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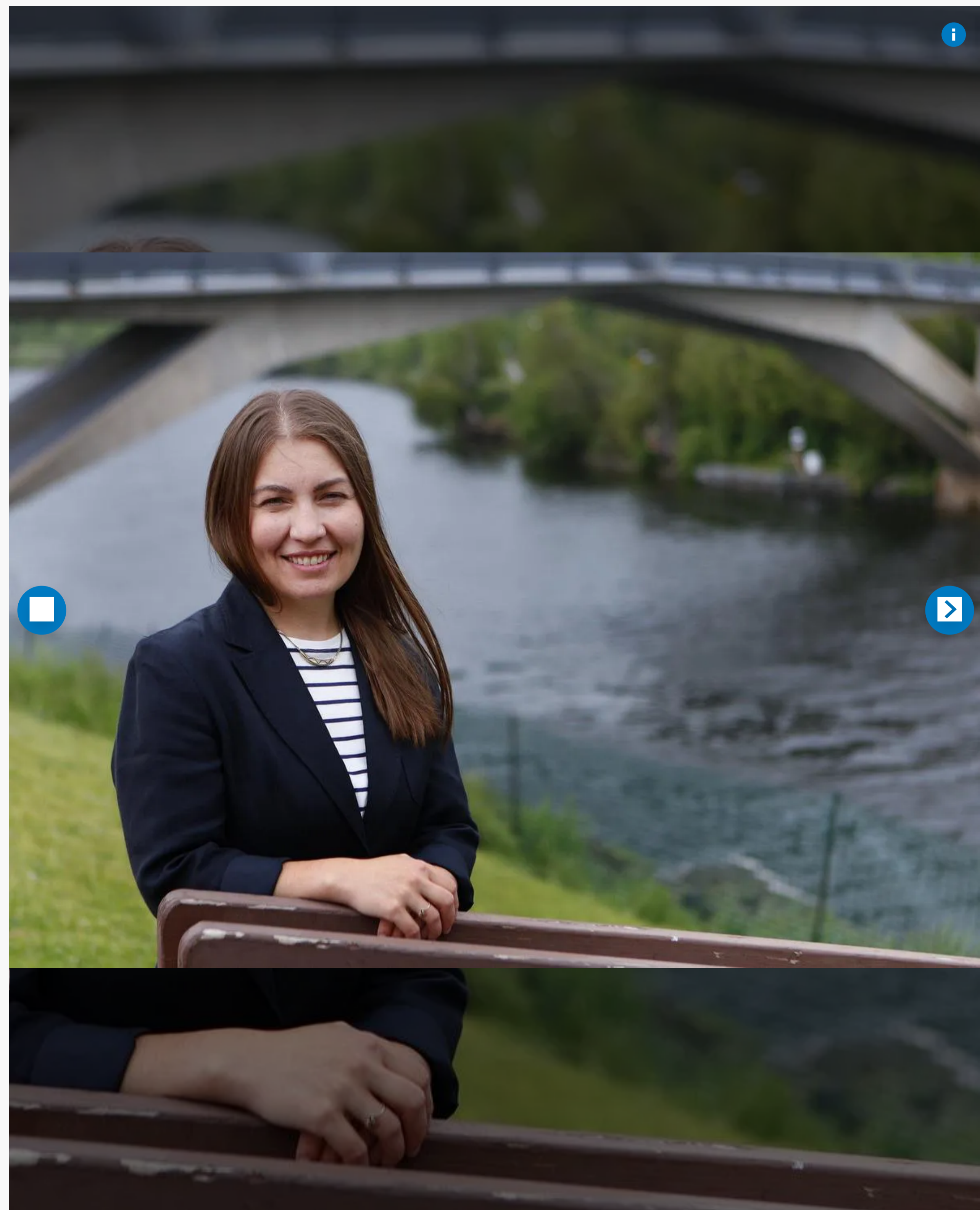
PETERBOROUGH REGION

Trent aims to pair students with Peterborough seniors during housing crisis

It's aimed at helping keep older people in their homes with some supports.

