

C A L G A R Y  
**DROP-IN**  
C E N T R E

**2022 - 23 Report to Community**  
April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023



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## Who We Are

At the DI, we welcome adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Working collaboratively with community partners, we offer a broad spectrum of care including emergency shelter, health programs, and housing options – all geared to help people find their way home.

Every person's story is as unique as the situation that brings them to our doors. For many, homelessness is the only option when affordable housing is out of reach, or income has been lost due to illness or having to flee an unsafe situation. Often, experiences of trauma, especially in early childhood, leave a lasting impact on a person's mental and physical health. Regardless of what led a person to the DI, our goal is to make their time with us as brief as possible.

Experiencing homelessness and lacking the basic necessities of life leads to disproportionately high rates of health issues, like substance use. As the drug crisis continues to escalate, we have added additional supports including a drug poisoning response program, detox and recovery transition programs, which together provide new pathways to treatment, recovery, and ultimately housing.



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## Land Acknowledgement

Calgary Drop-In Centre acknowledges that we are on Treaty 7 territory. Reconciliation is the responsibility for all. We respect the oral practices and cultures of the people of The Blackfoot Confederacy of Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations, the Îyâxe Nakoda of Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations, the TsuuT'ina Nation and the people of Métis Nation Region 3, all of whom have been and continue to be strong stewards of these lands and efforts to enrich our communities.

We commit to being a learning organization in efforts of reconciliation and decolonization.

## **Our Mission**

We welcome adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Working collaboratively, we provide access to a spectrum of care that supports each person's transition to the most independent living possible — including emergency shelter, programs and services, and affordable and supported housing.

## **Our Vision**

A community where everyone can find their home.

## **Our Values**



### **Respect**

Our actions honour the rights, differences, and dignity of others.



### **Community**

Through collaborative partnerships, we work together as a team, building inclusive communities.



### **Kindness**

We accept each person's uniqueness with compassion and empathy.



### **Wellness**

We promote, provide, and support holistic wellbeing.



### **Accountability**

We operate with transparency and integrity in both our relationships and our commitments.



## We all have the power to help solve homelessness for somebody.

Compassion. Empathy. Understanding. I'm not saying exercising these traits is all it takes – but putting them into practice for another can be the start of what sparks someone's exit from homelessness. I've seen it. Many of you have too.

I'm proud of the work we do here at the Calgary Drop-In Centre. And when I say "we," I mean all of us: staff, volunteers, partner agencies, government, donors, and guests. It takes a community to build community and the community supporting people experiencing homelessness or precarious housing is a great example.

The heart of our community here at the DI is the people we serve. Everyone's journey into homelessness or near-homelessness is unique to them, as are their pathways out. We welcome all who need us, and offer services with as few barriers as possible. By meeting people where they are at, we can focus on helping everyone create a new life for themselves, full of connection and hope, happiness, friends, self-determination, and good health.

Gaining a home is a journey and we're proud to be part of it, as are so many of our partners. Community provides strength in numbers and strength in unity. Because we're working toward a common goal, we

