

The Family Caregivers' Grapevine

A bi-monthly newsletter published by
Supporting Family Caregivers Across the Lifespan Project

July | August 2012

Getting Around Town on the Buses

by Josie Padro



While many of us make plans to retire from work, fewer of us think about retiring from driving. Whether it's for health, financial or environmental rea-

sons, when we hang up the car keys for good, it doesn't mean an end to freedom. The North Shore has many options for seniors to get where they want to go without having to drive there.

Public transit is one way to get around. For those who would like an orientation, TransLink offers TravelSmart for seniors seminars that offer practical information for navigating the system. They can be booked for a group or an individual, and cover topics such as boarding and exiting a bus with mobility aids. TransLink's Access Department also takes groups on excursions aboard the busses for practical sessions. Book a group or individual session with the Access Department, 604-453-4587. If you can't attend a seminar, you can

borrow a copy of *Access Transit – Getting Around Metro Vancouver*, available in North Vancouver libraries.

HandiDART is TransLink's door-to-door service for people whose health or mobility prevents them from using regular public transit. HandiDart buses accommodate wheelchairs and are fitted with motorized lifts. Passengers must first apply to use the service and can find application forms on the TransLink website, www.translink.ca, or request one by phone at 778-452-2860.

Once registered, riders are set to begin booking their HandiDART trips. Rides can be reserved on a regular or as needed basis. The cost of a trip is the same as a full adult fare on regular public transit and, like regular transit, is determined by the number of zones travelled. A monthly FareCard, \$46 for unlimited travel within one zone, can be worthwhile for those who use the system regularly. FareSaver tickets also make trips less costly and are a good option for those who use transit intermittently.

On the Buses

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MVT Canadian Bus Inc. Consumer Advocacy Manager, Linda McGowan has some advice for using HandiDART. She points out riders may bring along an attendant free of charge as long as a seat has been booked for them. Children may accompany the accompanying adult provides an appropriate car seat, which the driver will secure and remove on arrival.

Ms. McGowan, who uses a motorized wheelchair, says she appreciates HandiDART's automatically generated reminder calls. Passengers receive a call the day before their booked trip, and they can request an Imminent Arrival call, which goes out 10 minutes before the HandiDART bus is due to arrive. She says this gives her time to get her things together and be ready to go.

Ms. McGowan points out that HandiDART operators are not required to help passengers up and down stairs or to carry packages, but will drop passengers off at points which are most accessible .

Unfortunately, if you miss your bus, unlike the regular bus system, another HandiDART will not be coming along. Drivers will wait five minutes and then carry on to their next stop, so allow plenty of time before and after appointments.

Adjusting to life without a car may take a little time, but it can be an opportunity to venture

out into the community and meet others who are travelling the same road.

North Shore seniors have a number of community shuttle services that also help them get around.

Silver Harbour Centre's Go Bus. Monday to Wednesday. Free, but donations are appreciated. To book , call John McCann at 778-230-1852.

Capilano Community Services Society's Seniors' Hub provides outreach programs for their members who have mobility problems or need some assistance shopping. To join the Seniors' Hub and find out about the Hub Bus, phone Miki at 604-988-7115.

The Seniors' Shuttle Bus operates out of the West Vancouver Seniors Activity Center with two routes in West Vancouver, running from 8:45 am to 3:45 pm, Monday to Friday. Contact the centre at 604-925-7280 or visit their website at westvancouver.ca/seniors.

The Seymour Access Bus takes seniors shopping to Lynn Valley Mall on Fridays with at-home picks up and drop off. Free. To reserve a seat call Coordinator Jennifer Dibnah at 604-983-6354.

The Canadian Cancer Society arranges volunteer drivers for those who need transportation to cancer treatments. Call the society at 604-215-5462 two business days in advance.

A note from Cindy Bouvet

Dear family caregivers and colleagues,

I have had the great pleasure of working at North Shore Community Resources Society since 2007, first as coordinator of the Caregiver Support Program, then in 2010 I moved to the Caregiver Support Project, a three year federally funded project. These past five years have been a fun, positive and rewarding experience.

The support of North Shore Community Resources management, staff, volunteers and colleagues has allowed me to spread my wings, try new and exciting programs and learn new skills.



