



SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)

INFORMATION UPDATE

July 2, 2024

SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO) PARTNERS WITH UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS

Seniors for Social Action Ontario (SSAO) Joins the University of Manitoba in an Innovative Research Partnership

In June, the Board of SSAO struck an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to provide advice to University of Manitoba researchers examining Care Poverty in Canada. The concept of care poverty was first introduced by Professor Teppo Krogen at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. Dr. Krogen's book is available on open access here:

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-97243-1>

The University of Manitoba has done some excellent research that has been of interest to SSAO in the past, and researchers there have been respectful of elders' input into research initiatives for some time now.

This is one of the first formal partnerships between a seniors' organization and university researchers to examine an issue of significant importance to elders and their caregivers across Canada.

Special thanks to Dr. Andrew McNamara, Jo-Anne Beckett, Lauren Bates, Dr. Mattias Hoben, Eric De Schepper (Manitoba rep), and Harry Spindel for being willing to serve on this Committee and speak for SSAO members and elders and caregivers across Ontario and Manitoba on this important topic.

Thanks also to Ceciley White (Durham Region) and Steve Tennant (Lanark County), on SSAO's Board for being so supportive of this research partnership.

Other research done by University of Manitoba researchers that may be of interest to SSAO members is listed here:

Christine Kelly et al. (2018). Emergent issues in directly funded care: Canadian Perspectives. *Aging & Social Policy*, 33(6).

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08959420.2020.1745736>

Christine Kelly. (2020). Directly funded home care for older adults: Exploring the legacies of disability activism. Chapter 6 in *The Aging-Disability Nexus*. Full text: https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uXrnDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA97&dq=info:Z64Ilhbu9jAJ:scholar.google.com&ots=xtiIf1d_t&sig=ZqgsMok4ysFJZ1jcYmBA_uhYKfw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

Christine Kelly et al. (2021). Doing ‘whatever they can imagine’: social task shifting in directly funded home care. *Bristol University Press*.
<https://bristoluniversitypressdigital.com/view/journals/ijcc/5/3/article-p393.xml>

FALL ZOOM SESSION - RESEARCH ON SUPER AGING

Seniors for Social Action Ontario welcomes Professor Angela C. Roberts, Canada Research Chair, Data Analytics and Digital Health in Cognitive Aging and Dementia to present her research in a Zoom session for SSAO members in the Fall.

SSAO is also very pleased to welcome Professor Angela Roberts whose team at Western University is currently conducting research on what sets superagers apart from others with implications on reducing risk factors for dementia as people age. She will be joining us in the Fall in a Zoom session for SSAO members. Professor Roberts is part of the SuperAging Research Initiative - Communication Bridge Clinical Trial.

To read more about this research please see:
https://uwo.ca/fhs/news/2023/04_13_roberts.html

SSAO will do a mailout to members once this Zoom session is scheduled.

A WARM WELCOME TO SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION GREY-BRUCE!

SSAO is very pleased to welcome its first local chapter. SSA Grey-Bruce has been formed by elder activists and their allies in this beautiful part of Ontario. As the provincial organization we look forward to working with our first local chapter to advance aging in place initiatives in Grey-Bruce.

If you live in the Grey-Bruce area and wish to affiliate with your local chapter, please e-mail us at seniorsactionontario@gmail.com and we will be happy to connect you with the Grey-Bruce co-chairs.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Why Are SSAO Admins Anonymous?

Some have asked why, when they contact SSAO, they hear from an anonymous Admin. In the past, when Kay Wigle, now deceased, was our admin, people managed to track her down and call her at home. In some cases, as we all know, members of the public can also be less than respectful in their interactions with organizations.

Since all of SSAO's volunteers are in our 70's and 80's, and giving generously of our time to advance the perspectives of our membership and respond to members' questions and concerns, we have made the decision to protect admin's identities.

Admins are well versed in the issues SSAO takes up and make appropriate referrals to the Chair or other SSAO members when specific or specialized information is requested.

Why Are Some of SSAO's Articles Unsigned?

SSAO volunteers have also, and continue to, engage in research and in developing and analyzing public policies, and write editorials and articles that are sent to our members. In some cases, where there has been quite broad consultation on an article or editorial, or several contributions, all of the contributors are not named, so the article is not signed by an "author".

Wherever possible, if there has been a lead author or authors, that person or persons are named. All guest contributors are also named.

