



SUPPORTING INCLUSION *through*
INTERGENERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



Annual Newsletter

2022-23



Working
together
to address
social
isolation

Introduction

The past year has been busy, and we are excited to share the incredible progress the [Supporting Inclusion through Intergenerational Partnerships \(SIIP\)](#) project has achieved.

We continue to work with five collaborating organizations across Waterloo Region and the community advisory group to guide and implement project activities, promote awareness, and plan for sustainability.

The Community Advisory Group, which is made up of 15 community partners from various sectors, continued to provide support in a variety of ways, including as guest speakers at monthly collective impact team meetings, reviewing applications for a call for proposals, providing oversight for research opportunities and project plans, and promoting the projects across their networks.

The SIIP Backbone team continued to implement the Collective Impact Plan and evaluation. A focus for the 2022-23 project year was to increase community engagement and awareness of the SIIP project in Waterloo Region. To support this, SIIP hosted a Seniors Month event in June in collaboration with the City of Waterloo as well as an accompanying social media campaign to highlight the impact of social isolation on people living with dementia, and to share tips for creating successful intergenerational programs. Additionally, collaborating organizations were invited to create [videos](#) to showcase their programs.

Another major focus over the past year was offering a variety of shared learning opportunities for the collaborating organizations. Members of the Community Advisory Group shared their expertise on writing funding applications and youth and volunteer management. The SIIP Backbone team also provided opportunities to build capacity within the collaborating organizations through workshops on sustainability planning, knowledge translation, and storytelling.

The SIIP Backbone team was called upon to respond to an area of emerging need - supporting older adults living with dementia from racialized groups. A call for proposals was launched in the fall of 2022, and despite not having any successful applicants, the SIIP Backbone team used this as an opportunity to develop a theme for the Isolation to Inclusion case competition held in the spring 2023.

Throughout this newsletter, you will read updates on the many impactful intergenerational programming initiatives the SIIP collaborating organizations have implemented throughout Waterloo Region.

As they have been from the start, these projects continue to adapt their program delivery to build and sustain engagement. Rich intergenerational connections are developing between youth and older adults in all programs, but particularly for those that have been able to offer in-person programming for the first time this year.

We have consistently heard from participants that the SIIP-funded programs have allowed them to grow relationships with other participants and facilitators, take part in new experiences, build confidence in new skills, become more independent in daily living tasks, and in accessing health and community support.

On behalf of the SIIP Backbone team, we send our sincere thanks to our partners for their ongoing commitment to supporting older adults living with dementia, care partners, and youth.

Support.
Sharing.
Interest.
Engagement.

A year in review

AFRO: Support through the Generations

Support through the Generations is a program that supports Black/African Origin/Newcomer older adults with dementia and their care partners and builds meaningful relationships with our community's youth. Visit the AFRO website to [learn more](#).



Highlights:

- Hosted Walk with Me at Victoria Park, a public event to raise awareness about the program. Attendees included the Mayor of Kitchener, MP Tim Louis, MP Mike Morrice, WRPS police chief and many community members.
- The Federal Minister of the Seniors, the Honourable Kamal Khera, visited the Support through the Generations program. She met with local older adults and got a first-hand look at what the program offers and enjoying activities such as drumming and dialogue.
- Earlier in the year, AFRO purchased two sewing machines. The older adults have been helping provide garment repairs for each other as part of group building exercises. Older adults have been making sleeping mats and blankets and they will be visiting with Ray of Hope in Kitchener this spring or early summer to prepare meals for the homeless.

Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington: Sharing our Voices

Sharing our Voices is an intergenerational art collaboration for persons living with dementia and youth. Visit the Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington (ASWW) website to [learn more](#).

Alzheimer Society
WATERLOO WELLINGTON

Highlights:

- Transitioned Sharing Our Voices from a virtual to in-person format. This had a very positive impact on the development of deep relationships between participants.
- Partnered with the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery to create clay artworks & display pieces at the Gallery. This partnership enabled access to materials and expertise that would not normally be available, and an additional venue to display the work.
- Participants used iPads and software to capture original stop-motion films. This was another new experience for participants.

Conestoga College: Taking Interest in People

Taking Interest in People is an online, virtual group activity program for youth, faculty, people living with dementia and their care partners. Visit the Conestoga College website to [learn more](#).

Highlights:

- The Canadian Institute for Seniors Care at Conestoga College continued their partnership with the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) and Trinity Village to build connections between people living with dementia and high-school students.
- High school students participated in this program to expand their learning and knowledge about dementia and build rich intergenerational connections.



Fairview Parkwood Mennonite Homes: The Virtual Village

The Virtual Village promotes intergenerational learning and social connection through a virtual community. Visit Fairview Parkwood Mennonite Homes website to [learn more](#).

Highlights:

- Expanded their programming to provide additional offerings for older adults, including a walk and talk group, inclusion with music, tech issues with a student facilitator, and a virtual speaker series.
- The virtual speaker series allowed older adults from other homes to participate in the programming.
- Fifteen students learning to speak German had the opportunity to practice their conversation skills with German speaking older adults for 9 weeks.



Waterloo Public Library: Technology Lending Library

The Technology Lending Library supports the technology needs for older adults and addresses barriers created by virtual programming. SIIP partnered with Waterloo Public Library to meet an immediate need for a device and hotspot lending library for participants to connect to SIIP projects virtually. Ten iPads and 10 hotspots are available.



Endless Possibilities

Highlights:

- The first quarter the lending library was available, 6 out of 10 devices were borrowed.
- With the increase in availability of in-person programming in the later part of the year, the devices haven't been used as much, but continue to be used by some.

Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging: LIVING the Dementia Journey for Young Adults

LIVING the Dementia Journey for Young Adults is an evidence-informed, three hour online course that increases understanding of dementia and shares strategies to support people living with dementia. To learn more about this program, [click here](#).



Highlights:

- The LIVING the Dementia Journey for Young Adults online course was launched and widely promoted to WRDSB high schools in the spring of 2022.
- The SIIP Backbone team recently completed another broad promotion to local high schools, colleges and universities.

“The seniors are becoming strong ambassadors of the program. They are actively inviting people they meet in the community or at church, and have even brought their neighbour’s youth out to events.”

- AFRO project lead

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SIIP successes



2022 Isolation to Inclusion challenge: SIIP hosted the inaugural Isolation to Inclusion challenge in February 2022. The challenge was designed to consult with the community to identify barriers and co-create solutions to improve community inclusion of people living with dementia and care partners. The theme was “Rethinking social inclusion in the Waterloo Region post-pandemic” and the following ideas were identified as potential solutions to create a more inclusive community for people living with dementia:

- An advocacy campaign on awareness and impact of social isolation on people living with dementia and their care partners
- Development of a community hub
- Promotion and development of educational and training opportunities

Website update: The SIIP website was updated to serve as a community hub, including many valuable resources and tools that can be easily accessed and use by community-dwelling older adults living with dementia, care partners, community members, and the general public.

Seniors Month showcase: To kick-off Seniors Month and celebrate Intergenerational day on June 1st, the SIIP backbone team launched a social media campaign to highlight the impact of social isolation on people living with dementia and to share tips for creating successful intergenerational programs. We also held an event at the new community pavilion at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Centre in Waterloo for community members to find out more about SIIP and age-friendly initiatives throughout Waterloo Region.

Sustainability workshop: To ensure program longevity and sustainability, the SIIP Backbone team co-hosted a full-day workshop on sustainability planning and knowledge translation. Guest speakers Dr. Julia Moore from the Center for Implementation, and Dr. Inbal Itzhak from the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging, provided project leads with information to ensure they’re able to successfully continue and grow their programs. Following this workshop, monthly collective impact team meetings have focused on implementing the learnings from this workshop into the development of a written sustainability action plan.

Storytelling workshop: To support the collaborating organizations with sharing about their impact, the SIIP Backbone team hosted a storytelling workshop with the Goodman Centre. This was a 4-part workshop to learn about the importance of narrative as a form of communication and how to tell effective stories to share the impact of their work.

“I thought this was going to be a program that I didn’t need, but I have found I really enjoy learning something new.”

- ASWW program participant

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Evaluation Update:

The collective impact structure of the SIIP project is continually improving and the collective is benefiting from having highly committed, involved and capable project teams. Teams feel well supported by the SIIP backbone team.

Between April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023:

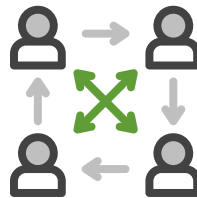
409 older adults, 25 youth, and 16 care partners participated in programs delivered through the collective.



95% of older adults and youth were fully satisfied with the program they participated in.



100% of older adults agreed or strongly agreed that after participating in the program they had improved quality of life, made new social connections, and **learned a new skill**.



98% of older adults felt more connected to their community, were more socially active, and felt like a **valued member** of society.

92% of youth felt like they gained **real-world experience** and expressed interest in future volunteer roles supporting older adults living with dementia.



100% of youth agreed or strongly agreed the program was a **valuable experience**.



“The African Family Revival Organization (AFRO) is a shining example of the power of intergenerational collaboration. By bringing together seniors and youth, they’re fostering deep connections, promoting wisdom sharing and empowering all members of the community to reach their full potential.”
- Kamal Khera, Federal Minister of Seniors

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Research resources

Conversation guide:

The [Community Conversation Guide](#) is a resource developed to help community members identify and support older adults who may be experiencing social isolation. This resource was developed with additional funding from the RTOERO Foundation for the Township of Woolwich, but the resource was so well received that the RTOERO Foundation requested that we rework the content to develop a Canadian edition. We have been promoting this resource widely on social media and will be working with the RTOERO Foundation in the coming months to continue promoting it.

Project videos:

The collaborating organizations were invited to develop a [project video](#) to highlight their program and share their story. The SIIP backbone team created a social media launch for the videos to help increase awareness of the programs in the community.

Looking ahead

- **LDJ for Young Adults:** LDJ for Young Adults course will continue to be available, however it will be transitioning from a main activity of SIIP to the Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program (MAREP) program at the RIA. The RIA will be developing a marketing plan for the course to expand the reach beyond Waterloo Region.
- **Collaborating organizations:** The collaborating organizations will be implementing their programs with SIIP funding until the end of October 2023. The project teams are actively working on developing their sustainability action plans as they will be transitioning into their sustainability year starting in November. Sustainability does not necessarily mean that the activities or program continue in the same format as originally planned, funded, or implemented. Programs evolve over time to adjust to the changing levels of funding, support and needs of the community. The process of creating a sustainability plan helps projects describe the importance of the program in the community and allows the team to make informed decisions about the future of the program.
- **Backbone Team:** The SIIP backbone team will be focused on developing knowledge products, like a toolkit for implementing intergenerational programs. This resource will highlight lessons learned through implementation of community-based intergenerational programs. The SIIP backbone team will also be looking to continue to amplify research opportunities related to social isolation of people living with dementia and their care partners.



Funding acknowledgment

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Canada

Stay in touch





If you would like to stay up to date with SIIP activities, sign up to receive news and event updates on the SIIP [website](#).

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Enhancing Life

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