

FRIENDLY FOCUS

27 Forest Street Parry Sound ON P2A 2R2
www.thefriends.on.ca info@thefriends.on.ca 1-888-746-5102

December has arrived with all of its traditions and festivities. While this can be a time of great enjoyment and celebration it can also be a time of loneliness for those who have lost loved ones or who are struggling with health issues.

This year, if you are buying gifts for elderly relatives or individuals dealing with health issues, consider things like gift cards for long distance telephone or a meal at a favourite restaurant; offer to spend an hour helping organize a closet, photo album or cluttered pantry; spend an afternoon playing cards; teach elderly loved ones how to use the internet to remain connected.

Give the gift of your time, a gift that has infinitely more value than the inevitable bottle of cologne and box of chocolates.

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Singing is Good for Your Health

Christmas is one of the few celebrations that actively engage both young and old in the art of singing. Everyone knows at least one Christmas carol and finds an opportunity to belt out a familiar tune over the holidays. What you may not know, is that singing is also good for you.

Recent research has shown that seniors who engage in choral singing reap even more benefits than those who sing alone, citing stronger voices, better posture and fewer incidents of depression. Even more astonishing, some studies show decreased numbers of doctor visits and falls.



Researchers tested the blood of seniors in choral groups and were astonished to find heightened levels of immunoglobulin A and cortisol which protect against illness.

Music and singing are also key elements in helping individuals with Alzheimer's disease continue to find connection and comfort in their daily lives. So make a New Year's resolution to sing more... big beautiful sound from your diaphragm is best, while singing with others provides even more protective help. Best of all, singing will put smile on your face and start the New Year on a positive, hopeful note.

Executive Directors Report

By Marliese Gause

The Friends Board of Directors held their Annual General Meeting on October 5th at the Huntsville Summit Centre this year. This year's key note speaker was the star of CBC's White Coat/Black Art, Dr. Brian Goldman, who provided an insightful look at health care today in Ontario. New Board members **Yvonne Green, David Crouch** and **John Gallagher** were welcomed. We were also delighted that the Board Chair of the North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network, **Mr. Robert Mortson**, and C.E.O. **Bernie Blais** were in attendance. Both Mr. Mortson and Mr. Blais brought greetings on behalf of the LHIN and spoke briefly of the importance of the community sector in health care.

One of the Board's top priorities is to get the Gravenhurst building project underway. It has been a long discouraging battle to find the funds needed to renovate the building; however, the Board is working hard to realize this goal in 2012.

This year The Friends welcomed the Port Loring Legion Meals on Wheels Volunteer Transportation agency to its programs and services. Welcome **Maureen Groves** and her volunteers! In addition new funding has been received to renovate the two bedroom respite unit at Forest Hill Apartments into a transitions-to-home unit for individuals moving from hospital to home. The unit will provide an intermediate space where clients

can access 24/7 services in an accessible, barrier free unit until they are ready to go home.

Last but not least, supervisors and managers have been working hard to implement a new client data software system that will seamlessly integrate with other computer systems already in place. The new system will provide better reporting mechanisms, help streamline payroll, and provide up-to-date client information which will in turn, support better client care.

A big round of applause for all of the supervisors and managers who have been on a pretty steep learning curve for the past year.

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.



Current president Linda Jones, past-president John Lee, Executive Director Marliese Gause and speaker Dr. Brian Goldman at the Annual General Meeting.

Favourite Songs of the Season

By Deborah Taylor

In the spirit of singing being good for your health, we polled our staff to see what music they like to listen to that put them in the holiday spirit.

Kelly, our Support Services Manager, likes the Bing Crosby song **White Christmas** because it reminds her of watching the old holiday musicals like Holiday Inn, White Christmas and Meet me in St. Louis.

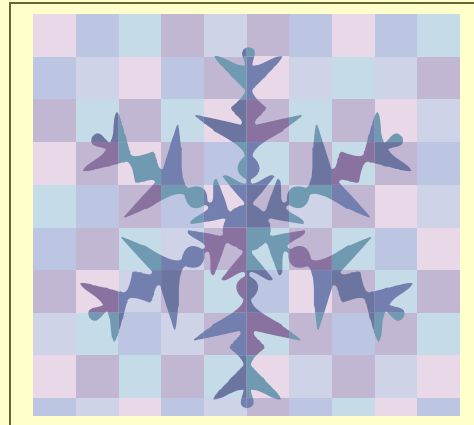
Nancy, supervisor of our Forest Hill Floor Staff & the Assisted Living program in West Parry Sound, mentioned her love of Kenny Rodgers & Dolly Parton's **I'll be Home with Bells On** as it brings back happy memories of her sister and her wearing their Christmas stockings and singing along to the record.

Crystal, our Human Resources Assistant, told stories of her Grandmother's love of the song, **Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree**, and how it is still being listened to on Christmas morning while they opened the presents, despite her passing.

Mary, supervisor of the Outreach and Homemaking program in West Parry Sound, told me about spending time in the car with her young daughter, teaching her to finish the sentences of **Rudolph, the Red Nose Reindeer**.

