



## Springing into Action!

### What's New?



#### Students Engaging in Social Action

The Collaborative is hosting its third cohort of St. Thomas Social Work students – find out what they are researching!

#### Finding the Time for Rest, Relaxation, and Sleep

Meet a New Brunswicker who has created an innovative tool to help minimize sleep disturbances for individuals living with dementia and their care partners.

#### Funding Opportunity

Learn about the CMA's Healthy Canadians Grant, which supports community run initiatives. This year's theme is Seniors' Wellness – is your community eligible for funding to support your initiative?

As the seasons change, so too do the various healthy aging stories, initiatives and community building projects New Brunswickers are leading and engaging in.

In this issue of *Neighbours in Aging*, we learn about two new NB research projects, a national, volunteer-lead program that has made its way into the province, and an upcoming opportunity to help fund your local healthy aging initiatives!

St. Thomas Social Work students highlight their social action research project, which aims to explore the value and need of social workers in New Brunswick nursing homes.

Learn about an upcoming research study on "The Sleep Kit", a tool that promotes human connection and sensory stimulation as a response to sleep disturbances throughout the dementia journey.

Hear from Elderdog Canada: Fredericton, a local chapter of the national charity that has become the largest "Pawd" in Canada.



#### We'd love to hear from you!

Have a story you would like to share? Do you know of an initiative in your community that is having big impact? Please get in touch with us.

*Neighbours in Aging* is your newsletter and we welcome your stories describing the healthy aging journey as it is experienced in NB. Email your stories, ideas and updates to [admin@nbcollab.ca](mailto:admin@nbcollab.ca)

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Erin Jackson  
Program Coordinator

**Post:** 1133-206 Regent Street  
Fredericton, NB, E3B 3Z2

**Tel:** 506.460.6262

**Web:** [www.nbcollab.ca](http://www.nbcollab.ca)

**FB:** Facebook/CHACCVSS

**Twitter:** @CHACCVS

## Exploring the Role of Social Work in Nursing Homes

### *Social Work Students Conduct a Survey*

By Keara Grey, Holly Hasson, Amber Brideau & Jennifer Estey

Since April 2018, St. Thomas University Social Work Students Keara Grey, Holly Hasson, Amber Brideau and Jennifer Estey have been working at the Collaborative for Healthy Aging and Care and New Brunswick Association of Nursing Homes (NBNH) as they complete their Social Action Placement, a requirement for the program. This year, students are exploring the value and role of social workers in New Brunswick nursing homes by distributing a survey to members of the NBNH.



**In the photo:** Social Work Students Keara, Holly, Amber & Jennifer

### *What is the purpose of the Survey?*

1. To explore the role of social workers in New Brunswick nursing homes.
2. To explore participant's perceptions about the need of social workers in New Brunswick nursing homes.

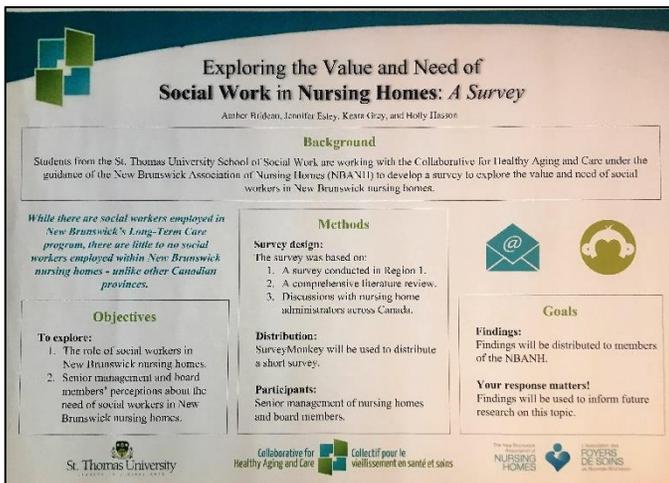
### *The Profession of Social Work*

While there are social workers employed in New Brunswick's Long-Term Care program, there are little to no social workers employed within New Brunswick nursing homes – unlike some other Canadian provinces.

