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Saanich Volunteer Services Society

THE FRIENDLY VISITOR

NEWSLETTER
Winter 2001

McRae House 1445 Ocean View Road Victoria V8P 1J8 595-8008

As president of the Saanich Volunteer Society, It is my pleasure to to submit the President's Message for this edition of our newsletter.

What can I say about our dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who perform many varied tasks for our clients and for our agency? Among the tasks our volunteers do so caringly are: working in the office, driving clients, completing home repairs, making friendly visits, doing income tax returns, gardening, assisting with fundraising and promotions. It is heartening to watch them giving so freely of their time and talents. We certainly live up to our motto of "neighbour helping

neighbours". Our volunteers and staff are second to none and I am proud to be part of this wonderful team. Thank you, volunteers, for your dedication to helping your neighbours.

We are fortunate to have a group of hard working and focused individuals on the board of directors. They consist of four new members and seven returning members who were profiled in the Autumn 2001 newsletter.

Through donations of furniture, equipment, and financial contributions we were able to make many improvements in our office this past year.

All these functions would not be possible without the

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generous support from the Saanich Municipality, corporations, local businesses and private donations. We thank you for your continuing support.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend my very best wishes to our staff, volunteers, supporters and clients for a



very happy holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year.

*Mel Williamson,
Chairman, Board of Directors*

Holiday Office Hours

In order that our volunteer receptionists and staff can enjoy a much-deserved Christmas break

the office will close at

4 pm Friday, December 21

and will reopen at

9 am Wednesday, January 2, 2002.

Volunteer Profile

by Bonnie Bacica

For Isobel and Rory Kirby volunteering has become a key part of life. It enhances the values and principles they practice and believe in. In an earlier edition of *The Friendly Visitor* (Spring, 2001) they wrote an article about Bill Christian, an elderly gentleman they met through Saanich Volunteer Services Friendly Visiting Program. At that time, they described the profound and remarkable experiences they had through their connection with Bill, a man of courage and determination. After visiting with Isobel and Rory one comes away with a sense of their own dedication.

Isobel was born in Scotland and moved to England at two years of age. A young girl when WW2 broke out, she was evacuated back to Scotland for a short time for safety reasons. She returned to England in 1941 and still remembers the air raids. Isobel attended elementary and high school in Essex and worked as a secretary for a company that produced the wonderful tinned biscuits that England is so famous for.

Rory was born in Kent, England and attended boarding school in Yorkshire. He spent a short time in the Army with the Royal Signals and then acquired a degree in physics. As an apprentice in the engineering department he too went to work for the same biscuit company! And there they met, brought together by the Personnel Manager, who noticed that they were born on the same day of the same year. That was more than 46 years ago. Soon after they married, Rory was convinced that their lives would be better in Canada, so he accepted an offer to work in Montreal at Northern Electric, as it was then known. He did so for 30 years. During that time they raised their five children, first in St Lambert, PQ, then in Islington, Ontario. Two daughters were born in England;

a son and fraternal twins in Canada. When Isobel's father passed away in England, her mother moved to Canada and lived with the family for 20 years.

Isobel has always been devoted to children and relished being a stay at home mom. But this didn't stop her from being busy in her community. She became involved in the Quebec Association for Children with Learning Disabilities - a pioneering group in the field. Her energy and guidance helped her provide funding by raising money through the sale of Christmas cards and Hasty Notes featuring artwork created by the children and local artists. The cards and notes were immensely popular, and to assist with the packaging work that ensued, Isobel enlisted the willing assistance of local Brownies, Guides, and seniors.

Isobel also became involved with the Horticultural Societies in St. Lambert and Islington, where she learned the art of drying flowers with silica gel, a craft she still loves. Each year she obtains many kinds of seeds, starting seedlings under lights then transplanting them in the spring to her garden. In the fall colorful bundles of drying flowers hang from the workshop ceiling. Isobel creates many arrangements, donating them to different agencies including Hospice and the Saanich Peninsula Hospital, as well as providing decorated cards and candles to the Village Crafts shop in Oak Bay.

Fifteen years ago it was time to retire. In 1965 Rory had visited Victoria. When Isobel had a chance to visit later, they decided that this would be the place to build their retirement home. They bought a lot high on a hill overlooking Cordova Bay with an exceptional view looking out toward Mt. Baker. There they live today.

Soon after they arrived, they took active roles in the Women's and the Men's Newcomers

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Clubs. These clubs provide invaluable help to people moving to Victoria, building friendships through meetings, activities, and informative local speakers.

