



## SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)

### *Guest Editorial*

# THE IMPORTANCE OF A HOME NOT JUST HOUSING

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Across Canada, the housing conversation is changing.

For years, affordable housing discussions at Habitat for Humanity Thousand Islands focused primarily on young families trying to enter the housing market. While that remains critically important, another growing reality is becoming impossible to ignore. Seniors across our communities are struggling to find safe, affordable, and accessible housing options that allow them to age with dignity.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with Seniors for Social Action about these growing challenges and the importance of communities working together to explore solutions. Video Link here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Em8ldjsM0CA>

At Habitat for Humanity Thousand Islands, we believe housing is about far more than four walls and a roof. A home represents safety, stability, independence, belonging, and hope. When people have secure housing, their physical health improves, stress decreases, and community connections grow stronger.

Many seniors today are facing significant pressures, including, rising housing and utility costs, homes that no longer meet accessibility needs, isolation and loneliness, long waitlists for affordable or supportive housing and concerns about maintaining independence as they age.

Many older adults simply want the ability to remain safely in the communities they helped build.

Throughout Leeds & Grenville and across Ontario, organizations, municipalities, and housing providers are beginning to recognize that traditional housing models alone may not fully address the growing and changing needs of seniors. Increasingly, conversations are focusing on ideas such as aging-in-place supports, accessible housing design, multigenerational living, integrated supportive housing and community-based partnerships focused on reducing isolation.

At Habitat for Humanity Thousand Islands, our current priority remains the completion of our Lockett Place development in Prescott, which will provide affordable homeownership opportunities for four local families.

At the same time, we are continuing to listen, learn, and participate in broader community conversations around future housing needs, including how organizations like Habitat for Humanity may continue supporting seniors and vulnerable homeowners through partnerships, advocacy, accessibility-focused initiatives, and innovative housing discussions in the years ahead.

### **The Need for Preventive Housing Support**

One area that continues to generate meaningful discussion across Canada is the importance of preventative housing support. Helping people remain safely housed through accessibility improvements, safety modifications, or home repairs can have a significant impact on health, independence, and quality of life.

While Habitat for Humanity Thousand Islands has not launched a Critical Repair Program at this time, exploring opportunities for future programs and partnerships that support aging in place is an important long-term conversation for our organization and many others in the housing sector.

### **Building Community Not Just Homes**

These discussions are not simply about construction. They are about building communities where people feel connected, supported, and valued at every stage of life.

One of the most encouraging parts of speaking with Seniors for Social Action was hearing the passion, ideas, and lived experiences shared by attendees. Meaningful solutions will only come through collaboration between nonprofits, healthcare providers, municipalities, businesses, volunteers, and community members.

Habitat for Humanity Thousand Islands has always been built on partnership. Volunteers, donors, businesses, and families all play a role in creating stronger communities together. That same collaborative spirit will be essential as communities continue responding to the housing realities facing seniors today.

As someone who has spent much of my career focused on community engagement and storytelling, I have learned that some of the best solutions begin by listening.

What barriers are seniors facing?

What supports are missing?

How do we reduce isolation?

How do we help people remain independent longer?

What does dignity truly look like in aging?

The answers may look different in every community, but the goal remains the same. Ensuring people feel safe, connected, and supported.

At Habitat for Humanity Thousand Islands, we are proud to be part of these important conversations and to continue exploring ways we can help strengthen our communities for the future.

Because a home is never just a structure. It is where people build their lives, recover from hardship, welcome loved ones, and grow older with dignity.

And every person deserves that opportunity.

Everyone deserves a safe and decent place to live!

*SSAO welcomes comments on this and other Editorials at*  
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