

LEGACY IN

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ACTION



Generosity
Education

*Community,
Connection
and Chocolate*

Tareq Hadhad shares his
experiences and how
entrepreneurship helped
his family give back

**LESSONS
FROM ART**

Bridging the past
and present



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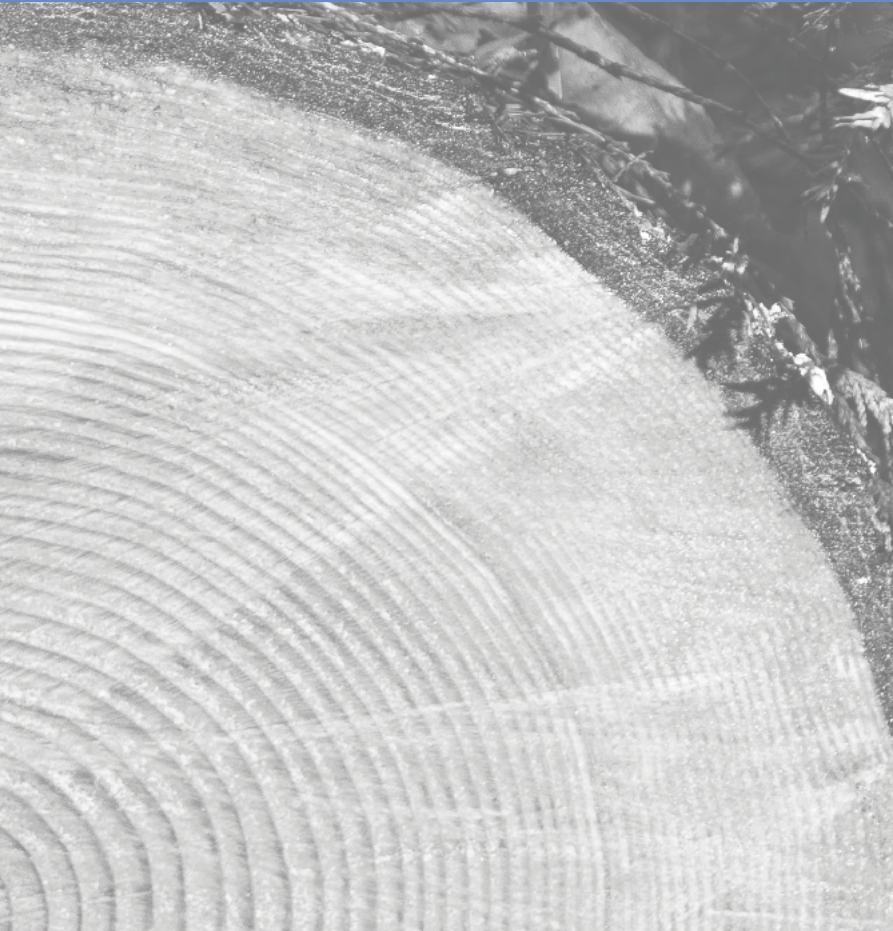


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PHOTO BY AARON PEDERSEN

TINA THOMAS
CEO, Edmonton Community Foundation

MESSAGE FROM THE **CEO**

Last year Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) released its three-year Strategic Plan. It's an ambitious and exciting road map that will guide us through 2026 as we work with our partners to enrich communities now and for generations.

At the heart of our strategic vision lies three pivotal goals: delivering impact, expanding community awareness and delivering exceptional experiences to our stakeholders. To achieve these goals, we need to understand the perspectives of our donors, grantees and community collaborators.

Following the recent completion of donor and grantee perception surveys this spring, we are ready to build on our

strengths — such as fostering meaningful staff-donor interactions, and our pivotal role as a pillar of support for charities in Edmonton — while actively addressing areas for improvement. This includes increasing awareness about the work we do and spending more time with our community partners to better understand their work.

These survey results have filled us with renewed enthusiasm as we embark on an eventful summer. Notably, Edmonton will host Connect & Collaborate, the inaugural conference for the newly established Association of Grantmakers in Alberta (AGA).

The AGA provides opportunities for grant makers to build relationships, increase understanding of the role each one plays, enhance knowledge of community needs, share practical learning to increase the effectiveness of granting and strengthen the impact of grants for the betterment of the communities we all serve. The AGA brings together a mix of granters who serve Alberta communities, including United Ways, Community Foundations, Private Foundations, Governments and Government Agencies.

We strive to be a catalyst for thriving communities, and hearing stories of people coming together to support each other inspires us. This is why we're thrilled to announce Tareq Hadhad, CEO of Peace by Chocolate, as our keynote speaker for the 2024 Annual Luncheon on June 20th.

Originally from Damascus, Tareq will share his harrowing journey from a Lebanese refugee camp to Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where he and his family started Peace by Chocolate — a thriving business with a sense of community at its heart. Despite losing everything, he was able to rebuild a life in the Canadian Maritimes thanks to the generosity of Canadians and the transformative power of compassion. We hope you enjoy this issue of *Legacy in Action* magazine. ■



ARCHIVAL ART

Strathcona County's archives have been enhanced by the work of a talented artist-in-residence

BY LISA CATTERALL
PHOTOS MAT SIMPSON

THE STRATHCONA COUNTY MUSEUM and Archives (Strathma) is home to a wide collection of historical photographs, maps and documents. But, more than that, Strathma also stewards the stories of the people and land where the archives are situated.

"What we try to do is capture as many stories that are as dynamic and interesting and colourful as our county's history," says Education and Engagement Coordinator Lauren Comba, adding that

the museum places particular importance on sharing the experiences of groups whose stories may have not yet been heard.

