

# OARC In Action

## For Residents By Residents

April 2026



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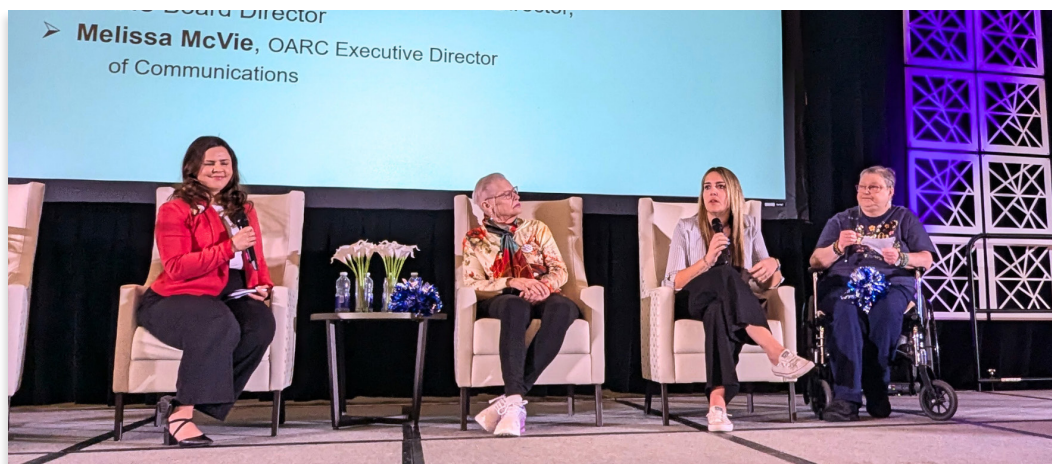
LTC Home Spotlight

### OARC at the AdvantAge Ontario 2026 Annual Convention

Three days of connection, networking, and fun, this year's convention was one to note!

On April 22-24, OARC team members, along with Resident Leaders, attended the AdvantAge Ontario 2026 Annual Convention, themed "The Power of Me," hosted at the Sheraton Centre in Downtown Toronto. Read on for some of our highlights!

1. Our Thursday morning fireside chat during the morning plenary was a wonderful opportunity for Resident Leaders Carol Burke and Andrea Pheonix to share their perspectives on meaningful resident engagement.



*"The best thing you can do with a dementia person is sit down and talk to them and listen to them. Because they might be sitting there not knowing where they're at, but they do know where they've been."*

*Carol Burke, Resident Leader*



2. The team engaged with conference delegates, including many Ministry of Long-term Care partners, at our table top display –showcasing our new toolkit and expanded home support team.

3. OARC’s Melissa McVie, Acting Executive Director, co-presented with Resident Leader Jennifer Brown and shared insights from our Resident Food Services Survey. They reminded LTC home leaders in the room that food service in LTC is more than the food on the plate. It’s about the human elements too.



*The key learnings/takeaways I’d like to share, is that a seed is what is started with ME. To share ideas with another person from the convention, and that it’s comfortable for me to talk in front of hundreds of people without being nervous.*

Andrea Pheonix, Resident Leader

4. We loved meeting (and having fun with) valued sector partners in person, including our friends at Family Councils Ontario.

The convention was an opportunity to showcase the collaborative partnerships OARC has with our Resident Leaders, and the great work we have accomplished together. It was also a learning opportunity for OARC team members and our Resident Leaders!

## In the Know at OARC

### May Webinar: Elevating the Resident Voice: Early Insights from OARC’s Food Services Survey

This May 6th at 2:00 PM EST, join OARC team members and Resident Leaders for an informative webinar exploring food services and the dining experience in long term care. What’s working, what needs improving, and how can we move forward at the home and government level for positive change?

Register here: <https://shorturl.at/WqsVj>

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### May Webinar: Strong Bones, Strong Voices: Empowering Residents in Long-Term Care

Join us May 20th at 2:00pm EST for an informative webinar focused on bone health and fracture prevention in long term care. OARC is partnering with the GERAS

Centre for Aging Research to explore what osteoporosis is and why it matters, how residents can take steps to reduce their risk of fractures related to falls.

