

RIDGE MEADOWS SENIORS SOCIETY



2024 Annual Report



Chamber of Commerce
Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows



"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.

2023 - 2024 Board of Directors



President - Karen Hjort-Olsen
Vice President - Bobbie Duncan
Secretary - Gayle Lyons
Treasurer - Richard Newman
Director - Margaret Attwell
Director - Patricia Gordon
Director - Angie Hodgins
Director - Deborah Jamieson

Staff

Executive Director - Maria Perretta
Administrative Coordinator - Nancy Markham
Activity Coordinator - Carmen Tischer
Bookkeeper - Eva Todd
Caregiver Coordinator - Raman Singh
Events Coordinator - Katie Cowieson
Outreach Coordinator - Bev Schmahmann
PM Facility Coordinator - Marcia de Vega
Transportation Coordinator - Joanne & John
Volunteer Coordinator - Kara Matthew
You Connect Coordinator - Vanessa De Freitas
Food Service Supervisor - Grace Nunnikhoven
Food Service Staff - Leah, Robyn, AJ, Mushtari, Nilab
Support Staff - Joys S, Sandra P
MR Facility Attendants - Devon M, Mojgan N
PM Facility Attendant - Sally R

President's Report

How time flies. As I write this note for the AGM report I am reflecting on my two years on the Board of Ridge Meadows Seniors Society and one year as President. I originally joined RMSS as a volunteer, three years ago and then joined the Board. I started volunteering to give back and become engaged with my community. Little did I know I would find a community that would welcome me but also challenge me to see our lives within our communities differently.

While Board members regularly attend and participate in special activities at both Centres, ensuring we are listening to you, the members, it is through regular daily interactions it becomes clear that we are no longer just food, fitness and fun. We are information, education and resources. Working alone or with community partners, the staff bring information and education seminars to ALL seniors in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, whether members or not. The staff are an important resource, helping Seniors navigate the healthcare system and government programs. But is that enough? I suggest not. We have a responsibility to ensure Seniors are not the unseen, so we need to do more. Advocacy will become more important as our Seniors population grows, but the dollars spent by governments tightens. The Board looks to investigate avenues to proactively advocate with all levels of Government to ensure our Seniors are heard and seen.

While the Board is working on that, we will continue to offer fitness, food and fun, with regular and special programs. Our staff and volunteers are fantastic, if you haven't already noticed and they will continue to work to provide everyone with interesting, thoughtful and different programs and activities throughout the year. If there is something you want to see or do – use the Suggestion Box, every Centre has one. And if you are looking for something to fill an afternoon or morning, consider becoming a Volunteer, it is truly a fulfilling experience.

To everyone who has taken the time to speak with me or other Board members throughout the year, thank you. Your candor and comments are always welcome and appreciated. Finally, as always, a huge thank you to the Staff and Volunteers, we cannot do this without you. On a personal note, a very big thank-you to our Executive Director, Maria Perretta who has patiently steered me through this organization for the past two years, and without whose counsel, well who knows what would have happened.

Thank you

Karen Hjort-Olsen
President, RMSS



Executive Director's Report

I would like to start off by saying thank you as we often don't say it or hear it enough. Thank you to all of our incredible community partners, funding agencies, volunteers and staff as well as so many community members who have helped build Ridge Meadows Seniors Society to what it has become.

RMSS seniors centres are full of inspiring people and are a true reflection of the vitality of seniors. I have been with RMSS for 10 years now, and I am proud of what I have learned and experienced and have thoroughly enjoyed seeing us grow. We provide a safe, accessible, and welcoming environment for all seniors and we remain committed to delivering opportunities for seniors to live healthy, active, and engaged lives through recreation and the resources we provide.

Thank you to all our wonderful staff for all they do. Without them we would not be the organization that we have become. Thank you to the volunteers who choose us to give their valuable time and energies which makes our centres the lively places they are. Thank you to the City of Maple Ridge and City of Pitt Meadows for entrusting RMSS to provide community seniors with all the recreation, outreach and resources they need. Thank you to the local community agencies and groups who have supported RMSS and in turn we have been able to support. Our Board of Directors have taken on many challenges and many have had to get up to speed in a short amount of time. I appreciate and thank them for the hard work, time, and efforts they have given.

