

February 2010

Up Front-



Susan King

“An age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.”

Dr. Alexandre Kalache, WHO

Parking spots for seniors, grit bags, a footwear report card, checklists for businesses, falls prevention placemats for community dinners, walkabouts to identify falls hazards, information kits for municipal officials, posters and brochures, partnerships and collaborations with pharmacies, district health authorities, housing authorities, boy scouts, adult day programs, and community health boards were just a few of the initiatives discussed at the Preventing Falls Together for Age Friendly Communities provincial conference. On October 29 & 30 in Truro more than 90 seniors, health care professionals, and community organization staff and volunteers came together to network, share and learn about community initiatives for an ageing population.

By the end of the conference I concluded that initiatives to reduce falls are still relevant and necessary. Using the population health approach and the social determinants of health to target falls prevention from multiple directions is effective in both rural and urban settings. This was proven by the evidence stated in the presentations and the stories told by delegates.

led to many “aha moments”. The impact was immediate as the delegates and Community

We learned from Julian Young, of the NS Department of Health Promotion and Protection, that Nova Scotia had the highest death rate from falls in Canada according to the research report *The Economic Burden of Injury in Canada* by SmartRisk, which used 2004 data. This reflects falls in all age groups, but one can conclude that there is a need to continue to focus on preventing falls and fall-related injuries by older adults.

A panel presented an overview of the age-friendly initiative of the World Health organization, the direction Nova Scotia is taking under the leadership of the Dept. of Seniors, and local initiatives in Truro. It was wonderful to listen to the Preventing Falls Together Regional Coalition members make connections between this international undertaking and their activities in communities across Nova Scotia. In November 2009 a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Dept. of Seniors and the Union of NS Municipalities formalizing a commitment to age friendly communities was signed. This is a great stride toward communities that are better for all. Preventing Falls Together Coalitions and Community Links will continue to be part of the process to make our communities more age friendly.

The speakers were thought provoking. The group discussions on ageism, stereotypes of seniors, medications, assistive devices, and product and building design were lively and

Links’ staff began to apply this knowledge by

examining projects in development from this new perspective.

As Provincial Coordinator of the Preventing Falls Together program, my favourite part of the conference was the second day when the falls prevention projects developed and implemented by the PFT Regional Coalitions were presented. There were so many projects and community initiatives underway that all agreed we would have enjoyed additional time to hear even more. The variety and originality of the approaches to falls prevention were staggering. It became very clear during the sharing and networking session that many of the Regional Coalitions' activities share the common thread of leading to more age friendly communities.

It takes the collaboration of many community partners to successfully address issues as broad as falls prevention and age friendly communities. The conference provided us the rare opportunity to have so many of these people from across the province come together. The Preventing Falls Together team is fortunate to have such dedicated and skilled members and partners willing to together take on this challenge and make our communities safer for all.

Susan King joined the staff of Community Links in 2005 and has been Provincial PFT Program Coordinator since 2007. Susan also enjoys her role as the Coalition Development and Support staff for Eastern Nova Scotia.

People's Schools — Supporting Seniors and their Communities

In February 2008 Community Links began an initiative to engage seniors in issues that affect them as identified in the provincial government's *Strategy for Positive Aging*. We held a People's School at Debert which attracted over 80 seniors from around the province to two days of information on seniors concerns, workshops, networking and fun. This event was followed the next winter by two Mini People's Schools in Shelburne and in Kingston where another 90 participants came together .

On November 20th, 2009 a third Mini People's School was held in Tatamagouche with Community Links working in partnership with the North Shore Area Community Health Board. The local planning committee chose the *Transportation* and the *Supportive Communities* goals from the *Strategy* on which to focus. Despite the

H1N1 threat over 40 seniors turned out for the event at the Tatamagouche Centre on a beautiful late fall day. David Stevenson, Chair of the North Shore and Area Community Health Board chaired the day. Participants learned about provincial and local efforts around transportation and supportive communities, enjoyed displays of local services, learned about leadership and public policy engagement, networked and shared information, enjoyed great food and the music of local entertainer Lloyd Tattrie and his band, and participated in a Tai Chi demonstration.

