



A Year Online



2020 - 2021
Annual Report

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Our Mission

The DDRC promotes awareness and supports communities to include persons with developmental disabilities, thereby strengthening communities for all citizens.

Our Vision

Everyone Belongs.

The Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre (DDRC) of Calgary is a non-profit, registered, charitable organization dedicated to facilitating the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in the community in real and meaningful ways.

Operating under the direction of a volunteer Board of Directors, the DDRC's activities are funded through government contracts, fee-for-service programs, fundraising events, corporate partnerships, and individual donations.

Our business number is 10683 0060 RR0001.

 **New message**



To: The DDRC Community

Subject: A Year Online

At the beginning of the DDRC's 2020-2021 fiscal year, the DDRC and our community faced an uncertain future with the Covid-19 pandemic. The Agency's response is one I am proud of. Clients, staff, and networks quickly adapted to ensure everyone's safety amid changing information and uncertainty. The Agency moved at lightning speed to meet the support expectations of individuals with developmental disabilities. Clients were supported to use Facetime, Zoom, Skype, or any preferred virtual platform, while the Agency developed safety protocols and training needed to safely support clients.

With connections between clients and staff established, it was clear that lockdowns, isolation, and distancing would be something to overcome, not waited out. Within a month of the first stay at home measures, the DDRC launched the first virtual Learning & Leadership workshop. This program grew rapidly to accommodate all who needed safe and accessible remote supports, and continues today. DDRC clients participate in workshops on a broad range of topics that work toward client goals.

The use of technology DDRC clients and staff used proved to be an invaluable skill that led to a successful Celebrating Excellence Together (CET) survey of the Agency, led by the Alberta Council of Disability Supports (ACDS) every three years. This year, CET was conducted online via Zoom with the Agency receiving CET Level 2 Accreditation standards yet again, showing that even in a pandemic, the DDRC continues to excel.

The theme of this Annual Report, A Year Online, showcases the success and determination of an inclusive community working to ensure that everyone belongs™. In this report, you will read more about CET, Learning & Leadership, and learn about clients who thrived despite the challenges thrown their way.

While A Year Online undoubtedly captures this year, I would be remiss not to mention the tremendous efforts made by DDRC staff who continue to support clients safely in person throughout the pandemic. The DDRC's doors never closed to clients. As an essential service in our community, DDRC staff worked to ensure that DDRC clients have the support they need, however they need it.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission, and for keeping our community vibrant, inclusive, and safe.

Helen Cowie, CEO



Celebrating Excellence Together

In a year where events and schedules were disrupted at each turn, one DDRC calendar regular held its date. Every three years, the DDRC participates in an annual audit of services in the Alberta Council for Disability Support (ACDS) providers CET survey. CET stands for Celebrating Excellence Together, and sure celebrated excellence this year, in a new kind of ‘together’.

The CET survey is a multi-week look at everything the DDRC does. Every process and policy are examined, and clients, their families, and DDRC employees are interviewed to evaluate how the Organization fulfills the mission of community inclusion. Typically, this would all be done face-to-face, but with public health recommendations, CET was had to be moved to remote, online platforms.

DDRC clients and staff embraced this new CET, as online meetings had been practiced and perfected since day-one of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On April 15th, 2020, just one month into the COVID-19 pandemic, the DDRC launched the first of what would become a vibrant new program at the Agency where clients embraced online connections through workshops. The first virtual workshop, titled “Introduction to Zoom Workshops” provided an opportunity for clients to learn this new platform and see friends. Demand was overwhelming, and it became clear that this was an opportunity to safely connect and continue to provide goal supports. The program was quickly expanded to offer a new workshop every day. The next week, it was doubled. The week after that, it was doubled again. By July, the DDRC held six workshops a day, and had 13 facilitators rotating through more than 150 unique topics.

When CET came to the DDRC’s online doors, clients and staff were prepared to meet the next challenge of the year. The CET surveys included conversations with 25 clients and their home networks, and more than 50 staff. At the end of the survey, the work of everyone was realized as the



DDRC once again received CET Accreditation Level 2 for disability service providers in Alberta. Level 2 notes that the Agency strives for excellent service to individuals, a higher level of support to staff, and a greater commitment to community. In addition to receiving CET Accreditation Level 2, the ACDS surveyor team made more than 10 commendations, recognizing specific practices at the DDRC where the Agency goes above and beyond.

It takes the whole community to go above and beyond, and it takes determination and perseverance to meet the challenges of COVID-19. This perseverance by clients and staff in the move to online programs has been realized in the shared success of the 2020 CET Survey. Together, from afar, we will excel.

