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GRC NEWS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As Director of the Simon Fraser University Gerontology Research Centre (GRC), I am delighted to share with you the December 2023, Volume 42, Issue 2 of the GRC News. I want to begin my message by extending warm Holiday Wishes to the wide-ranging Gerontology community, comprised of SFU students, faculty, research and support staff, and administration; community members working in the field; seniors and organizations serving older adults; government personnel; our many benefactors; and those working in the private sector to meet the diverse needs of older people. This issue continues to highlight a number of activities celebrating the 40th anniversary of the GRC (1982) and department (1983), in particular, the Ellen Gee Memorial Lecture. We spotlight a number of research and community outreach activities carried out by GRC members and gerontology faculty, research staff, and students. The GRC members and department had a very strong presence at the Canadian Association on Gerontology Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting held in Toronto ON, October 26-28, 2023; and the Gerontological Society of America Meeting held in Tampa Bay, FL, November 8-12, 2023. Additionally, the newest post-doctoral fellow of the GRC, Julie Beadle, is interviewed about their research program in hearing loss, social

isolation and cognition among older adults. We also recognize several of our benefactors in this newsletter, who we are deeply indebted for their continued support of the research, teaching and outreach activities of the GRC and department.

We look back at 2023 with both positive and negative emotions. While the world continues to recover from the pandemic and attempts to address issues that were exposed, such as deficiencies in our long-term care system in Canada, we continue to be challenged by systemic problems. Global conflict, economic problems, ageism, and the erosion of tolerance of diversity, to name a few, compromise the well-being of older people, and the communities and societies in which we all live. Simon Fraser University's Gerontology Research Centre is committed to our mission of enhancing the health and well-being of older people through research, training, and knowledge dissemination via well-established community connections.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of the GRC News.

ANDREW WISTER
DIRECTOR, GRC

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The GRC News is a print and digital magazine designed to keep readers inspired and informed about the people, projects and passions that make our research community so extraordinary. The GRC News covers a range of issues of interest to engage readers and encourages researchers, alumni, and community partners to contribute to making each issue visually rich and engaging.

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19th Ellen M. Gee Memorial Lecture

Sarah Qiu



Pictured: Attendees at the public lecture.



Pictured: Mélanie Levasseur.

On November 16, Mélanie Levasseur presented at the 19th Ellen M. Gee Memorial Lecture. Levasseur's presentation was titled, "Fostering social participation and connections: Lessons for reaching and intervening with older adults at risk for isolation."

The presentation highlighted the importance of individualized intervention plans to increase social participation among older adults in community settings.

By fostering social participation and connections, we will be able to cultivate communities that are more inclusive and accessible. One way of promoting social participation is by using social robots as a way of establishing meaningful interactions. The use of socially interactive agents can be especially meaningful for older adults in long term care.

[Watch the recorded presentation online.](#)

2023 Seniors Leadership Award

Sarah Qiu



Pictured (l-r): Andrew Wister, Kathleen Jamieson, Leslie Gaudette, Marion Leslie Pollack, Marika Kocaba, Sandra Gebhardt, Anthony Kupferschmidt, Audrey Hatch, Andrew Wister, City of Maple Ridge Mayor Dan Ruimy, and Councillor Judy Dueck. Missing: Penny MacCourt.

In 2001, the Simon Fraser University Gerontology Research Centre (GRC) established the Seniors Leadership Award to recognize the contributions that British Columbian seniors make as volunteers.

This year's recipients are more than just volunteers, their dedication to advocacy and improving the lives of seniors is unwavering and does not go unnoticed. The GRC is honoured to recognize the incredible work of this year's 2023 Seniors Leadership Award recipients: Sandra Gebhardt, Audrey Hatch, Kathleen Jamieson, Penny MacCourt, and Marion Leslie Pollack.

Learn more about the recipients below.

Sandra Gebhardt

Sandra Gebhardt is the Chair of the City of Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee (RSAC). Having been involved with the City of Richmond since 2017, Gebhardt continues to contribute to her local community through her voluntary work. As the former Executive Director at the 411 Seniors Centre Society, Gebhardt supported the creation of an alliance of seniors'

centres in Vancouver. In her previous roles, Gebhardt served on the Board of Directors of the Thompson Community Centre Association and the Richmond Addiction Services Society.

In addition to these roles, Gebhardt is also on the Board of Directors for the Richmond Centre for Disability and has also recently been appointed to the Council of Advisors of the BC Seniors Advocate.

Audrey Hatch

Audrey Hatch is a dedicated lifetime senior volunteer in the Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows communities. Her volunteering journey began in the late 1990's with the Elderly Citizens Recreation Association (ECRA), later becoming Ridge Meadows Seniors Society (RMSS), where she played a vital role in marketing the Seniors Activity Centre and producing the Grapevine newsletter for 19 years. She was also a major contributor to the Society's history book "Celebrating Seniors".

At 91 years old, Hatch is an active member of the Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, and Katzie Seniors

Network, holding a seat on the Board of Directors and contributing to the Dementia-Friendly Communities Task Group, focusing on inclusion and stigma reduction for people living with dementia. Her tireless efforts include involvement in literature reviews, focus groups, surveys, walkability studies, public education workshops, and fundraisers for the Alzheimer Society of B.C. She has also served on the fundraising committee for the Haney Farmers Market Food Coupon Program which helps ensure access to nutritious food for low-income older adults.

Kathleen Jamieson

Kathleen Jamieson, a dedicated advocate for public health care, served on the Council of Senior Citizen Organizations of BC (COSCO BC) Board of Directors and as Chair of COSCO's Health Committee. Her extensive involvement includes leadership roles in the National Pensioners' Federation, the BC Health Coalition, and the Action for Reform of Residential Care (ARRC) Steering Committee.

With a background in sociology and anthropology, her commitment to addressing issues of equity and discrimination is rooted in her volunteer work in southern Chile in the 1970s. Jamieson's goal is to support the human rights of marginalized communities in Canadian society.

Penny MacCourt

Penny MacCourt is the Founder and Chairperson of the Action for Reform of Residential Care B.C. (AARCBC). MacCourt, a distinguished social work professional, has dedicated over thirty years to advancing the fields of aging, mental health, and service delivery. Holding degrees from the University of Manitoba and a PhD from the University of Victoria, her extensive experience as a social worker and mental health consultant includes national projects on social isolation, mental health in older adults, and family caregiver needs.

