



CITY OF  
*Lethbridge*

July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**To Whom It May Concern:**

On behalf of Lethbridge City Council, I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society's application for funding for an Outdoor Classroom / Amphitheatre space.

Helen Schuler Nature Centre is one of Lethbridge's premier attractions where people and nature meet. Situated on a 200 acre nature preservation park with views of coulees and cottonwood forests, the Centre offers a wide range of nature-based experiences only minutes from downtown. With more than 51,000 visitors annually, the Nature Centre provides an opportunity to foster a community of environmentally aware and responsible citizens.

The Outdoor Classroom / Amphitheatre project at Helen Schuler Nature Centre will:

- enhance a well-loved community facility through improved form and function in an outdoor learning environment;
- improve accessibility of the site, ensuring that visitors of all ages and abilities are able to make the most of this connection-point with the park system of Lethbridge;
- provide a local demonstration site for outdoor learning environments, and provide opportunity for Nature Centre staff to train local educators how to activate these spaces for the benefit of their students; and
- decrease operational costs associated with snow removal from the site in winter.

The Outdoor Classroom / Amphitheatre project at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre will be of great benefit to our community for many years to come. We understand that everyone benefits from spending time outdoors. Spaces like this provide educational value as well as a wide range of physical, mental and social health benefits for people of all ages. We are looking forward to a new outdoor learning space that is inviting and welcoming. A place that will help visitors and residents of Lethbridge connect with their local natural heritage.

We support the Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society Outdoor Classroom / Amphitheatre project and hope that you may also be willing to support in fundraising for the project.

Yours truly,

Chris Spearman, Mayor  
City of Lethbridge



Shannon Phillips, MLA  
Lethbridge West Constituency  
402 8<sup>th</sup> St S, Lethbridge, AB T1J 2J7  
Phone: 403-329-4644  
Lethbridge.west@assembly.ab.ca

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July 12, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter in support of the Friends of Helen Schuler Nature Centre's application for funding for an outdoor classroom space.

Even before I was elected MLA for Lethbridge West, the riding in which the Helen Schuler Nature Centre is located, I was an avid fan and attendee at the Centre. My children and I have loved to visit and learn from the excellent staff and volunteers at the Centre.

Since being elected MLA, and then appointed as Alberta's Minister of Environment and Parks, I have seen the importance of nature and science education for all ages, and have appreciated the important contribution of nature centres across Alberta. The Helen Schuler Nature Centre is the jewel in our city's river bottom and provides incredible programming and education. They have lead the way in providing an opportunity to learn about our natural environment, protect species and spaces, and significantly contribute to our community. The addition of a new outdoor education space will make a huge difference to the centre, the city, and all the residents. I support their efforts and hope that you may be willing to support them in their fundraising.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Phillips'.

Shannon Phillips, MLA



August 13, 2018

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*Teacher, Calgary Board of  
Education*

To Whom It May Concern

**Re: Outdoor Learning Classroom & Amphitheatre at Helen Schuler Nature Centre**

Please accept this letter in support of the Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society's application for funding for an Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre at Helen Schuler Nature Centre in Lethbridge, Alberta.

As the Alberta Council for Environmental Education, we understand the benefits of outdoor classrooms in providing experiential learning opportunities. We know that learning in natural spaces builds important connections to nature, especially in young students. We believe that spending time in nature helps to build confidence, enhances attention, and fosters positive academic outcomes. We also believe in the importance of accessible spaces for all ages and abilities to connect and spend time with nature.

Alberta Council for Environmental Education has partnered with the Helen Schuler Nature Centre through recent programming initiatives in Lethbridge. At our most recent Lethbridge workshop in May 2018 we experienced programs in the existing Outdoor Amphitheatre and agree that it is time to refresh this space! The existing Outdoor Amphitheatre is original to the building and is showing major signs of wear and tear over the 35+ years in use. The Helen Schuler Nature Centre provides spaces to make important programming possible, and we can advocate for the high value that upgrading the space would return to the community.

The Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre will enhance the environmental education potential of this interpretive site. In addition, it will improve accessibility of the site, ensuring all visitors can enjoy this connection point with Lethbridge's parks system. We support the Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre project and hope that you may also be willing to support in fundraising for the project.

All the best,

Gareth Thomson  
Executive Director, ACEE

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my absolute honour to write this letter of support for The Helen Schuler Nature Centre (HSNC) Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre.

The Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre at HSNC will become a significant community learning and engagement place that will invite children, youth, families, educators, and other community members to build a stronger connection to nature, appreciate the beauty of our natural surroundings, engage in authentic learning about the natural world, and therefore, gain an understanding of the importance of maintaining the health of the natural environment as well as the living creatures in nature. Community's open access to and active engagement in nature will be increased, which helps with the development of environmentally friendly behaviour, sense of responsibility, and an understanding of the benefits of nature and outdoor play for children and the community. This will contribute to a whole community approach to preserving nature.

Everyone benefits from playing and learning outside, especially children and youth. Today's children and families have limited opportunities to connect with natural environments in their daily life. This phenomenon was coined by Richard Louv as 'nature-deficit disorder'. Also, it is concerning that Canadian children's inactive and sedentary lifestyles have negatively influenced them including a high rate of obesity, and mental illnesses such as depression. Numerous research studies have demonstrated that natural outdoor play can resolve this issue as it is beneficial for children's health, development, and learning. As Margaret McMillan stated, "The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky."

Accordingly, the Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre at HSNC will become a place that offers opportunities to integrate nature into children's learning. It will extend and maximize children's learning while providing opportunities for them to engage in hands-on experiences through a variety of exploration, investigations, and discoveries in nature. Children's learning becomes more meaningful and relevant to them as they lead and own their learning experiences. The Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre at HSNC will also support children in advancing their attention, cognitive abilities, physical development, and social skills while decreasing their stress level. Engaging in learning and playing in nature-based environments has been found to diminish children's bullying behaviours and violence, enhance their social competence, spark their curiosity, and provide interesting and challenging opportunities to explore and learn.

As an outdoor play researcher, advocate, and educator, I strongly believe that the Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre at HSNC is an essential component for improving well-being, health and learning of the whole community. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bora Kim  
Instructor, Early Childhood Education program  
School of Human Services  
Lethbridge College

August 27, 2018

Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society  
c/o 910 – 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0P6

Dear Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society,

Re: Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre

Healthy Lethbridge is pleased to support the proposed Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre. We are delighted that the Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society are putting forth this proposed project. Citizens of all ages and abilities will greatly benefit from the proposed Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre.

Healthy Lethbridge has utilized the Helen Schuler Nature Centre in the past when we hosted our Walkability Roadshow at the facility. At this event, international walkability experts presented to City of Lethbridge officials and Lethbridge residents. The experts took special note of the beautiful surroundings at the centre. The Nature Centre was a fabulous venue for the participants to appreciate the outdoor and natural surroundings in the heart of our City. Having an Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre would allow for more opportunities, like our event, to facilitate groups, events, classes and special projects.

Healthy Lethbridge is a collaborative registered society of community partners aiming to develop key strategies and common messages related to healthy lifestyles including healthy eating, active living and tobacco reduction. Healthy Lethbridge is comprised of active representation from Alberta Health, Lethbridge Be Fit for Life Centre, Runner's Soul, City of Lethbridge, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge Public Library and U of L Health Center, the Lethbridge Family Center, and YWCA. Some of our goals are to:

- Increase accessibility for everyone for healthy living opportunities
- Increase physical activity opportunities
- See the community come together to create a healthy, active culture

The addition of an Outdoor Classroom and Amphitheatre at the Helen Schuler Nature Centre would be a great benefit for the City of Lethbridge. Healthy Lethbridge is excited to provide this letter of support for this future, valuable asset for the community to enjoy!

Sincerely,



For Penni Wilson, President  
Healthy Lethbridge  
[healthylethbridge@gmail.com](mailto:healthylethbridge@gmail.com)



Active Lethbridge  
PROMOTING ACTIVE LIVING IN LETHBRIDGE



319-6 Street South  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 2C7  
(403) 330-6241  
[info@environmentlethbridge.org](mailto:info@environmentlethbridge.org)  
[www.environmentlethbridge.ca](http://www.environmentlethbridge.ca)

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April 25, 2018

City of Lethbridge - Recreation & Culture  
910 4th Avenue South  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0P6

Attention: Community Capital Project Grant Committee

Please accept this letter in support of Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society's application for the "Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre Project."

Environment Lethbridge was created in 2012 to help inspire our community into action and engagement towards sustainability. Our vision involves citizens, organizations, and businesses in environmental stewardship and innovation in Lethbridge. In doing so we help provide insight and direction for environmental sustainability initiatives. We understand the importance of connecting community to our local environment and equipping them with the knowledge of how our ecosystem functions.

