



2020 **Annual Report**

Inclusion Alberta
Supporting children and adults with developmental disabilities for 60+ years

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



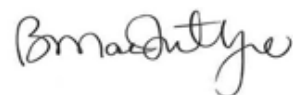
2020 will certainly go down in the history books. Looking back, I am filled with disbelief and mixed emotions. It has been a difficult year, like no other, for children and adults with developmental disabilities, families, our communities, our organization and the inclusion movement. COVID-19 has overwhelmed most our lives and has been challenging with increased health risks, amplified isolation and loneliness, added barriers to employment, magnified pressures in education and increased vulnerabilities to health care. In some ways, it has seemed like progress has stalled or even taken several steps backward, and it will take time to recover, re-energize and renew. At the same time, we should be enormously proud we responded with strength, clarity and came together in new ways. There have been unexpected opportunities that have emerged with reasons to be grateful and hopeful for the future.

In terms of the political environment, there have been challenges and concerns as to the government's lack of commitment to the disability community. Fiscal restraint was the predominant message to Albertans with many families experiencing delays, denials and reductions to requests for needed supports. Throughout the pandemic, supports for children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families have not been high on the government's radar and considerable advocacy efforts have been required provincially and federally. Although we have achieved some success in the areas of Personal Protective Equipment for support workers, triage protocols, hospital policies and the disability benefit, it has been an uphill effort with establishing appropriate vaccine priority, with those with disabilities at greater risk not acknowledged to date. On a national level, we continue to support the critical advocacy of Inclusion Canada and disability community partners to stop Bill C-7, an act which would expand medical assistance in dying to include people with disabilities who are not near the end of life. The need for our strong collective voice to challenge discrimination, marginalization and ableism has become even more evident as the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities become increasingly threatened should this bill be proclaimed.

Although the ways we connected shifted, we continued to focus on voluntary leadership development, networking and engaging individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Considering the day-to-day pressures many experienced throughout year, this has been an incredible testament to the dedication and perseverance of families, staff, Board and Executive members. With the exception of the cancelled 2020 Family Conference, our AGM, Board meetings, Executive meetings, Executive retreat, Leadership series, Workshops and Information sessions all successfully pivoted to virtual platforms. In fact, our Annual Fundraiser was a highlight of the year with overwhelming positive feedback and appreciation for the accessible nature of our virtual event.

Another highlight of the year was our stronger than anticipated financial performance. Even though Inclusion Alberta Foundation's contributions were reduced significantly due to COVID-19 collection restrictions, our fundraising revenue exceeded budget, pandemic related wage subsidies were received and operational costs, primarily due to in-person restrictions, were substantially reduced.

In closing, I am incredibly proud to be part of this organization. It has been my honor and privilege to have served as President of Inclusion Alberta. Thank you to the many courageous people who make a real difference for individuals with developmental disabilities and families in this province. From the families who dream big and have a vision for a bright future for their sons and daughters; to the families, individuals and allies who collectively mobilize for positive changes and social justice; to the staff who walk with individuals with developmental disabilities and families to make their lives better; to the leadership team for their belief in families and relentless efforts in creating opportunities for inclusive lives on a normative pathway; to Trish's unwavering commitment and guidance; to the Board of Directors members and the Executive Committee, all of whom volunteer their time and passion to strengthen our organization...what we do matters! "For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it". Amanda Gorman



Barb MacIntyre

President

CEO'S REPORT



As I prepared to write this annual report, I found myself struggling to think of 2020 as a single year. There was the ordinary passage of time before COVID-19, and then suddenly everything changed in unimaginable and frightening ways.

The year started as a continuation of our determined advocacy efforts to ensure individuals and families had access to every opportunity and any needed support to be fully included in all aspects of community life in the face of diminishing resources and increasing funding reductions, denials, and delays. However, in March our efforts quickly turned into ensuring the very lives of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families remained secure and safe.

The February 2020 provincial budget provided small increases to PDD and FSCD, but these were insufficient to address annualized costs and caseload growth; in real terms this was a reduction in funding and thus did nothing to stop the challenges families were experiencing in obtaining or sustaining adequate supports. Individuals new to FSCD or PDD were particularly impacted with growing waiting lists for supports from both programs. FSCD and PDD increasingly applied a criterion of 'urgent and critical' in assessing requests for support – a criteria that does not exist in legislation or regulation. Our advocacy team's efforts increased in response to this criteria by engaging in a growing number of largely successful administrative reviews and appeals to combat government's attempts to limit access to supports and funding.

With changes to the Education funding formula for school districts and reductions to PUF funding we prepared to see greater challenges for families seeking inclusion in the regular classroom or early childhood setting, with districts signaling they would have inadequate resources to provide appropriate support. While we know this to be a fundamentally inequitable and inaccurate understanding of how school district resources should be managed, experience tells us that the support children with disabilities require to receive an appropriate education in the regular classroom is always the first to be withdrawn in times of fiscal restraint.

Budget 2020-2021 did contain some welcome news with the announcement of funding to expand inclusive post-secondary opportunities, inclusive employment and Family Resource Centres. The recognition of the value of these initiatives is an acknowledgement of the longstanding advocacy of families, Member Associations and Inclusion Alberta.

Two weeks following the Budget, COVID-19 shut the province down. As Albertans everywhere struggled to understand the constantly changing information and public health restrictions, we began trying to ensure that various levels of government took into account individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. This proved to be challenging. Initial communication from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (CSS) was directed exclusively to service providers and not families. The Ministry of Education removed funding for Educational Assistants without consideration of the continued support children with disabilities, now learning at home, would require. CSS began developing protocols to provide PPE to service providers, without a plan to ensure individuals and families who utilize FSCD and Family Managed Supports (FMS) funding had equal access. With the fast moving and sometimes hourly decisions being made at multiple levels of government, by April I was having daily phone calls with the Assistant Deputy Minister of CSS to raise the unique issues impacting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Through these discussions and other advocacy strategies, we were able to ensure and facilitate access to PPE for families. We raised issues such as enabling Employment Insurance for those who lost employment or were temporarily laid off and receiving AISH, as well clarifying how CERB would be treated for those on AISH. We sought assurances that families would not be penalized for the underutilization of funding contracts as a result of not being able to have staff in their homes due to the increased risk for their family member and/or the loss of access to community activities. We asked for increased flexibility in the use of FSCD and PDD funds to address the unique circumstances of families, as well as an infusion of dollars to address the growing waiting lists and increased vulnerability of families as a result of COVID-19 and the closure of large parts of the economy and community. While unfortunately not always successful, we sought to ensure the voice of families was represented, present and never forgotten.

The Executive Committee and senior leadership worked diligently to safeguard individuals with developmental disabilities amidst the health crisis. In April, members of the Executive Committee, Bruce Uditsky and I met with Chief Medical Officer Deena Hinshaw and the Minister of Community and Social Services in partnership with Autism Alberta to address the unique issue and danger presented by the public health order preventing adults with developmental disabilities from having a family member accompany them should they require hospitalization. Also raised was the concern about the possible development of discriminatory triage protocols, should they become necessary. Follow-up meetings with Alberta Health Services resulted in the revision of their ethical framework related to triage protocols to ensure equal access to medical care for Albertans with developmental disabilities. Ongoing meetings with the Ministers of CSS and Education with Executive Committee members and myself throughout the year provided opportunities to share the impact of COVID-19 on families and their family members with developmental disabilities.

In the midst of these efforts, the work of the Association proceeded to respond and adapt as required to ensure individuals and families were safe and able to participate, as much as possible, in the changed and changing landscape. As you will see in the balance of the Annual Report, each of our initiatives adapted quickly to ensure individuals with developmental disabilities and their families continued to participate as fully as possible, often in virtual platforms, to sustain hope and plan for an eventual return to in-person activities. Students included in post-secondary studies largely transitioned to on-line learning with the support of our post-secondary team. The team ensured not only participation in academics but assisted students to navigate zoom coffee dates, group work, and where possible, socially distanced walks and visits with friends. Our Rotary Employment team ensured employees who lost employment or were temporally laid off had assistance establishing routines, applying for benefits and staying connected to coworkers. While we disappointingly had to cancel the 2020 Family Conference, families had the opportunity to attend numerous virtual workshops and webinars throughout the year on topics such as visioning and planning, inclusive education, facilitating relationships, creating and sustaining employment, navigating and negotiating FSCD and FMS, with many from rural communities participating given the virtual presentations.

Our advocates worked tirelessly to try and ensure individuals and families had the support they required to be safe and included in community in whatever ways possible. The breadth and creativity of the work that occurred despite the public health restrictions and the speed with which the all the staff at Inclusion Alberta adapted is a testament to their commitment and talent.

Despite many challenges, 2020 included some highlights. In particular, the expansion of our inclusive post-secondary partnerships and our inclusive employment partnerships in the fall. With funding made available in the provincial Budget as a consequence of UCP platform commitments, we were able to create additional capacity to include more students at a number of post-secondary institutions and to begin discussions with Olds College to include students with developmental disabilities in 2021. We were also able to expand our inclusive employment efforts in Edmonton and Calgary and extend our partnership with Rotary Clubs to include Vermillion.

The closure of many businesses, including Value Village for a number of months, along with restrictions on capacity in their retail stores and having to halt our door-to-door pickup service severely impacted Inclusion Alberta's budget. With revenue from the Foundation significantly reduced, and the unknown consequences of being unable to host our annual fundraising breakfasts in person, our budget was revised to accommodate decreased revenue. While the Foundation was only able to make a modest contribution to Inclusion Alberta in 2020, our virtual fund development breakfast vastly exceeded our expectations and was an unqualified success. Much thanks are owed to Shawn Ergang for steering the Foundation through a turbulent and difficult year, and to Wendy McDonald for her incredible talent and dedication in ensuring the success of our fund development efforts.

There is so much more I could share about the work of the Association in 2020. For example, mobilizing families to meet with their MLAs to try and safeguard the interests of children and adults with developmental disabilities. Grassroots efforts across the province and country to try and stop the passage of Bill C-7, an act to expand Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) to people with disabilities who were not dying or near death. Engagement in numerous consultations related to government reviews of the FSCD and PDD programs. Advocacy related to proposed changes to AISH.

