



# RAT CREEK PRESS

ALBERTA AVENUE • DELTON • EASTWOOD • ELMWOOD PARK • PARKDALE-CROMDALE • SPRUCE AVENUE • WESTWOOD

PUBLISHED ON TREATY 6 TERRITORY

WWW.RATCREEK.ORG MAY 2019

## Latino focus at Thousand Faces Festival

Long-running festival always has a celebration of cultural diversity



Natyam Ensemble, a dance and music company, will be performing. | Supplied

### SHAREE ALUKO

Canada, a multicultural society, portrays true diversity throughout its communities. This diversity is exactly what will be showcased at the Thousand Faces Festival this year from May 24-26.

Mark Henderson, the festival's artistic director, states, "It is a very fun festival where people from all different cultures will display where we are all connected at the root."

This year's festival will have a Latino focus. Lady Vanessa Cardona, a 2019 solo polo (slam poetry) champion, will be making her grand appearance. Henderson says, "There was a Latino night in January with Vanessa and she was amazing." Cardona is expected to deliver another stunning performance at the festival.

Festival goers can expect to enjoy

plenty of new performances.

"We will hear stories that we have never heard before," says Henderson.

Some of the scheduled performances will be *Popol Vuh (The Book of the People)*, a new project planned specifically for this festival. *Popol Vuh*, a Mayan creationist tale, is the story of hero twins who journey into the underworld, where they play against some unsporting gods of death.

Another notable performance is *Urashima Tarō*, a Japanese fairy tale based on a turtle king. The turtle theme will be appealing to both children and adults. *Rocko and Nakota: Tales from the Land* is a one-man Indigenous show, and Natyam Ensemble will also be performing. The Natyam Ensemble is a classical East Indian dance and music company. "They will be doing a

brand-new piece along with their traditional live music. It is always enchanting and amazing."

Henderson states, "It will be an immersive and interactive experience; no two shows will be on at the same time. It will be a big long journey together and people can come late and still enjoy."

This event is for every member of the household and every budget. There is a free student matinee, *Paw Patrol* for kids, and a puppet show. Tasty treats will also be available, like free ice cream in the afternoon sessions. The Green Onion Cake Man will be present with his delicious green onion cakes.

Public shows will be held at Alberta Avenue Community Centre on May 24 and 25, starting at 7 pm. The festival will also have an afternoon segment from 1-4 pm on May 25 and 26. The afternoon shows

will be more family oriented so that both parents and children can enjoy the performances.

The festival will be held inside the community centre as well as outside, extending to the backyard of the premises.

Henderson says, "The evening session will be three hours of excellent show and feast. We want to keep it accessible for all people [in] the city, so we only ask for a \$20 donation. No one will be turned away because there is no mandatory charge."

For additional information about the festival, visit [www.thousand-faces.ca](http://www.thousand-faces.ca). The website will be updated with all the relevant information two weeks prior to the event.

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

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# UCP forms majority government in Alberta

Janis Irwin voted in as NDP MLA in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood

## STEPHEN STRAND

On April 16, the UCP turned Alberta into a sea of blue, with Edmonton an island of orange. Even before the polls finished reporting their numbers and the advance polls were counted, it quickly became clear that the UCP would form a majority government.

With the ability to now vote anywhere in Alberta during advance voting, 696,000 voted early as opposed to 235,000 in 2015. As of April 17, the estimated voter turnout was 69.9 per cent, the highest turnout since the 1980s.

As election results rolled in, residents congregated at Alberta Avenue Community Centre.

Alberta Avenue resident

Betty-Jo Lecours was hoping for an NDP victory. “I was really rooting for Janis Irwin tonight because she is awesome and because I am really socially minded. I really believe in publicly-funded services. I believe, really strongly, in gay rights.” But she did not expect the NDP to win. “I had a feeling that the dominant culture was leaning conservative. Out of habit, maybe?”

Another Alberta Avenue resident, Donna, was also hoping for an NDP government. “But in reality, the UCP had such a strong campaign. Truthfully, across the whole province, judging from what I heard from my friends and my family, I doubted the NDP would win. But I am thrilled that in my riding Janis Irwin won because she

worked hard.” She says that you have to give credit where credit is due. “The candidates that went out, that worked hard, that touched base, that were there in their constituencies, those are the people that won.” She says she doesn’t believe that the UCP will be able to deliver on the promises made regarding oil and gas.

Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood has been an NDP stronghold for years. Now, Janis Irwin is the new NDP MLA after former house leader and transportation minister Brian Mason retired. Elections Alberta reported that Irwin received 63.3 per cent of the votes, while UCP candidate Leila Houle was runner up with 25.6 per cent.

“Obviously, I’m honoured and humbled to be able to

serve our neighbours here in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, but it is certainly bittersweet,” explains Irwin. “It is a privilege I don’t take lightly and I knocked on every door in this riding and many doors multiple times. I was able to hear a lot from our constituents about the issues that matter to them. That is going to be my primary goal, obviously, to serve our neighbourhoods well.”

Certain issues matter to her as well. “Education is a big one, healthcare is one that came up at the doors a whole lot. Affordability in general, whether it’s things like child care, whether it’s ensuring that folks have supports like AISH.”

With the UCP in power, Irwin is both hopeful and concerned. “I am a member of

the LGBTQ community and I met a lot of people during this campaign who are concerned about our community, given some of Jason Kenney’s stances in the past. That’s another area where I am going to hope to be an effective voice for our community.” Irwin says she is proud of outgoing Premier Rachel Notley and is proud to be part of her team. “I am just excited to get to work fighting for Albertans and being able to hold Mr. Kenney and his government to account in the legislature.”

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



On April 16, community members watched the election results at Alberta Avenue Community Centre. | Stephen Strand



Janis Irwin (right) with outgoing Premier Rachel Notley (left). Irwin is the new MLA for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. | Supplied

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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.

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Build Community, Encourage Communication, Increase Capacity.

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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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Serving 12,500 community members.

### DELIVERY

The paper is delivered by Canada Post to all houses, apartments, and businesses in the seven neighbourhoods listed above including those with no unaddressed mail notices. For the most part, delivery begins on the last Wednesday of the month.

# Local authors nominated for literary awards

Categories included non-fiction, poetry, and children's literature

**RUSTI L LEHAY**

Working alone, often for years, not knowing if their work will ever be published, writers push themselves forward in their solitary art without water cooler colleague breaks.

Happily, three Alberta Avenue area authors are receiving some well-earned recognition for their efforts.

The 2019 Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize Shortlist nominations include Carissa Halton for *Little Yellow House*. The R. Ross Annett Award for Children's Literature (Picture Books) nominations include Catherine Owen for *Day Cat, Night Cat* (nominated for illustrations), and the Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry nominations include Anna Marie Sewell *For the*

*Changing Moon*. (Unavailable for comment.)

On June 8, the winners will be announced at the Alberta Literary Awards Gala.

Halton heard of her nomination a week before the press release. The nominations affirmed that her modern stories "speaking to life in Edmonton were interesting to the jury".

Owen so aptly names nominations as nods from the community. "It is lovely to have *Day Cat, Night Cat* nodded at in Alberta, where the story was originally born and the illustrations were created." Nominations also make people aware there is a book that may be worthy of their attention or dollars. Plus, Owen says, "Jenny Keith's illustrations are phenomenal and deserve accolade!"

Peter Midgely, Halton's editor, was the first to read the

manuscript that took her one year to draft. He then took it through three years of editing/publishing and was a real support fighting for it with the committee and jury.

Before you think a picture book requires less time or devotion, Owen says, "Jenny and I worked on and off for 10 years on *Day Cat, Night Cat*. I had been an admirer of her work since I first met her in 2006. When I wrote the tale in 2008, I instantly knew she would be the one I wanted illustrating the story due to her love of cats and her exquisitely bright and textured encaustic style." Owen says, "It was worth the wait!"

It was a lengthy labour and required considerable trust in the process. Owen says, "In the tenth year, we obtained Friesen as our press. We went with them because they approved

our magical combination of artist and illustrator!"

Through her word wizardry, Halton strove to present her family's experience of Alberta Avenue with all its beauty, complexity, tensions, and fun. "I wanted to introduce the rest of Canada to our city, our neighbourhood where the non-fiction stories often held multiple truths in the same space." For example, "People feel safe and unsafe. People are annoyed at garbage outside and see it as an opportunity for art or a new free thing for their house."

When "I didn't know if anyone was going to care", Halton said that the bigger connections between personal experiences of everyday stories and events spurred her on to write and kept her going. Halton called upon "sheer strength and strong will to finish."

