



In the KNOW. In the NOW

Useful Information for Vernon Seniors

Spring 2021



REPORT FROM THE COORDINATOR'S OFFICE

What a crazy year this has been! COVID19 hit our province and so many things changed, however your VSAN team continued to meet virtually to discuss gaps in services for seniors, plan service provider information meetings and share strategies to ensure that seniors' needs were taken care of during this difficult time.

We learned a lot this year, about each other, our resiliency and our capacity to adapt, ensuring that those we serve were supported through difficult times. I look forward to a new day when we can all do our jobs together, in person. But until then we serve those in need, support each other and our community.

This newsletter attempts to keep you informed about what the VSAN team works on and shares with local service providers. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about VSAN and what we do, please forward this newsletter onto them for more information and updates, or connect with us through email at vernonseniorsactionnetwork@gmail.com.

Best regards, Kelly Johnson, VSAN Coordinator

NEXUSBC SENIOR SERVICES & BETTER AT HOME UPDATE

NexusBC continues to accept grants and donations to successfully deliver senior services through our CONNECT program which serves vulnerable adults and seniors. NexusBC offers quality services to support seniors with navigation and supports to online applications for government benefits and housing subsidies as well as income tax supports, a housing guide and community resource directory.

The United Way of the Lower Mainland continues to support the North Okanagan Better at Home program operated by NexusBC. This program supports seniors to enable them to live in their own homes longer. Services such as grocery shopping and delivery, housekeeping services and friendly visiting are offered to current clients. Through the Safe Seniors Strong Communities Initiative which began at the start of the pandemic, NexusBC has been offering rides to medical transportation, grocery/pharmacy shopping and delivery, prepared meals and virtual visits and phone check-ins to all seniors who requested those services. During the past year the organization has provided:

- 509 seniors served
- 1615 check-in or virtual visits
- 219 grocery shopping and delivery services
- 96 free meal and deliveries
- 482 rides to medical appointments
- 1316 hours of housekeeping

STAY CONNECTED

SENIOR SERVICE PROVIDERS NETWORK MEETINGS!

The VSAN team understands the importance of networking, as well as information sharing.

Perhaps during COVID19 it is even more important.

Our team aims to hold these meetings regularly.

May 26th at 2pm

is our next meeting, by Zoom:
A Service Provider Roundtable!

All Service Providers are welcome!

If you need the zoom invitation, please contact:

Peggy at VSAN
vernonseniorsactionnetwork@gmail.com

SENIORS COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE - PROVINCIAL UPDATE

The Seniors Community Action Committee Provincial Working Group of the CSAA Leadership Council is a community stakeholder committee which addresses the needs of seniors' planning, action, and/or advisory tables throughout BC. There are numerous seniors' planning, action, and/or advisory tables or committee working groups at local levels in communities through BC. The SCAC Working Group is working at investigating more about the importance of local/regional seniors' planning tables and senior action networks. VSAN has answered a survey regarding the importance of their committee and the importance of it for the Vernon seniors. Of note are:

- Information sharing through an inter-agency platform with the development and ongoing scheduling of service provider meetings
- The Christmas card initiative where seniors receiving a Christmas Hamper through NexusBC's Making Spirits Bright Campaign also received a handmade Christmas card from local students
- Undertaking of a Pen Pal pilot project
- Start up of the Dementia-Age Friendly Committee for Vernon
- Having a platform to share all news pertinent to seniors living in our area.
- Advocacy for local seniors organizations and non-profits

NexusBC with support from the United Way of the Lower Mainland and CFNO responded to the pandemic by supporting seniors through the new BC211 Safe Seniors Strong Communities initiative.

NexusBC provided rides to medical appointments, grocery or pharmacy shopping and delivery, prepared meals, virtual check-ins or visiting and laundry services all free of charge during this time.

A new report has been published recently called Rising to the Challenge: How BC's Community-Based Seniors' Service Agencies Stepped up During COVID19. The Vancouver Sun has done a follow up to the "Rising to the Challenge" report released last week. It is an excellent article highlighting and celebrating the amazing work of the community-based seniors serving sector,



"The report warns, however, that a return to conventional, competitive funding could reduce the sector's effectiveness. To address that, the report calls for "sufficient, stable and secure funding." It specifically mentions the need for core funding that isn't tied to a specific program as well as for stable, multi-year funding that allows groups to plan for the future. "The value of the CBSS sector has been illuminated and confirmed through this study," Rising to the Challenge says. "The data demonstrates the responsiveness and effectiveness of the sector during the COVID-19 pandemic."

<https://vancouversun.com/news/report-says-social-service-agencies-helped-keep-seniors-safe-during-covid-19>

NexusBC has been proud to support seniors throughout this pandemic and are appreciative of the provincial initiatives to keep seniors safe during this trying time.

To reach NexusBC please call 250-545-0585 or visit our website at: www.nexusbc.ca for more information.

Age/Dementia Friendly City Action Team

Its been a tough time for seniors, people with cognitive impairments and those with physical disabilities during this past COVID year. **But Hurray! We have a new Action Team!**

A Warm Welcome to the Age/Dementia Friendly City Action Team.

The main purpose of the Action Team is to have Vernon designed as an "Age/Dementia Friendly City" by the provincial government.

The benefits of this designation are many fold.

- It provides access to provincial grants for local organizations that address the needs of seniors and people with cognitive impairments.
- It makes local government actively think about aging and dementia needs, particularly in the areas of planning and building.
- It looks at areas such as outdoor spaces, transportation, housing, social participation, social inclusion, communication support and health services that are tailored for seniors.
- It addresses community awareness and understanding.
- It will create safer, barrier-free buildings and streets; better access to local businesses and facilities, and more green spaces which benefit not only seniors but people of all ages and abilities.

Vernon has a high percentage of seniors; the challenge is going to be how we enable seniors to be more active and to age at home.

The City of Vernon has enthusiastically endorsed this project and is partnering with VSAN. The team has representation from City Council (Councillor Kelly Fehr) and city staff.

As with everything else, COVID19 put a temporary halt to the project, but we have been advised by the Province that things are starting to move ahead.

In the meantime, the Committee has been working to identify aspects of the community that are age/dementia friendly; identify barriers and problems that show how the community is not age/dementia friendly; make suggestions to improve the problems or barriers, and list potential priorities for action.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Seniors Outreach Worker is operated by the North Okanagan Friendship Center Society, which is a non-profit society, working to enhance the lives of Indigenous seniors in the North Okanagan.

Outreach is an activity of providing services to any populations who might not otherwise have access to those services. A key component of outreach is that the person providing it are not stationary, but mobile; in other words, they are meeting those in need of outreach services at the locations where those in need are.

Maggie King, Seniors Outreach worker
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250-558-8787

For more information about VSAN or to receive this newsletter via email or to Unsubscribe, please email: vernonseniorsactionnetwork@gmail.com