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WINTER 2026

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ONE COMMUNITY**



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A portrait of Jane Goldrup, a woman with long dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt with a dark belt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

JANE GOLDRUP,
FOUNDER OF
PURANA SKINCARE

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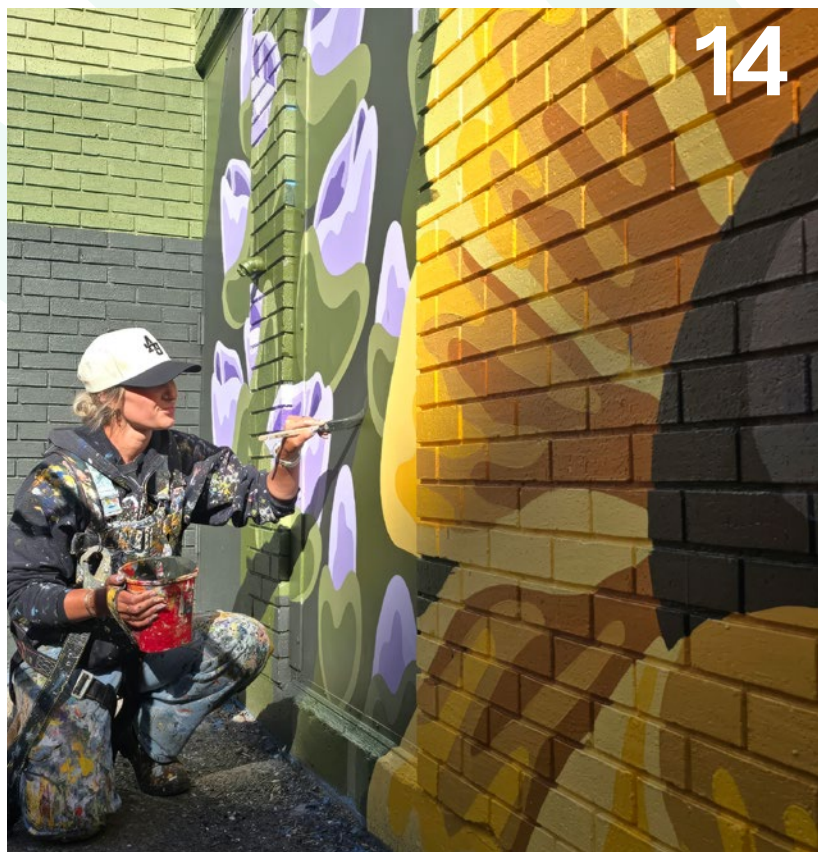
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Cover photo
by Ryan Parker

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PRINTING
Transcontinental Printing

PUBLISHER
Trudy Callaghan

ODVOD MEDIA CORP.
10221 123 St. NW
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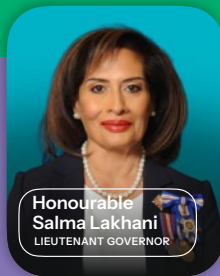
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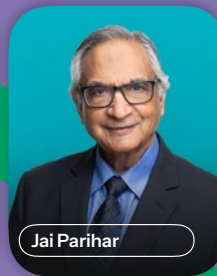
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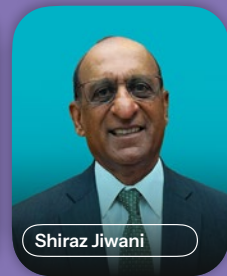
Honourable
Salma Lakhani
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



Radhe Gupta



Jai Parihar



Shiraz Jiwani

ROOTS *that* REACH

Celebrating South Asian Stories of Community Building

A panel discussion, moderated
by Amarjeet Sohi

November 5

FREE

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Murray Utas from
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Adventures

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Fringe Theatre Adventures

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- Plan for long-term sustainability

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Message from the CEO

What We Share

EDMONTON IS FULL of amazing people working to make their communities better. One of the great privileges of my job is having a front-row seat.

In late September, I joined Heidi and Grant Fedoruk as they opened their home for their fifth Edmonton Gives event. The Fedoruk's own a successful business and are using their success, passion and connections to inspire friends, family and colleagues to generously contribute to the services and spaces we need and love. In one night, they raised more than \$560,000 for The Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts, the Citadel Theatre and other charities.

A few days later, I celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards.

In 2001, Dr. Herb Belcourt, Georges Brosseau K.C. and Orval Belcourt created an endowment at Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) to help create future generations of Métis leaders through post-secondary education. Twenty-five years later, that endowment has grown to \$24.5 million and provided more than \$13 million through nearly 4,400 student awards.

But the numbers only tell part of the story. Thousands of Métis lawyers, doctors, artists, teachers, scientists and other professionals are contributing to communities across Alberta because of their vision. While government and sponsors have provided support, this work is primarily funded, nurtured and grown by Métis community members investing in themselves.

And then my team told me about Mirella Sacco.

Mirella knows first-hand how financial and accessibility barriers can limit people with physical disabilities. So, she created 13 funds with ECF — one for every province and territory in Canada — to ensure that financial barriers won't prevent adults with physical disabilities from accessing the programs, equipment, supplies and supports they need.

So often these days we read stories about what divides us. These three examples, from very different people, remind me that most of us care about our neighbours and want to share what we have — money, time, experience, relationships, ideas — to make life better for someone else.

That's the Edmonton I know. It makes me happy. And it gives me a lot of hope.

Tina Thomas

Chief Executive Officer

Edmonton Community Foundation



Heidi Fedoruk and Tina Thomas



Orval Belcourt and Tina Thomas



BUILDING ON FAITH

A \$2 million fund has committed over \$300,000 to faith groups exploring affordable housing opportunities on their lands

By HAMDI ISSAWI

On a rainy morning last June, St. Faith's Anglican Church welcomed a man seeking more than sanctuary.

"He said he lost his house," recalls Rev. Travis Enright, rector of the 116-year-old parish near Alberta Avenue. "So he came in, and I hugged him."

One in eight Edmonton households live in unsafe, unaffordable or overcrowded homes because they have no other options. St. Faith's often ministers to Edmontonians struggling with basic needs but does not offer housing. Not yet anyway.

The parish wants to add affordable housing on site, a goal that's often out of reach for faith groups. Besides lacking development experience, many grapple with financial pressure from declining memberships and aging infrastructure.

That's why Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) and the City of Edmonton created the \$2 million Faith Lands Affordable Housing Incentive. Eligible applicants can receive up to \$135,000 to explore and pursue affordable housing opportunities on their lands — and get help finding a development partner.

The initiative is one part of ECF's broader commitment to affordable housing as a strategic priority. ECF has also committed \$20 million through its Social Enterprise Fund, which aims to provide support for housing for 5,000 Edmontonians by the end of 2028.

"The strongest solutions emerge when we connect capital, expertise and community assets around shared challenges like affordable housing. It brings together people who might not otherwise find themselves at the same table," says Ryan Young, ECF's Executive Director of Impact Investments.

