



**Twentieth Annual
2015 – 2016**

Annual General Meeting

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2016

Beth Shalom Synagogue

11916 Jasper Avenue

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action

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OUR VISION:

THE EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION IS RECOGNIZED AS A VITAL ORGANIZATION THAT ADDRESSES FAITH ISSUES LOCALLY, NATIONALLY, AND GLOBALLY. WE MODEL A SOLIDARITY THAT EMBRACES BOTH DIVERSITY AND COMMONALITY OF FAITH GROUPS.

OUR MISSION:

THE EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION PROMOTES PEACE AND FACILITATES INTERFAITH SOLIDARITY AMONG OUR MEMBERS, AND OUR LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES, THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, SOCIAL ACTION, AND MODELLING RESPECTFUL PLURALISM.

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre was founded in December 1995 to promote respect, friendship, harmony and understanding between people of various faiths. Our programs aim to help people live together as good neighbors. The Interfaith Centre has lay and clergy members from many different faiths, and has more than a dozen different religions represented on its current board.

The objective of the Interfaith Centre is to educate its members and the wider community about the diverse religious faiths present in Edmonton. We have a long history of success in developing programs which communicate the importance of respect for diversity. We have implemented a wide variety of programs, large and small, which have brought together people of many faiths to discuss critical issues facing our community. The programs include lectures, prayer services, discussions, presentations, and interfaith dialogues. The Centre also works to raise awareness about local and global discrimination and to model a non-discriminatory lifestyle.

On an ongoing basis the Interfaith Centre provides speakers to schools across Edmonton, addressing the diversity of religious expressions found in the community. The Centre facilitates visits to houses of worship both for children and adults and also coordinates interfaith prayer services throughout the year.

We are particularly proud of our ongoing partnership with the City of Edmonton. Since 2006 we have had an ongoing, changing display at City Hall, called *Celebrating our Faiths*, see report below. Also since our inception we helped a succession of city chaplains find leaders from many faith traditions to say the prayers that opened city council meetings. Sadly this wonderful example of the true embrace of diversity has ended, due to a very broad ruling by the Supreme Court. We have presented workshops both locally and internationally, at the annual North American Interfaith Network Connect conference, and four Parliaments of the World's Religions. We have also implemented or created program material for use throughout the community such as the two peace posters created by local graphic designers, a booklet, "Seeking Please...Visions of Peace from Twelve Faith Traditions", the "Walking Together" curriculum, and the "Faith in the Classroom" component of the "Safe and Caring Schools" booklets used by the Alberta Teachers Association.

The Edmonton Interfaith Centre looks forward to continuing to serve the community through the two arms of education and action.

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EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - JUNE 1, 2016

AGENDA

Welcome and introductions: David Fekete, President

Approval of Agenda

*Minutes of last AGM, June 2015

* President's Report

* Coordinator's Report

* Committee Reports

- Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative
- Celebrating Our Faiths
- Concert
- Interfaith Explorations
- Lunch & Learn
- Membership
- North American Interfaith Network
- Parliament of the World's Religions Edmonton Committee
- United Nations International Days: Peace Sept. 21 & IDERD March 21

* Treasurer's Report & Financial Statement

* Nominations Committee, Approval of New Board Members & Executive

New Business

Refreshment Break

Program: Rabbi Kliel Rose, "Human Rights, the Ultimate Expression of Jewish Particularism and Universalism".

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting, June 10, 2015 at 7:30 PM,
Bharitya Cultural Centre, 9507 – 39 Ave.**

Present: Karen Gall, Paula Kirman, Kathie Reith, Eileen Bell, Audrey Brooks, Don Mayne, Avau Fast, Beth Wishart MacKenzie, Ed Paproski, Virginia Sharek, Len Gierach, Steven Johann, David Fekete, Pat Holt, Nasim Kherani, Tymmarah Zehr, Pauline Paulson, Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Archina Tiwari, Rob Hankinson, Randy Haluza-Delay, Shiraz Kanji, Lawrence Loyek, Dave Hubert, Helen Arnott, Dave Geddes, Netta Phillet.

Our hosts: The meeting was called to order by the President, David Fekete, and we were welcomed by Archina Tiwari, president of the Bharitya Cultural Centre. Jagjeet Bhardwaj then introduced Pandit Pankaj Dixit. Pandit-Ji spoke about *Seva* - the concept of service in Hinduism, and how this applies to our uses of our bodies, minds/thoughts, and material possessions. It includes giving the best of who you are and what you have, but doing so anonymously or in secret, being in service (being good to) to one's self, other individuals, and society as a whole. After he spoke he answered questions and then we were privileged to experience the evening prayer rituals including bell-ringing and chanting, as each statue/icon was blessed for the night with burning camphor like incense. During his talk and the prayers, many people and families came to pray individually and make offerings, since, as Pandit-Ji explained, the temple is open to all and people are welcome to pray when they wish, as well as attending the larger gatherings each Sunday.

Business Meeting: David Fekete then opened the business portion of the AGM, with approval of the agenda moved by Len Gierach, seconded by Kathie Reith. Carried. Moved by Pat Holt, seconded by Audrey Brooks that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of June 12, 2014 be adopted. Carried.
Note: The full reports of officers and committees are printed in the Annual General Meeting Booklet.

President's Report: David reported on a very full year for the Centre, but called particular attention to the issue of prayer at City Hall. We have had a long tradition of prayer offered at the beginning of each Council Meeting by a representative of the each of the many faith traditions found in Edmonton. A recent Supreme Court ruling based on a case in Quebec has resulted in the suspension of this practice while legal opinions are considered. David encouraged us to continue to write letters and contact Councillors to voice support for the practice of prayer and/or moments of silence, as appropriate to each faith group and even to those with no faith affiliation as deliberations begin.

Coordinator's Report: Netta Phillet referred people to her written report, which outlines the many tasks she undertakes for the Interfaith Centre, both as a half-time staff member and on her own time.

Treasurer's Report: The financial statements are found at the end of the AGM Report and include the Audit Statement signed by Avau Fast and Virginia Sharek. In addition, they have reviewed the financial information supplied by the committee which had wanted to apply for a Parliament of the World's Religions, which is also found at the end of the AGM Report. Approved by acclamation.

