

List of Activities of The Council on Aging of Ottawa during 2008

The Council on Aging of Ottawa (COA) is a bilingual, registered charitable organisation, which, through its Board of Directors and committees, Executive Director, project and administrative staff, works extensively with community partners and senior volunteers to provide relevant resources for Ottawa seniors by:

- Providing expertise on seniors' issues identified by the community and partners
- Promoting development of effective programs and services for seniors
- Serving as a partner in the planning and coordination of seniors' services
- Speaking to government on policy and funding priorities, and
- Promoting public understanding and awareness of seniors' issues.

Current COA priority areas include seniors' health issues, elder abuse, affordable and supportive housing, transportation, and income security.

We welcome any suggestions for future initiatives or directions for the Council, and we invite and encourage the community at large to support the work of the Council through membership, volunteering, and financial donations.

All publications are available on The Council on Aging's website: <http://www.coaottawa.ca/>

In 2008, the COA performed the following:

Events Hosted:

- Five Lunch & Learn sessions, each attended by approximately 100 people, including seniors, family members, friends and professionals, on the topics: "Protection from Investment Fraud," "Government Services for Seniors," "Seniors & Sexuality," "Les services gouvernementaux," and "Ending Life with Dignity."
- Annual Spring Luncheon at the Ottawa Congress Centre, attended by over 300 people, with special guest the Honourable James Bartleman, former Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario
- Francophone forum attended by 150 people on the topic « *On est encore capable... La contribution des aînés à la société* »
- 33rd Annual General Meeting, featuring presentations by Cal Martell (Executive Director, Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario), Diane Hupé (Senior Vice-President, Patient Care, Bruyère Continuing Care), and Greg Fougere (CEO, Perley-Rideau Veterans Health Centre)
- French bistro-themed Volunteer Recognition event to celebrate the outstanding dedication and contributions of our many volunteers

Elder Abuse:

- Formalised the structure of the Champlain Elder Abuse Steering Committee and the Ottawa Elder Abuse Community Response Network
- Strengthened links with the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, including continuing to host their Eastern Regional Consultant, the Elder Abuse Unit of the Ottawa Police Service, and the Elder Abuse Response and Referral Service (EARRS)
- Continued to grow the Elder Abuse Consultation Team, meeting monthly to discuss and provide options for resolution of complex cases of elder abuse in the community, including beginning to develop a roster of resource experts who could be called on as needed

Seniors' Housing:

- Published major research report, "Housing Seniors: Choices, Challenges and Solutions," based on the Fall 2007 Housing forum

- Investigated housing options for low-income francophone seniors
- Continued to advocate for legislation to regulate standards of care in retirement homes
- Continued to update the *Directory of Housing and Residences for Seniors in Ottawa*

Health Issues:

- City-wide forum, “Take Charge of Your Life... Adding Health to Years!”, held in collaboration with the Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario, bringing together seniors, service providers and health care professionals to discuss principles and practices of healthy aging
- “What Was Said” report produced and distributed following the forum, to ensure the voices of participants were heard

Seniors’ Transportation:

- Worked with the Ottawa Seniors Transportation Committee and OC Transpo to offer the “Ride With Us” program again in 2008, allowing seniors 65+ to ride buses free on Wednesdays during June, July and August, and lobbied for this to become a permanent program
- Launched a new branch of the COA website highlighting seniors’ transportation issues and options, in partnership with the Ottawa Seniors Transportation Committee
- Partnered with the OSTC and the Ottawa Community Support Coalition to develop and implement a city-wide volunteer driver recruitment campaign
- Collaborated with the OSTC and OC Transpo to produce a CHOICES document, soon to be widely distributed, describing the range of transportation options available to Ottawa seniors

Multicultural Issues:

- City-wide forum, “Building a Bridge... seniors’ rights to safety and security in Ottawa’s ethnocultural communities,” bringing together seniors and service providers to discuss the challenges facing New Canadian seniors and establish priorities for future research and advocacy
- “What Was Said” report produced and distributed following the forum, to ensure the voices of participants were heard
- Translated brochures on elder abuse, financial abuse, and sexual abuse into 12 additional languages (Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian) and distributed these in the community

Education and Advocacy:

- Three editions of the *Bulletin*, on the topics of Environment and Climate Change, Seniors & Sexuality, and Seniors’ Contributions to Society, with a circulation of 6000 copies per issue
- Printed and distributed over 2500 brochures in English and French, related to the Council on Aging, elder abuse, and seniors’ safety
- Gathered statistics from the 2006 Canadian Census and other sources to prepare an updated version of the Factbook on Aging, to be published in 2009
- Updated the “Long-Term Care Insurance in Canada: What is it and Do I need it?” guide
- Delivered many presentations to interested community groups on a variety of subjects
- Conducted media interviews on a number of issues related to seniors
- Continued to represent the interests and concerns of seniors on a wide variety of external advisory committees and to all levels of government
- Undertook an internal organisational review and restructuring to ensure our commitment to Ottawa’s seniors is fully realised, in accordance with our mandate and mission