

Community Developer Final Report

June 2013



United Way

**Better
at Home**

United Way helping seniors
remain independent.

Better at Home is funded by the Government of British Columbia.

Better at Home: Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake

Final Report

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FOREWORD

In early 2013, the Ashcroft/Cache Creek/Logan Lake area was identified as a potential Better at Home site. The communities were combined, based on input from regional experts.

Following Better at Home's standard approach, a local community developer was hired and a community engagement process was implemented. This process identified local seniors' non-medical home support service priorities and potential Better at Home 'lead organizations'. The community engagement process and additional consultations revealed that the area would be best served by two organizations: the Logan Lake Wellness Health Youth (WHY) Society serving Logan Lake and the Ashcroft and District Lions Club serving Ashcroft and Cache Creek.

Following the community engagement process, the WHY Society, Lions Club, and Better at Home Provincial Office continued conversations about how best to effectively provide Better at Home services to Logan Lake, Ashcroft and Cache Creek. These conversations took into consideration local community conditions, capacity, and geographical realities, including travel between Logan Lake and Ashcroft/Cache Creek, which becomes difficult in winter. During these conversations, the Ashcroft and District Lions Club enquired about a mentorship and support relationship with Seniors Outreach Society (SOS), which runs the Kamloops Better at Home program. As the Kamloops Better at Home program was started in January 2013, SOS has a lot of experience and the capacity to offer support. Further discussions with stakeholders revealed consensus that the communities would be best served with SOS mentoring and supporting the Lions to provide Better at Home in Ashcroft and Cache Creek. The Logan Lake WHY Society will provide Better at Home services in Logan Lake.

Debbie Sharp, Field Coordinator, Better at Home

1. BETTER AT HOME PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. The program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, with services delivered by a local non-profit organization. The Better at Home program is designed to address the specific needs of local seniors, allowing communities to choose from the following basket of services:

- friendly visiting
- transportation to appointments
- snow shoveling
- light yard work
- simple home repairs
- grocery shopping
- light housekeeping

Ashcroft-Cache Creek-Logan Lake were identified as a potential Better at Home site. Jennifer Dustin was contracted as community developer to assess community readiness, identify seniors' assets, needs and priorities in regards to the basket of services, and help identify a potential lead organization best suited in the community to deliver the Better at Home program.

This report reflects the findings of the community developer and will be used by the lead organization to design an appropriate local Better at Home program that meets community needs.

1.2 Description of the local community development approach

All information was collected either through interviews, meetings, phone/email contact, or through local and community specific research (Census, Municipal Council Research, etc.). Beginning with key community contacts based on the recommendations of United Way and *Better at Home* staff, the Community Developer built a list of Key Stakeholders and potential Lead Agencies, including individuals whose expertise was essential to the development of the program in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake communities. The Community Developer consulted non-profit agencies of all sizes, seniors agencies/groups/organizations, local businesses, representatives of non-eligible groups (Interior Health, municipal offices, private home care businesses, etc.), seniors and other key individuals for information and guidance throughout the community development and lead agency selection processes.

Consultation Categories	Number of Agencies/Seniors Consulted
Seniors' Focused Groups	4
Other Non-Profit Agencies	3
Non-eligible Agencies (IHA, City, for profit)	5
Seniors (individuals, excluding community/stakeholder meetings)	19
Total	31

Consultations were not aimed directly at senior-focused groups, rather information about the history of the communities based on local research and program development experience in Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake and additional sources of information would come from all citizens. As an 'outsider', taking the position of 'learner' in these three

communities allowed the Community Developer to hear the story of the diverse and widespread area, and to draw from local assets to mitigate concerns. For example, working with three separate communities under one *Better at Home* site proved early on to require specific and focused attention on each community. In order to begin to understand the characteristics and spirit of each community, rather than inadvertently generalizing information across Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake, the Community Developer committed to connecting with parallel organizations in each community, and set time aside to hear stories from the citizens themselves, in addition to gathering local research. Once the individual identity of each community was recognized, the Community Developer could then begin to identify similarities, and draw connections in order to pull the *Better at Home* program community development process together.



