

Calgary Foundation Winter 2024

spur



Mountain Rescue

Support services
in the Bow Valley

Building Belonging

Small acts,
big benefits

Legacy of Song

Supporting
music education

Parachutes for Pets

Melissa David ensures vulnerable people
and their pets stay together



Eva's message



Eva riding her horse Caramel.

I am an animal lover to my very core. Whether it's sunny summer afternoons out riding my horses in the foothills, crisp fall morning walks with my pups at the dog park or wrangling barn kittens on weekends, I find joy and companionship in animals. That's why I am so glad to showcase our first-ever issue featuring

a furry friend on the cover — Melissa David of Parachutes for Pets is pictured alongside her faithful companion, Charlie. I'm sure you'll agree it's our cutest cover yet!

While my passion lies in animals, others have devoted their lives to causes they care about just as deeply. Here, you'll read about the legacy of Wendy Eakins and how her friends and family channel her love for textiles and design into a Memorial Fund at Calgary Foundation. You'll learn of Douglas Parnham's devotion to fostering

music appreciation in young people through the Calgary Boys' Choir, and Chima Nkemdirim's lifelong commitment to civic engagement.

Fortunately, our city is supported by thousands of charities and nonprofit organizations working on issues that are critical to our quality of life — and no doubt, there's an organization that aligns with your own interests and values. Whether through financial donations or dedicating your time to volunteer efforts, your contributions can make a significant impact. Supporting local initiatives helps address pressing issues, from food insecurity to cultivating the arts, and strengthens the social fabric of our neighbourhoods. By investing in our city, we create a more vibrant, resilient place for everyone to live.

This issue of *spur* shines a spotlight on some of the incredible organizations and individuals following their passions and making a difference. I hope reading about them encourages you to give back however you can. We all play an important role in building a city where everyone feels they belong. ■

Eva Friesen
President & CEO, Calgary Foundation

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, we honour and acknowledge Moh'kinsstis, and the traditional Treaty 7 territory and oral practices of the Blackfoot confederacy: Siksika, Kainai, Piikani and the îethka Nakoda Nations: Chiniki, Bearspaw, Goodstoney and Tsuut'ina Nation. We acknowledge that this territory is home to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta Districts 5 and 6. Finally, we acknowledge all Nations — Indigenous and non — who live, work and play on this land, and who honour and celebrate this territory.



2024 - 2025 Board of Directors:

Blaine Lennox
Chair
Narmin Ismail-Teja
Vice Chair

Denise Bright
Sherry Ferronato
Alice Lam
Jamie Leong-Huxley
Ken Lima-Coelho

Melanie McDonald
Michael Mezei
Paul Moynihan
Chima Nkemdirim
Susan O'Brien
David Phillips
Kirby Redwood
Ivor Ruste
Julianna Spiropoulos
Hugh D. Williamson Q.C.

Eva Friesen
President & CEO
Taylor Barrie
VP, Communications
Janice Francey
Communications Associate

Kahanoff Centre
#1180, 105 12 Avenue S.E.
Calgary AB T2G 1A1
403-802-7700
calgaryfoundation.org



President
Kathe Lemon
Director of Strategy
Meredith Bailey
Executive Editor
Colleen Seto
Art Director
David Willcoome
Staff Photographer
Jared Sych

Contributors
Erin Brooke Burns
Elizabeth Chorney-Booth

Marcello Di Cintio
Karen Rudolph Durrie
Olivia Piché
Michaela Ream

Statements expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the publisher.
Copyright 2024 by RedPoint Media Group Inc.

No part of this publication may be reproduced without the express written consent of the publisher.

1721 29 Ave. S.W., Suite 375
Calgary AB T2T 6T7 (letter mail only)
Ph: 403-240-9055
redpointmedia.ca

Canadian Publications Mail Product Agreement No. PM 40030911

Calgary Foundation Winter 2024
spur

Published twice yearly by the Calgary Foundation in partnership with RedPoint Media Group.



04 A Holistic View of Calgary
Chima Nkemdirim brings his savvy civic engagement skills to Calgary Foundation.

06 Thoughtful Planning, Lasting Impact
Serving community needs through a relationship built on trust.

08 Sewing Support for Calgary's Theatre Community
The Wendy Eakins Memorial Fund for Textile and Design pays tribute to its namesake.

10 A Legacy of Harmony
A passion for music lives on through the Douglas Parnham Memorial Scholarship.

12 Laying the Foundation
Community organizations with impressive histories look ahead to the future.

16 Health and Welfare for All
Ensuring equitable and timely access to supportive services.

22 Building Belonging
Three small local groups create inclusive spaces through Calgary Foundation grants.

26 Making the Bow Valley Home
Bow Valley organizations help make mountain living easier for newcomers, gender-diverse individuals and unhoused locals.



p. 12 Celebrating Long-Standing Service to Community > Simon House Recovery Centre, Calgary Boys' Choir and Heritage Park commemorate milestone anniversaries.



A Holistic View of Calgary

Chima Nkemdirim brings his savvy civic engagement skills to Calgary Foundation's board

By Marcello Di Cintio • Photography by Jared Sych

“Cities create narratives about themselves,” says Chima Nkemdirim. “Calgary aspires to be — and often succeeds at being — a place where people can take a chance.”

Nkemdirim took his own chance after graduating from the University of Calgary in 1994 with a commerce degree and a desire to skip town. He fled east to study law at the University of Ottawa in the hopes of eventually finding a job at a Toronto law firm.

