

DEAFINITELY EDMONTON

News and highlights from the Edmonton Association of the Deaf

What's Happening At EADCC



As we look back on 2025, we celebrate a year filled with learning, advocacy, cultural events, family activities, and community connection. This year showed the strength and resilience of our community, with members coming together to support one another, share knowledge, uplift Deaf culture, and create accessible spaces where everyone belongs. From workshops that deepened our understanding of safety and relationships, to celebrations

that brought families together to gatherings that highlighted our leadership and pride, 2025 was shaped by the hands and hearts of our community. Thank you to every member, volunteer, partner, and supporter who helped make this year meaningful. Your time, energy, and passion kept our programs strong, our events welcoming, and our advocacy moving forward. Our progress this year reflects your dedication.

NEWS UPDATE



Building Accessible Healthcare Skills

For the fourth year, UofA medical students partnered with Deaf presenters to learn about health equity and basic ASL, strengthening their understanding of Deaf communication in clinical settings. More on page 6.



Congratulations to this year's Halloween costume contest winners.



[HTTPS://EDMONTONDEAF.COM/](https://edmontondeaf.com/)

Become an EAD Member

Join EAD to receive our newsletter and weekly email updates. Stay connected with community events and information.

First place went to Celeste Hobson, second place was awarded to Jonathan Stepien, and third place went to Shirley Handley.

Message from EAD President

As we wrap up another active and meaningful year at the Edmonton Association of the Deaf, we celebrate connection, growth, and the pride of being part of a strong community. EAD remained a welcoming space where Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind community members came together to learn, share, and support one another.

We welcomed youth, seniors, newcomers, families, and visitors from across Alberta, other provinces, the U.S., and internationally. Many visitors told us how impressed they were by our community and how fortunate we are to have our own Deaf Community Centre.

I'm also happy to bring this newsletter back for EAD. It helps us share our stories, celebrate our achievements, and stay connected.

This year has also prepared us for our 75th anniversary celebration on May 30th, 2026. Our board focused on building improvements, policy updates, community partnerships, program growth, and accessibility planning. We continued to honour our elders, support reconciliation, and strengthen relationships with Indigenous Deaf community members.

Thank you to every member, volunteer, partner, and supporter for your time, energy, and commitment. Together, we made this year one to be proud of, and I look forward to what we will build in the year ahead.

EAD President
Kamil Burnat



*Sunset over Fort Saskatchewan River.
Photo credited to Getty Images.*

Facility Improvements

EAD completed several important upgrades to our community centre this year. These improvements helped keep the building safer, cleaner, and more welcoming for members. Work included lawn care, pest control, window repairs, repainting parking lines, sealing cracks around the building, and removing damaged trees along 114 Avenue. We also updated office furniture and improved storage through new community lockers.

More updates took place inside the building. We refreshed and replaced worn items, serviced bar equipment, and added new technology, including updated computers, an iPad for VRS, and a projector for the Real Bouchard Room. Renovations to the Douglas Ferguson Room included a new board table. These upgrades improved daily operations and prepare the centre for workshops, presentations, and community events.



A Sunny and Successful CornFest

On Sept 6, 2025, the weather was more than perfect—sunny, no clouds in sight, and hot. We had about 70-80 people come out to enjoy a cold one in the beer garden and have a burger or hot dog. About 50 people renewed their EAD membership.

A big thank you to Alberta Deaf 55+ for donating prizes, running the lawn games, and overseeing the Pass the Ace game.

We also introduced a new feature this year: a food truck. "Dawg Gone It," run by a small business owner who knows some ASL, served burgers and hot dogs to everyone. Next year, CornFest will return on September 19, 2026.

Some of you may think it's too early to announce the date, but because food trucks and petting zoos are popular, they have to be booked a year in advance. We will explore additional food truck options such as Flipside Burgers, Drift, or Bully.

We appreciate the four volunteers from Shoppers Drug Mart who jumped in to help and brought great energy to the day. Their support made a real difference.

Thank you to every person who attended and helped make CornFest a fun and memorable community celebration.



Major Funding Boost for EAD Community Centre

Big news from EAD! We, the Edmonton Association of the Deaf, were proud to share that we received a CFEP Grant from the Government of Alberta. This funding provided \$65,000 in matching support, giving EAD a total renovation budget of \$130,000. This investment allowed us to begin long-awaited upgrades to our community centre and prepare the building for our 75th Anniversary celebration in 2026. The renovations will involve the

kitchen, bar, TV viewing areas, boardroom, water-filling station, and possibly the locker room if the budget allows. Our building ad hoc committee has been hard at work with discussions and planning.

