

The Village Collective Impact Project

In November 2019, The Village at Canadore College received nearly **\$2 million dollars** in funding through the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program. Over five years, The Village Collective Impact Project (CIP) will work collaboratively with seniors and Indigenous seniors (60+), their caregivers, stakeholders, regional community organizations and agencies to focus on developing new models of healthy aging and inclusion efforts to improve the health outcomes of seniors and Indigenous seniors living in the Nipissing-Parry Sound districts.

Data to consider from the Nipissing Parry Sound District 1:



Our population is nearly **130,000**

Majority of people live in **rural areas**



Twenty-four collaborating and partner organizations are part of the collective in addition to several other consultation organizations (The Collective has a shared vision for change in our region that “every senior and Indigenous senior is socially connected and engaged in their community.”)

Nearly **23%** of our population in the North is over **65 years old** (compared to 17% for the province)

There are **more women than men**; older women are the fastest growing demographic in the North



Our long-term goal is twofold: to use inter-cultural, inter-professional and inter-generational approaches that support an age-friendly and dementia-friendly inclusive community, and to improve our community's connectedness to prevent isolation in the future.

Nearly **15%** of those **over 65 have low income status** compared to 12% in Ontario



Majority (**92%**) of seniors live in **their homes** and nearly 30% live alone

All the work of The Village CIP is supported by a team of students called Community Connectors. The engagement of the students ensures that we build capacity in our community and make sustainable changes in the community that help improve services for seniors in the region. This work has proven to be a reciprocal relationship where seniors, in turn, are helping to better prepare students for the workforce.

Students describe their work with the project as a meaningful experience that prepared them for the workforce.

1/4 of all seniors are caregivers to other seniors

78% of First Nations communities are located in the North

The Village Collective Impact Project

Some highlights of 2021:

The project team remains focused on building successful, sustainable community partnerships, and has three areas of focus to achieve its mission:

- **Support** an innovative, age-friendly and dementia-friendly community;
- **Promote** social participation and inclusion by addressing barriers; and
- **Generate** meaningful, intergenerational learning experiences for students, seniors and Indigenous seniors.

In March, Canadore hosted a virtual intergenerational summit. Community leaders, service groups and seniors from the Nipissing-Parry Sound district came together to help draft a framework for the common agenda. More than 110 people attended, representing nearly 50 organizations.

In June 2021, The Village CIP launched a call for grant proposals to help lead change in the community. This led to the identification of four collaborating organizations, one Indigenous collaborating organization and seven seed grant partners (jointly referred to as The Collective), which distributed \$150,000 in grants for new programming across the region. There will be a second round of grants in the third year of the project.

Funded projects:

- Moose's Cookhouse is developing age-friendly and dementia-friendly dining experiences, gathering perspectives from seniors, their families and caregivers on menu planning, designing accessible and comfortable physical spaces, training staff, and creating social events;
- YMCA is offering the Digital Inclusion, Seniors Connection and Opportunities (DISCO) Hub, a Digital Literacy Program;
- The Callander Library is offering a book delivery service for rural seniors;
- Home Instead is developing specialized day programming and has provided Alzheimer's training for its staff;
- East Ferris Club Action 50+ and North Bay Golden Age Club have a simplified tablet lending program for their members; and
- Nipissing Serenity Hospice is developing legacy projects for its residents.



“Collaborating organizations and seed grant partners will help move our community towards the collective vision of having every senior in our region socially connected and engaged. Together we can improve the lives of seniors in our region.” *said Micheline McWhirter, Project Manager.*

Additional projects supported by The Village CIP include:

- The AIDS Committee of North Bay leading a 2SLGBTQ+ seniors program;
- CARE Calls – reassurance calls programs; and
- Women10 – Living Fit Inside Out – women's fitness programming.

