



## WHAT'S NEW?

Changing Lives One Ride at a Time	Page 2
Three Generations of Volunteers	Page 3
Burger Week Success Story	Page 4
NB Dementia Friendly Initiative	Page 5
Creating a More Dementia-Inclusive Sleep Kit	Page 5
Nackawic Area Designated as an AFC	Page 7
"Is it Worth it?"	Page 8
Recruitment of Caregivers for Research Project	Page 10
Continuing the Conversation on Death & Dying	Page 10
Social Work with Older Adults	Page 11

## Stories of Celebration and Reflection

Welcome to the Collaborative's Fall edition of *Neighbours in Aging*, a quarterly newsletter that features engaged community profiles, individual healthy aging stories, and everything in between.

Some time has passed since we released our last newsletter, so this Fall 2021 edition is packed with numerous stories of celebration and reflection, as well as information on new and existing research projects and community initiatives taking place in New Brunswick.

In this edition, we hear stories from the nursing home sector, the impact of volunteers supporting neighbours in their local communities, continued momentum in building age- and dementia friendly communities, as well as an overview of the practice of social work with older adults here in New Brunswick.

Check out what's under our "What's New" section to learn more.



### 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  
Coordinator

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#)



## Changing Lives One Ride at a Time

### Urban/Rural Rides

By Kelly Taylor, Executive Manager,  
Urban/Rural Rides



Urban/Rural Rides is a volunteer driver program that provides affordable transportation to seniors and low-income families. Sometimes the impact on someone's life that arises from a simple ride request is much more valuable than the ride itself.

One such story is a woman in Shediac who was diagnosed with terminal cancer and needed frequent transportation to the hospital for treatment. There is a shortage of volunteers in Shediac but, because of the seriousness of the need, a driver was brought in from another area to provide transportation to treatments. The two ladies became fast friends and as the client's health worsened, the driver looked for ways to help. Eventually on a trip for treatment, the volunteer driver was told her new friend would not be leaving the hospital again and was admitted to palliative care. This was all happening while the provincial borders were closed due to COVID effectively cutting off the client's family from visiting or assisting in any way. The amazing volunteer took it upon herself to visit the client in hospital regularly and to be her friend and comfort in her last days. The extra time and care the volunteer offered deeply touched the client and her family that was unable to be by her side.

Sometimes lack of transportation is not the only barrier to accessing services. One Wednesday in August, we

received a letter in the mail from a senior lady living in a remote area with no phone or Internet, who needed a ride to the food bank. Our service requires 48 hours to book transportation and unfortunately, the letter was received on the day she was asking for transportation. Further complicating the situation is the fact that her local foodbank is only open for 2 hours a week on Wednesday and we had already missed that window of time. Our ride coordinator tried to contact someone at the food bank to see if we could arrange to pick up food and deliver some to her as we were concerned about her having to wait another week to access food. She was unsuccessful.

The following Wednesday, a driver was out in that area for another ride and stopped in to check on this client and offer to take her to the food bank that afternoon. When the driver arrived at the home, the client did not answer the door, but the driver could hear the radio on inside the house. The concern for the welfare of this client increased dramatically. After a conversation with the ride coordinator, it was decided to go ahead and do the other ride and then return to this client's home to check on her again. If there was still no response, a call would be made for a wellness check. Thankfully, when the driver returned, the client answered the door. She had merely gone out for a walk. The driver took the client to the food bank to get supplies. We later received a letter of thanks from the food bank commending our driver and ride coordinator for going above and beyond to make sure this isolated senior had food.

Urban/Rural Rides staff and volunteers care about people, that is why they do what they do. If you want to help seniors in your community by offering transportation and



## Neighbours in Aging

a friendly conversation, please contact us to volunteer by calling 962-3073 or visit <http://urbanruralrides.ca>. We reimburse our drivers for mileage, the gift you offer to others is your time. Your time and concern for others can help us change lives one ride at a time.



