

Healthy Aging Alberta Community Leadership Council

Karen McDonald – CLC Chair and Executive Director, Sage Seniors Association



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Karen McDonald's career has focused almost exclusively in the field of gerontology, including a decade in seniors' supportive housing and over a decade with the Sage Seniors Association, most recently as Executive Director. Sage is an Edmonton-based community-based seniors serving organization that provides social services, community development, and life enrichment programming, primarily serving seniors who experience barriers to service delivery.

In 2015, Karen co-founded MatchWork, an interactive employment assessment tool used by employment support organizations to more effectively guide and support those who face barriers to employment. Karen completed both her BA and MBA at the University of Alberta and is currently a member of the Board of the Muttart Foundation.

Monica Morrison – Former Executive Director, Golden Circle Seniors Resource Centre



Monica Morrison worked with seniors for 30 years. Her career started in downtown Toronto with the Second Mile Club of Toronto and ended as the Executive Director of the Golden Circle Seniors Resource Centre from 2011 to her retirement in 2022. Monica's other roles included President of the Alberta Association of Seniors Centres, Treasurer of the Board for the Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council, member of the Central Alberta Falls Coalition, and on the operations team of the Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Alliance. Monica remains a continuing education instructor with Red Deer College's ASCHA certificate program in the area of aging and older adult fitness. Her experience covers a diverse client group, including people with physical disabilities, dementia, and multicultural and LGBTQ communities. Her mission is to ensure all seniors have fun and have a good quality of life for their entire lives.

Blake Eves – Director, Magrath Seniors Organization



Blake Eves is a member of our Community Leadership Council. Blake spent the last 20 years of his career travelling throughout the United States, implementing Payroll and HR systems for large hospitals. In 2013, he was asked to join Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego as a technical analyst in their information technology department. In 2017, Blake and his wife retired to the small town of Magrath. Blake wanted to be an active member of the community and accepted a nomination to the Magrath Seniors Board of Directors in 2018. Last year, he was asked to join the board of directors for the local theatre, where he volunteers his carpentry skills to set design and construction

Blake was recently asked to join the board of directors for the Magrath Handibus. Blake is passionate about the town and each of the seniors living in Magrath. Blake spends a portion of every day volunteering his time to help individuals or groups to make their lives just a bit easier.

Sheila Hallett – Executive Director, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC)



Sheila Hallett began working as the Executive Director of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council in 2006 after several years as director of a local senior centre. She works to support collective community action that engages older adults and supports their well-being. Collaborative approaches have resulted in initiatives such as Age Friendly Edmonton (partnering with the City of Edmonton since 2013), the Seniors Home Supports Program and the Pan-Edmonton Group Addressing the Social Isolation of Seniors (PEGASIS).

Sheila completed her Bachelor of Arts in 1989 from the School of Journalism and Communication, University of Regina. Her interest in social justice led her to work for the Edmonton Social Planning Council and many volunteer positions, including leading an Abundant Community Committee in her neighbourhood.

Luana Bussieres - Executive Director, St. Aidan's Society



Luana is the Executive Director of St. Aidan's Society in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, where she has led since 2001. With a background that includes 10 years as a Child Welfare Investigator and previous roles as a Parole and Probation Officer and Foster Care Program Coordinator, Luana holds a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Calgary. In 2014, Luana spearheaded a significant shift at St. Aidan's, transitioning the organization's focus from child and family services to senior service delivery. Since then, St. Aidan's has become a prominent advocate for seniors, amplifying the voices of older adults and increasing community awareness of their needs. This advocacy has been especially vital in times of crisis, as demonstrated during the 2016 wildfire and the major flood in 2020, which occurred amid the global pandemic.

Luana is dedicated to making the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo an Age-Friendly Designated Community under the World Health Organization. Her strong commitment to data collection, outcome measurement, and impact assessment ensures that the region becomes increasingly age-friendly and supportive of seniors. Collaboration is a cornerstone of her approach, deeply embedded in the operations and practices of the agency.

Wendy Evans – Registered Nurse, Wolf Creek Primary Care Network



Wendy Evans is a Registered Nurse with the Wolf Creek Primary Care Network, serving as a Geriatric Assessment Nurse at the Innisfail Medical Clinic.

Originally from the UK, Wendy graduated from the University of Wales Swansea and has over 40 years of experience in health care. She moved to Canada in 1997, beginning her career at Red Deer Regional Hospital and later working as a Nursing Instructor at Red Deer College. She also served as a Clinical Resource Reviewer and Analyst, contributing to the development of clinical pathways.

For the past 17 years, Wendy has focused on supporting older adults, helping develop Specialized Geriatrics Services at Red Deer Hospital and leading the hospital's NICHE Certification (Nurses Improving Care for Healthcare Systems Elders). Since 2017, she has been instrumental in developing the Healthy Aging program at the Innisfail Medical Clinic and founding the Community Partners in Action Society. She also contributed to the Alberta Dementia Strategy and led a Sparks Grant project to create a dementia-friendly community in Innisfail.

Dr. Mustafa Elhawi - Seniors Program Coordinator, AIWCC



Dr. Mustafa Elhawi is originally Palestinian from Gaza City. He came to Canada in 2018. He completed his first degree as a civil engineer in Egypt, later completing a master's and PhD in Environmental Management and Sustainable Development in Manchester, UK.

