



HSIIP SUCCESS STORY #7

Ms. M*

PEER CONNECTOR PROGRAM

Since May 2016, YWCA Hamilton has been a contributing member of the Hamilton Seniors Isolation Impact Plan (HSIIP), a collaborative initiative to reduce social isolation among seniors in Greater Hamilton. The HSIIP helps ensure that isolated seniors are connected with existing services and social opportunities across the Greater Hamilton area.



The YWCA Hamilton Peer Connector recruits and trains peer volunteers to assist isolated seniors with friendly visiting, accompaniment in trips, and more. The Connector matches seniors with peer volunteers, identifies isolated seniors, assesses needs and opportunities and creates plans to link them to resources. The YWCA Hamilton Peer Connector also follows up to ensure seniors are anchored and sustaining connections.

Are you socially isolated? Do you know someone that is? Call 905-522-9922, ext. 316 to speak with a HSIIP Connector.

Ms. M's STORY*

Ms. M is a 58-year-old woman who was keen to make friends and become more social, but she faced a number of barriers that made it difficult to get out and active in her community. Ms. M has some physical health challenges (mobility and chronic pain) as well as social phobia. She felt that exercise would be a helpful way to manage these health conditions, but was nervous to try new things and worried about the cost of paying for programs. A Connector at Hamilton's YWCA met with Ms. M to discuss recreation options available to seniors in her area. She was eager to join a local senior centre after reading through the program guide. The Connector helped her access funds to cover the cost of bus tickets, the senior centre membership fee, as well as yoga and oil painting classes. She now participates regularly in swimming, social events at the senior centre, bingo and craft groups. Because of her involvement in a charitable knitting group, she was invited to attend the senior centre's volunteer recognition event. Ms. M now has a full schedule of activities, and friends she has made through these programs. She also knows she can call the Connectors with any questions about programs or services in the community. Ms. M says, thanks to the Connectors program, "I have a life now. I am not so alone anymore, I am very busy. I go to the senior centre ... and even if I don't feel like talking to people some days, at least I am not alone."

**names have been changed to protect privacy*

Learn more about the Hamilton Seniors Isolation Impact Plan:

WEBSITE:

<http://socialisolation.ca>

EMAIL:

socialisolation@mcmaster.ca



**Materials co-developed by YWCA Hamilton and Gilbrea Centre, McMaster University*

gilbrea centre for Studies in Aging