

EX8.1.69

YORK-FAIRBANK CENTRE FOR SENIORS
Deputation to City of Toronto Executive Committee - Thursday July 28th

Good Afternoon Mayor Ford and members of the Executive Committee, my name is Mary Salerno and I am speaking this afternoon on behalf of York-Fairbank Centre for Seniors Members, Volunteers and Board of Directors specifically addressing the recommendations put forth to this Committee on the reduction and/elimination of the Community Partnership and Investment Program.

This program is exactly what it states in its name. For our organization, it has been a Community Partnership between the City of Toronto and York-Fairbank Centre for Seniors for almost 30 years. A mutual investment in a diverse, aging community that benefits through social recreational programs, community development programs, snow shoveling and lawn care programs, recreational programs and community safety programs. But in turn allows residents of all ages volunteer possibilities, special skill building capabilities, community capacity development and fostering further partnerships and increased investment with individuals, private sector, local businesses, Provincial and Federal Governments and a number of Foundations and Associations.

The loss of any of this funding would be a devastating setback with a severe domino effect within an already indigent and disadvantaged district. It would affect the most vulnerable individuals within a neighbourhood with one of the highest rates of Seniors populations and with more than 30 cultures represented. Our Centre has a membership of more than 400 older adults and we service through our outreach programs, snow shoveling and lawn care programs and community development programs more than 3000 individuals, with those numbers increasing yearly as residents age. These programs allow Older Adults, 55 years of age and older especially high risk older adults, the opportunity to improve health outcomes and physical fitness, help in chronic disease management, decrease incidence of isolation and neglect, increase their probabilities of staying in their homes longer and continuing to be vital contributors to this community and this City's tax base, as many have been contributing for more than 20 or 30 years.

On a personal note, the lack of this funding would mean the demise of York-Fairbank Centre for Seniors to our Community. For me, it would mean, regressing to poorer health, depression, loneliness and isolation, which I said goodbye to in my early 70's. As a result of joining this outstanding Seniors organization which allows me the opportunity to participate in fitness and yoga programs, volunteer for various special events and intergenerational programs and become a Board Member.

It would mean being housebound, eating meals alone, being out of touch with people, losing my volunteer position and revisiting the doctor with numerous aches, pains and melancholy, due to lack of movement and community involvement. A type of being I do not look forward to.

There is no possibility that the Centre could provide the remarkable programs they do presently, nor keep their doors open without this City of Toronto partnership program. This wonderful Centre is a second home to many Older Adults within the Fairbank Community. Residents who have lost spouses or partners would not have a place to convene and socialize, many of our Seniors who partake in daily fitness, yoga, wellness and lunch programs would be housebound and ultimately institutionalized, local children and youth who partake in our intergenerational programs would lose a special relationship fostered with one of our Seniors and students and adults who provide snow shoveling and lawn care services for Seniors would lose their jobs.

Many times throughout the consultation process, as our Board members attended 6 consultation meetings throughout the City of Toronto, we heard residents continually state that no community programs should be affected through the budget cutting process especially programs that affected the most defenseless, at risk residents – children, Youth and of course, Seniors.

Mayor Ford, and members of the Executive Committee, many of you promised during your election campaigns that services would not be cut ... guaranteed and that taxpayers wishes would be heard. Well this is your time to listen, as a City without "community" is not much of a City.

I thank you for allowing me to address you this afternoon and hope that your decisions will be mindful of the fact that you are presently or will become Seniors one day needing these services and programs.