

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

**Twenty Second Annual Report**  
**2017 – 2018**

**Annual General Meeting**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2018**

**Unitarian Church**

**10804 - 119 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.**

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## 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 ten 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.

We have a new focus, Religious Literacy, more on that in the coordinator's report.

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. The North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Connect conference is now less than two months away, more on that in the following reports. 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. 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.



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - JUNE 21, 2018 - AGENDA

Welcome and introductions:

- Approval of Agenda
- Minutes of last AGM, June 2017
- 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 – 2017 & 2018
  - United Nations International Days: Peace Sept. 21 & IDERD March 21
  - Invitation to the Annual Genocide Memorial – July 15, 2018
- Nominations Committee: Approval of Board & Executive
- New Business

Refreshments & Program

**Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action - Annual General Meeting - June 7, 2017**  
St. Alphonsa Syro – Malabar Catholic Church – 9120 – 146 Street, Edmonton AB

**Attendance:** Netta Phillet, Paula Kirman, Pauline Paulson, Len Gierach, Dave Hubert, Avau Fast, Betty Marlin, Rob Hankinson, Jim Gurnett, Karen Farkas, Karen Gall, Kara Murray, John Wright, Pat Holt, Eileen Bell, Donna Krucik, Kathie Reith, Virginia Sharek, Audrey Brooks, Sandra Maygard, Beth Mackenzie, Bev Moore, Dinesh Burad, Don Mayne

Vice-president Pauline began meeting at 7:34 p.m. with greetings and thanks to our hosts, then read the Mission and Vision statements from the annual report.

Len moved to approve the agenda, Kathie seconded. Approved.

Karen F. moved to approve the minutes of June 1, 2016 AGM, Kathie seconded. Approved.

**Reports:**

The President's report, Coordinator's Report, all committee reports, and the financial statements were presented and accepted as in the annual report.

Karen G. moved to accept, Don seconded. Approved.

**Nominations:**

Board members who are continuing or coming back for another term: Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Avau Fast, Len Gierach, Zohra Husaini, Shiraz Kanji, Nasim Kherani, Virginia Sharek, Salima Versi, Audrey Brooks, Karen Farkas, David Fekete, Karen Gall, Paula Kirman, Pauline Paulson, Kathie Reith.

**Executive:**

President – Shiraz Kanji

VP – Pauline Paulson

Treasurer – Karen Farkas

Secretary – Paula Kirman

Past-President – David Fekete

Four board members did not seek a new term, one of them was present, Dave Hubert, and he was thanked for his nine years of service.

Nominated for 2-year terms as new board members: Dinesh Burad, Farah Jamil, Dorit Kosmin, Kara Murray. Kara and Dinesh were present and introduced themselves; Pauline read the brief biographies sent by Dorit and Farah.

Don moved to accept the slate of new and returning board members and executive as presented, Dave H. seconded. Approved.

New Business: Nothing

Part way through the meeting our host, Father John, gave us a brief and very informative talk about the background of Syro-Malabar Christians, some of the oldest in the world, traced back to the Apostle St. Thomas who travelled to Kerala, India, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. They are a very quickly growing congregation.

Motion to adjourn: Kathie. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m. *Minutes prepared by Paula E. Kirman*

## **President's Report Shiraz Kanji**

Shiraz has enjoyed his term as president, which became more challenging when Edmonton was invited to host the 2018 NAIN (North American Interfaith Network) Connect Conference, and we accepted the challenge. We are looking forward to NAIN Connect here in 2018 from July 31 to Aug. 3 at Grant McEwan University. We see these conferences as means for us to strengthen our connections with all the faith groups in greater Edmonton as well as sister interfaith organizations in North America. Some of the biggest challenges included overall planning for NAIN Connect, particularly fundraising. But we have a number of teams led by committed members and supporters of Edmonton Interfaith Centre, who have been working hard to help with the organization.

As President, Shiraz also attended numerous events hosted by other organizations. This year we have also been working closely with the Office of the City of Edmonton Chaplain to recommend re-introduction of Nativity Display outside the City Hall during the Christmas Season and review the terms of Faith Celebrations at the City Hall. We look forward to making such facilities available to all faith communities that are part of our City, should they wish.

