

Calgary Foundation fall 2019

# spur



## Hub of Creativity

cSPACE King Edward  
comes alive as our city's  
arts incubator

## Home Base

Giving people a way to  
build equity and stability

## Greening the Future

Laying the groundwork  
for sustainability

# 'Lighter and Brighter'

Martha Hart and the  
Owen Hart Foundation



# Shared Knowledge

WHETHER IT'S listening to and learning from diverse perspectives, or building partnerships that encourage collaborative communities, Calgary Foundation's greatest asset is our knowledge of community needs.

It's a unique and treasured trait that brings value to donors and to the charitable sector we serve.

Knowledge expands, deepens and enriches our collective work in building a healthy and vibrant community where everyone belongs. But the value of knowledge is only as great as it is widely shared.

In this issue, Martha Hart shares her story of honouring her husband's memory by helping others over the past two decades through the Owen Hart Foundation.

The article *Shared Stories* (page 4) introduces Elizabeth Peters, our new board chair, who believes "communities are strong because people share stories, time, passions and commitments. It's what binds us."

You'll learn about the Education & Lifelong Learning committee members (page 6) who share their knowledge and valued perspectives as volunteers who support in a significant way our role as an effective grantmaker.

And you'll discover a group of Elders and Knowledge Keepers (page 18) whose shared vision "to climb a hill and look out to where we need to go" guides them in promoting and preserving traditional knowledge of the past so

it can be used in the present and taken into the future.

Sharing knowledge and sharing stories has always been, and will forever be, the bond that connects us. ■



Eva Friesen  
President & CEO,  
Calgary Foundation

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

Calgary Foundation Fall 2019

**spur**

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## people

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## P.11

**Habitat for Humanity:  
building a sense  
of belonging**





“It was always my grandfather’s belief that you had to give back to the community that has given you so much. My mother followed in his footsteps and so did we. It’s sort of morphed through the generations of my family.”

Elizabeth Peters is continuing a family tradition of philanthropy.



# Shared Stories

## Community involvement is a family affair for Elizabeth Peters

By Jennifer Friesen • Photography by Erin Brooke Burns

**FOR ELIZABETH PETERS,** shared stories make up the thread that runs through all of her years of volunteer experience.

"When you get down to it, everything is about sharing stories," says Peters, who heard this idea expressed by Blackfoot Elder Hutch Sitting Eagle at a Calgary Foundation event earlier this year. "He said that sharing stories is what gives people a sense of belonging. I think community is built on this idea, and communities are strong because people share their stories, time, passions and commitments. It's what binds us."

Peters took on the role of board chair for Calgary Foundation earlier this year, but her connection to the organization started much earlier than that.

Her grandparents, Ed and Frances Galvin, lived next door to the Harvie family when the Foundation was in its early stages. Eric Harvie was a well-known local philanthropist who believed strongly in Calgary Foundation, and his excitement jumped the fence into the Galvin family as well.

Ed Galvin made an initial gift to the Foundation when Frances passed away 25 years ago, establishing the Frances E. Galvin Fund. In 2005, it was expanded and renamed the Galvin Family Fund.

The family—including Peters, her mother and sisters and all of their children—remains engaged in keeping the Fund going strong. All 12 members decide which organizations and community initiatives they will support through the donor-directed portion of the Fund.

Ed passed away in 2004, and Peters now lives in her grandparents' house. As she walks through her kitchen, she smiles and points out an east-facing window.

"It all started because my grandparents used to talk over that fence with the Harvie family," she says. "It was always my grandfather's belief that you had to give back to the community that has given you so much. My mother followed

in his footsteps and so did we. It's sort of morphed through the generations of my family."

The Galvin Family Fund was Peters' first hands-on work with Calgary Foundation. Later, she joined the Foundation's Environment Committee, where she spent six years reviewing grant proposals and visiting organizations to get a better understanding of their work.

Peters calls those first site visits "a profound experience," because it was the first time she really had the opportunity to get out into the community and see what was being done.

"When I was on the environmental grants committee, I think the thing for me was seeing the number of people who are so hands-on, boots on the ground," she says. "People making change in the areas they're passionate about. And that's humbling, to have the privilege to be on a granting committee and appreciate the vision and dedication people have for their community."

Peters stayed involved with Calgary Foundation, joining the Board in 2013 and subsequently sitting on the Investment Committee, which she eventually chaired, along with the Audit, Governance and Impact Investing committees.

Peters recently began her new role as Board chair for a two-year term. She overlooks every aspect of how committees and the board run, and helps build consensus.

"It's kind of like being inside the machine with perspective on how all of the mechanics work together," she says.

It's a new chapter in her Calgary Foundation story—and with every new chapter, she says her passion for the community "grows exponentially."

"My grandfather was passionate about this organization, so I think he'd be pleased to see me now," she says with a smile. "To think that 20-some years later I'm now chairing this philanthropic organization that started with a couple of guys like him. He would be pretty happy to see the family so actively involved with the Foundation." ■

# 'A Collaborative

## Education and Lifelong Learning Committee members are inspired by applicants' passion

By Elizabeth Chorney-Booth • Photography by Jared Sych

**IN 2013, WHEN HE WAS** working with The Immigrant Education Society, Nouredine Bouissoukrane applied for a grant from Calgary Foundation to start a project-management course for newcomers seeking employment. His application was successful, and the process left him impressed.

In fact, the experience was so positive that when one of Bouissoukrane's contacts suggested he interview for a position on the same committee that had approved his proposal, he jumped at the chance. In 2017, he joined the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee and is now responsible for helping other registered charities get the money they need to launch their own community initiatives.

"With Calgary Foundation, it's a very transparent collaborative approach, which I love," says Bouissoukrane, who is now manager of the cultural brokerage program at the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and chair of the Akram Jomaa Islamic Centre board. "The decision on whether to give the money to an organization is always completely based on merit."

Deciding which projects will receive Foundation funding is no small task, and it requires a wide range of perspectives.

That's why the Foundation's committee volunteers are so important.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Committee is one of eight grant advisory committees that help decide which applicants receive funding.

The process is similar for each committee. The Foundation staff first reviews applications to ensure they meet eligibility criteria, with each committee reviewing eight to 10 proposals.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Committee looks at a range of applications, from programs that connect non-Indigenous children with their counterparts in Indigenous schools to assistance for immigrant seniors seeking volunteer opportunities. The committee meets with each applicant face to face, considers the projects carefully then makes recommendations to the Grants Committee, which allocates the actual funding.

"It's one thing to take a look at a proposal on paper when you're reading through it. It's a completely different animal when you get to hear the passion in people's voices around the amazing work that they're doing in the community," says Cathy Cochrane, who was chair of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee for the past six

years. "The face-to-face meetings are the joy of this volunteer work. It just brings colour to the whole process."

The 13 culturally diverse volunteer members who make up the committee include business experts in the field of technology and communications and leaders in the areas of arts, education and the charitable sector, like Bouissoukrane. Everyone brings a different point of view to the table, so some members will see potential in projects that others might overlook.

Cochrane moved on to join the Calgary Foundation's board of directors this past spring, but has left the committee in good hands with new chair Amanda Koyama.

"We have amazing gender and cultural diversity with really intelligent minds and perspectives on that committee," Cochrane says. "Being able to consider the applications from multiple lenses is really, really important." ■

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Education & Lifelong Learning Committee members, from left: Megan Marshall, Jessica Schneider, Nouredine Bouissoukrane, Justin Reti, outgoing chair Cathy Cochrane, and George Damian. Missing: Samantha First Chager, Dianne Goodman, Murray Laverty, Lorraine Pelletier, Zain Velji and new chair Amanda Koyama.

# Approach'





“Twenty years after Owen’s death, I know the foundation will always have a sad beginning, but it has become what I envisioned—a celebration of his amazing life.”



