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# PRELIMINARY AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SUMMIT REPORT

## GATHERING #4 – CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT

November 20, 2015 – Brant County Sports Complex

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**PRELIMINARY AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SUMMIT REPORT  
GATHERING #4 – CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT  
 November 20, 2015 – Brant Sports Complex**

**53 PARTICIPANTS**

**16 Organizations**

**27 Participants representing:**

- Alzheimer Society (2)
- Brant County Health Unit (4)
- Brantford Public Library (2)
- Canadian Cancer Society & BRAVA
- CARP (Canadian Association of Retired Persons)
- City of Brantford – Social Services
- Community Resource Services - Employment
- County of Brant – Recreation Services
- Creekside Village – Burford Housing Development (3)
- Grand Erie Immigration Partnership
- Grand Erie Learning Alternatives - Careerlink
- Grand River Community Health Centre (2)
- John Noble Home
- MP Office
- Seasons Bell Lane (2)
- Six Nations Health Services (3)

**Retirees**

**24 Participants indicated they were retired**

**2 Participants indicated they were semi-retired**

**Where do participants live?**

City of Brantford (16):	North end (12)
	East Ward-Echo Place (3)
	West Brantford (0)
	South-Eagle Place (1)
County of Brant (10):	Paris (7)
	St. George (2)
	Scotland (1)
Six Nations (3)	-
Other (5)	Cambridge, Simcoe, Dundas(3)
Unidentified (19)	

**The participants were advised that this Gathering would provide an opportunity for them to identify what civic participation and employment of “older adults” means to them and then to provide suggestions for businesses and organizations recruiting volunteers and/or employees.**

**The Table Facilitators gathered the demographic information and asked each participant to identify the reason for their attendance. These reasons are listed on page 3 of this report. The Table Talk then focused on identifying concerns/implications and providing suggestions for consideration.**

**INTRODUCTION**

MPP Levac outlined the vision he has for the entire Age-Friendly Community Summit process and expressed his appreciation to everyone for their willingness to participate.

MPP Dave Levac then introduced Mario Sergio, Ontario Minister Responsible for Senior Affairs, to bring remarks on behalf of the Ontario Seniors Secretariat. Minister Sergio highlighted the changing demographics and pointed out that, in Ontario, 1200 people turn 65 every day. For the first time, there are now more people over 65 than under 14. The Minister emphasized the importance of involving seniors in planning for the future for all residents as they age.

City of Brantford Mayor Chris Friel advised of the City’s plans to incorporate “age-friendly” awareness in all city planning.

Six Nations Elected Chief Hill expressed her appreciation to MPP Levac for including Six Nations in the Age-Friendly Summit process. Her remarks included an outline of the challenges faced by the elders as well as the responses implemented and planned.

**Changing Demographics**

It was noted that people are living longer and that by 2030, the population of the City of Brantford and the County of Brant (including Six Nations) will be made up of 35.2% age 55 and over

**Different Communities and Services In This Report**

City of Brantford            An urban community (population 93,650)with significant volunteer and employment opportunities in all aspects of community life. As well, it is the central location for the delivery of Social and Health Services and includes a public Transit System, including Brantford Lift for physically challenged riders, and various community activities and services.

County of Brant            A rural municipality (population 35,638 including Burford, Glen Morris, Harley, Middleport, Mt. Pleasant, Oakland, Onandaga, Paris, St. George and Scotland) with farming as the major industry. There is no public transportation system but there is a subsidized service for medical appointments. Residents must go to Brantford to access social services, most health care services and more diverse employment opportunities.

Six Nations of the Grand: Six Nations (population 25, 660) with no public transportation and limited volunteer and employment opportunities for older adults.

**It is important to note that this Gathering was a “brain storming” session designed to capture ideas “outside the box”. There has been no attempt to identify impact or cost implications. The suggestions apply to all three municipalities.**

**Reasons for Attendance**

- 16 To provide input from a senior’s perspective and support age-friendly planning
- 16 How to make volunteer opportunities “age-friendly”
- 6 To provide insight on how daily living challenges impact civic participation
- 5 To learn what “age-friendly” means
- 5 How to find volunteer opportunities
- 4 Working or Semi Retired – how to plan next steps
- 1 Anything available in the County?
- 53** Pariticipants

**CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT PERCEPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

**Volunteering**

- Good for Seniors
- What is there to participate in?
- Is it accessible re mobility?
- What about other challenges?
- Time of Day Options?
- Where does one go?
- Does it require police check, etc.?
- Is it a convenient location?
- Have users been involved in design?
- How are the accoustics?
- Are washrooms age-friendly?
- Is lighting good?

