Age-Friendly Advisory Committee

MINUTES

MEETING DATE: June 19, 2025, **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 Systems Integration & Planning, County of Simcoe
Louise Cohen, Co-Chair, Age-Friendly Orillia
Kristen Corbiere, Director of Quality, Performance and Special Projects, Helping Hands Orillia
Jackie Dusome, Director, Seniors Services, County of Simcoe
Sandra Easson-Bruno, Director, North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services (NSMSGS)
Shay Ford, Student, Health & Emergency Services, County of Simcoe
Marshall Green, Senior Counsel and Community Representative
Councillor Randy Greenlaw, Mayor Oro-Medonte
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 Services Coordinator, County of Simcoe
Mary Francis Maarup, Events Programmer, Service Simcoe, County of Simcoe
Laura MacCallum, Manager, Housing Programs, Social Housing, County of Simcoe
Sarah Orr-Shaw, Public Health Nurse, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
Brenda Pufek, CONTACT Community Services
Chris Sargent, Legislative Coordinator, Member Accessibility Advisory Table, County of Simcoe
Rebekah Vaughan, Manager, Collaboration and Partnerships, United Way Simcoe County
Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director, Independent Living Services

GUESTS:

Kassandra Barteaux, Senior Director, Business Support & Strategy Implementation, Community Health & Wellbeing, Canadian Red Cross
Asha Croggon, Director, Friendly Calls, Canadian Red Cross
Georgina Megens, Recreation Therapist, North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services Program (NSMSGS)

Guest presentations are attached to the Minutes

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & 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 Marshall Green and seconded by Councillor Randy Greenlaw **2.2. Approval of Previous Minutes** (March 20, 2025) The Minutes were approved by Marshall Green and seconded by Chris Sargant	
3. **PRESENTATION: Friendly Calls Program, Canadian Red Cross** Asha Croggon, Director, Friendly Calls, Canadian Red Cross *Presentation is attached.* The Friendly Call program and Friendly Visiting program address the impacts of social isolation and loneliness on personal wellbeing, support connection and communities, and those with skilled mental health background to help identify individual referral pathways and coping strategies to help people navigate. **Friendly Calls:** Friendly Calls is accessible coast2coast2coast providing evidence-based, culturally safe, accessible connections for people over 18. **Friendly Visiting:** Friendly Visiting re-launched post-Covid in January 2025 serving older adults in Simcoe-Muskoka region. These are run approximately an hour each about once per week. The **Friendly Calls** and **Friendly Visiting** programs are designed to foster connection, community resilience, and emotional wellbeing, especially during times of crisis. The duration of each connection is determined by the individual's needs, ensuring flexibility and personalized support. Volunteers receive comprehensive training and have access to a skilled support team for guidance and assistance.	705-721-3313 - Friendly Visiting 1-833-979-9779 – Friendly Calls (toll-free available M-F 9am-8pm) Paramedic Services referral program. Connect with County Emergency Manager re: emergency response and connecting with individuals during a severe event/weather event, etc. Add link/contact information to County Website.

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
Impact and Reach (2024): Over 3 million minutes of support were provided. More than 7,000 referral pathways were utilized to connect individuals with appropriate resources. These programs have contributed to reducing strain on the healthcare system by addressing emotional and social needs proactively. **Emergency Response Role:** During emergencies such as wildfires and ice storms, the programs provide: emotional support and coping strategies, referrals to trusted online resources, reminders for preparedness and safety. **Outcomes and Feedback:** Participants have reported feeling safer, Improved ability to cope with stress, engage across cultures, enhanced capacity to modify behavior, resiliency and make positive changes. There are opportunities for collaboration with the County of Simcoe Age-Friendly Advisory Committee to share practices and tools and cross promotion and volunteer opportunities. **Questions:** *Are there costs associated?* • There are no costs associated for the clients. *Is there a main referral number that can be used to help promote on websites such as through referral services such as County Paramedic Services?* • Main Referral numbers: 705-721-3313 - Friendly Visiting 1-833-979-9779 - Friendly Calls (toll-free available Monday – Friday 9am-8pm)	
4. **PRESENTATION: Caregiver Respite Program** Georgina Megens, Recreation Therapist, North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services Program (NSMSGS) *Presentation is attached.* The Purpose is to grow the range of appropriate and desirable respite options available to the care partners of persons living with complexity & increased frailty, and their loved ones throughout the North Simcoe Muskoka region.	Community Calendar – work with Georgina on programs. See the attached Business Recognition Awards Program Application and Nomination forms.

