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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

### **Parksville receives Age-friendly BC grant**

PARKSVILLE – Parksville seniors will benefit from a \$19,810 age-friendly grant to help create programs or tools that address the needs of the area’s older residents.

The City of Parksville is one of 27 communities receiving grants for 2013.

“This region is heavily populated with happy, healthy retired seniors who want to age gracefully and stay in their mid-island retirement communities,” said Minister of State for Seniors Ralph Sultan. “Successful projects like the one in Parksville focus on a wide range of supports to make life easier for the region’s older residents. Many of these age-friendly 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 City of Parksville will use the grant to work on the Oceanside IMPACTS: Improving Partnerships for Age-friendly Care Transitions for Seniors project. This community-planning project will involve hosting workshops to help develop a co-ordinated system of health and support services that are specifically designed to help seniors age in place in their home communities.

The workshops are intended to enhance the integration of primary and community care for older adults and develop strategies for engaging specific groups of seniors. The project also will focus on looking at new models of collaborative, co-ordinated care to improve the health of older adults and help ensure seamless care transitions for vulnerable seniors, from primary care through to end-of-life support.

“It is great news that this age-friendly grant will allowing Parksville to develop strategies that will support the well-being of local seniors and help us to live active, socially engaged, independent lives,” said Parksville-Qualicum MLA Ron Cantelon.

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.

“This funding allows us to provide a variety of age-friendly supports to the region’s residents,” said Mayor of Parksville Chris Burger. “Seniors are an integral part of our community. Whether you live in downtown Parksville or in our surrounding communities, we are committed to ensuring that residents can remain active and healthy as they age.”

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.

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 in funding 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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