

REVERA REPORT ON AGING

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# Living a Life of Purpose





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# Foreword

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Over the last half century, Canada has evolved into one of the most open, peaceful, welcoming, diverse and prosperous countries in the world. This was no accident. We owe our success to the choices our parents and grandparents made, their courage and commitment to live a life of purpose, and their determination to leave Canada, and the world, better for their efforts.

Yet ageism, the most socially acceptable form of discrimination, can make seniors, and their many contributions, invisible. This report, Revera's eighth on aging and ageism, celebrates the contributions seniors continue to make in Canadian society.

Through our research, we learned that older adults are leaders in our society when it comes to giving both time and money to the causes that matter to them. Causes like improving the environment, ensuring Canada has a strong public education system, and funding medical research to improve health outcomes.

Through this report, we show how older adults are active citizens and community members who remain relevant to Canadian society, and who continue to create a better world for future generations.

At Revera, we are privileged to serve and care for older people in our Retirement Residences and our Long Term Care Homes. Daily, we see their creativity, their intelligence, their energy and their vision. I am deeply grateful for their continued contributions and inspired by their spirit. I encourage all of us to continue to see seniors as relevant, and to recognize the incredible impact they have in our communities, our country and our world.

**Thomas G. Wellner**

President & Chief Executive Officer  
Revera Inc.





“Seniors built the world  
that younger generations  
will inherit and care deeply  
about its future.”

# Commentary

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I've always stressed the importance of living a life of purpose, and I think this is a particularly valuable message to share with Canadian seniors. There is a tendency to believe that older people are retired not only from work, but from giving back to their community. This is simply not true. As this report shows, seniors are a great value to our communities and are among the most giving individuals in Canada.

My purpose is to serve others. As a former mayor of one of Canada's largest cities, I had the pleasure to work with thousands of people that helped build our community. One of the things I'm proud of was being able to bring different people together to work on a common purpose of making our city the best place to live for families, young and old.

Seniors built the world that younger generations will inherit, and I can tell you as a senior myself, I care deeply about the future. We seniors have been the drivers of great change in society over our lifetime, and although progress has not always been straightforward, it has resulted in a better world. Older adults are willing and, most importantly, able to continue to make a positive impact in our communities, and I encourage you to make every effort to welcome their contributions.

**Hazel McCallion**  
Chief Elder Officer  
Revera Inc.

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# LIVING A LIFE OF Purpose

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Canadians over the age of 65 volunteer more hours and donate more money on average to the causes that are important to them than any other age group. Their dedication to giving back amounts to more than \$4 billion raised for charities<sup>1</sup> and other non-profit organizations, and nearly \$11 billion in economic value generated through volunteering.<sup>2</sup> Through their contribution of time and resources, older adults are providing essential programs and services, creating stronger social bonds in our communities and driving positive change in society.

Revera commissioned a national survey of 1,000 Canadians over the age of 65 and held roundtable discussion groups with 150 residents living in Revera's Retirement Residences and Long Term Care Homes across Canada to better understand why Canadian seniors give back, and how they hope to shape the future of our country.

We learned that older Canadians choose to give their time and money because they have a strong desire to make a positive contribution and share their abilities with their community. According to the national survey entitled the Report on Giving Back, 94 per cent of older adults believe that Canadians should do all they can to contribute

to making a better world. Additionally, 89 per cent of Canadian seniors believe that they can play a significant role in working towards solutions to the issues affecting the world. "When you retire, you're not giving up. You're simply changing direction," said a resident at Hollyburn House Retirement Residence in West Vancouver, British Columbia.

Canadians are some of the most charitable people in the world. According to a 2016 study by the Charities Aid Foundation, Canada has the third highest rate of charitable donations as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), behind the United States of America and New Zealand. In 2017, Canadians donated nearly \$9.6 billion to charities and other non-profit organizations. Incredibly, Canadians over the age of 65 contributed 42 per cent of all donations, equaling more than \$4 billion, with an average individual donation of \$2,500,<sup>3</sup> which exceeds the national average by a remarkable 40 per cent.

