

GRAY MATTERS

Published by SSM
Spring 2026



TRANSFORMING
THE FUTURE

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

“Why doesn't somebody do something?” I have heard several friends and even public commentators uttering this phrase over the last year. I might have said it myself on occasion when I heard about some cruel or boneheaded decision made by political leaders or decision-makers. Bad news and bad behaviour abounds and we are bombarded with it throughout the day. Then last week, when a group of us (on a zoom call actually) were lamenting the seeming inaction of people who could put a stop to the “madness” as we called it, one of my wise colleagues at SSM said in response to our general complaining, “but why aren't WE the somebodies who will do something?” Her comment stopped us short. When did I abandon my energy and attempts to be a change agent for making things better and start to feel comfortable sitting back and expecting others to do the heavy lifting of creating change?

I've thought a lot about this question and have lots of excuses as to why now 'at my age or stage in life' I have started to think I can't change the world. I feel helpless as I am not in a leadership position to be able to introduce new policy, enact new laws, convince the courts and official bodies to protect human rights and support vulnerable people. My voice is less powerful or lost in the din because I don't hold power and influence the way I thought I did at one time – even if I might have been assuming I had the right to speak up loudly and make demands for better laws and systems and address cries for kindness and caring. At what age or stage did I quietly turn over the reins to another generation? The change in me has been gradual and subtle.

However... I am now aware that if I **don't** try to do something: make my opinion heard, vote, start a petition, call up my political reps, attend a lecture to learn more detail and inform myself, or even try to inspire others to join our voices together or learn from my past experiences, I will continue to stay stuck in sadness and despair.

What has made me grow to believe that the role of crusading for a better world belongs to people younger or smarter than me? I realized I was trapped in some of the pitfalls of ageism. Another revelation came to me: I am very disappointed and feel almost betrayed as many of the things I thought/assumed about world order – kindness, community concern, belief that at the base of it all we had a system and way of being that

meant that the right thing would always be done in the end, does not seem sure any more.

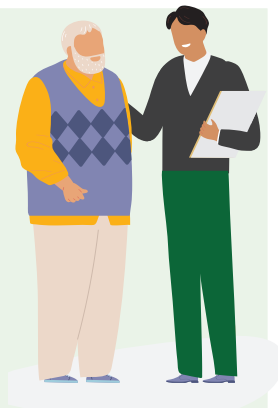
To be honest, I was likely never going to make big world-shattering changes on my own no matter how much of a crusader I was. I may also have been seeing the world through rose-coloured glasses and now with the benefit of invaluable life experience I am more of a realist about the conflicting opposites within the nature of global values and systems and beliefs. But...

Aha! There is no expiry date on using my voice, thinking through what might be the options for change and making myself and others aware of the need to pool our resources and voices, ideas and actions. In this edition of Gray Matters we put out a challenge to older adults: What can you do, no matter how small or very 'local' and seemingly insignificant in the big picture, to demonstrate that the status quo isn't working for us and that the world with its injustices can be changed – even if it is one older adult at a time or a group of older adults together? I know I might not dig out the tattered protest signs in my garage and attend a raucous rally (or maybe I will), but I might just send a message to my MLA/MP, organize a petition or massive letter-writing campaign (via social media of course!) and join with others to learn how we can become part of a multi-generational group of people who say “We are somebodies and we're ready to lead and participate in the change that will make things better for all of us.”

Shan Landry



Check out our new video
about Social Prescribing
in Saskatchewan:
www.skseniorsmechanism.ca



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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:

Canada Post Heritage Club - Golden Sheaf Chapter
C.A.R.P. Saskatchewan
Moose Jaw & District Seniors Association
National Association of Federal Retirees
Power Pioneers Association of Saskatchewan Inc.
Regina 55+ Community Centre
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
Seniors' University Group
Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan
Vitalité 55+ Saskatchewan
Women of the Dawn

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Prince Albert Seniors Advocacy Centre
Saskatchewan Association of Nurse Practitioners
Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan

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contents

- 2 **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**
- 4 **AGE-FRIENDLY:** Are We There Yet?
- 6 **DEPRESCRIBING:** Medications Affect Memory
- 7 **SOCIAL PRESCRIBING:** My Future, Your Future, Our Future
- 8 **MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:** STS
- 9 **MESSAGE FROM MINISTER OF SENIORS:** Lori Carr
- 10 **ASK AUNTIE AGEISM**
- 11 **GUEST COLUMN:**
How To Spend Health Dollars Wisely
- 12 **SSM ANNUAL CONFERENCE**
- 14 **THEME: TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE**
Introduction
FIG – Building Connections
Grandmothers to Grandmothers
- 18 **FRAUD AWARENESS:** Benefit Security
- 20 **BLOOMING PERENNIAL:** Carol Schultz
- 22 **CELEBRATING SENIORS:** How to Nominate for 2026
- 24 **BLUE CROSS:** Healthy Aging
- 27 **CENTURY CLUB CORNER**
- 28 **SSAI NEWSLETTER**

All editorial matter published in Gray Matters represents the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of SSM. Statements and opinions expressed do not represent the official policy of SSM unless so stated.

Look for Gray Matters to be available quarterly:
January, April, July, October.

Articles for consideration for publication are welcomed. Deadline for submissions is the first day of the month preceding publication.

Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by Gray Matters or SSM. Information regarding rates and policy available on request. Gray Matters can be contacted at the SSM Office:

#112 - 2001 Cornwall St., Regina, Sask., S4P 3X9.
Phone (306) 359-9956; Email: ssm@skseniorsmechanism.ca

<https://skseniorsmechanism.ca/>



Printed by:
Administration Centre Printing Services
111-2001 Cornwall Street, Regina, SK S4P 3X9





ARE WE THERE.... YET?

Ah, yes, the oft-repeated refrain from the tiniest of backseat drivers on family road trips: Are We There Yet? In the passenger seat sits a frustrated parent, creating ad hoc origami creatures from an unscrupulously unfolded travel map. This navigator tries to maintain composure as the driver takes a wrong turn despite the copilot's best efforts to keep this ship on course.

That description brings to mind an image that pre-dates Google Maps and GPS, both of which automatically know where we are and can easily map out turn-by-turn directions for where we want to go. The pleasant, English-accented voice coming from our GPS system is the icing on the cake.

