

SiWesa SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association

Celebrating Ten Years in 2022



2022 Annual Report

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Vision

SWESA is a progressive organization creating a vibrant, welcoming, age-friendly community.

Mission

As a member-driven organization, in concert with community groups and partners, SWESA empowers older adults in southwest Edmonton, to be active and to be socially engaged through quality programs and services.

Core Values

Collaboration: working with others to achieve mutually beneficial goals

Respect: valuing self and others

Inclusion: creating an environment of acceptance, engagement, and connection

Accountability: responding to the needs of our members and communicating in a transparent manner

Innovation: exploring new ideas

Land Acknowledgement

SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association (SWESA) acknowledges that we operate on Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional land of the as nêhiyaw / Cree, Dené, Anishinaabe / Saulteaux, Nakota Isga / Nakota Sioux, Niitsitapi / Blackfoot peoples, and Métis'. We call on our collective traditions and spirits to work on reconciliation and on building a strong community now and for future generations.

President's Message

With growing signs of isolation and loneliness among all segments of our population, SWESA carefully stepped into 2022. We breathed a sigh of relief when all COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in March. Although there was cautious participation in Spring/Summer programming, we were happy to see robust registration and a substantial number of new members in the Fall.

This year we commemorated SWESA's 10th Anniversary with numerous celebrations. Thanks to the Communications and Marketing committee, readers were taken on a trip down memory lane while reading the commemorative newsletter and viewing a pictorial slideshow they produced.

SWESA faced a number of operational challenges this year. 2022 was the first year that programming was offered at three locations. Scheduling and managing activities off site proved challenging and the configuration of community league buildings was not conducive to all our program needs. Processing program registrations and financial transactions was very time-consuming for staff. In addition, functioning as an operational Board, with numerous directors providing direction, also led to delays in communication.

To improve the overall functioning of SWESA as an organization, the Board unanimously agreed that enacting the recommendations suggested in the Alberta Community Support Network 2019 consultant's report were imperative. (Reviewing these priorities was put on hold in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

These recommendations included:

- Updating the strategic action plan
- Adopting a mode of Board governance that best maximizes the Board's potential to address SWESA's future growth and sustainability.
- Hiring an Executive Director
- Reviewing and updating the Board Committees roles and responsibilities
- Developing a formal succession plan for the Executive and Standing Committees

The Board fully supported transitioning to a governance Board and we were pleased Alariss Schmid accepted the role of Executive Director effective November 1, 2022. The Governance Committee was reinstated, and under the expert leadership of Vicki King, the strategic plan was updated, and committee roles and responsibilities updated. The transitioning of operational functions to the Executive Director has enabled the Board to focus on high level planning and future growth.

In conclusion, I wish to thank our members, staff, volunteers, donors, and sponsors for your dedication this past year. As Jack Johnson's song states, we are definitely "Better Together."

Josie Richardson, SWESA Board President

Reflections from SWESA's Executive Director

My employment with SWESA started April 2022 and I immediately noticed the friendly atmosphere within member gatherings and the valuable work of dedicated volunteers. These attributes are the foundation of SWESA. Thank you to all who extended the warm welcome I received! The milestone of 2022 was SWESA's 10th Anniversary event, and we filled the hall with members, community partners, and dignitaries. We reflected on the founding efforts of the Association and the community-minded spirit that has led to today's bustling programs! Thank you to the many people who helped build the SWESA we know and love.

Also in 2022, SWESA members, donors, and sponsors stood up once again with an excellent Annual Appeal, our Taste of Edmonton volunteers brought home a week's earnings in July, and our casino volunteers worked late into the night to support SWESA's operations for another year. Thank you everyone.

Additionally, we were fortunate to receive special funding from the following organizations for COVID-19 recovery and operational sustainability:

- Edmonton Community Foundation grant – supported SWESA during a difficult period and provided regular foundational programming for our members.
- Government of Canada, New Horizons for Seniors program – promoted volunteerism and supported community outreach initiatives through 10 special events.
- Government of Canada, Canadian Red Cross grant – supported special social programming aiming to reduce isolation of older adults who had been disproportionately impacted by pandemic measures.

