

SPUR

Calgary Foundation Spring 2016



3

**ways of connecting
generations and
neighbourhoods**

**Success
– with soul**

**The work of Zita Cobb
fires imaginations**

Inspired

**Sunny Delaney-Clark's
own experience fuels
her desire to help others**

On the front lines

**Anila Lee Yuen plays a key role
in welcoming newcomers**



‘Either everyone matters, or nobody matters’ – Zita Cobb

EACH OF US has a personal connection with the idea of belonging. It reaches deep. It's influenced by our experiences with the people, places and identities to which we feel connected.

From youth to seniors, indigenous people to new Calgarians, this issue of *Spur* showcases the Calgary Foundation's support in creating a community where all belong.

We're proud to feature Board member Sunny Delaney-Clark and committee volunteers Anila Lee Yuen and Amanda Koyama whose endless efforts connect us, bridging across our wonderful diversity and creating a common inspiration for community building.

This issue also salutes donors Gary Nissen and Marilyn and

Mark Brown who understand that strengthening our sense of belonging is at the heart of building more resilient communities.

We recently hosted an event with philanthropist and social entrepreneur Zita Cobb, whose powerful message of community revitalization and transformation really resonates with us. Perhaps because what she does on Fogo Island is exactly what our mission is at the Calgary Foundation — to nurture a vibrant community where everyone belongs.

Let's keep connecting to build communities where people feel they belong and trust each other, where neighbourhoods are welcoming. ■



In a richly diverse community such as Calgary, creating a sense of belonging can sometimes be challenging, but it is possible.

Eva Friesen
President & CEO,
Calgary Foundation

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The Calgary Foundation extends a sincere thank you to Jarislawsky Fraser Partners Foundation as our Event Partner in presenting speaker Zita Cobb

SPUR

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Welcoming a
Syrian family
to Calgary

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Fogo Island entrepreneur Zita Cobb is setting an example that's got the world of social enterprise excited. Her success is inspiring people around the world, and Calgary is no exception.

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Her own immigrant experience served as the catalyst for Sunny Delaney-Clark's passion to help newcomers.

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In their jobs and their volunteer work, Amanda Koyama and Anila Lee Yuen are both on the front lines welcoming immigrants and refugees to our city.

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Keeping a legacy alive by supporting the success of immigrant women through education is the goal of Every Woman Can: The Maria Eriksen Memorial Bursary.

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Mark and Marilyn Brown have seen tough times of their own. Today they are setting an example through their generosity.

Inspiring Leader



I feel strongly that all of us are in this life together.

Gary Nissen in the storage room at Inn from the Cold, where his Claire's Campaign – named after his mother – is an important financial boost.

WHEN GARY NISSEN was 10 years old, he rushed home with a book from the school library — *The Cookbook For Boys*. "I'm going to make a western omelette," he told his mom excitedly. "Where do I find the minced ham, chopped onions and beaten eggs?"

As he examined the pages, he realized he needed help.

"With a smile and in her usual compassionate, respectful and patient way, she showed me how to do everything I needed to make it," says Nissen, 54, president of Canadian Avatar Investments Ltd., as he sits in his office in southwest Calgary. "She treated everyone that same way — warm, kind, helpful and respectful. She taught me to be empathetic."

That small moment in the kitchen with his mom stays close to his heart, as he dedicates much of his life to helping others in the same kind and caring way.

those who are struggling — whether it be financial assistance, emotional support, education or simply compassion and kindness."

Nissen often supports charities directly, and also contributes to the growth of the Nissen Family Fund and the Gary Nissen Fund at the Calgary Foundation. "The Foundation is a high-integrity organization with great values that truly increases giving in this city."

Last year, Nissen was recognized with the Founders' Award from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary. The Founders' Award is presented to individuals who have made an extraordinary volunteer contribution to the mentoring movement through their knowledge and support. Nissen is proud of his three-year run as Chair of the Big Brothers Big Sisters All-Star Weekend, which raised a record-breaking \$250,000 in 2015.

Leading By Example

For Gary Nissen, helping people in need is a way of life

By Mike Fisher • Photography by Jared Sych

Nissen chairs the annual Claire's Campaign supporting Inn from the Cold in honour of his mom. The Mother's Day matching campaign raised \$670,000 last year, including his own donation of \$200,000. Hundreds of homeless mothers with their children come to Inn from the Cold each year, and the funds help them get back on their feet.

The campaign is one of many Nissen works on quietly behind the scenes, leading by example.

"My goal has been, and will be in the future, to donate more to charity in a year than I spend on my own personal needs," he says. "Without genuine support from others, I would not have had the success in my life that I am privileged to have. I feel strongly that all of us are in this life together. We should do all we can to give that hand up to

Nissen's other accolades include the Association of Fundraising Professionals' individual philanthropist award in 2007. Among the other causes he supports are the YWCA, Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter and Discovery House, along with the Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre (AARC), Little Warriors, the Impact Society and Even Start — organizations dedicated to children and youth in need.

As Alberta faces tough times, Nissen likes to remind people that there are opportunities to give and make a difference. "With taxes increasing in Alberta and the continuation of very generous charitable tax credits, there is even more reason to donate now." ■

Learning from Experience

Sunny Delaney-Clark is passionate about helping newcomers

By Kaitlyn Critchley • Photography by Jared Sych

AS A UNIVERSITY of Calgary student pursuing a math degree, Sunny Delaney-Clark had no idea that her part-time job washing dishes in a Calgary nursing home would shape her entire career.

"It was 1968, and as an immigrant, I was proud to tell my friends in Korea, 'I'm making 75 cents an hour washing dishes and it is wonderful,'" Delaney-Clark says. Wonderful until she made an unsettling discovery.

"I found out that all of my coworkers were earning \$1.25 an hour," she says. When she questioned her boss, he told her that she was earning less money because she was a "trainee."

"That really impacted me as an immigrant," Delaney-Clark says.

Today, Delaney-Clark helps newer immigrants through her work as the board chair for the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and as a board member at the Calgary Foundation, an organization she's been passionate about since first volunteering more than 15 years ago.

"I just got hooked," she says. "The Calgary Foundation became my family, and I just love what they do."

Getting involved with the CCIS was the beginning of her desire to serve, she adds. "I believe an immigrant should be able to be a fully participating member of

society without going through the challenges that I did. Canada has been good to me, and I want to help those who are new to Canada succeed, so that they can give something back."

In 2015, Delaney-Clark spearheaded an initiative to bring a Syrian family of five to Canada, joining forces with 68 Calgarians who wanted to make a difference in the lives of refugees. In January 2016, the family touched down in Calgary for the first time. Both parents, in their 30s, are electrical engineers, and the family has three young children.

It is Delaney-Clark's hope that by the end of the year, the couple will have found employment, navigated the challenges of enrolling the children in school and signed up for ESL classes.

"When they arrived it was very, very exciting," she says. "We have very hardworking individuals who are moving mountains to make this happen." ■

Sunny Delaney-Clark, photographed at the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. The background painting was created during a team-building exercise by CCIS staff and participants in the ArtRecruits initiative for adults with mental health barriers.



“

I believe an immigrant should be able to be a fully participating member of society without going through the challenges that I did.

