



Basic Income

Affordable Housing

Senior Tag Team

Senior Tag Teams:

*“The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”*

- Portia, from The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare

Sometimes we can blame ourselves for the choices we make: We have some power to change them!
Abuse by someone close? – we have few choices
Societies' inequities: No choice at all! We have to throw ourselves on the mercy of others!

Here's a BIG IDEA!

a Senior's Hot Line or Senior's HelpPhone line And more!

CARP has already called on the Government to take action in the development of [a cohesive national strategy to tackle elder abuse](#) and among other critical recommendations called for a Senior's Hot Line – In fact it was # 1 of their recommendations:

“Elder Abuse Hot Line – single point of first contact: 911 or a 1-800 line – widely known across the country, with the capacity to re-direct to local service agencies, and sensitive to diverse cultural and linguistic needs. 911 already has this capability but needs to be assigned this mandate and local service agencies must exist and be properly resourced. “

the Kids HelpPhone line:

Take for instance the effectiveness of the Kids HelpPhone line. It works extremely well across the country and costs the government \$0! And we know that it is enormously helpful for children in distress or crisis.

The kidHelpPhone works well because it is simple – one easy to remember number, and because it gets instant feedback. If a child is in crisis and asks for help, he or she absolutely requires instant communication. So does anyone else in crisis, so why not seniors too?

Kids Help Phone (*Jeunesse, J'écoute* in French), is Canada's only free, professional counselling service available for youth in every Canadian community. It provides anonymous phone and online counselling and referral and information services for children and youth. Founded May 16, 1989, the service provides counselling to youth who seek it by calling a toll-free number or posting anonymously on their website. – Source: Wiki Pedia

About Kids Help Phone

Kids Help Phone is a Canadian and world leader, known for its expertise in providing vital, innovative counselling services to children and youth in communities across Canada. Since 1989 it has offered children, teens and young adults a critical lifeline of hope and support, through its free, anonymous and confidential service. Kids Help Phone's professional counsellors support the mental health and well-being of young people ages five to 20, in urban, rural, and remote communities, by providing one-on-one counselling, information and resources online and by phone, in English and French. Kids Help Phone's internationally recognized, award-winning websites offer online counselling forums and engaging, therapeutic games, tools and information to encourage resilience and self-care. A community-based national charity, Kids Help Phone relies on community and corporate support for the majority of its funding. We're there for the 6.5 million young people in Canada*, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in English and in French. *Source: Statistics Canada (2012)

Amazingly it does not cost the tax payer a single cent. It is all managed by volunteers and funded by targeted fundraising efforts Like the Big Walk held in May across the country

News Flash!

“Canadians supporting young people's well-being: More than \$3 million (and counting) raised for Kids Help Phone through the Walk so Kids Can Talk presented by BMO

10,000+ Canadians participated in annual fundraising event; donations accepted until May 31, 2014

TORONTO, May 7, 2014 /Canada News Wire/ - In more than 25 communities across the country, Canadians showed their support for young people's mental health and well-being on Sunday, May 4 through their participation in the Walk so Kids Can Talk presented by BMO. Benefiting Kids Help Phone, the five-kilometre annual event brought together more than 10,000 kids, adults, families, schools, community organizations, and companies who together raised more than \$3 million – and counting, as fundraising will continue until May 31.

"More than 500 young people reach out to Kids Help Phone each day to find the help and hope they need, in the ways they most want to receive support," said Sharon Wood, President and CEO, Kids Help

Phone. "We're so grateful to Walk participants, donors and sponsors for their support, which ensures that children and youth have a place to be heard 24/7 and can receive confidential, anonymous and non-judgmental support from professional counsellors for any problem, big or small."

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Kids Help Phone and the start of its telephone counselling service – a service that has grown and evolved to meet kids where they're at, which today includes web-based options like Ask Us Online (web posts), Live Chat (online, real-time chats), and Resources Around Me, an online, map-based tool youth can use to search for and locate trusted resources in their area. As a charitable organization, Kids Help Phone relies on community and corporate support for the majority of its funding, making events like the Walk absolutely critical."

The KidsHelpPhone is successful because everyone gets behind it. It is a simple yet effective idea. The print is simple and large. The telephone number is simple to remember. It is a simple friendly logo, and one that encourages contact.



This is precisely what we need for seniors! A friendly logo, simple to read, easy to remember, easy to use, and with the potential for instant feedback!

A telephone hot line works well! Web surfing does not come naturally to seniors! They are not as sophisticated technically and cannot be expected to surf or browse online for hours trying to determine how to find help with their problems. A computer can be scary for some seniors and a telephone still a comfortable alternative. Now that doesn't mean that we don't have all information accessible online as well. It just means that the telephone option is one that might work easier for a senior, especially when they are already under stress.

Provide them a single easily recognizable telephone number and they'll use it. They need a direct line to a friendly sympathetic ear, a real person, as soon as they need it. We have to encourage them to call when they need help or information. It might well be a critical call for them. Most can't be tempted to talk to someone they know but might be tempted to talk to a real person when required. There is nothing like bearing your soul when you need to. They say that the sickness is in the secrets. And abused seniors have many secrets fearful to share them.