This year saw 207 first-time members, had 638 total members, and our small but mighty staff team successfully sold out programs at 3 locations. Our message to volunteers is - THANK You for helping us each and every day!

In conclusion, the image below was created by members describing what SWESA means to them. Let us carry these words forward into the many plans we have for 2023.

Alariss Schmid, SWESA Executive Director



Board of Directors



Josie Richardson
President



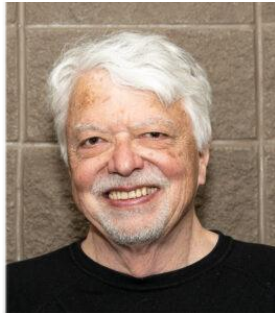
Vicki King
Vice President



Donna Stickland
Secretary



Catherine Hammond
Treasurer



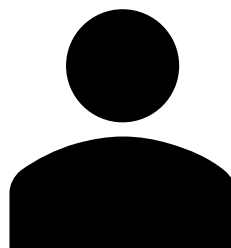
Bob Turner
Director



Lynn Masters
Director



Arlene Hosford
Director



David Rowand
Director

SWESA Staff Members



April
Program Coordinator



Alariss
Executive Director



Barbara
Home Supports
Coordinator

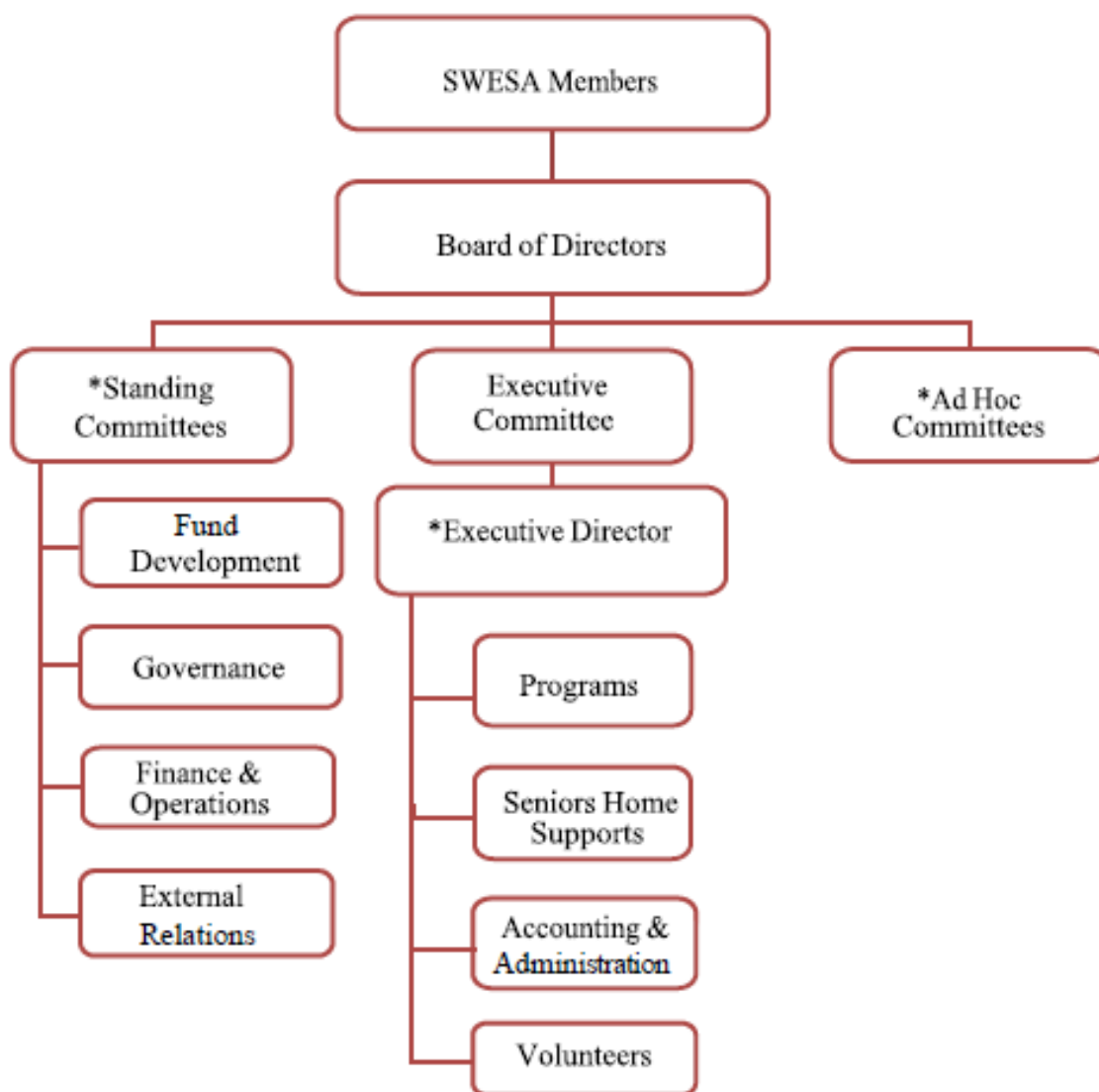


Sharon
Accounting /
Administrative Assistant

Acknowledgements

The Board of Directors and Staff wish to acknowledge and express gratitude to the funders, businesses, community organizations, volunteers and individuals who supported SWESA in 2022. Thank you for supporting older adults in southwest Edmonton and being part of what makes SWESA a great place to be!

SWESA Organizational Chart



*Executive Director reports to the President and is an ex officio member of all Board Standing and Ad Hoc Committees

Effective: February 9, 2023

Governance

The Governance Committee was re-instated in November 2022. Their initial work was focused on reviewing the organization structure, the Committee Terms of Reference and the policies and procedures impacted by these changes. The Committee obtained Board approval for these with the remaining policies and procedures to be reviewed by year's end.

The change in the organizational structure approved by the Board in November 2022, resulted in the creation of an Executive Director position. The Executive Director will lead and manage SWESA operations. For this position, the Committee created an Employment Contract which includes two parts – an Employment Agreement template and the specific Job Description for the position being hired. This was approved by the Board and used for the Executive Director's Contract. Going forward, these will be used for all recruited positions.

The Strategic Plan and Strategic Action Plan are in the second year of guiding the work and direction of SWESA. These Plans were developed in 2021 under the guidance of an Ad hoc Committee with the Governance Committee recently assuming ownership to monitor and report on completion of the work and to conduct the annual review and planning each Fall.

For the Bylaws, there was a project initiated in January 2021, where minor updates were made. More recently, the Governance Committee has guided a full review and updates to the Bylaws and anticipate the new version will be brought forward for approval at the 2023 AGM.

Future work of the Committee will include:

- Developing Board Recruitment and Orientation packages.
- Developing a Succession Plan so key Board positions are always filled, skillsets required on the Board are sustained and a staggered turnover of Board Directors is established.
- Completing a Board self-evaluation and a Retreat planned for 2024.
- Developing new policies and procedures as the need arises.

