



THE FRIENDS

DIGNITY • TEAMWORK • INNOVATION • EMPOWERMENT

Friendly Focus

Fall 2024



Welcome Autumn

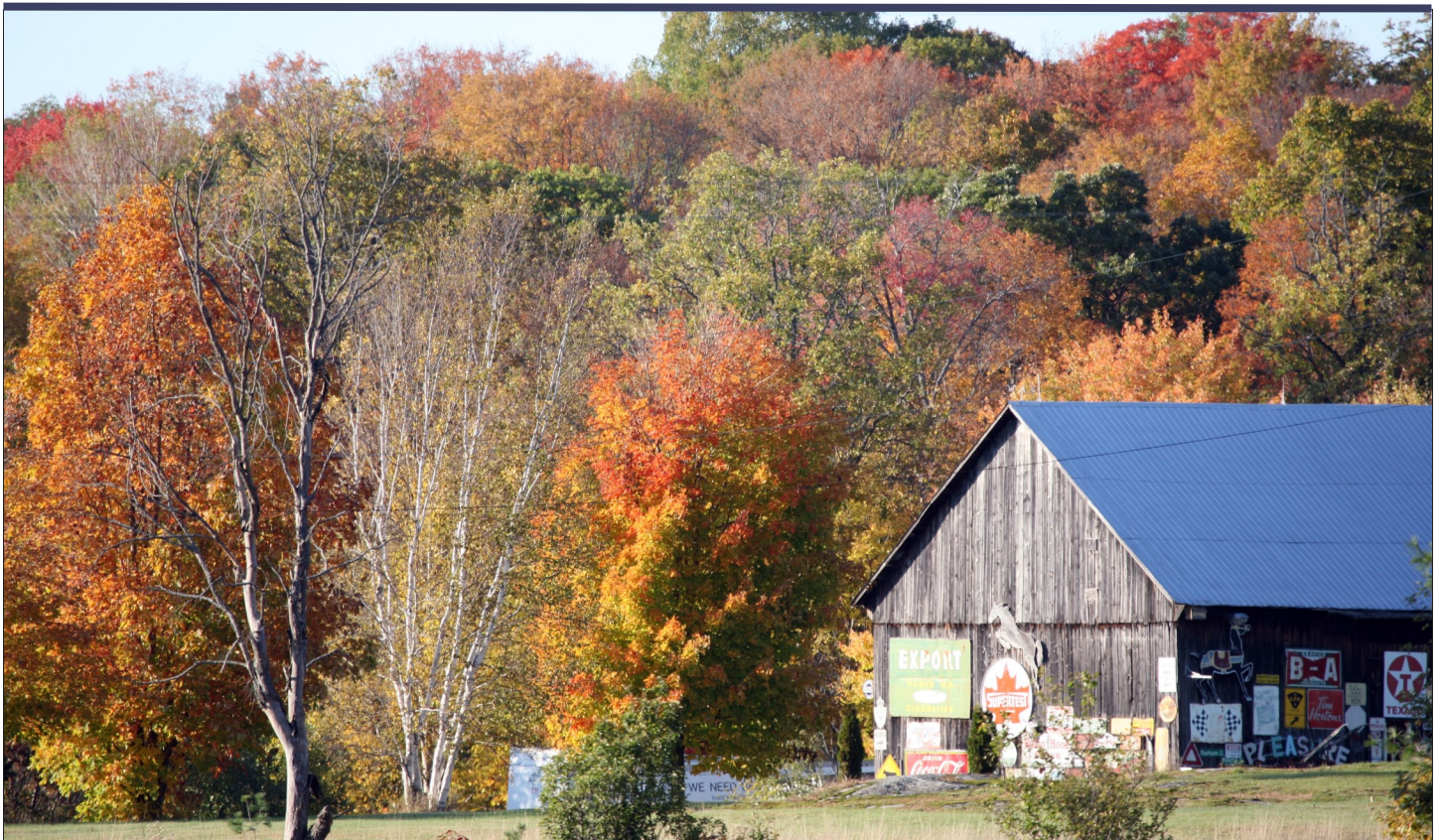
What is the Friendly Focus newsletter, you ask? The Friendly Focus is published and circulated by *The Friends...Supporting those with Long Term Health Care Needs*. For over 40 years, this non-profit charity has been providing supportive services and accessible housing to seniors and individuals with physical disabilities across the districts of Parry Sound and Muskoka.

