



**RTO  
ERO**

**District 24  
Scarborough and East York**

# **Beyond the Blackboard**



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**Travel**

While we have not been able to travel the world, we still have memories and stories to tell.

Consider contributing to our next E-News. Articles should be a short paragraph approximately 100 words telling us why this was your favourite memory and where it was taken. Please send photos/images as email attachments and do not reduce the size when sending.

Please send your submission to [President24@districts.rtoero.ca](mailto:President24@districts.rtoero.ca)

***Deadline: July 5, 2021***



## Beyond the Blackboard

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On Our Cover: Garden of Chris Elliot, Scarborough. Gardening is a source of exercise and beauty for many residents in Scarborough and East York, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

*Beyond the Blackboard* welcomes submissions from members of RTO district 24. We accept letters to the editor, article proposals, photos, and artwork. Do you have a story to tell, an experience to share, or a poem that you have written? Consider contributing your work for publication period articles should be between 400 and 1200 words, and photographs and scanned images should be at least 300 dpi at 5" x 7" size (please send photos/images as email attachments and do not reduce size when attaching). Send submissions to:

paula.chambers@rogers.com

We cannot guarantee that submissions will be published or published as received. The editors reserve the right to edit, condense, or reject letters or submissions.

**Deadline for submissions for the next edition of *Beyond the Blackboard* is September 7, 2021.**

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# President's Message

## Annemarie McKee

As president of District 24, I am proud and honoured to represent you locally and provincially, and to be a member of RTOERO. This past year has been challenging but encouraging. RTOERO and District 24 have taken all reasonable precautions to minimize the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Consequently, many of our district activities have been meeting virtually through Zoom. I extend my sincere appreciation to all members of the Executive who have continued to support our members in so many ways! One of the greatest pleasures of being President is being able to work with such a great team of dedicated volunteers. I would like to thank Donna, our Secretary, for her superb competence as she manages to capture accurately the many exchanges, questions and motions at our meetings. Thank you, everyone!

COVID-19 has cancelled travel plans for people all around the world. The time at home has provided us with the opportunity to recall and reflect on memories of past travel. I have envisioned where I would like to travel when this pandemic is over. As the vaccines become available, we may be able to get together with family and friends. Not sure if it will be shopping, enjoying a barbecue, seeing a play, or travelling the world.

As Dr. Seuss once said, "Oh, the places you'll go!"

The RTOERO Board of Directors has informed all district executives and members that all RTOERO in-person meetings are cancelled until further notice. It is anticipated that there will be no in-person gatherings until at least September, and perhaps not at any point before sometime in 2022. For updates, stay engaged with RTO District 24 communications on *E-News*, *Beyond the Blackboard*, Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/RTOERODistrict24ScarboroughandEastYork/>), or online at the D24 website at <https://district24.rto-ero.org>

Due to social gathering restrictions, the District 24 Annual Meeting scheduled for May 13, 2021, could not be held in person. Our next Annual Meeting will be in May, 2022 (the exact date is yet to be confirmed). Hopefully by that time we will be able to meet in person. The Annual Report for May 2021 has been uploaded to the website.

[https://district24.rto-ero.org/sites/district24.rto-ero.org/files/district-files/PDFs/2021\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://district24.rto-ero.org/sites/district24.rto-ero.org/files/district-files/PDFs/2021_annual_report.pdf)

The procedure followed this year was to canvas our members and individual Chairs of Committees by email and record their intentions for 2021-2022. If only one member expresses an interest in standing for any of the elected positions, the position will be acclaimed, and no election will be held for that position. The nominating committee submitted its recommendations for the new executive which started on June 1<sup>st</sup>. In this newsletter you will find the list of members currently serving on the Executive and the vacancies for the 2021-2022 term.

There will be some changes on the Executive for District 24. Two of our members are retiring from their positions on the Executive.

Gary Fick, our treasurer undertook the required training through workshops to implement all the new financial reporting forms and procedures that have been established across all districts to ensure national RTOERO organizational consistency! He has done an exceptional job ensuring our fiscal records were accurate, up to date, and so much more. As a Past President, Foundation Liaison, past Retirement Pension Workshop presenter, Gary continues to be a mentor to me as well as a strong advocate for RTOERO.

