



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: September 13, 2022 **TIME:** 1:00 - 2:30 PM

LOCATION: Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://simcoe.zoom.us/j/91979425390?pwd=RkVFYjYzbGJia1pBb0lDM3dVVUFOUT09>

Meeting ID: 919 7942 5390, Passcode: 449968

Telephone (if required): 1-855-703-8985

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

RECORDER: Catherine Ivanyshyn, Administrative Assistant II, County of Simcoe

ATTENDANCE:

County Councillor Anita Dubeau, Deputy Mayor, Town of Penetanguishene
Catherine O'Connor, Hearing Care Counsellor, Canadian Hearing Services
Christina Strong, Communications Coordinator, Independent Living Services Simcoe County
Dan Leonard, Service Coordinator & Community Navigator, Independent Living Services
Emeka Onuoha, Manager, Collaboration and Partnerships, United Way Simcoe Muskoka
Laura-Lynn Bourassa, Manager Education & Support Programs, Alzheimer Society
Margaret Adolphe, Chair Accessibility Committee of Collingwood
Michele Gouett, Chair Tay Seniors Advisory Committee
Michelle Pauzé, Director, Seniors Services, County of Simcoe
Jill St. Amant, Chair Wellness and Seniors Committee, Penetanguishene
Sandra Easson-Bruno, Director North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services Program
Sherry Teeter, Community Connection/211 Central East Ontario
Sarah Orr-Shaw, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Tracy Hill, Programs & Support Supervisor, Seniors Services and Age-Friendly Champion

GUESTS:

Councillor Anne-Marie Kungl, Barrie City Councillor
Bonnie Neely, Treasurer, Seniors Wish Program
Debbie Islam, CEO, Alzheimer's Society of Simcoe County
Pat Imrie, Director & Chair, Seniors Wish Program
Robin Chapman, Program Supervisor Non-Profit, Social Housing, County of Simcoe
Tom Fortier, Manager Housing Programs, Social Housing, County of Simcoe

REGRETS:

Andrea Roylance, Matthews House Hospice
Annick Brown, Director of Family Services, La Clé
Åsa Klint Piggott, Manager, Performance, Quality & Development, County of Simcoe
Barbara Knechtel, Midland Senior Council
Carly Murphy, Essa Township
Cate Root, Tay Township Representative
County Councillor Sandie Macdonald, Mayor, Town of Innisfil

Deborah Dion-Smith, Midland Seniors Council
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)
Jacqueline Berchtold, Project Coordinator, County of Simcoe



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Judy Contin, Executive Director, Askennonia Senior Centre
 Kari Warnar, Community Safety and Wellbeing, Avail Consulting
 Kelley Swift Jones, County of Simcoe Museum
 Kim Woodland, Matthews House Hospice
 Kris Hughston, Project Champion, Project LifeSaver
 Linda Flemington, Collingwood
 Lori Crossan, Collingwood Public Library
 Lucia Ricardo, Seniors Advisory Committee and CNIB Simcoe Muskoka
 Maria Borczyk, Matthews House Hospice
 Marie Hartman, South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre
 Marlene de Jesus, Helping Hands Orillia

Mary Warnock, Chair Seniors Advisory Committee, Tay Township
 Melissa Mei, LHINS
 Merideth Morrison, Director, Performance, Quality & Development, County of Simcoe
 Mia Brown, Manager, Substance Use & Injury Prevention Program, SMDHU
 Nancy Esson, Right at Home Canada
 Nathan Westendorp, Director Planning & Chief Planner, County of Simcoe
 Ron Coutts, Seniors Representative
 Ruth McArthur, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
 Susan Plewes, LHINS
 Tami Tarini, Independent Living Services
 Tom Johnston, Seniors for Seniors

Embedded PDFs are attached to these Minutes.

ITEM	ACTION ITEMS
<p>1.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>All committee members were welcomed to the meeting. New members were welcomed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emeka Onuoha, Manager, Collaboration and Partnerships, United Way Simcoe Muskoka • Pat Imrie, Director & Chair, Seniors Wish Program • Bonnie Neely, Treasurer, Seniors Wish Program • Councillor Anita Dubeau introduced Jill St. Amant, Wellness and Seniors Committee in Penetanguishene 	
<p>2.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA</p> <p>The Agenda was approved as presented by Michelle Gouett.</p>	
<p>3.0 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES (April 5, 2022)</p> <p>The Minutes from the June 14th meeting were approved as presented by County Councillor Anita Dubeau.</p>	
<p>4.0 Presentation: Seniors Wish Program</p> <p>Pat Imrie, Director & Chair, Seniors Wish Program Bonnie Neely, Treasurer, Seniors Wish Program</p>	<p>Pat and Bonnie to reach out to Sandra Easson-Bruno season-bruno@nsmsgcs.ca and, Laura-Lynn Bourassa</p>




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<p>Upcoming Seniors Wish program will be following a new process in the coming year. COVID was difficult due to not being able to go into the homes and into the communities.</p> <p>Seniors Wish program started in 2011 in Barrie with 125 people, and now up to 3,000. This program has spread to more communities such as Orillia, Springwater, Collingwood, Innisfil and Sandy Cove and other areas. The Seniors Wish Program will reach out to seniors who are alone and do not have family. We receive donations for people for Christmas and are now doing this all year long. There is also a group making special birthday cards for those turning 80, 85, 90, 95 and 100 and over. We will go to homes with these cards, balloons and sometimes cake for these individuals.</p> <p>Once the program gets back to more normal programs, we will bring back the Memory books. Plans are back in place for volunteers. We are dividing up Long-Term Care and Retirement, separate from community needs, as they vary.</p> <p>In the last few years, Bonnie led a program called “Bags of Love”. Bags were filled and distributed in the communities. During COVID, there were 5 (five) running this program and we are hoping to have more volunteers this coming year. Seniors Wish was grateful for a donation from “100 Gals’ in the amount of \$10,000. The Long-Term Care residents were recipients of Aveeno Lotion and hoping to also give Bags of Love in the coming season.</p> <p>In the past, the program set up donation boxes at events. This is no longer being done due to COVID. We are now working with groups (hockey teams, etc.) to help make Christmas cards.</p> <p>Collingwood has formed a committee of four working on the Seniors Wish program. Seniors Wish is looking to build on this with sub-committees in other areas such as Midland and Penetanguishene. The Seniors Wish program is also looking to hold a quarterly event to help seniors celebrate together.</p> <p>Website: https://aseniorwish.com/</p> <p>Email: info@aseniorswish.com</p> <p>Phone: (705) 481-7593</p>	<p>(LBourassa@alzheimersociety.ca)</p> <p>Askennonia Senior Centre contact: Judy Contin – jcontin@rogers.com</p> <p>Independent Living Services, Dan Leonard contact: dleonard@ilssimcoe.ca</p> <p>Seniors Wish to contact Michelle Gouett mpgouett@gmail.com to present at a Tay Seniors Advisory Committee Meeting.</p>