The Fall 2024 issue provides the absolute best information about where to go in Muskoka to celebrate the season, a comprehensive directory of resources, updates about accessible, supportive housing and a fascinating look at caregiver supports and resources.

If you have an aging family member or are experiencing care issues, have a look at our resource page on page 11 or give us a call. If you want to support a worth while, community driven charity, look us up (www.thefriends.on.ca). If you're just passing through on holiday or spending some time at the cottage, enjoy our listings of things to do and see, including information about fun special events for you and the family.

For those of you who want to make a real difference in your community, checkout page 12 to exercise your 'giving muscle'... ps. it's not always about the money.

Most of all enjoy the bounty of the season.



It's Been a Busy Season at *The Friends!*



Giving back to our Volunteers. We can't do what we do without you.



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In Appreciation of Your Dedication

What We Do

The Friends is a non-profit charitable organization providing services to individuals with physical Disabilities, and seniors. In Muskoka and Parry Sound the organization has been serving the community for over 30 years. Some of the programs and services the agency provides: attendant care, adult day programs, caregiver support, respite, alzheimer overnight respite, P.A.T.H (Priority Assistance to Transition Home) from the hospital, post stroke, supportive housing, and 24/7 assisted living.

Contact us

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info@thefriends.on.ca www.thefriends.on.ca

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The Friends newsletter can also be read online at
www.thefriends.on.ca

Send content or comments to
info@thefriends.on.ca

Supported by:



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North East Local Health
Integration Network

From the CEO's Desk

Days are colder, shorter and darker, fall is definitely here. This issue highlights Muskoka accessible housing, but sadly, if Muskoka District Housing has its way, the only 8 accessible supportive housing units in Muskoka will be doomed. It is the intention of Muskoka District Housing to "re-house" current tenants and to return the units for use by the general population. These units are barrier free, but would no longer be able to access onsite 24/7 supports. By eliminating this niche

supportive housing program, independent living options in Muskoka will have significantly narrowed if not eliminated. The units at Oakwood Heights have been in operation for over 30 years serving Muskoka residents. If this is something you care about contact your District councillor.

The Friends agency will continue to support its clients as best we can. The agency is also working with other partners to explore future options.

Thank you for caring, thank you for your support.

**Marliese Gause,
CEO**

Fundraising

The agency continues a slow and steady increase in our fundraising efforts. Community donations help us:

- Defray transportation costs for low income seniors
- Eliminate participation costs for specialized programs/services
- Support recreational events/services
- Work towards increasing accessible housing in communities across the area we serve

Currently, Muskoka (which has double the population of Parry Sound) has only 8 RGI (rent-geared-to-income) accessible supportive housing units. The Friends is exploring partnerships and fundraising support to increase accessible supportive units in Muskoka.

Your donation makes a difference....Thank You!



Parry Sound Cruizers treated Day Program clients and residents alike to a private, and very successful, show.



Let's Talk

About Housing

In addition to a variety of homecare services across the region, *The Friends* provides specialized housing to individuals with physical disabilities in Muskoka and Parry Sound. The agency takes the view that individuals who can manage their day-to-day lives should be able to live independently in a fully accessible environment accessing the level of care they need to support them. Muskoka, with twice the population of Parry Sound, has just 8 fully accessible supportive units compared to Parry Sound which has 30 fully accessible supportive housing units. Residents live independently in their apartments with 24/7 supports

available to them on site.

