



Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations
La Société des Organisations des Citoyens Aînés de l'Ontario



OUTREACH

Annual Report Edition

April 2018 - March 2019

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Every year OSSCO deals with change and this year was no different. Our landlord of 7 years substantially increased our rent. Regardless of our discussions, we moved to keep our costs lower and create an improved learning space for participants. Several board members saw and evaluated potential locations. In the end, OSSCO moved from 1 end of the block to the other, with Hersh Development as our new landlord. Parking is now free of charge for our staff, students and program participants. With our landlord's help, we have an improved learning space and an open concept office was built for our Education Program staff. Our work and learning spaces are bright and cheerful. As a result, participation increased in our Computer classes and Tuesdays with OSSCO workshops.

In this year's **Outreach Annual Report Edition**, our achievements are highlighted. We received 3 grants for educational programs, which you can read more about in the educational section. The grants were from Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario's Seniors Community Grant (SCG), and New Horizons for Seniors. OSSCO used these funds to generate more learning opportunities for older people, whether you attend our workshops in person or visit us online to learn.

We are proud of the contributions of each and every board member, sharing joys and sorrows together. Board member, Ghazy Mujahid's Parliamentary petition for a Federal Minister of Seniors, was successful. His efforts were acknowledged at an event with Minister of Seniors, the Honorable Filomena Tassi, by MP Iqra Khalid. In January, we were saddened with the unexpected passing of board member Hazel St. Pierre. We also would like to thank outgoing board member, Anna Zachariah for her 6-years of hard work, dedication and commitment.

The success of our charity is due to the diligence and commitment of our staff team. Thank you to our contract staff who moved on - Heather Beaumont, Mitra Mohamedzadeh, Justine Sterling, Susan McDougall; summer students Brittany Rooney and Swetha Srikanthan; and intern Nghy Nguyen. Our current staff Stacy Chung, and Jean Raymond Soulodre as well as our volunteers and program contributors all advanced our vision: delivering learning programs for older people and advocating for seniors to improve the quality of life as we age.

Subhash Rai
Chair

Elizabeth Macnab
Executive Director

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VOLUNTEERS AND PROGRAM CONTRIBUTORS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark Adler
Larry Duffield
Shesan Govindasamy
Claude Hould
Antoinette de Jager
Megan McElwain
Ghazy Mujahid

Subhash Rai
Ken Schafer
Valerie Smith-Waines
Evelyn Theriault
Mohan Viswan
Anna Zachariah (retired Nov 2018)

TRAINING PROGRAM CONSULTANTS

Sara Abdolvahabi
Karoline Bourdeau
Richard Bourdeau
Gerald Gauthier
Roslyn Harris
Renee Henriquez, RN
Noreen Horowitz

Adina Lebos
Katherine G. MacRae
Tracey McGruthers
Brenda Quaile
Gisele Simard
Anna Zachariah

PROGRAM & SPEAKER VOLUNTEERS

Dr. Alexander Abitol
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Grace Arnedo
Vivienne Barker
Glen Benson
Christine Bienko
Kassia Bonisteel
Jean Booker
Lou Ceconi
Ethan Cole
Kim Debon
Dave Dininio

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Lorne Miller
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Katherine Prigge
Deo Ramlochan
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Dr. John David Stewart
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Hazel St. Pierre
Heron Tait
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Sri Visvalingam
Lionel Walkfish
Thomas Whitby
Silvana Valentone
Barbara Wilson
Anita Windisman
Vivian Wong
Anna Zachariach
Margaret Ziore



PROGRAM CONTRIBUTORS & SPONSORS

Afford Ability Fund
Breckles Insurance
Connect Hearing
COSTI Brampton Employment Services:
Wanda Marsman, Zehra Noma
Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services:
Linda Maines, Aqila Hanseer-Rizvi
JobStart: Rebecca Newton, Artan Mustafa
LMC Healthcare

Mosaic Home Care & Community Resource
Centres
Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries
Sanofi Pasteur
Times Change: Katie Didyk, Shiva
University Settlement
YMCA Whitby Employment & Community:
Samantha Teney, Markie Rousseau,
Michelle Aitcheson

TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER & CONTRIBUTOR HOURS: 2465

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS

Finance Committee: Treasurer Mark Adler

Members: Larry Duffield, Mohan Viswan, Subhash Rai, Anna Zachariah

The auditing firm Edwards Manning, reviewed our finances and made recommendations on financial processes to manage a 3-year OTF grant which is shared with 5 partners: COSTI (Brampton), Dixon Hall, JobStart, YMCA Whitby and YMCA Markham.

