

The 2019 AGM

MUNPA held its 2019 AGM at the Fluvarium on Thursday, June 6th. Organized into two parts, the morning sessions focused on a single theme, *Keeping Healthy with Diet and Exercise*. Heidi Murphy, dietitian with Loblaw's Dominion supermarkets, guided members through Health Canada's new food guide (<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>), showing how the 2019 Food Guide differs from the 2007 guide, as well as earlier iterations. The 2007 guide stressed eating from four food groups, scaling portions to gender and age, and the importance of regular activity. In contrast, the theme for the 2019 food guide is eating and living well, more loosely defined. According to the new food guide, "healthy eating is more important than the foods you eat." The key is a diet that high in fiber, vitamins and minerals, getting a larger share of proteins from plants and particularly whole grains instead of meat or poultry. Explaining how the new food guide is a work in progress – successive elaborations will expand on it – Murphy showed how to incorporate plant-based proteins and healthy fats into meals and snacks. However, no need to summarize. You can download Heidi Murphy's presentation from the MUNPA website (<https://www.mun.ca/munpa/about/agm/>) and see for yourself.

After the break, Dr. Jeannette Byrne, from MUN's School of Human Kinetics and Recreation talked on *Healthy Aging Through Physical Activity*. Dr. Byrne argued that how we age depends not only on our genetic inheritance, but also, where we live, who we are, our access to health care, and "health behaviour." The last – under our control – depends on physical activity; eating, smoking and drinking; prescribed medications; and visits to physicians. Physical activity is important because it lowers the incidence of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and type 2 diabetes, as well as the incidence of colon and breast cancer. Exercise also improves mood, cognitive function, and strength, balance, and flexibility. Her message – that physical activity improves wellbeing – is, as Dr. Byrne pointed out, is not new: Hippocrates said it in 350 BC, Edward Stanley in 1870, and Kenneth Cooper in 1960. According to Cooper, "we do not stop exercising because we grow old." Rather "we grow old because we stop exercising.

Addressing the question of how much, and what, Dr. Byrne argued that we should be engaging moderate to vigorous exercise – i.e. activities that cause us to sweat or be out of breath for a minimum of 150 minutes per week in periods of at least ten minutes. If possible, these should combine aerobics strength and balance exercises. However, suggesting that exercise is a "magic pill" that too many of avoid taking, Dr. Byrne recognized that there were barriers to exercise, and suggested ways that they might be overcome.

Dr. Byrne's message is one that members of the Health and Aging Group and people who have attended previous AGMs, have heard before. You can download her presentation from the MUNPA website, (see

[\(https://www.mun.ca/munpa/about/agm/\)](https://www.mun.ca/munpa/about/agm/). If you want to examine it in greater detail.

The business meeting took place in the afternoon. Jane Foltz, reported on what she and the board had been doing in the previous year. Highlights included our move to the Signal Hill Campus, our participation in the Open House organized in late September, and our own opening event, in October. Jane also noted, the sudden and unexpected death of our office assistant, Gwyn Barrowman. You can download Jane's report, as well as other committee reports by clicking on the link at the bottom of the AGM page on our website. The meeting concluded with the election of a new board of directors and, as per usual practice, a members' forum. The new board of directors is

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