The Quarterly Newsletter from the Atlantic Institute on Aging

Fall 2013

In This Issue: Symposium • Music Care Workshop Series • Aging Awards • Podcast Update • University of Waterloo Research Project
From the Executive Director

The months since the last issue of our newsletter have been busy and productive for us at the Institute. We launched a podcast series, designed a music care workshop series to be launched in November, welcomed five students into our office and honoured a some very special individuals for their efforts in improving the quality of life for elders and others in this province.

It’s no secret that these are challenging times, especially in New Brunswick. Challenging times offer us an incredible opportunity for innovation, to find ways to address and change convention, overcome challenges and discuss issues. Great and innovative work continues to emerge from this province, country and around the world as it relates to aging, many of which were discussed at the Symposium in September. We learned about emerging technologies and approaches that can make living at home much safe and a reasonable option; we also learned about a new model of care, PRIME, originating from Manitoba, their strategies provide access to healthcare for seniors while allowing the frail elderly to stay at home longer and safer; and we learned about a falls prevention program that gets school children to become ‘Safety Superheroes’ and begin to think about how they can make their homes and communities more age-friendly.

It’s innovations like these, not all of which involve technology but rather a simple rethinking and asking ‘what else is possible?’, that can and will make our cities, province and country a much more age-friendly place to live and thrive.

I encourage you to learn more about age-friendly initiatives that are going on in your town and we’d love to hear your ideas on how we can make our communities more age-friendly.

Below are just a few of the great ideas and innovations in changing the way we approach aging issues!

Innovations in Aging (Colorado) - http://www.innovationsinaging.org/index.html
Global Age Friendly Cities Report - http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/

Barb
Therapeutic Activity Update
In our last newsletter, we talked about the Therapeutic Activity Professionals Course being offered by the Institute. We are proud to say that the progress of students has been outstanding and feedback from nursing home administrators and mentors has been reaffirming. We asked the students in the course for a few words and here are couple of their comments:

“The Therapeutic Activity Professionals Course which is being taught by Daphne Noonan has and continues to be an invaluable learning experience for me. I enjoy the course very much and find that it has been a great support and wealth of knowledge as I plan, implement and evaluate therapeutic activity programs for our residents with a person-centered focus and approach. I would highly recommend other Activity Professionals to take this course, when available.”-Carole Anne M.

“I am enjoying the course and am learning a great deal. The information put forth by Daphne is both informative and insightful. The section on care plans and charting has meant a great deal to me because I have found there wasn’t a lot of emphasis put on that element until recently.”-Sharon A.

We’re sure that the impact of this course will continue to grow and could lead to a real culture change in New Brunswick as it relates to long term care. If you’d like to learn more about the course and find out how you can get into the action, contact us!

Wellness Initiatives & Consultations
In October, the Institute had the opportunity to participate in a round table discussion with various stakeholders and government representatives (including the Minister of Healthy & Inclusive Communities) about the Wellness Movement in the province and begin discussions on seniors’ expectations of care. Our five wonderful students, Rhonda, Serena, Moira, Julia and Emily, were there too! They were excited to engage in meaningful conversations with individuals from around the province and representatives from government. Nice shades!

New phone line set up for seniors
The Department of Healthy & Inclusive Communities in New Brunswick now has a toll-free number for seniors, their families and caregivers who are looking for information on government programs and services. Call 1-855-550-0552 to speak to an agent today! Hours of operation: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This phone line is a great example of making services more accessible to seniors in the province.

Meeting with Minister of State for Seniors
In August, our Executive Director, Barb Burnett, attended a round table discussion with Minister of State for Seniors Alice Wong that centred on the prevention of financial abuse as well as the needs of older workers who are balancing work and caregiving responsibilities for seniors. This consultation is one of several that are slated to take place from coast to coast and is an opportunity for open dialogue on many important issues and topics. To find out more about the Federal Government’s services for seniors, be sure to visit seniors.gc.ca.

Summit for Healthy Aging & Care Followup
Last November, the Summit for Healthy Aging and Care: Innovating Together was held in Fredericton and was one of the first large-scale conversations about aging and long term care in New Brunswick. This November, a follow-up conversation will be taking place in what the organizers are dubbing a ‘provincial telephone conference call’ and will surely reenergize and refocus efforts on such an important topic. We look forward to providing you with more information in the next issue of Encouraged.
One of the most looked-forward to events of the year in the long term care and aging fields is the Symposium on Excellence in Aging Care. The sixth instalment of the annual conference took place in Fredericton in late September and saw over 300 people from a variety of sectors within the aging field (including caregivers, nurses, medical professionals, not-for-profits, academics, students, public employees, interested citizens and seniors).

