

COMING of AGE

ISSUE 54-SUMMER 2009



Ageless Art

Join SCOA on Saturday, June 6 at Market Mall for Ageless Art, a showing and sale of art by older adults. This special event will happen between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The showing will include photography, acrylic paintings and other pieces. Plant and flower arrangements will also be available for sale, and refreshments will be available. The majority of funds raised will help support the programs and services of the Council on Aging. Photo above: Students enjoying an SCOA art course.

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President's Message

**By Eleanor Williams
President, Saskatoon Council on Aging**

After what I call “the winter that wouldn’t quit,” spring has finally sprung. Hooray!!

Because of the huge number of volunteer hours (about 10,000 hours each year) and the hard work of SCOA’s wonderful staff, we can look back on a year full of accomplishments in our goal of promoting the dignity, health and independence of older adults.

Here is a quick summary:

More people know about us because of public presentations (most of them by our Executive Director, June Gawdun), articles in the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix* and *Sun* newspapers, and coverage by our local television channels.

We have seen a 40 per cent increase in participation in Resource Centre programs and tours, and a 29 per cent increase in traffic to the Resource Centre itself. Our website traffic is up by 10 per cent, and attendance at our last Spotlight on Seniors increased by 17 per cent. Great statistics!

We have participated in consultations with civic and provincial officials, and provided input on federal initiatives. We have consulted on housing and health strategies, safety, ageism and abuse, just to name a few.

As well, we have pro-bono students from the College of Law researching laws that pertain to seniors,

and final-year nursing students assessing staff education requirements of personal care homes. We are truly indebted to our members who have started these programs and to the University for taking them on.

Our great working relationships with the health district, police service, City of Saskatoon, and other organizations are also worth noting.

The Task Force on Abuse has made great progress in an effort to address unfair and dangerous situations in which some seniors find themselves. We look forward to some important solutions coming out of a provincial conference in May.

We feel that another major accomplishment this year will be an upcoming presentation to City Council, requesting property tax deferrals and tax abatement for home improvements so that seniors may remain in their own homes.

As always, let us know your concerns so that we may speak on your behalf.

We sincerely hope you are able to take part in our many programs, and continue to support the Council’s work. Check out the calendar of events in this issue, or online at www.scoa.ca, to stay informed of what’s happening.

Here’s to good health and happy days!! Have a wonderful summer!

Coming of Age

Published three times per year by the Saskatoon Council on Aging, Inc., 301-506 25th St. East, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4A7 (652-2255).

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SCOA is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the dignity, health and independence of older adults. Visit us online at www.scoa.ca

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**With assistance from
the Population Health
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and the Saskatoon
Health Region**



Older adult abuse awareness event set for June 11

Older adult abuse occurs every day in Saskatoon. It can happen in the best neighbourhoods, and sometimes in ways you might not realize.

Physical abuse, verbal abuse and financial abuse are all examples,

but even ageism can be a form of abuse.

Each year, communities around the world hold events to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. In Saskatoon, SCOA and other community partners

will present **Building Communication in a Circle of Care** on June 11.

Presenters at this event will include Shan Landry, vice-president of Community Services for the Saskatoon Health Region, Elliot Paus-Jensen, volunteer coordinator for SCOA's older adult abuse task force, and Doug Robertson, Facilitator, HQC, Saskatoon Health Region Collaborative on Chronic Disease Management.

This day-long event will also feature a national "snapshot" of older adult abuse.

The day will also feature a skit on the topic of older adult abuse.

For more information or to register, call the Saskatoon Council on Aging at 652-2255 or visit our web site at www.scoa.ca.



2008 World Older Adult Abuse Awareness Day

SCOA helps newcomers develop language skills in work setting

Thanh Khuu is currently volunteering with the Saskatoon Council on Aging as part of a volunteer placement program with SIAST.

The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program (LINC) is designed to expose students to a working environment that promotes language skills such as speaking reading and writing.

Thanh is currently in level five of the seven-level program. She is an enthusiastic learner and has

helped the Council by typing, working at the reception desk, and doing other tasks as required.

Thanh's work experience at the SCOA Resource Centre began in November 2008.

SCOA is grateful to Michael Pidwerbeski, program coordinator for the SIAST-LINC program, for recommending Thanh.