MacCourt's pivotal role in founding the advocacy group "ARRC" in 2020, underscores her commitment to systemic reform in long-term care, especially in the wake of COVID-19 challenges. With widespread support from organizations and individuals, MacCourt's advocacy efforts aim to influence positive change, as evidenced by regular meetings with government officials and a focus on improving the well-being of seniors, their families, and care staff.

Marion Leslie Pollack

Marion Leslie Pollack is the Past-President of the 411 Seniors Centre Society. Pollack has been a volunteer with the 411 Seniors Centre Society for many years and has dedicated her time and expertise in system navigation to connect older adults with the programs, services, and resources they require. As an advocate for affordable housing for seniors, Pollack has addressed issues such as accessibility, affordability, and suitability for aging in place.

Pollack previously worked at Canada Post and has served on the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, as an advocate for workers' rights and social justice. In addition, Pollack has been a driving force for positive change through her advocacy work for gender equality and the advancement of women. Her commitment to social justice and the welfare of seniors reflects her passion for creating positive social change beyond her local community.

[See the full list of previous Seniors Leadership Award recipients.](#)

Opinion: When senior centres close on weekends, many older adults are left isolated

Laura Kadowaki, Andrea Wadman, Anthony Kupferschmidt, and Andrew Wister



PHOTO BY DMITRY BERKUT /Getty Images/iStockphoto

Opinion: They're not just a place to play bingo, they provide a sense of community and social connection.

"We hate weekends, long weekends, and four-day weekends."

For most people, weekends represent a time for relaxation, fun, and spending time with friends and family. But for older adults who rely on their local senior centre for social connection, weekends can be a time of loneliness and isolation due to facility closures.

Senior centres are much more than just places where older adults go to play bingo or make crafts; they are welcoming and inclusive spaces that provide a sense of home and community for their members. The social connections members develop through participation can create opportunities for shared learning, increased social connection, and ways to discover meaning and purpose through engagement with others.

[Read the full Op-Ed in the Vancouver Sun here.](#)

New Publication: Fact Book on Aging in British Columbia and Canada, 8th Edition



We are pleased to share with you the 8th Edition of the Fact Book on Aging in British Columbia and Canada (Wister et al., 2023), published by the Gerontology Research Centre (GRC). The many requests that the GRC receives each year for information about the province's older population provides the impetus for its continued production.

This 107-page monograph compiles the most up-to-date demographic, social and health data on older adults with comparisons between British Columbia and Canada, as well as historical patterns. Data are drawn from several sources, but primarily the 2021 Canadian census and BC STATS, and also supplemented with data from national health surveys, such as the Canadian Community Health Surveys, and other targeted surveys conducted in B.C.

Digital and paper copies of this edition are available at no charge. It is hoped that this monograph contributes to gerontological research, knowledge, practice and policy in efforts to promote well-being over the life course.

A milestone has been reached in that over thirty-five years of data have been covered in the eight editions. We have made some selected comparisons of key patterns across the different editions of the Fact Book in order to highlight major trends over time. Topics highlighted in this document cover a wide range of areas including: the size and historical rate of growth of the elderly population of British Columbia; trends in life expectancy, mortality rates and causes of death; the marital status of the elderly population; its geographic distribution and residential mobility; ethnic composition; a description of living arrangements and housing; education, employment, and economic status; disabilities; diet and physical activity; and health service utilization.

[Download the full book here.](#)

Bidirectional associations between memory and depression moderated by sex and age: Findings from the CLSA

Shawna Hopper

What comes first – depression or cognitive decline? The temporal relationship between depression and cognition has been a subject of ongoing discussion. Some studies propose that depression may be a risk factor for future memory decline, while others suggest that memory decline may precede depression symptoms. As the Canadian population continues to age, age-related cognitive decline and depression are becoming more prevalent. Understanding their relationship to one-another is critical for addressing the unique challenges faced by an aging society. Building on the foundations of my previous master's research, I was motivated to address this ongoing question: What comes first, depression or cognitive decline?

Leveraging data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) provided an opportunity to dive into the complex relationship between depression and memory. The main objective of this study was to explore the relationship between depressive symptoms and memory over time in a sample of mid-aged and older Canadians. Given the differences in cognitive abilities and the experience of depressive symptoms between sexes and throughout the lifespan, we also sought to investigate how age (45-64 vs 65+) and sex might influence the association between depression and cognition.

The study's findings revealed a bidirectional relationship between depressive symptoms and memory. For example, individuals who experience more depressive symptoms were likely to have lower memory scores three years later.

At the same time, individuals who performed worst on memory tests were more likely to experience greater depressive symptoms three years later. This bidirectional relationship persisted across sex and age groups, except for older females, where baseline memory scores didn't predict depressive symptoms at follow-up.

Of particular significance was the finding that, for all groups except older males, depressive symptoms at the baseline were a stronger predictor of future memory decline than memory at the baseline was for subsequent depressive symptoms. Understanding these associations is vital to promote healthy aging and improve the quality of life for older individuals. These results emphasize the importance of early intervention to address depressive symptoms as a means of preventing future memory decline.

In my future PhD research, I aim to expand upon this work by investigating how social isolation can impact cognitive function through its influence on mental health. Given the increased prevalence of social isolation among older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become crucial to understand the long-term effects of being socially isolated. Additionally, it is essential to identify effective interventions that can promote healthy aging within our communities.

Read the whole article here: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2023.105154>.

An interview with Julie Beadle



Welcome [Julie Beadle](#) to the Gerontology Research Centre! As a postdoctoral fellow, Beadle will apply her background in audiology to improve the accessibility of hearing health care for older adults.

1. Tell us about yourself.

I completed my PhD at the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour, and Development, Western Sydney University (Australia). This experimental work examined sensory and cognitive factors that influence older adults' ability to communicate in situations with background noise. Prior to starting at the GRC I worked as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Adult Language Processing and Disorders Lab (UBC, Audiology and Speech Sciences) under the supervision of Professor Jeff Small. My projects at the ALPD Lab focused on: 1) aging and social perceptions of hearing aids and 2) effective communication for persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing and live in long-term care homes. I also enjoy teaching and have taught a variety of Psychology courses at Langara College, including Adulthood and Aging.

2. What research are you currently working on?

My projects at the GRC will focus on the intersection between hearing loss, hearing aid use, and social isolation in older adults. I will also collaborate with the Tong Louie Living Laboratory on assistive technology development and innovation.

3. How do you hope to apply your research?

British Columbia currently lags behind other provinces and territories when it comes to consistent hearing health coverage, particularly for older adults. I hope that my research will support initiatives aiming to improve the accessibility of hearing health care for older Canadians.