## **Coordinator's Report Netta Phillet**

Our work towards hosting the NAIN conference has taken much of my time over the last year, to the detriment of my regular office work: supporting the board in planning our programs; receiving and depositing membership dues, donations and sales revenue; paying bills; maintaining membership records and contacts; preparing tax receipts; filing annual returns with the Canada Revenue Agency and Alberta Registries. Once again we sold over 1000 of the 2018 Multifaith Calendars, this takes a lot of my time for a few months of the year.

Here is brief review of what I've done in this half time position since the last AGM:

Last July I was at the Native Healing Centre for "A Journey Together in Grief, Healing and Hope", a collaboration between Interfaith Housing Initiative and End Poverty Edmonton. Guests came from a host of different faith backgrounds including Jewish, Quaker, Catholic, Anglican, Christian Reformed, Methodist, Unitarian, United, Presbyterian, Eastern Orthodox, Zoroastrian, Hindu, and three leaders from Muslim communities. Elder Francis Whiskeyjack welcomed us with a smudge and words of wisdom, Michelle Nieviadomy and a pair from Kairos led us through the blanket exercise (if you have never been part of this, it will be included on the first day of NAIN). Then Francis led us into a powerful talking circle. They hope to make opportunities like this available in the languages of newcomer communities, to help them understand some history of their new home, and how they too can join our walk together in this place.

In August nine of us met with Alberta Education Minister Eggen; the provincial government is seeking public input to combat racism and we contacted him to say that religion as much as race can be as source of tension. Our basic argument is that in this time of either indifference or outright hostility to organized religion being erroneously blamed for so much wickedness in the world, with freedom of religion becoming freedom from religion, we are losing fundamental knowledge that enables us to understand and appreciate each other. A knowledge vacuum, like any other one, will be filled with whatever is easily available. The opposite of knowledge is ignorance. Speaking as a Westerner (which is my only legitimate viewpoint) we are losing history, poetry, literature, classics, Shakespeare and much more. We also were invited to talks with city staff on their Vision 2050 and strategic goals. On a Sunday afternoon in March eight board members and I met with them and I am confident we had ideas and suggestions they would not have heard otherwise, a dimension that has been totally missing.

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We are becoming passionate about religious literacy and I hope it can be added to our mission and vision.

Also in March Shiraz and I had a long meeting with a city multicultural liaison officer who has some ideas for collaboration with his department and city social workers, and more.

I have continued to support our commitment to the Edmonton Gender-Based Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention action. Their “It’s Time - Gender Based Violence Prevention” workshops are excellent, we’ve heard from “community advocates”, survivors who have offered to speak publicly. At one, nine women collaborated on a series of “maps”, their journeys through and out of domestic abuse. It was very effective.

As often as I can I attend Interfaith Pride Services, events sponsored by the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities and the Aga Khan Council, the Jewish Synagogues and Federation, Hindu Society, the Jains, Buddhists, Rev. Brooks’ Genocide Memorial, etc.

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

**Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative (CRIHI) Don Mayne**

Website: [interfaithhousing.ca](http://interfaithhousing.ca)

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre has been a member of the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative since two members of the Interfaith Centre attended the first planning meeting about 10 years ago. Staff are Rabbanit Batya Friedman, Coordinator, and Pastor Mike Van Boom, Housing Ambassador. Batya and her family are moving to London to serve a Jewish congregation there.

The latest of their monthly newsletters tells these stories:

1. Westmount Presbyterian Church tore down their church and erected a smaller one, with a housing facility for larger families, mostly refugees. Mayor Don Iveson called the Westmount development a ‘10 out of 10!’ Not just for the quality of the affordable housing project, but for the work done engaging with the local community.

2. On September 6, Edmonton’s faith communities (led by CRIHI) are gathering to speak to all political parties and all levels of government on the urgent need for housing help for some of our city’s most vulnerable citizens. At this meeting, many different faith traditions will stand up together to express their shared concern about a growing challenge impacting friends, family members and neighbors in all our communities affording a place to call home. Their website is <https://wp.me/P20ewB-F4>.

The September 6 meeting will be held at Evangel Pentecostal Assembly from 10 AM to 1:30 PM. Come and support interfaith housing solutions.