Environment Lethbridge has partnered with the Helen Schuler Nature Centre on a number of initiatives and projects in the past 3 years. The Nature Centre is a wonderful resource for the City of Lethbridge and creates experiences that connect people of all ages to our natural environment, instilling and inspiring action on sustainability.

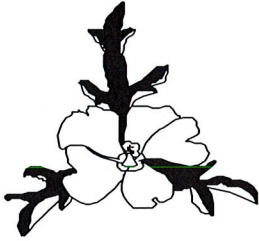
The Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre project is an important element in connecting our community to nature in Lethbridge. We understand the existing amphitheatre space at the Nature Centre is original to the building and certainly shows the wear and tear of many years of use. This project will improve the function and form of the existing amphitheatre space and will help improve the Nature Centre's ability to encourage visitors to spend more time outside in nature. It will also benefit the Nature Centre by upgrading the site to match the recent facility upgrades to the building itself.

We are pleased to be able to support Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society's Project which will create an improved space for the community to learn and connect with nature.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Sheppard  
Executive Director



# *Lethbridge Naturalists Society*

Box 1691, Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4K4

[LethbridgeNatureSociety@gmail.com](mailto:LethbridgeNatureSociety@gmail.com)

[www.NatureLethbridge.ca](http://www.NatureLethbridge.ca)

April 10, 2018

**City of Lethbridge - Recreation & Culture**

910 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

Lethbridge, AB T1J 0P6

**Attention: Community Capital Project Grant Committee**

Good day,

Please accept this letter in support of Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society's application for the "Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre Project."

The Lethbridge Naturalists' Society was one of the formational groups involved with the early beginnings of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre (formerly known as Helen Schuler Coulee Centre) as early as 1976. Our organization understands the importance of environmental education. We know the value of interpretation and sharing of local knowledge as a method of building connection with place. It is through this understanding of a place that people develop long-lasting emotional connection with nature.

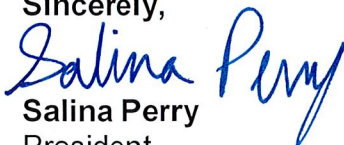
The Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society is an important advocate for place-based learning through their support of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre. The Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre project is worthy of support because it will refresh an existing site, improving the functionality and usability of the space. The project will improve accessibility to the site, allowing more people to explore and reflect upon their natural surroundings.

It has been over 35 years since the Outdoor Amphitheatre was originally constructed and it is evident the space has been well used. This project will provide opportunity to integrate an outdoor learning classroom at a destination that is well respected for leadership in environmental education.

We are pleased to be able to support Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society's Project which will create an improved space for the community to learn and connect with nature.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Salina Perry  
President



**LETHBRIDGE AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®**

A division of Lethbridge Real Estate Board Co-op Limited

January 17, 2019

**RE: Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre Project – Helen Schuler Nature Centre**

To whom it may concern:

Please accept this letter in support of the Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society's application for funding for an Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre project.

The Helen Schuler Nature Centre is one of Lethbridge's premier attractions where people and nature meet. Situated on a 200-acre nature preservation park with scenic views of coulees and cottonwood forests, the Centre offers a walk on the wild side, only minutes from downtown. Nature Centre staff and volunteers offer a wide range of programs and popular events each year. Visitors from around the world learn about the local wildlife, plants, and ecosystems. The LEED-Gold certified facility provides a demonstration site to learn about sustainable, low-impact development. The Nature Centre helps foster a community of environmentally aware and responsible citizens.

The Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre project at Helen Schuler Nature Centre will:

- improve accessibility of the site, ensuring that visitors of all ages and abilities are able to make the most of this connection-point with the park system of Lethbridge;
- provide a local demonstration site for outdoor learning environments, and provide opportunity for Nature Centre staff to train local educators how to activate outdoor learning spaces; and
- provide a flexible outdoor space for all park users to enjoy the view.

The Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre project will be of great benefit to our community for many years to come. Public spaces like this provide educational value as well as a wide range of physical, mental and social health benefits for people of all ages.

We support the Friends of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre Society's Outdoor Learning Classroom and Amphitheatre project and hope that you may also be willing to support in fundraising for the project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cathy Maxwell, CAE, CRAE  
CEO, Lethbridge & District Association of REALTORS®

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