



**SARCEE MEADOWS HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD.**

B50, 4221 Sarcee Rd. S.W., Calgary, Alberta T3E 6V9

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# ***Connections Newsletter***



# ***50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition***

## Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative Celebrates 50 years!



*Roberta Miller (age 10)*

It is impossible to capture the spirit and the amazing people that have contributed to making Sarcee Meadows but I will try by telling my story.

I have been living in SMHC primarily since 1974, my story of Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative is about growing up here and how the Co-op is home. My Mother, Sharon, and I moved in with my Aunt and Cousin. My Mom and Aunt were single mothers looking for an affordable place to stay. Sarcee Meadows became that place.

Growing up in Sarcee Meadows was a safe place, where parents felt comfortable letting their children roam with a bit more freedom than other communities. Within the boundaries of SMHC there were park areas, sidewalks away from roads, and backyard common areas to play. Everyone watched out for everyone else, working together to make this a great place to live and raise families. When I was older I shared a unit with two other family members and then applied for my own unit with my husband. Our 3 children have grown up here and two are currently Members, with our third in the process of

being added to the shares. Our oldest has her own unit with her husband, and is expecting a baby who will be our 4<sup>th</sup> generation to live in Sarcee Meadows. A situation which is very common in our wonderful community. Our middle child is working through the process to get a unit with his fiancé.

This is what SMHC means to me and many others who have had the privilege to live here. This sense of community, caring, safety and permanence is hard to find in the world today. Sarcee Meadows and housing cooperatives may be an idea from the past, but they are wonderful communities that many miss in today's world. The Cooperative Model has endured for 50 years, and can bring us all into the future. The community atmosphere helps to make people feel secure and allows them the ability to stretch their boundaries. Many current and former members have achieved great things in their lives for themselves, SMHC and the greater community.

I am sure when Mom moved in to the Coop in 1974 she never imagined how much family history would take place here. I know I never imagined that Sarcee Meadows would become a lifetime home and career passion. I am now General Manager of Sarcee Meadows, and looking forward to the future this wonderful community has.

Thank you to those that started this wonderful place, to those that have seen it through 50 years and to those who will see us all into the future. Happy 50<sup>th</sup> to Sarcee Meadows.

*Respectfully submitted by  
Roberta Miller, General Manager  
Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative*



*Roberta Miller (age 8) & her sister Monika Schuessler*



*(L to R) Randy, Tristan, Roberta, & Lyall Miller, Sharon Schuessler*

## **50 Years Proud – Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative**

Fifty years is indeed something to celebrate and all of us on the current Board of Directors are overjoyed that as a community SMHC has successfully reached this milestone and is now looking eagerly to the future.

When we read all the submissions of all of our neighbours and friends for this Special 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue, we've just got to say we've come a long way baby!. We as a Board are all very grateful to all the dedicated folks who came before us to grow Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative into the wonderful community that it has become. All members should be proud of attaining the first fifty year milestone. To each and every volunteer over these 50 years our membership owes a debt of gratitude. Their work and dedication given freely has enhanced everyone's lives and helped build a community that is far more than just a collection of affordable townhouses. Our four Members' Meetings each year demonstrate the business side of being a co-operative, the membership coming together to discuss and decide on our collective future; participation is a big factor in SMHC's successes.

The social activities like fairs, barbeques, and lawn sales bring us together with a sense of belonging, but just an evening stroll will reap the joy of many greetings from one's neighbours and friends. As we've grown and the years have gone by the face of Sarcee Meadows has changed and never was it more apparent than two summers ago at our Cultural Fair function when our Women's Circle spearheaded an event that was an overwhelming success showing us all the values of diversity, understanding, and respect. The diversity of our community is a strength to be celebrated and celebrate we did, getting to know our neighbours, where they had come from, what their special cultural traditions may be and through it all seeing that for all our differences there are so many things we share. What we share here is the gift of community, of secure affordable housing and a sense of belonging in a world that seems to be becoming increasingly insular.

We celebrate also our staff whose dedication to making SMHC better and to always doing their utmost to provide the best possible services to our membership. Whether it's in the front office or one of our maintenance professionals visiting your unit to repair or replace as necessary, these people help make Sarcee Meadows a more comfortable and safe home for us all.

And now, we must look to the future of our buildings, our community, and our children to grow and prosper for another fifty years. We wish everyone at Sarcee Meadows the best on our first Fifty Years and know that we move forward to more successes driven by the dedication, hopes, and dreams of even the youngest of our members to more achievements and growth.

*Respectfully submitted by  
Jenn Jenkinson, Chairperson  
On behalf of the 2018-2019 Board of Directors  
Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative*



*2018-2019 SMHC Board of Directors*



# MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER OF ALBERTA

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone to the Sarcee Meadows Housing Cooperative's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

Best wishes as you celebrate five decades of accomplishments. I hope you are incredibly proud of both your 50-year history and your contributions to the greater Calgary community.

I hope you have the opportunity to make new connections, build relationships, and renew friendships with your neighbors during this celebration.

Congratulations again as you mark this milestone. I wish you the very best in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "R. Notley".

**Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta**





**Calgary**

Naheed K. Nenshi, Mayor

July 2018



#### **A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR NENSHI**

On behalf of the citizens of Calgary and my City Council colleagues. It is my pleasure to congratulate Sarcee Meadows Housing Cooperative on 50 years of incorporation and service in our city.

Over the past five decades, SMHC has been a shining example of what it means to build community in Calgary. This complex is about so much more than housing – it is about creating a place where everyone feels at home.

SMHC exemplifies the word cooperative – the community works together to address challenges and celebrates the diversity that is the strength of this city. During my time as Mayor, I have seen firsthand the impact that this environment has had on the people who live there, and on the greater community.

I commend everyone who has been involved in bringing Sarcee Meadows Housing Cooperative's vision to reality over the past 50 years, and I wish you many more years of success.

Congratulations!

Sincerely,

Naheed K. Nenshi  
MAYOR



Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada  
Fédération de l'habitation coopérative du Canada

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July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative Ltd.  
B50-4221 Sarcee Road South West  
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Dear Friends,

On behalf of the members, board and staff of CHF Canada, congratulations on 50 years of incorporation! This is such a milestone occasion and one that you all deserve to be so proud of.

As you know, Sarcee Meadows has a remarkable history as one of Canada's first housing co-ops. The dedication and commitment of your members to making Sarcee Meadows such an amazing, welcoming community has been a part of your co-ops story since day one. This determination to provide quality, affordable housing for members in a vibrant community carried your co-op through the first few challenging years, and just look at where your co-op is now!

