

ALL ABOUT US

London Senior Games - LSG - now known as London 55+ Games, are a series of one-day tournaments for Londoners aged 55+, held annually in Summer & Winter. They are organized by dedicated volunteers, to promote an active mind & body lifestyle, as well as social engagement. The activities range from cards & walking to pickleball & ice hockey - more than 30 in all - something for everybody.

Their Board of Directors meets once a month, and your input would be welcome.

London is District 30 in the Ontario 55+ Games Association (OSGA), headquartered in Barrie, a province-wide network of district Games. Winners in these events qualify for the bi-annual Ontario 55+ Games, and winners there can go on to the Canada 55+ Games.

The London Senior Games Board was established in 1985. Rhoda Neilsen was the Chair for Actifest '90 which was held in London. Jim Martin was the District Coordinator. Jim resigned following Actifest '90 and Bruce Greenaway took over as chair with Bill Salter becoming the new Co-ordinator. Next chair was Barry Fay with Gord Gallagher as the District Coordinator. Barry Fay continued as the Chair and in 2003 Gail Prior took over as the District Coordinator. In 2008 Gail Prior was elected Chair and John Slavin took over as District Coordinator. In 2009 Jack Nichol was elected Chair with John Slavin remaining as District Coordinator. In 2010 and 2011 John Slavin was elected Chair with Doug Anderson as District Coordinator. In 2012 and 2013 Mitch Lupa was elected Chair and Doug Anderson remained as District Coordinator. Mitch Lupa was elected Chair and was also acting District Coordinator in 2015. Barry Fay was elected Chair and Mitch Lupa was appointed District Coordinator in 2016. In 2018, The D.C. job was split between Linda Grainger as Registrar and Kim Benke

for scheduling & OSGA liaison. In 2019, Linda accepted a position on the OSGA Board, representing the SW Region. For 2020, Jim Rayner became President and Kim Benke continued on as D.C. All activity ceased in March 2020 due to the Covid -19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. But then, London led the province in comebacks - holding Winter Games in Nov 2021, followed by Summer and Winter Games in 2022. In Jan 2023, interest surged, the Board grew to 15 members with Vince Lubrano as President. Some of the DC duties were shared with a new position called London Games Manager, held by Donald Nunns.

Bill Huddleston, representing Hamilton Road Seniors' Centre, was a member of long standing on the Board. In the beginning, a representative from most of the Seniors' Centres in London sat on the Board. They brought ideas and concerns from their centres and took information back from our monthly meetings. Barb Vella, from Parks and Recreation, and Kathy Kosatschenko, from Horton Street Senior Centre were key members of the Board providing guidance and facilitating the use of community facilities at our Games. Today their legacy continues with a Board of volunteers currently representing the Kiwanis & Hamilton Rd Seniors' Centre, the Huff n Puff Seniors Fitness Association and the community at large; all working in close association with the City of London Recreation Department. Together they schedule & manage all the events, and promote the Games around town.

There is a wide opportunity for seniors to become involved in London. District Games have been held throughout the city since its beginning. At first, we held all of the sanctioned Actifest events in our Games. We have gradually increased these events to include all Actifest events and numerous other events that are of interest to seniors in London; and in 2003, we held 23 events in our Summer Games; as well as hosting the Ontario Senior Actifest Games in 1990 and 2008. London has sent representatives to Sudbury, Hamilton, Richmond Hill, Ottawa, Kingston, St. Catherines, Hamilton, Oshawa, Brampton, Windsor/Amherstburg, Brampton again, Midland, Mississauga, and Peterborough in 2022. The

Brantford Winter Games in 2021 were cancelled, but they will host Summer Games in 2023.

Note: Somewhere along the way Actifest became the Ontario Senior Games and more recently OSGA changed its name to Ontario 55+ Games, since our participants aged 55+ are not so keen to be called "Seniors" anymore.

The first Ontario 55+ Winter Games (formerly Winterfest) were held in Collingwood in 2000. Again London sent a full contingent of competitors to participate in the seven scheduled events. London then staged a very successful Winterfest in 2003. Nine sanctioned events were held along with one demonstration sport. London has sent representatives to Barrie, Brockville, Haliburton, Cobourg, and Huntsville, between 2007 and 2019. Winter Games will resume after 5 long years, in Orillia in 2024.

Regional Games are held in the immediate area involving nine Southwestern Ontario Districts in non OSGA 55+ Summer years. London hosted these games in 1993 and has been involved in the other regional games in Waterloo, Sarnia, Chatham, Kincardine, Oxford-Elgin, St. Marys/Stratford, Chatham-Kent (twice), Huron-Perth-Middlesex, London 2015, Sarnia-Lambton, and Grey-Bruce 2019. Going forward SW Regional Games will be held in even years starting in 2024 in H-P-M. Different formats will be tried to engage more participants from this enormous geographic area.

Each year OSGA 55+ holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to introduce format changes as well as provide information and assistance to the various districts. As well, the districts of Southwestern Ontario have held semi-annual meetings since 1985. In 1990 following a very successful Actifest in London, the Southwest Regional Games concept was introduced due to the impetus of District 29. The first Southwest Regional Games (which were the first Regional Games held in the province) were held in Grand Bend in 1991. The main purpose of these games was to provide another level of competition for our districts in

non-Ontario 55+ Summer Games years. These Games will be smaller and less formal, with event offerings dependent on the facilities available and budget constraints.

The Districts included in the Southwest Region are:

#25 Brant/Haldimand/Norfolk

#26 Waterloo/Wellington

#27 Grey/Bruce

#29 Huron/Perth/Middlesex

#30 London

#31 Oxford/Elgin

#32 Windsor/Essex

#33 Sarnia/Lambton

#33A Chatham/Kent

With the start of annual District Winter Games as well as Summer Games we should be able to provide fun, friendly competition for all of London's senior population.