



Annual Report 2021

LINKages Society of Alberta



LINKages
connecting generations

Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director

In the spirit of working towards truth and reconciliation, we acknowledge that we have the privilege to live and serve our community on the traditional territories of the Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Iyârhe Nakoda and the Tsuut'ina Nations as well as the Métis Nation of Region 3. We honour all the people whose footsteps have marked this land for hundreds of generations.

Indigenous populations survived for millennia by working together for the betterment of the whole, honouring the wisdom of elders, and by ensuring that no one was left behind. As we moved through the second year of a global pandemic this wisdom became more crucial than ever. Depression in both youth and senior populations continued to rise in direct correlation to continued isolation. Long held bonds were stretched and broken, and divisive views permeated our culture.

Intergenerational programs became more important than they have ever been in our 28-year history. Our program staff, Board, and partners worked tirelessly to maintain programming and connections wherever possible as they also know what we know...

Intentional and ongoing intergenerational programs build lasting friendships, keep youth and seniors connected, reduce isolation and depression, break down stereotypes, ageism, and racism, and help both youth and seniors to feel more optimistic about their futures.

Through adapted Care Centre/School programs, Activity Buddies, Phone Pals, Pen Pals, Project Inspire, IG After School/Summer programs, the University of Calgary LINKages Chapter, and our Community Mural Project, we were able to foster and continue crucial connections and engagement between youth and seniors throughout the 2021 year.

As demand for grant and donor dollars continues to grow, we are so grateful to our donors and supporters and we continue to explore new ways of becoming sustainable while finding new ways to increase our impact.

As our world continues to change and recover from the pandemic, we will also continue to grow and evolve in our ability to connect youth and seniors for the betterment of all.

We have much to be grateful for, and so much to be excited about. We successfully soft launched our new Train the Trainer Program in 2021 and will be formalizing a full launch in 2022. We are also honoured and thrilled to have been chosen for the spring 2022 cohort of the Thriving Non-Profits program, generously supported by the Calgary Foundation. With representatives from all levels of the organization, we are diversifying our revenue streams to ensure that LINKages incredible impact continues to grow.

Wishing everyone a healthy and connected year ahead,

Kathy Phillips
Board Chair

Ruby Lecot
Executive Director



2021 Board of Directors



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Director

Ruby Lecot
Ex Officio (Executive Director)

Care Centre / School programs

As we moved into a second year of the pandemic, Care Centre/School Programs continued safely without in-person contact between the students and their senior friends. LINKages staff and care centre partners continued to pivot to provide a variety of programming options such as virtual visits, activity exchanges, and inspiring cards and notes.

We have held in-person programs when provincial regulations deemed appropriate and safe, and we can tell you the seniors and students really missed each other!

We also took the opportunity to pilot our LINKages Clubs, whereby student leaders and teachers work with care centre liaisons to create and host IG programs with mentoring and support from LINKages staff for the first year. Our senior students really stepped up to make each pilot site a success. Congratulations to our leaders at Centennial, St. Gabriel (Chestermere), and St. Francis schools!

238

Seniors

365

IG Friendships

371

Youth

3

LINKages Clubs

122

Hours Connecting



Let's hear it from the students: Angela and Isabela

Twin sisters Angela and Isabela joined the LINKages program in 2021 and dedicate their time to attend every Tuesday after school.

Each week Angela and Isabela put in extra effort to connect and create a meaningful experience for their senior friends by bringing flowers or arranging dance performances. Every resident in the program knows the girls and looks forward to seeing "what the twins have planned" each week. Both girls clarify that they receive as much as they give.



Isabela says,
"It is nice to have people who actually listen to you and care about what you have to say."

Her sister Angela agrees, *"I just really love LINKages. I look forward to Tuesdays each week."*



Let's hear it from a senior: Hartley

There really is something special about "Hartley with the big heart"!

Hartley, who just turned 92, joined the LINKages program in 2021 and never misses a session because he loves being around students and their youthful energy. His eyes light up whenever the students arrive. It is evident that his youth friends also adore him and make him feel good about himself as he is valued and appreciated.

