

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23

Baha'i The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. ❤️ **Buddhist** All tremble at violence, all fear death, Putting oneself in the place of another, One should not kill nor cause another to kill. ❤️ **Christian** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. ❤️ **Eckankar** Singing HU, an ancient name for God, can transform your life and open your heart to God's love. Daily practice can help you experience more love, joy, and spiritual freedom. ❤️ **Hindu** Om. May there be peace in all. May that peace, real peace, be mine. ❤️ **Islam** For them will be a home of peace in the presence of their Lord; He will be their friend, because they practised righteousness. ❤️ **Jain** Lord Mahavir, perhaps the world's first peace activist, preached that people wage wars because of their base emotions (kashaya) such as greed, anger, lust and deceit. ❤️ **Jewish** Who is mighty? One who makes an enemy into a friend. ❤️ **Sikh** Make this body the field, and plant the seed of good actions. Water it with the Name of God, who holds the entire world in His Hands. Let your mind be the farmer; then God will sprout in your heart, and you shall attain the state of Serenity. ❤️ **Unitarian Universalists** Let us make this globe, this small plot of soil in the universe, a messenger of peace, for we are all one species, one living kin. ❤️ **Wicca** The earth is alive and all of life is sacred and interconnected. All living beings are worthy of respect. ❤️ **Zoroastrian** Yokes shall drop, Weapons shall stop, Freedom shall flower, Right shall tower! May we be among those Who make this life fresh! ❤️



Celebrate Peace

Cover: Peace Poster by Wei Yew

Edmonton
Interfaith Centre
for Education & Action

IN MEMORIAM

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre and many other communities have suffered a great loss, **Dr. Zohra Husaini**. She was an exceptional woman, dear friend and a dynamic board member for many years. She was also active with two of our sister organizations, the Indo-Canadian Women's Association and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women. She was an educator and human rights activist, 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 taught Philosophy, Sociology and Education in both India and Canada. Her academic work was in the fields of metaphysical epistemology, education, women's studies and minority and ethnic group's studies. Her civic work was extensive in the areas of community action research, human rights, promotion of interfaith relations and advocacy on women's issues. She served as Vice-President of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, on the board of the Interfaith Council of Canada and President of the Indo-Canadian Women's Association. She did extensive research on Muslim Women, Human Rights and Law with the Intercultural Action Committee for Advancement of Women. She 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.

We were saddened in May 2022 to hear of the death of **Sister Rosaleen Mary Therese Zdunich**. Sister Rosaleen was the founding coordinator of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre. She participated as an Edmonton delegate to two Parliaments of World's Religions held in Cape Town, South Africa and Barcelona, Spain and was a pioneer in ecumenical and interfaith relations in the Edmonton area, setting the course for many interreligious activities and projects that we take for granted today. A life-long teacher and learner, she served as Ecumenical Officer at the Catholic Archdiocese as well as numerous boards and committees, including: the Edmonton & District Council of Churches, the Phoenix Multi-Faith Society for Harmony, the Alberta Teachers' Association Safe and Caring Schools interfaith project, the Western Diocesan & Eparchial Coordinators of Ecumenism, and the North American Interfaith Network. Sister Rosaleen studied Scripture at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, received her Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan, Masters in Psychological Counselling in Fordham University, New York, and a graduate diploma in Religious Education through various universities across the USA. Her background was in education as a teacher, principal and counsellor and she was the recipient of numerous recognitions and accolades over many years.

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 the 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 & ACTION

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action was founded in December 1995 to promote respect, friendship, harmony and interfaith solidarity between people of various faiths. Our vision is as broad as our membership; people of faith (and of no faith but abundant good will) have something to say and a role to play in all matters pertaining to making our world a more just and humane one.

Our actual incorporation became official on March 19, 1996 so we are formally 27 years old. Survival is hard for small not-for-profit societies and we are proud of the support of both individuals and organizations. We grew out of a few local initiatives such as the “Edmonton Inter-Faith Group” in 1987. That is not so long ago and we have come far; the sort of dialogues and public prayer services with which many of our founders were involved years ago were a novelty at the time and we are pleased and proud that, due in part to our work, they have become much more common. We will continue to promote religious literacy and look forward to a time when the embrace of difference and recognition of it as a strength will be taken for granted.

Our programs are designed to help people live together as good neighbors and we have lay and clergy members from many different religions with representatives of a dozen on the board and in our membership. We have implemented a wide variety of projects, large and small, from an hour long to four full days, local and international. All have brought people together to discuss critical issues facing us all. These include lectures, prayer services, dialogues

and presentations; the Centre also works to raise awareness about local and global prejudice and to model a non-discriminatory lifestyle. On an ongoing basis we provide speakers, addressing the diversity of religious expressions found in the community. The Centre facilitates visits to houses of worship both for children and adults and coordinates interfaith prayer services throughout the year. We have hosted the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Connect conference twice, presented workshops both locally and internationally at every NAIN Connect for over twenty years, and at four Parliaments of the World's Religions (PWR). It is incredibly inspiring to be part of 10,000 people gathered together to make the world better, more compassionate, with more understanding of each other. Several of us are going to the PWR in Chicago in August, back to the setting of the first one in 1893.

