



Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association

# CONNECTIONS FOR LIFE

HSCA'S REPORT TO COMMUNITY 2022

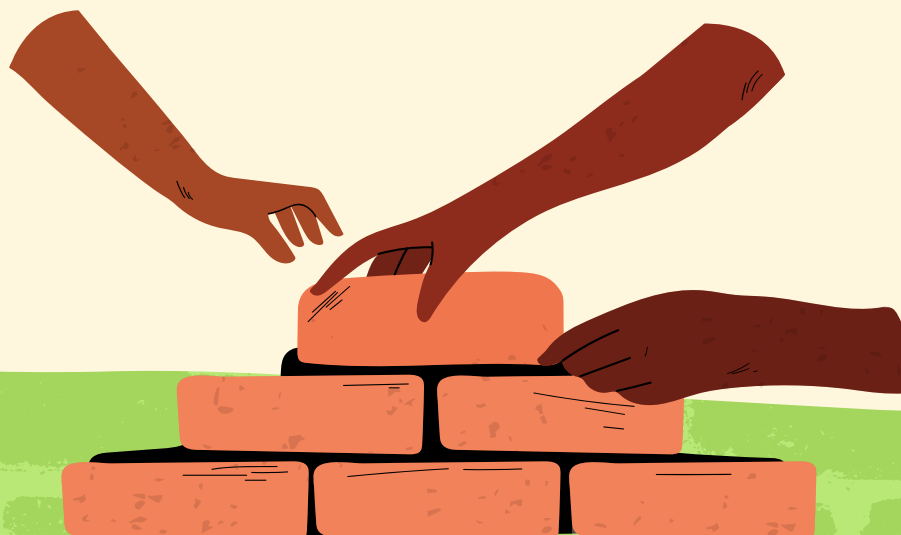


# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a small part of our ongoing commitment to truth and reconciliation, HSCA acknowledges that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Dear Hillhurst–Sunnyside Residents,

On behalf of HSCA, we are pleased to present you with the 2022 Report to Community. In the 2021 report, we mentioned three priorities for the upcoming year: Connecting our Community, Supporting Community Members, and Financial & Succession Planning. We have made progress in each of these areas and will continue to prioritize them throughout 2023.

### Connecting our Community

Throughout 2022 an increasing amount of in-person programming was brought back to HSCA; welcoming community members for opportunities to connect, socialize, learn and grow. Some highlights include the launch of Sip n' Chat, an informal opportunity for community members to drop by HSCA, have a warm beverage and chat with neighbours. Through an exciting partnership with Hillhurst Elementary School, community residents and local artists, new planters were installed in a pocket park on Gladstone Road, decorated with paintings courtesy of the grade two class!

### Supporting Community Members

In the fall, HSCA staff members worked with Aurora on the Park staff and residents to do a community clean-up. Through a conversation about food insecurity and the impact of a home cooked meal, a partnership was born. Since then, a group of HSCA's volunteers cook surplus food provided by Alpha House into meals for the residents at Aurora on the Park and for dinner at HSCA's Neighbour Night.

### Financial and Succession Planning

The financial impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on HSCA were significant, to say the least. Throughout 2022, we watched our finances closely and used scenario planning to navigate the many unknown variables. We continue to craft financial plans into the future and are pleased to be in a stable position after wavering on the edge of survival for over two years. Formal succession planning has been pushed to 2023, however in 2022 we prioritized staff retention given this has been an increasing challenge in the non-profit sector over the past few years. We are pleased to report that we have experienced above average staff retention at HSCA in 2022.

### Looking Ahead

HSCA continues to take a thoughtful approach to rebuilding after all of our operations were shutdown for periods throughout 2020 and 2021. We have heard frustration from some community members that we are moving too slowly, and we want to be transparent that we are taking our time in an attempt to build back better, rather than simply getting back to the way we were. The pandemic has been an unprecedented challenge in all our lives for all of us, but we feel there is an opportunity to rethink how we do things and even what we do.

While we plan for the future, there is still a lot going on and we hope you'll find a way to engage with us. Check out our Programs & Recreation calendar and our available volunteer positions to see if there's something for you!

