

# The History of the Arusha Centre



The Arusha Centre was founded in 1972, named after Julius Nyerere's speech about global justice issues in Arusha, Tanzania in 1969. We have been a meeting place for community members and activists throughout our history, offering programs, a resource library, funding, space for meetings, and affordable access to event supplies, button-making, stilts and costumes, tents, amplifiers, printing, and support. The Centre is an active tenant in the CommunityWise Resource Centre, a hub for nonprofits in Calgary providing inclusive, affordable, and equitable space and community development programs to support and strengthen diverse grassroots and non-profit members.



*Michael Miller-Lajeunesse contribute a grassroots community-inspired art piece to Arusha's office symbolizing community connections, collaboration, and sustainability.*

### **Pre-1972: Early Roots**

Carol Sherwood, Arusha's first staff person explained: "We didn't start in 1972, but a couple of years before that. Our roots go back to the Calgary and District International Society ... who brought you the 'Miles for Millions' fundraising walks." The staff at the CDIS wanted to incorporate development education in the walks to educate young people about "the split between the world's rich and poor."

### **1972: Alliances Forming**

In the spring of 1972, the Cross Cultural Learner Centre from London, Ontario visited Calgary and provided an example to CIDA of a model for how they could effectively educate people in Alberta about developing countries. Thus, the core people who came together to start a Centre in Calgary were from: (1) the Miles for Millions group, and (2) a Local Initiatives project named 'NIDERK' sponsored by Calgary Interfaith.

They came together to form... not the Arusha Centre, but the "Calgary Development Centre," until the following plea was issued at the first Annual General Meeting: "Can you please suggest a better name than 'Development Centre'? Suggestions will be gratefully received by the Secretary" (*AGM agenda*, Dec. 5, 1972). At this time, Carol Sherwood returned from two years of working in Zambia and she was delighted to find a group of kindred spirits prepared to offer her a job.

## The First AGM 1972

Here's a glimpse of what happened at that first AGM: "Alan James outlined the objectives and methods of the group as recorded in the constitution, against a background of slides emphasizing the Centre's human orientation. A group of street theatre enthusiasts, assisted by Matt Moche's slides, presented their interpretation of what the Centre can do" (*AGM minutes*, Dec. 5, 1972). Regarding our first location: "The Calgary Development Centre accepted an offer from Mount Royal College, then opening an elaborate new suburban campus, to rent space in the Learning Resources Centre. Free use of audio-visual equipment and larger meeting rooms were the advantages."



*1970's Board Members: L-R Sheila Robinson, Doreen Ormand, Judith Umbach*

## **1973: Arusha Coming to Life**

At the AGM, Arusha resolved to raise membership fees from \$1 to \$3 to cover the costs of the monthly newsletter (*AGM minutes*, Sept. 19, 1973). Arusha also played an active role in forming the Alberta Council of International Agencies, a council created to access provincial funding for development education.

## **1974-1975: Continuing to Educate**

At this time, Arusha worked with churches, schools, and labor groups to spread awareness and educate Albertans about the developing world. Activities included a film series, discussions, and orientations to prepare and educate overseas volunteers. Programming included weekly discussion groups on issues, participation in a program named 'Ten Days for World Development' (*Report to the AGM*, Sept. 26, 1975).

## **1976-1977: Expanding Focus**

At this time, Arusha focused on “The New International Economic Order” presented by some developing countries at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, proposed to promote ethical trade between nations through improving terms of trade, increasing development assistance, and other means. From the 1976-77 Annual Report by Chairperson Sheila Black: “We are happy to report that we at Arusha have energetically and fruitfully completed our fifth year of activity here in Calgary ... The major topics we have dealt with repeatedly during the past year include Southern Africa, Chile, energy alternatives, environmental problems, Sri Lanka and its tea, food, and immigration.” The overall themes for the years were “A Conserver Society” and “The International Food Issue.”

### **1978: Educating through Visuals and Experiences**

By 1978, Arusha had 100 regular members. The organization heavily focused its efforts on educating people through visual media. From the 1977-78 Annual Report by Chairperson Liz Reid: “We have loaned out our 5 films a total of 40 times. Our collection of 25 slide shows were used in total over 100 times.” The organization also sent 16 participants to Cuernavaca, Mexico on the first Mexico study travel tour, to become aware of issues affecting those living in poverty there.



