

Mill Woods Mosaic

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The Multicultural Voice of Edmonton Southeast

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New regulations for immigration and citizenship consultants

Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Marco Mendicino, announced on Nov. 26 that the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants Act is now in force. This Act provides a statutory framework to regulate immigration and citizenship consultants, and will make the forthcoming College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants the official regulator of immigration and citizenship consultants across the country.

The coming into force of the Act means that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is one step closer to the opening of the new College, which is anticipated in 2021. The College will be an arms-length institution mandated to regulate the profession in the public interest by protecting both the public and consultants in good standing from dishonest actors who take advantage of vulnerable people.

The new College will be subject to significant government oversight to ensure public protection. This includes government authority to establish a code of professional conduct for licensees of the College, to set the composition of the College Board of Directors, and appoint up to a majority of directors.

With his announcement, the Minister is honouring his mandate commitment to advance the full implementation of the new professional governance regime for immigration and citizenship consultants.

While coming into force of the Act is a required step, opening the College will also require the appointment of public interest directors to the College board by the government.

A notice of opportunity is posted on IRCC's website for interested parties to apply for the public interest director positions on the College board.

The board's mandate is to manage the activities and affairs of the College. The selection process for the public interest directors is open, transparent and based on merit criteria. It will help ensure that capable, diverse and well-qualified Directors are put in place.

"Today's announcement reaffirms that our Government is committed to the implementation of a new professional governance regime," said Minister Mendicino. "We're taking decisive action to hold immigration and citizenship consultants to account by improving oversight and increasing accountability to protect both the public and consultants in good standing from dishonest consultants who are taking advantage of vulnerable people."



Precious gifts under the Christmas tree

Mill Woods resident Susan Joop, who grew up in the Philippines and immigrated to Canada in 1988, likes to decorate her home for Christmas, and she has a different theme every year. She is very creative, wrapping the Christmas presents for her family and friends. Each present is unique, and Baby Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes, in a Manger, in a humble feeding trough, is always included.

For more photos of Susan's Christmas wrappings, please see page 12.

Photo: Arnim Joop/Mill Woods Mosaic

Quick facts:

- The Government of Canada continues to deploy efforts to better protect newcomers and applicants to Canada from unscrupulous and fraudulent consultants.
- The College Act stems from the 2019 Budget Implementation Act, which proposed to improve the oversight of immigration consultants in Canada.
- The College will have the authorities necessary for the regulation of consultants, in particular tools to investigate professional misconduct and discipline its licensees. This includes the power to enter the premises of a consultant for the purpose of gathering information to sup-

port an investigation, and compelling witnesses to appear and testify before the Discipline Committee.

- The College will have the ability to request court injunctions to address unlicensed actors providing immigration advice without authorization.
- The College Board's mandate will be to manage the activities and affairs of the College.
- A Code of Conduct for the College is being developed. This will help establish strong ethical and professional standards that all licensees must abide by.

More information: www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship



Silver anniversary

The publisher and editor of the "Mill Woods Mosaic", Arnim Joop, was able to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his publishing business on Dec. 1. He founded the German-Canadian newspaper "Albertaner" in December 1995 and has been publishing this ethnic newspaper monthly since then. Thirteen years later, in 2008, he founded his second publication, the "Mill Woods Mosaic." When the COVID-19 crisis started in March of this year, Joop switched from printing his newspapers to online publication. The website of the "Albertaner" is www.albertaner.ca.

Photo: Edmonton Journal

The freedom to celebrate

Every year, some people find it necessary to insist that we should say "Merry Christmas" and not "Happy Holidays." They argue that the greeting "Happy Holidays" takes Christmas out of the holiday season and say that we should return to "Merry Christmas", because that is the true meaning of this season.

Okay, I understand that Christmas is an annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ which is celebrated by billions of Christians around the world. But Canada is not a Christian country, it is a multicultural country with many immigrants from all over the world who have different faiths, and some of them are atheists and agnostics.

Nobody in Canada hinders Christians to celebrate Christmas, because freedom of religion is guaranteed in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But at this time of the year, there are also other religious celebrations. Jews celebrate Hanukkah, Sikhs, Hindus and Buddhists celebrate Diwali, and African-Americans celebrate Kwanzaa. Many of these celebrations are "Festivals of Light" during winter season when the days are short and the nights are long and dark. These festivals of light give people hope and optimism, some-

thing which has become even more important during the awful coronavirus pandemic this year, because many people are depressed by this devastating health crisis which has made people sick and killed already more than 700 people here in Alberta.

Therefore, to include not only Christmas but all the other religious and cultural celebrations, we call it "Holiday Season" and wish each other "Happy Holidays."

We have friends here in Mill Woods who are Sikhs, Muslims and Jews, and they wish us "Merry Christmas" every year, and we wish them "Happy Holidays" or whatever they celebrate. So, we can do both, and nobody is excluded.

Canada is not a perfect country but probably one of the best in the world. As Canadians, we are free to celebrate whatever we want, and we respect each other's religious and cultural traditions which is an essential component of a civilized society.

So, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!



Arnim Joop



Christmas Eve Candle Light Service Thursday, December 24, 6:30 p.m. ONLINE

Join us for a service of readings, carolling and reflecting on the birth of Jesus Christ and the good news his coming brings.

Please watch the online stream on our website: www.sunrisecommunitychurch.ca or our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SunriseCommunityChurchMillWoods

Sunrise Community Church
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Letters to the editor are welcome

We invite you to write letters to the editor. A maximum of 275 words is preferred. Letters must carry a first name or two initials with surname, and include an address and daytime telephone number. All letters are subject to editing. We don't publish letters addressed to others or sent to other publications.

Send to: Mill Woods Mosaic, P.O. Box 92087, Meadowbrook RPO, Edmonton, AB, T6T 1N1; fax 780-465-3140 or e-mail to mwmosaic@telus.net.

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and your family
this Christmas season!

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The Spirit of the Holiday Season

The Sikh Community of Edmonton has made a generous donation to the Edmonton Food Bank. The Vaisakhi Nagar Kirtan Committee along with Gurdwara Millwoods and Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha has donated \$13,000.13 on behalf of the Sikh Community of Edmonton. The donation was made in connection with "Parkash Purb" (birthday) of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism which fell on Nov. 30, 2020. The Mayor of Edmonton, Don Iveson, has proclaimed Nov. 30 as "Guru Nanak Day." There is a large Sikh population in Mill Woods, and their large Vaisakhi Nagar Kirtan Parade had to be cancelled this year, due to COVID-19. Sikhs believe that is their duty to support less fortunate members of society. One of their traditions is "Langar" which is serving free meals to members of the community who don't have enough food.

Photo: Vaisakhi Nagar Kirtan Committee





SEASON'S GREETINGS
FROM

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and all the best
in 2021*

Bridget Stirling
Trustee for Ward G

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Email: bridget.stirling@epsb.ca
<https://www.epps.ca/ourdistrict/board/trustees/ward-g/>





★

FOR UNTO US
A CHILD IS BORN

Merry Christmas



HON. TIM S. UPPAL MP
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Mill Woods Mosaic

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The Mill Woods Mosaic publishes a variety of opinions.
Unsigned editorials express the view of the publisher.
Signed pieces express the views of the writers only.

Our Opinion

Would Jesus visit Grandma?

The German news magazine DER SPIEGEL published a story with the headline "Jesus hätte Oma nicht besucht" (Jesus wouldn't have visited Grandma), referring to the coronavirus restrictions for family gatherings at Christmas. The writer made a very good point: In Germany, like here in Alberta, people are asked not to meet with relatives and friends during the Holiday Season if they are not members of the same household, because they could be infected with the virus. German Chancellor Angela Merkel even said that if people insist to visit their elderly parents or grandparents, it could be their last Christmas, because older people are more vulnerable and likely to be infected.

So, let's be responsible and forget about family gatherings during the Holiday Season and New Year's Eve parties this year to make sure that our loved ones are safe and healthy. Of course, it is upsetting that we can't enjoy our family gatherings this year, but it would be more upsetting to lose a loved one to the virus. Just ask the families of the more than 700 people who have already died from COVID-19 in Alberta. Many of them were grandmothers and grandfathers who would have loved to see their children and grandchildren one more time. Sometimes we have to give up something to gain something. Happy Holidays!



Christmas and the whole Holiday Season will be different this year with COVID-19 still impacting our lives. The Government of Alberta has asked all Albertans not to have family gatherings this year during the festive season to avoid further spread of the coronavirus, so many families will have only "virtual celebrations" this year, but there is light at the end of the tunnel, because Health Canada has approved the first vaccine, and vaccinations have already started.

