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### Chair's Report – Marilyn Schafer



#### **VOLUNTEERS**

Now that summer has arrived we can look back with pride on the accomplishments of the last quarter. None of our work could be so successful without our volunteers, both those who come regularly each week and those who help out at events.

We are continuing to survive as an organization with your support while others, such as the Canadian Pensioners Concerned, have closed.

#### **TIFF Lightbox**

In honour of Senior's Month in June, TIFF and OWN entered into a pilot project, bringing seniors together by offering our members complimentary seats for special screenings on Friday June 17 and Friday June 24. On June 17 a group of us went to see 'Born to be Blue', a film "riff" on a segment of the life of great jazz trumpeter, Chet Baker. This was followed by an interesting moderated discussion. On June 24, we also enjoyed viewing the American film adaptation of Jane Austen's last work 'Lady Susan' in a movie called 'Love and Friendship'. TIFF will continue to offer seniors *Friday at the Movies* during the summer, all thanks to a New Horizons grant.

#### **SERVICE CANADA**

On your behalf, I represented OWN at the Service Canada Senior's Advisory (SAC) Committee, Ontario Region meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup>. A celebratory luncheon was held honouring SAC's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a cake, and a commemorative group photograph. Discussions centred on updating the online applications for the Income Security Program, and a presentation of how information the SAC Committee provided in March has translated into new plain language letters and descriptions. As well, inclusionary demand has led to a formal outreach program, which will provide workshops/presentations on departmental services to groups on request.

## EQUALITY DAY

E-day on April 17th is our OWN annual signature event and this year was a success again, attracting people outside of OWN to see and hear The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs. Carolyn has been a long-time member and friend of OWN and it was wonderful for me to welcome her to OWN once again. The 2016 **Feminist of the Year Award** was presented to Carolyn for her leadership skills in keeping Women's College Hospital independent, and for outstanding achievements in advocating and investing in the lives of indigenous women and their families. (See more about this event in the report below)

Elder Anita Sauve, Wisdom Keeper of the CREE and TAHLTAN Nations, opened the event with a sacred water ceremony and offering, followed by an ex-temporaneous talk about oppression endured by families, and self-empowerment models.

Many thanks to Sharon Danley for acting as the official photographer for the event. More photos can be seen on the banner of our website.



Carolyn Marilyn Erin Elder Alita Sauve Carolyn Marilyn Erin

### **TRIBUTE to Dr. Carolyn Bennett, OWN Feminist of the Year 2016 award recipient by Erin Harris**

Advocacy is a response to society's failure to bring about equality and inclusion. The feminist principles of fairness and universality are central in our efforts towards these goals. As women, we enjoy a rich history of feminist activism that affects our lives today: suffrage, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, legalized access to abortion, pay equity, sexual assault and domestic violence laws among others. These changes did not come easily. Our advocacy was supported by rallies, marches, letter-writing, meetings, petitions and often, criticism of the powers that be.

It takes political savvy and immense persistence, patience, commitment, foresight and determination to keep investing in women's equality, and to bring about social change. These changes were the result of women, feminists like Carolyn, making themselves and their beliefs immovable objects, around which, the system had to flow.

As a personal friend and physician to feminist and OWN member Doris Anderson, Carolyn understands and acknowledges that OWN and other women's grassroots organizations across the country, fulfill an essential democratic function as an accountability mechanism for government, ensuring that policies affecting women are based on evidence from realistic research, frontline experience, and, on the actual needs of women and their families.

In December 2003, in the wake of the SARS outbreak, Prime Minister Paul Martin appointed Carolyn as the first ever Minister of State (Public Health). In her two years as Minister, she set up the Public Health Agency of Canada, appointed the first Chief Public Health Officer for Canada, and established the Public Health Network, which enabled all provinces and territories to work with the federal government to protect the health of Canadians.

Carolyn has served as:

- Chair of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament
- the Human Resources Development Committee sub-committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
- the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates
- the Standing Committee on Finance
- the Standing Committee on Health
- Official Opposition Critic for Health
- Official Opposition Critic for Democratic Renewal
- Liberal Party Critic for Aboriginal Affairs
- Chair of the National Liberal Women's Caucus

In November 2015, Carolyn was appointed as Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

With an undaunted commitment to working with disadvantaged women and girls, breaking down barriers of shame and secrecy and widening the circle of accountability, safety and care, Carolyn has shifted the focus from ongoing cycles of managing crises, to a shared responsibility and, a stronger continuum of care, a paradigm shift from risk-based practice to a focus on women's safety.

