

Minister's Seniors Service Awards

2023 Nominees

Person Nominations

Individual, Alice Modin, Special Service Awards

Listed alphabetically by last name.

Ms. Shahd Alburai, Edmonton

Nominated for: Individual Award

Mr. David Eggen, MLA for Edmonton-North West

Shahd Alburai, a remarkable 20-year-old newcomer to Canada, stands out as a dedicated participant in the Alberta Health Services SOARING initiative. Shahd, alongside her sister, initiated a commendable project focused on fostering inter-generational connections within the community. Motivated by her profound relationship with her grandmother, Shahd, volunteered at various senior centers in Edmonton along with other inspired young women.

Shahd's commitment to bridging generational gaps demonstrates remarkable determination, courage, and a genuine spirit of service. Her efforts have not only contributed to enhancing the lives of seniors in Edmonton but have also inspired a sense of community engagement among her peers. Shahd's initiative reflects community-minded and compassionate leadership that strengthens and encourages a culture of mutual support.

Mr. Francis Aranha, Calgary

Nominated for: Individual Award

Mr. Court Ellingson, MLA for Calgary-Foothills

Francis Aranha is a volunteer at various seniors-living facilities. He is an exceptionally dedicated individual with a remarkable decade-long commitment to volunteer work. Francis has contributed his time to various senior homes in Calgary, including Colonel Belchers, Covenant Care, Silvera for Seniors and the Aga Khan Foundation.

Francis demonstrates wholehearted dedication in every endeavor. Whether it is engaging in recreational activities for the seniors, extending compassion by offering a listening ear, or promoting well-being by reducing social isolation. His commitment and reliability have been instrumental, as seniors' homes rely heavily on our volunteers. Even on summer weekends, Francis consistently arrived early and prepared to assist, often volunteering as frequently as 3 times a week.

Francis' volunteer hours exceed 300 annually, showcasing his exceptional passion for making a difference. Colonel Belchers in Calgary holds a special place in his heart, where he and his family engage with veterans, fostering a sense of camaraderie and joy. Residents have fond memories of Francis orchestrating surprise birthday celebrations and providing support at the hospice. Francis has made an indelible impact on the lives of the seniors. Additionally, his unwavering dedication, compassion, and reliability have left an enduring mark on the organizations he serves.

Ms. Jane Atkins, Sundre

Nominated for: Individual Award

Honourable Jason Nixon, MLA for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre

Jane Atkins, a retired teacher turned community advocate, stands out as an exceptional model of advocacy and service in Sundre. Leading initiatives like S.P.R.U.C.E (Seniors Protected and Respected Under Community Engagement), Jane's commitment to elder abuse awareness is evident through facilitator training, presentations to town council, and canvassing businesses. Her visionary approach has transformed S.P.R.U.C.E into the Sundre Seniors SPRUCE Society, addressing not only elder abuse but also promoting healthy aging, intergenerational programming, and overall advocacy for seniors.

Jane's multifaceted contributions, from active provincial involvement with Healthy Aging CORE Alberta to locally teaching poetry and arts to seniors to preserving history at the Sundre Museum, showcase her holistic dedication to the well-being of the community's senior population. Jane's passion, strategic thinking, and collaboration with diverse groups embody the spirit of community leadership and service.

Mrs. Jeonhee Baek, Calgary

Nominated for: Individual Award

Honourable Demetrios Nicolaidis, MLA for Calgary-Bow

Jeonhee Baek stands out as a remarkable individual whose commitment to seniors is truly inspiring. Balancing a full-time job with extensive volunteer duties, including serving on multiple non-profit boards, she excels as the Program Coordinator for Korean Social Services Centre's "Go, Silver" initiative which teaches digital literacy for Korean seniors.

Beyond handling logistical aspects, such as venue booking and instructor recruitment, Joenhee's hands-on approach during classes reflects her passion for empowering Korean seniors in Calgary with digital literacy and wellness activities.

Her impact extends further as a general counselor for the organization's settlement program, specializing in welfare for seniors. Despite a full-time job, Joenhee educates herself on various government benefits and manages appointment bookings, intake procedures, and one-on-one sessions, guiding seniors through benefit applications. Challenging stereotypes about senior capabilities, she also serves as the dynamic stage manager for cultural events, showcasing unparalleled dedication and efficiency. Her tireless contributions make her an indispensable core member of the Korean Social Services Centre, enhancing the success and robustness of the organization's senior programs.

Mrs. Margaret (Elizabeth) Bagdan, Camrose

Nominated for: Individual Award

Ms. Jackie Lovely, MLA for Camrose

Elizabeth Bagden is a compassionate advocate for seniors demonstrated through her roles as a front-line volunteer and board member for The Bethany Group. She provides invaluable companionship to residents in continuing care and advocates for person-centered care. Elizabeth's generosity extends beyond her time, as she consistently donates funds to enhance resident life and selflessly returned pandemic assistance money, emphasizing her deep concern for seniors in greater need.

In addition to her commitments to The Bethany Group, Elizabeth's extensive volunteerism includes volunteering and sitting on the board for the public library, and providing English language support for newcomers. Serving on the Camrose Library board, she passionately advocates for services tailored to the city's significant senior demographic, actively participating in meetings, and ensuring the library caters to diverse community needs. Despite her substantial contributions, Elizabeth remains humble, making her an underappreciated yet invaluable member of the community. Her unwavering dedication to seniors is demonstrated through both her time and financial support.

Mrs. Olivia Bell, Edmonton

Nominated for: Individual Award

Ms. Peggy Wright, MLA for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview

Olivia Bell, a Program Manager with Alberta Health Services Facility and Supportive Living, is an exemplary advocate for seniors, leveraging her background in social work to address the diverse challenges seniors face and provide holistic care while reducing stigma regarding challenges clients may face. Over the past three years, Olivia has played a pivotal role in

creating safe and supportive environments and fostering a sense of community and acceptance among residents and staff. Her tireless leadership during a crisis, notably the 2021 fire at the Citadel Mews West Continuing Care Facility, showcases her selfless commitment to the seniors in her care.

Olivia's impact extends beyond her managerial role. Her support and advocacy during seniors' physical health, mental health, or housing challenges has resulted in positive outcomes for many seniors. Furthermore, she is dedicated to advocating for indigenous-focused geriatric supports, demonstrating a strong ability to bridge cultural differences and advance the rights and well-being of indigenous seniors.

Mrs. Cheryl Best, Red Deer

Nominated for: Individual Award

Honourable Adriana LaGrange, MLA for Red Deer-North

Cheryl Best is a dedicated and versatile 74-year-old, senior volunteer who exemplifies a profound passion and commitment to community service. For the past fifteen years, she has been an invaluable asset to the Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre, generously dedicating her time to various roles including front desk duties, making lunches and serving brunch. She is also an ambassador for the Golden Circle promoting the services and activities to all seniors in the community and ensuring everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Her commitment to the seniors at the centre goes beyond her schedule, as she steps in whenever needed.

Cheryl also volunteers at the Central Alberta Cancer Centre where she provides refreshments and is an encouraging and supportive presence to those navigating challenging health issues. Cheryl further extends her kindness at the Red Deer Memorial Centre and Mamas for Mamas, showcasing her versatility and dedication for serving the broader community.

