

Calgary Foundation winter 2022

# spur



## Wonders of Winter

Ensuring everyone has access to the rink

## Home Sweet Home

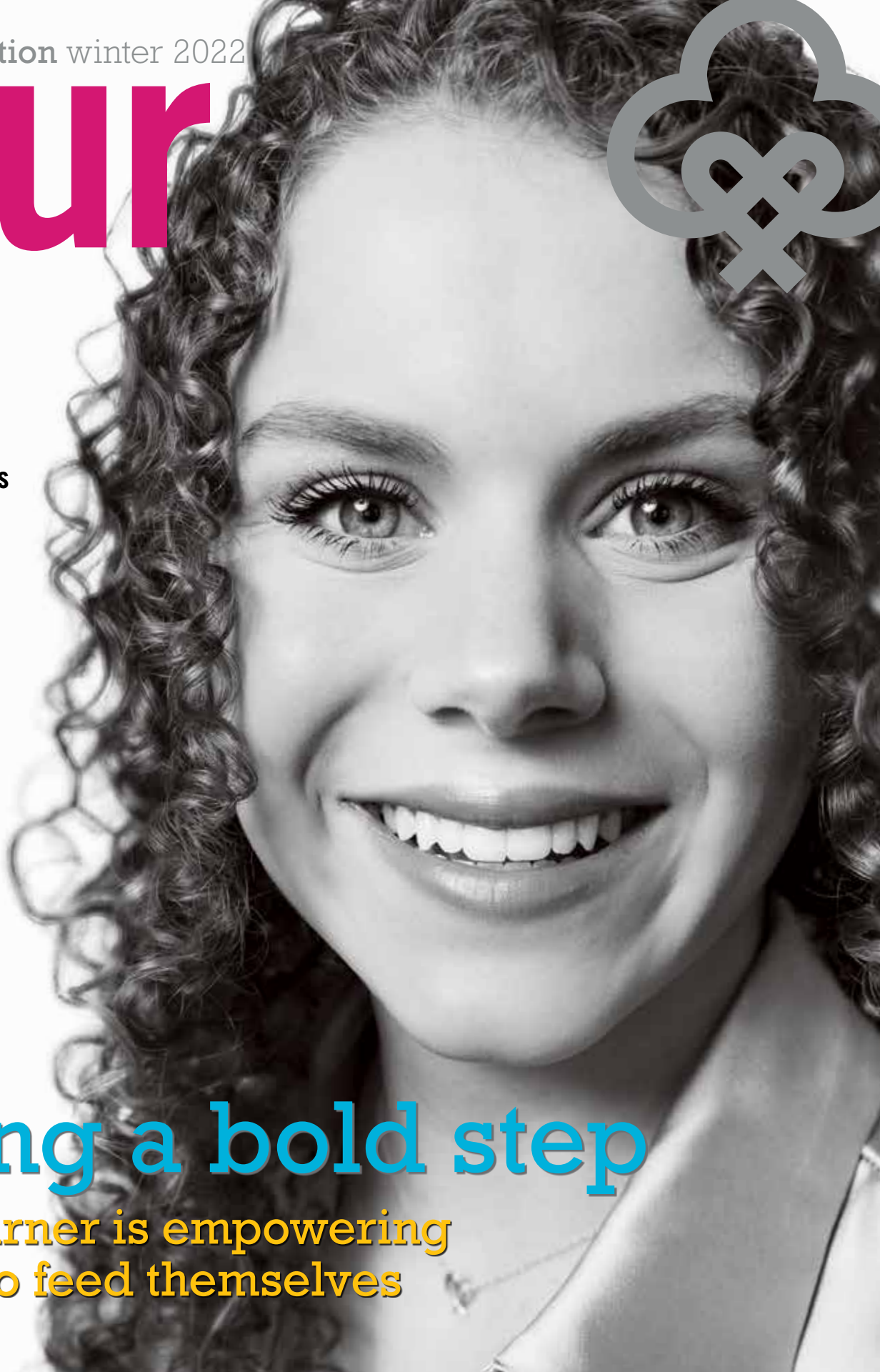
Creating safe and affordable housing

## Full Potential

Supporting children, youth and families

# Taking a bold step

Sutton Garner is empowering families to feed themselves





# All my relations

As referenced in Thomas King's book *All My Relations*, this commonly used Indigenous phrase reminds us of who we are and our relationships with family and relatives. It also extends to our shared relationships with other people and all living things. As one universal 'family,' all my relations encourages us to collectively embrace the responsibility of living our lives in harmony with others.

**IN THIS ISSUE**, you will meet incredible people and organizations who are intentionally making a difference for children, youth and families in so many ways.

From Ken Goldstein, who turned a tremendous loss into new possibilities for young people, to El Sistema, an organization changing vulnerable young lives through music, you will be inspired by all the good that is happening in our community.

You'll also learn about HomeSpace, Closer to Home and Inn from the Cold, organizations providing much-needed affordable homes for families because nothing can happen without a home to start from.

I extend gratitude to all my colleagues in the sector working to build a community where everyone can thrive. I'm also grateful for the generosity of Calgarians who continue to make good things happen. Together we share our time, talents and treasures for the well-being of all in our community because we understand that we are only as strong as the weakest, and we are all connected. **All my relations.** ■

Eva Friesen  
President & CEO, Calgary Foundation

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Calgary Foundation acknowledges that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda (Stoney Nakoda) Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3) and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.



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**On the cover:** Second-year university student Sutton Garner co-founded I Can for Kids in 2015 when she was just 11 years old after learning thousands of kids were suffering from childhood hunger. I Can for Kids continues her vision by pioneering new approaches to tackle the growing issue of food insecurity.





“I’ve had such a beautiful opportunity to have a taste of the charitable sector, and I’m in awe of what people in our city are doing.”

# The Gift of Learning

Cathy Cochrane found her passion through community engagement

By Michaela Ream • Photography by Jared Sych

**When Cathy Cochrane**, a born-and-raised Calgarian, graduated high school, she wasn't sure what to study at university. Cochrane decided on education, a choice largely influenced by her grandmother, who was a teacher. Cochrane imagined she'd teach for a few years and then switch careers. After graduating from the University of Alberta and joining the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), Cochrane began working with children with special needs, specializing in reading and writing remediation. She quickly discovered she loved teaching and, in 1999, went on to pursue a master's degree in Education Leadership at the University of Portland.

While with the CBE, Cochrane was introduced to Campus Calgary/Open Minds (CC/OM), a local program where students learn in the community for a week across 11 different sites around the city. At each site, K-12 students engage in hands-on experiences and use a journaling process to observe and write what they see, feel and think about. Cochrane readily accepted a five-year contract as co-coordinator.

“Being coordinator of the program

was like a dream come true,” says Cochrane. “It was like winning a lottery. It really transformed the way I thought about teaching and learning and influenced my career path from then on.”

