

2015 CALGARY SENIORS

# Annual Report





ALBERTA  
SENIORS AND HOUSING

*Office of the Minister  
MLA, Edmonton-Riverview*

**Message from Honourable Lori Sigurdson  
Minister of Seniors and Housing**

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, my sincere thanks to the Calgary Seniors' Resource Society for all that you do on behalf of seniors in Alberta's largest city.

As we all know, Alberta's population is aging. There are now more than 515,000 seniors in our province and the number of seniors is increasing faster than the general population. The needs and priorities of seniors who are living longer and, in many cases, healthier lives are changing as well. Your organization certainly recognizes the desire of many seniors to age in place and I commend you for providing a wide range of programs and services intended to help seniors remain healthy and independent.

Practical programs like Escorted Transportation, Friendly Visiting and Spring Clean Up/Fall Fix Up recognize that seniors may need a different type of support system to remain independent, but also feel connected to their community.

I was pleased to see that your hard work and innovative programs were recognized with a Minister's Seniors Service Award last year. This was well-deserved recognition for your efforts to support seniors and I would like to add my congratulations.

I know that the Calgary Seniors' Resource Society will continue to make a positive difference for seniors in your community and I wish you all the very best in your future endeavours.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lori Sigurdson'.

Lori Sigurdson  
Minister of Seniors and Housing

April, 2016

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# Message from the President and the Executive Director

**D**efining what success looks like is critical in knowing whether you have achieved what you set out to do - or not. In reflecting on what success looks like for Calgary Seniors over the past year, several components stand out.

**Dollars are certainly a common way that we measure success.** How much did we bring in? How much did we spend? Did we meet budget?

Looking at 2015, we had a challenging year financially, as indicated by our balance sheet. With the economic downturn and uncertainty, the loss of jobs across all sectors, and the freeze or hold on community investment and sponsorship dollars, raising funds from individuals and corporations got increasingly more difficult as the year went on. This, in combination with previous shortfalls due to flood recovery and no increase in core funding since 2005, left us with a significant shortfall. We run a lean organization at the best of times with little, if any, excess. That lack of reserve means it's harder for us to weather economic storms when they occur. This is something we are committed to changing, and we have developed several new strategies which are being put in place currently.

**In measuring success, there are other pieces of the puzzle that are equally important, like human impact.** How many people did we help? How many people did we engage? How many people support us day to day?

Again looking at 2015, this is where we really shone. Staff along with our volunteer contingent, continued to demonstrate creativity, innovation, responsiveness, agility and effectiveness when it came to problem solving and overcoming barriers and adversity. They demonstrated it each and every day when they dealt with the increasing needs, complexities and challenges of vulnerable seniors across our city, including those younger seniors between the ages of 55 - 64 who lost their jobs and did not know where to go or what to do. The seniors we serve remained first and foremost,

our number one priority. As you will see throughout this report, thousands of individuals and their families depended on our services over the course of the year. This difference we made in people's lives, in their well-being, can be difficult to measure, but you can see in their stories that it doesn't make it any less important than the dollars.

**As an organization with a 21+ year history, Calgary Seniors is no stranger to adversity.** We have survived and even thrived through lean times in the past, built anew on learnings from those past challenges and experiences, and most importantly, retained and developed our family of supporters.

The year would not be complete without recognizing the family of supporters including the Anonymous Family Legacy Fund and additional support from a variety of The Calgary Foundation family funds. This amazing annual gift, along with these other family fund gifts, were not only timely, but essential in this challenging year. Thank you to The Calgary Foundation for supporting our work and sharing with your wonderful donors.

**And then there are the people;** the staff, the volunteers, the Board of Directors, the donors and partners in the community.

Thank you to our staff for making a difference every day. We are proud of the work, the creativity and innovation you demonstrate, and the passion you exude in delivering programs and services. Thank you to our Board of Directors for having the courage to grow and for continuing to plan for the future. Thank you to our volunteers for your commitment, dedication and tireless efforts with our seniors every week. You are making meaningful and effective change in the overall wellbeing of the seniors you support. And, finally thank you to our funders, donors and partners in the community who believe in us, who support our work and together help us combat isolation one senior at a time.