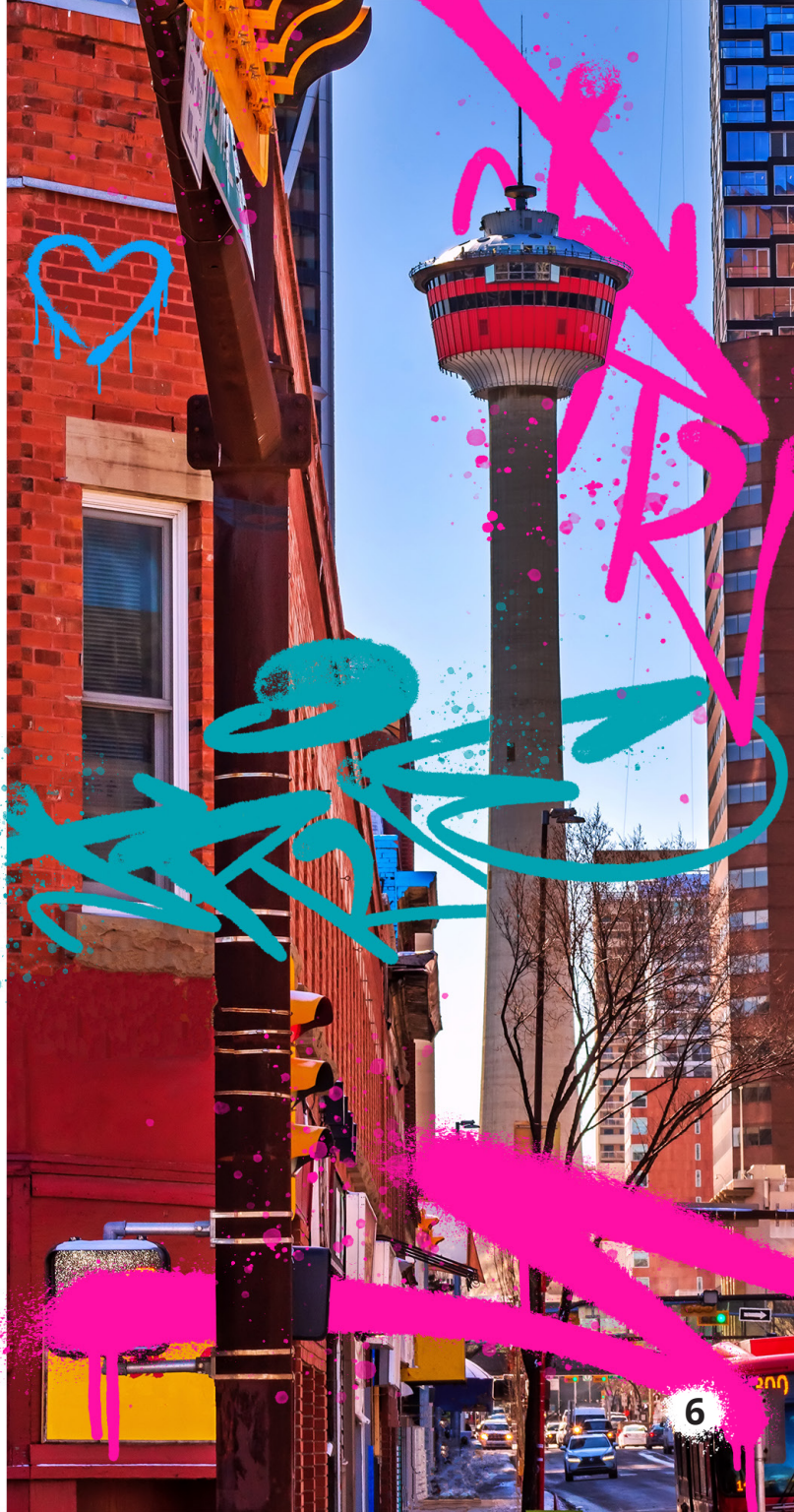


leverage one another's strengths and work much better together than as individual players trying to be all things to all people. We know homelessness is fraught with complexities, and a one-size-fits-all solution, unfortunately, isn't going to cut it. Different parts of the homeless-serving continuum are needed by different people at various points of time and progress. Collaboration is the best way to be truly effective.

We need you to collaborate too. Exercise your compassion, empathy, and understanding for folks who may not look like you, act like you, or live like you. It's in your power to use your gifts to make the world a better place for all. Thank you for letting the Calgary Drop-In Centre community be part of your work toward doing just that.

Your partner in ending homelessness,  
Sandra Clarkson  
Executive Director

**“Everyone's journey into homelessness or near-homelessness is unique to them, as are their pathways out.”**





# Shelter

## More than emergency shelter

The DI provides more than just a place to stay for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. We offer a broad spectrum of care including health programs, and housing options – all geared to help people find their way home. No matter how long a person is here, we help provide a safe, low-barrier space for all who access the DI, regardless of their circumstances. At the DI, we see shelter as a process, not a destination.

The DI is a housing-focused shelter, and we work with individuals to make their stay with us as brief as possible. We know that housing can be a first step towards recovery and when we eliminate competing needs such as health vs. home, we can work towards helping those experiencing homelessness get the proper rest and care they need.

