

# Celebrating Healthy Active Lives



**ALCOA Members – Making a Difference for Older Adults**



# Active Living Coalition for Older Adults **UPDATE**



## A Note from the Executive Director

### **Welcoming in New Ideas**

As our age demographics shift over the next 5 – 10 years, those of us providing services for older adults have a tremendous opportunity that has never been realized before. By the year 2016, those over the age of 65 will outnumber children under the age of 14; a phenomenon that has never happened before. Here is a great opportunity for new programming ideas and hopefully ALCOA can help.

Cancer is primarily a disease of older adults, and because of that, ALCOA has just recently published several documents on the benefits of physical activity for older adult cancer survivors and patients. Here is an opportunity to make cancer survivors feel welcomed and invited to participate in a program at your centre.

In our "Seniors Notes" we have a letter written by Patricia Beurteaux, a woman of 66, who has recently moved to a retirement community. Her thoughts on the programs that are offered in that retirement community are definitely worth reading. Are your programs really age appropriate? Another letter was sent in by Jock Pichette. He has a wonderful inspirational story, and shares his ideas for "Creative Walking". Some great ideas to think about.

The City of Richmond developed a very successful program to reduce barriers and increase wellness of the isolated and frail seniors. A new publication from Human Kinetics will get you thinking about leisure programming for baby boomers. Refresher driving courses, such as 55 ALIVE, is another opportunity available to seniors that you may want to consider. Lots of ideas!

Age friendly and age appropriate programming is definitely an opportunity that is knocking at your door. I hope that the articles in this issue of *Celebrating Healthy Active Lives* will give you some ideas and inspiration to open the doors and welcome in new ideas and new members of all ages.

Happy planning!

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# Wellness Connections

## *The City of Richmond*

has taken an important step in enhancing its recreation services – developing for the first time a program to reach out to isolated and frail seniors.

The aim of the *Decreasing Barriers, Increasing Wellness Project* was to reintroduce disengaged seniors to healthy, physically active lifestyles and provide an opportunity to be reconnected with their community.

The pilot program started with a grant from the Union of BC Municipalities, and was offset by drawing from existing recreational services and community resources. Because of this, the pilot program was free to participants. Initially, information about the innovative program was spread by marketing through partner agencies, by word of mouth, and other avenues.

Forty-two seniors ranging from 60 to 95 years old took part in the pilot, which lasted several months. Most of the participants had at least two chronic disease conditions. They received transportation to and from their homes, one-on-one leisure counselling, nutritious meals and a community centre membership. As a group, they participated in activities in a positive and supportive environment designed to empower them to improve their own quality of life. Fitness classes, fall-prevention sessions, a nutrition presentation, computer workshops and trips to Terra Nova Park were part of the agenda and helped the seniors develop new skills and confidence.

When the pilot project was over, a celebration was held for participants from all sessions, to share their experiences and be congratulated for their efforts. Each participant was given a complimentary registration in the recreation program of their choice to help them continue with their physically active and engaged lifestyle. It

was also an opportunity to share the results of the program with community partners, and celebrate the power of positive collaboration.



Seniors who took part in the project said they enjoyed making friends, learning new things and getting active. It made such an impact on them that 80 per cent of the participants said they intended to register for a recreation program afterward. Agencies in the community praised the initiative as a valuable resource to refer to their clients. For city staff and volunteers, the program was an opportunity to make new connections with the community and other agencies, and to think about new possibilities for working together. In the end, the project was a means for the city to further its vision of Active & Healthy

Living for all through inclusiveness and collaboration. Through its *Decreasing Barriers, Increasing Wellness Project*, the City of Richmond has created for itself a new tool to ensure everyone in the community has a high quality of life throughout their entire life.

Two exciting developments have taken place since the pilot project wrapped up. Recently, the BC Recreation and Parks Association has presented Richmond with the 2009 Provincial Program Excellence Award for the project. Secondly, the program has received funding through Vancouver Coastal Health, and will continue to connect with frail and isolated seniors in Richmond under the new banner *Wellness Connections*.

If you would like more information on this program, please contact Carolyn Brandly via email at [cbrandly@richmond.ca](mailto:cbrandly@richmond.ca) or by phone at 604-718-8460.

