

## Charity Auction

Help support our programs and win something exciting! Proceeds matched up to 50%!

## Program Update

Learn about one school's vision for ensuring the wellness of their students. Pg. 7

## President's Message

Hear Brenda's latest thoughts. Pg 8

## GREAT ALBERTA ADVENTURE CHARITY AUCTION

Our 2nd Annual Great Alberta Adventure Charity Auction supports our annual Birdies for Kids campaign, fundraising for programs equipping youth and families with skills to deal with bullying, racism and promoting mental and emotional wellbeing

- Items will be ready for viewing on June 30th
- Open for bids July 4th - 21st.
- Much bigger and better than ever!

Keep an eye out on our website ([pmast.org](http://pmast.org)) and social media (instagram, facebook and LinkedIn) for more details!



You can also directly support our Birdies for Kids campaign at [shawcharityclassic.com/pmast/](http://shawcharityclassic.com/pmast/)

***Do you have fundraising, social media, web, governance, accounting, copywriting/copy-editing, design, or other experience that could help support our working Board? Do you simply have some time to offer and are looking to gain some non-profit experience on your resumé? We need you!***

***If you would like to volunteer & contribute to your community with PMAST, click on the image below to contact us at our website***



## One School's Vision for Ensuring the Wellness of Their Students

Like many schools with a diverse student population, Our Lady of Assumption School in Calgary's Bowness area, recognizes the need to address issues of inclusion, a sense of belonging and empowerment for their students. Peer Mediation And Skills Training (PMAST) is proud to partner with OLA in this endeavour and are providing our Youth Empowerment Skills program (YES), where the students learn to build respect, compassion, empathy, and resiliency together. By working as partners, we can better understand how young people are impacted by diversity and we are looking for opportunities to embed further support on topics like unconscious bias into school resources and matters affecting the students' mental and emotional well-being. Teaching tolerance is not working – we need to go beyond to ensure all people are made welcome in our society, starting with children and youth.

Together we have developed a multi-faceted approach to dealing with these issues, to find opportunities to build and create a sense of beauty of diversity to move racial relations forward positively.

1. OLA is using education to help mitigate issues of diversity. PMAST is providing programs which go beyond acceptance and inclusiveness; to encourage young people to embrace their differences, appreciate the diversity of thought and experience while learning to deal with conflict and bullying.
2. The school has invited leaders from diverse backgrounds to speak to the students about what makes their culture different and special. The goal is to inspire pride in the authenticity of other cultures and learn to appreciate what each ethnic group brings to our society which makes us stronger.
3. The students have created posters in their native languages welcoming everyone to their school.
4. The biggest project is the innovative vision of Graham McComiskey, OLA's School Counsellor, to capture the students' thoughts, ideas and experiences on all facets of diversity in a live documentary. The students from K-9 will be engaged in all aspects from writing, scripting, interviewing, acting, role-playing, casting, directing, producing, and editing.

Students love to express themselves through media. This project would allow them to gain skills to deal with issues impacting mental and emotional wellness more effectively, but also foster creative skills which will keep them engaged and interested in school. All this while learning about other cultures and celebrating their differences, beauty, and strengths.

We recognize that schools are a microcosm of the community and what is practiced in these environments is reflected through greater systems. It takes a village... which has shown support by collaborating with the JEDI Group (Calgary Catholic School Division's diversity/racial justice team), CCSD's Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, Calgary-West Resource Network, RISE Calgary (conglomeration of Calgary communities), Bowness Community Association, Alberta Health Services and OLA's School Council.



Peacebuilding Skills for Youth, Families & Communities

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The goal is to involve parents and community members with any film or drama experience, with their cultural knowledge, request their assistance in viewing and providing feedback on the film and in planning a Premiere night for parents and the community to view. It will be an amazing project and Mr. McComiskey's goal is to make this an ongoing project and eventually create a documentary appropriate for entering into Children's Film Festivals across Canada.