In 2001, Cochrane began volunteering with the Calgary Foundation on the Campus Calgary committee and, in 2008, joined the Arts and Heritage Committee, followed by the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee, where she served as committee chair. In 2019, Cochrane was appointed to the Board and now acts as co-chair of community grants with Hugh Williamson. As a Board member, Cochrane has enjoyed having a direct hand in community engagements.

“It's been a gift to learn about what is happening [in the community], and what I love is it's been so diverse,” says Cochrane.

As a teacher and a learner, Cochrane says she's always intrigued by the significant reach Calgary Foundation has in the community. As co-chair of community grants, Cochrane oversees five community grant committees: Arts and Heritage, Education and Lifelong Learning, Children, Youth and Families, Health and Wellness, and

Environment. This year, Cochrane and the grants committee have been especially focused on racial equity and are intentionally cultivating relationships with Indigenous organizations.

Rather than having Elders from the community defend their proposals by providing reasons for needing monetary aid, which Cochrane says can be triggering or feel like an imbalance of power, the Foundation approved funding ahead of time, granted the money immediately, and then met with Elders to celebrate their work and discuss new ways to build relationships.

“One of the things that I admire most about the way the Calgary Foundation works is how well they listen to what's happening in the community and respond,” says Cochrane.

Across her career as a teacher, working with CC/OM and Calgary Foundation, Cochrane says her greatest gift has been the opportunity to keep learning.

“One of the great gifts I've been given in terms of my volunteer experiences is the opportunity to learn about the diversity in our city and how to embrace and celebrate it.” ■





“One of the things I tried to teach my kids is a term called ‘tzedakah,’ which is Hebrew for ‘to give.’”

# Paying it Forward

With the support of the Calgary Foundation, Ken Goldstein continues to honour his late brother and sister-in-law

By Derek Clouthier • Photography by Erin Brooke Burns

**Ken Goldstein's life** changed forever at 12:57 a.m. on Sunday, June 14, 1981. That's when Ken first realized he was going to be a father, but not in the way he could have imagined.

The day before, Ken's brother, Allen, sister-in-law, Robin, and two others were tragically killed when a vehicle being pursued in a high-speed police chase crashed into their car. Allen and Robin left behind two children, aged three and one.

Ken was 29 years old and admittedly not ready to go from uncle to father overnight.

"As a 29-year-old, I generally took care of me first," says Ken.

He immediately moved from Winnipeg to Calgary to care for his brother's children and received an outpouring of financial support from people across the country who read about the accident in the news.

Ken was overwhelmed. He reached out to John Armstrong, a keen ambassador for the Calgary Foundation and now one of its honorary life directors. Armstrong set up Ken's first meeting with the Foundation to help decide what to do with the approximately \$15,000 he had received from to-

tal strangers, which resulted in the establishment of the Allen and Robin Goldstein Memorial Fund.

"I first created two scholarships through the Allen and Robin Goldstein Memorial Fund," says Ken. "One, in Winnipeg, to the old high school my brother and I had attended, and the other to Henry Wise Wood [High School] in Calgary, where Robin had gone."

The Wise Wood scholarship was awarded to a graduating student going into home economics, an area dear to Robin. The Winnipeg scholarship was awarded to a student at West Kildonan Collegiate Institute who was entering the trades and was not based on academic proficiency. Allen was in the home-building industry.

Though described as "street-smart," Ken said Allen never graduated from high school because he couldn't pass French, which was a requirement back then.

"I thought, how great is this?" Ken says. "There is now a scholarship in Allen's name, and he didn't finish high school!"

Ken had previously taught grade school in Winnipeg and, to his delight,

the first recipient of the scholarship in Winnipeg turned out to be a former student.

"To give it out for the first time to someone I actually taught... what a moment that was," he says.

After five years of giving out scholarships through the Fund, Ken started to look for other charities to give to.

"Over the years, I've sent kids to camp, given to cancer research, Alzheimer's research, grief counselling, and many other charities all through the Memorial Fund," Ken says.

Most recently, Ken and his wife launched the Heather Hanson Memorial Fund, named after his wife's daughter, who died from complications of diabetes in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ken made the first donation to the new Fund in Allen and Robin's names.

Ken is the proud father of four adult children, and he plans to eventually pass the Fund along to his kids to administer.

"Giving has always been a given for our family," he says. "As long as there's a Goldstein in the mix, the Fund will continue to have meaning." ■



# Supporting Systemic Change

**The Calgary Foundation's Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee focuses on addressing systemic issues**

By Jennifer Friesen • Photography by Jared Sych

**As co-chair**, alongside Buffy St. Armand, of the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee since 2018, Hugh Williamson is able to share his passion for helping others.

"The more I get involved in philanthropy, the more I reflect on what my family and I want to do with our own charitable giving," he says. "And I'm most interested in those circumstances where our giving can attempt to bring about systemic change."

By supporting charitable organizations that serve vulnerable populations and offer programming for children, youth and families, the committee works to help families succeed.

The committee's focus shifted during the COVID-19 crisis, when funding was directed to meet immediate needs, often just to keep not-for-profit's doors open, through Calgary Foundation's Pandemic Recovery Program. Now the committee is back to focusing on funding attempts to facilitate the creation of systemic change while continuing to address ever-present basic needs.

"Mental health is, and continues to be, a major focus," says Williamson, adding that mental health challenges were exacerbated during the pandemic.

The committee meets biannually for spring and fall granting cycles, carefully reviewing each application before moving on to in-person meetings.

"That's the really exciting part of the work that we do," says Williamson. "We have the opportunity to meet with the applicants face-to-face and understand their passion around the initiatives and projects they're bringing forward."

Before making recommendations, committee members meet to discuss the applications and have a good debate.

"We're very focused on attempting to fully understand each applicant's vision and avoiding committee members imposing their own biases and world views," Williamson says. "They tell us what they need, why they need it and the work that they're going to do. We let them guide us."

The committee consists of 12 members from various backgrounds, including people with a history in law, like Williamson, as well as teachers, mental health professionals and others directly involved with the charitable sector.

"The Foundation considers it important to reflect the community that it is serving in the make-up of the committee," he says.

Food security, mental health and addiction are overarching issues for many families. The committee has funded many organizations, including the Genesis Life Centre, in partnership with Ruth's House, to help address domestic violence within Calgary's different African communities. It also supported the Sunrise Healing Lodge to create a gathering place for the spiritual, emotional and cultural well-being of Indigenous communities.

"Many applicants serve unique populations with unique needs," Williamson says. "Committee members, with the assistance of the expert staff of the Foundation, attempt to understand the factors that cause the issues that arise for vulnerable populations and what steps need to be taken to address the underlying causes."

