



## Business Plan | 2015-2016

Bissell Centre's  
vision is to  
eliminate poverty  
in our  
community



I've made it through this life and I survived. I'm grateful for the second chance Bissell Centre gave me. My life can be something different now.

-Rocky



## **CEO Introduction: We are grateful**

What Bissell Centre accomplished in 2014-2015 and what we are intending to do in the years ahead could not happen without the caring support of thousands of Edmontonians of all ages and walks of life. They give of their time, experience, and knowledge; they share their treasures in the form of financial donations, clothing, winter gear, food, and household items.

Nearly 1,100 volunteers helped deliver our mission last year. More than 10,000 people contributed to our community in-kind program.

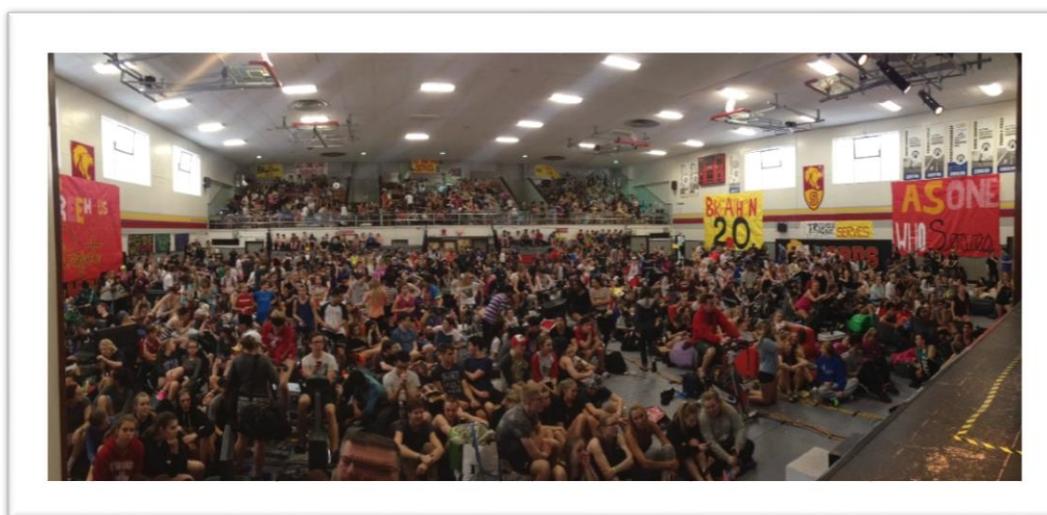
The United Church continued to provide its long-lasting and amazing support of Bissell Centre, which it founded long ago in 1910. We received support from congregations across the city and as far away as Saskatchewan. That's in addition to the annual grants from United Church Alberta and Northwest Conference and the Edmonton Presbytery.

When we experienced our second Thrift Shoppe fire in less than two years, Edmontonians got to work immediately organizing clothing drives and sending in donations. It is a testimony to the kindness in our community when so many people self-organize to help out during a crisis.

Each year – and 2014-2015 was no exception – businesses of all sizes stepped up to help us house the homeless, put more people to work, fill hungry bellies, and offer support and friendship to those who live in the shadows of mainstream community life. I can't name them all, but they range from small businesses like Duchess Bake Shop to large corporations like EPCOR and ATB.

Significant funding was provided by a variety of major funding bodies, including various provincial government departments, the city of Edmonton, United Way, Homeward Trust, REACH, the Edmonton Community Foundation, Stollery Charitable Foundation, and Tegler Trust. Without their respective commitments to our work to end poverty and homelessness, we could not deliver the services and results that we do.

Near the end of our fiscal year, the student body at Strathcona Composite High School organized an incredible fundraiser (called the Treehouse Project) for Change for Children and Bissell Centre. This was the first time in its fundraising history they included a local charity. The result exceeded everyone's wildest expectations. Bissell Centre received \$190,000 and Change for Children a similar amount which broke a record for total dollars raised by a high school in Canada. The dollars we received are being used in 2015-2016 to launch a new Outreach Housing Team.



