

The Serenity Connection

Caring for Your Loved Ones in Greater Victoria

CAREGIVER PROFILE



Our caregivers are totally committed, highly qualified and carefully selected individuals who are personally and thoroughly screened, bonded and insured.

Most importantly our caregivers are dependable and extraordinarily caring of others. In addition to their previous experience, our caregivers receive continuous training that includes a specialized curriculum exclusive to Serenity Home Care that results in them becoming Certified Companion Aides™. These highly qualified and trained caregivers are ready to help you and your loved ones with a variety of daily activities such as:

- Caring companionship
- Meal planning and preparation
- Incidental transportation
- Running errands
- Light housekeeping
- Medication reminders
- Assistance with bathing and grooming
- Assistance with bill paying
- Information and referral services

Our personalized and affordable services are available 7 days a week and can range from a few hours a day to 24 hour and live in care.



Welcome to the Spring 2013 Serenity Connection

What's the Secret to Serenity's Success?

If you answered our amazing caregivers, you aren't far off. True: caregivers are the foundation of the work we do, but it's deeper than the sum of the efforts of individual caregivers. Together, we create a network of connections that weave together a tapestry of caring, community and support to enrich the lives of our clients, their families and the caregivers themselves.

Kathy and Murray Tough started Serenity Home Care because they realized, from their own experiences with aging parents, there just weren't enough resources available to help loved ones manage life's late transitions — loss of sight, cancer, mobility issues, Alzheimer's disease — with the dignity they deserve without jeopardizing the health and well being of family members who act as primary caregivers.

Serenity offers the kind of thoughtful, personalized care that changes people's lives. One client, who lived in residential care, spent a large part of his life restoring aircrafts for a museum. Planes were his passion, but mobility issues prevented him from engaging his craft the way he used to. The caregiver realized this and started bringing in model planes they could work on together — a simple gesture that profoundly impacted the quality of our client's life. The resident caregiver was astonished, "You have absolutely transformed this man's life."

Connecting people with their passions, to whatever level their ability allows, is magic, no matter how old you are.

For clients who don't have family members close by, caregivers act as a link to their loved ones — they send weekly updates, stories, photos, via email — so a daughter in Toronto can feel connected to her mom's every-day life in Victoria when dementia prevents the mom from sharing stories herself. The daughter can tell her mom is loved, regularly cared for and engaged in life — what a relief.

An innovative business model based on community, connection and caring is the secret to Serenity's success. We're more than honoured to be the winner of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce 2013 Outstanding Customer Service Award, and also a winner of Douglas Magazine's "10 to Watch" Awards. A big round of applause for our caregivers and the contributions they make to the community.



**Murray Tough
Kathy Tough**

Owners,
Serenity Home Care

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FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES

The Perks of Growing Older

Your senior years can be one of the most enjoyable and fulfilling times of your life. As the baby boomer generation gets older, the number of senior citizens in Canada is rapidly increasing, and seniors are finding ways to be more active and involved.

There are more seniors today than ever before. In 1921, 420,000 Canadians were age 65 and older; by 2011, this number had grown to 14.4 million. Researchers estimate that by 2036, 25% percent of the Canadian population will be senior citizens.

Some of the key trends in this age group:

- **Better economic position.** The number of seniors below the poverty level has dramatically decreased, from 35 percent in the 1970s to about 10 percent today.
- **Higher education.** More seniors than ever before have completed high school, and a higher number have earned a bachelor's degree or higher.
- **Lasting marriages.** The majority of senior citizens younger than 85 are married. Since women tend to live longer than men, older men are twice as likely to be married as elderly women.
- **Longer life expectancy.** People are living longer; the percentage of the Canadian population living to 100 has grown 42 percent over the past decade.

Better Services and Programs for

Senior Citizens In generations past, people felt that old age was a time to take it easy and slow down. But today senior citizens know that staying active is one of the most important parts of healthy aging.

Some of the services available to help senior citizens remain vital include:

- **Fitness programs.** A number of local community centers, churches, fitness centers, and senior centers offer exercise programs specially designed for older adults. Regular exercise helps you stay functional and healthy.