Fifty years later, Sarcee Meadows stands as one of Canada's most diverse, strong and engaged co-ops. It was an honour for CHF Canada to present your Women's Circle with the 2017 Award for Co-operative Achievement, for building bridges in your community, living diversity, and reminding us all that everyone benefits when all cultures feel welcomed and are included.

Your co-op is truly a model to other housing co-ops across Canada. We are so privileged to have you as a member of CHF Canada, and wish you many more years of continued success and all-around awesomeness.

Congratulations to all the members, directors and staff of Sarcee Meadows for doing all that you do to make your co-op such a remarkable, inspiring place to call home. Have a wonderful BBQ in August and I'm so looking forward to hearing all about it! We would be thrilled to share some photos on our social media pages, so please feel free to send those along after your big day.

Congrats again!

Cynthia Mitchell  
Program Manager, Member Engagement

## SOUTHERN ALBERTA CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative  
B50, 4221 Sarcee Road SW  
Calgary, AB.  
T3E 6V9

Dear Fellow Co-op Members of Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative:

On behalf of the Southern Alberta Cooperative Housing Association (SACHA) board, staff and members, congratulations on your 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

Fifty years of offering secure, affordable housing in a caring community. Fifty years of leadership within the co-op movement of Alberta and Canada. Fifty years of living the cooperative principles and illustrating that cooperative enterprises and communities build a better world.

The Southern Alberta Cooperative Housing Association (SACHA) has a long and unique relationship with Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-op. Sarcee Meadows Co-op is one of the founding co-ops of SACHA and from the beginning Sarcee Meadows provided SACHA with leaders, facilitators, educators and staff.

As the first housing co-op in Calgary, the success of Sarcee Meadows encouraged the development of other housing co-ops in Southern Alberta. The continuing achievements of Sarcee Meadows provide a show case for those who are discovering co-op housing only now.

SACHA looks forward to another fifty years of working with Sarcee Meadows to developing sustainable, inclusive, affordable cooperative housing for all.

Cooperatively yours,



Brenda Davies  
Executive Director



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# *Our Stories*

## ***Carolyn and Phillip Buckingham***

*Interview by Slawa Gruszczynska*

Born and raised in Newfoundland, Canada Carolyn and Phillip Buckingham, along with their three young toddlers, set off on the most amazing adventure! Between 1971 and 1973 the young family sailed on a Russian liner to Europe where they began exploring 17 different countries - camping along the way. By 1974 their oldest child, Jeff, was ready for Kindergarten so the family returned to Canada and joined the SMHC family. They initially moved into “K” and as their family grew to include 5 children they moved into a 4 bedroom unit in “H” where they still reside today.

Carolyn was keen to volunteer and immediately joined the Membership Committee at SMHC. As her family grew she needed more time to focus on them and her full time position as a nurse at the Foothills Hospital so stepped away from the committee.

Phil was working in Sales & Marketing and was very involved with the Separate School Board, as all 5 children would attend Catholic school. He would become one of the key people involved in establishing the French Immersion System in Calgary schools.

In 2005 Carolyn retired from nursing and began to pursue her dream of visual arts. She is an accomplished painter and now has time to spend with her large family. Her volunteer spirit which was awakened here at SMHC has continued as well. She volunteered with Samaritan’s Purse and travelled to New Orleans to help with the clean-up and rebuilding following Hurricane Katrina.

Thank you to Carolyn and Phillip for sharing their story and for spreading the value of cooperation and community both locally and globally.



*Carolyn and Phillip Buckingham (front row) pictured with their children and grandchildren.*

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## **The Coates’ Journey – April 1, 1972 to present day**

### **Three Generations – Gerry and Betty Jean**

As one of the original families to live in Sarcee Meadows, it was rather an exciting time for our family way back when! In 1971, my husband Gerry and I were rather encouraged to learn that there was a project afloat that could change our lives and our living situation. We were a family of five – three young children, a daughter Laurie, 9, sons David and Jeffrey, 7 and 4, and we were just not in a position to purchase a home. We were living in a two-bedroom suite in a complex geared to income. Needless

to say, we were bursting at the seams.

The project, we were told was going to be for families and would be considered affordable housing, located in an area close to where we currently lived, and we were terribly excited to find out that we would be able to afford – we hoped – the monthly charges. As a matter of fact, the “rent” we were told was a “housing charge” that was, at that time, about \$199 per month. And our Share to become a member would be \$900. Such a new concept at that time! We decided we would jump in!

The new homes were not completely finished, but we were able to walk about and look at this huge property with beautiful looking townhomes, and we decided to pick which one we liked. As they were not completed, we had about 6 months to prepare for our big move and when the time came, I remember we came into our three-bedroom with 2 bathrooms, and sat on the white shag carpet in the living room. White shag carpet? Really? We were in a palace we thought! It was an amazing day, checking out the huge kitchen/dining room with a brand-new fridge and stove, patio in the back, huge front yard, and a basement which already had a dryer! Considering that we just came from a small two-bedroom suite, we felt we were in heaven!

As we adjusted to our new surroundings, we met and nurtured new friends and neighbors; the kids were all of varying ages and there seemed to be lots of them. Our three all found new buddies and enjoyed their new school and surroundings. For the first little while, the concept of “co-operative living” really wasn’t in our vocabularies, and it took us a while to understand what lifestyle we had chosen. It was mainly our neighbors (who actually had moved in the same day we had) who asked if I would volunteer. And it was after that, we became more involved in our neighborhood, our friends and what we could do to make our co-operative such a great place to be. At various times, we did different things. One of my volunteer choices was to become a Bloc Rep to deliver the Newsletter, which I continue to do today. Gerry served on a Committee and the Board up until his death in 1986 and I have been on various committees over the years. In 1988, a scholarship fund was set up in Gerry’s name which made the family very proud.

In 1982, I was asked if I would work part-time in the office answering the phone, and it was my pleasure to do so. The part-time aspect became a full-time job for twenty-seven years! After Gerry died, I realized that living in Sarcee Meadows was such a benefit for me; my home is well looked after maintenance wise, and anything I needed was close by. There’s no doubt that Sarcee Meadows has given me a lifetime of memories, special friends who are family to me, great neighbors, plus 50 years of co-operative living!

### **Laurie & Efren**

My memories of Sarcee Meadows go back to when we moved in – in 1972 – I remember feeling like I would get lost because it seemed soooo big! As kids, we used to hide in the garbage bins, because not all the units were filled yet, imagine that!

