



Seniors' Voice

Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA) Newsletter

Message From the President

Spring 2011, Volume 8

Spring is trying its hardest to take hold as I write you this message. At year end, it seems a fitting time to review our accomplishments. HCoA and its Board of Directors have had some exciting projects this year. Our main focus continues to move Hamilton forward to being a more Age Friendly City.

We have identified four areas for strategic focus in the next three years including: *age-friendly Hamilton; improving access to community support services for older adults from diverse communities; tackling poverty through increasing older adults' access to their financial entitlements and the prevention of abuse.* In this newsletter, we provide a brief report on each of these strategic areas.

- Dr. Margaret Denton
President of the Board

YEAR 2 REPORT: SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOWARDS HAMILTON: A CITY FOR ALL AGES

An Age-friendly city is an inclusive and accessible urban environment that promotes active ageing (World Health Organization). The Age-Friendly Hamilton project, with funding from the Trillium Foundation, has moved forward on many levels. A year ago we published our focus group findings "Hamilton, A City for ALL Ages" with 92 recommendations for changes required to accomplish our mission of making Hamilton not only the best place to raise a child, but also the best place to "raise up their grandparents." This report may be found on our website at:

www.coahamilton.ca

Since that report we have been working on a number of initiatives to make Hamilton an age-friendly city.

1. **RAISING THE PROFILE OF AGE-FRIENDLY HAMILTON INITIATIVE**
 - A. Hamilton Age-Friendly Mayorality Panel, October 1, 2010;
 - B. E-survey to all candidates to Hamilton City Council on the obstacles that face Hamilton to becoming an age-friendly city;
 - C. News features and opinion editorials in the Hamilton Spectator.

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Year 2 Report: Hamilton: A City for All Ages
- Walkability Assessments
- Results of the e-survey
- The Golden (C)Age: Breaking the Silence on Elder Abuse
- Improving Access
- Tackling Poverty
- Community Announcements



The Hamilton Council on Aging is a United Way Agency

Funding provided for Tackling Poverty Together Project



Funding provided for Age Friendly Hamilton Project

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors program.

Thank you to the New Horizons for Seniors Program for funding: "The Golden (C)Age"

2. SENIORS PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS

- A. Partnership with United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, City of Hamilton’s Seniors Advisory Committee to develop a seniors planning collaborative;
- B. Worked with the Social Planning and Research Council to develop: “A Profile of Vulnerable Seniors in Hamilton report.”
- C. Sat on a Hamilton Health Sciences advisory committee to develop Elder Friendly Hospital Program.



3. TRANSPORTATION ISSUES ADDRESSED

- A. Panel Presentation on Transportation in Hamilton, 2010 Annual General Meeting, September 22, 2010.
Panellists included Don Hall, City of Hamilton Transportation Department, Mark Mindorff, Executive Director of DARTs, Ron Smithson, Chair of City of Hamilton Senior’s Advisory Committee, and Dr. Margaret Denton, Chair of the Age-Friendly Hamilton Committee and Board member of the HCoA;
- B. Working with DARTS and HSR to develop a brochure for training bus drivers to provide a more age-friendly service.

4. WALKABILITY STUDY

(Healthy Communities Fund Grant – Ministry of Health Promotion)

- A. Completed 8 neighbourhood walkability audits in partnership with McMaster’s Occupational Therapy and Gerontology Programs and community volunteers.

5. PLAYING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ONTARIO TO HELP OTHER COMMUNITIES BECOME AGE FRIENDLY



The Ontario Trillium Foundation has approved a second grant to continue our Age-Friendly Hamilton project (2011-2013).

Under this grant we will work towards:

- Expanding our partnerships to work on specific projects to improve the aging experiences of older adults;
- Implementing recommendations for the strategic plan to make Hamilton an age-friendly community;
- Educating for improved experiences of older adults by attending meetings or planning groups that have the ability to implement positive change for seniors;
- Building membership and volunteers to support the continued operations of the Council on Aging.



24 out of 56 candidates running in the 15 wards responded to an e-survey asking them to identify three major obstacles that Hamilton faces to becoming an age-friendly city. The e-survey was conducted by the Hamilton Council on Aging and the Hamilton Chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP)

Lack of affordable, safe and accessible housing for seniors was identified as the number one problem in Hamilton.