”



Forging connections



Bridging gaps and joining people is the goal of these initiatives

By Elizabeth Chorney-Booth

CALGARY IS A CITY RICH IN BIG EVENTS AND EVEN BIGGER PERSONALITIES. But the city has grown so quickly over the last few decades, it's no surprise that some people may not feel included in all the positive energy. Here are three initiatives that help bring Calgarians together, building meaningful communities and giving people of all ages a sense of belonging.

LINKages

WHEN, AS A HIGH SCHOOL student, Regina Huh volunteered to spend some time with a local senior, she figured she'd be doing a good deed.

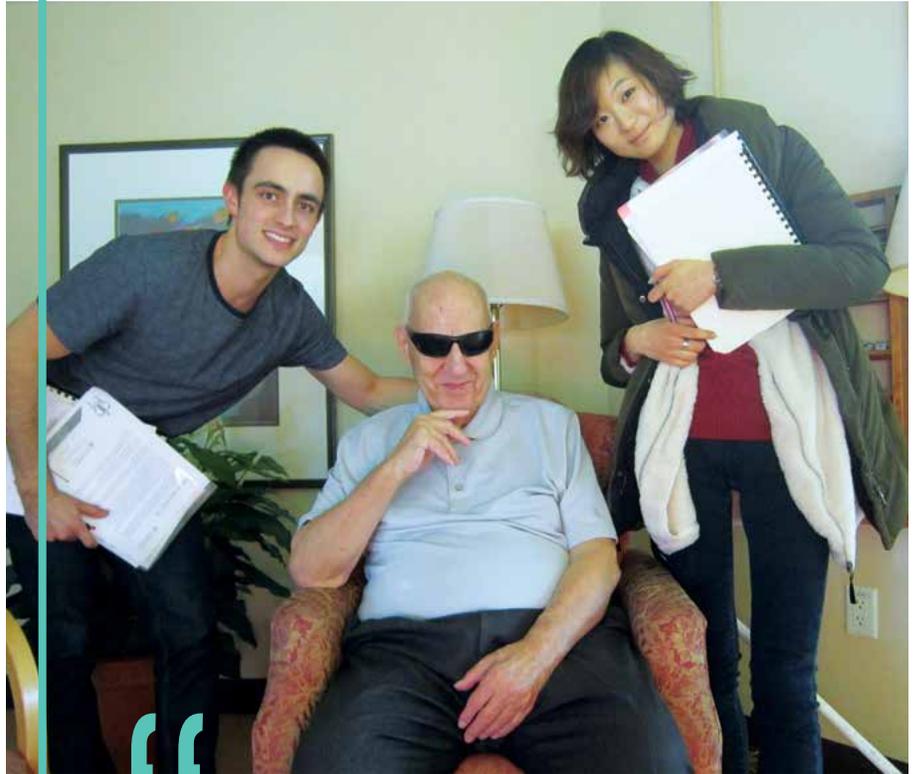
"In the beginning I thought I was just going in to brighten up her day," Huh says. "But it turned out that we formed a genuine friendship and a relationship. I really looked forward to all the visits. It was quite surprising."

Huh volunteered with a program run by LINKages, a community organization that connects generations. The program was simple — Huh and a friend were simply socializing with an older stranger. But it was profound enough that she signed up for a second round of volunteering when she started university.

"The lady we visited in university was partially blind, and we helped her set up a Skype account on her laptop so she could stay in touch with her children and her friends," Huh says. "She was recovering from her husband's death so she was feeling quite isolated and suffering from depression. I think we had an impact in bringing her out from her shell."

The philosophy behind LINKages is that intergenerational friendships will help build stronger communities and encourage seniors to get involved. This is especially important in revitalized neighborhoods, which often have new restaurants, shops and special events that the existing population of seniors may not be able to afford or feel part of.

"The long-term picture for Calgary looks quite wonderful, but you have a concentration of seniors who are worried about their future and feel neglected by urban planning," says Deborah Millward,



Students and seniors team up as part of the LINKages program. Student volunteer Regina Huh is at right in photo.

“

I've come to realize that senior citizens have a lot to offer. They have a lot of wisdom that just comes with age, and with having already experienced what young people are going through.

”

— Regina Huh, volunteer with LINKages

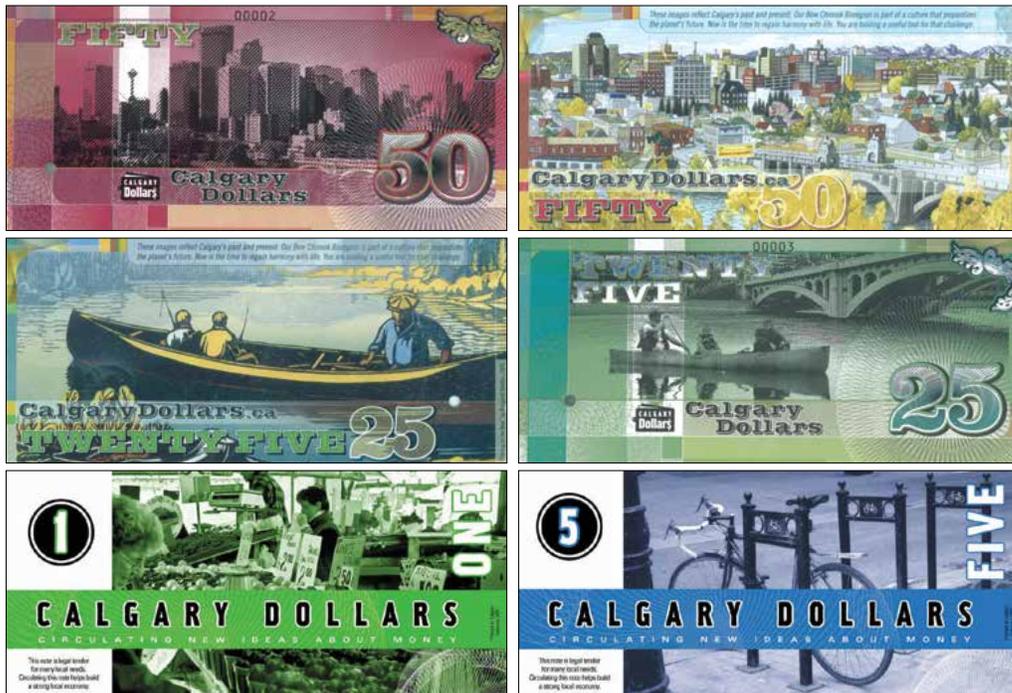
Community and School Programs Liaison at LINKages.

To address this concern, LINKages, with funding from the Calgary Foundation, has developed a new program called IG*101 that focuses specifically on Bridgeland and the East Village, bringing together generations to break down boundaries. LINKages' grassroots approach does make a difference. For volunteers like Regina Huh, the personal impact has

changed her view of the seniors in her community.

"Sometimes we are a bit condescending when we're communicating with seniors or think that they don't really know what's going on," Huh says.

"But I've come to realize that senior citizens have a lot to offer. They have a lot of wisdom that just comes with age, and with having already experienced what young people are going through."



ARUSHA CENTRE TIMEBANK AND CALGARY DOLLARS

“

There are currently 80,000 Calgary Dollars in circulation in the city, and the program has been in operation for 20 years.

