



Financial Management Committee
The Office of the City Clerk
c/o Financial Management Committee
4949 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC, V4G 1M2

September 10th, 2018

RE: Application for Community Grant

Dear Councillor Dan Johnston and members of the Financial Management Committee,

Please accept this letter from *Burnaby Seniors Outreach Services Society* as our application for a financial grant for \$3,000.00 from the City 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.

Peer Counselling

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 \$5,000 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.

Caregiver Support

Burnaby Seniors Outreach also provides a Caregiver Support program for unpaid/informal caregivers who support a family and friend. Often taking care of a loved one, such as a parent, spouse or adult child with a disability, can take a significant toll on the caregiver. In fact, according to BC's Seniors Advocate, Isobel Mackenzie, 31% of unpaid caregivers are experiencing symptoms of distress such as anger, depression or feelings of not being able to continue with their caregiving duties (*Caregivers in Distress: A Growing Problem* report, August 30, 2017).

Our Caregiver Support program provides a range of support groups every month, an Education Series twice a year, an annual Caregiver Expo and a "My Caregiving Role" publication (a resource where caregivers can record critical information about the person they care for).

At this time, the Caregiver Support Group does not receive funding from the City of Burnaby.

Memory Café

As part of the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan, Burnaby Seniors Outreach is proposing a twice-monthly Memory Café for people experiencing memory or cognitive deficits, and their caregivers. We are submitting a separate grant application to the Financial Management Committee for supporting the start-up of this new program.

Grant Request

Burnaby Seniors Outreach is requesting a community grant of \$3,000. Once again this year, the funding will support our upcoming Seniors Peer Counselling Training Course starting on October 1st, 2018.

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,

Stephen D'Souza,
Executive Director