
ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Helping to make low literacy something future generations
will only READ about.

For over 41 years!

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2020-21

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Message from the President

How's Everyone Been?

By this point, we may have collectively uttered the phrase, 'This has been a garbage year' (or maybe another phrase not suitable for print) a Trillion-billion times.

We can, however, consider ourselves grateful when scrolling back through history and realizing that 1980 came a bit late for the folks who had to deal with challenges like Yellow Fever or the Spanish Flu.

Now, in case you're scratching your chin wondering why this year is significant, well this is the year that RECLAIM Literacy was founded.

Over these past fifteen months, RECLAIM has continued to find accessible and innovative ways to still support its community despite the plethora of challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Among these challenges from the onset was to provide online programming for many of our learners who lacked this type of experience and had limited access to technology. Thanks to the staff, volunteers, and our community network, RECLAIM was able to target and address this need early on in the pandemic. Their efforts allowed for the traditional programming and support to continue while also providing our learners with tools that will continue to benefit them long after the pandemic has ended.

In addition to finding and developing these new paths to lifelong learning, RECLAIM continued to address other social factors connected to literacy challenges. Visits were still made, food was still prepared and delivered, and workshops and discussion groups were still provided. With this in mind, it might be said that the commitment and effort by everyone involved has not just remained the same, but it might have gotten a bit stronger.

So while we still might agree that this past year has been garbage (again, please feel free to replace this phrase with a more colourful one of your own), being a part of this organization has given us all the opportunity to learn even more about our resiliency and sense of community.

Happy Summer everyone!
Gary Purcell

Executive Director Message

RECLAIM 2020 Edition!

It was supposed to be our celebration year!

As we reflect over the past year, 2020 was our special year. Our 40th anniversary. We had plans. We had looked to launching new initiatives. Then Covid hit. What had initially looked to be a difficult transition, not being able to provide our usual face to face services, has actually turned into something wonderful. We have been able to convert some of our learners into working online. This has provided them the opportunity to become more independent learners, while acquiring the skills of working in a digital environment (one of our initiatives we had planned). We have been more involved at the community level, seeking ways that we can help break isolation, especially for seniors, by reinventing our lunch and learn program, delivering meals, and hosting online events. We have our team of cooks, delivery people, and guest speakers, all volunteering to contribute to something wonderful. We have been creating and delivering book bags for seniors. Partners have donated books, individuals have spread the word. We have loaned out computer equipment and supported seniors in learning to use Zoom and online shopping. Nothing is as wonderful as receiving a call from a senior over the holiday season, thanking us because they were able to participate in a family Zoom call for Christmas! It is the little things that mean a lot.

We have been fortunate this past year to have been able to support these types of programs thanks to grants from the Foundation of Greater Montreal and New Horizons for Seniors. As we move into 2021, we have ideas. We will follow the government guidelines, all the while continuing to be there to help provide as many literacy services as possible.

Thanks go to our wonderful, creative, and flexible staff; our partners in the community; the individuals who have financially contributed to our efforts; and everyone who has supported us for the past 41 years. Special thanks to our fabulous Board of Directors, who are willing to take chances and believe in our mission and my "ideas."

Here's to 2021 and beyond!

Joy Fyckes
Executive Director

Primary Programs

Learning Centre Covid edition

10 full time learners
5 part time learners
Total # of learning hours
11040

Program features
Online small group learning
News for you
Spelling/Grammar
Digital Literacy

The start of our September session looked a bit different this year. We were able to launch our online sessions as well as provide at-home distance learning kits. Our learners were happy they can still be working on improving their literacy skills!



One on one tutoring

7 tutoring pairs
5 volunteer tutors
1344 hours
of individualized
online tutoring

Program features
Matched with trained
volunteers
to work online on individual
literacy goals.
Tutoring time/place that fits
with
learner's schedule

Highlights

As we had launched a new digital literacy program in January 2020 (just prior to the pandemic hitting), we were well prepared to convert our learners to an online version of both the small group learning centre and our one-on-one program.

We did, however, experience difficulty in reaching approximately 50% of our learners as they did not have internet in their homes. Affordable internet remains a huge issue for some.



ProLiteracy's *News For You* online program became a staple for our Learning Centre Learners, as they could work with it independently.

