

LadiesCorner

MARCH 2024

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EDITION

Empowering Women

Oluseye Ashiru's Journey to Purpose and Potential

Creating a Legacy for Black Women

Rehana Malik-Mbanga

RHIANNON HOYLE

First Black Woman Elected to the Alberta Legislature



Let's keep believing in miracles!

Dawn of Grace

I'm delighted to share my thoughts with you on this crisp Sunday evening. The air is cool, and with the skies clear, we're anticipating a gentle snowfall—a quintessential February scene. This month holds special significance as it's Black History Month, a time when we honour and celebrate the richness of Black culture, arts, literature, and overall excellence.

At Ladiescorner.ca, our commitment to celebrating Black excellence extends beyond February, embracing it throughout the entire year. In this edition, we aim to blend the themes of Valentine's Day (with love permeating the air), Black History Month, and International Women's Day.

The discussions with Edmonton's councillors were transcribed from media conversations held earlier this year. We are always thankful for the chance to produce this magazine, and with your continued support, our determination is unwavering in believing that this will be a fantastic year.

Tee Adeyemo

Founder and Editor-in-Chief
Ladies Corner Magazine

LadiesCorner

MAGAZINE

COMMUNITY CREATIVITY VISIBILITY EMPOWERMENT

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Erin Rutherford



Jennifer Rice



Rehana Malik



Laura TEJEDA MEZA



Italian Centre Shop

Grazie mille for all the love and support over the past 65 years.

Serving Albertans since 1959.



10 IDEAS TO CHANGE THE WORLD INSIDE OUT

By Laura TEJEDA MEZA

Every day is an opportunity to build a better version of ourselves. In this time of change, this is all the more reason to be able to positively influence the world.

Small changes make big differences, and they start with us, from our inside. The best time to start is now, because if we postpone the action for tomorrow, changes will never come, and maybe tomorrow will be too late. Here we share ten actions to change the world and create a better life for everyone by working inside out.

Continue learning

We all ignore something, but this is not an excuse to do nothing about it. Knowing and discovering leads us to be able to think for ourselves. Therefore, learning is the key to be able to understand our environment and defend what really matters to us. Never take anything for granted: search, question and ask. Remember that the core part of the vast majority of the problems that afflict us, on a personal, social and global level, is the ignorance. Furthermore, you will have more tools to make decisions and take actions in favor of a greater good.

Know yourself

Knowing where we come from, who we are, what our values, strengths and weaknesses is essential, as well as knowing where we are going and how to achieve our goals. It is also a way to discover how we as individuals can contribute to the world in a positive way. For example, perhaps taking part in demonstrations or signing petitions is not what suits you best, but maybe you identify more with informing, healing, teaching, etc.

Open to reality

Denying or blinding yourself to the cruelty and problems around you and the world will not make them disappear or be solved by magic, even if we feel powerless. In order to find or contribute to a solution, it is important to acknowledge the very existence of any issue.

Be empathic

It's useless going through life cursing and seeing enemies everywhere. You are not the center of the world and you are not alone in it either. Find allies and connect with others; remember that together we can do more. Moreover, the exchange of ideas, feelings, knowledge and skills is not only a way to form links and get to know others better, but it is also a way to know ourselves better.

Open up to difference

Meeting people who are different from you, opens your eyes to various realities that you may not even have imagined. Who knows? Maybe you will discover that you share the same points of view, but express them in different ways.

Love yourself

People don't believe in the insecure ones, and to positively influence other people and the world you need to believe in yourself. You are a valuable person: the proof is that you can also change the world!

Try it

No matter what you undertake, failure is always a possibility, and a way of improving. This makes us grow and reformulate our actions; try again! And if you make a mistake and make a mess, identify

the problem, acknowledge it, learn and solve it.

Acknowledge the surrounding world

Do you feel alone? Think twice: you are surrounded by other people, animals and all the beauty this world has to offer, which are just waiting for you to be an active part of its story (your story!). You depend on your surroundings as well as others depend on you. You are as important as any other living being.

Consider your footprint

Whether we believe it or not, everything we do has one or more repercussions around us, be it on other human beings or on the environment. This is why one way to change the world is reconsidering our own habits and actions and how they negatively or positively affect the planet and its inhabitants.

Find your 'meaning'

A sense of purpose in life is not only essential in terms of personal well-being, but it is also a way to keep in mind our mission in life to contribute to society in a positive way. Not all of us are the type of classic heroes, like firefighters or doctors, but we can be our own version of superhero in our own domain and terms: teacher, counselor, communication specialist, translator, worker, lawyer, housewife, etc.

Changing the world is not an impossible mission or a matter of magic, we just need to be aware of our own means, as well as work actively and retrospectively on ourselves, since change starts from oneself.



Coco Skin

By Nana Otu

My name is Nana Otu. I am 31 years old, a wife, and a mother of two. I was born in Ghana, West Africa, and immigrated to Toronto with my mother at the tender age of two. I grew up in the heart of Toronto, Ontario and currently reside in Edmonton, Alberta with my family. I am the CEO and founder of Coco Nyle Skin.

Coco Nyle Skin is a plant-based skincare brand tailored to melanated and reactive skin. We incorporate raw, natural ingredients into our products, specifically designed to address acne, eczema, and other reactive skin conditions while prioritizing skin barrier repair. Our mission is to celebrate the beauty of diversity by providing skincare solutions that cater to all sensitive skin types and tones, using high-quality, clean ingredients.

My personal skincare journey served as the inspiration for

starting my own skincare brand. From the age of 12 and throughout early adulthood, I struggled with cystic acne, which deeply impacted my confidence and self-esteem. Through my experiences, I recognized a lack of understanding and proper representation for black skin, often leading to unsuccessful treatments and recurrent acne. This gap in representation ignited my determination to create a brand that not only offers effective skincare solutions but also celebrates the beauty and diversity of all individuals, empowering them to feel confident in their own skin.

Acne and eczema are the two most common skin issues among black women in North America. Additionally, black women spend \$7.5 billion annually on beauty products, twice as much on skincare. Furthermore, 60% of acne sufferers have sensitive skin, often exacerbated by harsh ingredients in typical acne products.

Our products provide natural

skincare options for those struggling with acne and sensitive skin, offering effective solutions without irritation, redness, or further inflammation. We meticulously avoid ingredients like parabens, artificial fragrances, synthetic additives, or chemicals.

In the long term, our vision is to become a global leader in promoting skin health, self-confidence, and inclusivity. We aim to continue innovating and creating high-quality products for diverse skin types and tones by expanding our product range. Additionally, we are committed to organizing and supporting skincare workshops in the community, providing education and practical knowledge on skincare, self-care, and self-esteem. While we currently handcraft our products, in the future we intend to transition to manufacturing processes that allow us to scale production while maintaining our commitment to quality and sustainability.

