

**2014 WHO AFC UPDATE**  
**Saanich Recreation**  
**Community Services Projects and Initiatives**

Overview of current programs and initiatives offered through Recreation Community Services addressing key themes or principles of Age Friendly Cities. At the end of each program description there is a reference to a corresponding AFC principle and to specific recommendations in the Saanich WHO AFC Report of 2008 (Note: these recommendations are listed at the bottom of the document.)

**Partnership and Community Planning**

***Saanich Network of Service Providers*** – Facilitated by Community Services staff members, a network of service providers for older adults and seniors meets two times a year to collaborate and plan for programs and services and to develop shared marketing tools. Members include Island Health, Saanich Volunteer Services Society, Goward House Society, Cordova Bay 55 Plus Association, Saanich Silver Threads, and Cedar Hill New Horizons. (Themes: [Communications and Information](#), [Community Support and Health Services](#). AFC Report Recommendations #4, 8, 12)

**Leisure Education – Connecting Seniors with their Community**

***Steps to Connect Program*** – Saanich Community Services works in partnership with the Island Health Hillside Seniors Health Centre (HSHC) to offer leisure education and community orientations to Island Health patients, clients and public. Some participants are referred to this 8 week workshop by their doctors, Community Health Nurses and/or Recreation Therapists while others hear about the program through the Saanich Parks & Recreation Active Living Guide and Island Health programs.

The program is designed to help seniors identify their interests, barriers and help them problem solve. The goal being to get participants involved in meaningful leisure and social pursuits. The first 4 weeks are spent at the HSHC developing plans to overcome barriers to participation in community recreation and building social connections in the group. The last 4 weeks are spent mainly in Saanich Recreation facilities, although include others facilities as needed (such as Les Passmore, Silver Threads for example) While trying a variety of recreation activities that the group has identified as interests (programs such as carpet bowling, pottery, yoga, etc) the participants also introduce themselves to recreation centres, public transit and new people. The program runs twice annually with 10-15 participants. (Themes: [Social Participation](#), [Respect and Social Inclusion](#), [Communication and Information](#), [Community Support and Health Services](#). AFC Recommendations #6, 7, 9, 11)

***Mature Driving Workshops***– Working with the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation, in cooperation with the Saanich Police, created a workshop to address some of the changes mature drivers develop. This three hour workshop will educate mature drivers about the changes we go through as we age, the changes in our driving environment, and give you the knowledge to adapt to these changes. Mature drivers are welcome to invite their family members to this informative workshop. (Themes: [Social Participation](#), [Community Support and Health Services](#))

**Arts Events**

***Aberdeen Art Program*** - The Arts Centre at Cedar Hill recently completed a pilot program in partnership with Island Health's Aberdeen Hospital and The Eldercare Foundation. Extended care residents along with the Recreation Therapist at Aberdeen and Cedar Hill Arts Centre staff worked on a weekly art project. An instructor would meet weekly at Aberdeen Hospital to guide the participants. Once

per month Aberdeen residents, staff and volunteers would make the trip from Aberdeen to Cedar Hill Recreation Centre to the art studios.

In this accessible and supportive environment, they were introduced to different art-making processes, developed individual and group creative projects, and contributed to the planning of an exhibition in celebration of the Eldercare Foundation's Embrace Aging Month entitled "Embrace Aging Through the Arts & Community." While at Cedar Hill, they visited the galleries, connected with staff, and arranged on a few occasions to stay for lunch or tea in the Cafe.

The program helped to give residents a sense of belonging in their community, the opportunity to develop a relationship with Community Arts Council and their local Recreation Centre, a chance to be proud of their accomplishments by inviting their family and friends to the exhibit.

Visiting the exhibition, Shaw TV was so taken with the program that they arranged to return to meet the artists and do a television segment. (Themes: [Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Communication and Information, Community Support and Health Services. AFC Recommendations #6, 7, 9, 11](#))

### **Seniors and Youth Dialogues**

**Conversation Cafes:** Evolving from the "Creating Home" Seniors Dialogues which Saanich Recreation had previously coordinated with Island Health and the Hillside Seniors Health Centre, these monthly dialogues offer a chance for seniors to come together and discuss current issues important to seniors. Each "café" is advertised through Saanich Recreation, Island Health and HSHC (Themes: [Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation, Communication and Information. AFC Recommendations #1, 3, 9, 10, 11](#))

