

# LEGACY *in* ACTION



Edmonton  
Community  
Foundation



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Working towards eliminating the stigma that surrounds HIV in Edmonton

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Cover photography by Curtis Comeau



from the End Poverty Edmonton (EPE) strategy that was approved by City Council in December 2015.

The link between racism and poverty is a complex one. The 2012 Racism Free Edmonton Survey found that over 20 per cent of respondents had personally witnessed an Aboriginal person or person of colour experience unfair treatment while looking for work. More than 44 per cent of Aboriginal children currently live in poverty, more than twice the rate of any other group. Racism and poverty go hand-in-hand; we can't end one without ending the other.

Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) is partnering with Skills Society to develop a new initiative to help address the complex link between racism and poverty. Called the Edmonton Shift Lab, the initiative responds to the "Eliminate Racism" recommendation

ECF has closely watched the work of EPE develop over the past two years. With its ambitious goal to end poverty in a generation, EPE's strategy requires community-wide support. ECF stepped up right away. We previously announced a \$10 million commitment to poverty-related investing through the Alberta Social Enterprise Venture Fund. In addition, the ECF Board wanted to develop a new granting program that would respond to one of the six "game changers" that EPE identified. ECF is well-positioned to respond to the Eliminate

Racism recommendation because of the wide reach of our work. Racism and poverty impact every part of our community. We hope to mobilize the collective knowledge of the diverse sectors ECF supports to try to move the needle on this issue.

We are very pleased to be working with Skills Society on this initiative. One of the largest disability service organizations in Edmonton, Skills Society has recently launched a social enterprise called Action Lab, which is dedicated to fostering social innovation. Skills Society's expertise on social labs makes it a natural partner to develop the Edmonton Shift Lab.

Social labs are intended to solve complex issues. They function by convening a group of people with diverse perspectives, learning from people with lived experience of the issue, building prototypes for solutions, and then testing those prototypes with people on the ground. It's "learning by doing" rather than "learning by studying." We hope that Edmonton Shift Lab will build on and support the work of other agencies already working in this area. ECF looks forward to seeing what kinds of projects emerge. We hope too that this process will help inform our granting process and give us new tools to respond to the needs of our community.

Racism and poverty impact us all: some of us benefit and all of us suffer. As such, ECF believes that everyone needs to be involved in ending both. We hope that our stepping up inspires others to do so as well.

You can learn more about Edmonton Shift Lab at [edmontonshiftlab.ca](http://edmontonshiftlab.ca).

Martin Garber-Conrad

## A TALE OF TWO COMMUNITIES

BY: LLOYD AXWORTHY

Last month I was in Israel giving lectures at the Hebrew University. Each night, I plugged into the news on my iPad and was struck by two stories coming from very different parts of the world yet sharing the same common tragedy. One was the frightening scene of people escaping Fort McMurray as searing flames threatened to block their way. The other: concerned families on flimsy boats in the Mediterranean, desperately escaping from war, drought, and devastation in Syria. In both cases people were escaping a disaster, facing the unknown, uprooted — the fate of the refugee.

Of course the degree of degradation and the scale of suffering is not the same. One difference was that Fort McMurray had governments that were in control, and a civil society and private sector that are both generous and prepared to reach out to those in need.

In reality these events are not unique but rather harbinger that in every part of the world people are on the move, pushed or pulled by a variety of disasters that make life unsafe. We are living through the worst crisis of forced displacement since the Second World War. In 2010, some 10,000 people worldwide fled their homes every day — a number that today has quadrupled. The new UN head of the Commission on Refugees predicts that 60 million displaced persons in the next 10 years will be searching to find asylum.

So let's switch the lens back to Fort McMurray. Where does it fit into this global scheme? Aaron Crosby, Councillor in the B.C. city of Rosalind wrote: "As I watched the disaster unfold in Alberta, I fought a terrible nagging question: Is this the new normal?"

The International Institute for Sustainable Development and University of Winnipeg launched the Prairie Climate Atlas, which illustrates how climate change is likely to impact the Canadian prairie provinces. One of the most dramatic maps in the atlas shows how the number of days per year with temperatures equal to or greater than 30 degrees Celsius

triples or even quadruples across the southern prairies by the end of this century.