Social workers have diverse professional skills that enable them to make valuable contributions to multidisciplinary teams in nursing homes.

#### **Social Workers can play a role in:**

- Pre-admission, admission, residency, and discharge phases
- Complete the re-assessment process for residents
- Advocate on behalf of residents and their families
- Advocate for inclusion and quality of life
- Support residents and families in the transition process
- Contribute to the ongoing psychosocial needs of residents
- Provide grief counselling to residents and families
- Develop and implement programs, such as end-of-life care programming
- Identify unmet needs of residents
- Work on a multidisciplinary team to maintain resident care plans
- Help residents make informed decisions
- Promote resident autonomy
- Supporting residents and families through the process of palliative care
- Participate in community outreach programs



Students showcase their research project at the NBANH Annual General Meeting (2018).

### How will survey responses be used?

Survey responses will be used to inform future research about this important topic. The students aim to enhance care practices among nursing homes to help improve quality of life and well-being for residents while upholding access to the continuum of care for our aging population.

Please stay tuned for their results which will be published in the next edition of *Neighbours in Aging*.



## Supporting Older Adults and their Canine Companions

### ElderDog Canada: Fredericton Pawd

By Cristi Flood, Pawd Leader

ElderDog Canada is a national, registered charity that is primarily focused on “keeping love in the home” by providing free in-home support services for seniors to assist with dog care, as well as free rehoming services for older adults who are no longer able to care for their dogs due to illness, relocation, etc. ElderDog is able to preserve the human-canine relationship through its 14 chapters, or "Pawds," across Canada, which go as far east as PEI and as far west as Alberta. Founded in March 2017, the ElderDog Canada: Fredericton Pawd is currently the largest Pawd in Canada, also being the only Pawd servicing New Brunswickers.



ELDERDOG  
CANADA

### What services does ElderDog provide?

With approximately 90 volunteers and being entirely volunteer-based, the ElderDog Canada: Fredericton Pawd currently assists with the in-home support of 10 clients' dogs. The entirely free services provided through the Pawd's in-home support services include assistance with dog walking, assistance with transportation to/from the vet and groomer, assistance with dog training and enrichment, assistance with animal grooming and hygiene, assistance with medication administration, and assistance with running dog-related errands, including picking up food and supplies.



These free services have allowed many of our clients to provide their dogs with excellent quality of life, as well as mental and physical stimulation, thus promoting the wellness of canine and human alike.



### *Honoring the Animal-Human Bond*

In the interest of preserving and protecting the animal-human bond and honoring the special relationship that older adults and their dogs have, ElderDog educates the public about the human-animal bond in general, and the significant role of companion animals in the health and well-being of seniors. We also support and conduct research into the human-animal bond with a focus on seniors and canine companionship.



When our free, in-home support services are not enough to enable a dog to stay in their older owner's home – usually due to relocation to a facility that does not allow for dogs, health issues, or other reasons - the Fredericton Pawd assists in the rehoming of beloved canine companions. In fact, the Pawd has helped to rehome 15 dogs whose owners could no longer care for them, including many senior dogs who may have had a difficult time enduring a traditional shelter situation or may have had health issues precluding them from having as many interested adopters as younger, healthier pooches. Our rehoming program, like our in-home support program, operates with dignity and respect for the dogs in our care, as well as the older clients whom we serve.

If you or someone you know could benefit from ElderDog's services, please feel free to contact us via email at [elderdogfredericton@gmail.com](mailto:elderdogfredericton@gmail.com) or call us at 1-855-336-4226.