We are proud of our partnership with the City of Edmonton. Since 2006 we have had a permanent, changing display at City Hall called “Celebrating our Faiths”. We have also implemented or created material 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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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

JUNE 14, 2023

HELD AT MCDOUGALL UNITED CHURCH, 10086 MACDONALD DRIVE, EDMONTON

- ▶ Devotional – Rev. Audrey Brooks
- ▶ Approval of Agenda
- ▶ Approval of Minutes of last AGM - June 1st , 2022
- ▶ President's Report
- ▶ Executive Director's Report
- ▶ Treasurer's Report and Year End Financial Statements
- ▶ Committee Reports
 - Capital Region Interfaith Housing Coalition
 - Celebrating Our Faiths
 - Concert
 - Gender Based Violence
 - Lunch & Learn
 - Membership
 - Open House
 - United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - March 21
 - United Nations International Day of Peace - Sept. 21
 - World Interfaith Harmony Week

Nominations and Election of Members to the Board for a two-year term:

The following members were elected or re-elected last year (June 2022) and are willing to serve another year:
Gail Allan, Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Guy Blood, Avau Fast, Shiraz Kanji, Nasim Kherani, Virginia Sharek and Suzanne Sauve.

The following members are completing the second year of a term and are willing to serve another two years:
Audrey Brooks, Karen Gall, Farah Jamil, Kathie Reith, Manish Shah, Karnail Singh & Rebecca Wright.

Leaving the Board are *Eileen Bell* and *Lewis Cardinal*, we thank them for their service.

Welcome new Board Members *Jeremiah Ellis, Michael Frishkopf, Surinder Singh Hoonjan & Gary Simpson.*

We continue to value the contributions of our Honorary Board Members: *Rev. Dr. Rob Hankinson, Rev. Dr. Don Mayne & JV Mehta.*

Election of Officers of the Board:

President – *Farah Jamil*
Vice – President – *Gail Allan*
Treasurer – *Nasim Kherani*
Past President – *Guy Blood*

Any New Business

Program:

Learn how McDougall United Church and the Muslim Association of Canada are sharing their worship space.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 1, 2022 7 P.M. - UNITARIAN CHURCH - 10804 - 119TH STREET

Members Present: Gail Allan, Eileen Bell, Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Guy Blood, Yvonne Collinson, Karen Gall, Len Gierach, Don Jaffray, Farah Jamil, Shiraz Kanji, Sylvia Krogh, Netta Phillet, Piotr Rajski, Kathie Reith, Virginia Sharek, Shaykh Sheikh, Gary Simpson

Members on Zoom: Audrey Brooks, Lewis Cardinal, Earl Choldin, Karen Farkas, Avau Fast, Surinder Hoonjan, Nasim Kherani, Paula Kirman, Ursula Maydell, Kay Quon, Amal Rushdy, Suzanne Sauve, Pat Seale, Jitendra Shah, Larry & Rebecca Wright

Non-Members Present: McKenzie Fleming, Rod Loyola, Rosemary Morrison

- ▶ **Devotional:** Virginia – Prayer for Ukraine
- ▶ **Approval of Agenda:** Moved by Kathie, seconded by Len with the addition of time for MLA Rod Loyola to address the group. Passed.
- ▶ **Approval of the Minutes of the last AGM June 2, 2021:** Moved by Karen, seconded by Eileen. Passed.
- ▶ **President's Report**
- ▶ **Coordinator's Report**
- ▶ **Treasurer's Report**
- ▶ **Committee Report**
 - Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative
 - Celebrating Our Faiths
 - Gender Based Violence
 - Genocide Memorial Service Invitation – July 10, 2022
 - Lunch and Learn
 - Membership
 - North American Interfaith Network Connect
 - United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - March 21
 - United Nations International Day of Peace - September 21
 - World Interfaith Harmony Week

Eileen moved that all reports be accepted, with appreciation, passed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 1, 2022 7 P.M. - UNITARIAN CHURCH - 10804 - 119TH STREET

Nomination:

Suzanne Sauve was nominated to join the Interfaith Board by Audrey, seconded by Nasim.
Passed.

Election of Officers of the Board – Shiraz (Nomination Chair)

President – *Farah Jamil*

Vice-President –

Treasurer – *Nasim Kherani* continues her 2 year commitment

Secretary – (Netta will stand in until a secretary is available)

Past President – *Guy Blood*

Reports were given by individuals who had attended the 2021 Parliament of the World Religions.

Motion to adjourn by Larry Wright at 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by Virginia Sharek

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FARAH JAMIL

It has been another eventful year for the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action (EICEA)!

We met with leaders across various sectors, engaged and supported our members while navigating COVID, partnered with organizations to lead / support initiatives (locally, nationally, and internationally), members received recognition for their exemplary work, etc. Here are some highlights:

- **Papal Mass** – on July 26, 2022, the EICEA was invited by the City of Edmonton to the Holy Mass at Commonwealth Stadium on July 26, 2022. It included various groups from the Vatican, Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and survivors of residential schools, government officials (federal, provincial, and municipal), and numerous volunteers from multiple faith groups.
- **World Interfaith Network** – on August 11, 2022, we presented our documentary “Building Bridges,” which profiles the important work of interfaith dialogue in Edmonton. Each time we present this documentary, it is so well received and has been inspiring other interfaith organizations to do something similar!
- **Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Salma Lakhani** – on October 8, 2022, the EICEA was invited to a brunch, hosted by the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities, to meet with Alberta’s first Muslim Lieutenant Governor.
- **Social Media** – we have been increasing our presence and engagement across different social media platforms - including Facebook, Instagram, etc. - to connect with our members of all ages and with interfaith organizations globally.
- **World Interfaith Harmony Week** – the EICEA hosted our annual event in February 2023, where we included hybrid options so those in Edmonton, and around the world, could take part in many of our events.
- **Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Medal** - Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee Medal recognizes the significant contributions of Albertans. In 2022, it was awarded to 7,000 people across Alberta, including members of the EICEA, such as our very own Netta Phillet, Executive Director of EICEA!

