

BY KRISTEN CLARK FOR BISSELL CENTRE | MAY 17, 2012 · 4:18 PM

The Homeless Memorial

By Mattie Cuvilier, Bissell Centre Adult Support Worker

This year I became a member of the board for Edmonton's Annual Homeless Memorial. I had been to the event in the past and have worked with Edmonton's homeless population for the last five years as a staff member at Bissell Centre and Youth Emergency Shelter (now called Youth Empowerment and Support Services). I desired to be a member of the board to pay my respects to those I had known that had past this past year, to meet fellow advocates for homeless rights, and be involved in a meaningful undertaking.

The Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness funded this event that was chaired by John Acheson and Marian Enow (of the Edmonton Public Library) and also had members from Boyle Street Community Services, George Spady, Mustard Seed, Hope Mission and others. The memorial was held May 11th and for the first time the memorial took place outside so that it could culminate around the newly erected homeless memorial statue and also to simulate the lives of our fallen brothers and sisters whom had to spend much of the last number of years braving the elements.

Music was provided in the form of a ceremonial Aboriginal drummer and a Scottish bagpiper and also featured poignant speeches from Gary Moostoos (of Boyle Street Community Services) and John Acheson. Approximately 200 people came to mourn the approximate 43 individuals who passed away this year. The event itself ran smoothly and was a success. It was covered by local media and will hopefully bring more awareness to the life threatening danger that our cities homeless face on the streets in one of Canada's coldest, most dangerous, and conservative cities.

[To watch a video of the memorial click here.](#)

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