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# THE BEAT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR THE  
SENIORS SERVICES SOCIETY OF BC

## THE GRAND PARADE

The Seniors Services Society is excited to announce our brand new peer-to-peer fundraising event: The Grand Parade! This one to five kilometre walk, hosted in association with Blue Sea Philanthropy, will replace the Coldest Night of the Year as the Society's fundraising walk. Set on Saturday, June 1, 2019, we are expecting warmer weather, more walkers, and lots of fun as we celebrate seniors and strive to help them lead their lives with support and dignity!

Registration for walkers begins in March; watch for the official announcement in the Spring issue of The Beat! We'd love it if you'd come help raise funds and awareness by joining us in The Grand Parade!

<https://thegrandparade.org/home>



## SANTA FOR SENIORS

Every December, in select stores throughout New Westminster, special Seniors Services Society Christmas trees carry the wish lists of seniors throughout Metro Vancouver who will receive no other gifts. Generous and caring members of the community purchase gifts from those wish lists, to ensure those seniors are able to experience some holiday cheer and goodwill.

We are very happy to say that 2018 has been an amazing success. Over 125 seniors throughout Metro Vancouver have had their Christmas wishes come true thanks to our amazing community, with gifts from scarves, toques, and mitts, to chocolates, books, calendars, coffee and tea, and holiday treats.

We at the Seniors Services Society would like to extend a huge thank you to Essence Hair Design, Sapperton Save-on Foods, London Drugs on 6th, the Dollar-Store-with-More on Carnarvon, and everyone in the community who has made Santa for Seniors a success.

Thank you all for your generosity!

Happy holidays!

## A HOLIDAY HERO

As a charitable organisation, the Seniors Services Society of BC relies on the generosity of government, corporations, foundations, and the community at large to ensure we have the resources to do what we do for seniors-in-need. Every dollar makes a difference, and we are very grateful for the support of the community.

On November 30th, 2018, we received an extraordinary gift of \$10,000 from an anonymous donor. We are very grateful to this unknown individual for the difference they've made for the seniors we serve.

Whomever you may be, we thank you. And thank you to all of our donors who have supported us throughout the year. Each of you has made a difference.

### SERVICES WE OFFER

- Housing Information & Referrals
- Housing Outreach Support & Rent Bank
- Temporary Housing
- Housing Navigation Training
- Light Housekeeping
- Meals on Wheels
- Medical Transport
- Grocery shopping
- Tax Clinics
- Bus Outings
- Social Programs
- Support Calls
- Santa for Seniors

### THE LION'S MANOR FIRE

The Seniors Services Society Housing Department provides some of our core services, from providing information on housing options for seniors, to assisting homeless or at-risk seniors in finding housing, and even providing short-term interest-free loans through the Society's newly launched Seniors Support & Rent Bank, for seniors struggling to pay rent and facing eviction as a result.

The Seniors Services Society is the only non-profit society in BC that works specifically with seniors to assist them in finding appropriate housing.

On Tuesday, July 24, 2018 a fire destroyed part of the Lions Manor in North Vancouver, displacing 66 seniors who were living there.

The Seniors Services Society of BC's Housing Program was called in to help with seven of those seniors, who had no other options for housing. The first order of business was to set them up in safe, secure spaces through our Temporary Housing Program (THP). THP provides seniors who have lost housing a self-contained, secure place to stay while we assist them in finding new, permanent housing.

Within three months of taking on these seven seniors, they all found themselves in appropriate new housing in areas of their choosing. An eighth has since entered into THP after other arrangements didn't work out, and we are now working to ensure they too will be rehoused safely and securely, in an area where they too will feel comfortable and at home.

*"I am thankful that your society was able to assist me at such a terrible time in my life. Facing upcoming surgery as well as the devastating loss of my housing and belongings in the fire was truly more than I could handle. Thank you for all your support and assistance in helping me to find new permanent housing and furnishings, and giving me peace of mind."*

-Lion's Manor Housing Client

### STEPS TO SUCCESS: SIAN

In early 2018, Century House and the Seniors Services Society of BC met to discuss a plan for resurrecting the former Seniors Planning and Action Network (SPAN) of New Westminster. It was hoped to create a new informal, small-scale version of SPAN which would focus on service providers. The purpose of the network would be to share ideas and exchange information; educate members on the various resources, services, and programs available for seniors; and discuss senior related issues in New Westminster. The new group would network 4-5 times a year, sharing updates and discussing emerging issues, under the new name Seniors Inter-Agency Network of New Westminster (SIAN).

On October 22, 2018, approximately 20 people from various organizations gathered at the Seniors Services Society for the first meeting of SIAN. Mariam Larson, the former coordinator of SPAN, facilitated the meeting and provided orientation to newcomers on SPAN's historical significance, terms of reference, and general governing principles. All members agreed to participate in future meetings.

