



County of Simcoe
1110 Highway 26,
Midhurst, ON
L0L 1X0

Main Line 705-726-9300
Toll Free 1-866-893-9300
Fax 705-792-5743
simcoe.ca

MINUTES

SUBJECT: Age-Friendly Advisory Committee

MEETING DATE: February 22, 2022 **TIME:** 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

CHAIR: Jane Sinclair, General Manager, Health & Emergency Services

ATTENDANCE:

County Councilor Anita Dubeau, Deputy Mayor, Town of Penetanguishene
County Councilor Sandie Macdonald, Mayor, Town of Innisfil
Åsa Klint Piggott, Manager, Performance, Quality & Development, County of Simcoe
Barbara Knechtel, Midland Senior Council
Catherine O'Connor, Hearing Care Counsellor
Christina Strong, Communications Coordinator, Independent Living Services Simcoe County
Deborah Dion-Smith, Midland Seniors Council
Jacqueline Berchtold, Project Coordinator, County of Simcoe
Jim Gough, Seniors' Representative
Johan Chen, Planning Officer, Entité 4
Judy Contin, Executive Director, Askennonnia Senior Centre
Katelyn Johns, Legislative Coordinator, County of Simcoe
Kim Woodland, Matthews House Hospice
Margaret Adolphe, Chair Accessibility Committee of Collingwood
Michele Gouette, Seniors Representative
Michelle Pauzé, Director Seniors Services, County of Simcoe
Sherry Teeter, Community Connection/211 Central East Ontario
Tracy Hill, Age-Friendly Project Lead, County of Simcoe

REGETS:

Andrea Roylance, Matthews House Hospice
Annick Brown, Director of Family Services, La Clé
Arfona Zwiers, Director, Social and Affordable Housing, County of Simcoe
Carly Murphy, Essa Township
Cate Root, Tay Township Representative
Chris Greer, Tiny Township Senior Advisory Committee
Dawn Hipwell, Director, Procurement, Fleet & Property County of Simcoe
Greg Bishop, Director, Social and Community Housing, County of Simcoe
Heather Hollingshead, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario (SCIO)
Jim Gough, Seniors' Representative
Kari Warnar, Community Safety and Wellbeing, Avail Consulting
Kelley Swift Jones, County of Simcoe Museum
Kris Houston, Project Champion, Project LifeSaver
Laura Lynn Borassa, Alzheimer's Society
Linda Flemington, Collingwood
Lori Crossan, Collingwood Public Library



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Lucia Ricardo, Seniors Advisory Committee and CNIB Simcoe Muskoka
 Lynne Trotechaud, Manager of Collaborations and Partnerships, United Way Greater Simcoe Muskoka
 Maggie Off, Community Recreation Coordinator, Seniors Advisory Committee, Township of Tiny
 Mary Warnock, Chair Seniors Advisory Committee, Tay Township
 Maria Borczyk, Matthews House Hospice
 Marie Hartman, South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre
 Marlene de Jesus, Helping Hands Orillia
 Melissa Mei, LHINS
 Merideth Morrison, Director, Performance, Quality & Development, County of Simcoe
 Nancy Esson, Right At Home Canada
 Ruth McArthur, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
 Sharon Youell, County of Simcoe
 Sandra Easson Bruno, Director North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services Program
 Sarah Orr-Shaw, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
 Susan Plewes, LHINS
 Tami Tarini, Independent Living Services
 Tom Johnston, Seniors for Seniors


RECORDER: Catherine Ivanyshyn, Administrative Assistant, County of Simcoe

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>All were welcomed to the meeting.</p>	
<p>2.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA</p> <p>The Agenda is approved as presented by Councilor Anita Dubeau and seconded by Kimberly Woodland.</p>	
<p>3.0 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES (December 14, 2022)</p> <p>The Minutes are approved by Margaret Adolphe and seconded by Christina Strong as presented.</p>	
<p>4.0 Presentation: Reducing Senior Isolation through Social Prescribing Project - Survey Results</p> <p>Sherry Teeter, Community Connection/211 Central East Ontario</p> <div data-bbox="321 1717 370 1780" style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Age Friendly Presentation - Feb :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Connection, a non-profit organization in Collingwood, is leading a 5-year project, funded in part from 	<p>Simcoe County will follow up with ideas on how to create a central area for seniors to access community calendar/s and resources.</p>



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ITEM	ACTION
<p>the Government of Canada’s New Horizons for Seniors Program. The project is guided by a dynamic, cross-sector leadership table of community members and service providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In total, 810 surveys were completed. 701 were completed over the internet using a web-link and 109 were completed over the telephone or in hard copies. • Key findings from the survey data will help inform and guide the project priorities over the next few years. • Seniors Public Activity Calendars - Groups, like Simcoe County Alliance, struggle with communicating activity calendars with the public where seniors can go to one spot and access activity calendars for their areas (For example, GIS Mapping). The challenge is the maintenance and owner of the collective calendars. • Focus groups will be developed for planning. Anyone who would like to volunteer on a focus group, please contact: Sherry Teeter, Project Lead, Reducing Senior Isolation Community Connection/211 Central East Ontario 705-444-0040 ext. 158, email: steeter@communityconnection.ca 	
<p>5.0 Presentation: Seniors and Employment Initiatives Deborah Dion-Smith, Midland Seniors Council, Barbara Knechtel,, Midland Seniors Council</p>  <p>Midland Seniors Council Presentator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace initiatives where older adults can obtain meaningful work. • Five-year Simcoe County Age-Friendly Initiative focus. • Look at Policy Development for Workplaces to help with recruitment, hiring practices and advertising to attract older adults. • Look at how Job descriptions are written to attract older adults. 	



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ITEM	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand on the Age-Friendly Business Guide and Award Program increases awareness of the County's aging population and helps businesses or organizations evaluate their business environment and service delivery. This can be revised and expanded to include age-friendly employers. 	
<p>6.0 Age-Friendly Future Planning – Tracy Hill, Age-Friendly Project Lead</p> <p> Simcoe County Age-Friendly next st</p> <p>County Age-Friendly five-year Initiative ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who want to age in place safely in their homes, look at how to provide education on maintaining current living environment, how to access accessible renovations, accessible devices and where to find these resources. Work with developers and planners to build homes and apartments with an accessible components. The County of Simcoe has incorporated municipal planning into the Age-Friendly planning framework 2018-2023 - Simcoe County Positive Aging Strategy: Older Adults Strengthening Our Communities. https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/ltc/age-friendly Review seniors programs offered are available in the area. For example, the seniors dental program was difficult to access for many seniors in our area due to the lack of dentists who were willing to access the program. The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit has a dental program available for seniors. Rental subsidy access for low income seniors living in higher rental buildings. Education and/or funding on fire safety and making homes fire safe for seniors living on their own in older homes. Will take this to our Emergency Management Department where they've focused on emergency planning around seniors. This will also be brought to the Joint Emergency Services Administration Group (JESAG). JESAG is a partnership of the County of Simcoe, Municipal Fire Services, Municipal Police Services, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Simcoe County Paramedic Services. 	<p>Will follow up with County Planning Dept. on Seniors Housing.</p> <p>Emergency Management Department – emergency planning around seniors. Will bring to the Joint Emergency Services Administration Group (JESAG).</p>

ITEM	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed how to communication to seniors on activities in their area. The County of Simcoe’s Age-Friendly Resources pages have extensive lists of various helpful resources located across member municipalities, as well as the provincial and federal government links. https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/ltc/age-friendly/age-friendly-resources It was recommended to print the lists of these resources and have available for seniors at local libraries. Outdoor spaces for those with diminished vision, hearing, mobility and dementia, and communication to seniors about these spaces. Simcoe planners meet with local planners regularly and can look at sharing these items with the groups. 	
<p>7.0 WHAT’S HAPPENING (local community initiatives) – Roundtable</p> <p>A roundtable discussion took place regarding local community initiatives. A summary of the discussions are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Deputy Mayor Anita Dubeau, Council Representative</u> – The Town of Penetanguishene has passed their Age-Friendly plan as of February 21st. <u>Mayor Sandie Macdonald, Council Representative</u> – The Town of Innisfil will be returning to the seniors walking and exercise in-person program helping seniors reconnect and get outdoors. <u>Laura Lynn Borassa, Alzheimer’s Society</u> – A new program called “ConnectUs” is a digital engagement program designed for seniors. This program is in partnership with Georgian College and the Central Ontario Health Teams and focussed towards specialized populations engaging older adults in online/digital learning and improved digital literacy. This poster appended is intended agencies, like The Alzheimer’s Society, to refer their clients to these services. <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Connect Us_Service Provider Flyer.pdf</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Christina Strong, Public Awareness Coordinator, Independent Living Services, Barrie</u> – Independent Living 	



