

SPRING 2019

LEGACY ACTION

EDMONTON
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MÉTIS PROUD

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Realizing potential
and paying it forward

SPEAK FOR THE TREES

p12

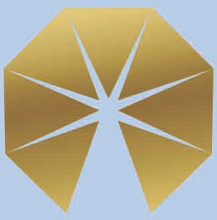
Vegreville's Kevin Stewart
does more than talk

RITE OF PASSAGE

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Adaptive bicycles for kids
with all abilities





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Cover by Laughing Dog Photography

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Martin Garber-Conrad

Martin Garber-Conrad
CEO

Legacy is at the heart of what we do at Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF). As we work with donors to build lasting support for the communities they care about, we also look back at the legacies of people and places that came before us.

This is the inspiration behind a special podcast series we're producing in 2019. In the first instalment of the series, I join Chris Chang-Yen Phillips, Edmonton's former historian laureate, to tell the story behind ECF's home in the historic Hilltop House. The podcast story can be found in Episode 37 of *The Well Endowed Podcast* at thewellendowedpodcast.com.

Built by the McDougall family in 1912, Hilltop House is a perfect fit for ECF and the spirit of what we help our donors achieve. Just as we take good care to steward our donors' legacies, we have also gone to great lengths to preserve Hilltop House. If John C. McDougall were still alive, I feel he would approve of the care we've taken to maintain his family home.

Family often plays an integral role in why donors come to ECF to realize their philanthropic goals. On page 20, you will find the stories of three donors, including Janet Riopel, who is using her endowment fund at ECF to instil in her children a tradition of giving back to the community.

Thousands of kids have benefited from

the programs our donors support through their funds. On page 16, you'll learn how Goodwill's You Can Ride 2 program is providing children with disabilities the opportunity to cycle with the help of modified bikes. And on page 15, we look at how the Connect Society is helping bridge the hearing divide between parents and their children who are deaf.

Siblings are a wonderful part of any family. On page 19, we honour Edmonton's much-loved Big Sister, Liz O'Neill, who is celebrating her 40th anniversary as the executive director of Boys & Girls Club Big Brothers Big Sisters. This is an incredible milestone and we offer our heartfelt congratulations and thanks to Liz for her decades of service to generations of children in Edmonton.

As generations change, so do the needs of the community. In Edmonton's theatre scene, the need is paramount for representation and safe spaces where under-represented communities can create art. On page 6, you can read about how Rapid Fire Theatre's *SPHINXES* showcase is creating that space for its female, trans and non-binary cast members.

This is just a handful of the stories you'll find in the spring issue of *Legacy in Action*. We hope you enjoy them.

– Martin Garber-Conrad

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LET US TELL YOU A RIDDLE

Rapid Fire Theatre's SPHINXES celebrates female, trans and non-binary funny folk



BY: FAWNDA MITHRUSH PHOTOGRAPHY: BUFFY GOODMAN

Spending time with improvisers Julia Grochowski and Joleen Ballendine is positively side-splitting. The co-directors of Rapid Fire Theatre's (RFT) *SPHINXES* spontaneously imitate an infamous *Saturday Night Live* sketch and casually riff on a deluge of gender-charged topics: turning 30, being told they look like their mothers, using bras as change purses and wearing mics with formal gowns (really, there are never enough pockets in women's clothing).

We'd be remiss to ignore the varied menstrual in-jokes that drop into the conversation, and often infuse their live show, too. Much like the coy queries posed by the Sphinx of Greek myth, the show's humour can sometimes prompt more questions than answers.

"My godfather came to the last show and he said to me, 'I've never heard of a Diva Cup. What is that?'" Ballendine asks with a laugh.

"God bless him," says Grochowski, with a warm grin.

Comedy has seen dramatic shifts in the wake of the #MeToo movement. In an era when Baronesses have become CBC's comic lifeline and Hannah Gadsby's *Nanette* overshadowed the standup patriarchy, with *SPHINXES*, which is being sponsored by Edmonton Community Foundation this season, Rapid Fire

is upending the male-dominated world of improv, too.

SPHINXES was initially an all-female format spawned by former RFT artistic director (AD) Amy Shostak in 2016 — a rare casting choice for a comedy show, especially one that didn't pander to the typical "wine time" trope of feminine humour.

Longtime RFT players Grochowski and Ballendine have since made the show their own, but they emphasize that *SPHINXES* is truly owned by its cast, a diverse crew of improvisers that range widely in age and experience. All of them — down to the technician and onstage musician — identify as female, trans or non-binary.

"It honestly makes for a very different show," says Ballendine. "It's still funny, it's still fast and fun, but there's more attention to pushing narratives where we don't usually go."

