



THE FRIENDS

DIGNITY • TEAMWORK • INNOVATION • EMPOWERMENT

Friendly Focus

Spring 2023

Coming Together

Spring 2023 is here! Time to air out the curtains, pull out the gardening books or make plans for a summer vacation. For those of you experiencing difficulties with bending, stretching or managing equipment, check out page 6 for our article on **Adaptive Gardening**. No need to give up a favoured hobby.

A summer vacation doesn't have to be in some exotic place. Ontario is full of natural wonders and many parks now include accessible trails for seniors or individuals using assisted devices. Page 5 will provide information about some of Ontario's parks along with their accessible venues.

Although the worst of COVID seems to have passed, please consider those who are vulnerable and wear

a mask when appropriate. It's a thoughtful gesture and much appreciated.

Want to do something good for your world? There are many charities and agencies looking for your support. *The Friends* is a non-profit charity providing services and supports to individuals with long term health care needs—check out our web page for information www.thefriends.on.ca. Supporting *The Friends* is as easy as visiting our website and donating online or, you are welcome to do it the old fashioned way, by writing us a cheque. See page 4 for information about what is happening with donations to the agency.

Enjoy the sunshine and bring your ray of kindness to the world.



*Adult Day Program Clients Explore
Obie interactive Gaming*

It's Been a Busy Season at *The Friends!*



Mildred



Kate



Jackie



Barbara

Rebecca



Say hello to our entirely awesome
Muskoka staff



Michelle



Colleen



Laurie



Vicky



Sonja & Erica



Nicole



Sonja, Linda, Theresa & Shelley

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Happy 81 years young

THE FRIENDS

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The Friends newsletter can also be read online at
www.thefriends.on.ca

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

Supported by:



Ontario

North East Local Health
Integration Network

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

Didn't we just celebrate New Year's? How is it that spring and summer 2023 is now on our doorstep? Here at *The Friends* our staffing levels have improved although we are actively recruiting to increase our overall service delivery ability, open new programs and provide the really important care that supports our clients.

There is no better training ground for individuals interested in a career in health than to start as a Personal Support Worker. Personal Support Workers or PSWs, are the backbone of community level care and have a hands on understanding of health care on the front lines. PSWs have gone on to become nurses and in a

few cases, physicians. Those who have a background in community care, bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to any career they may choose to

explore. Community level care is never boring, always interesting and full of moments both fulfilling and happy as well as tragic and sad. Sit in a room with some PSWs and you will hear stories of triumph over terrible circumstances, courage in the face of sickness and disability and the everyday struggle to keep your head up when just managing the basics of life.

Working as a PSW is not for the faint



hearted. It is a job that requires empathy, good decision making skills and a commitment to quality service. I encourage anyone who truly wants to make a difference to consider a career on the frontlines! For information about programs and services delivered by PSWs have a look at our website www.thefriends.on.ca

Marliese Gause,
CEO

Fundraising

The Friends raised \$17,657.00 from April 1st to February 28th 2023. Some of your donations support seniors who would otherwise not be able to afford to participate in programs. We underwrite transportation and program costs so that money is not a barrier to participation. We are saving dollars for a new build in Muskoka....although we are still a long way from a large enough account to make this a reality. Still, we persist. The agency also wants to improve

the accessibility of its 141 Sharpe Street West Gravenhurst building through an elevator for tenants on the second floor as well as paving our very rocky, pitted driveway/parking area. Senior citizens visiting the Sharpe Street W site for programs have to endure the humpity bumpity ride to access programs. Your donations are meaningful to the communities we serve across Muskoka and Parry Sound. On behalf of the people benefiting from your generosity, **thank you.**

New this Fall, In Memoriam

The fall edition of *The Friendly Focus* newsletter will feature an in memoriam page, remembering loved ones who are lost to us.

If you have someone you wish to memorialize, please send us an email with the relevant information and a donation of your choice. Space will be limited, however if this proves to be popular, we will include as a feature in future editions.