CET Commendations

Positive Relationships training

Advocacy for client rights

Abuse Prevention

Client Voice Committee

Risk Assessment & Management

Health and Safety

Intake processes

Employee Success

Human Resources Policies and Procedures

Training and Development

Belinda

Belinda, a previous nominee, award recipient, and perineal nominator, was already preparing her latest round of nominations before the DDRC had even announced the social media event for 2020. To attendees of past Inclusion Awards, this won't be a surprise, but it only begins to describe Belinda. A 21 years employee of Canadian Border Services Agency & Trade Operations Division, proponent of animal welfare, photographer, poet, fundraiser, disability advocate, and a loving daughter, Belinda is a staunch member of our community. Understandably, when our community restricted itself during the COVID-19 pandemic, Belinda's life changed.

A practiced lip reader, Belinda struggled to interact in the community due to masking practices at the onset of the pandemic. Her hearing impairment and associated health concerns resulted in a difficult period for Belinda as she sheltered in place at home. **The DDRC's Learning and Leadership coaches worked diligently to develop strategies to engage with Belinda online as she started using remote services.**

Belinda nominating DDRC's LPN



Belinda and her mother Carroll



Belinda would watch the Zoom workshops, but she wasn't able to hear her peers' voices, and she wasn't offering her thoughts and words of advice as she usually had before. Occasionally, Belinda would communicate using Zoom's chat feature, explaining that she couldn't find a way to interact with the group. She was frustrated.

Esme, the DDRC's Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) coordinated medical appointments to help Belinda find new hearing aids. Belinda said that Esme didn't stop until the perfect solution was found, as they visited various providers searching for the best fit and option, as well as offering ongoing medical advice and

support; "Esme works tirelessly and has made a huge difference in my life". **As a result, CRWs, team leaders, and DDRC clients noticed the light return to Belinda's eyes as she began to interact fully with remote service during the summer months of 2020.**

The confidence Belinda always had emerged again. Novel as it was for many of us, connecting over video meetings presented a learning curve for Belinda, one that she soon mastered. During the same time, her aging mother, Carroll, a resident at Bethany Seniors was isolated, unable to see her family - a somber and relatable reality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Belinda was concerned about her mother's emotional well-being, and worked through the possible ways to connect and nurture their relationship. Belinda, with the skills she developed through using the DDRC's remote service coordinated with Bethany Seniors social worker, Amanda, to connect her and her mother through weekly Skype sessions.

Some weeks, Carroll wouldn't wake for their Skype session. Amanda would still call Belinda from her mother's bed side, and quickly their relationship grew with Carroll's presence in the background.

As so many of us did, Belinda too found solutions to continue engaging in her passions during the pandemic. Donating art to charity auctions, recently raising money for Alberta Animal Rescue, fundraising by selling a calendar of her photography, all while returning to the community as much as she could. She was quickly involved with the DDRC's online Inclusions Celebration too. Belinda shared the impact of the work done by Nurse Esme and social worker Amanda Ruda on her and her family.

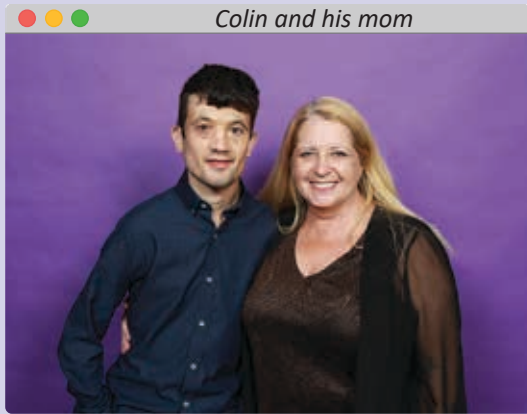
Belinda recognized at 2019 Awards



When asked about 2020 Belinda said, **"it was hard due to the uncertainty of the pandemic - I am blessed I get through each day, as someone with disabilities and cognitive disabilities it's harder for me than others. I have a good support system that helps me get through each day.** If my mom could talk to me, I know she would be proud of me. I'm proud of my accomplishments that I haven't given up, even though some days I want to. I'm still doing the best I can."

Colin

If you were to join a virtual Learning & Leadership session with client Colin Winch, you may very well forget about the fatigue and burn-out associated with the last year. DDRC clients like him have embraced the many shifts that the pandemic presented to their daily routines, including a new, virtual delivery of support. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the DDRC as it did many other organizations, forcing the agency to rapidly reimagine a digital format for operations, supports, and in-person workshops. Over the past year, with



the help of a team of dedicated facilitators, the DDRC has refined a Zoom Workshop schedule covering several topics, from resume building to understanding emotions. **With some facilitators running multiple workshops a week the experience is made much more rewarding with group engagement, and with personalities like Colin's in attendance.**

Colin is known for making an excellent first impression, thanks to his enthusiasm and his caring disposition. During a video call

with Colin, and workshop facilitator and CRW Shawna, he is warm and friendly, eager to share the most recently played song on his phone; a track from the Beauty and the Beast soundtrack. He loves animals, walks in nature, and making friends. Shawna describes Colin as a social person, with an infectious humour that draws people in. When asked about what he enjoys most about Zoom workshops, he cannot seem to contain his excitement when exclaiming, "Talking!" It is this eagerness that makes him a bright presence in any Learning & Leadership session.

