

FEBRUARY 2026

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BRIDGELAND RIVERSIDE

BRIDGES

THE OFFICIAL BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Helen Waving Farewell by Santisouk Phommachakr



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Funding	Cheryl De Paoli Funding@brcacalgary.org
Director at Large	Susan Mulholland
Director at Large	Catherine Larson Cath@brcacalgary.org
Newsletter	Ana Hoepfner Newsletter@brcacalgary.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM

New and returning members, please apply online at brcacalgary.org/ membership or use this form and mail or drop off along with cheque made out to:

Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association

**917 Centre Ave NE
Calgary AB T2E 0C6**

Membership type: (please check one)

Individual _____

Family _____

Senior _____

Member information: (please print clearly, attach additional family member names)

Last name: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

Postal code: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____



Or, please feel free to communicate with us about community events at events@BRCACalgary.org

Bridges contains editorial content and information provided by Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association and is distributed free to community residents and businesses 12 times per year. Circulation is approximately 5,500.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

February is heart month. Bridgeland-Riverside has heart. Our community is filled with kind and welcoming residents and businesses. It is with a heavy heart that we learned of the recent passing of two members of our community who exemplified the kindness this neighbourhood is known for.

Helen Jusic passed away in late December at the age of 89. She was loved by the many people who were touched by her acts of kindness over the decades she lived in Bridgeland. Those who did not know Helen before the pandemic certainly came to know her by being the recipients of the thousands of waves, blown kisses, and "air hugs" she gave out as she stood at the corner of 12 Street and 1 Avenue during those difficult times when we had to keep our distance from each other. Her efforts to cheer us up received widespread media attention, but Helen did not do it to receive publicity. She took it upon herself to do this to allow her to connect with friends and strangers alike and to let us know that, despite social distancing, we were still a community.

Since becoming the President of the BRCA, I was fortunate to receive a phone call from Helen at least once a year, thanking me and the other BRCA Directors and volunteers for our efforts on behalf of the residents of Bridgeland-Riverside. It was a pleasure to speak with Helen, but I felt humbled in receiving her thanks as my efforts pale in comparison to the contributions that she made over many decades of service to the community. My thoughts are with Helen's family and friends, including BRCA Director Deb Lee, whose tribute to Helen can be found in this issue of the newsletter.

We lost another community icon when Bob Lukes passed away in early January at the age of 73. Bob ran Lukes Drug Mart from 1985 to 2013, continuing the family business that was founded by his father Jim and that has operated in the same location in Bridgeland since 1951. The operation of Calgary's oldest independent pharmacy has been carried on by Bob's son Gareth since 2013, and it continues to be a beloved institution in our neighbourhood. Three generations of the Lukes family have served the needs of Bridgelanders with kindness and compassion and have been strong supporters of our community. We extend our condolences to the Lukes family at this time of sadness.

Alex MacWilliam

Join or Renew Your BRCA Membership

Individual, Senior and Family
memberships available.



Sign up to get information about BRCA events, programs, and community news.

Visit
www.brcacalgary.org
to learn more



BRCA SENIORS GAMES DAYS

CARDS - BOARD GAMES

WEDNESDAYS - 1-2PM

DROP IN

BRCA HALL - UPSTAIRS ROOM

FEB 4TH, 18TH

MARCH 4TH, 18TH

APRIL 1ST, 15TH

MAY 6TH, 20TH

JUNE 3RD, 17TH

THERE WILL BE SOME CARDS AND GAMES AVAILABLE,
BUT FEEL FREE TO BRING SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITES!

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED ON FEB 4TH,
THEN BYO REFRESHMENTS!