Committee and Activity Reports

Interfaith Explorations: These are the five general meetings held each year, each in a different location and faith community. Karen Gall noted that these were called our Bi-Monthly Program meetings but the

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action
Annual Report 2015 – 2016

new name “Interfaith Explorations” is a better reflection of what we do. The meetings this year are described in the AGM report, including last June at the Sai Baba Centre, October at the Baha’i Centre, December at the Ashbourne, February at Knox-Metropolitan United Church, and April at the Eckankar Centre.

Celebrating our Faiths: Since 2005 we have coordinated the display in City Hall, with a different faith community represented approximately every month. This year’s rota is described in the AGM Report, and displays are already scheduled for the remainder of 2015.

Concert: Our annual concert (Building Bridges among Faith Traditions) was held on Feb. 8, 2015 at the Royal Alberta Museum. Pat Holt reported that it was an enjoyable event and successful fundraiser, and it gave us the opportunity to present this year’s Interfaith Advocate Awards to Rev. Travis Enright and to the Interfaith Chaplains’ Association at the University of Alberta.

Edmonton Committee for a Parliament of the World’s Religions (ECPWR): After last year’s successful ‘Partner City Event’ conference, and the official withdrawal of a bid for the PWR in 2017, the committee has concentrated on using remaining City funds to send ‘interfaith ambassadors’ to Guadalajara in May, Regina in July, and Salt Lake City in October. Len Gierach noted that recipients of these \$500 bursaries will be reporting back to the members of the Interfaith Centre, likely in the fall of 2015.

Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative: Don Mayne reported on how interfaith groups have been involved with the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, the Welcome Home program, and Habitat for Humanity. Audrey Brooks also described the role that some churches and faith communities have taken on in putting together teams for specific jobs on the Habitat builds.

Lunch and Learn: Avau reported on the program which is held on the second Monday of the month at the Interfaith Centre, with a usual attendance of about 15 – 30. The year’s topics and speakers are given in the AGM Report booklet, and none are yet scheduled for the fall.

Membership: Netta reported that our membership numbers are fairly constant, with new members balancing out those who move or let memberships lapse. We are currently at 183 members, including 24 Life Members who do not need to renew every year.

North American Interfaith Network (NAIN): The AGM Report booklet has a lengthy report from Bodhi Sakyadhita who was our official delegate to the NAIN Connect meeting held in Detroit August 10-13, 2014. She encouraged everyone who can to attend the next one in Regina (July 19-22, 2015).

United Nations International Days (Sept. 21, Mar. 21): Audrey Brooks was the key organizer for these two events. Sept. 21 is the International Day of Peace which this year was part of a much larger than usual all-day celebration with many organizations. March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which was also celebrated at City Hall, and commemorates the 1960 Sharpeville shootings in South Africa. Audrey also extended an invitation to the Annual Genocide Memorial at 9916-154 St. on July 19, 2015.

Nominations: Pat Holt introduced the board members who are remaining on the board for the second year of their term, and those finishing their terms and who are willing to serve another two-year term.

Acceptance of these board members was moved by Pat, seconded by Nasim. Carried. Four new members were introduced, including Paula Kirman, Pauline Paulson, Tymmarah Zehr, and Karnail Singh. Karnail was introduced in absentia by Nasim, and Paula, Pauline, and Tymmarah each spoke briefly to introduce themselves. Moved by Pat, seconded by Nasim that these four people be accepted as new board members. Carried. The slate of officers presented for ratification includes President – David Fekete, Past President – Nasim Kherani, Vice-President – Shiraz Kanji, Secretary-Treasurer – Karen Farkas. Don Mayne moved, seconded by Len that the slate of officers be accepted. Carried.

New Business

Delegate Selection: The Interfaith Centre is a member of the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN), and is therefore entitled to vote at the AGM. Any member of the Centre is eligible to be chosen, and generally receives a subsidy of up to \$500 for travel expenses to attend. After discussion of who is available to attend and to be our delegate, Randy Haluza-Delay moved, seconded by Kathie Reith, that Len Gierach be named as our official delegate. Carried. Len promised to report back to the board and to next year's AGM on this very worthwhile conference, especially since the Interfaith Centre is planning a bid to host NAIN in 2018.

As there was no further new business brought forward, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 (moved by Dave Hubert, seconded by Paula Kirman). Refreshments were served upstairs away from the temple area.

President's Report Rev. Dr. David J. Fekete

This meeting represents the close of my term as president of the Interfaith Centre. It has been an honor and a joy to serve in that capacity these past two years. But I leave the Interfaith Centre in the most capable hands of Mr. Shiraz Kanji. This is a great Edmonton organization, and we do important work of healing in a time when understanding and education are so much needed in the world.

This year the highlight may well have been an event not sponsored by the Interfaith Centre. Over the dates October 15 - 19, 2015, the Parliament of the World's Religions was held in Salt Lake City. Edmonton had a very good showing of participants, including a significant number from the Interfaith Centre. There was music, drama, dancing, seminars, worship, sacred space, and a huge bazaar from the world's religions and cultures. In fact, at one seminar, I learned about an environmental theologian named James A. Nash and the virtue of frugality. I incorporated his ideas into my presentation at the Interfaith Centre's Dialogue Day. I also used Nash's ideas in a seminar presentation I submitted to the North American Interfaith Network's meeting this July in Guadalajara, which was accepted.

The past year we worked with City Hall to resolve the issue of prayer in the council chambers. Due to a ruling from the Canadian Supreme Court, Mayor Don Iveson called a hearing to discuss the issue. Members of the Interfaith Centre, including myself, were asked to address the City Council. Although it was ultimately decided against prayer in the council chambers, a moment of reflection was agreed upon. The Interfaith Centre, myself included, was called upon again to help craft what that moment of reflection would look like.

