



OCC Spring Newsletter

First Family Caregiver Day in Ontario recognizes the value of caregivers

As all OCC members know, we are working hard to have Family Caregiver Day recognized *officially* in Ontario. For the first time, while awaiting final approval of the private member's bill in the Legislature, OCC self-declared the first Tuesday in April as Family Caregiver Day.

One of the events held on April 4th was the result of a remarkably effective collaboration between OCC, VHA Home HealthCare, ENRICHES (a program designed to address the complex needs of socially isolated caregivers over the age of 55 in Toronto), and the City of Toronto. In just 2 short months of planning, this group was able to plan an event held at Toronto City Hall which attracted nearly 300 caregivers.

An official proclamation (see attached) was signed by Mayor John Tory and noted that caregivers of all ages in Ontario have an enormous impact on the sustainability of the health care system. Mayor Tory and Lisa Levin (former Chair of OCC) are seen in the upper two photos below addressing caregivers at the event in Council Chambers. The lower photo shows a young carer and her two siblings who spoke following a very touching video presentation.





A highlight of the event was the presentation of VHA's annual *Heart of Home Care Awards*. One of these award winners was Karen Gillespie. An article about Karen was published in the St. Catherine's Standard. See below:

[Karen accepts award for caregivers, everywhere](#)

There were many other efforts to celebrate and recognize caregivers on Family Caregiver Day around the province. Community and Primary Health Care (an OCC member represented by Patti Lennox on the OCC Steering Committee) submitted a press release to the local newspaper, *Inside Brockville*. Click on the link below to view:

<https://www.insidebrockville.com/news-story/7219042-cphc-joins-family-caregiver-day-celebration/>

As well, many members reached out to organizations and health care facilities with whom they had contact to request that the communications departments help promote awareness of the day.

One individual caregiver in Burlington decided to organize a special *Caregivers' Tea* in her own home. She saw the information about Family Caregiver Day on the OCC website and did not have time to plan anything for April 4th but did manage to have the event on April 12th. She said:

"I just saw your site on the internet. I am a caregiver – my 93 year old Mom lives with my husband and I. I realize I am connecting with you last minute! I have decided to have a Caregivers Tea at my home next Wednesday, April 12th and have invited 16 Caregivers and most are thrilled to be able to make plans to get together for a "tea" and chat with each other. I will be giving each lady a lovely gift bag with small fun items (and of course Lindt chocolate) in it as well as scones and jam to take home to share with their family.

My Pastor has talked to me and this may be something my church will do now every two months – just to have a time for Caregivers to share together. And yes, because I initiated it at home, I will be working with him to see that this does come to pass.

Do you have any brochures, or encouraging thoughts for me to give to the ladies who come? Even if I don't receive it by next week I will certainly be able to use it in future "teas". I just think it is nice to have some material to let the ladies look at. They are all coming from different scenarios. Some look after

spouses, some parents, some with Autistic children and some siblings. So often we as caregivers forget that we have to make time to have a break. “

The *Tea* was a great success on the 12th and is an example that shows we can offer caregivers recognition, appreciation and time to interact socially *year-round* – not just on one day.

Thank you to **everyone** who did something to mark Family Caregiver Day. We look forward to even more involvement of members next year.

Advocacy

There were some very important (and welcome) announcements from the provincial government last week about new investments in caregiver support. See the link below to the pre-budget announcement.

The OCC Research & Advocacy Committee is reviewing the sections of the budget that pertain to these. A letter has been sent to Premier Kathleen Wynne commending the government’s focus on caregiver needs and noting that OCC will be submitting some detailed feedback, especially with respect to the need for *flexible* respite options and expressing some concern that the new caregiver tax credits will be non-refundable thus disadvantaging low-income caregivers. See this link:

<https://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2017/04/providing-a-helping-hand-to-those-caring-for-loved-ones.html>

The OCC Caregiver Advisory Council will be asked to provide input into the submission.

If your organization (or, you, as an individual) would like to offer any comments on the press release above or on the just-released budget, please forward these to Joanne Bertrand, OCC Coordinator at – jbertrand@alzheimerront.org *no later than **Monday, May 29, 2017***. Your comments will be passed on to the Research & Advocacy Committee.

Caregiving in the News

CIBC survey - Canadians spending \$33B per year to care for elderly parents. Watch CTV Toronto’s report which aired two nights ago.

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/business/caring-for-aging-parents-costs-canadians-33b-a-year-survey-1.3402778>

New blog for caregivers – submitted by Paul Cavanagh, Caregiver Exchange. See following link:

caregiverblog

Health service providers in Ontario can help family #caregivers more easily than they may think.
caregiverexchange.ca/Spotlight/372/

Caregivers need our help: Viewpoint – CBC – The National

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGO1WKhLDYw>

Resources:

For those living in the **Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant District**, you may wish to find out more about a LHIN-funded respite program for caregivers in your area. The contact name and number appears at the end of this submission:

“VON is funded by the HNHBLHIN to provide in home and overnight (out of home) respite for caregivers. It is a service that is well received by those who use it but we are finding that caregivers aren’t necessarily aware that such services are available to them.

The service is staffed with trained PSWs and the services we provide are built around the needs of the caregiver. There is a modest fee for in home of \$6.00/hour. Overnight out of home is \$40/24 hour period including meals, social activation, personal support, meds assistance – all in a secure facility so that people at risk of wandering can be accommodated. As we are a charitable organization, we are able to offer these services at a very modest cost compared to private pay organizations with similar services. Our main focus for these supports is with the senior population”.

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Research

Workshop kicks off new study:

Several OCC members (Carole Ann Alloway, Denyse Lynch, Ellen Bruce and Lisa Levin) attended a workshop in December 2016 that was a part of a larger study being conducted by researchers at the University of Toronto, the Sinai Health System and the University Health Network. The

report is attached to this newsletter – Caregiver Workshop Report - BeACCoN - “Caregiver Voice through a Quantitative Lens”. The purpose of the workshop was “to gain first-hand knowledge from participants about what is important to caregivers, what their needs are and how these needs should be measured so that it captures the full experience and impact of caregiving”. The report has some interesting findings and is worth reading.

Opportunity to participate in a new research study:

If you are a caregiver to someone with dementia or a neurodegenerative disease, between the ages of 50-85 and live in the greater Toronto area, you may be interested in participating in a research study that is a partnership between Saint Elizabeth Health Care, Elizz and Ryerson University. (see attached flyer) You may also contact Dr. Alexandra Fiocco, Ryerson, at star.lab@psych.ryerson.ca. This is a 10-week study and if you qualify, 2 hours of free respite will be provided once a week over the course of your participation.

Welcome to new OCC members!

Dawn Vernon, Caregiver, Toronto

Joanne Cerovich, Caregiver, Ottawa

Helen Da Silva, Caregiver, Toronto

Carolyn Acton, S.R.T. Med-Staff, Toronto

Marie McLelland Leger, Rest Assure Community Support Services, Lindsay

Lynne Lavictoire, Caregiver, Ottawa

Leqin Lu, Heart and Stroke, Toronto

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