Cartoon by Susan Moshynski (www.bythebay.squarespace.com)

Christmas in the time of Covid-19

The times, they are a-changing.

It will be Christmas again in a few days, and my husband and I should have finalized our wish list for Santa Claus. We did this every year. I mostly asked for the same things: socks, cotton sweaters, leather gloves, maybe a pair of leather boots. All practical stuff. My husband would request a day planner, socks, a dinner gift certificate, a year's subscription of National Geographic, maybe a cashmere sweater. Santa, of course, would never see this list. Together on a weekday afternoon, we'd go shopping for those. This way we got to pick exactly what we asked for.

We've never put up a Christmas tree because my husband doesn't like fake trees, and I refuse to cut live trees. Once we've settled the issue, our Christmases passed by without any stress.

We didn't do much shopping this year, though. The Covid-19 changed the rules. No friendly parties or dinners in Vancouver. Celebrations and socializing will be achieved through Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram and other apps. Or through the good old telephone.

We wouldn't be going to the United States either.

My youngest daughter married an American, and they live in the State of Washington, USA. They have a six-year-old daughter. We spend the

Christmas holidays every year with them. This young family has a big circle of friends, other Filipino women with American husbands and little kids themselves. Together they celebrate the season with all the inherent excess-

Crisanta Sampang

*On
Second
Thought*



ses, through a frenzy of shopping, cooking and exchanging presents.

Gift-giving is such an integral part of the Western Christmas, something that Filipino immigrants have embraced happily, encouraged by the proximity of malls and the facility of online shopping.

Every year, my daughter would install a tall evergreen and decorate it lavishly. Piled around this tree would be a mountain of Christmas presents. On Christmas morning, we'd gather around early to open our gifts. Our six-year-old grandkid would be right in the middle of the action, opening box after

box after box of toys, new clothes, fancy princess costumes, kiddie make-up sets, books, colouring books, colouring pens, a new iPad or some other electronic gizmo; talking dolls, teddy bears, and other things. Mind-

boggling. The kid would usually spend a few seconds to examine every item, put it aside, and move on to the next. By the end of the gift-opening session, she would have lost interest in it all and would be off playing with Grampa in another part of the house.

Grampa and me, having seen the excess, had decided not to buy the grandkid any present, but agreed to contribute a modest amount to her college fund yearly instead.

That was last year. This year the US-Canada borders are closed. There will be no family gathering in the United States. We will be celebrating by Zoom.

In the olden days, before the time of technology or even Covid-19, everything seemed so simple. My parents were farming folks who didn't have much money, but they made sure that my brothers and I had new clothes and new shoes for Christmas. I would wear my new dress on Christmas morning to visit relatives in the village. I was required to kiss the hand of a variety of aunts, uncles, godparents, and all older members of the family circle, and would receive some money for my

effort. By the end of that day, I would have about ten pesos jingling in my pocket. My relatives weren't that well-off either, but they tried to give every child who came to visit a little something.

Back home for dinner, my mother would grab a chicken from the yard and turn it into a tinola, a popular Filipino soup featuring sauteed chicken pieces with slices of green papaya and pepper leaves, seasoned with ginger and black pepper, and serve it up with plates of steaming rice.

I would go to bed happy, looking forward to the next time I'd get to wear my new dress and spend my Christmas money on candies at the village store.

I wonder what kind of Christmas memories my granddaughter will have when she grows up. Will she remember which toy she loved most? Will she recall the Covid-19 pandemic? Or watching endless makeup tutorials on the computer while Grampa patiently kept her company?

Crisanta Sampang is a Filipino-Canadian author and filmmaker who is living in Vancouver, B.C.

She wrote the book Maid in Singapore in which she describes her experience working as a nanny.

Your Inner Lights

Depending on its context – physical, cognitive, emotional, or spiritual – the notion of ‘light’ or illumination provides many different meanings, which are all valuable and informative. Light is most commonly perceived or understood when it is visible or external to us. Nevertheless, I suggest to you that, though less visible, the light that shines within and through us is also particularly significant, and worthy of nurturing. Let me explain.

With very few exceptions, all living things crave sunlight. Plants, animals, and human beings depend on the sun for warmth, light, and the regulation of daily and perhaps even seasonal cycles. The sun is clearly a central factor in this regard; it enhances or influences physical growth and personal comfort, and also promotes a sense of security and well-being. Therefore, it is understandable that the short and often cold days of late fall and early winter have a profound influence on nearly all living entities.

Shorter daylight hours and less intense sunlight typically cause plants to go dormant; some shed their leaves while others wilt away until they sense a return of the sun's warmth and longer daylight hours. The same applies for animals, some of which literally hibernate, or shelter away, until the return of warmer days, while others reduce their activities to conserve energy and ensure their survival.

Human beings are also impacted by the seasonal reduction in the sun's warmth and shorter daily presence, whereby we too may experience a state of hibernation. However, with the assistance of technology and with modifications to our accommodations

and infrastructure, we are able to maintain our daily life. For example, we often feel the need for more brightness to overcome the seasonal gloom.

Ron Kuban

Time Passages



Since pre-historic days, human beings devoted much effort to create cheer and joy around the winter solstice, when daylight is shortest and the sun's warmth is at its weakest. Early and diverse celebrations became cultural norms, which involved food and gift exchanges, and the lighting of fires or candles for extra brightness. These celebrations, with their glowing lights, are now an integral and important element in the social practices of all societies and cultures. However, as important as these practices are, they are based on another bright and influential force, one which we cannot see with the naked eye – hope.

Our pre-historic ancestors celebrated the winter solstice in the hope that the days, weeks and months ahead would see the return of the sun with all its natural blessings. This hope sustained them through the dark days and rough times as they toiled for survival.

Hope is an internal force, an invisible flame, that each human being possesses at birth. It provides each of us with

brilliance of our own making, giving us energy to overcome obstacles and guiding us forward by spotlighting our desired objectives. It is simultaneously both intense and fragile, and it needs to be nurtured and fortified, often through faith and the belief in one's value system.

Think of hope as also being like a flame that needs to be shared with others, whose sense of hope has dwindled to embers, crushed by their life's misfortunes. While the need to maintain hope exists throughout the year, it seems to be particularly prevalent when all around us light and warmth dwindle, both literally and figuratively.

Life's dark periods cannot be overcome by hope alone and need support from another internal source of illumination – self-awareness. Think of it as the shining of a proverbial spotlight on our inner self to understand its emotional, mental, and spiritual composition. The brighter the light, or the desire to learn, the deeper the perspective it produces.

As is the case with hope, the desire to understand one's self is an inherently self-centered effort that requires courage, curiosity, and the desire to become an improved self – a better human being. It demands of us to consciously turn our view to the other-

wise-hidden elements that make us who we are. It requires us to gain knowledge about ourselves and our connections to the world around us by actively seeking intellectual and even spiritual meaning.

Self-awareness, like hope, may be dimmed or extinguished by life's many challenges, which tend to overwhelm, preoccupy, depress, or create doubt about our capabilities and our hopes for the future. The advancement of self-awareness is, therefore, of value throughout life, but is particularly important when we need to better understand who we are and how we should behave.

The wisdom we gain through self-awareness illuminates our way forward. The brighter the flame, the clearer the road. But the gains are not restricted to us; we can and should ignite in others the same desire or capacity to learn, grow, and become a more wholesome self. It is a process that is contagious but in a positive way.

In these darkened days, let us kindle the bright lights of the season, but let's not forget to nurture the two great flames: hope and self-awareness.

May your inner lights shine bright.

Dr. Ron Kuban is a long-term community volunteer and activist.

Letters to the editor welcome

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May peace and joy be with you Edmonton Catholic Schools Trustee Laura Thibert

With the last few days remaining in 2020, we anxiously wait for Christmas break to begin. This is a time of year filled with wonder! Even though Advent celebrations and Christmas activities are very different this year, everyone is getting ready for the birth of baby Jesus. With Kindergarten to Grade 12 students not returning to in-person learning until January 11, we are praying that this will provide the necessary break in the transmission of Covid-19 so we may start the new year together.

May this Advent provide you with many occasions to see God's abundant love in your life. This time of waiting provides us many opportunities to pause with family and reflect on the wonderful gift that is coming to us as we await the birth of Jesus. Edmonton Catholic Schools' Fine Arts team have designed a beautiful online Advent experience for all to enjoy. The virtual Advent calendar started on the first Sunday of Advent and you can "open a door" every day and experience Advent together as a family. You will experience weekly celebrations, art, performances, and Advent-themed activities. Visit www.ecsd.net and click on the Art of Advent banner to learn more.