ITEM	ACTION ITEMS
<p>5.0 Presentation: Ontario Renovates / Secondary Suites</p> <p>Tom Fortier, Manager Housing Programs, Social Housing, County of Simcoe Robin Chapman, Program Supervisor Non-Profit, Social Housing, County of Simcoe</p> <p> Ontario Renovates - Powerpoint.pdf <i>(presentation is attached to these Minutes)</i></p> <p>The Ontario Renovates program does align similarly to the Age-Friendly Seniors Housing Grant Program, with different criteria and can fund several types of work.</p> <p>Household income requirements vary. Ontario Renovates has a maximum income for the owner, while the Secondary Suites has a maximum income for the tenant and not the homeowner.</p> <p>Note: The Social and Community Investment Fund Applications for 2023 are now open, until the end of September. The link for agencies and those who represent agencies or are in contact with those that have a poverty initiative and who are seeking funding. https://www.simcoe.ca/scif</p> <p>Ontario Renovates Program: https://www.simcoe.ca/SocialHousing/Pages/Apply-for-Ontario-Renovates.aspx</p> <p>The Ontario Renovates Program includes funding for urgent repairs, renovations, and accessibility modifications for low to moderate income homeowners. Funding of up to \$15,000 per unit is available. Accessibility modifications are particularly beneficial for seniors to allow them to 'age in place' and persons with disabilities who require unit modifications. This is a forgivable loan that will not need to be repaid if all criteria are met. Examples of renovations include roofing, plumbing, septic, electricity, and some accessibility items such as ramps, bathrooms, staircases, etc.</p> <p>Secondary Suites Program: https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/sh/secondary-suites</p> <p>The Secondary Suites Program provides funding of up to \$30,000 per unit for the creation of a secondary or garden suite which is an effective means to increase the supply of affordable housing. The Suite cannot be occupied by the homeowner.</p>	



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<p><u>Rent Supplement Program</u> https://www.simcoe.ca/SocialHousing/Pages/RentSupplement.aspx A 'rent supplement/housing allowance' is a subsidy that would bridge the difference between what a tenant can afford to pay and the full market rent. This is paid directly to the Landlord.</p>	
<p>6.0 Age-Friendly Individual Recognition & Achievement Award</p> <p>Jane Sinclair, General Manager, Health & Emergency Services Tracy Hill, Program & Support Supervisor, Seniors Services and Age-Friendly Champion</p> <p>Debbie Islam was presented with the 2022 Age-Friendly Individual Recognition and Achievement Award.</p> <p>Debbie Islam recently retired from 25 years of service with the Simcoe Muskoka Alzheimer’s Society.</p> <p><i>Sandra Easson-Bruno, Director North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services Program</i> “Debbie’s work at the Alzheimer’s Society was amazing. However this work has extended beyond the Alzheimer’s Society across our region. Whether she was collaborating with the Local Health Integration Network at the time, through Care Connections, partnerships, or getting the Behavioral Support Team off the ground. She continued to do that work as we moved from the LHINs to Ontario Health and continued to be an amazing advocate for change and partnership, and more recently, as the Ontario Health Teams were being developed in the region. Debbie had a pivotal role in bringing the face and needs of older adults identified as a priority population at the planning tables in the region. The work Debbie has done exemplifies who she is as an individual. Debbie is incredibly caring and kind. When it comes to teamwork, there is never a “no”. She always tried to find a way, as it was “the right thing to do”. And she did all of this with amazing success while raising an amazing family. I would like to thank Debbie for everything she’s done and awarding her with the Age-Friendly Individual Recognition and Achievement Award.”</p> <p><i>Anne-Marie Kungl, Barrie City Councillor</i> “It is my pleasure to be celebrating this with Debbie and thank you to the Age-Friendly Advisory Committee for this recognition of</p>	



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<p>Debbie Islam. As a Barrie City Councillor, I also sit on the Senior’s Advisory Committee and share with the Committee on how the County is leading with seniors’ efforts and modelling the way forward. It is amazing to see this Recognition and Achievement Award established. This is a timely award to ensure we recognize Debbie Islam during her retirement and recognize her legacy and the impact of all she has done across the County. Elected officials across the County attended a recent event that Debbie was pivotal in organizing for the Alzheimer’s Society. On a more personal note, tied to having the privilege to work with Debbie and as part of the Behavioural Support Services work, I was able to to join the board in 2013. I was able to see how she integrated two small societies into a very strong Simcoe County Society. Debbie has led an amazing team to be responsive through very strong partnerships she’s fostered in her professional approach and her compassionate and highly empathetic way in which she takes a person-centred lens with everyone. It was a strong but mighty team where Debbie would say “onwards and upwards” with an everlasting positive approach to the art of impossible. Through Debbie’s leadership, the Simcoe County Alzheimer’s Society is highly regarded provincially. While she sits on many regional tables, she has had significant impact on putting the Alzheimer’s Society on the map with a positive reputation and influence. Debbie meets often with provincially elected officials and has been a very effective and fierce advocate for seniors. I am very happy to be here for her award presentation.”</p> <p><i>Laura-Lynn Bourassa, Manager Education & Support Programs, Alzheimer Society</i></p> <p>“Debbie has been our leader for 25 years and has brought the Alzheimer’s Society to where it is in the Community - being recognized as a valued and respected partner. Debbie has been the driving force behind the growth of the services we are able to offer our clients, from the older adults living with Dementia to the people supporting them. Through it all, Debbie puts forward the message of “the person first” and seeing people live well and thrive. This has been our mantra for a while. This aligns well with the whole concept of Age-Friendly and wanting people to do the best they can in any situation they are living in. From the staff, we were able to enjoy, love and grow with Debbie in the last 25 years and miss her and happy to see her being recognized this way.”</p> <p><i>Jane Sinclair, General Manager, Health & Emergency Services</i></p>	



