

# THE LOOP

The Foundation's Quarterly Update



Spring 2024



## Granting program update

The RTOERO Foundation has some exciting news to share. Our Board of Directors recently approved the recommendation from our Peer Review Panel to invest \$127,100 into Canadian communities through four new grants.

The foundation is a unique granting organization because it focuses on supporting projects that produce tangible resources that can easily be shared with older adults across Canada. These materials not only share important research insights but also provide tangible tools that people can use in their everyday lives.

The RTOERO Foundation awards grants between \$10,000 and \$50,000 to projects that aim to improve seniors' health and wellness, promote social engagement and pursue innovative geriatrics and gerontology research. Grants that the foundation funds ultimately enhance the value of older adults across Canada, connect seniors to services, and have the potential to affect policy change.

- Sinai Health and University Health Network (UHN) were awarded \$49,900 for their project entitled *Co-Designing Patient Education Materials for Older Adults Living with HIV*
- Heartland Forest Nature Experience in the Niagara Region received \$17,500 for their *innovative Intergenerational Nature Challenge Activities*
- H'art Centre's project, *MixAbilities: Seniors Module Outreach*, has received \$25,160
- Alzheimer Society of Ontario received \$34,540 for their dementia resource, *Cultivating Young Dementia Advocates: A Toolkit for Youth Engagement*

Please visit us online at [bit.ly/4b5TOze](https://bit.ly/4b5TOze) to see all past grants we've funded with the generous support of our donors. Thank you for supporting the important work we do for older adults in Canada.

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## Dr. Paula Rochon's student trainee program update

In 2022, we brought you a four-part series on Dr. Rochon's Women's College Hospital student trainee program. We introduced you to five innovative minds and gave you a sneak peek at not only their research initiatives but also what inspires them to pursue the field of geriatrics and where their future aspirations lie. This year, we bring you an update on where these bright students are today.



### Part 1: Keshini Sriarulnathan

Keshini graduated from McMaster University with an Honours Bachelor of Science degree in 2023. She is currently involved in academia as a teaching assistant and tutor for undergraduate students, contributing to the growth of aspiring minds.

Upon completion of her research project, under the guidance of Dr. Rochon, Keshini has embarked on groundbreaking research at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Her project focuses on enhancing the mental health support provided to Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) through the Resettlement Agency Program (RAP).

The focus of Keshini's research project, as one of Dr. Rochon's student trainees, highlights the issue and impact of ageism during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among women. The need to combat ageism on individual and societal levels continues to be an important cause for Keshini.

Eager to expand her knowledge, Keshini plans to pursue an MBA/MPH dual degree, combining public health expertise with business acumen. This academic journey reflects her commitment to creating positive impacts in the field of mental health and beyond.

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## The RTOERO Foundation's focus outputs and knowledge mobilization

One of the most unique and important features of the RTOERO Foundation's granting program is our emphasis on outputs. Outputs refer to the tangible, immediate results of a project - the "things" that the project creates. Primary outputs from geriatric research projects include academic papers and reports, which are published in peer-reviewed academic journals.

These sorts of results are incredibly valuable for their contribution to the base of knowledge that can inform medical care and public policy as it relates to aging adults. But these outputs are typically only accessed by academics, medical professionals and researchers.

The RTOERO Foundation is so unique because we not only fund the research and the outputs, but we also take it one step further. We transform project outputs into tools that can be accessed and used by everyone; a process called "knowledge mobilization."

Two recent examples of "knowledge mobilization" to all RTOERO members include:

- The Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging's booklet, [\*Supporting your neighbours, a community conversation guide\*](#)
- University of Alberta's recipe book, [\*Cooking up calm\*](#)

Moving forward, our foundation will be focusing even more on sharing the results of the research projects we fund and creating outputs that can be utilized by all RTOERO members.



## Naturally occurring retirement communities



**COMING OF AGE:**  
Meeting the needs of our aging population

Coming of Age features host Donna Duncan, CEO of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, in lively discussions with national and international experts on ageism and how to reimagine seniors' care.

In this episode on naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs), Donna is joined by a researcher and innovator on NORCs in urban centres: Jen Recknagel, Senior Design Lead and Director of Innovation and Design, NORC Innovation Centre. Paula Rochon, Founding Director of Women's Age Lab at Women's College Hospital in Toronto, Professor of Medicine and RTOERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Toronto. Listen for free on the web at [bit.ly/3RGhPW4](https://bit.ly/3RGhPW4) as they explore the evolving world of NORCs and how they make it possible for more senior

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### Looking ahead to 2024

In our efforts to continue our work on behalf of all seniors in Canada, the foundation has many exciting initiatives in the works for 2024.

#### Granting Program

At the core of the foundation's work is our granting program. We're excited to see the outcomes and impact of the four grants that were approved at the end of 2023 and to launch the 2024 granting cycle in the fall.

#### **Silent Auction**

For the second year in a row, the foundation will hold a silent auction online from May 27 to 31, 2024. Details will be sent via email as we get closer.

#### **50/50 Raffle**

The foundation will continue with its very successful 50/50 raffles with five raffles being held in February, April, July, October and December. Watch your email for information on when and how to buy tickets.

#### Chime In

In its third year, Chime In continues to offer weekly social chats with your peers. Register online at [rtoerofoundation.ca/chimein](https://rtoerofoundation.ca/chimein) and join this great group as often as you'd like.

#### Webinars

The foundation will continue with its webinar series into 2024, offering four interesting sessions. As always, our webinars are free. More information and registration details will be sent via email.

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For more information about the work of the RTOERO Foundation, please visit us on the [web](#).

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