The task of guiding a committee, group, or organization from one place to the next can be just as frustrating as those car trips of yore. Clear directions are crucial to our ability to transform our work into a future, desired state.

Whether it's a road trip or committee work, it remains true that if you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else.

As part of the Age-Friendly framework, Age-Friendly Committees are tasked with creating Action Plans

to guide their work. These plans will be based on information discovered through assessing the needs and strengths of the community through the lens of older adults, but with engagement from the entire community.

Action plans will:

- Clarify goals and maintain focus.
- Prevent wasted effort through collaboration.
- Build accountability.
- Help measure progress.

Creating an Action Plan:

- 1) Schedule a meeting that focuses only on creating the annual Action Plan.
- 2) Review previous plans and/or the community needs assessment to identify key areas or Age-Friendly Domains to focus on. (For more information on Age-Friendly Domains visit www.agefriendlysk.ca) It is wise to limit the number of items in your Action Plan to ensure success and completion.
- 3) Determine the WHAT, WHY, WHO, HOW, WHEN, AND WHERE and document this in a format that can be shared and easily followed.

THE WHAT:

Identify the Age-Friendly Domain being addressed and the specific actions that address the need.



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings



Transportation



Housing



Communication & Information



Community Support & Health Services



Civic Participation & Employment



Social Participation



Respect & Social Inclusion

THE WHO:

Identify who will lead and/or support each action. This may include committee members, community partners and stakeholders.



THE WHY:

Determine the change we will see because of our actions. Ask yourself, what does success look like?



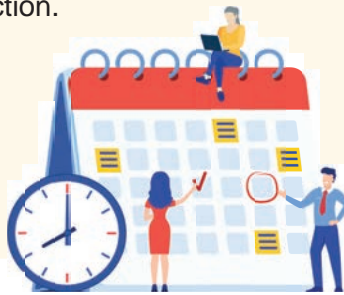
THE HOW:

List the specific tasks and resources required to complete the action.



THE WHEN:

Create timelines and deadlines for specific tasks and the overall action.



THE WHERE:

Share the Age-Friendly Action Plan publicly. The community, stakeholders, partners, and the municipality need to be aware of the plan. Keep the community engaged in your work!

Review the plan regularly to determine progress and to evaluate if you are still on track. Action plans, like map routes, can be altered as we encounter bumpy roads, potholes, dead ends and roadblocks. Ask the all-important question: Are We There Yet?? While Action Plans have clearly stated ETAs (Estimated Time of Arrival), becoming Age-Friendly is a journey, not a destination. Enjoy the ride!



Submitted by:
Wendy Thienes, Age-Friendly Saskatchewan Staff
Linda Pratt, Age-Friendly Saskatchewan Committee Chair

Did You Know? Your Medications Can Affect Your Memory



Certain commonly used medications can affect brain functions like **attention, speech** and **memory**. Their effects may be short term or persist over time.

Are you taking medications that can affect your memory ?



Here are some examples:

- Sleeping pills (ex: lorazepam, zopiclone)
- Muscle relaxants
- Opioids (ex: codeine, morphine)
- Medications for nerve pain (ex: pregabalin, gabapentin)
- Medications for urinary incontinence (ex: oxybutynin)

When multiple medications are taken, their effect can accumulate.



Taking action today can help protect your memory.

Learn more and discover our tools:
DeprescribingNetwork.ca/memory



Canadian Medication
Appropriateness and
Deprescribing Network



My Future, Your Future, Our Future

The view of my future today is very different from what I thought it was going to be when I thought about it 45 years ago. At that time, we may have had parents, partners and children with whom we made plans for the future, but those plans may have changed for all sorts of reasons.

When what we planned to do in the future is no longer the case, and family members and friends are no longer available to spend time with us to discuss our plans, we have to consider revisiting first of all what our plans are for each of us as individuals. Change has happened in a number of areas from our health to our finances, and sometimes those two areas are the ones we think of least of all or at the last moment. We have information available to us to make decisions about our health based on what has gone before with other family members, friends and colleagues and we can learn from that. However, sometimes we forget that the information is out there. By looking outside your current environment and into the community, you may find community connectors who have the skills to be able to assist you in making choices and decisions about your future, and what you want to do.

Some individuals have made plans that don't have the future in them, or they were told many years ago that life expectancy is only up to a certain age. We can no longer continue to do what we did 20 or 30 years ago and expect it to work for us today. We first

of all need to look at what we would like to do for now and into the future, setting goals and then deciding what it is going to take to bring our plans to fruition. A person may set the goal to climb Everest and never get all the way to the top, but they got part way up and had a better view of the world that others have never seen.

Once a person has decided what they would like to do, then that plan needs to be put into action. This is the time to talk with other knowledgeable folks who truly understand how to help you to achieve those goals. As communities, whether large or small, we have an opportunity to make the change collectively. Working together in collaboration to find out what is best for us all, and also as an individual in the community, will only be a benefit for everyone. Making decisions in isolation will only lead to no change. You might consider social prescribing; seek a referral through a community connector to someone or some service in your community to ensure your well-being is front and centre, and see and be part of the change.

– Rod McKendrick,
Social Prescribing Co-ordinator



Social Prescribing
in Saskatchewan

Living Well in Your Community

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan (STS)



Since its inception in 1973, the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan (STS) has focused on promoting the interests and welfare of all superannuated teachers. The original commitment had two main aims: to address the (then) existing inequity of teachers' pensions, and to improve the lot of pensioners, past, present, and in the future. Over the years, the role of the organization has expanded from specifically championing a teacher's right to retire with dignity to considering the needs of older adults in Saskatchewan more broadly.

Now the formal aims of the STS include the statement: ***"To advocate, within the scope of influence of the STS, for the collective interests of superannuated teachers, retired teachers, members and older adults."***

The STS carries out these aims in these ways:

We have 39 chapters scattered around Saskatchewan, and one in BC. They are generally loosely geographic similar to how school divisions existed "back in the day" (i.e. the 80s) but members are free to choose which chapter they wish to join. They range in size from 28 members to just under 3000. Chapters have representation at our AGM, which is where policy decisions are made and at which advocacy issues are raised for discussion.

