

## The Seniors Assisting Seniors Program

A benefit of having an engaged and dynamic volunteer base is the ability to utilize a workforce of committed people who will help execute the mandate of your organization.

Abrigo has a wonderful team of seniors who volunteer their time to assist other seniors who come to Abrigo for help.

The dedicated volunteers in our *Seniors Assisting Seniors* program help clients complete retirement forms, pension supplement forms and other related forms such as applying for drug benefits, Canadian citizenship and Canadian passports. They also assist in clarifying issues related to seniors' rights and obligations.

*Seniors Assisting Seniors* volunteers assist in March and April with our annual income tax clinic. With their help, a team of Abrigo staff members and other volunteers complete over 1,200 client tax returns each year.



## Providing our Seniors with the Support They Need



One strategic priority of the Abrigo Centre is to focus our efforts on assisting the growing seniors population in our community. Our seniors are a valuable resource that we need to attend to and nurture without fail. Abrigo is committed to identifying the best options or solutions for each individual client including our seniors.

Since 1990, Abrigo has assisted the women, men and children who turn to us for help and our programs and services for seniors will be there for you, a loved one or a family member when you need us.



### Abrigo Centre

1645 Dufferin Street, Toronto, ON M6H 3L9  
Telephone: (416) 534-3434

New Client Drop-in Hours: Weekdays 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Charitable Number 129515284 RR0001

For more information or to make a donation to the  
Abrigo Centre, visit our website: [www.abrigo.ca](http://www.abrigo.ca)  
Twitter: [@abrigocentre](https://twitter.com/abrigocentre)  
Facebook & Instagram: [/abrigocentre](https://www.facebook.com/abrigocentre)



## *Seniors' Programs and Services*



Reaching out to provide  
education, recreation,  
companionship  
and support.

## Seniors Recreational and Education Program

Group Vida e Esperança  
(Life and Hope Group)



For many that reach the golden years in life, this important time often comes with periods of loneliness and isolation. The loss of a spouse, loved ones or friends can be devastating. Family members moving on to other cities and limited financial resources can also make our senior years difficult. Occurrences of depression are on the rise and as our population ages, agencies like Abrigo are seeing more and more clients dealing with these issues.



A small group of volunteers initiated Abrigo's *Life and Hope Group* in 2010. They realized the urgent need in the community for a peer-to-peer support group. Since that day, their idea of

reaching out to seniors living in isolation and offering companionship and support has changed so many lives and has become a huge part of Abrigo's success.

## Out of the Darkness of Isolation and into the Light of Companionship

Membership in the *Life And Hope Group* numbers over 180 registered participants and is growing rapidly. Held on Abrigo's second floor, the program runs Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week. On average, 80 to 100 seniors participate in every session and the programming includes a variety of social, educational and recreational activities.



Activities available to participants include exercise classes, computer classes, art classes, dancing, health and financial information sessions, games such as bingo and field trips to local and regional attractions. Perhaps the ingredient most important to the success of this program is the opportunity to spend quality time with peers and build life-long friendships.

Many members of the *Life and Hope Group* actively give back to the community as well. They make visits to nursing homes during the holiday season to sing, dance and entertain residents. They also perform at local arts events including Portugal Day parade activities.

## The Benefits of an Active Life for Seniors

Here are a few reasons why seniors should stay active:



- **Improved quality of sleep:** Regular physical activity can improve length and quality of sleep.
- **Improved muscle strength and endurance:** Studies have shown that regular exercise, especially low to moderate level strength training, can reduce the decline in muscle strength and endurance in seniors.
- **Improved balance:** This will reduce the risk of falling.
- **Cognitive functioning:** There is evidence that regular physical activity can help postpone age-related declines in central nervous system processing speed and improve reaction times.
- **Empowerment:** Physical activity and exercise can give seniors confidence in their abilities and encourage them to remain active and involved.
- **Creating and enhancing friendships:** Older individuals can often find new friends and strengthen existing friendships by participating in organized activities and exercise programs.
- **Mental health:** Regular activity and exercise are beneficial in the treatment of several mental illnesses including depression.