



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



Further Education Society
Strengthening Communities



FESA acknowledges that the land upon which we work and call home is on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3, and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

We are grateful to work on the territory that situates Calgary, which is known as Mohkinstsis by the Blackfoot, Guts'ists'i by Tsuut'ina, and Wîchîspa by the Îyâxe Nakoda, as we endeavor to build a more literate and learning society allowing all to reach their potential.



Contents

4

President's letter

6

Our impact

8

Calgary Programs

22

Going the Distance

32

Pathways

33

Celebration of Learning Awards

38

Our finances

39

Our people

40

Birdies for Kids

41

Thank you

The Power of Words

Letter from our President, FESA's Board of Directors

Donna Rapp

Without words, we couldn't express ideas. Without ideas there would be no stories. Stories reflect our values and build understanding. Through understanding comes enlightenment, and it all starts with literacy.

Further Education Society has been bringing the power of words and the importance of literacy to children, adults, families, and communities for 26 years. But perhaps this past year stands out as exceptional, characterized by three powerful words:

Successful
Transformational
Influential

While I hope this is the last time I refer to the Pandemic, COVID still proved to be a challenging factor for the organization, its staff, facilitators, partners and most significantly for its program recipients—the learners. And yet, FESA achieved an enviable level of success.

Notably, is the Going the Distance (GD) Project which came to its highly successful conclusion after five years. A unique and innovative project that addressed the under-representation of Indigenous populations in the labour force, it supported businesses in the Tourism and Hospitality industry. The Project helped develop a better understanding of workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) needs and then designed solutions to address them. It was highly customized work, involving many partners, but that was the key reason for its success and is essentially the mantra of FESA. Partners included Elder Vinnia Van Overdyk, Pursuit Banff/Jasper Collection, Saugeen First Nation Employment and Training Centre, Stoney Nakoda

Consultation, and Stoney Nation Job Resource Center to name a few. I would like to thank Sweet Spot International, one of this year's Celebration of Learning Award winners, for their tremendous work and support of FESA's e-learning programs. In addition, I would like to thank Elder David Abraham for his contributions to the GD project and acknowledge his passing in December.

The other key success was the securing of the Pathways Project designed to create opportunities for Indigenous youth employment in both Tourism and Government. This is another project receiving National attention and garnering well-earned respect for FESA's excellent work, and we've only just begun.

One of FESA's foundational ideals is to embrace new approaches to learning. This past year was transformational in that regard as new hybrid learning models were designed and implemented from online program and training delivery to a careful return to face-to-face.

The outcomes are equally transformational for over 950 adult learners and over 800 children who participated; 91% of them applied their skills outside of class, 94% showed an increase in confidence and an amazing 96% progressed toward their learning goals. This year we celebrate one learner in particular—Komal, a young mother who came to Canada in 2020, but in short order exhibited an unparalleled dedication to learning and helping her community.

Which brings me to the word 'Influential'. FESA has been quietly and consistently building influence. Whether it's through our enduring core programs and learners like Komal whose achievements impact their lives and communities, the Cooks with Stones Program which won the 2022 Canada Life Literacy Innovation Award, or the tangible \$51,000 raised this year through the Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink fundraising efforts—our biggest number to date. From our roots as a local literacy non-profit, we are now influential with governments, businesses,

Indigenous communities, and learners across Canada. There is a deep appreciation for our special approach to developing replicable programs, building respectful partnerships, and engaging learners for life.

As always, I wish to acknowledge the FESA staff, who've weathered the ups and downs with hard work and winning attitudes. Of course, I can't shower enough praise on Elaine Cairns whose style of leadership and unwavering vision is something to aspire to. As for our Board of Directors, we bid farewell to two, but they are still in the FESA orbit as society members and in their own way still support our work. I was proud to welcome several new Board members who are already showing a keen commitment to our mission. They also circle our orbit with one having started as a program learner and the other is a professional colleague of a current Board member. Just like the Hotel California lyrics boast, "you can check out, but can never really leave!".

So while words are indeed powerful, there are not enough words to express my appreciation and thanks to all. Bring on this next year and let's see what else we can accomplish.

"No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world."

- John Keating,
Dead Poets Society





952

adult learners and families engaged in literacy and essential skills programs

↑ **29%**
increase

OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

814

children reached through family literacy programs

↑ **12%**
increase



83

facilitators trained to deliver FESA programs in their communities

94%

of learners showed increased confidence

91%

of learners applied their new foundational skills outside of class

96%

of learners progressed towards their learning goals



Calgary Programs

We collaborate with community agencies across Calgary to offer free foundational learning and family literacy programs. We deliver programs adapted to learner's self-identified literacy needs and give children and families the opportunity to learn to read, to write, and to develop the parenting and essential skills they need for a successful future.

This year, as we began returning to in-person programs our focus was on building partnerships and engaging learners in new and fun ways, inspiring and building confidence in the capable learners they are.

We held various community events and activities to introduce literacy and essential skills in different ways including: week long Children's Spring and Summer Programs, Family Day, Financial Literacy Day and National Children's Day events, a Children's Public Speaking program, a colouring competition and delivering holiday gift baskets and literacy kits to our program partners and learners.

FESA Family Day Event

On February 21st, we hosted a one hour virtual rhyme session for 18 families with young children. Parents were demonstrated how to interact with their children for the activities in terms of the children's ages and stages. Additionally, parents were taught strategies to help their young children learn a variety of concepts such as counting, spelling, action words, feelings, colours, shapes and more through singing, reading, drawing and craft.

'I loved to see all the children's faces lit up with joy and happiness. I felt the extra passion and enthusiasm from the young children when they were singing and rhyming together with their parents and siblings.'

- Beibei, FESA Facilitator

Spring and Summer Children's Programs

We partnered with the Nepalese Community Society of Calgary to offer a series of literacy focused children's programs.

In both Spring and Summer we offered a week-long online program. Each day there were different themes and literacy activities geared towards that topic: learning the difference between kind and nice, self-love and building self-esteem, science, bullying and standing up for yourself and managing complex emotions. The goal of the program was to not only develop literacy amongst the participants but also to allow participants to learn about



FESA WORD SEARCH

We create programs and spaces to learn that are:

useful life skills that go hand-in-hand with literacy.