As you will see from this report, this past year we have seen the greatest growth ever in participation, membership, services and activities. I know that the needs of our community dwelling seniors exceed what we could do in 2023/24 but I promise you we will continue to find ways to support and serve seniors further. RMSS will continue to be the best seniors facility for Fitness, Food, Fun and Friends.

Maria Perretta
Executive Director



Recreation

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 saw increasing memberships at both activity centres. Each day, people walked in looking for a place to connect, get involved, and stay active and engaged. Thanks to our team of incredible instructors, willing volunteer activity leaders, and diverse community presenters, RMSS provided a variety of fitness classes, programs, info sessions and workshops.

This past year saw a return to some evening and Saturday programming – welcoming the still at work 55+ demographic. From Therapeutic Yoga to Tai Chi, Table Tennis to Badminton, Beginners Conversation French to Jam Sessions, a variety of activities were available. At our Maple Ridge centre, the success of some programs made find a parking spot challenging. (Starting September 2024, the weekly schedule will see some adjustments to address this issue.)

Events increased in number with Bingo being offered at both centres, a monthly Pie & Ice Cream at Pitt Meadows, and a return of Luck of the Irish, For the Love of Art, and Christmas Teas. Variety Plus performed to four sold out audiences.

The demand for bus trips led to early morning queues on registration open days – akin to lining up for concert tickets or Black Friday sales. (Additional buses have since been procured for future excursions.) Open to non-RMSS members, a Seniors Community Bus allowed for some additional local trips.



Carpet Bowling



Functional Fitness



Line Dancers



50/50 Ticket Sales



Painting with Kim Workshop

Programs (number offered)	@ MR Centre	@ PM Centre
Fitness	19	11
Sport	18	14
Dance	4	3
Games	13	7
Music	6	2
Arts & Crafts	6	4
Tech & Taxes	2	2
Wellness	4	2
Workshops/Info Sessions/Clinics	28	15
Bus Trips	23	23

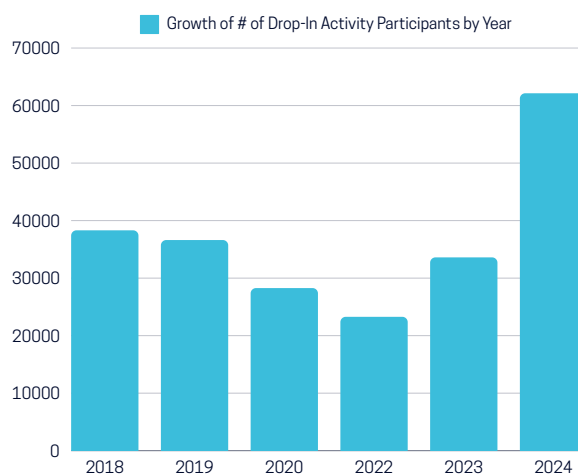
Programs (numbers attended)	@ MR Centre	@ PM Centre
Drop-In Programs	43,331	18,804
Wellness Clinic Visits	245	
Pre-Registered Programs	1596	800
Workshops/Info Sessions	303	146

62,135
DROP-IN
ATTENDEES

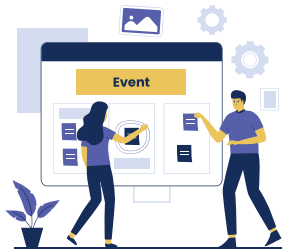
The balance of meeting the increasing membership demand while allowing for niche programming to address special interest groups is always top of mind. We aim to see, hear, anticipate, and ultimately provide centres that connect those 55+ with a happy, healthy life.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Tischer,
Activity Coordinator



Events



In July of 2023, we welcomed an Events Coordinator to the team. By implementing engaging events, RMSS has fostered a vibrant and welcoming environment for our valued members, while increasing our fundraising dollars.

REVITALIZED EVENTS CALENDAR

Our members wanted regular social gathering opportunities, and we heard them! A newly developed events calendar provided a diverse year-round schedule of events for our seniors. Familiar favorites like Bingo and Social Teas were reintroduced, offering a sense of comfort and reconnection for new and returning members. To cater to wider interests, monthly themed lunches were introduced, injecting fresh excitement into RMSS social gatherings.