“  
**People need stable housing before they can deal with any issues they may be suffering from.**  
”

- Fatima, DI Staff



# The DI follows these six foundational elements as a housing-focused emergency shelter:

**Low Barrier**

**Person-centered Care**

**Harm Reduction Principles**

**Shelter is a Process, not a Destination**

**Trauma-informed**

**Housing First Principles**



# of unique individuals who accessed shelter

<b>3,417</b>	<b>4,416</b>	<b>6,839</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



# of people sleeping in shelter per day

<b>423</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>505</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



# of meals served

<b>592,384</b>	<b>512,236</b>	<b>552,600</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



***“For many, the lack of affordable housing options is out of reach and is causing people to become homeless or stuck in unsafe situations.” - Kate, DI Staff***

# Drug Crisis

## 20 drug poisonings in 12 hours

A view from the front line

“ We’re twice as busy in the winter compared to the summer months. Due to the high number of guests staying inside the building, it increases our 911 calls substantially. There was one shift that I remember distinctly being both mentally and physically challenging on our medical staff. Within a 12-hour period, 20 clients experienced a drug poisoning. An emergency call in these instances runs the same way; we get the page on our radio, arrive at the scene, administer naloxone and oxygen, and stay alongside the individual until they regain consciousness.

The average response for a drug poisoning takes about 20-30 minutes, and sometimes with only two medics on site. During this shift, Health Services was receiving multiple drug poisoning calls within one hour - some at the same time. We had no spare time in between calls to gather new supplies, chart, or even catch our breath.

This shift impacted all of us both mentally and physically. This made me realize that our guests need us more than ever.

”

# STRENGTH



# drug poisonings responded to

<b>394</b>	<b>1,033</b>	<b>1,856</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



# of doses of naloxone

<b>1,148</b>	<b>2,733</b>	<b>4,173</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23

## Words Matter

At the DI, we encourage the use of respectful, non-stigmatizing language when describing substance use disorders, addiction, and people who use drugs.



# Health

## Expanding health services

When the DI first started offering health services in 2007, we had one part time nurse who primarily dealt with wound care. Today, we have a clinic staffed by over 40 health professionals who are now also responding to drug poisonings, treating opioid addiction, helping guests manage their medications, and connecting them with other health supports in the community.

As the drug crisis escalated, we needed to take action to expand our response and other harm reduction measures to protect those in shelter from the risk of drug poisonings.

Increasing our frontline staff to include more nurses, around the clock medics, peer support workers, mental health and addiction navigators, clinical educators, and administrators has been critical in assisting our guests in their recovery, health, and their pathway to housing.

CALGARY HERALD

### Province partners with Drop-In Centre to expand addictions treatment space, add 35 new beds

*The new available space will enable the shelter to support up to 1,000 people each year*

Olivia Condon  
Published Feb 15, 2023 • Last Updated Feb 15, 2023 • 2 minute read



# of Health Services appointments

14,057	29,176	44,099
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



average # of appointments per individual

15	20
2021-22	2022-23

“As a frontline nurse, it is incredible to have the opportunity to develop a rapport with guests”, says Renae. “Some don't automatically give their trust due to bad experiences, so it's wonderful when we gain that trust, and we can support people in a way that makes sense to them”.

One of our major accomplishments this year was to secure funding for new programs that contribute to a recovery-oriented system of care. These programs help people who are ready to begin or continue their recovery journey.

## We cannot do this work alone. We are partnered with:





# Housing

## Calgary is experiencing a rental affordability crisis

The journey of housing low and no-income Calgarians can feel like an uphill battle, fraught with many pitfalls and roadblocks along the way. While many different supports are available to those who need them, the real challenge is finding affordable rentals now, at a cost that's sustainable over time.

**“ I have the pleasure of working with many landlords who are compassionate, caring, and truly want to end homelessness in Calgary. ”**

*- Kevin, DI Staff*

Other issues arise when people are faced with resistance from landlords, who would rather not rent to those on income supports. Unfortunately, there are sometimes negative assumptions associated with renting to people on a limited income.

We are fortunate to have opportunities to work with landlords to increase their understanding of the supports we provide to ensure a relationship that is mutually beneficial.