By the end of the day a committee had been formed to explore getting a transportation service for the North Shore. In addition, everyone went away with a personal commitment to do something as a result of what had been learned.

Community Links is currently planning another Mini People's School for Louisdale in Cape Breton for sometime in April.

What makes your community age friendly?



We asked our members.

The World Health Organization defines an age friendly community as a community where *the physical and social environments support and enable people of all ages to live in a secure environment, enjoy good health, and continue to participate fully in society.* (NS Department of Seniors presentation).

This is certainly an ideal to reach for, but in the meantime, we decided to ask some of our members around the province what is age friendly about their communities, or “how does your community support seniors?” What we found is that it is often seniors themselves who are taking the lead on creating age friendly communities. Here are some of their answers.



Hope Bridgewater, Wentworth Pioneers, Wentworth. *Member, Cumberland County Preventing Falls Together Coalition*

“I think our community is very supportive of seniors. The Recreation Centre is a great spot. The last Sunday of the month we have old time music (Don Messer type) and seniors dance the afternoon away. It’s the older people who volunteer in this community, because those are the people who are here. But volunteer fatigue factors in as well. It is nice to have outside expertise and help. For example, through the Pugwash and Area Community Healthy Board and Preventing Falls Together, we are able to offer Tai Chi instruction for six weeks here in Wentworth.

“There is a lot of ageism out there, especially in the media. Demographics rule marketing and it is as if older people don’t exist and if they do, they are a problem.”

Joe Van Buskirk, Stellarton.

Member, Pictou County Preventing Falls Together Coalition

We have a seniors’ club and a nice park that is accessible. The

programming for seniors seems to happen mainly through the efforts of seniors and not because of our municipal and institutional leaders.” Recently a street by street fall potential report was prepared and delivered to our town council. The Mayor was very appreciative and I think Town Council has listened to our concerns.



Elizabeth Henri, Louisdale

We are a small community and the local Fleur de Lis Seniors’ Club brings local seniors together. Our club executive is trying to

encourage the idea that there is more to a seniors club than just bingo and cards, and to perhaps get speakers in to talk about issues of concern to seniors. The Arichat Co-op installed senior parking, but our local Co-op could be more age-friendly. The churches and Lions Club are more accessible - they have installed wheelchair ramps.



Emerson Jessome Mill Creek, Little Bras D’Or

The Bras D’Or Pensioners and Seniors do a lot to keep seniors active in the community. There is

something going on every day of the week. Local businesses like Eyking Farms and the retailers and banks in North Sydney and Sydney Mines are very supportive of seniors. Recently seniors protested the fact that the bus stop is too far away from the entrance to the Sydney Walmart, so seniors can’t access the store easily. We haven’t gotten anywhere with this yet, but we did get a promise from the mayor of CBRM that new businesses will have to have a plan for better bus access.

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.

Martin Luther

Evelyn Crowell, Baccaro

The Green Hill Seniors Club recently got a Wii machine, which is really enjoyed by the seniors. Clubs in Barrington like the Lions Club are supportive, and the Shelburne County Recreation Department arranges bus tours and other events. In a small community like ours, there are not many services for seniors.

Judith and Bill Poole, Scots Bay

In a small community like ours (about 200) we try to look after each other. The Scots Bay and Canning seniors groups have organized lunch and learn sessions with the help of the Canning Pharmasave—they've been very supportive. We help with snow clearing, arrange drives and get help promoting these things from Pat Martin at the Kings Register, another supportive business in the broader community. Recently we have started a storytelling group and sold all 100 copies of our first printed book. Now we are starting on another one.

Margo Zwicker, Mill Village, Queens

County I organize a seniors activity group with over 60 members that draws seniors in from all over South Queens. We organize a variety of events, and the seniors really look forward to it, as do I because I'm one of them! Frankly, there isn't much else going on that supports seniors. Our local bowling alley in Liverpool does cater to seniors, which is a plus. There are still a lot of bingo games going on, but they are losing numbers too.



