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Helping seniors age in their community

Home supports program paves the way to seniors benefits

North Edmonton Seniors Association has helped Stan Fuller (pictured) make his life a little easier. | Rebecca Lippiatt

KATE WILSON

When Stan Fuller checked out a book sale at the Northgate Lions Recreation Centre, it changed his life. He now has free snow shoveling, small income support, and a possible subsidy that will further reign in his rent expenditure.

"I heard about the centre in a newspaper ad about a book sale," recalled Fuller, who lives in northeast Edmonton. "There was a notice there about assistance for seniors."

He chatted with the centre's staff and thought nothing more of it. Then, one day he was surprised to see a snow shoveling crew clearing his walk.

"Turns out the [worker] at the seniors centre had put my name in. She thought, 'this is a candidate', and they arranged it," he said.

Since then, a snow shoveling crew has been a regular presence at Fuller's home. At their last visit, they even cleared snow off the back deck and took away the garbage.

It's a testament to the quality and range of services provided by North Edmonton Seniors Association (NESA), operating out of Northgate Lions Recreation Centre. One of NESA's founding principles is to help seniors age safely in their home community, which they accomplish through home supports and outreach programs.

"Home supports is a referral program to support seniors in remaining in their homes longer, safely, and independently," explained Stacey Flanagan, home supports co-ordinator. "We provide referrals to service providers for snow removal, yard maintenance, housekeeping, home repairs, and maintenance, as well as personal services and moving help."

Repair and maintenance trades include plumbing, electrical, and furnace repair. Service providers are vetted, and Flanagan welcomes them to call if they want to be put on the referrals list. Her staff also try to save spots on the free shovelling list, provided for seniors with very low incomes.

Since his initial contact with home supports staff, Fuller has had his income topped up through a provincial seniors benefit program. Now, he's completing forms for a program with Capital Region Housing that helps low income earners bring their rent to no more than one third of their income.

Another client, a widowed woman who lives alone, was given three referrals for snow removal. The provider she chose noticed she didn't have a working doorbell, so he installed one that same day. On another occasion, it snowed while she was away and her gate was locked.

"She told me the service provider jumped her back gate to shovel. Now that is . . . obviously a man who truly cares about seniors," said Flanagan.

The home supports program is a gateway to NESA's outreach services, which helps with tasks like navigating the health-care system, completing forms, and accessing grief support.

NESA is Edmonton's largest seniors organization, offering over 600 programs. Membership is open to anyone, but those aged 55 plus pay half the fee. The fee is waived for those 85 plus.

Kate took up the reporter's pad and pen while living in northern Alberta. The writing bug stuck, and the next 20 years were spent covering everything from local politics to community happenings. She lives in Alberta Avenue with her daughter.

NORTH EDMONTON SENIORS ASSOCIATION

7524 139 Avenue
www.nesa1.ca
Home supports: 780.496.6969 or info@nesa1.ca.
Outreach: 780.414.8790

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Micro farming is a viable alternative

Local producer teaches benefits of micro farming at home

TEKLA LUCHENSKI

It took bad luck in the form of nasty weather to turn Dawn Boileau's attention toward micro farming, but she hasn't looked back.

Boileau established Sunrise Gardens in 2003. Since 2007, her produce has been certified organic. Although her business was successful, she had to make major changes when a hail storm wiped out her entire crop.

Losing her traditional outdoor crop made Boileau realize the vulnerability producers face with Alberta's short growing season and unpredictable weather.

As Boileau said, "Growing our own food is therapeutic, not to mention nutritious."

In 2008, she discovered micro farming, which allows her to grow highly nutritious plants in a small indoor space. She realized micro farming is good for business, and creates an alternative for would-be gardeners from all walks of life. Boileau emphasized her commitment to establish a successful business and educate the community to micro farm successfully at home.

She's reached a point where she supplies businesses such as Booster Juice with microgreens, she's sought after for workshops at events such as Seedy Sunday, and she attends similar events as a vendor and educator.

"It's not all about the money," she said, and her generous and informative contributions demonstrate her commitment.

Although micro farming is not meant to replace traditional produce, she lauds the benefits it offers as an alternative and rich supplement.

"[Shoots and microgreens] are nutritionally very dense and super fresh. They allow us to be active in the growing of our food, connecting us with the magic of germination and photosynthesis. Growing our own food encourages us to share our love of plants and food with our friends and family and saves us money," she said.

Micro farming refers to the production of shoots and microgreens. She defined shoots as "crops that require less light and fewer growing days until harvest (5-14 days)." Meanwhile, she said, "Microgreens require much more light (14 hours per day, double grow lights or very good sun exposure). Microgreens are developed into their second or third true leaf stages and require 14-28 days growth."

As shoots, plants concentrate their phytonutrients. Ten ounces of broccoli shoots has more nutrients than a head of broccoli. You can't grow oranges in your living room, but red cabbage shoots yield high concentrations of vitamin C that can be grown in small trays on a bookshelf.

Micro farming has low requirements for soil and light, with minimal attention, but it requires good air flow to prevent mold. If you are away from home on vacation, put them in the refrigerator and they will go dormant.

Boileau recommends starting with wheat grass, pea, or sunflower shoots.

The beautiful thing about micro farming is its simplicity; it offers maximum results for minimal effort and expense. Boileau's best advice is to "... start small, feel good when you do succeed, and then try more and more." Sunrise Gardens is a regular vendor at the Old Strathcona Farmers Market. Check the website below for other locations.

Tekla enjoys renovating her 1953 bungalow in Parkdale, with attention to period style, including pink bathrooms. Trained as a cultural anthropologist, she is excited to contribute to The Rat Creek Press.

SUNRISE GARDENS

Onoway, AB

780.218.2430

Sunriseorganicgardens.ca

Dawn Boileau enjoys educating the public about micro farming. | Tekla Luchenski

Growing lush microgreens is possible at home. | Tekla Luchenski

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Taking the next steps in waste management

Recent audit reveals more action is needed to divert waste

TALEA MEDYNSKI

In February, city auditors revealed to the city's utility committee that Edmontonians are not the champions of diverting waste that we thought we were.

It's long been the city's goal to divert 90 per cent of residential waste, but we're nowhere near that number.

According to the city auditor, "We calculated the amount of waste coming to the Edmonton Waste Management Centre that is diverted from landfills in the past five years and found it is trending down. With the highest diversion rate in 2013 at 49.5 percent and the lowest in 2016 at 35.7 percent."

Once the Anaerobic Digestion Facility and the Waste to Biofuels Facility are running, about 72 per cent of residential waste could be diverted. The Anaerobic Digestion Facility will begin operating by mid-year, while the timeline for the Waste to Biofuel Facility operations is being determined.

"Some of the systems we have in place are the first of their kind in the world, and require an operational roll out in phases to reach full efficiency," said Waste Services staff.

In the meantime, Waste Services is taking the first steps to improving Edmonton's system.

On Feb. 23, the city's utility committee recommended banning grass clippings and other yard waste at the curb for pick up. Residents send 50,000 tonnes of grass clippings to the garbage every year, but grass is too wet and takes up too much space. If approved, the ban would begin in September. After that, residents could either practice bagless mowing, leaving the grass on their lawn or composting it, or dispose of it at an eco station or waste drop-off. Another suggestion is to separate food scraps from garbage before it's sent to the composting facility. Should city council approve this suggestion, it would go into effect in fall 2020.

A March 20 city council meeting resulted in deciding to further engage with Edmontonians on grass and yard waste collection. On June 8, the city (Waste Services) will report findings and recommendations to the utility committee. Meetings in October, 2018 and June, 2019 will address possible additional waste reduction programs and waste reduction strategies.

Waste Services staff explained that no changes will be made without council approval.

Locally, many residents already recycle, reuse, and dispose of their waste sustainably.

Rebecca Lippiatt, a local photographer, composts food waste and small pieces of paper, recycles paper, plastic, and containers, and takes her electronics and batteries to an eco-station. She explained she tries not to buy products with excessive packaging. She reuses items, and buys second-hand clothing to reduce the effects of fast-fashion.

"I stopped shopping at Costco in part because their packaging is out of hand. I would rather buy the bag of oddly-shaped cucumbers at the Italian Centre than the individually wrapped ones," Lippiatt explained.

Kate Wilson, an Alberta Avenue resident, shared, "We recycle pretty much everything we can, including organics, which go into my community garden plot."

Alita Rickards, another Avenue resident, suggested Edmonton model its system after Taipei's, where she lived for several years.