We also began planning for new technology that will support workshops, presentations, and community programs. These upgrades will help EAD continue to grow and serve our members for many years to come.

In addition to the CFEP grant, EAD received \$14,800 donation from the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) to support elevator repairs. We are very grateful for this generous donation from ECF.

This funding will restore safe access for seniors, wheelchair users, parents with strollers, and all members who rely on the lift. We are grateful for this support and look forward to completing these improvements soon.

Learning, Growing, and Connecting Through Workshops

We began the year with two important workshops hosted by the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE). In January, members took part in a Healthy Relationships session focused on boundaries and recognizing unhealthy dynamics.

In February, SACE also led our second workshop that explored consent, coercion, and how to support someone who shares a disclosure. These sessions gave our community a safe and accessible space to learn, reflect, and build stronger connections.

In March, Elections Canada came to EADCC to host a workshop to help members prepare for the upcoming national vote. About 10 people attended in person, and another 12 joined online. Attendees learned about their voting rights, voting misinformation, accessibility tools, and how to create a personalized voting plan, all in a clear, ASL-accessible format.

In April, our seniors participated in a Nutrition Workshop led by Alberta Health Services. AHS provided guidance on healthy

eating, daily habits, and strategies to support overall wellness. In May, AHS returned to lead a Heart Healthy Workshop that covered blood pressure, everyday habits, and ways to prevent heart-related concerns.

In July, we started offering art workshops. Our Membership Director, Crystal Jones who is an artist herself has been teaching these workshops for adults. Each month, participants get to paint, learn new techniques in a Deaf-led art space. Next art workshop is February 28th 2026.



The top photo highlights our Poppy Art Workshop, where participants spent a relaxing afternoon painting vibrant poppy-themed pieces using palette knives, piping bags and chalk pastel crayons.

The photo to the left features Gloria Bryan, one of EAD's lifetime members, and her son, Greg. Both joined the group. Participants created glowing pumpkin scenes, learning different techniques to create clouds or fog and trees. They also learned how to layer colors and make the color purple look darker.

International Week of the Deaf - September 22-28

International Week of the Deaf People took place from September 22 - 28, 2025, with a full schedule of activities across Edmonton.

Events included the General Meeting, High Tea with a cake-cutting ceremony with seniors, an evening walk across the High Level Bridge, and the AD 55+ Club. There was also a cake-cutting ceremony at Connect Society. EAD collaborated with the Western Canadian Centre for Deaf Studies for a screening of Deaf President Now at the University of Alberta. Sixty people turned out and, at the end, received a free bag of popcorn from Canadian Kettle Corn.

These events celebrated Deaf leadership, sign language rights, community strength, and shared identity. Community turnout was strong, and each day highlighted a different theme connected to culture and accessibility.



EAD Board Members: Pam Rustoen, Shirley Handley, Crystal Jones, Charlou Del Santos, David Burnat and Kamil Burnat stand before a cake made with the Deaf Flag.

OctoberFest Recap

Our Oktoberfest night was a great success. About 40 people attended that evening. A few men wore lederhosen and hats, and some women wore dirndl. Stephan Messenger brought blue and white pennant banners, Bavarian flags, pretzel- and beer-stein-themed items, and table decorations such as tablecloths, centrepieces, and signs. EAD's "Biergarten" looked amazing with all the blue-and-white flags.

Everyone enjoyed cold beer, some light snacks, and plenty of good conversations. Thank you to Stephan Messenger for lending his Oktoberfest decorations and helping set up for the event.



Community members gather at the EAD Oktoberfest celebration, raising their mugs for a cheerful moment together.

EAD Summer Camp Brings Families Together for a Weekend of Connection

The EAD Summer Camp took place from July 25 to 27, 2025 at Pigeon Lake, Alberta and brought close to forty people (families and volunteers) together for a weekend of community and connection.

Families settled into their assigned dorms. Everyone got to explore the campgrounds and enjoyed the chance to be surrounded by ASL all weekend.

The pace was relaxed, and the focus was simply spending time together in a supportive and welcoming space.

Roman began each morning with gentle stretching and yoga sessions before activities started. Everyone took part of scavenger hunts, board games, art challenges, storytelling and canoeing.



Campers and volunteers stand together with Pigeon Lake in the background. The photo marks the close of a weekend filled with shared activities and time outdoors.

The weather held up all weekend with some light rain on Saturday, allowing the kids to enjoy the playground, the waterfront, and the freedom to explore.

Evenings consisted of campfires with hot dogs and s'mores that brought everyone together.

