



AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Phase I REPORT



Final Report to Osprey Foundation and Columbia Basin Trust

July 1st, 2012 to June 30th, 2015

Submitted by: Corrine Younie, Initiative Coordinator

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An Age Friendly Community is one that is an inclusive and accessible environment that allows people to realize their potential for physical, social, and mental well-being throughout the life course and to participate in society, while providing them with adequate protection, security and care when they need it.

World Health Organization

1) General Information

1. Initiative start and completion dates: July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2015
2. Name of organization submitting report: Nelson CARES Society
3. Contact Person: Jenny Robinson, Executive Director and/or Corrine Younie, Coordinator, Age Friendly Community Initiative
4. Charitable Registration Number (required): 119053288RR0001
5. Mailing address (including postal code):

Nelson CARES Society

521 Vernon Street

Nelson, BC V1L 4E9

(250) 352-6011

(250) 352-9855

jrobinson@nelsoncares.ca and/or seniorsproject@nelsoncares.ca

6. Value of 2012-2015 grant awarded by Osprey for this project: \$250,000

2) Executive Summary

The Age Friendly Community (AFC) Initiative is a community collaboration funded by Osprey Community Foundation and Columbia Basin Trust to identify and address seniors' service gaps and barriers. In Phase I, the AFC Initiative brought together an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from senior-serving community organizations, municipal and regional government, and Interior Health, as well as individual seniors. Over time this group grew into a dedicated and cohesive body, embracing the role of guiding the Initiative.

The overarching goal of the Initiative is to identify and address seniors service gaps and barriers. To support and inform that work, a number of research and consultation activities were conducted in the first year of the Initiative. A 2013 gap analysis identified the following priority issues: *Information & Service Coordination*, *Isolated Rural Seniors*, and *Transportation Barriers*. Four pilot projects were developed to address these priorities:

- *Kootenay Seniors Website*
- *Kootenay Seniors Service Coordination Project*
- *Reaching Out: identifying isolated rural seniors & determining their priority needs*
- *Moving Together: a collaborative approach to addressing seniors' transportation barriers*

Key Successes

- *The Initiative has a cohesive, dedicated and well-functioning Advisory Committee with a collective community vision and is strongly committed to continuing to work together.*
- *The Initiative produces a Model of Community Collaboration to guide other communities interested in creating their own Age Friendly Community Initiative.*
- *The Initiative launches FOUR successful pilot projects, double the original goal of one or two.*
- *The Kootenay Seniors Website provides a searchable service directory with mapping function for seniors, their families and caregivers, and service providers.*
- *The Kootenay Seniors Service Coordination Project brings together diverse service providers from throughout the region to coordinate service provision and develop service delivery protocols.*
- *The Moving Together Project works with stakeholders across multiple sectors to improve transportation services for seniors in the Kootenay-Boundary region.*
- *The Reaching Out Research Intern "reaches out" to isolated rural seniors from Lardeau Valley to the Slocan, to determine their priority needs and connect them to services and resources.*
- *The Initiative brings a seniors lens to diverse community partners through collaborations with organizations like Kootenay Carshare and the Nelson Committee on Homelessness.*

Each of the pilot projects was evaluated and all have had positive community impact. The Moving Together Project has perhaps had the most remarkable outcomes including a region-wide seniors' transportation strategy that is now being implemented. The project has garnered strong support from seniors across the region, and from stakeholders in key sectors, including BC Transit and the Mayor of Nelson.

With the foundational work completed in the community development phase of the Initiative, we will focus more on service delivery. However, the Initiative will continue in its coordination role, with the Advisory Committee representing a collaborative "community of service". Pilot project oversight and fund development will continue to be core activities. We will also collaborate with community partners to fund community projects for emerging priorities, or for new projects that address existing priorities in new ways.

New activities for Phase II include seeking an Age Friendly Community designation for the City of Nelson, providing a framework to help measure the community's progress in terms of seniors' quality of life. We will also facilitate provision of training opportunities for Advisory Committee members and other interested senior-serving organizations to improve communication skills and develop a shared system of program evaluation.

The Advisory Committee is mindful that the job of creating a network of seniors' services is challenging and they will endeavour to keep the work manageable, with achievable goals. Increasingly, the overarching goal of the AFC Initiative will be to make Nelson and area an Age Friendly Community, and our principal role to lead, support, and facilitate change.

3) Introduction

In 2011, the Osprey Community Foundation undertook a research project so that the Foundation could be more effective in allocating available granting funds for programming to meet seniors' needs. Researcher Janice Murphy's *Creating an Age-Friendly Community: Assessing Needs and Priorities* examined a broad spectrum of service issues and identified key strategies to address the needs of the growing senior's population in Nelson and area. Osprey partnered with the Columbia Basin Trust and in mid-2012 contracted with Nelson CARES Society to animate the Age Friendly Community Initiative.

