



RISC

Reducing Isolation
of Seniors Collective

Reducing Isolation of Seniors in South and Central Saskatchewan



Alzheimer Society
SASKATCHEWAN



Reducing Isolation of Seniors in South and Central Saskatchewan

Objective: To measurably reduce the rate of social isolation of seniors in South and Central Saskatchewan.

Outcome 1: Reduce the proportion of seniors who do not have support and help when they need it by 25%.

Outcome 2: Reduce the proportion of seniors who do not participate regularly in activities by 20%.

Outcome 3: Reduce the proportion of seniors who do not feel connected to family, friends and acquaintances by 25%.

Outcome 4: Reduce the proportion of seniors who do not feel valued by family, friends and acquaintances by 15%.

Communities become more aware of the needs of older adults and find ways to address those needs

Seniors are viewed as valuable, contributing members of society

Accessible Services are Available

Seniors meaningfully connect with others through personal contact and meaningful activities

Our Projects

Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM)

- Age-Friendly Communities
- Ageism and Media
- Older Adult Abuse Prevention
- Reducing Isolation in Regina (Lifelong Learning Centre)

Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan (ASOS)

- Dementia Helpline
- Dementia Friends
- Dementia Friendly Communities
- Warning Signs

Saskatchewan Red Cross (RC)

- Friendly Visiting Program

Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU)

- Evaluation
- Scoping Paper
- Policy Maker Community Summit

Structure

RISC Impact Plan Team

16 staff people

RISC Program Coordinators

Shawna Green – RC

Abby Wolfe – ASOS

Michel Sorensen – SSM

Linda Anderson – Ageism and Media (SSM)

