

LIAISON

December 2024

Eco-friendly holiday tips



The holiday season is a wonderful time to spread joy, but it can also generate a lot of waste. Every small effort counts. Here's how you can make it greener without losing any festive cheer!

Thoughtful gifts: Choose the gift of experiences over things—tickets to events, classes or donations to a favourite charity. If you want to give a physical gift, think about supporting local artisans or eco-conscious brands. Homemade treats or upcycled items can also make meaningful presents.

Sustainable wrapping: Swap traditional wrapping paper for reusable options like fabric wraps, scarves or newspaper. Decorate with natural accents such as twine, dried orange slices or pine sprigs.

Holiday décor: Use pinecones, branches or acorns for table centerpieces and create garlands using dried fruits and cinnamon sticks. You can also upcycle old ornaments with a fresh coat of paint or glitter. When you can, swap disposable napkins and plates for reusable cloth and silverware.

Giving back: Invite family or friends to bring gently used items they no longer need—books, kitchenware, accessories, or décor. Let everyone pick a “new-to-them” treasure or wrap the items and do a mystery swap. Leftover items can be donated to a local charity!

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Webinaire:
**Démystifier le nouveau
Plan de soins dentaires
du Canada**

📅 11 Décembre
🕒 13 h 00 (HNE)

Join RTOERO in collaboration with the Ontario Dental Association (ODA) for a free webinar on December 11:

Unravelling the newly launched Canadian Dental Care Plan.

This session will provide valuable insights into the new dental care plan, including eligibility, coverage, and how it affects you. No matter where you are in Canada, experts from the ODA will be available to answer your questions and guide you through the details of this important new initiative, ensuring our members and community from coast to coast benefit from a clear understanding of the plan.

[Click here to register for the free webinar now!](#)

Unravelling the newly launched Canadian Dental Care Plan

Wednesday, December 11

1:00 pm to 2:15pm ET

Presenters:

Mr. Frank Bevilacqua is the Chief Executive Officer of the ODA.

He has been with the ODA since 1991 serving in various roles. Prior to that, Mr. Bevilacqua was a senior consultant with a leading government relations firm.

Dr. Maneesh Jain is the President of the ODA for 2024-2025.

Dr. Jain is a graduate of the University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry and is a general practitioner in Guelph, Ontario. He has served in a variety of roles for his local dental society and the ODA, including on the Board of Directors since 2016.

Creative experiences and inspired self-expression funded by RTOERO Foundation

Through its donor-supported granting program, the RTOERO Foundation recently funded a research project titled Using visual arts to address social isolation in older adults. This project was brought to life by the Sheridan Centre for Elder Research in collaboration with Artfull Enrichment.

The project aimed to identify the barriers to creative programming for older adults living at home and, at the same time, address social isolation. It explored how arts engagement serves as a powerful tool in reducing social isolation among older adults, inspiring creativity and empowering older adults through creative self-expression and skills development.

There is a transformative power of creative expression as a way to encourage social connection and personal growth. Art can be incredibly beneficial for mental and emotional well-being. It has been shown to reduce stress, promote relaxation, and improve cognitive function.

Another result of the project is an opportunity for RTOERO members to learn about art. [Artfull Enrichment](#) is offering a **20% discount on memberships exclusively for RTOERO members**. Access 100 creative experiences including live virtual workshops, interactive presentations, weekly online socials and dozens of step-by-step tutorials. Visit them [online](#) and **use discount code RTOEROtake20**.



Deadline for RTOERO post-secondary scholarship applications is January 10



In 2025, RTOERO will award 30 scholarships valued at \$3,000 each to post-secondary students, recommended by RTOERO members, enrolled in programs that lead to a career that will improve the lives of seniors and align with the RTOERO Strategic Plan.

[This year scholarships were awarded to students](#) in programs ranging from nursing, to occupational therapy, to environmental sciences.

Some standout recipients include: Maxwell Campbell, PhD – Mechanical & Materials Engineering; Sophie Dembski, MSc – Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences; Ayva O'Mahoney, MSc – Rehabilitation Studies and Spencer McMillan, MSc – Clinical Studies.