On May 12, the Interfaith Centre sponsored a most successful Dialogue Day. We had 27 participants and speakers from 6 different faith traditions: Dr. Moyhuddin Mirza, Muslim; Pankaj Pandit Dixit,

Hindu; Prem Kalia, Buddhist; Rev. Dr. David J. Fekete, Christian; Michelle Nieviadomy, Indigenous; and Paula Kirman: Jewish. Ashbourne Catering provided a delicious and satisfying lunch, during which Andrew Glover played jazz renderings. Karen Gall opened the seminar with a prayer, and Len Gierach led us in a chant of Hu before lunch.

Serving as president the past two years has been a joy for me and most satisfying. I will miss the meetings, personal connections, and business arrangements that are all part of the job. I thank the Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to serve as president and the members of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action for voting me into office. Thank you all for your continued support and participation in our events.

Coordinator's Report Netta Phillet

This is an overview of the year which hopefully won't repeat other reports. Running the office of the Centre is largely clerical, receiving and depositing funds (membership dues, donations, proceeds from sales of calendars and posters), paying bills, keeping track of members (dues payments, sending renewal reminders plus simply staying in touch, which includes those who do not have email), sending tax receipts for donations, filing our returns with the Canada Revenue Agency and Alberta Registries, etc. Quickbooks has made this easier and makes me use a different part of my brain.

Sales of the Multifaith Calendar account for about 30 % of our revenue but sadly we did not sell all 1000 this year. For a few months of the year promotion, advertising, contacting previous customers, invoicing, tracing payments and following up any outstanding, mailing and delivering, all add up to a large part of my time.

I finally made it to a Parliament of the World's Religions in Salt Lake City in October. It was a busy and intense five days plus two fun ones driving there with Karen Farkas. We were two of many Edmontonians attending who received subsidies from the city.

One of our many partnerships is the (new in 2015) YEG Peace Fest; our long time traditional city hall flag-raising on September 21 (see Audrey's report) is the oldest event in what is now a two week amalgam of separate events, culminating on Gandhi's birthday October 2nd. Also new last fall was the Festival of Faiths, spearheaded by the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights (JHC). Several board members were involved in various capacities.

I attended a half- day "Building Community Resilience in Response to Radicalization to Violence" community conference put on by the police service. It was worthwhile, speakers were cops and academics, good useful information. In particular I was interested to hear them stress that the biggest security threats in North America are from "home grown violent extremists on the right". There is so much ignorance and fear of refugees and/or Muslims that we all need to know this and speak out.

I was also at a Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative meeting facilitated by city staff to give input into the Congregational Housing Action Guide to help religious and spiritual communities take action on housing and homelessness, and the Anglican Diocese's new similar action guide on poverty, in conjunction with the EndPoverty Edmonton initiative. The Interfaith Centre has been very involved with the housing piece in the past and hopes to maintain the momentum. (See Don's report.)

I was able to attend all but one of a dialogue series organized by the U of A chaplains, the format was that two students (or chaplains) spoke about what they love about their own faith, what they want others to know, then very candidly what they feel might be misunderstood about it, and finally, very bravely, asked each other questions about something they “always wanted to know but were afraid to ask”. It is an excellent model of interfaith education.

When at workshops or services that aim to be “interfaith” inspired or guided I look and listen with two brains, one trying to appreciate what is being offered but another criticizing and wanting to give pointers. I think I can say without any false modesty that we have learned a lot in 20 years.

We have a new member (our first Scientologist in years) who offered to bring order to the very neglected library and it has been a treat working with her (well actually she does it all) and seeing order come from chaos.

Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative Don Mayne

The City of Edmonton’s Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness is well into its second five years and real success has been seen in the Housing First program, which places homeless persons into their own homes. About 85% of those who are placed into a Housing First home are successful in remaining there.

Archbishop Richard Smith of the Archdiocese of Edmonton has been a member of the planning committee and he called together representatives of a variety of faiths to work on the housing needs of Edmonton. The Edmonton Interfaith Centre was represented at the first meeting and has remained a member of the group which meets several times per year. Bob McKeon, staff of the Archdiocese, provided leadership until his retirement in 2015, and John Gee of the Anglican Diocese took over that responsibility. In 2016 Mike Van Boom was hired to work with communities, congregations and housing groups to raise support for housing for the needy. He is available to work with groups who have housing ideas and need to develop plans for their communities.

Habitat for Humanity began in Edmonton in 1991, and the Interfaith Housing Initiative has worked with them building homes for families in need of housing. This has taken place in May and June, but this year will be in July and August. People of every faith have been invited to join the volunteer groups. The call has gone out to faith groups to recruit volunteers for this summer’s build. Congregations and faith groups have provided about 400 volunteers and in 2015 fifty families were provided with affordable housing. The “Interfaith Works Project” would welcome individuals or groups to share in this work. If you or your faith group can volunteer with Habitat For Humanity, or require further information on the project, please contact volunteer@hfh.org, or phone 780-451-3416 x 223.

They have two special events coming up:

- A Kick-Off Event on July 7, 2016 at Habitat’s Prefab Shop, 14135 – 128 Avenue, at 12 noon. Lunch will be provided and there will be a guest speaker. Please register for this event by July 2.
- a Wrap-Up Event at the same location on August 25, 2016 at 12 noon, with lunch and a speaker. Please register by August 20. Your support will be appreciated.

Celebrating Our Faiths Netta Phillet

In 2005 we began a partnership with the City of Edmonton, prompted by a comment that the extensive Christmas decorations in City Hall, lovely as they are, do not reflect the diversity of faiths found here; “not everybody is Christian”. Mayor Mandel took this to heart and after several months of meetings Celebrating Our Faiths was unveiled. It is a successful program which advances our mission and that of the city, to be a place of inclusion. We have been told by city staff that dozens of people walk through the building every day and many of them stop to look at the display and read the brief descriptions of 12 faiths. Featured in the last year have been Baha’i, Buddhism, Eckankar, Islam, Jain, Sikhism and Unitarian Universalism. We were very pleased to have the first Indigenous exhibit thanks to the creative talents (and personal collection) of board member Pauline Paulson. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has become the regular January celebration, the focus this year was on the Imanta Latvian Society; in February the World Interfaith Harmony Week theme was “Love of God, or love of the good, and love of the neighbour.” We are meeting with several city employees from a variety of departments to evaluate this program and *the times they are a changing*, some of the many Christmas decorations in storage are a bit tired and tattered and rather than replace them all with more of the same, consideration is being given to what might be more suitable. Stay tuned for that in December and we also look forward to a fabulous 10th anniversary celebration of this unique program in October!

