



**A NEWSLETTER
FROM RTOERO DISTRICT 9
HURON-PERTH**

<https://district9.rtoero.ca>

2023 Spring Edition

Coming Events

For your calendar:

Clothing Donation for the Ukrainians to be collected and brought to the SGM in Mitchell, May 3rd or to the June 7th Wingham excursion.

Spring General Meeting & Luncheon
Wednesday, May 3, 2023
Mitchell Golf and Country Club
See form on page 6.

An Excursion to Wingham
Wednesday, June 7, 2023
Details on page 14.

An activity to Brocksden School Museum.
Wednesday, June 28, 2023
Details on page 15.

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President's Message



I wish I could report that through "moral suasion" I have been able to have Mr. Putin sidelined! So far, Mr. Putin has not contacted me for my input into his conduct of the Ukrainian Conflict. However, Mr. Putin does seem intent on continuing down his path of death, destruction and dislocation. It makes me sad.

As of this writing, some 60 dislocated Ukrainian immigrants (men, women & children) are hosted in Huron County. I'd guess just as many are in Perth County. Last Fall, a couple of churches and service clubs in Huron gathered winter coats, boots, scarves, toques and mitts to keep these folks warm. Their contribution ended Jan 31, 2023.

You may recall that RTOERO District 9 donated \$1.00 per member (\$1121.00) through the Red Cross to Ukrainians displaced in their own country. However, that \$1.00 contributed on your behalf did not touch your heart or wallet directly. May I be so bold as to suggest that we need to have "more skin in the game", since that Ukrainian Conflict could have future implications for the rest of the free world.

These immigrants can stay in Canada for up to 3 years. I'm going to suggest that we contribute to the cause by stepping up to the plate with "a random act of kindness". We can give from the heart without touching our wallet.

When you read our District 9 Newsletter the season will have changed to Spring/Summer. You will be housecleaning. You will be buying some new clothes. You will be purging. Your "gently used", unneeded articles of clothing can be just what a displaced Ukrainian would cherish right

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here in our community. Some came with just the clothes on their back. Why step up at this time?

At our upcoming Spring General meeting, May 3rd, 2023 at the Mitchell Golf Course, our guest speaker is Mark Nonkes, Immigration Officer for Huron County. His theme is, "Welcoming Ukrainian Immigrants to Huron County". As a government employee, he cannot accept an honorarium, but we can assist his efforts. Mark reports that the immigrant adults are all working, but he has partnered with the Goderich Salvation Army to provide for other basic needs. Once a month, a pot luck is held at the Knox Presbyterian Church in Goderich for the Ukrainians and their hosts. At that time the Salvation Army provides a food hamper for each family. The Salvation Army will take charge of our clothing donations and make these available at the pot luck supper for the folks to choose what they need.



Details of the plan: Please use zip lock bags for easy transport. This keeps your clothing donation neat and tidy and protects it from many hands touching it.

1. Gently used Spring/Summer attire for men, women, and children.
2. Washed and ironed or dry cleaned.
3. Fold the clothing to neatly fit in a zip lock bag.
 - Large (26x27cm) for t-shirts, blouses, shirts, PJs, shorts, socks.
 - Extra-large (33x38cm) for jeans, pants, sweaters, light jackets.
4. Enclose a recipe card to identify the clothing item, with size and gender.
5. Brand new items that you bought and wondered why, but never wore, would be accepted! Brand new underwear with attached tags will be accepted.
6. Bring your donation to the May 3rd General Meeting, or to the June 7th Wingham excursion, or look on page 19 of this newsletter for a Board member who lives near you. Drop your contribution off at their house for May 3rd delivery to the Mitchell Golf Course.
7. If this project is wildly successful, then we will contact Mark's Perth County counterpart to share your generosity. Thank you in advance. I know many of you will not limit yourself to just one item. It would be my hope that we would collect 1095 items...one for every member on our roster (Dec 31, 2022), or at least \$1095.00 in used clothing value.

What have your grandkids outgrown? "One person's garbage is another person's gold!" "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "We make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give." The quotes are not mine but they do convey my intended sentiment. Thank you one and all.

Sincerely,
Bruce Whitmore
President of RTOERO District 9



Health Benefits

As I consider a few words for Clean Slate, I feel grateful for the benefits that RTOERO provides, as well as the quality of service that Johnson Inc. delivers. I am also humbled by the ever-increasing awareness that so many retired Canadians lack access to such support. I would like to extend a big thank you to our Board of Directors and the Benefits Committee for the work they do to enhance our retirement.

Communiqué

RTOERO 2023
Health Benefits
Update



The RTOERO Health Benefits Update, Communiqué, for 2023, was mailed out to you in November 2022. If you have not already read it, I recommend doing so to stay informed about the recent changes made to our benefit plans.

One important change outlined in the Communiqué 2023 is the insurance claim submission period. Starting January 2023, RTOERO requires that all claims be submitted within six months from the date the expense was incurred. While mail-in claims will still be accepted, RTOERO encourages the use of the claims portal to submit insurance claims online, for quicker claims processing and reimbursement, saving you time and money.

If you haven't yet created an account to access the claims portal, you can easily do so from the portal's homepage.

<https://insurance.johnson.ca/>

Changes have been made to the way in which information, regarding our RTOERO insurance policies, is accessed. The previously known Members Only website is now called: My Insurance. To register for My Insurance, you can use the same username (email address) and password that you used for the Members Only site. It is important to note that only plan members are eligible to register for the My Insurance account, and spouses and dependents cannot create their own account. If you need help with registration or navigating My Insurance, please call 1-800-563-1650.

