

THE FRIENDS

DIGNITY • TEAMWORK • INNOVATION • EMPOWERMENT



newsletter of The Friends

Spring 2014

New building opens in Gravenhurst

After years of planning, the renovation of Gravenhurst's old (and abandoned) bowling alley at 141 Sharpe Street West is finally finished and is starting a new life as a facility designed to support and serve seniors. Although not without its challenges, the new building now houses a beautiful lounge/recreation area, a transitional care/respite unit, a kitchen, staff and administration offices and two apartments upstairs.

The space is bright, attractive and is already home to *The Friends'* Gravenhurst Adult Day Away programs. Now, instead of having to drive Gravenhurst seniors to attend programs, they can participate in their home community.

As spring finally appears on the doorstep, work will also be undertaken to beautify the space and to create an attractive, safe outdoor space for Adult Day program participants, thanks to

financial support through the **Bridge Street United Church** and **Muskoka's Pay it Forward** program.

In February an Open House was held to provide an opportunity for area residents to "check out" the new space. Although the Town of Gravenhurst struggled with a power outage early in the day, the lights came on just in time to welcome dignitaries and guests to the event; must have

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Elevator high on wish list

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been divine intervention!

Over the next few years the agency will be working hard to pay off its debt and raise enough money to install an elevator so that the apartments on the second floor will be more accessible to

those with mobility impairment.

Keep an eye open for summer events that will provide you with a chance to “come have a look” at the new building in Gravenhurst. If you are interested in volunteering to support *The Friends*, don’t hesitate to give us a

call at 1888.746.5102.

A very BIG thank you to everyone in the community who has shown such interest and who continue to support this project!

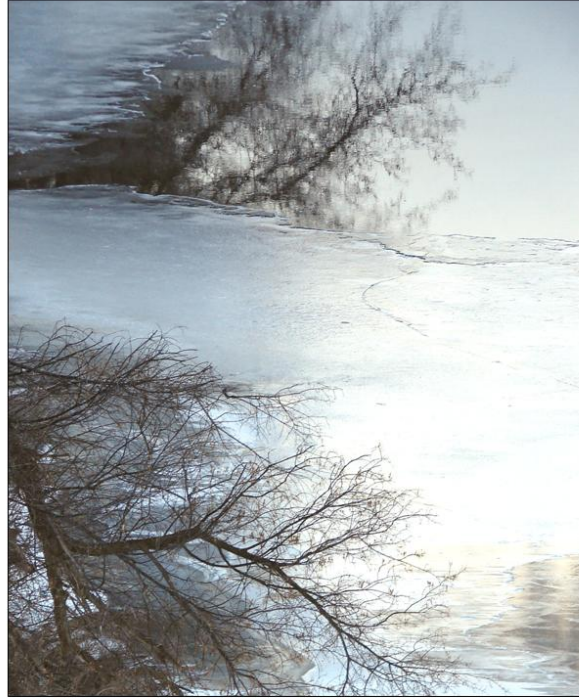


Officially open

Helping us celebrate were (left to right), *The Friends* C.E.O. Marliese Gause, NSM LHIN Director Ron Stevens, MPP Norm Miller, Muskoka District Councillor/Councillor Co-Chair for The Muskoka Attainable Housing Advisory Table Fran Coleman, Town of Gravenhurst Mayor Paisley McDonald, The District of Muskoka Deputy Chair Scott Young, *The Friends* Board Chair Leah Welk and MP Tony Clement.

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What We Do

The Friends is a non-profit charitable organization providing services to individuals with physical disabilities and seniors. In Muskoka and Parry Sound the organization has been serving the community for over 30 years. Some of the programs and services the agency provides: attendant care, adult day programs, caregiver support, respite, alzheimer overnight respite, P.A.T.H (Priority Assistance to Transition Home) from the hospital, post stroke, supportive housing, and 24/7 assisted living.

Contact us

Phone (705) 746.5102 27 Forest Street,
Parry Sound, ON P2A 2R2
info@thefriends.on.ca www.thefriends.on.ca

From the CEO's Desk

Renewal in the air

As I write this, the sun is finally shining, the monstrous piles of snow have vanished and a soft breeze is finally wafting its way across the land. After a long, cold winter I am delighted not only to see the warmer weather but to be able to finally deliver services from the newly renovated building at 141 Sharpe Street West in Gravenhurst.

It has been a very long time and a lot of hard work for *The Friends'* Board of Directors and staff but at long last, we are enjoying the new premises. Best of all caregivers of elderly family members, especially those suffering from age related dementia, are able to take

advantage of programs and services close to home.

