

Rat Creek Press

Alberta Avenue • Delton • Eastwood • Elmwood Park • Parkdale-Cromdale • Spruce Avenue • Westwood



BY THE COMMUNITY - FOR THE COMMUNITY

MAY 2023

Local radio station opens in May

Owners will focus on Alberta Avenue events and businesses



A local online radio station, 118 Radio, is set to launch May 2. | Rebecca Lippiatt

ANDRES CALDERON

118 Radio, an online radio station focusing on Alberta Avenue, is set to launch in May, confirms Andrew Winter, one of the station's founders.

"[Broadcast radio] requires a lot of different licenses that they're not giving away freely these days, so it's difficult to have a traditional radio station...where you just dial into a number and it's there," says Winter. "I think this is partly why 118 Radio may not have worked 10 or 15 years ago. [How] many people are listening to their Spotify playlists while they're driving down the road, or they're using apps to listen to things that are online? I think the timing is a little bit better and being digital may sound like a disadvantage, [but] I don't know if it is."

Gordon Bates, Winter's business partner, adds, "I think there's a huge advantage, in one aspect," says Bates. "If we were trying to make it your traditional radio station, it probably wouldn't happen. A [traditional] radio station would not be

able to afford to be focused on a geographic area [like] we are talking about."

Launching on May 2, the station will play a selection of music and deliver updates on news within the Alberta Avenue community without becoming "full-on talk radio," says Winter.

"News is a funny thing," Winter adds. "[It] can go stale pretty fast, especially if you're broadcasting it over the airwaves. Yes, there will be news...but we're not going to start broadcasting the police report or anything like that."

Though the station may not cover daily news, any updates on area news will be timely enough to make regular tune-ins worthwhile.

"Although it's not live, we still want to be community interactive," says Bates. "We want to do things that create interest in shopping, living, and playing on 118 Avenue."

Bates acknowledges the terrain for their vision may still be uncharted, but the focus of the station will remain locally oriented.

"We're starting out small here. [We're] not aware of anything like this anywhere, so I don't think there's anything to copy," he adds. "But we do have a vision...to be a viable business, [and] we think we have the right ingredients to make that happen. So where it ends up at the end of the day could be much bigger than we're talking about today."

Despite Bates and Winter being the only people running and operating 118 Radio, all of their hard work to get the station going isn't simply a business venture.

"This is gonna sound cheesy, but...I believe in this neighbourhood," says Winter. "I just want to support the community that I live in. [And I] get to use my radio background; it's been a passion my entire life, so it's nice to be able to put into practice something that I've always wanted to do."

"When you think of 118 Avenue," adds Bates. "You take multiculturalism, family-run stores, family-run restaurants, entertainment—so much activity in the community. Where else can you find that?"

The radio station will officially launch on May 2, and a larger grand opening will take place at the Alberta Avenue Night Market on June 30.

Andres is slowly studying nursing while working full time. He spends most of his free time either reading or going to used book stores. He has a collection of over 1,200 books.

KEY POINTS

Local internet radio station starts May 2. Run by Gordon Bates & Andrew Winter, 118 Radio will play music & local news.

Learn about shopping, living, & playing along 118 Ave.

118radio.com

info@118radio.com



We look forward to working together to share the great news and stories of 118!

 **Rat Creek Press**

Treasure hunt at local garage sale

Rent a table or shop at Spruce Avenue Garage Sale

TALEA MEDYNSKI

The Spruce Avenue Garage Sale has been a community staple since 1996, and it's returning on May 27 at Spruce Avenue Community League.

Verna Stainthorp, the league's treasurer and the garage sale organizer, says people can expect a variety of items up for grabs.

"Everything from kitchen items to tools," Stainthorp says. "Small household items: books, dishes, clothes, maybe antiques. Lots of jewelry as well. Just things [people] want to pass along."

With a park nearby for kids to play in, parents or guardians can shop for treasures and expect a range of prices from 25 cents to around \$10.

She adds that no large, heavy appliances will be sold, and that the league is no longer accepting item donations as they've done in the past. Some vendors may sell small electrical appliances.

The garage sale is held in the league's community hall, and anyone in Spruce Avenue and the surrounding areas can contact Stainthorp to reserve a table and sell their gently used items. Tables are \$10 to rent for the day.

