

GRAY MATTERS

Published by SSM
Spring 2020

STRATEGIZING FOR POSITIVE AGING



Community Involvement

Transportation

Services

photo by Carla M Betker



Positive Aging The Domino Effect!

- Randy Dove

*With close
to a
\$1
billion
annual
economic
contribution,
the
“Saskatchewan
advantage”
is asking,
“Where
do we fit?”*

SSM has embarked on a campaign to press the province to develop a comprehensive plan to respond to the needs of older adults in which “positive aging” is embraced, recognized and celebrated. With close to a \$1 billion annual economic contribution, the “Saskatchewan advantage” is asking, “Where do we fit?”

When SSM released the supportive research there was a realization that the issues raised by older adults were inter-related and interdependent. (see www.skseniorsmechanism.ca)

When older adults have problems with transportation to get to medical appointments or to visit with family and friends, the lack of adequate options has implications for a much broader set of challenges. Poor transportation options can lead to the inability to access services, whether they are local or in the regional trading area. Without needed services, too many older adults are now being faced with relocation to larger communities that can provide services e.g. medical, recreational and financial.

An affected adult may make a decision to relocate to a nearby, larger community. Even with better services, key ingredients for positive aging are still missing. Too often relocation results in the loss of contact with friends and family. With limited contacts, older adults can become more isolated, affecting their emotional, physical and mental health leading to a premature decline in overall wellness and limited participation in their new community.

SSM will continue to raise these issues with our stakeholders, including government, during 2020. It is our belief that action is overdue. With our many member organizations, supporters and partners, your participation is needed to help change the current situation so we achieve “quality life for all older adults in Saskatchewan”. The more you can raise these issues by talking to your neighbours, local MLAs and candidates to keep the needs of older adults as a high priority, the better opportunity we have to overcome the cascading effect of falling dominoes.

GRAY MATTERS

Volume 23 Issue 1 Spring 2020

Published by

SSM

Older Adults Moving Forward

SSM is an umbrella organization that brings together groups of older adults who offer their wealth of experience, knowledge and time to work together in the interest of seniors in Saskatchewan. From a wide range of backgrounds, these groups work selflessly to better the life of older adults, whether advocating about issues of interest to seniors, providing specific types of programming, or sharing information to benefit seniors in our province.

SSM Member Organizations are as follows:

Canada Post Heritage Club - Golden Sheaf Chapter
CARP - Regina Chapter

Fédération des aînés fransaskois

Lifelong Learning Centre

Moose Jaw & District Seniors Association

National Association of Federal Retirees

Power Pioneers Association of Saskatchewan Inc.

Regina Senior Citizens Centre Inc.

Saskatchewan Union Retirees Federation

Saskatchewan Retirees Association

Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc.

Saskatchewan Senior Fitness Association

Saskatoon Council on Aging

Saskatoon Services for Seniors

SaskTel Pioneers Chapter 59

Senior Power

Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan

Women of the Dawn

Supporters of SSM:

Association of Personal Care Home Operators in SK

Eden Care Communities, Regina

Prince Albert Seniors Advocacy Centre

Saskatchewan Association of Nurse Practitioners

Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association

Hafford/Blaine Lake Health Advisory Network

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SENIORS INFO-LINE 1-888-823-2211

SSM Office - 306-359-9956

www.skseniormechanism.ca

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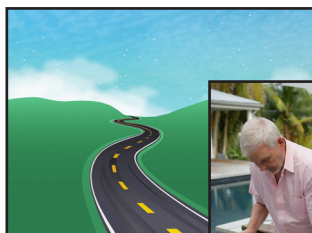
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Spring 2020 -3

STRATEGIZING FOR POSITIVE AGING

SASKATCHEWAN NEEDS A STRATEGY FOR POSITIVE AGING. This will require collaborative planning and input from multi-sector partners including communities, governments, and older adults themselves. **SSM is providing leadership and insight into the development of planning for positive aging** as we work toward achieving our vision of quality life for all older adults.

Plans for the following months:



In Gray Matters:

- April: Transportation, Services and Community Participation
- July: Housing, Health Care and Finances
- October: Overview

Member Organizations will be engaging their members, MLAs/candidates, and others in their communities using resources distributed by SSM.

These will include resources for each of the focus areas:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| • Transportation | • Healthcare |
| • Capacity/Structure | • Housing and Services |
| • Finances | • Community Involvement |

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO KEEP THE CONVERSATIONS GOING. Visit the SSM website (www.sksejorsmechanism.ca) for the report on our *Strategizing for Positive Aging* research, and to find other resources as they become available.

Century Club Corner

Spring in Saskatchewan

*Vesta Pickel, taken from book Vesta Althea Pickel:
Prairie Poet by Gaye Beechy*



Do you remember how it was in Spring,
How Winter lingered on until one day
Spring came and flung her woolen shawl away
For one so gossamer, a lacy thing
Thin as a night wind's subtle whispering.
The birds came back, red robin, lark, blue jay
And built a home for two without delay
While tree and flower were encouraging.

