

# ECVO Annual Report 2008

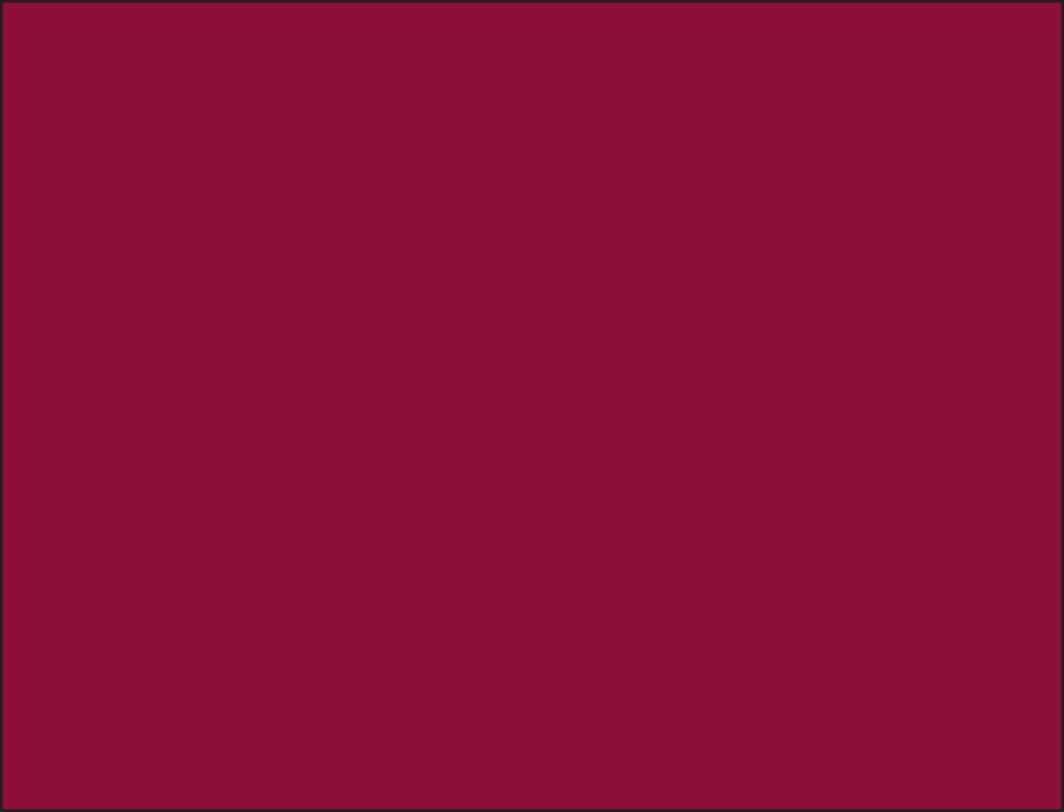


Edmonton  
Chamber of  
Voluntary  
Organizations

Serving nonprofits for stronger communities

[www.ecvo.ca](http://www.ecvo.ca)

# The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations



# ECVO Annual Report 2008

The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) is a nonprofit society and registered charity. The ECVO's primary focus is to enhance the sector's capacity to deliver programs and services by providing information and resources that strengthen organizational governance and operations; researching, analyzing and communicating information about broad issues that impact the sector's viability and vitality; offering leadership within the sector in order to increase awareness of the sector's contribution to quality of life; and advocating for measures that support the sector's short and long term sustainability.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our funders:  
Edmonton Community Foundation, Muttart Foundation,  
The United Way, The Wild Rose Foundation.

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# Message from the Chair



# ECVO Annual Report 2008

In 2008, the ECVO Board of Directors undertook different pieces of work reflective of the need for ECVO to continue to be an adaptive and resilient organization. To this end, the board and staff reviewed ECVO's strategic directions which resulted in a renewed commitment for ECVO's focus of building capacity of individual organizations and advocating on public policy issues of importance to the non-profit sector.



