



THE ACTIVE LIVING COALITION FOR OLDER ADULTS



Age Friendly Initiatives: *Breaking down barriers offers benefits for all*

Colleen Cosgrove

From easy-to-open doors, well-maintained sidewalks and railings on staircases, representatives from 17 communities around Manitoba took the first steps toward the province's goal of becoming the most age-friendly province in the country on Monday, **November 17, 2008**.

Hosted by Manitoba Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat (MSHAS), more than 50 people of all ages participated in the day of workshops, roundtable discussions and presentations that featured Kerri Irvin-Ross, Manitoba's Minister Responsible for Seniors, Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative executive director, Patti Chiapetta and Active Living Coalition for Older Adults chair Don Fletcher.

"The intent is to take a good look at those things that are either barriers to a number age-kinds of issues," Fletcher said. "When we talk age, we're usually talking about seniors, but the fact is that age-friendly initiatives are really for everybody ... The idea of an age-friendly initiative is how do we make life easier for a lot of people?"

Particularly we look at the issues that may be barriers to people participating in the community or being active or finding appropriate housing and transportation. How do we build community is essentially what it's about."

The province announced its age-friendly initiative and



Active Living Coalition for Older Adults board chairman Don Fletcher says the road to an age-friendly community is long, but each step — even if it just means repairing curbs and installing lighter doors — is an achievement.

Colleen Cosgrove/Brandon Sun

mission to become Canada's most age-friendly province early in 2008, and Fletcher said events like Monday's show the province is on the right track to achieving its goals.

As part of the newest batch of communities to sign up for the initiative, Brandon joins 28 communities across the province that have identified the age-friendly initiative as a cause. Of the 195 communities in Manitoba, Fletcher said engaging every one of them is a definite possibility in the years to come.

"Manitoba and British Columbia are probably the two provinces that are the most advanced in this process," he said. "Every community will determine what's important for them, what steps they need to take and what committees and strategies are needed to making their community more age-friendly. The intent is to help them understand what their individual issues are, form a small committee and develop an action-plan to tackling this."

A community's services, amenities and features like the number of disabled parking stalls, the number of useable benches and the level of social and community activities that include and welcome seniors are just a few of the factors that contribute to a community being age-friendly or not lists the MSHAS website.

University of Manitoba Centre on Aging director and research chair Verena Menec agreed that Manitoba

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ALCOA Member Spotlight

Clara Fitzgerald

Clara Fitzgerald is the Program Director of the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA) at the University of Western Ontario (www.ccaa/actage.ca) but has worked with the CCAA for the past 15 years in a variety of roles. Clara is a graduate from the University of Toronto and Brock University.

She is currently on the Executive with ALCOA and has been affiliated with ALCOA for over 12 years. She is a member of SHRTN – The Seniors Health Research Transfer Network in Ontario, has been a member in developing the RNAO (Registered Nurses of Ontario) Falls best Practice Guidelines and is recognized as a national presenter and educator with a focus on promoting physical activity opportunities for older adults. Clara has delivered the CCAA's national leadership training courses coast to coast, including Rae-Edzo in NWT, and in other countries such as Italy and Japan. She has facilitated more than 50 courses nationally to over 1000 participants and has worked with over 400 Care facilities (LTC, Residential care, Adult day programs) throughout the country to promote physical activity opportu-



nities in those settings.

Clara is passionate about the CCAA's vision "Research to Action – Leaders in Physical Activity and Aging". One of her latest publications is the first in Canada to address the need for Restorative Care programming for frail older adults and has also contributed

to the National Leadership Training guidelines for Physical Activity Leaders in the community, home care and long-term care settings leading to the development of the (ISAPA) – International Society on Aging and Physical Activity and (WHO) World Health Organizations recognition of International Curriculum guidelines for exercise programming for older adults and the "A.C.T.I.V.E." Practice guidelines being developed in partnership with SHRTN. Clara is a member of many committees – promoting the health and activity needs of older adults and she makes time to continue to live a physically active life with her family in London Ontario. You can contact Clara directly at cfitzge4@uwo.ca or toll free at 1.866.661.1603

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is on track and said she was pleased to see 17 more communities join the initiative's original 10.

"(Manitoba is) doing a lot compared to other provinces. I think as a province we're well on our way. And it was very nice to see Brandon come into this in the second round of community intakes with it being the province's second-largest city," Menec said. "In broad terms, just the fact that there is so much interest on aging across the province is a success."

