Welcome to the Fraser Valley Chapter’s Winter Newsletter

“Always choose the adventure ... unless, it's chilly outside and there's a cup of warm coffee resting near a book and comfy sofa.”

— Barbara Brooke

I don’t know about you but I enjoy getting out in the crisp, fresh air of winter. But, I love the warmth of a fireplace and blanket even more! Please take extra care this winter when you do venture outside. The roads and sidewalks are slippery and the weather can change quickly. Be sure your cell phone is charged, carry your identification with you and give yourself extra time to get to appointments.

Inside we share with you a number of updates in MS research, links to articles about MS that have recently been in the news, upcoming workshops and local meetings, details about the upcoming Ski to end MS and the 2014 MS Walks. We also share a variety of short term and longer term opportunities for you to get more involved with the Chapter. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year!

It is membership renewal time!

If you haven’t done so already, it is time to renew your membership. This is the time to update your contact information and to confirm your preferred manner of communications from the MS Society. Membership is only $10 for 1 year or $18 for 2 years and all fees collected locally are used to support our Chapter.

You can renew your membership or encourage others to become a member by contacting:

Email: Deanna.mcintyre@mssociety.ca
Call toll free: 1-877-746-9331
Online: www.mssociety.ca, under the Get Involved tab.
**MS Research News**

- Research reveals new understanding, warning signs, and potential treatments for multiple sclerosis – read [here](#)
- How many people with Clinically Isolated Syndrome never progress to MS? – read [here](#)
- Assessment of cardiac safety during fingolimod treatment initiation in a real-world relapsing multiple sclerosis population – read [here](#)
- Long term impact of interferon beta-1b in patients with CIS: 8 year follow-up of benefit – read [here](#)
- Researchers test first-in-class compound for neuroprotection, hope of stopping MS disease progression – read [here](#)
- Cortical plasticity predicts recovery from relapse in multiple sclerosis – read [here](#)

**MS in the News**

- Snow Angels hit the streets to help MS – click [here](#)
- NHL goalie opens up about his battle with MS - and how he is playing better than ever despite the devastating diagnosis – click [here](#)
- An RCT to treat learning impairment in multiple sclerosis: The MEMREHAB – read [here](#)
- Research reveals new understanding, warning signs, and potential treatments for multiple sclerosis – read [here](#)
- Could an external skeleton improve mobility and posture in MS? – read [here](#)
- Breakthrough Multiple Sclerosis DNA study could lead to new treatments – read [here](#)
- Using magnetic resonance imaging in animal models to guide drug development in multiple sclerosis – read [here](#)
- Disclosure of diagnosis of multiple sclerosis in the workplace positively affects employment status and job tenure – read [here](#)
**Can Do MS - Webinar Series**

2nd Tuesday of Each Month from 5:00 — 6:00 pm PST.

Ask questions and learn how to live your best life with MS. Can Do also has an archive of previous webinars that you might find useful and informative. Upcoming sessions include:

- January 14, 2014: New Year, New Changes: Tips on Daily Living with MS
- February 11, 2014: Keeping Your Relationship Alive: The Physical and Emotional Aspects of Intimacy in MS


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**Chronic Disease/Pain Self-Management Programs**

Upcoming winter sessions - The workshops are FREE, run for 2.5 hours, once a week, for six consecutive weeks and provide information to help people learn how to manage their condition and continue to live a healthy life. For further information on these programs [www.selfmanagementbc.ca](http://www.selfmanagementbc.ca).

**HOPE**

Fraser Canyon Hospital, 1275—7th Avenue, (Chronic Disease)

Tuesdays, 1:00 pm—3:30 pm, **January 14 to February 18**

**MISSION**

Lifetime Learning Centre, 32444 Seventh Avenue, (Chronic Pain)

Tuesdays, 1:00 pm—3:30 pm, **February 25 to April 8**

**Register:** Call 604-940-1273 or Toll Free 1-866-902-3767, register online at [www.selfmanagementbc.ca](http://www.selfmanagementbc.ca) or email selfmgmt@uvic.ca with your workshop choice, full name, telephone number and postal code.

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**National Volunteer Engagement Strategy Survey**

You input is needed! The MS Society of Canada has embarked on a mission to develop a Nationwide Volunteer Engagement Strategy. We invite you to make your voice heard by participating in this survey. Please click on one of the following links:

1. If you have volunteered with the MS Society in the past 12 months, please click on this link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GHYJP5Y](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GHYJP5Y)

2. If you have volunteered in the past with the MS Society but haven’t in the past 12 months, please click on this link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GKY88ZQ](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GKY88ZQ)
**Self Help Groups**

Trying to navigate through life with MS on your own? You don’t have to! Self-Help Groups are facilitated by volunteers interested in bringing together individuals and families whose lives are affected by MS. Groups operate independently, supported by the MS Society of Canada with information, promotion and resources. You are welcome to attend any Self-Help Group that works best for you even if you live in a different community from where the group meets.