”

WHEN MOST OF US make financial transactions, whether we're buying groceries or paying the person who delivers our pizza, it doesn't usually involve much more human interaction than handing over cash (or a debit terminal) and a quick "thanks." Even when we support our neighbours' businesses, the feeling is often fairly anonymous.

Steve Loo, who runs the event promotion service Poster Collective, was able to build his business in a much more community-minded way, through the Arusha Centre's Calgary Dollars currency.

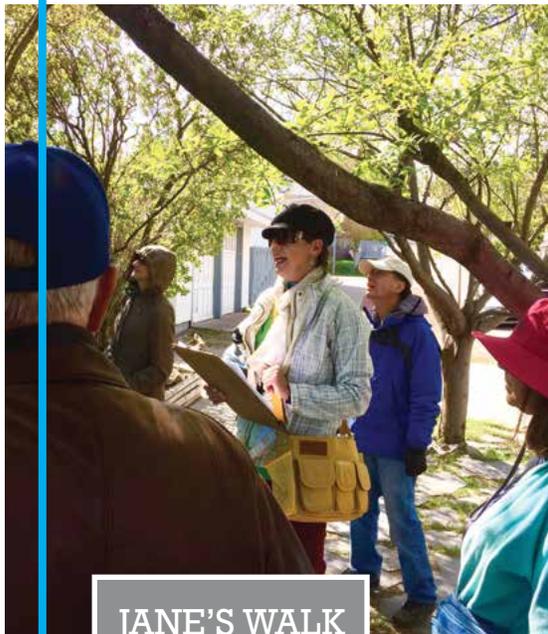
"For a long time, Arusha was my primary client and my business grew from that," Loo says. "They connected me to a lot of other groups who had Calgary Dollars and needed to advertise, so they would use their Calgary Dollars for me to put up posters for them around the city."

There are currently 80,000 Calgary Dollars in circulation in the city, and the program has been in

operation for 20 years. The dollars are considered to be a "complementary currency" — they don't replace regular money. Because they can't be banked or invested, Calgary Dollars are circulated back into the community and spent to support community-minded initiatives that accept them as payment, from businesses like Sunnyside Market or Mountain Equipment Co-op to individuals who are willing to trade their skills for the currency.

Helped by a grant from the Calgary Foundation to buy software, the Arusha Centre is launching a new pilot project called Timebank that could move Calgary Dollars into the digital age.

"The digital platform is flexible — it can allow time credits, printed and digital currency to be tracked," says Arusha Centre manager Gerald Wheatley. "We're currently discussing best practices with European experts and Calgary stakeholders."



Calgary Jane's Walks include Chinatown (top left), Drum 'n' Walk in Nose Hill Park (top and bottom right) and the Ramsay Southeast River Walk (bottom left).

JANE'S WALK

KAREN BEGG KNOWS that her community of Dover doesn't have the same glamorous reputation as bustling inner-city neighbourhoods like Inglewood or Kensington, but she thinks it's just as great a place to live. Fortunately for Begg, she gets the chance to show off her beloved neighbourhood when she — along with dozens of other volunteer leaders, from poets to politicians — leads a Jane's Walk on the first weekend in May.

Named after author and urban activist Jane Jacobs, Jane's Walk takes place each year in 170-plus cities around the world. Locally, Jane's Walk is presented by the Calgary Foundation. Since beginning in 2008, it has grown from six walks and 60 participants to last year's 50 walks, held in every quadrant of Calgary and attracting 2,000 people.

"Jane's Walk is just one example of the many grassroots initiatives the Calgary Foundation supports that help people strengthen the fabric of belonging and well-being in their own communities," says Julie Black, the Foundation's citizen engagement associate.

Whether it's exploring East Village, biking on bridges, taking a gay history walk or learning about a labyrinth in Silver Springs, Jane's Walk invites Calgarians to connect to and learn about our communities old and new and be inspired to help shape their city for the future.

Jane's Walks are free and take place regardless of weather — all you need to do to participate is show up. For a full list of this year's Jane's Walks, visit janewalk.org/canada/calgary. ■

“ Jane's Walk is just one example of the many grassroots initiatives the Calgary Foundation supports that help people strengthen the fabric of belonging and well-being in their neighbourhoods and communities. ”

— Julie Black,
Calgary Foundation
citizen engagement
associate

Help and Hope

Welcoming newcomers means more than giving them a safe place — what happens next is just as important

By Julia Williams • Photography by Jared Sych



Immigrants make up more than a quarter of Calgary's population. But even here, where newcomers are embraced, the experience of living in an unfamiliar place and culture can lead to a sense of isolation. These Calgary organizations are identifying the causes of immigrant isolation and finding ways to engage newcomers in community life, opening doors and removing barriers.

Welcoming Refugees: Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

WHEN SAMER MARDITE and his family arrived at the Calgary International Airport in early January, Mardite says he felt indescribably happy. He and his family had fled their home in Damascus, Syria, then spent three years of uncertainty in Lebanon — and now they were safe.

But Mardite also felt lost. "I don't know anyone here. I don't know what will happen to me," he said. Fortunately, he wasn't lost for long.

Mardite, 38, his wife Hipa Saqurja, 28, and their three young children arrived in Canada as part of the Government Assisted Refugees program. At the airport, the family was greeted by a representative from the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, or CCIS, an agency founded in the 1970s to support Vietnamese refugees. It is now the third-largest community sponsor of refugees in Canada.

Mardite and his family were taken to the Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre in Bridgeland, where the family members got their bearings and planned their next steps. Since 1986, the centre has served as a temporary accommodation site for refugees in Calgary. It welcomes up to 1,400 people a year, who receive secure rooms, meals, access to services and help finding permanent housing.

Fariborz Birjandian, the CEO of CCIS, is a resettlement expert who in 2002 helped to write *Refugee Resettlement: International*

Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration — a resource used by the United Nations Refugee Agency. "We are learning all the time," Birjandian says. "But we've been very stable in doing this kind of work."

While the refugee resettlement system in Calgary is robust, dealing with a refugee crisis like the one caused by the Syrian civil war requires planning. Birjandian says the CCIS began preparing for Syrian refugees more than two years ago when he struck a city-wide committee to coordinate services for them.