Caption



# Two Decades of Giving

## Martha Hart draws on life experiences to help others through the Owen Hart Foundation

By Mike Fisher • Photography by Jared Sych

**M**ARTHA HART, founder and director of the Owen Hart Foundation, remembers vividly the moment when she knew her husband's untimely death in a wrestling accident would become an unstoppable force for doing good.

She had sat alone in her kitchen at twilight, the landscape disappearing into shadows as she cradled a phone in her hand, listening to her lawyer.

"I was going through a terrible wrongful death lawsuit after Owen had died," Hart says. "I learned the justice I was seeking would have to come in the form of a settlement rather than criminal charges. In that moment—a millisecond, really—it came to me that I would start a foundation to make the world a better place in his name."

That was 20 years ago. Since then, the Owen Hart Foundation, established at Calgary Foundation to honour her late husband, has granted almost \$2 million to charitable organizations with a focus on education and poverty.

Of that amount, the Foundation has distributed more than \$700,000 through 10 annual scholarships including awards of \$4,000 each to Calgary high school students who each have a minimum grade average but demonstrate effort,

attitude and leadership and also hold down a part-time job.

"As soon as I made that decision, I set out to make the world lighter and brighter," says Hart, who continues to work in Calgary while travelling the world on charitable missions.

She has done so with the help of her son Oje, 27, a lawyer with a focus on human rights and international law, and her daughter Athena, 23, a journalism graduate who supports animal rights. A proud, active mom, Hart says her children's concerns inform her own work with the foundation.

"The foundation is in Owen's name, but we do it as a family," she says.

### Difficult beginnings

Hart and her 10 siblings grew up in Calgary's Inglewood community during a time when it was not as gentrified as it is today. Those early days continue to influence her and drive her mission to help others who need a hand up.

"I was a poor kid," she says. "Even then, I was sympathetic to people in need and I always tried to give back. The foundation has allowed me to be more generous. It's an opportunity to promote giving back to the community."

A program to help parents with kids at the Alberta Children's Hospital meet

basic financial needs such as hotel, food and parking expenses is one of many Hart has initiated.

The hospital, where she works as a University of Calgary researcher in paediatrics, is a special place for Hart. She earned two degrees at the U of C in psychology and sociology before completing her Master's and PhD degrees at the University of Cambridge in England.

Hart and Cumming School of Medicine colleague Nicole Letourneau, under whom Hart did post-doctoral research, have developed a parenting program entitled ATTACH that has launched in Calgary to help vulnerable families. The program is designed to help parents affected by issues such as mental health problems, addictions, family violence and poverty by improving parental reflective functioning skills.

"I work with a lot of individuals who are at risk and it means a lot to me that I can help them through my work and research, as well as doing charitable works with the foundation," Hart says.

### Signature programs

There are three Owen Hart Foundation signature programs. First, the Owen Hart Scholarship Fund covers awards offered at Calgary schools including Forest Lawn, Western Canada, Ernest

>>



Clockwise from top left: Students at Forest Lawn High School receive awards from the Owen Hart Scholarship Fund; Jerry Seinfeld is a featured performer at the annual Owen Hart Foundation fundraiser; Dr. Martha Hart with children in Peru; Hart at a school in Nepal; fundraiser performer Ringo Starr; Hart at a school in Cambodia; fundraiser performer Elvis Costello.

great causes, so that we can expand what we do with the foundation," Hart says. "It's all about partnerships and getting together to do good in the world."

Ensuring that needy kids have healthy lunches to eat at school is another one of the many programs funded by the foundation.

"You can't concentrate on school when you're hungry," says Hart. "We have initiatives under the foundation's umbrella of education to ensure students have the best possible opportunities to learn."

Another program Hart is excited about is the annual Backpack Giveaway, which the foundation created and funds. Working this year with the charitable organization Alberta Computers for Schools, the program provides computers to needy families along with filled backpacks for back to school.

### 'Truly a gift'

The foundation's annual fundraiser, which brings top stars to the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium, is perhaps its best-known event. Two performances by comedian Jerry Seinfeld highlight this year's 20th anniversary lineup.

The mid-October event features a celebrity online auction with prizes including NFL, Grey Cup and Calgary Flames tickets, luxury vacations, WestJet vouchers, sport memorabilia and more.

"Twenty years after Owen's death, I know the foundation will always have a sad beginning, but it has become what I envisioned—a celebration of his amazing life," says Hart. "I believe he would be very happy with what we've accomplished so far. For me, being able to help so many others, it is truly a gift." ■

**"I love the idea of collaborating with great causes, so that we can expand what we do with the foundation."**

>> Manning, Crescent Heights and Sir Winston Churchill to recognize students who are motivated to improve their lives through education.

Second, the Owen Hart Home Owners Program, administered by Momentum, a Calgary community economic development organization, offers people living in low-income situations the opportunity to save for a down payment for a home. It also helps them develop money-management skills with an emphasis on home ownership.

"Growing up impoverished gave me an understanding of the importance of having money for education and

the importance of affordable housing for families," Hart says. "These are problems that I lived, so I know how important this kind of help can be."

Third, the Owen Hart Partnership Program joins forces with other worthwhile causes, which to date have exceeded more than 35 organizations. The main partnership is with the For the Love of Children Society with which the foundation has done numerous humanitarian trips in support of schools all over the world, including Peru, India, Nepal, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, China and the Philippines.

"I love the idea of collaborating with





# Opening Doors

**Programs guide Calgarians toward employment and home ownership**

by Karen Rudolph Durrie

The right opportunity at the right time can make a life-changing difference for a family or an individual. These two organizations supported by Calgary Foundation help take youth and families from surviving to thriving through employment training and affordable housing.



Previous page, clockwise  
from top left: Analicia,  
Garred Oishi, Claude, Bindja,  
Muronyi, Josiah and Sierra.

# Habitat For Humanity



twelve-year-old  
Muronyi sits  
astride his bicycle,  
laughing with other

neighbourhood children on a warm summer day in front of a row of smart new homes in the northeast Calgary community of Pineridge.

Muronyi and his family—mother Analicia, father Claude and siblings Josiah, 19, Sierra, 17, and Bindja, 15—moved into their new four-bedroom home two years ago. The house was built by Habitat for Humanity, and the couple and eldest son Josiah put in 500 hours of sweat equity as part of the organization's homeowner agreement.

Soon, 32 more working families in Calgary will have the same

opportunity, as Habitat breaks ground on its largest project in Southern Alberta to date, the Silvercreek townhomes in the community of Silver Springs.

Getting families into affordable homes and easing their financial stress is Habitat's role, says Gerrad Oishi, the organization's Southern Alberta president and CEO.

"There are people in every part of the city who struggle. Our aspiration is to have affordable housing in every quadrant, close to where people work."

Silvercreek will give 32 families the opportunity to be homeowners, and new residents will also boost Silver Springs, whose population has declined by 1,700 since 1982.

"Over the course of the build, we will have thousands of volunteers come together. This changes a community," Oishi says.

The \$9-million project is supported by the province, the City and donor organizations including Calgary Foundation, as well as private donors, faith groups and corporations.

Silvercreek will feature four buildings with eight homes each. The first will be completed before the end of 2019.

Habitat works with applicant families to create a partnership for each of the homes. Families must meet a set of qualifications, including a minimum annual employment income of \$40,000.

There's no down payment; mortgage payments are interest-free and not more than 25 per cent of a household's monthly income.

"All the families we meet are working really hard but can't save for a down payment. We can change the trajectory of those families. Once they are in stable housing, they thrive and the kids do better in school," Oishi says.