Fostering a reciprocal working relationship between the Community Developer and the communities was essential to the Community Development process. The *Better at Home* program offers funding and support in an uncommon format using community consultation and research, forgoing many formal processes that agencies are accustomed to applying for and receiving funds through (i.e. traditional grant applications). When introducing the *Better at Home* program, which offers flexibility and

support of existing capacity, community leaders and agency representatives were confused, hesitant, and suspicious. Much of the initial stages of the community development process involved reassurance and in-depth discussions about the program and the potential for the community. The Community Developer continually encountered sincere apprehension about the fit between the *Better at Home Program* and potential Lead Agencies stemming from previous experience with inconsistent funding, an inability to maintain expected numbers (rural programs often feel measured by urban statistics), and an increasingly heavy demand for community programs. Furthermore, many small communities rely on one or two agencies that provide a diverse range of programming; when there are changes to the program schedule, all programs in the community feel the shift. The Community Developer responded to apprehension by



highlighting the *Better at Home Program's* strength through flexibility, thereby making it adaptable to each community. The community development process raised a large number of ideas for potential agency partnerships and program ideas, and also brought forward questions about the political leanings of the program, geographical boundaries (in particular to improve access for isolated seniors in other small bordering communities including Merritt, Clinton, Spences Bridge, etc.), and long-term funding structures.

By the Community Meetings the attendees (which included many of the people who were involved in the consultation process as well as members of the public) and the facilitators were able to confidently raise difficult questions and share open discussion with community member and *Better at Home* staff. In Logan Lake, the community was able to identify qualities of a desired Lead Agency, which confirmed the recommendation of the potential Lead Agency in attendance. In Ashcroft (representing Cache Creek and Ashcroft), the community engaged in an in-depth discussion about needs and strengths of the community, and demonstrated ongoing commitment to the *Better at Home* program. The community development approach was successful in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake - in both cases those present at the Community Meetings were able to directly support the emergence of the Logan Lake W.H.Y and the Ashcroft/Cache Creek Lions as Lead Agencies for the *Better at Home* program.

2. COMMUNITY PROFILE



Image credit: <http://www.newpathwaystogold.ca/geocache/route/3/savona>

2.1 Description of the local seniors' population

Information leading to a description of the seniors' population of Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake was collected from research specific to the three communities including the 2011 Census, municipal planning documents, as well as direct input from members of the communities. Seniors (65+) in the three communities combined represent an average of

roughly 28% of the population, and jumps to 38% when including those 60 years of age and older. In addition to citizens who have based their lives within municipal limits of Cache Creek, Ashcroft, and Logan Lake, the area is also home to many seniors who choose to live peacefully in the outskirts. As they age, the needs of these individuals change, often requiring support to help maintain their independence in their home; the needs for isolated seniors are heightened given their distance from community supports, and the physical demand of a deeply rural lifestyle. Even for those living in village limits, resources for seniors are limited. Ashcroft, Cache Creek are 60-70 minutes away from Kamloops, while Logan Lake is 45 minutes away; in many cases this commute (longer in winter months) becomes such a barrier to accessing urban services for seniors that they are forced to relocate to larger centers, thereby draining rural communities of the rich resource of their elders. Age and isolation make service accessibility a high priority for the populations of seniors in Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake.

Seniors Profile: Ashcroft (Pop. 1628)	Numbers / Percentage of Pop.
Age 65+	495 / 30.4%
Age 60+	670 / 41.2%
Median Age	55.2
Number of Seniors (65+) Living Alone in Own Home	140

Seniors Profile: Cache Creek (Pop. 1040)	Numbers / Percentage of Pop.
Age 65+	255 / 24.5%
Age 60+	335 / 32.2%
Median Age	51
Number of Seniors (65+) Living Alone in Own Home	55

Seniors Profile: Logan Lake (Pop. 1975)	Numbers / Percentage of Pop.
Age 65+	555 / 28.1%
Age 60+	785 / 39.7%
Median Age	54.8
Number of Seniors (65+) Living Alone in Own Home	95

Much of the volunteer force in this area is represented by seniors, which points to a strongly committed group with the capacity to support many organizations and groups in the area significantly adding to the communities' resiliency. Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake each addressed the issue of protecting and celebrating their volunteer base, and considering the shared boundaries between the volunteer and seniors' communities in this *Better at Home* site, taking care of those who contribute to the program must be an active priority. The need for preventative support services, while fostering a strong volunteer base is a clear need, given that the seniors' populations in all three communities is expected to grow.

