

**0:01**

Welcome to senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Hi, everybody.

I'm your host, Don Hemingway, and I'm here right now with Alan Huggin.

And people may have gotten to know Alan a bit lately.

He's a retired social worker.

And I would say I'm describing a community activist and we're going to talk about the needs of everyone in our community basically, but in particular the challenges of homelessness, poverty, addictions, mental health issues, all the related questions and particularly about Moccasin Flats and the recent court case.

**0:38**

Way too much for our half hour together, but we're going to get it started and then maybe have Alan back on again.

But before we start, maybe just a brief intro, Alan, I mean, I know you as a social worker and I know that you worked at intersecting camp trapping and things like that, but maybe a little bit more for our listeners.

**0:58**

Well, thanks for inviting me on to your show, Don.

And you're right, half an hour is not enough to cover all those topics.

And I was thinking that's part of the problem with these issues with homelessness and all the other issues that are related to it.

**1:17**

It's just such a big, big topic and people want seem to want simple answers to the problems.

So yeah, I was originally came to Prince George in 1987 and I was going to spend a year here.

**1:34**

Oh, you're just like me.

But I didn't come till 94.

I was too.

After a year, I gave it two years then and I was working at Camp Trapping, which was wilderness attendance program for young offenders, which really was pretty formative in my approach to the stuff that's happening today because a lot of people thought, think that's a boot camp, right?

**1:59**

And you got to.

Be tough ship.

Out, yeah.

And we were camp dropping was a a tough program, but it wasn't punitive.

It wasn't the boot camp model where you shoot them down to build them back up, looking at the strengths that the people had that the youth had and build on that instead of treating them like crap, which is how most of the people that I've worked with all my life.

**2:28**

So that's the experience of all of their lives, basically.

So I stayed at camp trapping, believe it or not, for about 20 years.

So somewhere along the way I was on a canoe trip and we had an inspector along with us going down the Crooked River, and the inspector says you're the old man of wilderness corrections, nobody's been doing it longer than you.

**2:55**

Kind of shook my head and went.

So I went back to school, got my Masters of Social Work from UMBC and did my practicum at Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services.

No, I didn't.

Know that and then got a job thereafter so I I worked there for around 10 years after leaving camp and that that was same kind of kid a little bit more some of the more challenging youth those are youth forensics is we do assessment and treatment of youth court ordered assessment and treatment of youth so so all sorts of different cases all sorts of offenses that these youth had been.

**3:47**

So really a solid background for our discussion, frankly.

Yeah, you could say.

That I think so.

I think so.

I know a little bit about camp trapping, just camp trapping just from being on the board at Intersect.

So for probably as long as you worked there, I'm not sure if I was there at the beginning when you worked there, but I think I'm up to nearly 20.

**4:08**

I think I'm over 25 years on that board now.

So yeah, yeah.

So a fair bit of familiarity.

So, you know, with that, with that sort of brief intro, and I know we could get into some of that more.

I'm, I'm just thinking, I know, I know one of the things that you've been really engaged in like quite specifically lately has been, well, not just lately, but recently has been around what's happening at Moccasin Flats and, and, and, and your friend too, Hank, who everybody, I think everybody got to know as the, the mayor of Moccasin.

**4:45**

Well, that's what people have called them.

Yeah.

Hank.

Hank and I, our history goes back probably about 30 years.

He.

Did work occasionally at camp trapping.

He was what I call the camp trapping groupie.

**5:00**

He would hang out with some of the staff that were working there.

Over the years he would come out and do some some of the construction projects we had going on, things like that and kind of lost contact with him for a while.

**5:17**

Our lives went in different directions and Hank, I met up with Hank probably about three years ago and got reacquainted with him.

So this is about the time that I semi retired.

I was I retired in 2021 and then worked after about six months off, went back to work for two days a week and then fully retired last year.

**5:44**

And that was at youth forensics.

Yeah.

And so I got to know Hank a little bit.

He told me he's living down at Millennium Park at the time and that he's doing first aid down there because he was a industrial first aider and safety.

Safety.

**6:00**

I don't know what they call.

Them safety.

Yeah, safety guy.

So he was doing that kind of work in the homeless encampments and when they moved, when City Hall created Moccasin Flats, they moved everybody down there from the other encampments and Hank helped facilitate that.

**6:21**

He was the go between between the city and the homeless and and help make sure that was a smooth transition, help set it up down at Moccasin Flats and trying to set up, make it a community.

Yes.

And then over the two years that he was at Moccasin Flats, he saved somewhere around 50 people from overdoses.

**6:47**

Wow, I knew he'd done that work, but I had no idea it was that large number.

And you know, unless somebody corrects me on this, as far as I know and from what we've discussed with Hank and others is that in those two years there were no deaths from overdose down at Moccasin Flats and yet there were what, over 100 in the rest?

**7:12**

In the city, yeah, that's really powerful.

So he was pulling people out of burning shelters, burning tents, He was fixing people up when they got stabbed and didn't want to go to the hospital and that kind of thing.

So, you know, he did quite a good service there.

**7:32**

And one day he told me that he's boiling the AR mask when he does artificial respiration.

He would then boil the mask so we could reuse it.

I'll go on.

Holy man, let's let's get you some some.

**7:48**

Other.

Apps supplies.

And we, we did that.

