

GEF Seniors Housing Strategic Plan

2020-2023



Quality of Life Philosophy

In support of GEF Seniors Housing's Vision and Mission, our Quality of Life Philosophy is:

"To provide seniors with affordable, accessible, and safe housing in comfortable and supportive environments that promote opportunities for them to successfully age in place."

The Guiding Principles to the Quality of Life Philosophy include working together to:

- Promote and respect individual **choice**, recognizing that each senior has knowledge and experience to be able to determine how best to live their life;
- Ensure each senior is treated fairly and with **dignity**, regardless of their age, gender identity, religious belief, ethnicity and culture, sexual orientation, financial means, ability or life experience;
- Foster opportunities that contribute to promoting one's **well-being** by supporting and encouraging each senior to live a healthy, independent life, where their voice is heard and respected;
- Encourage relationships between seniors, staff, and communities based on **respect, kindness, and compassion**;
- Promote **accountability** by providing each senior with the opportunity and encouragement to take ownership of, participate in, and provide feedback to the community in which they live.

Keeping Our Seniors Front and Centre

At GEF Seniors Housing, our Vision, Mission and Values are more than just words – they are foundational to everything we do.

Our Vision is "Positively influencing seniors' quality of life." Our Mission is to be "Leaders in friendly, affordable, secure housing and services for seniors." And respect, integrity, well-being and accountability are our core Values.

We are proud of our more than 60 years of service to seniors and the Edmonton community, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of housing and services we provide every day. Our focus is much more than basic shelter: it includes a steadfast commitment to contribute to the quality of life of each senior who makes a GEF community their home.

This commitment begins with our Board and our senior leadership team, and extends through our management and staff. We hope that by positively influencing the quality of life of those we serve, we create a ripple effect that touches our volunteers, family members and visitors, and sets an example for the external agencies and contractors with whom we work in the community.

Our commitment is most visible in our new Quality of Life Philosophy, which affirms our Vision and Mission, and guides our individual and collective behaviors and actions every day. It is through the lens of the Quality of Life Philosophy that GEF Seniors Housing has developed its new three-year strategic plan.

This strategic plan will guide us over the next three years in transforming how we work to best serve our seniors and growing our organization in sustainable ways.

We aspire for a future where GEF Seniors Housing:

- Enhances the quality of life of Alberta seniors through operating engaging communities;
- Innovates the design and delivery of housing and supportive services for Alberta seniors; and
- Remains a leading organization in the delivery of affordable housing and services for Alberta seniors.



Jacquie Eales, Board Chair



Raymond Swonek, CEO

Aligning Our Efforts to Bring About Meaningful and Lasting Changes

The Board of GEF Seniors Housing is guided by GEF's Vision, Mission and Values. The Board leads the organization through developing a strategic plan that sets the priorities for implementation and provides context for day-to-day operations. The pyramid below visually depicts this.



Our strategic priorities for the next three years bring focus to our efforts. They are about making two major pushes across the organization so that GEF is in a stronger position to navigate a changing landscape and help more Alberta seniors.

Our **two strategic priorities** for the 2020-2023 period are:

- Transforming how we work to best serve our seniors;
- Growing our organization in sustainable ways.

VISION

Positively influencing seniors' quality of life

MISSION

Leaders in friendly, affordable, secure housing and services for seniors

VALUES

Our values define how we serve and build relationships with our seniors' community, as well as our workplace family

RESPECT

Dignity | Appreciation | Courtesy

INTEGRITY

Trustworthy | Honest | Ethical

WELL BEING

Happiness | Health | Balance

ACCOUNTABILITY

Responsibility | Commitment | Ownership

Transforming How We Work to Best Serve Our Seniors

We care deeply about our seniors and are committed to serving them well. Like many other organizations, GEF finds itself operating in a quickly changing landscape. We are challenged to do this amid a climate of limited public resources, rising costs and evolving expectations. To thrive in the long term while succeeding in our Vision and Mission, we are committed to transforming how we do things. At the heart of this strategic priority is our people and our culture.

GEF's Quality of Life Philosophy is more than a statement of commitment. It is a fundamental shift in how we work to better support our seniors in their choices to live fulfilling lives. We have made great strides in programming that supports seniors' quality of life. Now we are going to embed these values culturally across GEF, into everything we do. The Philosophy and its Guiding Principles will be integrated into every aspect of GEF services and activities.

We understand that each and every person is a unique individual with their own stories, hopes and goals. That is why we consider the well-being of the whole person in all that we do – from the first contact we have with each senior as they explore housing options to how we interact with them during their time living in a GEF community. With the introduction of our new Quality of Life Philosophy, we are furthering our commitment to deliver an exceptional living experience for each senior who calls a GEF community home. Welcoming, diverse and engaging communities – where people can pursue the next chapter of their lives in secure, dignified and fulfilling ways. Simply put, we are building communities.

