



OCTOBER 2012



Upfront

Anna Wartacz

Executive Director

As summer has turned to golden autumn 2012, I would like to formally thank

everyone for welcoming me so warmly to this highly innovative and successful organization, which for the past 20 years has demonstrated an undisputed commitment and accomplishment in the area of working with seniors in Nova Scotia. Summer has been a busy time of transition for Community Links, as our organization wished a sincere farewell to the past Executive Director, Sandra Murphy and collectively grieved the very sudden and heartbreaking loss of the past President of the Board of Directors, Terry Smith. Such transitions could not have been successful without having a good organizational plan in place.

Planning is important not only for organizations, but also at the larger community and social scale. According to the World Health Organization, making cities age-friendly is one of the most effective local policy and planning approaches for responding to the ageing demographic. At Community Links, our organizational plans are closely guided by the age-friendly framework and the Nova Scotia Strategy for Positive Aging, as we continue to centre our actions on the health and well-being of our seniors. This includes supporting and leading valuable projects, as well as advocacy in areas conducive to creating age-friendly physical and social environments.

The Community Links newsletter has been one of the main and very effective means of communicating with our members, stakeholders, supporters and the community of Nova Scotia seniors at large. We will continue to cherish this method of staying in touch and welcome all input or suggestions as to the topics you may like to read about in the future.

As we make plans for the future and as we look forward to celebrating Ageing Well Week from November 18-24, I would like to pose a few questions for reflection:

- What does ageing well mean to you?
- How do you envision your future self?
- Are there changes we can all make now to have the best life later?
- What actions can Community Links undertake to enhance our collective ability to cultivate and further the already existing and thriving Ageing Well Together culture in Nova Scotia?

I welcome your direct personal contact to dialogue around these questions and to all the seniors who have worked hard to build this country and continue to contribute to its success. Being new to working in the community, I also appreciate your ongoing support expressed in the many e-mails, personal calls and sharing of the many helpful links to engaging literature, resources and tools. I very much look forward to working with each and every one of you and the many highly engaged stakeholders in the province of Nova Scotia and beyond!

Seniors Making a Difference in our Communities: Some Inspiring Stories

If you look around you at many community organizations, meetings and events in Nova Scotia, you will see many greying heads. Those in the 55 plus age range are often the people who hold the fabric of our communities together. In the next two pages, we celebrate a sampling of these remarkable seniors.



Nellie Bruton calls Westville, NS, home. After 40 years of working and raising a family of six children in Ontario, she is enjoying the peace and quiet of rural Pictou County. She is happy to live in a

community that allows her to be actively engaged in the activities she chooses.

Some days, you can find Nellie at the local seniors group, Westville Heritage. It may be at a regular meeting or taking part in a scheduled activity. She took her turn as a president of the Pictou County Seniors Council. During that time she advocated on behalf of seniors in the county, to help them live better quality of lives.

Nellie is in her third year as president of the Westville Heritage group. She feels the club has grown significantly over the last five years. Membership now stands at 80 and has hosted sessions to deal with chronic disease, mental well being, and falls prevention. It is also a great place to come if you just want to chat, enjoy a social outing and have a cup of tea.

Nellie has been a trainer with Your Way to Wellness, helping people manage chronic health conditions. She was also instrumental in getting Alateen started in Pictou.

She strongly believes that rural communities and towns need more affordable housing options, conveniently located, for our ageing

demographic. People who have worked all their lives, have small pensions and are trying to remain independent are the group that are really struggling, says Nellie. She wishes community groups shared a similar vision of what needs to be done and could work on it together, rather than dividing and conquering, and not really finding lasting solutions.

While in Ontario, after 22 years of working with computers and technology, Nellie retired, went back to school and took a certification program as a health care worker. She worked in that occupation for five years before retiring again. Nellie says she always wanted to be a nurse but left school early and headed down the road. She has no regrets. According to Nellie, everything happens for a reason, but at the same time, you have to get involved and create the life you want to the best of your ability.

Congratulations to all those associated in any way with Community Links during its first 20 years – job well-done – NS is a better province for your interest and work – many thanks!



Muriel Goguen retired after 50 years in nursing. After leaving hospital nursing, she spent a number of years as a Community Nurse with Bear River First Nations. “The First Nations

people taught me so much about tolerance and nature.” says Muriel.