"Recycling was encouraged by making it more expensive to not recycle. You had to buy special garbage bags at 7-Eleven for actual garbage, and they were quite expensive," Rickards explained. "Food waste was collected separately. Here we could do that by having special (free) bags for food waste, like the biodegradable ones in dog parks. All garbage would have to go in the quite expensive garbage bags specifically for that purpose."

Everything people do to reduce waste helps.

"It's important to know that each action makes a difference, especially when we add them up. It's also OK to start small. Change doesn't happen overnight. Try committing to something for three weeks. That's enough time to create a habit," said Waste Services staff, who shared tips on reducing and reusing.

"Limit your use of single-use items. Be aware of packaging. Choose to purchase items that have less. Refuse items that you know will end up in the garbage or recycling, such as unwanted leaflets and 'swag' from events. Give experiences as gifts. You'll end up with memories, not waste."

Reduce by donating items, buying used items, and repairing broken items before buying new ones.

When it comes to recycling, rinse containers, especially if food's been stored in them, and don't cram them tightly into the bags; keep items loose for easier sorting. Know what can and cannot be recycled. Download the WasteWise app, use the WasteWise tool on edmonton.ca/waste, or check the What Goes Where poster at edmonton.ca/recycling.

"Putting certain items in the recycling can damage sorting machinery, pose safety hazards to workers, and contaminate other materials," said Waste Services staff. Examples include garden hoses, textiles, styrofoam, dirty food containers, and electronics.

Wilson said reducing waste and recycling makes a difference.

"I remember back in the mid to late 80s, some people scoffed, 'What's the point?' I agreed that my small contribution wasn't making a dent at that time, but what it did do was give business, community, and government interests in recycling a strong message: to keep it up. And now it's become an accepted feature of the culture."

Visit edmonton.ca/futureofwaste for updates and opportunities to participate in public engagement.

Talea is the Rat Creek Press editor. She loves sharing the stories of our diverse neighbourhoods.

Recycling depots are also available to drop off recyclable items. | City of Edmonton

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Library pilot program helps job seekers

Volunteers lend their expertise to assist library patrons

TALEA MEDYNSKI

On a quiet March evening, volunteers at Edmonton Public Library's Sprucewood branch helped job-seeking customers on the first day of an eight-week pilot program.

For the next two hours, volunteers provided library patrons with individualized help.

Patrick Nguyen, one of the pilot volunteers at Sprucewood library, explained he stumbled across the volunteer opportunity.

"I work at the U of A Career Centre. I thought it was a good fit for me."

One of the people Nguyen helped was Abdullahi Abdaulle, who wanted to work on his resume. Abdaulle, who was applying for a job, said the advice Nguyen gave him was valuable.

Amanda Bird, associate manager at Lois Hole library, explained the pilot project was created due to the recommendations of a report. In 2015, EPL decided to hire an intern librarian to explore workforce development needs and partnerships. The intern recommended that EPL create a program where volunteers help job seekers.

"Our job-seeking customers (we have a lot of them) need one-on-one support our library staff just can't provide," said Bird. "A cover letter and resume are the first things a prospective employer sees."

The pilot program, held at the Calder and Sprucewood branches, started March 5 and March 7 respectively and runs until April 30 and April 25.

"EPL volunteers were recruited," said Bird. "They have experience in the human resources field and in helping people review resumes and conduct a job search. We want to ensure our customers are given expert advice."

Two volunteers help at each location, with sessions running at Calder library on Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, and at Sprucewood library on Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

"Calder and Sprucewood both scored high on branches where people asked about job information," explained Bird. "And those locations reported high unemployment in the city census."

It's a first-come-first-served program, with volunteers spending as much time as needed with participants. Upon arriving, participants should stop by the front desk and sign up for a session.

"It's really customer generated. Customers come in with their questions and volunteers do their best to provide answers," said Bird. "Job seekers have complex needs. We thought one-on-one help would work best."

That said, if a group of people have the same question, the volunteers can answer the question to the group.

While participants can ask any job-seeking question, some tips people can expect to get from the sessions include help with writing or formatting a resume, what information to include in a cover letter, and help with job search navigation and the job application process.

"People with low digital literacy skills could ask a volunteer to transcribe resumes or cover letters," added Bird.

Volunteers expect a mix of experience from participants, ranging from people who have been out of the job market for a while to new job seekers to people who want to brush up on their skills.

The pilot's been receiving positive reviews.

"Customers say they feel more confident due to one-on-one feedback," said Bird. "So far it's been very popular."

The program may continue as long as volunteers are willing to contribute their time and expertise.

Talea is the Rat Creek Press editor. She loves sharing the stories of our diverse neighbourhoods.

RESUME & JOB APPLICATION HELP

Free, drop-in pilot program
Calder branch
(12710 131 Ave)
Mondays, 6:30-8:30 pm
March 5-April 30, 2018
(cancelled April 2)
Sprucewood branch
(11555 95 St)
Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm
March 7-April 25, 2018

Patrick Nguyen, one of Sprucewood's volunteers, gets ready to help library patrons with their questions. | Talea Medynski

Wind down with Saturday evening meditation

Practice simple, guided meditation in a Buddhist temple

TALEA MEDYNSKI

Enjoy a relaxing end to your week by taking a free meditation class on Saturday evenings at the Land of Compassion Buddha Temple.

Glen McLean, a volunteer who is temporarily teaching the class, explained anyone can participate and no experience is required.

"It's a very simple meditation, a very generic meditation based on breath. It's a meditation successful by anyone," said McLean. "It's good, universal, and very simple to access."

He explained the meditation is not religious-based, although participants are welcome to arrive early at 6:30 pm to learn about Buddhism. The guided meditation begins at 7 pm with an introduction at the beginning of the class. Participants start by taking a meditative walk to help wind down, then sit down on provided cushions and begin the class.

"It goes for 45 minutes and is broken into two segments as that's a long time for beginners," McLean explained. "[Participants] can move into any position that's comfortable for them. It makes it very accessible."

The Land of Compassion Buddha Temple is three years old. | Talea Medynski

McLean, a senior citizen and a Buddhist, said he's been practicing meditation since he was 20 years old and that meditation is like any other skill.

"As you learn, you will improve. It takes quite a bit of practice."

He explained meditation has more benefits than relaxation.

"It will address your personal life and your emotional life."

The classes started a few months ago and the temple itself is only three years old. In fact, Land of Compassion Buddha Temple is one of two Tibetan temples in the city and belongs to the Galupa order, which is the same order to which the Dalai Lama belongs.

"He's a sort of teacher for us. We follow his teaching within Buddhism," said McLean, and added, "We're not asking you to join or become a member of our religion."

The temple doesn't charge for any activities, although they accept donations.

Classes operate on a drop-in basis, although if you want more information, you can contact McLean ahead of time.

"We live at such a hectic pace and in such a fast-paced world we almost need to meditate," said McLean.

Talea is the Rat Creek Press editor. She loves sharing the stories of our diverse neighbourhoods.

GUIDED MEDITATION

Free, drop-in class
Saturdays, 7 pm
Land of Compassion Buddha Temple
9352 106A Ave
780.862.7392

Norwood Dental hopes to help clients smile

New owners to take over a 60-year-old local business

REBECCA LIPPIATT

Dr. William Chin and his fiancé Amanda Nielsen had been looking for a dental practice to purchase for the last several years. When they came to Norwood Dental, they fell in love with both the practice and the community.

"I love this community. People are so passionate, friendly, optimistic, and hardworking," said Chin.

Chin (who prefers that his patients call him William) has been working as an associate for the last few months at Norwood Dental and has high praise for the practice. He said Dr. Randall Croutze "treats his patients like family, which you don't see in a lot of practices."

Croutze and his wife have owned Norwood Dental for the past 30 years, and the business itself is 60 years old. Chin looks forward to creating and building long-term relationships with his own clients when he takes over the practice.

When Nielsen was sorting through some of Norwood Dental's records, she found the records of a patient born in 1912. While that patient has long since died, her daughter is still a patient. This long-term relationship with patients intrigues the couple.

"To be part of that history is really exciting," said Nielsen.

Nielsen is finishing her MBA and will be the office manager, handling the business end.

"I am lucky to have Amanda through this whole process," said Chin.

Nielsen wants to find ways to make going to the dentist more enjoyable with things like providing tea or coffee for waiting clients, providing a blanket for people getting dental work done, or providing toys for children in the waiting room. Nielsen looks at the business from a patient's perspective and asks, "what can we do to make this better?"

Chin said he loves getting to know patients and their diverse backgrounds. He jokes that even while patients can't talk much while he's working, he still manages to learn a lot about them.

