



The Ontario Caregiver Coalition (OCC) is the voice of caregivers in Ontario. We advocate for recognition and support for the family, friends, and neighbours whose unpaid care is the hidden backbone of Ontario's health system. Our members include both caregivers from across Ontario and organizations that support them. For more information about the OCC and our work, please see our website at www.ontariocaregivercoalition.ca, or follow us on social media.

April 2025 Newsletter

At the OCC

Caregiver Day 2025: "The Scariest Thing: A World Without Caregivers"

We give our thanks to those who participated in our 2025 Caregiver Day Campaign, be that by contributing a photo and a story for us to share, by engaging with us on social media, or by recognizing Caregiver Day in some other fashion.

In honour of Caregiver Day falling on April Fool's this year, we decided to try something lighthearted and implemented a horror movie theme, titled "The Scariest Thing: A World Without Caregivers." Caregiver volunteers shared with us what makes them scream, be it financial strain, lack of respite support, or being put on hold for an hour just to get transferred and put on hold again. But caregivers really are afraid — with 9 million caregivers expected in Ontario by 2029, and no serious attention to policy changes, how can the province address the systemic problems facing caregivers in Ontario? By sharing these stories, the Ontario Caregiver Coalition urges the government to act now to address the pressures of caregiving as well as the pressures the systems caregivers rely on are under. Going forward, we will continue to use the attention generated by this campaign to highlight our Policy Briefs and demand a better Ontario for caregivers.

Interview with On The Ledge:

"Ontario's Silent Workforce — The Caregiver Crisis No One Talks About"

On Caregiver Day, the Ontario Caregiver Coalition sat down with Dave Trafford, host of Ontario's [On The Ledge podcast](#), to talk about the real, often invisible role of caregivers in holding together our fragile healthcare and social systems. Our Chair, Lauren Bates, along with Communications and Awareness Chair Daniel Nowoselski and Caregiver Collective Co-Chair Malene Stewart, spoke with *On The Ledge* about policy gaps, mental health and respite reform, the financial strain of caregiving, and the staggering increase in caregivers that Ontario will see across the next five years.

The OCC's conversation with *On the Ledge* is available on [Spreaker from iHeartRadio](#). The podcast can also be found on Spotify, YouTube, and Apple Podcasts.

Celebrating Volunteer Week 2025

Canada's National Volunteer Week will be April 27–May 3. This week is an opportunity to recognize the incredible work and invaluable impact of volunteers across Canada. The Ontario Caregiver Coalition is a grassroots organization built by and continuing to thrive because of our volunteers. Join us in thanking all of our incredible volunteers the week of April 27.

To celebrate the passion and dedication of our members, and to boost volunteer recruitment, the OCC will be running a social media campaign for Volunteer Week, with a theme of “We Volunteer Because We Care.” If you're a member of one of our committees and would like to share a photo and your personal reason for volunteering for the OCC, please reach out at ontariocaregivercoalitionocc@gmail.com. And please take a few minutes during Volunteer Week to like and re-share our social media posts.

March General Member's Meeting Recap: Caregiver Day, Provincial Election Debrief, and Guest Speakers

Our latest General Member's Meeting was held on March 20th, 2025. We were fortunate to have several thought-provoking presentations.

Malene Stewart, our Caregiver Collective co-chair, spoke about her caregiving experience and shared an article by Kyo Maclear for the Globe and Mail, titled [“It bears repeating: the stories we tell about dementia.”](#)

Dr. Christine Kelly, associate professor at the University of Manitoba, spoke about the Care Poverty Project she is leading. The OCC is supporting this project through participation on the Advisory Committee. The project aims to encourage comprehensive approaches to care at home, connecting structural issues to individual experiences of care poverty (situations where there is *not enough* care). Their team is currently gathering survey research through Statistics Canada, and will reach out with opportunities to get involved once they've published their findings.

James Janeiro, Director of Policy and Government Relations at the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, gave a debrief on the CCCE's [National Caregiving Strategy](#), which was launched in February. The strategy, which is outlined through five pillars, contains actionable public policy solutions to address the largest concerns faced by caregivers, care recipients, and

care providers in Canada. The CCCE will continue to call on the federal government to enact a National Caregiver Strategy.

We also heard from our Communications and Awareness Committee about plans for Caregiver Day 2025, and from our Research and Advocacy Committee about our provincial election activities and our next steps in contacting the new provincial government.