Carol Welch, Westport, Briar Island

The churches in our community are very supportive of seniors.

They visit seniors in their homes and provide transportation to those who need it. Our local library is another support, encouraging everyone to use their resources and offering computer instruction.



Alma Johnston, Humber Park/Cherry Brook

Well, we have good public transit bus service. The driver will even make stops between regular stops for seniors. I get mail delivery to my door every day, rain or shine, which is appreciated. The snow ploughing service in our community is also very good. However, there are no benches or shelters at the bus stops, and walking is dangerous, because there are no sidewalks, and the shoulders of the road are narrow. People in the community know each other and help each other out. When I go away, I know my neighbours will watch my house for me



Ester Baker-Duggan, Guysborough Member, Guysborough County Preventing Falls Together Coalition

We have such a small community—about 80 people and most are in their 70's and 80's! It is the people in their late 50's and early 60's who are giving informal support to seniors. There aren't any senior clubs in the area—the last one folded several years ago. There are some younger families in the surrounding areas. We need to integrate more young people into our groups and come up with some new ideas for the community.

Note: Guysborough was one of the communities featured in the Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide. See the report on-line at

www.gov.ns.ca/seniors/agefriendlyComm.asp

Mark the Date!



June 04, 2010 Community Links AGM

Featuring Sage Age Theatre –Canada's First Seniors' Improvisational Theatre Group



Love The Second Time Round

As the song goes: “Love is wonderful the second time around – just as wonderful with both feet on the ground.” Finding love and companionship, at any age, can be exciting, physically rejuvenating and great for one’s mental health. It is also true, however, that for older adults entering the world of dating, much will have changed from when they were young. Many seniors who find themselves alone due to divorce or the death of a spouse may be exploring on-line dating sites in their search for companionship. Some are beginning new sexual relationships after long term monogamous relationships. Others are contemplating moving in together so expenses and much more can be shared.

There are a few things to remember when embarking on a new relationship.

1. On-line dating can be a great way to connect with potential partners, but no one should get involved with this without researching the service to be used and setting up some clear guidelines around sharing of information and processes to follow before setting up an in-person meeting. There are a number of sites which offer safety tips for on-line dating.
2. Sexually transmitted diseases aren’t just a concern for the young. Protection is a necessity at any age. Get the information you need from your doctor or check the health information at www.seniors.gc.ca
3. Moving in together may have legal ramifications which you might not have considered. Look for good legal advice from

your lawyer or from the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia at www.legalinfo.org

Love can be wonderful at any age, but even if our head is in the clouds we should still keep “both feet on the ground”.

ACLE – Supporting small and rural charities

Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador in collaboration with its Nova Scotia partner, Community Links, offered the Atlantic Charities Learning Exchange (ACLE) Mentor Training Session in Stellarton, NS, on Monday, Feb 15. Personnel from registered charities throughout Nova Scotia were trained on how to accurately complete the Canada Revenue Agency’s T3010B. This “Train the Trainer” clinic was open to all those who wish to learn more about the T3010B and share that information with members of other local charities.

Staff and volunteers from churches, fire departments, museums, family resource centers and improvement societies were helped by trainer Diane Paquet, who facilitated the information and learning session. Similar sessions were also held in St John’s, Moncton, and Charlottetown. They are being offered through the ACLE project. For more information, go to www.atlanticcharities.ca Funding for the project is provided by the Canada Revenue Agency. The project’s overall objective is to recruit mentors in the charitable sector - persons or organizations willing to assist their peers (other charities) with annual reporting to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and provide them with the tools and resources required to mentor.



Preventing Falls Together

for age friendly communities

In October, 2009, Preventing Falls Together held a very successful two day conference in Truro. Following are some of the highlights.

