

North Shore Keep Well Society
Annual Report
2021/2022 Fiscal Year



NORTH SHORE

KEEP WELL

SOCIETY

KEEPS SENIORS ACTIVE



CONTACT INFO

1733 Lions Gate Lane
NORTH VANCOUVER, BC.
V7P 0C7

Telephone: 988-7115, ext. 3001

Email: keepwellsociety@telus.net

Website: www.keepwellsociety.ca

OUR SITES

NORTH SHORE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

DELBROOK RECREATION CENTRE

PARKGATE COMMUNITY CENTRE

SILVER HARBOUR SENIORS' CENTRE

WEST VANCOUVER SENIORS' ACTIVITY
CENTRE

LIONS GATE COMMUNITY RECREATION
CENTRE

Message from the President

It is my pleasure to serve as President of the North Shore Keep Well Society. It has been a very unusual experience for all of us on the Board. In fact, unusual since March 2019 when we had to suddenly close our usual way of connecting with North Shore Seniors and revamp our methods.

Our last year's AGM, June 16, 2021, was on Zoom. It is so much better to meet in person with members of the North Shore Keep Well Society who are able to attend. Although we are still being very careful, most of the Sites are back and welcoming Seniors to the facilities. We are very thankful for the help and support that the locations have given us to re-open. We initially started with advance notice of numbers and pre-registration then gradually dropped the requirements as the individual Sites allowed us to. Thanks very much to John Charles our Re-Opening Chair, who stayed in contact with each Site to obtain details. (Masks/no masks, pre-registration or none, vaccine passport process, numbers allowed process for entering building, etc.) Thank you, John!

In the meantime, we were able to continue with the Conversation circles and our website videos, plus Zoom classes thanks to Carole Kellough.

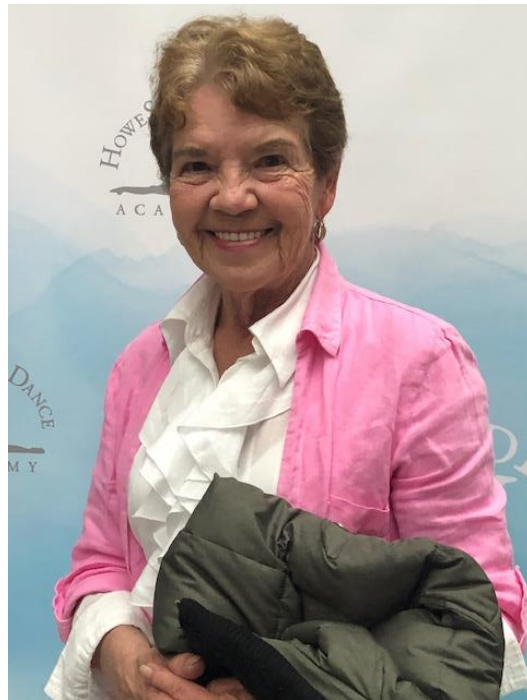
Our Coordinator is Rosa Tkacova, hired to replace Michelle Messinger who is off on leave since mid-December. In addition, Rosa continues to facilitate Healthy Aging programs. Keiko Kaneko has been hired to replace Joanne Waddington, who resigned in early January. Keiko and Rosa are getting us caught up and doing a great job. It is very difficult to hire anyone during this time or to recruit volunteers. Most of our Site Coordinators are still with us including one returning and a few new ones. We are very thankful for their time and commitment

Throughout this, our Office location moved to the New Lions Gate Community Centre from the old location so moving details and the execution of the move and set-up were carried out by Board Members, with many thanks to Capilano Services Society. We officially moved in the second week of March and are now up and running. In addition to re-opening of our usual Keep Well Sites, we opened a Site at the new Lions Gate Community Centre, so can now provide exercises for seniors in that area. It has been very successful with Rosa filling in until we find a permanent Site Coordinator. We are very appreciative of Rosa doing that, and for the participation from the community. Some of the Sites now allow coffee and a distanced social time, and by fall we should have no restrictions. Social interactions are very important for seniors as we have all learned during lock down. So, it has been a busy year!