**HOME**

***“Housing people during the housing crisis has proved exhausting, we have all these subsidy programs being offered but nowhere to place people.” - Angelina, DI Staff***

## Calgary Housing and Affordability Task Force Recommendations

Earlier this year, the Housing and Affordability Task Force released recommendations and actions that would improve our housing affordability and set our housing sector up to respond to some of the challenges it will face in the next decade.



Scan to learn more!

Are you a landlord in Calgary? We'd like to build a relationship with you! Email [landlords@thedi.ca](mailto:landlords@thedi.ca)



# of people housed

<b>402</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>553</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



# of people who avoided homelessness by early intervention

<b>92</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>232</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



% rate of people returning to shelter

<b>2.99%</b>	<b>3.78%</b>	<b>4.19%</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23





# Free Goods Program

## Getting donations into the right hands

The Free Goods Program collects new and used donations and distributes them to Calgarians who need them – at no cost. Working with over 120 agencies throughout the city, the DI’s Free Goods Program collects donations of furniture, appliances, and other household items, clothing, technology, personal hygiene products, and non-perishable food, and gets them into the hands of thousands of Calgarians a year.

The largest initiative under the Free Goods Program, our Move Out Program, assists Calgarians who are transitioning into long-term housing – sometimes for the first time in a very long time – to not only equip them with essentials but to provide that little extra that helps make a house a home.

“Every day we have the privilege of watching eyes light up and apprehension turn to optimism as community members realize that they can choose how they want their home to look and feel, sometimes after months or

**“ We are proud to provide a warm welcome to our community for those struggling to make ends meet, with refugees and newcomers now making up more than 40% of total referrals to the program. ”**

- Ryan, DI Staff

years of not having a place to call their own,” says Chris, DI Staff.

With over 10,000 people benefiting from our Move Out Program, and over 275,000 items distributed by the Free Goods Program, the Drop-In Centre is helping furnish, clothe, and prepare Calgarians for the transition from homeless to housed.

Help us break down barriers to housing,  
contact [community@thedi.ca](mailto:community@thedi.ca)



**# of people served by the Free Goods Program**

<b>4,853</b>	<b>7,191</b>	<b>10,846</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



**# of items distributed by the Free Goods Program**

<b>72,625</b>	<b>191,091</b>	<b>275,069</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



**# of visits to our Clothing Room:**

<b>5,305</b>	<b>15,392</b>	<b>22,393</b>
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23



***“I remember helping a young couple fleeing the war in Ukraine. They were sleeping on mats on the floor since they arrived in Canada. They were so grateful to be able to not only receive beds, but start furnishing their whole apartment.”***

*- Dale, DI Staff*

# Thanks to our Donors

The DI is tremendously grateful for the growing community of generous and loyal donors who contribute to us each year. Here are some of the many ways community support is making an impact.



CHANDOS

## Building better communities

Recognized as a purpose-driven organization, dedicated to positively impacting employees, communities, and the planet, Chandos Construction has been supporting the DI since 2017. They played a huge part in the construction of the DI's newest residential building, creating homes for people who previously didn't have one – an initiative they are truly proud of.

They have also been long time champions of our Kindness Open golf tournament, which raises funds to help Calgarians build foundations for better futures.

## Paul Valentine, Valentine Volvo

### Monthly giving inspired by faith and family

As a monthly donor for the past 11 years, Paul Valentine has graciously contributed 10% of company profits to the agencies that support our most vulnerable community members. Inspired by his parents and faith, Paul Valentine says the family business has always supported those less fortunate, knowing that one little thing can make a world of difference in someone's life. In addition to the impact this support has had on so many, the Valentine culture of giving back has inspired generations of family, friends, employees, and colleagues to do the same.



## A record-breaking Giving Tuesday

This year Viewpoint Foundation helped make a huge impact on the work we do at the DI. Because of their matching gift, on Giving Tuesday (the world's largest generosity movement) over \$200,000 was raised for the DI in one unified day of giving.

