

IN THIS fACTivist

Land Use Quandry: p1
Ending Homelessness: p2
Message from the Director: p3

Downtown East Revitalization: p4
ESPC Project Updates: p5
The Downtown Arena Issue: p6
Staff Profile: p6

Book Review: ESPC Book Club: p7
Homeless Count Reflection: p7
Board Profile: p7
Membership: p8

Planning a Great City: How will we use our land?

By ERIN KREKOSKI, *Resource Coordinator*

“Group out to protect local agriculture: Coalition of churches, community groups launch This Land is Our Land campaign to preserve fertile northeast area”

Edmonton Journal, September 21

“Should we sprawl on farmland?”

Edmonton Journal, September 17

“Coalition working to preserve northeast agricultural ‘nest egg’: Says development southeast of Manning Drive will destroy precious farmland”

Edmonton Journal, October 15

Have you seen these headlines? In recent weeks, land-use conflicts have sprung to the forefront as local groups urge that we preserve and protect the rich agricultural soils in northeast Edmonton which are threatened by encroaching residential and industrial development.

Edmonton area farmlands are the most recent battleground over which land use debates rage, but similar quagmires are being experienced all over the province – and have been for many years. In different locations and with different stakeholders, the core of many of these conflicts is the question of how land use decisions are made – who decides, and what factors are considered in the process? How will we use our land?

For Farming and Food?

Edmonton is surrounded by farmland, but between 2003 and 2007, the city gobbled up 3,991 hectares of agricultural lands, rezoning them to facilitate other land use needs – mostly residential development. However, despite the loss of food-producing land and trends of urbanization and the steady decline in numbers of farms and farmers, farming remains an important part of Alberta’s history, and a vital component of our culture and economy today. It has only been in recent decades that Albertans have consumed more imported than locally produced foods. For many Edmontonians, food security doesn’t seem to be a big concern – after all, grocery stores overflow with inexpensive and exotic foods. But just because I can purchase a pineapple at Sobey’s doesn’t mean that our community is food secure. Food prices are on the rise, farmer’s incomes are declining, and not everybody in Edmonton goes to bed every

night with a full belly. To feed ourselves, whether it’s through large local farms or small community gardens, we need to maintain our nutrient-rich soils and uncontaminated waters. To feed each other, we need to work together to support our local farmers, and to develop and sustain innovative food security projects, such as community gardens and collective kitchens. In the most recent Municipal Development Plan, the City of Edmonton recognizes the importance of a food secure community, and commits to working to “Ensure access to local food through a secure land supply and neighbourhood level approaches to local food, gardening and smaller scale food production”.

For Industry?

As our province continues to look north to the tarsands for economic growth and revenue, Albertans will be forced to cede more and more lands to industrial development. Recently, there has been a great deal of this type of development in and around ‘Alberta’s Industrial Heartland’, the 530-square kilometre tract of land northeast of Edmonton straddling the counties of Sturgeon, Strathcona, and Lamont. Upgraders, refineries, petrochemical processing plants and related industry are slated to be sited on agricultural lands, which have recently been rezoned for medium and heavy industrial development. Not only does industrial development have an impact on land use decisions in the greater Edmonton region, but also within our city limits, as well. While the type and scale of industrial development pursued in Upgrader Alley hasn’t been proposed within city limits, the establishment of smaller industrial facilities, the loss of natural areas and redevelopment of existing built areas to accommodate industry are contentious issues.

What is the impact of living near an industrial facility? How appropriate is industrial development within urban limits, on the urban-rural fringe, or in prime agricultural lands? Industry plays an important role in bringing employment and economic growth to Edmonton – but some have argued that the hidden cost of industry is too high. Nevertheless, industry greatly impacts land use decisions, and will likely continue to figure prominently in the foreseeable future.

(Continued on page 2)





Land Use, cont'd from page 1

For Residential Development?

