

President's Address summarizing SWESA progress in 2014

(There was no Annual Report for 2014. So as not to lose historical detail, this is President Carol Bigam's address to the 2015 AGM with some slight edits.)

I am very pleased to be bringing you some of the highlights of what SWESA has accomplished since our AGM a year ago and where we are headed in the next year.

I would like to introduce our most important resource "our volunteers", many of whom have volunteered for us at some time. We have tallied over 3000 volunteer hours for 2014 and without all of them we could not have accomplished what we have.

At our annual meeting in 2014 we had recently completed our Needs Assessment where you told us that you wanted more programs. In order to accomplish this we hired a program coordinator. We have more than doubled the number of programs and offer a much greater variety at both Yellowbird East and at the Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre. A few of the programs we offer are arts and crafts, nutrition, health and wellness, social services and recreation which includes yoga, the exercise program and the walking group. Becoming involved in pickle ball is on our agenda for this summer.

Our new Program Guide is available here today. Hopefully you will find some programs that you would like to participate in.

It is nice to see many of you attend our social functions. Our monthly luncheons are always popular; especially the themed luncheon with the lighted palm trees and the hula dancer. We were fortunate to have Councillor Walters and Councillor Knack as guest speakers at some of these functions.

We have developed partnerships with several organizations, including the Edmonton Public Library which has been a great benefit to SWESA, instructing our technology programs, in both English and Korean, and now supporting our Book Clubs.

SWESA has been chosen to be one of the 6 sites to receive funding from the City of Edmonton as part of the "AGE FRIENDLY EDMONTON" INITIATIVE. For seniors who wish to stay in their own homes but require assistance to do so, the HOME SUPPORTS TO EDMONTON SENIORS PROJECT is designed to help with snow removal, yard work, housekeeping or minor home repairs. Seniors in south west Edmonton requiring assistance will just have one number to call to get the names of screened, reliable and reasonably priced service providers. At this time SWESA is not in a position to take on the entire project and so we are pleased to have LIFESTYLE HELPING HANDS SENIORS ASSOCIATION to assist with the development of this project for which SWESA will be fully responsible in 2017 with funding for a part time employee.

For the third year in a row, we will be coordinating and hosting the pancake breakfast at the Blue Quill Community Hall during Seniors Week. This is a joint project with 5 local community leagues in south west Edmonton and we hope to see many of you there. We will have our information tent at various summer festivities including the Farmers Market at Terwillegar.

In order to increase our exposure we produced our first pamphlet. The committee did a wonderful job and you will probably recognize the photos of our members.

At our 2014 AGM members voted to support a \$30 membership fee to help defray programming and operation costs. We started collecting the fees in December and now have 160 paid members. In 2014 (with no fees) we had nearly 500 members. We want to increase our membership and are hoping that more older adults in south west Edmonton will decide to support SWESA by becoming a member. With our membership you not only receive the member rate for our programs but you can receive a discount of up to 20% on your membership at the Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre or at any of the other City of Edmonton recreation facilities in the city.

We have worked hard and completed many tasks, this year, one of them being our business plan for 2015 and beyond, which will be presented by Kathy Trepanier.

Next Steps

Where do we go from here? SWESA's Vision and Mission guide our growth and development. We have set goals for 2015-16 in the Action Plan. We will:

- * Continue to offer more programs to meet the needs of our members.
- * Develop a communication and marketing plan to spread the word about SWESA amongst the seniors population in south west Edmonton (35000)
- * Develop sources of funding to pay for the services we wish to offer.
- * Expand and formalize the volunteer program.