

1. **PURPOSE AND HISTORY OF ORGANIZATION**

The Saskatoon Council on Aging is a non-profit organization, and a community leader in the promotion of dignity, health and independence of older adults through programs, services, and policy advocacy. The Council is operated by a board of volunteers, the majority of whom are older adults, and has two main functions: Operating a Positive Aging Resource/Walk-in Centre to enhance the quality of life for older adults, and working with local agencies to initiate, implement, and evaluate projects useful to older adults in our community.

Positive Aging Resource Centre Programs and Services:

1991

Resource Centre

The Resource Centre opens to the public in 1991. The centre houses information on many topics of interest to older adults and caregivers.

Update: *As of 2013 the Resource Centre is now referred to as the Positive Aging Resource Centre. It is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.*

Publications

Coming of Age and *New Wrinkles* make their first appearances in 1991. *Coming of Age* is published three times per year, and features educational information and articles of interest to older adults. *New Wrinkles* is published four times a year and focuses on information about the activities of the Council on Aging, seniors groups, and other newsworthy items.

Update: *In 2001, the Council decides to combine the two publications into Coming of Age, which can be mailed out to members and is also dropped off around the city. In 2007 the publication committee is replaced by a Communications Committee.*

Education

Educational programs are provided at general meetings four times per year – these general meetings are discontinued in 2004. Elections take place for Council Board positions at the Annual meeting held the third Thursday of May at 1:00 p.m. at the Frances Morrison Library.

Update: *The Council continues to provide education to older adults through the Speaker's Bureau, Positive Aging Drop-In program and Life Long Learning Courses.*

Membership

Membership in the Saskatoon Council on Aging is free of charge.

Update: *More than 1,500 members, consisting of older adults and representatives of agencies and organizations concerned with people over the age of 55, are now taking an interest in the Council's activities.*

Volunteer Opportunities

The Positive Aging Resource Centre has welcomed assistance from volunteers since 1991.

Update: *By 2014, more than 100 volunteers are providing assistance throughout the year.*

1993

Blood Pressure Clinic

A total of 34 older adults attend the first free Blood Pressure Clinic in 1993. The clinic is held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Positive Aging Resource Centre from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Several dedicated volunteers operate this program.

Update: *The clinic's new hours are 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and has been renamed Wellness/Blood Pressure Clinic. A nurse and a pharmacist attend clinics to provide consultations to older adults. In 2014 this program was merged with Drop in Program to create a Positive Aging Drop in Program.*

1995

Student Work Placements

The Positive Aging Resource Centre begins working with educational institutions to provide volunteer field experiences.

Update: Many work placement students continue to find full-time employment after receiving training through our centre.

1998

Beginner Computer Literacy Service for Older Adults

Council launches this program in April 1998 to provide adults with the opportunity to develop their computer skills and access the Internet for information and communication.

Update: This is now a regular service that includes courses for beginners on Internet, Microsoft Word and other technology courses such as Skype, Facebook and iPads.

Telechat Service for Isolated Older Adults

Council launches this friendly telephone visiting program in April 1998. Caring volunteers with the time and desire were trained to call lonely, homebound older adults. A "how-to" manual was developed for groups wishing to start their own Telechat service and is available through the Council on Aging office.

Update: In January 2000, Saskatoon Services for Seniors adopted the Telechat program.

1999

Spotlight on Seniors

Council launches the first Spotlight on Seniors event in November 1999 as part of the International Year of Older Persons. This full-day event celebrates the contributions of seniors in the community. Information booths are set up for seniors to view the many services and products available to them. Entertainers and educational speakers are scheduled throughout the day. The help of many volunteers is key to making the event successful.

Update: In subsequent years, the committee continues to organize this event as it grows in popularity. In 2003, TCU Place becomes a major partner in planning Spotlight on Seniors.

2000

Elementary School Partnership

Council begins a formal partnership with Bishop Klein Elementary School in March 2000. This partnership bridges the gap between generations as students and seniors endeavor to complete special projects together.

2001

Directories for Older Adults

Council forms a partnership with the College of Kinesiology and Public Health Services of the Saskatoon Health Region to produce a Directory of Services and Social Activities for Older Adults. The Directory has several subjects of interest to older adults and caregivers.

Update: Several thousand copies are distributed every other year.

2002

Drop-in Program/Tours for Older Adults

Council launches this program in October 2002. The drop-in program is aimed at providing older adults the opportunity to socialize, learn new things and utilize the Positive Aging Resource Centre.

Update: The program is scheduled from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. Programs include listening to educational speakers, having refreshments, socializing and making crafts. Several dedicated volunteers operate this program. As well, the Council offers a few tours per year, taking

seniors to destinations in and around Saskatoon. Transportation to programs is provided for those who qualify. In 2014 this program merged with the Wellness Clinic to be called Positive Aging Drop in Program

2004

Advocacy

The Advocacy Committee is formed to find constructive ways to educate and influence decision makers on current issues of concern to older adults.