We found an agency in town that would provide him with first aid supplies.

And from there we got a, a nonprofit together to help support Hank in his endeavors.

**8:05**

And it was Hank that drove this.

He brought this disparate group of people together that people that probably wouldn't normally have gotten together.

And that was what Hank always did.

He was always doing, bringing people together and that's.

**8:21**

A wonderful quality.

Work, yeah.

Yeah.

So from there we did create building a healthy community, the Voices project.

So that's what the agencies agency was called, still is called.

**8:37**

I guess we truly are a nonprofit.

We got no money.

But a big part of that is the Voices project.

So Hank saw that agency as helping the community as a whole and also providing a voice to the to the homeless.

**9:01**

So from there, I guess we we're building this agency around Hank.

And then Hank did go and die in December of last year, ironically of an overdose.

**9:19**

That's so too bad.

Gosh, yeah, I know.

That's when you hear about all the, the the work that he did and the anyway, just the ability, that ability to bring people together, right.

I mean, that's that's a huge piece of what we're talking about, right?

**9:35**

Because there's such, there's, I don't know, tentacles might not be the right word, but but there's a reach into so many parts of society around these questions.

You know, whether it's, we talk about mental health and addictions, but it's poverty, it's homelessness, it's, it's other issues that arise for people in their lives.

**9:53**

It's the fact that we don't have social services that we need and so many questions.

And that's part of the problem is it's so complex and so big that people don't want to, they just shut off and they, they think simplistic answers are going to and solutions are going to solve the problem.

**10:12**

And the city, for example, has done a awesome job with getting the housing and doing housing first.

They've created hundreds of housing units for people without housing.

But there's another step or two or three or 10 or 100 that needs to be, needs to be done.

**10:35**

And that's kind of where I see the the issue with the city at the moment is there isn't the, they don't want to tread on somebody else's jurisdiction.

Right.

**10:50**

That if they seem to think, and that's my opinion, that if they do and set a precedent, then it's going to cost too much, that it's going to be, they're going to end up having to take on more responsibility.

**11:05**

It'll be all on them, yeah.

Yeah, which these issues are so big and complex.

You need all the levels of government you do and all the agencies and everybody.

Society as a whole you do working on these issues.

You do, you know, took us 40 years to get into this situation.

**11:23**

Yeah, we're not getting out in a day.

People expect it to be gone just because they went to court and closed down Marcus and Flats.

Yeah, yeah.

So we did.

So we we ended up having that court case just a few weeks ago.

And I know that the judge said that the decision would be withheld.

**11:47**

So from your perspective, like how I don't know have you can even answer this, but like, how did it go?

And, you know, is there a sense amongst some of the people that you worked with, because I know you helped around that, that we're getting closer to bringing that range of people together to be able to do something different than just hoping it will happen tomorrow.

**12:15**

Oh, God, no.

Yeah, it made me probably more pessimistic.

Oh, no.

I got involved with that after Hank died.

The agency that we created was kind of floundering.

**12:31**

Because he was.

Built around him.

He was the key.

And I started going down to Moccasin Flats and talking to a few people down there and getting to know them more than I had even when Hank was alive.

And what I noticed was people were actually cleaning up around their their shelter spaces.

**12:58**

So you have somebody with the metal rake, a metal rake without a handle on it, bending over and raking up all the garbage and making a pile.

And it wasn't just one or two people.

It was most of the people with shelters down there at that time.

**13:15**

And they're still doing it today.

And I'm thinking, well, how can I help?

Well, look, get rid of the garbage.

And that was the consensus, right?

You need help, right?

Well, no promises, but let's try to get the city to help here because stuff has come out of the snow at that time, you know, it was mid, mid March or something like that.

**13:38**

And stuff come out of the snow, got all these piles of garbage around.

People are trying to clean up as best they can and they've got limited ability, some of them.

And so we thought, OK, this is something I can do.

So I started advocating with the city to get the garbage picked up and the city did come back and say, yeah, we can come down every second Wednesday or something.

**14:08**

Parks goes through and they'll pick up garbage.

OK, so just create piles.

And then the eviction notice came along and I see this court document, several pages of documents, and it took about a week for it to meet to click in as to what this document was about.

**14:29**

So we had, there was one person named on the document who lives there.

And he was named because he was involved in the previous court case.

And then everybody else is going, oh, it doesn't involve me, It's just about him.

**14:46**

And but it also says Jane Doe, John Doe and other persons unnamed.

So everybody basically.

Not just everybody at Moccasin Flats, but every single homeless person in the city thereafter, because they're not just trying to close down Moccasin Flats, they're trying to get declarations from the court as to what they can do going forward.

**15:07**

OK, I don't, I don't think every everyone understands that.

No, that's an important.



Point.

So one of the things that came out in court, I'm jumping ahead now, I guess, yeah, is that they will offer somebody housing and after a certain amount of time of offering, they will then be allowed to declare that person not homeless, even if they refuse housing.

**15:38**

Right.

So how is that going to help?

Well, especially when we don't talk about what kinds of housing and what needs people have.

Yeah.

So I did the garbage thing.

We created piles at the time.

They put in the the Gate City, the rend of Moccasin Flats.

**15:56**

I talked to the bosses that came and did that work, people pulling the strings at at City Hall, and they said, well, we'll just mark the piles because we don't want to take any piles that might be somebody's stuff, right?

