

Sage Seniors Association

Community Impact Report

2020



To view the digitized report, click [here](#).

*A year of communities
coming together.*

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Message from our Board President

"2020 marked Sage's 50th anniversary and it was another year of growth, change, and resilience. Thanks to the hard work of the Board, volunteers, and staff team, Sage was well positioned to respond to the unique needs of seniors throughout 2020..."

- Joyce Tustian, President

To read more, [click and scroll.](#)

Message from our Executive Director

"The continued support of community, staff and volunteers this year has had an outsized impact on individuals in our community as we navigated a very challenging year as professionals. I'm personally so grateful for people's willingness to try new ways of doing things, to contribute in new and creative ways, and for the collective efforts to create a sense of stability within the organization and community through ongoing commitment and support..."

- Karen McDonald, Executive Director

To read more, [click and scroll.](#)

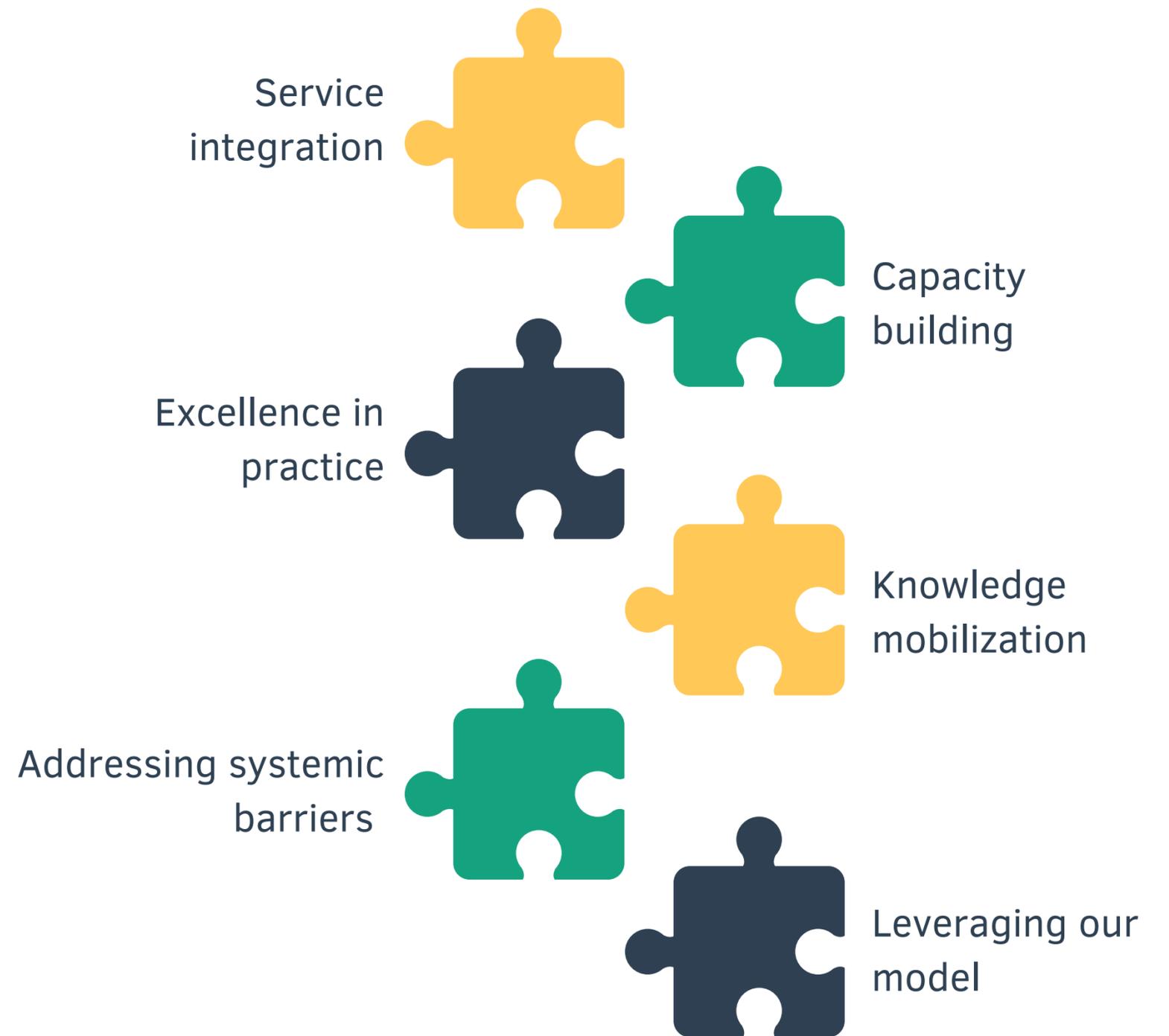


2020-2023 Strategic Priorities

Sage is a community-based, seniors serving organization that exists to enhance the quality of life of seniors and their families through the work of staff and volunteers, in collaboration with stakeholders and partner organizations.

For the next three years, we will continue to leverage our holistic, person-centred approach, to ensure services in Alberta optimize health, agency, and inclusion for seniors.

