



## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Carol Bigam**

SWESA has concluded its fourth year of operation and the Board is proud of its accomplishments to date. As one of the City of Edmonton's (COE) six district seniors' centres, SWESA targets an audience of over 30,000 individuals aged 55+ in southwest Edmonton.

When I look back at SWESA's development, a lot has happened in a short time. SWESA held its first Annual General Meeting in April 2013 and later that year, received its first Emerging Seniors' Centre Grant (ESCG) for \$100,000. That same year, SWESA signed agreements with Yellowbird East Community Centre (YECC) and the Terwillegar Community Recreation Centre (TCRC). Giving our members the opportunity to socialize twice a week at each of these locations was our start. The first employee was hired shortly after and soon SWESA began to offer programs. In 2014, the monthly luncheon program was started, which is now a favourite get together for many. SWESA's offerings continue to include programs, events and outings which are detailed in the weekly Bulletin, the Program Guide and on our website. In 2016, the ground work was completed to bring on a second employee to coordinate SWESA's newest program, the Seniors' Home Supports Program (SHSP). SWESA has been successful in securing a major fund-raising event: participation in the first casino will happen on May 20 and 21, 2017.



Our membership has reached nearly 400 and, for the first time, the Board has its full slate of 12 members. The Board is now moving to the next stage of development: from an operational Board to a governance Board, in order to meet the needs of this growing organization.

I joined the Board in April 2013, and am completing the last year of my term as a Board member. I am honoured to have been involved in the development of

SWESA. I have learned so much and have made so many wonderful friends. Members and volunteers will ensure that SWESA will continue to grow and expand. Thank you to the volunteers, members and to the COE for your support. You have made SWESA what it is today, a great place to meet people and have fun.

### FROM 2013 to TODAY

SWESA has made incredible advances in a very short time. At a strategic planning workshop this past year, the Board reflected on how far it has evolved since 2013.

At the end of 2013, there were five Board members. SWESA was still in the start-up phase, and was building slowly. The COE had a vision to have a seniors' centre in the southwest. As a result, it had provided an ESCG to fund the start-up phase. Then the work started to link the southwest 55+ community to the valuable offerings of a seniors' centre. People were encouraged to join as members. Prices for programs were set low (below full costs) to encourage member participation in the activities. Memberships were free, and 500 people had joined at that time. At the end of 2013, SWESA had delivered three programs: the YECC coffee group, the TCRC coffee group and a Christmas sparkle tour. The first employee was hired in April 2014. In 2015, membership fees were implemented to help cover increasing costs.

TCRC Coffee Group. Thanks to hosts: Bea Sidhu, Sue Whittington, Arlene Marvin, and Linda Allen



How things have changed in a short time. At the end of 2016, it was clear that the southwest area of Edmonton supports a seniors' centre, based on membership numbers and the demand for

programs. In 2016, SWESA closed with a membership of nearly 400, an increase of 35% from 2015, and is nearly back to the 2013 level (before fees). The organization is no longer a small start up; it has close to one-third the membership numbers of the major seniors' centres. SWESA's Board had grown to 12 members. These members bring a broad base of experience to the SWESA cause. As

SWESA nears the end of its eligibility for the ESCG , the Board is focusing on strategies to create a balance between program affordability and the financial sustainability of the organization.



SWESA Board:

**Back L to R:** J. L. Tymko, Kathy Trepanier (advisor), Fred Rumpel, Bob Hoddinott, Ellen Frombach, Sam Radke, Earl Bubis (COE rep):

**Front L to R:** Judy Baker, Shirley Adam, Carol Bigam, Judith Abbott:

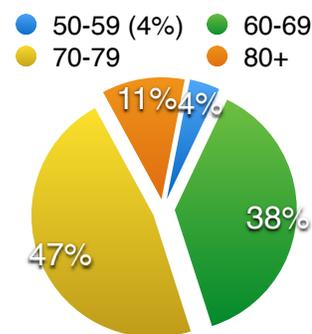
Missing: Barbara Olsen, Rama Banerjee Lall, Liz Tondu

Board profiles can be accessed at: <http://swedmontonseniors.ca/about/board-committees/>.

## MEMBERSHIP

The SWESA year closed with nearly 400 paid members. Eighty-five percent of Association membership is in the range of 60-79 years of age (see chart on right).

Hearing from members was important to the SWESA Board and, in 2016, an on-line member survey provided guidance for the development of a weekly Bulletin. SWESA membership also provided input into SWESA through participation on Board committees.



