

Join Together For Our Common Future



**Public Interest Alberta
Annual Report 2009-2010**

Message from the Chair

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The ultimate criterion of success for any advocacy organization comes in answer to the question, “Did you make a difference?” I am pleased to report that in the 2009-2010 year, the answer for Public Interest Alberta is a resounding, “Yes!”

Our advocacy efforts in our sixth year of operation in our province were effective, timely and badly needed. Alberta’s government once again seemed determined to continue on a path of pushing creeping privatization, underfunding public services and downloading costs to individuals and families. PIA’s consistent actions in mobilizing members and supporters to confront the government’s misguided agenda were probably the most effective in our organization’s history.

I am particularly proud of PIA’s work with the Alberta Federation of Labour to help coordinate the Join Together Alberta campaign, which brought together a wide range of public sector unions and civil society organizations to effectively confront the government’s announced intention to make massive budget cuts that would have led to a dramatic additional slashing of public services. PIA helped to plan and deliver town hall meetings in 22 communities across Alberta, and the pressure played a major role in the government’s decision to back away from the bulk of the proposed cuts.

As you will see in this annual report, PIA’s task forces played an important and effective role in advocating on more focused issues with a considerable degree of success. Thanks to the support of our members and the dedication and hard work of our task forces, we continue to make real changes to public policy on issues from childcare to seniors.

PIA’s successful advocacy conference, held in April of 2010, was focused on the topic, “Worth Fighting For: Public Solutions and Our Common Future,” and was particularly timely and effective, bringing organizations and activists together to develop the foundation for further action in the year ahead.

Our effectiveness in advocating for the public interest during the past year in this ever-challenging province is partly a reflection of the growing maturity of our organization, but it is also a continuing sign of the strengths that have been important in the previous five years: highly committed member organizations, wonderful volunteers, a strong and engaged board, dedicated and talented staff, and a clear focus on vigorously promoting the public interest in ways that will make a difference for all Albertans.

Larry Booi, President

Larry is the former President of the Alberta Teachers’ Association and was a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation. He is also currently on the Board of Directors of Canadian Council on Learning. He has played a central role in the establishment and growth of Public Interest Alberta and is Chair of the Democracy Task Force.



Report from the Executive Director

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The theme of this year's annual report, "Join Together: For Our Common Future" reflects the important role that Public Interest Alberta played this past year in bringing various organizations and individuals together to stand up for our common future.

You will see in this report that our eight task forces were each actively involved in taking action on their respective issues and a number of them saw significant success in their advocacy efforts. All the task forces strengthened our network of supporters and increased our impact around the province. We also outreached to more people through our various public forums, our "Don't Cut Us Out" rally in Red Deer on November 7th, film screenings and speaking engagements around the province. Our media events were well covered and we are regularly called upon by the media to address public interest issues. This year's conference, "Worth Fighting For: Public Solutions and Our Common Future" was another great success.

With the provincial government's plans for extensive cuts to public services, Public Interest Alberta played an important role in working with the Alberta Federation of Labour and other members to mount a dynamic campaign called "Join Together Alberta". This campaign brought together many different sectors to challenge the government to strengthen the fabric of our communities, not slash public services. We hosted 22 town halls around the province that were attended by close to 1800 people and received extensive media coverage. The campaign coordinated eleven rallies in cities and towns on budget day and then a large march and rally was held in Edmonton to deliver a two kilometer long message from Albertans to the Legislature on March 20th. The next phase of the campaign will involve building awareness of the impact of the cuts to public services in our communities and mobilizing people to speak out and build broad support for the campaign.

Thanks to the generous support of our members and the hard work of our staff, board members, student interns and volunteers, PIA continues to grow stronger each year. Our office manager, Karen Werlin, is absolutely instrumental to the effective operations of the organization. Sara Breitreutz did an excellent job as our communications assistant this year, working with our creative contract designers to produce print materials and to redesign our new website. We were also very pleased to have Russell Charlton join our staff team this year as our Environment Intern. We are looking forward to another effective and fun year of working together in our new office that we will be moving into this summer.

Bill Moore-Kilgannon, Executive Director

Prior to joining PIA, Bill worked in Ottawa as the Director of Campaigns and Communications of the Council of Canadians. He was the Executive Director of the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta from 1997-2001. He was the coordinator of the Global Visions Festival from 1992-1997. Bill studied Canadian and Latin American history, political science and economics at the University of Alberta and l'Université de Sherbrooke.



