



Envooy

Winter 2009

Make Tax Time Pay Joins E4C

Helping families get the most out of tax time


Every year as March approaches we can't help but feel the pressure of tax time – the unorganized files, the missing receipts, the piles and piles of loose papers. The April 30th deadline to complete income tax returns always seems to come up faster than we expect.

Now imagine adding the stress related to a mental or physical illness, financial strain, not being able to feed your children, or losing your job or home. For these people, taxes are often just one more thing they have neither the time nor money to get done. Unfortunately, when someone does not file taxes, not only do they not receive their income tax return, but they are also unable to access the many government programs, benefits and subsidies available to low-income individuals and families. These essential government benefits help people 'free up' their income to pay down debts, pay for a special night out, put the money into a savings account for emergencies or save for their child's education.

The Make Tax Time Pay program was created to help families understand the benefits available to them and assist them in completing their tax returns at no cost. These benefits include the Canada Child Tax Benefit, the GST rebate, the Alberta Child & Adult Health Benefits, and the City of Edmonton Leisure Access Pass. Whether it is a little extra money every month, a dental visit for their children, or being able to go for a free swim as a family, these benefits help ease the stress related to daily life for low-income families.

During March and April each year, we collaboratively offer approximately 28 free, volunteer-run Make Tax Time Pay sites. During those months people can call 211 to find out the location of sites in their communities.

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Emily Wolbeck,
Program Manager of
E4C's newest program,
Make Tax Time Pay.



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Message from our CEO

Where there's a need, E4C is there



Building a better world

Even though E4C has been working in Edmonton for almost 40 years to make this city a better place to live, many people are still unaware of who we are and what we do. In fact, even people who use our services or who support our programs are sometimes unclear on E4C.

In some ways, this doesn't matter—it doesn't change the quiet work we do in the community. We don't need to have our name in lights. We just want to make a difference to those in need and help to make a better community through our very successful and long-running programs. We have a vision for a better world and we make this vision tangible with every person who participates and benefits from our services.

On the other hand, E4C's low profile does pose some problems. There are very practical reasons it is important to be well-known in the community you serve. As a charitable organization, we need and want broad community involvement and support. Without this support we are diminished in what we can accomplish. When people know E4C, we can better attract the attention of people who make decisions. By being well-known, our views and opinions would have greater influence and our vision for a better world would receive the attention and the support of those who share our vision. This is necessary for us to make real change possible.

Who is E4C?

E4C is the early learning teacher who kneels on the classroom floor to help a child begin their learning journey. We are the outreach worker on the cold streets who comforts the lonely, the lost and the abused. We are the nutrition worker feeding meals to hungry children so they can grow and learn. We are the family worker in the home of the new Canadian family, helping them adapt and feel welcome in their new country. We are the counsellor working with young women struggling to triumph over addiction. We are the warm, accepting face at the door welcoming the homeless and helping them to find a lasting home of their own. We are the residential worker, supporting the person learning to live successfully with a chronic mental health diagnosis. We are the understanding and supportive landlord in the affordable housing buildings who provide a safe place to call home for those who have very modest incomes.

We are E4C, the staff and volunteers of over 20 programs and services making real, lasting and positive change in our community. E4C impacts the lives of hundreds of people every day and we exist because of you. Supporters, partners, friends, colleagues, neighbours – without you we would not be able to continue this work. Your vision of a better city – a more caring society – is what allows us to continue.

Together, we are the hope for and the practical means towards a safer, stronger, more inclusive and supportive community. Together, we can change the world.

Success is not built by observers and bystanders. We need you to stand up, lend your voice to ours and say:

- hungry children deserve food,
- each person deserves affordable housing,
- health care is for everyone.

Your involvement and partnership with E4C is essential if we are to make a difference. With you, we can do anything.

With you, we are E4C. 🌱

Michael Farris, CEO



Their Resiliency is Powerful

Crossroads Downtown continues to help women find a way out of homelessness

Crystal Finch, Crossroads Downtown Program Manager

In December of 2008 six women moved into Crossroads Downtown. Once the women had settled in we arranged for them to see doctors, dentists and counsellors, and worked with them to overcome the barriers they faced which were keeping them homeless. A few of the women really opened up to us immediately. The hurt and trauma that resulted from their experiences was painful to hear, and I often went home and cried in that first few weeks.

Now I get emotional for different reasons. Now I am there for those pivotal moments in a woman's life – when she enters treatment for her addictions, when she moves into her own home, when she gets her daughter back. Witnessing their resiliency is powerful and moving.