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<p>Services, Accessibility Resources and Connections (ARC) received \$16,000 from Ontario Health to help people purchase assisted devices. This needs to be spend by end of March 2022. The contact is Dan Leonard, Service Coordinator & Community Navigator. The link to this information - https://www.ilssimcoe.ca/programs/</p>	
<p>8.0 Closing Remarks</p>	
<p>9.0 Next Meeting: April 5th, 2022 (10:30 am – 12:00 noon)</p>	
<p>10.0 Adjournment: 2:30 PM</p>	



Age-Friendly Advisory Committee Meeting

Reducing Senior Isolation through Social Prescribing Project

Sherry Teeter, Project Lead

Feb. 22/22

Collective Impact Plan

- Table with a diverse group of community stakeholders

Major Work Streams

Linking isolated
seniors to
community
through Social
Prescribing -
HCP/Community

Volunteer
Database and
Website

Development
and
sustainability of
a Social Activity
Calendar



Older Adult (55+) Social Activity Survey Results

**Reducing Senior Isolation through
Social Prescribing Project**

October 2021

Project Background

Community Connection, a nonprofit organization in Collingwood, is leading a 5-year project, funded in part from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program. The project is guided by a dynamic, cross-sector leadership table of community members and service providers:

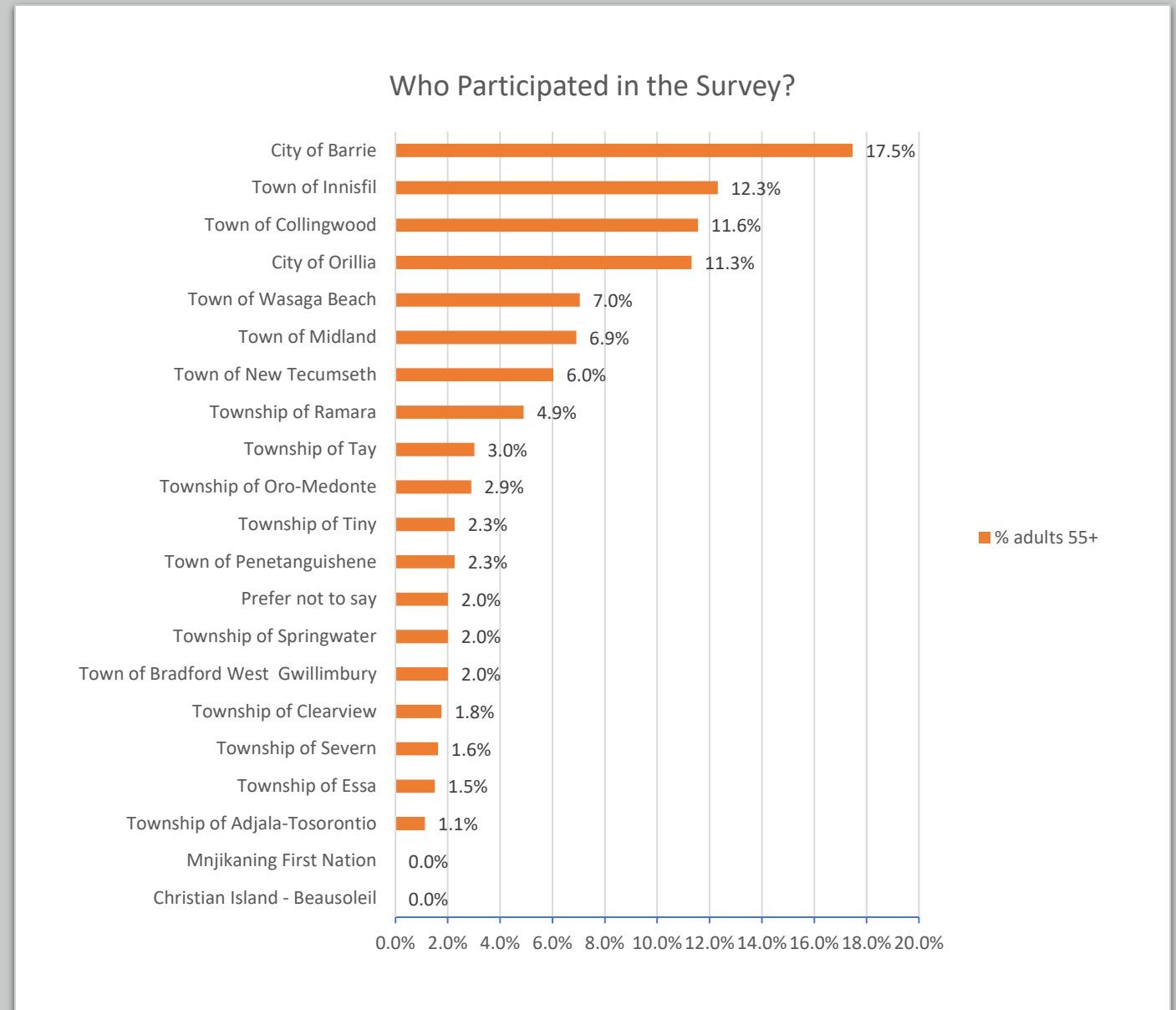
- Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director, Independent Living Services of Simcoe County (Chair)
- Andrea Abbott-Kokosin, Executive Director, Wendat Community Programs
- Brenda Jackson, Indigenous System's Coordinator & Interim Director, Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle
- Donald Carty, Citizen, Human Rights, Multicultural and Black Community Advocate
- Gerry Croteau, Executive Director, The Gilbert Centre, LGBTQ2S+ & Anti-Ageism Advocate
- Health Klein-Gebbinck, Executive Director, South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre
- Jenn Rae, Executive Director, Innisfil Community Foundation, Town of Innisfil
- Jessica Gourlie, Recreation Programmer, City of Barrie
- Karie Warnie, Consultant, Simcoe County Coordinated Access System (Homelessness)
- Pamela Hillier, Executive Director, Community Connection (Ex officio)
- Sandra Easson-Brunno, Director, North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services Program
- Sarah Grace Bebenek, Project Manager, South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team
- Sylvia Mueller, Coordinator, Information Barrie, Barrie Public Library
- Tara Bone, Program Coordinator, Red Cross Simcoe Muskoka, Telephone Assurance & Friendly Visiting

Survey Introduction

- An estimated 16% of adults 55+ years of age living in Simcoe County experience social isolation.
- Simcoe County is also experiencing rapid aging: According to Statistics Canada (2016) 18% of the population in Simcoe County is 65+ years of age, with predicted ongoing growth. This is higher than the provincial population (16.7%) and the national population (16.9%).
- Our initial plan was to conduct in-person focus groups to gather senior voices. Due to COVID, the approach changed, and a 30-question survey was instead distributed to adults 55+ years of age living across Simcoe County. This survey allowed us to gather the 'Voice of the Senior' and to provide valuable project feedback. The survey was dispersed through local newspapers, libraries, and community organizations across Simcoe County, and was available for completion during the month of September.
- Methods for survey completion were via internet, telephone, or paper copy. Participants could also answer the survey through their direct service provider.
- In total, **810 surveys were completed**. 701 were completed over the internet using a web-link and 109 were completed over the telephone or in hard copies.
- **Key findings from the survey data will help inform and guide the project priorities over the next few years.**