4. What brought you to Simon Fraser University and the GRC?

My PhD and initial postdoctoral research have focused on communication challenges that older adults experience as a result of age-related changes in hearing and cognition. As an ex-

NEW GRC POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

tension of this work, I became interested in the relationship between hearing loss and social network characteristics at a population level. This fit well with Professor Andrew Wister's existing work on social isolation, which brought me to the GRC. The GRC was highly recommended by my previous supervisor, Professor Jeff Small, who also completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the GRC.

5. What inspired you to study aging/gerontology?

During my undergraduate degree in Psychology at St. Francis Xavier University, I completed a service-learning placement at a long-term care home. This experience initially sparked my interest in studying aging, and in particular, the impact of hearing loss on communication.

6. What interests do you have outside of your research?

I sing in a local choir, Westcoast Harmony Chorus. I also enjoy skiing, and spending time with friends and family.

7. What are your goals for your time at the GRC?

During my time at the GRC, I would like to develop new projects that include hearing loss data from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging. I would also like to establish new academic, community, and industry collaborations.

Dementia-Friendly transportation services: A scoping review

Joey Wong³ and Cari Randa-Beaulieu²

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To better understand transit use of community-dwelling older adults living with dementia, members of the [DemSCAPE](#) team conducted a scoping review to answer the research questions:

1. What is known about transportation services for people living with dementia in the community?
2. What types and sources of evidence are commonly employed to study dementia-friendly transportation services?
3. What are the gaps in the research on dementia-friendly transportation services?

In addition to a [summary poster](#) at the CAG2023 conference, the scoping review is currently under review for publication. Follow [DemSCAPE](#) on social media to stay connected and read the full article once available!

Background

Mobility is essential for older adults to navigate the neighbourhood environment and engage in social, community and civic life. However, dementia challenges the mobility of older adults in their communities due to driving cessation and barriers to using various transportation.¹⁻⁴ When older adults living with dementia stop driving, they need to depend on others or public transportation to access places in the community.^{5,6} Transportation is a critical component of dementia-friendly communities and age-friendly cities guide framework.⁷ However, there has been less focus on transportation services in the

discussion of dementia-friendly communities.^{8,5} This scoping review aims to (a) map the literature on dementia-friendly transportation services, (b) explore the use and needs of dementia-friendly transportation services among people living with dementia in the community, and (c) identify key characteristics of effective dementia-friendly transportation services.

Methods

Twelve databases were searched following 2017 guidelines from Peters and colleagues and the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR).^{9,10}

Results

Thirty-five studies were included, most were published after 2017 in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Thirteen studies surveyed participants from urban areas and five from rural areas. The dimensions of transportation services discussed were the need for services, use of services, availability, accessibility, quality and affordability of services. The participants and groups interviewed were people living with dementia, caregivers or family, community organizations, municipalities, transportation service providers and health or social care professionals.

Key Findings

Met and unmet needs of transportation services. Several studies presented the need for transportation services for people living with dementia and their care partners. There is a significant difference in the need for services between



people with and without dementia.¹¹ One unmet need illustrated is the transportation needs after driving cessation: “[I] no longer go shopping, or to church or to visit friends. All parts of my life are affected because I am not able to drive.” (Dobbs, 2020, p.69)¹²

Use of transportation services. Among eight papers exploring the use of transportation services in the communities, most results were quantitative and cross-sectional. In France, 41.4% of participants living with mild to moderately severe Alzheimer’s Disease in the community were unable to travel on public transportation even when assisted.¹³

Availability. The perceived availability of services for people living with dementia was low worldwide, particularly in rural areas: “We have very little, if any, alternative driving solutions in rural areas. [...] And, if there isn’t a family member living close by, who can take time off work, it just becomes really difficult to get around.” (Stasiulis et al., 2020, p.1266)¹⁴

Accessibility. The important elements related to transportation services’ accessibility are the length and duration of bus journeys,^{15,16} the neighbourhood-built environment to reach a bus stop,^{15,17} the complexity in interpreting bus timetables, numbers and colour codes for buses,^{18,19}

and the challenges to navigate the large rail interchanges and multiple interchanges.^{16,17} Mobility management and personalized assistance could help reduce access barriers to transportation services.²⁰

Adaptability and acceptability (Quality). The quality of services is important for people living with dementia to sustain access. The dimensions presented in the studies are the quality of transportation services and alternative transportation services, services provided by transportation staff and training, and transport hubs’ environment and toilets.

Affordability. Three studies described concerns about organizational finances, e.g, financial resources for offering dementia transportation support,²¹ paratransit services,²⁰ and transportation services provided by day centres.²² In the UK in 2012, a study found that the free “freedom bus pass” improved the affordability of public transportation for some participants.¹⁶

Discussion

Despite a growing number of studies exploring dementia-friendly transportation, there is a lack of definitions of public transportation services and dementia-friendly transportation. Furthermore, limited reviewed articles stated explicitly

the specific transportation needs of people living with dementia and the importance of providing and improving dementia-friendly transportation. No studies compared the effectiveness or cost-effectiveness of transportation programs. Only one study examined the longitudinal use of transportation services.¹ There is a lack of studies exploring the full transportation services access continuum in the community the perceived availability and need of services by users, the service availability by providers, the actual use by users, and the exploration of barriers to access services.

Context of services is an important consideration. The challenges of accessing transportation services in rural and urban spaces can vary. For example, there were difficulties in navigating large interchanges for people living with dementia in urban areas,¹⁶ and people living with dementia faced a higher cost and inconsistent availability of transportation services in rural areas.²⁰

Practical Recommendations for Improving Dementia-Friendly Transportation

- Engage people living with dementia in the planning and designing of transportation services
- Understand the training for people living with dementia on the effective use of public transportation
- Build a supportive environment and improve the walkability in the neighbourhood to access public transportation hubs or bus stops
- Explore the idea of mobility management

Avenues for future research

- Analyze noteworthy case examples in rural communities
- Explore how people living with dementia help design transit group training programs
- Conduct cost-benefit analysis on the affordability of dementia-friendly transportation services

- Investigate technology-incorporated dementia-friendly transportation services

To conclude, improving the transportation system for people with hidden disabilities is essential to their engagement in social, community and civic life. More studies are needed to explore dementia-friendly transportation initiatives.

