



HelpAge

Canada

2023-2024 Impact Report

April 1st, 2023, to March 31st, 2024

Kateryna, 83, Lviv, Ukraine

A WORD FROM NICOLE CLARKE, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shaping a Vision for the Future of Aging in Canada

As we approach the end of another year, I'm taking a moment to reflect on all that we've accomplished together in 2023 and beyond. Last year, our team committed more than ever to steadfastly remaining, as we described it together, laser focused. We renewed our commitment to grounding all our current and future work in our simple but powerful mission and vision, making them the cornerstone of everything we do.

As we put this laser focus into practice, one theme that really stood out in our work this year — whether supporting older Ukrainians in crisis or empowering local organizations here in Canada — was the idea of being community-led. HelpAge Canada has always championed community-based initiatives, ever since our mission began nearly 50 years ago. This year, as we honed in on that mission, I realized something important: **truly working within a community means being wholeheartedly guided by it.**

At the first-ever national Community-Based Senior Services (CBSS) Summit, which HelpAge Canada proudly hosted this past June in Ottawa, we saw the power of community leadership in action. Hundreds of grassroots organizations came together to amplify their communities' voices and shape a vision for the future of aging in Canada — one where a robust, recognized, and

unified CBSS sector empowers every older person to age in their communities and feel seen, supported, and heard. Out of this work emerged the Canadian CBSS Interim Community Leadership Council — a group of community leaders from across the country who will guide the development of a national CBSS sector that reflects the perspectives of older adults and their communities, ensuring that every step we take together is truly led **by community, for community.**

This movement is bigger than any one person, any single community, or even HelpAge Canada. Together, we have the potential to transform how we support older adults, seeing them not only as individuals, but as part of a rich web of people and places — their communities.

For HelpAge Canada, older people and their communities will always be our focus, and I'm thrilled to see where they lead us!

Yours truly,



Nicole Clarke
*Acting Executive Director,
HelpAge Canada*



A WORD FROM AMY WESTLAND, BOARD CHAIR

Being Heard, Equally Valued, and Fully Included

At HelpAge Canada, we believe thriving communities are ones where older people are **heard, equally valued, and fully included**. As one of oldest – and only – national charities in Canada focused exclusively on older people, we are privileged to support the amazing work of a network of community-based seniors' services (CBSS) providers, and a wide range of community-based initiatives. Many pressing needs of Canadian older people are common across provincial and territorial boundaries and require an array of responses, including the needs for better supports to age in place, innovative ways to promote physical and mental health, and effective communication tools that can foster social connections and combat loneliness.

Having hosted the first ever pan-Canadian CBSS Sector Summit, we are excited to be at the forefront of an emerging dialogue about how best to address the challenges older people face nationally, which will help us to identify the most pressing national issues and develop programs and partnerships to address them. We plan to expand the range of community-based initiatives that we support internationally in the months ahead as well. This will allow us to be more responsive to the evolving needs of grassroots

organizations internationally, to maximize our impact for older people in those communities.

The Board of Directors is grateful to our small team of staff at HelpAge Canada, who work tirelessly to maximize the impact of your donations. We can never thank you, our donors, enough for your contributions. This report provides a glimpse of the incredible work that has been done thanks to your generosity.

Sincerely,



Amy Westland
*Board Chair,
HelpAge Canada*



Community-Led Impact, With and For Older People

Change starts where you live. That's why HelpAge Canada works with grassroots organizations in Canada and in developing countries around the world – so that no matter where they live, older people can access the programs and services they need to thrive, right in their own communities.

Along with our flagship programs, HelpAge Canada drives local action in three key ways:

Equipping community organizations with funding, innovative program models, and strategic partnerships, so they can most effectively support older adults in their communities.

Our mission is to support community-based initiatives through our partnerships, both locally and abroad, to improve the lives of older persons and their communities.

Our vision is for all older people to lead secure, healthy, active, and dignified lives.

Convening partners in healthy aging to maximize community impact, share resources and knowledge, and speak up for older people and their communities, together.

Amplifying voices of older people by participating in anti-ageism initiatives, humanitarian action groups, and advocating where important conversations are happening, led by and for older people.



