



Edmonton
Community
Foundation

inTOUCH

FALL 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Canada and Edmonton are doing quite well despite the European financial uncertainties. Here at ECF we are keeping an eye on the global economic situation, assisted by our expert Investment Committee and our professional fund managers.

Because we invest for the long term, temporary financial ups and downs are not a cause for concern. We have a disciplined investment strategy and we review it regularly and adjust it when external situations warrant. We remain confident that our portfolio will continue to perform satisfactorily in the long term.

In the meantime there are many very good things happening. Two rounds of Community Grants, totalling more than \$165,000, have been disbursed

to charities that offer a broad range of programs and services in our community. The Foundation also continues to provide valuable support, beyond granting, to important causes and collaborations.

Since June, many new funds have been established, including the Bob Ward Social Enterprise Endowment Fund. As you probably heard, Bob Ward, the first Executive Director of the Social Enterprise Fund, died suddenly on June 29th, just days before his retirement. The many contributions to this endowment are a testament to the excellent work he did on our behalf.

At our AGM in June, new board members were introduced. We said goodbye to Joanne Beaton and Melissa Field who had completed their maximum number of years, and to Hussein Kanji, who re-located to Vancouver. Joining the board are three exceptional new Directors: Anne McLellan, Gurvinder Bhatia and Nancy Reynolds. We welcome them and look forward to working with them this year and beyond.

As the end of the year approaches, please be reminded of the tax benefits of year-end giving and contact donor services staff if you have any questions about it. You already know the benefits to our community of your gifts anytime!

YEAR END TAX PLANNING

A gift made now is a wonderful way to support your community and enjoy tax savings when you file your 2011 tax return. The personal tax credit for a charitable gift is 50 per cent in Alberta in 2011. *(There is some fine print that applies).*

While special tax rules apply to gifts of publicly traded securities, those transactions must be "in the works" to ensure completion in 2011, please contact Donor Services for more information. We also recommend completing your 2011 donations to Edmonton Community Foundation by way of a cheque or Visa or Mastercard.

If you personally deliver your cheque or make a Visa or Mastercard payment by phoning 780-426-0015 before noon on December 23rd, 2011 we will be able to issue you a 2011 donation receipt.

We will also be able to issue 2011 receipts for cheques made payable to ECF and mailed in 2011. The envelope must have a December 2011 postmark stamped by Canada Post.

We pledge to continue ECF's history of solid financial performance and strong community support and we thank you for your continued generous contributions through *your* Foundation.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Our office will be closed from noon on December 23rd until January 3rd, 2012.

NEW STAFF AT ECF

There have been several staff changes at ECF over the past few months. Long-time employee Judith Peglau retired in June, and two other employees - Erich Welz, special funds administrator and Shirley Short, receptionist - moved on to other opportunities.

Joining the program staff are Cassandra Flett, grants administrator, and Alex Draper, special funds administrator. Both Cassandra and Alex have been with ECF since the summer. Andrew Paul, the social media officer, started in September and Wendy Buck assumed the receptionist duties in October.

At the Social Enterprise Fund, Jane Bisbee took over as executive director in June.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM'S SUCCESS MAKES FOR SOME CHALLENGES

In the non-profit sector, it is not always affordable for organizations to provide professional development for staff and volunteers. ECF recognized the need to address the human resources challenges faced by this sector and so it established the Community Scholarships Program in 2009.

The CSP supports students who have financial need and a demonstrated history of involvement in the non-profit sector. The awards are to help with the cost of education and skills training that would allow recipients to take on leadership roles in this sector.

It seems the need is indeed great. This year, the number of requests for scholarships far outnumbered the amount of funding available. ECF received 79 applications and the awards panel responsible for reviewing the applications and making recommendations for funding awarded scholarships to five individuals. Recipients are involved with the arts, social services, counselling, and education.

Review panel members were impressed with the quality of the applicants, which made it challenging to narrow the field and ensure that recipients received a scholarship that would make a difference to covering the cost of tuition. The hope is that the endowment will grow to allow more students to receive support and contribute to the charitable sector.

“By building leadership capacity in the non-profit sector, ECF’s scholarship program is of significant value to the community,” said Karen Link, awards panel member. “As we reviewed the candidates, I had renewed hope in Edmonton’s prospects given the potential of these future leaders.”

WILLS WEEK WRAP-UP

No doubt many, if not all, of the lawyers who volunteer their time to present the free Wills Week sessions could tell horror stories of what can happen in families when there is an absent or ill-prepared will.

The purpose of Will Power Wills Week, which has been presented by ECF as a public service for the past 15 years, is to inform people of the benefits of a having a valid, up-to-date will. Along with sharing some of their wills stories, presenters discussed such issues as changes to provincial laws, the role of an executor, power of attorney and personal directives, distribution of assets and how a will can save taxes.

Twelve free sessions were offered around the city, with one held in Sherwood Park. More than 800 people took advantage of the sessions to learn more about wills.

We are once again grateful for the partnership with the Edmonton Journal and the sponsorship that was provided by the Financial Planning Standards Council.

Thank you to all of the lawyers and their firms for volunteering their time. For a list of the lawyers who participated in this year’s sessions please visit our website at www.ecfoundation.org.