You cannot see it now but it is here
Just like it was for you so long ago.
You must remember when the streams were clear
When warming winds had melted all the snow.
Reach out and feel the air and smell the earth
For Springtime here is life, new hope, rebirth.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SSM research indicates that older adults are concerned about the following aspects of Community Involvement:

- Safety in home and community
- Awareness of the contributions and needs of older people
- Affordable and accessible recreational and educational activities
- Effective supports to prevent or address physical, financial, emotional, and sexual abuse of older adults
- Access and ability to use technology

Community Involvement Reduces Social Isolation of Seniors

For seniors to continue and even expand their participation in society they need to remain healthy and engaged in their communities. However, research shows that an estimated 30 percent of Canadian seniors are at risk of becoming socially isolated. According to the International Federation on Ageing, “the number one emerging issue facing seniors in Canada is keeping older people socially connected and active.”

Social isolation and exclusion is related to serious negative health effects and reduced quality of life for seniors. Social isolation is also linked to the undervaluing of seniors in our society and the loss of seniors from the volunteer sector and the paid economy. The

National Seniors Council also asserts that the social isolation of seniors can cause communities to suffer from a lack of social unity, higher social costs, and the loss of the wealth of experience that seniors bring to our families, neighbourhoods and communities.

Everyone has a valuable contribution to make in addressing social isolation—seniors, their families, government, businesses, non-profit organizations and the voluntary sector. Some of the factors that increase social isolation can be addressed by individual action; others require community-based solutions, like transportation, physical and geographic barriers, more appropriate or accessible programs and services.

[The Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors report on Social Isolation of Seniors (Volume 1)]

Blooming Perennials

often contribute through entrepreneurial and volunteer activities.



Belinda and Wayne Reddekopp from Warman are examples of continuing creativity and caring after retiring from their careers. They now work together on their new business venture – manufacturing and marketing a Frost Free Valve Rod to use in the water and sewer industry. Wayne is still working on developing new products.

They both are active as volunteers with their church in Warman and at the local MCC thrift store and still find leisure time to spend with grandchildren.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ASK AUNTIE AGEISM

Dear Auntie,

I work in a pharmacy and we have lots of elderly customers. The other day a sweet little old lady came up to the counter and I could tell she was confused. I greeted her kindly in my usual way, saying, "How can I help you, my dear." She got a strange look on her face and didn't say anything for a minute so I asked her again if I could help her, speaking a little more loudly this time.

I was so surprised when her face got kind of red and she said, "I am NOT your dear!" and turned and stomped away – well, sort of stomped, she did thump her cane loudly. Why was she angry? I really did want to help the poor old soul.

Caring Carol

Dear Auntie,

I am about ready to give up! Just because I have silver hair and am on the waiting list for a hip replacement so use a cane, people think I am feeble in every way and can't see, hear or care for myself.

The other day I popped into a pharmacy to pick up some throat lozenges. I noticed that someone had dropped a glass bottle of mouthwash and there was a dangerous slippery place in that aisle. I hurried to the counter to tell someone and before I could say anything the girl called me her dear and wanted to help me do something. I was just going to explain when she shouted the same thing again. That did it! I told her I wasn't her dear and got out of there before I might say something really rude.

I feel sort of bad about it now. Is there a way to stop young people from assuming all older people are incapable?

Strong Susan

Response

Let's think about this. Are all people aged 20 to 50 the same? Are all people aged 60 to 90 the same? Any time we make assumptions about a group of people based on stereotypes about age we are in the danger zone. Carol means well but doesn't see the real Susan. Carol mentally diminishes Susan by calling her a sweet little old lady and a poor old soul. Susan calls the young woman a girl – implying she may not be a capable adult.

The good news is that both Carol and Susan want to learn from this unfortunate encounter. It will help if each person discards some assumptions about the other and is willing to take the time and patience to clearly explain what they are saying and feeling. Some older adults don't mind being called dear, but the offer to help is fine without adding dear - which many feel is inaccurate and a bit insulting.

Auntie



THE RIPPLE EFFECT: SPREADING CARE ACROSS COMMUNITIES

CANADIAN RED CROSS FRIENDLY PHONE PROGRAM

When you drop a stone in the water, the ripples radiate in all directions. In a similar fashion, the Red Cross Friendly Phone program begins by forging connections between two people, but the ripple effects of camaraderie and good will can be felt across the community. And it all begins with a simple phone call.

The Red Cross Friendly Phone program pairs volunteers with seniors who feel they could benefit from weekly phone calls. That's it. Two folks chat on the phone for about an hour a week.

No mobility issues to negotiate, no travel expenses to incur, just a friendly phone call.



Ruth and Gwen have been paired for over a year now in the Red Cross Friendly Phone Program. Ruth has visual impairment and trouble getting around, so going on outings can be a challenge.

"It brings me companionship, something to look forward to each week," said Ruth about the Friendly Phone Program. "Conversation really brightens my day."

Volunteer Gwen shares Ruth's enthusiasm and enjoyment of their time together. She especially enjoys reading to her.

What makes the Friendly Phone Program unique is the warmth and pleasure it provides to both volunteer and participant. The valuable social connections flow both ways.

And the connections don't stop there. Additional social supports provide caregivers, family members, and friends comfort as well.

Ruth's son cannot say enough about how much this program has helped his mom. He jokes that Gwen has moved into the number one spot with his mom, and he has fallen to the number two spot. And he's not complaining. At any age, expanding social connections can enrich life enjoyment.



