

Celebrating Healthy Active Lives



ALCOA Members – Making a Difference for Older Adults



A Note from the Executive Director

Now that spring has sprung, we are all able to finally get out and enjoy the warm spring weather. Whether it's walking, gardening, or row-



ing, we all need to make sure that we stretch appropriately to prevent any unwanted injuries. Our article on summer preparedness will provide you with some easy and simply exercises that everyone can do.

ALCOA has always maintained that it is never too late to start to be active. 'No Butt's a Draggin' dragon boat team, certainly proves our point. All paddlers in the team must be 55 years and better. Maybe your centre might be interested in starting your own team. Read more about the Horton Street Senior's Centre rowing team in this issue.

It's amazing what a group of people can do when they all work together. The Campbell River Community Centre in beautiful British Columbia, recently received an Award for Facility Excellence. We congratulate you on your successes. It is a wonderful facility that welcomes people of "all ages, stages, and abilities." There may be some ideas in the article that your facility may use, or better yet, contact the director.

ALCOA is busy writing the final report for two projects that were completed this year; the Cross Canada Consultation and Active Living and Diabetes: Building on our Successes. We expect the documents to be finalized, translated and printed within the next few months. Members of ALCOA may expect to receive these documents in the summer.

It is with great sadness that we share with you the news about the passing of one of our Guardians, Archie MacKeigan, from Sydney River, NS. He was 63 and died suddenly in March from a motor vehicle accident. He was a wonderful asset to ALCOA and will be well missed by our coalition, his workplace, his family and friends.

Hopefully you will find this issue and the soon to be released project reports, useful resources with some great ideas that you too may incorporate into your facility to help celebrate healthy active lives!

Enjoy.

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Celebrating Healthy Active Lives

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"No Butt's a Draggin" Dragon Boat Team

In the spring of 2006, I was asked if I would put together a Dragon boat team for the seniors, staff, and youth of our club, Horton Street Seniors Centre. I made up and posted flyers around the club encouraging members to come out a try a practice. Seniors that I train came out for a practice in our pool, and then more came and so the team was developing. We are still recruiting. To join you must be 55 years and better and the eldest on the team is 72 years young.

We have a team coach and we practice in the pool on the side of the deck all winter. This helps with form, technique and endurance. In the spring, we are in our boat twice a week for a practice. In our first race on Fanshawe Lake last summer, the "No Butt's A Draggin'" seniors' team won a silver medal in their category. There were about 40 teams entered that day and we were the only known seniors' team in the area. They were so proud of themselves and they represented our club well. It was exciting and exhilarating for all of us!

The boat has to have 20 "paddlers" (we don't "row"), a steers' person at the stern (rear) and our drummer, seated on the bow (front). Most races are 500 metres

and some are 300 metres. You must all be "in time" otherwise the paddles will hit together and it will be ineffective in the way of movement. It's a fast race, with a 3 minute time limit but you want to finish way before that. The seniors love it!

Our team raises awareness of cancer. We provide rides to "Red Hats", participate in the Relay for Life, London Boat and Leisure show, London Boys and Girls Club Rib Fest, among other social activities. We turn no potential paddlers away due to ability or other. Come on out and watch us on the Thames River on a lazy summer evening. We'll even bring you aboard and let you try.

Horton Street Seniors Centre, is located in London, Ontario. "No Butt's A Draggin" Dragon Boat Team was developed and recruitment was in the process in the spring of 2006.

If you are interested in starting your own Dragon Boat team and would like some tips, feel free to contact Tracy at tracyralph2003@yahoo.com.

Tracy Ralph

F.H.P.
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Seniors first race at Fanshawe, Summer 2007, just before they won their silver medal.



A poolside winter practice.

Campbell River Community Centre

Campbell River Community Centre, which opened in January 2001, is a welcoming facility on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. They recently received an Award for Facility Excellence from the BC Recreation and Park Association. In recognition of that award, they would like to share their west coast spirit for senior living with the rest of the country.

The Centre welcomes people of all ages, stages and abilities. Families, newcomers, retirees and 'home grown' seniors are in and out the doors for everything from fitness, floor hockey or table tennis to painting, pottery or preschool. City of Campbell River Parks, Recreation and Culture operates the centre and administers a huge number of community projects from the offices within.



Recently the 50+ Active Living program retired their "Happy Wanderers" name and adopted a philosophy of working with older adults in their community to promote a lifestyle that values the physical, social and mental wellness of each individual. For a yearly membership under \$15 per year, volunteer led programs are free to members and supported by fundraisers. Paid programs are kept at an affordable level with the option to apply for a 50% off Leisure Involvement for Everyone (L.I.F.E.) subsidy. Over 1000 members in the small city of 30,000 citizens are adding value to their lives and the life of the community.