QUESTIONS? EMAIL PROGRAMS@BRCACALGARY.ORG



BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE

BRCA
BRIDGELAND RIVERSIDE
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

WINTER WELLNESS CLASSES

ALL CLASSES HAVE A LIMIT OF 20 PARTICIPANTS AND ARE LED BY KIM FESTA IN THE DOWNSTAIRS OF THE BRCA HALL (917 CENTRE AVE NE)

SENIOR CHAIR YOGA ADVANCED

THURSDAYS 10:30AM - 11:30AM

JAN 22 - FEB 26

FREE

SENIOR QIGONG

TUESDAYS 2:00PM - 3:00PM

JAN 20 - FEB 24

FREE

NEW CLASS

ADULT QI-YO CLASS

MONDAYS 7PM - 8PM

JAN 19 - MAR 2

FUSION OF QIGONG AND YOGA

\$80 - NO CLASS FEB 16

SENIOR STRENGTH TRAINING BEGINNER

MONDAYS 10:30AM - 11:30AM

JAN 19 - MAR 2

SPECIALIZED STRENGTH TRAINING WITH
PRIMARILY SEATED EXERCISES

FREE - NO CLASS FEB 16

SENIOR STRENGTH TRAINING INTERMEDIATE

FRIDAYS 10:30AM - 11:30PM

JAN 23 - FEB 27

SPECIALIZED STRENGTH TRAINING WITH
PRIMARILY STANDING EXERCISES

FREE

REGISTRATION DETAILS

- REGISTER ONLINE BY JANUARY 12
- REGISTRATION OPENS DEC 10 FOR BRIDGELAND RESIDENTS
- REGISTRATION OPENS JAN 2 FOR NON-RESIDENTS (AS SPACE PERMITS)

DUE POPULAR DEMAND, WE WILL BE LIMITING THE REGISTRATION OF THE SENIORS CLASSES TO 1 FREE PER PARTICPANT. IF YOU WISH TO BE ON A WAITLIST FOR A 2ND CLASS, PLEASE EMAIL PROGRAMS@BRCA.ORG

WWW.BRCACALGARY.ORG

IF YOU NEED HELP REGISTERING, CALL 403-263-5755 OR EMAIL
PROGRAMS@BRCACALGARY.ORG

CANCELLATION POLICY: REFUNDS MINUS 5% AVAILABLE FOR CANCELLATIONS OVER 7 DAYS: NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN FOR CANCELLATIONS WITHIN 7 DAYS TO START DATE

Understanding and Reporting Suspicious Activity

by Ron Bettin, BRCA Safe Community Director
(safecommunity@brcacalgary.org)

Community awareness and timely reporting deter crime and support effective policing. Suspicious activity can include peering into homes or vehicles, testing door handles, carrying break-in tools, or loitering without a clear purpose around properties. It can also involve unusual vehicle behaviour: circling repeatedly, lingering with lights off, or speeding away when observed or noticed. Trust your instincts and prioritize safety: never confront; instead, observe discreetly and record objective details such as location, time, descriptions (height, clothing, distinguishing marks), direction of travel, and vehicle make, model, colour, and licence plate (even partials help).

Decide the right reporting channel. Call 9-1-1 for emergencies or crimes in progress, threats to life, or when danger is imminent. Use the Calgary Police Service (CPS) non-emergency line (403-266-1234) for non-urgent attendance or to provide information that may help patrols (e.g., suspicious loitering or property checks). Many incidents that have already occurred—certain thefts, mischief to property, and some break-and-enters to detached spaces—can be reported online at calgary.ca/cps/report-a-crime. Accurate reports create data that informs resource allocation and hotspot analysis.

When you're unsure whether behaviour is suspicious, consider context: time of day, location (e.g., quiet residential lane vs. retail area), and actions that don't fit normal patterns (checking mailboxes at night, trying car doors, carrying crowbars). If you prefer to remain anonymous, Crime Stoppers provides a secure phone number, 800-222-8477, or website www.p3tips.com/tipform.aspx to share information and upload photos/videos. Remember that your safety comes first—capture descriptive details to support police but do not follow individuals.

Community habits amplify impact: your awareness and timely reporting help to deter crime and support effective policing.