Edmonton's population is growing and is expected to continue to grow. Edmonton's new draft Municipal Development Plan anticipates a population of 1 to 1.2 million by the year 2040, up from our current population of 750,000. So the need for houses, schools, services, and all of the other development that sustains urban life also continues to grow. And while we may be beginning to appreciate the wisdom of the adage, 'build up, not out', it would seem that Edmontonians still like their space. In fact, the population density of the Edmonton CMA is much lower than that of other similarly sized Canadian cities – just 109.9 persons per square kilometer (*Statistics Canada, 2007*). Compare that to Ottawa, with 197.8; Calgary, with 211.3; or Toronto, Canada's most densely populated city, with 866.1 persons per square kilometre. Some may point out that Edmonton's vast green spaces contribute to our spacious neighbourhoods, but even our 'built area' density – that is, excluding agricultural, parkland, and sports field areas within the city – is lower than most Canadian cities – approximately 187 persons per square kilometre. The fact of the matter is that residential development is the single largest contributing factor to the loss of agricultural lands in the Edmonton region.

For Heritage, Recreation and Biodiversity?

One of Edmonton's claims to fame is the vast expanse of parkland and green spaces within the city limits. These spaces provide access to recreation, and opportunities to learn about the complex interplay of ecology where nature meets the city. A 1993 City of Edmonton inventory of environmentally sensitive and

ecologically significant lands documented hundreds of sites within the boundaries of the City of Edmonton classified as natural areas, significant natural areas, and environmentally sensitive areas. Although 85 of these areas were designated as priorities for conservation, many have been lost to development, as a 2005 update to the inventory reveals. For social reasons, such as heritage and recreation, as well as ecological reasons, the preservation of greenspace is an important consideration for those at the land-use decision making table.

Moving Forward

With all of these competing interests, it's no wonder that land use decision making is a challenging process – and a contentious one. It will take actions at every level – from individual actions to federal government actions – to ensure that we live and grow in a way that will sustain the land that sustains us.

Some land-use decisions are up to individuals – for example, Edmontonians with big backyards might choose to convert their lawns into vegetable gardens. Individuals can also become involved in the land use decision making process by getting informed about the issues affecting their community, joining a group that's taking action, taking part in committees and public consultations, and engaging elected officials. There is no shortage of great examples of how citizens can influence land-use decisions. In Edmonton, a number of groups are organized and taking action to preserve agricultural land, influence the shape of new neighbourhoods, and keep our greenspaces, well, green!

(See the side bar for links to more information on land use issues.)

Land Use Links

Visit these links for more information on land use issues.

- ♦ **Alberta Land Trust Alliance**
landtrusts-alberta.ca
- ♦ **Alberta Land Use Framework**
landuse.alberta.ca
- ♦ **Canadian Parks and Wildlife Society: Edmonton**
cpaws-edmonton.org
- ♦ **Capital Region Integrated Growth Management Board**
capitalregionboard.ab.ca
- ♦ **City of Edmonton Planning and Projects**
edmonton.ca/city_government/planning-and-development.aspx
- ♦ **Greater Edmonton Alliance**
greateredmontonalliance.com
- ♦ **Green Edmonton**
greenedmonton.ca
- ♦ **Legacy Lands Conservation Society**
legacylands.ca
- ♦ **VOCAL: The Voice of Community and Land Society**
vocalalberta.com

Investing in Real Solutions to Homelessness

By ANETTE KINLEY, *Research & Communications Assistant*

The City of Edmonton's 10-year plan to end homelessness is expected to be released this Fall. The task of putting together the plan has been given to the Edmonton Committee to End Homelessness (ECEH), which is made up of government, business, labour, healthcare and social services representatives.

The complex nature of homelessness - which involves issues of affordable housing, income security, addictions and mental health, among **many** others - requires a long-term, comprehensive and coordinated approach.