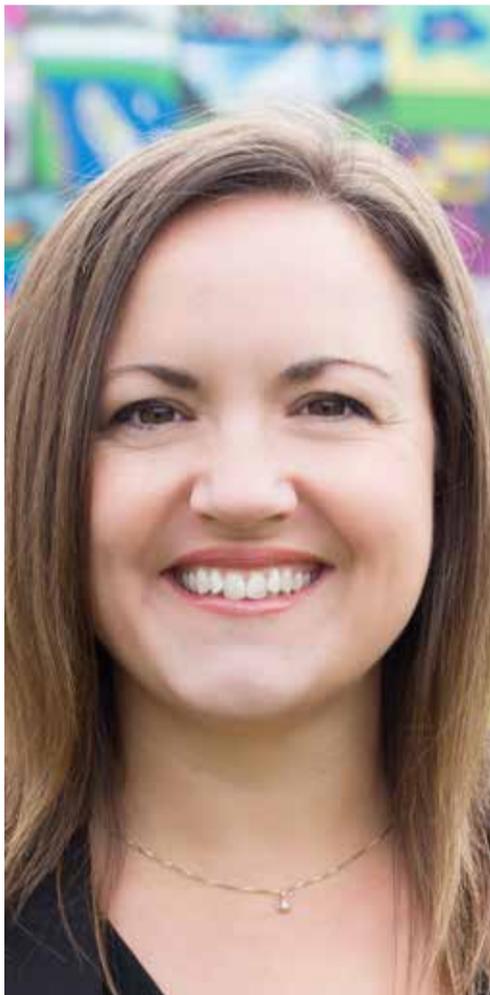
Only buying her heritage home off 118 Avenue less than a year ago, Owen says, "I already can see that residing just down the street from The Carrot and having many artsy neighbours will assist me to continue to flourish as a writer and performer. Words inevitably flow from engaged forms of energy."

Artists like these three are a huge part of Alberta Avenue being recognized as a vibrant part of Edmonton. Creatives of the area, you all deserve to take a bow!

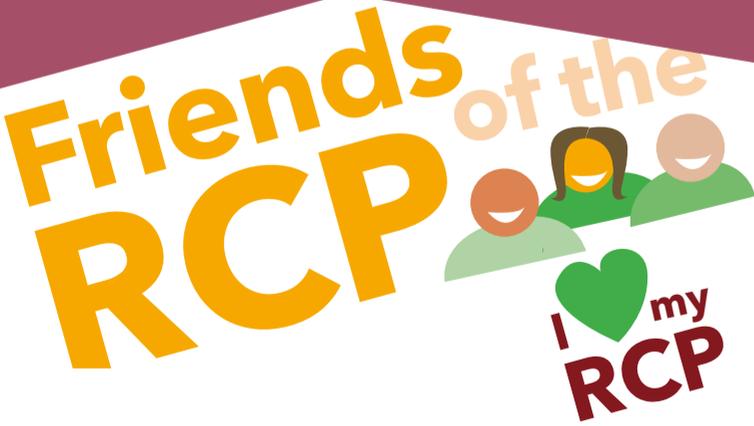
*A member of the Professional Writers Association of Canada since 2003, Rusti has been writing professionally since 1999. Her favourite word activity is immersion editing with memoir writers.*



Carissa Halton, author of *Little Yellow House*, is nominated for the Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize. | Supplied



Catherine Owen's children's book *Day Cat, Night Cat*, was nominated for Jenny Keith's illustrations. | Supplied



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# Bloomin' draws new and established vendors

Vendor offerings include beautiful pottery or mushroom kits

## MARI SASANO

Since 2007, the Bloomin' Garden Show has been kick-starting local gardens with a day of plant-related shopping, art, music, and tasty treats. It's a modest-sized event held at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre, but the quality of vendors and the atmosphere makes this one of the annual highlights for local gardening enthusiasts.

Heather Edwards, of Pottery by Heather, has been an exhibitor at Bloomin' Garden for over 10 years, and despite her hectic life, she always finds time to attend.

"I love everything about it. I rarely do shows anymore, but there's something about the whole feeling about this little show. First of all, 100 per cent believe in what they are doing for the community, and I know quite a few of the other artists who moved into that community," she says. "What a delightful group of people, amazing artists, fabulous music, surrounded by plants. It's a joy. It's supposed to be work, but I just smile all day long. It's supposed to be my job but it feels like a day off."

She will be bringing a selection of mugs, bowls, and other pottery items in her signature rich, layered colours and carved images inspired by nature.

"I really truly believe that

everybody should have something in their day-to-day life that has been made by someone else's hands. Even if it's functional, it should be beautiful."

tend to be gardeners, and they also tend to be cooks. Must have something to do with large ovens and creating vessels to put food in."

from a friend, and based on the show's reputation, she decided it was a good place to bring her products.

Originally from China, she

wanted a way to grow exotic mushrooms that weren't easily available in stores. Her parents had 20 years' experience growing mushrooms, and after a while she decided to create kits for the public to enjoy a number of interesting varieties, such as blue oyster, lion's mane, shiitake, and reishi mushrooms.

"If you want to grow mushrooms from scratch, it does require some technique. You need to have a laboratory space to maintain a clean space, like a biology lab. It has to be really clean so it doesn't have mould spores or bacteria growing on the medium."

The kit takes care of the hard

parts, and the rest is simple.

"The mycelium—it's like the mushroom's root system—already developed and mature, so when you purchase the kit, you just have to provide a little space and spray water to wait for the mushroom to fruit."

It takes about a week for them to get started, and eventually you can harvest a few every day. It's fun to watch them grow, she says, but there are other benefits to growing your own mushrooms.

"These will be the most fresh you can get. With storage, the mushrooms' flavour can decline, so the fresher you get, the most flavourful mushroom you can have."

And while the kits are easily kept on the kitchen counter, another advantage is they can be planted outdoors.

"When you plant them in the garden, it can benefit other plants as well. It helps [with] water retention, it helps improve the soil structure. It's kind of a win-win if you grow other plants."

This year's Bloomin' Garden Show takes place May 11 from 10 am to 4 pm at Alberta Avenue Community Centre (9210 118 Ave).

*Mari is a writer and civil servant.*



Chanchan Wang will be selling mushroom-growing kits. | Supplied

She continues: "I think there's always a connection between pottery and gardening. If you ever talk to potters, they are almost always involved in gardening. I don't know if it's the connection with the earth and the clay, but they always

Show organizers also try to bring in something new each year. This year, first-time vendor Planet Mushrooms-Myco Innovations is offering mushroom-growing kits.

Owner Chanchan Wang heard about Bloomin' Garden

it does require some technique. You need to have a laboratory space to maintain a clean space, like a biology lab. It has to be really clean so it doesn't have mould spores or bacteria growing on the medium."

The kit takes care of the hard

# Treating mothers to a potluck and plant swap

Parkdale Cromdale Community League to host Mother's Day event

## STEVEN TOWNSEND

Mothers give and sacrifice so much for the ones they love, so Parkdale Cromdale Community League is giving back with a Mother's Day potluck brunch and plant/seed swap.

I sat down with the Grower's Dozen Community Garden event planning committee Marina Fata, Sarah Dotimas, and Sarah De Lano to hear what they have planned.

The potluck brunch takes place on Sunday, May 12 at 11:30 am at Parkdale Cromdale Community League. This potluck will be the first Mother's Day brunch at the league and will serve as the kickoff for a series of summertime brunches hosted by the garden committee.

The idea is that community members bring their favourite dishes to share them with the other people in attendance.

Dotimas says, "Marina had the great idea of people bringing their recipes along with

their dish to share, just in case somebody wanted to make it at home."

The recipes would also help with any allergy concerns. Fata says she hopes that "by the end, people will have a little recipe book" put together from all the

mimosas.

Mothers will not go home empty handed, either. Children at the event can get in the planting spirit by making their mothers a gift.

De Lano says, "We are going to build some little planters.

planters will decompose and help to provide nutrients as the plants grow.

As part of the event, organizers are also planning a plant swap. This idea was brought to the group by garden club member Elvis Pineda. The swap is meant

ees the chance to bring home something new for their garden. People are encouraged to bring any of their leftover seeds and swap them as well.

In addition, those who purchased a rain barrel from the community garden's rain barrel fundraiser can pick up their barrels at the event. Funds from the sale of the rain barrels will go to the expansion of the community garden. Each barrel is priced between \$70 and \$90. The barrels come with all the accessories, including a leaf and mosquito screen, a spigot/tap, and an overflow adaptor and hose. The barrels can be purchased until May 2 at [rainbarrel.ca/GrowersDozen](http://rainbarrel.ca/GrowersDozen).

