

Our communities



Edmonton's Community Leagues

The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues is an umbrella organization for our city's 150 leagues.

- Our first community league, now called the Crestwood Community League, started in 1917. Edmonton was the first city in Canada to adopt the idea of this community-based organization.
- Our community leagues provide sports, educational and cultural activities, and give people an opportunity to be directly involved in municipal affairs affecting their neighbourhoods.

Source: Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, 2009.

A city where we belong

Debby Waldman moved to Edmonton in 1992 – planning to stay a couple of years while her husband, an Edmontonian, finished his post-doctoral fellowship. Then they'd move back to the U.S., Debby's home. The move never happened.

"Cut to 17 years later. I can't imagine living anywhere else but Edmonton" says Debby. "This place has become as much my home as Dave's. Over the years he's been offered jobs in cities I would once have jumped at the chance to live in. But when we weighed the pros and cons Edmonton won every time."

We have a great house in a terrific neighbourhood with wonderful neighbours, there are good shops and restaurants nearby, we can easily get tickets to see shows or concerts or movies, and our kids are getting a good education and have opportunities to participate in a variety of activities. And it's all affordable. I wish we were closer to the northeastern United States, but that just makes going back to my other home more special -- and then I come back to this home, our home".

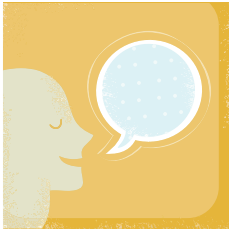
The way Debby feels about our city is not uncommon for Edmontonians. We like where we live and the vast majority of us would recommend living here. The chart on **page 20** shows that most of us feel proud to tell people we live in Edmonton, we rate our quality of life as high and we think the city provides us a good opportunity to make a living.

Liveable communities are defined by people feeling connected to their community. In Edmonton there are some aspects of community building that don't ring as true for all of us:

- just 30% of us get involved in neighbourhood events or activities,
- almost 20% of us feel that we could not count on our neighbours in an emergency.¹⁹

In discussing the reasons for this, focus group participants felt there aren't enough places in their neighbourhood, other than the playground, to get together. Others said that between work and our long winters, they simply don't see their neighbours out and about.

¹⁹ Leger Marketing, Community Values Survey conducted on behalf of City of Edmonton Community Services Department, June 2009.



What's the Deal With These Community Leagues?

"My wife and I were out with some new friends, all of whom had recently moved to Edmonton.

Surprisingly, the first topic of conversation when we sat down was, 'what's the deal with these community leagues?'

Turns out, after living all over the world, and in cities all across Canada, this was the first time they had heard of this kind of community-based organization. Apparently Edmonton is unique, at least in North America, perhaps in the world, for having organized and built itself around community leagues... and, in effect, around the idea of community.

The result is a kind of community spirit that you don't find anywhere else and that, as someone born and raised in Edmonton, I hadn't realized was quite so special." - Winston Pei

What we do for our community

Many of our city's events depend on Edmontonians' willingness to donate their time. From summer festivals, to support for those who find themselves in need, about 46% of us help out by volunteering.²⁰

Take Homeless Connect for example. It's a one-day event offering a wide range of services to Edmontonians who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. It takes place in the spring and again in the fall. Its success is due, in part, to the hundreds of Edmontonians who volunteer their time to help out.

"I had a wonderful time volunteering that day. My brother, niece and I were very impressed with the amount of services available and organizing that had been done to make the event successful. I found the clientele very appreciative and well behaved. I'll be there in October," commented one Homeless Connect volunteer in the feedback survey.

Edmontonians volunteer for many reasons: we want to be involved in the community; we believe in the cause or we're personally affected by the cause.

²⁰ Volunteer Edmonton Fact Sheet. 40.2% of the respondents to the Community Values Survey indicated that they help out by volunteering in Edmonton. As the accuracy level of the weighted sample for this survey is +6.34 percentage points 19 times out of 20, the proportion of residents who volunteer can be expected to be between 33.9% and 46.5%.



