



Gaia Community Care and
Wellness Society (“Gaia Cares”)

Annual Report 2020



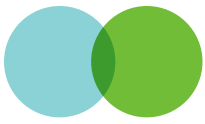


Vision

Our vision for seniors in our community is that they receive excellent, culturally and linguistically appropriate care, which helps them to live a long healthy life while maintaining their independence and dignity.

Mission

- **We promote the health and wellbeing of Chinese and other ethnic seniors and their caregivers. Our culturally and linguistically appropriate services include information sharing, education, training, counselling, and physical and emotional support.**
- **We provide seniors with essential support services that enable them to age comfortably and independently at home and defer the need for admissions to long-term care facilities.**



About Us

Gaia Cares Community and Wellness Society ("Gaia Cares") was born out of a passion for serving seniors in their advancing years and supporting the family and others who care for them.

It began in 2018 when a small group of like-minded individuals set out to plan much-needed services in Greater Vancouver for Chinese seniors and their family caregivers. They aimed to address unmet needs for culturally and linguistically sensitive health and wellness services that would ease the burdens of aging.

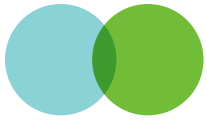
Inspired by the innovative seniors' care models of Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care ("Yee Hong") in Metro Toronto, and with support and guidance from its founder, Dr. Joseph Wong, the group sought Yee Hong's expertise to establish local services for seniors and families. With faith and trust to "let every idea blossom," they gained valuable insights into best practices and community outreach expertise. Gaia Cares was incorporated in 2018 and became a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency on April 1, 2019.

Consulting with various health and social work professionals, we are finding new and better ways to serve the Chinese seniors in Metro Vancouver.

Guided by our mission, albeit with limited resources, we have been identifying effective ways to meet some of the critical needs of seniors in the community. We help seniors and families manage the often-challenging process of aging through education programs, services, and counselling by:

- offering culturally and linguistically appropriate community-based services designed to help ease the stresses of aging and caring for seniors. Through instructional seminars, courses, and workshops, participants explore the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills that families and caregivers need to provide compassionate seniors' care;
- providing education in health and wellness through specialized training for family and community caregivers. Our programs cover topics that help build an understanding of age-related issues and enable participants to develop skills and strategies for coping with caregiving complexities. Workshops and programs also address the emotional, physical, and mental health stresses that many family members and caregivers experience which often lead to caregiver burnout.





President's Message

Many people in Canada and the world have experienced hardship, suffering and loss in the past year due to the pandemic. None of this should be overlooked or forgotten.

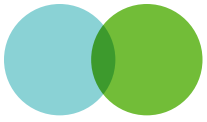
As President of Gaia Community Care and Wellness Society ("Gaia Cares"), I would like to personally thank you and all our supporters. I also want to thank everyone else who has worked hard to help keep us going during this unprecedented time. This includes doctors, nurses and hospital staff, delivery people and store clerks, public health officials, volunteers, and our donors. Truly, thank you.

Against this backdrop, it is a great source of pride to me that Gaia Cares has continued to embark on an ambitious journey to help seniors and their caregivers. We have continued to provide programming, kept moving forward in our charitable goals, and worked hard on our plans for the future of Gaia Cares.

The list of initiatives and milestones is significant. It includes the finalization of our website, the engagement of our wonderful Executive Director to help us move forward, foundational work for the establishment and strengthening of community partnerships, work on our roster of volunteers, the creation of our newsletter and efforts towards increasing our donor base. And, of course, we did all of this during COVID-19. Within Gaia Cares, there is recognition of the need to pursue creative change if we are to improve the availability of services to our cherished seniors, particularly for those most in need and their caregivers. Being focused, progressive and bold this year is our challenge and our passion in service of the seniors we serve. I look forward to our work together.



Morag MacLeod, QC
President, Board of Directors



A Year in Review

2020 presented significant challenges to all businesses and especially to non-profit organizations focused on providing in-person services. However, with the support of our partners and the tireless efforts of our team, Gaia Cares adapted to irregular circumstances and continued making progress.

In 2020, we delivered 11 programs with 69 sessions and 857 attendees. These programs provided rich experiences for learning and sharing in an environment sensitive to participants' emotional needs. A wide range of health and aging topics included diet and nutrition, exercise, stress relief, self-confidence, dealing with cognitive challenges and ways to cope.

In March, amid business closures, we responded to the Province of BC's recommendations for safe distancing by moving its programs and services online. Participants were encouraged to phone in or register online to participate in workshops and webinars delivered through the Zoom platform. We further directed participants to view health and aging videos posted to the Gaia Cares website. Print and online video resources were also available to support positive and continued learning outside of scheduled program sessions. Our videos proved to be popular with more than 1,300 views on YouTube.

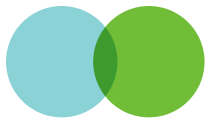
As the popularity of our programs grew, so did the number of participants who attended from both local and distant communities, including Vancouver Island. Participants came to appreciate the value in improving their physical and mental health and enriching their lives.