Canadians are also generous when it comes to giving their time to help others. In 2017, it is estimated that more than 13 million Canadians volunteered, contributing nearly 2.1 billion hours<sup>4</sup> to helping others or supporting causes that were important to them.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Derived from Table 11-10-0130-01 - "Summary of Charitable Donors", CANSIM (111-0001). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190208/t004c-eng.htm>

<sup>2</sup> The Conference Board of Canada. (2018). *The Value of Volunteering in Canada*. Ottawa, Canada. Retrieved from [https://volunteer.ca/vdemo/Campaigns\\_DOCS/Value%20of%20Volunteering%20in%20Canada%20Conf%20Board%20Final%20Report%20EN.pdf](https://volunteer.ca/vdemo/Campaigns_DOCS/Value%20of%20Volunteering%20in%20Canada%20Conf%20Board%20Final%20Report%20EN.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Table 11-10-0130-01 - "Summary of Charitable Donors", CANSIM (111-0001). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110013001>

<sup>4</sup> The Conference Board of Canada. (2018).



Volunteer Canada calculates the value of volunteers to non-profits and the economy at \$27 per hour. Accounting for 2.1 billion hours volunteered, this represents a total value of \$55.9 billion and approximately 1.2 million full- and part-time jobs.<sup>5</sup> Seniors are most likely to be considered super volunteers — that is, people in the top quarter in terms of hours volunteered.<sup>6</sup> According to the most recent data on the topic, Canadians 65 and older contributed 19.5 per cent of the total volunteer hours.<sup>7</sup> Assuming a similar participation rate in 2017, the value of Canadian seniors' volunteerism would have an economic impact of \$10.9 billion.

**“When you retire,  
you’re not giving up.  
You’re simply  
changing direction.”**

**Revera Resident**  
Hollyburn House,  
West Vancouver, British Columbia



**Residents at Revera's Granite Landing Retirement Residence**

<sup>5</sup>The Conference Board of Canada. (2018).

<sup>6</sup>Statistics Canada. (2010). *Report of the National Seniors Council on Volunteering Among Seniors and Positive and Active Aging*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/national-seniors-council/programs/publications-reports/2010/volunteering-among-seniors/page07.html>

<sup>7</sup>Statistics Canada. (2013). Table 45-10-0012-01 – “Volunteer rate and average annual volunteer hours, by age group”, CANSIM (119-0009). Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=4510001201>

<sup>8</sup>Turcotte, Martin. (2015). “Volunteering and charitable giving in Canada.” Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-652-



# How older Canadians give back

The Report on Giving Back shows that nine in ten older Canadians say they do something to support the charities or causes that are important to them – 82 per cent of respondents said they donate money and more than one third (37 per cent) said they volunteer their time. For charities and other non-profit organizations that rely on donors and volunteers, many of their top contributors of time and money are older adults.

Canadians over the age of 65 have a strong connection with religious groups. In fact, one-third of those who say they volunteer do so with a religious organization, according to the Report on Giving Back. Older adults are also more likely than younger Canadians to donate money to a religious organization. Health charities follow religious organizations as the second most popular choice (24 per cent) among seniors wanting to volunteer their time.

Many older adults choose to give back to society in informal ways, offering their time to help individuals directly, such as relatives, friends and neighbours. A resident at St. Lawrence Place Retirement Residence in Kingston, Ontario, said, “if someone needs your help you just put up your hand.”

In roundtable discussions, older adults who are no longer physically able to actively volunteer or who faced other

barriers such as the loss of a driver’s license or scheduling conflicts, said they still remain committed to giving back, however now make their contribution through financial donations or activities at their residence or home. Many participate in resident councils, which advocate for other residents, while others organize various programs for their neighbours and friends. For example, at Westney Gardens Retirement Residence in Ajax, Ontario, one resident puts her experience as a retired librarian to use by dedicating her time to keeping the library well-stocked and organized. At Hallowell House Long Term Care Home in Picton, Ontario, one resident sings in a band at special events for other residents, while another leads a Bible study group.

In conversations with Revera’s residents, many said they help others without the expectation of recognition. In one example at the Williamsburg Retirement Residence in Burlington, Ontario, a resident spoke on behalf of another to credit her direct involvement in the founding of the Juno Beach Centre Association. This association owns and operates the Juno Beach Centre in Normandy, France, which commemorates Canada’s participation in the Second World War. When asked why she did not mention her contribution she said she did not want to boast.



