



The Official Newsletter of the
VARSITY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
www.vcocalgary.com

Varsity VOICE

JANUARY 2024

**NEW
YEAR!**

*Happy
New Year*

Winter Programs Start: Jan 6th
Green Calgary – Spill the Beans: Jan 11th
Varsity Open Stage Night: Jan 12th
Free Program Demo: Jan 18th

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Varsity Community Association

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General E-mail: info@vcacalgary.com Website www.vcacalgary.com

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Committee Chairs

Casino	Doug Smith, gm@vcacalgary.com
Crowchild Twin Arenas	Jim Courchesne, 403-288-3617
Parks	Sue Davison, atbowmontpark@gmail.com

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Childcare Services (Out of School)	childinfo@vcacalgary.com
Director.....	Shelley Harrison
Assistant Director.....	Sherry Smith

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Councillor	Sonya Sharp, 403-268-2430
MLA	Luanne Metz, 403-247-1075
School Board	Dana Downey, 403-617-7933
Catholic School Board.....	Myra D'Souza, 403-500-2761

Varsity Voice

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In Our Community

Councillor Report

I hope everyone had a restful holiday season. My best wishes to you and your families for 2024!

Budget

As of the time I write this, deliberations on The City's budget have only recently concluded. Council approved a 7.8% increase to property taxes.

Residential Parking Permits

Through the budget, Council approved lower fees for residential parking permits than originally proposed. As a reminder, the new fees only apply to areas where permits are already required. There are no plans to impose permits or fees on new areas automatically. Visit calgary.ca/rpp to learn more.

Property assessment

Property tax assessment notices are mailed out this month. The customer review period runs from now until March. Questions or concerns? Contact The City's Assessment department at 403-268-2888 or visit calgary.ca/assessment.

Calgary Awards

Nominations for the Calgary Awards to recognize outstanding individuals, groups and businesses in our community are now open. Visit calgary.ca/awards to learn more and nominate someone for their contributions to our city.

Sidewalk clearing

A reminder that sidewalks must be cleared by property owners or occupants within 24 hours after a snowfall. Be a Snow Angel! Consider helping out a neighbour by clearing their walk.

Outdoor activities

January is a great time to get outside to enjoy all of the best that winter has to offer, like pleasure skating, hockey, crokicurl, cross-country skiing and tobogganing right here in Ward 1. Visit calgary.ca/parks to find activities near you!

Sonya Sharp, Councillor, Ward 1

SPELLISCY LAW OFFICE

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neighbourhood
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Casino Volunteers Needed!

Cowboys Casino
421 – 12 Avenue S.E.
Sat Feb 24 & Sun Feb 25, 2023
Volunteer Sign Up online at
www.vcacalgary.com

VCA Collecting for the Veterans Food Bank

We are accepting food donations for the Veteran's Food Bank. Please drop off to the collection box located on the main level during business hours. Thank you for supporting our Veterans!



VCA Programs Winter 2024

Visit www.vcacalgary.com to register

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

- Children's Art Classes (5yrs-13yrs)
- Chinooks Indoor Soccer (3yrs - 8yrs)
- Learn to Skate (3yrs- 9yrs)
- Loose Parts – Kids Play (all ages)
- Run_Jump_LEAD (Girls 7yrs - 12yrs)
- Sportball (2yrs - 8yrs)

ADULT PROGRAMS

- Tai Chi – Beginner & Intermediate
- Cardio Dance, Strength, Flexibility
- Qi Gong – Fusion Fitness
- Adult Art Classes

SENIOR'S PROGRAMS

- Cardio Combo 55+
- Seniors Art Classes
- 55+ Seated Cardio Dance
- Seniors Yoga 55+
- Senior Fit +55
- Silver Swans Ballet Fitness 55+

Free Demo Classes

Chinese Traditional Painting

No membership required but you must register online.

Thursday, January 18, 2024

2:00 – 2:30pm

Vienna Room

Join Carol Li as she embarks on a journey into the heart of Chinese culture through the enchanting world of traditional painting. Immerse yourself in the strokes of ink that tell stories of past that capture the essence of China's rich heritage.



"Many years ago I resolved never to bother with New Year's resolutions, and I've stuck with it ever since."

— Dave Beard

Varsity Civic Affairs Committee News

South Shaganappi Local Area Plan

The Local Area Plan engagement process is well underway and an open house was held on November 30 at the Varsity Community Centre. There was a very large turnout and the City will be recording all comments they received. More information can be found on the City's website at engage.calgary.ca/Shaganappi. If you would like to be on an email list to receive timely updates about the LAP or other planning matters, please send me your name, email, and address.