"I've seen it happen where women or trans performers are pigeonholed into specific roles, into stereotypes, or just bulldozed by the presence of the men onstage," says Matt Schuurman, who took the reins as Rapid Fire's AD in 2015. "What *SPHINXES* does is give a space for those performers to let their ideas and stories rise without that other voice in the room."

A *SPHINXES* show begins with a series of questions. Cues such as

“When was the last time that you felt heightened emotion?” or “When did you first notice your gender?” prompt the audience to share answers, which are then used to fuel subsequent scenes. As in all Rapid Fire shows, the entirety is improvised and ephemeral — and then it’s gone forever.

Schuurman admits that as a male audience member, he has a different take on *SPHINXES*, but he also points to the show’s celebration of universal experience.

“I feel like I’m being included in a conversation,” he says. “You see when those stories resonate with the audience, too, which is one of the most powerful things about improv, and the best kind of laugh that we always get. It’s that laughter of familiarity.”

Grochowski adds that the *SPHINXES* cast includes many close friends, which lends a spirit of camaraderie and a sense of safety.

“We didn’t even really need to do much, other than get all of these people in a room. And suddenly everything changed,” says Ballendine. “It wasn’t the same kind of improv because we weren’t editing ourselves the way we would have.”

Though RFT is making headway in terms of representation and diversity on Edmonton stages, Grochowski and Ballendine stress there’s still a long way to go.

“You don’t ever stop working as a woman in comedy; you never get to just sit back and relax,” says Grochowski. “You’re always awake, you’re always vigilant about how things are being portrayed. But people are realizing that we have stuff to say and comedy is a great way to comment on some heavy, heavy stuff.” ■

***SPHINXES* runs at Zeidler Hall in the Citadel Theatre
March 30 and June 1 at 10pm**



(Above and opposite) Left: Joleen Ballendine and Julia Grochowski



(From left): Sharon Uppal, Danielle Browne, Alaina Sadowski, Sydney Campbell, Lacey Huculak, Joleen Ballendine, Julia Grochowski, Christina Harbak, Amanda Buchner, Megan Prusko, Marielle TerHart, Tyra Banda, Catriona Hurley, Ana Mulino, Maria Besko, Kelly Turner, Sarah Mattiello

ADVANCING Métis education

Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards bring recipients one step closer to achieving their dreams

When Taneiya Mahe and Ramsey Mudryk imagine their future together, they know a few things for certain. “We just know that we want to help make whichever community we live in better,” says Mudryk. They also know that they’d prefer to end up in one of the eight Métis settlements in Alberta. And, perhaps most important of all, he adds, they look forward to being “a part of restoring (their) traditional culture and help(ing) improve the Métis nation as a whole.”

As recipients of the 2018 Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards (BBMA), Mahe and Mudryk are one step closer to making those plans a reality. The BBMA were founded by Dr. Herb Belcourt, Orval Belcourt and Georges Brosseau Q.C., directors of Canative Housing Corporation. The Canative Housing Corporation began operating in 1971, in response to the growing need for affordable housing for Alberta’s Métis people. Over the next three decades, the company purchased 228 homes in Edmonton and Calgary, renting them to Métis people at affordable rates. Turning their minds to the long-term success of their people, the founders decided to make an investment in education, founding the BBMA program in 2001. With help from Edmonton Community Foundation, Canative Housing Corporation established an endowment fund of \$13 million. Now in excess of \$19 million, the fund continues to grow and disperses \$600,000 every year to Métis learners via the BBMA, which are now the largest non-governmental source of student funding in all of Canada for Métis students.

With help from the BBMA program, Mahe was able to embark on studies at the

University of Alberta, pursuing a bachelor’s degree in education. Her passion to become a teacher stemmed from her dreams of becoming a mother one day, she explains. She thanks her own mother for inspiring her ambition to work with children and to be a role model. When Mahe was growing up, her mother was the sole provider for her nine children, eight of whom, including Mahe, were adopted.

“I will forever be grateful for my mom raising us as her own and building and guiding us on a pathway towards success,” says Mahe. Although her mother was non-Indigenous, Mahe always felt connected to her Métis roots. Her mother ensured she and all her adoptive siblings, either Métis or Indigenous, knew where they came from. Visits to her biological family were common, giving Mahe her very first experiences with her Métis heritage.

“I want to use my mother’s influence to pursue my dream in supporting the youth of our society and to be a role model for them” – Taneiya Mahe

“We would come home from those visits with a little teaching each time, like smudging before dinner (or) how we always should say ‘see you later’ instead of ‘goodbye.’”

Mahe notes that although her experience in the child welfare system was a positive one, “most children’s experience in the foster-care system are not as fortunate as mine.” Currently, Indigenous children in care in Alberta are vastly overrepresented, numbering 5,337 out of a total of 7,580. Mahe hopes to have an impact on the lives of those children in care.


