

# THE BRIDGE OF RECONCILIATION PROJECT



NEIGHBOURHOOD  
Empowerment Team



In March 2022, some members of the Spruce Avenue community noticed an increase in crime and disorder at the footbridge at 97 Street and 115 Avenue. Over the next few months, the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Alberta Avenue Beats Team worked with the community and the City of Edmonton to address these concerns. As a result, there was less crime and disorder in the neighbourhood. However, some community members, including students of the local Spruce Avenue School, still had concerns regarding unsafe activity on and around the bridge.

The Alberta Avenue Beats Team and the Neighbourhood Empowerment Team (NET) then approached Spruce Avenue School about collaboration, and The Bridge of Reconciliation project was born.



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles show how building a sense of community and animating a public space can help reduce crime and improve safety. The Bridge of Reconciliation project used some of these principles. The students were given an opportunity to animate the footbridge. The animation of the bridge also intended to share and reclaim Indigenous values and beliefs that promote truth and reconciliation.



NET and The Family Centre's Success Coach at Spruce Avenue School collaborated with a local Elder, Francis Whiskeyjack, and the Coach then shared his teachings of the medicine wheel with the students. The artwork on the bridge is the students' interpretation of those teachings. The bridge's four columns are painted in the four colours of the medicine wheel. Each colour represents specific themes in traditional Cree, Treaty 6 teachings. Learn more about the medicine wheel at: <https://windspeaker.com/teachings/the-medicine-wheel>



On September 28, 2022, in recognition of National Truth and Reconciliation Day, Spruce Avenue School students dressed in orange shirts and helped unveil the painted footbridge. The unveiling was conducted in Indigenous ceremony, led by Elder Francis Whiskeyjack and local urban Indigenous drummers. Members of the community, Edmonton Public School Board, EPS, NET, and City of Edmonton officials were also present. You can watch a video of the day at: <https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/News/SuccessStories/Bridgetoreconciliation>

A special thank you to the Edmonton Police Foundation and the City of Edmonton for supporting and funding this project.

NET is a partnership between the City of Edmonton, the [Edmonton Police Service](#), [The Family Centre](#), and [United Way of the Alberta Capital Region](#)

