

Local author dispels retirement myths with new book

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EMC Entertainment — Nepean resident Julie Chahal and Linda Lucas of Kanata are launching *Happily Retired*, a guide on how to take full advantage of the freedom retirement offers, on May 27 with the Ottawa Public Library.

"The old fashioned way was that people worked until they weren't able and were worn out, spending their last years in a rocking chair," explained Ms. Chahal. "Times have changed because people retire younger, especially baby boomers who always did things differently. We re-invented life as went along the way in the '60s and '70s and now we're reinventing retirement because we are healthy, active, and affluent despite the economy."

As a retired government employee, she said the idea for the book came during discussions with Ms. Lucas about her decision to be newly retired and wondering if it was the right choice.

"We now have a lot of time and feel we have fulfilled our responsibility," said Ms. Chahal.

"Suddenly, we are on our own with society and biology no longer dictating what we should do. It's freedom and it's a cause for celebration, but it is also a challenge. I'm not going to spend my time knitting for the next 20 years and after all those years of hard work, some of us have forgotten

how to have fun. We need to be reawakened."

Through comical sketches, planning sheets, diagrams, and other useful tools, the book draws upon both authors' knowledge as well as other sources on retirement. There is also a psychologist theory used to explain happiness equating to pleasure, engagement, and then meaning.

Ms. Chahal said new retirees often have fears of feeling useless once they are no longer working and need to find other activities to supplement the satisfaction derived from work, including volunteering or hobbies.

"Humans need to keep growing, learning, and using their skills to feel useful and our jobs give us that," she explained. "Loosing the engagement the job gives you is disorientating and some dread retirement in fear of becoming bored and lazy."

Other ideas to keep busy include going back to school, helping with the care of grandchildren or getting back into the work force in other ways such as building a new business as Ms. Chahal has done.

"It used to be about earning for a living and within a time constraint and now those priorities have flipped," she said. "We're exploring what we do to call the shots and there are a range of ideas and strategies for finding out what you want to do."

The concept of feeling 'washed out' by retirees is

felt by many who still want to remain valuable contributors to society. Instead dwelling on the negatives of retirement, *Happily Retired* provides advice on how to embrace a new lifestyle that is rewarding and fulfilling. As well, by volunteering and being active members of the community, retirees become role models for the younger generations in providing wisdom and guidance from their experiences.

"It's a wonderful opportunity because we can model now how to live free," explained Ms. Chahal. "We don't have a boss to answer to; we have discretionary time and are ready to take on causes."

Another aspect of retirement that calls for consideration is financial planning, however she said they chose to focus on the concept of happiness because there are not many books about the subject. The, process she said, has been a reflection on her own experience and helped to improve it.

"It's been really engaging and great to put the whole book together," said Ms. Chahal.

"By organizing, thinking, and pulling in examples it cleared up concepts for me and helped me to become really clear and find out problems."

The duo also plans on offering retirement workshops covering various topics and may publish another book in the future. For retirees living in Ottawa, she said there



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Nepeanite Julie Chahal recently published *Happily Retired* with co-author Linda Lucas, a guide to exploring what to do with the newfound freedom in retirement.

are great advantages to living in Canada's capital.

"Nepean/Ottawa is special because there are a lot of retirees who are highly educated and have a high level of social consciousness," Ms. Chahal explained. "Seniors here are well po-

sitioned to be role models and make a difference in the world because there are so many opportunities, especially for social work and volunteering."

Happily Retired is available at all local bookstores throughout Ottawa and will

soon be ready for purchase online through Chapters. The book launch begins at 7 p.m. in the Chambers at Ben Franklin Place, 101 Centrepointe Cres.

For more information, please visit www.happily-retired.com.

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