

## Happy Holidays

With the snow finally on the ground and it starting to become a winter wonderland once again, we would like to share some of the wonderful events that have been happening with MAC over the past month. Thanks to the many volunteers who have made these events happen and for all of the MAC members who have participated.

We would like to extend warm holiday wishes to all of our MAC members and your loved ones! We hope you all enjoy activities over the holidays that allow you to continue to age and live well here in Whistler.



## Volunteer Appreciation Event

On December 4, volunteers of the Making Connections program gathered at Creekbread for a volunteer appreciation event, sponsored by the Whistler Community Response Network (CRN). Lyn Stroshin, Director of the Whistler CRN, thanked all for coming to celebrate the wonderful work that is being done in our community for those afflicted with dementia. Lyn noted the Making Connections is a project that is definitely being carried out with love and respect and would not survive without the volunteers who run it. In particular, she singled out Charalyn Kriz for her dedication in getting the program off the ground and applying for funding to help support the program.



Charalyn spoke about the program, stating, "Making Connections has been successful beyond my wildest expectations and it would not have been possible without the interest and commitment of all you volunteers." She let the group know that from January to mid-December 2023 the volunteers' hours for the 3 hour sessions was a total 513 hours. In dollars, that equates to at least \$12,825. For Charalyn, it is not just that all the volunteers put in the time, but that they are very compassionate, which has been appreciated by the participants. "You are a very reliable and conscientious crew, and I am very grateful."

Read more about the Making Connections Program on page 3.



# 55+ Drop In Coffee Get Together

Social connections have been identified as one of the most important factors to ensure those 55+ can continue to live and age well in Whistler. In November 2023, The World Health Organization declared loneliness a global health priority. Loneliness can affect physical health, mental health, increase the risk of dementia and lead to early death, among other adverse outcomes.

Thanks to a grant from the Whistler Community Response Network (CRN), MAC is able to organize free Drop-in Events at the Whistler Racket Club for the 55+ Community in Whistler. The purpose of these Drop-ins is to provide a venue to encourage social connections for those looking to meet new people or catch up with old friends as well as combat loneliness for some by giving seniors in Whistler, which does not yet have a seniors' centre, a place to meet and make new friends. They are open to the 55+ public and not restricted to MAC members.

The first two of these events, held on November 28 and December 14, were attended by about 20 people each. Coffee, tea and snacks were provided. The casual ambiance of the Whistler Racket Club encouraged participants to comfortably chat over coffee, to explore areas of mutual interest and to make new acquaintances. Attendees seemed to enjoy these gatherings and asked to be informed of future events.

Drop-ins are planned in the New Year for Thursday January 11, Thursday February 1 and March 7 at the Whistler Racket Club (WRC) 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm. MAC thanks the WRC and their staff for being so supportive of the 55+ community.

## Whistler 55+ Drop-In

Coffee  
Get-Together!



Join us for Coffee,  
Conversation and Fun  
Make new friends

Free Event

Thursdays, January 11,  
February 1  
March 7  
2:30pm to 4:30pm  
Whistler Racket Club

Organized by Mature Action Community (MAC)  
with sponsorship from the  
Whistler Community Response Network (CRN)

Questions contact [cdkriz@gmail.com](mailto:cdkriz@gmail.com)

*We look forward to seeing you!*



**Please join us  
for the next 55+  
Drop-in at the  
WRC.**





# Making Connections Update

December 13 marked the final session of 2023 for the Making Connections Dementia-Friendly Social Club. We celebrated the occasion with a carol sing led by Bruce Green on guitar (thank-you, Bruce), and with a lunch of pizzas and special Christmas treats.

Making Connections has been operating weekly since January 2023, with support from MAC, Sea to Sky Community Services Better at Home Program, participant fees and the generosity of the Catholic Church. Since April 2023, the program has been funded by a federal New Horizons for Seniors Program grant.

Dementia isolates caregivers as opportunities to socialize disappear and their loved one's condition deteriorates. Our program was modeled on the Alzheimer Society's Minds in Motion, a partnered program, for people with early-stage dementia and their caregivers. The purpose is to slow cognitive decline in the afflicted and to give caregivers a chance to socialize, bond, share experiences and network. The program starts with 45 minutes of gentle fitness, followed by a period of games and brain stimulating activities, and socializing over lunch.



One of the benefits of running our own program is that we can be flexible, we are able to modify the program to meet the needs of participants and our community. We will not turn anyone away so long as they are not disruptive or violent; we have found that people with varying stages of dementia can get along well together and have fun. Caregivers can still benefit from the support and socializing, even if their loved one's disease is quite far advanced.

The program has evolved over the past year based on feedback from participants and opportunities that have arisen. We are truly serving the Sea to Sky Corridor, with two couples attending regularly from Squamish and one couple occasionally from Pemberton.

