



EDMONTON
SENIORS
COORDINATING
COUNCIL

LINKING SENIOR-SERVING
ORGANIZATIONS IN EDMONTON

ANNUAL REPORT 2012





EDMONTON SENIORS COORDINATING COUNCIL

THIS ANNUAL REPORT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.SENIORS COUNCIL.NET

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2012-13 ANNUAL REPORT

CONTACTS

EDMONTON SENIORS COORDINATING COUNCIL

#255 Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre 8330-82 Avenue Edmonton, AB T6C 4E3

Telephone 780.423.5635 Fax 780.428.3844

E-mail: info@seniorscouncil.net Website: www.seniorscouncil.net

PUBLICATION CONTRIBUTORS

Sheila Hallett Executive Director sheila@seniorscouncil.net

Rich Gossen Communications Coordinator rich@seniorscouncil.net

Rosalie Gelderman Projects Coordinator rosalie@seniorscouncil.net

The ESCC gratefully acknowledges the support of our funders:



CO-CHAIR'S REPORT 2012-13

Jean Innes, Co-Chair, ESCC
Cori Paul, Co-Chair, ESCC



Jean Innes
Co-Chair, ESCC

It is a privilege to submit the annual Co-Chair report on the activities of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) for the year of 2012/13. The last year has been filled with tremendous activity; reflection and recommitment, refocusing and re-energizing, a year of evaluation and reconnecting with our members.



Cori Paul
Co-Chair, ESCC

We have taken the opportunity as a board to reflect not just on the past year, but on more than a decade of service to seniors in the City of Edmonton using the benchmark of 1999 when the sector first started coming together. The impetus for the beginning of the Edmonton Community Network was the 1998 release of the report

Collaborative Assessment of the Strengths and Needs of Older People in Edmonton. Although the ESCC was incorporated in 2005 there had already been an impressive amount of research and thought put into strategies to meet the needs of a growing population of older adults. The ESCC board reflected on this in order to evaluate where we find ourselves after our first seven years, and to ensure that our vision remains similar to that of our members. Our dedication to process during this time was essential in order to guarantee members and funders, transparency and accountability in our activities.

Our summer was dedicated to the completion of an interim evaluation (IE) of ESCC activities,

requested by City Hall and undertaken by Civitas Consulting. Members and stakeholders had the opportunity to meet with consultants and share their view of board processes and outcomes. The IE substantiated that ESCC is a credible and well organized board “achieving its mandate... developing capacity within the seniors sector” and facilitating collaboration among senior-serving organizations. ESCC is “valued for its ability to bring focus to the big picture... while supporting individual agencies in delivering quality services to seniors.” (Osbourne and Chan, 2012). Members praised the ESCC for fiscal responsibility, the fine work of the ED and for the Link-Letter. Six key recommendations arose from the review and all are under review in board activities at the present time (the full report is available from the ESCC office).

The IE helped to elucidate the importance of clearly communicating the ESCC mandate, recommitting to information sharing with members and clarifying the roles of both the ESCC and the City of Edmonton in projects and processes where both are involved. To this end the ESCC felt it would be beneficial to meet with member boards in order to address some of the recommendations coming from the IE. Throughout the fall of 2012, we had the opportunity to meet with 10 of our member boards. Our sessions were highly instructive and helped us to gain additional insights into the challenges for, and strengths of, our member agencies. The sessions were found to be mutually beneficial and we plan to continue this initiative into the coming year.

This year we have formally set out objectives for our nominating committee and the recruitment of members to our board. We are collectively assessing the knowledge and skills required of potential board members and working to achieve

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continuity and smooth transitions in our board composition. We are excited about this new vision for board recruitment and hope we will be enabled to balance new ideas and energy with experience and institutional memory.

A Day of Reflection for the ESCC board occurred March 14th, 2013 at Trinity Anglican Church. Our goal was to review outcomes from our board to board meetings and to strengthen relationships through a better understanding of our collective experiences. We believe meetings such as this maximize our purposeful interactions and facilitate our ability to work in more creative and substantive ways.

There have been landmark achievements for the ESCC in the past year. We have now received

approval to move forward on the Strategic Plan for our Vision for an Age Friendly Edmonton. A steering committee has been established, working groups are now organized and engaged in activities and we have won the support of the Mayor and City Council. We are poised to set the course for our journey and will create goals and objectives to measure outcomes over the next 5 years. Our work can only be achieved through the combined energies and vision of our collective, and the support of our stakeholders.

