

Beacon News

FOR BCS HOME SUPPORT CLIENTS

Spring 2009
Volume 1, Issue 2
www.beaconcs.ca

Beacon
Community
Services

INTRODUCING OUR DIRECTOR OF HOME SUPPORT SERVICES

Mari Green, RN is the Director of Home Support Services for Beacon Community Services. She works with each of the six geographic Team Managers (Victoria, Gordon Head/Oak Bay, Royal Oak, Esquimalt/Westshore, Peninsula, and the Outer Gulf Islands – Salt Spring, Pender, Galiano, Mayne, and Saturna), plus the Assisted Living and After-Hours Team Managers to ensure a high level of standard is maintained.

Mari brings over 25 years of experience as a nurse to her role. She has been with Beacon Community Services for over six years, seeing the tremendous growth and changes that have occurred. Before Beacon, Mari spent 14 years with the Alpha Home Health Care agency.



Welcome to Spring!

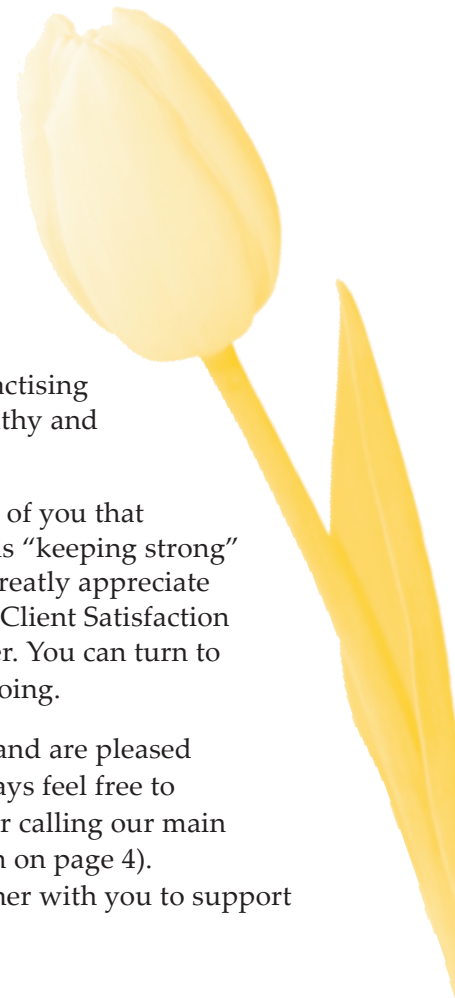
from Isobel Mackenzie,
Executive Director

I think we're all glad to put the unexpected harsh winter behind us. It's time to enjoy our longer days, warm spring breezes and rejuvenating sunshine.

However, there are still plenty of cold and flu bugs going around, so be sure to continue practising thorough hand hygiene to help keep you healthy and able to make the most of springtime.

We've had an opportunity to hear from many of you that Beacon Community Services' Home Support is "keeping strong" and continuing to serve you effectively. We greatly appreciate your helpful responses to our Home Support Client Satisfaction Survey distributed in the December newsletter. You can turn to page 2 for survey highlights on how we are doing.

We are proud of our Home Support Services and are pleased to bring them to you, our special clients. Always feel free to provide feedback and comments by writing or calling our main Home Support Office (see contact information on page 4). We look forward to continuing to work together with you to support your independence and well-being.



IN THIS ISSUE

All rights reserved.

Client Survey Highlights	2	Care Plans Get A New Look	3
Sluggett House Opens This Summer	2	Prepare for Allergy Season!	3
Access Your Schedule Online	2	Getting Help in the Yard and Garden	4



SURVEY SAYS . . .

Highlights of Client Feedback

Thank you to the many Home Support clients for taking time to complete the Satisfaction Survey distributed in our last newsletter.

