



A United Way
MEMBER
AGENCY

Newsletter

THE VANCOUVER SECOND MILE SOCIETY

Assisting Seniors in the Downtown Core

December 2002



Provincial cuts have impacted our seniors adversely during the past year. With the series of provincial government cutbacks in the medical and pharmaceutical area, many seniors in the downtown core find themselves floundering as a result of these cuts. Our mission is to help seniors. We have set up workshops to inform seniors about the cutbacks and to keep them informed of all the anticipated changes. This helps them cope with these changes during this transition period. Our members welcomed these workshops and they were well attended.

Our congratulations go to Valory Craske, our new Board Member for being nominated for a special medal to commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. This recognizes her significant contribution and distinguished service to her fellow citizens and her community. Valory received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Commemorative Medal at a presentation ceremony on November 8, 2002.

Comings & Goings

We say goodbye to our outgoing Board Member and past Chair, Eldon Jones.

We welcome new Board Members, Valory Craske, Margaret Toh, Adele Wagner and Stan Johnson.

We are sad to see Frank Green (Co-Executive Director) leave us as he moves to Vancouver Island. Steve Chan takes over his role as Executive Director of our Society.

Jeff Sommers, founder of our Neighbourhood Helpers Project (NHP), has left us to pursue a new career after 13 years with our Society.

We congratulate Ellen Woodsworth of our NHP staff who leaves to start a new career as a Councillor in the City of Vancouver.

Profile: Mr. Robert Chiu



“Welcome to the Centre!” Robert Chiu greets all who come to the center in this friendly manner in English or his native Cantonese. 81 year old Robert may be slow in his walk but his warmth and smile is always plentiful to all of us.

Robert has been a part of our centre since its early days. He has served as a Board member and a volunteer for the Welcome Desk along with many other duties at the centre. He is monumental in bringing many Chinese members from neighbouring Chinatown's senior residences to the centre.

The centre is like a second home to him. “I come here to meet and reminisce with old friends from China and Hong Kong. Sadly, also to remember the passing of friends whose pictures are added to the memorial wall.” He enjoys talking to people and you will always find him with an engaging tale to tell you.

Born in China, Chiu learned his English as a boy in a Canton Anglo-China School. When the Japanese invaded China, he fled to Hong Kong. There he met and married his wife in a traditional Buddhist ceremony. Robert moved to Canada in 1970 with his wife, two sons and two daughters. Since then, he has made Canada his home.

So come by one day and meet Robert. You will be inspired by his love of life and fascinated by his tales of his journey from China to Canada.

DSNHOP wins United Way Award



Our Downtown South Neighbourhood Helpers Outreach Program (DSNHOP) earned community recognition in early 2002 when we won the Scotiabank

and United Way Community Spirit Award for our Street Soup program. Since 2000, free food services in the Downtown South community have been cut or restricted. Seniors are suffering without adequate access to soup or hot meals. We thus have partnered with Ron Abbott's Street Ministry and the Waterfront Fairmont Hotel to provide a street meal on the Tuesday before welfare day for 150 low-income residents of the neighbourhood. The seniors enjoy the opportunity it provides to connect with others and learn about the full range of our outreach program.

Our Community Soup Program continues at the Old Continental Hotel, the Clifton and Vogue Hotels. We get vegetables and other ingredients from the Food Bank and donations from local grocery stores. We also encourage residents to contribute to the soup by bringing something to add to the pot. Residents state that they feel proud to be able to contribute.

The community kitchen at the Gresham Hotel is continuing and we also organized residents to start a Community Garden earlier this year. We just started a new coffee room at the Piccadilly Hotel.

NHP new ventures and liaison

Working in the Downtown Eastside to bring seniors out of isolation is our continuous

challenge. Over the summer, we began working with the seniors living in the Hugh Byrd Residence, a building that is owned and operated by the Greater Vancouver Regional District. During the fall, the Aboriginal Outreach Project initiated a weekly coffee session at 27 West Pender, a project of Vancouver Native Housing. At the same time, we work with the Downtown Eastside Community Kitchens project to organize kitchen groups at some of the residential hotels and housing projects in which we work.

We are now working closely with DSNHOP- our sister operation on Granville Street. Both projects now hold their monthly volunteer meetings together. We have begun a joint monthly newsletter of community and project issues for staff and volunteers.

Our staff and volunteers are working with the Women's Safety Project to organize a Senior Women's Safety Group. As well, NHP has supplied members for the Neighbourhood Liaison Committee that was set up to monitor the impact of the harm reduction projects of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.



Christmas is coming, can you help?

On December 9th about 200 members, volunteers, board and staff enjoyed a Christmas Lunch at the Fortune Court Seafood Restaurant. Our Christmas Day brunch will be held at our centre to celebrate Christmas with our seniors. We do not charge for this event on Christmas Day as we want seniors who live alone to enjoy the festivities of the holiday

Thanks to our 2002 funding partners:

City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Central City Mission Foundation, United Way of the Lower Mainland, Face the World Foundation, BC Gaming Commission and you, our loyal individual supporters.



A United Way
MEMBER
AGENCY

Newsletter

THE VANCOUVER SECOND MILE SOCIETY

Assisting Seniors in the Downtown Core

December 2002

season. We welcome donations of food, Christmas treats or money to help sponsor this special event. *If you can help, please call us at 604-254-2194.*

Happy Holidays and best wishes for the year 2003.