



WINNIPEG WellNews

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Helping Hands for Manitobans GOES PINK

by Margaret Anne Fehr



When the personal earthquake named breast cancer shakes up your life, there's no way to gauge how severe the after shocks will be. Despite our universal health care, there are significant gaps that only become apparent when someone embarks on their individual course of treatment. In 2005, a small group of Manitobans recognized a need that was not being addressed by the health care system and decided to do something about it.

Helping Hands for Manitobans with Breast Cancer was formed to provide assistance for the range of financial difficulties

that present themselves to vulnerable low-income patients once the initial diagnosis has been made and treatment and recovery begins in earnest.

Rachel Parkinson, Past President of Helping Hands says, "We have provided financial assistance to men and women for uninsured items not covered by other organizations such as prescriptions, parking, travel, accommodations, meals, special garments, wigs and so forth. Helping Hands is completely volunteer-based with no paid positions and is not funded by government or any other organizations."

"Men and women from anywhere in the province are eligible. We work hard at reaching rural communities as they have less support and more expenses and often feel very isolated when they are away from home. We

have an undisclosed cap but applicants can apply several times within a year and in consecutive years as well. Every application is reviewed on an individual basis regarding their needs and exceptions. To date we have given out \$70,000 and 40% of those assisted were from rural Manitoba."

As expected, fundraising plays a significant role in the organization's capacity to deliver their services to those who are in need. For the third consecutive year, the Rocky Mountain Soap Co is hosting the Women's Run and Walk at the Duck Pond in Assiniboine Park on Sunday, August 21, 2011.

"It's a luxury women's event that's all about celebrating women," says Ms Parkinson. "The pampering begins even before the race with all participants receiving \$50 in 100% natural Rocky Mountain Soap and a healthy brunch.

There will be a Zumba pre-run warm-up and post-race stretching. Participants also receive an aromatherapy scented washcloth at the finish line. There is an Expo where sponsors will demo and sell products. It's just a really great day for a really great cause!"

"This year we are expecting between 500 and 1,000 people and pledge forms are encouraged for all participants. Children and

...there are significant gaps that only become apparent when someone embarks on their individual course of treatment

pets are welcome but must remain at the back of the group. The walk is 5 km and the run is 5 or 10 km."

In addition to the walk, Helping Hands for Manitobans with Breast Cancer has introduced a new element; Pink for Prescriptions will be part of

(continued on page 4)

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TALKING ABOUT CANCER below the belt

Colorectal Cancer is Preventable, Treatable & Beatable yet there will be an estimated 810 new colorectal cancer cases diagnosed in Manitoba this year, (460 men - 350 women) and an estimated 320 colorectal cancer deaths (180 men - 140 women).

Overall, colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in Canada but the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada (CCAC) is a dedicated organization passionate about increasing the awareness of colorectal cancer, supporting patients, and advocating for population-based screening and timely access to effective treatments.

Anyone can get Colorectal Cancer, it often hits people before they become symptomatic and many risk factors have been identified. There is also a strong connection between Inflammatory Bowel Diseases, such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Unfortunately many people diagnosed with these diseases are unaware of the serious complications that can arise if they do not address their condition properly. Colorectal Cancer can be very expensive to treat, some treatments are not available in Manitoba, there are some painful side effects from some of the drug treatments that are available, and, sometimes if detected too late, the surgery can be very painful, irreversible and all too often fatal.

But this disease is preventable and families do not have to lose loved ones.

That is why, four years ago, the CCAC launched a nation-wide support initiative providing vital psychosocial support and information to colorectal cancer patients. The program consists of dedicated volunteers called Cancer Coaches located across Canada who have received special training and certification in the medical and surgical treatment of colorectal cancer, psychosocial coping, emotional support, communication, navigating the healthcare system, current drug therapies and their availability, nutrition, exercise and holistic treatment options.

This year saw local Winnipeg resident and Nutritional Therapist, Karen Insley become one of the four volunteer Cancer Coaches currently residing in Manitoba. Karen became involved with the CCAC after becoming a sponsor in 2008 at the first Kick Butt Run charity event (www.kickbuttrun.com) which raises funds and awareness for local Manitoba Colorectal Cancer patients. In 2010 she became Co-Chair on the organizing committee for the run which takes place annually on September 10th at Kildonan Park.

Karen and her Cancer Coach Colleagues have also been instrumental in bringing the "Giant Colon Tour" to Winnipeg four times now. The CCAC's latest initiative, it is an astounding 40 feet in length and eight feet high inflatable walk through multimedia exhibition for all ages, that is a fun yet graphic way of illustrating how Colorectal Cancer is preventable, treatable and beatable. Due to space constraints, this is an abridged article, but for the full story please join us online at www.winnipegwellnews.ca ■



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LEARN TO STRETCH EFFECTIVELY: Lengthen & Loosen Those Tight Muscles!