Respectfully Submitted,

Co-Chairs of the
Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council

Jean Innes & Cori Paul



ESCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS:

Co-chairs Cori Paul (Good Samaritan Seniors Clinic)
Jean Innes (Member at Large)

Treasurer Roger Laing (Seniors Association of
Greater Edmonton)

Secretary Mary Jane McLaughlin (Member at Large)

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:

- Grace Maier - Director, Specialized Geriatrics, Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, Alberta Health Services
- Dr. Belinda Parke - Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta
- Brenda Wong - Seniors Coordinator, Community Services, City of Edmonton

MEMBERS:

- Kimberly Buehler (South East Edmonton Seniors Association)
- Debbie Creaser (Calder Seniors Drop In Society)
- Peter Faid (Member at Large)
- Mary Fung (ASSIST Community Services)
- Rachelle Gietz (Alberta Caregivers Association)
- Samantha Lawrence-resigned Aug. 2012, unable to complete term (Catholic Social Services)
- Emily McLeod (Member at Large)
- Vi Presley (Central Lions Seniors Association)
- Judy Sillito-resigned Dec. 2012, unable to complete term (Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers)
- Jalal Syed-resigned Feb. 2013, unable to complete term (Multicultural Women and Seniors Services Association)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Sheila Hallett
ESCC Executive Director



Sheila Hallett
Executive Director

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) Board of Directors and Staff recently spent time reflecting on our achievements and our challenges. One of our exercises was to develop a metaphor that describes the work of the ESCC. Our group came up with the idea of a voyageur exploring new waters, sometimes paddling upstream and sometimes floating with the current -- but never bailing out of the boat even when the waters were rough. Another group described ESCC as being a compass, and the third group described the work as a stream of water -- an essential resource bringing sustenance to our community. It was an interesting exercise because it illustrated how a large group can come to similar endpoints independently when they share the same values and visions related to the work.

In 2012 the work of ESCC illustrates how progress was achieved by having one organization focusing (and often leading) collective work that our member agencies could not do alone. Here are some examples in summary form (you can learn more about them by reading articles in this annual report).

- The *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan*, a strategic plan for addressing the needs of seniors developed by our member agencies in conjunction with key stakeholders, was approved by City Council in July, 2012. This formal endorsement of the plan resulted in the City of Edmonton coming on board to be a key partner in the plan's implementation.
- A Steering Committee was formed to oversee implementation of the Age-Friendly Action Plan. The committee is co-led by the City of Edmonton and the ESCC, with seniors, and representatives from ESCC member agencies, Alberta Health Services and United Way, leading working groups in nine key areas.
- Several actions within the Age-Friendly Plan are already being pursued by ESCC: **Outreach Project**, **Door-Through-Door Seniors Assisted Transportation Project** and **Core Services Project**. Some dedicated funds were provided to ESCC by City of Edmonton Community Services in 2012, which allowed an additional staff member to be hired, bringing our total staff count to three.
- The ESCC project to improve accessibility of **outreach services to isolated and/or at-risk seniors** began in June, as our new Project Coordinator Rosalie Gelderman brought member agencies together to work on joint forms and resource development, case finding and some standardization of outreach services. The project involves partnering with multicultural and health colleagues to broaden the scope of clients that are accessing services provided by sector agencies.
- Three senior service agencies that offer **assisted transportation to seniors** who have mobility challenges and other special needs that prevent them from using public transportation, combined efforts with the assistance of ESCC and the City of Edmonton to propose a business plan outlining a shared service model. This business plan received one year of funding from

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the City of Edmonton to implement the model. This project takes up half the time of our Project Coordinator as well as one member of the City's Seniors Team to facilitate bi-weekly meetings of the coordinating committee. It includes two representatives from each of the three senior service agencies. The project will standardize procedures and will move the agencies to a common software program, provide a joint branding/marketing program, and establish a subsidy pool for seniors that cannot afford the service.

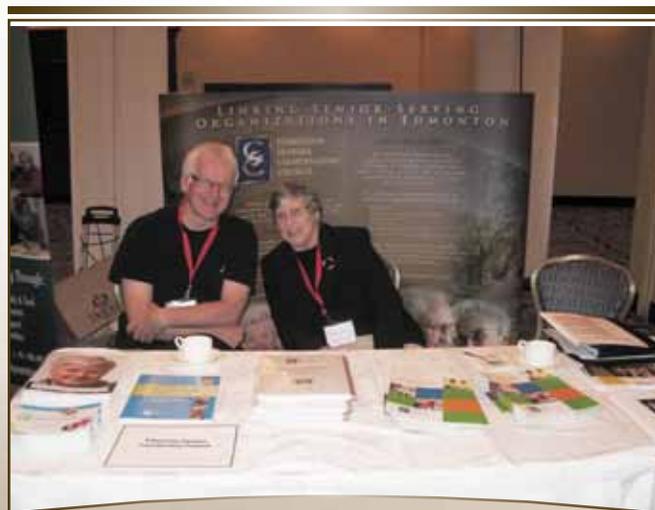
- The ESCC project that looks at **core services** that support seniors to be able to age in place has also moved forward beginning in 2012. The ESCC contracted Anne Smith to facilitate meetings with ESCC member agencies and stakeholders to prioritize service areas that could benefit from coordination. By early January of 2013, three focus areas were chosen. Working groups have been struck to come up with improvements for 1) snow removal/yard maintenance services 2) health promotion and injury/disease prevention education and awareness and 3) information and referral using a central telephone line.
- ESCC co-hosted the annual **senior services conference** with Alberta Health Seniors Division in the fall of 2012 with the theme of "Grey Matters: Creating Age-Friendly Communities." This conference attracted about 250 people from across Alberta and contributed to our role as a communication hub in the Edmonton senior sector to provide networking and information sharing opportunities. The conference also contributed to our mandate to enhance the capacity of organizations to provide effective, accessible services to seniors.
- The **Creative Age Festival**, with ESCC as its

fiscal agent and backbone organization, was able to incorporate as a not-for-profit company, Creative Age Edmonton, in the fall. A board of directors guides its work and many exciting partnerships have formed that will allow Creative Age Edmonton to promote the health and social benefits of developing and maintaining artistic activities for seniors in Edmonton.

