



**SouthWest Edmonton  
Seniors Association**

# 2020 Annual Report

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# President's Report

## Josie Richardson

“Look for the Silver Lining” was the theme chosen by SWESA member and column writer Colleen Crozier for an article published in our community newspapers on January 2021. There’s no doubt it helped to have this approach to 2020!

This year presented SWESA with many challenges. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic we had to adapt our operations to comply with government-imposed restrictions and protocols. All in-person gatherings were suspended in March then again in November. In-person programs offered between July and November were well received and filled up quickly. Thanks to the willingness of members to embrace technology, we were able to offer programming and conduct meetings in a virtual environment.

As you read through our Annual Report, you will see that SWESA said farewell to our long-time Program Coordinator Jennifer Hanrahan and hired two new staff members. We also explored ways to retain members, generate funds and engage volunteers. Most importantly, we focused on the welfare of our members. The priority was to ensure that they felt safe, engaged and supported.

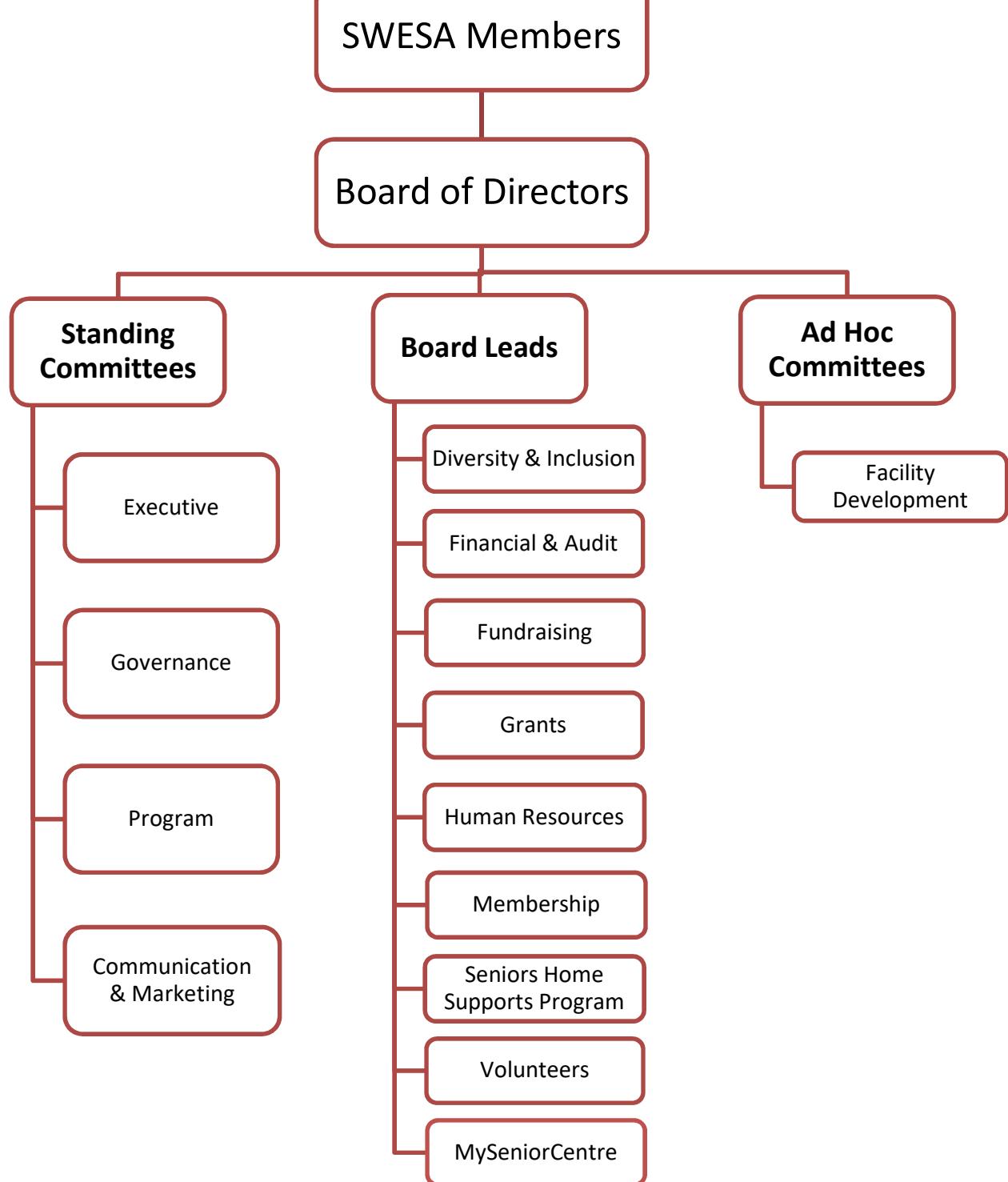
The SWESA Board continued to strive to fulfill its obligation of providing leadership, direction and good governance. Although the team building workshop scheduled for March 2020 to review our Action Plan did not take place due to restrictions on public gatherings, the Board updated the Action Plan and many of the objectives were met. At the governance level, policies and procedures were reviewed and updated, the organizational structure was revamped, finances were monitored carefully and grants were applied for. We were not successful in recruiting directors to fill vacant board positions but individuals did step forward to chair the Communication and Marketing Committee and the Annual Fundraising Campaign Committee. On an operational level, work continued on implementing the financial and reporting aspects of the MySeniorCenter, compiling of an operational manual and arranging for a virtual phone system. Program development and delivery, and referrals to home support services and resources were a priority.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I commend our staff Ruth Gill, Melissa McCuaig and Barbara Newell for their perseverance and hard work on behalf of SWESA and the 55+ community in southwest Edmonton. We thank the members who volunteered in various capacities to support the board and our numerous initiatives. Thanks to the individuals who renewed their memberships, supported our first Annual Appeal and participated in programs, we were able to sustain operations in 2020 and are prepared to reopen as soon as restrictions are lifted. What an honour it is to be surrounded by people who serve a greater good and contribute to the betterment of peoples’ lives.

