



OWN E-LETTER – June 2017, Vol. 4, Issue 2



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Feedback from our members:

“Dear OWN women,

Thank you.

The work you do every day is deeply important, absolutely essential, and profoundly impactful. Your community is so thankful for your hard work and efforts to be of service and create change through strength and determination. I hope that each of you is extremely proud of the immense contribution you're making, and know that you are recognized and appreciated.”

In solidarity,
Emily Harris

Past Chair's Report

By Marilyn Schafer

What a wonderful spring season we had! In spite of all the rain the air was fresh, without the oppressive heat of last year. While reducing my responsibilities and becoming past Chair, the Associate Council members Claudette Morier and Maureen Millard are acting as an executive body, in the roles of Chair and Secretary for the next few months. Many thanks Claudette and Maureen for stepping up to these roles. And to Renee Simon and Margaret McQuade for their continued service.

30th Anniversary

This year is our 30th Anniversary as an organization, and we will be celebrating with a dinner in the autumn. Stay tuned for more details later. Our 30th Anniversary is especially significant as very few women's groups have survived the reduced funding to advocacy groups during the Harper years. OWN will partner collaboratively with METRAC, Leaf, and Womenatthecentre in the Due Justice for All project, funded by the Status of Women.

Activities

Our organization has been very busy during the last quarter as you will see from the reports below. The Housing Committee has been particularly active since the last newsletter.

As your representative on the Service Canada Senior's Advisory Committee (SAC). I am pleased to report that SAC continues to provide advice and input into Service Canada programs, particularly regarding pensions. At the meeting earlier this month we saw the result of changes made to the online application forms for Old Age Security (OAS). Online applications for the Canada Pension Program and OAS have been increasing steadily.

Partnerships

During the last few years we have partnered with Dr. Martine Puts RN PhD at the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto on a number of projects. We are pleased to say that the latest, The Canadian Frailty Priority Setting Partnership is finally getting underway.

The purpose of the Canadian Frailty Priority-Setting Partnership is to involve individuals with direct experience of frailty in older adults, either personal or professional, in defining priorities for research. These research priorities will then be shared with researchers and research funding organizations so that more research is carried out in these priority areas.

The study follows the methods of the [James Lind Alliance \(UK\)](#) and is being funded by the Canadian Frailty Network (CFN). It is being led by [Drs. Katherine McGilton](#) and Jennifer Bethell [Toronto Rehabilitation Institute](#) , and Martine Puts (University of Toronto) and overseen by a Steering Group that includes patients, caregivers, and health and social care providers who work with older adults.

This is an opportunity for you to have your say in setting Canadian frailty research priorities by completing this short questionnaire at:

English: www.cfn-nce.ca/engaging-canadians/help-set-research-priorities

French: www.rcspf-rce.ca/participation-des-canadiens/help-set-research-priorities

We thank you for your assistance.

To celebrate Canada's 150th Anniversary as a confederation, the committee had its picture taken. See below.



Members of the Service Advisory Committee of Service Canada (SAC).

Reminder

**Check out our Facebook page and website to keep track of our events and others that we support.

Activism *and* Systems Advocacy

How do you engage with the world?

Summary of a must-read report from IBM:

“For the aging population, loneliness is more than a state of mind – it is an emerging risk factor that has implications for personal, economic and societal well-being. A range of stakeholders, including business leaders, medical professionals, governments, advocacy groups and social service organizations, has a significant interest in preventing, identifying and addressing the root causes of loneliness. Without countermeasures, older adults face continued detachment from the mainstream, even as their numbers grow. Our newest research explores how organizations in many industries can act to help older adults strengthen their social fabric and reconnect to others.”

“Loneliness and the aging population”

It can be read and downloaded here:

<https://www-935.ibm.com/services/us/gbs/thoughtleadership/loneliness/>

OWN member **Mary Hynes** was interviewed by The Star on how the city budget could affect seniors. Read the whole article here:

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/05/16/councillors-urged-to-spare-citys-vulnerable-from-effects-of-budget-freeze.html>



Elder Care Takes a Village – Meet Silver Sherpa!

