

Fall/Winter
2008-09

Director's Message



Dr. Janice Keefe
Director
NS Centre on
Aging

It's an exciting time at the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging and it's my pleasure to share news with you about our recent accomplishments and the new initiatives underway. It's also my pleasure to acknowledge the researchers, staff, students, as well as members of our Advisory Board and Management Board who make it all happen. The Centre is a buzz of activity with valuable input and effort from many.

First, welcome to new staff member Brenda Hattie as the Centre's Research Coordinator. Brenda has worked with us on several projects, and we are pleased that she has joined the Centre in this new role.

Second, we've recently completed some exciting work that has the potential to influence research, policy and practice. We've just finished an intensive year working on the revisions for the next version of the Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Care Course and we've recently released publications on the topics of rural senior volunteers, elder abuse and home support workers. What else is going on... well lots. We're working with a host of researchers on knowledge translation initiatives in dementia care and working with CIHR's Institute of Aging to plan the 2009 Summer Program in Aging. This event provides a valuable learning and networking opportunity for new and upcoming scholars.

For more than 15 years NSCA has contributed to the body of knowledge on aging. Through research, education and consultation we have worked in partnership and collaboration with decision makers, researchers, seniors, community organizations, and practitioners, to enhance the quality of life of seniors. We're working on a Strategic Plan for the Centre that will help guide our work and resources over the next 5 years. The plan will help us continue to work towards our vision: *To be a leader in advancing knowledge and informing policy and practice in the field of aging.* Enjoy our Newsletter,

We're on the web, visit us @

www.msvu.ca/nsca

Nova Scotia Centre on Aging 2008-2009 Advisory Board

The Nova Scotia Centre on Aging receives support from a community-based advisory board comprised of representatives from government, private business, senior organizations, universities, and the general community.

NSCA Welcomes New Staff:

Brenda Hattie as Research Coordinator. Brenda's role includes proposal development, project coordination and dissemination.

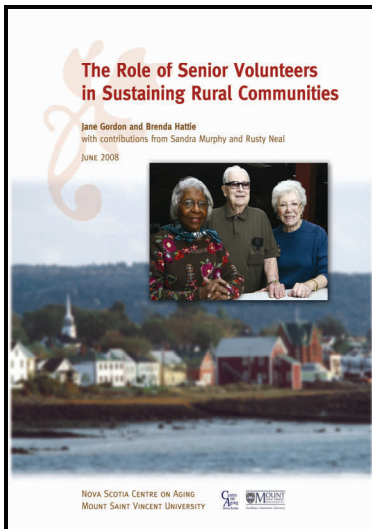
Christina Thibeau as Communications Assistant. Christina's role includes assisting with exhibits, the website, the newsletter, and other promotional materials.



Back Row (L to R): Ron Swan (Member at Large), Melissa Andrews (Centre for Health Care of the Elderly), Dr. Kenneth Rockwood (Centre for Health Care of the Elderly), Dr. Susan Brigham (Member at Large), Irene Rose (Member at Large), Valerie White (Department of Seniors), Dr. Nila Ipson (Gerontology Association of Nova Scotia), Sharon Reashore (Caregivers Nova Scotia), Bernie LaRusic (Group of IX).

Front Row (L to R): Dr. Mary Lyon (Dean of Professional Studies, MSVU), Dan Maclean (Member at Large), Bessie Harris (Member at Large, Chair), Dr. Janice Keefe (Director, NSCA), Pamela Fancey (Associate Director, NSCA), and Susan McDonald Wilson (Member at Large).

The Role of Senior Volunteers in Sustaining Rural Communities



A report prepared by Dr. Jane Gordon and Brenda Hattie provides valuable insight into the reality of rural senior volunteers. The findings serve as a contrast to much of the discussion around population aging which presents older adults as a social problem, one that is placing an increasing strain on social and economic resources. Key findings include:

- Seniors' volunteer work is significant to rural communities surviving and thriving
- Seniors' volunteer work enables seniors to stay in their community
- Seniors' volunteer work contributes to our culture and heritage industry
- Burnout by senior volunteers is a concern
- Challenges senior volunteer encounter include: Out of pocket expenses, lack of transportation, dwindling numbers, and reduced formal services

The report contains recommendations for organizations to recruit and retain volunteers and for government to help support seniors' important contributions to our rural communities.

