



# RAT CREEK PRESS

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## Medical centre focused on community

New clinic and pharmacy to be a part of community renewal



Norwood Medical Centre celebrated its grand opening on Feb. 28. | IntEx Imaging

### VICTORIA STEVENS

Norwood Medical Centre, located in McCauley, had its grand opening on Feb. 28.

The opening was well attended and featured remarks by local politicians, including Coun. Scott McKeen, NDP MLA Janis Irwin, the architects, and the construction company. The infill development is a partnership between Hibco Construction, AVID Architecture, and IDEA (Infill Development in Edmonton Association) in partnership with the McCauley and Norwood communities.

“When I first started to see construction here, I was very excited,” says Irwin, who lives only a few blocks away from the new medical centre.

The clinic occupies the space where a mechanic shop used to be, the owners of which were eager to sell. The design and construction of the clinic involved plenty of col-

laboration and planning. It was clear the location needed to be a strong presence on 95 Street and serve as a safe and active focal point for the community. Creating walkable streets and improving safety in the area were priorities for the project.

The building is a unique and vibrant design that both stands out and complements the existing Norwood and McCauley architecture. The façade features geometric designs that portray rocky mountains, flowing blue streams, and deep valleys, all while allowing the interior to be brightly lit with natural light. Inspiration was drawn from the art of local artists Curtis Doyle and Jason Carter, who both create bright, colourful, geometric art. These vibrant colours, which include LED lights at night, will brighten up the street on gloomy winter days and encourage community members to stop in to say hello. The design includes a second entrance and the ability to add a

second floor in the future, as well as consideration given to the back alley.

“The challenge,” says Lindsay Farr, architecture intern with AVID Architecture, “Was how to put in all these windows while still allowing for privacy of clients in the clinic.”

The building design truly lends itself to the welcoming nature of the centre where the focus is on community. In fact, their motto is “doctors who care about community” and it’s featured prominently on their website.

The clinic offers a full range of medical services, including specialties like pediatric care, obstetrics, and gynecology for individuals needing care relating to fertility or women’s health, and prenatal and postnatal care. There is a walk-in clinic as well as a full staff of family physicians accepting new patients. Massage therapy is offered on site and the centre includes a full service pharmacy.

Norwood Medical Centre hopes

to become a comfortable, welcoming part of the community while striving to serve the unique needs of the area with compassion and kindness.

“Revitalization and renewal played a really big part in this,” Farr says.

The medical centre is located at 11051 95 St and is open 9 am - 7 pm Monday to Friday and 9 am to 5 pm Saturday and Sunday for walk-ins and appointments. Appointments can be booked online, by phone, or by walking in.

*Victoria is an entrepreneur, roller derby player, and basset hound lover living in the Delton area.*

**NORWOOD MEDICAL CENTRE**  
11051 95 St  
780.669.9229  
norwoodmedical.ca

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## We are all in this together.

While physical distancing, we can still connect & support as neighbours.

“Good Neighbours by Lorraine Shulba  
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# How coronavirus has changed our lives

Some advice on staying healthy during this pandemic

## STEPHEN STRAND

The world has changed in the span of a few months. The outbreak of coronavirus started at the end of December in Wuhan, China, the epicentre of the pandemic. On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a pandemic. Numbers continue to rise daily as the virus spreads and countries fight to contain it.

According to WHO, a pandemic is defined as “the worldwide spread of a new disease.” An outbreak refers to an increased number of cases of a disease in a community, and an epidemic is a sudden outbreak of a disease in a geographic region.

Pandemics have always been a part of human history, with one of the first plagues being recorded in 165 A.D. The Black Death (Bubonic Plague) during the Middle Ages was particularly deadly, ravaging Europe and killing 200 million people. The Spanish Flu (1918) killed upwards of 50 million people, while the two most recent pandemics were the Swine Flu (2009), with more than 57,500

deaths, and HIV/Aids (ongoing), with about 35 million deaths since the 1980s.

But with each pandemic, the world seems to come together to fight it. So much has been learned each time, such as how to properly quarantine/self-isolate, practice proper hygiene, utilize proper protective equipment (such as gloves, masks, and gowns), develop and use effective vaccines/medication, and ways to test for diseases. There is also now a unified World Health Organization (WHO) that helps to achieve the highest sustainable level of health for all people. They work together with governments, organizations, academic institutions, foundations, and agencies to help the public. WHO also offers advice for people on how to remain healthy and what to do if they begin to show symptoms.

According to WHO, COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the recently discovered coronavirus. It was an unknown disease before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China. Symptoms include fever, tiredness, dry cough, and shortness of breath, with some patients experiencing

nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, and body aches. About one in six people infected will become seriously ill and develop difficulty breathing and pneumonia. Anyone with underlying medical problems is more likely to develop serious illness.

WHO warns that some people become infected but do not develop symptoms (asymptomatic). Knowing that some people are asymptomatic, it is best to practice proper hygiene, self-isolate when possible, and practice social distancing (cancelling events, working remotely, or staying at least six feet away from people). COVID-19 is spread through small droplets from the nose or the mouth, which are spread when an infected person coughs or exhales. The virus may also survive on surfaces for as long as several days. It is transferred to others when they touch the surface and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. So, be sure to wipe down surfaces with disinfectant.

It is also essential to practice proper hygiene. This includes washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

(sing *Happy Birthday* twice, or sing the chorus of Dolly Parton’s *Jolene* for reference) or rub them with an alcohol-based sanitizer.

Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue (dispose of tissue immediately afterwards), avoid touching your face, stay home if you’re feeling unwell or are showing symptoms, and avoid large gatherings and known COVID-19 hot spots. It helps to stop the spread of infection.

Both Alberta Health and WHO warn that masks are helpful, but may create a false sense of security. For those who do not show any symptoms or are not taking care of someone currently infected with COVID-19, it is not recommended to wear a mask. According to the WHO website, there is a worldwide shortage of masks and they urge people to use them wisely. For those infected, wear a mask in order to help contain the spread of infection.

The Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton have been proactive in keeping people aware of the situation and limiting the spread of infection.

It is good to have 14 days’

worth of supplies in case you are infected and need to quarantine. That said, do not hoard supplies. Others also need access to the same supplies and depriving others of the necessities can cause their situation to worsen.

As of now, there is no vaccine for COVID-19, though WHO is helping to coordinate efforts to develop vaccines and medicines.

For more information, visit: [alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](http://alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx) [albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx](http://albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx) [worldometers.info/coronavirus/#repro](http://worldometers.info/coronavirus/#repro) [who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses?fbclid=IwAR2RCWQPMG1RjzfdJOHnX7NMDysDaB6kr7VMJ8R17JLVBVxqsraac-9Q4NU](http://who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses?fbclid=IwAR2RCWQPMG1RjzfdJOHnX7NMDysDaB6kr7VMJ8R17JLVBVxqsraac-9Q4NU) <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html>

*Stephen works in broadcasting and writes for fun. He can be seen walking through the neighbourhood.*



COVID-19 has quickly swept the globe. | Pixabay

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### ABOUT US

We are a non-profit community newspaper serving Alberta Avenue, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue, and Westwood. Published on Treaty 6 Territory. The opinions expressed in the paper are those of the people named as authors of the articles and do not necessarily reflect those of the board or staff.

### GOALS

Build Community, Encourage Communication, Increase Capacity.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joe Wong, Mariam Masud, Muriel Wright, Steven Townsend, Virginia Potkins, Sarah Dotimas, George Crawford and Sean MacQueen. The board may be contacted at [board@ratcreek.org](mailto:board@ratcreek.org).

