

TRENT CENTRE FOR AGING & SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

FEATURED ARTICLES:

University-
Integrated Seniors
Village Update

Unscripting Age
with Dr. Julia
Henderson

Worlding
Difference: Aging,
Arts, & Accessibility

TCAS was well-
represented at
CAG2025



Innovations in Aging

*Elevating local and global perspectives,
research, and scholarship in
interdisciplinary aging studies*

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Michi Saagig Anishinaabeg. We offer our gratitude to the First Nations for their stewardship of the land and their teachings.
May we honour these teachings.

We at TCAS commit to Truth and Reconciliation.

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Top to Bottom: The crowd at 'Reframing Dementia: Challenging Stigma Through Film & Art', Dr. Julia Henderson, Dr. Bharti Sethi, an image from the #HaveASeniorMoment video series, Dr. Molly-Claire Gillett at Critical Craft Series

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Dr. Suzanne Bailey

Director's Letter

Dear TCAS members and supporters,

It is a pleasure to be working at the Trent Centre for Aging and Society this year and to see the flourishing of aging studies in the region and farther afield. It is our hope that the Centre makes visible the work of all the community associated with TCAS, from students to faculty to community members, as well as drawing attention to all the ways in which the full spectrum of aging is both visible and yet still to be seen and celebrated.

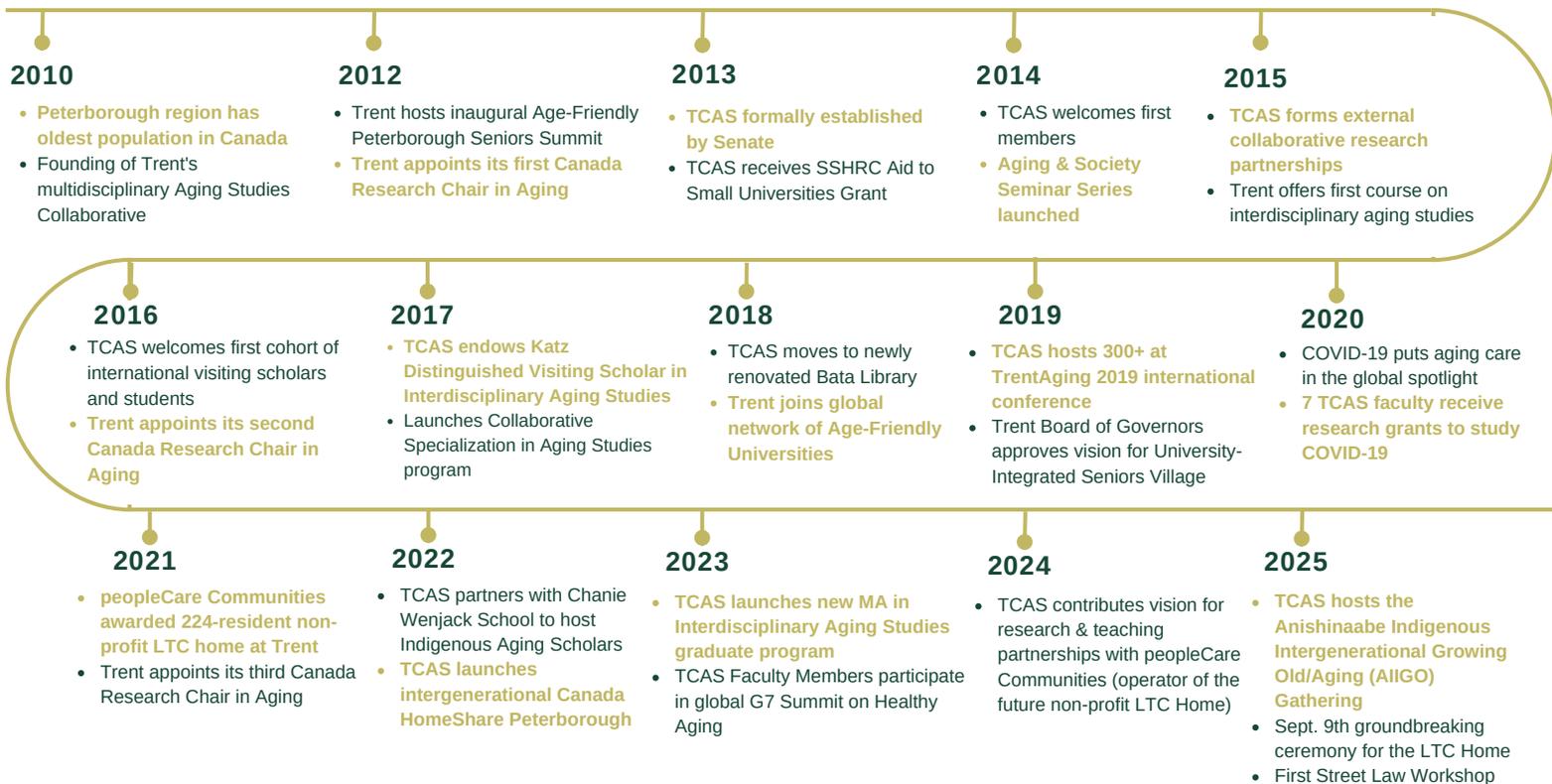
One of the highlights of 2025 was the groundbreaking ceremony for the new long-term care home on Trent grounds in September 2025. Construction on this collaborative project between the university, peopleCare and the municipality is moving quickly and we are looking forward to the learning opportunities that will be available to Trent faculty and students when the building opens.