At the November Public meeting of the Board, Trustees approved the Division's electoral boundaries that were created in partnership with the City of Edmonton's

Policy C469A, "Ward Boundary Design Policy." As a result of the recent annexation of land by The City of Edmonton, I am excited to formally welcome all students and families residing within this area to Ward 77!

Please also note the last day of classes before the Christmas break is Friday,

December 18th and all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students will resume online learning from January 4 to 8 and return to in-person learning on Monday, January 11th, 2021. Those students who have been learning on-line before November 30 will continue to do so after the Christmas break.

With the Christmas season upon us, I want to convey a special Christmas blessing and pray everyone has a wonderful socially-distanced New Year. May the peace and joy of this

holiday season be with you, your families, and your friends.

We all have an important role to play in success of students and I look forward to working closely with parents and government to ensure that this is an exciting and rewarding year. I encourage open communication and welcome your input on educational matters.

You can reach me at 780-231-6312 or laura.thibert@ecsd.net. You can also connect with me on Facebook and Twitter @LauraThibert.



Trustee Laura Thibert

Uyghur persecution in China today

The persecution of Uyghur and other Turkic peoples in Xinjiang/East Turkistan is today an increasingly alarming feature of Beijing's rule under Xi Jinping.

The pattern began following Mao's army seizure of the independent state of East Turkistan in 1949. It has subsequently been systematic, including using the region as a laboratory for 47 nuclear explosions from 1964 to 1996 with their radiation-caused cancer consequences for many residents.

Since 2016, conditions have worsened; increasingly, comparisons are made with the Holocaust. No foreign government is today permitted to send its diplomats or nationals into Xinjiang. Nor can foreign-based companies, so the world doesn't know what COVID-19 has done to the indigenous residents.

We know from escaped survivors, leaked official documents and satellite imaging that Beijing is subjecting hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs to concentration camps, with renunciation of Islam, 24/7 surveillance and torture as inhuman features of the policy.

According to the Australian Policy Institute, at least 80,000 Uyghurs have been sent to work as forced labourers in factories in other regions of China.

A news item carried by Radio Free Asia on Nov. 18 is revealing (1). A hospital for infectious diseases at Aksu city in Xinjiang was transformed into a second internment camp. There is a large crematorium nearby and a "green corridor" for expedited transport of organs at nearby Aksu airport.

Ethan Gutmann, author of *The Slaughter*, who has long studied forced organ harvesting from political prisoners in China, concludes that the Aksu camps, hospital infrastructure and green corridor facilitate a steady source of organs to harvest from Uyghurs.

He adds, "... a large cremation center and a hospital ... connected to the

camp directly ... You extract the organs from the living human being(s), you let them die. The organs are strapped to ... (a) machine (that oxygenates them for approximately 20-24 hours) ... That's enough time to get [an organ] to the airport to fly it over to the east coast of China."

**David
Kilgour**

**A Canadian
View on
World Events**



Former camp detainees, Gutmann met, detailed receiving DNA and blood tests upon their internment under the guise of a mandatory "universal health check," but he thinks the tests are "for tissue matching" for intended organ harvesting.

The infrastructure at the Aksu sites "speeds everything up ... for higher margins of profit," (because) foreign organ tourists are willing to pay significantly higher prices than Chinese citizens, meaning each detainee could be "worth" about U.S. \$750,000 for their lungs, heart, kidneys, and liver.

In 2017, Xi Jinping began erecting a "re-education" gulag for Muslim communities similar to that established for Falun Gong practitioners after mid-1999. Both networks receive inmates arrested by police without any pretence of a hearing, trial or appeal - a grim practice invented in Stalin's Soviet Union.

American author Robert D. Kaplan concludes that China's massive Belt and Road Initiative "requires the complete subjugation of the Uyghur population."

Organ harvesting from Uyghurs preceded that from Falun Gong (which began in 2001). Dr. Enver Tohti, a Uyghur, has described how in 1995, as a general surgeon in a Ürümqi hospital, he was sent to an execution ground to remove the kidneys and liver from a living prisoner.

Gutmann estimates that organs of 65,000 Falun Gong and 2000-4000 Uyghurs, Tibetans and Christians were "harvested" from 2000 to 2008.

Dr. Tohti has publicized a photograph of the Human Organ Transportation Green-Path (HOTGP) at Ürümqi Airport, which expedites the transport of organs to global recipients. The photo of a priority lane sign marked "Special Passengers, Human Organ Exportation Lane" went viral.

Dr. Maya Mitalipova at MIT's Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research asserts: "... (the) entire population of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other Muslims in (Xinjiang) (has) been forcefully health checked and ... blood samples (have been) withdrawn ... (from) 2016 (on). These procedures were performed only (on the) Muslim population ..."

The UN committee on the elimination of racial discrimination has termed Xinjiang a "no rights zone." Encircled by barbed wire, surveillance cameras, and armed guards are labour camps where Turkic minorities are forced to work for little or no pay.

Socially responsible governments

and businesses worldwide should join the United States and Australia in boycotting anyone doing business in Xinjiang. Forced labour in its internment camps is poisoning the supply chain of well-known companies based in democratic nations.

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the 'Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act' by a vote of 406-3; it is now under consideration by the Senate. The bill declares that unless U.S. Customs can verify that goods are not produced using forced labour they cannot enter the United States. If it becomes law, it will mark the most significant attempt to pressure Beijing over its gross abuses of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities.

(1) <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/trade-11182020153703.html?fbclid=IwAR34Gcb0Dv-S467RGduB1IayulEqIn9G0JTDHRIUUi9ukLVitLokqaopo>

*David Kilgour, a lawyer by profession, served in Canada's House of Commons for almost 27 years, representing southeast Edmonton. He was Secretary of State for Africa and Latin America and Asia-Pacific. He is the author of several books and co-author with David Matas of *Bloody Harvest: The Killing of Falun Gong for Their Organs*.*

**This article was first published by
The New Delhi Times.**

Letters to the editor are welcome

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COVID-19 has shone a spotlight on child and family poverty in Alberta

The Alberta College of Social Workers, the Edmonton Social Planning Council, and Public Interest Alberta have jointly released a report on the state of child and family poverty in Alberta, *Spotlight: Lessons on Child Poverty in a Pandemic*.

Over 160,000 or 1 in 6 children experience the all-encompassing effects of childhood poverty in Alberta – a staggering statistic which has been made even more dire by the dramatic economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report highlights the communities most affected by systemic poverty and lack of access to support services such as Indigenous communities, immigrants and refugees, and families in rural environments. It details the effects of poverty on the development of children, including issues affecting mental health, educational attainment, employment, and housing throughout their lives up to adulthood.

Sandra Ngo, the Research Coordinator for the Edmonton Social Planning Council, explained the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on child poverty in Alberta.

"Unemployment in Alberta hit a record high of 15.7% in June 2020," said Ngo. "It is clear that these bleak employment numbers have wreaked havoc on the ability for families to provide for their children. This is demonstrated in the significant increase in food insecurity during the pandemic due in part to job loss, reduced work hours, and impacts on income. Canadians living with children have felt the effects of COVID-19 even more so: food insecurity rose by 7% to a staggering 19.6% in households with children at the onset of the pandemic. That's nearly 1 in 5 Canadians who can't always afford healthy nutritious food for themselves and their families."

"However, the state of child and family poverty is not solely due to the pandemic," Ngo added. "If anything, this crisis is shining a spotlight on already-existing problems. COVID-19 has

exposed deficits in how our society has cared for the most vulnerable experiencing poverty."

Ajay Hartenfeld Pandhi, President of the Alberta College of Social Workers, called for the reduction of child poverty to be front and centre as the government plans for the economic recovery in a post-COVID world.

"As both the federal and provincial governments make plans for an economic recovery, they need to remember that implementing strategies to end child poverty is an investment into healthier families and communities, not a cost," said Pandhi. "We know that without equitable, public services and supports available for all children in Alberta, there will continue to be generational impacts of childhood poverty. Investing upstream in poverty reduction mitigates downstream costs and is good for all of us."

Joel French, Executive Director of Public Interest Alberta, warned of the cuts the provincial government has made which have exacerbated the issue of child and family poverty.

"The pandemic has shown how critical a robust network of well-funded public services are for all Albertans," said French. "Without our essential public health care system and income supports, it would have been impossi-

ble for many Albertans to keep their head above water. However, decisions like the minimum wage freeze, massive layoffs, cuts to supports like AISH, and cutting dependents off seniors' drug coverage have made an already-dire situation even worse."