Stainthorp describes the garage sale as having a "nice, friendly atmosphere." With a park nearby for kids



Top: Spruce Avenue Garage Sale offers a variety of household items for sale. **Bottom:** Clothing and toys are among some of the items at the event. | Supplied

to play in, parents or guardians can shop for treasures and expect a range of prices from 25 cents to around \$10.

"There's lots of things for everybody, lots for kids, too," she says, explaining that sometimes vendors sell bikes.

The garage sale has become popular over the years, now drawing around 200-300 people from all over Edmonton. Stainthorp explains that the event was first held in 1996 as a way to bring the community together and to fundraise after the league was a victim of embezzlement.

Now, however, it's become a way to see familiar faces and visit community members.

"What we gain from it now is basically to cover our overhead," says Stainthorp.

Those interested in reserving a table should email Stainthorp at treasurer@spruceavenuecommunity.com or call her at 780.479.8019. The deadline to reserve a table is May 23.

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

SPRUCE AVE GARAGE SALE
May 27, 9 am - 5 pm
Spruce Avenue Community League Hall
11507 103 St



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ABOUT US

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

GOALS

Build Community, Encourage Communication, Increase Capacity.

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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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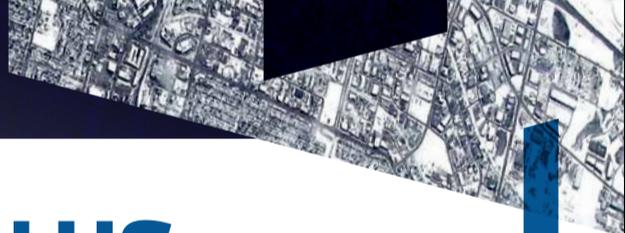
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CIRCULATION

Serving 12,000 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.



JOIN US

This spring, the Problem Property Initiative (PPI) will host a series of free events in north central Edmonton to increase awareness of the PPI's long term strategy to address problem properties. You do not need to live or work in the neighbourhood to attend.

Saturday, April 29, 2023
 2-4 p.m.
 Eastwood | Eastwood Community League Hall
 11803 86 Street

Thursday, May 18, 2023
 6:30-8:30 p.m.
 Alberta Avenue | Alberta Avenue Community League Hall
 9210 118 Avenue

Wednesday, June 14, 2023
 6:30-8:30 p.m.
 McCauley | Edmonton Intercultural Centre
 9538 107 Avenue

To help us plan, please scan QR code to RSVP
 (registration is not a requirement to attend).



To learn more about the Problem Property Initiative, visit edmonton.ca/ProblemProperties



Night markets coming to the Ave

Family-friendly events promise to showcase Alberta Avenue’s art and cultures

ANDRES CALDERON

Alberta Avenue can now count a series of night markets amongst its summer activities.

Starting June 30, local businesses at different locations along 118 Avenue will rotate hosting duties for the night markets on Friday evenings.

Erick Estrada, executive director of the Alberta Avenue Business Association (AABA), says holding each event at a different location will provide an introduction to the multiple services available within the community.

“[Each market] is catered to the different locations and businesses that participate,” says Estrada. “We are looking to bring that unique essence of the business mix that we have and showcase that to our neighbours and encourage them to approach.”

Estrada explains that the idea for the night markets was the result of discussions undertaken by AABA with local business owners, residents, and community leagues.

“A lot of activities that come to the Avenue...set up shop at the parking lot [of] the community league and do their event, but there’s not much engagement with the local economy,” says Estrada. “We decided to flip the script and start working with the businesses and community to see what it is that they value...and work with them in terms of space and logistics so that [the night markets] are a truly community-oriented event.”



Alberta Avenue Night Market is scheduled to begin on June 20, although a sample of one of the markets is set to showcase on May 26. | Supplied



The markets will take place on Friday evenings. | Supplied

Though exact details on what the night markets will include are still scarce, Estrada notes that there will be free family-friendly events that will feature food, music, and performers that will serve as a showcase for the area’s different art and cultures.

