



**Community
Impact Report
2023**



Sage Seniors Association (Sage) is a community-based seniors serving organization that provides a comprehensive spectrum of supports and services with and for seniors in the greater Edmonton area and beyond.

Sage Seniors Association

15 Sir Winston Churchill Square

Edmonton, AB T5J 2E5

Treaty No. 6 Territory and Métis Nation Region 4

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mysage.ca

Charitable Registration Number: 119154839 RR 0001

Sage proudly operates from the ancestral lands of the Plains Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois Dene, Ojibway, Sauteaux, Anishinaabe, Inuit, and numerous other Indigenous Peoples. It is with respect and humility that we acknowledge the land and the responsibilities that come with it.

To effectively serve Alberta's senior population, it is important to acknowledge the unique experiences and realities of their lives, including the ways in which they may be impacted by systems of oppression.

We are committed to taking action towards reconciliation by creating space and offering opportunities for reflection, as well as expanding our knowledge and understanding as a team. Part of this commitment is recognizing that de-colonization is a journey that requires constantly challenging how we see things, unlearning and re-learning and engaging in conversation together.

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Our Purpose

Sage’s work is guided by a vision of a community where all seniors are valued and have the opportunity to live according to their beliefs, abilities, and aspirations.

Our mission is to inspire and support seniors to be the best they can be. Sage offers programs and services that:

- Aid seniors in times of difficulty
- Help seniors share their gifts with community
- Support seniors to stay connected

Our Approach

ASSET BASED

We listen for, celebrate, and help mobilize the unique gifts, aspirations, and strengths of seniors.

RELATIONAL

We take the time to deeply understand seniors as holistic, complex, and multifaceted individuals who have a spectrum of needs and strengths.

CO-CREATIVE

We work with seniors in a reciprocal and co-creative manner that recognizes and draws upon the shared wisdom and expertise of both staff and seniors.

SELF-DETERMINING

We ask seniors themselves when, how, why, and what it means to create positive changes in their communities.

2023 Sage Snapshot

6,500 unique seniors accessed Sage services



1,900 connections were made with individuals through advocacy, educational, and community outreach work

30,000 copies of Sage's Directory of Seniors Services were distributed

60 organizations were engaged through almost 30 different partnerships



Message From the Executive Director

In 2023, under the strategic direction of the Board, Sage's staff and volunteers worked to continue to establish stability and sustainability in a post-pandemic environment.

Demand for services, and the complexity of the need of older adults accessing Sage's services had increased dramatically, staff and volunteers experienced unprecedented pressures, social disorder in downtown Edmonton made in-person services challenging, and the financial resources required to support service delivery were at times lagging in responding to the complexity and scale of the situation.

Yet despite these monumental challenges, Sage's community responded as it always does – with resilience, flexibility, creativity, partnership and cooperation, a whole lot of patience and grace, and so much generosity and support. Challenging times remind us why community and connection are so critically important to our wellbeing, as individuals, as professionals, and as a community. 2023 was surely a moment in Sage's history where we will remember the value of investing time, talent and resources into one another, ourselves, and our communities. Thank you to everyone who contributed to ensuring Sage's community meet the needs and strengths of older adults in 2023!



Karen McDonald, Sage Executive Director (right) and Anne Summach, Associate Teaching Professor, Director of Nurse Practitioner Programs, U of A (left) accept the 2023 Vision Award from the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health.



“Sage provides a model... that I hope will be replicated in other parts of the country”

— Award committee member

Programs & Services

Outreach, Assessments & Support Services

As part of the Coordinated Seniors Outreach Program, Sage employs a team, including social workers who provide assistance, information, and support to seniors, and help them connect to resources at Sage and in the broader community.


Assessment and Support is the first point of contact for seniors and their families, friends, and caregivers who have identified a need for information, guidance, or support. Our team recognize that the aging process is a very individualized experience. Seniors are paired with a social worker who works with them until their goals have been met, even when their needs seem disparate and unconnected.

Many of the seniors who access these services are low-resourced and/or experience marginalization because of socioeconomic status, lack of a social safety net, background, country of origin, sexual orientation, lived experience, or other circumstances.

