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PER PAPER

# ALBERTA Street News

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**Autism Superhero's Walk/Run - story on pages 4-5**  
**photo by John Zapantis      PAPERS SOLD BY DONATION**



## ALBERTA STREET NEWS

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## LETTERS

Mr. Sax submitted the following letter that he sent to the Ford Dealership. We have not been able to contact any one at the dealership regarding this contest.

Gateway Blvd, 51 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
February 6, 1917

Dear Sir or Madame:

I am writing in order to obtain some justice or fairness in a contest I was involved in in June of 2016 at the local dealership, specifically Koch Ford, who conducted a contest which I happened to win. The contest was fair and legal and I was declared a winner.

My prize was a new Ford Focus. When I went to claim the prize the manager said that I didn't have enough income to claim the prize. My income is personal and has no bearing on whether or not I can collect my prize. They gave no other reason for why I could not claim my prize, just refused to honour the contest, which I had won.

I am an older gentleman. When I won the prize I was very elated. Nothing like this has ever happened to me but it was spoiled by the dealership. Can you help me in my dealing with this company.

Sincerely,  
L.G. Sax

### Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation

By Pedro Schultz

Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (E4C) was started by four churches: Augustan, Lutheran All Saints. McDougal United and Christ Church in St. Joseph in 1970. It is a not for profit corporation with charitable status.

E4C manages Kids in the Hall at City Hall and helps fund the Women's' Emergency Accommodation Centre.

Their Crossroads Outreach Van goes out four nights a week from 8:30 - 12:30 at night, and 8 pm - 2 a.m. Saturdays with a needle exchange, food and clothes. E4C has 200 full time and 120 part time staff. Volunteers put in 1,000 hours per year. It invested 20 million dollars last year, including 70 units of affordable housing. They fund 20 programs for early learning. The Head Start Program prepares 250 kids in kindergarten.

E4C provides lunch to 2100 students, and snacks to 6,750 kids. It rents out 70 units and 57 bachelor suits. It invested over 20 million dollars last year in its many programs.

They have benefited thousands of homeless people and children. Barb Spencer is the person heading it up.

THE VIEWS PRESENTED ARE THOSE OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

# Early childhood development: Brains and relationships

By Timothy Wild

The Fraser Institute recently released their annual Report Card on Alberta Elementary Schools. Essentially, the document provides a school by school comparison on how well our province's elementary students performed in standardized achievement exams. And it appears that the results were not overwhelming. There have been only slight improvements in most subjects, together with an actual decrease in science achievement scores. As noted in the Calgary Herald "Crowded classrooms, limited resources and inconsistent supports in the early grades are contributing to mediocre results and little improvement in Alberta's elementary schools parents say."

Obviously, however, this is a province wide comparison and aggregation, and some schools do better than others. Glancing at the table, oddly enough, private schools seem to do considerably better than state schools in lower income neighbourhoods. Perhaps they have more resources to support the individual learners? Maybe there are fewer children with disabilities in the school? Might there be fewer students who are English Language Learners? Do parents have more disposable time to be involved in the school itself and outside in terms of informal learning? Yes. It really comes down to the unfortunate sway of economics. Do the working class have the same resources to offer additional support? Not always. And sometimes this lack of both equality and equity matters.

Related to that, I was reading an interesting article of the impact of poverty on brain development, "The effects of poverty on childhood brain development: the mediating effect of caregiving and stressful life events" by Doctor Joan Luby et al. The researchers suggested "that exposure to poverty during early childhood is associated with smaller white matter, cortical gray matter and hippocam-

pal and amygdala volumes measured at school age / early adolescence." I can't pretend that I even come close understanding the science behind it, (or even all of the quote), but there is a significant body of scientific evidence that childhood poverty can limit the future opportunities for our young people.

However, this is not inevitable and the article did suggest some potential foils to the impact of economic poverty, and this was largely centred in the role of relationship, and grounded in nurturing and supportive connections. We are well aware of the importance of connectivity to collective and individual well-being, and the article argues for the "importance of high quality early childhood caregiving, a task that can be achieved through parenting education and support as well as through preschool programs that provide high quality supplementary caregiving and safe haven to vulnerable young children." For this to actually happen, though, there needs to be some level of sustainable state programmatic and financial support.

The average weekly wage rate in Calgary is \$1162. But this is, of course, once again, an average and there are many members of the working class surviving below this amount. For example, a person working full-time at one job (a rare breed) on minimum wage would make about \$450 a week. And the monthly rates for both AISH and social assistance fall well behind that weekly average. That being the case, I believe we have to develop responses to counter the shortcomings of capitalist modes of economic distribution. It is essential that state resources be placed into supporting people on the margins, and ensuring that appropriate childhood supports are a social right of citizenship as opposed to an option for purchase by some well-heeled consumers.

From a policy perspective, I would argue that the evidence stemming from brain science provides

even more support for the creation of quality, universal, affordable and developmentally appropriate childcare. Such a system would provide greater options for lower income Albertans, and would be of benefit to all. Sure, it would cost money but it would be a worthwhile preventative investment. When it comes to the funding of social programs we are overly cautious, but it is, in the long run, well worth it in terms of a social return on investment. It makes sense economically. Money aside, though, it is also the right thing to do as it promotes inclusion and opportunities for all Albertans. Our government's tactical response of \$25 childcare is certainly a step in the right direction. It must be commended. But it is not enough.