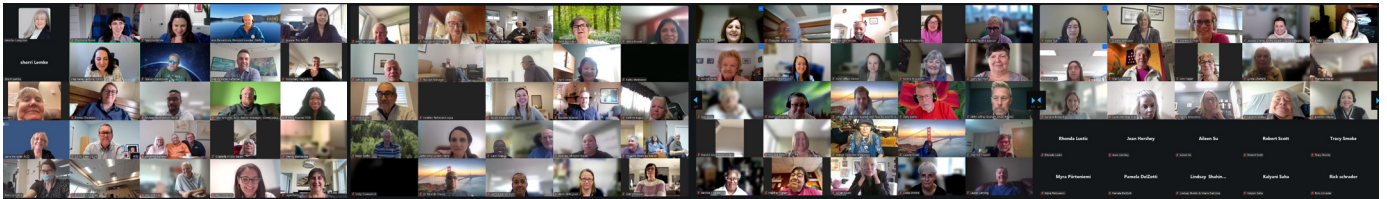
Register here: <https://shorturl.at/ZdqfG>

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## Webinar Reflection: Meet the Ministry

On April 15th's Webinar Wednesday, OARC and Family Councils Ontario welcomed our Ministry of Long-Term Care partners for sector updates and a Q&A session.

We had close to 400 registrations for this event, demonstrating the importance of these touch points with ministry. Thank you to everyone who attended and participated in this special webinar.



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## New Translations: Residents' Bill of Rights

Continuing with OARC's ongoing efforts to support homes serving residents of diverse cultural backgrounds, we're excited to now add four new translations languages to our Residents' Bill of Rights translation bank

- ▶ ASL (American Sign Language)
- ▶ LSQ (Langue des signes québécoise)
- ▶ Eastern Ojibwe
- ▶ Plains Cree

Access our full list of translations here <https://shorturl.at/Y3Hif>

Don't see a translation you need? Contact us and let us know!

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## Annual OARC Membership Reminder

Join us in building a sector where resident influence continues to grow!

Your annual OARC membership reflects a shared commitment to amplifying resident influence and lived experience across our work. Member insights and

feedback play a vital role in informing and advancing OARC’s advocacy, learning, and sector leadership.

If you haven’t yet renewed—or are considering joining for the first time—we invite you to become a member for the 2026–2027 year and be part of this collective impact. Contact Jennifer Langston at [jangston@ontarc.com](mailto:jangston@ontarc.com) for any questions.

Learn more: <https://shorturl.at/DmhSp>

## OARC Impact Stories

### National Poetry Month – Celebrating Resident Poet Herb Jolliffe



Look deeply into our  
BILL OF RIGHTS TREE—  
And what do you see? [...]

Families gather, residents sing,  
Visitors marvel at the peace it can bring.  
A canopy woven with rights that are true,  
Protecting the many, embracing the few.

So come, rest, and swing, let your spirit  
be free,  
On the branches of our  
BILL OF RIGHTS TREE

Special thanks to Herb Jolliffe for creating and sharing his wonderful poem celebrating the Residents’ Bill of Rights. Herb discovered his talent for writing poetry after moving into Dearness Home in London, ON. This poem was originally submitted as part of OARC’s Residents’ Council Week 2025 “Express Your Rights” contest.

Click the link to read Herb’s full poem: <https://shorturl.at/F801g>

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### National Volunteer Week: Celebrating the Contributions of OARC Volunteers

April 19- April 25 marked National Volunteer Week, and OARC would like to express our sincere thanks to the many individuals who generously dedicate

their time, expertise and lived experience to enriching the work and mission of our organization. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a vibrant, passionate and dedicated group of volunteers serving on OARC's Board of Directors and as members of the Resident Expert Advisors and Leaders (REAL) group.

## Celebrating Resident Engagement: OARC's New Resident Engagement Toolkit at Extencicare Brampton

We were so excited to receive this photo of Adam proudly showcasing his home's copy of OARC's new toolkit resource, Everything About Residents Involves Residents. The toolkit is a roadmap to meaningful engagement between residents and home leadership.

When asked what resident engagement meant to him, Adam stated: "Resident participation. Things are a lot better in the home when residents are actively engaged."

If you are interested in a copy of the toolkit, a downloadable version is available on our website here: <https://shorturl.at/GK5Ki>



*"Being supported by OARC means so much to us, I can't wait to try out the new tools in this kit."*

## Meet the Coaches - Special Limited Series

Welcome to the second edition of our feature article series, where we are introducing OARC's four new Education and Home Support Regional Coaches – complete with behind the work perspectives, passions and personal history. Each interview is led by OARC's Communications Coordinator, Stephanie Buosi, in conversation with members of the OARC team.

This April, we're getting to know Sarah Masonovich, our new Coach for the Ontario Central Region.

"In long term care, it's about more than going to work and coming home. You're a part of people's stories. You're shaping their mood for the day.

“

***You're a part of people's stories. You're shaping their mood for the day.***

You're making them feel better. It's not just clinical, it's social. It's emotional."