We asked our clients “How are we doing?” and they told us that overall we are doing pretty well, although there are some areas for improvement. Highlights of survey input include:

- 99% of clients responding say our services are always (60%) or usually (39%) meeting their needs
- 86% of respondents rate the performance of their CHW as excellent (35%), very good (29%), or good (22%)
- 71% of survey participants indicate workers are adequately trained (targeted for improvement)
- 76% of clients responding find their contact with the office always (37%) or usually (39%) prompt and courteous (targeted for improvement)
- 84% of former South Victoria clients responding feel their service has either improved (12%) or stayed the same (72%)
- 60% of respondents use/read the communication book in their home (targeted for improvement)
- 82% of survey participants were not aware of the VIHA policy change for visit schedules – i.e. moving to timeframes vs exact times (targeted for improvement)
- 30% of clients responding access their schedules on-line (targeted for improvement)

Home Support Workers’ Positive Impact

Clients responding gave CHWs the following percentage ratings on different work attributes:

CHW ATTRIBUTE	RATING	
	Always	Usually
• Punctual	42%	41%
• Courteous	74%	21%
• Reliable	58%	31%
• Friendly	69%	25%
• Skilled	48%	37%
• Caring	64%	28%
• Well-groomed	61%	28%
• Efficient	58%	43%
• Flexible	49%	34%



I am able to stay at home with the workers’ help and do not depend so heavily on my family.

The workers are very pleasant and offer quick response to any problem.



SLUGGETT HOUSE OPENS THIS SUMMER

Beacon Community Services is excited to be opening its second licensed dementia housing facility in August 2009. Modeled after the highly successful Brentwood House, Sluggett House will be home for 16 seniors who have mild to moderate dementia.

Located in Brentwood Bay, the land for this project was donated by the Sluggett family along with the Baptist Church that was erected on the site over 100 years ago. The façade of the original church has been incorporated into the structure of the new building. Watch for more news on this facility over the summer.



Access Your Schedule Online

Thirty percent of our clients are now viewing their personal home care schedule on-line.

You too can enjoy this convenience by following the steps below.

Your login ID and password must be set up prior to your first login.

To set up your account please contact Wanda at our office, Phone: 250-658-6407 or Email: wchawrun@beaconcs.ca.

After you have set up your account, visit our website www.beaconcs.ca and click on “Log In” located at the top right-hand corner of the home page. Enter your login ID, followed by your password, and click on “Submit”.

Prepare for Allergy Season!

The warmer months are here (yeah!), but with them comes the dreaded allergy season for many of us. We're preparing for the onslaught of pollen, that microscopic powder released by trees, weeds and grasses into the wind.

The allergic reaction, hay fever, is triggered when pollen comes into contact with cells in the nose, mouth and eyes of an allergic person. The body's immune system mistakes the pollen for a harmful substance and tries to defend itself by attacking the pollen with antibody cells. This causes special chemicals like histamine to be released. It is the histamine which causes those bothersome sneezing, runny nose and watery eyes symptoms.

With perseverance it is possible to reduce hay fever symptoms. Some of the most common preventative methods are:

- Avoid areas with troublesome grasses and trees. We're fortunate that seaside areas like ours have lower pollen counts.
- Have someone else mow the lawn if possible (see the page 4 article on getting gardening assistance). This is by far the most harmful activity for anyone allergic to grass pollens.
- Do not plant trees or shrubs too close to the house. Get rid of weeds.
- Stay indoors with windows closed when pollen levels are the highest, between 5 and 10am and before dusk.
- Keep car windows closed while driving.
- Wear sunglasses to stop pollen from entering the eyes.
- Wash clothes and hair after being outside to remove any trapped pollen.
- Dry clothes in the dryer; do not hang laundry outside as it collects pollen.
- Assess if ceiling and window fans are aggravating the problem by drawing outside air into rooms.
- Use air purifiers to remove excess particles such as pollen from the air.
- Maintain a healthy diet rich in Vitamin C and Vitamin E, to help strengthen the immune system to fight against hay fever symptoms.
- Avoid mucus-forming foods such as dairy products, refined wheat products and processed foods in general.
- Consult your pharmacist to determine if any over-the-counter medications are an option for addressing your hay fever symptoms.

