

May 1, 2024

The Honourable Neil Lumsden
Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Minister.Lumsden@ontario.ca

Sam Oosterhoff, MPP Niagara West
Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of
Tourism, Culture and Sport
sam.oosterhoffco@pc.ola.org

Local Area Municipalities

Local Area Libraries

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Re: Public Libraries and Older Adults

Please be advised that at its meeting of April 30, 2024, the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Wainfleet passed the following motion:

“WHEREAS Niagara Region and, specifically Wainfleet, has a significant aging cohort, particularly vulnerable to isolation in the digital world; and

WHEREAS the role of local libraries is definitely that of a community hub, offering numerous educational and socializing opportunities for all ages; and

WHEREAS the provincial funding model has remained unchanged for over 25 years and restricts “library growth and potential”; and

WHEREAS while we are respectful of Seniors Community Grants, today’s economic realities suggest libraries are in need of a funding increase;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Correspondence item C165 respecting Public Libraries and Older Adults be received and supported; and

THAT the Township of Wainfleet hereby calls upon the Province of Ontario to review its funding formula for Public Libraries.”

Should you have any questions, please contact me at achrastina@wainfleet.ca or 905-899-3463 ext. 224.

Regards,



Amber Chrastina
Deputy Clerk

Attachment: Correspondence item C165

Subject: RE: Council Correspondence

From: Lorrie Atkinson <LAtkinson@wainfleetlibrary.ca>

Sent: April 11, 2024 2:13 PM

To: Amber Chrastina <AChrastina@wainfleet.ca>

Subject: Council Correspondence

Hi Amber,

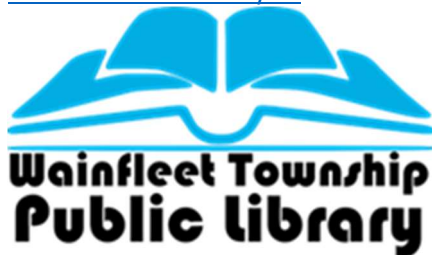
We discussed this at our April 10, 2024 Library Board Meeting , would you please include for correspondence at the next Council meeting.

https://www.wellandtribune.ca/opinion/contributors/public-libraries-foster-feelings-of-social-connectedness-for-older-adults/article_4bded397-c389-5f70-b55f-3e97f2cfe854.html

Thanks,
Lorrie

Regards,
Lorrie Atkinson,
CEO/Chief Librarian
Wainfleet Township Public Library
31909 Park St., P.O.Box 118,
Wainfleet, On L0S 1V0
(t)905-899-1277 x280
(f)905-899-2495

www.wainfleetlibrary.ca



https://www.thespec.com/opinion/contributors/public-libraries-foster-feelings-of-social-connectedness-for-older-adults/article_4a3f12fa-9eff-549e-b68e-9e60f2c12510.html

[Home](#) / [Opinion](#) / [Contributors](#)

CONTRIBUTORS

OPINION

Public libraries foster feelings of social connectedness for older adults

Older adults hold an intimate relationship with their public library branch — a relationship that typically spans the course of their lives.

 THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR
By Nicole Dalmer

Apr 9, 2024

Article was updated Apr 9, 2024

As part of my research, I interviewed 51 older adults living in Ontario who frequented their local public library, asking them questions to better understand the many roles the public library has played, and continues to play, in their everyday lives.

My research was in response to the International Federation on Ageing's statement that “the No. 1 emerging issue facing older adults in Canada is keeping older people socially connected and active.” Between 19 and 24 per cent of older people in Canada experience some level of isolation. Social isolation occupies an increasingly important place in conversations surrounding aging in Canada, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic that exacerbated feelings of social isolation and in part due to social isolation's negative impact on older adults' physical and mental health, including reduced quality of life, premature mortality, depression, as well as increased risk for falls, cardiovascular disease and dementia.

Socially isolated older adults often have poorer health outcomes and more complex support needs and therefore require access to a complement of community-based supports — such as public libraries — to thrive.

As I learned from the 51 older adults who shared their experiences of engaging with their public library, it became clear that participants hold an intimate relationship with their public library branch — a relationship that typically spans the course of their lives. The library was often referred to as an “old friend” or a “trusted friend.”

Public library branches foster feelings of social connectedness, not only due to the range of materials, programs, services and spaces that can be used without expectation of payment or any pre-existing level of knowledge. Public libraries also serve as trusted third places for discovering and accessing resources, enabling lifelong learning and fostering community relationships.

As voiced by so many individuals who took part in my study, public library offerings connect older library patrons with other people and other ideas, events and other services. Libraries were also spaces with free access to washrooms, places to keep cool in the summer and warm in the winter, and important places where older adults knew they could stop along their daily walking route.

Participants felt connected to library staff. This was especially so for those older adults living in rural areas, where staff knew them by name and could offer reading recommendations based on what the patrons had checked out in the past. Interestingly, older adults shared they felt connected to their community while in their library, even if they didn't actually interact with other people. Merely being in the presence of others (whether staff or other patrons) was sufficient to feel socially included and connected.

Public libraries also nurture social connection through intergenerational connections. Intergenerational library programs (movie nights, music classes, book clubs, knitting clubs and the like) are places where different generations can meet, interact and build relationships — bridging generational perspectives and experiences.

So when we're thinking about how to support social inclusion among older adults, it's important to consider those third places, such as public library branches, that can be crucial sites that foster, inspire and encourage feelings and experiences of social connection and social inclusion.

Nicole Dalmer is an assistant professor with the Department of Health, Aging and Society at McMaster University, an associate director of the Gilbrea Centre for Studies in Aging and a volunteer with the Hamilton Council on Aging. For more information or to donate to the Hamilton Council on Aging, visit coahamilton.ca.

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