



THE 2013

calgary nonprofit innovation awards

CELEBRATING CREATIVITY,
RISK & SUCCESS



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

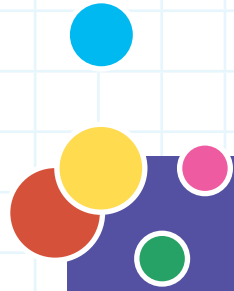
- Social Services
- Sports & Recreation
- Arts & Culture
- Health
- Environment
- Education & Research
- Fundraising & Volunteerism
- Advocacy & Policy
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- Development & Housing
- Religion
- International
- Universities, Colleges & Hospitals

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 2013.

Building stronger futures by fostering innovation and strengthening community capacity is important at Cenovus. They partner with many organizations that are focused on developing sustainable communities. Through their support of this awards program – Cenovus has helped honour, champion and advance innovation in Calgary's nonprofit sector. *Learn more: cenovus.com*

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ENERGY



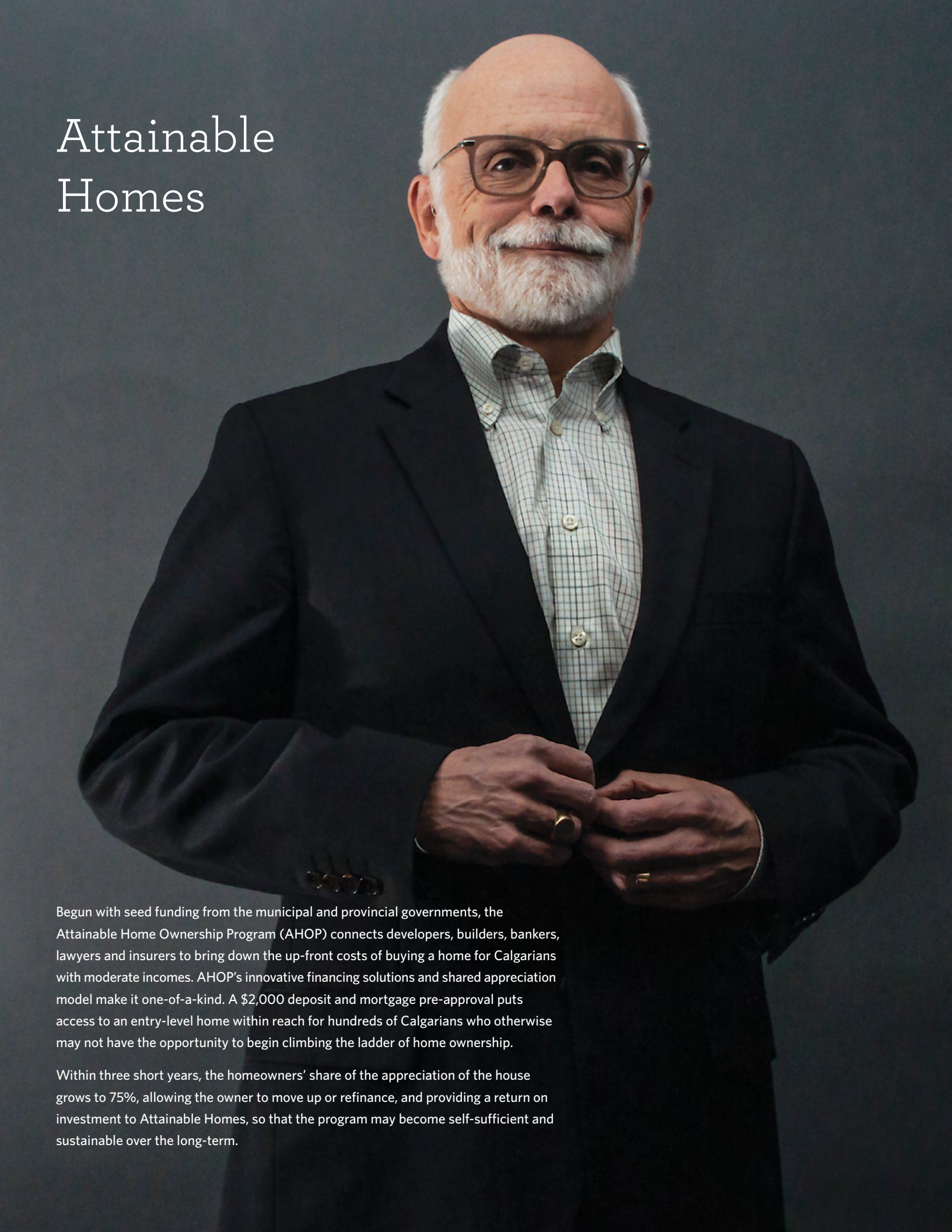
Charities and nonprofits are often the vanguard when it comes to finding creative solutions to systemic problems. Now in its third year, the Calgary Nonprofit Innovation Awards celebrate this creative spirit and showcase local innovation in action.