*Old Y group representatives celebrate their space. The photo inspired decades of similar photos at Community Wise.*

### 1979-1980: Advocating and Traveling

Arusha purchases a film projector! The organization also sent a second and then a third group of participants on Mexican study travel tours and participated in the “People's Perspective on Latin America” conference. Programming was targeted at addressing everyday poverty in Latin America, labour issues, and advocating for banking and corporate responsibility. Arusha also began work on the publication of what will eventually become its calendar of events.



*The Arusha Centre among 1979 Old Y tenants list*

### 1981-82: Schisms

In the 1980-81 Annual Report by Chairperson Steve O'Gomman, the Alberta Committee for International Cooperation, formerly the Alberta Council for International Agencies (ACIA) were described as being “increasingly antagonistic” towards Arusha. In the following year's report, Chairperson Martin Serediak says Arusha needs “to be able to determine our direction without the political interference of ACIC ... The Arusha Declaration stated, “if the pursuit of wealth clashes with things like human dignity and social equality, then the latter will be given priority”. How much more pleasant our existence would have been if ACIC also had a similar philosophical view.” As an initiative more in line with their values than ACIC, Arusha went on to take a leadership role in forming the new Alberta Development Education Coordinating Council (ADECC), sent more participants on a fourth Mexican study travel tour, and launched the ESL radio program, “Just the Three of Us: A radio drama series for learning English.”



### **1983-84: The Big Move**

Arusha moved from what was then called the Old Y to 10th Street. The Arusha newsletter (October, 1983) at the time described how, “A new tradition of annual dances is happily establishing itself at Arusha. The band 'Spotty Dog' played to a crowd of approximately 70 people.” The organization also offered two evening courses named, “Focus on Third World Development” and “Paulo Friere and Popular Education.”



*The logo for the Activist Network, first a printed events listing, then a web directory, published and distributed by Arusha as a critical events and organizational contact resource pre-internet and connecting grassroots Calgarians online.*

### **1985: Let's Get Louder**

As issues around global trade unionism, women's autonomy, pharmaceuticals, understanding the Middle East, and nuclear disarmament came to a head, Arusha facilitated a discussion group who produced a formal response to the government's 'green paper' on “Directions for Canada's International Relations.” Arusha ramped up its efforts to make change in this year; organizing “The World on Your Platter: An International Awareness Dinner,” creating a Sunday International Radio Program, initiating a job development project for severely employment disadvantaged immigrants (two years later, this project became “Employment Futures for New Canadians”), and publishing “Splintered Dreams: Sikhs of Southern Alberta” and “They Tried to Rob Me of My Name: Cross Cultural and Third World Literature for Social Change” by Jaswinder Gudara.

### **1986: Opening Up Discussion**

The year began with Arusha holding a spring retreat at Chief Camp Hector to strengthen the sense of community in the organization. Programming didn't slow down the following year

when Arusha offered the following evening courses: One Earth, Why Care?, Canada and the Third World, Tales Told About Central America: Yours, Mine and the Media's, South Africa: Whose Beloved Country?, and Women's Common Concerns; in addition the organization held a bimonthly 'Issues Over Ice Cream' discussion group, storytelling evenings, and fundraising dinner galas. The first "One World Film Festival is organized.

### **1987: Keep 'em Talking**

Arusha bought its first computer! Following this technological innovation, Arusha created its first strategic planning process and developed a 5 year plan for the organization at its second annual retreat. Reflecting the concerns of the year, Arusha also offered the course "The World Bank: Friend or Foe?" The organization then focused on strengthening their media engagement and raising its profile with the course "Communicating with the Media: A Skills Development Course." Issues Over Ice Cream was replaced by "Pictures and Popcorn," a series of evening slide presentations by returned overseas volunteers.



#### ***1987 - Arusha Staff and Board model the new Arusha toques***

*Back (l-r): Patrick Mahaffey, Janis McGinnis, David McGinnis*

*Middle (l-r): Walter Hossli, Phil Cox, Rob Weaver*

*Front (l-r): Barb Smith, Paul Cox, Esther Chaudry, Karen Wyllie, Linda Grandinetti, Martha Lambert, Amal Umar, Gerald Lajeunesse, Raylene Frechette*

*Staff: Barb and Amal-Making Changes, Phil, Linda, Rob and Walter - Arusha*

### **1988: Literary Interests**

Arusha's spring retreat this year focused on reworking their mission statement collectively. Arusha then continued to participate in events, including the Literary Arts Festival (part of the Winter Olympics), where they championed 'Third World Writers'. They also held an author

discussion series focused on prison memoirs and a course on global economics “for the overwhelmed.”