We were also proud and excited to host Dr. Julia Henderson from UBC as this year's Stephen Katz Distinguished Visiting Lecturer. Julia Henderson's innovative research shows us how the Humanities can be fused with social science methodologies to produce research and community activism as she invites us to 'unscript age'.

Please enjoy reading about the many accomplishments of our wonderful TCAS community!

Suzanne Bailey, *Ph.D.*
Acting Director (2025-26), Trent Centre for Aging & Society

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TRENT CENTRE FOR AGING & SOCIETY

University-Integrated Seniors Village Update

Latest Updates

- In May 2025, **Jack Hoggarth** and **Barbara Moktthewenkwe Wall** held a deeply moving Anishinaabe Haudenosaunee blessing ceremony for the land and building of the non-profit Long-Term Care Home, to be operated by **peopleCare Communities**.
- A Trent News article, ***Trent University Pursues Creative Solutions to Support Local Housing Needs***, includes comments from Trent president & vice-chancellor, **Dr. Cathy Bruce**
- On Sept. 9th 2025, an official groundbreaking ceremony was attended by **Ontario Minister of Long-Term Care Natalia Kusendova-Bashta**, and articles discussing the Seniors Village were published on **[Trent News](#)** & **[KawarthaNow](#)**.

Project Overview

- The site for the Seniors Village is located at the **north-west corner of Water Street and Woodland Drive**. This is an ideal location, as it is connected to transit routes and municipal services, and in close proximity to the Symons Campus. Construction is in progress!
- There will be exciting research and teaching opportunities with **90+ student placements**.
- A report series about this project, authored by TCAS member **Dr. Laura Poulin**, is available on **[our website](#)**.



TCAS members, including former Directors Dr. Elizabeth Russell (left) and Dr. Nadine Changfoot (right), and others at the Sept. 9th groundbreaking ceremony



Click to hear Dr. Bruce discuss the project with Megan Allen-Lamb, President of peopleCare Communities



Unscripting Age with Dr. Julia Henderson

As **The Stephen Katz Distinguished Visiting Scholar in Interdisciplinary Aging Studies**, Dr. **Julia Henderson's "Unscripting Age: Challenging Cultural Ageism Through Theatre & Performance"** examined how theatre and community performance can challenge entrenched ageist narratives. Trained across theatre, occupational therapy, and community-based research, she argued that performance offers a distinctive set of tools for contesting ageist narratives and imagining fuller accounts of older adulthood. Rather than treating the stage as merely reflective of cultural stereotypes, Henderson presented theatre and performance as sites where temporality, embodiment, and relationality can be mobilized to resist tropes of decline and to document older adults as active agents of meaning, skill, and civic belonging.

