

Canada HomeShare™ - Metro Vancouver: Addressing Ageism Through Intergenerational Housing

Age-divided societies can lead to conflict and ageism. Intergenerational engagement may facilitate the transmission of knowledge, sense of community and bridge generational divides.

Vancouver, British Columbia (October 1, 2021) - A host of global, socio-economic and cultural trends have created rapid and complex changes to the experience of growing older, and have challenged major institutions in Canadian society. Housing is one such institution, where older adults and younger generations may be equally impacted by housing attainability and affordability issues in cities like Vancouver and in communities across the country. However, generational tension and ageism often frame the narrative around housing in Canada.

On National Seniors Day, [Canada HomeShare](#), an innovative intergenerational housing solution run by the [National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly \(NICE\)](#), is announcing the recent launch of its new Metro Vancouver program in partnership with [Simon Fraser University \(SFU\)](#). To commemorate the occasion, **Canada HomeShare** is bringing light to the benefits of intergenerational relationships created through shared-housing in bringing communities together, addressing ageism, and lessening the impact of Canada's housing crisis.

"We have been responding to the issues of aging one generation at a time, and this approach neglects the social context in which aging occurs. An intergenerational approach, through programs like Canada HomeShare, recognizes the importance of ensuring solidarity and exchange between generations, such that the experience of growing older is optimized for current older adults and the future older adults as well", says Dr. Raza M. Mirza, Network Manager for NICE.

Metro Vancouver is regularly noted as a region with some of the most expensive real estate and rental markets in the world. SFU recognizes the critical role secure housing plays in a student's academic success and mental health, and the Metro Vancouver HomeShare Program will play a key role in providing safe and affordable off-campus housing for students while enabling older adults to age-in-place, in the homes and communities of their choice. "The HomeShare program offers much needed intergenerational engagement that has the promise of addressing social isolation, sense of purpose, ageist stereotypes, and sharing of skills. As we get through the social challenges of the pandemic, we need programs like this more than ever.", stated Dr. Atiya Mahmood, an Associate Professor of Gerontology at SFU.

With leadership from the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (FCAT), SFU is proud to be the first pilot site for the expansion of Canada HomeShare. "The Metro Vancouver Home Share represents an amazing opportunity to connect older adults in our communities with the next generation," says Carman Neustaedter, Dean of the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology. "I see it as a vital intergenerational link, while combating real world challenges. Older adults are able to share their home with a student, making it a less lonely place, while students are able to find affordable and safe housing."

Ageist stereotypes may also shape expectations that older adults do not belong in certain spaces and places, and that after a certain age, older adults should leave their homes making way for younger generations. Canada HomeShare offers a new solution to the longstanding challenges to aging-in-place, including ageist stereotypes that fail to recognize that most older adults in Canada live in community settings as they grow older and not in institutional settings. Ageist stereotypes also devalue the contributions that older adults make to our communities. **Vancouver HomeShare's first home provider to be matched**, a retired SFU physics professor, is one many older adults who shares this experience. "I

am widowed and just turning 85 yrs. I'd like to stay in my own house as long as I can; but, I can't do all the things I used to do. I need a bit of help now and then around the house and garden. At the same time Vancouver has a serious housing-affordability problem that makes it hard for students to find housing at reasonable cost. As far as I can see, it's a win-win situation. I am looking forward to the adventure!" - Michael Wortis, retired SFU physics professor.

Addressing generational divides and ageism are more important than ever, and solutions such as Canada HomeShare that bring generations together, can help ensure that our country remains a 'nation for all ages', now and in the future.

The History of HomeShare

Toronto HomeShare launched in 2018 as a pilot project implemented by the City of Toronto and NICE. The initiative arose out of a recommendation from the Toronto Seniors Strategy's Accountability Table, a group of seniors, caregivers, and other community partners dedicated to adequately and effectively supporting Toronto's aging population. With the support of Councillor Josh Matlow, the City of Toronto's Seniors Advocate, the program was adopted and funded in 2019.

About NICE

[The National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly \(NICE\) \(www.nicenet.ca\)](http://www.nicenet.ca), led by Scientific Director Dr. Lynn McDonald, PhD, FRSC, is a research knowledge transfer network in the field of aging, founded in 2006 through a National Centres of Excellence New Initiatives grant.

About SFU

Since its founding in 1965, Simon Fraser University (SFU) has encouraged and celebrated new ideas, student engagement and community involvement. SFU is excited to support the Canada HomeShare Program in Metro Vancouver. National Seniors Day gives us the important opportunity to honor the important contributions of older adults in our community.

About Canada HomeShare

Canada HomeShare is an innovative intergenerational housing solution run by the [National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly \(NICE\)](http://www.nicenet.ca). In exchange for safe and affordable housing close to campus, HomeShare students contribute up to seven hours per week of practical assistance around the home and companionship for their home provider.

Please contact us if you or your community are interested in joining the Canada HomeShare network www.canadahomeshare.com

For more information about NICE, or for media inquiries about Metro Vancouver HomeShare or Canada HomeShare, please contact:

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