

How Parks Professionals Can Contribute to Age Friendly Communities

As the first city in Canada to join the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age Friendly Cities, London is a leader in Age Friendly Community initiatives. The City of London has taken a community development approach to the creation of our Age Friendly London Three Year Action Plan and the Age Friendly London Network (AFLN). This approach involved an extensive community engagement process, resulting in an Action Plan that was crafted by a task force of older adults, caregivers, baby boomers, and other stakeholders. The AFLN is a community-based network responsible for implementing the Plan. The AFLN is comprised of eight working groups, one for each of the WHO identified domains of age-friendliness. These domains are:

1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation
5. Respect & Social Inclusion
6. Civic Participation & Employment
7. Communication & Information
8. Community Support & Health Services

The City of London provides backbone support for the AFLN, and City of London staff support the eight AFLN working groups. In particular, the Outdoor Spaces & Buildings working group of the AFLN has benefitted from the involvement of multiple city staff from parks operations, planning, and facilities management. Participation of these experts, along with the contributions of older adult volunteers, has resulted in unique opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

From the installation of new Age Friendly park benches to the creation of an Age Friendly Parks “app”, the Outdoor Spaces & Buildings working group is implementing strategies that will encourage park usage and appreciation among people of all ages.

Parks staff have a great deal to offer in the development of Age Friendly Communities. Your knowledge, skills, and resources are essential to creating public and green spaces that are accessible, welcoming, and health-promoting.

Join us to learn more about the Age Friendly London initiative and what you can do to help create and support Age Friendly outdoor spaces in your community.

Presenters: Paul D’Hollander and Michelle Dellamora

Who are the presenters?

Paul D’Hollander

Paul is the Manager of Area Recreation Services, East with the City of London, Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services. Area Recreation Services is responsible for leading and coordinating three services: a) recreation program provision, b)

community centre management c) supporting neighbourhood community development initiatives and projects. The City of London provides backbone administrative support to the Age Friendly London Network. Paul along with Michelle Dellamora are the City of London leads on this community initiative. He has worked with the City of London for 23 years.

Michelle Dellamora

Michelle is the Special Projects Coordinator for Age Friendly London with the City of London, Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services Division. For the past three years, Michelle has been actively involved in Age Friendly London through her graduate research on baseline assessment of age-friendliness and also as a member of the Age Friendly London Task Force.

Michelle holds a Master's degree in Health Sciences from Western University and is an active member of the Canadian Association on Gerontology. In her role as Project Coordinator, Michelle uses the principles of community development to support the Age Friendly London Network.