

ZEST

HEALTH • HEART • HOME



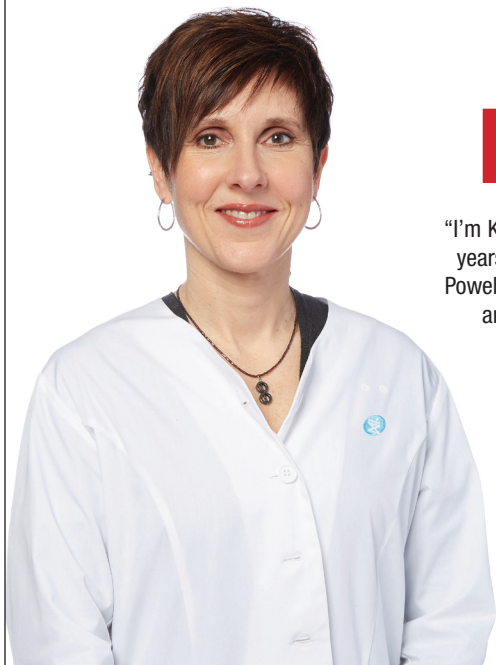
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Many of us who work at Shoppers have young children, as well as aging parents and grandparents. We believe that by treating our customers like our own families, we can provide exceptional care.

Inspiration for living a zestier life

By Isabelle Southcott, Publisher

How do you measure the health of a community? That's a difficult question and one for which there is no easy answer.

Before we can even attempt to answer that question we need to define health. What does it mean? What does it include? Is it simply being free from illness or injury or does it include more than that?

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. If you use that broad definition when looking at health (and we do), you include a whole lot more than just the absence of disease or illness.

We need good food and clean water and regular physical exercise to be healthy. We need social support and social interaction. According to Vancouver Coastal Health, the key factors that influence a population's health include income, education, physical and social environments.

Many reports have been carried out over the years looking at the health of our community.

The *My Health, My Community* Survey conducted between June 2013 and July 2014 included lifestyle choices such



as smoking, screen time and exercise, as well as having a chronic condition, having a family doctor and support from family and friends.

Realizing a multitude of factors influence a person's health and well-being is a good starting point. Powell River's Recreation Department, the Powell River Health and Wellness Project, Vancouver Coastal Health and many other groups, organizations and health-related businesses are conversing

about what to look for and how to better help our citizens in their quest to improve their health.

Health is a hot topic these days.

As the boomers get older, they are demanding more services that weren't available for previous generations. In our second issue of *ZEST* we look at a variety of topics that are health-related.

We have many opportunities to improve our health and wellness but often doing so requires a change and as we all know making changes can be difficult.

Our wish for you is that you're inspired to make those changes you've been thinking about when you're through this issue of *ZEST*. ☑

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We want your opinion

EXPANDED REGIONAL RECREATION INITIATIVE STUDY

Let's plan together what Parks, Recreation and Culture will look like in Powell River for the next 10 years

Surveys kiosks available at the Powell River Recreation Complex and various locations throughout the community.
 Check powellriver.ca or powellriverrrd.bc.ca for dates and locations

Fill out the survey at powellriver.ca or powellriverrrd.bc.ca or pick up a paper survey at the Recreation Complex

Complete this survey and enter to win a \$500 MasterCard gift card


Preschool & elder care, together

ON THE COVER: Delighted preschool students from PreScolaire Beau Soliel chase each other under a brightly coloured parachute, held up by residents of the Willingdon Creek Village complex care facility.

The activity is one of several programs hosted at Willingdon Creek that tries to encourage seniors and children to play together.

On the day ZEST photographer Sean Percy visited, both kids and seniors took the better part of an hour before they warmed up to interacting.

At first, the children played and performed while the seniors looked on.

But before too long, the youngsters were interacting with the elderly, sharing their creations and inviting them to work in modelling clay; and the seniors were cheering on the youngsters and playing games with them. 



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Shockwave sessions give relief of pain and restores mobility

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A LITTLE ZEST



New, super health look-up

Want to find a health program or practitioner? Fetch Powell River is a new website (powellriver.fetchbc.ca) that presents a huge variety of health services, activities and opportunities.

An initiative of Vancouver Coastal Health and the Powell River Division of Family Practice, the site contains a directory of community resources that are diverse as an aquatic program at the Powell River Recreation Complex to the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen to Alcoholics Anonymous.

