

E d m o n t o n
Interfaith Centre
for Education & Action

Twenty First Annual Report
2016 – 2017

Annual General Meeting

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2017

St. Alphonsa Syro - Malabar Catholic Church

9120 - 146 Street

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action

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OUR VISION:

THE EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION IS RECOGNIZED AS A VITAL ORGANIZATION THAT ADDRESSES FAITH ISSUES LOCALLY, NATIONALLY, AND GLOBALLY. WE MODEL A SOLIDARITY THAT EMBRACES BOTH DIVERSITY AND COMMONALITY OF FAITH GROUPS.

OUR MISSION:

THE EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION PROMOTES PEACE AND FACILITATES INTERFAITH SOLIDARITY AMONG OUR MEMBERS, AND OUR LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES, THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, SOCIAL ACTION, AND MODELLING RESPECTFUL PLURALISM.

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre was founded in December 1995 to promote respect, friendship, harmony and understanding between people of various faiths. Our programs aim to help people live together as good neighbors. The Interfaith Centre has lay and clergy members from many different faiths, and has more than a dozen different religions represented on its current board.

The objective of the Interfaith Centre is to educate its members and the wider community about the diverse religious faiths present in Edmonton. We have a long history of success in developing programs which communicate the importance of respect for diversity. We have implemented a wide variety of programs, large and small, which have brought together people of many faiths to discuss critical issues facing our community. The programs include lectures, prayer services, discussions, presentations, and interfaith dialogues. The Centre also works to raise awareness about local and global discrimination and to model a non-discriminatory lifestyle.

On an ongoing basis the Interfaith Centre provides speakers to schools across Edmonton, addressing the diversity of religious expressions found in the community. The Centre facilitates visits to houses of worship both for children and adults and also coordinates interfaith prayer services throughout the year. We are excited to announce that in 2018 we will be hosting the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Connect conference, more on that in the report. We have presented workshops both locally and internationally, at every NAIN Connect for over twenty years, and at four Parliaments of the World's Religions.

We are particularly proud of our ongoing partnership with the City of Edmonton. Since 2006 we have had an ongoing, changing display at City Hall, called "Celebrating our Faiths", full report follows. Another wonderful example of interfaith in action was that we helped a succession of city chaplains find leaders from many faith traditions to say the prayers that opened city council meetings. Sadly this wonderful embrace of diversity has ended, due to a very broad ruling by the Supreme Court. We have also implemented or created program material for use throughout the community such as the two peace posters created by local graphic designers, a booklet, "Seeking Peace...Visions of Peace from Twelve Faith Traditions", the "Walking Together" curriculum, and the "Faith in the Classroom" component of the "Safe and Caring Schools" booklets used by the Alberta Teachers Association.

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre looks forward to continuing to serve the community through the two arms of education and action.

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EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - JUNE 7, 2017

AGENDA

Welcome and introductions:

Approval of Agenda

*Minutes of last AGM, June 2016

*President's Report

*Coordinator's Report

*Treasurer's Report & Financial Statements

*Committee Reports

- Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative
- Celebrating Our Faiths
- Concert
- Interfaith Explorations
- Lunch & Learn
- Membership
- North American Interfaith Network – 2016 & 2018
- United Nations International Days: Peace Sept. 21 & IDERD March 21
- Invitation to the Annual Genocide Memorial – July 16, 2017

*Nominations Committee: Approval of Board & Executive

*New Business

**Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, JUNE 1, 2016**

Held at Beth Shalom Synagogue, 11916 Jasper Avenue

PRESENT: David Fekete, President; Shiraz Kanji, Vice-President, Karen Farkas, Secretary-Treasurer; Netta Phillet, Co-ordinator, Inger Bartram, Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Guy Blood, Audrey Brooks, Keith Dannacker, Larry Derkach, Avau Fast, Len Gierach, Shulamit Gil, Rob Hankinson, Debbie & Dean Hubbard, Dave Hubert, Zohra Husaini, Doug Irvine, Nasim Kherani, Paula Kirman, Phyllis Kopen, Lawrence Loyek, Odette & Jacob Masliyah, Don Mayne, Bev Moore, Joanne & Bill Morin, Kara Murray, Gordon Oaks, Pauline Paulson, Dean Reidt, Kathie Reith, Virginia Sharek, Salima Versi, Tymmarah Zehr.

CALL TO ORDER: David Fekete called the meeting to order at 7:37 PM.

AGENDA: We approved the agenda, moved by Kathie Reith and seconded by Audrey Brooks.

MINUTES: The minutes were approved, moved by Paula Kirman and seconded by Len Gierach.

REPORTS: President's report, coordinator's report, all committee reports and the financial statements were presented and accepted as in the annual report.

NOMINATIONS: Nasim Kherani moved and Shiraz Kanji seconded acceptance of the continuation of the board as presented and approval of the executive slate as presented in the annual report. Approved.

Nasim Kherani moved and Audrey Brooks seconded the addition of Salima Versi as a new board member for a two-year term. Approved.

Pat Holt was thanked for her participation and assistance over the last year.

MEETING ADJOURNED: The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM, on a motion by Paula Kirman.

PROGRAM: We moved to the sanctuary where our host, Rabbi Kliel Rose, gave a presentation on "Human Rights, the Ultimate Expression of Jewish Particularism and Universalism". We then retired to the social hall for refreshments.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Farkas

President's Report Shiraz Kanji

Shiraz has enjoyed the first year of his term as president, and is currently in Nairobi, Kenya doing volunteer work for the Aga Khan Foundation. He is looking forward to NAIN Connect here in 2018, particularly as a means for us to strengthen our connections with all the faith groups in greater Edmonton.