But an annual report can only be so long. Collectively, we have been through a great deal this year, both personally and in the public domain. It is with profound humility and honesty that I say I could not have navigated this alone. With the unfailing support and tireless effort of the leadership team, Inclusion Alberta was able to remain steadfast in its support to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Many thanks to Wendy McDonald, Chief Operating Officer, Billie Jack, Provincial Director of Advocacy and Engagement, Charmaine McIntyre, Provincial Director of Inclusive Post-Secondary Education, Trina Steed, Provincial Director of Inclusive Employment, and Catherine Oakleaf, Regional Director of Advocacy and Engagement. Gratitude to Tara-Lee LaRose, Executive Assistant for holding us all together. Heartfelt thanks to President Barb MacIntyre and the Executive Committee for their confidence, support, advice and encouragement as we navigated our way through stormy seas. And as always, thanks to Bruce Uditsky, CEO Emeritus, for his sage counsel and unwavering support.



Trish Bowman
CEO

TREASURER'S REPORT

Basis of Presentation

Inclusion Alberta's Audited Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2020 have been prepared on the basis of a not-for-profit organization, which includes a note to the financial statements indicating Inclusion Alberta Society controls the Inclusion Alberta Foundation and its activities. The form of reporting is currently required by not-for-profit organizations that control another not-for-profit organization through its management and operations. The inclusion of the note to the Audited Financial Statements provides an understanding of the financial position and operation of the Foundation.

Results of Operations

During the year ended December 31, 2020, Inclusion Alberta reported a surplus of \$679,981 as compared to \$410,454 in 2019.

The total revenues for the year were \$5,710,839 compared to \$6,145,510 in 2019. This is as a result of a decrease in contracts and grants of \$131,636, which included a CFEP grant for building renovations of \$115,000 in 2019. There was also a decrease in transfers from Inclusion Alberta Foundation of \$280,485 as a result of a temporary shutdown of Foundation operations due to COVID-19.

The total expenditures for the year were \$5,092,188 compared to \$5,819,783 in 2019, resulting in a decrease of \$727,595. This is mainly due to the cancellation of events and in-person meetings due to COVID-19.

Submitted by
Donna Dejardins
Treasurer

INCLUSION ALBERTA FOUNDATION

The beginning of 2020 saw the Inclusion Alberta Foundation (IAF) start the year strongly, carrying on the momentum gained in 2019. That of course changed with the beginning of a world-wide pandemic that would dramatically change operations for the remainder of the year.

On March 20th 2020, Value Village made the decision to temporarily close all of its retail and donation locations across Canada. Not knowing how long the closure might go on IAF continued to collect from its bin locations and maintain relationships with collection partnerships placing the product in storage until such time as Value Village reopened. While Value Village stores began to reopen in May, government mandated reductions in capacity resulted in a greatly diminished need for product and the Foundation was not able to resume deliveries to Value Village until July. The original plan called for a gradual monthly increase in deliveries from 40% of quota up to 90% by years end. Unfortunately circumstances relative to the pandemic saw Value Village unable to accept any more than 50-60% of quota through the remainder of 2020.

In September and with a large amount of product in storage difficult decisions were made to further reduce staffing and collections. A dramatic decrease in revenue necessitated cost cutting measures to salvage what we could for the year. While IAF did finish the year in a profit position the contribution to Inclusion Alberta was significantly reduced from original budget targets.



IAF will enter 2021 maintaining a large inventory position which, coupled with the expense reductions implemented in 2020, leave promise that contributions to Inclusion Alberta will stabilize in 2021.

A big thank you to the Foundation board members for their invaluable contributions. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge and thank Shawn and Trish for their extraordinary efforts in shifting and sustaining operations during a challenging year.

Submitted by
Barb MacIntyre
President

INCLUSION CANADA

There has been considerable national work that has directly impacted and/or involved the work of our provincial association. As representative to the board, I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight a few key areas.

After a lengthy process, Canadian Association for Community Living officially changed its name to Inclusion Canada, which is more reflective of the national movement represented.

When the pandemic broke out, Inclusion Canada began advocating strongly at a national level to ensure the interests of people with intellectual disabilities and their families were considered in the unfolding federal response programs. Inclusion Canada's Executive Vice-President was asked to co-chair the newly formed Federal COVID-19 Disability Advisory Group (CDAG). Due in large part to the advocacy work done with CDAG, the federal government identified three key goals of a Disability Inclusion Plan in the fall Speech from the Throne including: a new Canadian Disability Benefit, a robust employment strategy for people with disabilities and a better process to determine eligibility for disability programs and benefits.

The logo for Inclusion Canada features the word "Inclusion" in a bold, dark blue font and "Canada" in a bold, teal font, stacked vertically. The text is enclosed within a large, stylized bracket shape. The left side of the bracket is dark blue, and the right side is teal, matching the colors of the text.

**Inclusion
Canada**

As anticipated, new federal revisions to Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) legislation was tabled in the fall. Among other changes, Bill C-7 proposes removal of end-of-life criterion for people with disabilities. Tireless advocacy efforts, in collaboration with disability community partners, have gone into opposing the bill and preserving the end of life criterion as the only way to protect people with intellectual disabilities. Trish co-chaired an Inclusion Canada committee for a grass roots advocacy campaign over the spring and summer to have people meet with their respective Member of Parliament and Senators to discuss concerns and opposition to Bill C-7. Despite these efforts, Bill C-7 passed third reading in the House of Commons in December and was referred to the Senate.

In closing, Inclusion Canada's Annual Report 2019-2020 is a comprehensive, detailed summary of the year's work and can be viewed in entirety on Inclusion Canada's website or through the following link: https://issuu.com/inclusioncanada/docs/2019_2020_inclusion_canada_annual_report_print

Submitted by
Barb MacIntyre
President, Inclusion Alberta
Designate to the Inclusion
Canada Board of Directors

LOCAL FAMILY ADVOCACY ASSOCIATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed all our lives, and even more so for the families with children and adults with developmental disabilities. The volunteer board members quickly recognized the need to be responsive and helpful to families in their area knowing that the sudden school program and community service closures due to the pandemic were causing a greater degree of social isolation and fear of health risk for their loved ones with disabilities. The Local Associations re-evaluated their priorities to remain relevant, valuable and responsive to families during this unprecedented time. Local Inclusion Board members from multiple locations called and emailed their membership to see how people were doing during the pandemic and offered words of support and encouragement. In some instances, board members helped families, strategized with them to use their supports and offered online tools or set up a new routine for online learning for their family member. Speaking with local families deepened the board's connection to their membership and helped create new ideas and ways to stay connected. The more board members talked with their membership, the more it became necessary to offer people opportunities to ensure ongoing connections online.

As the pandemic unfolded in the fall of 2020, the government signaled possible significant cuts to disability services and education. The local associations and their membership engaged in a coordinated manner to ensure the voices of people with disabilities and their families are represented by meeting with their MLAs, either virtually or by telephone. The issues taken up in this campaign included expressing the experiences families were encountering and explaining the importance of maintaining the level of funding for disability services so that individuals would not be further impacted by potential budget cuts and policy changes across multiple Ministries such as services in Education, Health, and Community and Social Services.

Webinars and Events:

In recognition of the continued importance of connecting and supporting their membership, the local associations moved all their meetings to an online platform. Many of the local associations are interested in growing their membership and connecting with families is an ongoing priority in every community. They worked effectively to provide information-sharing events online and opening up these events to be shared throughout the province. Many local associations supported the learning series offered by the Darrell Cooke Family Managed Supports Resource Center in Calgary by promoting the events within their membership. Having the learning series offered virtually for the first time allowed for greater access from communities outside of Calgary, with some board members attending the events for the first time. While it may not be the ideal way to connect with other parents, online versions provide a helpful alternative to the disconnection experienced by many during these times of public health restrictions. In fact, offering families in more rural locations access to the learning series was an unexpected benefit of having to move to a virtual platform.

One family who attended a session in the fall said, "This online conference might not be ideal for those who can have in-person face to face but they sure are helpful to lots of people in rural areas who would not be able to afford the time to drive or the expenses of attending in person. "

Inclusion Edmonton Region, Inclusion Calgary, and Inclusion Grande Prairie held webinars with the following topics:

- Advocacy 101: Inclusive Education,
- Navigating and Negotiating FSCD and FMS (PDD)
- Inclusive Education: How Can We Help?
- Inclusive Education: Practical Tips for School Meetings and
- Living an Inclusive Life into the New Year.

Attendance at the webinars exceeded over two hundred and fifty participants. Feedback from the events was overwhelmingly positive and their feedback is shaping the development of new webinars into the future.

"...The most helpful was his explanation of what exactly my rights as my child's advocate are and where I can take a stand with some issues. Previously I thought what answer I was given was bottom line. Bruce's information has given me more courage and purpose (in a way) to be a better advocate for my son" - Advocacy 101: Inclusive Education, Aug. 29, 2020.

"Reminding me that we should create a family vision for our son to support our advocacy, that would support him to pursue an inclusive, rich, fulfilling life." – Navigating and Negotiating FSCD and FMS (PDD), Oct. 24, 2020.

"It was very nice to not feel alone in this fight for an inclusive education and to know work is being done to make a change!!!!" – Inclusive Education: How Can We Help? Jan. 16, 2021.

Inclusion St. Paul offered a place for youth with disabilities to showcase their skills and abilities by hosting virtual meetings that would be engaging and fun for everyone. Three topics were presented; a baking demonstration on making the best chocolate chip cookies, an art class teaching how to paint with watercolours, and a drama class coaching about public speaking and acting fundamentals. The events were lighthearted and celebrated the contributions of the youth with disabilities in their community.

Political/Civic Engagement

Meeting with elected officials is one of the most potent and effective means of helping federal, provincial, and municipal governments understand the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families. In sharing their stories, politicians are provided with the opportunity to understand how policy and legislative decisions impact the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

An example at the civic level of government is the work of Inclusion Grande Prairie. The membership is engaged in dialogue with their local representatives about inclusion in their community. Inclusion Grande Prairie is working to try and ensure that the program and recreational opportunities at new recreational facility are fully inclusive and available to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

In the fall of 2020, Inclusion Alberta and the local associations launched two significant campaigns. As previously mentioned, The Ensure Your Voice Counts provincial campaign aimed to raise awareness with MLAs across the province about the growing threat of cuts to education and disability services. Additionally, families advocated for their children with disabilities to be included in the vaccine rollout at early stages due to their increased health risks.