Most of all I am thankful to the caregivers who have taught me so much. It is from caregivers' stories and experiences that I have learned the most, laughed the hardest and had the most heartfelt tears. It has been an honour to get to know you.

Mid July I will be starting full-time with Vancouver Coastal Health at the West Vancouver Community Health Centre. I will be fortunate in that I will continue to work with families and my colleagues on the North Shore.

For Caregiver resources and support, please contact: karyn.davies@nscr.bc.ca

With warmth and respect,

Cindy Bouvet

Coordinator

Caregiver Support Project

From the staff at NSCR...

we wish Cindy the very best in her new job. We're going to miss her!

Eat Well; Stay Healthy*Source: Daniela Velez, RD***Decadent Chocolate Fix**

A yummy (and healthy) chocolate pudding made with superfoods



6 soft pitted dates (if the dates you have are a bit dry, soak them in warm water for about half an hour and then drain)

1/2 avocado

4 tbsp high-quality unsweetened cocoa powder

1 to 2 tps water if mixture is not blending

Whiz together in a blender or food processor and purée till smooth. Eat as is or spread on crackers.

Date Walnut Energy Bars

2 cups Medjool dates, pitted (about 16)

1/2 cup dried fruit, ie cranberries, apricots

1 cup raw walnuts

1/2 cup hulled hemp seeds or sesame seeds

1/2 cup old-fashioned oats (or quinoa flakes or amaranth puffs)

1/4 tsp kosher salt

1. Soak dates in hot water for 30 minutes and drain. If dates are soft and fresh, skip this step.
2. Place all ingredients in a food processor and process on high till finely

chopped and the mixture is pulling away from the bowl.

3. Line a bread 9x5 inch pan with plastic wrap, scoop the mixture into it and spread evenly. Fold plastic wrap edges over the mixture to cover it and gently press down, smoothing it out and packing it down—you want a dense loaf.
4. Flip pan to remove the loaf and remove the plastic wrap. Slice into desired thicknesses. Store tightly sealed in the refrigerator.

Asking for Help: A Sign of Strength not Weakness

It's important to care for yourself. That's the message caregivers often hear—but it's easier said than done. The Family Caregiver's Alliance, www.caregiver.org, has some practical tips on how to ask for help:

- Make a list of things you could use help with. Friends or family members could then select an item that work bests for them.
- Ask assertively and simply. Avoid couching your request with words like "it would be nice if..." or "maybe you could..." Try something like, "I need to do some grocery shopping this week. Could you stay with Mom for a couple of hours while I'm out?"
- Go with a person's strengths. If your daughter makes a great lasagne ask her to make one now and then to help with the cooking.
- Avoid relying exclusively on one person for help. Try to get support from a number of people to avoid relying too heavily on one person.
- Choose a good time to ask for help. Friends and family will appreciate your sensitivity to the events in their lives.
- Be aware that your request for help may not be accepted. It's the task that is being declined, not you. Don't be afraid to ask again another time.

Laugh Lines

Thank you to Child Care Resource and Referral at NSCR for allowing us to reprint these cute jokes created by some of the children in their programs.

1. Q: What is a frog's favourite drink?

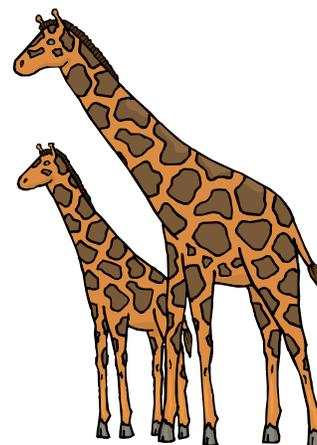
A : Croaka-Cola (George, age 5)

2. Q: Why did the cat sit on the computer?

A: To keep an eye on the mouse.
(Kayleigh, age 12)

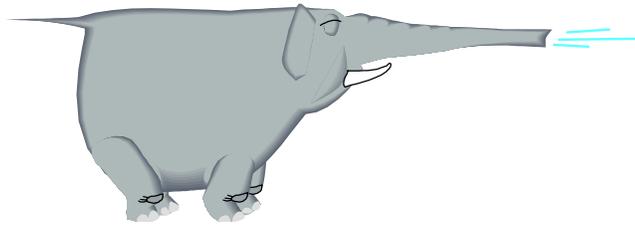
3. Q: Why do giraffes have long necks?