Concert Audrey Brooks & Pat Holt

Our “Building Bridges Among Faith Traditions” concert was held on Sunday, January 31, 2016 and marked the beginning of the United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week, February 1-7, 2016. The concert featured a wide variety of exciting musical performances, including Michael Frishkopf and members of the Middle Eastern & North African Musical Ensemble, Choreal, the Brail Tone Choir, two Ukrainian choirs (Akolada and the Typika Singers), poems by spoken word artist Roylin Picou, and the exciting fiddling of Darla Daniels.

This year our Interfaith Advocate Award was presented to Donna Entz for her work in building bridges between the Mennonite Central Committee and Edmonton’s Islamic Family and Social Services agency. Since the annual concert is also our major fundraiser for the year, the committee is grateful to all those who contributed through the silent auction, sponsorships, advertising, and ticket sales, as well as being on hand to help on the day.

Committee members: Audrey Brooks, Karen Gall, Pat Holt, Avau Fast, Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Netta Phillet.

Interfaith Explorations Avau Fast

Four times a year we hold programs that are open both to our membership and the general public. These programs take place on the first Wednesday of the month in October, February, April and June. They are held in a house of worship, and with the host community we introduce a topic for discussion. Last June the AGM was hosted by the Bharitya Cultural Centre (Hindu), on October 7th we visited St. George’s Ukrainian Church, beautiful Byzantine style building with iconography all through the church. The church was established in 1955, with the parish welcoming immigrants from Ukraine. A delicious meal was served to the board and then Father Tarasenko explained the icons in the church.

On December 2nd we had our annual open house at the Centre, celebrating our 20th with food, dance and a program on climate change. The Centre thanks our hosts and we will continue to explore faith communities in Edmonton.

Lunch & Learn Avau Fast

Once a month we invite speakers to present a topic of interest. It is a very popular program and we have between from fifteen and thirty people attending. The highlight is that not only do our members get to hear and gain knowledge on current social and religious issues but also there is time to ask questions and share their own views on the subject. This way learning from books and life experiences are both combined. To those who have not attended our Lunch and Learn program I highly recommend it, come and experience an hour where the mind will be nourished with knowledge, while you take care of your body with the food you bring. Enjoy the coffee and tea provided and meet friends around the table. To those who come regularly, our very faithful friends, a big “Thank You”. Our work at Lunch and Learn is not over, new topics are still to be explored and suggestions welcome. We thank the speakers who volunteered to share their knowledge. Topics and speakers since the last report are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Michelle Nieviadomy | ICPM <i>oskapew</i> (cultural helper) |
| • Kim Boyes | Tibetan bowls |
| • Zohra Husaini | Islam/Human Rights |
| • David Fekete | Blake & Swedenborg |
| • Paul Bergen | Pastoral Care/Hospital |
| • Lori Reiter | Kids Kottage |
| • Pauline Paulson | Indigenous world conference |
| • Suzanne Gross | Mennonites/Refugees |
| • Roxanne Maguire | Elizabeth House |
| • Gita Das | Hinduism in India |
| • Bedri Mohammed | Oromo community |

Membership Netta Phillet

Our membership number remains amazingly constant, which can be considered a glass half empty or half full sort of situation. We gain and lose a few each year, and currently have 184, including 27 “Life Members”, an increase of three; we are able to offer a charitable receipt donation for this generous support (\$250). We have members I’ve never met, who might have paid with Paypal, or who do not live in or near Edmonton, including former members who’ve moved away but continue to renew. Please never doubt that your commitment to us is much appreciated.

North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) Connect Len Gierach (2015 delegate)

Regina Sask. hosted the NAIN Connect on July 19 - 22. From the greeters who met us at the airport to “Evening of Sacred Listening” to which the Regina community was invited, from the fantastic food prepared by our hosts, one could feel the dedication of all the volunteers and sponsors (Luther College, Campion College, and Regina MultiFaith Forum) who created this event. Also involved were the First Nations University, whose team hosted a sweat lodge, banquet and workshops on the adjacent campus. With a multitude of activities, workshops, field trips, it was a great feature to have discussion circles

(composed of a diverse range of ages and background) which met periodically throughout the conference. A highlight was the youth gathering on the final night, which featured dance, readings, and musical offerings.

If you've never attended a NAIN event, come to Guadalajara or to San Diego. And for those who may not be able to attend, join the team working on the steering committee for a possible 2018 event here in Edmonton.

This year's NAIN CONNECT 2016 will be held in Guadalajara, Mexico July 10-13

NAIN CONNECT 2017 will be held in San Diego, California

Parliament of the World's Religions Edmonton Committee (ECPWR) Len Gierach

It has been a privilege to work with a dedicated executive during this last year to complete our work (since 2010 – post Melbourne 2009) and bring closure for our team. Recipients of the ambassadorial bursaries reported (both orally and written) about their experience at NAIN Connect Regina, *Diálogo Multicultural Universal II* in Guadalajara, and PWR 2015 in Salt Lake City, Utah, in November at a special EICEA function. The strong representation at Salt Lake City of both presenters and attendees reflect the commitment and teamwork within the committee at large.

See attached report on the financial affairs of the committee.

United Nations International Day of Peace (September 21st) Audrey Brooks

Our annual raising of the Peace Flag on the City Hall Plaza featured greetings and a proclamation given by city councilor Bev Esslinger, remarks from Rev. Dr. David Fekete, Jim Gurnett and Rev. Brian Kiely, and songs by Paula Kirman and the Raging Grannies.

