

Annual Review 2018-2019



**HelpAge
Canada**

age helps

SINCE 1975

Your support makes a difference.



By feeding, clothing, and sheltering vulnerable seniors with no one else to turn to,

By reaching out to older Canadians struggling with social isolation and loneliness,

By giving hope to seniors in need,

You are building a world in which older persons can live safe and dignified lives.



A member of

**HelpAge
International**
age helps

An inspirational visit

Amy Westland
Chairperson

I recently had the privilege of visiting the beautiful though complex country of Haiti in order to meet some of HelpAge Canada's long-time partners, observe our programs in operation, and explore potential new projects.

Port-au-Prince was daunting: hot, crowded, and rubbish-strewn. Traffic was chaotic. Fires burned every few feet, emitting acrid, eye-stinging smoke. Yet what struck me most as we left the city was the strength and dignity of the people amid the chaos; the cleanliness of their clothes; the big smiles on children's faces; the plantain, mango and avocado trees all around. I felt great hope for this small country, which has suffered so much.

Meeting with our sponsored grandparents in southern Haiti was also inspirational. Without exception, people were warm and in bright spirits despite their extreme poverty and ill health. As these seniors rely on sponsorship dollars for food, shelter, and vital medicines, Canadian donations not only help them age with dignity, but can also mean the difference between life and death.



Later, I visited Fond-Jean-Noël, a mountaintop community we have helped to build hurricane- and earthquake-resistant homes, as well as a water reservoir. This optimistic and energetic community has plans to improve water services, expand their infirmary, and establish a secondary school. These changes will help citizens avoid having to leave for the work and slums in the bigger cities. With your support, Haitian communities like this one can achieve the greater prosperity that is within their grasp.

Visiting Haiti was a powerful reminder of the strength of the human spirit and of the wisdom and importance of supporting community-conceived and community-led solutions to complex problems. Your donations are invaluable to these efforts. We are grateful for your ongoing support and excited about the year ahead.

Spreading smiles

Jacques Bertrand
Executive Director

A kind look, a warm smile. These are the telltale signs of the gratitude of seniors for HelpAge Canada's support. Our chairperson, Amy Westland, experienced it firsthand during her visit to Haiti earlier this year (page 5), just as Eilis Grant did in Dominica (page 6).

I witnessed it myself in July while spending some time with Ms. Alimoya Bambahuka (see photo on page 3), an elder from an isolated Twa community in eastern Congo (DRC). I had first met her many years ago, when she lived in a tiny hut made of branches. Thanks to our donors, she now has a little house of her own. She vaguely remembered the visit of a stranger and the construction of houses for her and nine other women some time later. However, she didn't really remember me, which is perfectly all right. In the end, HelpAge Canada is simply a bridge that brings together generous Canadians and vulnerable seniors from seven different countries. We forge this bond by supporting local organizations with strong community ties and long histories of helping older people in need. We believe this to be the surest way to improve the lives of seniors.

When giving to HelpAge Canada's foreign aid programs, our donors



know they are empowering a dynamic charity dedicated to the cause of older persons neglected by the rest of the world.

In Canada, our main concern remains addressing social isolation and loneliness among seniors. We focus on raising public awareness and encouraging people to take action by working primarily with established local organizations across the country. Our campaign will ring in its third year on Sunday, November 4, the day we turn back our clocks. In the coming year, we will build new partnerships with Canadian organizations in order to expand our presence in the field and better leverage every donation we receive. Your generosity is the spark that makes all of this possible.

If you are interested in raising funds or discussing a major gift or bequest, we will certainly be able to suggest a project that will bring a smile to the faces of vulnerable older persons.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this annual review:

Jacques Bertrand, Marie-Rachel Dionne, Beth Gordon, Eilis Grant, Gabriel Mayost, Amy Westland

Layout : Lynda Wegner, Fresh Image



Registration Number: 11895 5921 RR0001

Board of Directors 2018-2019

Amy Westland, Ottawa, ON
Hélène Gobeil, Montreal, QC
Rosalie Gelderman, Edmonton, AB
Don Hefler, Ottawa, ON
Gérard Briand, Montreal, QC
Lise Dube, Toronto, ON
Andrea Valentini, Toronto, ON

Chairperson
Vice-Chairperson
Secretary
Treasurer



Staff

Jacques Bertrand Executive Director
Beth Gordon Finance Manager
Eilis Grant Sponsorship Program Coordinator
Gabriel Mayost Communications

Email: info@helpagecanada.ca
Telephone: 1-800-648-1111 or 1-613-232-0727
www.helpagecanada.ca
1300 Carling Avenue, Suite 205, Ottawa, ON K1Z 7L2

Courage that brings light to Congo

A quick search of “Beni” or “North Kivu” on Google News will bring up dozens of articles on the Ebola epidemic that broke out in the DRC this past July. A little farther down appear stories of massacres, sexual violence, and terror told by displaced persons in a camp just outside Bunia.