Thank you to our ESCC Board and Staff who have served our membership so capably. And thank you to the Board and Staff of member organizations who have put in extraordinary time and effort towards collaborations and system improvements.

The 2012 year's work of the ESCC produced synergy and gained momentum. There will be many success stories to share about the 2013 work, I guarantee.

Respectively submitted,
Sheila Hallett



Jean Innes and Rich Gossen capably handle the information inquiries of conference attendees at Grey Matters 2012.

10 YEARS OF FOCUS ON SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

THE JOURNEY FROM THE 2003 EDMONTON TASK FORCE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR SENIORS TO THE 2013 IMPLEMENTATION OF AGE-FRIENDLY EDMONTON ACTION PLAN

The Final Report of the Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors, *Let's Make it Happen!* (2003), recommended the formation of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council to address, on a macro-level, the overarching issues that affect the broader community of service users, service providers and funders in the senior sector.

The ESCC was incorporated in 2005 to be a structure and mechanism for shared planning, coordination and collaboration. In some ways ESCC is what has been described as a backbone organization—an infrastructure that supports collective impact through initiatives.

Our mandate is to facilitate joint planning to enhance the capacity of organizations to provide effective, accessible services to meet the diverse needs of seniors. The collective impact we seek for Edmonton seniors is that social support and recreational programs and services in Edmonton will be comprehensive, effective, efficient and accessible.

The ESCC used the World Health Organization's *Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide* to facilitate the creation of a broad strategic plan for addressing the needs of seniors in Edmonton. The plan outlines recommendations in areas outside of social support and recreation, such as housing and health. These areas of service have impact upon the quality of life of seniors in Edmonton, even though only some of the ESCC member organizations provide housing or health services. These areas could not be ignored

in the creation of a broad strategic plan and many stakeholders have come forward to address them.

Ten years of work has been aimed at improving the quality of life of Edmonton seniors. Many would say they went by quickly and there has been progress, while others question why it is taking so long to see results. Progress, or the lack thereof, definitely makes for a good topic of discussion. We'd like to hear your feedback by land mail to our office or e-mail executivedirector@seniorscouncil.net.



Edmonton is a member of the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities.

AGE FRIENDLY EDMONTON

By Sheila Hallett, ESCC Executive Director

The Vision for an Age Friendly Edmonton Action Plan was a long time in the making by the senior sector, along with many stakeholders. It is an ambitious plan that addresses many of the barriers that get in the way when seniors try to access services, programs and places in our city.

City Council's approval of the action plan in July, 2012 and their approval of a budget for the 2013 work have energized ESCC member organizations, plan partners and stakeholders. We believe in the action plan and the promise it provides to seniors that improvements will be made that will add to their quality of life. Over and above this element is that people of all ages will benefit. "Design for the young and you exclude the old. Design for the old and you include everyone." (*Professor Bernard Isaacs, University of Birmingham*)



Brenda Wong, left, and Betty Loree are real champions of the Age-Friendly Edmonton initiative.

As work begins on some concrete actions in all nine key areas of Age-Friendly Edmonton, it is pulling in a number of sector partners and will engage seniors and communities in work that builds bridges between ages and cultures. We have moved from planning to action and momentum will build.

The ESCC is co-leading implementation of the Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan along with the City of Edmonton. Peter Faid authored a study for the Community Services department of the City of Edmonton in 2007 called "Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Strategy." In this study he referred to the action plan that ESCC was working on and said, "The key to success lies in ensuring that ESCC has support from the City to achieve the objectives of the strategy. Success will also depend on eliminating competition between seniors' groups and encouraging cooperation."

As fate would have it, Peter joined the board of the ESCC in 2012 and agreed to take on the role of Co-Chair of the Age-Friendly Edmonton Steering Committee. Peter is joined in the Co-Chair role by Elaine Betchinski, Director, Communities of Interest, Community and Social Development Branch of the City of Edmonton. Their commitment and the City's support are two of the ingredients necessary to be successful. The other key ingredient is the support of seniors, senior organizations and stakeholders.

Many of our ESCC member organizations have stepped up to be on the Age-Friendly Edmonton Steering Committee and to head working groups in all nine key areas. We are mindful that this work must be part of their agency's commitment to collaboration with the aim of improving

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the quality of life of seniors and not an added workload.