By **Karen Henderson**

Founder: Long Term Care Planning Network

www.ltcplanningnetwork.com

As you may know, I'm an expert in aging and long term care planning. If we wish to age on our own terms, with independence, dignity and control, planning in advance is absolutely necessary. That means becoming educated about home care, accommodation options, long term care facilities and palliative care—before you need them. That means doing the research to learn what services (and their costs) are available where you want to live out your life. That means understanding what the government will and will not pay for. That means having money set aside for your care needs, and having all your legal documents completed. And finally, that means looking after yourself physically, mentally and socially so you can stay out of the public health system for as long as possible!

The results of your efforts?

- You won't be a burden to your family
- You will have the resources to live out your life where you wish
- You will preserve your independence and dignity
- You will have peace of mind.

But over the 20+ years I have been working in this field, I have come to learn that planning is the first half of a more complex puzzlein spite of having the most complete plan possible, you cannot predict when or why a crisis or unexpected emergency may occur. The best laid plans often go awry.

For this reason I'm excited to introduce my new strategic alliance with Silver Sherpa Inc., whose services I have never encountered before. With its highly qualified team, Silver Sherpa helps the elderly manage lifestyle crises—at home, in hospital or in long term care facilities—caused by health issues, the loss of a partner, social isolation and other issues. There is no other organization in Canada offering this array of necessary services, which is also willing to work with their clients' existing advisors to execute each elder's plan.

So together the Long Term Care Planning Network and Silver Sherpa have created a unique entity—the village that aging and elder care need—to ensure that Canadians

age as successfully as possible. I encourage you to check out their website at www.silversherpa.net and see everything they have to offer.

Silver Sherpa is offering a one-time opportunity – any referrals received over the next two months from this newsletter will receive an *exclusive 15% discount!* In addition, as a first step, Silver Sherpa offers a complimentary telephone consultation for those who may benefit from their services.

Contact me at khenderson@silversherpa.net to set up a consultation. Please forward this information to anyone you know who is struggling with eldercare issues or who is in crisis.

Karen Henderson, Founder/CEO of the Long Term Care Planning Network, is an independent aging and long term care planning educator, speaker and consultant who works with Canadians to help them understand and plan for the effects of long term care on their personal, professional and financial well-being. You can reach Karen at 416-526-1090 or at karenh@ltcplanningnetwork.com.

Women Aging: Radical Self-Care includes Planning for our Own Aging

By **Sue Lantz**, BA, MPA, Managing Director, Collaborative Aging

By and large, women have longer lifespans than men. So why are we women in our 50s, 60s and 70s, privately and publicly, not thinking and talking about how and where we want to age in the best way possible, within environments that we would choose? Why don't we talk about and plan based on what is important to us as we age.

Denial is powerful. Many of us deny the reality of getting older, and all that it tends to entail. Maybe it is because of our human nature or maybe it is because of our society's values. We easily ignore the sheer numbers of aging boomers, and the impacts of our extended lives on the health and home care systems, as well as services for younger generations.

With medical advances, the aging process now often involves managing multiple health conditions which often become more complex, and one in ten of us (women between ages of 74-and 85) will have some form and level of dementia (and if we live to over 85 years old, that number rises to almost 40% of us).

Added to the complexities of physical aging, we may face social isolation, inadequate supports to our caregivers or us as caregivers and lack of affordable housing options. Unless we start acting now, we have a recipe for failure.

In Canada, after family members, friends and neighbours make up the second largest group of informal caregivers. This means that besides meeting our own personal health

and financial needs, we will be relying on others for support with our transportation, errands, navigating healthcare systems and decisions.

We have to collaborate to organize things to make the process of giving and receiving help smoother and easier for ourselves. We need each other; we cannot do it alone.

Radical self-care means deciding and pre-arranging a few things for ourselves and those who can help us – to make things simpler and easier, before aging is fully upon us.

- We can choose to live near the people we have meaningful relationships with, such as friends, neighbours, and family.
- We can opt to live near the day-to-day amenities (e.g. shopping, banking, drug stores, restaurants) and healthcare services, thus creating a simpler support structure to care for ourselves and to help each other.
- We can organize our wills, estates and finances in a way that maximizes our financial security.
- We can communicate our healthcare advance-care plans and wishes to the people who understand us most, and whom we trust - particularly our Power of Attorney for Health.
- We can set up ways of communicating (e.g. text, e-mail, drop-in visits, skype, Facebook, social activities) that allow us to easily “check-in” with people closest to us to avoid social isolation.
- We can start arranging (or expecting this arrangement) with our healthcare providers (e.g. family MD, pharmacist, home care providers) to communicate electronically where possible to ease our ability to self-manage our health conditions.