The facility was constructed to exceed the acceptable standards for physical accessibil-

ity. As a result, participation at the centre is increasing every day. Beyond the physical accessibility, the staff embrace a philosophy of inclusion and believe that the City's facilities need to be accessible to all people, regard-



less of their abilities. This welcoming attitude has transformed into several policies and programs that invite typical non users to participate. On any given day you will find people of all ages, ethnicity, level of wealth and ability in the Centre. For example, a partnership with the Multicultural Immigrant Services Association and 50+ Active Living programs translated into a barrier breaking program for seniors who did not speak English, would not cross the threshold of a public building and had never joined a 'group' in Canada. Every month seniors have fun with the English language and enjoy a potluck lunch. Food is a great connector. Another example is a singing program that evolved from able senior entertainers to



Campbell River Community Centre

a vibrant experience for special needs adults and seniors who attend with care givers. Music is added by a guitar player suffering a head injury and a member recovering from a stroke who plays an accordion he can manage with one hand.

The Campbell River Community Centre demonstrates unique, innovative design with its use of natural light. The architects listened and created a facility that everyone on the Steering Committee, which included public, staff, and city council members, felt met their vision of a new social centre. During the design process it became clear that there needed to be casual, welcoming spaces throughout the building that would encourage people to socialize. People often gather in any of the four locations to have coffee, chat or read. A group of 20 knitters get cozy by the fire while two tables of Mexican train dominoes compete around the corner. Seniors enjoy luncheons, potlucks, cards, games and a view of activities in the gym from the Lounge. Overall, the Centre is a warm and welcoming place that can be used by everyone in the community. It is a beautiful building outside and inside.

The center now has over 15,000 visits by older adults each year. Mixing generations has been a healthy alternate to an exclusive senior centre. The public nominated the Community Centre as a Family Friendly Business in 2007.

If you would like more information on this facility, its design or programs, please contact Linda Moore at Linda.Moore@campbellriver.ca.

Linda Moore
Program Coordinator
City of Campbell River
Parks, Recreation and Culture
Department



“Seniors’ & Summer Activity Preparedness”

It’s spring time and summer is just around the corner. Everyone is recovering from the typical Canadian winter. That being said, people are getting out and about, walking, golfing, gardening and even water activities. Everyone must bear in mind that there are potential injuries when we jump right into these activities. As with any new or “renewed activity” we must prepare ourselves to prevent this possible occurrence. The older we become, there is a greater risk for injury, therefore we must arm ourselves adding strength, stretch, and balance exercises that are more specific for your particular activity.

Exercises for Walking

It’s something we do everyday, but when you increase your speed, distance, time and frequency you add more stress. You must stress (overload) to a degree but if you do not train first there lies the risk. The stretching exercises are fairly simplistic, you just have to be motivated to do them.

1. To avoid “shin splints”, you may sit or stand (if you sit you may exercise both shins at once). Lift your toes upward, keeping your heels in contact with the floor, then back down. Repeat, 2 sets of 10 repetitions.



You may work your way up to 3 sets when you feel that you need more of a challenge. You may also wish to lay ankle weights on top of your toes. Do this if you have the weights and only use 1-3lbs.

2. To stretch the shin after you walk, stand on a step or a curb (hold on to a stable structure) and gently place the front part of your foot (shoe) against the lower area of the step and push lightly. Both knees are slightly bent while doing this stretch. The majority of your body weight should be the “stable leg” in which you are standing on.



3. The “hip flexor” muscle group stretch is usually neglected as well. This is the muscle group that does a majority of the work during the “swing phase” (moving your leg

forward) of walking. To stretch this muscle, stand with one foot in front of the other. You may hold onto something stable to maintain balance and stability. Ensure that your back toes are facing forward (so that you maintain correct body alignment). Your front toes should face forward as well. The front knee should never go beyond the toes. Now, pelvic tilt — do this, tuck your buttocks under, hold the position and then do the same with your other leg.



Enjoy the nice weather and the opportunity to get outdoors, but always remember to pay attention to your personal safety. Where sunscreen/bug repellent, where a hat, bring water with you and a cell phone if you have one. Also, always be aware of your surroundings from uneven terrain to people that may be getting closer to your “personal space” which is a 3 foot circumference.

“Walking is a great form of exercise. It is good for your legs and lungs, heart and head; it will help you live longer, love better and lighten up in more ways than one.” (Collis, M., Active Living, March 2008).

Tracy Ralph is a fitness, health, exercise and lifestyle consultant, how has over 20 years experience in the profession. Tracy specializes in fitness for seniors and for people with disabilities.

Ideas for People Who Don't See as Well as they Used to

Know someone who's not seeing as well as they used to?

According to CNIB consumer products specialist Caroline Brown, there are hundreds of handy gadgets available that can make a world of difference.

"The impact can be huge, especially if it's something that allows someone to keep doing things that they love, or makes them feel safer, or gives them more control over their lives," she says.

Brown has worked for thirteen years at CNIB, finding just the right products to fit her customers' needs from CNIB's vast selection of 1,100 items. "It's very rewarding," Brown says. "Sometimes people come in and they're overwhelmed by all the things we have available. They're like kids in a candy store."

