



# EMBRACE AGING

## News from the RTO/ERO Foundation



### Together we are shining a light on social isolation

The RTO/ERO Foundation is making social isolation a key focus for October with our second annual Social Isolation Awareness Month. To date, thanks to our donors we have funded \$250,000 for critical research to help better understand the risk factors and the impact social isolation has on our aging population.

We have also invested in innovative community programs that are making a real difference in the day-to-day lives of lonely and isolated seniors. Some examples include:

- Working with seniors in London, Ontario to develop plans for increasing social connection among residents of high-rise apartment buildings.
- Supporting the Hamilton Seniors Isolation Impact Project which brings together multiple agencies to identify, refer and connect isolated seniors with the services and supports they require.

- Creating a model for rural communities to engage first responders in identifying and referring isolated seniors to local support programs.
- Partnering with the National Institute on Ageing to create best practices and policies at the national level to strengthen a range of programs working to address social isolation.

But the development of strategies and solutions for this important issue has just begun. This year we have set a goal to raise \$100,000 to invest in ongoing research projects to ensure that seniors are supported and can remain socially connected in a meaningful way.

I hope you'll join me in making this a reality by making a donation to the RTO/ERO Foundation.

*Joanne Murphy*

Chair, Board of Directors  
RTO/ERO Foundation



## Join the campaign to let seniors know they are not alone

Social isolation can be defined as a complete or near-complete lack of contact between an individual and society. It can be easy to disregard because the danger isn't imminent. It's often gradual, brought on by a life change like retirement, the death of a spouse or a change in health. People who are caring for aging loved ones are also at risk.

It slowly creeps in and can eventually take over, developing into a state of severe loneliness. Social isolation affects one in five seniors and another 30% are at risk. Social isolation can contribute to anxiety and depression, poor physical health, higher rates of disease and dementia and even suicide. We cannot ignore this.

We believe RTO/ERO has the power to make a difference. Through modest, voluntary support from within our network of over 79,000 members, we can help Canadian seniors struggling with loneliness. Community agencies and geriatric researchers across the country are turning their attention to this growing issue and they need our help.


Last year the RTO/ERO Foundation launched the *Engage: End Isolation* campaign to raise awareness on the issue of social isolation and the response was overwhelming. This year, we are asking you to help us raise \$100,000 for research, education and community action programs to help socially isolated seniors. The campaign takes place during Social Isolation Awareness Month in October.

### How you can help

- Visit [www.rto-ero.org/endisolation](http://www.rto-ero.org/endisolation) and register to be part of the campaign. You will then receive an email outlining next steps.
- You'll be given the opportunity to help raise awareness and funds for the campaign.

You can also choose to support the campaign directly by making a donation. Please call us at 1-800-361-9888 ext.271 or mail a cheque to:

**The RTO/ERO Foundation**  
**18 Spadina Rd #300, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S7**



*Canadians over 65 have a higher suicide rate than any other age group - and men are at greatest risk.*



## Radio, but better? A beginner's guide to podcasts

A podcast is an online audio series focused on a particular theme; often described as “internet radio, on-demand.” Most are free. Podcasts offer incredible flexibility because they are archived (like a library for audio files) and available at any time. This means you can tune in via your desktop computer or mobile device and listen whenever you like, switch to another program, or start/stop an episode at your leisure. They can be accessed on the podcast's website, or more conveniently through a mobile app (see box below).

Podcasts are a great way to keep up on current issues, stimulate personal growth and be entertained. Listening forces the brain to process information at the pace it is played, so particularly for seniors, podcasts can help activate cognition in a way that is conducive to better brain health.

There are more than 700,000 active podcasts so searching through it all can be daunting. To get started, we've compiled a short list of podcasts below that are popular with older audiences.

