The Gift of Age

Age is a gift to a city. Older adults allow us to connect with the generations before, to learn the stories that brought us here, to understand the shape of a whole human life, and to remind us of a way of looking attentively at the world that is sometimes lost in the busy middle years.

Age brings its own resilience. Edmonton's older adults are survivors of many different histories and experiences. They include individuals from Indigenous backgrounds and the descendants of settlers. They include people who have lived here since birth and those who have moved here from around the globe. Leaders, workers, volunteers, artists, homemakers, and professionals of all kinds provide seasoning for our community in their older years.

Age is a gift to the city. Let us value all the individuals who bring it to us.

The period after traditional retirement age can cover more than three decades of continued achievement and change. After a lifetime of experience, we become even more individual in our interests, resources, capacities, and needs.

In many ways, the senior years are like any other time of life. We go through changes. We have the ability to learn, the need for love and connection, the desire to create and contribute. We add to the city's economy as consumers and sharers of wealth. Like people of all ages, we need respect and meaningful activity. We want the ability to make important choices about our lives.

Older adults do bring some special qualities to society, including perspective, time to share, and the gift of caring. Seniors also face the possibility there will be periods when we need extra support. Caring for older people has been a hallmark of human culture from our beginnings. Providing integration and care is just as necessary in our contemporary society. Together we can build and sustain a neighbourly city where we work to support older adults and their families, friends and caregivers of all ages—a city with people of all generations as its heart.

Written by Alice Major, Edmonton's former Poet-Laureate, in collaboration with members of Age Friendly Edmonton's Leadership Table.

Edmonton Seniors Declaration

Individuals are respected regardless of age. All generations have much to teach and learn from each other.

People of all ages feel safe, empowered, and supported as individuals, so that they can age well, connect with, and enrich the community.

Urban spaces are intentionally designed to be vibrant, inclusive, and accessible to meet the interests and needs of older adults.

Older persons have access to information, programs, and services that promote engagement.

City Council declares that it will work towards making Edmonton age-friendly as part of our vision for an integrated, sustainable, livable city. To do so, we will use the best knowledge available from international, national and local research. We will ensure our decision-making and policies embrace this perspective. We will encourage other organizations, individuals, businesses and institutions to adopt this declaration. And we will work with other orders of government to increase commitment and coordination on seniors' issues. Age is a gift to the city. We will value all the individuals who bring it to us.

Declared by Edmonton City Council on June 3, 2010.

Recommitted for October 1, 2020—the 30th anniversary of International Day of Older Persons (established by the United Nations).