Whether you live in a bustling city or a remote farm, the need to connect is the same. The Canadian Red Cross Friendly Phone program makes those connections a little easier. If you are interested in

finding out more about the program, contact Shawna Green, Friendly Phone Program Coordinator by phone: 306-216-6602

email: friendlyvisittingsask@redcross.ca or Red Cross website.



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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



While reading our community newsletter I discovered **Forever...in motion**. It sounded like an interesting exercise program and, as there is no charge, it is easy to try without making a financial commitment. Supplies for the session (weights and bands) are available to borrow. All sessions are held at accessible locations.

I found the instructors to be knowledgeable and able to lead in a manner that is easy to follow and have fun at the same time. Those already



Saskatchewan
Parks and Recreation
Association



Forever...in *motion* - Knowing the Benefits of Physical Activity

Do you believe in the benefits of physical activity, enjoy being active and socializing with others? Why not participate in the **Forever...in motion** program in your community?

Did you know?

- In 2011, over 60% of Saskatchewan seniors were classified as inactive in their leisure time. These inactive older adults were unable to realize the health benefits of active living. (Source: Statistics Canada)
- People with physical limitations and chronic conditions can benefit the most of being physically active. Chronic health conditions and falls can be prevented by participating in regular physical activity.
- Recreational experiences involving physical activity facilitates the maintenance of healthy body weights, which in turn reduces health care costs.

Benefits of being Physically Active:

- Decreases the effects of aging
- Builds stronger bones and muscles
- Reduces the risk of falling
- Delays and prevents chronic diseases
- Improves joint and muscle flexibility
- Lowers blood pressure
- Controls weight
- Lowers cholesterol
- Reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke
- Improves balance and strength
- Can help prevent osteoporosis
- Enhances sleep
- Reduces anxiety and depression
- Helps people remain at home, be independent and self-reliant
- Helps control swelling and pain caused by arthritis

.....

attending were friendly and encouraging to newcomers. I have a disability and needed to modify some of the exercises, often doing them seated or with extra supports for balance. I also have some difficulty lasting for the full hour session, but it was never a problem making these modifications. The attitude is that everyone is doing their best given their individual challenges. There is no “competition” to keep up to others, everyone works at their own pace.

I found that the program addresses the whole body through strengthening and stretching, cardio and balance. After a few months I was in good shape for gardening season!

-Linda Pratt, Regina

It's Tax Season!

Be on the lookout for CRA Email Scams

Taxpayers should be vigilant when they receive a communication that claims to be from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requesting personal information such as a **social insurance number, credit card number, bank account number, or passport number**.

These scams may insist that this personal information is needed so that the taxpayer can receive a refund or a benefit payment. Cases of fraudulent communication could also involve threatening or coercive language to scare individuals into paying fictitious debt to the CRA. Other communications urge taxpayers to visit a fake CRA website where the taxpayer is then asked to verify their identity by entering personal information. These are scams and taxpayers should never respond to these fraudulent communications or click on any of the links provided.

To identify legitimate communications from the CRA, be aware of these guidelines:

The CRA may

- notify you by email when a new message or a document, such as a notice of assessment or reassessment, is available for you to view in secure CRA portals such as My Account, My Business Account, or Represent a Client
- email you a link to a CRA webpage, form, or publication that you ask for during a telephone call or a meeting with an agent (this is the only case where the CRA will send an email containing links)

The CRA will never

- give or ask for personal or financial information by email and ask you to click on a link
- email you a link asking you to fill in an online form with personal or financial details



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Seniors are a special class of clients, as Steve Sr had witnessed how various companies tried to rip off his father in his later years. He vowed that he would never do business that way, to any of his clients, especially Seniors. Their motto is to "do unto others, as you would have them do unto you."

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PS: They are also happy to do presentations to your group on insurance that matters to Seniors.

If there is **ONE** service that family caregivers need to enable them to keep their loved one at home, healthy and in good spirits, it is **affordable and culturally appropriate respite and home care.**



SSM research indicates that older adults' ability to adjust to changes related to aging is enhanced by being able to access the following services:

- Homecare to assist with medical and personal care
- Clear and accessible information about what services are available and where to find them
- Assistance with yard work and home maintenance
- Assistance with housework

This is one of the conclusions of years of working alongside and studying the needs of family caregivers, from both rural and urban parts of the province.

In Saskatchewan, and several other Canadian provinces, when a caregiver needs a break from their constant responsibilities, the only respite care option is to place the “cared for” person in an extended care facility. **Placing a loved one in a “respite bed” is counter-productive** as the “cared for” individual’s health and wellness routine is disrupted and they are cut-off from their support network. This is particularly disruptive for individuals with Alzheimer’s and other dementias.