When a facilitator has Colin on their roster, they can be sure that he will liven discussions and eagerly participate. Workshop facilitator Maranda has noticed how Colin's encouragement has benefited her workshops for everyone. Maranda has seen Colin's growth, as the workshops give him a platform for others to see his caring and compassionate nature. He has become more trusting and decisive about sharing his emotions and experiences with mental health. At home, he has customized his workspace to his liking. Here, Colin feels sure of himself when offering his ideas to those around him.

Remote support has allowed Colin to continue to set and achieve new goals. Prior to the pandemic, transitions in Colin's schedule would sometimes cause anxiety. When many of his supports transitioned from being in-person, his patience with himself and others significantly improved. Having the ability to participate in activities from his home environment gave Colin the boost he needed to excel, making him more secure and confident.

Always prepared and punctual, Colin models professionalism in workshops. His charisma shines, and he brings excitement to every group he is a part of. Ryan, workshop facilitator and PACE CRW, has noticed Colin's positivity radiating to peers and staff during a jeopardy-style game of Bamboozle. His fun-spirited competitiveness often comes out when playing, making it fun for everyone involved. Colin's enthusiasm continues to grow, and Ryan noted, **"He just has the biggest, heartiest laugh when playing. In my years supporting him that's the first time I've heard that style of laugh from him, and that only started a couple of months ago."**

Colin has improved dramatically. He is able to express and channel his enthusiasm, which has reached beyond the confines of his daily Zoom sessions to his home life. Colin's family has observed the benefits the workshops have had on his daily routine. With the consistent and stable schedule he prefers, his family has noticed that Colin is happier, and excited for his daily activities.



Colin flourished during 2020. Zoom workshops have allowed him a unique avenue where he has learned to better express himself. As restrictions lift, Colin will return to his community to continue his dedicated volunteer work which was halted by the pandemic. He will have the opportunity to offer his thoughts, friendship, and positive energy in-person with everyone he meets with lessened anxiety, and greater confidence in himself. Keep an eye out for Colin as he reconnects with his community, shares his boosted confidence, and his new found laugh.

The DDRC's 2020 Inclusion Awards would have been the Agency's 'silver', 25th anniversary of the event. With over 500 attending the 2019 celebration, the latest event was anticipated to be bigger than ever.

In the interest of public safety due to Covid-19, the DDRC made the decisions not to host the in-person event. To keep the spirit of inclusion, and the everyone belongs vision alive and strong, the DDRC launched a new format for this long standing event.

In early September, the social media based Inclusion Celebration engaged more of the community than ever before; inviting all to recognize those who make our city more inclusive. Any form of nomination would be accepted; poetry, video, dance, artwork, writing, photography, and more. Clients, families, employers, and organizations reached out by email, phone, and direct social media message, sending in nominations and recognitions of individuals across our communities.

The DDRC's posts reach increased 466% when compared to the same time period of the previous year. On the DDRC Facebook page, each Inclusion Celebration post reached on average over 600 unique users, resulting in an increase of over 500 engagements per post when compared with the entire previous year. The DDRC's social media presence increased, and our followers grew, rivalling other stand-out agencies in our field.

The impact was clear. Apart from the numbers, people were thrilled with the chance to get involved while sharing inspiring stories through our social media. DDRC client Shelly Hunt nominated Wildflower Arts Centre, where she volunteers as a studio assistant. Shelly explained that they give her the opportunity to make new friendships, contribute, and feel helpful, all while doing what she loves: art. In response to the post, the organization replied with photographs of an art display to thank Shelly and the recognition she made.

Words of encouragement, praise, and thanks were shared with everyone - and through a particularly isolating and discouraging time.

The DDRC is thankful. Not for the success of this social media campaign, but for your success, our community's success. Your involvement in our Inclusion Celebration exemplifies our voice and the strength of our community, showcases success and achievement, and inspires.