A multitude of negative outcomes can be anticipated. Extreme heat can increase the frequency, duration and intensity of forest fires. The extreme heat will greatly impact agriculture, as many of the crop varieties we currently grow are not able to tolerate these high temperatures. The heat may also increase the risk of crop diseases and pathogens. In contrast, many invasive species can better take the heat. Even if we reach the emission goals of the Paris Agreement we will only limit the impacts on future generations. So we need to adapt and make our communities more resilient.



This is where the lines from Syria and Fort McMurray cross. We need to become engaged in local efforts but at a global scale to re-design our communities, make them more secure, resilient, and engage in preventative practices. The cost of prevention seems like a bargain compared to the cost of the cure. The Alberta floods in 2013 forced insurance payouts of almost \$2 billion; and Fort McMurray could top \$9 billion. Those figures don't begin to count the monumental human costs.

Fort McMurray's fate has brought forth a flood of support from Canada and beyond as people band together in common cause. The heroic actions of the firefighters on site managed to avert what could have been a much worse disaster.

Crisis often brings out the best of the human spirit.

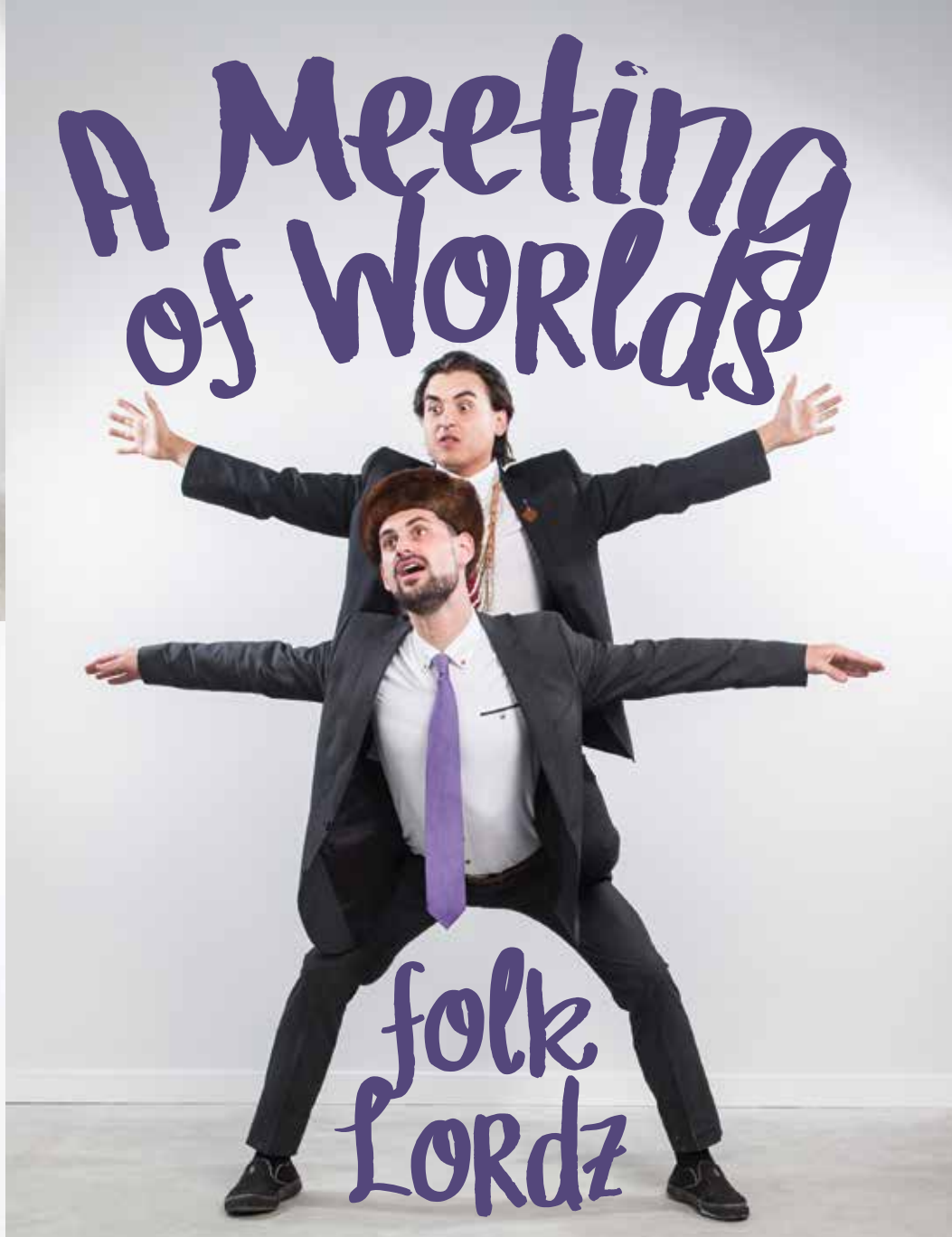
But I hope that Fort McMurray can also be a wakeup call — a touchstone that reminds us how critically important it is to invest in preparing for the next event, whether due to fire, drought or flood, and all those that will follow so as to avoid our next refugee crisis.