Our budget did not stretch far enough to install an elevator or to add the six additional accessible apartment units originally planned for this project, however, the Board is busy planning a fundraising strategy so that sometime in the future, a broader scope of housing and services can be provided to the community. In the meantime, we are looking forward to planning a garden and beautifying the space. In Parry Sound, the accessible gardens at Forest Hill Apartments are beginning to thaw and tenants are anxiously counting the days to plant seeds or simply enjoy the sunshine in the green space.

As a result of some additional

funding from the province, the agency was able to replace old ovens in almost all of the Forest Hill apartments and only a few weeks ago, the parking lot was swept clean of dirt and debris that had collected over the winter. You may be interested to know that *The Friends* now employs more than one hundred staff and delivers services through a variety of programs all the way from Port Loring in the north (just south of North Bay) to Honey Harbour in the south. We have come a very long way since the agency first began as just a small housing project in Parry Sound. Watch for more news regarding projects and services as the summer unfolds!

Generosity makes a difference

1996 was a banner year for *The Friends*. The agency was shocked and surprised by a very generous bequest made by a longtime client who had passed away. This person's generosity helped the agency build a recreation/lounge area at its Forest Hill Apartments site and years later, to purchase and renovate the old bowling alley at 141 Sharpe Street West in Gravenhurst. Both buildings are now hubs for much needed services to individuals with disabilities and seniors in these respective communities. I often

wonder what this person would think had she been able to look into the future and see how her gift had transformed communities. If you are thinking about planning your estate, and you wish to acknowledge services you or your family may have received, what better way than to leave a bequest in your will? It is through such generosity that *The Friends'* has been able to provide for the communities it serves. If you are interested in including *The Friends* in your estate planning or wish to memorialize a loved one, please call 1.888.746.5102 ext. 221

The Friends' Board of Directors will be launching a major fundraising campaign in early June in order to raise money to install an elevator into the building at 141 Sharpe Street, Gravenhurst. An elevator will make the second floor apartments accessible for seniors with mobility issues and is much needed. If you are interested in supporting us through volunteer work or through a donation, please fill out the Friendly feedback form on page 12.

**My thanks,
Marliese Gause**

Meaningful activities to plan as a caregiver

The caregiving journey can be, for both family caregiver and the care recipient, an experience like no other. Engaging in meaningful activities that either, or both people enjoy, can be a factor in creating positive and healthy relationships.

Consider the following questions either for yourself or with the person to whom you are providing care: What activity (physical, social, creative, spiritual) do you like to do or once did that brought you joy? Do you like to do activities on your own, with others in a small or large group? What is in your home that you can easily do? Do you know what is available in your local community? What time of day or day of the week works best for you?

Participation in activities does not have to be complicated. An activity could be as easy as sitting in a sunny corner for five minutes feeling the warmth of the sun through the window or stepping outside to notice the blossoms on the trees.

Caregivers often say that they have no time to participate in what they want to do and it is often the opposite for the recipient, they feel bored because they have too much time with nothing to do. How do you balance both persons' needs to do something interesting? An important first step is to identify what it is that you want to do. Here are a few suggestions to help make it happen.

How to find out about

activities: Look around your own home, read your municipality's Leisure guide, visit your public library, or ask family members and friends for information.

Pace the activity: Do not do the activity all at once if you tire easily, break it into short segments.

Adapt the activity: Sit down at a table to prepare something instead of standing. Use raised garden boxes, large print playing cards or audio books.

Plan transportation: Use public transit, accessible van, taxi, a volunteer driver, a friend or family member.

Cost: Find out what the cost is for the activity, and a paid companion if this is necessary.

Accessibility: Call ahead to ask about the entrance into the building, washrooms, disabled parking spots, and the busy or quiet times.

Try these activities that can be broken down into smaller tasks or adapted to meet each person's needs.

Gardening: Try box or container gardening, herb gardens, flower arranging, plan other people's gardens, take a trip to a garden centre and enjoy walking among the plants, visit local parks with gardens, work in your garden on small sections at a time.

Jigsaw puzzles: One person sorts by edge pieces or same colour, while the other puts pieces together, or do puzzles that have larger size pieces.