“[We] want to promote the entire district as a family-friendly area,” Estrada adds. “We want families to stop by and engage with business owners and see what they’re all about. It’s not just a business down the street, it’s a family-run business [with] people who are very passionate about the Avenue and [who] choose to spend their time here.”

Area business owners are not the only ones working behind the scenes, however. Local community leagues have not only participated in

the planning of the night markets, but they will also be present at the events.

“There’s a lot of people already very engaged [and] community leagues are pillars in this event,” says Estrada. “We really want to promote local neighbours [engaging] with the businesses here because there’s not much difference. [Business owners] work and live nearby the Avenue.”

Estrada confirms local community leagues will be present at the events, promoting memberships and helping out with night market activities. He adds that AABA has already collaborated with community leagues on neighbourhood safety initiatives and clean-up events.

The official launch of the night markets is scheduled for May 26, Estrada notes. “We will be gathering a bunch of different people that will be participating. It will be like a mini test of what the market is all about.”

Though it is not yet confirmed that the launch will be open to the public, watch for news by visiting alberta-avenue.com and all its other social media channels.

Andres is slowly studying nursing while working full time. He spends most of his free time either reading or going to used book stores. He has a collection of over 1,200 books.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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Encourage sharing and inclusion

An inclusion toolkit questionnaire for seniors works for any group

CONSTANCE BRISSENDEN

The Seniors' Group at Alberta Avenue Community League meets every Tuesday. Sitting in the lounge, we have lunch at noon and catch up on events. Some days we go on a field trip, such as a visit to the Alberta Aviation Museum. A few of us play pickleball in the gym, with no rules and often no net.

Recently, we got to know one another better by answering a few simple questions from the new Toolkit for Fostering Inclusion in Senior Serving Organizations, prepared by Age Friendly Edmonton and Edmonton Social Planning Council.

In the process, we discovered important things about our approach to inclusion. Even better, this toolkit is good for any group wanting to open its doors to others, to share community and culture.

According to Age Friendly Edmonton: "Inclusion means valuing the differences in the community and actively seeking out different perspectives. It means looking at how we might do things differently to benefit all members of our community. Inclusive practices are not just to benefit 'other' people but are usually good for everyone."

The first set of questions revolve around being welcoming. Does our group encourage existing seniors to welcome new members? Are there meaningful opportunities for new seniors to form connections with others?

Victoria Harrington is a practical person. She's a grandmother who often brings her preschool granddaughter to league events. As her granddaughter's caregiver, Harrington enjoys socializing and relaxing with the Seniors' Group, but recognizes it's not always possible to join a group like ours. "Outside influences, such as bus fare or family responsibilities, may make it hard for some people to get here," she observes. "Once you do get here, there are plenty of opportunities to participate."

Carol Brooks, the group's coordinator, helps new people feel welcome by



Members of the Seniors' Group at Alberta Avenue Community League. **Foreground from L to R:** Jocelyne Forget, Gerard Forget. **Background from L to R, facing camera:** Carol Brooks, Wayne Graham, and Frances Bernard. | Constance Brissenden

sharing food she's prepared. A vegetarian option is usually offered.

Jocelyne Forget says, "We have a small group and we welcome newcomers. It's easy to get to know them. Sometimes people just drop in now and then."

Husband Gerard Forget adds, "We are diverse and come from different backgrounds." He grew up in northern Alberta on a farm without running water or electricity. Forget helped establish the community league's garden and beehives. He enjoys sitting outdoors

with other seniors in the summer. When it comes to learning about other cultures, he suggests, "We can add field trips to go to places and learn about other cultures."

Only a few of us have attended a workshop on equity, diversity, and inclusion. "I went to one held at the [Canadian] Native Friendship Centre before Covid," shares Harrington. "It was cool; it was intense."

Frances Bernard and other group members agreed that it would be a great idea to seek out a speaker or workshop.

At the end of our discussion, Gerard Forget recalled his first job as a taxi driver in Peace River. "My bosses were two Ukrainian brothers, and they were my best bosses. When I worked the oil rigs in Fort St. John, I mixed with all kinds of people. We didn't separate ourselves. We didn't put ourselves or others into a box."

Inclusion is in the spotlight. For our group, it's the way to go.