Scroll down to read the full conversation at the end of this newsletter.

## Coaches Corner - Sarah Masonovich

Coaches Corner brings you helpful tips, insights, and resources directly from our four new Education and Home Support Regional Coaches. This month, Sarah reminds us that physical space plays a large role in encouraging open and inclusive council environments.

### Setting the Stage (Literally!): Spatial Considerations for Residents' Council Meetings

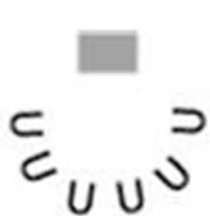
In my first few months as the Central Region Education and Home Support Coach, I've noticed a theme popping up in the homes I've visited... how we set the stage for Residents' Council meetings really matters!

Something as simple as the way a space is arranged can completely change the energy in the room. It can invite residents into the conversation, or make it feel like the conversation is happening to them.

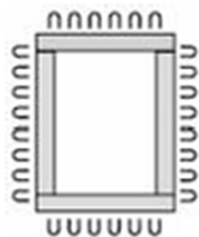
Residents' Council should feel welcoming, inclusive, and resident-led - never like a presentation. The environment plays a big role in that.

The Ontario Association of Residents' Councils Resource Guide (Section 3.3, pages 107–110) highlights different ways to set up a meeting space depending on the group's size and style, and it's a great starting point for inspiration. (<https://shorturl.at/XrpOH>)

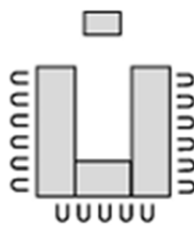
#### Table and Seating Considerations:



Semi Circle



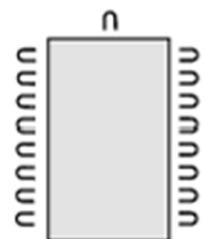
Hollow Square



U-Shape



Theater



Boardroom

## A few thoughtful considerations when setting up your space:

- ▶ *Can everyone see and hear each other comfortably?*
- ▶ *Does the layout promote inclusion and equal voice?*
- ▶ *Is the space accessible for all mobility needs?*
- ▶ *Does it feel like a safe, welcoming environment to share and connect?*

These small but meaningful details help create what OARC describes as a “safe place where residents feel comfortable participating” and that’s exactly what a Residents’ Council should be.

One of the things I’ve appreciated most in these early months is hearing how teams are trying new layouts, asking residents for feedback, and making changes along the way. That flexibility and responsiveness is what keeps Residents’ Councils truly for residents, by residents.

As you plan your next meeting, I encourage you to take a fresh look at your space as we approach a new season! **You might be surprised at how a simple shift in chairs or tables can spark new energy, connection, and conversation.**

“

***Something as simple as the way a space is arranged can completely change the energy in the room.***



▶ **Sarah Masonovich**  
Education & Support  
Coach, Central Region

[smasonovich@ontarc.com](mailto:smasonovich@ontarc.com)  
T 905-731-3710 ext. 320

If you have any questions about setting up your meeting space, or would like to reach out to Sarah in general, please reach out.

## Resources and Opportunities

### Radio Listen: The Current. “Why Canada’s Long Term Care Systems Can’t Keep up.”

CBC’s Matt Galloway explores the increasing demands on long-term care workers and what staffing issues mean for residents and resident care.

Listen to the episode segment here (21 min): <https://shorturl.at/dTSCY>

## April is Parkinson's Awareness Month: Resources from Parkinson Canada

Share your story, join a roundtable: Parkinson Canada is hosting a series of virtual discussions across Canada to gather perspectives from the Parkinson's community. Click the link for more information: <https://shorturl.at/sAAAni>

Read and learn from human stories: read powerful stories from people living with Parkinson's and determined to redefine what living with the condition could look like. Read on: <https://shorturl.at/oFEoj>

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## Mental Health and Fraud Prevention

### ► Mental Health Recovery Resource for Older Adults and Care Partners

The Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health has just released a new resource to support older adults and care partners in mental health recovery after experiencing financial fraud. Their two-page resource includes tips on where to start recovery, how to report fraud, cybersecurity training, and more.

Access the resource: <https://shorturl.at/iYhue>

### ► Scam and Fraud Prevention: Learning through Stories

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE) has produced a seven-part video series with the intent to empower seniors through storytelling, legal education and practical prevention tips.

Access the NOT ALONE: Senior Scam Stories here: <https://shorturl.at/YUG7O>

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## Podcast Episode: A featured conversation with the Honourable Natalia Kusendova-Bashta

The Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA)'s Coming of Age podcast featured a personal conversation with Ontario's Minister of Long-Term Care on March 24th. Minister Kusendova-Bashta speaks about her past experiences and how they shape her current leadership role.

