

connection



Fall 2016

Client Focus: Meet Ruba and Alex
Computer Literacy Course Launch

Why Do You Give?
...and much more!

In This Issue

A Message from Our CEO	3
Fundraising News	4
Client Focus: Meet Ruba and Alex	6
Renovations at the DDRC	8
BVC Computer Literacy Course Comes to DDRC	9
Holiday Open House	9
Why Do You Give?	10
Inclusion Awards	10

The DDRC Connection is published by the DDRC Communications Department. © 2016.

Editors: Aurora Graveland-Daines, Erin Queck
Contributors: Aurora Graveland-Daines, Erin Queck, Austin Clem
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. We believe that communities are stronger when people of all abilities are involved in activities that are meaningful to them. The DDRC is funded by the government and donations. The Developmental Disabilities Resource Foundation (DDRF) is an official fundraising partner of the DDRC.

On the covers: Front - PACE clients Cieran, Ashley, and Morgan will be participating in the BVC Computer Literacy course.
Back - Interested in becoming an Integrated Living Practitioner?



A Message from Our CEO

We are once again looking forward to the 21st Annual Inclusion Awards, where we will celebrate the accomplishments of the community members, DDRC clients and staff, and organizations that are committed to building an inclusive Calgary. We want to congratulate all of our nominees and winners for their dedication to creating vibrant communities where everyone belongs!

Since the launch of the Ability Fund in the winter of 2015, we are proud to say we have seen many successes. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we have been able to help eliminate the financial barriers that clients may face when it comes to participating in community activities. Our clients are taking part in a greater variety of activities that support their individual goals and personal development, and that make their lives meaningful.

In early 2016, the DDRC was awarded a grant through the Government of Alberta's Community Facility Enhancement Program. This grant allowed us to update and improve our building to ensure we have the safest possible environment for clients, staff, and guests. The renovations were substantially completed this summer, and we are excited to share the final product with you. Sincere thanks to the Government of Alberta for supporting the work of the agency and showing commitment to the vulnerable Albertans that we serve.

We are pleased to announce that we have partnered with Bow Valley College, who will be offering a computer literacy course at the DDRC for our clients. The course will give clients the chance to develop their computer skills, which can then be used to find meaningful employment in the community. Employment is a daily activity for most of us. By providing additional training to our clients, we hope to encourage employers to understand the significant contribution persons with developmental disabilities can make to the workforce and the economy.

In this edition, we are proud to be highlighting one of our many valued supporters: the Tharayil family. The continued support of our donors allow us to raise awareness, build inclusive communities, and offer the highest quality support to our clients and for that, we thank you.

It only remains for me to thank all of our stakeholders and the community at large for supporting the work of the DDRC. Our aim is to ensure that the highest quality of service is provided, and that persons with developmental disabilities are supported to achieve the greatest degree of independence possible based on their abilities.

If you have any story suggestions, comments or questions, please email us at connection@ddrc.ca.

Sincerely,

Helen Cowie, LLB; MBA



CEO Helen and Director Kim celebrated at the unveiling of our brand new kitchen.



We were thrilled with the number of politicians who joined us at our annual Stampede Breakfast!

Fundraising News

by Austin Clem

Over the years, the generosity of our donors has given the DDRC the opportunity to purchase valuable items such as adaptive communication technology devices for our building, and Smart Boards for our Learning and Leadership program. This past year, we identified that financial status is often a barrier to community inclusion for many of our clients. To help make community activities more accessible for everyone, we decided to launch a brand new initiative for the DDRC's 2015-2016 annual Winter Fundraising Campaign called the Ability Fund.

Since its introduction, the goals of the Ability Fund have been to eliminate financial restrictions for our clients, support their individual goals, and help them foster meaningful relationships with and in their communities. The Fund began supporting DDRC clients in March 2016 and in five short months, more than 80 individuals have been able to participate in a community activity.

A team of DDRC staff members worked to find activities, events, and opportunities that would be the most aligned with our client's goals. As a result, DDRC clients have been free to participate in a wide variety of activities of their choosing throughout the year, without feeling limited due to cost.



DDRC client Tommy proudly displays the environmentally friendly products he made at a Green Calgary workshop.

Several DDRC clients noted that fitness and community participation goals were important to them. When many fitness classes were fully booked or had wait lists, our staff used their resources to choose a class, find an instructor, promote it, and cover facility fees through the Ability Fund.

Thanks to DDRC supporters, Zumba was made available to DDRC clients and members of the community. People of all abilities were welcome to participate in an energetic dance-based fitness class in a space in Northeast Calgary. The inaugural class saw an overwhelming response; 16 clients, eight community members, two instructors, the facility staff, and several DDRC employees joined in on the fun.