Along with the 2013 work plan, there is seed money for projects that communities can undertake to address their local barriers. The budget will provide training to seniors to become advocates for community improvements. It also includes money for a pilot project that will allow a community to do a more in-depth audit and bring in community partners to address issues. It will build on existing resources to promote one phone number for information and referral for seniors and will provide age-friendly training for phone staff and volunteers. It will provide information and resources to the business community about adapting their services and products to be more age-friendly and will recognize businesses that undertake the work. It also emphasizes better linkages with the health system. The budget includes work to promote and disseminate “home for life” guidelines to builders and the general public, and to develop guidelines and resources for parks.

Progress will be monitored and an evaluation will report on performance measures and highlight accomplishments each year. The City’s budget investment will propel the work and create a lot of spin-off projects by stakeholders that will leverage many benefits for seniors in Edmonton. Our population of 65+ is now at 12 per cent and if you add in the 55-64 age group it increases the percentage to 25. By doing the work of the plan now, we are following the good examples set by many other cities around the world. We are also honouring the commitment we made to the World Health Organization in 2010 to follow through on the Age-Friendly action plan the senior sector

prepared to address gaps in senior services and infrastructure.

Looking back at 2012, I vividly recall the reaction of many Edmontonians when eight surplus school sites were rezoned for seniors housing. Many community members were opposed to having a seniors housing complex replace what would have been a footprint for a school. The opposition illustrates how much work there is to do in Edmonton to truly make it more age-friendly. There will be more communication about Age-Friendly in 2013 and next year’s ESCC Annual Report will detail what effect this work has had. It will be a busy, but fulfilling year.



Multicultural Women and Seniors Services Association Director Sofia Yaqub accepts a certificate of appreciation from Councillor Sohi and Community Services Manager Linda Cochrane for her contributions to the Aging in Place Pilot Project. The learnings from this project are helping inform the work of Age-Friendly Edmonton.

RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION EFFORTS GRATIFYING

By Rich Gossen, ESCC Communications Coordinator

“Thanks for all the wonderful information. Don’t know what we’d do without (the Link-Letter).”

“I really enjoyed many things from this (Link-Letter).”

“Every week I learn something from your newsletter.”

“It really is the best list (of information) around, so keep up the good work.”

“I simply wanted to thank you for all this great information you share in the weekly newsletter. Thank you for taking the time and putting this excellent document together. Much appreciated.”

When you spend considerable time each week gathering information from a lot of different sources, bringing it all together and organizing it so that it’s coherent (hopefully) and user friendly, and then fling it along cyber pathways to numerous unseen and only partially known destinations, it’s gratifying to learn that these efforts are valued and considered useful.

Publishing the *Link-Letter* is a primary task for communications coordinator Rich Gossen but he is, of course, not solely responsible and deserving of credit for all of the ESCC’s communications efforts.

“We are the communication hub for the senior



The ESCC provides a number of mediums through which member and supporting agencies can let the public know about their activities and opportunities for engagement.

sector,” to quote our brochure, “through weekly electronic bulletins, our website, databases, the *Physical Activity and Recreation Director for Older Adults*, the *Seniors Scene* published monthly in the *Edmonton Examiner*, and other reports and publications.”

A recent addition to our publications, which is distributed electronically to the same destinations as the *Link-Letter*, is a special *ESCC Updates* newsletter prepared by executive director Sheila Hallett. The first edition proved to be very popular and resulted in requests from unexpected sources to be added to our distribution list. The hope is that this periodic newsletter will help our members and supporters to gain a clearer picture of what we do

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and why we do it. If you want to be added to the recipient list, email rich@seniorscouncil.net.

Our website, www.seniorscouncil.net, continues to provide us with a solid online presence and identity, and we have added a Twitter account to our social media presence. We're probably not going to appeal to 20 year-olds, so our Facebook entries and tweets aren't as frequent or as cavalier as is often the norm in these environments, but there is increasing evidence that more and more seniors are going online to communicate with friends and family, and to access information.

A recent report by Statistics Canada notes that "in 2000, less than 10 per cent of seniors had been online in the month prior to being surveyed, whereas by 2010, fully 60 per cent of Canadians 65 to 74, and 29 per cent of those 75 and older, had done so." We intend to keep ahead of the curve in our efforts to remain relevant and reliable communicators. Join us on Twitter (@ESCC255) and on Facebook (choose the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council option showing our logo).

Credit for publication of the *Physical Activity and Recreation Director for Older Adults* should go to our valuable and much valued part-time staff member, Allison Purdon. She has been solely responsible for the past several years for gathering information, assembling and organizing it, and ordering the printing of this popular resource. In 2010, the ESCC and City of Edmonton distributed 4,000 copies. In 2012, that number rose to 6,500 copies.

The *Seniors Scene* in the *Edmonton Examiner* continues to provide us, and more importantly

our member organizations and supporters, with a presence in the community at a cost you can't beat. Contributors have the opportunity to publicize their events and activities free of charge throughout the city each month. The newspaper pays for the page with advertising its sales representatives solicit without any help from us or the beneficiaries of this service.

It's been a good year for communications efforts at the ESCC and we look forward to continuing to provide a meaningful contribution to the senior-serving sector by informing boards, staff and volunteers; connecting with and supporting seniors and their caregivers; and raising awareness of issues and initiatives related to older adults in the community as a whole.



