

HELPING OUR NEIGHBOURS – JANUARY 9, 2012

GROUP A – CARING FOR OUR NEIGHBOURS

Group participants:

Renate Dickman, Leona Kirejczyk, Marsha Melnik, Lillian Mierzwa, Joyce Reynolds, Aline Smith-Henderson (regrets from Carole Ginzel)

People who might be in need of assistance:

- Seniors
- Shut-ins
- Any residents living alone of any age (could be young or old, i.e. not age specific) who might benefit from assistance

Issues for residents who might be in need of assistance:

- medications running low, need refills from pharmacy
- when groceries in stock get low, need help to shop
- food/water supply for pets
- run personal errands
- mailings at post office or pick-ups (packages)
- help with information on services available, e.g. Gateway.com for grocery delivery, how to get an emergency call button/necklace from monitoring service such as LifeLine
- access to money
- temporary help needed, e.g. after surgery – how would we know about these people?
- condo community activity
- key exchange
- handyman services – changing light bulbs, cleaning lint trap, having the right screwdriver
- write notes, address envelopes, etc.
- be a good listener if someone needs to have someone to talk to
- play card games if someone needs a social break

How to identify recipients of assistance and make contact, while respecting confidentiality and privacy, and understanding that some residents may not want assistance at all:

- formal or informal connection
- survey or door-to-door
- human contact (cf isolation)
- social setting for first contact:
 - movies
 - Happy Hour
 - invite people (small card placed outside each door) on your floor to have tea which provides a smaller, “safer” setting for getting acquainted – can be extended to floor above or below – talk to your friends on other floors to host a tea
- floor specific? Isan kept record of floor of respondents from survey – Lillian
- Isan knows most about residents – use him as a resource – keep in mind issues of confidentiality and being intrusive
- if you are concerned about a neighbour or haven’t seen him/her for a while, ask Isan if he has seen them at the mailboxes
- Isan can speak to someone on same floor to offer help

Action items:

- ensure volunteers’ availability and commitment
- *afternoon group suggestion:* all volunteers to draft up an introductory letter for all residents – people must be made to feel comfortable – wording: if ... then ...
- *afternoon group suggestion:* letter of introduction: We are --- and ---. We’d like to meet with you ---
- *evening group suggestion:* floor teas – need a script on what and how we address the issues at the tea
- *several people suggested:* use Isan as a resource, but keep in mind issues of privacy/confidentiality and Isan’s position

Privacy/Confidentiality issue:

- people have already self-identified in Fire Department list
- Isan knows this information, but he would have to feel comfortable identifying the residents to whom we should send the letter of introduction
- speak to Isan re suggestion of letter being sent out
- update Fire Department list and include question “would you like to be contacted”