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
The Mission is to build the capacity of community organizations to design and implement sustainable respite options that meaningfully engage care partners and their loved one, living with complexity and increased frailty. Care partners of older adults living with complexity and/or frailty (including dementia) tend to take on much of the responsibilities such as travel, social engagement, finances, medication management, safety and supporting to respite opportunities. Goal is to support the caregiver as much as possible to help with early admissions to long-term care/hospital and helps alleviate caregiver fatigue and health issues. More needs to be done to support caregiver and provide opportunities to assist in enjoying meaningful time together in meaningful environments in their communities to help reduce stress and support of safe ageing in place. Have seen success with partnerships such as Bradford Greenhouse, the MacLaren Art Centre and Quest. Assist with applying for grants to help to continue to support these opportunities for respite. More opportunities in recreation therapy are being researched, i.e., horse therapy, music, art galleries, garden centres, Wye Marsh, etc. with patient, family council, and caregivers to help understand barriers and adapt programming to meet their needs. Work with Alzheimer Society, for example, to help adapt programs to the needs of caregivers and their loved ones. This program is currently more a project, and the goal is to make it self-sustainable in the community. The goal is to have organizations promote it and make it known locally. May be looking into an opportunity / tool for a dedicated caregiver/respite activity calendar. Would like to grade the activities on what activity a loved one can attend. **Questions and Comments:** Referrals – The County will help promote these programs through brochures and referrals through County Long-Term Care Respite, Adult Day and Home and Community Care Programs. Will promote through a link on the Age-Friendly Activity Calendar. These Businesses mentioned in the presentation and located in the County may quality for nomination for an Age-Friendly Business Recognition Award.	

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
Transportation is an issue for older adults and will discuss how we can link some of the County transportation services to assist with transporting individuals and their caregivers. Helping Hands in Orillia can partner with accessible transportation to assist with these programs.	
5. AGE-FRIENDLY COUNTY INITIATIVES UPDATE Link: Age-Friendly Communities – Simcoe County **5.1. County of Simcoe WHO Designation** Simcoe County - Age-Friendly World The County of Simcoe is now part of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities. They wanted to see all Age-Friendly programs to date. Must annually provide updates on all age-friendly projects. **5.2. Business & Individual Recognition Program** The **2025 Age-Friendly Business and Individual Recognition** Program will launch June 1st with a deadline of August 31st, 2025. The Age-Friendly Recognition Awards Ceremony will take place October 7th. Age-Friendly Businesses - Simcoe County Individual Recognition Awards Program - Simcoe County This year, we are excited to be adding a Youth Award. The **Age-Friendly Business and Organization Awards Program** helps Business owners to assess if their business or organization is designed to serve individuals of all ages and abilities through the Age-Friendly Business Recognition Program self-evaluation checklist. The **Age-Friendly Individual Recognition and Achievement Program** recognizes an individual who demonstrates an outstanding commitment to creating age-friendly communities, enriches the lives of older adults in their community, demonstrates leadership in and a commitment to age-friendly development, projects and/or initiatives in their community(s), improves the overall quality of life of vulnerable older adult residents and the community as a whole, devotes their time to selfless voluntary service, serves as a role model and champion for others within their community(s) and exemplifies the spirit of community service.	Age-Friendly Initiatives: Age-Friendly Communities – Simcoe County WHO: Simcoe County - Age-Friendly World Age-Friendly Activities Calendar: https://agefriendlyactivities.simcoe.ca/ To assist with contacting businesses and help with spreading the word, contact tracy.hill@simcoe.ca