### **1989: Moving into Charitable Status**

Arusha finally achieved charitable status, a major milestone. The organization went on to purchase their building (233 – 10 Street) for \$136,000. The success of the organization was marked by the continuation of its “Pictures and Popcorn” series and the One World Film Festival, as well as its casino netting \$32,500 for the organization. Arusha also co-sponsored the Mayor's Walk for Africa and secured a contract with Petro Canada International Assistance Corporation to supply resources for their briefing program.

### **1990: FUNdraising**

Anticipating early third-wave feminism, Arusha received funding to produce an assertiveness skills training video for immigrant women. This film was directed by Sherry Kozak and titled “Taking Control.” The Arusha collective also decided to venture forward with a collective decision-making model at its annual spring retreat in Canmore. Arusha had financial concerns at the beginning of 1991, and in response created a FUNdraising Committee which met its fundraising goals by holding events such as “Boogie for a Better World” which led the committee to gross \$58,000.

### **1991-92: It's all about the presentations**

Arusha spent 1991 educating over 300 members of the public about the war in the Gulf with the presentation, “The History of the Iraq/Kuwait Conflict.” Other cutting-edge issues of the time Arusha covered included, “South Africa: Changes Since Mandela's Release,” “Gender and Development in the Americas,” and “Peace, Palestinians and the PLO.” In 1992, Arusha produced another film festival and presented to many schools, reaching over 3,000 students and teachers. The organization also held a successful 20th anniversary dinner celebration attended by over 100 members, friends, and supporters.

### **1993-94: Losing Money**

Funding became an issue when CIDA ( Canadian International Development Agency) cut the funding they gave Arusha by 11% despite Arusha providing programming to at least 1,700 people this year. The theme of addressing economic and development issues continued with their workshops, “The Global Economy,” “Gender and Development,” “Environment and Development,” and “Canada's Role in the World.” An increased awareness on 'global citizenship' and anti-racism became the year's focus, and Arusha created a Committee for Anti-Racist Education while continuing to run its One World Film Festival, resource library, and Schools project. After extensive lobbying, City Hall refunded Arusha's property taxes.

### **1995: Losing More Money**

CIDA cut 100% of their funding for Arusha! The Arusha co-chairs responded valiantly with the following statement: “After much soul searching and interactions with staff, board, volunteers,



partner agencies and supporters, we have affirmed our new freedom and flexibility.” Arusha then received a \$3,000 grant along with an office and the use of a computer, they created a project with the goal of building community by linking people to create a grassroots alternative to the global economy.

### **1996: Making up the Difference**

The Sustainable Calgary project emerged from the Sustainable Communities work Arusha created using funding from the Calgary Community Adult Learning Association. This early research project was intended to create indicators for social, environmental, and economic conditions in Calgary. Finally, the organization held a dinner and auction featuring Joan Grant-Cummings, President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and raised almost \$13,000 for Arusha. Gerald Wheatley and Sarah Kerr are hired as new staff for the Bow Chinook Barter Community (BCBC).



*A preliminary meeting to discuss creation of a complementary currency for Calgary at the Calgary District Labour Council office.*

### **1997: 25 and Still Going Strong!**

Sustainable Calgary set up “think tanks” to focus the work of Arusha on indicators in six areas: Health and Education, Economy, Community, Natural Environment and Resource Use. The organization also held its first “Anti-Racism Education Training Program,” renewing its focus on early anti-racist efforts in Calgary.

### 1998-99: Driving into the 2000s

Arusha continued to present in the public school system, including programming addressing "Youth and Violence." The organization also met to discuss buying a vehicle to make a car-sharing program a feasible reality in Calgary.


