



Better at Home

Community Development Report; North Okanagan

Sue Rossi
September, 2013

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The North Okanagan Better at Home Community Report

1. Introduction

1.1 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



The North Okanagan (Vernon and surrounding communities) has been identified as a potential Better at Home site. Sue Rossi; Community Developer 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

Gathering information in Vernon was done by using four different approaches, which allowed for as much input from the community as possible:

1. Focus Groups
2. Key Interviews
3. Presentations
4. Surveys

Focus Groups: 7 focus groups held

- over 130 people attended
- Seniors and people who care for seniors
- People who work with seniors
- Non profit seniors' services
- Privately owned seniors' services providers
- Some examples: Interior Health; Integrated Health Team, Seniors Mental Health Team, College, Heart to Heart Services, self advocates, Investors group and more.

Key Interviews: 15 interviews about an hour in length

- Non-profit agencies and service organizations
- Community Response Network
- Regional (Regional District of the North Okanagan; Regional Growth Strategy Coordinator), provincial (Eric Foster) and federal government (Colin Mayes; MP)
- Handy Dart
- Private service providers
- BCGEU President
- Health Services (Life line, day programs)

Presentations: Over 150 people in total attendance. Some examples include the Birthday Lunch at the Schubert Centre, Old Age Pensioners meeting, and at the Seniors Action Network meeting.

Paper surveys (see Appendix A – survey template) were also made available for the public to complete and return to the Seniors Information and Resource Bureau and the Schubert Centre. Surveys were also made available to the public at the presentations and focus groups. Ten surveys handed back completed. Eight identified themselves as seniors and two as service providers. Also two people provided their contact information because they were interested in becoming members of an advisory committee.

The results of the findings were provided at the Community Presentation meeting held on September 20th, 2013. There were over 70 people in attendance. At the end of the presentation, the floor was opened for further feedback, input and suggestions on Better at Home in Vernon and outlying rural communities of the North Okanagan.

People attending the Community Presentation meeting were representing Vernon, Coldstream, Lavington, Spallumcheen, Armstrong and Lumby. Although the community development approach focused on Vernon, the outlying community representatives felt the issues, needs and wants were the same as the findings for Vernon. (Community Meeting Summary– Appendix B)

2. Community Profile

2.1 Description of the Local Seniors' Population

There are a large numbers of seniors living in the North Okanagan region. According to 2011 BC Stats Community Facts (www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca), the BC average distribution of people aged 65 and older is 15.7%.

The City of Vernon has a general population of 38,990 people. Of this population, 8,795 people are 65+ or 23%.

The City of Coldstream has a general population of 10,319 people and of this, 1,615 people are 65+ or 15.8%.

The Village of Lumby has a general population of 1,863 people and of this, 345 people are 65+ or 19.9%.

The Municipality of Spallumcheen has a general population of 5,155 people and of this, 845 are 65+ or 16%.

The City of Armstrong has a general population of 4,413 people and of this, 1,095 are 65+ or 22.7%.

BC Stats website did not provide information about Okanagan First Nations On-Reserve Populations.

The North Okanagan overall has approximately 7,965 males aged 65 and over and 9,115 females aged 65 and over or 21% of the population base.

The seniors that took part in the community development process ranged from characteristics of being healthy, fit and active to disabled (mobility, hearing or disease) and/or showed signs of advanced aging (Dementia and Alzheimer's).

It will be important for the North Okanagan Better at Home project to be flexible in its service delivery model to accommodate each individual's needs and desires for services and to respect the cultural diversity of the seniors and Elders living in this vast geographical region. (Appendix C – The North Okanagan)

2.2 Summary of Community Assets

Vernon has three main seniors' centres:

- a) Seniors Information and Resource Bureau (SIRB)
- b) The Schubert Centre
- c) The Halina Centre

There are also many support groups available such as: Multiple Sclerosis, Brain Injury and the New Hope for Widow/ers support groups.

Clubs provide many local services through Rotary, Elks, Lions, Army and Navy, Legion, and the Shriners.

There are a variety of organizations and committees for seniors as well. Examples are the Seniors Action Network and Old Age Pensioners.

There is a multitude of activities to enjoy, such as: dancing, crafts, table tennis, meals, card games, hiking and walking clubs and singles clubs for over 50.

