



Roundtable Conversation Highlights Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative

Prepared by Mary Wiley Executive Director Niagara Research and Planning Council -
"Generating knowledge that drives community action."

The Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative promotes awareness of age-friendly principles and fosters local action toward making Niagara a more age-friendly community for all ages.

Roundtable Conversation Process

Twelve roundtable conversations were held across Niagara between November 2011 and April 2012 involving over 100 citizens. Participants from Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, St. Catharines, Thorold, Wainfleet and West Lincoln joined in the conversations to discuss age-friendliness in their community. The aim was to identify more clearly the current situation facing our aging population to begin planning for more age-friendly communities. Partners organized conversations in a variety of venues including private retirement residences, regional housing, a transitional home, a town hall, community health centre and supportive living support centres. The City of Welland was the pilot and completed this process earlier.

The input received from local citizens will help identify priorities for local age-friendly initiatives and inspire others in promoting awareness and action in the age-friendly journey.

Common themes for action emerged from the 2012 Niagara-wide roundtable conversations. These themes align with findings from the 2011 pilot phase of the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative in Welland.

Niagara-Wide (2012)

- respect and appreciation
- information availability & knowledge transfer
- access and mobility

Welland (2011)

- a community culture of valuing older adults
- better communication practices
- improve accessibility for all



Actions Addressing Three Key Niagara-Wide Themes 2012

1. Respect and Appreciation

- Create more intergenerational opportunities, e.g., seniors mentoring students and students helping and visiting seniors
- Appointing seniors' advisory committees provides a sense of belonging for older adults

2. Information Availability and Knowledge Transfer

- Strengthen Information Niagara messaging, such as “When you need housing help, financial assistance, health services, employment centres, legal clinics, seniors’ programs, parenting help, volunteer opportunities or other support, DIAL 211!”
- Apply “Age-Friendly Communication” practices in the marketplace, and to address technology challenges, such as navigation of automated telephone service and on-line information. A helpful guide is available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>

3. Accessibility and Mobility

- Walkable neighbourhoods are critical to connecting older persons and others to local destinations, such as shopping centres, restaurants, health care and family and friends
- Taxi Service is an important part of a Niagara transportation strategy requiring attention, particularly in rural areas where people understand there will not be public transit in the foreseeable future

Moving Forward to Action

Local Age-Friendly Community events have started at the community level to address the input received at the roundtable conversations. To find out more about the age-friendly events in your community contact:

Virginia Stewart, Community Coordinator

E-mail: agefriendly@niagararegion.ca

Phone: 905.685.1571 ext. 3869



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A full report can be found at www.nrapc.com