Another major effort undertaken by families in Alberta in partnership with Inclusion Canada was advocacy regarding Bill C-7, an act to amend Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) legislation. Local associations engaged their membership to meet with their local MP to discuss Bill C-7 and the significant threat it poses to their family members. Families across the province met with close to 50% of the MPs.

Highlights and Future Directions

Exciting and new opportunities are on the horizon for the Local Associations and the communities they serve. A new learning series is being co-created with board members from Inclusion Edmonton Region, Inclusion Calgary and a newly formed Inclusion Alberta staff committee. The purpose of the series is to build employment support capacity with funds administrators and their FMS staff to create and sustain employment. Families and their FMS staff will learn alongside each other in a learning journey of nine sessions exploring vision and planning, staff and family roles, tools to find and sustain employment, and ways to create and facilitate relationships in the workplace and community life.

Inclusion Grande Prairie has identified some strong connections with Inclusive Education efforts with school districts including a developing relationship with the Public School district. There is room for growing connections for families in the region, specifically in Grande Prairie.

The local associations are eager to offer opportunities for families to connect in the future and are excited to meet more families in their respective communities with a focus on sustaining a vision of an inclusive life in education, community, recreation, and employment.

Submitted by

Kate Hughson

**Provincial Coordinator,
Community Development**

ROTARY DISTRICT 5360 & 5370 EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIPS

A significant development for the Rotary Employment Partnership in 2020 was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Rotary Districts 5370, 5360 and Inclusion Alberta. This is the first time in history a project has been formalized between the two Rotary Districts in Alberta and a community partner. We look forward to continuing to work with both Rotary Districts in creating employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Provincial Outcomes (January to December 2020)

Total Jobs created to date starting in 2001	605
New jobs created this year	42
Number of employees receiving follow-up support within the five-year time frame	131
Average wage (\$/hr)*	\$17.01
Average Hours/Week	16
Average # of hours of paid support/week (currently 6 individuals)	5
Number of individuals receiving on the job support in the past 3 months	8
Number of jobs currently in development	42
Number of job seekers being supported to find work	128
Number of Rotary Clubs involved	34

*Averages based upon aggregate data collected from the currently funded Partnerships in Edmonton, Lloydminster, Red Deer, Grande Prairie and Calgary but does not include long term employees who are no longer receiving follow-up and for which current data is not available.

Regional Results

	Edmonton	Lloydminster	Grande Prairie	Red Deer	Calgary	TOTAL
New Jobs in 2020	25	4	1	2	10	42
Total Created	303	86	59	64	93	605
#Active Jobs*	65	18	5	7	36	131
#Jobs in Development	18	3	3	4	15	42
# of Job Seekers	48	18	11	10	41	128

* Jobs are tracked and follow-up support is provided for a five-year time frame

COVID-19 Summary

- At the beginning of the pandemic in March, 80 out of 120 employees were temporarily laid off or on leave and within six months. Roughly half (41) of the employees have since been recalled. Eighteen employees have been permanently laid off since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Job development came to a halt as the economy shut down in March, however, within three months, job development became increasingly busy as coordinators worked with new and existing employment partnerships, creating 80 percent of the new jobs in July, August and September.

Summary of Support During COVID-19

Support to Families:

- Coordinators helped individuals with applications for CERB and Employment Insurance, reporting and general navigation of these complex systems including supporting some individuals to connect with AISH.
- Coordinators supported families in crisis, for instance, a single parent needed help to file a police report after having had their garage broken into and items stolen. Without the ability to safely have in-home supports for her two adult children with developmental disabilities, the parent did not have the capacity to go report the incident to police. The coordinator helped guide the family and complete the police report remotely, while organizing volunteers to fix the garage door.
- Coordinators helped a few individuals and families by buying and dropping off groceries when no other help could come from community.
- Coordinators offered more support by being a listening ear and assisting families to establish new routines while facing many struggles in adapting to the new normal.

Support to Rotary Clubs & Steering Committee Members:

- Steering Committees met virtually to continue the momentum of the Partnership.
- A meeting took place with both Rotary Districts to talk about the Partnership engaging Rotary during COVID-19 and afterwards. Both Districts are deeply committed to the partnership and generated ideas on increasing communication to Rotarians monthly, relative to promotion, awareness, prospecting, outreach and more.
- Rotary Employment Partnership coordinators attended Rotary meetings online.

Rotary Partners Highlights

This incredible opportunity was made possible by Rotary Club of Edmonton Sunrise. Canterbury Foundation became an inclusive employer as part of the Rotary Employment Partnership. Since July, Canterbury Foundation hired three full-time Client Services Ambassadors to perform the very important job of pre-screening visitors and reinforcing COVID-19 guidelines and protocols. From taking routine temperatures to ensuring first-time visitors are educated and informed, Ambassadors are among the dedicated and caring Canterbury staff working hard to ensure the safety of everyone. Their duties also include assisting with delivering mail and packages to residents as well as completing office administrative duties as required. The Client Services Ambassadors are proud to be serving the community as frontline workers, making a difference in the face of COVID-19. We are proud to be working with Canterbury Foundation and the wonderful residents in this exciting partnership.

- Throughout 2020, there were 15 presentations to Rotary Clubs and potential employers across the Province, and collectively Coordinators attended 142 Rotary meetings.
- In response to both District's interest in monthly Rotary Employment Partnership communications, the Rotary Employment Partnership coordinators brainstormed communication ideas. As a result, one electronic newsletter (eblast) is sent monthly to both districts, highlighting new jobs, job seeker profiles and other Rotary Employment Partnership promotion and action items for Rotary engagement. As well, monthly employee or employer stories and photos or short videos are sent to both Districts to post in Rotary newsletters and social media.

Steering Committee Highlights

Steering Committee Member Robert McGinn, from Rotary Club of St. Albert, sharing his networks

Thanks to a connection from Rotary Club of St. Albert, a job seeker recently started a part-time position as Project Assistant with Arts & Heritage - St Albert. In his new role, the employee supports the Archival and Programming teams with donation inventory, data entry & updating, research and retrieval of information on historic houses, education kit research and walking tours.

This individual completed his studies at MacEwan university with support from Inclusion Alberta's Inclusive Post-Secondary Education initiative, where he majored in History and loves everything historical.

The employee is currently expanding on his passion for history by writing a novel comparing historic battles in human history with Star Wars battles. He is very grateful for the opportunity to work with a team that shares his passion for history and the team is equally delighted to have him on board, describing his enthusiasm as, "infectious".



- Twelve jobs were created this year as a direct result of Rotarian connections.
- Steering Committees continued to meet virtually during the pandemic and some committees met monthly instead of quarterly to ensure Partnership engagement and activities continued during the pandemic.

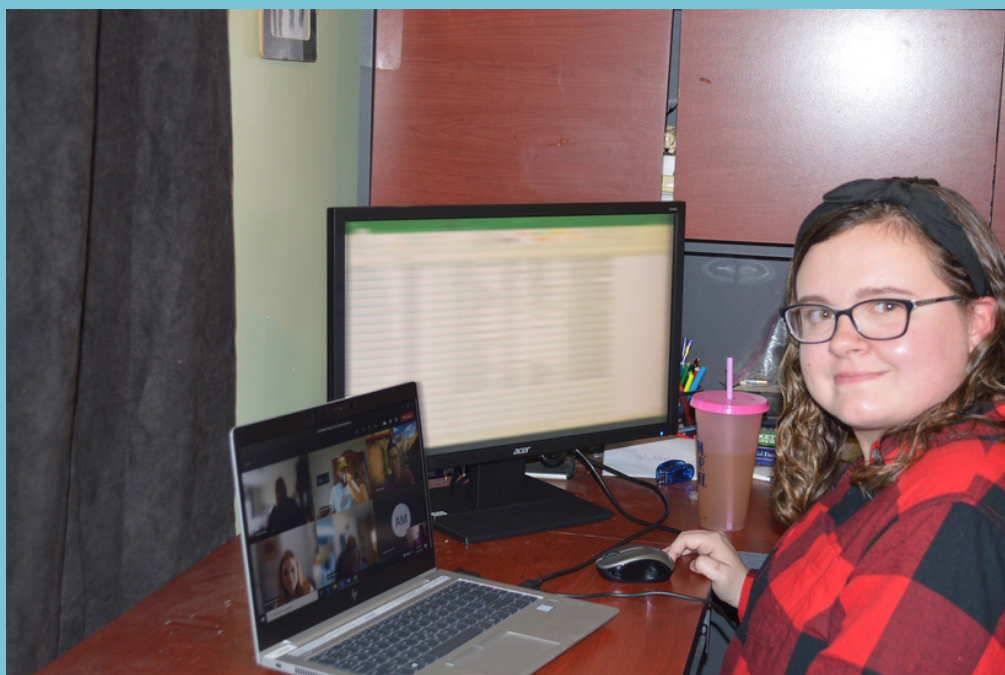
Employers

New Employers: Canadian Western Bank

Canadian Western Bank hired a a full-time Administrative Assistant in their Project Management Office. Like many starting a new job during the pandemic, this individual has had virtual training at home along with other colleagues and will be working from home for the foreseeable future.

The employee plays an essential role supporting the Project Management Office Team in overseeing and ensuring the accuracy of invoicing from different vendors. Her responsibilities include verifying, validating and coding invoices and time sheets submitted by vendors using specific software.

The supervisor and teammates quickly recognized her passion and skill with numbers and expressed their gratitude to the Rotary Employment Partnership for introducing them to such a valuable co-worker, noting the wonderful contribution she has made to the team in just a few weeks. Canadian Western Bank has hired two job seekers in 2020 in two different departments.