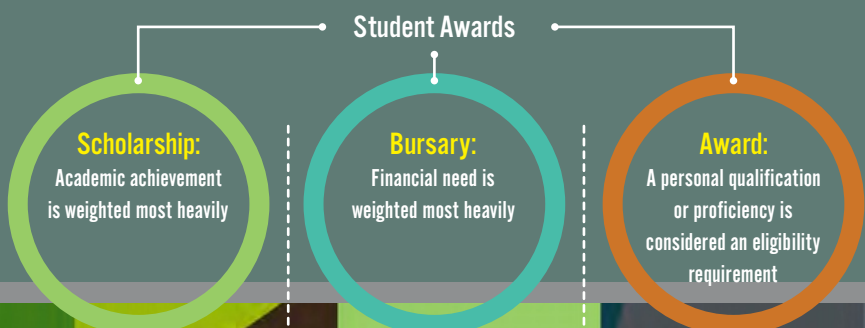
Investing in the Future

Believing in the power of post-secondary education to change lives

by Jennifer Friesen

Whether it's honouring an individual's life or recognizing commitment to leadership or community, over 200 Student Award Funds have been established at the Calgary Foundation. Here are four examples from over 500 Student Awards that are given annually to cover tuition costs of students attending post-secondaries locally, provincially and across Canada.

Some Student Awards contain components of three types of criteria: academic achievement, financial need and/or personal qualifications/proficiency, but, generally, they are described as:





Left: Kirby Morrow along with some of the characters he voiced over the course of his career.

Kirby Morrow Memorial Scholarship Fund

Kirby Morrow grew up with dreams of being a lawyer, but wound up captivating audiences through a different medium.

He voiced Michaelangelo on the *Ninja Turtles: The Next Mutation* series, Trowa in the series, *Gundam Wing*, Goku in *Dragon Ball Z*, and regularly appeared as Capt. Dave Kleinman on *Stargate: Atlantis*.

Whether working at the drug-store, lifeguarding at the local pool or walking the halls of their high school in Jasper, Alta., Kirby had a commanding personality, recalls his brother, Casey.

"He loved people," says Casey, "One thing that stood out was how he would make friends with

anybody. He never hung out with just one group; he always tried to include as many people as he could."

Kirby soon found his voice as an actor. After graduating in the 1990s from the theatre program at what was then Mount Royal College, he moved to Vancouver and found success. He worked steadily as a live-action and voice actor, always taking time to coach new talent in the industry.

Kirby gained strength from being around others, says Casey. When COVID-19 confined people to their homes, Kirby, who had lived with mental illness for many years, found his own mental health took a turn

for the worse.

After losing his father to cancer in November 2020, Kirby passed away eight days later at the age of 47 from complications related to alcohol addiction.

The tragedy devastated the family, but they were overwhelmed with stories from Kirby's friends and fans who shared how much Kirby guided them through their darkest days.

"It was amazing to see the support," says Casey. "That's what led me to think, 'We have to build something with this and make something out of a horrible situation.'"

In 2021, the Morrow family established the Kirby Morrow Memorial Scholarship at the Calgary Foundation to support the next generation of performing artists.

The scholarship supports first-year undergraduate students studying theatre, theatre arts, drama, film, radio, television, animation or scriptwriting. Three of Kirby's closest friends reviewed video submissions from students attending post-secondary institutions in Alberta and B.C., and, last fall, they awarded two students \$750 scholarships towards their tuition.

"Kirby loved being a teacher," says Casey. "He loved the energy of people that were still excited. He was there for them and loved helping them out."

Through crowdfunding, the Morrow family is close to their \$50,000 fundraising goal, allowing more scholarships to be awarded this fall.

"There are so many people who lose a loved one to mental illness and substance abuse, and they don't get to turn it into anything good," Casey says. "Now seeing it, we are so happy it has done some good, and Kirby knows he had a hand in making somebody else's life a little better."

“My thesis research used a combination of writing and oral storytelling through digital story work. The Calgary Foundation’s First Nations, Métis and Inuit Graduate Bursary covered the cost of the technology that I needed to successfully parallel the Western and Indigenous ways of sharing information that I had envisioned.” —Barbara Horsefall, bursary recipient

Calgary Foundation First Nations, Métis and Inuit Graduate Bursary

In 2019, the Thorner/Johnston/DiMarzo Family Fund established the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Bursary at Calgary Foundation, awarding three \$3,000 bursaries to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in any year of study at a Canadian post-secondary institution.

Applications poured in from across the country from both undergraduate and graduate degree students. The number of applications from qualified candidates showed the program could be expanded to broaden and deepen the bursary’s impact.

Savannah Wells has been a member of the selection committee since 2020. As an Indigenous woman, she says she’s excited to see how many Indigenous students are seeking out the bursary to further their education.

“By taking education back into our own hands and for scholarships to be created for Indigenous students, that’s

part of the process of overcoming colonialism,” she says. “Colonial systems can hold you back from achieving your dreams, but so many Indigenous folks are going for higher education. We’re breaking the stereotypes, and I just love that!”

The Calgary Foundation’s Student Awards team partnered with the Grants team to provide further bursary funding. The collaboration resulted in six additional \$3,000 bursaries in 2019: three for undergraduate students and three for graduate students.

For the 2020 student awards season, the bursary was reorganized into two separate bursary programs.

The Thorner/Johnston/DiMarzo Family Fund supports the First Nations, Métis and Inuit

Undergraduate Bursary, supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending an Alberta post-secondary institution pursuing an undergraduate degree, diploma or certificate program. This year, the family is offering four \$3,000 bursaries through its fund.

In 2020, the Foundation established the Calgary Foundation First Nations, Métis and Inuit Graduate Bursary. The \$3,000 bursary provides direct tuition support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending any year of study at a Canadian post-secondary institution pursuing a graduate degree, including medicine and law professional programs. Since 2019, nine graduate students have been supported.





For 25 years, the legacy of giving has lived on through Frances Camyre, a gift that will keep on giving to future generations.

Frances Camyre Memorial Foundation Fund

Frances Camyre was a lifelong pioneer.

Born in Maine in 1919, she grew up in Vancouver, where she worked as a hairdresser before moving to Moose Jaw, Sask., with her husband, and then Whitehorse, where they operated a fleet of taxis and buses for tourists.

After losing her husband in a fatal accident, Camyre returned to Vancouver to work in the hospitality industry and then moved back to

Alberta to succeed in the oil and gas industry.

Camyre partnered with two other oilfield veterans to establish Key Oilfield Supply & Rentals Ltd. in Calgary, a multi-million-dollar enterprise that provided equipment to the oil industry. She retired as CFO in 1987 and moved to New Westminster, B.C., where she lived until she passed away in 1992.

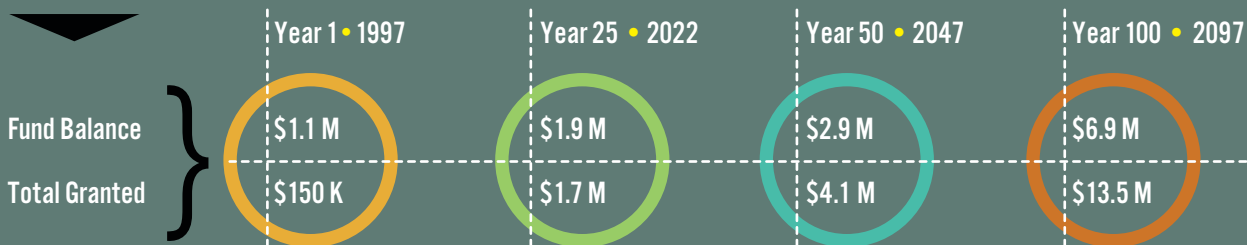
Having missed the opportunity herself, Camyre focused on helping

young people pursue a post-secondary education.