*Steven is an Edmonton native, community organizer and small business owner. His twitter handle is @grimacstv.*



Parkdale Cromdale's potluck brunch and plant/seed swap will include planters in biodegradable ice cream cones. | Supplied

summer brunches.

The event and food are free, but they will be selling \$2

They are going to be made out of ice cream cones so that they are fully biodegradable." The

to focus on helping people get rid of some of their extra starter plants. It will also give attend-

**MOTHER'S DAY POTLUCK BRUNCH & PLANT/SEED SWAP**

**Sunday, May 12 at 11:30 am**  
Bring your favourite dish with the recipe.

**Parkdale Cromdale Community League**  
11335 85 Street

# Beginner sewing class packed with students

Local resident will teach students to sew a variety of patterns

**TALEA MEDYNSKI**

Parkdale Cromdale Community League members are lucky indeed to have Margaret Gilbertson leading the free beginner sewing class that started on April 10.

Gilbertson, now 75 years old, has been sewing since she was 13. She took up sewing as a career when she worked for the Great Western Garment Company (GWG), a clothing company located on 86 Street and 106 Avenue that employed 500 people to produce blue jeans and men's work shirts. She worked there for 20 years and became an instructor to many employees.

"When you worked there, one person had one job: the pocket,

the fly. The parts went down the line until they were finished."

Employees were paid by piece and Gilbertson explains that most of the employees were immigrant women. "They were there to make money," she says. "They worked hard." But they visited while they worked and had fun. "It was just like a beehive."

Now she'll bring her experience to other budding seamstresses. The idea for the class started when she went out for lunch with community league president Kevin Wong and second vice president Steven Townsend.

"It was a spur of the moment thing," Gilbertson explains. "They asked, 'if we had a sewing class, would you teach it?'"

Gilbertson, who says she's "excited but nervous," was up for the idea and the class is full, with 15 people registered. Using a microgrant from Sage Seniors Association, the league purchased three sewing machines and one serger machine. Additionally, a few people donated their machines for students to use.

While those machines are there for students to use, other students are bringing their own machines, like Melisa Brittain. She borrowed a vintage sewing machine from a friend. The machine was her friend's grandmother's machine. Brittain says, "I just think I want to learn how to use the machine, maybe make something like curtains."

Catherine Tait has been

sewing since she was six years old and will be there to help Gilbertson.

"I saw that she was putting it on and asked if she needed some help," says Tait.

Gilbertson plans to discover the skill level of her students, but she has ideas for the first few classes, starting with the students practicing sewing lines on paper and getting accustomed to using a sewing machine in general. After that, they'll move on to other projects.

Over the years, Gilbertson was able to get some jean pockets, zippers, and denim material from work. Students will make a change purse and then a shopping bag. After that, she's going to ask for ideas on what people want to make.

"We could make aprons or placemats or potholders," she suggests. "I really look forward to their ideas."

Although she's supplying denim, zippers, and thread for the first few projects, participants will need to bring their own materials for future projects. She points out that although fabric used to be affordable, it can get expensive now.

Classes are every second Wednesday from 7 to 9 pm at Parkdale Cromdale Community League until the end of July.

"Depending on how it goes, we might continue in the fall," says Gilbertson.

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



Melisa Brittain with her borrowed vintage sewing machine. Brittain hopes to make some curtains. | Talea Medynski



Pretzel (right) and her daughter Jaymie (left) at the first class on April 10. | Talea Medynski

# Keeping that Spark! glowing for youth camp

Fundraising events will bring much-needed revenue to youth camp

**TEKLA LUCHENSKI**

Two upcoming fundraisers will help support Spark! Youth Camp, a theatre camp taking place at Alberta Avenue Community Centre this summer. Fees are kept low through donations, and the camp offers a financial assistance program to make the program accessible.

On Sunday, May 12, celebrate Mother's Day with the "It Takes a Village Mother's Day Brunch".

Alberta Avenue Community League organizes Spark! Youth Camp each year. Virginia Potkins, a community resident and owner of Special Events by Gina Miller, is coordinating the silent auction at their movie night fundraiser on May 19.

"I heard they had a little bit of a shortfall, and thought, 'Why don't I do [a fundraising event]?'"

Her company is organizing the brunch. She's excited by the league's goal of making

the camp accessible regardless of income level by offering low fees and a financial assistance program.

She says, "I'd love to see 75 per cent of these kids attending."

She hopes this event will raise at least \$3,000 for some of this year's expenses and as a jumpstart for next year's camp.

At Spark! Youth Camp, kids ages 7-14 learn about each other and community through theatre and the arts. Potkins says, "It opens kids' eyes for imagination and creativity." Kids attending are culturally and socioeconomically diverse. "You get to meet kids who have dreams and might be in a similar situation. Kids can realize, 'I'm not the only one who lives like this.'"

This year's brunch proudly features Edmonton singer/songwriter Martin Kerr.

The event is at London Villas Hub. Brunch is at 10:30 am, with a formal program at 11:15 am. "It will be a great buffet," says Potkins.

Purchase tickets now on Eventbrite under "It Takes A Village Mother's Day Brunch". Tickets for adults are \$60, while tickets for children ages 4-10 are \$45. Children under 4 years old attend for free.

Can't attend? Visit the Eventbrite page to donate or to gift tickets.

Also coming up is Spark! Screening Under the Stars, the camp's biggest fundraiser of the year on Sunday, May 19 at 8:30 pm. The feature is *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, with a concession and silent auction. Beer and wine are also available (served by the venue).

Chris Dela Cruz, co-founder of Spark! and head technical theatre instructor, says, "I'm so excited to present our fourth annual Spark! outdoor movie at La Cité Francophone. This year people will sit under the stars for a screening of *E.T.* on La Cité's beautiful outdoor patio. It doesn't get much better than watching this classic outside with popcorn in one hand

and beer sold by Café Bicyclette in the other. We offer an incredible camp to these students at an accessible price and this fundraiser is so important to continue to do so."

Alita Rickards, the camp's fundraiser and administrator, says it's a great night out and a wonderful way to raise money. The suggested donation is \$10.

"People lay sleeping bags, mats, blankets, and pillows on the grassy hill surrounding the café and recline with family and friends to watch the movie. We always call it 'Under the Stars', but this year it's funny because it's *E.T.*, so it's really out of this world!" says Rickards.

*Tekla has lived in the Parkdale neighbourhood since 2013.*

## SPARK! FUNDRAISERS

**It Takes A Village Mother's Day Brunch**  
May 12, 10:30 am  
London Villas Hub (9620 109 Ave)  
[www.eventbrite.ca](http://www.eventbrite.ca)

**Under the Stars, screening of E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial**  
May 19, 8:30 pm  
Café Bicyclette (8627 91 St)



Watch a classic movie under the stars on May 19. | Alita Rickards

## OPINION

# The quandary of finding a solution for all

Minimum wage is not a black and white situation

TALEA MEDYNSKI

We're all just looking to survive, and it's a fact that both business owners and employees need a reliable income to live.

The topic of minimum wage can elicit a passionate response from both employees and business owners, but it's not a black and white issue for either side. Both parties have their own financial struggles, with different factors coming into play.

For job seekers, it doesn't help that the job market hasn't improved. According to Statistics Canada, Alberta's unemployment rate has increased to 7.3 per cent, with Edmonton's unemployment rate at seven per cent. A *Global News* article published on March 8 stated, "Although the province has 3,800 more jobs than it did last month, the trend factors in the creation of 11,500 public-sector jobs and the loss of 7,000 private-sector positions."

A common misconception is that those with minimum wage jobs are students or people lacking post-secondary education. While 43 per cent of minimum wage earners are younger than 25, Statistics Canada says 17 per cent are 15 to 64 years old and are "single, lone parents or spouses/partners in single-earner couples", while 21 per cent are 15 to 64 years old and "spouses/partners in dual-earner couples."

On Oct. 1, 2018, the minimum wage increased to \$15 an hour, turning Alberta's minimum wage to the highest in Canada from the lowest. But still, in Edmonton the living wage is \$16.48 an hour for

two adults working full-time to support a family of four. Even if that job is 40 hours a week, other expenses eat up the money. Rent is an average of \$1,255 for a two-bedroom apartment. Food is becoming more expensive. This year's Canada Food Price Report states consumers are expected to pay \$411 more for food this year. And of course, not everyone is able to secure full-time hours.

person being healthy.