Anyway, moving from science to art, I have always thought that one of the saddest, yet most poignant, songs in the world is "In the ghetto" by Elvis Presley. I was a young boy when I first heard it played on a greatest hits album that my parents had. It gripped me. The song was just so bleak and raw in demonstrating the lack of opportunity and its implications for people with structurally limited options. It haunts me today, and I still listen to the song on a regular basis. Obviously, for the most part, things are not as bad in Alberta in 2017 as in Chicago in the 1960s. But there are still some people and groups who face significantly greater barriers to full inclusion and growth. Science is telling us about the impact of poverty. It shrinks things. It limits growth. It thwarts potential. It stops dreams. However, transformative public policy can provide ways to counter the above and promote a more just, inclusive and humane Alberta. Quality, universal, affordable and developmentally appropriate childcare is a necessary step for that to happen. It needs to be delivered in concert with a variety of other policy instruments, but it is foundational. As Elvis sang "People don't you understand, the child needs a helping hand..."

# A Son's Last Gift

by Sharon Austin



I have always loved daffodils. Their bright golden faces promise sunshine and warm days after the grey days of winter. Sometimes when I look at my big daffodil patch glowing in the sunshine I am reminded of a young man named Andrew. He couldn't afford to buy his mother roses so he would pick her big bouquets of daffodils and she would be so happy.

I first met Andrew many years ago when I was young and worked part time at an orphanage doing after-school lessons with about twenty children. He was ten years old with curly blonde hair, blue eyes and an ever present smile. Andrew and three of his siblings had all been placed in the orphanage but they were not up for adoption as his mother had not signed them over. He told me often that his mother would be coming back for them but she never did, not even to visit.

Andrew was a real animal lover like myself and he showed me the rabbits and guinea pigs that he kept in a small hutch on the orphanage grounds. My husband and I lived on an acreage with dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, and a pony and Andrew was eager to see them all. Before long, I was bringing him home for visits and sometimes for the weekend and he became a family friend. Even as a

teenager, his enthusiasm, spontaneity and funny antics always reminded me of a big kid. Once he brought a big garter snake into the house to show my young son and the snake got away. What a time we had trying to find that poor creature! Another time at a family party, the grandmother had bought sixteen

chocolate bars, one for each guest. Andrew came along and grabbed five but she saw him and questioned what he was doing. Sheepishly, he put them back but he explained, "At the orphanage you've got to grab fast or you end up with nothing." After Andrew graduated he moved out west to find work like so many other strong, hard-working young Eastern men.

A few years later an old beat up car drove in the yard and there was Andrew with a plump, grey-haired older woman. "This is my mom, Edna," he said proudly. "I got in contact with my mom, and I've come home to take care of her."

Between Edna's disability pension and Andrew's low paying job they were able to get by. Edna loved to go for drives in the country and every few weeks they would come by, blaring the country music that she loved and licking tall ice cream cones from the nearby Pumpkin Patch Market. One day they came with a small brown dog named CoCo that Andrew had given her. How she loved that little dog that was always in her lap or at her feet. Andrew and his mom would chant "Dance, CoCo, dance," and the little dog would rise up on its back feet and dance and twirl. Over the next few years, Andrew seemed oblivious to his mother's failing health as he

talked about the road trips they would take, but she had traded her cane for a walker and her breathing was much worse. It was as though he was trying to make up for all the years they had been apart.

One day, an outspoken, nosey neighbour happened over and approached Andrew where he was sketching some ducks in the yard. "You shouldn't have anything to do with that woman," she sneered. "She abandoned you when you were a child, you should be so angry."

Andrew stared at her with blue guileless eyes. "Mom was sick and couldn't take care of us," he said. "I had a good life, besides that was a long time ago and Mom needs me now."

He turned back to his drawing in dismissal. That was one of the things I admired about Andrew, he was one of those rare people who lived in the moment, never whining about the past or worrying about the future. He held no bitterness or anger over the things he could not change.

A few months later Andrew's mom passed away. His older brother Melvin came down from Montreal and took charge of the funeral but the other siblings did not attend. He had become a successful business man and an artist and brought pictures of all the paintings he had sold. As Melvin told everyone his rags to riches story, Andrew sat by the coffin too broken to speak. Sensing my presence he turned. "I wish I could have bought mom flowers like that," he said eyeing the huge casket wreath of roses and lilies that Melvin had bought. A huge white ribbon was emblazoned with "Mother" in gold.

"Flowers are for the living," I said softly. "Remember how she loved those daffodils. You were there for her when she needed you. That's what counts."

Continued on page 5



# Rebel's Relative

Rodney Graham  
Freelancer.

[www.rodney-graham.magix.net](http://www.rodney-graham.magix.net)

I've always loved dogs. When I was in my 20s I was working on a slash and burn up north of Prince George. I had a dog - his name was Rebel. I had him for just a year or more. He was very young - a border collie - Got him from the pound. He would come out and run around on the block every day and at night sleep outside in our camp. Everyone loved him.. some people even asked if they could buy him. No chance of that!! He would run off into the bush while we toiled away in the bush.