Privately operated companies and individuals are available such as: home and personal care, yard work, maintenance and repair, foot and hair care and house cleaning.

Vernon also has the Vernon Jubilee Hospital, Interior Health's Integrated Health Care Services, adult day programs, social workers and mental health and addictions workers. There is also a Community Response Network and a transition house for women.

Each of these community services and resources play a part in providing seniors and their families and care-givers with a variety of supports, education, transportation, information, advocacy, medical care and helping with day to day tasks.

(See Appendix D- Community Assets)

Note: The Okanagan First Nations, Armstrong, Spallumcheen, Coldstream, and Lumby are not specifically covered in this section of the report, as they did not have the opportunity to fully participate in this part of the community development process. This was largely due to time frame restrictions, although the public focus groups were advertised and open invitation to all North Okanagan community members. The focus groups and presentations were all held in Vernon.

2.3 Seniors' Needs Related to Non-Medical Home Support Services

The main issues facing seniors in Vernon to living at home longer in their own homes are:

- Communication causing confusion about information – difficult to navigate; especially computer only information or phone menus
- There is a need for a “one stop” shop – a reliable service outlet where providers of services can be trusted, responsible and build a relationship
- People are afraid to just phone anyone and explain their situation – afraid to be taken advantage of (Seniors' scams)
- Money and rising costs
- Mobility issues
- Most seniors are independent and don't want to seek help or want to bother anyone. What can happen is the senior will tackle a job, say climbing a ladder, lose their balance and end up in the hospital. If seniors wait until they are desperate for help, then there becomes a multitude of issues
- “We don't need help” attitude, especially with couples
- Lose their confidence (balance, hearing, out of touch, no car license) and become lonely, isolated and possibly depressed
- Losing a driver's license and having to find public transportation can be very frightening (one woman told me she had been driving for 50 years and had never taken a bus)
- Family issues – does the family support the person to stay at home with some help of time/money and energy? Do they live close by? Are they on the same page for care giving as the other siblings?

- Transitions and change can be very difficult
- Staying healthy and vital – easy access to transportation for food and medical appointments, keeping their homes clean and tidy, maintaining their investment (house) with yard work and odd jobs (gutters etc) and keeping and feeling safe (friendly visits, knowing someone is there, snow and ice removal, ladder climbing)
- Sense of neighborhood and community involvement
- We need a Seniors “911” (Help/Search engine)

“With seniors – you don’t send them to places – you take them”

2.4 Suggested Opportunities for Service Integration and Coordination

The North Okanagan has a long history of the communities’ abilities to work collaboratively and to share and exchange information, services and resources. This region already has existing structure that lends itself to service integration and coordination.

The integrated care teams that I spoke with already were familiar with SIRB’s seniors helping seniors program for referrals. The Whitevalley Community Resource Centre in Lumby; which serves seniors along with the seniors centre in Lumby, is well connected to the integrated interior health teams. Through these informal connections, which have created tremendous communication channels, seniors are able to access wrap around services whether they live in a rural area of the North Okanagan or in the largest city population of Vernon.

The advisory committee has already representatives from the outer lying communities offering to fill positions, which will be a value added for the host agency as they move forward on the Better at Home services.

The opportunity is there for cross valley marketing and promotion through two large newspapers that distribute and through the Seniors Directory which will be providing advertisement and contact information for Better at Home in their next edition.

3. Community Readiness

3.1 Explanation of Community Readiness that Reflects Community Consultations and Meetings

Better at Home was widely accepted by the North Okanagan region residents. Although there are existing seniors' centres and services, there is a need for the coordination of the services. There are existing infrastructures in each of the North Okanagan communities, although each community is unique in its capacity and available programming. Better at Home was welcomed during the community consultations as it will strengthen the existing infrastructures and bring connectiveness to the region by linking the unique qualities of the communities.

There are currently community volunteers in Vernon who serve seniors; for example, through driving programs, grocery shopping assistance, friendly telephone calls, and tax preparation. Some of these services are also available in the outlying rural communities, although not all of them in all of the communities. Better at Home will assist the outlying communities by being able to build onto the services that do exist and fill in the gaps where there isn't currently the service identified as a priority.

