



Vancouver Second Mile Society

Seniors Helping Seniors since 1958

DECEMBER 2015



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2015 HIGHLIGHTS



OUR MEMBER, ELAINE, WAS THE FIRST ONE TRYING OUT THE NEW AUTOMATIC DOOR DONATED BY ENTRANCE AUTOMATION SYSTEMS INC.

- Successfully completed the installation of an automatic door opener at the front door of our Seniors Centre so that it is more convenient for our members who use a walker, wheelchair or even a cane to get in and out of our facility.
- Collaboration with the other DTES Agencies and Volunteers to serve our members continues: Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House serving our seniors nutritious smoothies through their Mobile Smoothie Project, Carnegie Community Centre conducted the "Creative Dance" Workshops, the Quest Outreach Society offering affordable and healthy food choices through their

food redistribution program for use at our Kitchen, health related presentations from local pharmacist and medical equipment supplier.

- Muoi Ly, our Cook at the Downtown Eastside Seniors Centre, is a recipient of the Bhayana Family Foundation Dedication Award. This award recognizes an employee at a United Way supported agency who demonstrates exemplary dedication to their organization, peers and clients. Muoi has been working with us and serving seniors for more than 15 years. Congratulations to Muoi as a recognized frontline worker who makes a difference in the community every day.

Chinese Outreach Project



CHINESE SENIORS
HAND-CRAFTED
THEIR OWN
LANTERNS

On the night of Sept 27th, stargazers across Canada were met with the rare confluence of a total lunar eclipse and a so-called "super-moon". It also fell on the 15th day of the 8th month according to the Chinese lunar calendar, which is the Mid-Autumn Festival for all the Chinese. Because the full moon is round and symbolizes reunion, all family members try to get together on this special day. The Chinese Outreach Project celebrated this meaningful time of the year with the seniors by making traditional lanterns, story-telling and sharing moon cakes. The two ladies with the same name Yuet-Mei displayed their lanterns with a smile of satisfaction.

The Continental Seniors Centre

The Continental Seniors Centre has had an amazing year with many great successes as we continue to move forward. Our peer-led programs have grown with much anticipation among our seniors, who have found Chair Yoga, the Walking Group, and ongoing health related workshops to be extremely beneficial. The Computer Program has familiarized seniors with basic computer skills, how to operate the Internet, and utilize different social media outlets like Facebook, which has played a huge role in connecting isolated seniors to friends and family from around the globe. Our social programs such as the Creative Expressions Art Class, Ladies/Gentleman's Luncheon, Pool, Mahjong and Birthday Parties attract



VOLUNTEERS OF THE CONTINENTAL
SENIORS CENTRE

seniors from different communities, bringing everyone together under one roof. Friendships continue to form in our friendly living room environment over simple pleasures like a hot cup of coffee and sweet pastry. None of these things would have been made possible without the ongoing support from our hardworking volunteers who give back to the community on a daily basis!





Downtown Eastside



SERVING FOOD AT THE UKRAINIAN CHRISTMAS EVENT.
PHOTO BY: JENELLE SCHNEIDER/ VANCOUVER SUN

January 2015 started off with a bang when NHP volunteers and staff hosted a Ukrainian Christmas Luncheon at the VSMS Seniors Centre for approximately 125 people. The event, graciously sponsored by Bob Rennie, was picked up by the Vancouver Sun where reporter, John Mackie was given carte blanche of the centre. The story about the Chinese seniors had quite endearing results. It not only touched on the poverty experienced by our seniors, but also spoke about how the Chinese seniors in particular are wrongly perceived as coming from monied backgrounds. Mackie also wrote about the connection of similarities between Chinese and Ukrainian foodstuffs. The Chinese loved the cabbage rolls, perogies and kielbassa sausage and compared them to their own dumplings and Chinese sausages. The story not only hit front page news, but has been shared over the world wide web on a blog site that collects Ukrainian Christmas stories from across Canada. The blogger stated that our story was the most heartwarming and a live feed of views show that people from across the globe are still reading about us. The VSMS handed out 100 tickets for the event and we also had enough to feed people coming in off of the street. Everyone enjoyed the tasty and robust meal.

Downtown South

Another successful year has come and gone in our peer based volunteer program. A story that sticks out the most for us is one of connecting with community and securing safe affordable housing. John 55 has been a dedicated volunteer with our coffee program for 14 years. He has resided in the same Single Room Occupancy Hotel for 16 years, his room smaller than most. John has been coping with anxiety most of his life, spending most of his time in his room with his cat, friends bringing him food and other necessities. Hosting the coffee program weekly in the lobby of his hotel was his only means of “getting out”. Six years ago John started to get out of his room and come to the office once a week and participating in quarterly volunteer special events. Eventually John started to come to the office weekly to pick up his program supplies, chatting with other volunteers, providing feedback and supporting his peers. John developed a wonderful relationship with a key volunteer meeting him for coffee and conversation twice a week, they now have a standing meeting time. Recently, his quality of life started to decline as he was feeling very unsafe because the building he was living in was under new management and they were not concerned about tenant safety. With staff support John applied for affordable housing, was given an interview and as of December 1, he will be moving into a bachelor suite with his own bathroom, kitchen and more space than he’s ever had. Needless to say he is very happy, grateful and appreciative of the friendships that have developed and the community he is a part of. A quote from John, “being a part of the program has decreased my anxiety improving my quality of life”.



VOLUNTEERS OF THE DOWNTOWN SOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD HELPERS

Christmas is coming: Please help!



We will be hosting our Christmas Celebration brunch at our centre to celebrate Christmas with our seniors. We only charge a nominal fee of \$1, and we need your support to make it possible. Your donation provides support for all our programs. If you can help, please call us at (604) 254-2194.

THANKS TO OUR 2015 FUNDING PARTNERS:

City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, United Way of the Lower Mainland, The Province of British Columbia, Face the World Foundation, First Baptist Foundation, Entrance Automation Systems Inc. Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program, Soroptimist International of Vancouver and you, our loyal individual supporters.