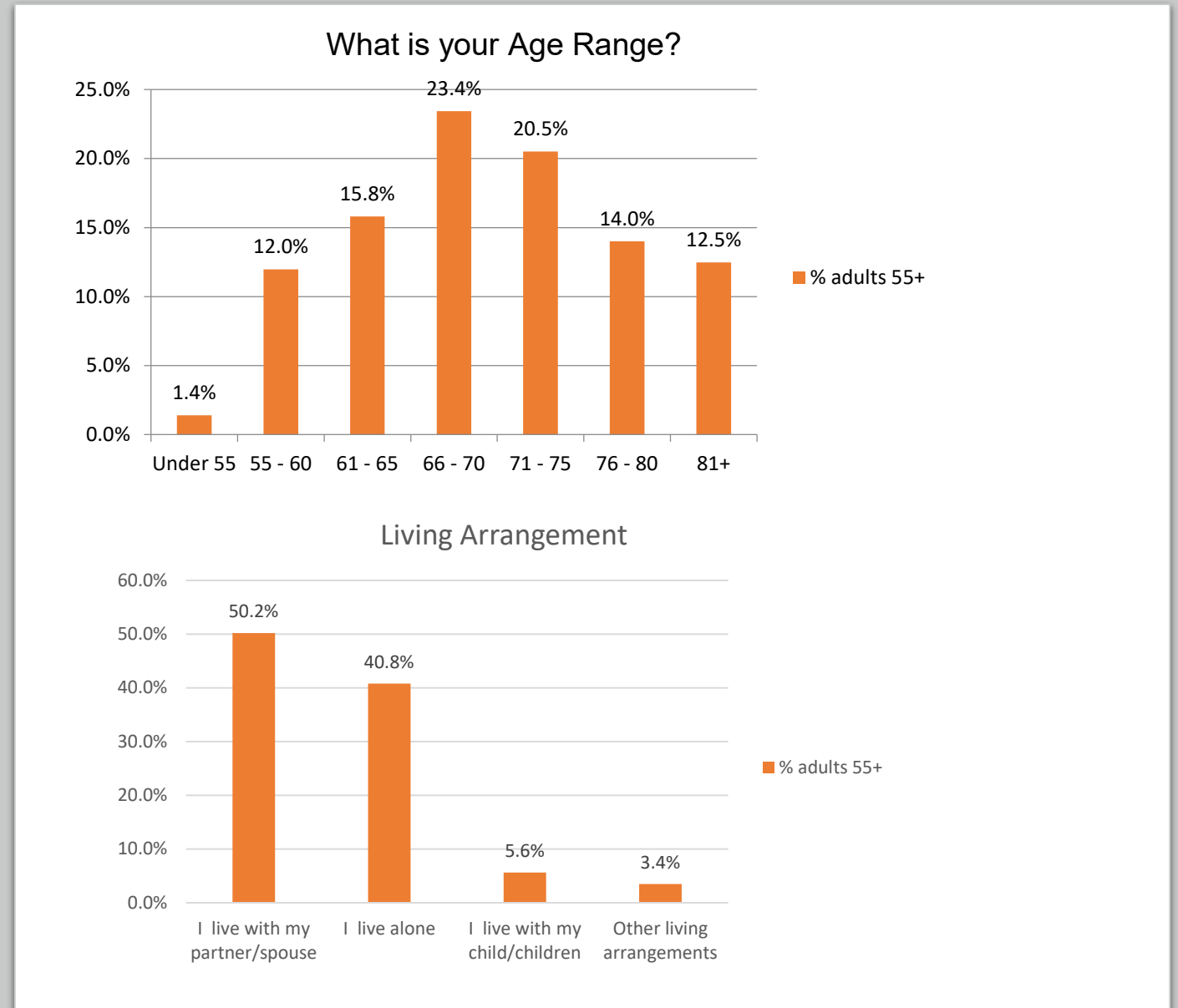
Who Participated in the Survey?

- Most respondents lived in **Barrie, Innisfil, Collingwood, Orillia, Wasaga Beach, and Midland.**
- The survey results are missing representation from **Mnjikaning First Nation** (Chippewas of Rama) and **Beausoleil First Nation.**
- 2.0% of those who participated identified as **Francophone.**
- 0.8% of participants identified as **2SLGBTQ+**
- 2.0% self-identified as **First Nations/Métis/Inuit**
- 91.5% of respondents described themselves as **White.**



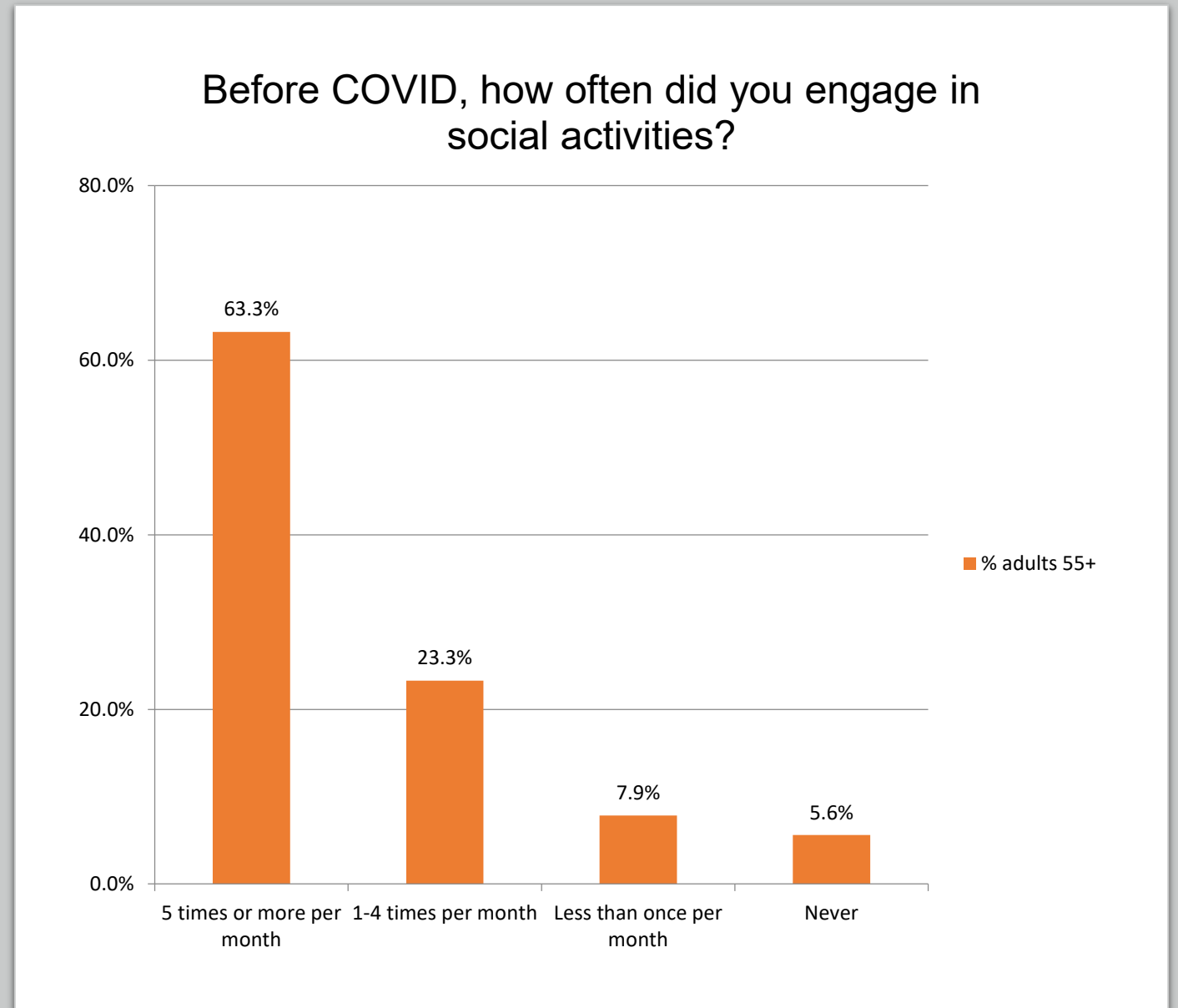
Who Participated in the Survey?

- Most adults lived with their **partner/spouse (50.2%)** or **lived alone (40.8%)**.
- Most were **66-70 years of age (23.4%)** or **71-75 years of age (20.5%)**.
- More than three-quarters of survey participants identified as **female (76.9%)**.
- **Almost half (49.3%) would be interested in participating in a focus group** to discuss solutions to increase social engagement for older adults.




Social Engagement Pre-COVID

- Before COVID-19, 63.3% of respondents had participated in social activities (i.e. visit a friend, go to a club or church, volunteer, cultural activities, etc.) ≥ 5 times/month.
- Only 5.6% of survey respondents did not participate in any social activities prior to COVID.