Blanket Upzoning of Residential Lots

The City plans to amend the Land Use Bylaw to change the zoning for low density residential housing. Currently, there are several different land uses in the LUB including RC-1 for single family homes, RC-2 for two dwelling units – semi-detached or duplex buildings. R-CG allows for a 4-plex building (often with 4 secondary suites). One of the main differences between these designations is that R-1 and R-2 have a maximum of 45% lot coverage and maximum height of 10 metres while R-CG allows for 60% lot coverage and a height of 11 metres. This is based on a lot that is 50 feet wide. Lots that are larger can accommodate more units.

The proposal is to change the zoning of all lots in the City to one designation that will allow all the different uses including R-CG. Currently, if a landowner wants to change their zoning from RC-1 to R-CG, they would have to apply for a land use redesignation which involves a public hearing before City Council where those affected by the change can speak. If all lots are rezoned, then all these possible uses would be permitted and no public hearing would be required to build a 4-plex. This is controversial as a building with greater lot coverage and height could overshadow adjacent homes and reduce the urban tree canopy. Proponents believe this will be beneficial as it will increase density and housing supply. Examples of R-CG housing can be found on many lots in Banff Trail, West Hillhurst, and Mount Pleasant.

Eliminating On-Site Parking Requirements

The other proposal that will require a change to the Land Use Bylaw is to eliminate on-site parking requirements for residential development. The standard requirement for many years was 1 stall per unit. This was changed last year to 0.5 stalls per unit. By eliminating parking requirements, the City believes it will reduce the cost of construction for developers thereby making infill

development more affordable. Opponents of this proposal believe it will create insufficient parking on public streets and will do little to increase affordability.

Playground Review Subcommittee

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered for this committee. We will be reviewing the existing playgrounds in Varsity and establishing a list of priorities. The first priority will be identifying any safety hazards. The other priority will be planning for the new playground at 37 Street and 32 Avenue by the fire hall. Even if you don't have time to serve on the committee, please email me with any concerns you have about playgrounds in the community.

University Innovation Quarter (formerly University Research Park)

The University Innovation Quarter is a 76 acre site north of 32 Avenue, south of Crowchild Trail, and east of 37 Street. Go to uiqcalgary.com to view the plans and for more information.

For information regarding the Civic Affairs Committee, please contact JoAnne Atkins, Director of Civic Affairs, at joanneatkins@shaw.ca.

Varsity Child Care

School Age Child Care at Varsity Out of School

We offer child care for children Gr. 1 to Gr. 5 attending Varsity Acres. The program is operated at the Varsity Community Centre. Our program is full of fun, games, various child friendly clubs, sewing, hockey and much, much more. We are an accredited and licensed program with the Alberta government. We offer full day care on professional days, teacher convention and Spring break for children enrolled in the Out of School programs.

We offer child care for children attending the A.M. Kindergarten program at the Varsity Acres School. **There is still space available in our Kindergarten Care Program.**

Information and Registration: www.vcocalgary.com
Contact: childinfo@vcocalgary.com 403-247-1145 ext 2

What We Are In Need of In Childcare...

Dress Up Shoes (low heels) or Men's Dress Shoes, Lego, Yarn

Christmas Tree Composting Program

Help keep Christmas trees out of the landfill by using your green cart.

Put your cut up tree in your green cart

- Remove all lights, ornaments, tinsel and tree stand
- Cut your tree into small pieces
- Place in your green cart (make sure lid can close)
- If your green cart is full:
- Put cut branches in paper yard waste bags and roll tops closed
- Set bags 0.5 metres (2 feet) from side of your cart
- **Please note:** Trees that are not prepared properly will not be collected.



Christmas tree drop-off locations – open Dec. 26 to Jan. 31

Take your tree to a temporary drop-off location. This program is for residential use only.

- Remove all ornaments, lights, garland, tinsel and tree stands
- Do not wrap, tie or bag your tree, even if the bag is labelled as compostable or biodegradable.
- If you wrap or bag your tree to transport it, remove the bag before dropping off.

Visit <https://www.calgary.ca/waste/residential/christmas-tree-recycling.html> for a list of drop off locations.

*City of Calgary,
Waste & Recycling Services*



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In Our Community

Varsity Open Stage Night

Live Music in Varsity!