Coordinator's Report Netta Phillet

The consistent part of my job is in the office, supporting the board in planning our programs which are reported separately. I receive and deposit the membership dues, donations, sales revenue, pay bills, keep track of members' status, prepare tax receipts, file annual returns with the Canada Revenue Agency and Alberta Registries. Speaking of Multifaith Calendars we sold 1000 of the 2017 edition, not a single one left. This takes a lot of my time for a few months of the year.

This is a half time job, which allows me to spend time out of the office as well. We are invited to become involved with many worthwhile initiatives and while we can't do everything, we try! Since we incorporated in 1996 Edmonton has changed; one indicator of our success in promoting respectful interfaith education is that the sort of dialogues and prayer services we organize are no longer a novelty. But we are also very aware of the work still to be done, that in some ways we are needed more than ever. And so of course your support is critical.

Here is some of what I've done:

June 2016, Canadian Multicultural Day, had a table of things which kept blowing away, thanks to Karen Gall and Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation for inviting us and Karen Farkas and Kathie for sitting with me.

For a second year we helped plan the Festival of Faiths in September and had a table there, again with Karen F. and Kathie, as a co – sponsor of this great idea we are disappointed to hear it may not continue. At gatherings like these and *Just one World* we don't focus on sales but rather the opportunity to promote the Centre.

In August I was able to help the local Project Officer of the United Nations Association in Canada organize "Soccer for Peace", part of the UN Sport in a Box program. She wanted it to be part of YEG Peace Fest, it was a success and might become an annual event.

On October 2 I laid a garland on the Gandhi statue, the Gandhi Foundation tries each year to make this an interfaith event with mixed success, good to see Kathie there.

Starting in April 2016 we were invited to several meetings in City Hall regarding the 10th anniversary of Celebrating Our Faiths, evaluating it, etc. Present were city employees and 3 or 4 board members. The subject of Christmas decorations came up but only as an internal city matter in which we had no part, so we were concerned to hear that one of councillors was saying the city was discontinuing the tradition of Christmas decorations in consultation with the Interfaith Centre! We did what we could to dispel this rumour, we don't believe in taking away but rather adding to.

On November 10 there was a Healing and Remembrance service organized by Stephen Gallard and Pastor Ingrid at Trinity Lutheran Church, I attended it as well as few a planning sessions, we hope this will become an annual interfaith observance.

The Centre has made a commitment to the Edmonton Gender-Based Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention action, we know faith traditions have a place and a part to play in this serious issue and hope to become more involved.

In January I went to Sherwood Park for its first multifaith fair, quite successful I think. I had 2 tables, one for our Centre and a Jewish one, talked to a lot of people and sold a few calendars.

**Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action
Annual Report 2016 - 2017**

New this year was a two day casino in March, it was a lot of work getting volunteers for 36 shifts, juggling them around until the last minute, sending confirmations and then thanks. The great news is that everyone showed up on time, no one called in sick, it was very smooth. I would recommend sitting in a stuffy little room for 10 hours until 3:30 a.m. as a great team building exercise. In fact, two board members with whom I did that both said they had not voted in favour of our applying for the license, and yet there they were. I see it as a very good example of board teamwork and democracy.

In March I spent an evening celebrating at the Sai Baba Centre (with Avau and Sushil) and the next afternoon at a Mormon Stake Centre (with Rob) where the topic was Religious Freedoms, we co-sponsored both.

Several of us attended a lunch on March 29 to learn more about Faith in Canada 150 and the new Angus Reid poll on attitudes to religious issues which was made public the following week and emailed to the membership.

In April I spent a day at the Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Housing Build, in spite of the cold and the MUD it was fun, and we did real work, hanging doors, etc. Karen F was there too, and I know Audrey is very involved too. I really want us to champion this in a big way, it is interfaith in action, a tangible, hands on *mitzvah!*

In May I was at the north side Hindu Temple for a wonderful project they shared with the Indigenous community, specifically the *Kohkom Kisewatiswin* (Grandmothers) Society, it was an excellent example of interfaith at work and I hope can be expanded. A few days later I celebrated the Buddha's birthday at the Truc Lam Monastery; on both occasions the work of the Centre was acknowledged.

As always I thank the board and members for your support.

Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative Don Mayne

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre has been a member of the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative since it began. It draws together members of a variety of faith and cultural groups to assist with the city's plan to end homelessness. It works closely with the City department of housing, and Homeward Trust as it develops a variety of programs. A major step forward was the hiring of Pastor Mike Van Boom in 2016 to work with groups and communities seeking to develop support for housing for the needy. (Mike@interfaithhousing.ca) Then Rabbanit Batya Friedman was appointed as staff of the Housing Initiative, and has inspired many individuals and groups to volunteer to help where needed. (Batya@interfaithhousing.ca)

The Housing Spectrum runs from Short Term Accommodation like shelters and transitional accommodation through Affordable Housing, to Market Housing.

Affordable Housing ranges from seniors lodges and assisted living facilities to self-contained apartments with daily living supports to independent living affordable housing (Habitat for Humanity, co-op housing). Each level seeks to serve citizens according to their needs.

