

THE GRAPEVINE

North Shore Caregivers Newsletter



Photo credit - Paul McGrath

FEATURED STORY

“When I am Old I Shall Wear Purple”: Being More and Doing Less in Retirement by Catherine Bryson

“When I am Old I Shall Wear Purple”: Being More and Doing Less in Retirement

By Catherine Bryson

Author George Sand once wrote: ‘It is a mistake to regard age as a downhill grade toward dissolution. The reverse is true. As one grows older, one climbs with surprising strides.’

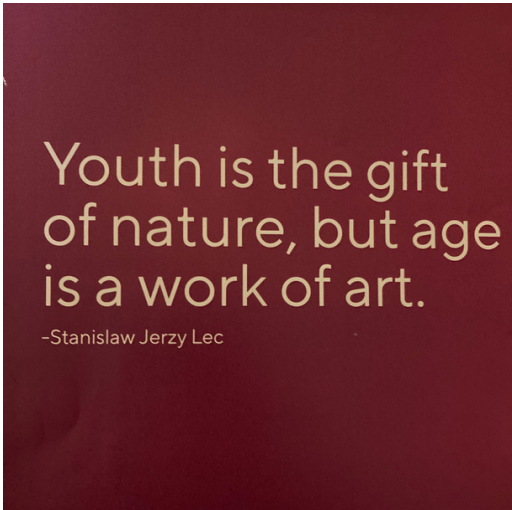
Tania Wiseman wrote an excellent piece on retirement. Here is an excerpt from Wiseman’s article (a link to full text is in the Resources section below).

‘Retirement can feel like a strange time for many people. Gone is the routine of work, your time is your own in theory. How to stop chores from taking over can become a tricky balance. Some people retreat and return to work. Often those who persevere find they are as busy as ever—but not always with the fun, leisurely activities they were looking forward to.’

I gave up tutoring in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, after 13 years as a tutor. It was a tough decision. My mother was very ill and I needed to focus on her care. Of course, I kept up my volunteer work, namely, writing for the NSCR Caregivers’ Blog. That was always important to me because I could express how I was dealing with caregiving and share what I learned with others. The 21st century is a rather noisy century, so one voice of reason can make a big difference in the overall din out there. As I wait for the bus, I can just barely hear birdsong over the traffic. Sometimes I think of my writing as a kind of birdsong.

As I age, I feel I am ever more myself. The layers of the onion are peeled back every day. I try to be a human be-ing and not a human do-ing, as they say. This then, becomes my way of finding meaning, which is increasingly important in this turbulent age. As Viktor E. Frankl said: ‘Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose.’ Frankl observed that in the dark days of the Second World War, those who found meaning and purpose tended to have a greater chance of survival.

In retirement, to be honest, life can get a bit like the movie ‘Groundhog Day’, or like the play ‘Waiting for Godot’ by Samuel Beckett. That is, until I read this great book years ago that talked about how



Youth is the gift
of nature, but age
is a work of art.

-Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

the older person finds meaning through recollection. The author felt that the work of the elderly is to try to understand one's life and its purpose. An older person might just be sitting in a chair staring out the window, but, in fact, they are working at reflection. They are at work finding meaning, like diving for pearls in the ocean. If you listen, truly listen, to the elderly, you can find these gems, these sage-like words of wisdom. And now guess what? It's your turn. So, I challenge you to truly BE in retirement; as this is your golden opportunity at authenticity and uncovering your inner self. I like to think of inner work as a kind of sculpture: every day you chip away at the marble block, until finally, a beautiful unique form is revealed. So, to be, or not to be, more yourself in retirement: which will you choose? Which animal will you feed? What will your legacy be? What will you pass on to the next generation? The choice is yours. I leave it to you to decide.