Confidence Returning to Social Activities



Those who were socially active before COVID were asked “How confident do you feel you will return to your social activities when it is safe to do so?”

- **27.0% were not too confident or not confident at all** that they would return.

Why Have Older Adults Lost their Confidence to Return to Social Activities?

When it came to re-engaging in social activities, what most affected their confidence? Participants most commonly reported:

- Fear of unvaccinated individuals;
- Fear of contracting COVID/variants of concern;
- That their physical limitations (i.e., chronic illness, disability) would increase their risk of COVID;
- Increased social anxiety as a result of isolation due to COVID.

Why Have Older Adults Lost their Confidence to Return to Social Activities?

Some individuals had lost hope:

“Don't see anything ahead of me. I am a social person and like doing things because of my age and don't have a partner anymore, that is all change. Have nothing to look forward to. My whole life has changed.”

Others were isolated by their chronic health condition(s):

“...My family fears that they will infect me, like we are all walking biohazards. Contact has been limited, and awkward, in person because of this. Though we make extra effort to stay connected, sometimes it's not satisfying due to the fear undercurrent eroding harmonious social connection and conversation.”

Broken social connections, and deteriorations in physical and mental health also played a role:

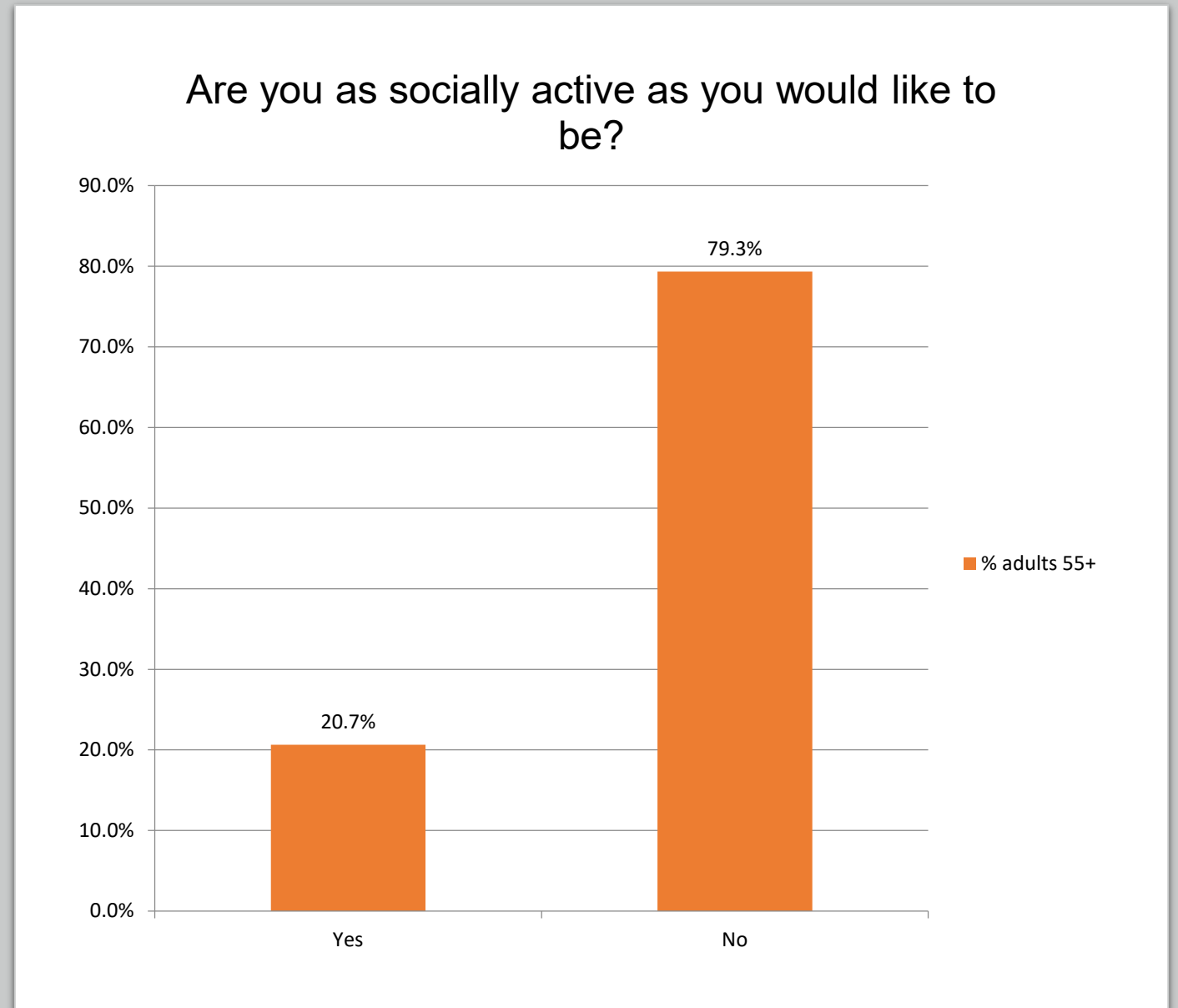
“Some of the social connections have been broken; my health has deteriorated somewhat”

266 responded to,
 Explain why you are not
 confident to return to
 your social activities
 when it is safe to do
 so.....

COMMENT THEMES		
Agoraphobia		2
Social anxiety/lack of confidence as a result of COVID & isolation		29
Physical limitations increase risk(e.g. chronic illness, disability)		32
Prefer to be alone/lost interest in being socially active/busy with other commitments		8
Friends and family have passed away and/or moved		2
Lack of knowledge re: activities/program and how to get connected		8
Affordability of programming /services		2
Discontinued / Changed programs and participants		10
Fear of contracting COVID / spreading to loved ones		89
Fear of unvaccinated individuals		38
Fear that organizations and people are not following COVID protocols		20
Government restrictions are a barrier (e.g. wearing masks, vaccine passport		10
Waiting / interested in activities starting up again		15

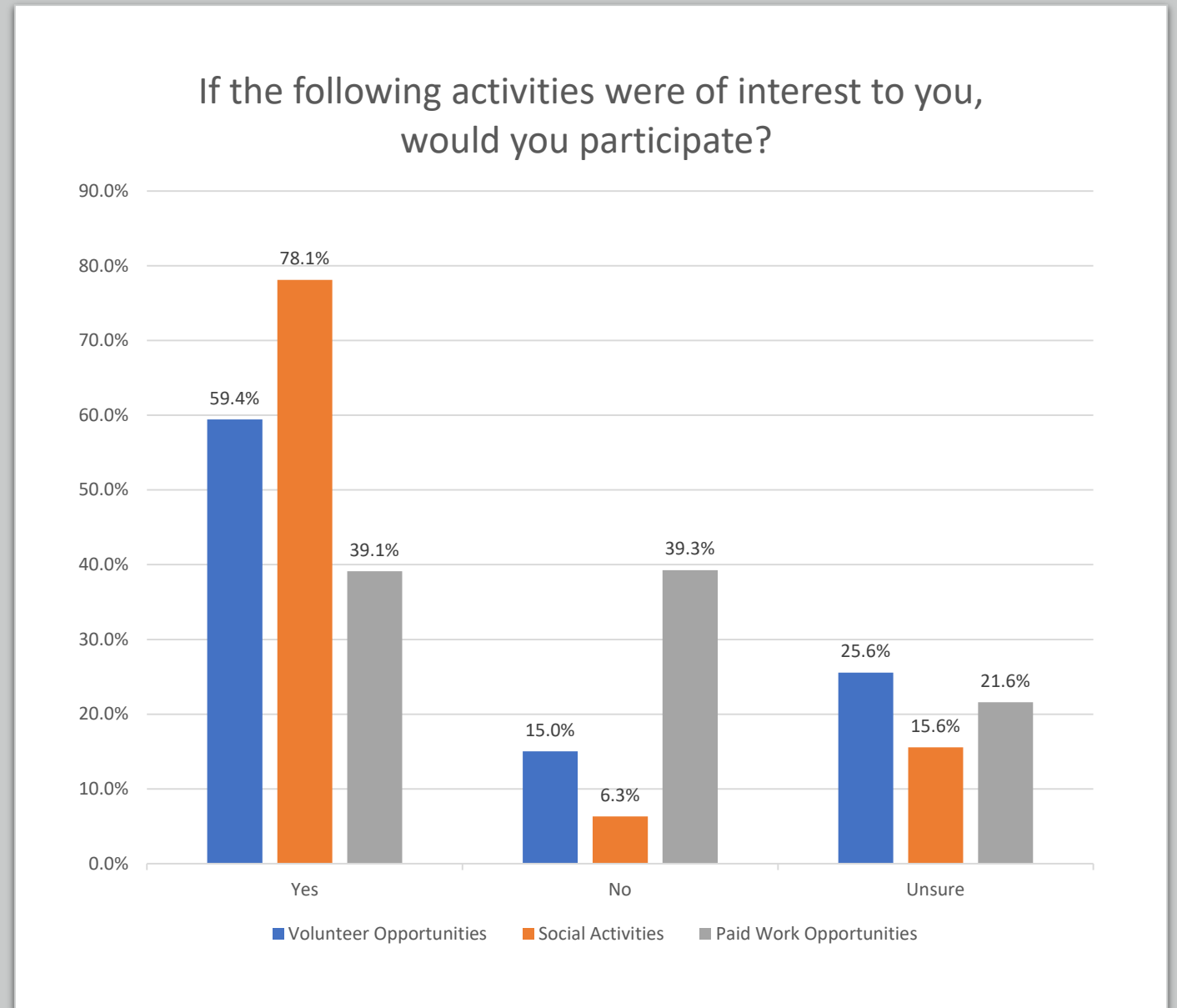
Support for Increasing Access to Social Activities

