

THE 2012

Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Awards

**CELEBRATING CREATIVITY,
RISK & SUCCESS**



CCVO
Calgary Chamber of
Voluntary Organizations

Creativity
is thinking up
new things.

Innovation
is doing
new things.

THEODORE LEVITT

The 2012 Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Awards

Throughout Calgary, many nonprofit organizations and charities are seeking, creating and advancing innovation in how they deliver services... and do business.

Social Services

Arts & Culture

Environment

Fund Raising & Volunteerism

Professional Associations & Unions

Religion

Universities, Colleges & Hospitals

Sports & Recreation

Health

Education & Research

Advocacy & Policy

Development & Housing

International

Nonprofits are stepping up with the desire and action to truly do things differently in bold and meaningful ways.

Cenovus Energy is the community sponsor of
The Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Awards for 2012.

Building better futures together is at the heart of Cenovus Energy's community investment strategy. They support a wide range of organizations that are focused on the needs that matter most to the local community. Through their support of this awards program – Cenovus Energy helps honour, champion and advance innovation in Calgary's nonprofit sector.

Learn more: cenovus.com

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ENERGY

This is our second year recognizing innovation in Calgary's nonprofit sector.

The awards were established to celebrate creativity, risk-taking, learning and successful improvements. The Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Awards are open to all Calgary and area nonprofits and registered charities.

We've discovered that organizations in our city are thinking and acting ingeniously. Leaders and team members in many nonprofit subsectors are finding and advancing opportunities to stimulate and cultivate innovation: they are changing the ways they deliver services and do business.

In Calgary's nonprofit sector, innovation is active in various guises. Unique collaborative partnerships have overcome perceived barriers of geographic boundaries, funding requirements, confidentiality constraints and resource sharing. This "power of many" is seen in extended networks, strategic relationships and shared commitment.

Others in our sector are embracing game-changing ways of operating, or are implementing new processes and inventive service offerings. Some groups are establishing social enterprises that provide both employment and funding opportunities. Nonprofits are stepping up with the desire and action to truly do things differently in bold and meaningful ways.

Astute leaders are also recognizing that innovation is not always externally-focused; it can be embodied within an organization in original employee-engagement strategies and this in turn can be a catalyst for even more innovation!

Through the Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Awards we have an opportunity to showcase innovation in action. This year's recipients demonstrate that while innovation can be a significant shift from the status quo, it can also consist of meaningful adjustments at a more fundamental level that deliver powerful impact.

By sharing these stories, we applaud these ground-breaking organizations – and we hope to stimulate others. We know that innovation is a mindset, not an outcome; it stems from a desire to do things better to improve the outcomes for our stakeholders. The possibilities for our sector are almost limitless.

Learn more: calgarycvo.org



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**The Canadian Nonprofit
Innovators Network**

Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured

ARBI gives Brain Injury and Stroke survivors a second chance at life.

“The goal was to reach survivors during the critical window of opportunity after stroke, to mitigate the long waiting lists, and to more effectively identify those who would benefit most from intense rehabilitation.”



The Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured (ARBI) is a community-based nonprofit organization. For more than 30 years, ARBI has been helping improve the lives of individuals with severe traumatic brain injury (caused by falls, car crashes, sporting injuries, assaults) and stroke.

ARBI provides a variety of rehabilitation programs and services on-site and in the community. Survivors receive a comprehensive program designed by physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists and recreation therapists. Then, volunteers, support workers or family members are trained to implement the program.



THE INNOVATION

ARBI was working at capacity. Stroke referrals had increased by 25 per cent over the previous year. Some clients were waiting as long as six months to access ARBI services and the waiting list was growing. Current research confirms that the initial months following stroke are critical for rewiring new pathways in the brain. Intensive rehabilitation in the early stages of recovery results in the best outcomes. To complicate matters, not all clients referred to ARBI had the tolerance or the motivation required for intensive rehab. Suitability for intensive rehab is often determined post assessment; this practice was using up valuable resources. Meanwhile, others who were eager to work hard languished on ARBI's wait list, at risk for depression and losing any gains they had achieved in hospital. Under these pressures, the organization realized that a new approach was needed.