Established by the Van Wielingen family, Viewpoint is committed to helping understand the needs of the community and nurturing lasting relationships with the organizations they work with. They are also involved in a project in memory of Adam Van Wielingen, to reimagine the DI's music program to bring education, empathy and entertainment to the wider community. Viewpoint's commitment to transformational change is felt throughout the community, and we are honored they stand behind us.

## Morgan Stanley

### Living their core values

Morgan Stanley is passionate about giving back to the communities where they work and live. For the past year, they have been volunteering with us, creating a positive impact wherever there is an opportunity to help. They support us in so many ways and are one of our "regulars" but were particularly busy helping us in June, during Morgan Stanley's Global Volunteer Month.

We are very thankful for their contributions and willingness to deepen their understanding of the people we serve – they are valued members of our team.

## Terry Horne

### A frontline champion

For the past 15 years Terry Horne has been coming into the DI's kitchen to help with meal service, along with helping sponsor meals for those in need. Weekly, Terry has formed connections with both guests and staff, bringing a warm energy into the kitchen. He is also the 2023 recipient of our Orange Brunch Respect Award. We are grateful to have volunteers like Terry, who become valuable members of our team with all they give back while making a difference. "It's rewarding for me to help on some small level. I found my niche in the kitchen," says Terry. "The DI provides a literal lifeline for Calgary's most vulnerable people.



# Volunteers

## The heart of our community

It takes a community to build community, and here at the DI, our volunteers are often the glue that holds it all together. There is no corner of the DI that has not benefited from the generosity of these skilled and kind Calgarians.

We are amazed by the magnitude of work done by our volunteers. Between serving meals, sorting donations, educating the community, supporting with logistics, and fundraising, there is massive breadth within our volunteer program.

Volunteers play a critical role at the DI by contributing to nearly every aspect of day-to-day operations, and become cherished members of our team. Whether it is coming in occasionally, often, or dedicating a practicum term here. The work done by those sharing their time and expertise helps us do better and more for all.

**“To all the amazing volunteers in our community, thank you! You have made a difference - I hear it from our guests, I see it myself. There is so much work to be done and we are so grateful you have decided to join us.”**

- Eman, DI staff



***“Volunteers play a critical role at the DI, contributing to nearly every aspect of our day-to-day work.” - Chris, DI Staff***

In 2022, there were over **42,000 volunteer hours** contributed. That is equivalent to over **22 full-time positions!**



**Total volunteer hours**

**42,352**



**Total practicum student hours**

**9,642**

Contact [volunteer@thedi.ca](mailto:volunteer@thedi.ca) to get involved today!



**THANKS!**



# 2022-23 Board of Directors

## Champions of the community

Our board is comprised of 12 purpose-driven, generous, hard-working individuals who are committed to building meaningful change in our community.



**Graham Richardson**  
Chair



**Mirela Hiti**  
Vice Chair



**Catherine Hamill**  
Secretary



**Jase Vanover**  
Treasurer



**Sydney Frazer**



**Thomas Hansen**



**Colan Kee**



**Ayesha Khory**



**Aman Bagga**



**Chris Montgomery**



**Mark Neufeld**



**Alisha Visanji**

## What does a meal mean to you?

“

“A meal is so much. I come from a culture where it's all about food, all the time we don't do anything without food. To me a meal is connection and history. It is so much more than just food on your plate. The impact it makes for someone to eat something nutritious, something they may have had in childhood or that they recognize, it's incredible.”

Eman,  
DI staff

”



# Strategic Priorities

2020-23



## According to the 2022 Point-In-Time Count, there were roughly 2,782 people experiencing homelessness on any given night.

In 2022, 6,839 unique individuals who needed a place to rest, refuel, access housing support and health services were connected to care at our emergency shelter. Also last year, our Free Goods program helped an approximate 10,000 Calgarians access furniture, clothing and other items to support their transition from homelessness to housed.

