

AGM & Spring Luncheon: Committee Reports & Resources

President's Message

As your District 13 President, I attended the Spring Forum Focus on the Future for RTOERO along with our District Treasurer, Liv Sluga, Secretary, Anna DiFazio and Foundation Chair, Janet Kilgannon. Together we were a part of the meeting that hosted participants from across Canada to represent over 83,000 members in fifty-one districts.

Did you know that our benefits plan insures 100,410 people and that 78% of our members have our benefits plan? The name of the plan is being changed from "RTOERO Johnson" to "Entente" to better reflect our diverse and inclusive group health Insurance plan.

In 2022, our Community Based Grant donated \$87,471 to twenty-two projects.

We have 6,369 members (7.7%) who are under the age of 60. There are 36,550 members (44%) who are between the of 70 to 79. In 2022 we added 3,233 new members. As members I urge you to talk to those who are not and let them know all that we do so that they can become a part of RTOERO. Let them know that they can become members for free until they retire. Once they do they will enjoy benefits like saving 40% on house and car insurance, annual tax tips resources, group travel discounts, and other discounts through Venngo Member Perks.

The mission of RTOERO is to be a bilingual trusted voice on healthy, active living in the retirement journey. To that end RTOERO delivers world-class programs, social engagement and political advocacy. We are the recognized voice and leadership benefits provider for the education retiree community in Canada.

I am proud to be a member and to represent you at meetings like the Spring Forum.

~ Inta Alridge



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Committee Reports

Benefits

The October “Know your Benefits” workshop was a great success, with 78 members attending. Members asked questions of Stephen Wong from the National Office, and learned about our partners such as Hearing Life, Johnsons insurance, and Venngo. Positive comments were also made regarding the venue and the meal.

For the coming 2023 year, there will be two workshops—one in June (online) and the other in October. Details will be coming via e-Blast and newsletter. Halton will be joining us for the Fall workshop.

Common questions that will be answered: Why should I keep the plan after 65? What is the stability Clause? Can I add dental to my plan? Can I switch from a competing plan? How do I set up my POA to help me with my plan? What is Cloud Second Opinion?

What is new? 100% of eligible expenses up to \$10,000,000 per person/trip for medical emergencies. Trip cancellation is \$6000. Private hospital coverage and “Cloud Second Opinion”. 6-month claims submission timeline. (Please take note of this change.)

Keep your eyes open as a new name for our plan will be coming soon. It should help differentiate us from our competitors. Your cards will not be changed and everything will remain the same.

Plan suggestions come from members and to the RTOERO office. The suggestions are compiled and are considered for the next year. At the Fall Benefits Committee meeting, the committee will determine the renewal of the plan for the following year for approval by the Board.

~ Jackie Aird



Citizenship Celebration

After a hiatus of 3 years due to Covid-19, Citizenship ceremonies are back to full capacity. The committee is excited to once again host the New Canadians after their swearing in.

We greet them when they arrive at the Federal Building and help seat them. We also provide refreshments for them and their guests. It's very interesting to hear their stories and learn more about different cultures.

~ Danielle Chouinard

Community Grants & Scholarships

District 13 supported the application submitted by *Cycling without Age* (Hamilton and Burlington Chapter) to the RTOERO Community Grant Advisory Committee in June 2022. The proposal was successful and this organization received \$4000 in the fall of 2022 to continue offering free bike rides to members in our community. Volunteer pilots are trained to use the trishaw safely so people with mobility issues can once again “feel the wind in their hair”. The funds were used to purchase an extra battery, feather flag, first aid kit, trishaw maintenance, indoor training space, support for volunteers, insurance and a decal recognizing the RTOERO District 13. Members of District 13 were able to experience a ride on the trishaw at Java time at Williams Café on the waterfront and see it up close after our Luncheon in October 2022, when Pat Hickey accepted the cheque from Catherine MacIsaac, President and the Chair of this committee. The final report was submitted this Spring.



The grant in 2021 supported stroke patients at St. Peter’s Hospital and was delayed by COVID restrictions and staffing issues. It will be completed this summer. In 2023, District 13 is supporting a grant application from *PACE* (Physical Centre of Excellence) located on the campus of McMaster University in Hamilton to purchase a blood pressure monitor.

If you are aware of an organization that improves the lives of our members and seniors or is a trusted voice for education communities or broadens our membership base, please let us know.

