



2020-2021 Saskatchewan Report Back to the Community



redcross.ca/saskatchewan

A message from the Vice President



The Canadian Red Cross in Saskatchewan accomplished much over the course of the last fiscal year, and I am pleased to provide this report for those we serve and to those who so generously support our work.

The 2020-2021 period was another year of challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, but our staff and volunteers continued to adapt and find new ways to help those in the midst of crisis and to help build resiliency.

As you will read, over the past year we provided emergency support to 615 people from 188 families who were experiencing a personal disaster. We also provided epidemic prevention and control and emergency care workers after a COVID-19 outbreak at two co-located long-term care homes in Regina.

We have seen massive growth in our Friendly Calls program which provides weekly phone calls to those age 55 and over who may be feeling lonely or isolated. The number of participants nearly tripled during 2020/2021 to 68 and we now have 131 Friendly Calls volunteers, an increase of 500 per cent.

I would also like to acknowledge the organizations and individuals who have supported the Red Cross in Saskatchewan. A particular thank you to Irene and

Leslie Dubé for supporting the Red Cross with a \$1 million donation through Dubé Endowed Funds which provides grants to sustain programs.

In addition to the accomplishments of 2020-2021, this fiscal year has seen significant strides forward in the development of direct relationships with several First Nations. We look forward to continuing to build positive relationships that will enable us to provide direct support when requested.

We have also seen an expanded role for Saskatchewan-based Red Cross staff across the country. Thirty personnel supported COVID-19 vaccination clinics in British Columbia; our Health in Emergencies Director played a key leadership role in operations to support Intensive Care Nurses at hospitals in Ontario and Manitoba; and our public health lead is representing our province on two national committees tasked with acquiring the scientific evidence that guides Red Cross implementation teams that are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When I stepped into this position in November 2020, I knew there would be great challenges ahead. I am, as always, inspired by the dedication of our staff, volunteers and supporters, and I look forward to what we will accomplish in the years to come.

Luc Mullinder
Vice President – Saskatchewan

2020-2021 Executive Cabinet



- Dorothy Slawinski (Chair)
- Maurice (Mo) Bundon
- Lance Donison
- Tim Loftsgard
- Steve McLellan
- Craig Reynolds
- Kimberly Stonechild

Mandate

- Bring together prominent high-level supporters who endorse the work of the Red Cross in Saskatchewan
- Provide strategic perspective to the organization
- Assist with expanding the network of corporate and individual support and stewardship

The Red Cross is there in the wake of a personal disaster

Imagine waking up at 3 a.m. to your neighbour banging on your door, telling you your house is on fire. That's exactly what happened to an Estevan family earlier this year.

While firefighters fought the blaze, the Pettitt family was approached by a police officer informing them that the Canadian Red Cross had already been contacted and that a room was waiting for them at a local hotel.

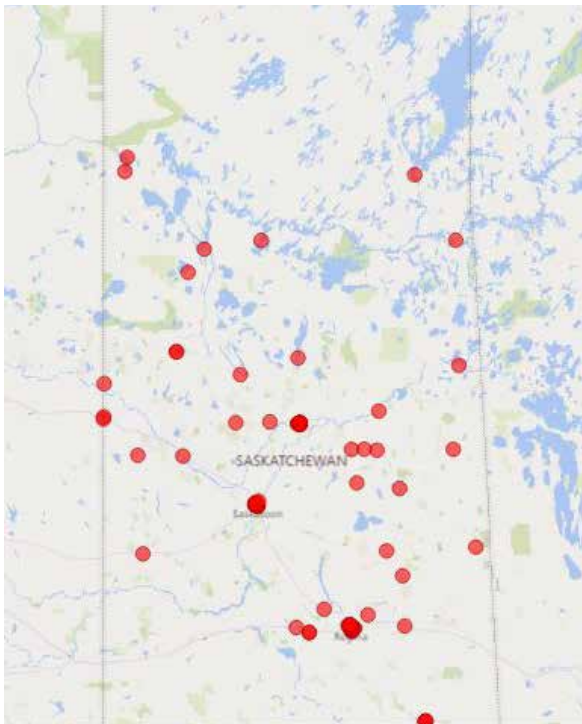
"We have volunteers across the province who are ready to respond at any time of day or night to help people in Saskatchewan displaced by a house fire," said Red Cross Emergency Management Coordinator Rawrie Bullock. "It is only through the generosity of our contributors that we are able to help people facing disaster."

