

**0:01**

Welcome to senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Hi, everybody.

I'm your host, Don Hemingway.

We have two excellent guests today.

First is Veronique Sufi, who is from the BC Society for Policy Solutions, and she's going to be talking to us about some legislation and practical questions around union organizing in British Columbia.

**0:27**

And then for the second-half of the show, we have Mel Kendakar, who is the executive director of the Prince George Council of Seniors, and he's going to talk about some of the initiatives and programs that are going on right now that people may be interested in.

But first, let's welcome Veronique and very happy to have you here.

**0:48**

Veronique is part of, as I said, the BC Society for Policy Solutions.

And if folks are not yet familiar with it, it's a progressive Public Policy Research institute situated here in BC and doing some interesting research and writing that people maybe want to avail themselves of.

**1:09**

So welcome to the program, Veronique.

Thanks for having me again.

Yeah, very glad to have you.

So you know, I don't know if you want to say any more than I just did about the policy solutions work.

**1:24**

Before we get into the question of of workers unionizing in British Columbia, is there anything else you'd like to share with the listeners?

Maybe.

I think more people are getting to know about BC policy solutions up this way in the northern part of British Columbia, but just in case we have listeners who aren't familiar, it might be good to share a little bit with them.

**1:49**

Yeah, I'd be happy to.

Yeah, Folks might be familiar with the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives.

We used to have an office in BC, the CCPABC, which was closed in January.

And those of us that work there felt like it's pretty important for us to keep doing the work that we do.

**2:10**

We need to challenge some of the narratives that we hear in the media, but often represent a kind of business corporate angle to the economy.

And, you know, as as critically thinking economists, we just thought this needs to be challenged.

**2:27**

We can do the calculations and show that a healthy economy can actually benefit everybody, not just corporations.

And so, yeah, that's, that's partly why the the BC Society for Policy Solutions opened in February and we really hit the ground running.

**2:44**

There's been a lot of narratives to challenge.

And, you know, so we our work never stops and we try to make everything as accessible as possible.

You know, we do have academic backgrounds, but we don't do the academic speak thing.

**3:01**

We've really tried and speak in in a way that's successful to everyone.

And I think the work that we do is very common sense.

So yeah, I think folks would probably relate to a lot of the problems that we tackle, housing and poverty and affordability.

**3:17**

And so, yeah, feel free to check out the the research that we have at [bcpolicy.ca](http://bcpolicy.ca).

Oh, thanks very much for Anik And, and we'll have in our discussion an example, I think of, of some of that work.

And in particular, I know there's been work done on this by you've all, all of you collectively research.

**3:39**

I, I remember, and I've also had you on before.

I also had my son on who's Alex Hemingway, who's one of the, I can hardly say Alex, he's Alexander to me anyway, He's one of the people that that decided after the CCPA closed the BC office to join with you and, and others to have the BC policy solutions.

**3:59**

But the topic for today, I, I do remember at least a couple, maybe more than that years ago that Alexander did do some work on this question of unionization.

But you've done some more recent work that I think is important and it relates to also some of the, the changes in legislation that the province initiated here.

**4:25**

So, you know, I wonder maybe you want to start just sort of talking about the, the work that you've been doing.

I, I see that you've done some of the work with a Glika Ivanova as well, but maybe sharing what are the, what's the situation, you know, some of the legislative changes and how they've impacted and then the shortcomings.

**4:54**

I mean, that's sort of our whole discussion, but maybe just starting laying some groundwork for people who may not be familiar with this situation in relation to union organizing.

Sure.

Yeah.

What, what Alexander wrote about a couple years ago, which was the reinstitution of card check and this is, you know how workers can organize, you know, and get representation from a union.

**5:25**

We used to have for about 20 years, we had a 2 step process to getting unionized.

And when you have a 2 step process, all you're doing is offering a, a big opportunity for the employer who of course doesn't want workers to have their own democratic representation and, and the chance to sit down at a bargaining table and negotiate with their employers.

**5:50**

You know, this gave them a chance to fight back in a way that was really hindering workers from unionizing.

And so we finally got the reinstitution of card check, which is just a single step process for unionizing where you just need to meet a threshold of 55 percent through through signing union cards and then you can be unionized.

**6:14**

And what we've seen since that reinstitution of card check is, you know, a huge uptick in the amount of workplaces that were finally able to unionize.

So it really was a major hindrance to have that two step verification process.

But I think one of the clearest examples we saw of that was the union certifications that happened this year 1 was the Uber drivers in Victoria joined UFC W158 Local 1518 to become the first platform workers in Canada to formally unionize and Amazon warehouse workers in D1 unit certification with Uniform Local 114.

**6:54**

And that's only the second Amazon facility in Canada to unionize and only the 3rd in North America because these employers are major, major union Busters.

And so part of the part of the win we're attributing to the reinstitution of that single step verification, which even with just that one step, those employers, you know, fought very hard to prevent these, both of these certifications from happening.

**7:24**

Uber tried to claim that they had a lot more drivers on the platform than they really do, you know, that anybody with an account counted as a potential driver, which of course watered down that 55% that that the UFCW tried to have to, to recognize that certification.

**7:44**

And the labor board, you know, sided with your CW and said, no, you know, we recognize that you've reached that 55% threshold.

Amazon did the same thing with their workers in Delta.

