

# Did you know?

## The History of NESA

In 1975, the Northgate Lions Club began discussions with Edmonton Parks and Recreation about building a recreation centre for senior citizens in the North District of Edmonton. In 1976, Edmonton City Council approved the Northgate Lions Club's proposal to finance the construction of the facility, which would be located at Cherrydale Park. Funding for the project came from provincial grants, a \$100,000 contribution, and a mortgage secured by members of the Northgate Lions Club. The Northgate Lions Senior Recreation Centre officially opened on April 16, 1978, with borrowed furniture from nearby community leagues.

In May 1978, the seniors groups Prairie Roots, New Beginnings, and Prairie Rose came together to form the Northgate Lions Seniors Recreation Association. This new organization raised funds to furnish and equip the Centre and began offering programs with support from the City of Edmonton and the Northgate Lions Club.

With the City of Edmonton operating the building, the Northgate Lions providing substantial financial support and the senior's organization now known as the North Edmonton Seniors Association (NESA) providing funds, volunteers and programming the building has grown through six expansions. Today, it is more than twice its original size, including renovations after a roof collapse in 2011. The facility now serves over 2,000 members and hosts more than 100,000 visits annually, offering a broad range of activities to the community.

NESA, based at the Northgate Lions Seniors Recreation Centre, is now the largest seniors' organization in Edmonton. Its history stands as a testament to the dedication of volunteers and the broader community, showcasing a shared commitment to fostering social connections and offering meaningful, healthy activities for seniors. With continued support, this remains a true community success story.



# NESA's Timeline



## 1975

Northgate Lions Club approached the City of Edmonton Parks & Recreation about a seniors center in north Edmonton.

## 1976

City Council accepted financing for the Cherrydale Park site and a cheque for \$205,282 was presented to the Lions Club. A 99-year lease was granted to support them building a Seniors Recreation Centre.

## 1977

**Phase 1** marked the construction of the original building, which cost \$663,000. Funding came from \$330,000 in provincial and federal grants, \$100,000 from the Lions Club, and the remainder was from a personal mortgage taken out by the Lions Club president.

## 1978

A grant from the New Horizons Group funded furniture and equipment for the newly formed Northgate Senior Citizens Association, created by merging 3 Seniors Associations. The Northgate Lions Recreation Centre officially opened on April 16, 1978, featuring an auditorium, cafeteria, and office space.

## 1980

**Phase 2** saw the opening of the building's second floor, which included a Board Room, two craft rooms, a lapidary room, and a combined carpentry/pottery space. The cost of this project was \$250,000 which was financed by the Lions Club, the Seniors Association and a grant. The Grand Opening took place on March 16, 1980.



# NESA's Timeline



## 1981

The first membership fee was introduced for \$1.

## 1986

The Seniors Association and the Lions developed the park at a cost of \$53,028. The following year, a grant for \$28,385 was obtained to install the paths and some trees in the park.

## 1988

**Phase 3** added 6,200 square feet over two floors, including an elevator, lobby, offices, a Board Room, and two upstairs classrooms. It also included second-floor renovations with a lounge and woodworking shop, plus a new patio outside the Auditorium. The total cost was \$450,000.

## 1992

The Solarium was constructed for additional space in the cafeteria. The total cost was \$111,590.

## 1994

An addition to include the Lion's Den off of the Auditorium was added, as well as the Fabric Arts room on the second floor. The total cost was \$90,000.



# NESA's Timeline



## 2006

**The Green Phase** of the building included the Fitness Centre, the change rooms and the classroom above was added. An extensive upgrade was also made to the HVAC and Sprinkler systems in the building. The total cost was \$550,000.

## 2009

The name of the association was changed to the North Edmonton Seniors Association after a naming contest.

## 2012

On January 25, 2011, the roof of the Auditorium collapsed. The total repair cost was approximately \$5.8 million, mostly covered by insurance. The City of Edmonton contributed \$680,000 toward building upgrades, while NESA donated \$162,000 for improvements. These upgrades included retrofitting aging infrastructure and enhancing accessibility through updated washrooms, doorways, and entry points. The building officially reopened on September 21, 2012.

## 2015

A new agreement was signed with the City of Edmonton which gives NESA the full responsibility for seniors programs at the Centre. Since that time Outreach and Home Supports programs were added and the variety of program choices continues to grow.