

McLuhan House

Marshall McLuhan, a leading 20th century thinker best known for communications theory, spent part of his childhood in the Highlands area of Edmonton. The former McLuhan home was purchased by Arts Habitat of Edmonton, not just to honour his legacy, but also to create a contemplative centre for arts and ideas. Arts Habitat has located its offices in the home, with space available to individuals and organizations working in literary arts and creative thought. SEF provided the mortgage for the purchase.

Music is a Weapon

It may look like a simple drumming circle or school workshop at first glance, but the people behind MIAW know that making music can open whole new worlds of creativity, health and community. MIAW offers drumming workshops and interactive school residencies, inspiring new musicians both old and young. They also organize 'people powered parties', unique bicycle powered sound and light shows for good causes of all kinds. MIAW took a big leap to expand its reach through artist-in-the-schools programs across Alberta., and with a loan from SEF, purchased the equipment to make it happen.

Edmonton Heritage Council

The Council helps Edmontonians understand the city's past as a way to understand its unique character, and to create an inclusive and

better future for citizens.

SEF supported the council to expand its operations through improved office space.



SPAN takes social enterprise to a whole new level

St Paul, Alberta, (population 6,004), probably shows up most often in a Google search as the home of the world's first UFO landing pad. Its real claim to world fame should be as the hotbed of Canadian social enterprise.

The town is lucky to be the home of the St. Paul Abilities Network, better known as SPAN. Founded in 1964, the organization is focussed on helping people with disabilities to find a meaningful life in the community. SPAN has developed a strong reputation for the excellence of its programming, and has even become a destination of choice for those with especially complex needs. And much of its programming and large inventory of supportive housing is financed through revenue from a wide array of social enterprises - businesses that also provide meaningful work for SPAN's clients as well as other town residents.

SPAN's social enterprise journey started slowly and traditionally in the 1970s with a next-to-new shop. But over time, the organization's social entrepreneurship profile has become anything but traditional. Its businesses include everything from one of the largest industrial laundries in Alberta, a transport trucking company (after all, how are you going to move around the laundry, and why not carry some other stuff too?) a booming catering business, a plumbing and heating business and Charitable Developments, which builds houses available for sale to the community. These businesses in some cases started as a way to create good jobs for SPAN's clients, but they also are important to produce revenue for all those things beyond the capacity of grant programs. Now SPAN has embarked on one of its biggest projects ever. Responding to both community need and opportunity, SPAN is building a new hotel in St. Paul. The hotel will not just provide revenue, it will provide good jobs, as well as training in the hospitality industry, leading to whole new lifetime potential.

SEF has provided a portion of the construction financing for the hotel project.