Muriel loved her job and says she would go back to work tomorrow, but would she have time, with all her volunteer work? She is an active member of the Digby and Area Ageing Well Together Coalition, as well as the RCMP Senior Safety Program. She just finished a 4-year stint on the VON Board, and also volunteers with the Hospital Auxiliary in addition to her involvement on the Community Health Board.

Recently, the Ageing Well Together Coalition and Senior Safety group are helping Transport de Clare expand their community based transportation, encouraging the use of affordable and accessible transportation in smaller communities in the county.

Dawn Thomas, Digby and Area Senior Safety Coordinator describes Muriel best: " Her caring nature and boundless enthusiasm sets an example for anyone going through difficult times. She can always find a silver lining even though her skies are sometimes grey".



Emerson Jessome

is a tall man with a big smile and a firm handshake. He started his working life on the Great Lakes as a sailor, then moved back to his native North Sydney to pursue a career in carpentry.

Emerson's interest in building led him to eventually own his own business. He retired in 2001 and started his next career of full time volunteer.

Emerson is currently the Chair of the Cape Breton Council of Seniors and Pensioners, Community Links Board member and past Chair of the Bras d'Or Seniors Club. When asked why he volunteers, Emerson replied: "It's been my experience that people can start to age very quickly once they retire but if you stay involved in your community and in life in general it keeps your mind active and gives you a reason to get up in the morning. Everyone needs to feel like they have a purpose, otherwise, you just get old. Another thing I really like about volunteering is you get to see new places, meet new and diverse people and you are always learning something new."

Emerson believes that volunteering is good for the community. "All the seniors clubs run on volunteers. If there were no volunteers, there would be no clubs. Without them, there would be a lot of isolated seniors." "There will

always be people who give and people who take. From what I've seen in my life the people who give are always so much happier than the people who take." Emerson is a happy man!

Edgar and Alice Fiske, Ed Murley and Monica Grant

have been building community. They form the executive of the Eastwood Tenants Association, a volunteer group of seniors that plans and organizes programs and services for those who live at Eastwood Manor, a 100+ unit high-rise in central Dartmouth managed by Metro Regional Housing Authority. Edgar Fiske uses his considerable experience in the culinary field to enhance many of the social events at Eastwood. Monica Grant brings her financial and business skills to bear on finding ways to fund some their many events and programs. One of the events the seniors at Eastwood enjoy is the outreach to the daycare next door, where at Christmas and other holidays they provide nutritious treats and intergenerational activities.

In the true spirit of community development, the Tenants Association asks seniors in the building what they want before embarking on a new plan. A twice per week exercise program, a craft group, cribbage nights and coffee break Fridays, bingo, barbecues and kitchen ceildihis featuring Eastwood Singers are part of the regular fare. The tenants' group is proud to be able to offer a canteen open each day for tenants and a newly equipped exercise room.

As in any community, there are "the sour apples in the barrel," those who try to find fault with one thing or another. However, Edgar feels that it is important not to get discouraged. Without a tenants' committee's like the one at Eastwood, very little would be available, since there is little to no provision for programming for seniors who live in these subsidized buildings. He feels that the secret to their success is sticking with it, working as a team and showing the tenants that we "mean business."

Pets-Making a difference in our Lives

In recent studies researchers have found that older people who own pets visit doctors less often than those without four-legged friends. Pets have been shown to build self-esteem, increase mental alertness, and lift the spirits of people with Alzheimer's disease. They have even been shown to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels!

Anyone who has owned a beloved pet knows how much animals have to offer. When their needs are understood and met, pets can provide a warm and fulfilling companionship:

- Make sure you have the right pet in the right situation – no German shepherds in small apartments! A large dog can be hard for an older person to handle. Dachshunds, poodles, and some terrier breeds have particularly good pet personalities.
- Most dogs need regular exercise. If the senior is unable to walk the dog, what other arrangements can be made?
- Cats can live indoors all the time and can be excellent and relatively undemanding companions. They keep themselves clean, but their litter box needs to be changed regularly.
- Puppies and kittens can be a lot of work. Older animals with proven personalities may be the best choice. Many older animals are waiting for a good home. Contact your local animal shelter.



Pet Therapy

With the many benefits of pets in mind, the **St John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program** is

designed to bring the experience of a loving canine companion to those who cannot own or care for their own dog. Volunteers and their dogs go into hospitals, seniors' residences or nursing homes on a weekly basis. Through petting, affection, and regular visitation, many people benefit both physically and emotionally from the unconditional love of a dog.