7:00 to 10:00 pm, Friday, January 12, 2024

Varsity Community Centre

4303 Varsity Drive NW

Come out and enjoy live music/performances by local talent in an all-ages venue. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. At 7:00 p.m., Sue Chick Denton will start the evening with a 30-minute set. Open mic sign-up starts at 7:00 p.m. For Open Mic, there will be two sessions for 3-4 performances, two songs each (10 min max), running from 7:30 to 8:15 pm and 9:00 to 9:45 pm. In between the Open Mic Sessions we will have a 45-minute set by our feature performers, Chartier and Checora. A full sound and lighting system and refreshments are provided. Donations are accepted and go to the VCA. Call Gillian (604-349-2511) or email gm.donald@gmail.com for more details.



Marion Carson School News

Marion Carson School, located at 5225 Varsity Drive Northwest is the home of two wonderful Calgary Board of Education programs. We are the designated Kindergarten to Grade 6 Community English School for students living in the community of Varsity and are also the home of the Kindergarten to Grade 4 Mandarin Bilingual Program which houses students from many of Calgary's communities in the Northwest. Together, the two unique programs come together to create one school with a welcoming, safe and caring learning environment that focuses on academic excellence and well-being. We have a school focus on belonging which is integrated throughout daily learning.

Students may enter the Mandarin Bilingual Program in Kindergarten or Grade 1 without any previous Mandarin language experience. Families wanting to enroll their child in Grades 2-4 are offered spaces in the program based on age appropriate language fluency and space availability within the school. Families who live in the Varsity catchment interested in joining our K-6 Community English program are also welcome to register.

Families interested in learning more about Marion Carson School and our programs are invited to attend our Open House on January 11th, 2023 from 6:00pm – 7:30pm and visit our school website at <https://school.cbe.ab.ca/school/MarionCarson>.

Online registration for our Mandarin Bilingual Program lottery process for the 2024-25 school year is open from January 16, 2024 to Feb. 14, 2024 at 12pm noon at www.cbe.ab.ca.

Sincerely, Mr. D. Turner, Principal, Marion Carson School

VCA Commercial Kitchen Rental

Available daily Monday – Friday
9:00am – 4:00pm or
6:00 – 9:00 pm

If interested please email
gm@vcacalgary.com

Thank You!

Thank you for all of you who donated to our shoeboxes. We were able to create 15 boxes to be sent overseas.

We will continue to collect donations throughout the year, if you have any treasures that may be appropriate, we encourage you to bring them anytime.

This year we had a shortage of the wow items. These are the things that are a little bigger, and the main part of the gift. We also had a shortage of the small toys to include, small bags of lego, tiny stuffies, hot wheels cars, figures etc. We appreciate anything that you have to share.

Thank you for helping us with this year's project, we appreciate your support.



Calgary Coyotes

It's dusk and a grey shadow flits across a greenspace in your neighbourhood. Its tail is pointed down as it runs. Just before it disappears into the brush, its yellow eyes glance your way.

Coyotes are elusive as they are present in our city. Weighing between 9 to 23 kilograms, (roughly a medium-sized dog), coyotes are one of the larger predators adapted to our urban habitats. What brings them into our city? Can we co-exist with them?

Food is the primary reason coyotes settle in our city. Their natural diet includes small mammals like mice, squirrels and hares, and larger ungulates like deer. They will also feed on berries and other vegetation, as they are omnivores. Their natural rodent-consuming habits are a coyote-positive aspect of their presence.

They are opportunistic feeders, and alternative food sources can include unsecured garbage, birdfeeders, pet food, pet feces, and small, off-leash or free-roaming pets. Coyotes do not always eat garbage or birdseed themselves, but the other prey species that this food attracts, like mice and other small mammals. Keeping your yard clean of attractants will reduce the wildlife traffic in your area.

Coyotes are monogamous, staying with the same mate for several years. They live in small packs, though will hunt



in smaller groups or even alone. Their mating season is in February and March with pups being born in April and May. Litter size depends on available food sources, but the average is three to seven pups. Coyotes are protective of their young and will feel threatened if off-leash pets are near their den with young pups. Coyotes exhibit escorting behaviour during this time. This is where a coyote will follow people who have crossed into their territory, escorting them at a distance until they exit their territory as a protective measure of their young.

While coyote-human conflicts are rare, coyotes are wild animals and can be dangerous. If you encounter a coyote and it seems to be focused on you, make yourself big, make loud noises, and throw sticks or rocks (not with the intention to hit, but scare) to deter the coyote. Do not run away from coyotes as this can trigger their instinct to chase. Coyotes can run over 60 km/hr, so running isn't a great plan! Help coyotes stay shy by making them uncomfortable when near humans. This helps us co-exist! Coyotes who are bold and desensitized tend to result in more conflicts.