It has been an honour to serve as President of the EICEA! I look forward to seeing how this organization of dedicated volunteers and members continues to learn, grow, and lead for many years to come.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT NETTA PHILLET

(* = Please see full reports.)

My job is divided between the regular tasks involved in running an office and representing us in the community. I enjoy the variety, including bookkeeping, like to think they use different parts of my brain.

Each of our events has a committee and there are separate reports included here.* I help with contacting speakers and performers, paying them when we can, booking venues, developing printed programs, advertising to our members, etc. The concert has an additional task, soliciting auction items from members, city councillors and local MP's and MLA's, picking them up and preparing bid sheets.

We had a table at "Just One World" in November, an important opportunity for us to talk about the Centre and sell calendars to repeat and new customers. Thanks to Kathie for setting up with me to open at 8:30 a.m. and stay for the morning, and to McKenzie for coming at closing time to help schlep everything back to my car. These sales were some of the almost 700 Multifaith Calendars for 2023 we sold. From September to December I contact previous customers and seek new ones and methods of advertising, then the different methods of payment and delivery are offered. We are proud to be the northern Alberta distributor of this Canadian educational resource.

Memberships must be tracked, reminders sent, the four options for payment offered and recorded.*

Other financial matters:

- fund-raising: completed annual funding applications to the Northern Spirit Region of the United Church and the Edmonton Community Investment Operating Grant. Previous benefactors were asked to continue their generosity, you'll see from the financial statement that donations from individuals are a good percentage of our income.
- completed the annual CRA Information Return; with the casino proceeds we made over \$100,000 in the last fiscal year so the long financial form had to be completed. It is much more detailed and takes a lot of time.
- with treasurer Nasim's help we are finally able to receive e-transfers.
- we have two bank accounts and I make all payments and deposits. One is on Quickbooks, the other kept by hand.
- Guy and I went shopping, bought a new laptop, 70" TV and a Poly. He and McKenzie set it all up in the Forum Room and we can now offer "hybrid" Zooming for meetings.

I find Lunch & Learn speakers and organize the displays in City Hall.*

Partnerships:

When possible I attend, with Audrey, meetings of the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative. The Centre has been involved since day one and we are concerned that it is no longer truly "interfaith". Considering the housing crisis in the city it is too bad there isn't wider investment. I've also begun attending the Edmonton Coalition on Housing & Homelessness monthly meetings, a very worthwhile group with excellent guest speakers, I hope we can become more involved.*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT CONTINUED

NETTA PHILLET

Also when possible I attend Edmonton & District Council of Churches lunch meetings in different churches, always interesting. For example, in November we gathered at St. George Ukrainian Catholic Church. Fr. Danylo and another member led us in a beautiful Byzantine noontime prayer called Sext or Sixth Hour. The sanctuary is gorgeous, every inch of the walls and ceiling domes are covered with gold and colourful icons. In October 2016 we held an "Interfaith Exploration" there, this activity had to be given up due to COVID and it is time to start booking them again.

In June we co-sponsored a celebration of Canadian Multiculturalism Day with the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation.

In September we honoured Daughters Day in City Hall.

I attended a half day "Resiliency Project" with the Edmonton Police Services. With 5 police officers we worked through examples of how they understand and investigate hate crimes and incidents in our city. It was very good.

On my own time I also attend many events related to our mission, sometimes as a speaker. A fun one was just today (June 9th), the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) AGM lunch with a thought provoking and somewhat controversial speaker, Irshad Manji. We are proud to be part of this incredible organization that does so much good in the community. Due to the foresight of former boards we have two funds: one in our name that has grown from \$11,000 to \$16,563; the second was a gift from former board member Dr. Teja Singh on the death of his wife, the Lavinia Singh Fund for Peace, grown from \$10,00 to \$14,413. In the financial statement for the operating account you can see how we benefitted in the last year.

As always I thank the board and membership for your support over the last 17 years.

TREASURER'S REPORT NASIM KHERANI

We are grateful for the support received from the Northern Spirit Regional Council of the United Church, our largest faith-based donor, and the Edmonton Community Investment Operating Grant, our largest grantor. We would also like to thank the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Edmonton Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, the Ramgarhia Gursikh Gurdwara, the Society for Development in Third World Countries, the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy and the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation, as well as many individual donors. Thank you as well to board members Jagjeet Bhardwaj and Shiraz Kanji for their internal review of the year end statements, as per our bylaws.

AUDIT STATEMENT

Fiscal Year 2022 - 2023

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

The Board of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre has chosen Jagjeet Bhardwaj and Shiraz Kanji to review the 2022 - 2023 Financial Statements.

Accordingly they 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 31st, 2023.