**Why**

- Promotes good mental health, social interaction and sharing of acquired experience
- Lack of knowledge of how to access information related to volunteer opportunities
- Ramps, railings, push button doors, chairs with arms, wide aisles, railings, elevators
- Eyesight, Hearing, Language may preclude getting involved if not planned for
- To best fit the volunteer available time and best serve the organization, event, etc.
- Clear and concise directional signage or instructions
- Will there be a cost?
- Parking, bus stops, etc.
- To ensure needs are met and logistical outcome is successful
- Too noisy reduces ability to hear.....particularly for those with hearing challenges (needs delicate balance as sound is important to someone with hearing challenges)
- Various toilet heights, wall bars, etc.
- Promotes safety

**Employment**

- Where are the jobs posted?
- No jobs for older workers
- Inconvenient locations/hours
- Next step plannng service?
- Ensure no age limit
- Training/orientation options
- Financial Anxiety
- Accessibility Issues
- Application by on-line only
- Small business Start-Up Services?
- Employers want Gr.12 minimum

**Why**

- Interested in working but do not know where to find the jobs
- 1) Some participants felt “pushed out” of jobs given to younger workers
- 2) Others reported no response to applications
- Part time jobs not wanted by younger workers
- Required by many middle and lower income workers
- To allow people to work as many hours and years as they are able to
- Technology/procedures may need to be updated
- Some seniors feel they must work – no persoal pension plans
- Transportation, location, building, office, washrooms, etc.
- Older Adults without technology skills cannot apply—not all jobs require these skills
- Advice re legal, accounting, taxes, marketing
- Many older adults do not have Grade 12 but do have years of actual experience

**ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY SUGGESTIONS**

**BENEFIT**

**Volunteer Opportunities**

- Create Local Volunteer Opportunity Personal Service
- Create an Organizational Speaker's Resource List
- Publish annual Volunteer Opportunities Guide
- Retirees take work ethics to volunteer placements
- Description of Organization's Goals/Work and Specific skills required by type of opportunity
- Provide Orientation/Training re jobs to be done
- Develop "Seniors Tutoring Kids" Service
- Develop "Seniors Volunteers" service for difficult living environments (i.e. nursing homes, physical or mental challenges, etc.)
- Free Parking, etc.
- Increase High School Volunteer Hours
- Offer a "Friendly" Visiting Service

- Web Site, Telephone, Personal Interviews (i.e. FAQ's on web site often do not address specific questions; talking to someone results in trust and personal connection. Also provides a resource for those lacking technological skills.)
- Organizations to reach out to Senior's Clubs/meeting places
- For individuals without computer skills and internet excess.
- Provide a hard copy for easy reference.
- Reward is in a job well done and recognition for it – not dollars
- Attracts volunteers with common interests and skills
- Ensures success for the organization and the volunteers
- Establishes connections and provides guidance
- Seniors have "lived experience" in dealing with difficult situations and individuals and may be better equipped to deal with emotional needs/situations
- Volunteers should not experience cost
- Provides more opportunities for interaction with seniors
- In addition to social participation, offers an opportunity for civic participation, and completion of government form from home

**ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY SUGGESTIONS**

**BENEFIT**

**Employment**

- Provide current employees with training and updated technical skills when changes occur
- Provide alternative to on-line application process for jobs NOT requiring computer skills
- Ensure work place is "age-friendly" and accessible
- Encourage employees to speak clearly, in person and on the telephone

- Ensures continued commitment to employer's goals
- Increases the opportunity for appropriate applicants
- Provides a safe and welcoming environment for all ages
- Demonstrates respect and reduces misunderstandings

**Buildings, Work Places, etc.**

- Use "age-friendly" filter to evaluate accessibility (Doors, steps, railings, ramps, elevators, lighting, noise, washrooms, work spaces)
- Use "age-friendly" filter to evaluate readability of signage, web sites, written materials, etc.
- Transportation Options
- Provide "scooter charger" stations

- Results in safe and accessible work place and can result in more volunteers
- Provides clear directions, description of opportunities and creates an understanding of expectations
- To ensure a supply of employees or volunteers
- Provides opportunities for workers/volunteers with mobility issues to access the location

**Education and Training**

- Free education/training alternatives for Age 65+ (i.e. Libraries, Universities)
- Provide courses around "Understanding Aging"
- Offer "gerontology" courses in high school

- Keeps the mind active, promotes mental health, establishes connections facilitates social participation
- To prepare for the changes that occur in the aging process. The information can be used by individuals, organizations, businesses and municipalities.
- To provide an understanding of the aging process and of aging family members

**ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY SUGGESTIONS**

**BENEFIT**

**Education and Training CONTINUED**

- Develop Community "Conversation Circles"
- Develop "Planning for Retirement" Workshops for all ages and while working – workshop content to cover all aspects of life – not just financial
- Entrepreneurial Skills Training –flexible hours
- Offer an annual "Training Fair" to promote what is available - for all ages
- Ontario Government upgrading offered by Grand Erie Learning Alternatives

- Information needs to be shared throughout life in order to plan for smooth transitions when required.
- Facilitate better planning for, and use of, community resources
- To start-up new businesses
- To include technical, academic, small business, shopping for one, cooking for one, food handling, crock pot cooking, gardening, etc.
- For Older Workers seeking work and requiring Grade 12 and/or technology training

**Other**

- Develop a Questionnaire seeking Seniors input
- Neighbourhood Hubs to Create Common Spaces
- Arrange for a second airing of City Council Meetings
- Organizations be encouraged to provide video Conferencing for Board Meetings, etc.
- Organizations be encouraged to include planning for Persons with hearing and/or sight challenges

- Removes intimidation and identifies what people think
- Events can be planned for all ages and support volunteering civic participation and social participation
- For those participants who do not have transportation to a Council meeting or access to the first airing of the meeting
- To facilitate people with disabilities to be involved and to continue should a disability be incurred
- To enable inclusivity

**SINCERE APPRECIATION IS EXPRESSED TO SEASONS BELL LANE FOR THE REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED**