



**Vancouver Second Mile Society**

*Seniors Helping Seniors since 1958*

DECEMBER 2019



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## 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Our mandate is dedicated to improving the quality of life for seniors through our Downtown Eastside Seniors Centre and the Continental Seniors Centre in Downtown South as well as the 3 outreach projects in the two neighbourhoods.

Stepping into our 61<sup>st</sup> years of serving seniors, we would like to recognize those who have helped the Society in its charitable work. We organized our Membership and Volunteer Appreciation Garden Picnic at the Continental Seniors Centre on July 6, 2019.

We sent invitations to politicians and funders. Volunteers

from all VSMS programs in different locations came together to receive their recognition awards. This event was well attended, including everyone was thrilled to have MP Jenny Kwan as our guest speaker and presenter of the gifts and certificates to the volunteers. It was a successful event as it brought unity to our organization as a whole as we move forward together.

Our programming for line dancing and karaoke singing are going strong in the Downtown Eastside Seniors Centre.



MP JENNY KWAN GIVING HER SPEECH



SERVING LIGHT HAMBURGER LUNCHES TO MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS



BOARD MEMBER Y. F. TIN SINGING HIS FAVOURITE SONG

## Downtown South

Don is a volunteer of 18 years. In the time that he's volunteered he has formed longstanding relationships with many in the community. He believes in the importance of building trust, which he emphasized is an important ingredient to nurturing well-being in a thriving world.

Although, Don grew up in the foster care system away from his biological family ties, he nonetheless grew up believing in the importance of family. As a result, he makes sure the coffee sessions he leads have an accepting and safe environment. He likes to lead by example and makes sure that participants can depend on him to intervene in case of conflict or abuse of power.

Participants who regularly attend his coffee time have grown to depend on him and know that they can come to a space where they can be themselves. Coffee time in his building is a nurturing, fun-filled experience where people can share information, form friendships and nurture trust.



DON ROY ANSWERING A PHONE CALL IN THE OFFICE





## Downtown Eastside

This past year, the Neighbourhood Helpers have been diligently working on our core mission: to connect seniors and break them out of their social isolation. In the Downtown Eastside, where living arrangements can be transient, sometimes for years, this is no easy task. Over the past year, our regular Coffee Houses have been working to give a sense of reliability and consistency that is so often a precious resource in our neighbourhood. Currently we are able to cater to about 200 people a week!

Over this summer with the help of Neighbourhood Small Grants, we were able to hold several BBQs and lunches for seniors, reaching over 300 people and creating space for them to meet and mingle with their neighbors. This in turn supports our regularly scheduled activities and helps us to reach out to even more seniors. We have high hopes that going into 2020 we will be able to connect even more seniors in our neighbourhood!



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS VISITING DR. SUN YAT-SEN CLASSICAL GARDEN

## The Continental Seniors Centre



UKULELE CLASS

This year has been a special one for the Continental Seniors Centre, especially in the creative arts domain. From workshops like *Ukulele for Beginners* held by Jane Belanger, *Mindful Art Expressions* class by Sharon Van Volkenburgh, and an all-time favorite *Knitting Class* by Pauline Mulvaney, our centre has continuously pursued the goal of creating connections and unity in a safe and welcoming environment for seniors in the community.

Sharon Van Volkenburgh, RCSW is an excellent artist, therapist and communicator, who led the senior participants on a colorful and mindful journey of expressing their creative side.

Pauline and Shirley bring not only their wealth of lifelong knitting knowledge, but they have also created a warm welcoming corner where long-forgotten stories are woven and yarns are spun!

Programs like these are what the Continental Seniors Centre aspires to. With the help of our amazing team of volunteers, we create a friendly, "family-like" environment for our members, gathering people together into a vibrant community.

## Chinese Outreach Project



COMMUNITY OUTREACH WITH UBC PARTNER

Collaboration with the right partners is the most effective way to serve the marginalized seniors in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) community. We greatly appreciate our partnership with the UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Through their Office of Experiential Education, we have organized 3 healthcare workshops and 2 outreach activities led by their community outreach pharmacists and student volunteers.

The City of Vancouver has identified that Chinese seniors living in the DTES have language barrier issues when trying to access medical services due to their illiteracy in English. Together with our UBC partner, we are able to bridge that gap, helping seniors to acquire some basic healthcare knowledge and culturally appropriate resources for support in their own language. *Life is always better when we work together!*

## Christmas is coming: Please help!



Once again we will be hosting a special Christmas brunch for our seniors. Your donation makes this lunch possible and will provide support for all our programs.

## THANKS TO OUR 2019 FUNDING PARTNERS:

City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, Face the World Foundation, United Way of the Lower Mainland, The Province of British Columbia, Rennie Foundation, and you –our loyal individual supporters.