Over \$300,000 has been committed to several groups who are now ready to act on their ambitions, including St. Faith's.

"It's important that we have homes where people can live, imagine and dream," Enright says. "That's the kind of housing we want to build."

Funding for faith organizations is still available. Applications close Dec. 31, 2026.

Visit edmonton.ca/FaithLands to learn more.



L to R: Betty Kaahwa; Thu Parmer, City Councillor, Ward sipiwiniwak; Marisa Redmond, Executive Director, Right at Home Housing; Ryan Young, Executive Director Impact Investments ECF; Rev. Travis Enright, St. Faith's Anglican Church and Anne Stevenson, City Councillor, Ward O-day'min.

Spotlight on Faith Lands Affordable Housing Incentive

Stream 1: PLANNING AND ENGAGEMENT

(up to \$35,000)

- **St. Philip Antiochian Orthodox Church** envisions a building with 30 to 40 units, including seniors' apartments, and a community hall. Funding will support a feasibility study for this 20-year-old dream, and help identify potential development partners.
- **St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church** in north Edmonton has more land than it needs. A redevelopment study will help identify affordable housing options for the site with space needed for the church.

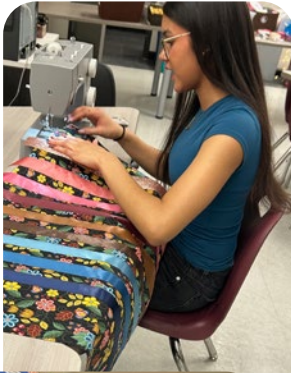
Stream 2: PRE-DEVELOPMENT

(up to \$100,000)

- **St. Faith's Anglican Church** wants to replace its underused parking lot with 58 affordable homes. The grant helps cover the cost of design and legal work required for a development permit and construction grants.
- **West Meadows Baptist Church** has discussed the future of its 10 acres in west Edmonton for two years. The vision: a thriving community-focused church surrounded by affordable homes. The next step: grant-funded technical studies.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Personal reflections on the difference philanthropy makes



“Our goal as Indigenous youth is to feel empowered, valued, seen and respected. Receiving ECF’s Youth VOICE grant to make ribbon skirts and shirts for graduates meant that cost was not a barrier to cultural expression. Due to this project, we have reclaimed the right to celebrate our identities. I feel grateful to walk on the stage in my beautiful skirt. This project allowed the youth to be more than graduates.”

Hayley Johnson
Braided Journeys
graduating group
member and
valedictorian

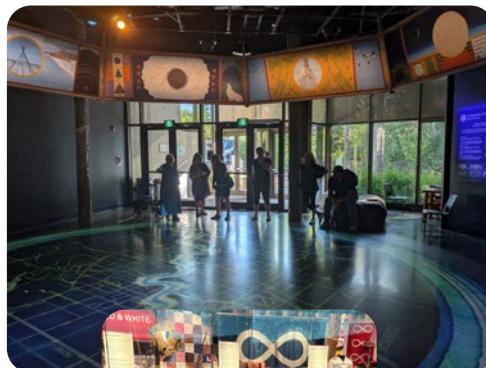


“WIN House sincerely appreciates the straight forwardness of ECF’s grant application process and the quick turnaround time, given that the funds are being used for urgent bathroom vanity replacements to meet Health and Safety Standards. This all results in WIN House being able to focus more on the supports and services we provide to women, children and gender-diverse people in need. Thank you!”

Lori Pratt
Director of Philanthropic Strategy, WIN House

“Indigenous educators carry so much knowledge, responsibility, and care into our schools and communities, but too often we are doing this work in isolation. This network gives us a place to come together, learn from one another, strengthen our practice and know we do not have to carry this work alone. Thank you for providing the John Humphrey Centre with the support needed to help sustain this network.”

Trudy Cardinal
Network Member and
Professor, Faculty of Education



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OUT n' ABOUT

ECF in the community



ECF's CEO Tina Thomas joined **North Road Investment Counsel's Ladies Lunch** at the Royal Glenora Club on Sept. 29. As the event's featured guest, she shared ECF's community perspective about bringing people together to help strengthen Edmonton.



Orval Belcourt and Ross Pambrun celebrate the **25th Anniversary of the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards (BBMA)** on Sept. 26. Since 2001, BBMA has distributed \$13.1 million through 4,400 awards at ECF to support Métis students across Alberta.



Photo credit: Brianne Jang

More than 600 ECF donors, volunteers and their families gathered at Fort Edmonton Park on Sept. 9 for **ECF's annual Appreciation Event**.

Pictured: Tracey Gleason, Donor Grants Associate and Melisa Zapisocky, Grants Associate helping guests during the sunny afternoon.



Photo by Colin Way



WORTH LISTENING

Is success really something you achieve alone?

Olympic champion Mark Tewksbury challenges the myth of the self-made winner, revealing how community matters as much as talent when it comes to reaching the podium in life and sports.

SCAN TO LISTEN





ECF donors and community partners joined artist Alixandra Jade on Sept. 24 for a tour of the new mural beside ECF's downtown offices. Created in partnership with **Edmonton Mural Festival** and Claire Estates, the mural brings colour and wayfinding to Slatter Way while reflecting ECF's broader commitment to supporting the arts and creating welcoming community spaces.

ECF donors and community partners joined CEO Tina Thomas and Vice President, Philanthropy & Donor Engagement Noel Xavier, on Sept. 24 for **the unveiling of *Return*** at its new MacDonald Drive location. Created by Edmonton artist Catherine Burgess, the sculpture honours ECF's community of donors and partners, with updated plaques recognizing those connected to its story.



ECF Philanthropy Advisor Lisa Dayanandan joined **SkirtsAfire Festival** founder Annette Loiselle for the launch of the Dana Rayment Emerging Playwright Fund. Established by Richard Reimer in memory of his wife and her passion for the arts, the fund will support emerging female playwrights through SkirtsAfire.



Andrew Paul, Manager, Communications at ECF and Greg Davis, Board Member, Alberta Magazine Publishers Association (AMPA) attended the **Alberta Magazine Awards** to celebrate excellence in the province's magazine industry. This year *Thrive Magazine* was nominated for four awards in three categories including Feature Writing Short, Profile and Illustration.



National Philanthropy Day will bring Edmonton's philanthropic community together on Nov. 13 to celebrate the people making a difference through giving. Ahead of the annual luncheon, ECF's Kerri DeLuca, Christelle Agahozo and Lisa Dayanandan joined Felicia Hodgson, Desiree Conception, Madeline Verhappen and Amber Benders at the Edmonton Convention Centre for a tasting menu to help prepare for the celebration.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Circle these noteworthy dates and explore all that ECF has to offer at ecf.ca

Nov. 5

Roots that Reach

Register today

Join ECF for the inaugural *Roots that Reach* Panel and hear Edmonton leaders share personal stories of belonging, leadership, giving back and community-building. Leave with new perspectives on what strengthens communities — and ideas for how you can play a part.

