

A UNITED VOICE

Edmonton is not like other places — in a good way.

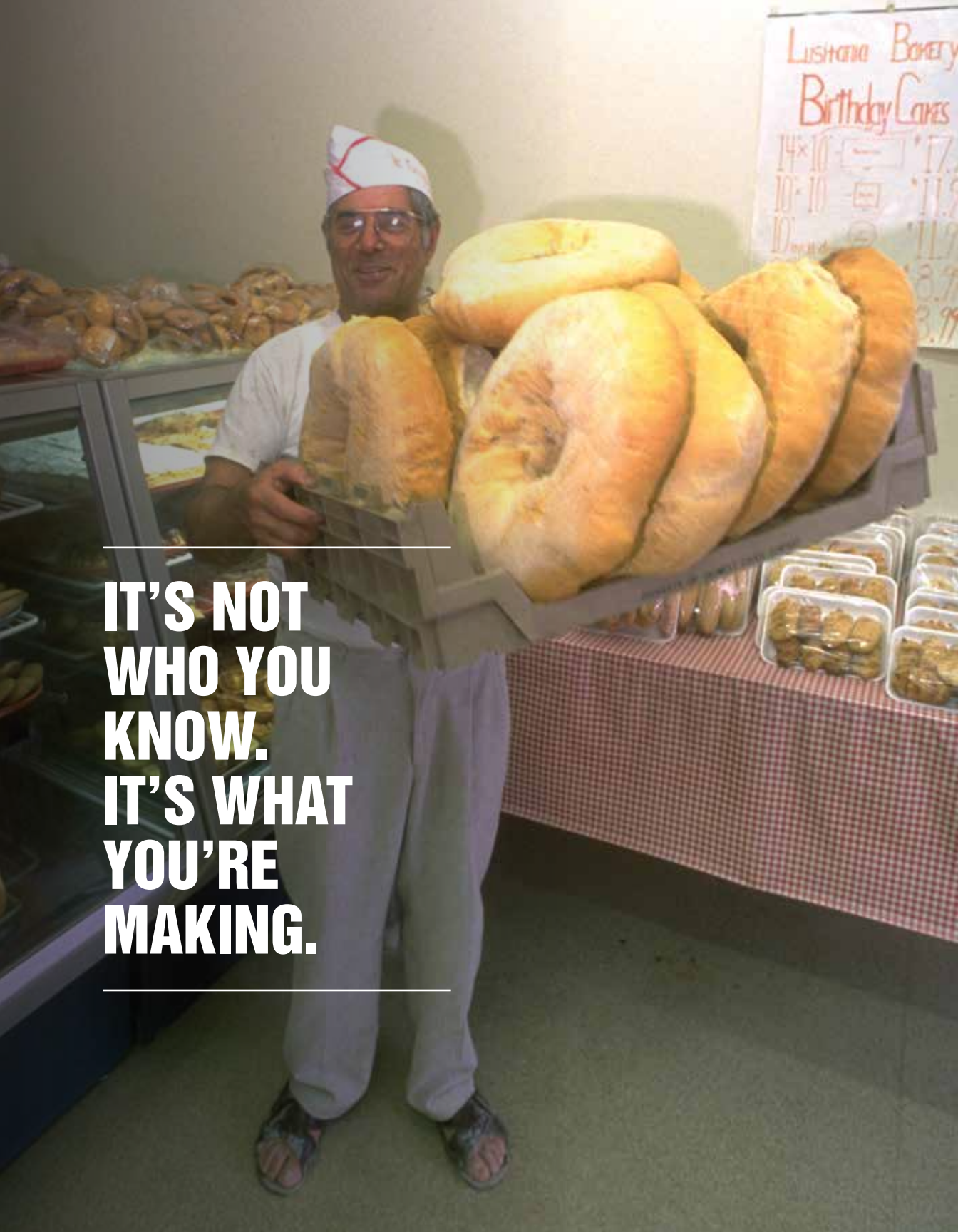
If you grew up here or even if you arrived last week, you feel this difference. But you may not be able to express it.

