

Giving Back

with the Battle River Community Foundation

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Join us June 9 for our annual Open House

The Battle River Community Foundation will be hosting its annual public Open House on Wednesday, June 9, at 7:30 p.m. at the Norsemen Inn in Camrose.

All donors, grant recipients, and residents of the east central Alberta area are welcome to attend.

This year's program will include two speakers who will share information about a very special 2009 pilot project called Reading University, which was offered jointly by the Battle River Community Foundation and the Battle River School Division.



Reading University is a summer reading program targeted at children in Grades 2 and 3 who are not yet reading at grade level.

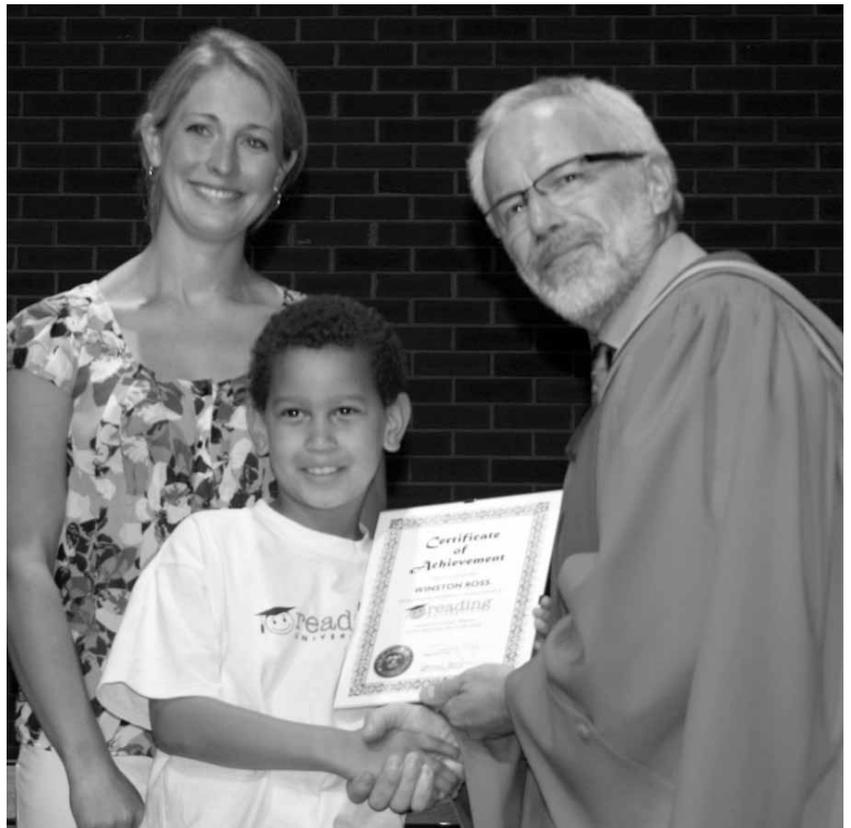
Shelley Hurley, whose son was a participant in Reading University, will talk about the impact and changes she has perceived in her child as a result of the program.

Joannie Zimmer, who spearheaded the program for the school division, will speak about the educational aspects of Reading University.

Also on the public meeting agenda is Deanne Morrow, who has been a strong contributor to the Battle River Community Foundation. Guest speaker for the evening will be Camrose Mayor Clarence Mastel.

In addition, the evening will include a financial update for the Foundation, as well as the opportunity to meet the Board members.

We look forward to seeing you there!



With his teacher, Katherine Cook, Winston Ross receives his Certificate of Achievement from Dean Roger Epp at the Reading University graduation ceremony, July 2009.

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Leaving a legacy to the place they called home

Erik and Gunvor Mygind came to Canada in 1950, for a five-year adventure.

Today, Gunvor says the pioneering journey that ended up lasting a lifetime was “always a lot of fun” and she’s pleased to have the opportunity to plan a legacy that will “pay back” the part of the world that became the couple’s long-time home.

Erik and Gunvor were both born in Denmark – she in 1921 and he about 18 months later. The couple became engaged in 1943, but didn’t find time to wed for many years.



Erik and Gunvor Mygind’s wedding day.