"One of the lessons of this report is that Alberta does not raise enough revenue to properly and sustainably fund

our essential public services and social supports," added French. "If Alberta adopted the tax system of any other province, we would raise between \$14.4 to \$25.5 billion more per year in revenue. The provincial government needs to make some significant changes so that everyone in Alberta has the ability to not only survive, but thrive."

Edmonton Catholic Schools
Trustee Laura Thibert
Ward 77

Wishes you and your Family
Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year

You can reach me at
780-231-6312 or laura.thibert@ecsd.net.
You can also connect with me on
Facebook & Twitter



Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year

Councillor Mike Nickel (Ward 11)
City of Edmonton



2nd Floor, City Hall, 1 Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2R7
Tel. (780) 496-8142 • Fax (780) 496-8113 • E-mail: mike.nickel@edmonton.ca

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!



Jasvir Deol, MLA

Edmonton-Meadows
Unit 204B, 3323 - 34 St NW
Edmonton.Meadows@assembly.ab.ca
780-466-3737

Christina Gray, MLA

Edmonton-Mill Woods
3448 - 93 St NW
Edmonton.Millwoods@assembly.ab.ca
780-414-1000

Rod Loyola, MLA

Edmonton-Ellerslie
5732 - 19A Ave
Edmonton.Ellerslie@assembly.ab.ca
780-414-2000

Hope for the future: a look back at Canadian immigration in 2020

Finally, We've finally made it to the end of 2020.

Immigration law has always been an area of law in which the rules and procedures have tended to change rapidly but never have we seen a period of upheaval like we did in 2020.

When the World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, Canada's immigration system and border controls responded quickly in order to safeguard staff and to try to restrict the virus' entry into the country. Immigration offices in Canada were closed and processing capacity plummeted as a significant proportion of immigration staff were sent to work from home. Visa Application Centres abroad were shuttered and Service Canada stopped providing biometrics collection service inside Canada. Citizenship tests and ceremonies were cancelled.

With an early emphasis put on essential health care workers and the protection of the food supply chain through the prioritization of agricultural and food processing workers – in the very early stages of the pandemic the immigration process largely ground to a near halt for most other classes of applicants.

Travel and border restrictions were introduced on March 18, 2020, and while the restrictions and applicable exemptions have evolved over time there continue to be significant restrictions on travel into Canada, two sets of restrictions exist: a more permissive set of restrictions for travelers entering Canada from the United States, and a more onerous set for travelers entering from any other country. Along with the requirement that all travelers entering Canada quarantine for 14 days, both sets of travel restrictions were recently extended until at least January 21, 2021.

Additional difficulties were encountered by Alberta-based employers seeking to hire or maintain the employment of temporary foreign workers when the Government of Alberta drastically restricted access to Labour Market Impact Assessments in a bid to have more job opportunities go to out-of-work Albertans – becoming

the only province in Canada to respond to the pandemic in this fashion. An LMIA approval is often needed by a Canadian employer before they can extend employment to a non-Canadian (usually obtained on the basis that there are no Canadians or permanent

**Nathan
A. Po**

**Immigration
Lawyer
in
Edmonton**



residents available for the position) and LMIA restrictions will therefore make it more difficult for some employers to fill specific labour shortages or to continue to employ foreign workers who current work for them. Although it was announced in June that there would be upcoming restrictions on Alberta-based Labour Market Impact Assessments, the province provided no details and left many employers, especially those with pending LMIA applications, in limbo for four months before finally providing the details of the restrictions and implementing them retroactively at the beginning of November. As of November 1, Alberta added all but a handful of occupational categories to a "refusal to process list" such that only 27 select occupations remain eligible for LMIA's in Alberta. While there are several exemptions – for example, LMIA's for specialized short-term work and LMIA's with a permanent residency component continue to be available – the provincial restrictions pose an additional obstacle to many Alberta based employers.

Although COVID-19 caused unprecedented disruption to Canada's immigration system, I have generally been impressed by the federal government's response. Canada has done its

best to introduce innovative and flexible solutions to reduce some of the delay and administrative burden caused by the pandemic. For example, the government introduced a process that allows work permit holders in Canada to change employers and start working for their new employers without needing to wait the usual amount of time necessary to have a new work permit processed. Another temporary policy allows visitors who have been in Canada since before August 24, 2020 to make an in-Canada application for a work permit (something that visitors are not usually allowed to do) – leveraging individuals who are already inside Canada to fill labour

shortages. Yet another temporary measure responded to the shortage of biometric collection capacity in Canada by providing an exemption to the biometric requirement to temporary residence applicants in Canada and for permanent residence applicants who have already given biometrics within the last 10 years.

Our firm's immigration lawyers quickly became familiar with the ins and outs of Canada's travel restrictions and continued to help eligible individuals obtain the approvals required to enter the country properly, and as services began to resume in the latter part of the year we saw the increased processing of applications and were happy to celebrate with many of our clients as their permanent residency was granted or as they had the unique experience of obtaining Canadian citizenship via ceremony conducted by Zoom videoconference.

Like many parts of Canadian society, our immigration system bent but did not break during the pandemic – while applications were delayed and admissions was significantly reduced, the system managed to continue to accept and process applications despite the tremendous pressures caused by COVID-19.

Looking into the future, we have

additional cause for hope. As with all other aspects of society, the current public health crisis will drive significant modernization of the Canadian immigration system. For example, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has recently announced several initiatives to speed up the processing of spousal applications by using new technology to conduct interviews with applicants remotely and to digitize paper applications in order to support staff who are processing applications remotely.

Modernization of the immigration system will be all the more important as Canada looks to immigration as a means of driving its post-COVID economic recovery. Minister of Immigration Marco Mendicino announced at the end of October that the government will set ambitious immigration targets for the next three years in order to compensate for the shortfall in admissions experienced during the pandemic and to help drive Canada's short-term economic recovery and long-term economic growth. According to Minister Mendicino, Canada's immigration plan "will help to address some of our most acute labour shortages and to grow our population to keep Canada competitive on the world stage."

As positive news regarding COVID-19 vaccines continues to roll in, there is finally a glimmer of hope that the end of the pandemic is at least on the horizon and we can begin looking forward to Canada's recovery – a recovery that immigration will no doubt play some part in.

On a personal note, as we come to the end of this difficult year the lawyers at McCuaig Desrochers would like to wish all readers of the *Mill Woods Mosaic* peace, health and strength this holiday season and to sustain you for the days ahead. We thank you for reading.

Nathan Po is a partner at McCuaig Desrochers LLP, a general practice law firm with Edmonton's largest group of immigration lawyers (www.mccuaig.com). This article is intended to provide general information only and should not be relied on as legal advice or opinion.

LIVE-STREAMED CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY MASS 2020

DECEMBER 24
CHRISTMAS EVE
5:00 pm

DECEMBER 25
CHRISTMAS DAY
10:30 am

Go to YouTube and search:
St. Theresa Catholic Church, Edmonton AB Channel



CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

WITH

PEACE AND JOY IN THE NEW YEAR!



Edmontonians invited to join a board

Edmontonians interested in sharing their ideas and helping shape Edmonton's future are invited to volunteer for a City of Edmonton civic board.

New volunteer members are needed for 14 of Edmonton's 20 civic boards, including the Naming Committee, Community Standards and Licence Appeal Committee, Edmonton Historical Board, GEF Seniors Housing Board of Directors, Edmonton Design Committee, Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, Edmonton Public Library Board and several others. Over 30 board positions are available this year.

A full list of boards and application details are available at edmonton.ca/boards.

Civic boards are made up of dedicated Edmontonians with varied skills, backgrounds and experience. Those

interested in helping shape Edmonton's future, are encouraged to apply. The application deadline is January 17, 2021.

To apply, submit an application, resume and three letters of reference.

Being a board member provides the opportunity to sharpen leadership and business skills and gain a broader understanding of municipal government processes.

Time commitments vary depending on the board. Most boards have monthly meetings and additional sub-committee meetings throughout the year.

The number and qualifications of available positions vary between boards and may change from year to year depending on the needs of the board.

For more information: edmonton.ca/boards

City facilities closed, services suspended in response to new COVID 19 restrictions

The City of Edmonton has closed recreation facilities and suspended in-person services in response to new provincial public health guidelines introduced on Dec. 8.

Recreation Centres and City Facilities

"The health and safety of recreation centre patrons and staff is our top priority," said the City administration in a news release on Dec. 9. "All City recreation facilities currently open to the public will close for at least 28 days after the last reserved time on Saturday, in compliance with new provincial restrictions. While outdoor ice surfaces will continue to be available for use, park pavilions at outdoor ice surfaces will be closed, with access only permitted to washroom facilities, Victoria Park Skating Oval and Ice Way, and The Meadows Community Recreation Centre outdoor leisure ice will remain open with new safety measures in place. The Rundle Park IceWay is expected to open on Friday, Dec. 11."

