



A United Way  
MEMBER  
AGENCY

# Newsletter

THE VANCOUVER SECOND MILE SOCIETY

*Assisting Seniors in the Downtown Core*

*December 2003*



**The** Vancouver Second Mile Society celebrated 45 years of serving seniors this year. To commemorate the occasion, a simple ceremony was held after the AGM on June 17, 2003. Our President, Patricia McKenzie did the honors of cake

cutting and shared memories and food with our past and present Board Members.

Due to the fear of the outbreak of SARS in Vancouver in March, attendance at our seniors centre dropped 50% from March to May 2003. To ensure the health of seniors attending our centre, staff took proactive preventive measures as advised by the Health Authorities. By June our operation returned to normal. Out trips for this year included visits to the Vancouver Aquarium, Buntzen Lake in Coquitlam, Buffet lunches, Sunshine Coast, Coquitlam Watershed and Harrison Hot Springs. All our trips were very successful and overbooked.

## Comings & Goings

We say goodbye to our outgoing Board Member Stan Johnson.

We welcome former Board Member Li Lung who returned to serve us again.

We are sad to see Bo Har Cheng (Cook) leave us due to health reasons. Our outreach worker Virginia Jones was unable to return after her sick leave.

NHP and DSNHOP had a restructuring this year. Clemencia Gomez, our outreach worker in

DSNHOP was assigned the duty of Outreach Program Co-ordinator to oversee the operation of our 2 outreach projects. We have hired new outreach staff: Michelle Burton in DSNHOP, Tammie Tupechka and Marshall Henry in NHP.

## Profile: Mr. Robert Waltz



Robert Waltz, an 82 year old writer has been a member of the Downtown Eastside Seniors Centre for 9 years. Chicago born in 1920, Robert lived in Europe and the Middle East for 20 years and has been published in several languages in France, Holland, Germany and America. One of his early novels will soon emerge on the theatre screens, produced by a Canadian film company.

His books are fiction stories closely related to his life experience with people he was involved with, flavoured with the futile sense of immortality that humans believe they are entitled to.

He was a tank driver in World War II, a sailor (once shipwrecked in Juan de Fuca strait) and now writes full time when not at the Centre playing pool and chess.

“The ethnic diversity and friendship with other seniors” he declares, “knowing other caring seniors whose long lives have contributed to acceptance among varied philosophies is a calming influence in our tumultuous modern world. The Downtown Eastside Seniors Centre is an oasis of calmness that I will always treasure.”

**NHP & DSNHOP** was selected by the *SMART Funds Program of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority as one of the best "Promising Practices" for community - based programs for seniors in the Lower Mainland.*



### **NHP's new initiatives**

To help seniors cope with government cutbacks to various social programs such as homecare, home visits and meals program, staff and volunteers have implemented new food programs which include:

- , **Community soup** Once a month, volunteers from the Keefer, the Dobson and the Empress Hotels make soup for 80 individuals on a hot plate in their own rooms. Sometimes we get in-kind donations from local grocery stores and the food bank but the bulk of the expense lies with us. We also encourage residents to contribute to the soup by bringing something to add to the pot.
- , **Community kitchen** Partnering with the Community Kitchen Program of the Downtown Eastside, our volunteers and staff help organize individuals in the hotels to get together regularly to learn how to cook. These individuals would share food after each cooking session. We host the community kitchens at the Abbott Mansions once per month and at the Antoinette Lodge twice per month.
- , **The "Food 2 U" program** This pilot project is our new partnership with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Food Bank. Its aim is to deliver food to the impoverished home-bound on Vancouver's East Side. We provide a volunteer to deliver the food once a week and provide the recipients with information and referrals for services.

By participating in these programs, residents of the hotels are adopting better eating habits and increase their social connections as well as their sense of community.

### **DSNHOP active in the community**

It has been a difficult year for seniors in Vancouver's Downtown South. This traditional low-income neighbourhood is under significant pressure from the new Yaletown development. With a looming 2010 Olympics, high land values and frenzied property speculation, the Downtown South is changing dramatically. Low income restaurants, convenience stores and low-cost bars are being replaced by upscale shops and services that long-term tenants cannot afford and do not feel welcome to enter. Several single room occupancy hotels have been demolished or converted to tourist use this year and several more are currently threatening to do the same. Many seniors have and will lose not only their homes, but also their neighbours, their friends and their community.

Due to the dramatic gentrification that has taken place, working in the Downtown South to bring low-income seniors out of isolation has been a challenge. Many seniors who are long-time tenants are facing the possibility of eviction and many others feel that they are no longer welcome in their community. DSNHOP has been active in our neighbourhood, providing a means for seniors to talk together and providing the resources to assist residents in taking action. When necessary, we have also been active in helping seniors make the transition to new housing and continue to provide the regular support, outreach and food security programs that we have done for the past eight years.



**Christmas is coming, can you help?**  
We will be hosting our Christmas Day brunch at our centre

#### **Thanks to our 2003 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.*



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to celebrate Christmas with our seniors. We do not charge for this event and 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 2004.***

*Wheelchair Accessible Facilities* 