He was a university professor at the University of Jerusalem for many years, and has also worked with Save the Children, World Vision, Catholic Relief Service, Oxfam, and Canada Fund. He has also been a consultant to different UN organizations, amassing extensive experience with capacity building and evaluation practices.

He currently works with the Alberta Immigrant Women and Children Center, assisting immigrant and newcomer seniors of diverse backgrounds to access appropriate and equitable programming to promote healthy aging.

Larry Mathieson – President & CEO, Unison at Kerby Centre



Larry Mathieson has been an organizational leader of charities and government departments for over 35 years. Larry was the CEO of Easter Seals Alberta. He was the CEO of Ronald McDonald House Charities in Alberta for over ten years. During this time, he built a new \$14 million House in Calgary, an \$ 11 million expansion to the House in Edmonton, and the first new RMH built in a new Canadian city in Red Deer in over 20 years. His team brought Canada's first and only two Ronald McDonald Care Mobiles to Canada. He was a member of the Ronald McDonald House Charities national board in Canada and the Easter Seals Canada national board.

Larry was a founding staff member of Closer To Home Community Services and worked for the Alberta Government as the CEO of one of the Child and Family Service Authorities. Larry has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Calgary, a Master of Business Administration from California Southern University and a Master of Science in Strategic Fundraising from BayPath University. Larry and his wife Cathy live in High River, Alberta and are the proud parents of five children and six grandchildren.

Shantel Ottenbreit- Community Resource Worker, City of Medicine Hat



Shantel is a registered social worker with the City of Medicine Hat, working as a Community Resource Worker. She holds a Degree in Social Work from the University of Calgary and is currently working on her master's degree.

Shantel has been working with older adults for the last twenty years. She is very passionate about elder abuse and has volunteered on the Alberta Elder Abuse Awareness Council for the last 12 years, taking on the role of the Chair for the previous eight before moving over to the CLC in June of this year.

Shantel is a champion for advanced care planning and has been a Designated Capacity Assessor since 2010. Shantel established and continues coordinating the Seniors Service Providers Group in Medicine Hat.

Coree Ladwig – County of Grande Prairie Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)



Coree Ladwig is registered social worker with a passion for enhancing communities and supporting individuals through her work in FCSS. Graduating with a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Calgary, Coree has dedicated the past 15 years of her career to the County of Grande Prairie as part of the Family & Community Support Services team.

Coree has held various roles within the County, allowing her to gain a deep understanding of the needs of rural communities and their unique challenges and opportunities. She is especially passionate about advocating for seniors, striving to create inclusive and supportive environments that empower older adults to thrive within their communities.

Bukola Ojemakinde - Executive Director, Bridge to Oasis (BTO) Foundation



Bukola Ojemakinde, a Chemical Engineer and passionate community leader, has made an extraordinary impact in Calgary. Through her two non-profits organizations and partnerships with other civic societies and funders, she has raised significant funds and received prestigious accolades, including the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal and the Innovative Leadership Award from the Bhayana Family Foundation. Bukola serves on multiple boards, actively supports Healthy Aging Alberta, and tirelessly works towards addressing social issues that Older Adults from the Afro-Caribbean communities face.

Her unwavering commitment to community service and dedication to creating positive change have transformed the lives of marginalized individuals, making her an inspiring force in the city.

Myrna Lanctot – Mayor, Village of Donnelly



My name is Myrna Lanctot, and I have the honour of serving as the mayor of the Village Of Donnelly and as the board chair for Heart River Housing, which encompasses 11 municipalities. Additionally, I hold the position of Smoky River Regional Healthcare Professional Attraction and Retention Coordinator, serving five municipalities in the area.

Beyond my professional responsibilities, my husband and I are proud owners and operators of a local business. I am also excited to announce that I look forward to sitting on the CLC board, where I can contribute my expertise and passion for community development. I find immense joy in being a mother to two wonderful children and a loving grandmother to three beautiful grandchildren. My passion lies in positively impacting my community and my family's lives, and I am dedicated to fostering growth and well-being in these areas.

Doreen Williams- Executive Director, Circle of Wisdom Elders & Seniors Centre



My given name is Doreen Williams, and my spirit name is White Hummingbird Woman, which was given in Ceremony. I come from Cree, trees and Metis, Bonnyville, Alberta, Red River descendant Metis through my Mushum side of the family. I have a long history of Metis Heritage, Hudson Bay-Voyageurs, and Pony Express Riders for mail. My mushum worked for CN rail. My kokum Saulteaux Cree from Elphinstone First Nation(Okanese-Bone) changed her name to Desjarlais. I get my cooking skills, resiliency, and stubbornness from her. My one regret is that I should have listened more to her stories as a child. I forgave myself for that, as now I understand the importance of one identity and being a Kookum myself. I am the Executive Director/founder of the Circle of Wisdom Elders & Senior Centre and a recent recipient of the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee medal for my community work.



Healthy Aging Alberta Community Leadership Council members come from all across the province!

- Calgary (3)
- Donnelly
- Edmonton (3)
- Grande Prairie
- Lacombe
- Medicine Hat
- Magrath
- Red Deer
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo



*Healthy Aging Alberta is a **for community, by community** provincial initiative.*

Healthy Aging Alberta expresses their gratitude to the Community Leadership Council members for their time, expertise, and dedication to the Community-Based Senior Serving sector.

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A network of
community allies
for older adults.