Mr. Dan Boisvert, Northern Sunrise County

Nominated for: Individual Award

Honourable Dan Williams, MLA for Peace River

Dan Boisvert is as an exemplary community builder, reliable volunteer, and advocate in Northern Sunrise County. His commitment extends beyond conventional roles such as contributing significantly to the Alberta 55+ Games and numerous casino fundraisers, which exemplifies his passion for creating inclusive opportunities for all.

Fluent in both French and English, Dan not only supports seniors but also assists newcomers to integrate into the community, find resources and jobs. His tireless efforts to educate seniors on emergency preparedness, safety and property security during extreme weather conditions

underline his genuine concern for their well-being. In his volunteer role with North Peace Housing Foundation, Dan supported improvements to senior housing and advocated for supports to seniors. He also provides acts of service to individuals in need such as delivering meals to seniors and dropping off care baskets for bereaved families.

His extensive list of volunteer activities, from organizing casinos for the Nampa Seniors Club to serving as Vice Chair of NSC Rural Crimewatch, demonstrates his commitment to seniors' safety and well-being. Dan's innovative approach to community development is evident in initiatives like converting an unused curling rink into two indoor Pickleball Courts. Serving as President and Board Member of the Marie Reine Community Hall since 1989, Dan has been a consistent force behind community events, including suppers with Santa, Mother's Day Breakfasts, and free internet raffles.

Mrs. Yvonne Brown, Beaver County

Nominated for: Individual, Alice Modin and Special Service Awards
Ms. Jackie Lovely, MLA for Camrose

Yvonne Brown, a lifelong resident of Tofield, Alberta, has devoted over 60 years to enriching the lives of her community members. Her extensive involvement with over 32 volunteer organizations, ranging from Beaver Foundation Seniors Housing to the Tofield Food Bank, showcases her unwavering commitment to addressing diverse community needs and versatility to serve where the needs are.

A founding member of the Beaver County Rural Crime Watch and the Tofield Farmer's Market, Yvonne's leadership and active participation in volunteer events have elevated the community. Beyond these roles, her philanthropy has touched essential community organizations, including the Boyle Street Project and the Tofield Lions Club which has supported the seniors and many less fortunate in the community. She is also dedicated to preserving the town's culture and history through her volunteer efforts with Tofield Historical Society and Economic Development Board.

Yvonne's dedication, love for her community and thoughtful initiatives, such as creating floral arrangements for local businesses, have left an enduring mark and make her a true community pillar and beloved leader.

Mr. Dale Cena, Calgary

Nominated for: Individual Award
Ms. Chantelle de Jonge, MLA for Chestermere-Strathmore

Dale Cena is a disability worker, committed to making a positive impact on the lives of individuals of all ages, including seniors. His unwavering dedication to enhancing

the quality of life for those he supports as well as his passion and dedication sets him apart as an advocate in his field. Notably, Dale collaborated with the Government of Alberta advocating for and promoting quality control within the disability support sector. His accomplishments ensure that frontline caregivers responsible for delivering care, maintaining welfare standards, and upholding safety and security receive the recognition and compensation they deserve.

Mrs. Hillary Cornelius Stormon, Cochrane

Nominated for: Individual Award
Honourable Pete Guthrie, MLA for Airdrie-Cochrane

Hillary Cornelius Stormon, the driving force behind Cochrane's 2023 Seniors Week, showcased exceptional dedication in orchestrating a week-long celebration that connected over 1,000 seniors and older adults. Collaborating with numerous community partners, she organized 30+ events ranging from heartwarming poetry readings to engaging fitness activities, reflecting a thoughtful understanding of seniors' diverse interests.

In the field of community development, Hillary's outstanding leadership is evident in her inclusive approach, fostering intergenerational connections, mens' groups, and collaborations with local organizations. Developing an Age-Friendly survey, planning educational sessions, and spearheading initiatives like the Tech Petting Zoo demonstrates her commitment to addressing the holistic well-being of seniors in Cochrane. Overall, Hillary's passion, energy, and commitment exemplifies her exceptional dedication to enhancing the lives of seniors.

Mrs. Wendy Doucet, Grande Prairie

Nominated for: Individual Award
Mr. Nolan Dyck, MLA for Grande Prairie

Wendy Doucet has been a part of Grande Spirit Foundation for over 16 years, volunteering in various roles, and rallying others to join her in supporting community seniors in Grande Prairie. She has played a pivotal role in coordinating fundraising events to purchase items that enhance the quality of life in seniors' facilities in her community.

Wendy's efforts in planning and organizing special occasions are especially noteworthy. Whether it is coordinating the delivery of Easter dinners to seniors' doors during the pandemic or reaching out to organizations for donations to ensure the annual fall harvest and Christmas dinners are successful, Wendy has tirelessly shown her leadership and dedication.

Her impact extends beyond fundraising and community involvement. She touches the hearts of seniors by being a

friend, active listener, and source of spiritual support. She is a dedicated coffee time visitor and needed friend who spends hours talking with seniors, providing them with the companionship and support they need.

Ms. Audrey Gall, Nampa

Nominated for: Individual Award

Honourable Dan Williams, MLA for Peace River

Audrey Gall, a dedicated advocate for seniors in Northern Sunrise County, stands out for her exemplary service and commitment to community well-being. As a Northern Sunrise County Councilor, she consistently champions seniors' needs, ensuring representation and support.

Beyond her official capacity, Audrey actively contributes to various organizations, including the Nampa & District Historical Society and the Nampa Golden Pioneers, where she enhances seniors' programs at the Drop-In Center. Her extensive involvement in the Nampa & District Agricultural Society reflects her commitment to accessibility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Audrey's three-year dedication to documenting war veterans' graves and her compassionate outreach to both immediate and extended family underscore her remarkable character.

Testimonials from community members on personal acts of service by Audrey highlight her versatility, compassion, and unwavering support during personal hardships. Audrey leaves a lasting positive impact on seniors and the broader community.

Ms. Rosalie Gelderman, Edmonton

Nominated for: Individual, Alice Modin and Special Service Awards

Ms. Janis Irwin, MLA for Edmonton-Highlands Norwood

Rosalie Gelderman, a devoted advocate for seniors, has dedicated over four decades to seniors' well-being in Alberta and beyond. Her extensive contributions include over a decade of impactful work with the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, where she played a pivotal role in shaping projects such as the seniors home supports program, diversity resources for seniors centres, and outreach service models, leveraging her insights, extensive connections, and wisdom. With 26 years at Operation Friendship Seniors Society and subsequent roles as the Aging in Place Project Coordinator in Edmonton, Rosalie has been a catalyst for innovative strategies, ensuring housing and support for marginalized seniors. Her extensive volunteerism, spanning 28 years, includes chairing the Keiskamma Canada Foundation, which supports South African seniors, and serving on many non-profit and community boards. She is known for fostering community understanding, safety, and compassionate responses in all of her roles.

Rosalie is a positive role model and is described by her colleagues as a one-woman harm reduction program, embodying quiet determination in her decades-long commitment to improving the lives of seniors. Rosalie's exceptional service, wealth of knowledge, and unwavering dedication to serving Alberta seniors across multiple sectors stands as a testament to over four decades of quiet activism, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of those she has touched.

Mrs. Shirley Gibson, Red Deer

Nominated for: Individual Award

Honourable Adriana LaGrange, MLA for Red Deer-North

Shirley Gibson is a retired nurse and a compassionate force in her community, notably aiding a 90-year-old neighbour in her community to continue to live independently for several years. Her regular gestures, such as coffee visits, providing personal care and transporting to appointments, created a robust support system to help the senior with basic needs.