ARBI implemented an external audit of their rehab program. Then, with a grant from the Alberta Lottery Fund, the team of therapists, program leaders and front-line staff developed and implemented a creative model: offer the right services at the right time to the right clients.

The goal was to reach survivors during the critical window of opportunity after stroke, to mitigate the long waiting lists, and to more effectively identify those who would benefit most from intense rehabilitation.

The innovative program included a revamped screening and intake process. A new part-time Outreach Assistant provided administrative support for the additional client referrals and enhanced follow-up services with families, clients, support workers and care facilities.

A full-time Rehab Worker provided therapy to clients on the ARBI wait list to initiate the program sooner. Therapy was offered on-site and in clients' homes. The therapists also designed a twice weekly wheelchair exercise program to bridge the waiting period from hospital to ARBI. The exercise program provided an opportunity for individuals to socialize and improve general fitness and mental abilities in a fun atmosphere. Staff monitored individual tolerance, participation and motivation levels of clients to identify the best candidates for intensive rehab. Once a spot became available on-site, appropriate individuals transitioned to the mainstream ARBI program.

Through the creative approach of providing a combination of one-on-one and group therapy, ARBI increased its total rehab program capacity by 20 people, or 41 per cent, at minimal cost. The ARBI wait list decreased by 91 per cent and the length of wait time decreased by 58 per cent.

WHY THEY WON

The project demonstrated how ARBI recognized a gap / challenge with their current program operations and developed a simple yet effective solution in response.

This small adjustment led to significant results and demonstrates an internal innovation that allowed ARBI to better reach and serve their clients through improved process and extended outreach.

It demonstrated how an organization challenged itself to change – and the willingness and creativity to reinvent how it delivered services.



Calgary Public Library

Celebrating its centennial this year, the Calgary Public Library serves as an invaluable resource for all Calgarians.

"A unique employee-engagement strategy in support of the library's organizational to-do list challenged staff to get creative under the banner: *Calgary Public Library is seeking big ideas!*"



The Calgary Public Library is one of the largest public library systems in North America and the second largest civic library system in Canada. Calgarians visit the library's 18 branches five million times each year, and borrow more than 16 million books, CDs, DVDs, and other materials.

This year, 2012, marks the 100th anniversary of the Calgary Public Library which, through its mission to *Inspire Life Stories*, ensures all Calgarians have access to resources for information, learning, inspiration and enjoyment.



THE INNOVATION

The Calgary Public Library launched a unique employee-engagement strategy in support of a number of items on the institution's to-do list including: strengthening a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in all parts of the library system; providing real-life opportunities for staff to hone skills in writing, presentations, critical and quick-thinking, and project management; reinforcement of the principles of a new project management process; trying out new technologies; and, not least, having fun. At the same time, the Calgary Public Library hoped that many ideas would come forward which could improve service for library customers, attract new users and introduce operating efficiencies.

The Library's version of Dragon's Den, a popular TV entrepreneurial pitch show, put out the call for proposals among all 906 employees under the banner: Calgary Public Library is seeking big ideas! The winner of the selected proposal would receive up to \$10,000 towards the cost of implementation. Twenty-eight submissions were received from staff and managers throughout the library. Nine were selected to be pitched in front of three members of the Calgary Public Library's senior leadership group (the Dragons).

The lunchtime pitch sessions were watched by staff attending the Central Library's John Dutton Theatre or virtually through live-streaming on the Library's channel. This was the first time the Library had used this technology and the event became a practical testing ground for future live-streaming of library programs. Also for the first time, the Library used live audience response software to poll those in attendance physically or virtually to ask what their favourite proposals were. Using the results of the poll, a People's Choice award was presented after each session.

The winning proposal was for the development of a Welcome to the Calgary Public Library video production available in 10 languages. The idea's originator, Umashanie Reddy, Manager of Diversity Services, was charged with developing an implementation plan and budget and led the concept through to delivery including a launch event with attendees from many of Calgary's immigrant-serving agencies and the video's translators and narrators.

The multi-language video is available on the Calgary Public Library's website, provided to local agencies, and is in every library location. It is also screened during library tours and ESL coffee and conversation programs. Citizenship and Immigration Canada has provided funding for translation into eight additional languages and for expanded distribution.