On average 20 children attended each day with ages ranging from 6-12 to join in art, stories, group work, brainstorming on a whiteboard, charades and **word searches**.

“Overall, the program was a huge success. There was ongoing engagement and participation from the kids. They contributed to meaningful discussions and put in their utmost effort in all of the activities. Accompanying this was much laughter and joy which made the program a fun, interactive, and educational space.”

- Thomas, Education Assistant (Summer student).

In the Summer, we also offered a public speaking program. Held online, this program developed participants’ public speaking skills and confidence through a variety of activities such as tongue twisters, show and tell, making up stories to funny images, and reading.

engaging

fun

interactive

learner-centred

informal

practical

safe

personalized

non-judgmental

encouraging

p e r s o n a l i z e d s f u
t o n m a s e v o i j z f j y
d l e a r n e r c e n t r e d
e p r a c t i c a l t g x y y
n z t y u h w i q v v h m y i
c n o n j u d g m e n t a l n
o d s a f e z d f i m y g p f
u e t c m f s w u l m m x g o
r n c z s b y v n j g a y o r
a g l **i n t e r a c t i v e m**
g a l w z u q g t o d o h q a
i g b w y a i f l a q u a a l
n i y c p t a t k l r d n b u
g n f y e l w c j j v g h i l
d g h m w p t c a d a f j b u

Fun with FESA

For our last children's programs of the summer, we were able to meet for two hours each day from August 2nd to 5th at the Nepalese Community Society of Calgary. Participants joined in-person to develop social and literacy skills through interacting with each other and fun activities.

Like our online Summer program we had a new theme to guide each day's activities: healthy relationships, art, effective communication and board games. The activities included team-building exercises, group discussions, answering writing prompts, word mapping, and more. Alongside the activities, snacks and juice were also provided.

FESA Colouring Contest

We were lucky enough to use Indigenous artist Kalum Teke Dan's new colouring book 'Colouring It Forward - Discover Blackfoot Nation Art and Wisdom' for a colouring competition.

The contest was open to everyone and to not limit creativity, we encouraged kids to draw outside the lines if they wanted. We chose two pictures from the colouring book for the competition; one page was of the Earth, a bear, and a crane, the other was a group of Indigenous people riding horses on the prairies heading towards the mountains.

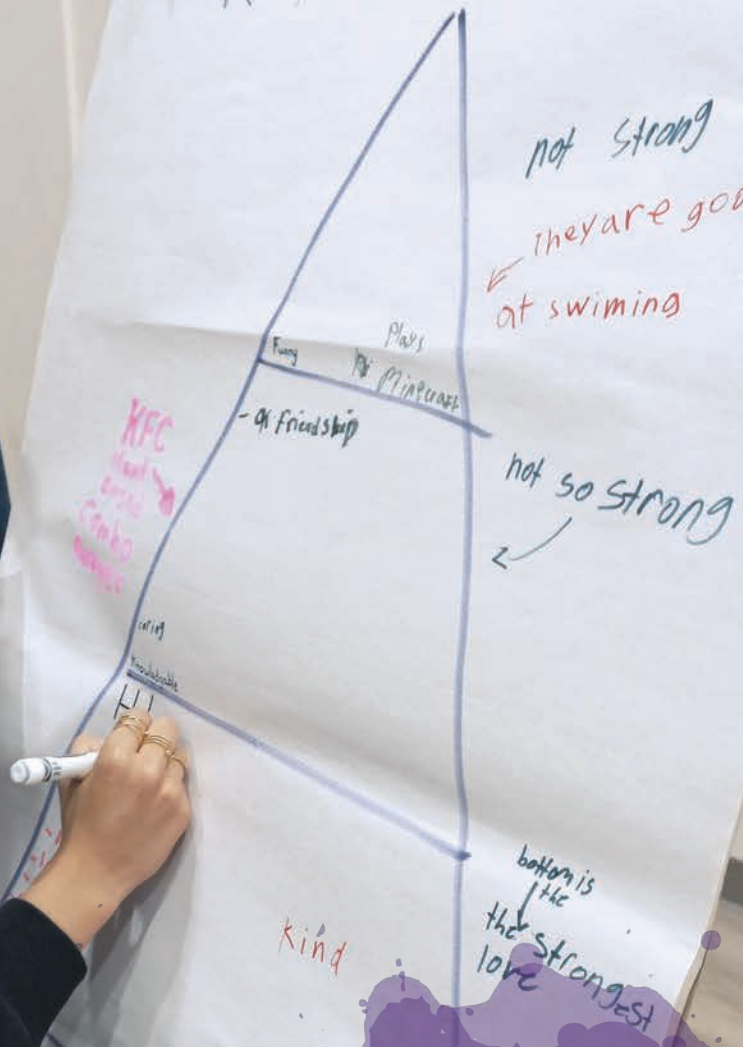
Children could submit the coloured pages to win prizes like board games, copies of the colouring book, and learning kits.

The contest ran from October to December 2021. When the contest closed, three finalists were chosen: Aarush, Nashita and Nivram. We thank everyone who submitted their drawings—they were all great and we enjoyed each one of them.





RELATIONSHIP PYRAMID



We delivered

222

adult and family literacy programs in Calgary

National Children's Day Event

On National Children's Day, November 20th, we partnered with Mount Royal University Child Care Centre to host a fun day filled with stories, colouring, and learning. Children joined in-person and parents joined us digitally via livestream.

Judy Everson, FESA Facilitator and Board Member, facilitated the event. The day started with songs, followed by a reading of Judy's book, *Chippy's Adventures*, and Judy answered questions. The children broke into groups and coloured the sheets from our colouring contest.

At the end, we handed out learning kits to everyone to continue the learning at home.

"The kids were curious and had so many questions. I loved that! I loved seeing the excitement on their faces, that's what I'm there for."

- Judy Everson



Holiday gift baskets and learning kits

We put together learning kits and gift baskets for families in need again this year. We delivered them directly to families from our programs and to two of our program partners, The Mustard Seed's Marlborough Park Neighbour Centre and Mount Royal University Child Care Centre to give to their clients.



Over
100
literacy kits
and baskets
delivered





We meet learners where they live or access services—at shelters, community resource centres and parent-link centres, and social service, immigrant, correctional, and Indigenous serving agencies across Calgary.

