

SASKATCHEWAN SENIORS ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

Hello SSAI members and friends. Here are a few thoughts from me on “Transforming the Future!”

When we think about seniors and the lives they lead, we recognize that much transformation has already occurred and that change is far from over. Our lives continue to evolve every day, shaping a future that begins anew each moment. We hope that this future will be positive: that we age with dignity, retain a sense of purpose, enjoy good health or recover quickly when we are ailing, and maintain meaningful, loyal friendships.

However, hope alone does not bring about transformation. Real change requires action, and it also requires encouraging others to act.

Recently, I listened to a woman who was deeply upset about her mother’s situation in a personal care home. She wanted conditions to improve but did not want to report what was happening. Instead, she hoped things would change on their own. Unfortunately, change is unlikely without speaking up and advocating for those who cannot do so themselves. Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel once said, “When we see injustice and choose to look away, we choose the side of the oppressor. When we witness suffering and remain silent, we give permission for it to continue.” Advocacy is essential if we want a better future.

If transformation is to occur, one of the first shifts must be in our attitudes—both our own and those of the people around us. A positive outlook matters. Seniors possess valuable life skills and experiences, and we are far from “down and out.” The idea that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks is simply untrue. Many seniors have embraced technology such as using cell phones, computers, tablets, and digital cameras, and enrolling in courses and workshops to keep learning and growing.

We must also challenge ageism—the tendency to judge ability or circumstance based solely on age. Is a sore leg due to aging, or is it because I pulled a muscle? Should a senior refrain from helping because of age or because they are physically unable? Being a senior does not mean being

incapable. By countering ageism, we can reshape how we see ourselves and how others see us. Seniors can still make meaningful contributions to society, just as they did when they were younger.

Advocacy also plays a role at the policy level. Recently, SSAI executive members and volunteers met with the Minister for Seniors, the Honourable Lori Carr, to discuss concerns such as helping seniors “age in place”—remaining in their own homes and communities rather than being relocated far from family. We also raised the issue of providing free shingles vaccines for all seniors. The minister noted ours was the only group she knew of which had advocated for this. This highlights the need for more seniors and organizations to speak up with a unified voice.

There are many opportunities to drive positive change. Seniors can stay connected with one another and their communities, helping to address issues like loneliness and isolation. Communities can support seniors by maintaining safe sidewalks, providing benches, supporting senior centers, ensuring access to local housing, home care, and affordable transportation. In turn, seniors can write letters, meet with elected officials, and participate in committees addressing these needs.

Through action, transformation becomes possible: reduced isolation, improved mental health, and stronger, more inclusive communities. The next time you imagine a better future for seniors, ask yourself what you can do today to help make that transformation real.

Lorraine Thibeault, SSAI President





Register now for Sask Seniors

Annual Convention

June 3rd and 4th, 2026
Travelodge, Saskatoon

This is a great opportunity for people to learn more about SSAI, network with others from around the province, and to attend presentations on a wide variety of topics.

Everyone is welcome to attend!

Register on or before May 25th.

Registration Fee is \$80/person to attend in person – Includes: 2-day Convention, coffee, snacks, meals, banquet/social

Tentative Schedule:

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

- 8:30 – 10AM - Sign-in & Introductions
- 10AM - Presentations/Speakers
- Noon - Buffet Lunch; 50/50 draw
- 1PM - Presentations/Speakers
- 3PM - Resolutions, Reports, Elections
- 4PM - Meeting for Directors/Coordinators
- 6PM - Banquet & entertainment

Thursday, June 4, 2026

- 8AM - Breakfast Buffet
- 9AM - Presentations/Speakers
- 11AM - Resolutions, Club Reports
- Noon - Buffet Lunch; Raffle Ticket Draw
- 1 – 4PM - Presentations/Speakers

Join us as we
celebrate milestones!

This event proudly supported by:



To register and for more information:

Visit our website saskseniors.com

or contact: Shannon Wright

Phone: 306-493-3023

Email: info@saskseniors.com

From Leaks to Peaks

Sometimes things happen that start off feeling like the biggest disaster in the world and then end on a positive note, giving hope for the future. The Ituna Seniors Social Club's roof suffered a catastrophic event in March of 2025 that rendered our place unusable for many months. That began a long series of disheartening interactions with insurance companies, engineers, businesses and other entities in town and the province that should have been our lifeline in times such as this. Instead, we found that they often appeared to be working against us, instead of with us. Some of us came away feeling like our problem and we ourselves were not important because we were seniors – old people – who are really not that vital to the life of the community. The Insurance company took a long time making a decision and ended up covering less than \$8,000 of our \$100,000 problem. Some of the organizations we first approached refused to help with allowing us the use of their space hindering our ability to fundraise and carry on with the activities we usually enjoyed in our club. But then there were some small things that happened that gave us hope – one of the first was an unexpected gift given in a very unorthodox manner. Our Vice Chairperson had just left our monthly meeting and went to the grocery store to get groceries and, when she went to pay, she found an envelope. It was very non-descript envelope, actually a return envelope that's often included in what some of us see as junk mail, with the words "for the roof repair". Inside was \$500 cash – she did not know when someone had slipped it in her handbag, had no idea where it came from and from whom – a mystery that has not been solved to this day. But it provided hope, that maybe there were people out there who cared and maybe, just maybe we could tackle what seemed like a daunting task. We soon found that some places DID say yes when we approached them to use their space. A Senior's complex allowed us to use their common area to conduct our weekly bingos which allowed us to continue making some money to pay the utilities that needed to be paid even if we couldn't use the building. A local church allowed to use their space for our weekly canasta nights in exchange for a free will offering from the players.