Although Brown's customers can be people with vision loss themselves, just as often she finds they are people looking for a gift for someone else. "A lot of sighted people come in to find something for a friend or relative," she says. "They may come in by themselves, or two or three in a family."

Talking clocks and watches are particularly popular. "The clocks are great particularly when you're half asleep in the middle of the night and you want to know what time it is," says Brown. "You just press a button."

CNIB has more than 1,100 items available, including kitchen devices, labeling aids, large button telephones and calculators, cheque-writing guides, and large print calendars and address books. There are high-tech products as well, such as talking

book players for reading and large desktop magnifying units for perusing everything from photographs to the newspaper.

Gifts for recreation and relaxation include large print playing cards, tactile cribbage and checkers sets, and high-contrast dominoes. "One thing many seniors miss is being able to play games with their grandkids," says Brown. "So a simple checkers set that will allow them to do that again can be wonderful."

Brown cautions that some items are not appropriate to purchase for someone else, unless the recipient comes with you to pick them out. "We don't recommend buying magnifiers, because it's like buying glasses; you need to be properly fitted," she says. She adds that if you're buying for someone new to assistive products, it's best to start with one or two items.

"Once someone sees there's a solution to one problem they're having, they're more open to finding solutions for others."

Brown has many memories of people whose lives were changed when she connected them with just the right item. Like a woman who was an avid bridge player all her life, and missed it immensely when she could no longer see the way she used to.

"She got large print playing cards and then started entering tournaments again," says Brown. "It's amazing. It doesn't have to be a big, fancy solution."

To order products from CNIB, call 1-866-659-1843 or visit www.cnib.ca. You can also request a catalogue by phone or view it online. Or visit your nearest CNIB office to see some of the items available.

Five Bestselling Gift Ideas from CNIB

- **Games, such as super jumbo playing cards (\$5.50) or tactile checkers sets (\$32.95).**
- **Talking watches and clocks, such as the UFO Talking Clock (\$19.15).**
- **An easy-to-see telephone, such as the Big Button Speakerphone CP-8816 (\$43.25)**
- **Organizers, such as a large print CNIB calendar (\$2.30) or address book (\$5.60)**
- **A large button TV remote, such as the Simplified Universal Remote (\$24.65)**



The Accessible Channel

The CRTC approved an application by the National Broadcast Reading Service Inc. (NBRS) for a broadcasting licence to operate a national, English-language digital specialty described video programming undertaking to be known as The Accessible Channel.”

“The beneficiaries of this NBRS visionary initiative will be persons living with vision loss,” says Jim Sanders, CNIB President and CEO.

The Accessible Channel features a range of programming – some that already has been ‘described’, much more that will

be ‘described’ for the first time. The new channel will seek to broadcast shows from such well-known networks as CTV, CBC, BBC, CanWest Global and more. The Accessible Channel plans to program to all age groups – from children to seniors.

‘Description’ is a process by which a narrative description of the “visual elements” of a story are added to a soundtrack, painting a picture in words of what is happening on screen.

The Accessible Channel will also provide closed captioning for 90% of its program schedule.

The National Broadcast Reading Service Inc. (NBRS) is a remarkable registered charity that enriches lives by providing highly valued news, information and entertainment to 4.5 million vision- and print-restricted Canadians. In addition to working with others, NBRS (www.nbrs-canada.com) does this through its two divisions, VoicePrint and AudioVision.

Because of VoicePrint, newspapers and magazines can be “heard,” allowing people who can’t independently access print due to, for example, blindness or physical impairment, low literacy skills or just getting older, to listen to in-depth articles from over 600 newspapers and magazines. VoicePrint can be accessed on the Secondary Audio Program of CBC Newsworld; on Star Choice (ch 825), ExpressVu (ch 49 & 967), Look TV (ch 400); Rogers Digital (ch 196) and Eastlink Digital (ch 394); and at www.voiceprintcanada.com.

Because of AudioVision, people who have vision restrictions can now “see” the action in movies and TV programs due to description. Many people have said description does for people with no or low vision what closed-captioning does for people with hearing impairments: it makes on-screen entertainment more accessible www.audiovision-canada.com. AudioVision is a description pioneer and continues to offer quality described products and services.

an excerpt from NBRS media release

211Ontario.ca

WHAT'S FAST, RELIABLE AND POWERFUL?

The new 211Ontario.ca website was released in May 2008!

WHAT IS 211 ONTARIO.CA?

A bilingual online directory with authoritative information about more than 56,000 community, social, health and related government services and programs in Ontario

- Location, keyword, subject and advanced searching available
- Sophisticated mapping interface
- Proximity searching finds the service closest to the user
- French language interface for Francophones in Ontario

A regularly verified and updated database of information collected by local community agencies

Web access to the 211 system in Ontario

Access to accurate and timely information can empower people to successfully cope with life's challenges and be productive, active and engaged. With the launch of 211Ontario.ca, access to human services information just got easier!