Age-Friendly Advisory Committee

MINUTES

MEETING DATE: December 4, 2024, **TIME:** 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM **LOCATION:** Zoom

CHAIR: Jane Sinclair, General Manager, Health & Emergency Services, Age-Friendly Lead

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

ATTENDANCE:

Jacqueline Berchtold, Project Coordinator, Health & Emergency Services, County of Simcoe
Kristen Corbiere, Director of Quality, Performance & Special Projects, Helping Hand Orillia.
Jackie Dusome, Director, Seniors Services, County of Simcoe
Sandra Gagnon, Regional Lead for Seniors, Ontario Health
Marshall Green, Senior Counsel and Community Representative
Holly Hartshorne, Coordinator, Assistive Technology & Aging at Home, Independent Living Services Simcoe County
Tracy Hill, Supervisor Program & Support Services, Age-Friendly Champion, County of Simcoe
Beatrice Jean, French Language Coordinator, County of Simcoe
Tom Johnson, Trustwell Seniorcare Barrie
Gwen Kavanagh, Chair, Chapter 36 Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) Barrie
Shane Little, Student Research Analyst, County of Simcoe
Councillor Sandie Macdonald, Mayor Essa Township
Sarah Orr-Shaw, Public Health Nurse, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Brenda Pufek, Acting Executive Director, CONTACT Community Services
Mandy Scott, Community Support Liaison, Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka
Jenna Wickens, Mature Minds Coordinator, CFSSC
Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director, Independent Living Services

GUEST:
Sari Russell, Executive Director, Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka
Krista Richards, Director Communications, Seniors Wish Association

Embedded PDFs are attached.

ITEM	Action Items Noted Event Dates Links
1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS All committee members were welcomed to the meeting.	
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA and PREVIOUS MINUTES **2.1. Approval of Agenda** The Agenda was approved as presented by Gwen Kavanagh	

ITEM	Action Items Noted Event Dates Links
2.2. Approval of Previous Minutes (September 25, 2024) The previous Minutes were approved as presented by Tom Johnson.	
3. PRESENTATION: Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka ***Presentation is attached to these Minutes*** Sari Russell, Executive Director Mandy Scott, Community Support Liaison Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka is a non-profit organization that works alongside individuals with hearing, speech, and communication differences, including culturally Deaf, oral deaf and hard of hearing people, their families and the community around us. Iindividuals the organization works with identify as one of four different groups: 1) Culturally Deaf: individuals who use sign language as a first or primary mode of communication and part of the deaf culture of shared language and typically shared educational background at one of the three schools in Ontario. 2) Oral Deaf: individuals who grew up in the early years using hearing aids or other spoken technology like cochlear implants or use spoken English or other language to communicate and may use different versions of sign language or other supports – i.e., text to speech, 3) Deafened: individuals who use spoken language and may have been using hearing devices over a period and hearing loss has progressed from age, accident, or injury. And do not have functional hearing to be able to use oral communication and may pursue implantation or may learn other communication strategies. 4) Hard of Hearing: individuals who grew up in language formative years with hearing aided by hearing aids who continue to use spoken language as a primary mode of communication. The progressive loss of hearing has a significant impact as well as those managing grief from loss of hearing or speech.	Tracy Hill to follow up with Sari and Mandy re: County Seniors Services presentation. County Seniors Services to follow up on Pocket Talkers for residents. Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka www.deafaccess.ca Interpreter Requests: info@deafaccess.ca All other inquires: programs@deafaccess.ca Canadian Hearing Society: interpreting@chs.ca Sari Russell: srussell@deafaccess.ca Mandy Scott: mscott@deafaccess.ca mailto:interpreting@chs.ca

