



Family Caregiver Education and Support Program (Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society)

PROGRAM PROFILE: OVERVIEW

June 2017

Type of Program	Health and wellness
Organization	Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society
Community Served	Burnaby
Program Goal	Provide education and emotional support to caregivers
Services Provided	Caregiver support group, 6-week caregiver education program, One-on-one phone support, Education sessions/presentations, Annual Fair, Caregiver resource handbook
Target Population	Senior caregivers (but also included baby boomers)
Staffing	Program Coordinator, Support from BSOSS staff
Program Strengths	Comprehensive caregiver program, Outreached to non-English speaking seniors, Provided supports for caregivers to attend the program, Created Caregivers Resource Handbook

Program Description

The *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* was a caregiver program initiated in 2007 by the [Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society \(BSOSS\)](#) and run by a professional gerontologist with support from BSOSS staff. The program focused on providing emotional support and education to caregivers who were seniors themselves, as well as to baby boomer caregivers (who were caring for their elderly loved ones).

The main goals of the program were:

1. To provide caregivers and caregiver-serving community organizations with information and resources.
2. To assist caregivers in coping with their caregiving responsibilities.
3. To provide one-on-one and group support to caregivers.

This profile primarily focuses on the program that ran between 2009-2015, before the loss of United Way funding led to the end of several aspects of the program.

Between 2009 and 2015, the *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* had funding for a part-time Coordinator to run the program for 15 hours/week. The program offered several different activities to support caregivers including:

- **Educations sessions/presentations** on a variety of topics related to caregivers delivered to the community (to English and non-English speaking communities), non-profit organizations and businesses.
- **Bi-monthly caregiver support group.**
- **A six-week education program for caregivers** offered 3-4 times per year.
- **One-on-one phone support.**
- **Annual Information Fair**, with five speakers and 20+ exhibitors.

- **Production of a caregiver resource handbook**, the *United Way of the Lower Mainland's Family & Friend Caregivers Information and Resource Handbook*, which began due to the high demand for the information from the presentations. In its first edition it was only 24 pages but eventually grew to over 100 pages.

The program was initially funded through a New Horizons grant, with some support from New Westminster Credit Union. In 2009, the United Way of the Lower Mainland began providing funding for family caregiver programs in the Lower Mainland, and with the addition of this \$40,000 - \$50,000 in annual funding, the program was able to expand its activities.

Unfortunately, due to declining donations, in 2015, the United Way had to cut the program's funding. While the official *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* ended due to these funding cuts, BSOSS was able to continue with some of the components of the program. A BSOSS staff member continued to run the support group and organize the Annual Information Fair. The program struggled for a while after some staff turnover, but BSOSS recently secured a Community Gaming Grant that has allowed them to hire a new part-time Coordinator. BSOSS currently runs three caregiver support groups, offers an Annual Information Fair and has plans to offer a newsletter and educational talks in the future.

Impact

The *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* provided caregivers with a place where they could socialize and receive support. The support group was an important social event for many of the caregivers who attended (evidenced by the fact many dressed up to attend the group). Through the support group, educational program and various educational activities, the program provided caregivers with a wealth of information and resources. The program served 480 unique clients each year including 247 seniors and 244 baby boomers. More than 160 caregivers attended the Annual Fair in 2015. Evaluations of the six-week education program were conducted after each session, and an average of 80% of participants rated the sessions as very good or excellent.

Strengths and Challenges

The *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* made use of several partnerships with businesses, health care providers, ethno-cultural organizations, community groups and other caregiver programs to enhance their program and to expand the reach of their services. Partnerships with businesses are often overlooked in the community sector, and the program was able to obtain private funding for three years for the rental of the space for their Annual Fair. The program also formed a partnership with Vancity to use their space, outreach to their members, and conduct a presentation for their staff. The United Way formed a Community of Practice for the caregiver programs they funded, which provided opportunities for the programs to interact, share ideas and learn from one another.

The *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* ensured they were outreaching to, and serving the needs of, non-English speaking seniors, who are often overlooked when providing caregiving support. The program worked with local ethno-cultural organizations (e.g., MOSAIC, SUCCESS and religious organizations) to deliver presentations to non-English speaking caregivers using interpreters. Some of their information (e.g., pamphlets) were translated into other languages and the program had exhibits at ethno-cultural fairs, such as the interCultural Online Health Network (iCON) Fair.

The program was attentive to the challenges facing caregivers in attending programming. To address these challenges, they worked with Fraser Health Authority to arrange home support workers to provide care, to enable the caregiver to attend the six-week education program (this was paid for out of the *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* budget). The program increased accessibility by providing transportation subsidies to caregivers who required help getting to the program.

One of the legacies of the Burnaby *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* is the [United Way of the Lower Mainland's Family & Friend Caregivers Information and Resource Handbook](#), which was supported by the United Way. The 2016 handbook has grown to 120 pages with 10,000 copies in print. The *Handbook* is very popular among healthcare providers including hospitals, physicians' offices and home and community care, and as a result the Provincial Division of Family Practice has offered to pay for copies to be printed and distributed in physicians' offices.

The main challenge for the *Family Caregiver Education and Support Program* was securing new funding after the United Way funding was discontinued in 2015. While BSOSS has been able to continue some of the components of the program, they are not currently able to provide many of the services offered before 2015, such as the caregiver education program and education outreach to businesses and different ethno-cultural communities.