While he enjoys using the technical skills needed in his job, he appreciates being able to help people who are in pain. Both he and Nielsen want to ensure their future patients know they won't judge or scold them, and that it is "never too late to come to the dentist."

"Dental care doesn't have to be scary," said Chin.

At this point, their fees will closely follow the Government of Alberta's dental fee guide, and they will accept ADSC (Alberta Dental Service Corporation) and NIHB (Non-Insured Health Benefits) plans, in addition to other health plans. Chin and Nielsen will also provide contacts to resources and provide payment plans for clients without insurance.

The couple, who look forward to living in Alberta Avenue someday, said community involvement is one of their core values. They volunteered with this year's Deep Freeze Festival, are patrons to an artist at the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts, and love eating at Pho King.

Amanda Nielsen (left) and Dr. William Chin (right) look forward to being a part of the Alberta Avenue community. | Rebecca Lippiatt

A professional photographer for the past nine years, Rebecca is a mother to two boys and stepmother to two girls.

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avenue initiative revitalization

EDITORIAL

Eradicating poverty benefits everyone

Literacy is an important step in alleviating poverty

MIMI WILLIAMS

People have been talking a lot about privilege these days.

Some argue that because some people enjoy certain privileges—whether based on race, socio-economic or other factors —those who lack similar backgrounds are automatically disadvantaged. "Born on third, thinks he got a triple," might be the easiest way to explain this view of privilege.

Others dismiss the idea of privilege altogether, with the view that poverty and economic disadvantage are the result of a personal flaw or individual failing that has nothing to do with systemic factors. While none of us has any control over the social and economic status of the families into which we are born, this point of view suggests that all we have to do is 'pull ourselves up by our bootstraps' and solve our own problems.

Evidence suggests the latter view is based more on myth than reality.

According to Statistic Canada's most recent figures, 4.9 million people (or one in seven) in Canada live in poverty, including 1.2 million (one in four) children. End Poverty Edmonton notes about one in eight Edmontonians are impoverished (with poverty defined as making less than $16,968 per year for a single person and $33,936 per year for a family of four). The organization suggests poverty costs the Alberta economy between $7 and $9 billion every year.

As national literacy organization Frontier College noted in a discussion paper released last year, poverty exists due to a number of compounding factors: "Things like low literacy, low income, poor health, limited mobility, social isolation, and compromised mental health can easily reinforce one another." People living in poverty are often denied access to the educational services, supports, and opportunities that might help improve their lives.

According to a 2010 Statistics Canada study, individuals with higher levels of proficiency in reading at the age of 15 had higher levels of educational attainment and income by the time they were 25 than youth with a lower reading proficiency.

Although Statistics Canada confirms that "literacy skill level and household income are positively related," literacy is often overlooked in poverty alleviation strategies. Complicating the matter is the reciprocal relationship; literacy impacts income and income impacts literacy.

A 2012 report from the Ontario Child and Youth Network reported that the Toronto District School Board discovered 47 per cent of students from the lowest income bracket (parents earning less than $30,000/year) met the provincial standard in reading, compared to 66 per cent of students from the highest income bracket (parents earning $100,000/year or more).

Just as privilege is passed down through generations and opens up opportunities, poverty is entrenched becauses it closes them off. Literacy is a tool we can use to break the cycle.

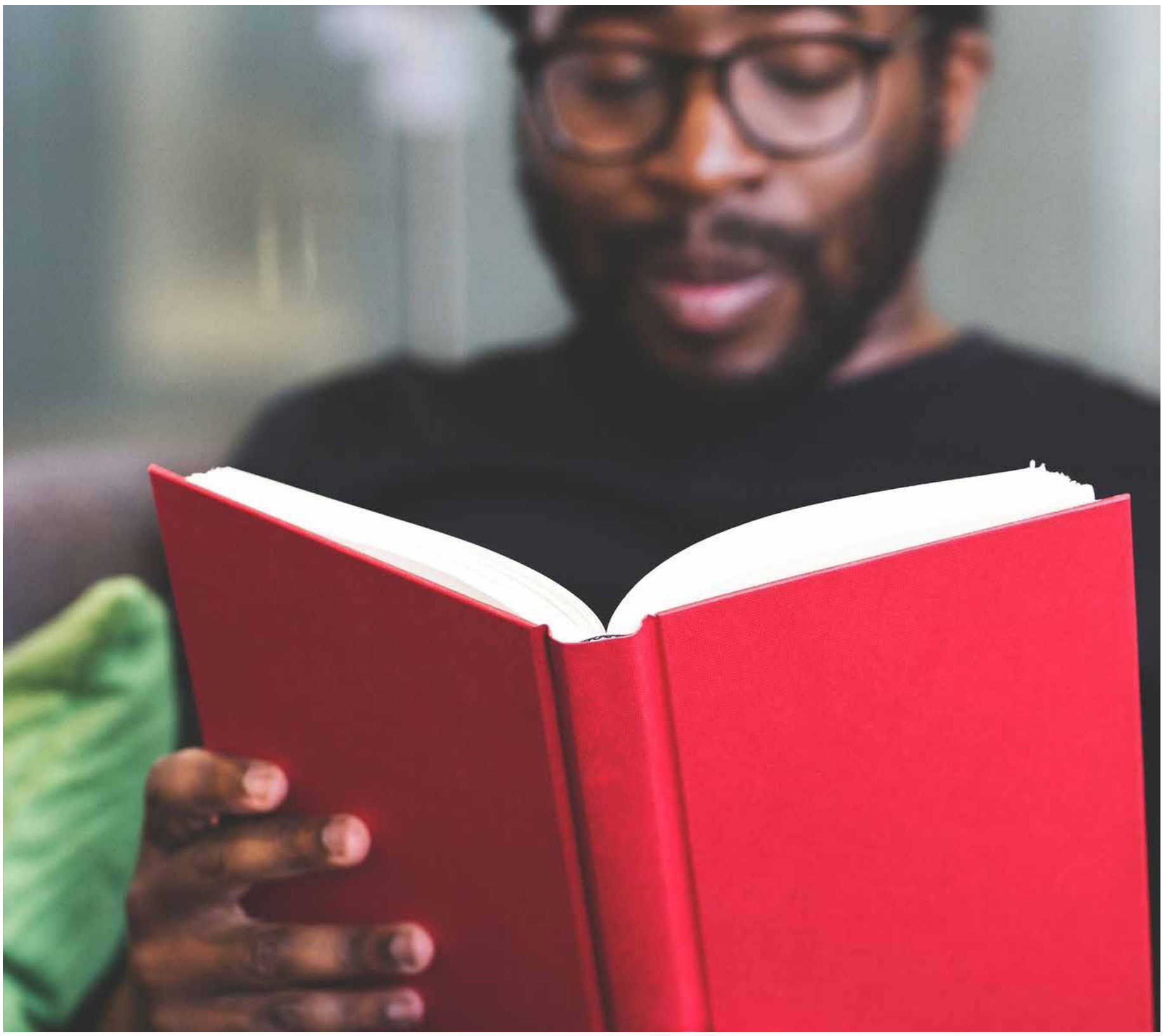
Nobody is suggesting it's easy. While my oldest son was always a voracious reader, my youngest was less inclined. Instead of getting into a power struggle with him over reading, I started buying him hockey and skateboarding magazines. If your children aren't interested in reading, get them reading about things that capture their interest. Who knows what might come of it? That young boy who didn't want to read now spends many of his evenings writing poetry.

Membership at Edmonton Public Library is free and a weekly visit can become a tradition that nurtures reading and learning among all family members, regardless of age. Getting older siblings to read to younger ones is a strategy that helps them both and is a little easier on the nerves than listening to the television or video games.

The Centre for Family Literacy offers a number of programs to help parents support their children's language and literacy development. They also offer free adult literacy programs and workshops.

Eradicating poverty will benefit everyone—not just those of us living in it—and raising literacy levels is one of the most important approaches. We can't change the fact that our children weren't born on third base, but we can get them on their way to first and second by instilling an early love of reading.

Mimi is a writer who first moved to the Alberta Avenue area over 20 years ago. She has participated in a number of revitalization initiatives and continues to promote the Ave as one of the best areas to live, work and play in Edmonton.



Poverty and literacy are related. | Pixabay

EDITORIAL

Increased stress levels affect mental health

Action is imperative for post-secondary students suffering from mental illness

BREANN GURNEY

A lack of support for students facing stressors of university life, including academics, finances, and reduced access to basic needs, has increased mental illness statistics in universities across Canada.

A study by Ryerson University reported that roughly 90 per cent of students feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities, while more than 50 per cent reported a hopeless outlook regarding school and their daily lives.

