

Timiskaming
Seniors' Centre
Without Walls
Executive Summary

October 2019



Services de santé du
TIMISKAMING
Health Unit

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Janet Smale and Lorna Desmarais. For further information, please contact Amanda Mongeon, Program Manager, Timiskaming Health Unit at 705-647-4305 x 2264 or mongeona@timiskaminghu.com.

The Timiskaming Health Unit would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to this report:

Celine Butler, Epidemiologist

Citation:

Timiskaming Health Unit (2019). Timiskaming Community Food Action Evaluation, prepared by Janet Smale and Lorna Desmarais. Temiskaming Shores, ON.

Executive Summary

Background

In 2018 the Timiskaming Health Unit received funding from the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation's Spark fund to hire a program coordinator to implement a seniors' social engagement initiative entitled the Seniors Centre without Walls (SCWW) program. This program was run in Timiskaming through Timiskaming Home support in collaboration with the Timiskaming Health Unit. The SCWW program aimed to reduce the feeling of loneliness and social isolation among homebound seniors and adults with physical disabilities aged 55 + in the Timiskaming region using a free conference call type platform to engage participants.

The program was offered to participants from February 2019 – September 2019. An evaluation of the program was conducted to determine if the program had met its objectives and to learn how the program may be improved as funding for future sustainability is explored.

Method

The Timiskaming health unit in consultation with partners lead the development of the SCWW evaluation plan. The evaluation plan underwent ethics review by the Health Unit ethics committee and received evaluation approval. A telephone based survey was developed by the Health Unit using Survey Monkey. A total of 42 individuals agreed to participate in the survey. Telephone interviews were conducted in July of 2019.

Survey data from each participant was collected and recorded in Survey Monkey. Of the 42 individuals who consented to participate in the survey, 31 completed the survey. A total of 2 survey calls were conducted in French. In August 2019 THU staff analyzed the survey results. Findings from the data analysis can be found in the results section of this report.

Results - Highlights

Participation

- A total of 73% of seniors who are registered with the program had participated in a call.
- 48% of participants attend every session they sign-up for

Calls

- A total of 65% of participants were satisfied with 10:00 am calls while approximately three quarters (74%) of participants were satisfied with 2 pm calls
- A total of 87% of participants chose they liked to access the program by telephone best followed by some face-to-face sessions (37%) and then by accessing the program by computer (20%)

Topics

- The top three topics survey participants identified they like to talk about were history (69%), health and wellness (66%) and good news stories (48%)

Services

- A total of 39% of people who learned about new services through SCWW answered yes services helped them take care of themselves and 13% had used the new service

Participant's thoughts about the SCWW Program

- Participants were asked a series of questions to see if they agreed or disagreed with specific statements about the SCWW program. Results showed 71% of people agreed they enjoyed participating in the SCWW calls and agreed activities were mentally stimulating
- Almost all participants (97%) would choose to stay in the SCWW program and a total of 84% of participants responded yes they were happy with the program
- Many participants (58%) felt like they belonged to a community because of the program, had something to look forward to and felt better because of the program (65%)
- A total of 81% of the survey participants too felt the SCWW program provided them with something they don't get anywhere else
- When asked how the SCWW has changed their lives a number of people shared the SCWW program gave them a social outlet to meet more people and feel connected to others

Loneliness and Isolation

- After the SCWW program, 65% of people said they were not lonely after the program
- 62% of SCWW participants said they were not isolated after the program

Marketing

- When participants were asked how they heard of the SCWW program, 68% of people heard about the SCWW through either a presentation, an event/meeting including the Diners Club, Spring Fling and fibromyalgia group meeting or at a seniors centre including the Golden Age Club.

Limitations

When interpreting the results of this survey, the following limitations should be considered. Survey results overall were subject to several form of bias often inherent with survey application including the following:

- *Self-selection bias* – survey participants were not randomized in their response to participate in the survey
- *Social desirability bias* - individual response may have been altered by participants desire to be viewed in a positive light
- *Non-response bias* – individuals who chose not to be part of the survey may have been those who held differing views of the program than those who did participate in the survey
- *Recall bias* – survey participants may have had difficulty remembering past events to refer to when answering survey questions and may have been influenced by other events which could influence data accuracy and alter response to survey questions

Despite limitations the survey participation rate was still considered good and data collected reflected the opinions of the target population.

Recommendations

Call Times

- 10:00 am and 2:00 pm calls work for the majority of SCWW participants. Keep providing calls at these times

Topic Preferences

- Keep offering history, health and wellness topics and good news stories as the top 3 topics of interest for participants

Program Services

- Keep sharing information about services through SCWW calls to help seniors

Program Overall

- Do keep running the SCWW program, 97% of survey participants planned to stay in the program and felt their quality of life had improved because of the program

Program and Social Aspect

- Continue running the SCWW program and ensure the social connections remain at the forefront

Program and Delivery

- Continue offering the SCWW program by telephone (87% agreed telephone was best) and consider hosting some face-to-face sessions as a part of the program
- Ask participants periodically what can be done to improve the SCWW program over time to ensure optimal program delivery

Marketing

- Continue to market the SCWW program to seniors through targeted presentations (45% of participants heard about the program this way), followed by events, seniors centres and existing social groups as well as through existing seniors service providers including Timiskaming Home Support and CSCT

References

¹ Statistics Canada. 2017. **Timiskaming, DIS [Census division], Ontario and Ontario [Province]** (table). **Census Profile**. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 20, 2019).

² Statistics Canada. 2017. **Temagami, MU [Census subdivision], Ontario and Nipissing, DIS [Census division], Ontario** (table). **Census Profile**. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 20, 2019).

³ Statistics Canada. (2012). *Timiskaming, Ontario (Code 3554) and Canada (Code 01)* (table). *Census Profile*. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.

<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed October 29, 2019).