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
We are looking to Committee Members for support of this program and assistance with connecting with the local businesses to help spread the word about this Recognition Program. Please contact tracy.hill@simcoe.ca. **5.3. Age-Friendly Activity Calendar** Launched June 1st - https://agefriendlyactivities.simcoe.ca/ Now in the process of getting this out in the Community and continue to work on building the calendar. **5.4. 2025-2030 Positive Ageing Strategy Update** 2025-2030 Positive Ageing Strategy is now complete and going to Council. Within this strategy, we are seeing 40 completed priorities, 83 complete and ongoing and 23 are in progress. We are working on getting this out to the Community and will bring this to any upcoming Seniors Information Days. **5.5. Grant Programs** **5.5.1. Municipal Grant Program** Launched January 1st and closed May 31st, 2025. Received 4 applications this year. County Council approved $50,000 annually for municipalities who are approved to receive up to $10,000 for programs geared toward older adults in their municipality and/or to create a community engagement survey to determine community needs. This Municipal Grant is open to all 16 member municipalities in the County of Simcoe. **5.5.2. Seniors Housing Grant Program** Launched March 1st and closed May 31st, 2025. Received 142 applications this year. Currently working on reviewing all applications. The Age-Friendly Seniors Housing Grant program was recommended within the Simcoe County 2018-2023 Positive Aging Strategy, which identified a number of recommendations for the County and its municipalities to prepare for the region's aging population. County Council has approved $500,000 per year to assist older adults 60+ fund projects that incorporate accessible, adaptable and inclusive designs, which allow them to live independently in their communities for as long as possible. Applicants are homeowners of principal residences in the	

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
County of Simcoe who reside in the home and landlords of principal residences who rent to those aged 60 or older. Grant amounts are distributed based on the number of applications received and ability to meet funding criteria. This grant is open to all residents residing in the 16 municipalities of the County of Simcoe only. This program is growing each year.	
6. WHAT'S HAPPENING (local community initiatives) **ROUNDTABLE** **Marshall Green, Senior Counsel and Community Representative** Continues to work with the local Chapter of CARP on a pilot program for a seniors housing initiative. A developer has offered a lot near downtown Barrie. Development team has been working with Community & Social Housing Dept. on funding for a portion of the building that will be a private public partnership. Continue to look into more funding incentives. Applications are being drawn and a groundbreaking coming up with date to be determine. **Mary Francis Maarup, Events Programmer, Service Simcoe, County of Simcoe** Heritage Hangout partnered with NSMSGS and pilot is running every Monday in September. Will be inviting give (5) participants experiencing Dementia. First part of the program will be a tour/walks and last part will be an activity while the caregivers will be out taking a bit of a break while their loved one is involved in the activity. **Sandra Easson-Bruno, Director, North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services (NSMSGS)** A large 2-day conference coming up June 24-25 at Rama in partnership with the Alzheimer Society. Expecting 250-300 attendees each day at Rama. Looking at strategies and healthcare design with health team partners. Will be engaging older adults on Day 1 in the afternoon and will be screening a Documentary "Taking Care". **Jane Sinclair, General Manager, Health & Emergency Services, Age-Friendly Lead** Georgian Manor recently completed the construction of a 16-bed addition and now operates at 162 beds. Continue with the Simcoe Village	