Another activity made possible thanks to the Ability Fund was hosted by Green Calgary, an environmental charity. Green Calgary held courses to promote independence and teach new skills. DDRC clients and community members participated in workshops to learn about green cleaning supplies, hygiene products, and being environmentally conscious. At the workshops, clients were able to identify and create safe products in a community-based setting.

When many clients identified improving their social skills and engaging further in their communities as important goals, our staff moved to find additional programming for personal development.

Inside Out Theatre, Calgary's mixed ability theatre company, was a perfect fit and would allow our clients to work on their communication and social skills. We worked with Inside Out to provide additional weekly classes so DDRC clients could participate alongside previously waitlisted community members in a variety of drama exercises.



Cieran, Ashley, and Sydney love coming up with creative ideas at the Inside Out workshops.

The Ability Fund was created thanks to the generosity of donors during the 2015 - 2016 Winter Fundraising Campaign.



The Community Wise Resource Centre in downtown Calgary was one of the spaces used for an Inside Out theatre class.

Various community spaces were used to host Inside Out's workshops, and offered new surroundings to our clients so they were able to work on their improvisation and interpretation skills. The costs for facility rentals, equipment, and facilitator fees for all participants were covered by the Ability Fund, and provided an opportunity for more Calgarians to access their remarkable programs.

While the Ability Fund has supported many individuals from the DDRC, it is our communities that have truly thrived thanks to the generosity of our donors. The impact of initiatives like the Ability Fund is invaluable; when clients can participate in activities and workshops alongside their fellow community members, our communities become more vibrant for everyone.

2016 Event Recap



Clockwise from top left: Team DDRC had participants in every race at this year's Scotiabank Calgary Marathon, ranging from 5K to 50K; The 36th Earl Grey Vipond Golf Classic was a success thanks to the players, sponsors and volunteers; Our annual Stampede Breakfast served over 800 guests, including Stampede Royalty.

Ruba Zoughaib

Making a Splash

by Aurora Graveland-Daines



When it comes to trying new things, Ruba Zoughaib likes to dive right in – especially if it involves swimming. The 40-year-old Central Team client has only been swimming for a year, but now it seems she was born to be in the water.

“I like being active,” she said. “It makes me happy. I wasn’t good at [swimming], but I learned.”

After coming to the DDRC 18 months ago, Zoughaib decided she wanted to learn how to swim as it would help to increase her mobility. She began by sitting in the pool to get used to being in the water, moved on to learning how to float, and then started mastering the backstroke.

When Zoughaib first started doing laps in the pool, it took her between 12 and 14 minutes to complete one. Now, according to Community Resource Worker Cyndi Ellis, she is down to an average time of only four minutes per lap.

“She is making such strides in her swimming,” Ellis said. “She loves beating her own records, and achieving new goals.”

Having moved to Calgary from Syria with her brother and parents five years ago, Zoughaib is happy to have the opportunity to take part in her community. Never one for just sitting around, a lack of accessible facilities and transportation options meant that even just leaving the house was difficult.

“From [the time] I was a baby in Syria, it wasn’t easy,” Zoughaib recalled. “I just had to watch. I couldn’t go and do anything.”

One of her sisters has lived in Canada for about 20 years, and was able to help her and the rest of her family settle in. Since moving to Canada, she has learned to speak English (she speaks Arabic originally), and is very proud to have become a Canadian citizen within the past year.

Client



Besides swimming, she also participates in the Adapted Fitness Program at Southland Leisure Centre, and is an active volunteer. She is currently in a role at the Heart and Stroke Foundation where she does “geo-mapping,” which involves her tracking what regions the charity receives its donations from. The data she reviews and tracks is from the foundation’s canvassing blitzes.

“I like using my brain,” Zoughaib said. “My volunteer role makes me think.”

Wissam Shalaby, Community Resource Worker, feels that the role is a natural fit for Zoughaib.

“These are time-sensitive events that require a keen eye for detail,” Shalaby explained. “She is passionate and dedicated, and has never failed to go above and beyond with each of her tasks.”

Alex Gorski

Alex's Amazing Art

by Erin Queck

Alex Gorski has a big heart and a big talent, and he is using both of them to make the world a better place.

"I have been painting all my life for a hobby," he explained. "But now, I do this for a career."

With the support of his mother, Gorski started his own business – Alex's Amazing Art – two years ago selling his artwork online. He donates all of the proceeds to Operation Smile, an international charity that provides free surgeries for children and young adults in developing countries who are born with cleft lip or cleft palate.

According to his family and friends, Gorski saw a television program about the charity and decided he wanted to buy a child a smile.

"[I chose] Operation Smile because they're helping kids, and it is a noble cause," he said.