HomeShare *Next Steps*

The Friends agency is working with Canada Homeshare to explore whether a Homeshare program would have real benefits for the communities served as well as exploring the measures needed to ensure the program is safe and successful for everyone involved.

The premise is that a senior living alone might benefit from sharing space with someone who is willing to provide some support & companionship in exchange for a very reasonable rent fee, a new friendship and some insights into the life experience of a senior. Both the senior and the person sharing the home have an opportunity to learn from one another.

During the spring, we will be exploring the nuts and bolts of the program to make sure that what we are embarking upon has the appropriate safe guards in place to ensure a successful, safe and mutually satisfactory experience for all participants.

Initially, we will be looking at students wanting to expand their horizons while attending post-secondary education as well as people who are working in the area on a temporary basis. If you

are a student or someone who will be working in Muskoka or Parry Sound on a short

term basis and are looking for accommodation, this might be a project for you. For information, connect with us via email, mgause@thefriends.on.ca.

The oldest Homeshare program is in Vermont where a group of seniors initiated the program in the 1980's and have continued to work with their communities for the benefit of all. Their success is an inspiration to all of us.

Participation by seniors will be a key factor in the success of the program. If you are a senior interested in helping us guide the process, to provide input and to ensure that we are not missing key elements in the program that would factor into its success or failure, please contact us at mgause@thefriends.on.ca. For information about our agency, check out our website - www.thefriends.on.ca



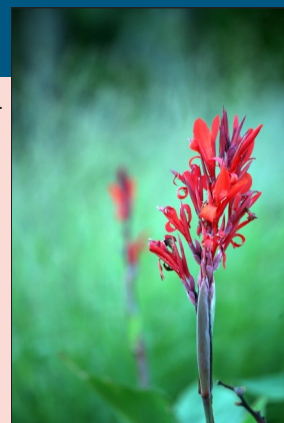
ACCESSIBLE TRAILS YOU CAN ENJOY

- **Rose Point Trail** from James Bay Junction Road to Rose Point Swing Bridge
- **Parry Sound Fitness Trail** (6.5 kms one way along Parry Sound Harbour and the shore of Georgian Bay)
- **Seguin Trail** Orrville east to Seguin Falls
- **Algonquin Logging Museum Trail.** This trail loops and exhibits summarizes the logging history of the Algonquin area. On the easy-to-walk 1.3-kilometre trail, a recreated camboose camp and a fascinating steam-powered amphibious tug called an "alligator" are among the many exhibits on display. This Trail is wheelchair accessible
- **Algonquin Park Spruce Bog Boardwalk** contains several boardwalk sections in this 1.5 km loop

trail that give you an excellent close-up look of two typical northern spruce bogs. The guide discusses their ecology. This trail is wheelchair accessible.

- **Limberlost Forest and Wildlife Preserve,** Muskoka (close to Huntsville) has 70 km of hiking/biking trails

• If you're a quilting enthusiast, you can visit the **Ryde Barn Quilt trail** in the Gravenhurst area, which was created in 2014 to honour the 135 year history



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of the Township of Ryde. You can drive the whole trail in about an hour. There are some side detours to see additional quilts. The website details the histories of the properties. All the barn quilts are on private property and are meant to be viewed from the road. Please drive carefully. Geocaching also present.

These are just a very few of the hiking trails available locally. Take the time to browse area websites for more information.



Adaptive Gardening Works With You

As we get older, some of our cherished hobbies become just a little more difficult to manage. Sore knees, stiff backs, arthritic hands can act as deterrents in continuing the activities we love. Instead of giving up something you care about, consider your options. Perhaps a large garden is no longer feasible, but that doesn't mean you can't consider manageable alternatives.

- raised container gardens reducing bending and kneeling
- window boxes are convenient, eliminate bending and kneeling. Be creative, you can grow strawberries, lettuces and herbs beside your flowers
- container gardens allow you to grow just about anything, even potatoes.

