

Seniors' Voice

Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA) Newsletter

Message from the Chair

Winter 2009 Volume 2

It is very exciting for me to address you in this our Winter 2009 newsletter of the Hamilton Council on Aging. The Council is still a relatively new organization that promises to be a force for improving the lives of older adults in Hamilton. We are in the process of launching our newest project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation called "Age Friendly Hamilton" and it is an exciting prospect to be on the cutting edge of promoting services and programs that will help make Hamilton one of the most age friendly cities in Canada! Our other projects are continuing thanks to support from the Hamilton Community Foundation and the United Way of Hamilton/Burlington and countless volunteers.

We have hired our first full time Executive Director, Debbie Christie, who will work with the Board of Directors in implementing the activities of the Council and help to build a strong and enduring organization. I am delighted to welcome Debbie who has her Master of Social Work with a focus on gerontology. In her previous experience, working in Long Term Care, Public Health and as the Chairperson of the Council Against Abuse of Older Persons, she has proved to be an effective advocate for the rights and self determination of older persons in our community. Debbie will be invaluable in helping the HCoA move forward.

St. Peter's Hospital continues to generously provide the Council with office space and administrative support. We are very appreciative of this partnership, and pleased to be working collaboratively with an organization whose mission of "Enhancing Lives" complements so well the aims of HCoA.

HCoA held its first Annual General Meeting on October 22, 2008 and Jim Hamilton, Special Advisor, Healthy Aging, for the Public Health Agency of Canada gave his address on "Age Friendly Communities in Canada and around the World". This event helped us to launch our project and the buzz in the room signaled that we are moving in the right direction. In June 2009, HCoA will host a public event to provide the public and our members with a report card of the progress of the Council. We will let you be the judge about what effects HCoA is having on the community. However at this time I can assure you that we are moving ahead to address the key issues

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The Hamilton Council on Aging is a United Way Agency



Funding provided for Tackling Poverty Together Project



Funding provided for Age Friendly Hamilton Project

affecting seniors that emerged from our initial consultations. We continue to work towards ensuring older adults know the resources to help them be financially independent and secure; we are working with diverse community groups to educate about access to health and social services and we continue to advocate for universal access to home support services; safe and affordable housing; and accessible transportation. These important issues continue to guide our activities and efforts. And I am proud to say that all our projects have been implemented with the help of senior volunteers.

Our membership campaign is underway and we hope you, our readers, will join the Council and encourage other individuals and organizations to join as well. We also hope that many of you will volunteer to assist the Council in the programs described above and in our other activities. We look forward to your participation and support as the Council works to fulfill its mission of "...educating and advocating for improved aging experiences for older adults through a collaborative network of individuals and organizations."

- Dr. Carolyn J. Rosenthal
President of the Board



GET INVOLVED!

If you are interested in participating in the activities of the Hamilton Council on Aging or receiving information from the Council, please call 905-777-3837, ext. 12238 or complete the form below, and return by mail or fax to:

Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA)
c/o St. Peter's Hospital, 88 Maplewood Avenue, Hamilton ON L8M 1W9
Fax: 905-575-5121

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

- Add me to the mailing list
- I would be interested in volunteering with the Council
- I would be interested in participating on a project steering committee

Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA) CURRENT ACTIVITIES

A NEW PROGRAM!

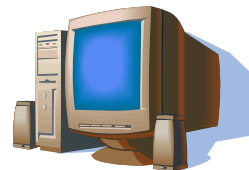
The Hamilton Council on Aging has been very fortunate to receive support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to implement a 2-year project to begin a journey towards an **Age Friendly Hamilton**. This project will include multi-sector community roundtable discussions and focus groups. The Roundtable will represent seniors, policy makers, planners, as well as business, community and neighbourhood leaders. **Age Friendly Hamilton** will be informed by eight sets of performance indicators developed and evaluated by the Work Health Organization (WHO) as follows:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation
5. Respect and Social Inclusion
6. Civic Participation and Employment
7. Communication and Information
8. Community and Health Services

Other Projects: We continue to recruit volunteers to assist seniors in Hamilton for the **Tackling Poverty Project**. This project helps seniors who are not accessing income benefits such as Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and other income and social benefits to which they may be entitled. Volunteer training for this initiative is ongoing. If you are interested in helping please contact us. Our aim in this year is to reach out to eligible seniors and assist these seniors in applying for benefits.

HCoA with United Way Funding has implemented strategies to address issues of **Access to Community Supports** in four sites and plans to expand this awareness project in more sites this year. This project helps seniors' services consider issues of culture, language, social isolation, transportation and other systemic barriers that may limit access by some cultural groups to their services. Where appropriate, seniors from the diverse community are recruited as volunteers to provide outreach to their own communities. At the same time, education to agencies and service providers will aim to improve their ability to address the needs of diverse seniors.