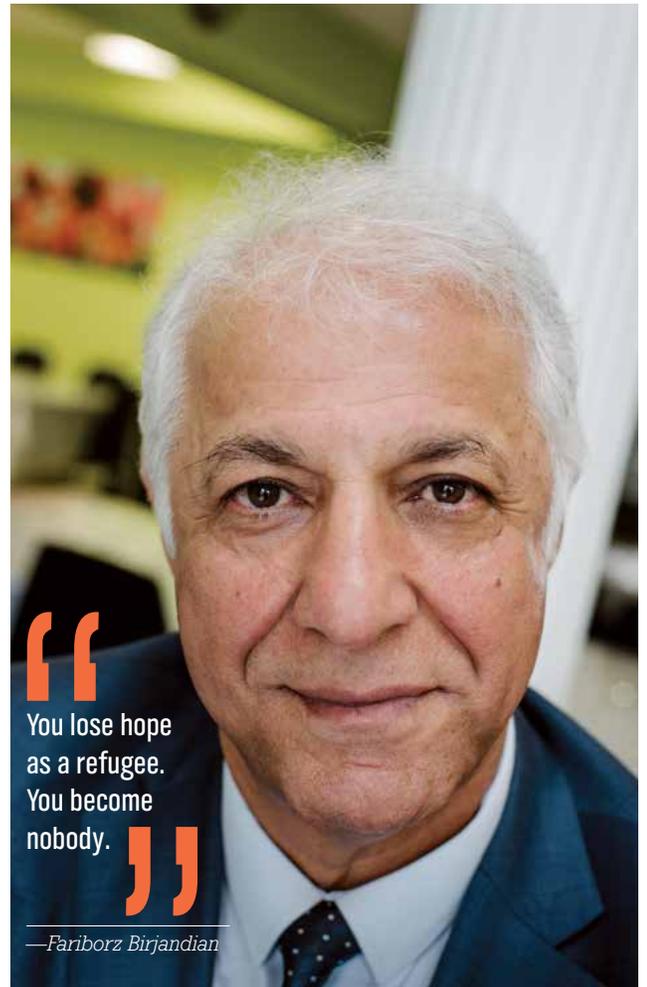
The society received a \$70,000 grant from the Calgary Foundation to build capacity for the influx of newcomers, and \$600,000 came from Community Foundations of Canada, in partnership with the business community, to help provide housing.

The planning paid off, with CCIS and its partner organizations welcoming 450 Syrian refugees to the city between mid-December 2015 and mid-January 2016 — on only a day's notice for each. Sixty per cent of these newcomers were children under 14.

By the beginning of February, resettlement services had helped Mardite's family

find a home in Calgary's southeast and arranged for both older children to attend school. Mardite and Saqurja are determined to learn English, and Mardite intends to resume his profession as a carpenter.

"You lose hope as a refugee. You become nobody," says Birjandian, who himself arrived in Calgary as a refugee from Iran in 1988. The most important thing newcomers learn, he says, is that there are people who care: "It gives them hope."



“You lose hope as a refugee. You become nobody.”
—Fariborz Birjandian

Samer Mardite, left, and Hipa Saqurja with their three children. The family arrived in Calgary from Syria earlier this year under the Government Assisted Refugees program.

4th largest immigrant agency in Canada	70 programs	250 staff	1,800 volunteers	6 offices in and around Calgary
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“

All my experiences as a volunteer contributed to the passion I have for helping this way.

”

—Connie Genilo



Building Bridges: The Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary

CONNIE GENILO LITERALLY sees the world through rose-coloured lenses — her glasses are entirely pink. “They brighten things,” she says.

When Genilo, who recently turned 80, moved to Canada from the Philippines, she brought along years of experience as a women’s leader. Naturally charismatic, she

soon became a go-to person in Calgary’s Filipino community. Genilo was delighted when the Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary, or ECCC, approached her about becoming a broker — someone who helps to connect members of ethno-cultural communities to the services they need.

“All my experiences as a volunteer con-

tributed to the passion I have for helping this way,” she says.

Marichu Antonio, executive director of the ECCC, says her 53-member organization is committed to enabling people from all ethno-cultural communities to be full participants in civic life. She says many newcomers don’t access community resources, turning instead to peers who may not have all the information.

The ECCC needed bridges, Antonio says. “If we had well-connected community



“... Well-connected community members ... can be the people who tell others where to access services.”



—Marichu Antonio

members who had the trust of the community, and if these people were given skills and information, they could be the people who told others where to access services.”

Five years later, the ECCC has 167 of these “bridges” — brokers like Genilo, making sure services are utilized where they’re needed. The Calgary Foundation has contributed funding for the broker program.

Of these 167 brokers, 14 are elder brokers, responsible for providing information and service referrals to seniors, helping with issues ranging from library cards to transportation, housing, advance care planning, health care services and even elder abuse. Brokers gather for weekly meetings and training sessions; they give public presentations and work information tables at community gathering places.

Even the outgoing Genilo admits she struggled when she first came to Canada in 2001, a move she made to be close to her two grandchildren. “I can see the changing landscape in the community now. All the seniors that I help, I’ll see them and they’ll call me *mahal*. In Tagalog it means ‘love.’” ■

Power Play Update

Each Wednesday from October through March, about 100 young immigrants show up at the Max Bell Arena and lace up their skates. Joining them on the ice are a few dozen volunteer police officers, cadets, civilians and coaches.

The Power Play program, a collaboration between Calgary Police Services and Hockey Calgary that’s supported by the Calgary Foundation, just wrapped up its sixth season — and it’s recently expanded to include about 40 new participants from the Shaganappi community.

Power Play coordinator



Const. Rayn Boyko says the program is a fun, effective way for Calgary police to build trusting relationships not only with young immigrants, but with

their parents. “A lot of the youth are from countries where police are feared,” Boyko says. “We want them to feel comfortable coming to us.”

One Ummah Conference

The Arabic word “ummah” describes a united community that transcends nationality and geography. Fittingly, the One Ummah Conference, taking place in Calgary this spring with financial support from the Calgary Foundation, welcomes people of all faiths.

Conference director Navaid Aziz says speakers will discuss issues such as poverty, Islamophobia, gender equality and radicalization. Aziz says these are issues that affect the entire community, not just Muslims.

An imam who moved to Calgary from Montreal in

2012, Aziz says Calgary is the perfect place for the conference, which aims to overcome misconceptions and challenges by teaching the true message of Islam. He describes Calgary’s culture as positive and inclusive, making it a “safe space” for Muslims in Canada.

For more information, visit oneummah.ca



Working It Out

Programs aimed at
breaking down barriers
to employment success

By Elizabeth Chorney-Booth

FINDING A GOOD JOB IS A CHALLENGE FOR ANYONE, especially in a shifting economy. But for some segments of the population, employment is a problem regardless of the economic times. Indigenous people, youth and the disabled have long faced higher levels of unemployment than other Calgarians. Here are three organizations helping to level the playing field.





Jinger Forde of Junior Achievement works with a Calgary student to develop and refine a business idea.



“The opportunity to become involved in Junior Achievement was profound.”

— Brian Sidorski

Sidorski credits JA — which has been teaching students about business for nearly 100 years — for his transformation from hapless student to successful businessman.

“The opportunity to become involved in Junior Achievement was profound,” Sidorski says. “I was able to open my own business and understand all the processes of what a

professional business looks like.”

Sidorski and Robertson both participated in Junior Achievement of Southern Alberta’s Company Program — Sidorski in 1961 and Robertson five decades later. The Company program has students start and operate their own small businesses while being mentored by a member of the business community. Sidorski developed and marketed an upholstery shampoo kit; Robertson did the same with micro-cloths to clean smartphone screens.

Being empowered to choose how you work is a concept that easily bridges the generations. “It taught me that you just need to throw yourself out there, and that’s where it started,” Robertson says. “After that, there was no stopping me.”

With funding from the Calgary Foundation, Junior Achievement of Southern Alberta is expanding the Company Program into the pilot Entrepreneurial Artist and Entrepreneurial Trades programs. The idea is to get young people thinking about various pathways to career success — and with so many decades of success stories under its belt, the JA model is clearly one that works.



“It taught me that you just need to throw yourself out there. After that, there was no stopping me.”