Any member or chapter can bring a resolution forward to our AGM – these may focus specifically on our organization itself or our relationship with other organizations, but they do expand to include issues that affect older adults in general. With over 12,000 members, we do have a "voice" and ways

to pursue representation at a provincial or even federal level. We send resolutions to ACER-CART (national organization representing retired teacher organizations across Canada) regarding items like a national pharmacare program or dental program. Resolution can also go to SSM (our provincial organization representing senior organizations within Saskatchewan) for items like the need for a Seniors' Advocate so that seniors' issues can be addressed outside the framework of whichever political party has formed government. In addition, we as STS executive sometimes have the opportunity to meet with provincial MLAs to raise concerns.

Less formally, we encourage chapters to open up planned presentations to their entire community where appropriate. We currently provide some funding from the provincial level to support initiatives like fraud and scam prevention, considering wills and estates, supporting reconciliation in their communities, or making connections between generations. Some chapters are addressing the very real health concern of social isolation by structuring weekly calls "just to talk" with members in the community. Many individual members are involved in the establishment of Age-Friendly communities across the province that are structured to meet the needs identified by the individual community.

These are uncertain times and it can be difficult to do any real long-range planning. Seniors are a potentially vulnerable group especially if no one is speaking on their behalf as policies and practice change. It is critical that we work together to address this. As an executive, as member chapters and as individual members, superannuated teachers want to be involved in addressing the inevitable challenges. Our demographic has lived through challenging times already, including wars, recessions, and major societal change. As the STS, working in collaboration with our partner organizations, we have a vision of where we need to go and a willingness to bring our skills and experience to the effort that will be needed to successfully navigate the road ahead.

– Sue Amundrud, President, STS



The Honourable Lori Carr

*Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health*



The effects of mental health challenges are far-reaching, going beyond the individual, involving family, friends, and the community. Everyone reading this column likely knows someone who has been affected in some way.

The Government of Saskatchewan is working hard to ensure residents of all ages, including older adults, have access to high-quality mental health care.

In 2025-26, we invested a record \$624 million into mental health and addictions services across the province. This included \$487 million directed to mental health. Through our Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions, we're taking steps so that people who are struggling with mental health issues can get the help they need.

Funding supports investments such as:

- additional resources for HealthLine 811, a service that includes 24/7 crisis support;
- free mental health Rapid Access Counselling through Family Service Saskatchewan is available in over 30 communities; and
- collaboration with the Ministry of Social Services to provide wrap-around mental health supports for residents of new supportive housing units.

In addition, we are providing \$480,000 in grants for suicide prevention initiatives in 2025-26, as part of Pillars for Life, our suicide prevention plan.

Delivering high-quality mental health services is important. Equally important is working hard to reduce the stigma that often surrounds mental health issues.

In recent years, our government has run mental health public awareness campaigns, asking people to “Break the Stigma” and to “Talk About It,” while directing them to help and resources.

We are currently running a suicide prevention campaign featuring two Saskatchewan Roughriders, Micah Johnson and Dan Clark. The campaign theme – “There’s strength in asking for help” – focuses on changing the underlying attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that contribute to stigma, while directing folks to help and resources.

We know changing people’s attitudes can take a while. Creating public awareness and strengthening programs and services for people with mental illness and their families is a step in the right direction.

As Minister of Seniors, I am dedicated to addressing your needs, concerns and suggestions. Please feel free to email my office at ministerrhe@gov.sk.ca, phone 306-798-9014 or send me a letter at: Room 208, Legislative Building, 2405 Legislative Dr, Regina, SK S4S 0B3



Ask Auntie Ageism



Dear Auntie,

I am a 69 year old woman who lives in a small Saskatchewan city.

I enjoy reading Gray Matters, including the Auntie Ageism column. However, I wonder whether we are spending too much energy on 'reducing ageism' when there are much bigger problems that affect older people. Health care is obviously the largest of these.

I know that when a clerk calls me "dearie" or friends tell stupid jokes or don't want to be called 'senior' those are signs of ageism. But does it really matter? I can ignore all of that quite easily. I am not going into depression just because someone thinks old IS depressing.

I really want to hear your opinion on this question.

Cynthia – getting on with life

Dear Cynthia,

You seem to be quite aware of ageism as you experience it as an individual. I am glad that you aren't letting some of these ageist interactions affect your mental and emotional well-being. I would ask you this, "Do you think all older people are as aware and unaffected by this form of ageism as you are?" Unfortunately, the attitudes and stereotypes you describe are the same attitudes that form the deeper and very consequential effects of ageism in organizations, institutions, workplaces and people-serving systems.

For example, in health systems ageism often goes unrecognized resulting in prejudicial, stereotyping, and discriminatory behavior against older adults. This often leads to undertreatment, misdiagnosis, and reduced quality of care. Prevalent issues include dismissing symptoms as "normal aging", limiting

access to procedures and new treatments.

Communication between health care professional and patient may be compromised.

Would you want the doctor to talk to your relative or friend who accompanied you rather than directly to you? Would your health care professional accept your description of what you are experiencing? Ageism significantly impacts patient health, increasing stress and causing reduced life expectancy.

Ageism can run rampant in a workplace. It can affect hiring practices, opportunities for advancement and social acceptance. Maybe a person is passed up for a promotion multiple times while watching less experienced and less qualified people rise through the ranks. Or maybe they are denied a job because a recruiter labels them "overqualified." Jokes can be a form of harassment in a workplace; even worse if accompanied by questions about retirement.

Ageism is often considered more acceptable by society than racism and sexism, but like those issues, it can't be solved overnight. However, that doesn't mean you should ignore it or accept unfair treatment for yourself or another person.

There are many steps you can take to address the problem and challenge ageism. By doing so, you not only improve your own well-being, but you also help create a more open-minded culture in which stereotypes hold less sway and discrimination is less prevalent. That, in a nutshell, is why we work to reduce ageism. I have used some advice from this website that offers clear, accurate information: <https://www.helpguide.org/aging/healthy-aging/ageism-and-age-discrimination>

— Auntie Ageism

Auntie Ageism highlights how anti-ageism critiques and challenges the ageist attitudes that are prevalent but often unrecognized in our society. Let's ALL do our part to challenge ageism.



For How To Spend Health Dollars Wisely, Look (Way) South

Living in a rich country is usually a blessing. (Not always – Kuwait and the US come to mind.) But with wealth comes the risk of throwing money at problems rather than solving them with imagination and discipline. Nowhere is that risk greater than in healthcare. Canada spends lavishly on an underperforming system, and a lot of that on us seniors. The public system spends minimally to support at-risk seniors and generously on the dying.