CompCare recognized CSW Ramanjeet



2019 Inclusion Awards



Miki celebrated AHS workers



Jamie recognized by a CRW



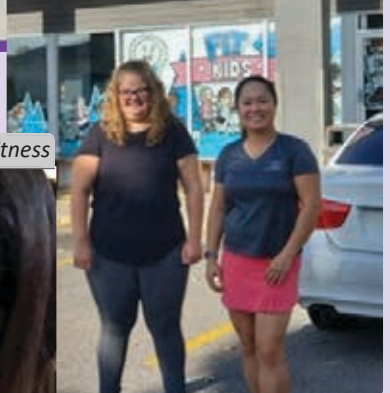
Wildflower Arts accepting Shelly's nomination



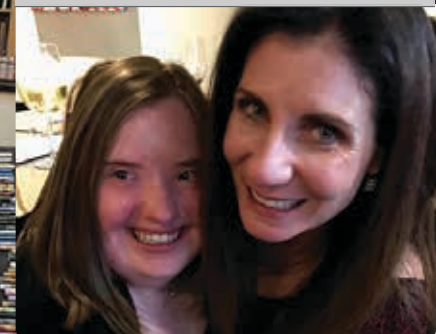
Leonka supporting Indefinite Arts



Sabrina nominated Kid's Fit



Ashley nominated Anytime Fitness





Board of Directors



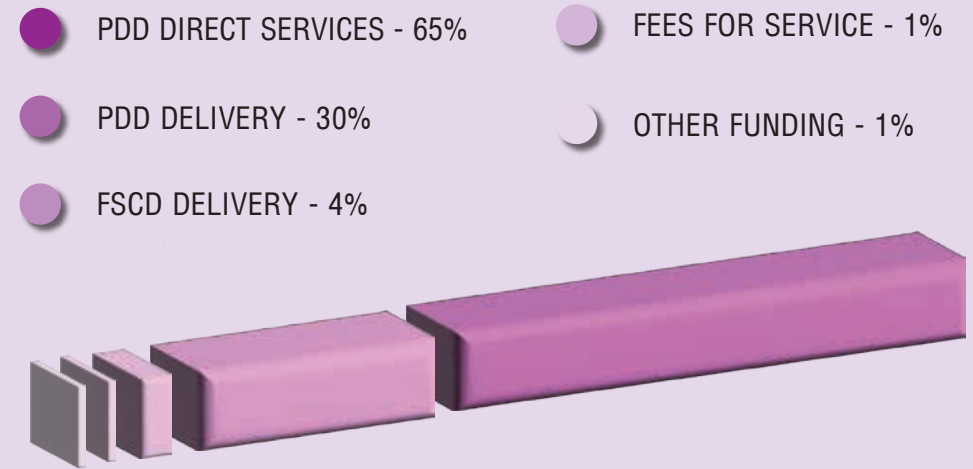
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 Past President: Tom Shindrak
 Treasurer: Shawna Taylor
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 Director: Dayna Johnson
 Director: Ali Waissi
 Director: Louis Bontorin
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Client Voice Committee

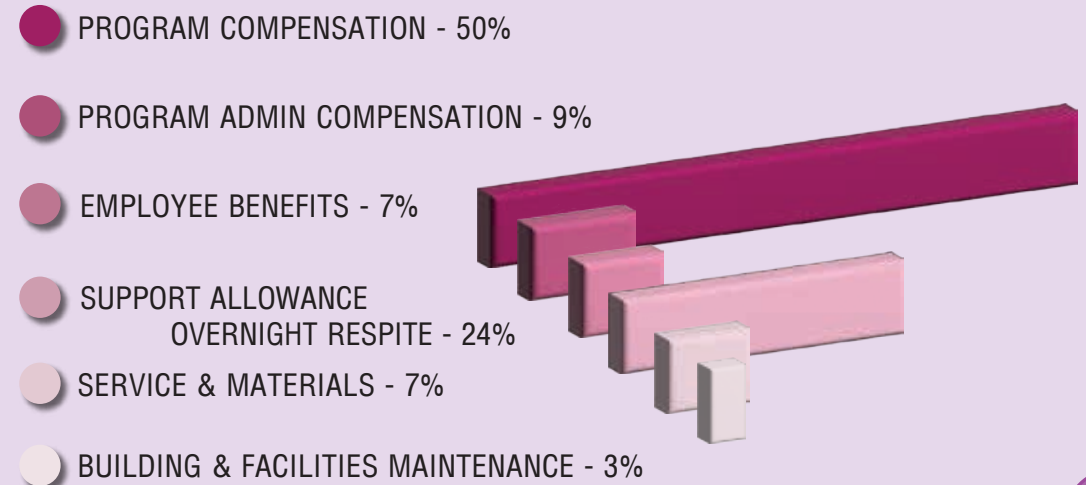
During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Client Voice Committee (CVC) continued to meet, collaborate, and advocate for client focused causes. The CVC took their meetings to Zoom, and maintained their efforts to discuss pertinent issues facing all DDRC clients, plan activities, and events. The CVC also started hosting Advocacy Cafe sessions, which were open to all DDRC clients to attend and participate in discussions on disability awareness and advocacy.



REVENUE

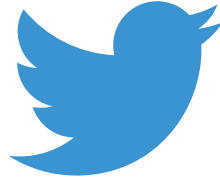


EXPENDITURES





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