Upon her death, she left \$1 million to the Calgary Foundation to establish the Frances Camyre Memorial Foundation Fund, which awards bursaries to Alberta students based on scholastic standing, personal character and financial need. ■

Visit calgaryfoundation.org/student-awards

Projected Growth of the Frances Camyre Memorial Foundation Fund



Calculations based on: annual market returns of 7%, 1.25% cost recovery, 2% reinvestment and 4% granted to community.

City of Edmonton Anirniq Ward Councillor

Balancing transparency and accountability with protection and safety are conversations that are and will be taking place.



Councillor Erin Rutherford

Councillor Rutherford, born and raised in Alberta, is currently representing Ward Anirniq in Edmonton. She shares that it takes “a lot of courage to step into this space” and the fact that she cares about community is evident. Making decisions for the city and the area she represents is important to her. Councillor Rutherford feels that she has accomplished a lot in her term as councillor by matching her practice with community development and building relationships.

Protecting the River Valley, improving public transit, and animal welfare are a few major areas that she is passionate about. Erin is proud of the work she has championed such as, consolidation of the public bylaw. She realizes that people want good quality public services which is what she campaigned for. The graduated tax increases over this next four-year period, post pandemic, helps protect and improve public services. Work is ongoing regarding the “amendment to

address deficiencies which would transfer \$240 million from non-core services to core services.” Standing collectively in the interests of Edmontonians is making decisions for the city’s residents to stay sustainable and provide the services people want.

Working within her Ward, Councillor Rutherford, shares that communication is essential. She does this through a newsletter, on social media and practical door knocking to hear her constituent’s voices and concerns. Her thoughtful approach to decisions is valued as well. For example, maintaining roads is an essential operational function. Rutherford suggests phoning 311 or using the app is the best way to address pothole or road problems.

A recent research paper addressed the problem female elected officials are experiencing in regard to bullying, threats and harassment. Councillor Rutherford does not want to lose the accessibility she has with the public; however, the reality that her family could be threatened is disconcerting. Protecting elected

officials is essential to safeguard them and their families especially after the recent incident at City Hall. Balancing transparency and accountability with protection and safety are conversations that are and will be taking place.

This is the most diverse council the city of Edmonton has ever had, with a majority of women. Councillor Rutherford also indicates that there needs to be more representation from Blacks. Anti racism work needs to continue and there is the hope for a Black councillor in 2025.

Finding a balance is ongoing in Councillor Rutherford’s life. “My career set me up for this,” she shares. Self-care is spending time with loved ones and as a single mom, life can be more challenging. Running, yoga and socializing with family and friends are pertinent. She reminds herself that “I have a really great team.” Showing up consistently and championing for her Ward will still be in her future.



Opens February 26th – April 30th

CALGARY Free Tax Clinic

MONDAYS AND FRIDAYS

10 AM – 3 PM

**7909 Flint Road SE Unit 202
Calgary AB T2H 1G3**

TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

10 AM – 3 PM

**Calgary Full Gospel Church
917 14 Ave SW, Calgary, AB T2R 0N8**

Opens February 26th – April 30th

EDMONTON

Free Tax Clinic

MONDAYS TO WEDNESDAYS

10 AM – 3 PM

**Orange Hub, Room 435
10045 156 St NW, Edmonton, AB T5P 2P7**

THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS

10 AM – 3 PM

**Africa Centre, 11808 St Albert Trail NW #106,
Edmonton, AB T5L 4G4**



Empowering Women

Oluseye Ashiru's Journey of Purpose and Potential



Oluseye Ashiru

A **life-family** business strategist, Oluseye works with women to pursue their dreams. Working with organizations in 24 different countries over the past 10 years has impacted over 50,000 women. Her recent work is with the Families Arising Resource Centre situated in Edmonton empowering and equipping individuals and families. She also co-founded Living Boldly Inc. and has touched people in many different areas both personally and professionally.

Oluseye's ambition is to support people and this is evident as a woman and mother who realizes that dreams, ambitions and desires can be swept under the carpet because one is "caught in the daily grind of diapers, baby food, school runs and things like that." She values a life of clarity, purpose and desires to help other women get "out of the shackles that hold them down" from achieving their potential. She has professional experience in both private and non-profit organizations and desires others to discover and achieve their God-given purpose.

Starting with a blog in 2014, Oluseye worked as a life-coach, gaining knowledge and expertise and working with and empowering women. Whether she was training, coaching or writing her 12 books,

Starting with a blog in 2014, Oluseye worked as a life-coach, gaining knowledge and expertise and working with and empowering women.

Oluseye's core message is "how can I help people discover and embrace their potential?"

Focusing on the "Mom community", she shared her passion and knowing that "people need to know the reason they are here on earth" gave her the drive to see others step into purpose. God has called her to this role. She may be busy, but she is never overwhelmed. She has created a structure of priorities for her personal wellness by creating time every day for herself. "Fill your cup everyday" is part of her lifestyle. "Before the world wakes up" Oluseye reads the bible, does her devotions and writes in her journals. Her day is full with family, meetings, coaching and

other details from her personal business, but at the end of the day, she unwinds with a book or meditation. Her advice for those who are overwhelmed, is "whatever your purpose in life is, be sure to prioritize what you are focusing on during this particular season in your life." That could potentially mean saying "no" if it does not align where you are going for the next 10 years.

Oluseye reads various books that serve different purposes in her life every day. She asks others, what should we be doing in 2024 to ensure we end the year fulfilled? She states, first of all, get clarity about the direction you want your life to go. Too many people are not aligned with their goals, so set goals that will move you close to the big picture of "me that I see in the future." Are you growing in all areas of your life? There are a number of tools and resources on her site to guide you personally, financially, spiritually and wellness.

oluseyeashiru.com



Navigating Edmonton's Future with Resilience and Resolve

Antiracism is a societal issue, the strategy is to consult and advise others regarding serving the community.

Sarah Hamilton is serving her second term as Councillor Ward Sipiwiyiniwak. Growing up in Edmonton, Sarah has been actively involved in community.

After the recent shooting incident at City Hall, people have been able to receive the support they needed before “back to business.” A security audit will be done; however, Sarah believes this evaluation will be based on previous recommendations to ensure it is a safe space. Reopening to the public and security issues will be addressed. Sarah indicates that she feels safe.

Lessons Sarah has learned along the way, as one of two women councillors in local government, was that “being in the public eye and people knowing your name, is there are different expectations placed upon you and that can feel tremendous at some point,” but feeling comfortable with decisions is a process. When opinions differ, Sarah doesn't see it as a threat. “Being open to the multitude of perspectives of the people you represent” and articulating a decision, makes her better at her job. The good news is that this term she is one of eight women councillors in local government.