In a June 2013 *Globe and Mail* article, Dr Su-Ting Teo, director of student health and wellness at Ryerson University, commented:

"There is the perception still, I think, in the public that students have it easy ... I'm not saying that it isn't [easy] for many students, but I don't think people recognize just how much students have to juggle these days," said Teo.

Literature from 1961 demonstrated the mystification of mental illness, including a book written by psychiatrist Thomas Szasz called *The Myth of Mental Illness*. In his book, Szasz held the belief that mental illness was fiction. He explained it was a result of the medical model not being capable of encompassing human struggles, and that mental health professionals diagnosed some problems as diseases.

These fixed judgements about mental health permeated into legislation, and formed a stigma for those affected by mental illness. They sparked a battle of beliefs around mental illness about whether it is self-caused or abnormal.

In an article published by *The Ubyssey*, the author notes that the Canadian government's student loan program doesn't give its lenders concessions for short-term issues, such as mental health concerns. But concessions are granted to students diagnosed with a "permanent disability."

On Jan. 9, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) submitted a policy paper to the federal government about cases of mental illness on university campuses, alongside recommendations for action.

"Many students hesitate about accessing supports related to mental health perhaps in part due to negative attitudes from peers and professors, who too often react with skepticism to requests of accommodation," said CASA. "Depression, anxiety, and suicide rates have doubled since a Canadian Community Health Survey done in 2012, which found that "seven per cent of 15-to-24 year-olds were identified as having had depression in the past 12 months."

In 2016, the National College Health Assessment survey compiled their findings on depression statistics, which showed "14.7 per cent of post secondary students had been diagnosed or treated for depression and 13.0 per cent of students reported seriously considering suicide within the last 12 months."

In *The Ubyssey* article, Hanna Murray, UBC's Graduate Student Society representative at CASA, explained that because many post-secondary institutions don't have adequate support, mental illnesses are left untreated.

Two professors affected by mental illness—Santa Ono, who attempted to take his own life twice, and Michael Wilson, who lost his son Cameron to suicide 23 years ago—contributed to the *Globe and Mail* in their article "Students are not fragile flowers-- we must care about their mental health".

"While physical health is easy to measure and talked about openly, mental health is under the surface and often not talked about at all," said Wilson and Ono.

Western University inspires the rest of us to change for the better through a student referendum passed in early February that demanded improvement to available mental health services. Nearly 90 per cent of students voted to prioritize mental health and wellness.

"There are four pillars of the plan: to promote resiliency, provide effective health communications, examine the stresses of academic life, and to ensure that school has accessible and effective mental health services," said vice-provost John Doerksen on CBC's London Morning program on Feb.13, 2018.

By looking critically at the environment of many post-secondary institutions, how can we use preventative measures effectively to reduce student stress before the situation becomes critical?

The Ubyssey article also features Shifrah Gadamsetti, CASA board chair and registered nurse, who discussed how money is distributed when it comes to mental health care. Gadamsetti pointed out that most funding is allocated toward "fixing" issues as they arise, instead of preventative care.

"Imagine if the standard of treatment was equal for mental and physical health conditions," said Wilson and Ono in their article. "Not only would it significantly improve the lives of those living with a mental illness, it would save lives."

Breann is a journalism student and intern at Rat Creek Press. She focuses on political issues, multiculturalism, and human rights.

Post-secondary education can be an incredibly stressful time, with many demands on students. | Pixabay

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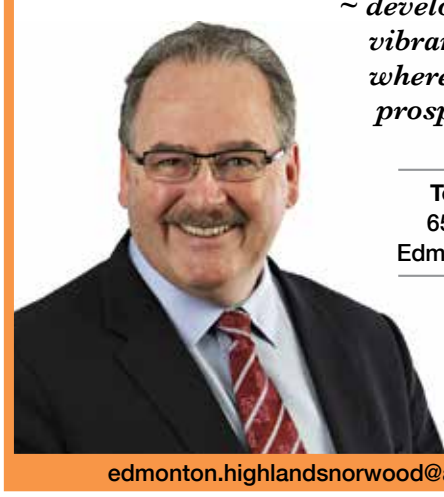
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School trustees play an important role

Why their role matters and how they impact your children

TAMIE PERRYMENT

When my children were in school, I didn't know what trustees did or who the elected official was in my area.

Our education system has a variety of demands and is affected by economic backgrounds, unique student needs, teacher-student ratio, and programming, to name but a few.

Policy decisions, educational choices, testing, and quality are among the reasons why the decisions of a school board trustee matter. The decisions they make affect your child's education.

Sherry Adams, Edmonton Public school board trustee for Ward I, is on her second term as a trustee. She took the time to talk about the school board and her role as a trustee.

She said the school board, "[Sets] the vision and course of the school district by setting a strategic plan which ensures educational and organizational success. Two important components of our work are to hire and hold accountable a capable superintendent and to oversee and approve the yearly budget and capital plan."

Adams explained her role as a trustee means "[Ensuring] a quality education for every student."

A trustee's role can be complex. He or she must reflect community values and communicate with school principals, school councils, and the community to know about challenges and triumphs. A trustee also advocates for financial needs to the provincial and municipal government, and works with those governments.

Communities in the inner city face unique challenges.

"Our programing and the professionalism of our teachers and staff remain strong in our inner city schools, and we have strong partnerships with many agencies to provide wrap-around services to children and their families. Decreased enrolments in the mature neighbourhoods, however, present challenges to maintaining our inner city school buildings," said Adams.

Sherry Adams is the Edmonton School board trustee for Ward I. | Supplied

She continued, "For the last 27 years, I have been personally involved in supplying supports for schools in low income, high needs communities. I continue to advocate for community partners to come alongside and help meet some of the practical needs that our inner-city kids and families have. It is very important to continue to build strong partnerships to make a difference."

A trustee can also help parents with school-related issues if they've had no success first working with teachers and the principal.

"[Parents can] contact their trustee, who will bring [an issue]to the attention of the very capable and conscientious district staff who, in my experience, are willing to go the extra mile to seeing (sic) problems and misunderstandings satisfactorily resolved."

The school board deals with its share of challenges. Adams shared two of these issues in Alberta:

"Defunding of independent, charter and home school programs moving toward a unification of provincial school boards," said Adams. "Balancing the desire of parents to be aware of what is part of their child's educational experience with a student's desire for privacy and personal protection."

The school board sometimes addresses complex issues, like GSAs (Gay Straight Alliance).

According to Alberta Education Guidelines: "If [students] tells us about their sexual orientation or gender identity, but isn't ready to tell anyone else, we must respect their privacy until they're ready to share. Our goal in these situations is to help students feel safe and supported. We encourage students to talk to their parents and work to bridge that conversation by giving students the support they need."

"GSAs serve to create empathy and provide personal support for all students around the LGBTQ experience and issues," said Adams. "A major reason gay-straight alliances were created was to engender empathy for fellow students. At the same time, I believe that the safety of all students depends on schools informing and involving parents as much as possible, unless doing so would be harmful to a student."

Students also have a voice and can participate in the school board in the form of a student senate.

"Each high school can elect up to two students to be on the senate. The trustees meet with the senate throughout the year and the senate reports to the public board three times a year. Three students from the senate are selected by their peers to be student trustees and each have an opportunity to participate in a public board meeting."

Adams said the senate has been effective in giving students an opportunity to communicate ideas and concerns as well as create initiatives for student well-being.

Of course, Adams has her own goals as a trustee. She's currently focused on "Improving the educational experience and proficiency of our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students." She also wants better mental health support and early interventions.

Tamie has been a Parkdale resident for 24 years, has advocated for social justice for over 30 years, and is a director for the Neighbourhood Development Committee (NDC) on the Parkdale Cromdale Community League (PCCL) Board. She lives with her partner Dean, her three dogs and cats, and numerous fish tanks.

LEARN MORE

Edmonton Public school board
epsb.ca/ourdistrict/board/about/

Edmonton Catholic school board
ecsd.net/BoardofTrustees/overview/Pages/Role-of-a-Trustee.aspx

It takes a community to raise a school

Spruce Avenue School strives to create and foster a positive environment

ALITA RICKARDS

At Spruce Avenue School, teachers, support workers, families, and kids work together to create a learning environment that caters to educational, physical, artistic, and emotional needs.

In the reception area, awards are displayed and art adorns the walls. It's a beautiful old brick school, with spaces for construction classes, a foods lab, a professional-level dance studio, library, art room, and music room.

Instead of an anti-bullying campaign, there's a kindness tree documenting good acts.