Learn more



Year-end giving

Year-end is a natural time to give back and can support the causes you care about while offering potential tax benefits. Connect with ECF and turn generosity into a lasting impact. Here are some important dates to keep in mind:

Nov. 30

Mutual Funds

Securities deadline

Start mutual fund gifts or gifts through your brokers to ensure completion by Dec. 31.

Contact ECF's Philanthropy Team for guidance.

Publicly Traded Securities via Direct Investment Accounts

We know many donors utilize direct investment accounts to manage their portfolios and, while we receive many gifts through these accounts, our experience with direct investment accounts has shown the transfer process takes more time than working with a broker directly. We advise any donor considering a gift through their direct investment account to begin that process early to ensure the gift is finalized in time.

Dec. 10

Publicly Traded Securities

If you are not using a direct investment account, we advise you start your transfer of publicly traded securities by **December 10** to allow time for year-end processing.

Dec. 24

Cash Gifts

Upon the office holiday closure, cash donations leading up to Dec. 31 can be made via e-transfer to edonations@ecf.ca

Make cash gifts by phone before noon at **780.426.0015**

Dec. 31

Online/Mailed Gifts

Giving deadline

Gifts made through CanadaHelps in the final week of December are credited the following year.

Give online through **CanadaHelps.org*** or mail gifts postmarked by Dec. 31.

Ripple Effect

By LISA OSTROWSKI

A family keeps their daughter's memory alive with an ECF fund

IN LIFE, THERE ARE PEOPLE who lead remarkable lives — full of passion, wonder, curiosity and love. And even though her life was brief, Ruby Walter was one of them. She was a vibrant young woman: a talented artist, an active skateboarder, an animal lover, an advocate for people in need and a loving daughter, sister and friend.

“Ruby was just a very dynamic, energetic, strong, sassy, feisty, very strong-minded young girl, and very adventurous, and just liked to try many, many things,” explains Colleen Mah, Ruby’s mother. “She just had a big heart and loved everybody.”

Ruby passed away on May 30, 2023 at 14 years old, after a two-year battle with Ewing’s Sarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of bone cancer. In her short life, she left a lasting impression on those who knew her.

“You just couldn’t help but feel at ease and comfortable with yourself when you were around Ruby,” says Derek Walter, Ruby’s father.

The true extent of how loved Ruby was became even more obvious at her celebration of life, when nearly 500 people crowded into the Central Lions Centre to pay their respects. Rather than wearing black, the Mah-Walter family asked guests to wear bright colours, to honour Ruby’s bright and positive presence.

“It was an ocean of Hawaiian shirts,” Mah says, with a tearful smile. “We just didn’t want to be mournful. Obviously it was, but (we wanted to) honour her spirit and who she was.”

Today, that hopeful and positive

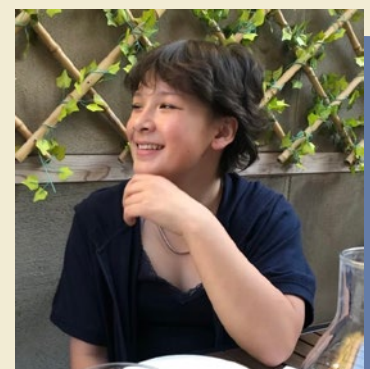
presence continues to ripple throughout the community, with the Ruby Walter Legacy Fund. The Mah-Walters created the fund to honour their daughter at a friend’s suggestion. Their goal was to support the many wide-reaching interests and passions Ruby had.

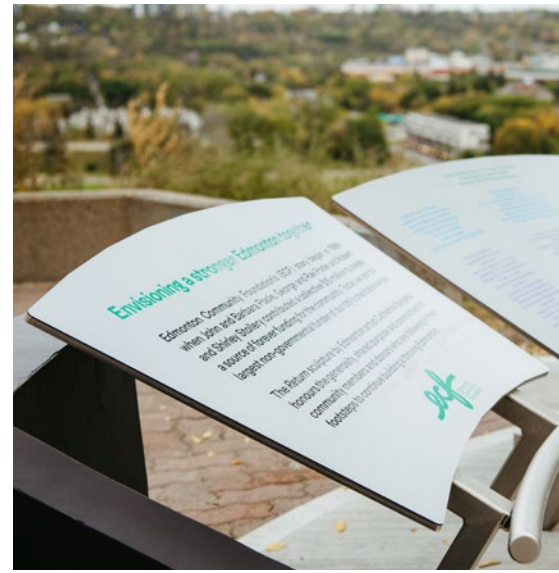
In the months after Ruby’s passing, the family met with Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) Philanthropy Advisor, Sydney Stuart, to explore meaningful ways to carry on their daughter’s legacy. They chose several areas to support, including supporting other families with children in cancer care, animal rescues, access to arts, music and sports for youth, and marginalized groups, including 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

“Typically the families we’re speaking with have an idea of the types of areas they’d like to support, that have touched their loved one before they passed away,” says Stuart. “So it was purely through conversation, discovering about Ruby and what kind of person she was and all the things that were near and dear to her, that informed how the family wanted to keep that spirit alive in the community through the fund.”

In 2025, the Mah-Walters were able to make their first grant from the fund, to Zoe’s Animal Rescue Society, in honour of Ruby’s love of animals. Although she never had a pet of her own, she always wanted one. That first grant was the Mah-Walters’ way of honouring Ruby’s wish and everything that she stood for.

“I think the ECF fund in her memory allows us to pour the love that we have for her into something positive and something that keeps her going, her memory,” Colleen says. “It’s amazing what you can do for the community when you have a lot of love to give after losing somebody. That’s why I think it’s important that we continue to do something.” *ecf*





INTERTWINED

For 25 years, *Return* has represented the pillars of community

By **CAITLIN HART**
Photos **BRIANNE JANG**

THREE COLUMNS INTERTWINE. Each could not stand without the others — a powerful image of the role philanthropy plays in our city.

The statue, *Return*, was created by Catherine Burgess to honour the 10th anniversary of Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF). At that 10-year milestone, ECF was celebrating new heights, including its largest grant to date at that time — \$340,000 to a literacy program at Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Burgess originally built a smaller version of the piece from cast iron rings an artist friend found on her acreage. When ECF started seeking proposals for a piece of public art to celebrate the Foundation hitting \$100 million in assets under management in 2001, Burgess submitted a model proposing a scaled-up version of *Return*. The sculpture encompasses the core pillars of ECF: three columns, representing donors, ECF and the beneficiaries who turn those funds into community impact.

As Noel Xavier, VP Philanthropy and Donor Engagement with ECF, says, “The three columns curve up around each other. The way it’s designed, no one column can stand alone because of this curvature, and so just like the notion of philanthropy and coming together

as a community to create impact, no one group can do it alone.”

When ECF first commissioned Burgess’ *Return*, the foundation was a decade old and approaching the 21st century with a sense of optimism. Since that time, the foundation has only grown — from a starting seed of \$15 million, to distributing a total of over \$500 million to date and a \$1 billion endowment base. But through that time of immense growth, the meaning of the sculpture is as relevant as ever.