**Carolyn Brandly**  
**Seniors Wellness Coordinator**  
**City of Richmond**

## A Success Story by Creative Walking

By Jock Pichette



*I was 66 years old when I ran away from home!*

My head was about to explode

from major stress. It was May 8, 2006 when I met my doctor and informed him that my head was swelling and hurting big time. At the time I was taking two high blood pressure pills per day, sleeping pills every now and then, plus averaging 16 Tylenols per month. Our meetings for the past 1½ years were always about my head! On his desk he had my latest blood test, and something new popped-up. My sugar was above 8 for the first time in my life with type-2 Diabetes in the works. The diabetes part blew my mind.

He did not waste any time with me – he suggested I do something about my problem at home, forget the Tylenols, because my problem was stress! He went on to say create an exercise program and to adjust my diet. Last, he informed me to make an appointment with his secretary for early July 2006.

A few day's later I was in Ottawa and over a period of seven weeks, my life took on a new meaning to caring for myself. Being away from my friends with pure peace and tranquility, the streets of Ottawa became my friend. The Rideau

Canal is awesome, Sparks's Street, museums, question period in the commons, the market, and huge shopping areas attracted my attention and long walks. I credit Ottawa for my weight reduction program.

Fast forward two months to July 2006, and my doctor had my recent blood test on his desk. He looked at me and was flabbergasted with the results. My weight went from 183 down to 164 lbs. Blood pressure was in great shape, so he reduced my pills to one pill per day. No more sleeping pills and only a few Tylenols during my seven weeks. My greatest relief came when he informed me that my sugar level was down with no sign of type-2 Diabetes.



Source: Ottawa Tourism

His advice was for me to continue my program. It goes without saying that I danced all the way back to Ottawa.

So I wrote about my turn around on my blog "Yahoo360" and produced 8 videos for "U-Tube".

I returned to Montreal and using my creative juices developed a program which can be adopted by most seniors.

- \* Purchased a good pair of walking shoes. Comfort is important.
- \* Purchased a decent scale, and weighed myself each Saturday morning prior to eating food.
- \* Bought a good book on Calories & Carbohydrates. Keeping a record of what I consumed was important in order to make changes in my eating habits. I used my computer for all my records.
- \* Bought a walking belt to keep my water bottle, keys, some change, and all necessary identification cards. Water is important

**Advice** – Walking can be boring but once you read all my creative ideas, you will see that it doesn't have to be.

With my doctor's approval to increasing my exercising – the street became my friend, and 'squaring a block' was my method that grew into fun ideas. In order to win my battle I walked every day, but I could have achieved the same results walking every second day.

Each morning I would walk over to the newsstand, and pick up my paper. Returned home, prepared a cereal type breakfast and enjoyed an hour or so of reading plus doing the daily crossword puzzle and planning my day.

I also walked to pick up my groceries, and as a bonus walked to the theater.

After my seven weeks, I could perform a brisk walk, and if I wanted, a power walk. I was happy with a longer walk at a decent pace.

I also knew that if I had a choice between fat (weakness) compared to muscle (strength), I'll take the firm body. My chances of sickness was reduced, my ability to be active was higher, and my bounce in my gait encouraging. Less one blood pressure pill, no sleeping pills, and major reduction in Tylenol pills is proof of how you can reduce chemicals from entering your body.

As time passed, I kept adding tracks to my walks. Example, when I left my front door my direction

depended on the wind. I always wanted the wind at my back upon return, especially during the colder months. When I returned home, I would write down interesting items about track one, and with each new track. I learned about new restaurants, short cuts, sales, boutiques, and my neighbourhood.



## My Creative Ideas

In cold months and rainy days I found indoor shopping malls.

I purchased a pedometer and with this idea I brought my mind into play. It gave me information on distance, steps, and calories.

I bought a Cd/MP3 player, and listened to music during my walks. At one point I was learning Spanish.

I brought along my digital camera, and took interesting photos of unusual scenes along my walk.

**My best Idea** –The transit system, (if you have one). I'd take it to a distance that would equal my walking time, and walk home. I saw so much more, in so many different locations.

