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Celebrating

National Seniors Day

A DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE



seniors.gc.ca

Canada 

CELEBRATE NATIONAL SENIORS DAY

Every year on October 1, Canadians pay tribute to seniors—the men and women who have helped make our country what it is today and who continue to enrich our lives.

Why celebrate seniors?

Seniors have made—and continue to make—a profound contribution to Canada: at home, in the community and as part of the workforce. They represent a large and growing proportion of our population.

We can all think of a senior who has made a difference in our lives. They are our mentors, teachers, grandparents and loved ones. They are volunteers and role models. They have contributed generously, building our families, communities, workplaces and country.

Why get involved?

National Seniors Day is an opportunity to recognize the important role seniors play in our society. It's also a great way to connect with the community, network with contacts and raise awareness of issues that matter to seniors.

About this guide

This guide will help you make the most of National Seniors Day. It suggests ways to celebrate, offers planning tips and includes links to ready-made tools you can use to make your activities a success.

Whether you spend time with a senior or host an event for your entire community, celebrating National Seniors Day shows your appreciation for the contribution seniors make every day to Canadian life, from coast to coast to coast.

WHAT'S INSIDE

HOW TO CELEBRATE	1
STEP 1 – PLAN YOUR ACTIVITY	3
STEP 2 – PROMOTE YOUR ACTIVITY	4
STEP 3 – HOST YOUR ACTIVITY	5
YOU DON'T HAVE TO REINVENT THE WHEEL	6

HOW TO CELEBRATE

National Seniors Day is your chance to do something special for the seniors in your family, workplace or community. How you celebrate is up to you. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination. We've offered some suggestions to get you started. For more, visit our website at seniors.gc.ca and download our [Tips for Celebrating National Seniors Day](#).

Other seniors celebrations

October 1 is the day Canadians come together as a country to celebrate seniors. Some provinces, territories and municipalities also have their own seniors occasions.

Ideas to consider

For families

Get creative. Make a video, online photo album or traditional photo album with pictures of the important seniors in your life. You could also think about sending a video message or [electronic postcard](#).



Get together. Hold a family game night or dinner with the seniors in your family. Watch old family videos. Put on a slide show, or break out old photo albums. You could even plan a family reunion.

Reach out. Celebrating National Seniors Day doesn't have to be complicated. It could be as simple as phoning a grandparent or sending a letter.

For businesses

Offer a discount. Show local seniors you care with a special deal, coupon or prize on National Seniors Day.

Put up a display. Create a National Seniors Day display in your storefront or lobby for patrons to see. You could mount a photo wall and invite the public to add pictures or notes of thanks to celebrate the seniors in their lives.

Showcase senior employees. Shine a spotlight on the seniors in your organization with an awards ceremony, certificate of appreciation, luncheon or other workplace special event. You could also hold an open house and share information about any seniors programs or services you offer.

For communities

Plan a meal. Hold a community breakfast, barbecue, potluck or social and invite the seniors in your neighbourhood. You could include a food or clothing drive as part of the event.

Get active. Organize a community swim, skate, walk or hike for seniors. Plant a community garden. Hold a seniors bowling night at a local alley, or plan a special event at the zoo, museum or movie theatre with free admission for seniors.

For schools or youth groups

Put on a production. Host an improv night or talent show to celebrate National Seniors Day.

Go where seniors are. Plan a class visit to a seniors home. You could put on a play, have a sing-along or play games.

For seniors residences

Get seniors involved. Organize a fair or concert featuring senior performers, organize a seniors dance or partner with a local humane society or shelter to bring some animals in for a visit.

Bring the past to life. Create a museum-style display of photos, films, mementos and historical items from the lives of residents.

Other suggestions

Being active is a great way to celebrate National Seniors Day. You could have your group offer dance lessons or coordinate a “seniors intro to yoga” class at a local studio.

Think of seniors first

However you choose to celebrate National Seniors Day, make sure your first consideration is the seniors themselves. Think about activities that would be easy—and appealing—for them to participate in. Make sure that whatever you plan, you have the time, energy, help and resources to see it through successfully.

STEP 1 – PLAN YOUR ACTIVITY

Planning is especially important if you're looking to host a larger-scale event for National Seniors Day. Even if you're thinking about something simple like a sing-along at a seniors home or a reunion of your extended family, a little planning goes a long way.