# Our Purpose

In 1995, Calgary Seniors' Resource Society emerged when three like-minded and allied community organizations came together to better serve seniors in our city under one roof and one name. Since then, the agency has continued to grow, evolve, and innovate through collaborative partnerships.

What has not changed, is the core reason Calgary Seniors is here: to help improve the quality of life for seniors and to provide opportunities for members of the community to support them through meaningful volunteer engagement. We carry out our mission with practical, cost-effective programming that makes a difference and recognizes the unique concerns and challenges faced by older adults.

**Poor health, dementia, mobility issues, poverty, isolation, loneliness, abuse, addictions, hoarding; no one plans to grow old and need help, but these are the realities for many seniors across our city.**

At Calgary Seniors, we focus on prevention: dealing with core issues around social isolation, abuse and neglect, housing, transportation, and critical needs. Above all, we want to ensure that seniors are not forgotten or left behind. While governments, municipalities, the health care system, business and communities face the reality of meeting the needs of our aging population, many gaps in services and systems emerge that seniors might fall through. This is where Calgary Seniors' Resource Society comes in.

## Calgary Seniors is focused on being a part of the solution.

As a non-profit agency that is part of a thriving non-profit sector, we work in collaboration with many other dedicated organizations to focus on real co-operation and real solutions. We are committed to continue moving forward with a view to creative solutions and collaboration across sectors, recognizing that the non-profit sector is often stretched thin.

**The need in our city has never been greater.**

**We provide a depth of support that creates meaningful and effective change in the overall well-being and quality of life for vulnerable seniors.**



### Fast Facts for 2015:

- 500+ social work outreach clients
- 1300+ volunteer services clients
- 1100+ individuals completed new online SeniorConnect training
- 2500+ seniors & family supported short term

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# Our Volunteers *...the eyes and ears, hands and heart*

**W**e could not provide the service we do without the time and energy of over 850 volunteers. From all ages and cultural backgrounds, our volunteers provide transportation to medical appointments, shopping for food and other basic items, assistance getting prescriptions, and provide reprieve from the desperate loneliness so many of our clients experience. Without this unwavering dedication and commitment, hundreds of seniors would go unnoticed and unassisted every single day. At Calgary Seniors, we understand the invaluable role that volunteers play. They are our eyes and ears in the community, and the hands and hearts in peoples' homes. For this, we are continually grateful.



Ted and Margo met a few months ago through our Friendly Visiting program. The visits started off strong and a friendship soon developed. Ted and Margo would sit and chat for hours over coffee every Saturday. During these weekly visits, Ted began seeing some unpleasant dynamics between Margo and her husband. He called the volunteer department at Calgary Seniors and expressed some of his concerns, specifically around domestic abuse. Thanks to Ted, Margo got the help she needed. Our SeniorConnect response team put together a safety plan and Margo knows that she can call us anytime for support. Thank you Ted for being our eyes and ears in the community.



Callan and Iva met through our Adopt a Grandparent program. During their visit, Iva mentioned that she would like someone to take her shopping. Callan stepped up and they have been friends ever since! Together they go to get Iva's hair cut, they go to the Farmer's Market and even out to Elbow Falls for a walk. In 2014, Iva had a bad fall and was in the hospital for a period of time. While she was there, Callan and her husband built Iva a ramp so she could get in and out of her home safely. Callan really enjoys the time she spends with Iva – they talk about anything and everything. Both hope that their relationship continues for many years to come. Thank you Callan for being our hands and heart in the community.