“Toronto seemed so much more vibrant. More diverse,” Nkemdirim recalls. He quickly learned, though, how little his central Canadian colleagues understood of Alberta. Nkemdirim was one of three Black students from Alberta at the law school, and their white classmates were surprised there were any Black people in Alberta at all. “At one point, we played a joke on people and told them Lethbridge was an all-Black city,” Nkemdirim said. They kept up the prank for a year until a white student from Lethbridge joined the program and spoiled the gag.

After graduating in 1997, Nkemdirim returned to article in Calgary, realizing his hometown was more open-minded than he had given it credit for, then joined a law practice here. The grueling workload, which left little time for non-legal pursuits, compelled Nkemdirim to seek volunteer opportunities outside the world of law.

A friend was trying to recruit board members for Sage Theatre. Nkemdirim, a fan of live theatre ever since seeing a Theatre Calgary production of W.O. Mitchell's *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* in high school, jumped at the chance. Thus began his involvement in Calgary's arts community.

In 2006, Nkemdirim started volunteering on Calgary Foundation's Arts and Heritage Committee. He reviewed grant applications but then moved onto the Major Grants


Committee, where he spent nine years overseeing transformational grants. The committee funded ambitious projects like the CKUA studio at the National Music Centre, a protected environmental easement along Highway 22 and the Stampede's Elbow River Camp.

“Calgary Foundation's committees are so wonderful because you get to meet all these nonprofit groups that are doing all this great work,” Nkemdirim says.

Then, in 2010, Nkemdirim's old university buddy Naheed Nenshi decided to run for mayor. Nkemdirim led Nenshi's winning campaign. “The campaign was reflective of the kind of city Calgarians wanted, and they weren't getting it.” Afterwards, Nkemdirim worked as Nenshi's chief of staff for seven years. “I loved it, but it was exhausting.”

Calgary Foundation invited Nkemdirim to join its board in 2021, bringing his longtime engagement with Calgary's arts community, sitting on boards for Arts Commons, Calgary Arts Development, the Walrus Foundation and the Black Opportunity Fund. But Nkemdirim's time at city hall is his true superpower. That position granted Nkemdirim a holistic view of the city and its interconnections. “I was seeing the entire community in so many different ways, in so many different aspects,” Nkemdirim says. “That job was such a gift because you get to see everything.” Nkemdirim's time on Calgary Foundation's board has built upon this civic education.

Now in his third year as a board member, Nkemdirim also sits on the Foundation's Impact Investing Committee, providing loans to Calgary nonprofits. For example, the committee loaned \$1.3 million to HomeSpace Society to purchase land for affordable housing and \$250,000 to Immigrant Services Calgary to bolster its interpretation and translation centre. “It's been a really interesting and rewarding experience,” Nkemdirim affirms. “You just learn so much about our city.” ■



“Calgary Foundation’s committees are so wonderful because you get to meet all these nonprofit groups that are doing all this great work.”

—Chima Nkemdirim



“ I was happy to rely on the leadership of these charities to use the money in the best way, and that’s what has happened.” —*Ron Law*

Thoughtful Planning Leads to Lasting Impact

Serving community needs through a relationship built on trust

By Olivia Piché • Photography by Erin Brooke Burns

Ron Law has been a financial advisor for over 35 years. It doesn't take long to notice his passion for proper estate planning and genuine care for his clients. "I'm a fanatic about people's wills," he says. With decades of experience as an estate executor, Law has witnessed both the atrocities of poor estate planning and the incredible impacts of thoughtful planning.

When Law met Gordon C. Barber, they were co-executors on Barber's father's estate. Barber later appointed Law as his executor.

Barber passed away in June 2020, leaving behind a substantial estate. Aside from the spousal trust for his wife, Hazel, the estate was to be donated to charity. While people often make generous charitable contributions in their wills, it's unusual to leave the decisions for which charities and how much to donate up to a sole executor. But this was the case with Law and Barber.

Widely respected as an experienced financial advisor, Law is known for his humility and his personal charitable giving. His involvement with various charities helped guide his decision on where to direct Barber's estate money.

To date, Law has directed \$12 million to the Community Fund at Calgary Foundation, which gives the Foundation the flexibility to support prioritized and emerging community needs. Hazel's spousal trust will also be directed to the Foundation after her passing.

Appreciating its long history of supporting a broad range of community programs and initiatives, Law says, "Calgary

Foundation does incredible things in the city. Part of it is the way they're organized. They have a good, strong board of directors — people who donate their time to be directors — and a great staff. They're able to do considerable research into the charities."

Law also chose 10 charities to directly support and made generous contributions on behalf of Barber's estate. Thanks to Law's thoughtful planning and careful discretion, the estate has provided funding for multiple charities in multiple capacities across the city.

Believing in giving to charities without any strings attached, Law trusts the charities to make their own decisions on using the money effectively. "I felt the need to leave it to them, and they can assess where the needs are. I was happy to rely on the leadership of these charities to use the money in the best way, and that's what has happened."

Incorporating charitable contributions into your will provides many tax benefits, Law explains. But more than that, it makes a difference for causes close to your heart. "The more money they get, the more people they can help," he affirms.