Carol Nelson, as Our Service to Others Chair (now called Community Grants) contributed greatly in our Outreach to the Tony Stacey Centre and the community work with the Eppleworth Adult Centre. She had hoped to be part of our Environmental Stewardship Action by helping to expand the gardens at Cedarbrook Retirement Residence where we host our executive meetings. Unfortunately, the pandemic affected all of our initiatives for the past year.

As we plan for the next year, 2021-2022, we have three open positions on the District 24 Board, Treasurer, First Vice President and Chair of Community Grants. Do you wish to make a difference for others, use your skills and talent for good, and, when it is safe to do so, meet other members from our district? If you would like to consider filling in for any of these positions, our entire executive would be only too happy to assist you in any way possible if you decide to join us. You can join as a "Member at Large" with no direct responsibilities other than to give input and help out. This is a way to get to know what we do. I invite you to contact myself or Paula Chambers, our Past-President, to let us know your interest or to have any questions answered.

Scott Baker, our Editor for the past 5 years developed a professional looking and reader friendly newsletter. Beyond the Blackboard was well designed, filled with informative content. Thank you for sharing your talent. We are fortunate that Paula Chambers has taken over that role.

Peter Vanderyagt was our Political Advocacy Chair last year when COVID first struck. His passion for supporting seniors' issues was significant. Betty Lou Reynolds has assumed this leadership role for District 24.

Now that the COVID-19 vaccination program is rolling out, and most long-term care residents have received at least the first dose of the vaccine, does that mean that the long-term care crisis will soon be over? Sadly, the answer is no. There are several COVID-19 variants spreading across the province and proving to be much more infectious than the original virus. The efficacy of our vaccines against emerging variants remains to be seen.

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Toronto General Hospital Research Institute's COVID-19 research project is the recipient of District 24 Scarborough and East York's \$2,000 donation for 2021. [www.uhn.ca/covid19](http://www.uhn.ca/covid19)

The donation will help to support COVID-19 research in the following areas:

- Antiviral and vaccine research.
- New diagnostics and therapeutics.
- Redeployment of research labs to support testing and quick development of new test measures.
- Rapid production scale-up of ventilator technologies, masks and other essential health safety equipment using innovative 3-D printing technologies.



District 24 has made a donation of \$2000 to the RTO-ERO Foundation to be used by the Foundation to support programs and research aimed at understanding and addressing social isolation. <https://rtoero.ca/rtoero-foundation/our-work/the-cause/>

### Supporting friend and family caregivers

The reliance on family and friend caregivers is increasing in Canada. An estimated 3.8 million Canadians aged 45 or older are providing unpaid care to an older adult with a short- or long-term health condition. Friend and family caregivers reduce demand on the health care system, but their care giving can take a toll on them and can have societal impacts. Friend and family caregivers experience economic, social and health-related consequences. Thanks to the support of our donors, we [recently granted funds](#) to research projects focused on better understanding this issue. Promoting social engagement

Not only is the thought of being forgotten in old age heartbreaking, but the impact of social isolation on our society is far-reaching and expensive. It's estimated that 30 percent of older adults are at risk of social isolation. We can do more to keep each other connected and active. Each October, we run our [Social Isolation Awareness Month campaign](#) to raise funds and shine a light on this issue.

### Educating health care professionals about working with older adults

There's a shortage of geriatric specialists across the country—there are just over 300 in Canada. While it's essential to increase the number of medical students who pursue geriatrics as a specialty, it is also critical to make sure general practitioners and other health care professionals have training in how to support older populations. This is one of the topics the [RTOERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine](#) is helping to address with her research group at the University of Toronto.

In closing, I ask that you check on friends and family who may be confined to their living quarters. A simple call can make such a difference in a person's life. Take care, keep well and stay safe.

Annemarie





## Prayers Answered...My Experience Getting the First Shot of the Pfizer Vaccine

**Donna Weston**

When I awoke the morning of March 25th, 2021, I could not believe what I was reading. Our wonderful District 24 President, Annemarie McKee had sent me an email with a website where I could book a vaccine appointment. This was wonderful news as having just turned 70, I was sure that I would have to wait until at least mid-April to receive the vaccine. I was doubly thrilled to see that it was an invite to the SHN booking site with which I was familiar.