Overall, the community development process was very positive. There was an appetite for more and more focus groups, interviews and presentations. Further conversations will need to be held with groups as Better at Home rolls out, such as; outlying community groups, Neighbourlink, Okanagan Indian Band, New Immigrant Society and City of Vernon Mayor. There was no lack of people who wanted to dedicate their time to remain involved with this project.

The North Okanagan region is ready and willing to provide Better at Home for their senior population.

3.2 Potential Risks Going Forward

Some of the potential risks for this project that will need to be included in conversations as the project moves forward are:

- Geography – which boundaries are going to fit within Better at Home service delivery?
- Coordination of the project – how will a coordinator or coordinators be able to respond to the needs of seniors throughout a region, rather than a single community project?
- Communication – will each community feel included in a regional decision making model?
- Equity – will population base (i.e. Vernon) count more than expensive rural outreach to less people when determining a service delivery model?
- Capacity – each organization working within the regional model will need to support the community agencies with less capacity and moderate the amount of work load on the smaller organizations
- Supply and demand – with such a large population of seniors spread out over the communities, will there be a lean towards vulnerable seniors rather than the general population

4. Local Better at Home 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

Common Themes in Priority:

- **Transportation** – [number one in all conversations as a need](#) –

Currently, there are HandyDART, bus, taxi, service at the seniors' information and resource bureau, privately owned businesses, delivery of groceries from Safeway, walking (slippery and dark in the winter and extremely hot in the summer) and your own vehicle but gas can be very expensive. Also, what about the outlying rural areas?

Ideally there would be transportation available through Better at Home that didn't have the requirements of HandyDART (eligible, phoning ahead, cost and not always convenient for multiple stops, not offered evenings and weekends), didn't have the limitations of the bus (lengthy routes, infrequent schedules, cost and some fear associated with ridership), taxi costs and volunteer or private business driving program costs. People need rides for day to day tasks, medical appointments, outings and social or entertainment events.



➤ **House Cleaning**

House cleaning was definitely second on the list. Associated with keeping the house clean was a sense of feeling good. If the house is clean then the rest is manageable. If aches and pains got in the way of house cleaning, then the person couldn't do anything else for the rest of the day – exhausting. The integrated care teams used to be able to do some of the chores, but with cut backs they don't have the time to do this anymore. It's the day to day help with the little things like tucking in fitted bed sheets, cleaning the bottom shelves, the little fix its that we need around the home. It's particularly important when a person is living alone and recovering from an illness or injury.

As safety, this is important for food preparation, mice (garbage), spreading of germs for low immunity or clutter that can lead to falls. Prevention is the key to crisis and the beginning of the “unraveling” of someone’s life.

"I can't do the housekeeping – especially the tub or anything that requires getting down on my knees – I can't do the edges or bottom cupboards"

➤ **Shopping**

Many people identified shopping as a need for seniors. Although Safeway will deliver if your order is over \$25.00, this doesn't always address the shopping issues. As we know, shopping isn't always for food or prescriptions. It's very difficult to manage multiple shopping bags if you are walking or taking a bus and especially if you are disabled in some way or another. A problem occurs when there needs to be assistance in getting to the shop, bringing home the bags and as well unloading or unpacking them too.

➤ **Home Maintenance, Adaptation and Small Repairs (installing safety equipment, hanging fixtures, carpentry and plumbing etc.)**

It's very hard to find a handyman that can come and do multiple tasks. For example, if my tap is dripping, I have to call a plumber and if my deck needs painting, I have to phone a painter and if my lawn mower needs to have gas poured into it – well who do I call then? The point is home maintenance is very important and if it all adds up, and then seniors start to wonder if they really can live at home by themselves. Large family homes that people have raised their children in often need adaptations as people age. Why transition to a smaller house when you are not ready, when you can adapt?

➤ **Friendly visits and companionship**

Loneliness is a reality for some seniors living in Vernon and the outlying rural areas, especially when the person has trouble getting out and about or is hard of hearing. Friendly visits are about building a relationship with someone in the community and can be anything from having a cup of tea or going on a short walk or a scenic drive.

➤ **Seasonal Yard Services**

Well living in a four seasons community, there is always yard work and this came up a lot at the groups and in the interviews. Curb appeal is important to the house owner. Yard services could include garden start up, tree pruning, leaf raking, snow and ice removal and gutter cleaning for the rainy days. The benefits of enjoying the back yard are tremendous and getting things started in the spring and tidied up in the fall was paramount to the seniors.