Thank you to all of those who were able to attend. We appreciated the lively discussion. OCC members will receive copies of presentations and a free version of the Globe and Mail article as a part of the formal meeting notes, which will be sent out in the next week.

Member Initiatives

Young Caregivers Day 2025

On May 22, 2025, the [Young Caregivers Association](#) will be hosting Young Caregivers Day. Young caregivers, aged 5–25, remain the hidden population of the caregiving world, often ignored by the health care system, educators, and other professionals. Through social media posts, email blasts and interviews, the Young Caregivers Association aims to bring awareness to those children, teens and young adults who help care for a loved one.

Please join us in liking, sharing, and engaging with the Young Caregivers Association on social media on May 22. You can find them on the following platforms:

Instagram: [@yngcaregiversassociation](#)

Facebook: [@YoungCaregiversAssociation](#)

X: [@yngcaregivers](#)

Linkedin: [Young Caregivers Association](#)

Canadian Young Caregivers Conference

The [Young Caregivers Association](#), in partnership with Toronto Metropolitan University, will be hosting their first-ever Canadian Young Caregivers Conference on May 3rd, 2025 at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. The conference aims to raise awareness for young caregivers across multiple sectors including healthcare, education, community organizations, and policy, as well as generate opportunities for meaningful change for young caregivers in Canada.

There is also a call for artists to submit digital works, drawings, videos, paintings, sculptures, and more, to be displayed at the Café Scientifique: Young Caregivers. Submissions should relate to the theme of caregiving, with preference given to pieces that focus on young caregivers. Some of the suggested themes include:

- Nurturing Bonds and The Heart of Caregiving
- Invisible Threads and The Journey of a Young Caregiver
- When Childhood Becomes a Responsibility
- Celebrating Resilience and Strength

For those interested in viewing artwork, Café Scientifique will be open both to attendees and the general public.

More information and applications to register for the conference or to submit artwork [can be found here](#).

Canadian Caregiving Summit

The [Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence](#) (CCCE) has announced their second [Canadian Caregiving Summit](#), which will take place from November 3–4, 2025 at the Fairmont Château Laurier in Ottawa. The two-day event brings together leading voices on care experience, research, and policy to find ways to make Canada the greatest place in the world for caregivers and care recipients. To register for the summit or to learn more, [visit their website](#).

Caregiver Awards for Excellence

The CCCE are opening nominations for the [Canadian Caregiving Awards for Excellence](#) on May 1, 2025. These awards recognize individuals, organizations, research and programs in Canada that have made meaningful contributions to the lives of caregivers, providers, and recipients in Canada. The awards will be distributed during the Canadian Caregiving Summit gala, taking place on November 3. To learn more about the awards, the awards categories, and 2023 award recipients, or to participate in nominations after May 1, visit their [website](#).

Of Interest

Changes to the Direct Funding Program, Canadian Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)

[The Direct Funding Program](#) for Self-Managed Attendant Services has made several important changes, including a shortened the waitlist for eligibility interviews and the ability for eligible applicants to start preparing to hire almost immediately after submitting an application. The program, which marks its 30th anniversary this year, enables adults living with disability to manage care based on their individual needs. It provides monthly funding to approximately 900 people in Ontario to recruit, hire and manage attendants to assist with daily life, and is ideal for individuals wanting more control over their personal care. For information on the Direct Funding program and eligibility, [visit their website](#).

Caregiver Contributions

In order to highlight the valuable work of our caregiver members, the OCC is introducing a new section to our monthly newsletter called “Caregiver Contributions.” If you’d like to contribute a written piece or visual art, or have any suggestions for the new section, please reach out to our general email: ontariocaregivercoalitionocc@gmail.com.

Caregiving

is a *fluid* experience
especially as you age
along with the one you care for.
Some days you are the Caregiver.
Other days you need to be cared for.
If you are lucky,
you and your partner experience
different care needs at different times,
But not always...
When you both have a need for care
at the same time...options are vital.
Remember to create an *extended family*
of friends, formal care providers, and/or loved ones
who will be available to support you both.
That way, you can regain your strength
to be there for one another again.
Like a river that sometimes changes course,
Caregiving is *fluid* as needs change and
as the circle of care grows.

Poem by Chris Cobus



If you have items that you would like to see included in future issues of this newsletter, please let us know. Sharing the accomplishments and activities of our members is part of our mandate. If you have received this newsletter in error, or no longer wish to receive it, please reply to this email to let us know, and we will remove you from our mailing list.