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### CONTRIBUTORS

Our writers vary from trained journalists to community residents with varying backgrounds. We strive to be a place where individuals can learn new skills and acquire experience—whether in writing, editing, photography, or illustration. We welcome letters, unsolicited submissions, and story ideas.

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### DELIVERY

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# Join Ab Avenue Community League's board

Three executive positions available at April's Annual General Meeting

## TALEA MEDYNSKI

Come April 28, Alberta Avenue residents have the opportunity to join the Alberta Avenue Community League board in some key positions.

"A little under half of our board will be open in April," says Brendan Van Alstine, league president.

Three executive positions will be vacant. Van Alstine will be leaving his position, Virginia Potkins will be resigning from the role of vice-president, and Melanie Anderson is resigning as development director. There are also some director-at-large positions available.

"The big one is my job," says Van Alstine. "It's better suited to someone with experience."

The president provides leadership to a board, supports and promotes the league, and chairs the meetings. Although it's best if someone with experience on a board takes on this role, the City of Edmonton and The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) have resources available should board members need the guidance.

Van Alstine joined the board in 2009. "I'm a big believer that a decade with any organization

is a big long time." He adds that although he will no longer be on the board, he's still in the neighbourhood. "I'm going to be around to provide support."

As for the vice president:

the league's program director and spearheaded plenty of fun programming. The term of vice-president is one year. "The treasurer would be willing to take on the role of vice-presi-

nesses, homes, or garage suites. "She was really good. She had to step down for personal reasons." This role is a two-year term.

Van Alstine encourages

of opportunities as directors-at-large to participate and contribute.

"If there's something that really interests you, we could develop a portfolio based on interests," says Van Alstine. Some interests could be communications, assistance with writing grants, and so on.

Volunteering for a board can be a great experience. "It's a great way to get involved. It gives you a stronger voice." It's especially useful if you're interested in governance, learning how things are run, and participating or planning league activities.

"I'm happy to chat with people if they're interested," says Van Alstine. Email [president@albertaave.org](mailto:president@albertaave.org).

Or go to <https://timecounts.org/alberta-avenue/assignments/4455> to apply.

Alberta Avenue Community League's AGM is scheduled for April 28 at 7 pm. The board is looking at virtual meeting options given the current situation with COVID-19.



Brendan Van Alstine, pictured at the front, speaks during a past Alberta Avenue Community League AGM. | Karen Mykietka

"The role is to back up the president. Unfortunately with Virginia, we did lose quite the package. Because of some changes in her life, she had to step back." Potkins was also

dent if there's someone who has finance experience."

In Anderson's role as development director, she looked at development-related issues such as permit applications for busi-

nesses, homes, or garage suites. "She was really good. She had to step down for personal reasons." This role is a two-year term. Van Alstine encourages anyone who lives in the geographic boundaries of Alberta Avenue to come to the AGM and run for the board. While the three executive positions are the main roles, there are plenty

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

# Delton hall undergoing needed renovations

Renovations expected to be finished in September

## TALEA MEDYNSKI

The hall in Delton Community League is undergoing much-needed renovations after the roof leaked last year.

"We had a huge issue with our roof," says Farid Foroud, league president. He explains that constant ice damming and heat loss during the winter resulted in shingle damage and a leak during the summer. "Last summer, during emergency

conditions, we had to put a new roof on the outside."

Although the roof is now metal on the outside, Farid explains workers had to remove the ceiling from the inside to do more work on insulation.

"We had to make sure there wasn't any mould," says Foroud.

Although renovations won't be extensive, they will be welcome. "We wanted to do more and bring the hall up to date. It hasn't been renovated since

the '80s."

The hall will be painted with modern colours, lighting will be added, and something will likely be done to update the flooring.

"The hall will look newer," says Foroud. "There'll be a bit of a visual update. It'll at least look like this decade."

The hall has been closed since January and will remain closed until May or June at the earliest, although Foroud says it will most likely open again in

September.

The league was able to secure a matching grant to cover the renovations. Some work, like demolition, can be done by volunteers. Work requiring professional help, like electrical, will require hiring tradespeople.

Delton's hall is used mainly for local community events, like Mother's Day or Father's Day, and they don't use it as often as other leagues for rentals. Any hall rental requests will be forwarded to other leagues.

As for community activities normally held there, Foroud says, "We have to think of other alternatives or just not offer it this year. Our rink shack was open throughout the winter [for events]."

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

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# At Home in Highlands helps people in recovery

Local initiative helps people reach independent living

**STEPHEN STRAND**

The world can feel lonely and scary, and sometimes you may not know who to turn to or where to go for help. But happily, no one is truly alone in the world. Luckily, for those recovering from addiction, residents in the Highlands community have opened their arms and helped them feel welcome.

“A group of Highlands neighbours started At Home in Highlands (formerly YIMBY) in 2015 in response to the Syrian refugee crisis,” says Tim Senger, a member of the Highlands community involved with the initiative. “Since then, focus has shifted to welcoming men and women in recovery from addiction into the neighbourhood through our partnership with Recovery Acres, a 34-bed residential recovery centre located in Highlands.”

Participants have to be sober for one to two years before accessing this initiative.

“We work closely with the Community Transition and Housing Coordinator at Recovery Acres to identify men and women who are well-suited to taking the next step into independent living in Highlands,” says Senger.

Those who work with the initiative also help make introductions to potential landlords and explore tenancy possibilities.

At Home in Highlands also helps create social connections as participants transition to independent living in the community. Each month, neighbours new to the initiative are

and more people learn about the initiative, we hear about and meet landlords of rental suites that may be appropriate housing for those we welcome.”

It is all about helping to build

challenging life circumstances often relies on stable housing and being connected with the community. According to the initiative overview, “At Home in Highlands works to provide

bourhood.

Not only does At Home in Highlands help connect tenants with landlords and organize potluck dinners, they also offer connections to the community through invitations to either attend or participate in local events and groups. They also connect those in need with helpful services and explore the possibility of employing residents with light work in the neighbourhood. All of this benefits the new neighbours through stable housing, regular connections with neighbours, a sense of belonging, local support and services, and opportunities to contribute to the neighbourhood.

But the new neighbours are not the only ones to benefit. “We are hopeful that At Home in Highlands will become a way of life in Highlands rather than a formal initiative. Healthy connection in a neighbourhood, especially around a common cause, builds resiliency and ultimately enriches the entire neighbourhood,” explains Senger.

For more information, email: [athomeinhighlands@gmail.com](mailto:athomeinhighlands@gmail.com).

*Stephen works in broadcasting and writes for fun. He can be seen walking through the neighbourhood.*



At Home in Highlands helps create social connections for people in recovery. | Pixabay

invited to the potluck meetings.

“Monthly potluck dinner meetings offer opportunities for neighbours to connect and meet men and women in recovery, all with a keen eye on opportunities to welcome them, house them, and connect them into the community,” explains Senger. “We appreciate their critique and ideas, and as more

a community. According to the initiative’s overview, their vision is: “A neighbourhood that thrives, grows stronger and becomes more inclusive, diverse and resilient because we welcome, engage with and support individuals who are overcoming and emerging out of challenging life circumstances.”

Sustained recovery from

both and believes that all people are intrinsically valuable with gifts, skills, and abilities to offer a community.”

Senger adds, “We also work in the community to raise awareness of Recovery Acres and, in turn, reduce the stigma of addiction and recovery.” This in turn will help build a sense of belonging in the neigh-

# Local leagues used City grant for residents

Snow removal program helped those who needed it most this winter

**KATE WILSON**

“When you can’t shovel snow off your sidewalk due to illness and see people having to use it when it isn’t cleared of snow, it can be a little frustrating,” says Amber Ziegler, a resident of Eastwood.