A major highlight of the past year was when Gorski was profiled on Global TV. On April 11, 2016, a local reporter interviewed him about his project, and he had a chance to show off his masterpieces. "It was amazing," recalled Gorski.

When he's not painting, Gorski enjoys developing his leadership skills in the *everyone belongs*[™] Toastmasters Club. He presented on his business in past speeches, and is currently working on his third speech about being on television, which he considers to be his most memorable experience.

Gorski also helps come up with Table Topics, or conversation starters, for the Toastmasters club. He said his most recent discussion points were all about the Summer Olympics.



"[I asked] stuff about the athletes, who is the fastest man in the world, how many medals Usain Bolt has, and which country was the first to host the Olympics," Gorski explained.

Community Resource Worker Evangeline Cabanas, who has been working with Alex for the past two years, believes that being in Toastmasters and running a business have helped transform Gorski.

"This gentleman has changed a lot. He is now more focused in his activities," she said. "But he has [always had] very bright ideas."

Gorski's main goals are to expand his business and be featured on Global News again. He even hopes to share his project with a larger audience: "I might try to go on [the television show] Dragon's Den."

Cabanas confirmed this, saying that Gorski has mentioned taking his business global so he can help kids around the world.

"He's very inspiring," she said with a smile. "He has a golden heart."

To see Gorski's paintings and learn more about his business, visit alexamazingart.wordpress.com.

Renovations at the DDRC

by Erin Queck

On March 22, 2016, we were thrilled to have MLA Greg Clark present the DDRC with a cheque for \$120,873. This money was awarded to us through a grant from the Government of Alberta's Community Facility Enhancement Program. The one-time grant allowed us to upgrade and improve our building to create a safer environment for all.

Renovations to our building began in March, and finished by the end of June. Enhancements were made to all washrooms and kitchen areas, as well as our training room. Additionally, a new and improved accessible ramp was constructed for the front entrance. We are excited to share our newly renovated spaces with you now:

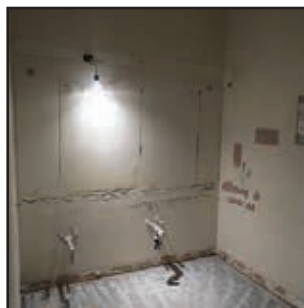
Before



During



After



BVC Computer Literacy Course Comes to DDRC

by Aurora Graveland-Daines

Bow Valley College will bring a computer literacy course to the DDRC as of September 2016.

The 12-week course will focus on supporting clients with relevant goals, such as finding community employment. Three Community Resource Workers from the PACE team will act as facilitators, making sure learners are comfortable with the concepts taught by a Bow Valley College instructor.

The course is designed to provide positive results for learners of all styles, using a blend of video, text, images, and activities to reinforce concepts. Bow Valley College's Candace Witkowskyj developed the course for the DDRC, basing part of the content on the Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) program offered by the school.

"We explored what some of DDRC's priorities were, and we decided to take [the ABLE] content and focus it on pre-employment strategies," Witkowskyj said.

Topics covered will include basic computer functions, using the Internet, digital literacy, online safety, and commonly used computer programs. Learners will also see how computer skills can help them with employment – searching for a job, writing a cover letter and résumé, applying for a job by email, and more.

Literacy has been a focus of Bow Valley College for nearly 30 years. It began as an informal one-to-one volunteer tutor-based initiative where individuals who wanted to improve their literacy skills could come in once a week for a couple of hours. Funding for literacy programs through the Alberta government changed, and so the institution began offering programs in a classroom setting.

Bow Valley College's Bernice Gowan believes that putting literacy education in the hands of the community will ultimately increase opportunities – and quality of life – for individuals with low literacy levels.



The DDRC and Bow Valley College staff involved with the Computer Literacy Course.

This is especially true for those who have had negative experiences with school.

"Literacy is about belonging. It's important at home, at work, and in the community," Gowan said.

"Not all learners will walk across that bridge to an educational institution, but they will benefit from an organization that is literacy friendly, and a literacy builder. That will always have value."

For more information about literacy courses offered to the public by Bow Valley College, visit their website at www.bit.ly/BVC_literacy.

Holiday Open House

Come celebrate the season with free food and fun!

December 8, 2016 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

DDRC Gym 4646 Sarcee Rd. SW

A festive banner for a holiday open house. The background is a gradient of blue and white, decorated with large white snowflakes and stylized evergreen trees. The text is in a mix of blue and black fonts, with the main title in a large, bold, blue font. The date and time are in a smaller blue font, and the location is in a black font at the bottom right.