— Cassidy Robertson

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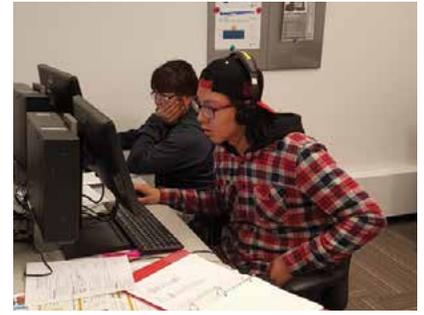
Junior Achievement of Southern Alberta

At age 15, Brian Sidorski wasn’t doing particularly well in school and had no idea where life would take him. By the age of 20, the self-described “terrible student” was running his own business — and went on to sell his furniture company to The Brick for a multi-million-dollar sum.

Cassidy Robertson is a recent high school graduate who found success through the same organization that gave Sidorski his career boost — Junior Achievement. Through JA, both learned that they could excel by approaching business in their own way.

Today, Sidorski is the executive chairman of Landsdowne Equity Ventures, one of Alberta’s most successful integrated real estate businesses, and Robertson is an associate product manager at Axiom Zen, a startup innovation studio in Vancouver.

Aboriginal Career Centre students pose after completing the centre's flagging course.



Alberta Aboriginal Construction Career Centre (AACCC)

Even though he had a solid decade of employment in the construction industry and a National Construction Safety Officer certification, when he was seeking a new job last year, David Cook wasn't having a lot of luck.

Looking to transition into safety work, he wasn't getting any callbacks from potential employers.

"There's a lot of guys out there with 15-plus years' experience in safety who are sitting at home," Cook says. "So when these job postings do come up, those guys are first on the list because of their experience."

Cook, an Aboriginal man, saw a Facebook post about Bow Valley College's Alberta Aboriginal Construction Career Centre, a facility that opened last year and helps First Nations and Métis clients prepare themselves for construction

jobs and connect with employers in the industry.

The centre specializes in helping Aboriginal workers transition from rural life to urban employment situations. For some clients, this can mean anything from being set up with proper housing and social services to increasing job skills. With funding from the Calgary Foundation, the centre is also working on developing sensitivity training programs for industry partners to address discrimination in the workplace.

For Cook, the key to success was meeting with counsellors at the centre and having them connect him with Thermal Systems, which hired him. There wasn't a safety position open at the time but they got his foot in the door doing construction projects (including working on the National Music Centre's Studio Bell) with a promise that he would be moved into safety once a job opened.

"Being Aboriginal is something I've been dealing with it my whole career in construction," Cook says. "I always felt like I had to work twice as hard to show that I could do the work. I've always seen myself as a natural leader, and that's what I've become."



I always felt like I had to work twice as hard to show that I could do the work.

—David Cook



Clients, employers and Champions Career Centre staff members gather at a Workplace Inclusion session held by Champions during Disability Employment Awareness Month last October.

3

Champions Career Centre

It's expected that most modern companies will welcome a diverse staff that includes persons with disabilities. But even with the best intentions, sometimes it can be difficult for disabled employees to communicate what they need to do their job properly.

Even though her company has clear diversity policies, making people feel comfortable about discussing their disabilities can be a delicate task, says Wanda MacKenzie, centralized hiring specialist for the Bank of Montreal's Alberta and Northwest Territories division.

"For me, it's important to try to understand what a new employee is dealing with ahead of time," MacKenzie says. "It's critical for any candidate, but particularly when we're dealing with visible or invisible disabilities, we need to be able to set that candidate up for success."

MacKenzie works closely with Champions Career Centre, an agency that helps both individuals with disabilities and employers who want to support

a diverse workplace. With funding from the Calgary Foundation, the centre has created a resource called the SHARE Method toolkit that helps disabled employees discuss with managers what they need to do the best possible job.

"My disability is not visible and, unlike a physical disability, it's hard to explain to employers," says one Champions client. "For the longest time, I felt like my 'wheelchair' was on the inside because you can't see my disability. With Champions help, I learned how to talk confidently about my learning disability with a focus on my abilities and strengths that I bring to the workplace — and landed the job of my dreams."

For MacKenzie, her relationship with the centre has been essential in helping her recruit a diverse workforce and understand how the bank can accommodate different needs.

"We talk about accommodation that we can offer, making sure that the branch is a fit, the leader is a fit and really making them comfortable with our company and what we can do to support their disability in any way that we need to," MacKenzie says. "We break down the barrier of the unknown, which is really important." ■

“My disability is not visible and, unlike a physical disability, it's hard to explain to employers.”

— Champions Career Centre client



Weaving a New

Fabric

Helping newcomers make Calgary home is all in a day's work for Amanda Koyama and Anila Lee Yuen

By Karen Rudolph • Photography by Jared Sych

AS CALGARY'S POPULATION becomes increasingly diverse, there's a growing need for help in weaving newcomers into the fabric of their new communities. Calgary Foundation volunteers Amanda Koyama and Anila Lee Yuen are two community leaders on the front lines of helping immigrants and refugees. Both are Canadian-born children of immigrants, and each brings a unique background and passion to work every day.



Anila Lee Yuen

IN BETWEEN THE strategy and planning meetings that fill her days, Anila Lee Yuen can often be found "recharging her batteries" by sharing a laugh with a few small children in the playroom at the Centre for Newcomers in northeast Calgary.

As the CEO of the centre, which offers English language training, employment assistance and first-language settlement support for recent immigrants, Yuen heads a staff of 300 multicultural professionals in a modern space inside Pacific Place Mall.

A child of Indian immigrants, Yuen's ideas on issues facing newcomers were shaped early. Her mother volunteered with immigrant-based organizations and launched a cross-cultural parenting association, and while in high school Yuen helped out at the Calgary Bridge

Foundation for Youth. So for her, volunteering with the Calgary Foundation's Education & Lifelong Learning Grant Advisory Committee is a natural fit.

"I like being able to connect with like-minded people with a deep love and caring for the community," she says. "I really believe in collaboration, partnerships and learning from each other — and reaching out to the community to find out what's going on."

As a teenage volunteer, she was struck by the resilience, resourcefulness and intelligence of Vietnamese and Iraqi refugee children with whom she worked. "In comparison, I felt very inadequate, never having experienced war. Would I be able to survive? There, I developed my respect for refugee youth — that they can still laugh and be successful."



I really believe in collaboration, partnerships and learning from each other.



Amanda Koyama

THE YEAR

BEGAN at full speed for Amanda Koyama, manager of family and children services for the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society.

The agency normally sees about 360 government-assisted refugees over the course of 12 months. But in just six weeks between mid-December and late January, it

helped 380 — along with a number of privately sponsored refugee families. Most came from Syria.

"Everyone is working way past their capacity to make things happen. All cylinders are firing, and we are overwhelmed by the generosity of the community, our partners, volunteers and the city," Koyama says.

It's a challenge she can handle. She's used to juggling her full-time work with a number of volunteer

roles, and she welcomes the opportunity to coordinate resources with other organizations.

Koyama first volunteered for the Calgary Foundation on the Arts & Heritage Grants Advisory Committee and has since moved to the Children, Youth & Families Grants Advisory Committee.

Her experience at CCIS, where she's worked for 12 years, gives Koyama valuable insight. "It's always interesting to be able to give my perspective on both sides, having been a recipient of grants. The best part about being on the committee is learning about the amazing initiatives taking place around the city. It's inspiring." ■



We are overwhelmed by the generosity of the community, our partners, volunteers and the city.