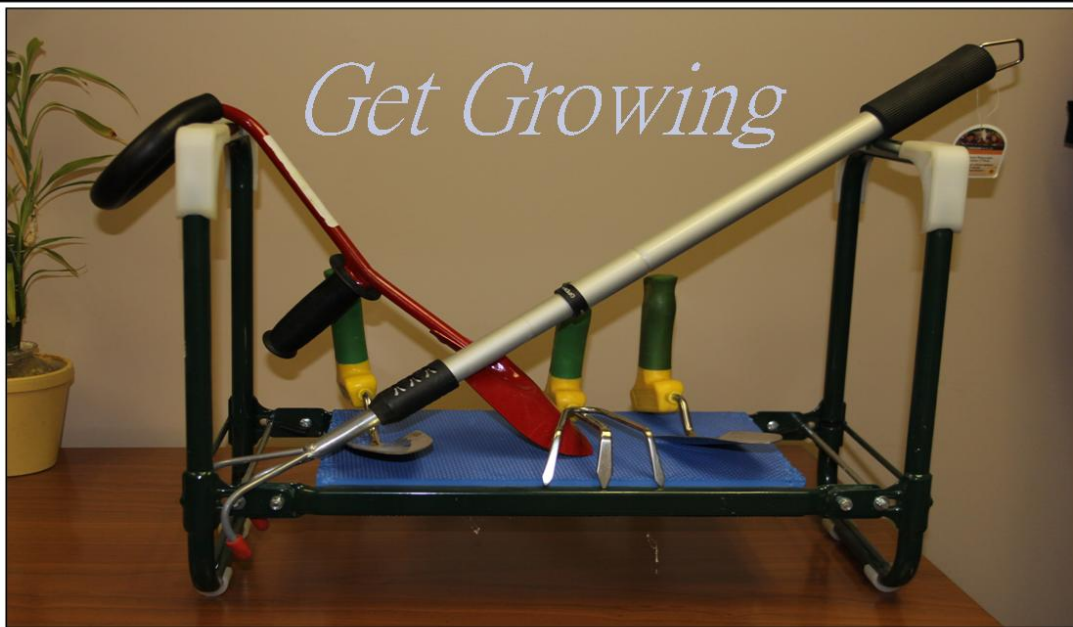
Friends, groups, clubs: Join a social bridge group; go golfing (or



Check listings of special events in local parks and community

to the clubhouse for a meal, play nine instead of 18 holes, use the practice or putting areas).

Reading: Go to the local library where you can read newspapers, borrow movies and audio books, and learn to use the computer. The most important aspect of 'keeping the connection' is that caregivers look after their own health first. Health consists of not only tending to your physical needs, but your emotional, social, mental and spiritual needs. It is okay to ask for help when needed, as it is a healthy way to prevent caregiver burnout and maintain a positive relationship with the person receiving your support.



Seeds have been purchased and plots have been claimed, with fresh gardening ideas in mind for a bountiful harvest this year.

Once again *The Friends'* accessible garden's 31 raised boxes—enough for one per apartment—are in demand by residents who enjoy growing fresh produce.

Everything from corn and cucumbers to pumpkins and squash, has been harvested by talented gardeners in past years.

"They're quite successful," says Nancy Hall, Program Supervisor for the Forest Hill apartments.

"It's quite popular. Most tenants participate."

For some, gardening provides a spiritual connection with the earth and creation. Others view it as highly social, and look forward to getting out with neighbours who share an interest in gardening. In addition to the added bonus of fresh air and activity, the gardening plots also promote healthy eating.

"A lot of the gardeners here are on fixed incomes so growing their own produce certainly reduces costs," explains Hall.

In past years, gardeners at *The Friends* have celebrated the harvest by cooking a spaghetti sauce and other favourite recipes together.

The raised boxes offer those in wheelchairs or with mobility issues greater ease in reaching their gardens. In 2009, contractors secured ground rock to prevent the raised boxes from sinking and new wooden containers assembled offsite by community volunteers were installed. *The Friends* has a variety of helpful tools including kneeling pads, extendable rakes to avoid bending, and shovels with large handgrips. Especially handy for weeding, is a pushcart with rotating seat and wide tires for easy navigation on pathways.

For apartment residents, raised planter gardens or wooden boxes are becoming increasingly popular. Another option is the Parry Sound Community Gardens. This spring, a fifth site was added to the Community Gardens operated collectively by gardeners in cooperation with the Town of Parry Sound, Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board and Canadore College. The new "eco-connection" site at Mission Park on Emily Street had five plots available as of mid-May. Parry Sound Community Gardens plot sizes vary, but average eight-by-ten feet. They are located at the front and back of Canadore College, behind the

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Fresh ideas sprouting in the garden



Mission Park Community Gardens

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Waubeeek Street day care centre, Yvonne Williams Park and Mission Park. The new site brings the total number of plots in town to 55. To arrange a plot, contact community gardens steering committee member Rick Harrington at 705-746-9330 or rharrington@clps.ca. No fee is charged for the plot, however participants agree to donate 20 percent of all produce harvested to the Salvation Army Food Bank, Harvest Share Parry Sound, Esprit Place or another non-profit community food sharing organization for distribution. "It's incredible the amount of produce we got last year and this year it's going to be even better," says Harrington. The increasing popular community plots attract a diverse range of area gardeners.