PIA Board of Directors

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Nancy Furlong, Vice President

Nancy Furlong is the Secretary Treasurer of the Alberta Federation of Labour and has been active in the trade union movement for over 30 years. She began her labour career as a union steward for the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) in 1976 and progressed to holding office in her local. From there she joined the staff of AUPE and in 1993 she became the Executive Director. In 1998 she went on to work for the Non-Academic Staff Association (NASA) as a Labour Relations Officer and became a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1158. Nancy is a strong supporter of networking and coalition work and an advocate for social change.



Noel Somerville, Secretary

Noel is the Chair of the PIA Seniors' Task Force. After a 33 year second career in education, Noel retired as Executive Secretary of Edmonton Public Teachers, Local 37 of the ATA in 1997. Since retirement, Noel has been active in *Seniors' Action Liaison Team* (SALT), an organization for which he has written numerous pamphlets on issues related to healthcare, deregulation, education and social justice. Noel has also served on the City of Edmonton Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.



Dennis Theobald, Treasurer

Dennis is the Alberta Teachers' Association Coordinator of Communications. In this role, he assists with the planning and implementation of the Association's communications and lobbying strategy as well as is responsible for administering the Association's initiatives to promote teacher engagement in the political process. He played a key role in establishing Public Interest Alberta.



Dorothy McKenna, Director

Dorothy is the Executive Director of the Womanspace Resource Centre in Lethbridge. Womanspace has focused its research and action on various policy issues affecting women. Since 2000, Dorothy has acted as co-chair of the South West Alberta Coalition on Poverty, which has initiated a number of innovative projects related to the role of poverty in creating social exclusion, and as a major social determinant of health.



Lori Sigurdson, Director

Lori has been employed as a social worker for over 20 years. She has worked in various fields of practice, including children's services, mental health, social policy and education. Currently, her work involves membership support for the over 6000 Registered Social Workers in Alberta. Larger systems advocacy to promote progressive social policies, as well as the profession of social work, are also part of her role. Lori received her Master of Social Work Degree from the University of Calgary. She lives in Edmonton with her 3 sons.



Heather Smith, Director

Heather is the President of the United Nurses of Alberta, a position she has held since 1988. Born and raised in Ontario, she came to Alberta to work as a nurse at the Edmonton General Hospital. She quickly became involved in her union and served as President of her Local for two years. She also sat on the provincial negotiating committee during the 19 day illegal strike in January of 1988. Heather has been a key figure in political action to defend public health care in Alberta including campaigns to oppose Bill 37, Bill 11 and the Third Way.



Jason Heistad, Director

Jason Heistad is a vice president with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. A long-time activist in their education sector, he chaired the Local for non-academic employees at Olds College and was a member of the union's political action committee. Elected to a second term on Innisfail's Town Council, he sits on the council's committees on general government development services, transportation services and recreation, culture and education. Jason works as an Instructional Assistant at Olds College.



Noreen Murphy, Director

Noreen is the Executive Director of Churchill Park Family Care Society, a large not-for-profit child care agency in Calgary. In this position she has worked tirelessly to improve Alberta child care standards and to ensure that high quality child care is accessible to all families. She has worked for social justice and responsible change for decades in various movements and is a respected advocate for families and children.



Gerald Wheatley, Director

Gerald is the Coordinator of the Arusha Centre's InfoActive Resource Centre, bringing community activists together on a variety of social justice and environmental issues since 1972. He is a founding member of Calgary Dollars, a complimentary currency system and chairperson of the Calgary Alternative Transportation Cooperative.



Ricardo Acuna, Director

Ricardo is the Executive Director of the Parkland Institute, a political and economic research institute at the University of Alberta. Prior to the Parkland Institute he worked as the project coordinator for Change for Children, an Edmonton based international development agency. He has over 18 years experience as a volunteer, staffer and consultant for various non-profit organizations.



Elisabeth Ballermann, Director

Elisabeth has been President of the Health Sciences Association of Alberta since 1995, becoming the first president elected by the membership. Elisabeth joined HSAA in 1980 when she started her health care career as a physical therapist at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital. In 1986, she joined the HSAA Staff Association. Elisabeth later graduated with a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Alberta. Her extensive community service was recognized in 2005 with the awarding of the Alberta Centennial Medal.



