



Ramping Up!

Volume 5, Issue 1

Fall 2006

ISSN 1703-681X

CHANGES TO HANDI-BUS POLICY KEEPS AHS VERY BUSY!

In order to reduce the risk for injury and improve safety for both clients and caregivers, Access Calgary (Handi-Bus) is implementing a new stair policy; effective September 1, 2006, drivers will only assist clients up 1 stair plus the door threshold.

Up until this date, drivers assisted clients using wheelchairs (total weight of no more than 250 pounds) up a maximum of 5 stairs, or 10 stairs with a landing midway. However, the leading cause of injury to drivers is slipping and falling when handling wheelchairs and change was needed.

This change in policy affects many individuals who rely on Access Calgary to assist them in and out of their home. Since the announcement, the Accessible Housing Society's (AHS) Residential Assessment and Design (RAD) Program has visited several of these individuals to recommend solutions for making their entrances

wheelchair accessible. RAD also continues to give out information over the phone on ramp design, porch lift installation, renovation funding programs, and names of lift suppliers and contractors.

Following the September 1st deadline, the RAD Team of Alanna Thiessen, Alan Nakatsui, Sue Pearson, and Lesley Gibson anticipate more calls from individuals affected by this policy change. They will do their best to accommodate these individuals, however, the waiting list for an initial consultation is approximately 2 to 3 weeks, making the deadline very difficult if not impossible to meet. In addition, contractors are extremely busy in Calgary and many are not able to schedule the work before winter.

As a temporary measure, renting a portable ramp may be an option for some. Others may have to rely on friends, family members, or perhaps the

ambulance to assist them up and down the stairs.

Whatever the situation, if you are affected by this policy change and need information on ramp design, porch lift installation, renovation funding programs, or names of lift suppliers or contractors, give the RAD team a call at 282-1872 and they would be happy to help you. Or go to the AHS website for links to information on ramp design and construction and renovation funding programs, www.ahscalgary.ca.

Access Calgary manages transportation services for Calgarians with disabilities, including Handi-Bus.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Farewell to Staff Members	2
Board Members Move On	2
If You Could Wheel in Your Kitchen	3
AHS Services // Funding	4
Design to Desire a Success!	5
AHS "Slurps Up" Donations from 7-Eleven	5
Donor Thank You	5
New Canadians Welcome	6

AHS Architect Alan Nakatsui grins over his wife's Silver Medal chili at the 4D Barbecue. Diane's recipe came in second place at the First Annual Chili Cook-Off that was part of the event.



FAREWELL TO STAFF MEMBERS

The May AGM was an ideal opportunity to recognize and thank long service employees Client Care Director, Erla Mottram and relief cook, Ann Roy who recently retired from AHS.

Erla Mottram

Erla Mottram began working for AHS in 1984 .

Just one of her notable accomplishments was the development of service delivery for the residents of McLaurin Village, as well as the evolution of services for residents at 4D and Chinook House.

It has been said that Erla had great skills when it came to evaluating clients and their medical conditions.

Erla was involved in many things on behalf of the Society over the years. While it is impossible to list all of her accomplishments, here is a representative sample:

- ◆ Erla helped to start the Personal Care Attendant Program at the Alberta Vocational College (now Bow Valley College). Graduates from Bow Valley and now NAIT are the core of our field care staff.
- ◆ When the Calgary Health Region was contemplating self-managed care, Erla acted as a resource and helped the health region understand how such a program could be delivered in the community and the care hours required to be budgeted in order to make this program successful.
- ◆ Erla is generally responsible for



Erla Mottram

putting together the Society's Policy and Procedure Manual. It is through her dedication that the Society has good reference material for its operations.

Ann Roy

Ann Roy began working for the Society in November, 1992 as relief cook at the Fourth Dimension Group Home and continued in this capacity until her retirement last December.

Ann was faithful in the way she carried out her work and meticulous and cost-effective in the way

she purchased food.

She was calm in the face of the competing culinary interests of the group home residents.

Ann was always clean and tidy and trustworthy when it came to her



Ann Roy with Tom Kenny, Executive Director

work. This was particularly important when handling food.

She was always organized and will be remembered by the 4D residents for making a "mean chicken-pot-pie".

Both Erla and Ann contributed to AHS in so many ways. They will be missed.