For further information follow the links below:

- Ashcroft Community Profile:
http://www.ashcroftbc.ca/community_profile
- Cache Creek Strategic Plan 2011:
<http://www.cachecreekvillage.com/files/StrategicPlan2011.pdf>
- Logan Lake 2012 2015 Strategic Plan:
<http://www.loganlake.ca/attachments/article/38/2012%202015%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf>

2.2 Summary of Community Assets

With three communities sharing one *Better at Home* site, there were different assets specific to Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake individually, however, listed below are a few points that represent some overlap between the three communities.

- **Connection to the Environment:** there is a genuine sense that the community is very proud of its beautiful surroundings and the particular characteristics of living in rural British Columbia. Many citizens shared their feelings of connection and responsibility to the area.
 - **Safety:** one of the benefits of these communities, as communicated by seniors in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake, is the feeling of being safe in their community – likely contributing to the heavy social contributions by the seniors population.
 - **Vibrant and active seniors population - physically and socially:** an active seniors population that is strongly connected to its community makes for a supportive and protective force, making this the area’s single most important asset.
 - **Existing capacity:** Hard-working, concerned, and committed citizens, who “do a lot with a little”, which points to the capacity of the area to offer a successful *Better at Home* program.
 - **Local service clubs and organizations serving seniors in Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake:**
 - Seniors Centers
 - Elisabeth Fry Society
 - Service Clubs: Lions, Rotary, Legion, etc.
 - Logan Lake WHY
 - Strong Artistic Community
 - Interior Health Centers
 - First Nations Bands
 - Thompson View Manner Society, and other seniors housing groups (private and non-profit)
 - Religious/Spiritual Groups and Churches
-

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- **Supportive Municipal Government:** In each of the three communities, the Village Councils were in strong support of the Better at Home program, as they identify the need for the program and the capacity of their communities to champion the program.
- **Strong and committed group of volunteers:** many services in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake require the support of dedicated volunteers to remain viable. While the community is very proud of this accomplishment there is also a sense of concern that with added services like the *Better at Home* program, volunteers will be overstretched, thereby effecting existing services. These communities are acutely aware of the valuable resource they have in its volunteers.

2.3 Seniors' needs related to non-medical home support services

For the purposes of this report, three factors will be outlined to highlight specific needs of the seniors of Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake. This is not an exhaustive list, however, these are the most frequently mentioned concerns.

- **Rural Community:** the geography of the three communities contributes to available services for seniors; the closest urban setting, Kamloops, is a 45 minute drive away from Logan Lake, and is over an hour for Ashcroft and Cache Creek. All of the services identified by *Better at Home* are needed in some respect in all three

communities. In addition, mobility within each community has been identified as a concern; Ashcroft is the only community in the site that has access to bus service, however, this service is very limited, and none of the communities has a consistent taxi service. As a result, transportation has been highlighted as an area of high priority in the Logan Lake and Ashcroft/Cache Creek service areas.



- **Isolation:** there are many seniors who live in the surrounding areas of all three communities. The physical demands of living away from a village center, often acts as a barrier for seniors as they age: yard maintenance, household repairs pose significant concern in this regard. It should also be noted that seniors within municipal boundaries are also experiencing difficulty with light yard work and home repair.
 - **Available/Affordable Skilled Work:** already experiencing geographic isolation, seniors' needs are compounded by a lack of available and affordable skilled services. Seniors are often required to hire contractors from other communities to complete small jobs, which are then offered at a premium. Services including light housework, light yard work, and home repair are included in this area.
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2.4 Suggested opportunities for service integration/coordination

The *Better at Home* program offers many opportunities for the community to collaborate toward effective and community-specific services. Some existing non-profit agencies currently offer services for seniors on an informal basis, either adapting eligibility requirements of programs to fit certain clients, offering non-existing services in an unofficial way to seniors in need, and occasionally creating a program that would otherwise not fit the mandate of the agency but was included based on the needs of clientele.

The *Better at Home* community development process has encouraged agencies, seniors and other stakeholders to gather around a table to discuss what is currently being offered to seniors, and how seniors' needs are being addressed. The act of facilitating this discussion brings to light the possibilities of collaboration, creative program development, and coordination of services in the area. Furthermore, by encouraging agencies of various expertise to work together, we help to build capacity with seniors' based agencies, thereby strengthening the potential for future programs and services in Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake beyond the boundaries of the program.

In addition to site-specific outcomes, the *Better at Home* program in Kamloops, partly due to the close proximity and largely due to the success of the Kamloops program, might offer a mentorship role with the Ashcroft/Cache Creek/Logan Lake site. A mentorship arrangement stands to strengthen the new site, celebrate the successes of the current site, and provide internal development for the overall *Better at Home* program.