But the staff, support, and students add the real beauty.

Mona Markwart, the principal, explained teachers call parents when their children are doing well. "As a parent, when the phone rings you think, 'Oh it's the school, which one of you is in trouble?' so it's great to be positive… We only have the kids for part of the day, so parents are a big part of our success."

The school partners with All In for Youth (AIFY), a collaboration including United Way, E4C (who provides a breakfast program), and Boys & Girls Clubs (who provides student support with a family therapist, nutritionist, and success coach). Out-of-School-Time provides after-school programming.

Mona Markwart, Spruce Avenue School principal, believes in her students and their families. | Alita Rickards

"Because of the work they do, the teachers can teach and focus on their work," said Markwart.

The school faces its share of challenges.

"We have a lot of the regular low socioeconomic challenges, but one that is increasing in our young people is mental health and anxiety. AIFY work hard and deserve recognition. What they do is so amazing and they give of themselves daily for the community and our children."

"I'm able to deal with the trauma that these kids deal with and help with coping strategies," said Philiana Wong, the school therapist. "Everybody has gone through bad things, but it's harder for people in the inner city area because they not only face poverty and mental health challenges, but [also] need more support with how to cope with traumatic events from broken families, addictions."

Wong continued, "We have a huge refugee population dealing with war. Residential schools, being in the system… it's having someone there to talk to, which doesn't come easy for teenagers, so you have to earn their trust, be patient, not give up on them, and be present."

Chantelle Jackson, the nutritional support worker, agreed.

"I always have my kitchen open and the kids can talk to me without shame, there's no blame and I get it. I just want them to come to school. We want to not just meet their nutritional or food needs, but emotional and mental, too."

Daniel Saison is the school's success coach and the basketball coach. He works directly with the youth, getting to know them and providing educational support and mentorship.

"The northeast end of the city has historically been lower income, and lots of kids need help," he said. "We work together with the school to build support for the child, the family, and branching into the community to create a space where the kids feel safe and comfortable and can learn and get the best education. The people we have in this team are some of the best I've ever worked with—there's no infighting—we give our all to the kids."

Markwart gives credit to AIFY and the "amazing staff, trusting parents, and the community that wraps around us as well," she said. "It's a really good place to be."

The school needs continued support from the community in the form of adult role models, said Wong. "Come in and talk to the teachers, the principal," she said. "We need volunteers to do coaching and after school activities. More people to volunteer their time to do guitar clubs, basketball, sports. Come run a club that's beneficial to the kids or helps build skills."

Alita moonlights as a freelance writer focused on interesting people, music, arts, food, culture, sustainable lifestyles, and human rights. These same things attracted her to become a homeowner in vibrant, diverse, walkable Alberta Avenue.

Repurposed schools gain a new life and use

Closed schools can still provide services to the community

CADENCE BERGMAN

McKay Avenue School, located in the heart of downtown Edmonton, is the oldest standing brick school in Alberta. But it hasn't operated as a traditional school since 1983, when the Edmonton Public school board converted it into a museum. Today, students and the public visit the school and learn about the history of education in Edmonton, as well as our province's early political history.

Throughout Edmonton's mature neighbourhoods, declining student enrolment and increasing building maintenance costs have resulted in many more older schools closing–at least to students.

According to officials, Edmonton Public school board has an inventory of 18 closed schools across the city. Ten of those are being used by the district for other purposes, and the other eight are leased to different school jurisdictions or to community service agencies. Likewise, the Edmonton Catholic school district has 12 closed schools in the city, with the district using four of them.

Carrie Rosa, spokesperson for the school board, said that when the board leases to a non-profit organization, the building can still serve the community, and in some cases, even the students in the area. But the challenge is to operate and maintain the spaces. Open schools receive funding for maintenance from the province, unlike leased schools.

The Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society leases the former Parkdale School.

Cheryl Whiskeyjack, executive director for Bent Arrow, said about 350 people use the space every week.

The building houses administration and staff workspaces, meeting and classroom spaces. The gym is used for community activities like crafts, cultural teachings, ceremonies, dancing, and drumming.

Bent Arrow also uses the building for the Employment Resource Journey to Success program, which offers an employment resource centre, individualized plans, and workshops to help Indigenous individuals find employment.

According to Whiskeyjack, there are challenges in leasing space in a former school, particularly when it comes to arranging and scheduling renovations, but there are benefits too.

"It's got great bones! The rooms are versatile. The gym space is great and it's got three kitchens so that works for us as well, as food is a big part of what we do."

She continued, "It's in the community. We are a part of the Avenue activities, so we get great community exposure. The building is versatile. The green space outside is also a benefit. For the size of our organization, it's affordable [and it's] good for folks using public transit."

As for the Edmonton Catholic school district, two inner-city school buildings are Sacred Heart and the former St. Patrick's School, now One World…One Centre. These former schools now house literacy programs, daycare centres, and other staff and programs.

Boris Radyo, assistant superintendent of educational planning with the school district, said about 80 staff work at each of the schools.

"[One World…One Centre] has a focus on English language learners, so that's an intake centre for newcomers. Students come there with their parents, they are assessed, we provide programs for the students, we provide supportive programs for the parents, and we also provide language instruction during the day and during the evening," said Radyo.

One World…One Centre has grown from six classes in 2011 to 18 today, and translators offer services in around a dozen languages.

"When we lease out our school buildings, especially for example to private school operators, we continue to maintain those schools at very high levels, so the surrounding community has a valuable asset in their neighbourhood… that provides services to the community," said Radyo.

Cadence lives in Edmonton with her husband and three kids, and is passionate about local history, politics, and current events.

REPURPOSED SCHOOLS

Alex Taylor School (93 St and Jasper Ave). E4C centre since 2001. Adult literacy, hot lunch programs, family counseling services.

Bellevue School (71 St and 115 Ave). Closed in 2003 and sold to the Distinctive Employment Counseling Services of Alberta (DECSA).

Eastwood School (81 St and 120 Ave). Leased to the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and the Nebula Foundation.

McCauley School (95 St and 107 Ave). Leased to the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative.

Parkdale School (85 St and 116 Ave). Leased to Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society.

Sacred Heart School (96 St and 108 Ave). Adult Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), and childcare for children of LINC students.

St. Patrick's School (95A St and 120 Ave). One World…One Centre, ECSD. LINC Program, home economics kitchen, childcare for children of LINC students.

Queen Mary Park School (113 St and 109 Ave). Leased to École À la Découverte, part of the Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord (Francophone School Board).

Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society leases what used to be Parkdale School. | Cadence Bergman

The importance of being an active bystander

Tools to use when witnessing harassment or violence

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

It can be difficult to know what to do if someone is experiencing sexual harassment or violence. Should you intervene or step away from the situation?

Emily Ophus is the community programs manager at the Calgary Sexual Health Centre, and her co-worker Stafford Perry recently gave a workshop at SkirtsAfire on this very topic. Both the Calgary centre and the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton are encouraging people to learn practical tools to apply to bystander intervention.

"A huge role that community members can take is as bystanders—noticing behaviour and doing something about it if they can," Ophus said. She suggested first speaking with the person being targeted to ensure they're comfortable with an intervention and that doing so won't put them in more danger.

"It is important that people only intervene if it is safe for them to do so," Ophus emphasized. "There's a difference between feeling uncomfortable and feeling unsafe."

Discomfort is one of the many barriers to intervention. Most people simply don't know how to go about speaking up. And in spite of a cultural shift going on amongst the general public, many people are unaware of what Ophus calls "the four Ds of bystander intervention."

These practical tools are summed up as "direct, distract, delegate, and delay."

Direct means confronting a behaviour directly. This tactic can help empower the target of the behaviour to leave and the person creating the behaviour to stop.

"Direct intervention can also take the form of asking the targeted person, 'Are you OK, do you need help?', 'Who did you come here with?', or challenging inappropriate jokes and language by stating your discomfort or disapproval," said Ophus.

Or, create a distraction or redirect the focus of the people involved. Ophus suggested using humour (if appropriate) or an excuse to divert the perpetrator's attention.

"This creates an opportunity for the person who is being targeted to leave the situation. Distraction works well in situations of street harassment, such as asking the perpetrator for the time or for directions," said Ophus.

Delegation means asking others (friends, a supervisor, a bouncer, security, or the police) to help. This is especially important if you are alone or concerned about your safety.

If the other tools don't work for the situation, Ophus said not to panic.

"You can also use a delayed response, such as following up and asking if someone is okay after the fact. The important thing is to show others that you care and are there to support them."

