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RETIREMENT MIRAMICHI

A Great Sense of Community

by Terri Cormier

As I glanced over the cover of a recent issue of *Silver and Gold*, a magazine popular with retirees in southern Ontario, my eye caught the headline: *Retirement: Searching for a Sense of Community*. "I'm going to take this home", I thought. "I want to read it."

I wanted to read it because, as Marketing and Client Services Manager for Retirement Miramichi for the past eight years, watching our community grow to near capacity with half of our tenants being with us for five years or more, I have come to know, with a certain amount of pride, that a great sense of community is our biggest asset.

What I was curious about, however, was just how important is a sense of community to today's retirees, many of whom are coming from a large impersonal world where you live beside somebody for years and don't know their name.

Miramichi, New Brunswick is known far and wide for its hospitality; as a native Miramichier, that I already knew. Our local paper regularly prints letters from people who have passed through; maybe they were lost, maybe they had a flat tire, maybe they were

visiting, or maybe they moved to Retirement Miramichi. All of them are pleasantly surprised to find that old-time friendliness, hospitality and helpfulness are not totally obsolete in today's rushed world. Not here, anyway. Even the teenagers smile and say hello when you pass them on the downtown streets.

Recently, as I was showing and telling some visiting clients from Ontario about our retirement community, we were joined by a couple of tenants who were, well, being friendly. "I think the nicest thing about this place is that there is a real sense of community", one tenant said.

"Our community is contained, so your neighbours and the people on the next block are retirees too. Everybody is in the same phase of their lives, so we share similar interests and concerns. Eighty percent of us are from somewhere outside Miramichi, so we all share that. And now that we're retired, we have time. Time to be part of a community."

"Yes," I mused, having my own thoughts validated by the tenant's comment. "I'm becoming quite convinced of that too.." Before I could finish my thought, the other tenant piped up: "It's in everybody's interest to look out for each other, but they're not on your doorstep every morning with the coffee cup. You can be as involved or uninvolved as you like!

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