You aren't alone.

We love this city but for years we have struggled to explain why in a way that feels right. Edmonton has a personality, and a big part of that personality is humility. We don't like empty boasting. Statistics come and go, and so do economic cycles. But something is constant.

We see our friends, colleagues, and neighbours launching new projects, new festivals, new ventures in every part of the city. We see the downtown cranes. We read the history. People have chosen this bend of the North Saskatchewan River for thousands of years, and for thousands of years before that, for similar reasons.

What are those reasons? What does it mean to be an Edmontonian? What is the answer to "Why Edmonton?" and why is it so important that we all know it?



**IT'S NOT
WHO YOU
KNOW.
IT'S WHAT
YOU'RE
MAKING.**

WHY YOU?

Edmonton is competing with mid-sized cities all over North America and around the world for investment and for talent, for great people and their ideas. We need a coherent and powerful brand strategy for the city, and we're building one.

But it begins with people like you and what you say in Toronto, New York, New Delhi, and that restaurant on Whyte Avenue when you talk about Edmonton. It begins with what you say to your colleagues, friends, and employees. It begins with the "About Edmonton" page on your website, the well-chosen anecdote in your speech, the made-in-Edmonton gifts you choose to give.

You're a community leader, a business leader, an artist, a new resident. You're a Brand Ambassador, and we want to help all of you speak with a united voice — in your own words.

THE BACK STORY

In 2011, business and community leaders gathered to discuss the future of economic development in Edmonton. Together they said our city's image and reputation was its number one challenge. Instead of hiring an agency to "rebrand" Edmonton, the mayor assembled a task force.

They set out with genuine curiosity, and spoke to 150 Edmontonians: writers and entrepreneurs, First Nations people and new immigrants, pianists and pipefitters, students and CEOs.

These interviews had a common pattern. You struggled for the first ten minutes and then you talked about what made you proud of this city — not with grand superlatives but with simple stories an Edmonton kind of success. These moving, powerful, often funny stories had similar themes. They were about a spirit of invention, about cooperation, about taking risks, and about a peculiar kind of openness.



