

AFCC WINTER 2024/2025

# NEWSLETTER

## ANNOUNCEMENT:



**Knightsbridge**  
ARCHITECTURE & CONSTRUCTION

**NORTH WIND**  
MANAGEMENT CORP.

**AFCC Selected to Develop New  
Culturally Safe Affordable Housing in Calgary**



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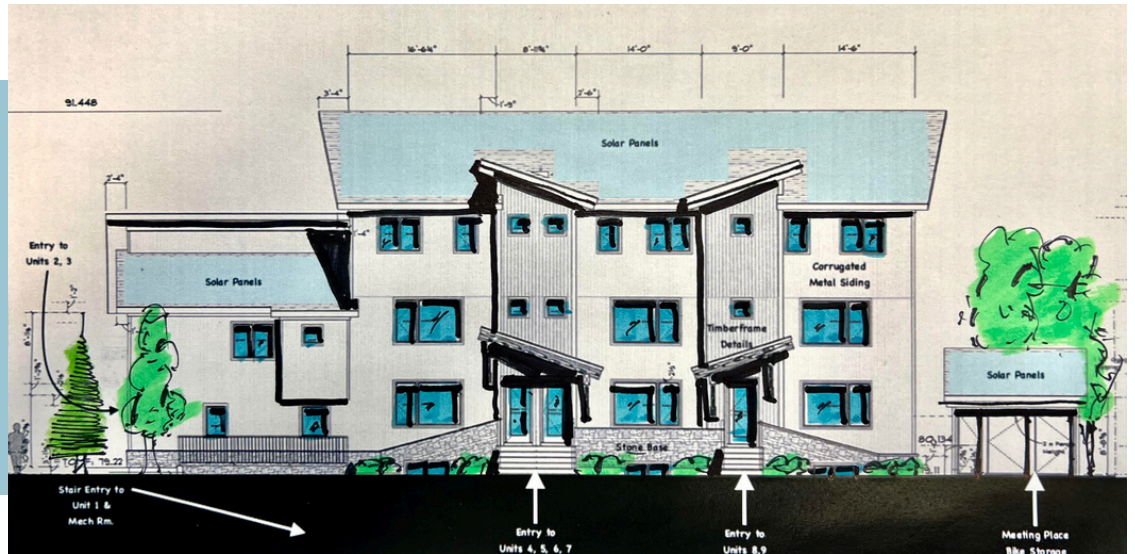
To make a donation, please scan the QR code for more details or email us at [info@afccalgary.org](mailto:info@afccalgary.org).

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**ABORIGINAL  
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CENTRE OF CALGARY**  
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# AFCC Selected to Develop New Culturally Safe Affordable Housing in Calgary



The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) is proud to announce its selection as one of the non-profit organizations approved through the City of Calgary's Non-Market Housing Land Disposition program. Through this initiative, AFCC will develop one of five City-owned sites to build culturally safe, affordable housing for Calgary's most vulnerable populations.

This transformative project will include 9 townhomes designed for families, offering not just shelter but a true sense of belonging and community. Building on the success of the Elders' Lodge, this new development will feature culturally enriched spaces for ceremonies, cultural programming, and community connection—fostering stability, healing, and empowerment for residents.

"This project is about more than bricks and mortar—it's the foundation for stability, dignity, and hope," said Shane Gauthier, CEO of AFCC. "We are humbled and honored to continue this important work and deeply grateful for the leadership of Mayor Jyoti Gondek and the support of City Council in making this initiative possible."

The development reflects AFCC's commitment to sustainability by incorporating eco-friendly practices such as solar energy, creating a lasting legacy for future generations. It also aligns with the City of Calgary's "Home is Here: The City of Calgary's Housing Strategy 2023–2030," which prioritizes increasing housing supply to meet growing demand and improve affordability.

This vision has been made possible through the invaluable partnership of Knightsbridge, serving as the Design/Build Team, and North Wind Management Corp., leading project management. Their collaboration with AFCC ensures the successful realization of this culturally grounded and community-driven project.

