



Accessible Housing Society

Ramping Up!

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WHAT A DAY FOR AHS!

Comments that could be heard in the clubhouse after the Inaugural Accessible Housing Society Golf Tournament at Redwood Meadows included "best tournament I've ever been to", "very well organized", "amazing", "where do I sign up for next year" and other accolades.

On a chilly Thursday in the first week of September, 132 golfers braved the elements and had an outstanding time raising funds for AHS. Hosted by the Calgary North Progress Club and the 7:30 News Business Club, the tournament surpassed its goal of \$20,000, raising over \$34,000!! And all in its first year!! Our heroic volunteers forsook bathroom breaks and a chance to warm up instead staying the course and spotting for hole-in-ones, running

the contests and bolstering the spirits of the very merry golfers!!

Our Master of Ceremonies, Jimmy Hughes, did an excellent job of keeping the golfers laughing. Bearcat Murray was a fabulous auctioneer, showing why he is such an incredible ambassador for our city. Thanks so much to both Jimmy and Bearcat for spending their day with us on the course and in the clubhouse.

A big thank you to this year's Major Sponsor, Sheila's Drapery and to its owner, the inimitable Ted Knapik for his commitment to making the inaugural tournament a triumph. The golf committee, led by Ted, are owed an enormous amount of thanks. They are Dwayne Austin, Mike Seth, Bill Hewson, Gary Nakamura, and Dennis Auger.

Director of Development, Jolayne Davidson, who also had a hand in the successful chaos, would like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts put forward by Jake Mayell and Dianne Nickel in selling entries, getting auction items and cheering the committee on every step of the way!

Finally, thank you to all the undaunted golfers who played hard, stayed warm and enjoyed the evening! We at AHS are delighted that you had a good time and hope to see you again next year.

Next year's tournament date is June 23rd at Bearspaw Country Club. If you are interested in playing, sponsoring or volunteering, please call us at 282-1872.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST!



AHS staffers Roy Smith and Alanna Thiessen spent 6 hours guarding the fourth hole of Redwood Meadows Golf Course. This couple of die-hards came prepared for the chilly day with blankets, fur hat, hot chocolate and crib board!

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AND I GREW THEM MYSELF!

Grace and grandson Donald proudly show off this year's petunias generously donated by the Greengate Garden Centre! This is the second summer the volunteering duo have spent several mornings a week watering window-boxes and planters at the Fourth Dimension Group Home. Donald thinks the payment of cookies makes this "volunteering thing" lots of fun!



A START TO SOMETHING GREAT

The Rotary Club of Calgary Centennial has generously agreed to provide the Accessible Housing Society with \$50,000 for a housing project. AHS is delighted to receive this commitment that is so critical to meeting the shortage of affordable and accessible housing in the city.

Thank you to the Centennial Rotarians for their contributions to the solution!

VOLUNTEERS ARE "GOOD" FOR NOTHING!

Who says "Volunteers are good for nothing"?

Vern Cole does – and he should know, he'd been doing "good" for absolutely nothing but "thanks" for the seven years he's been a volunteer at the Fourth Dimension Group Home!

"I came to visit a friend who had just moved into 4-D," says a smiling Vern Cole, "And that's when I made the mistake of asking the other residents if they needed help with anything."

"Not long after, my car started acting up – I turned the key and it automatically drove me to the group home."

It wasn't long before Vern was returning empty bottles to the depot, recycling newspapers, writing six residents' rent cheques at the end of the month, writing other cheques during the month, assisting several residents with their banking and correspondence, bringing fresh baked buns on "submarine sandwich" days, managing the

Resident's Book, picking up items from the grocery store and helping individual residents with their various projects.

Vern has always believed in volunteering and says it's what keeps him going.

"I've never been busier or happier," says the 77 year old serviceman who retired from the Canadian Armed Forces in 1976 after 33 years in the service.

But the group home is not the only place Vern does "good" for nothing. He has also been a dedicated volunteer at the Dr. Vernon Fanning Centre for 15 years.

Recently, Vern has had to quit actively volunteering at 4-D.

"My body and family are telling me I've got to slow down!" said Vern who still visits the residents regularly. "There'll be someone else to take my place!"

"A plaque with his photo will be the first to hang on our new Volunteer Wall located at the entrance to our



home," says resident Helen Rojek. "I doubt that Vern will ever know to what extent he made our (the residents') lives better. It wasn't just helping us with physical tasks. It was his regular visits, his attitude -- always positive and smiling, and his interest in what we each were up to. If he thought we were down, he'd try to cheer us up! Vern is like family!"