Key Focus Areas



Staying Sage in Extraordinary Times



Due to the spread of the
coronavirus, and risk for
severe illness among
older adults

Sage's building closed on
March 16, 2020.

Fortunately, community
isn't only connected to the
physical space at Sage.

It is also found within our programs and connections with one another.

These unprecedented times
have truly highlighted the
best of our community:

Collaboration

The deepening of collaboration between organizations working together to respond rapidly to the changing needs of the community.

Connection

The efforts made by so many to build virtual connections.

Resilience

The continued resilience and strength of older adults during times of hardship and uncertainty.

In 2020, the way in which we delivered our programs and services may have changed

but the approach to our
work did not.

We're here to prevent vulnerability, offer support when it's needed, and help seniors shape and enrich our communities.

2020 Quick Facts

- Sage was a member of the Coordinated Pandemic Response Steering Committee.

- Free masks, personal protective equipment, food hampers, and other essential resources were distributed to vulnerable seniors throughout Edmonton.

- Many Life Enrichment programs were offered online and by phone.

- All virtual programming was provided at no cost in order to maintain access and reduce barriers.

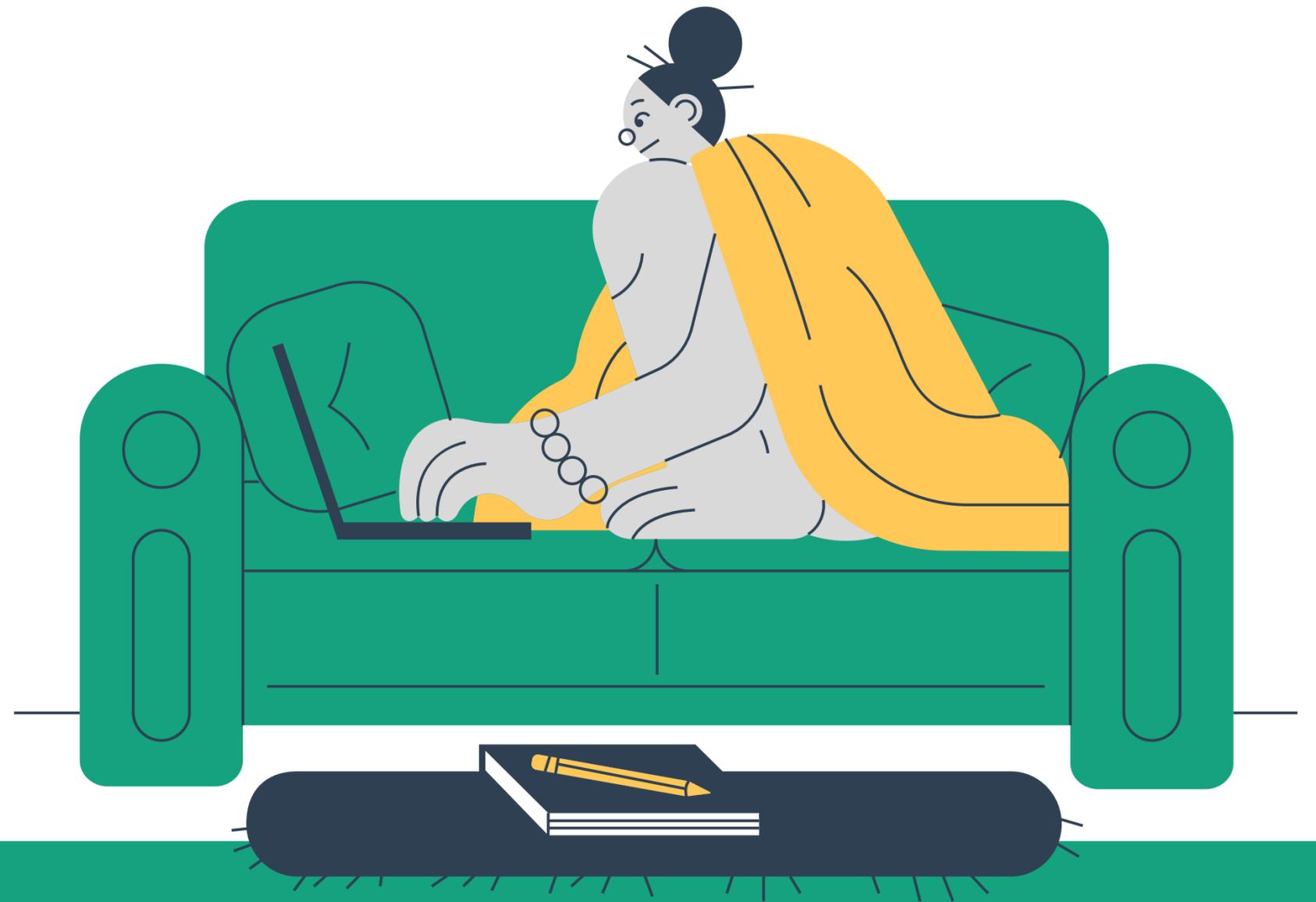
- The majority of program leaders, speakers, and instructors were volunteering remotely.

