



ALCOA — Quarterly Update Volume 6, Number 1, Spring 2010

The Active Living Coalition For Older Adults
Communicating With Round-Table Members



L-R Sylvie Jacques, Don Fletcher, Jeff Johnston, Patsy Beattie-Huggan, Jan Cochran Kroll, Thomas Spence, Sarah Merkel, Lilisha Burris, Sara MacDougall, Kim Watson, Alexa Roggeveen, Patty Clark

ALCOA develops “Your Passport to Healthy Living”

As reported in the fall issue of *QU*, ALCOA has been working on a prototype self-assessment tool for use by community leaders and their participants. The tool would be used by individual participants to measure their success in a diabetes prevention program, and changes in their health and lifestyle. Through several meetings with the Reference Group from November to March, a prototype ‘passport’ has been designed.

ALCOA then submitted a proposal to the Public Health Agency of Canada for a phase II of this project, and were successful in receiving contribution funding in the amount of \$334,000 over a two year period. This funding will allow ALCOA to further refine the tool, focus and pilot test it, promote, publish and disseminate the product across Canada. During the meetings with the Reference Group, it became apparent that a leader’s manual should be written to provide the necessary support and guidance for the community leader. This manual will be developed over the next two year period. It is also planned to translate the self-assessment tool into languages other than French, in an effort to reach some of the other ethnic groups in Canada, where English is not their first language and perhaps not even spoken by the older adults.

The Reference Group has provided ALCOA with their time, expertise and wisdom and without their commitment to this project, this would not have been possible. The Reference Group consists of the following individuals, representing a wide sector of interested groups from across Canada (*see page 3*).



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Roundtable Member Spotlight

OACAO

The Voice of Older Adult Centres
La voix des centres pour aînés

In a recent discussion with Mr. Lawrie Bloom, Executive Director of the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario, when asked what the role of the organization was, he replied, "The OACAO provides resources, expertise and leadership for older adult centres and seniors groups through advocacy, education, networking and innovative direction. Basically, we are here to help the staff and volunteers who are responsible for the management and operation of their centre and/or organization. The issues and concerns are varied from governance to centre construction."

The OACAO has been in existence since 1973 with 130 member organizations across the Province of Ontario representing over 150,000 older adults. There are also 16 Business Partners that provide services and programs to older adults who are members of the OACAO.

Some of the programs of the OACAO are:

- Ongoing liaison and advocacy with government and other provincial associations in matters that affect older adult centres and older adults
- Education programs for members through workshops
- A newsletter that promotes the exchange of information and ideas among members
- An annual Provincial Conference with speakers, workshops, resources and a Trade Show
- List Serve (email) service with up to date information
- Regional structure with 8 regions
- Business Partner program that provides services and programs to centres and centre members
- Awards Program that recognizes outstanding achievement in the field of older adults
- Networking opportunities through the List Serve, regional meetings and conference
- Printed resource materials including Standards, Centre Video and Research on centres

For further information, please contact Mr. Lawrie Bloom, Executive Director at 905-497-8122 or lbloom@oacao.org.

ALCOA Member Spotlight – Bill Krever



Bill Krever is the OACAO representative on the ALCOA Roundtable. Bill has a vast wealth of knowledge on the centre movement and has been involved in centres for over 20 years. He is the President and CEO of Better Living Health and Community Services located in Toronto. The organization has an older adult centre, a retirement facility and provides outreach and community support programs.