Just a week and a half prior to receiving Annemarie's email, I had booked appointments for my 85-year-old neighbours. They are immigrants from Sicily who do not speak English very well, do not read it at all and have never used a computer. Hence, they asked if I would assist them to get their vaccines. At a zoom meeting of District 24's table officers, Paula Chambers had informed us of the website where we could eventually book our appointments. Booking their appointments and accompanying them to the Centennial Campus AWC site was so easy and turned out to be a rather pleasant experience for us all.

I was able to book my appointment at the same COVID-19 vaccine clinic for that afternoon at 2:20 p.m.. Shortly after I had done this, a friend who is 76 years old called me. When I told her of my appointment, she said that the earliest that she could get one through the Ontario booking website was for the next week at the Scarborough Town Centre. I gave her the SHN booking site and she was able to get an appointment for that afternoon at the exact same time as mine. We met in the parking lot and went through the experience together. This was so fitting as, for the past four years, we have travelled together to different places in Southern Europe for the month of March. In 2020, we were in Spain and had to lockdown there together for one full week before being able to come home. That experience is a story in itself!

We arrived at the vaccine clinic ten minutes early, but they immediately allowed us to go into the huge gym/auditorium. Many young adults were directing people, checking health cards and their iPads to make sure everyone in line had a booked appointment. There was no wait time before we were directed to a registration table. We placed our health cards on a sterile wipe so that the young lady registering us did not have to handle it. Once registered, we were told to check with another young worker wearing a particular-coloured lab coat. That worker directed us to a young man wearing a different coloured lab coat. This young man sent us to a numbered cubicle where we were able to sit together. A doctor, who said he was retired from Sick Kid's Hospital, checked our health cards and gave us our vaccine shots. I could not believe that I did not feel a thing. Another worker, in yet another different coloured lab coat, was pointed out to us and he took us to the chairs where we would wait for the 15-minute period for nurses to monitor that we did not have a reaction to the vaccine. We were both fine and, after telling us a list of possible normal side effects, the nurse confirmed the date of our second dose and allowed us to leave. The whole process took approximately 45 minutes and my friend aptly described it as "pretty slick".

My reaction to the vaccine was minimal. I had a sore arm for the rest of the day and became extremely tired quite early that night. However, I had a sound sleep and woke feeling perfectly normal the next day. I can only hope that my next appointment in July goes as smoothly as this one and that I have the same minimal side effects.



## RTO 24 Health Seminar 2021 via Zoom

### Paula Chambers

Thanks to Bonnie Clarke, our Health Rep and our President, Annemarie McKee, District 24 was able to organize a very informative Health Seminar, via Zoom on May 5, 2021. Bonnie had planned to have an information session on the Medical Uses of Cannabis in a community centre, but COVID-19 prevented the public gathering. Some quick thinking and planning by Annemarie got the invitation out to the members via E-Blast and 30 members signed up to attend the presentation by Doctor Arash Taghvai. Dr. Taghvai works out of the Apollo Cannabis Clinic for Pain Management and Research.



After graduating from the University of Calgary, Dr. Taghvai practiced medicine at Grady Hospital in Atlanta and at Cook County Hospital in Chicago before returning to Toronto. The Apollo Cannabis Clinic provides prescriptions for main management and to treat chronic conditions. The cannabis used in prescriptions is grown under strict conditions overseen by Health Canada by licensed producers who are held to rigorous standards and regulations to ensure standards. This is not for the recreational market. The demographics for the clinic represent mostly patients over 50 years old. They want to use non-opioid medication for chronic pain and for conditions such as insomnia and PTSD.

The process is simple. The patient books an appointment. (No referral is needed.) He or she then has a phone or video appointment with the doctor. If a prescription is warranted, the medication is delivered to the patient.

The clinic has different types of cannabis for different ailments. Sativa is used in the daytime to help with mood disorders and acts as an antidepressant that allows the patient to focus. Indica is used for nighttime calming, relaxing. THC, tetrahydrocannabinol, is an analgesic muscle relaxant appetite-stimulating medication used to relax muscles and to aid with insomnia and chronic fatigue. It is particularly helpful for patients with fibromyalgia.