"We have two wheelchair accessible plots at our Waubeek garden that are taken," notes Harrington. "We have seniors and younger people, and people from all walks of life."

"Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For indeed that's all who ever have." ~ Margaret Mead



The Friends' accessible gardens

Friendly faces



Cruising on the Island Queen



Heading home from Henry's Restaurant,
Frying Pan Island



Enjoying *Bands on the Bay* at the Stockey Centre for
the Performing Arts on Georgian Bay

How does your garden grow?

GRAVENHURST

With warm weather only a short while away a lot of people are thinking about gardening. Organizers of the Gravenhurst Community Garden are preparing for spring planting, with plans to build on the success of last year's garden.

The community garden is a great place to grow your own veggies if you don't have land yourself. There are 30 garden boxes at various heights and the cost is \$10 per plot for the gardening season.

There is also an initial limit of two plots per family. For more details visit their Facebook page.

See more at: <http://moosefm.com/cfbgs/news/gravenhurst-community-garden-prepare-for-spring-planting/#sthash.kBvwqOjv.dpuf>

BRACEBRIDGE

Another option for those who have always wanted their own vegetable or flower garden but don't have the space or the right kind of soil is Morrison Meadows in Bracebridge.

Morrison Meadows was purchased in 2007 by Community Living South Muskoka with the goals of creating employment for those it serves and providing an outdoor recreational space for the community to enjoy and see individuals with a developmental disability as capable, friendly, teachers, partners and community leaders.

The 35-acre farm at 1177 Fraserburg Road on the outskirts of Bracebridge has four-foot-by-eight-foot raised planting beds that are available on a first come first served basis.

To reserve a raised planting bed call 705.687.5783. Payment is by donation which helps support the farm operation.

As an added bonus, a small portion of the land was donated to the Town of Bracebridge to put an accessible path and parking area from the Morrison Meadow property to the Bracebridge community's new baseball diamonds and park. Come check it out.

*What's in season?***Asparagus with Sesame Seeds***Servings: 4*

It's a great time of the year to buy asparagus and this recipe is a delicious and different way to prepare it:

1 1/2 pounds asparagus, tough stems removed, cut into 1-inch lengths

1 1/2 teaspoons unsalted margarine (or olive oil)
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
1 teaspoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 teaspoon Oriental sesame or peanut oil
1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1. In a 10-inch skillet, bring an inch of unsalted water to a boil. Add the asparagus and cook covered, for 3 minutes or until just tender. Drain in a colander, rinse under cold running water to stop the cooking, and drain again. Set aside.
2. In the same saucepan, melt the margarine over moderate heat; add the sesame seeds and cook, stirring for 3 to 4 minutes or until the seeds are golden.
3. Return the asparagus to the pan; add the soy sauce, sesame oil, and pepper, and cook, stirring, for 1 minute or until the asparagus is heated through.

For rent**Bachelor/
One Bedroom
Apartment**

**141
Sharpe Street
West,
Gravenhurst**

Located close to all amenities – drug store, post office, public library and Opera House. Brand new apartment, equipped with stove, fridge, washer/dryer. Ideal for mobile senior.

