

APRIL 2021

THE BEAT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR THE
SENIORS SERVICES SOCIETY OF BC

100 BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to Abdul Rahman Aziz!

On February 19, 2021, Mr. Aziz officially turned 100 years old! We were excited to be able to share in his special day, with a giant gift-wrapped basket of goodies for the centenarian!

As far as 100th birthdays go, Mr. Aziz celebrated in style, with cake, Zoom calls from family around the world, and an online memory book filled with pictures of his life, birth parents, siblings, hobbies, and travels, all set to his favourite songs. Also included were messages from relatives near and far, as well as his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr. Aziz thoroughly enjoyed his special day, and was thankful for all who participated in it, with a special mention to his daughter, Joy, who worked hard to put everything together.



In memory of Carol Livesey
Jul 24, 1943-Feb 19, 2021

IN MEMORIAM

It is with heavy hearts that the Support Services staff at Seniors Services Society of BC say goodbye to long-time client Carol Livesey.

Carol had been a part of the Society's Food Security Program since 2015, and was able to take advantage of the Medical Transportation Program during the course of the coronavirus pandemic.

Carol lived an independent life until October 2020, when she was diagnosed with cancer. With the help of Karl, the Society's Support Services Team Lead, she was signed up for the Grocery Shopping Program, with a volunteer shopping and delivering groceries for her. She was also signed up for the Light Housekeeping program, to help keep her apartment in order, as well as receiving Support Calls from volunteers.

We extend our sincere condolences to Tracey and all of Carol's family. For a time, Carol was a part of our Support Services family, and she will be missed.

HOUSING OUTREACH HIGHLIGHT

Housing outreach is a critical piece of our work here at Seniors Services Society of BC, and one that comes with its fair share of challenges and successes that deserve to be highlighted. One of our outreach clients had worked in trades and carpentry his whole life prior to being let go in 2016. He accrued debt from living expenses for a year until his pension kicked in at 65. After losing his job, he lived with roommates for a time until everyone eventually went their separate directions, making the cost of rent unaffordable. So, he lived in his truck to save money and pay off debt. He wasn't able to find a suitable living space for what he could afford, and so was homeless. In October 2020, he began renting a single room in a basement with no windows and no heat in an overcrowded house because it was all he could afford.

With his health quickly deteriorating, the client underwent months of testing at the hospital. During this time, the client was connected to a Housing Outreach Worker at Seniors Services Society through a hospital social worker due to concerns about his unsuitable living conditions and declining health. After a few housing searches, the client and outreach worker together decided that he should request palliative care, since his health continued to rapidly decline. Soon after, a diagnosis of cancer was confirmed.

The client was forced to turn down the option of chemotherapy treatments because he did not have anywhere safe and suitable to recover. Additionally, the home nurses who were part of his palliative team did not want to provide home visits because they did not feel safe in the overcrowded house where he was renting a room. Seniors Services Society learned that because he had to turn down chemotherapy, he was expected to only live a few more months.



Through hard work and building connections, Seniors Services Society was able to connect with an out-of-town relative who agreed to supplement the cost of G's rent so that he could afford to move. Soon after, our outreach worker found the client a room and board home with all meals included. Generously, the couple running the room and board were accepting of his medical situation and agreed to invite him in. He was able to move and have his nursing care restored. Now that he has a suitable living situation, he has the ability to decide on a care path that is self-determined and is truly his choice.



SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER

The year 2020 presented some very difficult challenges for staff, community members, and community organizations alike. Restrictions on gathering increased social isolation, risk of illness increased stress, workplace changes influenced work-life balance for families, and economic impacts were felt by all. So, this past holiday season, staff at Seniors Services Society of BC were gifted \$50 to pay forward to an individual or agency who they felt could use the support. Staff were told to use the \$50 in whatever way they saw fit to create a positive impact. Our incredible staff chose to use the donation in a variety of meaningful and creative ways, spreading good cheer over the holidays and strengthening bonds in their communities.

The creativity and generosity of staff resulted in a diverse array of meaningful donations, gifts, and memories. Staff donations were used to support both charitable organizations and individuals and families in need.

To read more about these wonderful stories, visit:
<https://www.seniorsservicessociety.ca/blog/spreading-holiday-cheer-at-seniors-services-society/>

SHINE HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019-2020

Over the past year SHINE has expanded to include partnerships with agencies in five areas of British Columbia, including: Seniors Services Society of BC (New Westminster), Seniors Outreach Services Society (Kelowna), Nanaimo Family Life Association (Vancouver Island), West End Seniors Network Society (Vancouver) and Prince George Council of Seniors (Northern BC).

The SHINE model enables a tailored approach to the unique characteristics, strengths, and challenges of each community. Some important strengths of the SHINE model as identified by partner agencies are collaboration between providers and wrap-around, holistic services for seniors. A key benefit of the SHINE model is staff working with seniors in different regions have an opportunity for ongoing skill development, are less isolated and can provide mutual support when working with vulnerable, high risk seniors with complex and sensitive issues.

