

connection



Fall 2017

Client Focus: Meet Sabrina and Paige

Humans of DDRC

Introducing the CHOICES Program

...and much more!

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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 - Founders Christine Meikle and Emily Follensbee cut a cake at a celebration in 1970.

Back - Thank you to our Inclusion Award sponsors!



A Message from Our CEO

The DDRC is a leader in community inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities. Since its inception, the mission of the DDRC has continued to evolve, but has always stood firmly on its foundation to support individuals to live and participate in the community and to enjoy life with family and friends.

This year marks the DDRC’s 65th anniversary. This is a true testament to the importance of the many supports and services that we have delivered, and continue to deliver, to all our clients. In a recent 2017 CET audit (Creating Excellence Together, part of the Alberta Council of Disability Services), the DDRC was once again accredited with the highest level of certification as a Level 2 agency, which means that we met all areas of excellence with at least a 95% score. This success can be attributed to the commitment and dedication of our board and staff, who strive every day to provide quality services and supports. A culture of continual improvement and learning is evident in the commendations received from CET. Examples:

“DDRC is commended for being highly successful at supporting adolescents in their transition to adulthood.”

“The DDRC is commended for providing expertise and being innovative with supporting individuals who want to engage in the workforce, and for encouraging individuals to dream big when making career choices.”

“The DDRC is commended for its extensive processes to ensure that individuals’” rights are protected, including ensuring that the CVC is always involved in the development and ongoing review of the 31 rights and responsibilities, as well as for going over and above with advocacy initiatives such as supporting individuals with mental disorders to access programs...”

Note: The Client Voice Committee (CVC) consists of number of elected clients who bring forward recommendations to DDRC management.

As a highly respected organization, we are proud of the daily positive impacts we have as we work with individuals, families and community partners. We will continue in our quest to evolve and to be strong advocates for the people we serve, as well as for those still seeking supports and services.

As always, if you have any story suggestions, comments or questions, please e-mail us at connection@ddrc.ca.

Sincerely,

Helen Cowie, LLB; MBA



Members of the Client Voice Committee meet each month to discuss important matters at the DDRC that may impact clients.



Members of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) and the Military Museums named PACE client Ryan Denhoff "Honourary Private."

Fundraising News

by Austin Clem

The Ability Fund: DDRC Donors Making the Difference

To accomplish one's goals, it takes determination, dedication, and often the support of those looking to lend a helping hand. At the DDRC, clients set goals and set to work to achieve them. For the past two years, the Ability Fund has been in their corner.

Made up of individual donations from 2015 and 2016, the Ability Fund supports DDRC clients to participate in community activities to achieve their goals. When financial roadblocks are met, or unexpected costs limit the opportunity to fulfil goals, the Ability Fund helps to remove restrictions and encourages exploration.

Since its creation, the Ability Fund has supported more than 100 clients to work toward their goals. Thanks to DDRC donors, clients at the DDRC have one less roadblock to participating in the activities they choose. In 2017, the Ability Fund has directly contributed to participation in more than 30 DDRC clients' activities in their own communities. Clients with education and employment goals are supported to register for courses and classes. Clients who have been working on their fitness and health goals access the Ability Fund to sign up for camps and instructed fitness sessions. Clients attend festivals, participate in workshops, and engage with their community in a variety of ways.

But the Ability Fund doesn't end here. This year, we call on donors to continue the success of this invaluable resource.

Visit our website at ddrc.ca/donations, or e-mail donations@ddrc.ca to support this fantastic initiative or to learn more about the Ability Fund.



Volunteers from the DDRC help out around the golf course at the 2017 tournament.



Vipond Charity Classic: the New Old Tournament

Like all spring seasons in Calgary, snow hung around too long, days became longer, grass grew, and the DDRC held its annual charity golf tournament at the Earl Grey Golf Club. For 37 years, Father's Day weekend has been marked by the Vipond Charity Classic in support of initiatives at the DDRC.

This year however, something was new about the Vipond. New faces in bigger numbers lit up the fairways. New committee members helped organize the tournament. New sponsors partnered with the DDRC and helped to raise funds. All of this "new" helped make June 19 a memorable and successful day of giving, raising more than \$31,000 for DDRC programs.

Thank you to all of the new players, sponsors, and committee members, and thank you to all of those who have stuck with the Vipond tournament over the last 37 years.

Next year, we continue the theme of "new" as Earl Grey receives a facelift, and Vipond golfers will see a new course!

Visit ddrc.ca/vipond or e-mail vipond@ddrc.ca to stay in the loop for our 2018 Vipond Charity Classic!

DDRC Events of 2017

by Aurora Graveland-Daines



Austin Clem, Community Relations and Development Coordinator, kicks off the Stampede Breakfast.



Lori Sigurdson, Alberta's Minister of Seniors and Housing, flips pancakes at the Stampede Breakfast.



MLAs Greg Clark and Brian Malkinson help make pancakes at the Stampede Breakfast.



Client Michael Fridfinnson meets the 2017 Stampede Royalty.



MLA Greg Clark joins the DDRC's 65th anniversary commemorative art project.



Beautiful cupcakes from the DDRC's 65th anniversary celebration.



CEO Helen Cowie (second from right) chats with representatives from Christine Meikle and Emily Follensbee Schools.

Sabrina Ambrogiano

Making Her Voice Heard

If you had suggested to Sabrina Ambrogiano a year ago that she would be speaking in front of a large crowd, she would never have believed you.

However, that is exactly what the 23-year-old PACE client did at the 2017 Alberta Council for Disability Services (ACDS) conference this spring when she was a co-presenter at a workshop about the impact of being part of the DDRC's everyone belongs™ Toastmasters Club.