Inquire at 1.888.746.5102 ext. 227. Rent: \$700 per month

*"Alone we can do so little,
together we can do so much."
~ Helen Keller*

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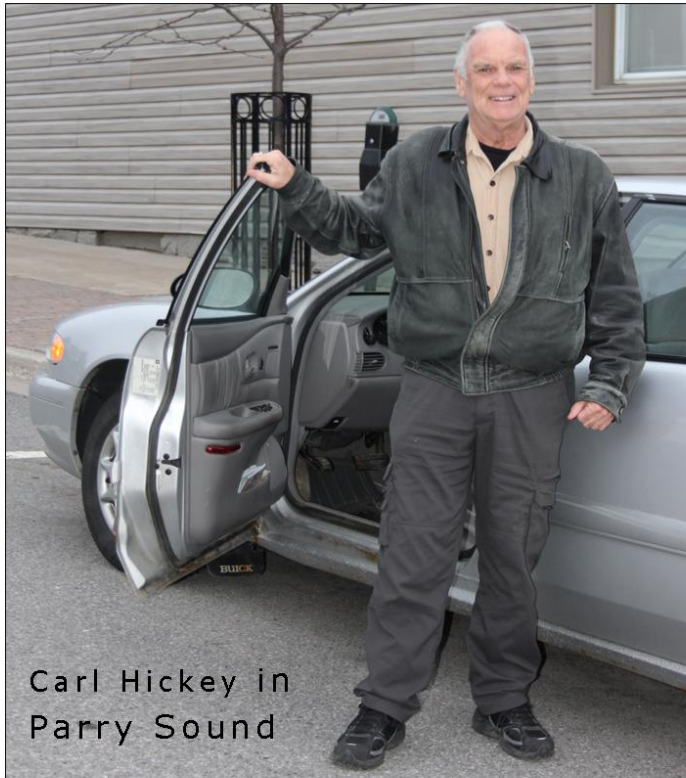
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Send content or comments to info@thefriends.on.ca

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Going the distance



Carl Hickey in
Parry Sound

Approaching 700 trips

Nearly 17 years ago Carl Hickey decided he wanted to help others get around. Since September 1997, he has made 691 trips, travelled 148,906 km. and devoted 3,135 hours as a volunteer driver with the Community Support Services Transportation. While his longest trip was to London, Ontario, the sights of Toronto, Barrie, North Bay, Sudbury, Gravenhurst, and Huntsville have all faded into history in his rear view mirror. Often his volunteer work is close to home in the Parry Sound area, as he ensures people are transported to doctors' visits and other important appointments. He's also busy making deliveries with the Meals On Wheels programs in the community where the arrival of his car and smiling face has become a reassuring sight.

Getting around in Port Loring

On the fourth Friday and second Saturday of each month, a group of Port Loring residents feel a lot less isolated.

Through the Port Loring Home Support program, those who find it difficult to travel outside the community are offered transportation to shopping malls in Powassan and North Bay. The transportation program initiated before Maureen Groves started as co-ordinator in 1998, has become an extremely important service to those who rely on it.

"I'm not being dramatic when I say it's their lifeline," Groves explains. "We're semi-isolated here. We're away from everything. The closest town is Powassan, 45 minutes from here."

The service has a handicapped-accessible van and school bus available, depending on the number of passengers taking the trips. Currently, the number averages six, but Groves anticipates this will increase. Users are primarily seniors and persons living on their own. To arrange a ride, contact the service at 705.757.2724. A \$10 fee is charged. The bus leaves at 9 a.m. on the fourth Friday taking residents to Powassan, and returning to Port Loring at 2 p.m. On the second Saturday, the bus leaves from Loring

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New van for Almaguin

Good news for the Almaguin Highlands in January was the arrival of a wheelchair accessible van. The van housed at the Burks Falls Health Centre services the Burks Falls area from South River to Novar and over to Magnetawan. It offers easy access to those in wheelchairs and frail elderly using walkers, providing them transportation to medical visits and other important appointments. For information about the van serving Almaguin Highlands, or other community support programs serving the entire East Parry Sound District, call the East Parry Sound Community Support Services Program at 1.888.521.000 or 705.724.6028. These include Meals On Wheels, Diners' Club and the volunteer driver program.

Port Loring

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at 9 a.m. taking residents to one or two malls in North Bay and returning by 4 p.m.

Home support program volunteer drivers take people to medical appointments in North Bay and Sudbury, as well as their home community, including the nursing station. Groves finds the nursing station a valuable source for referrals to the home support program's Meals On Wheels program, which can help those needing to supplement or maintain their nutrition levels.

As part of the home support program, Groves enjoys the occasional friendly visits with frail elderly in the community, checking on their safety and asking if they need any help.

Pampering close to home

Foot care services offered at Georgian Sunset Court

Since last summer, foot care services have been offered at Georgian Sunset Court, where residents have appreciated the convenience of care so close to home. Georgian Sunset Court resident Vi Whittaker relaxes above, during a treatment by Brianna Gagnon-Heil, a Personal Support Worker with *The Friends*, who is foot care certified. Foot care services are also offered at the Day Away Program.



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FRIENDLY FEEDBACK

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

- ☐ I would like to receive a copy of The Friends' newsletter.
- annual subscription fee \$7
- ☐ I would like to receive more information about The Friends' programs.
- ☐ I am interested in becoming a volunteer.
- ☐ I would like to make a contribution in the amount of \$
to support the ongoing work of The Friends.
- ☐ I would like to make a donation to the Gravenhurst building project.

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Return to:
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info@thefriends.on.ca