She’s on medication for asthma and her daughter is in a wheelchair. Last year she tried her best, but found she had trouble breathing after shovelling snow. So a new City grant offered to community leagues this past winter to help citizens with their snow removal has been a blessing. Through the program, Ziegler’s wheelchair ramp and the path leading to her car has been kept clear. Her street frontage sidewalk is no longer packed with ice and snow.

“They did a fantastic job,” Ziegler says of the two-man crew who cleared her walkway and sidewalk through the end of March.

The \$1,500 grant is used in whatever way each community league feels best. Four leagues in the *Rat Creek Press* area participated this winter, each offering free snow removal to those who need it the most, such as seniors and people with illness or dis-

ability.

Parkdale-Cromdale gave employment to a local contractor and also partnered with the North Edmonton Seniors Association through their home support program.

“We saw it as a good opportunity to support local businesses and offer some much-needed support to our community,”

and sees neighbouring seniors shovelling snow. The program makes sense, considering the City expects every resident to take care of their piece of sidewalk frontage.

“The program has helped me tremendously,” she said. “I think it should be part of the community. Most of us are seniors on this block.”

Eastwood resident Emma Gotowik, 84 years old, got the service thanks to a phone call made by her daughter, Inga Savard.

“My brother, who lives with my mom, has health problems. I help out when I can, but some of these back-breaking things, I can’t do them anymore,” explains Savard. “It has been a

continue, we’re on very limited income,” says Sheila. “As soon as I read the flier to my husband, he said we need to call about it.”

As many as 60 people in the four communities have benefited from the program this past winter.

At Alberta Avenue, Margaret Larsen, board director, says they weren’t sure what the response would be from seniors, single-parent households, and people with mobility limitations.

“The people who applied were very much in need of the service. One person told me he had already spent \$500 this winter,” says Larsen. “I hope the City will continue offering the grant.”

Andrew Jabs, program manager with Capital City Clean Up which is overseeing the program, says the City will be assessing its success for possible continuation.



Cory Phelan of Hire Good works on the streetfront sidewalk of an Eastwood resident who received free snow removal this winter. | Kate Wilson

says Kevin Wong, community league president.

Mary Hajar, a 74-year-old resident of Parkdale who recently lost her husband, was shovelling on her own. She suffers from rheumatoid arthritis

Elmwood Park and Eastwood also organized free snow removal. Eastwood Community League contracted snow clearing from the Hire Good program at Boyle Street Community Services.

godsend.”

Allan and Sheila Cowdell, also seniors in Eastwood, were thrilled when the crew not only cleared snow but also took their garbage to the garage door.

“We would love to see it

*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 Eastwood.*

# Give your input for a community hub

Look at design and program concepts planned for McCauley

MARK HOLMGREN

The McCauley community and the Edmonton Community Development Company (CDC) invite you to weigh in on a major development on 95 Street on either side of 106 A Avenue. A resident-led design team has identified three design/program concepts and are seeking your input and ideas about which concept is preferred. Participate online at [edmontoncdc.org/projects/paskin](http://edmontoncdc.org/projects/paskin).

The three options include: a food emporium, a makers' space, and a hardware store. We are also exploring whether we should add housing on top of these developments. Community input is appreciated. The link identified above includes design concept sketches and a description of each option. The overall goal is to contribute to the development of a commercial zone on 95 Street.

**“The three options include: a food emporium, a makers' space, and a hardware store. We are also exploring whether we should add housing on top of these developments.”**

According to Karen Gingras, Edmonton CDC's director of neighbourhood development, “Now that we have some concepts, we are at the important step of finding out which of these ideas is most likely to fit and succeed in the neighbourhood.”

Mark Holmgren, executive director, adds, “We invite all readers of *Rat Creek Press* to take this important survey and to share it with anyone they know who has a stake in the future of downtown Edmonton.”

The Edmonton CDC is a non-profit community development company operating primarily in urban core neighbourhoods to work with residents, local businesses, and other stakeholders on initiatives that strengthen social and economic life and that reflect their interests and ideas about how to do that.

## WHAT SHOULD BE BUILT HERE?

a hardware store?



a food emporium?



a makers' space?



The Paskin site at 106 Avenue and 95 Street is an area of great potential in one of Edmonton's oldest neighbourhoods. The Edmonton Community Development Company wants to hear your thoughts on the best possible use of the property.

Working with a resident-led McCauley Concept Design Team, we have identified three development concepts. If you have ten minutes, please take our survey to tell us what sort of business is most likely to fit, succeed, and enhance the lives of future visitors.

TAKE THE SURVEY TODAY AT:

[EDMONTONCDC.ORG/PROJECTS/PASKIN](http://EDMONTONCDC.ORG/PROJECTS/PASKIN)



**EDMONTON CDC**  
People First Community Development

# New reporting tool for problem properties

Tool may help make a case to help authorities to take effective action

TEKLA LUCHENSKI

For some, it is difficult to imagine people continuing to cause problems during this pandemic. Nevertheless, it is still happening and if you live near a problem property, you might be glad to learn that the City of Edmonton has launched a new tool.

The tool is an online complaint form. It was launched early this year as part of a response to the long-term issue of problem properties, and citizen complaints about the time (literally over a decade) it is taking Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and the City to act effectively.

An important feature of the tool is that it is completely confidential. The Problem Properties of Edmonton web page states that, “The identity of the person or persons making the complaint (the reporter) is entirely confidential. The reporter will not be involved in any investigative or court proceedings that may result from the complaint.” Concerned citizens

need not worry about further problems arising directly from their filing complaints with the City.

Rebecca Lippiatt is a member of the Alberta Ave Housing Collective. She says, “I encour-

this tool will allow us to tell a story about these properties and have it officially recorded.”

Lippiatt says that calls to 311 have been ineffective for many years. She further alleges that, “To date, neither the EPS

they have called several times to report problems in their neighbourhood and that EPS operators allegedly say there are no records of previous complaints.

Lippiatt and anonymous residents are optimistic that the

bit hard because during the winter, things get quiet. They are less overt. I haven't used [the online tool] because I can't see what's going on in the back of the [problem] house. When the summer comes, if we can actually be more social, people will see more activity.”

With warmer weather, concerned residents talk more to each other. They also see more activity at problem properties. The anonymous resident says, “I think there needs to be more education about this service.” Better promotion will encourage people to use the new tool to create data about problem properties.

City staff stated that they were unavailable for comment about the online tool in time for publication because they are overwhelmed dealing with the current COVID-19 crisis.



Use the City's new online tool to report problem properties. | Pixabay

age people to use the tool as much as they can, because up until now there has been no tracking of complaints. I believe

nor the City are keeping any records of complaints against properties.” One anonymous resident concurs, saying that

City's new online tool can be helpful. At this point, though, it is too early to tell. An anonymous resident says, “It's a little

*Tekla is a freelance writer living in Parkdale.*

## OPINION

# Poverty in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic

Hoarding essential food and household items harms low-income people

**VICTORIA STEVENS**

Imagine bare shelves in normally fully-stocked grocery stores, all the basics gone. Panicked people furtively searching for the household essentials, throwing multiple items in their carts as they hurry to the checkout. People fighting over the last package of toilet paper. Amidst all the activity, one person stands staring at an empty shelf, barely holding back tears, unsure how they are going to feed their kids for the week if the essentials they budgeted for are gone.