Research and advocacy regarding aging are forefront in the vision of RTOERO for our well-being.

I invite you to check out some of the informative webinars on the RTOERO website. If you missed them live in 2022, they are now available as recordings on the website <https://rtoero.ca/resources/videos/> - follow the tabs **Resources – Find by Topic – Healthy Living**.

Some examples of those recent recordings are entitled:

- **Webinar:** Mentally healthy living after social distancing – A study of older Canadians
- **Webinar:** Why you need a benefits plan after age 65
- **Webinar:** Our Earth, our responsibility
- **Webinar:** Diabetes prevention and management – What you should know
- **Webinar:** Self-care throughout the retirement journey

I was heartened by the Webinar on **Self Care**. This concept seems ever more pressing today, as we are constantly reminded of the challenges being made to the healthcare system, as a result of the demographic phenomenon of the baby boom.

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In this Webinar, Alka Chopra, a registered dietician, and a self-care advocate, and Shindujan Yogaratnam, a registered Kinesiologist outline why and how we need to “invest and indulge in self-care every single day.” Alka suggests fostering compassion for oneself and finding some activity that brings joy. I invite you to check out the list of alternate therapy modalities offered on our health insurance plan. Consider how these experiences might enhance your well-being. Indeed, it is not a great stretch of the imagination to realize that if we don’t take care of self, no one else will!



Further suggestions for self care - offered locally by One Care on ZOOM:

3 levels of Exercise Classes - twice a week,
Yoga, Tai Chi and Qigong classes weekly

When we retire and apply for the Extended Health Plan, we may not initially see the relevance of the Hospital and Convalescent Care Plan. However, as time goes by, and we learn from the experiences of others, it may be beneficial to reconsider the advantages of having semi-private accommodation in case of hospitalization, as well as convalescent care upon discharge. Therefore, it is worth considering the Hospital and Convalescent Care Plan when reviewing our insurance coverage.

Pauline Shore
Health Benefits Chair



The Role of Dental Care in Overall Health

Our oral health both impacts and is impacted by overall health. Good oral hygiene is an essential part of maintaining your wellness. Regular dental checkups can help ensure that any issues are caught or treated early.

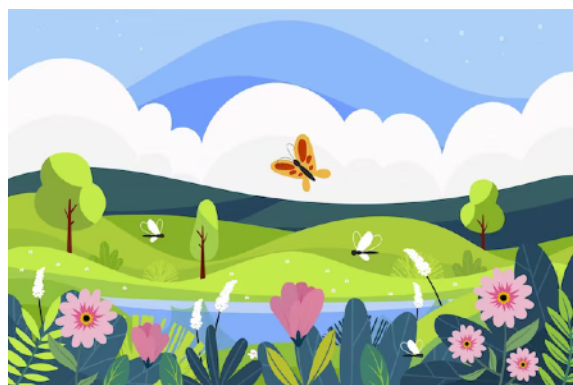


Six ways oral health interacts with overall health

- Bacteria from your mouth can enter the body and lead to medical concerns. Evidence has connected mouth bacteria to endocarditis, pneumonia, cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's.
- Bacteria in the mouth can cause gum disease. Gum disease is common – about seven in 10 Canadians will develop it. Left untreated, it can become periodontitis, which comes with various unpleasant symptoms. Since the risk for gum disease increases with age, having dental insurance can provide the peace of mind that you'll be covered if you need specialized treatment.
- Medications can impact saliva flow. Saliva is important for oral health. It helps to neutralize acids and support digestion. It can also help prevent tooth decay and gum disease by coating the teeth, eliminating harmful bacteria with its antimicrobial agents, and washing away bits of food that can feed bacteria.
- Some health conditions can impact oral health. For example, gum disease occurs more frequently among people with diabetes. And if you're receiving chemotherapy, you may not be able to have dental treatment done until your blood counts have recovered.
- Oral health issues can impact mental health and quality of life. Evidence shows that people with periodontal disease may avoid social contact. You may not be able to enjoy food in the same way. Bad breath or missing teeth can cause feelings of embarrassment or shame.
- Good nutrition supports oral health. Perhaps unsurprisingly, what you eat and drink impacts your oral health. Avoiding too many sugars is a good idea. Foods high in acid should be eaten as part of a larger meal as much as possible, including citrus and tomatoes.

Did you know that the spouse or dependent of an RTOERO member with extended health insurance can join the dental plan, even if the primary member doesn't? Details about RTOERO's dental plan are available at rtoero.ca/insurance/dental-plan or contact the RTOERO benefits team to discuss your needs: 1-800-361-9888.

From the RTOERO Toronto Office





**RTOERO District 9's
Spring General Meeting & Luncheon
Wednesday, May 3, 2023**

*****Registration Deadline: Wednesday, April 12, 2023*****

**Mitchell Golf & Country Club
81 Francis Street West, Mitchell**



Provincial masking regulations will apply at our event.

*We are asking you to register in advance, as always, however should provincial/local COVID regulations change prior to May 3, preventing this event, your cheque will be destroyed. Further, if **you** become uncomfortable with attending the SGM, please contact me at 519-524-2267, by Tuesday, April 25, to cancel your attendance and payment.*

*As at last year's SGM, we will be able to accommodate a **maximum of 120** on May 3. So ... first come, first served! You will be notified if there isn't room for you.*

Agenda

09:45 Registration and Coffee/Tea/Juice

10:15 District 9 Spring AGM

11:15 Guest Speaker: Mark Nonkes, Economic Development Department of Huron County. His topic will be "Ukrainian immigration to Huron County". Case studies, procedures, and stories will be shared via presentation supported via Power Point. Thirty minutes plus 10 minutes for questions.