**Parkland Institute Presents**

# The Real Cost of Globalization

## VANDANA SHIVA

**Wednesday, November 24  
7:30 pm - U of C  
Murray Fraser Hall - Room 162**

**A decade of globalization and trade liberalisation have destroyed the environment and people's livelihoods, undermined democracy and increased violence. Alternatives are not just possible, they are necessary to ensure the sustenance of humans and other species and to ensure peace and democracy. Dr. Shiva will talk of the real costs of globalization and real alternatives to it that are already growing across the world.**



**Vandana Shiva** is one of the world's most dynamic and provocative thinkers. A physicist, ecologist, and activist, she won the Right Livelihood Award in 1993. She is the Director of *The Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy*, based in India, a network of researchers specializing in sustainable agriculture and development. Her most recent book is *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge (1997)*.

*Right Livelihood Award winning author and physicist Vandana Shiva is hosted in Calgary by the Arusha Centre connecting climate, feminism, science and food issues.*

### 2000: Two Thousand Years, Ten Thousand Dollars

On May 1, 2000, Gerald Wheatley and Kerri Treherne sold their Toyota van for Calgary Dollars to the Calgary Alternative Transportation Co-operative (CATCO), a member-owned democratic co-operative best known for its car-sharing initiative, and this car became the first car-sharing project in Alberta. The year's Arusha dinner also raised \$10,000 to continue its efforts, aimed at funding: The Committee Against Racist Education, Earth Day Road Race, and the creation of a new resource centre with a library. This was a big year for activism in the new millennium, and Arusha staff member Sarah Kerr attended the well-known protests



against the WTO in Seattle where she was tear gassed, shot with rubber bullets, then arrested for peacefully demonstrating and spent four days in the King County jail.

### **2001: Times of Change**

Arusha and CATCO hired Marsha Staples to coordinate car-sharing across Calgary. Arusha purchased a building, this time in Inglewood. The organization's volunteers gutted the building and began building a large library and meeting space, as well as multiple offices for Arusha and its community partners. The organization also put together a compilation CD and concert of socially conscious music titled "Hold Your Ground" named after the James Keelaghan song and featuring National Dust, Great Uncle Bull, Dan the One Man Band, and Peter Puffin. The compilation included Ian Tyson, Corb Lund, Chad Van Gaalen, Ellen McElwayne, among the 60 contributions. Arusha also allied itself with the City of Calgary and began to sell Calgary Transit tickets and City Pool passes for local currency. The 'Calgary Community Development Network' (CCDN) was also founded by Arusha and partner organizations such as Building Stronger Communities, Community Development Council, Healthy Calgary, and Sustainable Calgary. The network created a speaker series called 'Community Speaks,' a series of workshops that led neighbourhoods to create new tools for organizing and community-building. In relation to C\$ programming, Arusha staff member, Gerald Wheatley, begins a Masters degree focussed on complementary currencies and attends conferences in California, Vermont, London and Ithaca New York on complementary currencies.



*One of the four bays in the 9th Ave building purchased by Arusha.*



*Tariq performs at the first of four Hold Your Ground concerts at the Bridgeland Hall.*

### **2002: Training for Transformation**

Maintaining and operating the Arusha building became difficult and by October it became evident that Arusha would not receive the total amount of funds from CFEP necessary to renovate the Inglewood building. As a result, Arusha sells the building. The BCBC local currency founded by Arusha unveiled a series of new, brightly-coloured notes with Alderman Joe Ceci, the first recipient of Calgary Dollars. He sold a pound of his composting worms at an unveiling ceremony. Sharon Stevens is hired at Arusha as the BCBC Business Coordinator. Arusha continued to present its 'Training for Transformation' anti-racism program and the program becomes integrated into the Calgary Young Offenders Centre for young people aged 12-17. The program delivered educational materials designed to prevent race, sexuality, culture, and ethnicity related violence among young offenders reintegrating into society. Training for Transformation also facilitated multiple networking workshops for women facing employment barriers called, "Bringing Down the Barriers for Women." Arusha continued to advance the message of CATCO too, helping the car-sharing collective create a website, and gain two vehicles and fourteen registered drivers.





*Calgary Councillor Joe Ceci unveils the new Calgary Dollars currency.*



*During the meeting of G8 leaders in Kananaskis, Arusha supports the independent media covering the event. picture: Arusha staff Grant Neufeld and Radical Knitters at the media centre.*

### **2003: Moving into the Present**

Arusha moved from a small office on the second floor of CommunityWise (then still referred to as 'The Old Y') into its current space, a larger and more accessible space on the main floor. This space became the hub for a variety of groups and meetings, such as The Revolutionary Knitters. What are now the 'Take Action' grants found their beginnings in this year with the 'Calgary Dollars Grants' awarded to Calgary Dollars members at monthly potlucks. Recipients for these grants included University of Calgary's community gardens, a justice theatre project, and the feminist 'Herland' Film and Video Festival.