Pat Bateman and Florence Fraser have replaced Erla Mottram as Client Care Directors. The search continues for the right person to serve as relief cook.

AHS BOARD MEMBERS MOVE ON

AHS also says farewell to two dedicated board members who are moving on to other ventures. Ursula Da Rugna of Medivet Pharmaceuticals Ltd. and Wendy Jabusch of Streetside Development Corporation are stepping down from their respective current roles of Secretary and Vice Chairperson.

Ursula served close to a decade on the board, at one point as Chairperson. She came to AHS from the Rotary Club of Calgary - Centennial and brought to the organization a strong commitment to the mission, helpful connections, and an invaluable knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order!

Though involved for a shorter period of time - 2004 to 2006 - Wendy's in-depth insight into Calgary's housing market and her keen mind were a tremendous asset. She will also be remembered for stepping up at the last minute and pulling two all-night shifts at our first casino!

Many, many thanks to Ursula and Wendy for their time, commitment, and friendship. Best of luck to you both!

IF YOU COULD WHEEL IN YOUR KITCHEN



by
A I a n
Nakatsui,
Architect,
A A A ,
PEng

From Renovations Magazine, Nov. 29, 2004.

A kitchen can be a frustrating and possibly dangerous place for someone using a wheelchair or walker. Consider how you would see into the pot on the stove, move hot items around, get water from the sink, reach something on the bottom shelf of the base cabinet... Here is how Mary (not her real name), with her kitchen consultant and advice on accessibility from Accessible Housing Society, has remodeled her kitchen to get rid of these worries.

A countertop stove is incorporated, mounted at a lower height and with clear space provided under the counter. The counter height is set so Mary can roll under in her chair and the lower height is still functional for her husband and children. Front mount controls eliminate the risk of reaching over hot pots and pans.

W h a t happens if she and her husband ever want to sell the house? The counter with the stove can be raised to match the rest of the

counters and a cabinet installed below. Mary's kitchen consultant suggested the granite top which can be cut and refit to create a continuous counter in the future.

A work surface with a small sink and with clear space under is part of a large island, around which there is plenty of space to move. The main double sink at the standard height is retained for the use of other members of the family. A microwave oven is also built into the island at a convenient height for Mary, although her children think it a great chore having to bend over to use it.

Other features that make it easier for Mary to use are drawers with full extension slides in the base cabinets instead of doors and shelves, a wall oven, and a side-by-side fridge. The wall oven and stove were retained from their original kitchen. Otherwise, a wall oven with a side hinged door is recommended. This allows a lower installation height and avoids the necessity of reaching over a hot door. The lower height is



important since carrying a weight above chest height uses muscles with less strength and the possibility of spills is greater.

(Continued on page 4)



(If You Could Wheel In Your Kitchen article continued from page 3)

Can you use these same modifications for your own kitchen renovation? The short answer is yes, but there are many considerations that go into designing a space such as a kitchen, especially when it is a renovation and it is for someone in a wheelchair. The modifications are often restricted by the existing walls and layout, traffic patterns, window locations, etc. It is also a very personal space, so the design must suit the users. Other members of the family must be taken into account. Building codes are also a factor. For instance, there are very stringent requirements for clearances from the stove to combustible surfaces. There are also many other features that can be incorporated into your kitchen if you need or want them. So it is best to get expert advice on the design and have comprehensive drawings done. Changes are much easier to do when they can be made on paper first!



Design service, are provided to assist those with mobility problems in their housing needs. See our website at www.ahscalgary.ca or call our office at 282-1872 for more information.

The Accessible Housing Society (AHS) is a non-profit, charitable organization serving the Calgary region. Services provided by AHS, including the Residential Assessment and

	
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ACCESSIBLE HOUSING SOCIETY SERVICES

Housing Registry - To help you find wheelchair accessible rental housing in the city, please call Lesley or Roy at 282-3373.

Residential Assessment and Design Program - To have your new or current housing situation evaluated for plans or renovations to achieve greater mobility, please call Alanna, Alan or Sue at 282-1872.

Personal Care Services - To access the personal care provided at three locations in Calgary, please call 282-1872.

Library Services - To research a mobility solution, please feel free to browse our resource library.