**In Conclusion** – I was hurting when I started this program, but so much to live for! In a matter of day's I realized that my life experiences was my biggest asset and motivational skills a plus. Since 2006, I'm a different man and I would like to thank many of my friends for being there when I needed them.



*I have just finished* reading your report on ageism\* which is very interesting and provides a kind of proof for all those incidents of ageism that we have all experienced, and do experience, everyday.

Women of my age - 66 - who were brought up in traditional environments seldom had an opportunity to participate in sports, except in school during Phys Ed, when all we got to do in my small high school was incredibly boring and appeared to have as the goal the conditioning of a body that would be appealing enough to `catch' a husband. I hated Phys Ed but I am, and always have been, an energetic soul. So that puts me off fitness centres (and the lycra crowd).

So to get us up and active, might mean having a look at the activities generally offered and determining, not why we don't participate, but what would attract us to participate.

## Programs to Attract Older Adults

**By Patricia Beurteaux**

Here's an interesting example. I recently moved to a town that is being promoted for 'retirement living'. As you would know, the 'economic engine' for this community's survival is the exploitation of seniors. There are activities by the dozens at the major seniors' centre here, if you like 'geriatric-style'. I am not going to be dressing in peculiar costumes any time soon so that I can clog or square dance (and I have no partner). Classes in yoga etc. are lead by unqualified volunteers and, although I have practiced hatha yoga for years, the pace of the class was so fast that I actually hurt my back — unheard of.

The municipal fitness centre is within the pool complex. The pool is heavily chlorinated — so much so that I can't use the complex at all (Multiple Chemical Sensitivities - but that's another issue), nor can many others because of health issues such as asthma. (I was appointed to the Parks and Rec Committee recently so I'm suggesting strongly the new pool use salt.)

The point I am making is that activities for seniors are often uninteresting, ageist in design and run on a shoestring. Is there a middle ground between childish activities and major sports activities? (I like to play to play — not to win.) I have had an active, interesting and highly successful professional life. I was busy raising my family as well. I have never been physically unfit or overweight before. I am now — after a year. It is so common that everyone sees it as normal! If this is the result of living in a retirement community, then perhaps that's the last place one should be. So that's an interesting area to look at - are retirement communities good for one's physical and mental health?

ALCOA has an interesting website. It's on my bookmarks bar.

\**Overcoming Ageism in Active Living*, written for ALCOA by Sandy O'Brien Cousins, (2005) is available from the ALCOA office or on line at: [http://www.alcoa.ca/e/pdf/overcoming\\_ageism.pdf](http://www.alcoa.ca/e/pdf/overcoming_ageism.pdf)



# DRIVING SAFELY AS WE AGE

**THE** *National Blueprint for Injury Prevention in Older Drivers* was recently released by the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. In the “Background and Statement of Concern, it states, “Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the driving population and driving is often a key component of independence. Current statistics indicate that older driver mortality and morbidity is on the rise, and thus, older driver safety is of great concern. While it has long been believed that the older driver is actually the safest and most cautious driver on the road, statistical analyses of collision data from the past decade reveals otherwise. The leading cause of accidental deaths for persons 65 to 75 years of age in Canada today, is driving-related accidents. Those over the age of 75 have a 3.5 times higher crash rate per miles driven compared to 35 to 44 year olds. Given that by the year 2040 there will be almost double the number of older drivers in Canada, this problem is likely to increase in the coming years if strategic actions are not put in place.”<sup>1</sup>

The main cause of problems is directly linked to physical changes that occur in all older persons. As people age, their pupils allow in about half as much light as those of people 20–30 years of age. So the ability to see in low light conditions is reduced. Most seniors admit that they avoid night driving when they can. Along with normal age-related vision and hearing changes, arthritis or rheumatism can slow reaction times and is a common problem faced by older drivers.

One strategic action that can be taken is to promote to your members, the 55 Alive Driver Improvement Course. It is a course for mature drivers aged 55 and older and is designed to help mature drivers renew their driving skills and cope with today’s traffic. It is a program sponsored by the Canada Safety Council. The 55 ALIVE refresher course teaches seniors how to adjust their driving skills and compensate for these changes.