*Over 100 teams and 1,100 young people participated in the Treehouse Project 24 hour Bikeathon on March 19, 2015*

I believe everyone can be a philanthropist – every individual and every business and every workplace. I believe being charitable sits at the heart of who we are as individuals and who we can be together. I know our supporters have a similar view and they inspire me and all of my colleagues at Bissell Centre to do the best we can to help change lives and help make Edmonton a world class city.

To all of our supporters and allies – past, present, and future – we are grateful.

Mark Holmgren, CEO

## Year in Review

Last year in 2014-15, we slowed our pace of growth to ensure that we did not overextend ourselves. We focused on internal/operational initiatives purposed to improve the quality relevance and timeliness of our services and programs, streamline our processes and systems to ensure optimal efficiency, and undertake the development of an agency-wide integrated case management approach.

### Preventing homelessness: Bissell's Community Bridge

Thanks to funding from Edmonton Community Foundation, Stollery Charitable Foundation, United Way, and the Homeless Commission, we launched the Community Bridge, an eviction prevention prototype we designed the previous year. It will continue into our 2015-16 fiscal year and if our external evaluation proves it is successful as a homelessness prevention strategy, we will seek to grow it substantially in the future.

After 12 months of operating, the Community Bridge prevented the eviction of 260 individuals, half of whom are children.

Preventing people from becoming homeless means a better life for them plus a more affordable way of helping. Research has shown that Housing First programs cost \$37,000 to support a homeless person in a home. The cost to society for one homeless individual can reach \$150,000 per year. As cost effective as that is, prevention is even more cost effective. Through the Community Bridge, the average cost of preventing a family from being evicted into homelessness was approximately \$850!

### Re-thinking the Drop-In Centre

Last year was also dedicated to evaluating our engagement of the homeless and street-involved people who come to our drop-in centre. While we remain committed to providing a place of sanctuary for the homeless and the provision of services that address basic needs (food, clothing, showers, etc.), we also seek new and better ways to help our drop-in participants move beyond a need for sanctuary to addressing needs and aspirations that can lead them out of poverty.

### Doing more to employ more

We undertook a feasibility study and then wrote a business plan about significantly expanding our employment services work over the next three years. While our commitment to our casual labour program will remain as strong as ever, we are looking to create a new employment centre in the future (maybe as early as 2016) that will

## HIGHLIGHT



Thousands of Edmonton and area citizens rallied around Bissell Centre after we had our second Thrift Shoppe fire in less than a year. They organized hundreds of clothing drives and nearly 200 individuals and organizations sent financial donations. We are grateful to everyone who helped us get back up and running.



Madhu, our Thrift Shoppe Manager--glad to be open again and helping her customers.

place more low income workers into longer term temporary placements, contract work, as well as permanent jobs that offer a living wage or higher.

While we pursued the future, we provided 14,000 casual labour placements and provided various employment training experiences to hundreds more. Our Jobs Club, launched during the year, helped find permanent employment for 100 individuals, all at a living wage or higher.

### **Engagement, Public Education, and Movement Building**

Last year, we provided education and information about poverty, homelessness and the work of Bissell Centre to 100 groups that visited Bissell Centre and dozens more that we visited and spoke to. We continued to grow our presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram and ended the year with approximately 13,000 active followers who mobilize various efforts to support poverty reduction as well as spread knowledge and awareness about the importance of ending poverty.

Our Fetal Alcohol Spectrum of Services program (FASS) delivered 94 FASD prevention sessions to schools and other groups, and our Inner City Victim Services team provided 30 public and agency presentations.

Early in the year, CEO Mark Holmgren was appointed to the Mayor's Task Force on Eliminating Poverty and was also asked to co-chair a working group on housing and transportation. Not only active on those two fronts, Mark has also played a role in advancing the social media presence of End Poverty Edmonton (the Task Force's public name) and launching a website devoted to this work – all of it a part of Bissell Centre's commitment to help create a movement to end poverty.

### **Being a good neighbour**

Bissell Centre respects and values its role as a service provider within the Boyle-McCauley neighborhood. Each year we either lead or participate in community events. Last year we partnered with the Boyle Street Community League to hold an event honouring Aboriginal culture. We also participated in the Heart of the City Festival and the Inner City Barbecue, wrote for the *Boyle McCauley News*, and during the summer we had a crew on the street each day helping with neighbourhood cleanup.

## FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

### VISION

We eliminate poverty in our community.

### MISSION

Working with others, we empower people to move from poverty to prosperity.

### LONG TERM OUTCOMES

People are able to meet their basic daily needs and participate in community.

People have sustainable livelihoods.

People feel hope for the future and make plans for a prosperous life.

People are fully engaged in life because of improved physical and mental health.

The community is educated and engaged in creating a prosperous future for all.

## Moving Forward | 2015-2016

Although we are wary of the potential impacts of reduced provincial revenues due to low oil prices, Bissell Centre's plan is still growth oriented; however, we are moving forward with contingency scenarios in place that will help us manage risk. Our budget is structured to time new or increased expenditures later on in the year, once we have more experience of the impact of the provincial budget and can assess the results of some of our early fundraising.

### Mission and Vision Priorities

Bissell Centre is committed to ensuring the stability of all existing programs and services currently offered. Not all of our programs are targeted for expansion; however, management is always open to emergent opportunities to further develop any of our service offerings.

Our 2015-2016 program and service priorities for growth and change are:

#### House more homeless people

In the coming year we will house 400 homeless people, nearly double the housing placements last year. We will do this through increasing our Housing First staff to include three new workers focused on housing and supporting complex families and by launching a new Bissell Centre housing outreach team of seven, which will undertake assertive outreach focused on housing homeless individuals who do not qualify for Housing First services.

#### Prevent homelessness

We will complete the Community Bridge prototype by the end of March 31, 2016 and seek the resources to scale this Bissell Centre designed homeless prevention program wider across the community. Our goal this year is to prevent the eviction of between 350 to 400 individuals and provide support services that help them avoid future evictions. We intend on releasing an evaluation report later in the year that not only documents the nature of the support provided and the results, but also the cost-savings realized through this work.

#### Investigate supportive housing innovations

We intend to identify a group of community leaders to work with us to explore innovative housing ideas, with an eye on prototyping those ideas thought to be most applicable to the Edmonton environment. We will use the recommendations coming out of the Mayor's Task Force to Eliminate Poverty as a major guide for our exploration.

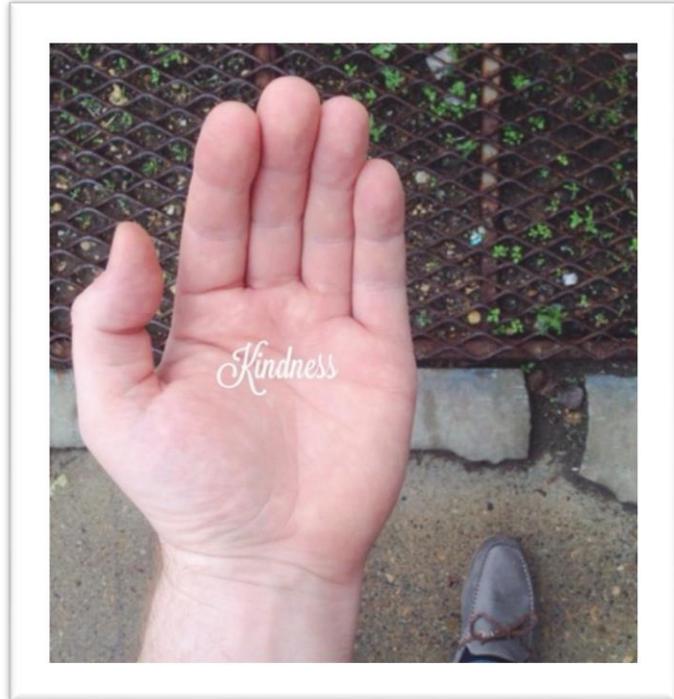


### **Employ more low-income people**

Our plan is to deliver 14,000 casual labour placements and find permanent employment for 150 street involved individuals. As well, we are currently in the business planning stage regarding the design and launch of a standalone employment centre focused on putting low income individuals to work. The current plan is to launch this centre in 2016.

