



THE FRIENDS

DIGNITY • TEAMWORK • INNOVATION • EMPOWERMENT

Friendly Focus

Winter 2023

It's That Time of the Year Again

Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of the Friendly Focus. On behalf of the agency, I would like to thank all of our communities for their support and to wish everyone a happy, healthy holiday season. This edition of the newsletter not only celebrates the season, but welcomes a positive look at the sometimes dreary mid-winter months that follow. Enjoy tips, information and resources, recipes and some fun. We aim to support seniors, caregivers and people dealing with physical limitations as well as the community that supports them. For information about programs and services in your community, check out page 11. For information about *The Friends* agency and the services we provide, check out our website, www.the.friends.on.ca. A brief description of what we do is available on page 3. Here are a few highlights of our Winter 2024 issue: insights into making a difference in your community (see page 5), dealing with loneliness, gift

giving, recipes and, given our long, gray winter days, how to beat the Wintertime Blues. If you would like to subscribe to the newsletter, just fill out the back page and send to us. Alternatively, you can connect via our website. The Friendly Focus is published quarterly and can be mailed directly to you or accessed online. You can donate online to further support the work of the agency in your community.

A special note of appreciation to donors in the community who have been so generous over the past year. Your contribution helps us support elderly persons and those dealing with mobility issues access transportation and community programs that make a difference. A "shout out" to all of our readers and supporters - your kindness makes the world a better place for all.

Wishing our community, caregivers and families a very happy holiday and a healthy, prosperous New Year. May 2024 bring you much luck and happiness.



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



The crews that managed to save the Titanic at our first All Staff meeting in what feels like an age. Congratulations teams!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 4 *From the CEO's Desk*
- Donations Make A Difference*
- 5 *Long Service Awards*
- Make A Difference*
- 6 *Loneliness*
- 7 *Gifts from the Heart*
- Holiday Greetings*
- 8 *How to Beat the Blues*
- 9 *Festive Cheeseball Recipe*
- Difference in Community*
- 10 *Fun Facts*
- Resources*
- 11 *Help Wanted*
- Bill of Rights*
- 12 *Please Provide us with your Friendly Feedback*



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

THE FRIENDS

Dignity • Teamwork
Innovation • Empowerment

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

From the CEO's Desk

For the first time in three years the agency was able to celebrate the achievements of our staff in person. What a pleasure to honour long service award recipients - staff who have faithfully "stuck with us" over the course of many years. Certificates for the completion of training were also awarded. To top the day off, all of us participated in a very unique "Save the Titanic" team building exercise. In this time of staffing shortages and ongoing HR crisis, there was something special about staff teams busy working together to

"save the Titanic" when we all know, that each and everyone has been responsible for making sure the needs of the people we serve in the community continued to be met. As the New Year approaches, the Senior Management Team and I will be working on a number of initiatives to better support the people we serve. At our 141 Sharpe Street W. building in Gravenhurst, we will be installing a chairlift to ease access to the second floor apartments for our elderly tenants. An application to the Trillium Foundation has been submitted, and if approved, will mean that the agency, in partnership with the University of Waterloo, will

be exploring underserved rural communities to identify and meet community level health care needs. In the meantime, like all healthcare providers in the province, we will continue to recruit, train and mentor staff keeping fingers crossed that they will find a "home" in our agency.

Wishing all clients, staff and Board members a wonderful, festive holiday full of laughter, good company and good food. May your 2024 bring good health, a little bit of wealth and a lot of happiness.

Marliese Gause,
CEO

Your Donations Made a Difference

Looking back on our fundraising efforts for 2023, it's clear that we did a few things right (see the chart below.) The challenge for 2024 will be how to engage readers, communities, families in continuing to support the efforts of the agency to raise funds. A significant portion of the funds we raise directly support seniors and individuals with disabilities in attending programs and accessing transportation. As many of you are aware, seniors and individuals with physical limitations are often struggling to make ends meet so, the funds raised support transportation costs and the ability to access Adult Day Programs. Adult Day

programs not only support the individual actively participating but the partners or family members who have a day to themselves.

The Friends continues to raise funds to improve accessibility at 141 Sharpe St. W, Gravenhurst as well as at Forest Hill Apartments in Parry Sound.