Further, there needs to be a mix of quality housing in all neighbourhoods to allow older adults to age-in-place. **Candidates see a need for all three levels of government, as well as the private sector, to come together to solve the housing problems in Hamilton.**

Lack of access to community supports and health services was identified by many candidates as a serious problem for older adults in Hamilton. Many older adults are unable to access the services they need to age-in-place, hospital and emergency wait times are long, and there is an inadequate supply of family physicians. Again, candidates see partnerships from all three levels of government are needed to address this problem. *(Note: This may be something to keep in mind with provincial and federal elections looming.)*

Transportation was identified as the third obstacle to an age-friendly city. Strategies for improvement included lowering the age of the free seniors bus pass, more funding to DARTS and accessible taxis, improvement to bus stops including better lighting, more benches, better snow clearing, improvements to street crossings, regular HSR services to Flamborough and implement shuttle bus services from retirement homes to shopping areas and entertainment venues.

In his response to the e-survey, Mayor Bob Bratina identified housing, respect and social inclusion, and transportation as his top three obstacles to an age-friendly city. He will work towards improving the conditions in residential properties owned and operated by the City of Hamilton, and making better use of the taxi industry in our transportation and transit strategy.

Results of the e-survey may be found on the Hamilton Council on Aging website: www.coahamilton.ca

RESULTS OF WALKABILITY ASSESSMENTS



In the past two years, HCoA has been working towards making Hamilton a more age friendly community and promoting initiatives that bring issues related to age friendliness to the forefront.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines an age friendly city as one in which members of the community: recognize the unique needs of older adults, and promote participation and independence of older adults.

It was noted in focus groups with older adults that the ability to walk in their neighbourhood in safety and security is a major factor in supporting aging in place. Aided by a grant from the Ministry of Health Promotion, HCoA partnered with McMaster University Occupational Therapy and graduate students from the Department of Health, Aging and Society to conduct walkability audits in 8 neighbourhoods in Hamilton. See the Walkability Report at www.coahamilton.ca

Walkability is important as it supports the daily needs of older adults. Access to groceries, church, medical needs and socialization are important features of an age-friendly neighbourhood and promote active, independent engagement throughout the lifespan. Most neighbourhoods in the study supported a walkable philosophy but there were some notable barriers.

The lack of public restrooms inhibits some older adults to venture far from their homes.



Generally bus stops are located in convenient and accessible locations; however, many at major intersections lacked benches and shelters. Most intersections were marked with designated crosswalks and the majority of them have signals that are long enough to cross safely; however, in each neighbourhood participants in the study could identify at least one intersection that was dangerous for them to cross.



In the study only one of the eight neighbourhoods had audio signals for individuals with visual impairments. Although most neighbourhoods had sidewalks in fairly good repair, with curb cuts for accessibility, one notable exception was in the Ottawa Street neighbourhood. And in all the neighbourhoods surveyed, there were sections of sidewalks that were uneven, broken and with major cracks that presented tripping hazards.

In all the neighbourhoods there were places that were appealing to walk, but there were also streets that were unattractive for walking due to lack of greenery or increased amounts of litter. Also safety at night was cited as a deterrent for getting out after dark.

Although drivers are thought to be respectful of pedestrians, it was noted in most neighbourhoods that the volume of traffic is problematic for walkers.

The City of Hamilton has shown commitment to walkability through several initiatives such as signing the International Charter for Walking in 2008, participating in the Canadian Walking Master Class project in 2009 and undertaking a comprehensive Pedestrian Mobility Master Plan for the City of Hamilton.

Many of the recommendations from the Canada Walking Master Class case study of Hamilton are relevant to improving the walkability of neighbourhoods where older adult's live.

Based on our findings, we make the following recommendations to the City of Hamilton:

- ✓ Identify priority neighbourhoods where seniors live and make them more inviting and accessible for pedestrians. For example, good crossing points, curb cuts, clear walking routes, repairing or replacing sidewalks, benches along the route for resting, extended crossing times at lights, audio signals at major intersections, improving the aesthetics, and improving the safety of these neighbourhoods.
- ✓ Identify priority areas for placing public washrooms along key routes into and around downtown, to public buildings and in neighbourhoods where more older adults live. Consideration should be given to placing coin operated self-cleaning portable washrooms found in many European Cities along these routes.
- ✓ Benches and shelters should be placed at all bus stops where they do not currently exist.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR SENIORS FROM DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Seniors from ethno-cultural communities are more marginalized than older persons at large, not only due to their age but also due to language, cultural and isolating experience barriers.

