

# EQUINOX VIGIL IN UNION CEMETERY

---



**SEPTEMBER 20, 2014**

---

**A free, family-friendly event to honour the deceased  
in creative and meaningful ways**

**Art Installations & Shrines  
Live Music  
Video & Film Projections  
The Union Choir  
Candlelight Processions  
Digital Shrine  
Memorial Craft-Making  
Hosted Tea Garden  
Calgary's Poet Laureate & Historian Laureate**

**For more information or to donate:**

**[www.equinoxvigil.ca](http://www.equinoxvigil.ca)**

## THE EVENT

Inspired by both age-old and contemporary traditions from around the globe, Equinox Vigil is a creative, respectful community event to celebrate deceased loved ones and ancestors and the natural cycle of Life and Death itself.



**Each year on the Autumn Equinox**, people of all ages, backgrounds and beliefs gather in Calgary's historic Union Cemetery. There, under the light of the moon and surrounded by fresh flowers, fluttering prayer flags and glowing lanterns, they join artists, musicians, poets and other members of our city's vibrant arts community in creating bittersweet rituals of remembrance and reflection.

**Colourful, inspiring art installations, video and film projections, and shrines** created by professional artists form the heart of the Equinox Vigil experience. But this is not art displayed as in a formal gallery setting. Rather, these artworks come alive through public participation. By performing simple acts like adding personal mementoes to shrines or joining a candlelit procession, each visitor to Equinox Vigil becomes part of a community drawing close to mourn its deceased through art and ritual.

**The sound of live acoustic music and the voices of the Union Choir** softly resonates amidst the headstones. Calgary's Poet Laureate reads aloud as he shares a bench with visitors. And Calgary's Historian Laureate recounts tales of Union Cemetery and its historic denizens.

**Visitors can create personal memorial tributes** under the guidance of professional artists in the Craft Tent, and a **hosted Tea Garden** offers a place for quiet conversation. Each element of the event is thoughtfully designed to provide families with a memorable and meaningful experience.

**Equinox Vigil is free, non-religious, and welcomes all members of Calgary's culturally diverse community**, regardless of whether they have loved ones interred at Union Cemetery.

## THE PEOPLE

### Our Creative Leadership

**Equinox Vigil in Union Cemetery was conceived and is directed by Sharon Stevens, a native Calgarian, award-winning video artist and long-time community activist and organizer.**



**Sharon's experience** in the arena of cultural event planning and management spans more than 20 years. She has served on the boards of numerous local arts associations including EMMedia Production Society, Syntax Arts Society and the herland feminist film festival, and is a former member of the Calgary Arts Development Authority (CADA) steering committee. She currently serves on the Board of the Alberta Media Arts Alliance and is Vice-Chair of the Calgary Folk Music Festival, one of the city's largest annual cultural events.

**Sharon is employed** by the International Avenue Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), where she previously served a one-year term as Artist in Residence and now facilitates Calgary's newest public art project, ArtBOX on 17E.

**Sharon was inspired to create Equinox Vigil** after serving in 2010 as an intern and guest artist at the *Night of All Souls*, a similar event at Vancouver's Mountainview Cemetery. That event, which has been held annually for seven years, attracts thousands of visitors and provided Sharon with invaluable on-the-ground experience.

**Sharon has also undertaken several research-study trips** to traditional *Day of the Dead* celebrations in Mexico. Most recently, she participated with artists and community members in Oaxaca in 2012 and again in 2013, returning to Calgary with profound respect for and deep insights into the importance of art and public rituals in building strong communities.

## Our Volunteer Team

Each of our volunteers is devoted to ensuring Equinox Vigil offers Calgarians a safe, welcoming environment and an enriching cultural and social experience.



**Volunteers are the lifeblood of Equinox Vigil.** Our team has been together since the project's inception in 2012 and includes: professional lighting, sound and video technicians; theatrical set designers; communications and marketing consultants; administrative and management wizards; and a host of folks who put heartfelt effort into everything from serving cups of warming tea to creating the glorious garlands of fresh flowers that greet visitors to Equinox Vigil.

## Our Artists

Each year, we invite members of Calgary's contemporary art community to submit proposals to create large-scale artworks for Equinox Vigil.



**Selected by a panel of professional artists**, successful proposals typically include traditional shrine and sculptural installations, as well as innovative artworks such as video, sound and digital media installations

**The artworks selected are diverse**, but all share two common attributes: each is crafted with an attitude of reverence and respect, and each is participatory in nature. Whether through inviting the public to place candles or personal mementoes on shrines, or welcoming them into a sacred space devoted to sharing stories, the artists of Equinox Vigil create works that are not just visually stunning, but also engaging and meaningful.

**Equinox Vigil is committed to supporting a flourishing arts community in Calgary.** In keeping with that commitment, we compensate our artists and musicians with professional fees as established by CARFAC (Canadian Artists' Representation/le Front des artistes canadiens) and the Canadian Federation of Musicians.

## OUR FUNDING

**Equinox Vigil is a non-profit event currently funded primarily through tax-deductible donations from individual Calgarians.**



**Each year, Equinox Vigil operates an on-line fundraising campaign** that generates most of our public donations. In 2012 and 2013 we also secured cultural and heritage grants from various public, private and community organizations. We have also been fortunate to receive donations of goods and services from small local businesses

**Support from the City of Calgary is also vital to our success**, in terms of allowing Equinox Vigil to operate in the city-owned Union Cemetery at no charge. We already have a written agreement with the City to again hold the event in September 2014. However, it is important to note that Equinox Vigil receives no guaranteed funding from the City beyond provision of the event site itself.

**In 2014 and beyond**, public fundraising initiatives and grants will continue to play integral roles in our funding strategy. However, these sources do not offer the security necessary for advance planning and are insufficient to provide the resources required by our steady rise in audience numbers. Equinox Vigil has been so popular with the public that we are, quite simply, outgrowing our financial ability to stage the event.

**In order to continue offering Calgary families this event, it is imperative that members of the city's business community join our team as valued funding partners.**

## PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**Equinox Vigil offers both small businesses and larger corporations the opportunity to become involved with this unique and cherished family event.**



**Donations over \$25 are tax-deductible, via our fiscal partnership with Community Wise Resources, a registered charitable organization.**

Funding partners can donate to our General Fund, with monies to be distributed where they are most needed, or they may earmark donations to support specific aspects of the event. Currently we are seeking funding sponsors for these and other areas:

- Artist & musician fees (\$7,000)
- Technical & lighting infrastructure for art/video installations (\$3,500)
- General site infrastructure, management, administrative fees, misc (\$3,500)
- Tea garden (\$2,500)
- Memorial craft-making tent (\$2,000)
- Marketing, advertising, website & photography (\$4,000)

**Equinox Vigil recognizes its major supporters during our active publicity campaign** and media interviews, and prominently displays their logos on all marketing and advertising materials. These include: on-site signage, community posters; printed invitations and mailers; vigorous Facebook and Twitter campaigns; an online fundraising campaign; and a dedicated website.

**Utilizing funds efficiently and ensuring sponsors of our fiscal responsibility** is important to us. Following Equinox Vigil 2014, major donors and sponsors will be provided with a thorough report including event documentation, public participation and survey results, and budget reconciliation.

## Discover how you can become part of Equinox Vigil



**Please email** to arrange a personal meeting or to receive more information about Equinox Vigil in Union Cemetery, including budget details. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

**Sharon Stevens, Director**

**Sharon@essense.ca**

**www.equinoxvigil.ca**

Photo credits: Joni Clarke, Melody Jacobson, Brian Jensen, Julie Kerr