Our "very long time" Exercise Instructor and Board member representative, Andy Demeule, is retiring at the end of June. We all wish him well in his new ventures. He has agreed to do the summer exercise programs and to fill in as a spare if we need him. We are very thankful for everything he has done to support Keep Well for so many years.

We are most thankful for the continued support from our Funders: Vancouver Coastal Health, New Horizons for Seniors Program, North Vancouver Community Foundation and West Vancouver Foundation, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, PARC Living. We also want to thank North Shore Community Centers, our members and participants for their ongoing support. Any donation or grant is very much appreciated and allows us to help seniors on the North Shore.

We must all still stay guarded as COVID is still around. We are trying very hard to keep our seniors and volunteers safe while integrating back into the community.



Cheryl Cowan

President

History and Introduction to Keep Well

The North Shore Keep Well Society is a community-based wellness program working with and for seniors across the 3 North Shore municipalities (City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver and District of West Vancouver). The program began as an initiative of Lions Gate Hospital and was incorporated as a society on March 14, 1991.

The goal of the Society is to help seniors to take responsibility for their own well-being by offering activities that encourage healthy living and opportunities to remain active in the community for as long as possible.

Sessions at seven sites from Parkgate to Dundarave enable seniors to participate in a variety of activities, including mild exercise, group discussions, massage, nutrition counselling, blood pressure monitoring, and socializing. With the exception of a part-time coordinator and certified fitness leaders, the programs are run by approximately 80 dedicated volunteers.

Mission Statement

We believe in Seniors.

We believe that Seniors represent a rich resource to themselves and to the Community.

We believe that when Seniors are given the opportunity to discover and develop their strengths, they can become powerful agents for change.

We believe that wellness is for everyone and that choosing to keep well is fun.

We believe that when we choose to exercise, relax, eat well, laugh, love, do the things we enjoy doing most, help and support each other and become actively involved in the community, our lives take on a special quality.

The North Shore Keep Well Program is designed to provide opportunities for seniors to choose to learn, to grow and to expand their experience of well-being.

Purpose

- To promote the health and well being of older adults living on the North Shore.
- To encourage seniors to help themselves and each other, to live in better health, to learn, and to expand their experiences of well-being.
- To increase awareness of community resources.
- To promote the Keep Well program in the community.

Coordinator's Report

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it!" - Johann Wolfgang Goethe

The key feature of our 2021-2022 season at Keep Well was a powerful post-pandemic revival, marked with boldness, determination, strength and optimism. The re-opening committee was led by John Charles. By September 2021, fitness classes began their on-site operations at Parkgate, followed by program resumption in all other Keep Well sites. In October 2021, 6 sites were operating at 5 locations (Silver Harbour is currently providing space for St. Stephens sessions). We were delighted to reunite with our valued participants and volunteers again, while keeping many safeguards in place. In May 2022, a new site began its operations at the recently opened Lions Gate Recreation Community Centre.

Mutual efforts of the Board members and volunteer site coordinators throughout the entire year bore fruit. As of June 2022, Keep Well actively operates at 7 sites. Let's reflect on each site's post-pandemic re-emergence to full on-site functioning:

- **Delbrook Recreation Centre**
Site coordinator: *Peggy Mathieson*
Fitness instructor: *Afsar Paidar*

Between September 2021 and full reopening in early 2022, 19 members and an instructor exercised. Because of class size restrictions, the volunteers withdrew from the gym.

Currently, up to 25 members participate in exercise classes each week. By the end of March, hands-on activities resumed at the Delbrook site, including blood pressure measurements.