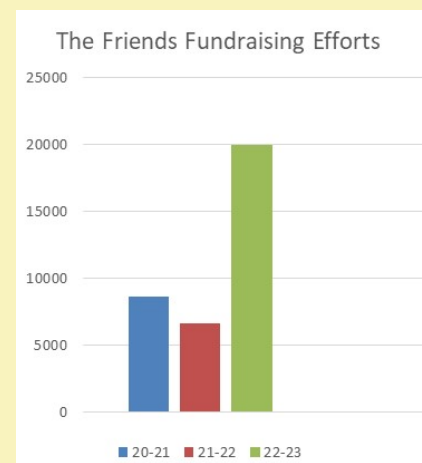
A long term dream, is to build another fully accessible, supportive housing complex which is still somewhere on the horizon and we continue to raise funds in the hope that we can develop much needed housing resources.

The long and the short of it is that every dollar you donate

means a lot. We do not use expensive public relations companies....your donation goes directly to support the initiatives described above.

Help us support the communities we serve with your donations. You truly make a difference.

A big, warm thank you and wishes for a happy, healthy and successful 2024.



The Friends Long Service Award Recipients

Congratulations to staff for standing by us for three years!

Marsha Rivers
Cathy Krieger
Linda Galbraith
Tonya Gagnon
Alison Buttineau

Not Pictured:
Barbara
Fielding,
Jacklyn Kiehl



And please join us in congratulating the balance of our long service award recipients:

5 Years of Service: Robin Stainton, Shelley Lacosse, Penny Knapp; **10 Years Service:** Shelly Hazzard, Vicky Holm; **15 Years of Service:** Heather Hebner; **25 Years of Service:** Sylvie Quelha

Yes You Can Make a Difference

Listening to the news is often an exercise in frustration and sadness. In this world so filled with anger, outright cruelty and degradation it becomes all too easy to just throw your hands up in despair. You, however are the key to changing the negative script. Here are some simple steps to create a more serene life while at the same time, making a difference in your community

- turn off the news and reduce your time on social networks
- stop knee jerk reactions to headlines and think, research and discuss
- find a cause you can support - green initiatives, local food, food banks, community housing, seniors, low income families, school programs, health initiatives, historical societies, etc. There is something for every interest and conviction
- Decide how you want to contribute - support

through a modest monthly donation, give by donating your services, support fundraising projects in your community, spread the news and be kind to others

Although *The Friends* is always looking for community support, we recognize that there are many groups that could use your help. Below are other worthy causes you may wish to espouse:

- Hospice
- Food Co-op
- Food Banks
- Libraries
- Community Transportation Agencies
- Health Care Providers
- Churches
- Arts Programs

You can make a difference. You can be a candle in the darkness.

Loneliness

Although the glitter and nostalgia of Christmas can lift spirits, it can also highlight a profound sense of loneliness. For those living alone or in circumstances that are personally challenging, loneliness can be the poison pill of the season. Studies have shown that extreme loneliness can increase an older person's chances of an earlier death by a whopping 14%. In fact, some studies have shown that loneliness is as bad as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day. Definitely a scary statistic.

Many seniors find themselves increasingly isolated as they age. Friends pass away, children live far from home and spouses may have passed away or are suffering from ill health.

Getting out of the house becomes more and more of a chore and before you know it you find yourself sitting at home alone in a silent house or apartment.

Loneliness and social isolation are no laughing matter as the studies on aging have clearly spelled out for us. Even though it may take some extra effort, it is worthwhile to spend some time and energy in remaining connected to your community.

Here are some tips to keep your social life healthy and your loneliness at bay.

1. Get acquainted with your



computer. Learn how to safely navigate the internet - check with your local library for information, tutorials or other learning supports. You can join groups of interest - whether it's knitting, chess or scientific discoveries, there's something for everyone's particular niche of interest. Use Facetime or other similar programs to remain connected to family and friends, in fact, make a point of scheduling regular chats!

2. Are you anti-social by inclination? Have you always relied on your spouse to put the "zing" into your social life? Well, it's time to get out of your armchair and resolve to connect with a minimum of one person a day, even if that means you're chatting up the local barista.
3. Go for a walk, smile at people and be open to conversation. Ask questions. Show an interest in others.
4. Volunteer! Offer your volunteer support - even one hour per week can both serve your community and keep you connected with others.