A respite model developed in Québec and which we’d like to see implemented in Western Canada, is “**baluchonnage**”. This non-profit



based program works with the public health and homecare agencies to identify caregivers who are exhausted, then sends a professional “baluchonneuse” to live-in with the “cared for” individual for 4 to 14 days, continuously. The baluchonneuse works (sleeping when the patient is sleeping) and is paid 24 hours a day, effectively replacing the family caregiver (typically the spouse or a son or daughter). And, because the program is fully government funded, (family pays \$15 per day for the service) it is affordable to all. Key elements of this model include: paid (not volunteer), qualified staff (usually RN’s and other health workers), deployment of culturally appropriate staff, the keeping of a journal of successful strategies for dealing with the dementia patient – this journal is then shared with the Caregiver when they return to the home, and maintenance of the “cared for” individual’s daily life routines. For more information on this program, check out the Baluchon Alzheimer website at <https://baluchonalzheimer.com/>. This site is only in French so for more information, please contact the author to receive an English language PowerPoint presentation.

The FAF’s position is that if Québec can afford this type of supportive service for family caregivers of persons with dementias, and keep these people living at home longer, then why can’t we in Saskatchewan find the funds to offer such a program?

*Agathe Gaulin,
Project coordinator, Fédération des aînés fransaskois (FAF)
(306) 280-4504 agaulin@sasktel.net*

What are the benefits of home care?

1. **Home care offers cost savings.** Many times, an aging loved one is placed in a long-term care facility when they're no longer able to manage one aspect of their care at home, such as meal preparation or bathing, simply due to lack of options.

By providing only the services people need at home, home care can significantly reduce the cost of care and the burden for patients and taxpayers.

2. **Home care maintains dignity.** While long-term care facilities aim to provide the best experience possible, many aspects of care in those facilities are undesired, like sharing personal spaces (bedroom, bathroom) and having many different caregivers assist with toileting and bathing.

Patients who receive home care have the privilege of establishing trusting relationships with consistent caregivers and are able to receive care in the privacy of their home.

3. **Home care soothes the soul.** Aging can come with a variety of challenges and obstacles, including losing loved ones as they age and pass away, losing the privilege to drive, and losing independence

Home care allows people to hang on to the things that mean the most to them while still getting the assistance and care they need – the familiarity of home, the comfort of their own bed, and all of those memories left at the kitchen table throughout the years.

4. **Home care provides safety benefits.** Our aging population is at higher risk of falls due to reductions in vision, hearing, balance, and mobility. Unfamiliar surroundings can increase this risk; things like rugs or small steps may not be anticipated in advance.

By providing the assistance they need in an environment they know well, we can reduce the risk of surprises, falls, and debilitating and painful injuries.

5. **Home care promotes nurturing relationships.** Sadly, many elderly people find that their relationships with loved ones change when they move out of their home.

But patients who are able to receive care in their own home can welcome guests, invite family overnight, and have private conversations without interruption. They can receive phone calls and house calls whenever they choose with no limit on visiting hours.

6. **Home care allows loved ones a choice.** Home care serves a critical role in the healthcare system by allowing patients more opportunity to make decisions about their care. It's very difficult, in most cases, to move out of a facility once a person has moved in. So, choosing home care while it's a viable option is a way to keep options open as long as possible.

Posted February 7, 2018 by Georgetown Home Care

TRANSPORTATION

SSM research indicates that older adults are concerned about transportation to:

- Get to medical and other appointments
- Get groceries, prescriptions and other items
- Participate in community activities
- Visit family and friends

DEPENDABLE, AFFORDABLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS ARE ESSENTIAL.

Collaborative efforts across communities, organizations and all levels of government are needed to develop plans.

Rural

The current approach in Saskatchewan is too ad hoc, scattered, expensive and incomplete to meet the needs of rural residents. Too often people are forced to relocate, as they cannot find acceptable, affordable transportation options.

Cities and Towns

- Accessible, affordable options are not always available:
- Schedules may not meet people's needs
- Taxis, where available, can be expensive
- Families and friends cannot satisfy all transportation needs

People need additional transportation options in winter e.g. some don't drive in winter; bikes, scooters or wheelchair use is difficult; those who walk may not be able to do so.

Century Club Corner

My first memories of travel are the many five-mile one-way trips from our family farm to the village of Lemsford in a school van, or, as German neighbors called it, a schul vaggon. Sundays, it was often used to convey our family of three or four adults and four children and my aunt's family of five to Sunday School and church at 2 p.m. It was powered by a team of horses. A good walking team could do it in one hour even. It was twelve feet by three and one half feet wide. The driver, always a good horseman, sat in front with the reins entering through small holes drilled in a hinged door sixteen by twenty inches, the top of which was partially glassed and kept closed during inclement weather only. It was originally mounted on a heavy duty democrat – a heavy buggy chassis with wooden-spoked steel-rimmed wheels, and was transferred to an ordinary bobsled for winter use.

However, when automobiles became too expensive for most, a wagon tongue replaced the steering mechanism, and they were called Bennett buggies to dishonor the Right Honorable R.B. Bennett, our Conservative Prime Minister during the early depression years. Thus the then and current saying, "Conservative government – hard times; hard times – Conservative government!" As the pneumatic car

continued on page 19

TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

How are communities ensuring that their residents have access to transportation for health and well-being? Thank you to three of our rural communities who are working on Age-Friendly goals who share their challenges and successes.

