

# connection



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**Spring 2018**

# A Message from Our CEO



At the DDRC we continue to be committed to promoting inclusion for all people in different aspects of their lives that uphold and enhance their sense of belonging within the community. Meaningful inclusion aids the development of personal and community

relationships that improve everyday life for individuals of all abilities, which means they who are happier and healthier, both physically and mentally.

The programs available at the DDRC provide many different paths towards community inclusion and provide individuals with developmental disabilities with opportunities to further their education at local colleges and universities, employment opportunities with local businesses that are supportive and enlightened, and recreation alongside other Calgarians. Many individuals further enrich the community by giving back to their communities each and every day through their volunteer work. I am sure you will agree, individuals accessing services with the DDRC participate in community events based on their personal preferences and are enthusiastic to take part in activities that support their goals and endeavours.

I hope you enjoy the refreshed *Connection*, which focuses on giving clients a space to share their voices and views directly with you, our generous supporters. As always, should you want to know more about the agency's work please e-mail us at [connection@ddrc.ca](mailto:connection@ddrc.ca) or remain connected through social media on Facebook (@DDRCCalgary) or Twitter (@DDRC\_Calgary).

Helen Cowie, LLB; MBA

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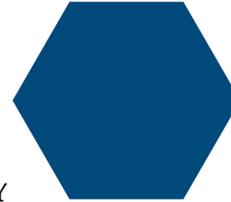
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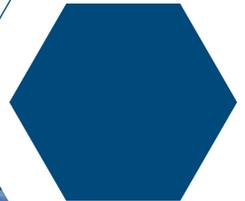
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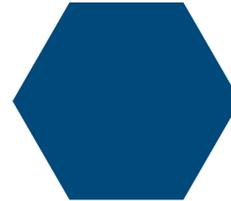
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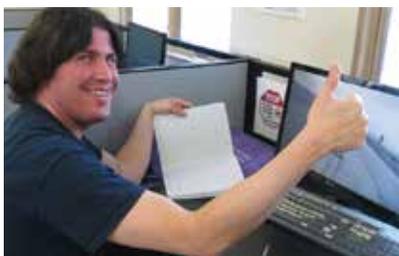
Editor: EmmaLee Taylor  
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Graphic Creation: Alex Gonzalez

The DDRC is a non-profit, registered, charitable organization that began in 1952. We offer programs and resources for children and adults with disabilities, their friends and family, and other people in the community.

Our business number is 10683 0060 RR0001.

# Computer Literacy

In September 2016, the DDRC, in partnership with Bow Valley College, launched a 12-week pre-employment computer literacy class for DDRC clients based on Bow Valley College's Adult Basic Literacy Education program. This course introduces students to computer basics, such as searching Google, learning how to use e-mail, creating PowerPoint and Word documents, managing files, and using social media. The importance of computer and internet safety is emphasised throughout the course. To date, three classes with a total of 23 students have graduated from the program.



*Mansour Deeb at the computer.*

Many classes struggle with making appropriate modifications to the curriculum for students with different learning styles, but in the DDRC computer literacy class, students with developmental disabilities are able to have their learning experience customized to suit their strengths. Nine months ago, DDRC client Mansour Deeb was afraid to use computers because of all the letters on them. For written communication, Mansour uses numbers that correspond to a letter to form words and sentences. Using a keyboard cover that replaces letters with numbers, Mansour now confidently uses the computer to search and apply for volunteer positions, take online math classes through the Calgary Public Library, and watch educational videos on YouTube. Now that he

trusts himself and believes in his abilities to use a computer, Mansour is interested in taking another computer class.

We all learn in different ways, but part of what makes this class unique is that community resource workers, Ryan Fedorchuk; Andrea McMillin; and Alyse Palko, use many ways

of teaching to help students learn. Using a projector to display the computer screen onto a white screen, one of the instructors demonstrates the task(s) involved with that lesson's topic while other instructors circulate. The five or six

students in the course are provided with one-on-one support to answer any questions they might have. In addition, the course content is managed so students have enough time to practice the skill(s) required for the task they are working on. For example, clients practice making multiple tables and charts in a Word document or saving documents in the appropriate folder.



