

Building Trust and Inspiring Hope

Celebrating the 2025 Sharron Cooke Annual Legacy Award Recipient

March 26, 2025 was a special day for the residents at Algonquin Nursing home, in Mattawa, Ontario. Members of the town's Recreation Department, the Home's Recreation team, and the high school hockey program came together to support residents for a fun day on the ice. The smiles on residents' faces were infectious. **"I never imagined I'd be on the ice again. It made me feel young,"** one resident shared.

The event highlighted the power of intergeneration connection and captured the true spirit of an initiative of the home that showcases what collaboration between Residents' Councils, staff,

families and community partners could accomplish. "The joy in that arena is something we'll carry with us for a long time." Reflected one team member.

The Sharron Cooke Annual Legacy Award (SCALA for short) – was created in memory of the late Sharron Cooke, a dynamic and inspiring Resident Leader from Newmarket, ON. Before her passing, Sharron worked with the OARC team to envision an annual award that recognizes a LTC home team, comprised of residents and team members, that are helping to bring about positive culture change. In 2025, during the Residents' Council Week celebrations, the award was presented to Algonquin Nursing Home. The home was selected for several reasons; ultimately, their submission told a story of home transformation, evidenced by collaboration and meaningful action.



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Following the COVID-19 pandemic, residents expressed a strong desire to spend more time out in the community. During the pandemic, with extended isolation and limitations to their freedom, residents felt disconnected. Many shared, through the home's Resident Satisfaction Survey and Residents' Council, that they had lost a sense of belonging.

In response, the Residents' Council partnered with staff to design a series of community outings. Residents were actively involved in identifying meaningful activities—such as attending seniors' club dances or visiting parks – and staff supported by arranging transportation, ensuring accessibility, and prioritizing safety.

“For so long we felt like the world forgot about us. Going back out into the community made me feel alive again—like I belong.” One resident Shared.

This initiative has had a profound impact on building trust and inspiring hope.

By listening to and responding with meaningful action, staff showed residents that their voices mattered and choices were respected—and that their Council was effective and valued.



It feels good to be heard. We said what mattered to us, and it actually happened.

– Resident

The collaboration, relationship-building, compassion, and respect for residents' voices, were all qualities and outcomes of this initiative that embodied the spirit of the SCALA award. The initiative enriched daily life and restored a vital sense of belonging for residents. OARC was proud to bestow the 2025 SCALA award to this inspiring LTC home and partnership initiative.

SCALA

Honourable Mentions



Staff Orientation By Residents - Huron Lodge, Windsor

Residents' Council leaders developed their own resident- presentation to inspire and connect with newly hired staff in the home. **“Learning about resident care lays the groundwork, but hearing directly from residents truly brings their experiences to life”** - Staff Development Coordinator

Reading Circle initiative: Building Bridges with Tanya - West Park Long-Term Care Centre

Working closely with the Recreation Team, Resident Leader Tanya helped to develop a new relationship-building and communication initiative, called the Reading Circle. This weekly peer-led storytelling group facilitates open dialogue between residents and team members.

A note from the resident adjudication committee

Our strongest applications showcased collaboration between residents and team members/home management, working together on an initiative to inspire culture change in the home.

Tuckshop Cupboard - Extendicare Iler Lodge, Essex

Responding to a resident-identified need, the President of the Residents' Council, Laura Drouillard, worked with the LTC home to create a new tuck shop program offering a range of items at accessible price points. As a former retail store manager, Laura used her career experience with maintaining and organizing product inventory and accounting to make the project a sustainable success.

The program is now hosted weekly in conjunction with the home's Lost and Found cart providing an essential service and facilitating relationships between the residents living in both the long-term care and Retirement Home sides of the community. Monies generated through tuck shop are reinvested into the home through Residents' Council to support special programs and BBQ's.

Applications are currently open for the 2026 Sharron Cooke Legacy Award. Visit our website for submission details.

<https://shorturl.at/Vqnr>