For decades, residents of the community of KIPLING (pop. 1200), 155 kms southeast of Regina, have been very grateful for the services of a Handy Van financially supported by the Town and the Rural Municipalities of Kingsley and Hazelwood. The van is replaced every 10 years. The service is available to town (not rural) residents who require mobility assistance and seniors who need transport to in-town appointments including medical appointments and shopping. It is also used by the local care home to transport residents to local events. Users call the town office whose staff then calls one of the five volunteers to see if they are free to drive. The van is available 9-4 on Wednesdays and Fridays at \$3 return trip. Limitations include the low number of drivers and service only 2 days a week. The van does travel out of town, usually less than 50 kms, on a very limited basis for social outings.

Senior residents of STRASBOURG (pop 800), an hour north of Regina, enthusiastically utilize their Senior Citizens' Volunteer Taxi Service initiated and coordinated by a board member of the Last Mountain Pioneer Home. Another volunteer recruits volunteer drivers (currently approximately 24) who are asked to drive for two months/year. Recruitment is a challenge as potential drivers are reluctant to assume responsibility in case of accidents or falls. The Taxi Service and contact numbers are listed in the Strasbourg Community Calendar. Users are encouraged to provide a day's notice to use the service for medical and hair appointments, and shopping. Rates per return trip are: Winter - \$4; Summer - \$3; Out-of-town - \$.36/km; Regina - \$55. It is difficult to find drivers to go to Regina given the time commitment for medical appointments and other errands that the senior citizen may wish to do in the city.

Transportation is addressed in various ways in ROSETOWN (pop. 2300). The Saskatchewan Health Authority Volunteer Services assists people in attaining transportation in and outside of Rosetown for medical appointments. The majority of the users are Home Care clients. Drivers providing this service are local volunteers who have been registered, orientated and trained through Volunteer Services. The Rosetown Wheels for Wheels Inc. is a non-profit organization that owns and operates an accessible van for use by community members. They partner with the Saskatchewan Health Authority's Volunteer Services who ensures all drivers have been registered and trained on its operation. Residents also find their own drivers who are often family members or friends. When these support systems are not available on the days needed or the person does not have such a system, some make informal arrangements with people in the community who do this on their own. A few entrepreneurs have started taxi services. These have all folded due to operators moving or the costs surpassing the revenue. Age Friendly Rosetown incorporates transportation into the events they host and encourages others to do the same.

We see from these stories that the majority of these services focus on medical appointments. Enabling older adults to meaningfully participate within and outside their community requires dependable transportation. The lack of public transportation greatly impacts their independence and the choices that seniors can make in many aspects of their lives.

Consider your community right now. What might you, your Age Friendly Committee, or any of your community organizations do to ensure transportation and meaningful participation for all your residents?





CELEBRATING
45 YEARS
1975-2020

The Saskatchewan Retirees Association (formerly known as the Saskatchewan Government Superannuates Association (SGSA), incorporated in 1975, is celebrating 45 years of “strength together”! The SRA was formed by volunteers who had interest in ensuring public sector retirees had quality pensions and had an active voice with government in the event any changes were considered for the future.

Over the 45 years, the SRA has developed, added new members, advocated and succeeded in obtaining partial indexing for defined benefit pensioners. In 1998, a new health and dental plan was added for members to increase the services available to members.

SRA now has about 3500 active members, spanning retirees from their early 50s to some over 90 years of age. Record growth has occurred over the last three years with almost 1000 new members joining the association from the crown corporations, executive government, the new health authority and various boards, agencies and commissions.



To celebrate 2020, plans are being finalized for member meetings in April to congratulate members and thank them for their support over the years. Much of the focus will be focused on building awareness of the “positive aging” campaign of SSM as the SRA members responded in large numbers to the SSM survey about the need for a comprehensive plan for older adults in Saskatchewan. The meetings will be an opportunity to dialogue with members, discuss recent developments related to pensions and financial security, key themes in the positive aging campaign.

The SRA is committed to providing “leadership to meet the interests of public sector retirees” across Saskatchewan. We have adopted a three-year action plan with substantial effort to engage members, learn more about their needs and then act on them with our partnership with SSM and directly with other stakeholders as needed. The SRA is committed to being the voice of public sector retirees from all government organizations and all levels of employees.

Together with SSM, the SRA will continue to take a more active role, raise our collective profile and represent all members’ needs and interests into the future.

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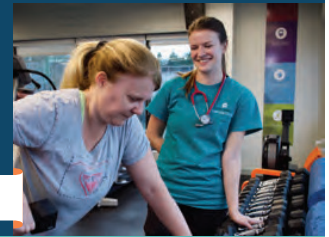
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DO YOU AGREE?

- John Knight

The old proverb cited, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." This applies to every side of life: to every decision, to our whole course of conduct and commitment, to our choice of a profession or pursuit of marriage, to standards, to actions, to every thought, to every habit, to every attitude and utterance. We need to learn to step wisely and with purpose. I go back a lot to my upbringing and the old days when respect and concern for others was a way of life. As we have advanced as a society, we seem to have lost a lot of this.

As a society, we tend to react rather than act. Our politicians no longer work together. They get angry and react. Our society is learning to do the same. They spend all their time finding fault. They do not consider supporting each other.

Let's not put all the blame on our politicians, let's look at society. We have forgotten to care. We were brought into the world to care about each other, to show love for our fellow human beings. It seems that our world has changed. It is unions against management; natives against white; men against women; rich against poor, young against old; and the list goes on. We need to step back, look at the situation and ensure that the first step on the journey is well thought out.