Through their monthly payments, Silvercreek homeowners will build equity in their homes and in their lives. The townhomes will be an "amazing legacy project" for Habitat and for Calgary at large, Oishi says.

Silvercreek owners will likely find just what Claude and Analicia and their family found working on and living in the Pineridge Habitat development.

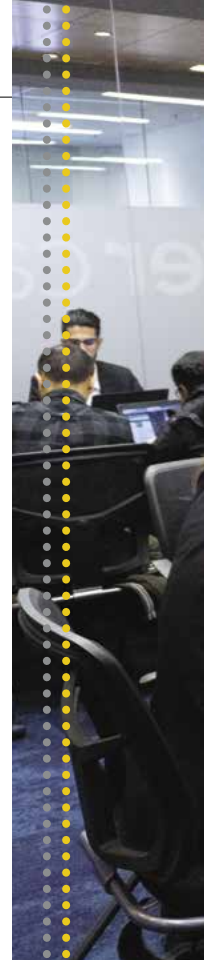
"We got to meet a lot of people, as well as our neighbours, before we moved in. So it was a good experience that helped create a sense of community," says Claude, a construction worker. Analicia, an office administrator, says she developed a new appreciation for her husband's profession.

"I loved learning to use the tools, and I learned what goes into a home before the makeup goes on," she says.

Sitting in their bright, south-facing living room, Claude and Analicia say they're grateful for school stability for the kids, and that the very social Muronyi has developed many friendships.

"Being able to own a Habitat home is good. You can say 'it's my house,' and it gives you the opportunity to save for the future," Analicia says.

**“Being able to own a Habitat home is good. You can say ‘it’s my house,’ and it gives you the opportunity to save for the future.”** —homeowner Analicia







From left: Lisa Moon, Aliza Adatia and Michelle Rowland in NPower Canada's IT classroom.

“We’ve had incredible success helping youth launch their careers in the IT sector.”

—Lisa Moon

# NPower Canada

**A**liza Adatia sits in a classroom in downtown Calgary with 41 other young adults, laptop open in front of her, listening to an instructor at the front of the room.

Adatia, 25, moved to Calgary from Greece three years ago and hasn’t been able to find work. She has experience as a hairstylist and an ESL tutor, and she volunteers for a number of charitable groups, but she’s faced barriers to securing a job.

“I think one of the reasons is that I lack significant employability and interview skills and some of my certificates from Europe are not applicable here. Also, the economic downturn has

caused a lot of applicants from the oil and gas industry to apply for other jobs,” Adatia says.

Being unemployed, she says, has left her unable to help support her family, pursue higher education or realize her full potential. So when she heard about a new skills training program called NPower Canada, she leapt at the chance to apply.

NPower Canada offers no-cost IT skills training to people aged 18 to 29, focusing on low-income, Indigenous, newcomers, LGBTQ2S+ and young people with disabilities.

The program had its start in the United States in 2000. NPower Canada began in 2015 in greater Toronto, and the Calgary location launched in May 2019.

“We’ve had incredible success helping youth launch their careers in the IT sector,” says Lisa Moon, program manager for NPower in Calgary. “We know it’s one of the fastest-growing sectors in Canada. There are about 2,000 jobs in Calgary unfilled because we don’t have a strong talent pipeline with that skillset.”

With its 15-week Junior IT Analyst program, NPower Canada offers a win-win proposition, training youth for entry-level IT careers while fulfilling an employment need in the city.

NPower Canada has attracted a number of employer partners, and Moon often fields calls from businesses asking how they can be involved.

“We rely on our employer partners to let us know what the new trends are in the industry and what they are looking for, so we can prepare our participants to stand out in a crowd.”

Not standing out is something participant Michelle Rowland, 29, can relate to. With some post-secondary under her belt, she had worked as a nanny, a landscaper and a housekeeper, but also struggled with depression. She felt she was just getting by, unable to plan for the future.

Neither Adatia nor Rowland had ever considered a career in IT, but both have been surprised at how much they enjoy the work.

“When I was considering it, I was like, ‘I don’t know anything about computers.’ And to my surprise I am able to understand things and keep up. The way the program was developed is very comprehensive, and I am becoming a computer geek,” Adatia says with a laugh.

For Rowland, the program has helped her build self-confidence and find a healthier work-life balance, and has given her the motivation to learn despite what else is going on in her life.

“They do a good job of creating a holistic approach that helps us get an edge in the job market,” she says.

The program includes two IT certifications, CompTIA A+ and Cisco IT Essentials, along with professional and personal skills development.

NPower Canada replicates a real workplace, and the program boasts an 80 per cent employment rate for graduates.

The initial group of students was a great example of how NPower Canada promotes its vision of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, Moon says, as NPower strove to build a group with gender parity that included new immigrants and those from traditionally equity-seeking communities.

“We are very proud of our first cohort team, and they have been open to accepting others who may be different from them. We want to continue in that vein.” ■





# Building a Sustainable Future

By Mike Fisher

**Educating the decision-makers of tomorrow about emerging clean technologies while protecting parklands for wildlife and recreation are two vital ways that Calgarians are creating a better city. Relay Education's Capture the Wind workshops for elementary students and the Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society's study on the impact of road construction are leading the way to an environmentally friendly, sustainable future.**



Collecting baseline data on the life within Weaselhead Flats and North and South Glenmore parks will provide a reference to gauge the impact of road construction.

## Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society

**I**n early mornings are magical times to be in Weaselhead Flats, when there are few people and the grass thrums with wildlife. Lisa Dahlseide turns and is startled by a deer that's foraging nearby. Birdcalls fill the air as the deer watches her for a moment, blinks, then bounds away, leaving her smiling in the dewy waist-high grass.

Weaselhead Flats is a 237-hectare natural environment park that borders the west end of the Glenmore Reservoir and connects South Glenmore Park and North Glenmore Park.

"Most Calgarians value having so much green space in the city—and the Weaselhead is unique, because you don't really feel like you're in the city when you're there," says Dahlseide, the interim Southwest Calgary Ring Road Impact Study coordinator for the Weaselhead/Glenmore Park Preservation Society.

Dahlseide is part of a Calgary Foundation-funded project to collect data on a suite of environmental and social indicators in the area, including biodiversity and water quality.

The grant has allowed the society to collect critical data before road construction started. The data will provide a baseline against which to measure the impact of the Elbow River valley section of the ring road, which began construction in late 2016 and is slated to open to traffic in 2021.

"The data will allow us to meaningfully compare 'before' and 'after' indicators," Dahlseide says. Without baseline data it would be very difficult to make a causal connection between any observed changes and construction of the highway.

Should any negative impacts of the road be revealed, the data will provide a firm basis for the implementation of mitigation measures, Dahlseide says. Efforts could include the installation of sound barriers and reduction in the use of road salt.

"We're hoping this study will help with any mitigation efforts to the impacts of the ring road, and be applied globally to other road projects," she says.

### A living classroom

The Weaselhead area acts as an outdoor classroom for 5,000 students annually, and is a beloved recreational destination within the city for walking, bird watching, kayaking and more. It teems with wildlife, including white-tailed deer, coyotes, bobcats, river otters, weasels and even moose.

Dahlseide and her colleagues are monitoring water quality and bioindicators such as mayflies to determine potential environmental impacts from road construction. More study is needed to determine whether any impacts can be attributed directly to any particular process or group, she says.

