



## The Burning Bush

*Troy Davies, Chief Executive Officer*

I hope you're all enjoying the last days of summer as we enter our beautiful fall season.

As the leaves begin to change colour and the air becomes crisper, it reminds me that we're already halfway through the year! It also reminds me that it has been a while since our last staff newsletter.

In the most recent Employee Engagement Survey, and in some staff focus groups, you told us you'd like to see more staff recognition and stories. With that said, hopefully, it will have been worth the wait.

We've revamped our newsletter, *The Beacon*, to make it briefer and to include more staff-focused content including new ways for you to take part in constructing its substance. Your feedback and participation will help shape *The Beacon* to reflect your work and your stories.

I truly do look forward to your feedback in making this newsletter one that you will look forward to reading each quarter.

Wishing you and your loved ones a warm and wonderful autumn season.

Troy

## UPCOMING DAYS AND EVENTS



**SEPTEMBER 30**

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

**OCTOBER 9**

Sophia Talks: Fr. Garry LaBoucane, OMI -  
*Gratitude from 7 perspectives*

**OCTOBER 14**

Thanksgiving

**OCTOBER 24**

CSS' Annual Public Meeting (APM)

**OCTOBER 27**

CSS Sunday in the Archdiocese

## People's Poll

Is the new *Beacon* newsletter format appealing to you?

*Tell us what you think.*

Suggestions can be sent to [communications@cssalberta.ca](mailto:communications@cssalberta.ca)



[bit.ly/cssbeacon](https://bit.ly/cssbeacon)



# CSS PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

## The Refugee Sponsorship Program (RSP)

The Refugee Sponsorship Program (RSP) managed by Catholic Social Services (CSS), was deeply involved in the process of reuniting Yoni with his family in Canada. The harrowing journey of Yoni, from being detained in Eritrea to finally reuniting with his family in Edmonton, has been a testament to hope, resilience, and tenacity of the CSS staff.

After the lengthy and complex process involving Yoni's application, ongoing communication with his family in Sudan, and coordination with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the CSS Immigration team was overjoyed when his application was approved in late 2016. However, Yoni went missing shortly after, and despite exhaustive searches, could not be found. His wife and child were sent to Canada without him.



In the spring of 2023 family informed CSS that Yoni had been located. He had been abducted the day he went missing and spent years in an Eritrean prison before escaping during a prison transfer. On hearing the news, CSS' dedicated RSP team immediately informed IRCC and resumed work on his application with renewed determination. The team's efforts in completing Yoni's application, gathering necessary documents, and communicating with IRCC were relentless, and Yoni's case was re-opened within two days.

Finally, Yoni arrived in Canada in mid 2024 and was welcomed by his family and our dedicated CSS staff. The reunion was a moment of immeasurable joy and celebration, underscoring the significance of hope and perseverance. Yoni's journey serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of the amazing work being done every day by the CSS frontline.

*It's stories like this one that truly show the important work our teams do every day! Together, with our colleagues in each of our service areas, we provide meaningful and important work that helps change lives and gives hope to those in despair.*

*You make a difference!*

## Getting to Know Each Other

Each quarter The Beacon will profile one of our CSS team members. Learn more about your amazing coworkers!

### JAMES WATSON - Irwin Office

At the CSS head office, he's the mild-mannered Manager of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM), but when he's off the clock, he goes home to a place that's far from ordinary.

James' home is a haven for birds, bees, snakes, muskrats, skunks, dogs, cats, fish, crabs, wolves, and even sea horses.

His small wildlife rescue is where he rehabilitates injured or abandoned animals of all kinds and releases them back into the wild whenever possible. Some animals, unable to make the transition, end up making James' backyard their permanent home.



His backyard features more than 10 bee houses that provide shelter and safety for stray bees as they visit his vast and varied gardenscape.

And in addition to the wildlife, James' household also includes three dogs and three cats. Two of the dogs are involved in agility competitions (timed obstacle courses) and rank in the top 10 in Canada, while the other dog is learning Man-trailing (scent-tracking sport).

James humorously describes his place as "pretty much a zoo at any given time."

**TO PROFILE ONE OF YOUR WORKMATES,  
CONTACT US AT:**

Contact us at: [communications@cssalberta.ca](mailto:communications@cssalberta.ca)