Even after her neighbour's passing, Shirley's remained involved in assisting the grieving family by contributing to the emotionally challenging task of packing up the house and personal effects. Shirley's service to her neighbour will forever leave a positive impact on her family and friends.

Mr. Bekele Hankebo, Calgary

Nominated for: Individual Award

Ms. Lizette Tejada, MLA for Calgary-Klein

Bekele Hankebo, the founder and Executive Director of EthioCare, has exemplified unwavering commitment and compassion in his leadership role since March 2020. His pivotal role spearheading EthioCare's response to pandemic challenges is commendable, particularly, providing food hampers, and essential supplies.

Notably, Bekele's visionary approach shines through in the creation of a social program to assist seniors who were fighting the consequences of isolation, burnout, stress and depression from COVID-19. The program successfully brought together a community of seniors from Africa and South East Asia, actively engaging them in monthly activities and providing them opportunities for a more fulfilled and meaningful life.

Mrs. Zebunissa Haroon, Edmonton

Nominated for: Individual Award

Ms. Rakhi Pancholi, MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud

Zebunissa Haroon emerged as an indispensable force in the community through her unwavering volunteer work at the Shaama Centre since 2014. Dedicated to social justice and seniors' rights, Zebunissa passionately advocates for and

supports South Asian seniors and women, addressing their unique needs with cultural sensitivity.

As a volunteer who contributed over 300 hours last year, Zebunissa's impact extends beyond routine visits, encompassing creative initiatives like personalized videos and care packages, significantly enhancing the well-being of those she serves and making individuals feel heard and supported. She actively participates in fundraising and special events. Her leadership shines through when securing sponsors and in personally delivering handwritten thank-you notes. She demonstrates a commitment that goes beyond the expected.

Zebunissa's sustained dedication over the years has not only prevented crises and improved well-being but has also fostered a stronger sense of community among the seniors and women she engages. Her exceptional commitment, tireless efforts, and genuine care for their welfare has improved the lives of all she supports.

Mrs. Heather (Jeanette) Harris, Daysland

Nominated for: Individual and Alice Modin Awards
Ms. Jackie Lovely, MLA for Camrose

Jeanette Harris, a devoted community member of Sedgewick, stands as a beacon of selfless service and dedication. With over 50 years of active involvement, Jeanette has significantly shaped the community through her extensive volunteerism and leadership roles.

Jeanette's commitment to the Sedgewick United Church spans over 50 years. Beyond her church involvement, she made her mark in local governance, successfully running for Town Council for 3 terms and serving as the Deputy Mayor for the Town of Sedgewick. Her contributions extended to provincial levels as she served on the Provincial Health Board, Children's Services Board and later as the Chairperson of the Killam Health Care Covenant Health Board. As a community advocate, Jeanette was involved in fundraising initiatives and volunteering for many other organizations such as the Women's Shelter, Cancer Society, and the Heart and Stroke Society.

Jeanette's transformative impact is also evident in her dedication to environmental initiatives. She has played a pivotal role in the development of Sedgewick Lake Park. Her enduring contributions include planting numerous trees that stand as a testament to her environmental stewardship.

Ms. Cathy Hume, Diamond Valley

Nominated for: Individual and Alice Modin Awards
Honourable R.J. Sigurdson, MLA for Highwood

Cathy Hume, with a senior living career spanning over 30 years, has consistently demonstrated an unwavering

commitment to creating positive experiences within the housing and healthcare sector for older adults. Beginning as a recreation therapist, and advancing to leadership roles, Cathy's volunteer efforts have been transformative. She challenges stereotypes of aging, champions innovation, and has spearheaded impactful initiatives, fundraising events, skills development conferences, and award programs for honouring volunteers in the community.

As President of Calgary Seniors Housing Forum Society for 14 years, Cathy tirelessly fundraised and ensured timely information was brought to Calgary seniors. Her leadership extends to the Creative Aging Calgary Society, where she secured funding for community-based arts programs during the pandemic. Cathy's influence also reaches advisory roles at the University of Calgary and the City of Calgary, where she actively contributes to age-friendly initiatives. Her visible presence and passions ensure that thousands of vulnerable seniors have a voice and access to crucial information and supports.

Mr. Moonsun Hwang, Calgary

Nominated for: Individual Award
Honourable Mike Ellis, MLA for Calgary-West

Moonsun Hwang, plays a pivotal role in the Korean Social Services Centre's (KSSC) senior programs while also fulfilling robust volunteer obligations. Serving as the Strategic Planning Team Lead, he has been instrumental in shaping and refining every seniors program at KSSC, drawing on his work experience from Korea to craft robust initiatives that resonate with the cultural community and secure government funding. Notably, Moonsun's leadership shines through in the success of the "Go, Silver!" program, a federally funded initiative providing smartphone and laptop literacy classes, as well as dancing and yoga lessons for Korean seniors. His hands-on approach, from setting up venues to personally picking up supplies, reflects an unparalleled commitment to the program's success.

Moonsun is consistent in his generosity and deferral of honorariums received, which he gives back to the programs so they can flourish for the benefit of seniors. His selflessness, coupled with an intuitive understanding of the needs of Korean seniors, sparks collaborative efforts within KSSC, resulting in initiatives that combat mental and physical decline in seniors while fostering a vibrant community.

Ms. Marlene Raasok, Airdrie

Nominated for: Individual Award
Honourable Pete Guthrie, MLA for Airdrie-Guthrie

Marlene Raasok has been a dedicated advocate for seniors since 1988, holding various leadership roles that have

established her as a prominent figure in the field. Joining the Good Samaritan Board in 2020, she quickly rose to eventually assume the role of Chair. Marlene's commitment to the well-being of older individuals is evident in her tireless efforts to transform systems and services, aligning with the vision for healthy aging and an improved quality of life for seniors in Alberta. Her advocacy efforts for the Alberta Association on Gerontology are transforming healthy aging systems and services for seniors.

With nearly two decades of leadership experience in continuing care and community care services, Marlene has made a significant impact in Alberta and beyond. Her extensive collaborations, spanning both private and public sector organizations, showcase her effectiveness in driving positive change. Notably, her tenure as the Executive Dean of the School of Health, Life Sciences, and Community Services at Conestoga College in Ontario was marked by several impactful projects including the establishment of the Research Institute for Aging, and the development of a unique Living Lab to enhance access to education for Health Care Aide and Practical Nursing students. Her commitment extends to volunteer work as a dedicated volunteer driver for Drive Happiness, supporting older adults in Airdrie. Plus, active involvement to transform community spaces and develop new housing models, making Marlene a true champion for her contributions to improving the lives of seniors across the province.

Mrs. Sandra Robin, Cochrane

Nominated for: Individual Award
Honourable Pete Guthrie, MLA for Airdrie-Cochrane

Sandra Robin, manager of the Big Hill Lodge in Cochrane, has demonstrated unwavering commitment to the well-being of residents over her impressive 23-year tenure. Beyond her managerial duties, she has been a pillar of support during the challenging times of the pandemic, providing emotional guidance and ensuring the safety and mental well-being of the residents. Her impact goes beyond her official capacity, as she actively promotes the lodge, acting as an ambassador for the organization and fostering a positive and nurturing atmosphere within the community.