The project has involved the community in various ways. With the help of volunteers, more than 750 people were

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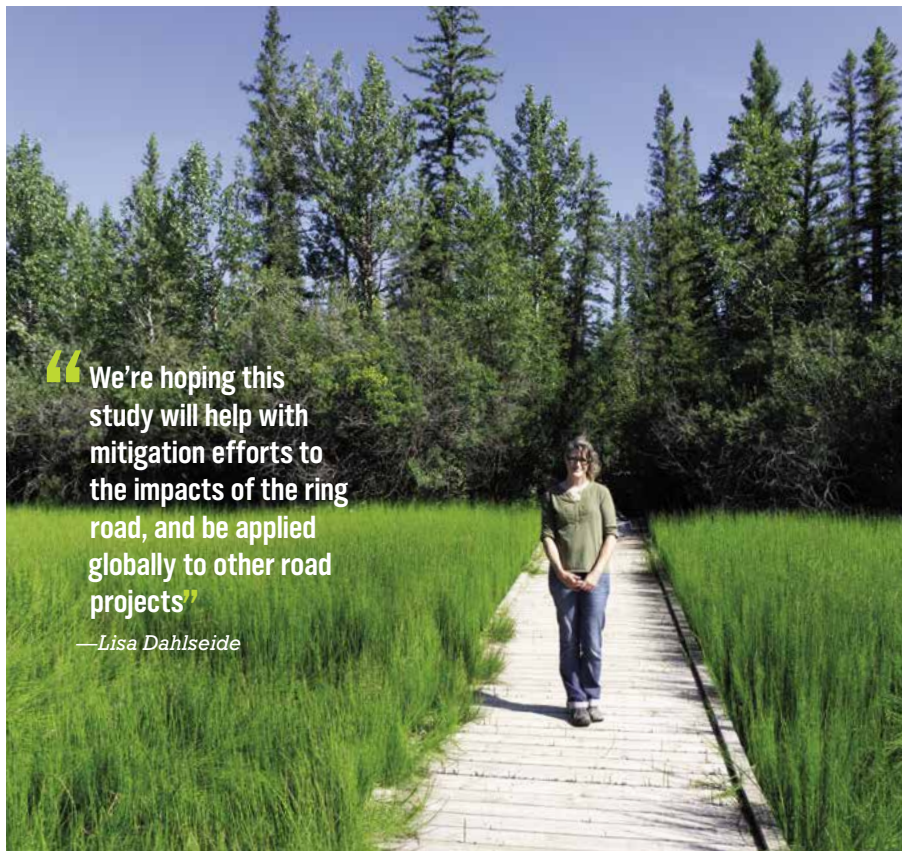
surveyed regarding their opinions about the ongoing management of the park area.

"We're involving the community as much as we can because we know how much Calgarians value this parkland," Dahlseide says.

Some volunteers gained experience in techniques such as vegetation sampling, water quality monitoring and bird counts. The project was enhanced by the participation of partners including the Friends of

Fish Creek Provincial Park Society, Land Stewardship Centre, Alberta EcoTrust Foundation, SAIT, the Miistakis Institute and the City of Calgary Parks Department.

"It doesn't matter what time of day, people want to connect with nature," Dahlseide says. "They want to know their drinking water is safe. They want to know the plants and animals that make the parkland experience are protected. We're part of making that happen."



**"We're hoping this study will help with mitigation efforts to the impacts of the ring road, and be applied globally to other road projects"**

—Lisa Dahlseide



## Wild Constructs

Wild Constructs is a series of six videos filmed in the Weaselhead, featuring the work of local artists in response to the Southwest Calgary Ring Road construction. A Calgary Foundation Strategic Opportunity Grant helped fund a video focusing on two young Tsuut'ina artists. The videos made their public debut at Beakerhead earlier this fall.



## Relay Education helps students capture the wind

It's a cold, snowy day in February, but inside a bustling Calgary classroom, Grade 5 kids are warming to the concept of renewable energy sources.

As workshop leader Rebecca Swanson unpacks two cases filled with small-scale working wind turbines, box fans, circuit kits, alligator clip wires, light bulbs and more, they're learning hands-on how wind turbines work.

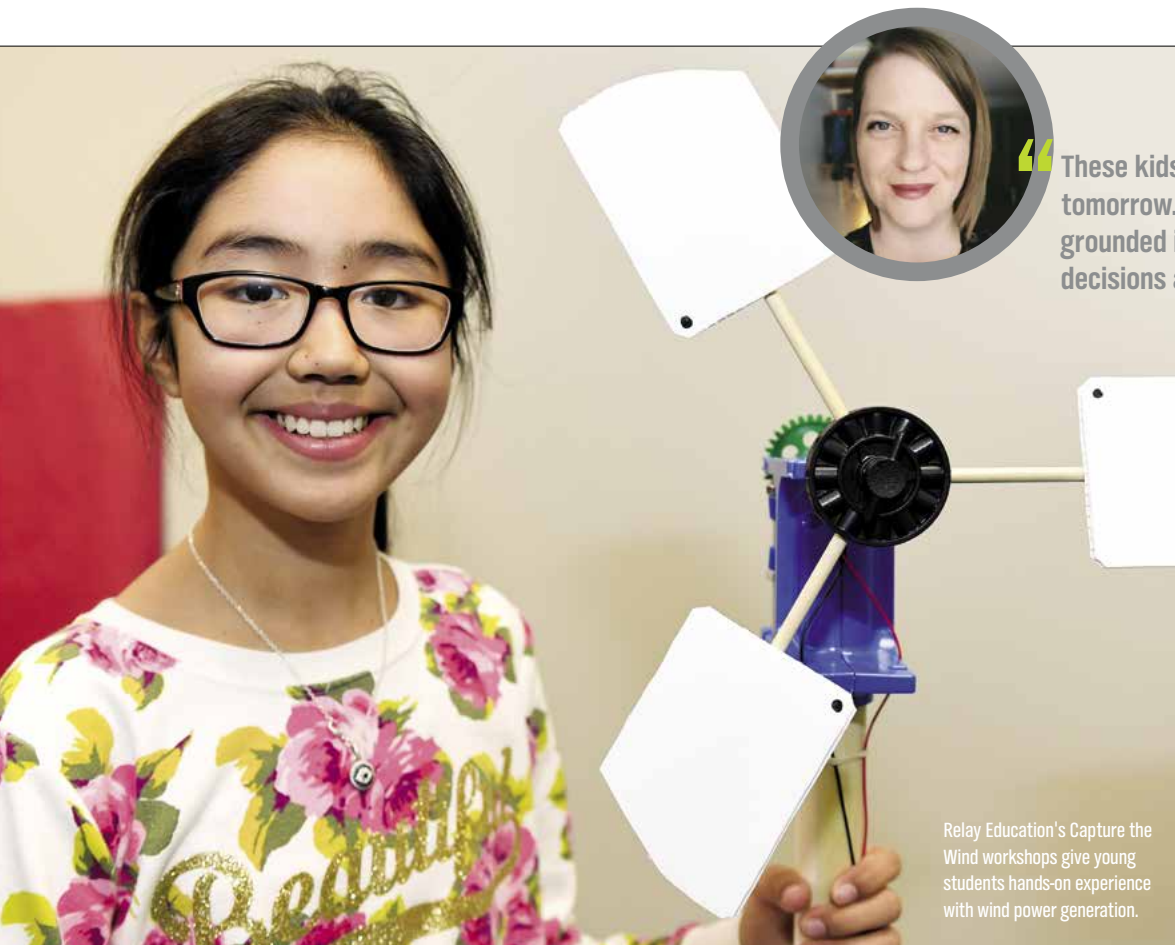
"What's great about teaching wind energy is that it's very tactile for kids," says Swanson, western Canada manager of Relay Education. "They learn better when they can get their hands onto things, play with them and discuss it."

Relay Education's Kids World of Energy and Renewable Energy Design Challenges workshops support teachers in meeting the Alberta education curriculum. They provide real experiences with renewable energy, allowing students to design and build wind turbines that generate electricity.

With the Capture the Wind workshops, students use model wind turbines to complete experiments that hone skills such as data recording, calculating math problems and working in teams.