An older adult and volunteer with Innovation Youth, an **Age Better** grant recipient.

Supporting Older People and Their Communities in Canada



Age Better
Investing in Wellness
by HelpAge Canada

Age Better awards community organizations flexible grants of up to \$10,000 to provide low-income older Canadians with the programs and services they need to **age in their own communities** and **live life to the fullest**.



We helped **over 2000 older people** in **22 communities** to age better with grants to drive programs and services supporting health, wellness, mobility, nutrition, and more.

13 communities received Health and Well-Being Grants to deliver mobility aids, communication devices, and food deliveries that support older adults to age in their own homes and communities.

9 communities received Innovative Programming Grants to drive musical therapy, art and cooking classes, social outings, and other programs that help low-income older adults get out of the house and have fun!



“ I’m very **grateful** that when I was down and out, and I couldn’t hardly move, [they brought] the **food right to my door**. The meals are nourishing me back to health.

More Than Just a Meal – Jerry’s Story

After undergoing open heart surgery, Jerry, an older person from Calgary, Alberta, knew he would need some extra help at home. That’s when one of his nurses referred him to Calgary Meals on Wheels’ *Going Home* program, which provides weekly meals to people who are returning home after a hospital stay.

Thanks to an Age Better grant from HelpAge Canada, **Calgary Meals on Wheels was able to give 35 older Calgarians, including Jerry, nutritious meals right to their doorsteps** to support their recovery.

Today, Jerry is on the mend and receives three meals from Calgary Meals on Wheels each week. Something really special about the program is the “My Choice”

menu — a service that gives meal recipients flexibility and independence in choosing meals that meet their health needs. For Jerry, that means nutrient-rich meals that are low in sodium to promote good heart health.

Calgary Meals on Wheels brings more than just healthy meals to people in need. An incredibly important aspect of their work is giving people who may be homebound a social touchpoint, **checking in on them with a smile and a friendly hello**.

HelpAge Canada is proud to equip community partners like Calgary Meals on Wheels with the funding and resources they need to reach older Canadians like Jerry.

Shedding Away Loneliness – HelpAge Canada Partners to Create Spaces for Older Men

The **Men's Mental Health Granting Initiative** was launched in 2021 to address the growing mental health crisis among men as they age. HelpAge Canada partnered with Men's Sheds Canada, a national organization committed to growing the Men's Sheds movement in Canada, and United Way British Columbia to **drive the creation of new Men's Sheds across Canada** and support established Sheds with projects to reach even more older men with opportunities for community engagement and connection.

In 2023, HelpAge Canada awarded **\$351,000 to Men's Sheds** across Canada

We offered start-up grants to **34 new Sheds** that helped cover the costs to launch a Shed, like procuring space and buying equipment.



We gave project grants to **8 established Sheds** to help Sheddors pursue their innovative ideas, like launching a community tool library or hosting wood-carving workshops.





What is a **Men's Shed**?

A Men's Shed provides a safe and friendly environment where men can work on meaningful projects at their own pace, in their own time, and in the company of other men.

It's a place where men **can learn or teach new skills** and find new opportunities and interests while making new friends, all while **giving back to the community**.

Members of **The Bike Shed** in Halifax, NS.

“Who can I help today?” – Fundy Men’s Shed Brings Together Men from All Walks of Life

The Fundy Men’s Shed, located in Saint John, New Brunswick, launched in 2023 with eight members. Their collective mission is powerful: **learn new skills, forge meaningful connections, and make a difference in their community.**

The group was fortunate to land the perfect meeting space at the heart of Saint John – The Tool Library. Established in 2018, The Tool Library serves as a community workshop, offering anyone in the community affordable access to tools. Saint John, one of the oldest cities in Canada, also has more dilapidated buildings than nearly any other Canadian city, but thanks to the Tool Library, community members have been inspired to revitalize their neighborhoods and transform the city to be better than it ever has been. The Fundy Shedders meet every Monday at The Tool Library to tackle new projects that serve their community and broaden their skillsets.

The Fundy Shedders share how the shed has given them a sense of purpose and belonging; the Shedders have formed close friendships with men they never would have otherwise crossed paths with. Working in the same space shoulder to shoulder, enjoying coffee breaks together, and serving their community together has fostered a shared sense of appreciation for the Men’s Shed among its members.