We meet learners where they're at in life by offering programs on practical and relevant topics. Our programs are often delivered in combination with other client services at partnering agencies, for example as part of employment, addiction and domestic violence support.

We meet learners at their literacy level. Our focus is to build learners' confidence, enjoyment, and success in learning, and eliminate the barriers that would normally hinder them from pursuing other educational opportunities.

Reading and Writing Circles

Reading and Writing Circles provides a safe environment where learners can read and write freely, at their own pace, and receive non-judgmental, personalized help with reading, writing and conversational English. We run this program with our partners across Calgary, including at the Women in Need Society and the Mustard Seed where these learner stories are from.

This year at the Women in Need Society, we delivered a hybrid program with a small group of participants in-person and a small group online simultaneously. We did this for several reasons: some participants were not comfortable coming in-person due to COVID-19, prior commitments like work, and problems with transportation. In addition, participants had grown to know each other and wanted to continue in the same group.

The online group joined via Zoom and were visible on the TV screen in the program space. There were two facilitators: one online in the Zoom call and one in-person. This allowed all participants to be able to connect and communicate smoothly and for the facilitators to focus on both groups.

'There were specific times where learners would struggle to answer a question on their worksheet and through guiding questions, they would reach the answer and instantly have an 'ah ha' moment. Other enjoyable moments included the learners completing their worksheets and sharing their sense of accomplishment, taking a break from working and enjoying conversations, and making mistakes. My favourite part of the program was the way we all laughed together when words were mispronounced and misspelled, and all the learners helped each other build on their skills in a fun way. As a facilitator I misspelled and sometimes made small errors



Our Learners

Calgary Programs

and was corrected by the learners. This created a lighthearted, easy going, and non-judgemental environment where mistakes were learning opportunities.'

- Minahil, FESA Facilitator

'I am working in retail store. Now when the customers ask me about any item of the store I understand and I can help them. It has been a big success for me because it helps me in my job. I see my progress when starting a conversation with a stranger. I have seen the progress of my companions and I feel immensely proud.'

- Participant, Reading and Writing Circles

'I can read any letter that comes to the house. Once in a while I get stuck on a big giant word but it's much better than before. I can open any envelope and read it. I learned in this program to help each other. I can help a second person who came in new and share what I learned in this place.'

- Participant, Reading and Writing Circles

Meet Mona

Mona is from Lebanon and has lived in Canada for 40 years. She joined Reading and Writing Circles.

I joined the program because I was looking to learn how to read and write. I have learnt the alphabet which was hard for me before and now I am learning to put letters together to form words and sentences.

What was your favourite part of the program?

I like the worksheets, and there are resources to practice. My favourite part is when I am able to read out loud and get everything correct, it makes me very happy.

How did the program help you? What's different now from when you started?

I learnt things better than before. I could not read or write at all before. Now I am getting better and better. My writing looks tidier. I was not able to fill out forms before and I never asked for help, I used to be very shy and uncomfortable when asking for help. Now I can speak well and ask for help when I need it. I can share my experiences and ideas with people, and I can explain myself better. I now use this to help other and encourage others.

Strong foundations

Parent Child Mother Goose (PCMG) is a group experience for parents with babies and young children to learn rhymes, songs, and stories to teach their children about language. It is often delivered with Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS) which uses parenting topics to strengthen the literacy skills of parents while giving them strategies to model good literacy practices with their children. Both programs build family bonds which, in turn, encourage lifelong learning.

Meet Ela and Mithran

Ela and her son Mithran first joined a combined Parent Child Mother Goose and Literacy and Parenting Skills program in 2019 when Mithran was one year old.

'Mithran didn't show his interests in singing, rhyming and storytelling in my program for a very long time. He couldn't concentrate in session time and seemed to get distracted easily. I always told program participants that young children's attention span is very short. They are learning more than you think if you expose them in a learning environment constantly. Ela shared the same strong belief as mine and maintained good attendance.

The moms and children in my program formed a great learning community where parents and children became friends. This further motivated Ela and Mithran's participation in my program. Gradually, the power of repetition did magic on Mithran. He showed more interest in singing and rhyming. He could concentrate better when he was getting more familiar with the songs, rhymes and session structures.

Due to COVID, this program transitioned to online Zoom sessions in March 2020. Mithran's progress was increasingly visible. Mithran nowadays can stay focused for an entire 40 minutes in a Zoom session. He is good at following my instructions, answering questions and expressing his ideas.

He has developed great interests in book reading. He likes to share his newly borrowed and purchased books at the beginning of a session when we are checking in and catching up with everyone. As Ela said, he developed a reading book habit.

Ela has been dedicated to her son's learning and development. Her love accompanies continuous learning in parenthood and has built a strong foundation of further learning and development for Mithran. Mithran started preschool in September. I believe he will shine in his learning.'
- Shared by a PCMG/LAPS Facilitator



New beginnings

Indigenous Parenting After Violence (I-PAV) was developed, and is delivered, with the support of Elders, Indigenous communities and learners. I-PAV uses a trauma-informed approach combining culture and literacy, parenting, pre-employment, financial literacy and essential skills to help learners who have been impacted by family violence develop self-sufficiency. By helping participants see themselves as capable learners, we enable them to develop their full potential.

Meet Tanya

Tanya, is an Indigenous mother of two children, who attended our Indigenous Parenting After Violence (I-PAV) program as part of the programming at a long-term residential recovery program for women experiencing co-occurring issues including addiction, mental health and a history of abuse.

Tanya had been abused mentally, emotionally, and physically by her children's father. Because of the abuse, she started drinking to cope. Tanya's drinking resulted in her children getting taken away from her.