"I feel so fortunate because your brain isn't thinking at all," said Mark Pettitt. "It was so nice to have someone there looking after everything so we could do a few things, like call our insurance company and find a place to stay long-term."

This year the Red Cross helped 615 people from 188 Saskatchewan families affected by



The Pettitt family felt fortunate to have the support of the Red Cross after a fire at their Estevan home.



Personal disaster assistance response locations in 2020-2021.

personal disasters. Direct aid of \$190,000 was provided through this service, ensuring people had everything they needed for 72 hours following the disaster.

Providing support to those affected by personal disasters, such as a house fire or flood, is one of the primary services provided by the Red Cross. Depending on the needs of the family or individual affected, this assistance can include shelter, food, emergency clothing and medical supplies for up to 72 hours. This past year, the Red Cross helped 615 people from 188 Saskatchewan families with direct aid equalling \$190,000.

From Black Lake to Estevan, Lloydminster to Kamsack, support from donors and volunteers resulted in people in 51 Saskatchewan communities receiving help when they needed it most.

"You always think things happen to other people, but everyone is other people. We are other people," said Pettitt.

Growing Red Cross program creates connection for isolated seniors

The numbers tell the story.

The exponential growth during 2020/2021 in the Friendly Calls program, in both the number of those supported and the volunteers who supported them, shows the need for this Red Cross service in Saskatchewan.

The program matches trained Red Cross volunteers with people aged 55 and over who are feeling lonely or isolated, who may have limited social and family connections, or who feel they could benefit from more social interaction. Through a weekly phone call, social connections are enhanced.

Initially intended for those in rural communities, the program expanded across the province in 2020/2021 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the program has continued to grow, providing socialization and referrals to people in many new geographical areas, including First Nation communities.

For one client, the Friendly Calls program was there at the lowest point of her life. Erma Crouse, a member of Piapot First Nation, was paired with Sasha Sadlemyer of Buena Vista, after Erma's husband died of cancer in 2020.

At the time, Erma was living in her husband's home community, Ocean Man First Nation, where they raised their children and grandchildren.

"I was all alone in this big five-bedroom home," said Erma. "I was scared to be by myself. I did a lot of praying, a lot of smudging. My grief counsellor in Weyburn recommended me to the Friendly Calls program. That's how it started."

Although their differences are striking, Erma and Sasha have forged a strong bond over their six months of weekly phone calls.

"I share things that are hurting me, and she shares what is hurting her. I love her from the bottom of my heart to the tip of my head, to the universe. She came to when I was at my lowest point in life," said Erma.



Friendly Calls program client Erma Crouse says the program was there at the lowest point of her life.

As a testament to the success of the program and the growing need for this outreach, variations of the Friendly Calls program are being introduced by the Red Cross across Canada.

In Saskatchewan, the number of participants nearly tripled in 2020/2021 to 68 and the number of volunteers increased to 131, a jump of 500 per cent.

"It's such a simple idea," said Shawna Green, Friendly Calls program coordinator. "Red Cross volunteers pick up the phone and call people who need some human contact. That's it."

"And it really works. Not only do volunteers provide care and conversation, but they check to make sure their partner has access to groceries, medications, or even professional counselling if needed. We are helping to keep our community connected."

If you know anyone who would benefit from this program, please email Shawna Green at friendlyvisittingsask@redcross.ca or call 306-216-6602.

New Health in Emergencies service launched

The Canadian Red Cross was pleased to welcome Briana Mullock, R.N., MBA, to our team in the new role of Director, Health in Emergencies for Saskatchewan in 2020-2021.

She has helped shape Red Cross emergency health interventions in the province and strengthen our surge capacity to respond to health-related issues.

One of the key accomplishments of the Health in Emergencies team, which grew to include a public health lead, was providing support to two co-located long-term care homes in Regina to help manage and contain a COVID-19 outbreak in December 2020.

At the request of the leadership of the facilities, the Red Cross deployed epidemic and prevention control experts and a team of emergency care aides to assist during the outbreak, which at its height saw eight elders and two staff members test positive for COVID-19.

Under Mullock's leadership, and with the support of the Red Cross Operations team, the Epidemic Prevention and Control team was activated and conducted a virtual assessment, followed by an on-site assessment.

This service supported the safe adaption and implementation of protocols and enhanced the development and organization of a safe healthcare environment during the pandemic. As a result of the rapid assessment, enhancement measures were implemented by Red Cross staff over a two-day period to bolster containment efforts and prevent spread of COVID-19 at the facilities.