Batya and Mike have worked diligently with Habitat for Humanity to encourage faith groups to provide help with their housing construction program. This year Habitat is building 150 homes for Canada's 150th anniversary, with 58 of those in South East Edmonton. This spring 220 volunteers from 28 faith groups participated in the Interfaith Build. We thank the Centre's members who volunteered, including Audrey Brooks, Karen Farkas and Netta Phillet. Families commit to volunteering 500 hours on home construction, which becomes their down payment. Their monthly financial commitment is determined by their income and resources,

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn have been outstanding leaders for Habitat for Humanity, and are to be in Edmonton in July for Canada's 150th anniversary and the celebration of the 58 new homes in Edmonton. From July 9 to 14 Habitat volunteers from around the world will come

to Edmonton for the 34th Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project. Local volunteers are encouraged to contact Habitat for Humanity to volunteer for this great event.

Celebrating Our Faiths Netta Phillet

In 2005 we began a partnership with the City of Edmonton, prompted by a comment that the extensive Christmas decorations in City Hall, lovely as they are, do not reflect the diversity of faiths found here; “not everybody is Christian”. Mayor Mandel took this to heart and after several months of meetings Celebrating Our Faiths was unveiled. It is a successful program which advances our mission and that of the city, to be a place of inclusion. We have been told by city staff that dozens of people walk through the building every day and many of them stop to look at the display and read the brief descriptions of 12 faiths. Featured in the last year have been Buddhism, Eckankar, Islam, Sikhism, and Zoroastrian. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has become the regular January display, the focus this year was on the Lutheran community.

In October we marked the 10th anniversary of this wonderful initiative with more than two dozen participants, music, the sound of the *shofar*, city poet laureate and two display cases filled with religious objects. It was a beautiful evening.

Concert Audrey Brooks

Our “Building Bridges Among Faith Traditions” concert was held on Sunday, January 29 and marked the beginning of the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week, February 1-7 as well as Canada’s 150th birthday. This was our seventh concert, it is our major fund raiser of the year and in previous years the ticket sales at \$20 and \$25 just covered our costs, renting the Royal Alberta Museum, honouraria for performers and incidentals. For the first time we had a free concert and the audience was considerably larger, which was a good thing of course, since it is a huge undertaking; we know how to put on a great show but not so much how to sell tickets. We are grateful to all those who contributed through the silent auction, sponsorships and advertising. We had the usual wide variety of exciting musical performances, including Dorit Kosmin singing “Jewish Songs from Around the World” to Paul Polushin’s piano accompaniment, the Greenland Chinese Music Society, learned about Noah’s Pudding from Mustafa Supur from the Intercultural Dialogue Institute (and ate some at intermission), played Anthony Burbridge’s 2016 “emPower Music & Arts Music Video” award-winning song “Us and Them” were thrilled by Flamenco dancers from the Alberta School of Ballet, and “Occasional Treat” Luke Tracey Newmann and Laura Fogden were our finale. This year our Interfaith Advocate Award was presented to City Chaplain Rev. John Dowds, since 2006 he has been offering counselling, crisis intervention, consulting and leading meditation to the city’s 11,000 full time employees. Special thanks to Kimberly Lang for her smooth stage management and past board secretary Pat Holt for help formatting the printed program.

Interfaith Explorations Avau Fast

Five times a year we hold special evening programs that are open both to our membership and the general public. Four are in an “outside” house of worship, after our monthly board meeting that host community offers a tour of the facility and/or a topic for discussion. In October we visited Gurdwara

Singh Sabha Society (Sikh) where we were given a delicious East Indian vegetarian meal and a brief history of Sikhism; in April we visited the Edmonton Christian Community Church (Chinese), they also treated us to a home cooked meal, Chinese this time, and after an overview of patterns of migration from China we saw their impressive building. Last June the AGM was hosted by the Beth Shalom Synagogue. The fifth one of the year is our annual December open house in the Ashbourne in Garneau United Assisted Living Place. This year's theme was joyfulness, the inner wellspring of peace and happiness. We celebrated with music, dance and multicultural finger food. These programs in various houses of worship are an important part of our mission to provide education and promote understanding between all faiths. We thank our hosts and will continue to explore faith communities in Edmonton.

Lunch & Learn Avau Fast

This program began in January 2008, it is one of our most consistently popular with an audience between 20 and 30. The speakers are asked to bring a 25 to 35 minute presentation and then take questions. And we have been able to expand the reach of these talks because our multi-talented secretary Paula Kirman videos them and puts on our website. The highlight is that not only do our members get to hear and gain knowledge on current social and religious issues but also there is time to ask questions and share their own views on the subject. We always have a lively discussion. This way learning from books and life experiences are both combined. To those who have not attended our Lunch and Learn program I highly recommend it, come and experience an hour where the mind will be nourished with knowledge, while you take care of your body with the food you bring. Enjoy the coffee and tea provided and meet friends around the table. To those who come regularly, our very faithful friends, a big "Thank You". Our work at Lunch and Learn is not over, new topics are still to be explored and suggestions welcome. We thank the speakers who volunteered to share their knowledge. Topics and speakers since the last report are:

Rev. Brian Kiely	Dying with Dignity
Kae Neufeld & Emanuel Gatera	Reconciliation in Rwanda
Rebecca Wright	Positive Portrayals of Religious & Spiritual Ideas in Modern Visual Media
Rev. Ian Kellogg	Mill Woods United Church Anniversary of Becoming Affirming
Salima Versi	Enjoining the Good & Forbidding the Evil: Islamic Ethics in Theory and Practice
Stephen Gallard	Healing & Remembrance Service
Lewis Cardinal	The Three R's: Reconciliation, Reparation, & Relationship
Kara Murray	What the Media Won't Tell You About Scientology
Don An	Christianity in China Today
Paul Kirman	Boyle McCauley video & discussion
Shiraz Kanji	Three Abrahamic Faiths
Karen Kerr	Edmonton Society of Atheists

Membership Netta Phillet

We currently have 172 members, including 28 "Life Members"; we are able to offer a charitable receipt donation for this generous support (\$250). We have members I've never met, who might have paid with Paypal, or who do not live in or near Edmonton, including former members who've moved away but continue to renew. Your support means everything to us, thank you.