Intentional and thoughtful estate planning is a great way to leave a lasting legacy and make a difference, just as Barber has. Law notes that there's a strong need for this kind of planned giving. And, there is no such thing as too early when it comes to planning your estate, and no amount is too small to make a difference. ■

Calgary Foundation Community Fund ► **Calgary Foundation harnesses the generosity of a broad range of donors to collectively address emerging needs and ongoing innovation in the community. Donors have the option of giving directly to the Community Fund or establishing a Named Fund within it. Donors entrust Calgary Foundation with the task of responding to community priorities and identifying the charitable organization best able to address them. Donations to the Community Fund give the Foundation the greatest flexibility to meet current and emerging needs.**

Sewing Support for Calgary's Theatre Community

The Wendy Eakins Memorial Fund for Textile and Design pays tribute to its namesake by supporting theatre craftspeople

By Karen Rudolph Durrie

From the beginning, Wendy (Wheeler) Eakins was captivated with textiles and design — all the way through elementary school, junior high and high school in Winnipeg.

The department of home economics, textile and design at the University of Manitoba became her second home, which she graduated from in 1977.

Banff beckoned in the summer months between university years, and in 1978, Wendy met her husband-to-be, Andrew. Three years later, in March 1981, a wedding, and then three beautiful children followed: Kyle, Alexandra and Grace.

Over time, and through multiple provincial moves (Alberta to B.C.; B.C. to Manitoba; Manitoba to Alberta), Wendy shared her skills academically and in live theatre as a stitcher/cutter. In Calgary, Wendy worked as the lead cutter for Alberta Theatre Projects (ATP) for many years, and on productions with Theatre Calgary, One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre and Vertigo Theatre, as well as countless film productions. She also shared her skills and enthusiasm at Arts Commons and was involved with the University of Calgary, cSPACE and Costume Alchemy.

"Wendy, my best friend and supporter, through thick and thin, solid," says Andrew. He writes the following words to describe her: warm, intelligent, beautiful, articulate, pragmatic, kind, encouraging, selfless.

This Benjamin Franklin quote embodies the spirit of the Wendy Eakins Memorial Fund for Textile and Design:

“Tell me, and I forget; teach me, and I may remember, involve me, and I will learn.”

In September 2022, soon after Wendy's passing in July, Theatre Calgary's wardrobe team hosted a picnic in Lindsay Park to laugh, to cherish and to remember her. During this picnic, it was suggested a memorial be created as a permanent tribute to Wendy, structured to help the Calgary theatre community, an initiative she would have embraced.

That suggestion soon became reality. Co-founded by Andrew, and Wendy's longtime work colleague and friend, costume designer Deitra Kalyn, the Wendy Eakins Memorial Fund for Textile and Design made its first grant to support the salary for a stitcher for the 2024 Christmas production at ATP.

Understanding that arts organizations often struggle for funding, Deitra says, "This grant will go towards hiring another person to work on the costumes, and in turn more time allotted to costume making will make the show that much better. In the theatre world, it adds up to making a huge impact."

Deitra recalls designing a housecoat for one production, and Wendy joked that she had a "four-hour" kimono pattern that would be perfect for this design. "We got a beautiful burnout velvet, and had it dyed in-house. It was incredible. A year or two after that show closed, I acquired this housecoat. I wore it on my wedding day. It was extra special because Wendy made it, and I designed it," she says.

The sewing machine Wendy worked on at ATP is still there, now adorned with a plaque that reads: Wendy's Machine. It will likely be used by craftspeople funded through the Wendy Eakins Memorial Fund for Textile and Design. ■



Deitra Kalyn and Andrew Eakins (wearing a vest created by Wendy Eakins) at Arts Commons in Calgary.

donor profile

“ If I have been able to give the boys ... a love of choral music, a striving for excellence through hard work and the joys of successfully performing to share with others, then my years have been richly rewarded.” —*Douglas Parnham*



A Legacy of Harmony

A passion for music lives on through the Douglas Parnham Memorial Scholarship

By Michaela Ream

Douglas Parnham, founder of the Calgary Boys' Choir, passed away in February 2018 at the age of 92, but his love of music still inspires countless young men. To continue his legacy, Moira Harlton, Parnham's daughter, and his other children, alongside Oliver Munar, a member of the choir since he was nine years old, worked together with Calgary Foundation to set up the Douglas Parnham Memorial Scholarship for Choral Music Fund.

Throughout Parnham's life, music played an integral role. After moving to Calgary in 1948, Parnham worked for the Alberta Wheat Pool by day while moonlighting in the world of music. He served as an organist and choir director for several churches. He also established and led the Naramata Summer School of Music Arts beginning in 1963, was the first Canadian to serve on the board of directors for the Choristers Guild, and, for more than 50 years, was a private piano and voice teacher.

In 1973, Parnham left his job with the wheat pool to pursue his vision of starting a world-class, all-boys choir. While Calgary had a variety of mixed-voice choirs for children and girls, there weren't any boys' choirs at the time. The creation of the Calgary Boys' Choir provided a unique opportunity to develop and showcase the musical talents of young singers.

For the next 18 years, Parnham served as the artistic director and principal conductor. Under his leadership, the boys' choir became one of Alberta's premier children's vocal groups. The choir toured across Canada and the U.S., performed in Britain, Wales, Sweden, Finland, Russia and Japan, and sang in different languages. The Calgary

Boys' Choir collaborated with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Calgary Opera and Calgary Flames, and performed at the opening ceremonies of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. In 1983, Parnham was awarded the Alberta Achievement Award from the provincial government for his contributions to choral music in Alberta.

