

## **Kanata Seniors Council Inc.**

### **Year End Summary January – December 2025**

#### **President's Report**

Our year started very quietly as a result of a two-month shut down last summer for roof repairs at the Kanata Seniors' Centre, but soon picked up speed. Within weeks of returning in September, we were at full tilt. Here is what we worked at to bring events, programs and services to the Seniors in our community.

One of our best ways to communicate with members is through our Newsletter, which goes out electronically to all members who have an e-mail address, and can also be picked up at the Seniors' Centre front desk. We have had a change of editors, and we want to thank Peter Van Boeschoten for his dedication and contributions during his time as editor.

We also produce a bi-weekly e-mail Flash that is delivered to 700 Kanata Seniors Council members and enjoys a 70% open rate. It offers information on Council events, health issues, local news and research, and offers advice on getting out of the house and enjoy the multitude of activities available in our community.

We have developed a partnership with many organizations who work with or on behalf of seniors. We have representation on the City of Ottawa's Older Adult Plan Roundtable (OAPR), a gathering of various organizations who work together to identify needs. We work with the Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario (OACAO), who offers seminars and information as well as support with grants for specific events. Our Health Fair has been the recipient of a grant for the last two years. Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) supports many services that help a variety of community members, and we partner with them for the bi-monthly Diner's Club luncheons in the Café. We have also partnered with local Senior and Neighbourhood Associations who work in their small area to better lives of others. Dementia Society, who provide support to members through counselling and education. The Council on Aging, who provide support through education and advocacy. Volunteer Ottawa, who help to navigate members to meaningful ways to share skills. Aging In Place, who provide support for those choosing to live in their home. We also worked with the local Lions Club and Kanata Legion – Branch 638, who support members in need, through guidance or fundraising.

We also have a close relationship with our local City Councillors, who include our events and programs in their Newsletters and Facebook publications, as well as attending and financially supporting our events.

**Advocacy and Outreach** is very active implementing and supporting activities that concern local, universal and council specific incentives and events. The Director has maintained connections by attending many neighbourhood meetings, fairs, AGM's and BBQ's, sharing with all the work the Kanata Seniors Council does to improve the lives of seniors, whether through education or advocacy for health issues, transportation, income security, programs and events. His attendance

at Housing meetings, the OC Transpo planning committee, or Gear-Up Older Driver Project Committee, has helped us contribute towards improving the lives of seniors. We offered a Seniors Fraud Presentation by Ottawa Police Service jointly with WOCRC. We have lead an affordable housing in Kanata initiative in association with the Kanata Community Forum, we actively participated in the Kanata North Transitway Extension Project with the Public Consultation Group, and participated in the OC Transpo Accessibility Plan Consultations.

He also contributes to the Board's well-being, by organizing bi-monthly social events that allow us time to relax and enjoy a few hours as friends, which contributes to us working better as a team.

**Café:** The Café has been operating for a number of years now and has been operating at a profit in the last couple of years. The number of people served has greatly increased and we now must utilize the space in Hall D on Tuesdays, which is our busiest day. Our Café volunteers are dedicated and are doing a great service. The turnover of Café volunteers is at a minimum with 5 to 6 volunteers working every day. We serve hot meals 3 times a week - Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. We will be introducing, on a trial basis, a hot meal on Fridays beginning in September on the days that Bingo is held at the Centre.

We also provide special lunches 4 times a year for special occasions such as Valentines, St. Patrick's, Thanksgiving and Christmas for 50 people. These lunches are sold out most of the time. Tables are decorated in the spirit of the celebration mostly in Hall D where the meal is served.

Prices have been in place for two years or so, however, due to increased food prices we have been obligated to increase our prices as of April 1<sup>st</sup>. The response from the people attending the Café has been positive. We look forward to continuing to be the hub of the Centre where friends meet to eat and socialize.

**Grants and Contribution** In the last few months two grant applications were submitted for new program ideas. The first one was to was to the province of Ontario and the second one to the City of Ottawa regarding the Ottawa 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Results for the first one are forthcoming in June and unfortunately, the Council's proposal for the second one was not successful in receiving funding. Research has been part of this mandate and much has been done around new programs, policies and procedures, and history. The portfolio also took lead to handle the Council's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. We are well into the planning of the event, which will highlight where we came from and where we are today. We all look forward to an exciting evening of fun, food and friendship at the party, which will be held at the Holiday Inn and Suites in Kanata on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026. We hope all our members, families and friends will join us. Tickets will go on sale June 4<sup>th</sup> at the opening breakfast of Far West Fun Fest and will be available in the Café starting June 8<sup>th</sup>. More information to follow.