3. Interfaith Habitat Works. Members of many faith groups have volunteered to work on this year’s Habitat build. As of late May, 246 volunteers from more than 16 faith communities have contributed to the build. A celebration of the work which was done with the Interfaith Habitat Works 2018 was held on May 31.

4. Supportive Housing for Heavy Users of Service. Balwin Place is a new place of home and healing for 25 of our most vulnerable citizens. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) marries stable housing to staffing and supports designed to help people battling multiple complex needs and challenges. For many of these folks, life on the street has been their experience for years. Living in a perpetual state of crisis

is very hard on a person, with enormous health consequences physically, emotionally and spiritually. They have been constantly under threat.

Homeward Trust owns the building and the George Spady Centre and Alberta Health Services provide appropriate supports. Balwin Place employs two case managers to work with the tenants, as well as visits from a psych nurse, an occupational therapist, recreational therapist, support worker, and on-site health care from a licensed practical nurse and two health care aids. A crisis worker from the George Spady Centre mobile support team is also available.

*LOVING GOD AND LOVING OTHERS, SERVING GOD THROUGH SERVING OTHERS.*

### **Celebrating Our Faiths Netta Phillet**

Since 2006 we have enjoyed a partnership with the City of Edmonton, prompted by a comment to Mayor Mandel that City Hall belongs to all citizens, and the seasonal decorations should reflect the diversity of faiths found here. It is a successful program which advances our mission and that of the city, to be a place of inclusion. In the last year we have celebrated

- the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh with the Baha'is,
- Islam,
- *Hanukkah* the Jewish festival of lights,
- Christmas and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity,
- Eckankar,
- Interfaith Harmony Week,
- Scientology,
- Sikh *Vaisakhi*,
- Buddhist *Wesak*
- and in June, National Aboriginal History Month.

### **Concert Audrey Brooks**

Our “Building Bridges Among Faith Traditions” concert was held on Sunday, February 11 in the newly purposed Jasper Place Campus of Grant MacEwan University. The building is newly designated as a location where non-profit organizations can rent space, with the intention of encouraging more community participation in events that enrich Edmonton culture. It has a new name, “The Orange Hub,” and is under city management. Our organization was fortunate to be one of the first groups to rent the Haar Theatre for our February concert, even though all the light and sound equipment had not yet been installed.

This year our performers included exceptional talent: The Umoco Troupe of Rwandan dancers; Ukrainian duo of Joyanne and Christina; The Edmonton Transcultural Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Michael Frishkopf from the University of Alberta, and The Occasional Treat folk group. Our Interfaith Advocate Award was presented to Renee Vaugeois, Director of the John Humphrey Centre for Peace & Human Rights, for her many years of dedication to work involving the UN charter of Human Rights. We thank those who come to our concerts and support us through purchasing advertising and items from our silent auction, as well as by making donations toward the continuation of our work in the community. Watch for our next concert at The Orange Hub in February of 2019. Thanks to Kimberly



Lang for being our stage manager again this year, and to all the volunteers who helped with the snacks and the auction tasks.

### **Interfaith Explorations Karen Gall**

This is one of our original programs through which we learn about each others' faith traditions, fulfilling our mandate of education to promote the embrace of diversity. It involves visits to various places of worship; we have been to many of the mosques, gurdwaras, temples, synagogues, churches, etc., in Edmonton over the last twenty - three years. Recently we have changed the format, rather than a special event just for us we are invited to a regular service. This gives us an authentic experience and our hosts have been very generous in giving us extra teaching, followed by a delicious lunch or dinner. In October we visited the north side Hindu Temple where the Jains have a worship space and were celebrating their New Year. In February we were special guests at Temple Beth Ora to celebrate *Tu B'shevat* with their new Rabbi Gila Caine. In April we were welcomed for a Shabbat morning service in Beth Shalom Synagogue. In May we observed the birth of the Buddha at the Truc Lam Monastery. Our annual December open house is always held in the Ashbourne, Garneau United Assisted Living Place, where our office is. It is always a relaxing evening of fun, food, music, dance and schmoozing with friends old and new. We thank our hosts and will continue to explore faith communities in Edmonton.