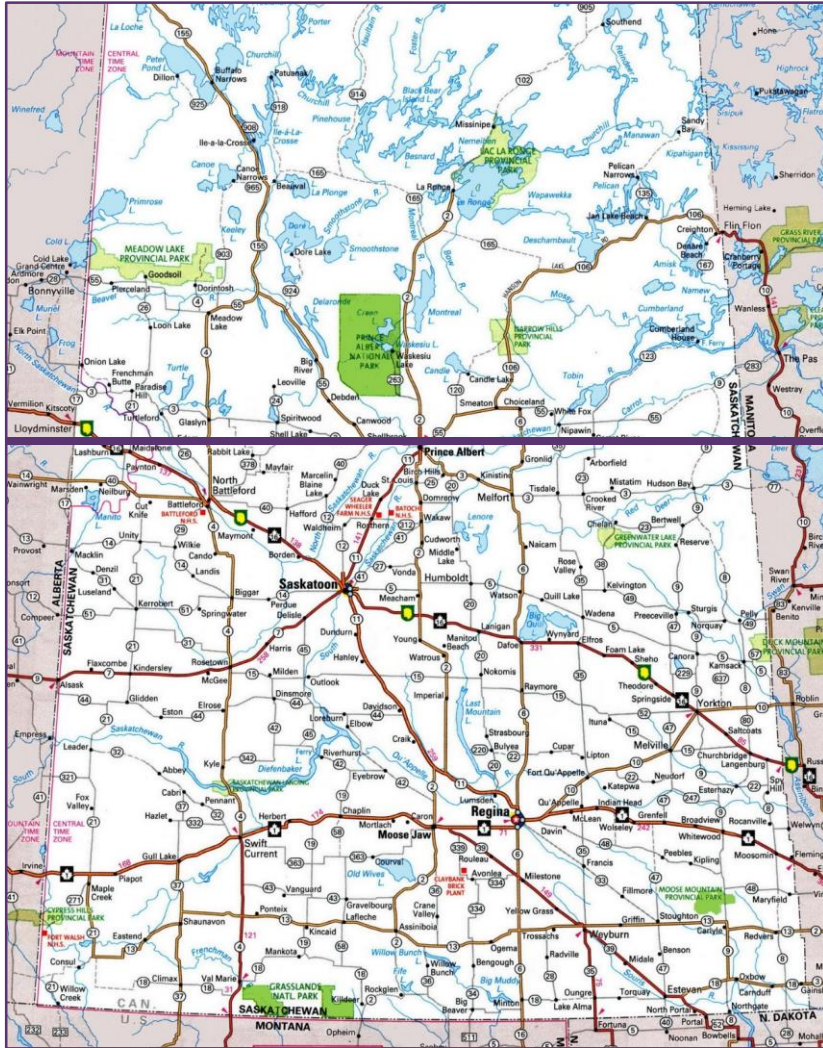
RISC Project Leads

Yvette Crane – RC

Joanne Bracken – ASOS

Holly Schick – SSM

Bonnie Jeffery - SPHERU



Community Contacts

Number of RISC Projects in Each Community

One Project	55
Two Projects	14
Three Projects	1
Four Projects	4
Five Projects	1
Six Projects	2
TOTAL	77

Benefits of Our Approach

- ▶ Addressing one aspect of social isolation has an effect on other aspects
- ▶ Covering a wide number of communities – learnings inform work in other communities
- ▶ Information and resource sharing
- ▶ Partners networking and making new connections translates into better strategies
- ▶ Reducing duplication of efforts and enhancing cross promotion
- ▶ Very beneficial to have research expertise on the team to assist in developing measures and indicators to evaluate our collective work

Benefits of Our Approach

- ▶ Learning from the other organization leaders in their area of expertise brought a wider range of knowledge to the team overall
- ▶ Greater impact by working and presenting with other organizations:
 - ▶ greater pull for audiences at workshops and booths,
 - ▶ helped gain program awareness
 - ▶ gained a broader connection with towns, recreation departments and health care through each organization's previous connections
- ▶ Working alone, growth in the program awareness would not have been made, nor would new resources had been tapped into as quickly

Communities become more aware of the needs of older adults and find ways to address those needs

- ▶ Dementia Friendly Communities – key barriers to becoming dementia friendly are related to lack of understanding about dementia and stigma
- ▶ **85** ABC's of Dementia presentations were conducted with 95% of survey respondents indicating that they agree/strongly agree that their knowledge about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias increased. 96% of survey respondents indicated an increase in awareness of the warning signs
- ▶ Presentations and displays
 - ABCs of Dementia – **85** presentations
 - DF Communities – **40** presentations
 - Friendly Visits
- ▶ **929** new Dementia Friends who committed to learn more about dementia to better support people with dementia who live in their communities
- ▶ Municipal and Libraries Toolkits developed to assist communities to become Dementia Friendly
- ▶ Friendly Visits working closely with local Health Authority staff to assist with client referrals and help promote the service

Communities become more aware of the needs of older adults and find ways to address those needs

Ageism and Media

- ▶ Local Media aware of opportunities to include older adults and how to portray them
- ▶ Reducing Ageism – **26 presentations**
- ▶ **45+ articles and media interviews**
- ▶ Ageism and Media Project received the Canadian Coalition for Seniors Mental Health ***Vision Award*** in **October 2019**



Age-Friendly Communities

- ▶ Engaged **30 communities** in age-friendly – urban, rural, francophone, First Nations; **23** were new as part of the project
- ▶ Resource Kit and website for communities working towards Age-Friendly
- ▶ AF Communities/Isolation – **40+ presentations**
- ▶ Older Adult Abuse – **40 presentations**

Seniors are viewed as valuable, contributing members of society

- ▶ **1710 surveys** (in both English and French) returned getting input from seniors on isolation
- ▶ People with Dementia are participating in delivering DFC presentations
- ▶ Seniors are key volunteer members of all local AF Committees
- ▶ Senior volunteers on our Advisory, Steering and Project Committees
- ▶ Seniors providing leadership for classes and activities
- ▶ Seniors invited as key participants in Policy Summit

Seniors are viewed as valuable, contributing members of society

- ▶ Older Adults doing media monitoring - **535 news items** monitored
- ▶ Ageism and Media
 - **19 education presentations** on ageism and media with media outlets
 - year of engagement with media outlets resulted in positive change shown in 2019 media monitoring
- ▶ Collaborating with the University of Regina Journalism School to raise awareness of seniors and media
- ▶ Positive images and stories of older adults in media
- ▶ Older adults appreciated doing systemic research and indicated they felt their opinions were valued

“I enjoy giving my opinion and (through this project) it would seem my opinion is valued. Once I got started, I enjoyed using my critical thinking skills.”