- **Lions Gate Recreation Community Centre**
Interim Site Coordinator: *Rosa Tkacova*
Fitness Instructor: *Miranda Ghoreshtabrizi*



Exercise group at the Lions Gate site facilitated by Miranda



Peggy Mathieson, Afsar Paidar and Sue Vince (volunteer)

By the end of April, the new recreation community centre had opened to the public. During the first week of May, Keep Well organized the new exercise group at this site. Cheryl welcomed the first participants on May 5th. She encouraged class participants to spread the news of our program to all interested seniors in the adjacent multicultural community. Miranda is our new fitness instructor at the Lions Gate site.

In addition to taking blood pressure measurements, Rosa facilitates socialization during the hands-on activities. 8-14 seniors participate each week, and languages spoken include English, Farsi, French, and German.

- **North Shore Neighbourhood House**
 Site coordinators: *Trudy Hubbard & Wendy Nevison*
 Fitness Instructor: *Peggy Ament*

Since the fall of 2021, two new coordinators guide KW activities at the NSNH: Trudy Hubbard and Wendy Nevison. We are grateful to Lisa Hubbard, Executive Director NSNH for the introducing her mother Trudy and friend Wendy to us!

Trudy and Wendy have become indispensable, enthusiastic leaders in the NSNH Keep Well site. The site currently welcomes between 20 and 25 participants each week. This is a marked increase from the original cohort of 7-8 people.



Exercise at the NSNH site

- **Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre**
 Site coordinator: *Roberta Tottle*
 Fitness Instructor: *Andy Demeule*



Exercise group at the Silver Harbour site facilitated by Andy

Between September 2021 and full reopening in early 2022, about 20 members, an instructor, and one volunteer exercised weekly. Currently, exercise classes are held on Wednesdays, with about 40 members participating. On Fridays, there are also about 40 participants, including the original St. Stephen's Parish group. Roberta emphasizes that the numbers keep increasing.

Hands-on activities also resumed, with BP measurements taken by volunteer nurses.

- **Parkgate Community Centre**
 Site coordinator: *Joy Gardiner*
 Fitness Instructor: *Andy Demeule*

About 30 seniors currently participate in exercise classes each week. Before the pandemic, there were about 50 people exercising. Unfortunately, some people did not return to classes in the fall 2021, or in the first months of 2022 due to health problems or concerns about COVID 19. At the same time, Joy welcomed several new people to the group.

Since April 2022, hands-on activities have resumed at the site, with 3 volunteers measuring blood pressure each week.



Exercise at Parkgate facilitated by Andy

- **West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre**
Interim Site coordinator: *Barbara Gillingham*
Fitness Instructor: *Peggy Ament*

When on-site classes resumed after the pandemic restrictions, Barbara put lots of her own personal strengths and efforts to engage KW members in exercise activities and the attendance here is continuously increasing.

In September, Barbara will pass the site coordinator's torch to Lorraine Bowden. Hands-on activities will also resume here in the fall.



Barbara Gillingham and the exercise group at the WVSAC site

- **Zoom Exercise Classes**
Zoom classes technical facilitator: *Wallis Dixon*
Fitness Instructors: *Afsar Paidar*
Judy Bjornson

Exercise classes led by Afsar became a huge success during the pandemic lockdown. Thanks to continuous technical support provided by Wallis, many seniors honed their computer skills and became comfortable with joining exercises in Zoom.

The success of online exercise engagement spilled over to the post-pandemic era. As of June 2022, more than 150 classes were offered, with about 90 participants enrolled throughout the year, of whom 15-20 attend each online class. Currently, Afsar Paidar and Judy Bjornson share fitness instructors' roles on the Zoom programs.



Afsar Paidar

Judy Bjornson

Wallis Dixon



An Online Exercise Class

Further Development

Between January and March 2022, the Keep Well office moved from its previous location to the Lions Gate Recreation Centre. The Office Licence Agreement between KW and Lions Gate Community centre was signed on March 31st, 2022.