WHY THEY WON

This project demonstrates a new internal process taken to bring fresh ideas to life and engage employees. It has benefits for library clients through service improvements and also as a boost to employee morale and retention.

The Calgary Public Library recognized that innovation is not just external-facing but also an important part of internal culture; they gave their staff permission and encouragement to innovate.

It is a positive example of innovation in a sector that strives to stay relevant as advancing technology continues to evolve ways of accessing information and resources.



Bridges of Love Ministry Society

Bridges of Love Ministry brings churches, emergency responders and the community together.

“The Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) facilitates the development of an integrated network of local churches to complement, strengthen and enhance performance with existing secular emergency management organizations creating a climate of mutual respect and understanding.”



Bridges of Love Ministry is a charitable organization that links churches with the public and private sectors to enhance community resilience in the event of an emergency or disaster.

The Ministry provides opportunities for churches to be a catalyst for change – reaching out with greater concern for, and influence on, those in their community.



THE INNOVATION

Managing resources during a major emergency is a significant challenge. Emergency response typically requires personnel, facilities, supplies and equipment from multiple organizations and jurisdictions. And, while the community's response to a major crisis is typically generous – uncontrolled mobilization and over-response are common challenges.

Bridges of Love Ministry formed the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) with support from an Advisory Council of representatives from the federal, provincial and municipal government emergency sectors as well as from the private, non-governmental and Christian communities. Bridges of Love Ministry was challenged by Public Safety Canada to develop a template which could be duplicated in other locations.

FEPI is a network of churches integrated with the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) offering a coordinated church body to complement and strengthen the emergency response in times of disaster or crisis. Faith communities are well-positioned to work with local emergency agencies as they are responsive to whatever people need, have a closeness to and familiarity with the communities they serve, have unique resources and capabilities directly applicable to the types of services needed in a disaster or crisis and can provide well-coordinated, trained volunteers ready to assist.

In each of Calgary's four geographic quadrants, one church is the designated lead during an emergency; they become the hub for information and volunteer deployment. Bridges of Love Ministry, the Faith Coordination Centre, acts as the liaison between CEMA and FEPI churches. Currently, 45 churches are part of the initiative; with more than 500 churches in the Calgary community, the hope and expectation is that many more will soon formalize their participation.

Churches can act as Emergency Reception Sites and 10 FEPI churches have completed the CEMA Disaster Social Services assessment. During a major disaster and through the recovery phase, churches respond to the needs of all community residents (whether church members or not) through the provision of: shelter; food, medical and hygiene services; mental and spiritual support; transportation and reconstruction aid.

Key to FEPI's effectiveness is collaboration, coordination, communication and integration with the Municipal Emergency Management Agency. Bridges of Love Ministry is building trust and developing relationships between all sectors of the emergency field through participation on the project's Advisory Council. Currently 25 members from major centers in Alberta meet twice a year in support of future collaboration during a major crisis. A Service Agreement with CEMA is an essential and critical aspect of the initiative. It provides protocols and structure for engaging in a disaster and recovery process and addresses the needs for volunteer awareness and appropriate training.

A recent grant from the Calgary Foundation enabled Bridges of Love Ministry to initiate the first Pandemic Table Top Exercise – an open forum discussion where a hypothetical emergency situation was presented and discussed by participants. This followed earlier orientation workshops and instructional sessions for FEPI partners.

WHY THEY WON

This project has brought CEMA and 45 churches together in a dynamic partnership using integrated faith networks in conjunction with a formalized agreement.

This initiative has – through its unique collaborative – the potential to have significant positive impact for community members who need services and support when an emergency occurs.

This project shows the power of leadership and a commitment to partnering in new and important ways. They successfully navigated the complex politics of collaboration and are engaged in strengthening the alliance to establish a strong foundation.



High Fidelity Wraparound Collaborative

High Fidelity Wraparound is a process to better help families, children and youth with complex needs.

“The wraparound model ensures each family has a voice and choice; they have a say in who is going to help them make tough decisions and support them through their own journeys.”