Please note, that you can read all of SSAO's research and policy papers, editorials, and letters to politicians on our website under the Advocacy, Editorial, and Research and Policy tabs: <https://www.seniorsactionontario.com/>

You can also view videos of SSAO's Zoom sessions on our YouTube Channel found here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0tGeL4P54rO8DWIVc9TND>

Consider becoming a subscriber so that you will know when new videos are posted.

SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION ONTARIO CO-FOUNDERS – WRITING FOR CHANGE

In March, 2020, twelve elder and disability activists came together to form Seniors for Social Action Ontario to begin to address the tragedy unfolding in long-term care institutions. Many had significant experience in successfully advocating for, and

developing alternatives to large institutions for labeled and vulnerable people. Since then over 1500 members from every part of Ontario have joined SSAO to promote alternatives to institutions in their local areas. Many are also affiliated with other organizations with similar goals, such as Councils on Aging.

For over four years co-founders of SSAO have produced articles and editorials, and taken part in advocacy with government and the Opposition to advance the cause of aging in place and in community. They have also written Op Eds to major newspapers, and have contributed articles for other organizations. Here are some of the Op Eds published in major newspapers or other organizations' communications produced by co-founders of SSAO:

Kay Wigle. (2022). Imagining better: The power of aging in place. Writing for *Community Living Ontario*. <https://communitylivingontario.ca/imagining-better-the-power-of-aging-in-place/> and Long Term Care Facilities are not normal for anyone. (Pg 18) <https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>

Douglas Carton. (2022). Ontario's long term care tragedy. Writing for *Community Living Ontario*. <https://communitylivingontario.ca/ontarios-long-term-care-tragedy/> and Aging at Home Inspired by Gord Ferguson's Story (Pg 20) <https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>

Linda Till. (2020). We must let our outrage drive real change in care for vulnerable citizens. *Hamilton Spectator*. https://www.thespec.com/opinion/contributors/we-must-let-our-outrage-drive-real-change-in-care-for-vulnerable-citizens/article_aac9fd3c-13bd-593e-9ba6-d041b1daaada.html

Linda Till. (2023) An illusion of care. Writing for *Community Living Ontario*. <https://communitylivingontario.ca/an-illusion-of-care/>

Dr. John Lord. (2021). It's time to shift our thinking on long-term care. *Waterloo Record*. https://www.therecord.com/opinion/it-s-time-to-shift-our-thinking-on-long-term-care/article_48bb93ff-3f8c-50be-b033-22b874361de4.html

Dr. John Lord. (2022). Our elders 'do not need more of the same system we already have'. *Waterloo Record*. https://www.therecord.com/opinion/our-elders-do-not-need-more-of-the-same-system-we-already-have/article_137fc5ed-6cee-541f-8966-ebfe817261be.html

Dr. John Lord. (2023). Lessons from the Blue Zones teach us how to age properly. *Waterloo Record*. https://www.therecord.com/opinion/lessons-from-the-blue-zones-teach-us-how-to-age-properly/article_d8f8e7a7-5e06-5efe-a82d-7f6a2c71c5c8.html

- Dr. Judith Sandys & Dr. Patricia Spindel. (2020). It's time to provide funding and real choice in long-term care. *Toronto Star*.
https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/time-to-provide-funding-and-real-choice-in-long-term-care/article_5801ce78-d315-5023-aa76-41a289d80f04.html
- Dr. Judith Sandys. (2023). Older adults with intellectual disabilities and aging in place. Writing for *Community Living Ontario*. <https://communitylivingontario.ca/older-adults-with-intellectual-disabilities-and-aging-in-place/> and Understanding the effect of the assumptions we hold. (Pg. 26) <https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>
- Dr. Judith Sandys and Doug Cartan. (2020). Afterword - what you can do to promote change. (Pg. 38) <https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>
- Dr. Sal Amenta. Why are persons with disabilities being placed in long-term care facilities? (Pg. 8) <https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>
- Joyce Balaz. The importance of our autonomy. (Pg. 9)
<https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>
- Dr. Patricia Spindel. (2020). Stop warehousing older adults. *Toronto Sun*.
<https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/spindel-stop-warehousing-older-adults>
- Dr. Patricia Spindel. (2020). Care home carelessness. *Globe and Mail*.
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/letters/article-jan-1-ontario-dropped-the-ball-so-badly-readers-lament-conditions-at/>
- Dr. Patricia Spindel. (August, 2023). Spindel: It's not OK for Boomers because governments did not plan for their dignified old age. *Ottawa Citizen*.
<https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/spindel-its-not-ok-for-boomers-because-governments-did-not-plan-for-their-dignified-old-age>
- Dr. Patricia Spindel. (November, 2023). Elders are not the problem – Ontario's bad public policy is. *Ottawa Citizen*. <https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/spindel-elders-are-not-the-problem-ontarios-bad-public-policy-is>
- Dr. Patricia Spindel. (December, 2023). 'Age friendly' communities in Durham need to back up the claim. *Durham Region News*.
https://www.durhamregion.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/age-friendly-communities-in-durham-need-to-back-up-the-claim-ajax-letter-writer/article_675fbccc-ef82-5efd-818a-d7903ac6c73d.html