### **2004-05: Arusha in Action**

In the wake of political turmoil during the Iraq invasion, Arusha supported anti-war efforts, such as the Calgary Coalition Against War and Occupation. The organization also ramped up its attention-getting antics, introducing stilt-walking mascots, promotional videos, and more music compilations into its repertoire to engage the public. The 'Hold Your Ground' music compilation produced its fourth and final CD this year, resulting in a 65-song compilation covering social and environmental music from across the province. The CATCO car-sharing fleet grew from 21 to 60 members and two to five vehicles. Arusha also led the charge in premiering films relevant to the social and environmental climate in a monthly 'Action Films' series. Groups like the "Feminist Men's Auxiliary," CultureJammers, African Sudanese Association, and Pesticide-Free Parks joined Arusha as members-at-large and used Arusha's resources to aid their activist efforts. The organization supported a number of events too using Calgary Dollars, such as International Day to Eradicate Poverty and the Party at Ground Zero in support of a pesticide-free Calgary.





*2005 Arusha staff and board complete strategic planning*

### **2006-07: Saying Yes to the Yes Men**

Action Films entered its second year, screening films such as 'Black Gold,' 'Iraq for Sale,' and 'Pills Profits Protest' at the Plaza Theatre. United Way began funding the CATCO project, which eventually grew into the 'Calgary Carshare Cooperative.' Take Action Grants expanded to a total of \$20,000—half in Canadian dollars and half in Calgary Dollars, and Calgary Dollars itself moved its listings online, allowing members to post listings instantaneously. Finally, and with much excitement, The Yes Men visited Arusha and filmed scenes for an upcoming film.



*Yes Men Mike and Andy, get the cameras rolling in the Arusha office*

### **2008: Taking Action**

Calgary Dollars held monthly potluck-markets at Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Association and its newspaper continued to grow. Arusha also asked Calgary Dollars members to complete an annual survey and the survey found: almost 90% of respondents attended monthly events and 75% of respondents believed Calgary Dollars helped them to be more involved in the community. Meanwhile, Arusha's 'Action Films' event brought together live bands, guest speakers, and new films every month, with each event averaging 250 attendees. Take Action grants also continued to improve communities, distributing \$15,000 in Calgary Dollars and matched Canadian funds to many local initiatives such as Art on the Street, Rock for Choice, Western Indian Art Show, and The EcoLiving Fair. Finally, Nobel Laureate Andrew Weaver visited in November to educate Calgarians about his book, "Keeping Our Cool: Canada in a Warming World."





*Arusha staff L-R: Gerald Wheatley, Melissa Centofanti, Sharon Stevens, Tina Adams, Corrine Youni, and Kirti Bahdresa*



*2008, Andrew Weaver (l), Nobel Prize winning climatologist is hosted in Calgary City Hall. Climate skeptic, Councillor Ric McIvor (R) is presented with a copy of the book.*



### **2009: A Credit to the Communities**

When the Credit Crisis hit Calgary, Arusha board member Kitty Dunn signalled the need for Arusha to continue with this statement, “With the economic train derailing, future-sighted economists tell us we shouldn’t be wasting time and money trying to get the train back on the tracks. They were tracks going in the wrong direction anyway. A whole new set of green and equitable tracks need to be built and the Arusha Centre is laying them here in Calgary.” Following this, Arusha continued with its Arusha 'Action Series' programming, inviting lawyers, environmental activists, The City of Calgary, disability activists, youth animators, and gender and sexual minority advocates to hold workshops and talks with the public. Car-sharing also became more popular in Calgary during this time and Calgary Carshare added member-drivers and three minivans. Finally, the Bow River Flow event drew 4,000 Calgarians along a kilometre-long section of Memorial Drive. The Arusha Centre also welcomed feminist author Judy Rebick to speak in Calgary about her book, “Transforming Power: From the Personal to the Political.”



