

# Peer Advocate Newsletter

Seniors Resource Centre of NL



## Happy Holidays!

Hello everyone,

It is hard to believe that another year has almost passed and Christmas is fast approaching. I hope that you all have a joyful and peaceful holiday season with family and friends. I also wish you much happiness and good health in the New Year!

The New Year is often a time of change and new challenges. For me personally, 2011 will be a time of great change. I will be leaving my position as Peer Advocate Manager at the end of December. I feel I am ready for a new challenge and I have decided to go back to university to study social work. This has not been an easy decision for me to make. Working at the Seniors Resource Centre for the last eight years has been an absolutely amazing experience for me. I have learned so much and met so many wonderful, inspiring people along the way. It has truly been a pleasure working with the Peer Advocates. You never cease to amaze me with all the valuable work you do. From providing information and support to starting up programs for seniors, you so generously give of your time to make your community and your province a better place for seniors. And you do all of this with such kindness and compassion. Each Peer Advocate brings their own unique life experience and wonderful personality to their role. So, thank you for sharing your wisdom, experience, and delightful personalities with seniors throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Words cannot express how much I appreciate all of the kindness you have shown me over the years. You have welcomed me into your communities and inspired me with your generosity and warmth. I have so many wonderful memories of my times spent with you. I consider myself blessed to have had the opportunity to work with you all.

Sincerely,  
Jill

**December 2010**

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## New Peer Advocates

I am very pleased to announce that we have had several new volunteers join the Peer Advocate Program in this past year. On March 6<sup>th</sup>, a group of seniors from Bell Island completed the Peer Advocate Information Sharing Sessions to learn about the common challenges facing seniors and the programs and services that are available to help. The Peer Advocate group in Grand Falls-Windsor recruited some new volunteers and they completed the Information Sharing Sessions on April 12<sup>th</sup>. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, a new group of Peer Advocates formed in Spaniard's Bay. Many of these volunteers are involved with the Seniors Resource Centre's Satellite Office in Spaniard's Bay. Finally, the Peer Advocate group in Bonavista recruited some new members and they completed the

Information Sharing Sessions on Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>. On behalf of the Seniors Resource Centre, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of these new volunteers to the Peer Advocate network.



Peer Advocates in Bonavista

## Age Well, Live Better—Volunteer!

The Community Sector Council (CSC) has been partnering with the Peer Advocates in Burin and Bonavista on a project called “Age Well, Live Better—Volunteer!”. This project is funded by a provincial wellness grant and its main goal is to motivate more seniors to volunteer.

As you all know, there are many benefits to volunteering. Volunteering provides seniors with opportunities to meet new friends, learn new things, develop new skills, and make meaningful contributions in their community. There are also many physical and mental health benefits. Research shows that people who volunteer more than 100 hours per year may see the following benefits:

- Increased sense of self-worth and accomplishment
- Life satisfaction

- Reduced blood pressure
- Enhanced immune system function
- Less incidence of heart disease
- Lower rates of depression and anxiety
- Decreased insomnia
- Speedier recovery from surgery
- Increased longevity

This project is raising awareness about these benefits of volunteering and then connecting seniors with community organizations that need volunteers. There was a forum for older adults and community organizations on Nov. 15 in Marystown and one in Bonavista on Dec. 6. As a result of these meetings, several seniors have signed up to volunteer with many different organizations, including the Peer Advocate Program. We hope that all of these new volunteers will have very rewarding experiences.

## Regional Networking Meetings

I am very pleased to announce that the Peer Advocate Program has received funding from the New Horizons Program to offer regional networking meetings. Peer Advocates from each group will be invited to attend a two-day meeting in their region. We are hoping that we will have at least two representatives from each group.

These meetings will include presentations from the CNIB, the Newfoundland and

Labrador Dental Hygienists Association, the Office of the Citizen's Representative, as well as presentations on a variety of other topics. These meetings will also offer opportunities for Peer Advocates to network with other Peer Advocates and find out what is happening in other communities.

More information about these meetings will be sent to you in the new year.

## News from Charlottetown, Labrador

The Peer Advocate group in Charlottetown has had a very busy, successful year. They received funding for two different projects: "Health Matters" and "Seniors Living Out Loud". With the "Health Matters" project, they are offering bi-weekly socials which include education on different health topics and a variety of social activities. "Seniors Living Out Loud" involves youth working with seniors on a drama project. The youth have been visiting seniors in their homes to collect stories from years ago and they are going to write a play based on these stories. They will perform the play in several communities in Labrador.

The Charlottetown group also recently took

advantage of the Hydro funding to offer a Health and Safety Day in their community. I was delighted to be able to attend on Nov. 3. They started the morning with a lovely brunch and a chance to socialize. Then I did a presentation on exercise and demonstrated some strength training exercises that they can do using exercise bands. After a healthy lunch, they had a presentation on arthritis. The day was considered to be a success and afterwards the group decided to start an exercise program for seniors. They received funding from Hydro's Community Action Fund to buy the exercise bands for their group. A special thank you to Hydro for all of their financial support!



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Newfoundland and Labrador

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## Smoke Free Guide

It is never too late to quit smoking. Quitting at any age has health benefits. When you quit the healing begins. Do you know anyone who wants to reduce or quit smoking? They only have to be thinking about it. Find out how to support an older adult in their efforts to live smoke free.

Included with this newsletter is a guide on "How to Plan a Smoke Free Information Session". This guide was developed at the end of the Seniors Resource Centre's "Smoke Free—It is Never Too Late" project. This guide includes key Smoke Free messages and will help you know what to say to people who want to reduce or quit smoking. There are also tips for planning a Smoke Free Information Session in your community and a list of available resources. If your group is interested in organizing an information session and you would like some assistance just call the Seniors Resource Centre at 1-800-563-5599.

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## Caregivers Out of Isolation

The NL Caregivers Out of Isolation Program is a program for unpaid caregivers who provide care for a family member or friend. This is a program of the Seniors Resource Centre but it provides support for caregivers of all ages from teenagers to seniors who are supporting a spouse, partner, parent, adult child, relative or friend.

The Caregiver Program offers: a toll free information and referral line, emotional support, "Caring Solutions" – a quarterly newsletter, and caregiver networks and support groups around the province.

All Peer Advocates are encouraged to let caregivers know about the Caregiver Program, especially the Caregiver Line. All referrals are much appreciated. Also, if anyone is interested in starting a caregiver network or support group in your area please let us know. Contact Paula toll free at 1-888-571-2273 or 726-2370.



*Caregivers  
Out of Isolation*

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