Remember that there are garden-



ing tools that can make the process easier. Here is a brief selection of available supports.

Look for garden shops/hardware stores for a **Five-Piece Ergonomic**



Garden Hand Tool. One such set by Radius Garden makes weed-

ing, digging, scooping and transplanting easier with its curved grips that prevent fatigue and wrist strain. This is especially important for those with weak hands or limited finger movement.

The shorter handles (8-1/2-inches) allow the visually impaired to work up close to the soil and plantings and feel one's way through the garden. The

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fluorescent purple color makes the tools easy to locate, even in the shade.

Cordless Shrub Shear/Hedge Trimmer Combo

Weighing a little more than a pound, the portable, handheld Cordless Rechargeable Two-in-One Shrub Shear and Hedge Trimmer Combo allows you to trim while standing, kneeling or sitting. The mounting plates with blades are easy to change — just switch out the hedge trimmer for the grass



Ratchet Pruning Shears

Requiring much less hand strength to operate than traditional clippers, the Gardener's Friend Ratchet Pruning Shears feature a distinctive ratchet mechanism based on leverage for quick and easy, one-handed cuts.



Garden Rocker Rolling Seat

The Garden Rocker Rolling Seat is one of the most ergonomic and comfortable garden scooters on the market. Why? It lets the seated gardener tilt forward to easily reach plants. And it rolls smoothly from side to side so they don't have to keep getting up and down. The seat height adjusts to allow more gardeners to do so independently.



Long Reach Garden Tools

Lightweight with extra long shafts, the Long Reach Garden Tools make digging in soil from a scooter or wheelchair easier. Work without bending over and straining your back with these stainless steel adaptive tools.



They feature non-slip handles (even when wet) with soft grips that are comfortable for arthritic hands. A set includes a hoe, cultivator, trowel and

fork. An optional Arm Support Cuff, sold separately, allows your forearm strength to act as a counter-balance for more comfort and better leverage when digging.

Garden Kneeler and Seat

If you spend prolonged periods of time gardening, a garden kneeler and seat can provide a cushy, foam knee pad. When turned over, it becomes a sturdy seat with handles. Made of strong steel tubing to support up to 300 lbs., the two-in-one convertible bench/knee cushion comes with two canvas side bags to hold gardening tools, a phone or water bottle. When not in use, this tool folds flat for space-saving storage. This kneeler/seat makes gardening more approachable and safer. Check your local hardware store for the model that best suits your needs.



Add-On Handles

PETA Easi-Grip Add-On Handles turn standard garden tools (with 2-1/2-in.-dia. shafts) into adaptive tools. These handles help you use your tools without straining your joints by keeping wrists and hands at a natural angle



Wheelchair-Accessible Elevated Garden Bed

Not all raised flower beds are created equal. Leveling the playing field is the Wheelchair Accessible Elevated Garden Bed by Gardener's Supply Company.

Though not technically a "garden tool," this ADA-compliant adaptive box provides ample wheelchair clearance underneath and features two shelves to accommodate various plant root lengths. Constructed of sturdy, pressure-treated cedar or cypress, tend plants from the furthest corners without uncomfortable or dangerous overreaching.



Adult Day Away Program Goes High Tech

One of the programs that was seriously impacted by COVID was *The Friends'* Adult Day program. This program provides caregiver respite while at the same time giving participants an opportunity to socialize, exercise in a safe environment and enjoy stimulating

activities that are designed to maintain best possible health. Unfortunately, due to risk to participants during the worst of the COVID pandemic, programs were often cancelled and in some cases, shut down for extended periods of time.

In order to continue to support this vulnerable population and their caregivers, *Friends'* staff began to explore alternative ways to deliver the program, and discovered that we could provide programming to many of our clients through the magic of ZOOM. This was not without its challenges.