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

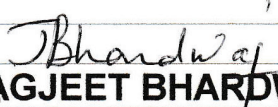
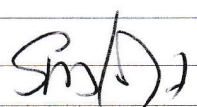
Signed:

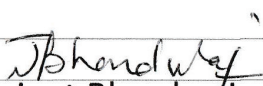
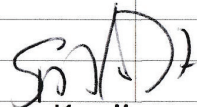
Jagjeet Bhardwaj



Shiraz Kanji

Dated May 31st, 2023

EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE Income & Expense		
April 1 , 2022 - March 31, 2023 - Operating Account		
Income		
City of Edmonton Grant	9,098.00	
Donations from Individuals	5,051.07	
Northern Spirit Regional Council United Church	2,500.00	
Sales Revenue (mostly calendars)	2,231.97	*
Edm. Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)	2,000.00	
Edmonton Community Foundation (2 funds)	1,348.00	
Ramgarhia Gursikh Gurdwara	500.00	
Unitarian Church	400.00	
Society for Development Third World Countries	400.00	
Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy	150.00	
Membership Dues	1,750.00	
Silent Auction	1,343.00	
Total Income	\$26,772.04	
Expense		
Salary	28,607.94	
Genocide Memorial Service	300.00	
Refreshments & Office Supplies	236.57	
IDERD refreshments	150.00	
Paypal & Bank Charges	112.26	
UN Day of Peace - Elder	100.00	
to ICWA as co-sponsor of Gender Based Violence program	100.00	
Total Expense	\$29,606.77	
Net Ordinary Income (deficit)	-\$2,834.73	
Bank Balance - March 31, 2023	\$36,300.23	
* lower than expected by \$1758 due to missed payment previous year		
REVIEWED & APPROVED by		
		
JAGJEET BHARDWAJ	SHIRAZ KANJI	
May 31st, 2023	May 31st, 2023	

EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE - CASINO ACCOUNT			
Income & Expense - April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023		CREDITS	DEBITS
Balance Forward		75,155.75	
DONATION (from CMEF for IDERD 2022)		200.00	
RENT			15003.41
TV, WALL MOUNT, POLY, LAPTOP, 1 YEAR ZOOM ACCOUNT			3415.42
WEBSITE MAINTENANCE			2530.50
INSURANCE - TWO POLICIES			2017.00
SHAW & TELUS			1654.26
CONCERT			1250.00
INT. DAY/ELIMINATION RACIAL DISCRIMINATION-PANEL 2022 & PIANO 2023			800.00
LUNCH & LEARN SPEAKERS			600.00
FORMAT ANNUAL REPORT			525.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES			381.64
PRINTING			337.38
BRAVENET & ONE YEAR HOST PAPA			270.63
MEMBERSHIP IN "CANADIAN INTERFAITH CONVERSATION"			250.00
DAUGHTERS DAY PROGRAM AD			125.00
BANK CHARGES			116.00
POSTAGE			27.49
TOTALS			\$29,303.73
Balance Forward April 1, 2021 & DONATION		75,355.75	
Expenses		29,303.73	
BANK BALANCE MARCH 31, 2023		\$46,052.02	
Reviewed and Approved by			
			
Jagjeet Bhardwaj		Shiraz Kanji	
May 31st, 2023		May 31st, 2023	

**EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE BALANCE SHEET
MARCH 31st, 2023**

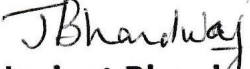
ASSETS

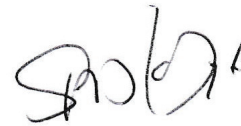
TD Bank Regular Account	35,840.14
TD Bank Casino Account	46,052.02
TOTAL ASSETS	\$81,892.16

EQUITY

Restricted Funds	46,052.02
Unrestricted Net Assets	39,078.63
Net Income	-2,834.73
GST	-403.76
TOTAL EQUITY	\$81,892.16

Reviewed and Approved by


Jagjeet Bhardwaj
May 31st, 2023



Shiraz Kanji
May 31st, 2023

CAPITAL REGION INTERFAITH HOUSING INITIATIVE (CRIHI)

PASTOR K. SCHMITKE

CRIHI was active last year rebuilding the Steering Committee and advocating to increase housing for our most vulnerable. This committee normally meets online in alternate months from September through May. The Education and Advocacy Committee meets monthly, usually online. This June we have planned a joint in-person meeting to brainstorm for a fall Education Event and a winter Plenary. As we looked forward to the provincial election, Education and Advocacy drew attention to the importance of housing with necessary supports in place for success with letters, rallies and a petition. Although the City and the Federal Government have worked hard to move forward, the province has not done its part in the last few years. CRIHI is grateful to the Edmonton Interfaith Centre and all who helped us raise the necessary funds to continue our work to build stronger neighbourhoods through multicultural friendship groups. The donations have allowed us to continue the process.

CELEBRATING OUR FAITHS NETTA PHILLET

Since 2006 we have enjoyed a unique partnership with the City of Edmonton, prompted by a comment to then Mayor Mandel that City Hall belongs to all citizens and should reflect the diversity of religions found here. It is a permanent display that features a different tradition each month, advancing our mission and that of the city: to embrace diversity and be a place of inclusion. Keeping a new display moving smoothly in and out each month is challenging. Last fall Farah and I met with City Chaplain John Dowds to discuss ideas to reinvigorate the program. Sadly he is no longer in that position. He was a wonderful promoter and supporter of our Centre and we look forward to working with his replacement when hired. Displays in the last year:

- Zoroastrian;
- A special one requested for the Pope's visit, featuring local interfaith activities;
- Islam;
- Baha'i;
- Eckankar;
- Trinity Lutheran observing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity;
- Quaker;
- Commemorating UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, with our City Hall program;
- Passover.