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Terms such as Hearing Impaired, deaf and dumb, deaf and mute, and handicapped are not appropriate. The most effective and appropriate mode of communication is used with each client individually. Tools of communication include: • American sign language, supporting spoken English through reading and writing, speech detect software, home signs for individuals (non-formal sign language and gestures made up for individuals at their home), lip reading/facial expressions, simultaneous/total communication (using signs or borrowing from signs) and the use of speech and hearing technology. Work alongside individuals who are using hearing technology for the first time. During the pandemic, many people moved to telephone, and this was an issue for those with hearing loss. Many individuals needed the direct face to face support. Staff are equipped to use the many modes of communication with clients such as Skype, Facetime, Message Relay and Text Messaging/Email. Canada Video Relay Service - Deaf, and hard of hearing individuals can use Canada VRS to access and make telephone calls using Internet and cellphone-based technologies. VRS callers are connected with a sign language interpreter who provides real time interpretation for telephone calls. https://srvcanadavrs.ca/en/ Arranging for sign-language interpreters – **Deaf Access Simcoe** Canadian Hearing Society (interpreting@chs.ca) can provide basis and interpreting services outside of this region and on an urgent/emergency basis. Work with interpreters to ensure we are communicating directly to individuals with hearing loss and pass along information that is shared and interpret and share all that is taking place in the environment/room. Percent of individuals who will have some degree of hearing loss: • By age 55 to 64, 10% of individuals already have a disabling hearing loss. This will impact the ability of these individuals to participate in group activities. • By age 65-74, 37% of individuals will have mild-moderate hearing loss and may be able to get by with a hearing aid in a quiet	

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environment, but may have difficulty in louder environments/wind, etc. 22% will have disabling hearing loss with significant hearing loss. • By age 75+, 60% will have mild-moderate hearing loss and 55% will have disabling hearing loss. These individuals will require appropriate technology (hearing aids, implants), and may only be possible through augmented hearing through devices (personal amplification devices) or a familiar voice. Around to support individuals that take part in programs and assist those who run the programs – how to use visual cues to incorporate into programs, ensure individuals are safe and fully included in programs (visual communication cards) for immediate communication should hearing devices not be used. Offer programs specific to senior populations: • Better Connections - connects older adults with hearing loss with others experiencing similar hearing loss, learning to use hearing tools, accessibility features on phones). • Health Care Coordination Program (supports individuals to book medical appointments, book interpreters for medical appointments and medical pre-screening for procedures, etc.). • Community Support Services – Direct support and programming. • Peer to Peer Network – Connecting individuals with hearing loss who have shared interests, struggles, and experiences. Pocket Talkers – the grey models are more user-friendly than the white ones (Well Wise – Shoppers Drug Mart). These use full headphones with a microphone that can be used by those speaking. These devices appear to be easier to use for older adults who have issues with their fine motor skills. These can be used only when needed. For example, hear aids are always in and not able to choose what an individual may or may not want to listen to. Hearing aids can be lost or difficult to use/change batteries and more expensive. Other tools that can help those hard of hearing – flashing lights before coming into a room to alert them, strobe lights attached to doorbells to alert when someone is at the door. Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka: www.deafaccess.ca	

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Interpreter Requests: info@deafaccess.ca All other inquires: programs@deafaccess.ca Sari Russell: srussell@deafaccess.ca Mandy Scott: mscott@deafaccess.ca	
4. PRESENTATION: Seniors Wish Association Krista Richards, Director Communications Senior Wish was started in 2011 by Barbara Richards. Seniors Wish has three (3) main programs and some smaller programs such as surprise spring cookies delivered to seniors' homes and food trucks and ice-cream socials to seniors' homes. 1. **Wish Granting** – wishes granted for various activities (i.e., visit horses, ride a motorcycle, walk the skywalk) that incorporates community involvement in helping wishes to come true. 2. **Memory Book Program** – Take someone from the public who have applied to work with seniors and a senior who would like to get their life story written. Volunteer would ask questions and get photographs to help create the life story book for the senior. 3. **Bags of Love** – This program is entirely volunteer run and ramps up November/December. Names are submitted through Long-Term Care Homes, Ontario Works, Paramedics, Red Cross, VON and in the Community who identify seniors who are alone, lonely and/or isolated. Seniors Wish went form 75 bags in the first year and is now serving approx. 2,000 seniors. All items can be donated throughout donation boxes set up in the community and all items donated are new. Lists of names are submitted to Seniors Wish from Seniors Homes/Long-Term Care Homes. Will also provide to low-income housing (with gifts that may be specific like a winter jacket, boots, etc.). Name are kept confidential with the only information provided is first name and last initial, age and gender. There is no monetary value attached to any of the Bags of Love and up to the donator to fill the bag. Seniors Wish receives monetary donations throughout the year and through donation boxes in the community. This week at Environmental Systems Corp. on Mapleview Street in Barrie to house the many bags with a team of volunteers sorting the bags for the various areas.	County Health & Emergency Services – donate items to Seniors Wish.