BUILDING STRONG CONNECTIONS

The Society actively collaborated with seniors to host events like the Love of Art Show in Pitt Meadows and a Community Garage Sale in Maple Ridge. By doing so many new faces were attracted to our activity centres, expanding our reach and engagement within the community.



SUPPORTING NEW INITIATIVES

The Events Coordinator actively supported the launch of the Lunch Buddies program, funded by the First West Foundation. This program addressed concerns about senior isolation by offering a welcoming space for seniors to:

- **Enjoy Meals Together:** Seniors were able to partake in free, nutritious meals in a social setting, combating feelings of loneliness and fostering connections.
- **Combat Isolation:** The Lunch Buddies program facilitated new friendships and social interactions, enhancing the well-being of participating seniors.

IN CONCLUSION

The revamped events program, with its emphasis on community engagement, has successfully enhanced the lives of our seniors. Increased attendance at events signifies a renewed sense of belonging and participation. The Lunch Buddies program, with its focus on social interaction and healthy meals, directly addresses concerns about senior isolation. These initiatives have contributed significantly to a vibrant and thriving senior community within the Society.



Volunteers

This year saw steady growth in the volunteer department. We welcomed new volunteers in every area, offered more roles, filled more regular/ongoing positions. While other organizations struggled to find help, we maintained our roster of 180 Registered Volunteers. 80% of our volunteers fell into the 55-85 demographic. The remaining 20% was a near-equal split between those under 55 or over 85.

RMSS Volunteers contributed over 18,000 hours!

Our centres were bursting with events and social activities. Over 30 volunteers helped with regular programs like Karaoke, plus monthly socials, seasonal events, Variety shows, 50/50 Sales. Volunteers welcomed new and returning members to RMSS by participating in Lunch Buddies and Welcome Tours.

RMSS offered a variety of recreational activities for members to choose from. The key to our popular Drop-in activities is Volunteer Activity Leaders, who offer to share their knowledge and passions with members. They also take on a responsibility to RMSS to plan and facilitate a successful program. ¼ of our volunteers were leaders!

From helping seniors in need, to getting word on the streets... from getting food or resources into someone's hands, to holding someone's hand as they navigate hardship, isolation or unwellness... Outreach Volunteers were there. Special teams of volunteers helped run our ever-expanding Foodbank program and Santa Bag committee. Others facilitated Caregiver support meetings. Others delivered GrapeVines or attended community events to represent and promote RMSS.

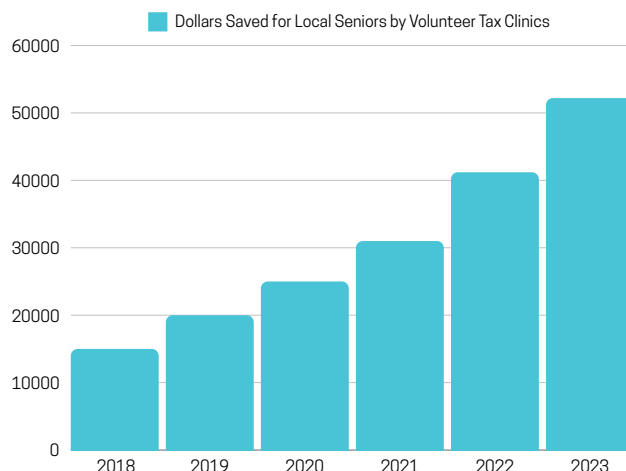


Transportation continued to be a growing need for members. Being an RMSS Driver is a huge commitment, with extra requirements and responsibilities, plus an irregular schedule. 3 Drivers joined the team bringing our fleet up to 11. Most trips remained local, but the need to travel outside the area for Hospital/Medical/Dental treatments or appointments increased. RMSS Drivers made 1,080 trips and saved members at least \$30,000 over cab fares!

Our Tax Team had another record-breaking year, filing 522 returns and saving over \$52,000 for local seniors! In addition to appointments at both centres, volunteers offered mobile sessions at Katzie First Nations and accepted an invitation to return next season. Tax services were available to any qualifying senior, no membership required.