*Rayn Su working on his resumé.*

Rayn Su, one of Mansour's classmates, believes the skills he learned in this course will be helpful for future classes. Since taking the class, Rayn has used the skills he developed to search for volunteer opportunities in the community. In the future, he hopes to use this knowledge to search for employment.

# Your Impact

Access is the silver bullet. It can help people pursue their goals. It encourages people to find meaningful work, make friends, or learn new things. Accessing support networks is one of the most meaningful connections the DDRC helps to develop between clients and the community. For years, DDRC supporters have assisted individuals with developmental disabilities to access experiences, follow goals, and explore their passions. Financial restrictions can prevent some DDRC clients from accessing opportunities in their community. To mitigate these restrictions, the DDRC launched the Ability Fund.

The Ability Fund, established in 2015 to support clients as they pursue their goals in their communities, continues to have a positive impact in 2018. Each year, through the winter holiday season, DDRC supporters keep the Ability Fund strong and continue supporting clients' access to events and experiences, workshops and work opportunities, and courses and classes. During the past two months, 17 individual DDRC clients had the opportunity to participate in activities in their community thanks to the Ability Fund. With the support of our generous donors, the Ability Fund continues to help DDRC clients realize their passions. To find out more about the Ability Fund, e-mail [donations@ddrc.ca](mailto:donations@ddrc.ca), and learn how you can keep the momentum going.

A client with a passion for graphic design is pursuing education to one day work in the field, but needed financial support to complete all courses in the allotted graduation time. The Ability Fund provided the funds necessary for the client to register for another course and not miss an opportunity to fulfil their goals.

With support from the Ability Fund, a client was able to purchase a required textbook so he could fully participate and learn in his Government and Politics course at Mount Royal University.

When searching for volunteer opportunities, a DDRC client found himself preparing for an interview for a position at the Calgary Zoo. This was a perfect fit, due to the client's love for animals, but preparation for the interview stalled because the client had never visited the zoo. The Ability Fund provided a pass for the client to tour the zoo and prepare for his interview (which he nailed!).

For a client on the DDRC's Northeast team, fitness and learning about music are top priorities. To pursue these goals, the Ability Fund helped him register for an Aerobics Drumming course, mixing his passions in one fun filled class!

**Thank you to the 98 donors  
to our Winter Fundraising  
Campaign.**

**\$25, 405 raised**

After a friend introduced Sandeep Lota to the DDRC in 2016, Sandeep began donating Calgary Flames tickets to provide DDRC clients with the opportunity to attend an NHL game. Since this introduction, Sandeep has donated his season tickets dozens of times, sending hockey fans for a night at the Saddledome. DDRC clients drawn for tickets have taken their moms, dads, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, and friends to enjoy a game. For many clients, this is a rare opportunity and is met with great excitement.

Though Flames fans are abundant, sometimes fate plays its part, and a Sharks fan (see Mansour pictured) gets to see their favorite team. Others experience bonding moments with loved ones, or the rush of seeing their favourite player score a goal, but all get to enjoy a special night thanks to the generosity of one Calgarian, committed to making our city, and the Saddledome, a place where *everyone belongs*<sup>TM</sup>. Thank you, Sandeep!



*Pictured (clockwise from top left): Client Elise sharing a hug with her mom at the Saddledome, Mansour & his mother cheering on the Sharks, and client Adam and his brother distracting the Buffalo Sabres' back-up goalie.*