**Here's a challenge for community foundations: to use their resources and commitment to make our world a safer place under the kinds of pressures that are faced from northern Alberta to the Middle East and beyond. ■**

Lloyd Axworthy was the 2016 keynote speaker at ECF's annual meeting. To learn more about ECF's Rebuilding Fort McMurray Fund visit [www.ecfoundation.org](http://www.ecfoundation.org).



# A Meeting of Worlds



growing up in Edmonton, Todd Houseman felt disconnected from his Indigenous roots. His father hailed from the Paul First Nations but had been fostered, and then adopted, by a Polish-German family. Although Houseman's dad later reconnected with his biological family, it wasn't enough for his son to connect with his own Cree heritage.

"I've spent a lot of my adult life researching and trying to connect with that part of my identity," he says. "Mainly through books and different people I've met, but it's hard to connect with a culture that's based so much in community." But in recent years, Houseman has found that using his creative talents as an improv performer, actor, and writer helps him to tap into his heritage and share it with the wider public.

This was the impetus behind Folk Lordz, an improv troupe Houseman created with fellow improviser Ben Gorodetsky. The duo met a few years ago as rookie players at Edmonton's Rapid Fire Theatre, where they performed together in the company's weekly Chimprov and Theatresports shows. "We kind of clicked with our performance styles," says Houseman. Soon after, they acted together in a children's play called *Boogie Monster Club*, in which ▶

*Edmonton's Folk Lordz blend multicultural storytelling with improv theatre to break down barriers*

BY: CAITLIN CRAWSHAW  
PHOTOGRAPHY: CURTIS COMEAU

“ I THINK WHAT'S INTOXICATING FOR PEOPLE AT OUR SHOW IS THAT THE FOURTH WALL IS POROUS. ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE ”

three children come to Edmonton from other places (Ukraine, South Africa, and the First Nations community of Maskwacis). "Coming out of that, we realized we both had a strong interest in and affinity for cultural storytelling," says Gorodetsky.

They decided to create a long-form improv show that tapped into Houseman's Cree heritage and Gorodetsky's Russian culture (his parents emigrated from the former Soviet Union when he was still in utero). Since its debut at Rapid Fire Theatre four years ago, Folk Lordz has performed at festivals across Canada including the Vancouver International Improv Festival, the Winnipeg Fringe Festival and the Toronto Fringe Festival.

The show is organized into three parts: an homage to a Cree creation myth, an interpretation of the existential Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, and a wildcard suggestion from the audience. However, the duo is quick to note that because their work is improvised — and therefore it's a new show every time — they don't actually retell a Cree creation myth. In keeping with the tradition of oral storytelling, creation myths must be meticulously memorized and told very carefully, as each word contains specific meaning and information. "There's so much loaded into each line of a story," explains Houseman. In addition to its main narrative — often about how something came into being and with an animal as the protagonist — a creation myth contains valuable information about an Indigenous community's geography, plants and animals, culture, history and much more. Rather than telling the story itself, Folk Lordz performs a reflection or homage based on the story or its themes. By the end of the performance, audiences leave with new knowledge about Cree culture and hopefully have an understanding of what it means to be Indigenous in a colonized place. "It's kind of empowering Indigenous culture and making it a little more accessible," says Houseman.