Accessible Services are Available

- ▶ Age-Friendly Business Resource
- ▶ Dementia Friendly Resources available for businesses, libraries, municipalities and faith groups
- ▶ Dementia Helpline – **352 calls received**, post contact survey indicate that 72% of callers agree or strongly agree that they know more about programs offered at the Alzheimer Society and 39% indicate that they know more about services offered in the community, 54% indicate that they have better strategies to cope with dementia
- ▶ Health care professionals are calling the Dementia Helpline to learn about services and supports that they can recommend to their clients
- ▶ www.DementiaFriendlySaskatchewan.ca website created
- ▶ Trained **13 OA Abuse presenters**, including First Nations presenters
- ▶ Seniors Fraud Awareness and Safety Handbook – **4000+ distributed**
- ▶ Lifelong Learning Centre – work on ways to involve more New Canadian seniors
- ▶ Scoping Paper on existing services to address isolation
- ▶ Activities/projects are almost all free; some very low cost
- ▶ Fédération des aînés francosaskois works directly with Francophone communities

Seniors meaningfully connect with others through personal contact and meaningful activities

- ▶ Reducing isolation in Regina (Lifelong Learning Centre) – programs, presentations and workshops e.g. Wednesday Wellness forums, presentation on Ageism and Human Rights to Justice Studies students, Understanding World Religions course; included **170+ free activities**, others at minimal cost
- ▶ AF activities in **30 communities**
- ▶ Intergenerational Interactions
 - Pen pal projects – seniors and children
 - Century Club for seniors 90+
 - Reading programs with school children
 - Connecting university students and seniors on projects
 - Community Gardening and Composting
 - Mentoring cooking French recipes



Seniors meaningfully connect with others through personal contact and meaningful activities

Friendly Visiting

- ▶ Hired Friendly Visiting Coordinator - went from minimal resources to well developed volunteer resources, marketing materials, assessment and tracking tools
- ▶ June 2018 to June 2019 - **program grew over 300%**
- ▶ Program increased from one volunteer and one senior at outset
 - ▶ now **26 actively visiting/phoning senior-volunteer pairs**; continuing to grow
 - ▶ Have **95 volunteers express interest or involved it the program** in some way since 2016; total of **59 seniors interacted with in a meaningful way** over the 3 years
 - ▶ **21 new volunteer** interest/requests in last quarter

