

Sunset Times Ontario

Grand Opening Memory Garden

District 26 Executive

Rosemary Robertson - Past President & Governance
Josie Groen - President, Benefits & Social Media
Elaine Sinclair - 1st VP, Secretary & Newsletter
Stephanie Kennedy - 2nd VP, Communications & Community Grant Lead
Kathleen O'Flaherty - Treasurer
Louise Gale, Lenora Zimmerman - Program/Social
Beth Courtney - Goodwill
Mary Bawden - Political Advocacy & RTO Foundation Rep
Cookie Wicks - Membership
Irene Kember - Recruitment & Retirement Planning Workshops
Evie O'Flaherty - Member-at-Large
Chona Dufresne - Member-at-Large



District 26 members who attended the Grand Opening of the Memory Garden in Keewatin on September 10, 2021. The memory garden project was the recipient of an RTOERO Community Grant applied for by Kenora District 26.

Volunteers Needed

Would you be interested in:

- organizing a group walk, or
- planning a social activity for our members?

Many hands make light work and most activities do not take much time.

Please contact Josie Groen at president26@districts.rtoero.ca if you would be willing to help out.

Message from the President

After a wonderful summer we have started off the new season with some terrific weather and everyone has settled into the usual fall routines. In June, there seemed to be a light at the end of the Covid tunnel and we were hoping that we would be able to resume in-person luncheons and meetings. Since this is not possible, our District executive is working hard to find ways to engage with our members. September saw the Grand Opening and Blessing of the Memory Gardens in Keewatin. Many of our members were in attendance for this. We also started a walking group and several people have joined in for walks through Lakeside or on the Tunnel Island trails.

We Salute Our 25-year Members!

We are hoping to have an activity in October at Anicinabe that will allow us to gather together outside. We will also be turning to Zoom again for some other activities as our spring Zoom activities were well-received. If you have some ideas for ways in which we can engage our members, please let us know.

In October the RTOERO Office will host a Special Meeting and Fall Forum via Zoom. Elaine Sinclair (1st Vice-President) and I will attend as Corporate Members and Stephanie Kennedy and Evie O'Flaherty will be the Alternates.

Our social committee would love to have some help planning activities. If you have some ideas or are willing to help for one or more activities, please let me know. It doesn't need to take much time and you don't need to attend our Executive Meetings.

-Respectfully Submitted by Josie Groen
president26@districts.rtoero.ca



RTO members participating in a walking group through Lakeside.

In June of 2021, eleven of our members were acknowledged as having reached this significant milestone. Each one received a note on special RTOERO stationery and an RTOERO lens cleaner. All 11 members were listed in the note: Bob Bartolo, Bart Bergman, Phil Burke, Dawn Clark, Phil Fafard, Sandy Gummesson, Sandy Irish, Judy Reynard, Dave Roberts, Bert Smith, and Bill Sokolyk.

In addition, we wanted to honour them further in the Newsletter this Fall by recording highlights they expressed through recent contact. Unfortunately, we were unable to connect with Bert Smith and Dawn Clark, and since Bob Bartolo was admitted to Birchwood Terrace a couple of months ago, he was unavailable for comments. I was grateful for Nancy Bergman's contributions on behalf of Bart who is in Pinecrest and quite unwell.

Bart Bergman: A little known fact is that Bart was an electrical engineer before going into teaching. During retirement he pursued photography and became very proficient. He loved building boats and furniture and even built and flew model airplanes. For 15 years they went to Arizona over the winter months and enjoyed travelling from there to see more of the USA. They've had three granddaughters born during retirement and have loved the freedom to enjoy them.

Phil Burke: He and Pat have loved calling Kenora home all these years. There's rarely a dull moment for Phil with his love of nature which informs his newspaper column 'Natural Acquaintances'. Many of us would have enjoyed Trylight's presentations of the two plays he wrote- 'Rats' in 2013 and 'Fashion Plate Bandit' in 2016. In between those years he wrote a play 'Itches and Tics' showcased by the Beaver Brae Drama Club. Along with a woodworking hobby he loves entertaining musically and we all know what a unique sense of humour he has.