Putting such a plan into action will have a high cost. However, the cost of not solving the problem is much higher than investing in solutions today. The table (*right*) shows estimated costs of different ways of sheltering

the homeless; the cost of running homeless shelters is over \$20,000 per person, per year. The 2006 Homeless Count in Edmonton found 2,618 homeless persons—that amounts to **\$52.36 million** yearly.

Comparing the cost of shelters to supplements and social housing (Toronto)

Source: Wellesley Institute (2006)

	Shelters	Rent Supplement (private rental)	Social Housing
Daily	\$63.52	\$23.00	\$6.57
Monthly	\$1,932.00	\$701.00	\$199.92
Annual	\$23,185.00	\$8,415.00	\$2,399.04

(Continued on page 3)



Homeless Plan, *cont'd from page 2*

The costs of homelessness go much further than homeless shelters, however. There are also on-going costs to the health care, emergency services, and justice system. All told, the estimated costs of homelessness range from \$35,000 to \$150,000 per year per person. That's a minimum of \$91.6 million per year for Edmonton. Continuing to manage homelessness, rather than investing in solutions, is not a sustainable option.

Investing in long-term solutions (like affordable housing) versus band-aid measures (like shelters) makes the most sense - socially, morally, and financially.

Four Cities, Four Plans

The ECEH has been looking at strategies implemented in hundreds of cities and counties across North America to form the basis of Edmonton's 10-year plan. I chose to limit my review to plans from four cities across Canada: Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, and Toronto. Each plan had a slightly different approach, and some were more comprehensive than others—but **all** of them contained specific, measurable targets and timelines.

When combined, the four plans revealed the following seven key objectives:

- ◆ **Build more affordable housing:** includes strategies like inclusionary zoning and density bonuses; developing new and renovated units; rent-to-own programs; more supportive and transitional housing.
- ◆ **Re-house the homeless:** includes the

Housing First approach, which focuses on providing housing before other interventions.

- ◆ **Improve Incomes:** includes increased wages; increased income support and housing allowances; improved employment assistance, training and job creation.
- ◆ **Enhance emergency and transitional services:** includes mental health and additions services; shelter services; outreach and drop-in centers; improved health care access.
- ◆ **Prevent homelessness:** includes investment in preventing eviction / increasing tenant stability.
- ◆ **Improve coordination / centralize homelessness information and systems:** for the purpose of improving planning, collaboration, and capacity of homeless-serving organization.
- ◆ **Address human resources issues impacting homeless-serving non-profit sector:** to ensure organizations have the staff capacity needed to effectively deliver services—essential to meeting the goals laid out in any homeless reduction plan.

It will be interesting to see how many of these elements are included in the plan for Edmonton. In my mind—the more comprehensive it is, the better. If we want to end homelessness, we need a solid plan.

For more information on Edmonton's 10-year plan, visit: endedmontonhomelessness.com

See page 6 for links to the 4 plans reviewed.

Road to Homelessness: Risk, Trigger, Trap

The reasons for becoming & remaining homeless can be understood in terms of risks, triggers and traps:

Risk Factors

- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Physical disability, mental illness or addiction
- ◆ Difficult childhood history (e.g. abuse)
- ◆ Time in foster care
- ◆ Family conflict
- ◆ Lack of supportive relationships
- ◆ Lack of education

Trigger Events

- ◆ Financial crisis
- ◆ Moving for economic or social opportunity
- ◆ Health crisis
- ◆ Family conflict
- ◆ Landlord/ roommate conflict
- ◆ Unchecked addiction and mental illness
- ◆ Crime (victim or perpetrator)

Traps

- ◆ Public system barriers
- ◆ Multiple jurisdictions
- ◆ Difficult "system" navigation
- ◆ Emergency shelter environments
- ◆ Addiction, mental and physical illness
- ◆ Employment barriers
- ◆ Insufficient income for rent/ deposit
- ◆ Conditions put on housing
- ◆ Institutional recycling
- ◆ Housing affordability

Source: Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, *Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness*, 2008, p 20-21)

Fall Season Brings Good Harvest & Renewal

by SUSAN MORRISSEY, Executive Director, Edmonton Social Planning Council

Welcome to the Fall edition of *the fACTivist!*

Over the course of the summer our staff were actively involved in a number of projects including the Edmonton Renters' Survey report and a review of the downtown arena issue. We also had our hands in the municipal development plan and transportation master plan. These are all issues directly effecting how Edmontonians live, work and play.

