



# Age-Friendly Saskatchewan

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AF COMMUNITIES HERE AND ELSEWHERE!



Be sure to scroll all the way down -- you won't want to miss anything!

## Age-Friendly Saskatchewan Connector February 3, 2025

We're pleased to welcome you to the 16th issue of the **Age-Friendly Saskatchewan Connector**. These newsletters keep you informed on what we're doing in Age-Friendly Saskatchewan, new things that are happening in the communities, and more.

**\*\* To contact Wendy about anything in this newsletter, please email her. Thanks! \*\***

**Happy Valentine's Day!**

My Mom moved to our low-cost housing complex in Shaunavon shortly after my Dad passed away in 2020. They were a social couple who loved to chat and visit and get to know others, wherever life took them. For her first Valentine's Day without him, and her first in her new home, she was

undoubtedly lonely and sad. Understanding that others may be feeling the same way too, she crafted red construction paper and white paper doilies into special valentines for each of her new neighbours. She slid them under their doors to introduce herself, wishing them a Happy Valentine's Day, and inviting them to stop by to say 'Hello'. This small gesture helped to alleviate her own feelings of isolation and I'm sure it brought a smile to many other faces, too.

Exchanging valentines with your sweetheart or preparing valentines for all your school friends created feelings of love and belonging. If our loved ones and friends are no longer with us, Valentine's Day can be especially difficult. But there are times of loneliness for people all year long. Reach out when someone crosses your mind to let them know you are thinking about them. A phone call, a friendly smile or a short, written message can brighten a day. Simple acts of kindness are good for the receiver and the giver! Let's get back to a culture of connection!

Love,  
Wendy ☐

---

## February 10-16, 2025, is Let No One Be Alone Week

Age-Friendly Committees have taken up the challenge to reduce social isolation in their communities and to make necessary changes so that we 'Let No One Be Alone' at any time of year. We're pleased to share some of those community initiatives and success stories in this issue.

☐



*Click on the image above to go to the SSM Let No One Be Alone page.*

☐

If you're on **Facebook** or **Bluesky**, we invite you to follow SSM's daily posts from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> – and share them! Each day there will be a different Let No One Be Alone Valentine heart with a suggestion for how to reach out to someone who is alone.

# LET NO ONE BE ALONE

**on Valentine's Day,  
or any day**



***If you are already feeling lonely, Valentine's Day can seem like one of the worst days of the year.***

Bruce Y. Lee has shared information from a survey that was conducted using a Loneliness Scale. The higher the score on the scale, the lonelier you feel, with an 80 being the maximum possible. Any score of 43 or higher would qualify as "loneliness." The results showed the following:

- 61% of the respondents crossed the 43-point loneliness threshold, up from 54% in a 2018 report. The average score increased from 44 to 45.7, as well.
- 58% say they always or sometimes feel like no one knows them well, compared to 54% in the 2018 report.
- 49% always or sometimes feel as though they lack companionship compared to 43%.
- 47% said that their relationships with others are not meaningful compared to 43%
- 45% said they sometimes or always feel that they are no longer close to anyone compared to 39%.

There needs to be much more open communication about loneliness, and frank conversations about what to do collectively about the loneliness epidemic.



SSM has developed several resources to help individuals and organizations deal with social isolation and loneliness. These resources can be found on the SSM website at: [ssm@skseniorsmechanism.ca](mailto:ssm@skseniorsmechanism.ca)

On the website you will find pamphlets, posters, and other resources that give ideas as to:

- how to connect and reach out when someone is isolated.
- ways to connect while providing others an opportunity to contribute.
- ways organizations can support those who are alone; and,
- positive actions that community businesses can take to help customers feel less isolated.

Please use these resources and reach out to those in your community who may be struggling with loneliness and social isolation, particularly on Valentine's Day.

Access the 5 **LET NO ONE BE ALONE** resources:

 [skseniorsmechanism.ca](http://skseniorsmechanism.ca)  [skseniorsmechanism](https://www.facebook.com/skseniorsmechanism)



*Click on the image above for the full-size PDF.*

## Age-Friendly Events



### Be Ready Virtual Webinar

**'Be Ready' Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults**  
presented by the Canadian Red Cross  
Thursday, February 27 online via Teams  
1:30 - 3:00 pm

Emergencies can happen anywhere at any time. In Canada, we face many

hazards from wildfires, flooding, heat waves, and earthquakes. The Be Ready workshop is aimed at raising individual emergency preparedness.