AFCC remains steadfast in its mission to create culturally safe spaces that support stability, connection, and community for Indigenous families and Calgary's most vulnerable populations. This initiative represents another significant step in addressing Calgary's housing crisis and building a city where everyone has access to safe, welcoming, and affordable housing.



# TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS AT AFCC

🎄 'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the space, The team was hard at work, spreading hope and embrace. Snow softly fell as Calgary turned white, But inside their hearts burned a compassionate light.

🎄 At the front desk, Diane sat with such grace, Sweet and soft-spoken, her warmth filled the place. The longest-serving member, a welcoming guide, With kindness and care, she stood by their side.

🎄 In finance, Val and Brenda worked away, Ensuring the Friendship Centre's bills saw no delay. Brenda, a veteran, the longest by far, Guided the numbers like a bright northern star.

🎄 Krista, Alanna, and Ethel brought humor and cheer, Sharing cultural teachings they held so dear. Through laughter and lessons, they gave hearts a lift, Honoring traditions, their greatest gift.

🎄 Out on the streets, Shane and Nicole took the lead, Facing tough tasks with care and speed. Nicole, with resolve and a heart full of grace, Helped families find closure, their pain to replace.

🎄 The housing team worked to ensure homes were secured, Cynthia led with strength, challenges endured. Joyce, Brett, Faith, and Eric stood strong, With Joyce's wisdom guiding them all along.

🎄 Eric, beyond housing, brought fitness to life, At GoodLife each evening, inspiring through strife. Brett and Faith, with hearts full of care, Found safe spaces for those in despair.

🎄 At the Elders' Drop-In, Eugene held the floor, With Nellie, Veda, and Josh giving even more. Together, they created a haven so true, Where wisdom and stories freely flowed through.

🎄 The work at the Centre is challenging and tough, Supporting Calgary's most vulnerable is never enough. Housing, mental health, addictions, and care. Hampers and hope they tirelessly share.

🎄 At the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, They bring light and love to the community gladly. And as the snow settled softly on this silent night, They called out together with hearts burning bright: "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"





# THE ART SMITH AWARDS 2024

In a powerful demonstration of Calgary's united commitment to supporting our most vulnerable community members, the Art Smith Awards Ceremony brought together the dedicated hearts and hands that work tirelessly to address homelessness in our city.

The November 6th gathering was more than an awards ceremony – it was a celebration of the compassion and dedication shown by front-line staff, leaders, partners, and key stakeholders in our community.

The ceremony began in a good way, with Knowledge Keeper Krista White Pup offering the Land Acknowledgment and opening Blessing, grounding the gathering in cultural protocol and spiritual significance. This sacred foundation set the tone for an evening of recognition and gratitude.



## Terran Orion Shepard

Aboriginal Friendship  
Centre of Calgary (AFCC)



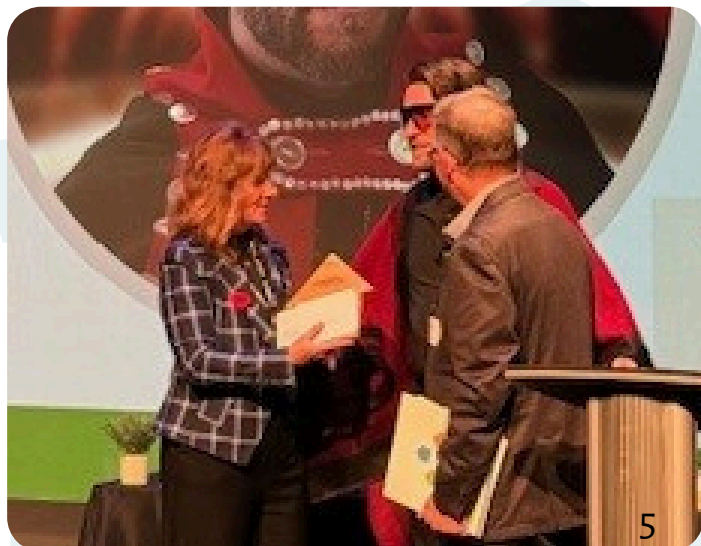
### **Terran Orion Sheperd (Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary) Front-line Employee Collaboration Award**

Among the evening's highlights was a moment of particular pride for the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, as our own Terran Shepard was honoured with the Leadership Award for Collaboration.