The newer, larger *Return* commissioned by ECF was built not from cast iron but aluminum, a more suitable material for Edmonton winters. For two decades, it lived on Jasper Avenue, between ATB Place and the Union Bank Inn. Burgess recalls once staying in the inn and having a view of her creation out of the window.

But when the inn was purchased by new owners, the sculpture needed a new home.

“When this sculpture was being dismantled, people from all walks of life stopped and asked why, and where it was going. We had to reassure everyone, ‘it’s not going far away, you can find it and it will continue to be there for you,’” says Linda Wedman, Chief Operating Officer of The Works International Visual Arts Society.



The Works has supported the commissioning and maintenance of *Return* since ECF first decided to launch the competition.

The sculpture stayed downtown. One block south of its old home, *Return* now resides on MacDonald Drive, against the backdrop of the river valley — a location Wedman, Burgess and Xavier all treasure for its beauty and symbolism.

“Much as I liked the brick background of the older setting, I really do like this new one. It’s much more peaceful, more contemplative. It looks out on the river valley. There aren’t cars rushing past all the time. So it’s like a more mature ECF,” says Burgess.

As Xavier puts it, the backdrop of the river valley also speaks to the piece’s significance in representing ECF. *Return* can be seen by students, downtown office workers,

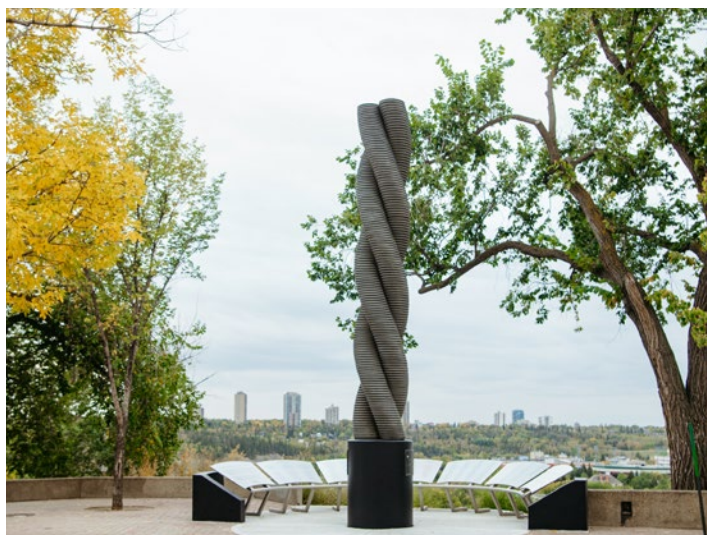
residents and visitors alike from its position on MacDonald Drive.

“It’s kind of standing on guard over those neighbourhoods to the south,” he says, pointing out the surrounding communities that ECF funds have supported, visible from that vantage point. “It’s an observer to our city, and hopefully it will be there for generations to come, and it will watch silently as Edmonton changes and grows,”

The statue’s new location also includes a new way to display donor names — there are several more names to be added since the first iteration in 2001, with a display Burgess describes as “open books” which tell the story of ECF, its donors and the countless individuals and organizations whose lives have been touched by the generosity and philanthropy of the foundation and its donors. *ecf*

“It’s kind of standing on guard over those neighbourhoods to the south. It’s an observer to our city, and hopefully it will be there for generations to come, and it will watch silently as Edmonton changes and grows.”

— Noel Xavier





WHERE BRICK MEETS SKY

A new mural brings art, connection and a little magic to a downtown alley

By **ANGEL DAHIYA**

TUCKED AWAY IN a downtown alley known as Slatter Way, a plain brick wall has been transformed into an 80-foot canvas of colour.

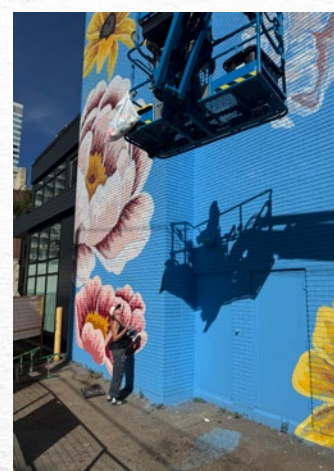
Alixandra Jade, international muralist and designer known for her work as lululemon's "chalk chick," brings her signature florals and butterflies to the west wall of Claire Estates at 10305 100 Ave.

At certain times of the day, the mural is designed to melt into the sky. The effect creates an unexpected connection between cityscape and nature — a fitting expression of Jade's concept of a "window of opportunity."

"Art can be more than just a decorative overlay" explains Jade. "It invites passersby, workers, travellers and the residents to stop, look, photograph and meaningfully engage with the environment, revealing the unexpected optical illusion."

The mural creates a bold landmark that rewards exploration and helps visitors orient themselves to the surrounding community.

Just down Slatter Way sits Hilltop House, the 1912 mansion that is home to Edmonton Community Foundation's (ECF) offices. Earlier this summer, ECF CEO Tina Thomas reached out to Edmonton Mural Festival and Claire Estates with an idea for bringing more vibrancy to the area — something unexpected, optimistic and inspiring.

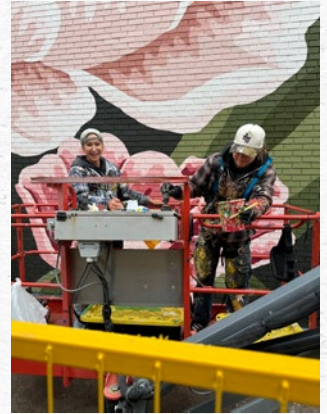


"This started with a simple vision to beautify an overlooked alley and act as wayfinding for ECF's historic Hilltop House offices on Slatter Way," says Thomas. "ECF has been a strong supporter of Edmonton's arts community since our inception. This stunning, larger-than-life mural demonstrates how essential art is to place-making, belonging, vibrancy and bringing joy into our lives."