When I had my own family, and was living in Yellowknife, I came home for Christmas 1995 and heard the waiting list was open. I knew we would be relocating back to Calgary in the next year, so I put my name in and left it at that. The following September, we made the move and my whole family (Efren, Christian – (4 ½) and Kianna (2)) moved in with my mom (Betty Jean). That was a full house!

Shortly after that, I got the phone call - we were being offered a unit! I remember being so excited, we would have our own unit! The best part was that it was right down the street from my mom, and the kids thought that was great!

So December 1, 1995 we moved in to our unit and got to spend our first Christmas in our own home.

It has been such a wonderful experience raising my children in the same place I grew up, the schools and play grounds and great friends over the years.

We feel very blessed to be a part of the community of Sarcee Meadows, and the story carries on.

In February 2018, Christian got his unit and has his own story to tell!

## Christian

I have basically lived my whole life in Sarcee Meadows from the age of four, at which time I remember excitedly running around my new house when we moved from Yellowknife.

I went to school at Sir James Lougheed, A.E. Cross and then to Central Memorial.

When I was about 23, I decided that it was time to move out on my own, and so my thought was that, a two-bedroom unit in Sarcee Meadows would suit me just fine. Only thing was – a two bedroom was not easy to get! I heard that the Waiting List was closed but would be opening up within a short time. So – when I found out it opened, I got my name on the list right away. Thought it wouldn't take long – but I was wrong!

I was on the waiting list for over three years and I was happy when I got the call that there was a unit available. In February of 2018 I moved with my girlfriend to my own unit and I have been able to do some things like woodworking, and gardening. We have a beautiful puppy and I am very much at home and happy to be living in Sarcee Meadows again.



*Back row (L to R): Efren & Laurie Ramos, Morgan Ptolemy, Christian Ramos, and Betty Jean Coates  
Front row: Audrey & Barrie Templeton.*

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## **Mike and Judy Cooper**

We have lived in Sarcee Meadows a long time and over the years we have experienced what a wonderful and caring community this is.

We were expecting our first child when we moved in and added two more to our family in the following years. Our youngest, Graham, was born with a genetic disorder rendering him severely disabled, necessitating many stays at Alberta Children's Hospital. Sarcee Meadows (the corporation) was so kind to endow us with a bursary to help meet our expenses, ensured we always received a Christmas hamper and built us a wheelchair ramp. But it is to the extraordinary people here to whom there are not words enough to express our gratitude. Those memories are very precious and I still get tears in my eyes when I recall neighbors arriving with meals, picking up the older kids from school, running errands, and/or

dashing to help in an emergency. In addition to all this was the emotional support we received--our son was accepted, while we were embraced, encouraged, and in the end consoled.

Sarcee Meadows is a rare and unique community, made so by people who are committed to making a positive impact on the lives of others locally and beyond.

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### ***Carol Davis***

In 1968 my first husband, Verne James, and I were sharing a house with a family who told us about a meeting they had attended to learn about a housing co-operative that was planned for SW Calgary. We started to attend the meetings and eventually paid our deposit (\$25) on our Share purchase. The co-op planning phase was long and fraught with problems. The City of Calgary owned a piece of land known as the "Sarcee Triangle" and the Co-op wanted to buy that land but were turned down as the City claimed to have a building project slated to start on it very soon. That never happened and in 1970 they finally agreed to sell the triangle to our housing co-operative. Interim financing was required and the Credit Union Federation of Alberta provided those funds. My Boss (Al Ritchie) was a key player in those negotiations. He knew I was interested in living in the co-op and I have always suspected he was responsible for me being appointed to the Board.



*Carol Davis*

Finally in summer 1971 the first units were ready to be occupied. We moved into C186 in late July. I was pregnant with my first child. For the first few days we had no utilities. No Hot Water, No Electricity. I remember it was hot outside. Moving is hot work. Cold showers were VERY refreshing!!

A few days after move in the man who was the President of the Co-op (Dave Graham) was at my door. His message. "We need a Secretary Treasurer. There is a Board meeting Thursday evening. Be There" Did I mention I was a shy girl? Easily intimidated by men in power? You bet I went!

I had not met him until then, but Bob Jensen and I were among the first "resident directors". Most of the Board members were our Founding Fathers. All very dedicated men who wanted this new concept in housing to happen and succeed. And yes the Board members were all men. I replaced the woman who had previously been Secretary. And yes I knew my place well. I was the "Recording Secretary", never opening my mouth unless to clarify a motion. I remember my first Members meeting well. It was my job to read the minutes of the previous meeting. I practiced for days and was so nervous I do not know how I locked my knees to allow me to stand before the crowd and read those minutes.

The original mortgage for the co-op was provided by an Innovative Housing Fund that the Federal Government had introduced. It bore an interest rate of 7 7/8% and required us to maintain an income mix 25% low income, 25% could be high income. The problem was no one thought to define what "low" and "high" meant! That caused a lot of grief in future years.

When we opened in 1971 we had about 60 members to fill 380 homes. There was a 10% vacancy rate in Calgary for public housing. The co-op was no financial bargain. A large three bedroom unit had a housing charge of \$170 to \$181 depending on income. The share was \$939. Huge vacancy losses were incurred before we finally filled up in late 1973. Since then we have never experienced vacancy problems again (thank goodness).

The enormous financial burden of vacancy losses and construction deficits took a huge financial toll on our co-op in those early years. We were struggling to survive. I remember one day getting a phone call from Ottawa. That really impressed me! The man said he was Glen Haddrell and that he was from The Co-operative Housing Foundation of Canada. I had never heard of them but they were offering their

help to our Board to get an increase in our approved mortgage so we could cover the huge cost overruns. It was not long before phone calls from Ottawa no longer impressed me but contact with CHF always has! (From those early days forward the bond between CHFC and SMHC has been solid, mutually supportive, and deeply entrenched. Since 1978 SMHC has been a CHF member and we have always sent representatives to CHF Annual meetings. A number of our members have been active CHF volunteers over these many years. It has always been comforting to know that whatever problems arise CHF always has our back.)

Now you have to appreciate that when Sarcee Meadows began there was little to no experience about what a housing co-op was and even less about best practices of operation. We “invented the wheel” for many years. This was long before all the things we take for granted today – like the Internet. Heck we did not even have FAX machines for years! So not only was our co-op working in isolation but so too were our members. Other than for one or two meetings a year the membership had little opportunity to interact and quite frankly the Board of Directors was too busy putting out forest fires to even have time to think about member involvement. I do not recall exactly how it happened but Betty Jensen and I both came to the same conclusion about the same time. We needed more members involved. We needed Committees. We needed a Newsletter. We needed to educate ourselves in how to make the best decisions and involve as many residents in the process as possible. I am so grateful to have crossed paths with people like Betty who enriched my experience and broadened my perspective. I guess we really were pioneers! It is fair to say that from that long ago day when I was told to “Be There”, Co-operative Housing has had a HUGE impact on my life. I often wonder what life would have been like if I had not become involved.