Charitable Donations in 2007

24%

of Edmonton tax filers donated to a charity, down from 31% in '91

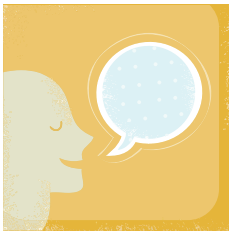
\$1,923

was donated by Edmonton residents, on average. That's lower than the provincial average, but higher than the national average

50

was the average age of people making donations

Source: Statistics Canada Tax Filer Data and Nichols Applied Management Inc.



A Neighbourhood Where I Belong

Jan Wallace's family has a 15 year old tradition. It's one that, for her neighbourhood as a whole, has an even longer history – 28 years. Every May the neighbours meet, divvy up the chores and start planning their annual block party. It begins with a Saturday morning community garage sale, with goods displayed on people's driveways. When the one-day sale wraps up, the crescent is closed to traffic, the barbecues and lawn chairs are pulled out and the potluck party begins.

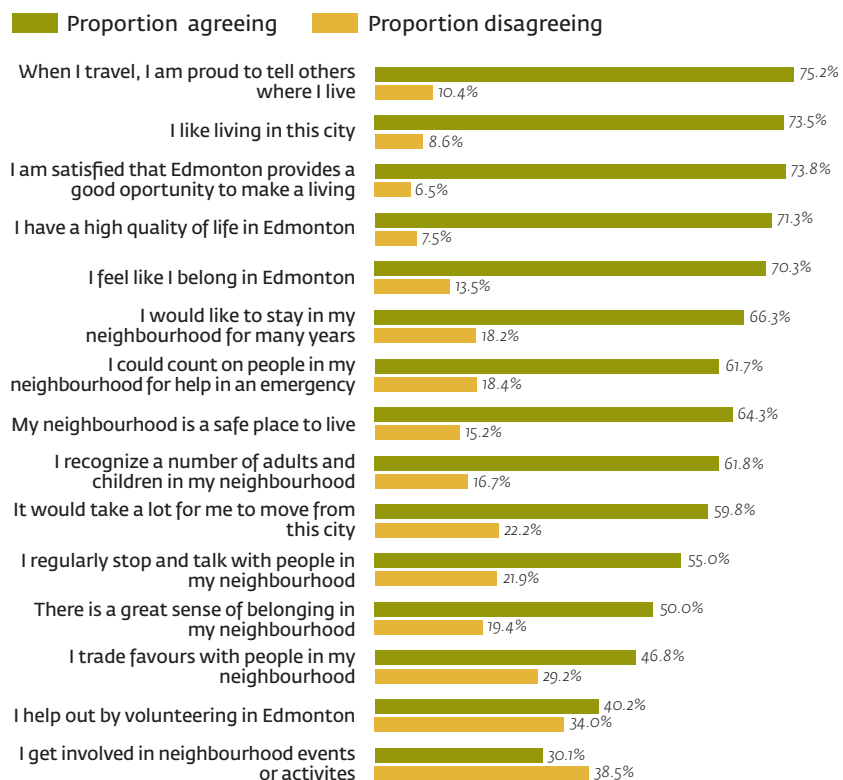
"We always sing O Canada, standing together on someone's front lawn. We welcome new people to the neighbourhood and say goodbye to anyone who's leaving," says Jan. "And we always, every year, take a group picture." Firefighters and police officers from the local detachments are invited and the night ends with a bonfire. But the party's far from over. The next morning, everyone gathers again for a pancake breakfast.

"You really get to know your neighbours. We even hand out guides, listing who lives where and their phone numbers." Jan's family sold their house just recently. But they're not going far. Their new home is right across the street. It's a neighbourhood where people feel they belong; a neighbourhood few want to leave.

– Jan Wallace



Agreement with community index questions



Source: Leger Marketing, 2009 Community Values Survey conducted on behalf of City of Edmonton Community Services Department, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Survey data was weighted to reflect the age and gender profile of the City of Edmonton's 18 and over population in the city of Edmonton's 2009 Municipal Census.

2. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is disagree completely and 5 is agree completely.