- 1 Response plan:** Maintain a low-barrier shelter and collaborate proactively with our peers in the homeless-serving sector.
- 2 Case Management:** Expand assessment, triage, and integrated case management across programs within the agency and, where possible, across the homeless-serving sector to help clients achieve the most independent living possible.
- 3 Housing Access:** Develop a strategy with other agencies (or our colleagues, partners) to house/find homes for those in the shelter continuing to experience chronic homelessness.
- 4 Health Services:** Working collaboratively, we will establish access to existing health and addictions services or develop and implement new services where no appropriate options exist.
- 5 Workplace Safety:** Create work practices and procedures that are actively monitored and managed to promote safety and wellness in the workplace for staff and volunteers.
- 6 Efficiency:** Establish best practice professional management capabilities to optimize the efficiency of our assets and resources.
- 7 Engagement:** Leverage data to demonstrate impact unique to each stakeholder group to build engagement and support for our vision and mission.
- 8 Data:** Continue to refine our extensible data collection, reporting, and analysis systems.

# Financial Summary

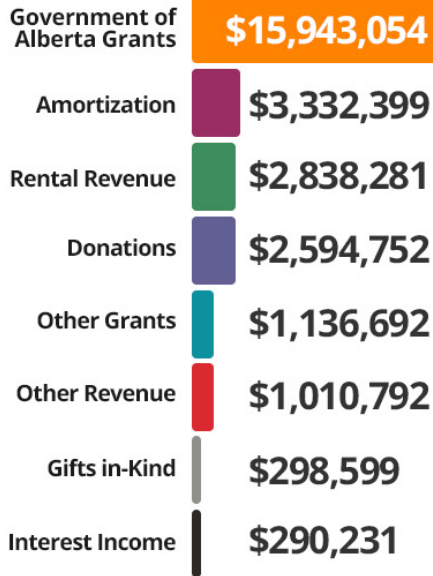
During the fiscal year 2022-2023, the DI delivered excellent work not only effectively managing the finances of the Society in an environment of shrinking revenues and inflationary pressures on cost, but also continuing to improve financial processes and adding value to the organization. This past year marks my final year as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance, Facilities, and Risk Committee; I am confident that, under the governance of the Board and the diligence of DI management, the financial health of the organization will continue to be well maintained and solvent.

With my departure from the Board, I also want to thank my fellow Board members for their cooperation and for allowing me the privilege of contributing to an organization that does so much good for so many people. I wish Sydney Frazer the best of luck as the DI's incoming Treasurer, and I will continue to follow and champion the mission of the DI from afar for years to come.

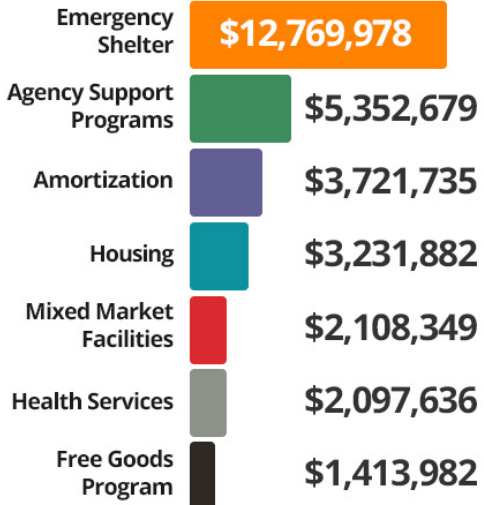


- Jase Vanover, Treasurer

## Total Revenue: \$27,444,800



## Total Expenses: \$30,696,241





# A future built on kindness

We are always working with our community partners to help Calgary's most vulnerable citizens find their way home. To create as many pathways as we can, while understanding that every person's journey is unique. This work is complex, and the need is immense. There is no one agency or one program that can tackle it in isolation.

The reason the DI exists is to help those experiencing homelessness create a new life for themselves, full of self-determination, connection, health, and hope.

Kindness is the foundation of our work, and if I could share one message with you, it would be to have compassion for those around you. For those who might not look like you or live like you.

Be kind. Use your privilege for good and make your community a better place for all.

- Sandra Clarkson, Executive Director



STAFF

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KEEP  
SMILING

# Join the DI community today!

## How to get involved:

- ✓ **Donate** to areas of greatest need
- ✓ **Volunteer** your time and talent
- ✓ **Subscribe** to receive updates

Have a unique idea about how you can make an impact? We'd love to hear from you!

Email us at [community@thedi.ca](mailto:community@thedi.ca)



Spread some **kindness** online @calgarydropin