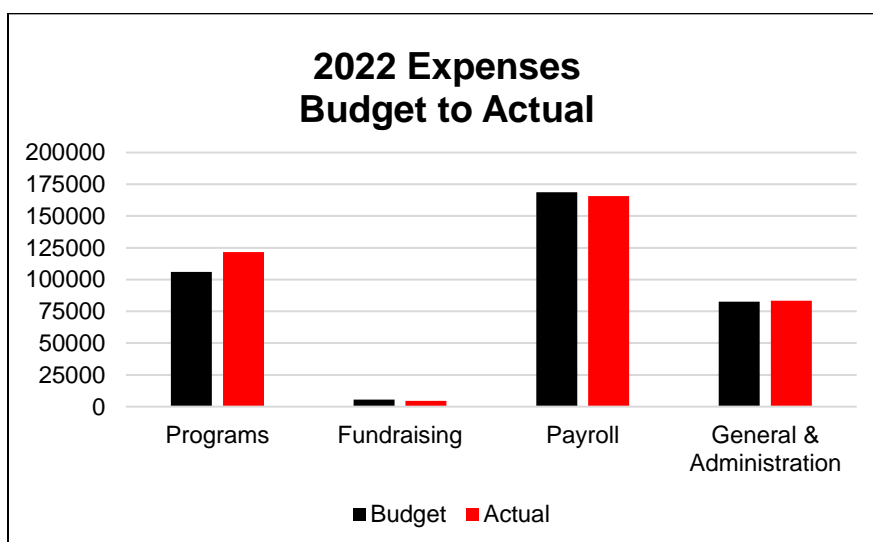
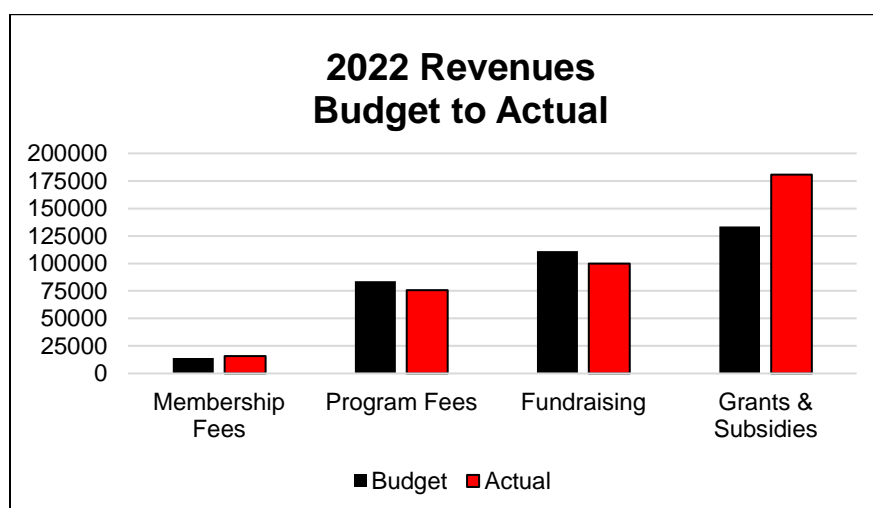
Review Highlights

<i>Full review</i>	Bylaws
<i>Full review</i>	Organizational Chart
<i>5/5</i>	Committee Terms of Reference
<i>15/35</i>	Policies and Procedures
<i>Created</i>	Employment Contract

Financials

2022 was a year of recovery for SWESA - while we didn't quite reach our budget revenue targets for Program Fees and Fundraising, memberships increased, and we received a grant from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program that allowed us to expand our reach. Edmonton Community Foundation extended our 2021 grant which also allowed us to offer programs that were not breaking even in the early part of the year. Overall, the deficit was significantly less than budgeted. The audit was conducted by Doyle & Company; complete 2022 Financial Statements are on the website.

2022 Revenue and Expense Summary		2022 Financial Position Summary	
Total Revenues	\$373,773	Assets (Cash, GICs)	\$336,907
Total Expenses	\$375,294	Liabilities	\$148,217
Net Income/(Loss)	(\$1,521)	Net Assets	\$188,690



Programs and Membership

In the first quarter of 2022 programming opened under limited capacity within our three facilities (Blue Quill Community Centre, Yellowbird East Community Centre, and Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre) due to COVID-19 restrictions. We offered in-person fitness classes, cards and games, art classes, Coffee & Chat groups (including a men's group) and lunch gatherings supporting local businesses. Once restrictions lifted in March 2022, SWESA offered 9 months of in-person programs totalling 48 weeks of in-person programming.

Spring/Summer 2022 programming was in a recovery phase with minimal participation. The Fall program guide was re-organized, simplified and categorized into instructor-led, non-instructor-led, Café SWESA, and Benefits of Membership. SWESA offered tried, true, and tested programs. This led to a strong return for Fall programs during Welcome Week and an outburst of new members and participation for our busiest months.