“They cut my parents’ throats and killed them because they were too old to run,” reads a testimony published in late August on a United Nations website*.

I heard the same kinds of stories when I visited the camp in July. Women of all ages told me of the sexual violence they experienced. Seniors and youth alike showed me their barely healed machete wounds. Farther south, near Beni, lies the “Triangle of Death,” where armed groups regularly terrorize civilians. For the past two decades, terrible violence has plagued the region. Roads are unsafe, as armed men can spring from the forest at any moment. Priests, doctors, and workers from local organizations are kidnapped and held hostage for 10,000 or 20,000 American dollars, a huge sum in Congo.

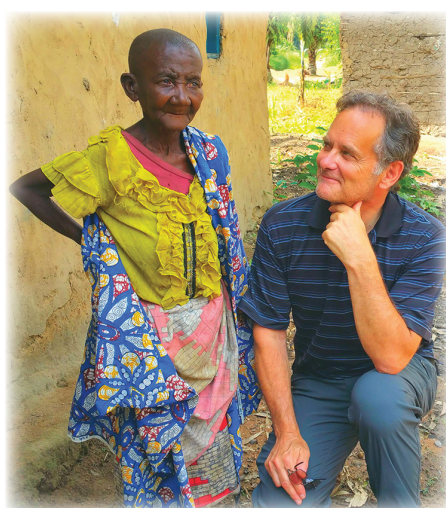
Best not to leave the city before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. Imagine, then, a senior tending to their crops so they can feed their family, or a little girl going out before sunrise to fetch water. A deeply traumatized woman told me about her five children between the ages of six and fourteen, all of whom



SOFEPADI President Julienne Lusenge. A true leader on the ground who has become an internationally recognized spokesperson on the effects and consequences of sexual violence in war zones.



Paulin Muliro, a lawyer and member of SOFEPADI’s legal team that has managed to convict dozens of sexual aggressors—many of whom belong to the military—and ensured the payment of damages to victims.



Thanks to a generous donation, we were able to build a house for Alimoya Mambahuka, a Twa elder. Before this, she had lived her entire life in a little hut made of branches.

were kidnapped in May. “We don’t know if they’re dead, alive, or even if they’re still in the country,” her counselor told me. A nightmare.

And yet, there is hope. It comes neither from the government nor from foreign aid, but from Congolese women who manage to bring **light** to this dark and neglected corner of Equatorial Africa. Our partner, the women’s organization SOFEPADI**, primarily offers psychological, medical, economic, and legal support to victims of sexual violence, in addition to promoting peace and women’s rights.

Our support of SOFEPADI primarily targets the well-being of older persons, including the Twa, an indigenous group living in the forests north of Beni that is often victimized by armed groups.

Every time I visit Congo, I am deeply moved by the SOFEPADI team’s **courage**, as many staff members take huge personal risks to help the less fortunate. Our help is greatly appreciated given that seniors are rarely at the forefront of other aid organizations’ minds.

Light and courage. These two words come to mind when I think of the women and men of SOFEPADI. Your donation will give us the means to increase our support for the cause of vulnerable seniors.

*From the article “Surging violence drives thousands of Congolese from their homes” on the UN Refugee Agency website.

**In French: Solidarité féminine pour la paix et le développement intégral (Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development).



Income-generating activities organized by our partner give hope to hundreds of survivors of sexual abuse.



Alphonsine, 60, bears scars on her face and arms from a machete attack. She currently lives in the displaced persons camp outside Bunia with her grandson.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO GIVE

Regular Sponsorship — Monthly general donation — Bequests

Please contact us for more information: 1-800-648-1111 — www.helpagecanada.ca

Reach out to isolated seniors

We likely all know someone who is socially isolated. They spend their days without ever speaking with another human being. No one visits them, and their phone never rings. Their only link to the rest of the world is television or the radio. With time, their health deteriorates, and they risk finding themselves in the hospital, or worse.

Of course, this is just a scenario. Social isolation has been described as “the condition of having little or fleeting contact with others.” We should bear in mind that social isolation differs from loneliness, which can be a self-imposed condition. Nonetheless, the two concepts are closely related.

Many factors can cause social isolation. Vision troubles, for example, can force someone to isolate themselves, and from that point on, other problems can appear or become worse. We always need to be on the lookout for factors that can cause isolation:



the passing of a spouse, illness or injury, moving, the loss of a driver's licence, financial problems, or belonging to a minority group, among others.

Social isolation is a widespread

problem that will become even more prevalent due to our aging population. You can learn more about it by visiting our campaign website: www.rise-cisa.ca. In the “Resources” section, you can consult “The Spectrum,” an

illustrated document that helps you recognize the symptoms of social isolation and offers suggestions on how to take action. This document has been translated into six languages by one of our participating organizations.