Barrier-Free Design Workshops - Call AHS at 282-1872 to arrange a workshop for your group.

FUNDING

Did you know that there are programs out there that may assist you financially if you need to renovate your home to improve accessibility? Each of the following programs has specific eligibility requirements. To determine your eligibility, call the individual program or call AHS at 282-1872.

- ◆ **Residential Access Modification Program (RAMP)**: through Alberta Seniors, 310-0000, then enter (780) 427-5760
- ◆ **Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)**: through CMHC, (403) 515-3000
- ◆ **Home Adaptations for Senior's Independence (HASI)**: through CMHC, (403) 515-3000
- ◆ **Alberta Easter Seals**: equipment only, (403) 235-5662

DESIGN TO DESIRE A SUCCESS !

And what an evening it was! On June 22, 450 people converged into a unique home in Springbank to enjoy the sumptuous food and beverage, the fabulous designs, and the funky fashion show.



A view of the back of the house – seen as you drive into the neighbourhood.

The event itself was hosted by the Design Association of Calgary in support of AHS and the Kerby Centre Housing Program.

Several AHS supporters contributed to this great event. Springbank Cheese Company was in fine form, sampling a tantalizing array of cheeses that went very well with the wines and scotches offered by Willow Park Wines & Spirits. Big thanks are owed to Hallmark Tubulars Ltd., the Alberta Real Estate Foundation, and JRS Print



A view of the front entrance of the house.

Services for their financial and in-kind support. And there were numerous AHS volunteers who came out to lend a hand.

AHS was thrilled to be a part of this brand new event and we thank the Design Association of Calgary for giving us the opportunity to be involved.



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AHS 'SLURPS UP' DONATIONS FROM 7-ELEVEN

Maybe it was the warm start to the summer or Calgarians had a bad case of the munchies in the month of May but the Accessible Housing Society (AHS) is thrilled to report that we received a phenomenal \$4,469 from 7-Eleven's Donation Box Program!

As noted in our last newsletter, 7-Eleven chooses one charity each month to donate the proceeds of their donation box program to. AHS was selected as the charity for the month of May.

The \$4,469 in small change can assist us in several large ways:

- ◆ Provide wheelchair accessible home design advice to 10 families through our Residential Assessment & Design Program, or
- ◆ Provide food to the 11 residents of our 4th Dimension Group Home for 2 months, or
- ◆ Provide assistance to 26 Calgarians seeking wheelchair accessible housing through our Accessible Housing Registry

Thanks to those who stopped in to the stores to help us out and encouraged family and friends to do so as well!



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Email: info@ahscalgary.ca
Web: www.ahscalgary.ca
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Ramping Up! Is published 3 times
per year. To subscribe to Ramping
Up!, contact AHS.
ISSN (print) 1703-681X
ISSN (online) 1703-6828

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NEW CANADIANS WELCOME!

Students of the Bow Valley College or ABES (Alberta Business and Educational Services) personal care programs are often new immigrants to Calgary.

The students embrace the opportunity to take the programs which are government funded and allow them to integrate into our society.

Both schools offer new Canadians an opportunity to gain well-paying, meaningful employment in a short period of time.

Many of the students were already involved in some aspect of nursing care in their countries. Others are looking to gain needed skills that will make them employable.



Joyce Ogunleye has recently graduated from the ABES Personal Care Attendant Program and now works as a casual at the Fourth Dimension group home. She immigrated to Calgary from Nigeria with her husband and two children. She enjoys being in Canada although she doesn't look forward to winter!

The Fourth Dimension group home (4D) and McLaurin Village (owned and operated by AHS) are practicum sites for students who learn from knowledgeable full-time staff how to do personal care in assisted living environments. "One of the greatest barriers the new students face is the English language," says 4D resident Helen Rojek, adding that some things don't need to be spoken to be understood....and most students are also taking ESL (English as a Second Language) courses.

"I couldn't imagine leaving my friends and family to live in a country half way around the world where I didn't know the language, had to get a job and raise my family. What a challenge!" said Helen.

OUR SPONSORS

1,000 copies of this issue will be delivered to and read by as many as 4,500 Albertans from the disabled community, health services sector and housing renovations industry. Do you have a product or service they should know about?

One issue—\$200; 3 issues—\$500

Contact Robyn at 282-1872 for more information.

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