Earlier this Fall, ESPC staff made a hands-on contribution to the community by volunteering at a Habitat for Humanity project (pictured, left).

We also joined our fellow United Way agencies at the United Way Campaign Kick-off (pictured, right).

We have also come through another federal election this Fall, and the face of government will be changing. The close contest in the Edmonton-

Strathcona riding showed us the important role voters can have in re-shaping their community.

I encourage you to get out and chat with your friends, neighbours and family members about the issues that are on your radar. This is our city, our province and our country and it is up to all of us to take interest and get involved in shaping our communities.

I also encourage you to read the updates on the ESPC's work. Some important projects will be coming to fruition as Fall turns to Winter.





Downtown East: Revitalization or Another False Start?

By JOHN KOLKMAN, *Research & Policy Analysis Coordinator*

The Quarters

The City of Edmonton's most recent effort to revitalize the area East of downtown (between 92 and 97 St and from the upper river valley to 103A Ave) got off to a rocky start. The area was initially described in City planning documents as an "open palette," and by a City hired architect as "fallow, fertile ground." This instantly led to suspicions that the City intended to displace the existing residents, bulldoze the entire area, and make way for upscale condos and trendy shops.

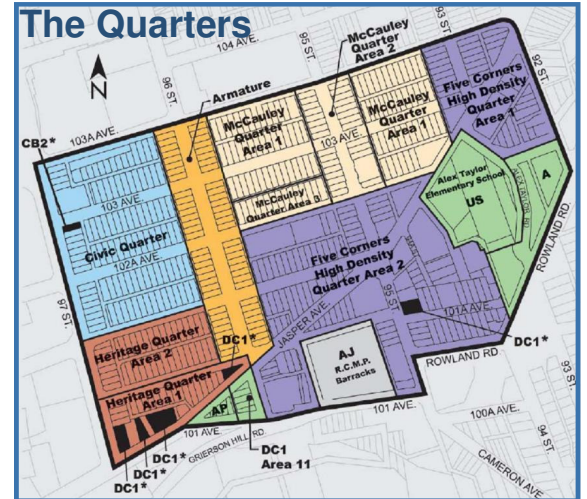
As with most things, the reality on the ground isn't quite so simple. While an estimated 2,400 mostly low-income residents currently live within the boundaries of the Downtown East, a growing percentage of the land (at least 40%) is being used as a giant surface parking lot.

As the two-year process to plan the revitalization of the Downtown East (later renamed 'The Quarters') has evolved, there is widespread acknowledgement that significant redevelopment opportunities do exist. A consensus has also emerged that sufficient vacant land is available so that most existing non-market housing and related support services do not have to be displaced. However, 50 existing units of affordable housing in two complexes would need to be demolished as part of the City's plan for a large, linear green space on the east side of 96 Street (the Armature).

The ESPC is actively participating in the Community Action Planning Group (CAPG) on the Downtown East. One of the actions undertaken by the CAPG was to engage a consultant to listen to the concerns of area residents and those who consider the Downtown East home.

Based on what was heard, and the CAPG's own deliberations, a set of recommendations is being made on the draft plan for submission to Edmonton City Council. The Downtown East redevelopment plan is scheduled to go to a City Council public hearing on November 24, 2008. While largely supportive of the overall plan, the CAPG is recommending some changes including:

- ♦ reducing the amount of green space associated with the 96 Street Armature and retaining the existing 50 units of social housing, and;
- ♦ using a significant percentage of public investment in the Quarters to acquire properties to accommodate a diverse range of non-market housing.