Sandra's infectious energy is exemplified in her role as organizer of the lodge's annual fundraiser, showcasing her unwavering commitment to the residents. Her years of service have not only contributed significantly to the Big Hill Lodge but have also left an indelible mark on the lives of those who have called the lodge home.

Mr. Manfred Schroeder, Oyen

Nominated for: Individual and Alice Modin Awards
Honourable Nate Horner, MLA for Drumheller-Stettler

Manfred Schroeder, a dedicated and compassionate pillar of the Oyen community, has made a profound impact through his selfless volunteerism for over 50 years. Known for his infectious humor and meaningful conversations, Manfred's commitment to service has left an indelible mark on various organizations, benefiting not only the groups he dedicates his time to but also the broader communities they serve. At 74 years old, Manfred devotes approximately three hours of each day to volunteer work, showcasing a heart-driven dedication for the seniors in his community. Serving as a reliable town "taxi", Manfred ensures that seniors have access to affordable transportation for their appointments and events, often using his own vehicle. His involvement with the local Handi-Bus Society as well as the Oyen and District Seniors Association and Oyen Lion's Club further exemplifies his commitment to enhancing the lives of seniors in the community.

Manfred's 50-year legacy of volunteerism is a testament to the power of individuals with compassionate hearts and a willingness to dedicate their time and talents for the betterment of others. As a trustworthy pillar in the lives of seniors, his generosity and unwavering commitment continue to bring smiles to the faces of those he serves.

Ms. Linda R.S. Shepherd, Red Deer

Nominated for: Individual, Alice Modin and Special Service Awards
Honourable Devin Dreesen, MLA for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake

Linda Shepherd has a passion for advocating for better services for seniors, amassing over 25 years of unwavering commitment to volunteer service at the Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre in Red Deer. Linda has significantly impacted her community through initiatives such as The Friendship Club, an inclusive social opportunity for seniors in Red Deer area to gather and made friendships. Serving as the chair of the Board of Directors for the Golden Circle, and through volunteering with Imagine Citizens Network, Linda has been instrumental in amplifying the voices of seniors and individuals with disabilities, ensuring their perspectives are central to decision-making processes. For over 10 years Linda has distinguished herself as a United Way Ambassador and was also a leader on the board for the Central Alberta Council on Aging.

As a wheelchair user, Linda is a passionate advocate for accessibility and disability supports and uses her experience to provide consultations and advice on improving accessibility. Notably, her years of persistent advocacy resulted in accessible transportation for seniors and people with disabilities within Red Deer County. Later, her involvement with Central Alberta Poverty Alliance, on the

Transportation Action Committee, yielded substantial enhancements to the service. Finally, she volunteers with Alberta Health Services on their Patient Advisory Council; and with Nutrition Services, she acts as a nutrition advisor for seniors.

Linda's influence extends far beyond her immediate community. Her remarkable resilience, visionary leadership, and dedication to enhancing the lives of seniors in all aspects of life, highlights her exceptional volunteerism.

Mr. William (Bill) Steinburg, Spruce Grove

Nominated for: Individual Award

Honourable Searle Turton, MLA for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain

Bill Steinburg, a dedicated volunteer with a background in healthcare and a strong commitment to community service, has been an unwavering advocate for seniors since the early 1990's. His extensive volunteering journey began with a 15 year tenure on the Neighbourlink Parkland Board, focused on providing companionship and financial support to residents of Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Parkland County. Elected to the Spruce Grove City Council in 1983, serving as Mayor from 1989 to 1992 and returning to serve on council until 2017, Bill consistently championed for seniors' recreation, securing funding for crucial projects, including the Spruce Grove Golden Age Club seniors facility.

Bill has also served St. Michael's Long Term Care Centre as a board member, contributing to overall governance, volunteering recruitment, and fundraising. Notably, he chairs the construction project for the new St. Michael's Fenwyck Heights supportive living facility in Spruce Grove. To date, the committee has raised \$7 million.

Bill's tireless dedication extends to active participation in events, recruiting volunteers, and ensuring seniors under St. Michael's care receive the attention and support they deserve. Bill Steinburg's lifelong commitment to senior care and community service has left an indelible mark on St. Michael's Health Group and the broader Spruce Grove community.

Mrs. Maryan Weenink, Rimbey

Nominated for: Individual Award

Honourable Jason Nixon, MLA for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre

Maryan Weenink, Sylvan Lake Seniors Centre's dedicated program coordinator, has significantly transformed the seniors community. Since taking the helm in 2021, membership increased from 111 to 390. Maryan's commitment to combating senior isolation is evident in her initiatives, from introducing entertainment at luncheons and organizing school choir performances to hosting informative speaker sessions. She also organizes ladies' nights with a fashion show, entertainment and food. Her personal touch

extends to food, where she single-handedly started cooking nutritious luncheons.

Maryan's leadership at the Sylvan Lake Seniors Centre goes beyond mere numbers. She reflects a genuine commitment to the well-being of seniors and the creation of a vibrant, supportive community. Her impact is evident in the increased engagement and participation of seniors, the success of events, and establishment of a welcoming atmosphere that fosters connection and camaraderie.

Mr. Kelly Weger, Calgary

Nominated for: Individual Award

Mr. Myles McDougall, MLA for Calgary-Fish Creek

Kelly Weger, a dedicated volunteer at the Calgary Seniors' Resource Society, has made an indelible impact on the lives of seniors through his exceptional commitment. In the past year, Kelly has assisted 234 seniors in the organization, providing crucial services such as grocery shopping, transportation to medical appointments, and support for visits to loved ones in the hospital. His contributions go beyond the basics, encompassing tasks like helping seniors home organization during moves, offering computer tutoring, delivering medical equipment, and providing transportation for various needs, including banking. Serving as a reliable and effective communicator, Kelly ensures a seamless discussion of seniors' needs. He has become a crucial part of the Calgary Seniors' Resource Society.

Mr. William C. (Butch) Whiteman, Edmonton

Nominated for: Individual Award (Posthumous)

Ms. Jodi Calahoo Stonehouse, MLA for Edmonton-Rutherford

Butch Whiteman, a dedicated and influential member of the Canadian Pensioners Association, the CN Edmonton Council, and Rail Vets, left a permanent mark on the organizations he served before his passing in March 2023. Since his retirement in April 1996, Butch's commitment and contributions spanned all levels of his association – national, regional, and local. Serving as the Pension Representative on the National Council and holding multiple executive roles within the Edmonton council, Butch played a pivotal role in shaping the council, where he served as both Director and Chairman for several years. Butch was described as dependable, dedicated, knowledgeable, fun, kind and irreplaceable.

Butch's vast knowledge and wealth of information made him the go-to person for everything. Whether offering innovative ideas, presenting opposing viewpoints, or thinking outside the box for alternate solutions, Butch was an asset. Behind the scenes, he spent countless hours fielding requests, answering questions, and ensuring members remained well-informed. His dedication extended to the meticulous task of printing and emailing the newsletter, reaching 1,200

members and personally welcoming new members. His absence leaves a void that will be deeply felt by all who had the privilege to know him.

Mrs. Joyce Wicks, Sundre

Nominated for: Individual and Special Service Awards

Honourable Jason Nixon, MLA for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre

Joyce Wicks, a retired nurse with a decades-long volunteer legacy, has had a substantial impact in her community. Her contributions extend throughout the surrounding areas, and the province, notably as a key member of the Sundre Health Professional Recruitment and Retention Committee. Her dedication shines through in initiatives such as the Sundre Seniors Go Virtual classes, addressing the technological needs of seniors, reducing seniors isolation, and arranging appreciation events for health care professionals. Moreover, her commitment to seniors is evident in the countless hours spent preparing hot lunches, fostering continuous learning, and securing grant funding to enhance their well-being.