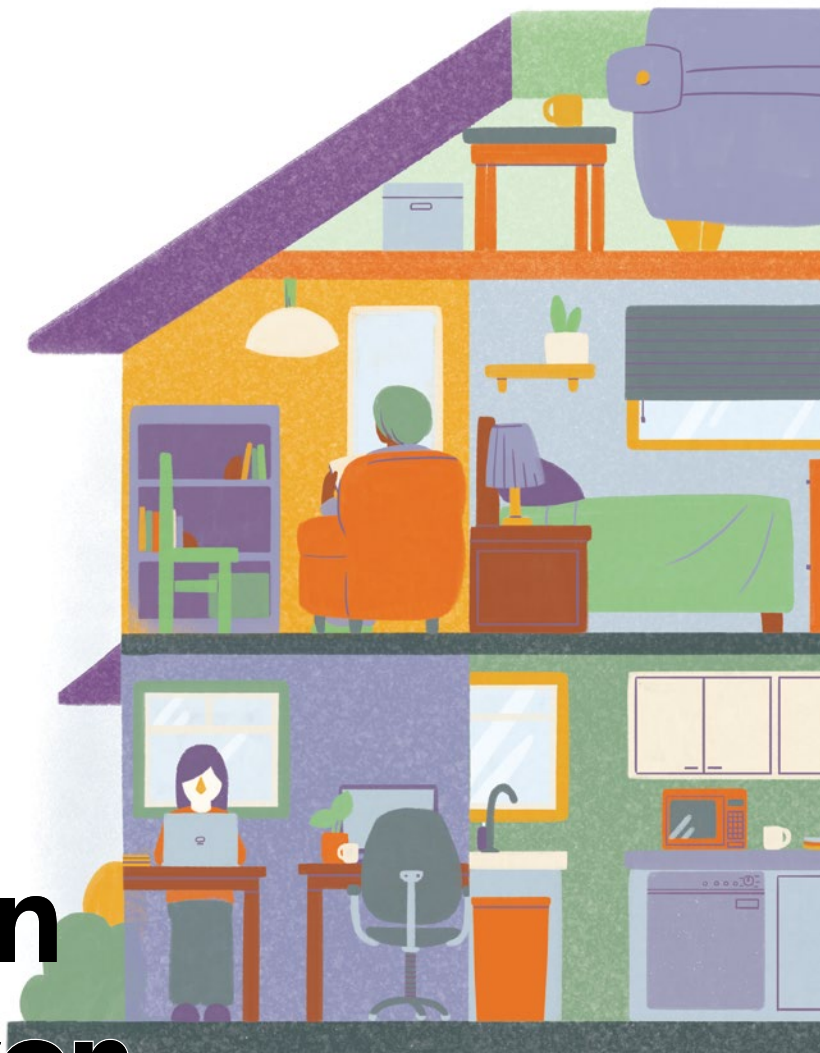
The project was completed in partnership with ECF, Edmonton Mural Festival and Claire Estates, managed by Omega Properties. It is one of five new murals added to the city's core over the past two years.

“When an ordinary city block transforms into a public art gallery, it brings new meaning and creates a real dialogue between architecture, art and the people who experience that space every day,” says Marcus Coldeway, Edmonton Mural Festival’s Creative Director and Curator.

The mural’s creativity gives a once-blank wall new presence, adding another layer to the neighbourhood identity and a reason to gather and connect. *ecf*



MORE Than a Roof Over Your Head



A proposed housing project helps people with disabilities find a place to stay — and be empowered

By **JUSTIN BELL**
Illustration **SERENA TANG**

Housing is more than just four walls and a roof: housing is health care, community, an opportunity to age in place.

Winnifred Stewart recognizes the importance of housing and is in the planning stages for a new affordable housing project called The Village.

The Village is a mixed-use hub that integrates housing, programs and community services into a single, inclusive environment. And this vision is being assisted through a grant from Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), which is helping to fund the planning stage with a grant of \$70,000.

Winnifred Stewart supports more than 150 individuals in the city with developmental disabilities and other complex needs through programming, housing and supports. This includes everything from helping individuals find a job or volunteer opportunity

to connecting them to safe housing with 24/7 supports to be able to live in that housing, explains Chief Executive Officer Emily Ruttan.

“Our role at Winnifred Stewart is to learn what people’s dreams are, what their needs and wants are, and to walk alongside them on that journey. This approach guides our work,” says Ruttan. “We make decisions *with* people, not *for* people.”

That focus on the individual extends to the work on The Village, ensuring there is housing that fits the diverse needs of the people they serve. Funding for housing projects that prioritize the needs of people with developmental disabilities in the design is a key factor in distinguishing this project from others.

There are extra challenges and costs associated with building specialized housing that is also part of a broader community of market and affordable housing. This is often why there is a gap in housing that supports people with developmental disabilities.

To bridge that gap, The Village will also provide the possibility for connected services such as employment opportunities, coffee shops, daycare or other services leading to a strong “live-work-play” model.

The supportive units would likely come in a variety of setups, from units where individuals are able to live more independently to pods with a central area for support staff and connected living spaces and kitchens to share resources where needed. These units would be in the same building as other market or affordable apartments which would give family members the option to live in the same building as their relative that is being supported.

“Our vision is that people with diverse abilities have a voice, choice and place to belong for their entire lives. Choice is not one option and to have true choice, one needs to be able to learn about different things and see how they fit our preferences and needs,” says Ruttan. “We are building this village to provide more housing options to people that have a developmental disability. We are demonstrating that we can build a model that is financially and operationally sustainable and can be replicated.”

Details for The Village are still up in the air, including the exact size of the development, the mix of affordable and market housing, location and what supports might be available, as organizers work their way through the planning

process. Winnifred Stewart has allocated significant time and resources toward the planning process, with support coming from the ECF grant to help them design the best project to help the adults they support.

Over the last year, ECF has supported housing projects with \$1.5 million in funding. This is part of the \$20 million commitment announced by ECF to support affordable housing projects over the next several years. Ryan Young, the executive director of Impact Investments at ECF, says non-profits are looking for help in the planning stages of their projects before shovels break ground.

Because organizations building affordable housing units want them to be financially sustainable while also looking to achieve social goals, from fostering community to delivering individualized supports, it can make the planning and feasibility stages much more important.

“We talked to the sector and they told us that the biggest impact we can have is in the early stages because that’s the most risky,” says Young. “Non-profits could put in \$100,000 or \$200,000 in money to see if the project is viable, and then realize it can’t work, and then, all that money’s lost. So, by providing money right up front, we’re de-risking these projects and helping them to explore things and make them become viable projects that can move forward and not bankrupt the organization at the same time.”

According to Young, they are also encouraging non-profits to think differently about building affordable housing, such as leveraging relationships with the for-profit sector and making connections with organizations such as BILD Alberta, an advocacy organization for home builders in the province.

Collaboration between for-profit developers and non-profit organizations could lead to better outcomes for both, and better housing options for all Edmontonians. *ecf*





REIMAGINING

A partnership is fostering community-based development in our city's core



CHINATOWN

by BREANNA MROCZEK / photos BUFFY GOODMAN

FOR YEARS, EDMONTON'S CHINATOWN HAS BEEN THOUGHT OF PRIMARILY AS A DESTINATION — A PLACE TO VISIT, SHOP, EAT AND EXPERIENCE ITS CULTURE.

The Koermann Block Affordable Housing Project, led by Chinatown Re:VITA, with mentorship from Right at Home Housing Society, is asking a different question: What would it mean for Chinatown to also be a place where people can put down roots? This proposal would create 28 affordable homes on the Koermann Block site.

For William Lau, President of Re:VITA, the idea is about recognizing that a neighbourhood's culture does not come only from the businesses and activities that draw people there, but the people who live there.

