SWESA News

SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association

Volume 3: June 1, 2022 - Special 10th Anniversary Issue

10th Anniversary

On June 29, 2012, SWESA started with a group of determined seniors and a dream to create a seniors activity centre in southwest Edmonton. It's time now to mark this milestone as we celebrate 10 years of programming for older adults. SWESA will celebrate starting with an Anniversary Party on June 9th from 1:00-4:00 at the Blue Quill Community Centre. There will be refreshments, program demonstrations, a 50/50 and more. Details will be sent to SWESA members and guests. To RSVP or for more info CLICK HERE

President's Letter

Happy 10th Anniversary SWESA!

As you read through this newsletter, I hope that you will be as impressed as I am to see how far SWESA has come in 10 short years. The initial idea for SWESA was spearheaded by the Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council (TRAC) under President Rob Agostinis, Seniors Representative Glenn Kissick and the City of Edmonton.

The 10th anniversary symbol is tin, representing strength, resilience, and longevity. To be successful, an organization needs to be flexible and stable, and able to bend without being broken. This has certainly proven to be the case for SWESA.

Staying true to our mission of empowering older adults in southwest Edmonton to be active and socially engaged, the SWESA Board continues to work tirelessly to ensure that we are positioned to be here for our members and the older adults in our community now and in the future.

cont'd on page 2

Hello Neighbour Project

As part of our Anniversary Celebrations, SWESA is launching the "Hello Neighbour - We Want to Meet You" project to reach out into the broader seniors community in SW Edmonton. The funding for this project has come from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program. CLICK HERE to read about this exciting project and participate.

Funded by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program

Canada

Get your coffee now

SWESA News is now published electronically. This Anniversary edition is longer, full of wonderful memories. So sit back, sip your coffee and enjoy.

Annual Appeal 2022

For the 4th year, an extremely generous community donor has pledged another $10,000 in a matching donation to the Annual Appeal. This person, who wishes to remain anonymous, has now given a total of $45,000 to SWESA!

Two additional early donations of $5,000 each have been received to match this. We are well on our way to meet SWESA's $40,000 Annual Appeal goal!

During this summer, Mike Bull, Appeal lead, will be reaching out to our "Friends of SWESA". These are members and others who have made a commitment to support SWESA in the past. We hope their ongoing support will ensure we are ready for the official October 1st Annual Appeal launch.

To learn more about the Appeal and Friends of SWESA, CLICK HERE.

President's Letter cont'd

Key to creating a sense of identity for older adults in southwest Edmonton is to have a permanent home base for large group programming and staffed services. To this end, a Building Reserve Fund has been established. Priorities for the next three years include developing a Board recruitment strategy and recruiting staff to manage operations. We will focus on developing partnerships and collaborations to support the coordination of services for older adults and to grow our Building Reserve Fund. We are expanding service responses to low resourced older adults and ensuring that we remain diverse and inclusive.

As a charitable association, volunteers are the heart of our success. Not only does volunteering provide a sense of fulfillment for having made a meaningful contribution to enhance the quality of life in their community, but volunteers also increase the human resource capacity of our association and provide innovative ideas, experience, and leadership. The Tin Man, in the book *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum, said it perfectly when he said, "You people with hearts have something to guide you and need never do wrong."

Congratulations SWESA! Together we are making a difference and I look forward to what the future has in store.
Josie Richardson

Read this before you say, "Not me." - you might be a perfect addition to the SWESA Board

The work of the Board is to steer SWESA forward. We figure out what members want in programming, what opportunities there are to partner with community members, what everything will cost and how we will find the funding. We organize work in committees so we can engage other SWESA members and use their talents.

We're all retired or semi-retired, enjoying that phase of our life and at the same time, giving a couple of years towards building this resource for seniors in SW Edmonton.

Some of us have Board experience, some don't. To talk to one of us on the Board, email president@swesa.ca.

SWESA History

All of the people that have led the development of SWESA so far are people just like you. They stepped up to develop this wonderful resource. Consider your turn.

2011-2012 The initial idea for SWESA was spearheaded by the Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council (TRAC) under President Rob Agostinis, Glenn Kissick (seniors representative on TRAC) and the City of Edmonton. New to SW Edmonton, Glenn noticed right away that something was missing. “There was no place for seniors to gather.’ TRAC planned several open forums, inviting city representatives, seniors associations and seniors. An Advisory Committee was established and, at the final forum, TRAC provided $500 in seed money and asked who would step up to take this further and develop the bylaws to become a non profit society. David Faber offered to lead a planning committee for this interim work, inspired by the experience of his grandmother in searching for companionship.

