Canadians
For A Civil Society

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

2017

info@ccsorg.ca

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VISION

A culture of human rights is the foundation of life in a civil society

MISSION

We advocate, share, and celebrate Canadian values and human rights as a way of life by engaging people and communities

WHAT DO WE DO?

CCS works to advance a culture of respect for human rights as well as gender equality through community events that celebrate women and foster an inclusive society. With education and advocacy as tools to effect change in society, we seek to cultivate an environment of dialogues and deliberations that strengthen our resolve on freedom from fear and promote the five pillars of civil society – respect, literacy, human rights, the rule of law and meaningful economic opportunity

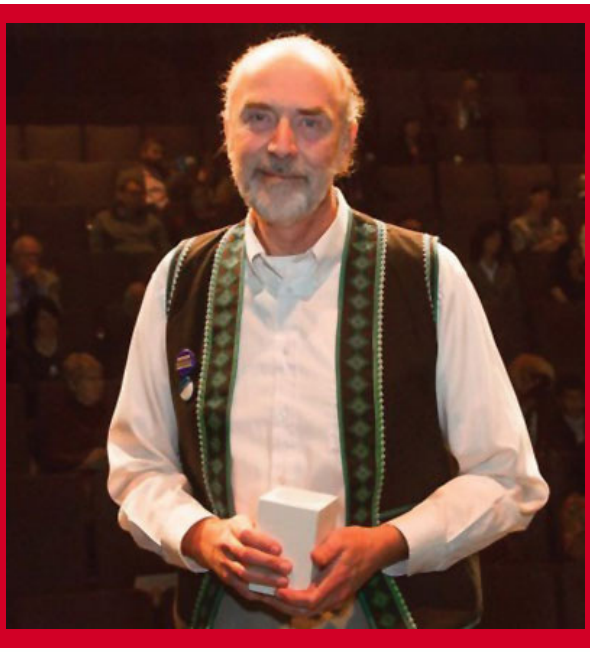
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Through its leadership and programs, Canadians For A Civil Society works to strengthen the five pillars of a civil society, advancing peace, literacy, democratic participation, the rule of law, and equal opportunity. We are pleased to present this report to the wider community, acknowledging our life, work and location on Treaty 6 territory, at ᐊᒥᐢᑲᑭᐊᐢᑲᐦᐃᐧᐣ, Amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton), in the presence of the rich living history and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

We focus on building a civil society that affirms and celebrates our common humanity, dignity, and civility in our relationships as contained in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Human rights remain our priority. The year reflected in this report covers the energetic events, programs and conversations essential to building a society where the fullness of humans rights are recognized and embraced.

My thanks to my fellow board members, the volunteers, staff and wider community for their dedication and commitment to the important work CCS undertakes.

Jim Gurnett, President, Board of Directors



Jim Gurnett
President

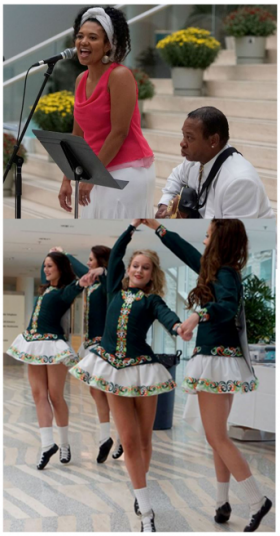
DAUGHTERS DAY 2017

The sixth annual Daughters Day celebration took place on September 9th at City Hall.

Daughters Day is a community initiative to highlight the importance of the daughters in all our lives - every girl and woman is a daughter - and to support the flourishing communities committed to an end to all discrimination and to stopping human rights abuses against women.