Today, Swanson has split the kids into groups of five. They create a





“These kids are the decision-makers of tomorrow... If the kids have facts that are grounded in science, it can help them make decisions about energy.” —Rebecca Swanson

Relay Education's Capture the Wind workshops give young students hands-on experience with wind power generation.



human chain, holding hands and then reaching out to touch items that may or may not conduct electricity to keep the electrical circuit going.

When one student grabs a wooden pencil, she learns that the circuit is broken. But if she were to just touch the graphite in the pencil, explains Swanson, *aha!*, the electrical circuit continues to flow.

The kids each work with six small

wind turbines set up on the floor, examining how they work and learning the role of wind energy in creating renewable and sustainable power.

“These kids are the decision-makers of tomorrow,” says Swanson. If the kids have facts that are grounded in science, it can help them make decisions about energy. We want them to see at the most basic level how the technology works.”

### Careers of the future

Educating kids about renewable energy sources can also help to prepare them for expected changes in the workforce.

With the anticipated surge in the adoption of electric cars, demands on the electrical grid will increase rapidly, Swanson says. By building understanding and engagement, there will ultimately be support for renewable energy and energy conservation. And

she expects increases in wind energy and solar energy will lead to more jobs in alternative energy resources.

Alberta is the third largest market for wind energy in Canada, with more than 900 wind turbines, says the Canadian Wind Energy Association, the voice of Canada's wind energy industry. Wind energy met approximately seven per cent of Alberta's electricity demand in 2017, according to Statistics Canada.

Calgary Foundation is supporting the expansion of the Capture the Wind program in Calgary to at least March 2020. This school year, 750 kids in grades 4 to 6 will participate in the renewable and sustainable energy workshops. A portion of the grant will fund the work Relay Education is doing with Indigenous peoples to bring their traditional knowledge into some of the programming.

“We recognize that there are different teachings within First Nations, and we want to ensure the proper perspectives from within Alberta are incorporated into our teaching,” Swanson says.

After participating in the school workshops, youth have the opportunity to share their new knowledge with family and friends, which is an important part in increasing the awareness of environmental issues that can lead to a sustainable future.

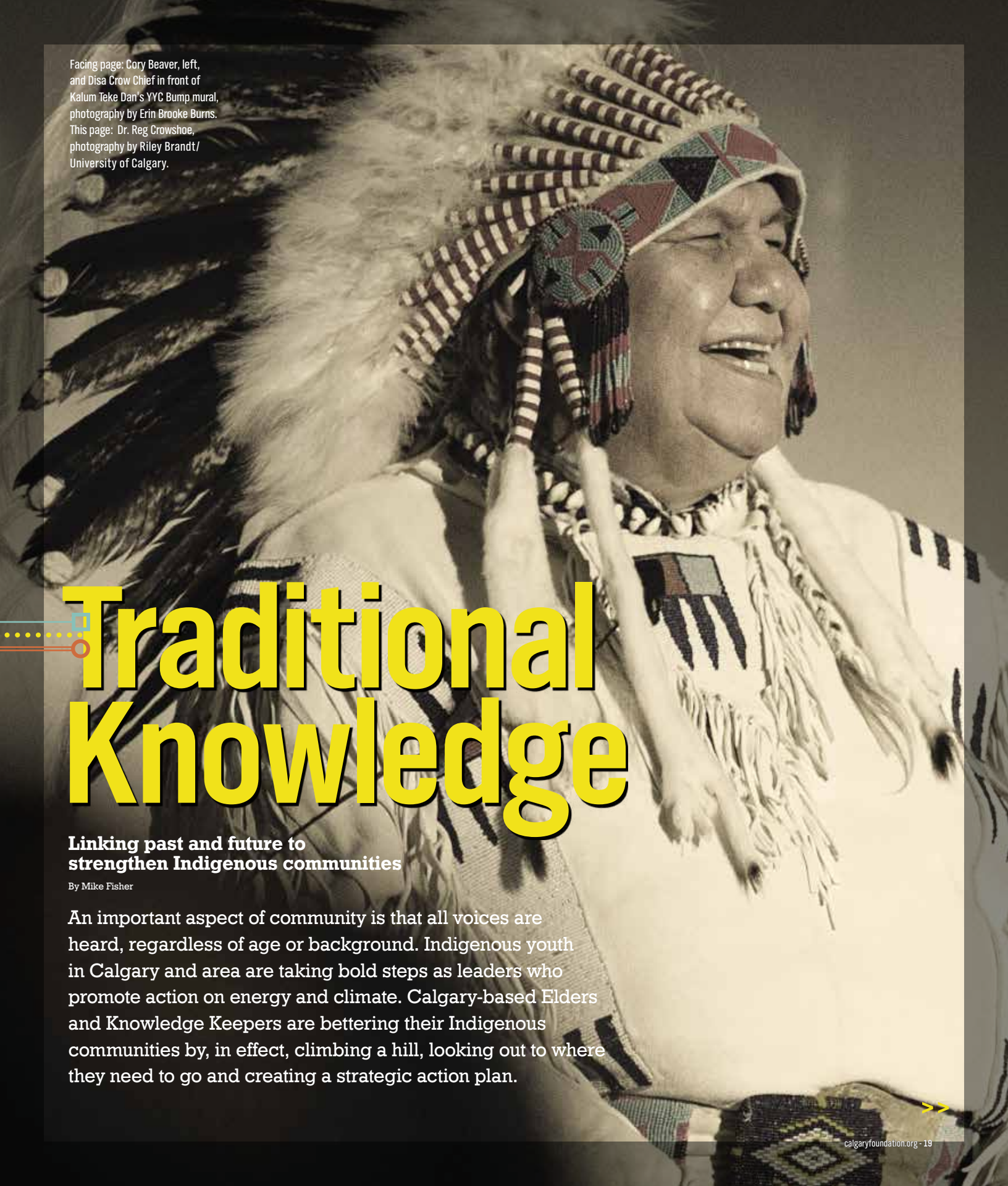
“Relay Education will continue to ensure that our workshops educate the next generation of youth in renewable energy and energy conservation,” says Swanson. ■





# New Year's





Facing page: Cory Beaver, left,  
and Disa Crow Chief in front of  
Kalum Teke Dan's YYC Bump mural,  
photography by Erin Brooke Burns.  
This page: Dr. Reg Crowshoe,  
photography by Riley Brandt/  
University of Calgary.

# Traditional Knowledge

**Linking past and future to  
strengthen Indigenous communities**

By Mike Fisher

An important aspect of community is that all voices are heard, regardless of age or background. Indigenous youth in Calgary and area are taking bold steps as leaders who promote action on energy and climate. Calgary-based Elders and Knowledge Keepers are bettering their Indigenous communities by, in effect, climbing a hill, looking out to where they need to go and creating a strategic action plan.





## SevenGen

Standing amid hundreds of participants from across Canada at the opening ceremony of SevenGen: Powering Resiliency Indigenous Student Energy Summit, the first Indigenous youth-led event of its kind, Cory Beaver was overcome with emotion. He couldn't believe it was finally happening. The idea he'd hatched with fellow Indigenous student Disa Crow Chief two years earlier had taken root at an international student energy summit and was in spectacular bloom.

Student Energy is a not-for-profit global charity that is focused on creating the next generation of energy leaders who are committed to transitioning the world to a sustainable future. Beaver is the SevenGen mentorship coordinator of student energy.

**“The name SevenGen came from a Native American prophecy that speaks of the seventh generation being the ones to lead and bring change, as a way to regain the agency that Indigenous nations once had.” —Cory Beaver**

The SevenGen Indigenous Student Energy summit brought together 200 First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth from every province and territory. The summit took place in January of this year in Calgary at the Grey Eagle Resort and Casino.