Thanh is originally from Vietnam and is the mother of two small children.



Thanh Khuu

How to have a safe, in *motion* summer

By Janet Barnes

Many people start to think about spending more time outdoors as spring and summer approach.

Unfortunately, there is the potential for injury or disappointment when those who are less active in winter start into activities without adequately preparing themselves.

Here are some suggestions on staying safe and injury-free while increasing your physical activity and enjoying summer:

- If you haven't been active for some time, talk to your doctor before starting an activity.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing. In warmer weather, choose white or light-coloured fabrics in cotton, linen or synthetic. Avoid tight clothing, which tends to trap heat close to your body.
- Invest in a good pair of walking shoes. They should have flexible, non-slip soles, good arch supports and good heel padding.
- Start slowly. Gradually increase your walking time over several weeks or months. Eventually you will want to walk 30 to 60 minutes most days of the week.
- Do the talk test. You should be able to carry on a normal conversation (but if you can sing opera, you need to increase your speed a little bit).
- Make sure the areas where you are walking are well lit. Carry a

cell phone, and watch for tripping hazards such as cracks and rises in the sidewalk.

- Start and end your walk with five minutes at a slower pace, and do stretches to warm up and cool down. Check out the City of Saskatoon's *Walk the Walk* brochures available at all Leisure Centres.
- Listen to your body. If you feel pain, stop. If the pain persists for more than a few days, see your doctor.
- Wear a sunhat and sunglasses. Choose sunglasses that provide at least 99 per cent UV-A and UV-B protection.
- Use sunscreen—some sun is good for you but you can have too much. Over-exposure can have serious health effects including sunburn, skin cancers, eye diseases and premature aging.
- Avoid being outdoors, or try to stay in the shade, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the sun is at it's hottest.
- Carry a water bottle with you and stay hydrated. As we age, our bodies are less able to regulate temperature, bringing a higher risk of heat related illness.

Your body needs 4–8 ounces of water every 20 minutes to replace water loss. If you become thirsty during exercise, you should drink water immediately as you most likely are already dehydrated.

- Protect yourself from West Nile virus by wearing long sleeves



and mosquito repellent and avoid being outdoors at dusk.

With a little planning, you should have an injury free and safe in *motion* summer!

For more information, visit www.in-motion.ca or request a copy of the *in motion* Older Adult Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Resource Guide by calling 655-DO IT (3648). Janet Barnes is Senior Recreation Therapist—Community Older Adult, with the Saskatoon Health Region.



SCOA: A valuable partner in learning

The Council on Aging is an important resource for educators who need the access and expertise of an active, community-based organization.

One recent example has involved a partnership with University of Saskatchewan Nursing faculty to examine ways of improving staff education at personal care homes.

The project, led by Peggy MacLeod and co-investigator Hope Bilinski, involved four Nursing students contacting personal care homes to assess staff education requirements.

“Part of the challenge for those working in personal care homes,

and the owners, is the level of education for workers. By providing caregivers with education to enhance their skills to work with people with dementia, or other challenging aging processes, unintentional abuse can be reduced,” says MacLeod.

This concern is shared by SCOA’s Older Adult in Care committee. It was MacLeod’s involvement in the committee that led to the project, titled *The Personal Care Home Support: Enhanced Education for Caregivers Project*. The

project has received financial support from Affinity Credit Union.



Nursing students Erika Gibault and Ashley Macdonald (back), Amanda Clavelle and Amber McNally (front)

Youth volunteer finds SCOA experience enlightening

By Amber Klassen

Before my placement with the Council on Aging, I had little experience working with older adults. The experiences I had were in care homes, so I didn’t know what to expect at SCOA.

My days at SCOA included helping with paperwork, creating posters or slide-shows and teaching computer lessons. I also took minutes at WOOAAD (World Older Adult Abuse Awareness Day) planning meetings, which was eye-opening. It’s incredible how much passion the volunteer task force has for this event.

I also came to know my computer student well and am happy to say I’ve made a new

friend.

Working with SCOA has opened my eyes—I have learned about ageism, but understand there is more to it than what I knew. Stereotypes about older adults have been disproved, and I have a

new respect for the older adult community.