CONCERT REV. AUDREY BROOKS

Our annual “Building Bridges Among Faith Traditions” multifaith concert was held on February 5, 2023 at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton. Although the concert predates UN World Interfaith Harmony Week we now consider it part of that celebration. Performers were pianist Dr. Leo Dieleman, Chilean singer Marianela Adasme, the Pepperseed Steel Orchestra, Young at Heart Jewish Choir and Cree poet Naomi McIlwraith.. Audrey acted as MC and was presented with our Interfaith Advocate Award, and Kimberly Lang as competent stage manager kept the show running on time. After missing a year due to COVID we were pleased to welcome a large audience to enjoy great music, social time and a successful silent auction.

Visit link here:

<https://youtu.be/kRCKoZmqy0Q>

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE JAGJEET BHARDWAJ

On November 23, 2022, to mark Family Violence Prevention Month, the Indo-Canadian Women’s Association and the Edmonton Interfaith Centre held a violence prevention workshop presented by three shelter homes. Sylvia Fleury gave a brief outline of the Lurana Emergency Shelter: first-stage, emergency housing providing safe, secure refuge and immediate services such as meals, clothing, personal care items, transportation, and child support. One-on-one counselling is provided in partnership with a community agency. Recognizing that domestic violence is a complex issue, the staff provide wrap-around services that support women and children in the shelter or transitioning from the shelter to the community.

Eman and Iman provided information about Nisa Homes, a group of transitional, long-term shelters for Muslim, immigrant, refugee, or non-status women and children who need a safe place and support to become independent and self-sufficient. They strive to support and empower women to regain the confidence, means and ability to start afresh.

Michele Markham described Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton Safe House, which provides temporary housing and help for men and women over 60 who are leaving abusive situations. If there is space at Safe House and the person is ready, he or she may move in immediately. If there is no space, staff arrange for safe housing at other locations until there is a room available. Seniors Safe House has been providing programs and services to older adults for almost 50 years.

The workshop gave information on each of the programs and services. Their compassionate and trauma-informed approach was enlightening. The audience had many questions and a good discussion followed. All in attendance learned about available community resources and shelter homes for women, seniors, and children.

Special thanks go to our members and donors for contributions at the event. We were able to collect items for the three homes, such as shampoo/conditioner, body wash, socks, diapers and snacks for the children.

LUNCH & LEARN NETTA PHILLET

One of our most popular programs, a monthly “Lunch & Learn”, was on Zoom for almost 2 years. Since we began meeting again in person we have continued to offer the choice between that or online in our new zoom room. Not surprisingly many prefer the convenience of joining from home or work or far away, we’ll see what the future holds. As with many activities, virtual meetings are a mixed blessing. We continue to have good attendance and engaged conversations. Speakers and topics in the last year were:

- **Shaykh Sheikh** moderated four conversations on the topic of “Where Do We Go From Here”, based on his near death experience.
- **Farah Jamil** spoke about “ADHD, Neurodiversity & Interfaith”. (She is our board president, please see her biography in that section of this report.)
- **Ibrahim Cin** titled his talk “Service: A Muslim Chaplain’s Journey to Providing Spiritual Care”, about his background and experience as a Chaplain and Spiritual Care Provider at Alberta Islamic Foundation and in the military.

All have been recorded and can be found on our website.

MEMBERSHIP NETTA PHILLET

Having members from all religious traditions is very important and we offer 3 categories: Member, Life Member, and Organizational Member. Currently, we have 131 members of whom 43 are “Lifers”, generous supporters who have paid ten times the annual dues of \$25. We are able to offer a tax receipt for this. Our website has a membership page with easy to use payment buttons and a list of categories, fees and benefits. With the world opening up we look forward to attending more in -person events which will allow us to talk to the public and tell our story. We only exist because of you and thanks to you!

OPEN HOUSE EILEEN BELL

Last year on December 14th we gave our members and friends a chance to virtually tour and learn more about the Centre. After a welcome from MC Eileen, Gail Allen gave an opening devotional. Our communications coordinator McKenzie had taken pictures around the office so next we had a virtual tour, we haven’t had many visitors since the pandemic hit. Rev. Audrey spoke about plans for the next UN Day of Peace; Netta told us about upcoming Lunch and Learn events, and Lewis Cardinal spoke about his hopes for a “How to be an Ally” presentation. Eileen spoke about what EIC members could expect during World Interfaith Harmony Week in February of 2023. Centre member Don Jaffray spoke about interfaith efforts during the Papal Visit to the Edmonton area in July, 2022. Netta spoke again about renewing memberships, and how we could receive a multifaith calendar for 2023. Ron Bissett entertained us with a medley of Christmas Carols performed on the harmonica. EICEA president Farah Jamil closed the program with remarks about the Centre. Many stayed on Zoom afterwards, to visit and catch up with old and new friends!

