



Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

interVivos leads the way for emerging leaders with volunteering and mentorship

Ryan Stephens, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

As children, mentors are all around us. Whether it's an encouraging coach, an eye-opening teacher, or a comforting older peer, it's easy to see the profound effect that our development. But why is it that when many of us enter the workforce, we no longer place much emphasis on finding a mentor to help guide our way?

Thankfully, professional mentorship has come back into vogue, with many organizations and associations encouraging, if not coordinating, mentorships for young professionals. interVivos has been creating mentorship opportunities for the next generation of Edmonton leaders since 2006. Their approach begins with a speed-dating-inspired pairing event, in which a number of youthful protégés rotate between a number of established leaders eager to volunteer their time and energy into supporting growth in the next generation.

A quick glance at recent interVivos mentors shows just how broad the opportunities can be. In their Fall 2017 program, protégés could connect with everybody from a Government Relations Specialist and a Chartered Accountant to a Social Media Strategist or one of many independent business owners. According to interVivos founder and President Zohreh Saher, the organization takes great pains to ensure that broad career experiences are on display and available for young leaders to explore.

"This is coming from a spot of connecting seasoned leaders with emerging leaders, regardless of their field or professional background," she says. "It's about getting more comfortable and excited about things that aren't in your background or your toolbox."

interVivos is thriving in a time where the boundaries around different sectors and professional disciplines are blurring, where non-profits and for-profits work more closely together and where professionals increasingly volunteer their time and expertise for the greater good. And when interVivos isn't busy connecting current and future leaders, their volunteers are dedicated to hosting much-needed conversations about our political and social systems.

From hosting a panel discussion on hot civic topics to help inform voters leading up to last year's election to organizing open dialogues about the issues women experience in their careers and workplaces, interVivos challenges the status quo and encourages us to push past assumptions about our professional spheres.

"We're constantly evolving in that way," Saher says. "We focused for example on the Me Too and Times Up movements. Not just how it's happening, but what we as young professionals can affect change."

Whether it's seasoned professionals taking time out of their busy schedules to mentor protégés or volunteers working together to open platforms for dialogue, interVivos is a group that highlights how important these opportunities are for our development, not only individually but as a society.

For more information on how to become involved with interVivos, visit www.intervivos.ca.

The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations believes in volunteerism and is proud to support individuals and nonprofit organizations who want to get involved in their communities. Eager to get involved? VolunteerConnector.org is a good place to start. Want to share your volunteer experience? Send us an email. Our address is volunteerism@ecvo.ca.