### **Lunch & Learn Avau Fast**

This program began in January 2008 and is very popular, albeit with people who are free at noon on Mondays. Speakers bring a 25 to 35 minute presentation and then take questions. When appropriate 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 & 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 were:

- Batya Ivry - Friedman & Mike Van Boom, Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative;
- Miranda Jimmy, "Reconciling Camsell";
- Firdosh Mehta, "Zoroastrian Eschatology";
- Rev. Dr. David Fekete, "*E Pluribus Unum*";
- Nicholas Wickenden, "Luther the Unintended Reformation";
- Marg Armstrong, Edmonton Memorial Society;
- Salima Versi, "Islam & Mental Health";
- Claire Rolheiser, "Welcome Home";
- Pauline Paulson, "Pilgrimage";
- Avau Fast, "Zoroastrianism".

## **Membership Netta Phillet**

We currently have 158 members, including 29 "Life Members"; we are able to offer a charitable receipt donation for this generous support (\$250). Sadly this is a decline from last year, our aging supporters are not being replaced as they move away or leave us one way or another. Your support means everything to us, thank you and please help us by spreading the word about our work. As Shiraz says, "We are the best kept secret in Edmonton" and you are the ones who can help us change that.

## **North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Connect 2017 – Netta Phillet**

NAIN Connect 2017, "Harmony – Journey to One Heart" met from August 6 to 10 in San Diego, California. The EIC has been a member of NAIN since our incorporation in 1996, hosted the conference in 1998 and will do so again in five weeks, when we'll also celebrate NAIN's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

There were eight major speakers/panels, three tours and 18 workshops, comprising almost 80 presenters. Most were of a very high calibre, academics, scholars, clerics, educators, musicians and poets from many disciplines and backgrounds. Realizing that youth are the future, NAIN has made scholarships available to an increasing number of young adults (age 18 – 35) each year, and they were a very impressive group. Their visions, attitudes and approaches are much needed fresh air, with a real appreciation of the necessity of truly embracing pluralism and inclusivity. At the EIC we also know this, even more important in these polarized times.

The novelty is gone from what we began in the early 90's, faiths praying together, often in their own language and dress, and there is an irony or contradiction that in spite of that our efforts are needed more than ever. It was interesting to spend 5 days in the US and have my assumptions tested. One was that other delegates would be "progressive" politically, but not necessarily so. Trump was rarely mentioned by name but his influence was there. One goal of the EIC is to promote harmony and true friendship between people of different faiths, the word "education" in our name speaks to this, but we are now talking more about "religious literacy", which I heard said only once in San Diego. One of our American born and raised attendants said it was all "very southern California". There were those who seem to believe that interfaith is a new religion, which of course could not be more wrong, but too often I heard it said "We all believe in the same thing/in one god" and I was not the only one shaking my head and saying, "No we don't". Millions of people have no religion, do not even define themselves as spiritual but atheist, agnostic, secular humanist or do not want to be labelled at all. They are working for a better world because they love their fellow creatures. The interfaith movement must welcome and embrace them as well, we cannot succeed without them and must not alienate them further.

## **North American Interfaith Network 2018 Connect**

### **David Fekete Planning Committee Chair**

Edmonton will be hosting this wonderful conference in a few weeks. Various committees have been meeting bi-weekly for a year and a half: Planning under Shiraz Kanji and me; Program by Paul Bergen; Facilities by Larry Wright; Publicity & Promotion, Paula Kirman; Finance/Fund-Raising Nasim Kherani; and Salima Versi and Farhana Nizam are in charge of Young Adult activities. Final details are being confirmed with MacEwan University. Keynote speakers are the Honourable Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire (retired), Dr. Marie Wilson and Stephen Kakfwi, Rev. Dr. Robert Sellers, Nakita

Valerio, and Shachi Kuri. We have hired Aly Sumar to be our conference coordinator. There are 30 programs scheduled, along with six tours of worship spaces throughout the city of Edmonton. To date, we have 100 full time delegates registered. **It is not too late, still room for more!**

### **United Nations International Day of Peace (September 21<sup>st</sup>) Audrey Brooks**

Each year, at noon on September 21, Members of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action raise the United Nations peace flag at Churchill Square at Edmonton City Hall. Members of the community come to hear words about peace, and stand in solidarity with each other to witness to the great need for peace in the world, and by being present, add their voices to the millions of others who want an end to war.

