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2023 CALGARY AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Summary

Award Categories	Selected Recipient(s)
The Community Achievement Awards:	
Arts	East Side Dance Festival
Calgarian of the Year (previously Citizen of the Year)	Usman Jutt
Community Advocate - Individual	Meenu Ahluwalia
Community Advocate - Organization	Centre for Sexuality
Education	Chantalle Bourque
Grant MacEwan Lifetime Achievement	Reg and Rose Crowshoe
Heritage	Josh Traptow
Social Impact – Business (previously Commerce)	inclusion FACTOR
Youth	Jeanae Elisha Ventura
The International Achievement Award	Tina Rinker
The Environmental Achievement Award	Carbon Upcycling Technologies
The Award for Accessibility	Garden Loft
The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize	Not yet selected Will be in April 25 Council update

Arts

East Side Dance Festival

East Side Dance Festival is removing barriers that prevent access to arts education, with volunteers working tirelessly to lay the groundwork for any youth wishing to tap into their desire to dance.

The East Side Dance Festival volunteers access dance studios for practices, raise funds and donate time to professional development to local Calgary dance artists so they can teach students at public schools. The group organizes an annual pinnacle event each year that enables the young performers to share their talents to friends, family members and the public. Through these actions, East Side Dance Festival is allowing marginalized dance students to share their passion in a non-competitive, inclusive environment.

Accessing arts education and opportunities for youth can be life changing, allowing young people to explore, experiment, and become active creators and participants. East Side Dance Festival's activities don't stop at dance. For the May 2022 annual festival, the volunteers secured funding enabling schools to collaborate with a local filmmaker to create a series of dance films to be showcased during the festival. Each participating school created two dance films, including a land acknowledgement video.

By creating an inclusive space for youth to take part in the art of dance; mentorship; healthy relationships; and authentic learning experiences, the East Side Dance Festival is building the next generation of artists, arts patrons, and arts appreciators in Calgary, long after high school is over.

Calgarian of the Year (previously Citizen of the Year)
Usman Jutt

Usman Jutt does not like to be in the spotlight. He'd prefer to leave that role up to the players on Calgary's newest professional basketball team, Surge, of which he owns. Instead, he works tirelessly behind the scenes supporting youth, sport, and young women through his business, community work, volunteer time, and philanthropy.

Whether it is providing leadership opportunities and mentorship to 244 youth, who he employs at the McDonalds he owns; empowering women at Chirp Foods, where, as CEO, he hired an 80 per cent female executive team; or implementing a maternity leave top-up and subsidized childcare at Chirp, his actions lead to a better quality of life for Calgarians, now and into the future.

Jutt has not stopped giving since he moved to Calgary in 2003 and became the youngest McDonald's owner/operator. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Usman started the social media campaigns #3Things4Neighbours and 12 Days of Giving, plus donated to and promoted 14 non-profits, encouraging Calgarians to help others in times of crisis.

He helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for numerous boards, including the Board of Contemporary Calgary; Ronald McDonald House; and the Calgary Public Library Foundation. He drove donations for Alberta's first mental health park to be built in Calgary, by tripling public donations, and personally contributed significant funds to a first-of-its-kind fitness park at Jack James High School.

Usman continues to be a leader in convincing Calgarians to step up along with him, to make Calgary better for everyone.

Community Advocate – Individual
Meenu Ahluwalia

An accomplished lawyer, community volunteer, mentor and founder, Meenu Ahluwalia is a person of action. When she sees a need, she does something about it, whether it's helping communities locally, or internationally.

As a volunteer with Calgary Legal Guidance and as a committee member of the Canadian Bar Association, Meenu made it her personal mission to support and empower women and families. Her board positions – past and present – are numerous, including the YMCA, Momentum, an organization for poverty reduction, and most notably, The Punjabi Community Health Services Calgary Society. Through these and other organizations, she has helped women gain financial literacy, other skills, and more opportunities in business. She has acted swiftly to meet identified needs in the Punjabi community by tailoring programs to reduce cultural and religious barriers, and addressing stigma around addiction, mental health, and domestic violence in the South Asian community.