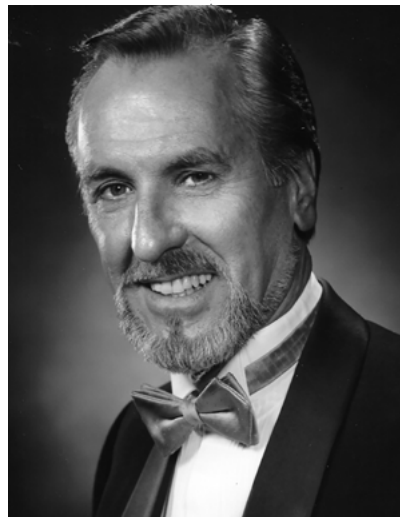
Munar's life was one of many that Parnham influenced. Munar grew up in the choir and remained close friends until Parnham passed away. "Mr. Parnham instilled in us the values that made the Calgary Boys' Choir so successful: discipline, hard work, being prepared and collaborating

with your team towards a common goal of musical excellence."

Parnham's final tour as artistic director was in 1991 for the choir's seventh international tour to Japan. In his final artistic director's message, Parnham wrote:

"After founding the organization 18 years ago, I am retiring not with a feeling of sadness but with one of pride in the success which has been achieved and wonderful memories of working with hundreds of the finest boys you would ever find. If I have been able to give the boys who have passed through my hands a love of choral music, a striving for excellence through hard work and the joys of successfully performing to share with others, then my years have been richly rewarded."

There's no doubt Parnham would feel rewarded by the choir's continued work, 51 years since he started it, and of the Douglas Parnham Memorial Scholarship, which annually awards \$1,000 towards tuition for students studying music, specializing in choral music and music education. ■



Douglas Parnham

Laying the foundation for serving future needs

By Michaela Ream

With a combined total of more than 150 years of service, and with long-term support from Calgary Foundation, the following organizations have impressive histories of building thriving communities and will continue to meet evolving needs for the next generation.



40+ years

Simon House Recovery Centre

ESTABLISHED IN 1982

In 2023, Calgary recorded an all-time high of 1,867 opioid-related deaths — that's the equivalent of more than five deaths every day.

It's a startling statistic that reflects the rising rates of addiction, a critical issue that Simon House Recovery Centre tackles

by transforming the lives of individuals battling drug or alcohol addiction.

Over the past 42 years, guided by the values of compassion, acceptance, collaboration, integrity, humility and innovation, the centre has provided a platform to advocate, educate and break down the stigma that surrounds those facing mental illness and addiction.

Simon House began with the support of volunteers and just a handful of employees. In 2006, space was added to include a 30-bed building with a full commercial kitchen, boardroom and office space. Over the years, the centre has grown to accommodate 67 beds.

In 2021, Simon House opened an Indigenous cultural space focused on traditional healing to support the many Indigenous men in recovery because of issues like addiction and

“We believe in the power of recovery and the potential within every individual to overcome addiction and lead a fulfilling, productive life. Our dedication is driven by the belief that everyone deserves a chance to recover and that we can create a ripple effect of positive change within the community.”

—Priya Reynaud, chief administrative officer for Simon House



Simon House photos, top to bottom: the Indigenous cultural space at Simon House; a group of program graduates; and program participants take part in equine assisted learning in partnership with The Equine Connection.



In 2023, Simon House served 337 residents, saw 192 program graduates and added 25 one-year sobriety plaques.

intergenerational trauma caused by residential schools.

Incorporating culturally appropriate activities into the recovery process, the centre offers Elder one-on-one support, healing circles, Indigenous counselling services, daily smudging and meditation. Non-Indigenous residents can learn about residential school history in an effort

to bring awareness about treaty misconceptions and stereotypes towards Indigenous communities.

Simon House also recently partnered with Stonewall Recovery to establish a program to help 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, meeting the needs of current and future community members.

 [Learn more at **simonhouse.com**](https://www.simonhouse.com)

50+ years

Calgary Boys' Choir

ESTABLISHED IN 1973

From performing for Prince Philip to collaborating with Canadian composer David Foster for a TV special in Banff and being known as “Calgary’s ambassadors for song,” the Calgary Boys’ Choir has built a reputation of excellence over the past 50 years.

These accolades can be attributed to the outstanding contributions of Douglas Parnham, a lifelong musi-



Calgary Boys' Choir on tour.

cian and music teacher who founded the Calgary Boys’ Choir in 1973 to develop musical talent in youth. Under Parnham’s tutelage, the choir toured internationally across Europe, Russia, the U.S. and Japan.

Parnham passed away in 2018, but his legacy continues as new generations of choir members unite through a shared love of music.

As a charitable organization run by dedicated volunteers, the choir



“Our vision is to empower boys to be remarkable, expressive and creative citizens through music. For some participants, this is the only place they feel they truly belong, and we want all of our members to feel like they are an integral and necessary part of our team.”

—Kathryn Berko, artistic director for the Calgary Boys’ Choir



Over the past 50 years, the Calgary Boys' Choir has performed at a variety of locations in Calgary and around the world, including Honolulu and Paris.



In its 2023/24 season, the Calgary Boys' Choir had 24 choristers, gave 8 performances, and held its 50th anniversary concert with 365 people in attendance.



>> continues to thrive thanks to the generous support of donors and funders. While most boys' choirs are open only to boys ages nine through 14 — typically before they go through puberty — the Calgary Boys'

Choir includes a group called Changed Voices, which helps boys navigate this transition with singing pieces designed for their altered voices.

Members of the Calgary Boys' Choir gain confi-

dence and learn leadership skills that shape them now and into the future — with a song forever in their hearts.

Learn more at calgaryboyschoir.com

60+ years

Heritage Park

ESTABLISHED IN 1964

Initially planned as a children's pioneer theme park, Heritage Park has grown to become one of North America's largest living history museums, featuring over 180 exhibits and 55,000 historical artifacts.

