

OUTREACH

December 2019

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Message from the Executive Director

By Elizabeth Nykorowytch Macnab, CHRL

The holiday season is upon us, Commercials promote consumerism and consumption, but for some of us this is the hardest time of the year. Family members could live far away; health may be the issue; maybe you're single and lonely. This is my first year without my husband of 35 years and it is tough. So, I decided to apply the techniques OSSCO's professional trainers have been teaching our "older" students when it comes to dealing with loneliness and social isolation. The first thing I applied was the "power of 5". To socially thrive, you must know five people that you can ask for help.

OSSCO's networking activities teach us how to redefine "relationships" as "netgivers". My final learning was in November while on vacation in Spain. There I met Birte, or rather Birte met me.

Birte is a Danish widow of 18 months and nearly 70 years of age. Birte was in Spain on her own. She approached me and a friend,

asking to sit at our table. I learned how the Danish treat their elders, about seniors housing, community support, etc., I also learned that the Danish teach people, as they age, new social skills, including that an acquired disability should not be a barrier. Courses are available at Danish senior's centres teaching how to reconnect or as Birte told me "to be with people". Not to be with people, she expressed, was not healthy. It was a pleasure surprise to run into Birte in a market place as we both bought spices and shared recipes. By our 3rd evening listening to the music in my hotel (she was renting a room elsewhere), we giggled like school girls commenting on how the "boys" were sitting at the bar while the "girls" paired up and danced to the music. She introduced me to the art of meeting new people. After getting home and unpacking I received a reply from my new overseas connections. It reminded me that I may be on my own, but I am not alone.

Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations

La Société des Organisations des Citoyens Aînés de l'Ontario

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What does community mapping mean and what are the benefits of walkable communities?

By Jane Teasdale, Principal Director of Business Development at Mosaic Home Care

As human beings we need social interaction, physical activity, control over our own lives and the opportunity to learn new things. Our local walkable communities are an important source of social connection and daily engagement with life, nature, architecture, interests and hobbies. At the heart of our walkable communities is the immediate neighbourhood in which we live. How socially engaged is it? Can you rely on others for help and are you willing to provide the same? Beyond your neighbours are the parks, the town squares, the community centres, shops, cafes, restaurants, libraries and churches where we can bump into people, engage in interests and form new friendships. Your local walkable community offers much more than exercise. Why not map it? Get a piece of paper, draw the boundaries and fill in the places you go to. Your area may be 500m to either side or a bit bigger. If you have difficulty

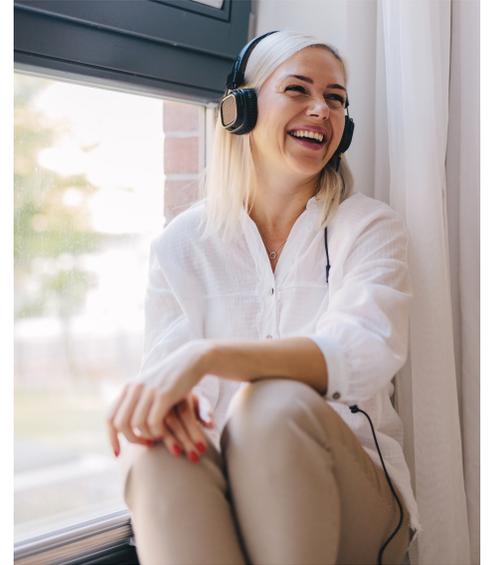
getting around you may depend on help from neighbours, friends and family. Vibrant walkable communities are built from the ground up with a culture of open engagement and collaboration. The community's most important assets are its people, their social interactions and their social capital. How willing are you to engage in meaningful conversation with others? Are your community spaces open and accepting and are there enough opportunities to satisfy our need for personal growth and social interaction? Do people, local businesses, non-profits and other community services work together to make it a better place? What would you do to change things? **Contact Jane at 416-322-7002**
jane@mosaichomecare.com



Want a better relationship with your cell phone? We can help!
Register for our January courses
at 416-785-8570 or
programs@ossco.org

Why is Social Connection important?

By Nghy Nguyen, OSSCO's Educational Program Assistant



Everyone has experienced loneliness but the risk of becoming socially isolated increases as we age. **OSSCO's Loneliness and Social Isolation** workshop provides an overview of how we can move out of a state of social isolation and the steps to take to reduce that risk. The workshop will equip attendees with the "power of 5" a concept on maintaining 5 social connections in your life. Attendees are also provided with information on how they can help someone who is lonely or is at risk of becoming socially isolated. **To book a workshop, please contact our Educational Program Specialist by email at education@ossco.org or by phone at 416.785.8570**

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Imagine a House Full of Friends!