Trichomes from cannabis plants are mixed with a healthy fat, e.g., coconut oil as a delivery method. The human body has receptors for cannabinoids and the plant form is more effective than synthetics.

Immune system research is currently underway, autoimmune conditions have shown benefits from cannabis. Encouraging results have also been found for Multiple Sclerosis and arthritis.

Currently, the most preferred forms of the medication are soft gels and oils. Edibles are also becoming popular because they provide long term effectiveness. Vaporizing can be used for immediate pain relief and provide 1 to 2 hours of effectiveness.

Possible side effects can include dizziness, a dry mouth, red eyes, a fast pulse, low blood pressure or cognitive slowing. There have been no deaths reported from a cannabis overdose.

If you would like more information, you can visit Apollo Cannabis Clinic at [www.apollocannabis.ca](http://www.apollocannabis.ca) or call Toll Free 1-877-560-9195. The Clinic also has a blog that addresses various patient questions at: [Apollocannabis.ca/blog](http://Apollocannabis.ca/blog)

## Update from Canada's Minister of Seniors **Deb Schulte**



I want to share some of the highlights for senior in *Budget 2021*, the Government of Canada's plan to finish the fight against COVID-19 and ensure a robust economic recovery that is inclusive of all Canadians. Here are a few of the key proposed initiatives in Budget 2021 for seniors:

### **Increasing seniors' financial security**

The Government *will increase Old Age Security (OAS) benefits for seniors age 75 and older*. Budget 2021 proposes to implement this commitment in two steps:

1. By providing a one-time payment of \$500 in August 2021 to OAS pensioner who will be 75 or over as of June 2022.
2. By introducing legislation to increase regular OAS payments for pensioners 75 and over by 10% on an ongoing basis as of July 2022.

This would increase the benefits for 3.3 million seniors, providing additional benefits of \$766 to full OAS pensioners in the first year and indexed to inflation going forward. This would give seniors more financial security later in life, when they are worried about outliving their life savings. As seniors age, their health and home care costs rise, all while they are more likely to be unable to work, having disabilities or be widowed. Our plan helps address these pressures and improve older seniors' quality of life.

### **Helping Seniors Age Well at Home**

To support seniors to live in their homes for longer as they age, Budget 2021 propose to provide \$90 million to launch the *Age Well at Home initiative*. The initiative would assist community-based organizations in providing practical support that helps low-income and otherwise vulnerable seniors age in their homes. It would match seniors with volunteers who can help with meal preparations, home maintenance, daily errands, yard work, and transportation. It would also help seniors access local services such as shoveling snow, cutting grass, picking up medicine and taking care of other practical, non-medical tasks that they are no longer able to manage.

### **Strengthening Long-Term Care and Supportive Care**

We welcome the *Health Standards Organization* and *Canadian Standards Association's* work to develop national standards for long-term care. Their work with governments, stakeholders, and Canadians will help inform our ongoing collaboration with provinces and territories on improving long-term care, while respecting their jurisdiction.

Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$3 billion over five years, starting in 2022-23, to Health Canada to support provinces and territories in ensuring standards for long-term care are applied and permanent changes are made, so that seniors and those in care live in safe and dignified conditions.

### **More supports of interest to seniors**

In addition to the supports mentioned above, Budget 2021 proposes to :

- Build, repair and support an additional 35,000 *affordable housing units for vulnerable Canadians*, including seniors. This is part of the National Housing Strategy, which is on track to invest \$70 billion by 2027-28 to help more Canadians affordable places to call home.
- Help more families and people living with disabilities access the existing *Disability Tax Credit and other related support measures*.
- *Improve access to palliative care* and end-of-life care, including culturally sensitive care by proposing to provide \$29.8 million over six years, starting in 2021-22 to Health Canada to advance the government's palliative care strategy and lay a better foundation for coordinated action on long-term and supportive care needs.
- Provide \$100 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to the Public Health Agency of Canada *to support projects for innovative mental health interventions for populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19*, including seniors.
- Invest \$4000 million in 2021-22 to Employment and Social Development Canada *to create a temporary Community Services Recovery Fund to help charities and non-profits adapt and modernize* so they can better support the economic recovery in our communities.
- Extend the *Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit* an additional 4 weeks, to a maximum of 42 weeks, in the event that care giving options are not sufficiently available.
- Invest \$50 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, for the Public Health Agency of Canada to design and deliver interventions that promote safe relationships and prevent family violence, including elder abuse.
- Provide an additional \$15 million over three years, starting in 2021-22 to Veterans Affairs Canada to expand and enhance the *Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund* for projects that will support veterans during the post COVID-19 recovery, including addressing homelessness, employment, retraining and health challenges.
- 

