

Support Rallies for Türkiye & Syria After Devastating Earthquakes



In the early hours of February 6th, 2023, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Türkiye and northern Syria, destroying hundreds of buildings, and killing tens of thousands of people – a number that will continue to rise as recovery efforts continue. Freezing temperatures and the aftermath of a second earthquake present added layers of danger and complexity to the crisis.

HelpAge Canada is committed to ensuring older people – many of whom do not have a family support network to rely on and who face barriers to seeking out aid alone – are not forgotten in the world's humanitarian response to this crisis. Learn more and support the Türkiye and Syria Earthquake Relief fund at helpagecanada.ca/turkiye-and-syria-earthquake.



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A Word From our Executive Director



We often hear about stepping outside ourselves, but rarely about stepping outside our generation. — Criss Jami

One of our core values at HelpAge Canada is **Community & Connections**. Communities thrive when meaningful intergenerational relationships flourish, and the interconnectedness of people across generations is critical to a healthy society.

How often do you find every generation of your family sitting side by side? With the distractions and dynamics of today's society, we often find ourselves sticking to our immediate family units, with the occasional visit to Grandma and Grandpa – if we are so lucky! How times have changed.

One can't help but wonder about the missed opportunities to share in wisdom, traditions, and the great narratives that tell us who we are, where we came from, and what is most valuable – to hear and even participate in the well-worn paths passed down through the ages. For those of us who have experienced much of our lives, we look forward to sharing the hopeful excitement of life with our loved ones who are just starting the pilgrimage that is the human experience.

Stepping outside of ourselves, to be with those outside our group, forms us. We are stretched and challenged, but most of all, we see our own, truest selves in others. We are moved to be more compassionate, to widen our visions, and to preserve wisdom. We discover that we belong to something beyond ourselves or any of the distractions that preoccupy so much of our attention.

This year, let's cross the generational divide and step outside ourselves, ready to connect and learn.

Thank you, dear friends and supporters of HelpAge Canada.

Yours truly,

Gregor Sneddon





Dig-IT Sees Great Successes

Dig-IT is a HelpAge Canada program that offers devices, data, education and technical support for low-income older Canadians to join the digital world.

Dig-IT is Sparking Continued Digital Learning for Individuals & Communities

In 2021, HelpAge Canada launched Dig-IT – a digital literacy initiative that aims to support older Canadians in becoming ‘digital citizens.’ Successfully delivered thanks to the contributions of Gluu Society, Best Buy Canada, TELUS, and our founding program partner, Dig-IT provides low-income older persons with a tablet, six months of cellular data, one year of technical support, and a volunteer coach.

Participants learn digital skills that grant independence and allow them to feel more connected to their communities. From learning how to turn on and off a device, to creating an email account, or ordering groceries online for home delivery, the skills participants learn in Dig-IT serve as a launching point in their digital learning journey.

Community-based seniors’ services (CBSS) organizations across the country joined us in delivering Dig-IT, and uplifting stories have begun to roll in. The uptake of Dig-IT at NorWest Community Health Centres in Thunder Bay, ON, was so successful that the volunteer digital coaches will continue to offer digital learning to the community, even after Dig-IT’s completion.



Participants learn digital skills at NorWest Community Health Centre

An Unwelcome Anniversary: Marking One Year of Russia’s Full-Scale War in Ukraine

Thousands of Canadians Show Their Support for Older Ukrainians

February 24th, 2023, marked the one-year anniversary of Russia launching a full-scale war in Ukraine.

HelpAge was the first non-governmental organization to be funded by Global Affairs Canada in its humanitarian response, with a \$4,000,000 contribution to our intervention in Moldova, Poland and Ukraine for displaced older Ukrainians, people with disabilities, and their families. In partnership with the Canada-Ukraine Foundation, Islamic Relief Canada, PWRDF, and with the support of thousands of generous Canadians, HelpAge Canada provided over \$2,000,000 in humanitarian support to those

affected by the war, which included a winter support program that funded twenty-three Ukrainian organizations.

Gregor Sneddon, Executive Director of HelpAge Canada, visited Ukraine in January 2023 to speak with volunteers and internally displaced persons, and to see first-hand how older people are being supported as the war continues.

Having heard harrowing stories of escape and heartbreaking accounts of violence, despair, and loss, Gregor recalls one thing that he heard over and over: “I just want to go home.”



Previously an abandoned orphanage, this building now serves as a Collection Centre — housing over two hundred internally displaced people.



An internally displaced person staying in a Collection Centre in Dnipro knits socks to keep her spirits high and pass the time.

“It was very exciting to see some of the seniors that were previously isolated develop the skills to get online. One of the seniors [who participated in Dig-IT] even became a coach herself!”

— Anita Jean, Manager of Community Digital Health Equity, NorWest Community Health Centres

8.9 million people in Ukraine – 24% of the population – are over the age of 60, and more than **one in ten** older people in Ukraine are internally displaced

– HelpAge International report: “Ukraine: Older People Unable to Afford Food, Medicines, Other Essentials”