She added, "The key to contributing to accountable environments is learning how to intervene in a way that fits your own comfort level and the situation that you are in (and personal safety must always come first)."

Bystanders have tools to use to safely intervene. | Pixabay

Constance's writing and editing career spans more than 40 years. She lives in Parkdale-Cromdale.

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION WORKSHOPS

The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton sace.ab.ca
Calgary Sexual Health Centre calgarygetsconsent.ca or calgarysexualhealth.ca

Eastwood Community League's board members. | Supplied

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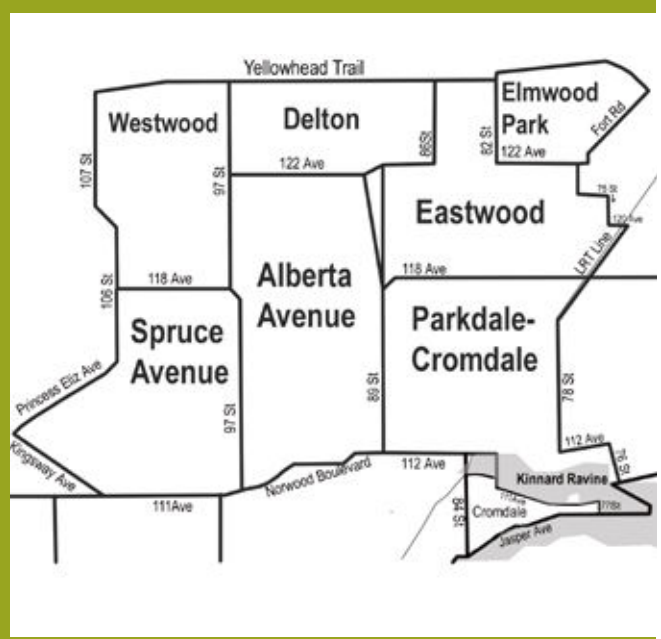

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Local artist makes jewelry for peace of mind

Susan Allebone uses her craft as a form of meditation

BREANN GURNEY

Local jewelry designer Susan Allebone breathes new life into her art and herself with each piece she creates.

"I use the designing and making of jewelry as a 'sanity saver,' with the eventual plan to have my creations available commercially," said Allebone.

Although Allebone dreams of crafting her unique pieces full time, she currently has a demanding job at the Government of Alberta, Ministry of Health. In the meantime, she channels her creativity into her campaigns at work, and continues to create art when she can.

She's also maintained multiple volunteer positions, including chair and president of the Art Mentorship Program of Alberta (AMSA), and as the vice chair of The Rat Creek Press.

"There's a need for more mentorship for people within the arts business," said Allebone. She has business experience to share. When she lived in Yukon, she started and ran her own bakery/deli/café.

She explained she believes a lack of business education in schools wastes untapped artistic potential because success in art requires business knowledge as much as talent. Currently, she is in contact with iHuman to participate in the business mentorship program, focused on youth development within the arts. She has seen how quickly lack of guidance can sour the career of a budding artist on the verge of success and is determined to prevent this type of failure as much as she can.

She began taking silversmithing courses in 1999 and has since expanded into other small metal works. When Allebone works on a piece of jewelry, she extracts materials she needs from other pieces she has found from previously loved jewelry to create stunning original pieces. She gives old jewelry new life and sees herself as adding another chapter to the item's life. From one repurposed piece, she can scatter its life into other creations and make many more stories in a meaningful and environmentally friendly way.

Her purpose in art is not to create a uniform for everyone to wear, but to allow her customers to express themselves and their personality visually.

Sue Allebone (pictured) with some of her jewelry she creates. | Breann Gurney

"Artists are very much underserved," said Allebone.

Jewelry making is also her form of meditation. She stands by the idea that 45 minutes of creating art provides countless benefits to the creator, including stress relief and relaxation. Allebone has found herself completely entranced in her creative space well into the early morning, often forgetting about the problems of the day.

"The idea isn't to be Picasso, it's just for yourself," said Allebone.

She also wears her own jewelry. In fact, everyday, Allebone wears a bracelet she created early on in her career to symbolize where she started and how far she's come personally. The imperfections remind her of her progress and her belief in maintaining a high degree of quality for her future customers.

"I'm going to do it my way because it's going to reflect on me," said Allebone.

Allebone is currently working on expanding her collection of jewelry to prepare for its launch into the Edmonton market within the next year. As for commissions?

"I'd be happy to take them on a limited basis, once my business is up and running," said Allebone.

Breann is a journalism student and intern at Rat Creek Press. She focuses on political issues, multiculturalism, and human rights.

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Local art centre helps level playing field

The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts helps people express themselves

BREANN GURNEY

The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts, at the corner of 118 Avenue and 93 Street, houses a unique collective of artists with developmental disabilities.

"Our collective is coming here to make art and have a good day," said Brenda Christiansen, studio manager.

At the centre, citizens with disabilities have the chance to learn an array of skills, including music, dance, painting, computer animation, clay, drawing, textiles, and screen printing.

The centre opened in 2003, in honour of Nina Haggerty, an Albertan diagnosed with polio.

Haggerty was born in the early 1900s. When she was diagnosed, she was placed in a home for "mental defectives." She lived there for 50 years until the SKILLS Society, an organization supporting individuals with disabilities, helped her live in the community. After leaving the institution, she began to take art classes and discovered unbridled joy in the process.

After she died, SKILLS helped open the centre with the intention of sharing the joy Haggerty felt while making art with others.

"We don't offer lecture-based classes for art," said Rona Fraser, director of fund development for the Nina. Instead, the focus is on self-expression through art.

It's a popular place for its collective and for the public.

The Nina is open 10 am to 2 pm on weekdays to serve its members with a packed schedule, which includes the Rising Sun Theatre group on Mondays, tai chi on Tuesdays, The Alberta Artists with Brain Injury Society on Wednesdays, Crystal Kids on Thursdays, and LGBT members on Fridays.

In addition to the daytime hours, the Nina has Community Art Night from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on Tuesdays and Family Art Night from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on Thursdays.

The size of the collective continues to grow as more people with disabilities discover the Nina. Agencies operating alongside individuals with disabilities usually recommend the program, and the public can purchase memberships.

The Nina runs assorted fundraisers every year to lower the cost of membership, currently $175 per year for one day a week. In co-operation with annual fundraisers, the centre participates in community events. They also have a patron program. For a yearly donation of $500, patrons are assigned an artist and can meet him or her and receive a piece of that artist's work.

"Art can't help but give people a chance to express themselves," said Christiansen.

Over the past 15 years, the program has expanded and created more opportunities for its artists.

One artist had her own exhibition in 2013 which included works in paint, pencil, and pastel. The exhibition had an underwater theme featuring whales, dolphins, fish, and sea monsters. Local media and reporters attended the event. By the end of the exhibition, the artist had sold just about every piece in her show.

"The Nina gives its members a chance to express themselves and create on a level playing field," said Fraser.

Breann is a journalism student and intern at Rat Creek Press. She focuses on political issues, multiculturalism, and human rights.

NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

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The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts has been open since 2003. | Jennifer Parker

A newcomer takes her first steps in Canada

Thanking the people who helped smooth the way

NATALIA ZIRNOV

"The way goes astray. If you run do not fall, if you fell stand up. If you got hurt do not cry, for life is like a striped zebra. When you walk on the dark stripe of misfortune always try to jump to the light stripe of life." - A. Brustein

I am a newcomer. I came to Canada in 2009 from Israel and would like to write about the people who helped me adapt in this country.

For a better life in Canada, learning the English language is essential. Teachers from the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers are helping me. The Mennonite Center for Newcomers is an organization that helps newcomers take their first steps in Canada, learn English, and Canadian laws. The following teachers have helped me achieve my dream: Mrs. Su Croll and Mr. William Shebansky. They are teaching me a high level of English and are helping me gain good communication skills in order to integrate easier into Canadian society. Those teachers have a lot of patience and a willingness to help others.

I have a teaching education. I really like children and would like to work with them. It is very important for me to gain experience working with children in Canada. For me, every child is a world that gives you a new vision. It is an opportunity to be reminded that once we were also children. A child's view of the world gives happiness.

I went to the principal of St. Alphonsus School, Mrs. McDonough, with a petition about volunteering there. The principal understood my situation and offered me an opportunity to volunteer in the kindergarten class with Ms. Blatz, a great teacher. She's worked in the school for 30 years, loves her job, and is a very good person.

I try to accept and learn her working skills, which will help me better understand the methods for approaching and communicating with children in Canada. The students at St. Alphonsus come from all over the world and from a variety of cultures. Thanks to my volunteering experience, I feel needed and able to help. It helps me believe in myself.