The weed that causes 75 percent of all hay fever is ragweed. One ragweed plant is estimated to produce up to 1 billion pollen grains!



CARE PLANS GET A NEW LOOK

Many of you will find new yellow books in your home along with electronically printed care plans. Care plans that are in clients' homes will now be the same as the care plans we have in our computerized client records.

While our Community Health Workers (CHWs) always had access to current care plans through their on-line schedules, the hand-written plans in clients' homes were often out-of-date. We will now be providing updated plans, delivered through the CHWs on a more frequent basis.

You will also notice a bright pink sticker on your communication book to indicate you have a Task 2 that CHWs should be aware of. While this information is in the care plan, the sticker is another alert to the CHWs.

These changes are part of our efforts to continue improving and updating our service to clients.

Enjoy the Benefits of Gardening

There is something for everyone in gardening – from high level to gentler forms of exercise.

Springtime is beckoning gardeners to their yards, gardens and flower pots. Gardening is a healthy way of maintaining physical fitness and wellness, with activity level and tasks adjustable to suit individual capabilities and age.

Gardening can involve walking, bending, stretching and reaching – whether it's pruning low branches, planting seeds and flowers, or digging up weeds – so it's good exercise for maintaining flexibility and mobility. Tasks like carrying a watering can, pushing a wheelbarrow or moving pots are weight bearing activities which, in addition to strengthening muscles and bones, are good for the heart and blood flow. Just remember when lifting to take proper measures to avoid straining the back.

For people encountering stiff joints and reduced movement in their hands, gardening's intricate tasks like picking out stones from soil and removing old plant blooms can help with smaller movements in the hands, and finger coordination.



Gardening outdoors in the warm weather is also a great way to reduce stress levels and provide mental stimulation. After a gardening session, it's the perfect opportunity to relax, and the fresh air and physical exertion can enhance sleep at night.

You should carefully consider the type of gardening activities to get involved in based on your physical condition and any limitations. Consulting a physician may be necessary to receive advice on gardening capabilities and whether help in the yard is needed.

HOME SUPPORT MAIN OFFICE

2723 Quadra Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4E5
Phone: 250-658-6407
Toll-free: 1-877-658-6003
Fax: 250-658-6417

ESQUIMALT/WESTSHORE

#205 - 791 Goldstream Avenue
Victoria, BC V9B 2X5
Phone: 250-658-6003
Fax: 250-478-6551

PENINSULA

9860 Third Street
Sidney, BC V8L 4R2
Phone: 250-656-0134
Fax: 250-655-4357

SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS

#2 - 137 Crofton Road (Annex)
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2R8
Phone: 250-537-9955
Fax: 250-537-9969

www.beaconcs.ca

Serving our community with respect and compassion



GETTING HELP IN THE YARD AND GARDEN

If you need help with your yard or gardening work, the following contacts may be of assistance (presented by region, **servicing residents of that area only**). Some services are free, others charge fees. Note that applicants could be required to complete a form and/or interview before gardening services are provided.

Esquimalt residents

- Esquimalt Volunteers
Phone: 250-412-8532

Oak Bay residents

- Recreation Oak Bay Hire-a-Teen Work Crews
(available July and August)
Phone: 250-370-7114
- Oak Bay Volunteer Services
Phone: 250-595-1034

Saanich Peninsula residents

- BCS Youth Employment Program
Phone: 250-656-5537 ext. 118

Saanich residents

- Saanich Volunteer Services
Phone: 250-595-8008

Victoria residents

- Capital City Volunteers
Phone: 250-380-0660

Greater Victoria residents

- Students/Seniors Work Assistance Program (SWAP) - UVic students
Phone: 250-388-4268 (Sliver Threads)

Gulf Island residents

- Pender Island Community Support
Phone: 250-629-3346
- Salt Spring Seniors Services Society
Phone: 250-537-4604

You can also check the Classified section of your local community paper and the *Times Colonist* for yard work advertisements. Consider asking businesses for references, and do not pay for services until the work is completed to your satisfaction.

Enjoy your yard, garden and flower pots in the warm months ahead!