Highlights

- In total the Rotary Employment Partnership created 42 jobs throughout 2020, comparable to other yearly outcomes of 44 jobs in 2019, 45 jobs in 2018 and 41 jobs created in 2017.
- Prime Boiler in Red Deer was one of this year's recipients of the Inclusion Alberta Community Inclusion award. Prime Boiler was recognized for their commitment and leadership as an inclusive employer, creating three positions for Albertans with developmental disabilities. Knowing that there are companies such as Prime Boilers, who value the contributions of people with developmental disabilities, is life changing and inspires individuals and their families to have hope and dream big.
- GeoLOGIC in Calgary was another recipient of the Inclusion Alberta Community Inclusion award. GeoLOGIC has been an inclusive employer for over five years and when their employee expressed an interest in growing in his role, they worked to figure out potential tasks that he would be interested in that would expand his skill set and increase his value to GeoLOGIC.
- Foster Park Brokers Inc. in Edmonton not only hired an employee over four years ago, and actively promotes the Partnership with their clients, they have gone beyond their role of inclusive employer by helping Inclusion Alberta fund raise, hosting a golf tournament in September.

Job Seekers

A family uses their networks to find Employment

All Around Hound Dog Services recently partnered with the Rotary Employment Partnership to hire a former NAIT student who audited the Animal Health Technology Program with the support of inclusive-post-secondary education. The part-time Service Assistant role helps care for the dogs visiting the kennel service. The employee was called “the dog whisperer” on her first shift when she entered the kennel and directed the dogs to sit, whereby every dog obeyed her gentle command and sat down. The family’s sharing of their personal network enabled the Rotary Employment Partnership to create this exciting opportunity for their daughter.



- There were 128 adults with developmental disabilities on the job seeker lists across all five partnerships in 2020. Coordinators continue to support job seekers to utilize their families’ personal networks to reach out to the business community to find employment opportunities.
- As a result of families of job seekers using their personal networks to connect employers to the Rotary Employment Partnership coordinators, four jobs were created this year.

Partnership Promotion & Recognition

Benefits of Project Recognition and Promotion: Curve Distribution



Dan Doherty is part of The Rotary Club of Calgary West and has been a significant supporter of the Rotary Employment Partnership. During his tenure as District Governor, he promoted the partnership throughout the District, creating employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

When Dan's company, Curve Distribution Services, required some additional administrative support, he reached out to the Rotary Employment Partnership. With the support of the Rotary Employment Partnership Curve found the perfect candidate in who began working at Curve Distribution in July, assisting the administration team with many tasks including organizing and filing documents. The employee says her shifts go by so fast as there is always important work to be done. Thanks to Dan at Curve for reaching out to the Rotary Employment partnership and for giving another individual with developmental disabilities the opportunity to put their skills to work.

Highlights of 2020 Recognition and Promotion of the Partnership

- 15 partnership presentations were made in 2020 as well as 142 meetings attended by Coordinators to promote the Partnership.
- In June, Chief Operating Officer Wendy McDonald was a recipient of Rotary International's Service Above Self Award. This award is Rotary International's highest distinction and is given out to individuals who have demonstrated exemplary humanitarian service with an emphasis on personal volunteer efforts and active involvement in helping others through Rotary. Wendy was deeply honoured to receive this prestigious honour and spoke about how it takes the support, drive and dedication of others to achieve the success of the Rotary Employment Partnership. "You don't do this work for 20 years by yourself, there is a whole bunch of Rotarians, Inclusion Alberta and others without whom we wouldn't have created almost 600 jobs".

Submitted by

Trina Steed

Provincial Director,
Employment Partnerships

Wendy McDonald

Chief Operating Officer

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP



Inclusion Alberta

Youth Employment Partnership

Nancy
Matt & Ashley's No Frills
Edmonton, AB

New Employer Partnership

Nancy is a grade 12 student who recently started her FIRST EVER job at No Frills in Edmonton as part of the Youth Employment Partnership. Nancy works as a part-time Grocery Clerk where she is responsible for facing merchandise so it is properly displayed and ensuring the aisles are clean and organized. Congratulations to Matt (pictured here with Nancy) and Ashley for adding Nancy to your employment team!

COVID-19 Update

Since mid-March, the province of Alberta had unpredictable patterns of restricting businesses from being open, or open at reduced measures due to COVID-19. From mid-March through to the end of the year, most job seekers and their families decided to put the prospects of employment on hold due to underlying health concerns that may put them at risk during the pandemic. As a result of uncertain times, job development slowed down at various times in the year, resulting in only three new jobs being created in 2020.

Throughout the year, the coordinator continued to engage job seekers by assisting with cover letter and resume building, deepening their career identities, exploring interests, skills, and talents, and by supporting families to explore their personal networks for the purpose of developing employment opportunities. The coordinator recruited new staff as several former peer mentors had aged out of the position. From June onward, the coordinator met with the peer mentors monthly, providing them with professional development opportunities. The monthly topics included deepening and for those new to the team, training the mentors in the skills such as prompt hierarchy, task analysis and the importance of facilitating natural supports in the workplace. Other topics included exercises in critical thinking, the art of public speaking, and a continued exploration of the definition of inclusion.

Summary

In 2020, the Youth Employment Partnership coordinator created three jobs with the business community, totalling seven jobs being sustained throughout the year by the coordinator, peer mentors and natural supports. A total of 48 positions have been created since the beginning of the Youth Employment Partnership. As well, Inclusion Alberta is excited to announce that the Calgary Youth Employment Partnership will begin again 2021 after securing additional resources from Community and Social Services.



Youth Facilitator

This half time role in Edmonton focuses on supporting youth with disabilities approaching adulthood and their families to create a vision for meaningful involvement in community, including youth employment and community recreation. In 2020, eleven families were supported in sustained planning, with an additional seven families supported via consultation. Due to the COVID pandemic, 2020 has been a year unlike any other. Along with seniors in long term care, people with developmental disabilities were impacted perhaps more than any other category of Canadians. For the majority of 2020, all social clubs, sports teams and recreational facilities were closed. When restrictions eased allowing limited reopening, it was often for short periods of time, or in unpredictable patterns that made sustained connections extremely challenging. New employment opportunities disappeared, and people lost existing jobs and community roles.



Families were supported to continuously think outside the box about how to maintain existing and build new relationships during the extraordinary challenges and restrictions of COVID-19. In cases where, due to health or other concerns, youth were unable to pursue any in-person goals such as employment, they were supported to plan creatively for how to use this time to 'get ready' to launch when it's safe to do so. This included, for example, a young man being supported to learn new computer programming skills through online courses, and to build online friendships with local peers who he can meet in-person when the pandemic restrictions ease. Another youth was supported to take over meal planning and preparation at home when the organization he volunteered at in the kitchen closed, to keep honing his skills toward his dream to work at a restaurant. A youth was supported to access Telus' low-cost internet and phone plans, as well as accessing a low-cost laptop to work on his computer skills like Excel and email, during lockdowns.

While our ability to implement and 'run with' planning has been impeded by the pandemic, it hasn't slowed the foundational work of planning at all, and in fact increased the time available to dedicate to more meaningful visioning, which is the bedrock of planning. The Facilitator created a robust visioning package that now forms the basis for initial online meetings, leading into Pathfinder work, documenting individuals' strengths and interests, identifying possibilities in community that exist now and those that will exist when restrictions ease, and identifying family networks to start building those bridges to future opportunities. All of this has been accomplished via online collaboration, until it's safe to meet in-person again.

Overall, families have expressed that an ongoing connection to the Facilitator with sustained conversations about visioning and planning, has had a strong stabilizing effect for youth and their families in this unprecedented time.

Submitted by

Wendy McDonald
Chief Operating Officer

Trina Steed
Provincial Director,
Employment
Partnerships

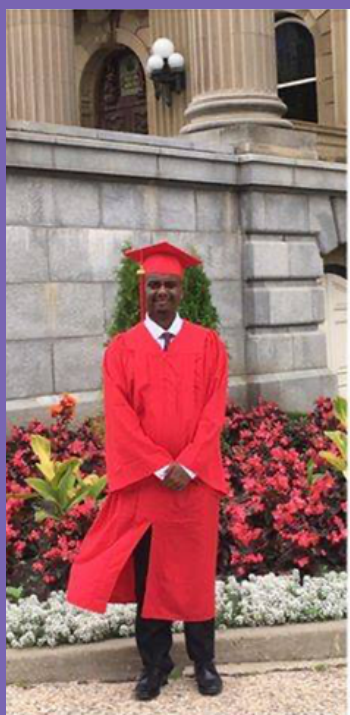
Caitlin Wray
Youth Facilitator

INCLUSIVE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Introduction and Overview

The year 2020 was filled with unprecedented circumstances that shifted the work of inclusive post-secondary education instantaneously. As the world struggled to understand COVID-19 and the ripple effect of a global pandemic, most post-secondary institutions shut down by mid-March. Despite the worldwide pandemic, the work of supporting students in pursuit of the good things in life did not stop. Inclusive post-secondary education Coordinators and Facilitators shifted support from on-campus to supporting students in their homes, job sites, and community. Course reviews consisted of supporting students with not only academics, but also ensuring students were learning how to mask properly, understood donning and doffing techniques, planning for food supplies, emergency preparedness, and creating mental health hygiene routines as isolation from others was difficult and often overwhelming. During March, many post-secondary institutes moved to online platforms to complete the semester in the most feasible way possible requiring adjustment and learning for all students. Post-secondary partnerships continued to be strengthened by this communal experience; in many cases, the inclusive post-secondary teams supported faculty in navigating this new online era filled with breakout rooms, screen sharing and virtual backgrounds from years of using online platforms connecting with provincial inclusive post-secondary staff. Though campus and student life looked drastically different this year, the resiliency of students with developmental disabilities continued to shine through. Students continued to connect with classmates and peers virtually, moved coffee dates to walk and chats outside, with students included within their friend's cohort family groups providing some normalcy and connection. Many students remained gainfully employed and at times, covered shifts when co-workers were unable to find childcare. Students continued to participate in clubs and groups such as Ambassador club, Anime club and Toastmasters that shifted to an online platform, creating the space for connection with others.