With funding from the United Way, this initiative bridges health and social services agencies with ethno-cultural communities by assisting those agencies to develop the capacity to serve the ethno-cultural communities in concrete ways by: evaluating their policies and practices using our Cultural Competency Tool, facilitating meetings between agency leaders and ethno-cultural community leaders to help identify programs of interest, and assisting agencies to recruit volunteers from ethno-cultural communities who will be trained to work on behalf of agencies but also within their communities.

In addition we are generating awareness in ethno-cultural communities of the services that are available to them and helping those community members to navigate the system and find “their way in.” Along with this, we are identifying volunteers from the ethno-cultural communities to mentor newcomers to help them to manoeuvre systems and buddy with them to get involved in the community. Four community agencies and three ethno-cultural groups have been engaged so far.

TACKLING POVERTY TOGETHER

Over the past few months the HCoA has been working with four senior apartment buildings on the Hamilton Mountain and one Neighbourhood Hub to identify senior-specific issues, provide linkages to local services and promote engagement.

With funding from the Hamilton Community Foundation, Hamilton Council on Aging project staff are partnering with the CityHousing Hamilton apartment representatives to provide workshops on financial entitlements as well as conduct needs assessments with seniors in the apartment buildings to promote greater awareness of health and social support services.

Programs of interest include special income supports for seniors, the Community Health Bus services and Trillium drug benefit supports. One-to-one and group support has been provided to increase awareness of special income supports and financial entitlements. In addition, we are working in collaboration with the Canada Revenue Agency and community volunteers to provide assistance to marginalized seniors with their Tax Returns.

Note: A Resource Guide to Financial Entitlements for Seniors in Hamilton is currently being updated and will be available shortly for individuals and community agencies.

Other initiatives with this project include: linkage for residents in one apartment building with a bus service to take them shopping and in another building to a community agency that offers exercise classes for residents to participate in.

SAVE THE DATE!

FREE EVENT:

3rd Annual Seniors' Information Fair

Thursday June 30, 2011

11am-2pm

Jackson Square Mall

100 King Street West, Hamilton

*Located outside of the library near the food court



For details, please visit:

www.coahamilton.ca

or call: 905-777-3837 x12238

"The Golden (C)Age"

BREAKING THE SILENCE ON ELDER ABUSE

The Committee Against the Abuse of Older Persons is pleased to have received funding from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program to support its work in increasing our community's ability to recognize and respond to the abuse of all older persons. This funding allowed a group of talented volunteers to work with Mixed Company Theatre to develop and perform "The Golden (C)Age: Breaking the Silence of Elder Abuse." Mixed Company Theatre uses the interactive approach of forum theatre very skillfully to engage audiences in developing strategies for dealing with social and personal issues.

The Golden (C)Age has been a resounding success, attended by over 400 people. Each performance was enriched by audience participation to find positive and realistic strategies for preventing and responding to elder abuse.

A DVD will be available in the fall of 2011 to interested organizations.

Thank you to volunteer actors Mary Sue Alessi, Diane Beatty-Wearing, Joan Coultres, Rosalinda Dalisay, Virbala Kumar, Penny Johnson and Ruth White for their commitment to this project; to the Creative Team of Mixed Company Theatre - Simon Malbogot, Director/Facilitator, Luciano Iogna, Scriptor and Marsha Coffey, Soundscape Composer for their excellent direction and work; and to Shelagh Kiely, Project Coordinator for so capably ensuring that all the details were always looked after.

A special thank you to The Committee Against Abuse of Older Persons, and to Janis North and Peggy Savage, Committee Chairs for all of their hard work and dedication to this project.

