

Annual Report 2009
Issue 67



OCSCO Outreach

Ontario Society (Coalition) of Senior Citizens' Organizations

Annual Report 2009

Summary of Activities Over The Past 12 Months
Ended August 31, 2009

1. Introduction
2. Information, Referral & Counselling
3. Dan Benedict Award
4. 2009's Projects, Joint Programs and Educational Events
5. Participation, Issues & Consultations
6. Publications & Website
7. People
8. Board of Directors
9. Thank you

OCSCO,
Tel: (416) 785-8570, 1-800-265-0779 Fax: (416) 785-7361
Email: OCSCO@web.net

1. Introduction

This has been a year of travel for OCSCO! We have been able to get out across the province and meet with our membership in Sudbury, Kenora, Sault Ste. Marie, Ottawa, Windsor, Barrie, Hamilton, Toronto and the GTA. The 2009 focus was on making communities "Age Friendly". In addition we continued with projects and issues around Capacity Building for groups in the north, Healthy Living and Care-giver Multicultural Information Fairs. Pension security, healthy affordable food and issues such as the harmonized sales tax continue to be a priority. OCSCO worked on a strategic plan.

2. Information, Referral & Counselling

OCSCO continues to provide this service via phone, fax, and e-mails. We refer callers to local service providers across the province this includes Community Care Access Centres (CCAC's), Government offices, health care services, pension information, community centres, senior's centres and housing to name a few.

3. Dan Benedict Award

Howard J. Watson is this years' recipient of the Dan Benedict Award. This award sponsored by CAW Canada is given for exceptional contributions towards social justice. Howard Watson both a Member of Canadian Pensioners Concerned and of OCSCO is an outstanding example.

Watson is a Retired Social Worker with a varied experience in the fields of Family Welfare, Corrections, and Employee Assistance Programs as well as in-depth experience in all phases of social work practice and programs. A dedicated professional with many years of direct experience in the field he developed innovative programs and methods of working with family, organizational and community systems on educational, preventive and treatment levels of intervention. His education includes Theology and Social Work, as well as training in Alcohol and Substance Abuse Intervention and Treatment, and Mediation.

Since he retired Watson has dedicated much of his time to voluntary organizations looking at concerns and advocating for the well-being of all ages of people related to community life. This has included being Chair of the Housing Committee of Canadian Pensioner's Concerned, Ontario (CPC). CPC received a New Horizon's

grant to do a Study on Senior Housing in Rural Communities. Through the work of the Housing Committee the report "Holding On To Housing: A Participatory Inquiry into Homelessness among Older People in Rural Areas of Simcoe County" was completed in May, 2006. This led to the development of RHINO (Rural Housing Issues Network of Ontario) which is now a member of the Housing Network Of Ontario.

Senior's groups (CPC , Older Women's Network, Ontario Community Support Association and United Senior Citizens of Ontario), came together as partners to address the housing needs and well-being of older persons in rural areas. This partnership was one of the outstanding results of the project. The Housing Committee began to think of ways where the partnership idea could work to the benefit of, not just seniors, but of all ages in our communities.

Howard Watson also participated in OCSCO's 2004 study "Seniors' Health & Housing Crossroads Project" where he conducted focus groups related to the experience of seniors' health and housing of which the Final Report was released in May17, 2004.

4. Projects, Joint Programs and educational events in 2009

Protecting what matters:

Preserving and maximizing income during the financial crisis

This past June a half day seminar was held in Toronto with speakers Christian Steinbock, Investment Advisor, RBC Dominion Securities and Chris Amodeo, Regional Vice-President with Franklin Templeton. Well received by the 45 seniors in attendance, this seminar discussed strategies to protect and maximize your income in the current economic climate. OCSCO plans to do a similar event in the coming year.

Capacity Building Workshop for Sudbury area Seniors' Groups

Held September 1, the theme was: Capacity Building and Advocacy for Seniors Organizations. Partnering with the CAW Local 598 Retirees, 90 Sudbury district seniors attended this event at a local Royal Canadian Legion to hear Janet Gasparini, Executive Director, of the Social Planning Council of Sudbury, speak about the problems of seniors who live in rural areas and isolation. Gasparini said we cannot expect the government to take care of everything, and innovative ways have to be found to help disconnected seniors keep in touch with one another for mutual help and support. One interesting program was a telephone tree, where people would check up on one another in a 'buddy' system.

Ms. Gasparini pointed out that by 2031, one quarter of the Sudbury population will be over 65, and that statistic probably applies to the rest of the province. It is imperative, she said, to have politicians hear from a large number of seniors; a single individual cannot do the job alone, and would not be taken seriously. A strong social network is needed.

Carmen Robillard, Program Manager North and East, Ontario Trillium Foundation made suggestions on applying for grants for funding seniors' projects.

In addition there was a panel discussion on seniors advocacy issues, by Dean Lindsay, National Coordinator CAW Retired Workers Department, David Munch of Finlandia Village Seniors Complex, Sudbury, and Morris Jesion, Executive Director of OCSCO.

Seniors' Health and Wellness Multicultural Information Fair: Tools & Resources for Healthy Living

This information fair and education session was held October 20, at the Hamilton Convention Centre. Sponsored by the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat over 48 Area Services' and Businesses' were available to the approximately 200 attendees. 4 similar events are planned in Toronto and the GTA this winter and spring for a total of 5 Multicultural Information Fairs, in 2009 - 2010.

To date, three educational modules or presentations have been developed by the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat who worked with seniors' groups, including OCSCO to gather relevant and current information to assist multicultural groups. The three module topics are: Tools and Resources for Healthy Living, Caregivers Information, and Seniors and Active Living.