Setting the Stage



Julian Young (at left) provided opening remarks about the role of Falls Prevention in the province's Injury

Prevention Strategy. Heather Praught from the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection moderated a panel discussion which included Pamela Fancey from Mount Saint Vincent University Centre on Aging, Jacqueline Campbell from the Department of Seniors, and Sharon Byers from the Town of Truro/Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities. Discussion centered around the recent World Health Organization research into what makes a community age friendly, from both the global and the local perspective, and how this concept may be played out in Nova Scotia.

The Presentations:

Barriers in the Accessible Landscape

Cynthia Street illustrated some of the considerations in accessible design for homes and public buildings. She explained how some well-meaning efforts have set up a new set of barriers, and also pointed out good examples of accessible design.

Age Friendly by Design: the Impact of Image. Glen Hougan discussed how many of the makeshift and unattractive products designed for seniors come from some of our stereotyped assumptions about what it

means to be old in our society. Letting go of these stereotypes can result in products that are attractive, functional and easy for seniors or anyone to use.

Overcoming Assistive Device Stigma

Wendy Lee Hamilton introduced the *Mobility: Now You're Going Places* Project, which uses humour and peer education to overcome seniors reluctance to use devices like canes, walkers, scooters, grab bars, and hip protectors. The program creates a warm friendly atmosphere where seniors can discuss their fears and difficulties regarding the use of mobility aids, and reinforces the idea that the use of such aids is a key to maintaining independence.

Medication and Falls Prevention - Susan Beresford spoke passionately about the role that pharmacists play in the community, and went on to describe some of the key elements of the Nova Scotia Seniors Medication Review.

Physical Activity Plenary

Demonstrations of the Home Support Exercise

Program (HSEP) by Sheila Rafferty and Tai Chi by Kathy Putnam got everyone on their feet. Fran Dunn from Heart and Stroke explained the benefits of the *Walkabout* program.



Falls Prevention in Nova Scotia

Suzanne Baker, Falls Prevention Coordinator, Department of Health Promotion and Protection/South Shore Health gave an overview of what is happening in falls prevention around the province, and focused on the role of the District Health Authorities in this process.



Harry Bentham (shown here with Wendy Lee Hamilton, Coalition member and Conference presenter)

Coalition Sharing



Coalition members Dawna Bell and Dawn Thomas enjoyed the Holiday Inn Truro's salt water pool.

Coalition members enjoyed an informal reception and dinner with musical entertainment by Harry Bentham. The following morning provided time for Coalitions to share their projects, network, and exchange ideas.

The last session of the conference sent participants away pondering the results of what kinds of birds make up our coalitions. There were lots of peacocks and doves, a few eagles, and only one owl!

This entertaining team building exercise was led by Carol Davis-Jamieson from the Department of Health Promotion and Protection.

Please note: The PowerPoint presentations used in the conference workshops can be viewed on our website at www.preventingfallstogether.ca



Carla Malay- one of the two peacocks on staff.

Recipe For Falls Prevention

Be aware - Take care
Never give safety a day off.
Your good health is your greatest wealth
If you are aware of it take care of it.
Safety awareness saves lives
Safety – a good friend to take home.
Be aware of slips & trips.
A spill, a slip, a hospital trip.

KISS – Keep it Safe & Sound
Safety is the light – Let it shine.
Lifting is a breeze when you bend at the knees.
The door to safety swings on hinges of common sense.
Wipe-up and avoid a slip -up.
Accidents hurt- safety doesn't.
Slip, trip and fall are four-letter words.
Check your shoes and don't let your day slip away.

Don't learn safety by accident.
Get a grip –to prevent a slip, use hand rails.
The price of an accident is always high.
Stretch and flex for your health & safety.
Pencils have erasers- mishaps don't.
If you think safety is a pain, try a fracture.

Home Safe – not just for baseball.
Make sure stairways are well lit.
Make sure handrails are installed and sturdy.
Keep one hand free so that you can hold the handrail.
Clean spills of food, water or other liquids right away.
When walkways freeze – walk safely please.