PMAST will handle raising and managing funds, help with contacts, promotion, planning and logistics for Premiere night. (we are looking for assistance). PMAST is proud to partner with OLA on this project and with the Nickle Foundation of Calgary, whose generous support has provided funds to purchase the equipment needed as well as sponsored one more segment of training for the students. Together we are making this happen!

If you are able to assist in raising funds or in any other capacity, including organizing the Premiere night, please contact Brenda Christie at 403 86-3759 or email [Brenda@pmast.org](mailto:Brenda@pmast.org).

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## **Special mention to the sponsors of this project:**



### **Family Legacy: Strengthening the Community**

Since 1962, the Nickle Family Foundation has served the community by providing charitable grants to worthy organizations in Calgary. We adapt often to help our grants meet the changing needs of the community.

They have funded the purchase of the camera, editing equipment, projector, etc. for Through The Eyes of a Child project at Our Lady of Assumption School plus funding for delivery of a conflict resolution program, in an effort to establish a PEER mediation team.

**Thank you!!**



# THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have been hearing from parents with offspring who have headed down a treacherous path and are overwhelmed by the lack of resources to change these lives.

Did you know that when youth are released from incarceration if they have no financial support from family, they can get a bus ticket to their town of origin, but no funds for food and shelter. They are likely assigned a Probation Officer with conditions for reporting (not in all cases), and they can apply for social assistance, but it will be 2-3 weeks before they receive any funds. So how do they survive for those 2-3 weeks?



For those who don't have financial support, their only option is to revert back to their old friends for food and shelter and to their old ways of surviving, which most likely got them incarcerated to begin with. According to a youth who is part of this shuffle, their biggest worry is the transition from the day release until housing and income is established. With no immediate support for the newly released person, they are concerned for their own safety and security, the desperation makes them easy prey to past connections. This usually results in re-offending and the vicious circle continues.

The Drop In Centre and Mustard Seed do a great job of providing overnight shelter, a shower and a meal, but they are so overloaded that their clients have access only in 7 hour stints, before they have to make room for the next shift. While some clients are just turned away for lack of facilities. They may get into the Dream Centre, but they must be drug free of a minimum of 5 days and the intake is only 2 days per week. Some day shelters charge \$40 a day, and while I understand the need to maintain these facilities, it creates a catch 22 when the cost pretty much defeats the purpose.

While they are incarcerated, there are some programs, but they are only available to inmates whose terms are sufficient for completion of the course, otherwise they are ineligible. Any programs available upon release are fee for service, so again no help to most of these youth. Even rehab is full to the point we have youth waiting from between 3 months to two years to get into their program. Resources are also few and far between for youth dealing with mental and emotional issues and again it takes years to get into treatment programs, unless they commit an act which considers them as high risk to harm someone.

DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- According to StatsCan we spend over \$13 million EACH DAY on incarceration alone
- 47,000 Canadian deaths each year are linked to substance abuse, with 60% of illicit drug users in Canada are between the ages of 15 and 24. Our insider tells us of 3 acquaintances who OD'd in a week - one was 16!
- Substance abuse costs our health care system \$8 billion each year.
- The number of youth between the ages of 12 to 19 years old at risk of depression is a staggering 3.2 million.
- Mark A. Cohen, Professor of Management and Law at Vanderbilt University says "We estimate the present value of saving a 14 year-old high risk juvenile from a life of crime to range from \$2.6 to \$5.3 million".
- In Saskatchewan the cost of processing one juvenile into the system is deemed to be \$84,000 without incarceration.

# THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

So are we just giving up on these youth, willing to lose them while spending more and more money on our legal system, incarceration and societal costs, let alone the waste of these lives which could be productive. Collateral damage is defined as “any death, injury, or other damage inflicted that is an incidental result of an activity”. By “activity” do we mean “inactivity” and the fact that we are not taking sufficient steps to mitigate these circumstances?