Although many auto insurance companies in the United States offer discounts to those who hold the 55 ALIVE certificate, most Canadian insurance companies are still unaware of this program. Older adults should call their agent and ask whether they offer discounts. Agents are usually more than willing to submit your request to their head office.

55 ALIVE courses are taught in a range of settings such as senior centres and churches. Individuals interested in taking the 55 ALIVE course should contact the Canada Safety Council either by email [csc@safety-council.org](mailto:csc@safety-council.org) or by telephone 613-739-1535 ext. 0, or call Susan Fow in southern Ontario at 519.942.1768.

For more information visit:

[www.safety-council.org](http://www.safety-council.org).

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[www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/driver55.pdf](http://www.aaafoundation.org/pdf/driver55.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2009) *National Blueprint for Injury Prevention in Older Drivers*

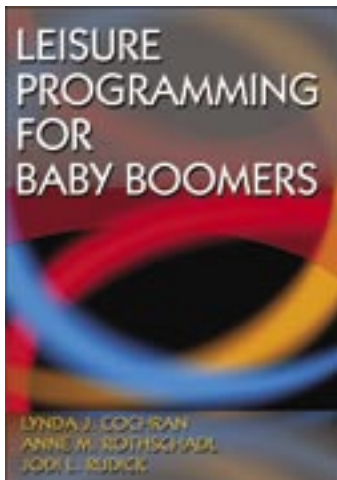
## Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers

*The baby boomers*—those born between 1946 and 1964—are a generation that consists of nearly 76 million Americans. Beginning in 2011, this large and influential population will begin their transition out of the workforce. As baby boomers enter retirement, they will be looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, arts and cultural events, and other activities that suit their vibrant lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, baby boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults.

Though many researchers have forecast the boomers' impact on the future, only *Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers* addresses key information that recreation and leisure professionals need in order to make program decisions with baby boomers in mind. The authors combine their research, programming, and marketing expertise to provide insights into the values and lifestyle choices of boomers and offer programming and marketing strategies to reach this large and influential population.

*Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers* will help you move beyond the traditional offerings of bingo, art classes, and social dances to capture the attention and imagination of your baby boomer community. This comprehensive guide offers these features:

- An in-depth review of current research to help you understand the values, interests, and needs of the boomer generation
- Guidance in adopting a "boomer lens" so you can more easily recognize the opportunities in working with this group and create and market programs that appeal to the values of this unique generation
- The Cochran Baby Boomer Quiz, a tool that can be used not only in assessing the programming preferences of the boomers in your community, but also in testing your staff's knowledge of boomers and preparing them to work more effectively with this group
- Strategies, guidelines, and ready-to-use ideas for boomer-specific programming in arts and culture, outdoor recreation, education, wellness, and tourism



- Marketing templates and strategies that will attract boomers and keep them coming to your programs

With *Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers*, you'll discover what distinguishes the baby boomer generation from previous generations in regard to their demographic makeup, gender differences, cultural influences, brand loyalty, consumer behavior, and spending patterns. Based on current research, *Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers* explains

the boomer generation in terms of five value areas specific to recreation and leisure programming: cultural influences, healthy aging and society, retirement, leisure pursuits, and economic levels. Using this knowledge, you'll learn how to consider these generational values to create effective marketing messages and plan appropriate programming.

*Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers* presents a range of detailed program ideas and formats that fulfill the interests of this new clientele so you can start offering new programs right away. It also offers guidelines and examples that will help you plan your

own programs to meet the needs of your community. You'll find all the tools you need to market your new programs, including techniques for attracting boomers to your programs and marketing templates that make implementing your marketing strategies simpler. Information on key topics such as marketing psychology; advertising beyond the brochure; motivating, recruiting, and communicating at the front lines; and creating and maintaining a focused image will help you better understand how to market programs.

In this demand-driven occupation, recreation professionals must be prepared to market and deliver a wide range of leisure opportunities to serve the boomer generation. Is your recreation or leisure program ready for the baby boomers? *Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers* will help you understand the unique profile of the boomer generation and respond with creative programs that will add value and quality to the leisure lives of this new generation of mature adults.

Authors: Lynda Cochran, Anne Rothschild, Jodi Rudick  
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