**16:14**

Because that's what got them in trouble before and they went to court because they did that.

They took everybody's stuff.

Yeah, So what I said, well, I'll take responsibility for that.

I'll do that.

I'll talk to the people.

I'll create piles.

Other people will create piles.

And then you just come along, I'll be here and show you the piles and I'll mark them with your flagging tape that they gave me.

**16:35**

OK.

And then after several weeks of trying to get the city to come and pick up the piles, the guy operating the machine goes well, we can only pick up piles that are marked with bylaw tape.

**16:51**

So we've got a whole row of piles that I've that myself and other volunteers have created and the people living there Mark clearly marked with tape that bylaw gave me, but it wasn't bylaw tape.

Oh boy.

So we eventually some of us were hand bombing it with the wheelbarrows and got a truck in there one time by law did open the gates for us and got some of the garbage removed that way, but we had to do it ourselves.

**17:23**

And in the end, talking to people fairly high up at City Hall, they basically have told me that they're not going to do it, they're not going to help.

This is after stringing me along for two months of saying they would come and help.

**17:39**

Wow.

Well, you know, as we said at the beginning, this is a a really big discussion to have and this is certainly just the beginning.

We're just going to take a a short break now and then we'll have about 10 more minutes to kind of pull together how far we've gone.

**17:57**

And we definitely will continue this especially in relation to the court case.

But but before that, if we need to, we look to the Irish for great tunes.

Who can't hear Irish tunes without knowing you're Irish and wanting to pound that fact into the floor?

**18:15**

It must be a fabulous place if it inspires so much wonderful music.

We have traveled the.

World over to bring you the very finest Celtic music.

You can certainly take my word for it, the Irish experience Kelt in A twist, and I'm Patricia Fraser.

**18:31**

Kelt in A twist.

Saturday nights at 11 here on CFIS 93.1.

With British Columbians increasingly affected by distressing news about wildfires, international conflicts, tariff uncertainty and political unrest, the mental health crisis line is an important resource to have on hand.

**18:49**

Available 24/7, the number is easy to remember.

Just dial 310-6789 when you're experiencing emotional distress, anxiety, loneliness, fear, uncertainty or mental health concerns.

That's three. 106789 for BC mental health crisis line.

**19:08**

The Prince George Chamber of Commerce is turning our city into a playground for local love.

Each week this summer, they'll drop a new clue on their Instagram and Facebook stories that will lead you to one of their member businesses.

Be the first to crack it, head to the right spot and win a prize from that business.

**19:25**

Everyone who visits the location can also enter the end of summer grand prize draw, but don't forget to say the code.

I'm here for the chamber scavenger hunt.

Forecast from Environment Canada for today, Increasing cloudiness.

A 30% chance of showers late this afternoon.

**19:40**

A high of 25 with the high UV index Tonight, cloudy of a 30% chance of showers.

A few showers overnight.

A low of 14 on Friday Showers.

The risk of a thunderstorm in the afternoon with wind to the north of 20K and a high of 19.

This is senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

**20:00**

Well, we're back with Alan Huggett, who's been a volunteer around some of the work and concerns and issues that arise in our community when people don't have the things they need, including a place to live.

**20:16**

And so we've been talking a bit about Moccasin Flats and some of the work that Alan was working with other residents there and other people about.

And then of course, there's the court case that just happened last weekend without a resolution yet.

And so maybe we could spend our last segment of time with you, Alan, just sort of sharing a bit about the court case and kind of where we're at.

**20:39**

Yeah, yeah, I got, like I said, I got I saw the court orders and the eviction notice and all the declarations.

It took about a week to sink in what this was about.

And I felt it was highly unjust that the city had a lawyer and a team of people working on taking this to court.

**21:03**

And the homeless people didn't even know anything about it, that they considered it not.

It didn't involve them, just that one.

Person, that one person.

And so I started casting around looking for, I've never done this before, went looking for a lawyer and it went to all the lawyers, the lawyers that were involved previously that had one and nobody was available.

**21:28**

And so, and I wasn't the only one, There's several of us that were kind of involved in doing this.

And I went to the BC Civil Liberties, we went to the BC Civil Liberties Association and had a chat with them and they weren't able to fully take it on, but they kind of started the ball rolling.

**21:55**

We started doing some interviewing interviews, doing the using one of the lawyers that was involved last time.

Oh good.

And I myself, we also got a group of volunteers together that were doing interviews, trying to get information to give to the lawyers.

**22:15**

So myself, I interviewed about 25 homeless people.

It might just be a simple quick conversation to sometimes several pages of information that I took down.

Those led to eventually led to when we did get a lawyer assigned to us, a bunch of affidavits were made, so those got submitted to the court.

**22:40**

I also did research about the housing and how that's going in Prince George and also looked into the reasons why people might not want to go into housing because there are people obviously still at Moccasin Flats.

Part of that's because there's not much in the way of housing left and there's lots of reasons why people don't want to go into housing.

**23:04**

So some of those are some some of the issues that we took to court.

We had Casey Jermaine was the lawyer that came up.

She was instrumental in starting the ball rolling and did most of the leg work As for the lawyer in part.

**23:22**

And then she ended up having somebody else support her and that person also came up, came up to help and they both presented in court.

So, and all pro bono.

And they were with the.