These examples of unique collaborative partnerships, game-changing ways of operating, and inventive service offerings show how local nonprofits are stepping up with the desire to truly do things differently in bold and meaningful ways. Each of these stories is a concrete example of innovative thinking making a difference in the lives of our fellow Calgarians, our neighbours, family and friends.

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

Attainable Homes



Begun with seed funding from the municipal and provincial governments, the Attainable Home Ownership Program (AHOP) connects developers, builders, bankers, lawyers and insurers to bring down the up-front costs of buying a home for Calgarians with moderate incomes. AHOP's innovative financing solutions and shared appreciation model make it one-of-a-kind. A \$2,000 deposit and mortgage pre-approval puts access to an entry-level home within reach for hundreds of Calgarians who otherwise may not have the opportunity to begin climbing the ladder of home ownership.

Within three short years, the homeowners' share of the appreciation of the house grows to 75%, allowing the owner to move up or refinance, and providing a return on investment to Attainable Homes, so that the program may become self-sufficient and sustainable over the long-term.



Meet David: He's narrowing the home affordability gap through innovative financing.

As Calgary has boomed, busted and boomed again, the gap between salaries and house prices keeps growing. Attainable Homes' CEO and President David Watson has been helping "people with real jobs, real credit ratings who could never get ahead enough to make a down payment" find their way to home ownership.

A former General Manager of the City's Planning, Development and Assessment Department, David has a unique perspective on the challenges that face Calgarians who have found themselves unable to participate in an ever-increasing growth in the cost of home ownership.

"Look at other cities to see what has happened. It's great when you have buckets of money, not great if you have no money, but at least then there are social agencies [to help]. The whole middle class gets hollowed out, where people have to drive until they can afford a mortgage," says David.

The solution? A better way for Calgarians who are earning \$80 - 90K per year in total household income to take the first steps towards home ownership. Attainable Homes works within the development system to bulk-buy housing units at a discounted rate. This discount is recognized by lenders and insurers as an equity loan - otherwise known as a gifted down payment - which means that buyers don't have to come up with the sizeable down payment that is required on the mainstream housing market.

It is a solution that has worked for Frances Crow, a recent immigrant to Canada from the UK.

For Frances, deciding to make the biggest purchasing decision of her life with Attainable Homes as a partner became easier once she did the simple math. She realized that any equity she earned would be more than the grand sum of zero she was earning in the rental market.

"Why am I paying into someone else's pocket when I can be doing this on my own, and moving myself up the mortgage ladder? If I make a profit, say I make thirty thousand, and I am paying back 25%, that's putting money back into a charity that helped me that is able to help someone else," says Frances.


France's story is just one of hundreds that Attainable Homes has helped to shape in the past five years. It is a story that David hopes becomes shared by more and more Calgarians as the city continues its economic growth.