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<p>“It is a great pleasure to provide the 2022 Age-Friendly Individual Recognition and Achievement Award to Debbie Islam. I have had the pleasure of working closely with Debbie over the years, and most closely with Behavioral Support. I’ve seen firsthand her tremendous leadership. The Age-Friendly Advisory Committee wishes to acknowledge your great support for older adults across this region and we wish you all the best in your retirement.”</p> <p><i>Debbie Islam, CEO, Alzheimer’s Society Simcoe County</i></p> <p>“Thank you all for the kind words and comments. I am deeply honoured and humbled to receive this special award from the Age-Friendly Advisory Committee. This is a truly unexpected and extremely gratifying honour. I want to thank my colleagues, Anne-Marie Kungl and Sandra Easson-Bruno for nominating me for this accolade and to the Advisory Committee for bestowing this honour in recognition of my efforts over the past 25 years as the CEO of the Alzheimer’s Society of Simcoe County. It is part of the mission of the Alzheimer’s Society to advocate dementia-friendly communities, which aligns with the vision for environments to become more age-friendly. I am so proud of how much we were able to accomplish in this regard as an organization during my tenure with the Alzheimer’s Society and through our involvement with planning and advisory groups, such as this one, right across Simcoe County and beyond. I know this important work will continue in order that seniors and those affected by dementia can live well and thrive wherever they reside. When I first started work at the Alzheimer’s Society in 1997, programs and support for seniors in this region were sparse. It was through the leadership and relentless and collective efforts of those serving on this committee and so many others that great strides have been made to create more age-friendly communities in Simcoe County. I commend all of you for your commitment and ongoing dedication to this and I look forward to the progress that will continue to be made in years to come, particularly with an aging population. I thank you again for this wonderful recognition and wish you all the best as you continue to promote and advocate for age-friendly communities.”</p>	

ITEM	ACTION ITEMS
<p>7.0 WHAT'S HAPPENING (local community initiatives) – Roundtable</p> <p>Sherry Teeter, Community Connection/211 Central East Ontario</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Senior Survey.pdf </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  Social Connection Focus Group Report </div> </div> <p>Seniors Survey Results are attached. We are hoping everyone receives a copy of the results from the Seniors Focus Groups from across the County. These focus groups comprised of seniors across Simcoe County who put forth an interest to talk about seniors engagement in the community and what they would like to see. We are hoping that organizations across the County, who are planning to do senior programming, can look at these results and tick off some of the boxes of what seniors put forth. One of the items of information that was noted was that seniors do not know where to go to find activities, even though activities are posted at libraries and seniors centres and the centres promote them. Currently, we are researching a method of creating a <u>single source</u> social activity calendar where seniors are able to easily find activities in their communities. We are looking for volunteers to work with us on this and brainstorm on suggestions to help make this easily available for seniors in the community. You may contact Sherry Teeter at the following email: steeter@communityconnection.ca</p> <p>Michele Gouett, Chair Tay Seniors Advisory Committee The Committee has been busy. Next week the Committee is hosting a Seniors Talk in Port McNichol and next month, the Committee will be hosting a Seniors Symposium. Information on this will be sent to everyone on the mailing list. Anyone wishing to participate in the Symposium, please contact Michelle at: mpgouett@gmail.com. The Advisory Committee is currently awaiting an outcome on the North Simcoe Aging Group (made up of Tiny, Tay, Midland and Penetanguishene) resulting from presentations to Council. The Advisory Committee would like to invite the Seniors Wish organization to present at an upcoming Tay Seniors Advisory Committee and will be in contact. Tracy Hill from the County will be participating in the upcoming Seniors Symposium.</p>	



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<p>Michelle Pauzé, Director, Seniors Services, County of Simcoe A few new and upcoming events are taking place at Georgian Village in Penetanguishene. We have set up a partnership with Karma Projects. Once a month, a stand is set up with affordable produce and homemade breads. In consultation with our IPAC Team, we will also be setting this up indoors in the winter months. Tracy Hill, who works with our seniors services department, is also looking at expanding this market to other vendors. BBQs are taking place at the Rendezvous Bistro along with entertainment that on the 4th Wednesday of every month between 11:00am and 1:00pm. Pub nights are now reopening with “VIP nights” in a smaller venue in the Bistro, with table reservations for food, beverages and entertainment. This will begin within the next month or so. The Therapy Pool and Fitness Centre are now open for external membership for those 60 years of age and over. The Simcoe Village Redevelopment in Beeton is underway with equipment on the grounds and construction to be starting by mid-October. A quarterly newsletter will be posted on this project.</p> <p>Dan Leonard, Service Coordinator & Community Navigator, Independent Living Services The recent Penetanguishene and Wasaga Beach Seniors Symposiums appeared to be very successful and well received. ILS will be attending the Tay Township Seniors Symposium as well as the Barrie Living Well Symposium. Last year, ILS had 302 clients (2021/22) that resulted in just over 2,000 connections back and forth contacts with these individuals. Of those, there were 70 fund requests that could not afford devices on their own. We assisted through community service clubs, financial institutions, and faith groups to help share the cost of these devices. This ended with 106 devices that we had helped individuals with and received funding for. This funding ranged from a few hundred dollars to three thousand dollars' worth of funding support. Some of these devices can cost upwards of \$28,000. Devices in highest demand are hospital beds, wheelchairs, and rollators. Anyone getting rid of these items, please contact Dan Leonard: dleonard@ilssimcoe.ca Accessibility Devices Website: https://www.goquipit.com/</p> <p>County Councillor Anita Dubeau, Deputy Mayor, Town of Penetanguishene We are working with the Chair of the Senior and Wellness Committee to help with the Seniors BBQ taking place on September 15th. The BBQ is \$5.00 that will also include</p>	