Here are a few tips I recommend that you might find helpful:

- Try new things. Even if you resist. Tania Wiseman, the author of the retirement article suggests people use a tool called 'behavioral activation.' Ms. Wiseman defines behavioral activation as: 'An approach to mental health that involves someone using behaviors to influence their emotional state. It is often a part of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), but it can also be a standalone treatment.'
- Build 'cognitive reserve'. Take classes, learn another language, do games, puzzles, crosswords etc. Or even, if you dare, go back to school. My late father obtained his PhD in his early sixties. You are never too old to learn. In fact, it is never too late to 'teach an old dog new tricks.'
- Limit worry time. There are many unknowns in one's retirement years, so it helps to stay in the now. After all, 'It takes as much time to worry as it does to plan.'
- Enjoy social time. Meet like-minded people through sports, seminars, watercolour painting classes, travel, etc.
- Keep good records. I also recommend writing a Will if you haven't already, and also a Representation Agreement and a POA (Power of Attorney). Planning ahead saves a lot of suffering. Also, keep your medical records (tests etc.) in order. You can find posts on how to write a Representation Agreement on the NSCR Caregivers' Blog (link below) I also recommend that you register for the British Columbia Health Gateway, where you can have access to your medical records and test results.
- Reminisce. Flip through old photo albums, school yearbooks, old letters, or else listen to the music that was at the top of the charts when you were young. Cook something that reminds you of your childhood. Macaroni and cheese for example. Watch old movies, or reruns of shows you used to watch. Reminiscing is not regressive, science has proven that now. The benefits of nostalgia are infinite. Not only in solitude but also as part of socializing with others.

Some resources are listed below, for you to explore if you wish. I will close with the words of Stanislaw Jerzy Lec: ‘Youth is the gift of nature, but age is a work of art.’

The title line ‘When I am Old I Shall Wear Purple’ is taken from the poem of that name by Jenny Joseph, published in the 1960s. Her words still ring true today. And in the words of Eleanor Roosevelt: ‘Today is the oldest you’ve ever been, and the youngest you’ll ever be again.’ I have one more thing to add: let ‘Seize the Day’ (Carpe Diem) be your motto. Live each day as if it were your last.



Resources

‘Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life’ by James Hollis (2006) Print copy available at North Vancouver City Library

‘Sages of Aging’ video (2022) Available on YouTube

‘How to Find Fulfillment in Retirement’ by Tania Wiseman (2023)

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_find_fulfillment_in_retirement

‘Solo and Smart: The Roadmap for a Supported and Secure Future’ by Carol L. Marck (2021) An excellent book. Very pragmatic, easy to read, clear.

North Vancouver Caregivers’ Blog

<https://northvancaregivers.wordpress.com>

What is ‘behavioral activation?’ (2021)

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/behavioral-activation>

I have added a link to the Better at Home program for seniors ages 65 and over (as well as people with disabilities between the ages of 55-64) offered by NSCR. It is an excellent program, in fact, I myself receive the service.

<https://seniors.nscr.ca/better-at-home/>

6TH ANNUAL CAREGIVER SENIOR EXPO

SATURDAY MAY 11, 2024 • 12-4PM

SILVER HARBOUR CENTRE, 144 EAST 22ND ST, NORTH VAN

Self-care, support and resources for unpaid caregivers is crucial to helping them navigate the difficulties of caring for loved ones. North Shore Community Resources is proud to present the following speakers:



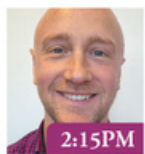
Lorna Harding *North Shore Neighbourhood House*
Lorna is the Seniors Peer Support Program Coordinator, and will speak about these topics: *Let's Talk Ageism: Recognize it When You See it;* and *"It's Not Right!": Recognizing Warning Signs of Elder Abuse.*

12:15PM



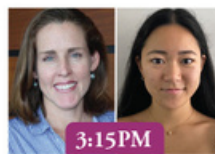
Chantal Bourke *Registered Clinical Counsellor*
Chantal's presentation is called *Self-care, Caregiver Burnout and Coping with Difficult Emotions in our Loved Ones.* She will discuss the importance of being your loved one's 'emotion coach' while being in the difficult role of their caregiver.

1:15PM



Paul Magennis *Vancouver Coastal Health; Palliative & Hospice Care, MAID*
Paul is a Clinical Resource Nurse and Educator who will present *The Importance and Role of High-Quality Palliative Care in the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) Process.*

2:15PM



Sally-Anne Stelling & Alisa Hashimoto *BC Brain Wellness*
Together, Sally-Anne and Alisa will talk about the BC Brain Wellness Program and will present on the *Importance of Brain Health for Caregivers and the Ones They Care For.*

3:15PM

Be sure to visit all of the expo booths and meet local business owners who offer products and services that can help you in your caregiving journey.