When asked about the Calgary of 2023, David responds, "We work with Habitat for Humanity, Calgary Housing Company, and the Homeless Foundation... we see this as a housing continuum. I spent my life planning cities. Cities are wonderful things, but there has to be planning to try to figure out how to make it work, and that means planning for diversity. My goal would be that we end up having a diversity of population in ages and incomes, because that is what makes a strong city."

And what does the future hold for Frances? "I still don't feel as if it's sunk in completely. I still haven't put any pictures on the walls because I don't want to put any holes in the drywall. I'm thinking about getting a puppy, or how I am going to decorate for Christmas. This will be my first Christmas in my own place. It's a nice feeling. It's the best decision I've made, apart from coming to Canada, since coming to Canada."

With current forecasts indicating that economic and population growth will continue to inflate home prices in Calgary, the need for AHOP is as important as ever. Improving access to housing contributes to Calgary's *10-Year Plan to End Homelessness* and makes it clear that Calgary is a great place to make a living and - most importantly - a great place to make a life.

Trinity Place



“I’ll be chilling with a senior and one of them will let me know about the past...” - *Lacy*

Trinity Place Foundation of Alberta (TPFA) is the largest provider of self-contained seniors' housing in Calgary, offering a variety of facilities and services responding to the needs of a diverse clientele. TPFA's 'more than housing' philosophy is based on hope for a future where appropriate housing and effective support services are available for all seniors in Calgary.

In 2011, Trinity Place's Murdoch Manor residence, located in the East Village, was dealing with a high vacancy rate. Inspired by a unique project in Red Deer, TPFA recognized that the vacancy situation was in fact an opportunity, and approached Bow Valley College with the hopes of addressing two problems: a shortage of affordable student housing in Calgary, and feelings of isolation among seniors.



Meet Lacy: She is living and learning with seniors in her community.

While Bow Valley College student Lacy Ford works towards a bachelor degree in Interior Design, she's getting another sort of education from her neighbours at Murdoch Manor. Lacy contributes towards her subsidized student housing by volunteering with the senior residents she lives with: preparing meals, planning events, helping with household tasks, or just spending time sharing stories.

"I'll be chilling with a senior and one of them will let me know about the past... I like music, so he will start telling me about the Motown days, and his experience of being there at a live show, seeing James Brown when he first fell on stage," Lacy recalls. "A lot of them are Canadian elders, which is really cool because then you see the history that sometimes isn't documented, talking about working on the railways or what life used to be like being a nurse back in the day."

Lacy is one of more than a dozen Bow Valley College students who have been living at the seniors' facility since the program began in 2011. The multi-generational living situation enhances the sense of community within the complex and enriches the lives of the people who live there, truly a 'win/win' scenario for students in need of housing and isolated seniors in need of social interaction.

The strong relationship between the students and seniors also made for a resilient support network during the flood of June 2013, when Murdoch Manor was forced to evacuate. Manor resident Ian McCutcheon was one of the seniors forced from his home, and he remembers fondly how Bow Valley College student Matthew Smith

provided a very stabilizing presence during their six-week stay in a temporary shelter at Olds College.

"I developed ultimate respect for Matthew," says Ian, explaining how Matthew embraced the opportunity to assist with the Manor residents. "He was studying social work, and suddenly had a practicum. Matthew was there 24 hours a day. He became the one you went to with a problem, he listened with compassion and understanding."

Matthew, now a caretaker at Murdoch Manor, has enjoyed getting to know his unlikely neighbours. "There are a lot of seniors who don't have family nearby and they just want someone to talk with. This program has been a great way to meet new people, give back to the community I live in, and have a quiet place to live and study."

Lacy agrees, and sees the social life she's found at Murdoch Manor to be incredibly rewarding. "If every apartment did stuff like this, communities would be better in general. "

The partnership between Trinity Place and Bow Valley College is exemplified by the vital relationships that have been fostered between these students and seniors. What on the surface seems a solution to a fairly mundane problem of how to fill vacant suites has become a success story about building strong multi-generational bonds. The story of Murdoch Manor is a sterling example of what can happen when we realize that everyone has a role to play in building a system of support networks for all Calgarians.