North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Connect David Fekete (2016 delegate)

The North American Interfaith Network Connect 2016, “Espacio Sagrado”—“Sacred Spaces,” met over the dates July 10-13, 2016. The conference was held in a remodelled convent, Our Lady of Guadalupe Retreat House. The retreat center is a fully-functioning convent. There is the retreat area where we were, but there is also a section in which the sisters live. There were 120 registered participants at NAIN 2016, 45 of whom were from the US and Canada, and the rest from Mexico, largely Guadalajara. NAIN Connect 2016 opened with a conch shell being blown, loud drums, and Mayans smudging the convent and dancing in full native dress, with fantastic headdresses and brightly colored costumes. They brought food offerings which they placed in a sacred circle. Then they offered prayers to the four directions, turning toward each compass point as they did so. We were invited to dance with them. Throughout the conference we were given earpieces with which we would hear the translator, as seminars and plenary gatherings were in both Spanish and English. The opening plenary featured Monsignor Raul Vera, bishop of the Diocese of Saltillo, and activist Gustavo Esteva.

Monday opened with an Indigenous people’s prayer. A circle of flowers was created on the lawn of the courtyard and divided into four, pie-shaped sections—each section being filled with petals from different colored flowers. The four colors represented the four races: White, Black, Yellow (the Mayans), and Red. We turned to the four directions, and at each direction, our female leader said prayers and a flute/whistle was blown. One prayer was a reminder that we come into the world and would go out of it, and to remember this every day. We said our last prayer by touching Mother Earth, while prayers were said to her. Then there was a full day of seminars. I presented on eco-justice using the theology of James A. Nash and Emanuel Swedenborg.

Tuesday was the final day of seminars, and the penultimate closing ceremony of the conference happened that night. We performed an evening devotion after supper (supper was at 8:00 PM). This one was a Buddhist devotion. A small statue of the Buddha was set on a table, and wrapped in cloths. We all took a candle, lit it, and brought it to the table on which the Buddha was sitting. While we lit our candle, and as we brought it to the table, we were to think good thoughts about someone we know. There were about 100 of us, and as many candles and good thoughts. Then we chanted a Buddhist mantra 108 times: “Om mani padme hum.” We were told to let our minds expand outward into the universe. Afterward we were invited to add prayers from our own tradition. We heard a Hebrew prayer. Women from Guadalajara sang a song to Mary. We then chanted Om three times and concluded the service.

Wednesday was formally concluded by Larry Greenfield, Executive Director for the Parliament of the World’s Religions. He said that we teach our children not to talk to strangers. But what is paramount in this world is just the opposite. “Talk to strangers,” Larry insisted. In a multi-cultural, international, multi-religious world, no message is more called for than “Talk to strangers.” Edmonton’s Rob Hankinson stepped down as president of NAIN, while Len Gierach, also of Edmonton, was elected treasurer.

We were then treated to a trip to Tlaquepaque, also known as San Pedro. We were told that we would leave at 1:00 PM, but to gather at the courtyard at 12:00. We did, and at 12:00 a mariachi band made a surprise entrance. Everyone started dancing and yelping--even the mother superior of the convent joined in the dance. We gathered at the Cultural Center at 6:00 for supper. As we ate, onstage a troupe of Mexican girls in beautiful, colorful traditional dresses and a boy danced for us for 2 ½ hours to Mexican music, while complimentary tequila was served. The dancers changed dresses and dance styles easily 8 times.

In a short time, I had made some real heartfelt connections. I was sad to leave Guadalajara and the friends I made. Guadalajara got a hold on me. I don't remember visiting any other place that was so hard to leave. NAIN 2016 was a truly memorable event.

This year's NAIN CONNECT 2017 will be held in San Diego, California, and 2018 in Edmonton.

North American Interfaith Network 2018 Connect **David Fekete Planning Committee Chair**

Edmonton's bid to host NAIN Connect 2018 has been approved and we will be hosting NAIN in 2018. A planning committee has been struck and has been meeting bi-weekly since its inception. Sub committees have been formed; most active are the program committee, chaired by Paul Bergen, facilities committee, chaired by Larry Wright, and media committee co-chaired by Rebecca Wright and Larry Wright. A newly formed finance committee is beginning to meet and identify strategies, as well as one to plan for young adult activities. A rough budget has been created. To date, the planning committee has booked a venue for the event, MacEwan University. Program committee has confirmed two keynote speakers: Rev. Dr. Robert Sellers and Nakita Valerio.

The planning committee worked hard to create a promotional ad to be placed in the program at the NAIN Connect 2017 meeting, with a logo created by Rebecca and Paul Wright. The logo and ad have been sent to San Diego and have been placed in brochures and the 2017 program. I have met with Rev. John Dowds, Alice Leung, and Judy Wilson at City Hall to discuss promotional videos, power point and the like for our presentation at NAIN 2017, and Netta Phillet and I met with Councilor Bev Esslinger to discuss her involvement in NAIN 2018 and her aid in locating possible funding sources. The planning committee had a very productive meeting with John Mahon to help with planning and staffing NAIN 2018.

