

Seniors

Invitation to join TV production

Seniors for the Future

Montreal, March 7, 1989. A widespread power failure affects thousands of Montreal-area residents during a spell of record low cold temperatures. Among those affected are three elderly sisters sharing an apartment. The only source of heat in the apartment is a gas stove in the kitchen. Other than the stove there is no heat, light or hot water and all the elevators have ceased working. The temperature in the sisters' apartment is 15 degrees. The power failure in the building lasts for 25 hours.

If you are a senior, would you have been prepared for such an emergency?

Aside from power failures, Emergency Preparedness Canada (EPC), the agency responsible for co-ordinating federal civil emergency planning has calculated that more than 60 types of emergencies can and do happen in Canada. The one common denominator in all these emergencies is that the first line of defence is always the individual and seniors are no exception.

Seniors are an independent, resourceful group, who, to a large extent, can look after themselves. In fact, according to Statistics Canada, 91 per cent of the 2.4 million Canadians aged 65 or over live at home. This is not to deny that some seniors do have handicaps and need special help, but no more than other segments of our population such as the visual or hearing impaired, the developmentally handicapped or those with severe physical disabilities. The key to emergency preparedness for seniors is to ensure that they have a voice in identifying their own needs and

play a part in planning the services needed to cater to those needs. Emergency preparedness for seniors also calls for communities to be aware and responsive to those needs.

SELF-HELP FOR SENIORS

Like other Canadians, there are a number of precautions seniors can take to ensure their well-being and to help others in an emergency:

Always keep a battery-powered radio, flashlight and spare batteries on hand. In many emergencies telephone lines and power may be the first thing to go and a radio will be your only link with the outside world.

Make sure that you know how and where to turn off your utilities (e.g. gas, water, electricity).

If you use medication or specialized medical equipment (e.g. inhalers, eyeglasses, hearing aid batteries, etc.) make sure you have an extra supply on hand at all times.

Always keep on hand an emergency survival kit containing food, sleeping bags, medication, first-aid kit and bottled water. Rotate food and water to ensure freshness.

Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers (e.g. fire, police, ambulance, poison control etc.) posted in a prominent place.

Take a first-aid course either through the Red Cross or St. John Ambulance.

If you ever have to evacuate your home make sure you have an evacuation kit containing a flashlight, radio and batteries,

important papers, identification and cash, medication, mobility aids, clothes, sleeping bag and food.

In an emergency use the telephone only if absolutely necessary. Chances are emergency crews will need all available lines.

IF YOU LIVE ON YOUR OWN

Get to know your neighbors. Explain that in an emergency you may not be able to get out of your house or attend to your medical needs.

Get someone to check on you during an emergency. Ideally you should make these arrangements with more than one neighbor so that there is always someone available, night or day, to check on you should an emergency occur.

If you are still-working or if you do some form of volunteer work, familiarize yourself with your employer's or your volunteer agency's emergency plan. Make arrangements with co-workers for any special help you may need.

If you have impaired mobility, hearing or vision the above advice is doubly important.

Seniors who would like more self-help advice on what to do to prepare for emergencies, or who would like to play a more active part in community emergency planning are advised to contact their provincial emergency measures organization or municipal emergency planning officer for further information.

Seniors should prepare for worst

By FLORENCE WILKINSON

It has been some time since I wrote about what goes on in a group to which I belong - Halton Seniors TV Productions. Recently, one of our cameramen and I taped an interview with Mr. Richard Marshall and Mrs. Betty Logan on the subject of Grandtime - Seniors in Halton Board of Education Schools. Mr. Marshall works regularly in a school in Oakville, and Mrs. Logan is the Facilitator for the program.

This program - Grandtime - has been on the books of the Halton Board for a couple of years, but so far is not that wide spread in usage. The interview which was done will appear on our program which will be on Cable 4 the second and third Wednesdays of January. (Our usual time is the first and third, but owing to holiday programming will be changed for January only.)

Besides meeting the two people who are involved in the program we also had the use of a tape to include in the interview. Any group which wishes to know about the program may contact Mrs. Logan at 1-416-634-8495, and she

will arrange for a time that a presentation may be made. The presentation is usually in the form of viewing the tape and then a panel of people who have been involved in the program, who will answer questions from the audience.

There is a brochure with information, and volunteer application forms at the Recreation and Parks Department of the Civic Centre for any who would like to sign up right away. I think the forms are self-explanatory. However, you would get a lot of information by watching our TV program as well.

One of the remarks which I found interesting was from Mr. Marshall - "You just invite us to your Centre whenever you want us to come..." I had to explain to him that Georgetown did not have a centre; we have quite a few seniors groups, but so far no centre through which all may be co-ordinated.

The first step in getting such a program going in the town is for seniors to register. Then the Facilitator has names to offers to

the schools. Since this is a program under the Board of Education one realizes that the primary purpose is for aid to children, but there are lots of other benefits from it as well. This is the kind of information which a presentation would bring to your group. As far as the senior goes, he or she says what time, what place, what skill, he or she is able to offer - all this is on the volunteer application form.

Our group, Halton Seniors TV Productions, is always looking for interested members. There is a chance to use the cameras, to do interviews, to give the news or just give ideas and advice about what programs seniors might like to view. We meet the first Tuesday of the month at Acton Social Services and the third Tuesday of the month at the Trafalgar Road offices of Halton Hills at 9:30 a.m.

I look forward to meeting some of you who may accept this open invitation, and do hope that there are those who might like to become part of the Grandtime program.

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