In this free workshop facilitated by the Canadian Red Cross, participants will learn about:

- The potential hazards and risks in their area
- How to create an emergency plan
- How to assemble an emergency kit
- The importance of social and support networks during emergencies

Age-Friendly Saskatchewan is organizing this workshop for our network but anyone is welcome to participate. To register and receive the link to join online, please email Wendy.



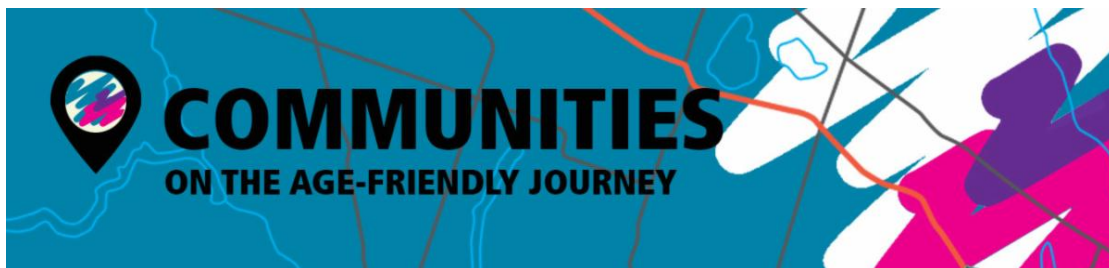
### Age-Friendly Communities Coffee Hour

Thursday, March 13  
10 am

Topic: Emergency Preparedness

Please register with Wendy to receive the link for the next Coffee Hour by emailing Wendy.

## Look What's Happening!



### January Coffee Hour Report

In January, our Age-Friendly Communities met for our regular Coffee Hour to discuss Let No One Be Alone Week and social isolation. Some of the factors that influence social isolation were discussed:

- lack of transportation

- people are independent and don't reach out
- affordability
- mobility & health issues
- difficulties seeing and hearing impact desire to take part
- retirees no longer have a work group so there may be fewer personal connections
- people who don't/can't volunteer have fewer interactions
- people who live on farms, those who live alone or are widowed, or have a lack of family contact
- not knowing how to reach people; no published phone numbers, concerns about privacy

Communities shared some of the ways they are trying to address social isolation. 'Social Participation' and 'Respect & Social Inclusion' are two Age-Friendly Domains that come to the forefront when we think about social isolation. However, social isolation can also be partly addressed when other domains, such as Transportation or Housing, are taken into consideration, too. Local volunteer transportation services for older adults are being offered and/or developed in many communities and help to ensure accessibility to services and events. Older adults residing in long term care facilities might benefit from interaction with someone who can visit and read to them. Our talented Beth Stilborn shared a series of blogs she has written: [Reading Aloud to Older Adults and Isolated Persons](#). Click the title for a PDF with links to all the posts.

## Age-Friendly Norwich, UK



Many Age-Friendly Committees in Saskatchewan have focused on the installation of benches within their community in response to the Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain. Having frequent places to rest while walking or shopping downtown is important for older adults, but also for families with young children. Age-Friendly Kipling & District says, "Our downtown park provides a place for people to meet and mingle or just watch the people go by."

A community in the UK has taken this one step further, also addressing the issue of social isolation, by installing 'Happy to Chat' benches which invite people to stop and to chat with each other while sitting on the benches.





Similarly, buddy benches have become more common on school and community playgrounds to improve inclusivity, reduce bullying and encourage kindness and interaction while reducing social anxiety. These concerns know no age limits; buddy benches can be for everyone!

Visit the following link to learn more about the Happy to Chat benches in Norwich, UK. Perhaps the next bench project in a Saskatchewan community can take this idea under consideration.

### Happy to Chat Bench Installed



---

## Ontario - Solutions for Belonging

Click the link below for an article on how the Canadian Mental Health Association York Region South Simcoe and Laboratory for Artistic Intelligence have launched Solutions for Belonging, a free evidence-based

resource that aims to end chronic loneliness. There is also a link that takes you directly to the developed resource, Solutions for Belonging.