Other Considerations:

- Moving and downsizing and taking stuff to the dump
- Pet sitting (especially for seniors' entering or exiting hospital stays)
- Personal care – hair/foot/nails – not bathing
- More adult day programs
- Specialized training for volunteers especially for hard of hearing and deaf
- Marketing and getting the word out
- Outreach to outer lying communities

Meal preparation, cooking and serving of meals was brought up in focus groups quite often. Although Better at Homes does not offer this in their basket of services, it's worth noting in this report as an identified need. Local Meals on Wheels services have started up through the Schubert Seniors' Centre and have had instant popularity.

4.2 Key Lead Organization Criteria Identified by the Community

During focus groups, interviews, and surveys, the community identified various criteria for an appropriate lead organization to deliver Better at Home services. The top criteria identified are shown below:

- Knows how to recruit, train, keep and value volunteers
- Can coordinate services; not duplicate them
- Can work closely with partners and create a referral system; under one umbrella enhancing existing partners and services
- Good communication
- Can provide person to person service; people talk too quickly on the phone, use jargon and government words
- Experience with the diverse population of senior's needs, economics and abilities

- Flexibility in service and centrally located
- Provide a welcoming comfort level to the senior
- Seek sustained funding for at least 5 years
- No conflict of interest of the association
- Experience with seniors bureaucracy
- Be able to reach seniors living outside of Vernon
- Visible, ground level and easily accessible

4.3 Proposed Lead Organization – including Commentary on the Identification Process and Rationale for Why They Were Chosen

From the beginning of the community consultations, it was obvious that the Vernon Seniors Information and Resource Bureau (SIRB) and the Schubert Centre would make good partners by pooling their resources and reaching their networks of the senior population in Vernon (and area) by using their strengths within each of the organizations. Both organizations fit the criteria that was gathered as a result of the focus groups.

SIRB is co-located with the Volunteer Bureau and has already developed a data base of volunteers which provide services very similar to the Better at Home program. They have also designed intake and screening processes for people requesting services and use a well managed plan for recruitment, screening, retention and follow up for their volunteer base. They specialize in resource and referral and have contact with vulnerable seniors looking for some extra assistance.

The Schubert Centre is a hub of the downtown core where a majority of seniors housing complexes and apartments are located. They have a large facility that offers a myriad of activities, as well as food services, catering, a small bus and a thrift shop. They also employ many volunteers and have great success within their programs. The Schubert Centre has a large membership and is well connected with the more active seniors in Vernon, and they also offer programming for the “not so” active seniors as well.

SIRB and Schubert Centre representatives were active in participating in the public focus group discussions and presentations. The Halina Centre was informed and interested, although they did not see themselves as taking on the role of implementing the Better at Home program.

Following the focus groups and prior to the Community Presentation, three meetings were held with combinations of the Schubert Centre, SIRB, United Way, the provincial Better at Home field coordinator and the local community developer for Better at Home. This gave the organizations and some of their board members an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss the partnership that could be developed.

Together, they decided that the Seniors Information and Resource Bureau would host the Better at Home program and identified the Schubert Centre as a partner in their agreement with the Better at Home; United Way of the Lower Mainland office.

This was further discussed at the Stakeholder and Advisory Committee meeting (which followed the Community Presentation). The group attending had an opportunity to support this partnership through understanding the rationale behind the model.

5. Recommendations and Next Steps

- The stakeholders and advisory members continue to meet and work on the details of implementation of the North Okanagan Better at Home
- The host agency builds a strong relationship with its partners and together, they can define their roles and responsibilities to the project and to take into consideration the potential risks
- The host agency develops a relationship with the Better at Home provincial office as a support to this project
- Once the stakeholders have decided on their Better at Home services and delivery of services, that there is a public awareness campaign about the program to ensure the community is aware of the project

In summary, this project has been fast paced, exciting and has provided the host agency and its partners with useful information to guide the North Okanagan Better at Home program.

I would personally like to thank all of the people who made time to participate in the project, gather people together to share their input with the development phase and for all the warm welcoming smiles and opportunities that arose during the community development presentations and interviews. I would also like to thank Linda and Sylvia of United Way of North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap for all their support.