So yes, a Seniors HelpPhone line is a great idea, but here is where it develops into a new idea!

The next level:

What is new is a next level support system to the Senior's Help Phone line!! The idea of adding on another critical service, a further option for engagement, is new! Why not refer seniors to a Local Senior Tag Team comprising 2 or 3 key people from their community to follow up with them. – One of the key people could be one of the senior women living in suitePEAS cohousing! There is a great need for the women living in this kind of community to give back to that community. These women residents could even become natural volunteers to manage the Senior's HelpPhone line.

a Senior's HelpPhone line, developed at a national level with comprehensive information, resources and links is great But then what? A direct line to local teams who interact directly with a senior in need might just be a big great idea

LETT = Local Elder Tag Teams = a group of at least 3 local people who can run interference for any senior in need or crisis.

The group could function as a sounding board (that's all a senior might need to recover – a sympathetic ear); culturally sensitive support service; advice; counseling; and regular learning workshops. Each Local tag team could comprise a faith person, and qualified councillor, and a senior women like themselves (likely from suitePEAS co housing). Information would be regularly updated. Online databases would be regularly updated too for those seniors who would be more tech savvy.

Older people who suffer abuse and neglect are often reluctant to seek help. However, a trusting relationship between faithful older persons, support people with faith or social service backgrounds might make disclosure of mistreatment more bearable.

The women in suitePEAS housing would make ideal candidates to run the HelpPhone lines, as well as join Local Tag Teams to compliment the professionals. It would make the older women of a suitePEAS community feel valued and their efforts appreciated. An altogether win/win scenario.

In the meantime, suitePEAS women will be making major contributions to a local community via Rent a Nana programs; inexpensive catering; house or pet sitting; accompanying a family on a trip and acting as a babysitter; travel companions. They can also get involved with mentoring programs; scholarships; teacher support at schools; private lessons for kids (music, reading, a language, cooking etc.) - What a great way to get our seniors involved in their communities!

The Older Women's Network might also be a perfect catalyst for managing a Senior's HelpPhone line. They are already an unbelievable resource for older women. Perhaps OWN plus a social worker/support person, plus students (law, accounting, banking, financial planning, health etc.) could form a Local Elder Tag Team. They could be trained to gather critical information, research, counsel, and intervene if necessary. - Any funding of this program could in fact save us millions!

Upon investigation we find that there is a SeniorBustersProgram and that is most encouraging! The site we see was honoured to receive the RCMP Commissioner's Volunteer Award in recognition of their dedication of service and support for the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. Sadly, no telephone number to call can be found on the site and so the most critical factor in providing support appears to be missing.

The branding is a little misleading too. It sounds like the seniors are being busted. But we are pleased to see that the effort is being made to provide Seniors with a place to go in crisis. Can we not build on this program?

“SeniorBusters Program”

Seniors are targeted for many reasons: loneliness, lack of family support, age vulnerability and for health-related reasons such as Alzheimer's. Seniors are particularly susceptible to fraud schemes because their generation tends to be more trusting and less likely to end conversations. Fraudulent telemarketers build relationships with seniors and gain their trust before victimizing them. Ruined family lives, great financial losses and suicides have resulted from this brutal crime against the elderly.

Unfortunately, staff at the CAFC found they had neither the time nor the resources to follow up with victimized seniors so the Centre decided to enlist volunteer seniors who could help with the battle against mass marketing and identity fraud. The volunteers were able to relate personal experiences, provide support and establish rapport with elderly victims. The "seniors helping seniors" program was named SeniorBusters.

SeniorBusters was officially launched by Premier Mike Harris in October 1997. Since then, it has grown to a group of approximately 50 active volunteers. They come from diverse backgrounds and bring many different skills to the CAFC and its attempt to reduce the level of mass marketing fraud and identity theft. This is clearly a successful and effective long-term strategy in reducing the number of seniors victimized by fraud. SeniorBusters helps fraud victims by:

- Relating personal experiences, wisdom and expertise
- Providing strength to victims
- Providing emotional and moral support
- Being sensitive to the needs of seniors
- Contacting victims as often as needed
- Educating and re-educating seniors
- Obtaining suspect company information
- Referring victims to other appropriate agencies
- Developing personal relationships with victims
- Ensuring that seniors have a place to turn to when they need assistance
- Helping victimized seniors regain personal dignity”

Like the KidsHelpPhone it could be funded by strategic fundraising and staffed by volunteers!

SeniorBusters has only 50 volunteers. The KidsPhoneHelp line has a network of 10,000 volunteers! It is vital to build this network now! Before the needs and the crisis become unmanageable!

It takes time to build a volunteer army so no time can be wasted!

Isolation is one of the biggest challenges we face in trying to address potential abuse of seniors. A Senior's PhoneHelp line and a Senior Tag Team could be the perfect solution for all of that isolation.