



Bowmont Seniors Assistance Association
Annual Report
2017

To be presented at the Annual General Meeting, May 16, 2018

“We are not defined by the children we once were, but by the men and women we have become.”

Dee Snider, vocalist, Twisted Sister (a heavy metal band from the 1980's)

Bowmont Seniors Assistance Association (BSAA)

About Us

Over the association's 45-year-history as a group of volunteers in the Bowness, Montgomery and Greenwood Village areas of Northwest Calgary, we have always been seniors helping seniors.

Our small board of senior citizens works diligently to help seniors by addressing issues that concern seniors and assist in creating community solutions so that seniors may live in health, comfort and dignity.

Through a formal partnership with Carya (formerly Calgary Family Services) and with less formal but no less strong links to other agencies and individuals on a similar mission, we have and continue to make a difference in these neighbourhoods.

When we started back in the 1970s, our volunteer board members helped seniors fill in complicated government forms, access whatever social programs seniors in the neighbourhoods needed and qualified for and helped people fill in and file their income tax forms. Over the years, the board members saw a need for social workers to deal with more complex issues in the seniors' lives, so they hired experts and then did everything they, as a board, could – from quilt raffles to cookie sales to 50-50 draws to raise money to pay salaries.

While the social work side of what we have always done has been taken over by Carya, its outreach workers and other social service agencies, we as a board are still busy, still challenged and still engaged in helping make seniors' lives better.

The issues haven't changed. There is still poverty, financial and person abuse, scams, isolation and ill health out there, in our chosen neighbourhoods and elsewhere. Through social advocacy and supporting Carya's elder adult program, our board has helped many people live more comfortably in their neighbourhoods. There is much more to be done.

We are a voice for seniors. We have long-time connections to some great people and agencies. We can and do make a difference.

Tea and Conversation (T&C)

In conjunction with Carya, BSAA hosts an afternoon tea and conversation event on the fourth Tuesday of the month. T&C is an event that gives isolated and lonely seniors a place they can come, enjoy a cup of tea, a snack and a chat as well as live music from yesteryear. Many of the participants are clients of the Carya staff.

For approximately 60 seniors, it's a highlight of their month. Held in the sunny front room of the Bowness Seniors' Centre, it's a lively, welcoming and non-threatening event. It's also free for attendees.

T& C is truly a community event. The hall is loaned to us by the Bowness Seniors. The Rockpointe Church volunteers serve and clean up for us. For the past two years, they have provided a ham dinner for attendees at the last T&C before Christmas (in November). Simon House participants put away the tables and chairs after the event. Carya outreach staff are around to greet participants and informally chat to them about issues and services they can provide, while keeping a trained eye out for bigger problems. Past and present Board members mingle and look after the popular 50-50 draw.

In 2017, we as a board asked participants to fill in a survey on their thoughts on the event. Virtually all wanted to remain as a social event, with only a few necessary announcements. They like the food (bread, cheese, sweets, tea and coffee) and the ambiance. They want to continue with the 50/50 draw. They like the music. They want to chat and meet new and old friends. They don't want a lot of information sessions, although they appreciate being informed if a major change is coming. They like to be reminded of annual events, like the tax clinics at Carya's Bowmont office. Most wanted to be called and reminded each month about the event. They don't want to play games, cards or have big information sessions at the event.

We asked about transportation. While we don't have the money to provide transportation to and from the event, we know it is an issue for some who would like to come regularly and can't get there.

Calgary Herald Christmas Fund

In 2014, The Calgary Herald awarded BSAA \$95,150 from their Christmas Fund Campaign of 2013. The money was to be used in Carya's Older Adult Programs who are in dire financial need on a one-time emergency basis.

When we received the money, a decision was made to mete out the money over a 10-year period. The rest of the money is cautiously invested in Guaranteed Income Certificates (GICs).

Carya outreach workers decide how the money is used.

The money from the fund has allowed outreach workers to make the lives of the clients a little easier. There is no other funding for emergencies that often are very small but \$50 can be insurmountable when there is not enough money for food that month or a prescription refill.

This past year, we spent \$4,000. As of the end of 2017, we have spent a total of 29,027 since we received the money. This leaves a balance of \$66,123. We have budgeted to use about \$10,000 per year, so we have funds for some future years.

The Bowness Seniors Constellation

2017 saw the development of an exciting liaison with other Northwest Calgary groups offering social services to Bowness, Montgomery and Greenwood Village seniors. While many of the groups/individuals have been operating in the area for years under various banners and mandates, this year we banded together and meet once a month to share concerns and look for common ground where we can pull together.