***News for You* provides 7 weekly news stories along with audio and interactive activities**

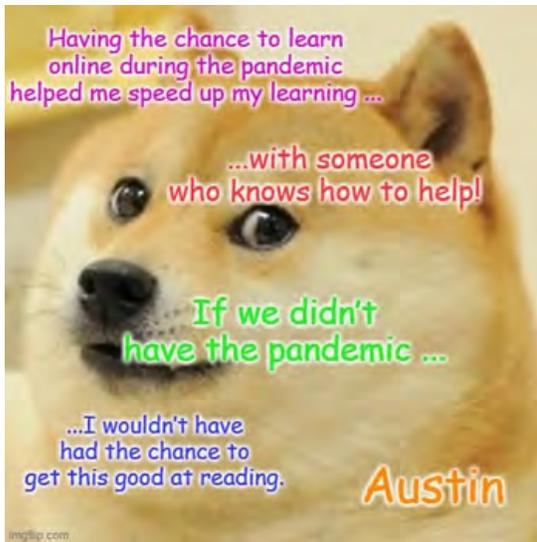
Each month, interactive rooms were created for the learners as well as for youth.



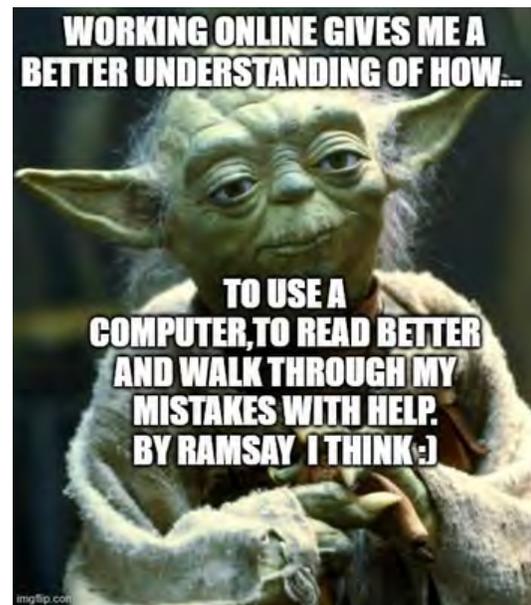
We asked Eric, who is helping run our digital literacy program, to give us a little summary of what the past year has been like. Here's what he had to say:

"We are so proud to have such dedicated learners at RECLAIM. The pandemic offered them a choice. They could either take a break from their studies or take the leap and learn how to get online. For many folks, this required starting from the very beginning. No computer at home! No internet! Very little experience and even less confidence. Fast forward to now, we have multiple online learning sessions every week, our learners are arriving consistently to our online classrooms, and sending and replying to emails. They look up information about all subjects from the latest COVID-19 rules in Montreal to being inspired by how people build houses using recycled materials. The learners have used digital learning as a way to further their own goals but also find ways to make their lives easier by learning to use Google Maps and other helpful resources."