2020 Quick Facts

- The Friendly Wellness Check program was introduced to ensure volunteers and program participants remained connected to Sage.
- Social work and health services supports were delivered primarily by phone, and essential services continued to operate face-to-face.
- The Safe House for seniors experiencing abuse continued to provide its residential program during the pandemic.
- Sage worked closely with 211 to address a substantial volume of referrals for seniors outreach.¹
- Sage produced a weekly newsletter with resources and information on how to cope physically and mentally during the pandemic.

Here are some highlights
from this year.

Delivery of Virtual Programming



Life Enrichment

Our Life Enrichment program offered accessible virtual programming that provided many opportunities for seniors to remain physically active, mentally engaged, and socially connected.

There was a steady increase in engagement as seniors reengaged with their pre-pandemic support networks through online and call-in programming, and we welcomed many seniors for the first time.

To view activities offered as part of our Life Enrichment programming, click [here](#).

By moving to virtual programming, we observed increased engagement among caregivers, men, individuals experiencing mobility impairment, seniors living in rural communities, and increased international connectedness among seniors living abroad.



DID YOU KNOW a senior living in Edmonton, told her cousin who lives abroad about our programming. Now she virtually joins our Sing-a-long from Germany!



"[Virtual Life Enrichment programming] has been a really neat way for some seniors who wouldn't have been able to join in with family members or friends from other places, come together on Zoom and meet up.²"

- Rachel Tassone, Life Enrichment Manager

To view an interview by the Edmonton Journal about seniors connecting during the pandemic through Life Enrichment, click [here](#).



DID YOU KNOW volunteers in Life Enrichment dedicated 1,520 hours of their time to provide accessible virtual programming.

Most of our volunteers are seniors themselves!

Guardianship and Trusteeship

For the past 35 years, Sage has been providing guidance and support needed to apply for Guardianship and Trusteeship.

When funding for this program ended in March 2020, we began offering it as a fee-for-service social enterprise. The program is delivered at a cost-recovery price to ensure we can continue to provide this essential service.

During the pandemic, Sage offered Guardianship and Trusteeship workshops virtually, which included:

- a mailed out package of necessary documents for the full application, and;
- access to a two-hour group workshop on guardianship, trusteeship, the forms, court process, and the role and responsibilities of a guardian and/or trustee.