Revenues through Break Open Tickets continued to drop and we adjusted our expenditures accordingly. However, effective May 2019, the provincial admin fee is removed. We should see an increase of revenues as a result.

OSSCO was successful during this fiscal year in obtaining 3 grants for educational programming. Funds of approximately \$150,000 continue to be earmarked for wellness workshops across the Province which includes computer training to adults 55+.

Based on the feedback received in the 2018-2019 Audit Letter which accompanies this year's financial audit, the following procedures will be implemented effective July 1, 2019:

- The written on paper component of the payroll process is replaced using the payroll function in Quickbooks. This helps ensure that there are no transposition errors on the transfer of payroll data and it creates a seamless reporting between the payroll function and the general ledger; and,
- Each project is given its own Class name in the Class Tracking function in Quickbooks. This allows for easier project spend analysis over the life of the project, to make adjustments and modifications to project spending, and, to monitor if there is an over or under spending trend.

Education & Research Committee Chair: Antoinette de Jager

Members: Ghazy Mujahid

With input from Elizabeth Macnab, Executive Director and Stacy Chung, Communications & Programs Specialist, the 12 month educational plan was finalized by this committee. With a staff of 4.9 full-time equivalents plus training consultants and volunteers, OSSCO delivered training programs in Brampton, Hamilton, Leamington, London, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Whitby, Windsor and various locations across Toronto.

Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Older Workers Project:

Background: In April 2018, OSSCO received its 3-year grant application from Ontario Trillium Foundation. We thank the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) for funding this project, which is reviewed every 6-months to ensure project goals are achieved. This project made up ½ of the work that OSSCO focused on this year.

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This project builds on the OTF pilot project of 2016: identifying what was necessary to enhance economic opportunities for older unemployed workers. During that project we learned that older workers do not want to exit the workforce before the age of 70, and the majority wanted help with their job search and 2nd career processes.

Four partner agencies signed onto our project for year 1, with a 5th partner (YMCA Markham) in 2019. This year COSTI Employment Services Brampton, YMCA Whitby; in Toronto Dixon Hall and JobStart participated. Of these Employment Ontario partners, JobStart was slow in implementing this project while Dixon Hall formally withdrew from the project by December due to staff changes. We were fortunate to partner with Times Change Women, where we pilot tested a workshop in January 2019.

Project Focus: This project addresses the many challenges of finding employment for older workers. Our program is designed to help people 50 to 70 gain new knowledge and skills of the job search process, to address their employability barriers and issues such as ageism, lack of Ontario experience, intergenerational recruiters and more.

The program has 2 learning components, which are delivered over a 12-week period. The components are: 2-full day job search workshops and 4 half-day ENG (Employment Networking Group) sessions spread over an eight-week period. This allows participants to take a hard look at the type of job and industry they wish to pursue. Completing introspective surveys and deciding on a single job path to follow are among the more difficult activities participants undertake.



Our 2-facilitators are dedicated to specific partners. They personally connect with participants after the workshops and sessions to ensure they gained the knowledge and have the maximum assistance to successfully finding work. As of this fiscal year, 20% found employment.

“The experience shared from other participants is really encouraging, really makes me have more courage to move on.” - COSTI participant, Job Search 2

Validating Success: This program received positive responses gathered from OTF and OSSCO participant surveys at all locations. More than 95% felt satisfied and willing to recommend the program to others.

Facilitators are aware of the fact that people out of work soon lose their social connections; have a tendency to lock themselves away from society; and generally begin having low self-esteem. Over the course of the program, facilitators communicate to participants that they are valued and encourage positive thinking and social interaction among the group. Facilitators received more than 95% satisfaction in delivering the program.

“I am satisfied with the workshop and facilitator’s work. I love the energy of the group.” - Dixon Hall participant, Job Search 1

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Key Program Learnings: Program activities help participants decide on the job they want, how to conduct job research and the steps to finding that job. Our participants reconfirmed that conventional job ads whether digital or analogue is not the solution. Networking and net giving interactions provide better outcomes.