RECIPIENTS

Susan Green
Rachelle Venne
Arigo Dut
Karen Lee Gall
Harriet Tinka
Lorna Dancey

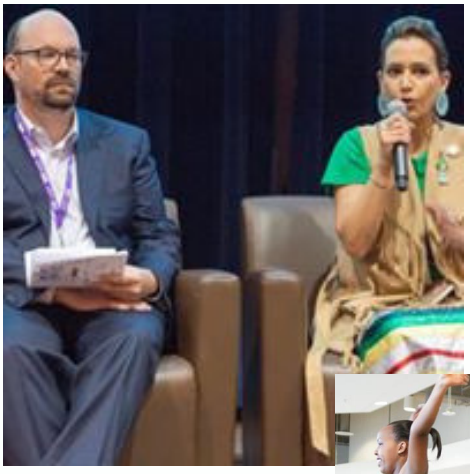


Mary Pinkoski; Junetta Jamerson; Matteirin Irish Dancers, Performers

Marianne Ryan, Keynote Speaker

Women Supporting Women

BECA 2017



"Exploring the Intersections of Gender, Race, Sexuality, Poverty, and Discrimination"

Under our director Judy Piercey's leadership and perseverance, Canadians for a Civil Society, in partnership with MacEwan University, NAIT and ICWA, was able to organise this wonderful symposium "Building Empathy and Conquering Apathy" on May 17-18th of 2017, It's the second event in a three-year plan to prevent and raise awareness of human-rights violations. Once again BECA brought together educators, policy makers, human-rights advocates, academics, non-profit and front-line service workers with the goal of exploring promising approaches to preventing human rights violations.

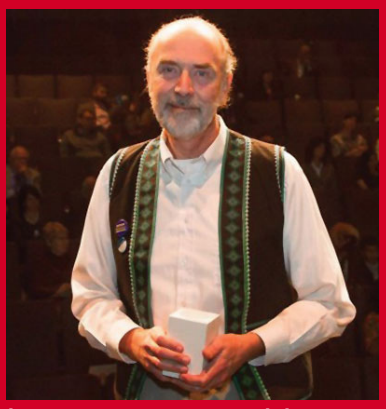
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Human Rights Day at the legislature was held by Canadians for a Civil Society on December 4, 2017. There were 24 guests honoured for their contributions to human rights.

2017 Honourees

Fakhra Abrar
Alphonse Ndem Ahola
Lorna Dancey
Susan (Arigo) Dut
Roxanne Felix-Mah
Joel French
Karen Lee Gail
Jill Green
Harchand Grewal
Jim Gurnett
Gary Hanson
Tammy Kaglik
Shahriyar Khan
Charan Khehra
Blake Loates
Austin Mardon
Catherine Mardon
Hai Nguyen
Cynthia Palmaria
Chevi Rabbit
Jonathan Robb
Harriet Tinka
Muriel Stanley Venne
Xiang Zhang

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017



Jim has been a community activist on human rights issues for many years, with special interests in issues of housing security and immigration/refugee issues. He is the executive director for the NDP government caucus at the Alberta Legislature and was active with the Daughters Day project for several years, including leading the development of the handbook “Together: Creating a Better World.

Jim Gurnett, President

Vasant Chotai,
Vice President

Vasant pursued Dip. Ed, BA (Hon) in psychology and MPl (Queen’s) in policy planning, and has 29 years of experience with the Government of Alberta, Canada, as senior manager and two years with Nairobi High School, Kenya, as a science teacher.

Vasant was Director of Social Policy with the Ministry of Employment, Immigration and Industry and he led a team of research staff. His major initiatives included cross-ministry coordination on social programs and supports, and a policy advisory committee consisting of community leaders, businesses, academics and senior government officials. He was appointed policy expert to the MLA Committee to review low-income programs that developed the new model for supports to low-income Albertans, crossing program and ministerial boundaries. He was recognized as an analytic thinker, a visionary and a leader.

Since retirement, Vasant has a private consulting business. He also sits on the Boards of Directors of Canadians for a Civil Society as chair of the community engagement committee; Public Interest Alberta as chair of human services and poverty; and the Quality of Life Commission. In the past, he was President of the Edmonton Social Planning Council; and sat on the boards of the Christmas Bureau; and the Vibrant Communities Edmonton.

Vasant’s personal philosophy is: To advocate for the vulnerable; to help those who have been left behind; to support those who need to move up; and to build a compassionate community based on human rights and social justice.

Gurcharan is a retired judge of the Citizenship Court of Canada, a former Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and the founder member of CCS who served on the Board as its first president.