For more information, or if you are a senior or interested in volunteering in any of these programs, please call Jahan Zeb at the Hamilton Council on Aging, (905) 777-3837, x12238.



Visit our website at www.coahamilton.ca to find other information about **HCoA**. The purpose of the website is to raise awareness about the Council and key priorities and activities. It will provide regular information and updates on our programs, services and opportunities for seniors to be involved and active in our community.

Senate Report on Aging

In November 2006, the Special Senate Committee on Aging was created by the Federal Government with a broad mandate to review a wide range of complex issues of aging, ranging from financial security and retirement to chronic diseases and palliative care, to determine if we are providing the right programs and services at the right time to the individuals who need them. By examining these issues through a public health lens, the Committee will review public programs and services for seniors, identify the gaps that exist in meeting their needs, and examine the implications for service delivery in the future as the population ages.

HCoA was invited and presented to this committee during the process.

The Committee released an interim report in February 2007, *Embracing the Challenge of Aging*, summarizes the findings of the first phase of the study. That report identified overarching questions, organized into the four broad themes: defining seniors; the diversity of seniors and their needs; promising policy approaches; and the role of the federal government. Using these four questions to frame its work, the Committee undertook to examine these issues in more detail in the second phase of its study. This included a series of hearings and a questionnaire sent to seniors' organizations across Canada to elicit their views on issues important to them and to examine and report upon the implications of an aging society in Canada.

The Committee notes that individuals and organizations are able to adapt to change. The changing needs which will arise out of the aging of the baby-boom generation provide an opportunity to think creatively about education, work, family and leisure throughout the life-course. For example, as we live in health for longer periods of time, it is conceivable that we will re-think the traditional school-work-retirement transitions to allow for greater flexibility at all stages of life.

If this were to happen, the aging of the population will not only be a challenge to be embraced, but an opportunity to be seized.

The interim report is the result of the Committee's work during the second phase. In this report, the Committee identifies key public policy issues with respect to the aging of the population and presents a set of potential options for addressing them. The issues and options contained in this report have been raised by witnesses before the Committee and in responses to the questionnaire; however, there may be other valid options which have not yet come to light.

In the next, and final, phase of its study, the Committee intends to invite expert witnesses to testify at roundtable hearings and to travel throughout Canada to hear from Canadians on the issues and options to develop a comprehensive set of final recommendations. For full report details visit:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/agei-e/rep-e/repfinmar08-e.pdf>

We will keep our members informed when the final report is published, sometime in 2009.

A Portrait of Seniors in Hamilton

The 2006 Statistics Canada report is complete. The Social Planning and Research Council in Hamilton has reviewed these figures and developed a snapshot for Hamilton of our Seniors' Population.

Although the percentage increase of seniors in Hamilton since the 2001 Census has increased only slightly from 14.3% to 14.9%, this does not reflect the major jump we will see when the "baby boomers" begin to turn 65 in 2009.

The following Chart shows the communities of Hamilton and the projected increases expected in 2009.

Population Distribution of Seniors (65+) by Municipality 1996 (Actual) 2009 (Projected)

	1996	2009	% Increase
Hamilton	48,810	57,224	17%
Dundas	3,925	4,484	14%
Stoney Creek	6,235	9,218	48%
Ancaster	2,825	4,282	52%
Glanbrook	1,235	1,890	53%
Flamborough	3,260	5,667	74%
Region Total	66,275	82,775	25%

Comparative data also highlights that Hamilton's seniors' population is larger and growing at a faster rate than that of the province or the country as a whole. A recent (2006) population forecast by the Honourable Deb Matthews suggests that between 2001 and 2051, while the total population of Hamilton is anticipated to grow by 34.5%, the population 65+ will grow by 104%. While this represents a dramatic rise, the growth in the number of those aged 85 and over, will be a staggering 160%.

Poverty is always a concern at any age; for older adults it poses risks to health and wellness. Financial resources are not only related to health but also to the possibility of being active as individuals age. Seniors, and particularly some sub-groups like senior women living alone are at greater risk of financial insecurity than others in society.

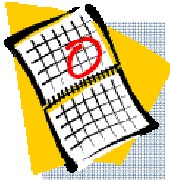
Financial well-being is a critical ingredient for health, wellness and security for seniors. Income is one of the most important health determinants and the basis of an individual's ability to access appropriate housing and transportation required to maintain independence; nutritious and sufficient food to maintain health; and non-insured medical services and supports such as medication and home support.

Although the financial situation of seniors has improved significantly in the past 25 years, being in low-income on an ongoing basis has implications. Approximately one-in-six seniors (16%) are persistently in the low-income category.

Average Household Income by Community in Hamilton

Community	Average Income
Hamilton	\$40,396
Dundas	\$62,133
Stoney Creek	\$63,124
Glanbrook	\$63,195
Flamborough	\$73,218
Ancaster	\$82,901
Provincial Average	\$66,836

Community Announcements



Service Canada and the City of Hamilton partner to provide additional services to expand services in Dundas and Flamborough.