### Look for the Silver Lining

“COVID-19 has given us ample opportunity to test these words. As seniors, our age and experience give us an advantage: we know that we have lived through some tough times before, and we can do it again. We can find the silver lining in a cloud because we know it exists, waiting to be found.”

-Colleen Crozier





## 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

# SWESA Board of Directors 2020-2021

			
Josie Richardson President	Judy Baker Vice-President	Catherine Hammond Treasurer	Judith Abbott Secretary
			
Eustace (Tony) Montrose Director	Pat Wren Director	Helga Dyckerhoff Director	Reg Wood Director

## SWESA Staff



Ruth Gill  
Program Coordinator



Melissa McQuaig  
Office Administrator



Barbara Newell  
Seniors Home Supports  
Program

# Program Report

## Judy Baker

Our program offerings in 2020 can be divided into four distinct phases. From January to March 13, programs ran as usual. We operated at the Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre, Yellowbird East Community Centre and Blue Quill Community Centre. During this time, we appeared to be on-track to have one of our most successful program years.

The second phase of programming ran from March 14 to the end of July, when in-person programs were shut down due to the COVID-19 Public Health emergency. Needless to say, this turn of events left us scrambling to keep in touch with members and to manage the day-to-day operations of SWESA. Due to the heroic efforts of our staff and volunteers, prepaid program fees were dealt with and a detailed plan for COVID-19 precautions was worked out. Virtual Coffee and Chats were begun, Friendly Phone Calls to our members were conducted and Parking Lot Puzzle Pick-ups were organized. A Re-Opening Survey was conducted to determine whether members would feel comfortable with starting SWESA activities again.

Phase three ran from late July to November 13 (another Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>). We began a partial reopening at the Blue Quill location only. This site was chosen because it allows for more social distancing and compliance with Public Health orders. The staff did a wonderful job of making us feel welcome and safe with a strict regimen of cleaning, social distancing, mask wearing and virtual hugs! We were able to offer a number of fitness programs, in-person coffee and chat, watercolours, art hive and others. During this time, we received the resignation of our long-time Program Coordinator, Jennifer Hanrahan. We were saddened to see her leave and we wish her the best in her new endeavours. While we were in the process of hiring a new Program Coordinator, Melissa McQuaig, our Office Administrator really stepped up to do double duty and make sure that programs ran smoothly.

