

509 East Hastings St., Vancouver BC, V6A 1P9 | T: 604-254-2194 | F: 604-254-2150 | www.vsms.ca

2007 HIGHLIGHTS

In the past year, there has been continuous development pressure in the Downtown Eastside community. Gentrification continues to exacerbate the poverty issues in the community. Along with poverty come poor nutrition, social isolation, and lack of safe and healthy living conditions. With the rapid pace of re-development of buildings in the area, seniors in the neighbourhood have found fewer and fewer places for them to hang out. In addition, the 3-month strike of the City of Vancouver workers also impacted seniors as all Community Centres were closed from July to October. Our Seniors Drop in Day Program becomes a crucial part of the life of low income seniors in the neighbourhood by providing them with a safe haven to gather and meet. Enjoying a hot nourishing meal gives seniors a chance to sit down, talk, connect, socialize and develop friendship circles while helping to meet their nutritional needs. The meal program at the Seniors Centre is a typical example of how we meet the nutritional and social needs of the senior citizens in the Downtown Eastside.



SENIORS PICNICKING AT A PARK IN AUGUST 2007



URBAIN CAISSY, LUCILLE NAST AND PADDY WING PLAYING THEIR FAVORITE MUSIC DURING WEEKLY 'JAM' SESSION

We continue to promote sensitivity to Cultural Diversity by means of social interaction through recreational activities such as playing pool, music, bingo, taking part in day trips and special events like Chinese New Year Celebrations. These activities help break down unfamiliarity, fear and isolation: factors associated with racism. They help promote positive contact between different ethnic groups and the broader community, allowing people to share cultural and ethnic differences.

50th Anniversary Celebration

Next year is our 50th anniversary. With the support of our generous funding partners, we have been serving the downtown eastside community since 1958. We look forward to your continued support and the opportunity to involve you in our 50th anniversary celebrations.



Seniors Helping Seniors since 1958

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NEIGHBOURHOOD HELPERS OUTREACH PROGRAM

Story 1: Overcoming Isolation



One of the seniors we have been visiting in the hotels for the past 4 years went through a very rough addiction related period this year. He had literally cut himself off from all neighbours and support systems. He was completely isolated for months.

Through multiple actions, including bringing doctors, counsellors and doing consistent check-ins, hotel staff, volunteers and his neighbours finally managed to get him into the hospital. Many of us believed he was not going to make it.

Two months ago he was released from the hospital and now resides in a seniors building in the community. Although his health is not great, his spirit is back and stronger than ever. He is out in the community again visiting our Downtown Eastside Seniors Centre, his friends and we feel his presence is a true gift. We recently had the privilege of reconnecting him with his very elderly dad in Ontario who thought his son had died.

During the time of his sickness, his neighbour and friend took on the care of something very special to this senior; currently we are going through the process of reuniting him with his best friend in the world – his cat.

Story 2: Rootin' Tootin' Bean-a-rama

This year NHP volunteers had the idea to take extra food leftover from the food bank, and use it to host a community meal. What started off as the idea of a few people, blossomed into the successful collective effort of all the volunteers to create a series of volunteer-initiated community events.

Volunteers made the posters, coordinated the venues and volunteers, prepared and served the food, and created an inclusive environment for planning the events.



The events were open to anybody in the DTES to attend. Because the event was put on by members of the Down-

town Eastside community, it was popular with the Downtown Eastside residents, and there seemed to be a general feeling of friendliness and sharing. From contacts that were made, referrals and ongoing relationships were created, which have strengthened the peer support model that Neighbourhood Helpers is committed to fostering.

Christmas is coming: Please help!



We will be hosting our Christmas Day brunch at our centre to celebrate Christmas with our seniors. We do not charge for this event, and we need your support to make it possible. Your donation provides support for all our programs. If you can help, please call us at 604-254-2194.

THANKS TO OUR 2007 FUNDING PARTNERS:

City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, United Way of the Lower Mainland, BC Gaming Commission, Central City Foundation, Concorde Pacific Charitable Trust One, Face the World Foundation, Soroptimist International Vancouver and you, our loyal individual supporters.