Prospect Human Services



A colorful, vibrant and energetic place, Prospect's Studio C is a unique, integrated community art and resource center where people with and without disabilities collaborate, find inspiration, and immerse themselves in Calgary's art community. For some people, a classroom isn't the best place to learn. Studio C's ArtRecruits initiative helps adults with mental health barriers learn employment skills in the art room instead of a classroom. Over the course of 12 weeks participants work as a team to identify and engage a community employer/partner in the creation of a joint art project and public exhibition; all while setting and achieving job placement, career development and educational goals.



Meet Marie and Alexi: They are using art to develop and encourage job placement skills.

When Marie Chapman was approached to participate in ArtRecruits, she was hesitant at first. But the self-proclaimed tea lover was won over when the program leader mentioned that she would have access to an unlimited supply of hot water. "My thought was OK I will give it a try and can drink all the tea I want," says Marie.

Marie quickly realized the potential role ArtRecruits could play in helping her achieve some personal goals she had set out for herself.

"My initial goals were very basic things," says Marie. "I wasn't really open to the idea of getting a job, just because I didn't think I was capable of it. Prior, I'd never really had a real job before. So one of my goals was to look people in the eye and say hello every time I was there. Another one of my goals was to just be open to the idea of employment and participate in the resume-building and other [employment] workshops. The more it went on the easier it got. I still ran into difficulties but had to keep reminding myself why I was there."

For many of the ArtRecruits participants, employment may not be the only goal. Alexi Davis, Prospect's Manager of Disability Services explains that "the structure of the model is project based, and within the project, art is the attractor - it's why someone maybe wants to get engaged"

Once in the program, however, participants find themselves immersed in a creative project that pays in dividends towards building employable skills.

"There are tons of employability and essential life skills that are fostered through this process. Group dynamics, communication, consistency, time management, commitment, planning, problem solving, and stakeholder engagement - all of these skills that anyone needs for any type of job," says Alexi.

But skill development is just one part of the equation. Employer participation was also identified as critical, so ArtRecruits pairs its participants with employers in facilitated art projects geared toward team-building.

"The collaborative partners that engage in this process get such a unique experience working with a group of individuals with mental health concerns. It can challenge your preconceived notions of what that is," says Alexi. "Having a real experience with somebody is a huge shift for people and for the companies who are willing to be engaged."

It is this level of engagement that benefitted the initially hesitant Marie, and helped her to find her current job, which she loves, at a warehouse for an online retailer.

"I learned how to be social again, and I learned a lot of teambuilding skills, learning to work with people, and making connections. Sometimes I still can't believe that all of this has happened. I am moving into a condo in the New Year, I'm working almost full time and just because of where I was before, it's just sometimes mind boggling, but it keeps me going. It's just great," enthuses Marie.

ArtRecruits partners, facilitators and participants use art as a bridge towards more inclusive thinking and a more diverse workplace, with results that often surprise all participants. The measurable outcomes are impressive: over a two-year period, more than 91% of adults with mental health issues who completed the ArtRecruits program have either found employment or enrolled in further education, results that have wide-ranging positive impact on our community.



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:

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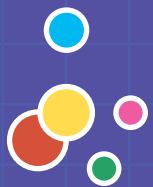
Adrian Bohach *The Ability Society*

Mike Grogan *Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organization*

About CCVO

CCVO is a bold advocate and champion of the nonprofit sector. We are the voice at the table ensuring the sector's perspective is heard and that our story is told. Our in-depth research provides analysis of nonprofit issues and trends, enabling funders, government and nonprofits and charities to make informed, community-minded decisions. Our workshops and practical resources promote sustainable and innovative practices. We bring together nonprofits and charities and provide a safe place for conversations with government and corporations.

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