Initial 2011 meeting between TRAC and city staff to discuss needs of seniors in the southwest. From L to R: Glenn Kissick, Linda Bombardieri, Rob Agostinis, Alisa Wheeler and Laura Shewchuk.

Significant to the planning was the CIty’s designation for this to be a seniors activity centre responsible to address the interests of seniors in a large district from the Whitemud Freeway south to 41st Ave SW and from the Calgary Trail west to the river.

First Open Forum in October 2011 to discuss needs for seniors representation in south west Edmonton.

On June 29, 2012, the planning committee filed an application to register SWESA as a non profit society. To announce the creation of SWESA to the public, a Fair was held at the William Lutksy YMCA. Over 400 people attended and representatives from all three levels of government attended and voiced support for SWESA.

Sept 2012 SWESA Fair from L to R James Rajotte MP, Fred Horne MLA, SWESA Committee Chair David Faber, City Councillor Linda Sloan, City Councillor Bryan Anderson, Matt Jeneroux, MLA

2013 - 2014 President Phil Brooks led the first Board in the early stages of developing what SWESA would become. Statements of mission, vision and values were drafted by this first Board and endorsed by the members. Board meetings were initially held in Tim Hortons, in borrowed spaces and dining rooms. When the first grant came through, a lease was signed for space at Yellowbird East Community Centre - and there was finally a place to call home. A website was created to add a virtual presence and enable us to communicate more broadly. A population based Needs Assessment was done to identify the interests of seniors and from that the first 'program' was offered - then called "Coffee, Chat 'n' Cards". The first AGM was attended by 75 people and included a performance by the GeriActors . Phil said "The most meaningful SWESA experience for me came later, phoning members during the pandemic. I realized how much it means to have someone to connect with."

Front L to R: Barbara Olsen, Phil Brooks, David Nichiporik. Back: a guest at the Board Meeting, Joe Roberts, Mac Fysh, Carol Bigam, Elnora Hibbert

2014 - 2017 President Carol Bigam bravely stepped forward, admitting no Board experience but having a real passion for what SWESA could become. She jumped right in updating the bylaws and directing the grant applications. Carol said, "I wrote my first grant application and it was thrilling to receive a grant of $100K!" The grant enabled the hire of the first Program Coordinator, Alex Santos. Coffee and Chat expanded to the

Terwillegar Recreation Centre. SWESA began hosting luncheons, with volunteers organizing, cooking and serving the food. SWESA hosted their first Pancake Breakfast for the community at the Blue Quill Community Hall. Information booths at the Terwillegar Farmers Market and a biweekly newsletter spread the word about SWESA. A second staff member, Barbara Newell, was contracted to run SWESA's arm of the city-wide Seniors Home Supports Program. Bus trips began in 2016 to Holden and to the Rosebud Theatre.

2016 SWESA Board: Front L to R Judy Baker, Carol Bigam, Barbara Olsen. Back L to R Phil Brooks, Rama Banerjee Lall, Ellen Frombach, Shirley Adam, Lawrence Tymko

2017- 2018 President Judy Baker remembers a turning point in SWESA's history. During a strategic planning session, in the midst of sticky notes, she said, "I suddenly realized that we're not just a coffee group anymore; we need to think bigger." During her tenure, for the first time there was a full Board of 12 members which made a huge difference in sharing the work to be done and drawing on the talent of the team. Front desk volunteers started to welcome members. Volunteer numbers grew. Luncheons grew in popularity with entertainment and themes that were just plain fun. The first casino fundraiser was in May 2017. Barry Headrick volunteered as Webmaster. "It was work and still is," said Judy who continues to support the Board, "but volunteering with SWESA keeps my mind active and I stay engaged with people."

2017-18 SWESA Board: Rob Agostinis, Judith Abbott, Judy Baker, Liz Tondu, Bob Power, Lawrence Tymko, Bob Hoddinott, Carol Vaage, Shirley Adam, Fred Rumpel, Chris Powell, Sam Radke

Apr 2018 - Dec 2018 Fred Rumpel was President during a transitional phase of SWESA's development. Program space was at a premium and options for expansion were being discussed. Our first membership survey was conducted. Fundraising efforts were underway and we held our first gala event - Under the Tuscan Sun. Fred resigned in December 2018 due to ill health.

Dec 2018 - Apr 2019 Chris Powell was appointed President on the resignation of Fred Rumpel and then elected President at the AGM in April 2019. She resigned in May 2019. Chris was responsible for implementing the purchase and use of the MySeniorCenter (MSC) data system. She was instrumental in SWESA's successful application for charitable status.

