

# **Executive Director's Report**

September 28

# 2013

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The past year has been one we will not soon forget. With the 2013 Alberta Floods hitting our Province, it has been an opportunity to experience a real disaster and put our Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative into action. We invite you to share in our journey as we come to the close of our ninth fiscal year.

**BRIDGES OF LOVE  
ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING**

***“For we are God’s fellow workers, you are God’s field, God’s building.”  
1 Corinthians 3:9***

God’s work involves many individuals each with their unique gifts and abilities; team members performing their own special roles. We have witnessed the collaborative efforts of many during the 2013 Alberta Floods and have learned the value and importance of helping one another. Before we focus our attention on Bridges of Love’s involvement in the flood activities, let us take a look over our past year’s activities.

Bridges of Love has matured from a vision into serving the city through a disaster. God has directed and we have been obedient. We are so very thankful for our Board’s support and assistance. It is with a very grateful heart that we say thank you and farewell to our long term member and Chair, Herb Arnold. Herb has served so faithfully since the start of Bridges of Love almost ten years ago. He has been part of a ground breaking ministry that has gone through the hills and valleys of any start up operation but has remained faithful through it all. I can recall only one meeting that Herb missed in all those years and if my memory serves me correctly, it was due to confusion over the date. He has taken his position seriously and he and Diane have been on board to help at every event. Herb will be greatly missed but he leaves a legacy on which to build. Thank you so much Herb for giving ten years to building Bridges of Love Ministry and we share many wonderful memories.



We also appreciate Tom’s continued support to help wherever needed as well as his valuable service as our IT expert. With Social Media becoming the norm for marketing and communication, it is indeed necessary to keep abreast of changing methodologies and modes of communication. We appreciate the abilities and talents he brings to the ministry. Thank you Tom.

It has been a busy year for Lois Reid, our secretary but she continues to assist when available. Thank you Lois for taking time to give in-put and assistance for our Board minutes. We appreciate Lois’s spiritual insight when she shares devotionals and we know it is a sacrifice of her time to remain on our board.

We also thank those whose support made our work possible this past year. Our funders, volunteers, church partners, sponsors and many who offered prayer support giving strength to persevere through a challenging but rewarding year.



Year nine started out with our first Fund Raising Banquet, “Get Ready, Get Set, Go...” We were very fortunate to have Jeff Lehrmann, President of Chevron Oil as our speaker. Jeff walks the talk and shared the importance of emergency preparedness – both personally and in the oil industry. The Cappy Smart Fire Department Band gave a lively rendition from their repertoire which we all enjoyed. Captain Linley Biblow, Fire Station 4 shared the importance of community support for added strength through a disaster and brought greetings from the City. It was truly a great evening held at Prince of Peace Village.

Fall had a great beginning with not only our banquet but being honoured with two awards. Last September the Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations (CCVO) presented their 2012 Calgary Non-profit Innovation Award to four Charities. Bridges of Love was one of the proud recipients participating in a reception including a panel discussion with the winners and CCVO members attending. We received a trophy accompanied by \$2500. It was indeed an honour to be recognized as an organization that strives for innovative practices, unafraid of taking risks stepping outside the box.



It was indeed an honour being awarded the Queen Elizabeth 11 Diamond Jubilee Medal. It was truly a special time and one I will always cherish.



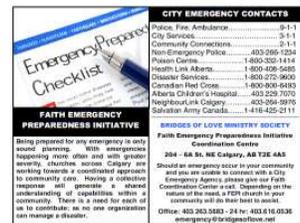
The **Van Horne Institute – “Ready at a Moment’s Notice”** The Logistics of the Military and Emergency Preparedness, was held October 11- 12, 2012 at the University of Calgary downtown campus. It was most interesting having a slightly different slant on emergency preparedness. **AEMA Stakeholders Summit**, a yearly conference funded by the Provincial Government was held at the Fantasyland Hotel, West Edmonton Mall, Nov. 19-20. I appreciated the opportunity to network with others in the emergency field at both events.

