



SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION ONTARIO

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Below is the Foreword to an upcoming publication (an e-booklet) on Long Term Care and Disability

Catherine Frazee, former Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and Professor Emerita at Ryerson University (retired), has graciously penned this Foreword to a joint writing project between Seniors for Social Action Ontario (SSAO) and Community Living Ontario (CLO). With thousands of citizens who have disabilities now being placed in Ontario's LTC facilities, including children, we must take a stand against institutions and say we can do better. We know how to do this as many disability leaders, parents and service providers attest to in this coming publication.

Catherine succinctly points out the folly of institutionalizing citizens in order to receive the support they need. Please take a few moments to read this powerful Foreword by a leading thinker.

Douglas J Cartan, SSAO

Foreword: by Catherine Frazee

*"They aren't nursing 'homes', they are institutions.
They aren't Long-Term 'Care' facilities, they are institutions.
End the euphemisms. These are institutions."*

[Gabrielle Peters, 2020](#)

With these words, Peters captures the core truth that animates the pages of this book. An institution is neither a home nor a place of care. An institution is a closed system where problems of human deprivation and indignity are quietly managed, where societal failings are hidden, and where people, individually or, as we now know, by tens of thousands, can die without triggering alarm.

Truth-tellers like Peters, who live precariously at the junction of disability and poverty, have been sounding the alarm for years. Instead of euphemisms, like-minded activists and scholars have written and spoken about [The Gulag](#), and the norms of [Carceral Practice](#) that reinforce and sustain its authority.

The Gulag is the place where people disappear. It may have “care and protection” spelled out in friendly script on the sign outside its gates, but inside those gates, the rules of order and efficiency prevail. As Harriet McBride Johnson declared, people don’t vanish into the Gulag because that’s what they want or need. They vanish because that is what their government offers: “You make your choice from an array of one.”

The contributors to this volume are not asking for a *nicer* Gulag, a *smaller* Gulag, a *not-for-profit* Gulag, a Gulag for *other* people, people different from themselves. As these essays make clear, we are all in this together, and we need no reminder that the Gulag is just one shift of circumstance away for each and every one of us.

In many voices, the rising chorus for ***Aging in Place*** is a call for abolition. It is a call that unites a broad sweep of citizens – dreamers and pragmatists, builders and agitators, influencers and outliers – from every demographic and electoral sphere. It is a call that accords with evidence that is plainly before us, and equally with the ethos of a post-pandemic awakening to human interdependence and the virtues of care. It is a call that resonates with common sense and common decency, and one that if parsed fairly, transcends partisan ideology.

Institutions have no place in a just and caring society. They must cease to exist, and their decommissioning must be managed swiftly and in good faith adherence to principles of sustainable public policy. Not just people abandoned to fend for themselves, but people accompanied, empowered and resourced to live and flourish in homes and communities of their choosing until the end of their natural lives.

As you are about to read, the studies are in. The pilot projects have delivered. The trials and exemplars are reported in the pages that follow. The blueprint is in your hands, and simply needs scaling. All that is needed now, to borrow from John Lord, for each of us to age in place, is political will fortified by human imagination and courage.

Catherine Frazee OC, D.Litt., LL.D. (Hon.), is Professor Emerita at Ryerson University, where prior to her retirement she served as Professor of Distinction in the School of Disability Studies. The Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission from 1989 to 1992, Dr. Frazee has published extensively on human rights, precarious citizenship, and the activist resistance of disabled people