**23:39**

They were found they were found by the BCC liberties, but they're they're own law corporations that and they're.

OK.

Well, that's very good of them to do that.

So it's a lot of work.

And I didn't realize, you know, like I say, I never gotten a lawyer before how much work it would involve because you're doing all that research work.

**24:04**

And right.

Trying to support the lawyers, so the city is asking for declarations about what they can do after about keeping people moving.

They want to create a campsite down at Moccasin Flats where people can put up a tent.

**24:21**

It has to be a temporary shelter.

You're allowed to camp there from 7:00 at night until 9:00 in the morning.

Then you have to be booted out.

It would be a fenced off area.

Then all these people would be roaming around the city with their possessions.

With no place to be With no place I read about that.

I mean that is just so not a solution.

**24:38**

And the city was also saying that there's all these, there's lots of places for people to go, not just for housing, but during the day and things like that.

When when you look closely at what those places are, they're limited, right?

**24:54**

Yes.

And some, yeah.

Well, there's different circumstances.

People want to hang out.

No, exactly.

No, I've heard, I've heard those stories.

We had a meeting of community partners addressing homelessness on Monday.

And, you know, we heard like people saying like, it's not like I don't want to be somewhere, but what are the circumstances of where I am?

**25:14**

And some of that, like a lot of the people down there, are very in tune with their own situation.

They have very good insights.

What seems to be missing is the engagement from the city, right?

**25:32**

They say, well, we we're leaving at the BC Housing.

And BC Housing is focused on getting people into into shelter.

Someplace, yeah.

But there's tons of reasons why people don't want to go into shelter.

And 1st, if you know the history of these people, which I've come to know quite a few of them, I can, I know their history.

**25:52**

I have a history with mental health, dealing with mental health it even if the reasons are imagined to some of these people, they're very much real to people in trauma, right?

Dealing with pain and pain based behaviors, right?

**26:09**

And what you don't have, what we've got right now is a city that's trying to criminalize poverty and tell people what to do instead of doing with they're trying to do to people.

And just like any other person in the city, once people are telling you what to do and where to go and how to do it, there's going to be push back.

**26:33**

Well, especially if you're not listening to what the concerns are of those folks and their lived experience, right.

I mean, there's things that we have to learn from that, right?

Like, I mean, it's just.

Yeah, there's one gentleman down at the flats right now who history is.

**26:51**

It's tragic, right?

Born to parents that were drug addicted, generally dropped out of school using drugs at a very early age, right Having negative stuff happened to them throughout their life, right?

**27:09**

And it's not to excuse if there's negative behavior, you still hold that accountable because you look past the behavior to the person, have some compassion and help the person work through those things.

And that's to me what's missing.

**27:25**

There's no engagement, there's no relationship building.

Don't get me wrong, there's lots of people inside the housing and out there doing outreach stuff.

Yes, that's trying to do that.

But the city itself is lacking in.

That Yeah, boy, I think, you know, it's we're going to we're going to leave it there for today with people to think about that question.

**27:48**

I mean, I'm just going to finally say that I think we, and I said this before on this show, we have the the resources and the wealth within our country, our world for that matter.

But that's a whole other question to be able to meet people's needs.

And, you know, we, we have to start to look at things in that way.

**28:08**

And why is it that we're not able to do that?

What is it about the way we're organized that we can't meet people's needs?

We have done that in the past.

Yeah.

So we have to look to do that in the future.

Thanks so much for coming on, Alan, and really look forward to having you back on, especially as we get close to hearing about the court case and maybe even before that because we've just scratched the surface.

**28:29**

Yep, thanks for letting me tell some of the story.

OK, much appreciated.

Omanika Arts Center is a not-for-profit artist run organization with dedicated volunteers playing vital roles in their success and community engagement.

Omanika is always looking for sharp, community minded individuals to sit on the board of directors as well as art and cultural enthusiasts willing to help out in other volunteer capacities.

**28:53**

Help keep the arts community strong in Prince George.

Full details of becoming a board member or other volunteer can be found under the About and Get Involved menus at [Omanika artscenter.com](http://Omanikaartscenter.com).

These days at your local Legion, we're marching to the beat of a different drum on a mission to support veterans, to have fun, and to welcome everyone to our ranks.

**29:15**

You don't have to be a veteran to join the Legion, and as a member, you'll join thousands of others serving our veterans, our communities, and our country.

Oh yeah, and our Member Perks program will save you thousands on shopping, dining, products and services across the.

Country.



**29:31**

Join us at [legion.ca](http://legion.ca).

The Seniors Housing Navigator at your Prince George Council of Seniors helps assist older adults 55 and over navigate through the many resources and information available for seniors.

Resources such as friendly phone calls, community referrals, help with forms and more.

**29:50**

The Seniors Housing Navigator is just a phone Callaway to help you get through the sea of resources provided by the Council of Seniors and others.

Call 250-5645, Triple 8 or stop by 13 35th Ave.

The Prince George Tennis and Pickleball Club is offering youth, adult, beginner and intermediate lessons throughout the summer for both pickleball and tennis.

**30:11**

They're dedicated group of instructors are eager to get you on the court and share their knowledge and love for the game with you.

Learn more about pickleball and tennis, grow your skills and join in on the fun of the game.

PG Tennis and Pickleball Club, located behind the PG Golf and Curling Club.

