**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Grants have been distributed for the initiative, “We Belong in Jasper Place” for projects chosen to strengthen the community.**

[Edmonton, AB] February 23, 2024 – At the beginning of this year, almost $50,000 of grants were handed out to eleven reviewed and chosen projects for the “We Belong in Jasper Place” initiative. Over the last six weeks, we have seen these projects begin to come to life; encouraging community members to come together to connect, support local businesses and foster a sense of belonging in Jasper Place.

A proposal review committee of local community members came together to assess the proposals. The chosen projects all explore how we can strengthen the social infrastructure in west-central Edmonton through belonging.

**Jasper Place Community History Portable Display - $4906.19**
*(Submitted by Jasper Place History)*

A portable display will be developed that will share the stories and histories of the different cultural communities in Jasper Place. Jasper Place History will be working with different communities to collect stories and co-design these displays.

**International Festival of Winter Cinema: Belonging in Winter Film! - $5,000**
*(Submitted by International Festival of Winter Cinema Society of Alberta)*

The International Festival of Winter Cinema (IFWC) recognizes and celebrates local and international cinema with winter, alpine, and polar themes of any style or genre. This year they will be hosting their festival for the first time in Sir Wilfred Laurier Park in collaboration with Silver Skate Festival.

**Black History Month Garth Prince Jasper Place Community Concerts - $5,000**
*(Submitted by Garth Prinsonsky)*

JUNO Award Winner Garth Prince will be hosting two free family friendly concerts celebrating Black History Month in Jasper Place. A promotional singing workshop will also be held free for children to attend prior to the concerts and learn the songs to sing along to.

**Art Within Us - $5,000**
*(Submitted by Red Road Healing Society)*

Art Within US will be an addition to the Red Road Healing Society's food security program and a collaboration with the Art Mentorship Alberta Society. A sense of community will be built through an arts program which will be offered to patrons of the food security program.

**Playing with Blocks - $5,000**
*(Submitted by High Park Community League)*

The Playing with Blocks (or block socials) initiative will facilitate community building one High Park block at a time. This project aims to develop block leaders that will engage with their neighbours to understand their needs and talents they would like to contribute to the community.

**Freedom Dance Scholarship Program - $4,800**
*(Submitted by Freedom Dance School)*

The Freedom School of Dance is committed to breaking down barriers and providing opportunities for children from low-income families to explore the world of dance. Freedom Dance School will be awarding scholarships to children designed to remove financial barriers and create a level playing field for children who may otherwise be unable to access quality dance education.

**Crestwood/JP Nordic Walking for Older Adults - $5,000**
*(Submitted by Crestwood Community League)*

The Crestwood Community League will be offering a Nordic Walking program for seniors in the area to improve social bonds with the community and to provide a physical outlet for exercise. This initiative will seek to connect seniors not only to each other but to youth and newcomers in the area as well.

**Jasper Place Spring Spirit Festival - $5,000**
*(Submitted by Allison Ochoa)*

The Jasper Place Spring Spirit Festival will bring together artists, musicians, cultural groups and businesses to celebrate Jasper Place in the springtime. This one day festival will uncover and highlight the hidden talents that exist in the communities of Jasper Place.

**Block Party Blitz in Meadowlark Park - $5,000**
*(Submitted by Meadowlark Community League)*

The Meadowlark Community league will be offering block party microgrants to community members through this initiative. The league hopes to spark inspiration and build capacity in community members to promote and host block parties.

**West End Hot Club Duo at CH Cafeteria - $1,840**
*(Submitted by Donald William Ross)*

This project will present a series of four Saturday afternoons of jazz for clarinet and guitar at CH Cafeteria. Donald William Ross and his fellow musicians hope to bring in community members and strengthen bonds between CH Cafeteria and the communities it is part of.

**North Glenora Human Library - $3,200**
*(Submitted by North Glenora Community League)*

This project will be an opportunity for community members to connect and learn from each other. Community members will be invited to become a “book” which can be “checked out” by a neighbour–giving community members an opportunity to talk to people they may have never connected with before. The league plans to create a supportive environment in which community members can make these connections, ask questions, and share stories.

**More Information on the Initiative**

Taking into account the different directions this initiative could go, exploring community belonging was selected as a focus for the initiative - in order to make a lasting and meaningful impact. The concept of belonging brings with it many opportunities, like community inclusivity, advocacy, community connectivity and strengthened relationships between neighbours.

In the fall of 2023, our Projects for Belonging Grant application process encouraged community members from across the Jasper Place District to submit project proposals to explore how we as a community might strengthen a sense of belonging in the area – for everyone. We invited people to submit their ideas for projects that foster belonging by:

- Engaging the community
- Developing a community resource
- Repurposing something that already exists
- Hosting an activity or event
- Developing a short term pilot program or initiative

The initiative is being supported by the Stony Plain Road Business Association (“Stony Plain Road BA”). The Stony Plain Road BA has secured limited funding from the City of Edmonton to jumpstart our process during the next two years. It is important to note that this project is a

transition from the City-led Jasper Place Revitalization Project which is wrapping up after over a decade of presence in our community.

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