As we age, we get treated with disrespect. Government closes down bus transportation in this province with no thought given to the fact that some people cannot get to medical appointments, visit their children, etc. My opinion is that government's responsibility is to look after those who cannot

look after themselves because of age, disability or poverty. In this case the government's only concern was budgets, not people. One politician I talked to said, "It's not my responsibility to help people who can't look after themselves get to the hospital." The crown corporations have closed all the drop boxes to pay your utilities. This is another act where no one considered those who had no other way to pay because of age, disability or economics and now cannot find an alternative. I was at SaskTel the other day to pay my bill because it was the convenient way to do it. Four young people standing at the front door, all on cell phones and doing nothing, told me I couldn't do this anymore. I said, "Why not? There are four of you doing nothing. The payment desk is a few steps away and you could just look after this." I won't go into what transpired after this. Needless to say, I was not treated well by some of these young people.

I have cited a few examples about what has happened and how society is evolving to the point of a lack of caring. When I was young, I took a course put on by the company I worked for, about caring and how important it is to care about others. It was the best course I ever attended in my career, and I embraced it in all my dealings. I believe that we are heading in the wrong direction if we don't change our course and start to care about each other. If we don't look after those in society that need help; if we don't treat all people with respect despite our differences, we will end up with a society at war with each other.

That old proverb talks about taking the first step - make it a positive one!

Century Club Corner

Continued from page 14

tires wore out, an ingenious inventor of rubber products designed and made solid rubber tires out of worn-out car tires. They made everlasting carefree Bennett buggy rims and soon found universal acceptance.

Single transportation was most often supplied by one's trusty saddle horse. On my seventh birthday I was given Patches, a Shetland-Welsh pony cross. She and I became good friends as she lugged me all over on her back or in our two-wooden-wheeled family cart.

Living on the CPR Empress branch line, we fortunately could catch a passenger train for Swift Current at 8 a.m., returning around 8 p.m. after a 10:30 to 5:00 day in the city, shopping and/or meeting any other professional needs. From here, on the CPR main line we could connect with transcontinental trains to east or west coasts or intermediate points. Commercial air travel soon became available for both continental and intercontinental travel after the 39/45 war came to an end. Until then most trans-ocean travel was by steamship.

- John Trew

Excerpts from *A Century of Memories*



Honourable Warren Kaeding

Minister of Rural and Remote Health and
Minister Responsible for Seniors



I welcome the opportunity to address Grey Matters readers once again. As Minister Responsible for Seniors, it is my role to work to ensure the programs and services we deliver are meeting the needs of our seniors. Our government is using a collaborative approach to build on the strengths of existing policies and programs to enhance the quality of life of older adults and I continue to engage with seniors' advocacy groups from across the province.

In partnership with the SSM, the Government of Saskatchewan offers an Age-Friendly Communities Recognition Program to celebrate communities that undertake activities or create programming to become more inclusive of seniors. An Age-Friendly Community understands and meets the age-related needs of seniors and recognizes the importance of enriching the lives of older adults. Saskatoon was recently recognized as the fourth recipient of this award and I look forward to more communities working to achieve this designation.

In the health system, our government is focusing on a Connected Care strategy and earlier initiatives such as Home First/Quick Response and Seniors House Calls are now a part of this work. As part of the provincial Connected Care Strategy, the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) has opened Community Health Centres at Market Mall in Saskatoon and at the Gardens in Regina focused on providing care to senior residents. These initiatives enhance and improve services to help seniors avoid unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalizations while continuing to live in their homes and communities.

There have been recent investments in health, social services, housing, and financial supports which benefit Saskatchewan seniors. The Programs and Services of Interest to Seniors booklet has recently been updated to ensure it contains the most up to date information on the programs and services our government offers. For example, seniors do not require a license to fish and they are provided free provincial park passes. The updated booklet can be found online at Saskatchewan.ca/seniors.

As our province continues to grow, we will continue to work together to build strong communities and make Saskatchewan the best place to retire and live a full, healthy and productive life.

SSM WELCOMES NEW STAFF!



Sybil Nugent has joined us as half-time Administrative Assistant. She brings many years of paralegal and administrative experience. Sybil also brings her life experience and her eagerness to support the wellbeing of older adults in Saskatchewan. We welcome her to our staff!



Catherine Barnsley has joined us as quarter-time Age-Friendly Communities Staff. She brings a career-long interest in adult education, community development, and advocacy for seniors. Catherine has worked in post-secondary education, government, and community organizations. She has a particular passion for quality of life in rural Saskatchewan. We welcome her to our staff!



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CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



11th Annual Saskatchewan Senior Volunteer Awards

presented by Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism



Nominees must:

- be 55+
- reside in SK
- be a volunteer
- actively contribute to their community

Award Categories

- Advocacy
- Centenarian
- Community Leadership (rural)
- Community Leadership (urban)
- Education
- Contribution to a First Nations or Métis Community
- Arts & Entertainment
- Intergenerational
- Fitness
- Heritage & Culture
- Lifetime Achievement
- Teamwork

Special Category:
Senior Friendly Business

Celebrating Seniors is an annual awards banquet honouring **senior volunteers** from across Saskatchewan. Any group or individual may send in a nomination. The 2020 Awards Banquet will be Sept 27 at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina.