In 1997, Judge Bhatia received Order of Canada and in 1999 he received a Citation Award from the City of Edmonton for his contribution to multiculturalism and community service

A veteran advocate for civil rights and multiculturalism in Canada, Judge Bhatia spent 10 long years as the founder, editor and publisher of the national multicultural newspaper, Canadian Link.

Gurcharan Bhatia, Past President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017

Juste Kagisye, Treasurer

Raised in the Great Lakes Region in Africa, Juste lived and worked in 10 different countries in Africa, Europe and North America over the last twenty years. Juste graduated in Belgium from the School of Business Administration and Economics of the University of Liège (Belgium), and completed his Master of Business Administration, Executive Management at the Royal Roads University, Victoria, British Columbia. Beside these achievements, Juste has attended numerous of Conferences, and also achieved several Certificates in Leadership, Business Process Mapping and Tactical Communication. His key roles in the areas of Business & Corporate Management, Change Management & Consulting, have sustained and built his successful international experience. Juste travelled a lot and learned how to interact with different cultures in order to help organizations to set up and enhance their businesses through Human Capital. Juste always has a learning history to share, that will shape the heart of your journey.

Mita's community service spans a broad range of interest, from music and the arts to human rights, empowerment of women, and the crafting of a civil society.
Educated in india and Canada, Mita has spent much of her professional career in accounting and finance, most recently with the Government of Alberta.
Mita has served as President of the Edmonnton Raga-Mala Music Society, which for three decades has been bringing the classical music and dance of India to Alberta audiences.
As a leader of Daughters Day, she has actively promoted human rights for all girls and women, everywhere.
At Canadians for a Civil Society, Mita has led the organisation's development and growth from an informal gathering of friends to an influential and effective citizens' organisation, that convenes progressive citizens to advance the Common Good.

Mita Das, Past President

Satya Das, Board Member

A seasoned policy guru and strategic adviser with a proven record of success, Satya Brata Das is a co-founder of an advisory for leaders.
Satya spent the last quarter of the 20th century in journalism, including more than two decades as an influential editorialist, columnist, and foreign correspondent.
He is a best-selling author of three books, and a frequent commentator and public speaker in both national languages, in media and on stage.
Satya's volunteer work is deeply informed with a lifelong commitment to human rights as a way of life, and the principles of human dignity espoused by M.K. Gandhi.
His community service includes leadership in heritage, culture, and the arts. He is a co--founder of Daughters Day, a grassroots initiative to affirm the human rights of girls and women by celebrating daughters.
Satya's volunteer work has been recognised with the City of Edmonton Citation Award for lifetime services to human rights and culture, the Alberta human Rights Award, and the Alberta Centennial Medal.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017

Two jobs, motherhood, university and adjusting to life in a new country; such was Dr. Vivian Abboud' s initiation into the Canadian society. Fast forward 20 years. Vivian is a wife to a very supportive husband, mother of three, public servant, community advocate, business founder (Viva Café Cafeterias).
In 2014, Dr. Abboud was selected as one of "Canada's Top 25 Immigrant" by RBC. As well, in 2015, as one of "Canada's Top 40 Women Change Makers" by Canadian Living Magazine and "Top 40 Under 40" class by Avenue Magazine. Dr. Abboud was part of the working group that created WAVE (Women Advocacy Voice of Edmonton). Her volunteer story and leadership views are published in the Edmonton Women Magazine, Franco Magazine and the GOA Connector/Women in Leadership SharePoint.
Dr. Abboud is an advocate for Human Rights and Citizenship and she is constantly contributing in the community to making a positive difference wherever there is a need to act.

Vivian Abboud, Board Member

Charan Khehra, Board Member

Charan Khehra has varied life experiences including education, public service, and community building. He was an assistant professor of political science n India, an executive officer in the U.K. civil service, an economist with Alberta government, and then until his retirement in 2005, he served the Alberta NDP opposition caucus as the executive assistant to the leader and director of special projects. He is a co-founder of Daughters Day, and has served on the boards of numerous non-profit community organizations, trade union bodies, and public agencies — promoting social justice, human rights, democracy and peace. He is a recipient of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers Rise award, SAGE award for public service, and the Alberta centennial medal for community service. His formal education includes: M.A, political science, MSc in economics, a diploma in government administration, and certificates in education and further education.