Mecca Burnat and her kitchen team served generous meals

and supported all dietary needs. Shared meals, outdoor time, and the easy flow of communication helped create warm memories and strengthened community bonds throughout the weekend.

One parent shared that their kids had so much fun and they hoped EAD will do the summer camp again next summer.

First Aid Course Recap



Photographed: Olena Borsenyko, Olha Perlai, Vrusha Patel, Mecca Burnat, Roman Kharchuk. Many thank you to the these for working hard to make July 25-27 a success for families!



On November 8 and 9, ten community members participated in a two-day First Aid Course delivered by St. John First Aid. Participants learned essential first aid skills, including CPR, and gained hands-on experience with emergency response techniques.

UofA Medical Students Learn About Deaf Health Equity Through ASL, Culture, and Community

On October 8, Kamil Burnat and Sarah Snively met with University of Alberta medical students to discuss health equity for Deaf people.

Their session focused on communication barriers in healthcare, the importance of qualified interpreters, and the value of culturally informed care.

This marks the fourth year that Deaf presenters and community partners have collaborated with UofA medical students to strengthen their understanding of Deaf culture and accessible healthcare.

As part of the program, students completed a 10-week introductory American Sign Language course taught by instructors from the Alberta



EAD President Kamil Burnat gives medical students a tour of EADCC. Students look on as he shares about the Handtalk bar.

Cultural Society of the Deaf (ACSD). The course introduced basic ASL and offered insight into Deaf communication and

students and community members practiced signing, built connections, and strengthened their understanding of Deaf culture.

To celebrate the end of the course, EAD and ACSD hosted an ASL games day and pizza party on Saturday, November 22. Nearly 50 people attended, creating a lively space where

This ongoing partnership helps future healthcare professionals build the skills and cultural awareness needed to better serve Deaf and hard of hearing patients across Alberta.

UPCOMING 2026 EVENTS AT EADCC

2026 — January

- Jan 6, 2026 – Tuesday Seniors (10 AM-3 PM)
- Jan 10, 2026 – EAD Fiscal Year Report Meeting (10 AM-12 PM)
- Jan 10, 2026 – City of Edmonton Workshop (1:30 PM-3:30 PM)
- Jan 13, 2026 – Tuesday Seniors (10 AM-3 PM)
- Jan 20, 2026 – Tuesday Seniors (10 AM-3 PM)
- Jan 27, 2026 – Tuesday Seniors (10 AM-3 PM)

2026 — February

- Feb 2, 2026 – FRBA Bingo (All day)
- Feb 3, 2026 – Tuesday Seniors (10 AM-3 PM)
- Feb 7, 2026 – EAD & AD55+ Monthly Fun Games (11 AM-5 PM)
- Feb 8, 2026 – Super Bowl Party
- Feb 10, 2026 – Tuesday Seniors (10 AM-3 PM)
- Feb 17, 2026 – Tuesday Seniors (10 AM-3 PM)
- Feb 24, 2026 – Tuesday Seniors (10 AM-3 PM)
- Feb 28, 2026 – EAD Darts & Art Workshop (1 PM-5 PM)



BOOK YOUR EVENT AT EADCC

Want to book EADCC for your upcoming event? Scan the QR code or head to EADCC to book space.