With the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping the globe, the possibility of needing to quarantine for 14 days, and the possibility of all but essential services being closed, people have been hoarding everyday essentials. Toilet paper was the first commodity in high demand, with

stores struggling to maintain stock levels. Then hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes became the sought-after item, along with essentials like rice, meat, and even eggs becoming scarce on some shelves. Shoppers were scared and buying to ensure that they and their families would survive. Unfortunately, some despicable people were buying truckloads of supplies with the intent to resell for a much higher price as availability diminished. Whether stocking up to supply your family or trying to profit from a crisis, the effect is the same on low-income people: they are unable to find the bare basics.

The majority of low-income earners, and those with fixed incomes such as those on AISH, have a very tight budget for food, medication, and household items like toilet paper. They shop when they get paid. They don't have the extra money to

shop mid-pay cycle, nor do they have the funds to buy the more expensive, premium toilet paper when the low-cost version has been bought out. They budget for everything, often down to the penny. They only purchase what they need until the next payday. Having to spend three dollars more on one item, or to wait a few more days requires a sacrifice somewhere else in the budget that may include food or medication.

It may appear that a solution would be to simply cut back on the amount of food, toilet paper, or soap someone is using, but those on a low income are already cutting back to save money. They often struggle to ensure they get proper nutrition. Roughly 110,000 households in Alberta are forced to compromise on food quality, eat less food than their body needs, or go a day without food, according to "The Affordability

of Healthy Eating in Alberta: 2015". Over time, this can lead to a myriad of physical and mental health-related issues, even if someone has only experienced food scarcity at a marginal level. These individuals experience higher rates of illness and are three times more likely to suffer from multiple chronic illnesses, often requiring expensive and vital medications.

Food insecurity, a nutritionally deficient diet, and the related stress leave people at increased risk during a pandemic, as it can impede the body's ability to fight a virus. Not having access to proper hygiene and sterilization products increases that risk even more. They are also at increased risk of transmitting a virus. With most low income people working jobs that lack adequate paid sick leave, employees are compelled to go to work even when they are sick. Otherwise,

they may have to cut back even more on food or medication. Missing one day of pay can result in being unable to pay rent or utilities.

If you have an abundance of supplies, consider checking in with those in your community and local organizations to see if they need anything, or join YEG Community Response to COVID19 on Facebook. Our efforts are only effective if all of us are able to take the precautions needed. We are only as safe as our most vulnerable people. Something we need to keep in mind now and going forward: We are all in this together.

*Victoria is an entrepreneur, roller derby player, and basset hound lover living in the Delton area.*



When you go to buy supplies, keep those on low-income in mind. Don't buy more than you need. | Pixabay

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# Going back to the history of Earth Day

Did you know that Earth Day turns 50 on April 22?

GILLIAN KERR

When you think of former U.S. President Richard Nixon, what comes to mind? Watergate? Impeachment? Those events stand out, but the very first Earth Day on April 22, 1970 also started under his presidency. It was the same period that some of America's most significant environmental legislation was enacted, including the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act.

Now, let me be clear: I am not giving Nixon personal credit for Earth Day. In fact, that first Earth Day raised significant suspicions in Washington. It's explained in an article published in *The Christian Monitor* on April 22, 2013 called "Earth Day, 1970: How President Nixon spied on Earth Day". According to former U.S. Congressman Pete McCloskey, one of Earth Day's organizers, Nixon was concerned about links to this movement and the anti-war movement.

What began as concern about such issues as industrial effluent and leaded gas use galvanized the world into a 50-year movement. Air pollution, water pollution, and contaminated lands were emerging as significant concerns, especially at a time when governments were not recognizing the significance of the problems.

To go back a little further, in 1962 the environmentalist seminal non-fiction book was published. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* gave us evidence that industrial and technological advancement, such as the development and wide-spread use of pesticides like DDT, were causing significant harm to living organisms, our environment, and, to most humans, "inextricable links between pollution and public health".

The first Earth Day was announced as a "national teach-in on the environment".

Former U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson, along with McCloskey and a 25-year-Harvard student, built a national staff of 85 to pro-

of the U.S. population, almost 20 million people, took part in rallies and protests coast to coast to halt the deterioration of the environment.

cial talked about pollution and changes in our climate. It awakened my commitment to the environment and motivated a small group of us to hold a

continent and in our oceans. All around us the media, governments, and groups like the Earth Day Organization, are talking about issues and solutions. While this kind of information can be depressing, it can also call us clearly to action! Today, Earth Day is recognized as "the largest secular observance in the world". More than one billion people take part in this day of action to provoke policy change and alter our own behaviour.

The website [earthday.org/](http://earthday.org/) provides fantastic details and advice about what you can do in your own community, for Earth Day and every day. In Edmonton, we have @EarthDayYEG (Facebook, Twitter) as a source for local actions.

The illustration in this article includes another monthly list of ideas, but the first one is worth sharing here. Did you know that if you fly five times per year, those trips are likely to account for 75 per cent of your personal carbon footprint? With COVID-19, social distancing and cancelling travel and large gatherings are recommended. So, let's teleconference instead of travelling. With Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp and more, there are endless ways to meet up virtually and limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Happy Earth Day!

*Gillian has lived in Norwood since 2006 and loves the community. She worked for the Ministry of Environment for over a decade until she finished her PhD on environmental governance. She is currently researching, teaching, and consulting. She volunteers with a number of social society and environmental groups. If you have any comments or ideas for a future article, email [gilliankerr@fastmail.fm](mailto:gilliankerr@fastmail.fm).*



mote events across the land. And make no mistake about it, Nixon had reason for concern as the movement was modeled on the student anti-war movement, with a focus on forcing environmental protection onto the national political agenda. On April 22, 1970, 10 per cent

I was in junior high when I first became concerned about environmental issues. In my Grade 9 class at Cornwallis Jr. High in Halifax, I had my first true understanding of what we were doing to the planet. My geography teacher, soccer coach, and school prin-

little Earth Day event of our own, focused on vehicles and leaded gas (which was banned in Canada in 1990).

This year, environmental issues are pervasive and in every corner of the world. In my last article, I mentioned micro plastics are now found on every

## Earth Day Tips - Everyday Tips!

- Join Earth Day Network's campaign for each or any of these issues: 1) Protect Our Species, 2) End Plastic Pollution, 3) create Foodprints for the Future. Or, a local YEG program or event.
- Contact your utility company about renewable energy options. EPCOR/ENMAX have green utility programs. Bullfrog Power leads the way in Green Energy options.
- Donate your old clothes and home goods instead of throwing them out. When you need something, consider buying used items.
- Change your paper bills to online billing. You'll be saving trees and the fuel it takes to deliver your bills by truck.
- Buy local food to reduce the distance from farm to fork. Buy straight from the farm, frequent your local farmers' market, or join a local food co-op.
- Run your dishwasher only when it's full to save water and energy.
- Turn your lights off when you leave a room.
- Eliminate single use plastics - Use reusable bottles, mugs, bags, straws.

**"Today, Earth Day is recognized as "the largest secular observance in the world". More than one billion people take part in this day of action to provoke policy change and alter our own behaviour."**

Follow these useful tips everyday. | Gillian Kerr

# The marvelous benefits of intentional living

Curiosity is a motivator I cannot live without

TRISH NOELLE

Recently I found myself off work for medical reasons and therefore without an enforced daily and weekly rhythm. I had insurance to cover the bills, so my first reaction was “Woo hoo! Extended vacation!” I started strong: planned my garden for spring, organized my closet, visited friends, binge-watched Netflix.

Soon, no need for routine meant my routine started to break down. Why do laundry now when I can do it tomorrow? Watching one more episode before making dinner became the first season and eating pizza. I went from getting up at 6:00-ish to crawling out of bed at 7:40 to make sure my kids made it to school on time.