Lisa, Muskoka Administrative Support, fondly remembers her mother singing **Holy Night** to her as a child at Christmas.

We hope you've enjoyed hearing about our selections and can enjoy your own favorites to help you usher in the season.



Seniors Services Update

Merry Christmas to everyone. Despite the lack of snow up until now, hopefully we'll see a bit of it in time for Christmas.

Adult Day Away Programs will be closed for 1 week between Christmas and New Years and will resume on January 2, 2012. During the month of December, each program will be engaging in some festivities of the season which the staff will let you know about.

During the Christmas season we also want to be mindful of cold and flu season. We are diligent about encouraging participants to get their flu shot. In order to minimize the spread of germs, we have a hand washing regime throughout the year which is augmented by the availability of hand sanitizer and regular disinfection of tables and other common surfaces such as exercise equipment throughout the day. A further precaution is minimizing attendance of participants who are ill. We hope that those who are not feeling well will stay at home to recuperate. When someone attends the program who is complaining of not feeling well, the staff will endeavor to send them home without hesitation.

Seniors Services Update continued

We hope that the indoor temperature of our host facilities is comfortable, but all participants are encouraged to bring along a sweater just in case and also properly fitting, supportive indoor shoes. This minimizes slippery water pools on the floors and keeps foot temperature comfortable throughout the day.

Clients attending the Adult Day Programs may notice a change in menu for lunches and snacks. Staff recently received some extensive training on the new Canada's Food Guide. This will be incorporated into all Adult Day programs in the coming months. Anyone interested in knowing more can contact us for more information.

Powassan Adult Day Program closes and Burk's Falls Adult Day Program Opens. It is with regret that the program in Powassan closed its doors this fall. The Legion in Powassan has been a gracious host of the program over the years and our heartfelt appreciation goes out to all the people in that Legion and the Powassan community at large who supported the program.

The Adult Day Away Program in Burk's Falls started in November and is already at capacity. The Burk's Falls Medical Building, Family Health Team and other interested community members have embraced the program which is held every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on the second floor of the building. We will be holding a Caregiver Support program in tandem with the Adult Day Away Program so that caregivers who would like to attend the Caregiver Support Program and require respite care in order to do so, can drop the person requiring care at the Adult Day Away Program. The Support Groups will be held from 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Again, please contact us for more information.

Round the Region

Muskoka

December 7th, 2011 – 6pm

Salvation Army Food Drive

Downtown Hunstville

December 17th, 2011 – 12pm to 4pm

Santa Fest

Santa's Village, Bracebridge

December 18th, 2011 – 1pm

A Charlie Brown Christmas

Renee M Caisse Theater

Parry Sound

December 7th, 2011 – 1pm

Accessibility Works Seminar

West Parry Sound District Museum

December 14th, 2011 – 7pm

Old Fashioned Carol Sing

Humphrey Community Centre

December 17th, 2011 – 1pm to 4pm

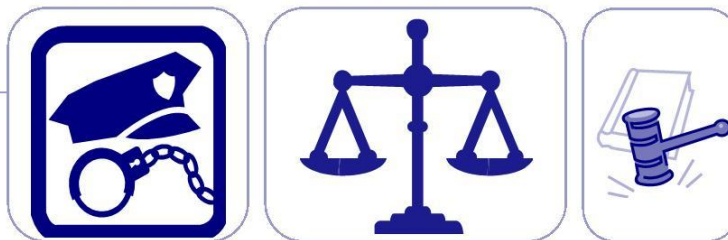
2nd Annual Santa Skate

Humphrey Arena

ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION FOR THE JUSTICE SECTOR

FRIDAY DECEMBER 9TH, 2011 9:00–2:30
REGISTRATION & REFRESHMENTS 8:30–9:00

FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH
169 WEST ROAD HUNTSVILLE, ON



Please join us for this free workshop on preventing Elder Abuse for the Justice Sector. There is no cost to attend and lunch will be provided. There will be speakers from various police and legal services as well as the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse. Don't miss this valuable opportunity to learn and network!

Speakers

Inga Thompson,

Regional Consultant, Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

Jo-Anne Boulding

Executive Director, Lake Country Community Legal Clinic

Tammy Rankin & Sgt John Keating

Durham Regional Police, Seniors Unit

Cheryl Penner

Legal Department, Royal Bank of Canada

Sgt. Monica Cachagee

Seniors Assistance Team, Ontario Provincial Police

To reserve a seat, please contact Deborah Taylor at:

Phone: 1-888-746-5102 ext.221

Fax: 705-746-8139

E-mail: info@thefriends.on.ca

Friendly Feedback

Please fill out the following and return it to the address below

- I would like to receive a copy of the newsletter Friendly Focus (Subscription fee of \$7.00 annually)
- I would like to receive more information about The Friends' programs
- I am interested in becoming a volunteer
- I am interested in becoming a member of *The Friends* (\$7.00 annual fee) which includes Friendly Focus subscription.
- I would like to make a contribution in the amount of \$ _____ to support the ongoing work at *The Friends*

Name: _____

Mailing Address:

Telephone:

Email:



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