As Williamson reflects on his volunteer role as he prepares to pass the torch to incoming chair Jessica Schneider, he says he's grateful for and excited about the future work of the committee.

"There are many, many instances where we have seen some real change," says Williamson. "What I value most is getting to understand what's going on in the community and helping people effect change." ■



**"It is particularly rewarding when the Foundation is able to support organizations that are focused on bringing about systemic change, rather than simply addressing reoccurring symptoms for persons experiencing a crisis in their lives."**

—Hugh Williamson, outgoing co-chair



Above from left to right: Ron Smith, Jessica Schneider (co-chair), Buffy St-Amand (co-chair), Ariam Wolde-Giorgis, Leanne Courchesne, Roxanne Steen and Munir Jivraj hold photos of themselves as children or pictures of their families. Below left to right: Tenchoe Dorjee, Dinnie Baker, Jaspreet Sandhu, Raidah Noshin, Leslie Tamagi, Norma Wood, Jennifer Craddock (outgoing CYF committee member)



Images of committee at bottom supplied individually by members



# Bright Minds

Creating real-world classrooms that inspire  
global citizenship in youth

by Michaela Ream

**The formation** of Campus Calgary/ Open Minds (CC/OM) nearly 30 years ago is what Trish Savill, community chair for the CC/OM Advisory Board, describes as a perfect storm.

In 1993, Calgary educator Gillian Kydd and philanthropist Don Harvie came together with a shared idea. Kydd's vision of taking students out of the classroom and into a stimulating environment, combined with Harvie's vision of a permanent zoo school, led to the creation of CC/OM's first-ever beyond-the-classroom learning program.

"Campus Calgary/Open Minds is truly an exemplary model of 'doing

together what we can't do alone,'" says Savill.

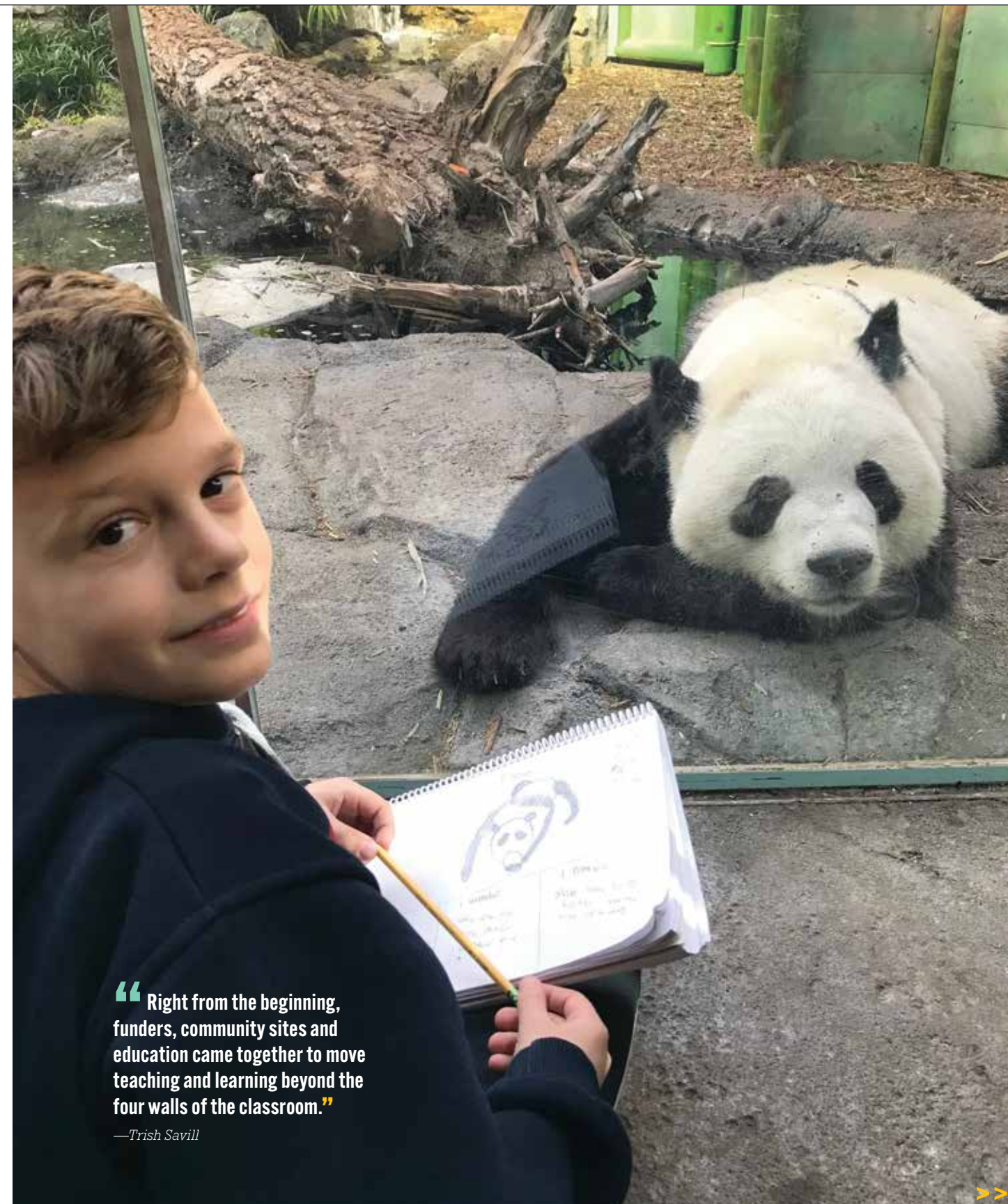
The program allows teachers to move students into community sites for a week-long experience that promotes inquiry learning and critical thinking. When CC/OM was founded with the support of Chevron Canada, Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and Calgary Foundation, Zoo School was the first community site.

CC/OM expanded to include 11 community sites in 2022, including Jube School, Stampede School and more. At each community site, kindergarten to Grade 12 students engage in hands-on learning paired with a jour-

naling process where they sketch and write about what they see, feel and imagine, helping them make sense of the world and stimulating curiosity.

As teachers, the unique educational experiences offered to students is what drew CBE learning leaders Jennifer Meredith and Natasha McKay to be part of the CC/OM team. Both are members of the CC/OM operations team and McKay is also the educational chair for the advisory board.

Meredith and McKay work closely with site coordinators and classroom teachers to custom-design the experience to meet students' individual needs.



**“ Right from the beginning, funders, community sites and education came together to move teaching and learning beyond the four walls of the classroom.”**

—Trish Savill



“Being in the community, learning in different environments, alongside people who are experts in various fields, truly transforms what education can be,” says Meredith.

“It really opens up opportunities for kids to see where their ideas live in the world and learn that they can make a difference in their own community, in their city and in the larger world.”

