



Turtle Soup

NORTH SHORE STROKE RECOVERY CENTRE

Editor: Hana Sykora

Photographers: Kathryn Seely, Sue Carabetta

February 2022

FAREWELL GAIL!



“Time flies when you’re having fun.”

That’s the only explanation I have as to where the last 15 ½ years have gone since I started as an Assistant Coordinator at the West Community Health building in West Vancouver in October 2006. This was just a few days after the very first Strides for Strokes at John Lawson Park.

Over the years I have met many survivors of stroke, and I have been amazed by the courage and drive shown by everyone during their recovery journey. Their stories are inspiring and the support and acceptance they show each other produces such an encouraging environment for recovery.

There have been so many incredible memories over the years. (see page 2) All of this could not have happened without the dedication of our volunteers and the hard work of our incredible staff. Thank you to Penelope, Yasmine and Kathryn and the other coordinators I’ve worked with over the years and the fantastic exercise, music and art therapists. Thank you to the board of directors for their direction and support.



Welcome to LaDonna! The Centre is very fortunate to have her take on the role of Executive Director. I know she has a vision for the organization and will provide great leadership in the coming years.

I’m excited about what direction my retirement journey will take me. I will miss you all very much but be assured I will be dropping by to say hi every so often plus I have volunteered my assistance in preparing for our next Strides for Strokes in June. I’m also looking forward to celebrating the Centre’s 50th Anniversary in 2024! See you then!

Gail Snelling

- Our first musical – Sentimental Journey in 2012
- 14 annual Strides for Strokes events with an exhibit of artwork by our members
- Establishing a Young Survivor of Stroke group
- Tone Chime performance at Capilano Mall
- Yearly luncheons in June and December
- “Pet Store Runaway: A Fishy Story” written by Gay with art by friends at the art table and “Lorna’s Poetry” – words & art by Lorna, facilitated by Penelope (SLP) & Jasmine (art therapist)
- Book Clubs started & SongShine program introduced
- Mural painted by members at Lonsdale Quay
- Luncheons at the Coquitlam Stroke Recovery
- Gatherings in the community – Cleveland Park
- Trishaw rides at Lonsdale Quay
- Manicure sessions
- Numerous performers/speakers: e.g. John Cronin, Mike’s Critters, Dr. Lara Boyd (UBC)
- Partnerships with Capilano University Rehab Assistant program and BCIT Nursing program
- UBC Balance Study using the Nintendo Balance board & games
- Nintendo Wii Bowling competitions & hockey playoffs
- Friday Walking Program at Capilano Mall in partnership with March of Dimes Canada
- Great Halloween costumes
- Annual Mary Thirsk Award honouring one of our amazing volunteers
- Ed’s 100th Birthday Party



LaDonna Miller

Executive Director

LaDonna Miller has a Master of Arts in Gerontology from Simon Fraser University. She is a passionate advocate for the well-

being of older adults and survivors of stroke. LaDonna has studied, researched, advocated, and volunteered in service of many issues facing the senior sector.

As a survivor of stroke, LaDonna personally sympathizes well and understands the value of the many services offered through the North Shore Stroke Recovery Centre. A strong support network, art therapy, exercise, a healthy organic diet, combined with a dedicated daily spiritual and wellness practice were instrumental in her own healing.

The knowledge gained through her education, her twenty years of extensive marketing/business development experience, and her passion to help others on their way to healing and re-integration also make her an asset to the North Shore Stroke Recovery team.

She is excited to work with the team of dedicated professionals to improve the lives of survivors of stroke, and develop innovative programs to support therapeutic programs for both Older Adult Survivors of Stroke (OASS) and Young Survivors of Stroke (YSS).



“The artist is not a special kind of person; rather each person is a special kind of artist.”

Amanda Coomarawany

The intention of art therapy is to create a playground to stimulate the imagination through the senses; visual, tactile, and movement. Colours, shapes, textures, lines, collages, etc., shaped into free, abstract or geometric concrete forms doesn't require any pre-existing skills. All that is needed is the courage and willingness to go on a creative adventure.

Creative activity is intertwined with freedom; to choose, imagine, engage in non-purposeful play to lose oneself in an aesthetic experience. Recovering the freedom of free play releases the inner potential in all human beings for joy, adaptability and aliveness. Expressions in art can give form to complex thoughts and feeling, carry meaning in a single visual statement, verbalized or not.

But mostly around the art making table is the warm company in creating, encouragement and inspiration of making art with each other. Acceptance, empathy, and a deep understanding of similar experiences is a gift the group gives to each other and is present at the art table.

~ Kali Anna Dukowski





Our Young Survivor of Stroke Program Supported by a Grant from the City of North Vancouver

The Young Survivor of Stroke (YSS) peer support program was started in September 2016 in response to an increasing number of younger survivors of stroke being referred to the NSSRC program. The needs of this age group are diverse and complex as these individuals can be mid-career or nearing retirement, raising a young family or caring for aging parents. Financial stability is also a very real stress for this age group and while they share some health issues in common with the seniors' demographic, giving and receiving peer support and keeping socially connected are key contributors to recovery. Community re-integration and finding ways to become productive members of society post stroke is also a significant area of support in this age group.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the City of North Vancouver through their Community Grant program for their continued support of this valued program, especially in a year when we were unable to hold our annual fundraiser, Strides for Strokes.

~ Gail Snelling



North Shore Stroke Recovery Centre

Phone: 778-340-5803 Website: www.nssrc.org

Co-ordinators: LaDonna Miller (Executive Director), Gail Snelling, Yasmine Bia, Kathryn Seely

Speech Language Pathologists: Penelope Baesfalvi **SLP Assistant:** Yasmine Bia

Days of Operation: **Monday: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon** - Amica West Van, 659 Clyde Ave., West Vancouver

Tuesday & Thursday: 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. North Shore Neighbourhood House, 225 East 2nd St, North Vancouver

Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. 113 East 3rd Street, North Vancouver

Young Survivors of Stroke– Monday: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. -Amica Edgemont Village, 3225 Highland Blvd, North Vancouver

EDITOR'S NOTE: 1. What is in the newsletter does not necessarily reflect the opinion of NSSRC Staff or Board. It is a newsletter written by/for stroke survivors and their families. 2. Grammatical errors are not corrected by the editor unless requested. Our newsletter is part of our recovery. Restoring confidence in self expression takes precedence over grammar.
