

# Celebrating Healthy Active Lives



**ALCOA Members – Making a Difference for Older Adults**



# Active Living Coalition for Older Adults **UPDATE**



## A Note from the Executive Director

### ***Let's All Celebrate and Carry the Torch!***

In less than 300 days the Torch Relay will start its way across Canada, in preparation for the Olympics in Vancouver on February 12, 2010. The Torch will travel 45,000 km across Canada, with the help of twelve thousand Canadians, representative of all ages, nationalities and abilities. *ALCOA would like to encourage you to inform your members about this wonderful opportunity to carry the torch for Canada, and highlight the abilities of older adults and their contribution to society.*

To be a Torch Bearer, you must register at [www.carrythetorch.com](http://www.carrythetorch.com), submit your name and make a pledge to do "something in your daily life to make Canada an even better place to live". There are more details on the web site. And, if your member is selected to be a Torch Bearer, we'd like to know so that we can tell all our members. We can all celebrate in the successes of older adults, being active, healthy and contributing to a better Canada.

Our stories in this issue of *Celebrating Healthy Active Living*, continue to celebrate the success of people, places and programs. At 94, Murial Chittick is still outpacing most of the other seniors at her centre; Saskatoon, New Brunswick and Edmonton share with you the secrets for their successful programs; Kingston has 'charted their own course' to fill the gaps to better serve seniors; and finally 'your best friend' is still your best friend to keep you healthy in these winter months.

Enjoy the winter, as much as you can! To quote my mother, who is 89 years young, she looks at each week "as getting one week closer to Spring!" May we all celebrate in our personal successes for staying active and healthy, even in these wintery Canadian months.

Enjoy.

## *Contact Information*

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### **Celebrating Healthy Active Lives**

Editor: Patricia Clark

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# Celebrating with Muriel Chittick

**Muriel Chittick** lives alone but is never lonely; even at 93 she's too busy. December was especially busy as she cooked for several parties and teas which she organized. As usual, people with no families were invited for a home-cooked meal on Christmas Day. Last year she served seven in her small apartment at the Admiral Beatty Complex in Saint John, NB, the renovated famous Admiral Beatty Hotel where royalty once stayed.

Mrs. Chittick always helped others; at four years of age, her mother taught her to sew. She made doll clothes for herself and the neighbourhood children. Barely out of her teens, the Department of Agriculture invited her to start a 4H Club teaching girls to cook and sew. She was very proud of them and taught for the next 25 years.

Widowed at 40, Muriel did remarry. She and George later moved to the USA where both took management courses at UCLA and managed several buildings for a number of years. They returned to Canada to manage the Miramichi Golf and Country Club in New Brunswick where Muriel catered to all the parties and weddings, making the wedding cakes herself.

Each year, one of her December projects is organizing a Mitten Tree at the Seniors' Resource Centre where she is a founding member. She baked most of the previous night for a tea for the children who came to decorate the tree with mittens which she had had donated. When they left, they took the mittens to warm the hands of needy children this winter.

Winter is not her only active time; she helps to organize day trips and other jaunts for seniors; she is an active member of the local seniors club, plays scrabble every week at the Senior's Resource Centre, and Auction 45s in her building.



Muriel with children from the Chicken Noodle Club at the Mitten Tree Party



Muriel's baked goodies for the tea



# Saskatoon Council on Aging: “one-stop shopping” for aging-related resources and information



by Dale Worobec

The Saskatoon Council on Aging (SCOA) provides “one-stop shopping” for resources, information of interest to seniors, and a growing number of programs and services, all in one convenient location in downtown Saskatoon. “For seniors or caregivers looking for information, it’s ideal – everything is here,” says SCOA Executive Director June Gawdun.

The SCOA office provides a walk-in Resource Centre, where seniors can browse through hundreds of publications and pamphlets. One of the most popular is the annual Directory of Services and Social Activities for Older Adults, a free, 125-page guide to resources, services and social activities. Also well-read: the SCOA’s publication, *Coming of Age*. These and other materials are also available online.

Visitors will also notice the Caregiver Information Centre, providing information, support and regular events for those who care for an older adult. In fact, the SCOA serves as a hub for a wide range of programs and services, says Gawdun.

Each autumn, the organization hosts Saskatoon’s premiere event for older adults. In 2008, ‘Spotlight on Seniors’, drew 1,200 visitors to enjoy a day of music and entertainment, plus workshops and exhibits featuring programs, products and services.