Henderson is an Assistant Professor in the **Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy** at the **University of British Columbia**, an investigator with UBC's **Edwin S. H. Leong Centre for Healthy Aging**, and Chair of the **North American Network in Aging Studies (NANAS)**. Her scholarship spans peer reviewed journals and edited collections in theatre studies, aging studies, health services, and cultural criticism. Her program of research centers on occupations, care, community, and activism with the explicit aim of redressing cultural ageism, challenging dementia stigma, and promoting older adults' citizenship through arts-based collaboration. Recent projects she leads include **Anti-ageist Active Access Design for Older Adults in the Performing Arts**, **Intergenerational Arts for Climate Action**, **Changing Home**, and a **Telepresence Robot Theatre** project that explores loneliness and access.



Dr. Julia Henderson (Glasses, black shirt/jacket, gold coloured nose ring, wavy hair, smiling)

Rather than offering a purely theoretical argument, 'Unscripting Age' advanced its claims through close analysis of specific theatrical works and community-engaged performance projects. Henderson distinguished three analytic devices that theatre both exposes and can transform: temporality, embodiment, and relationality. For each device she deployed examples drawn from professionally produced plays and from collaborative community projects, including the social media series **#HaveASeniorMoment** and the **Chop Theatre** production **Sonic Elder**. The lecture underscored how the conventions of dramatic form shape cultural assumptions about aging, and how those conventions can be reworked to produce more affirmative, complex representations.

Unscripting Age with Dr. Julia Henderson



Dr. Julia Henderson behind the Gzowski College podium at the Benedict Gathering Space for her presentation as The Stephen Katz Distinguished Visiting Scholar in Interdisciplinary Aging Studies. (Smiling, wine coloured jacket, glasses, wavy silver hair)

Temporality was the first lens Henderson advanced. Contemporary ageist narratives typically rely on an objective, linear account of time where life is measured as a forward march toward inevitable decline. Drawing on **Matthew D. Wagner's** framework from Shakespearean studies, she proposed three theatrical temporal phenomena that reconfigure how aging appears on stage: temporal dissonance, temporal thickness, and temporal materiality. Temporal dissonance attends to clashing time schemes, such as when a two hour performance compresses a lifetime or when flashbacks and flash forwards unsettle chronological expectations. Temporal thickness emphasizes how the present is saturated by elements of past and future, so that a character's current gestures

are weighted by memory and possibility. Temporal materiality attends to the way time acquires bodily density when lived bodies are present onstage.

Henderson illustrated these ideas with a #HaveASeniorMoment video in which older participants briefly morph into vivid 1980s versions of themselves. The sudden layering of eras dramatizes what she terms cyclical or layered experience of time, and counters the cultural script that confines older people to a diminished present. In this framing, theatre shows that aging is not experienced as a simple, linear passage of time, but as something felt, remembered, and revisited.

Unscripting Age with Dr. Julia Henderson

Embodiment was the second pillar of Henderson's argument. She argued that performance shows how identity, memory, and skill are expressed through the body. Drawing on scholars who emphasize how culture shapes bodily experience, she pointed to embodied musical skill as a powerful challenge to the idea that aging necessarily involves decline. Sonic Elder, a collaboratively developed autobiographical concert-theatre piece created by lifelong musicians in Vancouver, served as proof for this claim. The presence of musicians in their sixties and seventies performing material they have practiced for decades centred embodied competence as a form of resistance. A scene in which 72 year old performer **Joni Moore** layers childhood memory with present narration demonstrated how embodied autobiography collapses chronological expectations and produces rich, positive portrayals of older identity.



An image taken from one of the videos as part of the #HaveASeniorMoment series. (A collection of older adults wearing amusing costumes from their younger years in the 80's)

Relationality completed Henderson's trio. Theatre by its nature stages relationships, and community-engaged projects make that relationality explicit. Henderson described how collaborative work often required revising assumptions about authorship because older content creators wanted friends and peers included in their projects. The #HaveASeniorMoment series often expanded to include group casts, and the Intergenerational Arts for Climate Action study convened children aged nine to twelve with adults aged 60 to 83 in a public event at **Kitsilano Neighbourhood House** on August 24, 2024. Those performances deliberately exposed backstage processes, technicians, and intergenerational interactions, thereby treating caregiving, assistance, and collective preparation as part of the performance itself. For Henderson, those visible relationships perform a theory of personhood that is social, rather than solitary.