Why the discrepancy? In the 1980's Parry Sounders realized that young people with disabilities who were approaching adulthood would have only two housing options open to them; living at home or living in a Long Term Care facility. Neither option appealed to parents who understood that their children wanted to live as full a life as possible, who wanted the ability to live independently not to be beholden to aging parents or to

live in a seniors setting like Long Term Care. A groundswell of community fundraising and awareness resulted in what is now the only such model between Barrie and Sudbury. Currently, the agency is working with initiatives in Muskoka to expand accessible housing and it is the hope that Muskoka will finally increase the variety of accessible housing stock to support individuals with disabilities of all ages who want to continue to live independently.

You can help by donating. Please visit our website at www.thefriends.on.ca or simply mail the back page of the Friendly Focus along with your donation to us.

A "Golden Ticket"

Martha Hope never imagined herself in a wheelchair, she had a successful career in environmental science, enjoyed an active outdoor life, skied, travelled the world until the fateful day when on a visit, she fell, damaging her spine. She spent almost a year in recovery and rehabilitation and ended up having to face the fact that her entire life had been turned upside down.



"I was having to face some unpalatable choices... waitlists for housing of any kind, never mind accessible housing, were years long and I came face to face with the realization that I could end up in a Long Term Care facility sharing a room with three dementia patients. As a 43 year old, I just didn't know what to do." Her brother stumbled across information about The Friends agency and suggested she apply. *"My parents lived in Gravenhurst so, I was familiar with Muskoka. I had no other options so, we gave it a go. On my first night at the apartment at Oakwood Heights, I had a situation where I needed help and rang for staff. I expected to*

have to wait and to have to apologize profusely, because my stay in facilities in the city had trained me to expect little or nothing and that any call for help had to be met with deep appreciation so as to mollify sometimes testy staff. Imagine my shock when staff responded almost immediately, and when I suggested that if the time was inconvenient, that the staff person could come back later, the staff simply laughed [and] set about helping me get comfortable. I realized in that moment that I had won the "golden ticket" in terms of housing. I now lived in an environment that provided 24/7 supports, including Range of Motion and other rehabilitative supports while at the same time giving me the opportunity to live my life as an independent person."

You don't have to be old to have your life turned upside down. A stroke, an illness or condition such as Multiple Sclerosis can have a life altering affect. Supporting individuals to live an independent, meaningful life is what The Friends agency is here to do and to advocate for. If this is an issue you care about, please support our agency in working towards increasing the number of accessible supportive units in Muskoka.

Meals on a Budget

The cost of groceries has been a challenge for anyone on a low or fixed income. Here are some tips to improve your nutrition (and energy):

- Invest in legumes ie. lentils, chick peas, beans. Dried legumes are cheaper than canned, pre-cooked versions and offer you the opportunity to make only as much as you need, reducing food waste. Plan ahead. Legumes should be soaked overnight and then gently cooked until

tender. If you cook a larger batch, you can freeze in single servings for use at another time. Legumes are a good source of protein when paired with rice or pasta.

Remember to soak and rinse when preparing

- Pasta sauce has spiralled in cost. You can save by dicing and cooking tomatoes and freezing portions to suit your needs. The frozen, pre-cooked mix can quickly be added to soups, stews or

transformed into a pasta sauce. Just add your favourite seasoning

- Rice and pasta are readily available. Keep on hand for a quick meal
- Eggs are an excellent affordable source of protein
- Freeze meat and fish in small serving sizes
- Freeze thinly sliced lemons to enhance drinks, drink more water, save alcohol for special occasions
- Grow your own...even a window box can provide fresh herbs, lettuce and tomatoes

BUDGET STRETCHERS

When budgets are stretched to the max, especially for those on a small fixed income or pension, there are community groups and agencies that can help you get over whatever "rough patch" you are experiencing. Below is an inventory of Food Banks/ Pantries in your community. Alternatively, if you are looking for a good cause to support, lend your hand, groceries or dollars, to some of these worthy community groups.