United Nations International Day of Peace (September 21st) Audrey Brooks

Audrey acted as MC, Pauline Paulson gave an invocation to the four directions, president Rev. Dr. David Fekete brought greetings, Dr. Randy Haluza – Delay, King's University College professor was the keynote speaker, followed by a Muslim prayer from Salima Versi and the song "I Only Ask of God" (*Solo le Pido a Dios*) by Paula Kirman; all are board members. As usual the Raging Grannies brought us to a rousing conclusion. This annual raising of the Peace Flag on the City Hall Plaza was a bit different in 2016. There was a competing event across the street in Churchill Square at noon, so on the advice of city staff we held ours an hour earlier. City councilors chose to attend the other happening so for the first time we did not receive a city proclamation The United Nations International Day of Peace is now endorsed by many community groups and our celebration has become part of the YEG Peace Fest, ably

chaired by Colleen Ring, a member of the local Gandhi Foundation. Since they have begun planning an event inside city hall on September 21st we are in conversation about we can join together as part of the ten days that bring International Peace forward as a priority issue both locally and internationally.

United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD) Audrey Brooks

On March 21 we gathered for our annual commemoration of a massacre of unarmed civilians in 1960 in South Africa. Racial discrimination worldwide is still as critical an issue. The program began with a prelude by the Canadian Centre for Ethnomusicology (CCE) from the U of Alberta directed by Michael Frishkopf. Elder Pauline Paulson offered the Indigenous prayer and welcome to Treaty 6 Land. Greetings were brought by Shiraz Kanji, Edmonton Interfaith Centre President; Scott McKeen, City Councilor; Acting Chief Brian Simpson, Edmonton Police Service, and the Honorable Richard Feehan, MLA, Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Prayers were offered by Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Hindu; Karen Gall, Jewish; Rev. Dr. Don Mayne, Christian; and Salima Versi, Muslim. After a musical interlude, and a beautiful song by Charmaine Chinyemba accompanied by Michael Frishkopf, a keynote presentation was given by a King's University Sociology students Karis, Sarah and Amy with friends Katie and Claire "for support": "*Active Steps Towards Eliminating Racial Discrimination.*" After closing remarks and the beautiful postlude the audience joined in conversation and refreshments.

We give special thanks to the CCE: Dr. Michael Frishkopf, director; Diana Dawson; Tony Abinader; Corona Want; Devin Brocks; Nizar Ali; Dais Abid; Chris Schneider and Martha Steentrup.

Invitation to the Annual Genocide Memorial – July 16, 2017 Audrey Brooks

Members of all faith groups are invited to participate in the annual Genocide Memorial Service on Sunday, July 16th at 1 p.m. at 9916-154 Street. It is sponsored by the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and the Edmonton Interfaith Centre, facilitated by Rev. Audrey Brooks, Unitarian Chaplain at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, and board members of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre. This service began as a witness to violence committed against human beings because of war, greed, ethnic cleansing, slavery, gender bias, colonial appropriation of indigenous peoples, neglect and political oppression that resulted in the extinction of helpless civilians.

Individuals from different faiths and cultures are invited to place a large stone, inscribed with the name of a person, place, or event that involves these deaths, and to share with the audience the reason for the placement. We, the people, must stand as witnesses to genocide, and never let the world forget that humanity stands in a pool of its own blood. Albert Einstein said, "Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be kept by understanding...all my life I have hated war, it is the greatest curse of man's history. It come from absolute ignorance, absolute greed, and absolute cruelty...Some paths a man takes cannot be retraced. Some acts cannot be undone."

Nominations and Approval of New Board Members & Executive

Board members are elected for a two-year term. The following members were elected or re-elected last term (June 2016) and have indicated their willingness to continue to serve:

Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Avau Fast, Len Gierach, Zohra Husaini, Shiraz Kanji, Nasim Kherani, Virginia Sharek and Salima Versi.

The following members are completing the second year of their term, and present themselves for election for another two-year term:

Audrey Brooks, Karen Farkas, David Fekete, Karen Gall, Paula Kirman, Pauline Paulson, and Kathie Reith.

We say ‘Goodbye and thanks for your service’ to Randy Haluza-Delay (four years), Dave Hubert (nine years), Karnail Singh (two years) and Tymmarah Zehr (two years).

The executive committee will continue serving their current terms once ratified by the membership:

President – Shiraz Kanji
Vice-President –Pauline Paulson
Secretary – Paula Kirman
Treasurer – Karen Farkas
Past-President – David Fekete

Nominated for two-year terms as new board members are Dinesh Burad, Farah Jamil, Dorit Kosmin and Kara Murray.

Board Member Biographies

Jagjeet Bhardwaj is a retired scientist who now devotes her life to full-time volunteer work. For the past thirty five years she has volunteered for many organizations including the Girl Guides of Canada, Red Cross Society, the Marian Centre and the Millwoods Welcome Centre for Newcomers. Mrs. Bhardwaj is also a member of the Provincial Court Nominating Committee of Alberta. She is a recipient of the Centennial Medal from the Province of Alberta in recognition of her multi-faceted volunteer work. She has also been honoured by the Indo-Canadian Women's Association, with whom she has served as president and is currently treasurer for a third term. She also edited several publications for them. She has been nominated for the YWCA Tribute to Women of Distinction Award.