I am not alone in this struggle. Newton’s first law states an object at rest stays at rest and a body in motion stays in motion. This maxim applies to people too and I was at rest. Getting off my sofa was hard. So hard! The longer I sat, the harder change became and the more the things I wasn’t doing overwhelmed me.

With my curiosity slowly

dying, I feared I would become a boring conversationalist, my house would be a mess, and dinner parties would dwindle: a great loss because dinner parties are arguably the reason

more creative? More fit? Dive into the life of St. Theresa of Ávila? Master the art of soufflé?

I discovered goals need a plan, otherwise they are just dreams, not enough to get me

matters if a goal is realistic or sounds batshit crazy to everyone else, it just must excite me enough to start.

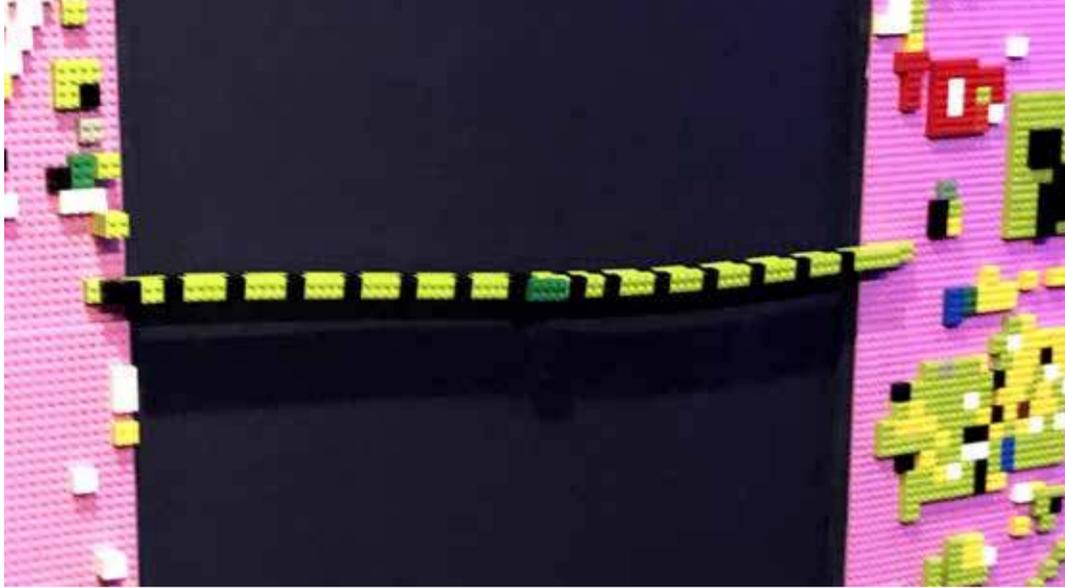
Stuck in your house? YouTube yoga classes or knit-

your nature on and walk the entire river valley or become an expert on some random topic, like 1970s vegetarian recipes or the films of Cecil B. DeMille and share this with others. Find your volunteer muscle.

Look, motivation is hard: few people truly want to do the things that make dreams a reality. Once I got comfy on my sofa, being lazy was easy. But emotional ennui and lack of dinner party invites on the horizon motivated me to find opportunities to learn and get involved in the community.

Knowing my action also makes someone else’s day better, either by being a customer or just sharing a smile, is a great motivator. Find the thing that makes you curious and get moving. It might take a while, but the conversational anecdotes are worth it.

*Trish lives in Parkdale-Cromdale in a very old house filled with kids, cats, a dog, and lots of memories. She’s a writer, sociologist, and fledgling pianist who loves a good cup of tea.*



Building a LEGO bridge across a divide, my LEGO partner and I wanted to discover if there was a way to reinforce the slim bridge so it would successfully span the gap between the two wall-mounted canvases. | Trish Noelle

I evolved. I resolved to start moving and to reframe this time as a season of growth. I am not just waiting to go back to work, I am on sabbatical. What is my dream for this time? Be

off my sofa. The Internet and library are a marvelous source of free resources and I took so many books out of the library I sometimes used them as a table to hold my tea. It no longer

ting tutorials are fantastic.

Learn an instrument, read the collected works of Shakespeare, learn to knit, and time just how long it takes to deliver 100 hats to Hope Mission. Get

# The unexpected benefit of social media

Community’s social togetherness in times of physical distancing

KILEY FITHEN

With COVID-19, we are facing a threat that is disrupting every aspect of our daily lives. The unknown will always prompt initial fear—dread of scarcity and the instinct to survive. We’re told to keep a distance, that people could unknowingly be contagious, and to stay away and hunker down for the long haul.

Still, the sun continues to rise. The snow melts and fear transforms into an understanding that we need each other to

continue to live full and meaningful lives.

Social media initiatives have been in bloom since the first indication of scarcity. Neighbours are offering supplies, resources, deliveries, or just a comforting word.

This rebirth of community—aptly dubbed caremongering—can be found everywhere online. There are city-wide groups on Facebook like YEG Community Response to COVID19 and CareMongering – YEG. Community league pages and groups have sprung alive, using hashtags of #offer #referral and

even #ALLR (A Little Light Relief).

Communities like Parkdale-Cromdale have a dedicated blog, a lively community group, and suggestions on how to come together and populate these forums. So far, Parkdale-Cromdale Community League has hosted a virtual pub and games night and over 30 people logged in. The community also has some neighbours opting to use ca.Nextdoor.com, a social media platform to communicate not only issues, but also to connect talents, resources, and information. The app includes

a map, which assists in connecting with others on your street.

As well, local neighbourhood Facebook groups have turned into platforms for people to reach out, either to ask for or to offer help.

While the policymakers continue to grapple with how to support and provide for the most vulnerable, such as those experiencing homelessness or those with mental health and addiction issues, it is becoming clear that the broader community understands that everyone, regardless of economic status, needs support at this time.

There will always be those who look to benefit from their stockpile of toilet paper or garage full of hand sanitizer, but our communities are actively coming together and looking for policies and resources to ensure no one is going without or is at risk.

*Kiley, a Parkdale resident who shares a passion for building community, is a business owner and a Registered Canadian Immigration Consultant.*



COVID-19 has brought online communities together. | Pixabay

# Summer beauty to cherish from a backyard

Stop and imagine you're taking time to smell the flowers

**AYDAN DUNNIGAN-VICKRUCK**

"The day is coming when a single carrot, freshly observed, will set off a revolution" (motto displayed at The Carrot Coffeehouse, a quote from Paul

Cezanne). If this is true, what acts of genius and brilliance will be inspired by a morning ritual of marvelling at a seductive iris or a ravishing poppy?

Beauty nurtures our soul and in turn is fed by our adula-

tion. In a secluded crook in our backyard, cup of coffee in one hand and camera in the other, we immerse ourselves in this primal experience of seeing and being seen.

Just a little garden. Just a few

(hardly exotic) flowers. Just a bit of time taken to frame the camera and snap the shutter. In return, we are gifted with the lasting vision of past beauties and hope for another spring.

*Aydan is a social worker, blogger, tango dancer, outdoor enthusiast and co-parent with Patricia to eight children and 16 grandchildren. He's also a resident of the 'hood and loving it.*



**A downy woodpecker helping himself to the bounty.**  
| Aydan Dunnigan-Vickruck



**Poppies. Self-seeding and extravagant.** | Aydan Dunnigan-Vickruck



**The green snake-like plants are hostas, happy to take over a shaded corner.**  
| Aydan Dunnigan-Vickruck



**Gaze at an iris, the flower with unabashed beauty.**  
| Aydan Dunnigan-Vickruck



**A lovely and hardy lily.** | Aydan Dunnigan-Vickruck

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parkdalecromdale.org

spruceavenuecommunity.com

westwoodcl.ca

elmwoodparkcommunity.org



**Spruce Avenue Urban Poling**

Join our fun and entertaining group for a walk around Spruce Avenue. Starting with a warmup we will walk at a pace that you are comfortable with. We aim to walk 5 km 2 times a week. If a shorter distance suits you, there are opportunities to shorten the route to fit everyone's abilities. The group finishes with cool down stretches before you head home.