[Article in Bradford Today](#)

[Solutions for Belonging Website](#)

---

### Other Social Isolation Resources

Click on each heading to go to the link.

[Case Studies from Social Connection Guidelines website](#)

[SSM Resource "Alone or Lonely"](#)

[Cyberseniors Website](#)

[Canadian Red Cross Friendly Calls Program in Saskatchewan](#)

---

### Queries



Do you have questions about what other Committees are doing, whether that be writing Terms of Reference, or Age-Friendly business work, or working with stakeholders/partners, or beginning a newsletter or ? Please send your queries to Wendy for inclusion in the next newsletter.

### Question of the Month:

***Do you know what services are available in your community in the event of an emergency or disaster? Does your community make plans for how to include older adults in their emergency planning? Are older adults in your community prepared for emergencies?***

## What's Happening at the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism?



### Facilitating Independence Grants Awarded

Facilitating Independence is a process that focuses on supporting older adults to live a meaningful and freely chosen life in their own homes and communities.



Based on the success of the past Facilitating Independence Grant (FIG) projects, the Ministry of Health has provided SSM with funding to support senior-serving organizations through the grant process again in 2025. Applications for funding of up to \$25,000 were received by SSM. Ten of the applications submitted were chosen to receive the grant. All ten organizations received the total amount of funding they requested. [Click here](#) for a full listing of the communities and projects who received a FIG grant in 2025.

### Celebrating Seniors Awards

**Start thinking about nominating an older adult!**

The Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM) is in the planning phase for the Provincial 2025 Celebrating Seniors Awards Event and Banquet, which will take place on September 28, 2025,



at the Conexus Art Centre in Regina. This is an important, in-person, and high-profile event where older adults are celebrated for their volunteer work. Older adults from throughout the province are nominated. While all who are nominated are celebrated at the event, one person in each specific category is presented with a trophy.



More information about the nomination process will follow over the next few weeks. Please give some thought to nominating a deserving older adult who has contributed their time and energy, through their volunteer efforts, to make their community and our province a better place to live, work and play.

## Century Club



The Saskatchewan Century Club, administered by SSM, is an association of seniors who have reached the age of 90 years and are determined to continue living in as full and active a style as possible to the age of 100 and beyond.

We invite anyone who is at least 90 years old and lives in Saskatchewan to join. There is no charge. [Click here](#) to find more information on SSM's website. We are in the process of creating ways for members outside of the major cities to be able to participate more fully than in the past.



Click on the first image (the brochure) to access and download a printable version of the Century Club brochure which includes the registration form. Those in Saskatoon who wish to register should contact SCOA, the Saskatoon Council on Aging.

## Follow SSM on Social Media

SSM is shifting away from X (Twitter) to Bluesky. Many of the groups and individuals who have migrated to Bluesky will be more likely to notice and respond to SSM posts there.

SSM will still maintain their Facebook presence.

You can follow SSM on Bluesky at  
<https://bsky.app/profile/ssmsk.bsky.social>

You can follow SSM on Facebook at  
<https://www.facebook.com/saskseniorsmechanism>



### Latest Issue of Gray Matters

Winter 2025:  
*Collaboration - Action*

[Click here](#) to access this issue.

***Here's to our Age-Friendly work and action!***

*Wendy*

Wendy Thienes  
Age-Friendly Communities Staff

*Beth*

Beth Stilborn  
Website and Social Media Staff

This newsletter may have been forwarded to you by someone on your local Age-Friendly Committee. If you would like to receive it directly, here's how you subscribe: please send your name and email address to Beth, **indicating that you want to subscribe to the Age-Friendly Saskatchewan Newsletter**. Please let Beth know your connection to Age-Friendly for her records.

For those receiving it with either Wendy Thienes or Holly Schick as the sender's name, you are already subscribed.

---

**Age-Friendly Saskatchewan Website: <https://agefriendlysk.ca/>**  
**Age-Friendly Communities Page: <https://agefriendlysk.ca/af-saskatchewan-communities-main-page/>**

Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism | #112 - 2001 Cornwall Street | Regina, SK S4P 3X9 CA

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!