Nelson CARES began by conducting a number of community engagement activities including a consultative community meeting, a series of sector interviews, and a survey of area seniors. They then brought together a multi-sectoral Advisory Committee comprised of representatives of senior-serving organizations, municipal and regional government, and Interior Health. This group would bring expertise and broad community support to the Initiative and ensure a collaborative approach. An

Initiative Coordinator was hired in December 2012 to work with the Advisory Committee and realize the goals and objectives of the Initiative. An independent consultant was retained to evaluate the Initiative.

From January 2013 to June 2015, the Initiative Coordinator and the Advisory Committee worked together to develop a model of community collaboration, conducting a series of priority setting exercises and launching four pilot projects. Over time the focus of the Advisory Committee evolved, moving from relationship building to project development and oversight. Many members of the Advisory Committee also sat on pilot project working groups. The Initiative Coordinator managed three of the four pilot projects, with the fourth being contracted to a partner organization. Each of the pilot projects had individual evaluation frameworks to measure outcomes distinct from the overarching initiative.

As the end of the three-year initiative term neared, staff and Advisory Committee conducted a strategic visioning session, examining the progress of the Initiative and its pilot projects. The group expressed a strong commitment to continuing to work together as a coordinating community body to sustain the pilot projects, address emerging issues, and represent seniors' priorities as a collaborative community voice.

<i>Age Friendly Community Initiative by the Numbers...</i>	
# of members currently sitting on the Advisory Committee	26
# of Advisory Committee meetings held since Initiative started	27
# of organizations engaged in Initiative activities	95
# of individuals engaged	270
# of pilot projects launched	4
# of sub-committees, project teams and working groups established	7
# of Moving Together Project Working Group meetings in year one	18
# of recommendations generated by the Moving Together Project Working Group	29
# of participants attending the Moving Together Stakeholder Gathering	53
# of media interviews for Moving Together Project May-June	9
# of "Wheelchair Van for West Kootenays" surveys completed	125
# of service providers attending first Kootenay Seniors Service Provider Group meeting	13
# of partnership initiatives resulting from Initiative	10
# of grant applications submitted	14
\$ of additional funding received for AFC Initiative and pilot projects (excludes Osprey/CBT funding)	\$28,214
\$ projected for Moving Together Project next phase (3-year funding, Vancouver Foundation/CBT)	\$156,593

4) Research & Consultation

Broad community consultation in the early stages of the Initiative provided crucial information and garnered meaningful support from key stakeholders. In addition to a community meeting, a survey of area seniors was conducted, along with one-on-one stakeholder interviews. Community consultation and stakeholder engagement would continue to be cornerstones of the Initiative and emerging pilot projects throughout. Research was also a key component of the Initiative from the outset, ensuring that priorities were evidence-based and that projects were developed based on best practices.

In 2013, researcher Helen Lutz conducted an asset scan, listing community, health, social and recreational services for seniors in Nelson and Areas E and F. The researcher also updated area census data and conducted a scan of community and social indicators for age friendly communities. The asset scan was later updated and expanded, forming the basis of a community resource inventory, a series of community resource maps, and the service directory on the Kootenay Seniors website. The mapping project was supported by a survey of area service providers, which also identified service gaps and barriers. An additional asset scan was later conducted to specifically identify transportation resources.

In addition to Janice Murphy's *Creating an Age-Friendly Community*, and reports and resources emerging from other Initiative activities (surveys, asset scans, etc.), research reports were also generated as part of individual pilot projects:

- *Reaching Out: identifying isolated seniors and determining their priority needs*
Dana Burgess, Reaching Out Project Final Report
- *Bracing for the Baby Boomers: projecting the impact on existing services*
Helen Lutz, for the Moving Together Project
- *Transportation Solutions for Rural Seniors: a literature review*
Helen Lutz, for the Moving Together Project
- *Moving Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Seniors' Transportation Barriers*
Corrine Younie, Moving Together Project Final Report

5) Advisory Committee & Model of Community Collaboration

A key objective of the Age Friendly Community Initiative was to create a Model of Community Collaboration – to build and nurture collaboration in our own community and to develop a model that could be replicated in other communities or regions. Despite considerable conflict within the Advisory Committee in the early stages of the Initiative – and minimal collaboration among area senior-serving organizations – the Initiative now has a cohesive, dedicated and well-functioning Advisory Committee

that is strongly committed to continuing to work together. The Advisory Committee – and the process that built it – is the “model”.

The Model of Community Collaboration has been drafted and most of the necessary building blocks have been developed to produce a “kit” that can be presented and distributed to communities interested in launching their own age friendly initiatives.