## Three Generations of Volunteers

### *Celebrating a Family's Dedication to Meals on Wheels*

By Nina Smith, Summer Student, Meals on Wheels

Fifteen years ago, Ed Smith was entering retirement and looking for a productive way to keep busy. He found Meals on Wheels, signed on as a volunteer driver and has been with us ever since. Ed found that he really enjoyed meeting and chatting with clients, and that delivering meals was a great way to get out of the house and serve his community at the same time.

Ed would sometimes take his young grandson, Sam Morin, along on his route. He said that Sam enjoyed it from the start and especially loved the elevators in all the buildings. When Sam was old enough to get his driver's license, he reached out to volunteer on his own. He went from volunteering in a car seat to being behind the wheel!

At the beginning of the pandemic, Sam took on a route "temporarily" while schools were closed, and he had free time on his hands. A year and a half later, he's still driving

that route! Sam shared with us that as a kid, he hadn't realized that Meals on Wheels was anything more than delivering meals. Now that he's older, he's discovered the social benefits that the volunteers provide. Driving a route allows him to check in with the people on his route and develop relationships with them and even with their pets! Although we're sure he still secretly likes the elevators, he also now enjoys his short visits with his clients as much as his grandfather does.

The family's involvement doesn't stop there. As with many younger volunteers, work and school commitments sometimes interfere with Sam's driving schedule, so he asked his mother Nancy if she could help out. Nancy happily agreed and signed on with us as a substitute driver, not only for Sam's route but other routes as well. She has also let us know that her younger son is eager to join their ranks as soon as he is old enough.



In the photo: Volunteers Nancy, Ed, and Sam

We are very grateful for the continuing involvement of all three generations of this wonderful family in our organization, and we're sure that our clients feel as fortunate as we do. Thank you from all of us at Meals on Wheels!



## Neighbours in Aging

### Burger Week Success Story

#### Battle of the Burgers

By Rachel Muzak-Ruff, St. FX Dietetic Intern, LLV

The third week of June marked Loch Lomond Villa’s first ever “Burger Week”! Burger Week has become a popular culinary event in many cities across Canada, so staff thought why not bring Burger Week to Loch Lomond Villa for our residents to enjoy as well? This was a fun-filled event where staff demonstrated strong teamwork and collaborative skills. The cooks of Loch Lomond Villa were tasked with putting their creativity and culinary talent to work where they each curated a unique burger recipe to be offered to residents on the event menu.



In the photo: LLV cooks creating their burgers.

The event was titled “Battle of the Burgers” as this was also a competition between the cooks to see who could create the most popular burger amongst residents. 19 residents living in Dogwood House participated in the event where they selected two of the restaurant-style

burgers to try during lunch service on both June 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. It was evident both staff and residents extensively enjoyed this event, the dining room was filled with smiles and chatter!



About the photo: LLV Residents enjoying their burgers.

A survey was conducted amongst residents to measure the success and gather feedback from the event. Residents rated the taste, temperature, and overall satisfaction of their meals very highly, stating they thoroughly enjoyed their burgers and the overall concept and idea. The survey resulted in 100% of residents stating they would enjoy more events like Burger Week which has sparked further conversation and brainstorming amongst the nutritional services team to plan similar special meals and events in the near future. Stay tuned!





## New Brunswick Dementia Friendly Initiative

### Seeking

### Participation from NB Communities

By Samantha Hachey, Project  
Lead, New Brunswick  
Dementia Friendly Initiative



My name is Samantha Hachey and I am the project lead for the New Brunswick Dementia Friendly Initiative. This initiative is a pilot project funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada through their Dementia Community Investment grant. The implementation of this project began in the spring of 2021 and during this time, we have worked with communities across New Brunswick to assist them in becoming more inclusive of people living with dementia as well as their caregivers.

