

Good Afternoon

I have been asked to talk today on the Falls Prevention Network, which after all does not only affect seniors.

I presume you are aware how this Network came about, but I will refresh your memory.

Nearly five years ago, a small group of residents from the Health Services, Seniors Advisory, City Works Yard and led by City Planner, Kari Huhtala – named this group the Slips, Trips and Falls Committee. We all agreed that there should be a policy in place to make Richmond residents aware of the risk factors when a large number of seniors are prone to falls. Therefore, diminishing their quality of life and of course the added costs to hospital care. Within a year, we as a group organized a public forum to educate seniors on the impact that falls have on their health. This workshop was a huge success with over 100 seniors attending and participating. Because of the response, a brochure was developed to inform seniors of potential hazards and with the help of the City Works Yard they would respond and repair any outdoor hazards that would come under their jurisdiction.

In April 2003 the Falls Prevention Network was approached by Dr. Shawn Peck, Deputy Provincial Health Officer for our input on the special report “Prevention Falls in the Elderly”, that he was involved in developing. A number of our suggestions were incorporated in the 27 recommendations that would reduce the number and consequences of falls in the province.

Later in the year the Richmond School Board became a partner with their “Way to Go” program for school-aged children.

Kari Huhtala encouraged us to continue our efforts and eventually to be known as a Walkable Community along with a number of other cities across Canada.

From these small beginnings, the group advocated for the establishment of a Safe Community Alliance in Richmond, where we can share our common interests with community agencies, health services, city services and local businesses.

Our plans for 2006 include a number of initiatives that will make a difference for all seniors living in Richmond. For example, discussing with developers to incorporate Universal Guidelines for future housing developments. Advocating for universal safety equipment in hotels.

The future for the Falls Prevention Network is enhanced because of the groundwork already achieved.

This is only a small element of our accomplishments, which is described in more detail within the Report provided to you by Dr. Lu.