There are also listings and information for physicians and medical clinics, food, services for seniors, mental health and wellness, First Nations, and Social Services.

The site is organized alphabetically with 36 pages of health-related community resources complete with contact information. Go Fetch!



Adult day program

To help seniors stay in their own homes longer, Willingdon Creek Village now offers an adult day program. Seniors have fun, get proper meals and snacks while enjoying the company of others in a supported environment. The cost? Just \$7 for a five-hour day.

“For caregivers, this is their chance to take a break from the demands of caring 24/7 for a loved one who has challenging care needs, such as dementia,” says Laura Kissick, coordinator of Recreation and Adult Day Program at Willingdon Creek.

The program includes fitness, bingo, cards, board games, gardening, music and entertainment, parties and teas, discussion groups, picnics, lunch outings, pet visits, and special theme days.

The adult day program is offered three times a week. Call 604-485-9868.



Ages & Stages Event

This May 13 event is for families of preschoolers to have the opportunity to meet the community professionals who are the local experts on child development, and promote healthy children.

The event has been growing over the past 12 years, and this year promises to be bigger and better than ever.

There's lots of keep the kids entertained while parents follow the different ages and stages of development that young children go through, and get assistance tracking how their child is doing.

Meet professionals from 15 different agencies who participate, and get answers to burning questions like “When will my child sleep through the night?” or “When is it okay for my child to ride a tricycle?” to “What can I feed my fussy eater?” and “Is my child speaking as they should?”

Each child attending will take home a bag full of information for parents, home-made playdough and an age-appropriate book.

Families can enjoy activities, snacks, door prizes, and a chance to climb aboard the Orca Bus and a fire truck!

It happens at the recreation complex from 10-2. Contact Laura Kew at 604.483.4042 Ext. 203.



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10 laps to transformation

By Linda Wegner

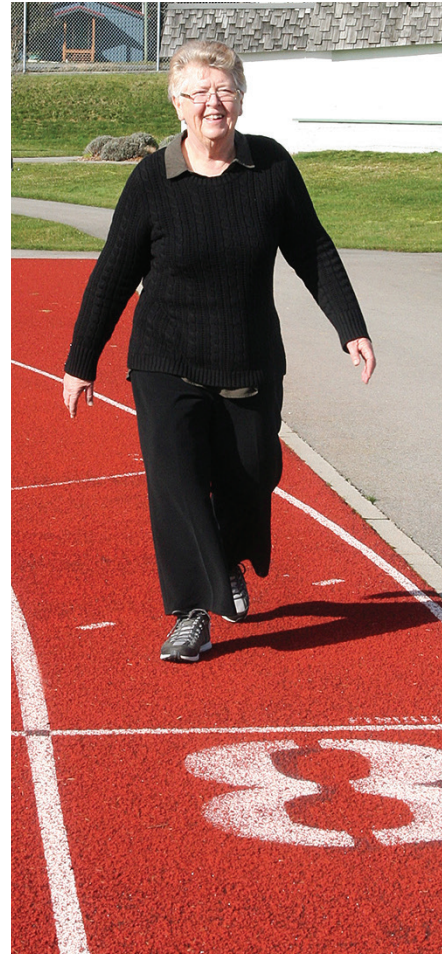
There's a stiff breeze today, enough of a wind to ruffle Pacific Ocean waters into a series of white caps out yonder and, I suspect, crashing waves on the shores. Moreover, the wind is strong enough to merit a head covering; up here on the track every breeze and every drop in temperature exaggerates itself.

While the weather plays a part in the enjoyment of my now-regular morning walk, the benefits I've gained far outweigh the best and the worst that nature throws at me. Since the first day I ventured onto the track above Brooks High School and the time of writing this article, 33 weeks and two days have passed into eternity. For me, they've been monumental.

It was on June 30 that the truth finally dawned on me: get physically fit or you will probably end up in a wheelchair. Or, dead. My blood pressure was high despite years of pills, weight continued to pile on my creaky frame and I was now reliant on a cane to walk more than a short distance. Even my husband's decades-long habit of walking eight to ten kilometres, six days a week, failed to motivate me. Now, I was genuinely scared of the consequences of my inaction.