John Nicholls, Director

John is the Executive Director of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA), which has been a member of PIA since its inception. He has played an active role on PIA's Post-Secondary Task Force, and previously sat on the PIA Board of Directors when he served as Research and Liaison Officer for the Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association (ACIFA). John is passionately committed to the principles of accessibility, affordability and quality in post-secondary education in Alberta.

Childcare

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Building a system of quality early childhood education and care is vital for the development of children, provides the necessary supports for parents to attend school or work and is important for all Albertans. Unfortunately, Alberta's patchwork, market driven system leaves many families on long waiting lists or struggling to afford the quality care that their children need and deserve.

Our advocacy efforts this past year continued to put pressure on the Alberta government to invest in a non-profit and public childcare system. While our past advocacy efforts were successful in securing a large increase in the childcare budget, we were shocked to see in the Ministry annual report that came out in September 2009 that they under spent the 2008-2009 budget by \$19.2 million, a full 10% of the budget. As we pointed out in our media release, the government has under spent its budget by over \$100 million since 2001, despite the fact Alberta spends the lowest per capita of all provinces on childcare. It is possible that our public critique of this under spending led to the projection that for the first time in many years, the government would spend the full \$205.8 million that was in the childcare budget this year.

We were also pleased to co-sponsor with CUPE Alberta and the Childcare Advocacy Association of Canada an afternoon strategy session and an evening public forum in November about the importance of public childcare. The forum featured one of Canada's top childcare advocates, Susan Prentice from Manitoba, and was an excellent way to educate people about childcare and build stronger connections with others who support childcare advocacy.

PIA also continues to challenge the growth of corporate childcare by exposing companies that are working to expand their control of childcare. In particular, we have spoken out against a new Texas-based company that is in the process of listing and raising money on the Toronto Stock Exchange. This company has raised millions of dollars and will soon be in the process of buying up a large number of childcare businesses similar to the model that was used by ABC Corporation in Australia and around the world.

Members of the Childcare Task Force also participated in the Join Together Alberta campaign to challenge the \$7.5 million dollar cut to this year's (2010-2011) budget. We hope that our work with the Join Together Alberta campaign will help us engage all sectors of society to support our advocacy for a real comprehensive early quality childhood education and care system that is affordable and accessible to all.



Task Force: Noreen Murphy (Co-Chair – Churchill Park Family Care Society), Cherie Langlois-Klassen (Co-Chair and United Nurses of Alberta), Avril Pike (Oliver Care Society), Christopher Smith (Muttart Foundation), Natalie Weller (Beaumont Childcare Centre), Teresa Ebbert (Oliver Head Start Program), Vivian Turner (Garneau-University Childcare Centre), Sandra Azocar and Karen Sputeck (Alberta Union of Provincial Employees), Carol Sullivan (Terra Association).

Community Human Services and Poverty

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Access to high quality public human services is vital for families and individuals who are struggling in poverty or who need support due to disabilities. Unfortunately, public and non-profit community human service providers continue to struggle with growing demands for services while the government cuts support for a number of these sectors.

PIA worked closely with many community agencies to advocate for more public services and programs for children and adults with disabilities through our “Albertans Who Care” campaign. We were very successful in building a public outcry against the government’s plans to cut funding from agencies that provide services to adults with developmental disabilities. We supported the organization of two successful rallies (the “Not a Bake Sale” rally in Calgary and the “Message in a Bottle” rally in Edmonton) that were attended by hundreds of people and received extensive media coverage. Once the public learned of these cuts, the government backed down and said the cuts are voluntary and would not be forced on these agencies. The provincial budget was changed so that there would be no cuts to the total PDD budget even though the agencies had been told to expect deep reductions.

The efforts to advocate for the establishment of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for Alberta also continued this past year with the completion of our final two of seven public forums in Calgary and Edmonton. These forums were supported and attended by many organizational leaders and decision makers and allowed us to really expand our network and help build momentum for the establishment of a plan to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate poverty in Alberta. A final report on the results of our forums was produced in partnership with the Edmonton Social Planning Council, the Bissell Centre and others. The “We Must Do Better” report was launched on November 24th, 2009, the 20th anniversary of the House of Commons resolution to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000.