COVID-19 posed significant challenges to Gaia Cares' program planning for 2020 as no in-person group activities were permitted. We used Zoom to deliver programs and workshops and facilitate group interaction with our clients. Through this process, Gaia Cares developed its online capacity for program delivery, including technical management, session facilitation and moderating audience interaction.

Online programs enabled us to fulfill our mission in promoting innovative and holistic care and wellness services for seniors and family caregivers and helped bring our services to a broader audience. This new capability laid the foundation for future online program delivery that will likely continue post-COVID-19.

Nellie Cheng

Executive Director



Gaia Cares Programs

Education and Caregivers Support

Our programs became popular with a growing number of participants.

Care2Smart Webinar and Support Group –

This safe environment enabled caregivers to relieve their stress, gain practical skills, and strengthen their coping abilities through the support of peers.

Chair Yoga – Introduced in the fall, Chair Yoga became very popular. Participants attended ten one-hour Zoom sessions to practice the gentle movements to increase their flexibility, circulation, and lung capacity, and improve balance and relieve stress.

Well Spring Program – Nourish to Flourish Group: Social Effectiveness Training – Six weekly sessions used an interactive and experiential learning approach to assist caregivers in

becoming more assertive and self-confident when managing challenging social situations with loved ones. The program was presented in partnership with Yee Hong.

Wise Food Choices for Brain Nourishment –

A quality diet creates a positive impact on brain health. Workshop participants were introduced to a range of healthy foods from different cultures and learned how to choose the best foods for building and maintaining optimal brain health and wellness.

Chronic Condition Self-Management Program –

Twelve Cantonese sessions were presented in partnership with the Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health at the University of Victoria. The program explored topics ranging from better sleep, positive thinking, and techniques for dealing with frustration to appropriate exercises to maintain and improve strength, flexibility, and endurance.





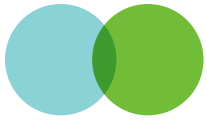
Spice Up Your Health Workshop – Use Everyday Super Spices – We teamed up with the Richmond City Centre Community Centre for this tasty program. Participants discovered the health benefits of spices like ginger and garlic and learned how to incorporate nutrient-dense, antioxidant-rich super spices into daily cooking.

Healthy Eating and Living Webinar Series – Four informative sessions offered helpful everyday tips for older adults and caregivers. Participants learned what foods boost immunity, how to use

antiviral herbs, and balance nutrition and eating for healthy aging.

Cultivating Resilience in Uncertain Times – Therapy Group – This powerful six-week therapy group is a forum for caregivers to share personal experiences, discover ways to reduce feelings of isolation and strengthen their relationship skills while managing caregiving stresses during pandemic restrictions. The BC Centre for Palliative Care supported the presentation of the program.





What Participants Are Saying

"I really appreciate Gaia service in Vancouver ... their courses are very helpful for me to take care of my mom and other seniors at church. Such as 曾家達教授 SSLD, 不亢不卑 and other courses for caregivers. Because of this support, I understand seniors with Dementia more about their emotional needs, which caregivers mostly neglect. At the same time, I also understand my limitation, access to seek help from the community and develop positive heart and attitude with love and respect to care for seniors."

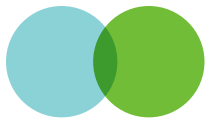
– Participant, Care2Smart Support Group

"I appreciate our instructor's compassionate and detailed demonstration, pointing out what to pay attention to in each movement, what to avoid in certain movements, and sometimes even pointed out what is the usual mistake in doing certain movements. All these are very good information and helpful for us in remembering what to watch out for when we do that particular movement again. I am particularly appreciative to Easter, who has been so persevering in sending us links after each session. They are precious in helping me to continue carrying out my exercises in the future as it is impossible for me to remember all these ten lessons materials ... Big thumbs up!!

– Participant, Chair Yoga Class

"I would like to praise our facilitator, Lorraine. I have learned from her what a real good listener is like - it is to make people feel heard. She was able to identify the essence of the things we said, made us feel respected, and guided us to self-reflect. With a dozen of classmates, it was not easy to make everyone feel the same way. She has strong abilities in presenting, analyzing, summarizing and building rapport with participants." (Translation)

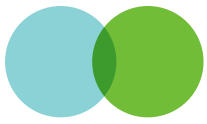
– Participant, Cultivating Resilience Program



Special Project

In June, we received 500,000 medical masks for distribution to organizations throughout the Lower Mainland to help protect health care workers, first responders, and others from COVID-19. The masks were a generous anonymous contribution that we donated to long-term care residences, aboriginal communities, non-profit groups, seniors, and family caregivers between June and December. Recipients of mask donations included 36 long-term care homes, 31 non-profit organizations, 3 Indigenous communities and First Nations Health Authority. We received overwhelming responses from recipients expressing gratitude for the donation to safeguard the health of the elderly and frontline workers.





