



Giving Back

with the Battle River Community Foundation

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Acknowledging two very dedicated community builders

The Battle River Community Foundation is very pleased to announce that, on Friday, October 19, long-time Camrose couple Alan and Valerie Fielding will be celebrated at the annual Community Builders Dinner.

The Fieldings, who have lived in Camrose since the early 1970s, are well known for their generous contributions and dedication to the community. You can learn more about their history and philosophy on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter.

A number of Camrose residents will be participating in the evening to honour Alan and Valerie, including David Samm (Master of Ceremonies); Doug Johnson (Auctioneer); Harry Gaede, Dittmar Mündel and Gail Stolee (all of whom will be speakers), as well as the couple's daughter Ariane, who lives in Edmonton. The event, taking place at the Norsemen Inn, will include a delicious meal, live auction and words of tribute. All proceeds from the night will be added to the Fieldings' Battle River Community Foundation fund, and used to support projects in east central Alberta.

Tickets can be purchased through any Battle River Community Foundation board member or by calling the office at 780-679-0449.



Valerie and Alan Fielding

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Two copies of the newsletter?

If you received *Giving Back* in the mail, you will have received two copies. It is hoped that you will share the second copy with someone who may be interested in the work we do. If you feel that the Foundation is worthy of support, perhaps they will too.

We appreciate your assistance in helping to raise awareness of the Foundation throughout east central Alberta.

Living a life

Each year the Battle River Community Foundation celebrates the contributions of individuals and couples in east central Alberta who have made a long-term difference to their community and beyond, by celebrating them at Community Builder tribute nights.

The Foundation seeks to honour those who believe in making their world a better place, and actually do what it takes to make positive change happen.

The story of Alan and Valerie Fielding's life together began with an act of service and that theme has remained a constant for the couple throughout their more than 40 years of marriage.

It was the mid-60s when Alberta-born Alan met Swiss-born Valerie. Both were part of a World Council of Churches Action Project, building a parish house in Germany. Alan was at the site as part of a European visit. Valerie, already fluent in French and English, was there studying German, and acting as translator for those construction volunteers – like Alan – who could not speak the local languages.

“There's a lot of power in being the translator,” Valerie says with a laugh. Although the two young people went back to their separate countries, they carried on a “correspondence romance” (in English!) and were married in Switzerland in 1968. (The ceremony was in French, which Alan learned to speak).

The couple settled in Edmonton, where Alan obtained a law degree and Valerie finished the Arts degree she had begun at a Swiss university. The two remember their school days fondly and recall riding bicycles throughout the city, as well as Alan's evenings and weekends spent driving a taxi to earn spending money. Music was always a big part of Alan's family and he often played guitar in church on Sundays.



The love of music spans generations of the Fielding family. Pictured are Alan, his mother and two sons enjoying a musical moment together.

Alan was familiar with Camrose because he had finished high school in the community, when his father was transferred there as the manager of the local CIBC. Alan's mother was also a substitute teacher in Camrose schools. So it was a logical place for Alan to return to start a law firm, with partner Harry Gaede.

The firm began in 1973, with Alan commuting while Valerie taught at an Edmonton school. The couple relocated to Camrose in 1974. While Alan focused on law, Valerie assisted in the creation of a French language program for Kindergarten children. By the late 70s Valerie had joined the faculty of Augustana as a part time Professor of French. With a short break in service when the couple's three children were small, Valerie remained with Augustana until 2010. Alan retired from the law firm in 2005.

Despite busy careers and being active parents to Marc, Ariane and Alex, both Alan and Valerie have also played significant roles in community organizations. They have been on numerous boards, committees and played many crucial roles.

Alan, for example, is the current President of Sahakarini (which undertakes international development projects) and has been a dedicated member of the Board for such respected groups as the Battle River

based on service

Community Foundation, the Battle River Credit Union and The Bethany Group. He was involved in fundraising for a Chapel at Augustana and has been a long-time member of the local Rotary Club.

Valerie has also been involved in Sahakarini, as well as the Camrose International Institute (initially called the Camrose One World Centre), the Camrose and District Music Festival, Kaleidoscope for Kids, and was a founding member of Neighbor Aide.



Valerie travelled to Guatemala, on behalf of Sahakarini, to visit a development project.

Both Alan and Valerie consider service to others to be an essential part of their lives. Some of that belief stems from their shared Christian roots.

“My parents believed in helping others,” Alan explains, “and making contributions to the community. They instilled that in me from an early age.”

For Valerie, the emphasis on service comes from a bigger picture too. “Switzerland always had a focus on helping the broader world,” she says. “It was part of my upbringing. Plus, I think the 60s were focused on more global thinking and a spirit of adventure – that played a role too.”

The Fieldings see the Battle River Community Foundation as helping facilitate that community support in the long term. Years ago, they established a fund in honour of Alan’s parents, Les and Bobbie Fielding, which assists music programs in the local area. They also established their own fund,

the Alan and Valerie Fielding Fund, with the proceeds made available to support whatever causes require assistance on an annual basis. Funds raised from the coming Community Builders dinner will be added to that fund.

Along with their dedication to serving others goes a sense of gratitude and humility that makes it slightly uncomfortable for the couple to be the centre of attention at an evening such as the coming tribute night.

“We’re honoured to be asked,” Alan says, “but we’re not really the kind of people who thrive on attention. We consider the evening to be a chance to bring together a wide range of people who care about and are involved in the community.”

“We’ve been very blessed,” says Valerie. “And we want to support our community. There’s always a very positive vibe to the tribute dinners. It’s lovely to be part of an event with such giving people.”

With a series of tribute speakers and a live auction including items as diverse as Swiss Chocolate Cake and the opportunity to attend the Fieldings’ annual Christmas caroling event, this fall’s tribute dinner promises to be an enjoyable evening.

More importantly, the event will bolster the funds of the Battle River Community Foundation and help make a difference to the wellbeing of local residents for many years to come. For Alan and Valerie, that’s what makes it all worthwhile.



The Fieldings enjoyed a bountiful table and beautiful scenery in France.



Battle River Community Foundation

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Why should you give to the Foundation?

Community Foundations across Canada (and around the world) exist for the benefit of communities and causes that are important to donors.

The Battle River Community Foundation exists to provide a venue for those who care about their community to make contributions that keep local organizations strong now and long into the future.

It's a bit like the bricks that Alan and Valerie Fielding laid way back in 1965, as they both helped to build a parish house in Germany. From that small and simple act has come a shared life that is long-lasting, substantial, meaningful and



Alan and Valerie Fielding began building their life together after meeting in Germany in the 1960s.

has grown to include others. Even when Alan and Valerie are no longer here, their contributions will remain.

It doesn't matter if your gift is large or small; if you give once or give often; if you create a fund or give to a fund that already exists; if you give in your own name, in memory or celebration of someone else; every contribution has the power to support and impact the future.

Call one of our Board of Directors or the Battle River Community Foundation office to talk more about how our foundation can help you build your foundation.



The Board of Directors, together with management of Battle River Credit Union Ltd., take this opportunity to recognize Alan Fielding.

His commitment, wisdom and guidance as Board Chair for three decades has been instrumental in our growth and success.



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