



Share and Care (Seniors Come Share Society, Surrey Food Bank, City of Surrey)

<http://www.comeshare.ca/>

PROGRAM PROFILE: OVERVIEW

June 2017

Type of Program	Health and Wellness
Organization	Seniors Come Share Society, Surrey Food Bank, & City of Surrey
Community Served	Surrey
Program Goal	Provides isolated seniors living in North Surrey using the Food Bank with a warm and welcoming environment and provides them with the opportunity to participate in activities and socialize with other seniors
Services Provided	Warm space, Socializing opportunities through special events by celebrating diversity and culture, Programming (e.g., activities, guest speakers, etc.), Refreshments
Target Population	Isolated seniors living in North Surrey
Staffing	1 staff member and 3 volunteers (Seniors Come Share Society)
Program Strengths	Low-barrier program that is accessible to diverse range of low-income seniors, Supported by strong partnerships, Program empowers participants and connects them with other community resources

Program Description

Seniors Come Share Society's Share and Care program provides socializing opportunities for seniors living in the North Surrey area. The goal is to provide a warm and welcoming environment for seniors to interact with other seniors to help fill the void of isolation and loneliness. The program offers activities (e.g., guest presentations, classes, health and wellness activities, etc.), refreshments and opportunities for socialization. It also focuses on celebrating diversity through culture, food and music. The target participants for the program are seniors from the North Surrey area who struggle with cultural, social and financial barriers.

The program is run in partnership with the Surrey Food Bank and the City of Surrey. The City provides the space for the program (lobby and kitchen), the Food Bank provides the food and refreshments, and the Seniors Come Share Society provides the programming.

The program operates twice a month and is facilitated by staff and volunteers from Seniors Come Share Society. All volunteers receive training, and some are able to provide translation for participants who do not speak English. There also are some practicum students from local universities and colleges who assist with the running of the program.

Though not a component of the Share and Care program, in the afternoon the seniors are able to access the Food Bank where a staff member and volunteers assist them during the senior specific timeslot. The Food Bank tries to provide food that will meet the special nutritional needs of seniors, including providing food with the highest nutritional value, providing smaller quantities of food, and including special options such as Boost nutritional drinks.

Impact

Approximately 30-40 seniors attend each session of Share and Care at the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre. The program provides seniors with opportunities to meet new people, socialize, and feel like they are a part of the community. The City of Surrey also contributes to the program by offering presentations on health promotion and prevention, which have proven to be valuable for the seniors who attend. For example, a hearing aid company came to one of the sessions to offer free hearing tests, and discovered that one of the participants was almost deaf. The program staff were then able to assist the senior to apply for a subsidized hearing aid. Through participation, seniors connect with community resources and are encouraged to participate in other activities at the Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre. The program attempts to create a sense of empowerment for the participating seniors by providing them with opportunities to contribute (e.g., opportunities to share their skills) and take ownership of the program.

Strengths and Challenges

Share and Care provides seniors with a low-barrier opportunity to receive social support and participate in a social program. The Share and Care program works because of the three-way partnership between the Seniors Come Share Society, Surrey Food Bank, and City of Surrey. This partnership provides an opportunity to leverage available resources and share the costs of the program. Share and Care also utilizes partnerships with other community organizations and service providers to bring in guest speakers and conduct activities during their program sessions.

The Seniors Come Share Society has formed partnerships with other organizations/municipal facilities to start offering the program at additional locations in Surrey in the near future including Fraser Heights Community Centre, Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub Society, Guildford Recreation Centre, and Bridgeview Community Centre. Seniors Come Share Society has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the City of Surrey about the use of space that will assist in facilitating the expansion of their programs to multiple sites across the city (for

“Len has been struggling with his own personal and professional life for many years. He is currently 78 years old and shares an apartment with his older sister. Len was raised in the North Surrey area and lived there for most of his life, particularly in the Whalley neighborhood. He suffers from mental health, mainly depression and anxiety. He never had a solid profession where he worked a regular job, making decent income, rather he has been living on low income trying to make ends meet for most of his adult life...”

Len has been attending Share and Care for the last six months and has become actively involved in helping with the registration, with set up and clean up and with interacting with others. He is less shy and is self-motivated. Len has defined his role and place in the program, acting as the main organizer in signing the participation list...In the Share and Care program, Len has been able to pursue his passion by being that positive role model for other seniors. He feels loved by everyone, which has increased his self-confidence and, most of all, for the first time in his life, he does not feel judged or discriminated against. Share and Care provides a place where Len feels he belongs. He feels accepted and valued as his input and opinion has always been appreciated. Due to his tumultuous life, Len is thankful for the Share and Care program about which he has said, 'Finally, I have found a purpose for myself in life, thanks to Share and Care.’”

-Story shared in the Seniors Come Share Society
Newsletter of a Share and Care Participant

more information please see the [Partnerships and Memorandums of Understanding \(MOU\): City of Surrey Senior Services Sector Profile](#)). This will help make the program accessible to seniors living in other areas of Surrey. While Share and Care is designed as a low-barrier program, one of the barriers for some seniors is being able to access transportation to get to the program. Seniors Come Share Society is hoping to form a new partnership to provide this needed transportation.

The Seniors Come Share Society relies on ongoing grants, donations and sponsors for funding of all its programs. Because this funding is dispersed across all of the Society's programs, Share and Care experiences variations in available funding from year-to-year. The staff member who is responsible for Share and Care is also in charge of a number of other programs run by the Society, meaning resources are stretched thin. Share and Care would be able to significantly expand the offerings and availability of the program if they had funding to hire a dedicated coordinator. Similarly, Surrey Food Bank says they need more staffing hours to dedicate to seniors' programs, so they could provide a meal program and/or community kitchen.

Volunteers are essential to running Share and Care and sometimes the program faces challenges with volunteer availability and stability.

Diversity and inclusiveness are a key part of the Share and Care program philosophy, and they work hard to make the program as accessible as possible to low-income seniors by taking a low-barrier approach. In recognition of the diversity of Surrey, Share and Care uses their translators to help with ongoing active outreach to non-English speaking communities. They also have some multilingual program volunteers who are able to connect with participants who do not speak English. Seniors are encouraged to take an active role in the program, which supports their empowerment, an important part of the program philosophy.