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Volunteer "elves" will be delivering them to the various places at the end of the week (usually first week of December). Seniors Wish serves most of Simcoe County – Angus, Collingwood, Orillia, Wasaga Beach, Sandy Cove, Innisfil, New Lowell, Clearview, and Barrie. Names are received daily, and Seniors Wish continues to provide gifts and wishes. County Health & Emergency Services will donate a box of County items to Seniors Wish. How to donate: various locations in the Community and Environmental Systems Corp. on Mapleview in Barrie. Sports teams in the community donate items. Example of donations (new items) – Cash donations, games, books, larger sizes of pajamas, pajamas, accessibility pajamas, socks, non-slip socks, toiletries, slippers, stuffed animals, dolls. Website: https://aseniorwish.com/ Email Seniors Wish: https://aseniorwish.com/contact/ Krista Richards: krista.richards68@gmail.com	
5. PRESENTATION: CFS Programming Jenna Wickens, BRLS, Certified Professional Consultant on Ageing, MatureMinds Coordinator, CFS Counselling + Wellbeing CFS Toiletries Bags of Love Drive – CFS collects and contributes toiletries to Seniors Wish. CFS also designed a Christmas card for Seniors Wish. Share the Love (February) – An intergenerational connection. CFS took this program over from Barrie Police. Elementary School students create Valentines Card that are distributed to older adults and older adult residences across Simcoe County. CFS partners with Collier Place that will assist in making Valentines Cards. Last February, 3,000 cards were delivered in Barrie. Generations Over Dinner – This program is run in partnership with Collier Place and Big Brother / Big Sister. An open access concept created by a non-profit organization in the US. A group from various	Website: https://cfssc.ca/ Jenna Wickens: jwickens@cfssc.ca

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generations is invited to a sit-down dinner. As an icebreaker/conversation starter, the meal is started by raising a glass to someone who has passed (family, friend, pet, colleague, anyone). Different topics of conversation are covered throughout the dinner. Dinner finishes by choosing a person to the right or left and voicing what they like about them. Grandpals Program – Innisfil, Barrie and Midland run. Opportunity for older adults to volunteer and share their life stores with a group of students. The students then capture those stories in written and art projects. Anyone who would like to volunteer or knows of anyone who would like to volunteer, contact Jenna Wickens (information below). Website: https://cfssc.ca/ Jenna Wickens Email: jwickens@cfssc.ca	
6. AGE-FRIENDLY COUNTY INITIATIVES UPDATE Link: Age-Friendly Communities – Simcoe County **6.1. Age-Friendly Community Focus Groups - Shane Little** Conducting focus groups across Simcoe County that include both 5 virtual and 4 in-person. Have conducted nine focus groups so far, with in-person at Askennonia Senior Centre, County of Simcoe Administration Centre, and Simcoe Manor and Georgian Manor. 43 participates total. Some responses from Deaf Access and will be adding to Focus Groups. Focus Group participants are from Barrie, Innisfil, Orillia, Severn, Springwater, Clearview, New Tech, Midland, Pene and Wasaga Beach. Currently now in the process of data analysis and coding. Common themes: • Wanting to spend more time with loved ones. • Public benches were taken away during Covid and not returned within communities. Would like more benches. • Walker and wheelchair accessible trail paths. • Lack of public transportation options in rural areas. LINX seen as a good service but would like more advertising on how to access information.	Age-Friendly Communities – Simcoe County Will connect with Sandy Cove Acres to conduct a Focus Group. Shane will contact Marshall Green re: Barrie.

