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KWAG's Senior Programming Receives Funding from the Government of Ontario

Kitchener, ON. — Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG) is thrilled to announce funding support from the Government of Ontario's Seniors Community Grant Program for the 2025-26 year. This funding will enable the Gallery to further its mission of supporting the 55+ community.

KWAG has been awarded \$24,725 from the Government of Ontario to host [Create and Connect](#) workshops through fall and winter 2025-26. These workshops are designed to deliver socially responsive arts programming and community services, addressing issues of isolation and loneliness. Since fall 2024, KWAG's volunteers have reached almost 400 individuals in long-term care homes, libraries, and city-run community recreational facilities.

“This program is so wonderful. It gives back to the people in the community. It also gives back to me as a volunteer. There is something great about being in a room with people who are creating and connecting. I am not an artist, although I do love all things art – painting, sculpture, sketching, etc., and this program brings it all.” - Create and Connect volunteer

[Create and Connect's](#) free programming aims to sustain partnerships with community organizations that focus on the well-being of seniors while fostering an appreciation for learning and the arts. Through discussions with community stakeholders, including representatives from the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, Create and Connect combats the adverse effects that a lack of community engagement can have on individuals who are at risk or living with dementia.

Since 2010, KWAG has worked with Waterloo Wellington Alzheimer Society to develop programming specifically for seniors and their caregivers. With the collaboration of the Schlegel Institute for Aging at the University of Waterloo, programming was evaluated in terms of its impact, accessibility, and inclusivity since the pandemic. In 2024, the program was re-branded as [Create and Connect](#), acknowledging the mutually beneficial levels of engagement between the 55+ aged volunteers and participants.

“I might not know some types of art or understand the artist concepts, but I really enjoyed researching and discovering what I thought about it, and I could see the same curiosity in the participants. The art projects are [designed] for each person to discover themselves and discover something in themselves.” - Create and Connect participant

The Gallery recruits senior volunteers, emphasising peer-to-peer mentorship as one of the contributing factors to deepening bonds formed between volunteers and participants. Building on this foundation, volunteers work with staff and facilitators to gain knowledge about art practices, dementia-friendly training, sensory learning, and integrating the restorative benefits of art within the community. Workshops consist of tailored art activities in line with KWAG's exhibitions.

In early September, two volunteer recruitment information sessions are planned, one virtual, one in-person, for individuals looking to contribute to this socially engaging initiative. The Gallery welcomes individuals aged 55+ and will provide multi-session training to individuals wishing to join a community of individuals looking to foster interconnectedness amongst seniors in the community. No previous artistic experience is necessary.

To get involved or to arrange hosting a workshop, please reach out to createconnect@kwag.on.ca

About Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery

As Waterloo Region's leading public art gallery, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG) connects people and ideas through art. Its nationally acclaimed exhibitions and programs welcome all to be inspired and challenged through a deepened understanding of ourselves, our cultures, and our communities. For the benefit of current and future generations, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery collects, preserves, researches, interprets, and exhibits the visual arts. It offers dynamic public programs that inspire creativity and an appreciation of the visual arts in the Region and beyond. Established in 1956 and incorporated in 1968, KWAG is a non-profit organization open to the public and administered in the public trust. Admission is free.

KWAG respectfully acknowledges that we are located in Block 2 on the Haldimand Tract: land promised to Six Nations, which includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River. This is the traditional home of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee Peoples, whose resilience we honor by offering this Gallery as a space to reflect and learn from one another.

We are committed to reconciliation and ensuring that our Gallery's programs and Permanent Collection demonstrate more diverse, culturally relevant Canadian art and artists.

Accessibility: KWAG is an accessible venue. [Visit kwag.ca/accessibility](https://www.kwag.ca/accessibility) for more information.

Visit Us

Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 101 Queen Street North, Kitchener, ON N2H 6P7
www.kwag.ca

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Images: Create and Connect workshop, 2024. Photo by KWAG.

Funded by:



The Village of Winston Park (Kitchener) and The Village at University Gates (Waterloo).