Sincerely,



Bekah Callaghan

Chair, HSCA Board of Directors



Kate Stenson

Executive Director

## CHILDCARE

### HSCA'S DAYCARE AND OUT OF SCHOOL CARE GO FAR BEYOND BABYSITTING

At HSCA, we believe in the phrase "It takes a village to raise a child". We provide a caring, safe, and stimulating environment in which children feel invested in their learning. This is indicated by our use of the **Flight Curriculum**, in which children's everyday experiences and interests inform the content of their learning goals. Several staff members have also taken **Brain Story** certification, which emphasizes research-based approaches to encourage resilience and prevent childhood adversity, which promotes better mental health and addiction prevention outcomes in adulthood.



#### FLIGHT CURRICULUM

"Children's play is central to this curriculum framework as an active, exploratory, creative, expressive process, deeply embedded in children's everyday experiences and through which children participate in, learn about, and actively make sense of the world." - [flightframework.ca](https://flightframework.ca)

#### BRAIN STORY CERTIFICATION

"Lifelong health is determined by more than just our genes: experiences at sensitive periods of development change the brain in ways that increase or decrease risk for later physical and mental illness, including addiction. That finding is the premise of the Brain Story, which puts scientific concepts into a narrative that is salient to both expert and non-expert audiences." - [albertafamilywellness.org](https://albertafamilywellness.org)

### HSCA DAYCARE'S LITTLE RAINBOWERS

These children, ranging from two and a half to three, have the opportunity to interact with the real world and choose their next destination while under the vigilant supervision of our educators. Their daily adventures link what they have seen in books and photos with the actual objects. Community members stop to ask them who they are, police officers wave and firetrucks honk their horns.

Our centre is fortunate to be situated at the crossroad where nature meets the city, with easy access to both settings. To travel east, we get to explore the hidden gem that is Riley Park, a tranquil piece of real estate where children can learn to appreciate animals and plants in their native environment. To travel south, the children can experience the friendly neighbourhood charm that Kensington gives off before seeing the tall office buildings just across the Bow River.

Depending on how adventurous we feel that day, it can be a nature day or an urban day or a nice blend of both. While no discover walk is ever the same, what is constant is that it is a wonderful way for children to safely learn about the real world while feeling empowered.





## SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROGRAMMING

The Sustainable Food Program continues to be many neighbours' "first step to community engagement", meaning they engage first to meet a basic need and then as they get comfortable here, they start to participate in more programs and asking for more support! I think it is a very important piece of gaining trust and engagement from vulnerable community members. – *Shaye Radford, Community Connections Coordinator*

## WHAT WAS NEW IN 2022?

- HSCA Sustainable Food Programming began a new partnership with Alpha House, using food donations received by Aurora on the Park. HSCA volunteers get creative with the surplus donations, and turn them into meals to help feed Aurora on the Park clients on the weekends, which is normally beyond their capacity. In return, HSCA uses some of the meals to provide food for Neighbour Night attendees, as well as snacks for HSCA's new Sip 'n' Chat program.
- The Sinneave Family Foundation, which helps young adults with autism gain valuable work experience, joined forces with HSCA to create dry soup kits using ingredients bought with donated gift cards. These kits were then distributed to Sustainable Food Programming participants to help build food literacy.
- HSCA rebranded and ramped up fundraising efforts for our Fresh Choices program, formerly known as the Fresh Food Basket (see below).

### FRESH CHOICES: CHANGING MINDS ABOUT FOOD CHARITY

HSCA's Fresh Choices program (formerly known as the Fresh Food Basket) gives \$10 grocery credits for low income residents to be redeemed at the Fresh Routes mobile grocery store during our Monday Sustainable Food Programming. In Fall 2022, we were able to increase these credits from monthly to weekly, as a result of increased fundraising efforts for the initiative. These fundraisers, with one taking place over the summer and the other during the holiday season, attempt to change how Calgarians think about food charity.