STAIRS...THE FINAL FRONTIER. . .

These are the voyages of the Residential Assessment and Design team. Its continuing mission...to explore clients' homes, to allow them to seek out a new found freedom and community involvement, to safely go where they've never gone before...

If we lived in the Star Trek world and there was such a device as a transporter, "wheelchair access" would take on a new meaning. Until then, those who have mobility problems living in an inaccessible home will require home renovations to remove barriers that affect safety, independence, and quality of life.

The story of Dora and Greg is one of many examples. Greg had his leg amputated last year and uses a manual wheelchair for mobility. His wife, Dora, has arthritis and uses a 4-wheeled walker. They couldn't leave their home without help. The neighbors and

Handi-Bus had to bump Greg up and down the stairs in his wheelchair. Dora held onto her heavy walker and the stair railing at the same time. Both methods presented a significant safety issue.

We visited the couple in their home and determined that the back entrance was the easiest to modify, and that a vertical porch lift as opposed to a ramp, would best meet their needs. We trialed threshold ramps at the door and determined the slope and length of ramp that would work the best for both of them.

Thanks to funding from the Home Adaptation Program (HAP) and an anonymous donor, the porch lift was installed and door was modified. Both Greg and Dora can now access their home independently and safely. They are thankful that the lift was installed. They said, "This is a blessing. Before, it was scary. Now I don't have to worry about falling on the steps. Thank God Accessible Housing came around."



WHEEL-IN SHOWER: AN ALTERNATIVE TO PREFABRICATED SHOWER UNITS

Do you have difficulty using a bathtub? Or are you planning to replace your tub with a shower? If you have limited physical mobility, you may want to research your options before purchasing a prefabricated unit. We have some suggestions for you ... read on.

Prefabricated shower units (typically fiberglass or acrylic) usually have a lip or curb around the edge to contain water. The height of the lip varies and can be as low as 1/2". Even this can be a barrier especially if a wheeled shower/commode chair is used.

Ask yourself these questions when

considering your options:

1. Will a shower lip interfere with access to the toilet or maneuvering space in the bathroom?
2. Do you have difficulty stepping over a lip? If you can currently manage, do you foresee having difficulty in the future?
3. Do you plan to use a wheeled shower/commode chair in the shower? Or might you use a walker or wheelchair to transfer onto a shower seat?

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, a custom

(Continued on page 4)

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING SOCIETY SERVICES

Housing Registry – To help you find wheelchair accessible rental housing in the city, please call Larry 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, Leslie or Alan at 282-1872.

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

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

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 us at 282-1872.

- Home Adaptation Program (HAP); 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
- Easter Seal Ability Council; equipment only, (403) 235-5662

WHEEL-IN SHOWER *(Continued from page 3)*



wheel-in shower may be a better solution.

The minimum recommended size of a wheel-in shower is 60" x 36", but larger is better. Ideally, 60" x 60" will provide adequate space for turning inside the shower area and for an assistant.

The floor in the shower area is sloped to the drain and doesn't have a lip around the edge. Since the lack of a raised lip will increase the possibility of water outside the shower area, the entire bathroom must be carefully designed with proper attention paid to the details of the flooring, materials, and equipment.

Water control can be aided by having a shower curtain long enough to reach the shower floor, and weighted at the bottom to limit the curtain's movement.

RENOVATION PLANNING – WHERE TO GET THE INFORMATION YOU NEED. FREE!

Planning a renovation for one's home requires thought and effort on the part of the homeowner. There are a number of steps involved in getting from a list of what you want to watching a contractor constructing or installing those items. If you wonder what those steps are, and how to go about having each one done, there is help available. And it is free!

Canada Mortgage and Housing hosts a web site with a wealth of information on housing. Go to www.cmhc.ca and pick the following from the menus:

- English or French
- Building, Renovating & Maintaining
- Renovation Planning
- Before You Renovate: Renovation Guide



From here pick the subjects on which you need further information. Especially important is advice on finding a contractor suitable for your job and the contract you will need.

The Residential Assessment and Design (RAD) program can also help you with some of the planning if your renovation is to assist you with a mobility difficulty.

AHS BOARD 2002/2003 MAKING IT WORK!

Thank you to the Board of AHS for their tireless efforts in the areas of policy development, organizational strategy, and fund raising. For seeing the big picture and where AHS fits, thank you!