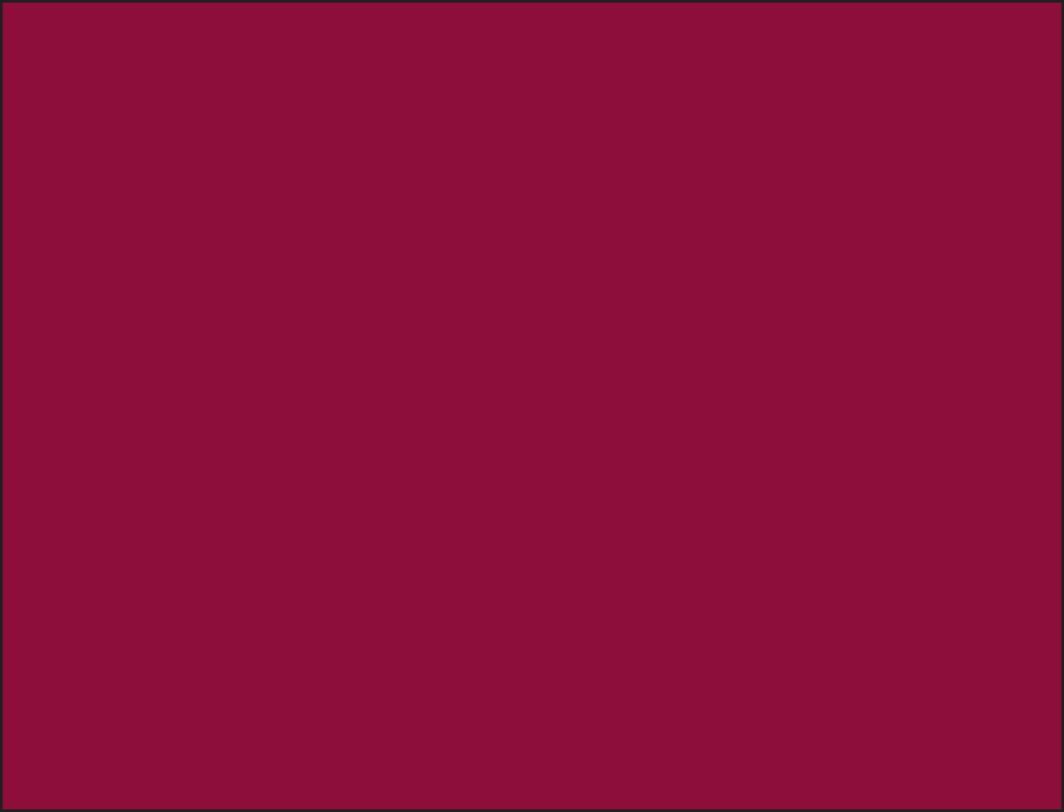
**ECVO Board Chair Kelly Sloan**

For building capacity of organizations, ECVO staff undertook initiatives that raised the profile of the sector and held workshops/educational sessions on current issues. In addition, the ECVO executive director continued to be actively engaged in public policy discussions on important sector issues such as lack of space for operations, a labour force strategy for the non-profit sector, and the provincial Lobbyists Bill. In order to continue to provide advocacy and services for the non-profit sector in Edmonton, ECVO board and staff sought input from organizations and individuals in the sector and also undertook a review and realignment of ECVO's membership structure. ECVO branding and profile in the community were also identified as priority areas and to this end, a new website was launched to raise the organization and sector profile.

The latter part of 2008 saw ECVO actively seeking funding for sustainability of operations and advocacy work in the coming years. This will continue to be a focus for the organization in the months to come. In 2008 the ECVO Board did an exceptional job of fulfilling their governance duties and monitoring the current sector and public policy issues requiring input and information.

Thank you to the ECVO Board and staff as well as to the organization's funders who continue to support the need for an Edmonton-based non-profit voice.

# Board of Directors



# ECVO Annual Report 2008

**Cindy Chiasson** is the Executive Director of the Environmental Law Centre (ELC) which is a registered charity that has acted as a public source of information about environmental law since 1982. Its mission is to ensure that laws, policies and legal processes protect the environment. ELC activities and services cover two broad categories: public legal education and information, and law reform and research. Services include lawyer consultation, lawyer referrals, community presentations, a public lending library and an extensive website.

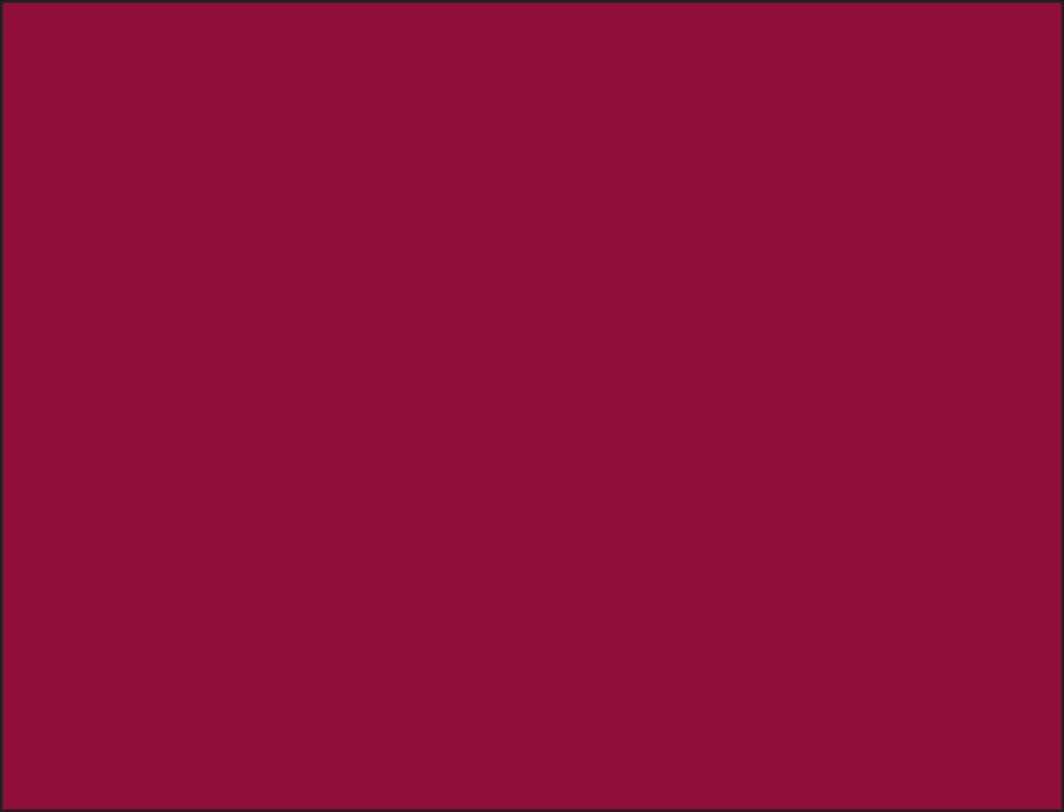
**Catherine Cole**, principal consultant with Catherine C. Cole & Associates for 16 years, has more than 30 years experience working for cultural organizations. Catherine is the Alberta Governor and past chair of the Board of the Heritage Canada Foundation; a member of the governing council of the Material Culture Institute at the University of Alberta; and the Education Advisory Committee for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