Boyle-Renaissance

About half-way through the Downtown East planning process, another redevelopment proposal emerged. Dubbed 'Boyle Renaissance' by the City, it is located on two and a half blocks immediately north of the Quarters.

When the Boyle Renaissance proposal first came to public attention earlier this year, concern was expressed about the proposed density of the development and whether there was an over-concentration of low income residents in an area already experiencing serious social problems.

To address these concerns, the Boyle Renaissance Advisory Committee (BRAC)—made up of representatives of the City, project proponents and neighborhood residents—was formed. The ESPC has participated on the Committee since its inception.

One of the major outstanding issues addressed by the BRAC in the last 6 months was the size of the project. The original proposal called for up to 900 social housing units. That number has been reduced to 585 units due to the relatively small size of the Boyle Renaissance site. Boyle Renaissance will not only accommodate the hard to house and homeless, but also families, youth, seniors and people with disabilities.

The project has also been divided into two distinct phases. Phase One will consist of:

- ♦ a Community Social and Recreation Space (replacing the existing community league building),
- ♦ an Inner City High School,
- ♦ and a YMCA Welcome Village of 150 housing units (including accommodating up

(Continued on page 5)

Want to know more about the Downtown East redevelopment?

Visit edmonton.ca/TheQuartersDowntown

Keep Your Ear on Social Issues!

The ESPC has just recorded its first podcast radio show!

In the first episode of *Ear on Social Issues*, we discuss:

- ♦ The results of our Renters' Survey, and;
- ♦ Our TOP 5 list of **Scary Social Issues in Alberta** (*just in time for Halloween!*)

Have a listen on-line @ edmontonsocialplanning.ca

Welcome!

The ESPC is happy to welcome our new social work practicum student, **Jaylene Ellard**, to our team!

Jaylene will be with us until April 2009, assisting us with our ongoing projects.

Learn more about Jaylene on page 6!



Downtown East, *cont'd from page 4*

to 30 students attending Inner City High).

Preliminary drawings indicate that the existing community garden and the baseball diamond will be able to be retained, thereby preserving most of the Boyle Street Park.

Phase Two will not proceed until the City purchases the land in the block immediately north of the Boyle Street Park. Currently, the City does not own any of the land, which is currently occupied by a metals scrap yard, the York Hotel, Edmonton Supply Company, an

optical business, a bottle depot, and a couple of empty commercial buildings. Urban Manor, which is transitional housing for single adult males, will remain and be incorporated into Phase Two should it proceed.

The ESPC's involvement in both of these Downtown East initiatives is to ensure that provision is made for additional badly needed affordable housing, while also ensuring the goal of healthier, more inclusive neighbourhoods is achieved.

Looking for Information on Social Issues?

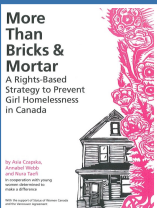
Visit the ESPC Resource Library today!

Open to the public:
M– F 8:30am- 4:30pm

Online Catalogue:
Available 24/7 @
socialresearchlibrary.ca

Our resource library is a rich source of current and historical publications on social issues.

Featured Report:

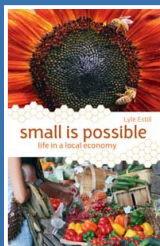


More than Bricks and Mortar: A Rights-Based Strategy to Prevent Girl Homelessness in Canada

(Czapska, A., Webb, A. and Taefi, N.; Justice for Girls)

Featured Book:

Small is Possible: Life in a Local Economy (Estill, L.)



Consulting Community to Shape our Priorities

Thanks to everyone who participated in the ESPC's community consultations on research needs in Edmonton! We received feedback in the form of surveys, conversations, and focus group participation from over 20 individuals representing diverse organizations and clients.

Summaries of the discussion during focus group sessions are available on our website, edmontonsocialplanning.ca. The final report will be posted on our website shortly.