Funding and services plan is ongoing, but council ensured that finances were in place for core services, such as snow removal in the city. Sarah is also passionate about the Big Island Provincial Park issue stating it is an asset for not only Edmonton, but Alberta. This

council has focused on climate, infrastructure and anti-racism and reconciliation, which were all previous priorities of council. Edmontonians will hear more about the City Plan which includes the development and structure, as well as a zoning Bylaw renewal allowing commercial and residential neighborhoods.

Anti-racism is a societal issue. The strategy is to consult and advise others regarding serving the community and “move the file forward and match the needs of the community.” The conversation has changed in the past six years and approaches have been changed based on past decisions council made, such as representation and diversity perspective. In terms of hiring processes, internal and external applicants are treated differently.

Housing is a complex issue. There is a need for more housing because of growth. Other needs include multifamily or intergenerational issues because of the present market. “Hard to house” because of supports is also needed. Because of its post secondary institutions, job market growth, and affordable cost of living, Edmonton has promise for the future. This economic development strategy can be effective for accommodating all housing needs; however, costs and interest rates have increased and labour shortages slow the process. Understanding the market is local councillor's job. Affordable housing grants help projects get started. But investing in Edmonton is good for

the country.

“My son gives me hope for the future,” Sarah shares. Fiction and non-fiction, music, exercise and being outdoors are her ways of taking care of her health as she continues to invest time as a councillor.



Sarah Hamilton

Is it Possible to Find **TRUE LOVE** in Your Forties?

Many people find love at this stage of life, often with a better sense of themselves and what they're looking for in a partner. Your forties can be a great time for love because you likely have more clarity about your values, desires, and boundaries, which can lead to more meaningful and fulfilling relationships.

Here are a few tips for finding love:

Be Open: Keep an open mind about who your ideal partner might be. People often find love in unexpected places and with people they might not have considered their "type" in their younger years.

Know What You Want: Having a clear understanding of your desires and deal-breakers can help you navigate the dating world more effectively.

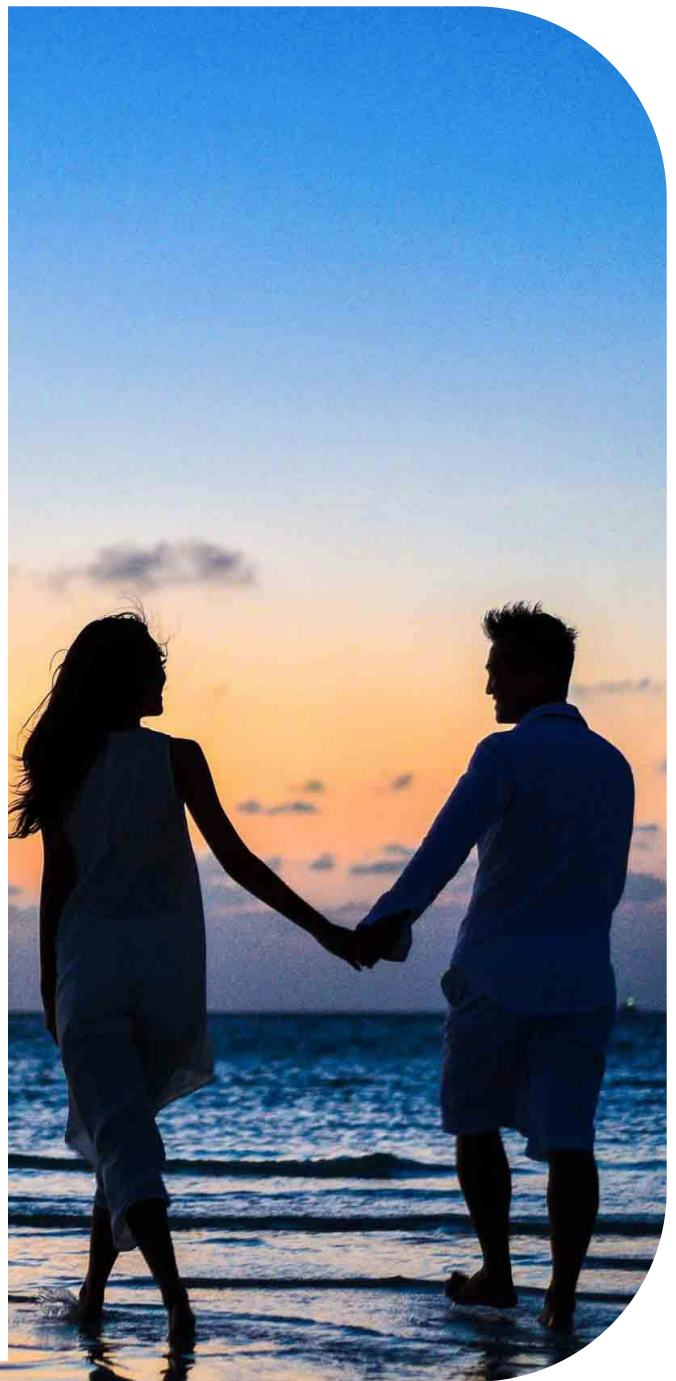
Try Online Dating: Many people in their forties have success with online dating, which allows you to connect with more potential partners than you might meet in your daily life.

Pursue Your Interests: Engaging in activities you enjoy can be a great way to meet people who share your interests, whether that's through hobbies, classes, or group activities.

Don't Rush: Take your time getting to know potential partners. Relationships that start later in life can be just as passionate and fulfilling as those that start earlier.

Stay Positive: Maintaining a positive outlook and being open to the possibilities can make all the difference in your dating experience.

Remember, love doesn't have an age limit. Your forties can be a wonderful time for romance, growth, and new beginnings. Whatever actions you take, please remember to prioritize your safety by using condoms, especially given the current syphilis epidemic in the province





Secrets to Aging Gracefully

Unraveling the Tapestry of Well-Being with Lorrie Morales

The tapestry of life is woven from the various choices we make each day. It's from our energy levels and doing what we enjoy, to changes and connecting with others through relationships as we age well into our later years. The fabric of our well being needs laughter, love and health. How do we maintain and nourish that spirit of youth and well being as we age? There are a number of helpful hints and cell building supplements that helps us flourish.

First of all, mindset is critical to overall health. When we find the cold dark days of winter creeping across our landscape, we tend to experience changes in our energy and moods. Finding a supplement, such as Vitamin D and eating a spice called Saffron are helpful. Saffron is a spice that has been shown to actually improve mood and Vitamin D is a must in the winter months. Apparently, by the time we are in our eighties, our production of this beneficial vitamin, is almost half of a person in their twenties! We also need to

connect with others through our various relationships and take that laughter to create laugh lines and rise each morning with a purpose for each new day. How we deal with our daily habits affects, not only our mobility, but whether we thrive or just survive.