Most of the seniors accessing support services are over 65 years of age (80%), female (60%), living alone (60%), and have an annual income less than \$29,285 (85%).



OVER 2500 SENIORS
were assisted in 2023.



40 CALLS
a day (average)
to Sage's intake line.



12-30+ UNSCHEDULED WALK-INS
a day from individuals
looking for senior-related
information, resources.

Numbers are an approximation, accurate to the capacity of our evaluation system.

“It is heartbreaking receiving calls from seniors desperate to avoid homelessness and having nothing to offer but shelters because there are no options due to long waitlists for affordable housing,”

— Assessment Coordinator

Trends we saw:

The rising cost of living has exacerbated many of the challenges facing low-resourced seniors, including an increase in the number of seniors:

- experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness
- accessing the foodbank
- experiencing social isolation
- having their cell phones disconnected
- facing eviction notices due to significant increases in rental rates.

*Funding support for this program:
Family and Community Support Services
(FCSS) Edmonton.*

“Whoever thought of all this must have been some kind of a genius...That there is this place where we come and questions are answered and help is kindly given...it’s genius,”

— Senior after an appointment with a social worker at Sage



Multicultural Seniors Outreach Program

Sage continued its longstanding partnership with the Multicultural Health Brokers (MCHB) to support the holistic wellbeing of immigrant, refugee, and newcomer (IRN) seniors.

The program supports seniors from several ethno-cultural communities such as: Eritrean, Ethiopian, Eastern European, Former Yugoslavian, Iraqi, Kurdish, Korean, Somalian, Spanish-speaking, and Syrian communities. Because of their established connections and relationships, cultural brokers are able to case-find the most deeply isolated seniors in these communities.

The program addresses the severe social isolation and complex vulnerability of IRN seniors using a model of practice that involves culturally and linguistically relevant outreach, holistic case management, collaborative care, community development, system navigation, and advocacy. Most essential to the practice is building the capacity of IRN seniors to overcome isolation, and become engaged in mutual support and joint leadership with other seniors.



375 seniors from **12+** different ethnocultural communities actively participated

*Funding support for this program:
United Way Capital Region, Family and
Community Support Services (FCSS)
Edmonton.*



“I live by myself with multiple physical and mental health issues. I speak no English. If it was not for a festive meal delivered at my door by my fellow seniors, I would not have had a Christmas this year. Not only the food but having somebody to visit me has brought peace and hope to my heart.”

(translated for participating senior)

Seniors Safe House

The Seniors Safe House extended outreach to ethnocultural communities which included presentations to African and South Asian community groups and translation of domestic violence resources into 14 languages.

The Seniors Safe House offers shelter, support, and assistance for older men and women needing safety from abuse. In addition to the seven furnished living units that offer temporary accommodation, the Seniors Safe House provides holistic case management, peer support, professional and practical assistance, and connection to resources that help residents deal with all areas of their lives that have been impacted by abuse.

“...I will never forget Sage and the kindness I experienced,”

— Former Safe House Resident

The fall of 2023 saw good news from our Safe House funder, the Government of Alberta, with an investment to increase the capacity of the Safe House by four suites to help address increased demand for service and increased waiting times to access services.

240 CALLS
calls received by the Safe House intake line requesting information, admission or crisis support

34 temporary residents

*Funding Support from:
Government of Alberta: Seniors, Community and Social Services,
City of Edmonton, Social Development Branch (via ACWS),
Women’s Shelter Canada.*

Social Prescribing: Social Rx

Through our social prescribing program, Sage connects older adults with the non-medical supports they need to age well in the community.

Up to 80 per cent of a person's health depends on "social determinants" – things like adequate food, housing, income, and relationships with others. Social prescribing is an approach to healthcare that bridges the gap between medical and social care services. Through Social Prescribing, healthcare professionals can make a social prescription for non-medical, health-related needs that refers and connects patients to community-based programs, services, and activities to improve their health and enhance their quality of life.