To volunteer in the program, or to ask for a therapy dog visit, contact:

www.sjatherapydog.ca or call Jaime Walker toll free at (800) 565-5056 ext. 2302

Did you know that the Nova Scotia SPCA:

- Has a program to foster your pet when you are away or in hospital.
- Has a no kill policy.
- Has declared October Animal Cruelty Awareness Month! Visit www.spcans.ca, Or call 1-888-703-7722 (toll-free).

As lovable as they are, pets can also be the cause of a fall. Please note:

- For pets that can get underfoot, putting a bell around their neck is a good way to know when they are in close proximity.
- Keep control of your pet when you have guests, especially older friends or family whose balance might be impaired.
- Walk your pooch in a familiar area with level terrain.
- Keep food and water bowls out of the area where you might trip on them or cause spills.



Home Sweet Home

Many seniors prefer to live in their own homes, but the costs involved in home heating, repairs or making the home accessible can be beyond the means of some low income seniors. With the cold weather approaching, it may be a good time to review some of the programs available to help make staying in your home affordable and comfortable. Please note: many of these programs are income-based.

Efficiency Nova Scotia offers free upgrades (insulating, lighting, sealing up drafts, etc.) to homeowners on a low income. A service provider manages all aspects of the project for you, making it easy for you to participate. Participants are also eligible for other free energy efficient and cost saving installations, including CFL light bulbs, tank wrap for electric hot water heaters and pipe insulation.

Another program allows you to retire your old refrigerator and get \$35.00. EfficiencyNS will have the old fridge hauled away for free.

If you have electric heat, EfficiencyNS has partnered with the Royal Bank to offer no interest loans to switch to another fuel source.

Visit www.energycyns.ca or call toll free **1-877-999-6035** for more information

Senior Citizens Assistance Program provides assistance to senior citizens (people at least 65 years of age) who wish to remain in their own homes but who cannot afford to carry out necessary repairs. Funding is provided by the Province of Nova Scotia. Eligible repairs must represent a threat to health or safety. Repairs to roofing, plumbing and heating are examples

The Home Adaptation for Seniors Independence program can provide grants to adapt your home to allow you to live independently. Installing grab bars, walk-in showers, lever handles on doors or rails on stairs are examples

To find out more about the two programs above, contact the Housing Services Office of the Department of Community Services nearest you. They are listed below.

<p>Cape Breton Region Sydney: 563-2120 Toll-free: 1-800-567-2135</p>	<p>Central Region New Glasgow: 755-5065 Toll-free: 1-800 -933-2101 Truro: 893-5999 Toll-free: 1-866-525-5454 Amherst: 667-1161</p>
<p>Metro Region Halifax: 424-5110 Toll-free: 1-800-774-5130</p>	<p>Western Region Middleton: 825-3481 Toll-free: 1-800-564-3483 Bridgewater: 543-7336 Toll free: 1-800-278-2144</p>

The Property Tax Rebate Program assists senior citizens who are in receipt of the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), by providing a rebate of a portion of the municipal property taxes paid for the previous year. You must apply by Dec. 31st,

The Home Heating Assistance Rebate Program allows a small rebate on home heating costs for low and modest income homeowners. Applications will be available soon and can be submitted until March 31, 2013.

For more information about either of the above provincial programs, contact Service Nova Scotia toll free 1-800-670-4357. Or visit the Access Nova Scotia website

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/access/default.asp>



Age is no Barrier to Success!

Complete the crossword below, send it to Community Links, and be eligible to win a prize!