Joni Moore (Black dress, blonde hair) singing into microphone as part of Sonic Elder's performance

Unscripting Age with Dr. Julia Henderson

Throughout the lecture Henderson connected these analytical frames to broader aims. Her work, she explained, seeks cultural practices that cultivate positive and authentic images of aging, develop reciprocal care and citizenship, and build activism for older adults. The examples she presented make clear that theatrical form and community arts projects can do more than raise awareness. They can enact new social practices that reconfigure expectations about competency, memory, and civic participation.

Dr. Stephen Katz, introducing the lecture, captured this blend of scholarship and practice when he observed that Henderson offers the field a rare combination of occupational therapy, theatre practice, media production, and collaborative community engagement. He praised her organizational leadership, including her chairship of the North American Network in Aging Studies (NANAS), and described her work as both rigorous and grounded in care. Katz's remarks underscore that Henderson's contributions are intellectual and institutional.

'Unscripting Age' works in two important ways. First, it gives scholars and practitioners clear concepts for understanding how time, bodies, and relationships are shaped and represented in performances involving older adults. The other is practical. Henderson's projects show how to design accessible productions, how to collaborate ethically with older participants, and how to craft public-facing works that affirm rather than diminish aging lives.

"Julie is a unique thinker and creator, and has contributed to aging studies the benefits of a uniquely combined research background in occupational therapy, theater, performance, media production, and collaborative community projects."

Dr. Stephen Katz

"...and while she's been in her current position a relatively short time (compared to some of us anyway) her organizational and service commitments have been remarkable! For example, her current chairship of the growing North American Network in Aging Studies or NANAS."

-Dr. Stephen Katz

For aging studies and performing arts practitioners the lecture offers an invitation. If the stage has long been complicit in reproducing reductive age stereotypes, then it is also a powerful medium for reworking those stereotypes. By attending to temporality, embodiment, and relationality, scholars and artists can produce work that resists scripted decline and instead scripts dignity, creativity, and mutual belonging. In the terms Henderson set out, theatre can be a site of redress where older adults are not passive subjects to be represented, but active agents who perform their own narratives of doing, being, becoming, and belonging.

"...and there's more. Great titles. Great articles. But these are not just theoretical arguments. They're caring, collaborative, and careful attending to difficult everyday problems of aging. Like dementia and inequality. Like climate change and disability, accessibility and technological intervention. They embody what Michel Foucault called a critical curiosity."

- Dr. Stephen Katz

Worlding Difference: Aging, Arts, & Accessibility

The **Aging, Arts, and Accessibility** module on the **Worlding Difference** platform features artwork by those who are “aging, of an age, old, older, and/or E/elder.” With sections such as **Indigenous Aging**, **Crippling Aging**, and **Queer Aging**, the perspectives shared are subversive, original, and deeply personal. Rather than treating aging as decline, the module attempts to dismantle the ableist and ageist idea of “successful aging” through collective knowledge-making and accessible artistic practice. TCAS is represented in this work through the contributions of **Dr. Nadine Changfoot** and Research Associate **Dr. Jami McFarland**.

Dr. Changfoot, TCAS Executive and former Director, serves as the Trent Research Lead and is credited as a contributor to the module and to its intellectual framing. Her research explains how videos and creative works from aging artists can foster new socio-cultural representations of aging experiences (indigenous aging, aging with dementia, aging queerly, etc.)

“Such a method offers one way to productively disrupt the logics of “successful aging” that reinforce heteronormative, cisgender, white, colonial, and middle-class experiences as model experiences of aging.”

– Dr. Nadine Changfoot

Her work helps situate aging within broader conversations about power, difference, and social justice, reinforcing the module’s commitment to understanding age alongside other forms of structural inequality. This contribution reflects TCAS’s long-standing focus on interdisciplinary research.