Deadline for Nominations:
Noon June 5, 2020

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Nomination Package contact SSM
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Walk This Way

A look at pedestrian safety and how all road users can make a difference

Walking in Saskatchewan can be a dangerous undertaking. In 2018, 15 pedestrians were killed on roads in the province. While the risk of pedestrian injury is far greater in urban areas, where 202 pedestrians were hurt, there are more fatalities on provincial highways, which accounted for nine deaths.

Combined, nearly 38 percent of incidents took place at intersections when pedestrians had the right of way. Though drivers aren't always to blame: A smaller number of occurrences were the result of pedestrians darting into roads, jaywalking or jumping on or off a vehicle. Still others were attributable to people skateboarding, working on a vehicle or using a wheelchair on a road.

**Source: CAA Saskatchewan Magazine, Spring 2020*



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Be an alert driver/walker:

Focus on the task at hand and avoid common distractions, including smartphones.

How to keep kids safe:

"CAA is a dedicated safety advocate for drivers and pedestrians of all ages, especially kids," says Christine Niemczyk, director of communications with CAA Saskatchewan.

Show them how to stop, think, look both ways, listen and stay alert while crossing the street. Children (and adults alike) should never walk or run out in traffic or between parked cars, buses, or buildings.

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STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE AGING

Healthy positive aging is about balance in mind, body and spirit. I have believed this for a long time but I've also found it sometimes difficult to achieve. As we age we seem to be less active and the cold winter months tend to keep us indoors.

I recently came across a posting from a business friend that had started a virtual walking group. The members of this group got together and decided that they were going to set a goal of walking across Canada, virtually, of course. So armed with their pedometers they would track the distance they had walked. Then once a week they would get together and see how far across Canada they had gone.

To make it interesting the person who had walked the least, would research the town nearest to where they had walked and give short report the following week on this town.

What if the whole town got involved!! Wouldn't it be great if everyone in a community was involved in virtual walking tours around the world. Pick a country.

Who knows where it might lead!!

A New Perspective – 2020 Vision

Travellers on the highways of the province notice the beauty of a revealing landscape. Our province illustrates many beautiful scenes during each season. The wide range of colors – spring, summer, fall, and even winter are inspiring. The landscape has many gorgeous views and the climate has many interesting presentations. Similarly, the journey of life has many stages and beautiful experiences.

As life goes on and we travel the highway of life, not too many of us really take time to think about the one factor that is most common...the fact that we are all aging. Aging is not a process unique to older people...it is an experience that all sectors of society are experiencing. The question that comes up more so for seniors, is "How can we continue to enjoy this experience in a positive, wholesome sense as we become less able and agile?"

There are many activities that we can do to maintain fitness. All these activities keep us physically, mentally and psychologically fit. As a result, the aging process is more wholesome and enjoyable until we get blessed with some health concerns.

At some stage, the community and society become important factors in our ability to maintain a Positive Aging attitude. The community assists us in many ways. Volunteerism enables mentorship, reduces isolation, and builds positive attitudes about all aspects of life.

Society addresses these important issues on a much broader scale. The government, through regulations, policies, and legislation attempts to establish programs that are supposed to enable us to maintain a good quality of life for positive aging. When we have health concerns, access to medical care, medication, homecare, surgery, etc. become high priority. Other factors magnify or reduce the degree to which these issues are resolved or magnified. Lack of financial resources, transportation, housing, specialists...all have a strong bearing on how we age in a positive sense.

Ironically, programs or policies that centralize services are more detrimental than supportive. The communication problems, additional costs, lack of access, and overall isolation impose a serious cost on the quality of life that people could enjoy.

Too many programs are developed by individuals

in large centres who do not really understand the issues/perspectives of the individuals who are really struggling with the aging process. Too often the government fails to engage the sector of society directly affected. For example, the lack of transportation in Saskatchewan and the resultant problems have not been addressed by engagement. The resultant study of transportation problems in rural Saskatchewan failed to engage rural seniors. As a result, the report is incomplete and possibly inaccurate.

Many well-intentioned programs, including, LEAN and the following formation of a single health authority also failed to engage the seniors of the province. The ensuing lack of access to medical services, longer surgery waiting lists, communication problems...are all symptoms of programs developed without the proper engagement of the

seniors for whom the program was intended. The results impair the efforts for a positive aging process for residents.

There are some good developments as well in this area. The government's appointment of a Minister for Seniors signals some opportunities to improve the process. A new perspective is required to make all programs more effective and efficient. Recent meetings of rural seniors with the Minister and also the Community Care Branch are good beginnings.

If this all signals an interest in a new approach, it is very welcome. Additionally, SSM and the seniors organizations of the province are developing a Seniors' Strategy. Once again, this will work well if it engages all seniors – urban as well as rural.

Mike Kaminski, SSAI 1st Vice

Transportation and Seniors

A lack of transportation alternatives is deterring some senior citizens from hanging up their car keys, even if it is no longer safe for them to drive. Seniors are dependent on their cars for longer than they should be because many of them have few options if they wish to maintain their independence and mobility. Either seniors will decrease their travel when they don't have alternatives, which leads to poor health and quality of life, or some will continue to drive even as their physical and mental capacity decline. This creates risk for themselves and the people in the community.