6. Appendices

A – Vernon Survey Template

B – Community Meeting Summary

C – The North Okanagan

D – Community Assets

E - Media

F – Stakeholder/Advisory Meeting Notes – September 20th



United Way



United Way helping seniors remain independent.

Appendix A

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

Vernon Community Development Survey

Are you a... Senior and/or a Service provider

1. What are the main issues to keep Vernon seniors living longer in their own homes?

2. What services and programs are currently offered that help Vernon seniors live longer in their homes—and who provides them?

Service

Provider

b. Are they accessible? _____

3. What non-medical home support services from the Better at Home basket of services are needed in Vernon?

Light housekeeping

Friendly visiting

Grocery shopping

Transportation to appointments

Simple home repairs

Snow shovelling

Light yard work

a. What non-medical home support services not listed above do you think are needed in Vernon?

4. What criteria would be important for a strong lead organization to offer Better at Home services in Vernon?

5. If you are interested in being on the Advisory Committee, please provide name and telephone:

Use back of the page for additional comments.

For more info - call Sue, Coordinator at 250-549-4534 OR Linda, United Way at 250-549-1346.

Drop off your completed survey at the Schubert Centre, 3505 - 30th Avenue

OR the Seniors Information & Resource Bureau, #102, 3201 - 30th Street

Appendix B: North Okanagan Better at Home Community Meeting Notes

Held on September 20th, 2013 The Schubert Centre From 10:00 until Noon

Attendance – over 70 people; a mix of people who had attended previous focus groups and presentations and some new to Better at Home

Debbie Sharp provided an overview of the provincial Better at Home role by Power Point

Sue Rossi provided the local findings of the Vernon Better at Home community development process by Power Point

The crowd was asked if there were any other issues or information that could be identified that was not recognized in the Vernon community report. The following were generated from the audience:

Other Community Assets:

- The Family Resource Centre of the North Okanagan has programs for seniors to follow up on
- The Crisis Line does friendly morning call ins
- There is a Good Morning Call in program in Lumby
- “Creative Expression” Program to keep people’s minds active (held at the Schubert Centre)

Issues:

- How do we reach seniors to come out to programs? Is it transportation, hearing, alone and frightened, fear of slipping on the ice, or lack of motivation?
- Having to look after an aging parent can cause huge stress in the family
- Even if we provide food, the person doesn’t always eat because they want company
- Not wanting strangers in their home
- Where do we start? How do we prioritize services?
- It’s a paradox since the money can only go so far – do we focus on the most vulnerable or all seniors?

Host Agency suggestions:

- Base fee scale on some verification so people don't take advantage of the program
- Reliable services are essential
- Programs need to understand the way seniors think
- Better at Home needs to be a collaboration amongst organizations
- The organization needs to be able to respond to various needs and not have the "it's not in our mandate" attitude. Work with people on a person to person basis
- Be able to provide a "personal" touch to their services
- Be able to provide support, resources and education for the caregivers of aging parents. If the caregivers are struggling, then the host agency needs to refer them to locally supports and workshops
- Be able to provide the costs of volunteers' expenses (gas, parking, meals etc.)
- The local advisory needs to work with the provincial advisory to assist continuity and quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation

Things to consider:

- Hire retired trades' people on a sub contract approach. This lifts their energy, gives them some money, and they help others. Get the young people from the schools involved with the retired trades' people to create jobs
- Eating and food are so important and having enough to eat. Food preparation is a huge gap

Debbie spoke about the limitations of Better at Home in regards to food, which is why this priority wasn't in Sue's report.

Snacks and refreshments were made available. The presentation ended by noon and was followed by lunch and a meeting for the stakeholders.

Appendix C: Discover the North Okanagan

Facts

- The North Okanagan encompasses the area from the City of Armstrong and Township of Spallumcheen in the north to the Villages of Lumby and Cherryville to the east, with Greater Vernon in the middle. Greater Vernon includes City of Vernon, Coldstream, the BX area, and Silver Star Mountain.
- With a moderate climate producing wonderfully warm spring weather, beautifully hot and sunny summers, mild autumns and temperate winters, the North Okanagan boasts a limitless amount of recreational activities all year long, such as skiing, boating, golfing, hiking and rock climbing.