Income Tax Clinic

Sage partners with the Canada Revenue Agency to provide free income tax preparation services to low-resourced seniors.

Due to the pandemic, the program shifted to telephone based, and no in-person appointments were offered.

DID YOU KNOW in 2020, volunteers spent 893 hours completing tax returns for low-resourced seniors without face to face meetings.

A note from an Income Tax program participant:

Thank you Sage and thank you Jeff.

Your help with my 2020 tax return was
wonderful
stress free
easy
professional

In years past I've struggled to
complete my tax return correctly.
Jeff had it done in minutes.

He was able to confirm that I had
all the proper receipts and that
his computer records matched my own.
(from Revenue Canada
and the Gov't of Alta)

He completed my taxes on Tuesday and
I had a copy of the tax return in
yesterday's mail. That is simply amazing.

So please let Jeff know how much
he is appreciated.

Safe House for Seniors Experiencing Abuse

Outreach work was primarily done through phone and a virtual, weekly psycho-education support group and informal chat group was initiated. This online chat group provided a venue to exercise social connections with peers safely.



In order to reduce the risk of exposure to the coronavirus, the number of staff and visitors on-site were limited. Staff were also diligent in disinfecting high touch areas at least three times a day, and increased the cleaning of suites. Staff and residents remained vigilant, and there were no outbreaks of the virus.

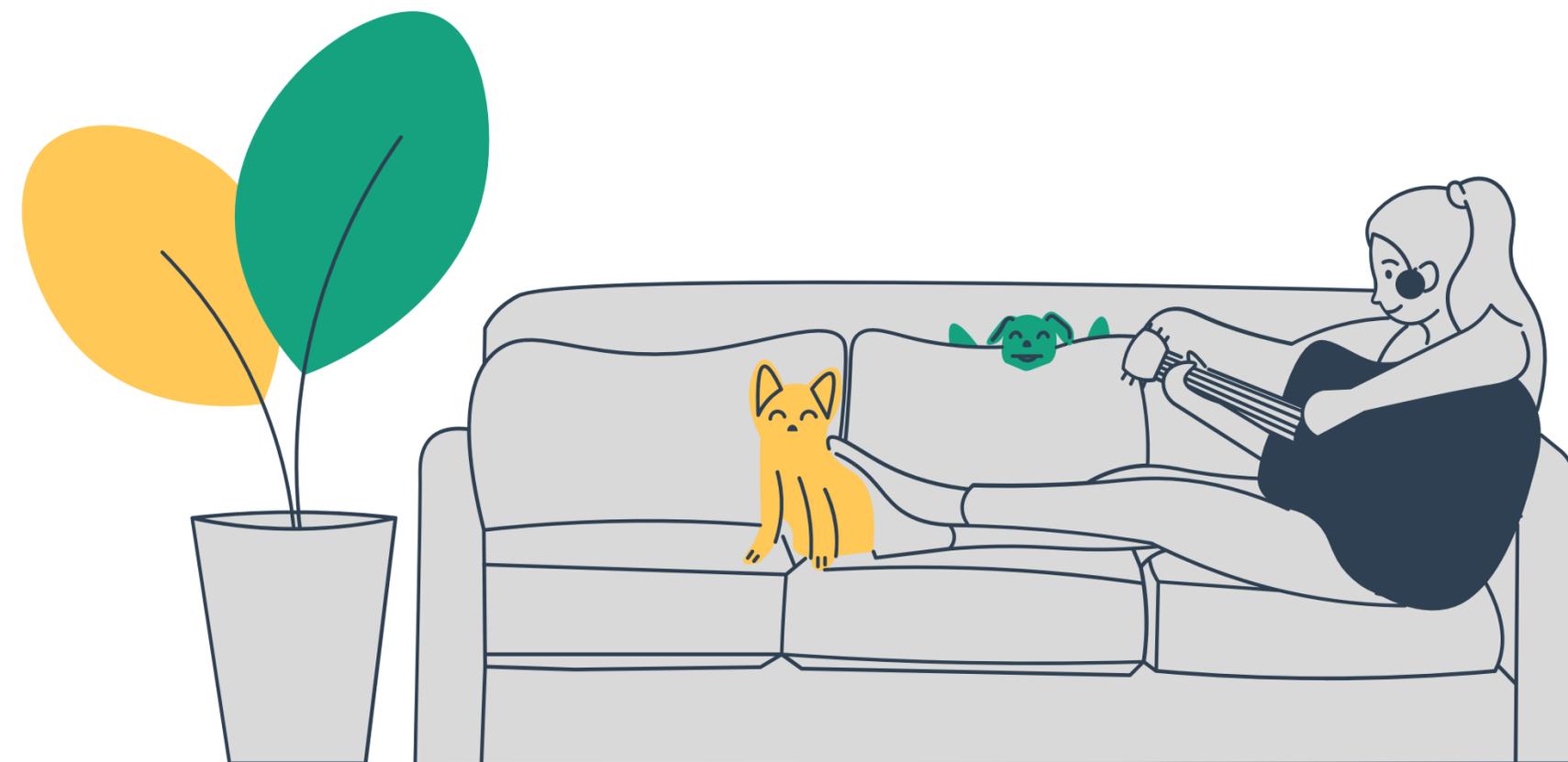
DID YOU KNOW Safe House staff safely connected with residents over 1,000 times during the pandemic.

