



Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative Year 1 2010-2011 Evaluation Summary Report

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"Generating knowledge that drives community action."
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In late 2009, the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative (NAFCI) was awarded a three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). In early 2010, work began to introduce and implement community partnerships for AFC initiatives throughout all 12 of Niagara's local municipalities by 2013.

The 3-year NAFCI was piloted in 2010 in Welland. A community engagement and action template was established as a basis for rolling the project out in all 12 of Niagara's local municipalities.

NAFCI partners include:

Niagara Region
City of Welland
Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
Rose City Seniors Foundation (Welland)
Niagara Research and Planning Council



Age-Friendly Community Principles in Niagara

Age-Friendly Communities (AFC) create safe and secure environments that foster community participation, personal health and well-being, taking into consideration the needs of all citizens, with a particular focus on older adults.

The NAFCI is based on Age-Friendly principles promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO), Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program at Waterloo University.

Year 1: Building a Base for Age-Friendly Action Throughout Niagara

- A NAFCI Community Coordinator position was established, to create tool kits, communications products and templates to engage citizens and assist with formation of an Age-Friendly local action committee in each of Niagara's local municipalities.
- A Project Management Committee and Vision Committee constructed a Niagara-wide framework applying Age-Friendly principles; a local action committee in Welland created a pilot template for local Age-Friendly community action.
- Niagara citizens touched by NAFCI in year one are receptive and open to learning about Age-Friendly principles.
- Dedicated project staff and committed volunteers have taken a forward-thinking, practical approach to discovering how Age-Friendly principles apply to the community of Niagara.
- Municipal and Regional leaders (both elected leaders and staff) have been receptive to learning about Age-Friendly principles and the bearing they will have on future community planning.
- Community partners with region-wide reach have engaged with NAFCI. In the spring of 2011, a partnership was launched for a regular NAFCI-branded column, written by community volunteers, to run in *Niagara This Week* newspaper. The Niagara Community Observatory at Brock University published a policy brief, which provides a project baseline: *Seniors in Niagara: Creating Age-Friendly Communities*. Niagara Region is hosting a NAFCI web page.

Future Directions for Niagara-wide Age-Friendly Community

1. Four main theme areas have emerged from community members' ideas for Age-Friendly actions to strengthen Niagara's communities:
 - better communication practices;
 - improved accessibility for all;
 - a community culture valuing older adults; and
 - applying an Age-Friendly lens to Niagara-wide and local municipal official planning.
2. Practical ideas for expediting local action committee goal-setting and Age-Friendly community action throughout Niagara include:
 - holding up-front local focus groups; and
 - building on and strengthening the Age-Friendly focus of existing community resources and activities (e.g., local action committee work linking with Mayor's Youth and Seniors Advisory Committees, Accessibility Committees and other Committees of Council that share similar Age-Friendly principles).
3. Project priorities, outcomes and planning for sustainability of Age-Friendly action beyond the end of the project will be strengthened by:
 - clarification of objectives and roles;
 - defining criteria and logistics around recognition of organizations and businesses in the community that engage in NAFCI action;
 - assessment of the human resources required to achieve project goals; and
 - refining communication and reporting processes of the project.
4. Engaging municipal governments in making Age-Friendly principles an integral part of planning is vital to healthy communities for all ages. Demonstrating practical ways Age-Friendly principles apply to the community of Niagara is an important project priority.