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Volunteers take action for future of community

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On a bright sunny day, the sight of pedestrians, cyclists and families walking up and down the walkways along the Elbow River near the community of Cliff Bungalow-Mission is a common one.

However, one area along the north bank of First and Fourth Street on 26 Avenue S.W. was once a forlorn looking sight with the walkways commonly used for temporary parking and a spot susceptible to flood damage during heavy rain.

About 12 volunteers from the community, many who are heavily involved with the Cliff Bungalow-Mission Community Association, saw an opportunity to bring the area up to snuff with the rest of the picturesque neighbourhood. They decided to hatch a plan and bring it to the city.

"On one side of the street, we had this really nice urban development with highrise apartments and nice walkways. On the other side of the street, we had kind of a beat up old bicycle path and it was mismatched," says volunteer Bill Longstaff of the Mission Elbow River Historic Promenade project.

"We thought we would put a promenade down and we would have a nice urban area."

Eilish Hiebert was the primary organizer for the project and has spent countless hours since 2005 taking it from concept to completion.

She says by taking a plan to the city, many factors from funding to support, came into place for the \$1.2 million project.

"If you want anything done, you get organized and do it yourselves and then you get help," says Hiebert.

Funding came from community fundraising and financial support from organizations such as Alberta Lotteries, City of Calgary and the Calgary Foundation Neighbourhood Grants Program. Former Alderman Madeline King became a major proponent of the project.

"If you do much of the public engagement and get the support from the community, then you can get the city's help," she said.

Preserving the area's history was also important to the residents in the area. Along with a widened pathway, three viewing areas will be marked with plaques commemorating Mission's French settler past and Cliff Bungalow's beginnings as a land grant from the Canadian Pacific Railway.

New lighting will also highlight the area and will be capped of with a 360 degree kaleidoscope art piece.

"The part that we feel is really important is that you can actually do it. With big projects there's sometimes a feeling



L to r: Volunteers Bob Lang, Eilish Hiebert, Bill Longstaff and Murray Hiebert have worked since 2005 to renovate pathways and construct a promenade along 26th Avenue between First and Fourth Street. S.W.

Photo by Terence Leung

of helplessness. The city individuals are wonderful to work with and developers are quite open to a lot of stuff if you give them the chance," says Hiebert.

"I think it's important for other communities to know if you take the helm and ask the city to support you, they're happy to do it."

With about \$85,000 raised from the community alone, the construction of the promenade is set to be completed by October. A celebration of the project will take place on Sept. 20 from 2 to 4 p.m. near the Mission Bridge on Elbow Drive and Fourth Street S.W.

"I think it's a tremendous project and we're all very proud to be able to see it through," says volunteer Bob Lang.

For more information about the promenade or celebration, contact elbowriverbank@yahoo.com

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Community Profile: Evanston-Creekside

Evanston-Creekside was incorporated in 2007. It is located Northwest of the communities of Hidden Valley/Hanson Ranch, and North of Kinora. Its Boundaries include North:144 Avenue, East: Stoney Trail, South: Beddington Trail, West: Symons Valley Road. It is a young community first established around 2002/2003. It is a fantastic community offering pathways, natural areas, and close proximity to many amenities. Some of the Evanston-Creekside Community Association's initiatives include a community clean up and a very popular Stamped Breakfast.

Demographics

Located in Ward 3, Evanston-Creekside has a population of 3,751 (2006 Civic Census) with approximately 25.6% comprising the immigrant population (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada). A total of 565 families accounted for 995 children still living at home with 36.2% of these being 6-14 years old.

According to Stats Canada, 2001 Census of Canada the median household income for Evanston-Creekside in 2005 was \$85,418. In addition, 61.2% of the population over 20 completed college, attended university or graduated university with a degree - an additional 8.1% graduated from Trade Schools (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada).

There are a total of 1,005 occupied private dwellings in Cranston with 92.5% being single detached dwellings (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada).

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WHAT DOES
community
MEAN TO YOU?

"For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and concern for each other."

- Millard Fuller

Founder of Habitat for Humanity