Century Club

A Saskatoon Branch of the Century Club is formed in 2004. This is a cost-free club for seniors who have reached the age of 90 years and are determined to live a full and active lifestyle to the age of 100 and beyond.

***Update:** Many activities are planned for this group throughout the year, with transportation provided if required. They also receive a newsletter five times a year. The Club has 180 members.*

2006

Ski Lessons

Ski for Life is a program sponsored by the Saskatoon Council on Aging and the Nordic Ski Club of Saskatoon. The program exists to teach older adults how to cross-country ski.

***Update:** The program ended in 2010 due to low enrollment. Seniors wanting to ski can take lessons with the Nordic Ski Club.*

2007

Art/Photography Lessons

Basic Drawing, Watercolor and Acrylic, and Photography courses are introduced for older adults.

***Update:** With the exception of photography, these have become a regular programs offered by SCOA.*

Prime of Life

In October 2007, the Council begins a regular column in the *Sunday Sun* called Prime of Life, featuring stories of interest to older adults, caregivers and the general public.

***Update:** There is no Sunday SUN anymore so stories are being run in other papers such as the Saskatoon Express. There is no regular column in other papers. .*

2008

Fundraising Events

A fundraising committee was struck to raise funds for general operations of the Council on Aging through holding events and activities. This committee also seeks out partnerships and sponsors associated with the planned activities.

***Update:** In 2012 a Finance/Fundraising Committee was formed and are working on fund development and in 2014 a Fundraising Sub Committee was formed.*

Developmental Projects in the Community:

1992

Abuse of the Elderly Project

Representatives from 24 agencies and groups form the Saskatoon Committee on Abuse of the Elderly Project. After research is completed in 1994, a protocol is designed for social agencies to use in cases of abuse and a brochure called "Financial Abuse of the Elderly" is printed. This brochure is widely distributed throughout the city.

1994

Isolation of Older Adults

A three-year project begins to address isolation of older adults. The project is intended to help community agencies find ways of reducing the isolation of older adults by strengthening their independence. A Steering Committee – comprised of SCOA members and representatives from a number of agencies – begins to focus on the issues of isolation and several exciting activities take place.

- 2. A Seniors Forum** is held in 1994 at the Pensioner and Pioneers Pavilion. The event draws 111 seniors and representatives of community agencies and organizations. They meet to share information about the most common barriers to the social involvement of older adults, and to suggest better ways of contacting isolated seniors. Several pilot projects and activities begin as a result of information gathered from the forum.

2. In May 1995, the first pilot project called **TEMT (Travel, Eat, Meet and Talk)** begins. This six-month project starts at Lutheran Sunset Home. The “wheels-on-meals” project offers gentle exercise, lunch, education sessions, entertainment and socializing to frail older adults who still live in their own homes.

Update: In April 1997, Luther Care Communities becomes the administrator of the project with funding from the Saskatoon Health Region.

3. In August 1995, the second pilot project, called **Live Smart**, begins. This 16-week project starts at Mayfair United Church and is similar to **TEMT**. The average age of participants is 80 years.

Update: In April 1997, Luther Care Communities becomes the project administrator with funding from the Saskatoon Health Region.

4. In November 1995, the third pilot project, called the **Seniors' Shuttle Service**, begins. In cooperation with the Corps of Commissionaires, this transportation project begins operating in the northwest area of Saskatoon and later expands city-wide due to demand. This service provides more than 5,000 rides in four-and-a-half months. Due to financial reasons, the pilot concludes on March 31, 1996, at which time an evaluation is done.

Update: Information from the pilot is being used today through a Special Needs Transportation Committee formed by the Council on Aging in 1999. The goals of this committee are:

- 2. To educate others on how inadequate transportation options contribute to isolation of older adults and undermine their independence and access to services and activities.*

ii) To attempt to influence the provincial government to increase funding for special needs transportation.

iii) To work with the City of Saskatoon through representation on the City of Saskatoon Special Needs Transportation Advisory Committee.

5. In November 1996, a fourth pilot project called **Young at Heart** began. This project, which is housed at McNaughton Place, is similar to **Live Smart** and **TEMT** but serves older adults living in apartments and high rises.

Update: In September 2004, Luther Care Communities becomes the administrator of the project with funding from the Saskatoon Health Region.

1997

Input '97 Forum

In January 1997, a forum is held at which 96 informal caregivers and agency representatives attend to address the needs of informal caregivers. A Steering Committee of Council members, professionals, volunteers, and caregivers is formed to focus on the needs of informal caregivers, using information from this forum and prior research from the Council's Long Range Planning Committee.

1999

Informal Caregivers

A three-year project to address the needs of informal caregivers begins. The project aims to address the difficulties caregivers experience by developing a community caregiver network and help-centre model, while increasing society's awareness of the needs and contributions of informal caregivers. The project is steered by an Action Committee of Council members, agency representatives and informal caregivers.

The Caregiver Information and Support is established and is located at the Saskatoon Council on Aging. Support is offered through a free caregiver guide, a telephone information line, useful information through a website, mini-forums to help caregivers to connect with each other and counseling through Community Social Workers.

