

Cornerstone

ELDERCARE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

EVERY SENIOR DESERVES THE CHANCE TO AGE WITH DIGNITY

From Shortfall to Crisis: BC Seniors Advocate's Report

According to the most recent report from the Office of the Seniors Advocate, the waitlist in BC for long-term care (LTC) beds has grown by more than 5,000 people over the past 10 years.

Eldercare has seen the challenges related to this change up close: the lack of support for at-home seniors, the challenges in other parts of the health care system that this creates by diverting seniors into emergency departments, and the high cost of going into private care while awaiting a LTC bed, resulting in seniors arriving in long-term care with no savings.



"Getting enough long-term care beds built for everyone who needs one will be a big challenge," says Tom Arnold. It currently costs approximately \$1M per bed to build a new LTC site, and, according to the Seniors Advocate Report, annual operational costs are roughly \$100,000 per bed. Arnold says that while those numbers seem daunting, philanthropy can be part of the solution.

"As an Island community, we are incredibly generous," he says. "More than \$25M is given each year to support Island hospitals and acute care. Until the last year or two, the equivalent total for public long-term care sites, adult day programs, and community bathing programs has only been a few hundred thousand per year. Thanks to the generosity of Eldercare donors, that number is now closer to \$2M per year."



"With your continued support, we hope to find ways to support the three planned builds in Campbell River, Nanaimo/Lantzville, and Colwood, and more support may help catalyze new projects in places like Oak Bay."

A panel discussion hosted by Action Oak Bay in September included (from left to right) Oak Bay Mayor, Kevin Murdoch, Chair of the Capital Regional Hospital District; Tom Arnold, Eldercare's Executive Director; Trudi Brown, KC, Panel Facilitator

Enriching quality of life via therapeutic virtual reality experiences



“There truly is something for everyone, from listening to live music in an Irish pub to watching a dog play fetch, to a front-row seat at a Frank Sinatra concert!”

Amanda Leddy, Lead, Research and Knowledge Translation in Long Term Care, Island Health

Eldercare is partnering with Island Health to fund a new pilot program testing promising virtual reality (VR) technology in five long-term care homes in the North, Centre and South. VR is a simulated 3D environment that allows users to explore, interact, and experience different surroundings.

Staff training delivered by the clinical team from CaregiVR, a company that originated from the research lab at the University Health Network in Toronto, took place in September. “At the training sessions, we learned that VR works best when tailored to meet each resident’s interests and needs,” says Amanda Leddy, a long-term care (LTC) research and knowledge translation lead at Island Health.

“We are grateful that so many activities and recreation staff, as well as allied health, nursing, and HCAs, took the time to attend the workshops and learn all the ways that virtual reality can support meaningful recreation,” says Amanda. “We were also pleasantly surprised to learn that older adults are generally not more likely to become motion-sick from VR, because they process visual input differently than younger people. We learned several approaches to minimize dizziness for more sensitive individuals.

“We’re very excited to partner with CaregiVR to bring this evidence-based program to long-term care, thanks to the generous support of Eldercare donors.”

VR has been shown to:

- Elevate mood and enrich quality of life through engaging therapeutic virtual experiences.
- Combat loneliness and isolation through moments that strengthen bonds.
- Empower care teams with tools that support their work.



Local seniors find joy and connection through gardening and baking

Over the summer months, many local long-term care residents and Adult Day Program participants experienced the joy of gardening thanks to Eldercare-funded raised garden beds, plants and seeds. For many of these seniors, the gardens provide a peaceful and fulfilling way to connect with nature and with one another.

At the Summit Adult Day Program, participants planted tomatoes, basil and other herbs, tending to them during their regular weekly visits.

Once the tomatoes ripened, and the herbs were fragrant, the group celebrated by crafting edible art with their harvest. “We made the tastiest, decorative focaccia bread,” says Activity Aide, Claudia Busteen. “It was so fun, creative, and it filled the centre with incredible aromas and so much laughter.”

Thank you to Eldercare donors for making this experience possible. Your donations provide more than just garden beds—they deliver purpose, pride, and joy to local seniors.



“I am very grateful, dear. Now I don’t need to worry”



The art of receiving can be difficult. “We give so much in many areas of our lives, so—for some—receiving can feel vulnerable or uncomfortable,” says Stephanie Stanton, a social worker at Brentwood House long-term care home.

One of the residents Stephanie cares for, Myrna, often declines support, saying, “I have everything I need, dear.” “She is usually reluctant when help is offered and hesitant to receive,” Stephanie explains.

Last month, Myrna needed some basic hygiene items such as toothpaste, deodorant, and moisturizer. Without access to funds and with no family to turn to, Myrna faced barriers to essential support. That’s when Stephanie reached out to **Eldercare’s Resident-in-Need Fund** for assistance.

When the items arrived from Eldercare, Myrna was surprised, her eyes misty, Stephanie recalls. “It took her a while to realize, receive, and accept that these items were a gift for her. She kept repeating, ‘I am very grateful, dear. Now I don’t need to worry.’”

Her favorite part was receiving Mars bars—the same candy her late son used to bring her. “Of course, these chocolates aren’t essentials, but they’re a special treat that brought such a smile to her face! Thank you, Eldercare.”

Every Gift Makes a Difference



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CFA2025

"Not all our programs and enhancements can be accommodated by our budget, which is a little black and white.

Eldercare gives us added colour. Knowing we have their support is like watching a painting come to life!"

Amie Aniban, Rehabilitation Assistant in long-term care



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 May 30 and September 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: Thomas Hayes, Gail M. MacDonald, Elizabeth Mill, Jagjit Trana

In Honour: Sandra Pomerantz



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