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# RAT CREEK PRESS

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## Women volunteer building Habitat homes in Norwood

### Nine new owner occupied units going up on site of former crime infested building

PATRICIA MCNEVIN

Habitat for Humanity volunteers recently started construction on a new site in Norwood where the Cloisters, a problematic apartment building, once stood.

The three new triplexes, at 114 Ave. and 95A Street, are a welcome addition to the community that will house nine new families by the end of the year.

Brenley Bennett, com-

and encourages enquiries from interested families.

"We are always looking for families who want a safe, new home," she says. "And we encourage families to check out our criteria."

Edmonton Habitat for Humanity has built over 80 homes for families since 1991. Habitat for Humanity finances a zero-interest mortgage to families who meet "habitat" criteria. There is no down payment and monthly payments are calculated between 25 and 30 per cent of the family's income, making mortgage payments affordable. The annual income for qualification is between \$32,000-\$54,000. Bennett says Habitat chooses families who meet all of the criteria and whom they believe will be successful.

#### Volunteers

Of course, none of this great work would be possible with-

out support from volunteers, who celebrated Volunteer Week April 15 to the 21. "Habitat Edmonton would not exist without our volunteers," says Bennett, citing the approximately 2,500 people who volunteered over 55,000 hours last year to the Edmonton chapter. She says the volunteers come from all walks of life and all different ages. "We get lawyers, teachers, police officers and stay-at-home-moms who volunteer."

One of the triplexes in Norwood is a Women Build, the second of its kind in Edmonton. "The Women Build project was created to encourage women to come out and participate and learn new skills. If you're a woman and would like to volunteer (for Habitat for Humanity) but have been hesitant in the past, the Women Build is the perfect place to start," Bennett says.

Volunteers Lorna Galbraith and her sister, Mary Scott, are enthusiastic first-time volunteers. Galbraith doesn't let the distance she travels from Hinton to Edmonton deter her from volunteering. She heard about Habitat's new build on the news and called her sister to see if she was interested in joining the Women Build. Over the next six months she will travel three hours from Hinton to Edmonton many times to achieve her goal. "It's



(L-R) SANDY RANKIN, LORNA GALBRAITH, LINDA FOY AND MARY SCOTT ARE ALL FIRST-TIME VOLUNTEERS WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY EDMONTON.

(Habitat for Humanity) something I've always been interested in and I'd like to leave my mark on this world," she says. Sandy Rankin and Linda Foy, one-time business partners in the not-for-profit sector, are also volunteering for the first time with Habitat. "I miss working in not-for-profit and this is a way for me to keep in touch with the community," says Rankin.

This year, apprentices from Women Building Futures, an Edmonton training centre for women in the trades, will also be on site to help out while earning some practical experience.

Habitat is always looking for volunteers but registering with the organization is a must. "It's not a show up and work kind of thing, you have to phone the office and register. But no experience is necessary, training is available and there is always supervision on site."

#### Research project

The Norwood build will also

serve as a research project that pits traditional stick framing against pre-fabricated pieces. Volunteers from Forintek, a forestry research company, will go head to head on April 23 to find out which building method is faster.

"We want to generate some quantitative measurement and evidence that one method is overwhelmingly faster than the other and encourage industry to use it," Bennett says, adding that they fully expect the prefab will go faster. Everyone is welcome to drop down and watch the action (starting at 11 a.m.).

Habitat is also working to complete its build on 97 Street and 120 Avenue, where four families will make their home, although the move-in date has not been established yet.

For more information on Habitat for Humanity Edmonton or to volunteer visit [www.hfh.org](http://www.hfh.org) or call 479-3566.



(L-R) TIFFANY CUNNINGHAM, JAMIE LAYTON AND MAGGIE PARKER WITH WOMEN BUILDING FUTURES TAKE A MOMENT TO POSE AT THE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY EDMONTON SITE IN NORWOOD

munications coordinator with Habitat for Humanity Edmonton, says the units haven't been designated to specific families yet

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## Funding for local projects

Got an idea or a project that advances one of the revitalization goals or objectives? Get funding to make it happen! The Avenue Initiative Neighbourhood Matching Fund will provide funding for projects, large or small, initiated by business owners, not-for-profit organizations, schools, or an ad hoc community group whose purpose is solely to carry out the specific project. You must match 50%

of your total project cost with either labour/sweat equity or cash, or a combination of both. Application Deadlines: 15th of the month, from May - September.

#### Small sparks challenge

Small Sparks is a unique grant designed to encourage community members, business owners, or schools to use their personal interest and creativity to do something fun and ben-

eficial in the neighbourhood. Small Spark Projects connect neighbours, ignite imagination, create community, and make a difference in their neighbourhood. Deadline—there isn't one! Submit your application any time until December 1st, 2007. Your application will be processed within 30 days.

Call Judy Allan at 496-1913 to get an application package or go to [ratcreek.org](http://ratcreek.org) to download.

#### May is clean up month

##### Big Bin event

Saturday, May 5 and Sunday, May 6 from 9am to 5pm  
Bring your large items to Alberta Avenue hall parking lot at 93 St and 118 Ave.

##### Large item pick up

Saturday, May 5 from 10am to 4pm ONLY!  
We need more volunteers, especially strong guys or gals to help pick up items. Call 278-4812.

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OUR MISSION  
The mission of the Rat Creek Press  
Association is to highlight community  
news, activities, and recreational  
opportunities as well as local residents  
and businesses to support the growth  
of a strong, vibrant, well-connected  
community.

OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS  
Norwood Neighbourhood Association  
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Alberta Avenue Business Association  
PAAFE - Prostitution Awareness &  
Action Foundation of Edmonton

# You too can be a professional volunteer

KAREN MYKIETKA

I was opening an account at the bank and was asked my occupation, I responded "professional volunteer." Although I am not currently "employed," I certainly do a lot of work – it's just volunteer work. For me volunteering started when I was a teenager.

At first all I had to give was my time. In junior high after a summer job working in a nursing home, I returned regularly to visit residents for numerous years. So many organizations need people power to do their good works, and every person at one time or another could use a hand or listening ear.

In high school I shared my talent as a swimming instructor to teach swimming skills to mentally and physically handicapped adults. Other times I've

given of my financial resources to support a family in need or a charity. There has rarely been a time in my life when I haven't volunteered in some capacity.