## **Volunteers Headlines - Making a Difference**

- **Volunteer takes senior on outing to Beaverdam Flats; shares an interest in birdwatching**
- **Volunteer teaches senior to sew; able to supplement income**
- **Volunteer reaches decade of service and commitment to senior; enriches both lives**
- **Volunteer takes meals to senior; ensures speedy recovery**
- **Volunteer makes three times the difference; supports three seniors weekly**
- **Volunteer helps stroke survivor and aphasia sufferer communicate with CRA; files taxes online and updates expired ID**



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# Our Stories

*We make a difference.  
We make change happen.*

**No one plans to become isolated, develop dementia, become a victim of elder abuse, become frail or unable to take care of ourselves, but for many seniors, this is a reality.**

Whether it be an outreach client, a SeniorConnect referral or a senior recipient from one of our volunteer programs, we are committed to enhancing and changing lives through our programming and caring at Calgary Seniors – one senior at a time. And we make a difference each and every day in the lives of hundreds of vulnerable seniors across our city. These are three stories ....



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## A SeniorConnect Story...

**A** woman made a call to the Distress Centre Senior Helpline. She was concerned about her elderly neighbour Ray who appeared to be behaving “a little out of character lately”. Upon further discussion, it appeared that Ray had not left his home much over the last couple of months and the curtains were always closed. The woman had knocked on the senior’s door to see if there was anything she could do or help with, but he didn’t answer, only peered through the curtains.

The Distress Centre placed a referral to SeniorConnect. Unsuccessful on the first visit, the social worker tried again. From the moment the worker stepped into the home, it was apparent that Ray was struggling. The home was cluttered, clothes were strewn across the floor and dirty dishes were piled high on the kitchen counter top. The senior looked tired and disheveled.

Over a period of time, the social worker learned that Ray had been living on bread and noodles, and had abandoned the bedroom to sleep on the couch. He only left his home when necessary to gather supplies. Ray suffered with chronic pain due to an old injury and admitted to drinking vast amounts of alcohol to aid sleep. The worker discovered that he lost his only surviving family member, a son, in a car accident four months earlier. Sadly, the worker also learned that Ray was contemplating suicide, and indeed, had the means to carry this out.

Over the course of some weeks and with the support of the Distress Centre 24-hr help line, the family doctor and community mental health, the SeniorConnect worker was able to coordinate treatment for severe depression and isolation. Gradually, over a period of time, Ray began to take more interest in himself and his home. With the help of a volunteer, he began attending a chronic pain clinic on Mondays and a grief support group on Thursdays. A final visit with the senior was also attended by the neighbour who had originally called the Distress Centre with her concerns. During this visit, it was established that Ray would let his neighbour know should he need help, and he had already agreed to sharing the Christmas holidays with her and her family. Ray was slowly getting back on his feet and no longer had thoughts about suicide. He was looking forward to the coming year and to living again.

## An Escorted Transportation Story ...

**D**oreen, 86, had been a Calgary Seniors’ Escorted Transportation client for 11 years. When Doreen’s husband Bill was alive, both used the program on a monthly basis to get to and from their doctors’ appointments. Bill always made the trips to the doctor bearable – he had such a way with people and a sense of humor. He made Doreen smile and feel good, even when things were difficult.

After her husband’s untimely passing, Doreen’s overall health deteriorated. She developed severe arthritis, mobility issues and heart problems. By herself and having no companionship, she was lonely. She missed her husband terribly. Her transportation driver noticed the change. She told him of her challenges and how even getting groceries was getting harder every week. Her driver called Volunteer Services.

Doreen was matched up with another volunteer for Assisted Shopping. It was a perfect match. Her volunteer, Shelley, was delightful and had a good sense of humor – something she really missed. Doreen began to look forward to their shopping outings; even her trips to the doctors’ appointments were better. Being connected to Calgary Seniors’ Resource Society and wonderful volunteers not only gave Doreen peace of mind but made her feel less alone, less overwhelmed and more cared for.

## An Outreach Story ...

**C**arl, a 70 year old widow, lived in a three bedroom rental home. His concerns included rental arrears and an eviction notice. An Outreach Worker met with Carl to complete an assessment and discuss his options.

Carl’s son (who had been living with him) and another roommate both abandoned Carl and left him with the full cost of the rent, which he could not afford. Carl disclosed he was being abused both financially and emotionally by various friends and family members, leaving him lonely, depressed and expressing thoughts of suicide. He was desperate.