By **Matthew P. Barker** Examiner Reporter
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Trent aims to pair students with Peterborough seniors during housing crisis

Matthew P. Barker

Trent University is launching a pilot project to help connect students looking for accommodations during the school year with older adults who are looking for added income so they can age in place.

The pilot project headed up by the Trent Centre for Aging and Society and Canada Home Share will link students from both Fleming College and Trent University with older people willing to rent out spaces in their homes to students in exchange for cheaper rents and minor chores.

Students will be offered rent ranging between \$400 and \$600 per month in exchange for up to seven hours weekly in the form of companionship, household tasks or errands for older adults in the home.

Ten cities throughout Canada are expected to take part in the pilot project helping to connect students and older adults wanting to age-in-place.

Communities including Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Kingston, Peel Region and Toronto will join Peterborough to study the outcomes of the pilot.

With a vacancy rate of about one per cent in Peterborough adding more options to the housing market will help

Elizabeth Russell, director of the Trent Centre for Aging and Society, walks across campus on Wednesday, June 1, 2022 in Peterborough, Ont. Russell is heading up a pilot project that will match older adults looking to supplement their incomes by offering students accommodations in the city during the school year. Elizabeth Russell, director of the Trent Centre for Aging and Society, walks across campus on Wednesday, June 1, 2022 in Peterborough, Ont. Russell is heading up a pilot project that will match older adults looking to supplement their incomes by offering students accommodations in the city during the school year. Elizabeth Russell, director of the Trent Centre for Aging and Society, walks across campus on Wednesday, June 1, 2022 in Peterborough, Ont. Russell is heading up a pilot project that will match older adults looking to supplement their incomes by offering students accommodations in the city during the school year. Elizabeth Russell, director of the Trent Centre for Aging and Society, walks across campus on Wednesday, June 1, 2022 in Peterborough, Ont. Russell is heading up a pilot project that will match older adults looking to supplement their incomes by offering students accommodations in the city during the school year.

with the community's need for more housing.

There will be about 10 spots open in the pilot to pair homeowners and students

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together, said Elizabeth Russell, associate professor of psychology and the director of the Centre for Aging and Society at Trent.

“This is open to all post-secondary students, so they could be a Fleming student, Trent student, though Trent is certainly the lead,” she said. “Home sharing is an innovative model supporting aging in place on the side of the older adults.”

Social workers will be engaged throughout the matching process for both parties and will be ongoing to support them throughout the pilot project.

“There are all sorts of screening safety checks, talking to both parties about their goals, their interest, why they’re interested in the program and just using those criteria to determine suitability,” said Russell.

“It’s not just looking at the suitability of the one individual for home sharing, rather it’s for a match. You want to make sure there’s a great match between both parties.”

A similar pilot project, helmed by Dr. Raza Mirza, was conducted in Toronto and presented back in 2019, which generated a lot of positive feedback leading an expanded pilot, again in Toronto, with a few hundred participants.

“They were, at that time, able to kind of iron out their process for the system and then now they can launch in multiple cities,” Russell said.

“We’re really pleased to be one of those cities, at this stage, we’re sort of the initial pilot is past us and now they have a system that’s ready to go here in Peterborough.”

Mirza, through connecting with Russell, came to present his findings in the initial pilot, leaving people excited for something similar.

“He talked about how the energy in the room was palpable in terms of excitement from key people who are there to support students and to support older people,” Russell said.

“He felt Trent and Peterborough in general was a great place to launch this initiative successfully.”

A pilot project of this nature would work wonders for the community because there is a need from both sides, she said.

“Peterborough is an aging community and has many students going to different institutions who really are interested in something different in terms of their living situation.”

An information session will take place June 15 at 2 p.m. in the Student Centre at Trent University at 1680 West Bank Dr. for anyone looking for information about how the pilot will work and to meet with members of the Canada HomeShare Peterborough program.

Participants can RSVP to aging@trentu.ca

mbarker@peterboroughdaily.com