Meanwhile, business owners typically paying minimum wage are also struggling. Restaurants Canada states restaurants operate on a narrow margin of profit of 5.4 per cent before taxes. The biggest expenses are labour at 29.7 per cent and the cost of sales at 33.7 per cent. Other factors include rent, repair and maintenance, utilities, advertising, depreciation, and miscellaneous expenses.

pay anyway if their supplier's costs increase.

Carbon tax is not perfect, but we also can't ignore climate change. Ignoring it and going on as we have won't make it go away.

Looking at both sides, it's hard to find a win-win solution, but perhaps some ideas can increase those odds.

For businesses, lobby the government to increase funding for startups and introduce

business, consider creating a business with several people. It may be more affordable to purchase a building together and run that business. The mortgage could then be split several ways. And if those people work in different aspects of the business, they're invested in making it successful.

As for job seekers, the job market has changed. Long gone are the days of working at one job or career, collecting a pension, and retiring. Side gigs have become a reality for many people in order to survive and meet financial goals. According to *What Color is My Parachute?*, job seekers took a little over a month to find a job before 2008. Now, 17 to 30 per cent of unemployed job seekers in the U.S. take over a year to find a job.

Keep current with expected skills, knowledge, and technology. It's incredibly difficult to get a job in a preferred career path if you haven't kept up. Resources like Lynda.com offer plenty of free courses with an Edmonton Public Library card. Polish your resume using resources at [alis.alberta.ca](http://alis.alberta.ca). Sometimes volunteering strategically to get desired skills can also be helpful. When working, take full advantage of any educational opportunity.

Networking has become important. Experience is necessary, but it doesn't hurt to attend networking events or simply cultivate a wider social network. It would be nice to be hired on experience and skill alone, but all too often knowing someone is what gets you in the door.

The world is changing, with life becoming more difficult.

Support local businesses. Our area has many local businesses, most of them small businesses, all of whom would appreciate your patronage.

Businesses: employ people so they too can make a decent living. All these people would appreciate being given a chance to lead a comfortable life.

In the end, hopefully we can all thrive, not just survive.

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



It's hard to find a win-win situation when both employees and employers have valid struggles. | Pixabay

Finances have a significant impact on our health. *StarMetro* recently published an article about social health. The author cited a 2013 Canadian Medical Association report, stating that 50 per cent of a population's health is impacted by the social and economic environment. The more money someone has, the higher the chances of that

The cost of food and transporting food has also increased. Food prices are expected to rise between 1.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent. Don't forget that climate change has an impact on food shortages and rising prices.

Carbon tax also affects the food service industry. According to Restaurants Canada, "Many food service businesses have large spaces to heat and rely on equipment that runs on natural gas to cook and safely preserve food. A large portion, if not the majority of a restaurant's energy use goes directly into the food preparation process. Restaurateurs can do very little to reduce energy use that is used to prepare, cook and preserve food to ensure food safety." Even if restaurant owners aren't affected by carbon tax directly, they

more tax breaks. A promising start is the plan for a project called The Public, which would include 13 commercial kitchens and resources like food storage, training, and space. Small food businesses don't always have the space for a commercial kitchen.

Connect with the community so potential customers know about the business. Take advantage of advertising opportunities, whether it's through social media, print, radio, television, or simply word of mouth.

If at all possible, pay a living wage. Business expenses are many and significant, but paying employees a fair and equitable wage increases disposable income, thus injecting more money back into the economy.

Think outside the box. Instead of one or two people owning and running a busi-



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# Expenses pile up for local businesses

Navigating the economy brings many challenges

**TALEA MEDYNSKI**

The economy has been a strain on everyone, employees and business owners alike. Last month, *RCP* featured the stories of people who live on a very limited income. This month illuminates the struggles business owners face.

Ryan Luxford is the owner of the 118 Avenue Wee Book Inn, a retail store selling, buying, and trading second-hand books. The store has a long history in the area; they've been on the Ave since 1995.

He says the biggest expenses are probably salaries and rent. He works with two part-time employees at his location.

"We used to own the building but sold it," he explains. "We're paying similar [rental] rates to downtown. I think the landlord has been nice to us for the first little bit."

With experience comes

wisdom in choosing locations. "One of our secrets over the years has been to find the best retail locations. We actually own the Whyte Avenue property." However, the trade off is paying the property taxes, which are particularly high.

Ed Donszelmann, owner of Otto Food and Drink, says his biggest expenses are food and labour.

"Labour's huge. Food has gone up. The raw material has gone up as well, all the time. That's a constant, it's inflation," Donszelmann says.

Donszelmann doesn't have a problem with carbon tax. "It's something that's needed, so do it."

The increase in minimum wage has affected some businesses more than others.

"Some restaurants have gone under. We're surviving, we're on the right path," says Donszelmann, but he adds, "As your expenses go up, you can't

keep raising your prices." At some point, people will simply not be able to pay.

While many people employed at restaurants in positions like servers make minimum wage, there is the benefit of tips.

Donszelmann employs 12 people at Otto Food and Drink, and they all tip share. "Tips are vital to this industry. We try to make it so everyone makes the same amount of money. Tipping gives all the staff a reasonable living wage." He explains that people work at restaurants for different reasons. Some, he says, make a career of it. "For others, it's a great means to an end."

Chris Hayduk, owner of Cafe Blackbird in Crestwood, explains that every aspect of running a business is expensive and it all adds up.

Location is a big factor. "We're in a small, desirable area," he explains. Rent, therefore, is a significant expense.

Add in the fact that every business has some sort of overhead costs.

"We're a business built on quite small transactions," he says. Customers typically come in for a cup of coffee or a bite to eat. "Cups, cream, sugar, cup sleeves—there's not a lot left at the end of it. Keeping those margins tight might work if you're doing a huge volume," he says, citing franchises like Tim Hortons. Small businesses don't usually have that volume of people coming through the doors.

And while something like carbon tax or increases in food or supplies may not affect a business directly, business owners still end up paying.

"Every time the cost of something goes up, it goes up across the board." For example, if suppliers who transport goods are faced with increased costs, they'll pass some of those increases on to their clients.

"Everything comes to us somehow. Even local products have to be shipped. I'm the guy at the end of the supply line. I don't want to reduce the quality of goods, so my option is to increase prices."

Joachim Holtz, executive director of Alberta Avenue Business Association, says businesses face many expenses.

"It's not just minimum wage, it could be other factors," Holtz says, giving examples of cost of goods and rent. "But they've been resilient and have the guts to go on. People don't have as much disposable income. Any bump in the economy will be good."

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



Ed Donszelmann tip shares at Otto Food and Drink. | Rebecca Lippiatt

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# Form vital relationships with your neighbours

Abundant Community and Neighbour Connect make connecting easy

TALEA MEDYNSKI

Being neighbourly doesn't mean channeling smarmy Ned Flanders from *The Simpsons*, but connecting with neighbours is important to our well-being and forms the basis of Abundant Community and Neighbour Connect.

Howard Lawrence, the City's Abundant Community coordinator, is the pioneer of the initiative. A longtime resident of the Highlands community, he describes himself as "a very neighbourly guy."

He continues: "I worked in the area of community development, which has awesome principles for troubled neighbourhoods, but research has shown that all neighbourhoods are troubled neighbourhoods."

Until residents are connected, a neighbourhood is just a place where people live. The idea is to make a community by connecting residents, who can then form relationships. Highland residents experimented with community development in their own neighbourhood, and the City looked at what they did.

"[Highland residents] proposed to the City to work with Northwestern University.

They've been researching what makes a great neighbourhood for over 30 years. We brought the City into the methodology."

The City website states that the initiative is "a neighbourhood engagement and community organizing approach that provides tools for neighbours to get to know each other on a block level."

Lawrence says Abundant Community works well in Edmonton because we have small neighbourhoods and leadership with community leagues.

"We develop with [neighbourhoods] a block to block experience," says Lawrence. "When neighbours gather together and look at each other, they're more connected and powerful."

He's passionate about his work. He has 20 years of experience in community development, four years of contracting with the City, and he's now a City employee.

"In the same way I love healthy people and healthy families, I love to see healthy neighbourhoods. It's a vocation, it's a calling. I can't not do it."

He explains people form vital relationships with family,

friends, and neighbours. "When people have all three, they flourish."

He describes neighbour-ing as a movement, and says Abundant Community gives it a framework and helps create a support team for neighbourhoods.

"We offer theoretical instruction to communities. We help to resource block connectors by finding a neighbourhood connector."

For those new to the initiative, he suggests keeping it simple by holding a block party.