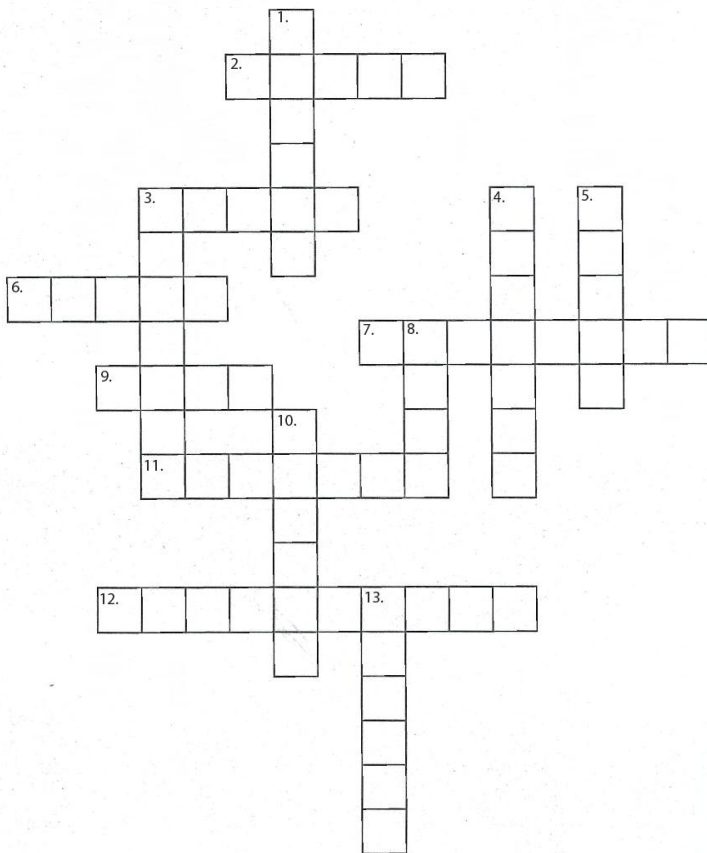
Famous Seniors and their Accomplishments

Across

2. Ran the Toronto marathon at age 100.
3. Received her last artist's commission at age 99.
6. Won an Academy Award at age 80.
7. Was president of Ireland at age 91.
9. Received a patent for his work on a hydrofoil boat at 75.
11. Formed the International Woman Suffrage Alliance in her 80's.
12. Ran a hospital in Africa at age 89.

Down

1. Published first novel, "Little House in the Big Woods" at age 64.
3. Elected president of South Africa at age 75.
4. Was producing drawing and engravings at age 90.
5. Published his first Thesaurus at age 73.
8. She founded the Christian Science Monitor at age 86.
10. Was head of a fashion design firm at age 85.
13. Nova Scotian who was elected Prime Minister at age 74



Keeping Fit After 50

According to Health Canada, 60% of older adults are inactive. And yet numerous studies have shown that maintaining physical fitness is a key factor in maintaining a good quality of life and independence as we age. Health Canada's **Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults** suggests that we should think of three areas of fitness:

1. **Endurance**-Continuous activities that make you feel warm and breathe deeply, increase your energy, and improve your heart, lungs and circulatory system.

Examples: walking, swimming, cycling, line dancing, Nordic walking

2. **Flexibility:** Gentle reaching, bending and stretching that keep your muscles relaxed and joints mobile.

Examples: Simple stretching routines, yoga, aqua fitness, tai chi,

3. **Strength and Balance:** Activities which improve balance and posture, keep muscles and bones strong, and prevent bone loss

Examples: tai chi, yoga, weight training, aqua fitness

Other tips

- Start slowly
- Listen to your body
- Every step counts
- You can spread exercise out into sessions of 10 minutes several times per day



Notes and Notices

Year of Ageing Well Photo Contest

Community Links would like to thank all those who submitted many wonderful photos for the contest. Winners will be announced soon, and the Calendar is slated to be ready for Ageing Well Week November 18-24.

For more information, please visit our website at www.nscommunitylinks.ca or telephone 902-422-0914 or toll free 1-855-253-9355.

Community Links Presents: Ageing Well Together Population Health in Action A One Day Conference Friday, November 16, 2012

Holiday Inn, Truro

Registration Deadline: Oct 26, 2012

FREE Registration

Lunch \$10

For more information, or to register, visit

www.nscommunitylinks.ca

Or contact: 902-422-0914

Toll Free 1-855-253-9355

admin@nscommunitylinks.ca



The Nova Scotia SPCA has launched its second annual **Pet**

Photo Calendar sales campaign to help raise much needed funds to support animal welfare and cruelty investigations across Nova Scotia. Calendars are \$15 and feature favourite pet photo entries submitted as part of a pet photo contest held earlier this summer. Visit www.spcans.ca, to download an order form or call the office 1-888-703-7722 (toll-free). Calendars are also available at some pet retailers and vet clinics.



211 Service is coming to Nova Scotia!

Starting in
February 2013,

Nova Scotians will be able to access free, confidential help for themselves and their families 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

If you have any questions or require additional information on the 211 service, please feel free to contact info@ns.211.ca or by phone 1-902-466-5720. You may also wish to visit the website at www.ns.211.ca.

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