Women have always been natural networkers, who understand the value of reciprocal help. For those of us who have raised children know that relying on our peers (e.g. other mothers) or other women (e.g. grandmothers, nannies, childcare, neighbours) was key to getting through the logistics of working and ensuring our kids were thriving, safe, schooled, fed, growing socially, and being physically active.

So, let’s apply this same logic to aging; thriving as we age, continuing to grow socially, while maintaining our best emotional and physical health. Creating our networks of support and helping one another as we care for ourselves comes naturally to us. Let’s become vocal and active about the options we want for ourselves and choices we can make for our future. Let’s be radical in ensuring our self-care, and in planning how we can support one another!

Collaborative Aging is helping individuals and organizations to be radical, “think ahead” and make plans for a more empowered and positive aging experience, to co-

design better housing options in age-friendly locations, modify our homes, organize home care and in our neighborhoods - while ensuring proper supports to caregivers. www.collaborativeaging.com

Sue Lantz, Managing Director of Collaborative Aging also prepared *A Planning Framework for Improving Supports to Caregivers* - which was posted June 10, 2017 on the Caregiving Matters website: <http://www.caregivingmatters.ca/new-framework-improving-supports-caregivers>

Ending Gender-based Violence and the law

Law Commission of Ontario

[Overview of Legal Capacity, Decision-making and Guardianship in Ontario](#)



OWN HOUSING COMMITTEE

Breaking news from the OWN Housing Committee:

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT LINES:

Why the caregiver and the wheelchair rider need Universal Design in their apartment

“Jane” (not her real name), age 36, is the primary caregiver for “Louise” who has MS. Jane wrote:

“If homes are built with Universal Design, it would allow my roommate, Louise, to enter and exit the apartment and building independently. This would free me from scheduling my day and work hours around her trips in and out of the home. She would also be able to enter the washroom/kitchen to wash her hands in the sink, to bathe in the bathroom and not on the bed/wheelchair. This would make it easier for me to assist her with her daily hygiene and require less strain on my back when helping her perform these tasks.

Universal design would also have spaces designed to accommodate assistive devices, like a Hoyer lift, to transfer Louise between the bed and her wheelchair. For now, it takes a fair bit of shuffling and removing of dressers and normal bedroom storage furniture to make room for a lift.

I would love to have an accessible kitchen where Louise could participate in meal preparation and have access to the balcony to enjoy the garden or the view. She loves cooking and has not been able to participate in meal preparation for more than 4 years.

We should be able to utilize every part of our living space, especially the common spaces that are usually shared.”

Louise, a 45-year-old artist, uses a 500 pound electric wheelchair due to MS. Louise wrote:

She writes:

“Universal Design would enable me to do fundamental things that most people take for granted. I would be able to open the front door to my apartment because I would have a device that would unlock it and hold it open, and the doorway would have no lintels or barriers that I would need assistance crossing. My apartment building would have similar devices in the hallways and throughout the building so I would be able to move freely and socialize as I liked.

Right now, if I don't have help leaving my apartment, I have to stay home.

In the world with Universal Design, my bathroom would have a doorway wide enough for a wheelchair, and it would have a shower that I could drive into. That would make the difference between being able to wash my hair in the shower, and having my hair washed over a basin in the hallway.

The social importance of Universal Design can't be ignored either. Too many discussions with family or friends about plans for get-togethers and celebrations finish with the sad conclusion that I won't be able to participate because stairs prevent me from even getting into their building. It's gotten to the point where I assume that I won't be able to take part in social gatherings because if I can't get around in my own living space, why should I expect that I would be able to in anyone else's?”