"We want to shine light not only on the well-documented, agricultural settlement history that laid the roots of the community, but also on the narratives that have long been overshadowed here."

One of the ways Strathma is working to share those narratives is through its artist-in-residence program. For 10 days in late 2023, and thanks to support from



“It was a very engaging way to connect with the community, because I lived there, so, I know that landscape.”

– Heather Shillinglaw

Edmonton Community Foundation, Strathma hosted its inaugural artist-in-residence, Indigenous mixed-media artist Heather Shillinglaw, for a series of workshops, artist talks and educational sessions.

“Having someone like Heather come in and bring life to the archives, to bridge that historical context, the oral traditions and history, it all culminated to something really wonderful,” says Comba.

“It built on so many aspects of what we’re trying to do here on a day-to-day basis.”

As a resident of the area who had grown up just outside of Sherwood Park near Cooking Lake, Shillinglaw was particularly excited to take part in the Strathma residency program. It was a chance to display her artwork, ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ (*kisitêpowin sâkâhikan*), which provides a bird’s-eye view of the changes in Cooking Lake’s landscape over the years.

“This project came up through a conversation with my mom where we were talking about harvesting sites, and thinking about matrilineal landscapes that are important to our family. And Cooking Lake has a long history with our Indigenous ancestry,” Shillinglaw explains.

A mixed-media piece, *kisitêpowin sâkâhikan* combines a collection of Alberta Archives’ images and historical aerial photos from the 1920s, with oral histories passed down from Shillinglaw’s family, as well as visits to the area as it exists today. The piece bridges the past and present, and as Shillinglaw explains, provides a starting point for bigger conversations about traditions, culture and ecology.

“It was a very engaging way to connect with the community, because I lived there, so I know that landscape. We can talk about the water level, we can talk about the land. What is happening to the land from a historical perspective,” she says.

“For instance, a lot of people were saying the water levels are so incredibly low, it’s scary. So let’s talk about that. What can we do? What we can do as a community is talk about preservation. So that’s where the education comes in.”

As part of the residency, Shillinglaw hosted interactive workshops, where members of the public could learn about

her techniques and try their hand at some as well. She also included talks with Elders, including her mother, Shirley Norris Shillinglaw, from the Cold Lake First Nation, and Ann Cardinal from the Saddle Lake Cree Nation.

“It was a number of aspects — cultural sharing, Elder teaching, even looking at the ecology and biology of the land. Whatever I learned, I built upon and shared,” she says.

Today, *kisitêpowin sâkâhikan* remains on display in Strathma, as Shillinglaw donated the piece after the residency. It stands as a powerful reminder of the area’s roots, and of the many generations of people who lived on the land well before it was even known as Strathcona County.

“Having Heather give a voice to those pieces of nature, like the lake, like the footsteps of the past, the trails, and relays that all back to her teachings, especially from her mother, is just so meaningful,” says Comba. ■



The piece bridges the past and present, provides a starting point for bigger conversations about traditions, culture and ecology.

LOOKING BACK ON A LEGACY

Kathy Hawkesworth spent more than two decades helping Edmontonians help Edmontonians

BY LISA CATTERALL

PHOTOS ERIC BELIVEAU

AFTER MORE THAN two decades at Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), Kathy Hawkesworth is getting ready for the next chapter in her life's story: retirement.

"It's a little like standing in front of this gorgeous vista, and you don't know what your next step will be, in two feet or 10 feet or going forward from there. It's very exciting, but there's a lot of factors unfolding," she says.

Over the past 23 years, Hawkesworth has worn a number of different hats at ECF, including Director of Donor Services, in-house counsel and Philanthropy Advisor. In every role, her focus remained the same: helping Edmontonians invest in their community for the long term. She played an integral part in the foundation's success in that time, but remains modest about her personal impact.

"I'm of course delighted that the foundation has grown and blossomed over the years, but it hasn't been me. It's been the people I've worked with, the foundation and the donors that have made that happen," she says.

Before joining ECF, Hawkesworth worked as a tax advisor, first at a law firm and then a national accounting firm. The expertise she developed in tax law, coupled with her passion for charitable giving and community investment, proved to be invaluable when she joined ECF. Martin Garber-Conrad, ECF's CEO during much of Hawkesworth's tenure, remembers the value she brought to the foundation and to donors.

"We used to joke that she'd go to sleep with the Income Tax Act on her nightstand. And there aren't too many lawyers that do that," he laughs. "But she knew it extremely





“WE USED TO JOKE THAT SHE’D GO TO SLEEP WITH THE INCOME TAX ACT ON HER NIGHTSTAND.”

– **Martin Garber-Conrad**,
ECF’s former CEO

well, and having somebody with that knowledge base and skill in-house was exceedingly useful.”

Throughout her time at ECF, Hawkesworth used that knowledge to help hundreds of donors establish endowment funds that now provide meaningful, ongoing support to the causes most important to them. No matter the donor, the cause, or the size of the gift, she showed an unwavering commitment to supporting the community.

“She would spend as much time with somebody who had a \$10,000 fund as somebody who had a \$10-million fund. Kathy knew it was about using ordinary amounts of resources to do extraordinary things in the community, and to keep on doing them for a very long time,” says Garber-Conrad.

While there are many aspects of her work that she’ll miss, Hawkesworth notes that some of the most meaningful moments in her career happened during conversations with donors.

“Every donor is different, and every way they want to support the community is different,” she says. “But there is a consistency in that these are people that want to make a difference. Getting to understand how they want to do that, that’s a very privileged thing to do, and something I’m absolutely going to miss.”

As she prepares for the next steps in her journey, Hawkesworth is looking forward to exploring her many interests and activities, including cycling, yoga, walking and pursuing her other creative outlets. As a new grandmother, she also plans to spend time with family during what she calls her “gap year.”

