



# OUTREACH

August 2018

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### OSSCO IS MOVING!

August 31, 2018, OSSCO is moving to 345 Wilson Avenue, Suite 404, Toronto. This office is at the corner of Wilson and Stradacona Blvd. Parking is free. There is also street parking on Stradacona.

As a result, the next Tuesdays with OSSCO is in September.

### SAVE THE DATE!

OSSCO's Annual General Meeting is on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Lynne Cassidy, Executive Director, OCGA, will be speaking on *Strategies for Effective Governance*. Location to be announced.

## Message from Executive Director

*Elizabeth Nykorowytch  
Macnab, CHRL*

For the past several months OSSCO has been receiving calls for help on complex issues that may not be easily resolved by calling 211. These issues deal with guardianship, rights associated with an individual's health care, and the newly formed Local Health Integrated Networks (LHIN).

When we talk about how to protect ourselves as we age or with help navigating the health care system, people tell OSSCO that they depend on family and friends to do so.

But, what happens if you do not have a family or your family (or friends) are not geographically near by?

The term elder orphan is used to describe those individuals living alone with little to no support system. This group of people are aging alone, usually with multiple chronic diseases, navigating the health system on their own.

This group of seniors, "Elder Orphans", are now being identified as the most vulnerable population.

In the United States, groups such as AARP developed a plan of action to help elder orphans age safely and well. They recognize that elder orphans require more services to support them including transportation, affordable housing and home share programs. New jobs are also being created for Elder Orphan Advocates, Facebook Group organizers and others in the Aging Industry sector

In Ontario, an online community of elder orphans is just being established. You can find them at [www.elderorphan.org](http://www.elderorphan.org). You can also learn more about preparedness as we age, whether you are supported by family, friends or community, by coming to this year's Ontario's Premier Seniors' Conference and Information Fair. Additionally, you can check out our monthly Tuesdays with OSSCO workshop or request a presentation from OSSCO's Speaker's Bureau on topics such as Elder Abuse

## Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations

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Awareness, Civic Dialogue, and many others.

## Canada's Loneliest people

by Meagan Campbell,

June 22, 2018

*Excerpted from Maclean's*

To have nobody means to have no children, spouse or friend still alive. It is to have no church group to belong to, no neighbour to eat a sandwich with or sibling to come over. If someone has a mailman or even a hydro meter reader who says hello, that greeting is a connection, but when somebody has nobody, the option is 911.

"We have individuals who will go weeks and weeks and weeks without having contact with someone from the external," says Ryan Sneath, a paramedic in Winnipeg. "They end up calling 911 because 911 ends up addressing their needs. They get interaction immediately. They get transported to an emergency department, where people care for them and are engaged with them, and I think they often crave that interaction or crave that engagement."

Sneath is one of the few medical practitioners who are beginning to identify Canada's loneliest people. While 25 per cent of Canadian seniors live alone, there lies a little-documented population within this demographic that live in acute isolation. Statistics Canada says it doesn't have publishable data on a group now being labelled "elder orphans"—people who are 65 and older with no living spouse or children. However, these people are sometimes called "elder orphans." The term "evolved in American academia in the early 2000s and is most recently associated with a 2016 journal article by Maria Carney, a geriatric doctor at Hofstra University in New York who was the lead author of "Elder orphans hiding in plain sight: a growing vulnerable population." The paper defines "elder orphans" as aged, childless, single people who are physically and/or socially isolated, and it found that 22 per cent of American seniors are at risk of becoming one.

One patient, who still has children and no serious medical concerns, asked Park about medically assisted dying - not actively suicidal but feels

she doesn't have pleasure in her life anymore," Park says. Indeed, even seniors with family aren't immune to urgent loneliness.

"You wish people would just say 'hi'" says Elizabeth Sewell, a 65-year-old woman in Prince George, B.C. Sewell married and was widowed three times. She has three adult children, but since her third husband, Dawson Kindred, died, she becomes lonely even while walking around the mall. One day, she explains, "I was walking behind this feller, and he looked exactly like Dawson from the back, and I just said, 'Dawson,' and I was hoping he would turn around and it would be Dawson. I said, 'Oh no, he's gone.'"



Sewell liked to play Solitaire, but her arthritis made it too painful to hold the cards. Sometimes she sits with a woman in the laundry room of her apartment building, or watches *Dr. Phil* by herself, and through the United Way's Better at Home program, a cleaner comes to the apartment once a month, and

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a volunteer “friendly visitor” spends about an hour with her every other week.