**Larry Derkach** has been executive director of Jewish Family Services since 2001, but his involvement in the nonprofit sector, both as employee and volunteer, began in 1971. Larry strongly believes the sector needs to work together creatively on common issues in order to advance a healthy civil society.

**Jim Gurnett** has been Executive Director of Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers since 2001. EMCN is a civil society organization providing programs and services for people who are immigrants and refugees. Recognitions: Queen's Jubilee Medal (2004) Alberta Centennial Medal (2005) Project Ploughshares Edmonton Salvos Prelorenzozs Peace Award (2007) Grant MacEwan College (2008) Honorary diploma in Community Studies Alberta Venture magazine (2007) "Alberta's 50 Most Influential People"

**Kathy Lenihan**, executive director of ABC Head Start for four years, has been involved with Head Start programs for over 20 years. Kathy has a Bachelor of Education degree and 10 years teaching experience at the elementary school level. ABC Head Start is a pre-kindergarten program aimed at working with low income children and families to achieve success in learning and life. The agency serves over 350 children and families across the city.

# Board of Directors



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**Susan Morrissey** is executive director for the Edmonton Social Planning Council, a social research and public education organization which has been in existence for 69 years. She has worked for over 15 years in the health and social services aspects of the nonprofit sector.

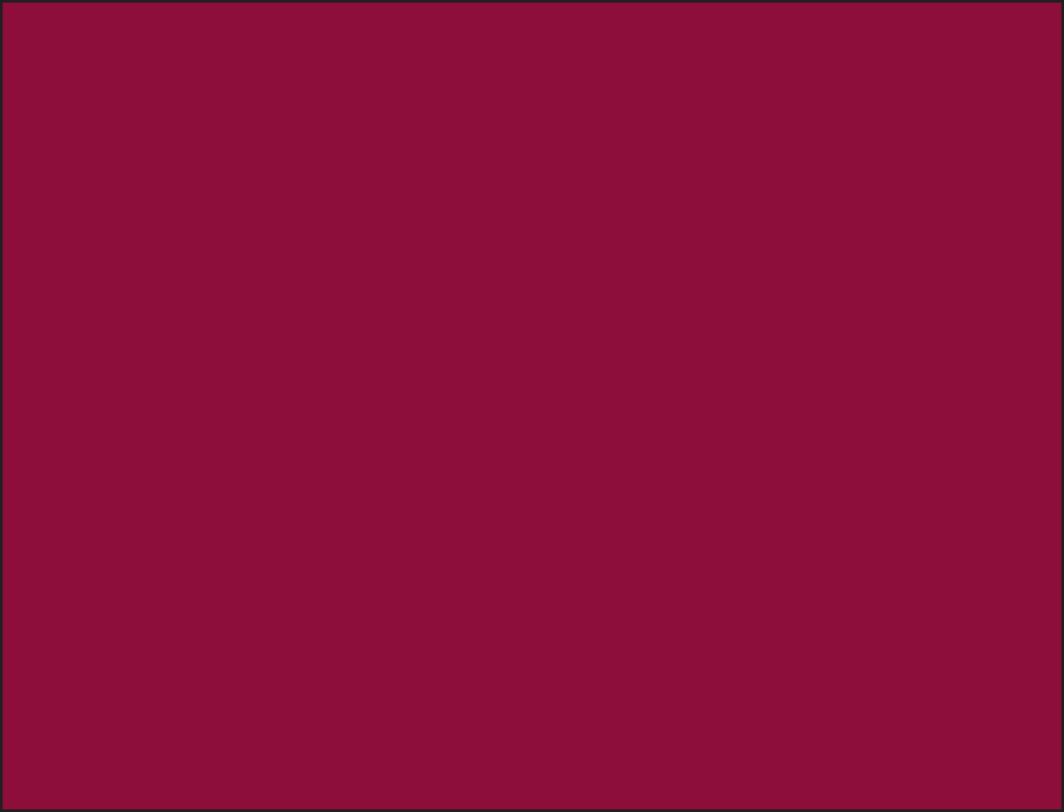
**John Mahon** has been executive director of the Edmonton Arts Council since 1998, serving as grants officer with the organization prior to that. The Edmonton Arts Council is a unique, visionary organization developed in 1995 by the City of Edmonton in consultation with the artists and arts supporters in Edmonton. The EAC allocates the city's Community Investment Grants to arts and festival organizations, and provides advice and advocacy on arts and cultural policy and issues to the city.