***Update:** In 2007, a subcommittee called the Caregiver Network was formed to help community agencies share and collaborate. Members of the committee joined the Caregiver Information and Support Committee after this networking was completed. In 2008 a monthly Caregiver Centre Club was piloted and operated for about 4 months. In 2010 plans a pilot support group for widowed male caregiver was planned. MENTorship was created.*

In 2011 a Women on Their Own pilot project was created. In 2011 mini forums for caregivers were provided including rural communities and a new website for caregiver information and support was created at www.saskatooncaregiver.ca.

2001

Adopt-A-Grandchild

A two-year pilot began with the goal of enriching the bonds between older adults and children. The project aims to promote intergenerational understanding through the sharing of skills, interests and experiences, and to improve the health and well-being of volunteer grandparents and grandchildren through meaningful social interaction. At the end of the pilot in 2004, Big Brothers/Big Sisters took over the match is made.

2003

Evaluation of Senior's Week

An evaluation project is initiated by the Council on Aging to determine the effectiveness of Seniors' Week in promoting the dignity, health and independence of older adults. Funding for this project is provided by Health Canada under the Population Health Fund. Findings conclude that Senior's Week is quite successful in meeting most of the stated objectives. A full evaluation report is housed at the Councils library.

Early in 2005, an additional evaluation is completed on the usefulness of promotional materials used to advertise and promote Senior's Week events. A copy of this report is also housed at the Council's library. A more in-depth evaluation of Seniors Week is conducted again in the winter of 2005 with funding from the Health Canada, Population Health Fund. A "How To" tool kit is created to assist the public in hosting events during Seniors Week. This tool kit is available through Health Canada and the Council's Positive Aging Resource Centre.

2004

Saskatoon City Police Committee on Diversity

Council provided representation for seniors through this committee which met monthly to share concerns with the Police. The Police received funding for three years to hold two day diversity awareness workshops. Council's representative moderated fourteen different panels as part of these. Each time, a professional working with seniors, an immigrant senior and a senior from the Council on Aging shared

with group members of the Police Force their concerns and appreciation of the work of the Police, who in turn expressed their experiences dealing with seniors.

Rainbow 50 Plus Program

This is a joint project between Rainbow Community Centre, the Saskatoon Council on Aging, Kokum's and the Saskatoon Health Region. Once a week, there are planned activities to provide exercise, lunch and time for socializing at the Rainbow Community Centre.

2005

Older Adult Abuse Task Force

Representatives from several agencies and groups begin to meet regularly to organize, prioritize and plan future community action on the issue of older adult abuse. This task force is an adhoc committee of the Council on Aging.

Update: Three specific subcommittees were formed to work on abuse issues: Legal/Financial, Older Adults in Care, and World Older Adult Abuse Awareness Day.

2007

Communications

A communications committee was formed to replace the publications committee. This committee developed communication strategies to provide awareness about the work of the Council on Aging through using Council's website, Prime of Life column in the Sunday Sun, Coming of Age newsletter publication and also going out into the community to provide presentations through the Speaker's Bureau.

2009

Age Alive

This one year project is to combat the myths of ageism by producing a photography exhibit to be displayed at various locations in Saskatoon. The photography portrays older adults in a positive way and is geared at reaching young adults.

Update: The exhibit travels to various community organizations and schools. Age Alive presentations were developed and are presented at the places where the exhibit is housed.

2010

Age Friendly Education

The Saskatoon Council on Aging developed a new project in the first part of 2010, to create a training program with strategies to improve service and client contact designed for taxi drivers. With our everyday involvement with older adults, our mandate, coupled with our community relationships, and with support from Saskatoon's main taxi companies, we are confident that this program will be successfully administered through our organization.

Update: An Age friendly Education presentation geared for businesses serving older adults was developed and continues to be shown as requested to various groups. A checklist was created for organizations and businesses to use to check if their physical space is age-friendly.

2010

Age Friendly Saskatoon

This project is a participatory grassroots effort for older adults, their caregivers, and support agencies, to develop a strategic plan under which we can promote positive aging in an age-friendly community.

Update: A final report of our numerous focus groups and surveys was completed with recommendations to make Saskatoon an Age Friendly Community. Phase II of this project has also been completed. Key partners and groups identified in the Age Friendly Saskatoon Initiative Report to take action on recommendations are currently being approached.

2011

Volunteer Professional Development

Several volunteers were provided training in areas of reception, Speaker's Bureau and Lifelong Learning instruction.

Bus Buddy

A pilot project began to match volunteers with seniors wanting to learn to use public transit.

2012

Intergenerational Project

A one year project began to promote intergenerational activities with youth and seniors. Partners in the project are Holy Cross High School, Jubilee Residence, Primary Health Centre and SCOA.

2013

Electronic Hub Project

A one year project began to revamp the Saskatoon Council on Aging's website to become an information hub where users can navigate to find needed resources

Seniors Globe Walk

A one year project began to address health and isolation by forming teams of seniors to walk around the world.