



Connecting adults 55+
with a happy, healthy life



Our Vision, Mission & Strategic Plan

Vision:

Connecting adults 55+ with a happy, healthy life.

Mission:

Providing services, fostering shared experiences, advancing the well being of adults 55+ in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows.

Value Statements: We strive to ...

- ... be a community leader in relation to issues relevant to adults 55+.
- ... be a welcoming, inclusive, safe centre that celebrates adults 55+.
- ... be a hub of social, fitness, and educational activities for adults 55+.
- ... provide opportunities for volunteerism and community service for our members.
- ... be a caring, compassionate, accessible, and transparent organization that works to improve the lives of our members.
- ... remain relevant and responsive to member needs.



RMSS would like to thank our funders and partners



Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services
Changing Lives Together



WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- ⇒ Make a monetary donation yearly or even monthly
- ⇒ Share with friends and neighbours how RMSS has helped you & encourage them to get involved
- ⇒ Offer the gift of time: volunteer
- ⇒ Invite a friend to try out a new program with you
- ⇒ Ask friends and family to donate to RMSS in lieu of birthday and holidays gifts
- ⇒ Leave a legacy gift

Are you ready, willing and able to serve as a Director on the RMSS Board?

- ✓ Are you passionate about the RMSS vision of Connecting adults 55+ to a happy, healthy life?
- ✓ Are you eager to promote the value of the RMSS services?
- ✓ Do you enjoy working on projects and committees?
- ✓ Do you have 15 - 20 hours per month to give in volunteer hours?

Answer YES to any of these questions? RMSS needs YOU! Put your name forward to serve on our Board of Directors.

Not your time to shine? Pass this along to someone you would like to see on our board!



Board of Directors & Staff

Board of Directors

President- Don Mitchell
 Vice-President- Fran Preston
 Secretary- Bobbi Duncan
 Treasurer- Richard Newman
 Director- Cindy Juker
 Director- Susan Schenkeveld
 Director- Kathleen Spiess
 Director- Joan Thane



Staff

Executive Director, Maria Perretta
 Administration Assistant, Nancy Markham
 Activity Coordinator, Carmen Tischer
 Outreach Coordinator, Bev Schmahmann
 Caregiver Coordinator, Raman Narang
 Volunteer Coordinator, Kara Mathews
 Bookkeeper- Eva Todd
 Facility Coordinator Pitt Meadows- Marcia de Vega
 Facility Attendants Pitt Meadows- Michelle Hochstetter & Sandra Penney
 YouConnect Coordinator- Vanessa De Freitas
 Kitchen Supervisor Maple Ridge- Grace Nunnikhoven
 Food Service Staff- Paula Brandys, Johertz Ross, Jimmy Bahn, & Shasta Goos

President's Report

After the excitement of 2019 and getting both centres back up and running and celebrating our 20th anniversary, 2020 came to a crashing halt due to the covid pandemic. No doubt the closure of most everything in our day to day lives and resultant social isolation were stressing for most of us.

There were some positives, however.

Staff were able to quickly adapt to the situation with a number of programs you will read about in their reports. Fortunately, our kitchen was not affected, and we were able to continue to provide for meals for the community.

While we did have to lay off some staff, we were able to keep the majority working on special projects that had been on hold and planning for the reopening guide lines as they came down. The federal wage subsidy played a major part in being able to do this.

With the first guidelines for reopening came up, a large expenditure was required to put screening in place. We were able to cover a significant portion of that through grants for covid recovery that came available from several organizations.

We were successful in obtaining a number of grants for programs, some of which are up and running and some you will see soon.

At long last we were able to put our insurance claim from the 2018 flood to rest with a mutually agreeable pay out.

As we come out of the 2020/2021 fiscal year, despite significant decreases in our normal income chains, the grants and subsidies we were able to obtain are putting RMSS in a solid financial footing for the next fiscal year.

I would like to thank the board and staff for the diligent work put in over the last year. The ups and downs of yes, we are reopening to no, we aren't, can be very disheartening when you consider the amount of work that goes into the planning and execution. Through it all, everybody kept a positive attitude.

As I am writing this, the centres are both up and running, almost totally back to normal. Hopefully we can keep it that way.