Maxwell is studying thumb osteoarthritis, and working towards developing a new form of artificial thumb joint implant. Sophie has now completed her Masters degree and is now working in a university research lab studying pathology and immunological mechanisms of respiratory diseases. Ayva recently finished a placement in the ICU and is starting a new placement in outpatient physiotherapy. Spencer is continuing his research on minimally invasive surgery instrumentation, with a focus on improving patient outcomes.

RTOERO is proud to support such deserving students in their quest to improve the lives of seniors in Canada. The scholarship application deadline is January 10, 2025. For more information please visit <https://rtoero.ca/giving-back/scholarships/>

Why older adults in Canada need advocates: Insights from the Future of Aging Summit



As Canada’s population ages, there is a growing need for dedicated advocates to address the systemic issues affecting older adults. Currently, only three provinces—British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick—have senior advocates, but Manitoba is moving toward creating this role.

During RTOERO’s 2024 Future of Aging Summit, an expert panel discussed why advocacy for older adults is crucial.

Seniors’ advocates work independently from the government, helping to identify and address widespread issues, from access to healthcare and affordable housing to preventing elder abuse and reducing social isolation. Having legislative backing allows seniors’ advocates to conduct research, review policies, and make formal recommendations to governments. Advocates can also use research and public campaigns to push for meaningful change.

“The legislation... outlines the powers and duties of my position, and it very clearly states that we are able to represent seniors in the province on issues of a systemic nature.”
Susan Walsh, Senior’s Advocate for Newfoundland and Labrador, at the Future of Aging Summit in May 2024.

[Read more insights from the expert panel](#) and access the full recording of the Future of Aging Summit section of [RTOERO learning](#).

Five tips for personal winter safety



Winter can bring slippery conditions, making fall prevention essential, especially for older adults. Here are five tips to help you stay safe:

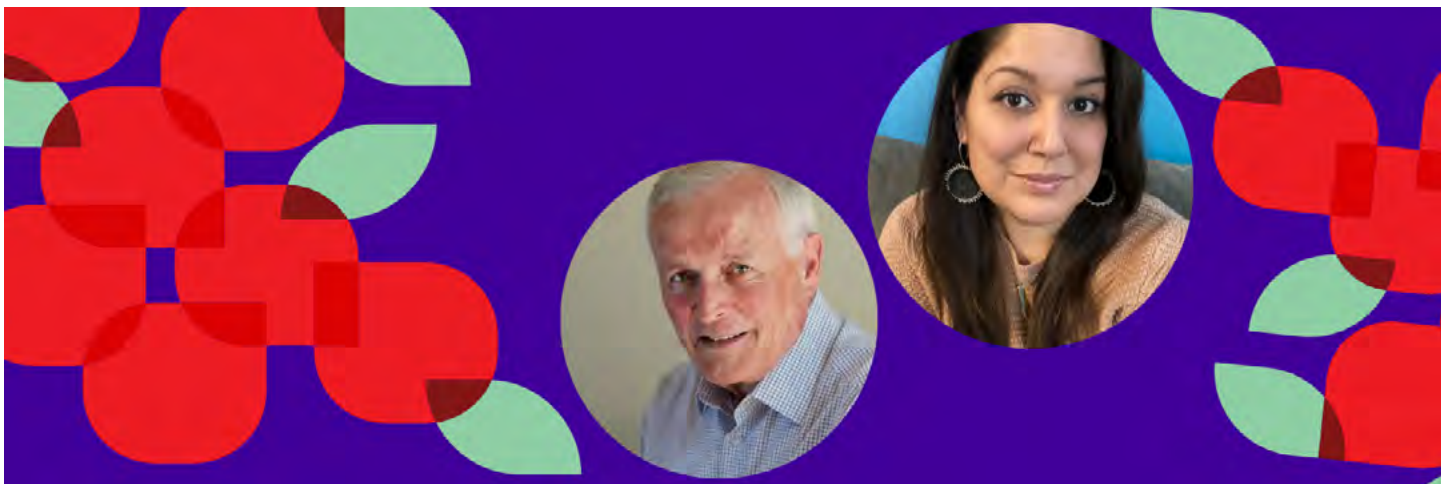
1. **Wear the Right Footwear:** Choose shoes or boots with excellent traction. Anti-slip devices like ice cleats improve grip on icy surfaces but should be removed indoors to prevent slipping.
2. **Walk Carefully:** Try the “penguin walk” by taking short, flat-footed steps with feet slightly outward and arms free for balance. Stay alert to icy patches, as wet or dark areas may be deceptively slippery.