Participants acknowledged that the workshop concepts of “Networking/net-giving”, “Personal branding”, and “Elevator speech (sound bite)” is what they retained the most. These concepts also are ranked as the top three reasons for taking the Job Search workshop.

Personal Branding - deciding who you are and what you are known for - is applied in every learning session. By the end of 12-weeks, participants have memorable and clear sound bite (elevator speech) identifying who they are and what job they want.



“It was empowering to move forward as a group to problem solve and create clarify on next steps. Was practical and result-driven.” - YMCA Whitby participant, ENG, Cycle 2

Challenges and Resolutions: OSSCO had 2 project challenges during the year: partner staff changes which resulted in re-educating multiple staff to understand the program; and reminding partners that this is an OSSCO program.

All partner sites underwent staffing changes during the year. This resulted in knowledge gaps, delayed the promotion and scheduling of the program in a timely manner. Partner Staff had difficulty understanding that there are 2 separate components of the program - Job Search and ENG - which made it a problem for them to promote it effectively.

Going forward, we established meeting schedules with the partner sites to ensure that they are not limiting outreach to the traditional definition of “seniors” (65+) and potentially missing out on attracting participants from 50+.

OSSCO needed to remind the partners of each one’s roles, and that this is an OSSCO program, hosted by the partner. We identified that communication had to be extended between cohorts as former participants might need additional support. Without broader communication and a dedicated partner effort, in 2018-2019 we did not achieve the project numbers - 450 participants accessing this program - and only had 359 access this.

“I enjoyed the conversations and great meeting with others in the group. Lots of ideas and tips from others, resources available to enhance our future. We can help each other and offer our positive feedback.” - YMCA Whitby participant, Job Search, Cycle 3.

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Moving Forward: OSSCO is pleased to be working with our partner agencies and after several months of discussions, welcomed the formal participation of Times Change Women by the end of March to replace Dixon Hall.



To make up for the shortfall in participant numbers, OSSCO will also host 2 additional program cycles at its office to increase the number of partners in year two. It is always a delight to learn from a program participant that they cannot attend any more sessions as they have found employment - as a result of this OSSCO program. We are happy to share in the project successes with our partner agencies who gained additional benefit with the employment of older workers. At the end of the day, that was the original purpose— to enhance economic opportunities for older workers 50 - 70 years of age.

Lives Lived: Stories North of 50 Project: This project is funded by the New Horizons for Seniors (NHS) grant. It funded 2 components: develop and deliver a program for seniors on how to capture stories in writing or through photographs and collect from Ontario Seniors their stories for inclusion in a published anthology. Two workshops on “Story writing” and “Storytelling with photos” helped sharpen their writing skills and provided learners with effective tools in expressing their ideas. Seniors learned about tips on how to engagingly tell a story and how to convey their stories through their memory pictures.



Our goal was to receive 25 submissions. We received more than 100 stories which were reviewed by their peers and selected for inclusion in the book. Authors were invited to the book launch and story readings. As usual, the event was oversubscribed. For those who could not attend, 10 video recordings of the authors reading their stories are on OSSCO website.

Computer Training: Ontario's Seniors Community Grant (SCG) funded OSSCO to redevelop its computer training programs. The goal that after 6 weeks of basic (beginner) computer instruction with 60% of the students proficient was maintained. 43 seniors including low income seniors provided feedback on what they felt was important to be included in a computer training program.

Creative Computing teaches how to use computers for flyers, photobooks, etc. Computer Level II Intermediate teaches seniors how to use different platforms i.e. tablets/iPad, cell phones, laptops. Photography Using Technology teaches seniors how to use their cell phones

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or cameras and apply it onto their laptops. NHS funded the Photoshop computer program which is for advanced level students. Each class is 2 hours long and are regularly offered in 3 locations on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. With the implementation of a new beginner computer program, proficiency increased to 70%, with students moving onto one of three new intermediate level programs. The pilot 6-week beginner training programs was also delivered at COSTI Corvetti Education Centre.

Seniors Learning Without Barriers Project: Educational workshops are offered in select areas in the province, with some presented in the French language.

OSSCO applied its funding from SCG to create and video record 5 workshops from the *Seniors Learning Without Barriers* educational series. This series is available as self-directed (online video), delivered by OSSCO staff or consultants to community groups or through Learning Champions (train the trainer). 60 seniors provided feedback in consultation sessions and 124 surveys were received before OSSCO developed the *Seniors Learning Without Barriers* educational series.