Community Safety Contacts

- 9-1-1: Emergency Services (For emergencies or crimes in progress)

- 403-266-1234: Calgary Police Non-Emergency Line, or www.calgary.ca/cps/report-a-crime.html
- 3-1-1: City of Calgary (For bylaw-related issues: graffiti, encampments, animals, etc.), or calgary-cwiprod.motorolasolutions.com/cwi/tile
- 800-222-8477: Crime Stoppers Anonymous Tips Line, or www.p3tips.com/tipform.aspx
- 2-1-1: Mental Health Support

The BRCA Safe Community Committee exists to enhance the safety, security, and well-being of Bridgeland-Riverside residents through collaboration, community connection, and proactive initiatives. We believe the safest communities are those where all members feel welcome and included, supported by a strong sense of belonging, active engagement, and regular interaction with one another.

If you are interested in contributing to the safety of Bridgeland-Riverside, please contact us at safecommunity@brcacalgary.org or join us for our meetings at 7:00 pm at the BRCA Hall Lantern Room, the first Tuesday of each month.

SAFE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Creating a safer community through **building strong community connections**

Tuesday, Feb 3
7:00 PM
BRCA Hall
917 Centre Ave NE



safecommunity@brcacalgary.org



Farewell Helen Jusic, Bridgeland Angel

by Deb Lee, BRCA Heritage Committee and Friend of Helen



Helen Jusic Waving Farewell. Photo by Santisouk Phommachakr

On Saturday, December 20, Helen Jusic celebrated an early Christmas with her daughter, her grandson, and his family, including her two great-grandsons. After enjoying a delicious meal and opening presents, Helen insisted that they do a family picture around the Christmas tree. Shortly after, as Helen was returning to her home, she suddenly died.

We all felt shock and disbelief. Was Helen not our community's 'ever-ready bunny' who would always bounce back, and who would always be there for us, waving and sharing her love?

Our neighbour Helen lived on 11A Street in Bridgeland for decades. She was a long-service employee at the Calgary General Hospital, and after her retirement, she continued to be involved as a volunteer with several organizations in the community. This included Silvera for Seniors, Rehab Society of Calgary, Christine Meikle School, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and she was awarded many certificates showing what a dedicated and appreciated volunteer she was!

Helen thrived on giving kindness, but when Covid came along in 2020, she was no longer allowed to volunteer and help others with her good works. This was very

distressing to Helen until she had a brilliant idea. Keeping in line with Covid restrictions, she decided to greet people—from a distance—at the corner of 12 Street and 1 Avenue. Faithfully, she stood at the corner, sharing air hugs and blowing kisses to everyone who passed by. And very soon, those passersby started waving back. More and more Calgarians looked forward to greeting her as they passed. Helen became quite famous, not just in Bridgeland-Riverside, but all over the world. Her story was featured in local, national, and international news, warming the hearts of people of all ages. Long after Covid was over, Helen continued to wave at passersby, and her appearance at the corner brought many Calgarians smiles and appreciation.

When the news of Helen's passing was reported on Bridgeland-Riverside Facebook groups, we received over 800 reactions to the post—probably the most ever. People shared their feelings about Helen. Here are a few of the comments:

Joe said, "Thank you for being a shining light and bringing joy to this world."

Cheryl said, "Helen's warmth reached far beyond her neighbourhood and touched the whole city."

Jen said, "Helen's acts of kindness hit deep. I think of her often."

Elisa said, "Even though Helen waved and blew kisses and said 'I love you' to everyone, I felt like it was just for me. It takes a special person to make you feel that way when you are essentially a stranger to each other."

Brooklyn says, "I met Helen when I delivered medications to her. She would sing 'You Are My Sunshine' as I left the room, until I was down the hallway. She inspired me to go through life with more love and compassion."

Caitie said, "Helen, you embodied what the world needed most, when it needed it most. May your legacy inspire everyone to be just a little kinder every day."

Allanna said, "Your light reached far beyond those who knew you personally and your joy and warmth brought hope to many in an otherwise dark time—thank you for reminding us of the power of sharing happiness and love with the world."

Lisa said, "Taking the time to chat with Helen would lift your spirits."