Over the past few months, we have collaborated with the Alzheimer's Society of New Brunswick to offer the participating communities dementia-related education. Our project researcher has also conducted interviews with caregivers. In these interviews, caregivers were given the opportunity to talk about their realities of caring for a person living with dementia. We have also asked the general population in these communities to complete a survey to assess their understanding of dementia.

We are currently able to welcome a few more communities to this project. If you're community is interested in this initiative, please contact [Samantha Hachey](#) at or [Cassandra Folkins](#). We look forward to hearing from you!

For more information on the project, visit the Collaborative for Healthy Aging and Care [website](#).



## Creating a More Dementia- Inclusive Sleep Kit

### New and Improved Changes

By Adrienne McNair & Eve Baird, Co-Owners, The Sleep Kit

You may remember hearing about The Sleep Kit in the 2018 newsletter. A few things have changed for The Sleep Kit and we are so excited to share it with you! But first, what is The Sleep Kit? Eve Baird, the creator of The Sleep Kit, completed an Aging and Health course with Dr. Janet Durkee-Lloyd and found that sleep disturbance is a common symptom of dementia. According to CBC, New Brunswick has the highest rate of use of sleeping pills among older adults in Canada ([CBC, 2021](#)). The Sleep Kit offers an alternative and holistic approach to sleep. It caters to our five senses and promotes one-on-one interaction between care-partners before bed.

Baird was awarded the SPARK grant from the Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation (CABHI) and the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation (NBHRF) through her job as an activity coordinator at York Care Centre. Baird and her team recruited 41 participants and care-partners and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The Kit decreased the number of restless bouts for the participant living in long-term care.



## Neighbours in Aging

I, Adrienne McNair, volunteered to participate in the research study and recognized the value in The Sleep Kit. I recently joined Eve as co-owner of The Sleep Kit and I am thrilled to be promoting healthy aging as it is a core passion of mine. We took the pandemic as an opportunity to pause and reflect and find ways to improve The Sleep Kit. A survey went out to those who have implemented The Sleep Kit in their daily routines, and we incorporated the feedback to make it even more person-centred and dementia-inclusive.



About the photo: Activities and products included in the Sleep Kit.

Our new wooden hairbrush is small, easy to hold and has gentle bristles. Our playing cards were specifically designed to be larger, thus being easier to hold, and they

also have enlarged print for easier reading. The adult colouring book pictures are at various levels of difficulty with bolder lines. They are age-appropriate and inspired by the beautiful nature of the East Coast. Another exciting new change is a new poetry book, complete with recognizable poems about sleep. Supporting local is key, so many of the products in the Kit are sourced from small businesses in New Brunswick!



About the photo: Playing cards, a product included in the Sleep Kit.

New Brunswick has two official languages, so it was important to us to offer this product to every person in their language of choice. The Sleep Diary, Reflection Booklet, Colouring Book, and Poetry book can be accessed in either language. Our labels are also bilingual.

We have also added the option to build-your-own Sleep Kit! Sleep routines look different to everyone, and we wanted to ensure that we continue to provide person centered options for care-partners and those living with dementia. If you are unable to purchase the full kit or would like to try out a few of the products, you are able to build your own to see if it works for you.

## Neighbours in Aging

The Sleep Kit is available for purchase on our website. You can also borrow a modified version from the Fredericton Public Library if you are interested in giving it a try! As a small business, we are happy to answer any questions you may have. Please check out our [website](#) or email [Adrienne](#) or [Eve](#) for more information.



## Nackawic Area Designated as an Age-Friendly Community

### *Celebrating a Milestone*

By Julie Stone, Co-Chair



In the photo: The Honourable Bruce Fitch (left) and Mayor Ian Kitchen (right).

On September 29<sup>th</sup> at the Curling Club in Nackawic, Minister of Social Development for New Brunswick, Mr. Bruce Fitch, presented the Town of Nackawic and 5 surrounding communities with an official designation as an Age Friendly Community. The Age Friendly Committee was thanked by Mayor Ian Kitchen for the work they had done to bring this award to the Town.