- Not surprisingly, 79.3% of the adults surveyed were not as socially active as they would like



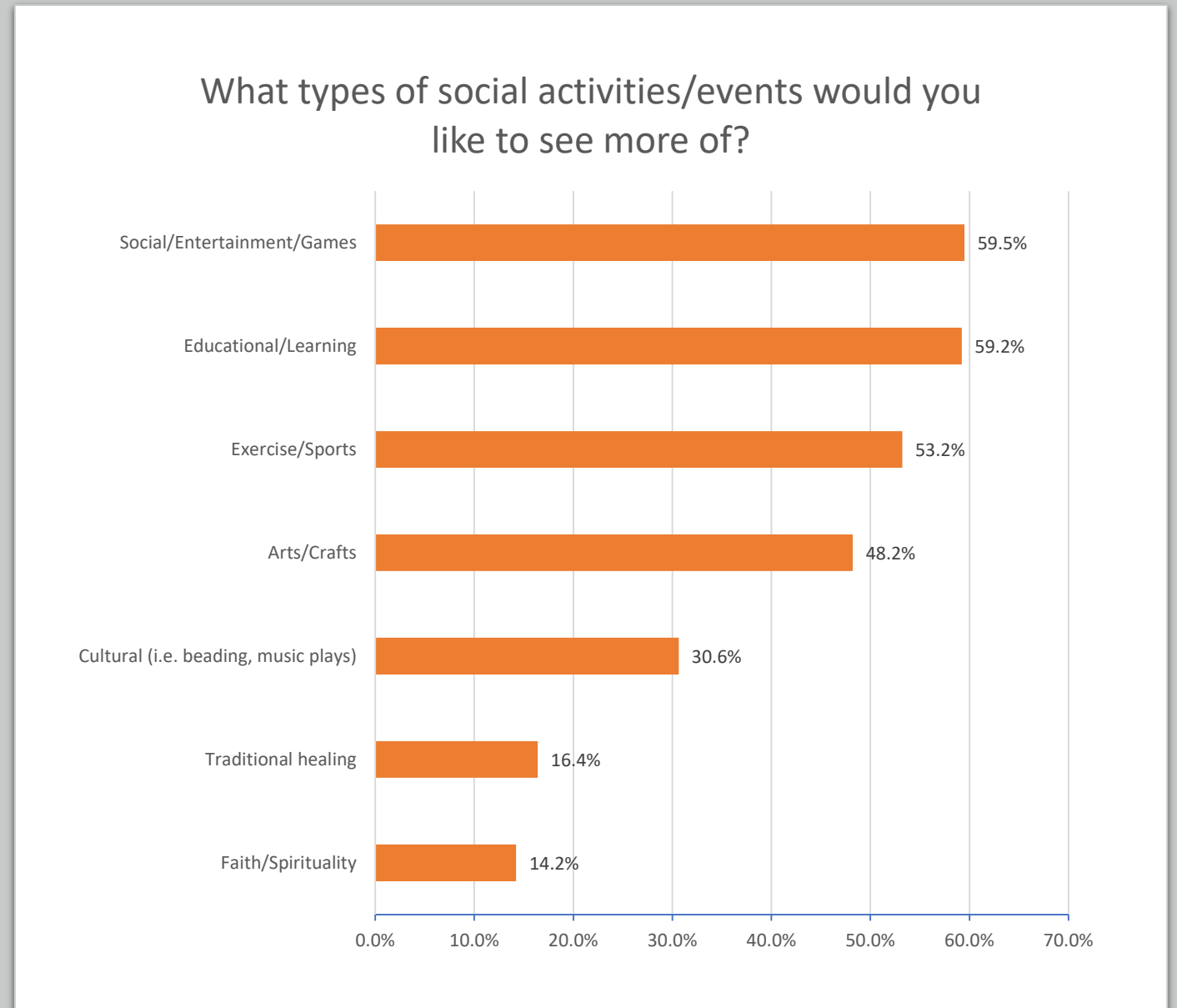
What Activities were of Interest?

- Most adults were interested in participating in social activities (78.1%) and volunteer opportunities (59.4%).



What Type of Social Activities?

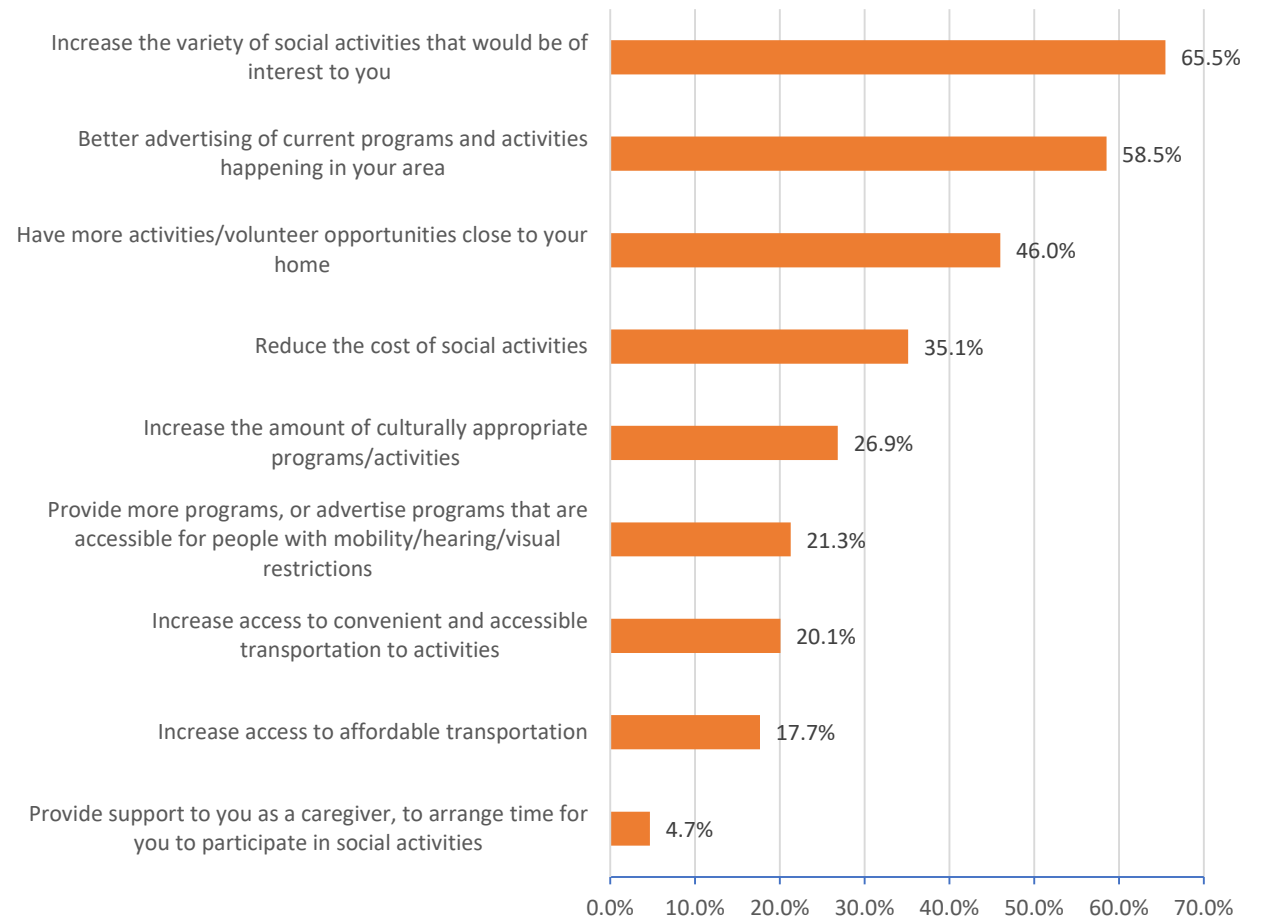
- Most survey respondents wanted to see more opportunities for **social/entertainment/games (59.5%)**, **education/learning (59.2%)**, and **exercise/sports (53.2%)**.