Cross-country skiing trails, walking trails and toboggan hills remain open with physical distancing and social gathering restrictions in place.

The City will continue to offer virtual fitness classes, such as Zumba, Yoga, Tabata and Bootcamp. Edmontonians can register at MoveLearnPlay.edmonton.ca.

The Prince of Wales Armouries and

the Orange Hub will remain open to tenants only. All public health guidelines in these facilities remain in place and must be followed.

Ride Transit Program Passes

With recreation centres being closed since Dec. 13, in-person sales of monthly Ride Transit Program passes are suspended. Passes can still be purchased online 24/7 at ride.edmonton.ca or by calling 780-423-RIDE (7433) Monday-Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Passes purchased online or by phone can be purchased using credit card, VISA Debit, Mastercard or prepaid VISA/Mastercard. Alternatively, regular priced fare products, including tickets for occasional riders, can be purchased at retail sales outlets.

Edmonton Valley Zoo

The City is evaluating the full impacts of the new restrictions on zoo operations and will provide more information soon. Zoominescence will remain open to ticket holders and an update will be provided as soon as possible. Patrons must adhere to public health guidelines while visiting the zoo.

For more information: alberta.ca/COVID19
edmonton.ca/COVID-19

A heartfelt thank you to all!

Edmonton Public Schools Trustee Sherry Adams

2020: A year of uncertainty, unpredictability, constant change, challenges and growth! I would like to dedicate this article to the incredible team across our Division who have done a heroic job in bringing us through a year like none other we have ever faced!

A heartfelt thank you

• To a committed Division of tenacious servant-leaders who go beyond the call of duty to overcome the challenges for the sake of kids! Their unwavering positive supply by a growing culture of collaboration has been an example to us all and has set this Division apart as exceptional.

• To our wonderful teachers, who have encountered unprecedented obstacles to their teaching tasks! One might refer to them as the true champions as they adapted to the multiple shifts and adjustments necessary to continue to provide the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for student success.

• To our support staff for their valuable work in our schools—organizing offices and working with students in classrooms, shops, libraries, and kitchens.

• To our amazing custodial staff who also were called upon to meet first-time challenges to combat an unseen virus by keeping our schools clean and sanitized.

• To e4c partners who take the lead in providing nutrition to many of our schools and to families who have needed support through COVID-19. We have so many great and valuable partners.

To the provincial and federal governments for the funding we received that will help our Division pay for costs that were not factored into our 20/21 Division budget.

• To our Professional Learning Department who build teacher capacity, through professional learning and mentoring opportunities in such areas as literacy and numeracy, mental health, EA supports for online learning, and specialized supports.

• To our principals who set the stage for a great school environment where staff

are encouraged and empowered to give their best to accomplish successful outcomes for student achievement and well being.

• To our online resource teams for their high-quality work. Divisions across the province have requested the use of these online resources for their schools. This

significant investment will not only provide quality resources for online learning for students learning at home during COVID, but will be an invaluable resource for teachers, families and students for years to come in various capacities for home and school.

• To our superintendent who continues to lead with vision, distinction, and hard work with an amazing team of assistant superintendents and division leaders and their dedicated staff.

• To my fellow trustees, who work diligently to improve the outcomes for students, to serve their communities and to advocate to our government for sustainable and adequate funds to foster success one student at a time.

• To our amazing School Parent Councils who provide invaluable support to their schools!

• And a very important thank you to the parents who provide the most significant investment into the success and well being of their children for a bright and meaningful future! Thank You!!

This will be a different Christmas season, and I urge all of us to find some creative ways to encourage and share some kindness every opportunity before us, especially to those who have suffered loss during this challenging time. My sincere wishes for you and your family to experience a very refreshing and meaningful time during this special time of year.

As always, it is a privilege to serve you as your trustee for Ward 1. You may contact me at sherry.adams@epsb.ca or 780-429-8087. You may also check out epsb.ca for other information on registration and scheduling for the coming quarters and 2021 diploma exams.



Trustee Sherry Adams

Letters to the editor welcome

We invite you to write letters to the editor. A maximum of 275 words is preferred. Letters must carry a first name or two initials with surname, and include an address and daytime telephone number. All letters are subject to editing. We don't publish letters addressed to others or sent to other publications. Send to: The Editor of the Mill Woods Mosaic, P.O. Box 92087, Meadowbrook RPO, Edmonton, Alberta, T6T 1N1; fax (780) 465-3140 or e-mail to mwmosaic@telus.net.

Did you work in Germany?

I can help you with:

- Refund of German pension deduction/contribution
- German pension/survivor's pension application
- German Revenue paperwork



Haike Biederstaedt, 780-293-2802
hbiederstaedt@gmail.com

Do you need help around the home?

The Seniors Home Supports Program gives seniors referrals to screened businesses which offer:

SNOW REMOVAL
YARD HELP
MOVING HELP
HOME REPAIR & MAINTENANCE
HOUSEKEEPING
PERSONAL SERVICES

Call the Home Supports Coordinator at
Mill Woods Seniors Association: 587-594-7884



Habitat for Humanity Edmonton begins recruiting for a Community Advisory Council

Imagine a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to call home; a place where they can rest their heads at night on terms they can afford to pay. That was the vision of a man named Millard Fuller, who started Habitat for Humanity in 1976. Fuller saw home ownership as a means for parents to build equity in a home while providing their children with a promising future. This affordable home ownership program has become Habitat's way of bringing communities together to help families build strength, stability, and independence.

In 1991, a group of individuals recognized the need for the Habitat for Humanity program and brought it to the Edmonton area. Since that time, Habitat for Humanity Edmonton has helped over 730 qualifying families with a life-changing opportunity to move into affordable home ownership. In the Habitat program, families pay an affordable mortgage that allows them to build equity in a home, save for their future, and grow roots in their community.

In Edmonton and other municipalities throughout Alberta, there is a growing concern about the availability of affordable housing. Habitat's home ownership program addresses the issue by helping move qualifying families from renting (either subsidized or market) to owning. Habitat's program helps families: a down payment is not required, and Habitat offers affordable



Two volunteers build a fence at Habitat Edmonton's Carter Place development during the 2017 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project.

Photo: Sam Dean/Habitat for Humanity Edmonton

monthly mortgage payments. If a family decides to sell their home in the future, Habitat retains the first right of refusal, and will repurchase the home so that another family can benefit from that same home.

In order to better serve our communities and to keep ourselves accountable to our vision and mission, Habitat is, as promised, is developing a diverse and compassionate Community

Advisory Council (CAC). The objective of the CAC is to support Habitat in remaining true to its vision and mis-

sion by acting as a liaison to the partner families and communities that it serves, through deliberate engagement and communication. The CAC will provide high-level recommendations to the Board of Directors in the areas of, but not limited to, affordable housing, industry and innovation, and critical issues affecting Habitat's communities.

If you live in the Edmonton area or in a community that Habitat Edmonton serves, you are invited to apply to be on the Council, which will be chosen by a Selection Committee comprised of reputable community leaders. More information about the Community Advisory Council, the Selection Committee, and how to apply can be found at HFH.org/cac. The application deadline for 2021 is January 15, 2021. We look forward to finalizing the CAC and to serving many more families in the future. In the words of Millard Fuller, we look forward to working together toward a world where everyone who gets sleepy at night has a simple decent place to lay their heads, on terms they can afford to pay.

You have news for the *Mill Woods Mosaic*?

Please give us a call at 780-465-7526

or e-mail to: mwmosaic@telus.net

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- ✓ 100+ career choices and opportunities
- ✓ Competitive health, wellness & benefits package
- ✓ Expand your knowledge and learn new skills
- ✓ Create positive change in your community

Every year the Edmonton Police Service hires people from a wide variety of backgrounds; born in different cities, countries and speak a variety of languages. One common factor they have is the desire to serve the citizens of Edmonton.

Learn what inspires the dedicated members of the Edmonton Police Service. Apply Today | JoinEPS.ca

EDMONTON
POLICE | **JoinEPS.ca**
SERVICE

Accepting Applications for Habitat's Community Advisory Council

Bringing communities together to help families build strength, stability, and independence through affordable home ownership.

Are you looking for a way to give back to your community?

Habitat for Humanity is assembling a diverse and compassionate Community Advisory Council for support in remaining true to its vision and mission. The council will be a liaison to the partner families and communities that Habitat serves through deliberate engagement and communication.

Habitat will be accepting applications from residents in the Edmonton area and in other communities across northern Alberta until January 15, 2021.