Don Mitchell
President, RMSS

Finance Committee Report

Operating Results for Fiscal year: 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021

The auditor's report was "clean", with no qualifications or areas requiring corrections.

COVID health restrictions and centre closures resulted in a sharp decline in overall revenues despite significant increases in Grants.

Expenses declined in proportion to revenues. While there was a nominal increase in Administrative Costs there was a reduction to Wages and Benefits due to reduced staff hours.

The Balance Sheet shows a healthy cash balance - largely due to increased Grant funds from organizations like the Vancouver Foundation and the government funded Wage Subsidy program.

The Finance Committee recommends the services of PSVC Chartered Professional Accountants to be retained for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

Finance Committee Members

Richard Newman, Treasurer, RMSS Board

Don Mitchell, President, RMSS Board

Maria Perretta, Executive Director

Eva Todd, RMSS Bookkeeper

**For a detailed explanation, please refer to the audited year end financial statements included in this package*

Food Services

The RMSS Kitchens are one of the best kept secrets of our communities. Providing hot, healthy and reasonably priced meals to anyone who would like to take us up on this delicious offer. Lunch is available at both activity centres Monday to Friday. Even during the closure of the centres, takeaway options were available outside of our buildings. We continued to have a new entrée each day alongside staples such as soups, sandwiches, salads and desserts.

In addition, to providing take away meals, RMSS continued to work in partnership with MR/PM Community Services to provide the meals for this program. Just this past year 18,065 meals were provided to the Meal on Wheels program.

We have seen a great increase in the cost of food prices by up to 4% this year but RMSS kitchens continue our partnership with the Friends in Need Food Bank to accept items that could be incorporated into our soups and some entrees.

The Friends in Need Food Bank also hosts a seniors food bank program from the Maple Ridge Seniors Centre to alleviate the difficulties some seniors have with standing in lines at the regular food bank. Soon we will see this starting at the Pitt Meadows centre as well.

Grace and her kitchen staff have given the menu rotation a slight update this year but still offer those popular favourites like Turkey Dinner, Roast Beef Dinner and meat pies . Always delicious!

Executive Director's Report

As I reflect on this past year, I realize how much we've accomplished and how far we've come since mid March 2020 when both seniors centres were closed. Closed for what we thought was a temporary 2 weeks, to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. Our doors were shut but our Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers felt it was important to continue "advancing the well-being of adults 55+" simply because we knew they are one of the most vulnerable populations, it would just be carried out a little differently.

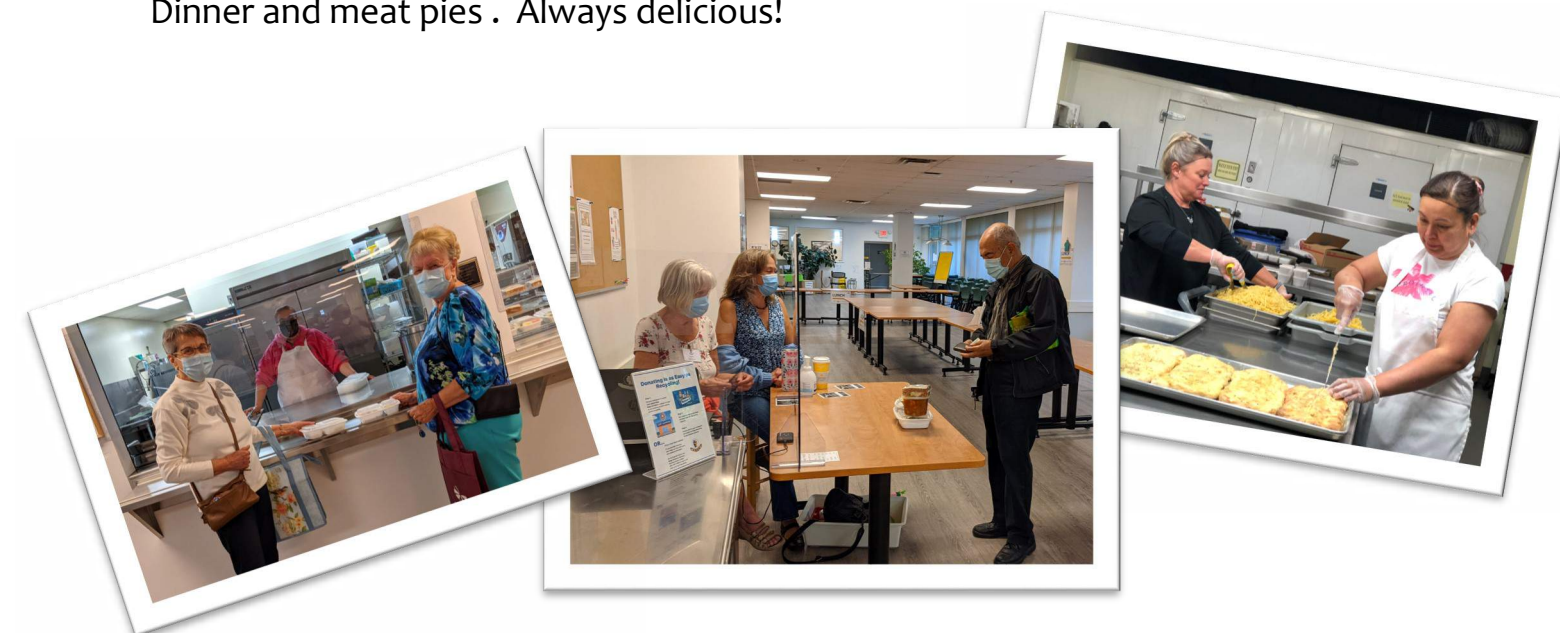
Many opportunities were quickly implemented, to make sure older adults remained connected and supported to prevent loneliness and isolation. A telephone check in program, take-away meal program, grocery assistance, meal delivery, drive/walk through tax clinic and continuing transportation for time sensitive medical appointments. Even a mini grapevine was created to make sure older adults were aware of services available in the community and ways to keep active. It's pretty safe to say that older adults in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows always have a place to turn to whether our doors are open or not.