Institute Board Member and co-Chair of this year’s Symposium, Ken McGeorge offered these words:

“"The Symposium on Excellence in Aging Care was, once again, very successful. Great faculty, a new venue, more exhibitors, some new partners–all came together to create an event that left people wanting more! Some of the preliminary feedback we received included:

• People loved the venue; they felt that the Journey Wesleyan Church had everything together in a convenient way, seating was comfortable, sound and video was great, lots of parking;
• Faculty were all rated very high; each speaker presented new information and state of the art material. We even heard that some folks took information right back to their nursing home and made improvements immediately!
• The time of the year is perfect with the caveat that we try to space the event from other meetings that would naturally take long term care people away;
• Francophone content should be extended and we’ve identified this as a priority for Symposium 2014.

The event has now become iconic with people putting it in their calendar as a “must attend” event each year. It was initiated originally to bring new thinking to long term care and the care of the frail elderly and it seems that the attendees think that goal is being achieved. Many, in their evaluations, stated: “the best conference I have ever attended”.

This large and diverse audience gave the perfect stage for Elizabeth Eldridge and the Institute’s own Daphne Noonan, to address the crowd about the power of music—an instrumental (no pun intended) and often overlooked form of care. Their talk brought those in audiences through their own musical journey, playing a selection of songs from past and current decades—every song eliciting a different but equally powerful emotion and memories. They also spoke to the various ways music is used as care and highlighted some great examples of how music is being used to start more intergenerational dialogue and programs. This presentation opened the doors for a Music Care Workshop Series (see the next page for more on that).

Daphne and Elizabeth took to the stage after Dr. Connie Tomaino spoke to the crowd about her experience as a music therapist in New York (Connie is the Executive Director and Co-founder of the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function) and showcased some of the research, work and interesting stories coming out of that organization and from friends of the organization. If you’d like to learn more about the IMNF and see some great videos of prominent musicians exploring the power of music on the brain, check out their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/musictherapy.imnf or go to their website musictherapy.imnf.org

The dates for next year’s event are September 24-26, 2014 and the presenters are now being selected for presentations To learn more about the Symposium on Excellence in Aging Care, please visit yorkfoundation.ca or contact the York Foundation at (506) 444-3880 ext. 2211.

The sixth instalment of the ‘must not miss’ event was a resounding success and organizers are already looking ahead for next year.
We know that music is an effective tool for care; we’ve seen that through the Well Tuned iPod Project, through Alive Inside and from what we’ve heard at Symposium. Daphne Noonan (our Director of Education) and music therapist Elizabeth Eldridge have teamed up (again) to create a Music Care Workshop Series.

Music Care is a way of providing a holistic and person-centred approach to care. It creates an additional medium of communication, sparks creativity and expression, triggers memories and addresses social, emotional and even physical difficulties. As healthcare costs continue to rise and the sustainability of our current care system is being called into question, we need to think outside the box to find alternative ways to care for residents.

This five-part series aims to equip individuals and facilities with the tools and skills to incorporate music as care, and will include both a face-to-face workshop and two online follow up webinars. Topics to be covered include: Creating a Personalized Music Program, Spiritual Music Care, Music as a Social Connection, Integrating music into Clinical Practice, and Creating a Music Care Culture.

At a price of $200+HST per person for each session (or attend any three for $525+HST or all five for $800.00+HST), the sessions are affordable and accessible to most people in the province— for the Integrating music into Clinical Practice, Daphne and Elizabeth can even arrange to come to your facility to allow a greater number of your staff to get in on the action (contact us for pricing and more details). An important and useful note: if you run a facility, you can take advantage of the Any 3 or All 5 pricing options and send different individuals to each, if you wish.

Launching in November 2013, the first instalment of the series will take place in Fredericton, with plans to offer versions in Saint John and Moncton in the new year. If you’d like to learn more, send us an email at info@aginginstitute.ca or call us at (506) 444-3337. You can also find the brochure and registration form on our website at aginginstitute.
New Brunswick has thousands of people who work diligently every day to support elders and the passion demonstrated by both individuals and organizations has the power to make significant positive impacts. That’s why, in the spring of 2012, the Lieutenant Governor’s Office and the Atlantic Institute on Aging teamed up to create an award to honour and recognize New Brunswickers who have had a positive, unique and remarkable impact on the way people age and grow in New Brunswick.

This year saw a number of entries come in from areas all around the province, all of which represented the diverse areas of the aging field—academics, community groups, spiritual caregivers, long term care providers and seniors themselves. The Selection Committee had a difficult task ahead of them, but ultimately they chose to recognize two recipients.