If you are interested please email Verna at [treasurer@spruceavenuecommunity.com](mailto:treasurer@spruceavenuecommunity.com) or call 780-479-8019



Parkdale Cromdale Community League

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- Director-at-large



**EASTWOOD COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Would you like a plot? Are you willing to volunteer? For more info: [treasurer@eastwoodhub.org](mailto:treasurer@eastwoodhub.org)



Spruce Ave Connects is a new neighbour-helping-neighbour volunteer program we are running in Edmonton's Spruce Avenue neighbourhood during the global pandemic of COVID-19. Hello Spruce Ave! With growing concerns over COVID-19, we are launching a new program to be proactive should we face increasing challenges, where we will need to learn to support and care for our neighbours locally. While there are some groups offering assistance and support across Metro Edmonton, we want to encourage the power of local connection in Spruce Ave and be resilient in the face of changing times, where we may be forced to support each other by those within walking distance, who we live and work with on a daily basis. Rather than spreading fear or germs, we are building community in the face of crisis.

Find us on Facebook: Spruce Avenue Covid19 Community Group

**Delton Community League is dedicated to serving its members and surrounding communities!**

We are currently undergoing renovations on the community hall. At this time, the hall is closed but the rink remains open for the season.

Please stay tuned as we plan our grand re-opening celebration!

**Are you interested in contributing some time towards this important project? Please email [buildings@deltoncommunity.com](mailto:buildings@deltoncommunity.com)!**



# Free business event offered valuable insights

Business owners and aspiring business owners shared their thoughts

**SHAREE ALUKO**

On Friday, March 6, Catholic Social Services in Alberta Avenue hosted a free event called Building Your Business.

Only two current business owners were at my table, but the group also had aspiring business owners who had owned a business in the past. Organizers recorded conversations to provide feedback to the government on how to improve assistance to small businesses.

Emmanuel Aluko, owner of G16framework Media Productions, shared insights about his web development company.

“An online presence is very important for marketing and connectivity,” said Aluko. He also emphasized that “a lot

of people are good at what they do, but are not making money. How can you stand out? Everyone is fighting for visibility and exposure, they all want to be on top. This can be achieved by effective search engine optimization.”

Tahir Masud, who owns a franchise restaurant and is in real estate, advised, “You have to keep working hard with continuous innovation to keep the business going. People tend to relax after the business is growing, but they should keep in mind that there are many other businesses competing for the same number of customers.”

Gerald Mobuogwu arrived in Canada as a new immigrant in January. He is eager to establish himself as a business owner in his new home. “While in banking, I kept seeing the challeng-

es of small and medium-scale enterprises, so I feel compelled to do something. If you check newborn babies, they have all the features of an adult which will later mature. A business can be referred to as an artificial person,” said Mobuogwu. He also aspires to start a business club. “My challenge is that it is a new system. If I was in my own country, I would know what to do. Here it is very structured, organized, and highly regulated. Based on this system, one has to be methodological, careful, and seek support to make sure that the step taken is calculative.”

The facilitator asked the group if they think there is support for small business owners, and the majority responded that there isn’t much support available.

Aluko said, “It is difficult

to start, integrate, and access financial support.”

Hussam Ammar, an aspiring business owner, expressed similar sentiments. He stated, “There is no guidance to go through the process and it is very hard to find financing. If everything is good you find financing, but if you don’t have everything in place, then [there is] no financing.”

There was a consensus that business owners need more information, mentoring, workshops, networking, resources, and guidance to build a roadmap to ensure all risks and uncertainties are covered.

Participants shared what they think is essential for business success.

Mobuogwu said, “The business world is a platform for economic warfare. We the

small microenterprises need to reposition and restructure.” He gave as an example the recent use of solar energy. “What has changed is that we [need to] reposition. A small business is a collateral risk, but financiers are looking for business, so we need to work collectively.”

“You have to understand the market needs first,” said Ammar.

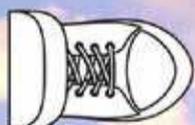
Aluko added, “It is a different game from what you have been taught in school and a different idea when you meet with clients. Commitment, consistency, and time is a major factor. If you lose one client you are losing your business, so you need to be able to sell yourself.”

*Sharee has a Masters in Business Administration and is passionate about sharing information.*



Gerald Mobuogwu was one of the participants at Building Your Business. | Supplied

**6th Annual Jane's Walk**



SPRUCE AVENUE

Spruce Ave's 6th annual Jane's Walk community history walk is happening Sat. May 9th. Meet at Spruce Ave School in front of the main doors at 10:30am. Bring your walking shoes, water bottle and come share a walk and stories with neighbours. Walk to end approx. 12:30pm at Spruce Ave league hall. The main Jane's Walk weekend in Edmonton runs May 1-3, 2020. Info on all walks is available at [janewalksyeg.wordpress.com](http://janewalksyeg.wordpress.com). (Note: Due to the changing health situation, Jane's Walks may be postponed if necessary - stay tuned to the RCP and Jane's Walk Edmonton websites for updates)



**24th ANNUAL SPRUCE AVENUE COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE**

When: Friday May 1 9:00 am to 7:00 pm  
Saturday May 2 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Where: Spruce Avenue Community Hall, 10240 - 115 avenue

What: An opportunity to shop, donate to our community and socialize and maybe have a snack too! Concession open.

Please monitor our Facebook page for updates or email: [communications@spruceavenuecommunity.com](mailto:communications@spruceavenuecommunity.com)

# Everything seems terrible this spring

## Trying to make sense of the worrisome new world

MARI SASANO

It happened so fast. On March 5, Alberta saw its first COVID-19 case. On March 13, we were being asked to stay at home if we could, cancel events of more than 250 people, and to self-isolate if we showed signs of the disease, or if we had been traveling. The price of oil and the stock market plummeted. Now, people are worried about their jobs, their kids. Sports teams have cancelled games. Schools have closed. The libraries closed, along with rec centres—most public places, actually. Everything is terrible.

And it's spring. We've been waiting for long, warm days. The seeds I started indoors are sending out their first delicate leaves. The garden should be ready to plant in a few more weeks. But with everything that's happening, it doesn't seem real. I don't even know what to think or feel.

Should I be scared, or annoyed? Hours after the first announcements, though, I saw Facebook groups spring up that connected those who are able to help with people in need: people

People started to share resources for kids, online courses, or tutoring. People alert others of scams and false information. People try to take care of each other. More people are asking

being there to make things go. If people aren't well, we don't get those things. All of our needs are fulfilled by other people. This is what we are as human beings: we need each other.

get back to normal life. People are saying, "everything will be OK," but that depends entirely on our actions. Only we can make it OK.

I don't know what will happen in the coming weeks and months. Spring is a time of renewal and fresh starts. Could we use this as an opportunity to change the way we live? Could we try to hang on to that generosity after the crisis is over? Can we destigmatize asking for help? The writer, Naomi Klein, wrote about social disruption as a way to distract people from the questionable actions of government. We could use this moment to

establish better habits and to examine what is most important to us. We can prioritize our relationships with people. Nothing else is real.