“We were very busy,” Gunvor recalls. “Erik’s family had a large farm and our days were full.” Erik had a “green paper” qualifying him for work as a farmer and was expected to take over his family’s operation one day. In 1950 the couple decided to travel to Canada and learn more about new and different agricultural methods. They married the day before they left their home country.

Erik and Gunvor’s first stop was a farm at Donalda, where Erik worked for the Helfer family. At the time, actress Tricia Helfer’s

father was a four-year-old boy running around the yard.

“It was a lovely farm and they are a lovely family,” Gunvor recalls.

Because the young couple wasn’t planning to stay in Canada, they did not accumulate a lot of possessions, basically living out of suitcases. Plus, Gunvor did not see many people and says it took her a long time to learn English. But those obstacles didn’t interfere with their sense of having a great adventure. “Well,” she laughs, “we were on our honeymoon, so we didn’t really mind.”

Soon, however, the couple rented a farm near Donalda in order to work for themselves. They stayed a few years before deciding it was time to see more of Canada. Erik built a trailer to pull behind their vehicle while they travelled.

The couple’s next stop became more permanent – Camrose. Erik and Gunvor had become acquainted with several other Danish couples who had settled in the Camrose area. Erik even went to work for one of them as a carpenter. Gunvor found employment at Rosehaven Care Centre.

“The matron there was a lovely lady,” she remembers. “I loved my job.”

By 1955 – the time Erik and Gunvor were originally going to return to Denmark – they and some others bought two quarters of land about seven miles northeast of Camrose. “Erik’s father was disappointed at first, because his son wasn’t coming back to the family farm. But the way things went, it turned out to be the right thing,” Gunvor says. “My own mother died when I was 17, but my father, well, he always just told us to enjoy the adventure.”

The new property the Myginds purchased had a small house, but there was no power, no water, no phone and no other buildings. “It was kind of fun,” she smiles. “We were real pioneers. Erik loved the land in Canada.” The couple stayed in their trailer until they got power and a phone, then moved into the house. They bought furniture at an auction because there was no money for luxuries – it all went into the farm.

“It suited us well,” Gunvor says, “even though we both had come from well-equipped families.

We liked building it up for ourselves.”

Soon Erik had begun a hog operation. The next decade was a time of comfort and prosperity. And when Erik developed asthma, the hogs were sold, the couple bought more land and turned exclusively to grain farming. “Life was very good,” according to the farm wife. “It was the right time to be farming.”

When the couple gave up actively farming themselves and rented out their land, they took up travelling in earnest. “We pretty much went around the world – we took 21 different cruises. We really enjoyed life to the fullest.”



Erik and Gunvor Mygind on a cruise.

Shortly after Erik and Gunvor sold their farm completely and moved into Camrose, Erik became ill. He passed away in January of 2005, at the age of 83 years.

When Erik died, Gunvor says, there was money. The Myginds had already given to their

relatives in Denmark as well as supporting the music program at Augustana because Erik had several members of his family who played instruments and he loved music of all kinds.

“Our lawyer told me about the Battle River Community Foundation,” Gunvor recalls. “I liked that idea very much. This is the only area we’ve known in Canada and we stayed here a long time. The people have been very friendly and our life has been good.”

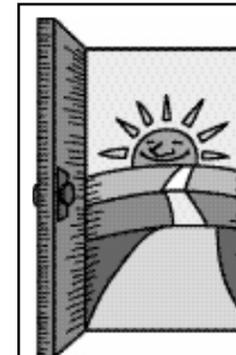
“Coming here was very good for us. Things always went well,” she adds. “We always seemed to have the wind at our back.”

But, Gunvor adds, not all people are as fortunate as the Myginds have been. “Sometimes people need help. I am blessed to be able to give help. I can’t do much myself with money, anymore, so I like to see the Foundation doing something with it.”

Gunvor has given more than \$116,000 to the Battle River Community Foundation. \$10,000 is earmarked to support music, while a further \$14,000 supports the Community Fund. Over \$92,000 is designated for scholarships and the environment.

Plus, Gunvor adds, everything is all arranged and spelled out, so no one will have to worry about settling her estate when the time comes. That, she says, is a great comfort.

“Life has been a great adventure for Erik and me. It was always just the two of us and it’s nice that what we leave will make a difference in the place that was our home.”