United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD) Audrey Brooks

On March 21 we gathered for our annual commemoration of a massacre of unarmed civilians in 1960 in South Africa. Racial discrimination worldwide is still as critical an issue. The program began with Karen Gall sounding the shofar to call us together, and greetings from Centre president David Fekete. Elder Pauline Paulson brought Treaty Six greetings and a prayer. Renee Vaugeois from the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights spoke on the theme: "Troubling times – Racism Raising its Head in Alberta". City councilor Bev Esslinger and Edmonton Police Service Chaplain Laurence Peck brought greetings as well. Youth worker Sebastian Barrera spoke about "Creating a Racist Free Edmonton Through Art." A student recently arrived from Syrian, Yosseff Edris, sang an Arabic peace song and Sebastian sang "I only Ask of God," in English and Spanish.

Invitation to the Annual Genocide Memorial – July 17, 2016 Audrey Brooks

Members of all faith groups are invited to participate in the annual Genocide Memorial Service on Sunday, July 17th at 1 p.m. at 9916-154 Street. It is sponsored by the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and the Edmonton Interfaith Centre, and facilitated by Rev. Audrey Brooks, Unitarian Chaplain at the University of Alberta, and member of the Interfaith Centre.

This annual Genocide Memorial Service began as a witness to violence committed against human beings because of war, greed, ethnic cleansing, slavery, gender bias, colonial appropriation of indigenous peoples, neglect and political oppression that resulted in the extinction of helpless children, men and women.

As part of the service, individuals from different faiths and cultures are invited to place a large stone, inscribed with the name of a person, place, or event that involves these deaths, and to share with the audience the reason for the placement. We, the people, must stand as witnesses to genocide, and never let the world forget that humanity stands in a pool of its own blood.

Albert Einstein Said, "Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be kept by understanding...all my life I have hated war, it is the greatest curse of man's history. It come from absolute ignorance, absolute greed, and absolute cruelty...Some paths a man takes cannot be retraced. Some acts cannot be undone."

Nominations and Approval of New Board Members & Executive

Pat Holt & Nasim Kherani

Board members are elected for a two-year term. The following members were elected or re-elected last term (June 2015) and have indicated their willingness to continue to serve:

Audrey Brooks, Karen Farkas, David Fekete, Karen Gall, Randy Haluza-Delay, Paula Kirman, Pauline Paulson, and Kathie Reith, Karnail Singh and Tymmarah Zehr.

The following members are completing the second year of their term, and present themselves for election for another two-year term:

Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Avau Fast, Len Gierach, Dave Hubert, Zohra Husaini, Shiraz Kanji, Nasim Kherani, and Virginia Sharek.

The committee also presents the following slate of officers for ratification by the membership:

President – Shiraz Kanji

Vice-President –Pauline Paulson

Secretary – Paula Kirman

Treasurer – Karen Farkas

Past-President – David Fekete

Salima Versi is nominated for a two-year term as new board member; we thank Bart Lambrecht for his term of service and wish him well.

Board Member Biographies

Jagjeet Bhardwaj is a retired scientist who now devotes her life to full-time volunteer work. For the past thirty five years she has volunteered for many organizations including the Girl Guides of Canada, Red Cross Society, the Marian Centre and the Millwoods Welcome Centre for Newcomers. Mrs. Bhardwaj is also a member of the Provincial Court Nominating Committee of Alberta. She is a recipient of the Centennial Medal from the Province of Alberta in recognition of her multi-faceted volunteer work. She has also been honoured by the Indo-Canadian Women's Association, with whom she has served as president and is currently treasurer for a third term. She also edited several publications for them. She has been nominated for the YWCA Tribute to Women of Distinction Award.

Rev. Audrey Brooks is the Unitarian Chaplain with the Interfaith Chaplains Association at the University of Alberta and received her Masters of Education at the U of Alberta, and her Masters of Divinity at Bangor Theological Seminary, Maine, USA, with a major in Pastoral Care. She celebrated 28 years of ministry this year on May 26th. She also taught with Edmonton Public Schools for 20 years. With a passion for social justice, Audrey sings with the Edmonton Raging Grannies at rallies and marches. Six years ago she founded the Annual Genocide Memorial Service, held on the third Sunday in July at 1 pm, at 9916 - 154 Street in Edmonton, sponsored by the Interfaith Centre and the Unitarian Church of Edmonton. Her special interest is in ecumenism, with the view that all peoples are genetically related, therefore divisive boundaries caused by cultural and religious differences must be addressed and rectified through loving cooperation.

Dr. Karen Farkas is most recently retired from positions of CFO and COO of a wholesale food company which she started with her husband, Clyde Hurtig, in 1990. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1969 with a degree in English, Philosophy and Mathematics and then worked for Travelers Insurance from 1970 through 1975, following which she attended Cornell University where she received the degrees of MBA, MS and PhD in Finance, Statistical Methods and Accounting. She has lived in the Edmonton area since 1981, teaching finance at the University of Alberta through 1987 and then working as a tutor, course writer and seminar instructor at Athabasca University from 1989 through 2002. She served on the Board of Governors at Athabasca University from 1999 through 2002. Karen is a life-member and past president of Edmonton Hadassah-WIZO and has been on their National Executive and Advisory Board. She is a member of the board and finance committee of Beth Israel Synagogue and, in the 80s and 90s, was active on the board for seven years, serving in many capacities. She has been active, through the years, in Edmonton Working Women and the Sustainable Population Society, and was on the steering committee for two international conferences put on by the True North Strong and Free Inquiry Society. Karen was on both the board and the finance committee and served a term as board chair for the Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association. She was an active member of the Arab/Jewish Women's Peace Coalition, with which group she traveled to Israel and the West Bank on an educational mission. Karen is a life member as well as a board member of the EICEA, and as served as treasurer and secretary. For the last 30 years she has belonged to a knitting group that meets monthly.

Avau Fast was born in Baluchistan, a beautiful region north west of India, during the British colonial period. She grew up in an area replete with different ethnicities. Later in India no matter where she lived there were churches, temples, synagogues and mosques around the railway colony where she lived. Before attending boarding school she lived with her aunt, and every morning as they walked to pick up fresh vegetables from the market, at each place of worship on the way, they would stop to pray. She recalls that she really did not mind as this gave her a few seconds to rest her weary feet. Avau looks upon India as an old multicultural country and Canada as a new one. As a born Zoroastrian she is proud to be a part of the Canadian mosaic; studying and working among different faiths and cultures has always been her interest in life. And, she and Malcolm are proud new grand parents.