May 2019 - May 2022 Josie Richardson's tenure has been one like no other! The COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 brought the world to a standstill but SWESA forged on. Members rallied together to support SWESA and each other. Technology was embraced and became front and centre to communicating and staying connected. Virtual programming was offered and Zoom meetings became the norm. Staff and volunteers worked to enhance the reporting capabilities of the MySeniorCentre database, and the option for members to register and pay for programs and events online was introduced. A new program coordinator and business manager were hired. The first Annual Appeal was launched in 2020 and raised $46,578. This was followed by an equally successful campaign in 2021. Membership remained high in comparison to other senior centres serving a large population area. For the first time, SWESA began offering full-time programs/activities from both the Yellowbird East and Blue Quill Community League Centres in March 2022. "Members tell me," says Josie, "that their pandemic experience has made it so clear that we all want to live life to the fullest and SWESA offers so much in the way of people connections and friendships."

2021 50:50 Draw
L to R: Donna Coombs-Montrose (SWESA Member), President Josie Richardson, Treasurer Catherine Hammond, Funding Committee Co-Chairs Rob Agostinis and Tony Montrose, Terri Krissie (SWESA Member), Eliza Encenarial (Charity 50/50 Raffle Inc) and Past Board Member Bob Power

SWESA Membership Memories

Long time SWESA members were asked to look back over the last 10 years and share favourite memories.

Margaret Corbett, at 93, enjoys meeting new people at SWESA and listening to one another over coffee. She says she learned a lot from other seniors.

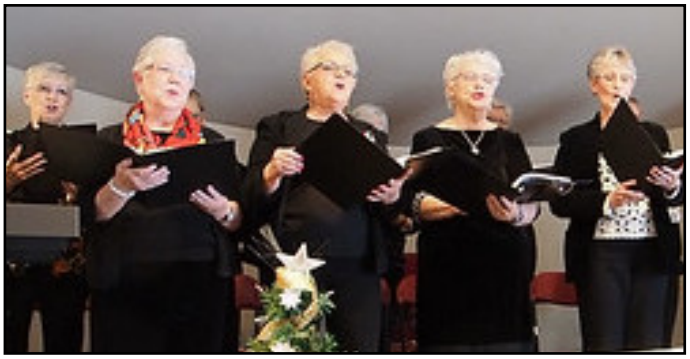
One of Fran Webster's best times at SWESA was being part of a square dancing group. She enjoys meeting new people over Bridge and exercise classes.

Jim Quilley has many fond memories of SWESA where he has made lots of friends and enjoyed meeting them at restaurants. Jim and his wife Pat enjoyed volunteering with the luncheons.

Elnora Hibbert was on the first Board and remembers the many challenges at the beginning. She says the Program Coordinators have been so wonderful in guiding SWESA. Her heart always remains at SWESA.

Shirley Adam felt that SWESA is a place of friendliness, goodwill and familiarity. She enjoyed the bus trips going to the Casino, Calgary Zoo and Rosebud Theatre. Her best memories are of the luncheons.

Peggy Scott was new to Edmonton and joined SWESA to meet people. She put the library together at YECC and enjoyed the social programs, saying she met some swell people at SWESA.



Graham Scott said the social gatherings and luncheons were so much fun. One best memory was playing Canasta with 3 men against 3 ladies. ‘THE MEN WON!’

Shahin Akbary-Soofi was new to Edmonton when she joined SWESA while still working; she was the youngest senior at the time. She’s developed deep friendships with people who have made quite an impact in her life, learning from their experiences of Canadian life.

Bruce Tindall has good memories of the luncheons and bus trips to see the Magna Carta, the Shaw TV Studio, the Ukrainian Village and the Manluk Theatre in Wetaskiwin.

Mimi Tindall enjoyed editing the weekly bulletin and program guides. She felt the programming was amazing with something for everyone. She so appreciates SWESA friendships.

Doug and Evelyn Carter met many wonderful people on out of town trips, the lunches and the social programs. Doug helped set up the lunches and bartending courses.

Ann McNabb stepped up when SWESA needed volunteer co-ordination. Ann says everyone is so positive and welcoming.

Leona Penner said she met many wonderful people and developed some connections while volunteering in the office and helping organize the monthly luncheons.

Rick Hernder really enjoyed his time volunteering as a lunch coordinator. He now enjoys the Essentrics exercise class.

Bob Power likes to keep busy, and busy he has been - helping SWESA with fundraising, organizing volunteers for Taste of Edmonton, gathering door prizes for special events and so much more.