Sometimes it was only small things like helping out a neighbour; other times it has been a huge commitment like managing this newspaper. But one thing it has always been is fulfilling. It's rewarding to know you are making a difference. You often get to develop new skills or even discover new talents or interests. And you get to meet new and interesting people.

I have found volunteering in the community where I live has additional benefits because

that it where my self-interest lies. Clean streets, safe parks, community programs, connected neighbours – they are all good things – but when I help them happen in my community they also directly benefit me and my family. (That's not to say we should only volunteer in our neighbourhoods!)

Not all my volunteering experiences have been pleasant. Ideally people would treat others with respect and courtesy especially those who are volunteering their precious time for the benefit of others. Unfortunately, some people (even sometimes the volunteer) cannot see past their own needs, wants or political agendas. So be open to

constructive criticism which can help you become a better person and let the rest slide off your back – don't take it personally.

We do have events happening in our community that require a lot of volunteers in various capacities: Clean up – May 5 & 6; Gardening Day – May 12; Dog event – May 9; 2nd Annual Arts Alive Festival – Sept 28 & 29; Hidden Treasures House Tour – Nov 22. Help make them a success by volunteering.

Volunteer opportunities in our community abound. There is something for everyone – skilled or unskilled, young or old, busy or not so busy. There are too many to list here but if you have some time to spare I'm willing to help you find a good match for your interests and level of commitment.

**So many organizations need people power to do their good works**

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## Top 10 reasons volunteering is good for your mental health

Volunteering is not only good for the soul; it's also good for both your physical and mental health.

- 1 YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.** Every person counts!
- 2 SET A GOOD EXAMPLE.** Volunteering is a selfless act that shows everyone in your family the value of giving back to the community, and helps foster the assets that go toward achieving lifelong success.
- 3 GAIN PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE.** Volunteering provides an opportunity to test out a new career. Plus, it looks great on a resume and can sometimes lead to a job in a new field.
- 4 MEET NEW FRIENDS.** Volunteering unites people from diverse backgrounds to work toward a common goal, building camaraderie through teamwork. This is a great way to meet new friends who share the same interests as you have.
- 5 PROMOTE PERSONAL GROWTH AND SELF-ESTEEM.** Helping others and learning new things helps build self-esteem and allows you to feel good about yourself. If you're going through a difficult time yourself, volunteering can help you to put things into perspective, plus keep you busy and connected to others.
- 6 DISCOVER HIDDEN TALENTS.** Volunteers often have the opportunity to try new things and develop new skills. Through this process you may discover some hidden talents you never knew you had.
- 7 BUILD A STRONGER COMMUNITY.** By supporting community organizations you will be making your neighbourhood a better place to live, not only for those around you but for yourself as well.
- 8 JOIN OTHERS IN GIVING BACK.** Volunteering allows you to give back to the services that those you care about might need. Local programs can only meet the needs of those in the community with the help of people like you.
- 9 BOOST PRIDE IN YOUR COMMUNITY.** When you volunteer and help out those in need, you take a vested interest in what goes on around you. This helps you feel better connected to your city and your community.
- 10 REDUCE STRESS.** Experts report that when you focus on someone other than yourself, it interrupts usual tension-producing patterns and reduces stress-related hormones.

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**Receive \$40 basket of food, pay only \$20.**  
**Sign up today!**  
**474.5546**

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### No child should be exposed to sexual exploitation or drugs

Response to "Not in my neighbourhood!" article in Edmonton Sun on April 5.

It seems that the drug trade and all that accompanies it abound wherever neighborhoods are apathetic. Thank God that we in the Alberta Ave area are shaking ourselves out of our slumber. Residents are insistently calling the police and working together to dismantle the criminal culture in these north central neighborhoods. There is no reason that children in any Edmonton community should be exposed to sexual exploitation or drugs. I hope

that Westmount will continue to be vocal and intolerant to the sex trade and all that goes with it. We, in Alberta Ave, will not tolerate anything that is unhealthy for families and community. Thank you Mayor Mandel, City Councilors, and Chief Mike Boyd for your vision and support of this historical Edmonton community.

Christy Morin  
Executive Director, Arts on the Ave  
Thirteen year Eastwood Resident

#### To all the mothers out there

Six hours after I delivered my daughter, I was at my design bench arranging flowers for a wedding. I should have seen it as a sign of things to come... 9 years later I am still pushing petals, as the as the owner of a busy flower shop. Like a great hairdresser or your favorite chef, a good florist is hard to find, and a job you love is hard to leave. I have had to make compromises and difficult decisions, but as mom and busy woman you have to find ways to work the family schedule, and still

have a life! I give kudos to all those hard working moms, especially to those single ones who are pulling more than their share.

My daughter is now 9 years old and loves to run the till at the shop. My mom is my business partner. My life is good. And best of all I know I have a family that loves me...

That's the best present a mom can get.

Angie Klein  
Your Friendly Neighborhood Florist

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# What has the Community Action Project (CAP) been up to?

CARLA RUGG, CAP CHAIR

It has been an eventful year with many changes and successes.

On March 18, the Community Action Project (CAP) held their annual general meeting. A new board was elected. We are: Carla Rugg (chair), Roberta Malin (vice-chair), Stephen Hosie (secretary), Pamela Mason (treasurer), Julian Lengauer, Shelley Severson, Amber Anderson, Geoff Hughes, and Kristine Nutting.

CAP's block clubs have been involved in many recent successful actions. The most noteworthy is about the house at 11344 - 92 Street, owned by Mr. Colin Baker. On January 29, 11 CAP members attended a quasi-judicial hearing at city hall to voice our concerns against his appeal of Bylaw's order to clean up his yard of all materials and debris. The city denied his appeal and ordered him to clean up his entire yard or they would do it for him, bill him, and if it fell into a similar state again, he would also be fined. Mr. Baker is planning to appeal this order through the Court of Queen's Bench and the block club is ready to be a show of force in support of the city and its first ruling.

Another block club opened a dialogue with Pedro Brito. Brito has agreed to rid his residences of renters who deal in illegal activities, renovate his properties in compliance with all bylaw and capital health orders, and work with CAP to communicate

with the area's absentee landlords. His house at 11331-93 Street is currently undergoing extensive renovations. We expect an invitation in the near future from Brito to an open house to see the quality of his work and to foster our new and positive relationship.