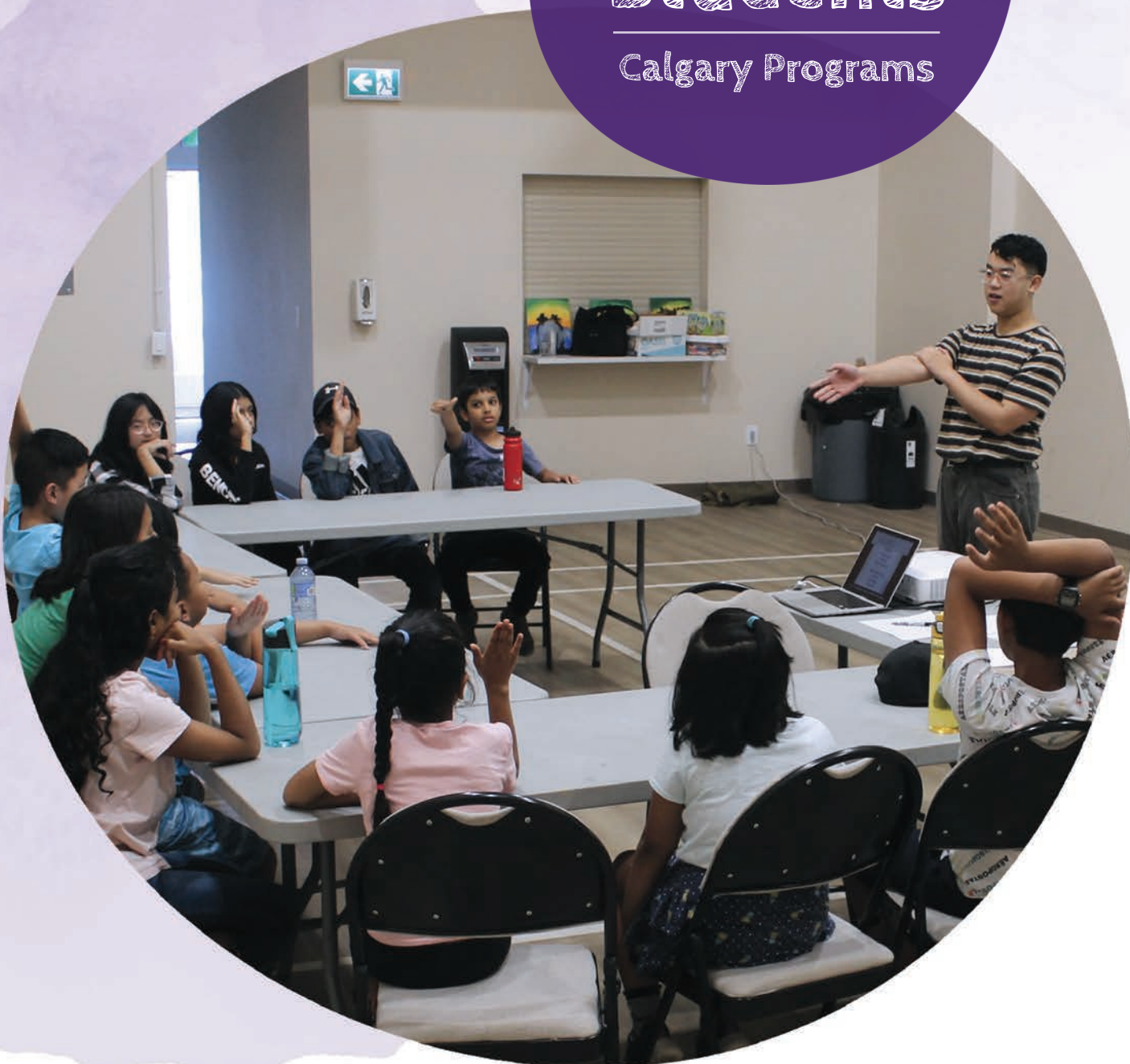
When Tanya first joined the I-PAV program, her self-esteem was very low; however, with each passing week, there was more growth. Tanya responded well to the sessions, and she started to participate more in group discussions and activities.

By the end of I-PAV and her recovery program, Tanya's self-esteem was restored, and her transformation was remarkable. Tanya was able to rent her own apartment and she got her children back.



Practicum Students

Calgary Programs



Each year students from the Department of Child Studies and Social Work at Mount Royal University are referred to us to complete their practicum. This year we had 11 students learning about our programs, facilitate, create lesson plans and activities and develop program partnerships.

Meet Thomas

Thomas first joined FESA as a practicum student completing his Social Work Diploma. He returned as a summer student the following year as the Education Assistant.

'During my time at FESA I was given the opportunity to facilitate and co-facilitate a roster of programs. To name a few: the Children's Reading and Writing Circle, the Spring Activity Events, Parenting Skills, Financial Literacy, and Youth Healthy Relationships. I learned a lot. I think most notably, it would be the ability to work with diverse groups. Because FESA serves people from different backgrounds whether it be literacy level, ethnicity, age, or gender, being able to work with different people broadened my horizon and perspective. I've also learned of the importance of literacy as it sets the foundation for life.

I think one of the biggest highlights was being able to work with different partner organizations. Despite the different populations that these partner organizations would serve, the underlying themes that unite everyone was literacy. It was interesting to see how the idea of literacy could be applied in so many cases like financial literacy, emotional literacy, anger management literacy, and etc. Another highlight would be being able to contribute meaningfully to the lives of the people FESA serves. Something so small like reading a book together could have long-lasting effects.

One thing I'm taking away after my time at FESA would be the importance of listening. Although many programs, workshops and sessions are delivered in a presentation way, when a piece is incorporated to listen to others, it changes the dynamics. More specifically, people are more inclined to participate and be active when they are being heard. I think this is a really important thing I can take away.'

Meet Minahil

Minahil joined FESA as a practicum student and has since joined FESA as a facilitator and Program Coordinator in Calgary Programs.

During my time at FESA as a practicum student, I was tasked with learning program manuals and facilitation techniques while presenting mock facilitations in order to practice the skills needed. I was able to use the feedback given to me by colleagues to then go out into the community and co-facilitate and lead facilitations with FESA staff.

I joined FESA after my practicum ended as a program coordinator and facilitator. Since then I've engaged with participants while helping them complete reading and writing worksheets and short stories and books in the Reading and Writing Circles program. I've worked alongside moms in the Parent Child Mother Goose program while they increased interaction and early literacy through singing rhymes and reading stories.

A specific highlight was when one of the participants had been struggling to get through a reading/writing worksheet, they seemed to have given up and with encouragement they not only overcame what they were struggling with but also the entire lesson plan. This made me realize that one of the biggest barriers in learning is not believing in oneself. Everyone needs and should be encouraged. Words of encouragement can spark determination and resilience.





'We started a Family Literacy Program in September and I wanted to have more tools in my "Tool Box". It gave me the skills to train other facilitators for our Literacy Program.'

