



Welcome!



Renee Lormé-Gulbrandsen
Executive Director

Welcome to our first edition of The Willow Tree – the Oak Bay Volunteer Services' healthy living and healthy aging newsletter! We have prepared interesting articles and relevant resources to share with our client community on living well in our beautiful Oak Bay. You will receive a copy twice a year with updates on our services and programs, highlights on great community events, as well as, tips and resources to support your independent living. I would like to thank the Hamber Foundation for their generous contribution to the development of The Willow Tree. I hope you enjoy this inaugural edition!

Four Tips for Healthy Aging

By Melinda Mann, Outreach and Services Coordinator

Populations around the world are getting older. In fact, by 2031 almost 1 in 4 people in BC will be over 65 years old. That's over 1.3 million people! Seniors make important contributions to their families, communities and the economy. Older adults who stay healthy, active and independent can continue to contribute their skills, knowledge and experience to society. Here are four easy tips for healthy aging:

Tips for Healthy Aging:

1. You are what you eat!

Make sure to eat a healthy diet full of fruits and veggies and drink plenty of water. I think we can all agree that this is easier said than done. We all know that eating well is best for our bodies but it can also be confusing, especially since the Canada Food Guide has been updated and the tradi-

tional four food groups that we are used to following no longer exist. The Guide now suggests choosing plant-based protein sources such as beans and nuts rather than always choosing animal based proteins such as meat and dairy. In addition to these new guidelines many people have specific restrictions in terms of what they can and cannot eat. If you have questions regarding your nutrition and diet you can order a free printed copy of the Healthy Eating for Seniors Handbook or speak directly to a Dietician by calling 8-1-1.

2. Get active and socialize!

Joining a social activity such as a weekly bridge game or knitting group is a great way to meet new people who share your interests.

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Getting Around

BC Transit handyDart

P: (250) 727-7811
Shared transportation service for people with temporary or permanent disabilities - Registration required.

Taxi Savers

P: (250) 995-5618
Taxi Saver vouchers are available to registered handyDart riders and provide 50% subsidy towards the cost of taxi rides.

Active Living

Monterey Recreation Centre

P: (250) 370-7300
Membership fee is \$46 a year for Adults 50+. Non-members are eligible to register for courses.

Silver Threads Service

P: (250) 388-4268
Annual membership fee is \$55. Non-members are welcome to register for programs.

Pharmacy Discounts

Fort Royal Pharmacy

2217 Oak Bay Avenue
P: (250) 590-9217
Seniors 65+ save 20% off purchases, Monday to Saturday.

Oak Bay Pharmasave

2200 Oak Bay Avenue
P: (250) 598-3380
Seniors save 15% off first Wednesday of every month.



Client Profile

Allison Holt

by Bronwyn Taylor, Volunteer and Board Director

Allison Holt has been a long time poet, writing her first poems growing up in Balfour, British Columbia, but it was only in 2015 that she published her first anthology. Aptly titled "Heard from our Tent", the collection is a compilation of memories from home, including nights spent in a tent with her sister, staying awake, to hear the natural beauty around them.

As a client with Oak Bay Volunteer Services since 2015, Allison is provided with on-going computer support. We began our conversation by Allison saying how very, very grateful she was for volunteers who give their all, for nothing in return. She was referring to the patient and tech savvy, Stan. Not many seniors in their 90's want to stay connected to the world through technology, so Allison is an example of a Renaissance woman.

"While helping me with my computer, Stan discovered a poem I had written," said Allison. "He encouraged me to publish a book of my poetry; his wife found a small publishing company in Eastern Canada that had a special deal about to expire, so with their support, 30 copies were printed for me to give away." Ten volumes were sent to a museum in Nelson, more were given away, and two remain with Allison in Victoria. In fact, there may be another edit and a second book published in the not too distant future.

Allison's love of music has also played an important part in her writing life. As a child she learned to play the piano and sang. In high school a teacher said she "spoke in a way of making a poem", which was evidenced in our conversation and confirmed when she read me a poem about 2 birds calling and answering each other, written years ago on a camping trip. About 10 years ago Allison was further encouraged to write by her singing teacher. It gave her the confidence she needed to proceed and produce more poems.

Apart from Allison's creative pursuits, she had a full working life: working in her father's country store as a teen, enrolling in nursing school ("the worst possible choice I could have made"), and attending Sprott-Shaw to learn office skills which lead to employment with BC Telecommunications for many years in Victoria, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and finally back to Victoria.