"Culture comes from the people, not the buildings," Lau says. "Having more families in the area, children in the neighbourhood and elders sitting on benches creates life on the street. Artists and makers living and working in the proposed live/work units could similarly contribute to the neighbourhood's cultural and economic life. That's how we get the sweet vibrancy back, and that's how people feel safe."

The project comes as Chinatown is undergoing significant change. The Valley Line LRT, Kinistinnaw Park, new infrastructure, rezoning and broader downtown investment are all part of a changing landscape. For Re:VITA, it is key for the community to be involved in deciding what happens next.

Re:VITA is a grassroots group that began in 2023. Its early work centred on regular monthly cleanups, which also became opportunities for volunteers to gather, have lunch, talk about what they had noticed in the neighbourhood and welcome new people into the work. The organization created the night market and block party, Chinatown After Dark, later that year.

Its focus has since expanded beyond events and activations. The group had been watching other Chinatowns and seeing communities spend significant time and effort fighting gentrification. Lau says Edmonton was not facing that situation yet, but the organization recognized that continually running activations without thinking about how to protect community interests could contribute to that process. That realization led Re:VITA to become more intentional about community real estate projects. The proposed Koermann Block development would be its first.

For Lau, affordable housing is particularly important because there is not much ground-level, family-sized housing in the core that low-income families can afford. He says much of the current housing consists of condos and apartment towers, often with smaller units for single people or couples. The proposed project would instead make families a significant part of the community. Twenty-four of the 28 homes would have two or more bedrooms, while the shared courtyard and community gardens would create common space for residents.

The project also proposes bringing younger families into an area that already has several seniors' housing complexes nearby. The mentorship with Right at Home Housing Society is intending to give Re:VITA an experienced housing operator as it takes on its first community real estate project.

Lau says Re:VITA learned about Right at Home through its work with Ambrose Place. When he later met Right at Home Executive Director Marissa Redmond, he says he was struck by her generosity with her time and expertise.

That combination — a grassroots organization grounded in the neighbourhood working alongside an established non-profit housing provider — also caught Edmonton Community Foundation's (ECF) attention.





WHAT WOULD IT MEAN FOR CHINATOWN TO ALSO BE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN PUT DOWN ROOTS?



CHINATOWN Re:VITA (Clockwise) Olivia Fung, William Lau, Jordon Hon, Jeremy Wong and Kathryn Lennon

Ryan Young, Executive Director of Impact Investments at ECF, says the foundation received a number of applications, but the Koermann Block proposal stood out for several reasons, including the location and the fact that a community-based group from the neighbourhood was taking the lead. The group also recognized its own limitations and partnered with an established non-profit housing provider, Young says, “We want to help them to see what they can do.”

ECF has provided a \$100,000 grant to support the work needed to make the project viable for acquiring the Koermann Block from the City of Edmonton. The partners need to undertake studies and demonstrate that they have a plan as they work toward securing the property.

The grant is part of ECF’s broader affordable housing work. In May, the Foundation announced a \$20 million commitment through its Social Enterprise Fund, alongside \$1 million annually for pre-development and feasibility studies. ECF has also partnered with the City of Edmonton on the \$2 million Faith Lands Affordable Housing Initiative, offering faith-based organizations up to \$135,000 to explore

and pursue affordable housing opportunities on properties they already own.

The Koermann Block project is still in its development and acquisition phase. ECF’s funding is intended to help Re:VITA move toward making the acquisition viable; it does not guarantee that the full development will proceed.

For Re:VITA, the larger goal is to make sure the community has a role in shaping Chinatown’s future. Lau says development in inner-city communities can happen without the people who give those communities their character having much say in what comes next. They plan to talk to neighbours about what they need and what should be protected, and to give the community a role in shaping development.

The Koermann Block represents an opportunity to begin doing things differently: to create affordable homes in the heart of Chinatown, bring families and other community members into the neighbourhood, and give artists, makers and small entrepreneurs space to contribute to its ongoing life. *ecf*

Community Creation with Honours

A conversation with Alberta's Lieutenant Governor, and her husband, on how giving back is the way forward

By **DANIELLE KNIBBE** & Photos **RYAN PARKER**

When Alberta Lieutenant Governor Salma Lakhani and her husband

Dr. Zaheer Lakhani moved to the United Kingdom to pursue post-secondary education, they had every intention of returning to their home country of Uganda. In 1972, that dream was destroyed when then-President, Idi Amin, ordered the expulsion of all South Asians from Uganda. Overnight, Their Honours became refugees, forced to find a new home and community.

On Nov. 5, Her Honour will join Radhe Gupta, Shiraz Jiwani and Jai Parihar for Edmonton Community Foundation's (ECF) Roots that Reach: Celebrating South Asian Stories of Community Building, presented in partnership with The Sifarish Network and Edmonton Public Library. Moderated by former Edmonton Mayor Amarjeet Sohi at the Muttart Theatre, this event explores the experiences, values and aspirations that connect Edmonton's communities.

Lt.-Gov Salma Lakhani and His Honour, Dr. Zaheer Lakhani sat down with ECF to reflect on rebuilding their life in Canada, volunteerism and what genuine inclusion looks like.

What brought you to Edmonton?

Lt.-Gov. Salma Lakhani (LG): Zaheer had just finished his degree in medicine, and I'd finished my degree in clinical biochemistry.

Dr. Zaheer Lakhani (ZL): Many in Uganda were British citizens without right of abode. There was much anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.K. If you were my colour and you were walking in the street at night — there used to be what we call skinheads, they'd beat your head in. I know of kids who lost their eyes and were severely injured, you had to be very careful. It was an unwelcoming atmosphere. At the time Canada had a campaign — "Make Our Country Your Country." We'd heard that the University of Alberta had a very good program. So, we thought, "Okay, let's go to the University of Alberta."

What do you remember about those early days?

ZL: We landed in Edmonton at 11:30 p.m.

LG: At that time, it was just, "Go down this road, turn left and keep driving." The road was not lit or



“I feel very strongly that we need to learn about people who are from different walks of life, different backgrounds and different cultures.”

—Lt.-Gov. Salma Lakhani

anything. It seemed like, “Whoa, from London, we’ve come here? What is this place?”

ZL: She kept saying to me, “Where have you brought me?” We didn’t know what Edmonton was like, there was nobody to receive us. We just knew that I was going to begin my residency in a week.

What people, communities or experiences helped make Edmonton feel like home?

LG: We found out that I had a cousin here, and we had a faith community, many ex-Ugandans. We felt reassured.

ZL: Our faith community (Ismaili Muslim) has historically had a volunteer-driven administrative structure. We’d been here 18 months, and I was appointed chairman of the local community.

Every two weeks we’d drive to the Calgary headquarters on a weekday. The meeting started at 8 p.m., finished at 2 a.m., I’d go back to work at 7 a.m. I did that for several years. But that was part of inculcating community.

What motivates you to volunteer, lead and give back to the community?

LG: In our faith, we have a concept called Seva, which means service to others. We are taught that from a very young age. Not just doing service within our own community, but within the community-at-large.