As time went on, we were cautious about how we transitioned into our new world when it came time to re-open. We kept up to date with new safety protocols, re-opened activities that were permitted and then stopped offering some when things went sideways.

It was a stressful, lonely and long many months since we were all impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. But here we are, thankful for all the sacrifices everyone made to (hopefully) end the madness.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the much needed volunteers who helped us hobble along through this past year and of course our members who stuck with us throughout. On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors, we are grateful for each of you and I'm excited to see where we go from here!

Maria Perretta
Executive Director



Recreation

Having come off an incredibly busy 2019 and early 2020, it looked like RMSS centres were going to again be bustling with programs, activities, events, and bus trips. Then the year that was... WAS.

On March 17, 2020, the last day of programming before the shutdown, our staff sat around the Maple Ridge boardroom table trying to look into the unknown future – wondering what our part would be in serving our 55+ demographic membership through a pandemic.

Within a blink of an eye, our roles changed to adapt to what at-home services and supports we could provide. For the recreation department, that initially meant creating and regularly updating a Q&A guide to answer the many questions people had as well as sourcing out community helps. Next, an extensive Activity Guide filled with ideas of how to fill ones time whether on their own, with another, with or without technology, was developed.

Additionally, where our GrapeVine program guide would normally promote upcoming on-site activities, a way to stay in touch with our members needed to develop. CONNECTIONS: GrapeVine 2.0 was born! This was a product of contributions from members, activity leaders, fitness instructors, and celebrated different amazing volunteers. It promoted community partnerships and what other organizations were doing to remain relevant to the challenges we all faced. The newsletter became an opportunity to spread encouragement, ignite imagination, and stay connected.

“It shouldn't be called a seniors centre. It should be called a centre for active living. Because seniors centre implies that you are ‘old’. And I don’t know anyone that is ‘old’ in this building.

Recognizing that we are in a time where the world is turning to doing many things online, we have a new addition to our web-

DONATE TODAY

site, the Donate Today button! Donations can now be received securely directly through our website. We were pleased to see that as immediate as adding the button we had donations coming in! Visit us on the web today to see lunch menus, current activity programming schedules, centre updates or fill out an online application to become a volunteer and much more.

Facebook continues to grow its following and now has 520 followers. Facebook is an excellent platform for RMSS to interact and connect with not only the seniors in our community but to also build strong relationships with local businesses and societies. Maintaining these relationships means our posts are shared giving us a greater community reach and helps us to plant our roots deeper into the community.