I served as Secretary- Treasurer and Director for Sarcee Meadows until 1979. At that time I was elected to the Co-operative Housing Foundation of Canada’s Board where I served for six years. That was an exciting time for the growth of housing co-operatives in Canada as special funding programs were negotiated to assist in financing the properties. Betty and I both served on CHF Committees during those years. Later we worked together to successfully develop five more Calgary Housing Co-ops and develop our local Federation of Housing Co-ops – SACHA. Many people have been involved in all of these advances. Audrey Templeton, Bernadette England get accolades for all their efforts over many years.

I was asked to join the Board of Rooftops Canada Foundation and served there for six years. That broadened my understanding to the world stage and cemented my love for a village in Uganda that is still part of my life today.

I was re-elected to the SMHC Board in the mid 1980’s. I was then hired as SMHC General Manager and served in that position for nearly 15 years. Since 1971 I have served on many committees in SMHC; served several years on the Rutland Park Board of Directors and three years on the City Committee to plan the re-use of the Base lands. I served six years on the Board of Directors for the Agency for Co-operative Housing. The days of being the shy, timid girl are long gone and I am sure there have been many times over many years that people wish she would return!

My children Mark and Shannon were both born and raised in Sarcee Meadows. Being well known in the membership I always got reports when they managed to get into mischief. I know the kids were sure their Mother had eyes in the back of her head. They had a large play area as I was comfortable with them roaming throughout the co-op. No streets to cross. Lots of sidewalks to ride bikes on. Both attended local schools. Now grown with families of their own they have fond memories of their life in SMHC.

In 1994 I married Bud Davis – a member of SMHC. I moved from C186 to K 626 where I still reside. Bud and I were active Co-op and Community Members. We loved to travel and entertain friends and family at our home. I lost him in 2008.

My new journey in life, as a widow, has been greatly assisted by my caring friends and neighbours. It is so comforting to know I live in a community where people really do look out for each other.

Sometimes we forget that others have our back but it is a very safe and secure feeling.

SMHC has undergone many, many changes in our 50 years of operation. We grew from an “idea” to a well-run housing success story. We have tried and sometimes failed. Mostly I believe we have learned from our mistakes and taken on new and exciting new endeavours. Our country and our City have also undergone many changes. We are so much more diverse than we were 50 years ago. I like to think we have become more tolerant and accepting of each other. Working together helps everyone learn new things and dispense with untruths that may have been common. I am delighted that our Women’s Circle is helping to broaden minds, teach new skills, and develop new Leaders for our future.

I have reached the stage in life where I know I have had more yesterdays than I will have tomorrows. I take great comfort in the fact that the work I have been involved in will continue to thrive with the new blood of those involved today.

I was so privileged to get to know and work with so many people from across Canada and around the world because of my involvement in our movement. I am humbled to have been made an Honorary Life Member of CHF in 1994 and to have also received the CMHC Outstanding Contribution to Co-operative Housing Award in 2013. At the time I was the only one to have been given both these prestigious awards.

Thank you for his opportunity to share a few thoughts with you.

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### ***The Edugyan Family***

*Interviews by Kathy Aubichon*

#### ***Kweku Edugyan***

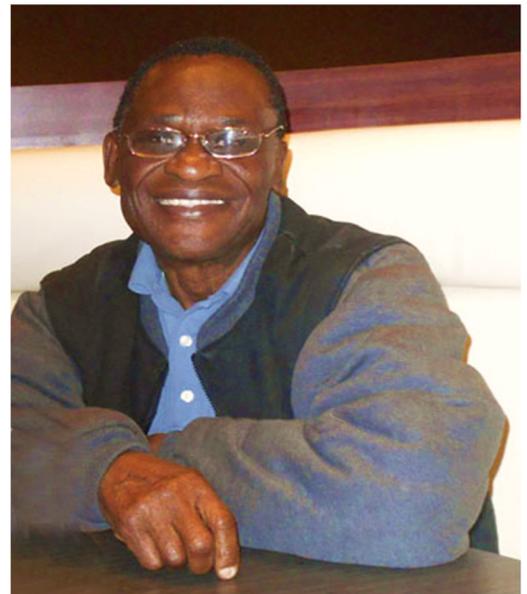
Introducing Kweku Edugyan, SMHC member since 1994.

I recently had the opportunity to sit with Kweku. He and his wife Nancy along with their three children Kofi, Abena, and Esi moved into SMHC in February 1994.

Kweku’s daughter Esi Edugyan had just won her second Scotiabank Giller Prize for her book *Washington Black*. Her first Scotiabank Giller Prize was in 2011 for her book *Half-Blood Blues*. Kweku was absolutely beaming as he spoke of his daughters’ success in the literary world.

When I asked him about his time living in SMHC these past 24 years a big smile came to his face. He has so many wonderful memories here. Kweku said the community has been so good to him right from day one and that has continued through the years. One of his favourite parts of SMHC is Green Dream. He loves that he no longer has to shovel all of that dreaded snow.

In 1968 Kweku emigrated from Ghana to go to school in California. It’s there that he met his wife Nancy. Kweku met Nancy at a friend’s place and didn’t see her again for six months. It was then that they started dating and 4 months later they were married. He moved his wife and young son Kofi from California to Edmonton to complete his Masters at the University of Alberta and received quite the surprise. They were living in a high-rise apartment and when he looked out the window one morning he said he saw something white falling from the sky. He said Nancy, I think it’s snowing. He grabbed a bucket and quickly ran outside. He filled the bucket with snow and returned to their apartment to show his wife. This was the first time they had seen snow. After a few harsh winters in Edmonton the novelty of snow had quickly worn off and he on more than one occasion questioned moving to such a cold climate. He also told me about having to adapt his eating habits when he came to North America. In Ghana he ate a lot of fish, some poultry, lots of root vegetables, and lots of fruit. When he moved to



*Kweku Edugyan*

California he had never even heard of a hamburger. When he was introduced to hotdogs he said what the heck is a hotdog? The name alone keeps him from eating it to this day.

Grandpa Kweku was happy as he shared stories with me of his grandchildren.

Sadly three years after moving into SMHC Nancy died suddenly from a heart attack. The family was devastated. Kweku did an incredible job of keeping his family strong and united.

Thank you Kweku for being such a wonderful member of SMHC and for letting me share your story.