Secondly, eating nutritious meals is essential to preventing disease and keeping us healthy. We all know that a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, healthy fats and grains is a better choice over processed foods. Eating plenty of protein also supports the bone, muscle and skin health, not to mention nutritional benefits. (check this month's recipe!) Research has recently discovered that probiotics helped improve cholesterol levels in individuals to help improve intestinal problems. Another interesting fact is that those yellow, red, orange vegetables act as antioxidants and are not only tasty, but beneficial to the heart. Because collagen production in our bodies decreases as we age, this supplement is needed for skin, hair, joint health and overall vitality.

Thirdly, a well-rounded exercise routine is critical for flexibility and joint mobility. Strength and cardiovascular fitness are also important as we age. There are a number of exercise routines to try, but best to go with the one you feel most comfortable with, such as yoga, walking, swimming or even strength or balance training. Magnesium is the supplement that is responsible for the many multiple pathways in the body. It is particularly beneficial for muscle function and recovery and heart health. The spice turmeric also supports muscle and joint health along with helping with inflammatory response after exercise. Remember that it is never too late to get moving!

I have discovered that walking is my best activity usually after a healthy lunch. Fresh air, at no cost (except a good pair of boots) and being active are simple ways to keep flexible, healthy and positive. After all, spring is on its way and the snow will melt and the bike paths will soon open!

From Inspiration to Action

LCCMedia was thrilled to have the chance to connect with Rehana Malik-Mbanga, Founder, When African Women Talk



Rehana Malik-Mbanga

Could you share a bit about your background and the origins of WAWT?

When African Women Talk was created out of a need I had to meet like-minded Black Women in the city. I immigrated to Canada in 2010 and craved spaces where I could network and connect with women who had similar lived experiences, culture and mindset I had.

I joined Women Talk an organization founded by Brigitte Lessard in 2016 shortly after my second child was born. I enjoyed the space as I learned so much about the lives experiences of middle aged white women that lived in Alberta. It was wonderful to network and connect with them but I soon grew weary of always explaining my background my heritage. I wanted to open up the space for more diversity and so Brigitte agreed to support me and I hosted the first Women Talk Africa in 2019 during Black History month. That was the first Black History Month Gala.

The following year, we hosted a gala in both Edmonton and Calgary. The women who were the inaugural speakers are who many now know as the Founding members of WAWT. We stayed in touch and formed a pioneers group that I would manage. Every month I was asked for more from the ladies. Programs, more talks, networking events and I kept saying it's coming

soon.

I'm 2022 Women Talk Africa was rebranded When African Women Talk. It was formally registered and incorporated. In 2023 we launched our membership and now we are known as the WAWT Women in the Black community.

Black Women who are working towards sisterhood, a stronger Black community and equality for all.

I can confidently say I have a network of like-minded women around me that have supported both my personal and professional development as a Black woman living in Canada.

How have attendees responded to your events?

Our events are very different. Each event pulls a different woman from the community. We have something for everyone and the spaces we have created through our events is a great platform for Black women and their friends from diverse communities to connect.

You can walk into a WAWT event alone and walk out with future life long friends, business partners and allies.

The response has been overwhelming and the demand for our events have been consistent.

As a result we are working on funding and sponsorship to make our events more accessible for more women in our community.

I have self funded all the

events with minimal community sponsorship here and there as a result our tickets tend to be on the higher need compared to other funded non-profits that can offer more subsidized prices.

Your business approach has evolved throughout the years. Could you share how you have evolved?

When African Women Talk has always been about creating a legacy for Black Women in the city, province and country at large.

It has been the biggest financial investment that my husband and I have made. It has taught me how to follow social media trends, analyze the Black community, listen to the people I serve and most of all patience.

I have learnt that it takes time to build a name, a reputation and consistency is one's best friend.

Many people think we make money from our events and we receive big funding. Till date we have not made a profit from any of our events. At WAWT our events are not streams of income they are spaces created for Black women to network, connect and become empowered.

Running a non-profit is a very expensive endeavour. To give back to community is hard work and so I take my hat off to all the Founders out there serving community.



Please tell us about your initiatives and their effects on the women you reach.

Discuss the changes in Edmonton's social scene from ten years ago to today. Has it improved?

Edmonton is very different. I feel there are more events, you can hear African music in different places which makes it feel more inclusive for me.

There are a variety of events, not just house parties. I can attend all kinds of social events from book club, walking club, travel with other more diverse groups, multiple networking events, summits and workshops on both personal and professional topics.

Sometimes there is just too much on one day

Regarding Black Excellence and Black History Month, where do you envision WAWT in the next few years?

When African Women Talk aims to continue holding a space that amplifies Black women living in Canada's voices during Black History Month through our Gala. We continue to share stories of the past, learn about those that have come before us, we make space for the diversity that exists in our Black community our journeys to this land all very different, our cultures and identify similar but unique and we are multi-generational and just like our ancestors we will learn

and pass down knowledge from generation to generation.

We'd love to hear about your Book Club, which I understand is one of your cherished initiatives.

The book club is indeed a cherished space. Every year my co-host Cynthia Onyegbula with suggestions of the members of the club choose our book list of the year. We are intentional about the balance of stories. It is important that the diversity of the Black community is reflected in the books we choose, the lived experience of our people and the space for us to practice narrative therapy as we share in discussion about the books.

We meet every 8 weeks, every book cycle is so revealing and yet so healing. It is truly a very powerful space.

How are you able to combine your work at WAWT and your family responsibilities?

I have a very supportive partner in my husband, my sister and brother in-law. I have built a supportive network that helps me in different ways.

My husband and I discuss and plan each week. If I have an event coming up then he knows that I need reinforcement which might mean he is picking up our daughter from school or making dinner.

My children are involved too my

son asked me recently, mummy don't you get tired of going to galas?. I share my day and plans with them sometimes they even help me set up.

My short answer it's a team effort.

Are you able to mentor other women, and if so, what does that mentorship entail?

I mentor women everyday. For now my focus is on the members of WAWT.

With some, we have worked through personal development. With others business acumen and strategy. I am always in mentorship mode 24/7.

Do you find time for leisure reading?

Yes, when I read the books we are reading in book club. This has been a great reward. Time to escape.

What activities or practices do you engage in for your mental well-being?

I listen to podcasts so I'm always working on my mindset. I have many big sisters around me that I seek advice from based on different aspect of my life. I love the diversity in our community it has allowed me to see life from many different angles.

I read, I walk, I connect with others, spend time with my children and go on dates with my husband.

BOOKS BY AFRICAN AUTHORS

Books by African authors offer a diverse array of perspectives, genres, and stories that capture the essence of African cultures, histories, and contemporary issues. Below is a list of notable books by African authors spanning various countries and literary styles:

“Things Fall Apart” by Chinua Achebe (Nigeria) - A seminal work of African literature that explores the clash of cultures and the impact of colonialism on traditional African societies.

“Half of a Yellow Sun” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Nigeria) - A powerful novel about the Nigerian Civil War and its effects on the lives of its characters.

“Americanah” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Nigeria) - A story of love and identity, spanning Nigeria and the United States.