Success with Soul

Zita Cobb uses business tools to build community resilience

By Julia Williams

FOGO ISLAND, NEWFOUNDLAND, may seem a world away from our land-locked prairie city. But the immensely successful community revitalization project that Zita Cobb has brought to life on the island is an inspiration for community-minded Calgarians. Cobb herself says her ideas are transferrable to any community, and it's hard to argue with someone who's achieved such astonishing results.

At a time when we're seeking creative solutions to economic challenges, Cobb's approach — which knits together social enterprise, community development and philanthropy — might be just what we need.

Equal parts idealistic social visionary and pragmatic businesswoman, Zita Cobb resists easy categorization. That's okay — she's more interested in grey areas anyway. "You've got to live in the soup," Cobb says. "You've got to move forward with your eyes closed."

Her ideas are anything but unclear, though. Cobb's work, which melds social enterprise, business and culture, has the world taking notice.

Cobb, 57, is an eighth-generation Fogo Islander. Off the northeast coast of Newfoundland, the island is home to just under 2,800 people who share about 250 square kilome-

tres of granite and grass in a wild stretch of the North Atlantic known as Iceberg Alley. Cobb describes the place in her grainy Newfoundland brogue as "friggin' beautiful."

Barely a decade ago, Fogo Island was considered a casualty of Newfoundland's declining cod fishery. The community was scraping by, belts

tight. The island's children shipped out as soon as they grew up.

Today, Fogo Island is home to one of the top-ranked five-star accommodations in the world, featured in the pages of *Vogue*, *Forbes*, *WestJet Magazine* and *National Geographic*. It has become an international cultural destination — economically



Business is just a way of organizing our resources, our activities. It's a beautiful thing.



Zita Cobb





viable, a place with opportunities — but it hasn't lost its soul.

This transformation is the work of the Shorefast Foundation, a registered charity Cobb created in 2003 along with two of her brothers, \$10 million of government investment and \$40 million of her own money.

"My dad used to say, 'Who in their right mind would take all the fish?'" Cobb says. "What kind of a system doesn't take into account its own survival?"

This has been the central question of Cobb's life. As a young adult, she left Newfoundland to study business at Carleton University. She then embarked on a varied and lucrative

career, and then in 2001, she stepped away from the corporate world. She had money. More importantly, she had an answer to her father's old question.

The beauty of business

Cobb says a deep suspicion of business and business people is a foundation of Newfoundland culture — but business is not to blame. "Business is just a way of organizing our resources, our activities," Cobb says. "It's a beautiful thing."

For Cobb, the solution to Fogo Island's struggle was not to reject business. Instead, she applied the

principles of asset-based community development and social entrepreneurship: she started with the community's heritage, values and local idiosyncrasies and built from there using business tools.

On Fogo Island, artistry and craftsmanship matter, so the Shorefast Foundation created an artist residency program with four self-sustaining studios. Hospitality is one of the place's most central values, so the foundation built an inn.

And the Fogo Island Inn is, by any measure, spectacular. It's a 29-room X-shaped box of glass and black spruce reaching toward the sea on angled legs. Inside that minimalist box, it's all rustic charm,

with most elements, from the wooden chairs and colourful quilts to the peg clothing rails, made by local artisans. "It's radical in its appearance and deeply traditional on the inside," Cobb says.

The success of the Fogo Island project is undeniable, but Cobb isn't finished. To her, the Fogo Island Inn is simply a Trojan horse for a set of ideas and dreams that could take shape anywhere, including here.

Cobb wants to change the way business is done, and to tear down what she believes is an unnecessary barrier separating commerce and community. "That's my dream," she says. "I want to create an infection." ■

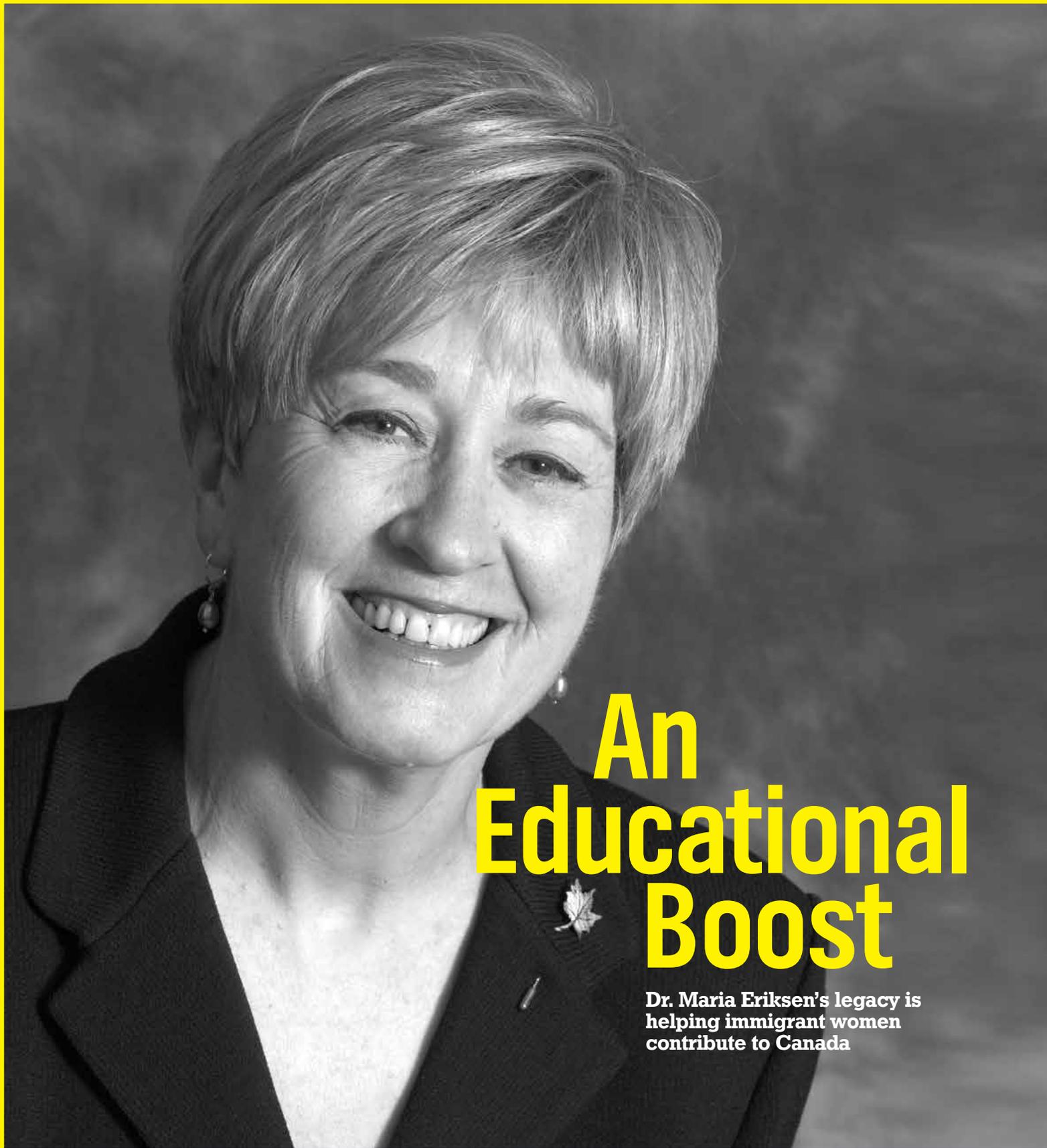
Facing page: Top, one of four self-sustaining artist studios created by the Shorefast Foundation. Bottom, the Fogo Island community of Barr'd Islands.