—Natasha McKay

At Zoo School, teachers and students can interact with experts to become emotionally engaged with the local and global conservation issues facing plants and animals. A week at the Mustard Seed School invites students to learn about poverty, people experiencing homelessness and social issues, which challenges how they see their role in community engagement. And, at the

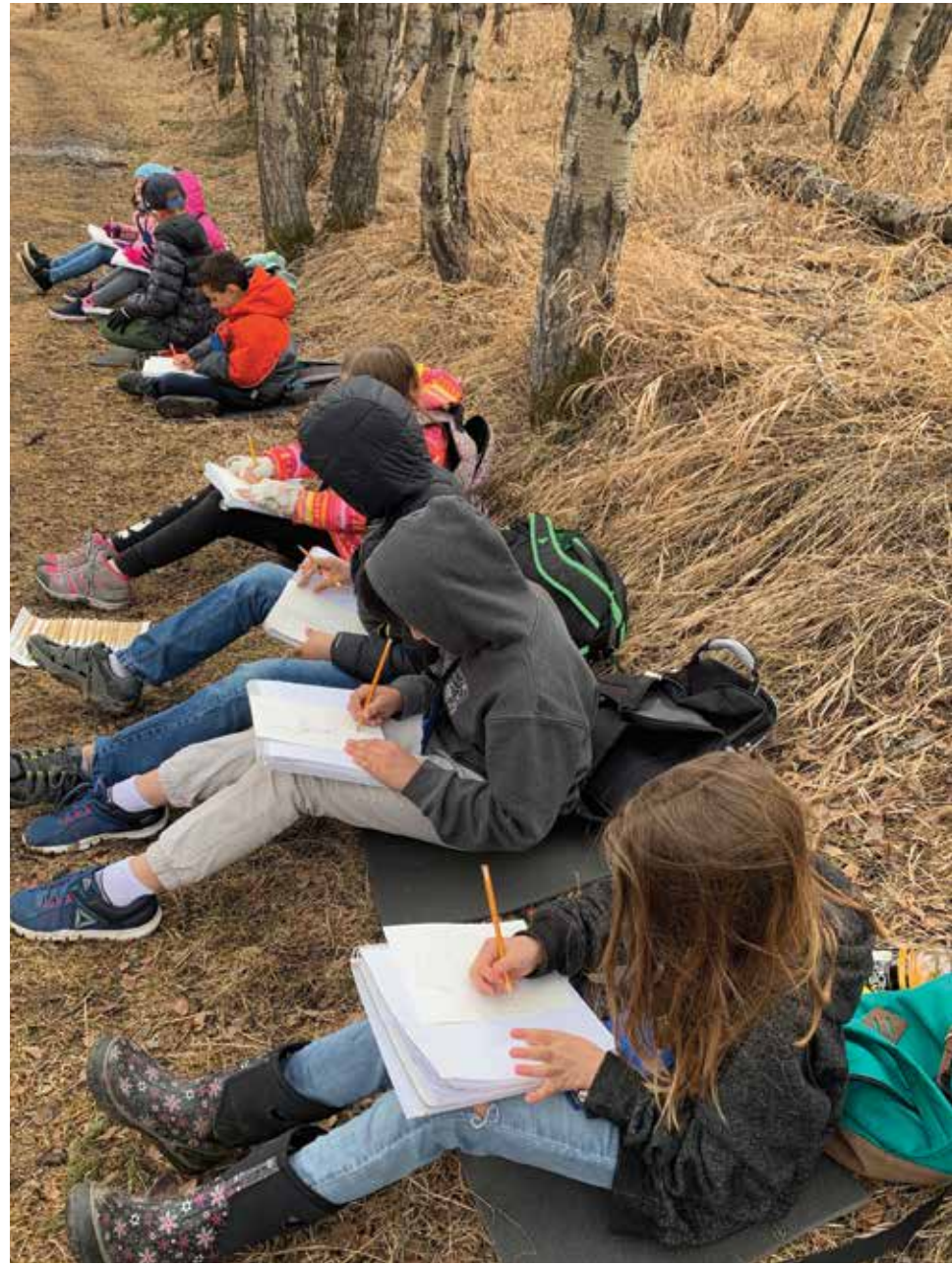
Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium, Jube School inspires students to make personal connections within the arts.

Once back in the classroom, students continue to apply their new-found real-life learning experiences gained in all areas of learning.

“It really opens up opportunities for kids to see where their ideas live in the world and learn that they can make a difference in their own community, in their city and in the larger world,” says McKay.

Slowing down and going beyond the obvious to actively explore, discover, reflect and share are some of the key aspects of the learning experience and inspire students to become active citizens.

“We say that before kids can care globally, they have to care locally about what’s happening in their backyard,” says McKay. “It’s about challenging students’ assumptions, biases and stereotypes and giving them an authentic opportunity to do that.”



This page and opposite page: Students from K-12 experience hands-on learning opportunities at 11 community sites around the city.

During the pandemic, CC/OM adapted, offering online programming in addition to virtual, in-community and on-site. “It really reinforced the importance of making those real-life connections for our students and teachers,” says McKay.

Next year, CC/OM will celebrate the 30th anniversary of its immersive programs that have impacted more than 125,000 students. Moving into the future, Savill hopes the program

continues to provide rich opportunities for students and teachers.

“Right from the beginning, funders, community sites and education came together to move teaching and learning beyond the four walls of the classroom,” says Savill. “That innovation continues today as each member of the partnership champions the work and pushes the boundaries of possibilities.” ■

### Campus Calgary/ Open Minds' Community Sites

- 2School: An Urban Experience
- Arts Commons
- City EcoAction School
- City Hall School
- Healthy Living School
- Jube School
- Library School
- Science School
- SEED School
- Stampede School
- Zoo School

**Don Harvie (1924-2001)** **ICONIC PHILANTHROPIST DON HARVIE** built the financial groundwork and network of partnerships that grew to support the Campus Calgary/Open Minds program. Harvie dedicated his life to many interests, from public parks to historical preservation. He was governor of the Glenbow Museum, which his father, Eric Harvie, founded. As the visionary chair of the Devonian Foundation, Harvie also helped establish Devonian Gardens, and initiated Calgary's extensive river pathway system — a legacy that continues to influence the lives of all Calgarians.



# Tools to Thrive

It takes a strong community to raise strong children. To ensure Calgary's youth meet their full potential, Calgary Foundation provided funding to these two grassroots groups that help give kids and teens the tools they need to thrive.

by Elizabeth Chorney-Booth



## Lionheart Foundation

**T**

he last three years have taken a toll on young people's mental health. A 2021 study from the University of Calgary revealed that rates of depression and anxiety symptoms had doubled in children and youth compared to pre-pandemic levels. COVID-19

compounded the challenges of finding affordable treatment for kids struggling with mental health. The pandemic also exacerbated anxiety issues for youth in families who may have faced job losses or are particularly vulnerable to COVID.