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<p>entertainment and prizing. The Committee is also exploring an organization call Stop Gap which is a non-profit organization that helps those in need of ramps and helps communities discover the benefit of barrier free spaces and providing support to create them. https://stopgap.ca/</p> <p>Sandra Easson-Bruno, Director North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services Program The County of Simcoe has addressed a gap with new health beds in the Region (Alison Howard will speak on this at the next meeting in November). In addition to this, a new program has come into the region for older adults called LOFT (https://www.loftcs.org/) and we are working closely with Waypoint. Some require the structure of a home, some supportive housing and others, mental health housing.</p> <p>Laura-Lynn Bourassa, Manager Education & Support Programs, Alzheimer Society Programs are now back to full complement with options offered to clients for support, education, and social recreation both in person and online. Program links for November and December are listed below. Programs & Services Guide link: https://alzheimer.ca/simcoecounty/sites/simcoecounty/files/documents/2022October.December.pdf</p> <p>A new In-Home Recreation Program began this summer and will be incorporating volunteers starting in September. This program provides in-home recreation to clients in their house on a weekly basis for up to a 12-week cycle. We hope to provide stimulation and social contact for those living with dementia and provide some support and respite for the care partner. In Home Recreation Program link: https://alzheimer.ca/simcoecounty/en/help-support/programs-services/social-recreational-programs/home-recreation-therapy</p> <p>Advocacy – Alzheimer Society of Ontario Statement re: Bill 7, More Beds, Better Care Act 2022 https://admin.alzheimer.ca/on/sites/on/files/documents/Bill%207%20Letter_EN.pdf?_ga=2.12913333.320091753.1663012112-1153875021.1573747330</p> <p>The Alzheimer’s Society of Canada released a new report called The Landmark Study which outlines some of the challenges faced by society in supporting people living with dementia in the coming</p>	



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ITEM	ACTION ITEMS
<p>years and addressing and outlining scenarios that can help alleviate some of the stressors we might be facing through looking at risk reduction and the impact that will have on the number of people affected.</p> <p>Alzheimer Society of Canada: The Landmark Study - download the Executive summary through this link: https://alzheimer.ca/en/research/reports-dementia/landmark-study-report-1-path-forward</p> <p><u>Dementia conference being held October 26th</u> for Healthcare Professionals. A speaker from the Alzheimer’s Society of Ontario will talk about a Roadmap for Dementia Care, focusing on some advocacy pieces. Monica Menecola from the Osteoporosis Society will talk about frailty and dementia.</p> <p>The Alzheimer’s Society will also be planning an upcoming Family Information Session.</p> <p>Christina Strong, Communications Coordinator, Independent Living Services Simcoe County ILS is preparing for the annual general meeting which will take place virtually, from 4:30-6:00pm. The Keynote Speaker attending is Nouman Ashraf who is an Associate Professor, Teaching Stream within the Organizational Behavior area at the Rotman School of Management, and the Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. Professor Ashraf will be talking about equity, diversity and inclusion called the “leadership stimulus package”. He has an interactive participatory presentation that talks about organizations having a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and an opportunity to focus on societal inclusion. Christina will forward the poster to the group to register. ILS has been able to take on a few more clients, however, it has been tough for those working in the community. Note, the new office at 15 Cedar Pointe has a notice posted that we are hiring.</p> <p>Margaret Adolphe, Chair Accessibility Committee of Collingwood Margaret is a Board Chair and Trustee for the Collingwood Library. An event called “Friends of the Library” book fair will be taking place on Friday October 7th 9:00am – 6:00pm and Saturday, October 8th, 9:00am-8:00pm at the local New Life Church. Location: 28 Tracey Lane, Collingwood.</p>	



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<p>Jill St. Amant, Chair, Wellness and Seniors Committee, Penetanguishene This is a very informative meeting and will bring many of this information back to the Wellness and Seniors Committee as we combine seniors with youth.</p> <p>Anne-Marie Kungl, Barrie City Counsellor Note of Interest: A resource that can be applied to aging well/ thriving/ resiliency. From research out of York University on Mattering. The Psychology of Mattering: Understanding the Human Need to be Significant</p>	
<p>8.0 Next Meeting: November 29, 2022 (10:30 AM – 12:00 Noon)</p>	
<p>9.0 Adjournment: 2:45 PM</p>	



County of Simcoe

Social and Community Services

Ontario Renovates

simcoe.ca



Ontario Renovates – Urgent Repairs and Accessibility Modifications

simcoe.ca

Purpose and Funding (OR)



- To help residents in Simcoe County make needed repairs to allow them to remain in their homes
- Funding comes from Federal and Provincial sources and looks to create better living conditions for households in need
- Funding:
 - Program provides financial assistance in the form of a 10 year forgivable loan to make essential home repairs and/or a grant to increase a homeowner's accessibility
 - Maximum of \$15,000 per dwelling
 - Funds are available on a first come, first served basis with some exceptions included (Urgent repairs)
 - Any work that is started prior to approval, will not be reimbursed



Eligibility (OR)