To deepen their own understanding of Indigenous culture, both actors travelled to Yellowknife, N.W.T., last March to conduct research with several Dene elders. "We chose that community because my parents had recently been through there and spoke with old storytellers who could tell stories from before colonization," says Houseman. Because some stories told by Indigenous people in Alberta have changed as a result of colonial influences

(including that of the Catholic Church), both actors wanted to get a grounding in authentic, pre-colonial creation stories. The research trip, funded by the Edmonton Arts Council, also helped to broaden their knowledge of oral storytelling. "One of the biggest things we took away was the importance of geography," says Houseman. Now the duo tries to incorporate references to local geography wherever they perform. The second portion of Folk Lordz uses the works of Chekhov as a springboard for exploring Gorodetsky's Russian culture. "He was a shining example of Russian drama and literature that is known in the West," says Gorodetsky. "We wanted something that's both educating and curious to people, but also relatable, to a degree." Unlike the playful, lighthearted Cree creation myths, this segment of the show is dramatic and explores the darkness of the human condition. Characters struggle to communicate, can't get what they want, or are paralyzed by choice.

While the first and second parts of the show explore the cultures of Houseman and Gorodetsky, the third is meant to represent the audience's own culture. To that end, audience members are asked to pick the concept, loosely based around popular culture. "It's never the same," says Gorodetsky. Past shows have explored Michael Jackson music videos, Westerns, and beat poetry. On one memorable occasion, the audience picked Count Chocula cereal.

The result is "effervescent," as Gorodetsky puts it. In keeping with the spirit of improv, Folk Lordz is a high-energy performance that breaks down the invisible barrier between the stage and audience. Both actors interact directly with the audience, not only by asking for prompts but acknowledging the crowd's responses to scenes. "I think what's intoxicating for people at our show is that the fourth wall is porous," says Gorodetsky. "Anything is possible."

But they also aim to break down cultural barriers to create an experience that affects audience members in a meaningful way. "Alongside the entertainment, people get this incredible opportunity to learn something about history and culture that they might not have had before. It empowers people to understand things about indigeneity and multiculturalism that isn't often part of a comedic performance," Gorodetsky adds.

In fact, Houseman and Gorodetsky are passionate about using their work to promote the equality of First Nations people. They hope ▶

**ECF granted \$2,950** through its YEG program to help Folk Lordz' produce *Stories on the Hills*. To learn more about applying for a YEG visit [www.ecfoundation.org](http://www.ecfoundation.org).

Folk Lordz can help to “decolonize” (eliminate oppression of First Nations people) and indigenize (include more Indigenous voices) the arts. To reach a wider audience, and include more First Nations people, they recently produced an Edmonton storytelling celebration called *Stories on The Hills*. Supported by Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), the March event was held at Fort Edmonton Park and featured not only Folk Lordz, but respected Indigenous storytellers (Elder Jerry Saddleback and Grand Chief Tony Alexis), musical entertainment by Quantum Tangle and visual storytelling through painting and poetry by Lana Whiskeyjack.

“It was kind of an extension of Folk Lordz — the idea of bringing together many cultures,” says Houseman. The response from the community was overwhelmingly positive: “We were completely sold out.” The event connected him and Gorodetsky to many Indigenous activists, artists and community members in a number of First Nations cultures in and around Edmonton. The duo hope to organize the event again next year. “Our goal is to grow it into a multi-day festival,” says Gorodetsky.

There are big changes ahead for Folk Lordz, as well. This spring, Houseman and Gorodetsky were both individually nominated for a Mayor's Celebration of the Arts Emerging Artist Award, which honours Edmonton artists in diverse disciplines. Gorodetsky won the award and they've also received funding from the Edmonton

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Arts Council to create a new version of Folk Lordz that will follow the same three-part structure but with a very different aesthetic. The first part of the show will explore Indigenous culture through the history, specifically the “horse wars” fought between the Cree and Blackfoot peoples. The second part will explore Gorodetsky's Jewish roots, through several comedic Yiddish traditions including “The Wise men of Chelm” — folklore centred around the idea of the village idiot. As with the original incarnation of Folk Lordz, the duo conducted extensive research to inform the performances (including plenty of library time and a visit to the Blood Nation in southern Alberta to learn more about Blackfoot history). After this, Houseman and Gorodetsky returned to the studio to do the creative work, first improvising with one another and then workshopping their performance with local theatre talent.