That's where the Lionheart Foundation comes in. The organization was founded in 2009 to help families



**“We believe mental health care is a fundamental right for everyone, regardless of their income.”**

—Jamilah Edwards

access quality long-term treatment for youth ages eight to 28 suffering from anxiety and anxiety-related issues like depression, eating disorders, self-harm and suicidal ideation. Lionheart doesn't deal with mental illnesses that need treatment by medical professionals; it focuses on issues that can be addressed by community-based therapists that may be out of reach for low-income families.

“If you're looking for someone who knows how to work with a young person and you need to commit to six months of therapy, that can be a cost-prohibitive treatment for many families that may not have access to insurance plans through their work,” says Jamilah Edwards, Lionheart's executive director.

Lionheart does not directly employ therapists, but refers youth and their

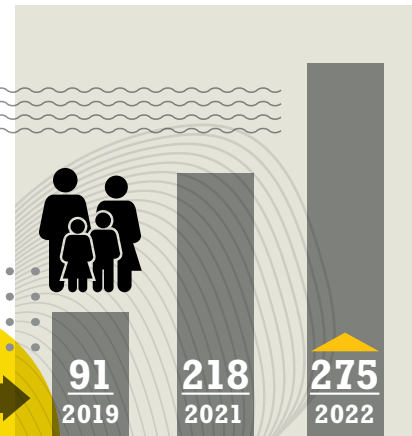


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families to one of 20 local and carefully vetted partner/contracted therapists.

The foundation's role not only connects families with treatment, it helps to remove financial barriers. Depending on family income, Lionheart provides partial or full funding for an unlimited number of sessions until the youth has received an entire course of treatment.

"There's no limitation on how long we'll support them," Edwards says. "We know that, on average, it will take at least six months to address people's needs and see a real shift in their lives."



Demand has increased during the pandemic: In 2019, Lionheart provided 91 youth and parents with treatment subsidies, but that number bumped up to 218 in 2021, with a target of 275 for 2022.

Edwards hopes that, through funding from organizations like the Calgary Foundation, Lionheart will continue to grow sustainably to meet increased community need. With 82 per cent of participants reporting significant improvements in their overall mental health after treatment, it's clear that access to therapy is making a difference.

"We believe mental health care is a fundamental right for everyone, regardless of their income," Edwards says. "Mental health is not just affecting kids of privilege. It's affecting all kids."



Left and opposite page: Yes We Code offered in-person robotic and coding summer camps for kids in grades two to 12 this past summer.



"As we've seen with the pandemic and rapid development of technology in recent years, acquiring these skills is no longer a luxury, it's becoming a necessity."

—Camilia Thieba

## Yes We Code

**W**hen it comes to learning skills beyond the core subjects covered in school, not all of Calgary's children are on an even playing field. Advanced computer science education programs are often only available at select schools or camps as extracurricular activities and can come with a hefty admission fee. Recognizing that a lack of access to coding and technology classes puts marginalized kids at a disadvantage, the Hakili Community for Sustainable Development decided to do something about it.

Hakili is a collective of primarily

racialized individuals that works to develop programs to support parents and educational initiatives that enrich youth to fight inter-generational poverty and empower families. Noting the disparity in accessing technology instruction for kids led to the development of a free program called Yes We Code that launched in 2019.

"As we've seen with the pandemic and rapid development of technology in recent years, acquiring these skills is no longer a luxury, it's becoming a necessity," says Camilia Thieba, Hakili's founder and CEO. "If we didn't act now and take things into our own hands, the kids in the community are at risk of becoming doubly marginalized."



Hakili created the initial version of Yes We Code in partnership with Canada Learning Code. But, once the pandemic hit, Hakili shifted to create its own program, which was offered virtually. The organization partnered with

the Electronic Recycling Association to secure used laptops for students to use at home, and it recruited and trained volunteer instructors passionate about STEM and equality. With support from the Calgary Foundation, Yes We Code

offered an in-person robotic and coding summer camp for kids in grades two to 12 this past summer. The group returned to virtual for its 24-week program to make things more convenient for kids and their families in the fall.

So far, it's been a rousing success, with registration starting with just 10 participants in the first year, growing to 20 in the summer 2022 camp and approximately 50 in the fall session. Thieba says, besides keeping kids busy and teaching them new skills, Yes We Code has helped build confidence among kids who may not have thought that computer science was for them.

"It's really fun — it's not only work," she says. "It gives them the opportunity to be creative and dream, and have conversations about the future and what's possible in the world."

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# Building resilience

**Empowering children, youth and families to thrive** > With funding from the Calgary Foundation, the following organizations provide a strong support system for children, youth and families to ensure they can flourish in the future.



## Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth

**Adapting to a new school** and a new country can be challenging. Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth (CBFY) provides immigrant and refugee children and their families with the appropriate skills and knowledge to successfully transition into their life in Canada.

Providing educational, leadership and mentorship programs and support services, CBFY empowers

racialized children and youth to overcome language, cultural and social barriers.


By learning with other students in an inclusive and welcoming environment, youth build cultural connections to community and develop resilience skills. CBFY supports youth in becoming part of their school's social and cultural community, allowing them to succeed with confidence.

**“Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth develops positive transitions for youth into Canadian schools and communities because we’re driven by our passion, ‘Youth Thrive and not Merely Survive.’”** —Frank Cattoni, Chief Executive Officer



## I Can for Kids Foundation

**One in five children** live in food-insecure homes in Calgary. That's more than 60,000 kids. Through an extensive network of over 25 frontline agencies, I Can for Kids (iCAN) supports food-insecure children and families with grocery gift cards that empower them to choose their own healthy food with dignity.

 = **60,000+**  
Calgary kids

By enabling families to shop with everyone else at convenient times and locations, grocery gift cards eliminate the challenges and stigma of accessing food hampers.

iCAN's research with the University of Calgary demonstrates that the distribution of grocery gift cards is an efficient and cost-effective method of supporting food-insecure households in a culturally sensitive and non-judgmental way.

**“Distributing grocery gift cards to families says that we trust them to make good choices. That simple plastic card becomes a more empathetic response to a very traumatic experience.”**

—Bobbi Turko, Co-founder & Executive Director.

Turko co-founded I Can for Kids with her daughter, Sutton Garner, who is featured on the cover.



## McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association of Calgary & Area

**One in five people** experience a mental illness and over 10 per cent of Albertans 15 years and older battle drug and alcohol dependency. Every year, McMan Calgary & Area impacts close to 3,000 individuals and families by making them stronger, more resilient and connected to one another.

It supports children, youth and families with complex needs that can include mental health issues, addiction, homelessness, poverty and disability

by providing them with the services and supports they need to achieve their full potential.

