

## Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### Library celebrates the diversity of downtown Edmonton

**Edmonton, May 5, 2012** – The Stanley A. Milner Library will be bustling with the energy, stories and rhythms of downtown Edmonton leading up to the opening of the Edmonton Public Library's outreach office.

"[Downtown Stories](#) is an event bringing downtown residents and the broader community together to share, learn and connect with each other," says Brent McDonough, Chair of the Edmonton Public Library Board of Trustees. "EPL is customer-driven and responds to community needs with free programs and services that improve the quality of life for all Edmontonians. Our outreach workers are committed to sharing their knowledge and support with our most vulnerable citizens."

Inspired by similar programs in Halifax and San Francisco and funded by the provincial Safe Communities Innovation Fund, EPL's outreach program was launched in response to the increasing number of people seeking refuge in the downtown library. EPL's three outreach workers operate within and outside the library walls to support and empower at-risk Edmontonians through literacy, education and social support.

"Providing safe communities for Albertans is a priority for our government and that's why we are pleased to support this program through our Safe Communities Innovation Fund," says Honourable Heather Klimchuk, Minister of Culture and Community Services. "I commend the project's partners for recognizing the need in this area of Edmonton, finding a practical solution and then collaborating to ensure the right partners are at the table to deliver that solution effectively."

"With this new outreach office located right inside Stanley A. Milner Library, citizens in need can do more than check out books," adds Councillor Amarjeet Sohi. "They can access social services, improve their education and literacy skills and be encouraged to make positive life choices."

Free events throughout the day will offer the chance to learn about downtown themes including poverty, housing, newcomers and safety in sessions hosted by community organizations. Edmonton Poet Laureate Anna Marie Sewell will share Aboriginal stories. EPL's writer in residence Jocelyn Brown, downtown resident and blogger Mack Male, and writers from Boyle Street Community Services Learning Centre will present their unique perspectives on downtown.

**Spread the words.**

After viewing photography and artwork by inner-city teens, people can take in digital demonstrations and create their own family photos and videos. Visitors to the event will also be able to try their hands at drumming and chalk drawing on Centennial Plaza. The musically inclined can take to the stage in the library theatre for a jam session. Outside the theatre, the best deals in town will be available at EPL's popular Books2Buy sale where books, CDs and DVDs can be had for a buck or two.

Downtown Stories celebrates Edmonton's central neighbourhoods and the diverse range of people who call downtown home. Responding to community needs, the Edmonton Public Library was the first library in Canada to hire an Aboriginal services librarian in 2007 and the first to hire community librarians in 2009. That same year EPL was the first library in Alberta to attain Safe Harbour designation – a national diversity initiative that creates safer, more welcoming environments.

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### **About the Edmonton Public Library**

The Edmonton Public Library (EPL) carries everything you care about. We are Edmonton's largest lender of all manner of information and entertainment. Our professionally trained staff take you beyond Google with the knowledge, discernment and desire to help you navigate a universe of information. Every year, we host over 14 million in-branch and online visits across our 17 branches and website. We deliver our incredible content to you everywhere - in the library, at home or on your handheld device. Unmatched access and unrivalled value - that is today's EPL. Spread the words.  
[www.epl.ca](http://www.epl.ca).

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