



December 2011



UPFRONT

Alma Johnston

Some people would define ageing well as keeping physically active or eating well. These things are important, but for me, it is community involvement that allows me to stay young and give back to my community. A few current examples of my community work include President of Lake Loon/Cherry Brook Seniors, Past President of the Halifax County Seniors Council, President of the Boundary Action Review Committee, Past Moderator of the African United Baptist Association of N.S., Graham Creighton School Advisory Committee. board member of the Black Cultural Centre and many others. You might say that my new husband Gerald and I are too busy to think about how well we are ageing –perhaps this is another sign of ageing well!

When asked whether my community helps seniors to age well, my answer would be “yes and no”. For example, HRM provides regular bus service to our area, but recent road work left the shoulders so narrow that it has become dangerous to wait for the bus or get to the stop. At a recent meeting with the Mayor, Lake Loon/Cherry Brook Seniors highlighted this problem, and also brought it to the attention of our Councillor. We are also advocating for safe walking trails in our community.

At this time of year though, it is good to focus on the positives. I have noticed many age friendly features in our communities. For example, seating for seniors in stores and banks, senior discounts at many locations, and restaurants that provide lower prices and smaller portions for seniors. The other day, I was able to park in one of the senior parking spaces at Wal-Mart, Dartmouth Crossing. Several malls and businesses in the province now have senior parking, and I am pleased to note that this is due to the work of Community Links and its Ageing Well Together Coalitions.. Parking for parents with young children is another age-friendly feature that I was pleased to notice.

By keeping connected to community issues and organizations, I can stay current with programs and services for seniors. For example, I have provided a number of seniors with applications for the property tax rebate and given information on snow removal services for seniors and those with disabilities. Reaching out to my community — that’s my key to ageing well.

Alma Johnston is a retired educator and community activist. She joined the Board of Community Links in 2008. In June 2009, Alma was awarded a "Remarkable Seniors Award" for leadership in her community. In September 2011, Alma was married to Gerald Tynes.

2011 and Looking Forward



Sandra Murphy-
Executive Director

As I reflect on the past year with Community Links, a few highlights spring to mind.

This has been a year of transition for Community Links. Our Preventing Falls Together Program which we have built over the last seven years has evolved into Ageing Well Together—an integral part of the work of Community Links in the areas of falls prevention, active living and age friendly communities. Among the activities of our Ageing Well Together Coalitions, the *Mobility Workshops* stand out. The response to these workshops from seniors has been overwhelming, and we will continue to offer sessions in 2012, thanks to a grant from the Department of Seniors Positive Aging Fund. Another Coalition project was our Ageing Well Photo Contest and *Year of Ageing Well Calendar 2012*, accomplished in partnership with Community Health Boards around the province.

Another highlight for our organization this year was our *Seniors and Gambling Project*. We were able to partner with The Department of Seniors and Gambling Awareness Nova Scotia to offer interactive skits and sessions in seven locations around the province. Lots of good discussion, food and fun were featured at these sessions, and many insights gained. All of Community Links' Board members were actively involved in this project, which certainly added to its success.

Looking forward., Community Links has started work on the Age Friendly Workplace Initiative, which deals with two main issues: First, the workforce is ageing and there are concerns about where the labour force is going to come from for all sectors in the future. This of great concern in the non profit/voluntary sector, which employs

36,098 persons in Nova Scotia. This is approximately 10,000 more than are employed in the construction industry according to a 2010 report undertaken by Gardner Pinfold for the Federation of Community Organizations and Phoenix Youth Programs. The voluntary sector is a major employer but in general pays lower wages and has fewer benefits than government or business. This poses a big disadvantage in its ability to recruit and retain employees for the vital work it undertakes throughout the province.

The second area of concern is that many people facing retirement may not feel ready or able to leave the paid workforce at the traditional retirement age. They are in good health and may feel they still have much to contribute and also may feel the need to supplement their income. At the same time they may be looking for flexibility in the working environment or even for a complete change of activities. Will older workers be at least part of the solution to labour shortages for the non profit /voluntary sector?