"A block social is to neighbour-ing like Thanksgiving is to family. Neighbours will be forever connected in a tangible way."

Lawrence suggests having one other household help plan the event so that even if no one else joins, there's two households. When issuing invites, don't give more than a week's notice. Plan for the event to last an hour, so it's not a huge time commitment. Hold it on a sidewalk or in an alley.

"Make it a potluck. Bring whatever you can, doesn't matter. Come visit with your block. People can be nervous, so lower the barriers."

An offshoot of Abundant

Community is Neighbour Connect.

Lenn Wheatley, neighbour connector for Alberta Avenue, says, "Neighbour Connect employs a slightly more comprehensive methodology in the end goal of bringing community together. It morphed from Abundant Community about a year ago. We utilize academic resources as well as tangible tools to make block parties easier. We are always learning with neighbours on how to connect in new ways."

Last summer, the Alberta Avenue team reached 85 of Alberta Ave's 100 blocks, and these coming months will be busy again. During this time, students help with the activities.

"We're gearing up for another spring and summer of doing block parties," says Wheatley. Neighbour Connect also helps people with similar interests connect. "We helped one block connector to form a bike night recently."

They're also holding an arts drop-in night on May 18 at 1 pm at Alberta Avenue Community

Centre. "Anyone can come work on their project."

Now other communities

are interested in Neighbour Connect. Parkdale-Cromdale and Westwood are getting started, while Eastwood is creating another grassroots engagement model.

"We've been collaborating with them in getting started on grants, block parties, and mingles. We'll also be encouraging them to go door knocking and meet neighbours in a very intentional way."

In our city, there's no need to be alone. With these initiatives, the hope is that people form vital, lasting relationships.

If you have any interests you'd like to share with others, contact Alberta Avenue Community League or visit [neighbourconnect.ca](http://neighbourconnect.ca).

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

## INFORMATION

Abundant Community  
[edmonton.ca/](http://edmonton.ca/)

abundantcommunity or 311

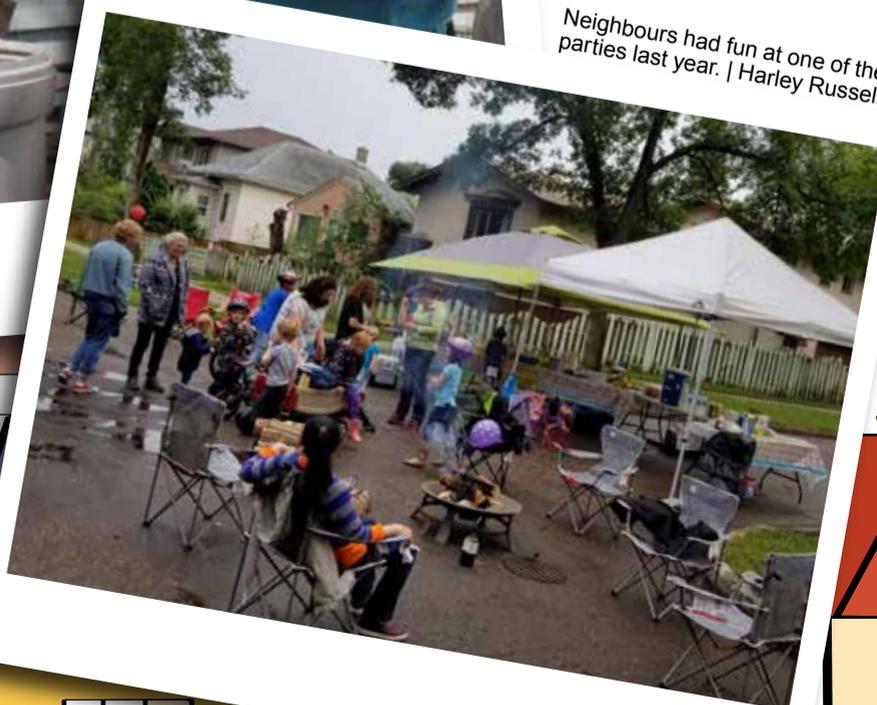
Neighbour Connect  
[neighbourconnect.ca](http://neighbourconnect.ca) or  
780.479.6237



Neighbour Connect has kits available to create a block party. | Supplied

Block parties can include plenty of delicious food. | Supplied

Neighbours had fun at one of the block parties last year. | Harley Russell





# Breathing new life into our communities

Neighbourhood renewal program brings much-needed upgrades

**PAULINE ISMAEL**

Neighbourhoods are susceptible to the ravages of time, and to help, the City of Edmonton has the neighbourhood renewal program for older neighbourhoods like ours.

Considering renewal affects all neighbourhood residents, it's worth knowing how it works. Renewal includes repaving neighbourhood roads, replacing street lights and sidewalks, and enhancing some park spaces. Collector roads such as 111, 115, and 118 Avenues, and 95 and 97 Streets are not included. Property taxes, provincial funding, and cost-sharing with property owners fund a renewal.

This year, two of our neighbourhoods will be under construction: Spruce Avenue, south of 114 Avenue from 97 to 104 Street and Alberta Avenue, south of 114 Avenue from 89 to 97 Street. Blocks will be closed as old sidewalks and pavement are removed and rebuilt. Residents may have to access their properties from the alleys.

Construction can be lengthy and may impact residents.

Verna Stainthorp, president of Spruce Avenue Community League, says Spruce Ave's renewal is half done and will be completed this year.

"[The construction] was well

organized. There was some disruption, of course, but not as much as we anticipated," says Stainthorp. "The City was very good in keeping us informed. Overall, it went quite well. There's still a lot of touch-ups to be done."

Most neighbourhoods take two years to complete a renewal, but it depends on the neighbourhood's size. Alberta Avenue, for example, will take four years.

"Construction is expected to start during the week of May 6, pending the progress of locating existing utilities. Construction is tentatively scheduled to start on 112 Avenue, between 95 Street and 91 Street," says Lyn Fluet, acting communications advisor with the City.

"I think it's really a once in a generation opportunity for us to reimagine and recreate our neighbourhood. Although I know that nobody likes construction, I hope that the end product is infrastructure and other improvements that support the vibrancy and connectivity in the neighbourhood," says Brendan Van Alstine, president of Alberta Avenue Community League.

Before renewal begins, the City assesses infrastructure in everything from roads to sidewalks to cracks. If conditions are poor, then that neighbourhood will be given priority.

Parkdale was the first neigh-

bourhood in our area to be renewed around 2008-2009. Cromdale, Delton, and Westwood were renewed in 2014-2016. Spruce Avenue is wrapping up this summer while Alberta Avenue is starting. Eastwood and Elmwood Park are in the consultation phase and renewal begins in 2020.

The City works with community leagues to help engage the neighbourhood in the planning process. Ongoing consultations and meetings are open to the public. The meetings serve as a way to collect feedback from the community and is taken into consideration, along with factors like City policies, programs, and technical considerations. The City seeks input on streets and pedestrian connections including bike lanes, safety, accessibility, parks, and underused facilities.

It's important for community members to attend so their voice is heard early in the planning process; it can be difficult to make changes once final designs are made. Renewal affects all residents with changes like reduced parking, bike lanes, increased property taxes, and construction. Share your thoughts and stay informed.

Eastwood and Elmwood Park's renewal begins next year. Community consultation meetings for both those neighbourhoods has already started. The next public meetings are

May 1 and 4.

Erin Campbell, Eastwood's communications director, urges community members to attend. "It's really important for the community to be heard and for the renewal to have a good impact."

Midway through the consultation process, community leagues may present their residents with decorative street light upgrades, which come with a small additional cost to property owners. In order for this to go ahead, 50 per cent plus one of a sample size need to vote in favour of them. There was not enough support in any of our neighbourhoods for decorative street lights thus far.

Property owners receive a local improvement notice for the cost associated with sidewalk reconstruction four to six months before reconstruction begins. At this time, they can petition against it. It takes 50 per cent plus one of property owners in a section of the neighbourhood to stop sidewalk renewal in that project area.

The cost to a property owner for new sidewalks on a 33 foot wide lot is approximately \$2,065, paid as a lump sum or added to property taxes at about \$150/year over 20 years.

This program should not be confused with the alley renewal program, which aims to renew

and rebuild alleys, or the neighbourhood revitalization, which sets neighbourhood goals related to physical, social, and economic improvements and often includes streetscape renewal of major commercial aerial roadways. The Avenue Initiative Revitalization included new streetscaping on 118 Avenue.

Should you have any concerns, contact the City or your community league.