**Liz O'Neill** has been the executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters Society of Edmonton & Area since 1990. She was the Executive Director of the Edmonton Big Sister Society from 1979 to 1990. She also spent 18 months with the Muttart Foundation on issues related to children and families from the Spring of 1998 to the fall of 1999. Her work for the past 25 years has been extensively with children, youth, families, and volunteers. Liz has served on numerous local, Provincial, and National committees on issues impacting children and youth and currently co-chair of the Alberta Mentoring Partnership.

**Bev Parks** has been executive director with Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre for the past 11 years, having served in the human services field for over 25 years. She sits on a number of boards including chair of the Regional Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee and member of Agency Head Start and Alberta Children and Youth Advisory Group.

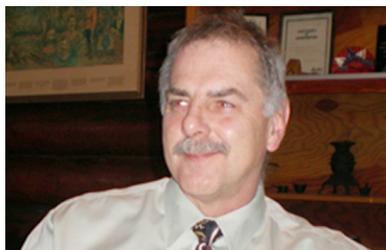
**Donna Woodford** has been the coordinator of volunteers for the Canadian Mental Health Association – Edmonton Region for the past two and a half years. She has worked in the non-profit sector since 1983. Along with serving on ECVO, Donna sits on the boards for the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues and the Lauderdale Community League. Donna has been very active in the community for the last 25 years.

# Report from the Executive Director



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The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, since its inception in 2003, has steadily evolved in its community presence through a variety of programs and services aimed at supporting and strengthening the nonprofit/voluntary sector. Throughout this past year, the ECVO has participated in several projects and initiatives. A highlight on the provincial front for 2008 was the



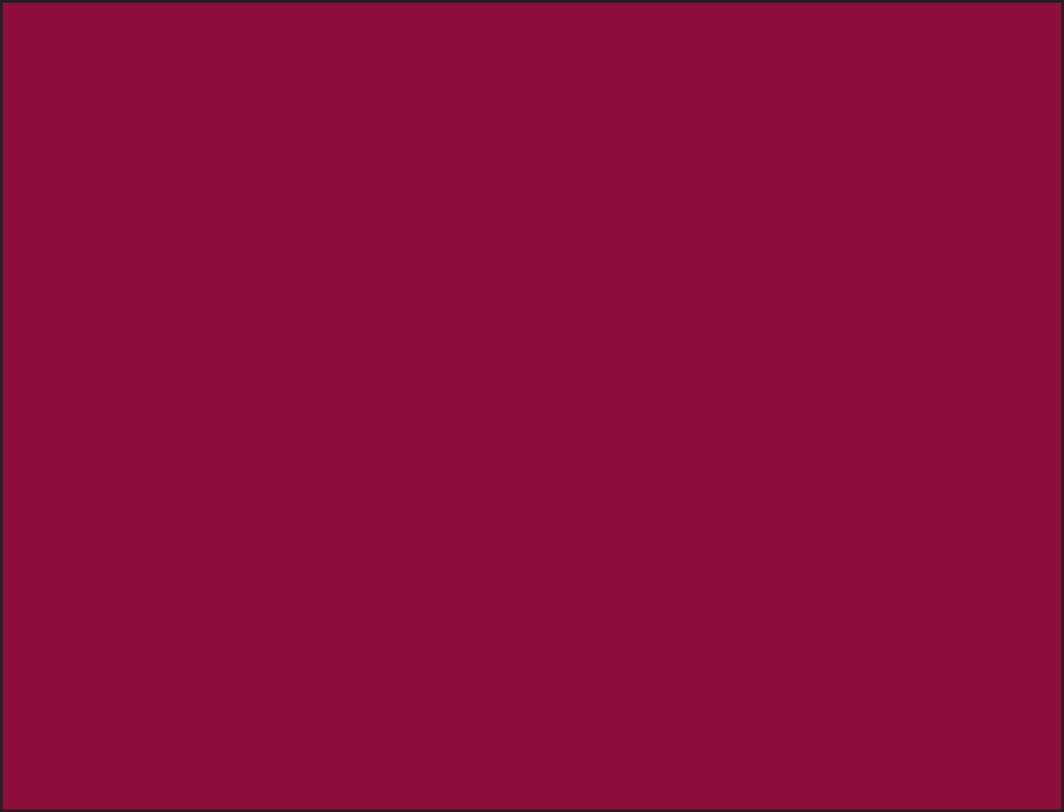
launching of A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector. ECVO teamed up with our Calgary counterpart to spearhead and drive the work to develop the initiative which was launched in April by the Minister of Alberta Employment and Immigration. The Alberta Nonprofit/Voluntary Sector Initiative, in which ECVO plays a key role, was brought into the newly created Ministry of Culture and Community Spirit and a significant focus of ANVSI was to determine how to connect with and stimulate cohesion within the voluntary sector province-wide.

