

At This Age group turns experience into radio play

Manfred Harter's song that inspired the play is a tribute to Canada and its citizens

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Submitted

Members of the At This Age group have recently produced a radio play.

Pack Your Bags and Go: Immigration to Canada is written by a group of seniors talking together around a table. They don't appear

to have much in common, but they are taking part in a project that shares their life experiences of coming to Canada.

The play was inspired by Manfred Harter's song, *Canada From Coast to Coast*. The lyrics and the melody were written in 1995, and are a tribute to Canada and

its citizens. The song reflects the joys and difficulties of integrating into the Canadian society and the subsequent rewards of doing so.

Pack Your Bags and Go has been written by members of At This Age, which meets once a week at the Schubert Centre in Vernon, B.C. The play includes guests from Immigration Services Canada and children from Okanagan Landing Elementary School.

The group members are Florence, Margaret, Pat, Barbara, Cara, Dalia, Heidi, Mila and Manfred. Their ages range from 65 to 87 years old. The group has been meeting for the last two years and is self-led. And although the group members have become very close to each other, they are always open to new participants.

They are part of a program designed in the late '90s as a new approach to dementia on-set delay and dementia care. The program has been developed by the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care, established 10 years ago in Vancouver by Dr. Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka. Dalia conducts workshops around the world for healthcare providers to show how intellectual, cultural and physical activities can change the perception of dementia.

The participants in this group are seniors of healthy cognition who understand the benefits of the creative arts that can lead to a better quality of life. The seniors are encouraged to venture into uncharted territories to try various modes of artistic expression.

One of the goals of this project was to create an educational tool to be presented and distributed in the school system across Canada.

This radio play is a brief glimpse into the uprooting, the transition and the re-rooting



Vernon musician Manfred Harter, a member of the At This Age group, explains his song that inspired the group's recently produced play, *Pack Your Bags and Go: Immigration to Canada*.

phases immigrants go through. The main goal was to allow the participants to express their thoughts while providing an inspiring project the group could work on together.

This is a self-produced play by the At This Age group. Its participants were involved in every step from writing the text, composing the music, interviewing other immigrants, recording, reviewing, selecting and editing materials. Mineo Tanaka was instrumental in editing the play and the sound effects.

If you are looking for a group which focuses on intellectual and on creative expression activities, please contact us at dr.daliagt@gmail.com

We will resume our meetings on May 25, 2015 and break away for the summer months of July and August with a new start in September, 2015. The exact day will be posted on the society's Facebook Page and website at www.facebook.com/TheSocietyForTheArtsInDementiaCare and www.cecd-society.org

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