Phil Fafard: In 2020, Phil and his wife Ronnie celebrated 60 years of marriage...a wonderful milestone. For the past 20 years they've been wintering in Brownsville, Texas and sightseeing out from there. They have 12 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren, who he was delighted to say, live here locally. About 5 years ago they sold their property on Norway Lake and moved into a condo in Kenora which they love and find so convenient for their current needs.

Sandy Gummesson: Retirement has afforded Sandy time to travel to places like Cuba, Hawaii, across Canada and overseas. She has also loved the freedom to be with friends and family. In fact, many of them gathered out at her camp to celebrate her 80th birthday in August. Just recently, she moved out of her home of 60 years and now resides in Benidickson Court which she absolutely loves.

Sandy Irish: One of the special highlights over these years was the Alaskan Cruise she and Jim took to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. She added that that was 7 years ago already. Becoming a grandparent in retirement has been special and he is 23 and lives in Rainy River.

Judy Reynard: Retirement has given her the freedom to connect with family and friends more regularly and it's even easier now that she's moved into a condo in town. Her greatest joy is making lap quilts for patients on 2nd East in our hospital. This endeavour grew out of her many hospitalizations and a desire to give back as a way of saying thank you for the wonderful care she received.

Dave Roberts: Dave credits his relatively good health to being able to spend most winters in Tucson, Arizona. He moved to Yorkton, Saskatchewan 10 years ago, the same year he married Patricia and during the summer months they venture out in their 5th wheel to visit family and friends. "Retirement has been wonderful," he says.

Bill Sokolyk: Over the first 10 years of retirement Bill was involved in a business venture printing t-shirts. Travelling extensively by car became their passion and they've managed to see Canada coast-to-coast, the Yukon and Alaska and even drove all the way to Puerto Vallarta one time. He says they've gone through half of the USA. When they weren't travelling, he took up bowling and curling but you realize when talking to him that the great outdoors is where he loves to be and family join him on his hunting and fishing expeditions plus the berry and mushroom gathering times. He's loved the freedom of 'no time constraints' that retirement has brought plus the bonding with grandchildren while they were very young and are now in their twenties.

-Respectfully Submitted by Beth Courtney,
Goodwill Chairperson

Welcome new members!

We are happy to introduce the following new members who have joined District 26 and shared their story with us:

Joan Kantola



On June 30th, I retired from my role as Superintendent of Special Education and Human Resources with the Keewatin-Patricia DSB. I was hired as a core French teacher in 1992 and have served in multiple roles throughout my career always maintaining responsibilities to support special education. Early in the 2020-21 school year, I was seconded by School

Mental Health Ontario as an Implementation Coach for the Northwest Boards.

I will continue to work privately in a part time role to support the Northwest Boards to implement their Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plans.

Once we can resume international travel safely, my bucket list is extensive. My husband and I look forward to the new "retirement flexibility" to travel outside of the March Break. In the short term I will enjoy some spontaneous trips to Ottawa to visit two of our girls. I also look forward to spending more quality time with family and friends and enjoy all that our great Northern outdoors has to offer.

Kim Pirie Milko



"The time has come the walrus said..."

My career in education as an education assistant has spanned over 20 years; all but for a few months being spent at Beaver Brae Secondary School. I had always intended to return to teacher's college but life had other plans and my time in special education proved to be very rewarding. Along with countless students who often taught me things as much as I taught them, it was indeed a pleasure to work with numerous teachers and support staff who I have

always considered my work family. I am going to really miss

everyone along with the youthful energy and creative spirit that resounds within the halls and classrooms of the educational environment.

I feel very proud and grateful to have watched my kids go through these halls and to now see one son on staff, along with some of his friends. There is no more obvious nudge to move on and make room for others than seeing your own kids and those they grew up with become the new generation of educators!

