

Workshop series aims to improve quality of care for elders in long-term care homes

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

AGING TOGETHER AS COMMUNITY

DOCUMENTARY AND DISCUSSION

IT IS NOT OVER YET is an immersive, life-affirming journey into the day-to-day rhythm of a controversial Danish nursing home for people with dementia, providing a rarely seen and uplifting experience of aging with dignity, grace and joy.



Our **PUBLIC DISCUSSION** is a chance to ask how we value 'aging' as a community and how we can work together on new approaches for extraordinary care.

Screening at 6pm **RSVP for FREE** **Discussion at 730pm**
www.ltcneedsyou.ca
705 457-2247

Donations Appreciated
Refreshments Provided

MASKS ENCOURAGED
APPRECIATED

Wednesday, June 22nd @ Lloyd Watson CC
Thursday, June 23rd @ Minden Lions Club
Friday, June 24th @ Haliburton United Church





By Nate Smelle

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the severity of several longstanding crises in Ontario that have been placed on the backburner for far too long. One of the most disturbing and tragic of these revelations was the horrendous living conditions found in many long-term care homes throughout the province. After being called to help the residents in seven of the worst affected long-term care homes experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks, the Canadian Armed Forces released a scathing report that provided insight into how the health-care system in Ontario is failing senior citizens. With the intention of using these lessons to improve the quality of care elders receive within the provincial long-term care system, the Haliburton Highlands Long-Term Care Coalition is hosting a series of film screening/workshops it calls, "Aging Together As Community." As one of the coalition's founding members, Bonnie Roe has played a key role in organizing the three events planned for next week. The first session will take place on Wednesday, June 22 at the Lloyd Watson Community Centre in Wilberforce. The evening's events will get underway at 6 p.m. with a screening of *It Is Not Over Yet*, a Danish documentary focused on a community-based model of elder care. Once the film is over, participants will break into smaller groups to discuss the value aging, and share options to institutional, for-profit care. The coalition will meet again the next night for a second film screening/workshop of at 6 p.m. at the Minden and District Lions Club; and, for a third time the following evening of Friday, June 24 at the Haliburton United Church. According to Roe, the idea for the Aging Together As Community series originated last fall when they were approached by David Barnes from Re:Think and Barnes Management Group to collaborate as a pilot project to facilitate community discussions. She sees the events planned for next week as a big step in moving the conversation regarding how we treat our elders forward. "The pandemic highlighted a broken system that has existed for

over 30 years," said Roe. "The time is now to look at alternative ways to support our elders with grace and respect." Roe said the coalition hopes *It Is Not Over Yet* will inspire participants in the workshops to explore the ideas and issues documented in the film during the group discussions. Reflecting on the many lessons learned about Ontario's long-term care system during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Roe said, "We feel that a key question to ask ourselves as a broader society is, do we truly value our elders? If we do, how can we justify the state of our long-term care system? Why has there been no political will to support our elders to live their final years with safe, healthy and dignified supports?" Those in attendance at any of next week's events will have the opportunity to discuss these type of questions and more, with their fellow community members after the film. With so many unforgettable lessons learned about the shortcomings within Ontario's long-term care system during the pandemic, Roe pointed out that there will be no shortage of issues to discuss and ideas to share. For example, acknowledging the atrocious conditions revealed in the Canadian military's report, she said it is critical that we act on their findings for the sake of our elders. "We were not prepared for a crisis even after SARS," explained Roe. "There was insufficient PPE and inadequate staffing and wages. As the horrific stories and deaths continued to be reported, the military were finally called in, and exposed what caregivers and families were saying, that their loved ones were lying in dried feces and vomit, dehydrated, and had not been bathed for weeks. Many died of neglect not COVID." Roe encourages everyone to come out and be a part of the conversation. She said their events have become a key stepping stone to begin sharing our thoughts as a community about how we want to age, what it could look like and to use this information to begin moving forward. "After the coalition processes what is learned from the Aging Together As Community sessions, Roe said they plan to approach the provincial government with "concrete suggestions" regarding how to ensure that all long-term care residents are being treated with respect and dignity. For more information, or to register for one of the coalition's upcoming events, contact Bonnie Roe at: 705 457 6579.