

SPECIAL
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The Bulletin

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Valued Elder Recognition Award 2014

The Valued Elder Recognition Award (VERA) was developed by a seniors group dedicated to helping the Centre on Aging share its research with, and appreciation of, older adults. Led by Doreen Burrows, the first president of the Friends of the Centre on Aging and one of the first social workers in Victoria to work specifically with older adults, this group worked from a belief that older adults truly are national treasures. VERA was developed in 1999, the International Year of Older Persons, and first presented in 2000.

This year's nominees were: Americk Bhandar, William Buckle, Jean E. McKenzie, and Narindra Sehmi.

Americk Bhandar worked as a cook for 40 years during which she volunteered with Women in Need for 10 years before retiring. Since then she has been volunteering as a cook at the Burnside Community Centre where she also organizes the Thanksgiving and Christmas community dinners. In addition to donating her time to cooking and organizing events at Burnside Gorge, she happily donates items she notices are missing from the kitchen—whether it's supplies or groceries she provides it, just like she donates to the Christmas Hamper Program each year. Her compassionate nature makes her welcome wherever she goes.

William Buckle's volunteering in the arts started with his teaching career when he chaired the Greater Victoria Schools Drama Festival Committee. In 1989 he and two colleagues helped found the Friends of Music Society. For those of you who aren't familiar with this group they are a not-for-profit organization using music partnerships for rehabilitation and socialization. The goal is to provide a safe, fun and supportive place to enjoy music and raise awareness and reduce stigma associated with mental illness.

Whether with the Friends, the BC Schizophrenia Society, Kiwanis or other community ties (and there are many) Bill is seen as caring, compassionate and passionate about people's wellbeing. He is a fervent champion of the need to enrich the lives of individuals living with serious mental illness.



2014 VERA nominees: Bill Buckle, Jean McKenzie, Nindi Sehmi and Americk Bhandar

Jean McKenzie's integrity is the start of the list of descriptors given to her by the Volunteer Victoria team and her volunteer colleagues. The list is then rounded out with patient, dedicated, kind, warm, comforting, flexible, energetic, cheerful, and exceptional.

Dubbed the historic memory of Volunteer Victoria – Jean is always willing to share her extensive knowledge with newer team members as she helps them understand their new role and hers. Jean's responsibilities as the Accounting and Payroll Department as well as keeping the scheduling records show her as sharp minded with a straightforward approach. Jean has a kind heart that is appreciated by all her co-workers.

Narindra Sehmi began volunteering in the Capital Regional District in the 1970s and has had a profound effect on the development of multiculturalism in Victoria. Nindi is a natural at multi-tasking and he has always juggled numerous volunteer efforts. He is always looking for ways to tie the community surrounding him into a better and stronger inclusive society.

Read more about Nindi, this year's VERA recipient, on page 3.

David Chuenyan Lai



Dr. David Chuenyan Lai

David Lai was recently appointed for a one year term to the Legacy Initiatives Advisory Council (LIAC). LIAC will provide the provincial government with advice to ensure the successful implementation of the legacy projects resulting from the Chinese Historical Wrongs Consultation Final Report. Dr. Lai currently sits on the Multicultural Advisory Council of BC.

Dr. Lai was also honoured at the national level in 2014. The Asian Business

Network Association (ABNA) presents the annual Chinese Canadian Legend award. In 2014 David was one of six individuals named as legends. ABNA has been awarding legends for 15 years. This year's theme was "Phoenix Reborn, the legacy goes on". As Alexandra Ngan, co-chair of the organizing committee states "Chinese Canadian legends are those who emerge from adversities with renewed strengths and visions." An apt de-

scription for David Lai. Dr. Lai came to Canada in 1967 and began his 35-year teaching career in the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria a year later.

Upon his retirement in 2003, David worked with the Development Office at UVic and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association to establish the Centre on Aging's first endowed scholarship. The David Chuenyan Lai Scholarship has been awarded annually since 2006.

Stuart

MacDonald's

research focuses

on cognition —

thought, reason

and memory — as

we age.

Stuart MacDonald

Stuart MacDonald has been elected for a 7-year term with the Royal Society of Canada's newly formed College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists. Members of the college, who must be within 15 years of receiving their PhDs or equivalent when appointed, are considered "the emerging generation of intellectual leadership in Canada."

Dr. MacDonald's research focuses on cognition—thought, reason and memory—as we age, looking for early indicators for decline and diseases such as Alzheimer's. He and his team have shown that the first signs of cognitive decline can be detected up to 10 years in advance of dementia diagnosis. "Living an engaged lifestyle helps us maximize 'healthspan' and helps us avoid multiple diseases of aging, including vascular diseases which negatively influence cognitive function," he says.