Crossroads Downtown is part of Homeward Trust's Homeless to Homes program. Housing First – the latest buzzword – means that everyone has a right to have a home of their own without having to first meet any set criteria, such as completing addiction treatment. The participants of this program agree to have Crossroads staff in their lives for at least one year. This begins when they come to live at the Crossroads house, usually for about three months.

When it is time for them to move out, we find them their own apartment and help them to set it up so that it becomes a real home for them. We then continue to visit and support them for one year. Support is solution-focused and includes

helping women set and accomplish goals, stick to a budget and repatriate with family. We get to witness first-hand the changes they make, and I am very proud to be a part of that. We can't go back and change the past, but thankfully we can give people the tools to create better futures for themselves and break the cycle of homelessness.

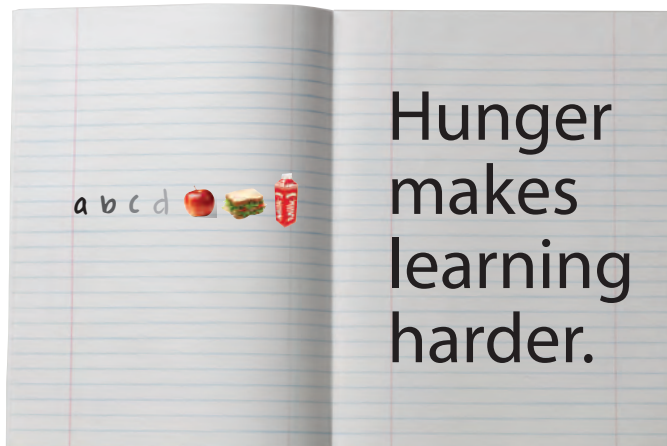
This is all possible thanks to the tremendous work of three caseworkers, Laura, Kandace and Wendy, and care workers Kuleza, Jacci, Emmanuel and Sandra. Each day is different and exhilarating at Crossroads Downtown.

I would like to thank No Room in the Inn for their extraordinarily generous contribution of over \$50,000.

I would also like to thank the women who have been a part of this program and to those women who will benefit from Crossroads Downtown in the future. 🌱



Teresa, Program Manager Crystal and Crossroads Caseworker Laura sitting outside Crossroads Downtown.



**Support E4C's
School Lunch Program**
Please give generously

www.e4calberta.org

WEAC's 3rd Annual Harvest Dinner

Fairmont Hotel Macdonald, Tuesday, November 10th

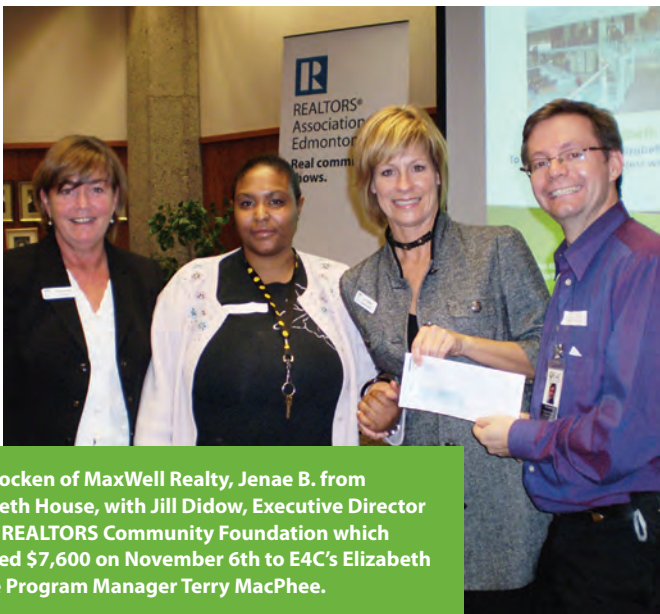
Fairmont Hotel Macdonald staff used their gourmet skills to treat women staying at E4C's Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC) to the 3rd Annual Harvest Dinner Tuesday, November 10th. This annual meal is prepared and served by the staff from Fairmont Hotel Macdonald who volunteer their time and skills to give homeless women the opportunity to sit down and be served a truly magnificent meal. 🍴



Fairmont Hotel Macdonald sous-chef Keith Jarvis originally came up with the idea to treat the women staying at WEAC. Keith, WEAC's kitchen supervisor Angie Bartholet, WEAC staff members and many other volunteers from Fairmont Hotel Macdonald, worked together to make this year's event a great success.

With winter coming there is a growing need for new clothing. The women who stay at WEAC are in need of new pyjamas, socks and underwear and all donations are greatly appreciated. All inquiries about donations can be directed to WEAC at (780) 423-5302.