The City of Calgary provided the land and matched \$150,000 in funds donated by the Woods Foundation, which, along with \$77,000 in donations from Calgarians, set the stage for the development of the park.

Since opening in 1964, the park has grown significantly. Offering numerous opportunities for entertainment and education, visitors can connect with nearly 100 years of Canadian Prairie historic buildings and artifacts — all brought to life by hundreds of staff and volunteers.

Guests can learn about traditional Indigenous culture, including the significance of tipis, explore how settlers established towns, completed the railroad and

“Heritage Park has a responsibility – and can take a leadership role – in authentically presenting diverse histories, heritages and cultures. This is not just important for guests, but also the history makers whose stories we have been entrusted with. The hope is that by walking in the footsteps of these history makers, visitors are encouraged to make history, too.”

—Lindsey Galloway, president and CEO of Heritage Park



discovered oil, and reflect on some of the most significant moments between 1860 and 1950 that continue to impact life today.

With an eye to the future, Heritage Park is looking ahead to a 20-year master plan to reimagine and renew the park to draw in young families and strengthen the voices of the diverse communities that are part of Western Canada's heritage. ■

In 2023, Heritage Park welcomed 600,000+ guests, hosted 52,000+ students in school programs, and had more than 940 volunteers and 600 staff members.



Learn more at heritagepark.ca

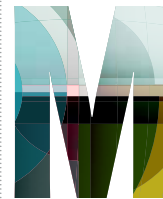
Health and Welfare for All

From essential pet care, oral health to restorative justice, with support from Calgary Foundation, the following organizations ensure everyone has equitable and timely access to supportive services.

By Olivia Piché

Parachutes for Pets

>>




elissa David always had a calling to care for pets. Working in law enforcement, she was known as the person to call if a

pet ever needed help. She kept dog bones in her office, called kennels for assistance and even brought pets home when they needed a temporary place to go.

After a cancer diagnosis in 2017, her profound love and respect for pets grew even stronger, as her dog's companionship was critical during her cancer treatment. "Without Charlie by my side, I'm not sure I would have gotten through it," she says.

Based on her own cancer journey with Charlie, she started Parachutes for Pets in 2019, saying, "I just couldn't fathom the idea of somebody needing their pet the most but being on the brink of losing them."



Melissa David with Bear at the Parachutes for Pets facility.

Parachutes for Pets provides essential care, including a pet food bank, veterinary assistance, medical grooming and a safekeeping program for vulnerable groups — seniors/veterans, children in foster care, people undergoing inpatient medical

treatment, the homeless and domestic violence survivors.

Initially, David received 30 to 40 requests for support a month, but when the pandemic hit, demand skyrocketed. In March 2020, she had 618 requests from pet owners desperate

to keep their pets at home and out of animal rescue facilities.

With the tight rental market, the organization offers short- and long-term safekeeping to support low-income owners who cannot afford pet-friendly housing. Many landlords won't accept pets, and some add a pet surcharge that drives some owners to live on the streets or in their vehicles to avoid losing their pets.

“I just couldn't fathom the idea of somebody needing their pet the most but being on the brink of losing them.” —Melissa David





Clockwise, left to right: Lauren Fettig, communication and fundraising lead for Parachutes for Pets, puts together packs of pet food and other essential items; shelves of donated food ready to feed pets in need; Macy gets a wash at the Parachutes for Pets facility.



Often, owners have to surrender or euthanize their pets in difficult times. The safekeeping program offers immediate assistance and ongoing care for pets. With many emergency shelters having no-pet policies, Parachutes for Pets is literally a lifesaving refuge for those facing homelessness

or fleeing an abusive situation, with no place for their pets to go.

"The owners can reach out to us to ask how their pet is doing, and we can share photos and videos. It's so important to keep that connection," says David.

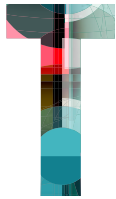
Due to the increased demand

caused by recent wildfires and the growing housing crisis, the safekeeping program has expanded. Animals are now kept in-house using team members with veterinary backgrounds, which lowers costs and increases capacity.

"We have a lot on the go, but it's really just about filling the gaps and advocating so that the rest of society understands that pets are not property. They're very valuable family members."

➤ Learn more at parachutesforpets.com

Nation's Dental



There's no denying the link between oral health and overall health — your mouth is the gateway to your body. Many untreated oral diseases

are linked to higher risks of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and dementia. When it comes to accessing services, the removal of barriers is critical because, with proper care, many oral hygiene issues can be prevented.

Nation's Dental (ND), a preventive mobile dental hygiene practice, is on a mission to provide affordable, accessible and equitable oral hygiene services for equity-deserving populations to improve Calgarians' overall health.

Cost, language, transportation, oral health literacy and trauma can prevent people from accessing proper dental care. ND works to remove those barriers, and while it does charge fees, they're a fraction of the cost of dental care elsewhere. Plus, ND's team has become well-versed in providing services with sensitivity and cultural awareness.

"Things like PTSD can prevent people from seeking care," says Denise Kokaram, ND's chief operating officer. "By partnering with local

A Nation's Dental hygienist provides care to a client.



organizations and taking the services to them in a place that they are comfortable with, it really overcomes a lot of barriers that people face."

ND also focuses on the importance of preventive dental care. "One of the gaps we were seeing was that newcomers have a health benefit from the Interim Federal Health Program,

but that does not cover prevention. It covers urgent care. So, we were finding that the need for preventive hygiene services was very high," Kokaram says.