- Own a home in Simcoe County
- Canadian Citizen, landed immigrant, refugee claimant status, no deportation order under Immigration Act
- Repairs to the home are required to bring it to acceptable standards and/or increase accessibility to the home through accessibility modifications and adaptations
- Property taxes and mortgage payments are up to date
- Insurance coverage in place for the full market value of the home
- Maximum Household Income: \$70,700
- Maximum House Value: \$659,866
- Maximum Personal Assets: \$20,000



Eligible Projects (OR/Accessibility)



■ Repairs

- Roofing, structural
- Plumbing, septic
- Fire safety
- Electrical systems
- Heating systems
- Mold remediation

■ Accessibility Modifications

- Ramps
- Handrails
- Chair/bath lifts
- Height adjustments to countertops
- Cues for doorbells/fire alarms
- Bathroom modifications



How to apply(OR/Accessibility)



- Print the application from our website
- Ensure all required documents are attached to the application

- Applications can be submitted by email
 - iah@Simcoe.ca
- Applications can be submitted in person/mail
 - County of Simcoe – Social Housing Department – 1110 Highway 26, Midhurst
 - Attn: Ontario Renovates Program





Secondary Suites

Secondary Suites Program



- This program provides financial assistance in the form of a 15 year forgivable loan of up to a maximum of \$30,000 to create a secondary or garden suite
- This program is available to eligible homeowners in Simcoe County
- Grants of up to \$5000 for permanent modifications to the secondary/garden suite to improve accessibility
- Applications can be obtained from website and submitted similarly to the Ontario Renovates, Repairs Program





Rent Supplement Program and Canada Ontario Housing Benefit

Rent Support Programs



■ Rent Supplement Program

- A rent supplement provides rental assistance in privately owned buildings for Tenants who cannot afford the regular market rent charged by Landlords.
- Rent supplements are paid monthly, directly to the landlord
- Time limited, typically a 5 year term
- Maximum allowable rents apply based on unit size and location within Simcoe County

■ Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

- Provides a portable housing benefit payment directly to eligible households
- Portable throughout the Province of Ontario
- Subsidy amount is calculated based on Average Market Rents as defined by The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)
- Time limited, currently funding is available until 2029



QUESTIONS

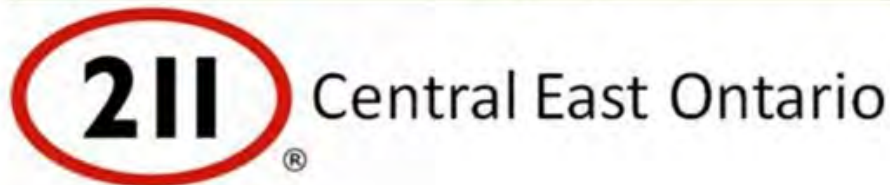


OLDER ADULT (55+) SOCIAL ACTIVITY FOCUS GROUPS



A discussion on social
isolation and social
connection in Simcoe
County

FINAL REPORT JULY 2022



Community Connection is a nonprofit information and referral service accredited by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). Our mission is to create and improve access to services for people.

Our core areas of work are, providing call centre services for 211, a national 24/7 helpline that connects people to essential services; maintaining a database of community resources and supporting online directories for public access; and producing reports on community needs/trends, and service gaps to support community planning. Another important area of our work is in our community where we are involved in numerous partnerships, shared service initiatives, and collective impact projects that are collaborative approaches to improve and support access to services for people. Several years ago, Community Connection established a volunteer program with the goal to connect volunteers to organizations and increase awareness of the impact of volunteering in our community.

Project Lead: Sherry Teeter steeter@communityconnection.ca

Consultant: Kathryn Manners 705 238 6146 kathy@kathrynmanners.com

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's New Horizons For Seniors Program

We want to thank all those who contributed to our discussions and for your insights and ideas that shaped this report.



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Background

A recent survey completed by more than 800 people over the age of 55 living in Simcoe County has provided insight to new perspectives on social engagement. The project team made up of a cross-sector of community leaders and service providers aimed to “Reducing Senior Social Isolation” in Simcoe County, surveyed seniors during the month of September 2021 for feedback on their level of social activity, their interests and how best to become or stay involved in their communities in meaningful ways.

One of the survey questions was, “Would you be interested in participating in older adult focus groups to discuss solutions to increase social engagement for older adults?” and we received an overwhelming response from interested seniors willing to discuss this issue.

**810 Completed
Survey**

**351 Interested in Follow up
Conversation**



Desired Outcome

Improved delivery of senior programs and developing a community that values their seniors.

Work with those who are isolated or at risk of becoming isolated (due to COVID or normally Isolate) to build citizen-led initiatives that are specific to geographic locations to improve social connection.

Social Isolation



The literature considers a person to be socially isolated if they “ live alone, have less than monthly contact with friends or family, and don’t belong to a group. (e.g., religious congregation, club or volunteer organization) (Clements-Cortes & Yip 2019)

Loneliness and social isolation are different, but related. Loneliness is the distressing feeling of being alone or separated. Social isolation is the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly. You can live alone and not feel lonely or socially isolated, and you can feel lonely while being with other people.

Community Connection is leading a 5-year project, funded in part from the Government of Canada’s New Horizons for Seniors Program.

An estimated 16% of adults 55+ years of age living in Simcoe County experience social isolation. (Stats Canada 2016)

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%).

Increase Social Engagement



An estimated 16% of adults 55+ years of age living in Simcoe County experience social isolation



Socially Active

79.3% of adults surveyed were not as socially active as they would like to be

Activities of Interest

59.4% Volunteering

78.1% Social Activities

39.1% Work

27.0% were not too confident or not confident at all that they would

How can community help?

- Increase variety of social activities 65.5%
- Better advertising of current programs 58.5%

Sense of Belonging



Family 79.5% or Friends 69.5%
 NOT Health Care system 39.7%
 or Community 27.3%

- 59.5% Social/entertainment/games
- 59.2% Education/training
- 53.2% Exercise/sports

Participants

82 Total Participants

Midland

10

Collingwood

17

Orillia

10



Barrie

15



15

**All County
on Zoom**

Innisfil

17

Activity One

Individuals suggested way to better connect and identified barriers to overcome.