As far back as 2011, the United Way of Calgary reported “Increasing social supports and improving social skills is a critical area of focus for ensuring vulnerable youth are able to successfully integrate within society.” Yet we are not doing enough to provide these youth with the tools to live a creative, useful, peaceful life - and empower them to reach their full potential.

If we spent that money to actively provide the necessary resources for juvenile offenders, and pro-actively to all youth, how many lives could we change and what would be the savings down the road!

I remember a conversation I had with a long-time worker at the Calgary Young Offenders Centre some years ago who said that the saddest thing was when they have youth incarcerated, they are required to do some school work, but basically we send them home, back to the same environment, with no new skills to cope - and expect them to be different. He said it just doesn't work. A Calgary Youth Probation officer agreed this was a major issue which results in many re-offences. When I asked - how would we get the kids who are no longer in school, the drop-outs and kids at risk to attend these programs, their answer was “we know where the ones who need it the most are - they are either at CYOC or on probation.” What if we could set up a program for these youth that would give them life skills, give them an opportunity to change the road they are on.

We recognize these youth probably wouldn't want to attend the program, but if it were made a condition of their incarceration or probation - what a difference it could make in their lives. If we could get them to learn some new skills and even get the best ones to take further training and become Peer Mediators to help the other kids to deal with their issues ... it could just keep on paying forward. We know we wouldn't save them all; no one bats 1000, but if a number of organizations could work together to develop the resources that are so badly needed and make them not only available to these youth, but mandated by the court system, the societal monies saved for the lives which could be changed would more than pay for the programs.

We would would like to hear your thoughts and ideas, please send to [Brenda@pmast.org](mailto:Brenda@pmast.org).



## MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

### Sania D'Silva

Sania D'Silva - Fernandes, born in Mumbai, India, has called Canada her home for the past seven years. She has 15 years of experience in marketing communication design and strategy. Sania currently works at Immigrant Services Calgary as a creative design lead. She chooses to make a transformational impact in the non-profit sector through technology and innovative marketing solutions. She works directly with community partners with a hands-on approach to making essential changes to see this vision through.

Sania is no stranger to the impact of bullying based on language, gender, and racial discrimination in the immigrant sector. Being passionate about art, she believes visual communication design can bridge these gaps, promote social inclusion and help build stronger communities.

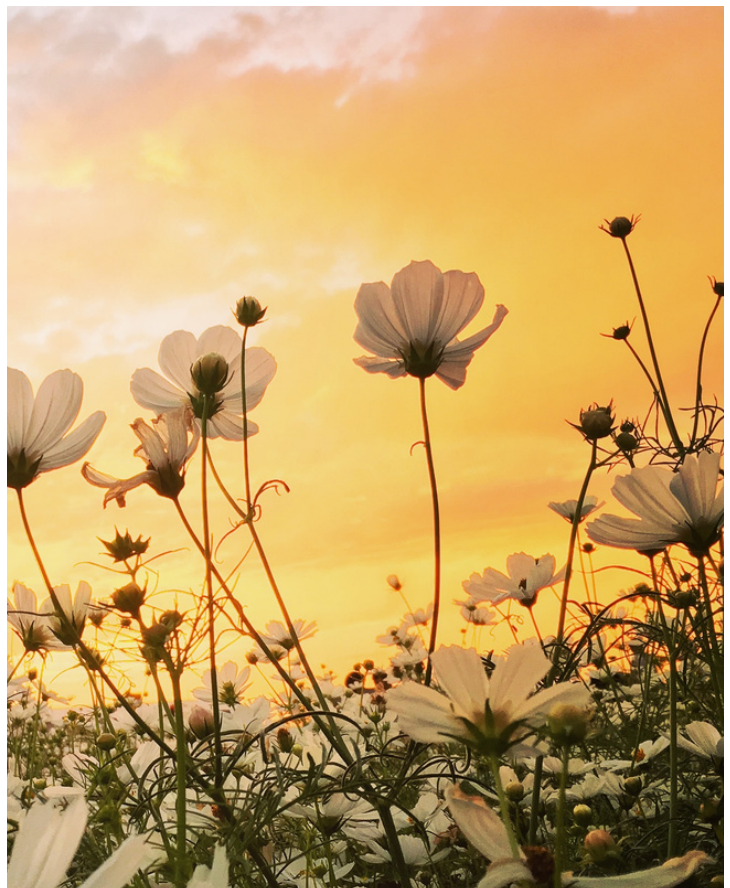
Sania is a lucky mom to one unique, strong, and curious boy. She lives with her supportive Chef husband in the Calgary suburbs maintaining indoor house plants and aquariums.