They did a hiring blitz to try and dilute the, the numbers of, of union cards that had been signed to make it less than 55%.

**8:05**

And again, the, the relations board was like, no, this was, you know, there was clear evidence that they had done this specifically as a union busting tactic.

And so even with single step, it can be very difficult to organize, but but it, it helped, I think it made a big difference.

**8:21**

And we've seen record numbers of certification since it was reinstated in 2022.

I mean it does certainly I think make it easier.

I mean, I, I in earlier days in, in my life, I did organize a couple of times unions where I was working and certainly one was in BC and one was in Ontario.

**8:41**

But this is many, many years ago.

But it certainly was a challenge and trying to, I think of one in particular, which was in BC where we were trying to figure out how to reach people because we had, we were just doing it ourselves as workers in the place, right?

**9:02**

We had literally no other support at the time and, and just the challenge of being able to know that you had the right to do it.

You know, at that time there were all sorts of threats and you know, which of course were not made publicly, but threats that were made to those of us who were organizing.

**9:20**

And so having some of this, the, the legal sort of ability to have some legal grounding in terms of what you're doing and to have the, the possibility of being more straightforward in terms of just, you know, getting the cards signed and not having to worry about the big campaign that's going to come next from the company about why you shouldn't do this.

**9:45**

And, and the example you gave of, of the hiring of, of a whole bunch more workers, another really good example of just trying to dilute how many people have already joined and then to try and change the situation on the ground.

So I think, you know, when I think back to those couple of times that I was working in particular, I mean, I was involved in a number, but these two that were really things that I was initiating, it was a tough go.

**10:11**

And it, it shouldn't be like that, right?

I mean, we have the right to be organized and to bargain collectively and, and to get to that point should be a fairly straightforward process.

It shouldn't, there shouldn't be roadblocks in the way.

So really appreciate, you know, the the work that's been done and, and the efforts that that BC policy solutions researchers have gone to try and explain this and to show the strengths, but also the challenges that still remain.

**10:45**

And I know that that's one of the things that you also have talked about in terms of the sort of limits in terms of what exists already.

And even in the successes that that took place, some of the challenges that remain.

And one of the things that we actually, I can't remember if it was last week or the week before, we were talking about the challenges of gig work and, and how to how to organize in those environments.

**11:14**

And, you know, some of the things that that you and Iglia Ivanova talk about in the article that you did about, you know, how the labor laws have impacted organizing.

So I'm just wondering, you know, if you can get into some of these other questions a little bit for our listeners.

**11:34**

Yeah, definitely.

Well, I mean, for gig workers, for up until 2023, they weren't counted as employees.

They weren't considered employees.

They were independent contractors.

And of course, how you know, independent contractors are not entitled to unionize the way unionization.

**11:54**

I, you know, I know employers make it seem like unions are big and strong and it's very easy to unionize and it's absolutely not right.

Our Labor Relations code is actually a set of limitations on the conditions under which we're allowed to unionize.

**12:10**

But to even have those limited conditions apply, you have to be considered an employee and you have to be working for someone that's considered your employer and until recently, platform workers.

So, so we can think of Uber drivers, ride Hill workers.

**12:25**

So that's Uber, Lyft.

There's a few other platforms also, food delivery workers or Task Rabbit.

These kind of workers were considered independent contractors as though they were running their own business.

And you know, this platform just helps us all meet up, you know, supply and demand matching platform.

**12:44**

Of course, we see the immense amount of profits that Uber gets from the work that they do.

And so we know from the work that drivers do.

So we know that this is, you know, it was an obvious when you do the testing of whether an employment relationship counts as employee or not.

**13:02**

It was very obvious that Uber is an employer and that these workers are employees running their own businesses.

They're very much working for Uber.

And so Bill 48 was the, the legislation that was introduced to define these workers as employees and, and Uber as an employer.

**13:21**

So without that bill, I, I don't think these Uber drivers would have been able to, to organize.

We see another jurisdictions where, I mean, in, in every other jurisdiction where these workers are not considered employees, they haven't been able to unionize.

They they organize in other ways and have tried to pass some legislation to, you know, to get some minimum protections we see in Ontario for example.

**13:45**

But they don't have that that right to democratic representation where they get to, you know, sit at a bargaining table with their employers and establish a proper working conditions that are specific to their to their line of work.

And so, yeah, that that definitely Bill 48 definitely removed a hurdle.

**14:03**

But you know, as as we were talking about with how difficult it is to unionize, there's so many hurdles remaining.

We've got, you know, I mentioned our Labor Relations code sets the limitations for the conditions under which we're allowed to unionize.

It's really outdated.

**14:20**

It is really designed around an employment model.

It's kind of based in the 1950s, you know, the, the old industrial model of the, the father work, you know, the, the kind of heteronormative couple with the father that works and supports the whole family.

**14:39**

And it's got one boss for his whole life and knows everybody that he works with, everyone he works with, you know, he knows by name and maybe he lives in the same neighborhood.

It, it's a lot easier to organize under those circumstances and you do the organizing once and that's your employer for life.

**14:55**

Well, work has really flexibilized over time, you know, to the benefit of employers.

There's a lot more subcontracting, there's a lot more temporary work, there's a lot more gig work, you know, and the, the Labor Relations code just hasn't kept up.