July 1, 2015: I did my first lap at the track today, barely made it around the shortest one using my cane but at least now I have a goal.

I aimed for a weight loss of one pound per week and the ability to handle five laps at a time. Although I'm only slightly short of the hoped-for reduction of 33 pounds, I complete between eight and ten laps per morning, the cane is in the closet, my blood pressure is normal and I recently rejoiced



10 YEARS YOUNGER: In less than a year of daily walking, Linda Wegner dropped 33 pounds and greatly enhanced her cardiovascular endurance, normalized her blood pressure, and enhanced her eyesight.

at the compliment of a friend, "You look ten years younger."

Oh yes, I also climb stairs without fear or panting.

My eyesight has even improved. According to my optometrist, it's likely because of increased blood flow to the vessels around my eyes. I no longer have to wear glasses when I drive. **Z**



Medical Marijuana: a locally-grown solution



By Pieta Woolley

One year ago this month, Dan Clarke opened **Grassroots Botanicals Wellness Collective** – Powell River’s first and only medical marijuana dispensary. So far, few people seem to know about it, as Dan depends on a website and word of mouth to let the news spread. Medical marijuana dispensaries still operate in a legal grey-zone, though the use of medical marijuana is legal (see sidebar, next page).

Now, with 210 regular clients, prescriptions flowing in from several local physicians, and the promise of full legalization on the horizon, Dan is ready to spill the beans about the shop.

Grassroots Botanicals sits on Willingdon Avenue, just around the corner from The Chopping Block. White walls, green plants and tasteful, tie-dyed wall art make for a clinic-like lobby. At the desk, Dan chats with clients as they come in to fill prescriptions,

taking them into the back room where he offers nine kinds of smoke-able marijuana, vape liquid, oil infusions, various lotions for arthritis and other pain, lip balm and even cannabis oil-infused bath salts. And brownies!

Here, he explains what he’s up to.

What does it take to buy marijuana products from you?

Dan • One of three things. First, you need a doctor’s prescription. Most doctors in town, I’d say, are willing to prescribe. Second, if your doctor won’t give you a prescription, she or she can send a note stating that you find marijuana relieves your symptoms. Third, you can self-refer, bring in proof of your medical condition (we have a list of acceptable ones). Before we’ll sell to you, you’ll need to become a member of the collective by filling out a form.

Do any insurance companies cover it?

Dan • No.

Which conditions are relieved by medical marijuana?

Dan • Well, a few are: Parkinson’s disease, ADHD, emphysema, head injury, chemotherapy, IBS, sleep disorders, and of course, chronic pain. There are many more. Check the membership form on the website for the full list – or drop in!

“My goal is to take an underground industry that’s served people for forty years, and to bring it above ground.”

– Dan Clarke

Recreational marijuana is so prevalent in Powell River. Why would people buy through you?

Dan • Many people who use medical marijuana are seniors who likely either haven't smoked in 40 years, or never did. Trying marijuana is a big step for them. Also, you know you're buying quality here. These are not street drugs – this is fresh marijuana from established local growers.

Why does anyone go out on a legal limb to do open a dispensary?

Dan • My goal is to take an underground industry that's served people for forty years, and to bring it above ground. Powell River will be better off economically and socially when marijuana – which is a huge crop here – is legal and above ground.

The Liberal government has promised to legalize and regulate both medical and recreational marijuana. And, I want to support this as a small industry – to keep big pharma and big retailers from demanding monopolies on something that has been run small and local for decades.

Currently, medical marijuana users are supposed to order from online suppliers. Why buy local?

Dan • The quality of the products. I sell only bud that's been grown on the Sunshine Coast. I sell nine varieties. You can try small amounts of many kinds, to find the one that works best for you and your condition.

Marijuana, like food, is a sensual experience. People want to see it and smell it before they buy it. 🍃



Medical marijuana: the legal grey area

Canada, along with many countries, is in the midst of changing marijuana laws, from illegal to... something else. The laws are, in short, extremely complex and somewhat contradictory at this point – something that the federal government has promised to fix.

In 2001, Canada first legalized medical marijuana, and updated those laws in 2013. Using marijuana for medical purposes is legal. Growing medical marijuana is regulated and legal. Dispensing medical marijuana is legal through a handful of designated online dispensaries, and, in some cases, through licensed growers.