The journey toward this distinction began 5 years ago when Gail Farnsworth, co-chair of the committee, decided that being an age friendly place to live and being recognized as such by the United Nations might be a needed and appropriate thing to do. And so began the process.

After a few planning meetings, the committee circulated a questionnaire that would be used to gather information about how residents feel about services and practices that exist in the area now. They were also asked about what would be needed for them to consider the Nackawic Area a good and safe place to live. They were instructed to rate their opinions on:

1. Housing
2. Transportation
3. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
4. Social participation
5. Respect and Social Inclusion
6. Communication and Information
7. Community Support and Health Services
8. Civic Participation

The surveys were mailed to some residents and delivered to others. Volunteers took the surveys to quilting groups, bowling groups and any other groups that meet on a



regular basis. Often the volunteers would assist those residents who were not used to filling out forms. The surveys were collected, and the responses tallied over the summer of 2018. Then an analysis of the data was completed and a report detailing the findings and recommendation for improvements was submitted to the Town Council in Nackawic.

The Committee then worked on an action plan, assigning tasks to various committee members. At subsequent meetings the committee would provide updates on what was being done. Each of the 8 domains listed above were the focus of the work.

In 2019, the committee applied to the Department of Social Development for the Designation as an Age-Friendly Community. The designation was received in June of 2019 but because of COVID-19 was not presented to the Town and 5 surrounding areas until September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Minister of Social Development, Bruce Fitch, presented the award to Mayor Ian Kitchen at a special luncheon held at the Nackawic Curling Club. A plaque and a banner were designed to mark the event, and both are on display at the Town Office in Nackawic.

In order to keep the designation of Age-Friendly, our work must continue for 5 years, and a report mailed to Social Development every year. If more information about the process and the journey is wanted or required, please contact Julie Stone at 575-8312 or [e-mail](#).



## “Is it Worth it?”

### *Reflections on Working in a Nursing Home*

By Juanita Hebert, Activity Director, Rexton Lions Nursing Home

I have worked at Rexton Lions Nursing Home for thirty-eight years now, a number of years ago a friend asked me “How can you do that, don’t you find it depressing?”

At the time I only told her “No”, but I wondered why it would be depressing. Now I understand why she would think like that:

- Yes, we are a last stop, we have to say goodbye a lot.
- We don’t get time to morn; we have others to care for.
- We deal with many health issues including dementia which most people find heart breaking.
- We are constantly told to do more with less funding, while the needs of the residents increase.
- It is hard work.

Covid has been horrible for everyone, especially for nursing homes. Covid created a lot of stress and fear, more work with social distancing, appointments, screening, lockdowns, and restrictions in an already very busy environment. It has tarnished nursing homes reputations across the country.

For new residents their families were not allowed in to visit so trust was not able to be formed. For our current family’s trust was challenging. Some were angry with us, for things we did not control.





## Neighbours in Aging

Fall 2021

The media's negative reports have painted nursing homes with the same brush. To say it's been disheartening is an understatement.

Staff recruitment and retention is an issue. Why?

Do we value seniors? Do we value the frail elderly? What are the perceptions of working in a nursing home now? Think about it.

My perception:

- Our job is to ensure the best quality of life the person is capable of having with the limitations they have.
- Our job for someone with dementia is to remember who they are, when they can no longer do so.
- Our nursing home is small, our residents are a family, most of the time they are content to be here, when one is not, they do not have the ability to be content anywhere. We are prepared to redirect or distract as necessary.
- Our job is caring, comforting, and taking the journey with them.

I have cried, gotten frustrated, felt exhausted, been discouraged, but more than anything I have shared laughs and love. I am proud of what I do, and I learn something every day. We make a difference in their lives. I have a quote in my office that says:

*"Will it be easy? Nope.*

*Will it be worth it? Absolutely! "*

This type of work is not for everyone, we are a unique breed. I asked a coworker who's worked here as long as I did, why she chose this type of work. She replied, "I look after people, it's what I do, it's who I am" and that says it all.