What seniors want isn't glamorous. Better primary care. Social supports for those who need them. More activation and less medicalization. Aging in place and less reliance on nursing homes. Expecting reasonable help from partners and family members but not working them to death.

Denmark we aren't. We're stuck in old patterns. We're told the problem isn't policy, but scarcity: not enough money, doctors, nurses, scanners, nursing home beds. But what if our problem is abundance?

Costa Rica (CR) stands out as a peaceful, stable democracy in Central America. It is a lower-middle-income country, with a GDP per capita about a third the size of Canada's. Thirty years ago, huge swaths of the population lacked access to basic care. The government decided to fix it.

Its goals were ambitious: provide high quality primary care to the entire population. Leaders made a plan and stuck to it. They trained physicians how to work in teams, and identified where new spending would have the biggest impact. The system integrates primary, secondary and tertiary care. A first-rate health information system drives needs assessment, evaluation and innovation.

Primary care teams are the system's backbone, consisting of a doctor, a nurse, a community outreach worker/epidemiologist/risk assessor, and a data manager/analyst. Each team looks after about 5,000 people. The whole system's viability relies on how successful the teams are at primary and secondary prevention; CR cannot afford a top-heavy curative and institutional system. It manages with about a quarter of Canada's per capita hospital beds.

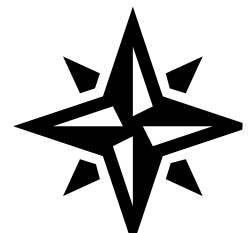
The system expanded quickly and now covers 93% of the population. CR is right on the OECD average in life expectancy (ahead of the US) and preventable mortality, and better than average in treatable mortality. It has low rates of smoking and alcohol consumption.

The system costs about 25% of what ours does. CR has one family doctor for 5,000 people, while Canada has one per 800, and still 25% of adults don't have a regular source of primary care. Yet we attribute the access problem to a doctor shortage.

It's not perfection. CR has far fewer imaging machines than richer countries. It has a lower rate of cancer but higher rate of preventable mortality. As the country gets richer, it will spend more on health care. I suspect it will spend smartly.

Imagine what it could do with our resources, and how it would invest in making life better for seniors. I'm guessing it would prioritize what Canadian seniors want. In this case, necessity may well be the mother of invention.

– Steven Lewis,
Adjunct Professor of Health Policy
at Simon Fraser University





Annual Conference
 Three unique morning sessions
April 21, April 29, May 12
 via Zoom



TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE: *Older Adults Seize the Day*

The conference will recognize the reality of life for older people today, including the analysis of the effectiveness of how societal systems support older people. Participants will explore how they can take action to effect change for the future and feel comfortable doing advocacy for themselves and others.

Sessions will emphasize the value of older people in our society – capable; bring experience, wisdom, and skills that differ from other age groups; large contingent of people, many of whom have time and financial resources and are looking for purpose in this stage of their lives.

All sessions offer inspiring speakers, different visions for change, activities and tools to support individual and group advocacy, and local examples. Most importantly, all sessions will offer participants a chance to devise ways that help older adults have voice and power for change.



Ashton Applewhite



Steven Lewis



Sally Mahood



April 21 – Beyond Ageism – Rockin’ into the New World

Featuring Ashton Applewhite, an internationally recognized expert on ageism, author of *This Chair Rocks: a Manifesto Against Ageism*. Ashton is funny, lively and challenging as she uncovers the hidden ageism in our society.

April 29 – Health Care – Rockin’ the Boat

Featuring a moderated conversation between Steven Lewis and Dr. Sally Mahood about how to transform health care in order to provide the right care for all, at the right time, in the right place.

Steven Lewis is a health policy and health services research consultant, and Adjunct Professor of Health Policy at Simon Fraser University.

Dr. Sally Mahood, retired family physician, continues to advocate for socially responsible health care and regularly sparks important discussions about issues facing our community and society as a whole, not just in the medical field but also in the world at large.

May 12 – Life Satisfaction as We Age – Older Adults Rock On

Explore what supports older adults to live as healthily and happily as possible on the aging journey.

Featuring information from Blue Cross about how, through education and support, they work towards their goal of growing preventative care and health knowledge throughout our communities.

Discover how Social Prescribing and Age-Friendly Communities are changing attitudes and acknowledging the contributions of all ages to the vitality and strength of their communities.

Register today!

Pre-registration is required. \$20 for all three sessions.
Visit the SSM website for registration information:
<https://skseniorsmechanism.ca/conference-2026/>



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CATHAY WAGANTALL
MP | YORKTON—MELVILLE

TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE



CONVERSATIONS

Pollsters are often fond of asking the question “Do you think the country (province, community) is going in the right direction?” “Right direction” means a good life for whomever is being asked the question.

Leaving aside political loyalties and concentrating on what we want for ourselves and our loved ones in the near and far future, we would most likely say that we are not confident that the future we want is present now or within reach. If we want freedom to live and age well, to have real choices to make without financial or social blocks, to expect that our children and grandchildren will be able to live in an even better world, then our society will have to show wisdom and courage to make that a reality. Each of us is part of society and therefore can/must take part in transforming our world for the better – whether in small or large ways.

Older people are beginning to realize that we are a strong segment of the population which has experience, wisdom, creativity, skills and the resources and tools that are needed to push for needed change. If we focus on change needed to provide the support needed for older adults as they age, we will discover:

Older people will continue to contribute within their families and communities – and probably will have even more ability to help their communities be strong and vibrant.



NETWORKING

Everything that is done to help support older people will also support people of all ages!

But I am just one person – and an older person besides! How can I make change happen?

Most importantly – DON'T THINK YOU CAN DO IT ALONE! Collaboration and coordination are essential. In every community there are organizations that are working for what all people want: dignity, choice, safety and belonging. Edge up to one of these and see if you can help. If that doesn't work, try another.

An example of collaboration designed to open hearts and minds so that transformation can happen:



INSPIRATION

On March 5, the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council (HQC) held a gathering of people from many different organizations, governments, SHA, academia as well as individuals and media – all part of their Thrive at Home initiative. HQC has supported, challenged and pushed us to find ways to step out of silos and to collaborate. All of us were eager to advance our connections and to collaborate.