Her work has now helped to galvanize that same community to celebrate the helpers, leaders and heroes through the South Asian Inspiration Awards, which she founded. She is recipient of several awards, including the 2022 Women in Law Leadership Alberta Award—Leader in Community Service; the 2020 Department of Justice National Award—Humanitarian Excellence for Community Service; and the Law Society of Alberta/Canadian Bar Association Distinguished Service Award for Community Service.

Meenu's next ambition is to set up family law mediation services, supporting deserving families through costly legal services. "Trying, always trying," she says, reassuring Calgarians she will never give up.

Community Advocate – Organization **Centre for Sexuality (C4S)**

The Centre for Sexuality (C4S) is an open and accepting sexual health and identity resource for individuals, families, and communities in Calgary and surrounding communities.

More than 50 years ago, a dedicated and visionary group of women came together to ensure that people had support and reliable information about their reproductive health. To this day, C4S has led the way as a tireless advocate for sexuality, healthy relationships, human rights, gender identity, sexual orientation, equality, and consent.

C4S has grown in tandem with their community impact. In 2022, C4S received funding from the federal government to adapt their Relationships and Sexual Health Education program to better meet the needs of 2S/LGBTQ+ and Indigenous communities, as well as people with developmental disabilities.

Other notable contributions to the Calgary community include an expansion of virtual services that provide a safe space, activities and counselling tailored to 2S/LGBTQ+ students; speaking up for systemic change to create equity for gender diverse people; and advocating for and providing the monkeypox vaccine.

Centre for Sexuality has been a safe and reliable resource and support for thousands of individuals, organizations, and communities. Their work continues to play a critical role in the lives of Calgarians.

Education

Chantalle Bourque

At the Calgary French and International School (CFIS), teacher Chantalle Bourque goes above and beyond to afford her students every possible opportunity to learn and grow.

Whether it be working as CFIS' Round Square representative, creating global opportunities for students through the school's travel studies program, building international connections with other educators, or offering countless hours of mentorship for students, she embodies what every educator should strive for.

Chantalle is committed to creating a respectful and safe environment for all. Through leading two Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committees for staff and parents, she strives to infuse principles of peace and understanding that are imperative to making the world a better place.

She forges new paths for students to learn about history from a different lens, allowing them to better understand our past. She encourages students to find new ways of making progress and creating change in the communities that surround them.

Chantalle's many astounding qualities include global mindedness, the ability to spark student creativity and action, an ongoing quest to make learning relevant, and her bravery to build a better world for the next generation. She is a world-class educator in Calgary who brings perspective, kindness, wisdom, to people around her, making a positive difference for young people.

Grant MacEwan Lifetime Achievement

Reg and Rose Crowshoe

Elder Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Elder Rose Crowshoe from the Piikani First Nation are bridge builders and agents of systemic change.

Together, Elders Reg and Rose have made significant contributions to the preservation and celebration of Blackfoot culture; both on the Nation and in the city of Calgary. They are at the forefront of establishing new and more appropriate ways of working with Indigenous people. For example, they have forged industry partnerships that align with the spirit and intent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the values of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Crowshoe's focus on respectful understanding of both Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. Their involvement extends beyond cultural activities and awareness, but moves towards the deeper, more complex work of identifying, reflecting, analyzing, honoring, and articulating the remarkable differences and similarities to create respectful change.

Elders Reg and Rose were awarded The Order of Canada in 2022. Their contributions to Calgary arts, business, social and cultural environment, and education are numerous and include involvement with Making Treaty 7; setting the Alberta Energy Regulator on a path of

understanding; The Calgary Stampede Interpretive program for over 20 years; providing spiritual and cultural knowledge for the University of Calgary's Solar House Decathlon project, known as Spo'pi, and United Way Indigenous Steering Committee.