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (IDERD)

REV. AUDREY BROOKS

Our 30th annual commemoration took place on March 21st in Edmonton City Hall. On this day in 1960 in Sharpeville, South Africa, police opened fire on unarmed protesters, killing 69. In 1966 the UN General Assembly proclaimed a day of remembrance and Canada was the first country to support it, making it an annual campaign in 1989. Our Centre grew out of this event which we began to observe in the early 1990's. Mayor Amarjeet Sohi brought greetings and presented a proclamation from the City and board member Lewis Cardinal offered welcoming words. Police Chief Dale McFee had accepted our invitation to speak but had to cancel due to the recent murder of two constables. A spokeswoman for the service took his place. Keynote speakers were The Venerable Jordan Haynie Ware, Archdeacon for Justice, Anglican Diocese of Edmonton, and Bella Asiri Opiyo, Co-founder of "Faith Spaces/Safe Spaces (FSSS)" and a member of Good Shepherd Anglican Church. This interfaith initiative is co-led by the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton and Islamic Family and Social Services. Nigel Williams, musician and vocalist, sang two songs, including Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin' On?" to energize us and Cree poet Naomi McIlwraith presented a powerful poem. Several board members offered prayers and a moment of silence was held.

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

REV. AUDREY BROOKS

This annual observance was held on September 21st on the grounds of Government House in Edmonton. Elder Elsie Paul started us off in a good way, followed by greetings from Vice-President Gail Allan. The Honorable Douglas Roche, O.C. spoke, saying "The Ukraine War Must End: The Role of the United Nations." As always we were grateful to Paula Kirman and the Raging Grannies for their songs.

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

EILEEN BELL

This year's events took place between Feb 1st and 7th as specified by the United Nations when they created the idea for the week back in 2012. Most of the events were over Zoom. We began with Sheikh Shaykh's Lunch & Learn on February 1st titled "An Attempt to Understand the Paranormal." It wrapped a four part series dealing with the afterlife.

Visit link here:

<https://youtu.be/zKqGAKRflmI>

On February 2nd the Edmonton Jewish Federation gave an update on how they have been trying to combat Antisemitism. The topic was defined, then details were given about a campaign that saw many people contribute tiles for a gorgeous mosaic that is being toured around the city.

Visit link here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QC8D4aQyxs8>

On February 4th former EIC president Len Gierach lead a discussion on "Spirituality through Poetry". A number of lovely pieces were shared by all who were present.

Visit link here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl-mYoQIGxs>

On February 5th the "Building Bridges Among Faith Traditions" multi-faith concert was held at the Unitarian Church, please see a separate report.

On February 6th we picked up the theme of "Hard Questions." Three panelists from different faith groups discussed the question "Why would a loving God allow bad things to happen? It sparked discussion and other participants shared their thoughts.

Visit link here:

<https://youtu.be/y5mWHkNGeLE>

For the final presentation on February 7th board member Lewis Cardinal gave a well attended and excellent presentation on "Becoming an Ally to Indigenous People." It attracted people who had never been to EIC events before, as well as the core group of participants who had come out to one or more of the events.

Visit link here:

<https://youtu.be/nJHgmv5kDFs>

All the presentations had space for great dialogues, sharing of ideas with uplifting discussions.

BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

Gail Allan is a member of the United Church of Canada who has worked for many years on issues of global and social justice; she lived in Edmonton until 1996, and has recently returned for “semi-retirement.” From 2004-2020 she was Coordinator for Ecumenical, Interchurch and Interfaith Relations in The United Church of Canada, representing the church in national and international ecumenical and interfaith groups, and supporting people engaged in dialogue and action in their local communities. She is an active participant in the North American Interfaith Network and Canadian Interfaith Conversation. From 2014-2020 she was co-chair of the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee. She has a doctorate in Ethics from Emmanuel College of the Toronto School of Theology, with a focus on feminist theological and social ethics. At present she is an associate faculty member at St. Stephen’s College, Edmonton and a member of Garneau United Church. She is also involved in the gender justice work of the World Council of Churches.

Eileen Bell has lived in Edmonton since 1984, when she began working at 630 CHED Radio as a news anchor, and is the radio news manager for Corus Entertainment Edmonton. She has been in broadcasting since 1978 and loves the many roles she has had over the years. She spent 25 years volunteering as the communication director for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for central and northern Alberta. She currently serves as the national social media manager for the Church in Canada. She has been a member of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for many years, including several previous terms on the Board of Directors. She believes the more we learn about various faiths, the more we learn to understand each other. Originally from Montreal, Eileen is a graduate of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. She golfs very badly but enjoys it very much. Her family is spread across Canada, and she loves going to visit them.

Jagjeet Bhardwaj is a retired scientist who now devotes her life to full-time volunteer work. For almost 40 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 was also a member of the Provincial Court Nominating Committee of Alberta. She is a recipient of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Medal as well as the Centennial Medal, both from the Province of Alberta in recognition of her multifaceted 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.

Guy W. Blood, M.Sc., P.Eng., has been a member of the Baha’i Faith since 1979. This choice was made after an extensive search of all possibilities of committing to a spiritual path within a religious community. He has been interested in religious harmony for many years. He started a demonstration of that interest by producing a weekly community television show in the early 80’s, titled Unity in Religion. People from all faith traditions were interviewed using questions that focused on the similarities amongst religious teachings rather than on the differences. That half hour weekly TV show ran for 3 years on local cable channel 10. Guy has been an active supporter of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for many years and is currently Past President. He has attended the last two Parliament of the World’s Religions events in Salt Lake City and Toronto, and is registered for Chicago in August, 2023. In his professional life, Guy has functioned as a structural engineer since

| BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

graduating from the University of Calgary with a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Work included designing bridges and buildings, providing educational seminars on cement and concrete, management and teaching at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, and most recently, independent structural engineering consulting, before retiring in 2018. He has held leadership positions with the United Nations Association in Canada, several condominium boards, the Edmonton Soaring Club and is currently treasurer of the Stony Plain Baha'i Assembly. Hobbies have included: golf, curling, photography, flying small airplanes and gliders. His wife is Joan Blood.