“I didn’t have a year off after high school or after university, so now I’m doing it while I figure out the third chapter here,” she laughs.

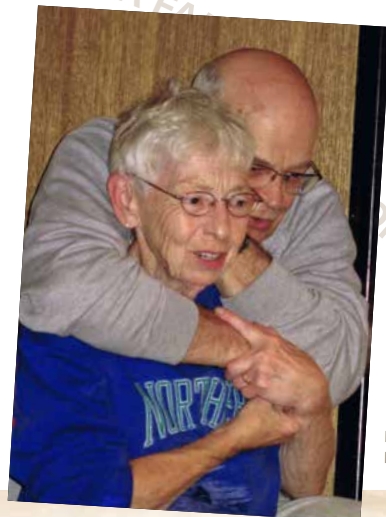
No matter where her busy lifestyle takes her in the future, Hawkesworth says her work at ECF will always hold a special place in her heart.

“I have had the most fulfilling career, and the most wonderful people in it, I’ve been so lucky. So I’m saying goodbye, but it’s also more like see you later in a different role,” she says. ■

A FAMILY TRADITION

THE SAVARD FAMILY PASSES DOWN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

BY JOELLE FAGAN



Donna and Don Savard

KIM AND SHANE SAVARD grew up mostly unaware of the extent of their parents' philanthropic work within the Edmonton community. The siblings describe their parents, Don and Donna, as private individuals. Their attitudes towards their charitable actions were discreet and modest, and they flew under the radar. Amongst other charitable giving, the couple established an endowment fund with Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), which ultimately has become the legacy that their children, and grandchildren, now care for.

"Supporting community has always been something our family has valued and our endowment fund at ECF is a wonderful way we can carry on the tradition that our parents started," says Kim.

Kim and Shane became aware of the philanthropic work following their father's death as Donna continued to enhance the impact that their donations made in the community.

After her passing, the siblings started dedicating some of their time to honour their parents' philanthropic spirit. The two explore ways that they can sustain and grow the legacy by not only maintaining existing donations but also through preserving the values that their parents embodied.

On an annual basis, Kim's and Shane's families meet to curate possible charities

before ultimately deciding on the one that the fund will support. Family members research causes that are examples of "effective altruism" and then present their rationales for allocating their portions of the total family fund to their selected charities.

Don and Donna's legacy has helped inform the family's interest in funding causes that promote well-being and success for disadvantaged children and Edmontonians affected by poverty, hunger and other crises. This includes health organizations that prioritize research, prevention and cures, with those focusing on lung cancer research being given a high priority.

In addition to these annual meetings, the two families have each developed a family charter which outlines the shared values and vision for the future. By getting their young-adult children engaged in the process, Kim and Shane are confident that this next generation will be equipped to carry their grandparents' and parents' legacy forward.

Shane expresses gratitude on behalf of the family, saying, "Edmonton is truly blessed with numerous compassionate organizations diligently improving the lives of our community members. We owe them a heartfelt thanks for their unwavering dedication." ■

"Edmonton is truly blessed with numerous compassionate organizations diligently improving the lives of our community members."

— Shane Savard



Front Row (L to R):
Kellen Forrest, Colton Savard

Back Row (L to R):
Ethan Forrest, Jim Forrest, Kim Savard,
Donna Savard, Alix Savard, Shane Savard

SONGS *from* THE SCHOOLS



YONA-Sistema helps students get in tune with each other

BY CAITLIN HART



Photos by Levi Manchak

It's standing room only in a classroom at St. Teresa of Calcutta Elementary School. Twenty Grade 2 and 3 students stand in rows, bows in hand, ready to show off what they've been learning in the Youth Orchestra of Northern Alberta (YONA-Sistema) program at their school. The students chatter and play with their music stands as their teacher, Mr. Nathan Chan, sits at the front of the classroom behind an electric piano.

Joy is a word one hears over and over from parents, staff and teachers describing the YONA-Sistema program. The kids don't use the word, but it's clear they've found joy in their little violins.

Jacquie McNulty, the YONA-Sistema Lead, says that learning to play in an ensemble not only teaches the students music, but it fosters their leadership abilities, builds emotional resilience and teaches a life lesson: it allows kids to learn that mistakes happen as they play music, and you can't fix what's already done. You move on and play the next passage as best as you can.

Founded in 2013, YONA-Sistema is a free music program operated by the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the Winspear Centre in partnership with the Edmonton Catholic School District, Edmonton Public School Board and Kipoptakāw Education Centre. >

“Everyone can be a leader. The program gives students an opportunity to lead in class and become mentors as they get older.”

— Jacque McNulty, YONA-Sistema Lead



It offers a lot more than after-school childcare. Students in the program learn an instrument, play outside, enjoy a healthy snack and get help with their school work. Modelled on the El Sistema program from Venezuela, YONA-Sistema uses music for social change, imbuing students with values like unity, compassion and harmony.

YONA-Sistema operates on five sites around Alberta — four in Edmonton and one on the Alexander First Nation. Programs are held at the Winspear Centre, St. Teresa of Calcutta Elementary School, St. Alphonsus Catholic Elementary and Junior High School, St. Catherine Catholic School and Kipohtakaw Education Centre. Schools are selected based on community need, mostly in Edmonton's core. Students from Grades 1-9 participate in the program, with older students and program alumni mentoring the younger ones.

The program's philosophy is holistic,

caring for the student as a whole person with needs beyond music lessons. Learning notes and how to hold a bow is just the beginning.

“Everyone can be a leader. The program gives students an opportunity to lead in class and become mentors as they get older,” McNulty says.

