

By Mary Lou Norton

FWIO Theme - 1999

International Year of Older Persons



International Theme:

"Towards a Society for All Ages"

The theme International Year of Older Persons (IYOP) was chosen to recognize that the world's population is aging and that such a change in demographics holds a special social, economic and spiritual significance.

Over the next few years, the average lifespan worldwide will increase by almost 20 years. At the same time, the proportion of older persons (defined by the United Nations as 60 and over) will increase from 1 in 14 to 1 in 4.

Check out the following Internet sites for program ideas:

International Project on Rural Aging, 1997-2000
<http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/som/ctr-on-aging/rural.htm#united>

United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development
<http://www.un.org.esa/socdev/iypop>

US Department of Health and Human Services
<http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/international>

Also, review recent and future issues of *The Countrywoman*, the Associated Country Women of the World magazine.

National Theme:

"Canada, A Society for All Ages"

This theme was developed by representatives of the federal, provincial and territorial governments in consultation with seniors and senior's organizations. Today, Canada's seniors comprise 12 percent of the population; this figure will double in the next 40 years.

The objectives of the Canada Coordinating Committee include:

- enhancing the understanding, harmony and mutual support across generations
- increasing recognition of seniors contributions to their families, communities and country
- helping Canadians understand how individual and societal choices and decisions made today will affect individuals and our society in the future
- encouraging all sectors of society to be responsive to a diverse and aging population in a rapidly changing world
- creating the potential for aging related products, technology and services

Have a look at the following sources for program ideas:

Canada Coordinating Committee for the International Year of Older Persons
 web site: <http://iyop-aipa.ic.gc.ca>

One Voice - The Canadian Seniors Network
 web site: www.crm.mb.ca/scip/option45+/bureau/onevoice.html

Canadian Association of Retired Persons
 web site: www.fifty-plus.net

Health Canada, Division of Aging and Seniors
 web site: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines>
 Phone: (613)954-5815 Fax: (613)957-1176
 Email: seniors@hc-sc.gc.ca

Provincial Theme:

"A Province of All Ages"

This theme provides Ontarions with a unique opportunity to work towards a province that recognizes and addresses the needs, aspirations and contributions of people of all ages. Each MPP has been asked to establish an IYOP Community Committee, co-chaired by your MPP and a local prominent senior, with at least three other representatives of local seniors.

Currently, Ontario has 1.45 million people 65 years of age. This is 12% of the population. By 2021, almost 18 percent of Ontario's population will be over 65.

Sources of program information:

Ontario Seniors Secretariat
 Phone: 1-888-910-1999
 Phone - Toronto: (416)327-0510
 Fax: (416)326-9338
 IYOP Web site:
<http://www.gov.on.ca/health/iypop>

Ontario Community Partnership Projects Program
 Ferguson Block, 6th Floor
 77 Wellesley St. W., Toronto ON M7A 1R3
 Phone: (416)326-7076 Fax: (416)326-7079

United Generations of Ontario (UGO)
 Phone: (416)426-7115
 Web site: <http://www.intergenugo.org>

Contact your Local MPP's office.

Women's Institute Involvement:

Participate and recognize the International Year of Older Persons as the theme for FWIO programming for 1999-2000. Things you can do:

- recommend to your municipal council that this be the theme for your community this year
- become involved with your local IYOP Community Committee
- make use of the IYOP logo on your program, displays, brochures, etc.
- ask your local council to form a committee to enhance and improve life for seniors in your community
- advertise all Women's Institute events with the IYOP Community Committee
- network with local organizations, committees, agencies, etc., to promote WI as a partner and make known the needs, interests and talents of older persons in rural Ontario
- honour older persons in the WI membership and community with a plaque, certificate or special gift
- have your PRO initiate profiles of and stories about local seniors
- initiate IYOP projects and competitions with children, youth, parents, neighbourhoods, etc.
- purchase and present a Women's Institute history book to members with a 9 in their year of birth (ie. '29, '39, etc.)
- add a new section to the Tweedsmuir history recognizing the contributions of community residents of all ages

Source: *IYOP 1999 Community Kit*

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