Enablers

List things that aid in social connection

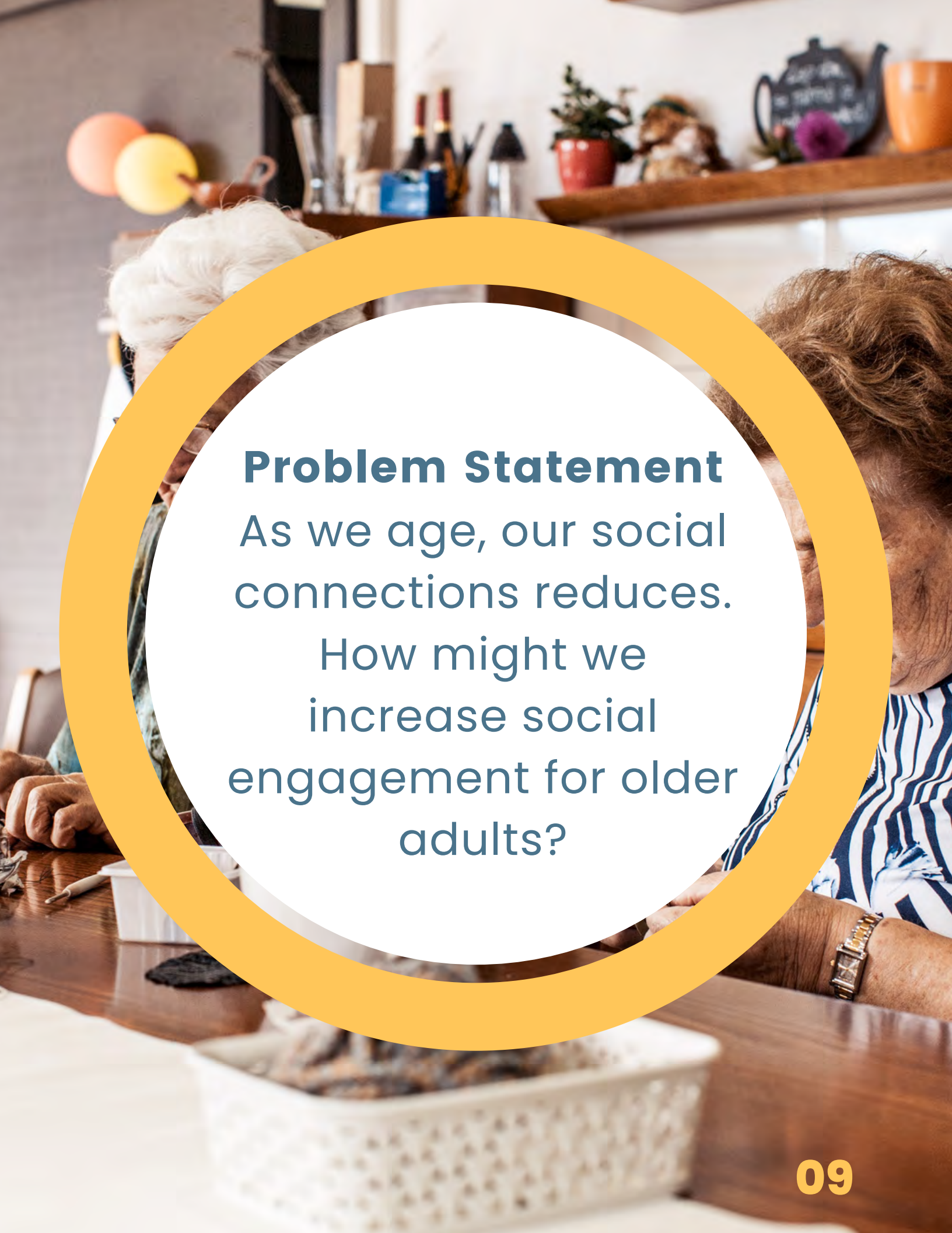
- Relationships–family and friends
- Groups–Church, service organizations
- Information sharing
- Digital literacy/Technology
- Coordinating services e.g. Senior centres
- Navigation supports
- Themed–based groups
- Clear and organized communication
- Transportation to and from events
- Welcoming services
- Buddy System (go to event with someone)
- Drop in Centres
- Volunteer outreach
- Information sessions
- Activities organized by interests
- Self motivation
- Regular time/Scheduling
- Safe walking trails–check in and out of activities
- Cell phones
- Physical and mental activities options
- Part–time work
- Accessible gathering places
- Willingness to learn new things
- Ambassadors
- Good content and facilitation
- Having something to offer. being listened to
- Variety of social actions
- Seniors helping seniors
- Age friendly neighbourhoods
- Technological support

Barriers

List things that are barriers to social connection

- Physical–hearing and mobility
- Cost
- Awareness of what is available
- Anxiety/depression
- Ability to travel to event
- Lack of knowledge as to what is happening/when
- Fear of physical security/illness
- Lack of accessibility
- Privacy concerns
- Apathy/Lack of energy
- Weather
- Available spaces to meet
- New normal to be isolated
- Trust–so many scams
- Size of group–if too big
- Time of day/not at night
- Wait–times
- Agism
- Being single
- Do not want to ask for help
- Language/cultural limitations
- Exhaustion from COVID
- Change in routine

Social engagement and reduction in social isolation for Older Adults



Problem Statement
As we age, our social connections reduces.
How might we increase social engagement for older adults?