An evaluation of Advisory Committee meetings and process was undertaken by the committee in December 2013 and January 2014, resulting in greater unity among Committee members. One of the recommendations of the evaluation was that the group receive training in consensus decision making. It was felt that, in addition to ensuring a consistent understanding of the process of, group members would then have the skills necessary to manage conflicts as they arose. A Consensus Decision Making Workshop was conducted in February 2014 and a model endorsed by the Advisory Committee.

A Review of Priorities in February 2014, followed by a Review of AFC Initiative Purpose and Goals in March 2014, served to move the Advisory Committee forward, past the introspective relationship building focus that had consumed much of the first year of the Initiative. From that point forward, the group was able to concentrate primarily on launching and overseeing the pilot projects, and building a collective vision for the Initiative.

6) Priority Setting

In January 2013, the Initiative Coordinator created a synthesis of all the priorities identified through initiative research and outreach activities, revealing eight overarching priority areas:

1. Community Support & Health Services
2. Housing Supply & Services
3. Transportation
4. Social Participation Opportunities
5. Outdoor Spaces & Public Facilities
6. Respect and Social Inclusion
7. Communication and Information
8. Civic Participation and Employment Opportunities

Under each of these priority *areas*, a list of priority *issues* was added; for example, the *issue* of transportation to social activities was listed under the priority area “Transportation”.

In March 2013, at the first of two priority setting sessions, the Advisory Committee worked together to narrow down the eight priority areas to three for further development. The priority areas and issues were examined using the following criteria:

- Issues are numerous, urgent, and/or interconnected
- Issues are not currently being addressed by existing services
- Issues could be easily integrated into existing service/organization
- Addressing issue would have widest impact
- Issues reach the most vulnerable seniors
- Issues address prevention
- Consider affordability/cost of addressing issue
- Objectivity – consider priorities/issues outside our individual service areas

The group also considered the following questions with regard to each priority area or issue:

- Does this issue represent a **GAP** in service? i.e. practically speaking, there is no service in the area meeting this need **OR**
- Is this a matter of **UNDERUTILIZATION** rather than a gap in services? i.e. an appropriate service exists but is not widely used/is underutilized **OR**
- Is the matter that there are **BARRIERS** to accessing this service or meeting this need? i.e. an appropriate service exists but barriers (transportation, cost, etc.) prevent people from accessing it
- Is there a **PRIORITY AREA CONNECTION**? e.g. the service falls under Community Support & Health Services but the barrier to accessing that service is a Transportation issue

The Committee then broke into small groups and each table identified three priority areas that they believed best met all criteria to be addressed through pilot project development. The top three priority areas emerging were:

1. Community Support & Health Services
2. Communication & Information
3. Transportation

At the second priority setting session in June 2013, the Advisory Committee viewed the community resource inventory and maps to ensure a collective understanding of available services. The group then reviewed the priority areas chosen in the earlier priority setting session and discussed the best approach to developing a project or projects to address these:

- Develop a project that addresses a single issue or a cluster of like issues; i.e. address a **GAP**
- OR**
- Develop a project that addresses multiple issues across priority areas by tackling access issues; i.e. address **BARRIERS**

It was decided that we needed an integrated approach to addressing issues, that developing “one-off” projects would not be sustainable. It was also suggested that we should eliminate issues over which we have little influence and virtually no control. Ultimately, it was agreed that communication and information coordination is critical; lack of awareness of and barriers to access to existing programs should be addressed before new programs are developed; and, public education is needed, as well as communication among organizations to facilitate referrals. It was also agreed that *Community Support & Health Services* included an extremely long list of services and programs, and that outreach to isolated rural seniors” would address the community and health service needs of the most vulnerable seniors.

The outcome of this priority setting session was the following framework for pilot project development:

- Information and Service Coordination
 - To be first pilot to receive AFC Community Grant funds
 - Project should be a regional service
 - Comprehensive, accurate information about services and resources for seniors
 - For seniors and their family/community support networks AND also for service providers
 - Include Kootenay Seniors website currently in development
 - Searchable database with mapping function
 - Collaboration and protocol development for service providers
- Outreach to Rural Seniors
 - Submit grant application for upcoming New Horizons call for proposals
 - Project to identify elder leaders in rural communities
 - Provide training and supports
 - Create network of senior peer advocates
- Transportation Barriers
 - Identified as greatest barrier to service access
 - To be next priority issue addressed by Advisory Committee for project development

7) Pilot Projects

Based upon the outcomes of the priority setting activities conducted by the Advisory Committee, two pilot projects were initially developed: *Kootenay Seniors*, which included a website for seniors and the people that support them, along with service coordination activities that would bring service providers together to strengthen collaboration. This project, which would address the priority *Information & Service Coordination*, was ultimately split into two separate projects, as described below.