As opposed to conventional hamper-style charities which often require recipients to travel large distances to receive pre-packaged bundles of non-perishable food, Fresh Choices empowers residents experiencing financial vulnerability to make their own choices, and tailor their shopping of fresh produce to fit their own dietary and cultural needs. While HSCA recognizes that income-based approaches are the only long term solution to food insecurity, Fresh Choices aims to be a more efficient and dignified take on food charity in the interim.



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS RESPONDING TO RESIDENTS' NEEDS

## NEW FOR 2022: HSCA SIP 'N' CHAT

**TUESDAYS FROM 2-4 IN THE HEARTH ROOM**

The success of the new HSCA Sip 'n' Chat program on Tuesday afternoons serves as an example of our Community Connections programming's ability to identify and fulfill a need in the community. Some participants have already made meaningful connections with one another during these informal chats: A family of new Canadians was able to connect with one individual who spoke their language and another who had recently immigrated from the same region. Of the two 90+ year old participants, one travels all the way from the northeast to take part in our Sip 'n' Chat, and has connected with a resident who has taken interest in their stories and is now recording them. This illustrates how participation in HSCA programming is about more than sheer numbers. **It's the stories that matter!**



## OTHER INITIATIVES

### HSCA hosted its second Repair Café in 2022...

This time organized by Circular Economy Club (CEC) Calgary, residents brought in items to be repaired by volunteer "fixers" in exchange for Calgary Dollars, barter, or other compensation.

### Neighbour Nights returned to in-person...

Neighbour Night activities were once again hosted at HSCA in 2022, and featured board games, creative journaling, abstract painting and more! All events include a free vegetarian meal and childminding.

### We began co-hosting Community Walk-Abouts...

Each month beginning in September 2022, Tyson from CDLI has been leading interested residents on a Community Walk-About, a casual stroll through the neighbourhood intended to generate interest in community assets, as well as strengthen bonds between participants.

2022 also featured another Free Tax Clinic for low-income individuals, as well as the Support A Family for the Holidays program!



## ***THE HSCA FLEA MARKET***      ***THANK YOU BONNIE!***

2022 was a big year for the HSCA Flea Market! We've gone from having vendor slots available to having a waitlist for new vendors. In other developments, Bonnie Constable, who had been running the market for 37 years, retired in December. Taking her place is Angel Davis, who previously ran the flea market concession, as well as helped with the HSCA Antique Market for 11 years. Needless to say, the Flea Market is in good hands!



## ***ALSO IN GOOD HANDS....***      ***THE HSCA FARMERS' MARKET***

HSCA's other market is also under new management! August 2022 saw our beloved Tolu Okunola moving on to go back to school while Alex Walz stepped in to take the reins. Since then things have been going strong, if still a bit slow compared to past years, likely due to inflation and the lingering effects of the pandemic. Special HSCFM events in 2022 included a scavenger hunt, Stampede giveaway, and a holiday market to raise funds for our Fresh Choices program.





# SENIORS' PROGRAMMING

**WHEN IT COMES TO SUPPORTING SENIORS, IT'S ABOUT QUALITY OVER QUANTITY.**

Being a Senior Connections Coordinator is all about relationship-building. As we age, maintaining independence becomes an even more precious thing, which can make asking for help a challenge. The best way to ensure that seniors are receiving the support they require, is to simply talk to them, says HSCA's Senior Connections Coordinator Debbie Olson. By spending time genuinely conversing with her clients, Debbie is able to identify opportunities for support that seniors might not otherwise broach themselves.

"I'm not calling to say 'what do you need?', it's about conversing with them, and letting them talk."

-Debbie Olson

Seniors Connections Coordinator



## CONNECTIONS FOR LIFE

Back in 2012, a community member whose husband was suffering with dementia reached out to Debbie. She was looking for someone to help keep her husband company while she ran errands. Debbie was able to connect the resident with a volunteer who was more than happy to chat and play games with the husband whenever needed. This wonderful volunteer became such a part of their lives that even after the husband's passing, she continued visiting and spending time with the resident, helping with cooking, baking, helping out during the holidays, etc. These days, the resident has moved into long-term care housing, but still receives regular visits by her dedicated volunteer-turned-close friend.