The final phase of 2020 began on November 13, with another complete lockdown and cancellation of programs for the remainder of the year. Virtual Coffee and Chat continued and we estimate that we had 78 sessions throughout the year. On a bright note, we hired our new Program Coordinator, Ruth Gill, and she began her orientation process. We also started the planning for more virtual program offerings to start in 2021.

Overall, we offered 81 separate programs, attended by 507 unique participants. Given our membership of 599 plus 33 reciprocal members from other seniors' centres, that represents a participation rate of 80%. This high rate of engagement is a testament to the dedication of our members and staff.

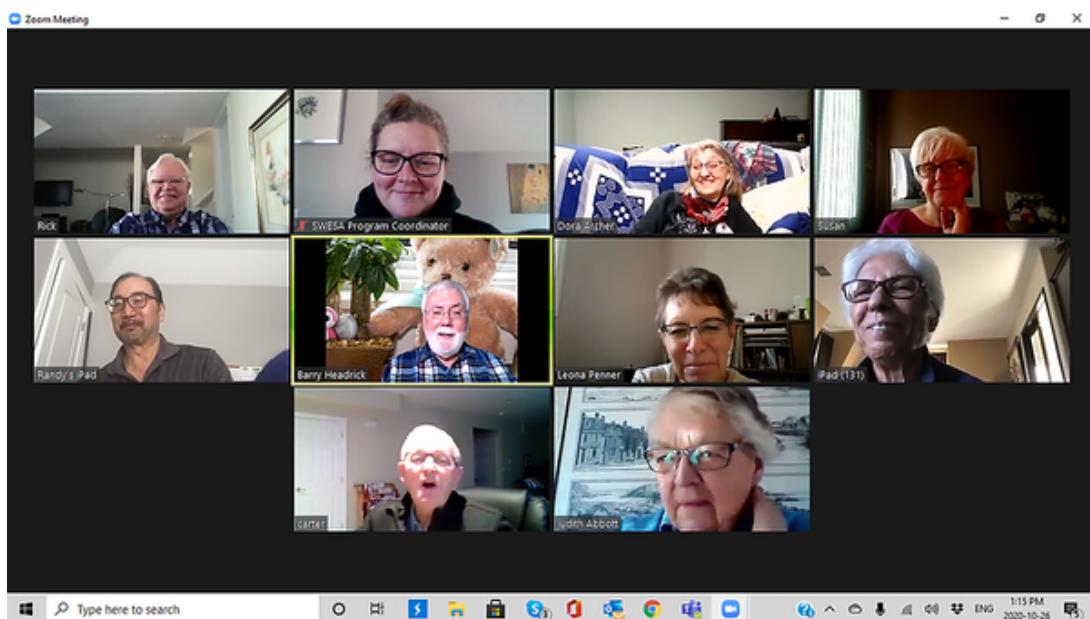
2020 was a year like no other! Hopefully, we won't face the same type of challenges again, but at least we have proven that we can weather any storm if we have common goals and work together to achieve them.