CONNECTING



STORY-TELLING

Keynote speaker, André Picard, formerly health columnist for the Globe & Mail, now freelance writer and speaker, set the stage as he described how health care in Canada has to change. In 1957, when Medicare began, the average age was 27 and life expectancy was 67. In 2026 the average age is 47 and life expectancy is 82. We are trying to use a 19th century model for health care to serve the 21st century population. What do we need in a health system? The right care, in the right place, at the right time.

- Prevention! Need much more support so people stay as well as possible for as long as possible.
- Structural change – they key cause of our health care system failures.

How did collaboration happen on March 5?

Photos tell the story:
Inspiration, Story-telling, Connecting with new people, Networking, Conversations

What needs to be fixed:

- Getting care to all people so everyone has a health care professional that is accessible to them.

Collaboration can start. Individual commitment can start. START NOW. DON'T STOP.

– Linda Anderson,
Communications and Ageism Awareness staff



WORKING STAFF



LOCAL EXPERIENCE



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Building Connections:

How FIG Funding Is Strengthening Strasbourg



When the Facilitating Independent Grants (FIG) program first launched in Strasbourg, the vision was clear: help older adults stay active, connected, and confident in their ability to live independently. Thanks to FIG support, that goal is being achieved every day through the work of the Strasbourg Age Friendly Recreation Board—and the results are remarkable.

The range of programs now available is impressive. The **Taxi Program** makes transportation affordable and reliable, ensuring seniors can reach medical appointments, shopping, and community events with ease. **Wellness Clinics** provide footcare, routine health monitoring, and information sessions that help seniors stay active, safe, and informed. Additional supports—such as **snow shoveling, handyman services, Meals on Wheels, and window cleaning**—allow older adults to remain comfortably in their own homes and maintain independence.

What makes the FIG grant especially impactful is how seamlessly it aligns with broader community initiatives, including Age Friendly and Social Prescribing efforts in the region. Together, these programs create a coordinated network that supports physical, emotional, and social well-being. FIG-funded programming strengthens Age Friendly goals by reducing isolation, improving accessibility, and ensuring seniors have opportunities to connect, participate, and thrive.

As one participant, **Margaret**, shared: “I used to stay home most days because I didn’t know where to go or who to ask for help. Now I have people checking in, classes I look forward to, and a reason to get out. It’s changed my whole routine.”

Volunteer Strength and Community Impact

At the heart of it all are the volunteers—about 20 strong—who make the programs run. Many are seniors themselves, giving back to the community while benefiting from the services. “They’re living proof of how valuable these programs are,” says Ashley Scholefield “Their passion and generosity are what keep everything going.”

The results speak for themselves. More than **300 older adults** have already benefited, with **100–150 participating each month**. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive: seniors say they feel healthier, less isolated, and more confident about remaining in their own homes.

Of course, challenges remain. With growing demand, the Board is always seeking additional volunteers and working to secure sustainable funding. But the vision is clear: to keep seniors not only safe, but **thriving—body, mind, and spirit**.

A Community Where Aging Is Celebrated

In Strasbourg, aging isn’t seen as an obstacle—it’s embraced as another season of life worth celebrating. Thanks to the Age Friendly program, strengthened by FIG funding, seniors here don’t just get by; **they flourish**, surrounded by care, community, and connection.





Grandmothers to Grandmothers

When the HIV epidemic swept across the continent of Africa, it took the lives of nearly an entire generation – 35 million perished – which left their children alone and vulnerable. With little or no support, it was the grandmothers of Africa who stepped in to care for these children. The Stephen Lewis Foundation’s “Grandmothers to Grandmothers” movement amplifies the voices and expertise of grandmothers in Africa, and shows the world that leadership by older women is critical in reclaiming hope and rebuilding resilience across communities.

Grandmothers and grandfathers in Canada have rallied in response, and raise funds in their communities. For nearly 20 years, Grandmothers 4 Grandmothers Regina (G4G Regina) has been fundraising in the Regina community, with tremendous support from a wide range of people and organizations, as we support the life-enhancing programs run by grandmothers in Africa and the community-led organizations that support them. Today, the hope and determination that drive the global response to HIV face a test unlike any in recent memory, and it is more important than ever to remain relentlessly on course. In January 2025, the U.S. administration issued devastating stop-work orders and brutally slashed funding, sending shockwaves through global health and HIV responses, and putting

hard-won progress against AIDS at risk. Now, we are planning for our popular fundraiser Fabric, Yarn & More Sale! Donation drop-off days are Wednesdays, April 8 and 15 from 4 – 7, and Saturdays, April 4, 11, and 18 from 10 – 2. The sale itself will be held on Saturday, April 25 from 9:00 – 3:30. All this is happening at St. James United Church, 4506 Sherwood Drive, Regina.

Should you have any questions, or would like to join our group, please don’t hesitate to contact us at g4gregina@gmail.com or visit our website at www.grandmothers4grandmothersregina.ca.





The security of your benefits rests in your hands

**Simple steps to protect your
personal information**

This leaflet offers tips for protecting your personal information as well as your Old Age Security (OAS), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) benefits, as well as the Allowance and the Allowance for the Survivor. It will also help you recognize the risks and how to respond confidently.

What to look out for

Contact Service Canada immediately if you notice any of the following:

- You discover that someone else is receiving or using your benefits.
- Changes have been made to your personal information without your consent (address, marital status, or banking information).
- Someone is forcing you to pay them part or all of your benefits.
- Personal documents look suspicious or altered (proof of residence, power of attorney, etc.).

Recognizing legitimate calls or visits

Sometimes, our employees may call or visit you. If someone claims to represent the Government of Canada and you are unsure about their identity, take a moment to verify their credentials. You can call **1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232 / ATTY: 1-800-926-9105)** to check if their name is on the official employee list.

Keep your personal information up-to-date for added security

To prevent errors or fraud, inform Service Canada promptly of any changes to the following:

- Mailing and residential address
- Banking information
- Marital status (married, common law, widow, separated or single)
- Absence from Canada for more than six months

If you modify your personal information, you must inform all applicable government organizations. It will not be automatically updated across all government organizations.



Service Canada can assist you:

By telephone:

- Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan: **1-800-277-9914** (TTY: 1-800-255-4786)
- Outreach Support Centre – this service is available to clients who do not have internet access or who face language or literacy difficulties: **1-877-631-2657** (TTY: 1-833-719-2657)

In person: offices.service.canada.ca/en

Contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre

If you believe you are a victim of fraud, [get help from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) through their website, or by telephone at **1-888-495-8501**.