Contact your local seniors' centres, schools or food banks for information about volunteering opportunities.

5. Consider your interests. Find a group or club that shares your passion. Here are just a few ideas to think about:

- local birdwatcher groups
- book clubs
- local outings/hikes/nature walks
- gaming groups
- movie clubs
- vintage car aficionados
- sports

6. Commit to learning something new this year; take language lessons, learn how to cook/bake, take dancing lessons or yoga.

7. Get a pet. Dogs are especially helpful in easing the stress of loneliness with a side benefit of getting you outside to take them for a walk.

8. Stop complaining.

9. Invite someone to join you for a coffee break. Keep it simple, a beverage, a cookie and a bit of conversation but most of all:

DON'T WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE. Be proactive.

Everyone has a different level of interest in social activities. Some people are content to live relatively solitary lives while others need social stimulation to feel alive and well. Whatever your personal inclination, make an effort to maintain at least a minimal connection with others to keep you from becoming a sour, grumpy old hermit.

Gifts from the Heart

Creative gift giving doesn't have to be expensive. Here are some thoughtful ideas for any season:

- someone who still likes communicating the old fashioned way (ie pen and paper) purchase a package of attractive note paper, add pre-printed address labels for family and friends along with a package of stamps
- create a special scrap book for an elderly relative by contacting his/her best friends, siblings, school chums or work colleagues. Ask them for stories and pictures they might be willing to share. Assemble and share!
- gift cards for restaurants or other services
- help an elderly relative organize photo albums, help create an online version that can be shared.
- send a recording of your grandchild or favourite relative reading a story/greeting or reminiscence to a loved one
- a gift certificate for car maintenance, ie an oil and lube
- arranging for snow clearing for an elderly relative or friend
- give a gift in their honour, ie a donation to a hospice, community support agency, food bank or other worthy cause
- gift certificate for a spa treatment!
- make a commitment to visit on a regular basis.

Something to celebrate!

National Cookie Exchange week - December 19th to 23rd

Worldwide Candle Lighting Day (largest mass candlelighting on the globe) December 10th

National Ugly Christmas Sweater day - December 16th



Happy Holidays

From Management and Staff of The Friends

Marliese Gause Linda Tiido Theresa Michell Marsha Rivers

How to Beat the Blues

Julianna McLeod from the All Seniors Centre has the following recommendations for managing the dark days of winter.

While the dark and cold winter months can make anyone feel glum, older adults and those with dementia are especially at risk. With a few precautions however, you can stay happy and healthy through the frigid times ahead. Follow these 5 tips to beat SAD and the blues.

1. Let in the Light

First and foremost, make a plan to get outside during the short hours of sun. Sunshine is vital to feeling healthy and happy. Direct sunlight provides us with Vitamin D, which boosts the immune system, improves bone health, and regulates mood.

On days when it's too cold to go outside, keep your curtains open and spend as much time as you can near the windows. Even if it's cloudy, getting some daylight can help you feel better.

2. Let's Get Physical

Regular exercise is one of the best things you can do to keep the blues and SAD symptoms at bay. A natural mood enhancer, even short periods of exercise can work wonders. It supports overall cognitive function and increases the number of feel-good neurotransmitters released by the brain. Moderate exercise such as walking, riding a stationary bike or swimming are a great way to get started. But any activity that raises your heart rate—including daily chores—can help, especially if you can do them outdoors or near a sunny window.

There are a multitude of exercise programs available across the Districts of Parry Sound and Muskoka. Look up your local municipality for information and locations in your area.

3. Stay Socially Engaged

You might not feel like a social butterfly at the moment, but seniors who remain socially connected also report having better mental

health. So, make it a goal to keep up with social activities by joining in on workshops, exercise classes and events. Other ways to stay connected this winter are to call or FaceTime with a loved one or send out a letter.

4. Get Into the Right Mindset

Scandinavian nations, such as Denmark, which endure some of the longest and bleakest winters on the planet, embrace the concept of hygge. The idea is to get cozy and spend time inside with friends and family. Create a sensory kind of pleasantness in your space.