SWESA introduced the Activity Pass that eliminated coin payments and the wallet credit system. The Activity Pass was well received with 124 holders and was a positive addition to the guide. For \$20 per Program Guide, it allows SWESA members to attend an unlimited number of SWESA's non-instructional activities such as cards & games, knitting group, art group, etc.

In September, SWESA's well loved social function, SWESA Luncheon, was revived, and regularly hosted 80-100 members and guests. The monthly luncheon was a highlight for members throughout the Fall/Winter of 2022. SWESA ended the year on a high note as staff hosted a holiday social event, "Pie Day", on the coldest day of December with 45+ brave attendees.

We faced many changes and challenges in 2022 but we know - tough times never last, but tough people do, then we rise and overcome. Thank you to our dedicated members, our program hosts, luncheon volunteers, programs and activities volunteers, instructors and the Board for your continuous support in programming.



Programs and Membership (continued)



2022 Program & Activities Highlights:

- Most popular card games were cribbage, bridge, and canasta.
- Instructional drawing and painting, and choir were the most popular amongst arts, crafts & hobbies.
- Essentrics, Core & All, Yoga, Beginners Line Dance and Zumba Gold were the favourite fitness classes.
- Most well attended FYI Talk: Fraud Prevention with Edmonton Police Service.
- Over 250 participants attended our 19 FYI Talks in 2022.
- The most popular outings were Cow Patti Comedy Theatre and Rosebud Theatre.
- Weekly Café SWESA Coffee and Chats are well attended, with 176 participants.
- A robust group of knitters supported Operation Friendship and the Grey Nuns Hospital with donations of knitted items.



Hello Neighbour – We'd Like to Get to Know You!

SWESA Celebrates 10 Years in 2022

SWESA was successful in being one of the recipients of the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program funding for our proposed project: "Hello Neighbour – We'd Like to Get to Know You!". This allowed us to hire Jessica Kinsella as Project Facilitator and plan 10 events and activities between May – October 2022 with the goal to address social isolation by increasing awareness of SWESA in neighbourhoods within our catchment area and sharing resources available for older adults.

A group of SWESA volunteers formed the Volunteer Organizing Committee and helped brainstorm and decide what events and activities we would hold under this project. These volunteers provided ongoing input, guidance and often attended and volunteered at many of the events.

The first event was the 10th Anniversary Celebration on June 9, 2022, which celebrated how far SWESA has come as an organization. SWESA has proven to be strong and resilient, and there is much opportunity for growth and success moving forward, as we continue growing and improving with every year. We were thrilled to see so many new and returning faces at this celebration, with nearly 140 people in attendance! Many more events followed, including a bus trip to Taste of Edmonton, an Indigenous landmark tour, a cultural exchange at Norquest College, information sessions and a Wellness Fair featuring over 20 vendors.

"Hello Neighbour" was a fantastic success overall – it gave SWESA the opportunity to offer many free activities and events for older adults in southwest Edmonton and encouraged both new members to join and past members to return post-pandemic. The events and activities SWESA conducted built new relationships and connections in the community and strengthened existing ones, strengthened volunteer engagement and participation, and provided a multitude of information, services, and resources to older adults in our community. We are thankful to all who helped plan, support, and attended these events.