The show debuted this summer during the troupe's tour of festivals across North America, including Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Philadelphia. As with the first incarnation of Folk Lordz, both troupe members hope the new show will be entertaining and thought-provoking, but also reveal the possibilities of improv as a genre. “When people associate improv with comedy, that's limiting,” says Gorodetsky. “We're excited to show the theatricality.” ■

The physical improv of Folk Lordz' Ben Gorodetsky (left) and Todd Houseman (right)



Laura Keegan stands as a beacon of hope for Edmonton

*HIV Edmonton celebrates 30 years, but the organization won't rest until HIV and AIDS are eliminated*

BY: ALIX KEMP PHOTOGRAPHY: CORY JOHNN

**I**n the early days, Edmonton seemed safe. It was the early 1980s, and while tens of thousands of people in North America were dying of a poorly understood disease called AIDS, they were all in major cities.

Michael Phair, a well-known gay activist and community organizer, says he figured Edmonton was just “too cold” for the disease to get a foothold. And then, in 1984, former bronze medal swimmer at the very first Gay Games, gay activist and Edmontonian Ross Armstrong was diagnosed with the disease. Phair gathered together a group of close friends who formed a plan of how the city's gay and lesbian community could tackle the issue. The AIDS Network of Edmonton was born that day. This year the organization — now known as HIV Edmonton — celebrates its 30th anniversary.

A lot has changed. Armstrong died just two years after his diagnosis. He wasn't the only one. “Everyone we worked with died,” Phair says. By 1995, more than 8,000 Canadians had died.

In the mid-90s, the discovery of anti-retroviral drugs meant people could now live with HIV for decades with a high quality of life. Laura Keegan, HIV Edmonton's Director of Resource Development and Public Engagement, says that meant the organization had to shift its focus. “To better reflect the time, we used HIV instead of AIDS because it became about people living with HIV and fewer dying of AIDS.”

There are fewer deaths from AIDS, but transmission rates for HIV have been increasing in Alberta. According to a 2013 report from the province, there were 112 new cases of HIV that year, up from 105 in 2012 and 98 in 2011.

Prevention, Keegan says, has become a marketing challenge. “We say ‘Protect yourself, you really don't want to contract HIV; but if you do, it's okay, because there's treatment and you can live a full life.’” It can

be challenging to both avoid HIV stigma while stressing that it's still a serious and preventable disease that can destroy lives. HIV seeks out the most vulnerable in our society: those struggling with depression, poverty and addiction along with stigma and isolation.

Earlier this year, HIV Edmonton worked with local advertising firm Calder Bateman to launch the online initiative, HIV Tonight. Funded in part by Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), the website focuses on gay and bisexual men and uses raunchy humour to emphasize the importance of getting tested for HIV.

Craig Stumpf-Allen, ECF's Director of Grants and Community Engagement, says statistics around HIV diagnosis and transmission were a large factor in approving the funding. Many people erroneously believe that those who have been diagnosed with HIV are almost certain to transmit the disease. In fact, people who know they are HIV-positive and are receiving treatment are much less likely to spread the infection than those who aren't aware they have it.

Stumpf-Allen says he's heard good things from the community about how the website has started conversations about HIV. “It's quite different from what the normal approach is. It's pretty in your face. It's fun, it's realistic, and it's addressing the actual issues that are part of the conversation these days.”

Keegan believes that eliminating HIV and AIDS is possible. That's HIV Edmonton's goal: zero new HIV infections, zero stigma and discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths. “We know exactly how to prevent it, we know exactly how to treat it, and the treatment is hugely successful,” she says.

In addition to their 30th anniversary, this year also marks the 25th anniversary of the AIDS Walk for Life, taking place on September 17, 2016. The walk is a major fundraising event for HIV Edmonton, allowing them to continue their march toward zero. ■

**ECF granted \$35,000** to support HIV Edmonton's HIV Tonight marketing/awareness campaign. To learn more about applying for a Community Grant visit [www.ecfoundation.org](http://www.ecfoundation.org).

# AT FULL POTENTIAL



*The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers gives newcomers the skills they need*

BY: CAROLINE BARLOTT  
PHOTOGRAPHY: CORY JOHNN

Najma Shahab reflects on his studies at NAIT

When Najma Shahab and his wife moved from Iran to Montreal, they were hopeful that their new beginning would mean a better life. The economics of their hometown had decreased to a point where it was no longer possible to find or keep a job. Shahab, who had worked as a civil engineer, says there were no projects for construction companies. And the couple wanted to provide a good place to live for their future children.