Community Links, working with the Federation of Community Organizations, is exploring these two issues by surveying Non-Profit/Voluntary Organizations about their policies and practices around older workers and by surveying employees in this sector as well as government and business about what they might be looking for as older workers. The survey portion of the project is just about complete. In January six focus groups will be held in the Valley, in HRM and in Pictou County. A discussion paper will be prepared and presented for discussion at a forum which will be held on February 27th in Truro. A final report will follow before the end of March.

Funding for this project is through the Voluntary Sector Professional Capacity Trust, Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Ageing Well Photo Contest: Some stories Behind the Images

This summer and fall, Community Links held an Ageing Well Photo Contest to gain photos for use in The Year of Ageing Well Calendar, a joint project of our Ageing Well Together Coalitions and Community Health Boards around the province. In the following pages, we highlight a few of the stories behind the pictures:

Ageing Well "On The Run" in CB



From left to right are George Bennett 72, Peter Hanna 70, Hilton Smith 80, and Jack Lively 72, after just completing the 5 km Johnny Miles Run in Sydney Mines on August 6th 2011. Trish Walsh, Elder Friendly Coordinator for Cape Breton District Health Authority believes that the key to the "boys" in the photo ageing well is not only the physical aspects of running but also the social. They all belong to the CB Roadrunners club and attend many of the road races. Peter organizes the popular Cabot Trail Relay where teams of runners complete 17 legs of the Cabot Trail ranging from 12.36 to 20.1 km, which takes a little over 25 hours. Trish remarks: "We look to them as role models and with the thought "if they can do it I can do it".



Hilda Thomas Churchover, Shelburne County

After retiring to Nova Scotia from Ontario in 1978,

Hilda looked for something to do on dry land while her husband spent a lot of time on his boat. One of the local churches was involved in starting a non-profit daycare, and Hilda decided to volunteer. In the early years, Hilda did everything that needed doing at Little People's Day Care. Now, at age 96, she volunteers for a few hours two days a week, mostly preparing vegetables and fruit in the kitchen for approximately 70 children age 18 months and up. In our Year of Ageing Well Calendar, Hilda is depicted at work in the kitchen at the day care

Originally from London England, Hilda lived through the Blitz, and experienced a few narrow escapes. Most of Hilda's family still lives in Ontario, something she shares with many other seniors in Nova Scotia whose families live in other parts of Canada. A 'young lady' in her 50's takes Hilda shopping and to appointments. However, Hilda doesn't mind travelling by herself and is due to fly to Toronto in December to meet a grandson who is treating her to a Caribbean cruise.

Keeping active in the community is one of Hilda's keys to aging well. Although there are plenty of clubs for older people in the community, Hilda feels that many rural seniors keep to themselves, and this is unfortunate. When asked her secret to ageing well, Hilda's immediate answer is "being with younger people." She has

many friends among staff at the daycare, and Hilda finds she has more in common with a younger generation. She also credits planning and cooking three meals a day and keeping a regular schedule for meals and bedtime. Setting the table for breakfast and supper is another positive routine, and a glass of wine with dinner helps as well!



Ringling in the New Year at Gables Lodge Amherst, NS with Frances Legere, 108, Lydia Lirette, 85, and Florence Willigar, 96. When Jill Blaikie, Director of Recreation for the Lodge, talked to Frances and Lydia about sending the photo off for publication, they were delighted and felt it would be a great way to pay tribute to their friend Florence who has died since the photo was taken.

All three are from different communities in Cumberland County. Frances hails from River Hebert, Lydia is from Amherst, and their friend Florence was from Parrsboro. When they arrived at Gables their faith brought them together. They had all been members of the Catholic Women's League and in their new home they would get together to pray the rosary and to sit all afternoon in their little corner. Jill says it was like dropping in and chatting at someone's kitchen table when you joined them. "They worried about each other and when someone was sick, they worried

more. When Florence died, it was so sad to see them as they grieved together." Frances at 108, lights up a room when she enters it, says Jill. She attributes her longevity to being happy and not worrying. She does exercises in her bed and uses Oil of Olay. She gets a call from their headquarters on her birthday. Her advice is not to pat your skin dry after washing. Let it dry on its own.