Being part of the first cohort in the new college is very gratifying, says MacDonald. "I'm particularly excited by the opportunity to liaise regularly with experts from across Canada, with the promise of influencing policy and facilitating successful aging for Canadians."

modified source: UVic media release

Debra Sheets



Dr. Debra Sheets

At its recent 2014 conference, Transforming Health, Driving Policy, in Washington, DC, the American Academy of Nursing selected 168 nurse leaders for induction as fellows. The impressive roster included

our own Dr. Debra Sheets. Selection criteria included evidence of significant contributions to nursing and health care, and sponsorship by two current Academy fellows. Applicants were reviewed by a panel comprised of elected and appointed fellows, and selec-

tion was based, in part, on the extent to which the nominee's nursing career has influenced health policies and the health and wellbeing of all.

The Academy fellows, with the addition of this newest class, represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 24 countries, including Canada.

Valued Elder Recognition Award (VERA) Recipient



Centre director, Scott Hofer and 2014 VERA recipient Nindi Sehmi

Nindi is an architect who continues to use his skills in his volunteer life to provide well thought

out spaces and improved organization for his volunteer agencies. And the list of organizations is impressive, especially when you consider that while he feels his time with many of the agencies was time limited, they consider him a continuing, valued volunteer.

He is an understated man with an immense capacity to give to our community. His belief that tying his various activities and groups together makes our

community better and stronger can easily be seen.

While he is more than happy to deal with details of social events he is also seen as a big picture thinker. In fact, he was instrumental in creating the India Canada Cultural Association's constitution and continues to support its development at every AGM.

Nindi's role in developing Victoria's multicultural identity, especially as it relates to new

immigrants, is inspiring and truly worthy of note.

"I was just really drawn to the idea of the environment and how much it impacts our mental, emotional and physical well-being."

Maria Przydatek

You may have heard of care facilities designed specifically for people with dementia; they have features such as circular walkways, colour-coded areas that help people recognize where they are, or simple signs hung at eye level. But what if we started taking the needs of people with dementia into consideration when we designed a new park or a city street? These were questions Maria Przydatek explored as part of her masters the-

sis on dementia-friendly urban planning. Through a review of existing policies, conversations with urban planners on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, and a review of some core elements of dementia-friendly design, Przydatek's master's research helped her draw up recommendations municipalities should consider when it comes to making public places more accessible for people with dementia.

"I think that making modifications to the built environment offers a broader range of support, rather than just individualized programs targeting a particular lifestyle choice or behaviour," she says of the importance of applying this work in public spaces. "They can offer benefits for a lot of other people with different impairments."

Source: *The Ring*

Kate Roland

Dr. Kaitlyn Roland is working with Dr. Neena Chappell on her post doctoral studies. Kate began this work in 2012 and will continue until 2016. She has had funding from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (2013-2014) and currently has funding from the Michael Smith Foundation of Health Research (2013-2016).

She has just received the Douglas Homes Quality of Life Award from the Gerontological Society of America. The Douglas Holmes Award, sponsored by the Research in Quality of Care (RESQCARE) Interest Group, honors Dr. Douglas Holmes, a noted psychologist who dedicated his life's work to

improving social services for the elderly. The award encourages important and promising research in improving long-term care to the elderly aging in place, and those in assisted living centers and nursing homes.



Dr. Kate Roland

UVic Campus Open House

The Centre on Aging on the UVic campus hosted its annual open house on December 4, 2014. Volunteers, community partners and government officials along with their families joined the centre staff, student and research affiliates to celebrate the season. Poster presentations of current research were displayed and discussed while everyone enjoyed the Bavarian themed refreshments.



Masterminds 2015

Save Wednesday evenings in April 2015 for the Masterminds Lecture Series. See the calendar of events in the next Bulletin, February 2015.

Or check the Masterminds website: <http://www.uvic.ca/masterminds/>

Ladner Open House

The Centre on Aging, Ladner, has consolidated their three offices into one location. The beautiful heritage building is located at 4907 Chisholm Street. The open house allowed the public, volunteers, community partners, government officials and staff to share the new look and plans for the office. The self management program continues to expand with new and innovative ways of reaching more British Columbians. For more information about the self management programs check the [website](#).



Opening ceremonies speakers (L to R): Tsawwassen First Nation Elder Ruth Adams, MLA Vicki Huntington, Dr. Pargat Bhurji, Self-Management BC Program Director Dr. Patrick McGowan, UVIC Centre on Aging Director Dr. Scott Hofer.



Mayor Lois Jackson with Patrick McGowan and Scott Hofer.



Members of public viewing research posters.



Volunteer leaders cutting the ribbon.

IDEA
FEST | 2015

Save the dates: March 2—7, 2015

See the calendar of events in the next Bulletin, February 2015.

Or check the IdeaFest website: www.uvic.ca/ideafest



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We invite your submissions, comments and contributions. Forward all correspondence to the editor, Lois Holizki.



All the best of the season

Happy holidays to everyone from the centre director, Scott Hofer and the administrative staff:

Arlene Senft

Lara Pearson (on educational leave)

Irene Lockwood

Leah Potter

Lois Holizki

Vincenza Gruppuso



Happy New Year! May 2015 bring you joy.