### **Transform Drop-in into a Centre for Reconciliation, Healing, and Change**

Based on a review in 2014 and conversations with Bissell Centre clients, service providers from other agencies, Aboriginal leaders, area residents, and our own staff, we will develop a long-term plan to become not only a sanctuary for the homeless but also a centre that helps our participants build and sustain healthier lives. We will launch the first stage of the plan in the Fall of 2015.



### **Grow our engagement of the public in poverty elimination**

This year we will increase our public education sessions and tours about poverty, homelessness, and the mission work of Bissell Centre to 120 groups, up 20% from the previous year. Our engagement of the public via social media will continue to be a priority through our website, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We plan is to increase the number of people “following” Bissell Centre from 13,000 people and organizations to 20,000.

As well, CEO Mark Holmgren will continue to devote significant time and work to the Mayor of Edmonton’s Task Force to Eliminate Poverty. We will also begin exploring the feasibility of creating a Public Engagement and Advocacy position that would work alongside of our CEO and in support of the Mayor’s Task Force.

### **Make Moonlight Bay Centre a year round resource**

This year marks the second year of our work to keep Moonlight Bay Centre open year round instead of being open only during the summer months. This means we will be able to offer more camps for low income families and offer more opportunities to the public to support those efforts through facility rentals for weddings, retreats, family reunions, and so on.

### **Complete roll out of our integrated case management model**

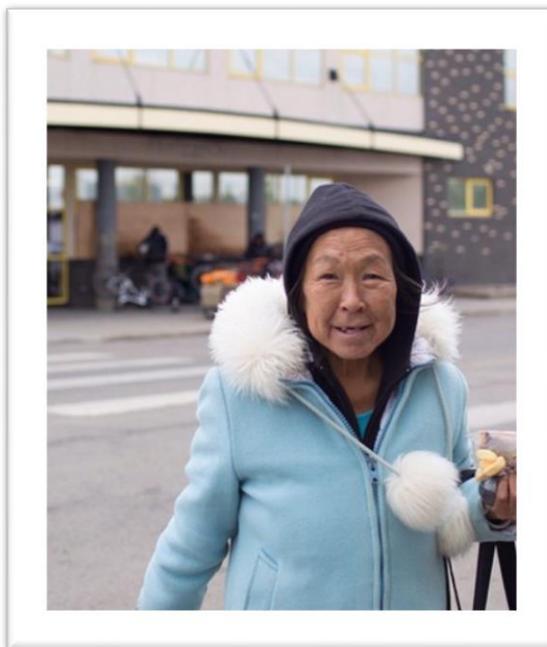
For the past year we have been working together to identify and eliminate stovepipes in our services while creating a culture of collaborative leadership across all departments. This work

will ensure that community participants can access a set of services at Bissell Centre without having to go through more than one intake.

### **Continue our commitment to fidelity, stewardship, and quality**

Bissell Centre will continue to provide our staff with appropriate hardware and software to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. This year we will implement a volunteer management and engagement software, a robust scheduling software, and undertake software improvements to how we administer human resource functions. We will launch a centralized client information system that will streamline data collection from clients while increasing the accuracy and integrity of information required to support those seeking services from Bissell Centre.

Work will continue to improve and streamline various business processes including contract management and reporting; donor receipting, communication, and recognition; and performance management.



### **Be an employer of choice**

This year we enter the fourth year of a five-year strategy to become an employer of choice in the human services sector. This includes implementing a living wage policy, maintaining current benefits while working with our staff to explore additional benefits that will optimally support employees and contribute to their health and well-being as well as to recruitment and retention.

Management will continue its practice of collaborating with staff to identify plans, address organizational issues, and develop policies and standards. This year we will also hold our second annual Staff Awards Event.

### **Continue to strengthen our financial condition**

Thanks to the support of our funders and donors and our commitment to stellar stewardship, we have ended the last four years in the black after experiencing deficits in the preceding three years. This year our budget is approximately \$8.6 million. To achieve this budget will require \$2.5 million in fundraising revenues, our biggest fundraising goal ever. As well we will continue to raise dollars for capital improvements at Moonlight Bay Centre and in our Drop-in Centre.