ND launched Canada's first social-entrepreneurial dental hygiene clinics, which allow its team of registered dental hygienists to set up





Denise Kokaram of Nation's Dental participating at a Seniors' Expo at the Centre for Newcomers.

“By partnering with local organizations and taking the services to them in a place that they are comfortable with, it really overcomes a lot of barriers that people face.” —Denise Kokaram

clinics in different locations, including the recently launched Newcomer Hygiene Clinic at Village Square Leisure Centre and Genesis Centre, to serve the needs of various populations. The portable clinics offer full hygiene treatments, atraumatic services such as care without using needles, preventive care, education on oral care and referrals. To date, the Newcomer Hygiene Clinic, in particular, has provided services to over 100 patients in Calgary, some of which required multiple appointments.

"We aim to create healthier communities by offering accessible oral healthcare in ways that reduce barriers," Kokaram explains. "By enhancing oral health literacy and encouraging good hygiene practices early, we could see a long-term reduction in related systemic illnesses and healthcare costs."

 Learn more at nationsdental.ca

Calgary John Howard Society



Since 1949, the Calgary John Howard Society (CJHS) has supported individuals in conflict with the law and helped address the underlying causes of their criminal behaviours. CJHS offers a multitude of programs and services like community outreach and advocacy, youth, adult and Indigenous programs and, since 1985, restorative justice programming.

Restorative justice has recently gained greater prevalence in Canada as more people discover its social benefits. "With our traditional justice system, the people who have been harmed are left out of the process. The only thing they're able to do is a victim impact statement. With a restorative process, it's about giving them a voice," explains Deborah Nowakowski, director of programs at CJHS.

Restorative justice is an alternative to traditional criminal justice, which involves criminal charges and possible incarceration. It's an approach that takes into account the needs of the person harmed, understanding what led the person responsible to cause harm and how their actions may have affected members of the community. It can take on different forms depend-

ing on the situation, but at CJHS, it's offered through Victim Offender Dialogue and Crime Impact Sessions.

"The person responsible gets to sit across from the person they harmed, look them in the eye, take responsibility for their actions and talk about the things they did that caused that harm. Through that process, there's the ability to gain empathy. Sometimes we don't know how we impact others until we hear from them," explains Nowakowski. "It's about having those conversations, being personally accountable, repairing the harm caused, then finding a way to move forward together."

Restorative justice has been linked with lower rates of reoffending. It provides those responsible for causing harm with an increased awareness of triggers and how to address them, an understanding of the depth of their actions and the chance to repair relationships, which decreases the chances of reoffending. For those who were harmed, positive outcomes include an increased sense of personal safety, feelings of being heard, having a voice and being a part of the process.

In 2022, the Alberta Court of Justice launched the Restorative Justice

“It's about having those conversations, being personally accountable, repairing the harm caused, then finding a way to move forward together.” —Deborah Nowakowski



A restorative justice process bringing together all of those who have been impacted by criminal activity. The circle includes the person responsible for the harm, the person harmed, their supporters and the facilitators. Facilitators guide the conversation to ensure everyone has a voice, and that the circle is a safe space.

Pilot Project, allowing referrals to restorative justice processes when appropriate situations are presented to the court. Since CJHS is one of the only organizations offering restorative programming to anyone in Calgary, the demand increased quickly and remains high. From March to December 2023 alone, there were 216 CHJS

restorative justice referrals.

"It was hard to keep up with an increased demand, but additionally, it was hard to market the program or open other doors to new avenues," says Nowakowski.

Recent grants funded an expansion of the program, allowing several new facilitators to come on board

to support the healing journey of individuals who have been harmed, their families and those responsible for causing harm. Restorative justice ensures all voices are heard, and helps properly repair the harm that took place. ■

► Learn more at cjhs.ca



Building Belonging

Grassroots peer-led organizations can be powerful community-builders. The following groups show how innovative support can spark friendships and create new opportunities for people who may not easily find support.

By Olivia Piché

Ukrainian Women Advancement Association

Supported by Calgary Foundation's Stepping Stones Grants Program



As the March 31, 2024, deadline to come to Canada through the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel program approached, Teneille Yau, Dayna Palmer, Tracy Ellis and Norrie Roberts noticed an influx of Ukrainian newcomers and a higher demand for resources and support.

"We didn't want to duplicate any existing services that were already in Calgary, but rather enhance the settlement experience for these individuals by providing more one-on-one, tailored support," explains Yau.

In January 2024, Yau and the other women founded the Ukrainian Women Advancement Association (UWAA), a registered charity run entirely by volunteers devoted to helping Ukrainian newcomers. Yau explains most individuals coming from Ukraine are women, often alone or with children, since many of the men stay back to help with the war efforts.

The association's primary initiative is its mentorship program, which pairs the women with a local peer for a year who provides tailored support to meet specific individual needs.

"It's very powerful," says Yau. "In terms of community building, it not only benefits the Ukrainian individuals that have arrived, but it also fosters long-term relationships with other people and volunteers in the community."

The Stepping Stones grant helped facilitate welcome baskets contain-

“In terms of community building, it not only benefits the Ukrainian individuals that have arrived, but it also fosters long-term relationships with other people and volunteers in the community.” —Teneille Yau



Left to right: In-person UWAA connection event with mentors, mentees and their children; a program mentee receives her welcome basket.

ing basic needs like hygiene products, food and more. “It was just so well-received because many of these individuals are arriving with very little,” says Yau.

UWAA envisions a more interconnected Calgary community. “We’re

connecting the participants with other people of their own cultural heritage, but also connecting the Calgary community to newcomers,” affirms Yau. “It’s fostering an inclusive belonging both ways.”