Harvest Share Parry Sound 705.774.9111, Food delivery hotline number is: 1.833.Food4HS OR 1.833.366.3447

Bracebridge Salvation Army 705.645.2602

MacTier Food Bank 705.774.1756 or 705.375.5765

Bracebridge Manna Food Bank 705.646.0114

West Muskoka Food Bank (Port Carling)

705.646.3997

Gravenhurst Salvation Army 705.687.2131

Georgian Bay Food Bank (Port Severn) 705.687.2131

Georgian Bay Township Community Service Outreach 705.528.2142

Huntsville Salvation Army Citadel 705.789.3398

Huntsville - The Table Food Bank 705.783.5827

St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Society of St Vincent DePaul 705.789.0008

Winter Pantry (Baysville & Dorset) Usually closes in the spring but are extending service for as long as necessary. Please call Susan 705.767.2205 or text her at 705.783.6427

Baked Stuffed Yams / Sweet Potatoes

This easy, nutritious and inexpensive meal can be upsized or downsized to suit your needs.

Bake 2 yams (choose the size that works for you) Scoop out interior, mash with a bit of butter, add shredded cooked chicken or mixed beans (or both,) a dollop of salsa and return to yam shell then top with shredded cheese.

Bake until cheese is melted et voila!

"People say money is not the key to happiness, but I have always figured if you have enough money, you can have a key made."
~Joan Rivers

Caregiving at a Distance

One of the most difficult things to navigate is caring for loved ones who live at a distance. The shock of visiting an elderly parent to discover a household in shambles is jarring and upsetting, often leading to testy exchanges with agencies providing services.

Here are a few things to think about:

- your parents have a right to decline services. You may have arranged for homemaking or other care, however, if your parents insist that they don't want a caregiver in their home or will only accept the bare minimum of support, the agency providing the service is obligated to respect their wishes. Before you go off on a furious tirade to agency staff, inquire politely as to what interactions with your parents or loved ones are like. Are they accepting the care? Available for scheduled bookings? If you are getting mixed messages from the Homecare Provider, dig deeper. Have a heart to heart discussion with your loved ones.
- If you are arranging for some level of Homecare services for your loved ones, make sure you have a discussion with your parents/loved ones. What do they feel they need most? Are they willing to have someone help? What are their preferences regarding frequency and types of services?
- When working with Homecare agencies, take the time to discuss limitations of service. Are there things the agency cannot provide? What happens in the event of staff shortages? Is there a code of conduct for Homecare workers?
- Make sure cleaning supplies are available and equipment (ie vacuum, etc.) is in working order.
- If your parents are missing social interactions look for an Adult Day program in your community. Alternatively, search for a



Friendly Visiting program or regular telephone check-ups.

- Make time to meet neighbours or friends of the family and ask for their help in supporting your parents/loved ones. Don't forget to thank neighbours or family members who help out. Informal caregiving is an under rated support system.
- Put a list of contacts and contact information on the fridge, including the family physician, dentist, and friends/neighbours who have agreed to support your parents by checking in on them from time to time.
- In discussion with your parents/loved ones, create an emergency plan for unexpected events such as lengthy power outages, storms etc.
- Stay in touch. You may live a busy life, but make a point of reaching out regularly and often, even if it's only to say hi. Remember that what you see on a Facetime interchange may not reflect what is actually happening in the home. Take the time to call the Homecare provider to get an update vis a vis service provision. Contact a friend or neighbour to get some additional insights. Most of all, try to keep an open, non-judgemental relationship with those you love.