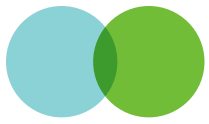
Resources for the Community

Visit Us Online

We enhanced our website with enriched content and added Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese pages to serve our target audience better. Caregiver videos and recorded webinars were uploaded to the site, offering seniors and family caregivers learning opportunities to fit their schedules. In providing further support to the community during the pandemic, links to

social support resources for caregivers were also included on the Gaia Cares website. In October, we launched our inaugural newsletter with updates on the latest developments, activities, and seniors' health and well-being information. The bilingual (English and Chinese) newsletter is scheduled to be published every two months and distributed to seniors and caregivers, community partners, government agencies and a wide range of networks.





Public Funding and Partnership

We obtained our first public grant from the BC Centre for Palliative Care to provide psycho-social support to seniors and caregivers, which was an essential step toward expanding funding for the society. Significant gains were also made in building crucial relationships with community groups. Positive collaborations were established with social services organizations such as Richmond City Community Centre, Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House, and Hong Fook Mental Health Association, and through experts from various professions, including a nutrition consultant, registered clinical counsellor, and wealth preservation coach to help deliver high-quality programs and activities.

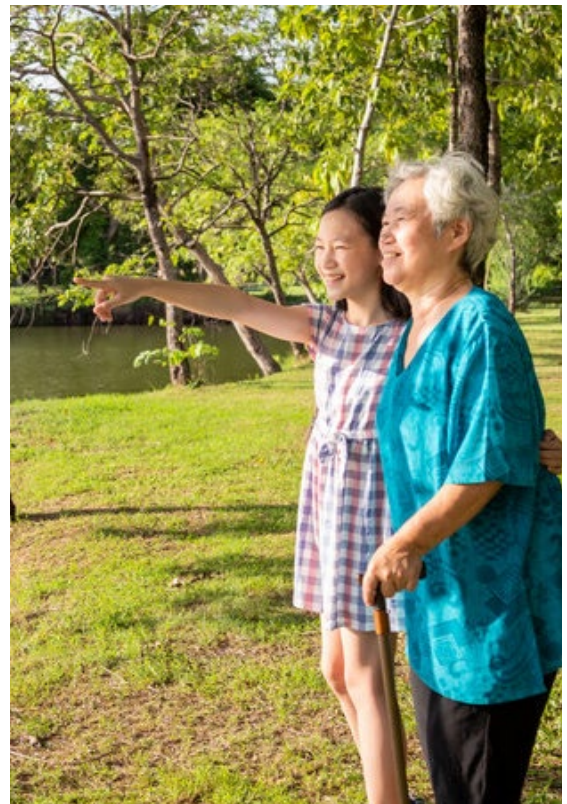


Thank You for Supporting Gaia Cares

Those involved in Gaia Cares since its inception embarked on a deeply rewarding experience. We are especially encouraged by the positive feedback of our participants and community partners and invite others to support our work.

As a new organization, we are making steady, incremental steps to meet the critical needs of a growing number of seniors in Metro Vancouver. There is much for us to learn and do and we are prepared to face the challenges ahead.

We express sincere appreciation to our many volunteers, donors, and contributors who believe in our vision and mission to provide vital services that are a lifeline to others. Through generous and ongoing support, we have accomplished great things. We look forward to working with you for years to come.



Board of Directors

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Member at Large

Staff

Nellie Cheng, *Executive Director*
Melanie Fong, *Administration Manager*
Easter Yeung, *Administrative Assistant*

Contact Us:

You can learn more about Gaia Community Care and Wellness Society by visiting www.gccws.ca, info@gccws.ca, or by calling **778.223.7236**.

Our office is located at #200 – 8877 Odlin Crescent, Richmond, B.C. V6X 3Z7.

Donate:

Support our vital work with seniors and caregivers through a donation made by cheque or credit card. For greater convenience, donate online at www.gccws.ca. Call us to learn more about volunteer opportunities with Gaia Cares at **778.223.7236**.

Gaia Cares 2020



HOME TO
Seniors | Caregivers
Families | Volunteers

Support | Connection | Education | Engagement | Empowerment | Nourishment | Holistic Health | Emotional Wellness



EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Caregivers Wellspring - Support Group
Caregivers Wellspring - Care2Smart
Cultivate Resilience in Uncertainty
Chronic Disease Self management
Social Effectiveness Training
Wise Food Choice for Brain
Healthy Eating and Living
Spice up Your Health
Chair Yoga

11
Programs

857
Attendees

1351
YouTube
views

69
Sessions

38
Learning
videos



MASK DONATIONS 500,000 TO

36 Long-term care homes
31 Non-profit organizations
3 Indigenous communities
First Nations Health Authority



PARTNERS NETWORKS

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Problem Gambling Program
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
Volunteers from Greater Vancouver
Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care
Richmond City Community Centre
Churches in Greater Vancouver
BC Centre for Palliative Care
Professionals



佳頤中心
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