ESCC staff, left to right, Rosalie Gelderman, Allison Purdon (part-time), Sheila Hallett and Rich Gossen are all deserving of credit for the council's communications efforts.

ESCC PLAYS SUPPORTIVE ROLE IN FOSTERING ARTS ENGAGEMENT BY SENIORS

By Rich Gossen, ESCC Communications Coordinator

Evidence of the benefits to older adults of engaging in the arts continues to mount.

The *New England Journal of Medicine* recently reported on a 21-year study of the mental acuity of senior citizens, age 75 and older, based on monitoring rates of dementia. The study found that the risk of dementia was reduced 35 per cent by reading, 47 per cent by doing crossword puzzles at least four days a week, but 76 per cent by dancing frequently.

An *Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health* found that women in their eighties who began playing a musical instrument or painting experienced improvements in activities of daily living and fewer limitations due to emotional factors, such as feeling depressed or anxious.

Art is "a great source of happiness" we often deny ourselves because we mistakenly believe that accessing it requires "a lot of time, energy, or money," says happiness guru Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Happiness Project*. Gay Hanna, executive director of the U.S. National Center for Creative Aging, urges seniors to maintain a creative mind, feed their creative spirit, set aside "silly roadblocks" and have fun, so that their later life "leaps with spunk and sass".

Even listening to music and attending arts performances has beneficial effects, researchers have found. Attendance at cultural events seems to be related to living longer, the *Silver Times* reported recently. The more often older adults go to the cinema, theatre, concerts, museums and art exhibits, the better they perceive their health.

Furthermore, two recent studies revealed that "individuals who frequently read fiction seem to be better able to understand other people, empathize with them and see the world from their perspective," skills that help older adults avoid isolation and loneliness.

Is it any wonder, then, that the ESCC has helped to organize the Creative Age Festival since its inception in 2008? During 2012, the CAF was downsized by a transition team intent on moving the capacity for arts engagement by older adults to levels that have not yet been achieved. The first step, the team determined, was formation of the non-profit organization Creative Age Edmonton. The ESCC's executive director, Sheila Hallett, and communications coordinator, Rich Gossen, were both members of the transition team and are now members of the CAE board of directors.

Once CAE has achieved charitable status and has the funding to hire or contract for services such as financial management, the role of fiscal agent for the festival will be transferred from the ESCC to CAE.

In 2012, the Creative Age Festival revolved primarily around workshops, a concert, an arts café and a symposium organized by staff connected with the drama department at the University of Alberta. Seniors centres participated in the festival by holding art shows, a spoken word event, arts cafés (variety shows) and a concert, but these were listed as community events because the festival didn't have sufficient resources to offer coordination support, as was the case in previous years.



*Dancing frequently is one of the best ways possible to combat the risk of dementia.
Here a Filipino dance group entertains during the 2012 Creative Age Festival.*

In 2013, the CAF will once again enjoy the services of a coordinator who will advise, assist and support event hosts, while helping with organizational details and responsibilities. The hope is that the CAF has turned a corner toward greater stability and growth, and that Creative Age Edmonton will be able to take on a role that has been a goal of festival

organizers since the beginning – namely, to nourish arts programming in Edmonton year round by providing opportunities for arts instructors to learn how to more effectively interact with and provide programs/classes for seniors, and to convince more seniors of the value they will derive from actively engaging in the arts.

IMPROVING OUTREACH TO EDMONTON'S ISOLATED AND AT-RISK SENIORS

By Rosalie Gelderman, ESCC Projects Coordinator

Risk factors for social isolation have been identified through research to increase with age. Isolation is most common among seniors aged 75 years or more, particularly those living alone, having low income, being single, experiencing loss, experiencing language and cultural barriers, and having transportation difficulties.

Isolated seniors have reduced well-being and quality of life, poor general health, and may experience abuse, stress and loneliness. Helping these seniors access the outreach services provided by senior centres and senior serving organizations is the goal of the Outreach Project.

Much work precedes the latest phase of the project. A 2007 *Aging in Place: A Neighborhood Strategy* report, produced for the City of Edmonton by Community Services Consulting Ltd., recommended a review of outreach services available to seniors, with a special focus on the elderly at-risk group. A 2009 assessment addressed that recommendation. Other work included the hiring of a facilitator to design an improved model for delivering outreach with ESCC and 14 participating agencies, and the release of the report, *Helping Seniors Age in Place-A Strategic Framework to Improve Outreach to Edmonton's Isolated Seniors*, in the fall of 2010. Additional funding obtained through the City of Edmonton enabled this work to proceed in 2012.

The final report proposed an enhanced collaborative model for outreach, with centralized, coordinated training for outreach workers, expansion of the collaborative network to include other outreach or related services, and attention to addressing the needs of seniors that require specialized services. Work would also explore and develop, as necessary, common approaches, standard

forms, tools and resources, as well as promotion of enhanced outreach services to raise awareness in the community. The project is partnering with multicultural, health and other senior-serving organizations to better reach isolated seniors and support them to age in place.