The group consists of MLA Deborah Drever and her assistant Harrison Clarke, the President of Bowness Seniors Association, a representative from Bow Centre Place, representatives from Greenwood Village, Carya staff, a City of Calgary social worker, a representative from the University of Calgary nursing school (who trains nursing students working in the community) and our president. It's an exciting opportunity to share information and get information out into the community. The Constellation allows us to tap into other willing and like-minded groups.

In 2017, we met several times, getting to know each other, then started to work as a team. In March, 2018, we, as a group, held one info session on Fraud. We are planning further information sessions as the year progresses.

This is an ideal way for us to share our passion and fulfill our mandate to help seniors.

Seniors Week Event

The board was asked to participate in a provincial Seniors' Week event, June 5th, 2017 at Bowness Community Hall. Approximately 400 seniors attended. Our association had a booth, as did Carya, Bowness Seniors, Age-Friendly Calgary, and Confederation Park, Calgary Police Services amongst others... We handed out our new discount sheets and CEMA information kits for how to organize for potential emergencies. We also had a draw for several emergency preparedness backpacks, worth about \$75 each.

Emergency Preparedness (e-prep)

Our Carya liaison, Kim Savard, has kept us abreast of the challenges and progress of the E-Prep program, developed after the 2013 flood. Several of our board members have taken the training to be part of the group of trained professionals who can go out to train/aid in the training of people who want to know how to deal with emergencies in their lives – flood, fire, evacuation, etc.

Discount Sheets

In January 2017, we launched our discount sheets. Board members developed the idea of capturing discounts offered to seniors by businesses in our area – from 30% off purchases on Tuesdays at Value Village to a once a month discount of 20% at Shoppers Drug Mart and all kinds of discounts in between. With the help of Carya office staff, the sheets have been updated quarterly. They are highly popular and appreciated. The sheets have both our logo and Carya's. The sheets have found their way into the Go Getters' newsletters, the bulletin

board at Bowness Seniors and assorted seniors homes and seniors-friendly apartment buildings.

Hearing Loss/Hearing Aid Recycling

In 2016, we met with Dr. Carrie Scarff of Audiology Innovations. She wanted to partner with us to set up a pilot project to recycle hearing aids. We enthusiastically said yes, then started looking into what was needed. There were two hiccups right off the start. We hoped to apply for a New Horizon grant to help us get the needed money to administer a program and create/set up boxes in nursing homes, etc., so people could donate hearing aids no longer needed. This didn't work. The grants prohibit using the money for hearing aids. We need to find another source of funding.

The second challenge was that the Lions Club collects hearing aids, along with donated pairs of glasses. These are sent to the third world through their club. Our Vice-President, Margaret Hildebrand, met with the Lions Club representative in the Calgary area, who has agreed to give us the donated hearing aids that meet our criteria. So far, this has not had much movement. We will continue to explore this challenge.

There is a real need for a program like this in the community.

Casino

Traditionally, we have a casino every 16-18 months. 2017 was our off year for casino. There is one scheduled for spring, 2018.

Most of the proceeds from the Casino go to support the salary of an outreach worker specializing in seniors' issues through Carya. A minor amount is kept back for our administration costs, like board insurance.

Bylaws

We thought we had the by-laws revamped and ready to go to the province for approval at the last AGM, in April, 2017. We sent them off and once some minor changes were made the by-laws were approved and registered.

BSAA Website

Our BSAA website is approximately 15 years old and in dire need of a re-do. Lana Berrington, past-president Ella Berrington's daughter, has offered to help us with this task. Lana sent us a rough proposal in mid-2017, sparking us to look closely at who we are, what we want to say and what links we want to put on the website. The work is ongoing and should be finished before fall, 2018.

Seniors' Advocacy

It's been a busy year for us. Our president and vice president, along with Kim Savard, met with the new president of Bowness Seniors in the spring.

We also met with Darcy Walsh, a former social worker trying to get a group like BSAA off the ground in East Village.

We explored assorted ideas for trying to get some help on transportation for getting people to T&C. So far, we have no good answers.

We wrote a letter of thanks to the United Way for their \$5,000 contribution to Silver Alert, letting them know what amazing events have come from a small donation.

Kim and Kerry met with Alberta Minister for Seniors Lori Sigurdson at a breakfast meeting, along with MLA Deborah Drever and a few other folks, to talk generally about issues concerning seniors.