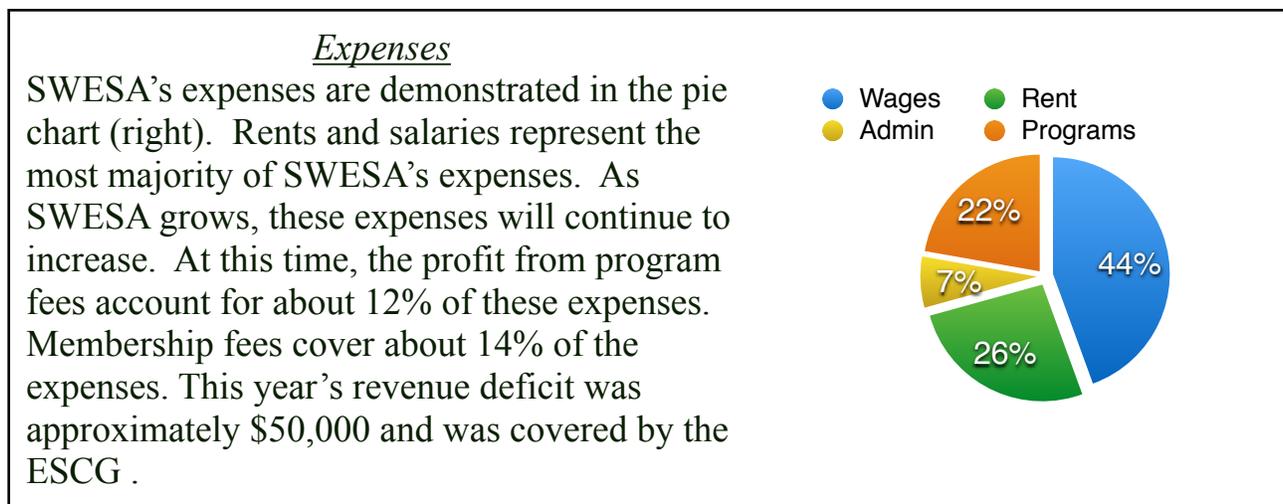
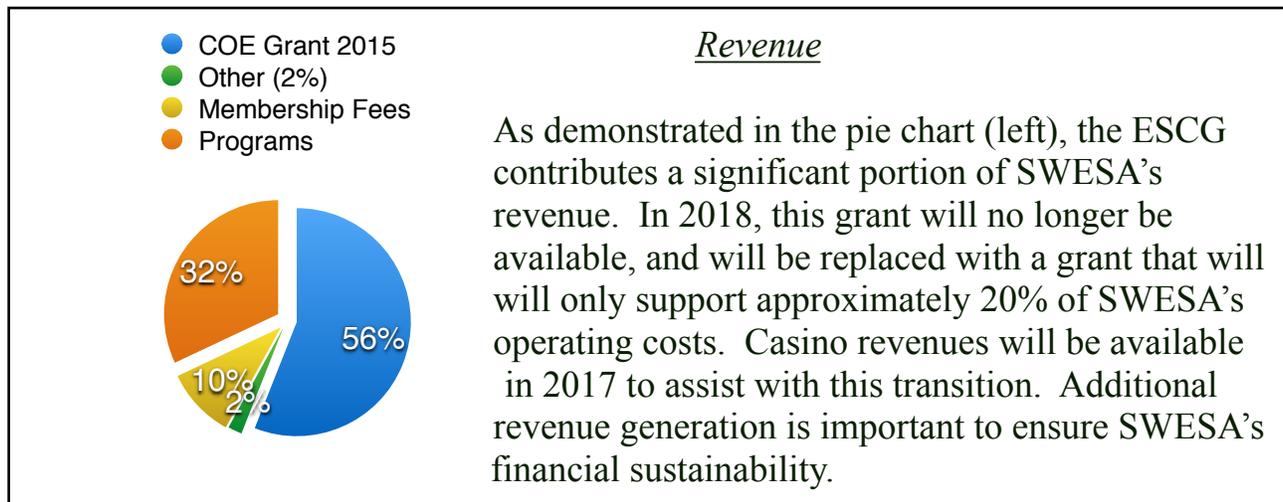
Age: SWESA Members

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In preparation for the end of the ESCG , SWESA has developed and moved forward with a four-prong approach to achieve financial sustainability, which included:

- sponsorship (involvement of the business community). In 2016, a strategic approach for securing sponsors was designed and implemented with assistance from the COE,
- a casino, scheduled for May 2017,
- membership participation (membership fees, program fees, 50:50 tickets),
- and finding additional sources of grant funding. In 2016, additional grants were received from Signarama to develop and produce two SWESA

display banners, and the Government of Alberta for the purchase of furniture for the coffee space, outdoor signage, yoga, floor curling and fitness equipment.



## INITIATIVES

To support SWESA's growth to a medium-sized centre, a Governance Committee was created to ensure that SWESA has the appropriate policies and organizational structure for its growing status, for setting direction for the future, and for strong Board operations. A strategic planning session with Jennifer Beyer, of Alberta Culture, led the way for an enhanced organization design to reflect SWESA's rapid growth.