Rev. Dr. David Fekete grew up in a family dominated by science and engineering, whose beliefs were agnostic/atheistic. This made his choice of ministry difficult. He holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy of Science, *Summa Cum Laude* from Urbana University, which facilitated his transition from his family's intellectual culture to the religion of his professional life. Rev. Fekete holds an M.T.S. from Harvard University in Religion and Culture, a diploma from the Swedenborg School of Religion in Swedenborgian Studies and Western Culture, and a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in Religion and Literature.

He taught World Religions, Philosophy, and Humanities in American colleges for six years before his ordination into Swedenborgian ministry in 2006. Since then he became pastor of the Edmonton Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian), is Camp Pastor at his church's youth Camp, Paulhaven Children's Camp, was the Swedenborgian Church Youth League Chaplain for all of North America for a period of 5 years and serves as his denomination's representative to the Faith and Order Convening Table of the National Council of Churches of Christ of the USA.

Rev. Fekete has published 39 articles in his denomination's journals, 3 articles in refereed university presses (one in the University of Alberta's journal *Religious Studies and Theology*), a scholarly book on love and spirituality, 4 articles in *The Edmonton Journal*, and has self published a book of poetry and one on spirituality. He lectured at the 2009 meeting of the American Academy of Religions on Swedenborg and Sakta yoga, has delivered a talk on his experiences with bipolar disorder at the University of Alberta in January of 2013, at the MHCC's Headstrong Youth Summit in 2015. Concordia University named him a Visiting Scholar in the Institute of Christian Studies and Society for the 2015-2016 term. On February 23, 2016 he delivered a lecture at Concordia on "Myth, Metaphor, and the Limits of Language."

Rev. Dr. Fekete says that he finds the Edmonton Interfaith Centre a stimulating environment of mutual respect, and continues to enthusiastically embrace the values of interfaith relations here, as he did in his graduate degree programs.

Karen Gall is on the board of the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation and has been involved for over a decade as the chair of their annual Harmony Brunch, which commemorates the International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination. She continues to assist on the organizing committee. She is a lay leader at Temple Beth Ora, Edmonton's Reform Jewish Synagogue, serves on their Ritual Committee and is a founding member of their *Chavurat Ha Shir* singers; she is also an occasional cantorial soloist. Karen focuses her time on successfully building bridges, using her appreciation and awareness of the value of multiculturalism and interfaith connections. She is also involved with a new initiative, which has as its working name the St. Albert Interfaith Network.

Len Gierach is a volunteer cleric with Eckankar and has been involved with interfaith activities in Edmonton for over twenty-five years. He served as chair for ECPWR 2010-2015 and as a member of the NAIN 2018 proposal committee (see reports on both). He is employed with Westlawn Memorial Gardens as a pre-need specialist. He is active as a writer, chorister with the Richard Eaton Singers, and various service work. Len and his wife Heather enjoy their five children and one grandchild in the Edmonton area

Randolph Haluza-DeLay, PhD is a father, cyclist, and former wilderness guide. He is Roman Catholic by adult baptism who currently participates with his family in a Mennonite church in Edmonton. As an sociology professor at The King's University College for the past 12 years, he has published over 30 academic papers and two books – "Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada" (2009), and "How the World's Religions are Responding to Climate Change" (2013). He has also conducted research on racism, including the 2012 City of Edmonton survey of Edmontonians attitudes about diversity and culture in the city.

Rev. Dr. Rob Hankinson has been associated with the Interfaith Centre since witnessing the original signatories to the Alberta Societies Act application, December 1995, at the Welcome Chapel, Royal Alexandra Hospital. Since then Rob has held a number of positions on the Centre's board, and he is now happy to be an honorary member. Rob retired from 40 years ministry with the United Church of

Canada in 2012. All three of his pastoral appointments were in Alberta: Lac La Biche 1973 - 77; Robertson-Wesley (Edmonton) 1977 - 80; and Garneau 1980 - 2008. Rob served as Chaplain to the Ashbourne (Garneau United Assisted Living Place) from the spring of 2002 - 2012. He continues to serve as an on-call Chaplain with the City of Edmonton. In July 2012 in Atlanta, Georgia, Rob was elected Chair of the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN). From May 2010 to December 2014, Rob, with other Edmontonians, explored the possibility of hosting the Parliament of World Religions (PWR) in Edmonton in 2017. Rob was appointed Executive Director of the Edmonton Committee for a Parliament of the World's Religions (ECPWR) in August 2013, a position that ended Dec. 31, 2014. Rob looks forward to continuing involvement with NAIN (meeting in Guadalajara, Mexico, this July); and working with our Centre to explore interfaith possibilities for Edmonton for Canada's sesquicentennial.

Dr. Dave Hubert Following a 23-year career in post-secondary education, including four years as president of Norquest College, Dave became the first executive director of the Edmonton Mennonite Center for Newcomers. He provided the needed leadership to build the Edmonton Recycling Society and implement Mennonite Central Committee employment programs in Edmonton, Calgary, Manitoba, BC and Atlantic Canada. While doing this Dave volunteered as the Founding Chair: Habitat for Humanity ; Edmonton Affiliate, President: Architectural Clearinghouse, a progenitor of Habitat ReStore; President: Alberta Plastics Recycling Association; Board: Economic Development Edmonton; Board: MEDA; and founded Canadian Peacemakers International. He has authored "Canada @ Peace: Coactive Security"; in May 2012 he received the Social Justice & Peace award from the Seniors' Association of Greater Edmonton, and in November that same year was given an Honourary Doctorate of Sacred Letters by St. Stephens College, U of A.