“We want to protect Mother Earth, so our key message was to encourage more Indigenous young leaders to become advocates to energy and environmental issues,” says Beaver, a member of the Stoney Nakoda Nation in Morley, 63 kilometres west of Calgary.

The summit is recognized as one of the first of its kind ever—an energy summit led by a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth for Indigenous youth.

It focused on engaging Indigenous youth to learn how they can lead in energy and climate action, so they can have a positive impact in their own communities and in their future careers, says Beaver, a Mount Royal University student.

### Looking ahead

Beaver and Crow Chief teamed up to create SevenGen after attending a Student Energy summit in Mexico during 2017.

“The name SevenGen came from a Native American prophecy that speaks of the seventh generation being the ones to lead and bring change, as a way to regain the agency that Indigenous nations once had,” Beaver says.

Based on consultations with the summit organizing committee, partners and delegates, this year's gathering prepared recommendations for future editions of SevenGen. Among the recommendations, “it is crucial that it be led by Indigenous youth who have control over the vision, program and partnerships.”

Beaver and Crow Chief are considering holding another SevenGen summit in 2020 or 2021.

“The summit was created so that we could all educate, empower and encourage each other,” Beaver says. “I know the majority of the youth who attended were very inspired and grateful because they'd never had the opportunity to attend an energy summit before, especially one that was hosted by Indigenous youth.”

Beaver also attended another international Student Energy summit in London, U.K., during the summer, leading the first Indigenous youth delegation in the program's history.

“It is important for me to have more Indigenous inclusion in spaces such as the Student Energy summits, especially in discussions about energy and climate issues, because Indigenous people were and are stewards of the land,” Beaver says.

A delegate survey showed that the top reason for attending SevenGen was to discover ways that the participants could bring opportunities back to their communities. Respondents' favourite part of the overall summit was the opening ceremony and the opportunity to meet 200 Indigenous youth and allies from across the country.





**“As a group, we are very interested in capturing and promoting traditional knowledge and ways of doing things.” —Dr. Reg Crowshoe**

“As a group, we are very interested in capturing and promoting traditional knowledge and ways of doing things,” says the group’s action plan. “For example, using appropriate protocols to approach Elders. We want to preserve the knowledge of the past, use it now in the present, and take it with us into the future.”

### A shortage of Elders

There are challenges. The plan notes that currently in Calgary, there is an extreme Elder shortage despite the high demand for their knowledge and wisdom. There is also the observation that Elders are underutilized on reserves.

“As the Knowledge Keeper Helpers are growing, and equally, interest in us is growing, we want to appropriately define the manner in which our group develops with a particular focus on reciprocal respect and trust,” says the plan.

Elders Dr. Crowshoe and Rose Crowshoe are utilizing funds from various sources to bring the Elders together, including the United Way, City of Calgary Family & Community Support Services and the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association.

“The most significant learning from this project was that there is invaluable impact in doing this Action Plan as a group,” Dr. Crowshoe says.

“It united voices and gave power to the shared purpose of the group—which is to ultimately help the Indigenous community in Calgary and area heal and arrive at a place where they can help themselves as well as help future generations.”

Sandra Sutter from Tarpon Energy invited the Knowledge Keeper Helpers to hold their full-day meeting at her offices without any costs to the group. John Fischer, director of the Iniskim Centre at Mount Royal University and co-chair of the Indigenous Gathering Place board, did the same for the second meeting.

By coming together to form the Action Plan, the Knowledge Keeper Helpers solidified the need for action and reaffirmed they were on the right path. ■

## Knowledge Keepers Helpers Strategic Action Plan

**T**raditional Knowledge Keepers are the foundation from whom First Nations traditions, customs, spirituality and laws are taught. They hold Indigenous knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Piikani Elders Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Rose Crowshoe are leading a group of multi-nation, Calgary-based Elders and Knowledge Keepers who collaborated with Elders and Knowledge

Keepers from the Treaty 7 area in creating the Knowledge Keepers Helpers Strategic Action Plan—2018/19.

The group first came together in March 2017 to determine how Elders of all nations could work together in the Calgary area.

“A positive result is that the creation of this plan reinforced the solidarity between the Knowledge Keeper Helpers Elders,” says Dr. Crowshoe. “It provided increased affirmation that the work they are doing in the community is more needed and is more timely now than ever.”

A Calgary Foundation grant supported the work of this group of 17 Elders. The Knowledge Keeper Helpers is based on fundamental actions, including existing as a support group for Elders and Knowledge Keepers, sharing and building on traditional knowledge, supporting others affected by residential schools and other cultural traumas and supporting cultural experiences for all with a special focus on youth.

How do the Knowledge Keeper Helpers answer the need of community?



Top: Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Rose Crowshoe; right, Dr. Crowshoe speaks at a University of Calgary event.





# Making Connections

**Initiatives build community by supporting mental wellness**

By Elizabeth Chorney-Booth • Photography by Rebecca Middlebrook





Supporting wellness requires a range of community building blocks, from forging a sense of belonging through meaningful connections with others to the availability of foundational health professionals. The following two very different initiatives support health and well-being in our communities.



From left: Longview Seniors board member and treasurer Ann Davis, board members Coun. Len Kirk and Winnie Hayden, resident David Wight, Longview Mayor Kathie Wight, board members Michele Geistlinger and Doreen Kirk, residents Gil Kidd and Emilie Williston, board secretary Andrea Kidd and chair Ivor McCorquindale.

## Longview Seniors Wheelchair-Accessible Bus

**I**milie Williston loves living in Longview. She treasures her tight-knit circle of neighbours, the beauty of the surrounding foothills and the peacefulness of her quiet community, which is conveniently close to larger centres like Black Diamond, Okotoks and Calgary.

Convenient, that is, if you're able to drive. At 90 years old, Williston no longer has a car or a driver's license—and that's a problem, since Longview doesn't have a full grocery store, a bank, doctors' offices or public transit. If she can't find an available relative or neighbour to give her a ride into the city, it costs her \$175 in taxi fares to get to doctors' appointments in Calgary.

"I love living here because I can go out to the post office or the library, which is only five minutes away," Williston says. "Other than the odd bear in the autumn, I can walk around and feel completely safe. It's a wonderful place for seniors, except for this terrible problem of transportation."



>> Williston isn't alone in her transportation woes. With a population of just over 300, Longview is not a large community, but it does have a very robust senior population—the median age according to the 2016 census is 51.6 years. In 2015, local seniors banded together to form what is now a very engaged seniors' group, with 118 members who get together twice weekly and occasionally go on group outings.

**“It does us such good to get a day out and see something different. Now that we have the bus, it's giving us all a new zest for life.”**

—Michele Geistlinger



Recognizing that transportation was an issue, both for group trips and for individuals like Williston, the group decided to fundraise for the purchase of a 24-seat wheelchair-accessible bus of its own.

"Emilie is not the only one in our community who has this issue," says Michele Geistlinger, a member of the seniors' group's board of directors. "People don't realize that when a senior is living in a small rural community, one of the things they dread the most is their driver's licence test. If they fail that test, they might have to move to a larger urban area and away from everyone they know."

The group started fundraising in January 2018 and, with the help of Calgary Foundation, reached its goal of raising \$100,000 within a year. The total raised has now topped \$160,000, enough to help pay for a coordinator who will schedule regular trips to Calgary so that individual members of the group can plan any appointments in advance. The group is also planning to use the bus for trips to the theatre or to the mountains, furthering opportunities for important social connections.

"It really is a godsend for us older people," Williston says. "It does us such good to get a day out and see something different. Now that we have the bus, it's giving us all a new zest for life."

Michele Geistlinger (left) and Emilie Williston.