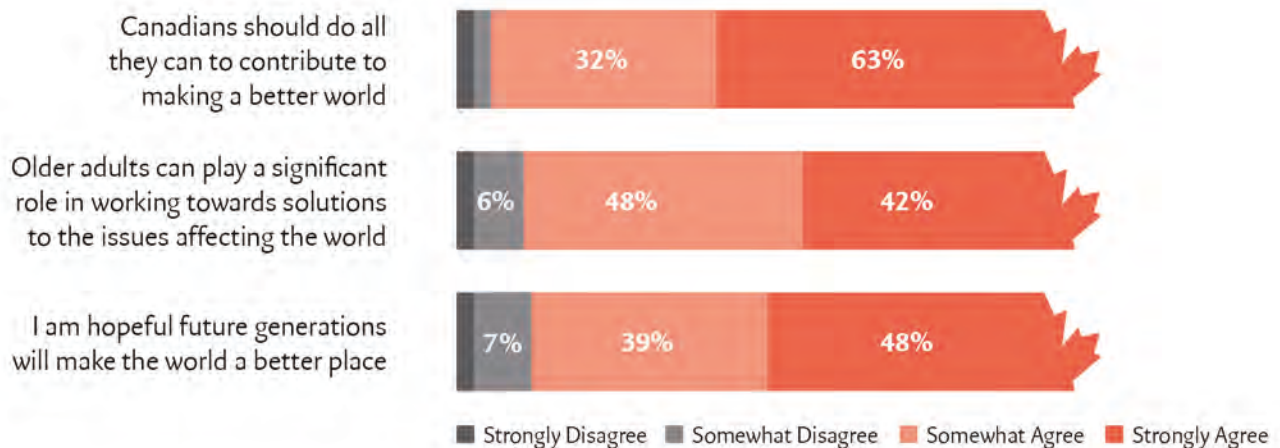


**82%**  
of Canadian seniors  
donate money to support  
the charities that are  
important to them

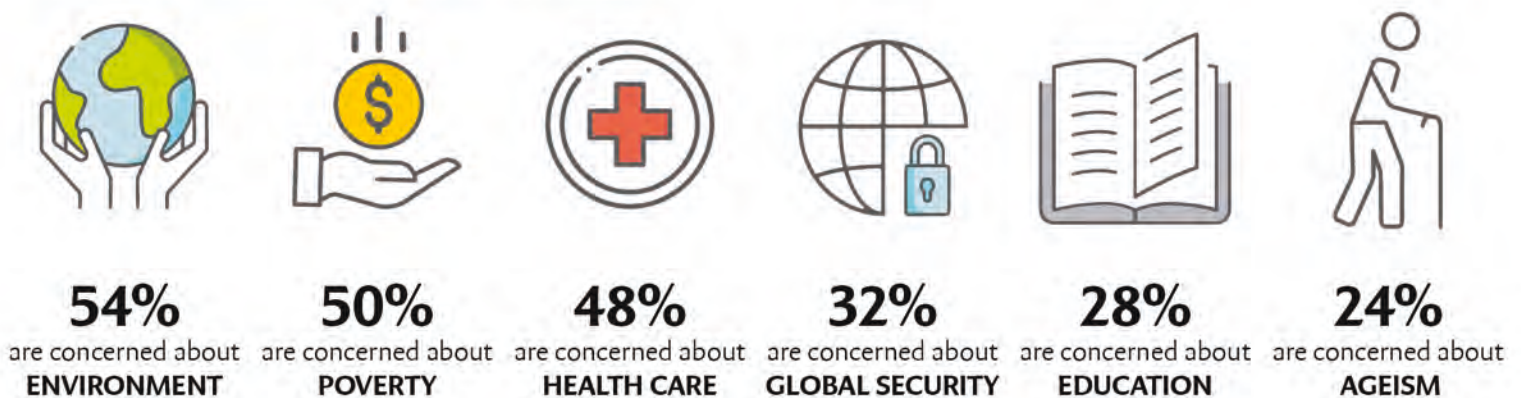


**19.5%**  
of all volunteer hours in  
Canada are contributed  
by older adults

## NEARLY ALL SENIORS BELIEVE THAT CANADIANS SHOULD DO ALL THEY CAN TO CONTRIBUTE TO MAKING A BETTER WORLD.



## 98% OF ALL SENIORS ARE CONCERNED WITH AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES.



# Creating a brighter future

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Canada's older population has overseen tremendous change over their lifetimes. This is the generation that led Canada, and the world, to a period of relative global stability following the Great Depression and the Second World War. They also laid the foundations for the inclusive society we hold dear today, advancing equal rights for people of different races, women, and members of the LGBTQ community.

Despite these changes, surprisingly, 56 per cent of survey respondents believe that society has changed for the worse. This was reflected in roundtable discussions where many said crime and public safety were top concerns, citing media reporting in their local areas. One resident at the Waverley and Rosewood Retirement Residences in Winnipeg, Manitoba, summed up this pessimistic view with humour, suggesting it is a generational rite of

passage: "My father used to say the world is going to hell in a handbasket, and we in this generation say the same thing. Every generation has this perception of the next."