Listen to the episode here: <https://shorturl.at/ZAZcQ>

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## New eLearning Course Series: Dysphagia and the Elements of Safe Eating

The Ontario CLRI at the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging is excited to share the launch of the new eLearning Course, Dysphagia and the Elements of Safe Eating. This training is open to all LTC team members, with a specific focus on the needs of Food Service Workers and Personal Support Workers.

Interested residents are invited to explore the series. The orientation series is available at no cost. Learn more: <https://shorturl.at/7d2NF>

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## **Join the Ontario CLRI for the expanded Person-Centred Care in LTC Community of Practice**

The Champlain Region Person-Centred Care is expanding to a provincial audience this June! This Community of Practice is open to all long-term care home team members and resident leaders in Ontario. Connect with peers across the province to support each other on your person-centred and emotion-based care journeys. The first virtual session is on June 10th, 2026 from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Learn more and register here: <https://clri-ltc.ca/resource/pcc-ltc-cop/>

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## **Updates to the Infection Prevention and Control Standard (IPAC) under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act**

Effective as of April 1, 2026, the updates to the IPAC Standard are focused primarily on addressing areas requiring clarification.

- ▶ Updated IPAC Standard: <https://shorturl.at/kEun1>
  - ▶ Slides from the Ministry of LTC's March 19 webinar: <https://shorturl.at/8VqvQ>
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## **Resource: Practical Resources for Fracture Prevention in Home and Long-Term Care**

Access a collection of four resources, developed by the Ontario Osteoporosis Strategy for Long-Term Care, in collaboration with the Geras Centre for Aging Research, and in partnership with Family Councils Ontario and the Ontario Association of Residents' Councils.

From actionable strategies to information on bone health and ways to mitigate harm, this suite of resources offers care teams tools to support and enhance resident safety.

Explore and download resources here: <https://shorturl.at/5B4BG>

## Long-Term Care Home Spotlight

### Giving Back to Staff at Tullamore Community

“At Tullamore Community in Brampton, the Residents’ Council leadership not only believes in community living, we PROMOTE it. Tullamore’s employees and front-line workers always contribute to our fundraising programs and many other unseen duties and in turn, our Residents’ Council returns the favour.” - Art Thompson, Resident Leader and Advocate



At Tullamore Community, the Residents’ Council plan appreciation events – many of which the Council also help fund. Most recently, to celebrate both the Blue Jay’s season opener and the team members at Tullamore Community, the Council organized a special BBQ. Special thanks to Art for sharing this story.

## Meet the Coaches - Sarah Masonovich

### Getting to know Sarah Masonovich: Building community and creating impact.

Sarah’s positive energy can be felt through the Zoom screen as we sit down and chat about her time in long-term care, and her excitement for the opportunities created by her new role as Regional Coach for the Central Region. Based in Beamsville, but a St Catharines’ native, Sarah is inspired by the power of community and connection when approaching her professional life.

**SB - So you grew up in St Catharines, and you’ve been in Beamsville for how long?**

**SM –** I’ve lived in Beamsville for about a year and a half. We bought this home and revamped it from the ground up, actually. So, it’s kind of just recently felt like home.

**SB - Wow. That’s big, congratulations! Can I ask what do you like about living in Beamsville?**

**SM –** I would say it’s a quieter town, But there’s a great sense of community. You go to the local pub, and you feel like everybody knows everybody. It’s also pretty central and easy to go into the city (Toronto).

**SB - I love when it feels like everyone knows everybody. That’s definitely a benefit, I think, of a smaller town, the community aspect of it.**

**SM –** Yes, like my local Starbucks. I can

anticipate knowing who's working the drive thru. But maybe that's bad to admit since I go there so often.

**SB** - That's my favorite part about going to get coffee! Chatting with the baristas.

**SM** - Yes, exactly!

**SB** - Getting into your professional life, what attracted you to pursue a career in long term care?

**SM** - It all dates to when my grandma got diagnosed with dementia when I was very young, and she moved into a long-term care home. My family and I would always go and visit her. To many young people, LTC homes can seem unfamiliar or even a bit intimidating. Residents might move slowly, use wheelchairs or walkers, or have conditions like dementia that affect how they speak or behave. The quiet hallways, medical equipment, or routines, can feel very different from what kids are used to. I, on the other hand, absolutely loved it.

And then recreation therapy! When I was a little bit younger, I went through some medical things and was in and out of the hospital. I had a rec therapist there who worked with me and she was amazing. To this day, she's more like a friend.