- **Elder Abuse Awareness & Prevention:** This 60-minute workshop teaches the basics of elder abuse prevention in community. Seniors learn how to identify risk factors and what steps to protect themselves. Participants also learn how to deal with allegations or perceptions of elder abuse and reach out to discuss their personal situations.
- **Aging With Good Sense:** The workshop helps participants understand the factors contributed to the wellbeing of seniors, including attitude defines our experience, importance of social networks, social support and spiritual sustenance. The workshop also helps to identify how seniors deal with loss, financial realities, downsizing and ageism.
- **Home Is Where I Am:** The participants of this workshop understand the differences between retirement homes versus long term care. The workshop also helps seniors prepare for their aging life, regardless if they choose to live in community, retirement or long term care homes.
- **Healthy Involvement in Public Policy by Seniors:** Seniors from this workshop are reminded about roles and responsibilities of all 3 levels of government. Participants of the workshop get a thorough understanding on how seniors contribute and impact on government policy and legislation. Participants are also well equipped with a toolkit on how to share their opinion to government officials and how to use communication strategies for messaging.
- **Overcoming Loneliness and Social Isolation:** This workshop provides an overview of how we can move into the state of social isolation and steps to take to reduce that risk. Participants also get to know the concept of “power of 5” - maintaining 5 social connections in your life.

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We delivered the workshops including *What's Your Why* this year in Hamilton (1), Leamington (1), London (3), Ottawa (2), St. Catharines (3) Sault Ste. Marie (2), Sudbury (2), Thunder Bay (1), Toronto (9) and Windsor (1) for a total of 25 workshops.

Ontario's Premier Seniors' Conference & Information Fair: Seniors are the fastest and largest growing demographic in Ontario. OSSCO has organized this annual signature event for more than 5 years to connect seniors with valuable information related to their health and well-being. Ontario's Premier Seniors' Conference & Information Fair includes a learning event (conference) and access to products or services of interest to seniors (information hall).



For 2018, OSSCO moved this event to a new venue, Julius Banquet Centre which allowed OSSCO to accommodate more than 35 exhibitors in one hall and it was suited to host the 250 seniors and vendors in the building. In total, there were 4 conference sponsors (Breckles Insurance, Sanofi Pasteur, Afford Ability Fund and LMC Healthcare) who generously contributed to the event and 4 educational program sponsors who presented on the following topics:

- Understanding Hearing Loss
Presented by: James McGrath, Audiologist, Connect Hearing
- Personhood, Community, Perspectives & Interactions: Mapping, Creativity & Collaboration
Presented by: Jane Teasdale, Principal & Director of Business Development, Mosaic Home Care & Community Resource Centres
- Your Exclusive Advantages: OSSCO Group Home & Auto Insurance
Presented by: Gary Banks, Associate Broker, Breckles Insurance
- A Gift of Love to Your Family: Pre-planning Your Final Arrangements
Presented by: Nicole Paik, Pre-Planning Advisor, Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries

Tuesday Seniors Series: Tuesdays with OSSCO is a monthly series of workshops offered free of charge to adults 55+ on the last Tuesday of each month. Attendance of this program remains with an average attendance of 15 to 20, with a variety of speakers scheduled based on feedback and interest of seniors. These sessions provide seniors with new learning and social opportunities.

Communications Committee Chair: Megan McElwain
Members: Shesan Govindasamy, Ken Schafer

With input from the Communications Committee, OSSCO hired Cyber Pros Consulting to design and develop a new website at the end of March 2019. In addition to a new domain name (www.ossco.org) to correspond with the organization's acronym, the new website is designed to be more accessible with more interactive and educational components planned for the new

fiscal year. Content from the previous website has been edited and website headings have been organized to be more user friendly.

This new website platform, WordPress, allows OSSCO to continue to stay connected with members and supporters through email blasts and monthly e-newsletters directly sent from the platform to our growing mailing list of subscribers. The email blasts provide updates on upcoming programs and events. The e-newsletter is an educational tool providing readers on issues of importance to seniors and services to enhance their quality of life.

Social media has continually been used and updated to interact with seniors, members and supporters. The new website provides easy access to our social media channels with icons for each platform available at the top and bottom header of the website.