Despite being a newly formed association, UWAA’s impact can already be seen, and Yau hopes to continue expanding its services and support.

Learn more at uwaa.ca



Fauzia Khedri

Immigrant Learning Mums Society

Supported by Calgary Foundation’s Neighbour Grants Program

For the last two decades, Fauzia Khedri has worked with different organizations that help immigrants settle in Canada. She has seen the gaps in services provided to Afghan women and witnessed the barriers they face, including illiteracy and language challenges.

Many immigrant women cannot use services offered only in English. “We can’t wait decades for them to reach a point where they can understand this information that we want them to have in English,” Khedri says.





An ILM Society gathering in October 2024 helped organizers gain more insight into the needs of newcomer women to inform ILM's programming. The event fostered connection and featured traditional Afghan music and singing. This honours the women's heritage, and also empowers them to reclaim their voices in a supportive community.

As an Afghan immigrant herself, Khedri's passion for helping others has always been deeply personal. "I want these women to be independent, to be empowered and become contributing members of society," she affirms. "When you're teaching women, you're teaching the whole community because these women are the heart of the family."

“When you're teaching women, you're teaching the whole community. Because these women are the heart of the family.” —Fauzia Khedri

In 2019, Khedri created the first series of the Sound Mind Sound Body 10-session program, held in Dari, to empower immigrant women in a language they understand. The workshops covered topics like parenting, mental health, healthy lifestyles, balanced diets, leadership, financial literacy, volunteering opportunities and learning about Canada.

"We created a sense of connection within the group, and as a result, that fear they had about going out into society or community vanished," she says.

In 2022, Khedri founded the Immigrant Learning Mums (ILM) Society — she notes that *ilm* broadly translates to *knowledge* in Arabic. Through ILM, Khedri hosts the Sound Mind Sound Body program to help participants gain more confidence. That confidence along with support through ILM allows these women to share their culture, learn from others and deepen their sense of belonging.

➡ Learn more at immigrantlearningmums.ca



Left: The Autistics Unmasking project, local mask artist Katie Green collaborated with participants to express themselves freely. Right: Autism identification cards.



port, and it hosts events to strengthen community and belonging. "It's a space where people can grow, network, get work done, find employment, but most importantly, find friendship," she says.

Autism for Life hosted its first big public event in May 2024, where 280 community members gathered for a day of networking. "A lot of friendships and networks were created that day. It was probably one of the best days of my life," Arbuckle-Bennett affirms.

Sensory-sensitive people, like Arbuckle-Bennett, may not feel comfortable in all settings, especially ones with loud music or flashing lights. So the foundation ensures sensory-sensitive spaces and accessible events. "It helps to have an environment that is safe, healthy and sensory-aware. Everyone can be their best, feel comfortable and know that no matter what, they are going to be okay," she says.

The foundation has also supplied thousands of autism identification cards, particularly important for people who are non-verbal, to act as a helpful tool in difficult situations, including interactions with first responders or needing help to reach their emergency contact.

"I hope we have a profound and positive impact, and I hope that after I'm gone, the organization will live on," says Arbuckle-Bennett. ■

➤ Learn more at autismforlife.ca

Autism for Life Foundation

Supported by Calgary Foundation's Neighbour Grants program

It wasn't until she was 26 years old that Lateshia Arbuckle-Bennett received an autism diagnosis. By the time she

knew what kind of support she needed, she had aged out of many available programs. "I started reaching out for support services, only to learn there was nothing for me," she recalls.

That's why, in 2020, Arbuckle-Bennett founded the Autism for Life Foundation to provide services and support for adults with autism. The foundation offers financial aid, resource referrals and personal sup-

“A lot of friendships and networks were created that day. It was probably one of the best days of my life.” —Lateshia Arbuckle-Bennett

Making the Bow Valley Home

By Elizabeth Chorney-Booth



W

hen it comes to beautiful locations to live, Banff and Canmore are rarely matched. But for some residents, life in the mountains can feel like an uphill battle. With support from Calgary Foundation, the following organizations help make living in the Bow Valley for newcomers, gender-diverse individuals and unhoused locals a little less rocky.

Castle Mountain in Banff National Park.

Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley

With a high cost of living and a low inventory of affordable places to live, the Bow Valley often has people finding themselves without a place to sleep. This can be incredibly dangerous, given the chilly winter temperatures and proximity to wildlife in the area.

Based in Canmore, the Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley (HSBV) opened as a pilot program in 2020 to provide unhoused locals with a warm and secure place to stay through winter months. It became a nonprofit in 2022 and gained charity status in 2024, continuing to run its Emergency Winter Shelter. There are other shelters in the Bow Valley, but HSBV is the only one in Canmore and doesn't require that clients provide identification or meet restrictive criteria for access.

"We have a mission to foster a local community where everyone has access to a safe, low-barrier shelter and programs that meet people where they're at," says HSBV executive director, Jessica Klaric. "That essentially means trying to support individuals and meet their unique needs."

HSBV currently offers its services within Scout Hall, a municipal building that is provided primarily through an in-kind partnership with the Town of Canmore. The temporary shelter location maintains eight beds and provides guests with hot meals, snacks, coffee vouchers and shower tokens for a nearby recreation centre. HSBV also offers referrals for local support services.

In past years, the seasonal shelter opened its doors to guests in mid-December, but to meet the increased demand, the shelter will welcome guests beginning November 1st for the upcoming 2024/2025 winter season.