**SB** - Wow. I love how you have such personal connections to both your initial love of long-term care with your grandma and then your recreation therapist.

**SM** - She really helped me recover and regain my passion for a lot of things. So

that's how I kind of got into the field of rec therapy in LTC.

**SB** - It's amazing how the experiences and the people that you meet in your life can really impact your journey. It sounds like you are very connected to your time as a recreation therapist. Would you say it was your most meaningful role, or were there other roles that have impacted you as well?

**SM** - I would say, yes, primarily being a rec therapist. Every day was so different. I would go to work and have 50 million stories by the end of the day. In long term



care, it's about more than going to work and coming home. You're a part of people's stories. You're shaping their mood for the day. You're making them feel better. It's not just clinical, it's social. It's emotional.

**SB** - Love that. We impact each other's lives, right? Or we have that ability too.

**SM** - Absolutely.

**SB** - So you had this wonderful time as a recreational therapist. What then drew you to OARC?

**SM** - What really drew me to OARC was the opportunity to make an impact, but on a broader scale. As a regional coach, you

really have an influence on a broader community and can create a snowball effect, where even small changes in one home can carry over to another, be adapted, strengthened, and then shared again. Over time, those small improvements build on each other, reaching more staff and residents and creating a much larger, lasting effect than any single effort. What can I do in this home that'll impact this other home, and so on and so forth. And then how can we collaborate with homes, learn and grow with them too. I think that's also exciting.

**SB** – What opportunities do you see for this impact? Are there specific needs or opportunities that you could see for this region (Central)?

**SM** – Specifically, what I'm suggesting for the central region right now is empowering staff with the right tools and resources. Ensuring that they feel confident. I think a lot of staff lack confidence in delivering education (to the Residents' Council), or knowing what education needs to be provided.

**SB** - I guess with it being the central region, there are a lot of resources, but that can be hard too. My mind goes to decision fatigue almost, when there's so much, and feeling empowered on how best to use those resources.

**SM** – Exactly. What channels to go to, best practices, things like that. It's exciting to kind of be the middle person for that too, for homes.

**SB** – I have a bonus question here from our R.E.A.L. (Resident Expert Advisors

& Leaders), Steven (Wenzowski). Drawing on your work experiences in long term care, what is the most important issue for you?

**SM** – I would say... a lack of mental health education and resources. Times have changed and there's more education out there in the world in regard to mental health. But I think when it comes to the elderly, or in general for LTC residents, it's often very overlooked. We jump to write a medical prescription for that. But what can we do that isn't pharmaceutical?

**SB** – Like in a holistic way.



*Those small improvements build on each other, reaching more staff and residents and creating a much larger, lasting effect than any single effort.*

**SM** – Holistic, yes. Again, back to rec therapy, I'm thinking of how we can nurture the mind better. How can we support our seniors when their Co resident passes? How can we support the staff who look after a certain resident for so many years, and they become more than just a resident? They're your family. How can we support the overall home better? Education and collaboration, as well as what OARC is doing with our great resident forums helps. Connection helps.

**SB** - That's a great answer. Thank you so much for all this great insight into your work and your journey in long-term care.

**SM** – Thanks, Steph!

**SB** – Okay, going into my fun question,

now. If you were to wear a sticker that said, “ask me about blank,” how would you fill in the blank?

**SM** – I love this. My sticker would say... ask me about my Dachshund. He’s like my son!

**SB** - Oh, now I want to know. Can I ask you about your Dachshund?

**SM** – Oh, you sure can, Steph. I’ve had him for three years. His name is Doug. He’s a long-haired miniature Dachshund.

**SB** - I love that name.

**SM** – He’s like my fiancés and I’s child. He’s so cuddly. But also, such a sassy personality, like, nobody can knock on the door without him barking.

**SB** - Oh my gosh, protective.

**SM** - Very protective, definitely a guard dog, but if someone were to break in, he would be so scared!



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Many thanks to Sarah for this wonderful opportunity to get to know her a little better!

**Please join us next month, where we’ll get to know Sierra Robertti, OARC’s Regional Coach for the Northern Region.**



Thank you to [AdvantAge Ontario](#), [Extendicare](#), [Java Group Programs](#), [peopleCare communities](#), [Sienna Senior Living](#) and [S&R Group](#) for supporting OARC’s Confidence in Culture Change Program.

To find out more about how you can support OARC, please contact [Melissa McVie](#), Acting Executive Director [mmcvie@ontarc.com](mailto:mmcvie@ontarc.com).

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