

Client Stories Report 2025

Through an anonymous survey, older adults from Seniors Active Living Centres (SALC) across Ontario shared reflections on their experience and participation in [Links2Wellbeing: Social Prescribing for Older Adults](#). They answered three questions:

1. “What is the most significant change you’ve experienced since joining the SALC?”
2. “Why is this change important to you?”
3. “How has this change influenced your life?”

The survey gathered a rich array of viewpoints shaped by each participant’s personal background. Analysis of the responses shows that the SALCs are making a broad, meaningful difference in members’ lives. This report explores three prominent themes that surfaced from those insights.

Building Social Connections and a Sense of Belonging

“It has changed my life in a positive way... I feel part of a community.”

One of the most common outcomes shared by participants was a significant reduction in social isolation and a deepened sense of connection. Many described, when first coming to the SALC, feeling alone or withdrawn. One respondent said, “I was a very quiet person and stayed by myself but now I am slowly becoming part of the group and making friends.” Others echoed similar transformations, noting how their time at the SALC has expanded their social circles: “I have met new friends, some of whom I communicate with on a regular basis... now, they are my best friends.”

Several people mentioned how this new sense of belonging helped them feel emotionally supported, with one participant stating, “it makes me feel like I’m not alone and that’s a very great feeling.” Another commented, “There’s always someone to talk to, and just being able to see people’s faces and make new friends...I just love it here.” These social connections are not just pleasant, they’re vital. They help participants manage loneliness, build confidence, and find purpose in their daily lives. As one respondent noted, “I realized I don’t have to stay home all day long... I can go and enjoy the company of other seniors, learn different cultures, be happy, laugh, and realize there is more to life.” The SALC is not just a place to visit; for many, it has become a second home.

Improving Physical Health and Mobility

“It has given me a new calm as an older adult... it has increased my flexibility, mobility, and adaptability.”

Improved physical health and mobility was another major benefit reported by SALC participants. Many said they feel stronger, more energetic, and better equipped to manage chronic conditions. One respondent explained, “I attended exercise programs for the last two months and my physical health improved a lot... I feel lighter and more energetic.” Others highlighted life-changing improvements, particularly in mobility and pain management. A participant shared, “Before joining the centre, I had a



diagnosis of severe osteoarthritis, but after joining, my knee pain has disappeared. It's improved my quality of life significantly as I can now walk pain-free."

These physical gains also contributed to improvements in overall well-being. Participants noted better mood, greater independence, and a renewed sense of control in their daily lives. One shared, "It has helped me keep my weight at a good balance and make me feel healthier." Another reflected, "I can feel more fit and walk a lot," highlighting how regular activity at the SALC encouraged healthier routines outside the centre. Many were also grateful for access to subsidized activities: "All my costs can be fully subsidized and I am able to take swimming lessons I otherwise cannot afford." These factors enable seniors to remain active and engaged in their communities.

Enhancing Emotional Well-being, Confidence, and Lifelong Learning

"I'm happy to get up, dress up, and show up... I'm having fun, laughing, making meaningful connections... I'm healthier and livelier than before."

The SALCs' role in supporting emotional health and self-confidence also stood out strongly in the responses. Participants frequently described feeling happier, more hopeful, and mentally engaged since joining the centre. One participant expressed this clearly: "Now I am busy and happy, not crying, not homesick... due to my happiness, my health is now very good." Others found that the activities and supportive environment helped reduce anxiety and depression. As one person wrote, "it helped me fight depression and feel that someone cares about me... made me feel confident and safe." A sense of emotional safety and connection often led to increased confidence and a willingness to try new things. One senior explained, "the most significant change to me is I've got social support now... which made me more confident to face my new life in Canada."

The SALC empowers seniors not just to feel better but to thrive and positively influence those around them. One participant said, "This change is significant as due to my happiness, my whole family feels very happy... they feel secure." Several participants noted taking part in lifelong learning opportunities like technology classes, language lessons, and even violin lessons: "In the past five months I have been taking violin lessons... something I have always wanted to try. Saying it has seriously changed my life is an understatement." These opportunities allow seniors not just to pass time but to grow, contribute, and feel fulfilled. As one summarized, "It gave me the space to explore and discover and savour meaningful connections within myself and in my relationships to others." The SALC fosters an environment where emotional wellness and personal growth are not only possible but encouraged.

SALCs play a vital role in supporting the well-being of older adults. As one participant shared, "It has truly transformed my daily life, empowering me to stay active, build meaningful connections, and feel more supported every day." Another reflected, "this change impacted my life in so many ways, "My health, my social life, and my way of living. I hope and wish that this community centre will continue to run." These voices speak to the lasting value of SALCs in the lives of older adults across Ontario.