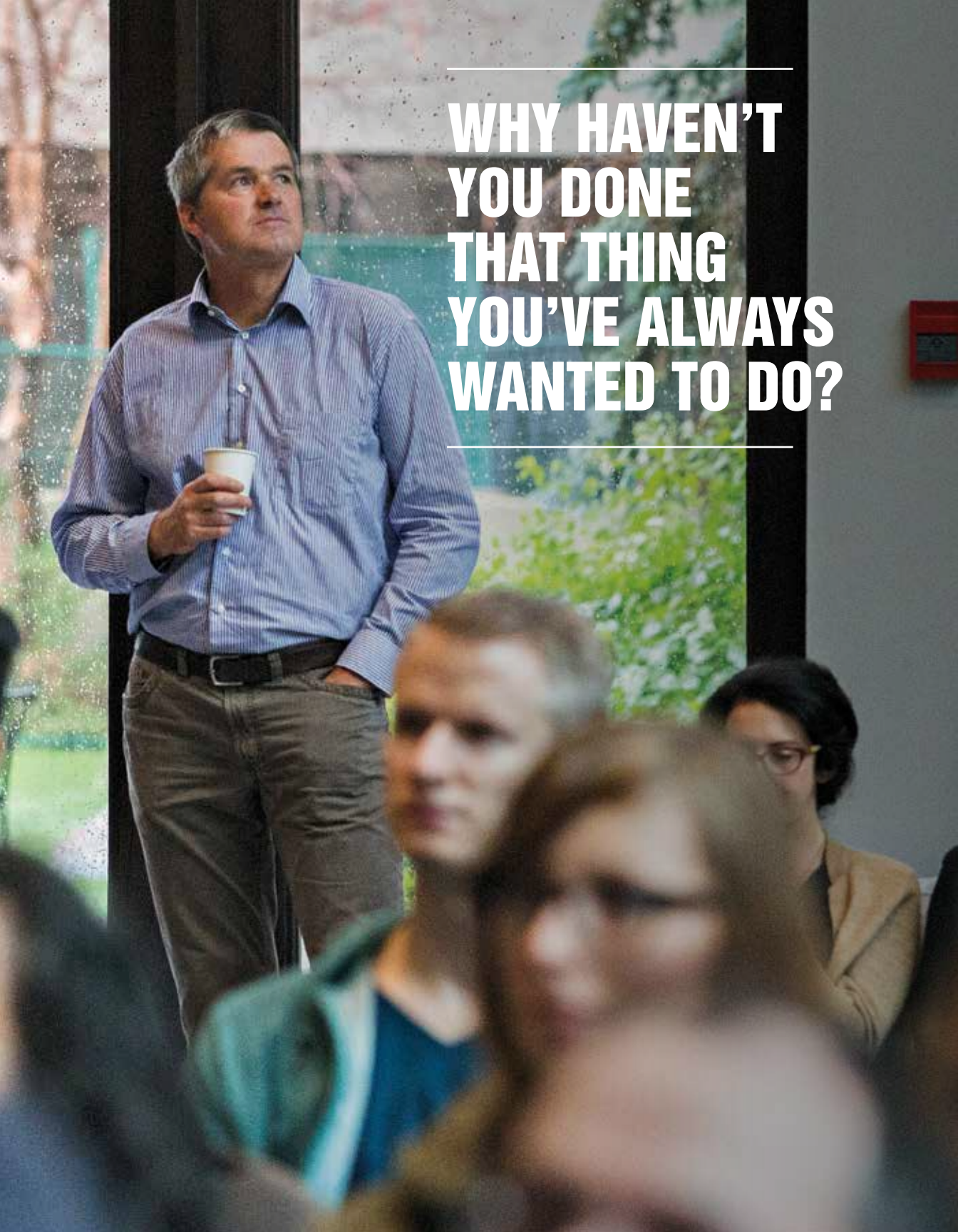
BENEFITS OF A PLACE BRAND

Yes, we have a river. Yes, we have a blue sky. And yes, we have festivals and a hockey team and shopping malls. Most cities are built on water. They have weather and sports and festivals and chain stores. These qualities don't speak to what truly makes Edmonton unique. If they did, frankly, we wouldn't have an image and reputation problem.

Edmontonians created the first mosque in Canada, as a community. They invented *the* food bank and the North American Fringe theatre movement the same way, with a few people, an idea, and a lot of help. They built a new model for public education and a community league system. With that same spirit, they launched *PCL, Stantec, Running Room, Telus, Shaw, Ledcor, Bioware*, and thousands of other enterprises small and large.

Edmonton isn't for everyone. No city is. But for a certain kind of person, the risk-takers, the builders, the ones who care more about ideas than weather, there isn't a better city on the continent today.

People across Canada and around the world are curious about us. They're hearing more about Edmonton and what makes this place different. Now is the time to invite them in.



WHY HAVEN'T
YOU DONE
THAT THING
YOU'VE ALWAYS
WANTED TO DO?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Traditional city-branding almost never works. And what we learned about Edmonton, in our research, is that when we build something together we build it strong. If the story was true, and we knew it was, Edmontonians would build their own brand — project by project.

The city's image and reputation strategy inspired a movement called "Make Something Edmonton" — a way to build our city, and prove the truth of its brand, through community action. We lit up the High Level Bridge. We planted community gardens in schoolyards. We launched new businesses, new festivals, new social ventures in a uniquely Edmonton way.

We uncovered the brand together and now we're preparing to take it to the world.

- Cities evolve. So do brands. But they never lose their essence.
- The brand is a public good. Leaders and organizations will use the brand to promote, build, and improve Edmonton, but citizens — you — own it. Use the four brand characteristics and tell the story in your own voice, in your own way.
- Our brand is both consistent and disciplined. But it's open to new expressions. What's your version of the Edmonton story?
- A place cannot be reduced to a logo and a slogan. It's more than marketing. The Edmonton brand is about being true to who we are at our best.