On the municipal front, ECVO worked with the City of Edmonton Community Services Department on the issue of space for nonprofits. Affordable office space in the city has become a growing concern.

Other key items for ECVO in 2008: hosting a number of workshops including Canada Revenue Agency compliance workshops and nonprofit leaders circle; involvement with Volunteer Alberta during the provincial elections; launching a new website; enhancing our weekly e-bulletin; and creation of new ECVO logo, display panel and brochure.

We look forward to 2009 and the work that lies ahead.

# Collaborations and Relationships



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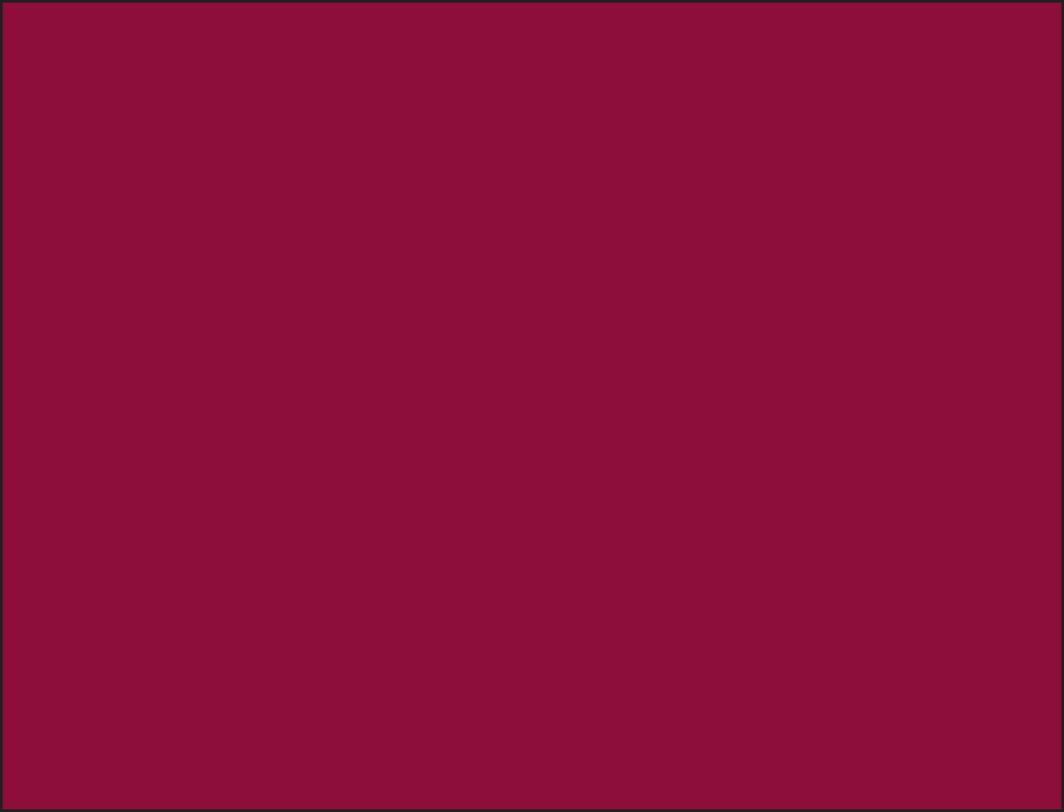
In our role as an intermediary organization, the development and maintenance of relationships with people in the government, business and nonprofit sectors is critical to our success.

The ECVO maintains membership and affiliation with the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks; Imagine Canada; Edmonton Chamber of Commerce; the HR Council for Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector; and Charity Village; to ensure ongoing communication, access to resources and opportunities to engage in beneficial programs and projects.

The ECVO also continues active participation in key provincial and local collaborations including the Alberta Voluntary Sector Insurance Council; the Alberta Nonprofit/Voluntary Sector Initiative Collaboration Committee; Partners for Better Boards group; and the Board Leadership Conference Committee.

Strong working relationships and sustained partnerships are fundamental to the ECVO's work and are reflected through the close working relationships with the Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations; Volunteer Edmonton; City of Edmonton Community Services Department; and Volunteer Alberta. The ECVO also maintains strong relationships with the provincial government departments of Culture and Community Spirit and Employment and Immigration. The ECVO also works closely with its counterpart in Calgary, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations.