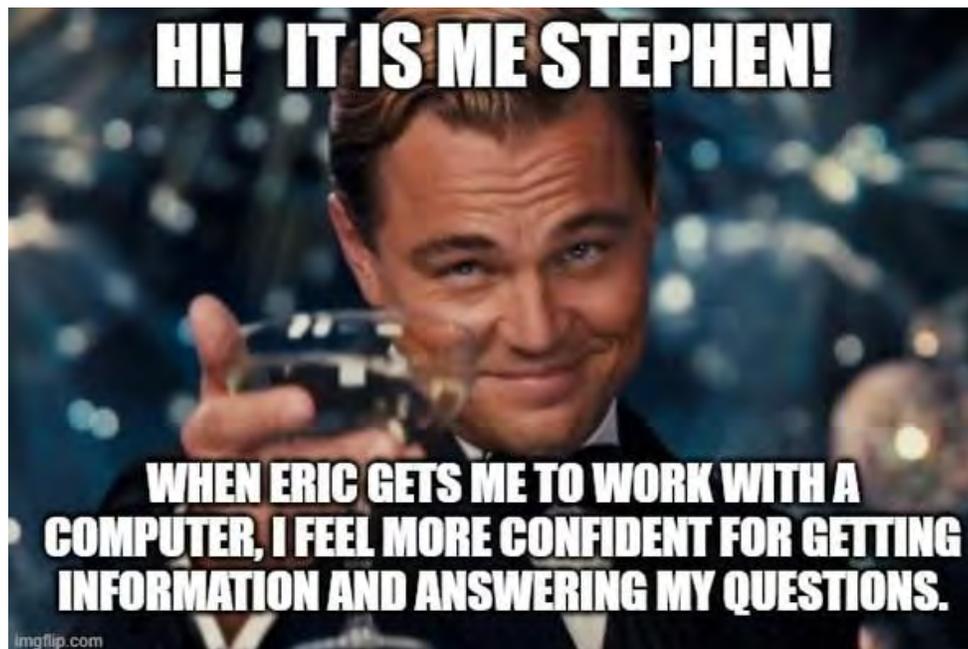
Digital literacy online sessions



The learners had a great time trying out all sorts of new things!



They especially enjoyed creating their own memes.

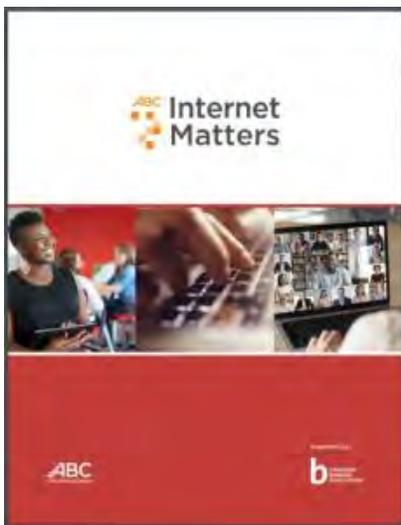


Special Project

Foundation of Greater Montreal

We received a Grant of \$10K from the Foundation of Greater Montreal (from the Government of Canada's "Emergency Community Support Fund"). The goal was to help seniors gain access to the internet in order to help them break isolation. We had initially tried to get youth to support the seniors, but this proved challenging given the school situation of being half in class and half online.

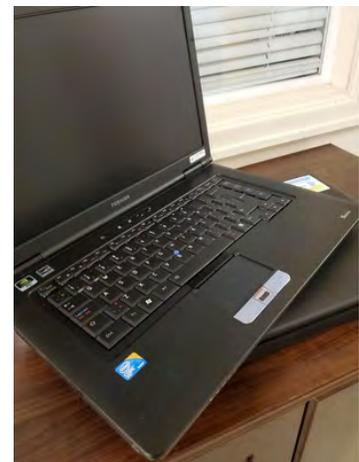
Through our partnership with OPEQ (Ordinateurs pour les écoles de Québec, 20 lightly used/reconditioned laptops computers were purchased. These computers are on loan to seniors in the community. Individualized telephone support was provided to the seniors.



Seniors were encouraged to get on zoom to engage with family and friends. One hundred copies of Internet Matters - created by ABC LifeLiteracy, were distributed.



In order to connect youth and seniors, we recruited several classes from both Royal Vale and Verdun Elementary to send notes of encouragement to the seniors.



Volunteers

Covid -19 hit our volunteer base ... HARD!
Over 90% of our volunteers
decided to take a break rather
than adapt to an online platform.

As of March 31, 2021
9 volunteer tutors are working
online with learners.



TUTOR TRAINING



7 new volunteers took
the online training
during 2020-21

**We had converted our tutor training to an online
version in 2019. So, even with COVID, we were well
placed to be able to train new volunteers.**

Volunteers



There is no Masking it:
Our volunteers are special..

Happy Volunteer Appreciation Week.
Stay safe!

**April 2020 should have
been our
big volunteer
appreciation
celebration!
Instead, we mailed out
28 masks to our
volunteers,
encouraging them to
STAY SAFE.**



Board of Directors

One sector of our volunteer base remained busier than ever. Quickly converting meetings to Zoom, our Board had many important decisions to make regarding service delivery, staffing, and governing a not-for-profit during a pandemic. The board was instrumental in ensuring that the staff had all the materials they needed to respect both the new reality and health guidelines.

It takes a village - or a dedicated Board of Directors!

RECLAIM is fortunate to have both! .

Community Outreach



Our biggest area of growth this past year was in our community outreach. When the pandemic hit, we sought out places that we could lend our support. As a literacy organization, we needed to use our past experiences to help those who were at risk and isolated during the pandemic.

Thanks to a grant from New Horizons for seniors we were able to adjust previous programs to work under the new reality.