I once again wonder how can that be depressing?



In the photo: Juanita sharing a laugh with resident Norma.





## Recruitment of Caregivers

### *Research Project on Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Did you care for an older adult living at home (including an independent living residence) during the COVID-19 pandemic? A group of researchers from the University of Ottawa, Université de Moncton and Université de Saint-Boniface invite you to participate in a study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on caregivers of seniors living at home.

The purpose of the study is to identify the changes experienced by caregivers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, you can visit:

[https://www.grefops.ca/impact\\_pandemic\\_caregivers.html](https://www.grefops.ca/impact_pandemic_caregivers.html)



To go directly to the survey:

[https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/caregivers\\_COV1](https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/caregivers_COV1)



## Continuing the Conversation on Death and Dying

### *DIE: Death Information and Education*

By Anne Marie Hartford & Karen Lake, D.I.E. Co-Chairs

DIE: Death Information and Education was born in Fredericton to meet the demand from the community for knowledge and resources about the end of life.



Back in the spring of 2018 we began facilitating a monthly Death Café at our public library. The response was very positive even though many people suggested that we would not likely attract many participants with the title Death Café in our promotional materials. People were hungry for an opportunity to talk about their experiences of death and dying, to learn from others' experiences, and to deepen the process of preparing for their own death or that of a loved one. At the Death Cafés we heard that “we don’t talk about death in our society” or “my children don’t want to hear about our wishes.” We heard questions about “what happens if I don’t have any advance health care directives when I go in the hospital?” or “what is a death doula?”



## Neighbours in Aging

In response to what we were hearing at the Death Cafés, in the fall of 2019 we organized a panel of experts in funeral planning, the legal matters related to death and dying, the need for assembling a team of caregivers and supporting players, and the personalization of your funeral. Again, the attendance was about three times what we expected.

Again, recognizing the need, in April 2019, we presented the first Death Expo east of Montreal. It was a resounding success. Over 300 participants attended. We thought we were being optimistic when we prepared for 200. The Expo attracted close to 40 vendors, and we presented five educational programs each lasting 45 minutes. The exhibitors were thrilled with the day's outcome. We were able to make all of these programs available at no charge to the public. The success of Death Expo 2019 confirmed what we were coming to understand; that there is a deep hunger for opportunities to talk openly about death and dying and to gather information and resources to help us plan and prepare for the inevitable – our death.

The next event that we offered to our community was titled Dying to Know: The Law & The Practice. This was a full day event addressing two major topics: Medical Assistance in Dying and Advanced Health Care Directives. Three aspects of each of the two topics were addressed: what the law says, what the actual practice looks like, and the recounting of lived experiences. Each of the events we have presented so far have had a success beyond what we had expected indicating to us the need for this kind of programming in our community.

As with everyone else's community work since March of 2020, our efforts to serve our community have been

dashed again and again. We have managed to continue offering a Death Café online and attempted this fall to go back to in-person gatherings, but our hopes were dashed once more.

We are indeed planning the second annual Death Expo for April 16, 2022, in Fredericton, and we are also planning the second annual Dying to Know conference in the fall of 2022. For more information, you can reach us on [Facebook](#) or via [email](#).



## Social Work with Older Adults

### *Overview of Practice and Advocating for Change*

By Miguel LeBlanc, Executive Director, NBASW

The NBASW represents over 2100 social workers in New Brunswick. Its role is to promote excellence in social work practice and to protect the public. Social workers work in various sectors with many different groups of people. No matter what sector they work in, social workers commit to:

- advocating for the well-being of each individual and
- protecting the most vulnerable members of our society, including seniors in our province.



## Neighbours in Aging

### Scope of Practice

The social work profession involves working in the field and is based on theories in the disciplines of social work, social sciences, and humanities.