Belief in the four Christian Absolutes has guided Allison through out her life: honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. She dreaded being single, but realized that was God's plan for her, "which turned out to be the best thing for me." Today, Allison is thankful these tenets continue to influence not only her poetry but her passion for living life to the fullest.



Four Tips for Healthy Aging
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Another fun and active way to make new friends is to take a yoga class or join a walking group. Participating in these types of social and physical activities is wonderful for your physical and mental well-being! The Monterey Recreation Centre and Silver Threads Services are both excellent local resources that offer a variety of options depending on what you are looking for.

3. Just add music!

Music provides a total brain workout. Along with reducing anxiety, blood pressure, and pain, listening to music can improve sleep quality, mental alertness, mood, memory and overall health and well-being. Scientists are still studying why music has such positive effects on a person's brain, but they agree that the benefits are crucial

4. Use your noggin!

It is important to keep your brain active by participating in activities such

as learning new things, doing puzzles, even watching Wheel of Fortune or Jeopardy (my faves!). Grab the crossword puzzle from the newspaper or play scrabble with a friend. All of these activities can help to stimulate your mind and keep your brain active and healthy!

The bottom line is that regardless of your age there are a variety of things you can do to remain healthy and living independently. Eating well, connecting with others and staying active are some of the easiest and most important things that you can do for yourself. There are numerous options available for you to access right here in Oak Bay! If you would like support connecting with healthy aging resources, please don't hesitate to contact me for more information.

OBVS CLIENT SERVICES

- Drives to medical appointments
- Home visits
- Walks in the community
- Social and reassurance phone calls
- Income tax return preparation
- Home support: gardening, minor household repairs, computer support

OUTREACH AND SERVICES COORDINATOR



Melinda Mann

Melinda is in the OBVS office :
Monday to Thursday,
9:00am – 4:00pm.

Ph: (250) 940-3433

MELINDA'S REMINDERS

1. Please try to call in your drive request 4-5 business days in advance of your appointment. This provides the best opportunity for us to be able to find you a driver.
2. Please contact the office if you are in need of assistance with a small repair around your home such as a burnt out lightbulb.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Summer Sunshine:
New Members Meet & Greet**
August 21st, 6:30pm

Monterey Recreation Centre

The Monterey Recreation Activity Association invites new and prospective members to an inter-active evening with complimentary refreshments and an opportunity to learn more about the programs offered at the Centre. FREE

**Oak Bay
Summer Night Market**
September 11th, 4pm – 8pm

Oak Bay Village

Come out for the last Night Market of the summer and enjoy a stroll along the avenue with live music, tasty treats, and an array of vendors, selling everything from home-made fudge to fresh produce.

Christmas Festival Light Up
November 24th, 2pm – 5pm

Oak Bay Village

Welcome the holiday season in Oak Bay Village with the annual Light Up. The event features lighted trucks, street food, pop up theatre Christmas stories, and a special visit from Santa Claus. Don't miss out on this merry tradition!



Hop Aboard! The OBVS Seniors Shopping Bus

In 2018, OBVS began the Hop Aboard Seniors Shopping Bus, giving seniors living independently an opportunity to enjoy a walk, purchase much-needed items for independent living and connect with other seniors living on their own.

Delivered in partnership with the Baptist Housing Society, participants are transported to a local shopping centre by bus, and while accompanied by an OBVS volunteer, can purchase goods, run errands such as banking, or merely window shop with someone who can provide a supportive arm and a listening ear.

After an hour of shopping, participants and volunteers meet for an hour of fellowship over light refreshments. This beloved program is enjoyed by clients and volunteers alike.

Residents interested in participating in the Hop Aboard Program can **contact the OBVS office at (250) 595-1034** for more information.

How Will You Be Remembered? Leave a Legacy to OBVS

There are many reasons why people choose to leave a gift in their will to a charitable organization:

- Wanting to leave a lasting impact in the community you love
- Interest in reducing taxes on your estate
- Opportunity to make a big difference in the lives of neighbours-in-need
- Desire to thank an organization that assisted you or a loved one in a time of need

For as many reasons as there are for leaving a gift, there are just as many ways to leave a gift. Learn more about Gifting OBVS in Your Will by contacting us at (250) 595-1034 or legacygiving@oakbayvolunteers.org.

Meet Your OBVS Team



Left to Right: Executive Director, Renee Lormé-Gulbrandsen; Outreach and Services Coordinator, Melinda Mann; Volunteer Coordinator, Ruth Platts; and Administrative Assistant, Amy Penner



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