# Confidence: The Key to CapABILITY

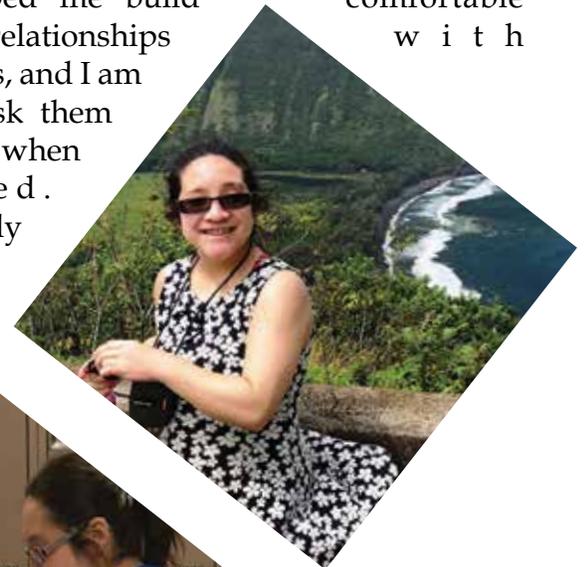
by Kristin Aquino

I am Kristin Aquino, an outgoing and fun-loving person. I like going to movies and attending dances with friends because it helps me to socialize. I have been with Special Olympics for five years, where I have tried speed skating, soccer, bowling, and bocce ball. My favorite activity in Special Olympics Alberta is bowling and in 2017, I was selected to participate in the Provincial Champions, which were held in Medicine Hat. I also really enjoy listening to music and singing along.

“  
**My greatest achievement is being independent like others in the community.**

I am currently working at Gibson Energy as a part-time administrative assistant. I have been working in this position for six years. My regular job responsibilities include: picking up and dropping off interoffice mail, replacing towels in shower rooms and the fitness room, printing and posting phone lists bi-weekly, checking meeting rooms for supplies, and restocking and ordering stationary supplies. The Human Resources team sometimes gives me extra projects once I have finished my regular duties. In one of the projects, I followed written instructions step by step and learned how to retrieve information from a database. These opportunities have given me the confidence to do my job independently and I am able to work once a week without support.

When I joined the DDRC in 2006, . . . [they] supported me in the job search process. Now that I have had this position for a while . . . [I] am comfortable with my responsibilities. The support from the DDRC has helped me to develop my interpersonal skills. The workshops in the Learning and Leadership Centre have taught me how to cope with my emotions and to make and choose the right friends. This helped me build comfortable working relationships with coworkers, and I am able to ask them for help when required. My family and close



friends' love and support have helped me know that they are always there for me.

My greatest achievement is being independent like others in the community. My job gives me the opportunity to spend my money the way I want. It makes me feel proud of myself as I feel needed in the organization I work in and in the community in which I live.

## Learning and Leadership

Jaclyn Curd believes learning about, “Client Rights and responsibilities helped [her] take responsibility for [her] own actions.” Along with Self-Advocacy and Understanding Abuse, Client Rights and Responsibilities is one of three foundational workshops offered by the DDRC’s Learning and Leadership Centre that all clients participate in during the intake process.

In addition to learning about basic human rights that all humans have, rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and rights guaranteed to clients through their Individual Service Agreement, the Client Rights and Responsibilities course supports clients in understanding how responsibility affects rights and privileges. Clients learn that while they have a right to find employment in a position that suits their experience and interests, they also have the responsibility to communicate their interests, complete work tasks in a timely manner, and ask for support when needed. During the Client Rights and Responsibilities workshop, clients also learn that failing to fulfill those responsibilities may compromise their right to finding employment that they enjoy.

“I don’t really advocate for myself,” Samantha Longeway says, “Or I wasn’t,” but after taking the Self-Advocacy workshop, Samantha learned how giving herself pep-talks when facing different problems boosted

her confidence, which has encouraged her to speak up for herself in difficult situations. Samantha found the Self-Advocacy workshop, and the skills she developed while practicing how to be an effective advocate, so helpful that she decided to join the Client Voice Committee (CVC), which is introduced in this workshop. As a member of the CVC, Samantha has been able to use these skills to advocate for other clients and to help them learn how to advocate for themselves.

In the Understanding Abuse workshop, clients learn about discriminatory, emotional, financial, physical, sexual, and verbal abuse; how neglect is a form of abuse; who can perpetrate abuse; and perhaps most importantly how to respond if they, or someone they know, are being abused. Clients also learn how false allegations can be harmful to themselves and to the innocent person(s) and potential consequences for making a false allegation. Educating clients about abuse is not about making them afraid to go into the community or to trust others, rather, it is supporting clients as they learn the boundaries of healthy relationships, which in turn allows them to make meaningful connections with the community while keeping themselves safe.