By providing support and resources that are adaptive, families and individuals receive personalized services to help strengthen their relationship skills and create lasting connections with their communities.

**“For over 40 years, we’ve helped individuals and families improve their well-being with the ultimate goal of building connections through natural supports for our clients.”**

—Jeff Morris, Senior Director of Strategy & Operations



## El Sistema Calgary Multicultural Orchestra Foundation

**El Sistema Calgary** is changing lives through the power of music. Offering free music programs to vulnerable children and youth in socially disadvantaged areas, El Sistema Calgary provides a refuge of joy and creativity in critical after-school hours and reduces exposure to negative influences and high-risk behaviours.

When students share the joy of

learning to play music together in an orchestra, they are also learning the value of teamwork, commitment and discipline. Through the universal language of music, El Sistema Calgary promotes cultural understanding and builds confidence and leadership skills while helping children and youth develop a sense of belonging to their community. ■

**“Music education is a vehicle for social change. It cultivates an affluence of spirit which brings hope, joy, and has a positive social impact for children and their families.”** —José Duque, Executive Artistic Director



# There's No Place Like Home

With support from the Calgary Foundation, these two organizations are addressing the urgent demand for housing, programming and emergency shelter for families in need.

by Karen Rudolph Durrie

## HomeSpace

**Converting the former** Sierra Place, a vacant 100,000-square-foot, 10-storey office tower, to 82 units of affordable rental housing will bring a myriad of benefits to the downtown core.

The building was recently renamed Neoma, which means "new moon." The name represents a new beginning for the downtown core, the building and the new residents. The project is being led by HomeSpace, a non-profit real estate developer, owner and property manager.

"It will bring life and activity to the core, which is important as we attract new business and increase safety—you have more eyes on the street with people around," says Bernadette Majdell, CEO of HomeSpace. "As we continue to grow as a city and attract business, the employee base is not

just wealthy markets and downtown condo people, but people who work at lower-paid jobs that want to live close to work."

Launched in 2016, HomeSpace focuses on real estate development and management that increases specialized and affordable housing units for low-income Calgarians. It works in close partnership with 20 agencies, including Alpha House, The Alex Community Health Centre, Inn from the Cold, The SHARP Foundation and Autism Calgary.

HomeSpace's plans to convert Sierra Place came after the federal government launched the Rapid Housing Initiative during the pandemic in 2020. The goal was to increase Canada's affordable housing supply and included financial support for organizations that

could address the need. One of the eligible project types for funding was for office-to-residential conversions.

HomeSpace assessed properties such as vacant hotels and office buildings for housing conversion suitability and found Sierra Place fit the bill, with the bonus of being right on the 7th Avenue CTrain line.

HomeSpace secured approximately

\$16 million for the \$30-million project through the federal government. But, Majdell says, the Impact Investment Loan, along with a Major and Signature Grant from the Calgary Foundation, allowed them to move forward with Neoma. "Calgary Foundation was so incredibly great to work with and supportive of this, and it was such a seamless process for us. Their support

leveraged our ability to buy the building," she says.

Opening this past September, Neoma's units are purpose-built for the 200 residents it will house and will include an art room, programming space, a mix of studio, two- and three-bedroom suites on each floor and on-site daycare. Inn from the Cold will move its entire operations into Neoma and

support some of the affordable housing units on the upper floors.

"HomeSpace and Inn from the Cold believe nobody can change their current life circumstances unless they have a secure place to live. It will provide people with a place to heal, build community, and be a part of something special," Majdell says.



**"HomeSpace and Inn from the Cold believe nobody can change their current life circumstances unless they have a secure place to live."**

—Bernadette Majdell, CEO of HomeSpace



Left: Bernadette Majdell, CEO of HomeSpace, in a three-bedroom suite at Neoma.

Above: Neoma's updated exterior includes a mural created by artist Jacquie Comrie.





# Closer to Home

**Preserving, unifying** and strengthening families are all goals made easier when you have a stable housing situation.

Closer to Home offers programs and services that deliver tools, training and support, particularly for newcomers, Indigenous families and any family that requires assistance. Since 1995, it has supported more than 65,000 people and has expanded to serve Airdrie, Cochrane, Banff and rural towns north of the city.

It also provides foster care, group care services for children, cultural and healing programs for Indigenous families and intensive services for youth with challenging mental health issues.

"We want to provide a continuum of early intervention supports to more intensive family supports by decreasing risk factors for children and families in the community and in the home with the goal to prevent families from being in crisis," says Karen Olivier, CEO of Closer to Home.

By providing in-care solutions for youth living with foster families, the main goal is for kids to eventually go back to their families or extended families. "It's about keeping children with their families if possible or reunifying them at a later time," says Olivier.

The organization will break ground in 2023 on a new purpose-built community facility at Bow Trail and Spruce Drive S.W. in Spruce Cliff. It will include affordable housing units for Indigenous families and provide wraparound services for residents. This programming hub allows Closer to Home to expand



partnerships, build connections and collaborate with other community organizations.

The top three floors of the six-storey, 55,000-square-foot building will provide affordable housing for 18 Indigenous families, who often face additional barriers because of discrimination. The third floor will feature a tipi-shaped Circle Room designed to practice

Indigenous culture that will be used for ceremonies, activities and teachings.

The adjacent rooftop will offer spaces to connect to the earth and sky and feature a medicine garden and east-facing gathering space.

Closer to Home's Elder Circle — Blackfoot and Cree Elders and a Knowledge Keeper — provided guidance on architectural designs for



the building, housing, meeting spaces and art. Its HVAC system was designed to allow families to smudge in their homes and throughout the Indigenous gathering spaces in the building.

Closer to Home will use the second floor for a main office, training and program meetings, while the main floor will offer a children's play area, a coffee shop, daycare or preschool

and commercial spaces for potential brand-partnership tenants socially aligned with Closer to Home. Tenants will provide employment opportunities and support for women's food and catering-based micro-businesses.

"I like to envision it as a doorway where people come in for coffee, but, because of the way we set it up, they see the main hub and become

Left: Closer to Home's purpose-built community facility will include commercial spaces, as well as gathering rooms inspired by Indigenous culture.



**"I like to envision it as a doorway where people come in for coffee, but, because of the way we set it up, they see the main hub and become aware of services that are available."**

—Karen Olivier, CEO of Closer to Home

aware of services that are available. It will bring together people who have resources with people who need support," Olivier says.

A loan from Calgary Foundation's Impact Investments program allowed Closer to Home to purchase the land for the project, enabling the organization to go ahead with design plans. Other funding partners include the Calgary Homeless Foundation through the Reaching Home federal funding stream and municipal and provincial governments.

"Calgary Foundation is a pretty big powerhouse, and their endorsement provided a lot of credibility to the community," Olivier says.