Social Rx is a partnership with Sage, Multicultural Health Brokers, Jewish Family Services, Drive Happiness and Edmonton Meals on Wheels with Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council being the backbone agency. Sage provides the central access point for referrals in addition to providing support and case management to the seniors for social supports such as housing, making certain they are receiving all financial benefits, access to transportation to get to

appointments, food security issues, as well as support in connecting for social engagement.

- From February 2023-February 2024, the central Intake at Sage received **773 referrals** into the program (average 63 new referrals per month)
- Of those, **400 individuals** were enrolled in Social Rx program at Sage (average 35 per month), and the others were referred through to other community partners.

Types of supports accessed:

- Navigation of community supports and services (**35%**)
- Meal assistance / food security (**13%**)
- Assisted transportation (**11%**)
- Housing (**10%**)
- Other supports (**10%**) including: application for financial benefits, housekeeping, grocery shopping, socialization, elder abuse, legal assistance, snow shoveling/yard maintenance, ethnocultural supports.

Funding Support for this program:

Government of Alberta, Anonymous Trust, with backbone support by the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and Healthy Aging Alberta.



Many diverse groups and individuals have found a welcoming home at Sage. Most classes are led by volunteers, though occasionally a paid instructor is required. We appreciate the financial support of the following: InMotion Network - Women in Motion, HelpAge Canada, and Servus Credit Union.

Community Animation

Support for senior-driven initiatives was extended city-wide with a Sage Community Animator in each quadrant of the city.

Community Animation is a facilitated process aimed at stimulating activity within communities. For many years Sage has offered this support in northeast Edmonton through the “Ageing to Sageing program” and at the Sage Centre downtown through senior-lead Life Enrichment Programs. In 2023, this program was expanded across the city of Edmonton. A team of five animators (one in each quadrant plus central at Sage) work to encourage seniors to explore their gifts, aspirations, and interests, and feel comfortable bringing their dreams to reality for themselves and their communities.

Funding support for this program: Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Edmonton.

In 2023, **16,000** contacts were made with almost **1000** community members



A Downtown Community Space for Seniors

Sage's auditorium, classroom spaces, and meeting rooms saw the return of more seniors in 2023. Throughout the year, they came to learn, teach, play, exercise, dance, help others, share, and connect.

At the Sage Centre, spaces are booked for a variety of activities and seniors' groups. Most programs and activities are run by seniors who volunteer their talents and gifts as leaders; these activities are complemented by programmed information sessions, classes, and events which result in a dynamic Life Enrichment Calendar that is co-created by community.

Even though the kitchen of the Sunshine Café has remained closed since the start of the pandemic, seniors once again started meeting in the Café space for drop-in games, coffee groups, and events. Seniors who come to Sage for support are introduced to programs or opportunities and welcomed to participate! Participation by livestream Zoom connection has helped many who cannot, or choose not, to attend in person stay connected.



In 2023, **550** individuals participated in **430** different sessions.



Creating a safe and welcoming space for seniors has always been a priority for Sage. In 2023, increasing concerns with safety in the downtown core resulted in a decision to keep our front entrance doors locked. Elevator repairs and bathroom renovations to improve accessibility and inclusion needs, also provided some challenges for seniors visiting our building. Volunteers and staff helped us to overcome these concerns by volunteering for ‘door duty’ and ensuring that visitors to our building were always made welcome.

Seniors Income Tax Clinic

Sage's Seniors Income Tax Clinic is often the first step for securing other stabilizing resources and life-enhancing connections for low-income / low-resourced seniors. In 2023, 16 skilled volunteers, mostly seniors themselves, filed almost 3400 returns for low-income individuals.

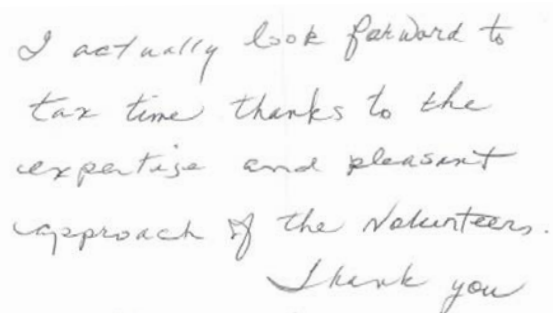
The Seniors Income Tax Clinic is a free service that can be accessed in person or by phone. The phone-based option allows individuals who are mobility restricted, or those for whom transportation is a barrier, to access the program.

