



IMPACT REPORT 2024

**Improving health
care and promoting
social engagement
for all seniors**

RTOERO FOUNDATION

By 2036, nearly one in four Canadians will be over 65. It's a growing, diverse segment of the population with complex needs, but there are not enough resources to address these unique challenges.

The RTOERO Foundation is one of the only charitable foundations in Canada to focus its efforts exclusively on the health and well-being of our older generations. We exist to address these critical gaps by raising awareness, funding projects and disseminating knowledge.

Through our RTOERO donor network, we fund innovative research, support community projects and develop resources to be used by older adults every day.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This Impact Report is our way of reporting our successes back to those who make our work possible - our donors.

I am always humbled and deeply impressed by their dedication to supporting our diverse aging population. Their generosity allows us to fill a funding gap and be recognized as one of the few charities that focuses exclusively on issues that affect our older population.

Our donors are the reason that we have been so successful in funding exciting new projects and research initiatives designed to improve the lives of all of us as we age.

A most sincere thank you to all who have supported us over the past year. Together, we are making meaningful progress for older adults across Canada.

Mike

RTOERO FOUNDATION GRANTING PROGRAM

Since 2011, the RTOERO Foundation has been enhancing the lives of seniors in Canada through our donor-funded granting program. Our overarching goal is to identify and partner with researchers and community programmers in order to address the most critical issues faced by our aging population.

We award grants to projects that improve seniors' health and wellness, promote social engagement for the elderly and pursue innovative research in the field of geriatrics and gerontology. Our grants also lead to the development of valuable resources and a knowledge base for all efforts focused on the building of an age-friendly society.

The greatest impact of our work lies in these grants, which are instrumental in understanding the complex needs of seniors across Canada. Together, with your generous support, we invest these funds in programs, research and training to support healthy, active aging for all Canadians.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Initiatives that primarily focus on improving social engagement for older adults.



2024 - \$42,660 (total grants)
SINCE 2011 - \$513,600

GERIATRICS RESEARCH

Initiatives that take a scientific approach to examining healthy aging, health services and the quality of life for older adults.



2024 - \$84,443 (total grants)
SINCE 2011 - \$383,838



SHERIDAN COLLEGE

Using visual arts to address social isolation in older adults

Grant amount: \$5,000

Timeline: August 2023 to July 2024



SNAPSHOT

Participating in the arts has been shown to improve health and wellness among older adults and can help combat social isolation. With grant funding from the RTOERO Foundation, a group of seniors were involved in the development of an online art program to inspire lifelong learning and encourage artistic self-expression.

CHALLENGE

There is a clear need to take a preventative approach to social isolation by developing accessible and sustainable social engagement opportunities specifically designed for older adults. With many arts organizations pivoting to online program delivery during the pandemic, arts participation became more accessible for many. However, one concern with this pivot is that programs may have been created without input from older adults, without considering their needs and without understanding the barriers and facilitators to participation.

SOLUTION

Artfull Enrichment provides older adults and their care providers with opportunities for arts education, creativity, self-expression and social connection. Over the past five years, the organization has worked with more than 400 senior living communities. In order to reach a much larger group of older adults, the Artfull app was developed, with 80 older adults helping to test the technology and provide feedback. In partnership with the Sheridan College Centre for Elder Research, a series of focus groups and multiple rounds of free art instruction gathered important insights to create a new digital resource specifically designed with and for older adults.

RESULTS

The Artfull app provided opportunities for meaningful connection and the project also encouraged older adults to build their skills, learn and feel confident in their abilities through:

- access to 100 creative experiences including live virtual workshops, video tutorials, interactive presentations and dozens of step-by-step lessons.
- a bilingual online community hub, where members can share photos of their art and connect with others across the country.
- The Artfull Gallery, a coffee table book featuring paintings by project participants.

IMPACT

The Artfull app makes art accessible to older adults around the world, no matter where they live. The app connects older adults and encourages creativity and lifelong learning. It helps users explore new skills, express themselves and build meaningful connections.

SOCIÉTÉ ALZHEIMER SOCIETY SUDBURY-MANITOULIN NORTH BAY

Friendship Circle

Grant amount: \$5,000

Timeline: August 2023 to June 2024



SNAPSHOT

People living with dementia often face judgment, stigma and exclusion, restricting their ability to fully participate in the larger community. The *Friendship Circle* project, funded by the RTOERO Foundation, brings these individuals together for activities and experiences in dementia-friendly spaces to reduce social isolation and encourage cognitive stimulation.

CHALLENGE

People with dementia and their families struggle to maintain a healthy level of activity and social engagement. The opportunities for participation can be even more limited in a small, rural community. This can lead to social isolation, which in turn can accelerate the progression of dementia in older adults.

SOLUTION

The Société Alzheimer Society Sudbury-Manitoulin North Bay & Districts provides essential programs and support services for those living with dementia, their caregivers and families. One such program is the Friendship Circle – a series of planned excursions and activities throughout the year, offered at low or no cost to participants. The program promotes simple and safe social interaction to reduce isolation, encourage physical activity and promote good mental health and cognitive well-being. The result is a circle of support with shared experiences in a dementia-friendly environment.

RESULTS

- During a 12-month period, the program planned and delivered 15 social, physical and educational experiences for older adults living with dementia in the Sudbury-Manitoulin North Bay area.
- Up to 40 participants enjoyed many activities including trivia nights, bowling, holiday parties, community farm tours, mini golf and a scenic lake cruise.
- Participants gave very positive feedback on the program, noting increased connection and friendships.
- The program positively impacted local businesses, promoting more dementia-friendly spaces.

IMPACT

Friendship Circle is a community-wide collaboration that has cultivated an environment where older adults living with dementia feel accepted and valued, further improving their quality of life through safe and stimulating activity and social interaction.

