



neighbourhoods

Deep Cove

All roads lead to Parkgate seniors' club

Unique program offers respite for caregivers

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There's a club with a retired judge, lawyer, doctor, media executive, housewife and beauty queen that meets twice a week at Parkgate Community Centre.

They gather in the lobby where one gentleman eagerly waits for his buddy to come through the front doors. He pops up to give his friend a hug. Then it's off to art class or the badminton court.

Members, as they are called, of the club come from different walks of life but are now bonded by something they may have never expected — Alzheimer's.

However, there are no patients in this room full of child-like enthusiasm.

"They all like to sing. They all like to tap their toes," says Erin Smith, who is manager of seniors' services at Parkgate Community Centre.

My Parkgate Break is a special program that started in the summer of 2012 at the centre that's considered a hub for seniors in the Seymour area.

Looking at dementia services



Members of the My Parkgate Break club take a stroll together through the neighbourhood on Tuesday. PHOTO MIKE WAKEFIELD

offered at the time, something was missing in the community — respite for caregivers.

"It can be very isolating for the

partners because your spouse is not the same as they were," explains Smith. "Obviously, we feel for the members who have dementia ...

but the burnout and fatigue for the caregivers is huge."

The goal at Parkgate was to create a place for those with mild to

moderate dementia to feel welcome and be engaged in a variety of

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