In February, Daily Operations Volunteers began training on our new customer management software. In addition to their regular shifts, our Welcome, Member Services, Cashier and Coffee Volunteers attended group and one-on-one trainings, plus drop-in practice sessions. We had a smooth rollout in mid March, thanks to their determination to master new processes. All this on top of being our friendly front-line-faces.

It is difficult to summarize the involvement and impact of volunteers, let alone our gratitude. RMSS has an outstanding and caring volunteer force. Volunteers work together to support staff and serve members with kindness, patience and humor. We can offer all that we do because of our dedicated volunteers.



***Kara Matthew,
Volunteer Coordinator***



Volunteer Stats at a Glance

Service Offered	# of Volunteers	# of Hours Donated
Welcome Desk	25	3,013
Member Services	31	3,452
Coffee Shop & Bakery	26	1,363
Lunch Cashiers /Servers	22	1,073
Activity Leaders	46	2,390
Board of Directors & Admin Support	15	1,188
Wellness Clinic	8	1,208
Tech Support	3	432
Tax Clinics	10	227
Foodbank	18	368
Driving Services	11	1,773

**Please note that some volunteers choose to volunteer in multiple roles within our Centres.*



Outreach & Support

EMPOWERING SENIORS THROUGH OUTREACH SERVICES

The Outreach Support program serves as a trusted partner for seniors, guiding them through life's daily challenges. We provide a comprehensive support system, which helps seniors maintain their independence, live at home longer and have a face to turn to.

OFFERING A HELPING HAND

The Outreach Support program offers a wide range of connection programs to support seniors:

- **Seniors Helping Santa:** In December, alongside our dedicated volunteers, London Drugs, and the generous community, we delivered 300 care packages filled with essential items, treats, and gifts to seniors in need. A heartfelt thank you from Connie W. exemplifies the program's impact: ["thank you to all from the Seniors Helping Santa program... you changed Christmas for me this year..."](#)
- **Community Connection:** The Here We Are team and Outreach staff actively engage with seniors at community events like Canada Day, Pitt Meadows Day, Music on the Wharf, Earth Day and Haney Market. We distribute resource materials about senior support services and introduce them to our Senior Centers, fostering connection and providing valuable information.
- **Tuesday Morning Walkers:** This program fosters social interaction and gentle exercise for seniors who use walkers or prefer a slower pace. It concludes with a social gathering with coffee and treats.
- **Dementia-Friendly Communities:** Our participation in the Action Plan for a Dementia-Friendly Community strengthens our connection to local planning efforts. We raise awareness about memory loss and its impact on families and caregivers.

- **Addressing Food Security:** Rising rents and food costs have created challenges for many seniors. Our weekly food bank at the Maple Ridge Activity Center is staffed by 10 dedicated volunteers and allows 70 seniors to choose essential groceries. Kathy M.'s story exemplifies the program's significance: "Outreach helped me find movers, got the landlord to paint my suite, and was there on the day I moved in with a meal... I was also enrolled in the foodbank for help with food security... Thank you Outreach..."

BEYOND SERVICES: ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT

Outreach goes beyond providing services; we offer vital advocacy and support:

- **Hospital Navigation and Aftercare:** We empower seniors navigating the complex hospital system and setting up aftercare. Marlon Q. expresses his gratitude: "I felt very vulnerable... Outreach provided an advocate who organized my homecoming, made sure I had services in place that I needed and has continued to support me on my journey of recovery..."
- **Life Challenges:** When facing difficulties, seniors can find guidance and solutions through Outreach. Wendy L. shares her experience: "Finding myself in a very difficult position... I found help and guidance from you... Thank you!"

The Outreach & Support Services program remains dedicated to empowering our seniors, ensuring they have the resources and support needed to live full and dignified lives.

Bev Schmahmann
Outreach Coordinator



Caregiver Connection

The Caregiver Connection Program, funded by the United Way of British Columbia, plays a vital role in supporting family and friend caregivers across our community. Recognizing that caregivers often juggle multiple roles and may neglect their own well-being, our program provides essential emotional, educational, and social support.

