

e4c envoy

Summer 2017



e4c WEAC and Crossroads Outreach program participants and staff prepare to take part in the Pride Parade

Community & Collaborations



Strengthening connections leads to positive change

Encouraging and enriching involvement in community is an important part of helping people living in poverty move toward healthy, positive change. When people are active in inclusive communities, individuals are empowered to find solutions to challenges and to play a role in shaping the future.

That's why e4c works to help people find opportunities to engage in community and find a sense of purpose and belonging. In this issue of envoy, we're focusing on some recent activities that have helped people contribute and participate in the communities they call home.

For close to 50 years, e4c has been helping Edmontonians get what they need to tackle life's challenges. e4c believes that people deserve to be listened to and respected, no matter what their circumstances or challenges. We see people and welcome them without judgment or bias.

e4c's vision is to limit, alleviate and ultimately eliminate poverty.

e4calberta.org |   Follow Us

9321 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5H 3T7 780.424.7543



Seeing people not poverty.



Long-time volunteers help to organize activities during the community clean up

McCauley Neighbourhood Clean Up

Bringing community together

In what has become an annual welcome to summer, this year's McCauley Neighbourhood Clean Up brought residents out in force to beautify their community.

An e4c community collaboration, in partnership with the McCauley Community League and the City of Edmonton, the event is supported by the Edmonton Host Lions Club and Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples. Several businesses, including Enterprise Car Rentals and 310-Dump, also lend their time and resources to the event, which involves clean up and garbage pick up in the McCauley area.

The McCauley neighbourhood is roughly triangle-shaped, bound on the north by 111 Avenue/Norwood Boulevard, the west by 101 Street, and the southeast by the LRT line. It is a culturally diverse, eclectic neighbourhood that is home to a wide variety of businesses and to many individuals and families.

During the event, which was held on June 10, residents could have garbage picked up for free or they could bring it to the disposal bin drop-off location at e4c McCauley Apartments.

Now in its 17th year, the event is organized and made possible by community volunteers and participants – including residents of McCauley Apartments. In total, 40 volunteers spent the day working to clean up the neighbourhood.

"The McCauley Clean Up provides an opportunity for the people we serve who live in the area to have meaningful roles in the greater community as volunteers," explains Taro Hashimoto, Community

Development Officer, e4c.

"The Community Members get to know the feeling of bringing value to the community. It also creates personal connections that break down social barriers and helps people meet their neighbours and strengthen their sense of community."

Strengthening these connections helps address some of the causes of vulnerability for children, youth, and families and helps everyone feel at home where they live.

"It's about creating a strong, vibrant community where people are invested in the place they call home," says Taro Hashimoto.



Community volunteers bringing in a load to the drop-off location

Pride Festival Parade

Proud to take part

Women from e4c Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC) and e4c Crossroads Outreach joined together with e4c staff to take part in Edmonton's annual Pride Parade on Saturday, June 10. Participants from WEAC and Crossroads travelled from WEAC on Jasper Avenue to Old Strathcona to participate in the parade.

The parade, which marched along Whyte Avenue, is the flagship event for the Edmonton Pride Festival Society, which works to unify and educate the community by celebrating gender and sexual diversity. Many of the participants from the e4c community belong to the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The Edmonton Pride Festival Society's mission aligns closely with e4c's commitment to be a supportive and empowering presence in times of individual, family and community need, create opportunities for people to become self-supporting, and to lead in the growth of inclusive and caring communities. e4c supports a safe, inclusive community for all.

"There is significant representation of the LGBTQ2S+ community at WEAC as we provide safe emergency accommodation to all women who need it, including transgender women," explains Jessie Jenkins, Community Enhancement Coordinator, e4c.

"One of the first things you lose when you are homeless is access to safe spaces, so if there is an opportunity to access a safe, inclusive space we will find a way to make that happen for everyone," says Jessie Jenkins.



Proudly walking together in community

Interview with Pride Parade Participant



Who: Samantha Rose Bighead

What: Walked in the Pride Parade with e4c WEAC

Where: Whyte Avenue in Old Strathcona

When: June 10, 2017

Why: Samantha participated as she wanted to show her support for the LGBTQ2S+ community including cousins and friends at WEAC. She wishes her family would realize that there is a bigger world out there and not just "the REZ" (Treaty 7 Blood Tribe).

Samantha liked the colours in the parade and how people were not scared to be themselves. She liked that the event was empowering to help people feel stronger.

"They (parade attendees) know how to have fun!"

She would like to thank her friends at WEAC for sharing their experiences and to let them know that she accepts them for who they are just as they accept her for who she is.

Samantha is being supported by e4c in her journey towards an independent future including obtaining various certifications to assist in securing employment.

e4c Make Tax Time Pay

Tax Filing boosts incomes and strengthens connections

It may be hard to see the connection between preparing taxes and strengthening communities, but for the past 12 years, e4c Make Tax Time Pay (MTTP) has been doing exactly that. MTTP recruits volunteers to work with low-income individuals and families to provide free tax preparation and access to various benefits they may be eligible for.

The program arose out of the realization that one of the most effective ways to boost the income of low-income individuals and families is through tax filing and connecting them to benefits.

MTTP directly addresses one of the core issues of poverty – lack of income.

“Many people simply don’t realize what is available or what they are eligible for,” explains Lucas Stone, Financial Empowerment Coordinator, e4c. “MTTP simply helps them access the things they are entitled to receive.”