Outcomes

The Service Provider Group completed a feedback form in November 2014, providing comments about the work of the Kootenay Seniors Service Coordination project and Service Provider Group meetings.

100% indicated *increased awareness* in the following areas:

- Meeting other seniors' service providers for the first time
- Having a better awareness of other programs that are available
- Increased knowledge regarding the services that other organizations provide
- Learning about new services that they were otherwise unaware of

Group members also indicated that due to increased coordination and collaboration among service providers:

- Trust has been developed among participants
- Participants are planning together and sharing work load
- Participants are now collaborating and networking
- Participants are having new conversations that haven't happened in the past
- Participants are learning information that is helpful to their clients

Other comments included that they hope the group continues to meet, that it feels like important connections are being made, that it is well worth the time and energy, and that they would hate to see it stop.

In addition to the benefits to participants of enhanced coordination and collaboration, the project has produced the *Kootenay Seniors Service Protocols*, a binder that includes protocols for information sharing and making referrals, and recommendations for how to respond in identified situations (e.g. disclosure of abuse), as well as information about seniors' services and resources.

"Some partnerships in service delivery have occurred... staff from Elder Abuse Awareness in Nelson linked to present to seniors in Kaslo; a budgeting workshop has been offered in Nelson by a group member from Castlegar; one group member is planning a Rideshare information session at another member's worksite."

***Anna Maskerine, Coordinator
Kootenay Seniors Service Coordination Project***

Challenges

An early challenge experienced by the project coordinator was that of proving the worth of participation in the Service Provider Group to busy professionals. Service providers often feel conflicted about attending meetings when their focus is crucial front-line service provision; they choose carefully among invitations to committee work. This concern was voiced at the first meeting of the Kootenay Seniors Service Provider Group. By leading the group in a hands-on, visual exercise that revealed the gaps in communication and service referrals among service organizations in attendance, the project coordinator was quickly able to demonstrate to the group the tangible value of collaboration.

What we learned

We learned that this particular project needs to serve the needs of the participants - a core group can be engaged and sustained when sufficiently motivated by the benefits of participation. The project has also collected valuable information about service gaps to inform the work of the larger Initiative.

Kootenay Seniors Website

It was decided that the Kootenay Seniors Website segment of the *Kootenay Seniors* project as originally designed would instead remain with Nelson CARES and the AFC Initiative Coordinator, with AFC Community Grants funding allocated for website development and to increase AFC staff hours for site maintenance and continuous content updates.

Designed to be appealing and accessible to seniors, the website would include a variety of user-friendly features for seniors and service providers, including:

- A comprehensive, searchable directory of seniors' services
- A calendar of social events and recreational activities for seniors
- A calendar of workshops, conferences and other professional development opportunities for service providers
- A service provider blog featuring community and program news and issues; primarily administered and written by the AFC Initiative Coordinator, entries for the blog will also be solicited from the Kootenay Seniors Service Coordination project and other collaborators
- News and resource literature of interest to seniors and service providers
- A password-protected service provider forum that would allow service providers to connect and privately discuss professional matters and challenges (to be added later)
- A "Volunteer Corner" to match community organizations and their volunteer needs with community members and their volunteer skills/interests (to be added later)
- A "Spotlight on Seniors" section to feature senior profiles and highlight new services for seniors (to be added later)

Outcomes

The Kootenay Seniors website has proven to be a valuable community resource. While the website has not yet been formally evaluated due to issues with site development in Phase I of the Initiative, we are aware that service providers regularly use the site to find resources and frequently submit events and services to be added to the site.

Revisions and improvements to the site will be completed in August including built-in evaluation tools such as SEO (Search Engine Optimization) Analyzer and/or Google Analytics. These will allow us to track the number of visits to the site and which sections were visited, as well as identifying when individual site visitors view successive sections, indicating that the site is easy to navigate and invites exploration of features.

Challenges

Developing and launching the Kootenay Seniors website proved to be a challenging undertaking. We experienced difficulties with website developer reliability and technical issues, including functionality problems with some site features. However, Nelson Community Response Network and BCCRN recently contributed funding to contract a highly recommended website developer to complete work on the site, expected to take place by mid-August. It should be noted that the website remained online and accessible throughout, being continuously updated and used by the public.

What we learned

An analysis of the process revealed lessons for future endeavours. A more comprehensive search for potential website developers, including more consultation with colleagues and community contacts, would have resulted in a larger pool of more proficient and reputable developers to draw from. Also, the hiring committee should have included at least one person with a strong understanding of website development, preferably including the specific platforms used (i.e. Word Press) and desired website features.