Joyce's advocacy spans to senior's health, where she tirelessly seeks resources to enhance their well-being, organizes educational programs, and aids in housing arrangements for incoming healthcare professionals and their families. At Mountain View Seniors Housing Commission, Joyce organizes excursions to improve seniors' mental health and get them out into the community. As a mentor and leader, Joyce exemplifies integrity, strength, perseverance, and respect, making her a true asset to the Sundre community.

Organization Nominations

Nonprofit, Business, Special Service Awards

Listed alphabetically.

Alzheimer Society of Alberta and NWT, Edmonton

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization and Special Service Awards

Ms. Rachel Notley, MLA for Edmonton-Strathcona

The Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories has been a hallmark of hope for families and individuals affected by Alzheimer's and related dementias for several decades. Their outstanding service in support of Alberta's seniors is evident through their diverse range of programs and initiative. They provide crucial support through care partner support groups, educational workshops, and a 24/7 helpline; equipping seniors and their families with the knowledge and resources needed to navigate the challenges of a dementia diagnosis. Furthermore, they work with organizations such as Drive Happiness, providing education and support to frontline service providers to recognize and respond to the signs of Alzheimer's in their clients.

The Alzheimer's Society actively advocates for seniors' rights, raises awareness about the unique issues of seniors with Alzheimer's and dementia, and works towards public policy changes that enhance the quality of life for seniors. Additionally, their community engagement efforts foster an environment of understanding and empathy, encouraging intergenerational activities, reducing social isolation and enhancing the overall well-being of seniors.

The impact of the Alzheimer Society's work is immeasurable to families and seniors living with the disease. The organization has successfully reduced isolation, increased the quality of life for seniors living with dementia, empowered caregivers with essential resources and support, contributed to groundbreaking research in dementia, and increased public awareness, thereby reducing stigma.

The Bethany Group, Camrose

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Jackie Lovely, MLA for Camrose

The Bethany Group, based out of Camrose, stands as a beacon of unwavering commitment to well-being, providing health and housing support to seniors in Camrose and across central Alberta. Over the past 101 years, The Bethany Group has demonstrated exceptional dedication to the seniors in its community, proving resilience through a century of challenges, including changing governance, a pandemic, and numerous hardships. By providing person-centered service, The Bethany Group has become a major provider of services, touching the lives of over 2,000 residents in 30 communities and employing nearly 800 individuals.

Founded in 1922 as a response to the need for senior's care for farmers and settlers without family or support in Canada, The Bethany Group has evolved into a faith-based organization with a mission to build a caring community and make a positive difference in each person's life through the provision of health, housing and supportive living services. The Bethany Group operates continuing care homes with varying levels of care, day programs in Camrose and Wetaskiwin to support seniors and caregivers, and an agency home care program to lodge residents. Notably, the organization conducts an extensive outreach education program, providing vital education sessions for healthcare providers throughout the province. Through a partnership with Norquest College, they provide students with the ability to "earn while they learn". Over decades, the Bethany Group has become a pillar in Central Alberta, embodying their goals of care, support, and community building.

Big Hill Lodge, Cochrane

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Honourable Pete Guthrie, MLA for Airdrie-Cochrane

Big Hill Lodge of Cochrane represents excellence in seniors care and community engagement. Established in 1977, this remarkable housing facility accommodates up to 75 residents and has garnered widespread acclaim for its commitment to creating a welcoming and supportive environment. Lodge staff contribute to an overall sense of warmth and comfort that is felt immediately upon entering. Their meticulous attention to sanitation, sign-in procedures and maintenance ensures a peaceful, safe, and relaxed atmosphere. The wholesome and healthy meals served weekly contribute to the overall well-being of the residents.

An innovative approach to resident well-being sets Big Hill Lodge apart. Residents are actively encouraged to participate in a multitude of carefully planned activities. These activities, many of which are subsidized for residents with limited income aim to promote inclusivity and prevent financial barriers from hindering participation. Volunteers appreciate the opportunity to contribute, and the staff take pride in the facility, which has created a warm and welcoming home for many Cochrane seniors.

The Brenda Stafford Foundation, Calgary

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Dr. Luanne Metz, MLA for Calgary-Varsity

Rec@Home, an innovative online recreation program launched by The Brenda Stafford Foundation, showcases excellence and innovation in enhancing the well-being of older adults. The program, part of the Foundation's broader vision for supportive communities, connects individuals in a virtual space, providing a diverse range of activities from

social gatherings and cognitive games to seated exercises and live musical entertainment.

Rec@Home not only enriches the lives of seniors, but also extends a helping hand to caregivers by offering respite and addressing the unique needs of those under their care. With a low monthly subscription fee, Rec@Home actively promotes inclusivity and provides a subsidy option for low-income seniors. Collaborations with other community-based seniors serving organizations further amplifies the program's impact, reaching older adults across Alberta and improving accessibility through its innovative online delivery.

Participants engaged with Rec@Home reported significant improvements in physical activity levels, mood, behavior, and social interactions. The program's success is underscored by testimonials from participants, with caregivers expressing gratitude for its positive impact on clients with dementia. Rec@Home emerges as a transformative initiative, fostering a sense of community and well-being among seniors through its inclusive and engaging approach that leverages technological innovation.

The Brenda Strafford Foundation, Calgary

Nominated for: Special Service Award

Honourable Demetrios Nicolaidis, MLA for Calgary-Bow

The Brenda Strafford Foundation's Adult Day Program team at Bow View Manor exemplifies dedication and excellence in serving seniors within the community. Funded by Alberta Health Services, this program caters to the holistic needs of seniors actively aging in place, offering a comprehensive five-day schedule that encompasses socialization, emotional support, physical activities, and cognitive skill building.

The team of seven staff members diligently ensures the safety and enjoyment of over 60 clients each week. Through evidence-based programming, the team fosters an environment that promotes well-being and combats social isolation commonly experienced by seniors living at home.

Clients express gratitude for the warm and friendly environment created by the caregivers, emphasizing the program's significant positive impact on their lives. Through their unwavering commitment to excellence and proven programming, the Adult Day Program Team at Bow View Manor epitomizes the core values of the Brenda Strafford Foundation. Their dedication to enhancing the well-being of seniors serves as a beacon of inspiration, embodying the Foundation's mission to create supportive communities that prioritize the needs of older adults.

Calgary Meals on Wheels

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Honourable Tanya Fir, MLA for Calgary-Peigan

Calgary Meals on Wheels, the largest Meals on Wheels program in Canada, has been a stalwart supporter of seniors' well-being since 1964. Their commitment to enhancing the lives of seniors is exemplified through the Going Home Program, which originated to provide nutritious meals to seniors recovering from hospital stays. Over the years, this initiative has evolved into a comprehensive program, offering lunch and supper at no cost to seniors aged 55 and above. The program has proven successful, with a remarkable decrease in hospital readmission rates, highlighting its impact to combat malnourishment and resulting in significant health care savings.

Beyond the Going Home Program, Calgary Meals on Wheels delivers general meals to seniors, fostering their ability to maintain independence in their own homes. These nutritious and affordable meals are accompanied by a crucial element of social connection. The organization's dedicated volunteers not only deliver meals but also offer personal touches like birthday cards, flowers, cards written from students, and wellness checks.