~ *Lee Hondronicols & Janet Kilgannon*

Goodwill

The District 13 RTOERO Goodwill Committee is made up of 33 hardworking and enthusiastic volunteers who support over 1053 District 13 members, 80+ years young. Its focus is *Caring, Compassion and Celebration* and the committee supports its members by reaching out to our more senior members through telephone calls, birthday cards, holiday greetings and “Thinking of You” messages. In some instances, a small token is shared with those members celebrating milestone birthdays (80, 85, 90, 95, 100+). A message of condolence is also sent to the family of deceased members along with a donation to the RTOERO Foundation.

In the past year, as Covid restrictions were lifted, the committee held two in-person meetings: one in the Fall and one in the Spring. During those meetings, committee representatives were updated regarding new financial

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Committee Reports

Goodwill Continued ...

guidelines and expense forms, possible “gift” ideas and ways to support our members. Representatives enjoyed fellowship and good discussion as we continue to look for ways to care, share compassion and celebrate with our 80+ years young members. The Goodwill Committee is always welcoming new members! If interested, please contact either of the Co-Chairs.

~ Sharon Derkach & Toni Nanne-Little

Java Time

Java Time Hamilton, was founded in 2016 by Gemma Monaco. It is a social get-together whereby members of District 13 can gather on the last Wednesday of the month to exchange ideas, relate experiences and make new friends. Since the Pandemic, the group has met at Williams on Pier 8. Williams' welcoming environment has provided a large upper area for comfortable and private discussions, as well as a patio offering the possibility of being outdoors in the warmer weather. The location serves also as a dual purpose, as it has also been ideal for walks along the water either before or after the coffee klatch.

Due to Java Time's great success in Hamilton and, understanding that some of our members may not be able/want to drive that far, we have looked at our geographically diverse district and have decided to offer additional coffee socials in other areas. Rob Stringer and Inta Aldridge have started rotating event locations--the first at the Tim Hortons in Cayuga this past May 25th. We are tentatively planning additional events in Stoney Creek, Ancaster and Burlington. It is hoped that the addition of rotating events will help to engage/serve greater numbers of members. More information about upcoming locations will be coming your way.

The Hamilton Java Time will continue to meet as usual on the last Wednesday of each month from September to May with the exception of the month of December. Should there be a change in venue for Java Time Hamilton, all members will be contacted by email, Facebook or newsletter.

Come out and come all! We hope to meet all of you!

~ Gemma Monaco, Inta Aldridge & Rob Stringer



Political Advocacy

We are working to become the trusted voice of seniors for our elected politicians. We have established lines of communication with local MP's—talking to them and providing information with the goal of having them contact us regarding issues or concerns relating to the well-being of seniors.

If you go to vibrantvoices.ca you will see that we have a seniors strategy that looks at social isolation, aging at home, rights for seniors, universal public pharmacare and income security. Geriatric health care is of concern for us all. We are also stewards for the environment and look to see what we can do as we face the challenges of climate change. We care about our Grandchildren and the future that they face.

Locally, we are continuing to build on our connections to various groups in our community that include the Hamilton Council on Aging and the Ontario Health Coalition. We are planning to plant trees with our local Scouts and to support community programs that work to protect the environment.

We have not forgotten the Long-Term Care Homes and are keeping vigilant when it comes to improving the conditions and care provided to our members by letting the elected officials and people of influence and stakeholders know that we are aware and ready to take action if called upon.

~ *Inta Aldridge*

RTOERO Foundation

"We envision a society in which all seniors live with dignity and respect". This is the guiding vision of our Foundation - simple and meaningful.

Many of the members of District 13 participated in online workshops and webinars over the past year with topics such as Optimizing Nutrition, Internet Safety, Social Media, Managing Delirium, Hospital Care Strategies, Social Purpose and Philanthropy.

The provincial office of the Foundation also announced new grants given to a variety of universities and other organizations to study a range of issues from connecting seniors, physical and mental well-being, organic gardening, to Dementia/Alzheimer's research.

District 13 supported the RTOERO Foundation with its usual yearly donation of \$2,000. We also participated in the 'first ever' Silent Auction, to raise additional funds for the Foundation. District 13, along with other Greenbelt districts, pooled their resources and placed the winning bid for a webinar/video by Bob McDonald of CBC's *Quirks and Quarks*. This will take place in the Fall, and will be open to all of our members.