Elders Reg and Rose are traditional grandparents to many across the globe; providing support and guidance and opening "windows and doors" to create and rebuild relationships with Indigenous communities in ethical space and sanctified kindness.

Their contributions continue to be pivotal to this shift and will positively impact Calgary and Canadian society for generations.

Heritage

Josh Traptow

As Chief Executive Officer of Heritage Calgary, a charitable civic partner of The City of Calgary, Josh Traptow has poured his energy into promoting and educating heritage to fellow Calgarians, with a focus on research, education, and preservation of the shared heritage across our city.

To Josh, heritage and history mean more than just places, dates, or buildings. It is the stories of people who bring these places to life and make them important for Calgarians today and tomorrow. Josh works with many organizations whose mandates are to promote historical awareness, including the Government of Alberta's Alberta Historical Resources Foundation and the Calgary Stampede's Western Agriculture Heritage committee. In 2012, he was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and in 2023, he received the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal for his contributions to his community and Canada.

A pinnacle example of Josh's work was the development of the Naming, Renaming, Commemoration, and Removal Handbook, a tangible instance of Heritage Calgary's commitment to inclusion and equity. He ensured that the process began with an Indigenous Sharing Circle. This opportunity enabled citizens and communities across Calgary to participate throughout the project.

Josh's work through Heritage Calgary has inspired a new mindset around what history means, enabling Calgarians and communities to perceive themselves in our city's broader history as we collectively move along our journey of reconciliation. Josh's advocacy and contributions to the awareness and preservation of our city's heritage and history will have an impact for generations to come.

Social Impact – Business (previously Commerce)

Inclusion Factor

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) are moral imperatives in today's business world. However, many organizations do not know how to begin to translate their vision into measurable DE&I tactics and strategies.

Enter Elise Ahenkorah, founder of inclusion FACTOR. Elise helps organizations unleash their employees' diversity of thought, designing spaces where people can choose how much of themselves they bring to work.

Elise Ahenkorah is a Racialized and queer entrepreneur who strives to transform her experiences of exclusion to uplift others, while providing practical and measurable advice for organizations to unleash the power of diversity of thought, belonging, and inclusion.

Through DE&I audits; training; workshops; and e-learning tools, Ahenkorah is helping companies ensure that all employees are invited to the table so they can innovate, collaborate, contribute, and thrive. Practical tips are provided to attract and retain Calgary's diversified and Racialized talent pools.

Elise is also the creator of #shemeets - a non-profit organization that supports Racialized and Indigenous womxn entrepreneurs. After four years, #shemeets has engaged more than 7000 women of colour through annual programming and has raised \$120,000 to advance women of colour entrepreneurs.

inclusion FACTOR is equipping the next generation of diversified, women of colour and Indigenous female leaders with networking, entrepreneurial training, and mentorships to develop their ideas into reality. In this way inclusion FACTOR has contributed much to Calgary's entrepreneurial and innovative competitiveness.

Youth

Jeanae Elisha Ventura

When four-year-old Elisha Ventura was still living in the Philippines, she was oblivious that her charitable acts and positive spirit would lead to a path of helping others.

Now 13 years old, Elisha is a humanitarian who has donated her talents, energy, and "giving back" philosophy to 24-hour food drives, supporting the Kids Cancer Care Foundation, helping citizens affected by COVID-19, raising funds for the homeless and other causes here in Calgary.

Elisha's positivity, passion, and 'zest for life' are personal hallmarks that drive her need to affect community change.

She has used proceeds from her singing events to purchase and fill 80 'Noche Buena' backpacks, which were shipped to less-fortunate families in the Philippines so they could enjoy Christmas with their loved ones. She also headed a toy drive at Christmas, collecting almost 4000 toys to benefit sick children for the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation.