I was not allowed to work here for seven years — we didn’t receive permanent residency until ’84. So, I volunteered with organizations that shared the values I was brought up on, like the John Humphrey Centre ▶



“What holds us together are values — our belief in things like democracy, respect for human rights, being welcoming and inclusive.”

—Dr. Zaheer Lakhani

how we find out how much all communities have in common.

ZL: What holds us together? Because you might come from a Muslim community in Turkey, a Jewish group in Poland, your ancestors might be Huguenots who had fled from France. What holds us together are values — our belief in things like democracy, respect for human rights, being welcoming and inclusive.

LG: Diversity is a fact. But real inclusion is an act and a choice. It's when you bring people from different walks of life together, and you actually listen to those people and act on what they're saying.

Is there anything you'd like to add?

LG: The poet Rupi Kaur wrote, “It isn't what we left behind that breaks me, it is what we could have built had we stayed.” We were denied the opportunity to build our country of birth, Uganda, but we are more than happy to help and contribute to building our adopted country. We would really like to see it become the best country in the world. And I think all communities feel that way — that we want to help build our country. *ecf*

This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

for Peace and Human Rights. I come from a country where there's no respect for people's human rights. Education is very important to me, because I know what would have happened to us had we not had an education.

Roots that Reach is an ECF initiative. How did you first hear about ECF?

ZL: I knew Ron Odynski, a friend who was just as passionate about community and was a past chair of ECF's Board of Directors. When we celebrated 25 years in Canada, we wanted to start an endowment. Ron said, “Look, would you like to serve on ECF's board because you've done all this volunteer work?”

What did that experience teach you about Edmonton's communities?

ZL: I really got an understanding of the extent of the needs we have in the community — the strata of people who never really receive

proper medical care, the hunger, drug use.

It also opened my eyes to the generosity of Albertans. All those years back, three very well-off families appreciated what the city had done for them and they started this amazing organization.

What can people learn by listening to the experiences and stories of communities other than their own?

LG: I feel very strongly that we need to learn about people who are from different walks of life, different backgrounds and different cultures. How do we teach people who are not from the South Asian community about who we actually are? It's by including and inviting them. That's

ROOTS that REACH

Nov. 5 | 6 – 8:30PM

Muttart Theatre, Stanley A. Milner Library

FREE admission,
registration required
ecf.ca/learning/roots-that-reach

Laying a Foundation

Helping Edmonton's youngest residents build a strong foundation for the future

SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN is one of the most powerful ways to build a healthier, more resilient city. Research shows that more than 50 per cent of children entering kindergarten are behind on at least one key measure of early childhood development. These early years shape a child's lifelong well-being, influencing everything from educational outcomes to mental health.

In 2025, Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) committed more than \$2.5 million through 59 grants to programs and initiatives supporting children ages zero to five and their families. This investment marked the beginning of a long-term focus on early childhood development, recognizing that supporting children early can help address challenges before they become more difficult to overcome.

"The development of a strong foundation for children early in life takes more than programs alone," Allan Undheim, ECF's Vice President of Community Impact says. "It depends on stable, welcoming spaces for children to learn and play, and on the educators, caregivers and organizations that help families thrive."

ECF's funding supports this work in many ways, from improving learning environments and expanding access to books and cultural programming to strengthening educator training and family supports.

But making a lasting difference also means understanding how children are



doing today, where support is most needed and what gaps remain.

ECF is working with Stone Olafson and the University of Alberta's Community-University Partnership to help address these gaps. Initial findings from this research will be featured in ECF's upcoming Vital Signs report, scheduled for release later in 2026. This work will contribute to understanding young children's well-being in this region and help inform decisions about where philanthropic support can make the greatest difference.

The following stories showcase some of the organizations putting ECF's 2025 funding to work today. >

By CAITLIN HART

Playing in Natural Spaces

Getting outside and playing is good for kids — and the grown-ups that care for them



Adine Shuchuk

THE PHRASE “OUTDOOR PLAY” in early childhood learning contexts usually evokes images of staticky plastic slides, metal monkey bars and play structures that leave splinters in hands. But there’s a lot more to outdoor play than the built structures on playgrounds. At Jasper Place Family Resource Centre (JPFRC), a team of educators is reimagining how kids can engage in all kinds of outdoor play — play that aids their development.

JPFRC has been serving families in west Edmonton since 1972. A non-profit dedicated to early childhood development, it offers services to families of all kinds, including daily childcare and programs for parents.

“Our population (that we serve) mirrors the community,” says Adine Shuchuk, Executive Director at JPFRC. Families come from all socioeconomic backgrounds and lived experiences, such as new Canadians navigating childcare for the first time.

With the help of a \$100,000 grant from the ECF, JPFRC has begun working on a project to bolster outdoor play.

As Dr. Lee Makovichuk, an early childhood educator and retired University Professor who has worked with JPFRC for more than a decade, says, outdoor play is particularly

important for young children.

“What does nature afford children? It’s the rocks and the trees and the sticks and the mud and the grass, small hills, and the bugs,” she says. And each of those elements helps children understand the world around them, build relationships, develop reasoning skills, imagination and explore healthy risk-taking.

The JPFRC’s site at the City-managed Orange Hub has some outdoor space, and part of the project is to find ways to incorporate natural elements like logs, rocks and hills that encourage creative play into the existing space.

But the outdoor space is only part of the project. The other component includes professional development for the centre’s staff. This includes a series of dialogues with Jasper Place educators in co-constructing a professional learning resource that will be shared with other early childhood educators.

The advantage to educators goes beyond professional development. Makovichuk highlights the benefits to educators when they “look through the eyes of a child” and experience the natural world in new ways.

“When we hold reverence for nature, we are more closely connected to how children experience nature,” says Makovichuk.



Dr. Lee Makovichuk



Caring for the Carers

A pilot project cultivates community for early childhood educators

WHILE MANY NON-PROFIT organizations are focused on serving vulnerable populations, who looks out for the people taking care of those populations?

The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (AECEA) is a membership-based organization that advocates for better working conditions, wages and support systems for those working across the sector.

With \$100,000 from ECF, AECEA was able to launch a pilot of the new Ambassadorship Program that brings these educators together in the city. Through activities and conversations, participants discuss the challenges and wins they face in their field, building camaraderie and discovering new ideas. The pilot also connects frontline educators with mentors, like Aradhna Abraham, who has been working and teaching in the sector for two decades.

“What we were seeing in the sector was that educators wanted more opportunity for connection, for mentorship, for leadership opportunities. So this is a really unique way to do that, where we’re giving educators these opportunities to hone those leadership skills,” says Madeline Kleinfeld, Membership

and Community Engagement Coordinator with AECEA.

Early childhood educators care for our youngest citizens, explains Abraham, but they rarely get recognition for the valuable work they do during the critical development period between birth and age five.

Kleinfeld says it’s important to uplift educators in a sector that is so often focused on the young population it serves. Serving children is important, but educators also need support and connection to ensure they are providing for the young people in their care. From this idea, the Ambassadorship Program was born.