*Pauline has lived in the area for almost 20 years and is currently finishing a degree in secondary education.*

**NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL**

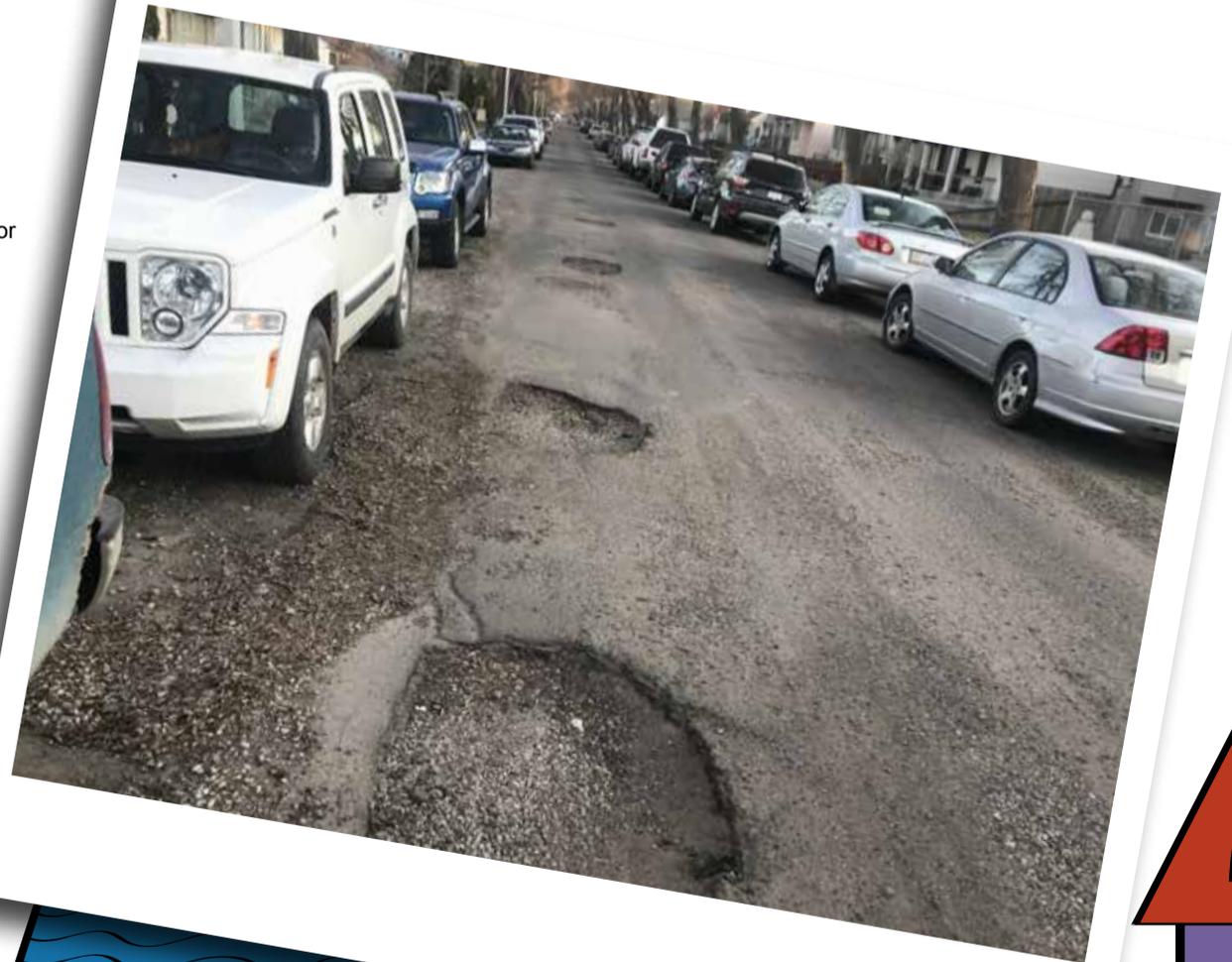
**Spruce Avenue  
2018-2019**  
edmonton.ca/  
BuildingSpruceAvenue

**Alberta Avenue  
2019-2022**  
edmonton.ca/  
BuildingAlbertaAvenue

**Project manager:  
Donny Fung, 780.423.7441.**  
Eastwood/Elmwood Park  
2020-2022  
edmonton.ca/Building  
EastwoodElmwoodPark

**Meetings on May 1 & 4,  
Eastwood Hall  
May 1, 5 to 8 pm  
May 4, 10 am to 1 pm**

Neighbourhood renewal works on improving or replacing infrastructure, like these residential roads. | Karen Mykietka



CONNECT WITH YOUR LEAGUE

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albertaave.org      parkdalecromdale.org

deltoncommunity.com      spruceavenuecommunity.com

eastwoodcommunity.org      westwoodcl.ca

elmwoodparkcommunity.org






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## Help us improve Eastwood and Elmwood Park

Starting in 2020, Eastwood and Elmwood Park will see the replacement of its aging roadway surfaces, street lights, curb and gutters, and reconstruction of sidewalks as part of the City of Edmonton's Neighbourhood Renewal Program for mature neighbourhoods.

**Exploring Options & Tradeoffs Public Engagement Events (Drop-in)**

<b>Wednesday, May 1, 2019</b> 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Eastwood Community League 11803 86 Street NW	<b>OR</b>	<b>Saturday, May 4, 2019</b> 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Eastwood Community League 11803 86 Street NW
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We invite you to:

- Work with us to confirm the vision and principles for Eastwood and Elmwood Park
- Share your input to help refine the designs of the draft concepts including improvements for people who walk and bike, and park features

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# Community-based work inspires local architect

Cynthia Dovell puts down roots in the neighbourhood

**NADINE RIOPEL**

Have you noticed the new medical building going up on 95 Street, just south of 111 Avenue? Or the facelift that businesses in the Royal Alex plaza just east of the Glenrose Hospital have received? Those two projects have something in common: a self-effacing, hard working local architect named Cynthia Dovell.

She's also the brains behind the new Wally Footz scorekeeper building, the Right at Home Housing Society's Beacon Heights affordable family housing project, the renovation of the Cambridge pedway tunnel in downtown Edmonton, and more.

These days, Dovell lives on the border between the Parkdale Cromdale and Alberta Avenue neighbourhoods with her husband Matt and their small son, but that wasn't always the case.

As a kid, her family moved around every couple of years for her father's work and studies, mostly within Alberta but eventually ending up in Ontario when she was in high school. She is the child of an epidemiologist father and a mother who immigrated from the Philippines at the age of 18. Her mother, having done some tailoring in her home country, worked in garment factories in B.C. shortly after her arrival. She worked her way up to management level in the factories before studying fashion at SAIT and NAIT, then ran her own formal wear design business.

Dovell attended the University of Toronto after graduating high school and, according to her, sort of stumbled upon the field that would become her passion.

"I decided to take architecture without really knowing what it was."

She flourished at the U of T

because she has a deep love of learning, and it's a school with a lot of variety.

"I took a course from every single faculty."

In spite of her broad interests, she never really wavered from architecture, eventually earning her bachelor's and master's degrees in the subject. She was drawn to it because it incorporates creativity, boundaries, and functionality, and also because, as she reflects, "It impacts people's well-being, their ability to function in the building, and it protects them from the elements."

After graduating, Dovell worked for 10 years at a firm in Toronto that focused on community work. She and her husband, a teacher, were finding the cost of living there unsustainable. So, when a visiting relative suggested they move to Alberta for better job prospects and lower costs, they decided to make the leap in 2013.

Her firm helped her transition. She opened and ran their western office for two years before going out on her own to open AVID Architecture in 2015.

Dovell and her small team work out of the 7th Street Lofts building in downtown Edmonton. She continues to favour community-based work, such as the new Beacon Heights development. She also has a passion for library design, and has presented at the provincial library conference in Jasper.

Many of her projects are based in story. For example, the Wally Footz building at Montrose Park takes its inspiration from the grain elevators that figured prominently in Footz's life.

"I normally have a story behind all the projects I work on."

She loves living where she does. "I love the trees. I love how close it is to the LRT

and the bike paths that lead downtown, where I have to go everyday."

She even likes hearing the noise from the Stadium. It gives her a sense that activity and action are happening—that it's a vibrant place.

She likes to see all the people walking by wearing their jerseys on game day, and hearing the music from concerts.

"It's the opposite of sleepy," she says.