Rev. Audrey Brooks (M. Ed; M.Div.) recently retired after 10 years as Unitarian Chaplain with the Interfaith Chaplains Association at the U of A. In 2017, she celebrated 30 years of Community Ministry with a focus on Pastoral care, as well as having taught with Edmonton Public Schools for 20 years. With a passion for social justice, Audrey sings with the Edmonton Raging Grannies at rallies and marches. Nine years ago she founded the Annual Genocide Memorial Service, held on the third Sunday in July at 1 pm, at 9916 - 154 Street in Edmonton, sponsored by the Interfaith Centre and the Unitarian Church of Edmonton. Her special interest is in ecumenism, with the view that all peoples are genetically related, therefore divisive boundaries caused by cultural and religious differences must be addressed and rectified through loving cooperation.

Karen Farkas is retired from being owner/operator of a wholesale food company. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1969 with a degree in English, Philosophy and Mathematics and then worked for Travelers Insurance from 1970 through 1975, following which she attended Cornell

University where she received the degrees of MBA, MS and PhD in Finance, Statistical Methods and Accounting. She has lived in the Edmonton area since 1981, teaching finance at the University of Alberta through 1987 and then working as a tutor, course writer and seminar instructor at Athabasca University from 1989 through 2002. She served on the Board of Governors at Athabasca University from 1999 through 2002. Karen is a life-member and past president of Edmonton Hadassah-WIZO and has been on their National Executive and Advisory Board. She is a member of the board and finance committee of Beth Israel Synagogue and, in the 80s and 90s, was active on the board for seven years, serving in many capacities. She has been active, through the years, in Edmonton Working Women and the Sustainable Population Society, and was on the steering committee for two international conferences put on by the True North Strong and Free Inquiry Society. Karen was on both the board and the finance committee and served a term as board chair for the Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association. She was an active member of the Arab/Jewish Women's Peace Coalition, with which group she travelled to Israel and the West Bank on an educational mission. Karen is a life member as well as a board member of the EICEA, and has served as treasurer and secretary. She has belonged to a knitting group that meets monthly for over 30 years.

Avau Fast was born in Baluchistan, a beautiful region north west of India, during the British colonial period. She grew up in an area replete with different ethnicities. Later in India no matter where she lived there were churches, temples, synagogues and mosques around the railway colony where she lived. Before attending boarding school she lived with her aunt, and every morning as they walked to pick up fresh vegetables from the market, at each place of worship on the way, they would stop to pray. She recalls that she really did not mind as this gave her a few seconds to rest her weary feet. Avau looks upon India as an old multicultural country and Canada as a new one. As a born Zoroastrian she is proud to be a part of the Canadian mosaic; studying and working among different faiths and cultures has always been her interest in life.

Rev. Dr. David Fekete grew up in a family dominated by science and engineering, whose beliefs were agnostic/atheistic. This made his choice of ministry difficult. He holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy of Science, *Summa Cum Laude* from Urbana University, which facilitated his transition from his family's intellectual culture to the religion of his professional life. Rev. Fekete holds an M.T.S. from Harvard University in Religion and Culture, a diploma from the Swedenborg School of Religion in Swedenborgian Studies and Western Culture, and a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in Religion and Literature.

He taught World Religions, Philosophy, and Humanities in American colleges for six years before his ordination into Swedenborgian ministry in 2006. Since then he became pastor of the Edmonton Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian), is Camp Pastor at his church's youth Camp, Paulhaven Children's Camp, was the Swedenborgian Church Youth League Chaplain for all of North America for a period of 5 years and serves as his denomination's representative to the Faith and Order Convening Table of the National Council of Churches of Christ of the USA.

Rev. Fekete has published 39 articles in his denomination's journals, 3 articles in refereed university presses (one in the University of Alberta's journal *Religious Studies and Theology*), a scholarly book on love and spirituality, 4 articles in *The Edmonton Journal*, and has self published a book of poetry and one on spirituality. He lectured at the 2009 meeting of the American Academy of Religions on Swedenborg and Sakta yoga, has delivered a talk on his experiences with bipolar disorder at the University of Alberta in January of 2013, at the MHCC's Headstrong Youth Summit in 2015.

Concordia University named him a Visiting Scholar in the Institute of Christian Studies and Society for the 2015-2016 term. On February 23, 2016 he delivered a lecture at Concordia on "Myth, Metaphor, and the Limits of Language."

Rev. Dr. Fekete says that he finds the Edmonton Interfaith Centre a stimulating environment of mutual respect, and continues to enthusiastically embrace the values of interfaith relations here, as he did in his graduate degree programs.

Karen Gall In addition to sitting on this board Karen is Vice President of the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation. For over a decade, she served as Chair of the annual CMEF Harmony Brunch which commemorates the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Karen continues to assist on the Harmony Brunch organizing committee. Karen is lay leader at Temple Beth Ora, Edmonton's Reform Jewish Synagogue, is a member of the TBO Ritual Committee and a founding member of the *Chavurat HaShir* singing group. She also serves as an occasional cantorial soloist. Karen focuses her time on successfully building bridges, using her appreciation and awareness of the value of multiculturalism and interfaith connections.

Len Gierach is a volunteer cleric with Eckankar and has been involved with interfaith activities in Edmonton for over twenty-five years. He served as chair for ECPWR 2010-2015 and as a member of the NAIN 2018 proposal committee (see reports on both). He is employed with Westlawn Memorial Gardens as a pre-need specialist. He is active as a writer, chorister with the Richard Eaton Singers, and various service work. Len and his wife Heather enjoy their five children and one grandchild in the Edmonton area

Randolph Haluza-DeLay, PhD is a father, cyclist, and former wilderness guide. He is Roman Catholic by adult baptism who currently participates with his family in a Mennonite church in Edmonton. As an sociology professor at The King's University College for the past 12 years, he has published over 30 academic papers and two books – “Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada” (2009), and “How the World's Religions are Responding to Climate Change” (2013). He has also conducted research on racism, including the 2012 City of Edmonton survey of Edmontonians attitudes about diversity and culture in the city.