Communities

Vernon

Vernon is situated between Okanagan and Kalamalka Lakes, two of BC's most beautiful and popular recreation destinations. Vernon is the hub of the North Okanagan with a population of 38,990. Vernon offers more than 100 lakes within a one-hour drive, world-class golf, mountain and wellness resorts, great beaches and trails, outstanding mountain biking, spectacular farmers' markets three days a week, and family-friendly attractions and festivals.

Coldstream

Coldstream is a district municipality located at the northern end of Kalamalka Lake directly southeast of Vernon and is considered part of Greater Vernon. Coldstream is best known for the Coldstream Ranch, established in 1863. Population: 10,319.

Armstrong

The City of Armstrong is located 22 km north of Vernon on Highway 97, and is well known for hosting the Interior Provincial Exhibition and Stampede, BC's largest country fair,. While agriculture, logging, and ranching remain a dominant portion of the economy of Armstrong and the Spallumcheen Valley, tourism increasingly plays a significant role in the economic activity of the area. Armstrong and the surrounding area feature many attractions including museums, golf courses, water sports, snow sports including skiing and snowmobile riding, boating, fishing and hiking trails. Population: 4,413.

Spallumcheen

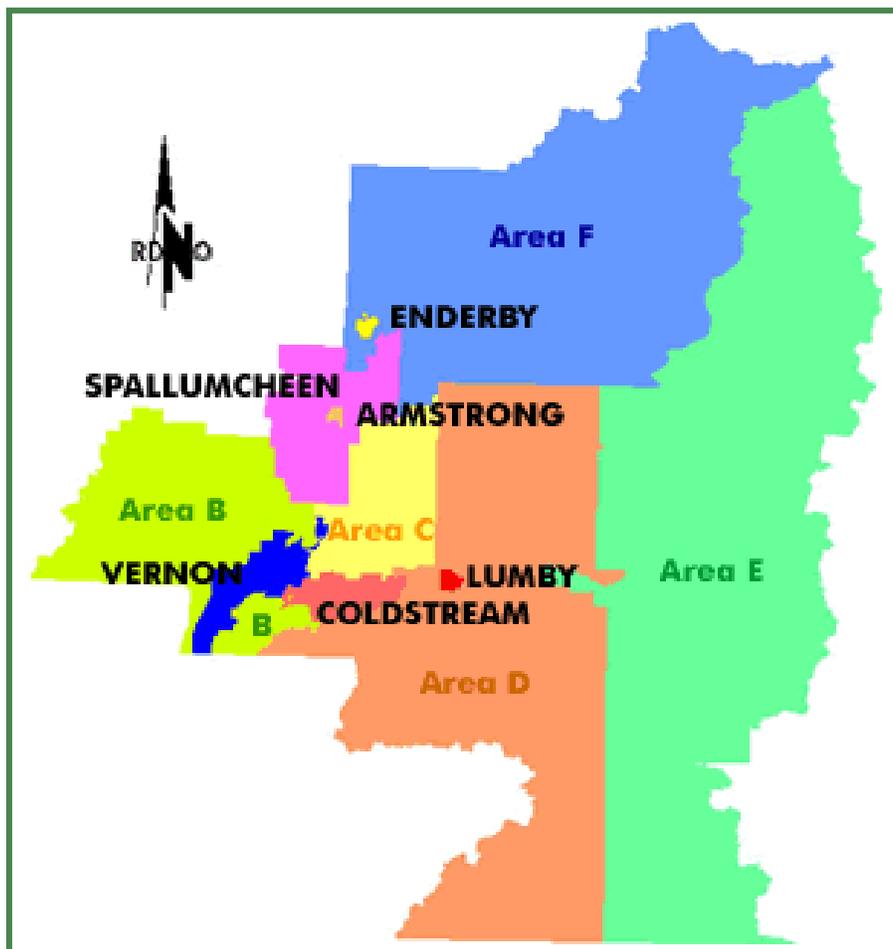
The Township of Spallumcheen is a district municipality consisting primarily of agricultural land surrounding the separately incorporated City of Armstrong and is the oldest rural municipality in the BC Interior (incorporated in 1892). Population: 5,155

Lumby

The Village of Lumby is a small community of 1,863 east of Vernon on Highway 6.. It is mainly a logging, manufacturing and agriculture community. The village is home to a vast network of trails along the creekbeds, known collectively as the Salmon Trail. Hang Gliding and Paragliding are also very popular in Lumby.