If you are a Caregiver looking for support or information, please think about joining The Friends Caregiver Support Program. This group meets virtually so is available to anyone wherever they live. Contact Robin Stainton at rstainton@the.friends.on.ca

Getting Ready for Winter

October is just around the corner so now is the time to:

- Put the garden to bed, clean and store gardening equipment
- Find your winter shovels, de-icing compounds and put them in a readily accessible location
- Make arrangements for driveway ploughing/walk clearing
- Has your furnace been cleaned?
- Clean and store summer clothing
- Check your winter clothing, boots and shoes. Do you need a new pair of boots?
- Get ready for Thanksgiving

and Hallowe'en. Are you hosting a Thanksgiving celebration? Are you travelling to friends and relatives? Make a list of things you need to make the event a happy success. For example, create a menu and grocery list well in advance. Purchase non-perishables early, organize your travel arrangements with friends and loved ones

- If you enjoy Hallowe'en, buy supplies early
- As a senior, Hallowe'en can be daunting. Invite a niece, nephew or grandchild to join you in giving out treats. Make sure you have a comfortable spot to rest close to the door. Keep your camera/

phone handy for some fun pictures. If you choose not to celebrate, make sure your porch lights are out. Some communities host Hallowe'en parties for youngsters, perhaps a donation of sweets would be a lovely idea

- With shorter, darker days ahead, stock up on your favourite pastimes - crossword puzzles, jig saw puzzles, a pile of books you've been meaning to read, catch up on a favourite hobby, create an indoor garden in a box with appropriate lighting. Indoor garden boxes can keep you supplied with fresh herbs, lettuce and tomatoes
- Join a community exercise group to maintain balance and fitness
- Keep in touch with family and friends

Remembrance Day

Take a moment to honour Canada's veterans on Remembrance Day. Veterans of the First and Second World Wars are diminishing every year. Their heroic sacrifices ensured our safety and the health of democratic societies. You can honour veterans both past and present by:

- attending Memorial services
- writing to Veterans (check out Canadian Armed Forces Facebook page)
- take your civic responsibilities seriously ... vote! No sitting on the couch and letting other



people make decisions for you. Soldiers safeguarded democracy for you, it's our turn to make sure we continue to safeguard democratic institutions and way of life

- engaging your family in Remembrance Day activities

Canadian Armed Forces have been on the frontlines when disasters have struck, whether in the LTC/COVID crisis or natural disasters. Check out the Canadian Armed Forces on the web

to see what you can do to support them.

Find out how you can support Canada's Armed Forces by contacting: www.forces.ca/en

The Friends' Agency Supports Local

With Christmas just around the corner, here are some interesting and yummy options for gifts and treats.

Discover the best cream pies bar none at **Loretta's Bakery** located at 1297 Lake Joseph Rd, Seguin . Thu 9-4, Fri 9-6 & Sat 9-4 until Christmas, call for Cardwell Rd hours in Rosseau 705.378.0080.

The Bakery in Gravenhurst, located at 141 Brock St. bakes the most scrumptious of Chelsea buns and other assorted sweets.

Explore **Muskoka Lakes Farm and Wineries** for interesting gift ideas.

Delicious jams and jellies at **Maple Orchard Farms**, Bracebridge.

For a memorable gift check out **Rich Hill Candles** in Bracebridge. A wonderful place to visit as the festive season approaches.

For the hockey fan in your life, visit Parry Sound's **Bobby Orr Hall of Fame**.

Trestle Brewery in Parry Sound, not only serves craft beer but is a wonderful place to sit and enjoy a tasty lunch by the river.

Looking for gifts for a fan of the great out-of-doors? Drop in to Parry Sound's **White Squall** for the best in mittens, gloves, hats and outdoor gear. A true bonanza of quality products.

Visit **Middle River Farms** in McKellar for farm fresh produce.

For a fun afternoon with the kids, visit the **Parry Sound Museum** on Tower Hill. For energetic "climbers" see if you can get to the top of the fire tower for a spectacular view.

Get into the Fall Spirit!