A particularly strong example of TCAS-linked practice within the module is the **Craftivism**



An example of a Zine created in Dr. Jami McFarland’s 4th year course

project shown in the Queer Aging module. This activity draws from Dr. Jami McFarland’s 2018 fourth-year course, **From Golden Girls to Raging Grannies: Feminist Perspectives on Aging**. In the assignment, students repurposed gossip magazines to create zines that critique media narratives surrounding aging, femininity, and respectability. By cutting, reworking, and reframing mass-media imagery, students were encouraged to question who is allowed visibility, and agency as they age.

The project demonstrates how craftivism can function as both pedagogy and political intervention. It is low-cost, accessible, and adaptable, which makes it well suited to diverse classrooms and communities. More importantly, it shows how creative methods can help students engage critically with ageism while producing knowledge that is collective, reflective, and materially grounded.

Through these contributions, TCAS members help make the Aging, Arts, and Accessibility module a practical and intellectually rigorous resource that bridges research, teaching, and creative activism.

Worlding Difference is part of the **Bodies in Translation** research project by **Re•Vision Centre for Art and Social Justice** at the **University of Guelph**, and it is supported by the **Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council**.

TCAS Was Well-Represented at CAG2025

At **CAG2025**, the 54th annual scientific and educational meeting of the **Canadian Association on Gerontology** held in Montréal, TCAS members made a strong and visible contribution across keynote, symposia, and other presentations. As Canada's premier national gathering for aging research, policy, and practice, the conference provided a significant platform for TCAS scholars to showcase work that is shaping contemporary debates in gerontology.

TCAS Executive member and past Director **Dr. Sally Chivers** delivered a keynote address titled **Don't Panic: Fear and the Stories We Tell about Age**. Drawing on decades of research into aging narratives in literature, film, popular culture, and gerontological scholarship, Chivers demonstrated how her podcast **Wrinkle Radio** emerges directly from this sustained body of work. Her keynote invited the audience to recognize fear as an understandable and shared dimension of aging, rather than a failure to be corrected. She challenged researchers to consider how acknowledging fear might reshape research questions and transform how participants are invited into studies. The impact of the keynote resonated well beyond the session itself, with conversations about Chivers' ideas continuing throughout the conference. Attendees reported feeling energized by the talk and emphasized its necessity to the future direction of gerontological research.



Dr. Sally Chivers at CAG2025 for her Keynote (Smiling, dark hair, navy jacket, glasses)

TCAS Founder **Dr. Stephen Katz** played a central organizational role at CAG2025 by convening and chairing two symposia. The first, **Aging by Design: Techno-Ethnographies of the Co-Constitution of Aging and Technologies**, examined how aging and technology are produced in relation to one another. As part of that symposium, Katz delivered a presentation entitled **The On-Going Relationality Between Aging And Technology: Conversations And Images About Design**. His second symposium, **Radical Relationality: Theory and Method in Aging Research**, explored relational approaches to aging scholarship. Within this session, Katz presented **From Demography to Kinship: A Relational Approach to Population Crisis**, offering a perspective that shifts attention from population metrics to relational understandings of social connection.

Dr. Nadine Changfoot, TCAS Executive member and former Director, presented on **Decolonial Relationality and Aging: Digital Storytelling with Nishinaabeg of Wshkiigmong**. Her presentation outlined decolonial relationality as a rethinking of being, becoming, and the constitution of knowledge. Dr. Changfoot emphasized the importance of decentring Western dominant frameworks while engaging Indigenous ways of knowing without appropriation. She highlighted how relationality between human and non-human worlds is central to research processes, and she shared examples of how university structures and systems continue to limit the full expression of relational and Indigenous knowledge within academic research.

Indigenous Aging: Intergenerational Connections

TCAS member **Dr. Jami McFarland** presented two papers that reflected both collaborative and independent postdoctoral research. In the session **Queer Aging and the Politics of Visibility**, McFarland presented ***Rooted in Story: Two-Spirit, Trans, and Queer E/elders on Representation and Belonging***. In the session **Dis/Ability and Intersectional Belonging**, she presented ***'Make Eye Contact to Ensure Drivers See You': Older Adults with Vision Loss Look Sideways at Ableist and Ageist Assumptions in the Built and Social Environment***. Together, these papers examined aging, representation, and social belonging through intersectional lenses.