Farouk Adatia	Michael Leahy
Dennis Auger	Shannon McGrath
Brian Carey	Jake Mayell
Ursula Da Rugna	Mike Rodomar
James Helmer	Mike Seth
Bill Hewson	David Watson
Tamara Isaacs	Cathy Yuzwak

Honourary Board Members
John Collins
Gerald Knowlton



AHS held its Annual General Meeting at Fort Calgary May 28 2002. Getting the inside information on AHS were, from left, Grace Kislanko, Erla Mottram, Helen Rojek, Stacy Marks, and Leslie Robinson.

THREE CHEERS FOR THE RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN PROGRAM

Having been an architect, who has worked with a diverse clientele, for many years, I have unabashed appreciation for a program that seamlessly incorporates the physical abilities of the client into the architectural design of a new home or renovation. The RAD program does this day in and day out.

The RAD team consists of a Registered Architect, Alan Nakatsui and two Occupational Therapists, Alanna Thiessen and Leslie Robinson, who assess the home and make recommendations based on an individual client's needs.



Jake Mayell, Vice Chairperson,
The Accessible Housing Society

The Accessible Housing Society is proud of the ingenuity regularly displayed by the RAD team.

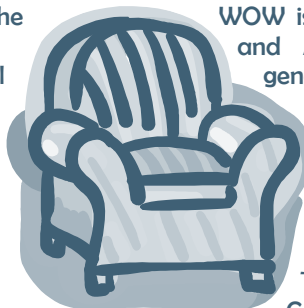
Furthermore, the RAD program is the only service of its kind in Calgary.

Clients of the RAD program include Calgarians who have been unable to leave their home for up to a year due to physical barriers. It is these barriers that the RAD program minimizes and/or alleviates completely allowing individuals with mobility challenges the ability to move in and around their home.

Kudos to the RAD team for their continued good work and for furthering our mission of creating opportunities for safe, affordable, barrier free housing in the community.

WOW DESIGN AND DONORS LIGHTEN UP 4D

Over the past few months the Fourth Dimension Group Home has been the grateful recipient of interior design expertise from the WOW Design Group, particularly Janice Wiebe and Craig Ainsworth, as well as funds for new furnishings and fixtures from a number of community foundations.



WOW is a division of CPV Group and AHS is grateful to the generosity of Fred Valentine, a partner in CPV Group, for facilitating the gift of Janice's and Craig's time, brilliant ideas and intense good nature.

Thanks also to the Harry B Cohen Foundation, the

Charitable Foundation of the Calgary Real Estate Board and the Calgary Community Lottery Board for providing funds for new, light weight, durable furniture and improved lighting.

The new adaptations will enhance the residents' comfort, safety and ease of movement throughout their home.



Suite 103, 2003-14th Street NW
Calgary, AB T2M 3N4

Phone: (403) 282-1872
Fax: (403) 284-0304
Email: info@ahscalgary.ca
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RAMPING UP! COMMITTEE:

- Helen Rojek - Editor
- Charlotte Apedaile
- Brooke Clibbon
- Jolayne Davidson
- Ursula Da Rugna

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ALAN, ALANNA AND LESLIE ARE RAD!

For the past few years, architect Alan Nakatsui and occupational therapists, Alanna Thiessen and Leslie Robinson have represented the Residential Assessment and Design (RAD) program of the Accessible Housing Society.

The lives of those who come to RAD have been changed because of a disability. In many cases, a lack of wheelchair access has turned the home they've lived in for many years into a prison! Their clients come to RAD for one reason - help with home adaptations that add accessibility.

RAD clients are all faced with some accessibility issue. In many cases, they need to know about building a ramp or renovating the kitchen or bathroom.

It is not until the clients are seen in their home environment that RAD can actually begin to help them. There is plenty of written information and even suggested building specifications, but every person is unique. It is important to address not only how the individual functions today but, to also consider what they may be dealing with a few years from now.

That is why having occupational therapists is so integral to the RAD program. While the OT addresses the clients' physical abilities, the architect looks at the actual home environment and address the clients' particular needs with an appropriate design. Although the RAD team will not be involved with the actual renovation, they can provide the names of reputable builders and suppliers, information on where to apply for funding for the project, and monitor progress.



Architect, Alan Nakatsui



OT, Alanna Thiessen



OT, Leslie Robinson

Depending on income, there are Home Adaptation Program (HAP), Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and other funding programs available to clients. The OT works with the person in need of funding to determine what program(s) may be able to fund the renovation.

Through funding provided by the Calgary Region Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Community Board, individual donors and the United Way, this service is provided free to those who qualify based on financial need.

If you would like more information about the Residential Assessment and Design (RAD) program, please call 282-1872.



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