However, Health Canada notes: "Dried marijuana is not an approved drug or medicine in Canada. The Government of Canada does not endorse the use of marijuana, but the courts have required reasonable access to a legal source of marijuana when authorized by a healthcare practitioner."

In other words, the courts are ahead of lawmakers on this, adding to the legal confusion.

Finally, in places where police departments are municipal, such as Vancouver and Victoria, the City Council is the boss of the police – and can order them to not harass dispensaries while the legalities are clarified. However, where RCMP are on contract, such as in Powell River, the police departments' orders come from Ottawa.

Dispensaries such as Grassroots Botanicals Wellness Cooperative, here in Powell River, are functioning as a 'beta' test for a fully-legal system. Dan Clarke, and small business people in other coastal communities, carry the risk so the rest of us can comfortably and locally have access to medical marijuana. 🍃

Can't keep your fingers away from Facebook?



Fiddling with your phone can be deadly on the road. What text is worth a brain injury?

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Spiritual salve: wake your heart

We asked Powell River's faith leaders to tell us one thing that people can change to improve their spiritual wellness. Here's what they had to say.

Rev. Brenda Nestegaard Paul
Faith Lutheran Church

"Being open to wonder. To wonder leads down a path of discovery, where curiosity reigns, there is room for mystery, and we come to realize we do not have all the answers.

It is to explore, to dream, maybe connect with that which is beyond the self. It is good for the spirit."

Pastor Katie Alescio

Living Waters Four Square

"For myself, I focus less on what is temporal and unchangeable, and instead set my mind, focus, time, and energy on God and what He is up to in my life.

To do this I make an effort to listen to music that is God-focused so that my mind has something to meditate on. I find specific scriptures in the Bible that declare what God's purposes and plans are for me (which are for my good!) and speak these over my circumstances.

This improves my spiritual wellness by giving me perspective, peace, hope, joy, and a general looking-forward-to of life."

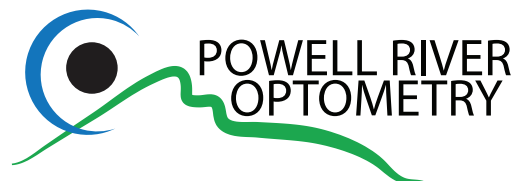


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Story and photos by Rachel Snyder, birth photographer

Birth. It's a beautiful beginning. When I moved here 14 years ago, I was pregnant with my first son. I didn't deliver him here, though. I moved up from Vancouver and I just could not give up the midwives that had been seeing me through my pregnancy. So I gave birth at St. Paul's Hospital with my midwife. My younger two were both born here in Powell River at the hospital with a doctor, because I didn't have other local options.

How things change. In 2014, registered midwives Elisha Manson and Sheena Nordman opened Ten Moons Midwifery here – the first midwifery practice to open in the city since the province started regulating

WELCOME, BABIES: In the pool, Maddox Xavier Titian was born October 27, 2015. Below, Kate Marie West and Bradley Titian snuggle in the moment after Maddox's birth. Centre, Andrew Messner and Aleasha Messner demonstrate the euphoria and the pain in the moments before, with 10 Moons midwife Elisha Manson. Far right, Diana Amundsen enjoys a quiet moment with a new life. *photos by Rachel Snyder*

Beautiful births

Powell River's registered midwives help families deliver new lives gently and safely







BEAUTIFUL DADS: Midwifery empowers fathers to have a hands-on experience in the birthing of their babies - and their expressiveness in these photos says everything about how much they treasured it.

photos by Rachel Snyder



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professional midwives in 1998. They are the kind of women you'd want to take in to battle with you - and the sweetest you'll ever meet. Our town is better for having them choose to start a practice here.

On July 21, 2014, the first birth supported by Ten Moons happened at the hospital, and then on August 10, they supported the first Powell River home birth.

Nearly 40 more births have happened under their care in the past 18 months. Many of these babies were born in hospital, some at home, some were even born by c-section. Working along side the midwives photographing births has been good for my heart, knowing that I was right; birth really can be beautiful and fearless. Helping other mothers to

remember just how incredible they were in the throws of it, to capture the love and support from their partner or the first reaction from a sibling; priceless. You never get a second chance to catch a first impression.

Giving birth is a normal function of life, but as a society we are having fewer babies, making births more rare and not so everyday. As women, we were born to do this. It's our natural superpower.

