

# Myrna NORMAN

COMMUNITY CHAMPION | VOLUNTEER  
DEMENTIA AWARENESS ADVOCATE

**COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS** is a citizen recognition campaign. Citizens of Maple Ridge were encouraged to nominate their exceptional neighbours this past summer according to five categories: artists, athletes, volunteers, storytellers and barrier breakers. Myrna is the first of the nominees to be featured.

Thank you, Myrna, for sharing your story with Maple Ridge. Learn more at [mapleridge.ca/2016](http://mapleridge.ca/2016).

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE LOVED ONES OF SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED?

If someone you know or love has been recently been diagnosed, please get some education. Contact the Alzheimer Society, the Purple Angels, Uptomize Counseling or CEED to help you understand to care for yourself while you are caring for someone else.

## DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY/STORY?

I have put toothpaste on my hairbrush, sometimes have trouble sorting out my bra straps, occasionally turn the taps on and walk away, and on one occasion tried to put a fire out in my oven with water. These are just some of my antics.

Over the last 10 years of my diagnosis my life has gone from despair to attending the first Canadian Dementia Strategy in Ottawa. My passion for sharing the possibilities of living well and sharing information is paramount.

## Get Involved

PURPLE ANGEL DEMENTIA AMBASSADORS:  
[purpleangel-global.com](http://purpleangel-global.com)

ALZHEIMER SOCIETY:  
[alzheimer.ca/en/bc](http://alzheimer.ca/en/bc)

SENIORS NETWORK:  
[seniorsnetworkca.wordpress.com](http://seniorsnetworkca.wordpress.com)



## WHAT DOES "COMMUNITY" MEAN TO YOU?

Community means working with all citizenry to learn and to hear from many different voices in a manner to empathize. Listening and acting when possible is the conscience of our city.

## HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN MAPLE RIDGE?

Dave and I chose to make Maple Ridge our home about 10 years ago. I do, however remember bringing my small children to see the 'Santa Claus Parade' some 30 or more years ago. The friendliness, the genuine concern for other members of our city combined with the 'country' feel give folks the best of the city and the country.

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT LIVING IN MAPLE RIDGE?

My favourite thing in Maple Ridge is the very quick ability to go from city living to country living in minutes. The Act and the Art Gallery are two of my favourite places in our city.

## TELL US ABOUT PURPLE ANGELS DEMENTIA SUPPORT. WHEN DID IT START? WHY DID YOU START IT?

Purple Angel Dementia Support is my passion. After flailing for a few years after my dementia diagnosis and needing some support, the Alzheimer's Society and the Purple Angel Ambassadors became my life lines. It seems that our group began some 5 years ago. It was important to me that a group that included persons living with dementia, caregivers, and family and friends all be welcome to the same group for fun, education and socialization.

## WHAT WAS IT LIKE CHAIRING THE FIRST WALK FOR ALZHEIMER'S IN MAPLE RIDGE?

It was an honour in being involved with the first Maple Ridge Walk for Alzheimer's. Many, many worked together to make this a reality. Having the Walk for Alzheimer's in Maple Ridge offers our citizenry the opportunity to learn and participate.

## TELL US ABOUT THE SENIORS NETWORK.

When I attended the Seniors Network in Maple Ridge, my heart was so touched by so many persons willing to work for every part of our society. From the Intergenerational Garden to helping folks who are disabled, to Hospice Services and recently Widowed Spouses, my admiration for this wonderful community swelled.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH DEMENTIA?

For those recently diagnosed or those who have been unable to come to terms with the diagnoses please know that you can live well. Being social is proving to be of utmost importance. Exercise, bringing more oxygen into our body, are other important aspects to living well. The support of my husband and family has been unconditional love.

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