From October 2020 - March 2021 over 240 home made meals were prepared and delivered to Seniors in the Verdun/Lasalle/Emard area.

Our wonderful cooking team of Ann, Mel, Shirley B. & Shirley H. lovingly cooked wonderful recipes.

Our delivery team of Gail, Gordie, Jean & Caroline ensured the deliveries were delivered with a smile and a quick hello!

Our wonderful Christmas meal saw 60 full Christmas dinners delivered with special treats thanks to a donation from the Erin Sports Association.



30 lbs of potatoes, 8 turkey breasts, 5 litres of gravy, 4 hams, 3 containers of stuffing
....for our 'distanced' Christmas community lunch !

60 home cooked meals being delivered, followed by a virtual Christmas concert by Terry Clahane!

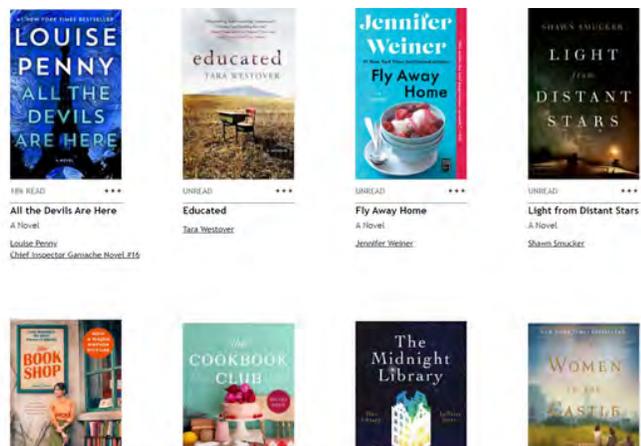


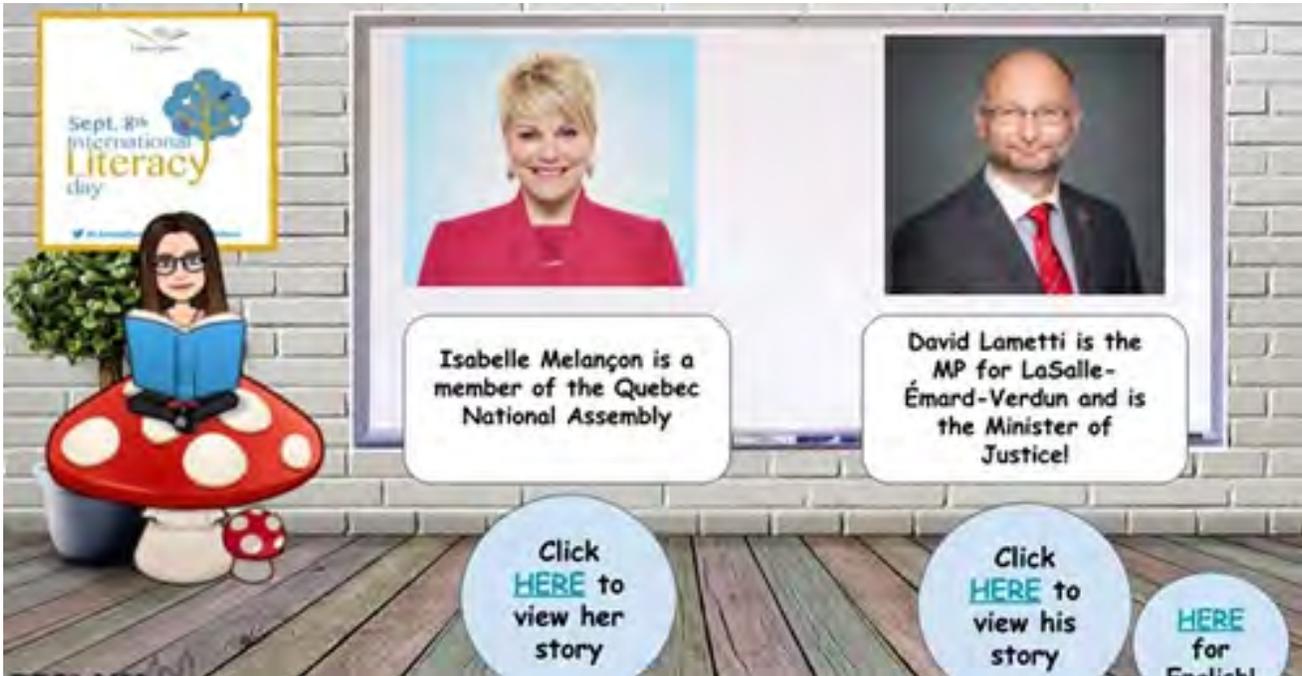
With the start of the first red zone 28 day lockdown, we launched some special projects in support of seniors. Thanks to the grant from the New Horizons for Seniors program we were able to purchase art supplies for the Epiphany craft group. Two members of the group, Anne and Jean, put together craft kits that are being delivered to the homes of the members to create homemade greeting cards for various occasions, while at home staying safe! A second project had the group making bookmarks. We also assembled book bags for seniors in need of reading material. Over 50 bags were prepared and delivered from October to March.