**30:27**

Sessions run from April to October each year.

You're listening.

To senior moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Well, welcome back everybody.

And for the the second-half of the show, we're joined by Janine Bortelon, who is the Seniors Housing Navigator with the Prince George Council of Seniors.

**30:48**

And Janine is going to talk to us about, well, really her work and all the issues that come up in the course of that work.

And I know there's going to be way too much to talk about as there was with them, Alan, but we're, we're looking forward to being able to share with you as as much as we can.

**31:05**

And certainly they'll be contact information that you can reach out from the Council of Seniors.

And we'll also put it on the CFIS website when the archived version of the show goes up on the site, right sometime on Friday.

So welcome to the show, Janine.

**31:24**

And I'm, I'm always liking to start off with just a little bit about yourself and how, how did you end up being this navigator?

OK, Well, I began working as the senior housing navigator last June, so I've been here for one year, basically.

**31:40**

Yeah, Yeah, I just applied.

I have worked with seniors and elders in the past and as a program coordinator for the Prince George Matey Elder Society.

OK, Yeah.

So I really enjoy working with seniors.

I enjoy their stories and helping people.

**31:57**

So applying for this job just was, you know, natural fits.

It was a good.

Fit and and the obviously the council of seniors realized it was a good fit because they hired you.

That's excellent.

Well, listen, maybe also share.

OK, so you are the housing navigator.

What does that mean?

**32:14**

That's a good question.

OK.

So my main role is to connect adults 55 and up to individual supports and housing navigation services.

So identify the barriers accessing and maintaining stable housing, you know, just being that bridge.

**32:36**

So a lot of seniors they don't like, they never rented before, you know, they don't know where to look.

The Council of Seniors has created an excellent resource.

It's the Housing Resource Guide.

It's got up to date information, you know, on programs like Safer.

**32:55**

I don't know if anyone knows what Safer is.

I'm sure they do.

It's the shelter, the aid for elderly rentals or renters.

Yeah.

And it's a initiative through BC Housing that seniors can access to offset the cost of.

And it's very helpful.

**33:12**

At the same time, I will say that I, I don't think it's, it's enough at this point, given what's happening to housing.

And I've said this before on the show, but I'll say it one more time.

I remember a, a press interview that the seniors advocate did about safer and when it went up a bit, which is good, but the, the media person asked him, what do you think?

**33:35**

How high should it go?

Like what would be enough?

Because people were saying it's still not enough.

And I, I have to say, I really appreciated his response.

He said it's enough when it's 30% of someone's income and no more because that's what's supposed to be for all of us what we spend on housing.

**33:53**

And it's just not anywhere near that.

So I know you must still run into many, many people who simply can't afford even with the safer funding.

Yes, Yeah, yeah, that's.

Unfortunate.

It is.

It is.

**34:09**

And I guess the other thing I should say, just I think people on that listen to the show may already have this number in your head.

But if you forget everything else about how to reach the council of seniors, 5645888 is the beginning, the opening the door phone number.

**34:24**

Yes, it is.

Yeah.

We're here to help, so.

That's wonderful.

OK.

So, OK, so you've got, you've got a big, a big, big job to do actually from all the things that you've that you've mentioned.

And so I'm just wondering with this almost, well, just over a year experience, maybe you could talk a bit about.

**34:46**

So we know that people can call you and that you can try and support people, but what are some of the challenges that you've, you know, sort of observed as you've been trying to provide that kind of support to people?

What are the issues?

**35:02**

I know just cost in general, but then there's I think you may be a bit more specific about some of the things that that relate.

Yeah.

So before this job, I never would have thought that seniors would or could be homeless.

**35:18**

You know, just something you don't think about, you know, when you're not doesn't affect you directly.

You know, I've met seniors living in their cars or substandard situations like such as houses filled with bedbugs or extreme hoarding, you know, and just trying to find supports for that.

**35:35**

It's it's pretty challenging and costly.

Yeah, no.

And, and it reflects, as we were talking about with Alan before you came on, talking about homelessness, moccasin flats, some of those questions.

And you know, there just isn't the, the supports that are needed or the kind of supports that are needed.

**35:57**

And I mean, my experience is that for older adults, it's tough to ask for, for support.

You know, you don't, you know, you've lived your whole life, you've worked and you've ended up on a pension that is not adequate for whatever reason.

**36:13**

And then to go and say, you know, I need a hamper or I need, you know, that's tough.

You know, really.

And I'm sure you're experiencing hearing from people that are hesitant.

They are hesitant, but don't be hesitant.

**36:30**

We're here to help.

Like yeah, lots of kind people down at the council seniors to help.

That's for sure.

So important to know that that that's there for people and, and also, you know, it's, it's a group of people, a lot of volunteers that are at the council of seniors who have experienced themselves.

**36:51**

You know, the, so it's not, you're not walking into a situation where people are not familiar with the challenges people have.

And I think the, the work that the council of seniors is doing has been expanding over the past while.

And so there's such a range of of supports available now.

**37:09**

That's pretty exciting to to know that there is some options there.

And certainly one of the the latest things was the the fundraiser that took place with the Miracle Theatre and the Community Foundation and the funds that are going to be available yearly.

**37:29**

And then there was an emergency fund.

Yeah.

So before that Miracle Theatre like Foundation Fund is it's, you know, ready to start, which will start next year.