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## Green Shield Canada Six 4 Six program

Successful companies know that being a good corporate citizen includes supporting the communities where they live, while looking to local organizations to guide their funding. Green Shield Canada, Canada's only national not-for-profit health and dental benefits specialist, has long been dedicated to social responsibility and charitable giving. In 2018, to mark its 60th anniversary, Green Shield launched a new collaborative giving program called Six 4 Six.

The Six 4 Six program is donating \$6 million to six community foundations across Canada to support local initiatives aimed at improving health and well-being for all Canadians. It represents a new collaborative model that's all about community partnerships. Calgary Foundation was selected as one of the foundations to work with local community stakeholders to identify key initiatives in two areas: oral health and mental health.

In Calgary, two projects that will benefit from the Six 4 Six program are the Alex Community Health Centre's dental health bus and a mental health navigator program that will work with patients at the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic.

"Navigating the mental health system is really one of the biggest barriers our patients face," says Mosaic Clinic physician lead Dr. Annalee Coakley.

"After you've come from a traumatic experience, you're not always very trusting. They need somebody to take them by the hand and introduce them to friendly services. They really need that warm handover."

That may mean referring refugees who may not speak English and can lack numeracy or literacy skills to psychological services as well as other agencies that will help them develop mental well-being.





“ Navigating the mental health system is really one of the biggest barriers our patients face.”

—Dr. Annalee Coakley

These could include community kitchens, refugee support groups and other activities that create a sense of belonging.

Local insights like these will drive the Six 4 Six program and ensure the funding has maximum impact.

Zahid Salman, Green Shield's president and CEO, says he's excited to see where these partnerships will go. "One of the most meaningful aspects of the program is the opportunity to put a spotlight on the incredible work that community organizations

undertake, day in and day out, to bring unique services to those in need of support," Salman says.

"This helps us collectively build community capacity, both locally and nationally. We look forward to seeing the Calgary-based projects unfold." ■





# Nurturing Creativity

**cSPACE King Edward has become a thriving venue and incubator for the arts**

By Jennifer Friesen

Calgary's King Edward School building has been a community hub for more than a century, and cSPACE is continuing that legacy. The organization reopened the renovated building in 2017, and today it supports a community of artists who help make our city an exciting and creative place.





“I always knew this building would become a new, incredible creative ecosystem... It's truly a living thing, an artistic coral reef filled with colour and life.” —Deeter Schurig



Scenes from cSPACE: Facing page, the Imaginarium by Katie Green and Daniel J. Kirk. This page, from top, Imago Theatre rehearsal, farmers' market and Atelier Artista.



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**B**efore the century-old King Edward School was reborn as the arts hub it is today, Deeter Schurig saw its potential as a vital centre of creativity within the city.

"I always knew this building would become a new, incredible creative ecosystem," he says. "It's truly a living thing, an artistic coral reef filled with colour and life."

The colossal sandstone building at 1721 29 Ave. S.W. was completed in 1912 and operated as a school until the Calgary Board

of Education closed its doors in 2001. A decade later, cSPACE Projects, with the support of an impact investment from Calgary Foundation, bought the building and started work on the large-scale renovation that would turn it into an arts incubator for Calgary.

The cSPACE team kept the integrity of the 47,500-square-

foot school intact (complete with the original brick and blackboards) but added a modern wing that provides theatre space, and updated utilities to make it accessible and environmentally responsible.

The building's occupants are artistic organizations from every discipline, from film and dance to painting, theatre and more, and cSPACE offers them subsidized space.

"In Calgary, there have always been pressures around property development," says Schurig, who has been with cSPACE

from the very beginning and is now its general manager. "The needs of emerging and young creatives to support their practices were not being met. We needed a portfolio of creation spaces that were affordable, accessible and sustainable."

Affordability was critical, Schurig says. "It's the core part of our mission. If we're not providing affordable, stable space for our tenants then we've missed the first responsibility of what we wanted to achieve."

Following the opening in 2017, cSPACE King Edward has evolved to include creative enterprise by supporting artists through its coffee shop and galleries, and has brought in a farmers' market every Saturday on the south-facing lawn.

"We wanted to make the building into an invitation," Schurig says. "We wanted people to see that there's something unique and authentic and interesting inside."

Following is a look at some of the organizations now thriving at cSPACE.

>>

## >> Dancers' Studio West

**D**ancers' Studio West was an Alberta first. Created in 1980 as a way to foster a community for Alberta dancers, the organization was the only contemporary dance presenter in Calgary for 25 years.

Over the last decade, Dancers' Studio West has shifted its focus away from dance presentation. Offering workshops, research labs, technique classes and artist-in-residence programs, the organization now concentrates on professional development for dance artists, says artistic director Sasha Ivanochko.

"We're looking to support somebody's practice and not just one piece," Ivanochko says. "We're supporting the evolution of contemporary dance practices in Alberta."

Ivanochko took the reins of the studio last August after years spent teaching and performing across the country.

"Any thinker needs to have something to bump up against to sharpen their own ideas," she says. "So Dancers' Studio West has taken on the challenge of creating opportunities for an exchange of ideas and knowledge to generate different stimuli for participants in our programming."

The organization moved into cSPACE King Edward this past spring, after years without having a home base. Ivanochko describes her organization as an "incubator of new ideas and experimental work," which echoes the mandate of the overall cSPACE facility.

"We're not even fully moved in yet; we still need furniture," she says with a laugh. "But there's already a difference in being in a physical space that has so much community. I see a lot of potential for new work to emerge."

By offering funded mentorships and residency programs, the studio is working to allow dancers to expand their artistry and skills.

The organization continues to launch "firsts" for the province, and next May it will present the inaugural Quick+Dirty: A Festival of Emerging Choreographers and Ideas, which will be presented at cSPACE.

"It's designed to support first works and risk-taking," Ivanochko says. "We want to allow artists to explore new ideas and styles that reflect this community and this place—because we want to challenge assumptions of the art form and what it can do."

"Having opportunities to see a wide variety of ways that dance can be done broadens one's mind and one's community," she says. "It changes culture, which is awesome. There are more people presenting and self-presenting in Alberta now, and we want to support those emerging artists."

“There's already a difference in being in a physical space that has so much community. I see a lot of potential for new work to emerge.” —Sasha Ivanochko

Meghann Michalsky performs her piece, *Magma*, which premiered at the 2018 annual Alberta Dance Festival.





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## Alexandra Writers' Centre Society

**FOR THE PAST 38 YEARS**, the Alexandra Writers' Centre Society has been working to build a community around Calgary writers through courses, workshops and writers-in residence programs. The society helps writers share their stories, and it's looking to expand its reach since moving to cSPACE in 2017 from its original Inglewood location.

"Writers in Calgary need to be heard, whether they're professional or not," says Robin van Eck, executive director. "Being creative should be a part of life."

The society has almost tripled its programming since moving to cSPACE.

"The thing with cSPACE is that it brings all of these people together under one roof," van Eck says. "The impact has been incredible."

The five-month Borderlines Writers Circle was launched in February of this year as a way to support and promote immigrant writers in the Calgary area. In partnership with the Writers' Guild of Alberta and supported by Calgary



**“The thing with cSPACE is that it brings all of these people together under one roof. The impact has been incredible.”** —Robin van Eck

Foundation, the program involved discussions, mentorship, workshops, networking and reading opportunities.

"In all of my time with the society, the Borderlines program has been the most transformational for me personally," van Eck says. "It's opened my eyes to how we need to do better as Canadians—and art is probably the way to do it. We're in the right place to be making that change in the world that we want to see."

From the initial interview process for Borderlines to its final reading event, van Eck says she saw a transformation in the participants. Initially, some of the writers were reluctant to use their voices, but by the end everyone spoke with authority and confidence.

"A lot of people think that what we do is just teach," van Eck says. "But if I really sit down and think about it, learning is kind of secondary. It's about the community we create."