### Freakonomics Radio

Host Stephen J. Dubner, co-author of the book *Freakonomics*, has created a collection of discussions and interviews to explore “the hidden side of everything.” With almost 400 episodes, this podcast covers an incredible range of socioeconomic topics. Dubner speaks with Nobel laureates and provocateurs, intellectuals and entrepreneurs to shed new light on the things you thought you knew.

### Lux Radio Theatre

This podcast is an archive of the classic radio anthology series of the same name. *Lux Radio* ran from 1934 – 1955 and featured hour-long audio adaptations of films and Broadway plays. Many of the leading names in film and stage appear on the show including Judy Garland, Rita Hayworth, Robert Mitchum and John Wayne.

### Planet Money

One of the most popular podcasts with older adults, *Planet Money* focuses entirely on the economy but is presented in very practical terms in an entertaining, often witty manner. Produced by NPR with very high quality production, *Planet Money* offers up quirky episodes like the science behind poker and the origins of the price tag.

### Revisionist History

Created and hosted by Canadian author and journalist Malcolm Gladwell, *Revisionist History* is one of the most interesting and educational podcasts available. Each episode delves deep into the particulars of a historical event, person or idea that according to Gladwell has been “overlooked or misunderstood.” Gladwell is an expert researcher, storyteller and social theorist and his podcast is an eye-opening and entertaining ride from end to end.



A mobile app will help you search and organize the content you want to listen to. Here are some of the most popular podcast apps for your phone or tablet:

- Overcast
- Stitcher
- Spotify
- Pocket Casts
- Google Podcasts
- iTunes (best option for desktop)





## 5 things you might not know about the RTO/ERO Foundation

One of the key responsibilities of Foundation staff and leadership is to address any and all questions we receive from RTO/ERO members and from the general public. We believe that the more inquiries we field the better, because it suggests an interest in our work and operations. We also believe that frequently asked questions are an indication of

specific information that may be missing or even misunderstood. In an effort to maximize transparency, we have updated our FAQ document, which can be found on our website at [www.rto-ero.org/support-the-foundation](http://www.rto-ero.org/support-the-foundation). Here are five facts emerging from our FAQ which may be of interest to RTO/ERO members.

- 1. We receive no government funding**  
The RTO/ERO Foundation relies on voluntary donations from RTO/ERO members, and financial support from corporate partners and others who care about improving the quality of life for older adults.
- 2. We issue tax receipts**  
The Foundation issues a tax receipt for every individual donation of \$20 or more. The RTO/ERO Foundation is a Registered Canadian charity. Our charitable registration number is #848662110RR0001.
- 3. We are independent and self-sustaining**  
The Foundation operates at arm's length from RTO/ERO. While some in-kind support such as office space is provided, all salaries and costs related to the operation of the Foundation are paid from the voluntary donations of members, friends and corporate partners. Each year we have been able to increase our net revenue through targeted fundraising and stewardship, ensuring that the Foundation can continue to reduce its administrative costs and increase its granting portfolio.
- 4. 100% of your donation can go to granting**  
Individual donors to the Foundation have the option to dedicate 100% of their donation to one of our two granting streams: 1) geriatric/gerontology research and training, or 2) social isolation initiatives.

- 5. We received core support in 2011**  
When the Foundation was established in 2011, it had an initial goal to fund an endowed Chair in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Toronto, valued at \$3 million. While fundraising activities in the first three years raised some funds, RTO/ERO offered, through a motion at Senate to fund the balance of the \$3 million.

When the funds were ready to be transferred from the Foundation to the University, we discovered that \$500,000 had been made available by the University, meaning that only \$2.5 million was required to fund the Chair.

Between fundraising and the remaining \$500,000, an investment of \$750,000 was made to provide core support to the Foundation in establishing its annual granting program. This investment continues to provide contingency support for the program, ensuring that the Foundation can meet its obligations as it focuses on building capacity to dramatically increase the funds available for granting.

If you have any questions or require any information about the Foundation, please contact us. We'd love to hear from you.



1-800-361-9888



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