Nexus Home Care Project



Preliminary results from personal interviews with 40 home support workers in Nova Scotia found that most were satisfied to very satisfied with their job. At the same time, they told us that they see clients with a lot of unmet need. Most experience sudden or unpredictable events during their home visit such as medical emergencies, falls, aggression and death. Most workers report job stress. Contributory factors include client behavior, client or family demands, inadequate equipment/supplies, travel

time between clients, and inability to meet client needs. Many also reported workplace safety concerns and issues with scheduling and compensation. This project was part of a larger study examining home care in Canada led by Dr. Anne Martin Matthews, University of British Columbia.

These results and those from interviews with workers in Ontario and British Columbia will help develop recruitment and retention strategies for the home care industry.



For more information visit
<http://nexushomecare.arts.ubc.ca>

Family Violence & Elder Abuse

Dr. Deborah Norris and Pamela Fancey submitted their Final Report to Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) on the lessons learned from family violence that can inform work on the important topic of elder abuse. This project was completed with the support of Alice Housing and NS Department of Seniors. The key messages from their research include:

- Inconsistent definitions and limiting screening protocols impact reporting practices and, therefore, the information available
- Lack of awareness, denial, shame and fear are barriers to reporting
- Adult protection legislation raises concerns about paternalism and infringement on rights and freedoms
- Responses to family violence and elder abuse vary by province
- Gender is important to understanding family violence but ageism is an added dimension in elder abuse
- Critical-ecological framework may be valuable as a unifying framework for advancing theory, policy and practice regarding family violence across the life span

An earlier version of the research was presented at an Expert Round Table organized by HRSDC at which national and international experts on the topic of elder abuse were present.

Canadian Dementia Translation Knowledge Network

A multidisciplinary team of researchers and practitioners have received \$4.3 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to translate the latest dementia research into meaningful products for clinicians and the community. During this 5 year project, Dr. Keefe will coordinate provincial initiatives and be responsible for linking team members across the provinces.

Seniors' Legal Information Kit

The Legal Information Society of N.S. has received 3 year funding through the New Horizons Program, Elder Abuse Initiative to develop an information Kit on issues related to seniors legal affairs. NSCA is responsible for the evaluation of the 3 year project as well as testing a draft of the Kit with seniors and care providers throughout Nova Scotia.

Institute of Aging Summer Program in Aging (SPA)

The 2009 SPA will be hosted by NSCA and held at White Point Beach Resort, June 8-11, 2009. The goal of SPA is to provide graduate students and post doctoral fellows involved in aging research a program of advanced training that crosses disciplines, sectors, institutions, and geography. Participants have valuable opportunities to network with other students and leading Canadian researchers.

What's Happening... Ongoing

Cancer and Seniors' Mental Health

In collaboration with Dr. Penny MacCourt, University of Victoria, and other stakeholders from the seniors, mental health and cancer fields, NSCA is contributing to a project that explores the perspectives of seniors' experience with cancer. Focus groups and individual interviews with seniors have been conducted in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and British Columbia. Their experience with the disease as well as the health care system will inform the development of an educational pamphlet for seniors and a report for health care professionals to be available in the Spring 2009.

Projecting the Housing Needs of Aging Atlantic Canadians

Now in its final year, this multi-sectoral, collaborative project is collecting information and conducting analysis that will help inform decisions and planning of housing and support services for Atlantic Canadian seniors. Dr. Keefe is a Co-Investigator and NSCA is one of the many stakeholders involved contributing to the research and knowledge transfer activities. In addition to the report on the survey with more than 1700 Atlantic Canadian seniors, the project has recently released its report of the focus groups with select populations. The lead investigator, Dr. Shiner, has recently completed site visits to explore housing options and is preparing a documentary DVD of his findings. Plans are underway for the final project event – Atlantic Seniors Housing Needs Conference (see Upcoming Events).

Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias Care Course

Since November 2007, NSCA has been working intensely on the revisions to this provincially recognized course that is managed by a provincial advisory committee. The Course is 27 hours in length and comprised of nine learning modules. Approximately 800 care providers and volunteers who support persons with dementia complete the course each year. The revision process included reviewing the latest literature in dementia care, analyzing course evaluation data, and consulting with participants, facilitators and industry stakeholders. As well, each module was reviewed by a subject matter expert. The revised curriculum is ready. NSCA is delivering orientation sessions across the province with the Course facilitators to help prepare them deliver this new curriculum to Nova Scotia care providers.