Moving Together: A collaborative approach to addressing seniors' transportation barriers

In January 2014, Nelson CARES received a grant from the Vancouver Foundation to bring together a multi-sectoral stakeholder group to identify specific transportation gaps and barriers, and to develop a strategy to address these. The project was managed by the AFC Initiative Coordinator, with the support of a very active Project Working Group comprised of area representatives from: Nelson Transit and West Kootenay Regional Transit; community, health and seniors advocacy groups; community-based transportation services such as volunteer driver programs and Kootenay Carshare; and, municipal and regional government.

The catchment area for this project was expanded beyond the Initiative's original reach of Nelson and RDCK Areas E and F to add Kaslo and RDCK Electoral Areas D, G, H, I, J, and K, as well as the city of Trail. The reason for this was to ensure that the region represented matched that of the West Kootenay Transit System and the overlapping area of the Kootenay Boundary Hospital District.

The *Moving Together Project* examined transportation options as a whole, including municipal and regional transit, volunteer/non-profit community transportation programs, and private/for profit transportation services.

The Project Working Group identified specific transportation barriers and developed a series of recommendations, creative solutions that tackle the transportation service gaps and barriers that prevent many seniors from participating fully in Kootenay life. These recommendations were brought to a broader stakeholder gathering that included senior managers and planners from multiple sectors, along with seniors and the community service providers that advocate for their needs. At this gathering, stakeholders and seniors "workshopped" key recommendations and identified opportunities, strengths, and solutions for overcoming obstacles to implementation. The outcome of the Stakeholder Gathering was an Action Plan, a series of next steps that would guide the next phase of the project.

An application has been submitted to Vancouver Foundation for *Moving Together Phase III: Implementing an Action Plan for Kootenay Boundary Seniors*. Columbia Basin Trust has confirmed funding to support the project also. The project will operationalize the Action Plan from Phase I/II in two segments:

- A Transportation Animator position – a key recommendation of Phase I/II - to help seniors navigate the complex network of transportation services, raise community awareness of seniors' transportation challenges (including health professionals and community services providers), and promote service coordination among transportation providers
- Policy, Practice & Project Development will see the Working Group further develop and/or implement the remaining recommendations through participation in wider transportation Initiatives with partner groups such as West Kootenay Transit Committee, City of Nelson, and Interior Health. It will also include further development on new projects like the wheelchair accessible van for Kootenay Carshare.

Outcomes

The project produced a comprehensive report that included an Action Plan for Phase III, a clear strategy that details the most promising recommendations emerging from Phase I/II. They apply to a wide variety of services and sectors including public transit, Interior Health, volunteer driver programs, Kootenay Rideshare, and Kootenay Carshare. To a great degree they strengthen or build on existing resources, though a small number do propose new project development. Implementation includes

changes to policy and practice, as well as direct service - a Transportation Animator position that will assist seniors in navigating the complex network of transportation services, as well as providing public education and working with health and community service providers to improve transportation service coordination.

That transportation is a critical issue for the growing seniors' population in the region is evidenced by the media attention and broad community support with which the release of the Moving Together Report was met. The project has great momentum and has already resulted in service enhancements and increased collaboration; samples of these developments include:

- Project staff is working with Kootenay Carshare and Nelson & District Seniors Coordinating Society to add a wheelchair accessible van to the carshare fleet. A needs assessment survey is underway.
- In response to a Moving Together recommendation, Interior Health is reviewing their hospital appointment scheduling practices and has committed to developing a new system that meshes with transit schedules and better accommodates seniors who have transportation challenges and/or are travelling long distances. They have been encouraged to set aside a 2-4 hour block of appointments each week, reserved to fit the transit window.
- The Moving Together project continues to partner with Kootenay Rideshare to enhance the program's accessibility to seniors and promote it to seniors as a transportation alternative.
- Summit Psychology – whose services include the Ministry of Transportation DriveABLE program (cognitive assessments that determine a senior's ability to continue driving) – has come forward as a partner for Phase III, committing to work closely with the Transportation Animator to help rural seniors plan for "life after driving", a Moving Together recommendation and a finding of the Reaching Out Project.
- With a freeze on transit funding, BC Transit initially rejected the recommendation that "one Transit bus per day travel direct to Trail hospital (round trip) without requiring passengers to transfer buses in Castlegar, with a bathroom stop at Castlegar Recreation Complex; must connect with North Shore Bus/Kootenay Connector". However, Working Group member Gerry Tennant (Nelson Transit Lead Hand) worked with bus drivers and his counterparts at West Kootenay Transit and Trail Transit to develop a practical proposal to accomplish this with minimal cost. They are now meeting with BC Transit senior regional manager to discuss implementation.
- The project coordinator, along with Working Group member and RDCK Area E Director Ramona Faust, met with Nelson Mayor Deb Kozak to solicit support for Phase III. The Mayor offered the City of Nelson as formal project partner, guaranteeing continued Working Group participation of Council members and Nelson Transit, and committed to arrange a joint meeting with the Ministers of Health and Transportation.
- Media attention to the project is unprecedented – see attached documents. The public release of the project report, followed by the release of the Carshare survey, was covered by print and online news outlets, as well as all three local radio stations and Shaw TV's Go Kootenays program.