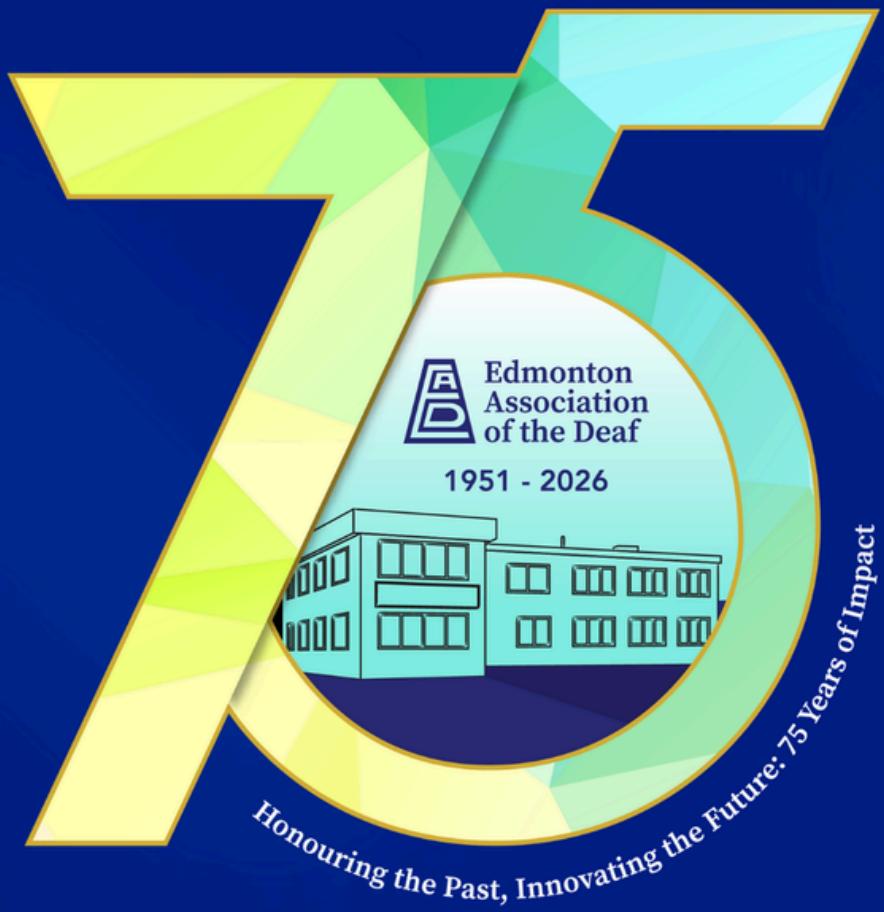


Check Out Our Phone Directory

Did you know that we now have a phone directory? You can find it on the EAD Website.

GALA

SATURDAY, MAY 30TH, 2026



*Join us for an unforgettable evening of glamour,
fine dining, and socializing*

*Location: Blatchford Field Air Hangar
at Fort Edmonton Park, Edmonton, AB*

Edmonton Association of the Deaf to Celebrates 75 Years

Reflecting on a Century and a Half of Success and Innovation

The Edmonton Association of the Deaf will celebrate 75 years of community service, advocacy, and cultural pride. What began as a small group of Deaf leaders working to build connection and belonging has grown into a strong organization that continues to shape Deaf life in Edmonton.



This anniversary will be a moment to honour the Deaf elders and volunteers who created the foundation we stand on today.

Their dedication has supported generations of Deaf individuals and families through programs, events, advocacy, and cultural gatherings. As we look ahead, we will continue to strengthen access, visibility, and community leadership.



The 75th anniversary will bring our community together for a memorable day at Fort Edmonton Park.

Members will enjoy a full day of access to the Midway and the rest of Fort Edmonton Park, a workshop, and a banquet. DJ Deaf Tunez will be coming to Edmonton to play music for the event.

Tickets and Pricing

Tickets will be available on the EAD website. The deadline to buy your \$100 early bird ticket will be February 28, 2026. After that date, the price will increase to \$125.00

A table of eight will be available for \$750.00

The event will highlight stories from our past, achievements of our present, and the shared vision that continues to guide the Edmonton Association of the Deaf. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with you on May 30, 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact eadinfo51@gmail.com



Daytime Event & Banquet Gala

\$100

Individual Ticket

\$750

Table of Eight

Early Bird Sale Ends February 28, 2026

Every ticket gives you access to the daytime workshop, full access to Fort Edmonton Park, the banquet dinner and keynote, and the evening social and dance with Deaf DJ Tunez.

Exciting draws, prize giveaways, and an evening of music, connection, and celebration.

To buy your ticket, scan the QR code or visit the EAD website.

➥ Payment plans available

⚠ Tickets are non-refundable

🚫 Tickets will not be sold at the door

After February 28, 2026

- Individual tickets increase to \$125
- Table of 8 increases to \$800

✉ Questions? Contact:
eadinfo051@gmail.com or
eadmembership@gmail.com



Holiday Puzzles, Recipes, Notices & Trivia

NOTICES

- We will announce the dates for our casino fundraiser in February, so be ready to sign up to volunteer!
- We need two more volunteers for bingo at Fort Road Bingo Association on Feb 2, 2026. We also need 10 more volunteers for the Monday, March 16 bingo fundraiser. Please contact our Bingo Director, Bill Kerslake, for more details.



🍓 Strawberry Smoothie

Time to make: 10 minutes

Serves: 1 person

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt, natural plain yogurt, or plain coconut yogurt
- 1/2 cup milk of your choice or water
- 1 cup fresh or frozen strawberries (or any berries). Optional: mint leaves

Preparation: Blend all ingredients until smooth.

Edmonton Deaf Trivia

1. When was the Edmonton Association of the Deaf (EAD) founded?
2. Before the Alberta School for the Deaf was established, where did Deaf children in Alberta have to go for their education?
3. What significant announcement regarding education was made at the EAD's first formal banquet in May 1954?
4. Who was the first Deaf recipient of the Order of Canada, known for her work as an educator, administrator, and advocate in Edmonton?
5. In 1965, a men's basketball team with five players from Edmonton participated in the World Summer Deaf Games (now called the Deaflympics). What medal did they win?

