

December 2024



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Warm Holiday Wishes from the OARC Team

Dear Residents, LTC Partners, Families and Friends,

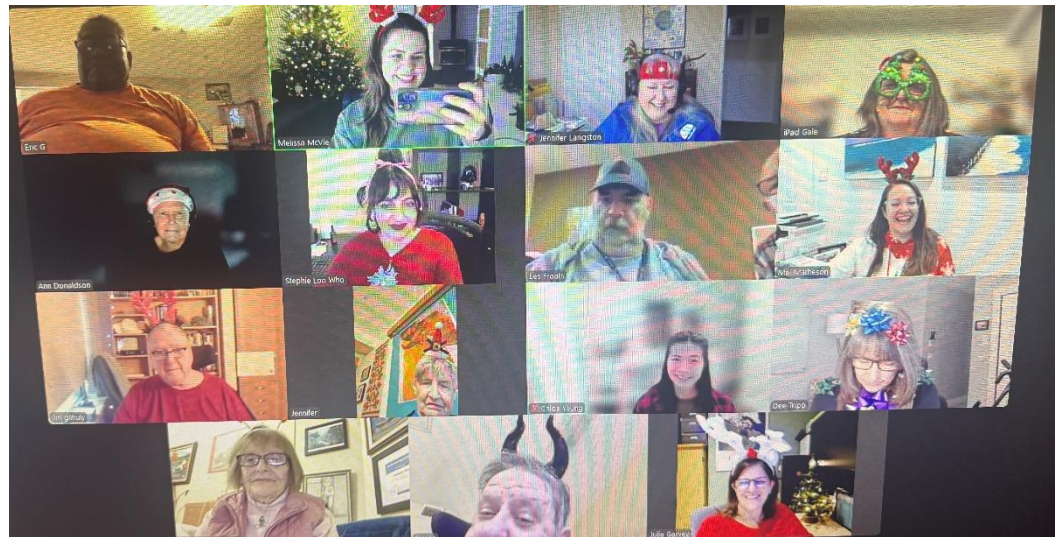
OARC would like to extend our heartfelt wishes to you and your loved ones this holiday season.

This time of year presents a special opportunity to reflect on the moments we've shared and the progress we've made, **together**. Our [2023-2024 Annual Report](#) showcased many of our organizational highlights – all made possible because of our relationships and interactions with people like YOU.

Now, more than ever before, OARC is being called upon to consult and infuse resident voice and lived experiences into long-term care policy and legislation. OARC's educational offerings and individualized approach to home support has helped to empower residents and teams and strengthen Residents' Councils province-wide. And for the first time, we are leading and actively contributing to co-design research *with residents*, with anticipated outcomes that will transform LTC home culture, by bringing evidence-informed, promising practices to the fore.

We look forward to the New Year with hope and determination. Together, we will continue to advocate for positive change and create a brighter future for all residents!

With kindness, caring and gratitude, From Your OARC team



A Message from OARC's Resident Advisory 'REAL' Group Co-Chairs

On behalf of myself and Devora Greenspon as the REAL Team Co-Chairs, I wanted to thank each and every one of our [Resident Leaders](#) for your dedication, contribution, passion, humour, support, and willingness to share what's going on in your home while we navigate learning how to live our best life. You are the heart and soul of representing the 78,000 people living in long-term care in Ontario. I admire and am grateful for your unwavering drive to shine a spotlight on life in long-term care while raising up Residents' Councils and the residents themselves.

I also wanted to thank the entire OARC team; we could not do without your support and determination to make life even better for every resident. You are amazing! Thank you for keeping us on track, supporting our meetings, organizing webinars and engagements, representing us to the Government, other organizations and sector stakeholders and... I can't possibly mention all the things you do.

Our group has been lucky to be enriched by all of our new members who joined in 2024. Sadly, we also had to say goodbye to several this year but we keep their memories in our hearts and are grateful for their passion and the contributions they shared.

I am excited to see what new challenges are coming in 2025. There will be a few bumps in the road, some ups and downs, but I know it'll be exciting and I'm looking forward to it.

Happy holidays! May you enjoy health and happiness and fulfilment in the coming year.

Submitted with a great deal of pride; may our wins keep coming!

~ Gale Ramsden, OARC REAL Group Co-Chair and Board Director

Remembering Our Friend, Gary Strickland

Earlier this month, the OARC REAL team learned about the passing of Gary Strickland, our dynamic and determined Resident Leader from Fort Frances.

Gary served as President of his Residents' Council for 4+ years. He helped to run the Tuck Shop for his home's Auxiliary, and worked closely with the Rainycrest LTC Recreation team to plan and execute special programs and events to enrich the lives of his fellow peers.

In his professional life, Gary served as Director for Native Child and Family Services. He created and oversaw the running of a traditional youth healing lodge, offering land-based activities and addictions counselling. During his time with OARC, Gary met with government leaders to share his lived experience and ideas about how to better support LTC homes in the North, and respond to the unique needs of Indigenous residents. Gary was a genuine, kind person, who will be greatly missed by all who knew him.