Challenges

The main challenge to proposing change that requires collaboration among stakeholders like Interior Health and BC Transit is the tendency to “silo” thinking. Interior Health already partners with and funds BC Transit through the West Kootenay Transit system – and acknowledges the clear link between social isolation and poor health outcomes. However, when it was first proposed that it might be their responsibility to help ensure that seniors have access to transportation for social and recreational activities (not just medical appointments), they insist they are “not in the transportation business”. Conversely, when BC Transit was initially asked to address HandyDART access issues for seniors with cognitive issues, they maintained that they are “not in the health care business”.

“It will take the dogged persistence of Project Coordinator and Working Group to see the public transit solutions, as well as all the other well thought out solutions, through to fruition. I feel the project has good potential for successfully improving seniors’ transportation options in the region. Systemic change is hard when working with big institutions – we know that – but we also believe that by working together locally, we can make positive change.”

*Gerry Tennant, Lead Hand
Nelson Transit, City of Nelson*

What we learned

Meaningful collaboration – building unity through shared purpose and vision – has been at the heart of the Age Friendly Community Initiative from the outset, and is a cornerstone of this pilot project. The Action Plan for Moving Together Phase III is based upon the collective deliberations of representatives of key sectors and dialogue has continued between phases of the project to ensure continuous engagement. While there are challenges to making change within large institutions like BC Transit and Interior Health, there remains a willingness to work together to improve seniors transportation services in the region. We have enlisted strong allies, including the Mayor of Nelson, and comprehensive media coverage has engaged broad community support. By engaging both senior management and local service providers we are able to continue to offer practical solutions developed by people inside the system. For example, a proposed transit route change initially met with resistance by BC Transit but local transit staff was able to further develop and reintroduce the recommendation with more favourable results.

Reaching Out: Identifying isolated rural seniors & determining their priority needs

In April 2014, Nelson CARES received a Teck Serv Applied Research Internship Grant from the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, supplemented by an additional grant from RDCK Area E. The grant allowed the Initiative to hire a Summer Student Research Intern to connect with area seniors and conduct research, guided by the following research questions:

- 1) Who/where are the seniors that are isolated (due to rural location, transportation, poor health, lack of family support nearby, etc.) in the identified region?
- 2) What are their most critical concerns?

The catchment area for this project was expanded beyond the Initiative's original reach of Nelson and RDCK Areas E and F to add Kaslo and RDCK Electoral Areas D and G. The purpose of this was to connect with the region's more isolated communities but confined to those served primarily by Nelson. The intern was supervised by a Project Team that included the AFC Initiative Coordinator and staff from partner organizations Nelson & District Seniors Coordinating Society and North Kootenay Lake Community Services (Kaslo). She was also supported by the Kootenay Seniors Service Provider Group and the AFC Advisory Committee. By collaborating with seniors' service agencies, the intern was able to connect seniors directly to appropriate programs to meet needs identified during the course of her research.

In addition to questionnaires and one-on-one interviews with rural seniors, the intern met with service providers and health professionals to gather information about the unique challenges of seniors living in remote communities. The resulting report identified key issues of concern for rural seniors, as well as strategies and recommendations for addressing those concerns.

Outcomes

This project provided the Age Friendly Community Initiative and collaborating organizations with a body of local research proving the need for more comprehensive and consistent outreach to isolated rural seniors. In addition to the project report, the Research Intern conducted a literature review, including evidence-based strategies and best practices for delivering services to rural seniors AND clearly linking seniors' isolation to poor health and social outcomes. This research can be used by community organizations to support project development and funding applications for outreach programs. Also, the local research identified transportation as a crucial issue for rural seniors in the region and the project report was used as a resource for the Moving Together project.

"The most significant finding to emerge from this research is that isolated rural seniors want to be reached, and want to talk about the challenges they are facing. It therefore follows that the most important recommendation presented by this project is for the work of reaching out to isolated rural seniors to continue."

***Dana Burgess, Research Intern
Reaching Out Project***

Challenges

Conducting research over the summer months (the internship ran from June through August) presented a significant challenge as virtually all seniors' branches and associations break over the summer and, being volunteer-led, do not have contact persons available during that time. Consequently, the intern was not able to interview as many seniors as projected.