I am so grateful for midwifery in a small town, even if I am never going to have another baby of my own. I love knowing that there are options for women now, that there is family-based care, that it is possible for women to have the birth of their dreams here in Powell River. 

Every. little. noise.

With new hearing aids, one local re-discovers all she's been missing

By Linda Fonesca

I have been steadily losing my hearing for over a decade - with tinnitus (a ringing in my ears) added to the mix for the last five. While this is quite common in someone my age, it was interfering with my job and my personal life.

Don't get me wrong. What spouse doesn't relish the opportunity to say, "Sorry honey, I didn't hear you"? But a large part of my verbal communication involves guessing at topics, mimicking others' expressions and reading lips.

I got my hearing aids on December 29, 2015. The first hours were spent in a wonderment of previously lost sounds.

Be careful what you wish for. Arriving home from work I could not tear them from my ears fast enough. All that sound - at work, the mall, my car and even my house. Bells, phones, cash registers, car signal lights. My dog's toenails on the floor, as he greeted me, were abrasive. I wept with relief upon removing them. The cacophony in which we live is overwhelming.

I will not give up. The next days were spent experimenting with the volume and wearing only one hearing aid. I was learning to make adjustments according to my circumstances. I had the power! I no longer wept with relief at the end of each day. I



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“I wept again... The highs and lows, unheard since my youth, reminded me of the power music has.”

– *Linda Fornesca*

did notice that my tinnitus was greatly reduced. What a bonus! For this alone I would wear these things forever.

New Year’s Eve was a complete success. I wept again, but this time in awe at the sounds from the live music. The highs and lows, unheard since my youth, reminded me of the power music has.

Sound is sometimes medicinal, sometimes pure sensory overload.

Juggling the requirements is getting easier. I am no longer avoiding answering a telephone, greeting


someone in public or adjusting the volume on a TV show or car stereo. I am shocked at the abundance of sounds we are inundated with every day, but I am slowly learning to banish those to the background. I am still surprised by sudden noises and volume fluctuations, but I find the trade off to be entirely acceptable.

I have had to adjust my morning regimen. I have learned to not insert the tiny devices into my ears before I shower and dry my hair. Good thing my reaction time is still crisp. I have learned to use the mirror when inserting them. That hairbrush sends a hearing aid bouncing off walls. I have learned to put them into a case when not using them. They are invisible when searching for them in the mornings.

There are also some disappointments. All sound is magnified, not just the sounds you want to hear. They rub



a little behind my ears. They don’t take out the garbage or run the dishwasher.

They do, however, allow me to hear the gentle snore of my husband (and my dog) having a comfortable sleep, my grandchildren’s voices on the phone and birds singing. Much more than a fair trade off for me. 

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How healthy is your brain?

Brain health is your ability to learn, plan, concentrate, remember and keep a clear and active mind, says Debbie Dee, Executive Director of the Powell River Brain Injury Society.

“A healthy brain means you’re on top of your game. When you exercise and use your muscles, you feel good. The same principles apply to your brain.”

Our minds and bodies are closely connected. We know that exercise and healthy habits make for a strong heart, which in turn make for a strong mind.

“Thirty minutes of heart pumping exercise a day delivers vital oxygen to your brain and this helps keep your mind sharp,” she said.

Studies say it’s important to give your brain a break.

“The benefits of taking a vacation, meditation, spending time in the garden or other outdoor space, can sharpen the mind.


Napping, unwinding while awake and even purposeful blinking can also enhance your brainpower,” she adds.

Many important physiological processes occur only when we sleep; others require downtime and rest. Downtime replenishes the brain’s stock of attention and motivation and is essential to creativity.

As we age, our experiences and knowledge keep our brains working, learning and developing. Some of us become more forgetful.

“We don’t remember words and names and we forget where we left our keys,” says Debbie. If you are worried about forgetfulness, talk to your doctor - there are also things you can do to improve your memory.

“Learn a new skill or language, get lots of rest, exercise and eat well.”

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Eat your weeds

If you can't beat 'em, you might as well eat 'em!


By Ioni Wais

A weed is any plant which happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. But weeds are not a biological category—they are a diverse and ever-changing jumble of plants, subject to opinion and circumstance. And even though weeds have challenged gardeners for as long as land has been cultivated, many com-

mon weeds are indeed delicious and nutritious. Below are four common weeds to add to your banquet.