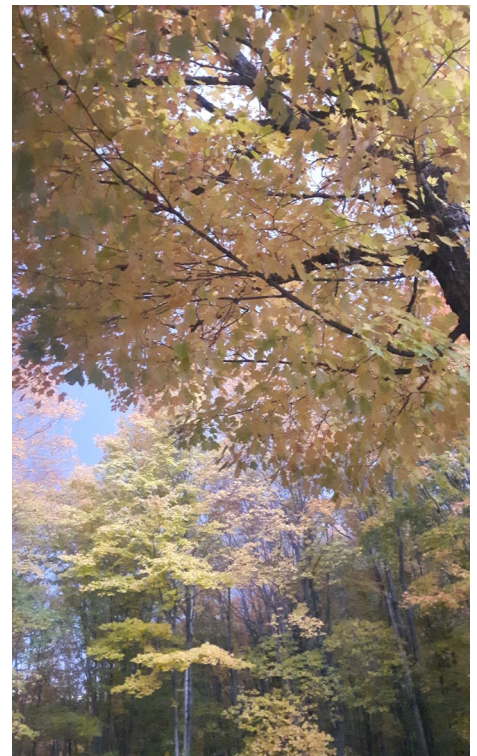
Visit Bala's annual Cranberry Festival from October 18th to October 20th. Interesting vendors and every kind of cranberry product you can imagine. Traffic can be an issue, so call ahead for information.

For the most memorable Hallowe'en ever, visit Muskoka Heritage Place in Huntsville. Join the fun and take the Great Pumpkin Trail. Scare factor is kept in check so the little ones can enjoy. Wander through the beautifully preserved Pioneer Village or take a ride on the Portage Flyer train, a 25 minute jaunt along the Muskoka River to Fairy Lake Station. Call Muskoka Heritage Place for details,

opening times and any other helpful information.

For a super charged Christmas event, check with Muskoka Heritage Place regarding its special Christmas Portage Flyer event. You can visit Santa and enjoy a ride along with a cup of hot chocolate and cookies. Call ahead for information. The Portage Flyer locomotive and authentic coaches have a thousand lights. Enjoy a cup of free hot chocolate and cookies (while supplies last) and sing along to the carols while you wait to board the train. Once on board, you will gently ride alongside the Muskoka River to The Purser's Cabin. Santa is

waiting to hear "your side of the story". If you want to stay longer, you can always catch the next train back.



Cost Free Resources

For Seniors having difficulty getting out of the house, consider signing them up to a virtual Adult Day Program, programs are engaging and designed to stimulate, support and reduce isolation. Call us at 705.746.5102 or email us at ltiido@thefriends.on.ca

For Caregivers, you may welcome an opportunity to share your experiences/expertise, learn from others, get access to resources you may not have been aware of. For more information contact Robin Stainton at rstainton@thefriends.on.ca

Want to know more about accessible supportive housing? You can arrange for a tour by calling us at 705.746.5102 or email shazzard@thefriends.on.ca

Interested in Volunteering? We are always looking for support in our Adult Day Away programs across the region. Gardeners, musicians, pet therapy, story tellers give us a call! 705.746.5102.

Transportation continues to be a huge issue for low income seniors and persons with disabilities...your donation can help. Please check out our webpage www.thefriends.on.ca or simply use the back page of the newsletter to mail a donation. Thank you!!!!

Bill of Rights

Courtesy, Respect and Freedom from Abuse. A person receiving a community service has the right to be dealt with by the service provider in a courteous and respectful manner and to be free from mental, physical and financial abuse by the service provider.

Privacy and Freedom to Make Your Own Decisions. A person receiving community service has a right to be dealt with by the service provider in a manner that respects the person's dignity and privacy and that promotes the person's autonomy.

Being an Individual. A person receiving community service has a right to be dealt with by the service provider in a manner that recognizes that persons' needs and preferences, including preference based on ethnic, spiritual, linguistic, familial and cultural factors.

Information and Answers. A person receiving community service has a right to information about the community services provided to him or her and to be told who will be providing the community services.

