

Canada HomeShare™ - Kingston: Supporting Older Adults to Thrive-in-Place on National Seniors Day

An ‘age-friendly’ society is based on the notion that societies need to be forward thinking in the way that policies and programmes are developed for an aging population, and “the society is set up to help members of all age groups stay active, live safely, enjoy good social connections with others and stay involved” through the transitions that occur as they grow older.

Kingston, Ontario, October 1st, 2021— For most older Canadians, aging-in-place and remaining in their homes and communities of choice, is preferable to congregate care settings. However, without adequate support, accessibility and opportunities for social engagement, aging-in-place can feel like being stuck in place. Aging-in-place is an important aspect of age-friendly communities, where the goal is to optimize the conditions for living together for individuals of all ages. With partners in Kingston, the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE), is taking up the challenge of supporting older adults to not only age-in-place, but to thrive-in-place by facilitating intergenerational engagement through an innovative intergenerational homesharing program.

[Canada HomeShare](#), an intergenerational housing program that promotes age-inclusive communities, by bringing together seniors and students, is bridging generational divides by providing students across the country with an affordable and flexible off-campus housing experience in the homes of older adults. In 2021, the [National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly \(NICE\)](#), a not-for-profit housed at the University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, expanded the Toronto HomeShare program to Kingston as part of a new national program, Canada HomeShare.

“The vision of HomeShare is to support older adults to remain in their own home and to thrive now and in the years to come while providing safe and affordable housing to students” said Network Manager for NICE Dr. Raza Mirza. HomeShare offers older adults and students a unique opportunity for intergenerational engagement while creating benefits for both parties: students get safe affordable housing in a desired location, and home providers (older adults) receive assistance around the home and additional monthly income that can help them remain living independently in their communities. The extra income gained through participating in HomeShare can be used to assist older adults in making their home more age-friendly for the future and the subsidized rent reduces education related debt that students need to incur.

The push towards scaling and replicating the HomeShare program to cities and communities across Canada, including Kingston, has been fueled by strong national interest in North America and beyond. In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized the intergenerational initiative as an age-friendly best practice.

“The Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program is pleased to collaborate with Canada HomeShare to bring its affordable, intergenerational co-housing model to Kingston, Ontario. This project has the potential to address housing issues faced by students and older adults, while promoting intergenerational engagement to help build a more vibrant and healthy community. Kingston HomeShare

is in the process of matching ten older adults (home providers) with ten post-secondary students (renters) to live together during 2021-2022”.

Making communities more age friendly is necessary to support the growing number of older adults wishing to age-in-place in cities like Kingston. Fostering intergenerational relationships is one of many steps to be taken to make our cities more age friendly. “National Seniors Day is an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the immense value of intergenerational relationships. When we learn together, live together, grow together, laugh together we remove the perceived divide between generations and we realize that we all have something to offer one another” says Jackie Tanner, National Manager for Canada HomeShare.

“As a lifelong resident of Kingston, what I’ve noticed is a divide between the older adults living in the community and the students attending school. We know that intergenerational relationship development on a community level supports aging-in-place and serves to prevent and reverse social isolation and loneliness. It appears that we are headed into our second winter of COVID-19. Kingston HomeShare will also include a virtual age friendly community component to help support older adults and students participating in Kingston HomeShare during the winter of 2022” says Zaina Baig, Kingston HomeShare Pilot Site Coordinator

As Canada moves towards a recovery phase from the COVID-19 pandemic there is an opportunity to leverage intergenerational relationships, and to ensure that our communities remain age-friendly for all. Many Canadians experienced social isolation and loneliness during the pandemic. Participants of Canada HomeShare will not have to face the recovery alone or in isolation, and in many communities and cities across our country students and older adults have welcomed National Seniors day by embracing intergenerational living as part of the way forward.

Kingston HomeShare is currently accepting applications.

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.

Building on this success, HomeShare later expanded to Barrie, with the support of Mayor Jeff Lehman and the City of Barrie's Age-Friendly plan. The City of Barrie and Georgian College partnered with NICE to bring Barrie HomeShare to life.

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 Canada HomeShare

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 Toronto HomeShare or Canada HomeShare, please contact:

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