# Communications



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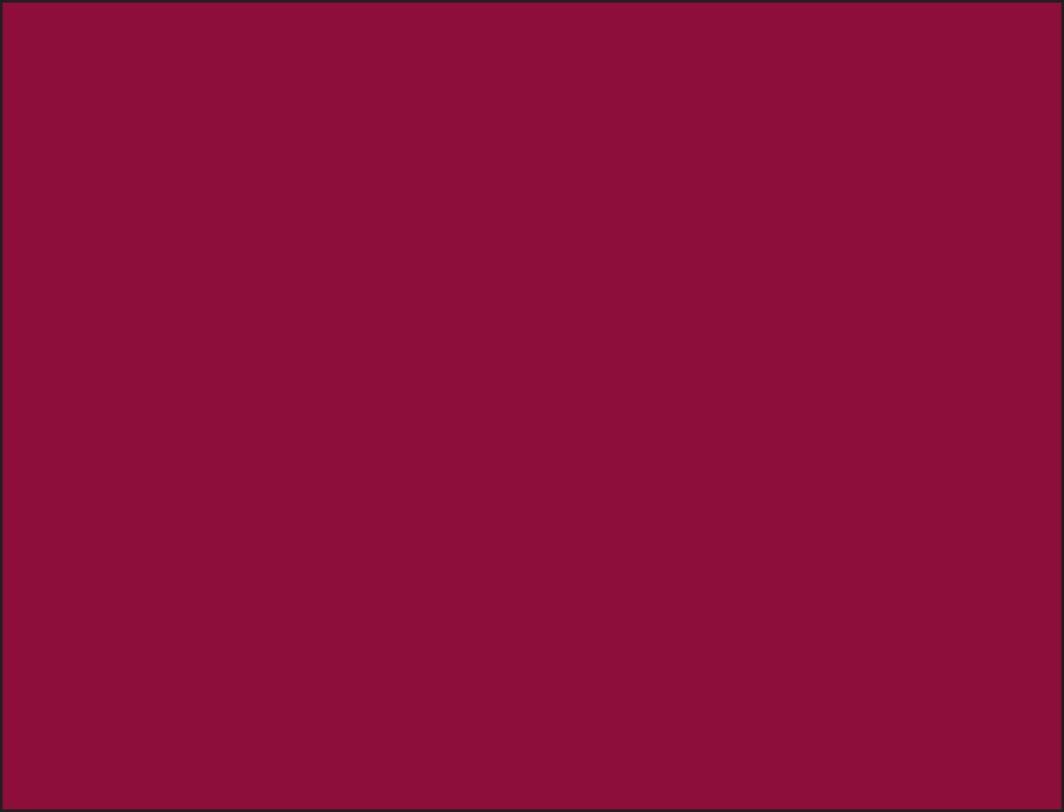
We use a variety of means to inform nonprofit workers, volunteers, and supporters about developments at the local, provincial and national levels.

Work continued on the communication plan in the beginning of the year. Elements of the plan included creating a new logo and improved visual image; utilizing more sophisticated e-mail strategies; developing a professional display for conferences, job fairs, etc. and developing an information brochure about the ECVO and its services. The new website was launched and is more user friendly.

The ECVO staff has provided insight and expertise on issues relating to the sector in news reports in The Edmonton Journal (notably Engage) and other media throughout 2008.

The eBulletin continues to be a valuable tool for informing hundreds of subscribers each week about current issues, upcoming events and programs, tools, tips and resources, and local, regional and national developments in the nonprofit sector. In 2008, the ECVO expanded its database to include all registered nonprofit organizations and charities in Edmonton (approximately 4,000). This will enable us to begin communicating directly with all these organizations on a quarterly basis in 2009.

# Programs and Projects



# ECVO Annual Report 2008

We work to enhance programs, services, operations and governance of nonprofit/voluntary organizations in the Edmonton region.

## **Workforce Strategy**

A year and a half worth of work culminated in April when A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector was launched. ECVO and CCVO led meetings throughout 2007 and the early part of 2008 with drafts of the strategy revised and the final document presented. Subsequent discussions took place with Alberta Employment and Immigration to secure funding enabling ECVO to hire a staff person in 2009 to implement the Workforce Strategy recommendations in the Edmonton Region.

## **HR Series**

ECVO proposed and was awarded funding from Alberta Employment and Immigration to run workshops to address human resources concerns, specifically workforce attraction and retention, for nonprofit organizations in the greater Edmonton area. Over 50 people participated in sessions held in August and Sept.

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## **Leaders Circle**

The Nonprofit Leaders Circle (peer learning circle) redirected its focus slightly to be more of a support network for executive directors, and less of a formalized learning arrangement. Membership changed with the departure of a couple people, and the joining of a couple others via invitation by members. The circle is more self directed.