Instagram has a following of 164. While Facebook remains forefront at the moment, Instagram is a very popular platform that we will continue to work on growing.

If you would like to follow us on Facebook or Instagram search for the handle “rmssseniors”.

YouTube is our latest social media venture, it is a platform for sharing videos. On the RMSS channel you can expect to find our videos sorted into playlists, like Programming & Activities, Pre Recorded Workshops, Special Events, Educational Speaker Series etc.

To subscribe to our channel visit YouTube, search for “Ridge Meadows Seniors Society” and be sure to subscribe!

Vanessa De Freitas
You Connect Coordinator



Number of People
Reached via FB page in
an average week: 5,194

Website visits this year:
32,450

YouConnect, Website & Social Media

This past year the You Connect program has played a key role in assisting us to keep contact with our membership throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Within days of having to close our doors, we were ready and equipped with comprehensive call lists for our newly assembled call team to check in on the wellbeing of the seniors belonging to RMSS. These call teams are still in place today and the phone calls continue!

While the world was changing and adapting, so were we. We felt incredibly lucky to have the You Connect program to help us identify and connect with the most vulnerable of our membership.

RMSS Centres staff and volunteers are now exclusively using the You Connect program throughout both Centres in many capacities. You Connect is currently being used for the following:

- Tracking building attendance
- Membership Management
- Account Credit Management
- Payment for drop in programming
- Enrolling in pre-registered classes
- Point Of Sale for reception coffee shop and lunch programs



Tap your fob to enter the building, check your membership status, pay for lunch and attend your classes!

We continue to work closely with the developers of the You Connect Program, and they continue to regularly update and provide enhancements to features provided within the program. We are excited for the future of the program!

The RMSS website, updated weekly, continues to be one of our best sources of information for seniors within the community. During the Pandemic it has been a reliable line of communication between our centres and our membership. A place we are able to keep everyone up to date with the changes to operations as well as connect the user to links and information useful to them in this new world of isolation.

Once the province gave direction on what re-opening to limited programming could look like, the summer months were spent in preparation to create a safe environment where our members could return to fitness and dance. This involved pre-registration for classes instead of the former drop-in format. What enthusiasm was evident when our members, in any weather, lined up an hour before our centres even opened, for the privilege to do SOMETHING! With each four week session the numbers of people who felt confident re-suming classes increased – all expressing gratitude for the measures taken for their ultimate benefit. Online programming became a new medium with a family history workshop series, painting classes, trivia and more. Knowing that most Metro Vancouver seniors centres did not choose to reopen, RMSS felt like “the little engine that could”. Through the commitment of the board, staff, volunteers, instructors, and the support of our membership, we found our way to offer the best we could.

Despite the provincial setbacks endured, and as I write this in July 2021, RMSS is now in a place of hope and renewal. With many lessons learned, we cautiously plan for what we trust will be a full return to programming this fall. We will never be quite the same – but perhaps that is partly what 2020 was about. When we stop, take stock, and clear away the distractions we may well be left with what matters most to each of us: being together – being resourceful – being respectful – being grateful.

Together – we truly ARE better – no matter what comes our way.

Carmen Tischer
Activity Coordinator



Volunteers

We all know 2020 as the year Covid shut the world right down as well as our centres. I would like to highlight a few of the ways RMSS staff and volunteers came together on short order to reduce the missing, maintain contact and offer services... all while navigating uncharted, everchanging and sometimes confusing territory.



Within days of our closure, select volunteers formed our **Wellness Call Team**. Armed with lists, scripts, Q&A's and resources, these volunteers set out to call our most senior members to make sure they were safe and supported; to address concerns and questions; to listen for indications of deeper outreach needed; to offer regular check-in calls. After those 1,000 members were contacted, they turned to the rest of our membership. Volunteers managed their own schedules so they could work around their personal situations. At any one time we had 5-15 callers, taking on 10-40 regular contacts per week. The Call Team also did check-ins for non-members screened through RMSS Outreach. Volunteers stayed on top of new information, kept in regular contact with staff, attended parking lot meetings to review and support each other. These volunteers were our ears, megaphones, pulse-takers and ambassadors, letting our members know that we were here for them in any capacity. ALL members appreciated RMSS reaching out, whether they needed anything or not. Call Team Volunteers updated contact info, offered condolences when they discovered a member had passed away, followed up with emergency contacts when there was concern. This was an especially valuable service for members who were alone or no longer frequenting the centers, as it provided a direct personal contact plus a connection to the society. The Wellness Call Team became a permanent role. Trusted bonds and friendships were formed. Our volunteers in turn expressed gratitude to RMSS for creating an opportunity for them to get know our members and to have such a meaningful role while the world went sideways.