Feedback from program participants responding to survey (85%) indicated they accessed the Housing Navigator or Community Connector for information on housing options. Approximately half received information about financial supports available to them, as well as support navigating the different supports/options available.

Many factors affecting the health and wellbeing of seniors are poised to be ongoing: Covid-19 safety protocols in public places, senior's residences, community businesses; reduced office hours; and an inability to meet clients face to face in office and to provide outreach. One partner reported having a waitlist of approximately 40 persons and an increasing inability to serve those calling for service in a reasonable timeframe. Connecting vulnerable seniors to housing resources ensures that they have timely support and urgent needs met.

Using the learnings and skills gained so far, SSSBC seeks to implement and expand the SHINE wrap-around model in all other regions of the province, reaching out to local universities and colleges, medical providers, housing, and support services for seniors in each area and connecting all satellite hubs in a network of collaborative partners.

In a notable recent development, Seniors Services Society is embedding a Housing Navigator and Community Connector within affordable rental housing buildings for low-income seniors in Vancouver and New Westminster. This expansion of SHINE programs and services has been developed in partnership with Brightside Community Homes Foundation and BC Housing.



CHOOSE TO MOVE PROGRAM

Choose to Move at Home is a FREE 12-week virtual program that supports older adults 60+ to become and stay active. Participants develop a personal action plan, receive 1-on-1 coaching and group support and learn new ways to live a healthier and more active life.

Join online via zoom or through phone.
For more information call 604-520-6621
or email: leanores@seniorsservicessociety.ca

AN EASTER GIFT



Students at Douglas College were able to provide Seniors Services Society with a wonderful Easter gift. We received a \$500 grant through Envision Financial which was used to purchase 60 Meals on Wheels for an Easter dinner for seniors in our community.

BEHIND THE SCENES: HOUSING NAVIGATOR TRAINING

Our clients, donors, and other members of our community know that the Seniors Services Society of BC provides support services and housing outreach to seniors- but were you aware we also train others in housing navigation services?

The Society's Housing Navigator Training Program (HNT) is now heading into its sixth year and is as popular as ever among housing workers across the province. Led by Facilitator Lin Chen, the four-week course is designed for social service workers who assist seniors in need of housing information and support in BC. Housing Navigator Training helps these workers enhance their skills and knowledge when it comes to navigating seniors' housing options, as well as facilitating access to community resources through the training's guest speakers.

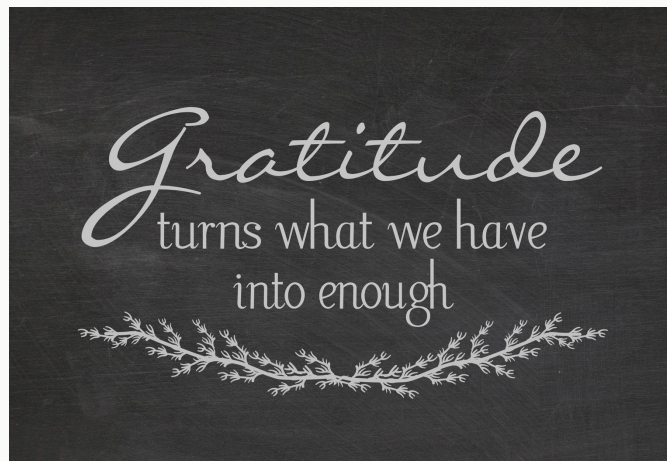
This year, we are offering the training online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The revised course offers four weekly sessions, covering topics such as Aging and its relation to Housing Needs, Housing Navigation, Rights and Responsibilities of senior renters, Digital Literacy for Seniors and more. The course has been redesigned with a focus on building capacities for the community social service workers and others, who work with older adults throughout BC.

Our next training starts on April 15th. For more information and/or to sign up, please contact us at admin@seniorsservicessociety.ca or visit us at www.seniorsservicessociety.ca/events/



OUR DONORS

We couldn't do the work we do without our amazing donors. Thank you to all who continue to support us in 2021; you're helping make a significant impact on the lives of the seniors we serve. Below are individuals and organisations who contributed in the last three months with a cash or in-kind donation of \$500 or more. Thank you, to ALL of our donors.



January - March 2021
\$500+

Ms. Melanie C. Walker
Richard Edward Sanford Fund
Mr. Chau Ng
George Weston Ltd.
Danice Park
Envision Financial

No duty is more urgent than giving thanks.
—James Allen, 1864–1912



Lin Chen, MSW, RSW (Left)
Vancouver Housing and Support Services Navigator

Lin is a registered social worker, passionate about continuous quality improvement, collective impact, multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement, and applied research and evaluation.