



IN THIS ISSUE



Making Connections

Orchard View's Betty Daniels describes her home's commitment of serving seniors living in Gagetown and surrounding areas.

Page 2



You spoke, we listened

Results of the Engaging Aging sessions held during the federal election are now available.

Page 3

The Art of Story-telling

Biographical aging and aging well: a different way of thinking about the aging experience.

Page 4

'Neighbours in Aging' has arrived!

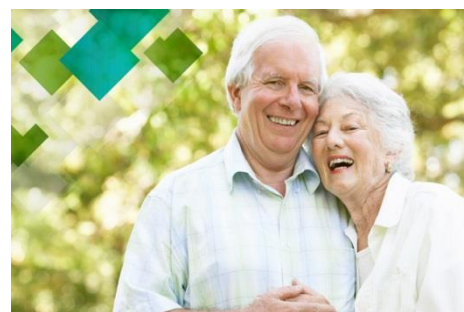
Hello and welcome to **Neighbours in Aging**, a quarterly newsletter that features engaged community profiles, individual healthy aging stories and everything in between.

To begin, this issue shares the story of a community that embarked on the healthy aging voyage with a Board, a bus and a big idea. Another article chronicles the journey of a minister-turned-professor whose life mission is to share his passion for personal narrative and the healing powers of story-telling.

Neighbours in Aging is your newsletter and we welcome your personal and community stories describing the healthy aging journey as it is experienced in NB. Feel free to send us your ideas, stories and submissions.


Happy Reading,

Beth Arsenault
Program Coordinator
Collaborative for Healthy Aging and Care



Find us on Social Media

That's right, the Collaborative is now on Facebook and twitter. Be sure to follow us for regular Collaborative updates and interesting healthy aging initiatives happening in your back yard and around the world.

 Facebook/CHACCVSS

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We'd love to hear from you

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Making social connections

One bus ride at a time

Incorporated in 1783, the Village of Gagetown finds itself nestled along the banks of the Saint John River just south of the province's capital. Historically a farming community, the village sports a number of well-maintained buildings from a time gone by. The area is frequented by avid boaters and bird enthusiasts during the summer months, and is home to a vibrant artisan community year-round.

Gagetown is also home to Orchard View, an inviting and cozy long term care facility that serves 40 residents, many of whom worked and raised families in Gagetown and the surrounding area. Betty Daniels tells the story of how a bus, a rural nursing home with a strong social compass, and a team of collaborators got together to explore ways the nursing home can assist local seniors to age well in the communities they call home.

BA: So tell me about Gagetown and the surrounding area.

BD: Well, Gagetown, Jemseg, Queenstown, and Cambridge Narrows are situated along a very picturesque part of the Saint John River Valley. Around 1000 people live in the area, and the vast majority are seniors. And, apart from a medical clinic, a small pharmacy and a gas station- convenience store, the area isn't serviced by the usual amenities you'd find in a larger centre. We lack the convenience of groceries stores and banking that make it possible for seniors to live and age well here. The closest are located in Oromocto, a 25 minute drive by car.

BA: How did the whole project come about?

BD: One of the strategic imperatives of Orchard View's Board of Directors is to reach out and be part of the community; to be part of the solution in finding ways that assist seniors in living and aging well at home. Research completed by Trevor Hanson identified that transportation



Driver and passengers taking advantage of The Orchard View Community Bus Service. Photo credit: Orchard View Long Term Care.

was a significant need in Gagetown and the surrounding area in order for seniors to remain in their homes and community. Orchard view has a 14-seat bus that we use to drive residents to appointments and on daytrips. The bus isn't used every day however, and we wanted to explore how it could be used to drive seniors into Oromocto to run errands, do their banking, and pick up groceries.

After being approached by the Nursing Home Association, we were able to connect and partner with them, along with the Atlantic Institute on Aging, Mount Allison and Université de Moncton in applying for a *New Horizons for Seniors Grant* from the federal government. We received a year's funding to pilot the service, and from there the Orchard View Community Transportation Project was born.

We are now in our second year and have expanded the transportation project to include a volunteer driving service that takes seniors to specific appointments that don't fall on the day the bus is scheduled for its bi-weekly run.

BA: That's great! Tell me a bit more about both projects.

BD: We usually have 7-8 seniors take the bus on a given week. The volunteer driver program consists of four active volunteer drivers who use their own vehicle to drive seniors to medical and dental appointments. This particular service is gaining momentum as more seniors learn of its availability.

BA: What are some of the hurdles that you encountered?

BD: Awareness. It takes time for people to understand that these services are available and feel comfortable enough to take advantage of them.

Funding would be the second hurdle. Grant funds were used to get the program up and running and now the challenge is how to sustain it. We are able to continue in the short term but long term funding is still a challenge. Our Board is determined however and will continue to seek out funding that will sustain the service over the long term.

BA: What were some of the surprises/positive results of the program that weren't anticipated?

BD: The response of those who use the service. The bus services a relatively large geographic area, and those who take it on a regular basis have become friendly with one another, creating new or reinvigorating old social connections. One user in particular explained to the CBC that the service has contributed to her ability to remain in her home for a while yet. These are the kind of stories you like to hear, as it gives you the momentum to continue.