The results of these consultations will inform our Strategic Planning process, and help us to determine how to prioritize research project proposals. If you didn't participate but would like to give us your views on research needed in the community, please note that the consultation process is meant to be an ongoing one – we hope that you will participate in the future.

Questions or comments? Contact Erin Krekoski at 780-423-2031 x 354.

Media Pays Attention to Renter's Survey Results

The release of the ESPC's report, *Not Just a Roof Over our Heads*, attracted a fair share of media attention.

Based on the responses of over 700 renters to the Edmonton Renters' Survey, the report reveals that the rental housing situation has not improved over the past year. This may be a somewhat surprising result in light of the recent improvement in the rental vacancy rate.

Want to learn more? Visit our website (edmontonsocialplanning.ca) to view the report, the ESPC's policy recommendations, and the TV and newspaper stories that followed the release.

The ESPC will be meeting with Minister Yvonne Fritz in November to discuss the report.

Questions or comments? Contact Anette Kinley at 780-423-2031 x351.

Child and Family Poverty Report in Final Stages

Work is nearing completion on the Alberta Child and Family Poverty Report. Tentatively slated for a November 21 public release, the report will take a detailed look at:

- ♦ the profile of children and families in Alberta, with breakdowns for different parts of the province;
- ♦ the depth of poverty in Alberta and how that compares to other Canadian provinces;
- ♦ working poverty, and the extent to which having a job is a ticket out of poverty, and;
- ♦ the extent of poverty in vulnerable groups such as lone parent families, Aboriginal people, and recent immigrants.

The report will also outline some proposed strategies and solutions for significantly reducing child poverty in this province.

The project partners are also looking at strategies to make sure that this isn't just another report that gathers dust on someone's bookshelf. Public forums and other events in a number of Alberta communities – including Edmonton – are being planned for next Spring. The findings of the report will be used at these forums to raise the public awareness not only about the plight of children who live in poor families, but also about the best solutions for ending it.

This report is funded by the Muttart Foundation, and supported by the following partners: Campaign 2000, Vibrant Communities Edmonton, Public Interest Alberta, and several United Ways including Edmonton and Calgary.



Urban Renewal? The Downtown Arena Controversy

By JAYLENE ELLARD, *MacEwan Social Work Practicum Student*

The idea of a downtown entertainment and sports facility for “urban renewal” is not uncommon to many North American cities. They have aided in the prosperity of the economy and image of Columbus, Indianapolis, and San Diego, to name a few. Not to mention the illustrious Coliseum over in Rome that still continues to have people bustling around its ruins. But has the City of Champions, our Edmonton, jumped on the next train to revitalization?

Thoughts of building a new arena to boost the city’s image started to emerge in the media in late 2005 and by early 2006 there was speculation that a new arena would arrive downtown. With Edmonton having the third oldest arena in the NHL, Mayor Mandel became a supporter of the idea along with the rest of the city, or so it appeared. Arguments began to stir in 2007 as the thoughts became conversation and Mandel orchestrated a committee to examine building the new arena. During the civic election, not much was mentioned of a new arena, but the people didn’t forget about it. A report sent out by the Northlands Group claimed the arena could be renovated for \$250 million. That’s a few hundred million short of the \$450 million price tag estimated by the Leadership Committee for the new downtown facility. One city councillor, Kim Krushnell, argued that the community needed to vote for the development as she was certain an arena wouldn’t come without public investments.

It appears that Krushnell was on to something. The report for the 18,000 sq. ft arena was sent out in March of this year claiming there would

need to be a combination of private funding, including the pledged \$100 million from new Oilers’ owner Darryl Katz, and up to 70% public funding. The report favors the new arena by saying it is both “feasible and desirable”. But how inclusive is this claim?