In its first year, YONA-Sistema offered instruction in violin to just 20 students. Today, there are 240 students registered in YONA-Sistema, and it's expanded its offerings to include viola, cello, bass, percussion, trombone, tuba, horn, flute, clarinet, recorder and trumpet.

In a world of ever-present screens, disembodiment and loneliness, students look forward to coming to YONA-Sistema to play

music, learn skills, connect with peers and mentors and get some physical activity.

“It's very much about being present,” McNulty says. “Playing an instrument is a full body experience and it engages your whole brain. There's a lot of research that shows the benefits [of playing an instrument] on brain development.”

For kids who are struggling, music's grounding effect is particularly helpful. Kids who come to YONA-Sistema stressed say they leave feeling better.

“Especially for students who have a hard time socially, being a part of an ensemble helps them feel valued, they feel part of a community,” McNulty says.

With help from a \$15,000 Edmonton Community Foundation grant, YONA-Sistema hired PlanIt Sound to create a time capsule video to mark a decade of YONA-Sistema in 2023.

“I cried when I saw the video,” McNulty says. “It really helped us tell the YONA-Sistema story, and show people how multifaceted the program is and how it's impacting our students. We are so grateful for the support of Edmonton Community Foundation in this. We always say it takes a village, and you're all part of that.” ■



GOING BATTY!



Little Brown Myotis
Photo Cory Olson

PROTECTING ALBERTA'S ECOLOGICAL SUPERHEROES

By **Liam Newbigging**

When the Alberta Community Bat Program first started in 2015, things looked bleak for bats in North America. A fungal disease known as white-nose syndrome hit the eastern part of the continent hard starting in 2006, and while it hadn't made it out west yet, more than six million hibernating bats are estimated to have already perished from the illness.

Cory Olson, the Program Coordinator for the Alberta Community Bat Program (ACBP), knew that if Alberta's bats were to stand a fighting chance against the disease, they would need some help from their human neighbours.

"We began our program to try to change public perceptions of bats and to raise awareness of bat-friendly management techniques so that we can give them the best chances of survival," says Olson.

Now, more than eight years later, the ACBP is an official program of the Wildlife Conservation Society and continues to grow. White-nose syndrome remains an issue out east, but, as far as research can see, endangered hibernating bats like the little brown myotis and the northern myotis are still doing OK in Alberta. ▶

**IF ALBERTA'S BATS WERE
TO STAND A FIGHTING
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“BAT BOXES ARE A GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW GOOD PRACTICES, INFORMED BY THE BEST RESEARCH COLLECTED AND CURATED BY THE ACBP, CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

— **Cory Olson**, Program Coordinator, Alberta Community Bat Program



“So far, we haven’t found that catastrophic die-off, so it could very well be that we have a bit of a refuge population that, if properly managed, can still be here in decades to come,” says Olson. The fungus that causes white-nose syndrome is only beginning to enter Alberta, so the next few years will be critical to understanding what effect it will have on our bats.

This year, the ACBP is making big improvements to bolster its conservation efforts. With funding from Edmonton Community Foundation, it can launch an intuitive online training program, update its existing guides and produce a video tutorial on how to make the best-in-class bat boxes.

Olson says it’s vital that people get the most up-to-date information on bat conservation. Bat boxes are a great example of how good practices, informed by the best research collected and curated by the ACBP, can make a difference.

While similar in theory to birdhouses, bat boxes tend to be much larger and taller. They can house up to 350 bats and need to be constructed with multiple chambers so that the bats don’t overheat on hot summer days.

Picking the right location for your bat boxes is just as important — and Olson recommends building more than one. Just like humans, these mammals like having

options in real estate.

Still, equipping people with the right bat-helping tools is only half the battle — the other challenge is dispelling some of the negative myths.

While they don’t fight crime or pick fights with the Penguin or Joker, bats are ecological superheroes in their own right. Olson says that people camping at night will often notice a dark figure swooping overhead, especially if they have a fire going. That’s actually your bat protector snatching up pesky insects like mosquitoes and biting flies!

During the peak of summer, bats eat their body weight in insects every night. With several million bats living



Photo Jason Headley

DURING THE PEAK OF SUMMER, BATS EAT THEIR BODY WEIGHT IN INSECTS EVERY NIGHT.

in Alberta, you can do the math on just how much they eat. Olson says they could be playing a massive role in regulating bug populations.

“The best estimate we have is that bats are providing billions of dollars’ worth of free insect control for the North American economy,” says Olson. “We know that bats are among the top predators of a lot of disease-bearing insects and may help regulate their numbers. So, the risk of *losing* bats is far greater than the risk of *having* bats.”

While white-nose syndrome is still a concern, humans must remain sensitive to the other risks they pose for bats. A concerning development for many bat biologists is the uptick in deaths related to wind turbines for migratory bats like the hoary bat, eastern red bat and silver-haired bats.

“The evidence right now is, there’s a good chance that they will not survive the current projections for the growth in wind energy across North America,” Olson says.

The good news is that there are already proven ways to begin mitigating these bat deaths and it won’t cost much to wind farm yields, Olson says. Turbine operators just need access to the right information and follow the right practices to manage their ecological impacts.

Whether it’s wind farmers or corn farmers, Olson hopes that the work the ACBP does will equip the community with the information and tools they need so that bats will have a safe and healthy home in Alberta for many decades to come. ■

SUMMER CAMP WITH A DIFFERENCE



ECF SUPPORTS A PLACE FOR TRANS KIDS TO BE THEMSELVES

BY **JASLEEN MAHIL**

ILLUSTRATION **CHRISTINE BERGLAND**

FROM ART TO SCIENCE to sports, there are numerous camps for kids to enjoy during the summer months. But for trans+ and gender-creative youth, camp may not feel like a space for them to be themselves. This is one of the reasons why Camp Dragonfly was created in 2018.

