

Shaping the Local World: Fostering an Age-Friendly Niagara

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Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



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Presentation Outline

1. Ageing in the Global Context
2. Niagara Community Profile
3. Age-Friendly Niagara Network (AFNN) Overview
4. AFNN Key Messages for Change
5. Key Elements and Strategies of AFNN
6. Next Steps towards Sustainability



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Ageing in the Global Context*

The world is facing a situation without precedent:

- *More older people than children*
- *More people at extreme old age*

Can we foster better health and well-being in older age?
How do we address the challenges and opportunities?

* WHO *Global Health and Ageing*



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Ageing in the Global Context *

Will population ageing be accompanied by:

- *A longer period of good health?*
- *Sustained sense of well-being?*
- *Extended periods of social engagement and productivity?*

OR

- *More illness, disability and dependency?*

*WHO *Global Health and Ageing*



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Ageing in the Global Context*

World Health Organization:

“Health and well-being are determined not only by our genes and personal characteristics, but also by the physical and social environments in which we live our lives”

Recognizes the diversity of older people and raises the importance of environments in determining healthy ageing and encourages age-friendly environments

*WHO *Global Health and Ageing*



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Ageing in the Global Context

World Health Organization Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (2010)

- Connects communities world-wide with the common vision of making their community a great place in which to age
- Focuses on action at the local level, fostering full participation of older people and the promotion of healthy and active ageing
- Membership of approx. 850 communities in over 40 countries covering over 230 million people



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World Health Organization: 8 Age-Friendly Community Domains



Niagara Community Profile

- Includes the Regional Municipality of Niagara as the upper tier order of municipal government, and
- 12 urban and rural local municipalities



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Niagara Demographic Profile*

- Population: 447,888
- Over 65 population: 95,845 = **21.4%**
- Ontario 16.7%
- Canada 16.9%

*Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016



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Age-Friendly Niagara Network

AFFN - Who we are:

- Leadership – 15+ committed volunteers
- Members – 400+ community members
- Government, non-profits, businesses
- 3 OTF grants received since 2009



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AFNN Leadership Council

- Older adults (e.g. Local Advisory Committees, CARP)
- Non-profit health and community service agencies staff
- For-profit business representatives
- Local municipal government staff
- Francophone health service provider representative
- Local university and community college representatives



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AFNN Key Elements and Strategies

- Volunteer-led
- Community-driven initiative seeking broad stakeholder input
- Collaboration among AFNN leadership and with stakeholders
- Partnerships across all municipalities and sectors
- Intergenerational perspective
- Raising Niagara-wide AFC awareness and nurturing local action



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Age-Friendly Niagara Vision

“A community for all ages”



A caring community
that optimizes opportunities for
overall well being
to enhance
quality of life as people age



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AFNN Key Messages for Change

1. Today's "older adults" are different than yesteryear's "seniors" (i.e. increasingly well and active, living healthier and longer)
2. Older adult population is an economic driver (i.e. baby boomers are numerically superior and control the bulk of wealth and spending)
3. Municipalities should seize this opportunity (i.e. involve older adults and capitalize on their social and economic capital)



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AFNN Actions

- Raised awareness about WHO Age-Friendly Community principles
- Assessed priorities involving >500 people in Niagara
- Developed *Niagara Aging Strategy & Action Plan (2015)* as a “living document” with 5 overarching goals and 100 actions
- Presented *Aging Strategy* at local area municipal councils



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Aging Strategy: Community's Goals

1. Elevate the profile, level of **leadership and engagement** of seniors in the community
2. Facilitate an **active and positive lifestyle** for all seniors
3. Optimize the **health and wellness** of seniors
4. Improve **access and utilization of services** and supports
5. Improve and maintain a **supportive infrastructure**



AFNN Actions

Implementing the *Plan* via community action groups

For example:

- Multiple community forums (e.g. affordable housing, age-friendly developments featuring Hazel MacCallion)
- Focus groups on social, recreational and cultural needs
- Recommendations to municipal councils (e.g. font size on road signs, accessible walkways with benches and washrooms)
- Age-Friendly Business Guides



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What municipalities have done

- Seniors/Age-Friendly Advisory Committees now in 11 of 12 local municipalities
- Five municipalities are members of the WHO Network
- Three municipalities received Provincial Age-Friendly awards
- Several Age-Friendly provincial grants received
- Recommended Age-friendly infrastructure improvements implemented



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Additional Key Strategies for Action

- Repeatedly communicate and engage with the community (e.g. media, focus groups, public forums, action groups)
- Engage community champions who can concurrently advance their organization's agenda and the AFC agenda
- Engage municipal champions at elected official and staff levels
- Consult the community at all stages (e.g. needs assessments, validating draft documents, prioritizing action plans, implementing and evaluating)
- Ensure older adults always have a role, ensuring grounding and practicality of age-friendly initiatives



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Next Steps towards Sustainability

- Determine how to share lessons learned and best practices among municipal Seniors/Age-Friendly Advisory Committees in Niagara
- Revisit understanding of “age-friendly” (e.g. intergenerational collaboration) and potential strategies to improve effectiveness
- Develop a Niagara-wide entity (e.g. Council on Aging, Age-Friendly Council) that is recognized by the community and funded by local government, lead non-profit organizations and businesses
- Work with the Ontario Association of Councils on Aging



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Thank You



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