Hartley hugs his student friends when they arrive. In his own words, *"My favourite part of the week is when the kids come. I just love them!"*



IG After School

We are so grateful for ongoing funding support from the City of Calgary FCSS,. Partnerships like this, along with our 8 After School community partners allow us to engage many amazing youth who may be facing barriers to connection.

Working within shifting restrictions we successfully continued existing programs, and piloted a new program partnership with Men's Shed at the Greater Forest Lawn 55+ Society. The Men's Shed group were exceptional hosts and deeply enjoyed connecting with their youth friends, enjoying their energy and perspective while teaching them woodworking safety and tool skills. Please flip back to pages 2/3 (and our cover page) for more pictures of the awesome IG After School summer programs and projects!



Our volunteers are amazing! As the pandemic continued, our volunteers continued to rise to the occasion. In-person programs could not happen, so our volunteers adapted to support isolated seniors (and reduced their own isolation) through our Intergenerational Pen Pals Program and our IG Outreach pilot program - Phone Pals. Our University of Calgary Chapter hosted physically distanced events when possible to have fun with seniors in Greater Forest Lawn.

Volunteers bring LINKages to life, and help us to expand our impact in ways that would not be possible otherwise. To all of our dedicated volunteers - THANK YOU!



The Galvin Family Foundation Award for Outstanding Senior Volunteer Brenda O'Malley

Brenda is a community resident with a beautiful smile and hearty laugh who is incredibly knowledgeable about the health benefits of staying active and staying connected. Brenda shares her time and knowledge through participation in programs, supporting other seniors, serving as a mentor to youth, facilitating and serving as an impact speaker, and by passionately promoting our programs to other seniors in her community. We are so thankful to you Brenda for your compassionate wisdom and perspective - Congratulations!

"All of the students are very precious and I hope to continue doing as much as I can with LINKages. There are so many reasons I love LINKages. It is fun, educational, and I love each and every one of the kids. People often have misconceptions about teenagers, but in reality, they laugh the way we do or at the same things as we do, and being together we have a better understanding of each other."



The Betty Jane Kadz Memorial Award for Outstanding Youth Volunteer George Tadros

George has been part of LINKages programs since high school, and continued on to become president of the U of C LINKages Chapter. Throughout the pandemic, George has shown exceptional compassion, leadership, and commitment to keeping isolated seniors connected to youth who were also impacted. Your humility, humour, and dedication are completely admirable. Congratulations George, it is our honor to work with you!

"Thank you so much to everyone at LINKages (especially the very special people that I got to work with: Ruby, Betty, Nathalie, and Miriam) for giving me the opportunity to be part of this amazing organization. I have learnt so much from all of you, especially what it means to truly be a compassionate, supportive, and just amazing person! Not to mention everything that I got to learn from all my senior friends. From the high school program to the U of C Chapter, it has been a truly life-changing experience (in a very literal sense) that I will forever be indebted to".



Community Programs

2021 marked a bittersweet year as we had some major successes in our Community and Dementia Programs, while also bringing them to a natural close. Key components of our Community Programs such as Project Inspire, Story of Your Life, Pen Pals, and Music2LINK will be incorporated into existing programs. Training to future community partners will also be available to support the spread of these impactful intergenerational programs.

One of our final community projects will forever be visible at 1515 Home Road NW. Four incredible Calgary artists (Pictured in circle below) worked with LINKages staff, area elders, local seniors, youth, and City of Calgary and United Way to collect the history and stories of the Bowness, Montgomery, and Greenwood communities. Hours and hours of intergenerational stories became pictures and images which were woven into a giant mural that now adorns the east wall of the Shouldice Arena (pictured below). Drive by and check it out!

252
IG Pen Pal letters
exchanged

72
hours virtual
Project Inspire



35
hours of community
story gathering

28
hours painting
& digital wrap
installation

(L - R) Amazing mural artists:
Allan Rosales, Andrea McLean, Tiffany Cuffley, Dean Stanton

1 beautiful giant mural



\$0

Cost to students and seniors in 2021

92%

Youth report an increase in self-esteem

93%

Seniors report an increase in mental health

100%

Seniors report less ageism towards youth

98%

Youth report increased empathy for seniors

55

Members of provincial Intergenerational Community of Practice

814

Program Participants

ROOTS

By Lily Fessehatsion, Grade 12 student

Oh, how joyful it is to learn about the lives of others.