“It gives us a sense of purpose. For a lot of people, once they’ve retired, they’re thinking ‘Now what do I do?’ [The] Men’s Shed gets us out.

“ It gives us a fellowship
...it’s something I look
forward to every Monday.





Eliminating Barriers to Home Sharing for Communities Across Canada

Canada HomeShare is the **only national, not-for-profit** home sharing program in Canada, and this past year, we had a bold but simple goal: make it easier than ever for communities across Canada to bring home sharing to older and younger people alike.

One of the biggest challenges communities face when introducing home sharing is start-up costs, which can be prohibitively expensive for grassroots organizations to take on. Canada HomeShare eliminates this barrier for communities by providing a comprehensive program model that communities can adapt to address local needs, along with marketing support and a **safe, simple, and seamless** online home sharing platform through our new technology partner, Happipad.

Canada HomeShare helps older people thrive by...

- Supporting aging in place by giving older adults a helping hand and company around the house
- Reducing isolation and loneliness by fostering meaningful intergenerational relationships
- Easing the financial burden of living on a fixed income by providing additional rental revenue

Canada HomeShare helps communities thrive by...

- Bridging the generational divide between younger and older people through a one-of-a-kind living experience
- Addressing housing insecurity by tapping into underutilized spare bedrooms
- Eliminating barriers to entry into home sharing by giving communities a full-service online platform and developed program model to offer home sharing locally



Canada HomeShare participants
enjoying each other's company.



Let's Connect
Digital Literacy
by HelpAge Canada

New Technologies Meet Traditional Knowledge Sharing in Nunavut

Over the past two years, **Connected Elders and Youth** – a two-year collaboration with Pinnguaq (now called Ampere) – has connected Inuit Elders with local youth to exchange traditional knowledge and digital literacy skills in Iqaluit and the Kivalliq region.

Community Partner Spotlight

Pinnguaq (Ampere) is a Canadian organization that works alongside rural, remote, Indigenous and other communities to support the development of **STEAM skills** through innovative technology, art and play.



A **Connected Elders and Youth** participant.

Strengthening Intergenerational Ties in Nunavut's Capital

22 drop-in sessions were hosted between September 2023 and March 2024

4 youth were hired to deliver the program to members of their community

17 Elders participated in weekly youth-led digital learning sessions in Iqaluit

Building Digital Literacy Skills for Older People and Their Families in the Kivalliq Region

145 Elders and their families took part in three-day intensive workshops to strengthen their digital knowledge and skills

That's **37% of the population aged 65+** in the Kivalliq region!

18 youth were hired to deliver the program to members of their community

As a result of the program, local Elders...

- ✓ **Spent more time talking with friends and family** with the new digital literacy skills they learned
- ✓ **Grew their independence** using devices on their own and exploring new apps
- ✓ **Became more confident** in asking younger community members for help with technology
- ✓ **Gained access to essential online services**, like government websites and healthcare portals

Today, Connected Elders and Youth continues to reach older adults across Nunavut and their communities through Ampere's regular local outreach.



BE GONE, THIEF!

Equipping Older Canadians to Identify Online Scams

In 2023, for the third year in a row, HelpAge Canada teamed up with **United Way British Columbia (UWBC)** to raise awareness of the latest online scams and teach everyday safety skills for email, social media, websites, phone calls, and more.

We helped launch the **CORE Canada Tech Corner** – a one-stop shop with over 85 resources on how to safeguard your information and identity, access assistive technologies, use the most popular everyday apps, and navigate services like online banking and grocery shopping

HelpAge Canada and UWBC offered **three community of practice webinars** for community organizations and older adults on pressing topics like holiday scams, healthy digital habits, and promoting digital equity

We worked with community partners across British Columbia to **learn what digital education resources they need** and how they can be supported to further develop **communities of practice**

Supporting **Older People** and Their Communities Worldwide



Sponsor a Grandparent is HelpAge Canada's **longest-running flagship program**, having connected Canadians who are passionate about dignity, well-being, and health with older people and their communities of care in developing countries worldwide for **nearly 50 years**.