What we learned

The project report included recommendations for best practices in reaching out to rural seniors, among them the importance of timing. Meanwhile, though the sample size was not statistically significant, the interviews were comprehensive and supported by a considerable number and diversity of service providers and so the data gathered is considered noteworthy and valuable. Another interesting finding of the project was that the priorities of rural seniors are consistent with that of all seniors; only the specific barriers vary. The priority issues in the report closely match those of the Age Friendly Community Initiative, as well as those presented in the Murphy report.

8) Fund Development

Throughout the Initiative, the coordinator developed and submitted numerous applications to alternate funding sources, enabling the launch of four distinct pilot projects (the original goal was one or two pilot projects). The only projects receiving significant resources from the Age Friendly Community Grants fund were the Kootenay Seniors Website and the Kootenay Seniors Service Coordination Project. Financial support for the other pilot projects came primarily from other funding sources. Nelson & District Seniors Coordinating Society also received a small grant from the Community Grants fund to build the capacity of their Home Help program, enabling them to reach more isolated rural seniors.

Grant applications submitted or supported:

- Union of BC Municipalities - *Age Friendly Community Initiative*
Submitted by AFC November 2012
\$20,000 for 2 years – unsuccessful
- New Horizons for Seniors – *Rural Seniors Outreach: Facilitating Senior Volunteerism & Leadership*
Submitted by AFC July 2013
\$24,540 for 1 year – unsuccessful
- AFC supports Nelson & District Women's Centre's July 2013 application to New Horizons for *Cross Cultural Community Threads* and *Rooted in Community* programs - successful

- Vancouver Foundation - *Moving Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Seniors' Transportation Barriers*
Submitted by AFC September 2013
\$14,212 for 1 year – successful
- AFC supports North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society October 2013 application to Union of BC Municipalities for *Kaslo Seniors Service and Access Coordination* - successful
- AFC partners with Nelson Community Response Network in November 2013 to facilitate the award of a \$500 grant from BC Community Response Network to the Eco-Society to enhance seniors' access to Kootenay Rideshare through website revisions
- Human Resources & Skills Development Canada – *Kootenay Lake Elder Links*
Submitted by AFC on behalf of Nelson & District Seniors Coordinating Society November 2013
\$96,000 for 3 years - unsuccessful
- AFC supports RDCK Area E March 2014 application to Healthy Communities Capacity Building Grants for Local Governments for *The Loop: Active Transportation Plan* - unsuccessful
- AFC supports North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society's March 2014 application to Vancouver Foundation for *Age-Friendly Kaslo*, in part to work collaboratively with AFC Moving Together project - successful
- Nelson & District Seniors Coordinating Society receives grant from CBT in April 2014 for their *Seniors CONNECT* project, which they conduct in partnership with AFC's Reaching Out project
- Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (Teck Serv Student Research Internship) - *Reaching Out: identifying isolated rural seniors and identifying their priority needs*
Submitted by AFC March 2014
\$10,002 for 4 months - successful
- Regional District of Central Kootenay, Area E for *Reaching Out: identifying isolated rural seniors and identifying their priority needs* (Student Research Internship)
Submitted by AFC March 2014
\$2000 match funding – successful
- AFC supports Nelson & District Women's Centre's July 2014 application to New Horizons for Seniors for their *Community Kitchen Project* – successful

- BC Community Gaming - *Age Friendly Community Initiative*
Submitted by AFC November 2014
\$33,954 for 1 year - unsuccessful
- Council to Prevent Elder Abuse - *Reaching Out to Reduce Elder Abuse*
Letter of Intent submitted by AFC January 2015
(in partnership with Nelson & District Seniors Coordinating Society)
\$45,000 for 1 year – unsuccessful
- In March 2015 the City of Nelson (Nelson Transit) applies to CBT to reallocate surplus Transit Marketing funds to Nelson CARES to support *Moving Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Seniors' Transportation Barriers*
\$5,000 - new funding arrangement later reached
- BC Community Response Network - *Moving Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Seniors' Transportation Barriers* (to promote Kootenay Rideshare as part of the Transportation Animator activities)
Submitted by AFC March 2015
\$500 match funding – successful
- Vancouver Foundation - *Moving Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Seniors' Transportation Barriers*
Submitted by AFC June 2015 (Project Overview/pre-application)
Subsequently invited to submit full proposal (sent July 7th)
\$126,593 for 3 years - decision pending
- Columbia Basin Trust - *Moving Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Seniors' Transportation Barriers*
Submitted by AFC June 2015
\$30,000 match funding - pending Vancouver Foundation approval
- BC Community Response Network and Nelson Community Response Network - *Kootenay Seniors Website* (website development and revisions)
Submitted June 2015
\$1000 (\$500 each) – successful
- Columbia Basin Trust for *Age Friendly Community Initiative, Phase II*
In development

9) Next Steps

As the Initiative neared the end of its three-year term, the Advisory Committee endorsed by consensus a framework for a second phase, affirming the need to continue the coordination role for the community, sustain the most promising pilot projects, and address emerging issues and service needs. In Phase II we will continue the “backbone function” essential to successful community collaboration, as indicated in the *Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact*. This will include maintaining an Initiative Coordinator position to support the Advisory Committee and oversee projects.