The Virtual Forum

From November 18-21, Sage held the first Virtual Seniors Forum, sponsored by Age Friendly Edmonton.

Attendees were treated to 29 presentations on a wide variety of topics relevant to seniors, which included: breakout sessions, musical performances, and facilitated conversations about wellness, self-care, housing, and community support.

DID YOU KNOW 293 people attended one or more sessions, with many attending the entire four days.



During the Celebration of Seniors for the Virtual Seniors Forum, a participant shared her reflections on 2020:

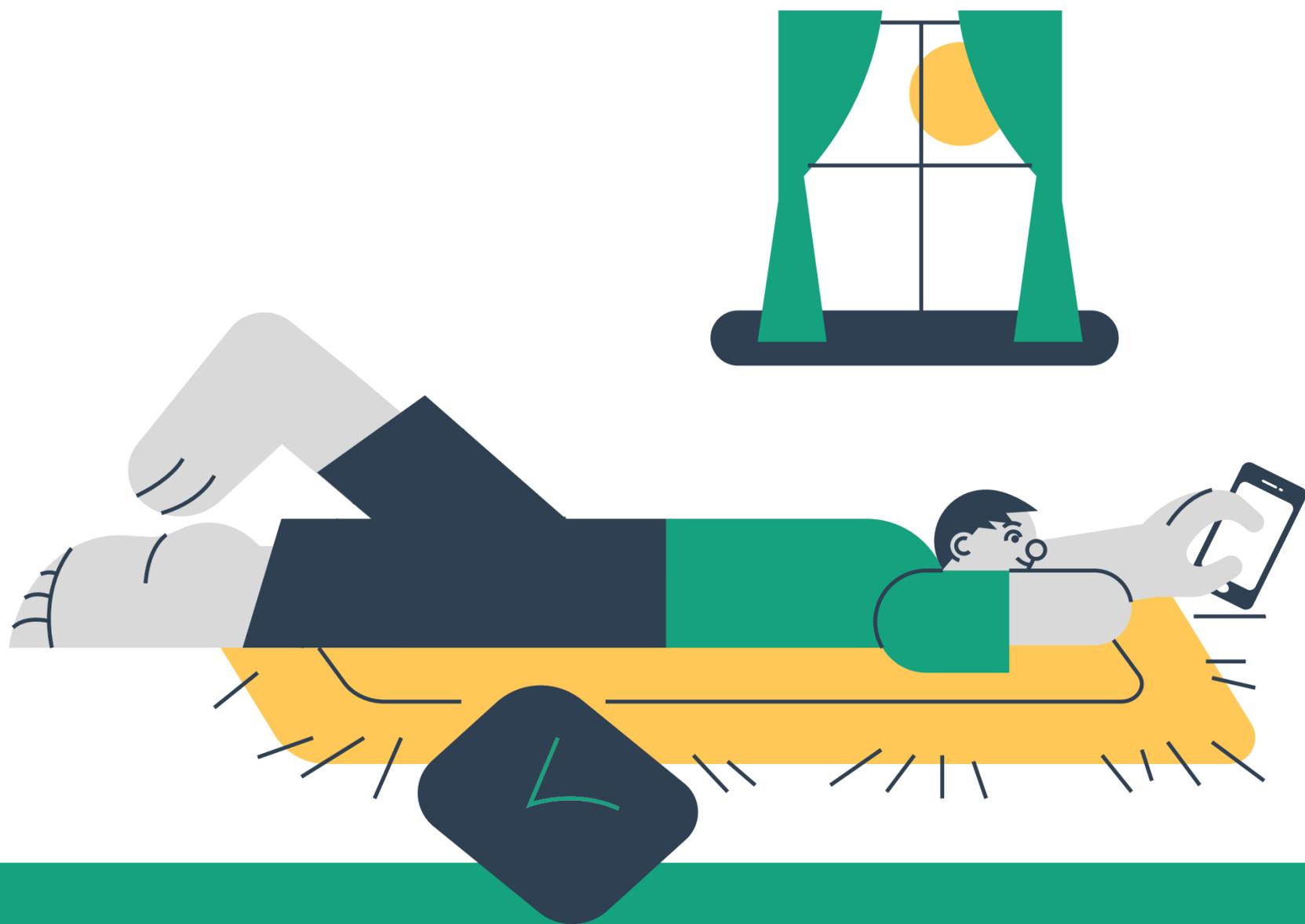
"A few years ago, I joined a seniors ukulele class at Sage. I had recently retired and needed to fill a void in my life. Music had always been a part of my life and now I had time to try something new. I met some good friends and we loved to sing and play together. Then COVID-19 happened..."

