



Third Age Network (TAN)
an association of lifelong learning groups in Ontario
www.thirdagenetwork.ca

Newsletter

January 2016

TAN Planning Luncheon

What the heck is TAN? Variations on this were heard following the Third Age Network's last symposium in May of last year. The symposium itself was well received but too many attending didn't know who we were. Most of you do and you can find out more on our website www.thirdagenetwork.ca.

But, it still seemed to be a good idea to try to remedy this question by inviting the presidents and representatives of our 26-member organizations to a working luncheon at which they might learn the answer to "who the heck is TAN".

November 9 of last year was the date, the North York YMCA was the place and 29 people responded. The day consisted of short presentations by Nancy Christie, Judith Levkoe, Nora McAuliffe, Sandra Kerr and Sheilagh Hickie on various aspects of the network.

A major part of the day was to enlist those present in the ongoing activities of TAN. What did they think worked well with TAN at the moment, what priorities should TAN be addressing, what benefits did they see for their groups and how they could contribute? These are all important and weighty topics and were certainly not solved in one session. What did happen



was greater interaction between groups, some good ideas for TAN and hopefully, the realization that if this network is to grow and be well managed, there needs to be more participation by representatives from each member organization. Each attendee was given a TAN bag which contained information on the network as well as a Skills Wish List designed to identify members of groups who could become more involved with TAN.

Specifically, TAN is looking for someone to head the Education Committee which will manage future symposia, smaller workshops on topics of importance to our members and any other activities this committee identifies. Interested? Please be in touch with president, Nancy Christie at: info@thirdagenetwork.ca

Just a reminder, membership fees were due by January 1. Please check with your Treasurer to ensure your organization's fees have been paid. Access to the members-only portion of the website is available only to members in good standing.

Niagara Group Gets Major Grant

by Gaby Arato

Recognizing the need to solicit funds for some of Lifelong Learning Niagara's planned marketing and program initiatives, in May 2015 Lifelong Learning Niagara (LLN) attended a brief presentation by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) where they had introduced and described a brand new set of investment strategies and funding streams that would be available in the Fall of 2015.



Quickly recognizing that one of LLN's main goals for our chapter's success was to find ways of connecting people in the twelve municipalities that comprise the Niagara region, particularly those seniors who may be isolated and living in the smaller outlying townships, LLN determined that the most suitable investment strategy was "Connecting People" and the applicable funding stream would be the "Seed Grant" as LLN was still in its early stages of getting organized and establishing its business plan.

In August of 2015, LLN applied for a "Seed Grant" of \$52,000 from the OTF to research, investigate and evaluate the feasibility of providing a variety of innovative approaches to learning and program opportunities that will effectively unite and include the seniors of the geographically distant communities of the Niagara region.

The Niagara team: (back row: Mary Jane Beccaria, Lynne Heaman, Paul Bradley, Joe Hockey, Burke MacGillivray, John Tordiff; front row: Lynn Mytroen, Donna Poag, Gaby Arato, Kathy Rose and Sharon Abbey.

They will be testing various forms of providing educational programs that are best suited to seniors who may be isolated due to distance, physical limitations, social and economic constraints and a general lack of awareness that contribute to limiting their direct involvement. The measurable outcomes will include building inclusive and engaging communities together and will have a significant impact on the lives of the people in our community.

The grant application was approved as submitted and the research project will begin in early January 2016 and will be completed by October 2016. The grant will also provide much needed funds for LLN to purchase some audio/visual equipment, develop a website, create various marketing products and host several suitable educational programs that will be determined during the project period.

Videoconferencing Working Group

by Frank Nicholson

Based on successful trials at the Academy for Lifelong Learning, a TAN working group has been formed to look into ways in which real-time video streaming over the internet can be used to enhance third age learning programs. Examples include bringing in speakers from out-of-town, allowing members to avoid missing lectures and providing greater flexibility for meetings. So far, TAN members from the Academy, Niagara,

Guelph, Barrie, Innis and LIFE are involved with research underway into software, equipment, training and cost issues. Contact has been made with groups elsewhere in Canada and the US using the technology. The working group plans to present a webinar in May 2016 and a training workshop in the Fall. Please stay tuned!

It All Started in France

Have you ever mentioned the phrase “third age” and got a blank stare? Most of us then have to define it and come up with a variety of things – seniors, over 60, retired but still learning, etc., etc.