Of the five pillars of Collective Impact, only a *shared measurement system* is missing from the Initiative structure; this skills gap has also been identified by both the Advisory Committee and the Kootenay Seniors Service Provider Group. In Phase II we will address this need by facilitating the provision of program evaluation training for senior-serving agencies. We will also develop a shared evaluation framework for all Initiative projects, including collaborative projects with partner organizations.

Another identified gap is meaningful engagement in the work of the Initiative by Interior Health (IH). We have IH representation on the Advisory Committee through Kerri Wall, IH Community Health Facilitator for the Kootenays (based in Fernie) and have also made progress engaging IH administrators and health professionals in pilot project activities. However, there remains a significant communication gap and in Phase II we will develop a strategy to expand and strengthen these relationships. The goal is to have IH representation at the Advisory Committee table that includes both senior management and health services workers.

Communication will also be a key focus in Phase II. Advisory Committee members will be equipped with communication skills training and marketing tools so that they can be more effective Ambassadors for the Initiative and spokespersons on seniors issues relevant to their organization or areas of expertise. The goal is to support the Initiative Coordinator with a pool of spokespersons that can be called on to represent specific seniors’ concerns to the media, and also to have Advisory Committee members represent the Initiative at meetings and to the public.

A key activity in Phase II will be fund development, to support the Initiative, sustain the pilot projects and address emerging priorities. A Fund Development Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee has been formed and their responsibilities include:

- Draft a Terms of Reference for the committee
- Support the Initiative Coordinator with project development and grant applications
- Create a database of funders and funding opportunities
- Be a repository of ideas based on needs and priorities, well-researched and “ready to go” when funding opportunities arise

With a strong backbone structure now in place, Phase II will focus more on delivery of services and service coordination. The pilot projects will be sustained and continuously evaluated for outcomes. The Advisory Committee will also revisit initiative priorities on a scheduled basis, ensuring we are achieving desired outcomes and having positive community impact. Funding will be sought to sustain and grow pilot projects where outcomes warrant.

A grant application has been submitted to Vancouver Foundation, with financial support committed by Columbia Basin Trust, to continue work on the Moving Together project in September. The Kootenay Seniors website will be maintained as part of the AFC Initiative and funding for the Moving Together project will add a section on transportation, as well as support regular updates to the site. Funding will be sought to continue the Kootenay Seniors Service Coordination project beyond its end date of September 30th, 2015. We will also continue collaborating with partner organizations to seek funding to address outreach to isolated rural seniors. This priority will also be addressed through other project work, e.g. the Transportation Animator position included in the Moving Together project.

New projects and activities will also be undertaken in Phase II, including working towards an Age Friendly Community designation for Nelson and a basin-wide Seniors Summit. New projects are emerging from Moving Together endeavours, such as the partnership with Kootenay Carshare to add a wheelchair accessible van to their fleet and potentially supporting a fledgling bus charter company to become a social enterprise focussed on providing escorted transportation to medical appointments in Trail, Kelowna and Vancouver.

Excellent progress has been made in strengthening the community's capacity to meet the needs of the growing senior population in the region. With the groundwork laid in Phase I of the Initiative, a strong structure is now in place to support seniors' service planning, funding and coordination. Key stakeholders are working together collaboratively to improve service delivery and new services have been developed that are improving seniors' wellbeing. The Initiative and the pilot projects have great momentum going into Phase II and the Advisory Committee is deeply committed to carrying the work forward.

Year Three/Quarter Four Deliverables (attached):

- 1) Advisory Committee Minutes (April & June)
- 2) Advisory Committee Member List
- 3) Media Release: Moving Together Report
- 4) Media Response to Moving Together Project Report
- 5) Media Release: Wheelchair Accessible Van Project
- 6) PSA – Wheelchair Van Survey
- 7) Media Response to Wheelchair Accessible Project
- 8) Model of Community Collaboration Outline
- 9) Kootenay Seniors Quarterly Report - Narrative
- 10) Kootenay Seniors Quarterly Report – Outcomes
- 11) AFC Financial Report Y3/Q4/Final, June 30th, 2015
- 12) Age Friendly Community Initiative Year3/Quarter 4 (Final) Report