It is fitting that Carolyn is receiving the statuette of Nellie McClung as OWN Feminist of the Year.

In 1916, the fight was won at the federal level. Nellie McClung was one of the "Famous Five" ([Irene Parlby](#), [Henrietta Muir Edwards](#), [Emily Murphy](#) and [Louise McKinney](#)), who in 1927, submitted a petition for an interpretation of the word "Person" in section 24 of the *British North America Act, 1867*. The decision on October 18, 1929, (Persons Case) found that "Person" includes female persons, thereby making women eligible for appointment to the Senate of Canada.

Both women are feminists, devoted to human rights and equality, political activists and mental health champions, participating in rural life and women's movements. Both are practical leaders and stewards of caring societies who put words into political action, and both uniquely inspire and role-model empowerment and equality in women and girls.

## **Activism *and* Systems Advocacy**

### **Toronto Seniors Summit, June 18th:**

On June 18, assisted by the Toronto Seniors' Forum, the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario held its first joint Seniors' Summit. The purpose of the Summit was to both share information with seniors, and to hear from seniors on Toronto's next steps in creating the Toronto Seniors' Strategy. The Summit was also a modest attempt to hear multicultural and LGBTQ2Spirited perspectives on seniors' issues.

On your behalf, Mary Hynes, Ronny Yaron, Velma Demerson and Marg Jarvis represented OWN at the Toronto Seniors Summit at City Hall, 10:00am - 2:00pm on Saturday, June 18. The summit was a half-day event for provincial, municipal and community partners including:

- an overview of the Toronto Seniors Strategy by the elected officials of Toronto and Ontario
- a seniors celebration of Toronto's recent World Health Organization designation as a Global Age-friendly City
- an open discussion of what seniors can do to advance their needs and interests in their community
- an informational opportunity with City Division and community partner info booths

Full details about the Toronto Seniors Summit are available on the [event flyer](#).

### **Toronto Seniors Forum**

The Toronto Seniors Forum was created by the City of Toronto Municipal government "to give a voice to seniors not often heard". Recently as membership dwindled, the Forum recruited 20 new members to assist with revitalization. The Forum had been valiantly working with its limited number to advance its mandate to provide **advocacy, outreach, leadership** and **policy development** as a **conduit** to City government.

Midlife and older women's issues are now represented on the Seniors' Forum and will be actively working with other forum members to create policy and to advocate for seniors, especially senior women.

## Toronto Seniors Strategy Accountability Table

In 2014, the City of Toronto created the Accountability Table to monitor implementation of the Seniors Strategy. OWN had been represented on the Expert Panel that assisted in creating the Strategy and a founding member of the Accountability Table. With the majority of recommendations being partially or completely implemented the expanded Accountability Table of community organizations and city staff are moving into the expanded role of co-creating a new or enhanced outcomes, indicators for measuring success and methods of community engagement. This is probably **the first time community groups are getting the opportunity to create City policy** from the ground up. Of course, the final policy implementation decisions will be on the shoulders of the elected councillors.

You can read the full report “Towards an Age-Friendly City” here:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Social%20Development,%20Finance%20&%20Administration/Shared%20Content/Seniors/PDFs/seniors-strategy-fullreport.pdf>

## Ontario Seniors Secretariat

OWN has been represented on the Liaison Committee for many years. The Committee has served as a tool of the provincial government to disseminate new policies, legislation and other government information to seniors groups. The Senior’s Secretariat has **begun an analysis of future direction** and, at the Committee’s May meeting, OWN and other organizations were able to emphasize to the Secretariat’s consultant that the Liaison Committee needed to become bi-directionally consultative. Committee members want to do more than share information on our activities. We want to be heard in policy development.

## SPACE Coalition

The SPACE Coalition is a loosely organized group of organizations advocating for continued and improved use of public spaces in Ontario. Much of the focus has been on the use of schools and school playfields by children and youth. OWN has given a senior perspective as a member of SPACE. We have worked alongside the other SPACE organizations to promote creation of community hubs in public spaces including schools.