An Inspiring Day at Queen's Park

On December 4th, OARC's Executive Director Dee Tripp had the honour of accepting an invitation from our Minister of LTC, Honourable Natalia Kusendova-Bashta to spend a half day at Queen's Park with other LTC and health system partners. On that day, Minister Kusendova-Bashta gave a passionate and emotional speech before introducing the ***Support for Seniors and***

Caregivers Act, 2024. The proposed legislation spans across the ministries of Long-Term Care, Health, and Seniors and Accessibility therefore the initiatives are intended to improve the lives of seniors and those who care for them whether they live in LTC homes, retirement homes or with their families. A major focus of this legislation is to improve and expand dementia care and supports including adult day programs, respite services, dementia programs in LTC homes, and more. Furthermore, the legislation will expand the scope of Ministry of LTC Investigators and strengthening existing requirements in LTC homes to recognize and respect at a minimum, the cultural, linguistic, religious and spiritual needs of residents. You can read more about the proposed legislation [here](#).

After spending the morning in the legislature including the question-and-answer period, Dee and other guests joined Minister Kusendova-Bashta and her team for a private luncheon. Dee enjoyed learning from others who serve in the seniors' care field and talking personally with our Minister of LTC about the mandate of OARC, highlighting the importance of Residents' Councils and authentic resident engagement.

December Forums for Residents and Residents' Council Assistants

A reminder that our virtual forums for residents and Council Assistants will continue throughout the holiday season, without disruption. If your schedule permits, please plan to join us for our upcoming December Forums:

Resident Forum: Thursday, December 26th at 2pm, EST

These resident-led Forums are offered on a weekly basis (every Thursday) using OARC's Zoom platform. No registration required. Simply use this [same link](#) to join us each week.

Meeting ID: 842 1343 0006

Passcode: Resident

Residents' Council Assistant Forum: Tuesday, December 31st at 1:30pm EST

Offered monthly, on the last Tuesday of each month, these Forums bring together team members to share ideas and pose questions. [Please register](#) to receive your link to join us.

OARC Webinar Wednesdays Resume on Wednesday, January 15, 2025

We look forward to kicking off our 2025 webinar offerings on Wednesday, January 15th at 2pm EST with special guests from the Ministry of Long-Term Care's Inspections Branch. Please be sure to share this special learning opportunity with residents at your LTC home:

A Conversation with the Ministry of Long-Term Care's Inspections Branch

As the people who live in long-term care homes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, residents and their Residents' Councils bring valuable insights and feedback when meeting with Long-Term Care Inspectors. In this session, residents will learn more about the Inspections program and how the MLTC continues to modernize its regulatory approach.

Register Here to Join Us on January 15th at 2pm:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mozvBrYSTZ6VYMY9jeuCVA#/registration

Ministry Guidance for Celebrating the Holiday Season Safely in LTC Homes

Recognizing the importance of supporting holiday celebrations in long-term care homes, and doing so in the safest ways possible, Kelly McAslan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Operations Division, circulated a memo and accompanying resource, containing information about respiratory illness preparedness for long-term care teams.

OARC is hopeful that long-term care homes will continue to prioritize the well-being and enjoyment of residents, balanced with infection, prevention and control measures, this holiday season.

- Memo from the Assistant Deputy Minister [English](#) | [French](#)
- Additional Respiratory Illness Preparedness Information from Webinars [English](#) | [French](#)

OARC Quality Corner – Administrator Focus Group Success

In late November, our research team facilitated 2 lively focus groups with close to 30 Administrators, who responded enthusiastically to our call for participants, with the task of helping to envision and inform the development of a toolkit to support resident engagement in long-term operations and decision-making. Over 80 Administrators and senior LTC leaders expressed interest in being involved in OARC's [research project](#), now in its third phase. A sincere thank you to everyone who took part and sees the value in this important work.

OARC looks forward to future consultations and feedback opportunities in the new year to co-design a resource to promote meaningful engagement and collaboration opportunities between residents and their LTC teams.

REAL Group Member LTC Home Spotlight: Holiday Bazaar at St. Lawrence Lodge

Long-Term Care homes across Ontario have been buzzing with holiday spirit over the last several weeks, with many hosting craft sales, bazaars and other events to bring cheer, early shopping opportunities, and yummy treats to those in attendance.

OARC is pleased to showcase the following photos, shared by La Vern Simkins, Resident Leader and OARC REAL Group member, from St. Lawrence Lodge in Brockville, Ontario. La Vern helped to coordinate a special Purdy's Chocolates fundraiser in conjunction with his home's annual bazaar, and he continued to sell chocolates throughout the busy month of December. The event was well-attended and touted to be a tremendous success thanks to all the thoughtful planning and teamwork involved. Congratulations to the St. Lawrence Lodge team and Residents' Council!



OARC Office Update

As the OARC office will be minimally staffed between December 23rd and January 10th, we invite you to contact our team directory at 1-800-532-0201 to leave a message. We will be checking messages periodically during this time, however response times may be longer than usual.

For issues of an urgent nature, please visit our [Complaints and Urgent Concerns](#) webpage for more information.




Thank you to [AdvantAge Ontario](#), [Extendicare](#), [Java Group Programs](#), [Schlegel Villages Inc.](#), [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 Dee Tripp, Executive Director dtripp@ontarc.com 1-800-532-0201 x 240.

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