3. COMMUNITY READINESS



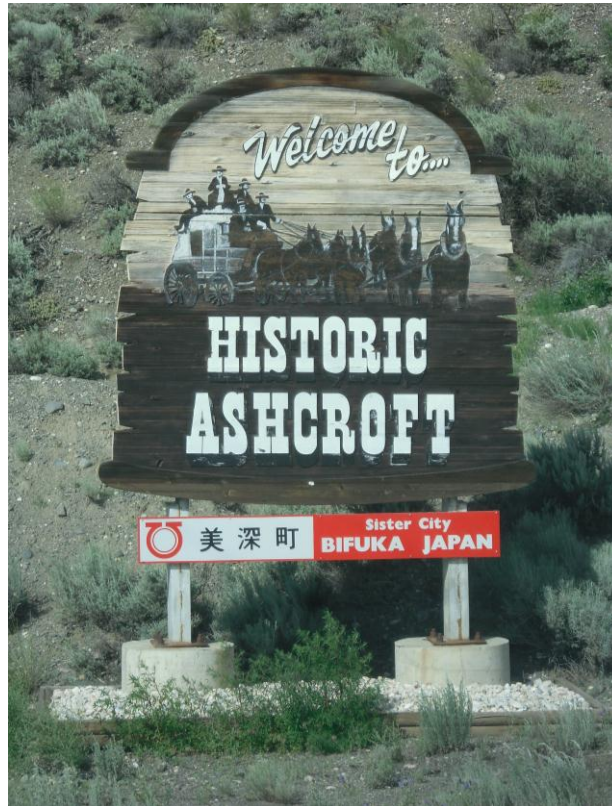
3.1 Explanation of community readiness that reflects community consultations and meetings

The communities of Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake demonstrated willingness through Village Council recognition and representation, individual citizen endorsement and input, and agency support. In terms of capacity, given the rural setting of the site, there were fewer agencies with the program history, administrative capacity, and volunteer base to offer the program than urban centers may offer. That said, the service agencies in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake have been offering a wide variety of services on a highly limited budget, making these agencies more than capable of offering the *Better at Home* program. In fact, given the support of local business, municipal government, local health authority representatives, agencies and volunteers, it is likely that the *Better at Home* program will thrive in these communities.

3.2 Potential risks going forward

- **Concerns with volunteers:** The communities of Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake very clearly indicated a level of concern with the reliance on volunteers, both in recruiting the number of volunteers, and in mitigating the potential for “volunteer drain”. “Volunteer drain” refers to the limited number of volunteers supporting a wide array of existing causes. There is potential to over extend the volunteers in this small community if adequate attention is not given to supporting the volunteers of *Better at Home*, thereby running the risk of eroding the quality of existing services supported by volunteers. Recalling that the community of volunteers is a strong asset of this site, it is of utmost importance that navigation of the volunteer component is done carefully and compassionately.
 - **Seniors Advocacy:** The citizens of Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake are highly concerned with the wellbeing of the seniors in their communities. Through individual discussions and in the Community Meetings, it was shared that many lament the erosion of services that were once included in health care/home care. While the *Better at Home* program is a welcome start to supporting seniors, it was unanimously communicated that the program alone does not go far enough for the seniors in their community.
 - **Short Term vs. Long Term Funding:** Given the funding through December 2015 outlined by the *Better at Home* program, there is some disillusionment and distrust with continued support by government for similar services looking beyond 2015. Rural communities are familiar with services, businesses, talent and wisdom leaving or being taken away from the community. The communities recognize the importance of reliable long-term funding, and are acutely aware of the vulnerability of seniors who may come to depend on *Better at Home* services, particularly if/when funding is cut.
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4. LOCAL *BETTER AT HOME* PROGRAM DETAILS



4.1 List of preferred services from the *Better at Home* basket of services that reflect community consultations and meetings and how they link to the identified needs

All services outlined in the basket of services are needed in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake, however, the community development process, as well as the Community Meeting revealed specific priority areas:

Community Development Process:

- *Transportation:* concerns with isolation of seniors, inclusion of outlying areas, and access to services.
- *Light Housework/Yard Work:* focusing on specific daily and more strenuous jobs (vacuuming, laundry, etc.), seasonal maintenance, planting, etc.
- *Snow Removal:* outlined due to climate, slipping hazard, and strenuous nature – potential to expand on existing snow removal program.
- *Light Home Repair:* small repairs including fixing leaks, changing light bulbs, etc.