My hobbies are listening to music and reading books. In my free time, I also enjoy playing the piano, writing poems on a variety of topics, and listening to classical music.

After finishing my education, I wish to work in my field, and implement my artistic skills wherever I can, especially in my future work with children. I would like to thank all of those people who helped me for their generosity. Seeing all that help provides me with another future goal and that is to help other newcomers make their first steps in Canada just like I was helped.

Natalia is a newcomer to Canada and has a teaching diploma. In the future, she hopes to work with children.

Edmonton is thriving with urban wildlife

Helpful tips to follow when encountering wildlife in the city

MARI SASANO

Kevin Cantelon grew up rambling through the Whitemud and Mill Creek ravines with his best friend, the son of a biologist, and remembers hearing coyotes howling in the distance at his family's farm.

He never imagined that he would be seeing coyotes right outside his house in the city.

"I recently learned that it's only the last 10 or 20 years that they've been moving into cities right across North America," he noted. As a biologist and educator, it's an interesting development that enriches his experience living at the edge of Kinnaird Ravine.

"I spent two years out at Elk Island in '95, '96 on a coyote study. We would put 25 coyotes on radio collars to find out where their home range was, where they were going. In those days, there wasn't any such thing as an urban coyote."

It may be a sign of a healthy environment that so many birds, mammals, and fish are choosing to live within city limits. Cantelon has seen jackrabbits, flying squirrels, porcupines, and coyotes. Once, his neighbour saw a moose on Jasper Avenue. Though rare, people have spotted cougar, lynx, and black bear in other parts of the city, and Spruce Avenue resident Lisa Lunn was surprised late one night by a massive snowy owl on the roof of her car.

"I was pregnant and I had insomnia, so I would get up and I went to the back window by the kitchen sink and what? There was an owl sitting on top of our car. It was striking because it was almost the size of the roof of the car. Watching it, it was pretty impressive."

We are lucky to be so close to nature in this city, said Shawn Beskowiney, park ranger with the City of Edmonton.

"Edmonton is one of the largest urban wildlife interfaces in North America. The river valley is a wildlife corridor, so any animal that is native to Alberta and our ecozone can live here."

Beskowiney explained wildlife sometimes they come out of the more thickly treed areas and right into our neighbourhoods. When they do, they're just seeing an opportunity.

"Wildlife are the same as humans. They go where they can get the things they need to survive: food, shelter, habitat. A little neighbourhood park might attract rabbits, so coyotes would see that and think, 'oh my goodness, there's my food'. And they take advantage of what we provide. They're a very intelligent and generalist species."

While the odd jackrabbit or woodpecker might be a fun sighting, a predator like a coyote might be a little more alarming. A few years ago, Lunn started seeing coyotes, and even had one camping out under her front step. While she has never felt threatened by the large canines, she is careful about letting her elderly cat and small dog out, and her neighbours have an informal network looking out for each other's small pets.

"I'm texting neighbours. A lot of pet owners around here let each other know when we see them. It's in community league letters, and a neighbour put a letter in our mailbox, and some people have reported a pair together."

She noted that coyotes, magpies, and ravens have shown up on garbage day, which is why she tries to take the trash out in the morning of garbage pickup day rather than leave it overnight.

This is one important thing we can do to reduce the chances of a negative wildlife encounter. With the exception of bird feeders, don't leave food or garbage out. According to Beskowiney, "Fed wildlife is dead wildlife. If they get desensitized and we give it a good meal, it's going to go to the next person and expect food, and that could lead to a negative interaction if they learn to approach humans."

He said it's unlikely that coyotes will attack a human, but it's our job to make sure they don't get too comfortable in our spaces.

"The number one thing is to keep wildlife wild. If you see something, check it out, but encourage it to get back to where it's from and make sure they understand that humans are not a source of safety or food."

Generally they avoid intervening unless it is a potential danger, but do call 311 for a park ranger if you have trouble. For injured birds, contact Wild North or the Birds of Prey Centre for advice. However, the city generally can't supply medical care for most wild animals.

"Injured wildlife can react negatively, so it's important not to touch them even if it's a baby bird or rabbit that seems like they've been left or injured. They're very sensitive to stress and they end up dying. We strongly discourage it," he explained. "With spring coming up, it's important to keep it in the forefront and encourage healthy relationships of mutual respect, and stay out of each other's way."

Mari is a writer and civil servant.

MORE INFORMATION

Friends of the Kinnaird Ravine Facebook page facebook.com/groups/257889723765/

Edmonton Urban Coyotes: edmontonurbancoyotes.ca/

Wild North: wildnorth.ca
Alberta Society for Injured Birds of Prey: raptorshelter.org/

Keep an eye out for woodpeckers, pictured here. | Kevin Cantelon

Kevin Cantelon, a biologist and educator, has seen coyotes in Sheriff Robertson Park near Kinnaird Ravine. | Kevin Cantelon

COMMUNITY BOARD

AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO HAND & POWER TOOLS

If you're a do-it-yourselfer, enjoy making things, or want to connect with a community of builders, check out the Edmonton Tool Library: edmontontoollibrary.ca.

ARTS ON THE AVE AGM

Monday, May 14, 7 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse (9351 118 Ave). Purchase membership 30 days prior to vote or join: artsontheave.org. Bob Layton from 630 CHED is a special guest.

FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Want to do something to get to know your neighbours? Beautify or add vibrancy to your neighbourhood? Receive up to $250 for projects that help promote safer, healthier and better neighbourhoods. Contact Judy.allan@edmonton.ca about the Small Spark Fund.

ALBERTA AVENUE AGM

The community league's annual general meeting is Tuesday, April 24 at 7 pm. Get info on street rehabilitation and on our summer Neighbour Connect project. Or join the board!

Community Events

GOBfest
April 13-15, 2018

Spruce Avenue Annual Garage Sale
May 4 & 5

Bloomin' Garden Show & Art Sale
May 12, 2018

The Carrot Ultimate Garage Sale
May 12, 2018

Thousand Faces
May 25-27, 2018

Heart of the City
June 2 & 3, 2018

Pure Speculation
June 15 & 16, 2018

Rubber Boots & Bow Tie Garden Party
June 23, 2018

FREE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

ESL & LANGUAGE

NEHIYAWE: CREE LANGUAGE LEARNING
Conversation circle by Canadian Native Friendship Centre. Mondays, 6-8 pm at Highlands Library.

PRACTICE ENGLISH
Conversation circle, Mondays, 7-8 pm at Sprucewood Library.

GLOBAL VOICES CHOIR
An informal way to practice English. Song books and light lunch provided. Thursdays, noon-1 pm at Mennonite Centre (no classes in August). More: Suzanne 780.423.9682.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CIRCLE
Fridays, 10:30-11:30 am at Highlands Library. Part of Catholic Social Services LACE program. More: 780-424-3545.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA (LINC)
More: Edmonton Mennonite Centre 780.424.7709 or info@emcn.ab.ca.

FOOD & SUPPORT

EDMONTON URBAN NATIVE MINISTRY
Drop-in Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 10:30 am and 3 pm for social, spiritual, and practical support, including computer access. Lunch Tuesdays and Fridays, noon-1:30 pm. Small food hamper every second Thursday. Meal provided after 4 pm Sunday service.

BENT ARROW TRADITIONAL HEALING SOCIETY
Various programs and services, including a soup & bannock lunch once a month. 11648 85 Street. 780.481.3451. www.bentarrow.ca.

PRAYERWORKS COMMUNITY
Hot meals & warm friendship at St.Faith's/St.Stephen's Anglican Church hall. Thurs: serving 11 am-1 pm; open 10 am-1:30 pm. Fri: serving 5-6 pm; open 3:30-7 pm. Sat: serving 8:30-9:30 am; open 8-10 am. More: 780.477.5931.

GLOBAL COOKING
Cook and eat ethnic food together. Tuesdays, 11 am-2 pm at Alberta Avenue kitchen. Run by Mennonite Centre from Oct to mid May. More: 780.423.9691.

COLLECTIVE KITCHENS
Cook with friends, try new recipes, help your food budget.
St. Faith/St. Stephen: 2nd Tuesday,1-3:30 pm. Call ahead. Trish: 780.464.5444.
Parkdale hall: Last Sunday of the mnth, 1-4 pm. Check parkdalecromdale.org for details.
Alberta Avenue: Sunday, 1-4 pm. Check albertaave.org for details.