CAP is also involved in many other actions. To give a brief overview:

- CAP's policing working group has been researching the primary factors that cause and sustain street prostitution in North Central Edmonton.
- The creation of a "family zone" along the 95th Street corridor from Giovanni Caboto Park north to its terminus at 118th Avenue.
- A Handyman Special Home Ownership Program
- Picker Stickers - to discourage the persons who go through the garbage seeking bottles and other recyclables from ripping open bags and strewing garbage everywhere.
- In addition to these

strategic projects, we are constantly working at cleaning up an unsightly property and/or evicting drug dealing tenants on a block-by-block basis. It is through these actions that new leaders are engaged and recruited. CAP leaders are reviewing and updating the education program for residents and will be delivering leadership development and organizing training in the coming year.

Overall, CAP and its members have a lot on their plate. We have successes to celebrate and the energy they have given provides us with momentum to move forward in our endeavours. We appreciate the amount of work ahead of us but we believe the desired results are achievable. The members of CAP can be proud regarding their level of involvement in our community.

If you have any questions about CAP or would be interested in assisting in cleaning up our neighbourhood, please call the CAP office at 474-8318.

## 27 Seller Tips

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## Got an interesting house? Know of one?

Rat Creek Press is organizing a house tour on Saturday, November 22 to show off some of the wonderful "hidden treasures" in our north central neighbourhood of the City of Edmonton. Nominate a house, volunteer to show off your house or join the planning committee. About five houses of varying architectural style will be selected by our committee. Call 479-6285 or email [info@ratcreek.org](mailto:info@ratcreek.org).

For advertising rates and info check out [www.ratcreek.org](http://www.ratcreek.org) or phone 479.6285  
Place a business card ad for only \$40!

# avenue initiative revitalization

*The Avenue Initiative is a community based revitalization of 118th from Nait to Northlands. The community has come together to work with the City to create a council approved strategy that will create a safe, walkable community for everyone.*



## Streetscape Open House

**May 9, 2007 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

**Eastwood Community League, 11803 - 86th street**

**Drop in** from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. to view the proposed streetscape plan. The streetscape includes: trees, pedestrian lighting, new sidewalks, parking, and narrowing of the entrances into the community. **YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT!**

## Those Bloomin' Back Alleys! Gardening Show

**May 12, 2007 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**Alberta Avenue Community League, 9210 - 118th Avenue**

Spring is in the air...come and enjoy a day full of Gardening Workshops:

Gail Rankin, The Plant Doctor, "How to make those Back Alleys Bloom"

Ron Berezan, The Urban Farmer, "Growing Food in Small Spaces" and "Edible Landscapes"

Refreshments • composting • seed swaps • window box demo • communities in bloom • enviro gardening • fun planting and crafts for kids • great mother's day gifts • tips for gardening

**Enter the bloomin' back alley challenge!**

## Avenue Goes to the Dogs

**June 9, 2007 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**Alberta Avenue Community League, 9210 - 118th Avenue**

**Don't miss this DOG'GONE great DAY!**

Celebrate our canine friends living on the Avenue, and the people who love them. Great dog events, agility, freestyle and rally demos. Fun games, great information and gourmet hot DOGS!

• **Looking for a new canine companion? Local rescue organization will be there.**

• **All proceeds raised at "The Avenue Goes to the Dogs" will help fund Dog Rescue.**

• **Donate old leashes, dishes etc.**

*All pets must be leashed and under control at all times*

**ALL EVENTS ARE FREE!**

Call Judy at 496-1913 for all event information.

# Keeping it all in the family

Avenue restaurant has been a city landmark for 30 years

PETER RAUSCH

Chris Varvis first came onto the Avenue when he bought the Day & Night Café – 51 years ago! In July 1976, after 25 years of business, the family decided to open Coliseum Steak & Pizza.

The Coliseum soon became the “place to go” for the Edmonton Oilers and food lovers throughout Edmonton. To keep up with the demand for seating they expanded in 1993. Take a look around the dining room and you will see mementos from the Oilers and Eskimos glory years.

Bill Varvis, Chris’s son, recalls how he was introduced into the family business when he was just four years old. He was taught the game of hide-and-seek by his dad and uncles by learning to put away dishes after they were washed. Today he is quite proud many of their 22 staff has been with the business for over 20 years.

Now 87, Chris continues to lead the family run business

focusing on “the highest quality food and great service at reasonable prices.” The steaks are cut fresh daily from prime aged AAA Sterling Beef and then seasoned using a secret family recipe, and their beef and

variety of menu items to satisfy the wishes of any group. The broad ranging lunch and supper menus include soups and salads, pizza, burgers, sea food and, of course steak and ribs. Choose from a number of side orders or mix and match dishes to customize your special meal. Take-out service is also available.

These efforts have not gone unnoticed: Coliseum Steak and Pizza has been recognized with a number of “Best of Edmonton” awards and still serves as “the” place to go for that pre-game meal for Oiler and Eskimo fans.

The Varvis family is looking at refurbishing the restaurant, but guarantees the tradition of quality will always be there. They invite everyone to “come in and give it a try.”

pork ribs are also prepared with the same demand for quality.

The tradition for making great food is not only reflected in their ribs and steaks, but in all the items they serve. They make their own stock for soups, salad dressings are home made, and fresh seafood, pasta sauces and hamburgers are made from scratch. The deserts will have you seriously paying attention to Weight-Watcher commercials.

The Coliseum offers a



CHRIS VARVIS AND THE BUSINESS HE STARTED 3 DECADES AGO

**Coliseum Steak, Ribs & Pizza**

**8015 – 118 Avenue  
474-1640**

**Hours of operation:**  
Mon. - Thurs 10:30 am – 10:30 pm;  
Fri. & Sat. 11:00 am – 11:00 pm  
Sun. 12:00 pm – 9:00 pm

# The book lady

KAREN MYKIEKTA

If you like books and you haven't been in the Bissell Thrift Shoppe lately, then you really should stop in. They have a new and much expanded book department with a new floor and 30 new six foot shelves loaded with books. The prices are fabulous: \$1.99 for a hard-cover or paperback and 99 cents for a pocket book, a large section of children's books for ten cents, and Harlequin and other romance novels also priced at ten cents.