Community Meeting:

- *Friendly Visits:* recognizing that this service can be paired with any of the other services, this area would build upon existing successes in the communities.
- *Transportation:* to appointments, for community activities, to encourage inclusion, and to out of town appointments (primarily Kamloops).
- *Advocacy:* while not in the Better at Home ‘basket of services’, both Community Meetings revealed the communities’ desire to maintain the needs of seniors as an utmost priority.

The discrepancy between the two lists indicates the range of services required in the area. Yard work and seasonal home repair may be reflective of the season in which the Community Development process was conducted, and while the tasks may change, the required up-keep, in and outside, remain constant.

It is the combination of complementary services that is likely to most effectively address the complex non-medical needs of seniors in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake.

4.2 Proposed lead agencies – including commentary on the identification process and rationale for why they were chosen

Given the nature of this multi-community site, the structure of the *Better at Home* program required adjustment. While Ashcroft and Cache Creek are within a 10-minute drive from one another, Logan Lake is roughly an hour's drive away; this Better at Home site spans approximately 70kms. It was identified early on that given the physical area, in order to offer responsive and relevant programs in all three communities, the program would require service organizations delivering services: probably one in Logan Lake, and another in Ashcroft/Cache Creek.

Proposed Lead Agency:

Logan Lake Wellness Health Youth Society (WHY)

Elaine Pennoyer, Managing Director

The WHY was consulted early in the Community Development process as it was identified as an agency in Logan Lake with high capacity to offer the *Better at Home* program, strong relationships and respected reputation within the community. The WHY has a long history of service to the Logan Lake community, and offers an exceptionally long and growing list of programming:

- Recreation/Fitness
 - Employment Services
 - Office Services
 - Welcome Program for New Residents
 - Services for children and youth including Teen Drop-In, Summer Camps,
 - Daycare, Preschool, Parent and Tot programs, etc.
 - Training: Babysitting, First Aid, Home Alone, etc
 - Snow Removal for Seniors (partnership with local high school)
 - Hospice Services
 - Transportation
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Proposed Partner Agency:

Ashcroft Cache Creek Lions Club

Darrell Rawcliffe, 2013-2013 Club President

The Lions Club represents a strong and active group of volunteers in the Ashcroft/Cache Creek area. While not traditionally involved in program delivery, the Lions have a respected position among the residents, and feel that with the support of the community and local agencies, along with the mentorship of the Kamloops *Better at Home* program, that they are prepared to take on this opportunity. Notable strengths include:

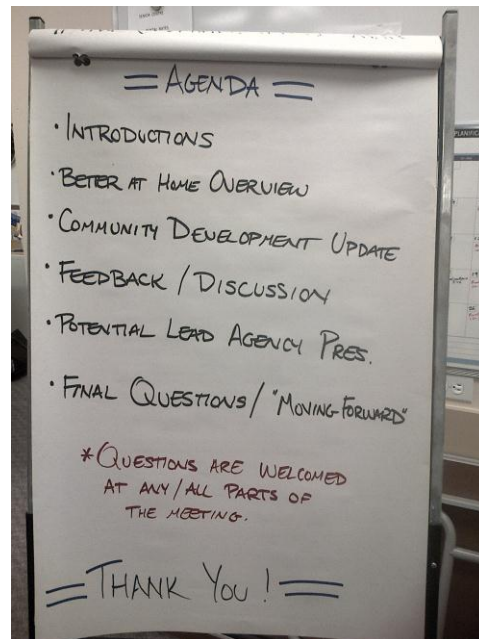
- Large pool of committed volunteers
- Strong capacity in membership representing former business owners, municipal councilors, service sector workers, local members of the seniors' community, etc.
- Long history of volunteer service in the area.
- History and willingness to collaborate with other groups/agencies in the area to support the community.

Selection Process:

There were two Community Meetings held: one in Logan Lake, and one in Ashcroft (representing the Ashcroft/Cache Creek area). In each meeting, there was only one Potential Lead Agency present: in Logan Lake this was the Logan Lake WHY; in Ashcroft/Cache Creek, the organization aiming to deliver Better at Home was the Ashcroft and District Lions Club. The meetings included an introduction to the *Better at Home* program, a brief

feedback session, and time for Potential Lead Agencies to announce their bid for the program and field questions from the community.