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Unearthing ethnicity in urban imagery: Exploring neighbourhoods

Isaac Ing

Cities are bursting with life and activity. On any given Tuesday afternoon, you might find couples strolling through a local park, criss-crossing paths with each other if only for a brief moment in time, their steps moving in rhythm not only with one another, but also to the laughter of a Zumba class on the other side of the grass field. Just across the street, there might be a group of rambunctious friends laughing over each other as they catch up on each other's week, stomping their way through a market square on a quest to sample all the local flavours. Living in a city may feel overwhelming at times, but often it is not the case. A big part of that is the resiliency of humans. Within urban planning, there are a few books that are considered 'classics.' One of these books is Kevin Lynch's "Image of the City." In this book, Lynch explains how humans have an innate ability to sort through all this chaos to find their own meaning for existing in a space: "The environment suggests distinctions and relations, and the observer—with great adaptability and in the light of [their] own purposes—selects, organizes, and endows with meaning what [they see]" (Lynch 1960, 6).

The beauty of Lynch's work is the belief that people are intelligent, creative, and powerful enough to justify their own existence, instead of becoming drowned out by all the commotion of a city. As much as I so dearly romanticize this concept every day as an urban planning student, I realize that it's important to recognize how people can also be victims of circumstance and practicality even at the very same time they wield the power to pick apart their environment for their own desire. Within these next few paragraphs, I'd like to share with you the tale of how

I came to learn this little oxymoron during my time as a research assistant for the Stakeholders' Walkability/Wheelability Audit in Neighbourhoods (SWAN) project in the summer of 2023. Although the reality may appear grim, it's important to remember that there is still a glimmer of hope. With its focus on community engagement, SWAN can aid residents in rediscovering their perspectives on the city.



Figure 1. SWAN Audit with Chinese-speaking participants

Immigrants, especially from Asia and the Middle East, make up an overrepresented proportion of Canada's older population—30% of older adults are immigrants while immigrants make up 21% of Canada's overall population (Wang et al. 194). This means that understanding the experiences of immigrants is a major part of the puzzle of understanding the wellbeing of older adults as a whole, which is becoming an increasing priority as Canada's population continues to age. During my internship, I conducted multiple street segments audits with 10 residents who im-

migrated to Canada from the Chinese-speaking regions, with different level of confidence in communicating in English. The primary purpose of these audits was to delve into various aspects of the neighborhood, such as functionality, safety, land use and supportive features, appearance and maintenance, and the social environment, while also capturing the residents' perceptions of these realities. Community residents played an integral role in this project as co-researchers, actively contributing by collecting data, and receiving assistance when necessary. This collaborative approach led to numerous discussions on topics relevant to the study's objectives. During these conversations, I frequently asked participants, both as part of the audit questionnaire and during casual conversation, about the different resources in their neighborhood that are pivotal for developing a sense of community. All participants, regardless of their English proficiency, acknowledged public amenities as crucial focal points in their sense of community, including places like community centers or the nearby Chinese supermarket. Urban planning literature emphasizes the significance of amenities in fostering community bonds (Evans 2008, 66).



Figure 2. Chinese Community resources

However, depending on the participant's English-speaking skill, I observed variations in the spatial arrangement of these hubs. It appeared that participants with greater English proficiency perceived a broader catchment area as part of their community. For example, one participant

noted how she travels to another neighborhood's community center to participate in their choir program because she enjoyed the style of music there. Inversely, the less confident a participant was with English, the more narrow the catchment area was, based around key corridors—paths as described in Lynch's book— or built around resources and amenities that specifically catered to Chinese-speakers—what Lynch would call nodes. For example, one participant identified parts of their neighborhood only in relation to the local Chinese supermarket and explained how they never strayed more than 2-3 blocks away from it (a 67-year-old woman mentioned: "It is only two blocks away from the supermarket"). Since a bilingual resident is able to engage with both English and Chinese-based resources, the possible number of choices they have to engage with is broadened. Nevertheless, residents who aren't confident in their English-speaking abilities might feel hesitant to interact with resources outside the Chinese community, as articulated by one participant. Consequently, their engagement might be limited to resources specifically tailored to the Chinese community. This restriction ultimately narrows their sense of community, confining it to areas housing Chinese-specific resources.

For participants who aren't fluent in English, was there really a choice in what amenity they chose to incorporate into their idea of community? Given their pursuit of a sense of community, they needed a Chinese-focused community resource, which practically left them with only two options: the local Chinese supermarket and the nearby Chinese senior's association. While they did have the option to engage or not engage with these two resources, is it truly fair to compare the choice between having something or having nothing at all with the choice of selecting the genre of music for their choir group? Those two resources were chosen out of circumstance, and as a result, the circumstances shaped that resident's image of their community to exclude a treasure trove of more activities to do, goods to buy, and people to interact with, for example at their local mall, precisely because those nodes

are not explicitly targeted for Chinese-speakers though they still may benefit Chinese speakers.

Hearing participants explain to me the mental maps they had of navigating their community, I was reminded of the practice of cultural mapping, which is an increasingly popular form of community engagement for municipalities to learn about the needs of different communities. Cultural mapping is defined as “a process of collecting, recording, analyzing and synthesizing information in order to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community or group” (Duxbury, Garrett-Petts, and MacLennan 2020, 2). Similar to Kevin Lynch’s spin on mental mapping, the modern concept of cultural mapping is built around empowerment, though the focus here is more on community empowerment than on the individual.

An individual’s very lifestyle and everyday activities is a result of their community’s culture, and cultural mapping is here simply to record this reality and inform planning on the needs of this community (Duxbury, Garrett-Petts, and MacLennan 2020, 8). This approach is very effective in accomplishing the goal of making planning more inclusive in a very practical way, often through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) (Evans 2008, 74; Jeannotte 2015, 103; Legacies Now & Creative City Network of Canada 2010, 10; Taylor 2013, 54; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2009, 12). One example of this success takes place in North Northamptonshire, England. Residents there were asked to map out the various cultural facilities they use in the region, which was then overlaid with spatial demographics data using GIS software (Evans 2015, 55). From this, leaders learned that a recent relocation of a youth theater moved it farther away from where young people are concentrated, making the theater inaccessible to the youth it is meant to serve. In this case study, the perspectives of the youth were brought to the attention of local leaders so that they could address their needs for better access to extracur-

ricular opportunities.