Sage is one of the only organizations in Edmonton that provides a year-round clinic and is able to help clients catch up on multiple years of tax returns. The majority of tax returns are completed in the spring: 90% over the phone, 10% by appointment at Sage.

Program Funding support: Canada Revenue Agency: Community Income Tax Volunteer Program

It is not uncommon for seniors with five or even 10 years of outstanding filings to access the Seniors Tax Clinic. The impact of this program for a senior struggling with poverty can be life changing, as the ability to access benefits they had not been receiving brings new financial security.

With staff coordinating support of a truly amazing team of volunteers, Sage's clinic has processed an increase of 500 filings a year since 2021.



I actually look forward to tax time thanks to the expertise and pleasant approach of the volunteers. Thank you

Directory of Senior Services

After an unprecedented two-year pause due to impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic, Sage published the greatly anticipated new edition of the Directory of Senior Services in the fall of 2023. Before the end of the year, almost 30,000 print copies had been distributed into the community free of charge.

With over 200 pages of seniors' services and housing listings, information and helpful checklists, Sage's Directory of Senior Services remains the go-to resource for thousands of seniors, caregivers, and senior-serving professionals in the Greater Edmonton region.

The Directory helps seniors and families navigate what can be complex systems, and this reduces pressure on frontline services. Social workers, and healthcare and homecare providers also rely on the Directory as a resource and give to seniors and caregivers upon discharge.

“I am waiting impatiently for the Directory. I have had one every year for years and use it every week. I have found my last two residences from the Directory, all of the important numbers I want and need are in there – it is my phonebook, my treasured resource & I feel lost without it.”

“Our non-profit uses the Directory to help the many seniors in our communities.”

“Thank you! This is a vital resource for our patients.”

Funding support for this program: City of Edmonton, CN, Directory Advertisers

Supports for Hoarding

Sage maintained its commitment to addressing the need for hoarding supports despite a significant funding gap.

Hoarding disorder is a serious public health and safety issue that affects 2-6% of the population; symptoms are more prevalent, and can be more life-threatening, in older adults. Sage's This Full House Program is one of the only venues for older adults to share and connect with others who experience hoarding. Securing adequate funding for the program has been an ongoing struggle even though the condition affects thousands of community members and has significant resourcing impacts on numerous community agencies.

- **Support for individuals:** 400 contacts were made with 77 individuals to support them with dealing with hoarding disorder including a Therapeutic Support group and Drop in support group.

- **Advocacy & Education:** Educational presentations and work with the Edmonton Hoarding Coalition continued, in particular in developing a new universal Assessment Tool to reduce stigma around hoarding and to work together in an integrated, collaborative system of services and supports.

Program Funding support: Edmonton Realtors Community Foundation

Partners: Edmonton Hoarding Coalition, Canadian Mental Health Association, Hoarding Disorder Foundation of Alberta

Research

With funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Sage undertook a research project to understand the intersection between hoarding and homelessness.

This research provides insight into system-level responses that could reduce housing precarity for seniors with hoarding disorder. The study concludes that addressing hoarding disorder requires a comprehensive, coordinated approach encompassing harm reduction, case management, and systemic changes in service delivery to better support older adults with hoarding behaviours and reduce the economic burden on society.

A coordinated, systems-level approach with streamlined referral pathways and standardized reporting systems is proposed to enhance efficiency and efficacy.

Read: [Hoarding Behaviour & Housing Insecurity For Older Adults](#)

Volunteers

Volunteers touch all areas of Sage and are critical to fulfilling our mandate to provide holistic support with and for seniors.

In 2023, 83 volunteers contributed 7439 hours assisting participants with form completion, completing tax returns and data entry, managing front reception, leading classes, community groups, and field trips, engaged as the Board of Directors, and various other administrative tasks.

Student Learning & Engagement

Sage routinely supports student engagement and learning through student placements, practicums, and special projects. In 2023, 9 students supported Life Enrichment programming, outreach work, the Seniors Safe House, production of the Directory of Seniors Services, and data and evaluation work.





Sector Building & Leadership

Healthy Aging Alberta

In 2023, Sage continued to support Healthy Aging Alberta and the development of the community-based seniors' services sector. Sage staff contributed to the Community Leadership Council, attended and presented at the inaugural Provincial CBSS Summit, attended Regional Gatherings, and engaged and learned through CORE Alberta.



Regional Centre for Healthy Aging

Sage launched the Northern Alberta Regional Centre for Healthy Aging (RCHA) in September 2023, in collaboration with the University of Alberta Faculty of Nursing and Athabasca University.

Through this groundbreaking new initiative, Sage has been designated as one of four regional centers in Canada working to mobilize and build on the strengths of seniors, streamline assessment practices, and implement interventions to promote healthy aging in community.

“Through the RCHA, Sage is helping to strengthen and expand the provision of the social supports that are fundamental to healthy aging, and demonstrate the significant impact that community-based interventions can have in alleviating the challenges faced by seniors and the healthcare system alike,”

— Karen McDonald, Sage ED

Collaborative & Collective Action

Sage participated in almost 30 partnerships and collaborations throughout 2023, engaging with more than 60 organizations.

Sage's approach is fundamentally collaborative in nature, and most programs are undertaken in partnership. This approach is particularly important because of our work with equity-seeking seniors.

Sage works with a variety of partners who serve seniors from various identities, backgrounds, and life experiences (including immigrant, refugee, and newcomer seniors and LGBTQ2S+ seniors), often establishing a fiscal agent/intermediary relationship so that these partners can work directly with the populations they are serving, while we offer complementary services, additional capacity, and organizational support.

Partnerships allow for complementary services like free drop in counselling - available at Sage through a long-standing partnership with the Family Centre.

Some of our key collaborations and partnerships include:

Alberta Council of Women's Shelters	Community Leagues	Jewish Family Services
Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council	Drive Happiness	Healthy Aging Alberta
Bissell Centre	Edmonton Hoarding Coalition	Meals on Wheels
C5 Hub	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	Men's Shed Edmonton
Canadian Mental Health Association	Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council	Seniors Protection Partnership
Caregivers Alberta	Edmonton Seniors Pride Group	The Family Centre
Catholic Social Services		Unison, Calgary

Funding

Sage’s impact is a result of a combination of community, corporate and government support. We believe that building a strong network of support, including funders, volunteers, members, donors, advocates, allies, and community groups, is essential to sustain the local social supports required for healthy aging in the community.

Grant Funding

Sage develops grant proposals throughout the year - often in partnership with other organizations.

CITY OF EDMONTON:

Seniors Community Investment Program
(Operating & Facility Conservation)

Family and Community Support Services

Social Development
Branch (via ACWS)

Transit Access Grant

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA:

Seniors, Community and Social Services

Enabling Accessibility

Alberta Gaming, Liquor
& Cannabis (Casino)

FEDERAL SUPPORT:

New Horizons For Seniors Program

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

Canadian Frailty Network

Canadian Mortgage and Housing
Corp Research & Planning Fund

Max Bell Foundation

PROGRAM SUPPORT:

Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council

Alberta Sport Connection –
In Motion Network

Edmonton Arts Council

Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council

HelpAge Canada

Homeward Trust

Realtors Community Foundation

St Paul's Foundation

Women's Shelter Canada

United Way - Alberta Capital Region

Evaluation and reporting required of grant funding takes a significant investment. Sage collaborated with Bissell Centre throughout 2023 to co-develop a cost-effective and agile case management database that will support outcomes measurement and reporting.

Thank you 

Corporate Support & Community Fundraising

Whether it is support for specific programs and events, an annual corporate gift, group fundraising, or gifts in-kind, when corporate and community groups choose Sage, they have a direct impact in the lives of seniors.