- The brand is rooted in only-in-Edmonton stories of people who have chosen this place. It's not about weather, structures, geography, clichés, or fads.
- The strategy is designed to inspire and equip Edmonton-region businesses, governments, industry associations, post-secondary institutions, arts organizations, and a million ambassadors to market and promote the city, to build more of what makes this place unlike any other.
- We know this isn't easy. How can we help?

OUR BRAND PROMISE

If you have the courage to take an idea to reality, to build, to make something, Edmonton is your city.

Years ago, when this was an isolated place, we invented our own fun. We created our own solutions. That spirit remains today: risk-takers, people with ideas, thrive in this bizarrely cooperative city. Edmonton is a place without hierarchy. Five minutes here and you're one of us.



**TAKE A RISK.
IT'S THE MOST
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OUR BRAND CHARACTER

Our Brand Promise is defined by four key characteristics:

Open

Edmonton welcomes and encourages new arrivals; you're instantly an Edmontonian. You don't need to "earn the right." You can be a leader overnight.

Courageous

Have an idea? Taking a risk is the most Edmonton thing you can do. The economy is resilient and your fellow Edmontonians will provide the encouragement you need.

Inventive

Edmontonians think and act differently. We're curious. We embrace odd solutions. A history of relative isolation taught us to invent our own fun.

Cooperative

Someone, or many others, will help you build what you're building. Then they'll celebrate it. Soon, you'll be helping people with their ideas. It's addictive.

Brand Map



Brand Characteristics capture the essence of Edmonton.



STATEMENT OF ENCOURAGEMENT

We express the brand characteristics through inspiring Statements of Encouragement.



We reinforce what we say with true stories about people who embody the Edmonton brand.

Photo above: Tina Thomas, Edmonton Public Library
Read her story on edmonton.com



ONLY IN EDMONTON

Statements of Encouragement

The best way to talk about and market the city is to be armed with the truth, with examples of Edmonton-ness.

Single-theme phrases and slogans like *City of Champions*, *River City*, *Festival City*, and *Gateway to the North* don't allow us to choose or curate extraordinary examples. More importantly, they don't reflect what we learned in our research.

Every city claims to be the best place to live, work, and play. Every city is innovative, diverse, sustainable, livable, and world-class. We're after something more powerful, more *Edmonton*.

The best way to answer, "Why Edmonton?" is always with an expression of our brand character and a story that underscores it. We have created Statements of Encouragement that start these conversations, guide us.

Take a risk.

It's the most Edmonton thing you can do.

What are you making? How can we help?

Try. Fail. Try again. Repeat. Succeed.

Every inventor needs a neighbour.

Five minutes here and you're one of us.

Your ideas matter, not your alma mater.

It's not who you know. It's what you're making.

Some cities are finished. Others you can change.

This one's your lab.

Why haven't you done that thing you've always wanted to do? There's a city that wants that from you.

STONE OF VOICE

What you say and how you say it will be different depending on who you are. That's perfectly fine. Edmonton is Edmonton because of so many singular voices. Our brand promise unites us.

When you're speaking on behalf of the brand:

Be enthusiastic. Make them laugh. Move them. If you're honest about what you find thrilling about Edmonton, it will be infectious.

Be surprising. Let ambassadors from other cities use business jargon, clichés or phrases borrowed from elsewhere. Tell them something they didn't know. Invite them in.

Be yourself. You don't have to use big words to impress. That's not the Edmonton way. Be clear. Be thoughtful. Be you.

Say it with pride. We're not asking you to brag or boast. There's a reason you chose and continue to choose Edmonton. Tell your audience why. And, most importantly...

Learn and share success stories. We remember and repeat examples. They're like viruses. Use your five senses. It could be your own or one of so many other Edmonton success stories that illustrate and prove our brand character. Telling a story takes marketing out of the realm of the abstract and into the unforgettable.