A: So they don't smell their stinky feet. (S.C., age 9)



Seasonal Allergy Solutions

by Pharmacist Shamim Confortin



AAH CHOO! Yes it is that time of the year again: when the flowers bloom, so do allergies!

Seasonal allergies are a reaction to allergens present at certain times of the year, usually in the Spring and Fall. Some of those include pollen, weeds, trees, and grass. Perennial allergies occur throughout the year and are caused by allergens such as dust, pet dander, dust mites and food.

When your body comes into contact with allergens found in the air, it reacts by producing histamine. Circulating histamine then produces symptoms such as sneezing, itchy watery eyes, a runny nose, hoarse voice, post-nasal drip or nasal congestion. Not all people experience all of the symptoms, and in some people, only one symptom may be present. A cold can present with some of the same symptoms as allergies so speak to your pharmacist if you are unsure.

Over-the-counter antihistamines are the first choice for treatment. First generation medications like Benadryl work quickly but cause a

lot of drowsiness and need to be taken a number of times during the day. Newer products like Claritin, Reactine and Aerius do not cause drowsiness and are taken once a day, which is more convenient. However these medications don't work as quickly. Ask for a pharmacist to help you make your selection.

Nasal sprays such as Nasonex, Omnaris, Nascort, and Avamys are effective, and eye drops like Patanol, Zaditor and Pataday are also useful. Both can complement antihistamine treatment. These items are only available by prescription so see your doctor. Opticrom and Cromolyn are available over the counter and work well if used on a regular basis.

Nasal rinses and lubricants can also be helpful as allergens can be rinsed out of the nasal passages and also be prevented from being inhaled.

Armed with this information you should be able to get outside and enjoy the spring and summer season.



*The purpose of this column is **not** to advise people on their health concerns, but to provide basic information for discussion with their own health provider.*

High Tech Tools

by Josie Padro

The iPod Effect

The Atlantic Institute of Aging, aginginstitute.ca, is conducting a pilot project to look at the effect of music on those with dementia, depression, strokes and Parkinson's. Researchers interviewed people in residential care about their musical preferences and then loaded ipods with the music that had special meaning to each one.

The effects of listening to the music varied from person to person, but many patients showed or reported a positive change in mood and improved mental function.

One family noticed their father became calmer, more focused and was able to sit through meals—a development that had an impact on his health as a whole.

Another resident who had trouble sleeping found that her favourite tunes from the past helped her relax and sleep through the night.

Researchers are still not sure exactly how music affects the brain. Some believe that music has such a powerful effect because it stimulates many different areas of the brain—areas that control movement, memory, and emotion.

Whatever the mechanism, the tiny ipod is helping some people with dementia to connect with their memories.

On the Hit List

The Institute for Music and Neurologic Function, www.imnf.org, has found that people tend to remember the songs that were popular in their twenties. Here are a few of their most requested tunes:

R&B

My Girl, The Temptations
(What) A Wonderful World, Sam Cooke

40s

Fever, Peggy Lee
Mambo Italiano, Dean Martin

50s

Do You Wanna Dance, Bobby Freeman
This Magic Moment, The Drifters

60s

California Girls, The Beach Boys
Monday, Monday, The Mamas and the Papas

Broadway

If I Were a Rich Man, Fiddler on the Roof
Give my Regards to Broadway, Judy Garland

Spiritual

Amazing Grace, Mahalia Jackson
His Eye is on the Sparrow, Selah

Country

The Gambler Kenny Rogers
Hurt, Johnny Cash

Making Your Wishes Known With an Advanced Care Plan

by Josie Padro

Some discussions are difficult to broach. Especially difficult are those concerning illness and end of life. Though it may be easier to avoid these topics while we're healthy, we may not be able to make our wishes known when we're ill.

In a recent education session on advance care planning here at NSCR, researcher and seniors' advocate Jane Osborne stated that 50 percent of us will not be able to make our own decisions in the final few days of our lives. Family members who are not prepared or are unsure of our wishes may, with the best intentions, choose treatments for us that we would not want.

To help BC residents work through these issues, the Ministry of Health has published an advance care planning guide called *My Voice*, which was adapted from an earlier workbook developed by the Fraser Health Authority.

