

Peer Advocate Newsletter

Seniors Resource Centre of NL

Welcome, Peer Advocates from Labrador!

It is with great pleasure that we announce that the Peer Advocate Program has been introduced to Labrador. In November, Jill Barron and myself traveled to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and then to Charlottetown, where we met with groups who were interested in having information sharing sessions about aging issues.

On November 17, Patti Fleming hosted us at the Labrador Friendship Centre where we met and presented to a group of 14 seniors. This is a very active group who brought a sense of the close knit, vibrant community they live in, as well as the lack of resources there or near to their town. All parties left better informed about the challenges to seniors and hopefully, ways to work together to advocate on their behalf.



Happy-Valley, Goose Bay



Charlottetown

The next day Jill and I flew to Blanc Sablon and drove the highway to Charlottetown, where we met with Ardena, Wanda and Annie, who became Peer Advocates. This is a younger, dynamic group who work with seniors in their town; they had a fabulous experience last year with one project in which seniors and youth shared skills and experiences, and they are already exploring ways to continue building on this foundation.

Glenda Cabot

March 2010

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Dorothy Whittick Award Winner

Congratulations to Ruth Sanders of Grand Falls-Windsor, the 2009 winner of the Dorothy Whittick Award. Every year the Seniors Resource Centre of NL gives out this award to a volunteer who has set a high standard for volunteerism and who shows overall dedication to the Centre. Ruth is a truly deserving recipient; involved with the Peer Advocate Program since 1998, she has worked on several provincial projects of the Seniors Resource Centre including diabetes prevention, falls prevention, healthy aging, and elder abuse awareness.

Ruth demonstrates an understanding of the values of the Seniors Resource Centre – respectful relationships, choice, collaboration and lifelong learning. As a Peer Advocate, she offers information to seniors in her community and also helps

start new programs for seniors. For example, in the past she helped organize a diabetes prevention session and then went on to work with the 50+ Club to organize an exercise program and T'ai Chi Chih program. Recently, she worked with other Peer Advocates to start the "Vial of Life" program – a program that helps emergency personnel get important medical information about a senior in an emergency situation.

Ruth has always been there to lend a helping hand and has recruited new Peer Advocates both in her own and in neighbouring communities. She so selflessly gives of her time and is a wonderful role model for all volunteers. The Seniors Resource Centre would not be able to exist without such devoted volunteers. Thanks so much, Ruth!

NL Hydro Supports Programming for Seniors

The newly formed Peer Advocates in Charlottetown, Labrador, wishes to extend a big thank you to NL Hydro for blessing us with the recent grant of \$250.00. This grant is making a difference in the lives of seniors in Charlottetown by providing board games, crafts and healthy snack items. Seniors meet on a bi-weekly basis at the Community Hall for tea time and to share many laughs and fun games and activities. Before the Peer Advocate program, seniors in this little village had little opportunity to meet and socialize. Recently, the Town of Charlottetown stepped up to generously

provide a free space to host the socials, helping to alleviate isolation, loneliness and boredom. The support of the Town of Charlottetown and NL Hydro have enriched the lives of seniors in our community.

As James M. Barrie once said, "Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others, cannot keep it from themselves." Many bouquets of sunshine to you Town of Charlottetown and NL Hydro!

Ardena Cadwell, Peer Advocate

Home Support Changes

In December 2009, new guidelines were put in place regarding the home support financial assessment process. Persons with a family income at or below \$13,000 per year for a single person and \$21,000 per year for a couple will NOT be required to contribute to home support. Income above that amount will be assessed using a formula that will see those with lower incomes pay less. For example, a person

with a monthly income of \$1,169 would have had to pay \$295 for home support before the changes but now would have to pay only \$15. A couple who has an income of \$2,155 per month would have had to pay \$1077 before December 9, but \$124 after that date.

For more information, please contact your local Health and Community Services office.

Drive Wise

The Seniors Resource Centre hosted a DRIVE WISE session on February 18, 2010. The purpose of this program is to share driving tips and strategies with seniors. It was delivered by Constable Kevin Foley of the RNC and sponsored by NL Hydro.

Over 30 people attended and it was very well received. One woman commented, "I am over 50 years old. I got my driving license when I was 17 and have had no driving

instruction since. This was excellent." The session covered topics like car maintenance, seat belt and mirror use, and a host of others. Did you know, for example, that to be a safe distance from the car ahead, you should have to count 3 seconds to catch up to it?

For any groups interested in organizing information sessions, safe driving may be a good topic to consider. Contact Jill or Glenda at 1-800-563-5599 for more information.

Peer Advocates Open Drop In Centre in Bonavista

The Peer Advocates in Bonavista received funding from the Hydro Community Action Fund to rent office space in the Federal Building. They are using this space as a drop-in centre for seniors. Seniors can drop by to obtain information, meet other seniors, play cards, have refreshments or just enjoy a friendly visit. The group is also looking for funding to develop new programs for seniors in the community. In partnership with the Town of Bonavista and several other non-profit groups, they are hoping to have regular classes to contribute to better physical and mental health and

prolonged independence. They also want to start new recreational activities such as walking programs, tours, card games, etc. and hope to provide transportation to and from programs for seniors who need it.

All Peer Advocate groups can apply for funding of up to \$250 from the Hydro Community Action Fund for an activity that promotes or supports the health and safety of seniors. Call Jill or Glenda at 1-800-563-5599 to discuss your ideas and get an application form.



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Newfoundland and Labrador

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Activities in Trepassey

Last year the Trepassey Peer Advocate group received funding from the Community Action Fund to start a "Community Singing Kitchen". This has proven to be a very popular program and is still going strong over a year later. They get together in groups of five to prepare a meal and then they serve it to seniors in the community. They get up to one hundred seniors come out to their dinners and they also deliver meals to the seniors' complex. In addition to the Community Kitchen, the Peer Advocates and the Trepassey 50+ Club are busy with a wide variety of programs that promote the health and safety of seniors. Please see page 12 of this month's Seniors Pride newsletter to read about their many other activities.

New Horizons Funding

The New Horizons for Seniors Program has recently announced that the Call for Proposals for their Community Participation and Leadership funding has begun and will run from March 1 – April 16, 2010. Grants of up to \$25,000 are available for community-based projects that encourage seniors to play an important role in their communities. There are a number of community sessions being held throughout the province to have discussions about the program, its priorities and the application overall. A number of communities have had this session and plans are underway to hold ones in St. Anthony,

Bonavista, Harbour Breton, Holyrood, Clarenville and Labrador.

Tom Hawco (709-772-2134) and Joanne MacDonald (709-772-4617) are the contacts for the New Horizons for Seniors Program in Newfoundland & Labrador. They can also be reached through the toll free telephone number at 1-800-277-9914. If you call the toll-free number just advise the agent you wish to speak to a representative of the New Horizons for Seniors Program for Newfoundland and Labrador. For more information or to get an application, you can also refer to the website at (www.hrsdc.gc.ca).
