

Senior Citizens' Month

Mr. Speaker, June is Senior Citizen's Month. I encourage all Northerners to join me in recognizing and celebrating the valuable contributions that Seniors and Elders make within our families and communities.

In the Northwest Territories, our Seniors and Elders are the fastest growing segment of our population. Through the Our Elders, Our Communities framework and the Continuing Care Services Action Plan, our government is working to support our Seniors and Elders to live in their own homes and communities for as long as possible, and to ensure that adequate supports are available for them when they can no longer do so.

We have also recently published an updated edition of the Seniors Information Handbook which provides a comprehensive list of programs and services that Seniors and their caregivers can access towards making informed decisions that can help them remain independent and active in their home communities.

Senior Citizens' Month is one way that our society recognizes and appreciates the valuable contributions that our Seniors and Elders make to the fabric of our communities. This recognition month also serves to highlight important issues facing our Seniors and Elders, and to that end, I would like to highlight two special days within Senior Citizens' Month.

Today, June 1st, is Intergenerational Day, and I encourage Northwest Territories residents to reflect on the importance that intergenerational relationships have had in their own lives.

Elders represent the heart and soul of our communities; they are respected for their knowledge, experience and wisdom. Supporting our Seniors and Elders to remain living in their communities has the potential to enhance intergenerational relationships between our Elders and younger generations. Making it possible for Seniors and Elders to remain with their families for longer creates more opportunities for storytelling, sharing of traditional knowledge, and enrichment of culture and heritage.

I would also like to highlight that June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Raising public awareness about the abuse and neglect of Seniors and Elders is the first of many steps in preventing Elder abuse. Abuse of older adults is more than just physical abuse. Elder abuse includes verbal, emotional and financial abuse, and this problem is present in our communities. As part of the Continuing Care Services Action Plan, our government has committed to finalizing Elder Abuse Screening tools in partnership with the NWT Seniors Society. Together, our goal is to decrease the rate of Elder abuse in the NWT by increasing the awareness of Elder abuse and ensuring Elders can access the supports they need.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to further recognize the valuable work the NWT Seniors' Society does in the prevention of abuse of older adults. The Society plays an important role in leading government and non-government partners in this work through the NWT Network to Prevent the Abuse of Older Adults. The NWT Seniors' Society are committed to educating and working with partners and other organizations to reduce, prevent, and ultimately eradicate the abuse of older adults, and we are pleased to be working with them on these efforts.

Our government is gathering data and collaborating with the NWT Seniors' Society to develop a report to provide information relating to programs and services used by Seniors and Elders in the NWT.

By working together with our partners, our government is improving our programs and services to best support our Seniors and Elders together, we are creating a future where

they can remain safely independent and actively engaged in their home communities for as long as possible.

As the Minister Responsible for Seniors, I want to recognize all of the Seniors and Elders who help to create the healthy and vibrant families and communities that we all want to be part of in the Northwest Territories. During Senior Citizens' Month, and on Intergenerational Day and Elder Abuse Awareness Day, I encourage all residents to celebrate the important role that our Seniors and Elders have in our lives.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.