Thank you also to the Alzheimer Society of Hamilton and Halton, Catholic Family Services and the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse whose staff were resource people at performances and to the organizations that provided venues for the production: St. Peter's Community Centre (HARRRP), which also generously provided rehearsal space over several weeks; VON Congregate Dining Program and Hindu Samaj; First Place Hamilton; St. Peter's Hospital; YWCA MacNab St. Seniors' Centre; the Scottish Rite of Hamilton; St. Christopher's Church, Burlington; and Hamilton Police Service Victims Services Branch.

Special Thanks to Mr. Cliff Tootell for your expertise and audio visual support as well as to Ms. Debbie Christie for your continued support of this project and without whom this project would not be possible.

CAST OF "The Golden (C)Age"

(from left)

Penny Johnson,
Joan Coultres,
Virbala Kumar,
Rosalinda Dalisay,
Diane Beatty-Wearing,
Mary Sue Alessi,
Ruth White

*(taken at the Scottish Rite -
March 5, 2011)*



Do you know where to call for help if you or someone you know is being abused?

- **911 if in an emergency situation**
- **Seniors Safety Line (24 Hours):
1-866-299-1011**
- **Catholic Family Services:
905-527-3823**
- **Alzheimer Society:
905-529-7030**
- **Police Services – Seniors Support:
905-546-4925**
- **Office of Public Guardian & Trustee
1-800-366-0335**
- **Long Term Care Homes Complaint Line:
1-866-434-0144**



CONGRATULATIONS! Volunteer Service Awards

A
N
N
O
U
N
C
E
M
E
N
T
S



In picture, from left: Carolyn Rosenthal, HCoA Founding President, Margaret Denton, Current President, Mary Buzzell, Founding Member (at Liuna Station, Hamilton)

On Tuesday April 12, Carolyn Rosenthal, Margaret Denton, and Mary Buzzell, all founding and current board members of HCoA, were awarded with 5-year pins for their commitment to the organization at the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards of Distinction.

Mrs. Beth Shemilt was also awarded with a 25-year pin of service as a founding and current member of our Committee Against Abuse of Older Persons.

Please join us in congratulating all recipients on their awards.

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers for your continued time, support, and dedication to the Hamilton Council on Aging.

~ Volunteer Recognition Event ~

JUNE 2011

Volunteers will be invited to a special event in June 2011 in honor of your commitment and special contributions to HCoA.

Please stay tuned for details.

JUNE IS SENIORS' MONTH

PLEASE JOIN US:

 **FREE WORKSHOP**

"Protect Your Pennies"

Thursday June 23

1:00 - 4:00pm

St. Peter's Hospital - Auditorium

88 Maplewood Avenue, Hamilton

FREE PARKING

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED

TO REGISTER, PLEASE CALL:

905-777-3837 EXT. 12238

JOIN US AND THE HONORABLE SOPHIA AGGELONITIS, M.P.P.,
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR SENIORS (INVITED):

• FEATURE PRESENTATION: "Protect Your Pennies," Bank of Canada

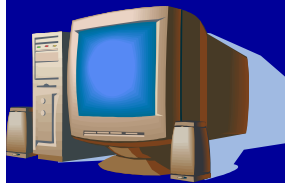
• Special Presentation: "Financial Abuse: Don't Be a Victim,"
Ed Lane, ONPEA, Regional Coordinator

Bank of Canada



The Ontario Network
for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

Hamilton Council on Aging
(HCoA)



For more information about the Hamilton Council on Aging, please visit:

www.coahamilton.ca

The purpose of this website is to raise awareness about HCoA and our key priorities and activities. It will provide regular information and updates on our programs and services and opportunities for seniors to be involved and active in our community. For more information or if you are a senior or interested in volunteering in any of these programs, please contact:

Shelagh Kiely,
Projects and Office Coordinator
Hamilton Council on Aging
905-777-3837 ext. 12238
kielys@hsc.ca

Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA)

educating and advocating for improved aging experiences...

Membership Campaign



Our membership campaign continues and we hope you, our readers, will join HCoA and encourage other individuals and organizations to join as well. We also hope that many of you will volunteer to assist us in the projects described above and in our other activities. We look forward to your participation and support as HCoA 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. Margaret Denton
President of the Board*

Just for Laughs



Seems an elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%. The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again." To which the gentleman said, "Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my Will three times!"

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 becoming a member of the Council
- I would be interested in volunteering with the Council
- I would be interested in participating on a project steering committee