Giving up driving can be traumatic for seniors so again we need to address other methods of travel

- especially in the smaller rural community. Having access to transportation is critical to staying connected to family and friends and in pursuing day-to-day activities, both of which are essential and enhance the quality of life. Over half of individuals who do not drive stay home. Even when they leave their homes, their time out tends to be limited. Compared to similarly-aged people who drive, 15 percent of those who don't drive make fewer trips to the doctor, 59 percent make fewer trips to shop or eat out, and 65 percent make fewer trips to visit family and friends. Volunteer driver programs, buddy system and other solutions tailored to your community needs are important approaches.

*Harold Pappenfus
President of St. Brieux Senior Citizens
306-275-4505*



Blaine Lake Seniors' enjoyed their annual Christmas Dinner with seventy two guests on December 1, 2019. The evening consisted of carol singing, games, door prizes and background music provided by Jim & Beryl Peake. Thomas Lozowchuck, Fire Chief for the Blaine Lake Fire Department, proudly received a cheque for \$500.00 on behalf of the Blaine Lake Seniors' for their much deserved efforts and involvement of volunteer labour especially in the community services. Presented by Nici Warnock.

WALKATHON REPORT

Greetings Everyone,

By now all of our seniors' clubs should have received the information for our annual walkathon. The Walkathon is meant to get us out of the winter doldrums and into spring's fresh air. Remember cycling, swimming, bowling and using a treadmill are all acceptable forms of exercise. If there is some other form of moving you do and you aren't sure if it is acceptable, please feel free to contact me. I will be able to give you the information you need.

The dates for the 2020 Walkathon are April 1st to May 15th. Keep track of all of your activities and at the end of the six weeks remit your results to the event coordinator. This information will be tabulated to see the winning results. Club totals must be in no later than May 25th. Remember all of the winning results will be available at the convention in June where certificates will be presented to the winners.

We will see you at the convention and until then happy walking!!

Walkathon Update

Hi Folks,

It was brought to my attention that while I updated the personal information sheet to kilometres for the walkathon, I was remiss in changing the other documents. My apologies. As you have already received the walkathon packages a simple fix is to just cross off the word "miles" on the Club record sheet and change to kilometres. That will ensure that I get the correct information.

Thanks for your attention to this. If you have questions, you can get in touch with me at j.boyer@sasktel.net or on my cell phone 306-980-8151.

Joan Boyer

Walkathon Co-ordinator

Positive Aging? Isolation? Age Friendly? Words that are used to describe programs, theories, wishes. How do we as a society address reality? The following is a true story of the realisms faced by a senior.

Positive Aging? My Story

I was ninety years old last October and I am still on my own. I have absolutely no family or relatives to help or advise me. I am just an old orphan! Health wise I am not doing very well. I have a weak and poor heart and a lot of allergies. As a result I cannot take many of my prescriptions. Sensitivity is also bad.

I was in a rental place, but they wanted to do renovations, so I had to move. A condo came up for sale in this community. It seemed to be just what I needed. It was on the ground floor, had two bedrooms, was clean and fresh. After reading up on their background, I thought that I could make it

my last home. The ad stated in bold letters – **No Dogs Allowed!** This was good news as I had allergies and sensitivities.

I bought this condo, made a few renovations and made it my home. One morning I was told that the board of directors was having a meeting, and that I should go to it. So I did only to hear that another owner with a dog was moving in to one of the units. The board changed the rules... almost overnight.

Here I am – my dream home is crashed down. I can't live in a building with a dog that close to me as I am still trying to recover from

previous health issues. I chose not to be close to animals when the rules clearly stated **"No Dogs!"**

I moved to a care home for the winter, but now having two residences to pay for is a bit much. I put the condo up for sale at a much lower price, but I cannot sell it. I do feel better in the care home and dread having to go back to the condo. It is a very nice place, but I feel my health should come first. I have no one to advise me so my life is not happy!

The place where I am now is not really a care home, but a facility where there is room and board – Caleb Housing. There are a lot of people and activities...no time to be lonely. But, there still is my condo! The condo fees, taxes, insurance, power, etc. which I cannot change. I am losing a lot of money, but cannot change anything.

With my poor heart and shortness of breath, I cannot do much work. I do have friends helping me, but they live in another community and cannot be here most of the time. Is this the life of a senior when your health is giving up?

*Mrs. 90 Year Old Senior
Rural, Saskatchewan
Positive Aging Avenue - True Story*

At the December meeting of the Do Drop Inn at Meota, a Lifetime Membership in SSAI was presented to Lorna Pearson by President Eric Callbeck and SSAI Regional Director Linda Ard along with a bouquet of flowers. Lorna was an active member of the Chitek Lake Sunshine Group for 30 years before her move to Meota 5 years ago. She still is an active member of the club and community. This award is granted to members of SSAI who are over 90 years of age.



SSAI Annual Convention June 3rd and 4th, 2020

Theme: Sask Seniors 2020 Vision

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· Walkathon update · Nominations · Networking
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