Flamborough Municipal Service Centre 163 Dundas St, E., Hwy 5, Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0	Thursday 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
Dundas Municipal Service Centre 60 Main St. Dundas, ON L9H 5E7	Tuesday 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Service Canada's Main Hamilton location at 1550 Upper James offers extended hours every Thursday until 7:00 pm. Services for Seniors include:

- Allowance for Survivors
- Canada Pension Plan Retirement Pension
- Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)
- Old Age Security

Income Tax Clinics are provided for Low income seniors at all MP offices. Please contact your local office to find the times in your area. HCoA continues to partner with many of these clinics and our volunteers continue to provide a broad range of information to seniors who attend.

VON Caregiver Support

When caring for a loved one it is easy to overlook your own needs. An occasional break allows an exhausted caregiver to regroup both physically and emotionally, and to find the strength to carry on. The Overnight Respite Program at the VON Adult Day Centre is available 7 nights a week and can provide caregivers with the opportunity for a regularly scheduled break. This program offers care, assistance, therapeutic activities and nutritious meals for older adults in a safe and secure setting for \$38.00 a night.

**For more information call Jessica Hollinger
905-523-1055 ext. 409**

WELCOME INN SENIOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

- Helping seniors to remain independent
- Providing opportunities for friendship
- Every Tuesday seniors gather at noon for a home-cooked meal
- Following the meal is an hour of interactive programming
- Transportation to and from Welcome Inn is provided where needed
- A suggested donation of \$3.50 helps to cover the costs
- Everyone is welcome!

Volunteers visit seniors one-on-one in home Individual interviews with both the senior and the volunteer to match

New volunteer visitors are always welcome.

For further information please contact:

Patricia Taylor, Seniors Program Coordinator
40 Wood Street East, Hamilton, ON L8L 3Y3

Telephone: 905-525-5824

Website: www.welcomeinn.ca

Email: seniors@welcomeinn.ca

Community Announcements con't



CANADA

Congregate Dining Program -Lunch Club for Seniors'

- Where: West Mountain, East Hamilton, Stoney Creek
- When: Every 2nd Tuesday or Wednesday from 12 – 2:30pm
- How: **It's easy to join! For further information: Call Carol Stonehouse at 905-522-0053**

THE CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY
LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE L'OUÏE



The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) is Expanding!

Shanni Philp, is a new audiologist who is providing hearing testing as well as hearing aid evaluations and sales.

Hearing Care counsellors in Hamilton, Brantford, and Niagara continue to provide home visits, education, demonstrations and recommendations for communication devices for seniors.

Contact us:

Hamilton

(905) 522-0755/TTY (905) 522-1128

Brantford

(519) 753-3162/TTY (905) 720-0251

Niagara

(905) 984-4412/TTY (905) 984-8916



get into it!

The 2008 United Way Campaign Needs Your Help!

The Hamilton Council on Aging is proud to be an agency of the United Way. The United Way's network of programs and services provide a reliable and effective support system for individuals and families in need. You can **designate your giving to Seniors Issues**. United Way is working to make our communities stronger and healthier places to live and work. **To donate, please call 905-527-4543**

Age Friendly Hamilton

If you are over 60 years young...we need your input. We are conducting **Focus Groups** to seek your thoughts on how "age friendly" is Hamilton. Please contact **Debbie Christie** if you wish to join one of the Sessions. **905-777-3837 ext. 12434.**

Volunteer Today to Tackle Poverty Among Seniors

Did you know that in Hamilton...?

Approximately 24% of seniors age 65+ and, 55% of seniors age 75+, are living at or below the poverty line.

That on average the GIS can increase a senior's income by \$6000 per year.

You must apply to receive the GIS, but many seniors do not know about this benefit or do not know how to apply for it.

For more information,
please call:

Jahan Zeb

Project Coordinator

Hamilton Council on Aging

Tel: 905-777-3837 x12238

Email: jzeb@stpetes.ca



HAMILTON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

This project is funded by
the Hamilton Community

HELP REDUCE POVERTY AMONG SENIORS IN HAMILTON

Volunteer Today!

The Hamilton Council on Aging is initiating a community campaign for the second year to reduce poverty among seniors in Hamilton through the help of a volunteer team who will assist seniors with applications for the Income Tax, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Pension, Bus Pass, Dental Service, Vision Care, Mobility Devices, Home Heating/Cooling, etc. If you can give up to 3 hours each week, you can help improve the quality of life of seniors in our community.

- **Volunteer team will** provide assistance to seniors to complete income tax and benefits applications at community clinics.
- **Volunteer training** will take place in January & February and volunteers will participate in community clinics during February - June 2009.
- **Bus Tickets are provided by the Council**