ITEM	Action Items, Noted Events & Links
Redevelopment with an expansion from 124 beds to 160 beds. A larger amount of seniors housing components will be offered. This new Campus will be scheduled to open 2026/2027 in a phased construction. Simcoe Village Campus Redevelopment - Simcoe County **Brenda Pufek, CONTACT Community Services** Now scheduled to launch the first Seniors Ukelele class in Wasaga Beach at the Rec Plex downtown. This will run for 4 weeks in 4 different areas. Recently held the 2nd annual Seniors Connecting Fair in Adjala Tosorontio and worked with Mayor Sandie Macdonald and the Township of Essa to create this fair. There was a great response and provided cab service, food, chair yoga and about 15 different organizations. Just launched 3rd annual Grand Parade fundraiser that support seniors in need within the communities. This takes place September 20 – Collingwood, Bradford and Alliston simultaneously. Note funds raised last year helped to set up an individual in need with a place to live. Collingwood (CONTACT Community Services Collingwood) - TGP 2025 Bradford (CONTACT Community Services Bradford) - TGP 2025 Alliston (CONTACT Community Services Alliston) - TGP 2025	Simcoe Village Campus Redevelopment - Simcoe County Grand Parade – September 20th Collingwood, Bradford and Alliston.
7. Closing Remarks	
8. Adjournment: 12:05 pm	
9. Next Meeting: September 18th, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm	

Public

FRIENDLY CALLS & VISITING PROGRAMS

Building community, one contact at a time.

Connecting Simcoe

Highlights of Friendly Calls & Visiting

June 19, 2025

Public

Public

Friendly Calls & Friendly Visiting

Friendly Calls is accessible coast2coast2coast providing evidence-based, culturally safe, accessible connections for people over 18.

Friendly Visiting re-launched post-Covid in January 2025 serving older adults in Simcoe-Muskoka region.

Both address the impacts of social isolation and loneliness on personal wellbeing, communities and the health care system.

Public

Public

“Friendly Calls is very much a lifeline. I’m so appreciative of what the program has done for me.

Those calls saw me through one of the most difficult times of my life.”

- Participant

Public

Public

Enhancing Wellbeing & Connectedness

- Protection through Connection

  Address the impact of social isolation and loneliness through evidence-based emotional support, coping strategies and strengthened connections.

- Strengthen Community Resilience

  Engage with community partners to identify referral pathways and provide enhanced support to at-risk community members everyday and during extreme weather events.

- Reduce strain on Health Care System

  Reduce significant impact of social isolation and loneliness on Canadian health care system.

Public

Public

Impact

Social Isolation & Loneliness

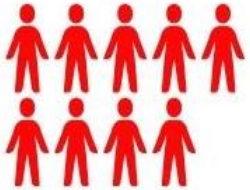
Equivalent to smoking **15 cigarettes** a day

26% increase in **anxiety & depression**

30+% increase in **stroke & heart disease**

50% increase in **dementia**

Friendly Calls



96.4%

Satisfied with the program

Public

“This program exemplifies everything the Red Cross does. They’re focused on people. They do what they do and they do it well.

It’s a vital service.”

- Participant

Public

Public

Friendly Calls & Friendly Visiting FY25 Highlights

(FC:Apr 1/24 – Mar 31/24; FV:Jan1/25-May 30/25)

FC Centre

Access to skilled FC staff for intakes/vol support
Bilingual
M-F 9am-9pm local time
Culturally safe
National database

2.9+m/31,980
mins of support

79,961/380
Contacts

36,086/33
People Supported

1133/13
Skilled Volunteers

Public

Public

FC Prepare & Care Calls

106 **Prepare Calls**
Preparedness calls before significant climate events

608 **Care Calls**
Check physical/emotional well-being, provide resources, coping strategies during extreme events

3 **Surge Support for Response**
Interoperable with CRC Response, FC staff/volunteers deploy virtually/in-person

> *"It's scary out there …. I didn't know how I was going to get to appointments and get food and things. I know where to call now, what I can do. It helps to talk."*
>
> *- FC Participant during Ontario Ice Storm P&C call*