### ***Esi Edugyan***



*Esi Edugyan winning the Scotiabank Giller Prize for 'Washington Black'*

Esi Edugyan moved into Sarcee Meadows when she was 15 years old with her parents Kweku and Nancy Edugyan and two siblings. She remembers SMHC being a lifesaver for her parents as our community really suited their needs. She also recalls feeling very comfortable and her neighbors and everyone else were so friendly. She had a friend since she was 4 years old that she had lost contact with. Esi was so happy to learn that her friend's mom lived here in SMHC so she was able to reconnect. Talk about a small world. Esi attended Central Memorial High School. She always loved reading and writing and announced to her English teacher that she was going to be a writer someday.

News of Esi winning the 2018 Scotiabank Giller Prize quickly spread through Sarcee Meadows with everyone so proudly remembering her.

When I asked Esi if she still has fond memories of SMHC she said oh yes. In fact she was just here in Calgary last month attending Wordfest at Mount Royal University with the other four Scotiabank Giller Prize nominees and she did a reading.

Esi Edugyan made history in 2011 by being the first Black woman to win the Scotiabank Giller Prize for her novel *Half-Blood Blues*. The award changed Esi's career.

Russell Smith - Contributor for the *Globe and Mail* writes "Washington Black has shown Esi Edugyan to be the most ambitious novelist in Canada, one who combines scope with technical chop ... Edugyan is a major talent, even maybe a minor genius."

We here at Sarcee Meadows could not be prouder of Esi and all of her talents and accomplishments.

## ***Bob and Betty Jensen***

A month after Bob and I were married, in the fall 1968, we attended the first public meeting of a new form of housing - co-operative housing! Bob was 22 and I was 21. We were immediately hooked! We embraced the values of co-operatives which closely matched our own. Soon, Bob and Carol Davis were invited by the founding directors to join the board of directors. During the extremely challenging three years it took to purchase land and build the housing, Bob became the first resident chair of the board. He served many stressful years on the board and committees through the years of handling building deficiencies, obtaining interim financing required until full occupancy was obtained in 1974, mortgage renewal negotiations when the federal government arbitrarily changed our operating agreement, and later as volunteer project co-ordinator of the special major projects of adding peaked roofs to the many flat roofs we had at original construction, and the water line insertion project that ultimately saved our members many dollars we had been losing through leaking underground water pipes. Bob also spent years as a volunteer emergency maintenance person - many a Christmas Day was interrupted when Bob got calls to help fix stoves or furnaces that weren't working. After working at TransAlta for many years, Bob was hired into a position over other applicants specifically because of his lengthy and extensive involvement as a volunteer in Sarcee Meadows. A scholarship fund in Bob's name was developed by Sarcee Meadows to provide some financial assistance to students of music or fine arts at Central Memorial High School who go on to further this study in their post-secondary education.

My involvement was fairly minimal in the beginning. Carol Davis was very involved in Sarcee Meadows and always seemed to have tasks where help was needed so I assisted where I could. Eventually, she encouraged me to run for the board and I became the first female chair of the board. While spending several years on the board and being actively involved in several committees, I again got a tap on the shoulder from Carol who was by then not only involved in our co-op but also at the federal level where she was on the board of directors of the then Co-operative Housing 'Foundation' of Canada, now the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. Carol and I served together for several years on the Management Education Committee. This led us into many other co-operative housing ventures together - to the development of several housing co-ops through a local resource group to helping establish SACHA, our local federation of housing co-operatives. My forte evolved into the areas of member development and education in co-operative operations where I worked part-time as a co-operative consultant and educator until my retirement in 2012.

We raised our two children, Dave and Diane, in Sarcee Meadows. When they were little, they played "co-op meetings" instead of store or school. They would write up an agenda, run meetings, and take minutes. Dave was the first chair of the early Kids Committee and Diane was vice-chair. Both Dave and Diane have been recipients of the Gerry Coates Memorial Fund to assist in their post-secondary education.

Bob and I feel very fortunate to have shared the many benefits of being a part of this co-operative community for 50 years! We have made many lifelong friends here, friends of various ages and backgrounds. Our family and many other families have been faced with very serious medical issues and life's losses over the



*Betty and Bob Jensen pictured with their children and grandchildren.*

years. We are all blessed that amazing co-op friends and neighbours continue to help and support each other through life's struggles and to celebrate together in the joyful times. Bob and I look forward to continuing to live our sunset years in this very special co-operative community.

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### **Leona Malcolm**

*Interview by Wendy Thomson*

Leona and Doug Malcolm moved into Sarcee Meadows in 1983 along with their two children, Jeff and Tammy. The Malcolm children had many friends and classmates living in Sarcee Meadows so the family was confident in choosing to move in to the community. They felt it was a safe and friendly environment to raise their family.

Doug was a member of the Legion and a true "cowboy at heart". He often wore jeans, boots, and a cowboy hat wherever he went - even while walking the dog! He thoroughly enjoyed attending The Calgary Stampede and had a passion for collecting the commemorative belt buckles. A passion that grew when he began receiving numerous buckles over the years as gifts.

For many years Doug worked as a custodian/caretaker for the Calgary Board of Education, mostly in the elementary schools. He enjoyed sharing his collection with all the kids. It became a game for the kids to see which buckle he was wearing so Doug always made sure to change the buckle daily.

Leona worked for many years doing housekeeping, caregiving, and hairdressing for seniors in nursing homes and with Calgary Home Services until her recent retirement.

Many changes have taken place over the years at Sarcee Meadows and Leona says she has been happy with all of them, from new roofs to updated appliances and flooring. She feels the staff are always friendly and helpful and she truly appreciates what a great job the maintenance staff do of taking care of all of us.

Unfortunately Doug passed away in 2013 but Leona is comforted knowing that he was a kind, friendly, helpful and well liked man. He was a great husband, father, grandfather, and friend. She gets great companionship now from her wonderful and friendly dog BJ.

Now in retirement Leona spends many hours with her gardens both indoors and outdoors. She also enjoys repurposing used items into new treasures which she proudly displays in her well maintained home.

Her children have moved out of Sarcee Meadows but she cherishes the time she is able to spend with them in their homes and when they come back for visits. She often travels out of town to watch her grandchildren play sports.

One thing that always stands out for Leona is the peace she feels when she returns home. She pulls into the parking lot and thinks this safe and friendly community is where I live - this is my home!



*Leona Malcolm*

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### **Stan Phillips**

Gloria, Shelly, and I moved into Sarcee Meadows in June 1971. We were thrilled beyond our wildest dreams that we had a home of our own.

Sarcee Meadows had a show home in C area that we and many members spent time promoting Sarcee Meadows to the public.