- **Job placement services.** You don't have to stop working at 65. Senior citizens today are working long after that age, and many people who retire from one job end up going back to work in another capacity. Programs like Silver Thread's "Experience Works" and RetiredWorker.com help older people find ways to get back into the workforce.
- **Volunteer organizations.** An estimated one-third of volunteers in Canada are senior citizens. Volunteering can be a great alternative for your time after retirement. There are many organizations, including the Volunteer Victoria, with programs that help match senior citizens to volunteer opportunities.
- **Lifelong education.** Staying mentally active is an important part of healthy aging, since researchers are finding out that when it comes to your mind, you have to use it so you don't lose it. One way to stay sharp is to enroll in adult education courses. Ask your local college, university, or public library if they offer education programs especially for seniors.
- **Travel programs.** Retirement is a great time to explore the world through travel. The Elderhostel Institute Network is a program that provides travel opportunities for people age 55 and older. BC Ferries and BC Transit both offer special fares for seniors.
- **Senior discounts.** There are numerous senior citizens discount programs everywhere. If you are a member of CARP, for instance, you have access to a number of discounts for members. In addition, many local movie theaters, museums, and restaurants offer discounted rates for seniors.

One of the best ways to stay in good mental and physical shape as you age is to get out and enjoy yourself. Take advantage of the many programs and services now offered to senior citizens.

*Edited by Murray Tough
www.serenityhomecare.ca*

if the patient meets very specific criteria. Home Health Services provides Nursing, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Social Work, and Home Health Aides.

To be eligible for services, you must also be unable to function independently because of chronic, health-related problems or have health care conditions that require care due to one or more of the following:

- You have recently been discharged from an acute care hospital.
- You require care to prevent or reduce the need for hospital or emergency department services or admission to a residential care facility.
- You have a life-limiting illness.

Private Pay Homecare:

Private pay homecare is typically non-medical. The services are provided by caregivers and/or registered care aides. The services provided do not require a

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ROTATING TOPIC

Understanding "Home Care"

There tends to be confusion, even in the professional community, about what is meant by "Home Care," when that term is used.

There are three types of home care: Home Health Services, Private Pay Homecare, and Hospice Care. This article outlines the parameters of each type of care.

Home Health Services:

Home health services is medical care in the home for homebound patients. It is a benefit of Medical Services Plan (MSP),



SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

Tai Chi Improves Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month

Tai chi, a type of exercise that guides the body through gentle, flowing poses, may help the worst physical problems of Parkinson's disease, a study shows. Experts say it appears that tai chi might be an effective therapy for improving a person's balance, ability to walk and move steadily. Tai chi may also reduce the chances of a fall.

"The results from this study are quite impressive," says Ray Dorsey, MD, MBA, a neurologist and associate professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore.

"The magnitude of the impact that they had is larger, in some cases, than what is seen with medications in Parkinson's," says Dorsey, who also directs the Movement Disorders Center and Neurology Telemedicine at Johns Hopkins.

Parkinson's disease involves the slow destruction of brain cells that make the chemical dopamine. Nerve cells depend on dopamine to send messages that guide muscle movement. As the cells die, movements may become shaky, stiff, and unbalanced. Walking may be harder.

Medications may help control some things, like tremors, but many drugs are not as good at helping the so-called axial symptoms of Parkinson's disease, which include problems with balance and walking.

Tai Chi Comes Out Tops

For the study, doctors assigned 195 people with mild-to-moderate Parkinson's disease to one of three groups: The first took tai chi classes, the second exercised with weights, and the third was assigned to a program of seated stretching. All the groups met for 60-minute sessions twice each week.

After six months, people who had been taking tai chi were able to lean farther forward or backward without stumbling or falling compared to those who had been doing resistance training or stretching. They were also better able to smoothly direct their movements and take longer strides than people in the other two groups.

Like resistance training, tai chi helped people walk more swiftly, get up from a chair more quickly, and increased leg strength.

Perhaps the most impressive benefit of tai chi, however, was related to falls. Falls are common in people with Parkinson's, and they can cause serious injuries, including fractures and concussions. Falls are the main cause of hospitalizations in Parkinson's patients. People in the tai chi group reported half the number of falls compared to those who were taking resistance training and two-thirds fewer falls than people who were doing light stretching exercises. The research is published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Mind-Body Benefit?

"This is a very encouraging study," said Chenchen Wang, MD, MSC, a rheumatologist at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston.

"Most of our previous studies have measured pain, depression, and anxiety, which are subjective measures. These results are very impressive because they used objective measurements," Wang said.

Researchers say they believe tai chi's effectiveness probably has something to do with the mind-body connection that's encouraged throughout the poses.

"It's intentional movement. So every step you take, you are aware of it. We put quite a bit of emphasis on the self-awareness of the movement," says Fuzhong Li, PhD, senior scientist at the Oregon Research Institute, a nonprofit center for the study of human behavior in Eugene, Ore.

Additionally, Li says, tai chi has some practical advantages over other kinds of exercise.

"You don't need any equipment. You can practice anywhere, anytime. It's low cost. It can easily be incorporated into the rehab setting, as well," Li says.

