

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

Sweet Successes across the Country

As I read through the articles submitted for this issue of Celebrating Healthy Active Lives, the innovative resources and programs that are available to help promote healthy aging is staggering. Once again I am so pleased that we are able to highlight and promote programs and ideas that have originated across Canada, from coast, to coast to coast.

In the NWT, a Nordic walking program was successfully targeted to older adults with diabetes or pre-diabetes. Leo Bonnetrouge, has a new lease on life, walking up to 7 km a day with his dog. In Saskatchewan, a very innovative program brought men together in a 'men-torship' Men's Survival Cooking Program. The Saskatoon Council on Aging will soon also has some new offerings for women. Moving across to Ontario, Mississauga is offering "Sweet Success" and has had a wonderful response for this group exercise program designed for people diagnosed with diabetes. This is just one of their 37 therapeutic community recreation programs. In the community of East York, in Toronto, students are learning health and wellness through an intergenerational program with local seniors. And moving on out to the east coast, Linda Nickerson in St. John NB, has more great ideas to share with you on assistive devices.

As you can see, this issue is full of wonderful new successful ideas and resources that could also work in your community. So don't be shy – please feel free to call the contact person in the article and get more information on their program.

Here's to spring. I am sure it is just around the corner.

Patty Clark
ALCOA National Executive Director

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Celebrating Healthy Active Lives

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Nordic Walking in Fort Providence

The NWT Recreation and Parks Association (NWTRPA) is a non-profit organization that works with communities across the territories to promote healthy living through active recreation. One program the NWTRPA offers to communities with a target demographic of people with diabetes, pre-diabetics and older adults is the Nordic Walking Program. Sheena Tremblay the Active Communities Coordinator works with communities across the North to help create sustainable walking groups.

A successful Nordic Walking group that has made an impact on the lives of its residence is the Fort Providence Nordic Walking club. The NWTRPA visited the community last fall to provide poles and train Daniele Gregoire, health promoter, to organize the group. Leo Bonnetrouge, an avid Nordic walker from Fort Providence expressed his impressions of Nordic Walking: "It's good for your respiratory system. Time goes faster. You rest much better and sleep better. You find you are more alert and you enjoy the fresh air". Leo currently walks with the Nordic Walking program in Fort Providence organized and supported by the Decho Health and Social Services. "Up to now he has completed an average of 200 km. He says that he gets around easier, feels more balanced with the poles and is confident that he will not fall on the ice and snow. For most of his walks he has a little dog named "little bear" that follows him all the time and they are enjoying each other's company. "He even walks up to 7 km, at temperatures under -36 °C," states organizer, Daniele Gregoire. She is honoured to have him as the team leader and is proud of his success.

Leo is a great testament to how Nordic walking can improve the health of older adults in a fun and social way. The NWTRPA hopes the Fort Providence walking group will continue to be active and will support Daniele in her efforts to promote Nordic walking in her community.

For more information on the program, contact Sheena Tremblay at stremblay@nwtrpa.org.



Leo Bonnetrouge & Daniele Gregoire

Sweet Success!

Therapeutic Community Recreation Programs started with the Sweet Success group exercise classes for people diagnosed with diabetes. This collaborated effort between a diabetes centre, a municipal fitness supervisor, and Get Active Mississauga coordinator, provided the ground work that recognized a growing gap between community recreation programs and hospital therapy. This collaboration resulted in a proactive, seamless and integrated active recreation program with measured success in the management of diabetes.



Today, over 37 therapeutic community recreation programs are offered. The success of our collaborations is most evident in **Sweet Success** and **Stronger and Steadier**, which is a falls prevention program. In both instances, the hospitals are limited in their ability to provide this programming. Sweet Success patients from the diabetic management centre have the opportunity to exercise together in a safe, comfortable community environment and are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of other community programs.



Falls Prevention research recommends 50 hours of programming to reduce risk of falling. While the hospital program provides 24 hours, the Stronger and Steadier community program, provides the opportunity to add the other 26 hours recommended, while introducing participants to other social and physical community centre activities. Stronger and Steadier participant Charles Owen Stephen noted improved breathing habits, as well as improvement in his mobility and movement. While participant Peter Porter recommends this program “to keep fit, active, and if you need confidence in your walking and balance.”

Developing community-based therapeutic recreation programs requires a change from traditional recreation. Our goal is to develop an integrated, sustainable integrated active recreation program that goes



beyond traditional rehabilitation to supported self management, while producing a program that is beneficial to the participant and the organizations. A strong collaboration with medical professionals who work directly with patients and who are willing to assist with program design, training and promotion, increases the individual's probability of continuing with beneficial daily physical activity.

Margaret Sanderson, a participant in the Sweet Success program says "Who knew that exercise could be fun! No intimidation, just people like me, making a change for the better. I actually look forward to coming to classes!"