Activity Two: Ideas

In groups, ideas and actions on how they can or their community can help seniors become or stay engaged

- **Reintroduce Welcome Wagon/Newcomer groups**
- **Build special interest groups such as gardening groups**
- **Improve communications and outreach to seniors**
- **Balanced digital and non-digital communication methods**
- **Create opportunities for compatible conversations and opportunities for people to meet each other**
- **Continue to offer skill development opportunities such as language classes**
- **Create mobile events that go to where the Seniors are**
- **Advertise events in places that Seniors go such as Doctors offices**
- **Create a number to call in to hear what is happening in area**
- **Set up Senior EXPOS to learn about available activities**
- **Have Seniors read to children**
- **Hold "Stuff Swaps"**
- **Introduce an Ambassadors program**
- **Balance both physical and mental activities**
- **Host sessions and supports on when to move out of house**
- **Enhances supports for hearing better at activities**
- **Combine activities with different groups/partners/joint communications**
- **Offer more activities in small towns**
- **Create Volunteer information ambassador**
- **Have a Senior phone line**
- **Expand Neighbourhood watch**
- **Offer Space to do crafts such as woodworking**
- **Expand Advocates for Seniors and have them work with Municipalities**
- **Offer Tech support**
- **Expand Lifelong learning**
- **Build Outdoor senior fitness parks**
- **Create a Senior section in papers/Phone inline**

Considerations

**55 + is too large a group/
Need to segment into
smaller groups**

Looks at stages of life

**Need to manage stress of
going to activities alone**

**Seniors should be
mentoring and sharing
wisdom**

**Difficult to find activities for
men**

Need a reason to meet

Recommendations by Region

While we heard similar themes throughout the County, there were different resources and activities available depending where you lived. Below we have summarized key points from each discussion.

Each region can learn from each other and we hope they will continue to share ideas and actions



Innifil

Access and Transportation

- Improve ways to get to events
- Create hubs
- Include diverse groups
- Age-friendly neighbourhoods



Orillia

Communication and Awareness

- Senior section in paper
- Activities in multiple location (urban/rural)
- Senior playground
- Continuous Learning events



Barrie

Diversity in events and with groups

- Access for computers
- Language and cultural programming
- Neighbourhood watch
- Move away from COVID restrictions

Recommendations by Region

While we heard similar themes throughout the County, there were different resources and activities available depending where you lived. Below we have summarized key points from each discussion. (continue)



Collingwood



Midland



Zoom

Meeting new people

- Compatible conversations
- Increase awareness of programming
- Create art walks
- Expand programs without municipal restrictions

Physical and mental

- Supports to hear better at events
- Offer Mobility aids and closer parking
- Gender specific events
- Opportunities to use personal skills and strengths

Fear and Finances

- Where to find FREE activities
- Build self-confidences to go to activities
- Create Senior EXPOS
- Set up networks to share communications

Overall Themes



MOTIVATION

- Use skills and strengths
- Share wisdom
- Overcome fear
- Find partners so do not have to go alone
- Overcome COVID restrictions

AVAILABILITY

- Urban and rural offerings
- Increase transportation options
- Offer a variety of events and activities
- Have online and in-person activities

ACCESSIBILITY

- Keep costs reasonable
- Need help as cost of volunteering going up
- Build computer skills and supports
- Senior designed spaces

COMMUNICATIONS

- Share knowledge of what is happening
- Have ambassadors and advocates
- Senior section in papers
- Phone in information

WHOLISTIC APPROACHES

- Physical activities designed for different ages
- Mental exercises to keep mind working
- Opportunities for spiritual connections

SEGMENTATION

- Create gender specific activities
- Offer intergenerational connections
- Develop local neighbourhood events



Overall Recommendations

- **Continue to educate people on the negative effects of social isolation**
- **Use a wide variety of communication methods**
- **Develop segmentation when appropriately (by age, by interests, by income, by neighbourhoods approaches)**
- **Encourage Urban designer/planners to build spaces for community building and senior activities**
- **Aid in reducing agism and increasing value of seniors**
- **Continue to support individuals to build technological skills**
- **Consider equity, diversity and inclusion to ensure all feel welcome**
- **Ensure mobility and transportation is considered in the implementation of programming**

Path Forward

While you may have heard some of these ideas and actions before, it is our hope that some new ideas are highlighted.

We will share ideas with age-friendly, libraries and senior groups in hope that they will implement some of the ideas and consideration when developing new programs.

This report might also support additional funding applications to ensure action happens.

While there were some citizen-led actions that happened at each focus group e.g. email exchanges, new social activities, there is still much work that can be done.

Social connection is complex but critical to the health and well-being of our older adults.

Together, we hope to build stronger connections and reduce social isolation.



"I was also getting feedback from many seniors who said they attended our focus group, and said it was a great experience and felt good information and feedback was given"

**Cheryl Cantin, Administration
Co-ordinator**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Project Lead: Sherry Teeter steeter@communityconnection.ca

55 or over?

Want to increase your health, happiness and belonging?

Community Connection is a non-profit agency leading a Seniors Project in Simcoe County. We are developing programs and services to meet the needs of older adults and need your input.

Research shows that being socially connected increases physical and mental health, increases life expectancy and reduces risk of dementia.

Life's circumstances can sometimes lead a person to be less involved in the community than they want, and we are working towards building our community to help those older adults be more connected.

We value older adults and want each of them to enjoy good health, happiness and belonging.

This project is led by Community Connection/211 and guided by community members and service providers.



Survey Instructions:

Please complete this 10-minute survey before September 30, 2021 and **return to:**

Community Connection/211
199 Campbell Street
Collingwood, ON L9Y 4J9

Feel free to skip any questions you don't want to answer.

Your feedback will remain anonymous, however, you have an option to provide your name and contact information, (which will be kept confidential), for:

- Entry into a prize draw
- Needing assistance completing survey
- Willingness to participate in future focus groups

All survey answers will be organized together and will not be associated with any names provided.

If you need assistance to complete this survey or if you have any questions, contact Debbe at 705-444-0040 ext. 246 or email survey@communityconnection.ca.

At the end of the survey, you have the option to submit your name into a draw for one of three gift cards valued at \$50.