Despite the growing uncertainty of COVID-19, opportunities for students with developmental disabilities did not diminish during the past year and often continued to thrive. Through collaborative conversations with post-secondary partners, there continued to be new programs of study and faculty that welcomed students with developmental disabilities despite uncertainties of the pandemic and severe budget cutbacks experienced by most institutions. In 2020, students had the opportunity to be included in programs of study that have not previously been open at their respective institutions: Interior Design (Lakeland College), Bachelor of Science (Concordia University of Edmonton). Two new programs of study have also agreed to include future students to pursue: the Automotive Service Technician Trades Program (Lakeland College) and Dental Assisting (NAIT). In addition to new programs expanding to welcome students with developmental disabilities, OLDS College became the fifteenth post-secondary institution to partner with Inclusion Alberta. While students will not formally begin studies until spring 2021, the efforts to prepare new programs of study to include students has started. This year also saw the partnership with Augustana Campus, University of Alberta formalized. While the institution has been welcoming students for many years, this is the first year an official letter of agreement was established, safeguarding the initiative's longevity.



73 STUDENTS

Students being included through Inclusion Alberta supports, with almost 125 students with developmental disabilities being included across the province in total.



INSTITUTIONS 22



Institutions across Alberta provide access to inclusive post-secondary education support for students with developmental disabilities.

15 INSTITUTIONS

Institutions that Inclusion Alberta partners with to include students with developmental disabilities.



Initiatives Currently Including Students

- University of Alberta*
- University of Calgary/St. Mary's*
- MacEwan University
- Mount Royal University
- Lethbridge College
- Red Deer College
- Grande Prairie Regional College
- Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
- Concordia University of Edmonton
- The King's University
- NorQuest College
- Augustana University (U of A)*
- Lakeland College
- Bow Valley College
- Medicine Hat College
- Ambrose University
- University of Lethbridge
- Portage College
- Olds College

**indicates an initiative is not governed by Inclusion Alberta. Please note Keyano College and Prairie Bible College periodically include students as well.

Areas of Study

- Administrative Professional
- Animal Health and Technology
- Architectural Technology
- Bachelor of Arts: Drama, English,
- Fine Arts, History, Humanities, Psychology, Sociology
- Bachelor of Child and Youth Care
- Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Communication Services
- Bachelor of Education
- Bachelor of Management
- Bachelor of Music
- Bachelor of Nursing
- Bachelor of Science
- Baking
- Business Administration
- Business Management
- Correctional Services
- Criminal Justice
- Culinary Arts
- Day Home Provider Program
- Dental Business Administration
- Digital Media and Information Technology
- Disability Studies
- Early Learning and Child Care
- Earth Sciences
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Environmental Studies
- Fine Arts
- General Studies
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Hospitality Management
- Interior Design
- Kinesiology and Sports Studies
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Paramedic Program
- Physical Education
- Professional Golf Management
- Veterinary Medical Assistant



Student's Success and Inclusion

The opportunity of academic and social participation both on and off-campus and gainful employment provides rich opportunities that enhance students' robust experiences. Some examples of the student accomplishments and highlights achieved are shared below:

A student from NAIT is enrolled in the Paramedic program. This semester is his last, and he is currently participating in a 4-month practicum at Alberta Paramedical Services in St. Albert. He attends practicum twice a week, from 11 am-2 pm. This student works closely with one paramedic, who is the operations manager of Alberta Paramedical Services. He is currently learning how to test LIFE PAK devices, a vital sign monitor and an external cardiac defibrillator. This is an important and essential task because Paramedics will use the device daily to keep people alive and monitor their vitals. He looks forward to mastering this skill and is excited to take on new skills as the practicum progresses.

A Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) student had an art piece on display in the glass gallery. This was an open art project to incorporate unique materials. Many of this student's classmates created great, textured pieces to be framed, but this student took things a step further, using a wolf skull as a canvas and painting it. This piece symbolized the masks we all wear to cover aspects of ourselves, such as LGBTQ+ status, mental illness, etc. They have been working on a commissioned art piece for a classmate who is a fellow anime fan and cosplayer. The commissioned piece that they are creating is a drawing/sketch of a cosplay costume.

A Lakeland College student was nominated for the President's Circle Award for her contributions to the Environment Club at college. She was selected by the Lakeland College President & CEO, Alice Wainwright-Steward, to join the President's Circle at Lakeland College. Recipients of the President's Circle are honoured for their outstanding contribution to student life at the college. She will be joined by the other recipients at a tea on the Vermilion Campus in the coming summer to receive her award and celebrate her success this past school year.

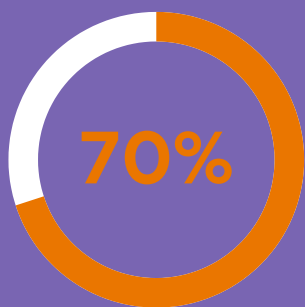
A student from NAIT was offered a part-time position at Forward Physiotherapy and Wellness as a Physio Assistant. In September, as the economy strengthens and the clinic gets busier, they plan to provide him with additional hours on weekdays & weekends. Currently, his responsibilities included prepping therapy rooms, prepping hot packs for patients, sanitization of physio tools and laundry. As this student builds confidence with the current roles, the supervisor will introduce new duties, including demonstrating exercises and stretches to patients and applying electro pulse pads to patients from the IFC shock pad machine.



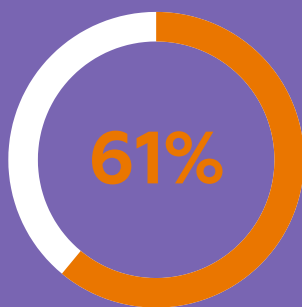
One student being included in his secondary year of Culinary Arts at Portage College is excited to be back in the campus kitchen. The student recently completed his regional course, where students were introduced to foods associated with Canada's provinces. This student was assigned the province of Saskatchewan; he researched the province's specialties, created a PowerPoint, which he presented to the entire class; created a menu and did the costing sheets that accompany it. A significant piece of the assignment was cooking one of his menu items and presenting them to his instructor. The student chose to make Regina Style Pizza; he was diligent and made two practice pizzas, one at his parent's place during reading week and one in his dorm. By the time the lab day came around, he was ready and confident in his ability to produce a beautiful, flavorful pizza. The student did very well on this assignment and was very proud of his creation. Classes for culinary are online with one to two days a month in person in the kitchen.

Student Employment

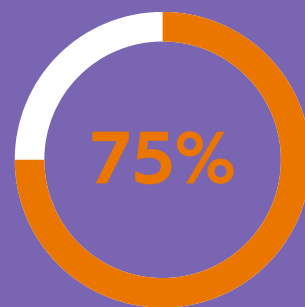
The economic uncertainty this past year and global pandemic has not minimized the desire for students with developmental disabilities to contribute to community, pursue a higher education, and work within industries they are passionate about. In fact, it has only strengthened the necessity of paid employment and educational opportunities for student being included, leaving them less reliant on funding and programs, and less isolated. Many students this year have earned a higher wage than previously and are gainfully employed in a steady workplace, often with supportive co-workers, truly a goal for any post-secondary student. As the post-secondary landscape has been impacted significantly by the global pandemic, employment has been a key anchor in providing students with not only structure and routine in a time that feels ambiguous, but also a way to contribute to community in a time it is needed most. Many students worked during the pandemic, and often increased their hours.



Students that completed their studies were gainfully employed



Completing students are employed in positions within their field of study



Employment rate for returning and new students this year

Staff Development and Resources

The work of inclusive post-secondary education is dynamic and vibrant; it requires innovative staff committed to supporting students and families to pursue an inclusive life. Following two years of continued growth and expansion within inclusive post-secondary educational supports, this year had a strong focus on: resourcing initiatives to sustain high quality support of students, nurturing relationships with faculty and peers, and continuing to build family leadership. As growth and evolution occur, constant critical reflection is required to ensure the experience of students is coherent with their fellow peers without disabilities and the overall experience remains authentic to their individual journey. Over the past five years, the post-secondary leadership team has prioritized staff development in effort to continually elevate the support provided to students with developmental disabilities. Investing in staff development has also allowed team members to deepen their knowledge related to the broader themes of inclusion, the experience of families, understand positionality, and the necessity of prioritizing relationships in the lives of people with developmental disabilities. The post-secondary leadership team utilized the unique time and virtual workspace to enhance resources to the post-secondary team with a learning series. These training pieces provided space for the larger group to connect to learn, reflect and work through challenges experienced by students and families. Training sessions provided a sense of community and coming together during a time that was hectic, stressful, and full of unknowns with the pandemic. Ensuring the provision of such training is paramount to continual growth within the post-secondary team. It has also provided space for staff to reflect on how our practice has adjusted in the face of a pandemic and supporting students to connect through a virtual lens. It has also challenged post-secondary team members to reconsider the identity of student as only being in person participation on a physical campus. In addition to staff training and in-house training, the Inclusive Post-Secondary Network met twice during 2020. The opportunity to connect with others supporting students with developmental disabilities across the province and country continues to be rich and valuable. Creating space as a collective during uncertain times allowed staff to engage in dialogue about the relevant themes that impacted the experience of students being included. Three themes that were focal points during network meetings this year were: Impact of COVID-19 on Post-Secondary Institutions, Experiences of Isolation & Relationships During Uncertain Times, Growing the Benchmarks: What Have We Learned Over the Last 10 Years?

