



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2010 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 12, 2010

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Snow Angels

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of Calgary

Jurisdiction population(s): 1,065,455 (2009)

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2009, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: October Year: 2004

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in San José, California, October 2010. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Owen Tobert

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Calgary

Name: Erika Hargesheimer

Title: General Manager, Community Services & Protective Services Jurisdiction: City of Calgary

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Tracy Bertsch

Title: Strategic Services Jurisdiction: City of Calgary
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**ICMA 2010 Program Excellence Award Nomination
Program Excellence Award Category: Community Health and Safety
Nominee: The City of Calgary's Snow Angels Program**

Problem Assessment

The convergence of an aging population, increased awareness of falls in hospitalization of the elderly and research indicating safety ranks among the key concerns for seniors pointed to the need for a program to support seniors living in their own homes. In a city where average annual snowfall is 126.7 cm, snow and ice pose one of the biggest risks to senior safety.

A Rapidly Growing Senior Population

The rate of growth of Calgary's senior population (ages 65 and over) has been forecasted to grow by over 50% every 10 years from 2006 to 2026. Additional research points towards a senior population that will need to be prepared to handle the day-to-day rigors of home maintenance but may be poorly equipped to do so:

- Calgary's senior population in 2006 was 93,859 of whom an estimated 90% or 84,473 are living independently in the community.
- The 2006 Federal Census stated approximately half of all Calgary seniors reported having difficulty with daily activities and/or reductions in the amount, or kind, of activities undertaken due to physical or mental conditions or health problems.

Falls are the Leading Cause for Senior Injury Hospitalization in Alberta

In Alberta, one in three seniors living in the community will experience a fall each year. In 2006, falls were the leading cause of injury hospital admissions among this group with over 6,900 admissions and 18,700 emergency room visits.

Alberta Seniors' Injury Hospital Admissions (2006)



Research also indicates that acute heart problems increase in connection with significant dips in outdoor temperature. One study notes that a 10-degree drop in temperature represents a 38 percent increased risk of a recurrent heart attack. Increased exertion due to snow shoveling can further elevate these heart health risks.

Research Demonstrates Safety, Maintaining a Home and Community are Key to Seniors

Elder Friendly Communities, a community-based study of seniors in Calgary conducted in 2000, identified eight core themes that encompassed the primary concerns of seniors. Of those themes, four related specifically to their desire to feel safe around their homes, feel they are safe when leaving their home to access transportation, develop abilities that allow them to live in their homes and be more connected to their communities.

When seniors spoke of feeling safe, this included concerns over personal safety in regards to emergency assistance and crime, but also environmental conditions such as snow and ice removal. For most seniors, the issues of environmental conditions and in-home chores were of significantly greater concern regarding safety than crime. This group also noted that finding reliable and trustworthy assistance for in-home chores could be difficult.

World Health Organization's *Guidebook on Age-Friendly Cities* identifies features essential to an age-friendly city based on international research with seniors that included four

Canadian cities. One of the essential features listed is that sidewalks remain clear of obstacles such as snow.

Program Implementation and Costs

Snow Angels Encourages Grassroots Support of Senior Health and Safety

The Snow Angels program has been running since 2004 to assist, and build capacity for, growing senior populations and their need for safe snow- and ice-free outdoor environments to foster a sense of safety and prevent injuries. It is a social marketing campaign that encourages Calgarians to look out for their neighbours, especially if they are older adults or have health concerns, by helping to clear snow and ice from their sidewalks. The goals of the program have been twofold: increase awareness among citizens that seniors and others may require assistance with snow removal; and increase occurrences of neighbour snow removal from the residences of seniors and other individuals with limited mobility.

The program uses several marketing techniques to raise awareness of snow removal needs, including dedicated road signs that appear at major access points into communities across Calgary and a combination of print and television advertising. Neighbours receiving assistance from their community members may also nominate them for recognition, which includes a letter from the City Mayor as well as entry into various draws that take place at the end of each snow season.