An anonymous donor in Prince George reached out to the foundation, Prince George Community Foundation and set up what is called the Seniors Emergency Pilot Program.

**37:50**

And between US and the Prince George Community Foundation, we are able to help seniors with sudden unexpected emergencies.

What that means they can apply for a grant, whether it's, you know, sudden like bills that are overdue, you're going to get your hydro cut off, dental needs, car repairs, emergency vac care like.

**38:15**

We're going to talk a teeny bit more about that after.

We just have to take a quick break.

With warmer weather upon us, Prince George RCMP remind all road users, drivers, cyclists, bikers and pedestrians that road safety is a shared responsibility.

No matter how you're getting around.

**38:32**

Avoid distractions and obey posted speed limits and road signs.

Cyclists should always wear a helmet and a bright reflective clothing and have their bicycle equipped with lights.

Also remember, unless marked as a shared pathway, sidewalks are for pedestrians only.

**38:48**

Know and obey the rules to share the road safely this summer.

Big name productions are the order of the day for next season at Theater Northwest.

Clue on Stage, The Odd Couple and Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express are on tap as Theater Northwest brings some of the best plays ever produced to their.

**39:06**

Prince George stage Catch all three with a season pass now available.

Online, general and open Call edition details also available at [theaternorthwest.com](http://theaternorthwest.com), Clue on Stage, The Odd Couple and Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express next season at Theaternorthwest.

**39:23**

Pick up your tickets for the Prince George Symphony Orchestra's car raffle.

Up for grabs is a 2025 Chevy all-wheel Drive Trailblazer LS worth just over \$30,000, sponsored by Wood Wheaton Supercenter.

Help the PGSO keep live music thriving in the north.

Tickets are available through the car raffle link under support us at [pgso.ca](http://pgso.ca).

**39:43**

Draw date is September 8th.

Your Prince George Symphony Orchestra 2025 car raffle BC Gaming license 160798 Know your limit play within it forecast from Environment Canada for today.

Increasing cloudiness.

A 30% chance of showers late this afternoon.

**40:01**

A high of 25 with the high UV index.

Tonight cloudy.

Percent chance of showers.

A few showers overnight, a low of 14 on Friday.

Showers.

The risk of a thunderstorm in the afternoon with wind to the north of 20K and a high of 19.

You're listening to Senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

**40:20**

Welcome back, everyone.

We're here with Janine, who's the senior housing navigator with the Prince George Council of Seniors and just talking about some of the programs that are available there.

The last thing before we went to break was about the emergency funds that are available until I guess the next phase of the emergency sort of program from the Prince, the Community Foundation comes into effect in about a year after the fundraising that many of us went to the shows that were put on by Miracle Theater to raise that fund.

**40:53**

So we we gave a sense of some of those categories of availability.

Did we, did we exhaust that?

I'm not sure if we quite got through it.

I'll just touch on how to apply.

Good.

Yeah.

So if you feel like you need help and you want to apply for this grant, you can do it online if you go to the Prince George Community Foundation website under the grant section.

**41:22**

And if online is not an option to you, which many seniors it's not, just call the council Seniors.

You can set up an appointment with myself or any other team member and we can help you with that application.

Excellent.

Oh, that's really good to know.

**41:38**

Thanks very much for that information.

And the other thing I think people would find useful would be maybe to go into a little bit more about some of the particular things that you would be able to help out with as the the housing navigator.

**41:54**

Sure.

Yeah, we can do that.

So I also help seniors complete online forms, whether that be like really anything.

I also help them with CPP applications, their old age security.

**42:11**

Sometimes I've met clients where they didn't know they had to apply and they were missing their benefits.

Wow.

So that really can, you know, make it tough if you're only receiving one of one of your benefits.

Absolutely no.

That's something that I think I don't know, we somehow as a society we need to do a better job of, of either making sure people need to apply or I always think, isn't there a way to do this without people having to apply?

**42:37**



Like is there some other mechanism, you know, through age, you know, and the other different services that people have?

Is there not some way to trigger that?

There may not be, but I think we should try and figure that out.

Yeah, I agree.

So and then would you be helping them if they to see once you met them whether safer is something they were it's available to them?

**43:02**

Yes, yeah, I would sit down, do an intake, see what their needs are, see what they're looking for, whether it's a short term rental, long term rental is do you know, do you need accessible, do you need an elevator?

That's those sorts of things, you know, and a lot of times safer is needed just because the cost of rentals is so high right now and a lot of seniors on pensions, you know, it's just it's not enough.

**43:29**

Difficult really to pay your.

Bills to get your medications, to get your food, Yeah.

No, the the whole question of the cost of housing never mind.

And this is one that I'm interested in just hearing your thoughts on never mind the cost, but also I think of that phrase affordable, accessible.

**43:51**

And what is the third one?

Affordable, accessible and.

Adaptable.

Adaptable, yeah, so or appropriate.

But anyway, it could be any of those as and really looking at what challenges you see in our region when people are trying to find houses.

**44:09**

Because I think of, I remember someone who did a, a thesis at the university whose committee I was on and she was doing a, a look at the three floor walk UPS that we have in Prince George.

And I think now about, Gee, there, there must be real challenges in terms of accessibility, if nothing else.

**44:30**

So what kinds of things you know do you run into when you're trying to help someone find a?