The family and community hub is slated to open in mid-2024. ■





# Winter Fun for Everyone

Whether you're playing competitive hockey or learning to navigate a snow-covered skating rink, hitting the ice is a beloved Canadian pastime. These two organizations, supported by the Calgary Foundation, are making sure access to the rink is available to everyone.

by Jennifer Friesen

## Parkdale Community Hub

**D**espite the brisk January weather, more than 400 people gathered around the Parkdale Community Association's skating rink in 2022.

It was Scotiabank Hockey Day in Canada, and the community came to celebrate the grand opening of the new Parkdale Accessible Community Rink. After five years of planning, fundraising and construction, the space was fully transformed into a winter wonderland, complete with an NHL-sized rink built to sledge hockey standards, heated change rooms and a team of players ready to take to the ice without any barriers in their way.

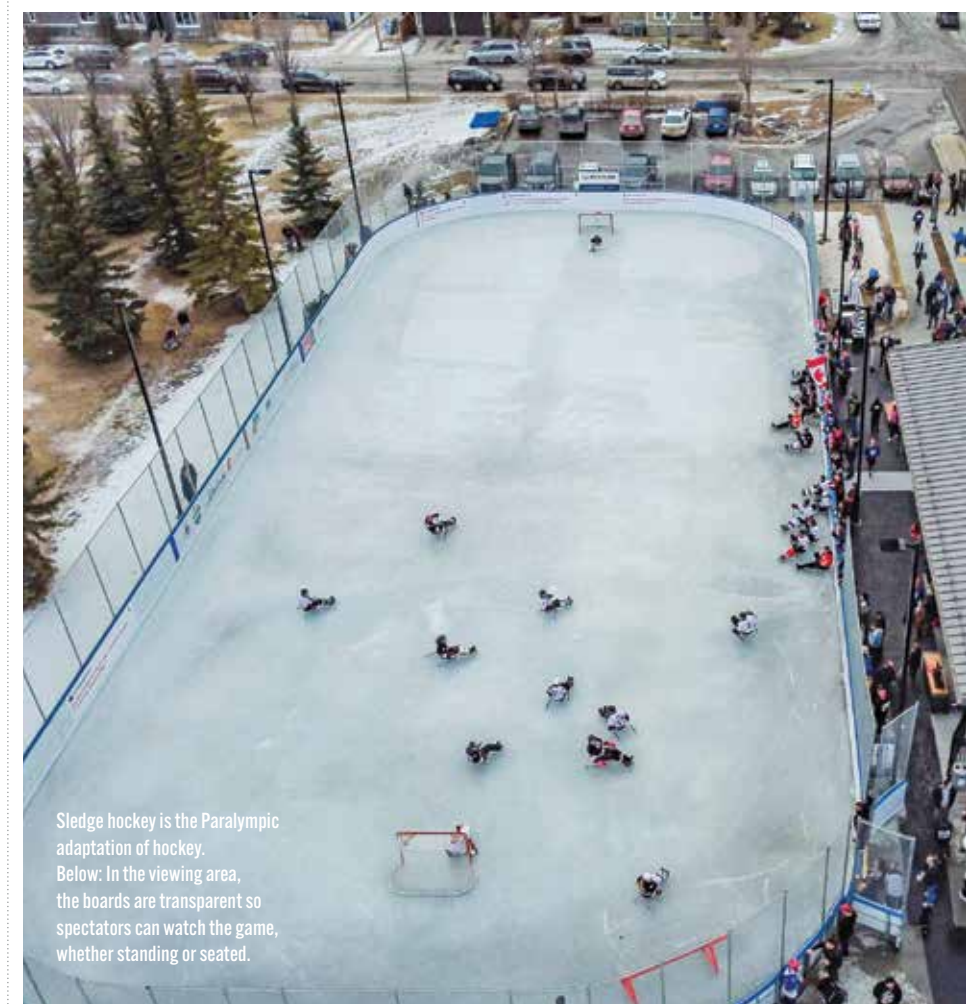
Sledge hockey is the Paralympic adaptation of hockey designed for athletes with a physical disability in the lower part of the body. Players sit on bladed sleds and use two hockey sticks with picks on one end to propel themselves and a curved blade on the other to handle the puck.

Parkdale Community Association's rink is the only accessible outdoor rink of its kind in Alberta and one of just two in Western Canada.

Planning began in 2017 after the original 30-year-old rink had reached "the end of its useful life," says Amanda Affonso, president of the Parkdale Community Association.

After asking the community for input on what should be included in the rebuild, someone asked, "Will the rink be accessible?"

"That question led to us asking the same question," says Affonso. The association began brainstorming to



Sledge hockey is the Paralympic adaptation of hockey. Below: In the viewing area, the boards are transparent so spectators can watch the game, whether standing or seated.

find a way to fund a new rink that was accessible to all.

The project cost \$2 million over two phases. The rink was completed in 2020, and the community hub, which includes change rooms, a firepit and a parking lot that are all fully accessible, was completed this past January. Funding partners for the project included Parks Foundation Calgary, Calgary Foundation, Calgary Flames Foundation, City of Calgary, Government of Alberta, ENMAX and the Calgary Parking Authority. Community residents also chipped in.

"What was really exciting is that this was a community-led project," says Sheila Taylor, CEO of Parks Foundation



Calgary. "When you see things that are professionally done at this scale, usually it's government-led."

Traditional outdoor rinks are surrounded by wooden boards that block out the game for spectators in wheelchairs. To hit the ice, Taylor and Affonso







**“People with disabilities face greater barriers to recreation than any other demographic, they’re often excluded from opportunity, especially during winter, because the only accessible spaces are usually inside.”** —Sheila Taylor

attest, that most rinks don’t have accessible paths from the parking lots to the changing rooms, and the openings to the ice are too narrow to allow access for sledge hockey sleds.

The Parkdale rink is flush to the ground and has wide entrances to access the ice, change rooms and parking lots. The boards are also transparent, so spectators can view the game, whether standing or seated.

This year, the rink received Gold certification from the Rick Hansen Foundation, which requires a design to meet strict standards for accessibility to allow meaningful access to everyone. The association was overjoyed to be acknowledged with such a high standard of recognition.

“People with disabilities face greater barriers to recreation than any other

demographic,” says Taylor. “They’re often excluded from opportunity, especially during winter, because the only accessible spaces are usually inside.”

Indoor facilities also typically have membership or rental fees associated, which add a financial barrier. The Parkdale Accessible Community Rink is free and open to the public from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

“We know that being active and outside is so important to our health and well-being,” says Taylor. “So, we need to do whatever is possible as a city to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity for outdoor recreation.”

On opening day, Affonso had tears in her eyes as she watched the crowd rally around the game as sledge hockey athletes played with Calgary Flames alumni. She recalls having conversations with parents of children who used sleds as they took to the ice.

