



## GREY MATTERS

A GUIDE TO COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH WITH SENIORS

Nancy Marlett and Claudia Emes

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**Pat Allen**

*People do for us and that's very nice, but that's not what we need. We need to do for ourselves and be listened to before legislation is enacted. I wanted older people to do their own looking at what they need and to verify it in a way that would be recognized by the community and at a university level.*

# The Kerby Centre of Excellence

The Kerby Centre of Excellence is a seniors-led organization dedicated to enhancing the ability of seniors to live healthy, creative, and productive lives within their community. Since it was established in 1973, the Centre has grown to become a dynamic, multifaceted organization, offering a wide range of social, recreational, educational, and wellness programs. It is Alberta's leading multi-service seniors centre, annually serving over 32,000 seniors and their families, more than 30 per cent of Calgary's senior population.

A social model of health has been developed by the Centre to meet seniors' intellectual, emotional, social, and physical needs and to improve their quality of life. To many seniors the Kerby Centre represents community. It is where they come for information, learning, advocacy, good meals, tax help, entertainment, socializing, exercise, and help, when needed.

The Kerby Centre of Excellence and Network in Applied Gerontology was established in 2002 to undertake research focusing on all aspects of aging successfully and to involve seniors in identifying and conducting research relevant to them and their peers. The Centre of Excellence is Canada's first community-based research centre to integrate research, education, and service delivery for seniors.

The goal of the centre is to conduct collaborative, multidisciplinary research into healthy and successful aging. One of the major thrusts will be to understand and promote resilience for seniors and their communities. This research will help to identify what makes seniors resilient, able to bounce back, and remain healthy and active

despite lifetime setbacks. The Centre of Excellence has a vision of involving seniors in all aspects of research: for seniors by seniors.

This manual is a product of the centre's first project titled *Seniors and Resilience: Sites and Sources*. It was a collaboration between the University of Calgary, the City of Calgary, and the Kerby Centre. It is hoped that this research manual will contribute to future research, programs, education, and services to improve seniors' quality of life today and in the future.

The funding for the research project was provided by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Aging. The one-year funding lead to a three-year project with other partners that turned the findings of the formal research into this book. We are grateful to them for their vision and willingness to start the process to a future where seniors are partners in setting the research agendas and are recognized as researchers in their own right.