**Health** There were nine seminars presented on various health issues during the last year. The topics included, heart health, dementia, humour, planning ahead, dancing with Parkinsons, eye care, fitness. All of our sessions were well attended, and participants went home with valuable information on handling issues they may have to contend with. We followed our tradition of

having a Christmas Carol sing along in December. This gathering provided a mental health break during a busy time of the year and was enjoyed by all - with a full house of attendees. Cider and cookies made it a happy celebration of the season.

Our biggest project was once again our free Health Fair. It is held in October and was a full day of health-related issues including three clinics and five sessions that ran during the day. There were 12 vendors who shared their service information with a very large turnout from the community. All participants enjoyed a delicious hot lunch to fill out the day. It was a very successful event and thanks to all who helped or participated. We had applied for a grant from OACAO to help subsidize the costs and were successful and are thankful for their generosity. We look forward to welcoming all to the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Health Fair, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Honours & Awards** The Frank Valentine Award was presented to Rachel McGregor, a volunteer who has shown dedication to helping others in our community by being a volunteer in an organization that helps seniors. It is presented at the Annual General Meeting each year. Anyone can submit a nomination for someone they feel is deserving.

We also honoured our volunteers at a dinner gathering at a local restaurant. The volunteers were thanked for their dedication and the time they give to making sure our organization can present Council events and maintain the Café. We could not function without their time and efforts.

**Membership and Volunteer Programs** are currently without a portfolio Director however we have been maintaining statistics for the year. The Council welcomed 168 new members in 2025 and 23 new volunteers. The total number of volunteer hours reported in 2025 was 12,175 – up from 10,896 in 2024 – an increase of almost 12%.

**Sponsorship** has had a strong year with renewed partnerships, increased engagement from local organizations, and a clearer understanding of what sponsors value most in their relationship with us. Our focus has been on strengthening long-term relationships, aligning benefits with sponsor preferences, and ensuring that sponsorship dollars directly support programs and services for seniors.

Six sponsors have already renewed, which gives us a solid foundation heading into the new year and shows real confidence in the work we're doing at the Seniors Council.

We've also seen a clear shift in sponsor preferences. Many are choosing the e-mail Flash for advertising over newsletter placements, so we've adjusted our sponsor packages to reflect what they find most valuable while still keeping our overall communication strategy balanced.

Sponsorship continues to be an essential source of revenue for our programs and events, and we're grateful for the stability it provides. Looking ahead, we'll keep strengthening relationships, tailoring recognition, and exploring new opportunities that align with our sponsors' interests and the need of our seniors.

And finally, a sincere thank-you to all of our sponsors. Their support truly makes a difference.

**Travel and Lifestyles** We look back at a very strong year for the team effort. From January through December, we delivered 34 events that welcomed 970 participants, about a 15% increase over 2024. Our programming included bus trips, special events, seminars, and recurring series such as International Dining and Lunch and Theatre.

**International Dining Series:** Participants enjoyed eight dining experiences featuring Scottish, French, Greek, Canadian, Thai, Italian, Pakistani and Turkish cuisine in relaxed and social settings.

**Lunch and Theatre Series:** Participants enjoyed five lunch-and-theatre outings featuring the plays presented by Kanata Theatre.

**Fabulous Fiesta:** This was an important cultural event for our team and a great example of the kind of programming we hope to continue building. We were thrilled to work with the Embassy of Mexico, and one of their representatives joined us at the event.

**Christmas Light Bus Tour:** One of the most popular seasonal outings returned in December and was offered twice giving more participants a chance to enjoy the experience. This event was supported in part through grants from Councillor Cathy Curry - Kanata North and Councillor Alan Hubley - Kanata South.

**Ottawa Titans Baseball Game:** This was something a little different for our team and gave participants a chance to enjoy a new kind of group outing. The Ottawa Titans invited us to spend a summer afternoon together in a lovely private suite, enjoying the game in comfort.

**Bus Trips and Outings:** Participants took part in a variety of excursions including Explore Ontario: Almonte, Experimental Farm: Animals, Pumpkinferno and Sugar Bush Wheelers.

**Special Events:** Our one-off programming included Christmas Lunch and Gift Exchange at the Mandarin, Diefenbunker Tour, Guided Bird Walk with Birds Unlimited, The Marshes Mini Putt and lunch, Trivia and Pizza at Brookside and our Host Your Own Murder Mystery, which was offered twice and gave participants a chance to play roles, follow the story, and guess who did it.