Escentrics Class - August 2020



Mardi Gras Luncheon - Feb 2020



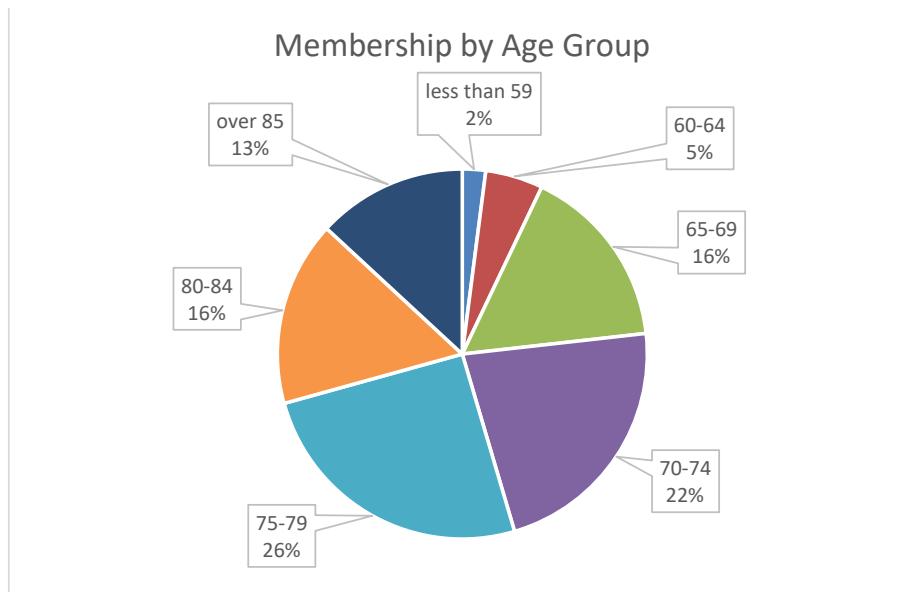
Coffee and Chat over Zoom - Oct 2020

# Membership Report

## Judy Baker

Membership renewals started out at a normal pace in the early part of 2020. After the first shut-down on March 13, it became more difficult to attract and process renewals and interest new members. Nevertheless, we ended the year with 599 members. During the year, we attracted 93 new members.

Our members come from a wide range of ages, with 77% over the age of 70.



Our membership is 79% female and 21% male.

Early in the year, we conducted a Membership Survey to canvas members' opinions of SWESA programs and services. A total of 226 people responded to the survey and a wide range of opinions and comments were recorded. The results of the survey have helped us better understand the needs of our members and have suggested a number of possible new programs for the future.

Membership involvement has always been enthusiastic in the volunteer program. Our challenge for the future is to attract members who have the time and enthusiasm to contribute to the running of the organization, especially in leadership roles.

It will be challenging to retain current members and recruit new members in 2021. When in-person programs resume, we are hopeful that membership numbers will increase.

# Treasurer's Report

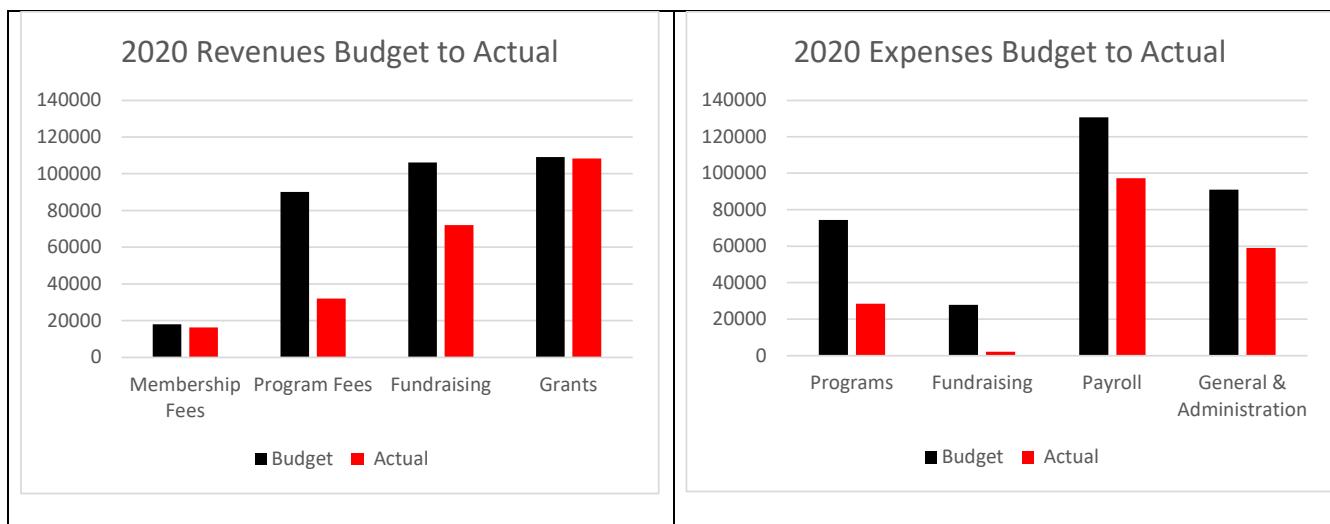
## Catherine Hammond

As you have read throughout this report, SWESA began 2020 with optimism that it would be our best year yet. At the start of 2020, members had prepaid \$7,500 in program registrations, more than double the previous year; by mid-March prepaid program registrations had increased to more than \$12,000. Everyone was looking forward to the March luncheon, outings to the theatre, and many other activities. Then COVID-19 hit and all programs were cancelled. Members were offered refunds. While some members accepted refunds, the majority chose to donate their program fees to SWESA, use them for future programs, or to purchase 2021 memberships. By the end of 2020 almost all prepaid program fees had been cleared and the year-end liability was minimal.