This book department is kept stocked and organized by a dedicated volunteer: Margaret Mooney, known as the Book Lady. “I go in six mornings a week before the store opens,” says Margaret, “I take care of the many boxes of books that are donated. I arrange them and am try to shelve them by category as best I can.”

Margaret, who says she always shopped at the Bissell Centre, was frequently sorting out the books and tidying them up. One day a senior staff member said, “You're always here anyway, so you might as well become the book volunteer.” And she did.

After spending 33 years at the Artistic Coordinator at the Citadel Theatre, Margaret retired in 1998. Margaret is also a professional painter

who has done numerous solo and group exhibits and has received many awards. She says, “I did not start any volunteer work, however, until a couple of years ago. At first, I just wanted to do what I wanted to do. The only thing that turns me on is books.” So, when a worthy charity like the Bissell needed book help, she happily stepped in to help.

The Bissell has Margaret and other volunteers keep track of the hours they spend at the shop. The Bissell, like many other non-profits, uses volunteer hours to leverage grants and other government support. A year ago the Bissell presented Margaret with a



ONE OF THE ROWS OF BOOK THAT MARGARET MOONEY – THE BOOK LADY – HELPS TO KEEP FULLY STOCKED AND ORGANIZED

lovely volunteer award.

“So – it all started with me hanging around there. We get a lot of excellent books – a lot of estates – and a lot of pure garbage.” Lucky for us, Margaret sorts through the junk to find the gems.



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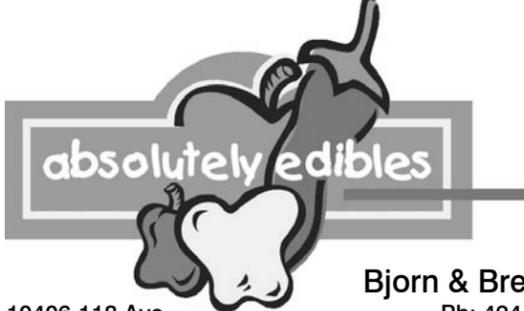


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# Taking helping hands a world away

MARGARET LARSEN

I have lived in the Alberta Avenue area with my husband for the past six years and am finding it a lively and engaging place to live. But this past January, I took myself, quite literally, into another world – a community of Mayan people in the rural highlands of Guatemala.

I read an article in the *Edmonton Journal* a year and a half ago about an organization called “Hearts & Hands Foundation” – a non-profit organization started two years ago by a woman named Jan Townsend that operates out of Canmore, Alberta. Several times a year she organizes groups of volunteers, at their own expense, to travel to rural communities in Guatemala

to build wood burning stoves to replace open wood fires. Anyone who has sat around a campfire knows the sensation of inhaling smoke and getting it in your eyes and how unpleasant that

can be. Imagine if all your food was cooked that way and the campfire was in your kitchen.

I had vacationed in Guatemala two years previously with my husband and knew I wanted to return sometime, so I flew out of the snow and cold and away from family and friends to work for three weeks as a volunteer.

The experience was everything I had hoped for and more. The schedule consisted of two weeks of stove build-

ing split up by a week of leisure. Our first week was spent in the highlands of Guatemala, in a village called Uspantan. Many of the people are subsistence farmers, living on very little. They grow corn and vegetables, and if they have the space, some chickens or pigs. Their homes are simple and basic, often made of adobe or cinder block with dirt floors, with only one or two rooms. Our material world seems a long way off when we

visit these simple dwellings. The “three stone fire” is what many Mayan families live with all their lives. This is a huge health problem and also uses a large amount of firewood. The replacement is something called the “ONIL stove” which is composed of three concrete pre-cast parts, an internal clay firebox insulated with sand, and a chimney to remove smoke. It can be assembled in about an hour, burns one-fifth of the wood, and takes all the smoke out of the dwelling. There is an interior stove called “La Planche,” and an outdoor stove is also built called “La Nixtamel.” These stoves improve the Mayans’ lives in so many ways.

After the stoves were assembled we were able to visit with family members and, through a translator, learn a little about them. They were very interested in hearing about the country we come from and about our own families. Pictures of our snowy Edmonton were a revelation to many. We left each home with warm feelings in our hearts, knowing that life will be better in many ways for the whole family.

Our second week was spent in the colonial city of Antigua, a World Heritage site, where our

group took the time to sightsee, brush up on our Spanish and do some volunteer shopping.

Since some of our group has gone home after Antigua, a smaller group of 10 of us spend



THE VOLUNTEERS HAVE PIZZA AND WATERMELON IN ANTIGUA. L-R ANN, JOHN, BARB (FROM CANMORE), MARGARET, AND HANNAH (FROM ONTARIO)

our third week in a village on the shores of Lake Atitlan, outside the town of Panajachel – a popular tourist town with lots of services, and a wonderful local flavor. We stay there and bus to the neighboring community of Jucanya to build stoves. We are given a warm and heartfelt welcome at the local school and our group is almost brought to tears listening to the children sing their national anthem with such enthusiasm. We are surrounded by beautiful children who are so, so curious about these visitors from another place, and who squeal with delight when they see their own faces on our digital screens.

I returned home with my head full of beautiful pictures, my heart brim full of loving memories, and a bag full of gorgeous colorful handicrafts. The experience of working in the Mayan communities was every bit as rewarding as I had imagined it would be. We were met at every turn by genuine gratitude and generosity from a group of people who have very little as far as material possessions go, but who abound in loving spirit. I believe that what we did for them will make a positive difference in their lives. We all felt our physical presence there was more worthwhile than just sending money; it showed the Mayans that others in the world care about their lives, and that we are all connected.

We each have different skills to offer. I had a pair of willing hands, a desire to do something worthwhile, and the funds to get me there. My three-week trip cost about \$2,500, which included \$450 toward the cost of some of the stoves. Each volunteer is also asked to collect donations of medical and school supplies to be given to the communities.

Anyone interested in finding out more about “Hearts & Hands” can check out their website at [www.heartshands.ca](http://www.heartshands.ca). Their next trip is scheduled for September 2007.



IN USPANTAN, A TYPICAL MAYAN FAMILY'S COOKING FIRE

## When caring hurts

PATRICIA DUNNIGAN

Most of us have heard the term Battle Fatigue, so when Charles Figley coined Compassion Fatigue in 1983, it had a familiar ring with an odd twist – but people get what it means instantly. It is the cost of caring, transmitted through empathy. At our most compassionate time – listening to others stories, pain, and hurts with an open heart so as to help them come to a place of resolution to life's losses and tragedies – we are also at our most vulnerable.

