

JULY 2020

THE BEAT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR THE
SENIORS SERVICES SOCIETY OF BC

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

The Coronavirus Pandemic that occurred in the spring of 2020 created a number of challenges for the Seniors Services Society of BC, while also solidifying existing partnerships and establishing new ones. The last three months have been challenging without the help of our cross-sectored partners, without whom we would not have been able to do the work we did.

Thank you.



THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS AND COVID-19

The weekend of March 14th/15th, 2020 would prove to be one that would shake up not just the Seniors Services Society of BC's operations, but all of North America, as the novel coronavirus and the condition it caused, COVID-19, prompted a lockdown of the province of British Columbia and Canada at-large.

Even as businesses and other organizations shut down, the Seniors Services Society continued on. Recognising the increased need for seniors' supports caused by the pandemic, provincial and municipal governments reached out to the Society for assistance. The Seniors Services Society of BC became one of twenty-four response hubs across the province, under the direction of the United Way of the Lower Mainland.

The Society expanded services for grocery shopping, check-in calls, meal delivery, and prescription pick-up. This increase in services ensured isolated seniors had access to the support they needed, including those who had formerly been fully independent, but were heavily impacted by the pandemic. These increased services would not have been possible without community partners from both the charitable and the corporate sector.

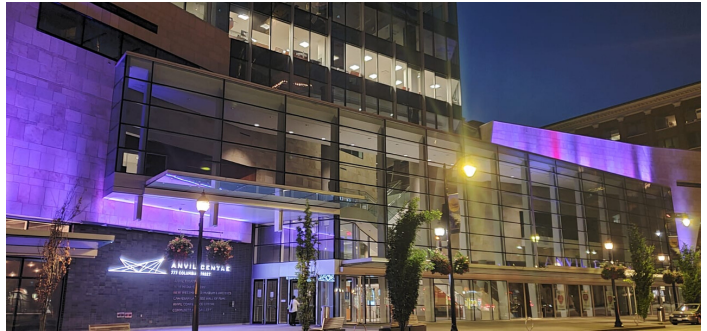
And of course, there are our volunteers. The people of New Westminster, who in the face of the coronavirus, donned masks and hand sanitizer and went out to the supermarkets and the pharmacies to purchase groceries and prescriptions for seniors trapped at home. Their commitment to our seniors-in-need has been unwavering and compassionate.

Thank you.



Seniors Services Society of BC onsite at Amazon

A NEW CHAPTER



The Anvil Centre, June 15th, 2020: Lit in purple in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

The Seniors Services Society of BC has established a Community Response Network (CRN) for New Westminster to address the issue of adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect. The New Westminster CRN is part of the BC Association of Community Response Networks, whose mandate is to gather a diverse group of concerned community and health service organizations, government agencies, community-minded individuals, local businesses, and seniors to develop a coordinated response to cases of adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect.

Elder abuse often goes unreported. The Ministry of Health reports as many as 10% of BC seniors will experience some form of abuse in their later years. One-in-twelve seniors will experience financial abuse caused by close family members or trusted friends. It has been reported that those statistics have risen since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, with reports of online and telephone scams aimed at seniors.

The mandate of the New Westminster CRN is to provide a foundation for the whole community to work together as a team in creating the safe, supportive community that everyone wants to live and grow old in. This can be achieved by building awareness and educating workers, friends, family members, caregivers, and neighbours in contact with vulnerable adults on how to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect and where to go for support.

The Seniors Services Society of BC is the host organization for the New Westminster CRN, and is looking forward to holding the first meeting of the New Westminster CRN Advisory Committee later this summer.

THE HIDDEN FACE OF HOMELESSNESS

A portion of the clients that approach the Seniors Services Society of BC for help come from difficult and traumatic situations. Alissa, one of our Seniors Housing Outreach Workers, came to the assistance of “Mary”, a woman fleeing a 25-year long abusive relationship. Leaving all her worldly possessions behind except the clothes she was wearing, she found refuge on a friend's couch in a single occupancy apartment. Unfortunately the tight living arrangement took its toll on both of their physical and mental health, and created a risk of the friend being evicted.

With Alissa's help, Mary learned to create a monthly budget, something she never had the opportunity to do before, as her ex-spouse had controlled the household income and expenses. With a budget in place and a newly acquired rent supplement, Mary was able to move into a new apartment, a space where she finally feels safe and secure. Her journey has been difficult, to say the least. However with Alissa's help, she now looks forward to integrating into a new community.