12:00 Luncheon Menu: Chicken Cordon Bleu — breaded chicken breast stuffed with ham and Swiss cheese; with garlic mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables, salad, veggie tray, coffee, tea and dessert.
(Note: a vegetarian meal can be provided if you request ahead.)

We are reverting to a 2008 price for this Spring General Meeting — just \$18 per person, whether member or guest!! So send your registration early!



Spring General Meeting & Luncheon, May 3, 2023

**Please complete, detach, and return with cheque payable to
"District 9 RTOERO"
to Marty Bond,
33833 Fullerview Circle, R.R.2, Goderich, ON N7A 3X8
by April 12, 2023 at the latest please.**



Name: _____

Guest: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Number of lunches: _____ @ \$18 each = \$ _____

Political Advocacy

The biggest issue in the provincial political realm these days is the attempt by right wing governments in several provinces to privatize medical services.

You all know the m. o. from the days of former education minister John Snobelen: 1) “create a crisis”, 2) offer solutions through the private sector, then 3) allow friends in high places to capitalize on that sector. It’s not for nothing that former Premier Mike Harris, in his retirement, sat on the board of one of the largest for-profit long term care companies, Chartwell, which became infamous for the high number of seniors’ deaths in the early days of Covid 19.

Well, this time, the right-wing movers and shakers did not have to create a crisis. (Remember, though, the government did get a good start on it by driving healthcare workers out of the profession with the unconstitutional Bill 124’s ceiling on pay rises.)

No, Covid 19 created the crisis. It exposed all the holes in the long term care and healthcare systems, making the situation worse. Burnout, exhaustion, fear, illness and even death among health care workers through the Covid period created even further staffing shortages, and postponed elective and emergency surgeries and testing to this somewhat post-pandemic period. So, the governments of the day got their crisis - and their “in” to privatization.

Here in Ontario, Health Minister Sylvia Jones just introduced a bill that would expand private, for-profit clinics, claiming that “our government is being bold, innovative and creative.” Bill 60, misleadingly titled *Your Health Act*, would make permanent the government’s plans allowing for-profit clinics to perform OHIP-covered surgeries and diagnostic procedures – and it has already gone through two readings. The Ontario Premier and his government are trying to push Bill 60 through before Ontarians realize the dangers it poses - taking another step towards funneling public resources into American-style privatized healthcare. By the time of reading, this Bill may have passed into law.

The current full-scale attack on public health care from right wing governments across the country is unprecedented. But instead of defending public health care, even the Federal Liberals who hold the healthcare purse-strings, are supporting for-profit care as a stop-gap measure, thereby threatening the future of our public system.

There’s nothing new or innovative about privatization – even if it comes with guarantees that OHIP dollars will cover these services. Remember these public dollars paid for by our taxes will be flowing to investors and big corporations who put profits ahead of care. They won’t pay for urgently needed health care workers, new hospitals or safer long-term care facilities.

Under the current government, there has been significant privatization in health care. Piece by piece, this government has handed over contracts to for-profit corporations for public and non-profit health care services. The government has privatized public health functions to Shoppers Drug Mart, brought in Life Labs to our public clinics, privatized COVID testing to for-profit companies, and allowed for-profit virtual care companies to charge patients for access to doctors. Instead of going to one hospital for EKGs and stress tests, for blood tests, for cancer tests, for physiotherapy and occupational therapy so many of us are shunted from hospital to one private clinic after another, paying the bills for service in many of them. Then when we try to claim the bills back at tax time we are refused! Often our health insurance doesn’t cover these services, either. Some of our most vulnerable cancer patients, for instance, are running to a different location at least three times a week to seek different treatments and testing. How does this benefit our patients? Would not a more centralized, one-stop, hospital-based system be easier on them?



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In Ontario, Bill 60 will unleash private clinics that will be *upselling* patients on services they don't medically need. The Ontario Health Coalition has lists of situations where this has occurred, but how many similar cases have gone under the radar?

One private company the government is embracing, is performing thousands of private surgeries for exorbitant fees, even charging \$28,000 for hip replacements. That's *supposed* to be a service included in *public health care*.

In Ottawa, Ottawa Hospital surgeons specializing in hip and knee replacement have decided to form a private consortium to do these surgeries in empty operating rooms on the weekend for an added cost - with OHIP picking up the bill! They are asking regular nurses to work as independent agency nurses on these same weekends at double the pay. Can you see what this kind of model will do to the hospital concerned? Nurses will take mid-week times off when they are needed in order to pick up more lucrative private agency work on the weekends. And the hospital will be scrambling for staff to fill the weekday roster! This kind of privatization undermines the public system and pillages its workers in the midst of a staffing crisis.

In one local county long term care facility "agency" nurses are being brought in to fill the gap when local nurses are not available. Hospitals are doing it too! These agency nurses are not local – they may require housing or mileage paid. They do not know the patients personally and are not part of the community. They are paid almost double what local nursing and PSW staff get, and yet that local staff is charged with training each new agency nurse to learn the ropes and fit in to the facility - while earning *half* their trainee's pay! Job frustration and animosity cannot help but ensue!