While focusing on community over the individual has its merits, I do think that only considering the community as a whole paints an incomplete understanding of the community itself. Communities are not necessarily homogeneous, which means that aggregating individual’s data may lead to the perspectives of some community members left out of the broader takeaways. Going back to the Chinese-speaking immigrant community that SWAN worked with, not all participants had the same level of participation in their local amenities. The majority of residents I collected data with were fluent in English, so aggregating their perspectives would have led to the conclusion that there is sufficient access to amenities in the community. This overlooks the very real reality of the remaining residents who expressed struggle in finding participation opportunities, preventing their perspective from informing planning to address this need. But the very fact that SWAN acknowledges individual experiences, ensures that such disregard didn’t happen.

What I appreciate about the SWAN project is that it is individual oriented, meaning that all 10 participants had the opportunity to meaningfully contribute their own lived experiences directly into the project. Understanding community means understanding the individual people who make it. As a method of data collection, focusing on the individual works. Treasuring individuals elevates a cultural mapping project from tokenism to citizen control on Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein 1969, 217). To illustrate this, I present the Chowrasta Market Upgrade Project in George Town, Malaysia. As part of a 2011 redevelopment of the historic wet market, the municipal government worked together with architects and the market’s existing vendors to draft improvements together through a series of co-design and reiterative design thinking workshops creating maps of how vendors carry out their business activities (Pillai 2015, 160-163). Each participant was able to integrate how they use their tools, mediums, and

expertise into the project’s future design. The result? A new market redesign that worked for all the vendors and their needs. But equally as important, city leaders and designers developed a newfound respect and esteem for the “cultural knowledge, competencies, and resources” (Pillai 2015, 163) of the historic business community that makes up the market.

The power of embracing individuality as a means of creating mutual respect between communities and leaders is not unique and can be found in other examples of cultural mapping, such as the fishing village of Marsaxlokk, Malta (Chiesi and Costa 2015, 82). From this respect comes long-term partnership where the city and community are able to look to and trust each other to contribute positively to future planning in this community. This perfectly matches the level of partnership on Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation, and is several steps above how cultural mapping is normally used as a tool to simply inform planners using aggregated community data GIS (Evans 2008, 74; Jeannotte 2015, 103). By building the project around understanding individuals, and spending the time to focus gathering quality lived experience knowledge from individuals, SWAN is helping form mutual partnerships where citizens are co-scientists along with academics in some of Vancouver’s Chinese-speaking immigrant communities.

Immigrant participants of the SWAN study have brought to light the challenges of forging communities as a result of language barriers. But this does not have to be a phenomenon that unfairly blames self-responsibility. Instead, cities can leverage this knowledge by working more closely with different ethnic groups to focus development of new amenities to be around existing cultural nodes where immigrant residents frequent. If we work within the framework of a narrow community scope, immigrant communities can potentially gain access to amenities and experiences that they might not have known about previously, as these resources lay outside the mental boundaries of their community. SWAN is contributing a shift in community

engagement that focuses more on the individual and is reimagining a more inclusive image of the city for all.

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DONOR RECOGNITION SEAN KEAYS



We are very grateful for the generous donation that Sean made to the Wister-Mitchell Gerontology Graduate Scholarship that provides support to one of our graduate students annually. Sean Keays is an important leader in the field of aging and is dedicated to meeting the future needs of an aging Canadian population. After completing his undergraduate degree in gerontology at McMaster University he went on to attain a Master's Degree at Simon Fraser University in Gerontology with a concentration in the built environment stream. Since 2010 he has been the Chief Administrative Officer of Foyer Richelieu Welland. The faculty in the graduate department in Gerontology at SFU gave Sean many of the skills and confidence to become a point of reference among his peers in the long-term care industry.

As a dedicated volunteer he has presided and sat on multiple boards at the local, provincial and national scale. This includes Chairing the CAG Student Connection in 2006-07 and sitting on the Ontario Minister of Health's Advisory Council. He is the recipient of many awards including the Niagara Centre Citizen of the Year Award, honoring his successes in business, education and community service.

He was successful in securing 128 long-term care licences for the Foyer Riche-lieu Welland and helping Hospice Niagara secure 10 hospice licences that will be built in the new Foyer Richelieu Welland. He also secured an additional 256 LTC licences for Foyer Richelieu Toronto. These projects will bring over \$2 billion dollars in jobs over the next 30 years plus the much-needed care beds.

Finally, Sean and his wife Valérie have donated over \$100,000 to various charities and has fundraised over \$10 million dollars.

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How I became a Certified Professional Gerontologist...and you can too

Anthony Kupferschmidt, M.A., C.P.G., C.D.P.

"Gerontologist... what is that?"

Most Gerontology graduates have likely had this question posed to them at one point or another when trying to explain their area of study. We may wish that we didn't have to answer, and that an awareness of Gerontology was as universal as aging itself.

As students of Gerontology, we know from early on that we need to "sell" ourselves until there is a greater appreciation of this field. One of the ways I chose to lean into this after completing the M.A. in Gerontology at Simon Fraser University was by becoming a Certified Professional Gerontologist (C.P.G.).

C.P.G. is a credential offered by the National Association for Professional Gerontologists (NAPG: <https://www.napgerontologists.org/>). NAPG is the only independent, international not-for-profit organization that recognizes and credentials Gerontology professionals. NAPG exists to advance the careers of appropriately trained Gerontology graduates by increasing the recognition of the competencies that define Gerontologists.

The C.P.G. credential has three levels: Graduate (Gerontologist), Baccalaureate (Gerontological Specialist), and Associate / Certificate (Gerontological Coordinator). NAPG also has an option to become a Student member, as well as a Professional / Scholar credential option for those who have dedicated their careers to aging but may not have studied Gerontology at university.

Credentialing Gerontology professionals legitimizes Gerontology as both a discipline and a profession. By credentialing, you help ensure

your expertise in the field of aging is recognized in a landscape where Gerontologists compete with other professionals for job opportunities.

NAPG is a U.S. based organization, but the C.P.G. credential is increasingly becoming recognized internationally as an indicator of expertise in Gerontology. A growing number of Gerontology graduates in Canada have received this credential, and as a NAPG Board member I want to help build a critical mass of Certified Professional Gerontologists across the country.

So how did I become a Certified Professional Gerontologist? For a reasonable fee, I sent a copy of my transcript to NAPG for review. Of course the Gerontology programs at SFU are comprehensive, so my training was recognized for credentialing and I could start to use C.P.G. after my name. You have to complete 20 hours of relevant professional development activities every two years to maintain this credential, but this can be achieved by attending (and presenting at) conferences, participating in online continuing education opportunities, and publishing in peer-reviewed journals.