Not all clients or caregivers had access to a Wi-Fi or tablets/computers, however *The Friends* agency was able to purchase some tablets and Mi-Fi to support connectivity and those were provided to clients

who expressed an interest in learning a new way of communicating. Of course, not everyone was a fan. For some of our seniors/caregivers' learning and managing new technology was a very challenging process, a process that was supported through staff



assistance in learning how to use ZOOM and has now become a part of their regular schedules allowing for a more structured way of planning their day. In the beginning zoom was provided three days a week for short sessions in morning or afternoon which provided some flexibility to clients

with respect to whether they wanted to participate to play games and exercise or whether they just wanted to log in to say "hi." They like the fact that they did not need to wear a mask or worry about

inclement weather. Living in the north always involves snow days resulting in cancelled services. Using zoom we can still provide a program for clients as well as an abbreviated form of Respite for caregivers.

Caregivers feel comfortable going about their daily routine knowing that their loved ones are safe and engaged in activities while staff keep their loved ones engaged.

When adult day away programs re-opened, clients expressed a strong desire to maintain the zoom program with the result that it is now being offered five days a week. Clients can join in with the adult day away program

for games like bingo, exercise, hangman and music with our volunteers.

The agency was able to purchase an OBIE program to make fun and games even more interactive for



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clients. OBIE is a new technology projector which provides an interactive play-ground which accesses up to 300 games. It works with a sensor which can be adapted to the physical abilities of the clients. Games can be projected on the floor, table or wall. This has been a wonderful addition for the participants. The games can be played one-on-one or in a collaborative setting. At present we are using the floor model of Obie with pool noodles which allows all to participate. How do our clients feel about the new technology?

Our Clients Tell us What they Think!

“Wonderful. Love the competitive part of the games.” Another participant had the following to say about using technology in Adult Day programs, “OBIE is great for range of motion. Both above significantly affect our daily lives in a very positive manner. All the Zoom days are highly anticipated by Pearl and me. First, they break up the monotony of usually drab days and it is stimulating to see her engage with staff and



Heather Becker gussied up by OBIE Bloom

clients in a variety of enjoyable and sometimes thought-provoking activities. The laughter and chit chat among the group flows naturally and fills the room. Much love and care permeate these sessions, even during bingo. This program certainly helps to stimulate Pearl in ways that, I as a caregiver, can't provide so regularly and often. It serves as a daily and essential stimulus for us. I am also pleased at the way Pearl engages in the exercises. The opportunity to share Zoom time with the other

ADAP is also helpful and the music is cheery and enjoyable when provided. Of course, what would the program be without BINGO!! I truly believe that the Zoom opportunities are a blessing for both the caregiver and the participants and am thankful for it and appreciate the planning and work that is done by staff in bringing it to our home. ADAP is also an extremely beneficial addition to our life. Tuesday is the sole day Pearl pops out of bed at first call to be on time for the early (for her) pick-up. She seems to enjoy all

aspects of the program and speaks highly of each day. Never a complaint. The treatment, understanding, and concern from staff are evident and appreciated. It is a day for me to join with friends, catch up on chores and, in good weather, to enjoy a round of care-free golf.”



Three Easy Steps to Manage Meal Planning for Seniors

1. Make a plan and write it down. Sit down on a Sunday and plan your meals for the entire week. Check out grocery store sales/offers when planning. Post your list in a place that you can easily access/remember.



2. If you have family or friends close by, enlist their help from time to time by making meal prep a group project. You can visit, enjoy each other's

vegetables can be washed, cut and stored in airtight containers in the fridge. Pre-prepared items will make cooking your meal a snap!

company and have meals ready for the week ahead.

3. Prepare versatile ingredients for the week ahead, for example if you are using quinoa or rice, cook enough for the meals you are planning and store in the refrigerator. Some

Bill of Rights

Courtesy, Respect and Freedom from Abuse. A person receiving a community service has the right to be dealt with by the service provider in a courteous and respectful manner and to be free from mental, physical and financial abuse by the service provider.