Rev. Dr. Rob Hankinson has been associated with the Interfaith Centre since witnessing the signatures of the Centre's founding board members to the Alberta Societies Act application, December 1995, at the Welcome Chapel, Royal Alexandra Hospital. Since then Rob has held a number of positions on the Centre's board, and he is now happy to be an honorary member. In December 2012 Rob retired from 40 years ministry with the United Church of Canada, but continues to serve as an On Call Chaplain with the City of Edmonton. In July 2012 in Atlanta, Georgia, Rob was elected Chair of the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) for a four-year term. He remains on the NAIN Executive as Past Chair. Rob looks forward to continuing involvement with NAIN (meeting in San Diego, California this August), and working with our Centre to explore more interfaith possibilities for Edmonton including hosting the 30th Anniversary meeting of NAIN in 2018.

Dr. Dave Hubert Following a 23-year career in post-secondary education, including four years as president of Norquest College, Dave became the first executive director of the Edmonton Mennonite Center for Newcomers. He provided the needed leadership to build the Edmonton Recycling Society and implement Mennonite Central Committee employment programs in Edmonton, Calgary, Manitoba, BC and Atlantic Canada. While doing this Dave volunteered as the Founding Chair: Habitat for Humanity ; Edmonton Affiliate, President: Architectural Clearinghouse, a progenitor of Habitat ReStore; President: Alberta Plastics Recycling Association; Board: Economic Development Edmonton; Board: MEDA; and founded Canadian Peacemakers International. He has authored “Canada @ Peace: Coactive Security”; in

May 2012 he received the Social Justice & Peace award from the Seniors' Association of Greater Edmonton, and in November that same year was given an Honorary Doctorate of Sacred Letters by St. Stephens College, U of A.

Dr. Zohra Husaini is an educator and human rights activist. She was born in India and migrated to Canada in 1971. She received her Masters of Letters degree from Cambridge University, England in Philosophy and her Ph. D from the University of Alberta in Sociology. She has taught Philosophy, Sociology and Education both in India and in Canada. Her academic work has been in the fields of metaphysical epistemology, education, women's studies and minority and ethnic group's studies. Her community work is extensive in the areas of community action research, human rights, promotion of interfaith relations and advocacy on women's issues. She is Vice-President of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, on the board of the Interfaith Council of Canada and Past-President of the Indo-Canadian Women's Association. At present she is working on a research project on Muslim Women, Human Rights and Law with the Intercultural Action Committee for Advancement of Women. She has received the Alberta Centennial Medal for her contributions to the life of our City as well as the Senior Women's Award and the Alberta Seniors Minister's Award (2013) for her work with immigrant women.

Shiraz Kanji recently embarked on his third career as Financial Planner with Investors Group. He is a professional engineer and has also worked for over 30 years in IT. He has worked in three different countries, and speaks five languages. Shiraz is passionate about public speaking and has spoken to a wide variety and sizes of audiences on different subjects including religion and Islam. He has been an active Toastmaster for over 25 years and has conducted many training seminars locally and overseas. He enjoys learning about different faith communities and participating in interfaith dialogue. Shiraz is an active volunteer, having served Toastmasters District 42, his professional organizations, church and community organizations. He has also volunteered for the Provincial Government sponsored Board Development Program. His other interests include music, cinema and reading.

Nasim Kherani has actively volunteered her services for the last 25 years in various leadership positions in numerous organizations. They include Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Edmonton Chapter of Soroptimist International, Centre for Race & Culture (formerly Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations), Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities and is the Edmonton Convenor for the Aga Khan University, Karachi. She was born in Tanzania and acquired her first designation as a Certified & Chartered Accountant in London, England, working in public practice. After moving to Canada she became a Certified General Accountant and Certified Financial Planner and worked for the provincial government as a senior financial auditor.

Paula E. Kirman was raised in a Modern Orthodox Jewish home but has been on a path that has led her to walk between a number of spiritual worlds. She is a writer, editor, photographer, filmmaker, musician, activist, and website/social media consultant. Paula is the Editor of *Boyle McCauley News* (an inner city community newspaper), an organizer with the Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism, and publishes RadicalCitizenMedia.com, a blog that visually documents Edmonton's activist scene. She is also the Social Media Coordinator for Mill Woods United Church and the Email List/Social Media Coordinator for the group Moving Forward with Reconciliation.

Rev. Dr. Don Mayne was born in Edmonton but took his schooling, university, and theological training in Saskatchewan, and his master's degree at Boston University School of Theology. His doctorate is an honorary degree from St. Stephen's College. He was the founding President of the Interfaith Centre,

serving for five years, then continued on the Board until he was appointed an honorary member in 2011. He served on the Board of the North American Interfaith Network, and was President from 2000 to 2004. He continues as a member of our NAIN 2018 Committee, and looks forward to that conference.

Pauline Paulson is a Cree Elder who was born and lived most of her life in Manitoba, the young years in Northern Manitoba, adolescence on a farm in the central part of the province and the balance in Winnipeg. Here in Edmonton she divides her time between the U of A Aboriginal Students Service Centre, U of A Interfaith Chaplains Association, and work in prison, as a spiritual and cultural advisor. Her formal studies include but are not limited to a diploma in Applied Counselling from the University of Manitoba, another in Child Family and Community Services through Red River Community College (Winnipeg) sponsored by Metis Child and Family Services, and the facilitator training program "In Search of Your Warrior" through Native Counselling Services of Alberta. Her informal education includes over 20 years of participating in aboriginal ceremonies and learning from various Elders, locally, nationally and internationally. She says, "I believe Spirit led me so I can fulfill the reason I was born into this world at this time".