“I want to use my mother’s influence to pursue my dream in supporting the youth of our society and to be a role model for them,” she explains, “to do as much as I can to assist raising them, guiding them towards their identity as Métis people and to represent what they can accomplish themselves. I want to be able to use my personal experiences to help others heal and grow from their own.”

Along with her strong family ties, another support for Mahe as she progresses through her studies is spouse Ramsey Mudryk, also a recipient of a 2018 BBMA. Mudryk is enrolled in the Primary Care Paramedic program at Northern Lakes College and is currently taking the National Fire Protection Association 1001 Standard for Firefighting Professionals program. He plans on completing a bachelor of applied business in emergency services. Although it’s a long road ahead of him in terms of studies, as Mudryk says, it is all “necessary to accomplish my career goals of providing the best possible emergency services in Métis communities.” ➤

ON THE
COVER

BY: BREANNA ARCAND-KOOTENAY
PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUGHING DOG PHOTOGRAPHY





“Being Métis has become an integral part of my identity”

– Ramsey Mudryk

Mudryk’s volunteer work as a first responder, where he provided aid to a Cree nation as well as a Métis settlement, opened his eyes to the issues faced by Métis and Indigenous communities. He recalls “a lack of funding for proper resources and training, discrimination from responders from outside communities, and response times of over an hour.”

Mudryk’s Métis heritage was not always central to his identity. He grew up in a small town in east-central Alberta, with little knowledge of, or exposure to, his cultural roots. “My family is like many others that chose not to fully embrace their Métis heritage for generations to avoid discrimination and persecution,” he explains. Mudryk’s first experience learning Métis history was in a social studies class in junior high. “Since then,” he adds, “being Métis has become an integral part of my identity.”

Mudryk continues to learn more about his history and celebrates what it means to be Métis. For him, this includes “a sense of family, community and willingness to help each other achieve our ambitions.”

Although they’re just beginning their journey of formal education together, Mahe and Mudryk anticipate a lifelong path of learning, thanks to the generosity of the BBMA program and donors.

“I don’t think we’ll ever be finished,” Mudryk notes, “as there is so much we wish to learn, such as the Cree and Michif languages, our rich and long history, and everything our traditions have to teach us.”

BBMA HELPING MÉTIS LEARNERS

Each academic year, BBMA provides 140 awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 towards tuition and fees for Métis learners. Since its establishment in 2001, BBMA has presented more than 1,800 awards to more than 1,200 Métis students across Alberta, with a total value of over \$7.2 million.

The success rate for award recipients is astounding, with graduates including roughly:

- 95 nurses
- 38 social workers
- 66 teachers

- 38 business professionals
- 32 lawyers
- 15 accountants
- 12 conservation sciences professionals
- 37 engineers
- 17 medical doctors
- 16 dentists and dental assistants

Recipients have also graduated as aviation mechanics, carpenters and cabinet makers, chiropractors, electricians, forestry professionals, film and video professionals, funeral directors, motorcycle mechanics, pharmacists and veterinarians.

To be considered for the BBMA program, applicants are assessed holistically on factors such as connection to their Métis community, financial need, capacity for success and likelihood of improved opportunities, as well as their individual circumstances. ■

Application deadline for this year’s awards is March 31. Applications are available on the BBMA website at bbma.ca.

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Vegreville's own

LORAX

Kevin Stewart shows how small actions can evolve into greatness

BY: THERESE KEHLER PHOTOGRAPHY: KEVIN STEWART

Small things make a difference, and if you need proof, consider how Kevin Stewart — a legally blind photo enthusiast who is on a mission to save a patch of aspen parkland — won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Well, sort of.

It's a bit of an involved story, but it starts in Rwanda in 1994, with a silverback gorilla killed by a landmine.

A zoology graduate from the University of Alberta at the time, Stewart's eyes were turned towards environmental concerns and activist efforts. The death of a gorilla half a world away inspired him to action. He turned himself into an authority, digging up information and newspaper clippings in those early-Internet days. "This was me, staying up late at night and doing the research. Because somebody needed to do it," he recalls.

Inspired by the gorilla's plight, he co-authored a 1999 article entitled "Animal Casualties of the Underground War." He was the "amateur researcher in Canada" interviewed by the *New York Times* in 2001. And he joined the International Campaign to Ban Landmines activist group.

"I was developing a feeling of empowerment, that I was actually doing something," Stewart says about those years. "Especially in November of '97, when I got an email from Jody Williams. It was

kind of a bulk email to everyone, going 'Congratulations, we've won' — he pauses for a beat — "the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize."

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines and its co-ordinator, Vermont-based Williams, were joint winners of the prize.