Camp Dragonfly brings together trans+ and gender creative youth aged 6-13 for “creativity, connection and celebration.” This year the camp will be held Aug 23-25 and hopes to host 100 kids.

“The demand is just growing and growing. I think especially with the political climate, what it is right now, those kids are looking for connections now more than ever and looking for those safe spaces now more than ever. So, we expect it to keep growing,” explains Camp Dragonfly Co-facilitator Kiana Chouinard.

Activities this year will include dance, coding and improv. Swimming is also on the itinerary, as Chouinard explains this will be the first time many participants have gone into a pool.

“They don’t know what to wear, they don’t know if it’s going to be safe, they don’t know what other people are going to say (and) they don’t know what

changeroom to go into. So, one of my favourite parts about the Camp Dragonfly community is watching those kiddos really come into themselves in that way and realize that they can wear whatever they want and they don’t have to be worried about what other people think.”

Joanne Currie, who directs Grants and Community Engagement at the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), agrees. She says Camp Dragonfly’s inclusivity was a big factor in ECF’s decision to provide it with \$10,000 through its Small Grants Program.

This funding helped cover operational

expenses allowing the camp to benefit 125 people, including subsidizing camping fees for 20 families.

“Offering safe places for young people to develop and discover themselves is crucial. We’re thrilled to witness increasing numbers of families benefiting from Camp Dragonfly’s fantastic services, and we’re proud to support their efforts to bring this community together,” she says.

Community connection is one of the pillars of Camp Dragonfly. This connection is not only to support the youth attending but extends to their families. During the weekend the camp gives space for parents and families to connect with one another.

“This is not in the parenting 101 handbook, they don’t know what to do, they don’t know who to talk to, they don’t know how to find other grownups who relate to them,” says Chouinard. “So that’s a really big part of camp, we throw a caregiver support circle, which we’re working on getting funding and grants to make that a monthly thing throughout the year, to give those caregivers support and a place to help.”

Those looking to register or volunteer this year can visit Camp Dragonfly’s website. ■



Photo credit: Adaptive Professional Photography



Beyond the Spectrum.

CHILDREN'S AUTISM SERVICES OF EDMONTON CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF SEEING AUTISM DIFFERENTLY

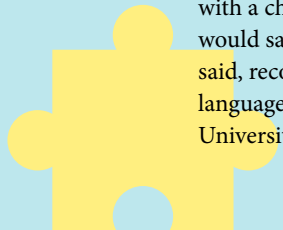
BY TOM NDEKEZI

AS CHILDREN'S AUTISM SERVICES of Edmonton celebrates its 20th year in operation in 2024, Executive Director Terri Duncan remembers a time not too long ago when conversations about autism were a lot less frequent and even less informed.

"I used to tell people that I worked with a child with autism and they would say, 'What's that?'" Duncan said, recounting her days as a speech language pathology student at the University of Alberta. "In fact, even

when I went to school, they taught us that you may come across kids with autism in your practice. So we thought it was a rare thing."

Those were the 1990s when autism was a little known condition that had only recently been recognized by organizations like the American Psychiatric Association. Reported global autism rates have since increased dramatically, rising from one in 1,000 people in the early 1990s to over one in 100 >





“What we do is work on relationships, interactions and emotional regulation to help kids stay regulated and ready to learn.”

**— TERRI DUNCAN,
Executive Director**



people today. The Public Health Agency of Canada reported that almost one in every 50 Canadian children and adolescents lives with autism. The increased prevalence of autism has to do with several factors, including improved diagnostic measures.

Despite the rising rates, Duncan and the team at Children’s Autism Services have always been more interested in engaging with autistic children meaningfully. They are especially passionate about facilitating those connections through the Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support — or SCERTS — Model, a framework that emphasizes connection and communication over the behaviour-based approaches commonly applied when working with autistic children. Duncan was first exposed to the SCERTS Model through the work of

Barry Prizant, and since founding Children’s Autism Services in 2004, has integrated it into every aspect of the organization’s work.

“We’re not trying to get kids to do what we want them to do,” Duncan says. “It’s not about control or compliance or behaviour management.”

“What we do is work on relationships, interactions and emotional regulation to help kids stay regulated and ready to learn. But emotional regulation is at the core of everything that we do.”

Through Children’s Autism Services, autistic children and their families are able to access specialized in-home services, respite care, diagnostic services and early childhood pre-school services, as well as summer camps and recreational

services. Each of the programs is characterized by small group sizes and directed support from registered professionals. The non-profit aspires to develop the functional skills of autistic children and build up the competence, independence and confidence of parents and caretakers. The resounding success of that approach suggests that it is not only singular, but effective.

Fall 2024 will also see Children’s Autism Services open its very own school for autistic children. Kids in their first two primary-school years can attend for this school year. The school is meant to be a space where children with autism can not only access specialized services but community members can be educated about the SCERTS Model. The school is set to be named after



Prestige Auto Group President Jim Jiwani, who got to know Children's Autism Services after operating a dealership next door to its offices for years before donating over \$3 million to help the organization purchase the building and land.

Children's Autism Services has also received support from Edmonton Community Foundation over the years, whether it was in obtaining equipment, launching the organization's learning management system, connecting with other local charities or helping build the organization's current building from the ground up almost 12 years ago.

"We have been very fortunate to have the community support that we have had," says Duncan, citing people like Klaus Maier — namesake of Children's Autism Service's current headquarters — as

well as the countless volunteers and board members that help the organization flourish.

