



B.S.O.S. Society
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Chairperson, Executive Council
C/o Clerk's Department
City of Burnaby

March 23, 2015

RE: APPLICATION FOR A FINANCIAL GRANT

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please accept this letter from Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society as our application for a financial grant from the Cit of Burnaby.

We are a small non-profit society dedicated to promoting the emotional health and well-being of seniors, thereby enhancing their quality of life through the support of their peers. Our volunteers have been providing a highly valued Peer Counselling service to seniors in Burnaby since 1987. The society is directed by a voluntary Board, all of whom are seniors, coordinated by part-time staff, and functions with a dedicated corps of service volunteers.

Our Peer Counsellors, (themselves men and women over the age of 55) whose purpose it is to assist their senior clients to address the emotional needs which frequently accompany aging, are selected for their warm and caring personal qualities and life experiences. They undergo an extensive 54-hour training program in communications and counselling skills. The increasing demand for assistance and intervention from the community for our unique, free in home services is challenging our current ability to provide sufficient peer counsellors. Training is the key and is essential for us to maintain a well-trained and vital body of volunteers. Inevitably, senior volunteers leave the program due to ill health or for other personal reasons requiring the need for on-going training courses.

Our funding comes primarily from the proceeds of BC Gaming, special events, membership dues, donations and special grants for specific programs. As with many other organizations, our funding options have been substantially reduced, so your financial support is more important than ever if this very valuable services can be maintained.

Our volunteer service program is a very cost effective way of providing benefit to those in need. For example, an 18-week training course for 15 participants costs us approximately \$5000 to implement. If each Peer Counsellor can reduce the need for only six seniors to seek more extensive and expensive physical or mental health services during a year, the potential savings are tremendous.

The opportunity to learn and do something meaningful and rewarding is also of immeasurable value to the peer counsellors. They take away with them effective interpersonal and life skills to use for themselves and share with those with whom they come in contact on a daily basis. Our motto is Seniors Helping Seniors Help Themselves and that has proven to be so true with our volunteers. Many were clients and now are counsellors helping others.

A financial grant from the City of Burnaby, once again this year, will help us in our efforts to fund a Seniors Peer Counselling Training Course in 2015.

We would be most pleased to provide any additional information or meet with you to discuss this request in greater detail.

We sincerely hope that you will consider our request favourable.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danelle Laidlaw".

Danelle Laidlaw - President
Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society