*Samantha (top) and Jaclyn (bottom) participating in a workshop.*

# UnstoppABLE

by Michael Fridfinnson

My name is Michael Fridfinnson, I will be writing an article in *Connection* on accessibility, and issues and events that matter to the disabled community, from the perspective of a person living with a disability. On the weekends I play Power Hockey and Power Soccer. I also go to the University of Calgary's Fitness and Rehabilitation program two afternoons a week, bowling twice a month, and attend a class on government and politics at Mount Royal University twice a week. I do all of this using a power chair, which I control through my headrest using my head motions.



Minivans might be a popular vehicle with families, but they are also popular within the disabled community, because removing the middle row of seats and adding a ramp to the rear passenger door, makes them accessible. I have an accessible van, which my dad uses to drive me to all of my activities. In the past, I travelled by ACCESS, but it did not suit my busy schedule as I had to share rides with others, which made the journeys long as I did not have a direct trip from my starting point to my end destination. Plus, when my dad drives me I get to listen to 80s music on my favourite radio station, 96.9 Jack f.m.

When people do not shovel their sidewalks, my dad has to find alternative parking so that the ramp from the minivan can be lowered to the sidewalk and I can get out; sometimes it can take

a while to find a spot that will work. It can also be hard to lower the ramp when the ploughs have come by and left a big pile of snow on the curb. Due to the snow and ice, it is difficult for me to get to different places during the winter, regardless of whether I'm using my minivan or my power chair. It makes me mad when people do not shovel the snow from their sidewalks, as it is particularly hard for me to go on walks in my neighbourhood, which is something that I enjoy doing.

Accessibility matters, not just for me, but also for everyone because it means everyone has the freedom to move around their neighbourhoods and community. Thank you to those who spent this winter shovelling your own sidewalk, and maybe even being a 'Snow Angel' to others in your neighbourhood, because of your work I was able to get out into the community and enjoy my activities like hockey and soccer. If you have not been so good about shovelling your sidewalk this winter, I hope you now understand how not shovelling your sidewalk makes life more difficult for people with mobility issues.



## Creative Connections

This new section is a place for DDRC clients to share their artistic and creative pursuits, such as drawings, paintings, photographs, poems, and short stories.

When the lions they cared for at the Richmond Zoo went to Kibur Reserve, life-long friends Efa and Sarah moved with them to the nearby city of Dodoma. Once in Tanzania, Sarah and her young son, Jay, spend time exploring the reserve and looking for poachers and traps. One day, when a storm hits, they become completely trapped in the middle of the reserve. After the storm, Efa and others search for the missing mother and son, but they only find Sarah's body. For six years, Efa has wondered what happened to her friend's son. While in the savannah filming the birth of an elephant calf, she hears an odd noise. Will she finally learn what happened to Jay? In this edition of *Connection*, we're happy to reveal an exclusive excerpt from Mackenzie Carver's (pictured above) *The Boy*:



*I looked back and gazed at the lion. There wasn't much that I could see of him, the plain grass covered him and prevented me from getting a clear look. From what I could see, the top of his head looked to be a brown coloured mane that sat on the top of his head. My guess was that this lion must be another male. This wouldn't be much of a surprise because a pride generally has three males. As I continued to spy on this presumed male, I was able to see more of the lion as he drew closer to the watering hole. However, the body movement he showed didn't resemble a lion's normal movement. Once he emerged from the grass, I swore that I saw hairless tanned skin.*

If you are as intrigued as we are, head over to <https://mdotbdotcarver.wordpress.com> to read Mackenzie's *The Boy*.



Ada Siu's water colour painting.



Winter Birch Trees

## Inclusive Communities

Two years ago, Angela Huntington was looking to start a new chapter in her life, while Roma Schafer was looking for an integrated living practitioner (ILP). Believing this could be the opportunity she was looking for, Angela applied to be Roma's new ILP. Having Roma move into the family home was, "like having any other family member move in." Six months after Roma moved in, and her daughters and husband had established relationships with Roma, the DDRC asked Angela if she and her family would be interested in having another client, Todd Spahl, join their home. To Angela's surprise, and Roma and Todd's delight, it turned out the two had previously been roommates in a group home years before. Angela says, "The puzzle pieces just fit together."