**15:12**

Work has become modernized and flexibilized and we think that our Labor Relations code should modernize and flexibilize on the worker end to maintain that supposed balance that's supposed to maintain between employers and workers for the public interest.

**15:29**

You know, reminding everybody that the public interest is the worker interest because we're mostly workers in the public.

So yeah, we've been working at BC Policy Solutions.

We've really been advocating for for more flexible models and, and So what we're looking at is the bargaining model and I don't know if you'd like me to.

**15:47**

I.

Would to what that is?

I would like to get into that.

I just want to sort of underline one thing that I think is really important that even though you know, now you know, say the workers in, in a lot of the gig sector have been considered to be employees, which is correct that the, the challenge for organizing still is fairly substantial.

**16:11**

Like I think of when I was doing stuff, one was at a hospital and one was at a care facility, at least I was very clear except for some of the part time staff who was there, right?

I mean, it was, it was not an impossible task to figure out the ways to connect with people.

**16:30**

It was, you know, we're trying to do it in a way that didn't get those of us organizing fired basically, but at least we knew who people were.

But I think of, you know, if you're, if you're doing deliveries, if you know, those kinds of things like Uber or, or the food delivery, all those things, you're so isolated from one another that I just, I just wanted to underline that it seems that there's still much to be done in that regard.

**16:59**

And maybe the the question that you want to get into next around the sectoral bargaining, maybe one of the, I don't know if it's an answer fully, but one of the things that might alleviate some of the, the challenges now.

But before we get into it, we're just going to take a break and then we can come back and and talk about that, that other approach that you discuss in some of the work that you've done.

**17:25**

Sure.

Don't miss out on CFIS 93.1's current 5050 raffle.

Up to \$2000 is up for grabs with 2000 tickets printed.

Tickets are a tuning each available from Ron's Hole in the Wall in the Q3 Creative Business Hub at Quebec and 3rd and from our table during the Q3 Community Market each Saturday.

**17:45**

The draw will be made live at 1:50 during Community Echoes on November 24th.

The CFIS 93.15050 BC Gaming license number 165461 must be 19 or older.

Know your limit, play within it.

Researchers at the University of Waterloo and University of Alberta are wanting feedback from people living with dementia and their care partners on an app called Guard IO.

**18:09**

The app was developed to support community safety and help prevent people from going missing.

Participating in the study involves trying out the app and providing feedback on how well it works.

For more information or to take part in the study, contact Doctor Antonio Miguel Kurzak by emailing Miguel CR at ualberta.ca.

**18:30**

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 forums, and more.

**18:45**

The Seniors Housing Navigator is just a phone call away 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.

Forecast from Environment Canada for today.

#### **19:02**

Periods of rain went the southwest to 20K, gusting to 40A High of 12 tonight.

Periods of rain ending late this evening, then partly cloudy.

Gusting southwest winds continuing a low for on Friday.

Cloudy periods of rain beginning near noon.

Gusting S winds increasing the 70 starting late in the morning with a high of 11.

#### **19:22**

This is senior Moments on 93.1 CFIS FM.

Welcome back everybody.

We're here with Veronique Sufi and we're talking about union organizing in in British Columbia.

And in particular just going to get into the question of a different, a different approach potentially, which is called broadly sectoral bargaining.

#### **19:44**

So it would great be great if you could share with our listeners how that might work.

Yeah, well, I think you highlighted a really important point about the difficulty for Uber drivers to organize, which is that they don't know each other, right?

#### **20:01**

You might know a few other drivers, but you don't work in the same.

Place together the way that our that our union regulations are designed around.

And so, you know, that's why Uber was able to intervene with, you know, claiming there were more drivers than there were because nobody really knows.

#### **20:20**

It's very difficult to know.

And gig workers are not the only kind of workers that face that problem.

We can think about domestic workers who have been really strong advocates for a sectoral approach to bargaining because they they work all by themselves, you know, in individually separate in different people's homes.

**20:40**

And those people aren't necessarily, you know, professional employers either.

So there's a lot of different kinds of work that happened that that are not particularly conducive to the options we have available to us right now around unionizing.

**20:56**

And so This is why we've kind of gotten behind the idea of looking in at least looking into a sectoral bargaining approach to organizing.

And so this is, this is an approach where, you know, there's a few different models, but we're roughly, you allow an entire sector to come together and have a set of representation on the employer side and the set of representation on the worker side to establish kind of minimum standards across a sector.

**21:27**

We know a little bit about sectoral bargaining.

We've got it in, you know, we can think of the public sector, for example, there's the we've got sectoral bargaining.

And So what this can do in the private sector in particular is beneficial not just for workers in terms of setting, you know, minimum standard that then workers can negotiate on top of, but also for, you know, consumers and the broader economy.

**21:54**

We see that jurisdictions that have sectoral bargaining, that means there's more collective agreement coverage.

And in those jurisdictions there tends to be a lot better pay equity.

So I'm thinking particularly like the the gender wage gap and the racial wage gap tends to close because, you know, employers are no longer allowed to kind of hit workers against each other in that way.

**22:19**

Those minimum standards are set, but also because they're not allowed to compete with each other, You know, businesses can't compete with each other within a sector based on lowering the wage for, you know, making extra profit off of our labor.

That's kind of taken out of the equation of that competition.

**22:37**

They have to compete on on other basis.

So they have to compete on innovation, on offering a better service or product.