One day a week Rory is a volunteer at Anawim House, where he teaches stained glass techniques as part of a rehabilitation program. The focus of this exceptional place is on building self-esteem through unconditional support and encouragement.

In between all their regular activities, the Kirby's have had time to travel to Spain, New Zealand, South Africa and recently to China - which is the most astonishing they say.

Now in retirement they have time to enjoy their 10 grandchildren and to entertain their friends. Recently, Rory has taken up quilting again. He continues his love of origami and is building a kayak with his younger son.

To close this story, you should know why Isobel and Rory find time to volunteer at SVSS. It's simple! They wanted an activity they could enjoy together. The Friendly Visiting Program has provided that chance. Their reward is the companionship they bring and the new friendships they form.

Perhaps there are other couples that would like to experience this same contentment!

**CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!
HELP WANTED**

Is bingo the name of your game? *Carmen* is an avid bingo player and would like a non-smoking female volunteer to accompany her, possibly to a weekly bingo game. Interested?

Ed resides in the Royal Oak area, is 51 years young, a former teacher, a non-smoker, was born in New Westminster, and likes to read. Ed is open to male or female companionship to share conversation, go for a drive, and wheelchair walks. Call our office to make arrangements to get to know this interesting man.

Lewis who is 80 years young, was born in Paris, France, served in the French Navy, and has cycled for 79 years! Lewis would like non-smoking male or female companionship. He resides in the Swan Lake area. Lewis has interesting stories to share and possesses a great sense of humour.

85 year young woman living in the Old West Saanich Road area seeks non-smoking female companionship. Christina speaks Punjabi and English. She is warm, friendly, and outgoing. It is not necessary that the volunteer speak Punjabi. Christina would enjoy short walks, conversation, and tea.

Nola is 80 years young and lives in the Harriet Road area. Born in Rossburn, Manitoba Nola likes to read, play crib, and would enjoy going for a drive and to the mall. Nola is looking for non-smoking female companionship.

**See a job
YOU can do?
Call Ilona 595-8008**

What Motivates Older Volunteers?

Age	45-54	55-64	65+
Belief in the cause	97 (%)	98(%)	97 (%)
To use skills/experience	75	75	71
Personally affected	70	70	66
To explore own strengths	50	46	37
To fulfil religious obligations	32	40	49
Friends volunteer	20	25	31
To improve job skills	12	9	3

From the pamphlet Volunteering...A Booming Trend

The Fine Heart Of Listening

Ever feel like picking up the phone and talking to someone because you are lonely, experiencing relationship problems, having thoughts of suicide, feeling depressed, dealing with the loss of a job or are just in need of information regarding a community resource? The Victoria Need Crisis and Information Line is that “someone”. Non-judgmental active listeners who have developed “The Fine Heart Of Listening” offer a continuous, confidential, and anonymous telephone service. Delivered through the concern and respect of professionally trained, caring volunteers NEED is committed to serving people by offering emotional support, crisis intervention, suicide prevention, and information on community services.

Last September, Linda Stanton, Clinical Director, and Joyalle Bunyan-Maynard, a NEED Trainer, provided a workshop for Saanich Volunteer Services Society volunteers. The workshop had two components: sharing information regarding the services NEED provides and teaching basic listening skills with specific focuses.

NEED proudly celebrated its 30th anniversary on May 10,

2001. This past year volunteers answered close to 18,000 calls with an average of 50 calls a day, dedicating 13,796 hours on the lines. Major concerns include topics such as: mental/emotional health, relationship, information, physical health, individual and family life, suicide, financial/occupational, threat/abuse, protection, justice and safety, dependencies, and sexuality. NEED volunteers are on the lines seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Volunteers are 19 years of age or older; make a one-year commitment; do a weekly 4-hour shift and once a month an overnight shift.

This year NEED became the Capital Health Region’s contact point for reporting concerns about vulnerable adults in our community making this region the first in the province to respond to the newly proclaimed Adult Guardianship legislation. The successful Peer Gatekeeper Training Program continues to be unique in Canada and was presented at the Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention Conference in the fall. Public access to NEED’s comprehensive database of community resources has been enhanced through a website application and additional funding has enabled the offer of a 5th annual

training group increasing new volunteers by 25%.

NEED’s phone lines are extremely busy and at times it can be difficult to get through to a volunteer. From 10 AM to 11 PM, 7 days a week, an emergency access system (EAS) allows a caller to leave a message when lines are busy. Volunteers respond to these messages within 30 minutes. In times of distress or crisis, this can be critical. Most of these calls concern acute emotional distress, depression, mental illness, and suicide.

