

9/11 event inspires Abrahamic multi-faith book now incorporated into EPSB Grade 8 curriculum in Edmonton

Edmonton, September 9, 2011 The book **“Our Stories . . . of Abrahamic inter-faith harmony and cooperation in and around Edmonton, Alberta”** was recently accepted into the Edmonton Public School Board’s Grade 8 curriculum.

“We needed a way to illustrate that Edmonton is about multi-faith cooperation rather than conflict. We needed to tell these stories, as many as we could find from Edmonton’s inception to the present day, about how these faith groups cooperated to help build an even stronger and more vibrant city,” says Sol Rolinger, founding member and now Honourary Chair, Phoenix Multi-Faith Society For Harmony.

“Likewise, we felt these stories needed to be in the hands of and understood by future generations and the Grade 8 curriculum was a good place to start,” said EPSB Superintendent of Schools Edgar Schmidt.

“Our efforts depend on the strong bonds of friendship between and among the various communities in Edmonton. The “Our Stories” book exemplifies what makes Edmonton such a great place in which to live,” stated EPS Chief Rod Knecht (Ex-officio Phoenix Society member).

When 9/11 occurred in New York City, it created fear of a backlash against the Muslim community and generally fear among all faith groups in Edmonton. Leaders of the Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities stood together with the Mayor and EPS Police Chief of the day and its newly created Hate and Bias Crime unit to publicly say, “that matters of Middle East concern, and the events of 9/11 in New York City, must remain in those locales. There should not be a backlash against the Muslim community in Edmonton.”

Since then, the Society has remained true to its mission: “To seek continued peaceful co-existence and positive relations amongst all faiths by fostering open communication, interfaith dialogue, education and participation amongst our community members and the community at large with particular emphasis on initiatives to address and eliminate intercommunity negative stereotyping, hatred, bias and prejudice.”

The “Our Stories” book contains 33 stories of Abrahamic multi-faith cooperation told by those who lived this kind of interaction in Edmonton. In particular, what it meant to them and their families and more generally to that strong interwoven fabric that is our society in Edmonton.

Copies can be obtained from the three current Phoenix Multi-Faith Society Co-chairs:

Current Phoenix Chair (2011/12) (Muslim): Masood Peracha – mperacha@telusplanet.net
Phoenix Co-chair (2012/13) (Christian): Major, Larry Wright (retired) – wrightlk@telus.net
Phoenix Co-chair (2013/14) (Jewish): Marvin Abugov – mabugov@shaw.ca

Visit the Phoenix website: <http://www.phmultifaithsociety.ca>