Public

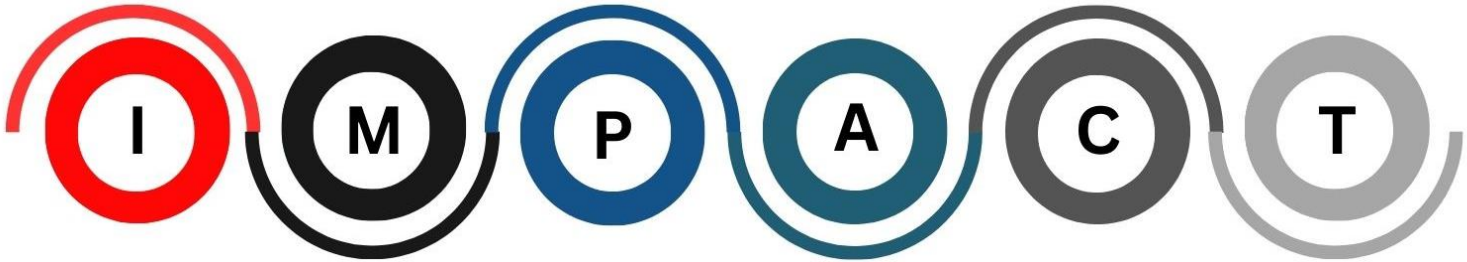
Public

Process

INTAKE
Responsive, trauma-informed intake by skilled staff via national toll-free

PLANS
Collaborative, person-centred plans to strengthen coping & healthy habits

CONNECTION
Ongoing connection (1 call or 1 visit/week) mutually agreed upon



MATCH
Participants matched with a trained volunteer for regular social calls

ACCESS
Referral pathways to community resources addressing needs & barriers

TRANSITION
Agreed close with coping strategies, resources and community support

Public

Public

Making a Difference

Public

Public

Opportunities for Collaboration

SHARING INFORMATION

Share promising practices, needs, tools and resources.

CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Ease participant access to appropriate programs and services.

SHARE THE MESSAGE

Share volunteer opportunities and promote program information.

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS IN SIMCOE COUNTY

Public

Learn More

FRIENDLY CALLS

1.833.979.9779

E: Friendlycalls@redcross.ca

FRIENDLY VISITING

705.721.3313

E: Simcoe@redcross.ca

Public

CANADIAN RED CROSS
CROIX-ROUGE CANADIENNE

Community Caregiver Respite Program

Simcoe County Age-Friendly Advisory Committee Meeting

Georgina Megens BFA, BSc, CTRS
Recreation Therapist, North Simcoe
Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services
gmegens@nsmsgs.ca 705-427-2809

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Alzheimer Society Simcoe County

Alzheimer Society Muskoka

Partner Organizations

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Health care team with specialized knowledge and skills who assess, diagnose and treat older adults living with complexity and/or frailty in the NSM region, and their care partners.

Alzheimer Societies of Muskoka and Simcoe County

The Alzheimer Society supports people living with dementia and their care partners through programs and services offered across their regions.

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Alzheimer Society Simcoe County

Alzheimer Society Muskoka

The Genesis of an Idea:

- Health care teams/funding alone can't meet the **growing needs of older adults** with complexity and frailty and their care partners.
- Older adults living with complexity and/or frailty and care partners need opportunities to **enjoy meaningful time** together in normalized community-based activities and environments to reduce stress and support safe aging-in-place.
- We have seen **success in our partnerships** with organizations like Bradford Greenhouse, MacLaren Art Centre and Quest.
- There is **untapped potential and interest** in local community groups and organizations to support older adults.
- There is also **funding for programming** that is not being accessed locally.
- Can we **collaborate in new ways** with new community partners to create new opportunities to improve health outcomes for older adults and their care partners.

Bradford Greenhouses

"Staff from all orgs. Seemed to trust that there was an equitable contribution – even though each partner org. contributed differently."

"All of the staff that came from Bradford were amazing. They were all so kind to the participants, very helpful and very efficient."

"It made me think of my parents garden"

Bradford Paper Link:

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Alzheimer Society Simcoe County

Alzheimer Society Muskoka

The Challenge

It is difficult for **care partners** of older adults living with complexity and/or frailty (including dementia) to **enjoy meaningful time** with their **loved one** in normalized **community**-based activities and environments.