But when the couple arrived in Montreal, things remained difficult. After seeing two career counsellors, Shahab was told he would have to change his field. Despite having a master's degree in his home country, he was unqualified to work as a civil engineer in Canada. And while he knew French and English, the French language skills he possessed were very different from those spoken in Quebec, which made finding a job a near impossibility.

"It was very disappointing for us," says Shahab. "But then I heard about Edmonton and a program in the city that could help."

That program was the Engineers' and Technologists' Integrated Training Program (ETIP), one of the bridging and training programs offered by the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN), an agency that helps newcomers successfully settle in Edmonton.

The EMCN recognizes the challenges faced by engineers and accountants from other parts of the world, who want to find employment in Canada. Since certification and regulations for these professionals differ in other countries, their high levels of education and skills do not always translate to similar positions in their new home. This can leave newcomers struggling to make ends meet in low-paying jobs, which is not only unfortunate for the individual and his or her family, it's unfortunate for our country. Even those who manage to get a related job in their field sometimes have difficulty keeping the job due to cultural differences in the workplace.

The EMCN recognized that the solution would be to fill in the gaps of those newcomers' skills through bridging and training programs including ETIP, the Accountants' Bridging Program (ABP) and the Payroll Professional Program.

For people like Shahab, it's life-changing.

"If our applicants to a program are working prior to entering into a program like ours, they're 99 per cent of the time holding down transitional, survival work," says Laurie Hauer, Manager of Employment and Bridging and Training Programs at EMCN. "That ranges from any place like Walmart, to Mac's, to cashiers and taxi drivers. Almost all are survival jobs, and usually they hold down more than one job."

Before he was accepted into ETIP, Shahab sent out around 45 job applications and received no calls back from any

employers. Finally, Shahab and his wife got jobs at Walmart. Shahab worked there until he started at ETIP.

The engineering program just celebrated its 20th anniversary, and has always been a partnership between the EMCN, the Alberta government, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) and the Association of Science & Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET). Students take classes through NAIT, and their tuition and living expenses for the 11-month course are covered through the Alberta government. More than 1800 people have graduated from the program.

Meanwhile, 12 years ago, the Accountants Bridging Program was introduced, which also sees the EMCN, NAIT and the Alberta government working together to provide a comprehensive program with 730 graduates to date.

So far, Shahab has learned some new technical applications of his skills — including information about products typically used in Canadian construction and how cold weather impacts urban design — and he's learned about Canadian culture in the workplace.

Hauer says other parts of the world conduct business in completely different ways that may not mesh with expectations of employers in our country. "We teach them the ability to understand what's going on in the culture: how we relate, how we behave, how we interact. And we define things like team work, how we manage conflicts, how to give and receive feedback," says Hauer.

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Over the course of 20 years, Hauer can only think of one case where a student wasn't able to finish the course, and it was a special case related to the student's health. It's a testament to the program's success. "Once a student begins, the commitment to the course is really high. It's mostly because it's filling all those gaps that they wouldn't be able to fill otherwise," says Hauer.

The government's assistance — which covers tuition, books and living expenses — is also incredibly helpful because students can then focus on their course work rather than worrying about covering rent or groceries. "And in the end, the return on the government's investment is exceptionally high." >



In 2014, though, the Mennonite Centre received news that the provincial funding to the bridging and training programs would take a cut, which left them with a tough decision, says executive director Erick Ambtman. The organization considered scaling back the program by about 10 per cent — which meant turning away at least 25 students — or letting one of their staff members go. Either way, they knew newcomers would suffer as a result of the decision. But it didn't seem like there were other options, at least not until they received a call from Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF).

“The Mennonite Centre for Newcomers plays such a key role supporting newcomers that we knew there was a tremendous opportunity for ECF to step in to help fill the funding gap,” Craig Stumpf-Allen, ECF’s Director of Grants and Community Engagement says. “It was the Foundation’s 25th anniversary that year and we were looking to disburse 25 grants of \$25,000 to various organizations to mark the milestone — the Mennonite Centre was a perfect fit.”

“This is one of those programs that literally lifts families out of poverty,” says Ambtman. And with that money, the organization could ensure that they continued helping many families whose income after taking the courses can double, triple,

even quadruple. “The amount of times I’ve heard people tell me that the programs have changed their lives, I can’t even count that high,” says Hauer. One of these individuals, before entering the engineering program, had been working two part-time jobs, one at a liquor store, and the other at Walmart. He had a PhD and had been teaching at an educational institution in his home country, but entering the industry in Canada would be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, on his own. He had a wife and small child, and was the sole caretaker of his family, which left him under a great deal of stress.

