

SENIOR SCAPE: The Benefits of Staying Active

By Doug Legallais

Researchers have concluded that remaining physically and socially active throughout life, especially as we age, can be extremely advantageous in maintaining both physical and mental wellbeing as well as keeping feelings of loneliness and isolation at bay.

The more we are able to exercise and keep socially active the more chance we have of feeling fulfilled and healthy.

One of the best places for seniors to find an outlet for both exercise and social interaction is at a local Seniors' Centre. Seniors' Centres offer a wide variety of activities and clubs to fulfill a wide range of interests and abilities. They are also a meeting place for people in the community to gather together.

At the Aurora Seniors' Centre you can find a wide range of physical activities to become involved with such as: Pickle Ball, Bocci, Zumba, the Walking Club, Chair Tai Chi or Chair Stretch. For those interested in more artistic endeavours there are the Sewing, Knitting or Woodworking clubs as well as the Drama Club or the Choir.

Along with the above options, the Centre offers many games including: Bridge, Bid Euchre, Snooker, Ping Pong or Mahjong. This is just a short list of the many activities available.

The Aurora Seniors' Centre also acts as a social gathering place.

It's a wonderful spot to get together with friends for the Wednesday lunch, Tuesday night movie or the Friday night dance. Others opt to just sit in the lounge and chat at their leisure. There also are a wide range of outings including: day trips to the Blue Jays game or the casino, or trips to see both local and professionally staged plays. Recently some of our members headed out for a four-day trip to Chicago.

One of the most rewarding activities at the Centre is the volunteer program. There are numerous jobs that need to be done that involve people of diverse talent and experience. Volunteers report that they really enjoy their work at the Centre.

Being both socially and physically active cannot prevent or cure a chronic illness, however, exercise does boost the immune system which can decrease the impact of certain diseases.

Exercise is one of the best ways to increase bone density. Bone is a living organism and by exercising you increase blood flow, which aids the bone in staying strong. This can help enormously in easing osteoporosis and can help prevent fractures.

As well, physical exercise has significant impact on your cardiac system and helps lower blood pressure. Both physical exercise and socially active pursuits help with overall health.

People who are isolated and lonely have more problems with sleep issues and depression. By getting out and being among people, seniors can ease or slow down the progression of many brain disorders such as dementia.

Finally, being around people and pursuing activities you enjoy helps create a better quality of life.

So, whatever you choose to do, whether it be activities at the Seniors' Centre or activities and people you choose to be involved with throughout your community, if you get out there and participate in life it's a safe bet you will be happier and healthier!

As a member I chatted with recently said about the Aurora Seniors' Centre, "Joining the Centre has really had a positive effect on my overall wellbeing."

HAPPENINGS AT THE SENIORS' CENTRE

With a Joyful Song is the title for this year's Evergreen Choir Spring Concert on Saturday, May 26 at 1:30 pm. The cost is \$5 but children 14 and under are free with a ticket. It is a fun event and is usually sold out. Tickets are on sale now at the Reception desk.

The Aurora Seniors Association Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 13. Members in good standing are invited to participate and there is a barbecue that follows for those attending. The cost is \$2.

Snooker League is a mixed player activity that started recently and has met with tremendous success. The new league starts in June. They play on Tuesdays and Thursdays and it is a lot of fun. If you are interested, you may sign up at Reception.

Ladies Foursome at the Herongate Barn Theatre will be performed on Thursday June 21. The cost is \$99 for members and \$110 for non-members. The trip includes lunch and premium seating for the show. You leave by bus at 11:15 a.m. from the Stronach Recreation Centre. For information contact Andrew Bailey at the Aurora Seniors Centre at 905-727-3123, ext. 3611.