



## Welcome!



Kara Udell  
Executive Director

*Welcome to the Spring Edition of **The Willow Tree**, Oak Bay Volunteer Services' healthy living and healthy aging newsletter.*

*Here, you will find articles and resources about living well in this incredible community we call home. **The Willow Tree** is published twice a year and includes updates on our many services and programs, events in the community, and tips and resources we've found helpful. Enjoy!*

## What's New at OBVS

This is a year of refresh and renewal for us at Oak Bay Volunteer Services. This Spring, we have been working hard on our new services that help clients access arts and culture, home organization, and active living. As well, we are excited to be launching a new Companion Pets program (more on last page) this year!

In January, we welcomed a new Executive Director, Kara, a dynamic leader with a long history as a non-profit leader. Kara's leadership philosophy is rooted in community, passion, and empowerment. Her career began in long-term care support near her hometown in Alberta. Since then, Kara has applied her Counselling and Addictions background and Master of Arts in Leadership to cultivate community, inspire passion-based purpose, and advocate for positive systemic change. Outside of work, she can be found wandering barefoot on local trails, reading a good book, or playing board games with loved ones. We are thrilled to have Kara's capable guidance moving us forward!

We have also been busy planning for some fun summer events this year. We encourage you to come out, enjoy, and say hi! Whether at the Oak Bay Tea Party, the Night Markets, or a special HarbourCats baseball game in July, we would love to see you.

Read on for more updates and resources to support healthy living in Oak Bay!

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### FOOD OPTIONS

#### Better Meals

1 (604) 299-1877

Low-cost meals made in Burnaby and delivered to your door

#### Chef on the Run

2020 Oak Bay Ave

(250) 595-3151

Premade meals for pickup or delivery

#### The Soup Kitchen

740 View St

Mon-Fri, 8:00-10:00 am

Free bagged lunch

### TRANSPORTATION

#### HandyDART

(250) 727-7811

Accessible transit service for people with disabilities

#### Cancer Driveline Society

(778) 265-0906

Free rides to cancer care appointments

#### Driving Miss Daisy

(250) 727-7811

Paid service for drives, shopping & other support

## Being Active Pays Off



Walk, wheel, socialize, see a play — being active may go farther than you think! Research has found that regular physical and social activity is important for people of all ages. Physical exercise can improve our health and reduce our chances of cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and dementia. And socializing is not just for fun! Keeping socially active has been linked to reduced stress and loneliness along with better mental health and wellbeing.

Taking a class or joining a club at a local recreation centre is a great way to stay active. Activities in our area range from lawn bowling to woodcraft, chess, dance classes, chair yoga and much more. Not sure about getting there on your own? Our Destination Walks or Drives services can help! Whether you are heading to a recreation class, shopping destination or medical appointment, you can book an OBVS volunteer to drive or walk with you there and back.

Another way to stay active is by attending a local cultural event like an art show, festival or performance. See an event of interest but would like someone to come with you? Give us a call, and we can link you up with a Cultural Companion to provide a ride and enjoy the event with you.

## Community Events

### OAK BAY TEA PARTY

Parade starts at 10:30am  
June 1 at Windsor Park

Fair runs from May 31 to  
June 2 at Willows Park

### OAK BAY NIGHT MARKETS

Oak Bay Village

Second Wednesday of each  
month between June and  
September, 4 to 8 pm

### HARBOUR CATS GAME

Royal Athletic Park

Victoria HarbourCats vs.  
Edmonton Riverhawks  
6:30pm July 31



## OBVS OFFICE HOURS

Monday to Friday  
9:00am — 12:00pm  
1:00pm — 4:00pm

## OUTREACH & SERVICES COORDINATOR



### Anna Mackay

Anna is your contact for client services and can help you identify which OBVS services may be useful to you. She can be reached on our main line: (250) 595-1034.

## UPCOMING AGM

Our Annual General Meeting is coming up on June 4 at 2pm. Space is limited, so call us soon if you'd like to attend.

Or if you'd like to socialize on a more regular basis, we can connect you with a friendly neighbour in Oak Bay for weekly visits, phone calls or walks. Extending your social network in this way is an excellent opportunity to have some fun, build a meaningful connection, and make a new acquaintance.

When it comes to activities, we each have our own preferences, and of course our health can affect which endeavours we can engage in. Luckily, there are many ways to stay active. If you are curious about a new activity, we encourage you to try it out!

## Painters, Walkers, Music Lovers



The things that OBVS volunteers and clients like to do to stay active are many and varied.

Claude began painting as a young boy in northern Manitoba, and these days he sells his

work at a Vancouver gallery. He says he feels lucky to have a passion that keeps him busy. He recently made our day by donating one of his paintings (shown above) to our office! We are thrilled to enjoy the fruits of his talents.

Caroline and Jenny have been getting out on walks together in the neighbourhood. They shared that walking with someone can be a great way to regain confidence after an injury or illness and to stay connected with people in the neighbourhood. Many walks have taken them to the ocean to take in the sun, the water, the boats and of course the seals.

Ruth has been attending the symphony with others as part of our Cultural Companion service. She was thrilled to discover new music at a recent strings performance and especially enjoyed the talkback session afterward, complete with beverages and nibbles!

## Reminders

1. Please call OBVS at least one week ahead of time to book drives or other services.
2. If you need to change or cancel a service, please contact our office at (250) 595-1034. Please do not call your volunteer directly.
3. We offer many services, including drives, technology support, gardening, and much more! We encourage you to give us a call if you'd like to learn more about our offerings.

## Companion Pets



Looking for the affection of a pet without the extra responsibility? OBVS is very excited to introduce our new Companion Pets program, thanks to generous funding from the ElderCare foundation.

These robotic cats and dogs are sure to provide joy and comfort and are available for free to Oak Bay seniors!

Here are some benefits of adopting one of these furry friends:

**Companionship and affection** Whether you want cuddles or simply a calming presence, Companion Pets are a great addition to any household. Their realistic behaviours and responses to touch and sound are sure to delight pet lovers of all ages!

**Safe and accessible** These pets are a fantastic option if you have allergies. Their synthetic fur is just as delightful as a real animal's and will not make you sneeze! They also don't pose other common risks, such as scratching or tripping.

**Pet ownership without the hassle** While a typical pet may require grooming, feeding, and walks, Companion Pets are low maintenance, requiring only a few batteries or a plug-in.

Ready to bring home a new furry friend, or interested in learning more?

Contact Anna at (250) 940-3433 or by email at [anna@oakbayvolunteers.org](mailto:anna@oakbayvolunteers.org)

## Ways to Give

There are many ways to give back and help support our organization.

### Donate

Any contribution, big or small, is welcome! One of the most effective ways to support our work is by joining the Helping Hearts Club, our treasured community of monthly donors. We accept donations by mail, by phone, in the OBVS office, or at [www.oakbayvolunteers.org/donate](http://www.oakbayvolunteers.org/donate)

### Leave a Legacy

Making a gift in your will can ensure a lasting impact in the community and may reduce estate taxes. Learn more about leaving your legacy by contacting us at (250) 940-3434 or [kara@oakbayvolunteers.org](mailto:kara@oakbayvolunteers.org).

### Volunteer

If you'd like to volunteer, we have many different options to help out, from gardening to making phone calls. Call us at (250) 595-1034 if you'd like to learn more!

## Meet our Team

### Executive Director

Kara Udell

### Outreach & Services Coordinator

Anna Mackay

### Volunteer Coordinator

Ruth Platts

### Administrative Coordinator

Jaimie Sumner