3. Plan Ahead: Allow extra travel time to avoid rushing. Share your plans with someone and bring a mobile phone or alert device for safety.
4. Clear Pathways: Regularly remove snow and ice from walkways, steps, and driveways, using salt or sand for extra traction. Carry a small container of sand or salt to sprinkle on icy areas when needed.
5. Stay Active Indoors: When conditions outside are risky, maintain balance and strength with indoor exercises. Many provinces offer free classes to improve stability and prevent falls. Check your provincial government's website to learn more.

Stay safe this winter!



Truth and Reconciliation today: How to move forward with intention



Webinar recording available

2025 is the 10th anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and the release of the Calls to Action. With only 14 of the 94 Calls to Action completed, now is the time for reflection — and action. Our allyship, as citizens and members of our national organization, is important to creating meaningful change.

On November 4, RTOERO hosted a webinar conversation with Shaneeka Forrester. As a contributor to our district newsletter packages and a passionate advocate for Indigenous rights, she was the perfect speaker to discuss with us how we can actively contribute to meaningful change with intent and purpose.

Providing insights from her work in the community, Shaneeka shared various resources with our members to highlight the importance of allyship and local actions. To learn more and continue in supporting reconciliation efforts, RTOERO has the recording available in the **webinar section** of RTOERO Learning. To access it, go to [RTOERO Learning](#) and login with your membership number.



Snowstorms: tips for avoiding the worst



Many places in Canada are hit hard by snowstorms. They may be part of everyday life, but they remain dangerous, particularly if you're behind the wheel. Here are a few safety rules you ought to take seriously should you find yourself stuck at a standstill in your car while waiting out a blizzard.

- Stay in your vehicle, unless you've spotted a safe place fewer than 90 metres away.
- Keep moving your arms and legs to stay warm.
- Remain visible by securing a piece of brightly coloured material to your antenna, turning the interior lights on (while the motor's running), or raising your hood if the snow has stopped falling.
- Ensure your exhaust pipe is clear.
- Turn the motor on and run the heat for only 10 minutes every hour.
- Leave a window cracked (on a side that isn't exposed to the wind.)
- Wait for the storm to be over before leaving your vehicle.

Protecting yourself, even at home

Even if you're safe at home when a winter storm hits, it's better to take precautions in case the storm lasts longer than expected. Here are some tips to help you protect yourself from the worst effects of a snowstorm.

Make sure you've got an emergency kit including:

- Drinking water (3 days' worth)
- Food (enough for 3 days, easy-to-prepare, non-perishable items)
- Manual can opener
- Hand-crank flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- Spare batteries
- First-aid kit
- Medication (3 days' worth)
- Multi-tool
- Personal hygiene items

[Click here to read the full belairdirect article.](#)

2023 Annual report highlights: RTOERO's increase in membership numbers



Broaden the membership base

RTOERO continues to work toward our third strategic goal, which is to broaden the membership base. Today, our membership consists of 86,000+ members across Canada. Below are key highlights from the 2023 Annual Report that show the progress that has helped us get to our current membership count.

Membership growth—In 2023, we welcomed over 4,500 new members through various outreach activities. By the end of 2023, our membership count was over 84,000. Some of the outreach activities involved connecting with French-language school boards, hosting virtual and in-person Retirement Planning Workshops and attending education-focused conferences.

Retirement Planning Workshops—The workshop sessions received over 5,500 registrants in 2023. Of the 119 workshops we hosted, 42 were facilitated in person, and 77 were online. The number of workshop registrants has continued to increase over the last five years.

Expanding Entente Group Insurance Program—At the end of 2023, the RTOERO Board of Directors voted to expand the availability of our Entente group insurance program to all members, regardless of age. The decision to remove the age restriction created an opportunity for Canadians working in the education sector who do not have coverage through their employer to access coverage.

For more highlights and information, visit RTOERO's [2023 Annual Report](#).

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