

Understanding Community Associations



The Background

The earliest community associations were formed during the 1920s to provide Calgarians with informal recreational programs and facilities such as outdoor skating rinks. The first official incorporation of a community association was Elbow Park in 1930. Two others, Mount Royal and Scarboro, were formed prior to World War II. Post-war Calgary saw a dramatic population increase and the number of community associations grew accordingly. These grassroots organizations filled the needs of a young growing population by offering recreational and social opportunities. Community associations continue to provide a sense of the local and collegial, a sense of belonging within the larger urban environment. By acting together, communities can better represent, advocate and meet the needs of residents.

Community Associations Today

Presently Calgary is made up of over 140 communities with almost all of them represented by an active community association. In some cases this may mean a large facility with a board of directors, employees and huge operating budgets. In other instances a community association might consist of a board of directors and a handful of volunteers working to run events, speak up for the community on planning issues or run the local rink. Whatever the style of community association may be, these groups are all made up of volunteers who work behind the scenes to give their neighbours a better place to live.

The Impact

Calgary is proud to be recognized as a "Volunteer City". A city whose residents are active in a multitude of volunteer activities that enhance not only our physical surroundings, but our quality of life. Of these, community associations form the city's largest volunteer network. Annually, 20,660 community association volunteers contribute 2.4 million hours of public service, which has an equivalent monetary value of over \$28 million. These volunteers operate, manage and maintain facilities and amenities with a value of more than \$200 million. They come forward from a diverse population base with about one-quarter of the city's population supporting community associations through paid membership.