Jill recalls a party for a staff member at Gables to which Frances was asked because the staff member was her relative. She was asked to make a little speech. "Her speech was nothing short of amazing," says Jill, and "it was completely off the cuff."

Affectionately referred to at Gables as the "Three Amigos", it was an honour to feature them in our Year of Ageing Well Calendar.

First Prize Winner Laura Fraser, Halifax

Laura is a high school student with a very active grandmother, Barbara Oldfield of Middle Lahave. Barbara credits her ability to enjoy tubing with her grandchildren to a healthy lifestyle and lots of exercise, including a regular exercise class, curling, and a variety of outdoor activities. Recently Barbara and Laura appeared on CTV's Morning Live as part of our Ageing Well Together Week, November 20-26.



View the Year of Aging Well Calendar at: www.nscommunitylinks.ca

The Benefits of Fitness – at Any Age

By Barbara Nicholls

I've been involved with the fitness industry, working quite literally from coast to coast. When I began working in Bridgetown NS, I had a bit of a wonderful surprise. The surprise was the amount of enthusiastic over 50 age group that were eager and grateful to begin and learn how to bring physical health and well-being into their lives. At first I was concerned to be working with this group, due to many imposed restrictions; such as high blood pressure, COPD, artificial hips and knees, heart valve constrictions, and osteoporosis, just to name a few. This was the first time in my career that I worked with seniors with such serious health concerns. I'm not one to run from a challenge, so with the participants' physicians consent, the fun began.

The reason I use the word "fun" instead of "work", is because I like to make getting in better

condition fun, not work. It really doesn't need to be work at all; I don't even like the phrase workout. The new reality T.V. fitness shows give exercise a bad name. I can see potential new exercisers cringing and throwing in the towel before they would even begin a fitness program, after having viewed such horrifying, over the top, physical torture.

My oldest client is 90 this year, and I can assure everyone reading this article that the sessions are very gentle, yet effective.

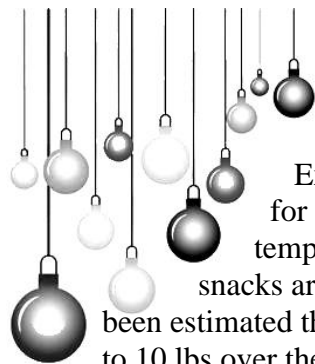


There is a newer term used these days when referencing exercise. It's functional fitness. Notice the prefix is "fun". We, as fitness professionals, agree it's not about how big the bicep is, it's about getting up out of a chair or perhaps climbing stairs with ease. Today, with the older adult, exercising has many different and enjoyable components, such as community organized events, in home appointments with a certified personal trainer, or simply finding a friend with whom to walk. I realize that winter can pose a fear of walking outside, but there are easy things seniors can do in the comfort of their own homes. The recommended amount of time for physical activity for seniors is 20 – 30 minutes a day. The good news is that it does not need to be consecutive. So, 10 minute increments three times a day is very reasonable, and must be done to maintain independent living.

I'd like to share a story of one of my clients. She is 65 and has been on blood pressure medication for a number of years. When she was first put on this prescription, her doctor explained that this would be a lifelong experience of drug therapy. At the time, she was not an exerciser, nor had she planned on becoming one in the foreseeable future. Albeit, she did become an exerciser, and I began training her on a 5 day a week schedule. After about 4 months she began to feel dizzy about half way through her program. I was concerned, and took her blood pressure, which was terribly low, so I called the nurse practitioner number (811), and passed the phone over to my

client. I fed her a little food, and she began to come around. Both the nurse and I recommended that she consult with her doctor. Two days later when I saw her again, she was so excited to report that the doctor cut her blood pressure medication in half, and suggested that she may be completely off it in a few months if she were to continue with the fitness regimen. Small but great are the benefits of exercise, as this tale expresses.

