

EDQG Founders Graduate Scholarship

Sincerest gratitude from Karen Fraser

My name is Karen Fraser, and I would like to thank the Edmonton and District Quilters' Guild for generously supporting Human Ecology students. I am honoured to have received this year's award and sincerely appreciate your financial support.

I am in my fourth year of the PhD program in Human Ecology with a specialization in Material Culture. I feel at home in Material Culture studies, as I am curious about the objects that people make, use and discard, and how objects and material practices embody or represent people's beliefs and values.

In my research, I am exploring the personal and social meanings of clothing, textiles and objects that people keep in their homes. I am interested in how people think, feel and act in relation to the accumulated things that get labelled as clutter. Drawing on my background as a professional organizer's assistant, I seek to understand how people negotiate the meanings and physical reality of objects as they engage with a professional organizer to manage and/or discard items.

While receiving this scholarship enables me to focus on my studies, it also allows me to dedicate my time to volunteer roles in the department. I am president of the Human Ecology Graduate Students' Association, a role in which I lead an executive team to plan and deliver social events, professional development opportunities and foster a sense of community with my student–peers. I am also a member of the student team that coordinates monthly department research seminars where students and faculty can present their work and get feedback in a collegial setting. Finally, I share my knowledge of how-to mend textiles and clothing in Clothing Repair Cafés, a campus sustainability initiative. With funding from the EDQG Graduate Scholarship, I can make the most of exciting opportunities like these on campus.

Thank you again for supporting my graduate studies and my personal and professional development. I truly appreciate it!

Karen

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