Netta was born in Edmonton and has a degree in Religious Studies. Since 2006 she has been the coordinator of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action after being on the executive for 6 years. She is active in different capacities at Beth Shalom Synagogue, the Women's League for Conservative Judaism and is currently secretary-treasurer of Project Ploughshares Edmonton. For over 20 years she was a member of the Arab/Jewish Women's Peace Coalition and helped found the Phoenix Multifaith Society for Harmony. Much of the focus of her volunteer life is inter/intra faith dialogue and conflict resolution, as well as the place of women in religious ritual and observance.

Netta Phillet, Board Member

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017

MD, FRCP (C)
Dermatologist and Pathologist
Clinical Professor Faculty of Medicine U of A
Order of Canada recipient

Eric Schloss, Board Member

Order of Canada recipient
Founder of Compassion House
Citizenship Court Justice

Elexis Schloss, Board Member

Brianna Abboud is a third-year biology major and physics minor student at the university of Alberta who has managed to connect the trade world with the academic one. She is a registered hairstylist apprentice and a med school prospect who strives for academic excellence, all whilst remaining an active citizen. She currently serves her second term as a director for Canadians for a civil society and finished serving two terms as a committee member on the City of Edmonton Youth Council. She speaks three languages, English, French and Arabic and is proud to be of Lebanese heritage.

Brianna Abboud, Board Member

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017

Minni Sharma holds a diploma in IT Business Analysis from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), and is currently working towards her degree in Technology Management. She is 23 years old, can speak 5 languages, and is a highly creative individual who expresses herself through her skills in photography, writing, and graphic design. She first got involved in CCS through the Building Empathy Conquering Apathy symposium in 2017 which NAIT was helping sponsor. Being an audience member for the first day of the emotionally moving event, it was eye-opening for her to see the struggles and prejudice people who identify as LGBTQ face. After being exposed to hearing all the hardships the speakers had to deal with, she realized that she needs to do better in educating herself and those around her about these types of major issues that impact humans. As a result, she has found CCS to be a platform which enables her to become an ally to those who are vulnerable and overall, a better global citizen.

Minni Sharma, Board Member

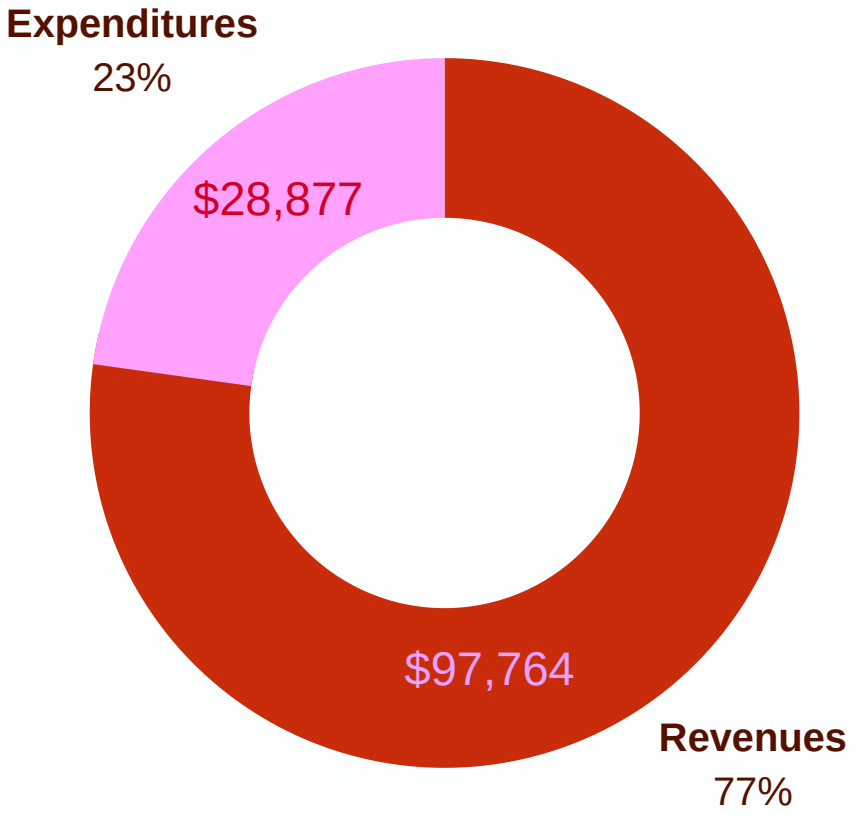
Rachel received her Bachelor of Commerce degree with a major in Marketing in 2018 and received her Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Biology and Psychology in 2016 from the University of Alberta. Along with her degrees, she also received a Certificate in Interdisciplinary Leadership Studies and a Certificate in Sustainability from the University. She regularly works elections at all levels of government – including as an enumerator, ballot clerk and deputy returning officer. She has volunteered for several local organizations including Ice on Whyte, the Heritage Festival, Humane Animal Rescue Team, Telus World of Science, and the Cross Cancer Institute. She first became involved with Canadians for a Civil Society in 2017 as a participant in the Non-Profit Board Internship program through the University of Alberta Community Service Learning program. She is also a founding member of the Alberta chapter of the Sunwah Foundation Global Young Leaders Network.