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Alzheimer Society Simcoe County

Alzheimer Society Muskoka

The Purpose

To **grow the range of** appropriate and desirable **respite options available to** the **care partners** of persons living with complexity & increased frailty, and their **loved ones** throughout the **North Simcoe Muskoka region**.

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Alzheimer Society Simcoe County

Alzheimer Society Muskoka

The Mission

To **build the capacity** of community organizations to **design and implement** sustainable respite options that meaningfully **engage** care partners and their loved one, living with complexity and increased frailty.

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Alzheimer Society Simcoe County

Alzheimer Society Muskoka

The Vision

To foster a **growing network** of **innovative respite options** that enable care partners to take a break from caregiving duties, to meaningfully enjoy time with their loved one in a **normalized community-based activities and environments.**

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Alzheimer Society Simcoe County

Alzheimer Society Muskoka

THEORY OF CHANGE

THE PURPOSE

To **grow the range of** appropriate and desirable **respite options available to** the **care partners** of persons living with dementia, and their **loved ones** throughout the **North Simcoe Muskoka region.**

THE CHALLENGE

It is difficult for **care partners** of people living with dementia to **enjoy meaningful time** with their **loved one** in normalized **community**-based activities and environments.

To grow the range of appropriate and desirable **respite options** available for this target population we must **work together** to **build the capacity** (knowledge, skills, resources) of organizations across our **region**.

THE MISSION

Our mission is to **build the capacity** of community organizations to **design and implement** sustainable respite options that meaningfully **engage** care partners and their loved one, living with dementia.

THE VISION

Our vision is to foster a **growing network** of **innovative respite options** that enable care partners to take a break from caregiving duties, to meaningfully enjoy time with their loved one in **normalized community -based activities and environments.**

WE AIM TO

- **Reach out** to local programs and organizations to assess their interest in adapting their programming to meet the needs of care partners of persons living with dementia, and their loved ones.
- **Offer** our **support** to help organizations **acquire the resources** (e.g., walking poles, ipads) they require to adapt/augment their programming.
- Provide **one-on-one coaching** to help organizations **design new and enhance existing** programming to better accommodate the dual needs of care partners and their loved ones.
- **Bring organizations together** to share ideas, learn from, and support each other. Forming a network of regional partners.
- **Follow** the progress of new and enhanced **respite initiatives** to understand the experiences of care partners and their loved ones.

Community-Engaged Health Promotion

ANTICIPATED CHANGE

If this initiative is successful we will have **accomplish** the following:

- **Increased** the **number** of appropriate and desirable **respite options** for this target population across the region.
- **Improved capacity** (knowledge, skills, resources) of **community organizations** to design and offer **innovative respite** options.
- **Nurtured** a **network** of like-minded community partners.
- **Created awareness** about new respite options amongst members of the **target population**.
- Helped **facilitate better health and health experiences** for care partners of persons living with dementia, and their loved ones
- **Promoted** the **efficient** use of health services.

WE KNOW THAT

When Care Partners of People Living with Dementia are able to participate in respite opportunities that:

- *prioritize <u>their</u> self-care*
- *offer supportive & engaging activities for themselves and their loved one*
- *ensure that their loved one is safe and meaningfully engaged*

Care partners are more likely to:

- experience positive health outcomes
- avoid unnecessary declines in their overall health
- experience positivity in the care role

Persons Living with Dementia are more likely to:

- experience posive health and care outcomes

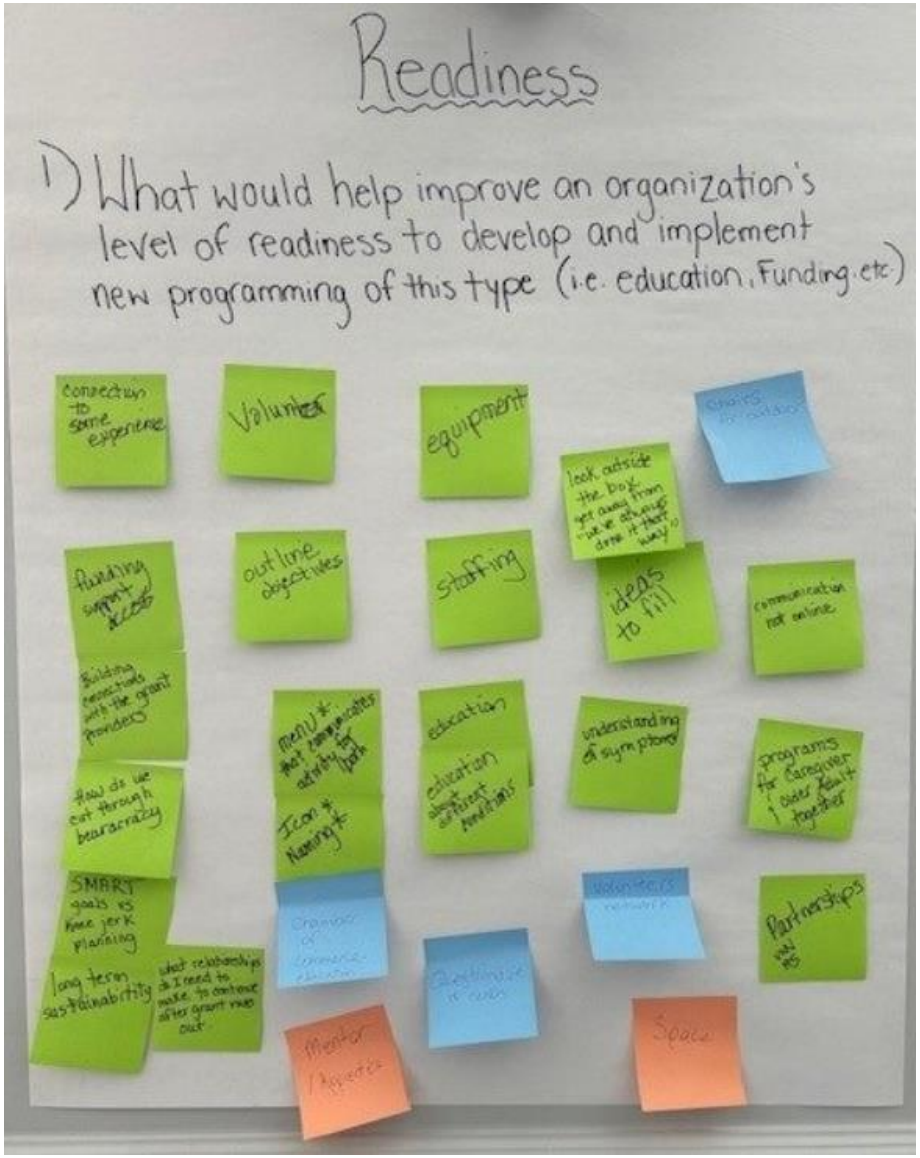
Communities are more likely to:

- benefit from the active presence and engagement of Care Partners and Persons living with Dementia

Time for Chang

Building Bridges For Caregivers

June 2 · Hawk Ridge Golf Club



North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services

Alzheimer Society Simcoe County

Alzheimer Society Muskoka

let the cat go

MACLAREN | ART CENTRE

Wandering
Nature Therapy Walks

BACK OF BEYOND
EQUINE CENTRE

PPL
BPP

SIMCOE COUNTY
MUSEUM
Take the Infinite Journey

Concerts in Care
ONTARIO

St. Paul's
United Church

QUEST ART
SCHOOL +GALLERY

HC
Huntsville
Community Choir

caregiVR

THE COLLINGWOOD
LEISURE TIME CLUB

Askennonia
Senior Centre

MUSKOKA
HERITAGE PLACE

NOTTAWASAGA VALLEY
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

ORILLIA

WYE MARSH

CFS Counselling + Wellbeing

Bradford Greenhouses
GARDEN GALLERY

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