Dr. Zohra Husaini is an educator and human rights activist. She was born in India and migrated to Canada in 1971. She received her Masters of Letters degree from Cambridge University, England in Philosophy and her Ph. D from the University of Alberta in Sociology. She has taught Philosophy, Sociology and Education both in India and in Canada. Her academic work has been in the fields of metaphysical epistemology, education, women's studies and minority and ethnic group's studies. Her community work is extensive in the areas of community action research, human rights, promotion of interfaith relations and advocacy on women's issues. She is Vice-President of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, on the board of the Interfaith Council of Canada and Past-President of the Indo-Canadian Women's Association. At present she is working on a research project on Muslim Women, Human Rights and Law with the Intercultural Action Committee for Advancement of Women. She has received the Alberta Centennial Medal for her contributions to the life of our City as well as the Senior Women's Award and the Alberta Seniors Minister's Award (2013) for her work with immigrant women.

Shiraz Kanji recently embarked on his third career as Financial Planner with Investors Group. He is a professional engineer and has also worked for over 30 years in IT. He has worked in three different countries, and speaks five languages. Shiraz is passionate about public speaking and has spoken to a wide variety and sizes of audiences on different subjects including religion and Islam. He has been an active Toastmaster for over 25 years and has conducted many training seminars locally and overseas. He enjoys learning about different faith communities and participating in interfaith dialogue. Shiraz is an active volunteer, having served Toastmasters District 42, his professional organizations, church and community organizations. He has also volunteered for the Provincial Government sponsored Board Development Program. His other interests include music, cinema and reading.

Nasim Kherani has actively volunteered her services for the last 25 years in various leadership positions in numerous organizations. They include Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Edmonton Chapter of Soroptimist International, Centre for Race & Culture (formerly Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations), Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities and is the Edmonton Convenor for the Aga Khan University, Karachi. She was born in Tanzania and acquired her first designation as a Certified & Chartered Accountant in London, England, working in public practice. After moving to Canada she became a Certified General Accountant and Certified Financial Planner and worked for the provincial government as a senior financial auditor.

Paula E. Kirman was raised in a Modern Orthodox Jewish home but has been on a path that has led her to walk between a number of spiritual worlds. She is a writer, editor, photographer, filmmaker, musician, activist, and website/social media consultant. Paula is the Editor of *Boyle McCauley News* (an inner city community newspaper), an organizer with the Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism, has a television program on Shaw TV called *From the Ground Up* that deals with local activism, and publishes RadicalCitizenMedia.com, a blog that visually documents Edmonton's activist scene.

Bart Lambrecht was born and raised in Belgium but spent the second half of his life in Canada and China. As a member of the Baha'i faith he tries to promote the oneness of all religions in the daily aspects of the interfaith community. Bart holds an MA in Applied Linguistics & TESOL from the University of Leicester, UK, and currently works as an Advisor at the University of Alberta. He is a strong proponent of expanding the values that junior youth development and community building can bring to the advancement of society."

Rev. Dr. Don Mayne was the founding president of the Interfaith Centre and served in that capacity for five years. He continued on the board as secretary, then treasurer, until being designated an honorary board member in 2011. In 2008 he began the Lunch & Learn program. He was one of the founders of the Edmonton Committee for a Parliament of the World's Religions where he also serves as secretary – treasurer. Don, Rob Hankinson and the late Lila Fahlman presented our application to join the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) in 1996, and he served them as president from 2000 to 2004.

Pauline Paulson is a Cree Elder who was born and lived most of her life in Manitoba, the young years in Northern Manitoba, adolescence on a farm in the central part of the province and the balance in Winnipeg. Here in Edmonton she divides her time between the U of A Aboriginal Students Service Centre, U of A Interfaith Chaplains Association, and work in prison, as a spiritual and cultural advisor. Her formal studies include but are not limited to a diploma in Applied Counselling from the University of Manitoba, another in Child Family and Community Services through Red River Community College (Winnipeg) sponsored by Metis Child and Family Services, and the facilitator training program "In Search of Your Warrior" through Native Counselling Services of Alberta. Her informal education includes over 20 years of participating in aboriginal ceremonies and learning from various Elders, locally, nationally and internationally. She says, "I believe Spirit led me so I can fulfill the reason I was born into this world at this time".

Kathie Reith is employed by the Edmonton Public School Board as an educational assistant. She is passionate about her community. One of the grass-roots initiatives with which she has been involved was establishing a Neighborhood Centre in south Edmonton where disadvantaged individuals can find the resources they need. Other interests are music and drama, and she sings in a choir.

Virginia Sharek grew up in Redwater, Alberta and has a B.Ed. and a B.A. from the U of A. After spending a year in London, England and one in Calgary, Edmonton became home. Happily, her two children and three grandchildren all reside in Edmonton. She served as the ecumenical officer for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, for twenty years. During that time, she held a number of positions on the Edmonton and District Council of Churches, Western Diocesan Eparchial Coordinators of Ecumenism and was the representative for the Ukrainian Catholic Church of Canada on the Canadian Council of Churches, for six years. She has been a member of the “No Room in the Inn” committee since 2001, and a member of the steering committee for the Parliament of the World's Religions project. In 2014, Virginia became a lifetime member of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action.

Karnail Singh

Tymmarah (Tymm) Zehr is The City of Red Deer's Human Resources Specialist - Diversity and Inclusion, responsible for providing awareness and training related to diversity and inclusion, and community engagement to help make The City of Red Deer more welcoming and inclusive. Tymmarah has been involved with the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination since 2006.

She has a Master's degree in Intercultural & International Communication from Royal Roads University. Her thesis, “Collectively Building a Welcoming Grande Prairie: Community, Arts-based Inquiry” involved an art exhibit presented to the community engaging newcomers to Canada, local artists and representatives from immigrant serving agencies to develop an action plan for the municipality to address gaps and opportunities to make it more welcoming to newcomers.

Tymmarah was Program Manager for Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Come Together Alberta initiatives at the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) helping municipalities develop action plans to address racism and discrimination and ways to help newcomers integrate into their new communities. She sits on the Alberta Hate Crime Committee, is a member of the Red Feather Women, and volunteers with the Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery's Reel Movie Mondays Selection Committee.

Tymmarah was awarded a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Edmonton Strathcona in June, 2013 “in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world.”

