



CONNECTING SENIORS ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES

**August 2019**



## Community Connections

*Photo: Partners' Gathering at Burnaby Neighbourhood House*

### **PARTNERS' GATHERING**

Staff and senior leaders from across the region gathered at Burnaby Neighbourhood House in early August. Participants reflected on how being part of Allies in Aging strengthened their capacity and effectiveness in reaching and connecting with isolated seniors. They also recognized the steep collective impact learning curve (especially when new staff came on board), and the importance of backbone support.

Highlights of being Allies in Aging partners included:

- Trying and testing new ideas shared across 30+ partner organizations;
- Applying what we learned through shared evaluation; and
- Growing from place-based projects to regional initiatives that increased seniors' connections.

### **VOLUNTEERS and SERVICE PROVIDERS:**

**Register for a Shared Learning Event - Becoming Allies with LGBTQ2S+ Older Adults**

**When: Mon. Sept. 16, 9:40am - 3:30pm**

**Where: Bonsor Community Centre, 6550 Bonsor Ave., Burnaby (easy access via transit)**  
**Cost: FREE! Registration is required as space is limited. Lunch will be provided.**

- Learn ways to ally with LGBTQ2S+ older adults
- Build outreach expertise and support
- Strengthen cross-community connections

*Includes presentations by Island Health and BC Community Response Network and facilitation by leaders from Volunteer Impact, Seniors Hub and Welcoming Senior's Spaces.*

[Click here to Register](#)

## Project Learning

***Food desert: A neighbourhood with limited access to groceries or restaurants offering healthy, affordable foods.\****

Seniors who live in a food desert with low income, mobility issues and/or limited transportation experience multiple barriers to getting healthy food. A recent partnership with the University of Calgary provided an opportunity to research access to affordable, healthy, local food. Seniors received food coupons to local farmers' markets and could participate in nutrition programs.

Project leaders discovered this type of program drew in a different group from those who go on social dining outings or use meal delivery programs. Participants were often more marginalized and wanted to shop and cook for themselves.

*Shared by Stephen D'Souza, Burnaby Community Services*

[\\*Canadian Environmental Health Atlas](#)

## Partner Stories

### **Seniors Hub**

Volunteers and staff doing door-to-door outreach give away calendars or leave behind door hangers with information about community programs and activities. An 85+ year old learned about Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House from a door hanger and dropped by for the first time. He is a regular walker and discovered it is a safe resting place. Program leaders got to know him a bit more and were able to connect him with programs that would be a good fit.

*Shared by Paola Antia, Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House*

### **Welcoming Seniors Spaces**

One evening, a new senior using our phone at the front desk was quite agitated. When she was finished with her call, I introduced myself, offered a drink of coffee or water, and we sat down for a conversation. She was lonely and needed support with a number of issues. English was not her first language, so she used her phone to find words when needed.

I talked about community programs that she might participate in, but her life was in such a

crisis that she was not ready to join. I made sure she had supports she could reach out to and assured her that she could come any time to talk or if she needed a safe place.

The next week, she returned to speak with our outreach staff about some family issues. By providing a welcoming space and a listening ear, we opened a door for her to get support. I will stay connected with her; she might want to join a neighbourhood house program in time.

*Shared by Kathy Bobicki, Burnaby Neighbourhood House*

***Allies in Aging collaborates to connect seniors across our communities through leadership, outreach, transportation, training and advocacy.***

*More than thirty organizations are working together to connect seniors to supports and services. Our focus is on seniors 75+ who are at risk of isolation due to disability, low income, language or cultural barriers.*

[Check out our website. Learn about projects and access resources.](#)

[Look, Like and Follow Allies in Aging on Facebook!](#)

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