“They were so thankful and appreciative that this facility is there for them,” she says. “And it’s not just Alberta’s first outdoor accessible rink – it’s a free public community space for anyone to use. That’s what we’re really proud of. Hopefully, other communities will take this blueprint and run with it.”

## KidSport's Skate Shack

**O**n cold winter days, KidSport’s roving Skate Shack trailer pulls into skating rinks like the polar opposite of an ice cream truck. Instead of popsicles, children clamour for a pair of skates and a helmet to hit the ice.

KidSport provides funding for families to overcome financial barriers to organized sport. More than two decades ago, the non-profit launched the Skate Shack, a roving truck and trailer filled with gear, including helmets and skates, at no cost to schools, community groups and special events.

The idea for the Skate Shack came from an interest in providing no-cost sports opportunities to kids in the community while raising awareness of KidSport and its programs.

“Connecting with schools and community associations was the outlet and the Skate Shack was the solution,” says Kevin Webster, CEO of KidSport Calgary and Area and the Calgary Flames Sports Bank. “It’s been a great tool to not only help thousands of kids in the community, but also get the word out so if low-income families need access to registration-free assistance or no-cost equipment, they have access to the support our programs can offer.”

Schools and community groups can book the Skate Shack online for their classes or community events and access skates in various sizes. Bookings open after Labour Day weekend, and the Skate Shack hits the road in late



Opposite page: The Parkdale rink’s community hub includes heated change rooms with access ramps. Clockwise from left: Children gather gear outside the Skate Shack, skates in various sizes; children experience skating for the first time.



**“Being on the ice with your peers is something everyone should have the chance to experience.”** —Kevin Webster

October or early November through March – weather-dependent

Since it began two decades ago, the program has been “booked basically solid,” says Webster. In 2014, KidSport added a second Skate Shack trailer to meet the demand. Each Skate Shack is moved around the city thanks to contributions from Calgary’s ULS Maintenance & Landscaping.

KidSport also partners with the Calgary Zoo for ZOO LIGHTS, community associations, special events and schools to offer more than 10,000 people a year the opportunity to skate at no cost.

In 2016, the Skate Shack was part of a Syrian refugee “Learn to Skate Day”

at Vivo. The event offered new Canadians the opportunity to take to the ice.

“Skating is something we take for granted here,” says Webster. “When you see a couple of hundred people from a country where ice is limited, putting on boots that have sharp blades on the bottom to go skate on frozen water, you see how open they are to trying it and how much fun they’re having. That’s what community is all about, and KidSport is glad to play a part in bringing some of this to life.”



This year, thanks to the Calgary Foundation’s Doc Seaman Amateur Sport Grant, the Skate Shack added two adult and two child-sized hockey sleds to its inventory to bring more people onto the ice.

“Being on the ice with your peers is something everyone should have the chance to experience,” says Webster. “Knowing that the Skate Shack is out there for thousands of kids so they can join in the fun with their peers is what it’s all about.” ■





“When we came together, it was about getting funding for different organizations that were really in dire need.”  
—Farah Ali

“Our members come up with their own priorities and identify what is impacting their communities.”  
—Charles Odame-Ankrah

# Strength in Numbers

by Elizabeth Chorney-Booth • Photography by Lola Adeniran (Falanafoto)

**When COVID-19 pandemic** restrictions began in March 2020, language barriers and culturally specific needs left members of Calgary’s African communities in a state of crisis that went beyond the challenges faced by the general population. Grassroots organizations that serve Calgary’s African-Canadian communities were not equipped with the resources to respond to such a sharp increase in need.

Recognizing that a strength-in-numbers approach would make it easier to organize funding, volunteers and other essentials, a group of community leaders quickly founded the Calgary African Community Collective (CACC). This umbrella organization now represents almost 40 member groups, all serving Calgary’s diverse African communities.

Funding from the Calgary Foundation supported CACC during its pathfinding stage and helped it secure a shared community space and leverage support from other funders.

“When we came together, it was about getting funding for different organizations that were really in dire need,” says CACC executive director

Farah Ali, who is also the executive director of the Somali Canadian Society of Calgary.

Calgary’s African community is broad and varied — newcomers from Ghana have different concerns than those from Somalia or Cameroon, and individual organizations exist to serve youth, seniors, people with various health-care needs, low-income families and many others. CACC recognized the challenges smaller organizations face to get proper funding. While focused on serving community members, many weren’t aware of other organizations doing similar work, resulting in the duplication of services and a lack of sharing knowledge and other resources.

Rather than compete with smaller organizations that have already earned the trust of their communities, CACC empowers each group to continue to do its work and collaborate with like-minded community builders. CACC also offers moral and financial support and office space where organizations can hold meetings. The collective’s board of directors is made up of leaders from different African cultural associations,

allowing everyone to have a place at the decision-making table.

“We cannot adopt one approach to fit all situations,” says Charles Odame-Ankrah, CACC’s director of finance and president of the Ghanaian-Canadian Association of Calgary. “Our members come up with their own priorities and identify what is impacting their communities.”

Moving forward, CACC would like to expand its physical space so its members can have offices within a central location to serve all African-Canadians’ cultural and social needs under a single roof.

Until then, the collective is helping the city’s African communities find support to strengthen their communities and celebrate their individual cultures.

“We are here to contribute to the diversity of Calgary,” Odame-Ankrah says. “To be able to do that, we want to ensure there is a cultural identity component as part of what we do. Culture defines people and they should be the ones spearheading the transformation of their needs. We want to ensure people can enjoy their culture in a safe space.” ■



# Visionary Leaders:

## Calgary Foundation's Honorary Directors

**F**rom the earliest days of the Calgary Foundation, volunteer contributions have been invaluable. Many have continued a lifelong commitment to our shared goal of bettering the lives of others beyond their term as volunteers at the Foundation. That dedication has earned them the well-deserved title of Honorary Director.

From Doug Hawkes, whose dogged determination to establish the Calgary Foundation in 1955 was based on receiving gifts from strangers as a POW in the Second World War, to Hayden Smith, whose brilliant idea to host a Million Dollar Dinner in 1979 helped raise the assets of the "church-mouse poor" Foundation by \$2 million, to John Armstrong, an outstanding ambassador who has introduced many generous Calgarians to the work of the Foundation – with deep gratitude, we thank these visionary leaders, past and present, who have helped build the Calgary Foundation over the past 67 years.

### Calgary Foundation Honorary Directors

John C. Armstrong, QC  
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Calgary Foundation proudly announces M. Ann McCaig as an Honorary Director.



M. Ann McCaig played an important leadership role at the Calgary Foundation, serving as chair of the Governance, Development and Executive committees prior to being named the first female board chair in 1994.

“There is nothing quite as rewarding, even exhilarating, as being part of a team of people who are united by a shared desire to improve the community and world around them.” —M. Ann McCaig

Photo by Jared Sych



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