STORIES

The stories we tell are deliberate. They embody openness, courage, inventiveness, and cooperation. We use founding mythologies: a few people, an idea, and a whole city getting behind them. We want our audiences to feel that if they live here, they can do it too.





WHAT ARE YOU MAKING? HOW CAN WE HELP?

CLEARWATER DOCUMENTARY

Clearwater Documentary, led by co-founders Tom Radford and Niobe Thompson, has become one of Canada's most ambitious, busiest, and lauded film companies. Their science documentaries have won every award in Canadian film.

Clearwater visits extraordinary places around the world. Like a lot of us, Niobe and Tom often hear, "I can't believe you're doing all that from Edmonton." But they are attracting talent from across Canada to their headquarters here, and exporting their films to the world.

When Niobe was ready to record the score for his latest film, *The Great Human Odyssey*, he did so in a very Edmonton way. He could have gone to an orchestra overseas, or hired a producer to create it in a studio with synthesizers. Instead he joined up with Edmonton-born composer Darren Fung, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra musicians, and the Pro Coro Canada choir. Together they recorded the score over three days in the Winspear. And on one memorable night, they threw open the doors and invited Edmontonians in to see and hear the magic happen.

TAKE A RISK. IT'S THE MOST EDMONTON THING YOU CAN DO.

THE CITADEL THEATRE

Joe Shoctor grew up on Boyle Street. As a Victoria Composite kid he acted and wrote plays, played producer. As a theatre-mad young man he followed his heart and moved nearly 4,000 kilometres away, to New York. He worked in theatre and learned the business. When he returned to Edmonton to practice law, Shoctor decided to take what he had learned and build something extraordinary here. He knew that in this city, we make our own fun. So he bought the old Salvation Army Citadel on 102nd Street south of Jasper Avenue.

Shoctor convinced Sandy Mactaggart, James

Martin, and Ralph MacMillan to invest. They launched the first season in 1965.

The Citadel Theatre was born audaciously and has grown bolder since Shoctor's time. In 1978, the Citadel moved to its current location and became the largest and most ambitious theatre complex west of Ontario. The Citadel under artistic director Bob Baker is as strong and as surprising as ever, its performances drawing on a new generation of local talent.





WHY HAVEN'T YOU DONE THAT THING YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO? THERE'S A CITY THAT WANTS THAT FROM YOU.

THE EDMONTON YOUNG OFFENDERS BOOK CLUB

As a community librarian with the Castle Downs EPL branch, Laura Young's job is to connect with as many people as possible. But she knew one cohort was missing out.

The Edmonton Young Offenders Centre (EYOC) is located in the community, but the youth living there had no access to library services. So, in early 2011, Laura reached out to a youth worker and the director of the EYOC and launched three weekly book clubs. Boys and girls aged 12 to 20 years old take part.

Aside from improving their literacy and making connections with others, the youth deeply appreciate that someone from the community wants to be at the centre and spend time with them.

Laura will tell you there's something special about Edmonton that helped make this program a reality. With far too much humility, she still reflects with wonder and surprise on the bridges she built between librarians, corrections officers and marginalized youth.

FIVE MINUTES HERE AND YOU'RE ONE OF US.

CANDY CANE LANE

It began simply enough in 1968, when Esther Matcham and her husband moved from Saskatoon to Crestwood on 148th Street.

Saskatoon held an annual Christmas lights festival and competition, and Esther wondered if there was anything similar in Edmonton. She used templates of a snowman and a candy cane from the Saskatoon festival, and shared them with her neighbours, so they could make their own decorations.

They added a few Christmas lights, and then: wonder and delight.

People started coming to see the decorations and hear the carollers who strolled down the street. Other neighbours joined in, adorning their houses and front lawns with pretty lights and festive displays. One block of houses turned to three, three to six, and a neighbourhood effort — and an Edmonton holiday tradition — took off.

In the early 2000s, another resident had the idea to encourage visitors to drop off food for the Edmonton Food Bank. Candy Cane Lane now collects over 25,000 kilograms in food donations each year.