The Government of Canada's top priority remains protecting Canadians' health and safety, particularly during this third, aggressive wave of the virus and its variants. The *vaccine rollout* is accelerating across Canada, and the federal government is on track to receive 48 to 50 Million doses by the end of June.

Minister Deb Schulte

[canada.ca/seniors](https://canada.ca/seniors)

## Meet Sunny

**Betty Lou Reynolds**

The COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives. Approximately one year ago our province went into lockdown. Schools were closed and places of business were shut down. We started to wear masks and isolate in our homes amid stay-at-home orders. Although grocery stores remained open, we began ordering our weekly groceries on-line. It was a difficult time as we adjusted our lives to living together 24/7 with little social interaction. I live with my daughter who was teaching online and my grandson who was learning online. At the time I was President of RTO Toronto District 16 and all meetings were being held online. Everyone was in front of a screen!



Four months later in July of 2020 we were beginning to experience COVID fatigue and felt down and drained. Where was the joy? We decided that it was time for a pet and started researching how to bring a pet into our home. My daughter has always been a cat person while I was not so keen. Both of us knew that my grandson would benefit from having a pet. On July 28, Sunny entered our lives.

We all fell in love with Sunny on first sight. He was only 2lbs. and seemed quite scared and anxious. We showered him with love and affection hoping to see him grow from a tiny kitten into a healthy, happy cat. However, as days went by, Sunny lost weight going down to one pound and was lethargic. We discovered when my daughter took him to the vet that he had been born with a condition and required medication. Once he had taken the medication for a few days, he started to recover and began eating more and becoming friskier. We were so happy and relieved.



Sunny is now an integral part of our family and my little shadow. Having a pet has brought us closer together as a family and given us so much fun and joy watching him get caught under the bedding, jumping up and surprising us and running to greet us when we come through the door. I have become a cat person!!! Miracles do happen! I highly recommend it!

## Political Advocacy Report

Betty Lou Reynolds, Co-Chair

On Monday, March 29 I attended a Political Advocacy Committee (PAC) Regional Zoom meeting chaired by Gail Anderson. Six Districts attended, York Region D.34, Scarborough and East York D.24, Etobicoke D.22, North York D. 23, Toronto D. 16, Halton D.15.

All Districts updated the chair on the Political Advocacy initiatives that their individual districts have been working on to further the RTOERO Advocacy issues with their members.

As Co-Chair for Scarborough and East York I reported that our District had chosen to focus on Geriatric and Senior Health Issues. We have informed our members of the policy documents regarding improvements to Long Term Care Homes and Senior's health in our Facebook Page, eblasts and newsletters. We have publicized the links to the Vibrant Voices webpage [Vibrant Voices - RTOERO](#) where our members can send letters to local politicians. We have encouraged our members to sign up for local Town Hall Zoom meetings where they can express their concerns regarding access to adequate health care and improvements to LTC homes. I have engaged frequently with the two sitting members in my riding, Mitzie Hunter, MPP and John McKay MP. I have been asked by Mitzie Hunter to advise her of Seniors Issues and have sent emails regarding some gaps in the vaccine rollout process which has passed on to the Minister of Health, Christine Elliott. I recommend contacting your local riding politicians through the website [Home page | Legislative Assembly of Ontario \(ola.org\)](#).

I believe politicians are listening as some changes have been made. Recently, I received a newsletter from an MPP outlining the efforts that are being made to improve Geriatric Health.