Staff training that was provided during the past year:

- Enhancing Relationships: This session explored the importance that relationships have for students and how during a pandemic, connections are more important than ever. The team talked about new creative ways to support students to connect with existing friendship to deepen these as well as develop new relationships.
- Facilitating Relationships
- Advocacy 101
- Supporting Students to Develop a Meaningful Career
- Academic Engagement- "New Classroom Experience"
- Academic Engagement Part One: This session provided space for staff to brainstorm ideas for the upcoming academic year. The topics included class addresses, engaging with faculty, exam and course work support, on campus resources, and new student orientation. We were also pleased to welcome guest speaker Dr. Tina Trigg, Associate Professor and Chair of English from The King's University.
- Academic Engagement Part Two: With a few weeks of the semester completed, this training gave staff the time and space to share what has been working in their support to students and areas that require further brainstorming.
- Employment 101: This training explored our foundational approach to generating employment opportunities as well as looked at adapting some of these strategies based on COVID-19.
- Career Development: Meaningful Employment
- Partnering with Family- Inspired by Family Leadership
- MAiD
- Safeguarding the work of Inclusive Post-Secondary Education

Conclusion

The past year students with developmental disabilities continued to embrace the identity of a learner and student despite the ever-changing landscape. Students being included challenged the notion of on-line learning as being too complex by continuing to forge ahead in their respective programs of study despite many uncertainties. Students were engaged in meaningful paid employment at a comparable or higher level than their non-disabled peers and continued connecting with friends and colleagues outside of campus or work life. All of this transpired despite significant shifting within post-secondary institutions, funding freezes and a global pandemic. This is a direct result of the strong partnership within post-secondary institutions, an unwavering commitment from many employers, and the community work of Inclusion Alberta to develop strong family leadership throughout the province. Families remain much of the foundation of the work that continues to unfold within inclusive post-secondary education. As an organization, we remain committed to ensuring students with developmental disabilities continue to participate in high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities and learning experiences despite the current environmental barriers. During the global pandemic, the necessity to ensure students with developmental disabilities have strong relationships with people who deeply care about them, that faculty are well supported in welcoming students in adverse times, and that families are connected to the broader family movement became increasingly evident. While post-secondary institutions have many unknowns in the coming months, it is clear that students with developmental disabilities will remain an integral part of the student community enriched by diverse learners, shared experiences and similar passions. Navigating an uncertain future while continuing to pursue your dreams, is in truth, the authentic student experience. The work being done in Alberta would not be possible without the inspiring team of talented young professionals Inclusion Alberta has developed, or the committed efforts of our Inclusive Post-Secondary Leadership Team. Special thanks to Regional Coordinators Shawna Francis, Jaime Skidmore, Madeline Ouellette, and Jessica Bransdman.

Submitted by

Charmaine McIntyre

**Provincial Director, Inclusive
Post-Secondary Education**

COMMUNITY INCLUSION INITIATIVE/ TRANSITION SUPPORTS (YFI/IEC)

Commencing in 1997, the Community Inclusion Initiative (CII) supports the unique regional priorities and needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families in realizing a good life fully included in community. The Federally funded CII grant enables the Provincial and Territorial Associations of Inclusion Canada to support and improve the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in their community. This funding has allowed Inclusion Alberta to retain 1.5 FTE Inclusive Education Consultants (IECs) who work with schools and families across Alberta. The Inclusive Education Consultants focus on providing timely and effective support to districts, schools and teachers to ensure students are able to access a high-quality inclusive education. As of 2016, this funding has also been used to support the development of the Alberta Youth for Inclusion Initiative.

Community Inclusion Initiative: Inclusive Education

A high-quality Inclusive Education remains the goal of the families who are looking to give their children the same opportunities and experiences to learn, grow and develop as any other child in the community. Schools are a place for children to build friendships, discover passions and make friendships that often become lifelong relationships. In addition to providing the academic opportunities to learn, grow and discover strengths and interests, schools provide a safe environment for students to learn resiliency skills by making mistakes and learning to overcome challenges. However, for families seeking full inclusion in school, there is no guarantee that their children with developmental disabilities will be able to access these high-quality experiences.

COVID-19 brought into the spotlight the ever-present systemic issues that families face in seeking an inclusive education in the general education classroom. The work of the Inclusive Education Consultants has rapidly evolved over the year in order to meet the challenges that arose from the health situation. The Inclusive Education Consultants supported the families in Alberta to address these challenges, mitigate the risks to inclusion and provide some consistency of learning for students through the pandemic. The Inclusive Education Consultants worked in the North, Central and South regions of Alberta.

The uncertain climate meant that schools had immense pressure to rapidly adjust to the new rules and budgets to support students in both in-class and home-based learning. Some schools were able to provide appropriate supports, but more often teachers were left to figure out supports for students with diverse learning needs on their own. When students were part of in-class learning, the traditional model of delivery was no longer a safe space to allow peers to interact, requiring significant changes to the learning environment. In the late fall when public health measures required all students in grades 7-12 to return to on-line learning, families were faced with the difficult decision to either provide learning supports at home, (potentially sacrificing parental employment to prioritize the physical health of their child) or send their child to school to learn alongside the EA and teachers without the social supports of their heterogeneous peers (risking being grouped with other students with disabilities, posing a major risk to their inclusion).

This year involved fewer presentations to universities or community groups and a greater emphasis on a Learning Series that was developed to meet the needs of the families who were interested in learning about how to adapt to the changed learning environment and still maintain the values of inclusion during the pandemic. The Inclusive Education Consultants also developed several resources that were shared with teachers and families of ideas to support learning during times of masking, social distancing, and home-based learning. Consultants worked with administration teams and teachers to adapt and modify the best teaching practices and ideas to be used in the context of pandemic restrictions and the ongoing shifting from in-class to home-based school delivery.

Over the last year, the Inclusive Education Consultants provided over one hundred fifty (150) consultations to twenty-seven (27) schools across fourteen (14) districts. Over one hundred ten (110) teachers, administrators, and support staff were provided consultation on topics including planning for home-based school delivery, the return to in-class learning, curricular adaptations, planning for socially distanced activities, adapted learning activities with restrictions, assessment, and maintaining social relationships with peers. The consultants also provided nine (9) additional presentations to schools and universities that reached nearly sixty (60) school administrators, teachers, and educational assistants, as well as school leaders pursuing their Masters Degree in Education.

In addition to working with educators and administrators, supporting families is an important part of the Inclusive Education Consultant's role. High quality inclusion is best achieved in strong partnership with families. An integral part of the Inclusive Education Consultant's work is to enhance the families' understanding of what constitutes high quality education and give guidance on how to successfully partner with schools. The Inclusive Education Consultants work closely with parents on an ongoing basis, and they met with families one hundred fifty-one (151) times during the year to provide information, guidance and consultation which increases families' capacity to collaborate and advocate for high quality inclusive education. The consultative team created three presentations to reflect the conditions that families were experiencing in order to support their choice for an inclusive education called the Inclusion Alberta Learning Series. The three topics were delivered over five sessions that were offered to parents to address schooling issues around COVID-19. The sessions were delivered virtually which allowed the consultants to reach approximately two hundred (200) families with similar challenges across Alberta including smaller and rural communities that are typically difficult to reach.

Youth for Inclusion

Inclusion Alberta Youth experienced a year full of change and growth amplified by the global pandemic and social justice movements that addressed systemic racism and the underrepresentation of marginalized groups in society. Youth meetings created a safe space for critical dialogue and conversations that explored the intersectionality of disability, racism, and ableism. Youth for Inclusion held seven meetings over the year, consisting of monthly meetings and space to plan events. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Youth Forum was cancelled. During the year, Youth for Inclusion became a community partner with TakingITGlobal. TakingITGlobal is an organization focused on connecting youth passionate about activism and enacting change in local communities. Through this formalized partnership, youth members had the opportunity to apply for #risingyouthgrants that TakingITGlobal generated to eliminate barriers for youth aspiring to create change at a community level. As a result of this partnership, youth applied for funding and completed projects intended to enhance their communities. As the grants provided to youth leaders had soft parameters on projects generating changing, Youth for Inclusion leaders felt it would be impactful to try and address the loneliness and isolation so many youth with and without disabilities were experiencing during the pandemic.

An example of one project was the creation of an inclusive movie club where both youths with and without disabilities could come together and foster social connectedness in a virtual setting while watching movies together. Projects were supported by the Youth Facilitator, who ensured that the youth enacting projects through the rising youth grants had the support and resources required to complete their projects successfully. The restrictions imposed by COVID-19 created barriers for the youth leaders to utilize this grant opportunity to its fullest potential fully.

In light of the Youth Forum's cancellation in April due to COVID-19, the need to connect and continue elevating the agenda of inclusion from a youth perspective was vital. The 2020 Youth Conference in October, 'Global Inclusion: The Cross-Cultural Impact of Belonging', was Youth for Inclusion's first virtual conference and hosted 25 total youth, including 12 with developmental disabilities. Youth gathered virtually via zoom for one day, instead of the traditional two-day conference held in Edmonton. This conference had youth attend from communities across Alberta including Edmonton, Calgary, St. Paul, Spruce Grove, Smoky Lake, Sylvan Lake, and Grande Prairie, as well as a youth in attendance from Iraq. This conference explored what inclusion of people with developmental disabilities looks like throughout the world. It boasted presentations of Inclusion through a Cree perspective, Inclusion in the Cayman Islands, Inclusion in Pakistan (presented by one of our youth leaders), and a workshop on how the youth can foster connections with their peers with and without disabilities in the time of COVID-19 and beyond. In addition to exploring the cross-cultural impacts of belonging, the group had a guest speaker, Laura Gerow-Burrin, who shared the experience of individuals with developmental disabilities during the pandemic. Laura discussed the importance of relationships in relation to overall wellness and happiness.

The current pandemic impacted the group's ability to be as actively engaged as in years prior. With the youth leaders being in high school and post-secondary education, the impacts of COVID-19 significantly impacted their ability to be present and engaged with Youth for Inclusion. With the loss of day-to-day routine, structure and interaction with peers, coupled with on-line learning, the idea of additional online pressures was at times overwhelming for many youth members. When restrictions were eased in the summer of 2020, engagement with youth leaders and members increased.

In the coming year, Youth Leaders plan to facilitate a speaker series that bridges the time gap between the Fall Youth Conference and Spring Youth Forum, addressing relevant topics and themes centred around advocacy, inclusion, leadership and activism. Goals for 2021 include seeing youth re-engage within their respective local communities in furthering the agenda of inclusion, growing the membership of youth with and without disabilities and elevating our current platforms for youth to connect and deepen their understanding of inclusion and marginalization.

Submitted by

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DARRELL COOK FAMILY MANAGED SUPPORTS RESOURCE CENTRE

The Darrell Cook Family Managed Supports Resource Centre completed its twelfth year of operation in 2020. While the year of the pandemic brought challenges for families, successes small and large were realized for individuals with disabilities.



34

**new families supported
in 2020**

667

**families supported
since inception (just under half
of all FMS contracts (1,369)
within the PDD Calgary
Region)**

20

**new or returning families
engaged with at any given time
(on average)**

3

**waitlist of families
each month (on average)**

Through the storm of the pandemic, individuals experienced losses of job, home and connections creating isolation for individuals.