How? Look for ways to bring things into your environment that will counteract the dullness of winter.

- Treat yourself to fresh flowers.
- Listen to music you love.
- Elevate your mood with tactile experiences like touching something soft, like a blanket or scarf.
- Nurture your spirit with a good book or gratitude journal.
- Or experiment with essential oils. Citrus scents, like grapefruit and tangerine, are great for positive mood boosting.

5. Maintain a Healthy Diet

We've all felt the allure of "comfort food" during fall and winter—pumpkin spice, apple crisp, chicken pot pie, chili or mac and cheese. The problem with many comfort food favourites is that they tend to be on the fattier side, and often loaded with carbs and sugar.

While there's no harm in indulging in the occasional treat, a healthy diet can ward off the blues by keeping you energized. So, make sure that vitamin and mineral rich fruits and vegetables are well represented in your diet.

Did you know that calling 211 can provide you with a wealth of information about services in your area? Try it, you'll like it!

Festive Cheese Ball Recipe

The perfect companion to assorted crackers and crisp breads!

1 pkg (8 oz. cream cheese, softened)
 ½ cup milk
 2 cups each of shredded Monterey Jack and sharp Cheddar cheeses
 ¼ cup crumbled blue cheese
 10 slices bacon, crisp cooked, crumbled and divided
 ¼ cup finely chopped pecans, divided
 ¼ cup finely minced green onions (white parts only)
 1 jar (2 oz) diced pimento, drained
 salt and pepper

¼ cup minced fresh parsley
 1 tbsp poppy seeds

- beat cream cheese and milk in a large bowl with an electric mixer on low speed until blended. Add cheeses. Beat at medium speed until well mixed. Add half of the crumbled bacon, half of the pecans, half green onions and half pimento. Beat at medium speed until well mixed. Add salt and pepper to taste.
- transfer half of the cheese mixture to a large piece of plastic wrap. Shape into a ball, wrap tightly. Repeat with remaining mixture.

Refrigerate until chilled (2 hours)

- Crumble remaining bacon, pecans with parsley and poppy seeds on a pie plate or large dinner plate. Remove plastic wrap from cheese balls, roll in bacon mixture until well coated. Wrap each ball tightly in plastic wrap, refrigerate until ready to serve.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY COME WORK FOR US

The Friends agency is always looking for individuals interested in supporting the work we do in the community. We are looking for:

- Support staff in Muskoka including PSWs.
- Volunteers across the region for support in Adult Day Programs or other recreational opportunities. If you enjoy merriment and a day of laughter, volunteer with us.
- Support staff in the Parry Sound area to help us expand community programs

To inquire about Muskoka opportunities, contact Theresa Michell at tmichell@thefriends.on.ca

To inquire about staffing or volunteer opportunities in the Parry Sound area, contact Linda Tiido at ltiido@thefriends.on.ca

Even working for one day a week whether as a volunteer or staff member can make a difference.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.



Fun Facts!

- According to a recent survey, seven out of ten British dogs get Christmas presents from their owners.
- During the Christmas season, Visa cards alone are used an average of 5,340 times every minute in the United States.
- Electric Christmas lights were first used in 1895. The idea for using electric Christmas lights came from an American, Ralph E. Morris. The new lights proved safer than the traditional candles
- In Britain, eating mince pies at Christmas dates back to the 16th century. It is still believed that to eat a mince pie on each of the Twelve Days of Christmas will bring happy months in the year to follow.
- In Mexico, more grapes are sold prior to New Year's Eve than at any other time of year. This is because it's traditional in Mexico to eat a grape at each of the twelve seconds counting down towards New Year!
- The Danes hold a tradition of throwing plates at the front door of family and friends' homes to welcome good fortune for the new year.

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



THE FRIENDS

DIGNITY • TEAMWORK • INNOVATION • EMPOWERMENT



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.

Your donations help us:

- underwrite transportation/program cost for low income seniors
- pave the driveway at our Gravenhurst facility
- install an elevator to increase accessibility of The Friends apartments in Gravenhurst
- build Muskoka Accessible Supportive Housing

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

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Return to:

**The Friends • 27 Forest St • Parry Sound
Ontario • P2A 2R2 • 1.888.746.5102
info@thefriends.on.ca**