From the newsletter of Stan Cho, MPP, Willowdale:

*"The Ontario Government continues to take every necessary action to stop the spread of COVID-19, including investing \$16.3 billion to help defeat the virus, fix decades of neglect and underinvestment in long-term care, and care for people and communities while strengthening our public healthcare system for future generations.*

*We're making it safer to re-engage in workplaces, businesses, and communities with \$2.3 billion for testing and contact tracing.*

*To protect front-line heroes and vulnerable people, we're investing \$1.4 billion for personal protective equipment, including more than 315 million masks and more than 1.2 billion gloves.*

*And to ensure the province's hospitals can continue to deliver world-class public healthcare, we are investing an additional \$5.1 billion in the hospital sector, including \$1.8 billion to address the surgical backlog. In addition, we're investing \$30.2 billion over ten years to build and renew hospital infrastructure and end hallway healthcare."*

And regarding Long Term Care:

*"The pandemic further exposed long-standing challenges in the long-term care system. Residents, caregivers, and staff deserve better. That's why we're investing \$2 billion to protect long-term care homes.*

*We're moving quickly to increase long-term care capacity and access with an additional \$933 million. Approvals of new and upgraded long-term care beds to date represent more than two thirds of the government's commitment to build 30,000 new beds by 2028.*

*I'm incredibly proud of our announcement in this budget of a \$4.9 billion investment to support our government's commitment to increase the average daily direct care for long-term care residents from 2.75 hours to 4 hours by 2024 – a nation-leading promise to provide the best care in Canada."*

According to Ministry Documents there is a waiting list for 40,000 beds in LTC homes right now. I believe the timeline for 30,000 beds needs to be shortened. However, I believe things are getting better.

WE need to act with one voice to see a noticeable improvement in our health care systems as regards Seniors. Let us continue to make our views known and be aware of the steps that you can take to improve your access to health care. Thank you for your advocacy.



## Come Sing with Us

Gwen Farrow

What have some of our retirees and their friends been doing during the last months of lockdown, isolation, and social distancing? Singing the Years Away! This just happens to be the theme song for a local community choir that has been doing just that for 46 years. The *Serenata Singers* is an adult daytime community choir and, although not able to gather together in person, entertain locally or present the annual spring concerts this past year, the group has maintained its Wednesday morning rehearsal time in virtual form. The wonders of Zoom and the ease with which it can be used, as well as modern devices, have allowed meetings to occur and lifelong friendships to continue! The gathering, just to see faces and chat before rehearsals start and hosting the occasional party, is very popular. News and conversations regarding the vaccines, etc. are shared, leaving members feeling they are actually in the room together.

The enthusiastic, extremely talented choir director leads gentle exercises for both body and voice, and choristers can both see and hear the piano player as different songs are rehearsed. A variety of choral music is sung, and the group worked on making a video -an ambitious and somewhat daunting experience for newbies, but not without growth, fun and laughter!

After a summer break, the Serenata Singers plan to reassemble in September in whatever form is possible. However, it is likely that the choir will gather via Zoom again in September 2021 and hopefully transition later to its rehearsal venue at Wilmar Heights Centre early in 2022 for in-person rehearsals. This is due to the complexities of the new COVID-19 variants and the slow roll-out of vaccines to all age groups. Meanwhile, there are perks to not driving in traffic and bad weather, and the opportunity to socialize, sing and be part of a group is uplifting, even if slightly restricted.

The choir is open to all but being able to read music is definitely a plus as SATB choral music is enjoyed by all. The outreach contact is Gwen Farrow, via E-mail at [gwenfarr@rogers.com](mailto:gwenfarr@rogers.com) or Bruce Galbraith, at [moliere@pathcom.com](mailto:moliere@pathcom.com), who will answer questions when contacted. Where else can you stay home in safety, yet be stimulated, involved and supported by caring people?

***Music is a universal language. Why not share in it?***

Website: [www.serenatasingers.ca](http://www.serenatasingers.ca)  
Facebook: [Serenata Singers](https://www.facebook.com/SerenataSingers)



## **New Retiree Welcome Event: March 18, 2021 via Zoom**

### **Wendy Hooker**

On March 18, RTO District 24 held a Zoom *Welcome for New Retirees* who retired from December 2020 to March 2021. This was the second time that District 24 was restricted to an on-line presentation due to COVID-19. Usually, this event is held in the fall at a banquet facility, and it provides new retirees an opportunity to enjoy a complimentary brunch while they hear about the activities provided by District 24 volunteers.