### Who is at Risk

All humans have the potential to be caregivers at one time or another. Some do it formally as professionals, others informally in their family and community networks. When I look around my neighbourhood I see many parents, some of who also do home schooling. I see those who care for sick, injured and ageing relatives. I see people who work in human services areas; child protection, health care, education, family support workers, ministers, police, ambulance drivers, to name only a few. All of these can be considered caregivers. As you read this make a mental note of your current helping relationships.

Burnout, secondary stress, vicarious traumatization, compassion fatigue are all words we use to describe the price we

pay for our deep caring about others. What is specific about Compassion Fatigue is that it is the natural consequence of attending to the experiences of traumatized people. The greater our capacity for listening and expressing empathy, the greater our vulnerability, and left untreated it can result in harm to ourselves and to those we care for.

### Symptoms and Progression

Compassion Fatigue can develop suddenly in response to a single experience or over time, as a process of job strain, erosion of idealism and the accumulation of intensive contact with the people we serve. Eric Gentry (2003) describes the process for a professional as a movement through a series of phases: The Zealot Phase: “yahoo I want to help change the world”; The Irritability Phase: “why doesn't the world want to change in my way”; The Withdrawal Phase: “I don't care if they change or not, they're all the same anyway”; The Zombie Phase: “Nothing

changes, no one cares, it doesn't matter, I hate this work”; The End Phase: pathology/illness, “I'll keep working for my pension”, or “I quit.” It can also lead to another pathway of renewal and maturation, “I need a break to recharge and look at my options.”



ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY MARIA PACE-WYNTERS

### Impact

The occurrence of Compassion Fatigue is rooted in trauma and when we add our personal unresolved experiences our risk is higher. It can manifest through symptoms that are similar to Post Traumatic Stress: horror,

suppression and avoidance, intrusive thoughts, nightmares or flashbacks, and self-destructive numbing techniques.

One sure sign is called the “Silencing Response.” We begin to lose our capacity to listen and subtly manipulate conversations to avoid the painful content. This is how we become ineffective in helping others. Sadly we also turn this silencing on ourselves and no longer recognize the signs of our own Compassion Fatigue.

### Prevention

Research shows that while measures to increase resilience are essential, most long-term caregivers will experience symptoms at one time or another; it is natural and not necessarily a problem. What is a problem is when it is left untreated and develops into a debilitating disorder.

We can keep our compassion levels topped up by a well planned self-care program, but as one caregiver said, “Bubble baths and exercise just aren't doing it for me anymore, I need something to deal with what's going on inside.”

### Treatment

Thankfully, Compassion Fatigue is very responsive to treatment. When caregivers take the crucial first step of reaching out to ask for help

they are on the way to recovery. That is a difficult first step for many, however; we may have an attitude that says we are weak if we need help, or we may work or live with others who encourage us to “suck it up.”

A program designed to address the symptoms and progression of Compassion Fatigue is now available in Edmonton through the Water and Stone Consulting Group. Training is offered to organizations as well as treatment for individuals. The Accelerated Recovery Program addresses caregiver attitudes, a review and assessment of our personal principles, mission and intention, tools for stabilizing and reducing anxiety, and the development of a long-term plan for recovery, support and ongoing health.

If you want to know more about Compassion Fatigue, check out our website at [www.waterandstone.ca](http://www.waterandstone.ca). You might choose to attend one of our training sessions, or to look into the possibility to doing the Accelerated Recovery Program with one of our trained specialists.

*PATRICIA DUNNIGAN has lived in Alberta Avenue for five years. She is an Applied Behavioural Scientist, specializing in educating, training and consulting to individuals and organizations since 1991. Patricia became a founding member of the Water and Stone Consulting Group and the Traumatology Institute of Western Canada in 2005.*

# What can I contribute?

## Words of wisdom from a volunteer extraordinaire

GORD VICKRUCK

Never the reluctant host, Valda waits approximately 30 seconds after I enter her house to offer me a drink. "What'll it be? Herbal tea, Coffee, Bailey's, Scotch?" Would she mind combining choice #2 and #3 for me? Done.

We sit down around the strikingly coloured, uniquely shaped tile table that occupies the centre of her kitchen. There must be a story. (Everything with Valda has a story!)

"This was created for me out of an Ikea gardening bench with a frame top made by my neighbour, Gerry. I had the idea and needed a frame to tile. He had the skill and the heart to help.

That's what I love about this neighbourhood. There are so many people with so many hidden gifts and talents that are always ready to lend a hand."

And Valda would be one of those. Since we have moved

into the neighbourhood, I have never known her to not be involved in some sort of volunteer something or other, from organizing block parties to organizing folk festivals.

Here are some questions and answers from the volunteer extraordinaire.

**Q:** My experience of you as a neighbour is that you aren't one to sit back. You have the knack or energy to get things started. Like our neighbourhood block party for instance.

**V:** It is something that comes natural to me. I see what needs

to be done and I get an idea of how to bring people together in doing it. It is kind of like filling a treasure chest; everyone contributes their own little gift or talent until it is loaded with all these special sparkly treasures. Everyone is happy. The people who have put in and the people who get to take out. It's all about just celebrating life together. My part is about creating an opportunity for people to discover or express gifts and talents that no one would have known about otherwise – maybe not even themselves. Or when I am teaching dance, to see the gifts of my students slowly blossoming. I think that is what is most satisfying to me.

**Q:** So were you always a volunteer organizer?

**V:** I have been a volunteer junkie since 1986, but it probably all started with my parents. Following my mother around to the Ladies auxiliary at the Legion, I grew up folding napkins. It all devel-

oped out of that.

**Q:** What happened in '86 that made you a volunteer junkie?

**V:** That's when I took the Volunteer Sector Management Program at Grant MacEwan. Since then it is has been pretty well standard fare.

**Q:** So you are a professional volunteer coordinator?

**V:** I have done a lot of paid professional gigs over the years. I started in the political arena with Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, but then migrated to the arts, which

suiting my style better. I worked for the WORKS visual arts festival, coordinated an international public TV conference, and have worked on video festivals, etc. Currently I am an area coordinator for the North Country Fair, as well as the manager of volunteers at the Edmonton Labatt Blues festival. I also volunteer at the Edmonton Folk Festival.