Place, yeah, for example, like if they've never rented before, they don't have references.

That's a whole other question.

Like, you know, who's going to say that they're going to be a good tenant?

**44:48**

You know, if you don't have those references and then subsidized housing as another, you know, the, the the list or the waiting list, sorry, is very long.

And then by the time you apply, it's a multi year wait if they ever do call you.

**45:07**

Yeah.

Or knowing that you have to keep your housing application up to date every six months is another thing that can get missed.

You could be on that list.

You apply like.

Great.

I'm in.

I'm in, yeah.

And then you forget to update your.

And then you drop off.

**45:22**

Yep.

Then you're not in.

Yeah, no, I heard about that.

I was actually quite surprised that it was so frequent like that, that you had to.

I mean, I understand some logic for it, but boy, you sure have to make sure people understand that.

Yeah.

So I think it's.

Just getting the messages out there and sharing the information just to kind of keep people on top of things before it's too late.

**45:41**

Yeah, Yeah, I know.

One of the other things that you mentioned just in passing was the question of of hoarding and the the challenge that that can pose as well.

Is there anything, I mean, what, what, what can people do or friends of people do in terms of that hoarding question?

**46:03**

Yeah, that's a tough.

One I know.

Support you know the person who is facing that issue.

It's it's tough one because there's also the mental health part of it.

You know, like you can take away all the contents in the house and clean it all up, which is in an expensive labor intensive process.

**46:25**

But then if you don't address the mental health piece of it then.

It may just repeat itself.

Yeah, there's there's really significant questions.

And I think we don't always know that those things are happening, right.

I mean, people can, people can be out and about and doing some things in the community.

**46:43**

And it may not be obvious for people if you, you know, around hoarding, if you haven't gone to the house or even around the, the, the poverty question.

And, and I don't even know if you want to call it poverty.

It's just the level of income that people have is just not enough for the, the, the cost of living these days.

**47:02**

And I don't think we always know what situation people are in, you know, just not wanting to really expose that beyond, you know, themselves or maybe some close people, but not wanting to really talk about it, which I know impacts people coming to get, you know, whether it's a hamper or whether it's even just popping by the council seniors office and just seeing what supports are there, you know, not really wanting to do that.

**47:30**

I, there was someone that told me that they were going to get a friend to do that because they didn't want to go there themselves just to try and find out.

Is there something that, you know, that way that I could be helped.

We're just going to take one more break and then we'll come back and and got another 10 minutes to kind of wrap things up a bit.

#### **47:50**

Prince George Council Seniors Meals on Wheels program is always looking for volunteers.

Meals are delivered Monday through Friday between 10:45 and noon to older adults in the Bowl N Nachaco and College Heights areas of Prince George who have difficulty preparing meals.

#### **48:06**

If you have a vehicle and are interested in giving back to your community, contact the Seniors Resource Center at 250-5645, Triple 8, e-mail [info@pgcos.ca](mailto:info@pgcos.ca) or stop by the office at 1330 5th Ave.

For many, a career in music is a dream come true.

#### **48:25**

However, the reality is that many.

People in the Canadian music industry do not have access to medical benefits and financial aid.

This is especially true for our music industry veterans, and it's why the Unison Fund created the Slate Family Foundation Legacy Program.

#### **48:41**

To learn more on how you can support legacy artists and musicians who are coping with unexpected or chronic illness, visit [unisonfun.ca](http://unisonfun.ca).

It's summer, the time to fix all those small appliances and other items around your home.

To get them back in working order, your Prince George Public Library can help.

#### **48:58**

They're holding a Repair Cafe on July 26th.

Bring your small appliances, textiles and other items in and get support and assistance from volunteers and other repair enthusiasts.

The Repair Cafe, in partnership with the Equal Living Community, will be held in the Knowledge Garden, rain or shine.

#### **49:14**

The Repair Cafe Saturday, July 26th from 2:00 to 4:00 at the Bob Harkins branch of your Public Library downtown.

The Katzun Yescot Botanical Garden has officially opened at UNBC, celebrating Clayton A culture and showcasing northern B CS diverse plant life.

**49:30**

Winding pathways inspired by the Nachaco and Fraser rivers invite you to explore native species in a setting that honors traditional knowledge.

This living space strengthens connections to the land and creates opportunities for learning and reflection.

Experience this vibrant blend of culture, nature, and community.

**49:49**

The Kansas Zune Yescot Botanical Garden.

Visit today at UNBC.

You're listening to senior moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

OK.

We're just talking with Janine about the the work of the seniors housing navigator that she does at the Council of Seniors.

**50:06**

And just for this last segment, we're going to talk a bit about thing, some of the things that you bump into to the question of addictions, sometimes people waiting too long to connect, what kind of prevention things can people can do?

**50:21**

I don't know.

We'll just start with that and then maybe a little bit about about advocacy and what friends can do.

Yeah, so there has been a rise I've noticed lately.

Seniors start struggling with addictions.

And again, there's the shame around that, not wanting to admit that there's a problem there or having, you know, maybe burnt all the bridges at this point, you know, and where, where do they go from here?

**50:46**

You know, who's who can help them?

So.

So you would that would also impact presumably what you can suggest to them in terms of housing and also whether they had the funds for housing?

