

2015 Annual Report




Letter from the Executive Director

On behalf of our Board of Directors, it is my privilege to present our members and partners a summary of our our 2015 Annual Report.

This past year was full of many highlights and achievements for our organization and reflects the collective work of our committed membership, volunteers, board of directors and staff.

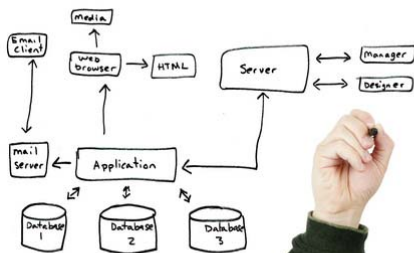
In coming into my 10th year as Executive Director, it has been, and continues to be, an honour and a joy to fulfill this position in the community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly!



Sincerely,

Lyndon Parakin
Executive Director
Autism Calgary Association



Mission

- ❖ Support, Speak, Educate, Advocate & Promote
- ❖ Support ... Bring hope and help meet the needs of families and individuals living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- ❖ Speak ... Be the voice of families and individuals living with ASD
- ❖ Educate ... Increase awareness and understanding of ASD
- ❖ Advocate... Secure and defend the best quality of life for those with ASD throughout their lifespan and their families
- ❖ Promote ... Encourage the advancement of meaningful research and the development of effective treatment options

Vision

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) living meaningful and purposeful lives in a community that values them



Family Support

- 1587 individuals and families provided support through email/phone/drop in support
- Expanded our diversity of support groups, now including:
 - Parents Connecting
 - Couples Support Group
 - Biomedical Support Group
 - KIT Keeping It Together (Mom's group)
 - FAN Fathers Autism Network (Father's Group)
 - Asperger Network

Events and Activities

- Annual Christmas Party Christmas
- Summer Picnic at Our Lady Queen of Peace Ranch, July 1, 2015
- Family Summer Camping at Elk Flats Aug 7, 8 & 9 2015
- Family Summer Camping at Pine Grove Provincial Recreation Area Aug 14, 15 & 16
- Weekly Go Group for Youth with Autism
- VECOVA weekly family swimming

Community Outreach & Partnerships:

- Development of presentations and in-services to schools and community, developing a training initiative for volunteer presenters
- Autism Community Network: continued to hold bimonthly meeting of agencies & professionals serving individuals and families,
- World Autism Awareness Day: Public celebration at Calgary Olympic Plaza, more than 450 attending, stage entertainment and activities for children. Mayor Nenshi made an appearance on stage to lead in the "blow bubbles for autism (radio, newspaper, and television)
- CASDA, support to Canada Autism Partnership hosting a stakeholder discussion
- Autism Canada: beginning discussions with the Provincial Territorial Council

▣ Resources

- Library: moving online and new investment in resources (Allies for Autism Foundation)
- Newsletter (electronic circulation now exceeding 1800) / Social Media gathering momentum
- Completed an edited draft of a resource – "A Community Guide to Supporting Adults with High Functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome through Recreational Activities, Workshops and Support Groups" (with support from a grant from Autism Speaks Canada). AAPC Publishing has presented an offer to publish the guide internationally. This guide will inspire and support other like-minded community groups
- Collaborative work with Autism Society Alberta, including employing an individual with Autism to assist with local and provincial resource management, work to build an Autism Alberta Alliance

Employment Initiatives

Meticulon Consulting Ltd.

- Conceived by Autism Calgary and implemented in partnership with the Government of Canada Social Development Partnership Program & Sinneave Family Foundation
- A Social Enterprise employing individuals with ASD in software testing and data quality assurance (modeled after a Belgium company Passworks, that became fully profitable within 3 years.)
- Completed final transition of Meticulon Consulting in 2015 to function as a fully Independent Registered Charitable Business, (AC consultation support to project ended March 2015)
- Meticulon Consulting now serving as an active partner in the Autism Community Network, working with us on concept of an "Autism at Work" peer support program



Spectrum Advantage



- Completed a pilot supported employment experience program, upstream/downstream to Meticulon Consulting (term ending Sept 2015)
- Successful in supporting 42 individuals with ASD, with a success rate of 82%
- Renewed commitment from Employment Skills Development Canada Skills Link program for another 18 month term commencing May 2016)
- October 2015 to April 2016 staff seconded to share skills learned, supporting role out of Community Works (a national employment initiative with 12 partners nationwide)

Office Space

We were successful in 2015 in strengthening our partnership with Calgary Seniors Resource Centre to set the framework to move our office to our new location in May of 2016. The building has over 1600 square feet on one level with great parking and street presence. Ultimately, the facility will house 4 to six charitable groups combining resources and expertise to increase our respective impact on the community. Shared office resources will include multiple meeting rooms / classrooms, restrooms, printing areas, kitchen.