Alberta Blue Cross

ATCO EPIC

Charities Aid Foundation Canada

CN

Edmonton Southgate Lions Club

Felesky Flynn LLP

Financial Services Group

Community Trust Fund

Hosanna Lutheran Church

Quilting Group

Imperial Sovereign Court of the

Wild Rose Social Organization

M & M Food Market

(Lakeland Ridge, Sherwood Park)

RBC Foundation

Rotary Club of Edmonton
East

Servus Credit Union

Telus Community
Ambassadors

We also gratefully acknowledge advertisers in the SageLink and Directory of Senior Services – without whom publications would not be possible.

Servus has supported Sage annually for over 10 years, even when priorities and conditions changed. This type of reliable long-term partnership allows for greater community impact through resource stability.

“We are proud to support seniors in community through our partnership with Sage. Sage’s holistic approach to health resonates with Servus values and priorities.”

— Servus Credit Union

Family Foundations & Planned Giving

The impact of gifts from family foundations and planned giving cannot be overstated. Whether supporting an emergent need or providing a stable source of funding that can be planned for year over year, these gifts can be both foundational and transformational.

Butler Family Foundation

Melton Foundation

Funds held at the Edmonton Community Foundation:

- Barbara G Blackley Fund
- Cable Family Fund
- Douglas Milton Campbell Estate Fund

The Estate of Margaret Philip

We also gratefully acknowledge supporters who have made a legacy gift commitment by including Sage as a beneficiary in their will.

Sage Donors & Champions

The Silver Threads of Sage

Approximately 300 donors collectively gave over \$75,000 throughout 2023. Community members contribute donations year-round to support special needs and the Resilience Fund which is used to fill gaps, and strengthen a community of support that seniors can count on.

Donor support is essential to maintaining free programs and services and responding to emergent needs. A very special thank you to monthly donors, those who gave in memory of a loved one and all of you who gave anonymously.

[See our donor list here](#)



Financials

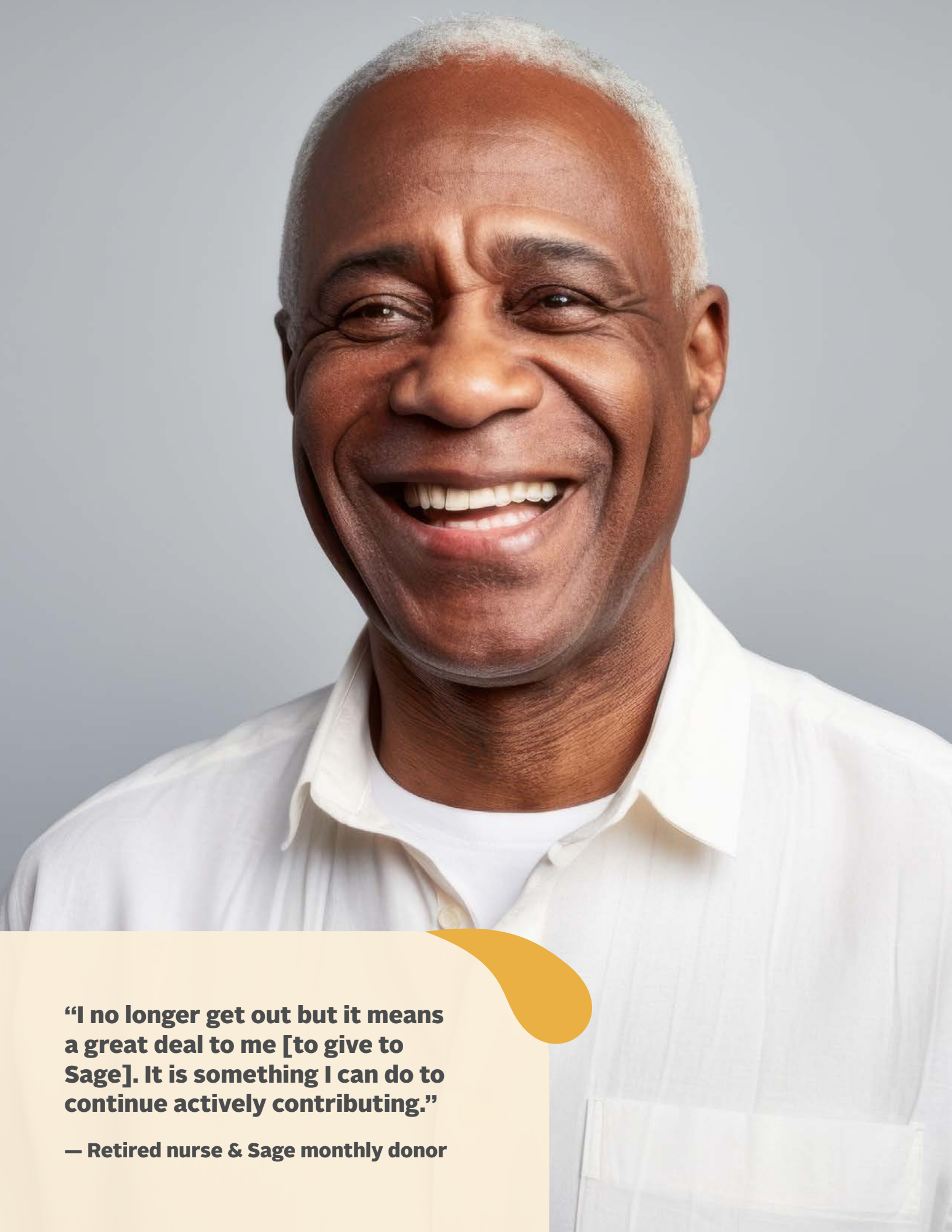
Sage Seniors Association
Summarized Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2023