Annually supporting approximately 2,271 seniors, Calgary Meals on Wheels has garnered commendable results, with clients expressing a sense of safety, independence, and engagement in their homes and communities. The impact of Calgary Meals on Wheels transcends individual clients, addressing the broader connection between healthcare costs and food insecurity. Their efforts contribute to lower risk of seniors requiring hospitalization or long-term care, reduce social isolation, and enhance overall health, well-being, and safety so that older adults may age in place.

Central Lions Seniors Association, Edmonton

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Sarah Hoffman, MLA for Edmonton-Glenora

The Central Lions Seniors Association in Edmonton is a vital pillar of support and enrichment for seniors aged 55 plus, acting as a lifeline that enhances their well-being and overall quality of life. Going beyond a mere community hub, this association is a second home for seniors seeking connection, engagement, and opportunities to thrive during their golden years. The social cohesion fostered by the Central Lions Seniors Association is remarkable, providing seniors with a warm and inclusive environment that promotes friendships and a sense of belonging. Beyond recreational occasions, regular social activities, events, and gatherings play a pivotal role in combating isolation and loneliness among the community.

Health and wellness take center stage within the association's offerings, with tailored fitness programs,

wellness workshops, and health education sessions empowering seniors to prioritize their physical and mental well-being. By promoting an active and healthy lifestyle, the Central Lions Seniors Association significantly contributes to the overall vitality of its members. Intellectual stimulation is equally emphasized, and the association organizes workshops, lectures, and skill-building sessions, offering continuous opportunities for learning and personal development. Additionally, the Central Lions Seniors Association serves as a valuable resource hub, connecting seniors with essential services, information, and support networks. This includes assistance with navigating healthcare options, accessing community resources, and addressing specific needs unique to seniors. For its members, staff and board, Central Lions Seniors Association is a place where they can come and feel included, safe, and supported.

Mr. Derek Weiss, Independent Consultant, Calgary

Nominated for: Business and Special Service Awards

Mr. Samir Kayande, MLA for Calgary-Elbow

Derek Weiss is an independent consultant with over 25 years of experience and expertise in real estate, asset management and project management. Derek has had a transformative impact on the organizations he has assisted. In his work with Heart River Housing in High Prairie, he encouraged the assisted living facility to take a holistic approach, aligning projects with regional housing needs and focusing on long-term affordability and organizational risk. His strategic guidance enabled the organization to secure funding, paving the way for success in community consultations, housing study needs, project planning, hiring, and construction of the facility. His commitment to understanding municipal partners' perspectives and his tireless dedication ensure quality housing options for seniors.

Derek's contributions extend to his pivotal role in the success of Silvera for Seniors, a nonprofit senior housing provider in Calgary; Westwinds Communities, a retirement community in High River; and various other housing projects. His expertise in navigating complex funding programs is instrumental in securing grants and financing for organizations. Derek's unwavering commitment to supporting housing management bodies, his ability to educate and empower leaders in the sector, and his strategic insights supports the organizations house seniors, and challenges them to critically examine seniors social housing services in their community.

Diversecities, Calgary

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization and Special Service Awards

Ms. Kathleen Ganley, MLA for Calgary-Mountain View

Serving the Calgary area for over 40 years, Diversecities is a champion for many Asian communities in Calgary. Their commitment to addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by seniors in these communities has resulted in a comprehensive array of programs and services.

Diversecities has played a pivotal role in enhancing the social independence of seniors through English as a second language classes, offering free foundational language courses to over 100 senior clients annually for nearly a decade. They have weekly art and craft sessions for women aged 65 and above, fostering skill development and social inclusion. The organization's innovative approach extends to "the Buddy Group", a community support program designed to help retiring individuals connect with peers, discuss relevant topics, such as pension and government benefits, and prepare for their retirement experience.

The Food Security Program for Seniors, initiated in response to the pandemic, has been instrumental in collecting and distributing food donations, providing approximately 29,000 pounds of food each week to over 100 senior clients in 2023 alone. The program has significantly alleviated financial burdens, reducing grocery bills for seniors. Additionally, Diversecities has empowered seniors with technological literacy through a six-year partnership with local organizations, delivering classes that enable seniors to confidently navigate smart devices and the online world. This initiative not only enhances their connectivity with family and friends but also turns seniors into digital ambassadors, supporting around 80 clients annually.

In addition to these impactful programs, Diversecities emphasizes the importance of seniors' active involvement in the community. The organization consistently provides volunteering opportunities, allowing seniors to contribute their time and skills, whether at the front desk, as translators, or offering one-on-one support to clients navigating government forms and community resources. Diversecities' passion and commitment to supporting vulnerable seniors have garnered community recognition, establishing the organization as a leader in providing ongoing and innovative support for seniors in the region.

Drive Happiness, Edmonton

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization and Special Service Awards

Mr. Marlin Schmidt, MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar

Drive Happiness Seniors Association is a non-profit association with the purpose to assist seniors to maintain an independent lifestyle to remain in their own home by

providing transportation services. They have been a pillar of support for the senior community in Greater Edmonton and surrounding areas for the past 25 years. Drive Happiness specializes in providing door-through-door, assisted transportation to seniors facing mobility challenges and with limited funds. In 2021, Drive Happiness facilitated almost 20,000 rides, with the majority of them medically related, including over 1,500 trips for vaccination appointments. They ensure that seniors, especially those with health or mobility challenges, can access essential services, such as medical appointments and grocery shopping, without the financial burden.

The seniors assisted transportation services offered by Drive Happiness have become a vital resource for older adults and individuals facing transportation challenges. With a client base of over 1,700 active clients, in addition to partnerships with health providers and other non-profits, Drive Happiness extends its impact beyond direct clients to touch the lives of caregivers, adult children, and countless others. The service is facilitated by a dedicated team of 167 volunteers spread across forty municipalities, showcasing the power of community-driven support for seniors. Drive Happiness not only provides transportation but also connects clients with resources crucial for living and aging well, including referrals to social work and health programs, ensuring comprehensive support.

ElderCare Edmonton

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Janis Irwin, MLA for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood

ElderCare Edmonton Society for Adult Day Programs, established in 1979, has undergone a transformative journey, guided by a devoted volunteer board of directors and a commitment to service excellence. The organization's evolution from Adult Social Day Programs to Elder Care Edmonton in 2007 marked a significant milestone, leading to its current operation from key locations such as the West Edmonton Seniors Activity Centre, Central Lions Seniors Centre, and Fulton School.

ElderCare Edmonton's innovative approach to senior care emphasizes social connection and engagement, distinguishing it as more than just a day program – it is a lifeline for seniors and their caregivers. The organization's impact on the community is profound, providing invaluable support to families caring for loved ones and playing a crucial role in maintaining the mental and social health of seniors. ElderCare Edmonton ensures older adults remain active, engaged, and valued members of society. Their influence extends beyond the immediate community as the organization actively supports student learning through practicums and volunteer placements, contributing to the professional development of future recreation and social services providers.

EthioCare, Calgary

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Lizette Tejada, MLA for Calgary-Klein

EthioCare is a non-profit charity that works with communities to provide linguistic and cultural awareness to youth and families. The founder and executive director of EthioCare has been supporting seniors since March 2020 by providing food hampers and essential supplies. Recognizing the need for enhanced social activities, EthioCare created their seniors program to assist seniors who were fighting the consequences of isolation, burnout, stress and depression from COVID-19.