Through the caregiver connection and support program, caregivers are able to access resources and referrals. Caregivers are often overwhelmed by their caregiving duties and they may not know how to get in touch with services that are available to them or might be too overwhelmed to think about contacting resources. Sally is a caregiver for her husband. She was trying to get ahold of a local health care agency for months and wasn't getting anywhere. By connecting with the program she was able to get help getting connected and she is now able to get Home Health to come to her home once a week to help out with personal care for her husband.

Individual one-on-one support is another avenue of support that caregivers can receive. One-on-one support allows for caregivers to receive individual support. Caregivers have found the one-on-one support to be helpful because of the individual attention that they receive. Beatrice is an individual who is a distant caregiver for her mother, who as any caregiver, juggles many roles in her life. Through the one-on-one support Beatrice was gently introduced to boundaries, and self-care skills. In addition, Beatrice was able to see that she didn't have to do all the caregiving duties on her own as she was calling her mother seven days a week, visiting her two to three times a week, and taking her to appointments. Through the conversations, Beatrice was able to see that she did not have to do it all on her own. She was able to get her brother and her children to take some of the responsibilities. The circle of care allowed her to be able to create a network of people that can help her out with her mom, rather than on her own. Resources with Beatrice were also shared that would benefit Beatrice and her mother. An example would be that the RMSS volunteer driving program information was shared with Beatrice, so that Beatrice wouldn't have to drive her mother to all of her appointments. It allowed for Beatrice to know that her mother was being well taken care when she wasn't able to take her to appointments. Another aspect of providing one-on-one support is learning new self-care tools and what works for Beatrice. Suggestions of medication, yoga, walking, and being outdoors were suggested to her, and she was able to find that paint by numbers was the way that she was able to practice self-care. What Beatrice found beneficial from one-on-one support is that she has someone who is actively listening to her, being about to talk through things with someone, finding resources for her, and making suggestions.

Raman Narang
Caregiver Coordinator

Healthy Aging

by United Way At home. In community.



This program is funded by the Government of BC and managed by the United Way in partnership with the Family Caregivers of BC



Caregiver Connection

In January we launched the Caregiver Connection Program, in partnership with Family Caregivers of British Columbia, with funding from the United Way of British Columbia. A caregiver can be a partner, a family member, friend, neighbour, or a volunteer. Caregivers juggle many roles and many forget how to take care of themselves. As caregivers, it's just as important, if not more, that they take care of themselves as well as their care recipient.

The Caregiver Connection and Support Program has benefited many caregivers as they are able to connect with other caregivers in the community. Through the drop in support groups caregivers have benefitted from being around other caregivers who have a shared understanding of what they are going through, as family and friends may not understand completely what they are going through. Caregivers are given the opportunity to vent frustrations, give and receive emotional support, and exchange resource information and coping strategies. Caregivers also share information and ideas with others, including what worked for them, what hasn't worked for them, and other caregivers can use these ideas if they want. In addition, the emotional support that caregivers receive from other caregivers is what makes a difference for one caregiver, she enjoys the interaction with others and says that the caregiver support group helps her be a better caregiver as she's able to hear how others are coping, and that they are there for encouragement and help.

“One caregiver said that other people look at him and do not see what is going on, and by coming to the drop in support group, he feels support from those that are around because no one is underestimating what you are going through.”

RMSS Drivers were initially asked to curtail trips while we assessed Public Health Orders. Their first response was, “What about my regulars?” Our drivers are so much more than chauffeurs; they are trusted and responsible representatives, assistants, friends. Drivers worked with staff to create protocols that enabled them to continue driving based on their comfort level, with a focus on essentials and medical trips. We expanded the service to include shopping and delivery services. During the height of the pandemic, our service was available to all local seniors in need. Like the Call Team, our drivers were a presence, a source of care and information for members. They were our front-line-faces and they, too, met outside to debrief and define services. Members and their families shared how our drivers offered life-saving services and peace-of-mind in the most challenging times. Hygiene kits, extra masks, plexi guards, resources. But more than that: a ride, a hand, a smile... and an infinite “Yes, I can do that.”