Don't know where he went. But one thing I always remember is the look on his face when he returned in the evening. He had a glow in his eyes.. they sparkled. He smiled. You don't see that with dogs in cities that are kept locked up in a small yard. Their eyes are dull. I feel so sorry for them when I see them. Interestingly, if I had been trav-

elling when I came to the door the dogs were a lot more friendly than if I went to someone's door and I had just been stuck in Winnipeg. Dogs can sense freedom. If I had been travelling the dog would be lively and smelling me like crazy. Anyway.. To get back to the story.. one day Rebel never returned. I camped on the block for a week. We even went looking for him for two weeks. But I got work nearby and looked for him on my days off.

I had to go on to other work. But I came back - from time to time, since I worked all over the north in B.C. that summer. I never saw him again. A couple of years later a friend of mine who worked for the M.O.F. told me something very interesting.. He said that many people in the area where he went missing had claimed to have seen a black and white border collie - A young black and white border collie - running with a pack of wolves. Over the years the dog - (My dog) was spotted near Fraser Lake and north of it.

The local paper, I think it was called the Prince George Citizen, wrote an article about it. The

title of the article was simply, Rebel Dog.

One summer, many years ago now, I was on my way from Prince Rupert, B.C. - just east of Prince Rupert. I had been writing a series of articles and traveling at the time. I saw a wolf walking off the tracks and into the brush.. She stopped. Looked as if she knew me or something. It was a young wolf. The wolf stared I me and I at it for some time - I had to leave because the train was leaving. She walked out onto the tracks and sat staring, then disappeared in the distance and fading light...

Most wolves are greyish, greyish brown, or are either all black or all white, grizzled, brownish. But this one had an unusual black and white to it, It was black and white, I thought, unless it was just the light.. I think it was a relative of Rebel. I often imagine - If I had called it - maybe it would have come with me. I'll never know. But it's better off anyhow, that the wolf didn't come into the world of my species. I hope someday to return to hers.

## A Son's Last Gift

Continued from page 4

It wasn't too long before CoCo, who was an old dog by this time, passed away, too, and Andrew with his usual flare held a wake for him. CoCo was laid out in a box with a blue blanket and lighted candles all around so friends could say their last goodbyes.

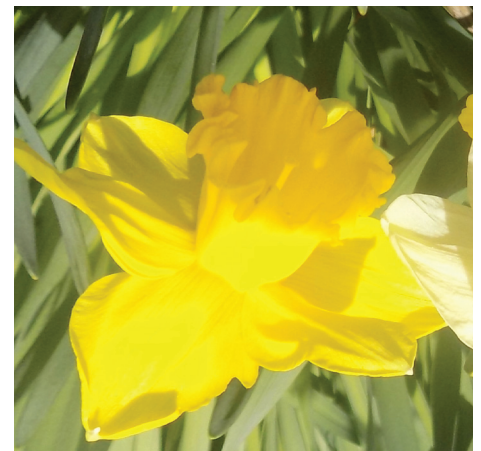
It was well past midnight when there was a knock on the door. There stood Andrew in his long western oilskin coat, his hair all frosted with

snowflakes. "I did a good thing tonight," he said. "I went to Mom's grave and I dug down a few feet and lay CoCo to rest with mom."

I shivered as I pictured the scene; a huge man in a long coat digging in the quiet, country graveyard as the snow fell softly, illuminated by the dull glow of the headlights. "I knew I had done the right thing," Andrew continued, "because when I got back to the car Mom's favourite song was playing, "He Stopped Loving Her Today".

Andrew had given his mom one last gift and I know Edna would have

been happy.



# Becoming Canadian



**By Joanne Bengier**

My Grandparents were illiterate Ukrainian peasants who came to Canada for that ten dollar homestead in 1905. Their children were expected to fit in and become good English Canadians. Names were anglicized and children were punished if they spoke Ukrainian in the school yard.

Mom was smart and read well but she dropped out of school because she was teased. Luckily there was a shortage of women and Dad married her two weeks after they met. They had four children – my brother, me and two younger sisters. My brother was smart and read well but dropped out of school because of teasing.

Mom loved us and raised us as she had been raised. I was a happy little farm girl, well fed, loved, and warm in the clothes Mom made. In Grade One, I read well.

Then in Grade Two, Mrs. Lloyd came and made me aware that I was dirty and stinky and dressed wrong. She said I had to have a bath once a week and to wash my hair every two weeks.

She said, “You are big enough to carry in half a pail of water at a time to heat for your bath.”

I told Dad I needed clothes

from the Eaton’s catalogue and I wore them to school, then changed into home clothes to keep them clean. I ironed my clothes before school and I had to wrap my sandwiches in wax paper, not newspaper.

I was very happy in Grade Three. Then in Grade Four, my sister started to school. She stood on the steps dressed funny with snots running down her face.

Children looked at her and talked and I realized if she was teased, I would be teased. I had to make her be clean and wear catalogue clothes, too. Soon I realized that wasn’t enough. I even had to make sure Mom and my baby sister were clean and dressed right when they came to school for parents’ day and concerts. Children were teased if they families looked funny.