It was a turning point, a huge affirmation of the power of small actions. But it coincided with another turning point, in which Stewart was literally losing sight of small things.

LOSING SIGHT, GAINING VISION

In the mid-'90s, Stewart's eyesight began changing. He was diagnosed with Stargardt disease, an untreatable genetic disorder, and within little more than a decade, his vision had deteriorated past 20/200, the point of legal blindness.

The 52-year-old picks up a magazine, flips it open and draws it toward his face. "I can see the words riiiiiggggght aboooouuuuu *now*," he exclaims, the glossy pages almost touching the tip of his nose.

This demonstration happens in an Edmonton coffee shop, where we've met to talk about the Vegreville Creek and Wetlands Fund that he started in August 2018 with Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF). It's another little project he hopes will grow into great things.

His resolve to protect his hometown area of Vegreville is partly influenced by Edmonton's

Little Mountain controversy of 1999, when 42 acres of natural aspen parkland were bulldozed despite widespread public outcry and efforts to save it. Says Stewart: "We don't want what happened to Little Mountain to happen in these places."

The area also means a great deal to Stewart because that's where he discovered the joy of seeing the beauty of nature through photography.

"I was developing a feeling of empowerment, that I was actually doing something"

He opens a photo album, its pages filled with extraordinary close-ups of tiny creatures — flies, snails, butterflies and more. He took the photos, with infinite patience and the macro setting of his auto-focus Olympus, while tramping through an area he calls Pussytoes Spring, near Vegreville.

Stewart can't see what his camera has captured until he opens the full-screen images on his computer. Then, he says, "I can actually see the details. Like, *really* see the details."

Stewart contributed \$2,506.25 — seed money, if you will — to set up his emerging fund with ECF. According to donor adviser Noel Xavier, this type >



of fund has 10 years to grow to \$10,000, through contributions and compounding interest. At that point, it can begin granting funds to support its cause.

Xavier says emerging funds are proof that small actions have big impact.

“A lot of people think, ‘Oh, an endowment fund. Well, I’m not rich,’” he says. “But when we say ‘You’ve got 10 years to get it to \$10,000,’ that makes it a lot more manageable and achievable for people.”

PROTECTING VULNERABLE LANDSCAPES

In this case, the funds would go to the Edmonton Area Land Trust (EALT) to cover stewardship costs associated with protecting two natural areas: a wetland on the southwest edge of Vegreville, and Pussytoes Spring, 100 acres of undisturbed aspen parkland that Stewart dreams could become a butterfly sanctuary.

"This is the most fragmented type of ecosystem in Alberta"

Pam Wight, the executive director of EALT, applauds Stewart’s fund, calling it a very important step to protect land in perpetuity.

Aspen parkland is a transition zone between boreal forests to the north and grasslands to the south, stretching from southern Manitoba to north-central Alberta.

“This is the most fragmented type of ecosystem in Alberta,” says Wight. “The central parkland area is used up by agriculture or urban areas ... and there’s very little native habitat left, relative to other ecosystems.”

CREATIVE GIVING

With ECF’s help, Stewart’s fund has an online giving page, making it easy for anyone to contribute. Stewart, meanwhile, is busy dreaming up ways to supplement the donations — a “Bottles for Butterflies” bottle drive, or maybe an adopt-a-critter campaign that uses his photographs.

On the online giving page, Stewart talks about speaking for the trees, a line from the 1971 Dr. Seuss book, *The Lorax*.

At the end of *The Lorax*, the Once-ler drops a single Truffula tree seed into the hand of a boy who listened to his story. “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not,” Seuss wrote.

Stewart is clearly someone who cares. A lot. ■



BRIDGING THE HEARING DIVIDE

Connect Society's pilot program deepens relationships between children who are deaf and their families

BY: CAITLIN CRAWSHAW

When Isaac Fipula was nine months old, his parents noticed that he didn't react when his father played his trumpet. "There was no startling or looking over," says his dad, Eric.

After a hearing assessment revealed that baby Isaac was completely deaf, his family turned to Edmonton's Connect Society. Created in 1963, the non-profit helps deaf and hearing people — especially families with deaf children — communicate through American Sign Language (ASL). While Isaac attended an early intervention program, then his first year of kindergarten, his parents took advantage of the non-profit's ASL instruction for adults.

Now 10, Isaac continues to develop his language skills at a school for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, but his parents have far less exposure to ASL. "It's just like any language," says his mom, Deborah Robb. "You only retain it to the extent to which you use it." And, as with any other language, it takes years for learners to become fluent.

With help from a \$39,500 Community Grant from Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), the Connect Society has expanded programming for families like Isaac's with a year-long pilot called the Family Sign Language Program. Since September of 2018, the program has been helping families with school-aged children through in-home instruction, Saturday classes and online instruction through an app called Glide.