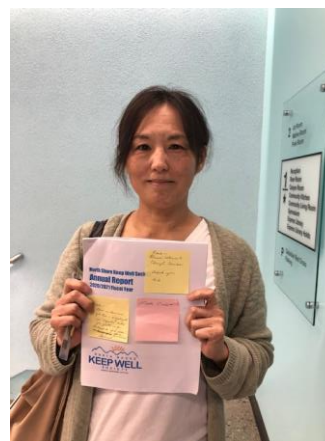
After Michelle Messinger temporarily stepped down from her position as coordinator, Joanne Waddington stepped in temporarily. In early 2022, I became Interim Coordinator, supported by our newly hired bookkeeper Keiko Kaneko. Keiko and I are deeply committed to support efficient and smooth operations at Keep Well!

Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who have made Keep Well a vibrant and strong society, and contributed to our return to normal operations. Let's all remember:

“Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow.” – Helen Keller



**Rosa Tkacova
Interim Program
Coordinator**



**Keiko Kaneko
Bookkeeper**

Mental Wellness & Healthy Aging for Seniors

This past year, we held workshops on Mental Wellness/Healthy Aging for Seniors with funding from New Horizons for Seniors Program. We ran 7 sessions of workshops, with each session covering the following 7 topics: Well-Being and Healthy Ageing; Physical Activity for Healthy Aging; Healthy Nutrition for Seniors; Healthy Sleep; Supporting Mental Well Being; Social Inclusion and Interconnectedness; Community Integration.

The workshops were initially run online. Starting in October 2021 workshops were held on-site, at the Silver Harbour Senior Centre, at the Squamish Nation Elders Centre, and at Parkgate Community Centre. About 100 seniors benefitted from the workshops.

All 7 topics were covered by a medical doctor (Rosa), and each presentation was intertwined with group exploration. The discussion and sharing aspects of the workshops were an important part of the workshops, as seniors were eager to connect with each other and share experiences, especially after being isolated during the pandemic. A volunteer opened and closed each session with a song, and individual coaching was offered.

To make the workshop topics more actionable, we invited specialists including a yoga/mindfulness instructor; a singer to help focus on memory and joy; a Chef from PARC Living to prepare and share samples of quick healthy meals; a registered dietitian to present on alternatives to meat, and to prepare and shared samples of healthy snacks and desserts; a physiotherapist to about taking of joints and improving balance.

Feedback from attendees was very positive. NHSP funded Healthy Aging workshops will also be held in the coming year.

Carole Kellough

Board Member



**Elders during a workshop
at the Squamish Elders Centre**

Andy Demeule

'Andy is the muscle, the heart, and the soul of Keep Well'

After 28 of serving Keep Well Society, Andy has announced his wish to retire from the fitness instructor role. This filled hearts of KW members with sadness and, at the same time, with gratitude. We all feel sadness to see leaving a person who is *'the muscle, the heart, and the soul of Keep Well'*, as one member put it. We all feel gratitude to Andy for all his strength, perseverance, care, courage, and creativity with which he served KW community for many years.

We are all privileged to have had spent so many years with Andy as Keep Well fitness instructor: Andy with his big, warm, caring heart; Andy with all his physical strengths and skills; Andy transpiring and living the values symbolized by the Olympic flame: friendship and unity, optimism and perseverance.



At the North Shore Neighbourhood House



**Carrying Olympic Torch
Winter Olympic Games, 2010**

Andy was born in a suburb of Winnipeg called St. Boniface, as the 7th of 10 children. Andy completed his formal education in the Winnipeg school system and then began his life's education there as well: he took on many job opportunities and experiences. Andy married his high school sweetheart Irma and they have been married for 57 years. Irma and Andy have 2 children and 2 grandchildren. After finally tiring of the cold and snow, Andy and Irma decided to make a move to Vancouver, to enjoy the sun and warm weather for a year to see whether they would like it. Well, some 52 years later they are still trying to decide and find the sun!

Andy has always been interested in fitness and in chemistry, physics, biology, and physiology. Out of this interest Andy developed his love of sports, injury rehabilitation and fitness.