**Coldest Night of the Year
Canmore, February 24, 2024**

**Inspired 161 walkers
Engaged 40 volunteers
Raised more than \$53,000**

It's a heartfelt journey to raise funds for those facing hurt, hunger and housing insecurity in the community.

Above and right: HSBV hosts a family-friendly walk as part of the Coldest Night of the Year event. Bottom right: Shelter space where guests receive a hot meal, prepared by Mountain Fire Foods and funded by the Bow Valley Food Bank.



“We have a mission to foster a local community where everyone has access to a safe, low-barrier shelter and programs that meet people where they're at.” —Jessica Klaric

"We have so many different individuals accessing the shelter space," Klaric says. "We have folks who stay for a couple nights. We have folks who stay for several nights during the operating period. Everyone has their own unique needs and unique story."

HSBV's ultimate goal is to move into a permanent dedicated space that will accommodate offices, showers and more room to provide year-round emergency shelter services.

To raise awareness and funding for those facing hurt, hunger and housing insecurity in Canmore, HSBV hosted its second family-friendly walk as part of the annual Coldest Night of the Year initiative, which attracted 161 participants, demonstrating how HSBV is forging a community where addressing homelessness is a shared commitment to compassion and change.

 [Learn more at bowvalleyshelter.ca](https://www.bowvalleyshelter.ca)





Settlement Services in the Bow Valley

With an abundance of job opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry, the Bow Valley appears to be an idyllic place to build a new life. But, the reality of relocating and experiencing affordability issues presents challenges for many newcomers.

To support the inclusion and integration of foreign-born community members, Settlement Services in the Bow Valley (SSBV) provides resources to permanent residents and refugees, including recently displaced Ukrainians, in Banff, Canmore, Lake Louise and Kananaskis.

SSBV offers free and confidential support on navigating the Canadian tax system, schooling, applying for Canadian citizenship and more. Its YouTube channel presents resources on family services, healthcare and English classes. SSBV also works with local agencies to provide information on housing and employment.

SSBV's Community Connections Try-It events introduce participants to



“The intention is to create a sense of community and a sense of belonging to ensure people feel welcome and confident in their new home.” —Heather Bates

recreational activities, including disc golf, yoga, mountain biking, skating, curling and skiing, while offering opportunities to meet other newcomers.

“The intention is to create a sense of community and a sense of belong-

ing to ensure people feel welcome and confident in their new home,” says Heather Bates, SSBV’s Community Connections supervisor. “We want clients to feel confident when they access services. We often take those

SSBV hosts walking field trips and recreational events to introduce newcomers to the community and to each other.

things for granted, but if you struggle with English and you’re not used to the way things work in Canada, it can be intimidating.”

To get to know the community and other residents better, SSBV offers walking field trips to locations like recreation centres, the post office, health clinics, libraries and municipal offices. Additionally, new residents can get matched with a Volunteer Connector or Connector Family who helps provide tailored support for individual needs.

According to Bates, the more integrated these residents become, the more likely they are to make the Bow Valley their permanent home. “The Bow Valley is a diverse community,” she says. “It’s a rich and vibrant community with people from all over the world calling it home and working together to make it a warm and welcoming place to live.”

Learn more at banff.ca/167/Settlement-Services-in-the-Bow-Valley

SSBV is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and operated through the Town of Banff, in partnership with the Town of Canmore and Bow Valley schools.





Local queer artist Nikki Goodwin AKA nak.creative leads attendees at a Banff Pride event in a communal art project.

Banff Pride Society

Everyone wants to feel a sense of belonging when moving to a new community, but for people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, inclusivity is more than feeling welcome; it means feeling safe and accepted.

To ensure Banff remains an inclusive, diverse and safe destination

for visitors and residents, the Banff Pride Society hosts a number of events that connect members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, including outdoor activities and meet-ups that are intentionally held in sober settings.

BanffLIFE, an initiative that promotes healthy lifestyles for young adults, invited the Banff Pride Society to jointly host two community BBQs

“Being visible is very important because it allows those new folk in town to come and find us and meet other people in the community.”

—Jeffrey Carpenter

this year as part of Pride Month celebrations and local 2SLGBTQIA+ musicians performed at the events.

“Being visible is very important because it allows those new folk in town to come and find us and meet other people in the community,” says Jeffrey Carpenter, Banff Pride Society’s executive director. “We’re a small town of around 10,000 people; it can be challenging to make new friends and connect, especially if you might not feel safe in being yourself.”

To promote inclusivity, organizers invited all attendees to join in the creation of an art project, guided by local queer artist Nikki Goodwin (also known as nak.creative). The finished art project will be displayed in community venues and at Banff Pride Festival events.

“There are plenty of obstacles to living here with financial and housing barriers,” Carpenter says. “Our hope as an organization is that people’s sexuality and gender doesn’t create another barrier to living in the Bow Valley.” ■

Learn more at banffpride.ca

YOU HELP YOUR CLIENTS BUILD WEALTH.



TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP THEM BUILD A LEGACY.

For nearly 70 years, Calgary Foundation has shaped a culture of philanthropy in our community. Aligning with the goals of Professional Advisors and their clients, we build on the legacies of generous donors all while supporting thousands of charities in Calgary and beyond.

For details on the power of endowment, visit calgaryfoundation.org





**CALGARY
FOUNDATION**
FOR COMMUNITY, FOREVER



COMMUNITY PARTNER



Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
Calgary Foundation
#1180, 105 12th Avenue SE
Calgary AB
T2G 1A1

Canadian Publications Mail Agreement #40030911