1. Please check the applicable box below to complete this sentence, I am:

- An older adult (55+)
- A caregiver on behalf of an older adult citizen
- A health service provider on behalf of an older adult
- A family member on behalf of an older adult
- An interested citizen on behalf of an older adult
- A volunteer that works with older adults
- Other (please specify)

2. What town/township do you live in?

3. How often did you/do you have contact (in person or on the telephone) with adult children, relatives, neighbours or friends that you do not live with?

Before COVID

- 5 times or more per month
- 1-4 times per month
- Less than once per month
- Never

During COVID

- 5 times or more per month
- 1-4 times per month
- Less than once per month
- Never

4. Before COVID, how often did you engage in social activities? (i.e. visit a friend, go to a club or church, volunteering, cultural activities, etc.)

- 5 times or more per month
- 1-4 times per month
- Less than once per month
- Never

5. If you were socially active before COVID, how confident do you feel you will return to your social activities when it is safe to do so?

- Not confident at all
- Not too confident
- Somewhat confident
- Very Confident
- Not applicable, I was not socially active before COVID

6. If you answered, 'Not confident at all' or 'Not too confident' to the previous question, can you explain why?

7. Are you as socially active as you would like to be?

- Yes
- No

8. If you answered 'No' how could the community help you become more socially active? (Click all that apply)

- Reduce the cost of social activities
- Increase the variety of social activities that would be of interest to you
- Increase access to convenient and accessible transportation to activities
- Increase access to affordable transportation
- Have more activities/volunteer opportunities close to your home
- Increase the amount of culturally appropriate programs/activities
- Better advertising of current programs and activities happening in your area
- Provide support to you as a caregiver, to arrange time for you to participate in social activities
- Provide more programs, or advertise programs that are accessible for people with mobility/hearing/visual restrictions
- None of the above, I am as socially active as I want to be

Other ways the community could support you to become more socially active (please specify).

9. Do you feel as an older adult that you have a sense of belonging in the following groups? (Check all that apply)

- With your friends
- With your family
- Within your community (i.e., faith family, cultural groups, retirement circle etc.)
- Within your neighbourhood (i.e., library, bank tellers, grocery store clerks, etc.)
- With the health care system (i.e., providers, caregivers, pharmacist, etc.)

10. Do you think there are a variety of volunteer opportunities for older adults in your community?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

11. Do you think there are a variety of social activities offered for older adults in your community?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

12. Do you think there are a variety of paid work options available for older adults in your community? (i.e., mentorships, internships, teaching, consulting)

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

13. If the following activities were of interest to you, would you participate?

Volunteer Opportunities

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Social Opportunities

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Paid Work Opportunities

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

14. What types of social activities/events would you like to see more of? (Check all that apply)

- Arts/Crafts
- Social/Entertainment/Games
- Faith/Spirituality
- Traditional healing
- Cultural (i.e., beading, music, plays)
- Educational/Learning
- Exercise/Sports
- None of the above, I am satisfied with the types of activities that are available to me.
- Other social activities you would be interested in that are not listed (please specify)

15. Do you feel you could find information easily about social activities and programs in your community?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure, never tried

16. What is the best way for you to get information about activities and programs running in your area? (Check all that apply)

- Newspaper
 - Internet/Websites
 - Community social activity calendars
 - Radio
 - Library
 - Television
 - Family/Friend/Neighbour
 - Faith Group/Church
 - Billboards/Posters
 - Social Media (Facebook, Instagram)
 - Other (please specify)
-
-
-

17. Computer and Internet

Do you have access to a computer or tablet?

- Yes
- No

Do you have access to the internet?

- Yes
- No

18. How important are the following items to you?

Using the computer & internet to connect with family and friends

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

Using the computer & internet to seek out and join social activities

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

Using the computer & internet to seek out and join volunteer opportunities

- Very Important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

Learning more about the computer and internet to be socially engaged

- Very Important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

19. Are you aware that dialing 2-1-1 for non-emergency services can help connect you to community and social services in your area? (i.e. volunteer opportunities, community programming, crisis lines, food security, financial assistance, legal help, basic personal/household needs)

- Yes
- No

20. Are you aware that you can access a confidential and free Senior Safety line (1-866-299-1011) that is available 24hrs a day, 7 days a week and can provide you with information, referrals, and support in over 150 languages for older adults experiencing abuse?

- Yes
- No

21. Research suggests that people who live alone are at greater risk of being isolated. Can you tell us a little bit about your living arrangement?

- I live with my partner/spouse
 - I live with my child/children
 - I live alone
 - Other living arrangements
-

22. What is your age range (or the age range of the older adult you are completing this survey for)?

- Under55
- 55 - 60
- 61- 65
- 66 - 70
- 71- 75
- 76 - 80
- 81+
- Prefer not to say

23. How do you self-identify?

- Male
 - Female
 - 2S-LGBTQ+
 - Prefer not to say
 - Other (please specify)
-

24. Do you self-identify as Francophone?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

25. Which of these groups best describes you?

Choose one or more.

- Prefer not to say
- White
- First Nations/Metis/Inuit
- South East Asian
- South Asian
- West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
- African
- Caribbean
- Black Canadian
- Korean
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Latin American
- Filipino
- Arab
- Other (please specify) _____

26. How did you hear about this survey?

- Newspaper
- Friend/Family/Neighbour
- On-line website
- Pharmacy
- Library
- Radio
- Agency I am connected to
- Other _____

27. Are there any additional comments you would like to share? _____

28. Would you be interested in participating in older adult focus groups to discuss solutions to increase social engagement for older adults?

- Yes
- No

29. If yes, please provide your contact information so we may contact you for the focus groups.

Name _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

30. Do you wish to be entered into a draw?

- Yes
- No

31. If yes, please provide your contact information so we can contact you if you are a prize winner. Good Luck!

Name _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

THANK YOU for completing this survey.
Your feedback is greatly appreciated!