'I run an Indigenous Literacy and Parenting course for our clients. I also use the skills in my one on one programming I run with Indigenous families.'

'I offer the teachings to our young parents.'

Every year we deliver

TRAIN THE FACILITATOR

workshops to workers from a wide range of community and workplace settings, to adapt and incorporate literacy programs for the needs of their communities and clients.



'I'm using materials given by you to begin a program!'

'We have used the activities as tools to use in a program with our mommas (I'm part of an Indigenous Early Intervention Child Development team).'

'I use what I learned in a program as well as carry it over to other programs I facilitate. I was able to utilize our kids library and help the parents incorporate reading into everyday life.'

'The manual provided is a perfect facilitator's guide that is essential for program planning especially to trial a pilot literacy program. Its many components can be used to tailor to the needs of our participants. I also liked that the training teaches us inclusivity like the community of care and suggestion circle.'

Going the Distance



Our national 'Going the Distance' project started on May 14, 2017, as a cultural and community response to the under-representation of Indigenous peoples employed in the Tourism and Hospitality industry across Canada.

Recognizing that many times limited Skills for Success are a barrier to entry and advancement in the workforce, Indigenous communities and organizations, literacy and essential skill specialists and employers came together to create localized responses for their individual communities.

Going the Distance delivered Celebrations of Success, Indigenous Asset Based Community Development, Managers Training, Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles (IWLC), Cultural Exchange Workshops, Leadership Training and the award-winning Cooks with Stones to name a few of the programs adapted and created.

During the project, 203 learners went through the IWLC program, and 55 facilitators and 71 managers were trained.

Now five years later, we're bringing together the work, learning and success of our journeys across Canada in an Indigenous Workplace Learning Framework that will be given away to assist other communities to create their own response.

It will be available online and provide guidance, resources, training, and practical tools to help Indigenous communities, bridging organizations (organizations that provide job resources and skills training support), and employers in the Tourism and Hospitality industry build inclusive workplaces.

In anticipation of the Framework, we want to celebrate the unique, innovative and invaluable contributions of the Indigenous communities who built it, and the enthusiasm and generosity of our employer partners.

Here are a few highlights from an amazing journey (with a focus on the last and final year of the project).



Celebrations of Success at Stoney Nakoda Resort and Casino and at Grey Eagle Resort and Casino for the Stoney Nakoda and Tsuut'ina communities. Led by Elders, community leaders and employers, the events were a cultural celebration and a platform for employees, potential employees, and employers to learn from one another.

'Thank you for believing in me, being a team, never had this opportunity before.'
- Participant, Celebration of Success

Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles

Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles (IWLC) is a program FESA developed in consultation with Indigenous communities that helps foundational learners, people new to the workplace and people returning to work. The program builds on learners strengths and incorporates traditional culture and language with employment readiness training to build their confidence and literacy skills.

Participants learn about transferable skills, develop literacy and essential skills, build resumes, practice job interviews, work through real workplace scenarios, network, receive mentorship and build confidence.

Over the course of Going the Distance IWLC was delivered with many partners including Stoney Nakoda Job Resource Center, Bullhead Adult Education Centre and Eden Valley Bearspaw HRD. It was adapted for different communities, and as a component of other programs like SkillsLink and Cooks with Stones.

Some of the highlights for IWLC programs this year:

Stoney Nakoda Job Resource Center hosted a job fair with local Tourism and Hospitality employers on March 15th and 16th for former IWLC Eden Valley participants. Local employers included Canmore Tourism, and Stoney Nakoda Resort and Casino.

These job fairs will continue to follow programs and support participants in their job search.

We've been building community capacity to ensure sustainability for the current IWLC programs. A new partnership was formed with the Stoney Nakoda Youth Council. Members of the council took part in an IWLC facilitator training and will be working with partner organizations to deliver IWLC programming in the future.

23 facilitators took part in our new online IWLC Facilitator Training and we continued to work with Sweet Spot International (SSI) to adapt the IWLC program to an online format given the demand and importance of distance learning.

You can read more about our work with SSI, one of the winners of our Celebration of Learning Awards on page 36.



203

learners completed the IWLC program.



100%

reported skill development when it comes to building a resume, and



71%

improved their job interview skills.





Know your dreams
Act on it
Focus!

Roger!

Wynne

Helped me achieve a lot. It helped me learn things I didn't know about and improve my confidence.

I learned that people think in many different ways and it is important to work together to use each others strengths.

I was alright with time management, but it was never a priority. Suddenly I had a place I wanted to be, I felt like I belonged and had something to work towards. It was great having people in the group nudging and encouraging me along the way.

Cooks with Stones is the winner
of ABC Life Literacy Canada's

Canada Life Literacy Innovation Award 2022





“The supports that I received were mentorship and peer support from FESA staff and Pursuit staff and my Eyithkabi weya mentor Wyanne Smallboy-Wesley all helping me to achieve my goals in gaining employment and realizing that I have a special gift of sharing my skills that I learned from my Nation. Skills I can take with me to teach others about my Nation the Stoney Nakoda.

What I really enjoyed making was the salads and seafood boil outside and also going inside the kitchen and learning the cooking prep in both settings. Learning ice breaker activities such as the sandwich artist challenge and the other team building games. I enjoyed taking home a plate for my father and seeing his face with a big smile that told me I did a good job and making him proud.”

- Cooks with Stones participant and current line cook with Pursuit Banff/Jasper

Cooks with Stones is a 9-week program with a traditional knowledge and skills camp, workplace essential skills training, culinary training, mentorship, internships, accommodation, and transportation.

The program’s development was driven by the Iyarhe Nakoda (Stoney Nakoda) community and supported by partnerships with Pursuit Banff/Jasper Collection, Chef Rich Francis, Stoney Nakoda Consultation, Stoney Nation Job Resource Centre, and many others.



Stoney Nakoda Storytelling workshops for Pursuit Banff/Jasper. The workshops focused on storytelling, literacy and the culture and traditions of the Stoney people and the relationship of these to workplace success.

'This was very enlightening and will be useful for our guides. We don't always have the opportunity to learn more about other cultures around us, so it was a really great experience.'

I would love to see more of these in the future to help us further understand our surroundings from the perspective of the Stoney people.'