Peterborough News

Report from Peterborough
By Jill N. Jones

We were pleased to be asked to meet with the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Maryam Monsef on April 13th. Issues discussed were:

- Economic insecurity
- Poverty
- Work issue's facing midlife women
- Affordable Housing - Co-housing - co-dwelling
- LGBTQ2 education event at seniors housing building
- Older Women and Disabilities

We have a desire to explore issues with Indigenous Women and Women of Colour, so asked Maryam to consider a summit on issues facing older women.

Peterborough women will be attending an OWN Council meeting to dialogue on collaborative issues and actions - and the best use of our Minister Responsible for Women's Issues.



Picture left to right:
Martha Butler, Margaret Slavin, Phyllis Dibble, Maryam Monsef, Jill Jones, Maureen Scollard

AGE
—IN—
PLACE



OR



MAKE
—A—
MOVE?

Showcasing Retirement and LT Care in Toronto, this issue featuring Respite Care

Respite or Vacation Long-Term Care Services in Toronto

There are two definitions of respite care:

1. Temporary institutional care of a dependent elderly, ill, or handicapped person, providing relief for their usual caregivers;
2. Planned or emergency temporary **care** provided to caregivers to provide a positive experience for the person receiving **care**. The term "short break" is used in some countries.

In Ontario, respite care is generally of the first type, allowing a senior requiring care to enter a long term care centre for short stays to give home caregivers a rest. The website <http://www.torontonursinghomes.com/nursing-homes/respite.html> gives oodles of information on this topic including lists of homes where respite care is available and how many beds are available for this purpose.

Respite care (short term care) in a Long-Term Care Home or Nursing Home is available to Ontario's seniors and individuals with disabilities. Respite care clients are allowed 60 consecutive days, and a total of 90 days per a year. The cost for a respite bed is \$33.02 per day, and this covers accommodation, meals and nursing care. Individuals are expected to make full payment for the complete stay on the day of admission. **Respite care is not subsidized by the government.**

It's recommended you plan in advance when considering respite care and take a tour of a few facilities before deciding on one.

Please contact your local CCAC for information on the application process:

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES:

Central West: (416) 626-2222
Central: (416) 222-2241
Central East: (416) 750-2444
Toronto Central: (416) 506-9888

Contact OWN if you have any suggestions for long term care, retirement, nursing, or rehab facilities.

OWN Members in the Community

Good advice on safe driving for seniors by **Sally Perkins**.



<https://www.senioradvisor.com/blog/2014/12/senior-driving-tips-that-can-save-your-life/>

Safe Driving Tips

In 2009, an estimated 33 million drivers aged 65 years and older had licenses to drive. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [an average of 500 older adults](#) are injured in a car crash every day. Another 15 older adults are killed every day from these car crashes.

As you age, the risk of being killed or injured in a car accident exponentially increases. In fact, older adults aged 75 to 80 are at the highest risk of a fatal crash. Studies have shown that these fatal crashes are largely due to medical complications that arise when a crash has occurred.

Although there are a range of reasons why car accidents occur with older adults, the primary reasons are the gradual decrease of vision, cognitive function, and side effects from medications. In honour of [Older Driver Safety Awareness Week](#), here are some safe driving tips that everyone can benefit from, especially seniors.

1. The #1 thing that you can do to keep you safe while driving is the most obvious one: **wear a seatbelt**. Not only will wearing a seatbelt ensure that you remain in place if the car spins out of control, but it also reduces the impact of a collision. If your car gets slammed into by another car while you are wearing a seatbelt you have a greater chance of being able to react properly and steer your vehicle out of further harm.
2. The next thing you can do to keep you safe while driving is to **ensure your vision is at its best**. Yearly eye check-ups with your eye doctor will help ensure that you are seeing at your best. A simple test you can perform is if you notice (or fail to notice) what a street sign or highway sign says. If you can't recognize your neighbor's face from across the street, you may need to go ahead and get that vision check-up sooner rather than later.
3. If you notice the bright glare of on-coming headlights at night and it makes your eyes feel uncomfortable you may want to check-in with your eye doctor as these could be **early signs of glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, or diabetic retinopathy**.
4. **Never use an old pair of eyeglasses when driving**. Use your most recent prescription at all times.
5. **Being physically fit makes a huge difference in the outcome of a potential crash**. It can help boost your reaction time and your ability to move your car out

of a dangerous situation. Simple stretching exercises can help keep your body from atrophying and increase your reaction time while driving.

