

IMPACT REPORT 2021

Everyone who works in education knows that the key to learning is listening — students actively listen to their teachers and in turn, teachers listen to their students.

In last year's Impact Report, I mentioned that the global pandemic had altered our routines and forced us to adapt. At the RTOERO Foundation, we try to focus on silver linings, so we took advantage of this break in routine and in 2021, we focused on listening more.

One of our biggest achievements this past year was the development of a new five-year strategic plan. It was a long, complex process, and before we put pen to paper, we listened. We asked our donors, RTOERO members and other stakeholders for their insights and opinions regarding the Foundation. The information we collected was instrumental in building the plan.

Another result of active listening was the launch of *Chime In*, the RTOERO Foundation's first original program, born from feedback offered to us by our donors. We listened to what they told us, and in response, developed this exciting new program that will continue into 2022. You can learn more about *Chime In* on the inside pages of this report.

Human beings love to talk, especially to those we agree with. But when the whole world is talking, we become less adept at listening, especially to opinions we don't care for. What our older generations seem to grasp better than the rest of us is that in order to form a rational viewpoint, you must first listen, consider and attempt to understand the opposing position.

We have so much to learn from our older adults. They have earned the right to be heard, and the rest of us should take a break from talking so that it's quiet enough for us to hear. As the oft-quoted columnist Doug Larson said, "Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk."

If you were one of the many donor voices we heard from in 2021, we thank you for your input. Our door, as they say, is always open and we encourage you to contact us any time with feedback. Your experiences, opinions and wisdom are invaluable as we continue to build the RTOERO Foundation into a long-term force for positive change, together. Thank you, once again, for another incredible year.



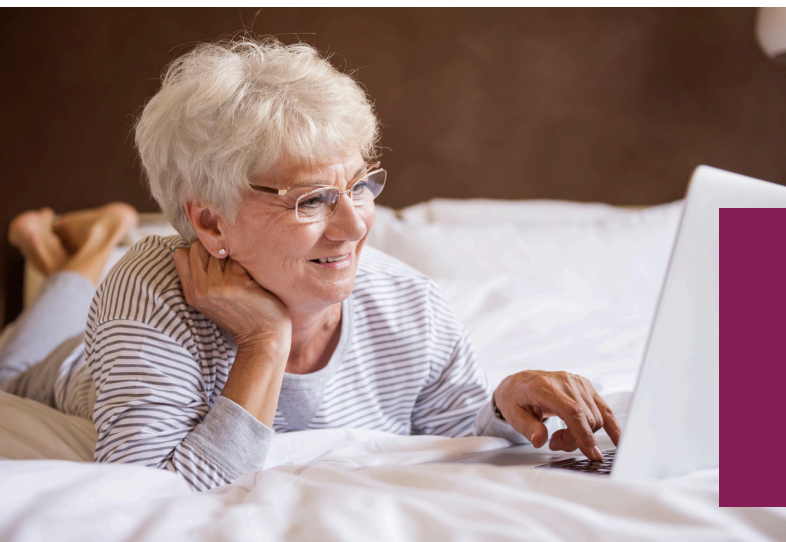
Mike Prentice
Executive Director, RTOERO Foundation



We asked members to *Chime In*

The RTOERO Foundation's core activities are to raise funds for its annual grant program, and awareness of the unique issues faced by older adults. Last year we grew the scope of our work to take on a more active role in facilitating social connection.

Many RTOERO members reached out to us, expressing feelings of loneliness and isolation, and asked what the Foundation could do to help. We listened, and in response, launched our first ever community-based program that takes immediate action to address social isolation among older adults in Canada. We call this program *Chime In*.



Chime In is an open conversation hour, hosted by RTOERO volunteers, that takes place weekly on Zoom. Participants are organized into small groups to allow for better conversation and connection. Groups might decide to focus on a particular topic each week, or may prefer to simply chat about whatever comes to mind and generates fun, stimulating discussion.

The program launched in the fall and feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. The tangible effects of the program have already emerged as participants tell us they look forward to the weekly discussions and have even made some new friends.

The RTOERO Foundation has plans to expand the program in 2022 to reach many more RTOERO members. We are proud of the small but important part *Chime In* will play in the national effort to address loneliness and isolation among Canadian seniors.

Chime In is a great idea to connect retirees and give them an opportunity to have discussions and meet new friends. I found the discussions enlightening and interesting and ended with a huge smile on my face. I felt that I had a good visit with friends.

- *Chime In* participant, District 23

RTOERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine

The RTOERO Foundation continues to act as a conduit for the ongoing relationship between RTOERO and Dr. Paula Rochon. As the inaugural and current RTOERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine, Dr. Rochon and her team remain an influential voice in the field of geriatric research, not only in Canada but globally. In addition to an array of innovative projects, Dr. Rochon and a diverse group of colleagues launched a new initiative called the Women's Age Lab, in the fall of 2021.

The Women's Age Lab is described as the first and only centre of its kind. It aims to support the healthy aging of women by re-imagining a system and society where older women and their unique well-being and health needs are recognized and addressed.

The four focus areas for the Women's Age Lab are:

- Addressing gendered ageism
- Re-imagining aging in place and congregate care
- Optimizing therapies
- Promoting social connectedness

The RTOERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine, together with researchers, health care providers, community-based organizations and policy makers have created the Lab to act as a catalyst to improve the lives of older women around the world.

Please visit www.womensagelab.ca to learn more about the Women's Age Lab.