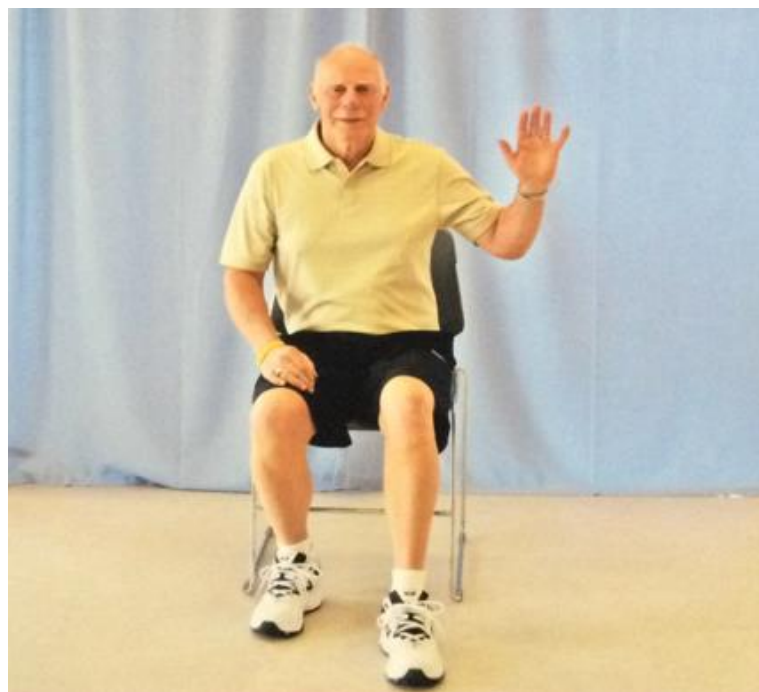
Andy testifies that over many working years of his life, the most meaningful work experiences have been working with seniors and people with disabilities in a helpful way such as fitness training. While working as a fitness instructor, Andy also served for North Shore Disability as a care aide at a group home for brain injured adults. Andy comments on this experience: *“It was both rewarding and difficult at the same time, but it gave me the insight of the strength people have and battles that many people who have a disability go through and the help that is needed by them just to get through a single day.”*

Keep Well directors Elise Shepherd and Nancy Miller had the foresight to hire Andy some 3 decades ago as a certified personal trainer, strength, aerobic, aquatic, and senior fitness trainer. Andy always felt that his interests, knowledge, skills, and personality are best suited for seniors and for people requiring specialized adaptive fitness and rehabilitation. He always shows up as an instructor who is aware – in his own words – that *“being a third age instructor, seniors fitness instructor, requires a great deal of knowledge about the many health issues that affect seniors as they age.”*

While working as a fitness instructor, Andy was also enjoying another of his passions – coaching. Andy coached several sports on the North Shore but mainly hockey and girls’ ringette. Andy’s other hobbies include reading and music.

When asked what his life A-HA moments were, Andy says: I have been fortunate to have had many A-HA moments, but a couple that really stand out is being nominated by former DNV Mayor Richard Walton, for service to the community, and then chosen as one of the torch bearers for the 2010 Olympic Games, and receiving Lifetime Membership Awards from North West Vancouver Ringette Association and North Vancouver Minor Hockey Association.

We are grateful to Andy for his unwavering devotion to support fitness among seniors at Keep Well for over 28 years. Andy’s genuine interest to assist Keep Well seniors transpired powerfully during the COVID-19 pandemic when Andy was repeatedly calling our seniors to make sure that they are doing well and carry through the lockdown with courage and optimism. Many of us became good friends with Andy and it will be hard to say goodbye. Nevertheless, when one door closes, another one opens. Our Keep Well community wishes Andy many wonderful years-to-come!





West Vancouver Seniors Activity Centre



Keep Well Community Life



Lonsdale Quay



Demo Day at Lynn Valley Centre



Keep Well Exercise in the Community

Volunteers at Keep Well

Volunteers are the backbone of Keep Well. Sites are run by volunteer coordinators. While some volunteers check blood pressure or arrange guest speakers, others help with set-up and serving coffee and tea. The hard-working Board of Directors are also all volunteers. Last year, volunteers contributed over 4,000 hours to Keep Well.



Roberta Tottle teaches about heat wave safety



Sing-a-Longs led by Doug Muir, 'Doug-on-Guitar', bring wonderful, heartfelt singing to the participants.

The activity is organized by Joy Gardiner, and the music is intertwined with sharing various stories.



Joy Gardiner at registration



Joyce Bain and Barbara London at registration

A Very Special Keep Well Volunteer

Mary Elizabeth (Bette) Rumble, a well-regarded long-term Keep Well member, massage volunteer and assistant at the North Shore Neighbourhood House and other sites passed away on November 11, 2020.

Bette retired from a successful career as a Public Health Nurse, and in her retirement was a dedicated seniors' advocate and volunteer. After her death, Keep Well learned that Bette had bequeathed a significant amount to our Society. These funds are invested with the intention of ensuring that Keep Well continues to operate and serve North Shore Seniors for many years to come. We at Keep Well are thankful to have known Bette and we will do our best to ensure that her legacy is remembered.



Volunteer Nurses at Blood Pressure Clinics



Retired nurses Trish Robinson and Jene Johnson

Farewells

Keep Well would like to recognize and honour the passing of our valued volunteers and/or participants over the past year:

Dorothy Brassil
John Brassil
Carmelita Cusano
Dian Bird
Neil Hay
Hosein Kazarany
Daphne Lakes
Andrew Law
Evelyn McSween
Ron Morrice
Michael Rath
Ken Schmidt
Margreth Sippila
Gladys Smith
Kay Spencer
Therese (Terry) Warren
Pat Wilson
Pat Woodbury



NORTH SHORE KEEP WELL BOARD MEMBERS



Cheryl Cowan



Doug Muir



Maureen Malcolm



Laura Degrave



Joe Brooker



John Charles



Georgiana Ferguson



Carole Kellough



Afsar Paidar



Marsha Unheim

OFFICERS

President, Cheryl Cowan
Vice-President, Doug Muir
Secretary, Maureen Malcolm
Treasurer, Laura DeGrave

DIRECTORS

Joe Brooker
John Charles
Georgiana Forguson
Carole Kellough
Afsar Paidar
Marsha Unheim

BOARD COMMITTEES 2021/2022

Finance

Laura DeGrave - Chair, Georgiana Forguson, Carole Kellough, Doug Muir

Fundraising Sub Committee

Carole Kellough - Chair, Laura DeGrave, Heather Dunsford, Georgiana Forguson,
Michelle Messinger, Afsar Paidar

Health Committee

Marsha Unheim - Chair, John Charles, Cheryl Cowan

Personnel Committee

John Charles – Chair, Cheryl Cowan, Carole Kellough

Communications Committee

Cheryl Cowan - Chair, Georgiana Forguson, Lillian Gorrie, Michelle Messinger, Afsar Paidar,

Events Committee

Marsha Unheim – Chair, Doug Muir, Maureen Malcolm, Afsar Paidar

Programming Committee

Afsar Paidar - Chair, Andy Demeule, Michelle Messinger

Reopening Committee

John Charles - Chair, Andy Demeule, Laura DeGrave, Lillian Gorrie, Doug Muir,
Michelle Messinger, Afsar Paidar, Marsha Unheim

Special Projects Committee

Doug Muir - Chair, John Charles, Cheryl Cowan, Laura DeGrave, Georgiana Forguson,
Maureen Malcolm, Michelle Messinger

Special Thanks To

Our 2021/22 Sponsors:

**Vancouver Coastal Health
PARC Retirement Living**

**GMR Foundation
The City of North Vancouver
City of North Vancouver Community Foundation
The District of North Vancouver
The District of West Vancouver
The Estate of Bette Rumble
West Vancouver Foundation**

Thank you to our members whose generous donations ensure that Keep Well continues. We gratefully acknowledge all who fund and donate to our program.