Cherryville

Cherryville is a community in the foothills of the Monashee Mountains with a population of approximately 614. It is located 22 km east of Lumby, along Highway 6. Originally an area of orchards, ranching and logging are major industries in the community. Recreation opportunities in the Cherryville area include bird watching, gold panning, skiing, hiking, camping, horseback tours, and fishing.



Appendix D: Community Assets

Organization	Contact
Seniors Information and Resource Bureau	250-545-8572
Shubert Centre	3505 30th Avenue Vernon, BC. Canada V1T 2E6 T: 250-549-4201 E: info@schubertcentre.ca
Halina Centre	3310 - 37th Avenue 250-542-2877
Old Age Pensioners #6	250-545-0075
Okanagan Indian Band (Wellness Centre)	250-558-3957
Whitevalley Community Resource Centre (Lumby)	250-547-8866
Seniors Drop in Centre (Lumby)	250-547-8821
Armstrong Seniors' Activity Centre	250-546-8307
Community Response Network	250-545-9292 #107 3402 27th Avenue; Vernon, BC V1T 1S1 info@irlc.bc.ca
Interior Crisis Line	888-353-2273
Neighbourlink	250-558-5527
Freemasons Volunteer Driving Program	800-299-0188
North Okanagan Hospice Society	250-503-1800
Vernon and District Volunteer Bureau	250-545-0585
CNIB	1-800-563-2642
Community Care Health Services; Interior Health (IH) Teams 1-5	250-541-2200 250-541-2206 direct
Seniors Mental Health IH	250-549-6335
IH; Lifeline Program Manager	250-558-1334 David.kelcey@interiorhealth.ca
Okanagan Historical Society	250-545-7673
Senior Literacy Group	lassloc@telus.net

BrainTrust: Brain Injury Services	250-307-6064
Canadian Red Cross	250-545-3111
Compassionate Friends	250-558-7605
Community Dental Access Centre	250-308-4613
Heart and Stroke Foundation	250-558-5815
North Okanagan Family Resource Centre	250-545-3390
First Nations Friendship Centre	250-542-1247
Mood Disorders Support	250-558-6900
MS Society	250-542-2241
Vernon and District Immigrant Services Society	250-542-4177
Community Guide to Better Living 50+	250-503-3887 Robert@experiencegroup.ca
City of Vernon	250-545-1361
Regional District of the North Okanagan	9848 Aberdeen Road, Coldstream V1B 2K9 250-550-3750
Local BCGEU Chair (805)	Mikeconnolly.bcgeu@gmail.com
IHA – Corporate administration chair; board of directors	250-804-0099 250-804-3459 cell nembree@shaw.ca
MP Colin Mayes	250-260-5020
MLA Eric Foster	250-503-3600
Minister of State for Seniors	Brian – 250-833-2156 Barb Ewans – 250-306-0912 Barb.ewens@gov.bc.ca
North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap United Way	250-549-1346

Appendix E: Media

The Morning Star was instrumental in the media coverage for the North Okanagan Better at Home project.

Each public forum event was advertised to the public two weeks prior to the event with time, location and details of Better at Home using key messages. There was a comprehensive article on Better at Home published a few days prior to the Community Presentation. This was very helpful for increasing the attendance to the event.

Better at Home will also be featured in the 5th anniversary edition of the Experience 50+ Living. This directory reaches the communities of Greater Vernon, Lumby, and Armstrong, as well as: Salmon Arm, Enderby, Sicamous and Sorrento, Chase and Lake Country. There are over 7000 copies published and distributed throughout 270 locations in the region. Better at Home was given 325 words for free as well as the listing in the directory.

Program helps seniors to do ‘Better at Home’

By Katherine Mortimer - Vernon Morning Star
Published: **September 18, 2013 1:00 AM**

Many North Okanagan seniors first moved to the area when their children were young. Now, some of them may find that they need a little extra help in order to remain in the family home.

Thanks to Better at Home, they can. Introduced in 68 B.C. communities, the program is designed to help seniors with day-to-day tasks to help them live independently and remain connected to the community. Services are provided by local non-profit organizations, which are selected through a community engagement process.

