Co-chairs' Welcome to ISG2026

It is our pleasure to welcome you to Vancouver and the International Society for Gerontechnology's 15th World Conference. In the 16 years since 2010 when ISG last held its biennial conference in Vancouver[1], we have witnessed world events that none of us expected or imagined – COVID-19 and its sequela among them. Coupled with military incursions, mass migration and climate change people are aging in a world that is very different than that of their parents and grandparents.

Technology has a key role to play in coping with emergent disasters and emergencies, from providing warnings of inbound missiles and drones that older persons with sensory deficits can benefit from, to enabling families to communicate with elderly loved ones subject to public health directives to socially isolate. And, post-disaster to get the mobility aids and IT devices they may need to reconnect with family and friends and participate to the extent they are able in the community of their choice. In the day to day non-disaster situation, new low and high technologies can enable frail older adults to age in place in conventional housing longer and more safely.

In the lead up to this conference we have worked diligently to identify keynote and symposium speakers who will draw attention to innovative new technologies as well as to key moral and ethical issues that need to be addressed in today's world of AI, cell phones and big data. We offer a site visit program that highlights local innovation in meeting the shelter and care needs of independent and semi-independent older adults as well as persons living with dementia. We also highlight local innovation in mobility aids ranging from wheelchair add-ons to the latest developments of exoskeletons. And, we offer ISG's 10th Master Class designed to build capacity among Masters and PhD students, post-doctoral fellows and early career professionals.

This issue of *Gerontechnology* provides abstracts for the scientific program (n=300+). It will serve as a permanent record of the individuals who gathered together in Vancouver to share their ideas, and it provides a snapshot of the state of the field of Gerontechnology in 2026.

Gloria Gutman and Shannon Freeman

References:

Sixsmith, A. & Gutman, G. (Eds.) Conference issue – abstracts of the 7th world conference. Gerontechnology, 2010, vol.9, no.2