I am coming out of this experience with a different mindset. I’ve met some incredible people that have cemented the idea that older adults have a lot to teach younger adults, and I have new respect for the diversity of individuals of all ages. I’m honoured to have had this opportunity, and have been inspired to challenge stereotypes and to see all people as they are: people.

Amber Klassen, an 18-year-old student from Winnipeg, worked as a Katimavik volunteer with SCOA in 2009. Katimavik offers young Canadians an exciting learning and volunteer experience. It is Canada’s leading youth volunteer-service program.



Amber Klassen (left) with SCOA Operations Coordinator Sandra Schweder.

Volunteers important to Council on Aging

Without volunteers, the Saskatoon Council on Aging would be a very different place.

“Volunteers are critical to the work of the Council on Aging. We have approximately 100 volunteers, and much of what we do wouldn’t be possible without their efforts,” says SCOA Execu-

tive Director June Gawdun.

Many of the programs and services offered by the Council would be much smaller, or wouldn’t exist at all. The publication you’re reading now, for instance, happens because of hours of planning by a volunteer communications committee. Another group handles the mail-out of more than 1,000 issues, and other volunteers bring copies to drop-off points around the city. Volunteers play a critical role in such events as World Older Adult

Abuse Awareness Day, Caregiver Forums, Spotlight on Seniors and various fundraising initiatives. A volunteer-driven advocacy committee works to identify issues of importance. And SCOA’s board and executive committee, which together set the organization’s priorities and direction, also depend on the work of committed and talented volunteers.

Traditional SCOA offerings such as blood pressure clinics, drop-in programs and many more important programs couldn’t operate without volunteers.

To all our volunteers: thank you. You are an essential part of the Saskatoon Council on Aging!



SCOA communications committee volunteers

Caregivers: Take a Break on April 30

Are you a caregiver? Know someone who provides care for a person who is frail, ill or has a disability?

On April 30th, the Caregiver Information Centre and SCOA will present **Caregivers: Take a Break.**

This day-long event will feature practical advice on handling the challenges of caregiving, tips on dealing with stress, and group discussion among caregivers.

Presenters at the event will include Joyce Tremmel, MSW (caregiving advice, dealing with stress), and Laura Harris, MSc (Dynamic Meditation).

And in keeping with the

‘take a break’ theme, free manicures will be offered by the students of Marca College.

When registering, be sure to inquire about free onsite elder care. Also, a limited number of respite subsidies are available: this will assist people who cannot

attend without hiring someone to look after their loved one.

Limited free transportation will also be available to and from the event—inquire when registering.

The cost to attend is \$15, which includes lunch and refreshments. Space is limited; register early to guarantee yourself a spot.

Caregivers: Take a Break begins at 8:45 a.m. and will be at Mayfair United Church (902 33rd St. W) in Saskatoon. For more information or to register, call the Caregiver Information Centre at 652-4411 or send an email to caregiver@sasktel.net.



Group discussion at a previous Caregiver Centre event

SCOA: Meet the staff

For many people, a Saskatoon Council on Aging staff member is the first point of contact with the organization.

So, when you're calling for information or to register for a Council on Aging event, who are you speaking with?

To help you put faces to names, we present this guide to SCOA staff.

In this issue: SCOA's June Gawdun and Pat Harcolt-Peever.

June Gawdun Executive Director



June Gawdun

Computer lessons, for example:

Having been with Council for more than a decade, June Gawdun remembers a lot of SCOA "firsts."

June, and SCOA volunteer Jean Nahachewsky, developed this program in 1998.

"I still remember getting a thank-you email from one student—she said it was her first email. It was really gratifying to read that," says June.

As the organization has grown, June now spends more time working with financial spreadsheets than teaching computer lessons.

She's also been getting better-known in the community, as SCOA's designated spokesperson for presentations to seniors groups and community organizations.

June is married with three daughters, two of which are living at home. She enjoys running, biking, swimming and being with family.

Pat Harcolt-Peever Caregiver/Events Coordinator

If you're wondering what Pat



Pat Harcolt-Peever

Harcolt-Peever is up to at any given moment, guess "events" and you'll probably be right. She helps a number of committees

develop events such as Caregiver Forums, World Older Adult Abuse Awareness Day or Spotlight on Seniors—from planning all the way to execution.