An additional example of the value seniors receive from our programming is the chair yoga program. One resident enjoys the program so much that she attended virtually from the beach while on vacation with her family. Another resident goes on a 700-mile pilgrim walk each year in Europe, and attends the chair yoga program to help keep her limber the rest of the time. Here are some of the things seniors have said about chair yoga!

"The program is great it helps my mobility and helps me feel connected and gives the social support that seniors need."

"Chair yoga keeps my body functioning and flexible, which is most important in the winter season, where walking outdoors can be challenging, or even dangerous, when the sidewalks are slippery."

"The program is fantastic! It's having a positive impact on my physical health and mobility as well as building a community of like minded folks who help to hold me accountable."



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PLANNING AND PLACEMAKING

In August 2022, our Planning, Engagement and Volunteer Coordinator Ali McMillan took an opportunity at the Federation of Calgary Communities. Due to budget constraints, we decided not to look for applicants to fill the role. However, 2022 saw Ali make a sizeable impact regarding community engagement in Hillhurst Sunnyside. She organized two different Warm Up To Winter pop-up events in two different pocket parks, and facilitated Grade 2 students from Hillhurst School in adding their artistic touch to yet another corner park in Hillhurst. Ali also served as a touchpoint for resident-led initiatives involving placemaking, traffic calming and more, all while running the HSCA Planning Committee and connecting interested community members with various volunteer opportunities. We can't thank Ali enough for her myriad contributions to HSCA in such a short time with us.

All planning-related issues in our neighbourhood will now go through the HSCA Planning Committee, reachable via email through [planning@hsc.ca](mailto:planning@hsc.ca).



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ANTI-RACISM

HSCA is dedicated to constantly evaluating and re-evaluating our operations to ensure that our space and our services feel safe and welcoming to all. Here are some examples of ways we stepped up to the plate in 2022:

- We began the Rainbow Ready program, hosted by Sageesse, which deals with capacity building re: 2SLGBTQ+ issues, with a specific focus on 2SLGBTQ+ people's experience of domestic abuse.
- We successfully applied for a Government of Alberta anti-racism grant, which was applied towards a Future Ancestors virtual anti-racism workshop in early 2023.
- We re-evaluated the Reconciliation Moment section of our team meetings to include some brief educational resources, in an attempt to meet team members where they're at regarding matters of Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous issues. We also added a Land Acknowledgement to the homepage of our website.

## 2022 HSCA ANNUAL SURVEY

This year, HSCA Conducted an annual survey to our residents, garnering 79 responses. Here are some of the results:

72%

Felt that their involvement with HSCA strengthened their sense of connection to the community.

73%

Were satisfied with the supports, programs, and services available through HSCA.

66%

Felt that they had the opportunity to influence the design of their neighbourhood.

### Resident Feedback:

"As a person who is new to this city and the Sunnyside neighbourhood, I am happy to have found HSCA! I have become involved through volunteering in several programs and met lots of my neighbours. Thank you HSCA!"

"Bring back more programming for families like Sportball, soccer and language lessons."

"It's time for HSCA to drop covid restrictions and get back normal. event bookings open door programs, etc"

"HSCA adds a strong voice to the neighbourhood. Keep up the good work!"

"Much appreciation to all the HSCA staff and volunteers, they make the community center a corner stone of this community - and even the surrounding communities "

"There could be more casual seating in the community."

"Would enjoy more historical articles in our newsletter."

"Add more fun programs"

"The food program gives residents choice, which is important to them (and everyone)."

"HSCA has provided an amazing daycare for my son to be a part of where he feels safe and happy everyday!"



# THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS FUNDERS!

## Partners (>\$10K)

- Family & Community Support Services
- Province of Alberta
- Community Food Centres Canada
- City of Calgary

## Supporters (>\$1000 and up to \$10k)

- Omega Properties
- Daycare Campaign Donations
- Fresh Choices Campaign Donations
- Safeway Kensington
- COBS Kensington

## Contributors (>\$100 and up to \$1000)

- Framed on Fifth
- Sunnyside Natural Market
- Leftover Foundation
- Fresh Routes