Day of Caring Brightens Elizabeth House



Gail Docken of MaxWell Realty, Jenae B. from Elizabeth House, with Jill Didow, Executive Director of the REALTORS Community Foundation which donated \$7,600 on November 6th to E4C's Elizabeth House Program Manager Terry MacPhee.

On Wednesday, October 7th twelve volunteers from CIBC, CWB, TD Bank and BMO came in to E4C's Elizabeth House as part of the United Way Day of Caring to help make some much needed improvements. It had been decided that what was most needed was new paint in three of Elizabeth House's common areas. The women living at Elizabeth House selected the paint colours, choosing to paint the kitchen yellow, the dining room blue and the lounge/living room a very eye-catching shade of pink.

The residents in the house washed and prepared the walls the night before. The volunteers worked the next day and applied two coats of paint. Elizabeth House provided a lunch of Sloppy Joes and salad and the volunteers ate and got to know the residents. One resident actually got information on RRSP contributions during the event. Thank you to everyone who helped to improve the living conditions for the current and future residents of Elizabeth House. 🍴

E4C's Elizabeth House provides accommodation and support for up to 24 women in need of a safe and caring place to live while working to integrate back into the community. If you or your group would like to arrange a service project to help improve Elizabeth House get in touch. Terry MacPhee, Program Manager of Elizabeth House, Phone: (780) 378-0611 or E-mail: ehous@e4calberta.org

Kids in the Hall Bistro Gala a Huge Success

Gala raises over \$80,000 towards helping youth succeed

Organizing Committee Chair Judy Ham with gala MC Rob Christie.



The youth and staff of the Kids in the Hall Bistro worked hard preparing the fantastic five-course meal.



City Hall's City Room was transformed for the evening into the autumn setting for the Kids in the Hall Bistro's Fall Gala.

Program Manager Calvin Avery with youth speaker Cera Mongrain.



Kids in the Hall Bistro supporters, City Councillor Linda Sloan and friend.



Oilers President and CEO Patrick LaForge came out to lend his support to this innovative social enterprise program, along with many others.



– continued from page 1

Clients then call the site, book an appointment, and take the first step (often the most difficult) towards filing income tax. When a client arrives at a site, they are welcomed by a volunteer greeter and invited to wait while a volunteer tax preparer completes their return. Once the return is done, the client visits with a volunteer 'benefits specialist' who explains any benefits and subsidies they may be eligible for and provides them with the necessary forms.

In 2009 Make Tax Time Pay assisted over 1,700 people in completing their tax returns. We connected them to over 1,000 benefit and subsidy forms and returned over \$800,000 in anticipated refunds. Although some families received refunds as big as \$3,000, most clients were grateful to not have to pay someone to complete their tax return. One site reported that a couple of their clients offered to come back next year and volunteer to help others in similar situations to their own.

How do we make this free tax preparation service happen? We partner with our community. We work with hundreds of caring individuals, community organizations, churches and non-profits that take time to come together and learn together to make this program possible. We would not have the success we do without the partnerships of the City of Edmonton, 211 (run through The Support Network), the Alberta Government, and the Canada Revenue Agency – Community Volunteer Income Tax Program. We value the relationships we have with our partners and look forward to another great year of taxes, benefits and better communities.

For more information please contact me. ☺

Emily Wolbeck
Program Manager
Make Tax Time Pay
Phone: (780) 424-5408
E-mail: ewolbeck@e4calberta.org
www.e4calberta.org

E4C Services Include



Nutrition and Community Services

Make Tax Time Pay
School Lunch Program
Snack Programs

Early Learning

ArtStart
Clareview Head Start
Early Head Start
Northeast Community Program

Transitional Services

Crossroads Programs
Elizabeth House
Mosaic Centre
Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC)
Women Moving Forward

Affordable Housing & Mental Health Services

Case Management Team
GC Place
Gold Nugget Suites
Holmes Place
Macdonald Place
McCauley Apartments
Meadow's Place
Our Place
Our Other Place
Sorensen Place
Stollery Place

Social Enterprise

Kids in the Hall Bistro Program

Founded in 1970, E4C is a registered charitable human services organization.

Charitable Registration # 13155 8140 RR001



ph (780) 424-7543 | fax (780) 425-5911
e-mail: info@e4calberta.org
9321 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5H 3T7
www.e4calberta.org

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If you have any newsletter comments or submissions please feel free to contact the Envoy editor, Tiffany Brown Olsen at tolsen@e4calberta.org, or by mail to 9321 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5H 3T7

Please send address changes to: lhome@e4calberta.org or phone (780) 424-7543 ext 115.