An electronic invitation went out to the newly retired education workers who were eligible to join District 24 and the recipients were able to register to attend the presentation via E-Mail. Wendy Hooker, the Chair of the New Retirees Brunch, organized the contact lists and responded to the registrations.

Our President, Annemarie McKee prepared a PowerPoint presentation and Wendy Hooker was the host. The Chairs of the various Committees in attendance were able to describe their activities and answer questions.

Attendees were encouraged to select a committee and volunteer if they wished to be part of one. Everyone in attendance became aware that RTOERO has a lot more than an excellent Healthcare Plan for retirees. The social aspect of District 24 is what makes it special. People who have been socially active in their education community while working do not lose those connections in retirement.

In addition to our luncheons, coffee meet-up, excursions, charity golf fundraiser, weekly bridge tournaments, knitting group, walking group, we also have volunteers who send greeting cards and phone for wellness calls. Our book clubs meet monthly. On a yearly basis, we also hold a trivia event and a health seminar. We even have a Community Service Award to give back to the greater community. Our Retired Women Teachers Rep coordinates dates with us to avoid any conflicts.

To communicate all of this to our members, we have an electronic E-News published on-line in February, March, April, June, September, November and December and a three-times-yearly newsletter. We even have a Facebook page! So, you see, there is a lot to do in retirement in Scarborough and East York. We hope that the attendees at our Welcome Event look forward to joining us for events in person soon when COVID-19 is under control due to vaccination.

We are all hoping to be able to meet in person again as soon as it is safe. We already have a deposit at The Guild Inn and are looking forward to seeing everyone in attendance.

## Three Random Acts of Kindnes

### Wendy Hooker

After returning from a Sunday evening walk in our neighbourhood, my husband Alan realized that he must have dropped our car fob and property keys. We immediately re-traced our steps that evening and the next morning without success. We were distressed about someone possibly having access to our home or stealing our vehicle.

Early Tuesday morning, prior to travelling to the car dealership for a costly car fob replacement, we received a call from the War Amps. The keys had been dropped into the Canada Post box at the top of our street by a kind stranger. I'd forgotten that we had attached the War Amps registered tags to our keys.

The postman emptying the mailbox saw the keys and the War Amps number on the tag. He chose to call the War Amps, advise that he had the keys and provided his cell number. This was NOT the normal protocol. The postman could have just transported the keys to his postal station to return them to the War Amps who would eventually return the keys to us.

When the War Amps phoned, they provided the name of the postman and his cell phone number. It was John, our local Postie! John popped over to our home and safely, behind Covid mask of course, returned our keys.

The sequence of these three random acts of kindness significantly impacted us. Although we had enthusiastically thanked John; we felt more should be done. We chose to write John a letter of appreciation and one for his supervisor expressing our gratitude for this remarkable Canada Post employee. Subsequently the Supervisor advised that the letter was posted on the station Canada Post bulletin board.





## Goodwill Report

### Lynne Horvath

The past year has been a year of special challenges and isolation for so many members. Those of us who have received our first vaccination are looking forward with hope that things will improve.

Our Annual Telephone Campaign is well underway and thanks to some new volunteers, all our phone lists have members making their calls. I would like to thank ALL our volunteers for their assistance in calling our senior members, especially during these challenging times. A special note of appreciation goes out to Sue Ackerman, Jill Underberg, Jeanne McMulkin, Chris Elliot, Lynn Pentz, Carol Nelson, Margaret Daw, Louise Henderson, Judy White, Mary Klos, Chris Pryde, Kathleen Taylor, Joan Taylor, Rosea Lonsdale, Gloria Smith, Wendy Hooker, David Caruana, Helen Sharpe, Karen Bardeau, Taharimoon Ali, Rose Rya, and Loretta Fines for their time and diligence on contacting our seniors. Linda Larcina, another new volunteer, has offered to help us with our calls next year.

Happy Birthday to all our members with birthdays in April, May and June! Birthday cards go out for our members 85 and older.