- Pursuit Employee, Stoney Nakoda Storytelling

Indigenous Asset Based Community Development for Hospitality and Tourism with Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University at Stoney Nakoda and Saugeen First Nation.

'A key element of the program is that it is based in the community's strength and recognizes the skills that they have and then collaboratively look at what learning and support they need.'

- Stakeholder





Youth and Community Leadership Workshops

This year, Saugeen First Nation co-developed and hosted two one-day leadership workshops for youth and program managers. The youth leadership workshop was a full-day event that brought 16 youth from the First Nation together, including some from a new Youth Council. A small group of the youth led by Leigha Roote were also instrumental in planning, organizing and co-facilitating the workshop, ensuring that the youth had a say in what activities and topics were included.

The workshop started with a song, smudge ceremony, and the Seven Grandfather teachings led by community Elder Lori Kewaquom. Participants took part in leadership, self-confidence, and team-building exercises throughout the day. They learned about goal setting, short and long-term planning, circle teachings and power. Central to the day's learning was reflecting on their lived experiences and existing wisdom and knowledge. The day ended with creating action plans to help them grow their skill sets.

The second workshop in Saugeen was offered for Saugeen First Nation Program managers. Ningwakwe George opened the day with a prayer and explained the existing partnership between Saugeen First Nation, FESA and Coady Institute. The day continued with more than 32 participants engaging in storytelling, relational accountability, and the importance of approaching the community and their work from an abundance lens. We helped managers identify their personal and team assets. The group also covered the importance of self-care while leading, understanding power, team building and ended with creating action plans that the managers will use with their teams.

Both workshops were grounded in the belief that Saugeen First Nation community members and youth had gifts and assets already, and Karri-Lynn Paul and Krista Hanscomb from Coady Institute and the FESA's GD Project worked with them to highlight their contributions.

'The final exercise before certificates were presented was an "Appreciation Activity". Everyone had a piece of construction paper taped to their back (facilitators included!) and each person was to write something positive about that person. One of the best moments of the whole day was watching their faces light up as they read what others had written about them.'

'As a facilitator and observer, I witnessed this group of young leaders encourage, support and inspire the participants who came to the workshop that day. They were humble and kind while modelling confidence, leadership, and vulnerability. I watched the shy and quiet participants connect with others and emerge from their shells. I saw the pride on each face as they were handed their workshop certificates.'
- Krista Hancombs, Coady Institute

'You could feel the power in the circle from every youth that was present...can't wait to see the circle grow. Embrace who you's are, you have so much to offer to us!'
- Elder Lori Kewaquom



Pathways

We're excited to announce the launch of our 'Pathways' project.

Pathways is a national, multi-year project that builds on the work of Going the Distance. It brings together Indigenous youth and their communities, Elders, mentors, bridging organizations (organizations that provide job resource and skills training support) and employers to create pathways for youth to meaningful employment in the Tourism and Government sectors.

New partnerships are developing as others from Going the Distance evolve to support youth to find their space within their communities and in the work environment. Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles (IWLC) continues in Morley and Eden Valley with the guidance of Indigenous youth in those communities to meet their needs.

Cooks with Stones was delivered again for a second group of Indigenous youth with Chef Scott Iserhoff as the partnering chef and mentor. Youth participated in Traditional Knowledge and Skills Camp, traditional cooking and culinary training and IWLC, workplace essential skills training, before a 4-week internship with Pursuit Banff Jasper Collection at their restaurants in Banff.

Building relationships will be a focus this coming year and

guide the project, events and programs. The input and direction provided from Elders, Indigenous communities and youth is already inspiring and we look forward to the journey ahead.

'Representation matters. The more that Indigenous people see themselves represented in all aspects of the Tourism and Government sectors, the easier it will be to attract other Indigenous workers to those sectors. Pathways will be a journey of discovery, skill development, and building self-confidence in their chosen field. Indigenous youth will have opportunities to flourish in supportive work environments, including showcasing their talents and unique cultural perspectives to the benefit of that workplace.'

— Ted Norris, Chair - National Advisory Circle for Pathways

Celebration of Learning Awards

Every year we like to celebrate the dedication of our learners and the commitment and contributions of our partners to literacy and learning.

Meet Komal

Komal is the 2022 Celebration of Learning Award winner for Outstanding Learner.

Komal moved to Canada in October 2020. She has a son and daughter. When she first arrived in Canada, her English proficiency was extremely low. She struggled to communicate with others and had a hard time integrating into the new culture. These challenges propelled her to join three of FESA's programs, Early Literacy, Reading and Writing Circles, and Parent Child Mother Goose (PCMG).

The first program she joined was Early Literacy in January 2021, with her daughter. The Early Literacy program is an adapted program that supports parents and young children with reading, math and readiness for school. During her time in this program, she mentioned that it was incredibly helpful to have basic instruction and to get a taste of practicing English. Following this program, she joined the Reading and Writing Circles program. Komal was dedicated. She had 100% attendance through all of her programs. It was evident that she was determined to quickly improve her language skills so that she could transition into the new life she wanted for herself and her kids.

She found these two programs so critical in supporting her language development that she decided to join a PCMG program with her son. During her time here, she continued to display a passion for learning and drive to improve her communication skills. In addition, the facilitator of the program recommended that she volunteer in her community as a way to further her English proficiency. She began volunteering with her kids at the Genesis Centre which she found extremely beneficial. Not only was she able to practice her English but she was giving back to the community in a meaningful way.

Komal has an impressive willingness to help the community while tirelessly working, contributing and dedicating herself to learning. She has also referred numerous peers to FESA's classes. She remains hopeful and optimistic about her new life in Canada.



Meet Teal

Teal has been with FESA for over 13 years. She's worked as a facilitator, manager for Calgary Programs and now as a Senior Manager at FESA and Project Manager for the Going the Distance and Pathways project. It's clear from everything her peers, colleagues and FESA's partners had to say that she is more than deserving of the 2022 Celebration of Learning Award for Outstanding Individual.


'Teal you have so many unique talents that it deserved an award this year for your contribution to learning. It has been an honour and a privilege to work with you over the last 13 years and watching your growth into your current leadership role demonstrating guidance, encouragement, strength and compassion all at the same time. A common sense approach to everything, the ability to handle conflict in a respectful way, I have learned a lot from you and by watching you with others.'