The Canadian Finals Rodeo calls Rexall Place its home year after year, bringing in close to \$60 million through economic activity. With a downtown arena, the CFR may have to search for a new residence before its contract is up with Edmonton in 2013 because the downtown core does not have the facilities needed to house and feed horses and livestock. In addition, the Canadian Taxpayers Association pointed out that the committee had neglected to mention that all of the new Canadian NHL arenas were funded solely by private tax dollars. The committee stated that it could not verify the information, so they decided to take it out of the report.

But even as the new arena debate is launched, and despite all of the opposition and disputes, long time sports and economics researcher Brad Humphreys predicts that, with the evidence of the Mayor’s support, “...it will happen”.

In regards to those that live or have a business in the so far undecided downtown location, the Leadership Committee Report affirms that “appropriate efforts would also be required to plan for and manage impacts (both positive and negative) on neighbouring communities”. Let’s just hope that if the arena project steams forward we won’t be seeing a train wreck any time soon.

Plans to End Homelessness Across Canada

The article on page 5 looked at Homelessness Reduction Plans from the following 4 cities:

- ♦ **Calgary**
Calgary Committee to End Homelessness. *Calgary’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.* (2008) endinghomelessness.ca
- ♦ **Saskatoon**
City of Saskatoon. *2007 Saskatoon Community Plan on Homelessness and Housing.* (2008) saskatoon.ca
- ♦ **Toronto**
Wellesley Institute. *The Blueprint to End Homelessness in Toronto: a two-part action plan.* (2006) wellesleyinstitute.com
- ♦ **Vancouver**
City of Vancouver Housing Centre. *Homeless Action Plan.* (2005) vancouver.ca

Take a look at the original plans at the links above!

meet the ESPC STAFF

Jaylene: New City-Girl with a Passion for People



Jaylene Ellard joined the ESPC in early September as a Social Work practicum student. While in her 2nd and final year of study at MacEwan, Jaylene chose the ESPC for her field placement after working first hand with some of

the Edmonton inner-city population at Boyle Street Community Services last year.

Raised in Vermilion, Alberta, Jaylene is finding that her experiences of city life to be quite eye-opening. She always knew deep-down that she was a “city girl”. After trying out some Social Work courses on a bit of a whim, Jaylene realized that she found her place in the world and her true passion in life: people.

Outside of school, Jaylene manages to stay busy. Last year she was involved in the Student Planning Council for Social Work students, and she is currently Co-Chair of the 2009 Graduation Committee. She also plays volleyball and racquet sports while still trying to find time to hang out with friends and family.

Jaylene is always looking for inspiration through many things whether she finds it in nature, music, art, books, animals, or of course, people. Jaylene hopes to live in LA (*that’s Los Angeles, not Leduc, Alberta*) one day, where she can work on gang and racism issues while starting off her surfing and skydiving career!



Book Club Review Excerpt: *The Glass Castle*

By ERIN KREKOSKI, *Resource Coordinator*

What messages are communicated by *The Glass Castle* about social justice? In this story, poverty is a choice. From these characters, we learn that independence and gritty determination are enough to get a person around any obstacles, no matter their starting point. Here, it seems that one is not bound or constrained by social class; rather, poverty, wealth, and everything in between is a direct result of one's individual choices. Who's to blame for the kids who had to eat out of school garbage cans? Certainly not the community, or the state, for their lack of hot lunch or breakfast programs. No, it is Jeannette's depressed mother, who's spent the last of the grocery money on a chocolate bar, who is at fault.

Devastations and triumphs have less to do with community, more to do with individual choice.

The circumstances in this book ought to make us think about the role of individuals, families, communities, and our government in creating supports and services that are appropriate to allow people to live healthily, free from poverty, and in dignity. Unfortunately, the author is such a magnificent storyteller that some of these deeper questions are likely missed as we follow the Walls family from one incredible adventure to the next.

To read Erin's full review, visit the Book Club page of edmontonsocialplanning.ca (under Resource Library & Links).

ESPC Book Club

The Council has started a book club!