This recognition celebrates not only individual excellence but also reflects the importance of working together to support those in need.

The evening concluded with a touching closing prayer from Elder Linda Johnson, bringing full circle a celebration that honoured the outstanding efforts of agency staff supporting Calgary's most vulnerable populations.

The Calgary Homeless Foundation's Board, CEO Patricia Jones, and CHF staff created a meaningful space for recognition and reflection on the important work being done throughout our community.



# AFCC PRESENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY ANTHROPOLOGY CLASS



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) Cultural Reconnection & Community Development (CRCD) team was honored to present at the University of Calgary's Anthropology 203: Introduction to Social & Cultural Anthropology class.





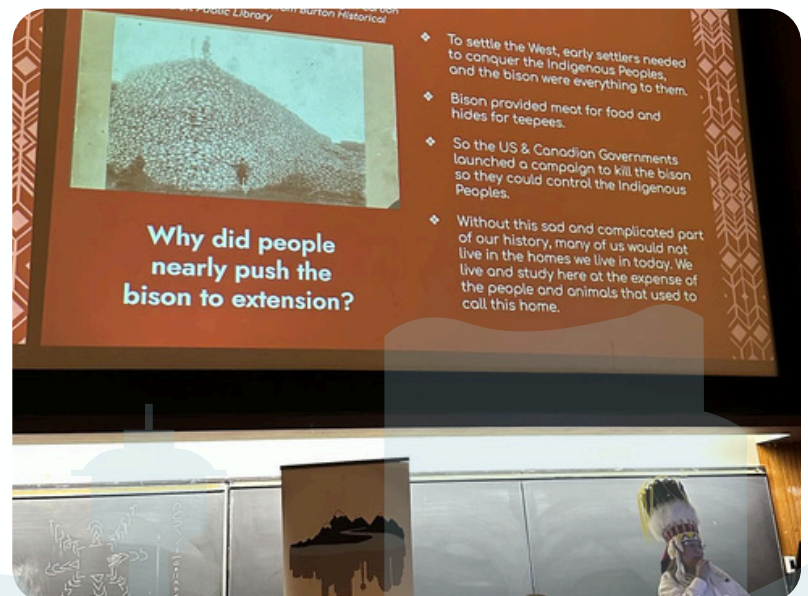
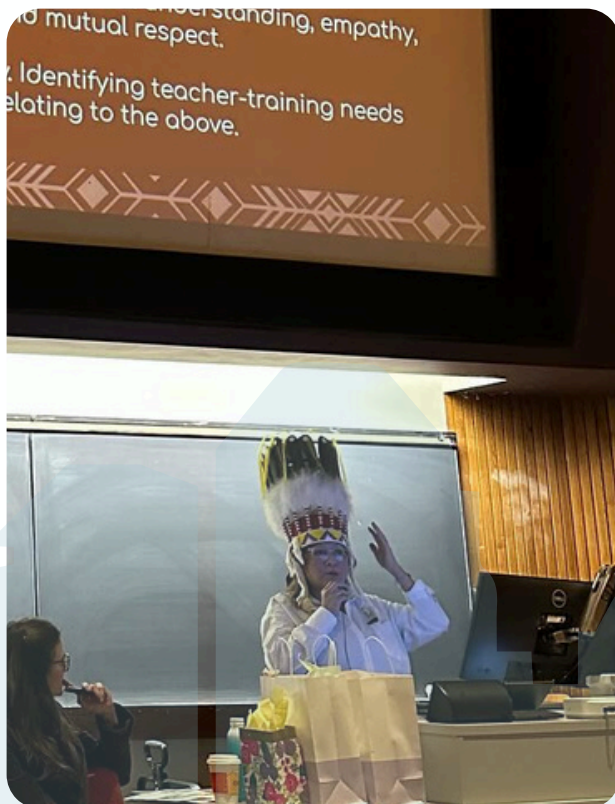
## AFCC PRESENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY ANTHROPOLOGY CLASS (CONTINUED)