'Teal rose to the challenge this year as our part of the Going the Distance program finished. Due to health issues of one of the project team-members, Teal stepped in and really made the difference. She smoothed the way forward and adjusted what she needed to adjust to ensure that we could all keep to the project timelines. She did so simultaneously using both compassion and intelligence.'

'Teal does deserve recognition for her hard work and dedication to joint ventures with Indigenous work placements skills. I have known Teal for several years for Tsuut'ina First Nation Skills Link to Stoney Nation Job Resource Center. Teal, I can always count on you when we need FESA collaboration with program development in our Indigenous communities. Having you as my main contact with FESA has been very important in both creating success stories and inspiring diamonds in the rough to self sufficiency. Im honoured to call you a friend and a colleague.'

'I have been working with Teal for the past 5 years and can't imagine a more deserving person for the Outstanding Individual Award. I have watched Teal grow in her role over the years, from building more relationships, taking on more responsibility, and going above and beyond in every part of her job while (like taking my calls while sitting in a car during after school pick up – yes, she is a full time mom too!). She is someone that cares about her co-workers, her programs, her participants, and really just all the great things that FESA does on a daily basis. She has been an amazing partner over the past 5 years, and I am excited to see what she does next.'

'It's great to work with Teal. Not only is she professional but more important, she listens and has a big heart. Congratulations Teal!'

A group of people is gathered in a grassy field. In the foreground, a white tarp is laid out on the ground. In the background, several people are standing, some wearing hooded sweatshirts. A dark-colored SUV is parked on the right side of the field. The scene appears to be outdoors during the day.

'Teal is the epitome of "grace under pressure". We know she has a LOT on her plate, but she never seems overly frazzled and always has time to share an encouraging word. I love seeing how she dives right into assisting with anything that needs to be done - always with a smile. She is so deserving of this heartfelt accolade! Congratulations Teal.'



Meet Sweet Spot International

Sweet Spot International (SSI) is the 2022 Celebration of Learning Award winner for Outstanding Organization Award. We want to thank them for their flexibility, creativity and the generous support they have given us.

Sweet Spot International (SSI) is a small, close-knit team of specialists covering the fields of instructional design, scriptwriting, graphic design, and custom media creation (videography, photography, illustrations, and narration). They've been working closely with us to adapt our Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles (IWLC) program into eLearning modules for an online facilitator-led training.

We were lucky enough to talk with Linda, an Instructional Designer and Writer from the SSI team about helping FESA bring the IWLC program to an online audience.

Tell us a bit about working on this project with FESA.

This has been a particularly interesting project because of its two-part nature—first, the pre-session eLearning courses (which the learner works through independently), and then the subsequent online meetings (led by a facilitator). The eLearning courses had to function as both an overview of the content to be discussed, as well as support and context for the online sessions. We greatly enjoyed the challenge of designing the eLearning courses and the online meetings to work with and complement each other.

Another enjoyable aspect was the opportunity to expand on the content in the facilitator's manual and deliver it directly to the learner through the pre-session eLearning courses. Whether in person or online, facilitator-led meetings must, by necessity, be constrained to a limited duration. The more time that is spent on explaining core concepts, the less time there is for interaction and discussion.

But with the addition of the pre-session eLearnings, we were able to offer participants the chance to have an understanding of core concepts before joining the online meeting. This allows facilitators to focus on the most rewarding aspects of facilitation—namely, encouraging interactions, leading discussions, and guiding participants in their learning journey.

One of our favourite parts of eLearning creation is when we are able to deliver content to learners in new and fun ways—often in the form of interactions, quizzes, and games. One of our favourite interactions from the IWLC program is a virtual “journey” through the forest, where they meet with various challenges (like a bear!) and have to use their knowledge of the nine essential skills to successfully reach the end of the trail.

What's something you've learned while working on IWLC program?

The IWLC program has at its core a reliance on the strength, community focus, caring, creativity, and sharing that becomes possible through the “learning circle” format. With the SSI team coming from a more Western-focused learning background, we were fascinated to learn the history of learning circles, and to discover their cultural and practical importance. We became intrigued by the philosophy behind the circle, how it is a setting where everyone is equal and connected to each other, with equal status, where there is no “right” or “wrong” but only different perspectives. Where everyone in the circle contributes the knowledge they have (whether from formal education or life experiences) so everyone may learn from each other's experiences and perspectives and grow as human beings. We worked hard to ensure the new, online version of the IWLC program both supported and empowered the use of the learning circle format.

What has been a challenge of adapting the content to a digital platform?

It was challenging to transpose some of the activities in the IWLC program to an online setting, especially activities that involved being hands-on or physically moving around a room and interacting with each other.

We were able to overcome some of the challenges by having participants go into breakout rooms on Zoom in small groups, which would be similar to having participants in a live setting go off and sit together for discussions. For activities that involved drawing or note-taking, participants could use the Zoom “whiteboard”—as opposed to writing on a piece of paper and then holding it up to share. And instead of using a flip chart, the facilitator could share a document on their screen, which everyone could see and annotate.

One of the advantages of a digital format is that it becomes much easier to share your work. For example, if you create a list of participants’ ideas for improving their workplace during an online meeting, you can send everyone a copy by email after the meeting has concluded. However, if this discussion were to happen in-person, participants would have to take their own notes if they wanted a record of what was said.

What do you like about the online IWLC program that has been created?

We are very excited about the online version of the IWLC program, because we are certain it will broaden the program’s reach and allow FESA to draw in participants from all over the country— not just those who live close enough to attend the in-person meetings.

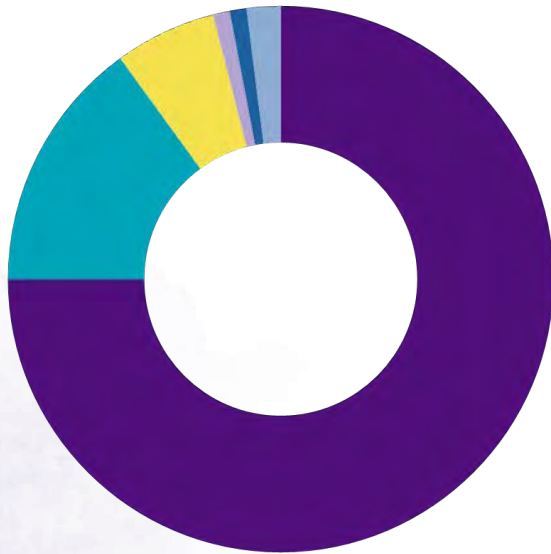
We are also proud of how the eLearnings and online meetings interact seamlessly with and complement each other, providing participants with effectively double the chances to learn and understand content from each session. Finally, we are looking forward to helping participants improve their digital literacy skills in a way that is both fun and engaging as they make their way through the eight-session program.