Today, Sponsor a Grandparent partners with local care organizations in five countries to make sure older adults receive the care and support they need, from daily essentials to medical care, and opportunities to stay socially connected in their communities.

This year, thanks to our dedicated sponsors, we were able to support **446 older adults** through **11 local care partners**



Dusila Duti, 89,
a sponsored Gran in Kenya.



Global Response
Relief & Development
by HelpAge Canada

The HelpAge Global Network is a unique worldwide alliance standing up for the rights of older people worldwide, made up of 199 members in 98 countries. HelpAge Canada is a founding member of HelpAge International, which plays a collective role in promoting the rights of older people around the world, including with the United Nations through its consultative status.

We proudly advocate for the rights of older adults on the global stage and take part in global humanitarian responses that address the unique needs of older people and support development initiatives in areas like income security, healthy aging, and climate action, so that all older people can age with dignity, no matter where they live.

Ukraine

Reaching Older Ukrainians and their families in the Most Conflict-Affected Regions

HelpAge has been operating in Ukraine since November 2014 when conflict broke out in the east of the country. **More than four million people have been directly affected by the conflict**, with a disproportionate number of those being older people.



An older person receiving
home-based care in Lviv, Ukraine

Eastern Ukraine is where the war's impact is most severe, and older people are being uprooted, forced to leave behind the homes, communities, and livelihoods they've known their entire lives. For many, fleeing westward or to neighbouring countries is not only logistically overwhelming — especially for those who have no family or caregivers nearby — but also deeply traumatic. **This emotional toll leaves many older Ukrainians among the last to leave conflict-affected areas**, even in the face of danger.

In partnership with Global Affairs Canada since the onset of the war, HelpAge has been providing home-based care, psycho-social support, and medical supplies to vulnerable older people in the most conflict-affected regions of Ukraine.

We reached **6627 older Ukrainians** with critical interventions to support their health, well-being, and safety.

Over **3000 older Ukrainians** received home-based care that helped to address their most pressing needs, and over **2600 older Ukrainians** were provided with social services.



93 local shelters were equipped with generators and heaters to fortify them against harsh winter weather.



In every aspect of our humanitarian work in Ukraine, **older people were actively involved in decisions affecting them**, including the development and approval of home-based care plans.

An older Ukrainian staying in a HelpAge shelter



Strengthening Community-Led Support for Older People in Eastern and Western Ukraine

In November 2023, HelpAge Canada launched its latest project with the Canada-Ukraine Foundation – one of our longstanding partners in responding to the war in Ukraine – to strengthen community-led response in eastern and western Ukraine and uphold the well-being and protection of older Ukrainians.

Together, HelpAge Canada and the Canada-Ukraine Foundation:



We trained **184 social workers** who provided home-based care to over **2700 older Ukrainians**



We provided **2751 older Ukrainians** with flexible, multi-purpose cash assistance



We gave **5 community-based organizations** grants to fund local recreational programs for **250 older Ukrainians**



Community Partner Spotlight: Starist na radist (Ageing with Joy), Lviv, Ukraine



Watch Video

Kateryna

83 years old

I was displaced by a cruel war.

Humanitarian Aid in Action – Our Visit to Ukraine

In May 2024, HelpAge Canada's Global Partnerships Lead, Hamza Ansari, had the opportunity to visit Ukraine and meet with older Ukrainians and our local humanitarian partners in the region who provided an update on the projects being delivered thanks to generous HelpAge Canada donors.


Despite the persistent, looming threat of conflict and the near-daily missile alerts, our partners on the ground in Ukraine – many of whom have been displaced themselves by the war and lost loved ones – continue to carry out their critical work, ensuring as many older people as possible remain safe.

We commend our on-the-ground partners' bravery and commitment in the face of unimaginable stress and hardship as this war enters its third year.

Our Global Partnerships Lead also travelled to Kyiv for meetings with the Government of Canada, the United Nations, and other partners committed to upholding the well-being of Ukraine's large and vulnerable older population.

For older people, humanitarian aid can be especially difficult to find and access, and it is only becoming more challenging to deliver. As part of the HelpAge Global Network, HelpAge Canada is committed to continuing our support for older Ukrainians now and in the future, looking ahead to when we can help them rebuild their lives when the war ends.