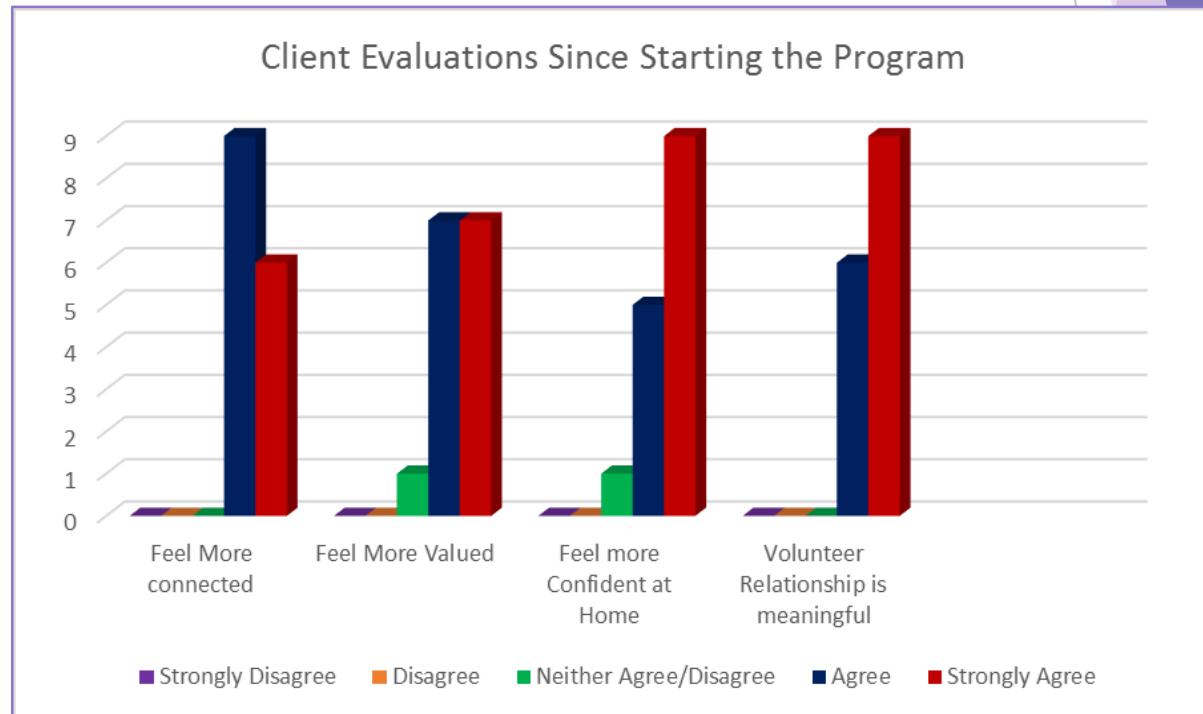


“Now as a program I find extreme value in this, it brings me companionship, something to look forward to each week. I am not very mobile and am visually impaired so going out is not an option so for someone to come to me and engage in conversation really brightens my day. Red Cross with this program you have changed my life for the better, a lot better. Thank you so much for this program.” – program participant

Seniors meaningfully connect with others through personal contact and meaningful activities

Friendly Visiting (continued)

- ▶ **31 communities** reached in some way by the program
- ▶ 100% of seniors and 94% of volunteers said they would recommend it to others
- ▶ **88% of volunteers** surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they were more aware of the needs of older adults; had made a meaningful connection with their friend; and were providing a valuable service to their community



Challenges

▶ **Time and Resources**

- ▶ To establish a foundation and build meaningful relationships
 - ▶ Unrealistic to measure impacts on seniors' isolation within a three-year period
 - ▶ More time and resources needed for backbone functions
 - ▶ Additional funding, from the public and/or private sector, is needed to create sustainability
- ▶ Moving beyond partners' focus on their individual projects to focus on collective initiatives
- ▶ Measurement of progress on outcomes

Successes

- ▶ Focus on shared opportunities for collaboration and alignment at meetings
- ▶ Going into community collectively – challenging at first, but easier second time and now have template for future
- ▶ Trust and open communication among partners
- ▶ Partners are making new connections as a result of being involved with RISC
- ▶ Establishing an identity through branding for the initiative
- ▶ Information and resource sharing provides better support for older adults and volunteers
- ▶ Reduced duplication of efforts and enhanced cross promotion
- ▶ Evaluation team embedded in overall team – enhanced understanding of evaluation concepts and strategies

Successes

- ▶ Going into a community collectively – challenging at first, but easier second time and now have template for future
- ▶ Learned from the experience going into Carlyle and adapted agenda and processes to go into another community – Davidson



Completed work

- ▶ *Reducing Social Isolation of Older Adults: Scoping Review of Interventions* completed in April 2019; final report submitted to ESDC and available at www.spheru.ca
- ▶ *Policy-Maker Community Summit on Social Isolation of Older Adults in South and Central Saskatchewan* held in April 2019
 - ▶ **41 participants**; almost one-half were older adults
 - ▶ Final report submitted to ESDC and available at www.spheru.ca