**"Trust Me" Project Intergenerational Dialogues** - This project was created to advance social connections and understandings between teens and seniors. The program began with a series of facilitated dialogues to discuss generational differences, and ways to create understanding and trust between seniors and teens. The group shared ideas and identified activities and projects they to explore what type of activity or program they could create together to support creating social connections in their communities. Advertising is currently underway for the "Trust Me" project which is hoping to bring together youth and seniors to discuss generational differences and ways to create understanding. (Themes: [Social Participation, Intergenerational, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation, Communication and Information. AFC Recommendations #1, 3, 9, 10, 11](#))

### **Social Drop In's at Saanich Teen Lounges**

**Seniors Drop Ins** - As an ongoing program, Community Services staff members facilitate a number of drop in social programs for both seniors and youth. Currently, our teen lounges are utilized one day per week by local seniors as a drop in social opportunity to play table tennis, billiards, etc. Evenings and weekends tend to have the same opportunity for youth and teens. We are intentionally creating the concept of a shared space in our community centres with the vision of bringing these groups together in the future. If we can create relationships with both age groups we hope to position ourselves as the bridge between the two. (Themes: [Social Participation, Intergenerational, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation. AFC Recommendations #1, 3, 9, 10, 11](#))

**Community Multigenerational Drop In-** A chance for grandparents and grandkids to enjoy the Youth Centre at Gordon Head Recreation Centre to play cards, table tennis, try the Wii, or just visit. (Themes: [Social Participation, Intergenerational, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation. AFC Recommendations #1, 3, 9, 10, 11](#))

## **Exercise and Social Programs in partnership with Island Health**

***Minds in Motion*** is a fitness and social program for people experiencing early stage memory loss due to Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Individuals with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia are encouraged to attend with a friend, family member or caregiver. A certified fitness instructor conducts the fitness portion of the program, and a facilitator ensures participants are welcomed and involved in activities such as billiards, Wii and ping pong, or just enjoying social time and light refreshments in a relaxed atmosphere. The program also utilizes seniors in volunteer facilitation and support roles. (Themes: [Social Participation](#), [Civic Participation](#), [Community Support and Health Services](#). AFC Recommendations #3, 9, 10, 11)

***Gentle Walk & Talk programs*** – The free guided walks give seniors a chance to enjoy fresh air, beautiful scenery, a friendly chat and gentle exercise as they take different walks through Saanich parks & trails. No registration required. Suitable for all walking abilities. (Themes: [Social Participation](#), [Community Support and Health Services](#). AFC Recommendations #3, 9, 11)

## **Nutrition and Food Security Programs**

***Food Skills for Seniors*** - Working in partnership with Saanich Parks & Recreation and the Diabetes Association to the Food Skills for Families: Seniors Edition workshop series. Participants in these free workshops learn about nutrition, how to make healthy food choices, safe food handling and storage, meal planning, healthy snacks, shopping and preparing meals for one or two people. (Themes: [Social Participation](#), [Civic Participation](#), [Community Support and Health Services](#). AFC Recommendations #3, 4, 11)

***Community Kitchens*** - In partnership with Eldercare Foundation and Saanich Parks & Recreation the current Community Kitchens evolved from an early Community Kitchen for Seniors grant program. The grant program offered a six week course for seniors to learn about healthy cooking, shopping tips, nutrition and food preparation. The first meeting would include meal planning, healthy eating literacy, budgeting, and shopping tips. The second meeting would be a hands-on preparation, cooking, and clean-up. The food would be prepared in large quantities, and the meals shared among the group participants for consumption back at their homes. As the grant finished it was evident the social connections were as important as the food. The program could not continue on a free basis so the program was restructured. The Community Kitchens are now offered with a registration fee and on a bi-weekly basis. Participants sign up as frequently as they are able. The Coordinator sets the menu and brings in the supplies while everyone participates in the cooking, cleaning and sharing of the meal. It makes healthy eating affordable while also decreasing isolation and developing social networks for seniors. (Themes: [Social Participation](#), [Civic Participation](#), [Community Support and Health Services](#). AFC Recommendations #3, 4, 6, 11)

***Seniors Gardening Group*** – Saanich supports two plots in the Capital City Allotment Garden. A Garden Supervisor will be on duty twice a week to coordinate the planning and cultivating of the garden with the members. Members can attend with the coordinator, or can come on their own schedule and follow the garden schedule & outline left by the Supervisor. The supervisor is a senior volunteer themselves. (Themes: [Social Participation](#), [Civic Participation](#), [Community Support and Health Services](#). AFC Recommendations #3, 11)

## **Cordova Bay Community Place**

The Municipality of Saanich has partnered with School District #63 and the Cordova Bay 55 Plus Association to convert a classroom and to add new space to the Cordova Bay Elementary school to create community space. The space is primarily operated and programmed by the Cordova Bay 55 Plus Association and Saanich Recreation Services. The creation of this space has opened the door to both informal and formal connections between students in Grades K-5 and seniors in their neighbourhood.