To read her full story, [click and scroll.](#)

Friendly Wellness Check Program

Sage staff were redeployed to establish and manage a caller program with a case management approach in order to connect with seniors throughout the pandemic.

The program matched seniors with appropriate supports through regular check-ins, including connections to social work assessments and supports, linkages into virtual life enrichment programming, and timely and accurate information.



Volunteers were trained as Friendly Callers to ensure they had the skills and knowledge to respond to complex needs, data collection processes, and appropriate boundaries with those they call.

DID YOU KNOW 40 trained volunteers connected with over 1,000 seniors participating in the Friendly Wellness Check program.

Volunteer Spotlight



Jolene's Story

Jolene reflects on her experience as a Friendly Caller:

"I placed my first calls in August. It was heartwarming. I was so thankful to speak with "my people," and so grateful they were happy to hear from me! As the month's passed, I got to know my people and my appreciation and gratitude grew as well. I came to realize these relationships came with surprising benefits..."

To read more about Jolene's story, [click and scroll.](#)

Partnerships and Collaboration



We always approach our
work through collaboration.

But this year it was more
important than ever.

Coordinated Outreach Across Edmonton

Early in the pandemic, Sage partnered with the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) to establish a Coordinated Pandemic Response (CPR) Model for community-based senior serving organizations.

As a primary provider of social work supports and services for low-resourced seniors, it was critical that our pandemic response aligned with the efforts of the sector and other organizations.

As the lead of the coordinated outreach efforts, we:

- led regular meetings of the task group,
- provided support for social work practice during the pandemic,
- liaised with 211 on changes to the outreach model, and;
- met regularly with funders to share trends and advocate for appropriate policy changes.

Coordinated Pandemic Response Packages

Sage's food services staff were redeployed to manage assembly and support a coordinated community distribution of essential items to vulnerable seniors throughout Edmonton.

These included personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies, activity packages, hygiene and incontinence supplies, denture cleaning supplies, M&M Meats packages, and food security gift cards. Drive Happiness was, and continues to be, an essential partner in this hamper delivery effort.



Between March and September 2020:

- 550 activity packages were distributed.
- 400 hygiene packages were distributed.
- 700 PPE kits were distributed.
- Close to 1,000 seniors received packages.³

These packages were used by seniors who had not otherwise been connected to resources, and helped build relationships and trust within the community.