A YEAR OF SUPPORTING CAREGIVERS:

The 2023-2024 program year has been a success in empowering caregivers. We focused on key areas like:

- **Advance Care Planning:** Educational sessions equipped caregivers with knowledge and tools to navigate life decisions.
- **Healthcare System Navigation:** We provided guidance and support to help caregivers navigate the healthcare system effectively.
- **Information Organization:** We offered resources to help caregivers manage home and personal information efficiently.

PROGRAM OFFERINGS:

- **Bi-Weekly Support Groups:** Three bi-weekly support groups (one in Pitt Meadows and two in Maple Ridge) provided a safe space for caregivers to connect, share experiences, and receive peer support.
 - 70 sessions offered
 - 105 hours of support
- **Individual Support:** We offered 121 individual support sessions (in-person, phone, and online) for 29 caregivers, addressing their specific needs.
- **Information and Referral:** We provided critical information and referrals to clients and community members 100 times.
- **Guest Speaker Series:** Informative sessions on topics such as Advance Care Planning, Home Safety, and Medication Safety equipped caregivers with valuable knowledge.

VOLUNTEERS: THE HEART OF THE PROGRAM:

Two dedicated volunteers, trained through Family Caregivers of BC, co-facilitated support groups, contributing 105 hours of volunteer service across 70 sessions.

IMPACT ON CAREGIVERS:

The Caregiver Connection Program addresses the critical need for social and emotional support. Prior to joining the program, many caregivers report feelings of isolation. By connecting with a supportive community of peers who understand their experiences, our program helps caregivers feel less alone and provides them with a safe space to share their journeys.

Raman Singh
Caregiver Coordinator



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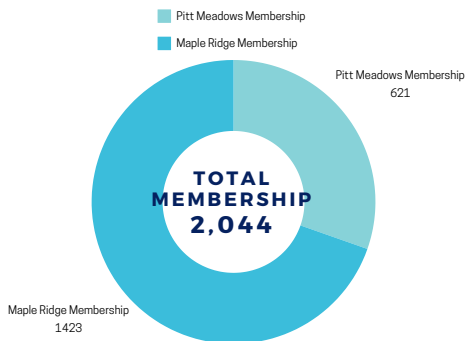
“The support group has helped me find a balance between caring for my loved one and caring for myself.” - Karen L

“It's more than just a support group; it's a community that lifts you up when you need it the most. This group helped me discover strength I didn't know I had.” - Jackie T

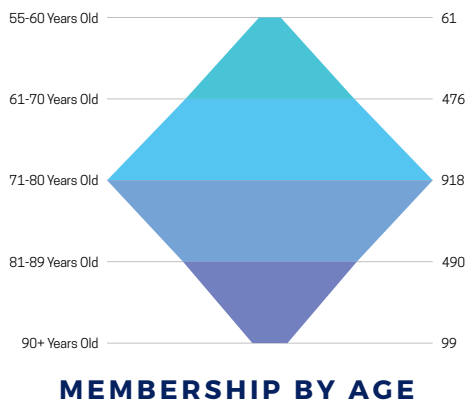
“This is a great group, thank you so much! Feeling understood and supported by others going through similar experiences has been a lifeline.” - Terry P

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You Connect, Website & Social Media



AS OF MARCH 31, 2024



YOU CONNECT UPDATE

It has been a significant year for our You Connect Program. With the discontinuation of our previous software, we embarked on a journey to transition to new solutions. We were fortunate to find a good fit with a company that would allow for us to maintain use of our blue FOBS in a similar manner for managing building attendance, membership & programming.

In November & December 2023, our dedicated staff invested time in learning the new software inside and out. A comprehensive training program was developed, and in January & February 2024, our team successfully trained 65 volunteers in utilizing the new software within their respective roles at both Activity Centres. The enthusiasm and eagerness to learn was felt from the volunteers and contributed to the overall success of the training program.

On March 18, 2024, we celebrated a smooth live launch of the new software, marking a successful transition for our operations. We are very excited for the future with this new software.