IT'S NOT WHO YOU KNOW. IT'S WHAT YOU'RE MAKING.

RUNNING ROOM

In 1981, when John Stanton was in his early thirties, he went for a run with his sons.

At the time he was the picture of bad health: overweight and smoking too much. Worried his friends and neighbours would see him, he started to sneak in runs. Slowly, and then quickly, running changed his life.

John wanted to bring this change to others. He left his job as a food industry executive to open a tiny running shop in Edmonton in 1984, sharing the space with a hairdressing boutique. John sold shoes and clothes,

but the Running Room expanded into an exciting North American brand by doing a very Edmonton thing: it builds community among people who'd otherwise be strangers. The Running Room teaches us to run and encourages us to run together. Today there are more than one hundred Running Room stores across the continent.

TRY. FAIL. TRY AGAIN. SUCCEED.

PCL CONSTRUCTION

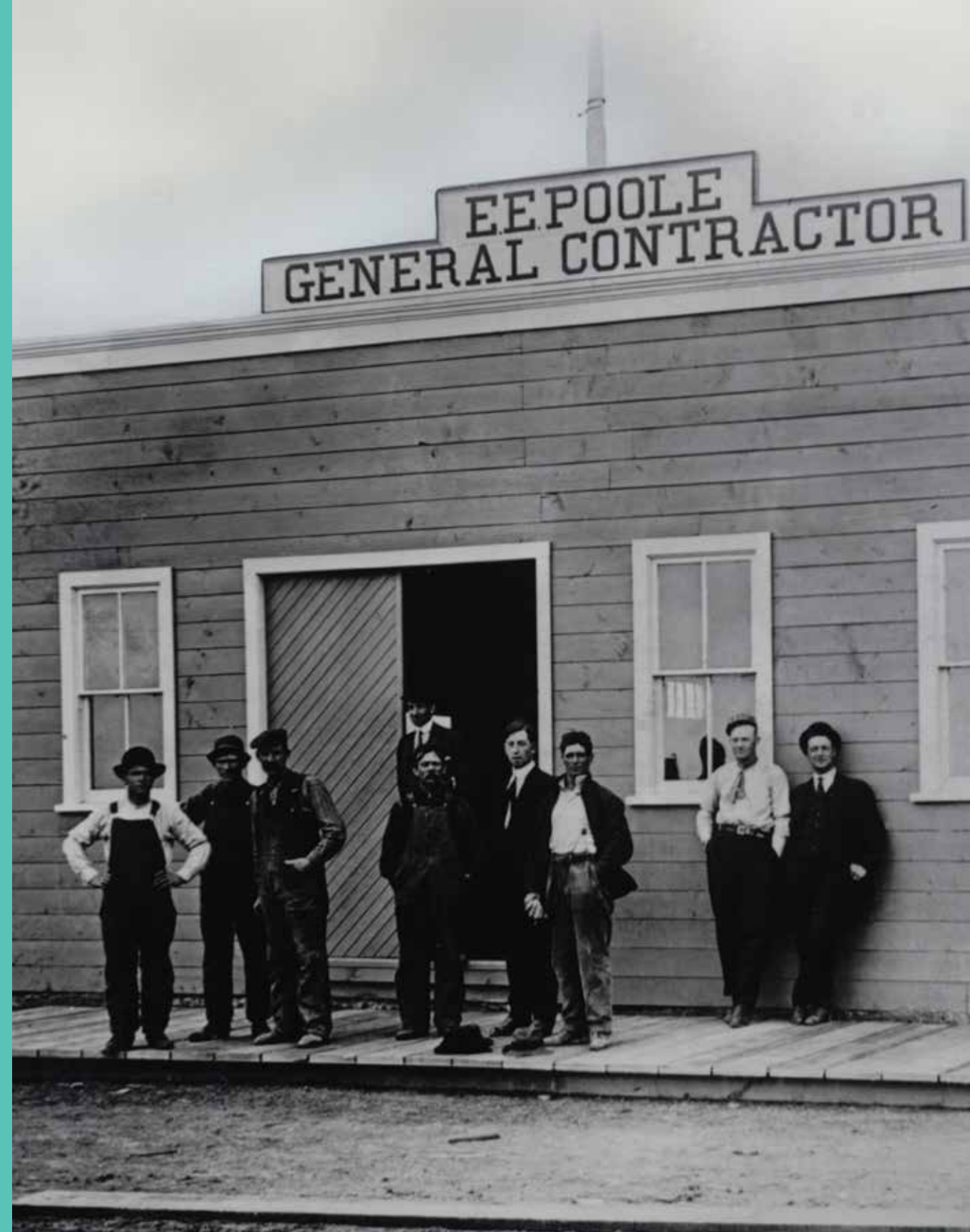
In the early years of the Great Depression, Ernest Poole moved his family construction business from Saskatchewan to Edmonton.