The objective is to enhance health and social well-being by basing practices on the theoretical framework of social determinants of health in service delivery, assistance in navigating the system, and advocating for equal access to services. Social workers concentrate on the person in their environment and take into account the fact that there are many factors affecting a person's health and well-being:

- economic stability;
- community and cultural links;
- relationships with the person's environment;
- access to quality services in their official languages.

It is important to have a good understanding of these different factors, because they have an influence on the health and well-being of the individual. A social worker working with a person will try to gain a good understanding of all the factors that have an influence on that person, in order to understand and solve the problems they are facing.

The social worker urges people and communities to meet the challenges in their lives and to overcome traumatic events, bring about change, and develop resilience.

The social worker also works with other professional specialists, other communities, and other organizations to provide services, improve living conditions for individuals, and create opportunities for people to flourish, get back on their feet, and experience personal growth.

Here in New Brunswick, social workers work with seniors in various settings, including mental health and addiction treatment programs, private practice, hospitals, the Extra-Mural Program, adult protection, and long-term care.

Instead of going into detail about what social workers do in each of these settings, I am going to talk about some changes that need to be made to the Family Services Act to protect older adults.

### Adult Protection

Section 34 of the *Family Services Act* provides definitions for a "neglected adult" and an "abused adult". The category includes disabled and elderly people.

When there is reason to believe that an adult is a victim of neglect or abuse, a social worker in adult protection with the Department of Social Development conducts an investigation.

If the investigation concludes that the person is a neglected or abused adult, a social worker will take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of the person, which may involve providing social services to the person. If the investigation concludes that the neglected or abused adult is not mentally competent, the social worker may apply for an order or put the person under protective care.

In New Brunswick, there is no legal definition of the concept of "financial abuse". The provincial *Family Services Act* needs to be amended to include a definition of financial abuse and give the Minister of Social Development the power to investigate financial abuse matters.



## Neighbours in Aging

Since social workers must obey the New Brunswick *Family Services Act*, they cannot currently investigate suspected cases of financial abuse. Instead of doing so, they refer their suspicions to the police or the RCMP so that an investigation can be conducted under the *Criminal Code* of Canada.

We know that financial abuse is a complicated problem that does not occur in isolation. To be able to shed light on instances of financial abuse, conduct an investigation, and confirm that it is taking place requires specialized knowledge and skills.

As an association, we will continue to advocate for the inclusion of financial abuse in an amended Act or a new Act, as well as a definition of the term.

### *Duty to Report Adult Abuse*

The New Brunswick *Family Services Act* deals with the duty to report child abuse for any person who has information causing them to suspect that a child has been neglected or abused, including a professional person.

However, the Act does not include a comparable duty with regard to suspected abuse of an adult and in particular of a senior. Social workers recommend that the provincial Act be amended to include the duty to report adult abuse.

The NBASW is convinced that the key to preventing abuse, and specifically financial abuse, is education, which would provide individuals, including professionals, the means to act when abuse happens.

If you have concerns that an adult may be a victim of abuse or neglect, please call the Department of Social Development. Regional branches of the department are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to refer reports to adult protective services.

### *Beyond Adult Protection*

I have mainly talked about amending the Act to provide better protection of seniors in the province, but I want to note that social workers are involved in many other things, aside from government protective services. As I have already mentioned, social workers provide support to seniors in long-term care, through the Extra-Mural Program, in health care, and so on.

Social workers are specialists in counselling, file management, education, advocacy, putting people in touch with resources, referring people to community services, and other things.

According to the NBASW, it is increasingly necessary for social workers and people filling positions in this field to provide the best support possible in responding to the needs of seniors and their families.

Since we live at a time when the scope and meaningful work done by social workers are recognized more and more, we hope that new organizations like nursing homes will begin to invest in hiring social workers to better meet the needs of their residents and their families.