WEBSITE UPDATE

The RMSS website currently hosts 68 active published pages, which are regularly updated and maintained on a weekly basis. Our website serves as a primary source of information for both our members and the wider senior community. The website offers access to the latest GrapeVine, details on programming, services, support, community resources, weekly lunch menus, membership applications, volunteer opportunities and much more. On average our website attracts around 3,000 visitors monthly! If you haven't checked out our site, please do! www.rmssseniors.org

801 FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	324 INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS	484 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS IN A YEAR	4.8/5 GOOGLE RATING ★★★★★
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SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

RMSS has experienced consistent growth with our social media following on platforms such as Facebook & Instagram. Our posts commonly feature program updates, upcoming events, community news, and relevant information tailored to our membership. Our active presence on the various social media outlets provides our members with new ways to remain involved, connect and be a part of the conversation. If you would like to follow us on either Facebook or Instagram, you can search for our handle "rmssseniors" or scan the QR code to connect with us directly on social media.

Vanessa De Freitas

You Connect Coordinator



FOLLOW US



Food Services

NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITIES



RMSS kitchens are a hidden gem: delicious, affordable, and nutritious meals open to everyone in our community. Our two centers provide a vital service by offering hot and cold lunches, a food bank market, and preparing the meals for the Meals on Wheels program.

HOT LUNCHES: MORE THAN JUST A MEAL

For 24 years, our hot lunch program has been a cornerstone of social and nutritional support for seniors aged 55+. Enjoying a delicious meal in the company of others fosters a sense of community and combats social isolation.

Every weekday from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, seniors and community members alike can gather at our Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows centers for a delicious lunch. Our dedicated staff handles meal preparation and cleanup, allowing guests to relax, socialize, and savor their meal.

PARTNERING FOR A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

Last year alone, our kitchens produced an impressive 34,529 meals (dine-in, take-out and meals on wheels) for community dwelling residents, demonstrating our commitment to nourishing the entire community. In addition to our in-house dining options, RMSS proudly collaborates with MR/PM Community Services to prepare meals for the Meals on Wheels program.

By offering a variety of affordable and accessible meal options, RMSS kitchens play a crucial role in promoting health, well-being, and social connection among our community members.

Finance Committee Report

Operating Results for Fiscal Year: April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

The year ended March 31, 2024, once again saw the Society receive a “clean” classification from our auditors.

We are pleased to see overall revenue increase over 2023, partially due to increased activities at the centres, but also grants which the Society was successful in obtaining from outside organizations. However, these grants relate to a specific project, either new or existing so they do not assist in offsetting the day-to-day operations of the centres. But without these grants, we would not be able to provide important programs and activities for members and the community in general.

While we ended the year with a deficit, this was not unexpected, as a decision made in late 2023 by the previous board, authorized an additional position, approved with the understanding it would result in a year end deficit. However, this new position is valuable and worth the added cost as the number of activities and members continues to grow and expand.

The board was busy this year with fund raising activities and researching other sources of revenue, all of which will continue. It is important we diversify our donation base and ensure the public is aware of us as a not-for-profit society and our work within the two cities. We look forward to this new year and what opportunities it will afford the Society

Finance Committee Members:

Karen Hjort-Olsen, Maria Perretta, Eva Todd

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



Year in Review





2023 - 2024





Chamber of Commerce
Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows



City of
Pitt Meadows
THE Natural PLACE



New
Horizons
for Seniors
Program



community
SERVICES
Changing lives together



Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA



Petro-Canada
CareMakers
Foundation™



ABSOLUTE
HEARING SERVICES INC



Ridge Meadows
Hospice Society
Grief has no timeline



Rotary
Club of Meadow Ridge

EVERCLEAN
CORPORATE SERVICES



enVision
FINANCIAL
COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT



DOUGLAS
DOUGLAS COLLEGE
TRAINING GROUP



Canada
Helps.org

Prospera
CREDIT UNION

van
couver
foundation



United Way
Healthy Aging



"Connecting adults 55+ with a happy, healthy life."

WAYS YOU CAN HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Make a monetary donation yearly or even monthly. Secure donations can be made online at www.rmssseniors.org.
- Share with friends and neighbors how RMSS has helped you & encourage them to get involved.
- Ask friends & family to donate to RMSS in lieu of birthday or holiday gifts.
- Invite a friend to try out a program with you!
- Offer the gift of time: volunteer with us!
- Donate your recyclables to the RMSS account at any Return It Express Depot Centre. Account is under (604) 467-4993.
- Leave a legacy gift.



Interested in donating to RMSS? Scan this code to donate today!