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	\$ 637,169	\$ 890,996
Accounts receivable	139,924	36,695
Inventory	-	1,288
Prepaid expenses	17,229	10,010
	794,322	938,989
Long-term portfolio investments, at market value	532,808	500,207
Property and equipment	518,605	523,973
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 1,845,735	\$ 1,963,169
LIABILITIES		
Current		
Accounts payable	\$ 92,145	\$ 165,613
Deferred contributions	676,811	848,456
	768,956	1,014,069
Deferred contributions related to capital assets	504,275	502,949
	1,273,231	1,517,018
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	25,364	(75,080)
Invested in capital assets	14,333	21,024
Contingency Fund	122,950	121,413
Investment Fund	409,857	378,794
	572,504	446,151
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$ 1,845,735	\$ 1,963,169

Sage Seniors Association
Summarized Statement of Operations
For the year ended December 31, 2023

	2023	2022
REVENUE		
Government grants	\$ 2,234,012	\$ 1,777,420
Government emergency funding	-	518
Other grants	667,884	339,534
Self-generated revenue	248,230	180,780
Donations and fundraising	155,666	163,233
Investment income	19,864	13,226
	3,325,656	2,474,711
EXPENSES		
Wages and benefits	2,024,341	1,885,505
Program expenses	692,516	413,103
Office operation	84,059	95,025
Occupancy	185,939	129,453
Amortization	130,767	126,020
Other expenses	105,763	82,998
	3,223,385	2,732,104
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES BEFORE OTHER ITEM	102,271	(257,393)
Change in unrealized gain on portfolio investments	24,082	(46,653)
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 126,353	\$ (304,046)

The complete audited financial statements are available upon request.



“I no longer get out but it means a great deal to me [to give to Sage]. It is something I can do to continue actively contributing.”

— Retired nurse & Sage monthly donor

Sage Board of Directors

President

Michael Solowan

President Elect

Arielle Whitham

Past President

Kathleen Thurber

Secretary

Anne Smith

Treasurer

Anne Smith

Members at Large

Joanna Cave

Cathy Giblin

Isha Katyal

Fayaz Rajabali

Paul Taylor

Board members are elected for two-year terms at the spring AGM.



Accredited
IMAGINE CANADA



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Connect with us!    

Charitable Registration Number: 119154839 RR 0001