To converse with someone with greater experience,

And to tell your own story in return.

The deep roots of friendship grip and imprint upon our hearts,

Embracing our minds and interlacing their thin fingers around our souls,

Bestowing us with a lingering breathlessness.

They elongate themselves on the feast that they've attained;

The knowledge and kindness arising from a good friend.

Although there may be no physical meeting or face-to-face contact,

Our written words now have the power to dictate the connection between us.



"The LINKages Society of Alberta Board of Directors and Management would like to thank the generous support of our donors, volunteers, and dedicated staff for another year of delivering a host of world-class intergenerational programs. Despite a challenging economic environment, LINKages has been resilient in developing mitigation strategies to ensure continuity, becoming more efficient. Its dedicated members are committed to strengthening key success factors of the organization and building a robust path for the future."

- Karen Wang, Treasurer

LINKages Society of Alberta

Statement of Operations and Net Assets

Year ended December 31,	2021	2020
Revenues		
Government agencies	\$ 165,739	\$ 247,814
Foundations and agencies	103,126	102,188
Casino	28,727	31,913
Individuals	7,856	6,653
Training programs	1,500	-
Biography guides	1,412	-
Corporations	350	24,385
Interest	247	1,010
	<u>308,957</u>	<u>413,963</u>
Expenses		
Salaries and related benefits (note 11)	259,119	333,380
Office and miscellaneous	21,398	26,251
Rent and utilities	21,351	21,263
Professional fees	14,625	12,500
Transportation	7,517	11,381
Program	5,747	7,806
Insurance	4,246	4,254
Amortization	1,593	2,203
Advertising and promotion	622	717
	<u>336,218</u>	<u>419,755</u>
Deficiency of revenues over expenses	(27,261)	(5,792)
Net assets, beginning of year	159,935	165,727
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 132,674</u>	<u>\$ 159,935</u>

As we look to the year ahead and the eventual end of the COVID-19 pandemic, we grieve all those we have lost and honour their impact by keeping connections strong. For LINKages, keeping connections strong means:

- Existing and evolved intergenerational programs will help to rebuild the fabric of society which has been stretched and torn over the past two years.
- Our newly launched Training Program will support provincial, national, and international communities to start customized best-practice intergenerational programs in their own areas, strengthening crucial threads of connection everywhere. **In 2021, we provided 15 hours of intergenerational program training to Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia!**
- Our soon-to-be launched intergenerational products for home and school will support individuals and classrooms to find new and fun ways to connect with people from a different generation.
- We will continue to build new connections with community and working partners to reduce gaps, improve services, and respond to emerging needs.

LINKages has been accepted into the next cohort of the Thriving Non-Profits program, generously supported by The Calgary Foundation (and we are so excited!). From February until June 2022, a LINKages team consisting of Board Members, Executive, and senior staff will learn about diversification of revenue streams for non-profits. Our course project will entail development of a "made for LINKages" revenue diversification plan to support our impact and evolution into the future.

Look for more in next year's Annual Report!



Thank You to Our Supporters

From a donor

"I donate to LINKages because I believe that it's an investment . An investment in the future of youth, and the happiness and wellbeing of our elderly. My investment gives LINKages flexibility to put important programming in place to support these groups and enrich their lives. I believe that LINKages is an organization that can do a lot with a small amount of investment, and that really makes me feel like my small contribution matters."

- Iain, monthly donor

Thanks to donors like Iain, partners like Alberta Health Services, family foundations, and major funding partners, LINKages Society of Alberta is able to invest in innovation, impact measurement, and to respond to community need.

We know that more connections = better health.

To all of the people who support us to ensure that seniors and youth stay connected - THANK YOU!

Canada



Monthly & One-Time Donors