2020 Revenue and Expense Summary		2020 Financial Position Summary	
Total Revenues	\$232,228	Assets (Cash, GICs)	\$275,647
Total Expenses	\$184,939	Liabilities	\$117,659
Net Income	\$47,289	Net Assets	\$157,988

The audit was conducted by Doyle & Company; complete 2020 Financial Statements are on the website.

The charts below show the impact of the pandemic closure on our operations. While our gala fundraising event had to be cancelled, SWESA members and supporters donated \$46,000 in a very successful Annual Appeal in the fall of 2020. This campaign provided a year-end cash surplus that will help to support operations in 2021. We have also received a grant from the Edmonton Community Foundation that will allow us to undertake virtual and in-person programs. Additionally, SWESA has \$90,650 in GICs to use as contingency funds if necessary.



# Volunteers Report

## Helga Dyckerhoff

SWESA volunteers are the backbone of the organization. Without their enthusiasm, hard work and support, SWESA simply could not exist. From those who have helped organize luncheons, greet at the front door, help on committees and serve on the Board, all are volunteers who make SWESA a vibrant grassroots organization.

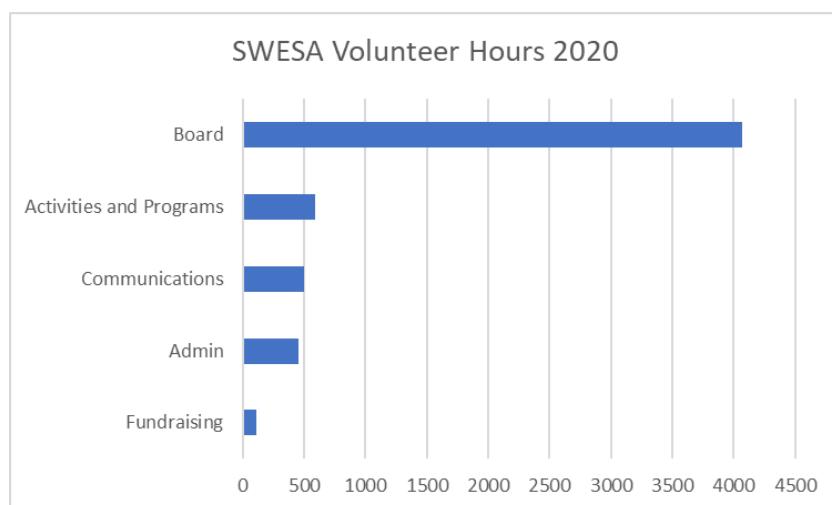
Despite the COVID-19 pandemic suspending nearly all of our programs and social activities, volunteers remained a vital part of what we were able to do. In 2020, 64 SWESA members volunteered 5,729 hours of their time.

In the late spring, as the COVID-19 lock down was in place, a group of SWESA volunteers called every SWESA member to ask how they were, if they needed a connection to resources and if they would appreciate a regular ongoing phone call just to chat with someone. The overall feedback was very positive and some ongoing calls were arranged.

In the fall, volunteers supported SWESA's first Annual Appeal. Following all of the current COVID-19 precautions at the time, nine SWESA members volunteered to stuff around 300 envelopes with the membership mail-out. Two weeks after the mail-out these same volunteers did follow-up phone calls. Their time and effort contributed greatly to the overall success of the campaign in raising \$46,000.

Throughout 2020, Board Committees continued to meet through Zoom and FaceTime. These committees included Board Directors and volunteers from the membership. Despite the limitations during the pandemic, these committees raised funds, hired and oriented staff, redesigned programs to offer them online and so much more.

While the Volunteer Committee did not meet in 2020, they expect to resume meeting in 2021 and, as COVID-19 restrictions lift, restart the volunteer activities of previous years. Our 2020 volunteer hours reflect the COVID-19 pandemic, with few opportunities to support activities and programs but considerable volunteer time put into Board and Committee work.