## **The Charities File**

ECVO through the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks in collaboration with the Canada Revenue Agency, offered workshops in Edmonton, Camrose, Red Deer, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie. The workshops were all well attended by charities, assisting them in completing annual tax filing information. Workshops were promoted by direct mail and a number of them had waiting lists.

## **Community Services Learning**

The three-year partnership between ECVO and the Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta, continued to evolve with the transfer of the Community Services Learning Community Liaison position to the University. The university assumed funding responsibility for the balance of 2008 and into 2009 and ECVO worked to put mechanisms into place to ensure ECVO retained an ongoing active and meaningful role in the program to guarantee suitable community input and guidance.

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## **Workshops and Gatherings**

In the fall, ECVO worked with several collaborating organizations to review sector learning needs and formulate strategies for information and resource delivery. One delivery method that will continue is the Board Leadership workshop which took place in March 2008 at Grant MacEwan College downtown campus.

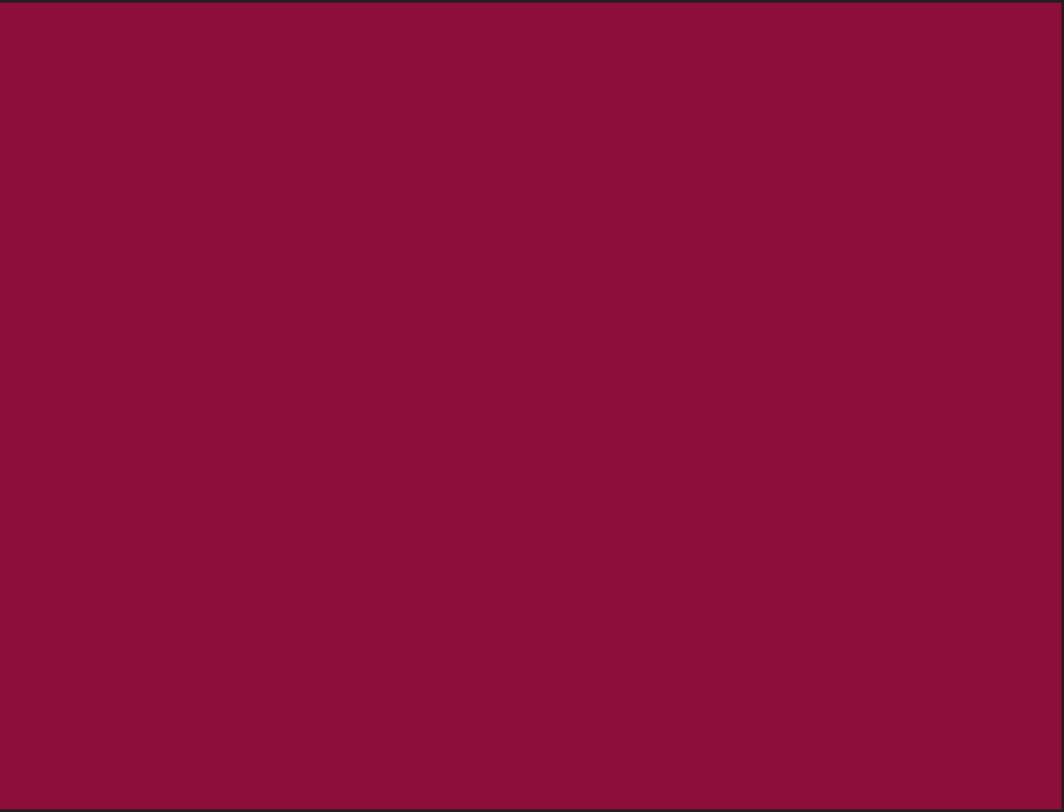
Community Spirit information sessions were hosted in September and October with nearly 150 participants coming out to learn about the On June 26, ECVO presented an introductory Social Return on Investment at Grant MacEwan College. The session over-filled capacity days before the registration cut off.

Community Spirit Grant Program information sessions were hosted in September and October with nearly 150 participants coming out to learn about the new provincial funding.

## **Staff**

Russ Dahms completed his first full year as executive director. Andrea Schuld-Ergil left her position of associate director at year's end and was replaced by Shawna Gnutel. Beth Hunter served as Community Service Learning liaison until the end of June when the position was transferred to the University of Alberta.