Increased Complex Case Management

To respond to the increased demand of complex case management resulting from COVID-19, social work and outreach capacity was increased. Sage worked with the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Strathcona Place Society, and the Multicultural Health Brokers to establish and deploy a coordinated outreach and case management model to support seniors city-wide.

Once complex cases were resolved, individuals were referred into appropriate community-based programming to sustain connection.

The pandemic presented some challenges for our team and the population we serve.

Staff received an average of 30+ calls a day from seniors with complex needs and/or circumstances. The increase in complex case management, coupled with working remotely, increased the time it took to resolve cases.

This Full House

This Full House, which assists individuals experiencing Hoarding Disorder, shifted to virtual programming, and continued to facilitate two support groups remotely.

For staff, virtual programming added a layer of complexity to already complex cases, as we continued to navigate the challenges of offering remote supports.

As a member of the Edmonton Hoarding Coalition, Sage was involved in planning a provincial-wide Hoarding Interventions Conference in the fall. Due to the pandemic and safety procedures being implemented, the conference was put on hold until 2021.

Increased Multicultural Seniors Outreach

Sage was able to increase its social work capacity with funding provided through the Government of Alberta's Social Services Support for COVID-19 grant. Through this, we have been able to increase the capacity of the Multicultural Health Brokers to serve immigrant and refugee seniors who have been further isolated due to the pandemic.

"Now that we have you, we do not worry. No matter how hard the pandemic is, always your hand is with us."

- Multicultural Seniors Outreach Participant

News Ways of Engaging: Ageing to Sageing

Ageing to Sageing (A2S) aims to mobilize seniors' assets to positively impact the poverty agenda through intergenerational relationships between older people, schools, agencies, and families and children in the community.

"[The A2S staff] are lifelines...they have really kept us going."

- A2S Program Participant



During the pandemic, seniors and collaborative agencies had to improvise ways to connect and support each other. Ageing to Sageing staff saw relationships that may have been restricted to facilitated groups prior to COVID deepen as participants leaned into each other as neighbours and community for support and connection.

While some groups went on hold, others like the Grandparents Who Parent Support Group transitioned online within weeks and have been meeting steadily, developed a curriculum, and are supporting each other.



Participants who have engaged with support groups through A2S have learned that they are not alone in dealing with their challenges and have found the groups to be supportive and healing. They have appreciated the opportunity to transition to remote meetings.

Similarly, participants in programs run by A2S have appreciated the chance to gather, learn from each other and share their skills remotely.

DID YOU KNOW in September, the Amazing Elders met at Borden Park for a socially distanced pop-up concert with the [Brasstastics!](#)

For individuals who do not engage in scheduled programming, the pandemic has been more disruptive.

Staff have been keeping in touch with people virtually, and supporting Sage's Friendly Wellness Check program. Community groups have also been supporting each other informally through phone calls, virtual meetings, and taking care of each other through drop-offs at each other's homes.

Most participants agree that they have been able to maintain their sense of wellbeing throughout the pandemic, though some find it difficult to engage with people virtually, even if they have access to the needed technology.

Learning Remote Programming

Sage was able to provide telephone-based and online programming because of our partnership with the Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network's Senior Centre Without Walls.

We leveraged their expertise in developing and implementing remote programming, and thank them for helping to ensure seniors were able to access essential programming.

No Room in the Inn Campaign raises \$40,000!

Every Christmas since 1999, the Edmonton and District Council of Churches have sponsored the No Room in the Inn campaign, an ecumenical initiative to support housing providers for the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless in the Capital Region.

In 2019, the Sage Seniors House Renovation Project was honored to be selected. We are thrilled to report that by 2020 the campaign raised over \$40,000, which will be used to create dedicated client areas and install accessible shower facilities at our Safe House.

Hope, Resilience, and Experiencing Loss

It is important to acknowledge
that we've all experienced loss
in 2020.

In an instant, life as we
knew it changed.

We are connected too by
this shared experience of
loss and grief as a result.

Our collective experience can
make this burden of grief feel
bigger and smaller at the
same time

and underscores the need to
celebrate hope and resilience
and our support of one another
where we can.