**Q:** What do you enjoy the most?

**V:** I enjoy them all. The quality of the music at the festivals just keeps me coming back. But then it is also how they honour the volunteers, like special parties where you can get mix with the artists. It makes it really personal and satisfying.

**Q:** What role or potential role do you see volunteering play in this community?

**V:** Volunteering is about looking beyond your own backyard and asking, "What can I contribute to make this a better neighborhood?" Then it becomes a ripple effect where other people begin to catch the vision. This community has so much going on in a volunteer basis, the avenue cleanup, the block parties, and the community leagues. But it goes deeper than that. It is about a true neighbourhood. These are the best neighbors I could ever dream of having. We look after each other whether it is problem rentals or just about throwing a party

**Q:** And you never shy away from either the fun or the challenges of life in the "hood"?

**V:** You got to have the right "attitude." If you have the 'tude, anything can happen.

This will not be the last time I sit around Valda's one-of-a-kind tile table listening to and telling stories, and I have no doubt this type of sharing of life experiences is where the spirit of volunteering is born and nurtured.

I raise the remainder of my coffee and Baileys in a salute: "Here's to 'tude!"



ACCORDING TO VALDA, VOLUNTEERING IS LIKE FILLING A TREASURE CHEST WITH SPARKLY TREASURES

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## Office Grand Opening!

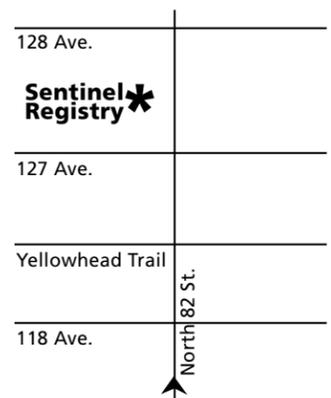
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# Bring your kitchen out of the dark ages

## HOMEGROWN RENOS

WITH JIM MAXWELL

Kitchens are usually regarded as functional rooms, but how many parties have you been at where everything is set up in the dining or living room, but everyone is in the kitchen? Make that chef in your life happy – give them a kitchen that they can use and create in, and want to be in. On a recent renovation I saw, the kitchen counter was only 32" high and 18" deep with one sink, and there were no electrical plug-ins! Interesting to see in a museum but not what you want in your house. When you do your kitchen it comes down to your budget and how much time you have. The cost of your renovation can range from a few dollars and an afternoon, to a second mortgage and three months of eating out.

The first and most major

issue with renovating the kitchen is something I can't help you with: what do you want your kitchen to be? The best advice is to look at all the kitchens you can; friends, show homes, kitchen specialty stores, building supply stores, and don't forget magazines and the Internet.

Are you just bored with your kitchen? Changing the handles on your cupboards and drawers, and painting or staining the doors can make a big difference. More ambitious, but budget still staring at you? You don't need to buy whole new cupboards – new doors can be bought instead. Take careful measurements and go down to Habitat for Humanity on the Yellowhead. They usually have a wide variety of styles and sizes available. If not the retail stores should have something, still for a lot less than buying new cupboards.

At a building supply store you will find a variety of cabinets, sinks, and appliances, along with design ideas. Many stores will give you a planning book with paper to draft your

ideal kitchen. The first step is to identify where your doors, windows, plumbing, and electrical services are. Then decide if your plan is just to replace the cabinets and appliances, or is it more ambitious, changing the size, and perhaps moving walls, doors or windows.

Is your kitchen dim or dark? Enlarging or adding a window is an option. Another option is to add a window to the dining room. This allows food to be passed directly to the table and the chef does not have to feel isolated from guests while in the kitchen. Putting low-wattage string lighting under the cabinets can brighten up the kitchen while keeping your power bill down, and easy to install kits are available. Then there are the floors.



The kitchen floor has to be strong to withstand everything from muddy boots to food and water spills, therefore it should be watertight. A single sheet of linoleum can do the trick. For heavy foot traffic many opt for ceramic tile or laminate wood flooring. Tile is extremely long lasting and can add a decorative

touch to the kitchen. Prices start from \$1/sq foot and up. Laminate hardwood is also good as extremely hard durable

coatings are applied at the factory that cannot be applied in the home.

The flooring I installed in my kitchen is called a floating floor and it was like putting together a jigsaw puzzle; the pieces snap together and a wax coating prevents water from seeping through. If you make a

mistake just pull up on the piece and put another one in; the floor is not attached to the sub-floor. Put moulding around the perimeter but be careful to nail it to the wall and not the floor.

Some things to take into consideration: the standard stove and fridge have a 30"x30" footprint. There are smaller stoves and fridges for apartments or small kitchens that are 24" wide by 30" deep. Fridges can vary in height and width. Dishwashers can fit under the counter, taking away valuable cupboard space, or can be portable. Think about what counter appliances you will be using on a regular basis: toaster, toaster oven, grill, coffee maker, blender? The electrical may have to be upgraded. GFCI receptacles are required and the fridge is required to be on its own circuit.

Good luck on your new kitchen!

*Jim has lived in Norwood for five years. He has learned a lot about renovating since moving into his 1912 house, and undoubtedly will be learning more in the future.*

## the Gardening Diva

WITH CHERYL WALKER

## In which she discourses on the fundamentals of planting

It has arrived, dear reader – that glorious time – planting season. I do hope that you shall join me in celebrating [the wonderful and esteemed] Victoria's birth by planting a flower or two. Be warned though, dear reader – plant seedlings only on or after HRH's Victoria's birthday, not before.

If you have seedlings, you will need to get their tender souls accustomed to being out doors. On a warm day, take your seedlings outside, and place them carefully in the shade. Do start slowly, dear readers: a few hours in a shaded place are enough. Dear readers may also wish to purchase or make a cold frame; the Internet and the local hardware store have a plethora of options. Each day the plants should

spend longer outside, and receive more sun. By the May long weekend your seedlings should be hardened off.

Now then to planting. You have read my instructions for preparing your beds, have you not dear reader? If not, off you go to read them. I'll wait.

Finished? Lovely. Now, your dirt should be tilled, weed free, and filled with the wonder of compost and organic mate-

rial. You may choose to plant in the morning, or in the evening, but do not plant in the heat of the day. TGD believes that evenings are for drinking gin and tonics on the porch, so she plants in the morning. Procure a trowel, a cultivator and an old paring knife. Lay out your plants and seeds to determine where each shall go.