That’s when the morning fights began. Mom would say, “She would be the best dressed girl in school if you let her wear all her clothes” and my sister would howl as I made her wear catalogue clothes and checked her lunch.

Mom hated me. She said I had become just like the girls who teased her. She sabotaged me. Once I came home from school and she said, “I bet they didn’t think you were so smart with your slip hanging out.” Actually it was OK. I was walking to school with my friend Brigitta when she said, “You’re slipping.” We found a safety pin and fixed it. I don’t know if she noticed that the elastic had been cut.

My toys were broken. My clothes were dirtied and wrinkled. My homework was destroyed. I had

to hide my things because I never knew what my mother and sisters would do next.

I loved school. My teachers and friends were my family and I shared my friends’ mothers. When I won a Grade Nine scholarship I spent it on dental work which is why I still have my own teeth. At 17 I went to university with my friends. I was the first member of our extended family to get educated.

Oddly, Mom and my sisters had changed, too. Even after I left home Mom continued to dress like my friends’ mothers and my sisters had their teeth filled and went to university. My brother got adult education but it was too late to save his teeth. He has dentures.

Mom and I became close. One day she said, “I feel guilty because you had so little and the girls had so much. I said, “I had enough.” I was with her when she died and the nurse said, “You’re mother was very proud that she believed in education and you all became teachers.”

My school friends and I are still close, but not my sisters. When Mom’s will was being settled, my sister said I couldn’t have the house because I hollered at Mom. The youngest sister got the house and sold it to strangers.

No matter. I have a wonderful life. Thank you. Thank you, Canada, for encouraging illiterate Ukrainian peasants to become homesteaders. Grandmother sponsored all the relatives, who would come to become Canadian, but those who remained behind either died in the 1929 famines or vanished into Hitler’s death camps.



# From Fay Selvan, INSP Chair and Chief Executive Big Life Group (Big Issue North): Manchester

Thank you for all the messages of support this week. It is hard to see the human cost of our world conflicts on the television or social media. When they come to our home towns it is truly shocking.

There were many tears.

Manchester suffered another bomb in recent memory - in 1996 the IRA blew up a shopping centre. That time though, the target was property. Warnings were given to minimise human casualties. This time, the aim was to maximise injury to people. To maim and kill children and parents having fun together.

I remember taking my daughter to her first concert. It was almost a rite of passage. Something to be celebrated on the road to adulthood. Now some of the children at Monday's concert won't have an

adulthood. Many will remember their first concert as a horrific act of terror.

After the IRA bomb the city got lots of investment - it brought about big improvements after a time of decline.

This time, we will have to bank our memories of heroism, community and love that filled the city after Monday's tragic event.

The homeless man who cradled a dying woman, the taxi drivers who offered free rides home, the city centre residents who offered up beds, food and shelter for people who couldn't get home, the thousands of people who shared #MCR as an act of solidarity and of course our amazing emergency services.

One of our staff who was at the concert with her teenage children (because they didn't want to go alone), is now recovering from an operation to remove a bolt lodged in her neck just one mm away from her carotid artery. The surgeon said she was very lucky....

Of course we are lucky. We are lucky that this is a rare event. We are lucky that we have a fabulous National Health Service and emergency services. We are lucky to live in the wonderful diverse city of Manchester.

We will try and remember this when we mourn the people who have died and support our friends and colleagues who have lost people or are helping them recover.

We must never lose the unique-



International  
Network of  
Street Papers

ness of Manchester with its many communities, faiths, and cultures, living together. One small handful of misguided people who think that blowing up children will help them achieve their aims - will not make us lose our wonderful cosmopolitan city.

As organisations in the business of changing lives, we all know about the inequality, injustice and cruelty of the world. We have a duty to show another way of bringing about change. One that doesn't involve blowing people up.

I hope many of you will be coming to celebrate our city with us in August at the INSP Summit. I am sure our city will give you the warm welcome it is known for.

As events unfolded this week we paused our work on the summit and decided we would not close registration as originally planned. The INSP team will be in touch early next week with more information.

Let us show how great it is, and stand together.

Fay Selvan  
INSP Chair

## Invisible City Tours

Take a guided walk through Edmonton's inner city to see where the shelters and organizations are that serve the homeless. You may also see homeless people with shelters erected from tarps and shopping carts or just sleeping under a blanket.

Cost: \$10 per person or a minimum charge of \$40 for fewer than four persons.

Call Linda to arrange a time for your tour.  
780-428-0805 or email Linda at dumontlc@hotmail.com

## Editors Note

*This year the International Network of Street Newspapers conference will be held in Manchester, U.K. from August 21 to 26. Alberta Street News writer Joanne Bengier and Alberta Street News editor Linda Dumont are planning on attending the conference that is being hosted by the Big Issue North, the street paper in Manchester*

## Life between the Cracks



**By Sharon Spencer**

The first thing I noticed about Donna is her beautiful strawberry blonde hair. Secondly it was her willingness to help. She and her partner help me at the House of Refuge at 10548-96 Street. We are open from 5:30 to 9:00 every evening. I minister to the homeless there on Wednesday evenings.

I was wondering how I would do the chores required of me because of mobility issues and then Linda told me she had asked Donna and Melvin to help me out. They have been faithfully there

to help me ever since. They are a blessing to me and others.