While we continue to build a network of organizations and individuals who are willing to advocate for more and better human services and a poverty reduction strategy, the 2010 budget will particularly hurt low-income people and families with disabilities. We therefore were very pleased that so many agencies and families with disabilities were able to actively participate in the 22 “Join Together Alberta” town halls. We will continue to build our connections and provide our support for these people to be able to speak out about the impact the cuts have on them and to advocate for the programs and services that all Albertans deserve.

Task Force: Lori Sigurdson (Alberta College of Social Workers), Jim Gurnett (Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers), Dan Meades (Vibrant Communities Calgary), Janice Melnychuk (Vibrant Communities Edmonton), Susan Morrissey and John Kolkman (Edmonton Social Planning Council), Dorothy McKenna (Lethbridge Womanspace Resource Centre), Christopher Smith (Muttart Foundation), Shelly Williams (Bissell Centre), Barbara Dart and Joanne Currie (United Way of Greater Edmonton), Lavonne Hailes (City of Edmonton), Martin Garber-Conrad (Edmonton Community Foundation), Ann Nicol (Alberta Council of Disability Services), Jan Reimer (Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters), Lavonne Roloff (Alberta Home Visitation Network Association), Rhonda Barraclough (Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families).



Democracy

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While the problems with our democratic system take many forms, the good news is that there are a growing number of Albertans becoming more aware of our democratic deficits and are willing to take action. Furthermore, recent developments in the political landscape of Alberta may open up opportunities for significant changes to our democratic processes.

The problems with the dismal state of democracy in Alberta are widespread and multi-faceted, and will require a systematic and comprehensive approach. To that end, we have developed a six-point approach to deal with the main priorities. While we continue to research and speak out on all six themes, the task force has decided to develop public advocacy campaigns in a couple of targeted areas.

The first step in this campaign was developing a review of how Alberta compares on our electoral and party financing rules to other jurisdictions. Our research and campaign materials that we distributed through various methods reveal that Alberta has much to learn from other jurisdictions on party and candidate spending rules, establishing stricter limits on the amount individuals can contribute to parties, on abolishing contributions from corporations and unions, and on the need to regulate the candidate nomination and leadership races.

Public Interest Alberta also supported the launch of an important legal action to defend Albertans' right to vote. The action requests a court declaration that, if granted, would create clear and enforceable guidelines for the government to follow regarding election protocol and voter's rights. In preparation for the legal hearings, we are currently reaching out to people around Alberta to tell their stories about any difficulties they had with the process during the last election.

The next step in the task force's advocacy plan is to develop a comprehensive approach to achieving gender equity in our political system. Other provinces and countries have taken steps to address the under-representation of women in all aspects of the political process. The task force is currently exploring the possibility of creating a high-profile commission on Gender and Democracy that will be able to examine the underlying barriers and issues, look at best practices and advocate for changes to our political system.

Task Force: Larry Booi (Chair), David King (Public School Boards Association of Alberta), Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain (Fair Vote Canada), Harold Neth (Alberta Teachers' Association), Janet Buckmaster (Equal Voice—Alberta North), Lynn Odynski, Ricardo Acuna (Parkland Institute), Steven Patten (Political Science, University of Alberta), Heather Mackintosh (Sheldon Chumir Foundation), Kate Whittlet (Student Intern).



Education

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The Education Task Force focuses its advocacy efforts on its core value of developing the full potential of all Alberta's students. Education is about developing compassion and embracing diversity. It is about creating citizenship and promoting fairness. Education is about the future.

The task force engaged in Minister Hancock's "Dialogue with Albertans – Inspiring Education," in the fall of 2009. Through public statements and a letter to the editor printed in the Edmonton Journal, we called upon the education review to adopt the principles that every child be safe, healthy, engaged, supported, and challenged and they take a broader approach to accountability and assessment based on UNESCO's "Four Pillars of Learning" – learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. The task force also raised concern about the declining role of the arts and supports health literacy in Alberta schools. It sees a need to ensure that there are programs for those not headed to university, including special needs, aboriginal, and ESL students who often do not complete high school.