To access and download the Toolkit for Fostering Inclusion in Senior Serving Organizations, visit seniorscouncil.net/diversity-and-inclusion-toolkit.

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

"Inclusion means valuing the differences in the community and actively seeking out different perspectives. It means looking at how we might do things differently to benefit all members of our community."

- Age Friendly Edmonton



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Community gardens ready to go

Discover the details on applying for your neighbourhood community garden

GAIL SILVIUS

Neighbourhood community league gardens are turning grass into groceries for many lucky gardeners this spring.

AudreyLynn Fluet, volunteer garden coordinator at Elmwood Park Community League, says, "It's the third season for the garden at Elmwood and there are 20 spots. The \$40 fee provides access to an 8 x 10 foot plot. This year, the board will be pulling names out of a hat as there are always more people who are wanting to garden than space available." Email epcl.info@shaw.ca to apply by the deadline of April 30.

Fluet, when asked why she devotes so much time to the garden, says, "I love the soil, love the people; it's such a beautiful place to grow food and build community."

The garden has been affected by the Yellowhead Trail and other construction projects. Says Fluet, "Neighbourhood renewal was sad and traumatic" as it disrupted the entire garden season last year.

Ashley Ayume, president of Spruce Avenue Community League, is equally enthusiastic about her community garden. The application process is open until the plots are full, so she suggests folks apply as soon as possible to programsdirector@spruceavenuecommunity.com.

Fundraising helps defray the costs, with a \$10 fee charged for a 4 x 8 foot plot. Gardeners don't have to be Spruce Avenue residents but are expected to join the league.

Ayume shares, "We are also planning several workshops this year. Composting, fruit tree planting and care, and a fall/winter session to plan for next year." Keep an eye on the league's social media sites for workshop information, and remember, the workshops are free.

Two other community leagues, Delton and Westwood, have applications into the City for pop-up gardens this year

and won't have confirmation in time for this article. Members are encouraged to check with their leagues in early May.

Alberta Avenue Community League has been hosting their garden for 13 years. Besides individual plots, the garden provides communal fruit and herb plots and a place for community members to gather. There are plans for a gazebo and a quiet corner. The fee this year is \$25 per plot (10 x 12 feet). The demand is high and priority is given to local residents.

"I love the soil, love the people; it's such a beautiful place to grow food and build community."

AudreyLynn Fluet, Elmwood Park Community League volunteer garden coordinator

Parkdale-Cromdale Community League started their community garden in 2016 and now have beds in the skating rink. Although the application process closed March 30, spaces may become available if gardeners aren't able to care for their plots. Part of the garden supports the collective kitchen hosted at the league and gardening has given youth a chance to learn skills and be part of



Parkdale-Cromdale's garden plots are claimed but may become available if gardeners change their minds. | Steven Townsend

their community.

Eastwood Community League has garden plots available for a \$25 refundable deposit. Email info@eastwoodhub.org or call 780.477.2354.

Besides the taste of fresh veggies and saving on your grocery bill, gardening

is a good way to spend time outside in Canada's short summer. It's a chance to get to know your neighbours and learn more about your community.

Gail is recently retired and enjoys exploring her Delton neighbourhood.



Alberta Avenue Community Garden plots are \$25. | Mya Colwell

WHAT'S A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

It's a place for people to grow vegetables. You'll be asked to do some volunteer work and get a community league membership.

The community league pays for water and the land.

A garden coordinator will tell you about the rules at the garden and collect your fee. You'll learn about gardening in Canada and share what you know with other gardeners.

EVERYONE BELONGS IN COMMUNITY!

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Rat Creek Press



Soil: the holy grail of gardening

Take care of the complex ecosystem beneath your feet



When you plant, ensure you cover the soil. | Karen Mykietka

KAREN MYKIETKA

Gardening doesn't start with plants, it starts with soil.

Soil is part of a fascinating ecosystem of insects, bacteria, fungi, and microbes in a complex relationship with plants, air, and water. Vegetables grown in unhealthy soil won't have the same nutrient levels as food grown in healthy, fertile soil.