Elisha also advocates for diversity and inclusion. She spoke at the One Girl Empowerment event in Calgary, did a speaking segment entitled "My Voice Matters" on a local talk show, participated in Fiesta Filipino, and was a global nominee for a IdealMe Enrichment Foundation humanitarian award.

Elisha's spirit, her drive to help the less fortunate, and her love of singing and sharing this talent with others have made a positive impact on so many.

The International Achievement Award

Tina Rinker

Tina Rinker is a professor in biomedical engineering at the University of Calgary, and chief scientific officer/co-founder of Syantra Inc. Her work demonstrates excellence and innovation in Calgary's technology sector and has received international recognition.

Syantra's flagship product is a blood test for breast cancer, Syantra DX | Breast Cancer, which is now available as a private pay test across Canada. Using proprietary technology, the test targets a panel of biomarkers in whole blood, and uses custom software developed with machine learning to interpret the data and provide a simple positive or negative test result.

It is a molecular approach to breast cancer screening that can detect invasive disease at early stages. This offers a greater chance of survival to the one in eight women who will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

Syantra was the winner of the One To Watch award presented by the A100, as part of the Start Alberta Tech Awards. Tina was named a Parex Innovation Fellow at the University of Calgary 2018-2020, and a Peak Scholar Nominee in 2017.

Tina has held numerous key positions in the biotech field and is a key player in the Calgary biotech/innovation/diversification ecosystem. Her work in developing the Syantra DX | Breast Cancer blood test promises to change the current standard of breast cancer care for women, and is bringing international recognition to Calgary, with the potential to save millions of lives around the world.

The Environmental Achievement Award

Carbon Upcycling Technologies

Carbon Upcycling is unlocking new frontiers to address climate change through carbon capture in the industrial waste sector, including the concrete and cement industries.

The company has employed new technologies using supplementary cementitious materials, or SCMs, to offset emissions. In the past, SCMs were readily available by-products of coal and steel production, but recently supply has dwindled as these industries pursue their own decarbonization efforts.

Carbon Upcycling's new process allows cement producers to attain SCMs from locally available feedstocks, such as clay, glass, natural pozzolans, alternative steels and more. In Calgary, the company worked with BURNCO to upcycle fly ash, a by-product of coal production, into an SCM used in Calgary's concrete sidewalks.

This offset system integrates seamlessly into existing cement operations, capturing onsite CO₂ emissions and permanently embedding them into unconventional feedstocks. One industry's waste becomes a valuable commodity for another – all while capturing CO₂.

Carbon Upcycling Technologies aligns with the City of Calgary's initiative to reduce pollution and divert waste from landfills through upcycling by-products. In this way, industrial waste is upcycled, a circular economy is promoted, and we become one step closer to a greener planet.

The Award for Accessibility **Garden Loft**

In Calgary and across Canada, seniors are one of the fastest-growing populations, and many wish to remain in a residential environment in their later years. Garden Loft addresses this by creating prefabricated living units that can be placed in the backyard of a single-family residence.

The units feature an accessible interior specifically intended to enable seniors to live independently, while near family, friends, and caregivers. Garden Loft is also an excellent option for people with a wide variety of mobility and cognitive disabilities, who require a quasi-independent and quiet living environment close to family support.

These prefabricated units are wheelchair accessible with an access ramp, zero step entry, wide doorways, accessible paths of interior travel and turning circles in the major rooms. The units also feature:

- a sit-stand accessible kitchen
- accessible bathroom with zero-step shower, and extra space for caregiver
- a fall safe floor that reduces the chance of injury from a fall by 43 per cent, with a radar enabled fall alert system that sends notifications to a loved one's cell phone
- no-reach storage options and other features for those with mild to moderate disabilities who do not require a wheelchair.

The financial model of the Garden Loft makes it an investment. Rather than paying rent to a retirement home, the unit can be sold and moved when no longer required.