



# STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS THROUGH FAITH COMMUNITIES

## JUNE 8, 2-4 PM

### Today's Objectives:

1. Consider ways to empower faith communities (leaders, care committees, volunteers) to identify and support socially isolated seniors
2. Introduce the concept for the Hamilton Aging in Community website to assist faith communities in this work
3. Interact with Hamilton area people interested in improving opportunities for social engagement among seniors through their own faith communities

**Welcome** Norman Ayerst, Aging Together & Hamilton Unitarian Church

### Presentations

#### **Aging in Community: Hamilton Opportunities**

Dr. Ellen Ryan, Professor Emeritus, McMaster University

#### **Supporting Socially Isolated Seniors Through Faith Communities**

Rev. Loretta Jaunzarins, Grace Lutheran Church

### Small Group Discussions

We are gathering in small groups to discuss the four questions, below. Each group has a designated facilitator and note-taker. After the session, Aging Together members will review the notes from the different groups and distribute the summary to participants via email. To receive a copy of that summary, please be sure to register at the reception table or with your group facilitator.

If you would be interested in meeting to follow up on the discussions and suggestions, please give your name to your group facilitator or indicate this on the registration list.

#### Questions:

- 1) What are the obstacles to social engagement in later life?
- 2) How does social isolation show up in your faith community?
- 3) Who in your faith community reaches out and finds these people?
- 4) How do faith communities successfully overcome social isolation in older members?

**Final Comments** Taralyn Prindiville, Hamilton Social Isolation Impact Plan

Presented by

Aging Together & Grace Lutheran Church

Co-Sponsored by

Hamilton Unitarian Church & Hamilton Council on Aging

## **Aging Together: A Hamilton Aging-in-Community Group**

**Aging Together** (founded in 2013 and led by Ellen Ryan) is an aging-in-community group of approximately 40 individuals residing in the Hamilton area. We are mostly between our mid50s and our mid80s. One member lives in a retirement home; quite a number have downsized to condo homes or seniors buildings. We are committed to learn and inform others about alternative housing options and other mutual support strategies for older adults. We are committed to get to know each other and to rely on each other in times of need.

Members of **Aging Together** have been invited to speak about social participation and aging in community by the Hamilton Council on Aging, the Hamilton Seniors Advisory Committee, Ancaster Senior Achievement Centre, Halton Seniors Advisory Committee, and various programs at McMaster University.

## **Hamilton Aging-in-Community Website Project**

Funded by Canadian New Horizons for Seniors  
Rev. Loretta Jaunzarins, Grace Lutheran Church  
In collaboration with Aging Together (Ellen Ryan)

April 2017-March 2018

Given the high number of seniors who attend places of worship in Hamilton-Wentworth, Grace Lutheran Church will work in collaboration with the Aging Together group to develop an interactive website to provide tools and resources to faith-community leaders and their care committees so that they can assist their socially isolated seniors, especially those with low income. This Aging-in-Community website project will be informed by and support the Hamilton Age-Friendly Plan and the recently funded multi-agency New Horizons initiative "Hamilton Seniors Isolation Population Impact Plan". The website will include tools such as the Halton HomeShare Toolkit and links to seniors services and programs in the Hamilton-Wentworth region. Resources will include articles and news blasts concerning alternative housing options and mutual support strategies for seniors. A regular blog will highlight positive experiences in drawing older individuals into an enabling environment. The project builds effectively upon the work of the Burlington Age-Friendly Seniors Council in developing the Halton HomeShare Toolkit for home-sharers and home-seekers to use to identify a good match and to negotiate services in lieu of rent. Working through the existing social ties and ongoing support within faith communities can make for good matches and sustained home-sharing.