COUNSELLING, INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

OSSCO continues to provide information, referral and counselling (mediated access) to seniors. The contacts that we receive is primarily for information to educate seniors on resources and for programming of interest (educational purposes), we have found that the number of clients per month has decreased for counselling and mediated access. From April to March, 817 seniors and older people reached out to OSSCO, of which 668 inquiries dealt with our educational programs.

The top 4 areas where assistance is sought still deals with: Educational programs (outside the GTA, assistance with Healthcare i.e. Long Term Care Accommodation, and general legal inquiries on Guardianship, Powers of Care and Powers for Property. We provided guidance regarding the best options available as well as redirected them to 211 providers or other service providers in their community.

ISSUES AND CONSULTATIONS

Seniors Lens to Community, Stakeholder and Government Relations

OSSCO is an active member of the Provincial Ministry of Seniors & Accessibility Liaison Committee. There was only 1 meeting in 2018, arranged prior to the election. In meeting with the Honorable Raymond Cho, Minister of Seniors & Accessibility, OSSCO shared its success in helping older unemployed workers enhance their economic opportunities, including 22% finding employment after completing our educational program.

OSSCO continues to participate in the semi-annual meetings with the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) Federal level. These meetings enable OSSCO to reach out to its members for feedback before and after the meetings. We believe that our feedback on pensioner poverty

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resulted in changes to Old Age Security and GIS programs as well as creating a joint provincial/federal initiative for a seamless process for people moving from ODSP to CPP.

OSSCO attended 2 townhall meetings this fiscal year organized on behalf of the Honorable Filomena Tassi, Minister of Seniors. There, we raised the importance of increasing funding for NHS for seniors and the value of that grant to the seniors' community. We also informed the importance of older workers participating in the workforce beyond the normal age of retirement. OSSCO participated in several national consultations on the NHS program and how to make the process easier to understand for applicants. We participated with representatives from 9 organizations in discussions on seniors' issues from a multicultural, multilingual and abilities perspective. This consultation was organized by former Minister of Seniors, MP Alice Wong. Through their commitment to you, our Board members and Executive Director continue to raise awareness of issues that affect the quality of life for Ontario seniors.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

OSSCO would like to acknowledge and thank the following for the various supports either monetary or in kind given during the past year.

AdvantAge Ontario
Afford Ability Fund
Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario
Amblecare Health Services
Antoinette de Jager
Baycrest Health Sciences & Rotman Research Institute
Bernard Betel Centre
Breckles Insurance
Break Open Ticket Marketing Companies:
Bazaar Marketing
Bingo Pro Inc
Cedar Islands Sales & Services Ltd.
Nevada Man/Nevada Ticket Services
Dr. Nevada
Party Novelties (Sudbury)
Brain McDonald
Canterbury Place Retirement Residence
Care Watch Ontario
Caribbean Canadian Seniors Club
Centres for Seniors/Life After Fifty
Chartwell Gibson Retirement Residence
Christopher Tanner
Community Care Peterborough
ComForCare
Concerned Friends
Connect Hearing
CNIB Group
Discerning Seniors Inc
Dr. Karen Hudes
Driving Miss Daisy Seniors' Services
First Student
Go Bee Industries
Golden Girls Canada
Hearing Solutions
Home Med Care
INDUS Community Services
ISNA Canada

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Janice Neerдам
La Capitale Financial Security
Lambton Seniors Association
LMC Healthcare
Lumacare
Media Planet
Minemill Local 598/UNIFOR Retired Chapter
Mohan Viswan
Mosaic Home Care & Community Resource Centres
Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries
Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario
National Pensioners Federation
New Horizons for Seniors Program
Nurse Next Door - North York
Ocean IT
Ontario Health Coalition
Ontario Society of Health & Fitness
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Punjabi Community Health Services
Rainbow Seniors Support
Red Coats Moving
Runnymede Healthcare Centre
Remy Landau
Sanofi Pasteur
Senior Discovery Tours
Senior Homecare By Angels
Social Services Network
Suomi-Koti Toronto Finnish-Canadian Seniors Centre & Nursing Home
Sylvia McPhee
The Retired Teachers of Ontario
The Rotary Dial Council
The Wexford Residence Inc
Total Access Centre
Toronto Council on Aging
Toronto Seniors Forum
Trinidad & Tobago 50+ Seniors Association of Canada
Vision Zero
Unison Health & Community Services
York Region Indian Seniors Club
York Region Women's Foundation

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NOTES

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