Fort Macleod Healthcare Auxiliary Association

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Mrs. Chelsae Petrovic, MLA for Livingstone-Macleod

Fort Macleod Healthcare Auxiliary Association has provided over a century of unwavering commitment and service to Fort Macleod and Southern Alberta. With a legacy spanning 125 years, this remarkable organization has been a vital force in supporting the local health system, contributing to emergency departments, renal care, and the enhancement of public health. The crowning achievement in this legacy year is the creation of the Garden of Love; transforming a once disused area into an outdoor wheelchair-accessible patio adjacent to palliative care beds. This project not only demonstrates their dedication to the well-being of patients but also showcases their innovative approach to enriching the healthcare experience.

The impact of Fort Macleod Healthcare Auxiliary Association extends far beyond the facility, reaching the lives of seniors, and disabled individuals through their support of the Handibus Society. For 125 years, auxiliary members have tirelessly worked to enhance community services, ensuring generations of residents have access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options. Their annual financial support to the Handibus Society underscores their commitment to maintaining the independence of seniors in Fort Macleod, allowing them access to medical, dental, and business-related appointments, as well as to engage in shopping and recreational outings.

The Good Samaritan Society, Edmonton

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Mr. Marlin Schmidt, MLA for Edmonton-Gold Bar

The Good Samaritan Society, Edmonton, established in 1949, is a trailblazer in the healthcare industry, with an exemplary model of organizational design that redefines the landscape of senior's residential care. At the heart of this innovation is the groundbreaking "Organizational Design Toolkit", a dynamic and comprehensive resource. This toolkit

contains a project plan, human resource tools, organizational structure, templates, position descriptions, and a communication plan; it guides healthcare organizations and sets a standard for transformative change in the senior's care industry. Good Samaritan's evidence-based approach represents a paradigm shift, emphasizing the importance of grounding design decisions in research and lived experiences, thus providing a model for others to follow.

In the face of unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, Good Samaritan Society demonstrated adaptability and resilience in implementing organizational design. This strategic implementation, coupled with the organization's success in talent acquisition and advancing new portfolios, serves as an example for healthcare organizations facing disruptions. Good Samaritan's proactive approach in sharing its transformative journey at provincial and national conferences underscores its commitment to fostering industry-wide learning and advancement.

Grande Prairie & District Golden Age Centre

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Mr. Nolan Dyck, MLA for Grande Prairie

The Grande Prairie & District Golden Age Centre is a beacon of support and community for seniors in the area. Governed by a dedicated volunteer board, all aged 70 plus, the centre operates seamlessly, offering a haven to seniors in the community. With a unique commitment to senior service, the center provides a safe and comfortable environment for over 300 active members.

At the heart of their offerings are a diverse range of social and recreational programs, including yoga, cribbage tournaments, billiards, and various workshops to address seniors' social and physical needs. The centre takes pride in its collaboration with other community agencies, leveraging partnerships to address the multifaceted needs of the senior population in Grande Prairie and area. This collaborative approach underscores the tireless efforts of the board and centre's volunteers, who work diligently to ensure the well-being, health and satisfaction of area seniors.

Green Acres Foundation, Lethbridge

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Shannon Phillips, Lethbridge-West

Green Acres Foundation provides affordable seniors' housing in Southern Alberta and plays a crucial role in supporting the Lethbridge Elder Abuse Response Network (LEARN) by providing innovative services to ensure the safety and well-being of older adults in the community. One outstanding initiative is the LEARN Safe Suite, a collaborative effort between the Green Acres Foundation, LEARN, and Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization. This

program offers a safe and secure residential placement in Green Acres Foundation lodges for seniors at imminent risk of abuse, providing a temporary haven until more permanent accommodations and additional supports can be arranged. The Foundation's willingness, flexibility, and capacity to implement this service illustrates their commitment to upholding the dignity of vulnerable seniors. The success of the safe suite concept meets the evolving needs of the community's most vulnerable seniors.

The partnership between Green Acres Foundation and Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization exemplifies the power of collaboration. Providing housing allows clients to receive safe accommodations and necessary services, facilitating their transition from abusive situations to a supportive environment. This innovative approach to elder abuse sheltering has gained interest from the government due to its positive outcomes and cost-effectiveness. Personal testimonials affirm the program's impact, highlighting the success stories of seniors who have found safety, support, and a renewed sense of happiness at Green Acres Foundation lodges.

Happy 50+ Association, Calgary

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Julia Hayter, MLA for Calgary-Edgemont

Happy 50+ Association, a non-profit organization established in 2018 by a dedicated group of experienced healthcare providers and community volunteers, provides support and community-building for seniors in Alberta. The association strives to be a leading partner in integrating community and health services for the Chinese community within the existing healthcare and social services network. The focus on creating a positive environment for seniors is evident through a variety of activities, including social opportunities, fitness classes, skill development, entertaining performances, door-to-door chats and visits, and holiday celebrations. Happy 50+ Association has not only achieved its goals but has significantly impacted the lives of thousands of seniors, benefitted their mental health and fostered a strong sense of belonging in society.

The association's commitment to fostering a sense of community and belonging is exemplified by its efforts to provide social connection and activities in both physical and virtual spaces. Through workshops and cultural celebrations organized by its leaders, Happy 50+ Association encourages interaction and knowledge sharing between youth and senior groups. Additionally, the organization facilitates sharing of information and resources, inviting professional speakers to share healthcare knowledge with seniors face-to-face.

Volunteer support is a cornerstone of their initiatives, training them to assist in areas such as basic health care aide services, technology assistance, language skills, and

grocery purchases and delivery. Collaborating with a range of organizations extends its reach to provide comprehensive support to seniors. The impact of Happy 50+ Association on the Calgary Community is undeniable, with over 10,000 seniors served. The association builds a robust community where members support each other and appreciate diverse cultures.

Madison Manor, Nanton

Nominated for: Business Award

Mrs. Chelsae Petrovic, MLA for Livingstone-Macleod

Madison Manor is a 6,000 sq. ft private assisted living residence that accommodates 17 residents with large bright rooms and ensuites, located in Nanton.

Madison Manor has provided outstanding services and support to the residents and created a home-like atmosphere for many seniors. They provide excellent care for seniors with medical needs, complemented with genuinely caring staff.

The staff takes time to listen and learn about each client's needs and preferences, so they can tailor their care programs to maximize the client's independence and dignity. At Madison Manor, residents can live the way they want with assistance when they need it.

Medical Equipment Lending Society, Rocky Mountain House

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Honourable Jason Nixon, MLA for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre

The Medical Equipment Lending Society is a lifeline for the community of Rocky Mountain House and area. In response to the discontinuation of home lending services for medical equipment in 2016, the Society was established to support community members requiring access to medical equipment for long- or short-term disabilities. Comprising a group of dedicated individuals, their primary mission is to provide affordable access to medical equipment for seniors and individuals with disabilities, while simultaneously contributing to the reduction of landfill waste.

Under the adept leadership of manager Kathy Snyder and her dedicated assistant, the Medical Equipment Lending Society has become a hub for those in need, housing an extensive collection of medical equipment to ensure that clients, particularly seniors, receive the essential medical aids they require. Last year, the society assisted 388 clients, more than half of them seniors. The society operates with a compassionate approach, refurbishing equipment for reuse and extending its usefulness to be as economical as possible. Furthermore, the organization collaborates with other charities to send surplus equipment overseas,

reaching seniors in need beyond the local community and across the world.

