

Seniors Theatre Report to the Annual General Meeting – September 2014

- March 31, 2014 marked the end of Government of Canada New Horizons Grant for the Seniors for the Ida and Old Baldy Seniors Theatre program created by Peter Blacklock and Joyce Sotski in partnership with Shuswap Theatre.
- **Some of the goals of the project, as reported by Peter Blacklock, were:**
- Create a Seniors' Theatre program which will strengthen cognitive and creative capacities of participants while examining critical life stream issues.
Achieved--responses of participants were that it was the best two hours of their week and actively recruited friends and acquaintances who they knew would benefit. We have had numerous requests from new people to be part of the program next year. As well as being a "fun" part of the week, we looked into the issues facing each of us and played out the scenes looking at issues from all sides.
- Deliver the program in the communities of Salmon Arm and Sorrento
Overachieved- We ran 24 sessions in Salmon Arm, 22 in Sorrento, and an additional 26 in Blind Bay (not part of the funding) and held Spring Concerts in Salmon Arm and Blind Bay in which 35 of the Seniors' Theatre participants demonstrated their work to over 200 friends and family and community members. In addition we presented our program to service clubs and at other concerts in the community.
- Host seminars to model the program for other groups interested in running similar programs.
Partly achieved at this time- One full day session was held at Shuswap Theatre at which representatives from Celista, Enderby, Armstrong, Revelstoke and Kamloops were in attendance. Several of these groups indicated an interest in beginning their own program in the fall and Peter Blacklock will be attending their sites to assist in the startup. It is hoped that the www.seniorstheatre.ca website will be an important part of the continuation of the work.
- Create a handbook to assist other groups in the development of a similar program.
Overachieved- Not only is there a handbook, the handbook has been put onto a Seniors' Theatre website where it is available to anyone who chooses to access the materials.

Seniors' Theatre is drawing people into the theatre as players who have not previously had this experience. While the program is designed to be participatory, and does not have a performance component, many of the PLAYers enjoy the opportunity to perform their work in front of the small and supportive audience which the sessions provide. Many have said that they had always wanted this kind of opportunity, but were always afraid of the "exposure."

As more seniors come to the recognition that taking a step outside their comfort zone is a necessary part of staying happy and healthy, the theatre provides an opportunity for creative expression that is low cost, that requires no great investment in materials, and is a whole lot of great fun.

Two washrooms at Shuswap Theatre were upgraded with grant proceeds to be more accessible for Seniors and those with physical disabilities to use. The grant covered \$7800 of the cost and the overage of \$380.70 was paid by Shuswap Theatre

- **Shuswap Theatre was very grateful to Peter Blacklock for his ongoing love and support of live theatre at Shuswap Theatre and for partnering with Shuswap Theatre in this wonderful project.**

Respectfully submitted by Monica Kriese