Starting January 2019, a working committee will commence planning for this initiative, and will continue on with the legacy of SPAN, while incorporating new ideas. It is hoped that SIAN will introduce a new level of inter-agency communication, while facilitating increased care and support for seniors across the New Westminster region. The Seniors Services Society is proud to be part of SIAN, and to continue working on behalf of seniors in New Westminster and beyond.



## SHINE BC

We are pleased to share our newly branded and proposed expansion plan, for SHINE BC (Seniors Housing Information & Navigation Ease) which will focus on being the main access point for helping seniors navigate resources to find housing, financial assistance, health care, and services to promote wellness, recovery, social inclusion, and poverty reduction.

As the only community based seniors services in BC with a specific mandate to provide Seniors Housing Support, we see an annual increase in the number of BC seniors who are finding themselves homeless for the first time and/or living at-risk of losing their housing, all the while living in poverty with multiple health complications.

In April 2018, we submitted our SHINE BC Proposal to four Provincial Ministries which will incorporate a coordinated, inter-ministry, preventative approach to supporting BC's most vulnerable seniors, with a mutual goal of ensuring seniors feel safe, secure in their housing, have reduced dangers of losing their rental housing, and live their final years with health and dignity.



SSS Resource Development Officer Nipa Bhalla and Executive Director Kara-Leigh Bloch at the BC Legislature

*"When I got evicted from my apartment of 22 years, it was more stressful than mourning the loss of my husband. Thank goodness I had Seniors Services Society of BC to help navigate me in the difficult process, i just didn't know where to start and what to do."*

-Seniors Services Society Housing Client

**SHINE BC PROVINCIAL SOLUTION:** An existing set of programs and services that exist regionally and replicating them to expand to serve the province, by partnering with community-based seniors services such as existing Homeless Outreach Programs, Seniors' Centres, and Better at Home sites. SHINE BC will include:

- Seniors Housing Navigation Phone Line, (aka 1-800-SHINE BC) to be directed to a local SHINE BC site.
- Expansion of Seniors Housing Navigation & Homeless Outreach Workers across Metro Vancouver and in hub communities across BC.
- Launch a newly updated educational website platform for Seniors Housing Navigation of BC: Including updating the Seniors Housing Directory of BC.
- The newly launched Seniors Support & Rent Bank of BC, for seniors who need immediate one-time or short-term financial support to maintain or attain their housing, and/or to maintain their health care needs.
- Launch an affordable Seniors Financial Management Service to support the financial management needs of vulnerable seniors, with the goal of ensuring stable finances, housing, and health.
- Integrate Seniors Mental Health & Addictions Outreach Workers to work alongside seniors in their homes, to navigate the behaviours of seniors living with mental health, addictions, and other chronic and social health issues that may prevent them from finding housing.

Stay tuned as we shine a needed light on seniors housing information and navigation services across BC.





## A GIFT FROM THE HEART

Sometimes gratitude comes in unexpected ways, and reminds us why our mission is necessary and so incredibly important.

This summer, a past client walked into the Seniors Services Society offices to personally thank our staff for all the assistance he received. Six years ago the gentleman had suffered a stroke, leading to an extended hospital stay. Due to this extended stay, he lost his housing. Upon discharge from the hospital, he needed senior appropriate housing and supports to get back on his feet. The Society was able to house him in a temporary apartment. During his six month stay with the Temporary Housing Program, Housing Outreach Workers made certain he received home health supports, as well as assistance in finding a permanent and stable home.

In his own words, he knew what it felt like to “hit rock bottom”, knowing the only way forward was up. He promised someday he would contribute his skills or funds to give back to the Society.

On the six year anniversary of healing from his stroke, wearing the very same blue hospital bracelet he received when he was admitted to hospital, he came into the Seniors Services Society offices with a \$500 donation.

This however wasn't the gift that brought tears to the eyes of the staff; it was the second gift he gave. He said, “when he hit rock bottom, you helped me, and now I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.” He then presented the Society staff with a light pink rock, in the shape of a heart.



From his “rock bottom” to the bottom of his heart, he was incredibly proud to be able to support the Society's work with his gifts. We in turn are grateful for his generosity, and for the opportunity we were given to make a difference in his life.

## SPOTLIGHT ON STATISTICS

September - November 2018



## HOW YOU CAN HELP - BE A VOLUNTEER!

The Seniors Services Society is happy to be offering opportunities to engage with older adults (60+) in a friendly, vibrant setting. We encourage you to come and connect with others who share your interest in helping others, and learn about issues that impact the people we serve.

Contact us today to become part of our dynamic volunteer team! Email us at [volunteer@seniorsservicessociety.ca](mailto:volunteer@seniorsservicessociety.ca), or call by phone at 604-520-6621.

To learn more about our volunteer program, visit us at [www.seniorsservicessociety.ca](http://www.seniorsservicessociety.ca)!

*“No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another.”*

– Author Unknown