Another client, “Joan”, had previously lived with her son until his death. Joan spent a few years after bouncing among her family members' homes, without ever having a place she could call her own. This situation came to a head when her sister moved out of the country, and she found herself sleeping on her nephew's couch. With the house being very busy with children and pets, there was little in the privacy for Joan, or her nephew and his family. She however was on disability, and was not bringing in enough money to afford a place of her own.

Alissa was able to secure a housing subsidy for Joan, and provide her with outreach services, including finding her a new home. Now Joan lives in a basement suite a mere three blocks from her nephew- the only support she has left in Canada.

For many seniors, stories like Mary's and Joan's are all too familiar. Fortunately, Alissa and the Seniors Services Society of BC are here to help.

MEET THE BOARD

Marg McKee, Member-at-Large

Q: How did you come to be involved with Seniors Services Society of BC?

A: I volunteered at Century House in 2007, where I chaired the City's Seniors' Planning and Action Network (SPAN). With my contributions to seniors in the community, Seniors Services Society (SSS) asked me to join their board.

Q: What inspired you to take the position?

A: From past volunteering, I embraced providing housing for those in need. This passion and my commitment to helping seniors made the Society an obvious fit. I was happy to join an organization that was positively impacting seniors through housing, Meals on Wheels, and other programs.

Q: Your final term is coming to a close after eight years on the board. When you look back, what do you think was your greatest contribution?

A: I encouraged team building among the board, increased communications between board and staff, encouraged diversity of board members, and saw board and staff move forward with an aligned vision to expand fundraising, and community awareness.

Q: Do you have any advice for future board members to help them be successful in the role?

A: Board members must ensure the needs of vulnerable seniors are kept front and center. Housing is the precursor to the many other valuable services, and to the ability of seniors to live independently, with dignity and respect.



Marg McKee, SSSBC Board Member



Why do we ask for your tax-deductible donation during our **Give 60+ Campaign**? Because your gifts support Seniors Services Society's efforts to assist seniors 60+ with housing navigation, temporary housing, and individual supports to help them remain healthy and independent in their own home.

6,528

The number of seniors who were assisted with housing support and social programs in 2019-2020.

2,317

The number of seniors who were provided one-on-one housing support and information in 2019-2020.

4,211

The number people in our community who accessed support services, including light housekeeping, meal delivery, and medical transportation to name just a few services, in 2019-2020.

This is the work your philanthropy funds. I cannot thank you enough. There is, however, much more work to be done. I urge you to make a tax-deductible gift to our **Annual Give 60+ Campaign** today.

www.seniorsservicessociety.ca/donate/

Thank you,

Alison Silgado
Chief Executive Officer
Seniors Services Society of BC

P.S. For more information on these and other Seniors Services Society initiatives that your support makes possible, I encourage you to look at our 2019 Annual Report at: <https://tinyurl.com/rjg97og>, or email us at info@seniorsservicessociety.ca.

Registered Charity Number #80138 8547 RR0001

SENIORS SERVICES SOCIETY OF BC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

With the coronavirus pandemic disrupting events (especially those involving large gatherings), the Seniors Services Society of BC's Annual General Meeting was unable to be held in June. At this time, plans are underway to hold the AGM on Tuesday, September 8th, 2020, as a virtual event.

It is our intention to make virtual attendance and participation as seamless as possible for our members. Further details will be provided to all members by late August.

If you have not renewed your membership yet, we encourage you to do so; if you wish to register online, you may do so at any time at www.seniorsservicessociety.ca/member/.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

OUR DONORS

We couldn't do the work we do without our amazing donors. Thank you to all who donated in 2020 and throughout the first wave of coronavirus; you've had a huge impact on the lives of the seniors we serve! Below are those individuals and organisations who contributed in the last six months with a donation of \$500 or more. Thank you, to ALL of our donors.

January-June 2020

\$500+

Age Care Harmony Court Estate & Care Centre
Amazon Canada (New Westminster)
Green Shield Canada
Ladies Auxiliary Fraternal Order of Eagles
Marley Memorial Fund for Education
Reaching Home
Richard Edward Sanford Fund
RICHARDSON GMP LTD
Rotary Club of New Westminster
St. Vincent De Paul Society
Jane Bruner
Sheila Grant
Jingyue Meng
Rory O'Connor
Pedro Rosales
Jan Schmidt
Susan Schmidt
Natalie Zigarlick

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