You want a soil texture that's loamy, which you get when you have a balanced amount of sand, clay, and silt particles. Our soil in Edmonton tends to have a lot of clay. The most important part of fertile soil is organic matter, which is living and dead plant and animal matter in various stages of decomposition. Organic matter aka compost also helps break up clay soil (edmontonhort.com/compost).

According to Janet Melrose and Sheryl Normaneau in *The Prairie Gardener's Go-to for Soil*, humus (the organic component of soil) "is created in situ in the garden, through the marvelous properties and processes of soil, over the course of years." You cannot buy it.

So, how do you create great soil?

Disturb the soil as little as possible.

According to the experts, mess with soil as little as possible. Yes, this means no tilling and ideally no digging, either. The soil has its own food web. The microlife

lives in layers. Turning it over messes up these layers.

Use a broadfork to loosen the soil without disturbing the soil strata (layers), although this can be difficult to do if your soil has a lot of clay or is very dense and hard. Explore sheet mulching or lasagna gardening where you build up soil using layers of materials; however, it does take some time.

Also, *don't walk on your beds* (planting area). Create paths and walkways instead. Most importantly, don't dig or walk on your soil too early in the spring or when it's wet.

Keep soil planted or covered as much as possible.

Bare soil is dead soil. Healthy soil needs plant roots. You need to feed all the tiny creatures in the soil with plants and organic matter, then they will provide nutrients to the plant roots.

Plant in wider beds covering the whole area (check out square foot gardening) rather than rows. For instance, in a 32-inch wide bed you may be able to straddle 36 to 48-inch beds that you can reach into without stepping in. Build paths according to your needs, but an 18-inch path is adequate for foot access and gives you more soil to plant and cover.

You can also keep the soil covered by planting fall plants between summer

plants, and shallow-rooted plants by deep-rooted plants. Try succession planting where you plant fast growing crops at intervals during the growing season. Grow flowers in and around your vegetables. Plant cover like legumes, clover, buckwheat, or rye. Cover crops help block weeds and improve the soil. Cut down the cover crop when about half of the crop is flowering. Let it decompose on the soil to provide maximum benefit.

Add organic matter as needed.

In nature, organic matter is continually being added through the life and death of plants and animals. Janet Melrose states, "Keeping our plant debris within our gardens should be our goal." It's best to leave your plant roots in the soil. Use a stirrup hoe to chop weeds that aren't in seed, which leaves their roots in the soil, and let the tops compost on the soil. When plants are done for the season, just chop and drop the plant material to decompose and return the nutrients to the soil.

It's organic matter that creates water-holding capacity in your garden soil. Cover bare soil and add mulch around plants. Organic mulch includes items like shredded leaves, grass clippings, wood chips, straw, compost, and even newspaper. It will decompose and have to be replaced, but it adds that organic matter to the soil.

Compost is food for your soil and improves soil structure, but like everything else, moderation is key. Plant-based compost is better than manure-based compost, which is high in phosphorus.

Sprinkle or mix in an inch or two of compost on landscape beds and up to three inches in vegetable beds.

Practice plant diversity and rotate crops.

Our bodies thrive on a diverse diet because it brings us the variety of micronutrients we need. The same goes for the soil. Plants impact soil differently due to their root systems, the nutrients they use and give, and the pests or weeds they attract or repel. If you want healthy soil, don't plant the same thing in the same place year after year.

Crop rotation can be challenging in small garden spaces. Try using a mix of ground beds, raised garden beds, and pots. Change what you plant from year to year or co-ordinate with neighbours and friends and swap veggies!

By working with the soil and adding nutrients to it, your garden will flourish.

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

Eastwood Community League

Now taking applications for
Garden Plots

info@eastwoodhub.org

SPRUCE AVENUE COMMUNITY GARDEN

We are now accepting applications for the garden. Please contact programsdirector@spruceavenuecommunity.com for more information and to reserve a space.

Garden is located at 115 Ave & 103 St.

Celebrating mothers this May

Mothers are a crucial part of our lives

NATANEL KRIEKSFELD

“Mom” is one of the first words that children say when learning to talk. Mothers are like angels on Earth who warm you with their wings and who protect and love you. To each one of us when we enter this world, God gifts us this angel to guide us through all our adventures.

Our mothers walk with us through the turbulent weather of life, and through happiness and grief. Much like flowers do not grow without the sun, without our mothers, new human life cannot appear in this world.

