



Friendly Visiting Makes a Difference

Isolation and loneliness are problems faced by many senior citizens, not just inner city seniors. However, care givers and support providers may be less likely to brave a visit to an inner city rooming house or hotel to see a lonely senior.

Friendly Visiting is a unique opportunity organized by the Volunteer Program. Volunteers are trained and matched up with a senior who would like to receive regular visits.

Friendly visiting can range anywhere from sharing a cup of coffee to reminiscing over photo albums to playing a game of cribbage. Some friendly visitors choose to use regular phone calls as their way of staying connected with a housebound senior.

Long term volunteer and former staff member, Henry Groleau, describes his experiences as “rewarding to know you have made a difference in someone else’s life”.

It’s rewarding to know you have made a difference in someone else’s life.

If you are interested in becoming a Friendly Visitor, contact Sandie at 408-2958 for more information.



Winter Needs

Help keep a senior warmer and safer this winter by donating any of the following;

- long underwear
- large winter coats
 - men’s boots
 - wool socks
- mittens and hats
 - bus tickets

Donations can be dropped off at 9526-106 Ave.

Thank You!



Operation Friendship Loses Founding Member

On October 31, 2001 Sister Mary Zuscar of the Sisters of Providence and a founding member of Operation Friendship, passed away in Edmonton. Sister Mary leaves behind a legacy of social activism and genuine compassion for the poor in society.

Sister Mary served as a nurse for 32 years in Vancouver before coming to Edmonton in 1967. The Sisters of Providence joined with the United Church through the Bissell Centre to respond to the needs of the disadvantaged in the inner city. What they saw were elderly people losing their homes to re-development, elderly people living in poverty and coping with addictions. In response to this need, Operation Friendship opened its doors in 1969 as a one afternoon a week drop-in centre.

Sister Mary served as chair of the committee that was instrumental in the development and construction of Pioneer Place, a 175 unit apartment building which opened in 1977. Another of Sister Mary’s achievements was the publication of the book, “Ten Years on Boyle Street” which chronicles the work undertaken in the inner city.

For Sister Mary, the focus of her work was always the people themselves. The following is an excerpt from her eulogy;

“Sister Mary had feelings of tenderness and enjoyment toward the people themselves. Once she felt an ambulance attendant was being rough with an elderly alcoholic who’d been found unconscious. She prodded the attendants shoulder and said to him, ‘Be careful! That’s a human being you’re handling!’

Looking back on her life, Sister Mary said, ‘Compassion and service have been called into action so often in my lifetime that they have carved a furrow into my being like the waters of a stream cut a course into the land’.

Sister Mary’s vision started Operation Friendship on the path to the multi-service agency it is today. She will be sorely missed but her legacy will remain.

Hospital Visiting

A stay in the hospital can be frightening and difficult at the best of times but imagine if you are confused, disoriented and alone. This is often the case for inner city seniors who are admitted to hospitals and extended care facilities.

A small group of seniors and staff at Operation Friendship has formed to visit seniors in hospital every Thursday after-

noon. The goal of the group is to keep hospitalized seniors connected to their community and share a supportive friendly visit. At the same time, staff members are also able to address some practical needs such as banking and bringing personal comforts from home.

If you are interested in joining the hospital visiting group, contact Caron at 429-2626.