Three modes of instruction ensure access for families with varied schedules. For Isaac and his parents, the best option has been the Saturday classes, where families practise ASL together under the guidance of skilled instructors. "What's been really helpful is becoming more confident in our signing," says Robb.

"This program helps parents maintain



their (ASL) so they can bond and communicate really effectively with their children," says Connect Society CEO Cheryl Redhead. Nyla Kurylowich, who runs the Family Sign Language Program, agrees. It's common for parents' ASL skills to lag while their children zoom ahead, she explains. This can cause frustration and damage the bond between parents and kids, putting the well-being of deaf young people at risk. Ultimately, the program is about far more than ASL skill-building, she says: "It's about strengthening family relationships. We're doing that through communication, but that's our ultimate goal." ■

“
WHAT'S BEEN REALLY
HELPFUL IS BECOMING
MORE CONFIDENT IN
OUR SIGNING

”



ALL-WHEEL DRIVE

BY: *CARISSA HALTON* PHOTOGRAPHY: *COOPER & O'HARA PHOTOGRAPHY*

Modified bikes bring joy and freedom to kids with disabilities

Fourteen-year-old Jordan loves bike rides. "She loves the feeling of the wind on her face and on her hands," says her mother, Lis Dam Lo. "Do you remember the movie *Titanic*, when Kate Winslet is on the bow of the boat and spreads out her hands in pure exhilaration? That's Jordan on a bike."

Because Jordan has a global developmental delay, she needs extra help riding a bike. She often forgets to keep her hands on the handle bars, feet on the pedals or even her body in the seat. With Jordan's first bike — a Rifton trike adapted for her ability, with straps on the pedals, a ring for handle bars and a harness to keep her seated — Dam Lo would use an attached pull bar to keep her moving. After Jordan outgrew that trike, Dam Lo was relieved to discover the You Can Ride 2 Borrow a Bike program.

You Can Ride 2 started in 2003, offering group bike-riding lessons to kids with co-ordination challenges. The program's volunteer physiotherapists soon noticed kids with more complex needs

— often caused by cerebral palsy, autism or Down syndrome — sometimes required modified bikes. Borrow a Bike was introduced to address this need, with many bike mechanics recruited from partner Bike Edmonton. Since 2013, it has helped hundreds of people aged three to 20. For a small fee, the program modifies and lends out, to registered participants, new and donated adaptive bikes — which can cost up to \$5,000 to purchase.

After donating their outgrown Rifton trike to Borrow a Bike, Dam Lo and Jordan signed up for the annual Adaptive Bike Fair, where they tested out multiple bike brands and styles adapted for kids with a range of abilities. Physiotherapists and bike mechanics were on hand at the fair to advise on additional modifications that would help Jordan continue to ride. At last year's fair, Jordan borrowed a tandem adaptive trike fitted with a power assist wheel that helps Dam Lo pedal the 39-kilogram (85-pound) trike while propelling two people. Through You Can Ride 2, the two have discovered new areas and people in their community.

Not only that, Dam Lo says, “It’s an easy way to interact with my daughter, because it’s sometimes hard to get into her world.”

Last year, 135 children were matched with a bike through Borrow a Bike. Many of these bikes are customized with an impressive array of adaptations. Consider the multiple options just for pedals: There are pedals with blocks, hand-cranked pedals, pedals that don’t require a child to bend their knees and pedals that can be switched to ‘coast mode’ so a child doesn’t need to pump if a parent is helping. Working together, physiotherapists and skilled mechanics modify the bikes to suit each child. This can include adding features such as backrests and harnesses.

Sometimes they work with partners. For example, University of Alberta engineering students and alumni developed the power-assist wheel on Jordan’s tandem trike. Out of this same partnership, a remote-controlled braking system was also developed. With the right funder, they hope to develop a power assist that is light enough and geared low enough for kids with muscular dystrophy to ride a bike successfully.

You Can Ride 2 recently became a

program of Goodwill Industries of Alberta. Their 173 bikes can now be stored in Goodwill’s Impact Centre, where there is also permanent space for the Adaptive Bike Fair and year-round bike-maintenance events. This year, Edmonton Community Foundation committed \$29,300 to support setting up this space. The funding went toward the purchase of additional storage shelves and critical bike-maintenance and modification equipment. It also supported the development of an adapted bike-maintenance work station. Here, organizers hope adults with disabilities will be able to learn maintenance skills while supporting the adaptive bike program.

Riding a bike is often considered a seminal rite of passage. “As an able-bodied person, I once took it for granted that everyone could ride a bike,” says Lis Dam Lo. “Now, raising a special-needs child, I realize it’s not that easy.”