Rev. Audrey Brooks, (M. Ed.; M. Div.) is a retired chaplain with the Unitarian Church of Edmonton. For many years she has facilitated the Interfaith Centre's annual concert as well as our UN International Day of Peace celebrations, the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination commemorations and the Genocide Memorial Services. She also serves on the Board of the Central Region Interfaith Housing Initiative which works to end homelessness in Edmonton. Audrey is involved with the Missing and Murdered Women and Girls marches; served on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of the University of Alberta Interfaith Chaplain's Association; is a founding member of the U of Alberta Pride Alumni Association; and is a Raging Granny. She is the mother of 5, grandmother of 13, great grandmother of 13, and great great grandmother of Lincoln, who was born in October of 2020.

Lewis Cardinal is a communicator and educator; he has dedicated his life's work to creating and maintaining connections and relationships across cultural divides. His long track record of public service includes: Board Member of Theatre Network Society; Vice-Chair of the Documentary Organization of Canada-Alberta; Chair of the Global Indigenous Dialogue of Initiatives of Change-Canada; Trustee and Chair of the Indigenous Taskforce for the Council for a Parliament of World Religions. He received two medals from Queen Elizabeth II, the Diamond Jubilee Medal for Public Service and her Platinum Jubilee Medal for his contributions to the Province of Alberta, as well as the IndSpire Award for Public Service, the Province of Alberta's Centennial Medal for his work in Human Rights and Diversity, the Distinguished Alumni Award from Grant MacEwan University, and the Honorary Degree of "Doctor of Sacred Letters" from St. Stephen's College at the University of Alberta. Lewis is Woodland Cree from the Sucker Creek Cree First Nation in Treaty No. 8 in northern Alberta. His consulting company, Cardinal Strategic Communications, specializes in Indigenous education, communications, and project development. He is also owner, CEO, and Head Storyteller of Red Earth Blue Sky Productions, a multi-media production company. Currently, Lewis is Project Manager for "kihcihkaw askiy-Sacred Land" in the City of Edmonton, the first designated urban Indigenous ceremony grounds in Canada.

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.

BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

Karen Gall has served on the Edmonton Interfaith Centre board since 2009; she is Vice President of the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation (CMEF) where, for over a decade, she served as Chair of the annual CMEF Harmony Brunch commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Karen is also a founding member of the St. Albert Interfaith Connections, an organization dedicated to providing an interfaith presence in that community. At her synagogue, Temple Beth Ora, Karen served as a lay leader for Shabbat and festival services, a member of the Ritual Committee, a founding member of the Chavurat HaShir choir and as a cantorial soloist. She worked with the LGBTQ community to support and help organize both the annual Edmonton Interfaith Pride Service as well as the Pride Shabbat service at her synagogue. Karen focuses her time on successfully building bridges, using her appreciation and awareness of the value of multiculturalism and interfaith connections while welcoming opportunities to share her Jewish values and traditions with students of all ages and members of the broader community. She has received recognition for her dedication and work advocating for interfaith, multicultural and human rights issues including a St. Albert International Women's Day Award, a Daughter of the Year Award and the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal in recognition of her valuable contribution to the province.

Rev. Dr. Rob Hankinson has been associated with the EIC since witnessing the signatures of the Centre's founding board members to the Alberta Societies Act application, December 1995. Since then he 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. On the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) he serves as a member of the newly formed NAIN Council. In August 2019 Rob relocated to Nova Scotia and is a member of the executive of the Wolfville Area Interchurch Council which is working towards hosting NAIN in 2025.

Farah Jamil is an Ivy League-educated Health Executive and a certified Leadership / Executive Coach, 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. Her work has ranged from briefing Canadian Ministers, US Senators and Ambassadors on strategic health policy issues to guest lecturing and coaching clients globally on how to be less passive and more proactive in their career / leadership goals. As a woman of colour and a visible religious minority, Farah recognized the need to bring down barriers and build bridges within the realm of interfaith dialogue. She has volunteered for several interfaith boards, committees and organizations, including the American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP), A Common Word Alberta – Christian Muslim Interfaith Dialogue, and more. As a proud member of the EICEA, Farah is committed to "help create a society which respects the richness of human diversity".

Shiraz Kanji has retired from three different careers - professional engineer, Information Technology and most recently as financial planning consultant. He has worked in three 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 30 years and has conducted many training seminars locally and overseas. He enjoys learning about different faith communities and participating in interfaith

| BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

dialogue. Shiraz is an active volunteer, having served his Toastmasters district, 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 is a long-time volunteer having served extensively both within and outside the Muslim Ummah over the past 40 years. While serving as treasurer of the Edmonton Chapter of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW), Nasim helped restore and find a new home for Edmonton's first mosque at Fort Edmonton Park, Al Rashid Mosque. Following her service as president of the Edmonton chapter of CCMW and treasurer of the Western Canada Group of Soroptomist International, she returned to serve the Ummah by becoming director of the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities chairing the Interfaith Portfolio. As the resource development coordinator for the Aga Khan University, she has coordinated more than five major fundraising drives aiding in the creation of an international-standard medical school, nursing school and sports centre in Karachi, Pakistan, and Nairobi, Kenya. Most recently, Nasim served as president of CCMW, Edmonton Chapter and also has been elected to be part of the CCMW National Board. In her professional life, Nasim completed accounting designations (FCCA, CGA, CPA) in both England and Canada. After working in a public practice in London, England, and then for more than a decade as Senior Financial and Management Auditor with the Alberta Social Services, Nasim switched focus to the health sector, managing and performing the accounting for a large dental office for over three decades. Using this experience, Nasim has spent the last seven years consulting for the Aga Khan University Nairobi on dental practice management and expansion as part of a larger public-private partnership. Nasim has completed further training to become a certified financial planner (CFP) and now operates a group of companies focused on investment and real estate development.

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 also was a founding member of the No Room in the Inn Committee of the Edmonton and District Council of Churches. They have encouraged the congregations of the Council to donate to a different community agency each year and they have raised well over \$1 million.

Kathie Reith says that at a young age she was taught the value of being actively involved in the betterment of her community. She has served on many committees and boards, including the Soroptimist International Group which empowers women to make an impact on others' lives by financing their dreams. Other projects are an awareness campaign on the effect of human trafficking and "Welcome Home" which befriends newly housed participants who were previously homeless. She works for EPSB as an Educational Assistant.

Manish Shah was born and brought up in India; he has a Bachelor of Science & Medical Laboratory

| BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

Technology degree as part of his academic carrier and studied Fundamentals & Science of Jainism as part of his spiritual journey. This work explains the basic and complex principals of Jainism with the scientific point of view and translates it in a way that can be easily understood. He also studied Vedic Hindu philosophy and Buddhism and the major technical differences between these three major religions practiced in South East Asia, mainly in India, Burma, Myanmar, Cambodia, Sri Lanka. Jain philosophy connects with nature and the environment and its effects on all life including human, animal, plants and nonliving matter. Volunteer activities include fund raising for earthquake relief, blood donation camps and organizing annual republic day functions in India; he captained the intercollege cricket team of Gujarat University for many years. He teaches mental health improvement and food habits and does public and motivational speaking, promotes and practices naturopathy, nonviolence and Jain lifestyle and vegetarian food ideology for healthy human society and keeping the environment safe for generations to come. He is passionate about motorcycle riding and exploring the natural beauty of Alberta in all directions as well as in learning about religious diversity and different cultures. He is working towards achieving a Vedic concept of “Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam”: that we are part of a universal undivided family.

Suzanne Sauvé was raised in Ottawa in a practicing French Canadian Catholic family. At university she found the Bahá'í Faith and learned about its prophet founder Bahá'u'lláh, gaining a greater love and appreciation of the status of all of God's Great Educators, these Manifestations of God, that include Jesus and his teachings she had grown up with. Suzanne has always been passionate about equality and was grateful to work for the Federal government with community groups, individuals and institutions helping remove barriers to equality and unity in diversity in our society. The federal department eventually became Canadian Heritage and the Women's Program, and at a certain point, Suzanne felt it was time for her to change careers. She returned to school for graduate studies and became a speech language pathologist. To this day, she continues to work in this fascinating field helping individuals overcome communication barriers, from aphasia to stuttering, find their voice, and even become proficient readers, despite dyslexia. Suzanne has been married to Jim Hoover for 36 years. Together, they enjoy walking around Edmonton's beautiful river valley, going to our great coffee shops, and visiting their two sons in Vancouver.

Virginia Sharek is an Albertan who attended the U of A, completing a Bachelor of Education in 1967 and a Bachelor of Arts in 1990. After her first degree she spent a year in London, England. Upon her return to Canada she taught in Calgary for a year then two more years in Edmonton. She was married in 1973 and chose to stay home to raise her 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 2013. During those years she held a number of positions in the Edmonton & District 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

| BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

organizations that are engaged in providing safe and affordable housing for people experiencing difficulties and hard times. In 2014, Virginia became a Life Member of the Interfaith Centre and joined the executive in 2019 as secretary. With appreciation and enthusiasm she continues to be part of the activities, educational opportunities, experiences, projects and workshops provided by the staff and members of the Centre. For Virginia, membership in the EICEA provides opportunities to work toward a kinder gentler and more just world with like minded people of faith which helps each of us to have hope.

Karnail Singh

Rebecca Wright has been involved in interfaith work since 2012 and has been to multiple NAIN “Connects”, including helping to plan the one held in Edmonton in 2018 and designing its logo.

| EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Netta Phillet was born in Edmonton and has a degree in Religious Studies from the U of A. She has worked for the Centre since 2006 after being on the executive for 6 years, is active in different capacities at Beth Shalom Synagogue and the Women’s League for Conservative Judaism, locally and internationally, is a life-member of Hadassah and was a founding member of the Phoenix Multifaith Society for Harmony. She is on the boards of the Jewish Archives & Historical Society of Edmonton & Northern Alberta and the local chapter of the M. Gandhi Foundation for World Peace. She is also serving on the Edmonton City Manager’s Anti-Racism Advisory Board. For 30 years she has been a sister in the Arab/Jewish Women’s Peace Coalition. Much of the focus of her volunteer life is inter/intra faith dialogue and the place of women in religious ritual and observance.

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2022 – 2023

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ANNUAL REPORT

2022/2023