Make Tax Time Pay’s tax season campaign is a team effort that includes partners such as 2-1-1 The Support Network, The United Way, Prosper Canada and the City of Edmonton, who work together throughout the year to plan and prepare for tax season.

Each MTTP site is designed to meet the unique needs of the community. Many of the volunteers are program alumni who consider working with MTTP a way to give back and make a tangible difference. Their efforts not only help people access much needed benefits and refunds, but demonstrate what can be accomplished when communities work together.

This past year, MTTP highlights included,

- Individuals served → **4,212**
- Tax returns filed → **4,567**
- Benefit applications completed → **1,061**

and the program provided access to:

- Anticipated refunds totalling → **\$1,785,466**
- GST rebates totalling → **\$1,512,627**
- Canada Child Benefits totalling → **\$7,022,308**

Volunteers are critical to the success of the program, and in 2017, more than 250 volunteers donated their time at 25 community locations.

Yes

I/we want to support the work of e4c and give a gift to help people in the community!

My/our gift supports community and collaborations in the area of greatest need.

\$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

To find out more about e4c’s focus areas check out the website at e4calberta.org

Cheque: (payable to e4c) Credit Card: Visa Mastercard

Name on Card: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____ CSV: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this completed form with your gift to: e4c, 9321 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton AB T5H 3T7

Name: _____
First Initial Last

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ P/C: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Gifts can also be made securely online through Canada Helps, by calling e4c Fund Development at 780.424.7543, or in person at e4c, 9321 Jasper Avenue.

Thank you for your support!

Charity Registration # 131558140RR0001

We're back!

A Message From Barb Spencer, CEO

envoy
Special Insert

Regular envoy readers may have noticed that it's been a while since we published our last issue. That's why I want to begin by thanking you for taking the time to read about what we've been up to the past few months. It's been a hectic – and productive – time, and I'm grateful to be able to share some of what e4c has been doing.

We welcomed 2017, with the opening of three new homes for people with complex needs. Made possible through a partnership with Alberta Health Services, these homes help hard-to-house individuals find the transitional housing and permanent supportive housing they need to feel safe in the community.

This was an important accomplishment, as housing is a key element of Edmonton's 10-year plan to end homelessness, and reflects the importance of collaboration in the work to end poverty. We've already had an amazing response from families, who have told us what an incredible difference this has made in their loved ones' lives.

The first few months of 2017, involved a great deal of work on refining our new Strategic Plan. As part of this, we spent a lot of time reflecting on our work and thinking about where we need to go as an organization over the next few years. This process helped us reconfirm our belief in our core values of

Courage, Compassion, Connection and Commitment, and in our vision, which is ultimately the elimination of poverty.

Through the work on our Strategic Plan, we've adopted a human rights lens view of poverty, which means that we believe people who live in poverty are denied multiple human rights. This human rights lens aligns closely with advancing the actions of truth and reconciliation, something that remains critically important.

Not surprisingly, our Strategic Plan was also informed by work we did in the community as part of the End Poverty Roadmap and with the United Way on Pathways Out of Poverty. We recognize that the goal of eliminating poverty demands collaboration from all levels of government and from organizations, community and individuals who share our commitment to preventing, alleviating, and ending poverty.

...over

Housing is a key element of Edmonton's 10-year plan to end homelessness, and reflects the importance of collaboration in the work to end poverty.



Our Board of Directors approved the transformation of the Kids in the Hall Bistro program, which includes a renovation of the bistro itself and improving our pre-employment training for vulnerable youth.

So what happens next? Well, our Strategic Plan allowed us to confirm that our four focus areas of *Shelter & Housing, Food Security, Education & Skill Development and Community & Collaborations* are vitally important. At the same time, we recognize that we must take a holistic approach to poverty, and ensure our focus areas can be layered and adapted to meet each individual's needs.

We've established three strategic goals, each one outlining measurable ways our work can meet the changing needs of the people we serve. From finding ways to wrap people in the right services at the right time, to becoming more involved in the community, and supporting social enterprise opportunities, we've already begun working toward these goals. This includes working with the Government of Alberta on initiatives like the province's school nutrition pilot program and the federal government's poverty strategy. We've appreciated the chance to be involved and to have connected with many of you through these activities.

The ongoing transformation of e4c Kids in the Hall is an excellent example of our work to enhance social enterprise opportunities. In January, our Board of Directors approved the transformation of the Kids in the Hall Bistro program, which includes a renovation of the bistro itself and improving our pre-employment training for vulnerable youth. We are incredibly grateful to the community for their support to make this possible.

These past few months have also involved us taking action on things we have been told matter – specifically, talking to others about the work we do and inviting them to become involved in that work.

This spring, we launched a new awareness campaign focused on helping the public look beyond poverty to see the strength and resilience of the people we serve. You may have seen our billboards, digital and transit advertising, heard our radio spot or viewed our

television public service announcement, or perhaps saw our social media ads or visited our new website. We intend to continue building awareness of the work we do, and telling the stories of the people we walk with, throughout the coming months.

We have been busy and this year has set the stage for the work we will continue to do over the coming year. We are excited to be able to share this work with you and look forward to publishing envoy on a regular basis.

If the work we do and the stories we tell resonate with you, please pass envoy on to your network of friends and associates. We know you are the best ambassadors in the effort to end poverty and we hope you will continue to support our work.

Thank you,
Barb

