



Faithful City
 Bringing renewed energy & blessing to the voluntary sector.

The voluntary sector in Alberta is stretched to the limit. The faith community must take action to help.

According to a recent study from the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO), the voluntary sector – so crucial to Alberta’s quality of life – is stretched to the limit. The sector is feeling the effect of the economic downturn and government funding cuts. Action is needed to prevent the closure of much needed programs and services. Can the faith community help?

Yes. In an age of scarcity of resources when leadership is stretched to the edge, faith communities have an opportunity to engage the systemic issues that shape the soul of our city. Faith communities can influence fundamental change and be effective, compassionate contributors to the strengthening of our community’s life. The time to act is now.

How is Faithful City assisting?

- Faithful City, on behalf of the Diocese of Calgary and Christ Church, recently sponsored *Your Church and Community Impact*, a Study Day dedicated to inspiring faith communities to continue taking an active and positive role in the voluntary sector.
- The Very Reverend Robert Pynn is the Board Chair of CCVO, an organization dedicated to strengthening Alberta’s voluntary sector.

What can you do?

Alberta’s voluntary sector needs you and your faith community. Donate your time. Share your expertise. Make a contribution. Simply spread the word. You can make a real and meaningful difference to causes that are important to you.

Faithful City –
 Sharing faith.
 Igniting ideas.
 Building community.

Bringing a faith perspective and spiritual foundation to Calgary’s social services community, Faithful City endeavours to raise up our community – and all who live here.

We seek real change on a systemic level; not bandaid solutions. And we believe that, together, the spiritual, social welfare, government and business communities can affect this change – for all.

Volunteer.
Donate.
Share.

Please contact us at
info@faithfulcitycalgary.com

Stretched to the Limit: An Economic Impact Survey

The following article includes excerpts from the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organization's latest survey report, which was released in November 2009.

Alberta's voluntary sector is stretched to the limit. Although nonprofit organizations and charities have been adapting to the economic downturn for some time, apprehension is growing.

Since the fall of 2008, many groups have reduced expenses by streamlining their operations and by letting go of much-needed staff. The full force of the recession, however, is yet to come. Further reductions in revenue will have a significant impact on programs and services.

These are the trends identified by 472 respondents to a provincial economic survey conducted by the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) in late fall of 2009.

Key Findings

- There has been a lag effect in terms of the recession on nonprofits and charities. As such, the real force of the economic recession will hit the voluntary sector in 2010. Charities and nonprofits will be grappling with deepening challenges at the same time as other parts of the economy are recovering.
- Alberta's voluntary sector is experiencing continued erosion from all revenue streams. Individual donors have cut back on their giving and will be cautious about increasing their donations to previous levels. The biggest anticipated impact is the potential for significant

cuts in provincial government funding, indicated to be in the range of 5-15% in 2010.

- More than 60% of organizations reported increased service demand and operating costs.
- Nonprofits and charities are resilient and resourceful, but further funding reductions will result in reduced programs and services for families and communities.
- Alberta's nonprofits and charities have been adapting, but they are stretched to the limit with little capacity to make further changes.

Survey Summary

The voluntary sector is crucial to Alberta's quality of life. Imagine fewer sports and recreation opportunities for children, less assistance for seniors and for families struggling on low incomes. Think about the homeless and the sick. What about community outreach from faith-based organizations and churches? Consider the many arts and cultural programs, environment protection services and additional education opportunities for low-income, immigrant families? The true impact of losing these programs and services will not be realized until they are no longer there. To read the full report of *Stretched to the Limit: Economic Impact Survey*, visit www.calgarycvo.org.

CCVO provides research and resources to strengthen the nonprofit and voluntary sector in an effort to create vibrant communities.

Your Church and Community Impact

Engaging the community can bring renewed energy and blessings. Reaching out with a wise and loving strategy can rekindle the confidence of our congregations and restore the faith communities' place in the consciousness of the greater community.

On January 21, Faithful City sponsored *Your Church and Community Impact*, a Study Day designed for clergy, diocesan leaders and interested parishioners. This day focussed energy, spirit and action to helping the needs of Alberta's crucial voluntary sector.

We were honoured to have as our key presenter Ruth Ramsden Wood, the President of United Way of Calgary and Area. Ruth is considered to be among the 100 most influential people in Canada. Our second presenter, Katie Melnyk, the Faith Connections Coordinator for the Aspen Family and Community Network, provided insight into the Upstart Critical Hours program – a working example of positive community results through collaboration between the faith community and the voluntary sector.

This Study Day was just the beginning. As need continues to grow within the voluntary sector, the faith community will continue to help raise up the community.

It is our duty. It is our calling. It is our community. Please become involved however you can.