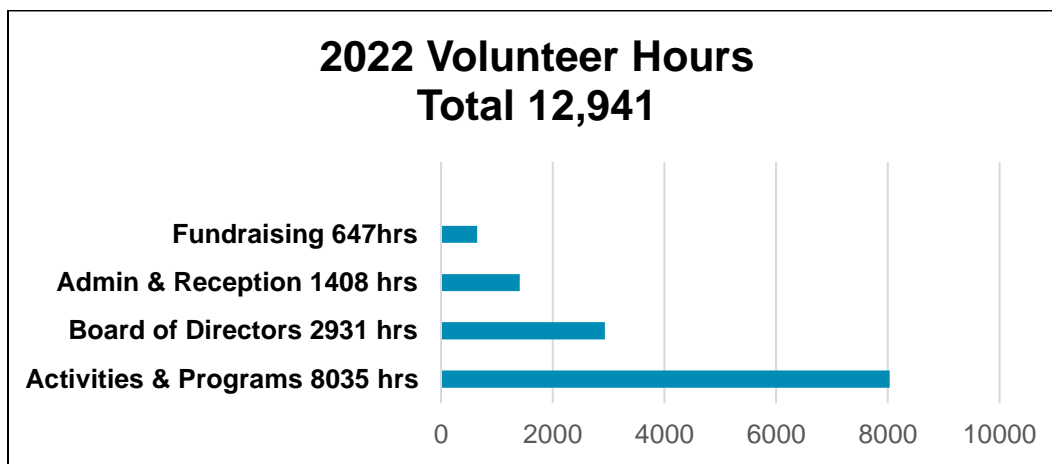
As we look forward, the future holds plenty of challenges, but also lots of hope. Together, with our amazing members, volunteers, and community, we know we can continue to make SWESA a great place to be for all!



Volunteers

Our volunteers were critical to SWESA's success in 2022 year. **119 individuals** donated a total of **12,941 hours** of their time to lead and support SWESA over the course of the year – more than twice as many hours as in 2021! We are extremely grateful for their contributions.

Volunteers are the backbone of SWESA. Without their enthusiasm, hard work, and support, we simply could not exist. Including those who serve on the Board of Directors and various Committees, to those who help set up for programs, greet people at the reception desk, act as volunteer hosts, fundraise, support our luncheons, all are volunteers who make SWESA a vibrant grassroots organization. **WE THANK YOU ALL!**



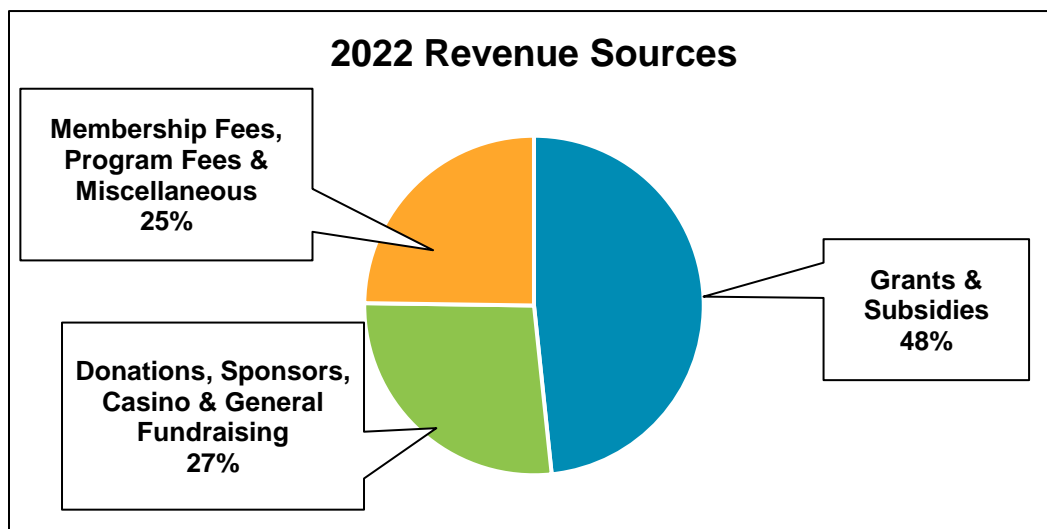
SWESA was honoured to host a celebratory gathering on November 17, 2022, where MLA Richard Feehan presented Dr. Rob Agostinis with the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal in recognition of his significant contributions to the province of Alberta.

Rob has a long history with SWESA. He is a founding member and served on the Board of Directors for many years. He initiated numerous fundraising activities and continues to be actively involved. Thank you, Rob, for donating your time and talents in support of SWESA!