February 2021 saw the Launch of our "Just Write" journaling club. A wonderful sharing opportunity for seniors. On average 8 Seniors participated each month.

In order to encourage the use of technology during the pandemic, we launched a Kobo book club, where members could access over 48 books that were available for downloading. Kobo readers were also loaned out to seniors, as well as support offered to others who were experiencing ebooks on their tablets for the first time. 14 individuals were participating.





A special reading room created to celebrate International Literacy Day featured our MP and MNA reading their favourite stories (online!)

...and then there were Books, books and more books

With the lockdown happening, and - much to our shock - books not being considered 'essential items,' we took it upon ourselves to ensure that those in our community who needed a book to keep themselves busy, got one! From safely distanced free giveaways, to our book bag for seniors, to our Christmas book donations, to our March break bags, books were on our mind a lot during the pandemic.



August 2020 - Our first book giveaway. Over 500 books given away!

We received hundreds of donations of books, both new and gently used.



Our usual Learning Centre room became a staging area for book distribution! Many thanks to First Books Canada.

Christmas 2020:
In partnership with Literacy
Quebec, over 2020 books
were given away to help
celebrate the holidays.



Groups who benefitted from the books:
Erin Sports Association annual Xmas party
The Christmas Basket Project
"Mom"treat
CLSCs
Batshaw
CCS Little Learners & Early Head Start
Riverview Daycare
Funville Daycare

Book
giveaways

Many of the books were
thanks to our association
with *First Books Canada*.



We made a donation of 200 “keep
safe” colouring books and crayons to
the Best Western Airport Hotel
(A Quarantine Hotel) for the “little travellers”
who were being quarantined while awaiting
test results!



We were happy to donate some brand new books for Innovation jeune-Innovation youth's library, because literacy and cooperation are essential needs and skills. We were able to meet some new partners and work with some old, in order to get books out into the community.

March break bags:

Bags of books for parents and children to read together during March break were prepared and distributed to Riverview Elementary school K4 to grade 2 children. In all 96 bags were given out. We



were thrilled to receive a lovely phone message from a parent and his child thanking us for the books and for the incentive to spend time together reading. Calls like that make it all worthwhile!

Lunch and Learn: A series of Zoom sessions

| Date | Speaker | Subject |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| October 29 | Samir Bouras of Familiprix | Keeping healthy during COVID |
| November 26 | Lisa Marcovici | Brain Gym |
| December 17 | Terry Clahane | Lunch & Sing |
| January 28 | Caroline | Journaling Club / Genealogy |
| February 25 | Lilana De Leo | Laughter Yoga |
| March 22 | Jeffrey Mackie | Special guest from the Yukon |



Lisa Forget & Terry Clahane entertained us for a Special St Paddy's Day edition

Along with a great meal, seniors also received a variety of books, puzzles, etc to help keep them busy during lockdown.



International Literacy Day!

Wieners and Words, celebrated with Literacy Quebec
September 8th, 2020



A great day with Literacy Quebec
as we celebrated International
Literacy Day.

Wieners and words...to go!
Over 100 hot dogs and bags of
chips were prepared and handed
out to the community to celebrate
Literacy.

More than 750 books were
given out to
members of the community



A special thank you to The
MTL Book Project who
donated ten boxes of books for
our International Literacy Day
book giveaway event.