Rachel Veinott-McKeough, Board Intern

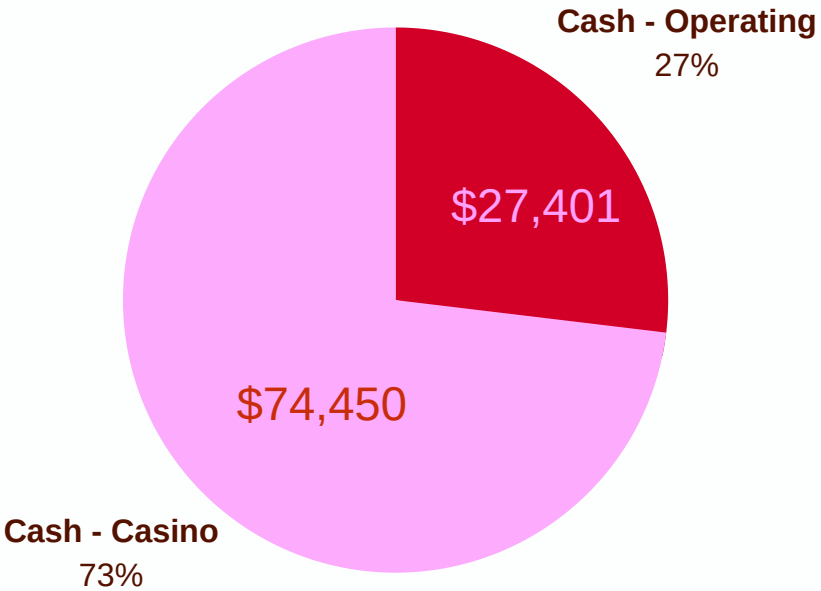
INCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018

Vasant Chotai, President
Vivian Abboud, Vice President
Juste Kagisye, Treasurer
Brianna Abboud, Secretary
Netta Phillet, Board Member
Charan Kehra, Board Member
Gurcharan Bhatia, Board Member
Mita Das, Board Member
Satya Das, Board Member
Eric Schloss, Board Member
Rachel Veinott-McKeough, Board Member
Minni Sharma, Board Member
Prabhjot Kaur , Board Member
David Ridley, Board Member
Bob Philp, Board Member

SUMMARY OF FINANCES



Excess revenues over expenditures: $68,887



Balance, beginning of year:

$32,064

Excess of revenues over expenditures:

$68,887

Balance, end of year:

$100,951

Net Assets:

$101,851

CANADIANS FOR A CIVIL SOCIETY

Canadians for a Civil Society (CCS) is a volunteer organization committed to advancing human dignity, a culture of peace, and the full enjoyment of the human birthright to a life free of fear and free of want: the foundations of a civil society.

Committed to inclusion and pluralism as the essential foundations of a communitarian life of meaning and purpose, CCS believes in our collective responsibility to give voice to the voiceless and agency to the powerless, and societal development that leaves none behind.

Canadians
For A Civil Society

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