In January, we will welcome music therapist Luke Burton to run monthly sessions with the group. Luke has a master's in music therapy and has run similar programs in seniors' care homes. A counsellor from the Hospice Society will also be coming in once a month or as needed to run a support group for caregivers on the side of our session.

Making Connections will recommence on January 10, 2024, 10:30 am in the Catholic Church. We invite caregivers of people with dementia to try a session for free (contact [cdktriz@gmail.com](mailto:cdktriz@gmail.com) to arrange). You will have a lot of fun, make new friends and benefit from the socializing and support of the group.





## Quick Notes, Resources and Articles of Interest

[This is what Canada will look like in 20 years – are we ready for an aging population?](#)

[Experts say Canada's health-care system isn't ready for an aging population – here's why](#)

[It will get worse over the next 10 to 15 years': What to expect from Canada's labour market as the workforce ages](#)

[Unprecedented growth among Canada's senior population will mean shift in housing needs: experts](#)

[DREAM :Dementia Resources for Eating, Activity, and Meaningful Inclusion](#)

[UBC announces new Edwin S.H. Leong Centre for Healthy Aging](#)

[WHO Commission on Social Connection](#)

[The 'Double Risk' of Aging: Examining Vulnerability and \(Un\)supportive Built Environments in Canadian Cities](#)

### From the Whistler 360 Health Collaborative Society

The Whistler 360 Health Collaborative Society wants to ensure all Whistler residents can have access to primary healthcare by sharing news about their ongoing success, and to ask for your help in getting those who need primary care registered with their organization so that all Whistler residents can access medical help.

Whistler 360 Health Collaborative Society would like to reach all MAC members to let us know the following:

We have been diligently working towards the goal of ensuring that every resident in Whistler has access to essential primary-care services. This innovative, locally governed, registered charitable organization was first established in 2022 following several years of groundwork, to address the shortage of primary care providers. Under the Whistler 360 Health model, the Collaborative operates a medical clinic, which is professionally managed, with governance from the community.

So far, we have added 4.8 FTE family doctors and nurse practitioners to the clinic and that has allowed us to provide over 1,900 new patients with care. But we know there are still people in our community who do not have a family physician and we are hoping you can help by letting people know that they can register for care through Whistler 360 Health. We are accepting new patients, and by registering, we will also understand the volume of the local need.

If you or someone you know is a Whistler resident without a family doctor or nurse practitioner, go here to ([www.whistler360health.org/register](http://www.whistler360health.org/register)) add your name to the registry. Please register each family member separately. Whistler 360 Health will contact prospective patients on the list as space becomes available.

### MAC Talks- Let's Connect

Have you been looking for a place to talk together for engaging 55+conversations with coffee and snacks?

Whistler MAC is creating a new pilot project at Whistler Library Meeting Room starting on Fri. Jan. 19, 2024 at (2 to 4 pm)

Our event will have a chat about Whistler Community Response Network, part of [www.bccrns.ca](http://www.bccrns.ca) and discuss travel experiences.

FREE event and we ask you to register at this link: [CLICK HERE](#)



# MAC Christmas Party

The MAC holiday spirit was alive with partying, dinner, dancing and much merriment as MAC members filled the Whistler Racket Club to capacity. What a FUN evening it was! Long-time members and many newcomers mixed and mingled over appetizers during cocktail hour and new friendships were made. The lovely buffet - green salad, roast turkey/stuffing/cranberry sauce with a fried Brussels sprouts medley and braised spiced red cabbage - was in the main room and accessible from both sides which made the lines move quickly and dessert of cheesecake truffles followed. The ticket price was kept at \$75 per person thanks to a subsidy from MAC!

And WOW, what an after-dinner party! As Brenda Lee would say, "There was some definite Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree with everyone dancin' merrily in the new old-fashioned way" on the dance floor almost to closing time. We even did the Macarena led by Sonja our WRC host! Such fun to hear everyone singing along to the music as they danced. Check out the photos!!!



There were 19 door prizes donated by Rainbow Independent, Creekside Market, Fresh Street Market, Tim Horton's Creekside, Realtor Kathy White and books on Estate Planning from Santa. We did not solicit a door prize from Nester's since they had provided the food for our summer BBQ. We ask our membership to support these businesses which have so generously supported us.

At this time of year, we like to give back to the community, to help the less fortunate. Non-perishable items plus money and gift cards were collected for the Food Bank - thanks to all that donated.

And lastly, we must thank the Whistler Racket Club and their staff for helping to make our party such a success. Many guests remarked that it was a super party, one of the best ever!

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Your Social Committee











**Have a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year!**

**Looking forward to many more fun times in 2024.**