The premier's claim that patients will not be charged extra fees in private for-profit clinics and hospitals is demonstrably false. The Canada Health Act bans extra-billing and user fees for *medically necessary* hospital and physician services. Patients cannot be charged for *medically necessary* surgeries and diagnostic tests, no matter what facility performs it. But, irrefutable evidence from Ontario shows private clinics extra-billing patients thousands of dollars for needed care in violation of the Canada Health Act, and breaking the law by charging for care for necessary medical care that is *covered by OHIP*. The main violators are clinics that offer scans such as MRI and organ scans, those that offer eye surgery, gender-affirming surgeries, and any private surgery. It is also illegal to manipulate patients into paying by pretending unnecessary services are necessary. Some private hospitals, for example, only provide private rooms, resulting in huge, unexpected costs for those whose insurance will only cover semi-private rooms. In addition, many private clinics manipulate folks to opt for their expensive surgeries or services by exaggerating wait times. This is also illegal.

It is illegal for a *private clinic* to manipulate patients into buying medically unnecessary procedures, equipment and accommodation in order to extra-bill them. They cannot attach medically unnecessary items to a medically-necessary surgery in order to charge the patient for it.

Ontario tracks wait times and patients can look up actual wait times here: <https://www.ontariohealth.ca/public-reporting/wait-times>

The current government could have fined the private clinics and doctors in violation of the Canada Health Act and Ontario's Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act (2004). It has not done so and does not need new legislation to do so. It simply needs to *actually* enforce the law. Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition stated: "They (The Ford government) have been in government for five years and have never used their existing powers to crack down on private clinics extra-billing patients, manipulating them into buying all kinds of medically unnecessary procedures and tests, and violating the laws that protect public Medicare. Why would any Ontarian believe this government? They have not once held for-profit health care corporations accountable so far, not even for negligence, death, illegal extra-billing and selling medically unneeded services to seniors."

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Switching to for-profit care is proven to increase wait times, reduce access, and pull health care professionals out of a public system that is already facing a huge staffing shortage. And the ultra-wealthy will get to skip the line.

The Ontario government has promised that these services from private clinics will be part of public healthcare paid with your OHIP dollars. But do you want your tax dollars to the healthcare system to go to making specialist doctors and private investors richer? Do you want your tax dollars to go to privatization which always costs more - or do you want them to go farther by improving the public system we already have in place? We saw how privatization in Long Term Care resulted in more cost cutting in private LTC homes and

much higher fatality rates during COVID-19. This same scenario will play out again in our healthcare system should we allow Conservative privatization schemes to go ahead.

This is not the public health care system that Canada and Tommy Douglas fought so hard to build!

For years, we've seen the government's actions worsen the healthcare crisis in Ontario. Despite promising no significant cuts to public services, when it took office in 2018 the Ford government brought in real-dollar cuts to hospital funding and a whole array of additional health care cuts. Throughout the pandemic, the government underspent Ontario's budgeted COVID money by billions of dollars each year. Even as the staffing crisis in our public hospitals became extreme, in the most recent fiscal year the Ford government underspent on health care by almost *\$1 billion*, and hoarded *billions of dollars in surplus*. At the same time it maintained a wage cap on the public and non-profit workforce while significantly increasing funding for-profit clinics and hospitals (doubling actually the private clinics' funding in the final quarter of the year, over previous quarters). Since the last election, the government has continued to give significant increases in funding to the for-profits while keeping wage suppression legislation on public and non-profit health care workforce - while doing almost nothing substantive to address the staffing crisis.

Almost 100 Emergency Departments have had closures across Ontario - mainly due to staffing issues - putting our community hospitals at grave risk. And now, with a system pushed to the brink of collapse, Ford and his cabinet are introducing private care as an "innovative solution."

The decision of the current government to privatize Ontario's local public hospital services to for-profit clinics and hospitals is a political *choice* not a necessity: -- a choice to hand over publicly-funded contracts to people and corporations with whom, by his own admission, Doug Ford and his government have been meeting.

Ontario funds its public hospitals *at the lowest rate of any province* in Canada and has downsized hospitals more radically than any other province. Across Ontario, there are unused and under-used operating rooms and diagnostic testing capacity in our public hospitals, due to underfunding, that could clear backlogs and improve access if the government chose to do so.

More recently, staffing shortages have also become a load-limiting factor. It is choice, not a necessity, for the Ford government to put the health care workforce under wage suppression legislation for years - even as staff are leaving by the thousands, to do substantively nothing to resolve the staffing crisis, to not fund public hospitals to capacity, and to leave units, floors and ORs shut down even while patients languish on wait lists. There is *no actual need* to build a whole second set of OR capacity in private clinics. There is no second staff force for private clinics. A nurse or an MRI technologist in a private clinic is a nurse or an MRI technologist who is not available to work in a public hospital. Where private clinics have opened in Canada, they have taken staff from public hospitals.

Meanwhile, nurses in Ontario have entered contract negotiations with the province for the first time since Bill 124 was declared unconstitutional. Negotiations have, at this writing, broken down, and will enter the mediation stage. For the first time in years, the Ontario Nurses' Association has the chance to negotiate a fair wage increase, above the one percent limit set by Bill 124. But from Premier Ford's recent announcement expanding surgeries at private, for-profit clinics, to his government's appeal of the court decision striking down Bill 124, it's clear that funding the public healthcare system is not a priority for this government.