“We want to help amplify the voices of early childhood educators,” says Kleinfeld. While

events range from paint nights to Zoom conversations, Kleinfeld and Abraham have observed how, regardless of activity, bringing people together naturally leads to conversations about the wins and challenges facing the sector. After the events, AECEA Ambassadors are able to bring those challenges from the frontline to leadership, and then to the people who can affect policy.

But most critically, these events offer community building for educators who don’t get many chances to network or connect with each other.

“They do a lot to uplift the children and the families,” says Abraham. “That trickles out and ripples out into our neighbourhoods and communities.” *ecf*



Madeline Kleinfeld and Aradhna Abraham



GIVE WHERE YOU LOVE

From the arts to rehabilitation and community organizations, the Rumbolds chose to create different funds, providing lasting support to causes close to their hearts

By **ANDREW PAUL**

ARNOLD AND GRACE Rumbold didn't begin their philanthropic journey with a master plan. They simply started giving to the organizations they loved.

"We just began making annual donations to arts organizations that we enjoyed attending and that were important to us," Arnold says.

Walterdale Theatre, the Citadel Theatre, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and Edmonton Opera were among the early beneficiaries. Over time, the Rumbolds' giving expanded to include scholarships and donations to Edmonton's post-secondary institutions, emerging arts organizations and local groups supporting people in need.

As their philanthropy grew, so did their interest in making their gifts last.

The Rumbolds established several funds

at Edmonton Community Foundation, using different approaches depending on what they wanted their giving to accomplish. Their donor-advised fund gives them flexibility to respond to emerging needs and change their annual giving as priorities evolve. Dedicated, permanently endowed funds allow them to provide ongoing support to specific organizations and programs.

"We've always believed that the Edmonton Community Foundation is the best way for us to give back, either through a dedicated fund or a donor-advised fund," Arnold says.

For the Rumbolds, the choice between the two isn't about one being better than the other. It's about matching the structure of a gift to its purpose.

A dedicated fund can provide permanent support for an organization, allow others to contribute and, in some cases, be eligible for matching government funding. The Rumbolds have used endowed funds to create lasting support for programs at Edmonton Opera, the University of Alberta's Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine and the Citadel Theatre.

That long-term commitment is particularly meaningful when the impact of a program is something the Rumbolds have witnessed first-hand.

The Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR), part of the University of Alberta's Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, was developed by a family friend. Arnold says the couple have seen year after year how transformative the program is for the people who participate. Because ISTAR relies significantly on private contributions, the





Rumbolds felt strongly about helping ensure its work could continue.

Their connection to Edmonton Opera inspired another lasting gift. The Rumbold Vocal Prize provides coaching, support and funding to promising young Canadian classical vocalists. Establishing a permanent fund meant the Rumbolds could help support emerging artists while strengthening Edmonton's arts community for years to come.

"We wanted to provide permanent support for these young people, for Edmonton Opera and for the arts in Edmonton," Arnold says.

For Arnold, one of the most meaningful recent gifts is one made in Grace's memory. A \$1 million donation supporting capital improvements and the long-term viability of Camp He Ho Ha reflects a cause that was particularly important to her.

"I think she would be very pleased," Arnold says. "Her memory lives on through the gift that supports the refurbishment and long-term viability of the camp and the work that it does."

That may be the most enduring lesson in the Rumbolds' approach to generosity: giving doesn't have to end with the gift itself. It can be structured to keep doing work long after the donor's lifetime.

"It's not often in life that a person has an opportunity to really make a difference over the long term," Arnold says. "It's humbling to know that our gifts will keep supporting causes that were important to us long after we're gone."

For the Rumbolds, that possibility is both a privilege and a responsibility — and one they have chosen to build into their philanthropy from the start. *ecf*



See It While You're Here

Edmonton Community Foundation is known for its endowment funds — but there are more ways to give



FOREVER IS NOT what every donor wants. Not because an endowment makes donors wait. Endowed funds grant every year, and many donors see that impact in their lifetime. But to last forever, an endowment grants an established 4.5 per cent a year so the rest can keep growing.

Some situations require more flexibility, and those donors prefer to put a larger portion of their gift to work over the short term: a charity raising money for a new building, where a meaningful share of the cost is needed in the next few years, not spread across decades; a three-year program a donor wants to fund from launch to finish. These types of projects need a different kind of fund and a different kind of investment portfolio.

That's what ECF's Non-Ended Pooled Portfolio (NEPP) is for. These funds have an end date, chosen by the donor, between two to 10 years. Over that window, every dollar goes to work supporting the cause until the fund has achieved what it set out to do. Unlike

the endowment, there's no single spending rate. Each donor sets their own schedule, and ECF's job is to make sure the money is there when needed.

As a result, NEPP can't have the same investment portfolio as an endowment.

An endowment's infinite horizon lets it invest in private markets, such as a stake in a power line, a long term loan to a growing business or an apartment building. These investments can take a decade to pay off and can't be sold on short notice, and we expect to be paid extra in the long term for that patience.

A fund with a finite life doesn't have that patience. If it must make its final grant in four years, it can't tie up money in something that may not be able to sell before the fund closes. When stock markets fall, the NEPP feels it just as the endowment does. The difference is that every dollar NEPP owns is highly liquid and can be turned into a grant on schedule. So, when ECF designed NEPP, we left out those private assets on purpose.

If you have a retirement savings plan, you already understand a NEPP. Someone five years from retiring doesn't lock their savings into

something they can't cash out for a decade. They hold a mix of stocks to keep growing and bonds, so one bad year doesn't derail the plan. NEPP works the same way, with about 60 per cent in stocks and 40 per cent in bonds.

With NEPP, we don't ask every quarter how much it returned. We ask whether the money will be there when each donor's next grant is due. NEPP isn't built to match the endowment's long-run returns, and judging it that way misses the point. As it grows, we're also looking at whether a two-year fund and a 10-year fund should be invested differently.

ECF doesn't have just one portfolio with one answer. An endowment is for those who want their generosity to last forever. NEPP is for those who want to see it at work within a set timeline. For donors whose faith shapes how their money is invested, ECF has its Shariah-compliant portfolio.

Granting forever is a beautiful promise. But there's something just as powerful about watching your generosity make positive changes while you're here to see it. Whichever you choose, we build the portfolio around you. Not the other way around. *ecf*

	Endowment	NEPP
How long it lasts	Forever	2 to 10 years
What it owns	Public stocks, private markets and bonds	Public stocks and bonds
Can it be sold any day?	Partly; much is invested for years	Yes, all of it
How it grants	A set annual spending rate	Each donor sets their own schedule



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HOW IT WORKS:

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- ECF will match eligible contributions up to 1-to-1 for 2026, with pro rata matching if contributions exceed available funds.
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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

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- You must be a registered charity and have received an ECF discretionary grant since 2020.
- The net income from the fund must support environmental initiatives in Edmonton and northern Alberta.

Deadline to
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