The community therapeutic recreation programs are essential for individuals who are not able to participate in a main stream recreational programming. Joanne Stewart participates in a chair-ercise class. She comments, "Because I have severe arthritis & fibromyalgia, I am no longer able to do regular aerobic classes anymore. However, I have now discovered chair exercise which I truly love. They provide muscle work with weights, stretching with tubes and yoga balls and a general good feeling. I love this class and Donna is an excellent and caring instructor"

For more information on the development of community therapeutic recreation programs contact Brenda Callaghan, Get Active Mississauga Coordinator: Brenda.callaghan@mississauga.ca



Seniors Notes

Men's Survival Cooking Program

Brett Makulowich

Saskatoon Council on Aging

The Saskatoon Council on Aging has developed a "Men-torship Men's Survival Cooking Program". The premise of the program is to teach older men cooking skills and to provide a socialization venue for them. Men join other men to prepare meals that are quick, simple, and easy to make. Participants receive a copy of *Living Simply*, a handbook for adults assuming new responsibilities. Meals include: 15 Minute Microwave Meals, Soup 'R Stew Daze, Fast-A-Pasta Feast, and Potluck. There are four sessions of the class for the low cost of \$30.00.

The participants of the program tend to be men who are assuming responsibilities unfamiliar to them such as grocery shopping and meal preparation. These men may be widowed or caregivers for their spouses. The program offers men the opportunity to ask questions, exchange ideas, tell stories, and provide fellowship. I interviewed the man behind the program, Murray Scharf, to hear about its inspiration.

M: *Where did the idea of the class come from?*

S: It came from two sources. The first was Paul Benson from the Palliative Care unit at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. Paul noticed that men had a hard time coping after their wives died due to lack of a social network and cooking skills. The second source was the Menshed Program in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan. This program found that when men retired they didn't have a socialization structure. The Menshed Program decided to follow a program from Australia. The primary benefit found in the Menshed Program in Assiniboia was socialization rather than cooking skills.

M: *What else does the class provide besides socialization and cooking skills?*

S: The class showcases seniors helping seniors. The class is taught by retired home economics teachers Millie Reynolds and Betty Burwell. The class also creates partnerships in the community. The class is facilitated by the Saskatoon Council on Aging in partnership with the Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists and Affinity Credit Union.

M: *What was your favourite recipe you learned?*

S: The 15 minute meal session because it was quick to prepare and something that you could make in smaller portions. We made orange glazed pork chops, potatoes, cream corn, coleslaw, and chocolate pudding. It gave the full spectrum with regards to nutrition and is something you could make frequently.



M: Any funny cooking stories from the first session of classes?

S: Yes, when we made tapioca pudding we followed the recipe in *Living Simply* which was designed when microwaves had a lower wattage. We were using microwaves with a higher wattage and all three cooking groups of men had their tapioca pudding explode on them!

M: Any upcoming classes for older women?

S: We may start classes for widowed women such as Handy Women (how to change a furnace filter, etc.), Me and My Car, and Finances (how to handle the finances after your spouse dies). In the older generation there is a division of roles between men and women. These classes may not be needed in the next generation since that division of roles is eroding.

For more information on the program, please contact: Murray Scharf, 306-374-0874 admin@scoa.ca

Building Healthier Communities Across The Lifespan

Community Care East York hosted the last of a three-part series in February that promoted health and wellness to students at Secord Elementary School, through its Intergenerational program.

In partnership with the South East Stroke Network and Secord Elementary school, students are given the opportunity to participate in a program that focuses on developing healthy behaviours to prevent childhood obesity and stroke, and to learn from seniors in the community.

With the success of the Cooking Across Cultures Summer Program, where Senior Volunteers lead cooking classes with elementary school students in order to promote nutrition, food safety, cultural sharing, stroke prevention, and healthy attitudes towards aging, the program is now being implemented in the classroom. Senior volunteers are Team Champions and play a very important role in coaching and promoting health and wellness. With the increase in childhood obesity and chronic disease, this project hopes to promote health and wellness across the lifespan.

For more information, contact:

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More than a thousand words

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then what is the worth of actually holding the pictured item in your hand? At the Seniors' Resource Centre, we have a great variety of pamphlets, brochures, flyers, newsletters, etc. related to seniors. What we were lacking was a display of assistive devices so the senior and/or family and friends could actually examine the item and even take it home for a few days to test it while performing daily living skills. With funding from the United Way of Greater Saint John, we are putting together such a display. The best way to explain a few of these items is to show you the photos. This article is a continuation from the previous issue of CHAL.

Linda Nickerson, Events Coordinator
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Seniors' Resource Centre
Saint John, NB



Left

Wintertrax comes in different sizes to fit over winter boots to prevent slipping on icy surfaces – easy to put on, take off, and store.

Middle

a combination shoe horn/
back scratcher

Right

A sturdy long-handled bath scrubber – can also be used to clean the bathtub, etc.



Weighted 2-handled cup/mug

– Great for people with Parkinson's Disease as the weight better controls the shaking of the hands.

Nordic walking sticks – Gives an increased general body work-out, increases upper body strength (recommended for people who have suffered a heart attack), relieves neck and shoulder pain, helps with balance (researchers are finding it helps people with Parkinson's Disease).



Sock Aid

Demonstration of a sock aid – this allows you to put on socks without bending over which is a great help for many people who have joint and muscle problems.