## AIRDRIE FAMILY WELLNESS FAIR

Connect with your community agencies to learn and gather resources on how to build your school-aged child and family's wellness. **FREE** wellness activities for kids, fun snacks, door prizes, information on summer programs, and lots of connections to be made!

**MAY 14 • SATURDAY**  
**1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**  
**BGC AIRDRIE - 200 EAST**  
**LAKE CRESCENT**





# PMAST

## Racial Justice and Equity Statement



**Many of the young people who participate in our programs and their families, are likely to have been victims of racism, including from their peers.**

At PMAST, we do not feel this is in any way acceptable and we seek to encourage young people to embrace their differences and learn from the diversity of thought and experience they all bring to the table.

Our programs are focused on helping equip young people with the tools to communicate, manage conflict and advocate for themselves in situations where they may feel discriminated against, and to learn about how they may hurting others through their words and actions.

All PMAST programs go beyond inclusiveness and acceptance. We work with our key partners, schools and teachers to better understand how young people may be impacted by racism and we are actively reviewing where there is an opportunity to embed further support on topics like unconscious bias into our programming.

Spanning generations, acknowledgment of the land is a traditional custom of Indigenous people when welcoming outsiders onto their land and into their homes. To build respectful relationships, acknowledging the land is an important part of reconciliation. It honours the authentic history of North America, its original people and tells the story of the creation of this country that has historically been missing.

### **Treaty 7 Territory Land Acknowledgement**

**In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.**



# A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS



Calgary Foundation in view of the approval we have just received for over \$10,000 for COVID recovery



Calgary Northmount Kiwanis for continuous support and funding our programs at Our Lady of Assumption and Good Shepherd School in the coming year.



MDRT International for funding our Youth Empowerment Skills Program to the English Language Learners classes at Nelson Mandela High School

MDRT Canada for funding our Youth Empowerment Skills Program at Good Shepherd School in Airdrie



Richard Lee, of Leeland Financial Services, for being our Knight and always supporting PMAST with MDRT (Million Dollar Round Table)



Thumbs Up Foundation for support for the Connected Families program in 2020/21.



Cam Clark Ford for assisting in funding of PMAST's Connected Families program developed in conjunction with Thumbs Up



Community Mediation Calgary Society - Our sister organization who always supports us and is partnering with us to develop and pilot a community based program in Calgary for people who just want to improve their relationships with their neighbours, co-workers, communities and families.



Nelson Mandela High School and Tina Merali, Head of English Language Learner team, for your dedication in ensuring your students have the best programs possible to ease their transition into Canadian society.



Good Shepherd School and Elizabeth Bennett, Principal, a long time supporter of PMAST who never stops promoting our programs and services



Our Lady of Assumption School, Graham McComiskey, Guidance Counsellor, for recognizing the needs of his students and the value of PMAST's YES program

**Anonymous Donor  
acknowledgement for ELL  
program at Nelson Mandela  
High School (NMHS)**

Bob Warren for writing original music for PMAST's use in our videos and programs

**Anonymous donors via  
Benevity**

A thank you to Flo Lye, Program Director, and our Board of Directors who work tirelessly to make this all happen. You are awesome!

## And another round of thank you to all our other sponsors, partners, and supporters!