Other edible weeds include dandelions, chickweed, dock, and Himalayan blackberries. The list is long, but play it safe! Always be 100% sure of any foraged plant, start with small amounts, and be sure to eat plants in their season. Avoid plants from polluted areas (e.g. roadsides), and familiarize

yourself with poisonous lookalikes. This article is not intended as a foraging guide; always consult a botanist or expert forager.

For more plant-related fun, please visit www.vegetationstation.ca, and check out the CJMP program Vegetation Station, 90.1 FM, Powell River, on Sundays from 5 pm to 5:30 pm. You can also download podcasts at www.cjmp.ca 

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So go out and get active, and include a regular visit to your chiropractor as part of your wellness routine.

For more healthy living tips, visit our website powellriverchiro.ca and sign up for our newsletter. Each month we'll email you information that you'll not only find fascinating, but relevant to those interested in a natural approach to health. You'll find practical ideas that you can use to improve your overall health and well-being.



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Creeping Charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*)

Also known as Ale Hoof or Ground-Ivy, this creeping relative of mint trails its squared stems along lawns and borders. Its kidney-shaped leaves are common enough to be invisible, but its aroma is unmistakable. Use it as a potherb or infuse it for a refreshing, buttery tea. Traditionally, this European herb was used for bittering beer. Ethnobotanist Tom Nagy (outsidethehops.com) has added it to many of his homebrews, with much success!



Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*)

This juicy-leaved annual is a pervasive groundcover on hot, dry soils and pathways. Its sprawling habit has landed it a bad reputation, though it does a fantastic job of keeping soil shaded and moist. Rich in Omega-3, vitamins and dietary minerals, this plant is an excellent addition to salads or vinaigrettes! Be sure to distinguish it from the poisonous spurge (*Euphorbia*), and avoid eating it on a low oxalate diet.

Broadleaf Plantain (*Plantago major*)

Although plantain shares its common name with bananas' starchy relative, you're more likely to find it in your lawn than your local supermarket. Rich in protein, calcium and vitamins (A, C, K), its leaves can be eaten raw (if young) or cooked (when older). Like psyllium—a close relative—its seeds are high in mucilage. Karen Stephenson (ediblewildfood.com) suggests baking its leaves like kale chips, with salt and olive oil!



Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)

Blossoming on scraggly roadside growth, chicory's beautiful blue flowers are often overlooked; feature them in your next salad, along with minced leaves. Young flowerbuds are said to make delicious caper-like preserves, and even the root is edible; it's often roasted as a coffee substitute.

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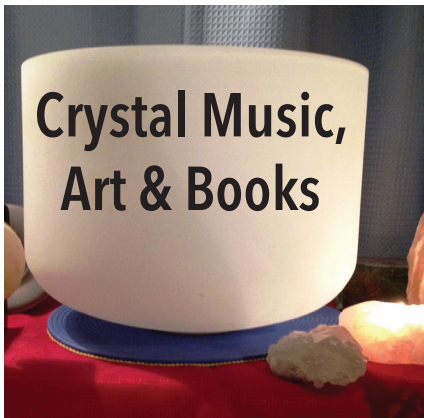
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POSITIVE SEXUAL HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH: The Powell River Division of

Working to Improve Health Care

By Gary Shilling

The Powell River Division of Family Practice supports family physicians in Powell River. Together with our members, we work to improve primary health care in the community. Over the past year, we have focused on three important local initiatives with an aim to bring positive change to primary health care services. Each initiative was led by a local doctor and supported by many other doctors and staff from Vancouver Coastal Health.

The three projects and their goals are:

A GP for Me

- Enable patients who want a family doctor to find one
- Increase the capacity of the primary health care system
- Confirm and strengthen the continuous doctor-patient relationship, including better support for the needs of vulnerable patients

Palliative Care Project

- Improve awareness and knowledge of palliative care
- Improve coordination of palliative care services
- Improve patients' and caregivers' experience

Youth Sexual Health Education Project

- Improve access to education for children, youth, young adults, parents and caregivers

- Provide best-practices support to health care providers, teachers, and community professionals

- Develop a local plan for ongoing collaborations between health services, schools, and youth/family support services

To address the doctor shortage and attract more doctors, the Division collaborated with Powell River Tourism and the City to develop a recruitment brochure, YouTube videos, and a Facebook page. The Division also directly worked with family doctors to help them find new colleagues for their practice or find temporary replacements so they can go on holidays.