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Creative Care: The Integration of Art and Music in Caregiving

By Neeki Alavi

In the realm of caregiving, where the primary focus is often on physical health and practical assistance, the incorporation of art and music presents a transformative approach. This integration, referred to as Creative Caregiving, enriches the caregiving experience and offers emotional, cognitive, and social benefits to those receiving care. It represents a holistic method, acknowledging the person beyond their care needs and tapping into the profound therapeutic potential of creativity.

The introduction of creativity programs for those needing care or the aging population started in the 1970s in the United States with combining art and activities for older adults. In recent years, the creative aging movement has become widespread around the world. In 2013, the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), an organization aimed to create initiatives in the field of creative aging, collaborated with the University of Central Florida to create an environment for artists to support creative aging programs and improve life quality for patients and caregivers. From there, the Creative Caregiving Guide® was born. This guide highlights lessons not only in art and music, but also lessons for dance, movement, poetry, and story writing – all methods for creative expression. There are now many free online resources that provide guidance and practical tips for caregivers to integrate all forms of activities for their care recipients.



Creative care offers comprehensive benefits that allow activities to engage, stimulate, and provide comfort to individuals. Not only does it promote emotional expression and cognitive engagement, but it also helps manage stress and encourage social interaction. Moreover, creative care initiatives can be adapted to individual preferences and abilities, ensuring accessibility and inclusiveness. Having a diverse range of creative care options is crucial because it accommodates the varied abilities, interests, and needs of individuals, including those with disabilities. For instance, someone with physical limitations may find painting or sculpting challenging but could thrive in music or storytelling sessions. This diversity ensures that everyone has the chance to experience the therapeutic benefits of creativity, regardless of abilities or limitations. This offers a person-centered

approach, recognizing and valuing the unique identity, interests, and experiences of each individual. The abundance of expressive options, ranging from art and music to writing and dance, is wonderful because it allows individuals to find unique and resonant ways to express creativity that may be difficult to articulate verbally.

From the caregiver perspective, creative care benefits caregivers by providing them with new tools and approaches to connect with and support those they care for. It can reduce caregiver stress and burnout by offering enjoyable and fulfilling activities that can be shared, fostering a deeper emotional connection. Particularly in diverse communities like the North Shore, creative care can bridge between care recipients and caregivers from all backgrounds. Engaging in creative activities alongside those receiving care can offer caregivers insights into the individual's preferences, abilities, and memories, enhancing empathy and understanding. Additionally, these activities can serve as a meaningful respite, allowing caregivers to express their own emotions and process the challenges of caregiving in a supportive environment.

So... how can caregivers integrate creative activities into their roles? Implementing creative care requires a thoughtful and personalized approach. As mentioned, creative expression differs for everyone, so the consideration of interests, limitations, history, and cultural background have to be understood to ensure that the activities are meaningful and engaging. For more specific visual art, music, dance/movement, and poetry/storytelling lessons, please refer to the Creative Caregiving Guide by Scripps Opening Minds through Art (OMA). Some examples of lessons include creating greeting cards, playing favorite holiday songs, mirror dancing, and reciting familiar poetry.

The integration of art and music into caregiving is more than an enrichment activity; it's a necessary evaluation in the way care is perceived and delivered. By adopting a more holistic approach, caregivers can address not only the physical but also the emotional and social needs, crafting a care experience that truly nurtures the human spirit.

Resources

"Creative Caregiving Guide." ScrippsOMA. (n.d.). <https://scrippsoma.org/creative-caregiving-guide/>

Pabst Steinmetz, M. "The Creative Caregiving Initiative." Grantmakers in the Arts. (n.d.). <https://www.giarts.org/article/creative-caregiving-initiative>

Events Calendar

MAY

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------|
| Thurs
02 | Men's Support Group Meeting (In Person) | 10:30 AM - 12:30 AM |
| Mon
06 | Persian Group Workshops in Farsi (In Person)
with Dr. Leila Maleki | 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM |
| Tues
07 | Caregiver Support Group Meeting (Zoom) | 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM |
| Wed
08 | Korean Group Meeting (In Person) | 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM |
| Thurs
11 | 6th Annual Caregiver & Senior Expo
with 4 guest speakers | 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM |
| Mon
13 | Persian Group Workshops in Farsi (In Person)
with Dr. Leila Maleki | 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM |
| Mon
27 | Persian Group Meeting (Zoom) | 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM |

JUNE

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------|
| Mon
03 | Bereavement Support Group Meeting (In Person) | 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM |
| Tues
04 | Caregiver Support Group Meeting (In Person) | 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM |
| Thurs
06 | Men's Support Group Meeting (In Person) | 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM |
| Wed
12 | Korean Group Meeting (In Person) | 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM |
| Mon
17 | Persian Group Meeting (Zoom) | 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM |



PERSIAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP WORKSHOP

NSCR Presents a 2-session Workshop, conducted fully in Farsi, in-person at our Community Room. Led by Dr. Leila Maleki S, Psy.D., Psychologist & Family Therapist for 22 years; Registered with BC Association of Clinical Counselors (RCC); Member of Iranian Psychology and Counseling Organization (PCO IRAN), Iranian Family Psychology Association (FPAI), and International Research Institute for the Study of Behavior and Thought.



May 6 & 13 - Both sessions 4pm-6pm

1- May 6: "Are you happy?"

۱- آیا شما خوشحال هستید؟

2- May 13: "How do our choices shape our lives?"

۲- چگونه انتخاب های ما زندگی ما را شکل می دهند؟

For more information and details, please contact:

Noushin Beheshtipoor (Persian Group Leader) ~ noushinbeheshtipoor@gmail.com

Vic Gailiunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

Volunteer Interview: Neeki Alavi

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself. What has your journey been into volunteering that brought you to NSCR?

A: My volunteering journey began while I was studying in Toronto, around the time my cousin was diagnosed with Lymphoma. His survival was dependent on finding a compatible stem cell donor. However, we quickly came to realize the lack of representation from Middle Eastern individuals in stem cell registries. In response to this disparity, my family and I created a campaign aimed to secure a lifeline for my cousin and diversify the registry, ensuring that patients of colour could access life-saving treatments. Though my cousin passed away before he could find a match, this experience provided many learning lessons for me. The most important of these lessons was the significance and impact of supporting those who might be in greater need than ourselves. From there, it was instilled in me a commitment to helping underrepresented and vulnerable groups.

After returning home to North Vancouver, I sought to be involved in an organization that empowered community engagement and well-being, especially in services aimed at seniors. This inclination was deeply influenced by my family's experiences. My grandparents have been long-time residents of the North Shore and their use of NSCR's services has highlighted the importance of this organization's goals in enhancing the quality of life for seniors. Specifically, my grandmother has used NSCR's transportation services and other government services introduced to us by NSCR. This personal connection to the senior community drove my desire to contribute to NSCR, aiming to give back to an organization that has helped my family and to many others in our community.



Volunteer Interview: Neeki Alavi

Q: Tell us about your involvement with NSCR as a new volunteer. What are some areas you are volunteering in?

A: I started my volunteer work with NSCR in January 2024, and it's been 4 months of rewarding experiences. Though it has only been a short time, the more I discover about the amazing programs and services at NSCR, the more eager I am to be involved. My current role is with the Better at Home Program, aimed to assist in senior residents' well-being and independence on the North Shore. Within this great program, I help with grocery pick-up/delivery and Friendly Visiting. In the Friendly Visiting program, I particularly appreciate its ongoing nature, where I can forge meaningful connections with community members through quality time. Additionally, I'm very excited about contributing to the caregiver newsletter for the first time in this edition of The Grapevine, another great resource provided by NSCR.

Q: What do you feel are some benefits to attending an NSCR support group or workshop?

A: The support groups and workshops at NSCR offer numerous benefits, especially for individuals with specific challenges or seeking personal growth. In my eyes, one of the primary benefits of attending a support group and attending workshops is the opportunity to meet others who are facing similar challenges or having similar questions. This can provide a sense of community and understanding between a group of individuals. Equally as valuable, the access to resources and information at support groups and workshops that individuals might struggle to find independently. These could include educational materials, professional advice, guidance to support services, advice from experts in the field, and peer recommendations.

Q: What do you do for your own self care? What keeps you busy and feeling positive?

