

Senior centre snaps up provincial award

By Joe Rogers
Staff Reporter

Trying to sum up the atmosphere with a picture at Charleswood Senior Centre was a challenging task.

Say cheese.

"Do you want food, do you want sex, do you want both?" an elderly woman joked to the subject in the picture.

It got everyone laughing and captured the friendly and jovial environment at Charleswood Senior Centre as they hosted their first Christmas table sale.

It's just one of the many initiatives the centre hosts and for their diversity of programs and resources for seniors they have been recognized with a provincial award from the Manitoba Council on Aging.

Joanne Grusko, the executive director, said they were pleased to receive the award.

"We were pretty excited," said Grusko, adding they didn't even know they were nominated.

"But everyone is being recognized for the great job we're doing."

Grusko said since the centre's inception in 1999, the membership

base has expanded from six to 345.

She credits the centre's success to the range of programs such as fitness, crafts and education, including computer classes and an ongoing series of lectures from a University of Winnipeg history professor on "The Birth of Islam."

But Grusko said they are not planning to sit on their laurels.

She said only five per cent of seniors in the area are using the centre, so they are embarking on a survey to try and reach those people and develop programs to cater for everyone and find solutions to obstacles like a lack of transport.

Roy Botham, president of the centre, said they are also trying to attract more men.

"Most of the seniors here are women," he said.

"We're focusing on getting more men out to fitness classes - seniors' style," he said with a smile.

He was also pleased to receive an award that that recognized the organization and

contribution of the members, directors, staff and 95 volunteers.

He said they've enjoyed strong support from the community and Coun. Bill Clement (Charleswood-Tuxedo) to secure a second site in the old municipal building at 5006 Roblin Blvd. on a 25-year lease at \$1 per year.

The Manitoba Council on Aging awards seek to salute outstanding individuals and organizations for their efforts on behalf of seniors.



Photo by Joe Rogers

Charleswood Senior Centre volunteer Arline Botham.

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