And so that can actually benefit the consumer.

We get a better service, we get a better product, we see more investment and research and development from the private sector, so more innovation in our economy.

**22:59**

And then we also see the jurisdictions that have more collective agreement coverage, usually because of sectoral bargaining, but that's more money, more spending money in the pockets of lower income folks and lower income folks tend to spend their money in their local community.

**23:17**

So we see a kind of economic stimulus happen where the local economy gets a boost from people having more spending money.

No, I think those are really important points and, and in particular, you know, I'm thinking about the need to have some basic standards, right, that are, that are, you know, required across different types of jobs.

**23:43**

And, and of course, I mean, I, my, my reflections on these years are many, many years ago.

But I do remember when we used to have, for example, differential wages for students.

And I remember in, you know, in the hospital sector when there, and this was an Ontario one, but where there were students working part time in various aspects.

**24:06**

And holy smokes, when we finally organized and got them retroactive pay, like it was just, you know, like a, a sky opened up, you know, the clouds cleared because they knew, you know, that they were doing the same work and should be getting the same pay.

**24:22**

And we were lucky enough to actually get them retroactive.

And so it was, you know, was really a positive, positive step.

And I think another example I think of is, is in in housekeeping, when there used to be quite a differentiation in the wages between within the hospital or health sector between women and men as well.

**24:44**

And that was supposedly because men push bigger machines down the hall, except we would happily, I worked in that sector in housekeeping and that we would happily have pushed the machines, right?

There was no option to push those machines.

So you know, having, I'm just giving them as the examples about why having some standard levels of of expectation dollar wise, condition wise is really important.

**25:09**

And so that is one of the positives of the sectoral bargaining.

I guess one of the things that that I hear, you know, you don't want to lose in that though is also the specificity of some things that need to be addressed.

And so we have to be careful about that as well.

**25:26**

Yeah, you're absolutely right in that.

I think what you're describing really is that intervention in the race to the bottom, what one thing that employers are able to do by and and sometimes this happens through subcontracting, but it is hired different kinds of workers and value them at different rates.

**25:45**

And so we see this with students, we see this with temporary foreign workers.

We see this with racialized workers.

We see this between genders.

We see this with age as well, right?

So, so this can be ageism both for young people and for older folks.

**26:01**

And So what, you know, setting these kind of regulations across the whole sector can do.

Yeah, it take away that race to the bottom where we're not competing with each other for that.

You know, this is the standard of work across the base and and you have to meet that standard.

**26:18**

And for health and safety issues, which I think is really important too.

But you're right, we do need some specificity, not, you know, a sector is a very broad thing.

And so it really should be a flexible model.

And I think that's a little bit what's Dymeid, the Labor Relations code review boards and the province is choosing which model would work best and, and needing to have one universal model that works for every kind of situation.

**26:47**

And I, I just don't think we can have that.

I think we have so many different types of workplaces.

We've been talking about atomized workers, for example, but we can think of franchise workers, you know, where workers will organize at one McDonald's and McDonald's shuts it down.

**27:02**

We're seeing that with Starbucks right now shutting down, you know, I think 10% of their unionized locations.

And so, you know, there there's a lot of different models that we're that we'll need to look at and maybe adopt more than one.

It may not be a A1 size fits all solution.

**27:18**

There's so many things we could say about this.

We're just running out of time now, Veronique, but just want to remind our listeners, if you want to learn more, go to [bcpolicy.ca](http://bcpolicy.ca) and you'll be able to read some of the the work that's been done and maybe get connected in a bit further with webinars and other aspects of the work that's going.

**27:39**

So thank you again, Veronique.

Really appreciate you being here as a racial equity researcher and policy analyst with the BC Society for Policy Solutions.

Thanks for having me.

Your Prince George Council of Seniors is always in need of volunteers.

**27:56**

Drivers are needed for their growing Meals on Wheels program.

Their Friendly Phone Calls program reaches out and gives comfort to isolated or lonely seniors better at home.

Volunteers help with friendly visits, grocery shopping and delivery, and the Seniors Resource Center can always use help at the front desk.

**28:13**

To find out more about these volunteer opportunities and others, call the Resource Center at 250-5645 Triple 8.

I'm standing for Canada.

**28:29**

Hi there, I'm Rick Mercer.

This is not a rant, just a polite Canadian request.

Let's use our collective Canadianness to protect Canadian jobs and Canadian business.

If the label says made in Canada or product of Canada, buy it.

#### **28:46**

Shop as if your country depends on it.

Keep your money in Canada for Canada.

Create your own beaded poppy pin in honor of Remembrance Day during the next Beads and Bannock project at Two Rivers Gallery.

Join Crystal Band to create your own customized accessory and enjoy freshly made treats while learning traditional Indigenous art.

#### **29:06**

Everyone is welcome for this two session workshop.

Registration and full details are available at the gallery and through Two Rivers [gallery.ca](http://gallery.ca).

Poppy pins the next Beads and Bannock event Thursday, October 16th and 30th at 2:00 Rivers Gallery.

#### **29:22**

Calling all artists, makers and creatives join the weekly Creative Connect gathering at Omanika Art Center Thursday evenings from 6 to 10.

Bring along your materials and dive into whatever inspires you.

This is your time to create, connect and be inspired by other artists.

#### **29:38**

Entry is by donation.