## Elder Orphans: How to Plan for Aging Without a Family Caregiver

by Christina Ianzito, Features  
Editor, AARP Media

When you can't lean on family and friends to help take care of you, here's what you can do.

Marak, 65, of Waco, Texas, is considered an “elder orphan” — someone who is aging alone with no family available to address their caregiving needs. More than 1 in 5 Americans older than 65 are — or are at risk of becoming — elder orphans. And 23 percent of boomers will eventually be without family caretakers, according to Maria Torroella Carney, who has studied the issue and is chief of geriatric and palliative medicine at Northwell Health of Great Neck, N.Y.

And those figures don't include the countless parents whose adult children are not available

or able, for various reasons, to assist them.

The American Geriatrics Society recently developed guidelines for how public policy and the health care industry might assist elder orphans. (The authors refer to them as “unbefriended” older adults.) Experts warn of a potential crisis as the population ages and even fewer family caregivers are available for each person. A 2015 AARP Public Policy report titled “Valuing the Invaluable” concluded that while there were 7.2 potential family caregivers for every person 80 and older in 2010, that ratio is likely to fall to 4 to 1 by 2030 and could sink to 3 to 1 by 2050.

But even with already high numbers of elder orphans set to skyrocket, there's still a widely held assumption in the health care industry that everyone has a family caregiver in the wings. “When you go in for a colonoscopy, they won't even do the procedure if you don't have someone to take you home,” Marak points out. “Everyone thinks we all have family. Well, we don't.”

Here are some tips for planning ahead if you don't have a family caregiver.

**Consider where — and how — you might like to age.** While you're still healthy, evaluate your living situation and try to make a plan. “Identify where the best place is for you to live,” Carney says. “Should you move to an area that's more walkable, or has mass transportation or access to taxis?”

You might also consider communal living options, such as taking on roommates, or moving to a senior community or assisted living facility — often an ideal option for some who can afford it.

**Get your paperwork in order.** Make all legal documents accessible and your intentions clear. That includes deciding upon a health and financial proxy: Who's going to make crucial decisions for you if you become incapacitated? If you don't have anyone in your personal life to fill that role, you might look into elder care resources in your region. Or your doctor may be willing to step in, Carney says.

“I've had patients who've had no one and have asked me or

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my colleague to be their health care proxy," she adds. (If a physician agrees to be your proxy, he or she can't continue as your health care provider.)

You might consult an elder care lawyer to discuss your situation and help you plan.



**Develop a social network.** You may not be able to rely on friends for serious, long-term care, but they can help you — and you them — in many ways, such as bringing meals when you're ill or recovering, and doing errands such as picking up prescriptions or groceries. Sometimes it's hard to make new friends late in life, and old ones may not live nearby or are caught up in their own health issues. Consider joining clubs, taking a class, volunteering — anything that will offer you repeated exposure to a new group of people.

**Find support from like-minded people.** Marak started a Facebook group for

elder orphans in February 2016 so "people have a place just to feel like they're not alone, so they can identify with others."

**Think creatively.** Among other possible ways to plan for a future without a family caregiver, Marak has considered adopting a family. They'd agree to care for her, and she'd bequeath her assets to them. Other innovative ideas, Marak says, include joining other elder orphans in a living situation with space for a live-in caregiver "so the residents, as they age, can count on this caregiver to help them at home. They provide the space for the person to live, and that person provides the services they need."

## The Role of the Office of the Public Guardian & Trustee (OPGT)

By Mitra Mohamedzadeh,  
Educational Program Assistant

The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) is part of Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General. The OPGT delivers a unique and diverse range of services that safeguard the legal, personal, and financial interests of certain private individuals and estates. It also plays an

important role in helping to protect charitable property in Ontario. The OPGT has almost 400 staff located in six offices throughout Ontario. Services are provided by multi-disciplinary teams of dedicated staff with experience in the health care, social work and financial planning fields. They receive professional support from lawyers, accountants, and investigators.

Overall, the OPGT plays a role in:

- protecting mentally incapable people
- protecting the public's interest in charities
- searching for heirs for estates which the OPGT administers
- investing perpetual care funds
- dealing with dissolved corporations

### Outreach and Education

Every year, the OPGT conducts numerous outreach sessions to provide public education on issues such as mental incapacity, guardianship processes, and powers of attorney.