Importantly, this work involves transforming the ways we plan for, think about and interact with our seniors. Even though housing is in GEF's roots, we are actually in the business of supporting people – to be well, to belong, and to live healthy and independent lives. GEF staff and our culture are key to accomplishing this transformation and embracing innovation. GEF has a comprehensive training program for all staff, right from their very first day of work, and refresher programs that help staff stay current in their knowledge throughout their career with GEF. Continuing to invest in our staff will help ensure GEF Seniors Housing remains an employer of choice and that our staff embody our Quality of Life Philosophy in their everyday interactions with our seniors.

We will actively promote transformational leadership as the means to enrich the client experience. In three years we expect to achieve the following outcomes:

- Seniors living in GEF communities have a strong sense of belonging; and
- GEF employees are highly engaged.



Growing Our Organization in Sustainable Ways

With an increase in the number of seniors expected to be in need of our services, we see an opportunity for GEF to grow in size and reach. Importantly, we are committed to growing in sustainable ways: socially, environmentally and economically.

As we provide high-quality service to our current seniors, we will take advantage of opportunities to bring our unique approach, developed over the last 60 years, to more seniors by expanding the number of housing units under GEF management. Guided by the principles of our Quality of Life Philosophy, this will enable us to help more seniors pursue the next chapters of their lives in fulfilling and meaningful ways. Opportunities to expand may emerge from various efforts – such as constructing new housing developments, redeveloping existing GEF buildings, or taking on the management of others' housing units.

We will take care of what we have already established as we seek to build on our success by making conscious choices. We will exercise responsible stewardship of the environment by ensuring regulatory compliance and implementing best practices with a goal of minimizing negative impacts on the local and global environments. We will consciously consider new technologies and processes to reduce our environmental footprint and design innovative spaces that enhance seniors' livability.

Sustainable growth also requires fiscal prudence. We will keep building on our track record of solid stewardship of the public funds we receive. At the same time, we are going to reduce our reliance on government funding through diversification of our revenue sources. This will involve fostering creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial thinking within our organization. The result will be greater fiscal flexibility, helping to support our Vision, Mission and growth agenda.

We will develop a sustainable framework for GEF. In three years we expect to achieve the following outcomes:

- Seniors in and close to Edmonton have access to more affordable, quality housing and services; and
- GEF Seniors Housing remains a sustainable organization.



An Evolving Alberta Means More Opportunities to Serve

In charting our path forward, we have considered how our province is changing and what that means for our seniors, our staff and our business. Looking ahead, it is clear there is an important role for GEF Seniors Housing and there are opportunities to seize.

- **Alberta's population demographics mean there are more people to serve.** GEF's primary clients are Albertans aged 65 and older who have lower incomes. As of March 2020, an estimated 640,000 Albertans were aged 65 or older, and the size of this cohort continues to grow.
- **Amid a tough economy, there will be a greater need for our services.** Volatility in global markets has impacted Alberta's economy in ways we have not seen for a long time. This has had consequences for jobs, savings and investments. This will place affordable housing in greater demand from Albertans as they move into their senior years.
- **Organizations everywhere are being challenged to do things differently.** Limited public resources, rising costs and unexpected global events are just some of the factors driving the need to do things differently. As we enhance our own business, GEF can lend its expertise, explore partnerships and help strengthen the affordable housing and senior-serving sectors.

- **Stable and proven service providers are in demand.** When considering living arrangements for themselves or older adults, people want assurances of affordable, accessible and supportive housing where individuals are treated with respect and dignity. With deep roots in the community and a demonstrated record of excellence, GEF can be counted upon as a trusted and respected provider.
- **Organizations who can adapt to changing and more complex needs of older adults will be standouts.** Due to capacity issues in the continuing care system, providers of seniors lodging are challenged to meet a diverse range of needs of an increasingly complex range of residents – despite not being funded to meet these changing needs. Providers like GEF who rise to this challenge, take leadership positions in the sector.



Quick Facts

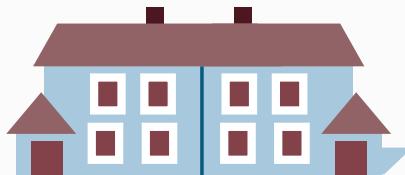
about GEF Seniors Housing



Close to **4,000** seniors call a GEF community home



GEF Seniors Housing is the **largest provider** of subsidized seniors housing in Alberta



GEF Seniors Housing is a registered charity and we **accept donations**



80% of GEF seniors live on less than **\$27,000 a year**

Established in 1959, GEF is now entering its **seventh decade of service** to Edmontonians

82% of GEF seniors are between **71 and 100** years of age

GEF operates and manages **11 lodges** and **35 apartment buildings** and duplexes

There are **twice as many women** as men who live in GEF communities

Our employees have recognized GEF as a Best Employer for **10 years**

More than **1,500 seniors** applied for housing with GEF in 2019

GEF employs more than **550** full-time, part-time and casual staff



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