Health Services and the DRAGONFLY Program

The loss of health services funding marked the end of Sage's Nurse Practitioner-led clinic. The Nurse Practitioners and the Health Services team thank all of our patients and stakeholders who made the past three years at Sage a time of growth and achievement.

As we navigate these uncertain and challenging times together, we continue to help seniors access health care during the pandemic.



Sage has continued involvement in a program assessing the strengths and needs of older adults in the community called DRAGONFLY.

The DRAGONFLY program offers follow-up services addressing the social, emotional, and health needs of older adults experiencing frailty, through assessment, support, connection to resources, and system navigation.

Change in Volunteer Services

Volunteer Services provide meaningful opportunities for individuals to share their knowledge and skills with Sage and the broader community. With the loss of our physical building due to the pandemic, many volunteer roles were put on hold or shifted. This loss was felt by everyone and has been painful. Volunteers at Sage are more than volunteers - we are a community.

We look forward to the opportunity - when it is safe to do so - to share the space at Sage once more with the amazing volunteers who contribute so much of their time and talent toward supporting seniors.



DID YOU KNOW in 2020, volunteers dedicated over 10,000 hours of their time and talents to Sage. The majority of this invaluable work was done remotely.

Thank You Funders

It takes a community to build community. And we're still building.

Sage works with a wide variety of organizations to help seniors live their best lives possible. We would like to acknowledge that we could not do our work without the numerous agencies that we work collaboratively with in the community.

Thank you to the following partners for assisting us in delivering programs and services to seniors.

Celebrating 50 Years of Sage

In 2020, Sage turned 50!

The past has laid the foundation for where we are today, and the present lays the foundation for where we will be tomorrow. We look forward to continuing to meet the needs of seniors in Alberta.

To view a timeline highlighting our milestones from the last 50 years, please [click and scroll](#).

Thank you to historian and archivist Val Chymko for her talents in curating this information.

Summarized Financials

Sage Seniors Association
Summarized Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
Assets		
Current		
Cash	\$ 1,319,469	\$ 1,735,997
Accounts receivable	294,013	267,890
Inventory	4,146	5,848
Prepaid expenses	16,649	16,255
	1,634,277	2,025,990
Long-term portfolio investments, at market value	510,042	485,458
Equipment	617,931	745,180
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,762,250	\$ 3,256,628
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable	\$ 94,112	\$ 301,143
Deferred contributions	1,197,123	1,719,308
	1,291,235	2,020,451
Deferred contributions related to capital assets	606,294	735,468
	1,897,529	2,755,919
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	343,041	5,538
Capital assets	11,638	9,713
Contingency	119,958	118,467
Investment	390,084	366,991
	864,721	500,709
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 2,762,250	\$ 3,256,628

Sage Seniors Association
Summarized Statement of Operations
For the year ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
Revenue		
Government grants	\$ 2,969,457	\$ 3,284,804
Government emergency funding	459,764	-
Other grants	444,489	250,544
Self-generated revenue	188,981	372,475
Donations and fundraising	35,137	133,898
Investment income	17,586	29,360
	4,115,414	4,071,081
 Expenses		
Wages and benefits	2,208,498	2,223,146
Program expenses	993,776	1,150,899
Office operation	194,469	163,873
Occupancy	142,437	152,685
Amortization	132,400	138,508
Other expenses	93,296	175,750
	3,764,876	4,004,861
 Excess of revenue over expenses before other item	350,538	66,220
Change in unrealized gain on portfolio investments	13,474	18,348
	\$ 364,012	\$ 84,568

The complete audited financial statements are available upon request.



Sources

1. "FACT Sheet — Supporting Seniors During COVID-19." Apr. 9 2021, www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/2021/04/09/fact-sheet-supporting-seniors-during-covid-19.
2. "Phone-based senior connections took off during the pandemic." YouTube, uploaded by Edmonton Journal, Mar. 4 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuPDNTbXVVI
3. "Coordinated Pandemic Response for Senior Serving Community." www.seniorscouncil.net/uploads/files/Edmonton_Senior-Serving-Pandemic-Response-Report-FINAL.pdf

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Sage Seniors Association