## Law Commission of Ontario and Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE) collaboration

On May 11, 2016 OWN provided expert advice as consultants to the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly on the Law Commission of Ontario report outlining advanced care planning, Informed Consent, and goals of care.

OWN voiced the need for patient advocacy and literacy: full disclosure of information regarding informed consent, oversight governance of the complaints process, designated funding for homecare and end of life literacy programs.

## Ending Gender-based Violence

OWN continues to be a member of the Premiers permanent Roundtable on Violence against Women (VAW) representing the unique physical, mental and spiritual needs of women over 50 years old in an ever changing environment. OWN continues to advocate for trauma-informed, evidence-based best practice approaches, reducing people working in silos and suffering in silence.

### OWN and the Alfreda Mordas Reading Room recommends this vital resource book - *Back to Loving Me* by Lourita Lue-Shing



This resource is currently being used in women's organizations across Canada in resource rooms, group programs, staff training, outreach, book clubs and more.

The book was also reviewed and recommended by the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

<https://www.pinterest.com/nnedv/educational-books-about-dv/>

About the book:

*Back to Loving Me* introduces a new model: the Self-Empowerment Wheel. Its eight principles are outlines in the book: personal responsibility, positive self-image, self-love, inner peace, self-reliance, community, healthy boundaries, and assertiveness. Included are reference materials and over 40 personal growth exercises that can help facilitate individual and group learning. It is an easy to read self-help book for adults of any gender, race, or religion.

More information can be found at: [www.backtolovingme.com](http://www.backtolovingme.com)



## **OWN HOUSING COMMITTEE**

### **Peterborough's Seniors Housing Summit**

The City is partnering with Trent University, Peterborough Council on Aging, the health sector, and community members to plan a Seniors Housing Summit on Thursday **October 27, 2016 at Trent**. We expect about 200 people, including community members, practitioners, developers, political leaders, and decision makers in the field. Our aim is to inspire, educate, and continue the dialogue to highlight seniors' housing issues.

Trent's work in Aging and Society has been recently recognized with a funded research chair. The Summit will build on this momentum, by providing a chance to focus efforts, celebrate success and encourage leadership in seniors housing.

The Summit themes are: Design of Home and Community; Service Provision and Access; Leadership Opportunities.

### **OWN's Public Presentation to the Toronto Affordable Housing Committee - City Hall - June 20, 2016**

OWN has been a long-time advocate for affordable housing. Over the years of listening to women, we have come to realize that accessibility is as important as affordability for many women. The same may be true for many men, but our concern has been for women's needs.

We need to make some radical changes to the way we design new buildings. Hence, our initiative to promote universal design.

We are partnering with the Association of Design Professionals for Accessibility to tap into their expertise through their representative Thea Kurdi, and OWN member Ronny Yaron spoke for the OWN Housing Committee.

Our intention is to promote universal design in construction of all new multi-unit residential buildings amongst architects, developers, urban planners, policy makers, and politicians at all levels of government. Our goal is to make changes to the provincial building code. To this end we are planning an event for the fall of 2016.

Association of Design Professionals for Accessibility (ADPA) is a not for profit, unfunded, non-partisan organization of professionals in all segments of the design industry. Member share a common interest to help make buildings and all things designed fully inclusive for all people, including people with disabilities, going above and beyond what the laws require. OWN Housing Committee members were in attendance.



## Association of Design Professionals for Accessibility (ADPA)

Email: [adpafeedback@gmail](mailto:adpafeedback@gmail.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ADPforAccessibility/>

Twitter: [@ADPAtweets](https://twitter.com/ADPAtweets)

Association of *Design*  
Professionals for *Accessibility*

The presentation was well received and several members of the City's Affordable Housing Committee were very receptive of the concept. Mayor John Tory sat in on the presentation.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/ah/bqrd/backgroundfile-94585.pdf>

Here is our flyer to promote our housing event coming this **Fall**:

## Living in Place and Liveability Outcomes

OWN Housing Committee

What do Ireland, Norway and Singapore have that Canada does not? Universal Design principles.