Everyone is welcome, no matter your experience or medium.

For more information on this and other events at Omanika, visit [omanikaartcenter.com](http://omanikaartcenter.com).

Creative Connect Thursday evenings from six to 10 at Amanika Arts.

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

#### **29:59**

Welcome back, everybody.

I'm here with Malhar Kandakar.

Just I think everybody almost probably that's listening to the program knows is the executive director of the Prince George Council of Seniors.

And we're just going to take the next half hour to just talk about all the different programs that are happening out of the Council of Seniors.

**30:19**

We won't get through it all.

But anyway, welcome Malhar, really appreciate you stopping by to just make sure people are up to date on some of the new things, especially that are happening.

Yeah, thanks for having me.

So as as most well pretty much everyone knows about the Better at Home program, Community Connector, Meals on Wheels, Friends and family caregiver support program and volunteer coordinator and Seniors Housing navigator.

**30:50**

But in addition to that, we started 2 new programs, 1 is a compassionate dementia coordinator that is in collaboration with Hospice society and also with NAV Care, which is UBC.

**31:09**

So it's her name is Gagandeep.

She's a full time compassionate dementia coordinator.

And the second one we just started, it's called Navigation and Peer Support Worker.

So that is, that's another new program that is kind of a support for Janine and Melanie.

**31:33**

So Melanie's our community connector and Janine is our seniors housing navigator.

So Asha Allah, that's her name.

Actually yesterday on Wednesday, that was her first day in the office.

So that's a part time position.

But yeah, she will be supporting clients directly as well, just like most of us, most of the programs do.

**31:54**

And then we also have the seniors emergency pilot program, which is which we rolled out in in in April with the with the Prince George Community Foundation.

So anonymous donor donated a lot of money to to support seniors who are in need.

**32:15**

Yeah.

So this is the only program that actually supports with the financial assistance directly.

And we have, oh God, we have so far we have supported over 68 seniors with the program directly.

**32:32**

Yeah.

Well, you know, I'm, I'm just thinking even for me as well As for the listeners, because I thought I was up to date sitting on the advisory of the council of seniors, but I missed the last meeting, so I'm out.

Not up to date.

Is there any anything more you'd like to say about the compassionate dementia coordinator?

**32:50**

Kind of what they're doing and yeah, yeah.

So that, so, so that program actually supports seniors to for you know, who are, who are in early stages of dementia or they are in dementia.

So it, it, it supports directly to, to the clients and it's kind of works in collaboration with the caregiver support coordinator, which is excellent because our caregiver support coordinator have, she has a lot of clients who have early, you know, they have early stages of dementia.

**33:23**

So the caregivers also need the support.

So that's where the two program actually works so closely because Penas, who is our caregiver support coordinator who supports the caregivers and Gagandeep, who is our dementia coordinator, she supports the clients who are in dementia.

**33:41**

And so of course, for dementia program as well, we do need a lot of volunteers because we just started that program like 2 months ago, OK?

And Kegendeep already has, I believe 11 clients for that program, but that program will grow significantly, you know, very soon.

**34:06**

No, I've got for sure.

No, that's really, really important.

I, I can't remember if we've talked about this Malhar, but in my first days here in Prince George, mid 1990s, we just, we started an early stage support group for people with dementia.

**34:22**

That was I think the second one in the province.

There were some in the interior down, I think Kelowna or Kamloops area and, and, and there was also a support group for the caregivers at that time.

But things have, you know, in terms of how many people are impacted, the need has so grown.

**34:43**

I think this is wonderful that you're able to do this.

Oh, absolutely.

The grown we can see in our office, you know, the grown, it's exponential, right?

It's, it's, there's so much support that, that a lot of the clients actually need and we do our best to support all of them.

**35:01**

And, but for the dementia coordinator, we also, you know, require a lot of volunteers because, and, but for that program, there is a specific training that that council of seniors and Hospice actually provides.

So it's a 2 day workshop for the volunteers to, to do the, it's called a NAV care training.

**35:23**

That is basically that training actually helps all the volunteers to understand, you know, how to support people who are living with with dementia and how to be compassionate.

And because it's, it's, it's challenge, right?

**35:40**

It's very challenging.

So, yeah.

So we do provide that two day of training and then they will get the certificate on that.

So the training itself is actually created by UBC and the funding came through Health Canada.

**35:56**

OK, So it's a Health Canada project, yes, Yeah.

Well, I think more of those initiatives need to be funded.

So I mean that's positive that that's happening.

I guess the other thing for me, and I'll throw it out there now, I know we need volunteers and I encourage volunteers, but at the same time, I can't help but feel that we should not have to be so reliant on volunteers for all these things.

**36:21**

You know, it's, you know, we need them and I do it too.

And I know, you know, but but it should not be that way that we're actually reliant on it.

There should be the possibility for other types of supports that are that are available, you know, Absolutely, yeah, yeah, there should be definitely more, you know, be more funding for programs and funding that lasts, that lasts.

**36:50**

I know you've become a since you took over.

And now how long is it?

Is it 2 years already getting closer to two years as the Ed.

But I know you know, just, I have a pretty good idea anyway, how much time people in your position spend writing grants and I and I just think of all the things one could be doing if you weren't having to over and over and over write these grants.

**37:13**

So anyway, we have to take a quick break, but then we'll get into talking about also the navigation and peer support worker and the emergency funding program and so much else.