Dr. Pia Kontos presented several times at CAG2025. In the session **Grieving, Planning, Meaning-Making**, she delivered ***Dying on Our Own Terms: A Relational Framework for Supporting Compassionate End-of-Life Processes for People Living With Dementia, Families and Professionals***. In the symposium **Radically Rethinking Urban Poverty and the Everyday Lives of Older People**, she presented ***Relational and 'Situated Selves': Forging a New Conceptual Space to Understand Poverty and Dementia in Everyday Lives***. At the symposium **Radical Relationality: Theory and Method in Aging Research**, she presented ***Rethinking Risk as a Relational Ethic for Human Flourishing in Dementia Care***. She also participated in a workshop (alongside fellow TCAS member **Dr. Rachel Bar**) titled ***Fostering Relationality Through Sharing Dance with People Living with Dementia in Canada's South Asian Community***.

Samantha Teichman presented at CAG2025 in both paper and poster sessions. In the session **Kinship, Spirituality and Faith**, she delivered ***Mindfulness as a Public Good: Rethinking,***

Participation, Practice, and Policy. She also presented two posters on bereavement: ***Last Responders: Understanding the Impact of Funeral Directors' Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic on Bereavement*** and ***Reimagining Bereavement: Supporting Older Adults and Aging Families amidst and post COVID-19***.

Several TCAS members also contributed to the symposium **Creative Reimaginings of Aging: Dementia, Death, and Radical Relationality in Cultural Scripts**. Presentations included:

- **Yusi Chang's *Memory and Identity: Dementia Narratives in Chinese Cinema***
- **Dr. Albert Banerjee's *Yoga For Mortals: What Yoga and its Radical Relationality Have to Teach Us About Healthy Aging***
- **Dr. Nicole Dalmer's *Googling the Great Beyond: How Older Canadians Navigate Death-Related Information***
- **Dr. Ulla Kribernegg's *Dementia as Radical Relationality: Cultural Gerontological Readings of King Lear and The Old King in His Exile***.

There were even more TCAS member presentations at CAG2025 than could be included in this article, so please check out the **Member Updates** page of this newsletter to see the other contributions of TCAS members like:

- **Dr. An Kosurko**
- **Dr. Barbara Marshall**
- **Dr. Kim Ritchie**
- **Shawna Peddar**

TCAS Member Updates

Dr. Zoey Chen (pictured) presented their research, *From Data to Decisions: Exploring the Influence of Information Accuracy on Older Population Migration*, at the **2025 Chinese Economists Society (CES) Annual Conference**. The project examines how improved pollution information shapes mobility patterns among older adults and contributes to regional disparities in aging demographics. It also explores whether these shifts align with the development of public services, with the aim of informing actionable policy recommendations.



Dr. Mary Jean Hande and **Dr. Stephanie Tobin** have officially joined the TCAS Executive!

TCAS executive, **Dr. Bharati Sethi** presented this month at the **North American Refugee Conference (NARHC)** on the analysis of the three refugee sponsorship programs. The North American Refugee Conference (NARHC) is a leading global conference addressing all aspects of refugee health, from pre-migration to resettlement.

At 11am on September 29th, **Leighla Foster**, TCAS Undergraduate Associate, and local musician **Parker Farris** performed a half-hour **Trent Radio** show hosted by Trent Instructor Musician **Jill Staveley** and Trent President **Cathy Bruce**. This broadcast was part of **Artsweek 2025**, a bi-annual event put on by the **Electric City Culture Council (EC3)**

The Rural Aging Research Program, led by TCAS members **Dr. Elizabeth Russell** and former Director **Dr. Mark Skinner**, was featured on **Trent Radio**. Through the Rural Aging Research Program, faculty, students, and community members are working together to explore how older adults age in place, build social connections, and contribute to the resilience of rural life. To listen to the segment, **click here!**