That makes it really tough sometimes because if you don't present well, like if you got no references, previous evictions from other places they've lived, you know, drug use and alcohol use is, you know, it makes it challenging.

**51:13**

And at the end of the day, like, where do we put, where do we put people?

Yeah, no big issues.

And then you mentioned the question of waiting too long for help.

Yes, like couple, you know, instances, you know, they roll in and there's been several missed payments on their house.

**51:36**

You know, it's already gone into foreclosure.

You know the bailiffs coming and you know, if they would have just came sooner, you could have helped.

Yes.

But by that time, it's pretty.

It's too late.

Yeah, it's too late.

So if you know, don't wait too long.

**51:53**

If you need help, just you know, don't be shy.

Well, especially when we all know that conditions as they exist now within society are such that all sorts of people who, like I said, work their whole lives and everything are in tough situations.

**52:10**

So none of us, even though it's hard, none of us should feel that we can't step forward and say, you know, I, I could use a hand in at least in figuring out what to do, even if, you know, it's not like I'm asking for the emergency dollars or something.

But how can I deal with this situation?

**52:27**

And sometimes there's ways out if we if we start soon enough.

So I think that's a really important point that you're making, yeah.

Prince George has, you know, like Prince George community partners.

There's lots of us.

We're all willing to help and you know, great people in this community that have big hearts.

**52:43**

And.

Yeah, it's good to see that.

No, it really is.

And I know Janine and I were both at a meeting of the community partners addressing homelessness on Monday.

And certainly one of the things that was talked about around the table is it just increase that people in all sorts of organizations and agencies are finding of older adults in need and being at risk or already homeless.

**53:08**

And a big question that sometimes we don't think about.

I think we think, you know, sometimes you think of of more younger folks who are who are experiencing homelessness, which they are, but not always older folks.

The other thing that we were talking a bit about was the question of what kind of advocacy like the Council senior does and and what other people can do.

**53:32**

Yeah, maybe speak to your local MLA, your governments, you know, write the letters, write your lived experiences, share it, share it social media, Like just get the word out there, you know, like.

Yeah, and even to talk with them when you come to the Council of Seniors, I think when you, you know, you put out the the Council of Seniors newsletter or excuse me, there's also the advisory committee to the Council of Seniors where lots of different community groups are around that table that work with older adults in one way or another.

**54:03**

And just to be able to let people know what the issues are, even if you're not the one that's feeling comfortable with, with being that advocate, but even letting us that are around those tables know about it so that we can be that voice.

**54:19**

And yeah, I mean, I think it's that question is, is huge, huge.

The other thing I was thinking about that you mentioned earlier was the and I see it on the table here was the housing resource guide.

So if someone So, what kind of things are in that and how would someone access it?

**54:41**

Oh, yes, OK.

So the housing resource guide, there's tons of information about the SAFER program, BC housing, how that kind of works, all the listings of their housing like support of housing, subsidized housing, the Northern Health housing for seniors, how to go, you know, apply for that.

**55:04**

I have also information about long term care residences, assisted living residences, and then how to apply in like the general market property management companies and then short term motel rentals if needed because sometimes you can't get a place right away.

**55:29**

So you know, like monthly motels are maybe your only option.

Right.

No, that's, that's an excellent resource to know about.

So people would be able to find that if they went to the website.

It's not on there, but it's going to be on there OK soon.

**55:46**

But BC Housing shares it widely and then the council seniors has it available at the office.

OK, excellent.

So if you want something like that, presumably people could actually get a copy of it if they wanted to have an actual copy.

OK, that's great.

**56:02**

And then the other thing I just want to make sure with that we get to before we finish is just the ways that people can get in touch.

So I gave the phone number 250-564-5888.

But then there's other ways.

**56:17**

There's an e-mail to reach you directly as the housing navigator.

There is, yeah.

You can either pop by in person.

Our address is 13 35th Ave. where the Seniors Resource Center.



Right across from the post office.

Absolutely so, but.

If you want, the best thing is to call ahead to make an appointment because we are very busy down there.

**56:36**

So if you need help, call ahead, make an appointment, OK, And then my e-mail is SHN.

So like Sam, Happy Nancy, Yeah.

OK at PGCO s.ca OK.

**56:53**

And we're going to put that information on the, as I said, on the archive link of the show.

So after the show's over, usually by the day after, we have a link up on the CFIS FM website.

So you can, if you've missed part of the show or you just didn't have a pencil, you didn't get this information down, you want to hear it again or you want to see the information there, it will be included with the link to the show so people will be able to get it.

**57:20**

The other thing, just as we wrap up.

Also, I know the Council of Seniors is always happy to have volunteers, so if someone wanted to volunteer, it could be in some way to support the front desk when people come in or one of the programs right that that you have, which is much more than just the housing program.

**57:42**

Yes, we're always looking for volunteers.

The council seniors would not, you know, be, as you know, doing as well as they are without the help of the volunteers.

If that is something that interests you, just call ahead, get a criminal record check done right and you know, or connect with our volunteer coordinator.

**58:03**

Her name is Lisa.

She can set all that up, you know, get the ball rolling on.

Excellent.

Well, listen, I want to thank you very much for coming on.

This has been Janine Bartolan, who is the Seniors Housing Navigator at the Council of Seniors.

Great information and look forward to having you on again.

**58:22**

Thank you so much.

And thank you, Janine.