The High Fidelity Wraparound Collaborative utilizes a process to better help families, children and youth with complex needs. The Collaborative is recognized for this innovation award implemented and partnered by:

Calgary and Area Child and Family Services; Enviros Wilderness School Association; Hull Services; and McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association.

THE INNOVATION

High Fidelity Wraparound is a process to better help families, children and youth with complex needs. It's an approach where families are empowered to work collaboratively with formal and informal supports to develop a plan that will help them realize their vision for a better life. The core belief is that all families and youth are the experts of their own lives and should be the ones making decisions on issues that directly affect them.

The wraparound model has been used in other communities in North America as the preferred strategy for an integrated "system of care" for families and children needing diverse supports and services. The concepts at its heart are: a family-centered team, individualized plans, planning based on strengths and culture, helping community connections and planning based on needs rather than services.

The Calgary High Fidelity Wraparound Collaborative has been working together toward improved outcomes for families since 2007. Prior to the implementation of wraparound, families and youth with complex problems would often be involved with multiple systems providing assistance. The systems were often not coordinated; they lacked the communications to ensure families received the support they needed. Families often felt they had little or no voice in the case planning process and how decisions were made that impacted their lives.

Now, the wraparound model ensures each family has a voice and choice; they have a say in who is going to help them make tough decisions and support them through their own journeys. A focus is placed on the power of the natural family and leveraging natural supports including community, family and friends – rather than pre-determined or formal paid support services. Families now see case workers as meaningful partners assisting them in times of challenge.

The Collaborative has achieved positive outcomes for the children and youth being supported: a significant percentage of children in government care have returned home. Others have been placed in less intrusive placements including foster care and independent living. The Collaborative has also been measuring its fidelity since 2008 against the Wraparound Fidelity Index. The Calgary model is exceeding national averages in all areas as determined by the National Wraparound Initiative.

WHY THEY WON

This project demonstrates innovation through the partnership established between organizations. This group of agencies mitigated barriers including funding, territory and confidentiality to make this initiative possible and it has resulted in positive change and outcomes for clients in the larger system.

Staff were encouraged to be innovative and as a result, a case worker suggested establishing the wraparound model in Calgary.

The Calgary High Fidelity Wraparound Collaborative provides wraparound training to staff working with children, youth and families across the province demonstrating how the experience in Calgary is leveraged to enhance the models of support to families and children throughout Alberta.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We believe that a critical step in growing a culture of innovative practice is sharing the experiences of organizations that have undertaken (or are undertaking) elements of innovative practice. Through showcasing recipients of The Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Awards, we hope others will explore how they might incorporate aspects of innovative practices in their own organizations.

CCVO thanks the Project Advisory Committee for their contributions to this work:

Sharilyn Amy	Go-To Group, Inc.
Karina Campbell	The Mustard Seed
Carlo Jensen	Uniscan Consulting Inc.
Janet Lavoie	City of Calgary
Megan Marshall	Cenovus Energy
Sue Phillips	Further Education Society
Erin Sharp	STARS Foundation
Mike Grogan	Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

Our website shares more information about nonprofit innovation occurring in Alberta. You'll find links to organizations, collaboratives, think tanks, events and innovation reports, studies and resources.

ABOUT THE CALGARY CHAMBER OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

The Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations gives voice to the nonprofit sector. CCVO promotes and strengthens the sector by developing and sharing resources and knowledge, building connections, leading collaborative work, and giving voice to critical issues affecting the sector. CCVO's vision is of a vital, dynamic nonprofit and voluntary sector that is recognized and respected as an integral partner in building strong, healthy communities.

Learn more: calgarycvo.org

ABOUT THE CANADIAN NONPROFIT INNOVATORS' NETWORK

The Canadian Nonprofit Innovators' Network brings people and organizations together to develop and share innovative practices in the nonprofit sector. The Innovators' Network does this through an interactive website that links people, ideas and tools; an annual forum to showcase and learn about innovations; and through the development and support of regional Innovation Nodes that animate innovative ideas and practices in their regions.

Learn more: sparkinginnovation.ca

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**All human
development,
no matter what
form it takes,
must be outside
the rules;
otherwise we
would never have
anything new.**

CHARLES KETTERING



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