You may not know that third age learning started in the country that has produced intelligent ideas since forever – France. The concept of continuing education for seniors started there in 1973, known as The University of the Third Age (U3A). Its aim was to provide continuing education and various cultural activities for seniors in order to “prolong active life”. In 1993, it became known as L’Union Française des Universités tous âges (UFUTA) and this model has



expanded throughout Europe, into Australia and the US and as we know, into Canada as well.

Last Spring, one of the members of the Academy for Lifelong Learning, Frank Nicholson, vacationed in France and decided to see if he could find out more about the group. He started with AIUTA, the International Association of Universities of the Third Age in Toulouse, and met with their president, Professor Francois Vellas.

He discovered that it was Professor Vellas’ father who established the first U3A program at the University of Toulouse and also that AIUTA’s current president will visit Canada next year and may meet with TAN’s board.

Peer Learning Session in Toronto

TAN members in or near Toronto will be interested to know that the Academy for lifelong Learning and the Toronto Public Library (Yonge, just north of Bloor) will be cooperating to present a forum on peer learning. It will be held on Thursday, April 14 at 1 pm in the Beaton Auditorium.

Wikipedia defines peer learning in this way: “peer learning is an educational practice in which students interact with other students to attain educational

goals...in this context, it can be compared to the practices that go by the name cooperative learning... peer-to-peer learning is a mode of learning for everyone by everyone, about almost anything.”

Three Academy members will reprise their past presentations on a range of topics, so this represents a good opportunity for groups perhaps interested in expanding their academic offerings to include peer learning.

BC Network Underway

by Ron Coreau, BC Elder College

While we at TAN continue to develop our organization, a similar network is being set up in BC as representatives from Vancouver and Fraser Valley Seniors’ and Elder College’s met on October 23 to discuss the sustainability of their respective organizations and future potential.

The organizations represented self-funded societies, groups that are self-governed but affiliated with either a post-secondary institution or fully sponsored to by a post-secondary institution. The meeting was held in Abbotsford at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV). The group discussed issues such as creating communication to link all organizations, taking bus trips to each other’s organization, writing out a page on how they operate to exchange with each other,

communicating to the provincial government as one voice, and creating one “umbrella” organization. The meeting concluded with an agreement to write a letter and open dialogue with MLA Darry Plecas regarding our organizations and the contributions our organizations make to the wellbeing of seniors. The focus of the letter was that regardless of our structure or affiliation, all organizations need assistance with recruiting and training instructors, website development and online registration. In setting up the meeting the organizing committee was able to locate 18 Senior or Elder College organizations in British Columbia. Following TAN’s example the hope is to create an umbrella organization to share information and act as one voice when required.

From your Executive Committee....

As you can see from the articles in the newsletter, TAN members continue to be active, connecting with each other to build knowledge networks and linking with the entire group to share new information on how Third Age learning can be stimulated to meet the needs of our expanding population of retired people. Networking is taking root amongst our members!

We learned at the November meeting that the **TAN data base** which compares information about members' operations is a very useful document, but sometimes hard to use. We are exploring ways of simplifying this.

The **Starter Kit** for new organizations has also been a useful item for many of our new members. Presently, we have an editor to review and revise as necessary what we have, with the plan of creating a hard copy which will also be available – both for use as a guide and as a promotional item for TAN.

We are constantly being reminded that communication is a two way street. With this in mind, a couple of requests for our member representatives:

We still need to hear from about half of you regarding your **insurance** situation so that we continue to investigate the possibility of a group insurance plan for member organizations. Please check with whoever in

your organization is responsible for this and return the questionnaire to Survey Monkey as soon as you can so that we can move forward with this project. If you need help finding the questionnaire, contact Julian Sale at juliansale@gmail.com

Membership fees were due by January 1. Please check with your Treasurer to ensure your organization's fees for 2016 have been paid. Access to the members only portion of the website is available only to members in good standing.

With all good wishes for enjoyable learning in 2016

Nancy Christie for TAN Executive Committee



Photos of member groups: top left, a performance by Act Two of Ryerson; top right: from Bluewater Association in Owen Sound; left, a social event at Society for Learning in Retirement (London) and right, a workshop at the Academy for Lifelong Learning.



Please send news of your association and photos of your members to Sheilagh Hickie at shickie@bell.net