- ✓ Norway is working toward raising awareness and achieving universal design by 2025.
- ✓ The Singapore government's Accessibility Fund supports public departments by modifying existing structures to make them accessible.
- ✓ Ireland's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design supports professional development by integrating universal design principles into curricula.

Source: *World Report on Aging and Health 2016*

## What is Universal Design?

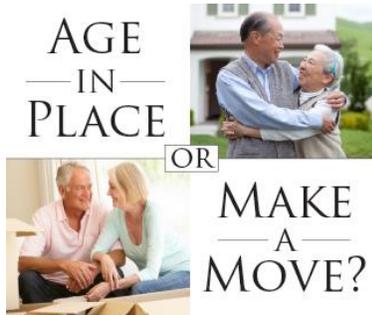
Come and find out by attending an accessible housing event sponsored by the Older Women's Network and Quadrangle Architects **in the fall of 2016**.

- ✓ Over 4.4 million Canadians (one out of every seven) live with some form of disability. That's a substantial group of possible buyers who are generally overlooked in housing projects.
- ✓ "There are 1.65 million people in Ontario who have a disability." Source: *Ontario Nonprofit Network 2016*

- ✓ The Royal Bank has found that Canadians with disabilities do \$25 billion in consumer spending every year. Every person with a disability influences the spending of 12-15 people.
- ✓ 40% of people over 60 have some disability. Source: *Thea Kurdi – Designable Environments*
- ✓ By 2030, seniors will be 30% of the population. Builders need to keep this in mind in designing housing.
- ✓ "We live in a world that's not designed for us; we live in a society that's full of barriers, physical, technological, etc. We need to get rid of those barriers so that we can all fully participate." David Lepofsky
- ✓ Incorporate well-established universal design standards in our national building codes to support the development of more Age-friendly physical spaces. Source: *Institute for Research and Public Policy Task Force on Aging – a National Seniors Strategy for Canada framework 2015*
- ✓ Statistics Canada indicates that 14% of the Canadian population are people with disabilities, a percentage that we are told will increase to 25% by 2025. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/highlights-canadas-baby-boom-larger-than-in-other-g8-countries/article4217072/>
- ✓ We know older persons are more likely than younger people to not only live with one type of disability, but typically two or three as they continue to age. <http://www4.rhdcc.gc.ca/indicator.jsp?&indicatorid=40>
- ✓ Approximately 70% of disabilities are 'invisible' which means that people with some disabilities do not need to use assistive equipment that distinguishes them from the able-bodied. <http://www.limeconnect.com/about/page/the-facts>

Disabilities play no favourites. Anyone of any age can be born with or be struck with an illness or injury which creates a temporary or lasting disability.

The Older Women's Network believes that rather than focusing on a Ministry of Housing, housing should be the focus of all ministries. We are committed to advocating for serious infrastructure investment.



### Showcasing Retirement Homes in Toronto

**Christie Gardens:** <http://www.christiegardens.org/>

Christie Gardens is a fully private, not-for-profit, and charitable organization that offers graduated living.

**Davenhill Senior Living:** <http://davenhillliving.com/about>

Located at Yonge and Davenport, just steps from public transit, Davenhill Senior Living is a not-for-profit retirement community for over 200 seniors.

**Cedarvale Terrace:** <http://www.cedarvalteterrace.ca/>

Long term care, semi-private and private accommodations.

**Briton House:** <http://www.britonhouse.com/>

Retirement centre.

### OWN Members in the Community



Pictures courtesy of Kim Levis



Edith, Bea Levis, and Rachel Tamari

**Edith Ginsburg** became 100 years young in June 11<sup>th</sup> 2016  
Her family held a private party for her on her birthday at her residence.  
Many friends and residents celebrated her life with tributes. Sandwiches and sweets  
were enjoyed by all.

Erin Harris presented Edith with an award from the Seniors' Advocate, Councillor Josh  
Matlow, who congratulated her as follows:

“Toronto is truly fortunate to have exceptional individuals like you. On behalf of our  
community, I would like to congratulate you on celebrating your 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thank  
you for choosing to make Toronto your home and for being a very engaged and active  
member of our vibrant community.”

## **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.

Recent OWN members honoured are **Bev McClelland, Connie Yang, and Elizabeth  
Quan.**

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,  
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