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• Modifications to make homes more accessible like chairlifts/stairlifts, smart home technology, non-slip flooring. • Struggling to find communication information/activities. Many do not know how to access online. Newspapers were their source of resources, but most are no longer running. • Family doctors are most preferred level of health services. • Most concerned about affording Long-Term Care, support services and housing costs. Next Steps: Analysis of focus group data and merging data with survey data from Community Survey run in 2023. Will be building a comprehensive report with info graphics. Specific regional data will be included with the specific region's municipality report. Will connect with Sandy Cove Acres to conduct a Focus Group. **6.2. Age-Friendly Recognition Awards Program - Tracy Hill** The Recognition Awards Ceremony will take place January 28th, 2025 at the County of Simcoe Administration Centre Atrium. Thank you to the Committee in helping to spread the word about this program. Currently there are **13** Individuals and **10** Businesses that will be recognized. We are looking to the Advisory Committee to help us grow this Program in 2025. The more focus we can provide to businesses with age-friendly components and initiatives, the greater promotion of awareness of the needs of a more inclusive community. **January 28 – Age-Friendly Recognition Awards Ceremony** **See the attached invitation. RSVP to 705-726-9300 ext. 1211** (Catherine Ivanyshyn) **or email agefriendly@simcoe.ca** **6.3. 2025 Initiatives Schedule - Tracy Hill** **The 2025 Advisory Committee Meetings have been scheduled as follows:**	**January 28 – Age-Friendly Recognition Awards Ceremony** RSVP to 705-726-9300 ext. 1211 (Catherine Ivanyshyn) **or email** agefriendly@simcoe.ca

ITEM	Action Items Noted Event Dates Links
• March 20, 2025 • June 19, 2025 • September 18, 2025 • December 4, 2025 The **Age-Friendly Municipal Grant Program** will launch January 1st and will be open until March 1st. The **Age-Friendly Seniors Housing Grant Program** will be open February 1st – March 31st. This program is growing considerably each year with 150 applicants this past year. The **Business and Individual Recognition Program** will run June 1st to September 1st with the Awards Ceremony taking place in October (date to be determined).	
7. WHAT'S HAPPENING (local community initiatives) **ROUNDTABLE** Tom Johnson, Trustwell Seniorcare (Seniors for Seniors) As of December 1st, Seniors for Seniors will now be known as Trustwell Senior Care. The parent company (Spectrum) has moved away from Seniors for Seniors brand. Website: https://www.trustwellseniorcare.ca/ Councillor Sandie Macdonald, Mayor Essa Township The Innisfil Library has been conducting many activities this fall/winter. Added a new exercise program into the Thornton Arena. A chair exercise and a walking group has been added. Continuously looking for initiatives for seniors to participate in and run Christmas donation program of gifts to local seniors' residences. Pickle ball is popular and will be planning a tournament in the near future. Beatrice Jean, French Language Coordinator, County of Simcoe Working with the CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association) to run a francophone mental health workshop at Georgian Village.	

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Gwen Kavanagh, Chair, Chapter 36 CARP Barrie CARP is working on the Senior Community Fund, which raises money for seniors living at or below the poverty line, will be looking at ways to raise money for this program and will be looking at how to make this a registered charity. Seniors Housing Alliance – making progress on looking at creative options for aging well and working with local developers and Habitat for Humanity. Affordable Housing for Seniors will be brought to Council with hopes to have shovels in the ground by Fall. Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director, Independent Living Services ILS hosted an online buy and sell for gently used medical devices and will be pausing/cancelling this service as of this week Friday. All current subscribers will be notified. Brenda Pufek, Executive Director, CONTACT Community Services CONTACT continues to run seniors' programs. November ran South Asian Cooking classes with a waiting list. Pickle Ball is very popular. The Pickle Ball Club offered to come and teach people. Salsa for Seniors will be run in Essa, Tottenham, Bradford and Innisfil. A magician will be attending at Bradford and Alliston with a gift of a deck of cards and a trick to take home. In January, will be doing Fresh Start Financial Literacy and Banking Safety sessions for seniors and newcomers. In March, will running the Seniors Connecting Fair in Adjala-Tosorontio and organizations are welcome to include a booth at the fair. Contact Brenda Pufek. Email: brenda@contactcommunityservices.ca Website: https://www.contactcommunityservices.ca/ Sarah Orr-Shaw, Public Health Nurse, SMDHU In November, the Health Unit sent an email out for Falls Prevention month with three short videos of older adults from around the County and the District of Muskoka for aging and wellness. The videos are on: social and emotional wellbeing, physical activity and nutrition and hydration. The videos are being shared November to end of January and then accessible through YouTube channel. Highlighted a trivia "screen loop" for those with screens and monitors that contain true and false and multiple-choice questions on aging and wellness. In November, in partnership with Georgian College, ran the low-cost dental hygiene clinic older adults. The Health Unit is restructuring, and Injury Prevention is moving to another team. Sarah will be moving to Chronic	Organizations who would like to include a booth at the **Seniors Connecting Fair** March – contact Brenda: brenda@contactcommunityservices.ca