How Can the Community Help?

- When asked how the community could help them become more socially active, the most common responses were to **increase the variety of social activities (65.5%)** and to provide **better advertising of current programs and activities (58.5%)**

How Could The Community Help You Become More Socially Active?

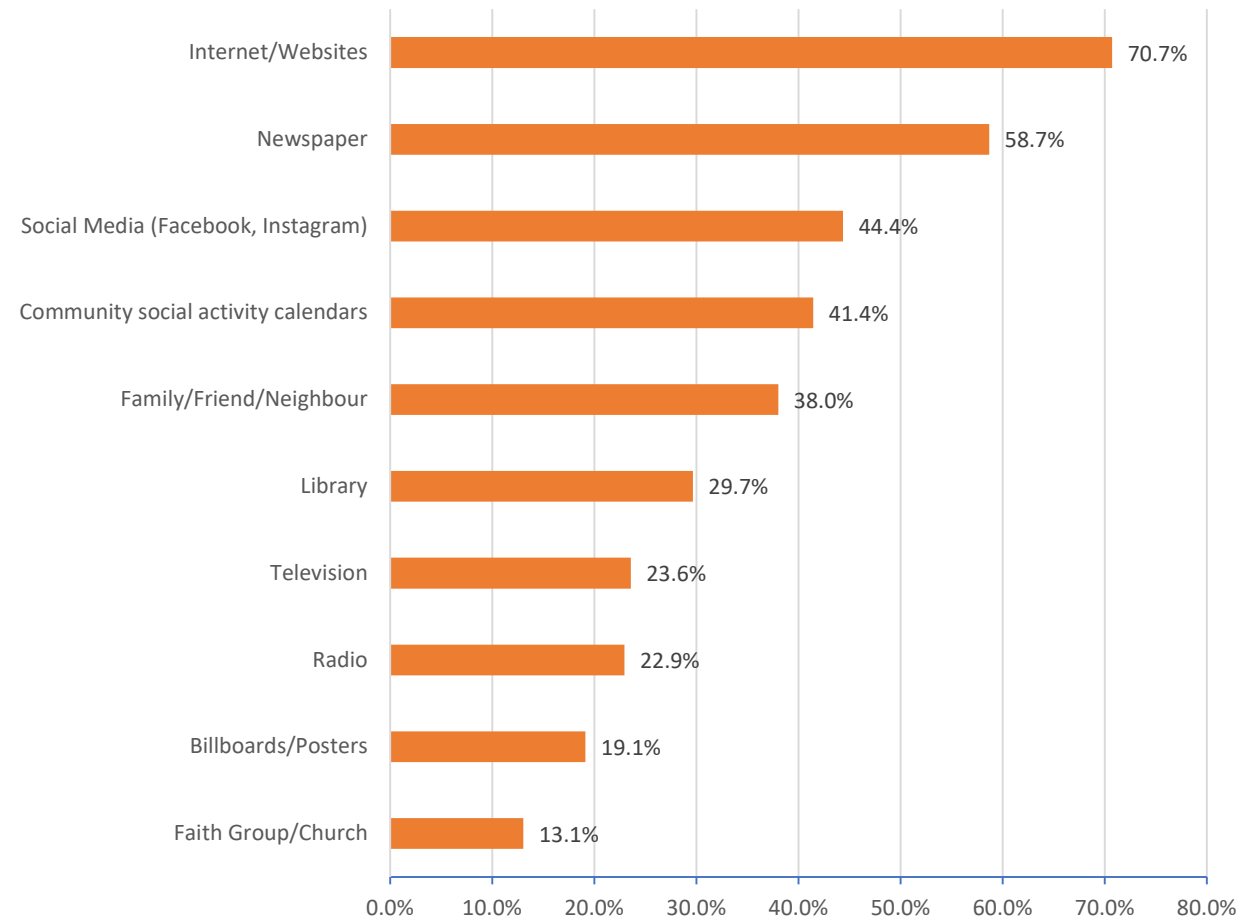


Best Way to Get Information?

- Internet/websites (70.7%);
- Newspaper (58.7%);
- Social media (44.4%);
- Community social activity calendars (41.4%).

- Similarly, most participants had heard about the Community Connection survey through the newspaper (43.0%), and online (38.6%).

Best Way to Get Information About Activities and Programs in Your Area?



Sense of Belonging

- Most adults 55+ felt a sense of belonging with their **families** (79.5%) and **friends** (69.5%).
- Adults 55+ were least likely to feel a sense of belonging with the **health care system** (39.7%) and within their **community** (27.3%)
- In the comments section, participants expressed how social isolation and sense of belonging affected them. The most common themes are as follows:
 - **COVID-related closures causing isolation.**
 - **Difficulty finding out about programs, particularly for those new to the community. Need for a single source and/or increased outreach.**
 - **Concerns related to physical health preventing social engagement and volunteerism.**

One participant stated,

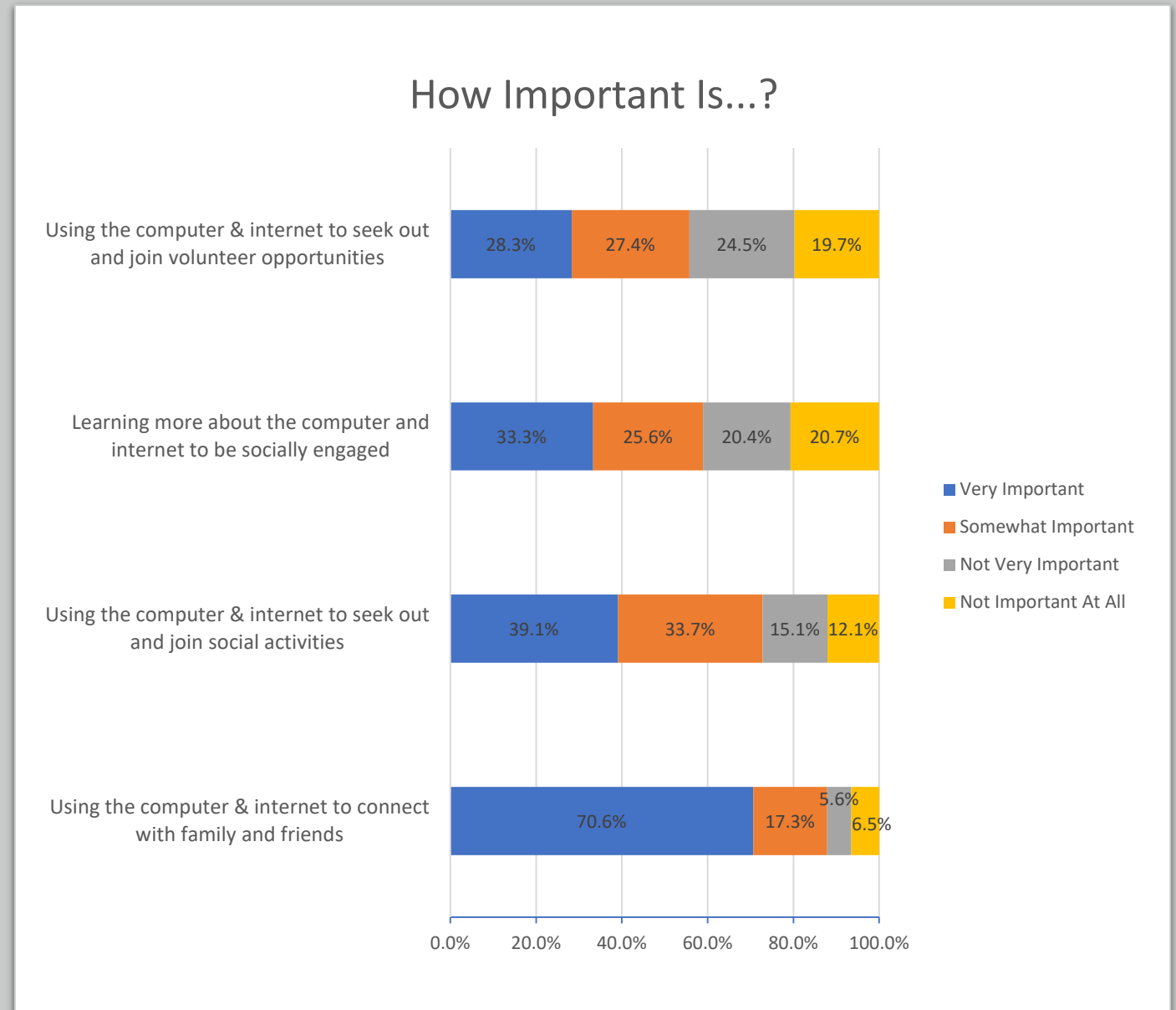
“I just feel that there are a whole lot of people like me in my age group - all friends have died, gone to homes, people avoid you as you might be a problem. New neighbours are young, and they don't make friends with older people - that goes for everyone - they just don't see you anymore because you could be a problem...Politicians etc. don't think you are a big enough community to help.”