Since the beginning this amazing community has grown into a place of security. A place where a person can knock on any door in a time of need and also a time to extend a neighborly gesture. This is a close knit environment that has not only been supportive but many people have become extended family.

It is amazing how time flies from watching children grow into adults that now have a unit of their own.

The community started with dirt yards and only one small playground. Over time with each passing year the trees have grown and many common areas have turned into places that everyone can enjoy.

The impact this co-operative had on our family was to be given an opportunity to not only dream of having our own home but allowed us to feel fulfilled in all areas of our lives. That is the gift of Sarcee Meadows.



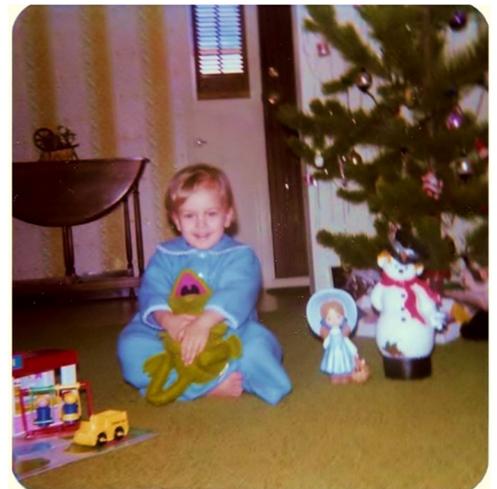
*Stan, Gloria, and Shelly Phillips*

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### ***Heather and Dean Putman***

My family has a history at Sarcee Meadows. When my parents first adopted me, they brought me here, to my very first home, in B101. I remember sitting on green shag carpet, waiting my turn to open Christmas gifts, and riding my trike down the sidewalks. I remember the neighbourhood kids playing in the wading pool in our underwear while the moms chatted, and the excitement of moving to K631 when my sister was a baby. I remember it was a great place to be a little kid.

What was important to my parents way back then, and why they wanted to bring their girls here, are the same values that brought us back to raise our family. A sense of community within an ever



*Heather Putman, age 2*



*Heather Putman, age 3*

expanding city; close neighbours; lots of kids; and the feeling that your voice matters. Not least, of course, is the fact that it makes great financial sense to be here.

When you consider that the going rent in this area for a 1000 square foot townhouse is upwards of \$1200 plus utilities, not a day goes by where I'm not grateful that we live where we do. We had kids young, and paying a reasonable rent has made it possible for us to get ahead. Years ago, that meant knowing we had enough left over at the end of the month for groceries, or being able to buy the bigger kids an occasional treat or take them tenting for a weekend. These days it means we can camp with the little kids for a few weeks in the summer, travel occasionally, and still know there's enough left to pay for school.

We have owned before. Our condo really never felt like 'us', and we were killing ourselves keeping up with the utilities and constant special assessments. We sold it as soon as we got on the waiting list at SMHC, and the day we walked into our first unit in D, we knew we were home. It felt like a return to childhood (you know, with less splashing around in my underwear).

Living here has fostered a sense of volunteerism I didn't know we had. We try to volunteer where we can, because it seems a good way to give back a community that has given us so much, and it makes me so proud to see our kids step up to do the same. I truly believe living here has brought out a spirit of giving in all of my children that other living situations would not.

Although our appearance has changed over time (the trees are a little taller, and the colors a little less ... Harvest Gold), 50 years on, Sarcee Meadows still has the same heart as it did when the first key turned in the first lock. I feel as lucky to be here today as my parents did in 1975.

This is where we belong.



*Jevon and Dean Putman*

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### ***Annalise Schwaiger***

I grew up in Sarcee Meadows and am excited to be waiting for a unit of my own. I have spent the past few years working with seniors and adults with acquired/traumatic brain injuries. I spent four years working in an Administrative/Resident Services role at Royal Park while I completed my Hospital Unit Clerk certificate at Bow Valley College.

After completing my Hospital Unit Clerk training I found my current position at the Southern Alberta Brain Injury Society (SABIS). I have been



*Annalise Schwaiger*

at SABIS in the Administrative Assistant/Intake Coordinator role for almost a year and a half. SABIS allows me to continue to develop many skills and work towards my goal of moving into a Service Coordinator role. I am currently enrolled in a Disability Studies program and am looking forward to continuing to grow in my career and as part of the Sarcee Meadows community.

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### ***Jonathon Schwaiger***

I was born and Raised in Sarcee Meadows, living there until I moved out East when I was 20 for sport.

I have been competing in the sport of Power Tumbling and Double-Mini Trampoline (DMT) for the past decade with great success. Nationally, I have set the record for the most consecutive National titles on Power Tumbling, winning the last 7 while also adding 2 national titles on DMT. In 2015 I set the Canadian Record for the hardest tumbling pass performed by a Canadian.

Internationally I have been representing Team Canada for the past 8 Years. I have attended 6 World Championships, 10 Worlds Cups, and 2 World Games (Which is the Olympics for non-Olympic sports). In 2017 I placed 4th at the World Games in tumbling which is the best placing a Canadian has ever had.

Besides getting to represent Canada, one of the greatest things I have gotten to do is work with Cirque Du Soleil for the 2015 Pan American Games opening ceremonies in Toronto. Getting to tumble over fire in front of 50,000 Canadians was a once in a lifetime experience!



*Jonathon Schwaiger*

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### ***Nellie and Steve Wouterse***

*Interview by Slawa Gruszczynska*

Nellie and Steve Wouterse met during World War II in Holland while she was a Nurses Aid and he was a Staff Sargent First Class in the Air Force. They have been married now for 62 years. Although both are in failing health we were warmly welcomed into their beautiful home. A home which is full of various mementos from their homeland as well as Canada and their many travels.



*Nellie and Steve Wouterse*

Nellie and Steve joined the SMHC family 38 years ago after their friends and former members, Peter and Anne Bunts, suggested it would be a good home for them.

While Steve worked as a mechanic in the oil field, Nellie worked as a Nurse in addition to raising their family, daughter Mireya and son Martin. Mireya has one son, Steven, and one grandson. They all reside in SMHC. Martin lives in Calgary as well.

In the early years of SMHC the Maintenance Shop had only two staff members so for many years Steve would volunteer his time and expertise in helping with the plumbing and mechanical issues in our units. Nellie also found time to volunteer and served on the Board of Directors and the Property Standards Committee.