PARENTS & PRE-SCHOOLERS

BABES IN ARMS
A wonderful casual parent meetup. Fridays, 10 am-noon at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

SING, SIGN, LAUGH & LEARN
Mondays and Tuesdays, 10:30-11:15 am at Sprucewood Library. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:15 am at Highlands Library. More: 780.496.7099.

BABY LAPTIME
Stories, songs, books, rhymes, & finger play for babies up to 12 months. Tuesdays, 10:15-10:45 am at Highlands Library.

FAMILY STORYTIME
Share stories, songs, and games. Wednesdays, 10:30-11 am at Sprucewood Library.

NORWOOD CHILD & FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE
Parent & family education, early childhood education, community events. 9516 114 Avenue. 780.471.3737. www.norwoodcentre.com.

CHILDREN

LEGO AT THE LIBRARY
Design and build a lego creation. Ages 6-12. Saturdays, 3-4 pm at Highlands Library.

GIRL GUIDES
Meetings on Mondays from September to June at St. Andrew's. More: 39thedmontonguiding@gmail.com or 1.800.565.8111 (answered locally).

YOUTH

EVIL GENIUS CLUB
Robot battles, Arduino hacks, DIY music, art, Minecraft, photography, 3-D design & printing are just the beginning. Fridays, 4-5 pm at Highlands Library.

TEEN LOUNGE
Play video games, make a DIY project, or just hang out. Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 pm at Sprucewood Library.

GLOBAL GIRLS
Build new relationships, develop self-confidence, and identify pathways to achieve goals. Every other Thursday, 3:15-5:30 pm at the Mennonite Centre. Drop-in. More: 780.423.9691.

TEEN LOUNGE JR.
Play video games, make a DIY project, meet friends. Thursdays, 3:30-5 pm at Sprucewood Library and 3:30-4:30 pm at Highlands Library.

AIR CADET SQUADRON
Youth program for ages 12-18. Aviation, drill, deportment, music, marksmanship, survival, physical fitness. Thursdays, 6:30-9:15 pm Sept to June. www.570squadron.com.

ADULTS

COFFEE WITH COPS
Join a roundtable conversation with EPS. First Tuesday of the month, 10-11 am at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

AVENUE BOOK CLUB
Meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse. More: Lorraine 780.934.3209.

YOGA CLASS
Focus on senses , breathing techniques, and postures that build strength and flexibility. Thursdays, 7-7:50 pm at Parkdale-Cromdale hall.

MEDITATION INTRO CLASS
Explore mental and physical exercises in order to relax and enjoy stillness more easily. Thursdays, 7-7:50 pm at Parkdale-Cromdale hall.

GUIDED MEDITATION SITS
Perfect for beginners. Saturdays, 7 pm. All welcome, no charge. Land of Compassion Buddha Temple. 9352 106A Ave. 780.862.7392.

COFFEE FRIENDSHIP CLUB
Have coffee with individuals who are single, divorced, or widowed and looking to meet new people in the area. Wednesdays, 1-2 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

COMMUNITY ART NIGHT
Free art workshop for adults. Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm at The Nina. Register/info: 780.474.7611.

WELLBRIETY SUPPORT GROUP
Mondays, 7-9 pm at Canadian Native Friendship Centre, upstairs room #200.

SENIORS

CENTRAL LIONS SENIORS ASSOCIATION
Programs, clubs, drop-in activities, fitness centre. 11113 113 St. 780.496.7369. www.centrallions.org.

NORWOOD LEGION SENIORS GROUP
Cribbage, Wednesdays at 1 pm at NorwoodLegion.ca.

SENIORS BREAKFAST & SOCIAL (55+)
Join us for breakfast, visit, or play cards or billiards. Wednesdays, 11:30 am-12:45 pm (10:30-11:45 am during the summer) at Crystal Kids.

FAMILIES

DENE DRUMMING
Wednesdays, 1-3 pm at Canadian Native Friendship Centre, upstairs room #200.

TRADITIONAL ARTS & CRAFTS
For ages 12+. Wednesdays, 5-7 pm at Canadian Native Friendship Centre, upstairs room #200.

POP-UP MAKERSPACE
Makey Makey hack, DIY music, art, 3-D design, and more. First Wednesday of the month from 6:30-7:30 pm at Highlands Library.

HIP HOP SHOWCASE
Listen to sick beats and step up on our open stage for hip hop artists, rappers, spoken word, and poets. Rated PG. Third Wednesday, 7-9 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

TABLE TOP GAMES NIGHT
Choose from over 20 board games and let fun fill your table. Tables are free! Last Tuesday of the month from 6-9 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

FAMILY ART NIGHT
A variety of free art activities for school age children accompanied by adults. Thursdays, 6:30-8 pm at The Nina.

MUSIC LESSONS BY CREART
Free group music lessons Saturdays at Parkdale-Cromdale hall from 10 am-noon. More: creartedmonton@gmail.com or 587.336.5480.

FREE COMMUNITY REC ACCESS
At Commonwealth Stadium on Saturdays from 5-7 pm and Sundays from 1-3 pm. Saturdays: Alberta Ave, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Spruce Ave, Westwood. Sundays: Alberta Ave, Delton, Parkdale-Cromdale.

OPEN MIC NIGHT
Open to performers of all stages and ages! Sip a latte and enjoy original music, poetry, comedy, and more at The Carrot's uniquely warm and personal open mic night. Saturdays, 6-10 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

LOCATIONS

Bent Arrow	11648 85 St
Bethel Gospel	11461 95 St
Cnd Native Friendship	11728 95 St
Community Leagues - see page 12	
Crystal Kids	8715 118 Ave
Highlands Library	6710 118 Ave
Mennonite Centre	11713 82 St
Norwood Family Centre	9516 114 Ave
Norwood Legion	11150 82 St
Sprucewood Library	11555 95 St
St. Faith/St.Stephen Church	11725 93 St
St. Andrew's Church	8715 118 Ave
The Carrot Coffeehouse	9351 118 Ave
The Nina	9225 118 Ave

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St. Stephen: 780.422.3240
Sunday Worship:
8:30 am - Low Mass
9:00 am - Morning Prayer
9:30 am - High Mass
7:00 pm - Evensong

St. Faith: 780.477.5931
Sunday Worship:
9:00 am Friday Prayer

11:00 am Sunday Worship
1st Sunday Common
2nd Sunday Trad. Anglican
3rd Sunday Aboriginal Form
4th Sunday Trad. Anglican

AVENUE VINEYARD CHURCH

A friendly, informal, non-judgmental and safe place to grow spiritually. Traditional Christian values in a non-traditional way.
8718 118 Avenue
(Crystal Kids Building)
avenuevineyard.com
Sundays at 10:30 am

AVENUE CHURCH

A community to belong in...a community to serve with.

11335 85 Street
(Parkdale Hall)
avenuechurch.ca

Sundays
coffee fellowship - 9:30am
10:00 am Service

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL

A Bible-based, multi-ethnic fellowship.
11461 95 Street
780.477.3341

Sunday Meetings:
9:30 am - Lord's Supper
11:00 am - Family Bible Hour

NORWOOD WESLEYAN CHURCH

Meeting needs with love and compassion
11306 91 St
10:00 am Sunday School
11:00 am Sunday Service

EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCH

'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you…Therefore encourage one another and build each other up' Eph. 4:32, 1 Th. 5:11a
12317-82 St.
780.474.4830

Sunday School 10:00 am
Sunday Worship 11:00 am
Wed. Study/Prayer 6:30 pm

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8715 118 Avenue
780-477-8677

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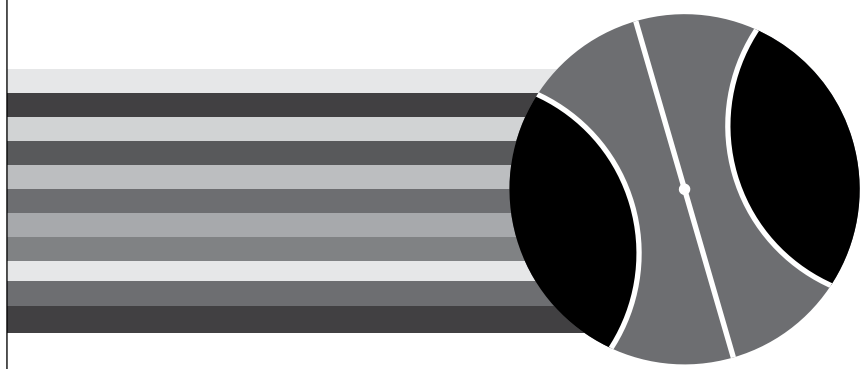
www.revreader.blogspot.ca



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