

# Why Every Retired Educator Should Join the B.C.R.T.A.

Membership in the B.C. Retired Teachers' Association is important for all retired educators.

The mission of the BCRTA is to maintain and enhance the quality of life of its members and that of other seniors. The goals of the BCRTA are to

- Promote the interests and safe guard the welfare of its members
- Provide information and advice to individual members and their beneficiaries regarding retirement programs and benefits
- Communicate to members regarding the activities of the Association and issues of common interest
- Promote excellence in education

Members have an Association to speak about their economic interest and concerns – the larger the membership the more effective the voice. Recent examples of advocacy activities include pension income splitting, the negotiation with the College of Teachers allowing retired teachers to keep their teaching certificates at no cost to them, and the development and presentation of pre and post retirement workshops.

Individual members make the BCRTA voice stronger on issues related to seniors' pension, health, housing, and social well being through affiliation with other senior organizations such as the

- Council of Senior Citizen Organizations (COSCO) of BC
- National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Organization (NCPSO)
- Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER/CART)
- BC Coalition of Health
- NIDUS - the Representation Agreement Centre of BC
- BC Retired Government Employees Union

Members of the BCRTA may join a local Branch of the Association to enjoy the activities and social relationships which are an important part of a healthy retirement.

All members belong to the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation. Through this affiliation, members contribute to worthwhile educational projects in their community, province, and abroad. Scholarships have been established in six major provincial universities to assist students in Faculty of Education programs.

The BCRTA provides services to members through its established committees. Members may bring forward their concerns to the following committees:

- a) The **Social Concerns Committee** keeps up to date with critical issues that impact the quality of life of members. This committee reviews issues related to the environment, estate planning, access to information, scams and fraud, and elder abuse, to name only a few.
- b) The **Health and Housing Committee** provides substantive information for BCRTA members and seniors on
  - The federal and provincial aspects of Medicare, Pharmacare, and housing for seniors, including public and private costs
  - The preparation of proactive responses to any changes that will impact the costs, and/or quality of care and the timeliness of care that seniors will receive
  - The development of a Quality of Life program to help seniors to remain as healthy and independent as possible as they age
- c) The **Heritage Committee** encourages the preservation of our educational heritage. It encourages Branches to document and retain the educational history of their area. Branches may apply for a grant to do this work.
- d) **Postscript** communicates with the members of the BCRTA. Members are welcome to advertise in this newsmagazine. As well, most Branches have their own newsletter or communication vehicle for keeping members informed.
- e) The **Membership Committee** encourages all persons eligible for membership to join the BCRTA and assists members in the formation and operation of Branches.
- f) The **Advocacy Committee** develops materials and strategies that inform members and encourage them to take proactive positions in support of issues affecting their well-being.
- g) The **Finance Committee** oversees the Association's income and expenditures, manages a cost-effective organization, and reviews the investment of the Association's monies.
- h) The **Pension and Benefits Committee** monitors the economic security of the membership and recommends policy affecting the Pension Plan, benefit and insurance programs.
- i) The **Excellence in Public Education Committee** recognizes outstanding educational practices within the BC K-12 system.

### **Professional Staff Support**

The BCRTA has employees available in the office of the Association five days per week. They can be contacted via email, local and toll free telephone numbers; they assist with information and guidance for the welfare of our members. The Association also maintains a website for members.

### **Additional Benefits for Active and Affiliate Member**

In addition to the above benefits, Active and Affiliate members are eligible to vote on issues at the Branch level, run for Branch Executive positions, run for a BCRTA Board of Directors positions, sit on Branch and Association committees, and become delegates to the BCRTA AGM.

BCRTA members engaged in BCRTA business at the request of the BCRTA, are eligible to claim documented expenses for travel, accommodation and meals. The Association has insurance that provides indemnity to a maximum of \$150,000 per person for BCRTA members while on official BCRTA business.

Life Membership is granted to an Active or Affiliate member who reaches the age of 85 years, and who has been a member for at least 10 years.

Spouses of deceased Active members may apply to become Active members.

### **Associate Members**

The spouse of an Active member may join the BCRTA as an Associate member.

Retired educators of independent schools may become Associate members.

### **Fees**

The membership fee is set by the delegates to the BCRTA AGM. The present fee is \$35.00. The Branches set their own fees.