He considered taking the engineering program a huge risk, since he was unsure he’d have a job coming out of it. But Hauer begged him to give it a try. Upon graduating, Hauer says, he became the highest earning graduate of all the programs, securing a job as a project manager.

“When he bought his first car, he was excited. When he put a down payment on a house, he was thrilled. Those are the kinds of things that make a person feel like they’re actually settled and really becoming a part of the community,” says Hauer.

Hauer says many former students are empowered to give back to the community and get involved in ways they hadn’t felt comfortable trying in the past. One of the graduates, she says, co-ordinates the entire volunteer corps for the Nepalese tents at the Heritage Festival each year.

Shahab is nearing the end of his course, and for him, the knowledge he’s gained, particularly about how things work in Canadian work environments, has changed his outlook. “In my heart, I have something very good from this course. It made me more confident to apply for a job,” he says. ■

**ECF granted \$25,000** to support the Edmonton Mennonite Centre's bridging and training programs. To learn more about funding opportunities at ECF visit [www.ecfoundation.org](http://www.ecfoundation.org).

Good Women Dance Society

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# ROOM, BOARD & BABY

YWCA's Pregnancy Pathways program will serve as an entry point for services and supportive housing for an estimated 100 pregnant homeless women in Edmonton

BY: ANGELA BRUNSCHOT ILLUSTRATION: SANDER SARIOGLU

For most women living in Edmonton, expecting a baby means some of the most extensive medical examinations they've ever experienced. Ultrasounds, blood tests and regular doctor visits are the norm even for healthy, uncomplicated pregnancies. Near the end of her term, a pregnant woman may see a doctor on a weekly or even daily basis. Women are screened for mental health issues, and asked about their family situations. Referrals to counsellors or nutritionists are commonplace.

But for pregnant women living on the streets, that level of care seems out of reach. Many homeless women will not seek out any prenatal care, says David Berger, who is coordinating a new initiative called Pregnancy Pathways.

"Homeless women living with addictions are afraid to seek help because they are worried their baby will be apprehended by social services," he says. "It becomes a 'Catch 22'. They need support. They need help. But vulnerable women are afraid to reach out."

In his eight years as former deputy Executive Director of Boyle Street Community Services, Berger saw many homeless people who had experienced childhood trauma or family instability. He describes an intergenerational cycle of lost parenting and life skills, resulting in self-medication and further dysfunction.

"You know what's going to happen when you have a child, because that's the only thing you were exposed to," he says. "As a society, we have to find ways out of this toxic cycle."

The people behind Pregnancy Pathways want to do just that. The co-chairs are Dr. John Lilley, a retired physician and Linda McConnan, the former executive director at the Stollery Children's Hospital. This new initiative, spearheaded by a large coalition of healthcare providers and social service agencies, is designed to reach women who deliver babies without prenatal care in Edmonton each year.

Its main goal is to provide them with integrated housing, medical

and support programs.

About 25 organizations are involved in this collaboration, including departments of large institutional players such as Alberta Health Services and professors from the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry and Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta.

Grants from Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) and the City of Edmonton provided the first dedicated staff member for Pregnancy Pathways, enabling the working group to hire Berger as the project co-ordinator. The coalition had already completed the initial research and planning, says Craig Stumpf-Allen, Director of Grants and Community Engagement for ECF. But the group couldn't get off the ground without a dedicated individual managing the program.

"When you have that many organizations that have identified a need, it's pretty clear that someone needs to take action," Stumpf-Allen says.

Working through the YWCA, Berger has already begun his work as the project co-ordinator. Although Pregnancy Pathways is not up and running yet, he's currently talking with social and private sector housing providers to sketch out possibilities for a small pilot location.

One scenario includes operating a dedicated apartment building. Berger envisions space for 10 to 12 pregnant women, with room for support staff such as a social worker and den mothers.

Residents will be linked to programs such as medical care, counselling, parenting and life skills coaching.

These additional resources can mean the difference between separating a mother and child or helping to build a successful family, Berger says.

While he realizes the ideal is not always possible, keeping mothers and babies together can have a transformative effect on both generations.