Shirley Shipman Memorial Lecture Series

The Shipman family established this annual lecture series to commemorate the life of Shirley Shipman, a founding member of Ryerson's Learning is for Everyone (LIFE) Institute, which offers courses to adults over 50 years old. OCSCO supports this annual event. The 2009 topic was on the Multicultural Experience.

Computer Training

OCSCO partners with Elder Connections to provide free or low cost computer training for seniors in the following locations:

- Aurora Senior Centre
- Hamilton - S.O.A.R.
- Mississauga - Punjabi Community Health Services
- Mississauga Seniors Centre
- Oshawa Senior Centre
- Richmond Hill - CHATS
- Toronto - Matty Eckler Recreation Centre
- Vaughan - Woodbridge
- Vaughan Community Center - Dufferin/Clark

These classes include the basics such as using email, common terminology and using popular applications or web sites such as Facebook (for social networking) and Skype (for video calling). In addition, short-term classes were held this past summer for veterans at the Sunnybrook Veterans

Age Friendly Community Forums

The Ontario Seniors' Secretariat (OSS) partnered with the OCSCO, along with other seniors' organizations and community leaders to deliver seven one-day Age-Friendly Communities Regional events across Ontario. The communities included: Kenora, Sault Ste. Marie, Ottawa, Barrie, Windsor, Hamilton and Toronto.

The forums, which were provided at no cost to participants, encouraged people to take leadership in their community on making their communities age-friendly. Seniors and individuals from various groups and sectors (private, public and non-profit) participated. Each forum included presentations of age-friendly initiatives and provided opportunities for discussion and planning.

Age-Friendly Communities create supportive environments that foster healthy and active aging. OCSCO looks forward to working with member organizations on future age-friendly initiatives.

5. Participation, Issues & Consultations

- Age Friendly Communities
- Aging at home
- Canada - CPP/OAS
- Consumer protection
- Economic Crisis - Jim Staford, CAW Economist
- Elder Abuse
- Elder Care
- GAINS (Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement)
- Human Resources Service Development
- Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)
- Locked-In Funds - RRSP
- LIHNs (Local Integrated Health Networks)
- Long-term Care issues
- Medication Awareness
- Notice of Compliance Regulations and Data Protection
- Charities rules
- Out-of-country travel insurance
- Older Worker Issues
- Pension Issues
- Pre-Budget Consultation
- Retirement Homes
- Senate Report on Aging
- Strategies on Aging - Family Caregivers

OCSCO has been involved (at government's request) in many seniors' topics. OCSCO served on and assisted with the following committees:

- Ontario Seniors' Secretariat Liaison Committee & Sub-committees on long-term care, housing and on the pre-budget consultation
- Seniors Advisory Committee with Service Canada regarding Income Security
- Toronto Emergency Medical Services

6. Publications & Website

- "Sentimental Journey Down Memory Lane" - Both the lyric and complete music song books continue to sell well and we get requests on a weekly basis. *Price: \$40 for the songbook or \$20 for the lyric book + mailing costs*
- "Life Before Medicare - Canadian Experiences" another OCSCO publication compiled by Helen Heeney has been distributed to schools in the Kenora region and it is hoped we can distribute the book to more school libraries throughout Ontario. *Price: \$15 + mailing costs*

*To order any publication please call: OCSCO at:
1-800-265-0779*

- *OCSCO Outreach* is an educational newsletter produced by OCSCO. It is free with membership.
- OCSCO has a website (www.ocSCO.ca), is currently under review to be revised, in order to better bring information on upcoming events and health promotion and provide links to services for seniors in Ontario.

7. People

Passing

- Jerry Berman
Teri Levis
- John Maybanks

Staff & Office

Morris Jesion, Executive Director
Lisa Hems, Programs & Communications
Evely Escobar, Administrative Assistant
Amrit Khaper, Program Coordinator (part-time)
Joanna Rizzuti (part-time)

...

8. Board of Directors

- Jim Allan - CAW Local 1973 - Retiree's Division (Windsor)
- Shirley Barnes (Co-Chair) - Town of Whitby Seniors' Services
- Colin Benjamin - Care Watch Toronto
- Paul Delahanty (Co-Chair) - Ottawa Seniors Action Network
- Bill Fuller - SOAR #10 - Hamilton
- Ben Goldmintz (Treasurer) - Individual Member
- Ivy Leung-Barnes - George S. Syme Seniors' Centre of York (SYME 55+ Centre)
- Ron Michaud - Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers - CAW Local 598 (Sudbury)
- Amy Nelson - Caribbean-Canadian Seniors' Club
- Arlene Patterson - Sarnia Health Coalition (Secretary)
- K. Rathinasingam - Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario
- Ray Sadowski - Association of Jewish Seniors
- Satya Pal Wadhwa - York Region Indian Seniors Club
- Bill Wallace - Seniors Health Advisory Committee of Sault Ste. Marie
- Margaret Watson - Canadian Pensioners Concerned

9. Thank you

OCSCO would like to acknowledge and thank the following for their support:

- Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario
 - Breckles Insurance
 - CAW-Canada
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada - New Horizons for Seniors Program
 - Province of Ontario Seniors' Secretariat
- Break Open Ticket marketing companies:
 - Bazaar Marketing
 - Bingo Pro Inc.
 - Cedar Island Sales and Services Ltd.
 - Dr. Nevada
 - Nevada Enterprises
 - Nevada Man (Nevada Ticket Services)
 - Party Novelties Sudbury
 - Tri-Continental Marketing Corporation

Respectfully Submitted,

Shirley Barnes
Co-Chair

Paul Delahanty
Co-Chair

Morris Jesion
Executive Director