These past few years have given me a taste of transition due to Covid. I must say that I really miss the sounds of competition and excitement from the gym, up and coming talent in drama and musical performances, fun filled staff functions and all-round high school energy. I know that life is on the verge of returning to a new but more normal state of being but having said that, it's now time to take a turn on my path and explore other things. I love this quote: "often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else".

My definition of retiring is simply changing careers. I hope to continue to be active with my passion in photography which has been part of my being since I can remember, and I am excited about that! My love for family, the outdoors, adventure and travel fully compliments the shutterbug in me and my four little grandgiriies are icing on the cake!

Happy to be joining the ranks!



Brandon Woods

I am not sure where to start as the realization that I will not be returning to work in September is only starting to sink in. I have worked as a French teacher for 29 years and have been involved in the Lakewood Outers

Canoe Club, Cubs along with many other sporting clubs With my new found freedom I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the Cubs, walk my two dogs, canoe, fish and boat. I recently got my motorcycle license and purchased a motorcycle which I am excited to start driving.

I intend to do some home repairs. Since I am not very handy it will be a sharp learning curve, but hey, I have more time. Once the world slowly returns to normal, I look forward to travelling with Dy at non-peak times to see some of the world as well as spending more time with my daughter and stepchildren.

Kelly Sundmark

I spent my entire 29-year career at St. Thomas Aquinas High School and will certainly miss my many close friends and colleagues.

I am thrilled to be retired and am looking forward to spending time at my cottage, golfing, hiking, snowshoeing and skiing in the winter. I hope that when the world allows, I will be doing some travelling.



2021 Membership Survey Results - Kenora

The following are the results for our District from the survey conducted by RTOERO in the spring:

Number of Respondents: Overall - 8723 Kenora District - 27

Length of Membership in Years

	Overall	District 26
Less than 1	4%	15%
1-2 years	7%	0%
3-5 years	12%	7%
6-10 years	15%	19%
11-15 years	17%	15%
16-24 years	29%	37%
15 or more	15%	7%

Which district activities did you engage in?

Read District Newsletter	79%	82%
Read District Emails	71%	96%
Attend Online District Events	13%	22%
Follow District Social Media	12%	43%

District Voices (Comments from survey):

-Volunteers enjoy the social aspect of volunteering

-Just to say thank you for the leadership and communication by Provincial through this difficult year.

7 ways to make the most of your RTOERO insurance plan

1) Set up direct deposit

You can choose to have claim payments deposited into your bank account. To set up direct deposit, submit a VOID cheque to our insurance service administrator. Contact the service administrator at 1-877-406-9007 or pbclaimsonario@johnson.ca for more information.

2) Set up your account for online claims

Online submission is easy and convenient. Your first step is to set up your online claims account. Choose 'Register' in the 'new to this' section at insurance.johnson.ca/. Once registered, bookmark the online claims login page or find it anytime on the 'Claims' page in the 'Insurance' section of the RTOERO website.

3) Submit claims right away and file your receipts

Develop a habit of submitting claims right away so you don't forget. Claims must be submitted no later than the end of the calendar year following the year in which the expenses were incurred. Set up a place to store your receipts after you've submitted the claims. Photocopies of receipts are acceptable. Like other financial documents, it's best to keep receipts for seven years.

4) Explore your retirement health coverage

Health insurance can help you stay healthy. It provides peace of mind that your health needs will be taken care of

and gives you access to services to help you maintain and optimize your health and well-being. Familiarize yourself with what's covered so you can decide how to use your insurance to best support your health needs. Summaries of the extended health care plan, dental plan and hospital and convalescent care plan, are available on the RTOERO website at rtoero.ca/insurance/.

5) Call the claims team before major aids and appliances purchases

Your plan covers a large variety of aids and appliances, including wigs, hearing aids, CPAP units, orthotics and more. We suggest contacting the claims team before your purchase to review the eligibility and maximums and help you get the best value. Reach the claims team at 416-920-7248 or 1-877-406-9007 or pbclaimsonario@johnson.ca.