"What we've done with all this work is to reflect the growing community," she continues. "It shows that, yes, we're all different—but we're all the same, too. We all have really powerful stories to tell and we shouldn't be afraid to share them."

The Borderlines Writers Circle program at cSPACE: offering support for immigrant writers.



Linnea Swan in *I Eat You*  
(2017), choreographed  
by Nicole Mion.



## Springboard Performance

**N**icole Mion was just seven when she saw something that changed her life. She went with a friend's family to a performance of the opera *Madame Butterfly* at the Hollywood Bowl, and the memory resonates to this day.

"The whole show was unlike anything else I'd ever experienced," Mion says. "Sometimes we think that kids aren't ready for these things in life or in art, but boy, that one stuck with me. I believe that planting seeds can encourage people to go down a path of creativity."

This early experience set Mion on a path of her own. Now the artistic director and executive producer of >>

Springboard Performance, she was a founding member of the organization before taking over in a leadership capacity 16 years ago.

"Creative arts are a part of the fabric of a city," she says. "It's something that we need to keep replenishing and celebrating. You never know who will be inspired and change the community as a result."

Springboard started in the 1980s as a non-profit artists' collective. Today, its mandate is to connect people through physical creation, live performance and the activation of public spaces to help connect communities through art.

The company moved into cSPACE in early 2018, and Mion says the space's creative energy was evident immediately.

"As an organization, we're trying to build a culture and a synergy around art and people coming together," she says. "And cSPACE was in a parallel position where they were looking to become leaders in art and creative ideas, so we were drawn to that."

Springboard is still focused on dance and physical performance, but it has also made waves in the city through containR, a pop-up community installation and performance space. Currently installed in Sunnyside, the space is built from recycled shipping containers. Mion says it's about helping Calgarians see artistic expression without boundaries.

Last year, the company started the Signature Dance Presentation Series, an opportunity for national and international artists to present performances, talks and workshops to Calgary audiences.

"We want to stimulate an ongoing conversation that serves our artists and inspires the people in the audience," Mion says. "Who knows, it might have a ripple effect—like *Madame Butterfly* had for me."

Kids participate in Quest Theatre's 2018 Treks Summer Camp.



## Quest Theatre

**FROM THE FIRST TIME NIKKI LOACH DONNED** her whimsical character costume—complete with kazoo—she knew theatre for children was where she belonged.

She had taken a summer job at Quest Theatre after her third year of university, and spent the season bouncing around Calgary in her costume. She calls those moments "the beginning" of her journey.

"I completely fell in love with it," says Loach, now the artistic director of Quest. "I couldn't even tell you what the play was about anymore, but I remember the excitement on the faces of the children in the audience, and I knew I had found my purpose. Inviting young people into theatre was what I was meant to be doing."

Quest Theatre Society has long been a school-touring company, but has now expanded to include camps and artist-in-residence programs.

**“We allow children to write their stories and share them, so it's not just creating for children, it's creating with them. We really try to foster their ideas.”** —Nikki Loach



Since 1984, it has toured more than 100 productions and reached more than 1.3 million children.

The company began holding summer theatre camps at cSPACE after moving in last year. The camp productions are child-led, with the camp helping to bring the kids' ideas to life on stage.

"We allow children to write their stories and share them," Loach says. "So it's not just creating for children, it's creating with them. We really try to foster their ideas."

For the past four years, the company has also been touring a collaboration with the Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society called *We Are All Treaty People*.

It's a story of two children, one Indigenous and one non-Indigenous, as they walk through the history of racial and cultural issues in Southern Alberta.

The sold-out production has toured across Canada and ends with a question-and-answer period.

"Kids are always open to stories, and they always see when something is unfair," Loach says. "But, for me, when I get letters from Blackfoot kids who saw the show and want to tell me how proud they are of their heritage, it really makes me feel like we're doing our part in nurturing young people. We're working to give kids context for their own inquiries and move toward action." ■





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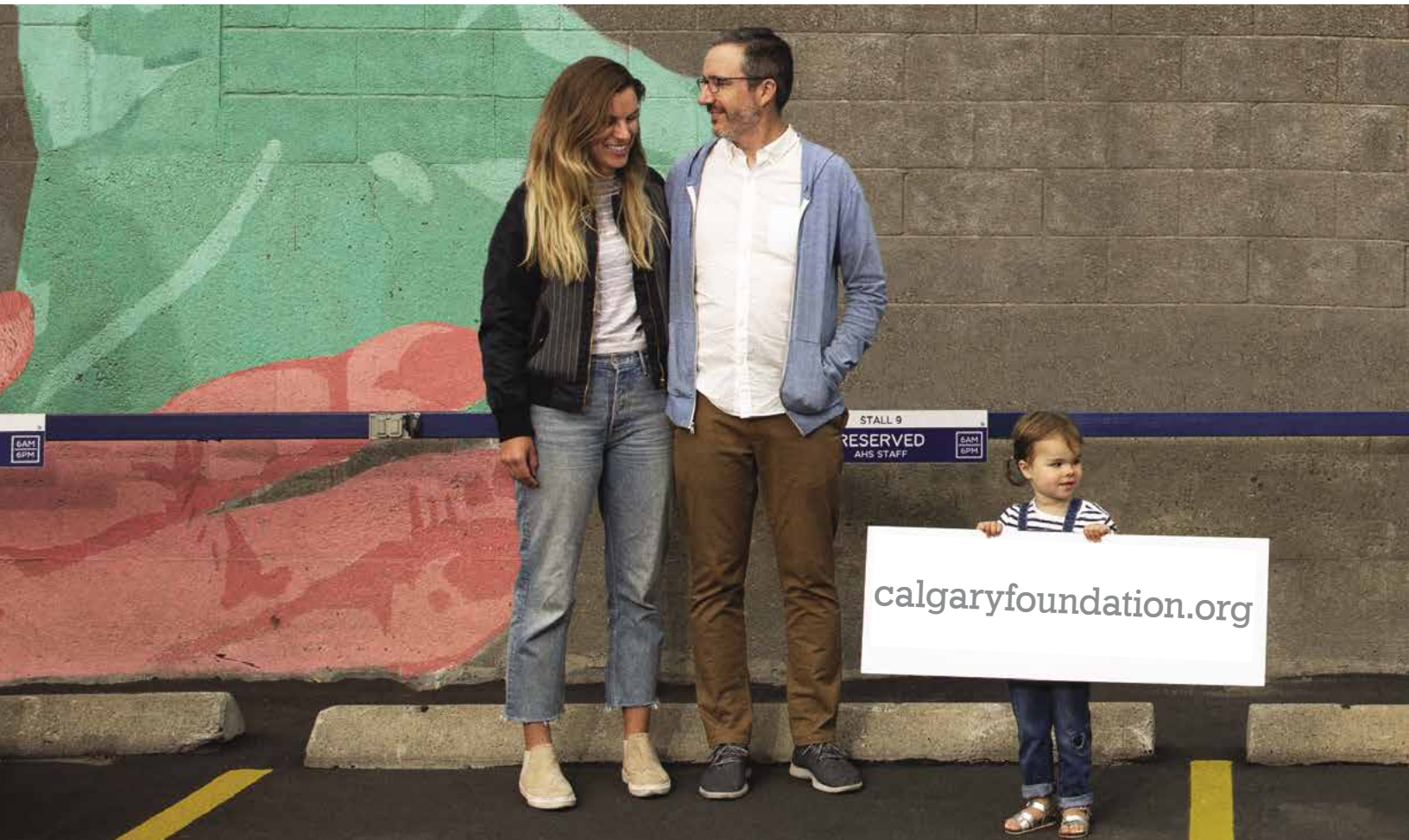
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