Outreach workers become navigators, linking seniors to community resources. They often do this through providing information and referrals, completion of forms and applications, advocacy and support, assessment and monitoring. This set of services is provided to seniors in their homes, a centre or elsewhere in the community. How to reach the isolated and at risk seniors is a challenge, since they often do not willingly walk through the doors of seniors centres seeking help. As outreach workers address some of the needs of individual seniors and a trusting relationship develops the senior may be more willing to become involved in other programs or services offered by the centres.

Outreach workers from senior centres are working with Rosalie Gelderman of ESCC to meet the goals of the project. Joint forms have begun to be developed, partnerships are being enhanced with Alberta Health Services and multicultural organizations, and a better understanding of who the isolated seniors are and how best to work with them has been explored. Joint training has been offered and more is being planned for the upcoming year. Updated information on the Support Network's telephone system - 211 database will enable its operators to make accurate referrals.

All are working toward increasing the capacity of the sector to respond to the needs of the isolated. This project is being ably steered by a team of agency executive directors, Alberta Health Services employees and multicultural experts.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS AND BOARD CHAIR GATHERINGS: A LOOK BACK OVER THE YEARS

By Sheila Hallett, ESCC Executive Director

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council's mission is to enhance the capacity of our member organizations by facilitating collaboration and resource sharing. Our members are not-for-profit, senior serving organizations that provide social and recreational programs and/or social support services for Edmonton's aging population. One of the methods we use to enhance their capacity is to hold regular gatherings of their Executive Directors and Board Chairs.

Prior to our meeting on January 18, 2013, I took some time to look back at all the various gatherings we've had over the years. It is quite a list (see below). All of these meetings had a central theme that was explored either through the inclusion of a guest speaker or a facilitator. We focused in on the topic of collaboration in the fall of 2012 and had Mark Cabaj and Russ Dahms lead us in an afternoon of discussion. We were exploring how we could shape the future of senior services by collaborating and practising social innovation in order to collectively have a positive impact on the quality of life of Edmonton seniors.

Mayor Stephen Mandel has been the force behind urging Edmonton's Human Services Sector to improve collaborations. In November of 2012 and March of 2013, he called agencies together to come up with ideas for improvements in service delivery to Edmontonians. In many ways, ESCC has provided a vehicle to the seniors sector to undertake service improvements.

In our short history we have provided many gathering opportunities and we've heard some positive feedback about many of these events. The events that seem to really get the most mention are the conversation cafes. These are events all board members of senior-serving organizations are invited



The ESCC shares an office with, and occasionally holds special gatherings in common with, the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations and the Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families.

to attend to network with people who share similar positions in other senior-serving agencies.

We value your suggestions for theme discussions. We have also posed the question of whether we should schedule regular meetings of other groups, such as fundraising committees, treasurers etc. We acknowledge that there are a number of other demands on busy people and so we are mindful of the number of meetings ESCC sets that may require executive directors or board representatives to attend. We hope that the meetings result in some learnings and opportunities to move forward in our goal to enhance your organization's capacity to provide social support and recreational services to seniors.

ESCC's history of facilitating information sharing with members:

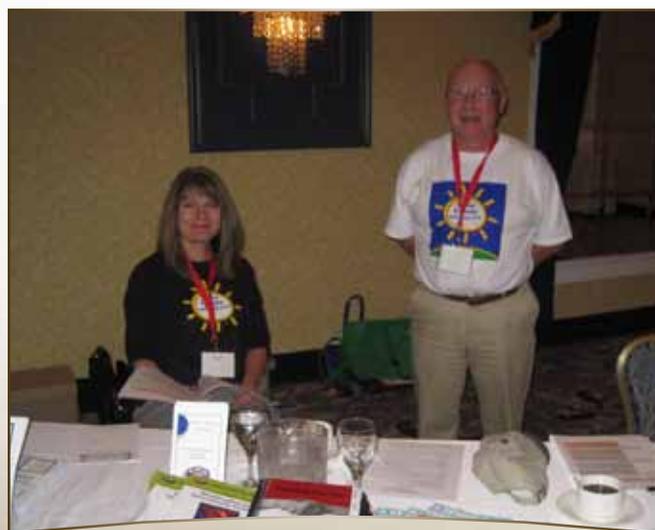
- 2006 – November session with YWCA executive director Kelly Sloan on ED/board relationships