For more information, or to apply, visit HFH.org/cac.



HFH.org/cac



Susan Joop, who grew up in the Philippines and immigrated to Canada in 1988, likes to decorate her house for Christmas and wrap presents nicely for her family and friends.

Photos: Arnim Joop/Mill Woods Mosaic

Wrapping up the Festive Season

Months before Christmas, my daughter and I usually go shopping for family Christmas gifts, but this year, no shopping was done because of Covid-19. Hence, there are not many gifts under our Christmas Tree this Season, but my husband Arnim and I decided to tuck in \$\$\$\$ each for my son, daughter, son-in-law and grandson gift box. Here are the gifts I wrapped for my family. I do beyond just wrapping, because I believe what is beautiful and precious inside the box, should also look beautiful outside. Although, the one gift I received, beyond worldly price, of INCALCULABLE WORTH, is the One wrapped in swaddling clothes, in a Manger, in a humble feeding trough. This Christmas, I wish you all the gift of THE LIGHT OF LIFE be born in everyone's heart.

Susan Joop



Using telephones and telephone directories in Alberta

Almost every home and business in Alberta has a telephone. Many Albertans also use cell phones (cellular or mobile phones).

Local calls

To make a local call (to a number in the same community or local area, such as Edmonton and surrounding communities), dial the 10-digit telephone number (area code and telephone number):

780-000-0000

Area Code Telephone number

Alberta currently has four area codes: **780, 403, 587, 825**. When you make a local call from someone's home, the call is free and you can talk as long as you like. When you make a local call from a pay phone or a hotel or motel room, you will be charged for the call.

Follow these instructions to make a local call from a public pay phone:

- Pick up the receiver.
- Deposit the required change or use a major credit card or a pay phone card (a prepaid phone card for use in public pay phones). Phone cards are available at many locations, including Canada Post outlets, gas stations, grocery stores and drugstores (pharmacies).
- Dial the area code and telephone number.
- If your call is answered, talk for as long as you like.

- If the line is busy, hang up and your money will be returned.

Long-distance calls

Follow these instructions to make a long distance telephone call:

- For numbers in North America and the Caribbean, press **1** and enter the area code and telephone number:

1-403-000-0000

Long Area Code Telephone number
Distance

Welcome to Alberta

Important information for immigrants and other newcomers

- For numbers in other areas, press **011** plus the **country code** and the number. Country codes are listed in the front pages of the telephone book. You can also press **0** and ask the operator for the country code.

You can pay for long-distance telephone calls in the following ways:

- Use a long-distance calling plan for your home or cellphone. You are billed monthly for the calls you make.
- Use a prepaid phone card. These are available at many locations, including gas stations and grocery stores. They are often less expensive than using calling plans or paying with credit cards.
- Press **0** instead of **1** to make a collect call. The person you are calling pays for the call.
- Use a credit card at a pay phone.

Toll-free calls

Toll-free calls are long-distance calls you can make for free. Toll-free numbers often begin with **1-800, 1-866, 1-877** or **1-888**. Many businesses and government departments have toll-free numbers.

You can reach any Alberta government number outside your community toll-free by dialing 310-0000 and, after the prompt, entering the 10-digit number you are trying to reach. Within your community, dial the regular 10-digit number as you would with any other telephone call.

Telephone books and directories

Telephone books (also called phone books and telephone directories) are divided into sections:

- The front pages list emergency phone numbers and important numbers for community services, such as hospitals.
 - The first several pages provide information about telephone services.
 - The **blue pages** alphabetically list telephone numbers for municipal, provincial and federal government offices and programs.
 - The **white pages** alphabetically list telephone numbers for individuals (by family name) and businesses in the community.
 - The **yellow or business pages** may be a separate section or a separate book. These pages list business names and telephone numbers alphabetically by service (for example, Banks, Day Care Centres, Department Stores and Electric Contractors).
- You can also find telephone numbers for people and businesses in the following online directories:
- **411.ca**
 - **YellowPages.ca**

For help finding phone numbers for social, health and government services

- call **211** in Edmonton or Calgary
- go to **informalberta.ca**.

Getting telephone services

For telephone service in your home, you can use a landline (fixed line), a cell phone or both. You may decide to buy a bundle (group) of services from a single company that provides local telephone, long-distance, cable television and Internet services for a fixed rate. You can also buy these services separately.

Ask friends and family about the telephone companies or services they use. Learn the details about a service before you sign a contract. To find companies that offer telephone services in your community, look in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book under both Telephone Service and Cellular Telephones in an online directory or in the business pages of the telephone book.

Reprinted with permission from *Welcome to Alberta: Information for Newcomers*, produced by Alberta Employment and Immigration. Visit the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website at alis.alberta.ca/publications to view or order your copy (free to Albertans).

Resources for Temporary Foreign Workers

ALBERTA

Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan

www.health.alberta.ca

Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program

www.albertacanada.com

Alberta Temporary Foreign Worker Helpline

Call: (780) 644-9955
(Edmonton local calling area)
or 1-877-944-9955 from anywhere
in North America

Employment Standards

Call: (780) 427-3731 (toll-free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000 first)

Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office

North Location
2nd Floor, 10242 - 105 Street
Edmonton, AB
T5J 3L5

South Location
5th Floor, Century Park Place
855 - 8th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB
T2P 3P1

E-mail:
tfwadvisory.office@gov.ab.ca

To contact an advisor, call the Alberta Temporary Foreign Worker Helpline.

WCB Alberta

Call: Toll-free in Alberta
1-866-WCB-WCB-1
(1-866-922-9221)
Outside of Alberta 1-800-661-9608

E-mail: contactcentre@wcb.ab.ca

www.wcb.ab.ca

Occupational Health and Safety

Call: 1-866-415-8690

<http://employment.alberta.ca>

CANADA

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Call: 1-800-242-2100

www.cic.gc.ca

Service Canada

www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplace_skills/foreign_workers/index.shtml

DID YOU KNOW?

Many people, businesses and programs in Alberta use voice mail, an automated message-taking system. If you hear a recorded message when you call a number, leave your name, your telephone number and a brief message after the tone. Ask that your call be returned later. When leaving your telephone number, include your area code.

When calling long distance, you may need to press 0 to go through the operator if you want to

- make a collect call
- charge the call to a different number
- call long distance from some pay phones

Important addresses for immigrants and other newcomers

If you are new to Edmonton and don't know anybody, it can be tough to find a place to stay, a job, the right school for your children or good health care services, but there is plenty of help available.

Here are some of the main agencies specializing in helping immigrants and other newcomers in the Edmonton area:

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

11713 - 82 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5B 2V9
Tel. (780) 424-7709
Website: www.emcn.ab.ca

The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers offers a wide variety of programs for newcomers and helps immigrants to find a place to live, a job and English classes.

Welcome Centre for Immigrants in Mill Woods

Suite 200, Tower II, Millbourne Mall
7609 - 38 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6K 3L6
Tel. (780) 462-6924
Website: www.mwci-edmonton.net

The Welcome Centre for Immigrants in Mill Woods offers many programs and services for immigrants, including settlement assistance, language and educational counseling, employment assistance, citizenship classes, English classes, computer classes, public speaking classes, and youth programs.

Changing Together Centre for Immigrant Women

3rd Floor, 9538 - 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0T7
Tel. (780) 421-0175
Website: www.changingtogether.com

Founded in 1984, Changing Together is a non-profit, charitable organization operated by immigrant women for immigrant women. Its mission is to help Edmonton and area immigrant women and their families overcome personal and systemic barriers that keep them from participating fully in Canadian Society.

Catholic Social Services

8212 - 118 Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T5B 0S3
Tel. (780) 424-3545
Website: www.catholicsocialservices.ab.ca

For more than 50 years, Catholic Social Services has welcomed immigrants and refugees to Alberta. The services are free and offered in both official languages and more than 50 other languages. In the Meadows, CSS runs a drop-in group for women of all ages and backgrounds. Participants connect through diverse activities like speaking English, sharing cultural experiences, learning to use computers and connecting with useful resources. The program, called Tea Connections, runs every Friday from 10 a.m. to noon, in the room of The Meadows Community League on the 2nd floor of the Meadows Community Recreation Centre, 2704 - 17 Street. For more information, contact Raminder Dhindsa at raminder.dhindsa@cssalberta.ca or 780-391-3204.

Family Futures Resource Network

5704 - 19 A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6L 1L8
Tel. 413-4521
Website: www.familyfutures.ca

The Family Futures Resource Network (FFRN) is a non-profit organization providing support to families and parents in the areas of early childhood education, child and youth, family and adult support and parent education. The FFRN has three separate

locations in Mill Woods: Millhurst Site (5704 - 19 A Avenue), Knottwood Site (1733 Mill Woods Road) and Millbourne Community Site (3756 - 78 Street).

Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative

9538 - 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 0T7
Tel. (780) 423-1973
Website: www.mchb.org

The Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative is a registered worker's co-operative with members from immigrant and refugee communities, providing culturally and linguistically relevant prenatal education, post-natal outreach, parenting support, family liaison and community development support to immigrant and refugee families.

Indo-Canadian Women's Association

9324 - 34 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 5X8
Tel. (780) 490-0477

The Indo-Canadian Women's Association is a not-for-profit organization for enthusiastic volunteers committed to full participation of immigrant and visible minority women and men in economic, social and political life in Canada.

The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women (formerly Multicultural Women & Seniors Services Association)

329 Woodvale Road West
Edmonton, Alberta
T6L 3Z7
Tel. (780) 465-2992

The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women (SCSW) is a non-profit organization. The focus is to provide service and programs for immigrant women and senior men and women. Program goal is to promote and enhance the well-being and self-reliance of seniors and women especially those at risk and isolated before a crisis situation occurs. SCSW provides social support, information sessions, and skill building classes, home and hospital visits, as well as translation, and referrals to other service providers. It also offers family support and crisis intervention. For youth, there are Urdu and math classes and homework help, and there is also an Urdu library with more than 2000 books. The SCSW is open from 9 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday.

Youth Empowerment and Support Services

9310 - Whyte Avenue (82 Ave.)
Edmonton, Alberta, T6C 0Z6
Tel. (780) 468-7070
Website: www.yess.org

The Youth Emergency Shelter Society is a not-for-profit organization serving young people between the ages of 15-18 who are in crisis, at risk or homeless.

Alberta Employment Standards

Edmonton Office - Main Floor Sterling Place
9940 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2N2
Tel. (780) 427-3731
Website: www.employment.alberta.ca

Alberta Employment Standards is a provincial agency responsible for the administration and enforcement of employment standards in Alberta. AES has publications available for temporary for-

eign workers and their employers to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under Alberta's employment standards and workplace health and safety legislation. These publications are available in Chinese, English, French, German and Spanish.

NorQuest College

10215 - 108 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 1L6
Tel. (780) 422-2020
Website: www.norquest.ab.ca

NorQuest College is a public college offering many programs, including English as a Second Language classes and employment programs for immigrants.

Alberta Health and Wellness

Edmonton Office
Telus Tower North, Main Floor
10025 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
Tel. (780) 427-1432
Website: www.health.alberta.ca

Alberta Health and Wellness answers any questions about health care and health care insurance coverage in Alberta.

Immigrant Access Fund Canada

45, 9912 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 4M9
Tel. (Toll Free) 1-855-423-2262
Website: www.iafcanada.org

The Immigrant Access Fund provides micro loans to internationally trained immigrant professionals, trades people and skilled workers so they may obtain the Canadian licensing and/or training that will allow them to obtain employment in their field.

Other important phone numbers:

Edmonton Police Service

Emergency calls only **9-1-1**
Police - Fire - Ambulance
Life & death, injury accident, crime in progress

Non-emergency calls

(Dispatch) **780-423-4567**
Report of suspicious activity, calls for assistance, advice, etc.

Poison Centre **1-800-332-1414**

Hazardous Material Spills **9-1-1**

Utility Trouble Calls Only:

Power Emergency **780-412-4500**
Within Edmonton

Gas Emergency **780-420-5585**
Edmonton & Area

Drainage Trouble **780-496-1717**

Sewer Trouble **780-496-1717**

Wastewater (odour hotline) **780-469-8176**

Water Emergency Service **780-412-6800**

The next issue of the Mill Woods Mosaic will be published on January 15, 2021. The deadline for advertising and editorial is Friday, January 8, 2021.



We wish all readers, advertisers and supporters of the Mill Woods Mosaic a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!

**Arnim &
Susan Joop**
**MILL WOODS
MOSAIC**

What's up?

Community events in Mill Woods

Many events in Mill Woods and the Meadows have been cancelled, due to the current COVID-19 health crisis. After the number of new cases has increased dramatically in the last few weeks, the Government of Alberta has announced stronger public health measures on Dec. 8 to curb the rapid growth of COVID-19 in Alberta and protect the health system:

- All indoor and outdoor social gatherings are prohibited. This will be enforced with \$1,000 fines.
- Maximum of 10 people for wedding ceremonies or funeral services and must be held in a public place.
- Faith services are limited to 15% of fire code occupancy for in-person attendance.
- Physical distancing between households must be maintained.
- Masks are mandatory in all indoor public spaces and workplaces.
- Working from home is mandatory when physical presence is not required.
- Current child care and K-12 learning measures remain in effect.
- Some businesses will be required to close, reduce capacity or limit their in-person access.
- Retail services must reduce customer capacity to 15% of fire code occupancy or a minimum of 5 customers.
- Curbside pick up, delivery and online services are encouraged.
- Shop alone if possible or only with the people you live with.
- All restaurants, bars, pubs, bars, lounges and cafes are closed to in-person service. Take out, curbside pickup and delivery services are allowed.
- All indoor entertainment facilities and recreation centres must be closed.
- Outdoor recreation is permitted, but facilities with indoor spaces except for washrooms are closed.

For more information, visit the website of the Government of Alberta at www.alberta.ca.

Do you have a community event in Mill Woods to announce? Please send us the information, and we will include it in this community calendar in the next issue of the Mill Woods Mosaic.

*Tel. (780) 465-7526 or e-mail to:
mwmosaic@telus.net*

The next deadline is Friday, January 8, 2021.

**Do you have
any story ideas
for the *Mill
Woods Mosaic*?
Give us a call at
780-465-7526
or e-mail to
mwmosaic@telus.net**

***Mill Woods
Mosaic***

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Our Team: Eden Tourangeau • Kristie Tourangeau • Janelle Caouette

Covid-19 - What can we do to keep ourselves safe?

Covid-19 numbers are raging in Alberta. As Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Deena Hinshaw says, we have reached "a precarious point". Stronger public health measures are now in place to address the growing number of cases. The restrictions will help protect our health care system, keep schools and businesses open as much as possible, and protect vulnerable Albertans. Health officials are monitoring the situation and will adjust the restrictions in the coming weeks if necessary.

The appropriate response to increasing Covid-19 numbers across Canada remains a hotly contested and politicized topic. Many people are furious that not enough is being done to control this second wave and others argue that even stricter restrictions could choke out an already struggling economy.

Politicians are trying to balance an economic decline with a strained health care system. Health care decisions in this pandemic should not be formed or justified from personal feelings or political/religious beliefs. The science, data and advice from trusted health officials should be governing how we proceed in the coming weeks and months.

Each day more and more people are ignoring the advice and mandates of our health care officials and in turn exposing themselves and others in their personal circle to Covid-19. Some people elect to believe the conspiratorial advice on their social media page over what Dr. Hinshaw suggests; fact and fiction is seemingly harder to differentiate each day for the ignorant among us.

It has rightly been pointed out that Covid-19 affects all elements of our society. It is a global pandemic. Whoever fails to follow the updated protocols and does not adhere to practices as recommended by Alberta Health Services is risking the chance of spreading of the disease. Personally, I do not think anyone is blaming any particular group or any community for spreading Covid-19. However, we can not ignore the actuality that some communities are disproportionately affected.

By collecting demographic data, health officials can help target resources for those in need. This is not the time to politicize the pandemic. We all have biases, and these factor into how we view what is happening around us. We need to evaluate our biases, we must pause and think, why we have been drawn to a particular headline or story? What is our interpretation of it? Why are we reacting to it that way? Is the source a legitimate one, or is it a sensational headline to gain attention?

If we satisfy our political bias by consuming information from limited sources, we might be putting our own family, friends, and greater community at higher risk. Now is the time to listen to reputable, respected news sources and health care professionals. If you do not have anything positive or constructive to add to the greater conversation and community action, keep your political biases and false beliefs to yourself.

Regarding our ever-increasing Covid-19 numbers, why is it that they are so high? There are a variety of con-

tributing factors. Firstly, cramped living conditions and a fast-moving virus makes a dangerous mix. That means people living in homeless shelters, prisons, overcrowded apartments, multigenerational households, and other tight spaces face a greater risk of

Sharanpal Sandhu

Guest Column



infection as well as difficulty quarantining if infected.