This page: Left, the Labrador Suite in the Fogo Island Inn. Right, the Fogo Island Inn is a modern interpretation of the island's traditional structures.

CONNECTING WITH CALGARY

Calgary Foundation CEO Eva Friesen didn't know much about Zita Cobb when she sat down to hear the community builder speak at the national conference of community foundations in Calgary last spring. But she was quickly impressed. "I was, frankly, blown away," Friesen says — both by Cobb's success in revitalizing Fogo

Island, and by her ability to integrate business and culture in a way that sets an example of what can be done. "It's social enterprise, community development and philanthropy interwoven for the most outstanding impact," Friesen says. "Imagine if we could transport that way of thinking and doing into our communities."



An Educational Boost

Dr. Maria Eriksen's legacy is helping immigrant women contribute to Canada

FOR DR. MARIA ERIKSEN, seeing educated immigrant women unable to work in their fields in Canada was a tragedy, not just for the women themselves but for Canada.

Eriksen, who died in 2008, was a Calgary psychologist and women's rights advocate. She was the founding chair of the Immigrant Access Fund Society of Alberta, which offers foreign-educated professionals loans to pursue Canadian accreditation.

“Maria was very troubled by the fact that we bring the brightest and the most experienced immigrants to Canada and they end up working as cleaners, taxi drivers and security guards,” says her friend Amal Umar, a former Calgary Foundation board member and past chair of the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association.

“It is pushing me forward toward my career dream,” she says.

— Amal Umar

JOHARA OMER is teaching her sons the greatest lesson she can by going back to school herself.

“Education is really important — not just for women, but also for bringing up the next generation,” says the 37-year-old single mom. “I'm glad I'm in this position to motivate my kids.”

Omer is currently in her third semester of practical nursing studies at Bow Valley College, pursuing her dream of helping others while providing for her family.

“By having a better job, I will be able to fulfill their needs,” Omer says of her sons, aged eight and five. “That will give them self-esteem. They'll have a better dream for themselves.”

Juggling a full-time course load and motherhood is not easy. But another challenge that Omer faces is that she's an immigrant, having moved to Canada from Ethiopia. Statistically, immigrants face an above-average unemployment rate and earn less than their Canadian-born and -educated counterparts.

Omer says without the bursary she wouldn't have been able to afford her third semester of schooling; she would've had to take an indefinite break from her studies.

“It is pushing me forward toward my career dream,” she says.

NIMRA AMJAD, 30, is equally grateful. The Every Woman Can bursary is helping her to transition her knowledge, expertise and passion for environmental policy into a meaningful career in Canada.

In her native Pakistan, Amjad worked with a non-profit women's rights group, and also consulted with organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund and the World Bank. Now a full-time Mount Royal University student, she will complete her Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Environmental Science this year.

“The degree has helped me make my previous experience relevant to the industry here, learn about the energy sector in Alberta and network with employers,” Amjad says.

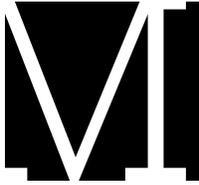
The Every Woman Can Bursary benefits immigrant women and enables them to make positive contributions to their adopted country.

“There are many highly skilled immigrant women who add diversity and expertise to the workforce, but they need this kind of help to transition to working in Canada,” she says. “It makes me proud to be part of a country that wants to welcome my skill set and diversity, and that there is support to help me pursue my dreams.” ■



“It makes me proud to be part of a country that wants to welcome my skill set...”

— Nimra Amjad



MARILYN AND MARK Brown know first-hand what it's like to live in tough times. The Calgary couple has weathered several boom-and-bust cycles in our city, including a particularly challenging period

for them more than 20 years ago. And they've both been on the receiving end of help from non-profit organizations, giving them a feet-on-the-ground perspective as their wealth has grown.

"I remember the nightmare of using my debit card at the grocery store and having it denied, calling Mark and then calming his panic because I knew we'd get by on what was in the pantry," Marilyn says. Mark recalls going

Calgary Foundation committee meetings and has volunteered farther afield, including at an orphanage in Burkina Faso in West Africa.

"I'm always interested in the smaller causes that need our special attention and in helping people who may fall through the cracks, but I'm also passionate about international development," she adds.

When the Browns established their Donor Advised Fund at the Calgary Foundation in 2010, the focus was necessarily narrower. "I wanted to cover the arts community, as well as women's issues and international development," says Marilyn, who has been an artist, actor, musician, painter, photographer and freelance writer.

First-Hand Experience

When it comes to facing difficult times, Marilyn and Mark Brown have been there.

By Mike Fisher • Photography by Dwight Dunn

to the local junkyard with his kids to hunt down parts for the car the couple was trying to keep running, and seeking help from a food bank.

But career success in the energy industry followed, and now Marilyn watches from their San Diego winter home as fishermen cast nets along the California coast. The Browns explain what they hope to achieve with their philanthropy, and specifically the Mark & Marilyn Brown Family Fund at the Calgary Foundation, which will donate to eight agencies this year.

"Just like those fishermen, I'd like to cast as wide a net as possible with my time, treasures and talents, diversifying the fund," says Marilyn, who attends grassroots Cal-

The fund has since grown tenfold from its original amount, allowing for a wider range of recipients including the areas of mental and physical health, Mark says.

"My passion is setting an example of philanthropy with my peers and young people in the industry," adds Mark, a retired oil and gas executive in his mid-50s. "I talk to them as much as possible about how they can set up a legacy through philanthropy now.

"Some younger people have wealth they can never spend in their lifetime. Philanthropy and a legacy of giving is something they can teach their children and the next generation." ■



“

I'd like to cast as wide a net as possible with my time, treasures and talents.

