

Upcoming Events

Thursday, February 19th

**WHAT IS YOUR WHY?
HEART HEALTH**

Speaker: Roslyn Harris
Location: Shaarei Shomayim

Thursday, March 26th

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Speaker: Jamie Golombek
Location: Shaarei Shomayim

Friday, April 3rd

**FIRST ANNUAL
FIRST SEDER**

Location: Bernard Betel Centre

Thursday, May 21st

**HOW TO SLEEP LIKE A
BABY WHEN YOU ARE
OVER 60!**

Speaker: Jeffrey Lipsitz
Location: Shaarei Shomayim

Tuesday, June 23rd

TO OUR GOOD HEALTH

Topic: Seniors & Travel
Location: Earl Bales Park

Resources from Our Education Program 2014

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly	416 598-2656
Canadian Mental Health Foundation	416 789-9079
Chai Tikvah Foundation.....	416 634-3050
Circle of Care	416 635-2860
Housing Connections	416 981 6111
Jewish National Fund.....	416 638-7200
Kehilla Residential Programme.....	416 932 1212
Landlord and Tenant Board	416 645 8080
Ministry of Consumer Services.....	416 326-8800
One Kenton.....	647-932-7913
Shoppers Drug Mart Information Center	1-800-746-7737



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United Way Toronto
City of Toronto

Fees for certain programs and donations
contribute to Association funding.
Membership in the Association is open
to any senior group or individual.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
4211 Yonge Street, Suite 401
Toronto, Ontario
M2P 2A9

Telephone: (416) 635-2900 ext. 458
Fax: (416) 635-1692
ajs@circleofcare.com



Association of
Jewish Seniors

News & Views

From the President's Desk



As a senior citizen I'm finding it difficult to adjust to new times. It's January and it's raining outside! When I think back to my childhood days, memories of snowmen, snow forts and walking to school on the snowbanks, built up from the snow removed from the road and sidewalks, come to mind. It seems to me that the snow was there from December to March. I get warm fuzzy feelings thinking about the winter play.

Moving forward to Winter 2015 leaves us with a multitude of issues to deal with and that's what our social action committee is all about. We put pressure on the politicians responsible for change. The objective is to see that our tax dollar is spent responsibly assuring that seniors get their fair share of the pot. We deserve to be as comfortable as possible as we age.

Thinking about our legacy inspires our committee to take action. This fall I attended several meetings and had my say on your behalf. The Seniors' and Retirees' Meeting, with Natalie Mayra as chair, focussed on free access to health care covered by OHIP as opposed to private clinics run by doctors making extra money on the backs of the general public. More recently I attended a meeting of the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat Liaison Committee. About twenty people were present representing key seniors' associations. Some interesting facts came to light. From the Affordable Housing Office came their thrust - Close the Housing Gap. Apparently, there are many problems such as declining funds and some disrepair of the buildings.

Recommendations were made on how to respond to these issues. They suggested that the City of Toronto needs the federal government to stop withdrawing money for social housing and instead reinvest that money back into social housing capital repairs. It was also suggested that both the federal and provincial governments provide fully-funded, long term housing strategies. Junita Dobson (Assistant Deputy Minister) welcomed us and chaired the meeting. Mario Sergio (Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs) and Mitze Hunter (Associate Minister of Finance - Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) were present in the second half of the meeting. They listened and responded to our questions.

I received the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations (OCSCO) summary report on Defying Ageism: Developing Strategies for Positive Active Ageing. They identified a number of important issues needing seniors' attention: Income, Affordability, Employment, Education, Access to Information, Health Care. As you may know, OCSCO is the umbrella organization into which one hundred and fifty seniors' groups come together. So it's pretty obvious that when many organizations focus on the same topic, politicians take notice. To review this document, visit their website at www.ocSCO.ca.

As Jews we actually get two chances each year to activate our positive goals. On Rosh Hashana we planned for the New Year, and in January once again we are given the opportunity to review our path. On behalf of the board we wish you a happy, healthy, prosperous and active journey in 2015.

Roslyn Harris, President

My Meeting with the Honourable Mario Sergio, Minister Responsible for Senior Affairs

By Doreen Benou, Co-chair of the Social Action Committee

In December I had the pleasure to meet with the Honourable Mario Sergio to discuss a number of issues of concern brought to the Social Action Committee from the members of AJS.