Edmonton
Interfaith Centre
for Education & Action

AUDIT STATEMENT

Fiscal Year 2015 - 2016

To the Members of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action:

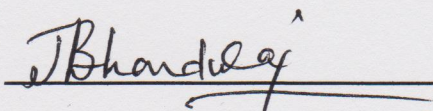
As per the April 6, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes, the reviewers chosen for the 2015 - 2016 Financial Statements are Jagjeet Bhardwaj and Paula Kirman.

Therefore, we have reviewed the TD Canada Trust account records: cheques, bank deposits and statements.

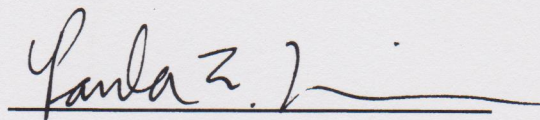
We believe that the "Income & Expenses" and the "Balance Sheet" statements accurately represent the financial position of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action.

In common with other membership organizations, we could only verify income as deposited.

Signed:



Jagjeet Bhardwaj



Paula Kirman

Dated May 25, 2016

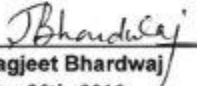
Dated May 25, 2016

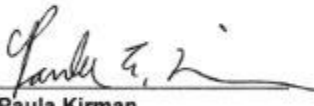
Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action
Annual Report 2015 - 2016

Edmonton Interfaith Centre
Income & Expense
April 2015 through March 2016

Income	
Calendar & Poster Sales	12,927.77
Gifts from other organizations	8,025.00
Donations from Individuals	7,335.45
Concert	5,431.84
City Grants	4,488.44
Membership Dues	3,162.26
Edmonton Community Foundation	1,090.00
Interest Income	61.55
Total Income	42,522.31
Expense	
Salary	29,993.32
Rent Expense	8,100.84
Cost of Calendars & Posters	6,908.40
Office	3,366.76
Concert	2,180.07
Conference Travel Expense	500.00
Donation to other Organization	250.00
Website Domain Renewal	240.53
Membership in NAIN	93.75
Bank Charges	59.30
Hospitality	50.00
Total Expense	51,742.97
Net Ordinary Income	-9,220.66

Reviewed & Approved by


Jagjeet Bhardwaj
May 26th, 2016
JJB


Paula Kirman
May 26th, 2016
P.K.

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action
Annual Report 2015 - 2016

**Edmonton Interfaith Centre
Balance Sheet**

As of 31 March 2016

Accrual Basis
31 Mar 16

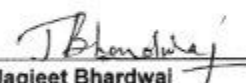
ASSETS


Chequing/Savings TD Bank	18,936.21
Short-term investments	14,188.52
TOTAL ASSETS	33,124.73

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Liabilities GST Payable	-275.38
Total Liabilities	-275.38
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	42,620.77
Net Income	-9,220.66
Total Equity	33,400.11
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	33,124.73

Reviewed & Approved by


Jagjeet Bhardwaj
May 26th, 2016
25 J.B.


Paula Kirman
May 26th, 2016
25 P.E.K.

Edmonton
Interfaith Centre
for Education & Action

11148 84 Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6G 0V8 (entry at N rear of building)
• Phone: 780-413-6159 • Fax: 780-413-6143
• Email: intfaith@shaw.ca • Web: www.edminterfaithcentre.ca

EDMONTON COMMITTEE FOR A PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS (ECPWR)

2015 AUDIT STATEMENT

To the Members of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action:

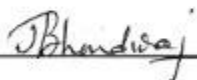
As per the April 6, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes, the reviewers chosen for the 2015 - 2016 Financial Statements are Jagjeet Bhardwaj and Paula Kirman.

Therefore, we have reviewed the TD Canada Trust account records: cheques, bank deposits and statements.

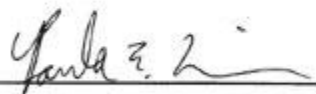
We believe that the "Income & Expenses" and the "Balance Sheet" statements accurately represent the financial position of the ECPWR account which closed on December 31, 2015.

In common with other membership organizations, we could only verify income as deposited.

Signed:


Jagjeet Bhardwaj

Dated May 25, 2015


Paula Kirman

Dated May 25, 2015

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action
Annual Report 2015 - 2016

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action

Edmonton Committee for a Parliament of the World's Religions

TD Bank Account, Whyte Avenue and 109 Street - 8368 - 0879 - 5235523

April 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015

INCOME

Balance - April 1, 2015	13,064.08	
Return of Bursaries (2)	1,000.00	
Account Balance Rebate (5)	9.75	
Total Income - Apr. 1 - Dec. 23, 2015		14,073.83

EXPENDITURES

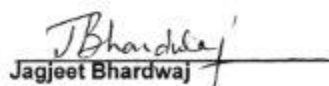
Bursaries (25)	12,500.00	
Derek Gomez	158.89	
Ambassadors Day Celebration	273.65	
Monthly Plan Fee (8)	15.60	
Service Charge	6.25	
Transfer to EICEA Account	1,119.44	
Total Expenditures - April 1-Dec 23/15		14,073.83

Balance -00-

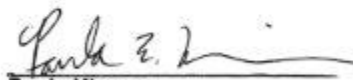


Don Mayne.
Secretary - Treasurer
Dec. 23, 2015

Reviewed & Approved



Jagjeet Bhardwaj
May 26th, 2016
25 JB



Paula Kirman
May 26th, 2016
25 P.E.K.

**EDMONTON INTERFAITH CENTRE
FOR EDUCATION AND ACTION**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2015 – 2016

EXECUTIVE

**David Fekete - President
Shiraz Kanji - Vice President
Nasim Kherani – Past President
Karen Farkas – Secretary/Treasurer
Avau Fast**

GENERAL BOARD MEMBERS

**Jagjeet Bhardwaj
Audrey Brooks
Karen Gall
Len Gierach
Randolph Haluza-Delay
Dave Hubert
Zohra Husaini
Paula Kirman
Bart Lambrecht
Pauline Paulson
Kathie Reith
Virginia Sharek
Karnail Singh
Tymmarah Zehr**

HONOURARY BOARD MEMBERS

**Rob Hankinson
Sushil Kalia
Don Mayne
Jasvant Mehta
Ida Rasmussen
Teja Singh**

Office Coordinator – Netta Phillet