### Seedlings

Using your cultivator, loosen

Pay attention to spacing, dear reader. The tiny little plants will get larger.

### Seeds

TGD drags the end of a rake or shovel to make a furrow in her garden. She walks or kneels in the soil and shakes out the seeds into the furrow and pushes the ridge of the furrow on to the seeds to cover them, as she goes along. TGD always plants more thickly than suggested, and thins in the coming weeks to achieve the desired spacing. Seeds may be planted earlier than HRH's birthday – the average last frost in Edmonton is May 7, and TGD often plants her vegetable seeds on that day. Most seeds will take 14 days to germinate, and Edmonton will most likely be past any danger of frost by then.

Give all of your plants a good drink, and tell them how happy they will be in their new home. They will turn their darling little faces to the sun, and bloom forth.

*TGD (AKA Cheryl Walker) lives and gardens in Parkdale, with the très wonderful Gardening Diva husband and the non-gardening dogs. She believes that every flower should bloom where it is planted. Next month she shall parse the problem of pruning.*



**PETER GOLDRING**  
Member of Parliament  
Edmonton East

## Good News For Seniors

Senior citizens are the fastest-growing group in Canada, a vital part of our society. Canada's New Government is delivering on its promise to support seniors through the New Horizons for Seniors Program, encouraging seniors to use their skills and experience to make a difference in their communities.

The program funds a wide range of non-profit activities led by seniors, such as volunteering, outreach, mentoring and teaching to benefit their communities. We recently announced almost \$14 million for 775 New Horizons for Seniors Program projects across Canada. In Edmonton groups taking part include: Meals On Wheels, the Edmonton Korean Seniors College Society, On 'R' Own Home Society, Ital-Canadian Seniors Association, Millwoods Council of Community Leagues, Alberta Caregivers Association and Hakka Tsung Tsin Association of Edmonton.

Fulfilling an election promise, we are creating a National Seniors Council to advise, study and report on current and future issues affecting seniors.

We are also working hard to help seniors financially with tax relief. The Age Credit Amount has been raised by \$1,000 to \$5,066. The pension income credit has been doubled to \$2,000. That puts almost \$900 million back in the hands of seniors over the next two years and removes 85,000 pensioners from the tax rolls. We have introduced pension income splitting - good news for seniors.

We are increasing the maximum Guaranteed Income Supplement benefit, assisting more than 50,000 seniors; we have proposed legislation to make it easier for seniors to apply for and receive that Supplement; and we are increasing the Refundable Medical Expense Supplement tax credit by more than 30 per cent to \$1,000.

Canada's New Government is delivering tax relief to seniors and to all Canadians and expanding opportunities for seniors to stay active in the community.

I'm proud to belong to a government that's getting things done for seniors, who worked hard and sacrificed so much for this great country.

What do you think?

495-3261

[www.petergoldring.ca](http://www.petergoldring.ca)

# EVENTS

## CHECK OUT THE NEW ONLINE COMMUNITY CALENDARS

All our community events & meetings are now on google calendars. Go to [www.ratcreek.org/calendar](http://www.ratcreek.org/calendar) Scroll down to view one of the four different calendars. Click on an event to get the details.

You can create your own google calendar and add any of these calendars to your personal one. Go to [www.google.com/calendar](http://www.google.com/calendar) and sign up for free. Then go to +other calendars and search "118th Avenue" and add desired calendars.

To submit your event or post a free community notice (max 75 words) email [events@ratcreek.org](mailto:events@ratcreek.org) or call 479-6285. Events & notices printed in the paper as deemed appropriate by the editorial team and as space permits.

## MAY WEEK LABOUR ARTS FESTIVAL

April 27th through May 5th, 2007, 11am - 7pm daily at 9115 118 Ave. The Edmonton May Week Labour Arts Festival brings together the labour movement, workers and artists to celebrate the achievements of people's struggles for social and economic justice through visual arts, music, film, poetry and theatre. Go to their website for more information: [www.mayweek.ab.ca](http://www.mayweek.ab.ca).

## MAY IS CLEAN UP MONTH

Please help give our communities a fresh spring look. Start by cleaning up your own property - front yards and alleys. Recruit neighbours to help you get the block clean - pick up garbage, rake leaves, clean street gutters. Make use of the big bin event and help out with community clean up efforts.

## BIG BIN EVENT

Saturday, May 5 and Sunday, May 6 from 9am to 5pm. Bring your large garbage items to Alberta Avenue parking lot at 93 St & 118 Ave. Need assistance call 278-4812. Able to volunteer or have a truck, call 278-4812. If you miss this one, there is another big bin on Sat, May 12 and Sun, May 13 from 9am to 5pm at Commonwealth Stadium (112 Ave & 90 St).

## LARGE ITEM PICK UP / GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Saturday, May 5 from 9am to 4pm ONLY.

Call 278-4812 to volunteer or report items for pick up. Volunteer headquarters at Eastwood Community League (11803 86 St).

## SPRUCE AVE SPRING CLEAN UP

May 3-5, Join us in our annual spring clean up!! Free bin for unwanted household items (no appliances or tires please). Canteen and bottle drive with all proceeds going to the park project. Garage sale tables available for only \$10.00. Call Verna @479-8019.

## KINNAIRD RAVINE CLEAN UP

Sunday, May 6, 10am to 3pm. Help clean up Kinnaird ravine from the Stadium LRT station down the ravine towards the river. Everyone is welcome! Meet at Sherriff Robertson Park (111 Ave & 82 St)

Garbage bags will be provided and the City will pick up the garbage from the park. Please wear sturdy shoes, clothes that can get dirty and heavy gloves. For more info contact Warren or Shelly 423-1015.

## YOU CAN STILL SIGN UP AS BLOCK CAPTAIN

The City of Edmonton has extended its Capital City Clean Up sign up to May 11. Sign up to keep your block clean and receive gloves, bags & a t-shirt. Block captain sign-up forms are available at City Hall, online at [www.edmonton.ca/capitalcitycleanup](http://www.edmonton.ca/capitalcitycleanup) or by calling 944-5470.

## SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET

Presented by Theatre Prospero and Arts on the Ave

May 11 and 12 at 8:00pm Hodson Hall (Avespace 1), Alberta Avenue Community League, 9210 118 Ave

Tickets are \$8.00 at the door. Bring your community membership for a discount. Call 477-2773 or go to [www.theatreprospero.ca](http://www.theatreprospero.ca) for more information.

## THOSE BLOOMING BACK ALLEYS! GARDENING SHOW

Saturday, May 12, 11am-3pm at Alberta Avenue hall. See ad page 3 for details.

## CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS FOR SPRING OFFERED BY THE ALBERTA AVENUE COMMUNITY LEAGUE AND THE CITY OF EDMONTON

### Saturday, May 5th - Mother's Day Soap Making

6-12 years 1-3 pm \$7 Create the perfect gift for Mom. You will experience soap making first hand as you melt, pour, colour and scent your very own soaps to take home.

### Saturday, May 26th - Ride To Survive (Bike Safety)

5 - 9 years 1-4 pm \$12

Participants will learn basic bicycle skills, rules of the road, safety and will participate in bike-related games and obstacles. Helmets and bike bells are mandatory.

## Saturday, June 9th - Sport Saturday

6-12 years 1-4 pm \$5 Join us in an active, fun Saturday afternoon all about sports. We will explore new sports, enjoy old favorites and have a great time while also learning about fair play and fitness.

All programs will be at the Alberta Avenue Community League Hall at 9210-118 Avenue. For more information visit Alberta Avenue's website at [www.aacl.shawbiz.ca](http://www.aacl.shawbiz.ca) or to register call 496-4999.

## DIVINE PERFORMING ARTS CHINESE SPECTACULAR

May 16, 7:30 pm at the Northern Alberta Jubilee

Tickets \$35-110. Call 780-993-8879 or 780-482-2256. Also available at ticketmaster.

A dazzling theatrical presentation. Through music and elegant dance, it presents the essence of China's rich ancient culture, and portrays mankind's quest for spirituality and goodness. This inspirational presentation includes marvellous precision dragon dances, stunning silken dancers in colourful costumes, gorgeous back-drops, and flawless musical performances. It is a tantalizing and fascinating evening that will make you stay and see more!

## ANNOUNCING THE GOOD NEWS

Friday, May 25, 7-9 pm at Avenue Vineyard Community Church (2nd floor, 11726 95 St). We all have people

who cross our paths who make us uncomfortable, who we don't know how to relate to, who we are afraid of, or who we simply want to ignore. As Christians we know these aren't the responses we're "supposed" to have but we don't know how to change them. Come listen to Joyce Heron, an internationally known speaker and member of Jacob's Well, a faith community in East Vancouver. She spoke at Breakforth 2005 and 2006 and will be speaking at YC 2007.

## LADIES MORNING OUT

Ladies, take some time out for yourselves! Join us 9:45 Thursday mornings for coffee, cake, conversation and the chance to discover and explore God's Word together. We meet at 11610 - 95A St (Orthodox Reformed Church of Edmonton). For more info: 455-0626 or 474-3893.

## REGISTER NOW FOR CITY OF EDMONTON SUMMER PROGRAMS

City of Edmonton summer program brochures will be available through schools by April 27. Registration for preschool and children's camps begins April 30 and registration for Play and Save children's programs begins May 12. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Program fees must be paid in full at time of registration.

Phone: 496-4999 press#2

Online: [ereg.edmonton.ca](http://ereg.edmonton.ca) (not available for Play and Save programs) Walk in to: any City of Edmonton Leisure Centre or City of Edmonton Circle Square, main floor, 11808 St. Albert Trail.

# Spirit of Our Youth Homes Inc. Home Operators Needed

A Home Operator provides live-in care and support to sibling groups of teens, children and/or youth. You are responsible for meeting their basic needs, developing a relationship, and providing a nurturing and home like atmosphere.

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T5H 2X6  
[Kerrie@spirityouth.ca](mailto:Kerrie@spirityouth.ca)  
P: 474-7140 F: 474-3120



Edmonton Public Library

## SPRUCEWOOD BRANCH

11555 - 95 Street Call 496-7099 to register

## Sign With Your Baby

1:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 16 Teach your pre-speaking, hearing baby or toddler how to communicate with you. Learn simple signs in American Sign Language to get you and your baby started. This session is for parents with babies 6 months to 2 years old and babies are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## Take Action On Climate Change

6:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 29 This workshop provides practical tips for saving time, energy and money by making your home and lifestyle more energy efficient. You will learn how to reduce energy consumption both indoors and out, and hear about available funding to retrofit your home. This program is presented by Brenda Osborne, Program Manager of the City of Edmonton's greenhouse gas reduction strategy CO2RE - Carbon Dioxide Reduction Edmonton. Visit [www.co2re.ca](http://www.co2re.ca) or call 944-CORE (2673) for additional information.

## Silly Songs With Larry

2 p.m. Saturday, June 9 for ages 5 - 12 years. Join Larry the Cucumber and Bob the Tomato as they take a journey down memory lane and relive some of their favorite silly songs. Extreme silliness warning!!

All welcome at

## SOLID ROCK EVANGEL CHURCH



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# Cheremosh Auditions

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PERFORMING ENSEMBLES  
AUDITIONS

Thursday, June 7, 2007  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm  
CHEREMOSHNA (Ages 14+)

Friday, June 8, 2007  
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
CHUMAK I (Ages 9 - 11)  
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
CHUMAK II (Ages 12 - 14)

BEGINNER CLASSES REGISTRATION  
(DURING AUDITIONS)

June 7, 2007  
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
(Ages 4 - 12) & Adult Group (18+)

June 8, 2007  
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
(Ages 4 - 12) & Adult Group (18+)

## CHEREMOSH UKRAINIAN DANCE COMPANY

AUDITIONS

Thursday, June 7, 2007  
7:30 pm - 9:00 pm  
CHEREMOSH (Ages 16+ or grade 10)



CHEREMOSH STUDIO  
4005 - 115 Avenue • Edmonton, AB T5W 0V5  
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ABC HEAD START  
[www.abcheadstart.org](http://www.abcheadstart.org)



Qualified staff promote a positive learning experience for your child and parents will have the opportunity to be involved. There is no fee for the program and transportation and snack are provided.

If your child is born between March 2, 2003 and March 1, 2004  
call **461-5353** to apply for the 2007/2008 school year.