Access to Information, Building Awareness

- When asked if there were a variety of **volunteer opportunities** available to older adults in their community, almost half (**45.6%**) **didn't know**.
- When asked if there were a variety of **social opportunities** available to older adults in their community, **38.1%** **didn't know**.
- When asked if there were a variety of **paid work opportunities** available to older adults in their community, **59.0%** **didn't know**.
- When respondents were asked if they felt they could **easily find information about social activities and programs in their area**, almost half (**43.0%**) **answered no**, and **21.3%** **were not sure, or had never tried**.
- More than two-thirds (**62.5%**) of adults 55+ are not aware that **dialing 2-1-1 for non-emergency services can help connect them to community and social services in their area**.

Computer & Internet

- Nearly all respondents had **access to a computer or tablet (94.5%)** and **internet (95.4%)**.
- Respondents were most likely to report that they felt that using the computer and internet were **very or somewhat important to connecting with family and friends (87.9%)** as well as **seeking out and joining social activities (72.8%)**.
- Respondents were less likely to feel that the computer and internet were **very or somewhat important to being socially engaged (59.0%)** or seeking out and **joining volunteer activities (55.8%)**.



Access to Technology

While most survey participants had access to a computer and internet, there are many older adults who do not. One participant indicated,

“My building is full of seniors needing activities and social stimulation. We are rent geared to income and therefore money is a real problem. Many seniors are unable to order groceries online as they either do not have a computer and internet or lack the skills...We have a common room which should have free access to the internet along with a computer for use by residents...Computer lessons could be given to residents...Exercise groups could be organized...Outings could be available for certain activities.”

Another shared:

“Really bad news for seniors who do not have a computer. And those who do, do not know how to use community equipment. Seniors don't know where to go for help.”

And another spoke to the need for support in this area:

“Tech help is extremely important and hard to find. I could use a lot of help in this area in order to connect with programs and services.”

230 responded to,

Are there any additional comments you would to share.....

COMMENT THEMES		
Would like to see more community events/programs (concerts, fairs, farmers market)		4
More community sports particularly in the winter (pickleball, skating, pool)		14
Community centres/workshop/hub for seniors		8
Continuing education programs (e.g. computer/technology, seniors teaching skills to others, music program)		17
Would like to be connected with others with shared interests and life experiences		19
Limited or no access to internet/devices for social activities – discounts		6
Scheduling of activities is problematic – more evenings and wknds		3
Transportation issues (e.g. due to disability, lack of vehicle, poor public transit)		12
Limitations due to living in rural area with less programming/services		9
Need free or discounted programs		4
Trouble with finding out about programs / would like a single source		28
Feeling isolated and lonely		9

Social Activity Calendar

- [Activity Calendar - SGB Ontario Health \(southgeorgianbayoht.ca\)](https://southgeorgianbayoht.ca)

Participating Organizations

- Breaking down Barriers
- VON
- Alzheimer
- SGB CHC
- Seniors Active Living Centre
- Wasaga Beach Public Library
- Chigamik CHC
- Town of Penetanguishene
- CMHA
- Hospice Georgian Triangle

Focus Group Respondents

Area	Number of interested seniors
Midland	23
Barrie	63
Orillia	45
Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury	4
Collingwood	45
Innisfil	31
Town of New Tecumseth	24
Penetanguishene	10
Wasaga Beach	26
Adjala - Tosorontio	3
Clearview	8
Essa	6
Oro-Medonte	4
Township of Ramara	17
Township of Severn	8
Springwater	11
Township of Tay	9
Township of Tiny	5
Prefer not to say	9
Total	351



For more information contact:

Sherry Teeter | Project Lead, Reducing Senior Isolation
Community Connection/211 Central East Ontario
steeter@communityconnection.ca

Slides prepared by:

Marcie Snyder, PhD
Principal Consultant, Meeting Ground Consulting

Participant comments collated by:

Julie Hodgson, BScFN, RD, MPH
Volunteer



Connect Us

A Digital Engagement Program



Inviting Older Adults to learn online skills
with Georgian College Students
and celebrate the connection in a virtual art event
on March 24th 2022, 4pm-6pm

Connect Us is a digital engagement collaboration between Georgian College and the Central Ontario Health Team for Specialized Populations. It aims to engage older adults in online learning and improve their digital literacy to support their wellbeing and connect with their community.

How It Works

Each semester Georgian College students will be connecting with older adults, and we need your help! Please review your current clients and encourage their participation in this program. This semester the support will be offered virtually, so either caregiver support or basic knowledge are key to success for those participating in this first cycle. A limited tech lending library of tablets and data cards is available if needed. Older adults will be matched with a Georgian College student to connect virtually, meeting once or twice a week to support their personal goals and assist in navigating online platforms. To celebrate, all participating older adults

Why Participate?

This initiative will run from now until the end of 2022, giving opportunities to new participants at cycle intervals. Supporting digital literacy of older adults who are unfamiliar with technology will encourage participation in additional activities to address social isolation. From a program design perspective, the goal is to create a Community of Practice through this design engagement with older adults and Georgian students. This is part of a larger vision to innovate community-based solutions for community problems. Program sustainability beyond 2022 will also be addressed.

will be invited to a virtually guided art workshop on March 24th, 2022. All the art supplies needed to participate in the workshop will be delivered to the older adult prior to the event. The registration cut-off for this cycle of programming is March 11th, 2022. There will be two more cycles in 2022. Those who register after March 11th will be engaged during the next cycle.

About Connect Us

Connect Us is a community initiative dedicated to helping older adults and Georgian College students connect. Its goal is to support older adults use digital technology to access health and wellness resources and make social connections. Furthermore, it enables students to feel better connected to their community and contribute their skills and knowledge towards the betterment of community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER

Please contact: William Rudkins
William.Rudkins@Georgiancollege.ca



Central Ontario
Health Team for
Specialized
Populations

**Presenter Deborah Dion-Smith, Vice Chair, Midland Seniors Council,
February 22, 2022.**

Our focus:

- an overview of our proposed initiative
- background information
- statistics, myths and stereotypes
- challenges and successes

Our research indicates:

- much already accomplished in the (petal) areas of Civic Participation and Volunteerism
- In Midland most survey respondents identified a general sense of a lack of employment opportunities
 - also identified in the Tay Age Friendly Plan
- Some Simcoe County businesses are already recognized for embracing a more inclusive and age friendly workplace
- Economic security is important for many adults, particularly those with low or fixed incomes. For many, working after retirement is essential
 - The ability to remain employed or find new employment provides economic security and benefits employers
 - This age group needs to be recognized for the experience and commitment that they bring to the workplace

What if?