Updated: January 8, 2026



Problems with Long Term Care?

Maybe I can help.

Keith Jorgenson
MLA – Saskatoon Churchill Wildwood

Email:
saskatoonchurchillwildwood@ndpcaucus.sk.ca

Phone: 306-250-1210





Carol Schultz

Age 70



For more than five decades, I have helped shape community life in Strasbourg through dedicated volunteer service, driven by the belief that no community is too small to offer meaningful, affordable programs for all ages. That belief was formed early, growing up in Strasbourg where community involvement wasn't optional—it was simply how life worked.

I was born and raised in Strasbourg, with my parents and three siblings—two sisters and a brother. I graduated from WDS in 1974, began working at the Royal Bank in Strasbourg that July, and married my late husband, Robert, that October. Strasbourg has always been home and serving it has always felt natural.

Robert and I raised three sons, and we thoroughly enjoyed the many years of hockey and ball they brought into our lives. While the boys were involved in their activities, so were we. Volunteering became a family effort. Robert and the boys were always supportive, stepping in whenever “Mom” needed extra hands. That spirit of teamwork carried through my community roles, including over 40 years on the Recreation Board, many of them as Chairperson, and 28 years on Town Council—8 years as Mayor and 20 years as Councillor.

Through my work with the Recreation Board and Strasbourg Age Friendly, my focus has always been on helping people feel connected, included, and proud of where they live. I believe that when people have opportunities to participate, they stay happier, healthier, and more engaged—and that a community, no matter its size, thrives when people look after one another.

I could not possibly achieve the remarkable successes we continue to see in Strasbourg on my own. Those successes belong to the friends, committee members, volunteers, and community members who back and support me every step of the way. Many hands truly make work an easy task, and I am deeply grateful for the teamwork and encouragement that make everything possible.

Life has continued to be full and rewarding. My sons married and blessed me with eight grandchildren, making me one very proud lady. In 2015, I was given a second chance at love when I married Peter, a widowed dear friend. Together, our blended family now includes seven adult children and spouses and twenty grandchildren. Peter is my right-hand volunteer (best friend)—always by my side and always ready to help.

This January, I celebrated my 70th birthday surrounded by family and friends. I truly believe that age is just a number—how we choose to live our lives is what shapes who we are. I am deeply grateful for the life I have been given and for the community that has walked beside me every step of the way. Strasbourg has shaped who I am, just as I hope I have helped shape it in return. With the support of my family, friends, and so many dedicated volunteers, I know that service is not about recognition—it is about caring, connection, and showing up when it matters. If I am able, I will continue to give back, believing wholeheartedly that when we look after one another, our community will always thrive.

“Service is not about recognition, it is about caring, connection, and showing up when it matters.”



DO YOU KNOW OF AN OLDER ADULT VOLUNTEER IN YOUR COMMUNITY WHO DESERVES RECOGNITION FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS?

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10 AWARD CATEGORIES:

- community leadership (urban)
- community leadership (rural)
- community leadership (First Nations or Métis)
- advocacy
- arts & culture
- blooming perennial (90+)
- intergenerational award
- well-being
- education
- older adult friendly business

Nominees must be a 55+ volunteer, reside in Saskatchewan, and actively contribute to their community.

Deadline for Nominations:

Friday, June 12, 2026

How and to whom do I submit my nomination:

1. Email to: ssm@skseniorsmechanism.ca.
2. If unable to email, send to Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, 112 - 2001 Cornwall Street, Regina, SK S4P 3X9



www.skseniorsmechanism.ca/celebrating-seniors-2026

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* See clinic for full details.

Transforming your future through healthy aging

One of the most meaningful ways to influence the future is by caring for our own health. Healthy aging is more than staying active or eating well. It is about preserving choice, independence and confidence in the years ahead. Learn about ways to age well, with proactive steps that can improve outcomes for chronic conditions, reduce anxiety and help you stay focused on what matters most.

STAY PROACTIVE WITH PREVENTATIVE HEALTH SCREENINGS

Preventive screenings are one of the most powerful ways to protect long-term health.

Schedule your age-appropriate screenings:

- **Ages 40 to 64:** cholesterol checks, blood pressure checks, diabetes screening and recommended cancer screenings.
- **Ages 65 plus:** bone density tests, vision and hearing exams, cognitive assessments and mobility or fall risk assessments.

Follow through on appointments even if you feel well. Early detection significantly improves outcomes.

For example, breast cancer survival is almost 98 per cent when caught at stage 1 compared to just over 26 per cent at stage 4. **Ask your health provider what screenings you may be due for this year.**

PRIORITIZE MENTAL WELLNESS

Healthy aging includes caring for your emotional and mental well-being.

Take time to:

- **Check in with yourself regularly** to acknowledge and signs of stress, burnout or worry.
- **Explore mental health supports** such as counselling or virtual therapy.
- **Build small habits** like deep breathing, short walks or taking mindful breaks during the day.

USE YOUR BENEFITS TO MAINTAIN MOBILITY AND COMFORT

Wellness services can improve quality of life, reduce pain and prevent small issues from becoming limitations.

- **Book supportive therapies** such as massage therapy, chiropractic care or acupuncture. These services can reduce stress, support mobility and prevent chronic pain.
- **Review your benefits plan** to understand what services are covered so you can use your benefits fully.
- **Try one new therapy this season** to support mobility or stress reduction.



STAY INVOLVED AND CONNECTED

A strong future is built not just on physical health, but also with meaningful connections.

Stay connected by:

- **Staying social active** through clubs, community programs or intergenerational activities.
- **Sharing your experience with others** to help build a culture of support and resilience.
- **Modelling healthy aging** for younger generations who are watching how older adults navigate change.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

Transforming the future does not always require sweeping action.

It begins with the everyday choices that help us age well, live well and stay involved. By taking practical steps such as booking screenings, using available benefits and building supportive habits, individuals can shape a future defined by independence, dignity and connection.

Learn more about ways you can empower your future at sk.bluecross.ca/healthysk.



Curious about electric vehicles in Saskatoon?



