

City of Richmond

# 2021 Seniors Services Highlights











## Introduction

In 2021, the City, Community Associations and Societies, and seniors-serving community organizations continued to support seniors to remain safe, healthy, active and socially connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff met monthly throughout 2021 to brainstorm programming ideas, discuss seniors-related trends and issues, and review current COVID-19 public health guidelines that affected program and service delivery for seniors.

Several COVID-19 related funding opportunities supported the development of new, safe and accessible programs for seniors. While the pandemic and associated health guidelines highlighted various challenges in delivering programs and services to seniors, it also encouraged innovative and creative practices to connect with the 55+ population and their caregivers and families.

Community facilities and amenities reopened in 2021, once again providing opportunities to participate in arts, fitness, language, technology and wellness programs, out trips, and cultural celebrations in various formats, including virtual, phone-in and in-person. Information and resources for seniors were communicated broadly through several methods, including the City's and community partners' websites

and social media channels, verbal updates during programs, posters and a city-wide monthly Richmond Seniors 55+ Newsletter. Where possible, resource materials were emailed to seniors and printed copies were provided to several seniors-focused residences to ensure seniors were connected to programs, services and supports. Additionally, a seasonal 55+ Program Guide was provided in response to requests for a printed catalogue of 55+ program opportunities.

A focus for 2021 included substantial research, community engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders to develop a new City of Richmond Seniors Strategy 2022–2032, that will build upon the learnings and achievements from the 2015–2020 Seniors Service Plan and the 2015–2020 Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan. The new Seniors Strategy will apply a broader focus to guide City and community stakeholder planning, policy development, and program and service provision to best support seniors in Richmond over the next ten years. The draft Seniors Strategy was approved by City Council for the purposes of seeking public input on March 28, 2022. It is anticipated that the final Seniors Strategy will be presented to Council for adoption in fall 2022.

The following pages provide a summary of seniors services highlights from 2021.

## Grants Keep Seniors Active, Safe and Connected

In 2021, the City and community partners received \$51,728 in grants to develop programs for seniors to help them keep safe, active and socially connected and to reach those unable to participate in person due to the impacts of COVID-19. Grant funding was provided through the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors Program, the ICBC Provincial Community Grants Program, the BC Recreation and Parks Association, and the United Way's Safe Seniors, Strong Communities (SSSC) initiative.

Virtual and in-person activities made possible by these grants included an iPad lending program, art programs, outdoor fitness programs, a multicultural day celebration and workshops on the topics of fall prevention and road and pedestrian safety. Phone-in programs were also offered through grant funding, including book clubs and music, theatre, history and wellness programs. A number of these programs were delivered in collaboration with community organizations, including Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond RCMP, Walk Richmond and TransLink.

## Programs Celebrate the Diversity of Seniors

For Seniors Week in June 2021, the City, Community Associations and Societies, and other community partners offered seven days of free outdoor, virtual and phone-in activities to celebrate and recognize the contributions seniors bring to the community. More than 285 seniors participated in over 20 programs around the theme of *Reconnect, Restore and Reactivate*. The week featured the one-day biennial *Activate! Health and Wellness Fair*, which provided healthy living and active aging virtual workshops.

With the support of youth volunteers, the East Richmond Community Association hosted an in-person multicultural celebration at Cambie Community Centre in August that included tap dance performances, an Indigenous Women's Drumming Circle, Bollywood dance lessons and martial arts demonstrations. The East Richmond Community Association also hosted an in-person Diwali celebration for seniors in November 2021.







## Activities Keep Seniors Active and Socially Connected

Seniors returned to City facilities in 2021 with the number and type of opportunities to participate increasing throughout the year as services were restored. In 2021, there were 10,442 participants in 55+ registered recreation and sport programs and seniors visited City facilities 219,568<sup>1</sup> times, keeping active through participation in various activities including:

- Aquatics programs and swim sessions at Minoru Centre for Active Living and Watermania;
- Seniors skate and early morning adult drop-in hockey at Minoru Arenas and Richmond Ice Centre;
- Luk Tung at Thompson Community Centre;
- Golf skills lessons at Richmond Pitch 'n' Putt;
- French Dans le Parc, an outdoors French language class at West Richmond Community Centre; and
- Plant Buddies a gardening instruction program at South Arm Community Centre aimed at supporting isolated and vulnerable seniors.

Men's programs helped to support and connect senior men living in Richmond, including Hanging with the Guys at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living, and Gentlemen in Conversation at Thompson Community Centre. These groups offered an opportunity for conversations on various topics, connections with peers, sharing concerns, and laughing together in a friendly, open environment. A virtual Prostate Cancer Support Group, hosted at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living with support from the Prostate Cancer Foundation of BC, also continued to meet monthly.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Richmond Public Library's Home Services Program delivers library materials and resources to customers confined to a private residence, residential facility or hospital because of a disability, illness or injury lasting more than three months. In 2021, the Richmond Public Library delivered over 3,200 items to over 50 customers through their Home Services Program.

<sup>1</sup> Includes the number of 55+ Fitness, Sports, Aquatics and Games Room Passes scanned at Community Centres in 2021.





## Creative Communication Methods Keep Seniors Aware and Informed

A monthly Richmond Seniors 55+ Newsletter, Read, Relax & Rejuvenate, kept seniors updated with information about meal programs and recipes, health resources, home activities, brain games and trivia. Created in 2020 as a partnership between the City, Community Associations and Societies, and the Richmond Public Library, the newsletter incorporates the seven dimensions of wellness and encourages self-care.