After we got to know each other we began to talking and wouldn't you know it she has the same food allergies as me. She is a celiac (gluten intolerance) diabetic with lactose intolerance -crippling food allergies that do serious damage to your body if you do not follow a careful diet. One touch of wheat products or dairy or sugar can send you into a world of pain for days and has very serious consequence to your organs. It could shut down your intestinal track and shorten your life. So far there is no real cure other than diet. I knew a man who didn't know he had celiac disease until he was forty and by then he was so sick that he had to eat through a feeding tube for the rest of his life.

I can sympathize with Donna because I have the same allergies as she does. I am a senior and I can tell you that a lot of my money goes into buying and cooking for my special diet. Because I didn't know I had food allergies till late in life, many sickness and disorders came upon me. Even with some of the right resources it's very chal-

lenging.

To live below the poverty line and rely on the soup kitchens to feed you is a disaster if you have food allergies. Don't get me wrong, they do a great job of feeding hundreds of men women and children and the low income people of Edmonton are very grateful for these services. But if you need a gluten free diet, you might just end up with nothing you can eat but a small salad that won't fill you or meet your nutritional needs, so most time you go without or if you are hungry enough, starvation wins out, and you give in and eat inappropriately. Sometimes you just want something tasty so you eat wheat or other things and suffer the pain and consequences on your organs. It's a real catch 22 situation.

The House Refuge doesn't have the resources to provide gluten free options, but we would like to. If you would like to assist Donna and others like her please contact Linda at 780 975-3903. We could use gluten free products like bread and macaroni. Money and vouchers would help meet this very basic need as well.

## Cataract operation a success

**By John Zapantis**

Recently on April 3rd and April 7th of 2017, I had eye cataract surgeries performed in both eyes by Dr. Ross Harris, an ophthalmologist of the Harris Eye Clinic in Sherwood Park.

The operations took place at the Lamont Health Care Centre in Lamont, Alberta.

My vision prior to this operation was assessed by the Capilano Eye Centre's Dr. Ken Carlson, who confirmed both my eyes at 20/50.

After the surgery was completed along with the accurate installation of an intraocular lens for each eye, my vision was enhanced to a perfect 20/20.

I can see clearly again, thanks to the following people who made this all possible, Capilano Eye Centre optometrist Dr. Ken Carlson for the eye examination and for referring me to Dr. Harris for that successful cataract surgery.

Then I'd like to thank Dr. Harris and his friendly crew in the operating room for the humor and laughter, which is often considered the best

medicine, in assuring me a safe return for my new vision!

Last but not least, the love of my life, Theresa Walsh Cooke, acted as a sideline consultant. She once had a cataract operation, and assured me from her previous experience that cataract operations only take eight minutes with no pain involved. I thank this angel for her support and again, all those involved in the process that allows me now to see the picture more clearly!



# HEALING WORDS



BY THE CMHA  
WRITING FOR RECOVERY GROUP

by Lisa Anderson

blades carve through a sheath of ice  
flash of orange and blue  
hungry for a silver cup

## Anodyne

By Ky Perrau

Step outside  
There is a world  
going on.  
in danger here  
of panic.

You are not  
Defy adrenaline.

## Snapshot

By Lisa Anderson

### Snapshot

On our way to Florida we went  
to the  
Gater Land zoo  
My dad said that it was  
something we had to do

Wooden buildings on pillars  
above a swamp  
They strung a raw chicken  
on a cable  
Within seconds leapt a gator  
with huge jaws  
He deficiently ate her

When we got to Florida  
We stayed at an inn  
it was so hot  
I could squish my  
Cabbage Patch Kid's head in.

### Snapshot

Again, in Florida  
the world's tallest Christmas Tree  
all lit up. It was something to see

### Snapshot

We went to the White house  
where my 6 foot 240 pound  
dad set off the alarm  
guards swarmed him  
it was his keys  
He meant no harm.

## Snapshot

We went to Arlington Cemetery  
where we saw JFKs  
eternal flame  
row upon row  
the headstones laid  
to honour the dead soldiers  
that were so brave

## Snapshot

We went to the Smithsonian  
and saw really neat things  
like part of the space shuttle,  
astronaut suits  
and many other  
historical things.

## Snapshot

On one of our last vacations  
we drove from home  
to Antiginish  
where my sister and I went  
to camp  
On our way home we experienced  
the Highland Games  
cabers tossers, and  
Highland dancers  
and listened to the beauty of the  
bagpipes.

Many snapshots taken  
many memorable places  
many trips along the way  
Many experiences had.

## Dishes

By Lanky

One dish at a time, that's how I get them done.  
One dish at a time, it doesn't matter which one.  
One dish at a time, even though its not much fun.  
One dish at a time, before I know it, there's none.

One dish at a time, that's how I get them done.  
One dish at a time, as I use this song and rhyme.  
One dish at a time, whatever's on top is just fine.  
One dish at a time, doesn't matter which one.

One dish at a time, just sing and have some fun.  
One dish at a time, before I know it, there's none.