Learn more about driving and charging electric vehicles at our information hub:

> saskatoon.ca/EV

Living in a multi-unit building?
Find info specific to apartments, townhomes and condos at:
saskatoon.ca/MurbEV



Unfair government services

Having problems with a provincial, municipal or health services in Saskatchewan? **Maybe we can help.**

If you have tried to resolve the issue, but think the result is unfair, contact us. We may be able to help resolve the problem informally or by investigating and making recommendations when appropriate.

Our services are free.

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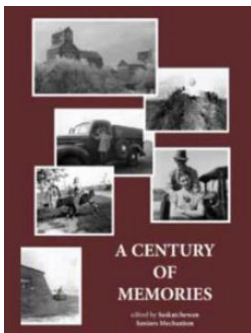
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Century Club Corner

Throughout life, being involved in sports can enhance life and health, truly making a difference in a person's life. Even after the age of 90, this continues to be the case, although the sports may look a little different than they did in our younger days. The games keep our minds and bodies active. The camaraderie and social times often associated with sports help alleviate isolation and give people something to look forward to. Here are a couple of examples, one from SSM's A CENTURY OF MEMORIES, and one from an event held in early February of this year.

From Anton Melnychuk, in A CENTURY OF MEMORIES



I like going on shuffle-board tournaments. And I love competitions. I am hoping that this will help to encourage 'seniors' to be active in any games of their choice, at any age.

Over the years I have won 28 medals and 34 trophies in playing shuffle-board tournaments. Now at 91 years of age and bad arthritis in my fingers, I thought that my time was over playing shuffle-board. But I decided to try one more time this year, 2014, at the Humboldt Provincial Saskatchewan Seniors Summer Games. My shuffle-board partner had not played shuffle-board for at least 20 years. So we practiced a few times ahead. I showed her some important moves and what to watch for, etc.

So at the games we won the first 4 games and that put us in the final game for the Silver Medal. We were tied all through the game with the opposition. On the last rock it happened to be my partner's shot. It was a very hard shot to make as the shuffle-board was warped. And she had to go through a space that was just wide enough for a rock to go through and knock out the opposition's rock. She was so excited because that shot meant winning or losing the Silver Medal. To help her settle down, I pointed on the table as to where she had to shoot. With all spectators' eyes on her and everybody holding their breath, she made a perfect shot, and we won the Silver Medal. She was so happy that I think she is still on cloud nine. That was the most exciting game I have ever had. So I have changed my mind about quitting. I am hoping that this article will encourage all seniors not to quit yet.



Linda Restau, Program & Promotions staff person at SSM, had the honour of presenting some of the College Park Games winners with their medals, as seen in this photo.

In early February 2026, the College Park residences in Regina participated in the annual All Seniors Care Seniors Games, which celebrate healthy aging and community through both physical and mental exercises and games. The sports may include walking, beanbag toss, pétanque, cornhole, bocce, shuffle-board, a "Jeopardy" quiz challenge, bingo, and more.

You may join the Century Club by calling:

Toll free 1-888-823-2211 or 306-359-9956 (Regina) or send a note to: SSM (112-2001 Cornwall St. Regina, SK S4P 3X9). If you live in Saskatoon, please call Saskatoon Council on Aging (306-652-2255) to register.

Hello SSAI members and friends. Here are a few thoughts from me on “Transforming the Future!”

When we think about seniors and the lives they lead, we recognize that much transformation has already occurred and that change is far from over. Our lives continue to evolve every day, shaping a future that begins anew each moment. We hope that this future will be positive: that we age with dignity, retain a sense of purpose, enjoy good health or recover quickly when we are ailing, and maintain meaningful, loyal friendships.

However, hope alone does not bring about transformation. Real change requires action, and it also requires encouraging others to act.

Recently, I listened to a woman who was deeply upset about her mother’s situation in a personal care home. She wanted conditions to improve but did not want to report what was happening. Instead, she hoped things would change on their own. Unfortunately, change is unlikely without speaking up and advocating for those who cannot do so themselves. Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel once said, “When we see injustice and choose to look away, we choose the side of the oppressor. When we witness suffering and remain silent, we give permission for it to continue.” Advocacy is essential if we want a better future.

If transformation is to occur, one of the first shifts must be in our attitudes—both our own and those of the people around us. A positive outlook matters. Seniors possess valuable life skills and experiences, and we are far from “down and out.” The idea that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks is simply untrue. Many seniors have embraced technology such as using cell phones, computers, tablets, and digital cameras, and enrolling in courses and workshops to keep learning and growing.

We must also challenge ageism—the tendency to judge ability or circumstance based solely on age. Is a sore leg due to aging, or is it because I pulled a muscle? Should a senior refrain from helping because of age or because they are physically unable? Being a senior does not mean being incapable. By countering ageism, we can reshape how we see ourselves and how others see us.

Seniors can still make meaningful contributions to society, just as they did when they were younger.

Advocacy also plays a role at the policy level. Recently, SSAI executive members and volunteers met with the Minister for Seniors, the Honourable Lori Carr, to discuss concerns such as helping seniors “age in place”—remaining in their own homes and communities rather than being relocated far from family. We also raised the issue of providing free shingles vaccines for all seniors. The minister noted ours was the only group she knew of which had advocated for this. This highlights the need for more seniors and organizations to speak up with a unified voice.

There are many opportunities to drive positive change. Seniors can stay connected with one another and their communities, helping to address issues like loneliness and isolation. Communities can support seniors by maintaining safe sidewalks, providing benches, supporting senior centers, ensuring access to local housing, home care, and affordable transportation. In turn, seniors can write letters, meet with elected officials, and participate in committees addressing these needs.

Through action, transformation becomes possible: reduced isolation, improved mental health, and stronger, more inclusive communities. The next time you imagine a better future for seniors, ask yourself what you can do today to help make that transformation real.



Lorraine Thibeault, SSAI President



Register now for Sask Seniors Annual Convention

June 3rd and 4th, 2026
Travelodge, Saskatoon

This is a great opportunity for people to learn more about SSAI, network with others from around the province, and to attend presentations on a wide variety of topics.

Everyone is welcome to attend!

Register on or before May 25th.