Sustained, planned funding is critical to children's education. We helped promote the "Stop the Cuts" Campaign that was coordinated by the Alberta Teachers' Association. The task force advised the organizers of the Join Together Alberta campaign on education issues in the face of threats to the education budget. While the Education Department actually saw modest increases to its total budget, teaching and support staffs will still be cut in the fall.

The Education Task Force further provided support to parents in Edmonton Public Schools who opposed school closures. This included in-kind supports and a letter to The Edmonton Journal congratulating parents on their efforts and criticizing trustees and the Minister for failing to keep inner-city schools open.

We are working with others to encourage candidates who see their role as serving students and their communities to run in trustee elections next fall. The task force is also developing a survey for school board trustee candidates to complete, a tool to allow communities around Alberta to see what their trustee candidates believe regarding public education and their role in it.

Shortly, the task force will examine the report on "Setting the Direction", a review of special education services in the province. School boards indicate that in September there will be less money and more students with special needs in classrooms, impacting the education of all students. The task force will continue to advocate for developing the full potential of all students and recruit members who bring an ever broader perspective to its work.

Task Force: Harold Neth (Chair), Lynn Odynski, Dennis Theobald (Alberta Teachers' Association), David King (Public School Boards Association of Alberta), Rick Klimchuck and Danny Burrell (Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union), Chris McCollough (Red Deer Catholic Teachers' Association), Susan O'Neil (Action for Education), Kathryn Burke (Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta), Dianne Oberg (Faculty of Education, University of Alberta), Larry Booi (PIA), Laura Shutiak (Calgary Association of Parents and School Councils), Christopher Spenser (parent advocate) Gloria Nordin (ATA Local 37, Edmonton Public).



Environment

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Throughout the world, there is growing awareness of the need to re-think our relationship with the environment and prioritize sustainability if we are to have a healthy planet to support our children and communities into the future. Alberta, unfortunately, has serious sustainability challenges due to our province's dependence on coal-powered electricity generation, low levels of waste diversion, car dependent urban planning, and the central role of the energy sector in our economy.

The task force works to address those challenges and protect the health of our communities and future generations, providing a province-wide networking body to improve the educational and campaign work of the environmental community. Over the last year, campaigns have included green jobs research and education, nuclear power consultations, environmental considerations of trade agreements, energy royalties reviews, climate change negotiations, and sustainable communities. In each case, PIA is working to both advance the work of concerned Albertans as well as better connect them to those in varied communities and sectors.

Through various events and communications, the task force has fostered discussion and awareness on the actions we need to take to address the environmental crisis. For example, PIA helped organize World Water Week, a week of events exploring issues of water scarcity, privatization, contamination and commodification. For our annual conference we hosted renowned author and lecturer David Korten, in both Calgary and Edmonton, who sets forth a framework for an economy designed to bring humans into balance with Earth's biosphere, and equitably share the wealth of our common human heritage. We also hosted Meera Karunanathan, national water campaigner for the Council of Canadians, who spoke to the challenges and solutions for water globally, nationally and here in Alberta.

We are facing serious threats to our water with the provincial government planning to implement water markets to allocate water according to ability to pay. PIA has been working with other organizations to mount a campaign that will engage a wide range of organizations to fight to protect water for our communities and for the eco-systems on which our survival depends.

Finally, we are happy to welcome Russell Charlton as our first environment intern, whose position will allow us to strengthen and expand our work on the environment, playing a crucial role in a growing movement for change and for the sustainable solutions we need for our future.



Task Force: Gerald Wheatley (Chair – Arusha Centre, Calgary), Jenn Ruddy and Julie Hrdlicka (Parkland Institute), Sheila Muxlow and Lindsay Telfer (Sierra Club), Mike Hudema (Greenpeace), Scott Harris (Council of Canadians), Mandy Melnyk (Keep Alberta Nuclear Free), Julia Ko (Water Matters), Greg Powell (Alberta Acts on Climate Change), Jessie Kalman (Polaris Institute), Mathieu Lebel (World Wildlife Fund), Sophia Lang (Citizens Advocating the Use of Sustainable Energy).

Post-Secondary Education

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Post-secondary education (PSE) has a fundamental role to play in preparing Albertans to meet the challenges of a rapidly developing global knowledge economy, and in helping us to build productive, healthy and diverse communities. Albertans recognize that PSE benefits not only the individual but society as a whole, and that public investment in our universities, colleges and technical institutes is an investment in our common future. With over two-thirds of new jobs now requiring a post-secondary qualification, the province's economic recovery over the next few years is dependent on the expansion of PSE opportunities for Albertans.