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

This engaging session highlighted the significance of Indigenous cultural knowledge, history, and teachings, fostering meaningful connections and understanding among students. We are grateful for the opportunity to share our perspective and contribute to shaping a culturally informed future.

Stay connected with us for more updates on our community outreach initiatives!



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# THE INDIGENOUS WARMING CENTRE

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary is pleased to announce the seasonal reopening of Calgary's first and only Indigenous-led warming centre. From November 2024 to April 2025, the **Indigenous Warming & Community Centre at 4628 - 16 Ave NW** will once again open its doors, offering more than just shelter from the cold.

Standing unique in Calgary as the only Indigenous warming centre, this space was specifically designed to provide culturally sensitive support to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members. More than just a warming centre, it serves as a place of genuine connection, with cultural and spiritual support at the forefront of our services.

Visitors to the centre find not only physical warmth and safety but also opportunities to reconnect with Indigenous heritage through teachings and spiritual practices. This innovative approach ensures that those seeking refuge receive holistic support in a welcoming, culturally enriching environment.

The centre represents AFCC's ongoing commitment to creating spaces where community members can find both practical support and cultural connection during the winter months.



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October 2024

# ELDER'S CENTRE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY



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The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary celebrated a significant milestone – the first anniversary of Kanakaa'tsinom (All Friends Place), Calgary's first Indigenous Elders' Drop-in Centre. The celebration embodied the centre's mission of creating a culturally safe and welcoming space for Indigenous Elders.

The anniversary gathering brought the community together for a day of celebration, featuring bingo games, diabetic-friendly food and cupcakes, and special prize giveaways, including a grand prize Pendleton blanket. Patricia Jones, CEO of Calgary Homeless Foundation, joined the celebration, sharing her thoughts and taking time to listen to Elders' stories.

Throughout its first year, Kanakaa'tsinom has established itself as a vital community hub, offering traditional ceremonies, cultural programming, and essential support services. Eugene Wilk and his dedicated staff organized both the anniversary celebration and continue to maintain this welcoming space for Elders.

"It's hard to put into words what a culturally safe place means to our community and especially to our Elders," reflects the AFCC team. "This place is for connecting and being heard when you feel nobody is listening, and finding a hug when you are feeling alone and isolated."

As Calgary's first Indigenous Elders' Drop-in Centre, Kanakaa'tsinom continues to honor its name – "All Friends Place" in Blackfoot – creating a space where all are valued and heard.

# HONOURING LIFE PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Kuruk attends Jack James High School and has been enrolled in the Weaving Wichitowin for Learning Program for the last 3 years. Initially, Kuruk was a bit shy and timid in big groups. It was easy to talk to Kuruk 1 on 1, but when he was asked to speak to the class or share in circle, he usually declined to do so.

Kuruk could achieve good grades, however struggled to apply himself due to his lack of self-confidence. Kuruk decided to enroll in AFCC's youth program in order to connect more to his culture and experience more land based sessions. Kuruk bonded with Brett, the youth worker at AFCC, through their love of heavy metal music. At program Kuruk would consistently show Brett new music and they would have conversations about upcoming concerts/albums.

Through these interactions Kuruk became confident in himself and found a sense of identity and acceptance. Kuruk slowly began sharing more, attending classes and actively accessing the supports that Jack James High School offers (school work, dental and mental health supports). Kuruk is also working with Brett to access housing and employment supports as Kuruk would like to move out upon graduation.

Kuruk's home life is inconsistent. Kuruk's family cares for and supports each other deeply, however are affected by low-income, inconsistent housing and food insecurity.