Well, we'll be back after a minute or two.

Follow on Manika Arts on social media to stay in the loop on their special events, inspiring exhibitions and hands on workshops.

**37:35**

You can also share your ideas for art related programs, workshops, or anything you'd love to see at the gallery.

Omanika Arts is open to all art expressions.

Let's create, connect and make common Nikka an artistic haven together.

Spread the word, invite your friends and let the creativity flow.

**37:53**

Omanika Arts stay up to date on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

The UNBC Timberwolves men's and women's varsity teams are back on the field in court this fall for the 202526 Canada W season.

The Timberwolves take on the best in Western Canada as they aim for a return to the Canada W playoffs.

**38:12**

Find the schedule, buy a ticket and get more information at [unbc.ca/timberwolves](http://unbc.ca/timberwolves).

Don't miss the next soccer home games when the men host University of Fraser Valley tomorrow morning at 11 and noon Saturday at Massagay Stadium.

Two Rivers Gallery on Saturday, October the 4th for a live art auction featuring artwork by Canadian artists, many from around Prince George.

**38:35**

The evening will include a silent auction, a no host bar and light refreshments.

Tickets are free to members if reserved before 5:00 PM September 30th.

Non member tickets are \$20.

Available through the events page at [tworiversgallery.ca](http://tworiversgallery.ca) and at the gallery.

**38:50**

The Two Rivers Gallery Live auction Saturday, October 4th from 6:30 to 10:00 at Two Rivers Gallery.

Forecast from Environment Canada for today.

Periods of rain went the southwest to 20K, gusting to 40A.

High of 12 tonight.

Periods of rain ending late this evening, then partly cloudy.

**39:08**

Gusting southwest winds continuing a low 4 on Friday.

Cloudy periods of rain beginning near noon.

Gusting S winds increasing the 70 starting late in the morning with a high of 11.

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

**39:25**

OK.

We're here with Malhar from the Executive Director from the Council of Seniors and and we haven't got to the standard programs in any detail, but we're just familiarizing listeners with some of the new programs.

And I know we could say more about the compassionate dementia coordinator, but maybe we'll shift now to talk about the navigation and peer support worker.

**39:47**

Yeah.

So that's another new position.

It's a part time position though through United Way BC of course.

So this position is kind of a support for Janine, our housing navigator and Melanie who is our community connector.

**40:04**

So Asha, Ella, that's that's her name, who is the navigation and peer support worker.

So she will be helping clients find, you know.

Finding affordable house housing, which doesn't exist a lot anymore in Prince George.

**40:20**

I know anywhere in BC really.

And also helping Melanie with the, you know, filing the OAS application or GIS guaranteed income supplement, some applications or helping her with helping Melanie with, with farmers market coupons and, and the bus transit passes and the TAP program.

**40:45**

So many things.

Yeah, no, I mean, it's great that you're able to have a a part time person.

But as we were talking about, you know, earlier and at the break, it's a real challenge when you have to go through this funding process where every every year, you know, and, and you don't know.

**41:04**

And so then there's impact on what people want to come and work because they think, well, I, it's only a job for a year.

Should I, should I do that or should I look for something, you know, And so those questions, you know, of having to repeat repeatedly do that and the applications and also the question of, of total, you know, so big of a reliance on volunteers.

**41:27**

It's it's, you know, it's, it's uncertainty, right?

Like every every year to year.

We don't know if you're going to get the same grant again or not when the program is, you know, really successful.

We are helping clients and we have, you know, and literally year after year, it's that having that uncertainty, it's it's really stressful.

**41:49**

It is.

And I, you know, for a lot of people, yeah.

I just, you know, and really to me, it makes absolutely no sense even, you know, economically, right.

Yeah.

So, so you make the argument that if I could spend, and I'm talking about you, if I could spend my time doing this other organizing work, knowing and plan for the future, knowing that that funding is coming in, that makes a lot more sense than me spending a bunch of time writing all these grants.

**42:15**

That's right.

Yeah.

Because I, I spend a lot of time writing, writing grant applications for all the programs, for all the projects, you know, for one time projects, it's, it's, you know, it's OK to write the grant application.

But for like the main programs, like Better at Home, Meals on Wheels, Community Connector and all these programs that we have at the Council of seniors, spending hours and hours, you know, writing the grant application, explaining what the program does, when the funders already know what the program does and how successful the program has been since it started.

**42:50**

It should be a continuous thing.

It really should, you know, But unfortunately it's, it's not.

And, and we try to advocate for that, but you know, it's well, that's that's another thing too is, is the time that you have to spend advocating for the changes that are necessary anyway, really appreciate being able to underline that.

**43:10**

It's a real frustration, I think for many of us watching this happening.

Having said that, maybe we can share a little bit more about the good news from the emergency funds.

Yeah.

So the seniors emergency pilot program or for acronym, it's called Sep it's we got a news from from Community Foundation a few months ago actually, because Miracle Theatre Ted and and they've

done such a fantastic job in you know in supporting the community and now they are supporting the council of seniors in the endowment funds.

**43:43**

We will start getting those funds next year, but it would be this anonymous donor who decided to donate \$200,000 to towards helping and supporting seniors.

It's just, it's mind, mind blowing.