One example of the type of intergenerational programming is the **“Handy Grandies,”** program. This program is all about Grade 4 and 5 students from Cordova Bay School working with CB55+ members twice a week making items such as bracelets and bookmarks. These items are then sold, with all proceeds donated to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. This campaign supports African grandmothers who are raising orphaned children who have lost their parents to AIDS. . (Themes: [Social Participation, Intergenerational, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation, Communication and Information. AFC Recommendations #1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11](#))

## **Volunteerism**

Saanich Recreation offers volunteer opportunities working in various programs and special events within the municipality. We promote these opportunities to all age groups from seniors to youth. It is not unusual to have 2 volunteers running an activity booth at a community event where one is a youth or young person and the other is a senior or older adult. This working platform creates social connections and can inspire relationship building.

The second avenue that volunteerism that Saanich looks to build Intergenerational relations is for seniors and older adults to volunteer in our preschool and children’s programs as a supervisor and activity leader. This creates an opportunity for seniors to share their hobbies and experiences in a structured program setting with young children in their communities. (Themes: [Social Participation, Civic Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Community Support and Health Services. AFC Recommendations #1, 2, 3, 6, 10](#))

## **Marketing and Promotions – Public Health Education/Awareness**

**“Embrace Aging” Show** – Saanich supports the Eldercare Foundation and Senior Living magazine through facility usage at the Pearkes Recreation Centre in exchange for Saanich Recreation advertising and articles in the Senior Living magazine. Saanich Recreation also runs a large activity booth at the show supporting leisure and community education resources for seniors. (Themes: [Social Participation, Civic Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Communications and Information. AFC Recommendations #4, 7, 9, 10](#))

**Social and Recreational Opportunities Guide** – This guide has been produced 4 times now, spearheaded and funded by Community Services this will now be an annual product representing all of Saanich’s partners in Senior Services such as Cordova Bay 55 Plus, Goward House, Silver Threads and Cedar Hill New Horizons. Guide is distributed through VIHA programs and other community outlets (Libraries, etc). (Themes: [Civic Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Communications and Information. AFC Recommendations #4, 7, 8, 10](#))

The following recommendations from the 2008 WHO AFC Saanich Report which are relevant to Recreation and Community Services are listed below. These are connected to and/or addressed by the programs or projects listed above with a reference to the recommendation number listed at the end of each program description.

### Respect and Social Inclusion (p. 15 of Saanich Report)

1. Encourage mixed use and intergenerational social interactions in partnership with existing seniors associations and organizations and school districts as seen in the development of Cordova Bay Community Place.
2. Implement a reception desk or kiosk at municipal facilities providing older persons with volunteer opportunities to act as “greeters” or ambassadors to municipal services assisting older persons in navigating services.

### Social Participation (p. 17)

3. Develop new volunteer opportunities for older persons to participate in their community through municipal and community events.
4. Foster the development of local, self supporting, community based groups of seniors to provide social and recreational activities for seniors in their local neighbourhoods.
5. Work with School Districts to investigate further opportunities to provide physical space and intergenerational programs for a variety of seniors groups and associations.

### Communications and Information (p. 19)

6. Offer tours of Saanich Municipal Hall and other municipal facilities and services.
7. Open House Seniors Days at Recreation Centres and other municipal facilities to engage older persons and improve the awareness of services offered while creating a social connection between municipal staff and citizens.
8. Work with local organizations to develop a resource guide specific to Saanich or to contribute to existing city directories to ensure Saanich specific information is included.
9. Improve promotion of education tours and workshops at recreation facilities and municipal halls.

### Civic Participation and Employment

10. Enhance the awareness of meaningful volunteer opportunities such as the Emergency Program through communication and partnerships with Saanich Volunteer Services Society, Saanich Silver Threads and other senior serving organizations.

### Community Support and Health Services

11. Educate the older population in the health and social benefits of participation in recreation and leisure services and civic or community activities in conjunction with Island Health
12. Host an annual community forum with health service providers, senior serving agencies, stakeholders and municipal representatives to share information and explore partnerships for improving community support and health services.