Participation in Their Care Decisions. A person applying to community services has a right to participate in the service provider's assessment of his or her requirements and a person who is determined under this Act to be eligible for a community service has the right to participate in the service provider's development of the person's plan of service, the service provider's review of the person's requirements and the service provider's evaluation and revision of the person's plan of service.

Control and Consent. A person has the right to refuse consent to provision of any community service.

Freedom to Speak Out. A person receiving community service has a right to raise concerns or recommend changes in connection with the community service provided to him or her in connection with policies and decisions that affect his or her interests to the service provider, government officials or any other person without fear of interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal.

Knowing the Rules. A person receiving community service has the right to be informed of the laws, rules and policies affecting the operation of the service provider and to be informed in writing of the procedures for initiating complaints about the service provider.

Confidentiality. A person receiving community service has the right to have his or her records kept confidential in accordance with the law.

Resources

Eastholme Community Support Services
 (Congregate Dining/Meals on Wheels/Volunteer Transportation) epscssp@ontera.net
 705.724.6028 1.888.521.0000 www.eastholme.ca

West Parry Sound District Community Support Services (Congregate Dining/Exercise/Meals on Wheels/Volunteer Transportation) 705.746.5602 linda@csswest.ca www.parrysoundsupportservices.ca

NE Home & Community Care
 705.746.4602 1.800.440.6762
 www.healthcareathome.ca/northeast

North Simcoe Muskoka Home & Community Care
 705.721.8010 Ext. 6100 Toll Free: 1.888.721.2222
 Ex 6100 www.healthcareathome.ca/nsm

Alzheimer Society of Muskoka
 Serving Muskoka & Parry Sound
 1.800.605.2075
 www.alzheimermuskoka.ca

Port Loring (Meals on Wheels & Volunteer Transport) 705.757.2530

Muskoka/Parry Sound Mental Health Services

www.mpscmhs.on.ca
 Bracebridge: 705.645.2262 Fax 705.645.7473
 Huntsville: 705.789.8891 Fax:705.789.3002
 Parry Sound: 705.746.4264; Fax:705.746.1537 Toll Free:1.866.829.7049

Crisis Lines:

Muskoka and area: 1.888.893.8333
 Parry Sound and area, incl. Sundridge:
 1.800.461.5424

Ontario Renovates, District of Muskoka – Assistance for Accessibility Modifications 1.800.461.4210

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit – flu clinics/health information 1.877.721.7520

Walk in Clinic Bracebridge Medical Ctr.
 705.646.7634

Scams and Frauds – Crime Stoppers –
 1.800.222.8477

Senior’s Programs & Services Muskoka
 705.645.2100 ext.199

McConnell Foundation Muskoka – Financial Assistance for eye glasses/assistive devices/dentures/dental 705.645.2412

Muskoka Senior’s (Meals on Wheels, Transportation (Huntsville and area), Congregate dining)
 705.789.6676

Red Cross - Transportation (South Muskoka) 705.721.3313 ext. 5602

Elder Abuse – Senior’s Safety Line – call if you are being mistreated, bullied or neglected 1.888.299.1011

Assistive Device Exchange A.D.E. – Data base of devices for sale or free
 www.Assistivedeviceexchange.com



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FRIENDLY FEEDBACK

Please fill out the following and return it to the address below

- I would like to receive a copy of The Friends' newsletter.
- annual subscription fee \$7
- I would like to receive more information about The Friends' programs.
- I am interested in becoming a volunteer.
- I would like to make a contribution in the amount of \$
to support the ongoing work of The Friends.
- I would like to make a donation to the Muskoka Building project.

You can now donate online. Click on the Canada Helps logo on our website
www.thefriends.on.ca

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Return to:
The Friends • 27 Forest St • Parry Sound
Ontario • P2A 2R2 • 1.888.746.5102
info@thefriends.on.ca