We know that every opportunity we have to describe the study of aging and older adults is a chance to increase the recognition of our field. People will now ask me what C.P.G. stands for, and I have the perfect opening to talk about both Gerontology and my qualifications.

I hope you will join me in becoming a Certified Professional Gerontologist.

For more information, email Anthony Kupferschmidt at a.kupferschmidt@gmail.com.

Student Presentations

Hopper, S., Wister, A. V., Cosco, T. D., & Best, J. R. “Exploring the Relationship between Social Isolation and Cognitive Change in the CLSA: The Mediating Role of Physical Activity” Oral presentation in “Innovative Research Using the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging: Emerging Scholars in the Spotlight” symposium at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Kim, B., Li, L., & Wister, A. “The Effect of Interventions to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Family Caregivers: A Systematic Review.” Poster presented at the Gerontological Society of America, 76th Annual Scientific Meeting, Tampa Bay, FL., November 8-12, 2023.

Kim, B., Wister, A. V., O’Dea, E., Mitchell, B. A., Li, L., & Kadowaki, K. “The roles and experiences of informal caregivers of older people in community and health care system navigation: A scoping review” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

O’Dea, E., Wister, A., Kim, B., Canham, S., Mitchell, B., & Li, L. “Volunteering among culturally diverse populations of older adults: A scoping review of the literature” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

O’Dea, E., Wister, A., Li, L., Canham, S., & Mitchell, B. “Volunteering among CLSA participants: Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic” Oral presentation in “Innovative Research Using the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging: Emerging Scholars in the Spotlight” symposium at the

52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Randa-Beaulieu, C., Chaudhury, H., & Seetharaman, K. “Developing Knowledge Mobilization Strategies to create Dementia-inclusive Neighbourhoods for Community Access, Participation, and Engagement (DemSCAPE): An Awareness-raising Educational Video”. Oral presentation at the Aging Better Together Symposium, Edwin S.H. Leong Centre for Healthy Aging at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, November 19 - 20, 2023.

Rikhtehgaran, F., Mahmood, A., Nouri, M. “Investigating the perceptions and lived experiences of the socio-spatial context of walkability among older adult immigrants: A scoping review” Oral presentation in “Promoting Aging in Place” symposium at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Seetharaman, K., & Chaudhury, H. “Using visual methods to explore the neighbourhood walking experience of people living with dementia” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

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Sixsmith, A., Fang, M. L., White, R., Dragomir,

G., & Gomez, C. “Partnership Working Towards a Senior’s Centre of the Future” Oral presentation in “Promoting Aging in Place” symposium at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Teichman, S., & Banerjee, A. “Courageous conversations: The politics, possibilities and perils of discussing death in the classroom” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Wadman, A., Kadowaki, K., Wister, A., & Kupferschmidt, A. “Meeting the needs of older adults: Co-developing a research agenda with Metro Vancouver independent, not-for-profit senior centres” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

White, R., Fang, M.L., Sixsmith, J., Loret, H.,

Student Publications

Adedeji, I., Wister, A., & Pickering, J. (2023). COVID-19 experiences of social isolation and loneliness among older adults in Africa: A scoping review. *Frontiers in Public Health*. 11, 1158716.

Beaulieu, C. (2023). Transcending Verbal Communication: Celebrating the Creativity of Older Adults through Art Therapy in Long-Term Care. In T. Weinberg & M. Carpendale (Eds.), *Walking With: An Emerging Dialogue with Art Therapists in the Cultural Commons* (pp. 171 - 186). Nelson, BC: Essenze Publications. ISBN-10:1999185560.

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Faculty & Postdoctoral Fellow Presentations

Chaudhury, H., & Hung, L. “Aging in Place”. Interactive panel discussion at the Aging Better Together Symposium, Edwin S.H. Leong Centre for Healthy Aging at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, November 19 - 20, 2023.

Chaudhury, H., Hung, L., Freeman, S., Groulx, M., Seetharaman, K., Wong, J., & Randa, C. “Transition and Stability of Place and Aging in Later Life: Housing and Neighborhood Contexts”. Symposium at the Gerontological Society of America, 76th Annual Scientific Meeting, Tampa Bay, FL, November 8-12, 2023.

Chaudhury, H., Seetharaman, K., Hung, L., Freeman, S., Groulx, M., Wong, J., & Randa, C. “Understanding the role of the neighbourhood built environment on outdoor mobility and participation of people living with dementia” Oral presentation in “Moving Ahead and Learning from Diverse Approaches to Dementia-Inclusive Communities” symposium at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Chaudhury, H., Seetharaman, K., Hung, L., Phinney, A., Freeman, S., Groulx, M., Hemingway, D., Randa, C., & Lanthier-Labonté, S. “Neighbourhood Built Environment and Dementia: Methodological Reflections”. Symposium at the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) 2023 Environment and Health: Global/Local Challenges and Actions, Mexico City, UNAM, June 20 - 23, 2023.

Chaudhury, H., Seetharaman, K., Hung, L., Freeman, S., Groulx, M., Wong, J., & Randa, C. “Co-creating Supportive Neighbourhood Built Environment through the Lens of People Living with Dementia - the Dementia-inclusive Streets and Community Access, Participation, and Engagement (DemSCAPE) study”. Oral presenta-

tion at the BC Patient Safety & Quality Forum 2023, Vancouver, BC, Canada, June 6 – 8, 2023.

Chaudhury, H., & Zhang, Z. “Physical Environmental Evaluation of a Dementia Village in British Columbia: Pre-Relocation Findings” Oral presentation in “Transforming Care to Enhance Quality of Life: A Collaborative Approach to Evaluating British Columbia’s First Publicly-Funded “Dementia Village” symposium at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

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Dalton, K., Joshi, I, Stephenson, S., Zanette, M., & Gutman, G. “Advanced care planning for the 2SLGBTQIA+ aging population” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Gill, P., & Gutman, G. “Mitigation strategies employed by seniors’ housing and assisted living sites during the COVID-19 pandemic” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Guo, J., Wister, A., & Li, S. “Longitudinal Trajectories of Family Support Vulnerability For Older Adults in Anhui Province in China: Exchange, Growth And Dispersion Effects” Oral presentation in “Intergenerational and Familial Relationships” symposium at the 52nd Annual

Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Guo, J., Wister, A., Wang, J., & Li, S. “Life-Course Risk and Protective Factors of Multimorbidity Resilience among Older Adults in Rural China: A Longitudinal Study in Anhui Province” Oral presentation in “Resilience in Later Adulthood” symposium at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Gutman, G., Vashisht, A., & Kaur, T. “ACP conversations with Chinese and South Asian patients: Physicians’ perspectives of barriers and facilitating factors” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Lanthier-Labonté, S., Chaudhury, H., Wong, J., & Hung, L. “Dementia-Friendly Transportation Services: A Scoping Review”. Poster presented at the Canadian Association on Gerontology 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting, Toronto, Ontario, October 26 - 28, 2023.