“So Long a Letter” by Mariama Bâ (Senegal) - An epistolary novel that examines the condition of women in Senegalese society and Islamic culture.

“Disgrace” by J.M. Coetzee (South Africa) - A controversial novel that explores post-apartheid South Africa through the experiences of a disgraced university professor.

“The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born” by Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghana) - A novel that deals with the disillusionment of post-independence Ghana.

“Season of Migration to the North” by Tayeb Salih (Sudan) - A postcolonial Sudanese novel considered an important work in modern Arabic literature.

“Nervous Conditions” by Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe) - A coming-of-age story about a young girl's struggle against the constraints of race, class, and gender in Zimbabwe.

“Purple Hibiscus” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Nigeria) - A novel about the emotional turmoil of adolescence, the power of love, and the complexities of family dynamics in Nigeria.

“We Need New Names” by NoViolet Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) - A story that navigates the experiences of a young girl from a shantytown in Zimbabwe to the United States.

“The River Between” by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (Kenya) - A narrative set against the backdrop of the Gikuyu society's response to British colonialism and Christian missionary work.

“Born a Crime” by Trevor Noah (South Africa) - A memoir that provides insights into growing up in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

“The Fishermen” by Chigozie Obioma (Nigeria) - A story about four brothers in a Nigerian village and how a madman's prophecy changes their lives.

“Homegoing” by Yaa Gyasi (Ghana/USA) - A sweeping tale that covers several generations, tracing the lineage of two half-sisters born in 18th century Ghana and their descendants in America and Africa.

“Black Moses” by Alain Mabanckou (Republic of Congo) - A novel that follows the life of an orphan in the Republic of Congo as he navigates a world filled with crime and revolution.

“Behold the Dreamers” by Imbolo Mbue (Cameroon) - A novel about an immigrant couple from Cameroon trying to make a new life in New York just as the Great Recession starts.

“The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives” by Lola Shoneyin (Nigeria) - A revealing look into polygamy, family, and culture in Nigeria.

“Waiting for the Barbarians” by J.M. Coetzee (South Africa) - A novel that delves into the themes of oppression, otherness, and the constructs of civilization.

“Our Sister Killjoy” by Ama Ata Aidoo (Ghana) - A narrative that explores themes of diaspora, exile, and the experiences of Africans abroad.

These books offer a glimpse into the rich literary world of Africa, showcasing the continent's vast cultures, languages, and experiences. Each author brings a unique voice and perspective, contributing to the global literary landscape.



IBK Ibukun Orefuja

IBK, founder of Black Business Edmonton (BBE), is very passionate about what he does and wants to see the Black businesses thrive.

His desire is to bring people together for a good cause. The idea started with a need within the community and thus, with his IT knowledge, he developed a hub for business owners to connect and showcase Black businesses. They are celebrating a one - year anniversary this month.

BBE is a self-funded, digital hub that promotes Black businesses, talents, and events going on in Black communities showcasing what is available for individuals, organizations or the community. Identifying and supporting these businesses is the mandate, but the entire Edmonton landscape is able to benefit from the group.

The creation of the digital platform website bbedm.ca/ was one of the achievements. This website is an information resource, where different Edmonton zones and surrounding cities can showcase their businesses. A community calendar was also created for the digital hub bbedm.ca/community-engagements/

Black Business Edmonton is unique in that it connects all business owners specific to Edmonton, even though there are other groups that support black

business. Ibukun originally looked at the Edmonton zone and the success of the group is evident from this past year. An example of this is businesses just starting with the hope to grow their influence and capacity. "This goal is a different shift" from other organizations. Providing support for newcomers and contributing to the economy are also goals set out for the group.

Despite successes, every business has its challenges, and BBE is no different. Ibukun started a social media page on both Instagram and Facebook and was reaching out to people he knew that had businesses to inform them about the platform. The response was low; however, as people trusted him to write up and share their businesses, Ibukun used key words and formatted the information about the business to promote the profiles. He saw the results. His initial goal was to reach 500, but the number more than doubled before the end of the year. The main challenge was the support from the community. "Once you have a clear path, then the kind of support you are looking for, will come along with you," Ibukun shares. The resilience and perseverance of people demonstrated this and have kept BBE running.

There have been businesses

that had no location, that do now. Business services, such as counseling and therapies, have reached out to help support mental health initiatives through community outreach for those starting out. People that have been working parttime to support their business, are now able to put their energy into their business fulltime. The next step for BBE is creating a portal where businesses can post jobs and people can apply for jobs, as well as offering resume services for newcomers. There are also a few workshops such as Financial Literacy and Insurance planned for the upcoming year. Empowering youth is also on the agenda.

Celebrating what has been achieved this past year, showcasing over 200 business, promoting events such as Afrocarnival, Jollof Fest and Black Business Expo as well as volunteering, are successes of BBE. Dignitaries and key note speakers were at the event – Saturday, January 27th, to create awareness within the city and celebrate the success and hope as they continue to grow into the future. Check for events on Facebook, Instagram or

bbedm.ca



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Rhiannon Hoyle, First Black Female Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA)

Rhiannon Hoyle



After spending the last 20 years working in leadership roles, business, nonprofits and community leagues, Rhiannon Hoyle continues her dedication as a community advocate, but more importantly, she is the first Black woman to be elected to Alberta Legislature. As a member of the Alberta New Democratic Party, she represents Edmonton-South. She is also the critic for Advanced Education.

As an immigrant from Trinidad and Tobago, Rhiannon knows how important it is to have a strong sense of belonging, and she is excited to represent so many different communities and different kinds of people. “Still trying to digest” her winning seat even after eight months, there is “immense pressure to represent, but at the same time, there is a deep sadness I carry for our Black and Caribbean community for being the only Black woman in 2024” she shares. Her desire is to connect with community and build that future legacy of breaking down barriers.

“Building community and being leaders in community” gives a platform for work with economics, social justice, businesses or mentoring youth. As well as connecting people to build networks, Rhiannon enjoys the work she does. Putting pressure on government and holding them accountable is her role as an

opposition member. In terms of working with businesses, there are opportunities for mentorship and the need to feel connected.

Black History month is every day. Ideas from the Black communities and sharing stories is essential to our history. Rhiannon is excited to be part of and continuing to further support work already done. “Politics is life” and her message is for people to step outside their communities into the broader world of education, health care, business and even socially to address racism and have those conversations. Provincially, there are issues that can be addressed with our federal government in terms of immigration and supports that are needed.

One of the key issues that the opposition is opposing recently is the Canadian Pension Plan being removed from the federal government to an Alberta Pension Plan. After caucus surveys of 40,000 respondents, Rhiannon doesn't see this as a “fiscally responsible decision.” Younger voters and senior citizens are concerned about this decision; however, Premier Smith indicates there will be a referendum where Albertans will “have a say” in the matter. “Reflecting the needs of Albertans” is important.

Premier Danielle Smith recently indicated that “children 15 and under should not be given puberty blocking drugs and hormone therapy without parental

consent.” As a mother of two school-aged children, Rhiannon Hoyle understands Parental Rights legislation; however, feels this is fundamentally “denying access to crucial health services... from medical professionals which violates the Human Rights and transgender and gender diversity.” Parents and children should be making informed choices in collaboration with their physician regarding health care she shares.