E4C is registered at CanadaHelps.org to make online donations.

Give a Gift That Makes a Difference

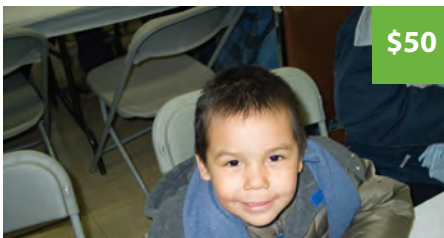
E4C's 2009 Holiday Gift Catalogue



\$50

1. Learning My Way E4C's Early Learning Programs

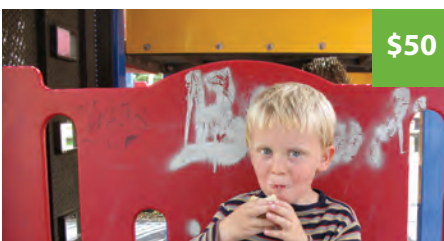
Edmonton has many diverse cultures in one city. Give children books and other learning materials that reflect their own culture and language. Building an inclusive society is something we can all encourage.



\$50

2. A Warm Heart E4C's Early Learning Programs

Provide a child with warm clothing this chilly winter season.



\$50

3. Healthy Food for a Healthy Start E4C's Nutrition Programs

Providing healthy snacks to children is only half the battle. Providing children with the knowledge that allows them to make healthy choices goes even further. You can do both by helping to provide a child with snacks for a month and the nutrition information to help make good choices.



\$125

4. Get a Child to School and Home Again E4C's Clareview Head Start

Give a child transportation to and from school for one month.



\$150

5. A Door Off the Streets E4C's Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC)

Homeless women in Edmonton need, at the very least, a place to warm up, a healthy meal, a hot shower, a change of clothes, a warm bed for the night and someone to talk to. Give someone the very basics.



\$250

6. A Helping Hand E4C

People who have lived on and off the streets for a long period of time often need ongoing support to make life changes. Give someone a helping hand and supportive shoulder by contributing to the work of E4C.



\$250

7. Open a Young Mind with the Arts E4C's ArtStart

Many children do not have exposure to the arts. Give a child a semester of instruction in music, drama, dance and more. High quality arts instruction can open a whole new world to a young mind.



\$500

8. A Full Tummy E4C's School Lunch Program

Every child should eat a healthy lunch every day. Give a child a nutritious lunch at school every day for five months.



\$500

9. The Gift of Education E4C's Kids in the Hall Bistro Program

Youth need work experience and an education to build a life of their own. Give the gift of tuition for a youth for one course towards the completion of high school.



\$500

10. The Tools to Start Again E4C's Transitional Services

Many people who are homeless are trapped in a cycle with no home and no job. Give someone the basic items needed to set up a new home, including furniture, bedding and kitchen supplies.



Changing Lives • Growing Community

Give a Gift

I want to give a gift from E4C's Holiday Gift Catalogue

Please send an acknowledgement of my gift to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Province/State: _____

Country: _____

Postal Code/ZIP: _____

Special Message on Acknowledgement:

Gift # _____ for \$ _____

Gift # _____ for \$ _____

Gift # _____ for \$ _____

Total \$ _____

A Donation

I want to support E4C through a monthly donation of:

_____ \$20

_____ \$50

_____ \$100

_____ \$ _____ Other

I want to support E4C through a one-time donation of:

_____ \$50

_____ \$100

_____ \$500

_____ \$ _____ Other

Payment Information

_____ Cheque enclosed payable to E4C

_____ VISA

_____ MasterCard

Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Charitable Reg. # 13155 8140 RR0001

Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation operating as E4C

E4C Right to Privacy Policy: E4C protects your personal information and adheres to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy.

We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists.

E4C hopes to raise \$65,000 from the winter fundraising campaign. Our costs for this campaign are estimated to be \$22,000. For further information contact Jim Draginda (780) 424-7543 x 116.

E4C is registered at CanadaHelps.org to make online donations.

Please complete and return this form to E4C in the envelope attached.

Thank you for your generous gift. It will make a difference in someone's life.

Name as it appears on Credit Card:

Address: _____

City: _____

Province/State: _____

Country: _____

Postal Code/ZIP: _____

E-mail: _____

Signature: _____

Additional E4C Holiday Gift Catalogue forms are available at www.e4calberta.org.

Additional gift information can be included on a separate piece of paper.