By Dorothy Mazeau, Golden Girls Canada and Golden HomeSharing Connections



Are you living alone in your family home, the home which you lovingly created with your spouse and where you raised your children? Your home may be filled with happy memories – but are they enough to keep you happy? Perhaps your spouse has passed away, and your children and grandchildren don't visit as much as you would like. After all, they are busy with their own lives. Maybe it's time to see your home in a new way. Think back to the time when you first moved in; back then the house was filled with possibilities – not memories – and guess what? It still is! Imagine what it would be like to turn your house into a place that could welcome two or three other people who share your idea of what makes a happy home. Imagine a house full of friends! Home-sharing offers a way to fill the void left when children leave the "nest." It's a great feeling to

have somebody else around the house to share a cup of coffee and talk about your day – not to mention having someone to help with daily chores and help support the costs of running the home. And as time goes by, at least one of you is likely to still have their driver's license! It can be a win-win situation; it's not just the millennials who are having trouble finding an affordable place to live. Many older adults on a fixed income are in the same situation. They have lots of life left to live and lots of life experience to share and they may be just as ready for companionship as you are. Golden Girls Canada offers an online database where single mature adults can find compatible people to explore the possibility of sharing a home. Why don't you give it a try? You have nothing to lose and a lot of happy living to gain!

**Contact us at 416-550-4015,
hello@GoldenGirlsCanada.ca**

**Are you interested in some exercise
from the comfort of your home?**

**Contact us for more information
at 416-785-8570 x233 or
programs@ossco.org**

New Year, New Network

By Meg Mathur & Jean Raymond
Soulodre, OSSCO's
Educational Program Associates

If you're motivated by New Year's Resolutions, we have one for you, *start networking*. We teach job-search workshops and facilitate Employment Networking Groups (ENGs). It's very common for unemployed older workers to feel like they've lost their connections. With job loss, they feel like they have lost their social value. But, here's the great news: they do have value, and one of the most important lessons we teach is how to start building and reconnecting their network, so they can share that value – and find a job. Rebuilding their networks offers multiple benefits. Some exercises force us to recall skills, knowledge and experiences. Networking in our casual ENG environment provides an opportunity for participants to get to know others, rediscover their worthiness and confirm what's important to them, connections and conversation. Rebuild your network and reaffirm your brand. Then go out and promote it. **Check out the Education section of www.ossco.org or call the register at 416-785-8570**

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Are You a Male Boomer?

By Tolu Olagunju,
E-commerce Analytics
Associate at Boomersplus



The male boomer population faces loneliness which is often ignored as they struggle to make friends, cope and socialize, compared to their female counterparts. Loneliness is considered a health risk for boomers as it can lead to dementia and possibly cut a boomer's life short. Here are some signs of loneliness in male boomers: too much time spent indoors, changes in appetite and sleep deprivation. We can help fight loneliness in a number of ways, first by learning to be social media savvy, engaging in conversations and social activities like playing board games, working out (at the gym or home), reading out loud, finding a fulfilling part time job and outdoor activities. Volunteering and mentoring is also a great way to stay active in your community. It is also essential that boomers gather to

create an environment of social support. We help the aging population stay engaged mentally, emotionally and physically through the job opportunities we offer. **Contact us at info@boomersplus.com**

Can virtual reality make long-term care residents happier?

Supported by Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI)



Virtual reality (VR) is one of the most exciting technologies in seniors' care innovation today. According to a study conducted by researcher Sherry Law, VR improves the well-being of adults living in long-term care facilities. Findings from Law's study, based out of York Care Centre in Fredericton, New Brunswick, also indicate that VR has the potential to improve the quality of life of residents in the same vein as traditional forms of therapy, such

as being read to by a volunteer. The project, which was completed in January 2019, was funded by the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI)'s Spark Program and the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation (NBHRF). **To learn more visit, www.cabhi.com**

Why do I need to get Vaccinated at 65+?

Supported by an educational grant from Sanofi Pasteur

It's all too easy to put off getting the flu shot thinking that you won't get the flu, or that if you do, it won't be that bad. The reality is that even healthy adults over 65 can get sick enough from the flu to end up hospitalized. Hospitalizations occur disproportionately in adults over 65 who are a high risk group for getting flu-related complications, especially those with additional medical conditions like diabetes. In fact, adults 65 years of age and older accounted for 65% of flu-related hospitalizations and 86% of the flu-related deaths in the 2017-2018 flu season. Our immune system's defense declines as we age, even if we are healthy, which exposes us to an increased risk of contracting infections like the flu. **To learn more visit, www.sanofi.ca**

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