70 to 75 Percent of Program Costs Mitigated through Sponsorship

The Snow Angels program is result of the collaborative efforts of several City of Calgary Business Units, including Community & Neighbourhood Services, Customer Service & Communications, Roads and Animal & Bylaw Services. The program also receives donations and

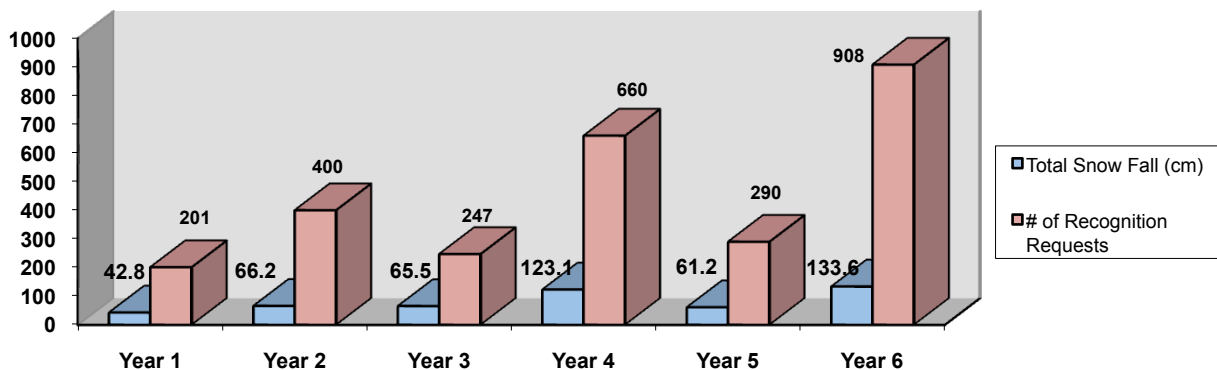
in-kind support from various local and national organizations, such as the Calgary Sun and CTV Network.

By leveraging media and corporate sponsorships, 70 to 75 percent of annual program costs are offset. As a result, The City of Calgary typically pays only \$19,000 to \$36,340 yearly, depending on the nature of the annual marketing campaign, to support the program and enhance senior safety across the city.

Tangible Results or Measurable Outcomes of Program

Community Members Increase Snow Removal Efforts in Times of Increased Need

Since its inception, the Snow Angel program has seen a direct correlation between the number of nominations, or recognition requests, that the Snow Angel program receives every year and the amount of snowfall received. This is an ideal outcome as it demonstrates citizens are responding with snow removal assistance when it is most needed.



A 2008 survey of individuals who received snow removal assistance from neighbours as well as those individuals who provided snow removal indicated:

- Two-thirds of those who provided snow removal felt the marketing campaigns effectively raised awareness that others in the community may need assistance with snow removal.
- Of those who received snow removal assistance:

- 100% felt it improved their safety on their sidewalks and driveways;
- 96.1% felt it made it easier for them to leave their home more often;
- 93.3% felt it improved their day-to-day ability to do things;
- 97.3% felt it made them feel less likely to fall on their sidewalk or driveway.

Increased Sense of Community and Ongoing Monitoring of Senior Health and Safety

In addition, the Snow Angel program has effectively fostered relationships where neighbours are more aware of seniors in their communities, monitor for signs of illness or assist with other household chores. Survey comments from those who benefited from snow removal indicated:

- “The ‘secret code’ between the (neighbour) wife and me is if the curtain is not opened in the morning and the doorbell isn’t answered, she will notify my daughter.”
- “When I fell on the floor...the came right over the picked me up and put me back into my wheelchair. Whenever I need help to reach things in the top of cupboards or I need help to fix things in the house of garden (they are there to help).”

Lessons Learned During Planning, Implementation and Analysis

- Engaging citizens to support seniors and others with mobility or physical restrictions in their community can build momentum to encourage ongoing support, monitoring and care of these individuals.
- Program costs can be significantly mitigated through partnerships and sponsorships with local businesses and media aligned with the social cause.
- Helping seniors stay safe outside their homes reduces instances of injury and hospitalization, encourages active participation in social events and reduces the sense of isolation common among these valuable members of society.