

SENIOR WOMEN LIVING TOGETHER AN INNOVATIVE HOUSING SOLUTION

Approximately 350,000 senior women live alone in Ontario; of these, over 140,000 live in poverty.

The lack of affordable rental housing, paired with the significant rise in rental rates and a 10 year wait list for rent-gear-to-income housing, have left far too many single, senior women homeless or at risk of homelessness.

But affordable housing is not their only problem. Living alone increases the social isolation and loneliness that are known to cause serious illnesses, and functional and mental health decline. As well, senior women living alone are more likely to be victims of elder abuse.

So, something needed to be done. In 2019, Senior Women Living Together (SWLT) was born.

SWLT is a grass roots non-profit organization that has grown rapidly since its inception. Its mission is to help senior women find compatible homemates to live together in rental housing, thus increasing their financial freedom and housing security while essentially ending their social isolation. Single, senior women and those who identify as women can join the SWLT website and receive their program for a modest fee. Those with low incomes get the service for free.



Once a woman is a member on the website, she can learn everything about shared living through the many available articles. The website provides her with the tools for finding compatible homemates and determining compatibility and with the ability to message and chat with all the other members.

When she finds the woman or women she wants to live with, SWLT will help the homemate group find an appropriate and affordable rental unit to live in together. A

homemate group might be 2, 3, 4 or more women, and it usually takes 3 to 6 months to form a group.

Sometimes, the homemate group finds a place themselves but if they can't, SWLT has a relationship with a private real estate investor (CoLiving Solutions) who will purchase a home for the group and then becomes their landlord.

Here's a sample of comments from women who are now living with homemates:

"When I was living alone, the only people I talked with on a regular basis were store clerks. Now, my homemate and I chat on and off all day long."

"I was going deeper and deeper into debt just trying to keep a decent roof over my head. Now, I have some money at the end of every month. It's such a relief to not have to worry about being homeless."

"It's hard to think of just one way that my life has changed. So many things are better now. I am so grateful to be finally living a life I can afford with homemates supporting me. Every day, I say a little prayer of thanks."

To join or learn more, go to: <https://swlt.ca>

To comment or ask a question, go here:

Contact Us | Senior Women Living Together (swlt.ca)

To donate, go here: [Make a Donation | Senior Women Living Together \(swlt.ca\)](#)

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OMERS pensioner

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