One of their favourite stories (and most amusing) to tell is a great example of how our spirit of cooperation and community was at work even in those earliest days. On a very cold and windy winter's day Steve noticed that the plastic Santa decoration on the front of their home had come loose and was blowing down the sidewalk. Dressed only in his underwear he dashed out the door

in pursuit of the rogue decoration. What Steve didn't realize is that the doorknob was in the "locked" position and when the wind blew the door shut he would be locked outside. Directly across from his unit lived Mrs. MacDougall, J584. He had few options and it was cold outside so he knocked on her door and was greeted by a very shocked Mrs. MacDougall. Hesitantly he was asked to come inside and they called Steve's son, Martin, to bring the extra keys to unlock his door. When Martin arrived to the rescue he would find his father sitting in the living room sipping hot tea and visiting while wearing Mrs. MacDougall's fur coat!

Thank you to Nellie and Steve for welcoming us into their home and sharing their SMHC journey.

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### ***Rick and Shirley Wright***

*Interview by Wendy Thomson*

Rick and Shirley Wright moved into Sarcee Meadows in 1975 along with their daughter Angela. Another daughter, Kristine, arrived one year later. They felt as though this was a safe and friendly environment in which to live and raise their family.

Now, many years later Kristine, husband Ben and children Emily and Matthew live in their own home here at Sarcee Meadows.

Rick worked many years as an auto mechanic and Shirley was a stay at home mom who also did housekeeping jobs outside the home. Both are now retired and filling their time with travel, reading, watching movies, bike riding, and making puzzles.

A fond memory for Shirley from the early years was all the time spent with the kids at the wading pool (now the beautiful gardens). It was a great way for all the kids to play together and for the moms to meet with and visit their neighbours.

Shirley also spent time on the board of directors. She says it was one of the most rewarding experiences she has had. She was very impressed by the knowledge, experience, and dedication of all members who served on the various committees. She also wishes to congratulate all who have in the past or are currently serving on the various committees at Sarcee Meadows.

Rick and Shirley mentioned that they have always been pleased with the office staff, maintenance staff, and all the contractors they have had interactions with over the years.

The Wright's say that they have had a good life living at Sarcee Meadows and feel that the best way to sum all this up is to say that it "is all about being a community".

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### ***Isabell Reznik***

Congratulations Sarcee Meadows on 50 great years!

An "ode" to our bakers, preservers, and cooks  
They shared all their recipes  
And we printed two books  
Though so many are gone now  
Their memory is strong  
50 years of culinary excellence  
Will always live on.

*Submitted by,  
Isabell Reznik Unit K691  
Member since December 1, 1971.*



*Isabell Reznik showing off the 25<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cookbooks*

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## **Women's Circle**

*Submitted by Kathy Aubichon on behalf of the Women's Circle*

December 4, 2014 is a date I won't soon forget as it was our first official Women's Circle meeting. Present at this meeting were Farha Khan (hosted at her unit) Roberta Miller (General Manager), Joan Farkas (City of Calgary Community Social Worker), Slawa Gruszczynska, Meraj Fatima, Shabana Aslam, Haseena Sultana, Zehra Syeda, Ayesha Ahmedi and me Kathy Aubichon. Farha served up butter chicken and chai and we ladies enjoyed good conversation and the opportunity to really get to know each other for the first time. The conversation was so easy we knew we were on to something special. Word of the Women's Circle quickly spread thru the SMHC community and as a result our circle grew bigger with each gathering we had. We started off as 10 women of different backgrounds and cultures just wanting to get to know each other. As we shared our stories we soon realized there were a lot of myths and barriers that needed to be broken down so we set out to do just that. As time went on you could see all of our walls coming down and we began trusting each other and respecting each other's differences. The Women's Circle is all about encouraging each other to be better people and do better in our community by promoting cultural acceptance and understanding.

Prior to this December 4th meeting, Joan came to Roberta to ask about what she felt the community needed. They discussed a variety of things but Roberta told Joan that her biggest worry was that Sarcee Meadows was becoming divided. Not because of racism, but because of fear. Nobody knew how to interact with each other, they were afraid of offending each other. Members wanted to get to know each other but didn't know how. Joan and Roberta discussed the universal concerns of women and how they are the same across religious or cultural backgrounds. Women care about their communities, children, elders and their families. They also discussed how getting to know each other over coffee (and food) would be a great way to start building bridges, get to know each other and help everyone realize that there is a common thread between people no matter what their race, religion, culture, background, or sexuality etc. At the heart of every human being is the need to be part of a group, a willingness to help, and of caring for our fellow human beings. Getting together helps erase the fear of the differences and highlights the common ground. Starting off small with no pressure was a way to reduce the anxiety of meeting new people and help with getting to know someone. As the comfort level grew more people would be invited and involved until the community grew on its own organically. In November 2014 Roberta, Joan, Farha, and Zehra sat down and decided to try a gathering of a few ladies to see how things would go. It is thanks to these four ladies that had the foresight to try this social experiment. December 4, 2014 was a very special day for all of us and we haven't looked back since.

This informal circle of women friends has had a significant impact on the well-being of our entire Sarcee Meadows Housing Cooperative and beyond. Social support, special events, parenting tips, children playing together, exchange of information, leisure activities from cooking, gardening, crafts, discovering the Canadian way of life and sharing the interfaith and intercultural protocols, traditions. The Women's Circle is a diverse group of women interested in building community. Our aim is to breakdown cultural barriers, eliminate misconceptions, and work together in the community to enhance lives through greater understanding.

We started with gatherings every two weeks with the women. Baking, gardening, sharing stories, learning from each other's experiences. There was always lots of laughter. Then we started adding the children. The kids are a welcome addition to our gatherings. We hope to lead the kids by our example.

Then we applied for the 2017 CHF Canada Co-operative Achievement Award and the 2017 CHF Canada Diversity Grant. And we were blessed enough to have been awarded both. Before long we were being published in articles in CHF Canada eNews and our community newsletter Rutland Post. ICA (International Co-operative Alliance) and other Co-op social media outlets from United Kingdom, New Delhi, Malaysia, Belgium, Chicago, and Ottawa published articles about our Women's Circle story. We are seizing the moment and helping to keep Co-operative Housing and its role in building community in the forefront.



Award for multi-ethnic Canadian housing co-operative



Members of the Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-op in Calgary come from different ethnicities, and have created a friendly environment, where they work together and encourage intermingling of diverse cultures. They have been awarded the CHF Canada Co-operative Achievement Award. Kudos to them!

#AroundTheWorldInCoops  
Source: news.coop



We were gaining momentum. The women in the group became more confident and started joining committees. Everything from Newsletter, Education and Involvement, Membership and Entertainment and Social Events.

Then we started adding the men. It always makes me smile when the men come up to me and tell me how proud they are of their wives and the rest of the women for going to all of this effort. I've even heard a couple of men talking about forming a men's version of the Women's Circle. Possibly a Men's Square.