Preventing Falls Together – Keep these great tips in mind and your good health and safety will shine

*Barb Dewtie
Senior Safety Coordinator,
Pictou County Municipalities Crime Prevention
Member of Pictou County PFT Coalition*



Coalition Member Profile: Shelley Dyer

Q. *How did you get involved with Queens County Preventing Falls Together Coalition?*

A. I saw the Coalition booth at a trade show, and thought it would be an excellent fit for me. As a Pharmacy Technician and Home Health Care Practitioner for Reynolds PharmaChoice in Liverpool, I deal with falls prevention issues every day. Something as simple as advising a senior to attach a metal ice pick to his cane in this icy weather can be enough to prevent a fall. As a pharmacy technician, I am also very aware of how medication side effects such as dizziness can increase the chance of a fall. My pharmacy participates in the Senior Medication Review Program, which can identify and hopefully correct some of these problems in cooperation with the senior and the physician.

Q. *What have you and your Coalition been up to lately?*

A. Our latest project was the “Don’t Fall for Christmas” poster that we displayed throughout the county. This poster listed many items readily available to assist in decreasing falls at home and in our community. Some of us were able to attend the PFT Conference in October last year, and really enjoyed it. I was fully supported by my employer to attend. Every six weeks, I do a column called *Health Notes* for our local newspaper, the *Advance*, and I often include information on falls prevention. Our pharmacy partners with the municipality on a program called *Advice For Life*, where we promote active lifestyles and increased physical activity. Many of the participants

are over 55. Being part of the Queens Preventing Falls Together Coalition enhances the work I already do in community, and the Coalition gets great staff support from Carla Malay– Carla is awesome!

Q. *Are there other issues that you see in your work that relate to falls?*

A. Recently I was somewhat surprised to see an order for hip protectors come from a group home for young people with disabilities. It just serves to remind us that age friendly can mean any age, and falls don’t just affect seniors! My contact with seniors gives me the unique opportunity to help them stay safely in their homes by recommending solutions that fit their home situation.

Q. *Is there anything else you would like to comment on?*

A. I think all Coalitions should have pharmacy representatives because our role in falls prevention in the community is so strong. I encourage all pharmacies to find a local coalition and join in the fun.

Shelley Dyer lives in Jordan Falls, Shelburne County, and has worked with Reynolds PharmaChoice for 5 years. Shelley joined the Queens County PFT Coalition in 2008. She can be contacted at:

homehealthcare@jmreynoldspharmacy.ca



Pets: A Joy – and a potential falls hazard



The unconditional love and affection that pets offer can provide companionship for seniors who live alone, or have recently lost a loved one. Pets can also make seniors feel

less vulnerable, providing them with an increased sense of security.

A study in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* and several other studies have shown that seniors who own pets are more physically active than those who do not own pets, and even a little bit of exercise can improve overall health. Feeding and taking care of a pet also can help seniors stay more alert and allow them to keep track of their own routines as well.

An Australian study has shown that senior pet owners have lower blood pressure, triglycerides and cholesterol than non pet owners! A follow-up study with heart attack patients by doctors at Brooklyn College, New York shows that pets increase survival rates after a heart attack. Another study has shown that seniors who own pets have a 21% reduction in doctor visits.

But don't rush to the nearest pet store or animal shelter! Pets can be a potential falling hazard both inside and outside the home. Following are some tips courtesy of *WECARE News* on how to reduce the risk of falling when you own a pet.

- For pets that can get underfoot, putting a bell around their neck is a

good way to know when they are in close proximity. If you have a cat that goes outdoors, a bell will also help our bird population!

- Keep control of your pet when you have guests, especially older friends or family whose balance might be impaired.
- When visiting friends with pets, be prepared when you enter the home. A large friendly dog could knock you over. Even a small dog or cat rushing by can upset your balance.
- Walk your pooch in a familiar area with level terrain.
- When walking a larger dog use two hands and spread them out, with one holding the end of the leash and the other a couple of feet below to increase stability.
- Keep food and water bowls out of the area where you might trip on them or cause spills.

For more information and research on the benefits of pet ownership for seniors, as well as tips on what to look for when adopting a pet, contact www.petsfortheelderly.org

Joggers Beware!