6. One complaint that people seem to have about older drivers is that they are oblivious to any of the other cars on the road. **Always make sure to use your blinker to signal your intent to make a turn.**
7. **Check your rear view mirrors and keep at least 10” away from your steering wheel** to avoid potential injuries from the air bag.
8. **Take note of when you are the most alert and use this time to plan your trips outside.** If a certain medication makes you feel sleepy, avoid driving right away if at all possible.

Good drivers are safe drivers. When you plan your route ahead of time, you feel less stressed and are able to engage in your surroundings much more quickly. Only drive when you are at your best, otherwise it can wait.

Medical Marijuana

OWN would be interested to hear from mid-life and older women about their experiences with medical marijuana and their thoughts on the changing laws on the subject. Anonymously if you prefer. Please email info@olderwomensnetwork.org

Member Blogs

Please visit our website for the link to OWN member Audrey Danaher's blog. <https://fromheretothere2016.wordpress.com/2017/02/20/continuing-the-revolution/>

If you have an interesting blog and wish for us to showcase it, please email the link.

OWN Interest Groups and Activities

End of Life Planning Workshop held

On Saturday, May 13, there was a workshop regarding End of Life Planning, held at OWN, in conjunction with the Soroptimist women's organization.

There were 3 presentations:

- The first by lawyer **Barbro Stalbecker-Pountney** on Estate Planning, Powers of Attorney and Will, - why it is necessary to have these prepared and the differences to consider.
- The second by Susan Dawson, a Death Doula (also termed an end of life practitioner) with the Dying Well Collective, who presented on the various ways in which they assist individuals in the hospital and at home.
- The third was given by Sun Drews, a Funeral Director with Dignity Memorial, who talked about their funeral, burial, cremation, and transfer services, as well as the

various documents which are required by the funeral homes, and some other very helpful relevant information.

Disappointingly, the attendance was less than anticipated, with only about 14 present, but they were quite attentive and left seemingly much more informed than when they came.

Social Link

By **Susan Mansfield-Jones**, Social Convenor for OWN

Social Link has been neglected a little this year. As I am the Convenor it has been difficult due to health stresses.

I am now far better than I was, so I am hoping we can get back to a more comprehensive Calendar from July onward.

Let me remind our membership that we meet the first Saturday of every month in the Meeting Room of the West Wing, 115 The Esplanade, Toronto. Location is Lower Market Street and one block West of Jarvis on The Esplanade. Just North of Lakeshore Avenue. Meeting times are 1:30pm to 4:30pm.

The theory is bring your interests along and we will try and incorporate them into our Calendar. This way one can experience an activity with other members of OWN. I do hope you will consider joining us; the next meeting will be Saturday July 1, 2017. This is also Canada Day, so maybe we will see other activities from The St. Lawrence District, of which OWN is a part.

I would also like to bring your attention to our 30th Anniversary which is PEARL in the commemorative list of dates and celebrations. Be sure to also check our website for details. More details will follow shortly. We are also asking our members if they could make a contribution towards the celebration of this event. Help from the general Membership would be very much appreciated.

Anam Cara

Anam Cara is a Gaelic term for soul mate. Soul mates share a bond that transcends time and place. OWN has a commemorative record book which honours individuals or a group. A donation to OWN purchases a page in the book with a message concerning the honoree, a photo, or any other tribute desired. This book is on permanent display at the OWN office. It is a great way to celebrate a life. If you would like to take advantage of this, please contact the OWN office and we will send you an application form.

Margaret Jean Houston 1917 – 2015

Jean's death at the age of 98 was reported in the Globe and Mail recently. She was a member of OWN for many years and worked on the Communications Committee. As a former editor with the University of Toronto Press, Jean brought her skills to the production of *CONTACT*, OWN's much admired pre-web quarterly publication.

Rosemary Miceli

Longtime OWN member Rosemary passed away earlier this year. Condolences to son Michael and her extended family.

Check our website, Facebook page and new Twitter feed for more info on OWN activities and news.

<http://olderwomensnetwork.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/OlderWomensNetwork/>

Twitter: @OWN_Ont

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the following articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Older Women's Network.