
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

Eight communities receive Age-friendly BC Recognition

VICTORIA – Eight local governments have received Age-friendly BC Recognition for their actions in supporting older residents to remain healthy and active in their communities.

To achieve Age-friendly BC Recognition, the communities completed four steps to become recognized. They had to pass a local government resolution, establish an advisory committee, conduct an age-friendly assessment and develop and publish an action plan – all with the leadership and involvement of local seniors.

Armstrong, Burnaby, Clearwater, Creston, Fruitvale, Kamloops, Logan Lake and Riondel have successfully completed these steps. Each community will receive an Age-friendly BC award poster and a \$1,000 grant to create a legacy project or a celebration, and will be profiled on the website: www.SeniorsBC.ca

Age-friendly BC Recognition is one component of the Ministry of Health's strategy to support the needs of an aging population and is offered in partnership with BC Healthy Communities. In addition to the recognition program, Age-friendly BC also supports communities working to provide age-friendly features through grants delivered in partnership with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

Some examples of Age-friendly community improvements include: widening sidewalks, installing benches and covered rest areas, maximizing green space and making community programs and services more accessible to older adults.

Quotes:

Ralph Sultan, Minister of State for Seniors –

“As a senior myself, I hear firsthand how small changes have really impacted the quality of life of my siblings and friends. My position in government allows me to socialize on a regular basis, but for some seniors a ride to the local seniors centre is what they need to fulfil that same objective. Isolation is a big problem for seniors, one that slips up on us. Something as simple as a covered bench may encourage a senior to venture outside and enjoy the fresh air and conversation with others when they would otherwise stay home. I applaud the participating communities for their efforts and congratulate them on their Age-friendly BC Community Recognition.”

Jodi Mucha, executive director, BC Healthy Communities –

“We are impressed with the level of enthusiasm and commitment that local governments around the province are showing toward age friendly communities. Planning for age friendly communities is a win-win for everyone – it helps the community be great for everyone.”

Quick Facts:

- Nine British Columbia communities received Age-friendly BC Recognition in 2012: City of Duncan, Township of Esquimalt, District of Metchosin, City of Revelstoke, District of Saanich, District of Sechelt, City of Surrey, District of West Vancouver and City of White Rock.
- By 2031, close to 1.5 million British Columbians throughout the province will be over 65 – almost one-quarter of the province’s population.
- To address the aging population, government launched the Improving Care for B.C. Seniors: An Action Plan in February 2012. Some accomplishments to date include:
 - Together to Reduce Elder Abuse – B.C.’s Strategy, which includes expanding the Seniors Abuse Information Line, providing information kits, establishing a multi-sector Council to Reduce Elder Abuse and supporting training and awareness-building exercises for health professionals and others to recognize abuse and take appropriate action.
 - A provincial Dementia Action Plan that outlines priorities for improved dementia care.
 - A new toll-free Seniors Health Support Line to give seniors, their families and their caregivers’ access to more health support.
 - The redesigned SeniorsBC.ca website, including improved navigation, search functions and more content and resources to help better serve seniors and their families.
 - The 10th edition of the BC Seniors’ Guide. The easy-to-read B.C. Seniors’ Guide contains information on a range of topics including transportation options, housing, health services and healthy living. It is also available in Chinese, Punjabi and French translations and includes telephone numbers and website information for frequently used resources.
- In June 2011, the Province, in partnership with the BC Chamber of Commerce, launched a guide for businesses to address the needs of older customers and employees, Creating an Age-friendly Business in B.C.
- In September 2011, government launched Becoming an Age-friendly Community: Local Government Guide, a new tool for local governments, community organizations or local champions to help them create an age-friendly community.

Learn More:

Age-friendly BC: www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly

Seniors BC: www.seniorsbc.ca

BC Healthy Communities: www.bchealthycommunities.ca/

Age-friendly Business in BC guide:

http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca/sbbcfiles/files/SeniorsBC_agefriendly_business_guide.pdf

Seniors Action Plan:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=BFA182946B2C407CB7B48571BA5C25EB>

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