"I really enjoy working with people, and I'm often told that I have a lot of empathy.

"And I love the non-profit sector—it's such a positive atmosphere," says Pat.

Pat is recently married and has two adult step-sons.

See our next issue for more profiles of Saskatoon Council on Aging staff members.

News & Upcoming Events

Drop-in program

Third Wednesday of each month, 1–3 p.m. at SCOA Resource Centre. Free unless specified. For more info, call 652-2255 or visit www.scoa.ca.

Free blood pressure clinic

First Tuesday of each month at

SCOA Resource Centre (301-506 25th St. E.), 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Membership list updates

SCOA is updating its membership list—members can expect a call from a volunteer between now and June. We're also looking for volunteers to make calls—

phone us at 652-2255 if you're able to help.

In memory

This edition of *Coming of Age* is in memory of Marilyn McCuaig, who taught computer lessons at SCOA for four years. She will be missed.

Do this, don't do that—and lay off the fries

Drive defensively. Wear your seat belt. Don't spit on the sidewalk. Compost those leaves. Recycle that can. Watch it with the 2,4-D, eh? Lay off the French fries. And there's no reason to call them "freedom fries" any more.

Don't forget to floss. Don't stay in the sun too long. Don't stay out of the sun too long, either, since Vitamin D cures everything but heartbreak.

Get some exercise. Remember to buy extra insurance before traveling to another country. Better yet, stay out of other countries; they aren't safe. Read a book. Don't cheat on your taxes, you might get caught. Keep a fully stocked first-aid kit. Don't drink and drive. Don't drink at all. Well, maybe a glass of wine. No, better not. On the other hand . . . Oh, just wait for the next study. Don't drive; take a bus. Better yet, walk.

Use environmentally friendly detergents. Don't litter. Quit complaining. Recycle old newspapers. Save the whales. Save the pandas. Save the dolphins.

Michael Gillgannon

Don't refer to women as "girls" unless you are a woman. Keep up with current events. Don't forget to vote. Be a volunteer. Conserve energy.

When sliding into second base, try not to perforate the shortstop with your cleats. Give money to charities. Be nice to your kids; maybe someday they'll be nice to you — even though they are in their 50s now.

Drive slowly through puddles so as not to splash pedestrians. Revisit paragraph two; you're supposed to be walking, remember? Don't eat so much.

Remember the Alamo. Don't park in spaces reserved for the handicapped. Be nice to people older than you. Follow the Golden Rule. Quit telling people how sick you are. Quit talking about your recent holiday in Aruba; people hate you enough already. Besides, you're supposed to stay out of other countries. Learn to play the piano. Visit a museum. Don't put

off until tomorrow what you can put off today. Take an aspirin; if Vitamin D doesn't cure it, aspirin will. Don't smoke. Keep a stiff upper lip. Go dancing. Write a letter to a friend. Don't run that red light. Save the rain forests. If the ship is sinking, remember: It's lawyers first, then women and children. Keep in mind when writing essays that frequent paragraphs help comprehension.

Say "please" and "thank you." When in doubt, form a committee. Eat your carrots. Watch out for polyunsaturated thingamabobs. Don't be such a gloomy Gus just because the economic "downturn" wiped out your life savings. Don't talk in the movie theatre. What, you haven't been to a movie theatre since Dr. Zhivago? Maybe you should get out more. A recent study said it's good for you.

"How kind of you," someone once said, "to want to live my life for me."

Michael Gillgannon is a retired newspaper writer and editor, and lives in Saskatoon.

SCOA Annual General Meeting on May 21

The Saskatoon Council on Aging's Skrapek, RN. Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21st.

The meeting will feature a presentation on the topic of ageism by SCOA board member Candace

Before Skrapek's presentation there will be a short business meeting, which will include a summary of the Council's programs and activities during the past year.

The Annual General Meeting is at Frances Morrison Library (311 23rd Street E) in Room Three. Refreshments will be served. The meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. and attendance is free.

Subscriber notice: If you already receive *Coming of Age* at one of our drop-off locations and would like to stop mail delivery, please call 652-2255 to request this change.