You Can Ride 2’s aim is that every child, no matter their ability, can learn to ride. And their work is making a difference. “Jordan feels freedom when she’s on the bike,” says her mom. “She feels exhilarated, involved and included.” ■



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I really believe in Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), the work that they do, and the benefit that they add to the community. They are so much better positioned to determine the needs of Edmontonians than I am.

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Karen Platten



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BIG SISTER TO THEM ALL

BGCBigs' Liz O'Neill has been a leader in Edmonton's non-profit scene since 1979

BY: CAITLIN CRAWSHAW

Liz O'Neill never intended to set down roots in Edmonton, but when she lost a coin-toss with her new husband, she found herself leaving Toronto for the Prairie city.

It was 1979 and the city was growing rapidly. A number of non-profits had recently been established, including the Big Sisters Society of Edmonton, a fledgling charity that matched adult mentors (or "big sisters") with girls in need of positive role models. Not long after arriving, O'Neill spotted a job opportunity and put her hat in the ring.

"I applied for the job because I came from a large family and thought I could make a contribution," says O'Neill, who grew up with nine siblings. "As a big sister to four younger ones, I understood intuitively what the role would be about and that I could help make a difference in kids' lives." At 24, she was hired as the organization's executive director, a role she has happily remained in for 40 years.

During that time, Big Sisters — now Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters (BGCBigs) — has grown by leaps and bounds. When O'Neill took the helm, the organization had just one-and-a-half staff members (herself and a part-time employee) serving 24 clients with an annual budget of \$36,000; today, the organization supports 5,700 kids with 125 employees and an annual budget of \$7.6 million.

Much of the organization's growth is attributable to two big mergers: the first in 1990 with Big Brothers of Edmonton (which provided mentorship to boys) and the second in 2011 with Boys and Girls Clubs



Liz O'Neill

of Edmonton (specializing in after-school programming). Today, BGCBigs' services include mentoring of girls and boys, after-school programs for kids and youth, and other programming focused on the well-being of diverse families in the community.

“**I APPLIED FOR THE JOB BECAUSE I CAME FROM A LARGE FAMILY AND THOUGHT I COULD MAKE A CONTRIBUTION**”

“We work with Indigenous families, refugee families, immigrant families and families of limited means,” explains O'Neill.

BGCBigs has also seen big growth in terms of the number of clients knocking on its door, which O'Neill attributes to its public outreach over the decades. More and more families know about the organization and are reaching out for help. In fact, there are

currently about 1,000 children waiting to be matched with a Big Sister or Big Brother.

O'Neill says the organization's work wouldn't be possible without Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF), which has provided crucial funding of \$1 million for various projects over the past four years. BGCBigs also found valuable help establishing their endowment fund in 2015 using ECF's Endowment Sustainability Program. And, O'Neill says, during her two six-year terms on ECF's board of directors, she was fortunate to gain an invaluable education about the granting process, financial management for non-profits and much more.

Four decades after arriving in Edmonton, O'Neill is still just as enthusiastic about working behind the scenes with young people, volunteers, donors, funders, government agencies and others to help the next generation succeed. She takes joy in her work connecting all of these entities to create the "patchwork quilt" of support needed for a vibrant community. "Communities work because people look out for each other," she says. "I don't think we talk about it enough." ■



JANET RIOPELE



DAWN HAWLEY



SHANNON DEAN

MAKING *a mark*

ECF donors invest in the future of community

BY: JENELLE JENSEN

Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) is dedicated to creating a strong community now and in the future. Through endowment funds, ECF helps donors create permanent, ongoing support for charities they are passionate about, leaving a legacy for future generations. These are just a few stories of donors who are determined to make a mark on Edmonton's future.

SHANNON *Dean*

Living with a disability for 50 years has helped Shannon Dean to understand the importance of providing support for individuals like her.

Eight years ago, Dean and her husband began the Shannon and John Dean Endowment Fund, which supports organizations that provide services to people with disabilities, allowing them to foster independent living skills. Some of the many organizations the fund supports include William Watson Lodge Society, Pilgrims Hospice, Canadian Paraplegic Association, MS Society, Camp He Ho Ha and Easter Seals.

"I've worked with a lot of people with a broad range of disabilities, and became familiar with the challenges they experience, whether it's a lifelong disability or one they recently acquired," says Dean.

Dean was inspired to start an endowment fund after reading an article explaining the process. She was surprised to learn that these funds are not just for the wealthy; anyone can start one.

Resources provided by ECF made starting their fund a seamless experience for Dean and her husband. Between setting up a meeting, speaking with an advisor and signing the papers, the process was so simple

that Dean has since convinced friends to start their own funds with ECF.

