

SPRING 2025

THE WILLOWTREE

Our Healthy Living Newsletter



It's Spring!

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of the WillowTree, Oak Bay Volunteer Services' newsletter dedicated to promoting healthy living in our community.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KARA UDELL

As we embrace this vibrant season, we're excited to share the latest updates, events, and resources to support our incredible community of clients, volunteers, and supporters.

At OBVS, we are continually inspired by how neighbors help one another, creating strong connections and a sense of belonging. In this issue, you'll find highlights of new programs, incredible opportunities and events, and practical tips to help you live your best life. Whether you're engaging with us through our services or volunteering your time, we are so grateful for your involvement in making Oak Bay a place of care and connection.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. We look forward to continuing to serve and share in the joy of community throughout this year. Enjoy reading and stay connected!

GROOVING IN THE SUN AT ONE OF OUR SILENT DISCOS



In This Edition

**intergenerational
homeshares**

**social prescribing
for wellbeing**

**staying saavy
to scams**





Open Your Home, Change a Life

Oak Bay Volunteer Services is exploring an intergenerational homesharing program — connecting local seniors who have a spare room with university students looking for safe, affordable housing.

This would be a supportive and flexible arrangement, where seniors can offer housing and a welcoming environment, while students contribute with light household help or companionship. OBVS would help facilitate the match and support both parties.

If you are a senior who'd like to welcome a student into your home — or know someone who might — we'd love to hear from you! Call our office or send an email to kara@oakbayvolunteers.org to learn more.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

RETURN TO HEALTH

236-464-7172

Volunteer assistance for seniors in the transition from hospital to home

SAFER - Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters

1-800-257-7756

Rent subsidies for lower income seniors ages 60+

FROM A LOCAL FAMILY

We are a homeschooling family in Saanich with 2 children ages 11 and 14 looking for a kind, patient, and engaged grandparent-like role model. We'd love to connect with someone who shares our Christian values and enjoys activities like walking, playing chess, or teaching handicrafts. If you'd like to make a impact in the lives of two awesome kids, please contact Kara at kara@oakbayvolunteers.org.

A New Approach to Senior Wellbeing

BY EMMA GOULDING



As British Columbia continues to prioritize healthy aging, a growing movement is gaining momentum in the senior-serving sector — social prescribing. This innovative approach recognizes that health is influenced not only by medical factors but also by social, emotional, and community connections.

Social prescribing empowers community organizations to connect older adults with non-clinical supports that improve overall wellbeing. These may include art or

UPDATES and REMINDERS

- If we can't find a volunteer for a scheduled service, we will notify you two days ahead and help you rebook if needed.
- Our volunteers are not allowed to accept tips or donations. If you'd like to donate to OBVS, we accept donations by mail, phone, or online at www.oakbayvolunteers.org/donate
- Please call us at least one week in advance to book a service. This helps us ensure we can find a volunteer to assist you.

music classes, walking groups, volunteer opportunities, social clubs, or access to community resources such as food security programs or housing support. The goal is to address the broader determinants of health—such as loneliness, isolation, or financial stress—that often affect seniors.

In BC, social prescribing is being integrated into community settings, with community connectors playing a key role. These professionals work alongside clients to co-create personalized plans and link them with meaningful community-based services and activities.



Early results show promise: participants report improved mood, reduced loneliness, and a greater sense of purpose. For us at OBVS, social prescribing presents an opportunity to work collaboratively and more closely with other agencies, highlighting the value of community-based supports in promoting holistic health.

Stay tuned for more information as we launch our Community Connector program in Oak Bay and across local health authority (LHA) 411 over the coming months.



OUTREACH & SERVICES COORDINATOR

Our Outreach and Services Coordinator is your contact for accessing services at OBVS. They can help you sign up for something new, make changes to your current services, or talk through our processes.

OUR SERVICES

- DRIVES
- SOCIAL VISITS & PHONE CALLS
- DESTINATION & SOCIAL WALKS
- REASSURANCE PHONE CALLS
- TECHNOLOGY HELP
- MINOR HOME REPAIRS
- DOCUMENT ASSISTANCE
- PACKING & SORTING
- SEASONAL GARDENING
- ROBOTIC PET COMPANIONS
- INCOME TAX
- CULTURAL OUTINGS

LOCAL EVENTS

OAK BAY TEA PARTY

Parade starts at 10:30am on Sat., June 7 and winds through Oak Bay Village. The fairgrounds run from June 6 – 8 at Willows Park.

OBVS SILENT DISCOS

Free community dances in the summer in Oak Bay parks. Give us a call to find out when and where!

OAK BAY NIGHT MARKETS

These vibrant markets will return to Oak Bay Village on the second Wednesday of each month from June to September, 4-8pm.

Staying Ahead of Scams

Staying informed is one of the best ways to protect yourself from scams, financial abuse, and high-pressure sales tactics. These issues can affect anyone of any age or background. The good news is that with a few simple habits and the right resources, you can stay a step ahead.

Scams often come in the form of unexpected calls, messages, or visits that create a sense of urgency. Common warning signs include requests for personal information, demands for immediate payment, or offers that sound too good to be true. If someone pressures you to make a quick decision — especially about money — it's a sign to slow down. It's okay to say goodbye, leave, or hang up the phone and take time to investigate.



Financial abuse can be harder to detect, particularly when it involves friends or family. Watch for changes in your financial situation that you didn't authorize, such as unusual withdrawals or unpaid bills. If someone is mishandling your finances or pressuring you to give gifts or sign documents, be sure to seek help.

It's also important to look out for high-pressure sales techniques, especially in telemarketing or door-to-door sales. You always have the right to say no, ask for written information, and take time to consider a purchase.

If you believe you've been targeted by a scam, financial abuse, or pushy sales tactics, you're not alone – and there is support available. Please see the sidebar on the right for some resources that can help.

SCAM AND FRAUD RESOURCES

SENIORS ABUSE AND INFORMATION LINE

1-866-437-1940

Offers information and assistance to seniors experiencing abuse or mistreatment

OAK BAY POLICE NON-EMERGENCY

250-592-2424

Can assist if criminal activity is suspected

ISLAND HEALTH **250-388-2273**

Coordinates supports in cases of adult abuse, neglect, or self-neglect

SENIORS ENTITLEMENT SERVICES

250-388-7696 ext. 230

Provides advocacy for adults 55+ with financial and legal issues

CONNECT WITH US

OFFICE HOURS

Monday to Friday
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ADDRESS

Oak Bay Volunteer Services
1442 Monterey Avenue
Victoria, BC V8S 4W1

PHONE

(250) 595-1034

WEBSITE

www.oakbayvolunteers.org

EMAIL

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