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

On March 21 we gathered at noon in City Hall for our annual commemoration of a massacre of unarmed civilians in 1960 in South Africa, and to acknowledge that worldwide racial discrimination is still a critical issue. Our program began with the blowing of the *shofar* by Karen Gall, a member of Beth Ora Synagogue, to gather us together, awaken us to our topic and strengthen our commitment to be agents of change. Elder Pauline Paulson welcomed us to Treaty 6 territory and shared a prayer from her Indigenous tradition, greetings were brought by Shiraz Kanji, President of Edmonton Interfaith Centre; Mr. Moe Banga, City Councilor; Honourable Rod Loyola, MLA; and Deputy Chief Brian Simpson of the Edmonton Police Service. Maria Angelic Quesada, Louise Pozdik and Roxanne Ulanicki from the John Humphrey Centre spoke about the UN Charter of Human Rights with a focus on the elimination of racial discrimination. Deborah Dobbins, Laila Bellamy and Stephanie Burlie from the Shilo Centre for Multicultural Roots, shared the experiences of Black pioneers who overcame racial discrimination in Alberta, and prospered as valued members of our province. Laila added her beautiful voice in a song that resonated with our audience. Prayers were offered by board members: Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Hindu; Karen Gall, Jewish; Rev. Dr. Don Mayne, Christian; and Salima Versi, Muslim. A "Call to Action" song was presented to the audience by The Raging Grannies, to encourage people to make a difference in their communities regardless of their age, to protest instances of racial discrimination.

### **Invitation to the Annual Genocide Memorial – July 15, 2018 Audrey Brooks**

Members of all faith groups and cultures are invited to participate in the annual Genocide Memorial Service that 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.

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Genocide Memorial Service on Sunday, July 15, 2018 will be held at 10:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804 - 119 Street. The theme this year is "Hope and Perseverance." You and your family are welcome to attend and participate in the service. There will be a pot luck after the service.

For more information contact Rev. Audrey Brooks at [audbrook@telusplanet.net](mailto:audbrook@telusplanet.net), or 780-489-8842.



## **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 2017) and have indicated their willingness to continue to serve one more year:

**Audrey Brooks, Dinesh Burad, David Fekete, Karen Gall, Farah Jamil, Paula Kirman, Kara Murray, Pauline Paulson and Kathie Reith.**

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

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

**We say ‘Goodbye and thanks for your service’ to Karen Farkas, Dorit Kosmin and Salima Versi.**

A new executive committee will begin serving their current term once ratified by the membership:

**President – Pauline Paulson**

**Vice-President – Jagjeet Bhardwaj**

**Secretary – Paula Kirman**

**Treasurer – Kara Murray**

**Past-President – Shiraz Kanji**

**Nominated for a two-year term as a new board member is Guy Blood.**

## 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.) continues to serve as Unitarian Chaplain at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804 - 119 Street, Edmonton, celebrating over 30 years in community ministry, with a focus on pastoral care and counselling. Audrey also serves on the board of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action (EIC), with many enthusiastic and dedicated members who work for cooperation and friendship with diverse faith groups and many other service organizations. Ten years ago, with the support of the Unitarian Church and the EIC, Audrey founded the annual Genocide Memorial Service, which witnesses and honours the names peoples who died violent deaths because of war and other forms of abuse that have no place in our world. This year the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Genocide Memorial Service will be celebrated on Sunday, July 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Church with the theme of "Hope and Perseverance." All peaceful minded persons are invited to attend and enjoy the potluck celebration afterwards. Bring your prayers, thoughts, and your families to this important event, where those lost through intentional attacks on them are not forgotten. Contact Audrey at [audbrook@telusplanet.net](mailto:audbrook@telusplanet.net) for ways you can participate.

### Dinesh Burad

**Karen Farkas** is retired from several vocations. Her recent and most enjoyable to date is as a grandmother. 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. 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 EIC, and has served as treasurer and secretary. She has belonged to a knitting group that meets monthly for well 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.