A: Amid the demands of school, finding time for personal care can be a challenge. Yet, I've always noticed a significant positive impact when I make time for physical activities like gym workouts at Delbrook or spin classes. Sundays have become my 'reset' day, starting with a walk either to Edgemont Village or walking along the Seawall and ending with dinner at one of my grandmother's homes, setting a positive tone for the week ahead. Additionally, I enjoy keeping myself busy with cooking, particularly in creatively incorporating ingredients like tofu or leafy greens into dishes in such a way that their presence is delightfully undetectable! The rich variety of spice combinations in Persian cuisine also offers an exciting playground for experimentation, blending traditional flavors and recipes with other culinary styles, and adds to ways that I like to take time to do things that I enjoy.



CAREGIVER BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for people experiencing grief in the loss of a loved one. The group is designed to create community and offer a time of sharing stories and resources, listening, and connecting with others with similar experiences.

**Monday, June 3, 2024 In Person at our Community Room,
6:00-8:00pm**



As we move into the beginning of Summer, things can seem more pronounced for those experiencing loss. It is a good time to consider our well-being, how to find meaning in grief, but also in hope, rejuvenation and renewal of spirit.

For more information, to register, and for details, please contact:

Vic Gailiunas
Caregiver Support Program Coordinator
604.982.3320
vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a monthly support group specifically for family caregivers who support their loved ones – either living together or apart.

The group's goal is to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for anyone with the unique experience of caregiving for family members.

Program participants are welcome to encourage and invite others they feel might benefit from joining the group.

Monthly Meetings

Next 2 meetings:

May 7 - on Zoom

**June 4 - In-Person *note location,
and time change for this meeting to
6:00-8:00pm**

Meetings are currently on the first Tuesday of each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm.

For the May Zoom link, please contact NSCR directly.

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information, details, or to find out more about NSCR's caregiver support programs, please contact:

Vic Gailiunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

Or Phone: 604-982-3320



MEN'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for male caregivers who support their spouses/partners, either living together or apart. The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for men with the unique experience of caregiving for their partners.

Program participants are welcome to encourage other men they feel might benefit from joining the group to join us.

Monthly Meetings

We currently meet in-person at the NSCR Community Room on the first Thursday of each month, from 10:30am-12:30pm.

Next 2 meetings:

May 2

June 6

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)

Contact:

For more information and details, contact:

Vic Gailiunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

Pat Dean (Group Leader) ~ pdean@telus.net





PERSIAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Persian community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, and connecting for our Persian community.

Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Farsi, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and music.

Monthly Meetings

We are currently meeting on Zoom. Our meetings run on the third Monday of each month, from 6:00-8:00pm.

Next 2 Meetings:

May 27 - *note, due to Victoria Day holiday, this meeting will be on the 4th Monday of May

June 17

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Noushin Beheshtipoor (Group Leader) ~ noushinbeheshtipoor@gmail.com

Vic Gailiunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

KOREAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Korean community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, and connecting for our Korean community.

Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Korean, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and creative arts.

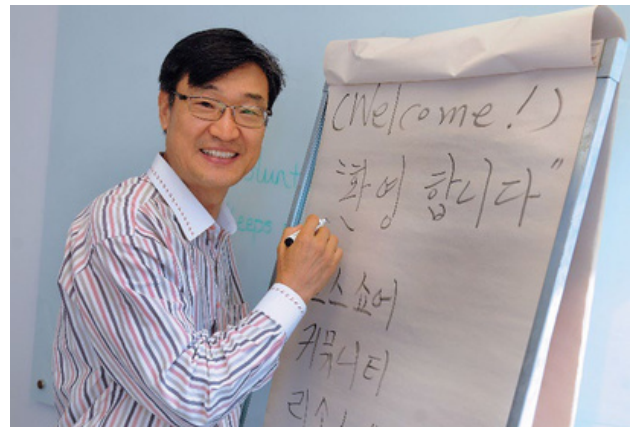
Monthly Meetings

We will be meeting in person in our NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the second Wednesday of each month, from 2:00-4:00pm.

Next 2 Meetings:

May 8

June 12



(photo credit – Paul McGrath)

Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Yoonwon Lee (Group Leader) ~ infocwtc@gmail.com

Vic Gailiunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~
Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca

THE GRAPEVINE

North Shore Caregivers Newsletter



North Shore
Community
Resources

If you'd like to help support NSCR and the work we do you can follow the link below to donate

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We are thankful for all the support we get and couldn't help others without the generous help of patrons like you