Bill has also been a member of the ALCOA Guardians for the past two years and is the current Treasurer for the Coalition. Through his work with OACAO and older adult centres, Bill has gained a keen interest in the important role that physical activities play for older adults including the difference that older adult centres can make in the lives of seniors. This interest includes taking a lead role in recent research conducted on older adult centres as part of the "Building Bridges to Tomorrow" project. *An excerpt from this research follows on page 4.*

Farah Ahmad Certified Diabetes Educator	Canadian Diabetes Association Fort McMurray, AB
Patsy Beattie- Huggan President (facilitator)	The Quaich Charlottetown, PEI
Susan Brown Research Coordinator	Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging Waterloo, ON
Lilisha Burris Registered Dietician	Dietitians of Canada EatRight Ontario, Toronto, ON
Jan Cochrane Certified Diabetes Educator Dir. of Quality for DES National	FNIH Home and Community Care Program Prince Albert , SK
Don Fletcher ALCOA Chairman/ CACR Treasurer	ALCOA & Cdn. Assoc. of Cardiac Rehabilitation Winnipeg MB
Sylvie Jacques Certified Diabetes Educator	Bruyère Academic Family Health Team Ottawa, ON
Jeff Johnson Professor & Canada Research Chair	School of Public Health Univ. of Alberta Edmonton, AB
Sara MacDougall Researcher	The Quaich Charlottetown, PEI
Sarah Merkel Program Coordinator	Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging London, ON
Michelle Porter Professor/ CSEP Representative	U. of Manitoba Winnipeg, MB
Alexa Roggeveen Research Coordinator	Sheridan Elder Research Centre Sheridan Inst, of Technology & Advanced Learning Toronto ON
Thomas Spence Councilor & Community Health Rep	National Indian & Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization South Indian Lake, MB
Kimberly Wilson Executive Director	Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health Toronto, ON

ALCOA Reference Group

Annual General Meeting Reminder

ALCOA AGM Conference Call



THURSDAY JUNE 24TH, 2010
2:00 E.S.T.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS.



Further information will be sent in early June.

'Building Bridges' Research Project

Excerpt

The following is an excerpt from the Executive Summary of the OACAO research project. To receive a copy of the full report, please contact Katherine McLeod at kmcleod@betterlivinghealth.org

The Building Bridges to Tomorrow project represents the largest body of primary research that has ever been conducted on older adult centres in the Province of Ontario. As we look to the future of older adult centres, this data will be invaluable to the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) and individual older adult centres for strategic planning purposes. All of the data gathered through this project has helped us identify a number of trends and issues that need to be addressed by centres both at a local and a provincial level.

The OACAO has long believed that older adult centres are one of the best kept secrets within our healthcare system. It is our belief that centres are not recognized for the health promotion benefits that they add to our healthcare system, local communities and individual seniors throughout the province. Part of the problem in recognizing the value of any social service is having the ability to measure the impact of the service in terms of participant benefits. This problem is compounded when looking at health promotion programs where the potential benefit may not be seen for a number of years or even decades in terms of value to the healthcare system.

In total, 26 research sites were used for this study totaling more than 2,300 older adult centre members and 700 non members. The research sites included urban, suburban and exurban communities along with rural areas and northern Ontario communities. The findings were as follows:

- members participate often, stay involved, and are very engaged with their centre and with their community
- volunteer member participation levels are more than 50%
- older adult centres are one of the few types of services within our healthcare system which are virtually self supporting in terms of human resources
- the members are very satisfied with the services, with ratings higher than 9 out of 10
- given that more than 50% of members are single or live alone, the importance of social interaction should not be under estimated
- the members are very healthy and have strong activity patterns that help them remain physically well
- the majority of members feel that they are in good or excellent health and overall they have very few major health problems or conditions
- the average member remains active at an older adult centre for more than 10 years; the centre can be seen as a major contributor to this positive health outcome, and should be recognized as making a positive contribution to reducing the utilization of acute health and medical services
- centres provide a solid option for seniors who are not well positioned in terms of their financial resources or are on moderate incomes

From all of the data gathered there are a number of strategies to be consider for the future. While these centres are an incredible resource for older adults in communities across Ontario, there are emerging issues that correspond with overall demographic trends that will impact on the future role of older adult centres. In addition, older adult centres are an outstanding but underutilized resource for the healthcare system.