**Seminars and Educational Programming:** We offered seminars and educational events including our Spring Makeover and Fall Beauty seminars, Ottawa Valley Tours, and Mental Health Seminar and Dog Therapy.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are focused on keeping events affordable and accessible for our participants. Plans include more events that highlight the wonderful diverse cultures that make up our community. The Drumming Circle in January is a good example of the kind of culturally rich programming we hope to continue building. We also plan to trial some evening events to include seniors who are not yet retired. A continuing challenge is offering affordable and accessible excursions however, transportation cost - especially for buses, have increased dramatically over the past few years. We also want to hear directly from our members so if you have ideas for new activities, events, seminars or potential new partners, please let us know, we'd love to hear from you. We want our programming to reflect the ideas, interests, and experiences that matter the most to you. We look forward to another fantastic year of meaningful, and memorable experiences.

**Awesome Garage Sale** Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual garage sale since COVID, was another huge success with lots of treasures to be found. Donations were down slightly but crowds were awesome yet again. It was a major fundraiser for our organization. Anything left over was donated to charity shops like the Salvation Army Thrift Store and Mission Thrift Store.

We look forward to this year's event, which will be held on August 22, 2026, in halls C&D at the Kanata Seniors' Centre. New attractions this year include a fashion show to be held at 9:00 am as well as a silent auction. Donations are greatly appreciated. Watch for more information in the Newsletter or e-mail Flash.

**Bingo** The Council's electronic Bingos that happen twice a month resumed in September 2025 and will go until May 22<sup>nd</sup> this year. This event continues to be well attended with anywhere between 26 and 42 participants. It is quite evident that seniors enjoy this activity, which is run by the trio of Clay Wheaton, Bonnie Oostlander, and Frank Boisvenue. We will be taking a break during the months of July and August, and look forward to seeing everyone back in September. Thank you to the team working this event and for your ongoing support.

**Far West Fun Fest (FWFF)** Many volunteer hours went into the planning and delivery of FWFF in 2025. Participation rates were at a maximum for most of the events and both the opening breakfast and closing ceremony luncheon were well attended. Some new events were introduced and were very much enjoyed along with many of the familiar favourites. New friends were made and fun, friendship and food were once again shared by all.

The planning for FWFF 2026 started last Fall and we are looking forward to another two weeks of fun, which begins on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> and runs to June 18<sup>th</sup>. Participants will be sporting new name badges this year and can look forward to some of the favourites and a good selection of new activities such as a strawberry social, drumming circle, NIA class, Boxing 4 Life, to name a few. Registration begins Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> and the fee has remained at \$40. We work constantly with our sponsors and the retirement residences in the west end of Ottawa who graciously host many of our events and offer delicious refreshments to those in attendance. We are very grateful to the Kanata Seniors Craft Group, as well as City Councillors who have generously donated money to help with our costs.

**Seniors Marketplace** This event was an outstanding success in 2025 and continues to grow as one of the Council's signature annual events. Designed as a resource hub for seniors and caregivers, the Marketplace provides a valuable opportunity for older adults to connect with organizations offering services, programs, and supports that enhance quality of life. It also serves as a networking venue for local organizations, a fundraising and awareness initiative for the Kanata Seniors Council, and a welcoming social event that strengthens community ties.

This year's Marketplace achieved a new milestone with an impressive 44 exhibitors - the highest number in the event's history. Many exhibitors returned from last year, demonstrating strong confidence in the event's value, while numerous new exhibitors joined for the first time - broadening the range of information and services available to attendees. Exhibitors represented a

diverse cross-section - all important for seniors. They included: home care, personal support, wellness and fitness, retirement living and housing options, travel and leisure, lifestyle, safety and community resources.

A strong turnout, positive engagement, and enthusiastic participation from both returning and new exhibitors reflect the Marketplaces' growing reputation and its importance to the community.

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As you can see, we have had a very busy and fulfilling year and look forward to working hard to bring programs that will enhance the lives of Seniors in our community. We have a wonderful working team on our Board of Directors, and will do our very best to fulfill our mandate and vision of "Seniors Helping Seniors".

We have a number of vacancies for some of our key portfolios, which we hope to fill during the next year with volunteers who have the skills needed to help us continue to promote the Council's work in developing programs for Seniors.

Thanks to everyone who contributed time and effort to making this all happen.