Carol Moore at 79, enjoys exercise, dance and walking classes to stay active. She misses the social gatherings that were postponed during COVID-19.

Thank you to our photographers Barry Headrick and Rob Agnostinis without whom we would not have all these wonderful photos and history!

To enjoy more of the great photos from our 10 year history CLICK HERE
If you have a favourite memory of the last 10 years, let us know for the next SWESA News. Write the Editor, Kathy Trepanier at info@swesa.ca.

You told us

In February 2022 SWESA surveyed members on the Friday Weekly Bulletin and the biannual SWESA News. The Weekly Bulletin was well liked as is with no changes. Most respondents suggested SWESA News be distributed by email rather than by paper mail. There were many other more specific suggestions that will be incorporated into upcoming editions. There are only a few members without email. SWESA will call them when SWESA News is produced and offer a paper copy.

Volunteer shout out!

There are so many wonderful volunteers at SWESA . One of the next editions of SWESA News will feature SWESA volunteers. If you know of someone that should be profiled, write the Editor at info@swesa.ca.

Membership rising

Members are returning from their pandemic imposed isolation and practically skipping back to SWESA to enjoy being with people again. As of May 1, 2022, our membership is 390. To become a member or to check your membership status, CLICK HERE.

Contact us if you have any questions or suggestions for future SWESA News.
Phone: 587 987 3200 Email: info@swesa.ca

Congratulations!

Mayor Amarjeet Sohi "I thank the SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association for their continued work in supporting Edmonton's senior population. You have created a welcoming environment that fosters a sense of belonging in our city. Congratulations on your 10-year anniversary!"	**Matt Jeneroux, MP** "Congratulations on SWESA's 10th Anniversary! Your continued dedication to our community is just simply remarkable and I continue to look forward to seeing SWESA actively enriching the lives of our seniors for many more years into the future."
Rakhi Pancholi, MLA "Congratulations to SWESA on your 10th anniversary! SWESA's work to reach out to seniors during the pandemic demonstrated your commitment to building community in uncertain times. I look forward to working with all of you in the coming years to make southwest Edmonton a great place to call home for all of us."	**City Councillor Jennifer Rice** "I would like to take this opportunity to thank SWESA for the amazing work they are doing in our communities. Supporting our seniors and organizations that contribute to their quality of life is very dear to my heart. Congratulations SWESA on your 10th Anniversary and continuing success for years to come!"
City Councillor Michael Janz "SWESA has been a great benefit to the communities of southwest Edmonton, empowering seniors through meaningful programs and activities. On behalf of the City, I'd like to offer my congratulations and thanks to all the incredible SWESA volunteers, staff and members."	**City Councillor Tim Cartmell** "Happy 10th Anniversary to SWESA! Thank you for making vibrant communities for our Seniors in Southwest Edmonton. I wish you many more years of success."
City Counciilor Andrew Knack "It is my pleasure to congratulate the South West Edmonton Seniors Association on celebrating their 10th Anniversary. Our community is incredibly lucky to have dedicated community members who are committed to fostering an age friendly community for all with a focus on ensuring high quality of life at all stages whether through programs or other engagement."	**Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council - Exec Dir. Sheila Hallett** "The determination and foresight that sparked the development of SWESA has carried the organization a long way and you should be proud of all you have done. Through the Seniors Home Support Program, you have provided hundreds of older adults in your area with connections to services for aging in place and you've been a great collaborative partner throughout. Well done. Congratulations!"

Thank you!

Thank you to Chartwell Retirement Residences!

Chartwell Retirement Residences is the first organization to enter into a Co-operation Agreement with SWESA. Through this arrangement, there are a number of mutually beneficial activities and sponsorships that will occur for the balance of 2022.

Chartwell provided desserts at the SWESA Mexican Fiesta luncheon and on June 9th, at the Anniversary Party, Chartwell will provide cupcakes for all attendees - adding greatly to the feeling of festivity.

Chartwell contributed to the 2021 Annual Appeal and will be contributing to the 2022 Annual Appeal as well. Watch for a giant cheque presentation that will be announced.

Chartwell will offer two bus tours of their facilities with a private bus, VIP tour and reception.

Once our weather warms up Chartwell will set up outdoor information booths for SWESA members and the general public to learn more about the Chartwell organization.

Chartwell offered “Fit Minds” to SWESA members, an 8 week cognitive stimulation and resiliency program at Blue Quill Community Centre.

Chartwell will work with April, our Program Coordinator, to offer monthly educational sessions at SWESA’s Wise Talks.

SWESA is very pleased to have this new relationship with Chartwell.

SWesa
SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association

CHARTwell
retirement residences