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Message from Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Darryl Plecas



Whoever came up with the phrase lazy days of summer, wasn't thinking of the many active seniors throughout British Columbia. It has been a busy season for many, especially those organizing, volunteering or participating in the 55+ BC Games, held in North Vancouver at the end of August. With over 3,300 participants and 24 different sports, from archery and bridge to ice hockey, older adults are showcasing their talents as well as embodying active, healthy lifestyles. I applaud those who have competed or supported seniors during the games and extend my congratulations to all medalists. Your drive and competitiveness clearly show sport is a lifelong endeavour. Final results and photos can be seen at www.bcgames.net.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate has also been very active examining housing challenges some seniors in British Columbia face, from independent living to the residential care and assisted living facilities available to older adults as they age. *Seniors' Housing: Affordable. Appropriate. Available* and the office's four other reports can be read here <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/reports/> if you are interested in the work B.C.'s seniors' advocate is pursuing. The office has also recently produced their first annual report, which reflects the work Isobel Mackenzie has undertaken in the office's inaugural year, as well as detailing the issues she will examine in the coming year.

The issue of secure, affordable and accessible housing is a cornerstone to seniors' quality of life. In July, I had the honour to attend the opening of Kiwanis Towers in Richmond, which provides 296 new, affordable rental apartments near the city centre. A partnership of the B.C. government, the city of Richmond and the Richmond Kiwanis Senior Citizens Housing Society, the complex includes community gardens, patio areas, landscaped outdoor spaces, walking paths, secure parking, laundry facilities, a fitness area and shared amenity space. Projects like



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these not only support seniors' continued independence, but also create strong and supportive community ties. Details of the opening and the housing project can be read in the B.C. Government Newsroom <https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/>.

As we move into fall, there are many interesting upcoming activities. This year's Union of British Columbia Municipalities convention is September 21-25, and is an opportunity for the province's local governments to share best practices as well as explore new ways to maximize value to taxpayers in the services and programs they provide. This year's theme is 'Excellence in Action' and I have no doubt discussions impacting all generations will be avidly discussed.

This fall also marks the 25th International Day of Older Persons on October 1st, a global observance led by the United Nations. That same day is also National Seniors Day in Canada, and is an opportunity for us to collectively or individually share our appreciation and respect for older adults. There are many ways for families, community groups, businesses and individuals to celebrate. The Government of Canada has several helpful online tools and resources at <http://www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/pie/nsd/index.shtml> to mark the occasion.

In my role as the Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors, I have had numerous opportunities to meet remarkable seniors who have served, designed and shaped the British Columbia we all benefit from today. National Seniors Day is a time to appreciate the positive impact and personal connection older adults have in our family and community, as well as a time for each of us to reflect and challenge ourselves to further develop more age-friendly and inclusive urban and rural communities now and for the next generation of seniors.

Thank you,

Darryl Plecas

Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health

For more information about seniors' services and supports, visit www.seniorsbc.ca.