*Nadine is a professional facilitator and connector. She is also an enthusiastic member of the Spruce Avenue community, where she lives with her husband and young son.*

**AVID Architecture**

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



Cynthia Dovell opened AVID Architecture two years after moving to Alberta. | FO Photography

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# Stay in motion with inclusive organization

Physical activity leads to much more than improved health

**STEPHEN STRAND**

For 25 years, InMotion Network has worked to keep women and girls physically active and healthy in order to build community and foster physical activity, sports awareness, and leadership skills.

“It is well known that girls that are involved in sports from a very early age learn self-coping skills, self-effacing skills. They can put their position forward. They build self-confidence. All of those wonderful things,” says Ella Mayer, executive director with InMotion Network. “They learn time management and prioritization. More importantly, they learn to value themselves.” Mayer adds that a woman who values herself and knows her worth will be less likely to remain in an abusive relationship.

“The immediate benefit is improving health determinants. Getting them active. Getting them out socializing. [It’s] espe-

cially important for women that come to Canada from somewhere else. It’s just good for women to be able to build that bond with other women, because women tend to gather for strength.”

They’re also an inclusive organization. “We accept a gender diverse population as long as they are significantly female identified. That value has been part of our guiding values for five years, six years.”

She explains how the non-profit organization became inclusive.

“We were funding a project with a group that was working with women leaving the street life,” says Mayer. The Alberta government was providing funding for upgrading so participants could receive their GED. But the women were struggling because it was a solely intellectual project, so Mayer asked the executive director if there was a physical component. “She said, ‘No, not really. We don’t have the money to do it.’” InMotion

Network donated \$2,500 for that purpose and their success rate increased by 30 per cent. “It allowed [participants] to develop friendships, trust relationships—which is something that anyone that has worked the street doesn’t really have the ability to [do]—to get physical, to laugh, and then spark the emotional side of well-being.”

At the end of the year, the group sent InMotion a class picture of the women and two trans women. “I said, ‘If they were working the street as women, and the rest of the class accepts them as women, then they are women.’ And I brought that to my next board meeting.”

Outdoor fitness is also important. A few years ago, InMotion put on a program called Play Like a Canadian.

“It was designed for new Canadian women and girls that had been here for less than two years, and refugee women and girls. Research shows that individuals that come from tropical climates tend to stay indoors in

the winter. There is a two year window that if an individual is introduced to winter activities, sports, and games outside they are far more likely to [stay] involved in those winter activities.”

Women are still the primary caregivers and role models for children under the age of seven. “So, if kids see mum wrapped up in a blanket on the sofa from October until April, what message are the kids getting?”

The program offered six hours of instruction in each winter sport. “We did cross-country skiing, ice skating, snow shoeing, and winter orienteering. It was fantastic.” Participants laughed and helped one another. “Somebody would be on snowshoes and they would fall over, and all the other women would laugh and help the other one up. Then [they’d] give tips on how they did it.” The purpose was to show participants that winter is not that bad, if properly dressed.

InMotion Network has programs all over the province,

including five schools in the Alberta Avenue region. Their Go Girl programs introduce girls to the Commonwealth Fitness Centre. “Most of those girls have never been in [the Commonwealth Fitness Centre]. But to me, the most important thing is moms who have never volunteered before are going along as volunteers with Go Girl and they are building that network,” says Mayer. “Now, it’s to the point that Via Rail has recognized the value of it and they give 50 of their staff the day off to go volunteer.”

Fitness, community building, inclusiveness. It’s a win-win situation. After all, who knows where that community and an introduction to fitness could lead?

For more information, visit [inmotionnetwork.org](http://inmotionnetwork.org).

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



Being physically active helps people bond with one another. | Pixabay



InMotion Network’s goal is to keep girls and women active. | Pixabay

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# Hempcrete can help make a net zero home

Local resident's journey from forestry led him to sustainable alternative

**STEVEN TOWNSEND**

I first met Peter Zurrdeeg while checking out his front boulevard in Parkdale-Cromdale. Most boulevards in mature neighbourhoods have a stretch of green grass and a couple of elm trees plopped into place. Sure, he has the trees, but he also has filled the green space between them with beautiful perennials and cherry bushes that you just can't help but taste as you walk by.

Zurrdeeg also makes hempcrete houses. He had a couple of blocks of hempcrete on the table when I arrived at his house.

Of course, he did other things on his way to building homes. Zurrdeeg studied forestry in Holland and Germany before making his way to Canada. He

immigrated to Canada hoping to work in the forestry industry, but quickly found out it was not what he thought it would be.

"When I started to get into forestry [in Canada], I found that forestry was not the same forestry that I learned."

The system he had learned was based around a forest's ecosystem. European companies would look at which species of trees were good for harvesting and which were supportive species. Then they chose what to harvest in a way that kept balance in the environment.

When he landed in Quebec, he discovered the Canadian forestry industry was about harvesting everything and leaving no balance in the ecosystem. He says, "I don't want to be part of that; I don't support that." Zurrdeeg wanted to be

supportive of the environment and give back to it rather than take from it.

So, he started a tree nursery; he was an arborist for a time. Then, he developed a cone-harvesting machine and started a company called Canadian Cone Collectors. Zurrdeeg's company would collect cones for reforestation after the forest had been harvested. However, there was a lot of travelling involved, and because he had a young family he decided to try something new. He opened a new company called Go Green Ltd. This is what brought him into the world of hempcrete and straw construction.

Farmers grow hemp to produce hemp seed for food and oil. Hemp seed is a high-value commodity which can give the farmer a good return on their investment. The problem is

that this practice uses only the top portion of the hemp plant, leaving the rest of the plant and its valuable fibres behind.

"The development of hempcrete came as a direct response for what to do with the leftovers [from hemp harvesting]," he says.

With the leftovers you get two products: the fibre and little sticks called hurd. The hurd is the centre of the stem and the fibre is the very thin skin on the stalk of the hemp plant. The hempcrete bricks are made by combining the hemp fibres and hurd with calcium.

Hempcrete bricks are not used as a supportive structure for the house, but go in between the wall frames and act as both a wall and an insulator. Hempcrete has an R value of R3-R4 per inch, meaning these bricks are perfect for someone

trying to build a net zero home.

As great as this sounds, there are some hurdles to jump when it comes to developing the hempcrete into a commercially viable alternative.

According to Zurrdeeg, "We currently have no hemp fibre processing plants in North America." So until that happens, if you are interested in having a hempcrete home you will have to find a contractor like Zurrdeeg to guide you along in the right direction. To learn more, search "Industrial Hemp Building Project Share Canada" on Facebook.

*Steven is an Edmonton native, community organizer and small business owner. His twitter handle is @grimacstv.*



Peter Zurrdeeg's career in forestry led him to the sustainability of hempcrete. | Steven Townsend

that **Bloomin'**  
garden show  
& art sale

**Saturday, May 11<sup>2019</sup>**  
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Alberta Avenue Community Centre  
93 st-118 avenue

"Faith in Dreams" by L.Shulba

[www.albertaave.org](http://www.albertaave.org)

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# Getting involved in the democratic process

Why it's important to become informed about politics

**VICTORIA STEVENS**

As a child, I remember always watching with my father as election results rolled in. It was akin to watching the Stanley Cup finals in excitement and I suspect it was even more exciting and stressful for my father. I was 17 during the Manitoba provincial election of '99. My dad was on the couch, a glass of bourbon in hand, as the NDP won a majority government. My conservative father stood up, finished his drink, and said, "That's it. We're moving." We didn't move.

Growing up, we discussed politics at the dinner table, over

drinks, at the cabin, and pretty much everywhere. It is an integral aspect of my life and it's no surprise that as an adult I am heavily involved. Politics are important, being informed is important, voting is important. The people we elect shape our lives, our future, and those of future generations. The best part is that if we don't like who has been elected, we have a chance to make changes in the next election.

We all can become more personally involved. I have volunteered with three campaigns since moving to Edmonton 15 years ago: two provincial and one civic. All three have been incredibly positive experi-

ences and have given me lasting friendships. Involvement doesn't need to end when the election results are tallied. Being politically involved is ongoing; there are many ways you can stay involved.

The most direct way is to contact your representative. The representative you contact will depend on whether your idea or concern is a federal, provincial, or civic matter. The easiest way to get in contact is through email, phone, or social media. Find your representative's contact information with a quick Internet search. It's even possible to set up a time to meet face-to-face. When contacting your representative or their office, be

prepared with the issue you'd like addressed, why you believe it is important, and an idea of what changes you would like to see.

Another way to be involved is to participate in rallies and marches. Demonstrations show your government that there are many people who believe change is needed. Most governments have citizen committees, which are a group of volunteers who meet and work with a representative or government employee to help them draft potential legislation based on what is important to their communities.

