

A non-profit society governed by local volunteers dedicated to the health and wellness needs of our community.

*Local health matters*

## Volunteers make waves at the Health Centre

Would you like to live a longer, happier life? It turns out that research studies show that mortality rates are significantly reduced for older adults who volunteer in their communities by providing instrumental support to others.

This year's theme for National Volunteer Week (April 27 – May 3) is "Volunteers Make Waves," and this is very true with our Better at Home team.

The Pender Harbour Better at Home team helps seniors with non-medical services that help them live longer in their own homes. Better at Home is funded by the provincial government and managed by United Way BC. We deliver services to residents over the age of 60 from Halfmoon Bay to Egmont.

No matter what your age, three great reasons to volunteer include improving your well-being, developing your skills and knowledge, and creating a sense of belonging in your community. We provide moral support, educational and social opportunities throughout the year.

There is a great feeling of satisfaction when you know that what you are doing is making a difference, not just for others, but also for the health and well-being of our community. The community connectedness achieved from volunteering deepens social networks and reduces the likelihood of social isolation.

One volunteer, Alex, who has been volunteering with Better at Home since we began, said "My involvement with Better at Home makes me feel like I am more a part of the community than before I volunteered. I am meeting people I never knew before, knowing people on a first name basis, and feeling more connected. One day I may

need this help, so I am kind of paying it forward."

A second volunteer shared, "I have enjoyed helping people in our community to continue to stay in their own home. The enriching experience is very rewarding. As a senior myself, I enjoy socializing and chatting while assisting. I hope in the future, should I need it, this service will be available for me and my husband."

Here are two testimonials on how the Better at Home team has made a difference to 64 participants in our community.

One participant expressed, "Knowing that my food and meds will arrive, even if I am bedridden, has lifted a huge amount of stress from my life!" Needless to say, less stress means more joy and health and a longer life.

A second participant shared, "I want you to know that your program is a lifesaver. I am so grateful for your assistance in driving me to my eye appointments. Without your help, I would not be able to keep my eyesight."

When we volunteer, we create many opportunities to make new friends, network with other people and add value to the lives of both ourselves and others. Whatever reason you choose to become a volunteer, know that you will be a community hero.

Better at Home is inviting members of the community to apply to be a volunteer driver to bring our elders to medical appointments or for groceries, or provide friendly social visits to isolated participants. If interested, please contact the program coordinator, Haida Bolton, at 604-212-2232 or [haida.bolton@penderharbourhealth.com](mailto:haida.bolton@penderharbourhealth.com).



Better At Home volunteers (l-r): Alex Pernat, Val Ridsdale and Pat Thibodeau.

**Better  
at Home**



United Way helping seniors remain independent.



Phyllis Gunter (l), P. H. Better at Home participant and Naz Mistry, P. H. Better at Home volunteer.