

Supporting our Seniors: Moose Jaw Age-Friendly Committee's inviting public to participate in Virtual Letter Writing Campaign

With the threat of COVID-19, assisted living centers and care homes for senior citizens across the country have had to go on lockdown for the safety of their residents and patients, which is better for their physical health, but has left a lot of people feeling more alone in a stressful time. Complying with social distancing and self-isolation measures in response to COVID-19 has meant that lockdown or not, seniors just aren't getting out as much, getting to see their families and/or friends, or getting the social connection they may need to carry them through this difficult time. Moose Jaw's Age-Friendly Committee has come together in an attempt to address this issue and support Moose Jaw and Area seniors through this unprecedented time.

Made up of representatives from varied sectors and agencies, including: Health, Community, Moose Jaw Salvation Army, Moose Jaw Public Library, The Moose Jaw & Senior Citizens Association Inc., Moose Jaw Literacy, Moose Jaw Housing Authority, ect., Moose Jaw's Age-Friendly Committee collaborates to learn from seniors about challenges, needs and opportunities in Moose Jaw; inform seniors on issues of concern/interest to seniors; and advocate for the needs of seniors in Moose Jaw and Area. Age-Friendly Moose Jaw's Vision is to see a community where seniors are supported to thrive and attain a high quality of life. Their Mission is to educate, advocate and collaborate with community stakeholders to support the senior community in Moose Jaw. Following some preliminary research on initiating a letter writing campaign to address heightened social isolation experienced by seniors in the wake of COVID-19, Moose Jaw's Age-Friendly Committee identified some potential risks of a traditional 'mail exchange' with a vulnerable population. As such they are proposing a 'virtual' letter writing campaign, in which children, youth, and adults in our community can email generic letters/scanned copies & pictures to older adults in care homes, ect.

Specifically, the committee has created an email address (keepingmjseniorsconnected@gmail.com) where they will receive and screen generic letters of support & encouragement, scanned pictures, ect. from the public. Those participating assisted living centers, care homes, and retirement communities will then receive weekly emails with compiled content to print and post, or share with all residents as they see fit.

Moose Jaw's Age-Friendly Committee is inviting Moose Jaw and Area residents to help in boosting the morale and brightening the day of a senior, by sending some virtual mail their way! Email your generic letters of support & encouragement, stories, scanned copies/pictures, ect. to: keepingmjseniorsconnected@gmail.com and Moose Jaw's Age-Friendly Committee will distribute them to all participating assisted living centers, care homes, and retirement communities. If you are representative of a facility interested in participating, please email request with heading 'Sign Us Up'.