The SCOA also offers monthly blood pressure clinics, and classes in art, photography, cross country skiing and computer skills. There is a monthly drop-in program, with topics such as chronic pain or seniors housing options. The Saskatoon Century Club, for seniors 90 years and up, is also operated through the SCOA.

The organization is also very active in preventing senior abuse, including financial abuse, and holds an annual event to coincide with World Elder Abuse Day each spring.

For more information on their programs, please contact

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Dale Worobec is Communications Manager for the Saskatoon Council on Aging.



Computer Lessons



Seniors Week walk

# Greater Edmonton Foundation: *Providing a Solid Active Living Program for Seniors*



Greater Edmonton Foundation (GEF): Housing for Seniors, has standardized its active living program across all sites and made active living part of the resident and tenant culture. For 50 years, GEF has provided quality, affordable housing and supportive living services to 1900 seniors in 11 apartment buildings and 9 lodges throughout the City of Edmonton and offers a community-oriented lifestyle, a home environment and a good quality of life. GEF seniors are age 65+ with an average age of 78. GEF strongly believes that active living is the vital ingredient to keeping seniors healthy and safe.

The GEF recreation programs for the residents and tenants are designed specifically to enhance their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health. The programs provide a wide variety of options to make active living fun and safe for its seniors and so all seniors can participate. Treadmills and exercise bicycles are located at all sites. Residents and tenants have direct input into the selection of new items for their sites. New equipment and games to enhance mental or physical exercise programs are always being considered. Wii games and computers are located at all sites. Instructor-led exercise programs are offered and there are competitive activities throughout the foundation sites. Volunteer opportunities exist to contribute to the common wellness at the sites. Community outings can be in the new wheelchair accessible bus or on the other bus and van vehicles.

University students are with our staff almost year round from practicum and/or community placement programs and they provide extra support and options to the recreation programming. When surveyed, over 80% of the seniors were satisfied with and had fun participating in the programming!!

GEF seniors have been provided with an almost endless range of options to keep active and healthy. We are proud of our extremely dedicated and knowledgeable staff and we look forward to more active living program options for our seniors in the future!!

Sandra Copeland, Operations Manager, GEF  
14220-109 Avenue  
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[www.housingforseniors.org](http://www.housingforseniors.org)



Tai Chi classes are held at the Ottewell Lodge, and are designed for all abilities.

# Healthy Active Living Program For The 50plus/ programme Vie Saine Et Active Pour Les 50plus



The Healthy Active Living Program for the 50Plus created in 1993 has made a major contribution in the lives of thousands of 50Plus residents throughout the Province of New Brunswick.

All the major concerns of seniors are addressed through different workshops in every community of the province providing information on several key lifestyle choices:

1. UNDERSTANDING AGING
2. HEALTHY AGING
3. IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
4. WISE MEDICATION USE
5. IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY EATING
6. MANAGING STRESS
7. FALLS PREVENTION
8. PERSONAL SAFETY AND HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS
9. UNDERSTANDING HEARING LOSS

Every senior in New Brunswick has a chance to listen, question and act on these topics. Each month approximately 1000 seniors are exposed to the program. It is peer led with currently 12 regional coordinators, approximately 40 volunteers and 100 resource people who deliver the sessions. To date there have been over 6400 workshops delivered in over 3,400 communities across New Brunswick.

Many more topics, not included in our EDUKIT, are explored through different workshops and with a number of professionals. Many of these workshops or sessions are given by professionals in their own field be it; pharmacists, dieticians, nutritionists, police officers, nurses, lawyers, gerontologists etc. Seniors in New Brunswick benefit from the expertise of all of these people, whom volunteer of their time, to enhance the lives of the 50Plus population.

Our seniors deserve nothing but the best and we strive to achieve our goal of making a difference in their lives by cultivating a positive attitude to aging.

For more information, please give us a call at 1-800-530-4844 or visit our web site at [www.ainesnbseniors.com](http://www.ainesnbseniors.com)



Regional Coordinators (from throughout New Brunswick), Healthy Active Living Program for the 50Plus and of the H.A.L. Program staff (Provincial office, Moncton, N.B.). Photos were taken at the Regional Coordinators' workshop held in Memramcook, N.B. on September 3rd, 4th and 5th, 2008.



(l-r) - Jean-Claude Cormier, Program Director, Healthy Active Living Program for the 50Plus - Bun Veysey, Regional Coordinator, Healthy Active Living Program for the 50Plus.