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- 2007 – January session with Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations Executive Director Val Mays on attracting and retaining good board members; April session on elder abuse protocols; October session with Millard Health and the Insurance Bureau of Canada on retraining workers and voluntary sector insurance
- 2008 – February presentation on the Senior Centre Grant, New Horizons for Seniors and program subsidies; April session with Peter Faid, Jim Klingle and Mark Cabaj on collaboration; May meeting with five seniors centres to gather input on the ESCC's strategic plan; June session on fundraising with Ron Coulombe of the YMCA; November session with Quickcard exploring the possibility of establishing a group benefits plan for senior sector employees
- 2009 – April discussion on waiver forms, cross registration policy and a report on the Aging in America conference; September co-hosting of the Silver Surge Alberta Seniors Services Conference; October session on the Edmonton Seniors Declaration, MySeniorCentre software, SOCAN regulations and the Quickcard group benefits proposal
- 2010 – March meeting on the ESCC's broad strategic plan, senior centre research study and Outreach assessment; June Summer Conversation Café; November Winter Conversation Café and Alberta Community Spirit-facilitated discussion of governance models
- 2011 – June session on senior sector trends; September grants presentation; December session on 211 and 311 resource telephone lines (information and referral)
- 2012 – June Summer Conversation Café; September co-hosting of Grey Matters Alberta Seniors Services Conference; October Shaping Our Future session on collaboration with Russ Dahms and Mark Cabaj
- 2013 – January ESCC report on learnings from 2012 board-to-board meetings; February recruiting and retaining board members session facilitated by Tony Spencer and Mary Jane McLaughlin



ESCC executive director Sheila Hallett, right, and Grey Matters 2012 keynote speaker Dorian Block share a moment during the provincial seniors services conference in September. Dorian is the project manager of Age-Friendly New York.



Donna Durand and Gary Pool from the Alberta Council on Aging provide information on Senior-Friendly programs at the Grey Matters conference.



GREY MATTERS:

CREATING AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council co-hosted a successful provincial senior services conference in 2012 together with Alberta Health: “Grey Matters: Creating Age-Friendly Communities.” Over 230 people paid to attend the Sept. 13-14 conference held at the Fantasyland Hotel.

Participants were able to choose from 18 breakout sessions, some of which provided accreditation for social work continuing education credits. The sessions ranged from featuring a how-to-create an assisted ride program or a community led strategic plan for addressing the needs of seniors, to addressing falls and preparing for emergencies. The conference featured examples of some of the many great things happening in Alberta that contribute to helping people age in place.

The keynote speakers were both involved in Age-Friendly initiatives in their respective cities: Dorian Block is the project manager of the Age-Friendly New York City initiative and Judy Brownoff is a member of the Saanich, B.C. Council and the WHO 2006 Age Friendly Cities project team. Both speakers provided excellent examples of how improvements have been made in their respective communities in response to what local seniors said would improve their quality of life and make their lives easier. These sessions in particular scored very high in terms of accuracy of session description, knowledgeable presenter, effective presentation, appropriateness of the session for participant knowledge, and overall impression. A couple of breakout sessions even got 100 per cent good or excellent ratings from participants, so there were many people who felt the conference was a very effective use of their time and a good investment of their training dollars.

Other conference successes include the fact that 82 per cent of the people who filled out the post-conference survey rated the conference as good or excellent (87 of 106), and ESCC’s conference registration process received an 85 per cent good/excellent rating (89 of 105).

Not only did people learn from participating in the sessions, but also from visiting more than 30 display booths relating to senior services and programs — more displays and sponsors than we anticipated!

2012 was the first year that a call for presenters was used to help develop the conference program. This was a very successful strategy that has been adopted by the 2013 senior services conference committee in Lethbridge.

To plan and deliver a conference of this magnitude requires the dedication and commitment of many people: the conference organizing committee, conference volunteers, and the venue staff. It should also be said that many members of the conference organizing team were staff from a number of agencies. These organizations are to be credited for supporting the time commitment to attend meetings and to do the collaborative work necessary to make the event successful. Thank you to the conference planning committee:

- Donna Durand and Gary Pool of the Alberta Council on Aging
- Caroline Gee of the Alberta Motor Association
- Laura Paradowski, Leslie Sorenson and Marjory Buerger of Alberta Health
- Brenda Wong and Ingrid Hoogenboom of the City of Edmonton
- Roger Laing of the Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)
- Janice Monfries of the Westend Seniors Activity Centre
- Rich Gossen and Sheila Hallett of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council

The conference provided an opportunity to share success stories and new research that will enhance the capacity of senior service providers (staff or volunteer) to support and serve seniors more effectively. Thank you to attendees, volunteers and organizers. It was a great event we are proud to have co-hosted.

SENIORS ASSISTED TRANSPORTATION PROJECT OFF AND ROLLING

By Rosalie Gelderman, ESCC Projects Coordinator

After years of planning and reporting, the wheels have hit the ground with the Senior Assisted Transportation Project. After building a business case, money was successfully garnered through the City of Edmonton budgeting process in December of 2012. The budget allotted to the collaborative shared service model for Door-Through-Door Seniors Transportation has enabled the three organizations offering the service with volunteer drivers to come together biweekly to realize the vision stated for the sector: assisted transportation will be available for those who need it.

Door-Through-Door Assisted Transportation is for seniors who have mobility challenges and other special needs that require a higher level of service than is available through public transportation or other existing ride services. These dedicated volunteer drivers will assist seniors into medical clinics, pharmacies, grocery stores etc. to access services and to shop for food supplies, will accompany them when needed, and will help carry their packages into their homes if necessary.