**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. Since then Rob has held a number of positions on the Centre's board, and is now happy to be an honorary member. In December 2012 Rob retired from 40 years ministry with the United Church of Canada. He continues to serve as an On Call Chaplain with the City of Edmonton, and in February 2018 Edmonton

Presbytery of the United Church of Canada appointed Rob as its Chaplain. On the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Executive Rob serves as Past Chair and Convenor of the Nominations Committee. Rob looks forward to continuing involvement with NAIN, especially celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting in Edmonton this summer and working with our Centre to explore more interfaith possibilities for Edmonton.

**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.

**Farah Jamil** is a Health Executive, where she has combined her love of science and business to work in several sectors, including: government, health region, non-profit and academia in Canada and the United States. While in school and during her career, she recognized the need for bringing down barriers and building bridges in the realm of interfaith dialogue. Therefore, Farah has volunteered for several interfaith boards, committees and organizations, including: the Edmonton Interfaith Center for Education and Action (EICEA), American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP), A Common Word Alberta - Christian Muslim Interfaith Dialogue, etc. As a member of EICEA, Farah is committed to "help create a society which respects the richness of human diversity."

"**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, President of Project Ploughshares Edmonton, and was a lead organizer of the 2017 and 2018 Women's Marches in Edmonton. She also publishes *RadicalCitizenMedia.com*, a blog that visually documents Edmonton's activist scene and is the Email List/Social Media Coordinator for the group Moving Forward with Reconciliation. Paula has received numerous awards for her work and activism, most recently the Edmonton Social Planning Council's Award of Merit for Advocacy of Social Justice.

### **Dorit Kosmin**

**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.

**Kara Murray** has 23 years of experience in the not for profit industry in various capacities such as program management, funds development, human resources and governance. She enjoys various projects and initiatives and has done some eclectic ones such as produced a sold out show of the Vagina Monologues at the Jubilee, hosted a 13 episode radio series and ran her own business, Beauty Blends. She has done guest lectures at Grant MacEwan on inclusion and disability services, participated on the board for the Edmonton Sport Council as a director, and ran a million dollar research project for the province. Kara loves collaborating and working together to bring about positive social change and has done so through 25 years of various volunteer work within the community.

**Pauline Paulson** is a Metis 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 Native Counseling Services as a spiritual and cultural advisor, the Elders Counsel for Concordia University and Elder in residence for the HIV Drop In Centre. 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

**Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action  
Annual Report 2017 - 2018**

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** is an Albertan who attended the U of A. She completed a Bachelor of Education (1967), and a Bachelor of Arts (1990). After graduation she spent a year in London, England. Upon her return to Canada Virginia chose to teach in Calgary for one year. This was followed by a move to Edmonton to teach for an additional two years. Virginia was married in 1973 and chose to stay home to raise her family of two sons. In 1993, Virginia took the opportunity to serve as the ecumenical and interfaith officer for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, until her retirement in June of 2013. During those years she held number of positions in the Edmonton Council of Churches, as well as in the Western Diocesan Eparchial Coordinators of Ecumenism. She was the representative for the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Canada on the Canadian Council of Churches, for six years. Being a member of the “No Room in the Inn” committee since 2001 has provided the opportunity to get to know so many dedicated individuals in many organizations that are engaged in providing safe and affordable housing for people experiencing difficulties and hard times. In 2014, Virginia became a lifetime member of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action. With appreciation and enthusiasm Virginia, continues to be a part of the activities, educational opportunities and experiences, projects, workshops provided by the staff and members of the Interfaith Centre.

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

**AUDIT STATEMENT**

**Fiscal Year 2017 - 2018**

**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 2017 - 2018 Financial Statements.

**Accordingly we have reviewed the TD Canada Trust records, cheques, deposits and bank statements for two accounts:**

**Operating Account # 0873 - 5203980 and**

**Casino Account # 0873 – 5223027.**

**We believe that the “Income & Expenses” statements and the “Balance Sheet” accurately represent the financial position of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018.**

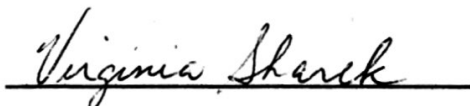
**In common with other membership organizations, we could only verify income as deposited.**