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This is a pivotal moment for our public healthcare system. The Premier has accepted a federal healthcare funding proposal, but he still has to come up with an "action plan" to address the ongoing crisis in our hospitals. Many groups, unions, and some political parties are building a movement of Canadians who demand the Federal Liberals, who hold the purse-strings, take action to curb provincial privatization of the public health care system.

There is a history of the current government putting out legislation then pulling back when they get too much pushback. They want to see how much they can get away with, then pull back somewhat when they realize they have crossed the line that will cost the next election. The provision of public healthcare for all is a basic tenet of Canadian society and government. No matter what your political affiliation, this move to privatize, to reduce services and cut corners on our healthcare system is contrary to that basic tenet. It is contrary to what RTOERO believes, particularly as it will disproportionately affect seniors' health. Don't even get started on the yet - undiscussed Schedule 2 which allows private providers to call unregistered, untrained persons "nurses", "technicians", "therapists", etc. Now is the time for all Ontario citizens, regardless of their political stripe or their means to pay, to pushback against privatization, and to strive instead for an even stronger public healthcare system in the future.

If you want to get more involved with this issue you can join groups like the Ontario Health Coalition, or LeadNow either through their website or their Facebook pages and they will keep you up to date on the latest developments. They will provide opportunities for those who wish to participate in petitions, in contacting their local MPs, in participating in rallies and town hall meetings, or just spreading the word around their own social circles.



Check out what the local unions and the Ontario Labour Association are saying on ONA, CUPE and SEIU websites for instance to see how these moves towards privatization are affecting healthcare practitioners and support workers.

Paying nurses and healthcare workers fairly is the best way to address staffing shortages, improve working conditions, and increase the availability and quality of care for everyone in Ontario. Regulating the pay for agency nurses must go hand in hand with this. Between the province's \$2.1 billion surplus in 2022 and the new federal money, we know there's more than enough funding. But we need to make sure the Ontario government uses it to retain and recruit healthcare workers in our public hospitals, where they are needed most. It is past time to move on from Bill 124 and give healthcare workers the respect they deserve. The conditions of work they're fighting to improve are also the conditions of care for Ontarians.

Low-cost and accessible public healthcare is a cherished right of all Ontarians. Government privatization plans threaten the health of millions. Rather than turning to false solutions, we must fight to protect and invest in a public health system that works for people, not profits.

Private profit should never be prioritized over public good. And every Ontarian should be able to access the care they need, regardless of their ability to pay for it.

Willi Laurie
Political Advocacy Chair



RTOERO Foundation Grant Updates

For more than 10 years the Foundation has been enhancing the lives of seniors in Canada through the donor-funded grant program. During the pandemic the application process has been updated, and it is now entirely online. The goal of the program is “to identify and partner with creative, results-based organizations in order to address the most critical issues faced by our aging population.”

Two current ongoing grants are “Nipissing University: Social Connections and Living with Dementia” and “University of Alberta: Mentally healthy living after social distancing”.

WEBINARS

The Foundation has presented two informative and worthwhile webinars this winter: “Delirium: An Overview of the Causes, Treatments and How You Can Help” (Feb. 23/23) and “Collaborative Care: Rethinking How We Care for People Living With Dementia” (Mar. 23/23). These webinars can still be accessed through the RTOERO website.

DONATIONS

Of course, the Foundation relies on the support of individuals. If you wish to support the goals of the Foundation in advancing the care for our aging population there is always donor information in the Renaissance magazine, as well as in individual mailings throughout the year. Tax receipts will be issued for all donations of \$20 or more.

Shelley Worsell
Charitable Foundation Chair



Membership Report

District 9 has 1095 members including 19 actively employed. If you know someone who'd like to join RTOERO or enroll in the health plan, the membership form and the health plan comparison chart are on the provincial website, www.rtoero.ca. Provincial office is still offering virtual Retirement Planning workshops as well as in-person; dates and locations are on the website.

Also on the website, under Resources/Enjoy Retirement, is a list of 50 suggested activities/hobbies in case you're looking to try something different this Spring.

Remember to forward changes to your contact information directly to Provincial office at membership@rtoero.ca or 1-800-361-9888. The monthly membership updates help the Executive to plan and to keep our members well informed.

Dixie Lee Arbuckle
Member Services Chair



Grants Application

The 2023 Community Grants application is now available on the RTOERO website at the following link: <https://rtoero.ca/giving-back/grants/>. You will find the following supporting documents available for download:

1. Application Instructions
2. Evaluation Rubric
3. Application Questions

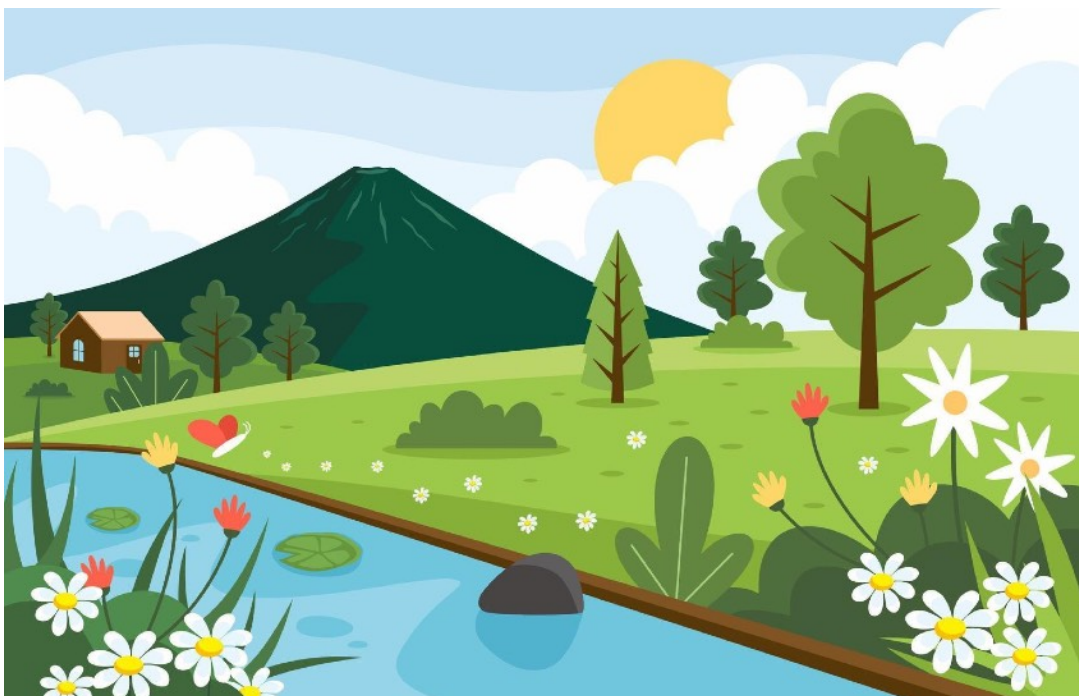
Only applications submitted on the online form will be considered by Community Grant Committee.

Community Grants are designed to encourage all RTOERO Districts to support and partner with local organizations to promote projects that will meet the strategic goal of improving the lives of Members and Seniors. RTOERO Districts are eligible to receive grants of up to \$4000.

Applications are due by June 2, 2023. District 9 requests that you let myself (Jean Weigand) know of your wish that District 9 support your project. At a date in April the executive will meet with the person(s) submitting the grant request. If more than one application, the executive of District 9 will choose one. Application can then be filled out online and sent to Provincial office for consideration by the Grant committee.

Posted on the RTOERO Grant site, there is a list of projects that were successful in 2022. Having a look at this list may tweak an idea to pursue, or remind you of one in the District 9 community that could use some monetary assistance.

Jean Weigand - email - dweigand@hay.net
Telephone - 519-237-3418 cell - 519-870-1988
Community Grants Chair



How to Engage in Democracy Between Elections

Democracy means government by the people. Governments at all levels should have processes that allow the public to participate, and public officials should consider the public's opinions and experiential knowledge. There are various ways you can engage in democracy at the municipal level. Here are some suggestions:

Attend council and school board meetings

It may be helpful to create a group that shares the responsibility of attending meetings and reading staff reports so that you can stay informed together.

Join public engagement and consultation sessions

Watch for public notices about upcoming consultations and consider attending to learn more and share your thoughts. Respond to surveys asking for the public's input on municipal issues and share the survey with others to help encourage participation.

Reach out to your councillor directly

You can always call, email or send a letter to your city councillor to express your thoughts on an issue of importance.

Request to speak at council

You can request the opportunity to delegate to your city council. Check your municipality's website for information and guidelines about delegating.

Volunteer for local organizations

There are organizations in your community focused on various issues that are related to municipal democracy. Find an organization working on a topic you care about and join them. Through that organization, you can interact with public officials and lend your skills to advocacy efforts.

Join municipal committees

Municipalities often put out calls for volunteers for municipal committees. If you have experiential knowledge on a topic, this is a great way to engage in democracy. You will meet people and have more direct ways of influencing decisions.

Attend rallies and demonstrations

There's strength in numbers. If there's a community demonstration happening about an issue you care about, showing up is a simple way to help the cause.

For more, read the full RTOERO blog post at rtoero.ca/how-to-engage-in-democracy-between-municipal-elections.

From the RTOERO Toronto Office



Leisure and Recreation

We are back! Hope we are back to stay with in-person gatherings.

Dave McClure took the mike on Oct 5th offering to put together a group to assume this portfolio, since Bruce has moved on to President. I am aware that he has recruited Arnold Mathers, Clare French and Jim Chapman, maybe others by now. They might consider a theatre excursion in June.

In the meantime, we have brought forward, an excursion to Wingham for June 7, 2023. It was already in place until Covid19 so rudely intruded on our plans. Here is the outline modified a bit from pre-Covid. Something for everyone! Guests welcome.

The date is Wednesday, June 7, 2023. The destination is Wingham. Arrival time is 9:15 am.

1. Sweets 'N Treats: 9:15 am. -10:00 am at 14 B Line Rd.

The first arrivals will be the Group #1, who will have a hands-on candy making session, approx. 20 minutes. You will take your creation home. You will then enjoy shopping in the store front for additional goodies to enjoy later. While you are making candy, Group #2 is shopping, then they make candy. Google says it is one minute travel time to Britespan Manufacturing.



2. Britespan Manufacturing: 10:15 am-11:15 am--71 North Rd. (the other side of the curve on Hwy #4); Safety glasses and jackets provided. It is a weekday, workday. They make building trusses for barns and sheds etc. A learning experience for us.

3. Wingham Golf Course: 11:30-12:40 am--40292 Jamestown Rd. (South side of town). Soup and sandwich/wrap buffet approx. \$10, subsidy to be decided to reduce this cost. Drinks approx. \$6.