My Voice outlines the different advance care planning options and the situations in which they can be applied. Especially helpful is the use of real life examples that illustrate how some families have made their plans.

The workbook includes check lists and legal forms that help you explore your thoughts and put your wishes into writing.

You can find *My Voice* Advance Care Planning guide on the BC Ministry of Health website www.health.gov.bc.ca. Because of high demand, it is not presently available in hard copy, however North Shore Community Resources will print a copy for you to take home. Print copies also can be borrowed from most North Shore Libraries

As a result of new incapacity planning legislation passed in September 2011, BC residents have more ways to ensure they receive care according to their directions:

A **Representation Agreement** is a legal document that names the person, your representative, who will make your medical decisions if you are not able. It outlines your wishes regarding the type of medical treatments you do and do not want.

An **Advance Directive** is also a legal document for your health provider outlining your wishes for medical care. Health care professionals are legally bound to follow the instructions in the directive.

An **Advance Care Plan** provides family and friends with a statement of your wishes regarding medical care.

If you choose to draw up these documents, provide your family members and physician with copies. Not only do they ensure that

Advanced Care Plannint *continued*

your wishes are carried out when you cannot speak for yourself, but they also provide clear direction for your family members—direction that can be invaluable during a time that can already be extremely stressful for them.

Whether or not you draw up legal documents, it's important to complete the three key tasks of advance care planning:

- Have a discussion with those who are closest to you about how you would like to be cared for.
- Write down your wishes about how you want to be cared for.
- Record the names of those who you choose to speak for you if you can't speak for yourself.

Resources

Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry, www.nidus.ca, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to personal planning issues. They provide self-help resources to assist with representation agreements, advance care directives and a number of other documents.

You can submit your representation agreement, advanced care plan or other documents to the Nidus Registry with information on where the originals are stored and who may access them—whether it's family members or

medical institutions. You may also submit information such as the financial institutions you deal with, the name of your pharmacist, lawyer and physician. The cost of a Registry Account with Nidus is \$25 for your first document, and \$10 for each additional one. It's a handy way to keep all your documents in one place so that you can review them regularly. It also provides convenient access for family and health professionals, if needed.

The **BC Ministry of Health**,

www.health.gov.bc.ca/hcc/advance-care-planning, is an excellent source of information on advance planning. Along with a link to *My Voice*, the site contains a list of “Frequently Asked Questions” on advanced care planning and to organizations and health authorities.

The **Fraser Health Authority** has been a leader in advanced care planning and has helpful information on its website, www.fraserhealth. Phone: 1-877-935.5669 or 604-587-4600

The **Public Guardian and Trustee of BC**, www.trustee.bc.ca also has a number of advance care planning publications on their website. Phone: 604-660-4444.



The Family Caregivers' Grapevine is a bi-monthly publication intended to support family caregivers by promoting the importance of self-care while providing practical information and resources.

If you have any questions or feedback about the newsletter, please contact the editor at:
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**North Shore
Community Resources**

Connecting You to Community Services!

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The Supporting Caregivers Across the Lifespan Project

The Supporting Caregivers Across the Lifespan Project works in partnership with the North Shore Caregiver Support Program. Together we provide a wide variety of educational workshops, caregiver support and resources for family and friends supporting someone with an illness or disability.

The Project provides:

- Education sessions for family caregivers
- Social recreation programs
- Expressive arts programming
- Tele-learning education sessions for family caregivers (educational workshops over the phone)
- Education for professionals working with family caregivers
- Education for employers

Additional activities provided by the Caregiver Support Program:

- Family Caregiver Network groups
- Stress management and relaxation workshops
- Telephone support and individual consultation
- Educational workshops
- Information and referral to community services
- Library with books, videos, and other educational resources

Are you a family caregiver?

You are if you provide a family member or friend who is chronically ill, elderly, palliative or living with a disability with **any** of the following types of assistance:

- **Personal Care:** dressing, bathing, eating
- **Household Work:** house cleaning, shopping/errands, preparing meals, yard work
- **Coordination of Care:** transportation, appointments, arranging services, visiting
- **Support:** phone check-in, supervision, emotional support
- **Nursing Care:** medication, changing dressings

You're not alone.

We're here to help.

For more information, contact Helen at 604-982-3313 or helen.wait@nscr.bc.ca.