The Women’s Institute Home in Woodstock, NB has been providing care for senior ladies in the community for the last sixty years. The only one of its kind in Canada (and the world), the non-profit is home to approximately twenty ladies who range in age from their early 70s to well over 100 years! As their nominator and neighbour, Dawn Lockwood noted that “I have watched the work from up close and have seen the love and very special care given to these senior ladies of all ages. Staffed round the clock and serving home cooked meals, the ladies receive loving care like close friends, sharing their lives, keeping them safe and treating them with dignity. This is a real home for the care of our seniors. It is a priceless gem in our province.” As another supporter, Thelma Brennan pointed out that “the history of the Women’s Institute details a determined group of women who have shaped the social and economic values of our province...The home on Chapel Street is a testament to women past and present, who were determined to contribute to society and make a difference in its history.”

Father Monte Peters, or simply Monte as he is known to those around him, has been a priest in the Fredericton area for a number of years. Currently at St. Anthony’s Parish in Fredericton, Monte was instrumental in making the parish an age-friendly place through the Parish Nurse Program, the Seniors’ Elite 90s Club, and Seniors’ Lunch and Learns—just to name a few. Chief Candice Paul of St. Mary’s First Nation noted that Monte is “an ever-present entity at the bedside of many our seniors, both at home and the hospital whenever he is needed. He serves this population and their families with enormous compassion and understanding during their period of illness and subsequent passing.” Rev. Bill Brennan also offered these words: “Monte has the gift of thinking beyond the status quo and to imagine new possibilities for church and community life. He is an elder who helps shape new possibilities for healing, reconciliation, social justice and recreation, and he commits to gathering others for new initiatives and working with established groups to move these possibilities into concrete actions.”

His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor spoke about the importance of tapping into the wealth of knowledge and experience of New Brunswick’s elders, he made a special note of how elders in the province more often than not are eager to share their narratives. He gave the example of Flora Thibodeau, a Rogersville resident and the oldest Canadian-born citizen at 112 years of age, who continues to welcome guests into her home and has a guest book filled with messages from those who have visited her. These individuals demonstrate to us that society has a wonderful opportunity to tap into these ‘living libraries’ and allow them to share their wisdom.
In our summer newsletter, we talked about an idea that we had, to create a place where important aging-related topics could be discussed and highlighted, and be accessible to New Brunswickers and those living beyond this province’s borders.

That idea has now been realized, thanks in large part to the five wonderful St. Thomas University Social Work students we have working with us as part of their Social Action Placement. The team has been diligently working on producing each episode, crafting questions that give listeners the necessary information to affect change, touch upon policy issues and highlight some interesting and enlightening topics.

We’re having a blast conducting these interviews, including conversations with AIA Board Chair Paul Theriault talking about the vision, mission and work of the Institute; Marilyn Noble talking about creativity in later life and another conversation about baby boomer women’s transition to retirement; Ken McGeorge talking about the changing face of long term care and our health care system; Dr. Bill Randall talking about narrative gerontology and care; Madeleine Gaudet talking about the Stepping Stone Seniors Centre in Fredericton and the importance of staying involved in your community, in retirement—just to name a few! These episodes will be released bi-weekly on the Institute’s website (aginginstitute.ca/podcast) and through iTunes, with some available already. The students have also been writing blog entries to accompany each interview, offering additional insight, relevant links and useful resources—so be sure to check them out!

Want more information? Is there a topic you’d like to hear us cover? Would you like to speak and be featured? Let us know (we’re always looking for ideas) by email at info@aginginstitute.ca; call us at (506) 444-3337 or message us on Facebook—just search for Atlantic Institute on Aging.
The Institute is collaborating with the University of Waterloo on a research project exploring culture change in long-term care facilities, with a focus on how recreation and leisure can be used to facilitate this change. Our involvement in this study sees the participants of our Therapeutic Activity Professionals course being interviewed in this national collaborative study.

Many LTC homes are moving away from the medical institutional model of care and are adopting more person-centered and relationship-centered care approaches. Such culture change processes are ongoing and everyone plays an important role. The researchers believe that recreation and leisure professionals and practices have a unique role to play in helping to change the culture of care within LTC. Yet, little is known about how recreation and leisure professionals perceive culture change, their role in the process, and how they are working to align their practices with the culture change values. The purpose of this study is fill this gap in our understanding so we can better support recreation and leisure professionals as they work towards culture change in their own settings.

The interviews will ask professionals to share their experience with culture change thus far by asking them to describe, for example, their involvement in the culture change process, the role of recreation and leisure in the culture change process, the impact of the changes within their LTC home since the culture change process began, and factors that have both supported and limited their ability to make change in their settings.

If you’d like to participate in the study or learn more about the project, contact the Atlantic Institute on Aging and we’ll connect you with the research team.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact us:

Atlantic Institute on Aging
100 Sunset Drive
Fredericton, NB
E3A 1A3
info@aginginstitute.ca
(506) 444-3337
Facebook & Twitter : AgingInstitute