

# Seniors centres begin adjusting to new future

Continued from pg. 1  
promoting a healthier life style.

"We know this wave of boomers is coming and that we must move to health and wellness type of activities," said Krever.

But, Halton Hills's two seniors centres are facing a space crunch.

As the centres' membership grows so does the demand for the use of space.

Already with a membership of 854 in 2007—a 12 per cent increase from 2006—the Georgetown Seniors Centre is using 80 per cent of its 7,300 sq. ft. leisure centre during daytime hours and 30 per cent during evening hours.

Similarly, the Acton Seniors Centre is experiencing a 9 per cent growth to 340 members in 2007, using 94 per cent of its 2,400 sq. ft. space during the day, and 29 per cent during the evening. Plus, seniors programs account for 30 per cent of the usage during the daytime of the adjacent community hall.

The centres are shifting programs to other locations to ease this capacity crunch.

"Both the centres have very limited opportunities for program expansion in their current facilities," said Krever, adding that both are below the provincial average in space allocation based on membership.

"We recognize that we have a shortage of space, and that the boomers will impact on how we'll be looking at our space," said Krever.

That includes fulfilling some of the recommendations within the 2007 Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan:

- to provide additional space, including a lounge at the Gellert Centre, as part of its second phase
- to work with the Acton Seniors Centre to develop a feasibility plan to expand the centre or expand the use of the adjacent community hall.

- to maintain the existing lease on the Georgetown Seniors Centre space, until a cost/benefit analysis has been done. That lease is up in September 2009. The centre is also being renovated this year.

- to work with community groups to ensure that programs are being provided for the 'new senior'.

As well, the two executives of the Town's two centres have been meeting regularly to investigate joint programming and services and to build a strategic plan to meet the needs of seniors now and the boomers to come.

The plan will be developed and implemented over the next three to five years, with emphasis on membership development, creative programming, revenue generation, promotion and future facilities needs.

Another update on the seniors centre planning is expected to be presented to council sometime in the fall.

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