Under *A GP for Me*, we also started a pilot project to transfer a Nurse Practitioner into a family doctor's clinic. The move allowed the NP to see more vulnerable patients and to collaborate with the family doctors in the clinic. We will continue this pilot for another year.

We learned that our family doctors spend a lot of their time assisting their patients in finding community health resources. To help people find resources on their own, the Division developed a community health database Fetch: For Everything That's Community Health (powellriver.fetch.ca). Now people can find senior services, social services, mental health & wellness, and child youth & family services and much more in one place.

Many health care professionals are involved in palliative care and



Family Practice is helping schools, families and doctors talk to each other.

in Our Community

What you can do to improve the healthcare in our community:


- Welcome new doctors, make them feel at home
- Talk to others about what great community Powell River is
- Like our Facebook page “Powell River: doctors practice here”
- Forward information about our medical community to everyone, especially to medical students and doctors
- Use Fetch to look up community health resources (powellriver.fetchbc.ca)
- Get your advanced care plan ready (resources are available at theconversationproject.org & nidus.ca)
- Keep teaching your children about all sorts of health topics, including sexual health

the transfer between care providers does not always go smoothly for patients. With help of staff and managers at Vancouver Coastal Health we began addressing this issue. For example, we improved the process for palliative patients when they go home after a stay in the hospital. Because the community and healthcare professionals needed to know more about palliative care, the Division also provided training and supported a community event.

Fostering positive sexual health outcomes for our youth requires a coordinated effort from schools, families, and health services.

To improve the understanding about sexual health, we developed a new teaching framework, training materials, and delivered 25 education sessions.

The Powell River Division of Family Practice is funded by Doctors of BC and the Ministry of Health. We are working together to help build a healthy future for our community.

In the coming year we will continue supporting the recruitment of new doctors, support doctors in their practice, and improve palliative care. The work is challenging, but with your help we can make a difference. 

Did you know ...

Did you know that the work of most family doctors includes work beyond their clinic hours? Many doctors work in the emergency department, assist with operations, visit patients at home, in residential care and in the hospital, and are on call for their patients.



Did you know that having an Advanced Care Plan can reduce stress for you and your loved ones in the future? Theconversationproject.org and nidus.com have some great resources.



Did you know that most doctors would like you to visit their replacement when they are on holidays? If you wait until your doctor is back, their replacement might not want to come again, as most visiting doctors only get paid when they see a patient.



Did you know that you can find a lot of community health resources online? Visit powellriver.fetchbc.ca and learn more.



Did you know that an early home visit from a home and community care nurse could improve your care when you have a life threatening disease? Without a home visit, it is difficult to have the help available when you might need it in the future.



Did you know that many family doctors take on additional roles outside of their work to improve the health in our community? Last year alone, there were doctors leading and participating in projects to improve the sexual health of our youth, active transportation and palliative care in our community.

Powell River
 **Division of Family Practice**
 A GPSC initiative

divisionsbc.ca/powellriver

Dialysis: a bad trip, three times a week.

By Isabelle Southcott

It's still dark when 77 year-old Myrna Leishman pulls her Ford Explorer out of the driveway at her Powell River home. Her mission: to catch the 7:25 am ferry at Saltery Bay.

Her nearly-three-hour trip starts on upper Nootka Street, with a 30-minute drive, the ferry wait, an hour-long ferry ride, another 45-minute drive down a winding and often-wet road, before she arrives at St. Mary's Hospital in Sechelt – where she receives life-sustaining hemodialysis.

She makes this round-trip three days a week, and has since soon after her kidneys packed it in last August.

It's a difficult journey for someone who is already sick. But it's non-negotiable. "If I don't go and have dialysis, I will die," says Myrna.

The irony is, three new dialysis machines are sitting ready – and unused – at Powell River General Hospital, a three-minute drive from Myrna's home. Currently, there are six dialysis machines in Powell River. Three get used, and six residents do receive dialysis treatment here in town. Three other three machines are considered "back-ups."

Some argue that at least one of these could be made available for patients who, like Myrna, now must commute to Sechelt of Vancouver for treatment. That would leave two as back-ups.