It is, you know, and when, when Community Foundation actually told us, I, I just had to pause there for 2 minutes I think.

**44:05**

OK, is that, are you guys joking?

Am I hearing you correctly?

And yeah, but, and then we rolled out the program, you know, with the help of Community Foundation and and Rianne, Kathleen and and and Angie, they have been very helpful in, you know, supporting Janine.

**44:24**

And now Janine has been working very hard and, you know, keeping the program going.

And so Janine has been very busy.

So if someone OK, so we've said this, there's been this donor of the \$200,000.

So what, what is the process if someone you know, how does someone apply or is it a, is it an organization that, that applies or how does that work?

**44:49**

So, so we have Prince George Community Foundation has this grant application portal online.

OK.

I don't know the, the, the domain, but they could, you could look it up.

Yeah, yeah.

It's called Seniors Emergency Pilot program.

**45:06**

If you go on Community Foundation's website, OK.

And then you could apply it through that, the online website or, or sometimes they could come into our office and ask for a paper application.

Then Janine will help.

**45:22**

Well, any of our coordinators, you know, can help filling the application form for them.

At the end of the day is we have a committee, two people from council of Seniors and two, two people from Community Foundation that looks after the, the entire application and the process and everything.

**45:43**

And then we decide who you know to accept and, and, and back and you know, so on and so forth.

So yes, there is a process of online application and then there's a paper application as well.

Sometimes we get referrals from Northern Health as well, for example condensers or hearing aids cuz they are very expensive and continue to be an issue.

**46:09**

Yes, yes.

As we know, yes and yeah.

So we do have a process of online application and paper applications.

So if someone is not comfortable with the online they could pop into the office?

Yes.

**46:25**

Can you remind the address?

I know it's across the from the post office on 5th Ave. but I don't know the address.

Yes, the address is 13 35th Ave.

Okay, the hours.

The hours are 9:00 to 3:00 Monday to Friday, except for holidays.

**46:40**

And what I do remember is the phone number, which is 250-564-5888.

That's right.

You got a good number to be able to remember.

So I think before we get into some of the other programming, just to remind people about some of it and maybe any upcoming events, I think it's close to time for another break and then we'll have our last little segment to talk about those things.

**47:07**

Sounds good.

Applications are now being accepted for the City of Prince George My PG Community Grant.

The grant assists not-for-profit organizations in implementing projects and events which contribute to making Prince George a great community.

Eligible projects and events can be large or small.

**47:25**

Full details about the My PG Grant, including how to apply and eligibility requirements, are available through the Community Grants page under Community and Culture at [princegeorge.ca](http://princegeorge.ca).

The application deadline is October 15th.

**47:40**

Just one more thing, before your interview, can I have your address please?

I live on main.

Street.

I need your exact address.

I live on main.

Street.

Oh.

No job, no home, and no home no job.

**48:00**

Don't let homelessness assumptions get in the way of homelessness solutions.

Go to [canadacandoit.ca](http://canadacandoit.ca).

Help the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

The Elder Citizens Recreation Association has a variety of services available for members.

**48:15**

There are plenty of social, exercise and music programs available, like the Birthday Tea, yoga and the Forever Young Chorus.

The kitchen can provide catering for small and large parties, plus they serve lunch Monday through Friday.

There are also special events throughout the year.

Annual membership is just \$25.

**48:32**

Memberships and full details are available at the ECRA office on 10th between Vancouver and Winnipeg streets.

Prince George RCMP and Prince George Bylaw Services are cracking down on off road vehicle use within city limits.

Police are using their UTV and helicopter, along with traditional vehicle patrols and foot patrols with bylaw officers.

**48:53**

Dirt bikes are not allowed on city streets, sidewalks and bike lanes or any other public place and are subject to the Motor Vehicle Act and Criminal Code offenses.

More information for the use of off road vehicles in city limits is available online through the RCMP Rd.

**49:09**

Safety page.

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

OK, welcome back everybody.

We're just talking about some of the programming at the Council of Seniors in Prince George.

We started with some of the new programs, but I'm just thinking that it might be good for some of our newer listeners to just talk a bit about some of the other programs that exist.

**49:31**

And I, I think of one thing, I'm not sure where it fits exactly.

It's certainly social connection.

I've been to a few of them and that is the, the teas that happen at golden age social, Golden age social.

That's what it is.

It depends whether you're doing tea or coffee, I guess.

**49:48**

I yeah, Golden age socials actually well yeah, we have our first golden age socials coming up on October 6th, October 6th.

So that's just Wednesday.

Yeah, yeah, wow, yeah, So it's coming up pretty fast and yeah, we are all prepared for that and we are excited to, you know, host and people 250 seniors and people can just come, come.

**50:12**

Yeah, they could come in and and we have this is for October 6th for the entertainment.

We have Spruce Capital senior senator coming in for the cardio drumming.

Oh wow, I love that.

I love that.

I saw it at the seniors day at the exhibition.

**50:29**

Yes, I'd love to be there for that.

I'm going to be in Vancouver at another meeting.

But what time and where would people come?

So the IT opens at at 1:00 one to four.

Well, 2 the doors open at 1:00.

It starts at 2:00 to 4:00 at at the Civic Center in the first floor, the main big auditorium.

**50:48**

OK, yeah, there we will provide refreshment, some snacks, coffee, tea, cream, sugar, all of that.