4. Royal Homes Factory site 1 pm SHARP- 2 pm. -213 Arthur St. Tour house assembly indoor site. Then go across town to the east side to tour 3 model homes either guided or self-directed. Amberley Rd or Hwy 86 east. Phone 519.357.2444 ext. 226 if you wish to pre-book a consultation with Tracy.



Can sign up at Mitchell on May 3rd. Bring a friend to Wingham.

Bruce and Margaret Whitmore



Message from New Leisure and Recreation Chair - Plus One Activity

Now that the pandemic of the past 3 years is ended, we hope to return to many social activities. In the past, our membership has been well served by members who organized many of our leisure and recreation activities. I am thinking of the many events organized by Jim Chapman, Arn Mathers, Doug Bundy, Clare French and Bruce Whitmore. How enjoyable were the many events near and far in our province, other provinces and the United States. Not to be forgotten were bus trips, rail trips, field trips, garden tours, historic tours and house tours and being able to attend many plays or musicals in our 2 counties well blessed with 5 theatres in Blyth, Drayton, Goderich, Grand Bend & Stratford as well as those in nearby London & Petrolia.

Enjoy a one room rural school experience at BROCKSDEN SCHOOL MUSEUM on Wednesday, June 28, 2023. Bring a lunch as the activity will take place from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There are no fees but donations will be welcomed.

You can spend the school day with your teacher, Gloria Hutchison. She will be playing the rural one room school teacher named Miss Priestap. The address of the school museum is:

BROCKSDEN SCHOOL MUSEUM
2719 Vivian Line 37
Perth East



which is located 5 km north east of Stratford. Please register at our spring meeting in Mitchell for the school museum one room rural school day experience.

Our committee hope to have other spring and summer activities, like group theatre tickets to plays or musicals at Blyth, Drayton, Grand Bend, and Petrolia, organized by our spring meeting in Mitchell. We hope to have a few selections available for our spring meeting in Mitchell. The Wingham tour organized by Bruce Whitmore is very appealing and will be an excellent guide for organizing similar tours of several of our towns and villages in the 2 counties. It is so nice that again we will be able to attend events and enjoy the company of others.

David McClure
Leisure and Recreation Chair



Change Her World in Malawi

Read All About it!

Work continues to furnish and stock the library with books. Charts and maps have been obtained to use, both to inform and to brighten the walls. Sturdy wooden chairs, tables and a desk are under construction in a local tradesman's shop. Plastic chairs have been purchased for the children's centre because they are colourful, can be stacked when not in use, are economical to replace, and can be easily cleaned. Some book shelving is installed with more to come. A shipment of children's books is slated to leave Stratford shortly on its journey to the new book shelves. A set of textbooks for all secondary courses has been purchased in Malawi. Those books have arrived and will be used by students in the library, with a second set to follow as soon as funding allows. Lynda Willis has been on a determined search for a wide range of publications which reflect the Malawian culture and way of life. You may have had the chance to view a sample of what she has found for beginning readers at our meeting last October. She is investigating the possibility of working through the Maneno Bookshop in Lilongwe, Malawi for guidance in selecting and purchasing suitable books for all ages. And so, the dream of a literacy centre is, bit by bit, becoming a reality!



Continuation from page 16

April 15th will mark the 13th annual Fundraising Dinner. It's an occasion to recognize another year for the charity to count its blessings and achievements. It's a chance to visit with old friends and make new acquaintances. Hopefully it will also be an opportunity to welcome two visitors from Malawi. You will remember that in 2020 two of the first graduate students were to visit Canada. We were making excited plans to host them and introduce them to Canada during their 2 week stay. Unfortunately Covid restrictions dashed their dreams – and ours. Those two girls have since carried on with their lives and now have commitments to work and families. In their places Wezzie Moyo and Fiskani Chirwa are making passport and visa arrangements and excitedly preparing for the journey to visit us. Wezzie is currently the co-coordinator of Change Her World operations along with her committee of 9 and team of 70 other volunteers. Fiskani, a special advisor to the project played an important role in the founding of Change Her World in Chilumba. These ladies plan to bring greetings from Malawi and speak about their lives and work there, and the support and opportunities Change Her World offers girls, women, and families in northern Malawi. Fingers crossed that nothing disrupts the plans for these visits. Details about the event are included on the poster accompanying this article. You may find the poster on page 18 in this newsletter. I hope to see some RTO friends in attendance to join in the celebrations. I can promise good friends, both old and new, a tasty meal, a beverage, if you wish, interesting displays, one-of-a-kind silent auction items, great musical entertainment, and a unique presentation.

Lorraine Stevenson and I are organizing a new Change Her World fundraising effort. It is titled Books 2 Books. Here are the details. If you find you have bulging book shelves or that your home is over populated with the books you've and your family have read or outgrown, we can help. Just call or text to contact Lorraine in Stratford (519-852-6784) or me in Wingham (519-450-8479). We will arrange a convenient drop off or pick up of your books. We then work with a reputable book seller to convert your used books into funds for new books on the library shelves in Malawi. Fiction and all areas of non-fiction (except school textbooks) are accepted and greatly appreciated. You can also drop your books off at the Change Her World Dinner in April in Stratford, at our Spring Meeting in May in Mitchell, or at the RTO group outing in June in Wingham. As you are Spring Cleaning please gather any books you can bear to part with. I know that is a difficult decision for teachers. We know the value and power of books. Bring me one, a couple, a bag full, or a whole box. It will put a big smile on my face, I guarantee it!