Collectively, families were resilient in holding on to their vision of an inclusive future for their sons, daughters, sister and brothers with developmental disabilities. Navigating the possibilities and redesigning support for their visions through individualized planning with the Centre took on new meaning through virtual platforms.

The Centre helped define protocols for staff with PPE when social distancing became a reality, and individuals were supported to find opportunities for work and recreation, as well as to maintain existing relationships and create social gathering outdoors. Some individuals, as restrictions permitted, found opportunities in the community to swim, play volleyball, attend church, hike and volunteer at a golf course. Others used virtual means to create a book club, cook with friends and family, join on-line yoga and other exercise programs and simply connect with friends and family. Successful employment was found during the year at a box store, women's clothing store, a farmer's market, candle store, a mechanics shop, the Arts common and with a junior hockey team.

The intersection of disability and health for individuals required support from the Centre to advocate with hospitals and home care to ensure support for physical and mental health. As health and well-being for individuals during the pandemic was challenging, individuals managed their medications, made connections with needed mental health support, and successfully recovered from surgery.

While many individuals moved back to their family home during the pandemic others were supported by the Centre to look for living environments that reflected their identity, personal preferences and support needs. One individual moved into his own home with a supported roommate while one young man moved into an apartment with a supportive neighbour. Four individuals moved to a supportive roommate living environment. One of those stories follows.

"A family reached out to the Resource Centre in October 2019 to request help in finding a supportive roommate for their sister with an immediate request to find support in the home while the family was at work. Their sister had begun to exhibit uncharacteristic behaviours and significant mood swings. Before the Centre Coordinator had the chance to meet with the family, the woman broke her ankle while at the corner store and was taken to the hospital. While in the hospital, an assessment was completed which resulted in a diagnosis of dementia.

The Resource Centre worked with the woman's sister to hire staff to support her in the hospital and supported the family to begin a search for a supported roommate as she would not be able to return to her sister's home when leaving the hospital. The Resource Centre helped the family to understand their sister's needs and interests and met with them and potential supportive roommates while in the hospital. After choosing a supportive roommate, the Resource Centre Coordinator, met with the family and the supported roommate to understand the complex medical, home and community support needed which included working as a team with the day support.

As the woman recovered, staff supported her to find a new church, exercise, bike ride, join aquacise and encouraged new relationships. As restrictions came into force, staff creatively sought outdoor and indoor activities of interest including snowshoeing. Unfortunately, in October 2020, unforeseen circumstances led to a search for a new roommate. Supported by the Centre, a new home was found where she now has her own suite and is supported thoughtfully to maintain as much independence as possible. She has begun exploring her new community and when restrictions lift, she is looking forward to developing relationships in the community. Given the intersection of mental health and developmental disability, the family works closely with the team of staff to support their sister to pursue a good life."

In order for families to implementing their vision and plans throughout the year required families to hire support staff. As the pandemic created challenges of fewer staff available the Centre continued to support families to successfully find staff through a variety of means including reviewing their family networks. The Centre supported families and staff to create steps to pursue meaningful opportunities and provided guidance on employer responsibilities. While some families were uncertain whether to retain or lay staff off, the Centre supported the families to think deeply about their vision and current support needs and possible ways of mitigating the risk for individuals with disabilities, families and staff.

Website

The new online resource created with the support of John O'Brien was made available in October 2020. Significant traffic from October to December 31st, 2020 indicated many families, individuals and Family Managed Supports Funds Administrators viewed family and individual testimonials, hiring resources, planning tools and information on Family Managed Supports.

Why Choose FMS? ▾

An Online Guide on Using FMS to Support an Inclusive Life

What Experienced Families Have to Share

Family Managed Supports

What this Guide Cannot Offer

What Families Say About the Benefits and Costs of FMS

If Thousands Have - You Can Too

Transitioning from FSCD to FMS

Welcome and Introduction to this Guide



Watch on YouTube

Your Family Vision >

Community Pathways >

Organizing Supports >

Managing FMS >

The Guide has five sections which can be viewed in order or whatever order is most relevant to the viewer. The Guide contains numerous short video clips of families sharing their experience with FMS.

The Guide has 5 Sections:

- 1. Why Choose FMS?** features videos of families sharing their experiences with FMS followed by more information on FMS itself and additional videos with families on the benefits and costs of FMS.
- 2. Your Family Vision** covers critical ideas to think about in crafting a vision and planning for an inclusive life based on a person's gifts.

FMS Series

For the fifth year, the Centre conducted four sessions of its annual FMS learning series. The sessions offered were Visioning and Planning, Exploring Opportunities for Creating Employment and Creating and Facilitating Relationships through Community Engagement (twice). The FMS series offers families stories, tools and hope to create or recreate their vision and continue their journey for an inclusive life in the community, in relationships and at work. Due to the pandemic, the sessions in the fall were offered virtually providing the opportunity for families and staff across the province to participate. The sessions were well attended for a total of two hundred and forty-three (243) participants including families, staff and professionals. Families expressed the sessions were in-depth and provided a good foundation for creating a vision and connecting to employment and community opportunities. Families thanked Inclusion Alberta for arranging the workshops and found the large group activities very helpful and insightful with professional and excellent facilitation.

FMS Staff Training Pilot Series

The Centre completed the pilot project for a small group of families and staff, in partnership with Inclusive Post- Secondary staff, aimed at expanding an understanding of inclusion, deepening visions and refining practices. Held over a three-month period ending in 2020, family and their staff participated in a learning series (Visioning and Planning, Creating Employment and Creating Relationships through Community Engagement) and came together after the series to explore and unpack more deeply the topics, separately and together. Content developed to enhance discussions on vision, employment and creating relationships through community engagement revealed a deeper understanding of families hopes and dreams being understood by staff, and ideas generated for employment, creating connections and participation in the community. Staff were supported to reflect on individuals' visions for their life, and on practices of finding and supporting individuals in employment and creating relationships and community engagement. The success of the pilot project provided the framework for further sessions targeted at employment.

Pathfinders

A group of five families began a journey together in 2020 through the Pathfinders process interested in continuing their pursuit of a good life. The process makes space for families to invite and gather their networks to create capacity and think deeply about possibilities for their family member with a developmental disability. Those possibilities include exploring opportunities for deepening and developing relationships, expanding opportunities to participate in their communities, and finding employment. Staff from across Inclusion Alberta's initiatives facilitated the process with families in smaller groups to foster capacity and leadership and families joined together in a larger group to share progress and ideas.

The reality of the pandemic dictated families gather virtually. Although meeting virtually created limitations of intimate face-to-face interactions for families, network members from other provinces and countries were able to participate, enriching the conversation and possibilities for the individual. Despite the virtual challenges, families shared ideas, asked questions and encouraged each other during larger group meetings. Networks created and shared technical ideas with other networks to capture information in real time enabling groups to simultaneously input and view ideas.

The power of networks coming together was expressed by families and evidenced by the excitement of the individuals around contributions of creative roles and environments to pursue. The next steps are creating plans to realize possibilities identified. Planning for the future through the pandemic has given families and individuals with developmental disabilities hope and concrete actions not only to pursue their dreams but to deepen existing relationships.

Submitted by

Pat Winter

**Coordinator,
Darrell Cook Family
Managed Supports
Resource Centre**

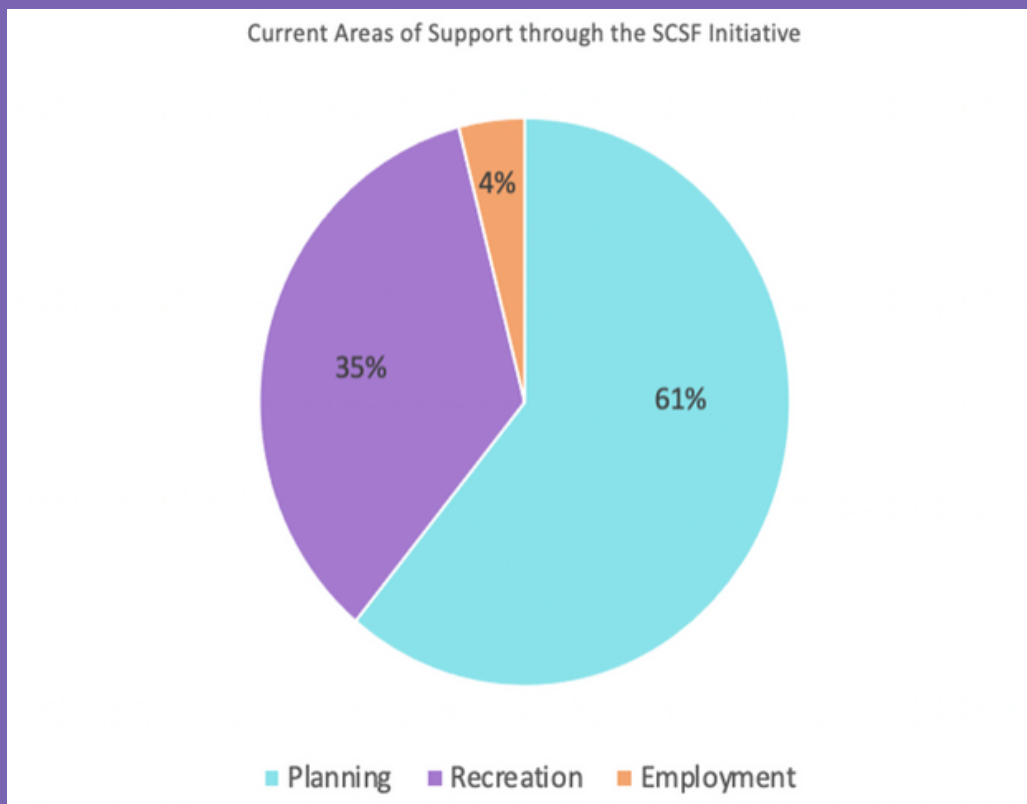
Billie Jack

**Provincial Director
of Advocacy and Community
Engagement**

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES; STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Calgary Area

The Supportive Communities: Strengthening Families initiative in Calgary supports children and youth to access inclusive community opportunities, with a specific focus on supporting youth ages fourteen to eighteen in developing a vision for an inclusive life in community through their transition to adulthood. The facilitator supports families to immerse themselves in a natural pathway in the same ways in which any other youth without a disability would immerse themselves. The facilitator supports families in taking the necessary steps to facilitate inclusion in a variety of community activities. This includes participation in recreation and leisure activities, part-time employment, exploring post-secondary education, and membership in clubs, groups and faith communities. When necessary, the facilitator supports families in recruiting staff to facilitate meaningful inclusion in community opportunities. Additionally, the facilitator seeks out, communicates with, and offers support to community organizations and businesses to enhance their capacity to facilitate inclusion.