Volunteers who supported the Annual Appeal by preparing the mail-out and making follow-up phone calls - Fall 2020



Volunteers at Registration Desk for Mardi Gras Luncheon - Feb 2020



Volunteers at Happy Chinese New Year - Jan 2020 Luncheon



Volunteers and Participants at Manluk Theatre Outing - Feb 2020

# Fundraising Report

Rob Agostinis and Tony Montrose

SWESA in 2020 was ready to have a great year with programming, fundraising, events and so on. However, we were hit with the COVID-19 pandemic and many arrangements and changes had to be made. We look forward to a better year in 2021.

<b>Summer Fling</b> Cancelled Deposit to Fort Edmonton returned.	<b>Taste of Edmonton</b> Cancelled. Postponed.	<b>50/50 Draws</b> Suspended.	<b>Annual Appeal/ Campaign</b> New initiative. See below.
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## Annual Appeal

SWESA is so grateful for personal donations that support and grow our organization. A tax deductible receipt was issued for any donation of \$20.00 or more. Donations were made through [CanadaHelps.org](https://www.canadahelps.org); a great platform for that. The Annual Appeal will occur each fall.

### OUR 2020 ANNUAL APPEAL/CAMPAIGN (OCT-NOV)

This first Annual Appeal was a tremendous success. The campaign kicked off with an anonymous donor who pledged \$15,000 as a matching gift. Over 200 SWESA members responded to the challenge, raising that first \$15,000 and continuing, to reach a total of \$46,578.86.

Our thanks go out to the generous anonymous donor, the SWESA members who donated ([Annual Donor Appreciation Wall 2020](#)), the SWESA volunteers and staff who worked behind the scenes and to Michael Bull, a SWESA member who stepped forward to act as the Lead.



Josie Richardson (SWESA President) and Michael Bull (Annual Appeal Lead) at start of the campaign

# SWESA Operations Report

## Pat Wren

During the past year SWESA continued improving the day-to-day operations in support of our program delivery and our financial reporting. We have continued to improve the use of My Senior Centre (MSC) and have activated My Active Centre (MAC) allowing our members to register for programs online. The team continued to improve our website and communications with our membership and the public.

With the addition of Melissa McCuaig, Office Administrator, we have improved the daily reporting and accuracy. We have also implemented a common Microsoft environment where all Executive members can communicate on the same platform. The next phase will implement a common repository for all electronic communications for easy access by those authorized to update and review.

The implementation of a consistent and user-friendly electronic infrastructure allowed SWESA to continue providing programs and services to our membership. With the implementation of Zoom, video technology, including TV, video camera and laptop we were able to introduce a virtual set of programs to reengage our membership who could once again actively participate in programs that support a healthy lifestyle.

In late 2020 we consolidated our external storage space by acquiring a storage unit at Sentinel Storage. This allows better access and a reassessment of our current inventory. All SWESA inventory has been logged and documented for use in the future. We reduced our expense and increased our ease of access whenever required. With the shutdown of Yellowbird East Community Centre site, we moved all SWESA assets to the new storage location.

In 2020 the operations team has had to go-with-the-flow given the multiple changes presented by the worldwide pandemic, the changing regulations and controls and closure of our facilities. Lease agreements with both Blue Quill and Yellowbird East community leagues expired December 31, 2020. The Blue Quill lease was renewed for a 12-month term. In addition to defined office and program space, provisions were added for renting the hall and other rooms in the facility. The inability to reach a consensus with Yellowbird East Community League, resulted in their declining to renew our continuing lease agreement. SWESA has been granted first right of refusal until June 30, 2021. Blue Quill Community League has provided an adequate site to support our operations in 2020.

The SWESA team continue to work with local community and the City of Edmonton to define our needs for the future. The current economic climate in Alberta and the City of Edmonton has created an environment to acquire or build a new facility a challenge. However, discussions continue as we search for a solution for a long-term home for our organization.

We are excited about the future and are willing and ready to engage with our membership in person through all our programs, Toonie talks, games, outings and luncheons.