NEED volunteers consult with, and refer people in crisis, to Emergency Mental Health Services, the mobile, psychiatric response team from 1:00 PM to midnight, 7 days a week. Last year over 400 referrals were made to this team. Statistics have shown that 72% of NEED’s service is delivered outside regular business hours. NEED also offers Youth Services, as suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 15 - 19 years. This preventative education program is available to all Jr. and Senior Secondary Schools in the Capital Health Region and to groups of out of school youth. Through facilitated discussion, video and small

The Fine Heart Of Listening

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group work, youth learn suicide risk factors, signals of suicide, how to talk to a troubled friend and where to get help. Additionally, the Peer Gatekeeper Training Program teaches peer helpers in grades 8 to 12 how to assess risk for suicide and initiate an intervention. NEED's future goals include the development of an accessible, youth friendly phone line service that reflects their unique needs. Target date for the implementation of this phone line is April 2002.

NEED truly supports the well being of our community. The Crisis & Information Line can be reached at 386-6323 and the administrative office number is 386-6328, and access via the web at: <http://www.needcrisis.bc.ca>

Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year
from the
Volunteers & Staff of
SUS

Special Note to our Volunteer Drivers

Thank you to all of you for the wonderful service and companionship that you provide to our clients! We hear so many comments of appreciation! Many of you generously donate your kilometer reimbursement and that makes a huge difference to our costs. Reimbursement is done quarterly: to start donating simply call the office to make arrangements. If you wish to withdraw your donation and start claiming we require written notice with your monthly statistical report and will only reimburse starting with the current month.

Off the Beaten Path

by Barbara Baldwin

As our lives unfold during these uncertain times, I believe we are all experiencing a deeper appreciation for life itself. Living each moment as if it is our last allows us to engage and relate totally to



life. The Buddhists' refer to this as mindfulness.

When we are mindful life takes on a clarity and focus which helps us to see and sense details often unacknowledged. Simple pleasures become cause for celebration. The rainbow made by sunlight shining on the threads of a spiders web, a drop of dew on a leaf, an eagle riding the wind, a smile from a stranger, a baby's soft skin, the aroma of bread baking all become part of the miracle of life.

Mindfulness also means giving comfort when someone is hurting, sharing your inner peace with someone who is feeling uncertain, listening with an open heart to one who is troubled, giving encouragement to those discouraged and praising someone's efforts.

I believe we can make a difference in the world, in fact change the world, if we practice mindfulness in each moment. In this way a spirit of community evolves and it becomes clear that we really are all one.



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Our first on line auction closed November 30, 2001. I want to send a sincere message of appreciation to all of you who participated in the bidding and hope you had fun while shopping for just the right item. Finding interesting and beneficial fundraising programs is essential to the sustainability of our agency and the people we are here to serve. This auction couldn't have happened without the support of the more than 75 business people who contributed gift certificates and products. Thankyou to all of those community conscious folks who generously shared and contributed toward helping those in need in our neighborhood. Many Volunteers dedicated themselves to the success of the auction by making telephone calls to businesses, picking up auction items, entering information on the website and a myriad of other tasks. Thankyou to everyone of you for participating, you really made a difference!

Susan Zerb, Executive Director

Satisfied clients referring their friends, family, and co-workers to me are the foundation of my business.

The only way this has come about is by consistently delivering professional, caring service. My goal is for you to be so thrilled with your home and so happy with the selling process that you would feel more than confident in referring me.

My goal is to earn the right to be your trusted Real Estate Consultant for Life, focusing on your needs and desires, explaining your options, guiding you through your real estate transaction!

I don't just help you buy and sell a house, I develop a lifetime relationship *one client at a time.*



Diana
DEVLIN
595-3200



Making Your Real Estate Dreams Bloom

Holiday Safety

If you are out for the evening:

- * turn on a light and a radio or T.V.
Make your home look and sound occupied
- * be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it is just for a few minutes
- * don't display gifts or any valuables where they can be seen from the outside

If you are shopping

- * stay alert, aware of your surroundings
- * report any suspicious activities to the police
- * park your car in a well-lighted space near other vehicles and close to pedestrian traffic
- * lock your vehicle and remove valuables

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If you do not want to receive our newsletter, please call Kathryn at 595-8008, and we will remove your name from the mailing list.

The Saanich Volunteer Society Newsletter

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