This past year has brought unique and significant challenges with the coronavirus pandemic, and things have looked quite different over the last twelve months. With government restrictions, health and safety regulations, community closures, and social distance protocols, the SCSF initiative needed to re-evaluate the support they provided to families and begin to think more creatively about community inclusion. In doing so, the initiative was able to support families to put a focus on exploring interests and strengths from within the home, with a great emphasis on virtual and outdoor opportunities when possible. Moreover, a large portion of attention has been given to working with families on their vision of inclusion for their loved one, along with planning and finding ways to effectively utilize funding and supports.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, the SCSF initiative in Calgary and area was able to provide support to families in planning, being included within the community, and developing a vision for inclusion. The SCSF Team Lead provided nine presentations to community organizations throughout the year in order to promote a



greater understanding of community inclusion, as well as raise awareness of Inclusion Alberta and the SCSF initiative, in particular, with the hope of connecting to more families. Additionally, the SCSF Team Lead worked alongside members from numerous organizations throughout

the region, some of which families identified from their existing networks, and offered support with working towards creating more inclusive spaces within the community. These relations led to some wonderful inclusive opportunities for families connected to SCSF, an example of which was the creation of part-time employment at a local café, as well as employment at a local grooming salon, which was obtained through utilizing a family's network. These opportunities also included recreation, with individuals doing things such as observing a class of interest at the YMCA, and participating in virtual drama and improv classes at Pumphouse Theatre. In addition to fostering community inclusion directly, this community collaboration allowed the Team Lead to get a better sense of what opportunities are currently out there for children and youth with developmental disabilities, and where efforts can be focused in the future.

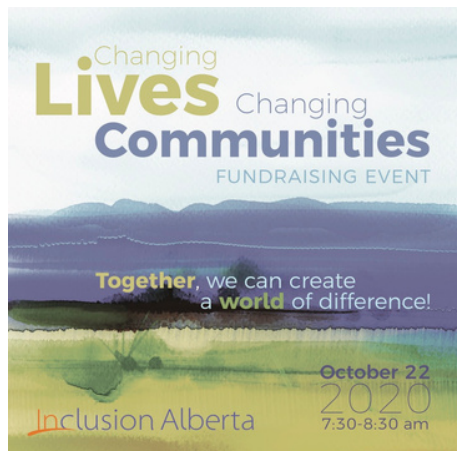
Submitted by
Mackenzie Spencer
SCSF Facilitator

Catherine Oakleaf
Regional Director of Advocacy
& Community Engagement

FUND DEVELOPMENT

We are so incredibly thankful for all the support Inclusion Alberta received in 2020. As has been repeatedly stated 2020 was an very challenging year for many. As a result of COVID-19 we were unable to hold our annual fundraising breakfast in partnership with Inclusion Lloydminster this year.

A major goal of our fund development approach is to secure multi-year donors who commit a minimum of \$1,000.00 per year for five years – these individuals and organizations belong to our Dream Maker Society. This approach demonstrated its importance this year in particular as COVID-19 disrupted typical fund development activities and created much uncertainty. As a result of the membership in this Society and our committed donors, we had a commitment of \$250,000.00 entering 2020. This provided a great deal of security particularly when we were unsure of whether we would be able to hold an event or if we would be able to secure new donations.



It was not possible to hold our in-person Edmonton and Calgary Changing Lives Changing Communities breakfasts so as a result we held a virtual event in October. We were overwhelmed with the support we received in both attendance and donations at this event. As a result of the virtual Changing Lives Changing Communities event \$406,000.00 was raised and we welcomed 32 new Dream Makers into the Dream Maker

Society, with an additional seven current Dream Makers either renewing or extending their commitment for five years. This made a substantial difference to our budget in 2020 as these unrestricted dollars allowed us to provide the necessary and critical support to individuals and families.

We would also like to acknowledge Concordia University of Edmonton for sponsoring our Changing Lives Changing Communities virtual event this year. As a result of their sponsorship all of the money raised goes directly to supporting individuals and families. We are deeply grateful for their support.

Through their Common Ground program MasterBUILT Hotels provided us with their third donation. This year we received of \$20,000.00 for a total donation of \$75,000.00 over the last three years. The Common Ground program allows guests staying at MasterBUILT Hotels across Canada to positively impact the communities in which they stay by donating to charities. Inclusion Alberta is honoured to be one of the charities of choice in the Alberta Common Ground program.

WestJet Raffle

Thank you to WestJet who once again, provided two vouchers for anywhere WestJet flies. The original raffle date was postponed to June due to COVID-19. We raised \$15,000.00. Thanks to everyone who supported us by purchasing a ticket.

Peter Lee Golf Classic

The first annual Peter Lee Golf Classic was held on September 24, 2020. A huge thank-you to Andre Charrois and Foster Park Brokers for holding this tournament in support of Inclusion Alberta. We received \$15,000.00 from the tournament and a wonderful fall day was enjoyed by all participants. Keep your eye out for details on next year's tournament.

Mailout

In December we reach out to previous donors from whom we have not yet received a donation this year. This year we chose to send by email where possible with 646 letters sent by email and 236 by post. As a result, we received 11 donations for a total of \$3,997.00.

Our deepest thanks to everyone who donated to Inclusion Alberta in 2020. Your support is a vital contribution to our ability to make a difference in the lives of individuals and families with developmental disabilities.

Submitted by
Wendy McDonald
Chief Operating Officer

2020 DREAM MAKERS

This group of community-minded people from all walks of life has chosen to support the hopes and aspirations of Albertans with developmental disabilities and their families. Inclusion Alberta Dream Makers commit to a minimum five-year financial contribution.

Amy Abbott
Erin Acton
John & Robin Acton
Janet Adams
Leela Aheer (Aheer Studio of Performance)
Mukhtar Ali
ALSA Road Construction
Georgina & T.J. Altman
Don & Terry Anderson
Stacey & Quentin Andrews
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Kelley Doerksen
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Bill & Cecilia Engelage
Shawn & Vanessa Ergang
David & Jodie Ewasiuk
Cynthia & John Farmer
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Tally & Chelsie Hutchinson
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Integra Engineering Ltd. (Evan & Sherry Stephens)
Kathryn Ivany

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Tazmin Nawla
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Mark Nolin

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Ralph & Charlotte White
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Ralph & Gay Young Family Fund
Zippered Tiger Inc. (Heike Cantrup)
Leon & Vonnie Zupan
Anonymous (6)

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Inclusion Alberta is grateful for all the support it received for the 2020 year and we want to acknowledge the following individuals, organizations and groups for their contributions:

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Lorne & Patricia Gordon Legacy Fund- Made possible by PEMBINA
ATB Financial
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Darrell Cook Family Managed Support Resource Centre Coordinator - Pat Winter
Supportive Communities Strengthening Families Facilitator – Calgary, Mackenzie Spencer
Complex Needs Coordinator - Arne Fulton
Complex Needs Facilitator - Laura Patience

Employment Partnerships

Regional Employment Partnership Coordinator - Carla Hamarsnes
Rotary Employment Partnership Coordinator, Calgary - Katlyn McLaughlin
Rotary Employment Partnership Coordinator, Calgary - Karen Murray
Rotary Employment Partnership Coordinator, Calgary - Courtney Wilson
Rotary Employment Partnership Coordinator, Edmonton - Brogan Gordon
Rotary Employment Partnership Coordinator, Edmonton - Lynn Kazairwe
Rotary Employment Partnership Coordinator, Edmonton - Jolanta Vermette
Rotary Employment Partnership Coordinator, Grande Prairie - Lindsay Kelly*
Rotary Employment Partnership Coordinator, Red Deer - Deborah Gallant
Youth Employment Partnership Coordinator, Edmonton - Aliesha Hart Stone

Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education Consultant - Lissa Horyn

Inclusive Education Consultant - Aqeela Khalid

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education

Regional Coordinator, Inclusive Post-Secondary Education - Shawna Francis

Regional Coordinator, Inclusive Post-Secondary Education - Madeline Ouellette

Regional Coordinator, Inclusive Post-Secondary Education - Jaime Skidmore

Ambrose University, Coordinator - Jessica White

Bow Valley College, Coordinator - Kristina McGovern

Bow Valley College, Facilitator - Justine Jarmuske

Concordia University, Coordinator - Brigjilda Berger

Concordia University, Facilitator - Jacinta Suma

Grande Prairie Regional College, Coordinator - Laura Gerow-Burrin

Grande Prairie Regional College, Facilitator - Amber McNeeley-Fraser

Lakeland College, Coordinator - Ashley Klamot

MacEwan University, Coordinator - Darren Beach

MacEwan University, Facilitator - Cynthia Buller

MacEwan University, Facilitator - Abby Fitzgerald

MacEwan University, Facilitator - Tadiwa Nemutambwe

MacEwan University, Facilitator - Amber Tweedy

MacEwan University, Facilitator - Sarah Waring

Medicine Hat College, Coordinator - Ashley Funk

NAIT, Coordinator - Katie Bhar Jacobsen

NAIT, Facilitator - Kala Matvij

NorQuest College, Coordinator - Kelsey Zaruk

Red Deer College, Coordinator - Daesha Thompson

Red Deer College, Facilitator - Denise Varty

Red Deer College, Facilitator - Tina Smith

The King's University, Coordinator - Mackenzie Kainer

The University of Alberta, Augustana Campus – Coordinator - Heather Barr

University of Lethbridge, Coordinator - Janelle Dyck

*indicates staff with multiple roles/titles