Li, L., Wister, A., Lee, Y., & Brittner, K. “Loneliness among long-term spousal caregivers: A gender-based analysis using the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging” Poster presentation at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Li, L., Wister, A., Lee, Y. & Kim, B. “Loneliness Among Older Family Caregivers: A Study of Caregiving Intensity, Type and Location Based on the CLSA.” Poster presented at the Gerontological Society of America, 76th Annual Scientific Meeting, Tampa Bay, FL., November 8-12, 2023.

Mahmood, A., Canham, S. L., Weldrick, R., Patille, R., & Erisman, M. “Meanings of aging in

the right place for housing insecure older adults in temporary housing” Paper presentation at the Gerontological Society of America, 76th Annual Scientific Meeting, Tampa Bay, FL., November 8-12, 2023.

Mahmood, A., Ford, H. T., Rikhtehgaran, F., & Mortenson, B. “Adapting Stakeholders Walkability/Wheelability Audits in Neighbourhoods tool for people with sensory and cognitive disabilities” Paper presentation at the Environmental Research Design Association Annual Conference (EDRA 53), Mexico City, MX., June 21-24, 2023.

Mahmood, A., Patille, R., & Canham, S. “Sharing experiences through photovoice: Older people experiencing homelessness express the importance of built and environmental features to aging in the right place” Oral presentation in “Storytelling and sharing in community-engaged research: Learnings from four interdisciplinary projects with older people” symposium at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Mahmood, A., Patille, R., Gurung, S., & Canham, S. L. “Exploring ‘aging in the right place’ through community-engaged research: Photovoice with older adults who are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity” Paper presentation at the Environmental Design Association Annual Conference (EDRA 53), Mexico City, MX., June 21-24, 2023.

Mahmood, A., Patille, R., Victoria, I., Bookmyer, G., Lam, E., More, D. J., & Canham, S. “Overview of the Aging in the Right Place (AIRP) Project: Some findings through photovoice with older adults who experience homelessness or housing insecurity” Paper presentation at the Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC), Vancouver, BC., September 27-29, 2023.

Mitchell, B., & Teichman, S. “Aging parents

and the ties that bind: Intergenerational closeness and conflict among culturally diverse families” Oral presentation in “Intergenerational and Familial Relationships” symposium at the 52nd Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting of the Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, ON., October 26-28, 2023.

Pauly, T. “Time savoring and affect reactivity to daily events in old age” Paper presentation at the Society for Ambulatory Assessment Conference in Amsterdam, NL., June 2023.

Pauly, T., Gerstorf, D., Wahl, H. W., Luescher, J., Scholz, U., & Hoppmann, C. A. “A developmental-contextual model of couple synchrony: Central tenets and empirical application” Paper presentation at the Gerontological Society of America, 76th Annual Scientific Meeting, Tampa Bay, FL., November 8-12, 2023.

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SFU Gerontology at CAG 2023



Pictured (l-r): Eireann O'Dea, Michelle LeBlanc, Ziyang Zhang



Pictured (l-r): Lun Li, Boah Kim, Barbara Mitchell, Andrew Wister



Pictured: John Pickering



Pictured: Samantha Teichman



Pictured: Ziyang Zhang



Pictured (l-r): Eireann O'Dea, Andrew Wister, Shawna Hopper



Pictured: Atiya Mahmood



Pictured (l-r): Habib Chaudhury, Sarah Qiu, Barbara Mitchell, Laura Kadowaki, Andrew Wister



Pictured (l-r): Barbara Mitchell, Samantha Teichman



Pictured: Rebecca White



Pictured: Kishore Seetharaman



Pictured: Farinaz Rikhtehgaran



SENIORS HOUSING UPDATE

Pieces of identity in older adults': How the built environment should help us reflect who we are

Jean Paul Ramirez Echavarría

Within environmental psychology and related fields of knowledge, the concept of home as an identity provider has been widely studied (Prentice et al., 2018). This is especially true for older adults who may have lived in their homes for long periods and formed strong attachments to their homes.

With the aging population, there is a growing need for spaces that provide both physical and emotional support and, in many cases, care from outside sources for older adults. As the idea of place and its implications for the welfare of people becomes a more extensive field of research (Ratliff, 2022), the need to understand spaces that contribute to the expression of older adults' identity arises.

Through a community-based participatory approach, the Aging in the Right Place (AIRP) Project (Research, n.d. <https://www.sfu.ca/airp/research.html>) evaluates "promising practices" in housing support for older people experiencing homelessness (OPEH). Ideally, these innovative solutions support aging in the "right" place by recognizing that "where an older person lives impacts their ability to age optimally and must match their unique lifestyles and vulnerabilities" (Research, n.d. <https://www.sfu.ca/airp/research.html>).

The AIRP Project is conducted in three urban centers in Canada: Montreal, Calgary, and Vancouver. This blog post focuses on one of the four Vancouver sites (promising practices) linked to the project: Whole Way House (WWH). WWH is a non-profit organization that offers community-building programs and tenant support services by partnering with different housing providers (Whole Way House, 2023. <https://wholewayhouse.ca/>).

Identity and Emotional Place Attachment

The notion of an empowering place that authentically reflects who we are is closely linked to the concept of emotional place attachment (Zahra, 2022): a positive bond between the person and the places they inhabit, particularly their home, neighborhood, city and country of residence. In the AIRP Project's theoretical framework (Canham et al. 2022), different indicators that contribute to aging in the "right" place are shown in half circle diagrammatic format. One part of this framework displays four concepts that contribute towards emotional place attachment and place-identity. These four concepts are: satisfaction, safety and privacy, choice and autonomy, and sense of control.

Figure 1
Aging in the Right Place Theoretical Framework



In the AIRP Project, study participants worked as co-researchers, collecting data through photovoice to discuss their experiences of aging and well-being. They took pictures of places and events in their home or built environment that reflect their idea of aging in the right place. Photovoice is a participatory research method defined by Wang et al. (2000) as "a process by which people can identify, represent, and en-

hance their community through a specific photographic technique” (p.82).