# How We Can Create Change: Municipalities

By: Sam Goertz

After exploring community level opportunities for eliminating poverty, we move on to the municipal level. In this article, I will outline some of what is already being done on poverty and homelessness in Alberta and explore what can be done further. For our purposes, poverty in Canada is broadly defined as those with after-tax income below 50% of the national median income (this is known as the Low Income Cut-Off or LICO) which is then adjusted based on family income/size. This broad definition provides a good starting point but does not get the whole picture. Viewed holistically, poverty also includes a lack of access to education and culturally accepted work, social disconnectedness, and homelessness.

EndPovertyEdmonton is an initiative that was formed in 2014 out of the Mayor's Task Force to Eliminate Poverty, co-chaired by Mayor Iveson and Bishop Jane Alexander. The initiative is incredibly impressive in its ambitions, but it does not let the size of the challenge be discouraging. Bishop Alexander said this about the initiative: "I don't think it's going to be easy but we actually believe it's possible — what might we bring to the table to make it work? It's a fantastically courageous conversation to be having."

The goal of EndPovertyEdmonton is right there in its name, it seeks to make Edmonton poverty-free within a generation. To do this it set out 28 priorities that rest on 6 key "game changers": 1. Eliminate racism, 2. Livable incomes, 3. Affordable housing, 4. Accessible and affordable transit, 5. Affordable and quality child care, 6. Access to mental health services. Further details of the strategy can be found on their website: [www.end-povertyedmonton.ca](http://www.end-povertyedmonton.ca). Looking to Calgary, Alberta's other

big city is certainly not staying mum on poverty.

Enough For All is the Calgary initiative that seeks to alleviate the strains of poverty. The Enough For All strategy was released in 2013 after "15,000 hours of consultation" according to the organization's website. Per their research, 1 in 10 Calgarians live in poverty while a staggering 1 in 2 worry about not being able to save enough money for the future.

Enough For All has a comprehensive strategy akin to EndPovertyEdmonton's which is also available on its website ([www.enoughforall.ca](http://www.enoughforall.ca)). Among its key, quantifiable goals are: to have 95% of Calgarians at or above current LICO rates by 2023, to have 90% of Calgarians at 125% of the LICO rate or higher by 2023, and to establish poverty reduction as a high priority among Calgarians by 2018. Having measurable goals, as both initiatives do is absolutely essential to a credible poverty action plan. Municipalities benefit greatly by not being prone to partisanship (at least in Alberta) and instead is tied more to a pragmatic idealism that is devoid of party politicking.

These large-scale strategies are certainly not the only things Municipal bodies can do, however, and while they are the headline makers, it's important to note the smaller-scale policies too. Low-income recreation passes are not sexy, but they are invaluable to those who qualify for them. Poverty is not just a material problem but a socio-cultural one as well.

Recreation is not an obvious place to start when looking at poverty alleviation but upon deeper examination its importance is felt. Recreation is most often a social endeavour, it ties us to our communities and to each other. Furthermore, recreation is an obvious source of well-being for people, serving as a way to relax and have

fun. If we are to tackle poverty in a holistic/realistic way we have to look beyond merely the material side and on to the socio-cultural side as well. Low income passes and free public amenities are a great place to start.

Low income bus passes are another way that cities alleviate poverty. Transportation issues are damning in that they can become a vicious cycle. Transportation is expensive, but without it job opportunities are restricted, and if those are restricted then less money is available for transportation, and on it goes. That is only one issue with poverty and transportation. By offering bus passes at lower costs, we are empowering people with the ability to expand their horizons when looking for job opportunities or recreation.

So how can we work with our municipal leaders and as municipal leaders to eliminate poverty? One of the most important and conveniently the easiest way we can make a difference is with our vote. We are lucky in Canada in that our municipal elections follow a uniform schedule. In Alberta, all municipalities will have the opportunity to exercise their vote on October 16th, 2017. In municipal elections, turnout is low, even though the effects of the election are the most immediate of any level of government. This presents a golden opportunity to make a difference with your vote. Further, campaigns are always looking for more volunteers and support, and doing these things is just a few emails or phone calls away. Municipal leaders are often considered to be the most accountable of any level of government because of their independence and proximity to community issues. Furthermore, as someone who has worked for a City Councillor before, I can tell you that your messages are received loud and clear. City Councillors get the least amount of communication from constituents (versus other elected officials), so your message is much more **likely to be heard and responded to.**



# Barbecue Days

By Joanne Bengner

1. No one remembered to bring the matches.
2. The drinks are warm and the ice has melted.
3. There are more ants than food.
4. The meat is burnt on the outside and raw on the inside.
5. The jellied salad has lost its gel.
6. Nobody knows the heartiest eater.
7. The picnic table bench is hot as fire. You sit and leap up.
8. Everyone's fingers are sticky and the napkins have vanished.
9. Smoke keeps blowing at you no matter where you stand.
10. The marshmallows catch on fire.
11. The wind has blown dust and leaves into all the salads.
12. There is something swimming in the bowl of mustard.
13. Some one is always allergic to the bug spray.
14. The coals are never ready so we finally eat the meat by the light of the citronella candle.
15. It rains without warning just before we hear of the tornado watch.
16. There's always a dog just waiting to grab anything edible.
17. The kickball ends up on the table, knocking over drinks and salads.
18. A big black bird flies down to steal food from the table.
19. Suddenly everyone is looking up the symptoms of sun stroke.
20. The sounds of the siren keep coming closer.
21. The car won't start because the battery ran down while we listened to weather alerts.