**Signed:**



**Len Gierach**

**Dated June 13th, 2018**



**Virginia Sharek**

**Dated June 13th, 2018**

**Edmonton Interfaith Centre**  
**INCOME & EXPENSE**  
 April 2017 through March 2018

**Income**

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| NAIN Registrations                 | 13,500.00 |
| NAIN Organization Donations        | 10,000.00 |
| NAIN Individual Donations          | 4,635.00  |
| Sales Revenue (Calendars, etc.)    | 13,619.45 |
| Repay Dallaire Deposit from Casino | 8,006.25  |
| City of Edmonton Grant             | 7,589.00  |
| Donations from Individuals         | 3,674.90  |
| Gifts from Other Organizations     | 6,113.98  |
| Membership Dues                    | 2,600.00  |
| Edmonton Community Foundation      | 1,143.00  |
| Concert Donations Individuals      | 2,195.00  |
| Concert Auction                    | 1,012.00  |
| Concert Donations Organization     | 250.00    |
| Interest                           | 275.84    |

**Total Income** 74,614.42

**Expense**

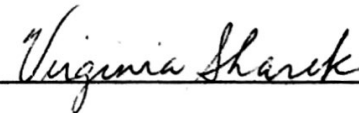
|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Salary          | 29,572.59 |
| NAIN 2018       | 19,887.10 |
| Office          | 4,332.04  |
| Calendars, etc. | 8,233.67  |
| Concert         | 2,273.69  |
| Rent Expense    | 8,715.76  |
| Paypal Charges  | 220.43    |
| Bank Charges    | 84.25     |

**Total Expense** 73,319.53

**Net Income** 1,294.89

**Reviewed and Approved by**





**Len Gierach**  
 June 13th, 2018

**Virginia Sharek**  
 June 13th, 2018



## EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE CASINO ACCOUNT - MARCH 31, 2018

|                              | INCOME           | EXPENSE         |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| TOTAL PROCEEDS               | 75004.96         |                 |
| ADVISORS                     |                  | 2373.75         |
| NAIN SPEAKER                 |                  | 8006.25         |
| RENT                         |                  | 3025.08         |
| PROMOTION                    |                  | 1183.40         |
| YOUTH CONFERENCE             |                  | 1358.52         |
| NEW COMPUTER                 |                  | 997.50          |
| WEBSITE                      |                  | 536.11          |
| MEMBERSHIP IN NAIN           |                  | 133.00          |
| CHEQUES                      |                  | 123.28          |
| LOAN                         | 20.00            |                 |
| BANK CHARGES                 |                  | 45.08           |
|                              | <b>75024.96</b>  | <b>17781.97</b> |
| INCOME                       | 75,024.96        |                 |
| LESS EXPENSES                | 17,781.97        |                 |
| <b>BANK BALANCE MARCH 31</b> | <b>57,242.99</b> |                 |

## EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE BALANCE SHEET - MARCH 31, 2018


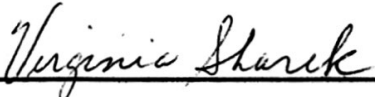
### ASSETS

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| TD Bank Casino Account  | 57,242.99        |
| TD Bank Regular Account | 31,038.29        |
| GST Recoverable         | 483.98           |
|                         | <b>88,765.26</b> |

### EQUITY

|                                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Restricted Funds                      | 57,242.99        |
| Unrestricted Net Assets               | 30,227.38        |
| Net Income                            | 1,294.89         |
| <b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>                   | <b>88,765.26</b> |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b> | <b>88,765.26</b> |

Reviewed and Approved by

  
\_\_\_\_\_ 

Len Gierach  
June 13th, 2018

Virginia Sharek  
June 13th, 2018

# **EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2017 – 2018**

### **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**  
**Dinesh Burad**  
**Avau Fast**  
**Karen Gall**  
**Len Gierach**  
**Zohra Husaini**  
**Farah Jamil**  
**Nasim Kherani**  
**Dorit Kosmin**  
**Kara Murra**  
**Kathie Reith**  
**Virginia Sharek**  
**Salima Versi**

### **HONOURARY BOARD MEMBERS**

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

**Office Coordinator – Netta Phillet**