We first discussed the high cost of public transportation for seniors in Toronto compared to other cities in Ontario and Canada. He informed me that he had visited the City of London, Ontario where seniors ride for free. He agreed, in principle, that \$98.00 for a monthly pass was excessive for a population who primarily live on a limited income. He indicated that he would present this issue, on behalf of AJS, when he meets with Mayor Tory and will propose reducing the pass from \$98.00 to \$49.00.

We next discussed the need for the development of more affordable housing. He agreed that the lack of affordable housing for seniors is a problem. He suggested that we raise our concerns directly to the City. Mr. Sergio said he will be meeting with the

Minister of Housing and 50 other stakeholders and will advocate for affordable housing for seniors.

With regard to Personal Support Worker/patient ratio in long term care facilities, he referred me to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care, Dr. Eric Hoskins. He also suggested scheduling a meeting with the Federal Minister of Health and the Federal Minister Responsible for Seniors.

Mr. Sergio remembers coming out to speak with membership and would be happy to attend another one of our General Meetings. He suggested scheduling a follow-up meeting and is interested in discussing other senior issues that come to our attention.

AJS is continuously looking at our needs. New issues become relevant every day and we respond by doing research, educating our members and contacting politicians. AJS has joined with OSCO, the Alliance of Seniors and other advocacy groups in the community to work together to effect change.

Honouring Our Volunteers



Arnold Foss presents award to Esther Pohn

Esther Pohn received the Al Gorlick Memorial Award for dedication and commitment to Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Seniors. Esther is a longstanding member of the Association of Jewish Seniors and has been doing this for over 20 years. Esther is a member of the AJS Board where she has held executive positions, including Secretary. She is an active member of the Social Action Committee where she frequently researches and reports on issues affecting our members and the community.



Doreen Benou accepts award from Roslyn Harris

Doreen Benou received the Sam Shapio Memorial Award for dedicated service and commitment to the Association of Jewish Seniors. Doreen is a member of the AJS Board where she currently Co-Chairs the Membership Committee. Doreen has been instrumental in getting “younger” seniors involved with the organization. As Co-Chair of the Social Action Committee she is a strong advocate for seniors rights and frequently visits with politicians to present issues and offer solutions.

A Commentary on Elder Abuse

By Esther Pohn, Member of the Social Action Committee



We hear of abuse of the elderly, not only in nursing homes, but also with seniors who are dependent or living with family members. As the baby boom generation ages, Canada is becoming an older country. According to Statistics Canada, eight million of us will be over the age of 65 by 2031. That’s nearly 25 per cent of the population. What’s more, a growing number of those in this age bracket are reporting that they are the victims of abuse.

Stories are constantly appearing in the newspaper of nursing home residents being physically attacked by the nursing home staff, other residents, and sometimes by their own personal caregivers. Recently, one such incident was discovered by the children of the abused women. She had bruises covering almost her entire body. When questioned by the family, the staff denied any abuse by the workers, and claimed the resident had fallen. The poor woman was too frightened to accuse her own caregiver, but finally gave in after much persuasion from her family. The caregiver was immediately fired, but the incident was not reported to the police. In another similar case, one of the nursing staff was the abuser. She was fired, but managed to find a job at another facility.

Seniors are most at risk of suffering abuse at the hand of family members. The biggest perpetrators of abuse against seniors are adult children or spouses. This is often

the result of the stress of caregiving. Elder abuse can take several forms, among them are: neglect; physical abuse; psychological/emotional abuse; and, economic/financial abuse. An example of this is the recent case of a 68-year-old Toronto woman who was left alone in an uninsulated garage during the winter by her son and daughter-in-law.

What can we do to prevent elder abuse? First, nursing homes obviously need more staff than are currently available. Many workers are overworked, and physically tired, cannot control all the residents especially those with challenging behaviors, and therefore the residents will suffer. Family caregivers need increased access to supports to assist them in caring for an aging relative. Shelters are needed, specifically for abused seniors, so they can remove themselves from the situation. Secondly, more strict “policing” is necessary. The Criminal Code needs to be modified to include a duty to report suspected cases of elder abuse. In addition, increased penalties for crimes against the elderly need to be imposed.

As more and more people are heading into their nineties, one can only hope, and pray for good health and strength as they approach the end of life.

The Association of Jewish Seniors is working towards creating a task force whose goal is to develop transitional housing for abused seniors.

Celebrating Our Traditions



**SUKKOTH LUNCH
OCTOBER 14, 2014**

From left to right: Shirley Karbin, Rabbi Chaim Strauchler and Doris Adesserman



**CHANUKAH LUNCH
DECEMBER 18, 2014**

Sandy Genesove symbolically lights the Chanukah candles