Retirement Planning for Older Adults with Developmental Disabilities

This project, led by the Nova Scotia Community College and funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, focuses on building links between the aging and developmental disability sectors. Its activities during the past three years have included the development of a Resource Guide, the development of a Discussion Paper, pilot project, workshops with front-line workers and numerous presentations. NSCA is a project partner and has also been evaluating the project and its outcomes. In the spring of 2008, the project received funding for an additional year to continue with its dissemination activities to front-line workers and to develop education resources for service providers in the disability and aging communities. NSCA continues its partner and evaluation roles until the Spring of 2009.

Seniors and Pension Information

The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia, with funding from the Department of Seniors Positive Aging Fund, is developing an online resource to inform seniors about their legal rights and the issues associated with public pensions. NSCA has conducted a focus group with seniors who reviewed the draft resource and provided valuable comments regarding its relevance, presentation and accessibility. Their comments will help shape the final product which is expected to be available through the Society in the Winter of 2009.

F.R. MacKinnon Endowment Fund



Dr. F.R. MacKinnon
Founding member of NSCA

Dr. MacKinnon was a founding member of the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging (NSCA), having facilitated its inception in 1992 in response to the need for a university-based centre that could blend academic strengths with community involvement in age-related issues. The Endowment Fund, established in 1996 to honor the retirement of Dr. MacKinnon from public sector service, is used to support research, education on aging issues and opportunities to consult with the senior community. Donations may be made through the Mount's University Advancement Office (www.msvu.ca/alumnae/howtogive.asp).

Recent Publications/Presentations

Publicatons

Carrière, Y., Keefe, J., Légaré, J., Xiaofen, L., Rowe, G., Martel, L., & Rajbhandary, S. (2008). *Projecting the Future Availability of the Informal Support Network of the Elderly Population and Assessing its Impact on Home Care Services*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada (Catalogue # 91F00ISM).

Gordon, J. & Hattie, B. (2008). *The Role of Senior Volunteers in Sustaining Rural Communities*. Halifax: Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, Mount Saint Vincent University.

Norris, D. & Fancey, P. (2008). *Family Violence-Applying Lessons Learned to Elder Abuse. Final Report*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

Presentations

McAuley, T. & Fancey, P. (2008, October). *Dementia Care: An Educational Tool*. Presentation at the Tools for Life Conference. Greenwich, Nova Scotia.

Keefe, J. (2008, October). *Caregivers: The Backbone of Our Long-Term Care System Asses-*

ing Today's Needs Planning for Tomorrow. Presentation at the Long Term Care Conference Prince Edward Island Health, Summerside, Prince Edward Island.

Keefe, J. (2008, September). *Caregivers' Realities: Assessing Today's Needs - Planning for Tomorrow*. Presentation to Geriatric Rounds QE II Health Sciences Centre, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Fancey, P. (2008, September). *Cancer and its Impact on Seniors Mental Health*. Presentation to Cancer Care Nova Scotia Patient Education Committee, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Keefe, J., Menac, V., & Gallagher, E. (2008, September). *Similarities and Differences across Three Canadian Cities and their Stakeholders*. Presentation at International Federation on Aging Conference, Montreal, Quebec.

Keefe, J. (2008, September). *Policies to Support Family Caregivers: Lessons from the International Countries on Work and Eldercare Policy*. Presentation at International Federation on Aging Conference, Montreal, Quebec.

Upcoming Events:

- MSVU Research Day - February 11, 2009

www.msvu.ca/research

- Atlantic Seniors Housing Needs Conference, May 27-29, 2009
Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax NS

www.msvu.ca/ashra

- Summer Program in Aging, hosted by CIHR Institute of Aging, June 8-11, 2009, White Point Resort, Nova Scotia.

www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/30793.html

Contact Us

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Achievements/Awards

Dr. Janice Keefe was honored by the provincial gerontology association for her exceptional service and contribution to the field (see photo left).

Dr. Janice Keefe and Pamela Fancey received recognition at a dinner hosted by MSVU President Kathryn Laurin for their contribution to the university's strong research program.

Photo left to right: Dr. Jerry Singleton, Dalhousie University; Heather Bell, 2008 Award of Excellence recipient; Dr. Janice Keefe 2008 Award of Recognition recipient; Pamela Fancey NSCA Associate Director; and, Dr. Nila Ipson GANS President.