Supporting local Black businesses, the “core of Black culture”, Rhiannon loves the variety of restaurants and looking forward to visiting many of them in the future. “You need a lot of energy to do this job”; however, she takes

As an immigrant from Trinidad and Tobago, Rhiannon knows how important it is to have a strong sense of belonging, and she is excited to represent so many different communities and different kinds of people.

good care of her mental and physical health and creates positive time for her family and friends.

Wheeling in Winter? Definitely!

By *Laura TEJEDA MEZA*

We all know it: generally, in Canada, we have long, snowy winters, but that is not a reason to stop biking. Every winter we observe with an astonished eye those who continue to commute by bike during winter. But what are they thinking! Is it really a good idea?

Why Doing it?

If biking is good for health, biking all year-round, especially in winter, is even better. In fact, the amount of snow offers an extra resistance that demands a higher physical effort, as well as the slippery surface demands a higher level of attention and effort to keep the balance. This without mentioning that when you start to shiver the calorie burn increases.

It dramatically improves the mood, too. First, it is well known that a regular physical activity is a natural antidepressant, and for the winter blues this is not an exception. Also, just like the runners, cyclists experience a

'high' while engaging regularly in a strenuous activity.

Therefore, you work out harder both physically and mentally, which counteract the holiday weight gain and make each hot meal even more delicious, because it is like a reward for the effort, with calories that you actually need.

Furthermore, in some cases, the bike is still a faster means of transportation than cars, and despite what we might think, it is also a fun way to avoid getting sick. First of all, we have the cold-exposure which increase immune system activity. Also, according to a Harvard study, we may get sick more easily during winter because we spend more time at indoor spaces with poor ventilation and in close proximity to others, which increases the germ exchange, and not just the exchange of gifts!

Nor should we forget that biking is a cleaning transportation option, that allows us, at the same time, to save a lot of money on gas. Gentle to the planet, the health and the economy, what's better than that!



Is All about Preparation

We have seen that this activity has indeed several benefits, but you should also be aware of the risks, like slippery roads and reduced visibility, that is why the main thing to keep in mind before wheeling in winter is PREPARATION.

If you do not have a bike, think smart and buy one during winter, as prices drops along with the temperatures. Also, consider that single-speed fixed-gear bikes are the most reliable and durable bikes, especially during winter months, because the multi-speed ones have more moving parts.

Be prepared to get wet, as you are going to ride literally in frozen water. In order to avoid freezing out or getting sick, use the layering fashion method. Wear a waterproof, windproof and breathable outer layer, a warm and moisture-wicking



inner layer, and long underwear.

Keep your extremities warm with good gloves or mittens, socks and boots. Do not forget to keep your head warm (not sweaty), too, while you properly wear a helmet. It is very important to tuck in your scarf so it doesn't get caught in a tree, for instance, and use goggles to avoid sight issues.

When there is water involved, my mother always recommends me to have at least a pair of extra socks. Moreover, avoid wearing accessories such as metal-rimmed glasses, watches, or jewellery, because they can get cold enough to cause you frostbite.

Even if you are just going to work, bring water to stay hydrated and a snack for extra energy to stay warm, and do not spare on security and lights: a white headlamp, a red tail lamp, red rear reflector, etc., so everyone can see you. Set up your bike for winter riding and give it proper maintenance, clean and lubricate your chains and cables, check and clean your brakes also.

Good tires can improve traction, and minimize possible rust by cleaning your bike often.

The How to

Before hitting the road, practice biking in a park in order to get used to the snow drive and to learn to recognize the ice spots. Start slowly with short trips through quieter streets, those which keep you away from busy vehicle traffic. Take your time, avoid abrupt and quick turns during the practice and during the real deal.

Keep your head up and your eyes on the road, while evaluating the conditions ahead. Expect to fall, as you probably will, like a child who is learning to walk or like Bambi on ice. Ride slowly and anticipate a slip or two, and always keep in mind to brake early and slowly.

Be reasonable, listen to your body and never force yourself beyond your capacity, remember that you are dealing with a lot more than in a summer trip.

The Fat Biking

There is no need to be a masochist and biking every day despite of the snow. You can also perform this activity as a recreation with the fat biking, which consist in biking with tires that are almost twice the size of a regular summer mountain bike. This sport gives you the possibility to stay on top of the snow rather than fighting against it, while exploring astonish landscapes in the nature. For instance, Jasper National Park maintains its reputation as the go-to destination for year-round biking.

Now that you know every important aspect of winter biking, getting outside to enjoy a beautiful winter day is as easy as pulling on mittens and a toque. Memories of blizzards, freezing waits at the bus stop or horrific driving experiences will be replaced by positive ones, with a brighter and healthier lifestyle.



Councillor Jennifer Rice

Councillor Jennifer Rice

Jennifer Rice is one of the first visible minority first-generation immigrant women to be elected to City Council in Edmonton's history. As a City Councillor, she represents over 90,000 people in Ward Ipiihkookhanipiaohsi, which is located in South Edmonton.

Listening to and serving people are fundamental principles that she embraces as a councillor. Councillor Rice informs her decisions based on what she hears from her constituents along with Edmontonians as a whole. As an example of this, she is the only councillor to have voted against Edmonton's city's tax increases of 6.6% for 2024. She heard from many concerned Edmontonians regarding affordability challenges related to the increasing cost of living.

Respecting tax dollars: Councillor Rice strongly believes that the city needs to spend responsibly and her focus on fiscal responsibility is reflected in how she votes on Council.

Public safety, Councillor Rice believes that public safety is

fundamentally important for the people.

Many factors contribute to crime in the community, and addressing and preventing crime are continually being examined. She has been focusing her efforts to address public safety covering both community safety and transit safety.

Diversity and Inclusion: As a first-generation immigrant to Edmonton and Canada, she strongly supports the values of diversity and inclusion. She said the very fact that she is on Council "reflects our city's value for diversity and inclusion." She wishes to give back and use her own experience as a public servant and to inspire others to get involved in leadership.

Anti-Racism: As we live in a multi-cultural society, anti-racism legislation helps to ensure everyone is treated equally and can feel safe. Along with this, a diverse range of voices need to be heard and respected. Speaking from her own experience, Councillor Rice stated "We still have a way to go to make everyone feel they are equally treated." The city of Edmonton has implemented an anti-racism strategy to ensure minority

communities within Edmonton have access to the resources that have been made available to them.

Housing: According to Councillor Rice, "Every person deserves a place to live." Based on her two years of experience on Council thus far, she has found that the city, province, and federal governments are collaborating to assist Edmonton's homeless population with a variety of resources and initiatives, including a housing strategy. If the strategies are not achieving desired outcomes, then questions need to be asked to improve these initiatives through understanding what is working along with what is not working.