FACEBOOK SHOUT-OUT



ECF is now on Facebook. As a way to increase our reach to the community, we have entered the realm of social media. We have hired a part-time Social Media Officer, Andrew Paul, to help guide us with a strategy for using these communications tools. The hope is that these platforms will take our message to a broader audience.

Visit us on Facebook.

NILEX COMMUNITY FUND



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Walter van Woudenberg understands that one good turn deserves another.

In 1977 he saw an opportunity to trail-blaze a new industry in Alberta, and founded Nilex Inc., a company that specializes in the distribution of Geosynthetics, which at that time was still a relatively new field and construction companies had to import much of these materials from Europe. Today, Nilex continues to break new ground as a leading source of innovative construction materials – products and technologies designed to lessen the environmental impact of any construction project.

“I was just a skinny kid wanting to make a living. I was in the right place at the right time. Alberta was booming and the community supported Nilex’s success which is why we want to give back,”
van Woudenberg, Nilex’s CEO says.

One way that Nilex is giving back is through a partnership with Edmonton Community Foundation. In July, Nilex established a donor advised fund with a \$200,000 gift, and in the coming months an advisory committee comprised of five to 10 Nilex employees will begin selecting charitable causes that will benefit from the company’s generosity.

The intent and purpose of the Fund is to enhance the well-being of those living in the Canadian communities in which Nilex maintains a corporate presence. Nilex has come a long way since its humble beginnings. Today Nilex consists of three companies: Nilex Inc. (Canada), Nilex Construction (Canada), and Nilex Environmental Inc. (USA) and maintains offices in Burnaby, Abbotsford, Vernon, Prince George, Calgary, Saskatoon, Toronto, and Denver, Colorado.

“We would like to find causes that will allow individual employees to devote their time and energy,” van Woudenberg says. “We want to be different than other organizations. It’s easy to simply cut a cheque once or twice a year and throw it in the mail. It’s more meaningful to engage our people to volunteer their time and energy.”

FROM TADPOLES TO ANIMAL TRACKS

Helping young naturalists explore their environment

When Nature Alberta approached Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) about supporting its Young Naturalist Club, ECF saw a shining opportunity.

“We’re often asked to help fund environmental projects outside of the city, but it’s rare that we are able to support local environmental programs, and we knew that this was an opportunity we couldn’t pass up,” Scott Graham, ECF director of community grants says.

The \$20,000 Community Grant will help fund the YNC’s youth programming by covering project administration costs

and subsidizing low-income families who otherwise could not afford to participate in YNC events including Explorer Days.

The ultimate goal of projects like Explorer Days is to get kids away from the TV and computer screen and into the fresh air to learn about the natural world outside of a classroom setting. The hope is to inspire a new generation of environmentalists by bringing in experts to teach the classes.

“The kids get a real sense of nature, and one of my favourite activities is a forest sensory activity we do,” Kelsie Sharun, YNC project coordinator says. “The kids are given a list of descriptors like squishy, soft, prickly and red, and they have to go into the forest and find objects that match the descriptors. That allows for spontaneous learning, because whatever they find we’ll talk about in a larger group discussion.”

The next Explorer Day takes place on Nov. 12 at the John Janzen Nature Centre. This time the theme is tracking animals.

The children will learn to identify and follow animal tracks in the mud or snow, and how to approach them undetected. The day will be capped off with a craft project that will see the students create plaster casts of their favourite animal tracks.

With a little luck, events like this will inspire the children to get involved with conservation activities in the future, and help preserve the natural beauty of our river city – a goal shared by Nature Alberta and ECF.

“I really enjoyed working with the ECF,” Sharun says. “The ECF is very thorough and committed to serving Edmonton and its citizens.”



ALL THE WORLD IS (AN ALUMINUM) STAGE



Mark Meer, Belinda Cornish and John Wright in a scene from Twelfth Night, one of the two plays presented at the 2011 Freewill Shakespeare Festival.

The Free Will Players have weathered many an Edmonton summer in the Heritage Amphitheatre, the home of the Freewill Shakespeare Festival for several weeks every year. The FWP have been bringing the works of Shakespeare to audiences for the past 23 years - on beautiful, warm evenings and dreary, rain-soaked nights.

“Mother Nature can really throw a wrench into things”, says Fawnda Mithrush, the festival’s general manager.

“Bad weather is tough on the artists, the audience and the bank account.”

It’s also tough on the stage. Every year the festival installs a pre-fabricated forestage to the existing amphitheatre stage. “The forestage really contributes to the experience of seeing the play”, explains Mithrush. “It brings the action closer to the audience and allows actors to enter and exit the stage through the aisles. “

Historically the forestages have been made of plywood and had to be rebuilt every few years. One of the items the festival wanted to budget for was the construction of an aluminum stage with interlocking components that can be easily taken apart and reassembled. The stage would last longer and would save money on storage.

This past summer attendance at the festival was down - due in part to the seemingly endless rain and the swarms of voracious mosquitoes. This of course meant revenues were down too. The new stage would have been just a dream were it not for a grant from ECF.

“The stage could never have happened without the ECF funding, we just would not have had the money this year”, says Mithrush.

The aluminum stage will be ready for the 2012 festival and thanks to ECF, the stage is the thing.

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www.ecfoundation.org



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