THE RTOERO CHAIR IN GERIATRIC MEDICINE

Paula A. Rochon, MD, MPH, FRCPC

2024: A year in review

Dr. Paula Rochon is the RTOERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine. She is a Senior Scientist at Women's College Hospital in Toronto and the Founding Director of the Women's Age Lab.

In 2024, Women's Age Lab celebrated its third anniversary. In just three years, the lab has achieved incredible milestones, thanks to its dedicated team and partners. The lab's mission is to improve the lives of older women by using science to transform care and practice. Throughout the years, and as they look to the future, the lab remains committed to advancing research that supports the healthy aging of women.



HIGHLIGHTS

- Published first-ever comprehensive report on ***Women at the Forefront of Aging in Canada***
- Published a policy brief, ***Recommendations for Action to Tackle the Loneliness Epidemic Among Older Adults in Canada***, and met with the Minister of Labour & Seniors
- Published five opinion editorials across North America reaching 20 million people
- Worked in ten buildings in two cities to evaluate the implementation of UHN's Ambassador program for older adults living in **Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)**
- Collaborated with aging-focused organizations such as RTOERO, Barrie Housing, NORC Innovation Centre, and SE Health.
- Participated in five prestigious national and international conferences

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTING DISTRICTS

The support we receive from many RTOERO districts across the country is key to our success. Thank you to those who made a financial gift between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024.

\$3,000+

District 14 – Niagara
District 20 – Frontenac Lennox & Addington
District 39 – Peel

\$1,000-\$2,999

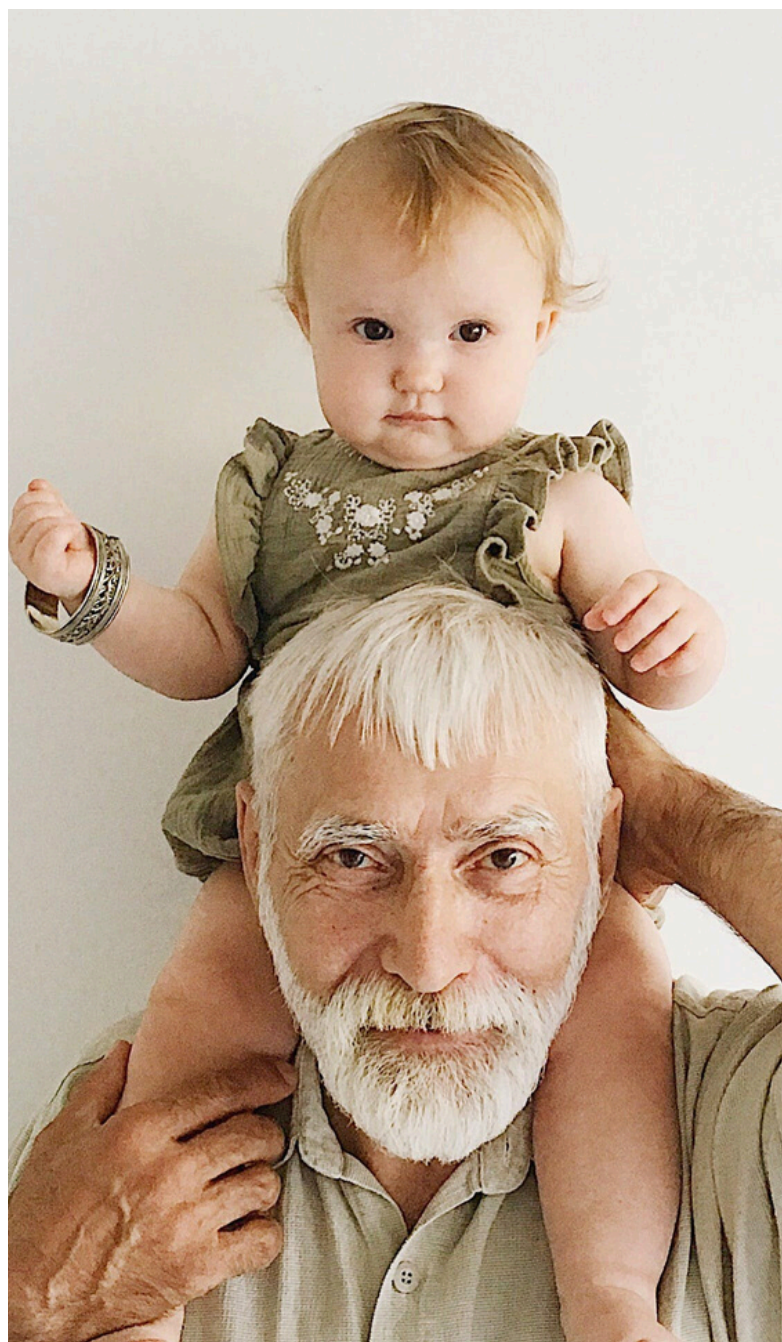
District 3 – Algoma
District 11 – Waterloo Region
District 13 – Hamilton-Wentworth & Haldimand
District 22 – Etobicoke and York
District 24 – Scarborough & East York
District 28 – Region of Durham
District 42 – Mainland British Columbia

\$500-\$999

District 12 – Norfolk
District 17 – Simcoe County
District 23 – North York
District 36 – Peterborough
District 40 – Brant

\$499 and under

District 5 – Cochrane & Temiskaming
District 10 – Bruce Grey & Dufferin
District 15 – Halton
District 16 – City of Toronto
District 21 – Renfrew
District 25 – Stormont Dundas Glengarry
District 27 – Ottawa-Carleton
District 29 – Lanark
District 31 – Wellington
District 32 – Prescott-Russell
District 34 – York Region
District 37 – Oxford
District 43 – Nipissing
District 46 – Muskoka





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