With the help of a Calgary Seniors Outreach Worker, he was able to find a new apartment. As Carl was unable to afford the cost of the move or to physically move his belongings because of arthritis, the worker accessed emergency funding to help pay for the cost of a mover and arranged for volunteers to help him pack and unpack his belongings. Carl was able to move into his new apartment and with the help of his social worker, was able to make a fresh start with hope for the future.

# A Year In Review

The past year was challenging for many in Calgary. The energy sector has been struggling, resulting in other sectors being adversely affected and layoffs have resulted across the board. Charitable donations have become increasingly scarce and corporate sponsorships have been put on hold, leaving most non-profits scrambling. Our agency, like many others, felt this impact painfully in 2015. Calgary Seniors remains adaptive, creative and innovative in these challenging times. We remain focused on the people we serve - ensuring they receive the critical support they need on a daily basis.

The seniors we work with are low income, have mobility issues, and other health issues, and many have no family or support systems in place. They are isolated and often lonely. We feel that no senior should be alone and without support.

## RESPONDING TO EMERGING TRENDS...

Perhaps most significant, are the number of inquiries around assistance with clutter removal, one time clean-up or home maintenance projects and moving help. Volunteer Services received several of these requests each week. Most of the seniors applying for assistance were very low income, and almost all had no support from family or friends. The need for a Clutter Clean Up and Moving Support program is clearly apparent and development is underway. We anticipate this program will formally launch in 2017.

In 2015, Volunteer Services noted a number of common threads among the client requests we received.

Other trends of note are: requests for help with companion animal care, emergency assistance in dealing with overdue utility, telephone (Lifeline) and cable TV bills and requests about resources for caregivers (specifically seniors caring for seniors). In response to these trends, Calgary Seniors' Volunteer Services department strives to meet the emerging needs of our clients. Our Senior Pet Assist program will officially launch in late 2016/early 2017, and focus on mobilizing volunteers to assist vulnerable seniors with companion animals. Our Volunteer Social Respite program will be launching in Fall 2016, and will mobilize volunteers to provide social respite for seniors caregiving for other seniors.

**With the economic downturn in 2015, our Outreach programs** have seen a significant increase in requests from older adults 55+ who require assistance seeking a means of income after losing their jobs. Not only do these "younger" older adults need help with immediate supports such as food and rent, they also need emotional support and practical guidance around their rapidly changing circumstances.

Other rapidly increasing trends include immigrant seniors needing connection to services in their communities and also to government programs to access financial and other assistance. Many immigrant seniors live with their extended families and have little or no knowledge of the English language making them fully dependent on others to access important programs and services.

## Board Members:

**Mark Kolesar**, Board President  
**Kathryn Lefevre**, Past President  
**Sandra Hirst**, Vice-President  
**Dorothy Harris**, Treasurer  
**Athenea O'Bryan**, Secretary  
**Joel Christie**, Director  
**Louise Campbell**, Director  
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**Roy Goodall**, Director  
**Ranjan Kumar**, Director  
**Joseph Osuji**, Director  
**Lori Paine**, ED & Ex Officio  
**John William Wade**, Director

## Calgary Seniors Programs and Services:

### Adopt a Grandparent

- Christmas Cheer Up
- Spring Clean Up
- Fall Fix Up

### Escorted Transportation

### Assisted Shopping

### Friendly Visiting

### Telephone Reassurance

### SeniorConnect

### Outreach (a member of The Way In Network)

### Information and Referral

### Caregiver Connect **NEW**

### Launching in 2016/2017

### Pet Assist &

### Volunteer Respite

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# Highlights From 2015

## Caregiver Connect

The Caregiver Connect Project came to fruition in Fall 2015 with seed funding provided by the Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program and The Calgary Foundation.

This two year project strives to link up working caregivers to community resources, information, and support through a series of specialized education sessions. The project also aims to assist employers to better understand the needs of working caregivers with focused education sessions specially designed for managers and human resources professionals.