In both meetings, the feedback from the communities reinforced the Potential Lead Agencies proposal; both groups were identified as having trusted positions within the community, while having the capacity and expertise to offer the program successfully.



Following each Community Meeting, an informal Key Stakeholder meeting was held; next steps were discussed, and contact information of potential Steering Committee members were collected. Due to the segmented nature of this particular site, there was an additional, Joined Key Stakeholder meeting held after the Community and Stakeholder meetings in Ashcroft: representatives of the Logan Lake portion of the program joined members of the proposed Ashcroft/Cache Creek portion of the program to establish initial communication. The Joined Key Stakeholder meeting provided the first opportunity for the two agencies to connect and establish a partnership.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS/CONCLUSION

- **Service Coordination:** understanding the roles various agencies have in lives of seniors in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, and Logan Lake to better identify gaps in service is a strongly suggested starting point; this step will also encourage strong community engagement.
 - **Collaboration:** given the complexity between existing assets, needs, and services, it is highly recommended that the Lead Agency collaborate with local organizations and groups to coordinate effective services.
 - **Advocacy:** drawing from the feedback in both of the community meetings, there is a strong drive to provide formalized support for the needs of seniors in Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake that can move beyond the boundaries of the *Better at Home* program.
 - **Communication:** regular contact and contribution to the online *Better at Home* Community of Practice, open and supportive meetings with the Advisory Committee and scheduled meetings with Field Coordinator are all recommended for the continued success of the program. In addition to existing *Better at Home* streams of communication, connection with communities outside of the *Better at Home* site will heighten the profile of seniors' needs in and out of Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake.
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***Conclusion:***

The *Better at Home* community development process was a success in this multi-community site; the process revealed community the needs/assets for seniors in the area, identified potential Lead Agencies, gathered local stakeholders, and established space designated to address the non-medical needs of independent seniors in Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake. Based on the support and potential partnerships offered by non-profit agencies, local businesses, the Health Authority and all three village councils; the engagement of several local experts willing to help guide the process; a supportive mentoring relationship with existing *Better at Home* programs; and a dedicated and active volunteer core, there is great confidence that the *Better at Home* program will directly address the needs of seniors in Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake.

6. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A: List of Community Assets

- Interior Health Centers
 - Ashcroft Women's Auxiliary
 - Thompson View Manor Society
 - Elisabeth Fry Society
 - Lions Clubs
 - Service Clubs: Rotary, Legion, Royal Purple, etc.
 - Logan Lake Wellness Health Youth (WHY)
 - Village Councils (Ashcroft, Cache Creek and Logan Lake)
 - Community Libraries
 - Ashcroft/Cache Creek Seniors Centre
 - Arts Council
 - Local Newspapers/Newsletters
 - Religious Centers: churches, temples, etc.
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6.2 Appendix B: Documented Media Coverage

- Early April (specific date unknown), email recognition: Village of Ashcroft website -
http://www.ashcroftbc.ca/services_for_senior_citizens
- May 23rd, 2013: Media Release
- June 27th, 2013: Interview with Logan Lake writer regarding the Logan Lake Community Meeting - to be submitted to outlying community newspapers (*Merritt Herald*, for example)

*All media outlets (including newsprint, radio, and online sources) were contacted with a news release to promote the program and the Community Meeting.

6.3 Appendix C: Community Meeting Posters

50 Copies (25 each poster), Standard Letter Size



United Way



United Way helping seniors
remain independent.

Better at Home is funded by the Government of British Columbia.

COMMUNITY MEETING

Better at Home is a program delivered by local non-profit agencies to help seniors live in their own homes longer, among friends, family and neighbours. Ideas, questions and suggestions about the Logan Lake program are encouraged at the upcoming Community Meeting.

Everyone is welcome to attend the community meeting:

**Wednesday, May 29th, 2013 from 2-4pm at the
Logan Lake Seniors Centre (next to the public library)**

For more information go to betterathome.ca or email jennifer.dustin@gmail.com



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COMMUNITY MEETING

Better at Home is a program delivered by local non-profit agencies to help seniors live in their own homes longer, among friends, family and neighbours. Ideas, questions and suggestions about the Ashcroft/Cache Creek program are encouraged at the upcoming Community Meeting.

Everyone is welcome to attend the community meeting:

**Thursday, May 30th, 2013 from 11-1pm at the
Ashcroft Seniors Centre (601 Bancroft St., Ashcroft, BC)**

For more information go to betterathome.ca or email jennifer.dustin@gmail.com