Pictured left to right: *Dr. Isabelle Chiu, Dr. Rob Agostinis and Richard Feehan, MLA*

Fund Development

As the SWESA Board moves beyond day-to-day operational concerns an increasing effort has begun towards Fund Development instead of simply Fundraising. Fund Development is a longer-term approach to raising funds and focuses on building long term relationships with donors and community organizations. Prior to COVID, SWESA's revenue sources were fairly evenly distributed between the three sources shown in the chart below; 2022 saw a shift towards developing relationships with granting agencies and away from general fundraising activities. This was probably temporary as general fundraising activities were still limited in 2022 due to COVID-19.



SWESA received approximately \$50,000 in project grant funding from the following organizations in 2022:

- Edmonton Community Foundation – funding was to be used in 2021 and the Foundation generously extended it to 2022.
- Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program
- Canadian Red Cross (Government of Canada) – this funding will continue through 2023.

We thank the many community organizations who supported SWESA programs, events, and activities this year. SWESA also wishes to acknowledge and thank the City of Edmonton for their support in funding our operational activities.

Once again, our members and the surrounding community generously donated over \$44,000 to our 2022 Annual Appeal. These funds assist us in being able to run quality programs at reasonable prices for all members.



Above: "Friends of SWESA" event which launched our 2022 Annual Appeal Campaign.

Last and certainly not least, our Taste of Edmonton and Casino volunteers raised \$88,000! Casino funds will be used to support rent, administration, and programs over 2023 and 2024.

Thank you to one and all for the amazing effort in helping SWESA continue to grow and provide programs for all!



Left: SWESA volunteers sell 50/50 tickets at one of our Monthly Luncheons



Right: SWESA Committee Volunteers supporting the 10th Anniversary Event on June 9, 2022

Communications and Marketing

The Communication and Marketing Committee's focus in 2022 was to support SWESA's goals of being a valued collaborator and partner in Edmonton's senior community and to support older adults to be actively and socially engaged. Thanks to Committee Chair, Kathy Trepanier, and a robust team of volunteers, several important projects were completed.

In support of the Board, the Committee:

- drafted Key Message documents.
- compiled a comprehensive list of Stakeholders. This list includes names and contact information for government, community leagues, places of worship, businesses, and media.
- worked with Mapping and Planning Support Alberta Capital Region (M.A.P.S), to compile data maps of SWESA's catchment area based on 2021 Census data.

Working in collaboration with the Executive Director and other committees, the Committee:

- developed and executed promotional plans for the New Horizons for Seniors, "Hello Neighbour, We'd Like to Get to Know You" project.
- supported Fund Development initiatives by developing marketing plans to promote the 50/50 Raffle and 2022 Annual Appeal.
- published a commemorative 10th Anniversary newsletter.
- wrote monthly articles for inclusion in neighbourhood newspapers.
- maintained SWESA's Website and Social Media accounts.
- photographed SWESA events.

As the Board transitions to a governance model, the Communication and Marketing committee has been renamed the External Relations Committee. The focus will be to develop and implement communication and marketing plans that increase awareness and improve the branding of SWESA. The Executive Director will oversee the operational components. Due to staff limitations, volunteer support will be imperative.



Committee volunteers, Lynn (far right) and Usha (far left), coach members to put themselves on a district map which outlines the neighbourhoods surrounding SWESA's three programming sites.

Social Engagement and Website Development

SWESA Communication and Social Engagement

SWESA strives to keep members and the community informed about programs and activities taking place at our locations and in the community. Because of limited staff capacity, SWESA depends on volunteers to oversee most of our communication vehicles.

Weekly Bulletin

The weekly bulletin keeps subscribers informed of the latest activities, events and news happening at SWESA. The bulletin is prepared by our Program Coordinator, April, and is emailed to subscribers via MailChimp every Friday. Although it is very time-consuming to prepare, our members reported that it is an important communication to them.

Weekly Bulletin	
1,281	Total audience
676	Average opens
SWESA members and the community at large subscribe to the Weekly Bulletin.	

Website

The website is the primary communication vehicle for SWESA. We are grateful for the dedication and commitment of our volunteer Webmaster, Barry, who has overseen the layout and content for the past five years. Barry also does volunteer photography for SWESA, capturing most of the photos of our 2022 events that you see on the website.