A photograph of an elderly woman, Lyubov, sitting on a bed in a shelter. She is wearing a black jacket with red trim over a green shirt and light-colored pants. She is holding a cane. The room has blue walls, yellow paper decorations, and several bunk beds in the background. A dark blue text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

It was a small
comfort, but it **meant**
everything to me. ”

A Glimpse Inside a HelpAge Shelter in Ukraine – Lyubov’s Story

At 83, Lyubov’s life has been marked by displacement and uncertainty since she was forced to flee her home in Sievierodonetsk at the onset of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. She vividly recounts the harrowing journey: “When the war started, I fled because the city was occupied almost immediately. We travelled by train all night, stopping from time to time to wait out the shelling. **I don’t even know if my house is still intact.**”

Now living in the “Your Support” shelter in Lviv, Lyubov faces ongoing challenges due to her eyesight and

mobility issues, compounded by her solitude and the constant influx of displaced people seeking refuge. Despite these difficulties, the assistance she received through a project funded by HelpAge Canada and the Canada-Ukraine Foundation has provided her with essential support. Reflecting on this aid, Lyubov shared, “It was a small comfort, but it meant everything to me. **It’s more than just items; it’s a reminder that I am not forgotten, that there is still support out there for people like me.**”

Morocco

On September 8th, 2023, a **devastating 6.3 magnitude earthquake** struck mountain-circled communities in Morocco, around 70 kilometres south of Marrakesh. Nearly 3000 people died and over 5000 people were injured, with many having been trapped under the crumbled debris of their homes. The remoteness and high altitude of the communities affected by the earthquake made it difficult for humanitarian aid and disaster relief to reach those in need quickly, and older people were especially vulnerable as colder weather approached.

HelpAge Canada rallied Canadian support for older Moroccans in crisis and worked with HelpAge International and local partners in Morocco to reach those most in need of aid.

We delivered winterization kits to **120 families**, which included items like heaters, solar lamps, and warm winter clothing, to safeguard older people and their families from the cold through the region's fast approaching winter season.

"In Talat N'wargh, the hardest season is winter because of the rain and snow... These items [that HelpAge gave us] made **a big difference** in our daily lives."

– Fatima, earthquake survivor



"The earthquake turned our lives upside down. We lost our home and belongings, and the cold weather made it even harder to survive. **We express our gratitude** for the help that this winter pack will provide us at this time of the year."

– Abdlatif, earthquake survivor



An earthquake **survivor** in Morocco receives a winterization kit.



Gaza

Though they make up only 5% of the population, older Gazans have been especially devastated by the effects of treatment deprivation, starvation, and upheaval from their homes after conflict in the region began in October 2023. Shelters, set up in community centers, mosques, and other local buildings, lack the facilities needed to safely support vulnerable people, especially older adults. Many arriving at these makeshift shelters have lost everything — clothing, medical devices, and personal belongings — when their homes were destroyed.

To help address this urgent crisis for older people in the Gaza Strip, HelpAge Canada partnered with Juzoor for Health and Social Development, one of our longstanding humanitarian partners in Palestine, to quickly begin responding to the growing crisis.

So far, HelpAge and its partners have delivered medical devices and supplies, basic necessities, and hygiene kits to over **1100 older people in Gaza.**



Mariam, 69, was given a wheelchair and clothing after her belongings were **destroyed in the bombardment.**

Banding Together to Transform the Global Aging Landscape

*HelpAge Canada is proud to advocate for older people worldwide
as a member of global humanitarian and development groups.*



Our 2024-25 Team



Nicole Clarke
Acting Executive Director



Raza M. Mirza, PhD.
Director of National Partnerships
and Knowledge Mobilization



Hamza Ansari
Global Partnerships Lead



Randall Hivert,
Financial Controller



Kristen Lonergan
Communications Manager



Felicity Watson
Project Manager



Julianna Kerr
Donor Relations Coordinator



Simon Bikai
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Tejiri Oghenekaro,
Sponsorships and Digital
Fundraising Manager