The Wildlife Den allowed us to use their space to hold our monthly meetings free of charge. The Town Council held a barbecue with proceeds going to our initiative and agreed to provide income tax receipts for donations made at their office. A bank account was set up so that people could contribute directly at the bank into the account and people did. We had money in savings and GICs (unfortunately not nearly enough) and donations had started to come but we needed more – much more! So, we began making soup and sandwiches – on a take-out basis from our kitchen (which was not affected by the roof damage in the main hall). A pork was donated by a local company, and we sold raffle tickets with two prizes of ½ a pork cut and wrapped. Much to our surprise, the Bank, based on how hard we had been working and the donations we had received thus far, gave us a loan (by the way we have not had to use the loan yet because of all the financial support that we have gotten or earned).

When construction began, we could no longer use our kitchen, so another local church allowed us to use their hall and kitchen, at no charge, to make and sell our soup and sandwiches. Various service groups and individuals gave us donations in varying amounts - one individual even gave us \$10,000. Our contractor was a local person who was very supportive from the start of this project offering advice on how to proceed, etc. We finally had enough to start and our contractor agreed to partial payments. By this time, it was already November, and we feared the weather would be against him. The weather co-operated (somewhat) and he worked when he could, often well into the night and on weekends, to get it done before significant snow came. We are so grateful to his hard work and to some of the tradesmen who provided free product and/or free labour.

We are, of course, grateful to all the people who supported us with donations and buying soup and sandwiches from us each week. There were many individual people in the town and surrounding area that cared and saw that we, a bunch of elderly people, were determined to get our building back up and running and stepped up to support us in

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whatever way they could. One man (not a member of the club) said that he was proud of the way we did not simply accept defeat and instead got into action saving our building. The service group this man is part of has made a significant donation to us and has promised another one once a fundraiser they have planned is complete. The response from people outside our club has been phenomenal and has really made us feel a valuable part of this community.

Recently our theatre was up for sale with no takers, so a community co-operative was formed. Residents purchased shares that then went toward purchasing the theatre. The theater happens to be next door to our facility, and we have planned a joint event – “Dinner and a Movie”. We will provide

a roast beef dinner after which ticket holders will go next door for a movie. We hope to begin doing more of these types of joint ventures with other entities and age groups in our area. The support we received from our community has inspired us to give back where we can – to pay it forward as such. That may mean selling tickets for another service group, helping make perogies for a group that gave us a donation or helping wherever and whenever we can and are able (after all we are elderly).

From **leaks** (that is exactly how we started this journey) to **peaks**. We end on a high note with a renewed sense of purpose, pride in who we are and what we accomplished and gratitude for the community we are privileged to be part of.

-- Linda Smuk, Ituna

SSAI RAFFLE TICKETS

SSAI raffle fundraiser (Licence #SR25-1335) – draws to be held at convention in Saskatoon on June 4th, 2026. Tickets are \$2 each for a chance to win 1 draw of \$1000, 2 x \$500, and 5 x \$100. If you are interested in purchasing or selling raffle tickets, please contact Shannon Wright phone: 306-493-3023 email: info@saskseniors.com

Be part of a strong association and network with other seniors and rural seniors' clubs. Reach beyond your own community to connect with other seniors and clubs from other parts of the province for support and new ideas.



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE - \$5/person

SSAI Clubs collect fees from each club member and remit to the SSAI Treasurer. SSAI Membership fees can be mailed to:
Shannon Wright, Secretary/Treasurer, Box 455 Vanscoy, SK S0L 3J0
Phone: 306-493-3023 email: info@saskseniors.com
Website: saskseniors.com



Subscribe to our email list

If you would like to receive emails from Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc., send us an email at info@saskseniors.com with your request to SUBSCRIBE. You will receive emails regarding upcoming SSAI events as well as forwarded information pertinent to Saskatchewan Seniors.

Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. (SSAI) would like to acknowledge the support of Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM) and the Saskatchewan Lottery Trust Fund for SSAI outreach to Seniors. Some of this funding pays for the quarterly distribution of the SSAI newsletter in Gray Matters.