The company nearly went bankrupt but Ernest and his sons, John and George Poole, found support, encouragement, and the source of new ideas in Edmonton. John and George learned from their father, a community builder and a patron of the arts.

After WWII, the sons bought the company from their father and it grew rapidly across the continent. In 1977, the family sold Poole

Construction to Bob Stollery and a group of other employees, launching a new era as PCL. John Poole and his wife Barbara became Edmonton's most active and imaginative philanthropists.

At the same time, PCL became the most successful construction firm in the country; the largest in Canada and the fifth-largest in the U.S. Throughout this expansion they maintained their unique status as an employee-owned company. From their home in Edmonton, they're building cities and industries all over North America and Australia.





WHAT ARE YOU MAKING? HOW CAN WE HELP?

IHUMAN

In 1997, a few Edmontonians came together to solve a problem: there were too many neglected and forgotten young people on the streets.

Some were homeless. Others battled addictions and mental illness. The route into crime was too easy. And there was no existing model that worked well to solve this problem.

So the people behind the iHuman Youth Society built an alternative that was more attractive, more powerful, more Edmonton:

they built it on creativity. The iHuman Youth Society invites young people to find new directions in their lives through the arts and artistic expression.

Since it launched, iHuman has never turned a youth down. The society has helped thousands of young people. In the true cooperative spirit of Edmonton, more than 500 people and businesses large and small kicked in to build a new home for iHuman, which will open in 2015.

EVERY INVENTOR NEEDS A NEIGHBOUR.

EDMONTON'S COMMUNITY LEAGUES

Edmonton's community leagues date back to 1907, when the city became the first in Canada to adopt the idea of creating organizations focused solely on individual neighbourhoods. Hockey, unsurprisingly, was the first program on offer.

In 1917, the 142nd Street District Community League (now Crestwood) formed, and convinced the City of Edmonton to designate a block of land for recreational use, forever linking Edmonton's community leagues with recreational space and programming.

Today there are 158 individual leagues. Ours is the strongest and most successful network in the country.

Community leagues are where kids learn to ride a bike or practice karate, where mothers gather with their newborn babies, or play league basketball. Where fathers cheer on their kids' softball team or play shinny, where seniors gather for socials and bridge and cribbage. They're where newcomers to Edmonton get to know their neighbours, or step onto a skating rink for the very first time.





SOME CITIES ARE FINISHED. OTHERS YOU CAN CHANGE.

AL-RASHID MOSQUE

In the 1930s, there were just a few hundred Muslims in Canada. But a group of Muslim women in Edmonton set out to get the first mosque built in the country. Different cultural groups helped them make it happen.

The women approached the mayor of Edmonton, John Fry, and arranged the use of the land near the Royal Alexandra Hospital. A Ukrainian-Canadian contractor agreed to take on the work, while members of the Christian and Jewish communities helped raise funds to build the mosque. It opened its doors to the community in 1938.

By the 1980s, the booming 16,000 person Muslim community had outgrown the mosque and moved to a larger, newer building. The original mosque fell into disrepair. The Canadian Council of Muslim Women lobbied to save the mosque, and it was relocated to its current spot, within Fort Edmonton Park.