### For More Information

For more detailed information about the programs offered by

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the OPGT please visit their website at:  
<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/>

To view copies of brochures and publications search:

- Power of Attorney Kit
- A Guide to the Substitute Decisions Act
- The Register of Guardians
- Duty of the Public Guardian and Trustee to arrange legal representation
- Duties and Powers of a Guardian of Property
- When the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee becomes your Guardian of Property
- Estates Administration
- Role of the OPGT in Guardianship Investigations
- Role of the OPGT in Providing Property Guardianship Services
- Becoming a Guardian of Property
- Role of the OPGT in Making Substitute Health Care Decisions
- Accountant of the Superior Court of Justice
- Powers of Attorney - Questions and Answers

- The Capacity Assessment Office - Questions and Answers
- Charities Bulletins - Bulletins 1 to 8

You can also obtain a copy of the Substitute Decisions Act online at [www.ontario.ca/laws](http://www.ontario.ca/laws).

## Here's why you need a Power of Attorney

By Brittany Rooney, Educational Program Support Assistant

Do you need a notarized Power of Attorney (POA)



indicating who will be your guardian and responsible for your finances and health care? People who do not have a POA can actually end up in quite a bit of 'trouble'. This is especially the case for seniors who lack mental capacity as it puts them at higher risk of experiencing elder abuse if there is no guardian.

When a concern is raised to the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) about an adult being incapable of understanding the

implications of their financial or health care decisions, an investigation is done to determine their mental capacity. When a specially trained health professional or doctor, called a "capacity assessor", determines that the adult is 'mentally incapable', the OPGT is appointed as that person's acting guardian. Should that person have a valid POA for their finances or health care, the OPGT's appointment is then cancelled. If there is no POA established, the OPGT assumes that guardian responsibility until someone else, possibly a family member, files the paperwork to assume responsibility.

Being in this state of uncertainty is where the risk of experiencing elder abuse is increased. Since this person is mentally incapable, people may take advantage of them. It is also possible that a family member who they never would have chosen to be their guardian, or may not have their best interest at heart, applies for and becomes that guardian. This could result in misuse of property and funds or abuse.

While you are under OPGT's guardianship, OPGT is responsible to protect you from financial exploitation, protect your money and look after health care decisions. There are some aspects of their

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services that may be undesirable such as paying a service fee depending on your financial situation. It is better to choose your guardian and have a notarized POA created so when you need protection, you can have peace of mind. To avoid future hassles, update your will and POA annually or as relationships change. Only give guardianship to a person or people who you know and trust. You want your wishes respected and people to have your best interests at heart.

To read more about OPGT visit: <https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/index.php>.

To read more on elder abuse visit: <http://www.elderabuseontario.com/what-is-elder-abuse/help-for-seniors/educational-materials-for-seniors/>

## The Importance of Establishing a Network

By Justine Sterling, Educational Program Assistant



Social relationships are a core element of the quality of life for all members of society and have been ranked as the second most important area of life after health. As we age, it becomes quite easy for our social networks to reduce drastically which can lead to isolation and feelings of loneliness.

This is why it is crucial that we make the effort to preserve our current social relationships, or to establish and maintain new relationships. For those who identify themselves as an Elder Orphan, it is even more imperative to develop a network of social relationships. Social support provides not only companionship and emotional reassurance but also practical assistance with potential daily difficulties caused by illness or frailty.

This is no easy task, especially if you have been socially isolated for some time. It becomes increasingly difficult to find the motivation to socialize and network in many different settings. By reading this article you have already taken the first step towards increasing your social network. At this point you have acknowledged a desire to build-up your social network.

The next step is to start taking action. Set yourself some S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable,

Realistic, Time-specific) goals to participate and contribute in any kind of social sphere where you are interacting with at least one other person. From there, try to get that person's contact information and arrange a meeting to solidify your friendship / relationship. If you can get that far, you've accomplished a huge step in increasing your social network! Well done!

Now you may be wondering, "where on earth do I go to actually meet and interact with people"? This part may involve some research. With the help of the internet, which can be done either at home, or at a public library you can search for groups who share similar interest as yours.

The library is a great place to socialize. They often have workshops and events running that you may be interested in. If not, try googling "seniors meet-ups near me" and see what comes up. You may be happily surprised by what you find!

Seniors Active Living Centres are another great place to meet new people in a variety of different programs. Community recreation centres offer a welcoming environment to meet people of all ages and backgrounds. You can also volunteer for a community organization you have always been interested in and expand

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your network and get new experiences. You never know, you may just meet your next best friend there!