Now that her daughters are older, Angela has focused her natural nurturing instincts towards assisting Roma and Todd as they enjoy their lives in the community. ILPs provide DDRC clients with a happy, healthy, and safe family environment while providing clients with the appropriate support as they work towards their goals and enjoy a great quality of life. Remaining connected to Roma and Todd, being adaptable

73 ILPs supporting  
80 clients

### 27 independent clients

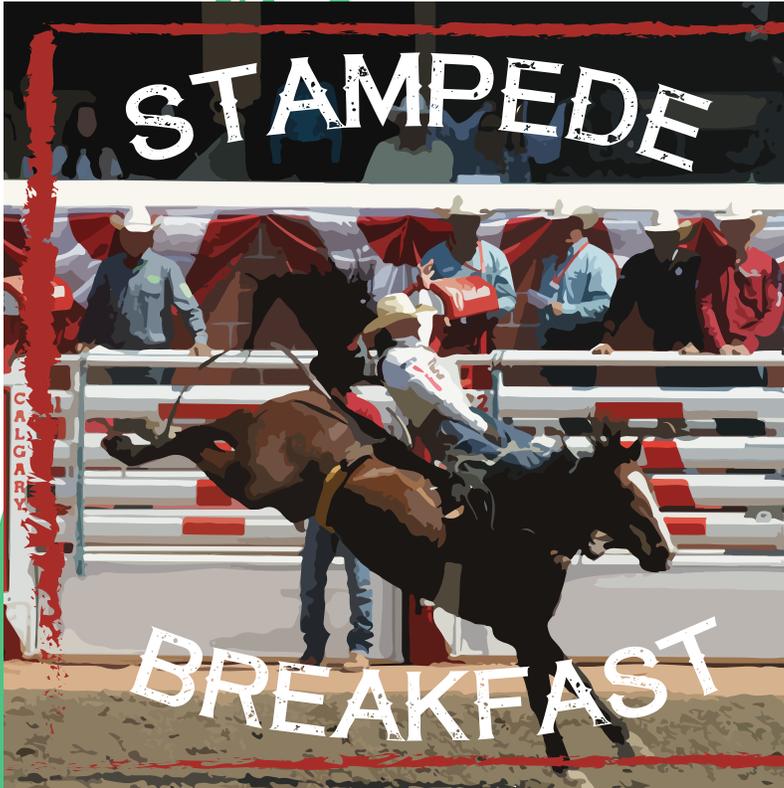
to changing circumstances, and understanding that their needs vary from day-to-day have helped Angela succeed in her job as an ILP. While there can be challenging moments, the joy she feels when Roma or Todd give her a piece of art or a card is unparalleled. Watching Roma and Todd achieve their goals and celebrating their victories with them are two things that Angela finds rewarding as an ILP.

While many might think ILPs do all of the supporting and caregiving, Angela has found that in their own way the clients she supports return the support and care she gives to them. Todd knows Angela's hands are frequently cold, and when they are out in the community, particularly in winter, he does his best to make sure her hands are warm by ensuring she has gloves.

By having ongoing conversations with Roma and Todd; helping them go into the community for recreational activities, such as art classes; ensuring their home is safe and comfortable; and supporting them when they experience a challenge, Angela is doing what she can to ensure Calgary is a city where *everyone belongs*™.



# Upcoming Events



LIVE MUSIC  
PRIZES  
FUN ACTIVITIES

THURSDAY, JULY 12TH, 2018  
8:00 - 11:00 AM

4646 SARCEE ROAD S.W.

For more information, call 403.240.3111  
or visit our website at [www.ddrc.ca](http://www.ddrc.ca).

Additional parking available at Mount Royal University.



Established in 1996, the Inclusion Awards celebrate the contributions of individuals, organizations and businesses that go above and beyond in promoting the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in the community in real and meaningful ways.

October 3, 2018  
Coast Plaza Hotel

Follow us on social media for updates.



# Thank You to Our Community Partners!



If you have comments or feedback on our new look, please contact us at [connection@ddrc.ca](mailto:connection@ddrc.ca). The DDRC's *Connection* is published twice a year, but there's lots going on at our agency every day! Stay in touch with us online:



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