Coyotes have over eleven types of vocalizations! Their yipping howls are easily recognizable at night, though exact meanings continue to be as elusive as the animal itself.

Found injured or orphaned wildlife? Please contact Calgary Wildlife at 403-214-1312.

Calgary Wildlife



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Understanding Mental Health

Mental Health is complicated. There are so many ways to talk about it and it can get confusing. To better understand, Mental Health Literacy developed a tool known as “the pyramid” that consists of 4 layers. The base of the pyramid is the largest, which is related to the number of individuals in this state. Therefore, as the pyramid gets smaller so does the amount of people who may experience this state. Let’s take a closer look at what the 4 levels of the pyramid are:

1. No Distress, Problem or Disorder:

This is the bottom level and the largest of the pyramid. This is when everything is okay and you are not experiencing any mental distress, problems of disorders.

2. Mental Distress:

The next layer up is mental distress. Distress releases a signal from our brain indicating the need to adapt to our environment and that there is a problem to solve. Triggers of distress are unavoidable, but the process is necessary for life-skills promoting and building resilience. An example is having an argument with your boss. Once you figure out a solution the mental distress goes away.

3. Mental Health Problem:

The layer second from the top is mental health problems which is an indicator that we are having difficulties and may need external help such as, counselling or community support. This can arise from a stressor of great amount, such as the death of a loved one.

4. Mental Disorder/Illness:

Located at the top of the pyramid is mental illness. This occurs when there is disruption in usual brain functioning. This disruption is the result of our genes and our environment from the time of conception and throughout the lifespan. Examples of this can be the diagnosis of ADHD, Clinical Depression, and Anxiety.

Now that we have a better understanding of these terms, here are everyday things you can do for your mental health, also known as the Big 5 to Thrive!

- **Exercise:** This could be a walk in the community or a session at the gym
- **Sleep:** The optimal amount needed varies for everyone. Put away your phone and snuggle up for a good night’s sleep.
- **Supportive Relationships:** Develop and maintain



positive relationships with family, friends, and community. Surround yourself by those who lift you up.

- **Nutrition:** Incorporate healthy foods that are easy to make and taste great!
- **Helping Others:** Get involved in your community coalitions or volunteer with local charities.

It has been shown that improving even one of these areas translates to improvement in the other areas. Consider steps that are realistic to you to better your mental health!

*Community Health Promotion Services Team,
Alberta Health Services*

Did You Know...

These Facts About January

- January's birthstone is garnet, which represents constancy.
- The zodiac signs for January are Capricorn (December 22 - January 19) and Aquarius (January 20 - February 18).
- The flowers of January are snowdrop & carnation.
- The name January came from the Roman god Janus.
- January was known as the wolf month to the Anglo-Saxons because in winter, wolves came into the villages to search for food.
- In the Southern Hemisphere, January is the warmest month.

Sledding Safety

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) would like to remind parents and children about a few toboggan/sledding safety tips. Injuries may result from collisions with stationary objects on the hill, such as trees, poles, rocks, or even collisions with other people. Unprotected falls can also result in more serious injury if you lose control at high speeds. However, everyone can be safe and have fun on the toboggan hill by following these reminders.

Equipment

- Always ensure your toboggan, or sledding device, is in good repair. Inspect it for any damaged or missing parts before each use;
- Be certain the operator is fully capable of staying in control of the sled at all times;
- Wear a ski helmet designed for use in cold weather and high speeds.

Hazards

- Avoid hills that are too steep or icy;
- Choose hills free of all obstacles such as trees, rocks, utility poles, benches, or fences;
- Beware of loose scarves, or clothing containing drawstrings, which could present a strangulation hazard if they become caught or snagged;

Explore Calgary Parks This Winter

Winter makes it possible to enjoy Calgary parks in a different way than during any other season. Many cold-weather park activities are also free with minimal equipment needed. Only in winter can you skate on outdoor rinks, marvel at beautifully lit ice trails, play Crokicurl and ride an ice bike in our parks. Plan an afternoon at your local community park snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. For easier skiing, visit a park or golf course that has groomed cross-country trails.

Take a walk through a park on a sunny winter day. You are sure to see birds and other wildlife. You can also pre-book an outdoor firepit at a park and have a winter picnic with friends.