For more information on where to connect with other people please go to <https://www.ontario.ca/page/seniors-connect-your-community>

## DEMOCRACY AT WORK

By Elizabeth Macnab  
Edited by Ghazy Mujahid



When Prime Minister (PM) Justin Trudeau announced his newly reshuffled cabinet, he also announced the Honorable Filomena Tassi as Minister for Seniors. I was not surprised by this appointment. For the past 3-years, seniors' groups and organizations have asked the PM to re-appoint a dedicated Minister for Seniors.

Regardless of the requests to the PM for re-appointment, aging Canadians were under the umbrella of the Minister for

Families, Children & Social Development. While the Official Opposition may claim that the government acquiesced to their demands to re-establish the Minister of Seniors, I know that they are wrong in that belief.

In February 2018, OSSCO board member Ghazy Mujahid published an OPED in The Hill Times (February 15<sup>th</sup>) highlighting the increasing proportion of seniors in Canada's population and their growing strength in the electorate. In it he suggested that "*Trudeau should appoint a cabinet minister responsible solely for seniors*". He followed this with initiating an electronic Petition (e-1566) to Parliament requesting a dedicated Minister or Special Advisor on seniors be appointed. Since April OSSCO has been promoting the signing onto this petition. I believe that it was this initiative by our board member which confirmed for the PM of the value of a Minister of Seniors.

Once the cabinet reshuffling was announced, Ghazy wrote that he was "pleased to inform you that the Prime Minister in his recent re-shuffling of the Cabinet has appointed Honourable Filomena Tassi as the Federal Minister for Seniors. The decision to entrust a woman with this portfolio is all the more appropriate given that the

majority of Canada's seniors are females - 55 per cent. Moreover, seniors comprise a higher proportion of the female population (18.1%) than that of the male population (15.6%)."

He went on to state "I would like to thank you for your support and all those who supported the Petition at your request as a result of which the Petition gathered over 5,400 signatures."

I also would like to echo's Ghazy's appreciation. OSSCO members and supporters were key to reaching this number of signatories. Although only 500 signatures are required to get a petition into parliament, elected officials know that 500 constituents are represented for every 1 letter (or signature) received. Those signatures represent the voices of 2,700,000 Canadians. You should be proud of finally succeeding in your efforts in the establishment of a dedicated Minister for Seniors.



The process to create an e-petition can be found on <https://cpi.ca/preparing-and-submitting-petitions>.

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There is information on guidelines and specific requirements. A petition is a good tool for a straightforward issue that has widespread support. 15-minutes are set aside daily in the House of Commons for petitions to be read. There is no debate following the reading of the petition, but the government is required to respond to a petition within 45 days.

To view or sign a petition, go to <https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Home/Index>.

To view The Hill Times Opinion piece go to <http://ocsc.ca/news/pub:273/The-Hill-Times---Opinion-Trudeau-Should-Appoint-a->

## A Lighthearted View on Aging at Tuesdays with OSSCO

By Brittany Rooney, Educational Program Support Assistant

The July Tuesdays with OSSCO invited Executive Producer and writer David Lipson along with Executive Producer and actor Ethan Cole to conduct a screening of their television show entitled 'My 90 Year Roommate'.

Photo: Ethan (left) & David addressing participants on their show

OSSCO endorsed and supported a grant application to Telus to support the production of this budding "buddy" TV comedy series.

After the screenings, they discussed the development and inspiration for this show including the important lessons they learned from their own grandparents. David shared with our participants that he's always looking for new stories to gather. OSSCO gave both David and Ethan a copy of its publication called *Life before Medicare*. We have permitted them to include stories from that book in any upcoming shows.

While everyone had a good laugh and were excited to watch more episodes at home, our participants also saw a new perspective on aging – from both the "younger and "older" generations' views on the same topic.

For more photos check out OSSCO's Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ocsc.ca/>



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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT OSSCO

### OSSCO IS MOVING

Tuesdays with OSSCO returns on September 25<sup>th</sup> in our new office

345 Wilson Ave, Suite 404,  
Toronto.

### SEPTEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> OSSCO AGM

**DATE:** September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**TIME:** 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m

**Speaker:** Lynne Cassidy,  
Executive Director, OCGA, on

"Strategies for Effective Governance"

**LOCATION:** To be announced

Call for Board of Directors & Application form on OSSCO website under

### NEWS

Call (416) 785-8570 for more information or tell us that you are coming.



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