Strategic plan guides the Foundation to 2025

In 2021, the RTOERO Foundation turned ten years old and we used this as inspiration to develop a new strategic plan for the organization. We are proud of all we've done so far and it was time to take stock of our work and make decisions about where to go next.

The strategic planning process starts with gaining insight about who we are, what we do well and what could be improved. It challenges us to examine and reaffirm why we exist. We gathered input from all our stakeholders and incorporated these external insights into our own notions of what our role could and should be in affecting real, lasting change for older adults.

The RTOERO Foundation's Strategic Plan 2025 has sharpened our vision, mission and mandate. It has helped carve out a distinct identity for the Foundation while more clearly dovetailing our work with RTOERO as two coordinated aspects of the same goal; to improve the lives of RTOERO members and all older Canadians.



Vision

We envision a society in which all seniors live with dignity and respect.

Mission

We invest in programs, research and training to support healthy, active aging for all Canadians. Our activities aim to improve seniors' health care, end social isolation and combat ageism.

New grant focuses on seniors' mental health

The RTOERO Foundation is thrilled to announce the awarding of a new grant in 2021 for a project titled *Mentally Healthy Living After Social Distancing*. The project will be implemented and managed by a research team from the University of Alberta. It was selected by the Foundation for its academic rigor and focus on post-pandemic health and wellness, but also for its tangible, practical outputs.

The project aims to compile mentally healthy living strategies used by older adults during the pandemic, which can also be used to ease back into society. Researchers will learn which strategies are most effective at reducing anxiety, stress and other mental effects of the pandemic. This will lay the groundwork for a "mental health cookbook" complete with sage advice and accompanying recipes. This project output, developed by and for older Canadians, will help isolated individuals rebuild connection and become part of a larger community of recovery.



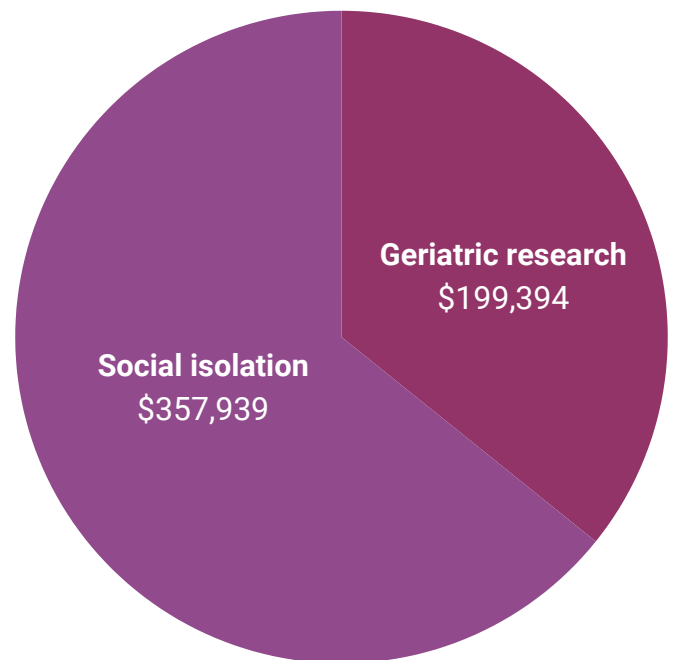
Granting crosses half million dollar mark

Since its inception in 2011, the RTOERO Foundation has focused the bulk of its efforts on raising funds for its annual grant program. We are extremely pleased to announce that in 2021, the cumulative value of all the grants we have awarded is \$557,333.

In total, we have awarded \$199,394 to projects focused on geriatric and gerontology research. Seven projects have received grants in this area, with an average grant size of \$28,485. The other key area our grants address is the growing problem of loneliness and social isolation among older adults. We have awarded \$357,939 across ten social isolation projects with an average of \$35,794 per project.

The vast majority of funding that supports the RTOERO Foundation's grant program is provided by individual members and RTOERO districts. Without generous contributions from our members, the Foundation could not continue to support the innovative research and community programming that we should all be proud to say we help make possible.

We see the potential and the need for significant growth to our donor base and fundraising capacity, to ensure that we fulfill our mission and vision. Through creative and engaging new fundraising channels, we will harness the power of the RTOERO community to significantly increase annual donation revenue and grant impact in 2022.



Districts key to Foundation success

With a new strategic plan that includes bold fundraising and granting targets, we rely more than ever on district support. This list recognizes the generosity of RTOERO districts that have supported the RTOERO Foundation with a financial gift between January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021.

\$3,000+

District 39 – Peel

\$1,000 - \$2,999

District 11 – Waterloo Region
District 14 – Niagara
District 20 – Frontenac Lennox & Addington
District 24 – Scarborough & East York
District 33 – Chatham-Kent
District 49 – The Prairies

\$500 - \$999

District 3 – Algoma
District 5 – Cochrane & Temiskaming
District 12 – Norfolk
District 22 – Etobicoke and York
District 23 – North York
District 36 – Peterborough
District 44 – Region du ciel bleu
District 50 – Atlantic

\$499 and under

District 1 – Rainy River
District 15 – Halton
District 17 – Simcoe County
District 21 – Renfrew
District 26 – Kenora
District 27 – Ottawa-Carleton
District 29 – Lanark
District 31 – Wellington
District 32 – Prescott-Russell
District 35 – Dryden
District 40 – Brant
District 41 – Elgin
District 43 – Nipissing
District 46 – Muskoka
District 48 – Leeds and Grenville