Always remember the best way to make sure your activity will appeal to seniors is to involve seniors in the planning. After all, it's their day!

Tips for planning a successful National Seniors Day

Pick a practical location. Schools, community centres and parks can often be used or rented out for community programs. So can many bowling alleys, swimming pools and sports facilities. Find out what permits you'll need and any rules or costs associated with the site—and book early to save your spot!

You may also want to think about...

- Setting a budget
- Coordinating technical and logistical elements such as audio-visual, refrigeration, seating, etc.

Make sure it's accessible. Wherever you hold your event, be sure it can accommodate wheelchairs and people with reduced mobility. If you live in an urban area, it's also a good idea to think about parking and public transit access to your chosen site. Washroom availability is also key. If you're expecting a big crowd, consider renting portable toilets.

Get support. If your event is community-wide, you may want to approach local businesses, community organizations or others about partnering or sponsorship. Partners may provide space or other resources; sponsors usually contribute financially. Also think about inviting someone who might give your event a higher profile—either an on-air personality from a local media outlet, a politician, an athlete or a performer.

Solicit volunteers. Volunteers are the glue that hold community events together. There are many potential sources of volunteers: family and friends, community organizations and local schools and businesses are good places to start. Keep in mind, the more volunteers you have, the more training and organization you may need. Consider appointing a volunteer coordinator.

Suggestions for media organizations

You can help celebrate and stimulate interest in National Seniors Day—for example, by soliciting entries for a seniors-themed photo, essay or poem contest; by recording interviews with seniors; or by promoting the achievements of local seniors through special features.

Be safe. When you hold an event, you're responsible for the safety and security of everyone at your event. Make sure there is First Aid available. Larger events may require a lost children area as well as fire department and/or police personnel on site.

Have a Plan B. Part of event planning is being prepared for unforeseeable circumstances. What if the weather turns bad? What if your scheduled celebrity suddenly can't attend or a key volunteer falls ill? Having alternatives ready at hand will ease your mind on the day.

STEP 2 – PROMOTE YOUR ACTIVITY

Use a little star power

One sure way to get people out to an event is by having someone notable attend. Why not invite a special guest: a local celebrity, politician or other VIP who can help raise the profile of your National Seniors Day celebration?

Once your event is planned, it's time to spread the word. If it's a family occasion, planning is simple enough. If you want to attract a larger crowd, you'll need to do some promotion. Before you start, make sure you know your target audience—who you want to reach. That can influence the approach you take to getting people interested in your event.

How to generate interest in your event

Contact seniors groups. Call, write to or connect in person with local retirement and nursing homes, seniors clubs, associations and community centres to let them know what you're planning.

Hand out flyers. Distribute flyers, or post notices or signs at schools, shopping malls, community centres and local businesses. Check if permission is required for posting.

Get on the community calendar. Promote your event in newspapers, shopping malls, on community television or radio, bulletin boards or in pharmacies and restaurants. Go where seniors are!

Create a social media presence. Facebook and Twitter are a great way to get the word out and keep your event going past October 1. Many seniors today are tech-savvy—you can keep in touch all year long electronically. Use our sample [messaging](#) to help.

Issue a media release. Let your local news outlets in on your plans, including newspapers, local cable, community blogs and radio stations. Use our [tools](#) to make it easy. We've developed templates to help you write a media advisory, news release, public service announcement, newspaper article or messaging for social media about your event. Download any or all of our [templates](#).

Suggestions for schools

National Seniors Day is a great opportunity to forge a strong connection between generations. If you're a school looking to celebrate, think about having a senior or group of seniors in to lead an activity with the students—leading an art class, for example.

Don't forget word of mouth. Tell everyone you know—and ask them to pass it on!

STEP 3 – HOST YOUR ACTIVITY

National Seniors Day is finally here. All your hard work has led up to this. For family and smaller-scale events, hosting may be a relatively simple task. For larger events, more coordination may be needed.

Capture your event for posterity!

Commemorate your National Seniors Day celebration by having someone take pictures, record videos or interview participants. If the media is present, give them appropriate access to performers, organizers and guests.