Secondly, with the increasing number of Covid-19 cases, the consumption of social media content is at an all time high and much of the content is unreliable. There has been a huge spike in fake news and fraudulent products such as immunity booster recipes touted to cure or treat Covid-19. The spread of misinformation of such concerning products and recipes over WhatsApp and other social media platforms in the community can keep infected people away from real treatment and those who are at risk of contamination far from preventive measures, promoting real harm.

Another concern is our natural tendency to want to come together to celebrate. Festivals mark the spirit of joy and celebration. Each celebration involves meetings of families, friends, and neighbors. As cases continue to increase rapidly across the province, the safest way to celebrate festivals is to celebrate at home with the people we live with. Indoor gatherings with extended families and friends who do not live with us exponentially increase the chances of getting or spreading Covid-19.

We need the leaders in our communities to reach out to people and make them understand that social gatherings need to be cancelled or postponed. Cancelling, postponing, or moving online for our celebrations or other reasons may be inconvenient, frustrating, annoying, and disappointing. But the current difficult and challenging circumstances demand we modify our plans so that our extended families, friends, neighbors, and communities are healthy and safe. Social gatherings with known friends or extended families is a risk and must be avoided to manage the increasing numbers of Covid-19. We must spread awareness and counter rumours amongst everyone we know.

The global impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been unprecedented, and in addition to coping with increased levels of stress and anxiety, many of us are now faced with the necessity of making dramatic adjustments to our daily lives. With so much uncertainty and fear all around us, it is normal to feel a sense of gloom and doom or a heightened sense of anxiety – or even both. Positivity and kindness are cru-

cial in these challenging times. Try to give your community a break from the barrage of gloomy headlines and share some good news stories.

Lastly, if we pay attention to the world around us, there are kind acts occurring everywhere. The ultimate kind and selfless acts are seen in so many of those on the frontlines of this pandemic – health care providers, first responders, truck drivers, grocery clerks, and so on. There are people like Varinder Bhullar and his team of volunteers offering guidance to those who might be going through financial instability and delivering food to people in need through his team members as well as Dil-E-Punjab Sweets & Restaurant in Mill Woods. We need more such endeavors so that people can reach out when they are in need.

If anyone needs to isolate because of Covid-19 and does not have room for isolation at their home, the Alberta government will arrange a hotel room and food for you. Any family that does not have a proper place to isolate at home and are looking for government support to isolate at a hotel but are unable to find information, please call Varinder Bhullar at 780-966-3121.

The University of Alberta's Isolation Accommodation Program sets you up with airport-to-hotel travel, if needed, and helps you get through those next 14 days. This program is available to any University of Alberta student, faculty or staff returning to Edmonton and any international student coming from abroad attending an Edmonton post-secondary institution. Please email reslife@ualberta.ca.

We see mental health providers continuing to provide important services through Telehealth to people who are struggling with emotional difficulties and increased stress. Telehealth is the

delivery of health related services and information at a distance using video-conference technology. We see neighbors reaching out to neighbors to assist in helping in any way they can. Keep looking for the positives and sharing those stories. Positive emotions play an important role in health by increasing our resistance to illness. There is something amazing that is happening in the present dark and difficult times that shows that the light and goodness in humanity. We are all witnesses to that now, in this moment.

During the upcoming holidays it is absolutely crucial to isolate at our homes in order to contain the spread of pandemic. Failing to follow the guidelines of Alberta Health to reduce the spread of Covid-19 could lead to significant repercussions. Instead, let us take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. We must stay informed, but we also must be cognizant of how we are staying informed. Limit your news intake to one hour a day and choose your news sources wisely. It is important that we do not let fear control our life.

This holiday season will also bring unwelcome guests – stress and depression. It is natural to feel depressed when we can not be with our loved ones or extended families and friends. One way to keep stress and depression away and lessen worry is to ground yourself in the present moment through mindfulness. Mindfulness is a great technique and can definitely help reduce stress during these challenging times. Practice mindfulness by sitting quietly and focusing on your breathing and senses. With a little planning and some positive thinking, we can find peace and joy during the holidays. Let us plan for safer holidays this season.

Sharanpal Sandhu is a resident of Mill Woods who works as Secretary Treasurer at the Boyle Street Education Centre.

Important resources during COVID-19

Addictions Helpline	1-866-332-2322
Community Resources	211
Crisis Text Line	Text CONNECT to 741741
Family Violence (in more than 170 languages)	310-1818
Income Supports	1-866-644-5135
Mental Health Helpline	1-877-303-2642
Varinder Bhullar & Team	780-695-8229
For financial assistance advice, any PPE need, or for isolation accommodation guidance and free meals	
Caregiver Advisor (if you need one-on-one support)	780-966-3121
	780-453-5088/1-877-453-5088
Edmonton Food Bank (food assistance)	780-425-4190

If you have symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat or runny nose:

- You MUST self-isolate for 10 days after the onset of symptoms and until your symptoms have resolved (whichever is longer).
- If your symptoms worsen, call 811.
- Please do not visit a hospital, physician's office, lab or healthcare facility without consulting Health Link (811) first.
- Please call 911 ONLY if you are seriously ill and need immediate medical attention. Inform them of your symptoms.

For more resources during Covid-19 please see the list compiled by Andrew Knack (City of Edmonton Ward 1 Councillor):
www.andrewknack.com/local-organizations-in-operation-during-covid-19

COVID-19 INFORMATION

STAY SAFE, ALBERTA.

**Do the right things to
help prevent the spread.**

We're all tired of COVID-19, but this fight isn't over. We all need to do the right things to prevent the spread—and protect the most vulnerable.



**Stay home if
you're sick**



**Practice physical
distancing**



**Wear a mask when you
can't distance**

Questions about your health? Call 811.

Stay informed.

alberta.ca/covid19

Alberta 

Remembering Operation Syrian Refugees

On Dec. 10, Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Marco Mendicino, issued the following statement:

"Five years ago, on December 10, the first flight as part of Operation Syrian Refugees, left for Canada. It was an emotional milestone in what was to become a national project, and one that built upon our great Canadian humanitarian tradition of offering protection to people from around the world escaping persecution and violence."

"I had the privilege of being at Pearson International Airport in Toronto that night with my eight year old daughter. The experience of welcoming families that had fled violence in their home country to their new home was one of the most profound moments that I have had as a parliamentarian, a Canadian, and as a father."

"The success of Operation Syrian Refugees can be attributed to the people of Canada. It was not just a government initiative, it was a whole of country initiative. We saw outpourings of support from communities, businesses and people from all walks of life. It was made possible because of the dedication of private sponsors and the resettlement service providers who

made sure the refugees were provided for, and our international partners who helped bring them here."

"It was a massive humanitarian effort and it showed the strength of our country and the depths of our compassion. In 2018 and 2019, Canada was the top resettlement country globally."

"Since that first flight, nearly 73,000 Syrian refugees have settled into communities from coast to coast. Many have become Canadian citizens, and I have been honoured to attend some of their citizenship ceremonies."

"There was never a doubt that those arriving in December 2015, and in the months that followed, would give back to Canada - and they have. We see the results of their determination and resilience, and we salute the strength of those who are now our neighbours, our friends, our employees and employers and, for many, our fellow Canadian citizens."

"To those who worked and volunteered as part of this important chapter in Canadian history, we thank you."

"To those who found a new home in Canada through Operation Syrian Refugees, our sincere hopes for your continued success and happiness for years to come."

Do you need help around the home?

The Seniors Home Supports Program gives seniors referrals to screened businesses which offer:

SNOW REMOVAL HOME REPAIR & MAINTENANCE
YARD HELP HOUSEKEEPING
MOVING HELP PERSONAL SERVICES

Call the Home Supports Coordinator at
Mill Woods Seniors Association: 587-594-7884



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780-466-8699


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MONDAYS


Drums Alive
6:00 - 7:00 PM
IN PERSON


TRX
Suspension Training
7:30 - 8:30 PM
IN PERSON

TUESDAYS


ZUMBA
5:45 - 6:45 PM
IN PERSON & ONLINE



Yoga Flow
7:15 - 8:15 PM
IN PERSON & ONLINE

WEDNESDAYS

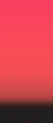

Flirty Girl Fitness
6:15 - 7:15 PM
IN PERSON AND ONLINE


IMPROV
7:30 - 9:00 PM
IN PERSON AND ONLINE

THURSDAYS


ZUMBA
fitness
5:45 - 6:45 PM
IN PERSON & ONLINE

FRIDAYS


STRONG
NATION
5:45 - 6:45 PM
IN PERSON AND ONLINE

SATURDAYS

**PROGRAMMING
OPPORTUNITY!**

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WITH YOUR IDEAS**


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SUNDAYS


**PAINT
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