*L-R: Judy Rebick, Sharon Stevens-Arusha staff, and Susan Gillies, Women’s Centre Director*





*Gerald Wheatley does media interviews on site at the Bow River Flow*



*2009: Nation-wide actions on climate change leading up to the Copenhagen climate talks included numerous Calgary events culminating in 27 peaceful sit-in participants being arrested in federal government offices including Canadian Environment Minister, Jim Prentice's office in Calgary where 6 were arrested garnering international news coverage.*

**2010: Conference Calls to Action**

Arusha Centre staff began to provide in-school presentations with a curriculum made up of its previously disparate themes organized around three key designations: Abili-trees (environmental economics), Calgary Dollars (complementary currency), Bioregionalism (living sustainably). Arusha also attended the People and Place, Cities and Towns in Transition Conference to discuss with other Calgary voices how to transform our living spaces with activist ideas. Arusha spoke on complementary currency at a number of conferences this year, reaching many new audiences. The organization also presented an arts activity and free yoga at Folk Festival where participants could hand-decorate flags and make buttons.

These conferences prepared Arusha as it held its 2nd Annual Bow River Flow, a large event featuring bike tuning stations, 21 live music acts, a dozen fitness activities, and a human-powered procession made up of mayoral candidates, including eventual mayor Naheed Nenshi. To end the year, longtime Arusha team member Sharon Stevens was presented with the William Irvine Award for Social Justice.



*Nenshi enters the Mayoral race, and the mini bike race at the Bow River Flow*

### **2011: Still Bowling, Still Flowing**

The Third Annual Bow River Flow attracted thousands of people to its positive message of human-powered transportation, and to celebrate using public space. Four kilometres of roadways were filled with activities including music stages, a mini-bike race between local Olympians, karaoke, mini-golf, and examples of alternative transportation for the public to see and experience. Rounding



out the year, longtime Arusha team member Gerald Wheatley was presented with the Calgary Peace Prize and Sharon Stevens was presented with the Elephant Artists Relief Outer Ear Award.



*2011: Arusha supporters celebrate at Community Wise*

### **2012: Opening up the Streets**

This year, Arusha decided not to put together a Bow River Flow event, preferring instead to invest in 'Open Streets,' a new initiative intending to reclaim public space to a broader audience throughout the whole year rather than for just one event. The organization took ownership of a bike blender and bike power generator from 'Powered by the People' as part of this new Open Streets program. Arusha was also nominated for a Legacy of Social Justice award by Michael Byerley and recognized as a Living Wage Leader by Vibrant Communities Calgary. The organization also held a book launch for Judy Rebick. The year was also a difficult one though, with United Way cutting its funding, a member of the board noted that once again the “funding climate is getting harsher.”



*2012: Internationally-acclaimed author John Ralston Saul is presented with Calgary Dollars by Arusha staff Erin McFarlane as Arusha hosts Saul's Calgary lecture to 600 guests.*

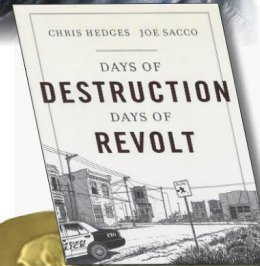
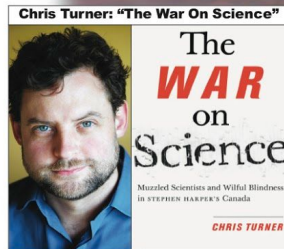
### **2013: Reading is FUNdamental**

This was a year of funding problems, with the board noting that many small non-governmental organizations had lost their funding and their sense of community along with it. The organization considered how to go from relying on government funding or funding from other organizations, to private funding. Throughout the year, the organization still held a monthly sustainability book club, its Calgary Dollars markets, and Open Streets launched successfully, being featured in multiple festivals and special holidays throughout the summer. In November, the organization held a book launch for Chris Hedges, author of several books including "War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning" (2002) and "Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle" (2009). This launch was for his New York Times best seller, "Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt" (2012).



# Chris Hedges

First Time In Calgary-One Night!



The Arusha Centre and Leadership Calgary Present:  
Saturday November 23, 2013, 7pm  
Calgary Library-Dutton Theatre 616 Macleod Trail SE  
[www.chrishedgescalgary.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.chrishedgescalgary.brownpapertickets.com)  
Tickets: Sunnyside Market, Pages Books, Arusha Centre  
403-270-3200. 100% Calgary Dollars



*Arusha hosts the first Calgary visit by Pulitzer-prize winner Chris Hedges*

## 2014: Open Streets, Open Streets

Open Streets Calgary rang in the New Year with a contract for the Municipal building, with bike-powered lights. A board member suggested Calgary Dollars go digital for the first time. The organization continued to hold its sustainability book club and Open Streets filled some gaps as far as funding was concerned generating revenue while providing high-visibility, attention-grabbing environmental education programming.