Running smoothly from start to finish

Create a “runsheets.” Make sure you and any co-organizers have a single, clear checklist and timeline for how the event is to unfold—and who’s responsible for what—from setup to takedown.

Coordinate your volunteers. If you have several volunteers, give them a central place to check in and get instructions when they arrive. You may want to appoint a volunteer coordinator to organize them and assign tasks. Make sure your volunteers also have time to enjoy the event for themselves.

Set up a prep area. If you have guest speakers, performers or other dignitaries attending, make sure there’s a quiet place away from the action for them to prepare and get organized.

Coordinate the cleanup. Again, assign responsibilities for cleaning up after the event. Pick up any garbage, pack up your equipment and infrastructure and make sure all money or goods collected are accounted for. Don’t forget to return any equipment or furniture you rent or borrow.

Give credit where it’s due. If you had help organizing and hosting your event, make sure you acknowledge everyone’s time and effort. You couldn’t have done it without them! Don’t forget to acknowledge community partners, sponsors and donors as well.

Suggestions for families

Renting some classic movies and having senior relatives over for popcorn and a double-bill can be a fun and easy way to show your appreciation. You could also bring the family pet around to visit a senior for some fun, affectionate “pet therapy.” Be sure to check the establishment’s policy on pets.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO REINVENT THE WHEEL

To raise awareness of National Seniors Day and your plans to celebrate, we've developed a number of handy resources that will spare you the trouble of starting from scratch. You can download the full versions of any of these templates online at seniors.gc.ca.

Free resources you can use

[Frequently asked questions](#) – Answers to common questions about National Seniors Day.

[Tips for Celebrating National Seniors Day](#) – Find a wide-ranging list of ways to acknowledge the seniors in your community. You can print copies of this list for sharing with co-workers, family, classmates, community groups and others.

[Poster](#) – Download and print for posting in your office, community centre or other local venue.

[Media advisory](#) – This is to let the media know your event is coming up in the near future. Download and customize this media advisory template and email it to newspapers, radio stations and other media outlets including local event websites and blogs in your community to let them know your event is coming up. This will give them the chance to send someone to cover it if they feel it's newsworthy.

[News release](#) – Unlike a media advisory, which goes out before your event, a news release is issued on the day to help journalists write a story about it. Download and customize this news release template, then send it to local media outlets including newspapers, radio and TV stations, as well as local event websites and blogs.

[Messaging for social media and radio](#) – Customize these Tweets and Facebook posts to promote your event, or, for radio public service announcements, customize a prepared script and send it to your local radio station to promote your National Seniors Day event. You can also make a recording yourself, using a child or senior as the voice.

[Sample speech](#) – Customize this sample speech which can be tailored to any National Seniors Day event.

[Feature article](#) – A feature article is a news story about your event. We've prepared the basics of an article you can build on to write about seniors in your area. Send your articles to the editors of community newspapers, newsletters and magazines: most are happy to take submissions.

[Mayoral proclamation](#) – Have October 1 declared National Seniors Day officially in your community, town or municipality. Hold an event to mark the day and celebrate your declaration. Approach your city councillor or mayor's office by contacting them directly.

[Certificate of Appreciation](#) – Know a senior who is making a real difference in the lives of others? Celebrate them by honouring them with a certificate of appreciation.

[Website button](#) – Promote National Seniors Day by posting this button on your website.

[Postcard](#) – Send an e-postcard to seniors you know for National Seniors Day.

Event Preparation Summary

Plan

- Pick and book a venue
- Recruit volunteers
- Recruit partner organizations
- Book speakers or special guests

Don't forget to: Create and confirm your budget and always have a plan B

Promote

- Hand out flyers
- Use the templates provided on seniors.gc.ca to notify the media, and get the message out online

Don't forget to: Spread the word by telling everyone you know

Host

- Coordinate your volunteers
- Coordinate clean up
- Give credit where it's due

Don't forget to: Let us know about your event on seniors.gc.ca

THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING CANADA'S SENIORS

Your efforts make an important difference to the lives of seniors in your community. Remember, you don't need a national day to show your appreciation for seniors: you can extend the respect and care you give all year round. Keep in mind, one day you'll be a senior too!

HAPPY NATIONAL SENIORS DAY!

Visit seniors.gc.ca for more information, to download tools and templates and to let us know about your upcoming National Seniors Day event.