The Richmond Public Library hosted four Book Talks throughout 2021 in partnership with the Kehila Society of Richmond, providing opportunities for members to connect with library staff and learn about resources with a goal to reduce social isolation and support seniors. The library also offered five programs on financial and retirement planning, including information on government saving plans and how to avoid fraud.

## Collaborations Keep Seniors Healthy and Well

In partnership with Community Associations and Societies and other seniors-serving community organizations, the City offered various health and wellness webinars and in-person information sessions. Examples of workshops included Managing Your Prescriptions, The Lymphatic System, Grief and the Holidays, Healthy Eating for Healthy Aging, and Brain Fog and Clarity. The Richmond Public Library's Health Talk series offered 22 programs in English and Mandarin to 327 participants covering topics that included sleep and mood, osteoporosis, dementia, stress reduction.



## Programs Connect Seniors to Essential Supports

Beginning in April 2021, the Steveston Rotary Club's food security program partnered with the Minoru Seniors Society to deliver nutritious meals, bi-weekly, from the cafeteria at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living to 20 isolated seniors who had limited access to fresh, healthy food. This initiative was part of the Steveston Rotary Club's food security program, which supported people in need to have access to food during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, Minoru Seniors Society members received 350 meals through this partnership.

For the second year in a row, with the support of sponsors, the Minoru Seniors Society delivered holiday meals to 100 vulnerable seniors along with a

Save-On-Foods gift card and greeting card. Society volunteers assembled the packages from the Seniors Centre and hand delivered them to the homes of seniors on Christmas Eve.

The Community Leisure Transportation (CLT) program was relaunched in 2021 and provided low-cost transportation to community programs, services and special events for youth, seniors, persons with disabilities and other Richmond residents in need. In fall 2021, the CLT program made 43 trips, with 27 trips (63%) dedicated to seniors. The CLT program also revamped its shopping bus service, adding more stops to buildings with a high number of senior residents, new shopping locations and increasing the frequency of trips.

The shopping bus service included transportation to and from three different Richmond shopping locations at the cost of two dollars per trip.





## Education and Development Opportunities

To stay abreast of current, evidence-based information related to best practices in seniors programs and services, City and Community Associations and Societies staff attended 14 virtual workshops, information sessions and seminars on a variety of topics and issues related to seniors and the aging population. Topics included transportation, participation of women 55+ in physical activity, resiliency, caregiver support, men's programming, social prescribing, and reducing social isolation and loneliness.

Additionally, the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee and the Seniors Strategy Stakeholder Advisory Committee hosted a virtual presentation by the BC Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie, on *Envisioning the Future for Seniors: Building on Lessons Learned and Exploring Future Trends in Richmond* on May 12, 2021. Attended by City and Community Associations and Societies staff and community partners, the presentation included discussions on lessons learned from COVID-19 as well as suggested topics for the new 10-year Seniors Strategy.

## Activities Reduce Ageism and Promote Positive Aging

A number of age-friendly activities were created in 2021 to reduce ageism and promote positive aging, including the following:

- The City Centre Community Association's Intergenerational Youth Leadership Team (INTERGEN) hosted four events that aimed to educate and inform youth and seniors about how positive intergenerational relationships can contribute to building a healthy community. Activities included a healthy aging seminar during Youth Week, an interactive online art workshop for Seniors Week, and two art workshops, including a holiday event.
- This year's Annual Positive Aging Campaign, launched on October 1 for National Seniors Day, showcased positive images of seniors in Richmond through the theme, *How Aging Positively Spreads*. The campaign highlighted the impact one person can have in creating positivity across a community while profiling five Richmond residents aged 64 to 92 years. The campaign was featured in a







Richmond News article, shared on the City's social media platforms, online and in-person at various City facilities.

- Together with the Minoru Seniors Society, the Richmond Public Library offered a Pen Pals program that paired local seniors with youth. This program provided teens with valuable writing experience and supported seniors experiencing social isolation. Twelve youth and nine seniors exchanged 109 letters between June and December 2021. One pair (youth/senior) noted a lasting friendship resulting from this project.

## Initiatives Ensure Those Living with Dementia are Supported

The following are examples of activities and resources offered in 2021 that helped to ensure residents living with dementia and their families and caregivers were included, supported and able to continue to be active and engaged with their community.

- Virtual and phone-in workshops offered in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of B.C. and other health partners on topics including naturopathic approaches to dementia, brain health

and dementia tips for families and caregivers.

- Richmond Public Library's dementia-friendly resources including books for those living with dementia, DVDs, audiobooks, web resources, books in Chinese and picture books for children.
- Iki Iki Japanese social for seniors with mild to moderate dementia, offered weekly in both English and Japanese languages at the Japanese-Canadian Cultural Centre at Steveston Community Centre. Delivered in partnership with Tonari Gumi and supported with volunteers, this program includes food, activities and social opportunities in an easier-paced and culturally familiar safe and engaging space.
- The Friend and Family Caregiver Hub at Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives, hosted educational workshops for caregivers that highlighted the various dementia-friendly resources available at the Richmond Public Library.
- Support for caregivers of those living with dementia included an online caregiver support group hosted at City Centre Community Centre. Additionally, a watch party to view a virtual health forum aimed to help patients, their families and caregivers through sharing of information and resources to manage dementia was held at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living.





## Conclusion

In 2021, the City of Richmond and community partners continued to adapt and innovate programs and services to support Richmond's seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing important opportunities for Richmond's seniors to connect and stay active, these programs and services contributed to the resiliency of seniors in the community. The 2021 accomplishments promoted active and healthy aging and furthered the City's ongoing efforts to create an age-friendly and dementia-friendly community.









## City of Richmond

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