

Cornerstone

ELDERCARE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

EVERY SENIOR DESERVES THE CHANCE TO AGE WITH DIGNITY

Marigolds, pansies, impatiens – all thanks to you!

“This is so much more fun than sitting inside watching TV,”
says Diane, pictured at right.

On a sunny afternoon in early May, Diane and fellow residents at the Priory care home took part in the horticulture therapy program, made possible thanks to Eldercare donors like you.

Diane and her friends chatted and chuckled as they planted marigolds, pansies, impatiens, and more. The recreation therapists facilitating the session playfully engaged with each resident, many of whom have dementia, to encourage their participation and bring a little joy and laughter to their day.



“This fantastic program has already made such a positive impact in the lives of the residents we serve,” says Gabrielle Kropf, Recreation Therapist at the Priory care home. “Thank you to Eldercare for funding the horticulture therapy program again this year.”

Horticulture therapy in long-term care uses plants and gardening activities to improve the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of residents. It is known to be particularly beneficial for individuals with dementia. Connecting with nature through gentle gardening activities can have a profoundly calming effect, fostering a sense of peace and relaxation.

Thank you! Your gifts to Eldercare help us enhance quality of life to local seniors. Donations support residents in long-term care through enriching programs like this one.



Benefits of horticulture therapy:

- Enhances mobility and agility
- Reduces stress, anxiety and agitation
- Improves mood and cognitive function
- Provides a sense of purpose and achievement
- Builds and strengthens social connections

“When I’m on the bike I don’t feel any pain”

Thanks to generous donors, Eldercare recently purchased eight adaptive bikes for several local long-term care facilities. The Med Up bike is designed for people with physical limitations and mobility issues, including wheelchair users. They have four training modes (passive, assisted, active and isokinetic), can identify and release spasms for safe training, and support symmetry training for left and right limbs.



“I’ve liked riding bikes since I was a kid with a paper route growing up in Sooke,” says Rob Eddy, a wheelchair-bound resident at the Priory care home, at left. A big fan of the 1970s rock band Creedence Clearwater Revival, Rob pedals the Med Up bike for 30 minutes per session, all while enjoying the band’s music videos on the big screen in front of him. As he cycles, Rob regales passersby with stories of seeing the band live in concert and sings along to the classics.

The Med Up bike offers enjoyment and relief for Rob. “I can’t walk but I really like riding the bike. When I’m on the bike I don’t feel any pain.”

First wound VAC recipient gets a new lease on life

A new wound VAC (vacuum-assisted closure) funded by Eldercare will make it easier for Saanich residents to transition home from hospital. Wound VAC therapy offers several benefits for wound healing, including reduced swelling, inflammation, and infection risk, as well as improved blood flow and tissue regeneration. It can also decrease the frequency of dressing changes and may shorten hospital stays.

Over the years, Saanich Community Health Services has seen an increasing demand for wound VACs but the cost of renting a unit became prohibitive. Manager Nic Stankov approached Eldercare about purchasing a lightweight portable unit for community health clients.

“Helping more Vancouver Islanders to age safely in place is a key priority for Eldercare,” says Executive Director Tom Arnold, “And given our long history of strategic partnerships with Island Health, projects like this just make sense.” Nic agrees: “Our missions are so similar – we both want to support our senior population to stay healthy and remain independent at home. It’s been great to team up.”

Saanich resident Debra Morin is the first recipient of the Eldercare-funded wound VAC. She is recovering from a parastomal hernia that caused a serious infection. Says Debra: **“I’m very grateful to Eldercare for donating the wound VAC. It’s been a lifesaver.”**



Public education in action: Eldercare co-hosts expert panel



There was a full house at Eldercare's recent panel discussion on **Healthy Aging with Cancer** hosted in partnership **UBC's School of Nursing** and **BC Cancer**. More than 60 people turned up to hear from speakers who shared their research and recommendations on cancer prevention and maintaining wellbeing as you age and during cancer treatment. Dr. Enrique Soto Pérez de Celis, a globally recognized geriatric oncologist visiting from the University of Colorado Cancer Center, delivered a powerful closing session on cancer survivorship and resilience.

Pictured from left to right: *Bonnie Leung*, MN-NP(F), Panelist; *Dr. Enrique Soto Pérez de Celis* MD, PhD, FASCO, Panelist; *Dr. Caroline Mariano*, Panelist; *Dr. Kristen Haase*, RN, PhD, Panel Chair; *Mary Ellen Purkis*, Eldercare Board; *Tom Arnold*, Eldercare Executive Director; *Jeanette Funke-Furber*, Eldercare Board; *Dale Armstrong*, Eldercare Board President.

Did you know? Eldercare has a long-standing commitment to education and research. We proudly support **free workshops year-round** at the **Yakimovich Wellness Centre**, offering relevant, reliable, and reputable public education sessions to help you navigate and enrich your aging journey. Learn more at gvef.org/events

Expanding support for home-bound, low-income seniors

Every year, 1 in 3 seniors aged 65+ are likely to fall at least once. For many, these falls can have serious consequences: fractured hips, hospitalizations, and loss of independence.

Your donations help us tackle this critical issue through the **SAFE Lifeline Program**, providing home medical alarm systems to low-income seniors living independently with a high risk of falls or hospitalization.

A recent conversation with Kelly Mitchell, a community social worker who works with SAFE clients, sparked an idea to support even more Island seniors. Kelly suggested expanding SAFE to include foot care from specialized nurses for home-bound, low-income seniors. As Kelly says: **"Having your feet in optimal health can prevent falls and preserve mobility and independence. It is foundational to healthy aging."**

Now, thanks to Kelly – and support from people like you – we're excited to be launching our **SAFE Foot Care Pilot Program**. More details to come over the next year!

Every Gift Makes a Difference



Enclosed is my cheque payable to **Eldercare Foundation**

- ☐ I would like to make a single gift of: _____
- ☐ I would like to make a monthly gift of: _____
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CSU2025

Restoring happy memories with donor-funded iPads



Donations to Eldercare are helping to purchase iPads for local long-term care homes, sparking joy for residents. Jane (pictured here) is 92. She has dementia and her short-term memory is quite impaired. But a simple new tool – an iPad – helps unlock deep-rooted memories. Here she is singing along to old Scottish tunes from her childhood.

Your gift can help restore happy memories, social connection, and quality of life to local seniors like Jane.

Please give today.

Paying Tribute to Someone Special

The individuals listed below have been remembered by friends and loved ones with a donation to Eldercare Foundation, made in memory or in honour, between March 14 and May 29, 2025. Eldercare is grateful to receive such meaningful gifts that, in paying tribute to someone special, help enhance care and quality of life for other seniors in need.

In Memory: Elizabeth Mill, Laura Bergersen, Peter Douglas Frazier, and Vera Beischer