Laureen said, "You were the best, Helen. You were the rock for the community, and I hope your family knows

how many lives you touched with your kindness. You will always be remembered."

Dave said, "Beautiful lady... Made us smile when we drove by."

Kara said, "I loved seeing Helen on the corner and would often circle the block so I could get a second wave from her."

Helen's kindness and loving actions touched many. We miss her, and she will not be forgotten.

In 2024, a local park was named in her honour. "Helen's Garden" is just south of Bishop's Manor, near the 12 Street access to the community. We were working with Helen on the wording for the name plaque. It will soon be completed. We plan to install the plaque in the spring. This will be an opportunity to celebrate Helen and all that she meant to us.

Please stay tuned for the unveiling of Helen's Garden plaque.



Light Up Bridgeland

Thank you to everyone who decorated the community with holiday lights this winter! You helped make our community feel warm and welcoming despite the chilly temperatures.

Alissa Fahrner

BRCA Beautification Committee

beautification@brcacalgary.org



BRCA **WELLNESS** **CLASSES**



**REGISTRATION
FOR
MAR-APR 2026**
**SESSIONS WILL OPEN IN
FEBRUARY.**
**CHECK WEBSITE FOR
DETAILS**

ADVANCED CHAIR YOGA FOR SENIORS
STRENGTH TRAINING FOR SENIORS
QIGONG FOR SENIORS
ADULT QI-YO
(CLASSES SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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SCAN ME

BRIDGELAND-RIVERSIDE 2026 YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAM

U4-U13 MIXED TEAMS.
THE SEASON RUNS
APPROXIMATELY
APRIL 20 – JUNE 20
(BASED ON WEATHER AND FIELDS)



REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 9TH

Early Bird Registration
FEBRUARY 9 - 16

Regular Registration
FEBRUARY 17 - MARCH 3

TO REGISTER, PLEASE VISIT
WWW.BRCACALGARY.ORG/PROGRAMS/SOCCER/

OUR PROGRAM DEPENDS ON PARENT VOLUNTEERS AS COACHES, ASSISTANT COACHES, MANAGERS AND MORE. PLEASE CONSIDER SIGNING UP WHEN YOU REGISTER! COACHES RECEIVE A REGISTRATION DISCOUNT.

BRCA
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COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



Plant Together ~ Grow Together

BRCA Rooftop Garden

Applications Open March 1 to April 1, 2026

The BRCA Rooftop Garden is gearing up for another season of growing together with a focus on creating community connections!

The garden, located on the roof of the BRCA Community Hall, has 25 individual small and large plots.

Applications for the 2026 growing season are open from March 1 to April 1, 2026. You must be a resident of Bridgeland-Riverside and a member of the Bridgeland-Riverside Community Association to be eligible to apply for a garden plot.

Preference is given to persons living in apartments and condos. Individual gardeners are responsible for weeding, watering, caring for, and harvesting throughout the season on their specific plot, and must participate in the spring and fall clean-ups. Applications are processed in the order in which they are received.

Plot fees cover soil and compost. These are the costs for the 2026 gardening season:

- Large plots: \$45
- Small plots: \$35

To offer barrier-free gardening, we have a limited number of plots which we can offer at a reduced rate. Please contact rooftopgarden@brcacalgary.org for more information.

Once the application period is open, the Gardener Application Form will be found at brcacalgary.org/programs/rooftop-garden/.

Help Out with the Rooftop Garden: Plant Together, Grow Together

Our rooftop garden is looking for helping hands! We are currently recruiting two Garden Guardians to support the Maintenance Lead with regular upkeep, including weeding and spring or fall cleanups.

If you're interested in volunteering and helping our garden thrive, please email rooftopgarden@brcacalgary.org.



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Staying in Relationships Thinking the Other Person Will Change, Now What?

by Nancy Bergeron, R.Psych. | info@nancybergeron.ca

In romantic relationships, the hope that someone will change is incredibly common, and very human. Here's the why:

We fall in love with potential, not just reality. Early connection, chemistry, and shared dreams can make us focus on who someone could be rather than who they consistently are.