*Barbara Nicholls is a Certified Personal Trainer and Nutrition and Wellness Specialist in Bridgetown, Nova Scotia
Reach her at: Barbelles@eastlink.ca*



Happy Healthy Holidays

Exercise classes break for the holidays, and tempting food and snacks are everywhere. It has been estimated that people can gain 7 to 10 lbs over the holiday season.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Below are tips from the weight loss experts:

Find a way to build fresh air and exercise into your day, and get adequate sleep.

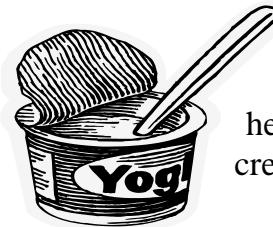
Drink water before eating.

A study in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association found that when people drank two cups of water before breakfast, they ate 75 fewer calories, or 13 percent less, compared to the participants who didn't get their H₂O before eating.

Eat slowly. It takes fifteen to twenty minutes for your brain to register that you are full

Don't slip meals. When we are extremely hungry we tend to eat more.

Don't try to lose weight over the holidays—maintenance should be the goal.



Yogurt Cheese

(A healthier alternative to cream cheese)

Place a sieve or colander lined with a clean coffee filter over a bowl. Put some plain yogurt in the filter and let stand covered in the fridge for a few hours or overnight. The liquid will drain off and the result will be a spreadable yogurt cheese, perfect for making healthier holiday dips and spreads. Draining the liquid also takes out some of the tangy yogurt flavour. The longer it drips, the thicker the consistency.

Muffin, Anyone? Think a raisin bran muffin is a healthy snack? Think again.

- 360 calories (almost 20% of average daily needs)
- 10 grams of fat (15% of average daily needs)
- 790 mg sodium (over 50% of daily recommendation)
- 6 grams of fibre (considered a very high source of fibre)
- 37 grams of sugar (100% of daily recommendation)

Source: Policy and the Food Environment, Kelly Cavan, Public Health Nutritionist



Notes and Notices

National Non-smoking Week

January 15-21 For tips and links on quitting, visit <http://nnsww.ca/>

National Volunteer Week.

Each year, communities all across Canada recognize the contribution of volunteers . Volunteer Week 2012 takes place from April 15 to April 21.

Customized Training for Registered Charities

Atlantic Charities Learning Exchange (ACLE) is offering free clinics to Nova Scotia registered charities and those who work with charities. These sessions are geared to your needs, and cover such topics as Board accountability in charities reporting, planning for fundraising and the fundraising ratio, moving from the financial statements to the T3010, seminar on receipting, and more. ACLE is funded by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), and all information is approved by CRA. To inquire about a session for your organization, go to www.atlanticcharities.ca or call 902-422-0914.

Community Links is a Nova Scotia partner in the ACLE project.

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year – A Christmas Carol, By Charles Dickens

Mobility Workshops

How do I know when I need a cane or walker? What is the proper height for my cane? How can I make my bathroom safer? These questions and others can be answered through our popular Mobility Workshops. To arrange for a workshop for your group, contact Community Links Provincial Office at 902-422-0914 or email info@ageingwelltogether.ca

The 38th Annual Provincial Volunteer Awards Ceremony and Luncheon

will be held Monday, April 2nd at the Westin Hotel, Halifax. More than 70 volunteers will be honored for the tremendous contributions they have made to their communities and to the province.

Deadline for all award nomination submissions is 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 28th, 2012

www.recreationns.ns.ca/volunteerawards

Cross Border Turkey Trivia Quiz



Who are more likely to serve turkey for Thanksgiving dinner, Canadians or Americans? Send you answers by mail only to Community Links, Box 29103, Halifax, NS B3L 4T8. The first correct answer received by mail wins a \$25 Sobey's gift certificate. Second and third prizes too!

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