

*Symposium on Aging and the
Not-for-Profit Sector in Ontario:
Ready or Not?*

By

Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office

Outline

- A. Sharing of issues and challenges affecting seniors from Thorncliffe Park and other surrounding communities

- A. TNO's programs and services for seniors
 - Existing services and activities for seniors
 - TNO and New Horizons for Seniors Project

- C. Description about TNO's current level of involvement around aging/seniors including achievements

- D. What works best?

- E. Open Forum

- Issues and Challenges Faced by Seniors

- Social isolation, income security and health and related issues
- Limited access to information, support and mainstream services
 - Public transportation could be a major barrier especially for those who are financially dependent to their children
 - Difficulty contacting government offices to access services
 - Seniors feel intimidated and frustrated in using automated telephone systems
- Limited employment opportunities – newcomer seniors (too many barriers); needs skills-based training

Source: Understanding Thorncliffe Park 2009 by Public Interest and Don Valley Local Immigration Partnership Phase 1 Report

- TNO's Existing Program and Services for Seniors

TNO offers direct settlement services and develops innovative programs and services for seniors in Thorncliffe Park and surrounding communities.

The programs and services for seniors aim to improve the seniors' quality of life, address the diverse needs of the seniors' population and to develop an advocacy and empowerment program for seniors.

It also aim to break the seniors' social isolation by providing opportunity for healthy and active living an accessible community space.

- *One-on-one Settlement Support*

Seniors can access assistance and information on settlement services, access to services such as homecare, transportation, housing, filling out of forms, income tax, etc.

- *Health, Wellness and Fitness Activities for Seniors*

TNO enhances the lives of many seniors in Thorncliffe Park by providing wellness and fitness activities for them. *Shibashi* (meditation exercise) classes are being offered once a week.

TNO in collaboration with City of Toronto Public Health also offers Peer Nutrition Classes for seniors.

- *Computer Workshops*

Computer lessons for seniors are held every Wednesday from 3-5 p.m. The personalized computer lessons make learning easy and convenient for seniors.

- *Information Sessions, Training & Workshops*

TNO also organize a variety of information sessions on various topics such as Stress Management, Healthy Eating, Falls Preventions, Healthy Ageing, Personal Safety, Writing of Wills and Power of Attorneys, First-aids tips, Consumer Protection, Life Skills, etc.

- *Seniors Lounge*

Seniors are also welcome to come at the TNO's Seniors Lounge. The seniors' lounge provides a social setting to keep seniors connected to one another and encourage them to stay active and make new friends. Activities include daily games, special events, fitness opportunities and much more

- TNO and New Horizons for Seniors' Project : *Seniors in Motion: Empowering, Connecting and Engaging Seniors in Thorncliffe Park and Neighbouring Communities*

Seniors will be trained to be Peer Leaders so that they can support other seniors in promoting and advocating for their social well-being in the communities where they live. The process of seniors leading seniors will be empowering to the group.

A newsletter will be published in different languages to document the process, highlight achievements, monitor progress and share information. This way there is transparency and sharing.

The project also involves activities such as Empowerment and Advocacy Sessions, Seniors' Breakfast Special, Launching of Elder Abuse Awareness Campaign, Asian Heritage Month Celebration & other drop-in activities for seniors.

- Description about TNO's current level of involvement around aging/seniors including achievements

- *TNO's current level of involvement*

Assist in organizing community consultations and dialogues between seniors and government officials

Work with and provide capacity support for ethno-specific seniors' groups

Support and actively participate in the Seniors' Services Network (TP, FP, Victoria Village and O'connor)

- *Achievements*

Hired a FT settlement worker for seniors

Developed partnerships with various ethno-specific seniors groups

Engaged more seniors in the community to participate in various programs

- What works best?

Ensure that seniors participate in the development of programs and services through community consultations and dialogues

Ensure that all seniors ethnic groups are represented in networks, Councils, etc. and consultation meetings

Provide opportunities for seniors to give feedback and comments about the programs and services being offered to them

Ensure the sustainability of implemented projects for seniors through capacity building

Recognize the fact that seniors have diverse needs so the development of culturally sensitive programs and services is very crucial

Flexibility and availability of mobile services for seniors

Development of senior-friendly materials and environment

Thank you