But while just over half of older Canadians see things getting worse, 87 per cent say they are optimistic that today's young people are the key to a bright future. "Young people are not afraid to challenge leaders," said a resident at St. Lawrence Place in Kingston, Ontario.

This sentiment was echoed from coast to coast, with older adults in Winnipeg saying young people understand that they can stand up and have a voice. "Young people are the future," said a Second World War veteran living at the Waverley and Rosewood Retirement Residences. "I see them mobilizing and taking charge and I think, by God, there is a future for Canada right here."

## Conclusion: The value of giving back

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Contributing to the causes that are important to us, particularly through volunteering, has many positive benefits. Volunteering can help expand our social networks, improve access to information and reduce the likelihood of social isolation. It can also improve quality of life by fostering self-confidence and personal growth through concrete, positive contributions to the people around us and the communities where we live.

This is particularly true for older adults. Giving back allows seniors to maintain a social, collective identity, to find an outlet for their skills and abilities, and to make a tangible contribution to their communities.

That is, volunteering is an opportunity to be relevant. As one resident at Aspen Ridge Retirement Residence in Red Deer, Alberta, explained, "Work gives people a sense of purpose. When you retire you still need a sense of purpose. It's important to provide this opportunity to seniors."

As the population of people over 65 continues to grow, it is encouraging to know that older Canadians are actively seeking opportunities to continue shaping a better future for the next generations.





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“Work gives people a sense of purpose. When you retire you still need a sense of purpose. It’s important to provide this opportunity to seniors.”

Revera Resident  
Aspen Ridge Residence, Red Deer, Alberta

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# Methodology

## Leger “Report on Giving Back”

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An online survey of 1,000 Canadian seniors, 65 and older, was completed in March of 2019 using Leger’s online panel. The margin of error for this quantitative study was +/-3.1%, 19 times out of 20. Leger’s online panel has approximately 400,000 members nationally and has a retention rate of 90%.

## Roundtables with Revera’s residents

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In March and April of 2019, discussion groups were held at 12 Revera Retirement Residences and Long Term Care Homes from British Columbia to Ontario. Through these discussions with 150 residents, qualitative research was gathered to understand the causes older Canadians care about, why they care about them and how they contribute to those causes.



A few of the participating residents of the Arbutus and Hollyburn House Revera Residences, British Columbia.

# Statistics Canada

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Using the most current data available from Statistics Canada, Revera studied the trends of Canadians' charitable donations as well as trends on volunteering from the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating.

## Thanks & credits

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We are grateful to Revera's residents who shared their time and diverse insights into how they continue to live a life of purpose. We would especially like to thank the residents and employees of:

- Hollyburn Retirement Residence in West Vancouver, British Columbia;
- Arbutus Long Term Care Home in Vancouver, British Columbia;
- Aspen Ridge Retirement Residence in Red Deer, Alberta;
- McKenzie Towne Long Term Care Home in Calgary, Alberta;
- The Bentley Saskatoon Retirement Residence in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan;
- The Waverley and Rosewood Retirement Residences in Winnipeg, Manitoba;
- St. Lawrence Place Retirement Residence in Kingston, Ontario;
- Carlingview Manor Long Term Care Home in Ottawa, Ontario;
- Portobello Retirement Residence in Orléans, Ontario;
- Hallowell House Long Term Care Home in Picton, Ontario;
- Westney Gardens Retirement Residence in Ajax, Ontario;
- The Williamsburg Retirement Residence in Burlington, Ontario.

We would also like to thank all older Canadians for the incredible impact they make on our communities. We are inspired by their selfless dedication to giving back and ensuring a better world for future generations.



# About us

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Revera is a leading owner, operator and investor in the senior living sector. Through its portfolio of partnerships, Revera owns or operates more than 500 properties across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, serving more than 55,000 seniors. The company offers seniors' apartments, independent living, assisted living, memory care, and long term care. With approximately 50,000 employees dedicated to providing exceptional care and service, Revera is helping seniors live life to the fullest. The Revera Innovators in Aging Program is a platform for the company to invest in and scale innovations that improve the aging experience. Revera is investing up to \$20 million through the program to bring the most promising innovations to seniors. Through *Age is More*®, Revera is committed to challenging ageism, the company's social cause of choice. Find out more at [ReveraLiving.com](http://ReveraLiving.com), [Facebook.com/ReveraInc](https://Facebook.com/ReveraInc) or on Twitter [@Revera\\_Inc](https://Twitter.com/Revera_Inc)



[AgeIsMore.com](http://AgeIsMore.com)