Why Do You Give?

by Aurora Graveland-Daines

After using services through Comprehensive Care for seven years, the Tharayil family decided that a milestone celebration was the perfect opportunity to support the DDRC.

Former DDRC client Simson Tharayil celebrated his 18th birthday earlier this year, and in lieu of gifts, the family asked guests to donate to one of three organizations. Among these organizations was the DDRC.

"Simson loves celebrations and we had decided long before that we would have a big birthday party for him on his 18th," Shiny Tharayil, Simson's mother, said.

"We decided to use this platform to honour all the individuals and organizations that have been instrumental in Simson's care and development over the years."

The Tharayil family asked guests to write cheques directly to the DDRC so that the donors themselves would receive the tax receipts, and then hand delivered the donations.

All told, the generosity of the Tharayil family and the party guests resulted in approximately \$5,000 being raised to help the DDRC provide support and resources aimed at increasing quality of life for our clients.

After moving to Canada from India in 2002, the Tharayil family learned about the DDRC's services through their FSCD (Family Support for Children with Disabilities) worker. Having no extended family to help support four-year-old Simson, they accessed respite services through Comprehensive Care until 2009.

"Simson benefitted highly from the in- and out-of-home respite that was provided by DDRC personnel," Shiny shared, adding that Simson, who is non-verbal, was able to access different facilities and be included in his community thanks to the support he received.

It is clear to see that Simson's community inclusion and success continue today.



Simson has a seasonal part-time job at Costco, and is gaining valuable work experience at both Lifestyles Bistro and the Northmount Dollar Store.

In addition to this, he is an active volunteer with the Calgary Food Bank. As of this fall, he will have resumed school at Bishop McNally High School.

Shiny believes that Simson was surrounded by "kind and generous people, and organizations with great visions" who worked over the years to provide him with the tools and resources he needed to be successful as an adult and reach his full potential.

"There was no bigger gift that he could have asked for when he turned 18," Shiny said.

Congratulations to the 2016 Inclusion Awards Nominees!

Together we are building a Calgary where everyone belongs.

Alberta Health Service's
The Rhythm Project

Alex Gorski

Andrea McMillin

Bow View Manor

Canada's Sports Hall of Fame

Central Team

Client Services Coordinators

Crysta Trask

Crystal Thrings

Daniel Sapong

Daniel Williams

Darrell Howard

Dr. Gordon Higgins School

Gibson Energy Inc.

Inside Out Theatre

James Walters

Janeth Ordenes

Jessica Boulter

Joey Duong

Julie Picoc

Kais Mussa

Katherine Swaffield

Kieran Corrigan

Killarney Aquatic & Recreation

Centre

Kristin Aquino

Lisa King

Madeleine Pearce

Men In Kilts

Morgan Gehring

Nancy Rowan

Neemi Kassam

Rob Wilton

Ruba Zoughaib

Samantha Archibald

Shannon Mills

Signal Hill Tim Hortons

Suzanna Crawford

Travelodge Calgary University

University of Calgary Residence Services

Award winners' names in purple.

comprehensive  care™
Respite Services

**Together we can build
a healthier family dynamic**



- We provide your family with a learning environment to help your child achieve his or her goals



- We offer play and school support with an individual focus
- We offer sibling care to give parents a break
- We offer direct billing to FSCD

Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary

Tel 403.240.7327

Email comprehensivecare@ddrc.ca

Communities are more vibrant, healthy, safe, strong, and satisfying when all people, regardless of disability, ethno-cultural background, age, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class are welcome.

**Show your support for
inclusive communities!**

everyone  belongs™



www.everyonebelongs.ca

everyone belongs™ is a DDRC initiative.

**THE Real Estate
Company**

L I M I T E D



Randy G. Brown

Associate Broker

11-5080 12A St. SE Calgary AB T2G 5K9

Office: 403.270.4060

Cell: 403.815.0404 Fax: 403.592.7855

E-mail: brownrg@telusplanet.net

www.trecl.com

It's what we do!



Interested in becoming an Integrated Living Practitioner?

As an ILP, you can enjoy the benefit of doing meaningful work from the comfort of your own home. Meet new people, build life-long relationships, and experience the tremendous support of our Integrated Living Team.

Integrated Living Services (ILS) is tailored to help adults with developmental disabilities secure living arrangements in the communities they choose.



**Integrated
Living
Services**

For more information, or to apply, visit www.integratedliving.ca or e-mail careers@ddrc.ca.

The DDRC Connection is published twice a year, but there's lots going on at our agency every day! Stay in touch with us online:



DDRCCalgary



DDRC_Calgary



DDRCCalgary



DDRC_Calgary



www.ddrc.ca



www.everyonebelongs.ca



4631 Richardson Way S.W.
Calgary, AB T3E 7B7