Completed work

- ▶ *Seniors Impact Survey* completed in 2017 (n=1,719) to measure social isolation
 - ▶ Social isolation index created as aggregate of 3 questions on 'support', 'connectedness' and 'value'
 - ▶ Almost one-quarter (23.9%) scored high or medium on measure of social isolation
- ▶ *Community Perspectives Survey* completed in 2018 (n=271)
 - ▶ Three-quarters (75.3%) believed social isolation 'somewhat' or 'very' common in their community
 - ▶ 36.5% felt that there was general awareness of social isolation of older adults in their community

Additional Data Collection/Analysis

▶ Community Case Studies

- ▶ Completed in October 2019 with 6 communities – communities selected in consultation with RISC partner organizations
- ▶ Purpose was to gain a more in depth understanding of the impact of RISC projects/collective
- ▶ Gathered post-survey data on Seniors Impact Survey (n~84)
- ▶ Gathered post-survey data Community Perspectives Survey (~36)

Additional Data Collection/Analysis

- ▶ Community Case Studies (continued)
 - ▶ Focus groups and interviews with 114 individuals
 - ▶ 72 participants were older adults; the remainder were community stakeholders
 - ▶ Findings illustrate the linkages between RISC support to local communities, and locally-driven activities that produce outcomes required for reduction of social isolation.
 - ▶ Suggestions for continued work
 - ▶ Improve communication methods with older adults
 - ▶ Improve community awareness of social isolation
 - ▶ Intergenerational activities to reduce social isolation
 - ▶ Human service system needs to reach those who are socially isolated and address 'ageism'

Additional Data Collection/Analysis

- ▶ Exit Interviews with RISC partners
 - ▶ Completed in April 2019
 - ▶ Group interviews held with the 3 partner organizations
 - ▶ Data analysis completed and findings being prepared
- ▶ Content Analysis of RISC meeting minutes
 - ▶ Purpose to add more depth to the process of developing a collective impact approach
 - ▶ Data analysis completed and findings being prepared

Final Evaluation Report

Report is being guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent were the interventions **successful** in reducing the social isolation of older adults?

- ▶ What was the **reach** of the interventions across central and southern Saskatchewan both in terms of communities and individual?
- ▶ To what extent is there evidence that the interventions increased **public awareness** of the social isolation of older adults?
- ▶ To what extent is there evidence that communities or individuals **took action** to reduce the social isolation of older adults?
- ▶ To what extent is there evidence that the efforts of communities and individuals have made an **impact** on social isolation of older adults?

Final Evaluation Report

2. To what extent is there evidence that the RISC partners employed a **collective impact** approach in the roll-out of the interventions to reduce the social isolation of older adults in central and southern Saskatchewan?

- ▶ Is there evidence the RISC partners engaged in **strategic learning**?
- ▶ Is there evidence of **flexibility** in the evaluation design?
- ▶ Is there evidence of using **multiple designs** for multiple users?
- ▶ Is there evidence of **shared measurement**?
- ▶ Was there a realization of **unintended outcomes**?
- ▶ Did the collective seek out contribution to **community change**?

Key Lessons Learned

- ▶ Need to strategize and plan collectively from the very beginning
- ▶ Intentional time needed to grow trust
- ▶ Challenging to work on a collective initiative and this needs to happen relatively early in the process
- ▶ Trying to quantify effects on isolation is not workable in many situations – need to accept that many effects are qualitative and can't be measured in the same way
- ▶ Need plenty of time if you really want to have a significant social impact
- ▶ Interventions need to be followed up and given ongoing support if they are to result in success/change

Projects that will be sustained

Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan

- ▶ Dementia Helpline
- ▶ Dementia Friends
- ▶ Dementia Friendly Communities
- ▶ Warning Signs

Saskatchewan Red Cross

- ▶ Friendly Phone Link Program

Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism

- ▶ Age-Friendly Communities
- ▶ Ageism and Media will continue and expand to reducing ageism in other areas
- ▶ Presentations on Older Adult Abuse