

## RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

***“Seniors in the Suburbs”: Understanding belonging & community connection - together!***

### WHO? (Researcher Team)

#### Investigators:

- Dr. Sonya Jakubec\*, Mount Royal University
- Dr. Marg Olfert, Mount Royal University
- Liza Choi, Mount Royal University
- Nicole Dawe, Mount Royal University

#### Collaborators:

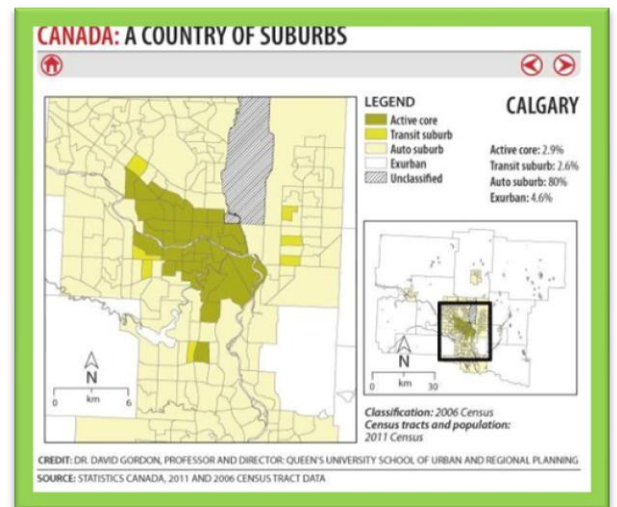
- Anna Mollo, Research Assistant; MRU
- Dr. Dwayne Sheehan, Collaborator; MRU, Canadian Academy for Healthier Generations
- Cynthia Watson, Collaborator; VIVO; Canadian Academy for Healthier Generations

### WHY? (Purpose)

The roles of place & belonging on wellbeing are increasingly understood. Seniors *are* increasingly living in suburbs – though little is known about the strengths, strategies and struggles! The views of seniors were the place for Vivo to begin to understand how to work together.

#### This study asked:

- *What does belonging mean to seniors in Calgary’s NE/Central suburbs?*
- *What are the facilitators & barriers?*
- *What could belonging look like for seniors in the suburbs?*



### WHAT? (Research Process)

This exploratory research project used focus group methods to learn about community health and belonging for seniors living in Calgary NE/N. Central suburbs. The purpose was to gather the views and opinions of groups of seniors who were already engaged in community outreach and activities. In 2015, a total of 36 seniors were consulted from 3 existing groups, including an activity group and 2 cultural (Punjabi and Chinese) groups.

## SO WHAT? Research Discoveries...



### Belonging in the community means...

- FEELING ... attached, comforted, accepted, respected, visible & useful
- KNOWING ... the resources & activities available
- BEING ... part of something bigger (community of all ages, abilities, & cultures)
- DOING ... sharing experiences & activities, meeting together, reading/gathering information, hearing & being heard



### Belonging is supported (or hindered) by ...

- PERSONAL FACTORS eg. curiosity/interest , hope, desire/will
- RELATIONAL FACTORS eg. leadership, seeking similarities, inclusion
- COMMUNITY FACTORS eg. isolation/separation, professionalized helping



### Belonging looks like...

- Connecting to others of all ages, cultures & circumstances
- Contributing to wellbeing & social life
- Learning & recreating in cooperation & common spaces

## NOW WHAT? Next Steps...

- Seniors are connecting – activity day event August 2016!
- Research Dissemination (Participant feedback, ARPA Conference, City of Calgary Active Aging Think Tank, Canadian Assoc. for Gerontology, papers in progress)
- Spin off proposals (programming, student experiences and further research)

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