Kathie Reith is employed by the Edmonton Public School Board as an educational assistant. She is passionate about her community. One of the grass-roots initiatives with which she has been involved was establishing a Neighborhood Centre in south Edmonton where disadvantaged individuals can find the resources they need. Other interests are music and drama, and she sings in a choir.

Virginia Sharek grew up in Redwater, Alberta and has a B.Ed. and a B.A. from the U of A. After spending a year in London, England and one in Calgary, Edmonton became home. Happily, her two children and three grandchildren all reside in Edmonton. She served as the ecumenical officer for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, for twenty years. During that time, she held a number of positions on the Edmonton and District Council of Churches, Western Diocesan Eparchial Coordinators of Ecumenism and was the representative for the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Canada on the Canadian Council of Churches, for six years. She has been a member of the "No Room in the Inn" committee since 2001, and a member of the steering committee for the Parliament of the World's Religions project. In 2014, Virginia became a lifetime member of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action.

Karnail Singh

Tymmarah (Tymm) Sheculski is The City of Red Deer's Human Resources Specialist - Diversity and Inclusion, responsible for providing awareness and training related to diversity and inclusion, and community engagement to help make The City of Red Deer more welcoming and inclusive. Tymmarah has been involved with the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination since 2006.

She has a Master's degree in Intercultural & International Communication from Royal Roads University. Her thesis, "Collectively Building a Welcoming Grande Prairie: Community, Arts-based Inquiry" involved an art exhibit presented to the community engaging newcomers to Canada, local artists and representatives from immigrant serving agencies to develop an action plan for the municipality to address gaps and opportunities to make it more welcoming to newcomers. Her thesis work led to the development of the Fostering Diverse Communities Conference held annually in different Alberta municipalities.

Tymmarah was Program Manager for Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Come Together

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Alberta initiatives at the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) helping municipalities develop action plans to address racism and discrimination and ways to help newcomers integrate into their new communities. She sits on the Alberta Hate Crime Committee, is a member of the Red Feather Women, and volunteers with the Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery's Reel Movie Mondays Selection Committee.

Tymmarah was awarded a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Edmonton Strathcona in June, 2013 "in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world."



AUDIT STATEMENT

Fiscal Year 2016 - 2017

To the Members of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action:

The Board of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre has chosen Len Gierach and Virginia Sharek to review the 2016 - 2017 Financial Statements.

Accordingly we have reviewed the TD Canada Trust account records: cheques, deposits and bank statements.

We believe that the "Income & Expenses" and the "Balance Sheet" statements accurately represent the financial position of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action on March 31st, 2017.

In common with other membership organizations, we could only verify income as deposited.

Signed:

Handwritten signature of Len Gierach in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Len Gierach

Dated June 1st, 2017

Handwritten signature of Virginia Sharek in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Virginia Sharek

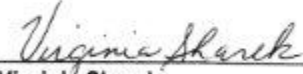
Dated June 1st, 2017

Edmonton Interfaith Centre
Profit & Loss
 April 2016 through March 2017

	<u>Apr '16 - Mar 17</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Donations from Individuals	5,734.75
Concert	2,504.00
Gifts from Other Organizations	11,359.00
City Grant	13,939.00
GST Refund	280.13
Interest Income	71.51
Membership Dues	2,925.00
Program Revenues	560.00
Sales Revenue	15,855.25
Total Income	<u>53,228.64</u>
Expense	
Paypal Chargrs	66.72
Bank Charges	77.92
Conferences	500.00
Fund Raiser Expenses	2,143.50
Memberships in Other Orgs.	250.00
Office	4,152.83
Posters, Calendars	7,555.42
Programs	673.37
Rent Expense	11,249.70
Salary	29,798.37
Total Expense	<u>56,467.83</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-3,239.19</u>

Reviewed and approved by


 Len Gierach
 June 1st, 2017


 Virginia Sharek
 June 1st, 2017

Edmonton Interfaith Centre
 Balance Sheet
 As of 31 March 2017

	<u>31 Mar 17</u>
ASSETS	
TD Bank	15,325.74 *
Short-term investments	14,260.03
Other Assets	22.50
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>29,608.27</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
GST/HST Payable	-552.65
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	33,400.11
Net Income	-3,239.19
Total Equity	<u>30,160.92</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>29,608.27</u>

* -\$304.00 from March 2016
 and + \$5232.15 Outstanding
 Gives Bank Balance

Reviewed and approved by


 Len Gierach
 June 1st, 2017


 Virginia Sharek
 June 1st, 2017

**EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE
FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2016 – 2017

EXECUTIVE

**Shiraz Kanji – President
Pauline Paulson – Vice - President
Karen Farkas – Treasurer
Paula Kirman - Secretary
David Fekete – Past - President**

GENERAL BOARD MEMBERS

**Jagjeet Bhardwaj
Audrey Brooks
Avau Fast
Karen Gall
Len Gierach
Randolph Haluza-Delay
Dave Hubert
Zohra Husaini
Nasim Kherani
Kathie Reith
Virginia Sharek
Karnail Singh
Salima Versi
Tymmarah Zehr**

HONOURARY BOARD MEMBERS

**Rob Hankinson
Sushil Kalia
Don Mayne
Jasvant Mehta
Ida Rasmussen
Teja Singh**

Office Coordinator – Netta Phillet