Yet post-secondary education in Alberta is facing major funding challenges now, and for the foreseeable future, as the provincial government seeks to stabilize its fiscal position by cutting spending on public services. The cuts are already having an impact on the accessibility, affordability and quality of our PSE system, as new student spaces remain unfunded, non-instructional fees rise dramatically, and institutions shed both academic and non-academic staff positions in an attempt to address major budget shortfalls.

Well before the 2010 provincial budget was finalized, the PSE Task Force launched a province-wide advocacy campaign – “Don’t Cut Us Out: Invest in Post-Secondary Education to Build Alberta’s Future” – intended to rally public opinion in support of public investment in PSE. In its first phase, the campaign garnered attention across the province, with media conferences highlighting the key role PSE must play in the recovery and diversification of the Alberta economy, and warning of the consequences of a new round of cuts to a sector still recovering from the massive cuts of the Klein years.

The “Don’t Cut Us Out” campaign continues to evolve, and the PSE Task Force is considering ways to extend its reach, as evidence mounts of the real cost to the PSE system of provincial funding cuts. Accessibility, affordability, and quality, so closely interrelated, will be the focus of advocacy, as learners and their families attempt to come to terms with reduced intake of students, fewer programs, larger class sizes, and higher fees at our PSE institutions.

These are bread and butter issues, which should also be seen in the context of the larger crisis facing public services in Alberta, the subject of another major advocacy campaign – “Join Together Alberta” – coordinated in part by Public Interest Alberta. The PSE Task Force is committed to helping to ensure that the challenges facing PSE remain a central theme as the “Join Together Alberta” campaign enters its second phase. In addition, in the coming year, the PSE Task Force will focus on fostering connections with other sectors, such as K-12 education and healthcare, to assist in broadening the base of its advocacy.

Task Force: John Nicholls (Chair – Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations), Duncan Wojtaszek and Beverly Eastham (Council of Alberta University Students), Carol Neuman (Alberta Students’ Executive Council), Lynn Devlin (Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association), Russell Eccles (Non-Academic Staff Association, University of Alberta), Jennifer Krygier (Faculty Association of the University of Calgary), Emma Newman (Alberta Graduate Council), Jason Heistad (Alberta Union of Public Employees).



Privatization

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Advocating for better quality public services often requires challenging the conservative agenda to give control of public services over to corporations. In Alberta, the push for privatization of public services continues in every sector where we are working, despite the majority of Albertans being strongly opposed to privatization.

One of the main advocacy campaigns this past year was to mobilize opposition to the decision to sell off billions of dollars worth of electrical generating assets owned by the City of Edmonton as part of EPCOR. City Council rammed this decision through with no advance warning or public debate at a closed door shareholders meeting in April 2009. PIA brought together many organizations, unions and concerned citizens to challenge this massive privatization. Two legal actions were launched that questioned the City's authority to make this decision in a closed door shareholders meeting. The Our Power Citizen's Group was established to mobilize hundreds of people to educate and mobilize citizens in opposition to this sell off. We helped set up a website, hosted numerous public meetings, spoke in the media and distributed thousands of lawn signs. The Our Power Citizens Group also coordinated a petition drive that collected 7800 signatures of people opposed to the privatization. The Our Power group is going to be mobilizing its members to put pressure on all candidates in the upcoming municipal elections and will continue to work with others to advocate that no other parts of EPCOR are privatized and that our power generating assets remain under the control of the City of Edmonton.

Many of PIA's other task forces were also involved in speaking out against privatization. In particular, the Childcare Task Force is still closely monitoring the development of corporate childcare. The Seniors Task Force has also been very effective in building strong opposition to the privatization of long-term care and homecare. We continue to play an active role in supporting the advocacy work of Friends of Medicare and helped with the campaign led by AUPE to stop the closure of Alberta Hospital. We are regularly called to comment in the media about privatization and Public-Private Partnerships.