In this blog post, I use a sample of quotes from photovoice interviews with study participants in WWH to showcase how participants describe their sense of identity and belonging as it relates to their home environments and surrounding areas using the AIRP conceptual framework as a guide. In the following section, I share select quotes for the four concepts linked to place attachment: satisfaction, safety and privacy, choice and autonomy, and sense of control, to highlight how these can be related to aging in the right place for OPEH.

Satisfaction

AIRP study participants who expressed that their home or built environment reflected their identities, expressed a feeling of being ‘at home’ within the housing they were living in.

Four main components within the environment contributed to their feelings of sense of ‘being home.’:

a) Accessibility of the place: This included having different resources and services within easy reach, such as markets, health centers, community centers, parks, and trails. According to a 61-year-old male resident: “I told my friend the first reason why I chose to stay here, to begin with, was the fact that: I just have to walk around the corner and I’m right where I need to be.”

b) Affordability and stability: This means having a secure living environment in an increasingly insecure housing landscape. This allows for a personal and intimate space that they could call their own. The abovementioned participant said: “renting is fantastic, it’s only costing me [amount of money] a month. I cannot get anything better than that in my wildest dreams”.

c) The aesthetics of the place and the surround-

ings: This means living in a visually appealing place where spaces are clean and comfortable and where people enjoy spending time. A 77-year-old man said: “So, when it blooms [the trees], I mean, it sorts of lights of the place”.

Figure 2
Flowering Trees



Note: V3-C12.2. Photo 4

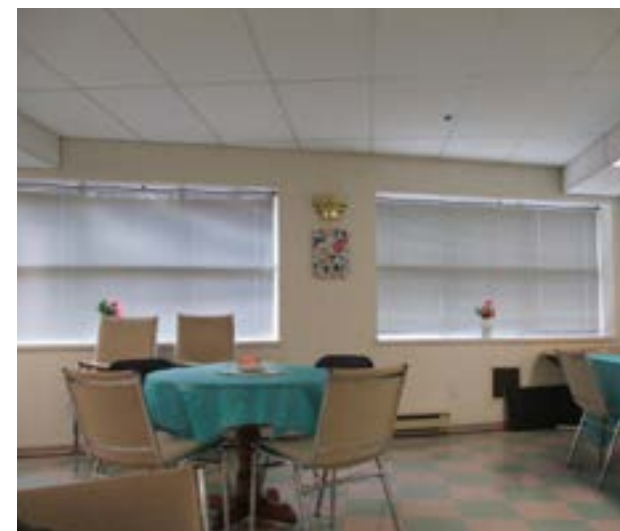
d) The flexibility and the option to personalize their homes: This means having the freedom to decorate their own space and make it a distinctive expression of their personal taste and style. For example, one of the participants talked about her car, which she nicknamed “Star Wars” because she decorated it with lights that shine at night, and expressed how the personalization of this and the sense of belonging she feels towards the car gave her a great sense of freedom. While explaining her car’s name, she said: “Star Wars is he, because it had to be a huge taking care of me. And Star Wars is called that because at nighttime, all the lights come on everywhere in the car, especially in the front.” (63-year-old woman).

Choice and Autonomy

Many participants valued choice and autonomy and discussed that these factors are the ones that most contributed to their age in the right place experiences. These components helped them be responsible for the choices they made about

housing, services, and activities, and this grounds a sense of who they are. One of the participants (62-year-old woman) mentioned that she felt at home in this housing; she realized that she was not in a nursing home-type institutional setting and that she was able to wander freely, and do as she pleased while living in her current housing and receive supports and assistance, as needed. The idea of choice and autonomy was mentioned over and over by participants when they articulated how important it was to them to have their right to handle life at their own pace: “I try to be as independent as I can” (72-year-old woman).

Figure 3
Participant’s common space: having everything you need to function.



Note: V3-C11.2. Photo 2.

Feeling safe and supported in their housing and being able to make their own choices and build autonomy enhances their sense of well-being, one of them (61-year-old man) stated: “I am doing so with better and better clarity, much more decisive decision-making, happier with the outcome.”

Safety and Privacy

Participants felt attached to the place of living because they could thrive without worrying about external factors such as unsafe conditions, security threats, or extreme weather conditions.

Privacy and personal spaces were respected and valued within the housing they were living in. Some of them found a direct relation between safety and security of the environment and the feeling of social integration: “I feel safe going anywhere. And I love the building. I trust pretty much everybody in the building.” (63-year-old woman).

Figure 4
Building’s Lobby: security



Note: V3-C7.2. Photo 2.

Some of the participants were able to engage in meaningful relationships with their neighbors in the building and even with the staff, and these relationships meant changes for participants in their way of expressing themselves, seeing the world, and evaluating their place of residence, the abovementioned participant adds: “Yeah, it’s enabled me to come out of the shell that I was in for a little while. And just be- feel- I’m not alone.” Other participants mentioned taking on more active roles within their community and housing and acting as caretakers for other neighbors that have a higher level of need or have some type of disability. One participant, a 61-year-old-man, shared: “And I’ve gone out of my way, in a sort of a way, to knock on the doors and make sure that they get everything they need and join us.”

Sense of Control

Some participants highlighted the significance of aging in a place where they felt comfortable and at home, and how this allows them to have control over their daily lives and make their own choices about food, housing and activities: “Yeah, I do what I want, when I want, and how I want” (73-year-old-woman).

Figure 5

Market: being free to decide.



Note: V3-C1.2. Photo 4

These different components contributed to a sense of control for the participants. Additionally, being in an affordable and stable place allowed them to be somewhat financially free, as well as living in a safe neighborhood with access to different services and transportation, about this, one of the participants (63-year-old-woman) said: “I feel safe going anywhere. Especially with- I have a car. And I love the building.”

Different objective and subjective factors within the built environment are closely linked to emotional place-attachment and build place-identity in older adults. According to the experiences captured through the different interviews in the AIRP Project, these factors can be summarized as: participants’ satisfaction with their living place, including accessibility, affordability,

stability, aesthetics, and opportunities for personalization; autonomy and choice to do as they please; a sense of safety and privacy that allows for greater social integration within the housing and the community; and, finally, a sense of control. Place attachment and place-identity are good predictors of the social well-being of older adults (Pouya et al., 2017), thus there is a need for more research on place attachment and identity as it links to housing for older adults, especially housing precarious older adults to help with the development of new promising practices that are affordable and stable and allow older adults of all ability, socio-economic backgrounds to age in the right place.

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