For Duncan, however, the work of Children's Autism Services always goes back to imagining more for what education, child care and ultimately life could be for autistic children in Edmonton and beyond.

"Families and the school systems can benefit from learning that there is a better way to support our students without trying to physically force them to do things and without trying to force them to comply."

"The hope for this organization is the same as it's always been, which is to share that knowledge and make sure that the community understands that there are ways that we can support our autistic children and adults to be successful and to improve their quality of life." ■



"We have been very fortunate to have the community support that we have had."

— TERRI DUNCAN





THE SWEET TASTE OF PEACE



EVEN THE HELL OF WAR
COULDN'T MELT TAREQ
HADHAD'S HEART

By Cory Schachtel



When most Westerners think of Syria, they think of its civil war, which has killed over half a million people since it started in 2011. But death-toll numbers that high can overwhelm the senses, turning lost souls into statistics that barely register in Western minds.

Tareq Hadhad is not a statistic. He's an entrepreneur and public speaker who escaped Syria in 2013. Despite losing his cousin and brother-in-law (both were kidnapped, tortured and killed), when Hadhad thinks of Syria, he doesn't think of numbers or war. He thinks of family, community — and chocolate, which, for the Hadhads, is kind of all the same thing.

“My grandmother's home kitchen ... inspired my father to leave his engineering degree behind and start on a journey to make chocolate, because he believed that it is a product that spreads happiness, that spreads joy, that really contributes to a much brighter world,” Hadhad says.

His mother's kitchen played a pivotal role, but Hadhad's father's “journey of entrepreneurship” started at a cousin's wedding, where he saw how happy the chocolates made guests. That night changed the trajectory for the entire family, Hadhad says, because “before then, none of my family members were entrepreneurs. None of them believed in entrepreneurship as a power to make a change ... to bring in something different to the family's history. And, since 1986, it became very clear to my family that the connection to us with



the community was absolutely through giving back and contributing and making sure that everyone around us is living a happy life.”

But the war destroyed everyone's happy lives, and in 2012, it also destroyed the chocolate factory Hadhad grew up in. The family continued running it after the war started, to provide employees with jobs and customers with a sense of normalcy. And they chose not to view it in its ruined form before escaping (though they later saw pictures) to keep it a “sweet memory” at a time when things weren't so sweet.

“I think the harshest part of war is the uncertainty,” Hadhad says. “And

I believe that the human suffering happens after the trauma, not before or during it ... when someone is missing around the dinner table the day after,” adding that a survivor's pain only grows when he, she or they escape, “because once you leave, you are disconnected from your roots and disconnected from your homeland.”

Hadhad did not go far before feeling disconnected from his homeland — or his humanity. As one of the thousands of refugees who crossed the border into Lebanon each day, Hadhad found himself at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, where an officer addressed him by the number on his chest. Hadhad refused to respond.

“I told them, ‘We are not a number. Why are you calling me with a number? I have a name, and you have it,’ — and he did have it, in front of him, but he just preferred to call us by our numbers. It was an eye-opening moment for my family, because when you are in that situation, you just need anything that brings you hope. And I think the moment that we challenged to claim our humanity back, that was the first time when I saw my family hopeful again.”

“And I believe that the human suffering happens after the trauma, not before or during it...when someone is missing around the dinner table the day after.”

– Tareq Hadhad





“It feels like a dream, and I’m absolutely very grateful to have made that choice, because coming to Canada is absolutely the best decision I have made in my entire life.”

– Tareq Hadhad



When the family decided to flee their homeland in 2013, they applied to 15 countries, and the process got even the optimistic Hadhad down. “I tried to go to the U.S., to France, to Spain, to Portugal, to Australia, New Zealand. None of these countries actually

opened the doors for us, and I actually didn’t even think about applying to Canada, because I thought, how is Canada going to be different than all of those countries?”


Then Hadhad remembered a cab driver he met in Lebanon in 2014, who

had lived in Montreal for 10 years and loved it. Hadhad applied and ended up on the third flight of Syrian refugees to Canada in 2015, who were welcomed by then-governor general David Johnston. Over the next few weeks, 32 family members followed Hadhad to freedom. “It feels like a dream, and I’m absolutely very grateful to have made that choice, because coming to Canada is absolutely the best decision I have made in my entire life.”

Hadhad settled in the Nova Scotia town of Antigonish, which welcomed him and his fellow immigrants, “in a way that we have never imagined. We have never imagined that anyone in the world actually would care about us after the war started. Because what



Images supplied

He thinks of family, community – and chocolate, which, for the Hadhads, is kind of all the same thing. 



the war does, is it just makes you lose your belief and your sense of humanity. It makes you lose the ability to comprehend the idea that, yes, there are caring people around the world, [and] we matter to them. Because the only thing that war does well is make us numbers on the screens.”

By the end of the third week in their new community, the Hadhads were already looking to give back to it. But it wasn't only because they're a hardworking, chocolate-loving family that does good by doing good business. “Although we have faced overwhelming support, one of the community members came to me and said, ‘Welcome to Canada, Tareq. I saw your picture yesterday on the front page

of the newspaper, but why did you come here to take our jobs? I said, ‘We did not come here to take jobs. We came here to create them.’”

Two months after the Hadhads arrived, a few Antigonishians attended a potluck and tried the first Peace by Chocolate products made on Canadian soil. Then Hadhad brought his family's treats to farmers' markets and, by late winter of 2016, the first Canadian Peace by Chocolate storefront opened, employing community members and fellow immigrants, who welcomed about 100 people waiting for the doors to open that first day. “It meant a lot to our family that, yes, there are people who care about what we are making, and they want to be a part of it. They

want to be a part of that success.”

