

SENIOR SCAPE: Forever Young

By Jim L. Abram

Bob Dylan's 1974 album, Planet Waves, featured the song ?Forever Young? and this is the song that popped into my head when I very recently had the distinct opportunity to interview both Tim Jones and Charles Sequeira, who are both ?forever young?. If you look at the plaque commemorating the opening of our Seniors Centre in 2006, you will see their names, forever young, as they were in 2006 and continue to be in 2013. I'm sure we all know and appreciate their efforts and tenacity, past and present. These few years later, both Tim, then Mayor of Aurora and Charles, then and now President of the Seniors Association, continue to contribute to our community in a meaningful way. Today's column focuses on the good work that Tim and his team do through CHAT's for seniors in Aurora and throughout York Region because it is such a good news story and I like to tell it.

Help's Here!

I have a personal, first-hand association with CHATS. CHATS offer an adult day program that my mother-in-law participates in weekly.

The day program offers a variety of social and wellness activities, companionship and lunch. This has proven to be a convenient and valuable support group that we as caregivers cannot do without. Also, my dear wife Susan, her primary caregiver, also benefits by attending a CHATS Caregiver Support and Education Group. These groups are specially designed to meet the unique needs of those of us who are caring for a senior-aged loved one. These group sessions are available free of charge to participants and are facilitated by a professional Caregiver Education Counsellor and feature workshops with regular guest speakers. Don't think you are alone. You are not alone!

CHATS support the health and wellbeing of seniors and Caregivers. CHATS stands for Community & Home Assistance to Seniors. CHATS was launched in 1980 by a caring group of community members and has grown to evolve to meet the changing needs of more than 7,400 seniors and caregivers each year with the help of over 600 volunteers and 220 staff.

Their programs include in-home help and care, Meals on Wheels, transportation, hospital-to-home transition, caregiver support and education, home medical equipment, seniors' social/wellness programs and much more. I'd like to elaborate on a few of the many support programs CHATS offers.

The Home at Last program helps patients transition from hospital to home easily and comfortably. This service is a home referral program referred to CHATS at the time of discharge and provides a trained and caring personal support worker who will stay with the patient until they are settled, transportation and a small meal or snack on the day of discharge plus pick up groceries and prescriptions if necessary. There are no charges to patients for participating in the program.

The Meals on Wheels program allows you to enjoy a selection of more than 100 tasty, nutritious soups, entrees, breakfasts and desserts. All of this for a low price of \$5 to \$6 per entree and \$2 to \$3 for a dessert, including delivery and there are no additional costs for dietary accommodations.

CHATS is currently offering a free workshop on THE AGING BRAIN: This free workshop series has only the June 21st session remaining on seniors' cognitive and mental health. Learn and share information on the facts about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, understanding how the brain works and assessing brain functions as we age.

To find out more about participation in CHATS programs or becoming a valued CHATS volunteer or donor just call them at 905-713-6596 or 1-877-452-4287. CHATS has recently relocated to new offices at 240 Edward St., Aurora to better serve their many clients.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, email auroraseniors@rogers.com or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.