Our **Tax Clinic Team** began as usual, then had to completely redesign the service to be Covid-compliant. Their solution: take it outside! Our volunteers worked closely with staff to determine logistics for this indispensable service. Clinic stations were set up outside at both centres, rain or shine. Volunteers completed returns at home, were available by phone, and even arranged pickup/delivery for those unable to make it down in person. 4 experienced volunteers were able to run with the notion... and they broke our previous records, processing over 250 returns and saving local seniors over \$25,000.

In summer 2020 volunteers were surveyed about returning for our September reopening. Over the next 6 months staff would ultimately lead 60 volunteers in retraining sessions. Learning new health protocols, facility layouts, cashless systems, our safety plan plus renewing commitments was required of all returning volunteers. Some volunteers took multiple roles and shifts, holding the fort till others were ready to come back, and becoming training assistants. **Caregivers Support** volunteers completed training and began facilitating. **RMSS Foodbank** volunteers returned to offer seniors friendly and discreet access to grocery items and fresh produce.

More like a family than an organization, we hunkered down time and again and made things work, no matter what. RMSS volunteers helped us become an even more connected, caring, serving community. It was a year we supported each other professionally and personally. A year of resilience, teamwork, creativity. Thanks to the extraordinary hearts and contributions of our volunteers, it was the year we refused to be shut right down, mentally, physically, emotionally or spiritually.

Kara Matthew,
Volunteer Coordinator



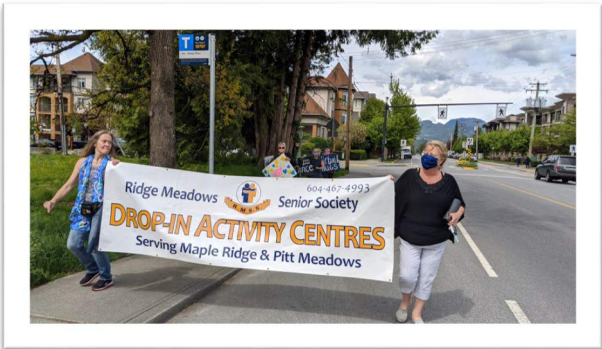
Outreach & Support

Outreach & Support services program is working alongside our seniors in every facet of their journey through the challenges of daily life, from finding answers in the medical field, to support at home and where to find the resources to facilitate the best information and support. This certainly didn't stop during the pandemic. If anything it was amplified!

In December, Seniors Helping Santa volunteers and Outreach packed 250 bags for our senior's in need, together with London Drugs tree and our very generous community. During our deliveries we stopped off at a local senior's home where we met Ed. He was so thrilled to see us and in so much need of the items we have in the bags that he sent us a great letter letting us know we had changed his life at Christmas time, he felt important to someone and not invisible. You are welcome Ed!

During a very lonely time, MRSS high school and the seniors from RMSS connected with a pen pal program, a wonderful opportunity to correspond with a different generation. This program has brought these writers together with a new insight to each other's lives. Some art work has been exchanged, photographs and excitement for the next letter to come.

The Here We Are team and volunteers from the community got together and walked our community streets in a weekly Music Juke Box during the Covid year, walking from apartment block to senior's residences during lockdown to bring fun and favorite tunes.



Tuesday morning Outreach brings people together using walkers and those that need a gentle pace around the building in MR to connect and move together. A beautiful story, during the Tuesday morning outreach that is worth a share, is this story of a lonely senior looking for connection with a language barrier. He arrived every Tuesday morning and sat by himself having coffee, one morning I had asked him if he was waiting for someone, he replied “no but I don’t speak English well and am very lonely”. He is Spanish speaking and a couple of the walkers speak fluent Spanish. Right there instant friendships were formed..... Ole!

Bev Schmahmann
Outreach Services Coordinator



Marg and Alice had been neighbors for years and yet had never talked to each other, they both came out onto their balconies during lockdown to dance and sing as the Music Juke Box came past. They connected out on their balconies and found a friendship they had not expected and are now firm friends, and found connection during a lonely time. “Music brought them together” they both say.