### ASK Friendship Society

The ASK Friendship Society engagement project supports the planning for new programs and designing of a new space at the Arbutus Shopping Mall redevelopment which is scheduled for completion in 2022. Project Management Volunteers, City of Vancouver, and Board Members will be invited to various planning events organized by the ASK Friendship Society to design the space and programs, share insights and ideas, while at the same time ensuring that the needs of the community are met. Their goal is to continue supporting people living with dementia and their caregivers as they transition to a new location.

This engagement fund money is being used for volunteer recognition, as these hardworking individuals are involved in the planning of the new programs. As a result of COVID-19, many of the planning events have been restructured to take place in a virtual setting through the use of a video-conference software system, such as Zoom.

The ASK Friendship Society innovation project aims to enhance current late stage dementia programs to better support their client population. Trained staff have the skills and knowledge to involve every individual at ASK in their specialized programs. However, staff have observed a decline in the cognitive and physical ability in the seniors that they serve, as well as an increase in the levels of caregiver stress and burnout. Exacerbated by COVID-19, these concerns, along with an increased rate of client referrals have made it challenging for staff to plan and deliver programs.

The funding will be used to enhance the current programs, or design new programs by purchasing some of the supplies and costs associated with specialized programs. Currently the ASK Friendship Centre is closed but clients are supported with social, check in phone calls, online programs and outreach visits. Once the centre is able to open, dementia program supplies will need to be purchased to supplement old and out of date supplies and add new items. With Covid-19, individuals will need their own items to reduce risk of spread. The challenge is finding a way to safely reopen with dementia clients. There will be a reduction in the number of clients who will be able to attend the day program each day. With this in mind a hybrid of in person and virtual/phone program and supports may be a solution.

People can get involved by donating to the ASK Friendship Society as we will not be able to accept volunteers during the pandemic.

For further information, please contact:

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