



We can't prevent aging.  
We can help you through it.

## Summer 2010 Newsletter

Luck is when preparedness meets opportunity. Planning ahead is another way of becoming lucky. For adult children with aging parents, meeting with a professional from the IRIS team can certainly help in preventing a crisis from occurring. Since 1981 we have been helping individuals and families to navigate and understand the health and social service system. Call us to discuss your situation. (416) 444-7598.

### **Is there an Elder Tsunami coming?**

These days, we so often hear healthcare professionals, financial advisors and business people refer to the increase in our elder population as a TSUNAMI. Yes, there will be a substantial increase in the over 85 age group and, at the same time, a reduction in the number of births but, there is no reason to be alarmed.

New innovations such as smarter cars that will help older drivers keep driving longer will emerge. Instead of losing the right to drive there will be ways of allowing seniors to remain on the road longer. Changes to existing society structures will also occur. Better ways of managing

an aging society will happen.

Let's look at the positive. People are living longer. They are healthier because of lifestyle changes, education and advancements in medical technology. Books are being written about 'positive aging', a new era to look forward to with enthusiasm. Opportunities to engage with communities to meet the demands of their aging population are springing up everywhere.

Older adults, collectively, have power to make change happen. They can become partners in decision-making about the way their health care is delivered, how housing needs are met and they can give input on new laws at all levels of government. They are becoming pro-active instead of reactive. Think of life as an adventure.

Remember the 60's when it was said, "Don't trust anybody over 30". Well, those who said it are the aging Boomers of today.

Boomers are aware that healthy living through proper diet and exercise keeps them in better physical shape and that certainly has an impact on their intellectual and

emotional health. They have more disposable income to purchase non-traditional forms of treatment such as massage therapy, chiropractic services, reflexology, reiki, naturopathy and acupuncture to name just a few. Often these treatments work better than medications.

Chronic conditions can spring up at any age. People with arthritis, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease have learned how to manage these conditions as they happen. They do not compartmentalize them as separate aspects of life.

Will the aging population be a drain on our health system? In reality, the biggest need for health services by an older person is in the last six months of their lives. Old doesn't mean "sick". When older adults are admitted to acute hospitals, there should be treatments in place that ensure they are sent home and not funneled into long term care beds. A change in the system that will allow older adults to remain active in the community would make a difference. Attitude is everything. Prevention is key to keeping everybody healthy.

## **A Life Plan**

Most of us have a Will, Powers of

Attorney for Property and Personal Care, but how many have a Life Plan? A Life Plan is very personal and focuses on non-financial goals such as health, personal fulfillment and family involvement without losing sight of the need to save and invest for a secure future. It is a map or guide to define your vision and is a written plan of goals and objectives on life.

When preparing your Life Plan, look at short, middle and long term goals. Make notes of past events that helped shape your life. Then develop a Mission Statement. Look at your life, career, family, health and leisure. The future belongs to those who believe in the power of their dreams. Once you have put a Life Plan together you need to revisit it every three to five years to update it as your life changes. It helps to define where you are and where you want to be.

*"Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards". Kierkegaard*

*We look forward to your feedback. If you have any questions or would like to comment on any of these articles, please feel free to do so by emailing: [info@irisforseniors.com](mailto:info@irisforseniors.com)*