~ *Janet Kilgannon*



Committee Reports

Tours

The District 13 Tours Committee is finally back in action after COVID turned out the lights for many entertainment venues. In 2022 members could purchase tickets for Theatre Aquarius at a special price in the Spring and again in December. In 2023 our members will be going to the Shaw Festival, a cruise on the Grand River, Stratford and an excursion for those who enjoy searching out interesting foods.

We have had to find new coach companies at much higher prices. In 2023 and 2024, the increase in cost will be subsidized by District 13 to make going on a day trip more affordable for all our members.

There will also be holiday tickets for Theatre Aquarius and other local events at special prices in the fall and early winter. Information will be on our website, in our newsletter and sent to members by email.

~ Lee Hondronicols & Catherine Maclsaac

Newsletter

You may have noticed the last few issues of our *Thirteenth World* newsletter have a different look to them. Last October, the District welcomed a new Managing Editor onboard, who, along with the talented District Editorial Team, have made a few changes.

In addition to much loved Committee & Event updates and photos, each issue now has a theme. The Spring issue's theme was "Hobbies" where members were encouraged to send in photos and/or stories about how they spend their free time. **The Fall issue has the theme of "Pets"**. Please consider sending in *your* pet-related photos, stories, poems or artwork to share with the District. (Details can be found on the back page of the newsletter.)

As well, now, **if you would like to make changes to your subscription, simply contact membership@rtoero.ca or call**

1-800-361-9888. Digital copies are sent out via eBlast to members

with an email address on file and also posted on our District website. Print copies are mailed out to members who request them. **Not receiving your copy? Contact the membership office.**

Finally, starting this Fall, the newsletter will move from *three* issues a year to **FOUR** issues! Soon there will be even *more* chances to hear about (and see) great things going on in our District and by our members.

Have suggestions, feedback, event photos or other submissions? Email rob.stringer.editor@gmail.com

~ Rob Stringer



Facebook

Several posts have highlighted Java Time and most recently “Coffee in Cayuga”. At Christmas members or followers were asked to share some seasonal traditions. District 13 workshops are often highlighted and postings from the RTOERO Foundation are sometimes shared. Members and followers are always welcome to and encouraged to comment.

~ Sue Crawford

Website

Our District 13 website continues to be a source of information for our members. It is updated regularly so that members can easily access information about upcoming events, meetings, and contact information.

New features this year include a monthly message from the District 13 President, Thought for the Month, a calendar of upcoming meetings and events as well as forms for registering for local events such as the AGM, Retirement Planning Workshops, Benefits Workshops, Tours Events, etc.

Along with the newsletter, e-blasts and Facebook page, the website is part of the communication efforts with our members. Be sure to visit the site to stay up-to-date with the good work and highlights of District 13 Hamilton-Wentworth, Haldimand: <https://district13.rtoero.ca/>

~ Toni Nanne-Little



Retirement Planning Workshop

We had a successful RPW on April 15, 2023 that was well-attended at the Marriott Courtyard, Hamilton. Our presenter from the RTOERO Office, Sonya Walker, did an amazing presentation.

Thank you to our volunteers who attended the workshop to welcome and socialize with our potential members. We received positive feedback from our attendees.

RTOERO Office are continuing virtual Retirement Planning Workshops online as well.

~ Catherine MacIsaac

Committee Reports

Membership

District 13, Hamilton-Wentworth, Haldimand has a total of 3802 members as of May 1, 2023. Public, Catholic and private schools are represented and include elementary, secondary and post secondary. All members of the educational community are valued members. Age Banding reports have been included in newsletters.

Our “In Memoriam” list has appeared in all three newsletters this year. We again pass along sincere condolences to all families, friends and former colleagues.

Membership Milestones of exactly 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 years membership in RTOERO have been recognized at the Fall Luncheon 2022 and at the recent “80 and Over” Breakfast Celebration. More will be presented at this year’s Fall Luncheon. If recipients were not in attendance a certificate and pin were mailed out. We hope to see you at the Fall Luncheon on October 26th, 2023 if in the winter of 2023 you reached one of the specific milestones.

~ Joanne Weeks

Remembrance Day Services

RTOERO Remembrance Day wreaths were laid in Caledonia, Cayuga, Dunnville, Glanbrook, the Warplane Heritage Museum, Mountain Legion Branch 163, Selkirk, Stoney Creek and Dundas. Thank you to those District 13 members who laid our wreaths for us. If you would like to lay a wreath in Waterdown or Ancaster please let Joanne Weeks know.

~ Joanne Weeks