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Disease Prevention that will include the Social Determinants of Health staff will be joining the Team to form a comprehensive health promotion team.	
8. Closing Remarks Wishing everyone a very Happy Holidays and see you in 2025!	
9. Adjournment: 12:10 p.m.	
10. Next Meeting: March 20, 2025	

deaf access simcoe muskoka

services to culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people

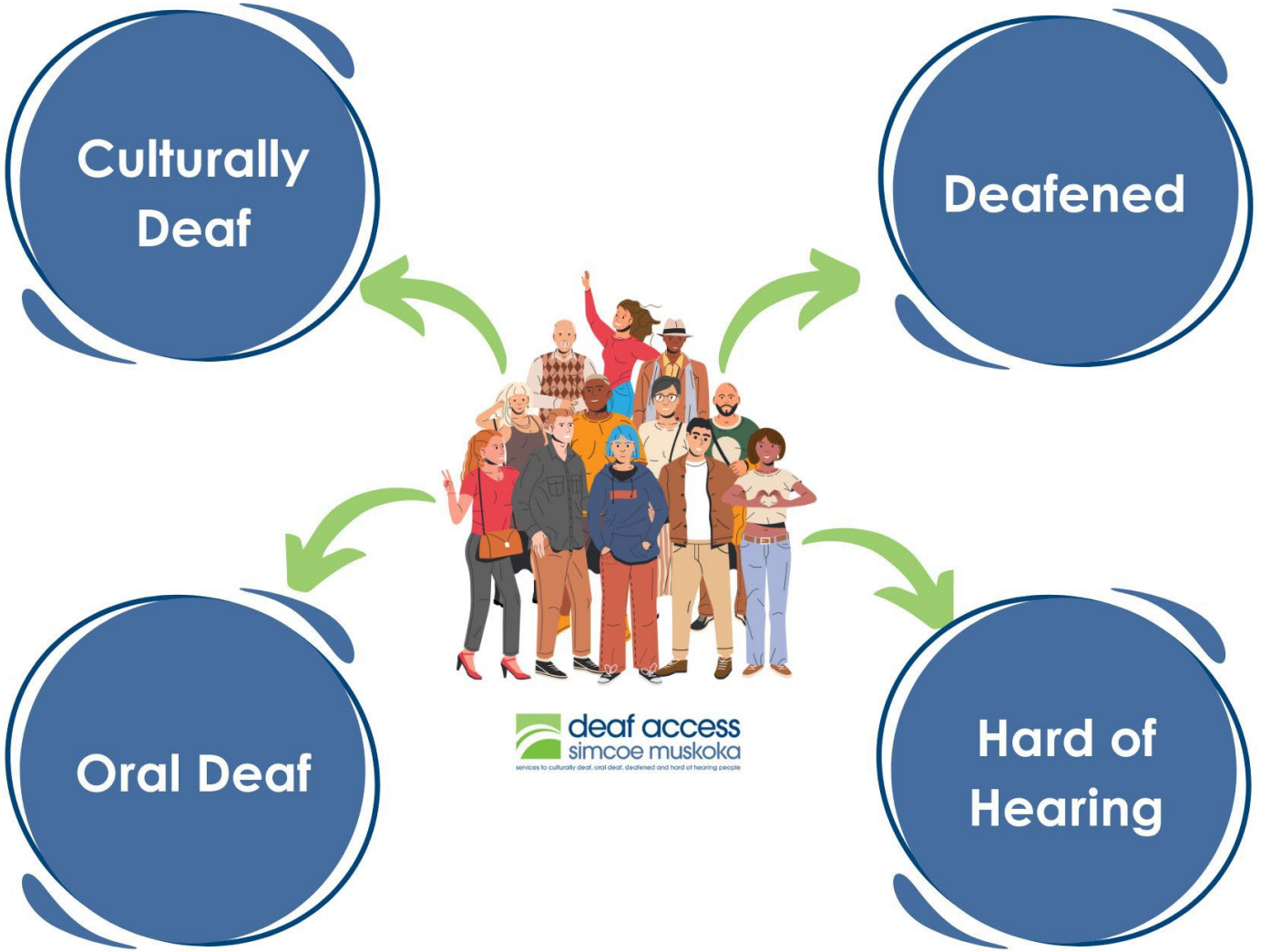
Sari Russell, Executive Director

Mandy Scott, Community Support Liaison

Who are we?

Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka is a non-profit organization that works alongside individuals with hearing, speech and communication differences, including culturally Deaf, oral deaf and hard of hearing people, their families and the community around us.

Clients Served



Inappropriate Terms…

Hearing Impaired
Deaf and Dumb
Deaf and Mute
Handicapped

Communication Modes of Clients & Staff

Sign Language is not the only language used among Deaf and Hard of hearing people:

- Reading and Writing (English)
- Gestures/Home Signs
- Lip-Reading
- Simultaneous/Total Communication
- Speech and Use of Hearing Technology

Contacting a Person with Hearing Loss

- Email/Text
- Voice Call *If individual has confirmed comfort with this*
- Deaf Access Message Relay (Community Support Team)
- Canada Video Relay Service
- Teletypewriter (TTY) *Less common*

Arranging a Sign Language Interpreter

- Within Simcoe Muskoka, Interpreters can be booked through Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka
- Demand for ASL/English Interpreters often exceeds availability, book an interpreter as soon as appointment is scheduled.
  - Recommended minimum notice is 2 to 4 weeks
- Outside of Simcoe County and Muskoka, interpreters can be booked through Canadian Hearing Services (interpreting@chs.ca)

Important to know…

Taking Sign Language is a great skill, and we recommend anyone interested to do so. It is important to keep in mind, that while knowing basic ASL is useful in greeting Deaf customers or visitors, this is not a substitute for a professional interpreter.

Use of a suitably qualified interpreter helps to ensure Deaf people are accessing the same level of information and quality of service as other clients/customers.

Working with an Interpreter – Tips!

- Speak in a normal tone and speed. If the interpreter needs you to slow down or repeat something, they will tell you.
- When using an interpreter, look directly at the Deaf person (not the interpreter)
- Speak in first and second persons, not third.
- Whatever the interpreter hears, they will interpret (including phone calls, or side conversations). Do not ask the interpreter to censor any portion of the conversation.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

deaf access simcoe muskoka

www.deafaccess.ca

Programs and services for older adults who are Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing

Email us at: programs@deafaccess.ca

Phone, Facetime or text us at: 705-644-1825

Not listed:

Employment Services

Interpreting and Notetaking

ASL Classes

Upcoming Events

ASLZOOM

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSIONS IN **SIGN LANGUAGE**

DATES & TOPICS:

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

January 27
BINGO

February 24
Heart Health

March 24
Gardening & Emotional Health

zoom

Zoom opens 10 minutes before start. Please email programs@deafaccess.ca for registration.

HARD OF HEARING SUPPORT NETWORK

Join us in-person!

Are you looking to connect with others who understand the challenges of hearing loss? Join our in-person support network groups to share experiences, learn and build friendships!

RSVP to **programs@deafaccess.ca**

January

January 20 - 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Deaf Access Office (11 Victoria St, Unit 214, Barrie, ON)
Topic: Community Services & BINGO

February

Monday, February 10 - 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Deaf Access Office (11 Victoria St, Unit 214, Barrie, ON)
Topic: Heart & Stroke Awareness

March

Monday, March 10 - 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Deaf Access Office (11 Victoria St, Unit 214, Barrie, ON)
Topic: Emotional Health with Gardening

Monday, March 31 - 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Midland Public Library (350 King Street, Midland, ON)
Topic: Emotional Health with Gardening

RSVP REQUIRED

Questions? Contact us!

Deaf Access Simcoe Muskoka

11 Victoria Street, Unit 214

Barrie, ON

705-728-3577 / 1-844-728-3511

www.deafaccess.ca

Interpreter Requests: info@deafaccess.ca

All other inquires: programs@deafaccess.ca

deaf access
simcoe muskoka
services to culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people

COUNTY OF SIMCOE

JOIN US FOR THE

Age-Friendly *Recognition Awards* Ceremony

Tuesday, January 28

5:30 p.m.

**Simcoe County Administration Centre,
1110 Highway 26, Midhurst**

Join Warden Basil Clarke in celebrating the County of Simcoe's Age-Friendly Recognition Awards

**RSVP by January 10, 2025
agefriendly@simcoe.ca**