Pat Evers
Change Her World Director and RTOERO Liaison



Wezzie Moyo—CHW Project coordinator



Fiskani Chirwa—CHW Advisor in Malawi

Be inspired as you hear the stories of how this charity has impacted the lives of girls and women in Malawi, Africa!

Wezzie and Fiskani will be joining us for this dinner!



Special Music by the **Gee Gees** from St Marys! Silent Auction, Door Prizes and so much more!



Bring An Item For The Collection Campaign 2023



Cotton Briefs for Girls (Size 4 and up) and Women (Size S/M/L)

Please join us for our...

13th Annual Fundraising Dinner

Saturday April 15, 2023

Best Western Plus ARDEN PARK HOTEL

552 Ontario Street, Stratford

Social Hour: 5:30 PM

Dinner: 6:30 PM

Cost: \$60.00

Tickets available at:

Blowes Stationary on Wellington Street, Stratford

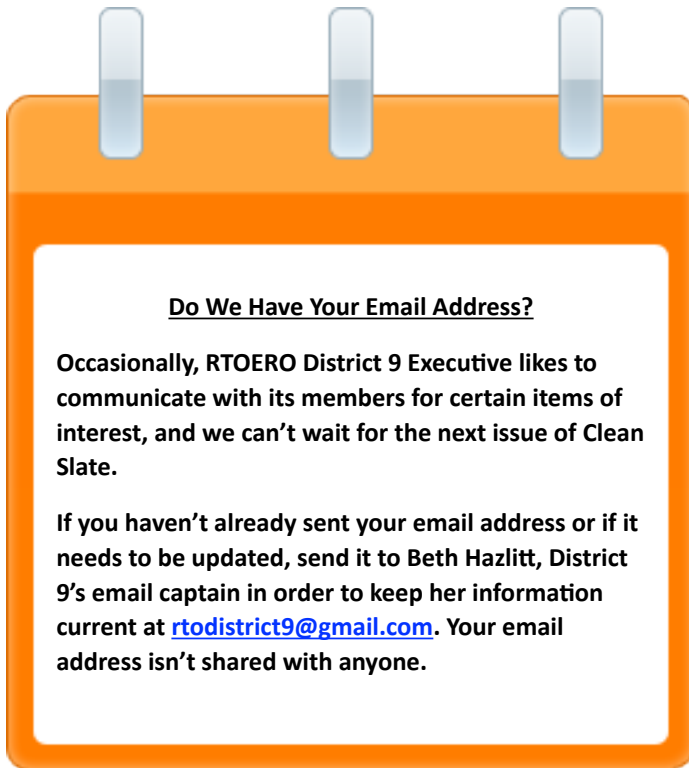
OR ONLINE AT

changeherworld.ca

For more information, call Linda Willis at (519) 271-5598 or l.willis@rogers.com

Change Her World is a Canadian registered charity empowering girls and women in the developing world through education!

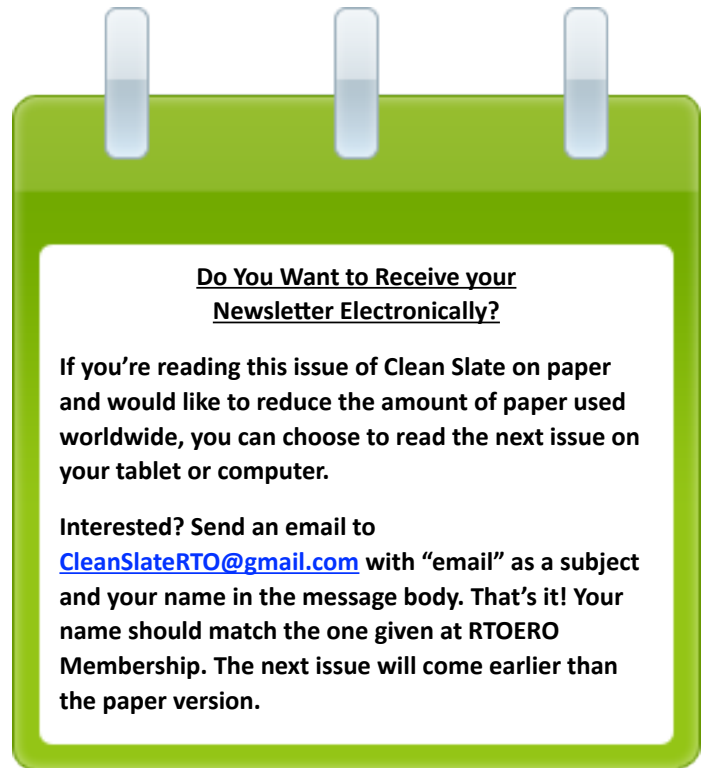
If you want to change the world...start with her!



Do We Have Your Email Address?

Occasionally, RTOERO District 9 Executive likes to communicate with its members for certain items of interest, and we can't wait for the next issue of Clean Slate.

If you haven't already sent your email address or if it needs to be updated, send it to Beth Hazlitt, District 9's email captain in order to keep her information current at rtodistrict9@gmail.com. Your email address isn't shared with anyone.



Do You Want to Receive your Newsletter Electronically?

If you're reading this issue of Clean Slate on paper and would like to reduce the amount of paper used worldwide, you can choose to read the next issue on your tablet or computer.

Interested? Send an email to CleanSlateRTO@gmail.com with "email" as a subject and your name in the message body. That's it! Your name should match the one given at RTOERO Membership. The next issue will come earlier than the paper version.

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