*Mari is a writer and civil servant.*



The coming months may be a time of uncertainty. | Pixabay

offering rides, dropping off groceries or other supplies, sharing (real and reliable!) information, advice, and mental health support. People shared what stores still stocked toilet paper (what was that about, huh?), infant formula, and hand sanitizer.

for help. If anything, we're going to become very aware that nothing happens without people. Everything from hospitals, schools, utilities, supply chains—the entire economy, basically—relies on people

I wrote this piece in mid-March, so things may have changed by the time the paper is printed. Things do seem to be moving fast, and we're asked to respond hour by hour. But we all have to think about what will happen when we're able to

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# Nurtured into a place of heart and home

How the need for change led to selling and moving on

**SHELAINE SPARROW**

It was when I saw the “for sale” sign at the front yard entry of our home that I felt in my gut the full depth of the relationship I have to this place.

Twenty years ago, with a humble profession in Edmonton’s arts and culture sector and the financial backing of my family, I accepted stewardship over the two-story, boarded-up brick house at 11635 95A St.

Though neglect and abuse cast a hard shadow on the whole property, a visceral connection captivated me. All that wear and tear was a minor distraction to the true nature I saw so clearly beneath. I could feel the house breathing. I sensed the strength in her bones.

Seeing potential in old homes and furniture was a gift from my mother. She always acknowledged soul and spirit—whether in a piece of wood, a building, or in a person.

We grew up with a deep appreciation for the beauty of age and character.

This house and neighbourhood welcomed such appreciation. In return, its colourful reflection of humanity offered an abundance of riches.

For the first decade, I embraced dismantling and reconstructing my new environment—observing and exploring each raw layer and all the pieces of story revealed. As a young socially-engaged producer, the house, even stripped down to the 100-year-old fir studs, provided a secure container for a life of creative projects and reflection on social

issues.

I felt no time pressure in making the house perfect. To be honest, the rawness intrigued me. It needed time to air out, to breathe without the shackles of abuse. I allowed the house

tickle trunk parties, and meaningful porch conversations. The house shaped me as much as I shaped it, as did the neighbourhood. I steered my life from here. Simultaneously, a community tapestry was weaving itself

When I became pregnant, my gaze shifted to a more intimate zone of home and community life. I went into nesting mode with an ambitious renovation plan that was declared complete with the early arrival of my

into the assets of the neighbourhood. My daughter and I were embraced by an accepting network of genuine people who shared values of art, diversity, inclusion, and social care. We belonged in this nourishing community that celebrated artistic expression and engagement with humility and without shame.

Lida grew up swinging in a backyard hammock and hopping through the community garden. Annual rituals were co-created on the grandest of neighbourly scale thanks to Arts on the Ave. Our life was delightfully animated by clowns and horns and songs. Our home was steeped in a community of beloved characters.

All this made it easy to ignore an intuitive inner-calling for change. For years, I hushed the voice that persisted, “It is time to move”.

Only after honouring my kitten angel Rakshita (and house companion since the beginning) with a calm, loving, and natural home death did I accept it was time to release the house to another and move on.

Now I step forward, grateful for the way this chapter is closing. I know from experience that the weavings of authentic community do not unravel when you take a brave leap. In fact, it is often the strength of community that gives the courage to leap.

Like a handprint in concrete, I know that imprints of us will remain in the texture of this place just as it is forever imprinted in us.

*Shelaine is a cultural creative who has lived in Ab Ave since 1999. Her life and career have been driven by a passion for ethical, place-sourced design, and grassroots community development.*



Shelaine Sparrow (left) lived in her Alberta Avenue home for 20 years before making the decision to leave. | Supplied

its space and it gave me mine. There were many photoshoots,

together through inspired initiatives and good-hearted people.

daughter in February 2009.

As a new mother, I leaned

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stay home.

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get past  
this.

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# When your life finally catches up to you

Burnout tells you when you must finally put your well-being first

**KAREN MYKIETKA**

I stare at my computer, tabs open for five different jobs and projects. This has been my life for many, many years, but now my brain is paralyzed. I cannot concentrate. My heart is beating rapidly. I go back and forth, not really accomplishing much of anything.

My voicemail greeting says, “You’ve reached Karen Mykietka, the woman with many work hats...” This is too true. Paid and unpaid, I have been involved in many things over the years, mostly in these communities.

Because I live, work, and play in my community, I don’t really ever stop working. I cannot go to a neighbourhood event and simply enjoy it. I am always on the lookout for possible news and stories or networking or representing the RCP. When I see something that needs to be done, it’s hard for me to not do it.

I am an organizer, a doer; I don’t sit still much unless it is sitting at my computer and working, usually multitasking on numerous projects.

When I’m asked “How are you doing?” it seems like the only thing I’ve been replying for years is “I’m busy.” I help organize and promote community programs and events, but I hardly ever fully participate in them. I tried doing fitness with some ladies at Alberta Avenue

last year, but usually ditched it because I had a meeting or I worked in the office on my always growing to-do list. I was excited to see a cycling group start up last summer, but in the end I didn’t make it to even one ride. I had a meeting or something every single week. Sigh!

I’ve had some weeks with no meetings, but that’s rare. Normal for me means two to three meetings a week. Sometimes I’ve had

eating supper, I think about all the things I have to do while wasting time watching TV, and I even work in my dreams.

Well, you can guess all this work and meetings have put a little stress on my family and home life. I just can’t keep the pace I used to. Is it age? Or cumulative stress? Likely both.

So take a vacation to de-stress! Taking a vacation is a huge added stress. I work in the non-

overdue items. Then I need to find someone to cover the essentials and be on call. And even then, I can’t remember a vacation where I didn’t monitor my nine email accounts and deal with urgent business and trash the junk mail so that I wouldn’t be facing inboxes overflowing with emails upon my return. I’ve often returned from vacation and gone straight to work or a meeting before even going

care of myself.

The last few months I’ve really been feeling the stress pile up. I was feeling unwell and stopped at the pharmacy to have my blood pressure checked. It was high. Too high. This, right before my two busiest weeks of the year. Not surprising, I guess. But also no opportunity to slow down and rest.

More and more frequently, I was feeling utterly overwhelmed with work and life in general. I knew it would be best to take a few days off, or ideally a week or two. But when you work contracts and non-profit jobs with no benefits, there really isn’t an option for a mental health day or stress leave. You work or you don’t get paid.

But when you’ve hit your wall, you have to make changes. I hired someone to help me out with my work for a few weeks. I dropped what I could. I ditched some meetings. I took some time for myself. I even attended the barre class at Parkdale.

I’m not only dealing with burnout, my partner also just had surgery and I will soon be having major surgery. There’s no putting off taking care of myself any longer. If you don’t take care of yourself, sometimes life will make you.

I’m planning a leisurely spring and summer feeding and nurturing my body, mind, and spirit. I think I’ll actually follow through on my plan to slow down this time. I have no choice.

*A busy woman of many jobs, Karen spends too much time in front of a computer. In the past 20 years, she has lived in Eastwood, Alberta Avenue and now Parkdale, meeting awesome people everywhere she goes.*



Too much work can lead to burnout. | Pixabay

a meeting every weeknight or even multiple meetings in an evening. I also work with some very busy people and sometimes we can only get together to meet after our other meetings at 9:30 or 10 pm.