With the funds we received from the Co-operative Achievement Award and the Diversity Grant, we worked with our Entertainment and Social Events Committee and combined our annual SMHC BBQ with a Culture event. We had 12 countries represented by our members. Canada, China, England, Hungary, India, Ireland, Mexico, Pakistan, Poland, Scotland, Somalia, Ukraine. We also had a History station, a Peace station and a Women's Circle station. Men, women and children of all ages worked together to decorate their stations to showcase their culture. It was such a beautiful thing to see everyone working together. City of Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi paid us a visit at the event. He spent an hour chatting with our members, taking pictures and then ended with a 10 minute speech about diversity and inclusivity. He applauded what SMHC and the Women's Circle is trying to achieve. We also had special guests from CHF Canada, SACHA, Alberta 75 Co-op, and Springhill Ranch Co-op. CTV News and Hidden Stories Productions even came out to film our event.

As our Women's Circle grew we were so blessed to have our Board of Directors and our General Manager on board. We kept them aware every step of the way of what we were doing to help bring awareness and inclusion to the community.

The Women's Circle was invited to meet with the Alberta Minister of Education David Eggen about Premier Rachel Notley's anti-racism initiative. We received a letter from Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale that read "...regarding the significant work of the Women's Circle of Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative, I appreciate your efforts to create a welcoming and friendly community and bridge cultural differences." In July 2018 the Women's Circle were invited to attend a roundtable discussion with Alberta Minister of Municipal Affairs Shaye Anderson, Alberta Minister of Environment & Parks Shannon Phillips and, Stakeholder Relations Manager - Office of the Premier Geoff Braun, together with others in the non-profit sector. The topic of conversation was Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) and non-profit energy efficiency.

It's wonderful to see our youth engaging with our seniors. In 2017 a number of the ladies from the Women's Circle came together with their kids and made cards to honor our seniors on National Seniors Day. We pitched in our own money and bought enough treats for 88 bags. We went door to door surprising our seniors. The smiles on the faces of the seniors and the kids was absolutely incredible. It was such a wonderful experience for everyone that we did it again in 2018 and hope to continue this for years to come.

We plan to keep growing, educating, and harnessing the bonds of inclusiveness within our growing diverse community of Sarcee Meadows and other communities as well. When Women collaborate they are energized and have power which ripples out in their homes, community, and thus the world. There is no doubt that in these difficult times everyone wants to experience a positive, inclusive, supportive, and welcoming community. We hope that this legacy of diversity and inclusion continues for many generations of peace.

*Submitted by Slawa Gruszczynska on behalf of the Women's Circle*

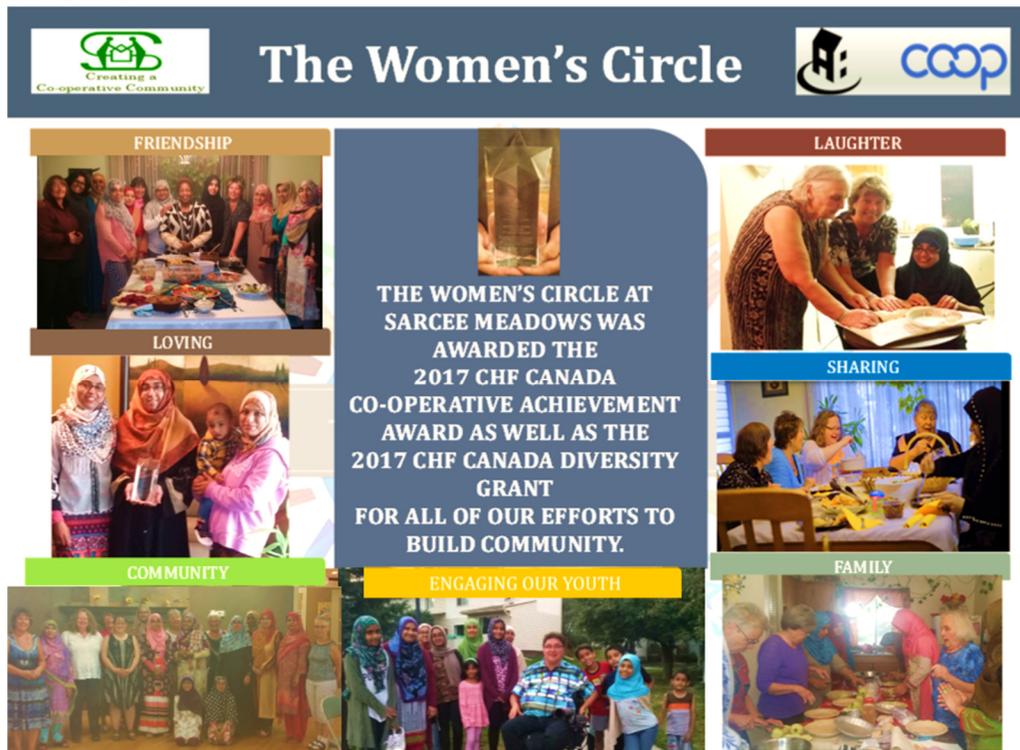
The “Women’s Circle” wouldn’t be what it is today, if Kathy Aubichon hadn’t taken up the reigns. “Kathy has been the glue that has held it together after it got running” said Roberta Miller, the General Manager of Sarcee Meadows Housing Cooperative. Her statement captures the essence of Kathy’s role in the development of this such a beneficial social capital born a few years ago in our CO-OP.

The Women’s Circle was established to find a way to include and create a way of understanding between the established members of SMHC and new young families gradually moving into our “village”.

Kathy’s passionate and professional work as the leader, communicator, organizer, and friend played a pivotal role in forming and nurturing the “Women’s Circle” movement. Since its conception in 2014, she has been the heart and soul of the Circle.

The “Women’s Circle” concept of connecting with each other over “milk and cookies” in search of friendship and understanding transformed our neighborhood. By learning about each other’s backgrounds, we, the SMHC family, are gradually gaining trust and a sense of belonging within the membership and in the neighbourhood at large. Thanks to Kathy’s efforts, the Women’s Circle became not only one of the social hubs at Sarcee Meadows but an exemplary model to follow for several other coops in Canada and abroad.

Thank you Kathy.



### **Acknowledgements**

*The SMHC Newsletter Committee would like to extend our gratitude to all those who contributed their stories and photos for this Special 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of the Connections Newsletter. We would like to thank the Committee and Volunteer Coordinator, Janine Bell, for her help in putting this issue together. And finally, we would like to thank Little Rock Printing for working with us on this special project.*