1. The EAD was founded in 1951 and officially registered in May 1953. 2. Deaf children had to travel to residential schools in Montreal, Saskatoon, or Vancouver, often being away from family for ten months of the year. 3. Ernest Kane announced that the Alberta School for the Deaf would be built in South Edmonton; it opened in 1955/1956. 4. Charmaine Letourneau (1947-2022). 5. They won a bronze medal.

Christmas Word Search

H	S	G	R	E	E	T	I	N	G	S	W	O	W	C
F	U	Z	Q	Q	Y	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S
P	R	P	F	Z	L	G	B	G	G	K	R	U	H	X
J	S	U	F	B	L	S	N	O	W	M	A	N	P	A
E	J	J	I	R	O	Z	F	X	J	C	T	Y	R	N
L	F	H	J	T	H	N	T	H	F	A	S	C	C	G
C	C	S	V	R	C	U	V	A	M	N	P	A	G	E
I	Y	H	P	E	N	A	T	W	D	D	X	N	O	L
C	V	P	H	T	L	H	K	A	H	L	Y	D	N	U
I	D	O	S	O	T	V	S	E	A	E	L	Y	G	G
R	K	E	Z	S	L	H	E	C	P	S	I	K	G	R
A	H	R	I	G	E	I	E	S	P	F	M	E	E	E
C	W	R	T	R	B	M	D	B	Y	Y	A	C	O	E
Z	H	F	R	O	S	T	Y	A	O	W	F	K	K	N
C	K	R	V	Y	H	A	Q	B	Y	R	K	Y	P	F

ANGEL	CHRISTMAS	FROSTY	HOLIDAY
CANDLES	DASHER	FRUITCAKE	HOLLY
CANDY	EGGNOG	GREEN	ICICLE
CHESTNUT	ELVES	GREETINGS	SNOWMAN
CHRIST	FAMILY	HAPPY	STAR



This image is hiding somewhere in the EADCC building. If you find it, come find Crystal Jones to get a prize!

From the Archives

JUL 14, 1976-LETHBRIDGE-HERALD-P-24

Edmonton hairdresser becomes Miss Deaf Canada

EDMONTON (CP) — On the front cover of a magazine called Cultural Horizons of the Deaf in Canada is a picture of a laughing, vivacious woman in a Klondike dress and big feathered hat. She is on a stage singing I Could Have Danced All Night from My Fair Lady. She is singing it in sign language.

Christine Spink is an Edmonton hairdresser who won the Miss Deaf Canada title in a contest sponsored by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf in 1973-74. Her singing was part of her talent performance in the contest.

"I've been deaf since I was 3½ years old when I had meningitis," Christine said in an interview during which Sue Boesen acted as an interpreter. Sue works for the interpreting service for the deaf which is based at Alberta College in Edmonton.

"I went to the McKay School for the Deaf in Montreal when I was five and came back to the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton when it opened," Christine said.

"I left when I was 15½ to take hairdressing and I've been a hairdresser ever since, although that was not really my goal.

"I wanted to attend Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C.— the only liberal arts college in the world for the deaf. That's still my aim. I'd like to study drama and music and then teach deaf children."

Working helped Christine overcome her shyness and fear that hearing people would make fun of her and laugh at her voice. She describes herself as a person

who enjoys a challenge and said this has given her determination and optimism.

"But I still wish people wouldn't assume that because you're deaf you must also be stupid, or feel they must give you pity.

"If hearing people would just try to get to know the deaf, talk with them, make friends with them, there would be much more understanding."

"One of the big problems can be with your family," said Christine, who is president of the Alberta Cultural Society for the Deaf.

"Some parents downgrade their deaf children, push them aside and are embarrassed by them. Or they decide what their future will be without consulting them. Others over-protect them."

Although some of Christine's speech could be understood, the interview was conducted through Sue Boesen, using a combination of signs and speech, with Christine watching both hands and lips. Sue, a native of California, learned to "sign" because her deaf parents communicate that way.

"I wasn't aware my parents were deaf until a friend in kindergarten told me," Sue said. "I went home and whispered in my mother's ear but she said, 'Sorry, I can't hear you.' I said, 'Then it's true what my friend said.' So she told me the whole story. Her deafness resulted from spinal meningitis in childhood. She and my father met while attending Gallaudet College."

There will be another Miss Deaf Canada Pageant in Vancouver in July.