I enjoy most of the work I do, but there’s so much of it, I end up working day and night—literally. I work at work, I work in the car, I multitask at meetings, I think about my meeting while

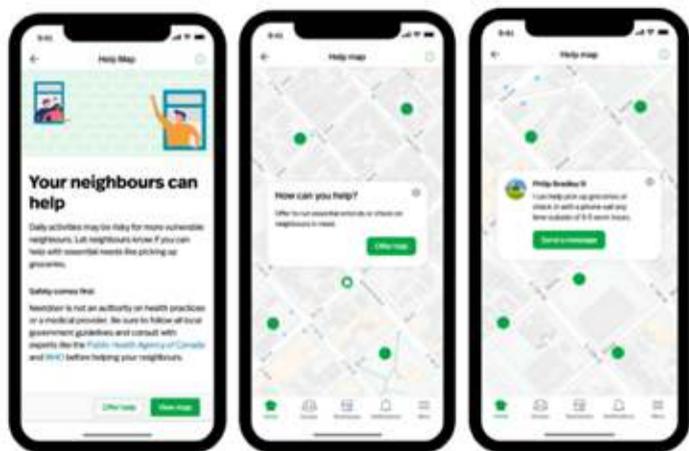
profit world where I do a lot of everything and there is no one who can cover my job completely, or sometimes at all. I have to choose my vacation days around a not too busy time (so not at press time and not when there are rentals needing my attention at my hall manager job and not when I have important community meetings to attend or chair). That’s pretty slim.

I need to get caught up on

home.

I don’t share all this to be a martyr or be lifted up on a pedestal. And I’m not saying this is a good life to lead. But this has been my “normal” life for years. Now I’m feeling the effects, feeling the need for a break, a rest. But how do you accomplish that when you’ve committed yourself to many things? I have a hard time breaking my commitments even when it is to take

## Neighbourhood Help Map



Offer to run essential errands or check in on neighbours in need.  
Download the app or go to [ca.Nextdoor.com](https://ca.Nextdoor.com).

 **Nextdoor**

## CHURCH SERVICES

ANGLICAN PARISHES  
ST. FAITH AND ST. STEPHEN  
Two Traditions – One Faith.

11725 93 Street

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](https://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](https://avenuechurch.ca)

Sundays  
9:30am coffee fellowship  
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  
ST. ANDREW'S  
PRESBYTERIAN

A caring and loving church  
in your community where  
everyone is welcome.

8715 118 Avenue  
780-477-8677  
Sundays at 11 am

THE SALVATION ARMY  
CROSSROADS COMMUNITY  
CHURCH

A Place for Worship and Service  
11661 95 Street  
[salvationarmy.ca/alberta](https://salvationarmy.ca/alberta)  
780.474.4324  
3:00 pm Sunday Worship

CHURCH SERVICES  
CHURCH SERVICES  
CHURCH SERVICES

# Local pop-up markets have been a success

Get ready for six more markets in Alberta Avenue this year

**TALEA MEDYNSKI**

Pop-up markets at Alberta Avenue have proven to be a success since they started in 2018.

Virginia Potkins, market organizer, says, “When we did our first Christmas market in 2018, we had only 12 vendors and the market was open for four hours. We had maybe 125 people attend.”

Last year’s Christmas market was quite a different story, with 42 vendors and 600 people attending. The market ran all day long.

And during last year’s markets, Potkins says, “We increased our vendor size with every market. The vendors made money.”

There will be a variety of goods at the markets. “Each market attracts different vendors and therefore each market will have our regulars and a great mixture of new vendors,” says Potkins. “You can expect everything from pet products to clothing and jewelry

to home decor.”

When Potkins started up the markets last year, it was to see if they’d be successful in the area. Alberta Avenue once had a

markets if the weather is good. Organizers will ensure the area is well-lit. Because activity will be going on around the Avenue, it will hopefully reduce crime

Potkins has the other four markets planned for May 28, July 30, and Sept. 24. The Christmas market is scheduled for Nov. 21. She adds, “Now

The markets are all scheduled to be held outside Alberta Avenue Community League again, unless the weather forces vendors indoors.

There’s still space for vendors, buskers, balloon artists, live painters, or face painters to participate in the markets.

“Anyone who wants to show off talent,” says Potkins. “Interactive stuff for people to see and experience.”

Email Potkins at [specialeventsbyginamiller@gmail.com](mailto:specialeventsbyginamiller@gmail.com) to participate in the upcoming markets.

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



The pop-up markets have been a success. | Karen Mykietka

farmers market every Thursday, but the market eventually closed due to lack of popularity. So, the success of these pop-up markets has been encouraging.

“This year, I’m going to do six markets,” says Potkins. She plans on holding two night

and get people engaged. The night markets are scheduled for June 19 and Aug. 28 from 7 to 11 p.m.

“The night markets are a partnership with Theatre Prospero. They’ll be doing something interactive.”

with everything that’s going on [with COVID-19], the May markets are questionable. The Bloomin’ Garden Show & Art Sale has been cancelled and maybe even the first public market at the end of May. I’m just taking it day by day.”

**POP-UP MARKETS**

May 28, 4-8 pm

June 19, 7-11 pm

July 30, 4-8 pm

Aug. 28, 7-11 pm

Sept. 24, 3-7 pm

Christmas market: Nov.

21, 10 am to 4 pm

# Students embrace hands-on learning

Creating things is a great way to learn about culture and science

**NORWOOD NEWSPAPER CLUB**

Students at Norwood Elementary do a great job of making things from kindergarten all the way up to Grade 6. Here are some examples of students using hands-on learning experiences. *Norwood Newspaper Club* was formed by Ms. Rickards as a way to have members of her Grade 5 class at Norwood Elementary School learn about being journalists.



Beading is a traditional First Nations skill we are learning about in French class. | Norwood Newspaper Club

In Science, Grade 5 students used wires, lightbulbs, cardboard tubes, and a battery to make a flashlight with a paper clip switch. You need to have a complete circuit for it to work! | Norwood Newspaper Club



In kindergarten, students play with objects like jewels in sand using sensory exploration to increase their motor skills. | Norwood Newspaper Club

To learn about mechanisms and vehicles that move, Grade 4 students created cars out of tin cans. | Norwood Newspaper Club



## COVID-19 INFORMATION

# HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD

Prevention starts with awareness. Be informed on how you can protect yourself and others from novel coronavirus:

- Now mandatory to self-isolate if you're feeling sick
- Wash your hands frequently
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Avoid touching your face

Concerns about your health?  
Call Health Link 811.

[alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19)

Alberta

## COVID-19 INFORMATION

# PHYSICAL DISTANCING TIPS

## GROCERY SHOPPING

When out in public, practicing social distancing can help you reduce your risk by minimizing contact with others in the community.

- Order online and try to have groceries delivered if possible
- Try to shop at times when there are fewer shoppers (first thing in the morning or late at night)
- Wipe down handle of grocery carts and baskets, and wash or sanitize hands before entering and after leaving the store
- Use self-check out if available

[alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19)

Alberta



Source: World Health Organization

IT'S NORMAL TO FEEL SAD,  
STRESSED, CONFUSED, SCARED  
OR ANGRY DURING A CRISIS.



TALK TO PEOPLE YOU TRUST, SUCH  
AS FRIENDS AND FAMILY OR YOUR  
FELLOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

Need someone to talk to?

24 hour Distress Line 780.482.4357

Alberta 24/7 Mental Health Line 1.877.303.2642

Community & Social Services Help Line 211

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY SUPPORTS INFORMATION

FEDERAL · PROVINCIAL · MUNICIPAL · UTILITIES · BANKING

SIGN UP FOR THE EARN | SAVE | BUILD NEWSLETTER  
[EDMONTON.CA/FINANCIALEMPowerMENT](https://edmonton.ca/financialemPOWERMENT)



## NEW CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT

\$2,000 A MONTH FOR UP TO 4 MONTHS

APPLY IN EARLY APRIL USING YOUR CRA MY ACCOUNT OR TOLL-FREE NUMBER (TBA)