# Communications and Marketing Report

Helga Dyckerhoff and Kathy Trepanier

The Communications and Marketing Committee (CAM) resumed in July 2020 under the leadership of Volunteer Chair, Kathy Trepanier, reporting to the Board through Director Helga Dyckerhoff. The other ten committee members brought a wide variety of experiences and talents to committee work: five were Board Directors.

While the early 2020 Board planning proposed a Communications and Marketing Plan, the Board asked the new CAM Committee to focus on direct support to Board Directors leading key initiatives, especially fundraising.

The primary focus of CAM in the fall of 2020 was supporting SWESA's first Annual Appeal, led by Volunteer Mike Bull. CAM drafted and produced a mail-out to membership, developed a progress poster and added two pages to the website for regular updates. Particularly new for SWESA is a website donor appreciation wall. With Barry Headrick as videographer, CAM also developed a short testimonial videoclip that was used to support the Appeal. More of these testimonial videos were planned but then put on hold by COVID-19 restrictions.

CAM continues to put an emphasis on the website as it is often the first point of contact for the public. We've been very fortunate to have Barry Headrick as the Webmaster for the SWESA website. Barry posts approved content (other than for program pages), trouble shoots, stays atop best practices for websites and liaises with Dynacor Media, our web host. The Program Coordinator manages the program pages. The online presence for SWESA performs well:

- The photo gallery, hosted by SmugMug, has 57 photo galleries with 2,625 photos uploaded. There were over 100,000 individual photo views in 2020.
- The website had over 22,000 individual page views, mostly on the Weekly Bulletins and Contact Us pages.
- The Facebook page was rated by Google with 4.3 stars out of 5 stars. It is interesting to note that 432 people follow SWESA on Facebook.

A workgroup of CAM reviewed the website this fall for content and function. Their report uncovered the need to write content more for a general public audience not just membership. The home page was updated to be more welcoming. A review like this will be done yearly.

Committee member Colleen Crozier writes seniors columns for SWESA in the Riverbend Ragtimes and Terwilleger Tribune. This is wonderful free promotional space, incorporating timely messages to the general senior public.

# The Seniors Home Support Program

Josie Richardson

The Seniors Home Supports Program (SHSP) is an important component of SWESA's operations established as a city-wide collaborative in 2015. Program Coordinator Barbara Newell assists individuals aged 55+ in accessing reliable service providers to undertake home and yard maintenance projects as well as a range of personal services.

There were 480 requests for referrals in 2020. Of those requests, 195 were first time callers. The majority of callers were female, living alone, and over the age of 75 years.

Most requests were for home maintenance, including services of an electrician and plumber, followed by housekeeping. Twelve percent of calls were for personal services such as hairdressing, foot care and grocery delivery. There was a 12% decrease in referrals from the previous year. This was attributed to COVID-19 restrictions and subsequent concerns regarding potential exposure to the virus from individuals outside of the registrant's cohort.

Barriers for the registrant's ability to access services included financial limitations and communication issues due to language. Many aged 80+ were concerned that seeking outside help would result in a loss of their independence. Data showed that 38% of new registrants were receiving Alberta Seniors Benefits Support and Guaranteed Income Supplement Subsidies. In addition, their finances were often impacted by costs related to dealing with critical health issues or by the death of a spouse.

A priority for our Program Coordinator Barbara Newell this year was to collaborate with organizations to maintain an inventory of low-cost service options for seniors in need. Organizations such as Elders and Angels, Bissell Casual Labour, Southside Primary Care Network and Strathcona Outreach have all helped to provide services that allow older adults to remain in their homes and communities longer. Barbara also worked with service providers to ensure that their businesses had appropriate COVID-19 protocols in place and she contacted registrants to follow-up on service requests. The phone call or email was appreciated, especially by older adults who were living alone and feeling isolated. In addition to referrals, many individuals were provided with information on how to access other community resources or outreach services that they required. Southwest Edmonton received ten snow removal subsidies, which were distributed to qualifying individuals.

Year over year, the SHSP has proven itself to be an invaluable resource to the 55+ population in southwest Edmonton. Barbara Newell has been the program coordinator at SWESA for the past five years and continues to work hard, not only to support the registrants, but to continually promote the program in our area. The SHSP is funded by a grant from Family and Community Support Services and is administered by the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council.