

Tilson announces support for seniors' groups in riding

By Bill Rea

Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson was on hand recently at the Caledon Seniors' Centre in Bolton to announce that new volunteer resources will be available.

The Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) will be getting \$25,000 from the New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) for the project.

Tilson stressed the government is proud to work with groups like this that are aimed at helping seniors maintain a good quality of life.

OACAO is a group of non-profit centres, organizations, clubs and individuals that work with older adults. It represents more than 160 centres and some 160,000 people across the province.

Tilson explained the new project will train eight senior regional volunteer leaders who will be involved in planning regional workshops and volunteer opportunities.

"Our government recognizes the valuable contribution seniors have made to our society and the economy," Tilson said. "By supporting New Horizons for Seniors Program projects, we are acting to ensure that seniors maintain a good quality of life and continue to be active members of their communities."

Sue Hesjedahl, executive director of OACAO, said the project will be operating out of the central region of the organization. She added the eight volunteers will be trained to take on mentorship and leadership roles to provide educational and networking opportunities.

"The OACAO is very excited about our project 'Regional Approach to Volunteer Engagement, Mentorship and Sustainability,'" she said. "We will engage, educate and empower eight older adult volunteers to have leadership and mentorship roles in their regions across Ontario. Regional meetings and education forums will be held over the course of the upcoming year. Resources and project findings will be made available on an interactive website and will be accessible to all volunteers in Dufferin-Caledon."

NHSP has funded more than 13,000 projects in hundreds of communities across Canada since 2006. It received \$50 million in funding per year, and Tilson said that since 2006, \$2.8 billion in annual tax relief has been provided to seniors and those on pension.