Success sums up much of Hadhad's life since then. He now spends much of his time traveling and talking to international audiences, sharing his story of survival and hearing heartbreakingly similar tales in return. But he says the greatest achievement of his life was when he officially became a Canadian citizen in 2020. And for all its awfulness, Hadhad looks at the war as a turning point that sent him on a journey to where he is today. “Something that kept me going is a quote from a wonderful Canadian that said, ‘Canadians are born everywhere. It just takes them a little bit to get here.’ I really keep that very close to my heart, because that's my story.” ■



Noel Xavier

Director of Philanthropy & Donor Engagement

GIFTS OF INSURANCE ARE A GREAT WAY TO MAXIMIZE YOUR CHARITABLE IMPACT

Fostering a vibrant city for all hinges on philanthropy.

Donors are driven by desires to enact meaningful changes in causes dear to them. Whether you're a seasoned contributor or new to supporting Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), we're excited to welcome you to our latest Generosity Education segment in *Legacy in Action*.

Our aim is to equip donors with practical insights, empowering them to make informed decisions about their community contributions.

In this issue, our attention turns to the transformative potential of gifting insurance policies to grow or create endowment funds. Throughout the forthcoming pages, we'll explore the advantages, guided by financial planning specialists. We'll also spotlight ECF donors who use these strategies. We'll show how this underused way of giving can have an enormous impact on the charities you care most about.

We trust you'll find this guidance valuable and encourage you to engage in discussions with your financial advisors.

We're eager to hear from you. Share with us the philanthropic areas you wish to delve deeper into. We are excited to enrich our communities together. ■

Image Supplied

A POLICY FOR GOOD



Image Supplied



ASK THE EXPERT:

Transforming a policy into a donation that keeps giving

Kelly Cyre

Entrepreneur and Insurance Advisor at Clark Insurance Advisory

LATE SPRING IS my favourite time of year. I love the smell of buds and blossoms in the air, and I am fascinated at how a seed becomes a beautiful plant in a short time. Philanthropy can be much the same. You can take a small amount of money and turn it into a significant gift — making beautiful opportunities blossom.

Life insurance is an often overlooked vehicle for making a big philanthropic gift. Many clients include charitable donations in their estate planning and you do not need to be wealthy to create a positive impact. Every person has the ability to be a philanthropist. Donating a policy allows an individual or a corporation to make a maximum gift for minimum cost. In very simplistic terms, \$2 to a charity equals \$1 of tax saved personally, and \$1 to a charity equals \$1 of tax saved corporately. >

Here are a few ways life insurance can be used for charitable donations.

1

Split the beneficiary on an existing policy — keep 80 per cent (or some percentage) for your intended beneficiary and divert 20 per cent to your favorite charity (the policy must have been in place for a few years).

Splitting the beneficiary:



A charitable tax receipt will reflect the **20%** donated.

2

Donate an existing policy — if you no longer need a policy, consider donating it. Have the policy valued for fair market value (FMV), receive charitable tax receipts for the FMV, as well as future premium payments.

← For example

\$200,000 policy donated

\$50,000 FMV

\$25,000 tax saved

Donor recognized for **\$200,000** donation to charity and saves a lot on taxes.

3

Donate a new policy — The same money paid each month creates a greater impact. Want to turn \$60 a month into \$100,000? The donor must decide if they want the ongoing annual premium tax credit or the larger tax credit upon death.

← For example

\$100,000 life insurance policy that lasts for a term of 20 years on a 55-year-old male

Premium:
 or **\$60** per month
 or **\$720** per year

Tax receipt:
 or **\$720** for each year
 or **\$100,000** on death

4

If CPP income is not needed for lifestyle, use those funds to pay the premium on a new policy owned by the charity, with the charity as the beneficiary. This saves the tax on CPP income as it becomes a charitable donation and leaves a large donation legacy. As well, you can take the CPP funds, pay the personal tax and purchase a policy that is donated by the family's estate on death.

← For example

\$20,000 in CPP income
 Purchase a **\$1,000,000** Joint Last policy.

Save **\$500,000** in tax to the estate.

Charity receives **\$1,000,000** gift.

5

Donate a policy that would otherwise lapse. Term insurance can become prohibitively expensive as you age. Consider having the policy valued, donate it to a charity and receive a tax receipt

for 10 to 50 per cent of face amount. The charity continues to pay the premium. You are recognized for the gift. ■



Insuring a Legacy

The Kembhavi family takes a unique path to philanthropy through a gift of insurance

By ECF

DILIP AND ALAKA KEMBHAVI are securing a legacy by establishing an endowment fund at Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) through the donation of a life insurance policy.

Through this unique approach, the Kembhavis' commitment to their community resonates.

"I said, 'you know what? We should find an organization that's part of the community and that helps the community,'" Dilip says. "And, through talking to some friends of ours, we decided to make ECF one of the beneficiaries."

Their connection to Edmonton runs deep, stemming from their arrival in the city in 1972 to pursue higher education at the University of Alberta. Hailing from a small town in India, Dilip found a second home in Edmonton, where he not only completed his master's in engineering but also cultivated lifelong friendships and professional connections.

"Edmonton is like home to me," he says.

Over the years, his engineering career took him across various sectors and continents including management consulting and eventually founding his own company, Shivasoft. Through it all, Edmonton remained his anchor, a place where he raised his family and found fulfillment in contributing to the community that had embraced him.

The Kembhavi family's decision to establish an endowment fund at ECF was influenced by their desire to give back to the city that had given them so much. And

there are also practical financial benefits to establishing an endowment through a gift of insurance.

"Not only are you giving back to the community, but there's also tax advantages to it," Dilip explains.

As he delves into the areas his fund will support, his passion for education, arts and nature conservation becomes clear.