# We're All in tune with June

By Joanne Bengner

It's June when we celebrate the men in our lives

June is D-Day when we honor the fallen who went to war.

June is Father's day. Father's Day is always the third Sunday in June and it can occur as early as June 15 or as late as June 21. It has been celebrate since 1909 but it only got legal recognition in the U.S. in 1972.

June 27 is Happy Birthday in honour of Mildred J. Mill who wrote Happy birthday to you.

In 1959, at stag parties, which frequently occur in June, the same tune is used for Happy Bridegroom to you.

There used to be a Farmers' Day as well in June, but times have changed and it is rarely celebrated anymore. Still, Happy Farmers' Day to any of you who still farm in some form.

June 30th is the last Friday in June and everyone knows that makes it the happiest day of the year – Be /happy!

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and have a conversation about what you want from your city.

I have spent a good deal of time focusing on the big cities in Alberta likely to be heard and responded to. Phone or email your elected official and have a conversation

about what you want from your city. It is in the big cities that poverty is most prominent and plans to solve it are the most developed. But poverty also affects smaller municipalities and it's there that the solution becomes more com-

plex. Some places are simply too small for poverty action plans like Edmonton or Calgary's and so need provincial guidance, which will be the topic of next month's article. We'll talk soon.

# HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY

By Maria B.

As a Mother, I have been blessed with three incredible children and they have been the ones that have taught me how to love and be the kind of Mother that is committed and that loves them unconditionally.

The tapestry that forms our family  
This is dedicated to my Children



## TO MY CHILDREN

My dear child when you were born and I was able  
To see you for the first time, I witnessed a true master ship,  
And the true reflection of our creator.  
What a gift you have been.

As your Mother I have  
Proudly been beside you, while you become who you were meant to be, a child of God, and going through the process  
of identifying and clarifying your true magnificence and uniqueness.

The essence of who you are gives you the freedom and the courage to follow your dreams, uncovering every day the  
wonder of your being.

This freedom is a gift of our creator for you to feel unconditionally in order to express your true essence of who you  
are in the many places and things that you experience while becoming your path in life.

Because of this you must recognize and allow who you are to become the beacon of light to which others are drawn in  
seeking for leadership. In this path you are meant to live with a purpose to provide kindness, compassion forgiveness  
and love to all who wishes to become part of your life.

Each member of our family is a connection so deep and so pure, it is an unearned and unconditional gift to one another. This will fortify our family and will serve as a refuge when needed.

Our love is the golden thread that becomes the link to our soul, it is the golden thread that will last forever and  
forever has no end.

We are awakened to each other's value and we will be able to cherish each other with gratefulness.

It is every moment of our life that forms the river of life and sets a new direction. Whether the moment is easy or  
difficult we will provide the necessary strength for one another and become the harbour of safety.

And therefore the true tapestry of our family is identified and fortified by who we truly are and by our ever-lasting  
love.

Love you  
Your Mother



# ALL ABOUT FATHERS

**By Joanne Bengier**

1. A father's kiss can cure the worst owie.
2. Fathers are so tall so they can lift their children high.
3. Fathers have broad shoulders so they can carry children for hours.
4. Fathers married mothers so they could have children.
5. Fathers read fairy tales out loud but they read newspapers silently.
6. Fathers like spending money on children more than they like spending money on themselves.
7. Fathers play like children but work like mega men.
8. Fathers are tough but gentle like the man in the spark plug ad.
9. Fathers know everything and can fix everything.

## DAD'S WISDOM

**By Joanne Bengier**

1. Nobody looks in your toolbox so it is a good place to hide things like money.
2. All a handy man really needs is WD40 and a superglue. WD40 will loosen what's stuck and superglue will stick anything that's loose.
3. Real men don't cook – they barbecue.
4. Duck tape is a handy thing. It shows you are in command when you wrap it around anything.
5. Nothing looks more macho or gets you out of more work than a bandaged hand.
6. Big muddy boots are the answer. Now what is the question?
7. Size matters. Big screen TV is better for watching the game than your cell phone.
8. If it isn't broken, don't fix it.
9. Keep a stiff upper lip and bite the bullet.
10. No man can have too many tools.
11. Don't forget a man's brain is hard wired to the internal combustion engine.
12. My garage is my man cave – enter at your own risk.
13. My tools are off limits. Don't look at them, don't touch them, use them or borrow them. Don't even think about them.
14. No man can ever have too much torque.
15. If no other tool is handy, use your teeth.
16. Chilli can never be too hot and spicy for a real man.
17. Beer, ice cold beer, is the answer anytime, anywhere for any situation.
18. There are many tough decisions that must be made in this life, like Coors or Moosehead.

Question of the month: the word father is made up of two smaller words, fat plus her. Will a father be a father if he is a thin him?