Our bus drivers are also tremendously committed to this project. They go above and beyond in all kinds of weather, helping passengers carry their parcels to the bus. The enthusiasm and commitment of the volunteer drivers is also contagious. This area is very much a community in the sense that they tend to look out for one another, and try to be a part of the solution when challenges arise.

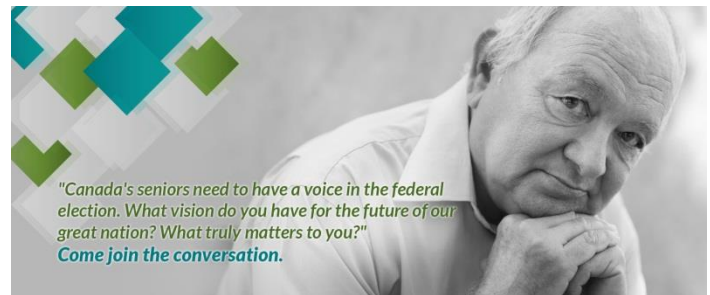
BA: Have other healthy aging initiatives come to light since the transportation project's implementation?

BD: Yes. Due to the success of the transportation project, we are creating a Seniors Information Brochure that provides pertinent provincial and federal information, and will also include information relevant to seniors in our area. We are also looking into the possibility of offering a number of health services currently available to our residents to the wider senior population. A one stop health shop if you will.

For more information on the Orchard View Community Transportation Project, please contact Betty Daniels, Administrator at Orchard View Long Term Care, (506.488.3586) or bdaniels@orchardviewltc.ca.

You spoke, we listened: *Senior Engagement Session results are in*

The Collaborative hosted five engagement sessions around the province this past September to learn how New Brunswick seniors envision a National Seniors Strategy. These findings were then shared with the Canadian Medical Association's **Demand a Plan** campaign, the New Brunswick Medical Society, along with NB candidates that ran in this year's federal election.



A number of commonalities arose during the sessions. First and foremost, participants understand the fiscal realities of the province and want the opportunity to be part of the solution every step along the way.

Other commonalities are summarized in very general terms below:

Communication: Create a one-stop senior communication hub listing services related to aging at both the provincial and community levels.

Home Support: Examine ways in which to better support formal and informal caregivers.

Affordability: Re-examine government services to determine which ones are delivering real value and positively impacting quality of life.

Please visit <http://tinyurl.com/EngagingAging> to read the full report or contact the Collaborative for a copy.



The Art of Story-Telling:

It's in our bones

by Beth Arsenault

Bill Randall, a professor of gerontology at Saint Thomas University, has a real passion for storytelling – so much so that he brings his love of narrative to the academic sphere.



Dr. Bill Randall

Photo credit: Saint Thomas University

Growing up in Harvey Station, he spent many afternoons listening to his father, a United Church of Canada minister with a real knack for story-telling, turn the most benign circumstance into an engrossing yarn that grabs the attention and imaginations of young and old alike.

After graduating high school, Bill went off to college in pursuit of higher education. He tried his hand at graduate studies but felt he needed more life experience to do his studies justice. He decided to follow in his father's footsteps and entered parish ministry. After ten years of serving and listening to stories told by the people living in various Canadian towns, he

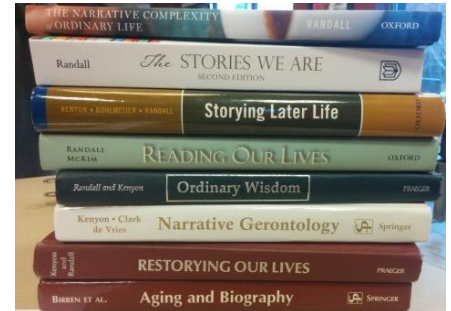
decided to return to his story-listening roots and pursued a doctorate in narrative studies. His life experiences all greatly assisted in shaping his main argument: human beings don't just have stories or the ability to tell them, but rather *we are stories*.

"There are certain narratives we like to tell about ourselves," says Bill while sipping a Tim Horton's coffee. "It's in their retelling that we feel connected, uplifted, stronger, and have a better sense of Self."

Open to opportunities and collaborations, Bill found his way back to New Brunswick as Saint Thomas' visiting chair in gerontology. What started out as a 4-month residency, eventually turned into a full-time position in which Bill continues to explore his love of narrative from the gerontology perspective.

Narrative gerontology is best understood as "a lens through which to view the aging process; a unique way of seeing life as story and what aging involves."

Narrative Care, an important facet of the aging journey, is one very important way that healthcare and long term care professionals can administer person-centred care to seniors visiting clinics or residing



Bill has authored and edited an abundance of books on narrative and the aging experience.

in nursing homes. Those who attentively listen can learn much about those in their care through the stories they tell.

"Narrative care is so important because our stories shape our identity, values, beliefs and our relationships with others," continues Bill. "Our stories are what make us fully human."

It's through our personal stories that we make sense of our unique and particular path through life. As such, narrative care is the heart from which all other types of care (dietary, medical, physical) stem, as it honours the complexity of our stories, which in turn provide meaning and make us who we are.

Interested in learning more? Bill is more than happy to chat about narrative activities. You can also listen to him on CBC *Ideas* podcast "Aging by the Book". Email: brandall@stu.ca