Kuruk is currently in Grade 12, attending classes consistently and planning to pursue a degree in electronic engineering at a local polytechnic school.

This year Kuruk has been a true leader within the class by helping with smudge, sharing during check-ins, participating in group discussions and mentoring the other younger youth. Kuruk's social skills are greatly improving as well and he has a very close group of friends.

The housing process is slow moving, however Brett and Kuruk continue to work at it and are hoping to find him housing by late spring or early summer.



# STATUS CARD CLINIC

**Providing Essential Support to Our Community**

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary has launched a vital new service within the Indigenous Hub at the Crossroads Centre – a dedicated Status Card Clinic that's already making a significant impact in our community.

In just its first three days of operation, the clinic supported nearly 30 community members in obtaining their Status Cards, highlighting the pressing need for this essential service.

The clinic operates Tuesday through Thursday, with appointments available from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM on a first-come, first-served basis.

Under the coordination of Bailey Dodds, this initiative represents AFCC's ongoing commitment to removing barriers and ensuring our community members can access their rightful benefits.

**Community members interested in accessing this service can contact Bailey Dodds at 368-999-8041 or [bdodds@afccalgary.org](mailto:bdodds@afccalgary.org). The clinic is located at AFCC's office at 316 7 Ave SE.**



# Obtain Your Status Card For Free!

**FIRST COME  
FIRST SERVE**

## In 3 Easy Steps!

### Documentation

- Valid Photo I.D.
  - SCIS card (if applicable)
  - Mailing address
  - Contact Information
- 01**
- Must be Registered
  - Additional Documentation may be required

### Where?

Please bring all required documentation to:

The Aboriginal Friendship  
Centre of Calgary  
316-7th Ave SE  
located inside  
The Crossroads Centre

### When?

**Monday - Thursday**  
**9am - 12pm**  
**1pm- 3pm**

**03**

Contact BAILEY for more information:

[bdodds@afccalgary.org](mailto:bdodds@afccalgary.org)  
368-999-8041



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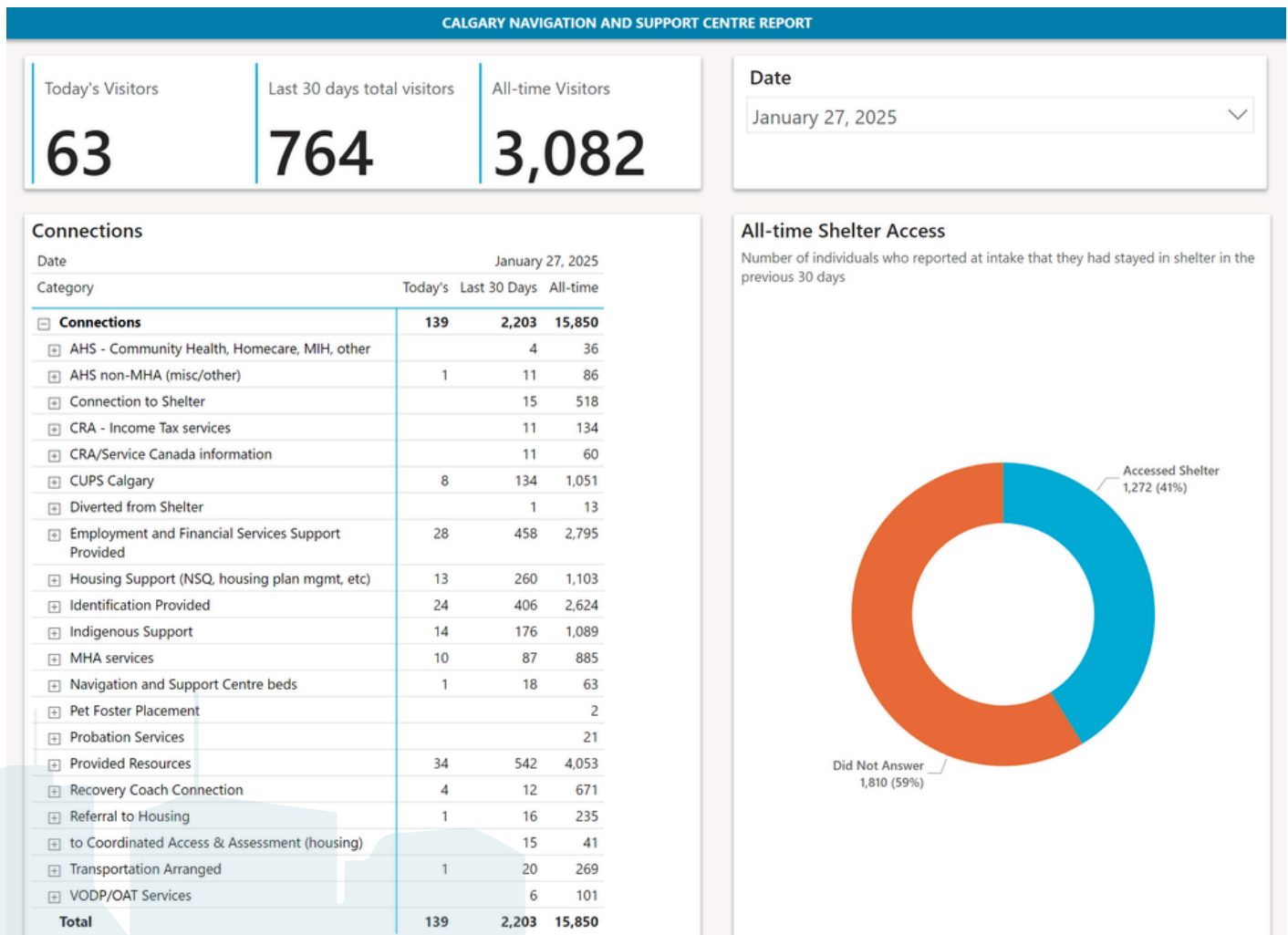
In Partnership With  
Indigenous Services  
Canada





# CALGARY NAVIGATION AND SUPPORT CENTRE REPORT

The Calgary Navigation and Support Centre continues to serve as a crucial hub for support and services in Calgary, connecting individuals with essential resources such as shelter, employment, and financial assistance. Our comprehensive data reflects the centre's significant impact within the community.



The client shared that they had been working different jobs through Dayforce and was scheduled for a job interview on the same day they visited the Navigation Centre.



Positivity truly is a blessing, making a meaningful difference in helping individuals reach their own destinies, like finding the beauty at the end of a rainbow.





# THE CONFLUENCE

## Memorandum of Understanding

A transformative project is unfolding at The Confluence Historic Site & Parkland, where construction is actively underway to create a vital new space for Indigenous cultural connection.

Through a groundbreaking partnership between the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) and The Confluence, an existing space within the Fort Calgary Barracks is being reimagined as a dedicated gathering place for Indigenous ceremony and community.

The vision for this space extends far beyond physical renovations. While the facility will offer practical amenities including a kitchenette, washrooms, and independent access, its true significance lies in its spiritual and cultural purpose.

Under the guidance of Elders, this space is being crafted to honor Indigenous traditions and provide a sacred place for ceremonies, smudging, and community gatherings.

What makes this initiative particularly meaningful is its commitment to accessibility - the space will be available at no cost to Indigenous community members and Indigenous-led organizations. This dedication to removing barriers reflects both organizations' understanding of the profound importance of cultural connection and ceremony.

As construction progresses and plans for a naming ceremony take shape, this collaborative project stands as a testament to the growing recognition of Indigenous needs for cultural spaces. Situated alongside the future site of Calgary's Residential School Memorial, this gathering place will contribute to a larger vision of healing, remembrance, and cultural revitalization.

# THANK YOU

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## DONATE NOW!

To make a donation, please scan the QR code for more details or email us at [info@afccalgary.org](mailto:info@afccalgary.org).

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