Myrna isn't alone in her long commute for dialysis.

The Leishman family has heard several other nightmarish stories from locals.

For example, Powell River's Visay Phenphonsy initially had to move to Vancouver for treatment when he first needed dialysis.



GET OUT OF TOWN: For Powell River dialysis patients Myrna Leishman and Visay Phenphonsy (inset), "inconvenient" doesn't begin to cover what they've been through.

This is a test

Dialysis isn't the only reason Powell Riverites must travel out of town for health treatments. Apart from the discomfort the shortage of dialysis machines is causing local elders, the situation is functioning as an early-warning system for a shifting society.

Powell River is greying, as the resident population ages and the region's climate and affordability attract newly-retired Baby Boomers.

"The health authority should adapt to those changes," says City Councillor CarolAnn Leishman.

How our various health governance structures choose to address the dialysis dilemma will speak volumes.

Visay, who owned the Vietnam Cuisine Restaurant, was an active man who enjoyed spending time in the bush, before his kidneys function declined to the point that he became so ill he could no longer live without dialysis.

Later, a chair in Sechelt became available for him. At the time, his illness prevented him from driving so he had to depend on his daughter and

friends to take him to Sechelt three times a week.

He says he doesn't know how many people manage.

"It's better now that I get treatment here," says Visay.

Locals take it on

City Councillors Maggie Hathaway and CarolAnn are exploring how the Regional Hospital Board, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Powell River Community Forest can work together to fix the problem.

"All we need to do is renovate the space," reports Maggie, who says the issue is a lack of readily-available room at the hospital.

Maggie is also working with the Division of Family Practice to find out how many other people in Powell River do home dialysis.

"There could be some who do it reluctantly because they have been told they'd have to go to Sechelt or Vancouver if they don't or others who have had to move away from Powell River to get dialysis treatment."

Even one Powell River resident travelling out of town on a regular basis to receive treatment available here is unacceptable to Maggie.

"There are a lot more Myrna's out there who are just a lot quieter and we need to hear from them," she says. **▣**

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BC's healthiest community
(in five years' time):

Powell River

By Isabelle Southcott

In five years, Ray Boogaards wants this community to be the healthiest in BC.

Not that everyone needs to start jogging, says Powell River's Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture.

"It's getting out and participating. Getting out and walking to the next event, getting out and having fun. That is a healthy community."

But to meet that goal, he needs your help.

"This [becoming BC's healthiest] is a community-based project. It's not just the recreation department."

He's working with Vancouver Coastal Health, Division of Family Practice, plus individual volunteers and professionals. While the scope of the initiative is still being defined, a couple of projects are already underway.

First, the Powell River Wellness

"We're looking for a better quality of life."

– Ray Boogaards

Help Powell River become BC's healthiest community

1. Take the recreation survey at kiosks and online
2. Take part in the Wellness challenge
3. Set your own goals – with friends and family

Challenge. On April 24, get your blood pressure, heart rate, flexibility and balance tested so you have a fitness baseline. That starts at 4:30 pm at the Max Cameron Theatre. Then, stay for the Powell River Wellness Speakers Forum – an evening of inspiration and practical guidance.

On September 24, come to the Recreation Complex again for the Health & Wellness Fair, in partnership with *Powell River Living*.

The regional recreation study - now underway – will help recreation planners better understand the needs and desires of residents. Public input will assist in the development of a 10-year plan for recreation in the area.

As well, a community-wide survey to determine parks, recreation and cultural services in the Powell River

area is available online, at the complex and now kiosks are available at a number of locations in the community.

Overall, the regional recreation study is designed to help get locals out, engaged and moving – by figuring out what they want, and delivering it.

"We have made great strides in working with professionals in getting people who weren't doing anything to now being active," says Ray. "The social component is probably one of the biggest issues in our community. There are lots of opportunities but not everyone is aware of them or is able to get there."

In short, the "healthiest community" goal is all about tying health and recreation together. Health focuses on getting people better and recreation is preventative. Between them, they cover everything from food to an outdoor concert that sees concertgoers walk to and from the event. It includes walking to the grocery store, playing bridge, biking to work, and taking the Wellness Challenge.

"When you look at a healthy community that is what I look at," says Ray. "We're looking for a better quality of life." 📌

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