# Chart Your Course Framework

*Do you know what physical activity opportunities are in your neighbourhood?*

*Are there local resources going unused?*

*Is there anyone in the community who is willing to take a leadership role?*



These were some of the questions we asked ourselves at North Kingston Community Health Centre (a part of Kingston Community Health Centres (KCHC) at the end of 2004.

## *To begin...*

To find out the answers, two Community Development Workers from KCHC held an open community meeting and invited organizations, agencies and community members who had an interest in physical activity. Voices were heard loud and clear that sport and physical activities were needed and wanted, and multiple barriers to participation existed for many community residents. A Steering Committee made up of organizations, agencies and community volunteers formed and named themselves North of Princess Communities in Action (NPCIA). Terms of Reference were developed and the newly formed coalition began to address the issue of sport and physical activity at the neighbourhood level.

## *To move forward...*

We needed a comprehensive Community Sport and Physical Activity plan and with the help of a consultant the "Chart Your Course" framework was developed. An environmental scan was conducted and an audit was compiled to list what physical activity opportunities already existed in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Analysis of the information gathered was used to identify gaps. The framework was launched to the community at the first Get Active Fair. Input was received from the community and a working group of community members developed a friendly version of the framework and named it "People Get Moving".

## *Filing the gaps...*

One identified gap in the community was the lack of local leadership to deliver fitness classes to older adults living in our community. Hence the "Staywell in North Kingston" program was designed to recruit and train local volunteers to deliver exercise classes within the neighbourhoods at churches and

a community centre. Healthcare professionals from NKCHC provided an educational component about physical activity within their area of expertise. And lastly, a social time was provided after the exercise component to enjoy a healthy snack and build a social network. Staywell in North Kingston helps to fill a service gap by offering a much needed program to isolated older adults in the community and to overcome the multiple barriers to exercise which residents face.

## *Working together...*

The NPCIA Steering Committee grounds its work in the Chart Your Course framework. 'Staywell in North Kingston', is just one of many physical activity interventions implemented in the community over the past four years. The NPCIA Steering Committee members are from different sectors with different mandates but we work together with a shared mission and vision. At times the lead is taken by one or more partners to accomplish a task and twice a year we all hold a Get Active Fair at the Wally Elmer Community Centre.

## *Our Vision...*

All community members enjoy physical activity as part of the daily lifestyle.

For more information on our process, please contact:

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We acknowledge the financial contributions of the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Healthy Communities fund. The friendly version of the framework was made possible through funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

# Let the Dogs Out!



One of the gravest public health concerns in Canada is sedentary living and the recent dramatic rise in body weight. One solution is for individuals to engage in regular walking. From studies conducted around the world, including Canada, we know that dog owners walk more than non-dog owners. For example, in a study that followed seniors over three years, dog walkers were approximately two times as likely to meet the recommended prescribed weekly walking levels, even when accounting for initial walking difficulty and other health-related characteristics.

It seems, then, that dogs and their natural inclination and need for movement serve as important stimulators for their owners to engage in walking, but why? Some have suggested that dog walking may support and motivate physical activity by providing companionship and creating expectations for care. This was confirmed by our prior research in Victoria BC where we found that dog owners' sense of obligation toward exercising their dog predicted how often they walked their dog, creating a human-canine 'buddy' system.

One criticism of this research is the self-reported nature of walking practices, which may not accurately reflect dog-owners' behaviours. To address this concern, we systematically observed the use of six public parks in Victoria, BC in both fair (warm temperatures, no precipitation) and inclement (high winds, cooler temperatures and rain/snow) weather to document visitors' walking levels, and if they walked with or without dogs. In poor weather, park visits in the absence of dogs fell significantly by at least 35%, while there were no differences at all among dog walkers' visits over the two seasons. In fact, dog walkers' visits rose by 6% during inclement weather. Indeed, we think this sense of obligation and ethic of care motivates dog walking despite our human preference and instinct to remain indoors when the winds howl and the rains fall. While it's not always convenient to own a dog, if you are looking for a 'buddy' you can count on, 'borrow' a neighbour's dog, or volunteer for the local humane society. Our ongoing studies are exploring the potential of increasing these human-canine bonds in an attempt to improve the health of all.

For more information about these studies, please feel free to contact the authors.

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We all  
need to be  
active

It makes  
us happy