The campaign starts on Sunday, November 4, the day we turn back our clocks. We invite everyone to reach out to an isolated senior and brighten their day. An act of kindness is a wonderful start.

rise-cisa.ca



A unified voice for Nunavut seniors

In the remote towns of the Great North, seniors often struggle with social isolation and loneliness with few resources at their disposal. Ten years ago, a generous donor left a significant sum to HelpAge Canada for the benefit of Inuit elders. It was this gift that led HelpAge to Nunavut.

Several rounds of consultations with local elder groups brought to light the need for a territory-wide seniors group to act as a unified voice that would advocate for older persons. In 2013, a founding meeting marked the birth of the Nunavut Seniors Society, a



registered non-profit organization with a mandate to improve the lives and living conditions of Nunavut seniors.

HelpAge has kept on supporting the Nunavut Seniors Society since its inception. Dedicated to the health, security, and empowerment of Nunavut seniors, the Society strives to uphold the very principles that we and our supporters hold dear.

Though securing funding proved to be a difficult task during its first few years, the Society received a grant last year from the Nunavut government, enough to hire staff and purchase computer equipment and furniture. The funding has continued this year as well,

allowing the Society to engage elders, stakeholders, and the community at large to identify and meet the needs of Nunavut seniors.

“It is an honour for the Nunavut Seniors Society to work in partnership with HelpAge Canada, which has faithfully supported us in many ways,” says Society President Lazarus Arreak. “The values of our organizations are entirely shared. We look forward with optimism and conviction and dedication to our future collaboration, and learning, in support of seniors in our part of Canada’s Arctic.”

HelpAge is proud to support an organization so dedicated to the well-being of Canadian seniors.



Society Secretary Cam McGregor with President Lazarus Arreak.

**HelpAge
Canada**

age helps

SINCE 1975

Haiti

“Without HelpAge, we’d have to close our doors.”

This past June, I had the pleasure of visiting sponsored grandparents in southern Haiti. While there, I met with our partners, Rose-Yolène Remarais and Michel Léonard (Camp Perrin) and Father Alfred Charpentier (Les Cayes), who run the homes for vulnerable seniors our donors have supported for decades.

In Camp Perrin, Ms. Remarais and Mr. Leonard run Le Bon Samaritain, a home whose residents are all sponsored by HelpAge donors. Their dedication is truly inspirational, and their tireless efforts give the residents the chance to live comfortably and with dignity. “Without the support of HelpAge, the home would cease to exist,” they said.

Hurricane Matthew devastated Camp Perrin in 2016, but the residence was mostly able to withstand the storm. Thanks to your donations, we have been able to finance many repairs, the completion of a wall around the home, and the installation of solar panels. Today, the home’s beautiful garden gives the whole place the tranquil feeling of an oasis.



Le Bon Samaritain

But the residents still need our help. New mattresses and fans, funding for activities, and a communal television would greatly improve their quality of life.

HelpAge donors are also helping sponsored grandparents whose homes were damaged during the hurricane. For example, Ms. Mercilia Aujour received a new roof for her house, and new homes

for Mr. Martin Jean Bart and Ms. Anita Nestor are currently under construction.

In Les Cayes, HelpAge donors sponsor residents of the Foyer St-Étienne, a home for vulnerable older persons run by Father Alfred Charpentier, who has worked with the poor in Haiti for 47 years.

The home boasts an onsite health clinic that provides access to 24-

hour care. There is a television for the residents to enjoy, and the staff’s children often play among the seniors.

The residents seemed happy and expressed deep gratitude for the care they receive. Those among them supported by generous sponsors in Canada said they were simply astonished that people they had never met and who lived so far away would be willing to help them so much.

What I saw in Haiti was a testament to the hope that HelpAge donors have given these seniors. Your help is truly invaluable, and I hope that I have been able to convey how fundamentally you are affecting their lives.



Amy Westland and Anita Nestor.

Bequests

HelpAge Canada is truly fortunate to have such unwaveringly generous supporters. While many donors make monthly contributions, we also receive charitable bequests that greatly improve the well-being of seniors in Canada and abroad.

Two recent bequests highlight the many ways there are to give: Mr. Larry Derick of Hedley, BC, left HelpAge his home in his will, and Dr. Hawa Patel of Burnaby, BC, donated a net sum from her estate. We are immensely thankful for both of these contributions, which will go toward building a better world for older persons.

If you would like to build your own legacy of caring, please consider leaving a charitable bequest to HelpAge Canada in your will. This act of thoughtfulness will make a difference in the lives of vulnerable seniors for years to come.

A charitable bequest is simply a gift in your will left to a registered charity like HelpAge Canada.