Privacy and Freedom to Make Your Own Decisions. A person receiving community service has a right to be dealt with by the service provider in a manner that respects the person's dignity and privacy and that promotes the person's autonomy.

Being an Individual. A person receiving community service has a right to be dealt with by the service provider in a manner that recognizes that persons' needs and preferences, including preference based on ethnic, spiritual, linguistic, familial and cultural factors.

Information and Answers. A person receiving community service has a right to information about the community services provided to him or her and to be told who will be providing the community services.

Participation in Their Care Decisions. A person applying to community services has a right to participate in the service provider's assessment of his or her requirements and a person who is determined under this Act to be eligible for a community service has the right to participate in the service provider's development of the person's plan of service, the service provider's review of the person's requirements and the service provider's evaluation and revision of the person's plan of service.

Control and Consent. A person has the right to refuse consent to provision of any community service.

Freedom to Speak Out. A person receiving community service has a right to raise concerns or recommend changes in connection with the community service provided to him or her in connection with policies and decisions that affect his or her interests to the service provider, government officials or any other person without fear of interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal.

Knowing the Rules. A person receiving community service has the right to be informed of the laws, rules and policies affecting the operation of the service provider and to be informed in writing of the procedures for initiating complaints about the service provider.

Confidentiality. A person receiving community service has the right to have his or her records kept confidential in accordance with the law.

Resources

Eastholme Community Support Services

(Congregate Dining/Meals on Wheels/Volunteer Transportation) epscssp@ontera.net
705.724.6028 1.888.521.0000 www.eastholme.ca

West Parry Sound District

Community Support Services (Congregate Dining/Meals on Wheels/Volunteer Transportation)
705.746.5602 1.800.883.0058 belvedereheights.com
aholloway@belvedereheights.com

NE Home & Community Care

705.746.4602 1.800.440.6762
www.healthcareathome.ca/northeast

North Simcoe Muskoka Home & Community Care

705.721.8010 Ext. 6100 Toll Free: 1.888.721.2222
Ex 6100 www.healthcareathome.ca/nsm

Alzheimer Society of Muskoka

Serving Muskoka & Parry Sound
1.800.605.2075
www.alzheimermuskoka.ca

Port Loring (Meals on Wheels & Volunteer Transport) 705.757.2530

Muskoka/Parry Sound Mental Health Services

www.mpscmhs.on.ca
Bracebridge: 705.645.2262 Fax 705.645.7473
Huntsville: 705.789.8891 Fax:705.789.3002
Parry Sound: 705.746.4264; Fax:705.746.1537 Toll Free:1.866.829.7049

Crisis Lines:

Muskoka and area: 1.888.893.8333
Parry Sound and area, incl. Sundridge:
1.800.461.5424

Ontario Renovates, District of Muskoka – Assistance for Accessibility Modifications 1.800.461.4210

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit – flu clinics/health information 1.877.721.7520

Walk in Clinic Bracebridge Medical Ctr.
705.646.7634

Scams and Frauds – Crime Stoppers –
1.800.222.8477

Senior's Programs & Services Muskoka
705.645.2100 ext.199

McConnell Foundation Muskoka – Financial Assistance for eye glasses/assistive devices/dentures/dental 705.645.2412

Muskoka Senior's (Meals on Wheels, Transportation (Huntsville and area), Congregate dining)
705.789.6676

Red Cross - Transportation (South Muskoka) 705.721.3313 ext. 5602

Elder Abuse – Senior's Safety Line – call if you are being mistreated, bullied or neglected 1.888.299.1011

Assistive Device Exchange A.D.E. – Data base of devices for sale or free
www.Assistivedeviceexchange.com



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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 Muskoka Building project.

You can now donate online. Click on the Canada Helps logo on our website
www.thefriends.on.ca

Name:

Mailing address:

Telephone number: Email:

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info@thefriends.on.ca