Looking ahead to 2024, Councillor Rice's main objectives include continuing to deliver on her promises to her constituents to address their concerns by working collaboratively with her council colleagues. Enhancing support in the business community, in particular for the Multicultural Business Community, is one of her goals for this year. She has a strong sense of "giving back" to our community. She wishes everyone a healthy, happy, and prosperous year of the dragon.

Councillor Ashley Salvador

Councillor Salvador, born and raised in Edmonton, is an urban planner who represents Ward Métis. She has worked on various projects since 2021, from affordable housing, infill policy, senior housing to social isolation and inclusion. She enjoys working with others on the city council and with community members “who are compassionate about building a better Edmonton.”

Councillor Salvador states that this council has had a positive impact on Edmontonians by improving core services, like recreation centres, parks and libraries. Infrastructure maintenance, snow clearing and investing in public transit are also a few of the city’s responsibilities, besides making sure the city is an affordable and inclusive place to live. She is also an advocate for housing, zoning bylaws and expanding bus service.

What led to the 6.6% increase in taxes is a result of the pandemic when property taxes were kept low. Keeping up with costs to improve core services is important so that programs and amenities are not cut. “This budget is about maintaining existing service levels and trying to grow them strategically,” such as “OP12”, when administration is asked to be efficient by finding savings and reallocating dollars to the core services when addressing budget items.

The city’s top priority is ensuring staff and visitors are safe and secure at City Hall, and after the recent incident, which was handled with professionalism, this was evident. Community wellbeing and safety is an ongoing conversation by addressing root causes of crime and disorder in the city. The city is in the process of implementing a downtown transit safety plan as well as partnering with outreach programs to provide mental health

and social supports.

Council will also continue to advocate for improvement of spaces to meet minimum shelter standards. Because of the recent housing and houselessness emergency, the support of even the federal government is also needed. The provincial government ensured there were enough shelter spaces; however, more are needed. The city has been making investments into affordable and supportive housing “recognizing the scale of this emergency.” A new zoning bylaw was passed and housing market is also being looked at.

Council has demonstrated initiatives for Anti-Racism; however, there is still work to be done. They have also made commitments and progress based on inclusion and diversity. Leadership priority has set the direction. Plans and funding has been put in place to address many issues, such as reconciliation and missing Indigenous girls.

Councillor Salvador is passionate about a healthy climate, and will continue to work on council, sustaining her role as representative for Ward Métis. She looks forward to future work such as district planning, approach to growth management, and investing in mature communities. “I love being in that implementation phase... and work that I want to be part of.”

Nature walks, talking with her therapist and being with loved ones during this time are helping her transition and process these past few weeks.



Councillor Ashley Salvador



David Shepherd

David Shepherd is the MLA for Edmonton-City Centre after being re-elected for a second term. He presently serves as the Alberta NDP's critic for Health and is a member of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices.

NDP's Rachel Notley has "demonstrated her credibility as a leader and brought us through some difficult times," David shares. The party plans on putting forth a "new vision." MLA Shepherd believes there is more work to do in terms of diverse representation within the party itself and they have been working with many cultural communities across the province in reference to choosing the next leader of the NDP party.

"Alberta is becoming more diverse," MLA Shepherd shares. With his role as Health Critic, he has had the opportunity to get to know many people in rural communities and small municipalities in Alberta. Discussions have centered on Health Care issues and challenges. "Our job as the Opposition is to

hold the government accountable," MLA Shepherd notes.

Immigrants have the opportunity to practice their professions, contribute to the province and get the credentials they need. During his term as MLA, David worked on the Anti-Racism Act, and introduced a bill focused on "the collection of race-based data." Tracking the data helps identify where the problems exist. UPC did establish an office to address the problem. David explains that NDP will be advocating for "actual work to get done for real change."

David also shares that, pharmacists play an important role in our complex health care system, but do not provide a comprehensive health plan. "We need an investment in family doctors" to provide intricate care." Funding is needed to stabilize family doctors and then work on a stabilized fee structure for teams of health professionals to work together. People can then have access to health care within the community to take pressure off Emergency workers.

Black History month is a

"wonderful opportunity to talk about history and current contributions of Black Albertans." In reality, Black communities are doing this all year round. David shares that sharing Black stories is a commitment that lasts throughout the year for him at events he attends.

Supporting independent media entrepreneurs is important, but funding issues are apparent when there are certain biases. Wanting independent businesses to thrive is a hope for the NDP. "Making ourselves available," is the most important, David says.

Legislative objectives include a number of things such as child care, water and drought, environment, and utility rates issues. MLA Shepherd is also interested in the leadership race. The biggest challenge for the NDP in the next three years is "to earn trust with a lot of Albertans." Personally, "this has been tough these past four years." However, David has hope when he receives emails from health care workers, when he talks with Black youth or seniors, and knows that he is standing up for Albertans. "Change is possible."

Being Shayla S. Dube



When she is not mothering or adulting, Shayla is a social worker, therapist, cultural safety consultant, clinical supervisor among many other roles. Working in the Black mental health space has afforded Shayla the opportunity to help transform mind sets and as we venture into 2024 with resolutions and transformations, Shayla shares her wisdom.

"Being" is Shayla's manifestation "word" for this coming year, as she "pivots" from 2023. "As immigrants in this country, we are always hustling and doing", so now she is slowing down. Developing patterns of discipline are essential in life.

"Everything starts with awareness," Shayla reiterates. Behavior activation is setting the intention and then doing the work. We are often not motivated, so our discipline helps us achieve our intentions and we follow through regardless, with "purpose and passion." Your "WHY" is what is needed for your plan to succeed.

When living in isolation with your goals, it is easy to disregard them, but if you have an accountability partner, like family or friends, you will more than likely feel motivated.

"The road is tougher and longer when we are traveling journeys in solitary." Doing life with your "tribe" is important especially in terms of goal setting and following through.

Being kind and compassionate to ourselves helps when dealing with our frustrations and disappointments. We can be hard on ourselves or tie our sense of self-worth to what we do. If we fail, we forget to recognize our past victories. Extending ourselves grace and compassion makes us realize we can always start over. "We fail when we give up." Shayla shares that goals are often the mindset that we are in at that time. See your goal as, "more of a journey than a destination." Her slogan, "we grow what we water" is good advice for having a balanced view of life.

Change is constant and inevitable and transformation is possible. "Some is intentional and some just comes with the territory of being human." It's a question of perspective." "What transformation are you looking at and how are you measuring it?" are a few questions Shayla asks. Being true to self is imperative. Walk into new spaces and expect the best. When things don't turn out the way we expect

Change is constant and inevitable and transformation is possible. "Some is intentional and some just comes with the territory of being human." It's a question of perspective."

them to, as long as we have that support system in place, we can be okay.

Even though we are living in a different world from the past, we can define family, neighbors, and what community means to us. This could mean connecting through church or our child's school depending on the person. If we don't have "the village", then create the village.

Shayla transitioned from AHS (Alberta Health Services) to private practice where she continues to work on Anti-racism and focusing on collective psychotherapy with workshops and cultural consulting. You are able to find her on LinkedIn as Shalya S. Dube – Instagram @ **Ubuntucentredpractice.**

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