6) Carry your RTOERO benefits card with you

You'll need your benefits card at pharmacies and especially when travelling. It's a good idea to keep it in your wallet at all times, so you have our contact information close at hand.

7) Make sure you have proof of travel dates

You don't need to let us know when you're travelling, but you do need to make sure you have proof of your departure and return dates. That could be plane tickets and boarding passes, passport stamp, transaction receipts like gas, hotel or purchase that show travel leaving and returning to your province of residence.

Learn more

Read the full article on the RTOERO website at rtoero.ca/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-your-retirement-health-insurance-plan/.

Upcoming Vibrant Voices Webinars:

- Oct. 13: [Saving the forest...saving us](#) – featuring Dr. Diana Beresford-Kroeger
- Nov. 3: [Pathways to wellness for older persons](#) – featuring Isobel Mackenzie and Keri-Leigh Cassidy

FOUNDATION NEWS

October is Social Isolation Awareness Month

The RTOERO Foundation's fourth annual Social Isolation Awareness Month is this month. Every October, the Foundation raises funds and awareness about the issue of social isolation among Canada's seniors. This year we will move beyond raising awareness and begin to take action.

The Foundation has been working to address the issue of social isolation since 2018, but feedback from our members told us we needed to do more. That's why we are launching *Chime In*. Beginning Oct. 6 at 1 pm Eastern Time, the Foundation is hosting a weekly online chat called *Chime In* - a new, ongoing program designed to help RTOERO members connect with one another and enjoy regular social activity. This program offers an opportunity for members to engage in open discussion and social connection with one another. RTOERO members can visit rtoerofoundation.ca/chimein to learn more and to sign up for the program. For more information or help signing up, contact foundation@rtoero.ca or 1-800-361-9888 ext. 271.

We are also looking forward to kicking off Social Isolation Awareness Month with a free webinar featuring Dr. Samir Sinha on Oct. 5 at 1 pm ET. Dr. Sinha is director of geriatrics at Sinai Health and the University Health Network, director of health policy research at the National Institute on Ageing and chair of the National Long-Term Care Services Standard Committee.

To learn more about social isolation, please visit the Foundation's website at rtoero.ca/rtoero-foundation/get-involved/social-isolation-awareness.

Donating to RTOERO Foundation is easy and tax deductible

Member fees are not allocated to the RTOERO Foundation

We are sometimes asked if the Foundation is supported through a portion of membership fees. The answer is no. RTOERO does provide in-kind support to the Foundation in the form of office space. RTOERO auditors have confirmed that this is a standard arrangement for any association that is the parent of a charity formed under its umbrella.

Our programs are sustained through fundraising

While RTOERO and the Foundation are closely integrated, the Foundation is, in fact, a separate organization with its own board of directors and an operating budget that is independent from RTOERO finances. It is through the generosity of RTOERO members that we are able to fulfil our mission – to invest in research, ideas and actions that ensure a healthier future for all of us as we age.

We issue charitable tax receipts

We understand that giving back and philanthropy are top priorities when considering donating, but we also know that tax benefits are important. The RTOERO Foundation is a registered Canadian charity, and our charitable registration number is #848662110RR0001. We issue a tax receipt for every donation of \$20 or more. From the time your gift is processed, a tax receipt is typically mailed to you within seven days. Your tax receipt can also be sent to you via email if you prefer.

Donating is easy!

There are three ways to donate. You will receive a tax receipt for any donation of \$20 or more.

- Online at rtoero.ca/rtoero-foundation/donate
- Mail a cheque, payable to RTOERO Foundation, to 18 Spadina Rd, Toronto ON M5R 2S7
- Donate by credit card over the phone by calling 1-800-361-9888 ext. 271



Hope everyone is
enjoying the
beautiful fall season