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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

### **Bowen Island receives Age-friendly BC grant**

BOWEN ISLAND – Bowen Island seniors will benefit from a \$19,993 age-friendly grant to help create programs or tools that address the needs of older residents.

The Municipality of Bowen Island is one of 27 communities receiving grants for 2013.

“This year’s grant recipients have recognized the importance of ensuring that communities and businesses meet the needs of residents of all ages,” said Minister of State for Seniors Ralph Sultan. “Successful projects like the ones on Bowen Island and West Vancouver focus on a wide range of supports to make life easier for older residents. Many of these programs are supporting seniors to remain socially active and connected to their communities and are helping to reduce isolation, which is one of the top issues that I hear from seniors throughout B.C. when I meet with them.”

The municipality will use the funds to develop the Bowen Island Health Care Resource Guide in both print and online formats. As well, a telephone support line will assist with access to the guide and other health resources in the community. The municipality also is implementing the Bone Estrogen Strength Training (BEST) program for prevention and maintenance of osteoporosis and osteopenia. The BEST program will run for 45 weeks through 2013 and include speakers and social gatherings, a twice-weekly strength training program and ongoing support to monitor progress.

“It is great to see communities like Bowen Island and West Vancouver taking steps to implement programs that support the needs and health of local seniors,” said West Vancouver-Sea to Sky MLA Joan McIntyre.

The age-friendly planning and project grant program is a partnership between the government of B.C. and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). Grants of up to \$20,000 are provided through UBCM to help establish, or continue, a variety of projects that support healthy, active seniors.

Applications for age-friendly planning and projects grants were reviewed by staff from UBCM and the Ministry of Health. They were scored on a variety of factors, including: goals, proposed activities, involvement of seniors and other key partners, budget, and innovation and sustainability.

“Seniors are an integral part of our community and we are pleased that this age-friendly grant will help us to develop resources that will benefit the health of our older residents,” said Jack Adelaar, mayor of Bowen Island Municipality.

Since 2007, 117 B.C. communities have received funding to support age-friendly planning and projects. Examples include age-friendly assessments, ensuring services are more accessible, supporting transportation and social connection to help prevent social isolation, and improving the community by increasing garden and green space.

In September 2012, government announced \$500,000 was available for the 2013 round of grants. Fourteen of the 27 successful applicants for 2013 have not received previous funding through the program.

The age-friendly grant program is just one aspect of Age-friendly BC, which focuses on providing communities with support, information and recognition to help meet the needs of an aging population. Local governments can achieve age-friendly recognition and officially become an Age-friendly BC community once they have completed four basic steps that focus on community engagement, commitment, assessment and action. To learn more about Age-friendly B.C. and the Age-friendly Planning and Project grant program, please visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly](http://www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly)

The age-friendly grant program reflects the goals of B.C.’s Family Agenda, which supports seniors by encouraging healthy, active aging. To learn more, visit: [www.familiesfirstbc.ca](http://www.familiesfirstbc.ca)

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