**What can you do,  
when someone close to you drinks  
too much? You might be surprised  
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meeting.**

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**Email  
edmontonalanon@gmail.com  
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# 3rd annual Autism Super Hero 5 K Walk/Run raises over \$3,700

By John Zapantis

Superman, Batman and Spiderman, who are notable for saving the planet from those diabolical arch villains, were once again out doing their noble deeds, while participating in the 3rd annual Autism Super Hero Walk/Run hosted and organized by Connect-Belong-Grow-(Autism Support Association).

The real super heroes aren't the fictitious types that we often read or hear about in the DC or Marvel comic books and movies, but the real life compassionate and committed souls, who were all dressed up in those super hero costumes, who all helped in raising money for the cause, when they participated in a 5 kilometre walk and run for Autism Spectrum Disorder (A.S.D.).

The fundraising event commenced on Saturday May 6th 2017 at 11:00 a.m., when 136 walkers and runners left the starter's gate on their 5 K journey around Gold Bar Park in Edmonton.

Right after the walkers and runners completed their 5 K walk and run, a presentation ceremony took place at 1 p.m. The event's MC, Mario Swampy, introduced his wife, Autism Super Hero Race Director Kristen Swampy, who gave the only presentation on Autism and its impact on members of the Autism community.

According to statistics provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Autism Spectrum Disorder (A.S.D.) is a developmental disability and are a group of developmental issues that are shown to affect social communication and behavioural functioning. The diagnosis includes milder forms of the disorders such as Asperger's Syndrome. In the USA one out of 68 children had the disorder in 2008. In recent years there was a 25% rise in the incidence of this disorder. One in 110 American children can be diagnosed as early as 18 months or younger.

Causes and risk factors outlined on the CDC website include genetics as the cause that can develop Autism Spectrum Disorder (A.S.D.) Children who have siblings with autism are at a higher risk of developing the disorder. These are just a few of the many causes.

Kristen Swampy's son, age 8, (whose name she didn't want mentioned in our story), lives with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He was diagnosed at age three. His symptoms then included decreased eye contact, communication delays, socialization delays and repetitive hand flapping.

He was accompanied by his parents and was determined to help out the cause by walking the 5 K walk.

After his mother completed her

presentation on autism, she took time out for an interview with ASN. She elaborated on her son's battle with autism and how she was encouraged to enroll for an autism support program that helped her understand her son's struggle with autism. Swampy said, "I think that once we started noticing the signs and symptoms, we just wanted to figure out how to connect with him in order for him to be able to connect with others around him. So I think that's what kind of drove us to want to understand his condition and want to really figure out what was going on with my son, because I wanted him to be able to be successful and make relationships and be successful in a pre-school setting and things like that, based on what he was experiencing at that time."

Swampy's curiosity in finding the proper source of information for understanding her son's battle with autism led her to a helpful autism support program that she discovered on the internet. The program that provided her with insight was the Sonrise program in Sheffield Massachusetts, which she later attended.

She elaborated further on the dynamics of this helpful program, Swampy said, "We did have to explore our options. That's where I found the Sonrise Program, which is actually a parent directed program. So I received the training myself. I implemented the program. I trained others to help me and we ran for four years. We ran a lot of programs with that one."

The program helped equip the dedicated mother with the right tools for helping to improve her son's development while struggling with autism.

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She elaborated further about some of the progress made with her son, Swampy said, "It made me realize the importance of social relationships in children with autism. Once you really started to focus on connecting with him, bonding with him, it came naturally. He became more interested in us. The more we accepted him, the more we showed him that he is special the way he is, the more he started to blossom and open up to us. I mean the Sonrise program has very key principals to inspire growth - how to bond through acceptance.

It really gave us those tools, especially myself as his mother, to look at autism through a different lens, not as something that's a

hopeless scenario. It really helped inspire me to realize that I can help my son with some tools in order to grow and be successful in life. I mean we're still growing. We're still learning just like any family, but after receiving my training and running my program, I feel much better about my future with my son."

Since completing her autism support program at Sonrise, she has noticed remarkable progress in her son's ability to communicate, Swampy said, "Like when anybody sees him now, they say, 'Wow your son has come such a long ways.' I just really owe it to the support group that we've built around us. That's what inspired me to now start to build a support group for other families, because I know what

it's like to be alone. I know what it's like to be scared. I know what it's like to be uncertain. I just want to reach out to other families and say, 'You know what? I'm here even if it's just to listen. I'm here because I understand what you're going through.'"

This year's event, again successfully reached its goal through walkers and runners who raised over \$3,700 that will be donated to Connect-Belong-Grow- (Autism Support Association's) families with autism.

Thanks to the many volunteers, walkers, runners and many local sponsors, events like these are helping to improve the quality of life for children living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (A.S.D.).



Superheros came out to the 3rd annual Autism Superhero 5 K Walk/Run.  
Photo by John Zapantis





**Edmonton**

*As members of City Council, we have a goal to end poverty within a generation. It's shared vision of prosperity for all, where every Edmontonian has an equal opportunity to live, work, participate and thrive. Ending poverty benefits us all, and we've started a city-wide conversation about it. Our approaches to ending poverty — even the ways we talk about poverty — are evolving. We know there is no one simple solution. We invite you to raise your voice, share your opinions and be part of this conversation. Let's end poverty together.*

**[www.endpovertyedmonton.ca](http://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca)**



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