In 2016, SWESA coordinated the transfer of the third year of a pilot program, the SHSP, with the Lifestyles Helping Hands Seniors' Association. This program is funded by a COE grant. Barb Newell, a Home Supports Program coordinator, was hired, with program commencement scheduled for January 1, 2017. The SHSP provides a service that gives seniors referrals to vetted service providers who offer snow removal, yard help, housekeeping and minor home repair services at reasonable costs.

Networking and community partners are important to SWESA. A standing Liaison Committee continues to maintain open lines of communication and develop strategic working relationships. Large public events have been utilized to reach seniors at large and have included participation in multi-community events at the Blue Quill Community League, the South Edmonton Farmers' Market and the Heritage Point Community League.

SWESA has also had active involvement with the Primary Care Network Community Council. The coffee group collaboration with TCRC continues in importance, with the signing of a memorandum of understanding again in 2016. SWESA actively collaborates with the Edmonton Public Library by offering technology courses and programs.

SWESA has expanded its community reach through regular submissions to the six community papers in its catchment area: the Riverbend Ragg Times, the Ermineskin Enlightener, the Duggan Details, the Terwillegar Tribune, the Heritage Point Community Views (includes Blue Quill, Twin Brooks, Heritage, Blackmud Creek and Yellowbird), and the Examiner. SWESA continues to liaise with and support the work of other neighbourhood seniors' centres.



## **VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT**

Volunteers continue to play a major role in SWESA's success. In 2016, over 5,250 volunteer hours were logged by SWESA's Board and members. That is equivalent to a value of \$105,280. Volunteers play a strong role in the operations

of SWESA, and in keeping costs down to its members! In addition, the volunteer program also provides members the opportunity to make new friends, to socialize, and to be a part of building the future of the SWESA legacy.

The structure and policies for an official volunteer program were developed by the Volunteer Committee, following the Canadian Code for Volunteers of a Non-Profit Organization and after consulting with other seniors' centres. Volunteer week in April marked SWESA's another volunteer appreciation event: a great success!

## PROGRAMS



SWESA offers 15 on-going programs per week (e.g. coffee groups, exercise programs, etc.) and an additional 10 events per month (e.g. Toonie Talks, workshops, etc.). Toonie Talks interest has grown. In 2016, SWESA broke records for attendance with multiple Toonie Talks that brought in audiences of 40 or more. Previous attendances were in the mid-20s. The monthly luncheon also demonstrated a similar success, with participation expanding from 60 to 90 members during the popular months.

Jennifer Hanrahan - Program Coordinator

A couple of new bus trips also proved to be popular. This included a fully subscribed bus to the Beaver Regional Arts Society for the Steve Pineo Elvis Show and a smaller coach to the Victoria Settlement near Smoky Lake, which also included a lunch with the Smoky Lake Seniors' Association.

Other new programs also proved to be a success: guitar lessons, a songbirds group, and a jam-session group. It is so nice to hear the music echoing the hallways of YECC on those days.

SWESA also ventured into successful new special events, including a Valentine's evening event, Shakespeare in the Park, and the Sunday trip to Holden for a dinner and concert.

Yellowbird East Community Centre Coffee Group



Demand also increased for some of the tried and true programs. Canasta, mahjong, and bridge groups continue to grow. The growth in the SWESA coffee group has resulted in a change in the YECC coffee room configuration to accommodate the extra members.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

SWESA's Board expects that membership will continue to increase. As a result, it will be partnering with community organizations to provide options to further expand its program. It will continue to discuss with city councillors and representatives the progress toward a dedicated facility. Providing quality programs for members, managing organization growth, and moving forward with strategies for financial sustainability will be a focus for the next year.

Operational efficiencies, low-cost strategies, and continued work on fund-raising will be an important part of the future as SWESA strives for financial sustainability, while at the same time keeping the cost of programs as low as possible for its members.

Involvement of members will continue to be an important part of SWESA's success, particularly through their involvement as volunteers. New program ideas come from SWESA's members. Increased member involvement and input in SWESA's committees will ensure that **SWESA remains an organization that is 'grassroots' focused, by being responsive to its members.**

*SWESA is building a legacy for southwest Edmonton—a long-term seniors' activity centre. We are a seniors' community building a seniors' community. Be part of building this legacy: as a member, a participant in activities, a volunteer, or a community business offering support!*



## **VISION, MISSION AND VALUES**

### **VISION:**

All seniors in southwest Edmonton enjoy an enhanced quality of life.

### **MISSION:**

SWESA provides opportunities for adults 55+ in southwest Edmonton to pursue healthy and satisfying lives through engagement in a variety of programs and through social connections.

### **VALUES:**

Respect  
Program diversity  
Collaborating with other organizations  
Lifelong learning  
Building social connections  
Social and cultural inclusion  
Being responsive to the needs of our community  
Sustainability  
Having FUN!

**SWESA - A Great Place to Be at 55+**

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