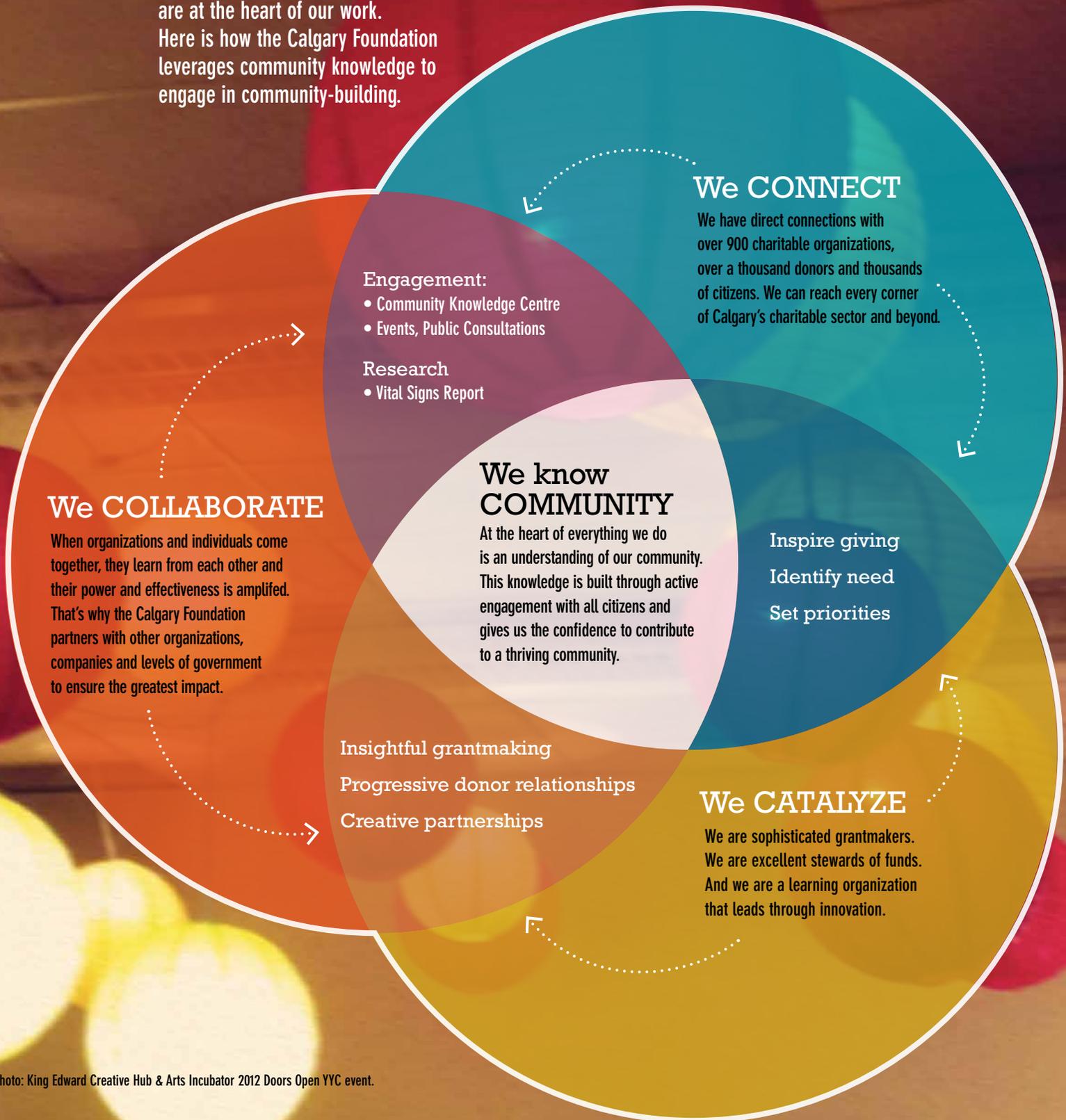
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—Marilyn Brown



Knowledge Philanthropy

Engagement, information and insight are at the heart of our work. Here is how the Calgary Foundation leverages community knowledge to engage in community-building.



THE FOUNDATION. of my community

starts with you and me - more than charity
it's the empathy i feel for the
people where i live.

Close to home is where the heart is,
where help goes farthest
my foundation helps me start this:

people standing Tall
in towns big and small,
urban, rural, one and all.

My care comes through
helping those that can't make do,
or get by, or maybe
just need to fly... 

My foundation has roots across the land,
intertwining, hand-to-hand,
showing what we thousands banded
together can do, including you, making true
the endeavour
to make things better

for generations still,
their dreams fulfilled,

it all gets built ...

on THE FOUNDATION.

Canada's community foundations help communities where they need it the most, connecting people, families and companies with the causes that inspire them. **Community makes you. You make your community.**

BROUGHT TO
YOU BY THE

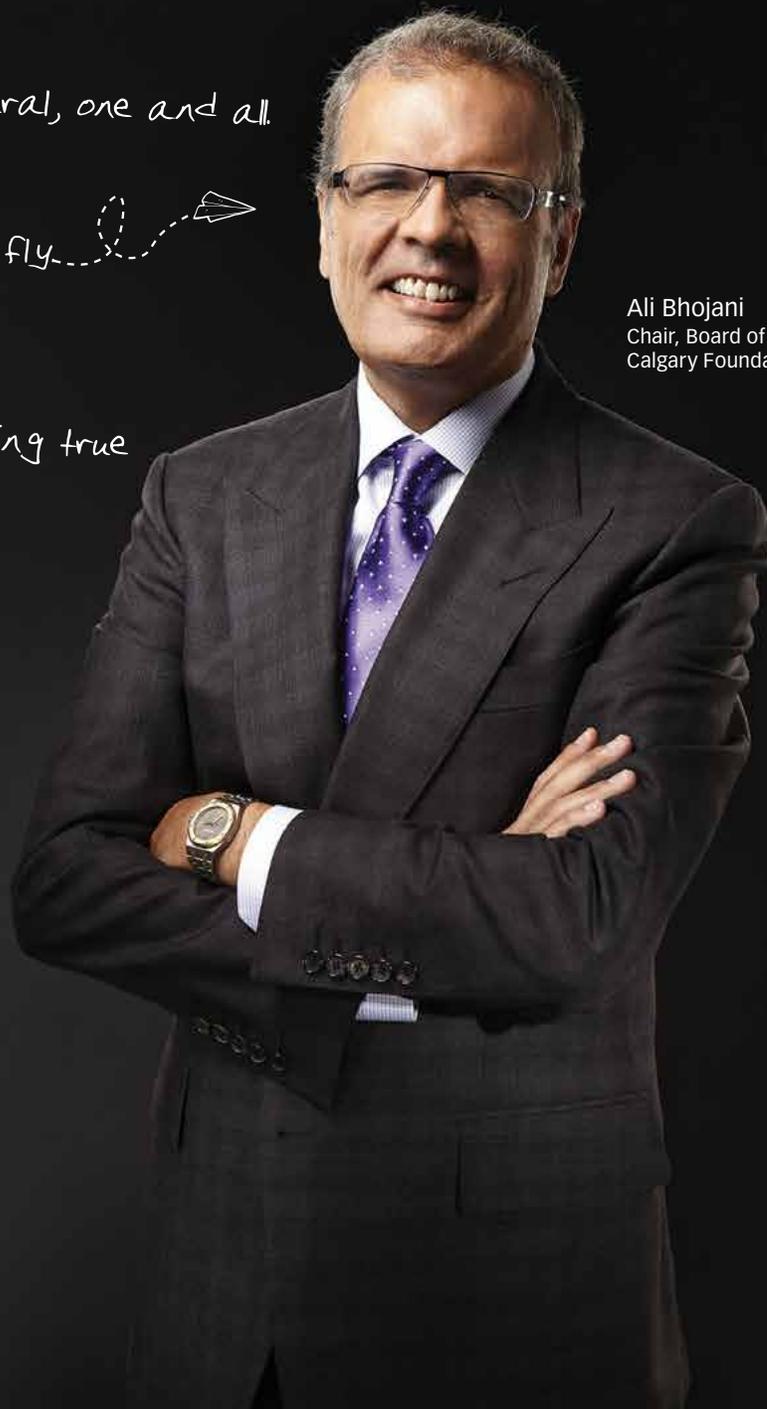
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