Love activates optimism and attachment. Attachment bonds naturally create hope. Our nervous system prefers security over loss, so we hold onto the idea that change will come rather than face the pain of disappointment or separation.

We confuse influence with control. Healthy relationships do involve growth and compromise, but that can slide into the belief that love, patience, or suffering will eventually motivate change in areas that are actually character-based or deeply ingrained.

Familiar patterns feel safer than unfamiliar outcomes. Even dissatisfaction can feel safer than the uncertainty of leaving—especially if someone grew up adapting to others or earning love by tolerating discomfort.

Cultural narratives reinforce it. We're taught that love "fixes," that commitment means endurance, and that leaving equals failure rather than discernment.

Acceptance doesn't mean approval. It means clearly seeing who someone is right now, and asking: Can I live peacefully with this if it never changes? If the answer is no, the work isn't to force acceptance—it's to honor that truth. Real intimacy grows when we choose people for who they are, not who we hope they'll become.

Here are practical ways to shift your inner narration and cultivate acceptance of your partner—without abandoning your own needs or values (unless the situation is unsafe or abusive):

1. Separate "preferences" from "deal-breakers"

Narration shift: "I don't like this" to... "This is uncomfortable, but not unsafe or violating."



2. Replace fantasy with reality statements

Narration shift: "They would be perfect if..." to... "This is who they are today, consistently."

3. Translate irritation into meaning

Ask: What does this trigger in me; fear, unmet needs, old wounds?

Narration shift: "They're the problem" to... "This brings up something important in me."

4. Use compassion without justification

Narration shift: "They shouldn't be this way" to... "I can understand why they're this way, without agreeing or excusing."

5. Practice present-tense acceptance language

Use phrases like: "This is what's here right now" or... "I don't have to solve this today."

6. Stop future-bargaining

Narration shift: "Once X happens, then I'll be okay" to... "If nothing changes, how do I feel about this life?"

7. Name your choice clearly

Narration shift: "I'm stuck" to... "I am choosing to stay for now, with eyes open."

Choice restores agency and reduces resentment.

8. Practice grief, not resistance

Acceptance often requires grieving the partner you hoped for.

Narration shift: "This shouldn't hurt" to... "Of course this hurts."

9. Anchor acceptance in boundaries

Narration shift: "I have to accept everything" to... "I accept who they are and I choose how close I stand."

10. Use curiosity over judgment

Narration shift: "They're wrong" to... "This is different from me—what does that mean for us?"

February Is Heart Month

by Alberta Health Services



Do you know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and what to do if someone experiences these? Knowing may make the difference between life and death. Recognizing and responding immediately to the warning signs of a potential heart attack may significantly improve survival and recovery. February is Heart Month: take the time to be heart safe and learn how you can reduce your risk.

Common Signs of a Heart Attack

(Any, or all, of these signs and symptoms may occur)

- Chest discomfort described as simply a mild pressure up to a 'crushing' pain; may also be 'squeezing' or a 'heavy' sensation.
- Discomfort may move to the shoulders, arm, neck, or jaw.

- May include shortness of breath, sweating, or nausea/vomiting.
- Signs may vary person to person and can differ between men, women, and the elderly.

Heart Attack Risk Factors

- Obesity*
- Sedentary lifestyle*
- Smoking*
- High cholesterol*
- Age/Gender
- Family history

Speak with your doctor about how to treat your modifiable (*) risk factors and learn to be heart safe.

What To Do When Seconds Count

- Call 9-1-1, immediately. Early treatment can greatly reduce heart damage and be the difference between life and death.
- Treatment starts the moment EMS arrives. Paramedics can provide oxygen, start an intravenous, and perform an electrocardiogram (ECG).
- Paramedics can also administer important medication(s) in the early minutes of a heart attack to lessen heart damage.
- During transport, EMS will share information with the hospital so that definitive treatment can begin immediately upon arrival.
- Take a CPR/AED course. Training is widely available from many reputable organizations. It's easy and could make a significant difference in the outcome of someone experiencing a heart attack.