## Adopt a Grandparent

Although Adopt a Grandparent did not reach our fundraising goals for 2015, we still made Christmas a whole lot merrier for lonely seniors in our city. Thanks to the generosity of corporate Calgary, we managed to once again provide visits and stockings full of gifts to approximately 300 isolated seniors.

In addition to our major cash supporters, Qualico Developments, Nexen Energy ULC, MEG Energy, and Connacher Oil & Gas Ltd., companies including Stuart Olsen, Seventh Generation Energy, Vermilion Energy, Savanna Energy, Bridgewater Bank, Worley Parsons, Office Team & Robert Half, and Amica of Aspen Woods donated a substantial number of stockings as well. McCrum's Office Furniture and STEP Energy collected donations via their staff.

We wish to thank all of our donors. Your support means that our Volunteer Programs run strong all year-round. These programs are only possible because of the generosity of donors like you.

## Spring Clean Up/Fall Fix Up

More than 50 Adopt a Grandparent Spring Clean Up/Fall Fix Up projects were completed in 2015 (compared to twelve completed in 2014)! We are so grateful for all the generous support we receive from our donors and volunteers. From one of our very thankful seniors: "Without you, I would still be scared of falling down my front stairs, but now I have a ramp. You helped me when no one else would. Bless you."

## One for the Ages Gala

Calgary Seniors hosted our inaugural gala, One for the Ages ~ Celebrating Seniors on June 5th, 2015 at the prestigious Ranchmen's Club, featuring a private performance by Canadian actor & singer Tom Jackson and The Travelling Mabels. Thank you to our 2015 event sponsors, donors, and guests for making this event an unforgettable evening and success.

## Remembering When Program

This is a Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults developed by the National Fire Protection Association. We were honoured to be asked to partner with the Calgary Fire Department and Meals on Wheels to deliver this program in the community. Agency training was provided in Florida at the NFPA Scholarship Conference in November.

## SeniorConnect

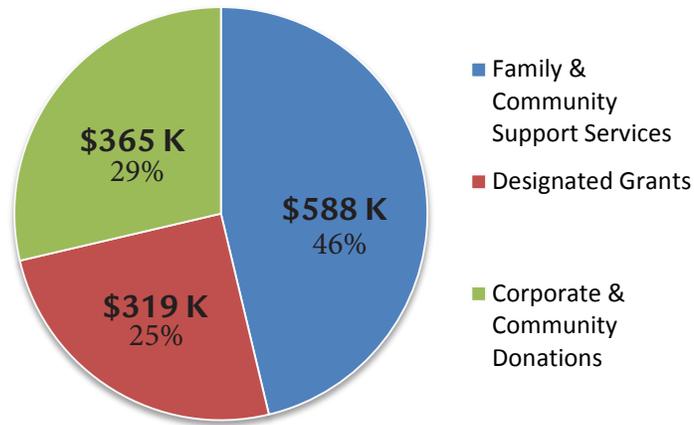
The SeniorConnect education component came fully online in 2015 after a pilot period in 2014. It followed later in the year by three additional optional training modules: Addictions, Caregiver Stress and Mental Health (The 3 D's). This training provides awareness of at-risk seniors and where to get help.

SeniorConnect worked closely with many community agencies, organizations and businesses throughout the year, including emergency and specialized teams, City departments, places of worship, local community centres and Alberta Health Services to broaden the reach and strengthen the community "Gatekeeper approach" in effectively identifying and helping vulnerable seniors in our communities. In addition, SeniorConnect expanded its response to the areas of Cochrane, Okotoks, High River, Strathmore and Chestermere.

## Minister of Seniors Service Award

In October at Government House in Edmonton, Calgary Seniors received a Minister of Seniors Service Award from the Honourable Sara Hoffman. Eight awards were presented to Albertans and agencies who make a significant contribution and impact in the lives of seniors. The award speaks to the dedication of our volunteers and recognizes the value and effectiveness of our programming and services through community engagement.