Creating interest is the first step toward reaching the province's goal, Menec said, adding that it's too soon to

compare communities in terms of being age-friendly.

The evolution of a city like Brandon into an age-friendly community will no doubt take a lot of time and effort, and Menec said patience and celebrating the small steps is very important.

"It's big and that's why we constantly say you can't become an age-friendly community overnight. People's concerns come with thinking that progress has to be done immediately. But we keep saying that this is a long-term project that must start small," Menec said.

"Even if it's things like painting a crosswalk or repairing a curb. Some people may say it's just a curb. But it's one curb closer to that goal."



Roundtable Member Spot Light

Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging

The CCAA is a national research and educational centre that is unique in Canada and among the best in the world. The mandate of the centre is to develop, encourage and promote an active, healthy lifestyle for Canadian adults that will enhance the dignity of the aging process.

The centre promotes physical activity and the well being of older adults to over 400 members, through a combination of basic and applied research, educational resources and community-based programs. Located at The University of Western Ontario, researchers and program staff at the CCAA are at the forefront of the development and dissemination of evidence-based programs designed to improve quality of life for older Canadians.

There are six laboratories which specialize in the following aspects of physiological testing and research: cardio respiratory function; blood chemistry and acid based factors; nutrition; community stress testing; muscle physiology; and strength testing.

The CCAA leadership training team offers a variety of learning opportunities for those interested in helping older adults across the spectrum of mobility, adopt a healthier more active lifestyle.

- The Seniors' Fitness Instructor Course (SFIC) was developed to address a need for training and information about appropriate physical activity programs for healthy, community-dwelling older adults.

- The Get Fit for Active Living Course (GFAL) was designed to make beginning an exercise regimen easier for these individuals with the addition of a one hour education component for the first eight-weeks of the exercise program.
- The Functional Fitness for Older Adults (FFOA) teaches those working with frail older adults in long-term care centres to promote their clients' independence for activities of daily living by improving their functional abilities.
- The Restorative Care Education Training workshop builds on topics covers in the FFOA with the addition of modules related to restorative feeding, communication, positioning and transfers.
- The Home Support Exercise Program (HSEP) was designed to help older people remain in their homes longer by improving their functional strength, balance, flexibility and endurance.
- The CCAA also offers training in the development of fitness programs for adult day programs (FF-ADP) and for post rehab stroke patients (PRES).

For more information visit the website at www.uwo.ca/actage or contact the office directly at 1.866.661.1603.

Clara Fitzgerald
Program Director



THE ACTIVE LIVING COALITION FOR OLDER ADULTS

The National Blueprint for Injury Prevention in Older Drivers

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) received funding for the development of a National Blueprint for Injury Prevention in Older Drivers from the Public Health Agency of Canada. This Blueprint was developed with the input and assistance of a 21 member National Advisory Committee, of which ALCOA was one of the representatives. The Advisory Committee consisted of key stakeholders for older driver safety and included representatives from consumers, researchers, educators, clinicians, law and government. CAOT



is most grateful for the assistance provided by the National Blueprint for Injury Prevention in Older Drivers Advisory Committee.

The Blueprint outlines a vision and identifies directions for action for promoting safe driving among older drivers in Canada. It is directed towards increasing the capacity of older adults to drive safely for as long as possible and maintain their engagement in the occupations which give meaning and purpose to their lives. The final content of the Blueprint has been finalized and the document will soon be available to the public on the project website at: www.caot.ca/driving.

For more information please contact Janet Craik at: jcraik@caot.ca.



Getting the Most Out of Life with Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults



Whether it's walking the dog, playing with grandchildren at the park or gardening, being active is one of the best ways to stay healthy and independent as we age. Unfortunately, sixty per cent of senior Canadians are inactive and levels of physical inactivity increase with age alongside obesity rates. As a result, older adults, in general, may be at higher risk of poor health.

Using Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults can help seniors become more active in their daily life. The Guide is designed as a tool to help make wise choices about physical activity to improve health, help prevent disease and allow older adults to get the most out of life.

Developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology,

Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults provides clear and concise guidelines on how to achieve better health by making physical activity an important part of daily living. The Guide reinforces the importance of active living -- a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily living -- and clarifies the benefits of being active (as well as the risks of being inactive). It complements "Canada's Food Guide," which gives Canadians information on healthy eating. There are also separate Guides for adults, children and youth.

Please visit www.paguide.com or call toll-free 1-888-334-9769 for information and free copies of Canada's Physical Activity Guides.