"There are many vulnerable women who, with some help, can hold on to their babies. It can be a big part of assisting them toward a path of stability." ■



## EDMONTON IS A WELCOMING CITY



Edmonton has the **sixth largest immigrant population** of Canada's largest cities – **20.4%** of Edmonton's population but only **6.5%** of Alberta's overall population.

According to [Canadaimmigrants.com](http://Canadaimmigrants.com)

PROUD TO BE A CANADIAN:

**↑ 83%**  
OF MUSLIMS  
in Canada say they are proud to be Canadian.  
(UP FROM 73% IN 2006).

**↓ 73%**  
OF NON-MUSLIMS  
said they were proud to be Canadian.  
(DOWN FROM 74% IN 2006).

According to the Survey of Muslims in Canada 2016 report.

**Who is an IMMIGRANT?**  
A person who has settled permanently in Canada from another country. Many no longer consider themselves immigrants once they become Canadian citizens.

**Who is a REFUGEE?**  
A person who came to Canada to flee persecution and who is located outside of their home country; also called a "Protected Person." They are no longer considered refugees once they become Canadian Citizens.

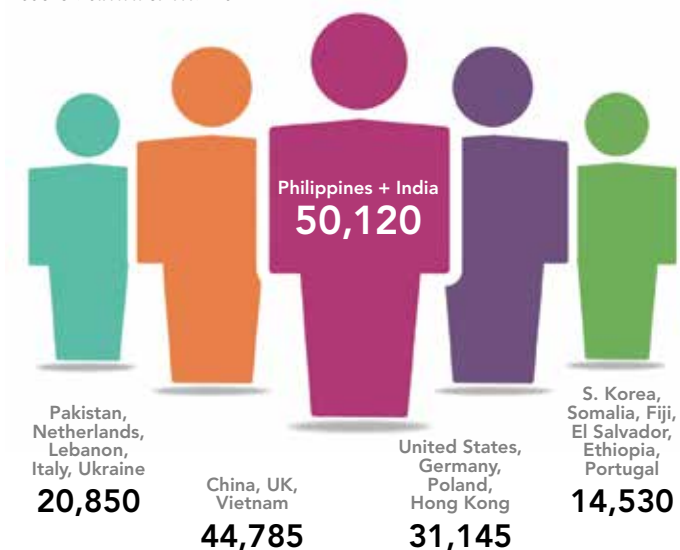
SOURCE: Canadian Council for Refugees  
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN CANADA PLEASE GO TO [ccrweb.ca](http://ccrweb.ca)

**DID YOU KNOW?** The first Mosque in Canada was built in Edmonton in 1938.

### Immigrants in Edmonton

Top Source Countries (2011)

SOURCE: Statistics Canada. N.H.S.



### WHY DO WE NEED IMMIGRANTS?

**In 2026, the first of the baby boomers will reach the age of 80 and the number of deaths will increase significantly.<sup>1</sup>**

Using a medium immigration rate of 7.5 immigrants per 1,000 population and a typical fertility rate of 1.7 children per woman, the migratory increase could account for more than 80% of Canada's population growth. Without a sustained level of immigration or a substantial increase in fertility, Canada's population growth could, within 20 years, be close to zero.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Canadians are aging faster than we are giving birth. Without immigrants we won't have a work force to sustain the growing number of seniors.

<sup>1</sup> SOURCE: [https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-310-x/98-310-x2011003\\_1-eng.cfm](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-310-x/98-310-x2011003_1-eng.cfm)

### Why did your family come to Edmonton?

We all have a story to tell: were you part of the fur trade that originally settled this area? Perhaps you came for economic reasons or unrest in your country of origin?

**EDMONTON IS A WELCOMING CITY THAT IS MADE UP OF MANY NATIONALITIES. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF OUR FIRST NATIONS POPULATIONS, WE CAN ALL TRACE OUR FAMILY HISTORY TO ANOTHER COUNTRY.**

### CANADA IS RESPONDING TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

According to UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) there are **21.3 million refugees worldwide**. Canada has welcomed more than 28,876 refugees as of July, 2016 (since Nov 4, 2015). As of July 2016, there were more than **2,643 refugees who have been processed but have not yet travelled to Canada**. This includes more than 1500 refugees\* that have settled in Edmonton since Nov. 4, 2015.

According to Canadian Immigration and Citizenship. [www.Cic.gc.ca](http://www.Cic.gc.ca).



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