# Issues and Advocacy



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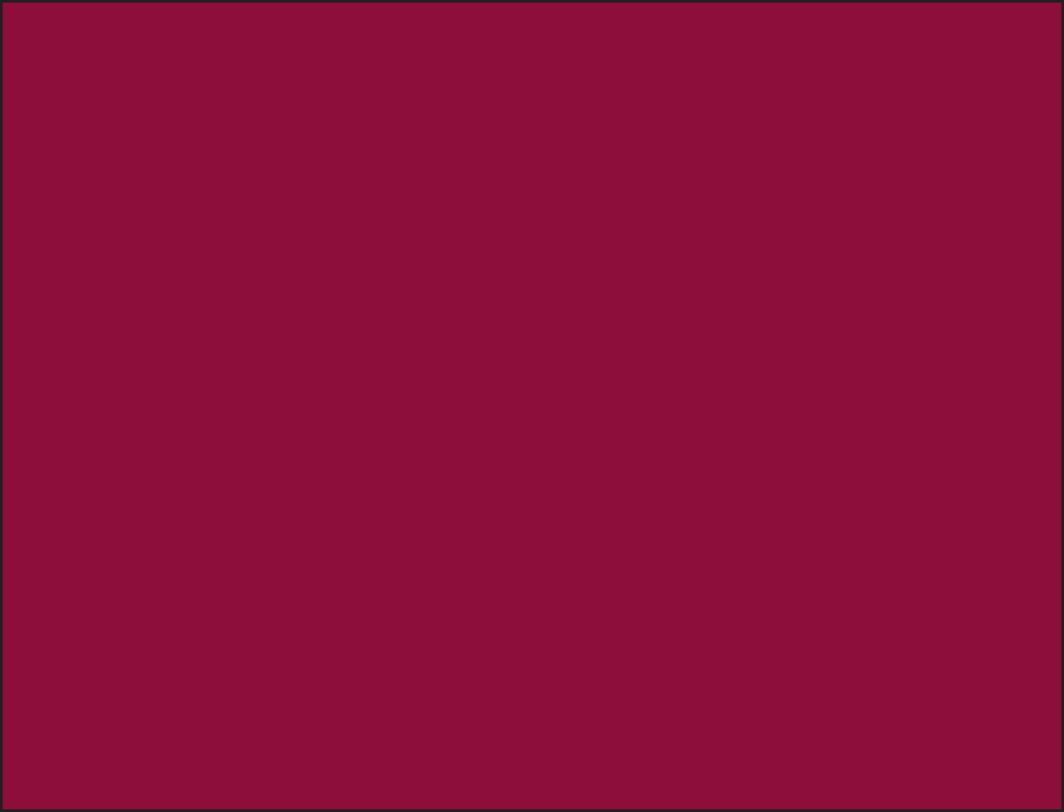
We give voice to the nonprofit/voluntary sector on important issues and promote the sector's important contribution to quality of life.

ECVO was pleased when the provincial government announced the creation of a ministry dedicated to the nonprofit/voluntary sector, Culture and Community Spirit. ECVO worked with the City of Edmonton on a number of projects in 2008. The Community Resiliency Project focused on community leagues and other neighbourhood based community organizations to explore options to enhance neighbourhood level emergency preparedness. Discussions ensued with City of Edmonton officials, the Federation of Community Leagues, the local Red Cross and other members of the nonprofit groups that work closely with the city in this area. ECVO worked this year with the City of Edmonton Community Services Department to address the issue of affordable space for nonprofit organizations. The City distributed a test survey to gather information about space needs to FCSS-funded organizations.

Survey results are to be made known in early 2009 and work continues in order to define the type of information that will be needed for a web based clearinghouse. The ECVO participated in the Counterpart Summit in February in Calgary. The event involved the voluntary sector and provincial government representatives attending from eight provinces and the NWT. The focus was on the relationships between the voluntary sector and provincial governments.

The ECVO continues to develop relationships and links to obtain current and reliable information about emerging issues and concerns that may impact the capacity of the nonprofit/voluntary sector to successfully deliver programs and services. This includes monitoring relevant trends and changes across Canada and around the world.

# Positioning for the Future



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## Provincial and National Landscape

Recent events in Alberta and across Canada hold promise for future sustainability of the nonprofit/voluntary sector. An example is development in Alberta, with the creation of a ministry, dedicated to the sector. With the Department of Culture and Community Spirit, Alberta became one of a handful of provinces to put such importance on the sector. As well, the collaboration between the provincial government and the sector in developing a Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector is another indication of the importance of the sector and its work in this province. The development of the workforce strategy is being examined by the HR Council for Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector as a means for recommendations to other provinces.

The Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks continues to evolve a pan-Canadian network of capacity building organizations and Imagine Canada is embarking on initiatives to broaden its scope in supporting and giving voice to the nonprofit/voluntary sector on a national scale.

## Membership

Membership is structured in two categories – organizational and individual members. While a moderate decline in both organizational and individual membership occurred in 2008, one of ECVO's goals in 2009 will be to focus on growing membership. In 2008, individual membership stood at 19 (in 2007 it was 26), while the ECVO's organizational membership was 41 (in 2007 it was 46).

# Summary

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Sustaining relationships with members and building relations with potential members is an important ongoing priority. ECVO will focus to grow our membership list in 2009 to 90. As such, ECVO will be encouraging new members through direct communications to all organizations in the Edmonton region. The creation of a quarterly publication in 2009 as well as a new look and improved website will work toward this end.

## **In Summary**

The ECVO looks ahead to addressing future challenges, such as the need to enhance communication and member services; to invest in network and relationship building; to actively participate in provincial and national activities; and to continue challenging current convention and looking for ways to both think and work differently in our rapidly changing economic and social environment.