L-R: Mike Byerley-Arusha Board, Director Avi Lewis, Author Naomi Klein, and Arusha staff Gerald Wheatley at the premiere of This Changes Everything.

### **2015: Cities are for Everybody**

Arusha was the convener for The McConnell Foundation's 'Cities for People' roundtable events developing policy recommendations for the federal government to better support social and environmental work. The organization was particularly interested in initiatives connecting people, ideas, and activities across the following domains: Art and Society, Citizen Spaces, New Economies, and CityScapes. The organization pulled together 45 participants. In addition, Open Streets held events all year, including for the Winter holiday season.





*2015: Arusha is hired by Bow Valley College to host a forum on Social Innovation. (L-R) Author Chris Turner, BVC Dean, Councillor Druh Farrell and Arusha staff Gerald Wheatley.*

### **2016: Open Streets Takes to the Streets**

Open Streets took centre stage in 2016, programming a dozens of events including The University of Calgary, The City of Calgary's Earth Day, the opening of the Beltline, and the Mayor's Environmental Expo, Canada Day, Telus Spark, and the Calgary Stampede. Vilma Dawson helps Calgary Dollars develop collaborations with NE Family Connections, FOCUS on Seniors, and NE Calgary partners at Falconridge/Castleridge Community Association. Take Action Grants are awarded to 11 community projects.

### **2017: New Horizons**

Arusha re-worked and expanded its Powering Our World schools sessions and awarded grants to feminist arts festival Femme Wave. The organization also committed to its egalitarian, non-hierarchical, consensus form of decision making and organizing with renewed Operational and Strategic Plans. Open Streets continued to be a success too, reaching 6,000 people at events across Alberta.

Calgary Dollars begins design work to implement a digital currency platform and Mike Unrau, having presented Calgary Dollars in the Netherlands presents again at the International Community Currency Conference in Barcelona, Spain.

### **2018: Beaker and Better**

In 2018, Open Streets Events presented the City of Calgary's Earth Hour event at St. Patrick's Island. Arusha co-sponsored a documentary looking at three millennials who visited social enterprises Canada-wide, awarded Take Action Grants to the Calgary Food Alliance and a spoken word event, received a \$24,000 grant from New Horizons for Seniors for Calgary Dollars programming, and with Arusha board member Chantal Chagnon, presented a pedal-powered dream catcher at the arts and music festival Beakerhead.

Calgary Dollars is now integrated into five affordable housing agencies. Norfolk Housing, CUPS, Sharp Foundation, Inn from the Cold, and Calgary Housing Company start accepting Calgary Dollars. Calgary Dollars are used to create fitness activities, computer labs, crafts and music programming, rent payment, peer-to-peer activities, and as rewards for participating in local community organizing such as sitting on a board for a housing project.

Open Streets participated in and presented programming around sustainability at many more community projects, for example at Bow Valley College (the bike blender), King Eddy Hotel (pedal-power music), and at Mount Royal University (pedal-power USB charging). The year ended with members of Arusha accepting a 'Social Innovator' award from the Canadian government in Ottawa as part of the 'Canada Volunteer Awards'.

### **2019: There's no time like the present**

Arusha continues to present innovative programming around sustainability and other social and environmental issues through its three central initiatives, Calgary Dollars, Take Action Grants and Open Streets Events. Thus far this year, the organization held an indoor market for Calgary Dollars, presented Open Streets at Bridgeland Night Market and the Lilac Festival, and Take Action Grants funded numerous initiatives including a Mad Max-themed bike ride to Sled Island's block party. Gerald Wheatley was profiled by Bow Valley College magazine and when asked to give his advice for young Calgarians, he said "you should go with what you're most passionate about and be sure to take action!"





*2019: After serving as Arusha's Finance Administrator and Calgary Dollars Manager, leading dozens of events and programs for 8 years, Mike Unrau, leaves Arusha to complete Phd work. (L-R) Effemini Ime-practicum, Mike Unrau, Erin Madden-practicum, Lina Lopez-practicum*