## Revenues



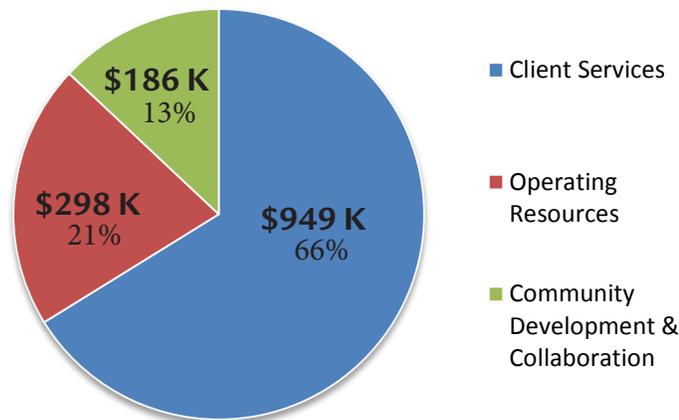
### Fast Facts:

We accepted and trained 430 new volunteers

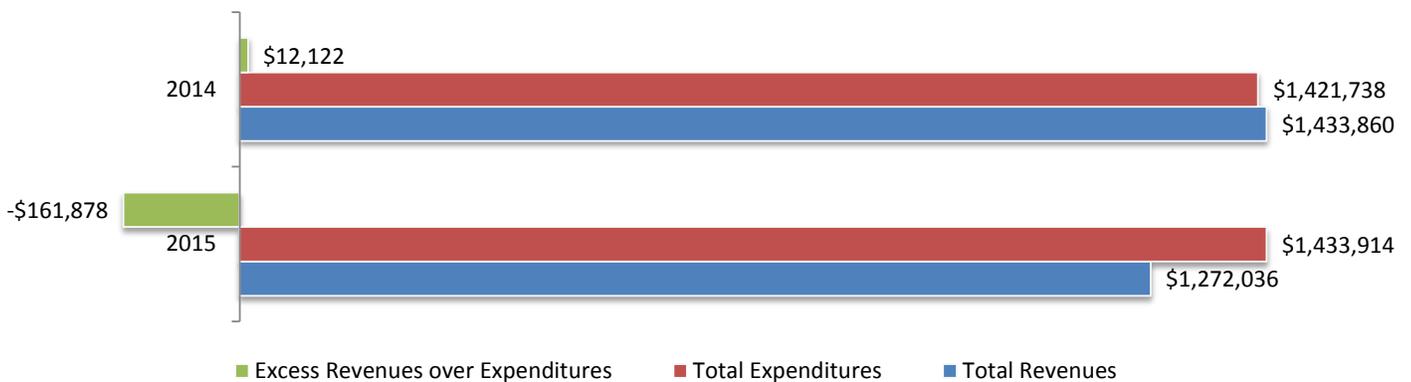
Volunteers provided over 53,000 hours of service (equivalent to over \$1 million or 30 full-time employees)

Escorted Transportation volunteers drove over 100,000 km

## Expenditures



## Statement of Operations



Calgary Seniors' Audited Financial Statements are available by request. To obtain a copy, please call (403) 266-6200

# Donor Thank You!

Thank you to all of our donors! Without your support - both big and small - we would not be able to make the difference we make each day in the lives of seniors across our city. Below we recognize those who donated over \$500 in 2015. Calgary Seniors would also like to express our sincerest thank you to the Calgary Foundation and an Anonymous Family Legacy Fund for their very generous annual gift of \$100,000+ in perpetuity. Their will help to ensure we are here to support seniors in the years to come.

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Thank you to our major donors and partners:



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Government of Alberta

# We're Mobile!

Calgary Seniors would like to express our sincere gratitude to our Facebook followers! We have well over 2000 of followers. Every time we post an urgent need for a client, you step up to the plate! Because of our followers, we were able to do many things for our clients that are above and beyond, such as helping with much needed furniture or utilities bills for low-income seniors who are in a pinch. Thank you again.

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