Older Adults Coalition of Chestermere

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Chantelle de Jonge, MLA for Chestermere-Strathmore

The Older Adults Coalition of Chestermere is a community driven group of like-minded older adults, community members, organizations, and businesses. Their commitment to seniors is exemplified by their tireless efforts in advocating for health services, housing, and community programming. A crowning achievement is their creation of the *Older Adult Resource Handbook*, a comprehensive tool that empowers seniors and their families with essential information on topics such as healthcare, housing options, and community programs. This handbook has become invaluable to seniors in Chestermere, enhancing the lives of older adults by providing them with knowledge and information, ultimately making their lives easier and helping them navigate supports. Furthermore, the recent launch of the Older Adult Information Line enhances this access even further.

The coalition's advocacy for improved health services has yielded tangible improvements in healthcare access and quality for seniors. Their unwavering dedication to volunteerism, philanthropy, and innovation is evident in the significant impact they've had on the community. The outstanding service provided has set a shining example for likeminded organizations to emulate.

Respect Newspaper, Cold Lake

Nominated for: Business Award

Mr. Scott Cyr, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul

Founder Jeff Gaye started the newspaper in August 2018, as the owner, publisher and writer of Respect Newspaper. It is a biweekly publication geared towards seniors and older adults. Jeff travels throughout Lakeland and area to cover stories relevant to seniors, providing them with curated news and information. Jeff has won the Outstanding Small Business Award for Business Resiliency in October 2023 and an award for covering the 55 plus games in May 2023.

The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women, Edmonton

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Christina Gray, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods

The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women is a cornerstone of community support, exemplified by its unwavering commitment to enhancing the well-being of seniors, newcomers, and women. Founded on the principles of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, this grassroots multicultural organization provides extensive supports. Through a dedicated volunteer base, The Shaama Centre

has been instrumental in addressing the unique needs of South Asian seniors and women in Edmonton.

At the heart of the organization's mission is the provision of linguistically and culturally appropriate services, and bridging gaps that often hinder community members' participation in programs. The tireless efforts of the organization's volunteers, which extend beyond routine volunteer hours, have significantly contributed to fostering a sense of belonging and preventing isolation among seniors. The organization's innovative approaches, such as creating personalized videos, delivering care packages, and coordinating regular visits to isolated individuals are integral in improving the overall well-being of those they serve.

In addition to its hands-on support, The Shaama Centre actively engages in fundraising initiatives, special events, and outreach programs. This multifaceted approach ensures that the organization not only meets the immediate needs of its community members but also creates lasting connections and prevents future crises. The Shaama Centre, through its dedicated volunteers and inclusive practices, continues to be a leader, promoting the welfare and vitality of the seniors.

Spruce Grove Golden Age Club

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award
Honourable Searle Turton, MLA for Spruce Grove-Stony Plain

The Spruce Grove Golden Age Club, a non-profit organization established in 1973, provides support and engagement for seniors in the City of Spruce Grove. This membership-based club has been fostering a vibrant and inclusive community for seniors aged 55 and above for nearly five decades.

Led by a dedicated team of volunteer coordinators and an elected volunteer Board of Directors, the club goes beyond routine programs by offering a diverse range of weekly activities that exercise the mind, body, and soul. The Spruce Grove Golden Age Club is committed to providing a space where seniors can build friendships, engage in social interactions, and participate in competitive yet inclusive events.

The club's impact extends beyond its immediate community, as it hosts seniors from various parts of Alberta for tournaments and socialization events. Known for its warm hospitality and excellent meals, the Spruce Grove Golden Age Club is a hub for seniors seeking a sense of belonging. Additionally, the club demonstrates a strong commitment to giving back to the broader community by supporting many local non-profit organizations. Through strategic partnerships with other community-based seniors serving organizations, the Spruce Grove Golden Age Club ensures that seniors have access to the resources necessary to fulfill their care and support needs such as transportation, food,

companionship and in-home supports. The Golden Age Club is truly a home away from home for its members.

United Active Living Inc., Calgary

Nominated for: Business Award
Mr. Samir Kayande, MLA for Calgary-Elbow

United Active Living Inc.'s senior retirement homes in Calgary transform the experience of getting older, enhancing the health and well-being of residents and create community. Their philosophy, since 1991, is to transform the experience of aging. The program is an integrated-living model that is the first of its kind in Canada and supported by "United Minds" service which is one of the many memory care programs in North America. From educational workshops to intergenerational connections with post-secondary partners, United Active Living promotes social interaction and a sense of belonging, creating an environment that is nurturing and stimulating.

The organization held its first annual Innovation Fair in September 2023, encouraging employees from the senior's serving sector to share ideas on enhancing resident safety, food services, and operations. From the submissions and research, two models were put into place: (1) "Universal Access to Point of Care", uses the technology system across departments for safety monitoring of residents; and (2) "Art Across All Ages", an intergenerational art program with residents and school age children. Through their work and evaluative processes, United Active Living continues to transform intergenerational collaboration, which improves the lives of participating seniors and children.

West Country Family Service Association, Rocky Mountain House

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award
Honourable Jason Nixon, MLA for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre

West Country Family Service Association in Rocky Mountain House is supported by volunteers, home support workers and administrative staff to deliver programs to older adults living in Rocky Mountain House. They are committed to enabling seniors to age in place with dignity and grace. Direction from the organization's strong leadership has strengthened and streamlined services, ensuring inclusivity for the most vulnerable in the community.

Beyond its primary services, West Country Family Service Association collaborates extensively with key community-based seniors serving partners. Partnering with key agencies, the association has created a network of support that addresses the diverse needs of seniors. Their recent hosting of an RCMP Musical Ride exemplifies their dedication to community engagement, and initiatives in transportation and housing showcase their commitment to

going above and beyond their mandate. Despite facing staffing challenges, the team perseveres, driven by a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of local seniors.

Wing Kei Care Centres, Calgary

Nominated for: Nonprofit Organization Award

Ms. Kathleen Ganley, MLA for Calgary-Mountain View

Wing Kei Care Centres represent a commitment to quality, culturally sensitive services, and compassionate support for the elderly. Since 2005, Wing Kei Care Centres have rapidly expanded to three facilities, including two long-term care and one supportive living facility, serving 320 residents and 64 clients in their Adult Day Program. The organization's dedication to person- and family-centered care is evident in its collaborative approaches, involving caregivers, family, support staff, administrators, and volunteers in providing safe and high-quality care. Wing Kei Care Centres' impact extends beyond their current facilities, with ongoing work to accommodate 180 continuing care and hospice care residents.

Wing Kei Care Centres have been consistently recognized for their role in the community. They have continuously received exemplary standing in the Accreditation Canada surveys, which is the highest rating. In addition, the Canadian Institution for Health Information has found the centres to be above local, provincial, and national standards on several quality indicators. Wing Kei Care Centres' impact goes beyond statistics and accolades; it is deeply felt by the seniors they serve. The staff radiate love and care in their daily work, treating residents as family members. Even in the face of the challenging pandemic, the Wing Kei Care Centres demonstrated resilience and dedication, keeping families informed, seeking feedback, and implementing preventive measures with utmost care and consideration.