Discuss policy, new legislation, new laws, and societal

changes with friends and family. Conventional wisdom may tell us it is impolite to discuss these things. However, they are very important and having an open dialogue about them when it is not an election year is essential to ensuring an engaged and informed electorate.

Politics may seem confusing and overwhelming. Ease into it one step at a time and you'll find that it is quite interesting, satisfying, and engaging.

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



Political involvement doesn't stop after an election. | Victoria Stevens

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

Rat Creek Press needs casino volunteers for Aug 31/Sept 1 at Century Casino. Sign Up: <https://timecounts.org/rat-creek-press/events/13077>. Or [info@ratcreek.org](mailto:info@ratcreek.org) or 780.479.6285.

Help at the wonderful Bloomin Garden Show & Art Sale on May 11 with set up/tear down, info/greeting or concession. Sign up: <https://timecounts.org/alberta-avenue/events/13764>. Or [info@albertaave.org](mailto:info@albertaave.org) or 780.477.2773.

Enjoy vintage items & meeting neighbours? Become a clerk at The Carrot Charity Garage Sale on May 11!! Contact [events@artsontheave.org](mailto:events@artsontheave.org) Welcome new talent to our district! Become a host at The Carrot on

Saturdays Open Mic. Rotating schedule. Contact [manager@thecarrot.ca](mailto:manager@thecarrot.ca)

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# Take in Alberta Avenue's pop-up markets

Shop or sell at the upcoming neighbourhood markets

**NAZREENA ANWAR-TRAVAS**

Alberta Avenue's farmers market may be making a comeback depending on the success of three pop-up markets this year.

Following the success of last year's Christmas market, Special Events by Gina Miller is hosting its first pop-up public market on May 23, followed by two additional markets on July 25 and September 26. All three dates fall on a Thursday and the stalls are open from 4-8 pm.

The Alberta Avenue Community League board

has been discussing creating a farmers market in 2020. These pop-up markets will be a great test to see if Alberta Avenue can sustain a regular market.

Just like the name suggests, pop-up markets are temporary stores that encourage local shopping as well as supporting adjacent and walkable communities.

"We hope to have as much diversity as possible in these markets, but the focus is more on create it, bake it, and make it products that include culinary delights, jewellery, local artisans, and local artists," states Virginia Potkins, event orga-

nizer. "At our last Christmas market, there were at least 100 customers every hour. Vendors with appealing products along with right pricing benefited a lot and we hope to see more of these in the 2019 markets."

Booking a stall involves an application process. It costs \$25 to book a stall for one event, \$45 for two events, and \$65 for three events. Only one vendor can be at one stall. Non-profit organizations are welcome to participate at a discounted rate. Revenue obtained from bookings helps to support the Alberta Avenue Community League.

Pop-up markets are a great opportunity for not only vendors to display their creativity, but also offers the public and community residents an opportunity to mix and mingle as they hop from one stall to the next. Outdoor events create vibrancy and connectivity.

Admission is free. There will be something for everyone, including food trucks. So, if you want to take your creativity to the next level or want to do something different, check out the pop-up market.

*Writing has always been Nazreena's biggest passion besides*

*crocheting and breeding budgies. Having changed nine schools as a child in different countries, cultural tolerance and flexibility to adapt to diverse environments come naturally to her.*

## POP-UP MARKETS

**Alberta Ave Community Centre - 9210 118 Ave**  
**Thursday, May 23, 4-8 pm**  
**Thursday, July 25, 4-8 pm**  
**Thursday, Sept. 26, 4-8 pm**  
**Contact:**  
**specialeventsbyginamiller@gmail.com.**



The pop-up markets will include products such as food, jewellery, and artwork. | Pixabay



The first pop-up market is on May 23 at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre from 4 pm until 8 pm. | Nazreena Anwar-Travas

## FREE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

### ESL & LANGUAGE

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

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

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

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

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

### FOOD & SUPPORT

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

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

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

**COLLECTIVE KITCHENS**  
 Cook with friends, try new recipes, help your food budget.  
 St. Faith/St. Stephen: 2nd Tuesday, 1-3:30 pm. Call ahead. Trish: 780.464.5444.  
 Parent Link: Second Wednesday, 11:30-2:30 pm. Call ahead: 780.474.2400  
 Parkdale hall: Last Sunday of the month, 1-4 pm. Check parkdalecromdale.org for details.  
 Alberta Avenue: Sunday, 1-4 pm. Check albertaave.org for details.

### PARENTS & PRE-SCHOOLERS

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

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

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

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

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

**PARENT LINK CENTRE**  
 Information, support and a variety of free programs. 11666 95 St. 780.474.2400. Mon to Fri, 9 am-7 pm.

### CHILDREN

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

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

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

### YOUTH

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

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

**GLOBAL GIRLS**  
 Build new relationships, develop self-confidence, and identify pathways to achieve goals. Every other Thursday, 3:15-5:30 pm at the Mennonite Centre for ages 16-22. Drop-in. More: 780.423.9691.

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

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

### ADULTS

**COFFEE WITH COPS**  
 Join a roundtable conversation with EPS. First Wednesday of month from 10-11:00 am at The Carrot Coffeehouse.

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

**AVENUE WORD ADVENTURING**  
 Join other writers in a positive environment to write, share, and discuss writing habits and goals. Drop-in on the third Thursday afternoon of the month, 1:30-3:30 pm, The Carrot Coffeehouse. More: Rusti @ lit@ratcreek.org.

**SEATED MEDITATION**  
 Restfulness for the body and mind. Led by Kate Wilson, 12 years exp of Zen-based meditation. Bring a cushion and mat or simply show up. Mondays, 6:30 pm, Eastwood hall. Membership required.

**YOGA CLASS**  
 Focus on senses, breathing techniques, and postures that build strength & flexibility. First & third Thurs of the month, 7-8 pm until May 16 at Parkdale Cromdale hall.

**MEDITATION & SOUND BATH**  
 Explore mental and physical exercises to relax and enjoy stillness more easily. First & third Thurs of the month, 8-9 pm until May 16 at Parkdale Cromdale hall.

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

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

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

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

### SENIORS

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

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

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

### FAMILIES

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

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

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

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

**TABLE TOP GAMES NIGHT**  
 Choose from our selection of games or BYOG. Tables are free! Last Wednesday of the month, 4-9 pm at The Carrot Coffeehouse. Hosted by Tim of GObfest.

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

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

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

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

### LOCATIONS

Bent Arrow  
 11648 85 St  
 Bethel Gospel  
 11461 95 St  
 Cnd Native Friendship  
 11728 95 St  
 Community Leagues - see page 12

Crystal Kids  
 8715 118 Ave  
 Highlands Library  
 6710 118 Ave  
 Mennonite Centre  
 11713 82 St  
 Norwood Family Centre  
 9516 114 Ave  
 Norwood Legion  
 11150 82 St

Sprucewood Library  
 11555 95 St  
 St. Faith/St. Stephen Church  
 11725 93 St  
 St. Andrew's Church  
 8715 118 Ave  
 The Carrot Coffeehouse  
 9351 118 Ave  
 The Nina  
 9225 118 Ave





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

**St. Faith | 780.477.5931**  
**Sunday Worship:**  
 9:00 am Friday Prayer  
 11:00 am Sunday Worship  
 1st Sunday Common  
 2nd Sunday Trad. Anglican  
 3rd Sunday Aboriginal Form  
 4th Sunday Trad. Anglican

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

**AVENUE CHURCH**  
*A community to belong in... a community to serve with.*  
 11335 85 Street (Parkdale Hall)  
 avenuechurch.ca  
**Sundays**  
 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

**EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCH**  
*'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you... Therefore encourage one another and build each other up' Eph. 4:32, 1 Th. 5:11a*  
 12317-82 St.  
 780.474.4830  
 10:00 am Sunday School  
 11:00 am Sunday Worship  
 6:30 pm Wed. Study/Prayer

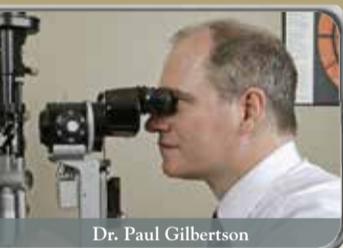
**ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN**  
*A caring and loving church in your community where everyone is welcome.*  
 8715 118 Avenue  
 780-477-8677  
 Sundays at 11 am

**THE SALVATION ARMY CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
*A Place for Worship and Service*  
 11661 95 Street  
 salvationarmy.ca/alberta  
 780.474.4324  
 3:00 pm Sunday Worship



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