After hearing about Dean's own experience setting up a fund, a friend decided to do the same for her family. Dean has since initiated the establishment of two other funds: the Brenda J. Moore Scholarship Fund and the Diane Butcher "Open Door" Legacy Fund in memory of two dear friends who both passed away in recent years.

JANET *Riopel*

Janet Riopel has decades of experience as an avid volunteer and financial contributor to many Edmonton charities. As president and CEO of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, the prominent local business leader acknowledges the importance of enhancing the quality of life within her community. Through ECF, she established an endowment fund that supports women and children living in poverty, living on the streets or living in danger.



REALLY, IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY — BUILDING
COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY



"I feel very strongly that in a province that offers so much benefit and so much value, the only way we can be successful is to make sure our kids grow up healthy, strong, well-educated and committed to the community," she says.

Since deciding to include ECF in her will, Riopel knows that her biggest contribution will come once she is gone. Riopel believes in creating family traditions, and sees her fund as a kind of torch-passing to the next generation. The fund allows her to "continue to build benevolence" in her family long after she's gone.

"Really, it's all about community — building community and strengthening community," she says. "And that has to be a generational thing."

DAWN *Hawley*

As a financial planner and a longtime ECF volunteer, Dawn Hawley has always been a supporter and has encouraged her children to be contributing volunteers in the community as well.

Hawley is a recent recipient of the Donald J. Johnston Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to the financial-planning profession, and as part of the award received \$10,000. She split her award between her two passions — supporting the Financial Planning Research Foundation and establishing an endowment fund with ECF. Together, Hawley and her adult children determined the fund will support programs for children and adolescents, as well as mental health programs. ECF made the process easy, Hawley says, and she has referred many of her financial-planning clients to the foundation to assist them with their charitable giving.

"Being a donor has allowed me to leave a legacy and to continue to support Edmonton," says Hawley. "I think that ECF does a great job supporting the Edmonton-and-area community." ■

You CAN START A FUND, TOO!

1. ECF's donor advisors can help you answer many questions, such as:

- What do you believe would make your community a better place and how could you have an impact?
- What types of charitable interests mean the most to you?
- What would you like your fund to be named? Would you like to name your fund in memory of a loved one or in honour of someone you admire?

Grants can be made to any registered Canadian charity, which means you can provide support to your favourite causes in Edmonton, across Canada and around the world.

2. With your questions answered, ECF drafts an agreement. It's a straightforward document that explains, in writing, the goal of your fund and how it is to operate.

3. With an agreement in place, you can make your gifts immediately or in your estate plans. A fully operational endowment can be created with \$10,000. You can donate it all at once or take up to 10 years to reach the total amount.

4. Your gift is invested and a percentage is disbursed to charities each year as you have described in the agreement. You can stay active in the annual granting process and you can take advantage of ECF's expertise regarding grants within the community.

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Learn more or start your fund now at ecfoundation.org.

ARTS IN EDMONTON

Unless otherwise stated, "Edmonton" refers to Census Metropolitan Area and not solely the City of Edmonton.

For the purposes of this document, this is what is referred to when discussing arts and arts organizations.

ARTS include a wide variety of creative disciplines including:

- **literature** (including drama, poetry, and prose),
- **performing arts** (including dance, music, and theatre),
- **and media and visual arts** (including drawing, painting, filmmaking, architecture, ceramics, sculpting, and photography).

ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

There are many types of arts organizations that have various structures. Organizations may have artists that are paid (professional) or unpaid (voluntary), be privately or publicly funded, or be considered a for-profit or non-profit. The structure of the organization does not necessarily denote the quality of the work or the commitment of the artists.

Why Arts are Important

Research shows that:

- **Where the arts thrive, there is also likely to be a vibrant, thriving economy.** Neighbourhoods are livelier, communities are revitalized, tourists and residents are attracted to the area.
- **There is a correlation between engagement in the arts and other types of civic engagement.** Adults who attend art galleries, attend live performances, or read literature are more likely than non-attenders or non-readers to vote, volunteer and take part in community events.

Health and Arts

There is a lot of evidence that art is good for your physical and mental health. Art therapy can help with self-expression, manage pain, and even reduce fatigue, stress, or anxiety.

In 2018-2019, the Health Arts Society of Alberta (HASA) will perform over 400 concerts for elders in care across the province. The concerts bring professional musicians in Alberta to care and retirement homes.

The McMullen Gallery at University Hospital in Edmonton runs the "Artist on the Wards" program, a free service that caters to the adult patients in the hospital. It provides therapeutic literary, musical, and visual arts programming. In addition, the gallery sees 1,200-1,500 visitors per exhibition.

IN A 2018 LEGER POLL:

79% of Edmontonians agree that Edmonton is a city that values the Arts

Public Engagement in the Arts

DID YOU KNOW?