And then Spruce Capital Senior Center will be doing the cardio drumming.

That's excellent.

**51:04**

Yeah.

So we are quite looking forward to that.

Yeah.

No.

And I've been to some of them.

And I have to say, if you, if you decide to come and you don't maybe have someone else that wants to come with you.

I came on my own once and I went and sat at a table where there was a couple of other people and I got to know a couple of other people that were not sort of in the realm of where I, I bump into people every day.

**51:27**

So 2 new connections that I really appreciate.

We've kind of one, at least of us have, we've stayed in touch.

So it is a time, even if you don't have other folks to come with, it's a time to come and connect.

It's a social time.

Absolutely it is.

And it kind of, you know, it also helps seniors to socialize, you know, to meet new, you know, make connections, make new friends.

**51:48**

And also the main thing is to kind of reduce that social isolation, peace as well, because as we know, we're getting close to winter time and, you know, it gets dark early and and, you know, it's cold out, so no one wants to go out and not even me.

**52:04**

I mean, it's when it's cold, too cold out.

But if it's snow out, then it's nice.

But yeah, it's it's kind of a, you know, it's a great way to socialize and talk to talk to other seniors, have some snacks and and, you know, have a good time.

**52:20**

Yeah.

You know, the golden age socials.

Absolutely.

No, I can underline that, that I really, you know, I'm and I'm used to, you know, going to different things.

But I, I didn't really think about the fact that, you know, I would just sit at a table.

I didn't only two people there.

It ended up filling up, but I didn't know anybody that was sitting there.

**52:39**

And yet then I got to know other people, you know, so it was really a, it was a very positive experience actually.

Yeah, yeah.

So, so that's one of the things coming up.

Are there other things that are in particular that are coming up?

Not right now apart from the golden age socials, but there is at the center.

**52:59**

We are.

It's always so, so busy, you know.

And yeah, with the Meals on Wheels program, we have expanded that program as well.

Now I think we have about, well, weekly we are doing approximately 345, anywhere between 345 to 380 meals a week.

**53:20**

Wow.

You know, so Andrew, our Meals on Wheels coordinator has done an excellent job and our chef Mike, who is doing an excellent job keeping up with all the meals.

And yeah, yeah, all the everyone is doing a fantastic job.

**53:36**

And if people are interested in learning more about the Meals on Wheels, they could, I guess they could go to the website or they could call.

That's yes, they could.

Yeah, they could go on our website which is [www.pgc.ca](http://www.pgc.ca) and they could come into our office.

**53:52**

We have application forms as well.

I forgot to mention we'd actually rolled out Adopt A Senior Program program again.

I heard about that.

Yes.

So I know for the past year and half we didn't have any funding because initially this program was entirely run by donation and we were getting request, you know for that program, but we didn't have any financial means.

**54:16**

So we applied for the grant again.

Yes, more grants and through Community Foundation and and they accepted the grant, they approved it.

So now we can actually we rolled the program out finally.

**54:33**

So yeah, we can provide about 41 seniors with with 21 meals.

Yeah, with that with the grand, grand we have got, but we are also always looking for a donation for you know for adopt A senior program grant because we want to keep that program running, OK.

**54:56**

Because we know that there is a need and we want to we want to make sure that we kind of bridge that gap.

Yeah.

So it's always a yeah challenge to get get donation and, and funding for yeah, for sub programs.

**55:12**

So for people to know the council of seniors has charitable status.

Yes.

So if you make a donation, you can request a a charitable tax receipt.

That's correct.

So that's good.

And so you could make well, I'm old school.

Often times I would bring a check or now I sometimes actually use the transfer thing on my computer.

**55:33**

But there's different ways that you can do that.

And it could be big or small donations.

Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah, they could, they could come to our office, give us the check cash or they could do the E transfer at, at the e-mail Ed at PGCO s.ca, then we are and we can provide them the tax receipt.

**55:52**

And yeah, any donation is always is always helpful.

You know, every little bit helps.

Absolutely, especially when when there's not the the funding that should be there all the time.

That's right.

That's right.

So, you know, time goes by so quickly.

I just want to make sure that we're, we're covering everything that we should right now.

**56:13**

In particular, the one other thing I wondered about is the, the, the, the better at home program.

Just maybe quickly.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

So we have, I don't know if I mentioned this before, but now we have 1/3 a full time housekeeper.

Good.

**56:29**

Yeah, before we only had two of them, two full time housekeepers and now we got a funding for a third one which is excellent.

So now we are actually serving more clients.

So that Better at Home program provides a light housekeeping, online grocery ordering, friendly visits, friendly phone calls.

**56:48**

And yeah, so we're yeah, there.

We do have, however, wait list for the for the housekeeping.

OK.

But we are serving a lot of clients and we are trying to reduce that, that wait list slowly.

**57:06**

But yeah, it's, it's, you know, when we have 3 full time housekeeper, it's usually hard to get eliminate that entire wait list.

But we try to do our best to reduce the wait list.

Yeah.

So we've highlighted some of the things we're at the end of the program now.

But just a reminder, people can call 564-5888 or go to the Council of Seniors website and or drop by the office, which is across from the post office on 5th Ave. and get more information.

**57:37**

So thank you very much for coming in Melhar.

And we will do this again periodically to keep people up to date.

Absolutely.

Thanks for having me.

OK, take care.