City of Edmonton’s Aging in Place Community Demonstration Projects

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Presented by

Brenda Wong - Seniors Coordinator
brenda.wong@edmonton.ca
www.seniors.ca/seniors
History

- **2007**
  - Aging in Place Study/ Aging in Place Fire Summit

- **2010**
  - Funding approved by Alberta Health and Wellness (May 2010 – March 2012)
Aging in Place Projects

- Two Community Demonstration Projects
  - Mill Woods and Southeast Edmonton
- Community Initiatives to support seniors to stay in their homes longer

(Aging in Place Launch Event, June 2010)
Aging in Place Definition

- In this project “Aging in Place” is defined as helping to support seniors to remain in their homes in the community, for as long as they wish and are safely able to do so.
Aging in Place Projects

- Initiatives addressed the four risk factors:
  - Transportation
  - Social isolation
  - Awareness of resources
  - Home support services
Partners & Stakeholders

- **100 + stakeholders**
  - City of Edmonton (Community Services including Fire, Police, Transportation, Library, City Council)
  - Health (AHS, Homecare, Good Samaritan, Elder Care, Primary Care Network)
  - Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council
  - Senior Centres (SAGE, SEESA, Mill Woods Seniors Activity Centre)
  - Seniors Groups (AB Caregivers, Meals on Wheels, SSCAS, local groups)
  - Community Leagues (SE Edmonton and Area Council)
  - Community Groups (Faith-based groups, AMA, Lions Club)
  - Multicultural groups (Multicultural Health Brokers, Welcome Centre, Multicultural Women and Seniors, Council of India)
Project Focus

- Community development approach
- Finding and working with community partners
- Build upon community strengths/ resources
- Informal and formal initiatives to address risk factors
- Sustainable initiatives
- “Age friendly” communities
- Learning's tracked via a developmental evaluation
Mill Woods Site

- Focused on the needs of older immigrant seniors living on their own or with family.
- Special focus on isolated immigrant seniors with language barriers.
Key Issues in Immigrant Communities

- Social Isolation (especially women); often at home babysitting their grandchildren
- Low income if sponsored by family (cannot apply for OAS/GIS if not in Canada 10 years, dependent on family)
- Lack of information in languages other than English; literacy challenges
- Accessing transportation difficult if they have mobility and language barriers
- Cultural appropriate community resources
More about Mill Woods

- 100,000 residents live in Mill Woods and area
- Very complex site in Mill Woods: 10+ languages
- Cultural groups with senior gatherings meet on their own, reconstruct the “village”
- Cultural adjustments are difficult
- Caregiver stress & elder abuse not in the open
- Many cultural groups take care of their own elders, strong cultural value
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

- Transportation
  - Transportation Forum
  - Assisted Transportation Pilot Project
    - Recruited volunteer drivers
    - Reduced transportation barriers
  - Community Bus Survey
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

- Community Bus
  - Surveyed over 500 community residents through community connectors
  - Route designed that uses Mill Wood Town Centre Mall as a Hub, goes to places seniors gather
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

- Social Isolation
  MWSAC AGE-less Pursuits
Mill Woods Site Highlights

- Bridging the Cultural Gaps
  - Joint Potlucks between Senior Groups is fostering intercultural understanding, working with the Mill Woods Seniors Activity Centre
  - Faces of Mill Woods, joint art project shown at Edmonton’s Creative Age Art Show
  - Group leaders meet around AIP table
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

Faces of Mill Woods Art Project
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

- Social Isolation
  - Culturally Appropriate Caregiver Support
  - AHS Lamplighter Program
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

- **Home Support**
  - Ethnic Food Services
    (Halal taste testings, new freezer in Mill Woods and expanded ethnic foods)
  - Cultural Competency Training Workshop
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

- Awareness of Resources
  - Survey translated in many languages to explore ways to get information to seniors
  - Computer class
  - EAL class
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

- Computer class
Mill Woods Site Project Highlights

- Included sharing seniors' gifts
Southeast Site

- Older seniors (75 yrs+)
- Living in their homes, in six communities
  - Holyrood
  - Ottewell
  - Terrace/Forest Heights
  - Capilano
  - Fulton Place
  - Gold Bar
Southeast Site Overview

- High percentage of seniors over 75 years
- Homeowners for 50+ years
- Many live alone or are care-giving for their spouse
- Adult children (if they live in Edmonton) are often overextended
- Neighbours are frail, like themselves
- Busy younger families moving in
Southeast Project Highlights

- Community development – working with, not for the community
- Finding interested partners - talking, talking and more talking with the “community”
- Many of the ideas they dreamed of became the projects we share
Southeast Project Highlights

- Awareness of Resources
  - Capilano Mall Resource Fairs
  - South East Voice Community Newsletter Articles
Southeast Project Highlights

- Social Isolation
  - “It Takes a Village to Age in Place” Workshops
  - Community leagues - Liaison for Seniors
  - Multi-Generational Collection – games
Southeast Project Highlights

- Home support
  - Promotion of Snow Busters/Snow Angels
  - Snow Shovelling/ Home Support Pilot Project
  - Business/Grocery Store Audits
  - MOW’s Taste testing Community League Event
  - MOW’s Community Freezer
Tickle Your Taste Buds Event
New Freezer in Fulton Place School
Southeast Project Highlights

- Transportation
  - Transportation Forum
  - Developed “Driving and Beyond” Workshop
  - Promotion of AMA Driving Angel Program
  - Survey and New Community Bus!
Southeast Project Highlights

- Community Bus
  - Survey distributed in key locations
  - Close to 500 surveys received within a four week period
  - Existing ETS route expanded, as well, service increased from weekend only to seven day service – effective September 2012
Developmental Evaluation

- Ongoing evaluation and interviews done
- Final evaluation report completed
- Learnings shared
Some Key Learnings…

- It takes a Community to Age in Place!
- Project impacted both communities in many similar and unique ways
- Need to build upon community strengths/interests
Some Key Learnings…

- Engagement resulted in benefits to everyone
- Community building takes time….and results are long term
- Seniors need to be involved throughout!!
Some Key Learnings…

Mill Woods

- Takes time to build relationships & develop trust (relationship-trust-credibility)
- Initial layer, often invisible, of ethno-cultural community groups, both informal and formal, they are the “go to” people, the community connectors, the gatekeepers
- Learn from those groups and workers already working with the multicultural sector
- Bonding; those we naturally affiliate with, Bridging; across groups, Linking; working together to address change

(MHBC)
Some Key Learnings…

- **South East**
  - Engaging seniors and community members in all aspects of the projects leads to sustainability… they take ownership
  
  - Communication – even within a small area of the city and with a predominantly English speaking population it was very challenging to get the word out.
Future Plans

- Work is continuing….
  - Many projects are continuing!
  - Learning’s are being shared
  - Community Services Seniors Team/ increased seniors focus in the City of Edmonton
  - Two new Community Buses
  - “Vision for an Age- Friendly Edmonton” Implementation Plans
  - Age friendly training and resources