- **Chilliwack MS Self Help Group** – Support group for persons with MS
  Meets the 3rd Thursday of each month, 11:30 am – 2:00 pm
  Decades, 45846 Wellington, Chilliwack

- **Mission Party (MS Self Help Group)** - Support group for persons with MS
  Meets the 2nd Thursday of each month, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
  St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, 8469 Cedar Street, Mission

- **MS Family Members Group** – Support group for spouses, family, and caregivers of persons with MS. Open to family members from all Fraser Valley communities. Meets 3rd Saturday of the month, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
  St Paul’s Lutheran Church, 8871 School St, Chilliwack

Please note that the Hope Self Help Group has recently ceased meeting. If you reside in Hope or another community that does not currently have a support group, you are welcome to join any existing support groups. If you would like to start a support group in your area, please call 1-877-303-7122.

**Caregivers Information and Care-Ring Voice Network**

Click [here](#) to view the next issue of **Caring for the Caregiver**, from the MS Society. For more information, visit [http://mssociety.ca/en/help/iAmaCaregiver.htm](http://mssociety.ca/en/help/iAmaCaregiver.htm)

**Care-Ring Voice Network**


**Host Organization: AMI Quebec (Action on Mental Illness)**

January 15, 2014 07:00 PM (EST) (Session offered in English)

*Why are you so angry? A management guide.*

For more information, contact info.fraservalley@mssociety.ca.

Be sure to read the Fall 2013 Caring Voice Soar Newsletter. Click [here](#) to access the newsletter and their archive of newsletters from the past year.
Finance News: Old Age Security and its recent changes

The beginning of government sponsored retirement assistant programs began with the Old Age Pension Act of 1927. Since then, the act has undergone significant changes. It is now comprised of three pillars; Old Age Security, Canada Pension Plan, and retirement saving accounts. Old Age Security can be further broken down into four parts: Old Age Security Pension; Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS); Allowance; and Allowance for the Survivor.

This article will focus on changes to the first part, Old Age Security Pension, or OAS. This federally funded program is available to Canadians based upon a residency test. A benefit received from this program is considered taxable income in the year that it is received. The OAS pension provides a taxable retirement pension to all eligible individuals. The GIS, Allowance and Allowance for Survivor may be available for lower income individuals. Some of you may be experiencing a claw back, or a reduction, in your OAS pension. This issue may be solved with a financial planning solution.

OAS Change #1 – Age limit increase

There have been two changes recently to Old Age Security. The 2012 Federal Budget introduced measures which would increase the age of eligibility for OAS and GIS benefits from age 65 to age 67. The age increase will be phased-in over a number of years starting in April 2023, with full implementation by January 2029. Individuals born on or before March 31, 1958 will remain eligible for benefits at age 65. Individuals born on or after February 1, 1962 will not be eligible until they are 67 years of age. Individuals born between April 1, 1958 and January 31, 1962 will have an eligibility age between age 65 and age 67.

OAS Change #2 – Enhancement for deferral of benefits

Beginning on July 1, 2013, an individual will be able to defer the start date of OAS benefits for up to 5 years, which will result in a higher actuarially adjusted pension. The actuarial adjustment will be equal to 0.6% for each month that the start date is delayed after the date that the person becomes eligible for the OAS benefit.

Thank you to Greg Reinhart, Consultant at Investors Group who provided us with this information. For his contact details, email Deanna.mcintyre@mssociety.ca or please call 1-877-746-9331.

For more information on how to take advantage of this program, contact a financial planner or accountant.
Resources

The MS Society is always updating their resources so we can provide you with the most current information. For the latest and newest resources, visit www.mssociety.ca/en/help/pubs.htm

To receive a hard copy of any of these resources, please contact us at info.fraservalley@mssociety.ca with your name, address, and the title of each publication you would like.

The Fraser Valley Recreation and Leisure Guide has been posted on the website here. This guide has details of many disability organizations and accessible leisure activities available throughout the Fraser Valley and the Greater Vancouver area.

Also new on our website is a link the MS Resource Guide, found here. It is an annually updated information guide to resources and benefits available to people with MS.

There is a lot of information on the MS Society website and it is updated regularly. Be sure to check the site often! If you find any information that we missed and that you think should be included, please send it to info.fraservalley@mssociety.ca.

Volunteers needed

The MS Society is a volunteer driven organization. We could not do all that we do without the time and efforts given to us by our wonderful, dedicated volunteers.