Annual General Meeting

May 27, 2020

12 Members in attendance

Presentation of Annual
Report

Audited financial statements

Election of Board of Directors

2020-2021

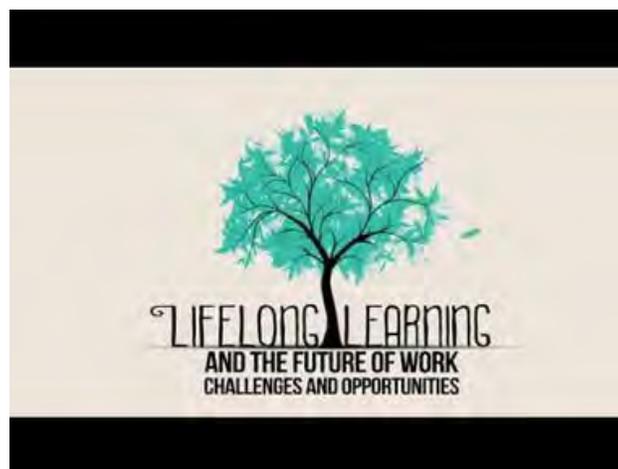
2020 - 2021



Our first ever attempt at holding an AGM at a distance was a huge success. Thanks to a couple of 'practice runs' and the support of our tech guru Eric, we were able to host our Annual General Meeting on schedule.

Covid is showing us that although we have to learn to do things differently, things can still get done.

A true lesson of Lifelong Learning!



Representations

Meetings and workshops

Literacy Quebec
Réseau Réussite Montréal
Anglo Family Council
CDSV
ProLiteracy

How do you find the right funders?

There are several different donor databases available that house potential funders (government grants, businesses, foundations). By entering specific search criteria, these donor databases can generate a listing of funders whose criteria your project matches.

HOWEVER, these databases only provide a basic donor profile and don't contain all the details we need to make a funding request. In addition, it's not all databases that are kept up to date on a regular basis.

Example: Imagine Canada's Grant Connect - www.imaginecanada.ca

espaceidees.ca

Fifty-six virtual workshops, webinars, meetings, etc, were attended by RECLAIM's Executive Director, staff and volunteers.

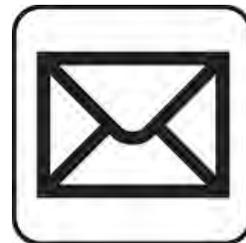
Many of the sessions were to enable us to work online, and/or to help support our learners and volunteers to become comfortable working online.

Many thanks to our wonderful partners, who quickly offered a variety of sessions. Literacy Quebec was particularly essential in supporting us as we navigated our new normal, and as we made efforts to continue "work as usual."

Communications



458 Facebook
followers



83 Monthly
e-news subscribers

Our Partners

**Anglo Family Council
Atwater Library
Church of the Epiphany
Éducation et Enseignement Supérieur Québec
Employment and Social Development Canada
(New Horizons for Seniors & Summer employment)
English Montreal School Board
Erin Sports Association
First Books Canada
Literacy Quebec
OPEQ
Réseau Réussite Montréal**



Opinion Pieces

*From the RECLAIM ONLINE
Learning Centre*

People who are older than sixty-five should have access to the internet. Governments require that you use the internet. (information about taxes, health, pensions, etc) If you don't have it you will have trouble getting the things you might need. Also, requiring universal access to the internet would help people to learn more about how our computers work. Everyone needs to know how to use the internet now! In the meantime, we need older people to get confident using the internet. The internet should be free to access for those who can't afford it. -Ramsay

There is a very serious problem that is happening all across North America. Racism has been a problem for as long as I can remember, and it gets worse not better. All minorities but especially black people are being targeted by the police usually for no reason except for their color. There are protests and riots because the government isn't doing enough to make things any better. Too many innocent people are dying. Police need to be accountable for their actions!! - Vanreece

Everyone can learn how to use computers!

Life is going to get better for you when you can find answers to your questions and get information!

Computers are part of daily life!

Learning helps live better! - Stephen

Government school programs and the school system are broken in a big way. The school system doesn't match the needs of the modern workplace. - Austin

Seniors are experiencing ageism. They are suffering from loneliness, especially during the COVID- 19 pandemic and they hardly have anybody fighting for them. In my opinion, we should review the way seniors are treated. Their role is more valued in other countries and they have more respect. Seniors have a wealth of experiences in life and they can enrich the lives they touch! - Mario