We wrote a letter to Minister Sigurdson and MLA Drever supporting Bill 210 in the Alberta Legislature. It was a private member's bill to allow police to release critical information in a timely manner when a senior wandered or went missing. The bill was approved unanimously by the entire House. BSAA's name was raised and a portion of our letter was read aloud. Our part in the movement to have a Silver Alert-type program in our city and province were acknowledged.

Silver Alert

Silver Alert, a program in many states in the US, is a way to track missing or wandering seniors who have Alzheimer's or dementia. In a system often based on Amber Alert criteria for missing children, this program cannot be found anywhere in Canada.

In 2015, we asked for and received a grant from The United Way to look into what is happening across Canada, what is happening in the US and other western world countries. Through 2016, we received reports from our researcher and met with assorted stakeholders in Calgary – from the Calgary Police to Carya to the Alzheimer's Society and others. All agreed it was an important project to pursue.

In late 2016 we passed it on to the Age Friendly Calgary group with the City of Calgary. Our Carya Liaison, Kim Savard has stayed as a key member of the group and brings us updates on the project at regular intervals.

The project is moving along and Calgary will be beta testing a Silver Alert type program in the Spring, 2018.

Although the ongoing development of a Silver Alert program has passed from our hands into those more skilled, with financial resources and reach to carry the torch, we are still interested in what is happening on this.

As mentioned above, Bill 210 was passed in our provincial legislature in December 2017. A backbencher proposed the bill, which gives police power to release information on a lost or wandering senior so that the public and key stakeholders can look for these folks effectively. As part of our advocacy roll, we wrote a letter to Seniors' Minister Lori Sigurdson asking that she and her government support the bill. The bill passed unanimously in December, 2017. Our letter was read out in part in the legislature and our association was acknowledged as a leader in the push for help for wandering seniors in Alberta.

Financials

As in previous years, our volunteer board member and accountant, Ross Fujino has provided expert and excellent support to us as a board. He keeps our books, ensures that the money is managed appropriately by the bank, deals with Carya requests for cheques to be signed and keeps us on track.

Our auditor from past years, Stu Kinsey, has retired. This year, our auditor is Shahid Naqi Professional Corporation.

Future

As with life, little is certain. However, we are on a strong trajectory, buoyed by a strong team, great support from many people and a passion for trying to help make seniors' lives easier.

Our partnership with Carya remains strong. They are our eyes and ears into the issues of the elderly. As seniors from Northwest Calgary, we have our own experiences to add to the mix. Our links with Bowness Seniors, Rockpointe Church, the Northwest Constellation, local and provincial politicians, the Calgary Police, Dr. Carrie Scarff, the Lions Club and others help us in our mission.

We have long-held projects we will continue. These include our Tea and Conversation, our Casino, the discount sheet and our advisory capacity on many topics that come our way.

We are exploring new avenues that will allow us to help others, but those are in their infancy or need a re-vamp in the way we want to tackle them. These projects include continuing to explore hearing aid recycling, possibly setting up a program for handing out cane tips/picks for winter and non-slip pull on Yak Traks or something similar to help seniors NOT fall. We are exploring other ways of helping seniors stay connected with each other, so they don't get so isolated.

We will get our website up and running in 2018. That will help launch the tone for the future.

We need to find a few new board members or board assistants to help share the load and to do some specialized work like apply for grants for projects we would like to have funding for.

We are busy. We are committed. We are motivated to help seniors. And we give thanks that we are part of a strong network of people who really want to help seniors.

Our Board Members

President:	Kerry Tremblay
Vice President:	Margaret Hildebrand
Treasurer:	Ross Fujino
Director:	Mary Coulsen
Director:	Marian Fox
Director:	Colleen Groves
Director:	Deane (Dee) Vincent
Carya Liaison:	Kim Savard

5 board positions are currently vacant

Retiring this year:

Past president Ella Berrington

Director Esther McIntosh

Our Community Partners:

Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission

Bowness Seniors Centre

Bowness Seniors Constellation

BSAA board members

Calgary Alzheimer's Society

Calgary Herald Christmas Fund

Calgary Police Services

Carya

Calgary Police Services

Casino volunteers

City of Calgary

City of Calgary Ward Sutherland

Institute of Chartered Accountants

MLA Deborah Drever

MLA Hon. Stephanie McLean

Montgomery Community Association

Rockpointe Church

Dr. Carrie Scarff

Simon House volunteers

United Way of Calgary

University of Calgary