So far, our club has read:

My Home Street Home
by Val Stevens
and

The Glass Castle: A Memoir
by Jeanette Walls
(excerpt of book review, right)

Next Meeting: Nov 27, 2008
Next Book: *The Bean Trees*
by Barbara Kingsolver

Please join us!

Visit the Book Club page on edmontonsocialplanning.ca (under Resource Library & Links) for more information.

A Reflection on the 2008 Homeless Count: Excerpt

By ERIN KREKOSKI, *Resource Coordinator*

On October 21st, I volunteered for the 2008 Edmonton Homeless Count. As Homeless Count volunteers, our job was to approach everybody we saw, and ask them if they had a place to go home to...

As a volunteer, I set out from the Homeward Trust offices in Edmonton's downtown northeast with another volunteer and her young son. Armed with clipboards, reflective vests, and volunteer badges, we set out to walk our beat, an approximately 15-block route near the library, the City Centre Mall, Churchill Square and City Hall.

As Homeless Count volunteers, our job was to approach everybody we saw, and ask them if they had a place to go home to. The first question that we were to ask was "Have you been asked about your housing situation today?", and after that, "Do you have a permanent residence to go home to tonight?" In less than two hours, we had spoken to more than 15 people who had nowhere to live – a number which I wasn't expecting. And even

more startling, a large proportion of these were teens!

It was a cold and windy day, and it didn't take long before my counterpart and I were looking for a place to warm up for a few minutes before continuing with the count. On a cold day, it's hard to stay outside for very long – never mind living outside, which many people have to do.

Not surprisingly, a lot of the people that we approached were 'too busy' to stop and answer our questions. Many of them seemed flustered when we asked if they had a home – it seemed like some people were even offended to be asked the question. Perhaps they thought that they didn't 'look' homeless. ...

Have any thoughts about Erin's experience? Leave a comment on her blog entry on edmontonsocialplanning.ca (on the Blog: Issue Brief page).

Visit homewardtrust.ca to learn more about the Homeless Count & to view the results of the 2008 count (to be released in November).

meet the ESPC BOARD OF DIRECTORS Farrants Active in Local & Global Social Issues



Greg Farrants is a social justice activist and is employed at "the Hub" in the role of the Landlord Recruiter and Support Coordinator. He has been involved in local affordable housing, Haiti solidarity, and peace efforts and has

worked in both government and the non-profit industry.

Greg is a graduate of the Human Geography program at the University of Alberta. He also has extensive experience as an educator – both coaching swimming and teaching English abroad. Greg also works as a city lifeguard part-time.



our VISION

A healthy, just and inclusive community.



our MISSION

The Edmonton Social Planning Council provides leadership to the community and its organizations in addressing social issues and effecting changes to social policy.

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Jaylene Ellard
Practicum Student

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Douglas Meggison

Larry Brockman
Michael Cohen
Greg Farrants
Alvin Finkel
Father Edward Kennedy
Janet Kluthe
Joscelyn Proby
Ann Semotiuk
Ken Stickland
Patricia Cardinal
John Pater

by BECOMING A MEMBER, you will...

- ... support our efforts to remain on the forefront in dealing with social issues
- ... make it possible for us to distribute our materials freely and widely to all
- ... receive our newsletters, fact sheets and other publications
- ... be eligible to vote at ESPC AGMs and have a say in the direction of the organization
- ... be eligible to serve on the board of directors



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Organization _____

Position _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ **Postal Code** _____

Phone _____ **Fax** _____

Email _____

Membership Type	Fees
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Organization	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Large Organization	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate (no vote)	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Limited Income/ Student/ Senior	\$5

Donations Welcome - Can be included with cheque or money order for membership.

PAY ONLINE or mail the completed form with a cheque or money order payable to:

Edmonton Social Planning Council
Suite 37, 9912 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1C5

Online payment and membership details available @ edmontonsocialplanning.ca.