Here are the current opportunities available:

- Volunteers to contribute to the production of the quarterly newsletter. Tasks include writing, editing, deciding on content, layout and design.
- Organizing committee members for the 2014 MS Walk are needed for Abbotsford and Chilliwack. Meetings take place once per month between January and May. A variety of positions are available. Many positions will allow you to both volunteer and participate in the Walk.
- A volunteer is needed to create an inventory and organize fundraising and office supplies. Must be able to climb stairs and know how to use Excel spreadsheets.
- A volunteer Event coordinator is needed for the Ski to end MS. Must be able to attend on March 1st, take over the planning and promotions of the event. Support and training will be provided.

For more details or to apply for any of these opportunities, please contact Deanna at 604-746-9331 or Deanna.mcintyre@mssociety.ca, unless otherwise indicated.

“Winter is coming.”
— George R.R. Martin, A Game of Thrones

“Are ye the ghosts of fallen leaves, O flakes of snow, For which, through naked trees, the winds A-mourning go?”
— John B. Tabb
2014 MS Walk

Registration will be opening soon for the 2014 MS Walks!

**Abbotsford:** New date and location! Sunday, May 4th at Gardner Park. Come enjoy the beauty of this 3km walk along the Discovery Trail/Fishtrap Creek trails. You can do 1, 2 or 3 loops of this fully accessible route.

**Chilliwack:** New date! Sunday, May 25th at Strathcona Elementary. Join us for a 5km walk around the picturesque Fairfield Island and surrounding area. Runners can do 2 loops for a great 10km run.

**Hope:** Sunday, June 8th at Memorial Park. Don’t miss walking this scenic 4km route through the pretty streets of Hope. Runners can do 3 loops for a breezy 8km run.

Start forming your teams and begin fundraising now. It’s never too early to begin! We will need lots of volunteers for these events. Check our website for more details of how you can help. Questions? Contact Deanna.mcintyre@mssociety.ca.

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2014 Ski to end MS

Registration for the 4th annual 2014 Ski to end MS is now open! Go to [www.msski.ca](http://www.msski.ca) to register you and your team for this fundraiser. It will be taking place at Hemlock Resort on Saturday, March 1st from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

All participants will earn a string for each run they complete as part of our Vertical Challenge. The person who earns the most beads by 3:00pm will win a great prize at the après ski party!

We have raised over $10,000 through the Ski to end MS and hope to raise $5,000 more in 2014. Funds raised will support the programs and services provided to those people affected by MS in the Fraser Valley and goes toward research for finding a cure.

Not a skier but want to get involved? We need a few great volunteers to help make this day a success. Volunteers are needed for a variety of position for March 1st. We also need a volunteer to take over the planning and promotions of the event. Contact Deanna.mcintyre@mssociety.ca for more details about the positions available.

A big thank you goes out to all of our sponsors! We appreciate their contributions and ask that you show them a little love this season, too. Visit them at: Hemlock Resort, 89.5 The Drive, Fly in the Eye Photographic Arts, Signal Signs & Graphics, Global BC, 99.3 The Fox, The Abbotsford News, The Mission Record, The Agassiz-Harrison Observer, The Chilliwack Progress and The Hope Standard.

Register today and join us for this fun, family friendly event!
News from the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has been very busy this fall working on a number of projects.

First, the 2014 budget was drafted, reviewed, modified and approved. Priorities for 2014 were defined, which include expanding the programs offered to our clients and members.

Second, they have been reviewing the position description, hours and key areas of focus for a new Community Services Coordinator. We hope to be able to share more details early in the New Year.

Third, the Board has been reviewing a new Chapter Charter that will replace the current Chapter By-laws. They have asked many questions and provided their feedback. This is part of a nation wide initiative to detail the relationships between the MS Society of Canada and its Divisions and between Divisions and their Chapters.

Board Meeting Schedule

The Board meets monthly, except during the summer. Guests are always welcome to attend. Upcoming meetings are:

- Wednesday, December 18, 2013
- Thursday, January 23, 2014
- Thursday, February 20, 2014

All meetings begin at 7:00 pm. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Deanna at Deanna.mcintyre@mssociety.ca or by calling 1-877-746-9331.

Contact Information

Please make note of our contact information:

PO Box 373
Abbotsford, BC  V2T 6Z6

Community Services Coordinator:
Toll Free: 1-877-303-7122

Deanna McIntyre, Fundraising, Event & Volunteer Coordinator:
Direct Phone: 604-746-9331
Toll Free: 1-877-746-9331
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www.mssociety.ca/fraservalley

This newsletter is intended to provide news and information to people living with MS, their families, caregivers, medical professionals and other stakeholders. Information/opinions contained in this newsletter are obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but their accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The MS Society does not approve, endorse or recommend specific products or services and respects an individual’s right to make their own health management decisions. However, we can provide information to assist people in their decision process. For specific, personalized information, please consult your physician or other health care professional.