Bequests can take many forms, including:

- A net sum of money
- Securities
- Real estate
- A set percentage of the value of your estate
- A residuary gift (the amount remaining after other payments, debts, and gifts have been distributed)

In addition to the satisfaction of knowing that your gift will help those in need, leaving a bequest offers a number of tax advantages to your estate and to the beneficiary. A bequest entitles the estate to a charitable gift receipt for its full value, which can significantly reduce the amount of tax payable on your estate.

If you are preparing or amending your will, leaving a bequest is a simple matter. Your lawyer can assist you with the wording in order to ensure that your wishes are successfully carried out.



HelpAge Canada depends on your support to continue assisting vulnerable older people. Please consider leaving a bequest as your legacy of caring.

**For more information,
please contact
Beth Gordon:
613-232-0727
1-800-648-1111**

Resilience in Dominica

One year ago, Hurricane Maria devastated the small island nation of Dominica. With torrential rains and fierce winds, the storm levelled homes and gardens, damaged much of the country's infrastructure, and left many without electricity or water.

It is the worst natural disaster Dominicans have ever experienced.

Today, as the island undergoes a difficult recovery, many are still without power. Sadly, around a third of sponsored Grans have passed away due to the stressful conditions in the wake of the storm.

But many Grans relied on their resiliency to weather this terrible hardship, and the emergency medical care they have received has given them the hope to rebuild.

Eilis Grant, our sponsorship coordinator, visited Dominica earlier this year on a monitoring trip. We shared some of the stories she brought back in our last newsletter, but it was just the tip of the iceberg! We thought to take this opportunity to show you the courage of older Dominicans in trying times.



Magdaline James

Magdaline James saw the roof of her house blown off, her garden destroyed and strewn with rubble. While her home has been repaired, she is still without electricity. A woman of remarkable strength, she walks down the steep hill she lives on to go to church. She has also begun selling castor seeds from her new garden to generate a bit of income.

Hattie Dupuis is a quiet woman with an easy smile. The hurricane caught her, her son Joseph, and



Hattie Dupuis with her daughter Ketury and her son Joseph.

her daughter Ketury by surprise. They managed to survive by taking shelter at a neighbour's. But Hattie returned home to an awful sight: both her and her daughter's homes had been swept away. The family of three is currently living in a small cabin without electricity or running water. Luckily, their strong bond and the kindness of neighbours are keeping them afloat.

At the young age of 104, Maggie Charles is a true inspiration. She and her grandson Demitte spent six hours holed up in their bathroom as Maria sent the roof over their heads flying. They are thankful just to be alive. Demitte takes care of the cooking and the laundry, saying that it would break his heart to leave the woman who raised him since he was two years old.



Maggie Charles and her grandson Demitte.



The remains of Hattie's house.

These difficult times have left many unsponsored seniors in dire need of support. Rosalene Nixon was left homeless and alone by the hurricane. Another senior, Bernard



Rosalene Nixon



Bernard Riley

Riley, paralyzed on his right side by a stroke, is no longer able to work. His brother John, whose house Maria destroyed, takes care of him. Fortunately, every sponsor who lost their Gran after the storm unhesitatingly took another vulnerable senior under their wing. Even sponsors who hadn't lost a Gran called in to adopt another one! Rosalene, Bernard, and John are now receiving much-needed support from dedicated sponsors.

The road ahead is long and difficult, as many only have access to the barest of essentials and waiting lists for sponsorships grow even longer. Thankfully, the generosity of HelpAge sponsors has been on full display. Now more than ever, your invaluable support makes a huge difference in the lives of Dominican seniors.



John Riley

**To sponsor a grandparent,
please contact Eilis Grant:
egrant@helpagecanada.ca
1-800-648-1111**

Our numbers

**HelpAge
Canada**

age helps

SINCE 1975



HelpAge Canada 2018

Operating in: 7 countries

HelpAge sponsors*: 781

Partner organizations: 20

Sponsored Grandparents: 661

Democratic Republic of the Congo: 8

Dominica: 62

Haiti: 166

India: 158

Jamaica: 86

Kenya: 122

Sri Lanka: 59

Regular employees: 4

Office volunteers: 3

Helping older persons for: 43 years

*Instead of directly sponsoring seniors, some donors give to the homes that care for them.



HelpAge Canada financial data as of March 31, 2018

Percentage of revenue used for HAC administration: 16.5%

Percentage of revenue used for fundraising: 6.8%

Revenue: \$603,909

Expenditures: \$575,222

Financial statements for 2018 prepared and verified by the accounting firm Collins Barrow.
Reports available at: www.helpagecanada.ca



**HelpAge
International**

age helps



Through HelpAge International's work

850,000 of the world's poorest older people received essential services

1.4 million people accessed health and HIV services in 29 countries

25 governments delivered better pensions, benefits, and livelihood programs for seniors

90,067 people signed the petition for a UN convention on the rights of older people