For more ideas about how to stay active during cooler temperatures at city parks, visit <https://www.calgary.ca/events/winter-city/activities.html>.

City of Calgary



- Look out for others. Move quickly to the side after finishing a run and stay to the side of the sliding path when walking up the hill;
- Children should be supervised by an adult; try not to toboggan alone;
- Sledding at night is not advised.

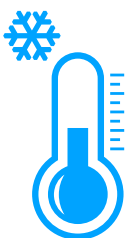
Plan ahead

- Anticipate weather changes and plan accordingly;
- Wear warm, insulating layers closer to the body, and wind/waterproof layers on the outside;
- Consider bringing extra sets of gloves and toques to exchange wet garments for dry ones;
- Take breaks out of the cold to warm up;
- Even when properly protected from the elements, the finger tips, toes, ears, the tip of the nose, and other high points on the face such as the forehead and cheek bones can be affected by frostbite; therefore, attempt to cover up any exposed skin at all times;
- If frost bite has occurred, treat it by first getting out of the cold environment, or at least sheltered from any wind-chill;
- Gently warm the affected skin by placing a warm hand over it, or by placing the affected part in warm - not hot - water, until re-warmed.

Alberta Health Services

DID YOU KNOW?

The coldest temperature ever recorded occurred in Antarctica, -144 Fahrenheit, as reported by researchers in a scientific journal in 2018.



Corporate Memberships

Starting September 1st, we are pleased to share that we are introducing new levels to our Corporate Memberships.

Our new Bronze Membership will be for smaller business looking to get some initial exposure to VCA members and residents.

- \$50 annually, runs from September 1 to August 31
- Listed on our website as a Bronze Member, bulletin board at VCA
- Able to offer discounts to approximately 700 VCA Members
- Listed on Corporate Member page in the Varsity Voice reaching 5600 residences.

Our new Silver Membership for businesses

- \$125 annually, runs from September 1 to August 31
- Includes Bronze benefits plus
- 5% discount on Varsity Voice ads
- 1x per year corporate profile in Varsity Voice
- Co-sponsor opportunities for VCA Events
- Newsletter profile 1x per year (700 VCA Members)
- Free tickets to one paid VCA Event

Our new Gold Membership for businesses

- \$250 annually, runs from September 1 to August 31
- Includes all of Silver and Bronze benefits plus
- Sole Sponsorship of one VCA Event
- Inhouse advertising on TV display
- Onsite Advertising opportunities (Rink Boards, Tennis Court, Room Naming)*
- *some additional fees may apply to development of rink and tennis courts signs

We look forward to continuing working with our community partners and businesses to encourage members and residents to shop local in 2023/2024.

Corporate Members

Gold Corporate Members

Colin Ongyerth – Realtor
Remax

Silver Corporate Members

ATB Brentwood
Always Best Care Senior
Services
Chinooks Grassroots Soccer
Dance Fitness by Ruth
Winnitoy

Farideh Abbasi – WFG Associate

Joyride Automotive
Organized Place
Run.Jump.LEAD!
Sportball Sports Instruction
The b. Class & Girl Be YOU
The Calgary Dance Club
Varsity Open Stage
Western Pizza Express
Zenith Music

More info at www.vcacalgary.com

Featured Corporate Members

ATB Financial

The Brentwood Branch has been serving the Brentwood, Varsity and Dalhousie communities for 48 years. They're proud to serve these communities' financial needs and support their financial health. ATB has been a Corporate Member with VCA for two years. They have partnered with us to provide financial information and support VCA staff, members and residents in our community. Check them out on our website for more information and link to register.

Zenith Music

New Corporate member, Zenith Music, is a new face in music education, but one that aims to become your new go-to music studio. With our roots here in Calgary we know this city and what it needs when it comes to learning to make music. Founded in 2023 with the goal of bringing the next generation of musicians together with our highly experienced teachers, we want to see you hit your goals and reach your zenith. Check them out on our website.



YES!

I want to be a supporter of my community and all the good it does!

Purchase online at:
www.vcacalgary.com

Names: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail: _____

Type of membership: ☐ Community (Household) - \$36.75
☐ Senior (55+) - \$10.50/senior

Payment: \$ _____ Donation: \$ _____

☐ Please issue a tax receipt for my donation

* Memberships are valid from September to August of the following year.
Please mail or drop off, along with your cheques made payable to:

Varsity Community Association,
4303 Varsity Drive NW, Calgary, Alberta, T3A 0Z7