Selina Rattani
Marketing and Outreach
Coordinator

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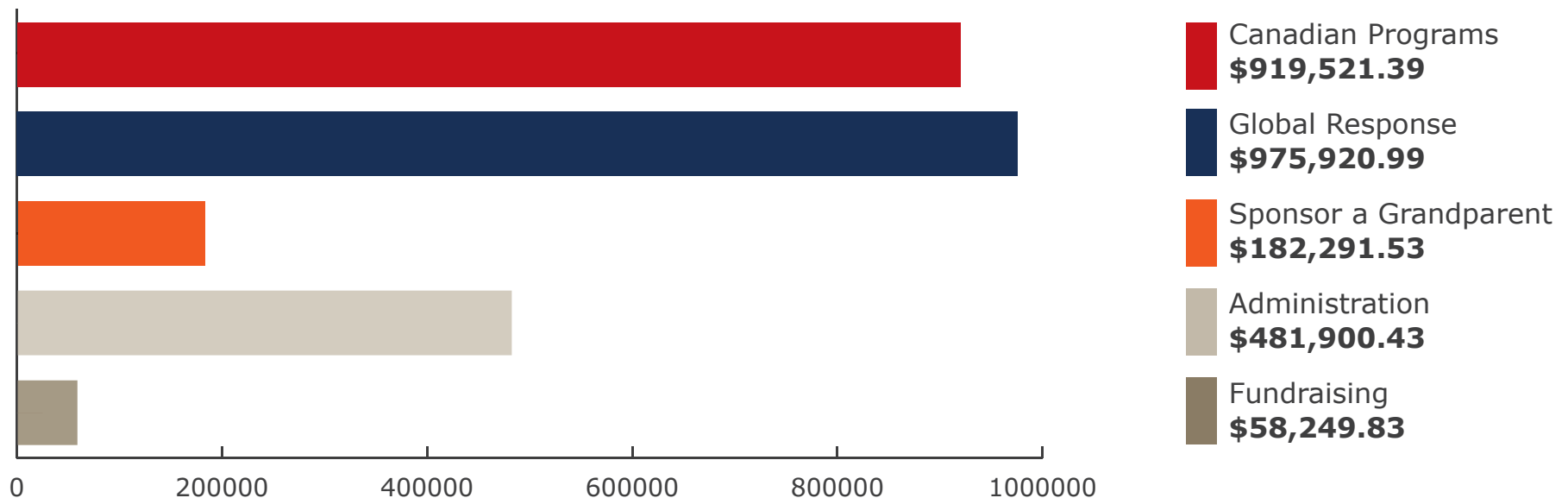
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How We Use Your Donation to Make a Difference

HelpAge Canada's financials are independently audited annually as part of our commitment to transparency and accountability. The figures below outline how HelpAge Canada allocated funds in the 2024 fiscal year (March 31st, 2023, to April 1st, 2024) to **make a difference in the lives of older people and their communities.**



Please [click here](#) to see our full
2024 audited financial statements.

Financial Statements for April 2023 - March 2024 have been prepared and verified by the accounting firm Andrews & Co.

A Look Ahead – Community, Coordination, and Collective Impact

As part of our multi-year commitment to growing and strengthening the community-based seniors' services (CBSS) sector in Canada, HelpAge Canada placed a call in early 2024 to form the Canadian **CBSS Interim Community Leadership Council** – a group of community leaders in aging who will guide the development of a coordinated, national CBSS sector. Through this collaborative effort, we aim to create a sector that's truly driven by community priorities and informed by real-life experiences.

In the coming year, we're thrilled to be hosting a series of community consultations, giving older adults and their communities the chance to share their needs, experiences, and priorities in shaping the future of age-inclusive, community-centered care across the country.

Are you part of a Canadian community-based seniors' services (CBSS) organization?

Sign up for our CBSS Sector Newsletter to stay informed about the latest funding opportunities, community consultations, and more!



Changemakers participating in brainstorming at the 2024 CBSS Sector Summit

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Working with communities in
BC's North, Interior, Lower Mainland,
Central & Northern Vancouver Island



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HelpAge

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TRAINING & SIMULATION

... along with our dedicated donors from
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older people and their communities!**

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