Following the introduction of the enhancement measures, a Red Cross Emergency Care Support team was deployed to assist in the day-to-day operations for a four-week period.

One of the important roles of the support aides was to provide companionship for the elders who were isolated in their individual rooms and unable to see family members due to the outbreak. From visiting with the elders for a chat, reading a book aloud, or playing cards to hallway bingo or sing-a-longs, support aides provided much needed



A Red Cross emergency care aide providing support in a long-term care home.

interaction for the elders, while freeing up staff for those tasks that involved higher-level care.

Depending on the needs that develop in Saskatchewan, some of the services Mullock could help to facilitate may include:

- epidemic prevention and control, contact tracing, testing, and support to vaccination sites;
- provision of mental health and psychosocial support services;
- support to quarantine or isolation sites, and emergency field hospital or clinical surge support to local health authorities.

Mullock is also helping to build relationships to better understand health needs within the province, and provide leadership and technical expertise towards the planning, design and coordination of Red Cross interventions and services if needed.

“The team has been built and over the last year we have been creating the internal capacity to respond to any future need from communities or the province of Saskatchewan,” said Mullock.

Virtual violence prevention work continues to have impact

No one copes well with extended isolation and not being able to partake in regular daily activities, but it is particularly difficult for youth.

They depend on peer interactions as a key part of their development and are just beginning to learn how to manage challenging situations. Building resilience in youth has been critical during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Red Cross Violence Prevention team in Saskatchewan responded to the pandemic in 2020/2021 by working in collaboration with Indigenous communities to deliver virtual workshops on violence and abuse prevention.

The focus was on building individual resilience to survive and thrive during challenging times.

Although in-person contact was curtailed, the Violence Prevention team continued to provide health and wellness resources for Saskatchewan youth. The Red Cross supported 14 emotional wellness sessions for youth, reached 600 students across the province, and provided 150 wellness backpacks for the youth of Black Lake First Nation.

The relationship with Black Lake First Nation is an excellent example of how the Red Cross can work with a community as it builds resiliency. It starts with a long-term commitment to form a relationship.

Once established, the Violence Prevention team was able to support the community to identify resources that would positively impact its members.

Emotional wellness backpacks shipped to Black Lake First Nation.



“The relationship with Father Porte Memorial School developed over the last couple of years. It takes time to build trust,” said Elaine Caswell, Canadian Red Cross Community Engagement/Indigenous coordinator.

The Violence Prevention team helped support eight emotional wellness workshops at Father Porte Memorial School.

Students identified the topics they wanted to explore including how to be safe when being bullied, racism, how to resource safety and wellness, learning how to resolve conflict, understanding and managing stress and anxiety, the impacts of trauma on wellbeing, and activities for healthy coping.

At the end of the sessions, each student was provided an emotional wellness backpack which included key resources for personal wellbeing and safety.

“Our work with Black Lake is a gold-star model of working in partnership with community,” said Caswell. “This project showed the great work that can be done when a school gives its full support to the work and the Red Cross takes the role of advocate and mentor. We took a support role that focused on listening and planning with, not planning for, the community.”



Canadian Red Cross in Saskatchewan

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



- Responded to personal disaster incidents affecting 185 families, comprised of 615 individuals, in 51 communities across the province
- Provided shelter, food, clothing and personal services valued at nearly \$190,000
- Volunteers contributed more than 400 hours responding to personal disaster incidents

RISK RECOVERY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



- Provided emotional wellness programs for 600 students during 14 virtual presentations
- Red Cross Ambassadors, who are also Saskatchewan Roughriders, virtually presented to 2,200 students at 50 schools

COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS



- Provided support to 68 isolated seniors through the Friendly Calls program; volunteers contributed 1,421 hours to the program
- Provided support to more than 2,300 individuals who had to isolate due to COVID-19 but did not have the means to do so themselves
- Safety & Wellbeing volunteers made 5,921 phone calls to check on the wellbeing of those in isolation due to COVID-19

PREVENTION & SAFETY



- More than 24,000 people completed a Red Cross First Aid course
- More than 12,000 people attended Red Cross swimming and water safety programs
- More than 200 people attended Psychological First Aid courses

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY



- More than 600 active volunteers contributed over 7,600 hours
- 42 employees



Connect with us:

Web: redcross.ca/saskatchewan

Twitter: @RedCrossSK

Facebook: facebook.com/canadianredcross