In addition to Birthday cards, we also send out Get Well and Sympathy cards. ***If you know of someone needing one of these cards, please contact me at 647-483-7377 or email: [lynne.horvath58@gmail.com](mailto:lynne.horvath58@gmail.com)*** Thank you.



## Book Club A Gloria Courtney

**Jun, 2021**

*Talking to Strangers* — Malcolm Gladwell

**Sept 29, 2021**

*Rules of Civility*—Amor Towles

**Oct 27, 2021**

*Beneath the Tamarind Tree*— Isha Sesay

**Nov 24, 2021**

*A Long Petal of the Sea*—Isabel Allende

**Dec 2021**

**NO MEETING**

**Jan 26, 2022**

*All the Devils are Here*— Louise Penny

**Feb 23, 2022**

*American Dirt*—Jeanine Cummins

**Mar 30, 2022**

*The Henna Artist*—Alka Joshi

**Apr 27, 2022**

*The Forgotten Home Child*—Genevieve Graham

**May 25, 2022**

*Indians on Vacation*—Thomas King

**Jun 29, 2022**

*Anxious People*—Frederik Backman

## Rest in Peace, Anne Marie Ellis-Taylor



RTO 24 is sad to report the passing of Anne Taylor Smith. Anne passed peacefully on Saturday, April 25, 2021 in her 100<sup>th</sup> year.

After graduating from University of Toronto and the Ontario College of Education in 1950, Anne started her teaching career in 1950 at Riverdale Collegiate. After a break of five years to raise her son, David, Anne returned to teaching at David and Mary Thomson Collegiate.

In 2003, after being a widow for four years, Anne married Anson Taylor, who was the Director of Education for Scarborough for 25 years. When Anson passed away in 2007, Anne gave the acceptance speech when Anson's star was added to the Scarborough Walk of Fame.

For many years Anne organized a Travelogue for the residents of Livingston Lodge Retirement Home. In 1985, when she retired, she extended this idea to the Retired Teachers of Ontario District 24. Anne continued her involvement organizing the Travelogues for RTO District 24. In recent years, Gloria Wilson Forbes worked with Anne so that there would be continuity for the Travelogue in District 24.

Well into her 90s, Anne was involved with the Ladies Bridge at the Scarboro Golf and Country Club and also with the University Women's Bridge. Anne was also active in the Rotary Club of Scarborough.

**It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of the following members of District 24.**

**We extend our heartfelt sympathy.**

Marilyn Barry	Karen Gravitis	Mry Kirkpatrick	Mary Lynch
Wendy Ryan	Ann Smola	Jean Walcott	Joyce Woodward
Margaret Hancox	Edith Morgan	Susan Powell	Harry Brown
Patricia Clarke	Marjorie Harper	Mary Martino	Katherine Rendall
Lintoy Sahadath	Gloria Sumiya	Mary Tucker	P. Douglas Wickland
Althea Lewis	Robert L. Spencer	Nola Bogie	Noreen Crifo
Amar Erry	Craig Lougheed	Robert MacLeod	Shirley McKimm
Shirley McLean	Jane Yuk-Sun Ching	Jean Woodard	



**The Executive welcomes all new members of District 24 and invites them to become active participants in our activities.**

Barbara Gawelczyk	Raziana Hussanee	Raymond Ireland	Sherilyn Koenig
Susan Martin	Marie	Cathy Quinn-Thomas	Heather Simpson
Donna Couch	Jade Downey-Ging	Erwin Miranda	Norine Spencer
Gayle Feeney	Petra Galowitsch	Peggy Kiely	Manfred Koepke
Nicolangelo Martino	Michelle Mercer	Rosemary Nagy	

## Webmaster: Annemarie McKee



What can you access on our website?

Your Executive

Publications – every issue of Beyond the Blackboard is posted to the website as well as the most recent E-News

Activities - use this to print out your coupons for upcoming events

The Provincial website links

Provincial Members Centre link

Calendar – with upcoming events/meetings posted

Retirement Workshops

Photos of Events through Flickr

Just go to the website homepage. <https://district24.rto-ero.org>

When all else fails, try the SEARCH box on the top of every page.

Facebook Editors: Paula Chambers & Annemarie McKee.

<https://www.facebook.com/RTOERODistrict24ScarboroughandEastYork/>