Most visited pages on the SWESA website:	
331,000	SmugMug Photo & Video Views
37,594	Unique page views
15,316	Home page
3,170	Program guide
2402	Contact Us
2,246	Supporting seniors in their homes
2,211	Newsletter
1,143	General information
1,029	SWESA Latest News

Facebook

SWESA's Facebook page is used to share information about SWESA and the community as well as positive images and messages.

Updating the page became more consistent beginning in Fall 2022 and continues to see positive engagement on social media. Our thanks to Jessica, who volunteered to help as a social media administrator when her contract concluded following the end of the "Hello Neighbour" project.

2022 Facebook Stats	
77	Facebook Posts
2461	Page Visits
710	Followers
103	Likes
7225	Total Reach

Social Media Demographics:

Of our Facebook Page followers:

- 80% identify as female
- 35% are 65+ years old
- 41% are 35-64 years old



Left: Our webmaster and volunteer photographer, Barry, in action. Right: SWESA's front desk volunteer(s) often greet members at SWESA's admin office at Blue Quill Community Centre

Community Engagement

Articles highlighting SWESA's events and achievements are distributed to more than 10,000 households via the Riverbend Raggy-Times and Terwillegar Tribune. Thanks to volunteer Colleen's creativity, her submissions raise awareness of SWESA because they are both informative and fun to read!

One of the project goals of "Hello Neighbour" was to conduct outreach to the communities surrounding us. SWESA designed a postcard and mailed these to approximately 3,000 community members in late September 2022. The mailout successfully strengthened awareness of SWESA, its programs and membership opportunities, and promoted the Wellness Fair held October 11, 2022.



ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW 55+?

Drop by for a chat with us!
 Blue Quill Community Centre
 11304 25 Avenue NW
 Mon-Fri, 9:00am-4:30pm
www.swesa.ca
 Present this card for a free coffee!

Swesa SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association

We offer a wide range of activities, including:

- Fitness classes, card games and walk group
- Knitting, choir and coffee & chat socials
- Bus outings and luncheons
- Information sessions & workshops
- Home supports program, volunteer opportunities
- Friendly, fun and welcoming environment!



Chartwell Retirement Residences was a big supporter of SWESA in 2022, sponsoring elements of the Monthly Luncheons and the 10th Anniversary Celebration. They also hosted the "Friends of SWESA" event and were a vendor at our Wellness Fair. Our thanks for your continued support!

Seniors Home Supports Program (SHSP)

The Seniors Home Supports Program (SHSP) has positively impacted various demographic and vulnerable groups of Edmonton seniors. The program offers individuals aged 55+ referrals to vetted service providers. Under SWESA's umbrella since 2017, well over 1600 older adults in southwest Edmonton have registered as a program user and 100 service providers have been vetted.

Highlights of 2022:

- In this citywide program, SWESA had the most referrals of the 6 SHSP sites in Edmonton. Over 600 clients in southwest Edmonton were given SHSP referrals.
- SHSP demographics showed:
 - 36% are between the ages of 80-99, they are also the most frequent users.
 - 42% are between 70-79 years of age and 22% between 60-69 years of age.
 - 70% identified as female.
 - 68% are of medium or higher income, while 32% are lower income.
- There is substantially higher need for older adults living alone, especially women.
 - 67% of users identified that they live alone.

When asked, *"What difference did this service make for you?"*, the results were:

- 25% of participants felt more safety utilizing our referrals.
- 20% responded that the program was convenient.
- 20% responded it helped with inclusion.
- 21% said it helped their independence.

With a \$5,000 snow removal budget, SWESA was able to help several low-income participants who desperately needed this financial resource for snow removal services, otherwise not available to them.



SHSP Coordinator, Barb (left) with SWESA Volunteer, Mimi (right), at the SWESA Wellness Fair.

Southwest Edmonton Seniors Association (SWESA)

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SWESA Admin Office

Blue Quill Community Centre

11304 25 Avenue NW Edmonton AB

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Phone: 587.987.3200

Email: info@swesa.ca

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