“The goal is to help seniors live in their own homes longer and better with non-medical services,” said Sue Rossi, who is facilitating community development of the Better at Home program through the United Way. “My role is to listen to local seniors, and people who work with seniors, for our community and its outlying areas.

“It’s been really well received, and people are pleased to know that the services are based on a sliding fee scale, according to a senior’s ability to pay.”

Rossi has facilitated several presentations and focus groups for the program to get an idea of what seniors need, with the local program set to start early in 2014.

“Some seniors moved here with their families, and bought large family homes that they have been in for 50 years, with laundry downstairs,” she said. “I had one gentleman at the meeting who said we need to encourage younger seniors to downsize when they still can.”

With funding from the provincial Health Services Authority, Better at Home services can include friendly visits, light yard work, minor home repair, snow shovelling, light housekeeping and grocery shopping.

When Rossi has completed the community engagement process, the United Way will hire a Better at Home coordinator, who will act as a central contact for seniors to call.

“That’s a really important point because that’s been a big issue for seniors — who can I trust? They have come from a generation where a handshake meant everything; we’re a little more fearful to let people into our homes, to be wary of people we don’t know, so to have someone to contact for the services they need is key.”

Better at Home services are designed to complement existing community supports, including those offered by regional health authorities.

“In speaking with seniors, a number of issues have come up, such as transportation,” said Rossi. “There are gaps in service — we do have buses and taxis; we have the volunteer driver program through the Seniors Information & Resource Bureau, but even with all those options, there still seems to be, ‘I need someone to come into the house, to get me to the car, to get groceries,’ and all the other pieces that connect to that.

“We are trying to make it accessible for everybody, to fill in the gaps and to work with service providers.”

APPENDIX F: North Okanagan Stakeholder/Advisory Meeting Notes, September 20th, 2013

Attending: 16 stakeholders plus United Way of North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap (Linda Yule and Sylvia Arneson), Better at Home Provincial Field Coordinator (Debbie Sharp) and Better at Home Community Developer (Sue Rossi)

Representatives from: North Okanagan Employment Enhancement Society, Okanagan College, Okanagan Senior Transitions, Catherine Gardens, Schubert Centre, Aboriginal Community Elders Society, Heart to Heart Services, Interior Health, Seniors Information and Resource Bureau, Saferhome Society, NexusBC, Master's Student, Senior from Vernon.

Others who wanted to attend, but were unable: Okanagan Home Management and Consulting Services, Retired Social Worker, Community Response Network, Whitevalley Community Resource Centre and Old Age Pensioners #6.

There were three main topics for the afternoon meeting:

1. Review of the morning community presentation
2. Discussion about the best approach to implementing Better at Home in the North Okanagan
3. Decision about the host agency and moving forward

Considerations (from the flip chart notes):

- This is an opportunity to work together and bring resources and information together for seniors
- It will provide a way for organizations to work cohesively
- Communication is the key
- Promotion is important through newspapers, posters and word of mouth (no acronyms please). Reach out to seniors where seniors are; i.e. immunization clinics, churches, the seniors' centres and newsletters. Use networks, like Interior Health, since some seniors who may need the service can't get out and maybe they don't read the newspaper
- Offer a mix of volunteers and businesses for Better at Home
- Volunteer appreciation is key
- Use Better at Home to leverage funding; e.g. talk to the Age Friendly Community Committees
- Include the communities of Coldstream, Lumby, Armstrong and the Okanagan Band
- Build on existing programs and networks

Identified next steps:

- The Seniors Information and Resource Bureau (soon to be NexusBC) will host the Better at Home project and include the Schubert Centre in the contract agreement with the Provincial Better at Home office as a partner.
- Bring the “community” stakeholders and advisory together to further discuss a regional Better at Home program
- Explore other Better at Home regional models in the province and determine a good strategy for the North Okanagan

Both Sue Rossi as Better at Home Community Developer, Debbie Sharp the Better at Home Provincial Field Coordinator and myself as the local United Way representative would like to thank all who have participated to bring this initiative through this phase in the North Okanagan.

Going forward, Debbie Sharp will be in contact with NexusBC (formerly the Seniors Information and Resource Bureau).

Sincere thanks,

Linda Yule, Executive Director
United Way North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap

Sue Rossi, Community Developer
Shuswap Better at Home