A new study has found that middle-aged men and women who engage in lots of high impact exercise, like running and jumping, may be causing damage to their knees and putting themselves at greater risk of developing osteoarthritis. The study was the work of Christoph Stehling and colleagues, and was presented at the 95th Scientific Assembly and Annual Meeting of the Radiological Society of North America.



Carrot Soup

Here's a warm and nutritious winter recipe for root vegetables – either store bought or from the root cellar! (From the Martha Stewart show on US National Carrot Day)

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 pounds carrots, preferably with stems, peeled and sliced 1/2-inch thick on the bias
- 1/4 cup diced onion
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh ginger
- Pinch of sugar
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 parsnips, peeled and sliced crosswise into 1/2-inch rounds
- 1 teaspoon white-wine vinegar
- 2 cups homemade or store-bought low-sodium chicken broth
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, thinly sliced

1. In a medium-size saucepan with a lid, melt butter over medium heat. Reserve 1/2 cup carrots and add remaining carrots to saucepan along with onion, garlic, ginger, sugar, 2 teaspoons salt, and a pinch of pepper; stir to combine. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until carrots are soft, 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in another medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Add reserved 1/2 cup carrots, parsnips, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until they begin to color slightly, about 2 minutes. Cover and cook until tender, about 5 minutes more.
3. Increase heat to medium-high and add vinegar, stirring to coat; cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and divide vegetable mixture evenly between 4 soup bowls.
4. Add chicken broth and milk to carrot and onion mixture; season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil and working in batches, transfer to the jar of a blender (do not fill more than halfway); loosely cover and carefully puree until very smooth and frothy. Pour soup over vegetables in soup bowls and garnish with parsley. Serve immediately.



On the lighter side:

Some not so famous quotations-by “Author Unknown”.

“It's always darkest before the dawn. So if you're going to steal your neighbor's newspaper, that's the time to do it.”

“I plan on living forever. So far, so good.”

“Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes.”

“I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.”



Notes and Notices

The Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection (Volunteerism and the Voluntary Sector) and local community partners invite you to attend:

Local Gatherings for Volunteers and Non-Profits

Volunteers, staff and Board members of organizations will have the opportunity to network, share successes, and discuss opportunities and challenges with a view to strengthening the volunteer sector. Plan to attend one of the following:

Halifax: March 4th

St. Andrews Community Centre

Bridgewater: March 6th

Bridgewater High school

Amherst: March 11th

Amherst Fire Hall

New Glasgow March 30th

NSCC, Stellarton Campus

Windsor: March 31st

Kingsway Gardens Retirement Residence

Municipality of Clare April 10th

Université de St. Anne

Truro April 14th

Nova Scotia Agricultural College

Kentville May 4th

NSCC, Kingstec Campus

Gatherings will also in Port Hawskebury and Antigonish Place and Date TBA

To register or for more information on a Local Gathering, visit:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteerism/>

The **2010 Programs for Positive Aging** (formerly Programs for Seniors) is now available from the Department of Seniors online at www.gov.ns.ca/seniors, or call 1-800-670-0065

Recreation Nova Scotia is seeking nominations for the 36th Annual Provincial Volunteers Award Ceremony

For more information and to obtain nomination forms go to www.recreationns.ns.ca/voluneerawards or contact Michelle at Recreation Nova Scotia at 902-425-1128. Nominations must be submitted to Recreation Nova Scotia on or before March 4th.

The Nova Scotia Department of Seniors Presents

The Silver Economy Summit

May 13-14, 2010

World Trade & Convention Centre
Halifax, Nova Scotia

For information, email

silvereconomysummit@gov.ns.ca

or

call: **902-424-4649** or (Toll Free in Nova Scotia) **1-800-670-0065**

The Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR)

holds its conference May 30 to June 1, 2010 in St. John's NL. Co-hosted by The Newfoundland and Labrador Administrators of Volunteer Resources. For info contact Lisa Pike: lpike@chpna.ca

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