THE OPEN DOOR

Building Community Connections

2009 was a year of significant growth and development for The Open Door, an organization focused on providing service and support to at-risk youth, aged 11 to 14.

Thanks, in part, to \$15,000 in support from the Battle River Community Foundation, The Open Door has been successfully building young people’s connection to the community, through employment training, customer service and sharing technology skills.

Get a more in-depth look at The Open Door’s 2009 year in the upcoming BRCF annual report, coming in June.



Battle River Community Foundation

TELEPHONE and FAX:
780-679-0449

Box 1122
Camrose, AB
T4V 4E7

EMAIL: info@brcf.ca

WEBSITE: www.brcf.ca

BOARD CHAIR

Blain Fowler
780-672-3142

VICE-CHAIR

Vivianne Grue
780-672-9624

SECRETARY

Dana Andreassen
780-672-2964

TREASURER

James Mayer
780-672-4491

DIRECTORS

Gerry Davis
780-672-7761

Corey Kudrowich
780-679-5085

Tom Kuntz
780-672-7096

David Ofrim
780-672-3534

By Reesor
780-672-5709

PAST CHAIR

Ken Drever
780-672-4651

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kerry Grettum
780-679-0449

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Phyllis Robertson
780-679-0449

Introducing a new Board member

The Battle River Community Foundation is pleased to welcome David Ofrim to the Board of Directors.

David, age 48 and owner of Ofrim Project Management Inc since 1994, is a third generation resident of Camrose and, along with his wife Karen, has three teenage sons.

After obtaining a B.Sc in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Alberta in 1983, David returned to work with his father at Ofrim Construction. He has always been involved in the community, most especially in activities which involve his children.

“That’s kind of pseudo-volunteering,” he says, “because there’s also a personal benefit to you and your family from being involved.” But joining the Battle River Community Foundation Board is a step beyond and one that David is pleased to be taking.

“I appreciate the commitment of the other Board members – several of them have been part of the Foundation for a long time and that’s a good indicator of a strong organization.”

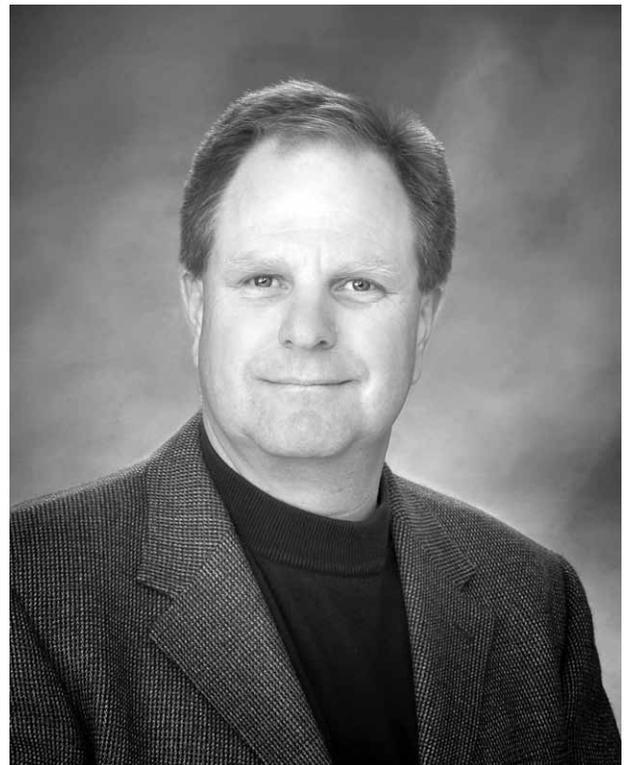
“I chose to be part of the Foundation because I thought it would allow me to make a stronger impact on the community. There are so many organizations looking for support. The Foundation is like a blanket – it is flexible enough to cover so many areas and allows us to contribute more generally to the wellbeing of our community.”

David says that he and his siblings became contributors to the organization long before he ever thought about being on the Board. “It’s meaningful to us to have ongoing recognition of those who were part of the community in the past.”

David also likes knowing the principle of his gift is going to exist in perpetuity.

“I’m old enough now to be occasionally nostalgic for the old days and I really appreciate having roots. I want that community feeling to exist for the next generation of local children, too.”

“Giving back to that is what I hope to do by being part of the Battle River Community Foundation.”



David Ofrim