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News, Events,
& More



Crime
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Statistics



SOCIAL DISORDER WHO TO CONTACT

SOCIAL ISSUES SUCH AS HOMELESSNESS, ADDICTION, ENCAMPMENTS, ROUGH SLEEPING, OR MENTAL HEALTH ARE NOT TYPICALLY A CRIMINAL MATTER. TO BEST SUPPORT COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN CRISIS OR FOR HELP DURING NON-EMERGENCY SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE, PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

311 CALGARY

311 allows you to access City services and information 24/7. The information reported to 311 helps the City record keep and direct their response where needed. Call 311, visit calgary.ca/311 or download the 311 app.

ALPHA HOUSE

Alpha House offers a range of outreach programs aimed at engaging clients into services and helping reduce the impact of addiction and homelessness on the broader community and public systems.

TRANSIT SAFETY

Calgary Transit partners with Peace Officers, the Calgary Police Service, and the Alpha House DOAP Team to respond to situations as they arise. On-call support is available 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

211 ALBERTA

211 provides access to a network of community, social, health, and government services. You can call, text, or chat online - ab.211.ca and be connected to a broad suite of social resources and supports.

★PLEASE BEGIN BY REPORTING ALL CONCERNs TO 311★



HOMELESSNESS + ROUGH SLEEPING

Alpha House
HELP Team

*Formerly the DOAP Team
T:403-998-7388



ENCAMPMENTS

Alpha House
Encampment Team
T:403-805-7388

*Please be sure to report all encampment concerns to 311



TRANSIT SAFETY

Transit Safety (24/7)
Text 74100 or call 403-262-1000
(option 1)

Alpha House
Transit Team
T:403-827-7106



NEEDLE DEBRIS

Alpha House Needle
Response Team

Call/Text 403-796-5334
*After hour requests will be
answered the following day.
Urgent after-hours needle
debris collection: call 311



MENTAL HEALTH + ADDICTION

211 Alberta (24/7)

If you or someone you know
is seeking help for addiction
or mental health, contact 211
for available local resources.



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A Modern Jonah

On February 13, 2025, Adrián Simancas experienced something truly biblical. While kayaking off Chile's Patagonian coast, Simancas was briefly swallowed by a humpback whale. The encounter, filmed by his father, lasted only a few seconds with the whale luckily spitting him out. What an over-whale-ming experience!



YOUR CITY OF CALGARY

Make The Youth Hiring Fair Work for You

by The City of Calgary



Mark your calendars! The Youth Hiring Fair is on March 26, at the Big Four Building in Stampede Park from 1:30 to 6:00 pm. Now's the time to get prepared. Set yourself up for success and be ready to meet 80 employers who are hiring.

Interested in attending? Youth ages 15 to 24 are encouraged to visit the Youth Employment Centre before the event. Drop-in to meet with an employment counsellor for free Youth Hiring Fair preparation. We can help you with:

- Targeting your résumé to available jobs.
- Creating a pitch to introduce yourself.
- Preparing for on-the-spot interviews and more.

Find us at the Alberta Trade Centre (315 – 10 Ave SE). We're open on weekdays from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. No appointment needed.

Visit calgary.ca/yechiring for ongoing announcements and advice on how to get prepared!

BUSINESS CLASSIFIEDS

For business classified ad rates contact Great News Media
at 403-720-0762 or sales@greatnewsmedia.ca

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BRIDGELAND MORTGAGE BROKER: Save a bunch of cash! As a Calgary mortgage broker, I have helped your neighbors navigate their purchase, refinance, and renewal options. If you are looking for expert mortgage advice, excellent rates, many options, and better financing, Call Anita at 403-771-8771 | anita@anitamortgage.ca | Licensed by Avenue Financial.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD CONFLICT? Community Mediation Calgary Society (CMCS) is a no-cost mediation and conflict coaching service that can help you resolve problems and restore peace! We help neighbours be neighbours again! www.communitymediation.ca, 403-269-2707.

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