Dr. Bharati Sethi was honoured with both an appointment to the **Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars** and by the many tributes from colleagues at the **Celebration of Excellence** event at Trent

On September 21st, 2025 **Dr. Pia Kontos** and **Dr. Rachel Bar**, in partnership with **KITE Research Institute, Canada's National Ballet School (NBS)**, and **Mid-Career Productions**, co-led **'Reframing Dementia: Challenging Stigma Through Film & Art'** to challenge stigma associated with dementia and to help shift the dominant narrative about dementia from loss and decline, to hope and new possibilities. The event drew **130+ attendees**. (pictured)



TCAS Founder and Executive **Dr. Stephen Katz** recently published a book review of *Curious Kin in Fictions of Posthuman Care* by **Amelia DeFalco** in **TECNOSCIENZA: Italian Journal of Science and Technology Studies** (Vol. 15, No. 2, 2025).

TCAS Member Updates

More TCAS at CAG2025

Dr. An Kosurko, during the section **Rethinking Dementia Care Through Relational Engagement**, delivered the presentation ***Respecifying Social Inclusion in Practical Action for People Living with Dementia in Online Dance Activities***

Dr. Barbara Marshall, during the symposium **Aging by Design: Techno-Ethnographies of the Co-Constitution of Aging and Technologies**, delivered the presentation ***"Cruel optimism"? Representations of independence and relationality in AgeTech***

Shawna Peddar presented the poster ***Understanding Nurses' Use of Activity-Based Interventions for People Living with Dementia in Acute Care***

Dr. Nicole Dalmer during the section **Aging Through Gender: Care, Identity and Culture**, gave the presentation ***Ripple Effects: Tracing Older Women's Engagement with Water***

Dr. Kim Ritchie, during the symposium **Moral Distress And Moral Injury In Healthcare Providers, Veterans, And First Responders: Findings From Pan-Canadian Research Teams**, delivered the presentation ***Trauma-Informed Care: Co-Designing Policies to Support Healthcare Provider Mental Health***

Dr. Albert Banerjee, during the symposium **Aging Equitably with Care I: Communities 'within' Communities**, presented ***Your Days are Numbered: A Critical Look at Active Aging and Self-care***

Dr. Ulla Kribernegg, during the symposium **Liberalism in Care: From Aging Citizens to an Aging Society**, delivered presentation titled ***Politics of Age and Exclusion: Gerontocide and Social Abandonment in Plan 75 (2022)***

Dr. Bharathi Sethi (pictured) gave a research presentation titled ***Experiences of Racialized Personal Support Workers (PSWs) in Ontario*** at the **8th Metropolis Identities Conference** in Saskatoon (pictured). Dr. Sethi was also part of an invited panel presentation titled ***On Both Frontlines: Double Duty Caregivers: Risk and Resilience***, at the **Canadian Caregiving Summit** in Ottawa.



Dr. Sethi also delivered the keynote titled ***"You are dark and dirty...": Lived experiences of Personal Support Workers in Ontario***, at the **Summit on Racial and Cultural Diversity in Long-term Care in Atlantic Canada: A Spotlight on Worker Experience**, in Halifax

TCAS Postdoctoral Fellow **Molly-Claire Gillett** spoke about her new monograph, ***Irish Lacemaking: Art, Industry, and Cultural Practice*** and her current work with older women's communities of craft in rural Ireland and Canada at the launch of **Bloomsbury Academic's** new **Critical Craft Series** at **Concordia University's 4th Space**, with international attendance on zoom, in Montreal on November 19th, 2025. The event is archived online, **click here** to view it!

William Riopelle, an Honours thesis student in Psychology (working with **Dr. Sebastien Paquette**) and TCAS member, recently showcased his preliminary findings at the **ON-EAR (Ontario Network for Emerging Auditory Research)** conference. His poster, titled ***"Listening with Less Effort: Does Musical Training Buffer Age-Related Auditory Decline?"***, examined whether musical training can reduce listening effort in older adults—a challenge linked to decreased well-being.

CHALLENGE THE WAY YOU THINK



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