Dr. Patricia Spindel. (December, 2023). Sudbury Column: Rural and northern health care an essential service for seniors. *Sudbury Star*.
<https://www.thesudburystar.com/opinion/columnists/sudbury-column-rural-and-northern-home-care-an-essential-service-for-seniors>

Dr. Patricia Spindel. (November, 2023). Seniority Radio Show with Dave Carr, Owen Sound. <https://www.560cfos.ca/2023/11/20/seniority-with-dave-carr-10/>

Another SSAO Co-Founder in the Press:

Judge Marvin Zuker. (2020). Enforce long term care laws says retired judge.
<https://torontosun.com/news/local-news/levy-enforce-long-term-care-laws-says-retired-judge>

Op Eds and Letters by SSAO Members and Supporters:

Dr. Aldred H. Neufeldt. (2021). It's time to re-think long-term care for seniors. *Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/it-s-time-to-rethink-long-term-care-for-seniors/article_c24c6022-a9d3-556a-b85d-97dc0c85d163.html and No one aspires to a nursing home - 4 steps to reform elder care. (Pg. 28)
<https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>

Audrey Cole. (2020). Aging in Place. For *Community Living Ontario*.
<https://communitylivingontario.ca/audrey-cole-on-aging-in-place/> And underlying threat. (Pg 6).<https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>

Alan McWhorter. (2020). Making Aging in Place a real choice: We can help. (Pg 16)
<https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>

Donna Marcaccio (2020). Community-based support lifelong. (Pg 30)
<https://communitylivingontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AgingInPlace.pdf>

Please consider writing your own Op Eds and Letters to the Editor of your local newspapers and sending them along to SSAO so they can be shared with our membership.

SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO SSAO CO-FOUNDERS WHO HAVE PASSED

At this time we also remember with respect Kay Wigle, Don Weitz and Sparky Johnson, co-founders of SSAO who have passed since the organization was formed. All put their hearts and souls into effecting change for older adults. May they rest in peace and their memories be a blessing.

Kay Wigle passed at the age of 67 in 2021. Her death was a devastating blow to all of us at SSAO. She was a tireless and effective advocate for people with disabilities and elders, and an excellent spokesperson and admin for SSAO. She was also a prominent labour activist in London. Kay was always upbeat and encouraging to all of us and we will miss her to the end of our days. More about Kay's activism is found here:

<https://www.opseu110.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Educator-November2021.pdf>

Don Weitz, another founder of SSAO and mental health activist, also passed in 2021 at the age of 90. Don fought the forces of oppression of people living with mental health challenges his whole life and was an important voice within this organization. We all greatly miss Don's humor, caring, and determination and especially his wise counsel about people with mental health issues facing mistreatment in the long-term care system. More about Don's life is found here: https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/for-don-weitz-resistance-mattered-prominent-activist-dies-at-90/article_60613171-a537-50f1-bbfb-03f21476c57f.html

Sparky Johnson, an Indigenous long-term care activist, was a warrior for justice in every sense of the word. We lost her at the young age of 52 in 2022. Sparky organized numerous demonstrations in front of nursing homes across Ontario to bring awareness of the conditions there. She was someone who never gave up and could always be counted on to support SSAO's advocacy efforts. Her determination to effect change, and her personal friendship was of great value to all of us and she is greatly missed. More about Sparky's life can be found here:

https://www.durhamregion.com/news/vigil-monday-night-for-clarington-woman-remembered-as-fierce-and-selfless-advocate-for-seniors/article_04f50c5a-987d-5339-8e3f-599031d97db0.html

We hope that you are enjoying your summer and that this Information Update has supplied you with some interesting and thought provoking summer reading.