Task Force: Ricardo Acuna (Parkland Institute), Richard Zwicker (Our Power Spokesperson), Aileen Tayler and Ray Lopatka (Seniors Action and Liaison Team), Jack Hubler (Plumbers and Pipefitters), Alf Hryciw (CUPE Alberta), Jim Darwish, Bill Pidruchney, Jason Foster and Gil McGowan (Alberta Federation of Labour), Dave Loken (Coalition of Civic Trade Unions), Sheila Muxlow (Council of Canadians), Sara Breitreutz (PIA), Bohdan Harasymiw, Mitch Makowsky, Liz Reid, Paul Greene.

Seniors

As the government continues to focus on seniors as one of the principal targets to reduce its health care expenditures, we continue to advocate for comprehensive public services for some of the most vulnerable members of society.

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Through the efforts of the member organizations of the task force and our MLA contacts, sufficient pressure was generated to secure a delay in the seniors' portion of the Pharmaceutical Strategy that was scheduled to begin on July 1, 2010. While the universal seniors' drug plan has been preserved for now, it remains to be seen whether it can be permanently saved.



Unfortunately, we have not been as successful with the government's Continuing Care Strategy. As the percentage of seniors in the province grows, the number of long-term care beds is actually shrinking. Meanwhile, the government encourages private operators to build Assisted and Supportive Living facilities where seniors will pay not only for accommodation, but also much of the medically necessary services they require.

Looking ahead, the Seniors Task Force is very concerned that the proposed Alberta Health Act will use privatization to off-load more and more of its health care costs onto Albertans in general, and seniors in particular. A new Health Act based on vague general principles could lead to government by regulation rather than legislation. This could undermine democracy and circumvent the Legislature. We see this as a major threat to existing legislation such as the Nursing Home Act that guarantees some quality of care, and we will be very active in our advocacy efforts on this issue.

Task Force: Noel Somerville, (Chair – Seniors Action Liasion Team), John Bachynsky (Seniors Community Health Council), Bernice Cassady and Bernice Rempel (Canadian Association of Retired People), Sam Denhaan (Central Alberta Council on Aging), David Eggen (Friends of Medicare), Jason Heistad (AUPE), Frank Horvath (Whitemud Citizens for Public Heath), Lynda and Ron Jonson (Seniors I Care), Gary Pool (Alberta Council on Aging), Baldwin Reichwein (Alberta College of Social Workers), Heather Smith and Keith Wiley (United Nurses of Alberta), Rod Thronndson (Alberta Retired Teachers' Association), Jacqueline Biollo and Gordon Voth (Seniors United Now), Louise Yarrow and Geri Keith (Health Sciences Association of Alberta).



Worth Fighting For | Public Solutions and our Common Future Conference 2010

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Our fourth annual advocacy conference brought together our members and the general public to explore the political challenges and opportunities facing Alberta today. Given the extensive budget cuts to many vital public services and programs, it was a timely opportunity for our members to join together to explore how to fight for the public solutions that are vital to our common future.

This year, our keynote speaker David Korten, author of *"When Corporations Rule the World"* and *"Agenda for a New Economy,"* spoke in both Calgary and Edmonton and inspired participants with his big picture critique of market fundamentalism and his proposed solutions for a new economy. Other first-rate plenary speakers on key topics included Robert Chernomas, a well-published Professor of Economics at the University of Manitoba, Alex Molnar, an expert on the commercialization of public education from Arizona State University, Natalie Mehra of the Ontario Health Coalition, Meera Karunanathan, National Water Campaigner for the Council of Canadians and Ricardo Acuna, Executive Director of the Parkland Institute.

The conference not only provided a chance for the 150 participants to learn from our plenary speakers, but also an opportunity for people from various sectors to develop connections and hear from each other about their issues and solutions. Our eight task forces hosted sessions to explore their issues and engage participants in a dialogue on how best to advocate for public solutions. The "Tools For Advocacy" breakout sessions covered such topics as: Taking Back Public Ownership, Building Successful Campaigns, Art for Social Change, Engaging Politicians, Community Organizing, Social Return on Investment and Food Security. We were also pleased to host a fun evening during the conference with live Latin American music and dancing and were able to raise some funds for the earthquake victims in Chile.

The conference was a great success thanks to the financial support of our sustaining members and conference sponsors, the guidance of our conference planning committee and the hard work of our volunteers and staff. The annual advocacy conference is a significant amount of work, but it is clearly an important part of our efforts to build a stronger and more effective community of advocates who can learn and work together for our common future.