In August 2021, three working groups were formed to support project objectives to address barriers faced by seniors, engage and support seniors experiencing vulnerabilities, and to build capacity in the community to support seniors and influence future programs. Their work falls into three main areas for change:

1. You Belong Here – promoting inclusive and accessible spaces for seniors;
2. Digital Literacy and Access to Technology – creating a strategy for the region; and
3. Northern Seniors Resource Guide – Promotion Social Inclusion – a guide to services available in the community.

In the fall of 2021, in-person programming for seniors began on campus at The Village and at the West Parry Sound Campus. These include VON exercise classes, Occupational Therapist Assistant/Physiotherapist Assistant student-led indoor walking groups, outdoor walking groups, seniors' yoga and gentle fit classes.

The Village Collective Impact Project

Our Reach

As of fall 2021, the CIP has engaged and provided programming to over 500 seniors, including 5% Indigenous seniors, with the support of over 120 students. The Village dental program and respiratory therapy clinic, as well as programming at the West Parry Sound Campus, support an additional 300 seniors annually. The project team and our student placement team have supported an increase in capacity of 15 organizations that work with over 1000 seniors in our region. We have provided over 40,000 hours of community support through student placements. This has increased social participation of seniors, reducing the risk of social isolation, and has increased interaction between seniors and students.

Collaborative Organizations and Partner Organizations

- Moose's Cookhouse
- St. James United Church - The Mary Street Centre, Parry Sound
- North Bay Golden Age Club
- Callander Public Library
- Shawanaga First Nation Healing Centre
- East Ferris - Club Action 50+
- YMCA of Northeastern Ontario
- Third Age Learning
- The North Bay Choral Society
- Home Instead
- Nipissing Serenity Hospice
- AIDS Committee of North Bay and Safer Spaces
- Christian Horizons
- Human Endeavour
- North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
- Older Adults Centres Association of Ontario
- Women10 - Living Fit Inside Out, North Bay
- Age Friendly Committee
- Nipissing Wellness Ontario Health Team
- West Nipissing Health Centre
- Canadian Red Cross - Nipissing
- VON - North Bay
- Retired Teachers of Ontario Association - District 43



THE VILLAGE
#CANADORE

Has provided over
40,000 hours
of community support
through student
placements

Connecting at The Village

Research shows that regular social contact reduces the risks and anxiety associated with being isolated. That is why The Village was happy to end 2021 with its doors open, welcoming the community back. The Village launched two programs in November – an indoor walking program, led by students, and an exercise program run in partnership with the VON.

“It’s great. I think we need to be organized with our exercising or else we just do not do it at home,” said [Rona Currie](#) who participates in both programs. “It’s nice to come out to be with our friends, get out of the house and socialize, as well as exercise.”

“I need to come out and do some exercise. I don’t do very much at home, so I need this, in the winter particularly,” said [Judy Armstrong](#). “I need the social activity too.”

Working with older adults is a great learning experience for the students too.

“The highlight of working with older adults for me is getting to learn so much about the perspective of an older adult,” said [Jazmin Foreshew, a Canadore Behavioural Science student](#). “Doing research about the needs and interests of the older members of our community has really made me realize how few differences – but how many rich differences – there are between an older adult and a college student. We all want to learn, be with our friends, have meaningful experiences, and feel both safe and included. It has also given me a much more educated perspective on aging!”

“I have realized that working with the elderly is a very enriching experience for me and even for my family,” said [Social Service Worker student Cenayda Serrano Vergara](#). “First, because I have learned a great deal about very important issues of the human being. I have known more closely the needs of life at this age. I have grown in the knowledge of care and the best way to work with this population. I have had the happiness of giving my best to all these special people who need my support.”

“The thing I’m impressed with the most is the students,” said [Laurel Brooks](#). “We meet them every week, so it’s like meeting our friends. Most of us are living alone. The part of the program with the kids – I call them kids – is we feel young being with them. But, they’re also learning something that is very vital for our future.”

“It takes a village to take care of senior ladies,” said [Penny McCracken](#), a regular participant in the seniors’ program.