## Human Connection and the Dementia Journey

### *Introducing: The Sleep Kit*

By Eve Baird



Photo by Sammy Wongpun

My name is Eve Baird, and I am a graduate of St. Thomas University, where I studied gerontology. In my 4<sup>th</sup> year, I took an Aging and Health course with Dr. Janet Durkee-Lloyd. We were asked to write about a health issue among the older population; and create an innovative solution. I decided to write about dementia because at the time I hadn't researched it much, and my only experience was with the individuals I had met during my summer position in a long-term care facility as an activity assistant. I learned that sleep disturbance was a common symptom of dementia. I researched this more, and found that it was also overlooked, and there weren't many solutions other than certain types of medications (which work for some but not for all), increasing exercise, light therapy, and eliminating caffeine. One particular study talked about the importance of social interaction to help people with dementia sleep. This really sparked my interest, and I developed a product that I call "The Sleep Kit", as a tool for caregivers.

### *What is the Sleep Kit?*

The Sleep Kit is a small box of alternative sleep therapies based on the idea of one-on-one social interaction before bed. The Sleep Kit contains a hair brush, hand mirror, essential oil blend, lotion, chamomile tea, playing cards, a book, a therapeutic CD, herbal pillow, and coloring book and markers. It also contains a custom-made sleep diary for the caregiver to keep track of the experience. The Sleep Kit appeals to the five senses and was developed to be helpful for the varying stages of the dementia journey.



Photo by James West Photography

### *The Importance of Bedtime Routine*

Most individuals have a routine before bed – I always wash my face, brush my teeth, and read my book. I remember my Grandad always had a solid routine before bed, and he spent a considerable amount of time in the bathroom combing his hair, shaving, brushing his teeth, washing his face, and listening to music on full blast (while joyfully singing along). Bedtime routines are a universal comfort. The Sleep Kit aims to provide caregivers and their loved ones who are living with dementia with a routine that provides both parties with a session of meaningfully engaging activities, social stimulation and rest and relaxation.

Within the last year, I worked evening shifts in a memory care unit where 24 individuals living with dementia call home. I became aware of individuals experiencing Sundowning, which is an increase in agitation in the evening time. Sometimes, sitting down with them and giving them a hand massage or just initiating a conversation and opportunity for them to engage with me was helpful. The human connection is so important and often taken for granted.

### *The Research Study*

I recently applied for a grant through York Care Centre to the Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation to do a research project on The Sleep Kit. I was elated to receive \$50,000 which was then matched by the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation. Claire Hargrove, graduate of St. Thomas University and Coordinator of the Adult Day Program at York Care Centre, is the co-researcher on the project.



**In the Photo:** Claire Hargrove & Eve Baird  
Photo by James West Photography

We have created 50 Sleep Kits, which will be provided to 26 members of the community in the summer, followed by 24 residents of a long-term care facility in the fall. The participants will be asked to wear a Fitbit in order to track their sleep. My hope is that this can be a helpful tool for both formal and informal caregivers, and that it can help to improve the quality of life for people affected by dementia and ease the challenges that their caregivers can experience.

If you are interested in being involved in this study, please contact us at:

[eve@thesleepkit.org](mailto:eve@thesleepkit.org);

[claire@thesleepkit.org](mailto:claire@thesleepkit.org).

## Announcement of the CMA: Healthy Canadians Grant

ASSOCIATION  
MÉDICALE  
CANADIENNE



CANADIAN  
MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION

The Canadian Medical Association, in partnership with the CMA Foundation, is committed to supporting innovative, grassroots health initiatives. The theme for 2018 is *Seniors' Wellness*. Some examples of initiatives that fit within this theme are:

- Exercise programs geared toward seniors
- Programs to help seniors remain in their homes
- Social programs aimed at getting seniors active in the community
- Transportation programs
- Friendly visits for socially isolated seniors
- Programs in seniors' residences and nursing homes
- Respite programs for families caring for seniors

The deadline for this year's applications is **June 22**. Click [here](#) for more information on grant eligibility and how to apply.