‘When we started discussing the online development of FESA programming I knew that was important to work with developers that could not only deliver top notch content, but that also would take the time to understand and appropriately incorporate the nuanced content of FESA programming. I have been lucky enough to work on multiple projects with SSI and they remain my first choice when it comes to online learning development because they take time and energy to understand what success should look like for both the organization as well as a client. I am proud to work with SSI and FESA to develop these life altering programs and look forward continuing to work with both FESA and SSI to provide these important programs to people in need.’

- Trevor Freeman, eLearning Content Designer for Going the Distance and Pathways

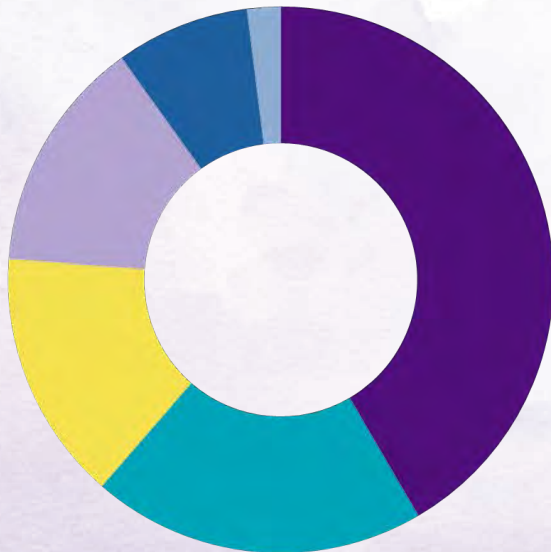


Our Finances 2021-2022



Income - 1,523,179

- Grants Special Project 75%
- Grants Calgary Programs 15%
- Fundraising 6%
- Training Revenue 1%
- Casino 1%
- Other 2%



Expenses - 1,519,008

- Special Projects Delivery 42%
- Program Development 20%
- Calgary Programs Delivery 15%
- Facilitator Training 14%
- Administrative 8%
- Fundraising 2%

Our People



Donna Rapp
President



Jenna Truong
Vice President

Thank you

to our **volunteer Board** whose commitment to the organization is important to our success.



Paul Rowe
Treasurer



Jessica Spicer
Secretary



Alesia Fieldberg
Director



Deveeda Kumar
Director



Janine Rogan
Director



Judy Everson
Director



This year we raised

\$66,704

through **Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink**. Thank you to everyone who donated and to Birdies for Kids! Your generosity gives children and families the opportunity to learn to read, to write, and to develop the parenting and essential skills they need for a successful future.

Thank you

The Further Education Society would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our funders, partners and the many committed individuals who support our work by making generous contributions to help achieve our purpose.

Funders

Alberta Lottery Fund (AGLC)
Bears paw Benevolent Foundation
Calgary Foundation
Calgary Learns
City of Calgary - Family and Community Support Services
Government of Canada - Employment and Social Development
Government of Canada - National Essential Skills Initiative
Government of Canada - Sectoral Initiatives Program
International Fellowship of the Least Coin
Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink
TC Energy

Donors

Aimee Lo
Amanda Lemieux
Angela T Dratowany
Beibei Lu
Carol McCullough
Christine Hampshire
Christine Sparrow
Donna Rapp
Elaine Cairns
Holy Spirit Catholic Women's League
Jeffery Struth
Joanne Good
Judith Gingrich
Kathleen Myers
Laureen Mackenzie
Linda Johnson
Linda Schneiderei
Louise Breadner
Marisa Swift-Hill
Mary Rapp
Michelle Proulx
Nicole Langton
Niranjan Gautam
Robert Swift-Hill
Ryan Sauve
SouthWest Communities Resource Centre
Susana Balzan
Tasneen Kotadia
Ted Norris
Utkarsh Subnis
Virgil Smith
Youth and Philanthropy Initiative

Partner Organizations

Calgary Programs

Alcove Recovery Centre
Aspen Village Square
Calgary John Howard Society
Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre
Calgary Remand Centre
Canadian Mental Health Association
Calgary Catholic Immigrant Society
Centre For Newcomers
Immigrant Services Calgary
Immigrant Services Calgary -
Louise Station, Calgary Housing
The Mustard Seed
Nepalese Community Society of Calgary
Salvation Army
Stoney Health Services
The Immigrant Education Society
The Genesis Centre
Women in Need Society, Dover
Women in Need Society, Bridgeland

Going the Distance

Coady International Institute,
St. Francis Xavier University
Dig Insights Inc.
Eden Valley Bearspaw HRD
Pursuit Banff/Jasper Collection
Saugeen First Nation Employment
and Training Centre
Stoney Nakoda Consultation
Stoney Nation Job Resource Center
Stoney Nakoda Resort and Casino
Sweet Spot International Inc.
Tourism HR Canada
Wise Resources Inc.
Workforce Educational Consulting
Xpan International Inc.

This year we would like to highlight **The Mustard Seed** as an outstanding Calgary Program partner. They helped us to deliver Reading and Writing Circles to vulnerable and eager to learn individuals. It is an honour and privilege to have worked with The Mustard Seed. Thank you for your dedication and devotion to the needs of people in our community. Much gratitude for making this year another success!



Thank you to the Elders who shared knowledge and helped plan and deliver programs this year including:

Vinnia Van Overdyk
Ningwakwe George
Lori Kewaquom
John Wesley
Barry Wesley
Darol Shortneck
Ina Gartner-Poucette
Paula Smallboy
Gary Dixon
Jessie Smallboy

We would also like to thank Elder David Abraham for his contributions to Going the Distance and acknowledge his passing in December.





CONNECT WITH US

✉ info@furthered.ca

📘 @FESACalgary

🐦 @FESACalgary

📷 @FESA_Calgary

www.furthered.ca



Further Education Society
Strengthening Communities