



**Federation**  
of Calgary Communities  
Improving neighbourhood life in Calgary

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for the Federation of  
Calgary Communities

# Lending seniors a helping hand in local communities

is wonderful. I'm trying to stay in my own house and I couldn't pay the whole shot with expenses getting out of reach."

Seniors Services Coordinator Debbie Olson staffs the program with both volunteers and paid workers.

People of all ages volunteer for this

community Association, is funded in part by the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), a joint municipal/provincial funding program established to develop, support and fund preventative social services. Clients pay what they can based on their income.

longer maintain their homes themselves and can't afford to hire help, they are forced to make other living arrangements.

They may have lived in a blue collar community for forty years, but suddenly when it becomes trendy to live there, the taxes go up making it unaffordable for many long time residents.

Most of the more than 150 clients are in their 80s, but some are as young as 60. One client will celebrate 101 years this coming birthday.

This is the only program in the city that offers the three main services to all seniors regardless of their income level. Their goal is to be accessible to all seniors.

Six years ago the program, originally called Neighbourhood Help, expanded to include Hillhurst-Sunnyside, St. Andrews Heights, University Heights, Hounsfeld Heights - Briar Hill, Crescent Heights, Bridgeland, Renfrew, Tuxedo Park, Winston Heights - Mountview, Mayland Heights.

Please contact Debbie Olson at 403-283-0554 ext 224 for more information.



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Although Dorothy is very independent and finds it hard to ask for help, she was glad her daughter put her in touch with Community Assistance for Seniors about three years ago.

The program assists seniors with housekeeping, yard work, and snow removal. They also have a handy person that helps out with small chores like replacing a faucet or a seal, fixing a closet door or painting.

Having come through three open heart surgeries, Dorothy says, "I have a lot of problems, but I try not to give into them."

"A girl comes in once a month to do the vacuuming thoroughly; I keep it up from there. I can do all my dusting." Dorothy says she could do the vacuuming herself, but she'd end up having to lie down all the next day. She also has someone come by to shovel and cut the grass.

"They are very nice people. I can't tell you how grateful I am to have these people to help me. I think (the program)



**Volunteers from Coneco-Phillips help with fall clean-ups for seniors in the community as part of their "Days of Caring" initiative.**

*Photo courtesy Community Outreach Program*

program, even couples and they do not always live in one of the twelve communities served, she says.

"They are people who see a need and want to help out and make a difference."

The program, which operates out of the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Commu-

"There needs to be more programs like this across the city," says Olson. "Some seniors can access commercial resources, but people don't realize how many others are struggling. Our focus is to help seniors stay in their homes."

Olson says when seniors can no

## Erin Woods

Erin Woods, a southeast Calgary community, was annexed by the city in 1961, but was not developed until 20 years later. The area provides panoramic views of the Rocky Mountains. There are also a number of recreational opportunities for residents, including plenty of open fields and green space.

The community also offers convenient access to the rest of the city. It is only a quick commute to 52 Avenue SE, which is connected to a number of other transportation arteries. There is a public school in the area.

The Erin Woods community center has a variety of facilities including ample green space, baseball diamonds, a playground, soccer fields, an indoor soccer field, as well as a hall and variety of meeting rooms.

Most years volunteers also maintain a skating rink. Some of the programs offered in Erin Woods include childrens' programs, Jellybean

dances, indoor and outdoor soccer, softball, adult slo-pitch, bingo, and a Euchre night. This Euchre night is unique in Calgary because it is open to the blind through the use of Braille cards.

The community association also holds a number of special events such as craft fairs and the Stampede Stomp, which includes a Stampede breakfast games prizes, a barbeque and entertainment

### Schools

- Erin Woods Elementary — Public

### Demographics

Located in Ward 9, Erin Woods has a population of 7,087 (2008 Civic Census) with approximately 26.3 per cent comprising the immigrant population (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Canada). A total of 1,395 families accounted for

2,540 children still living at home with 37.6 per cent of these being 6-14 years old.

According to Stats Canada, the median household income for Erin Woods in 2005 was \$65,605. In addition, 27.5 per cent of the population over 20 completed college, attended university or graduated university with a degree - an additional 11.5 per cent graduated from Trade Schools (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Canada). There are a total of 2,340 occupied private dwellings in downtown Woods with 80.8 per cent being single detached dwellings (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Canada). For more information visit [www.calgarycommunities.com](http://www.calgarycommunities.com).

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