- We dedicate and promote a month to seniors looking for employment.
 - Martina Wahl, Team Leader, Midland YMCA Employment Centre is enthusiastic to work with us to make this happen
 - A barrier: Many older workers may find approaching an employer for a job, going into an employment center, creating a resume etc. very intimidating
 - **Goal:** reduce these barriers, with the result older workers seeking employment will feel more valued and confident in their job search

Important Data: The number of seniors in Ontario aged 65 and over is projected to almost double from 2.6 million , or 17.6% of population in 2020 to 4.5 million or 22.2% by 2046.

Expert Voice Margaret Neal:

According to Margaret Neal (Director for Institute on Aging in Portland): "Age-friendly communities are 'economic engines' and older adults can provide the fuel. We need to show that older people are not an economic drain, but actually an economic boon, in addition to being valued members of the community:

- Their contribution can provide "a boost to local work forces"
- They can help communities maximize resources and equalize service flow for businesses

Expert Voice Harvard Business Review:

- "From an employee's perspective, many older workers who can retire do not find traditional retirement appealing. A large number have the desire to work after the traditional retirement age and their reasons are not just financial."
- For many, continuing to be employed, whether it be part-time, seasonal, casual or contract, can provide many mental health benefits
 - These include increased self-esteem and confidence, sense of belonging and reduced social isolation
- In the wise words of Stephen Hawking, work gives you meaning and purpose and life is empty without it
- Age does correspond with wisdom and research proves it, according to the Harvard Business review

Misconceptions about Older Workers:

- Myth -They are less productive.
 - Fact- intellectual capacity and the ability to perform routine or repetitive tasks are not influenced by age. Although physical strength does diminish with age, there are jobs that would not require a lot of physical output
- Myth - Older workers are quick to retire.
 - Fact -"Many older workers do not view retirement as a set event, but rather a gradual process. Many want to stay connected to the workforce in some way after they retire
 - In a sample of currently working and never retired 50 to 75 year olds, over half indicated they planned to work past retirement on a p/t basis.

- Myth - older workers are less receptive to training and training is not cost effective
 - Fact- Older workers tend to be more loyal and less likely to change jobs, especially if they know their efforts are appreciated
 - Baby Boomers prefer working in challenging environments where they can improve their skill set

Did you know?

- Older workers were less likely to identify barriers to training than their younger counterparts
- Workers of all ages are looking for more flexibility in the workplace.
 - Flexible hours, job sharing, teleworking, gradual reduction in hours with no decrease in productivity appeal to many workers

Older workers face many stereotypes:

- Incompetence:
 - Many young adults think older workers are less competent. A large multi-country study in Europe found that older workers are more satisfied with their jobs when they live in a country that views older workers as competent (Shiu et al 2015)
- Resistance to Change:
 - This is grounded in the belief that older workers "are harder to train, less adaptable, less flexible, and more resistant to change
 - Many studies have shown that participants showed motivation to achieve but that older workers that face discrimination may exhibit unmotivated behaviour, as the stereotype becomes self-fulfilling
 - This is why employers need to examine workplace culture with focus on inclusiveness. One noteworthy initiative is to create age friendly workplaces that foster older adult labour force participation. Workplaces need to challenge attitudes and beliefs about older workers and create an inclusive culture where performance is not attached to age
- Take jobs away from younger workers:
 - A US study of data collected between 1977 and 2011 did not find evidence to support those claims
 - Since 2018 job vacancies have outnumbered job applicants in the US

How do we move forward to recognize and value older workers:

- Public Awareness campaigns to highlight the harmful effects of stereotyping and ageism beliefs, so that older adults are supported
- The UK government has appointed a " Business Champion for Older Workers" to spearhead initiatives to help and support older workers
 - (Expert Voice) Andy Briggs sees his role as to support "unleashing the true value of mature talent"
- Professional development opportunities to keep older adult skill sets relevant
- To better position older adults as job candidates, provide opportunities for learning about resume framing that will minimize potential for bias screening and to better align skills with position required competencies
- Reach out to seniors by word, social media, paper to identify those who are interested in working (to establish a benchmark)
- A focus month that promotes hiring a senior, what the benefits are etc.
- A non-threatening and welcoming afternoon by open invitation in partnership with YMCA Employment Centre to listen and provide supports to finding a job
- Presentations to local organizations i.e Rotary Club, Lion Club, Chamber of Commerce, etc

Final thoughts:

As summarized by Andy Briggs "By taking action to be more age friendly, employers can build skilled multigenerational workforces, where people value and respect each other, share skills and experience and better reflect the full diversity of both clients and consumers."

Mechanisms such as flexible workplace policies and government efforts to remove structural barriers to working longer are important to promote older worker labour force participation.

But to decrease ageism beliefs and stereotyping is everyone's responsibility so that we can all benefit from a more inclusive and age friendly workplace and community.

Resources:

From the Age Friendly document: "The ability to continue working or find new employment provides economic security for older adults, as well as people of all ages and abilities. This includes having access to accessible environments, including accessible workplaces."

https://www.workopolis.com/jobsearch/find-jobs?ak=part+time+jobs+for+seniors&l=Midland%2C+ontario&job=sKfKgl9nAGtRweRdAnyxwYgz5hcRGKBum4Qs7_oBRe6f7YAMVF6ovQ

<https://retirehappy.ca/tips-to-working-in-retirement/>

<https://retirehappy.ca/are-you-planning-to-work-in-retirement/>

<https://retirehappy.ca/part-time-jobs-for-seniors/>

<https://hbr.org/2019/09/the-case-for-hiring-older-workers>

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/best-jobs-for-seniors-over-60>

<https://wise-seniorsinbusiness.com/wiserguide/>

<https://sixtyandme.com/working-in-retirement-the-3-rs-that-will-help-you-find-your-passion/>

<https://wiseage.org.uk/>

<https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/bitc-age-report-agefriendlyemployer-sep2018.pdf>

<https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/428987/publication.html?wbdisable=true>

Age-Friendly Workplaces: Promoting Older Worker Participation

www12.hrsdc.gc.ca

Older Workers: Exploring and Addressing the Stereotypes

www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/seniors/forum

Guide : Becoming an age -friendly employer

www.ageing-better.org.uk

Work BC Booklet on How to Engage Mature Workers

<https://www.workbc.ca/Resources-for/Mature-Workers.aspx>

Anti-ageism in the workplace (Canada)

www.nicenet.ca



An Age-Friendly Simcoe County

**Simcoe County Age-Friendly
Future Planning**



An Age-Friendly Simcoe County



Introduction

Age friendly Simcoe County

In 2015, the County of Simcoe received \$50,000 in funding from the Government of Ontario as part of its Age-friendly Community Planning Grant Program. This funding was provided to support the implementation of a comprehensive community needs assessment.

In March of 2016, the County released that needs assessment survey and received an overwhelming response of 3,048 surveys.



An Age-Friendly Simcoe County

Age-Friendly Planning Framework 2018-2023

Simcoe County Positive Aging Strategy

The needs assessment process received extensive feedback and recommendations in all eight (8) community dimensions as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), the most common themes for continued development across the County focused on four (4) key areas:

- Transportation
- Communication/information
- Affordability
- Accessibility

Each of these key areas received concerted focus in this document in the Simcoe County Positive Aging Strategy 2017-2023



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Key Programs Implemented

Priority 1 – Priority 4

- Simcoe County AFC Advisory Committee
- Simcoe.ca/Age-friendly Website
- Promotion of Senior Fairs, Forums, Seniors' Events & Celebrations.
- Simcoe County LINX Transit Service
- County of Simcoe Paramedic Services Paramedic Referral Program
- Age-friendly Tool Kit for Businesses and AFC Business Recognition Program.
- Age-Friendly Housing Grant Program
- Age-Friendly Municipal Grant Program
- Long Term Care Redevelopment and Expansion



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Possible County Initiatives

Possible County Initiatives

Bench program

Reaching seniors in rural areas

And



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**Thank you Age-Friendly Seniors Advisory
Committee for you ongoing support**