"And to me, basically from where my background is, education is very important," Dilip says. "Plus, nature. I like the outdoors."

Dilip and Alaka's personal experiences and values have guided their philanthropic priorities, ensuring that their contributions align with their beliefs and aspirations for Edmonton's future.

From their humble beginnings to thriving careers and community engagement, the Kembhavis' story underscores the importance of giving back and paying it forward.

As Dilip and Alaka look to the future, their legacy will extend far beyond their lifetimes, shaping Edmonton's cultural landscape, educational opportunities and conservation efforts for generations to come. ■

"Not only are you giving back to the community, but there's also tax advantages to it."

— Dilip Kembhavi



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MAKE A DIFFERENCE in your community. Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) can help ensure your charitable giving is set-up for long term growth and greater impact.

You can set up an endowment fund that provides a permanent investment of charitable gifts. You can determine your philanthropic wishes; decide what you want to accomplish; and define the legacy you want to leave. You can set up your fund for yourself, your family or your business!

It's up to you. Here's how it works:

STEP 1

Speak with one of our philanthropy advisors about your charitable interests to determine which fund options are right for you. You can choose to support important causes locally, nationally, or around the world.

STEP 2

Once you've defined the objective of your fund, we'll create an agreement that captures your intentions. It's a straightforward document that explains the goal of your fund, how involved you would like to be in allocating grants, and other relevant details. There's no obligation for you during this process — we simply want to ensure we've documented your wishes correctly.

STEP 3

It's time to make your gift. You can create your endowment with \$10,000 – donated all at once, or you can build to this granting threshold over time. This flexibility allows you, your family, staff or clients the opportunity to contribute to the fund in a meaningful way.

STEP 4

When your fund is ready to grant, your level of involvement going forward is your choice. You could seek input from your family. Many businesses include employees or clients in deciding what causes to support each year. This becomes a powerful tool to showcase your commitment to what matters. You can also get creative with future fundraising efforts like special events, golf tournaments, or corporate matching programs. ■

You make the decisions. We provide the information.

To learn more, visit ecfoundation.org.





Moving Over Barriers^{!!!}

Helping youth discover their love of dance

By Odvod Staff



FOR AS LONG AS HUMANS have existed, we've danced. From ballet to powwow and everything in between, the art form is one of humanity's truly universal languages, helping to channel inner creativity and communicate across cultural, geographic and linguistic divides.

But access to this Rosetta Stone of human expression isn't always equal — especially in the modern era, where many families face significant barriers to practicing dance. Tearing down those barriers is why a new program was created to connect Indigenous youth to the art of dance.

A partnership between the Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta (ISCA) and Alberta Ballet, the program offers six weeks of free dance training for

Indigenous youths who might otherwise not be able to explore their creativity in the medium. The program splits six one-hour classes into two parts: 30 minutes of ballet followed by 30 minutes of powwow dance instruction.

"We wanted to introduce youth to dance, but not just exclusively ballet," says Taryn Samson, the Director of Community Programming with Alberta Ballet. "Incorporating Indigenous dance practices allows students to experience both sides of dance culture through that universal language."

Christie Nepoose, one of the instructors who teaches the traditional powwow dance and a Cultural Engagement Coordinator with the ISCA, says combining the two practices gives youth a chance to express

themselves while also allowing them space to explore their development and passions in life.

"You get to express yourself with both styles and tell your own story," she says. "A lot of youth are still learning who they are and the way social media runs everything, it kind of pressures youth to know who they are right now. I wanted to let kids know they're still developing and learning who they are and what their passions are."

Beyond exposing youth to a variety of dance types, combining the two disciplines was a conscious decision to help tackle some of the cultural barriers, as well as financial ones. >



“With this program, we’re tackling that barrier and saying ‘how can we bring these youth in and expose them to styles of dance while also helping them learn about their culture and others, and how they can come together through dance,’” says Samson.

And instructors learn, too.

“The ballet instructor and I both take part in each other’s classes,” says Nepoose. “We want students to know that we’re learning with them and they’re not alone. It’s new and exciting and they’re all willing to try and just get out there.”

Now in its third iteration of offerings, the program launched in 2023 thanks, in part, to a \$3,200 grant from Edmonton Community Foundation that helped pay for instruction and equipment (including ballet slippers and hand-made moccasins for each student).

“That partnership is important,” says Samson. “We were really lucky that we were able to receive funding from the Edmonton Community Foundation for that pilot program. Both Alberta Ballet and the ISCA are looking to continue and grow the program, so the more funding we receive, that’s essential for us.”

Since its first round of classes, the program has been able to offer two more sessions — one in Calgary and another in Edmonton — as well as increase the size of classes from 18 to 40 and increase the age eligibility for youth.

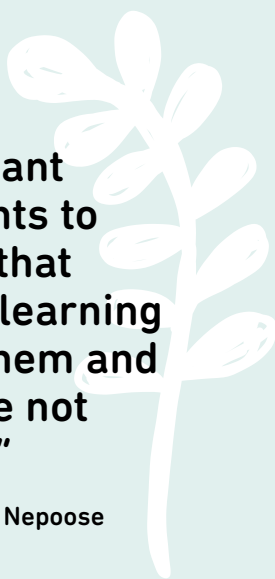
“Because of the success of that first class, we’re running the program again and we’ve opened up the age groups. It’s now eight-year-old students all the way up to 14 years old,” Samson says.

That change is for good reason, too, because, as Samson points out, the programs popularity has surged alongside its size.

“When the ISCA opened up the registration for the program, it filled in about 30 minutes,” she says. ■

“We want students to know that we’re learning with them and they’re not alone.”

— Christie Nepoose





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