By Lisa Mills-Hutton, B.Comm.(Hons.), BMR(PT) & Karly Melnyk, B.A., CAT(C)

Good flexibility brings many benefits to the muscles and joints including injury prevention, decreasing muscle soreness, and improving efficiency for all activities and movements. Having good flexibility means increased elasticity in the muscles, and therefore a wider range of motion in the joints. And it's not just the muscles that tighten up; the fascia (a thin layer of connective tissue that surrounds each muscle) can also get all wound up and create restrictions.

Many people have false ideas about how to stretch properly, including holding a stretch for a few seconds prior to activity. It has been proven that these quick, careless stretches are not the key to improving flexibility and, not surprisingly, can cause strains.

Here are some tips to improve flexibility by actually changing the length of the muscle tissue and achieving beneficial change to the neuromuscular-tendon unit.

- Never stretch a cold muscle! Stretching should be incorporated once the heart rate is increased, and the muscles are warm. A fast paced walk is all that is needed to get the muscles warm,
- Before an activity like a going for a walk, bike ride or gardening, dynamic stretches can be used to prepare the body. These include movements like arm circles, shoulder rolls, hip circles, ankle circles and side bending.
- Holding stretches for 1-2 minutes will help release the fascia (a layer of connective tissue surrounding muscle and muscle fibers) and is the most beneficial type of stretch.
- Start light and increase the intensity of the stretch over time as your flexibility allows. Over-stretching too soon will cause micro-tearing and may lead to soreness the next day.
- Fit it into your day! For example, stretch when watching television at the end of the day, or before you go to bed.
- The feeling of a good stretch should be a strong tension, but comfortable. Ease in slowly, and allow the muscle to release before stretching further. Avoid severe discomfort.
- BREATHE!...Bringing oxygen to the muscles while you stretch will help. Deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth will help with relaxation.

For more about effective stretching view the whole article at www.winnipegwellnews.ca ■



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Alzheimer Society reports failing grades

Almost a decade has gone by since the release of *The Strategy for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementias in Manitoba* by Manitoba Health. The Alzheimer Society of Manitoba is urgently appealing to government for a revitalized and renewed Strategy and for funding to implement a revised set of recommendations that will address the current needs of dementia care.

At a press conference held June 28th, the Alzheimer Society released a report card grading the progress of the Strategy and identifying the gaps that need attention.

"We felt it was time to take a hard look at the results the Strategy has brought about. Sadly, we were not able to give the Strategy and the change it has brought about a high grade," says Sylvia Rothney, CEO of the Alzheimer Society. "The overall grade for the nine issues in the Strategy was a D."

One of the lowest grades is in the area of *Family and Individual Support*, receiving an E. "Families need far better support when faced with caring for someone with dementia," says Linda Weaver, whose father is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. "This is not a disease that comes with a hand book. If you have not cared for someone who has Alzheimer's, you don't know the right questions to ask to help you navigate the system," states Weaver, who dropped out of the workforce to care for her father.

"Today there's over 19,500 Manitobans living with a form of dementia," says Rothney. "This means their family members or friends provide 9 million hours of care. The number is going to increase dramatically to approximately 22 million hours by the year 2038. Immediate attention needs to be paid to the issues surrounding dementia care leading to improvement in the health and well-being of all those touched by dementia."

Helping Hands *(continued from page 1)*

the proceedings with MC College students putting in hair extensions as well as offering hand and foot massages for a minimum \$5 donation.

"Registration for the event is filling up quickly, so if you are interested, you are encouraged to register soon," adds Ms Parkinson.

A special Pink for Prescriptions pre-run blitz at 1181 Portage Avenue will be held on July 19 and 20th. The event is open to the public and appointments for hair extensions can be booked ahead by calling 786-5081. Drop-ins are also welcome. Online donations can also be made through through CanadaHelps.org "

"Currently, we have 8 salons from Aura Hair Group and Cozy Cuts Hairstyling participating. Reanna Cairns from Student Aid will be playing bagpipes at the beginning of each blitz. I am hoping to decorate the sidewalks one block in either direction with outlined pink ladies to show the way. Boston Pizza has donated many prizes for giveaways. We will be having a draw for a basket at the end of the blitz and we plan on providing hourly prizes for everyone who participates."

For more information related to Pink for Prescriptions and the Women's Run and Walk, refer to the Events tab at www.helpinghands4mbwbc.com.



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