*By Brenda Goodman, MA
Reprinted from www.webmd.com
<http://www.webmd.com/parkinsons-disease/news/20120208/tai-chi-improves-symptoms-parkinsons-disease>*

physician's order. Services are designed to help the individual remain in their home as independently as possible by providing hygiene, meals, light housekeeping, companionship, errands, and medication reminders. Agencies like Serenity Home Care's services include transportation of clients.

Most Private Pay Homecare services are paid out of pocket, but may be covered in part or whole by long-term care insurance or the Veterans Independence Program. Serenity Home Care is proud to be a member of the Veterans Independence Program.

Private Duty Homecare is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Clients can obtain services long term or short term. Some agencies require a minimum number of hours either per shift, per day or per week, some do not.

Hospice:

Hospice is care for the dying. Hospice can be provided in homes, hospice facilities, long term care facilities and in hospitals. Hospice care is for clients in the last 6 months of their life and is initiated at the request of a physician. In most cases hospice palliative care is covered by MSP. Hospice palliative care offers a client -

and family - centred approach and support for people making choices about end-of-life care. The goal is to help clients and families make the most of their time together, and to cope with grief and loss during illness and bereavement.

Hospice consists of Nurses, Registered Care Aides, Social Work, Spiritual Care, and Volunteers, as well as a Bereavement Counselor. Patients may use all or some of the services based on their needs and preferences.

*Edited by Murray Tough
www.serenityhomecare.ca*

SERENITY SUPPORTS THE VICTORIA HOSPICE

Upcoming Fun Events

8th Annual Teeny Tiny Garden Tour Sunday, June 9th

Come discover the beauty and surprises that await on the Teeny Tiny Garden Tour! On Sunday, June 9th the owners of 14 gardens will open their gates, allowing you a rare glimpse into Victoria's smallest backyard gems – all in support of Victoria Hospice. This year's teeny tiny gardens include a rose lover's garden, an oasis of waterfalls, a garden that works around rock, a garden buzzing with life, and many more.

Tickets: \$25, available starting May 13th

at all Victoria Thrifty Foods and Dig This locations, Victoria Hospice Thrift Boutique (1315 Cook St), and the Victoria Hospice Foundation Office. For more information visit

www.victoriahospice.org

Swimathon this fall

Over the years Swimathon has been an important and much loved

Victoria Hospice event, traditionally held in the spring. This year we are working on moving Swimathon to the fall, to align with World Hospice and Palliative Care Day (October 12th, 2013). We can't think of a better way to honour a Victoria Hospice tradition and celebrate World Hospice Day. Stay tuned for more details.



SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

Is Spousal Caregiving Becoming Too Risky for You?

Caring for a spouse in need is very demanding, and can be stressful enough to threaten your own health. It is important to consider your own needs as just as high a priority as that of your spouse — in the long run it will be to their benefit as much as your own.

As a caregiving spouse, you may begin to feel very isolated from friends and feel guilt about your own unmet needs. There can also be a sense of loss, especially if your spouse suffers from dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

So how do you know if caregiving is becoming too risky for you? Examine this list and see how many apply to you:

- Missing or delaying your own doctor appointments
- Ignoring your own health problems or symptoms
- Not eating a healthy diet for lack of time
- Overusing tobacco and alcohol when you feel stressed
- Giving up exercise habits for lack of time
- Losing sleep

- Losing connections with friends for lack of time to socialize
- Bottling up feelings of anger and frustration and then being surprised by angry, even violent, outbursts directed at your spouse, other family members, co-workers — even strangers
- Feeling sad, down, depressed or hopeless
- Loss of energy
- Lacking interest in things that used to give you (and your spouse) pleasure
- Feeling resentful toward your spouse
- Blaming your spouse for the situation
- Feeling that people ask more of you than they should
- Feeling like caregiving has affected family relationships in a negative way
- Feeling annoyed by other family members who don't help out or who criticize your care

All caregivers who experience elevated levels of stress are at an increased risk for physical and emotional issues.

Even if you are only experiencing two or three of these items, it is important to get help and support. If you are experiencing

many of the symptoms on this list, it may be time to seriously consider alternatives — whether that be relying on supplemental caregivers or full time care at home or in a facility for your spouse.

The truth is your spouse/partner will be in better hands if you are healthy.

*Reprinted from caregiverstress.com
<http://www.caregiverstress.com/stress-management/stress-symptoms/signs-spousal-caregiving-too-risky/>*

When to Ask for Help

Serenity Home Care presents a free seminar for caregivers and for people who are concerned that someone they love may need care.

Call to book