

NEWS RELEASE

RTO/ERO Foundation Announces \$100,000 in New Grants to address Social Isolation of Seniors

May 17, 2017 – Toronto

The Retired Teachers of Ontario Foundation (RTO/ERO Foundation) announced today the funding of four new projects, valued at \$100,000, to address social isolation of older adults across the province.

“Social isolation is a major contributor to poor health of older adults”, says Joanne Murphy, Chair of the Foundation Board of Directors. “That is why it is a priority area for us to fund local community projects with potential to be replicated in other communities across Canada.”

One of the key criteria for funding is that the project has an intergenerational component.

Funds will be distributed to the following communities through the project leads:

- Guelph: St. Joseph’s Health Centre Guelph and Everdale Environmental Learning Centre.

A micro-farm will be built on site at St. Joseph’s and will bring together seniors and youth to grow fresh organic fruits and vegetables and then collaboratively choose innovative ways to share the harvest with the community.

- Prince Edward County: Prince Edward County Community Care for Seniors Association and community partners – PEC Fire Department, PE Detachment of the OPP, Hastings-Quinte Paramedic Services, Rural Mail Couriers (CUPW), Public Libraries of PEC and the PE Family Health Team.

With the help of police, fire, paramedics, rural mail couriers and staff in the decentralized library branches, isolated seniors will be identified and invited to participate in a series of presentations at nine municipal halls and the Community Care office. Students will be engaged at the presentations to participate in the social time. The community partners will also be evaluating and promoting programs such as Mail Couriers Alert program and the Home Alone Program formerly managed by the OPP.

- Ottawa: The Council on Aging of Ottawa and community partners – Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre, Ottawa Senior Pride Network, and United Way Ottawa and two local high schools.

A multimedia classroom activity will be developed to produce a series of bilingual videos showing the life experiences of older adults who face social isolation as a result of their health and/or disabilities, sexual orientation and culture. Weaving themes of reducing social isolation, ageism and prejudice into the narrative, a series of workshops will support older adults in telling their story and capturing them on video.

- London: Neighbourhood Watch London, Centre for Health Equity and Social Inclusion-Western University and community partner London Middlesex Housing Corporation.

Engage residents of a rent-geared-to-income senior’s apartment building as co-researchers to address questions and shared issues that are significant to them related to social connectedness, engagement and inclusion. High school and university students will support project activities, such as resident meetings and community idea sharing events, during which photographs that reflect participants sense of connectedness or isolation will be discussed.

The Retired Teachers of Ontario Foundation (RTO/ERO Foundation) aims to enhance the quality of life for aging adults through the funding of aging research, training in geriatrics and gerontology and community-based programs to address social isolation in older adults. The Foundation was established in 2011 with the support of its founding benefactor, the Retired Teachers of Ontario, and inspired by the philanthropic spirit of retired teachers and other members of the education community.

In 2014, the Foundation established the RTO/ERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Toronto, and continues to raise funds for innovative approaches to enhancing the lives of aging adults across Ontario and beyond. Grantees are considered based on specific granting criteria and a rigorous peer-review process. With these new grants, the Foundation will have invested almost \$2.8 million in projects that will enhance the quality of life of aging adults.

For more information on the RTO/ERO Foundation and to make a donation, go www.embrace-aging.ca , or contact us at 416-962-9463 or 1-800-361-9888.