Registration Fee is \$80/person to attend in person – Includes: 2-day Convention, coffee, snacks, meals, banquet/social

Tentative Schedule:

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

- 8:30 – 10AM - Sign-in & Introductions
- 10AM - Presentations/Speakers
- Noon - Buffet Lunch; 50/50 draw
- 1PM - Presentations/Speakers
- 3PM - Resolutions, Reports, Elections
- 4PM - Meeting for Directors/Coordinators
- 6PM - Banquet & entertainment

Thursday, June 4, 2026

- 8AM - Breakfast Buffet
- 9AM - Presentations/Speakers
- 11AM - Resolutions, Club Reports
- Noon - Buffet Lunch; Raffle Ticket Draw
- 1 – 4PM - Presentations/Speakers

Join us as we
celebrate milestones!

This event proudly supported by:



To register and for more information:

Visit our website saskseniors.com

or contact: Shannon Wright

Phone: 306-493-3023

Email: info@saskseniors.com

FROM LEAKS TO PEAKS

Sometimes things happen that start off feeling like the biggest disaster in the world and then end on a positive note, giving hope for the future. The Ituna Seniors Social Club's roof suffered a catastrophic event in March of 2025 that rendered our place unusable for many months. That began a long series of disheartening interactions with insurance companies, engineers, businesses and other entities in town and the province that should have been our lifeline in times such as this. Instead, we found that they often appeared to be working against us, instead of with us. Some of us came away feeling like our problem and we ourselves were not important because we were seniors – old people – who are really not that vital to the life of the community. The insurance company took a long time making a decision and ended up covering less than \$8,000 of our \$100,000 problem. Some of the organizations we first approached refused to help with allowing us the use of their space hindering our ability to fundraise and carry on with the activities we usually enjoyed in our club. But then there were some small things that happened that gave us hope – one of the first was an unexpected gift given in a very unorthodox manner. Our Vice Chairperson had just left our monthly meeting and went to the grocery store to get groceries and, when she went to pay, she found an envelope. It was very non-descript envelope, actually a return envelope that's often included in what some of us see as junk mail, with the words "for the roof repair". Inside was \$500 cash – she did not know when someone had slipped it in her handbag, had no idea where it came from and from whom – a mystery that has not been solved to this day. But it provided hope, that maybe there were people out there who cared and maybe, just maybe we could tackle what seemed like a daunting task. We soon found that some places DID say yes when we approached them to use their space. A Senior's complex allowed us to use their common area to conduct our weekly bingos which allowed us to continue making some money to pay the utilities that needed to be paid even if we couldn't use the building. A local church allowed to use their space for our weekly canasta nights in exchange for a free will offering from the players. The Wildlife Den

allowed us to use their space to hold our monthly meetings free of charge. The Town Council held a barbecue with proceeds going to our initiative and agreed to provide income tax receipts for donations made at their office. A bank account was set up so that people could contribute directly at the bank into the account and people did. We had money in savings and GICs (unfortunately not nearly enough) and donations had started to come but we needed more – much more! So, we began making soup and sandwiches – on a take-out basis from our kitchen (which was not affected by the roof damage in the main hall). A pork was donated by a local company, and we sold raffle tickets with two prizes of ½ a pork cut and wrapped. Much to our surprise, the bank, based on how hard we had been working and the donations we had received thus far, gave us a loan (by the way we have not had to use the loan yet because of all the financial support that we have gotten or earned).

When construction began, we could no longer use our kitchen, so another local church allowed us to use their hall and kitchen, at no charge, to make and sell our soup and sandwiches. Various service groups and individuals gave us donations in varying amounts – one individual even gave us \$10,000. Our contractor was a local person who was very supportive from the start of this project offering advice on how to proceed, etc. We finally had enough to start and our contractor agreed to partial payments. By this time, it was already November, and we feared the weather would be against him. The weather co-operated (somewhat) and he worked when he could, often well into the night and on weekends, to get it done before significant snow came. We are so grateful to his hard work and to some of the tradesmen who provided free product and/or free labour.

We are, of course, grateful to all the people who supported us with donations and buying soup and sandwiches from us each week. There were many individual people in the town and surrounding area that cared and saw that we, a bunch of elderly people, were determined to get our building back up and running and stepped up to support us in

whatever way they could. One man (not a member of the club) said that he was proud of the way we did not simply accept defeat and instead got into action saving our building. The service group this man is part of has made a significant donation to us and has promised another one once a fundraiser they have planned is complete. The response from people outside our club has been phenomenal and has really made us feel a valuable part of this community.

Recently our theatre was up for sale with no takers, so a community co-operative was formed. Residents purchased shares that then went toward purchasing the theatre. The theater happens to be next door to our facility, and we have planned a joint event – “Dinner and a Movie”. We will provide a roast beef dinner after which ticket holders will go next door

for a movie. We hope to begin doing more of these types of joint ventures with other entities and age groups in our area. The support we received from our community has inspired us to give back where we can – to pay it forward as such. That may mean selling tickets for another service group, helping make perogies for a group that gave us a donation or helping wherever and whenever we can and are able (after all we are elderly).

From leaks (that is exactly how we started this journey) to peaks. We end on a high note with a renewed sense of purpose, pride in who we are and what we accomplished and gratitude for the community we are privileged to be part of.

– Linda Smuk, Ituna

SSAI RAFFLE TICKETS

SSAI raffle fundraiser (Licence #SR25-1335) – draws to be held at convention in Saskatoon on June 4th, 2026. Tickets are \$2 each for a chance to win 1 draw of \$1000, 2 x \$500, and 5 x \$100.

If you are interested in purchasing or selling raffle tickets, please contact:

Shannon Wright phone: 306-493-3023 email: info@saskseniors.com

Be part of a strong association and network with other seniors and rural seniors’ clubs.

Reach beyond your own community to connect with other seniors and clubs from other parts of the province for support and new ideas.



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE - \$5/person

SSAI Membership fees can be mailed to:

Shannon Wright, Secretary/Treasurer, Box 455, Vanscoy, SK S0L 3J0

Phone: 306-493-3023 email: info@saskseniors.com

Website: www.saskseniors.com



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If you would like to receive emails from SSAI, send us an email at info@saskseniors.com with your request to SUBSCRIBE. You will receive emails regarding upcoming SSAI events as well as forwarded information pertinent to Saskatchewan Seniors.

Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. (SSAI) would like to acknowledge the support of Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM) and the Saskatchewan Lottery Trust Fund for SSAI outreach to Seniors. Some of this funding pays for the quarterly distribution of the SSAI newsletter in Gray Matters.



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