“Love Bee...ing Prepared” continues Ostrander has provided assistance share with FEPI churches who ordered communities. We also thank Don our on-going production. Toques have the Prime Minister’s family, Lieutenant Sector partners to the youth of four Lutheran Church. Tom and I delivered emergency preparedness community on a cold February evening. What a wonderful time, concluding with homemade apple pie and discussion around the table, as they shared their experiences. Youth from grades 7 – 11 were full of enthusiasm and their spiritual maturity was truly an inspiration.



as our reoccurring theme. Susanne producing hundreds of toques to magnets for distribution in their MacKenzie who donated wool for been presented to everyone from Governor and wife, MP’s, Public churches including Emmanuel accompanied the youth as they material along with magnets to their

Three additional churches participated in magnet distribution in their communities with a total of 750 magnets being shared throughout the city. Since the number ordered was not large enough to consider a professional printer, Bridges of Love purchased an inkjet printer that could accommodate magnet stock for a cost of 0.85 each. Using this little resource as an outreach tool is a means to connect with the community to show the church cares, developing relationships of trust.



Attending MissionFest Alberta last February was a surprise that was greatly appreciated. Due to the kind generosity of Peter and Leslie McManus who shared their booth, we were able to participate. Both Tom and I felt this was the most valuable time we had spent at Mission Fests as there was greater clarity for our message and the response from the attendees was affirmed more than in previous years. As you can see from the photo our booth was very colourful with lots of valuable information...and of course toques to share!

As in the past three years, we were once again invited to participate in Disaster Alley during Emergency Preparedness Week (May 5). The Calgary Emergency Management Agency changed venues this year holding it at McMahon Stadium which proved to be a better location. We appreciated Don’s demonstration for how to make a Love Bee...ing Prepared toque. I know he was the greatest attraction at this year’s event!



The FEPI Advisory Council meeting was held in Red Deer on April 15. We had a few new faces around the table whose main focus was on emergency training. Since the New Year, attention was on the Community Emergency Response Teams SWAT Training material. Fine tuning the material, targeted at the youth with the American content being replaced with Canadian material, is underway. It was coming along nicely with completion expected by the end of the summer. Due to the 2013 Alberta Floods, however, the CERT SWAT training was put on hold, until the flood recovery efforts are under control.



Over the past ten years, our Newsletter has been emailed at the beginning of each month, without fail. To this day, I am not sure why July's Newsletter was sent two weeks early...just days before the flood waters devastated our Province. The devotional and theme for July was "perseverance" with the accompanying photo and message... *"Perseverance is more than endurance. It is endurance combined with absolute assurance and certainty that what we are looking for is going to happen. We are assured that every hope or dream we have will be fulfilled if it is noble and of God."* Was God preparing us for a devastation that was about to rock our foundation? Did we truly believe we would experience a disaster of this magnitude in our Province that would test the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative?

Through this experience we have learned a great deal that will assist with future planning. We are truly grateful for RECOVERS for the kind assistance to match donations with those in need. Our <https://alberta.recovers.org> web site as been invaluable to assist many in rebuilding lives and structure. Due to Jill Browne's, introduction to this San Francisco organization, they generously shared their expertise and custom web site with Bridges of Love. It was a gift we will always treasure and be grateful.

The experiences since the flood have touched both heart and soul. We have seen what transpires when there is a need and people have been moved to action. We have worked as a united front, collaborating across boundaries. What a picture of solidarity as people from all walks of life have given sacrificially to help flood victims. This has not only been a Christian response...it has been a people response. Families have lost material possessions due to the flood waters but they have gained a greater sense of community, which will garner well for future disasters.

The question I would like to leave for consideration as we plan for another year, "How do we sustain the momentum created by the 2013 Alberta Floods?" Is it business as usual or do we continue to strive to build stronger communities with God at the helm?

## **SUMMARY**

The completion of each year brings greater satisfaction and appreciation for the work God has called Bridges of Love to fulfill. As we reflect on the past year, it has been full of surprises and challenges. He has provided and over-come, however, the obstacles we have faced. Each year brings greater faith and belief knowing our Lord and Saviour is in control. I look forward with excited anticipation for the coming year and invite others to join His great adventure. Thank you for the privilege of serving as Founding Director of this ministry.

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Gratefully Submitted:

Marg Pollon  
Founding Director, Bridges of Love Ministry  
AGM Executive Report  
September 28, 2013 His Service,