Conference Planning Committee: Larry Booi (PIA), Ricardo Acuna (Parkland Institute), Sandra Azocar (AUPE), Phil McRae (Alberta Teachers' Association), Lindsay Telfer (Sierra Club), Robby Shearer (Alberta College of Social Workers), Keith Wiley (United Nurses of Alberta), Scott Harris (Council of Canadians), Sara Breitreutz, Karen Werlin and Bill Moore-Kilgannon (PIA Staff)

Public Interest Alberta's 4th Annual Advocacy Conference

WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Public Solutions and Our Common Future

Featuring Keynote Speaker:

David Korten
Visionary author and lecturer
Dr. David Korten will speak on the themes of his most recent book *Agenda for a New Economy: From Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth*.

April 8-10, 2010
Chateau Louis Conference Centre
11727 Kingsway Avenue

Other plenary speakers include:
Robert Chernomas, Professor of Economics, University of Manitoba
Alex Molnar, Professor of Education Policy, Arizona State University
Meera Karunanathan, National Water Campaigner, Council of Canadians
Natalie Mehra, Director, Ontario Health Coalition
Ricardo Acuna, Executive Director, Parkland Institute

Full Conference Registration
Individuals - \$175 PIA members, \$200 non-members
Table of seven - \$1200 PIA members, \$1225 non-members
Limited subsidies and volunteer opportunities for low-income people

For more information and to register, contact
Public Interest Alberta @ 780 420-0471
web: www.piaalberta.org
email: plattusa@telus.net

Calgary
Wednesday, April 7 @ 7:00 p.m.
Room 119, Craig Hall C,
University of Calgary
Call 403 270-3200
(Aruba Centre)
Separate keynote tickets available for \$10

Edmonton
Thursday, April 8 @ 7:00 p.m.
Grand Ballroom, Chateau Louis
Conference Centre
Separate keynote tickets available for \$15
Reception to follow

Latin Dance Party
Friday @ 7:30 PM
Grand Ballroom
Tickets \$15

Sponsored by:

VUE
AUPE
United Nurses of Alberta
HSAA

Financial Statement

Statement of Operations - Year Ended March 31, 2010

	2010	2009
Revenue		
Membership Fees	204436.00	164149.00
Campaign Income	40334.00	46696.00
Conference Income	38084.00	41589.00
Sublease	11519.00	8522.00
Fundraising Income	10187.00	0.00
Expense Reimbursement	1854.00	3752.00
Speaker & Writer Honourarium	350.00	1000.00
Miscellaneous/Interest Income	244.00	509.00
General Advocacy Fund	84238.00	20000.00
	391246.00	286217.00
Operating Expenditures		
Staffing	126957.00	114551.00
Communications & Outreach	23480.00	9730.00
Rent	23178.00	23061.00
Telecommunications	3989.00	3918.00
Audit Fees	3561.00	3035.00
Annual General Meeting	3200.00	4138.00
Amortization	2750.00	2493.00
Insurance	1677.00	866.00
Stationery & Supplies	1573.00	734.00
Board Meetings	1035.00	1190.00
Miscellaneous	495.00	258.00
Furniture	422.00	0.00
Interest & Bank Charges	411.00	271.00
Equipment/Programs	397.00	1175.00
	193125.00	165420.00
Program Costs		
Child Care Task Force	260.00	325.00
Democracy Task Force	2735.00	152.00
Education Task Force	77.00	74.00
Energy & Environment Task Force	884.00	1532.00
General Advocacy Campaign	15686.00	0.00
Human Service & Poverty Task Force	30635.00	14854.00
Join Together Alberta Campaign	45872.00	0.00
Post-Secondary Education Task Force	2354.00	4770.00
Privatization Task Force	9364.00	47.00
Seniors Task Force	1199.00	12024.00
2009 Conference	24129.00	0.00
2008 Conference	0.00	44153.00
Loss on disposal of assets	1972.00	0.00
	135167.00	77931.00
Excess of Revenues over Operating Expenses	62954.00	42866.00



Public Interest Alberta

Public Interest Alberta (PIA) is a non-partisan province-wide organization focused on education and advocacy on public interest issues. PIA exists to foster in Albertans an understanding of the importance of public services, institutions and spaces in Albertans' lives, and to build a network of organizations and individuals committed to advancing the public interest.

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