- **76.3%** of Albertans attended an arts event in 2018.
- **Attendance at arts events** presented by Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) operational grant recipients **exceeds the population of the province.**

According to a survey done by PACE (Professional Arts Coalition of Edmonton), organizations reported holding 11,727 days of arts events in the Edmonton region in 2016.

- This represents roughly **30 arts events per day.**
- Arts and cultural festivals and live art performance accounted for **over 90% of total event attendance.**

DID YOU KNOW?

The Kiwanis Music Festival in Edmonton began in 1908 and was one of the first competitive musical festivals in Canada. It features over 1,700 performers including choirs, bands, Aboriginal dancing, theatre performers, and more. This year will be its 111th year.

Arts Education in Edmonton

Both EPSB and ECSD offer focused arts education in addition to regular curriculum.

ONLY ABOUT ONE-QUARTER of those working in the arts in Canada have graduated from post-secondary arts education.

MORE THAN 10,000 INDIVIDUALS OVER THE AGE OF 15 IN THE CITY OF EDMONTON HAVE STUDIED VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AT A POST-SECONDARY LEVEL. **OF THOSE, 6,680 ARE FEMALE AND 4,300 ARE MALE.**

6,680 FEMALE

4,300 MALE

Individuals Working in the Arts

- Often work part time, **SUPPLEMENTING THEIR INCOME** with work outside the arts.
- **OFTEN HAVE A LOWER INCOME.** Since 2008 real wages have only increased 6.7% compared to 10% for the Canadian economy. Income from writing has decreased by 27% from 2014 to 2017.
- **FACE A HIGH TURNOVER RATE OF 13.3%**
This is higher than the all-industry average of 7.1%.

Top three categories of self-employment:

65.4%

OF PHOTOGRAPHERS

65.1%

OF MUSICIANS
AND SINGERS

63.9%

OF PAINTERS,
SCULPTORS AND
OTHER VISUAL
ARTISTS

35.8% OF ARTISTS

IN EDMONTON ARE SELF-EMPLOYED.

In **EDMONTON NON-PROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS**
two-thirds are part-time employees or contractors.

Volunteerism in the Arts

Volunteers are an important part of the arts in Edmonton. Volunteers provided the equivalent of an estimated 220 full-time jobs to assist arts organizations in 2016.

An average of 52,000 people volunteer each year to assist the arts in Alberta.

If volunteers were paid \$15 per hour, their labour would be worth more than \$28.5 million, equivalent to approximately 14% of the total revenue for the sector in the province.

Public Art

The City of Edmonton Percent for Art program allocates 1% of the eligible construction budget of any publicly accessible municipal project for the acquisition of art.

- As of January, 2019 there are **233** pieces of completed public art and **29** are in progress.

THE AFA CARES FOR THE LARGEST PROVINCIAL PUBLIC ART COLLECTION **WITH 9,049 ARTWORKS.** AS OF MARCH 31, 2018, IT WAS **VALUED AT \$16,370,749.**



Equity in the arts has a long way to go

WOMEN MAKE UP 51% OF THE 650,000 ARTS WORKERS IN CANADA, BUT REPRESENT ONLY 25% OF ARTISTIC DIRECTORS. MINORITY WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE CONTRACT POSITIONS AND LESS LIKELY TO BE IN FULL-TIME POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP.

A 2016 study found that of more than 2,300 theatre awards, the largest and highest-profile awards are most often given to men.

72% of directing awards were given to men

62% of playwriting awards were given to men

According to a 2015 survey with the Canadian Actors Equity Association:

48% of racially diverse members of the Canadian Actors Equity Association did not feel adequately represented in live performance, as compared to 9% of white members

27% of members who were hard of hearing or living with a disability earned less than \$20,000 per year, as compared to 18% of able-bodied members in theatre or live performances

According to Best Practice Recommendations in Achieving Equity in Canadian Theatre, there is a link between women as artistic directors, directors, playwrights, and roles for women actors. Increasing women's representation in one area will have a positive effect on the others.

Economic Impact

The Edmonton arts sector contributes \$78 million to the local economy, providing more than 1,540 full-time job equivalents and generating \$59 million worth of income.

REALITY CHECK: Non-profit organizations are as adept at balancing a budget as for-profit organizations, and are well managed and stable.

FOR 2018, THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT PROVIDED **\$101 MILLION FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES, ONLY 0.18% OF THE TOTAL BUDGET.**

- According to Statistics Canada data: Non-profit and for-profit performing arts companies as a whole had a positive operating margin in 2016.
- Non-profit performing arts companies tended to spend a larger proportion of their operating expenses on salaries, wages, commissions and benefits.



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