A mother is a tree under whose branches we can always hide from life’s many storms. Our moms give us the greatest gift: life. We are reflected in the eyes of our mothers. They laugh with us, cry with us, dream with us, and love with us.

Our mothers help us with our first steps in a room, on the street, and later on in life. Because of us, we will always be in debt to them. When our mothers are with us, we always remain children, even if we are already adults. Thanks to our mothers, we learn to distinguish between good and evil, and to value every moment of our lives.

They teach us to love this world, to love humanity, and to serve them to the best of our abilities. Our mothers are one of the most important people in our lives, and one of our first teachers. They teach us how to walk our first steps, how to pronounce our first words, and how to swim in the large sea of life. Without these lessons, our development as individuals would simply not be possible. For our mothers we do not have to occupy a high position in society, or be wealthy; they always accept us the way we are. There are no good days and bad days for our mothers, because they are always ready and willing to help us at any moment in life

and with any situation. Our mothers are the most trustworthy people in our lives who will never leave us to face challenges on our own and who will always stand by our side until our challenges are resolved.

Because of all that our mothers do, we have a holiday to cherish them. Every year, on the second Sunday of May, Mother’s Day is celebrated. This holiday is known from ancient times and has been celebrated through many centuries. In ancient Greece, people worshiped a goddess named Gaia, who was the mother of all the gods. In England, people began celebrating Mother’s Day in the 17th century.

In 1910 in the United States, Mother’s Day was established thanks to Anna Marie Jarvis, an American from Philadelphia who wanted to express gratitude to her mother who raised her and 12 other children, as well as to all other mothers. Jarvis chose the second Sunday of May for Mother’s Day. Canada followed suit in 1914.

Mother’s Day is a day of thankfulness, since to be a mother is to care and to constantly remind the world that through love, kindness, tenderness, and compassion we can make the world a better place to live. The whole world begins with mothers’ love, from their greatest gifts: life, light, and a good-natured heart.

On this wonderful day, I would like to thank all mothers in Edmonton for their hard work and dedication to their children. Thank you for your love, generosity, and kindness, and for always being there for us even in the most difficult times and standing by our side. Happy Mother’s Day!

Natanel is originally from Israel and came to Canada with his family when he was a year old. Now 15 years old and in Grade 9, he’s a new Canadian citizen.



The writer with his mother. | Supplied

Seeking members from all the district neighbourhoods!

Alberta Ave, Delton, Eastwood, Elmwood Park, Parkdale-Cromdale, Spruce Avenue, & Westwood



Improve your community through neighbourhood empowerment!



Membership ONLY \$5

Annual General Meeting

New board members welcome!

Sunday, June 11 2 p.m. Alberta Ave 9210 118 Ave

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WEDNESDAYS 6 - 8 PM
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Free access to hand, power, and garden tools for Alberta Avenue, Parkdale-Cromdale & Spruce Avenue league members. Individual membership \$50.

Delton Community League Gardeners wanted

We are doing some landscaping at the building and welcome volunteers and perennials.

Small raised garden plots \$10 with league membership.

Compost sales

Please email buildings@deltoncommunity.com

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All ladies are welcome to attend!
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Please bring Membership Cards or sign up for one on the day of!

May 18, 2023
6:30 pm- 9:00 pm

Elmwood Park Community League
12505 75 st



RSVP to epcl.info@shaw.ca or 780-479-1035



WILL YOU BE OUR NEIGHBOUR?



Our board members will be door knocking all spring & summer, make sure to say hi!

- We'll be wearing AACL volunteer tags.
- Handing out #AACL Proud mailbox stickers.
- Asking what you want from the league and answering any questions.
- Asking about your safety concerns.
- Offering membership signups on the spot.

We want our 100 blocks to be safe spaces for all of our neighbours!



A better future.

Janis Irwin

Edmonton – Highlands – Norwood



We're focused on the things that matter to you:

- ✓ Standing up for public healthcare and an end to the chaos in hospitals
- ✓ Attracting investment to create more good-paying jobs
- ✓ Fighting for real action to make life more affordable
- ✓ Properly funding public education and lowering costs for students and families

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