The three volunteer-driving organizations (Seniors Assisted Transportation Society, Lifestyle Helping Hands Seniors Association, and Society of Seniors Caring About Seniors) send one staff and board member to bi-weekly coordinating committee meetings facilitated by Rosalie Gelderman (ESCC) and Ingrid Hoogenboom (City-Seniors Team). The committee is well into its one-year work plan to develop/implement a shared service model for coordinated, city-wide coverage, and has developed shared forms and standardized procedures. Work is underway to develop a subsidy pool for seniors who cannot afford the service.

The current data collection methods of each organization have been analyzed and this information will be useful in the search for software that will allow the three organizations to enter ride

clients and volunteer drivers, issue ride requests and dispatch drivers. The addition of funds from Alberta Health will enable the purchase of this software, training materials and evaluation. This information will also allow the groups to further define their target markets and to illustrate the growing need for this assisted transportation service. The information and process for this shared service will provide a valuable template for other Alberta communities.

We will also contract assistance to help with fund development for the shared services model, marketing and drafting a business plan. Many volunteer drivers currently head south for the winter months, so reaching new markets for volunteers is essential. Work will be done on how seniors can best become aware of and access the service if they are not members of senior centres or recipients of services from senior service organizations.

By building on the existing strengths of the organization, we believe this shared services model will help more seniors and will help the agencies build capacity to meet future demand.



The City of Edmonton is supporting development of a shared services model for door-through-door seniors transportation.

SUMMARIZED STATEMENTS 2012

Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Summarized Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2012

	2012	2011
Assets		
Current		
Cash	\$ 46,916	\$ 76,824
Accounts receivable	4,440	3,665
Prepaid expenses	1,951	6,939
	<hr/> 53,307	<hr/> 87,428
Equipment	3,096	2,517
	<hr/> \$ 56,403	<hr/> \$ 89,945
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable	\$ 11,969	\$ 7,516
Deferred contributions	17,269	58,180
	<hr/> 29,238	<hr/> 65,696
Net Assets	<hr/> 27,165	<hr/> 24,249
	<hr/> \$ 56,403	<hr/> \$ 89,945

Summarized Statement of Operations For the year ended December 31, 2012

	2012	2011
Revenue		
Grants	\$ 274,599	\$ 271,327
Event funding	137,329	59,854
Donations, memberships and fundraising	3,965	7,806
	<hr/> 415,893	<hr/> 338,987
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	191,414	141,550
Occupancy	11,093	13,378
Communications	4,710	5,107
Purchased services	43,047	87,822
Event direct costs	130,867	67,195
Other expenses	30,788	26,315
Amortization	1,058	744
	<hr/> 412,977	<hr/> 342,111
Excess of revenue over expenses	<hr/> \$ 2,916	<hr/> \$ (3,124)

The audited financial statements are available on request by contacting the Executive Director.

2012 REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

- Alberta Caregivers Association
- Alberta Council on Aging
- Alberta Seniors United Now Society (SUN)
- Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories
- ASSIST Community Services Centre
- Bernadette N. Swan Social Care Foundation
- Calder Seniors Drop-in Society
- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
- CARP – Edmonton Chapter
- Catholic Social Services – Elder Abuse Intervention Team
- Catholic Social Services – Immigration and Settlement (Senior Council)
- Central Lions Seniors Association
- Edmonton Aboriginal Seniors Centre
- Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association (ELLA)
- Edmonton Meals on Wheels
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Edmonton Seniors Slo-Pitch Association
- Edmonton Seniors Centre
- ElderCare Edmonton
- Good Samaritan Telecare
- Indo Canadian Women's Association of Edmonton
- Ital-Canadian Seniors Association
- Jewish Family Services
- Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre
- Lifestyle Helping Hands Seniors Association
- Mill Woods Seniors Activity Centre
- Multicultural Women and Seniors Services Association
- North Edmonton Seniors Association
- Operation Friendship Seniors Society
- Parkinson Alberta Society
- Seniors Assisted Transportation Society of Greater Edmonton (SATS)
- Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)
- Senior Citizens Opportunity Neighborhood Association (SCONA)
- Seniors Outreach Network Society
- Society of Seniors Caring About Seniors
- South East Edmonton Seniors Association (SEESA)
- Southwest Seniors' Outreach Society
- Strathcona Place Senior Centre
- Westend Seniors Activity Centre

2012 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

- Alberta Health Services Primary Care Division – Healthy Aging Resource Team
- All Seniors Care Living Centres (Laurel Heights Retirement Residence)
- Arthritis Society
- Canadian Accreditation Council
- City of Leduc, Seniors Outreach, FCSS
- Comfort Keepers
- Commissionaires Northern Alberta Division
- Lifestyle Options
- Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative
- Norquest College
- River Ridge Seniors Community
- SKILLS Society
- St. Albert FCSS
- Town of Beaumont FCSS
- Wild Rose Caregivers

PLUS 2 INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

EDMONTON SENIORS COORDINATING COUNCIL

#255 BONNIE DOON SHOPPING CENTRE
8330-82 AVENUE
EDMONTON, AB T6C 4E3

TELEPHONE 780.423.5635
FAX 780.428.3844

E-MAIL: INFO@SENIORSCOUNCIL.NET
WEBSITE: WWW.SENIORSCOUNCIL.NET

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