"Toastmasters has really helped me a lot with becoming more comfortable with talking to people," Ambrogiano said. She joined Toastmasters in 2015, and remembers how nervous she felt at the prospect of speaking in front of the small group.

"I was asked a question, and I literally stared at the table for ten seconds. I was thinking 'Do I have to answer this question? I guess I have to stand up now and answer this question,'" Ambrogiano recalled with a laugh.

Andrea McMillin, a Community Resource Worker with PACE, has seen a marked improvement in Ambrogiano's confidence since she began working on her public speaking skills, which she believes will ultimately help with her goals. Ambrogiano agrees.

"It's definitely helped a lot with my work and with my school, and with my life in general. It has made me more confident."

That confidence shines through when she speaks about her plans for the future – working with children. Ambrogiano has been dreaming of this line of work since she was a teenager, but had not completed all of the requirements to enroll.

"I like working with children because I love the smiles on their faces and how happy they always are, she said. "It's something that I've wanted to do since high school, but there was a point where I thought that I wouldn't be able to."

McMillin said that the most profound change that she has seen in Ambrogiano over the past year has been getting to a place where she believes in herself.

"I remember sitting with her the first week of classes, and she did not feel like she belonged," McMillin recalled. "I told her that she had passed the same test and accomplished the same prerequisites that the other students had. Her realizing she did have skills to be there, and that she was capable of accomplishing things in the class went a long way."

After coming to the DDRC three years ago, her Community Resource Workers helped her identify the courses she needed to take in order to get into her preferred program.

Now in her second year of the Early Learning and Child Care program at Bow Valley College, Ambrogiano even has gained practical experience by volunteering with MRUKids summer camp through Mount Royal University, as well as a daycare close to her home.

"I hope to be able to work in a daycare or a preschool," she said. "That would make me really happy."

Client



Sabrina Ambrogiano is excited to complete her program at Bow Valley College.

Paige Sampson

Busy as a Bee

Some people just thrive on being busy, and Paige Sampson is definitely among them. Between working three jobs, attending school, and keeping active, the 26-year-old CHOICES client barely has a moment to spare.

“I like being busy,” Sampson said with a smile. “I’m really proud of accomplishing my goals, like getting these different jobs.”

The first of her jobs is at the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), where she works each Tuesday to put together important information packages. The drive to give back to the city runs deep with Sampson.

“It feels really good to work somewhere that helps Calgary. Being a part of that makes me feel like I’m making a difference,” Sampson said.

by Aurora Graveland-Daines

Her second role is with Dale Carnegie Training every Monday. Here, she helps make sure that the classrooms are in tip-top shape by the time each training workshop begins.

“I put binders together with training information,” she explained. “I make sure everything’s got the right branding, and I put everything out on the tables.”

Sampson’s third gig is also the one she has been at for the longest – she is a courtesy clerk at Chestermere Safeway, and is celebrating her tenth anniversary there this fall. “I’ve met a lot of people at Safeway, and it’s a really good job,” Sampson said.

Evangeline Cabanas, a Community Resource Worker with CHOICES, said that she believes Sampson is very serious about accomplishing her employment goals and having a career she enjoys.



Paige Sampson is proud to have accomplished many career goals.

“She is hardworking and responsible,” Cabanas said. “She is always willing to accept and learn new tasks.”

Among the new challenges Sampson has decided to take on is attending Bow Valley College once a week. She explained that she wanted to improve her math literacy skills, and so enrolled in a course to achieve that goal. Cabanas said that Sampson is “very positive and passionate about learning,” which is paying off. According to Sampson, she is feeling far more confident with math since she started the course.

When she isn’t busy with work or school, Sampson enjoys keeping active by swimming three days a week, and describes herself as a “bit of a bookworm,” noting that her favourite book is *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*.

Sampson also noted that keeping her relationships strong is important to her.

“I like to communicate with and spend time with my family. I like talking to my friends,” she said. “I like working with my CRWs. It makes me happy to see them.”

Humans of DDRC

by Aurora Graveland-Daines

The DDRC is celebrating 65 years of service in 2017. To help commemorate this important milestone, we have been sharing the stories of people who make the DDRC what it is today through the “Humans of DDRC” project. Here are a few of them:



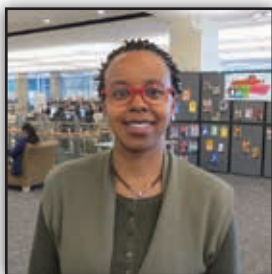
Leonka Kaluha,
South Team Client

I've been in Special Olympics for 15 years; I joined right after high school. Special Olympics gave me my voice. When I was in high school, I got bullied. It shut me down, big time. I used to shuffle my feet and look at the ground. Now when I walk, I hold my head high. I was told that I would never be coordinated enough to do sports, but look at me now. I do floor hockey, downhill skiing, soccer, and track and field, and I'm going to [the Special Olympics Alberta Summer Games] in July for track. I do the 100 M, 200 M, shotput, and the relay.

The arrival of technology for the DDRC was in the early 2000s. It had a huge impact, especially for those who were using computers for communication, and developing communication skills. The technology was very basic to begin with, but it made a real difference for so many people, especially once we were able to load programs on the computers. Clients were able to start using programs like Boardmaker to create symbols to express their thoughts. It opened all sorts of doors for communication and inclusion.



Don McKay,
Client Funding Analyst



Anne Mbugua,
PACE Community Resource Worker

I think a big barrier is people stereotyping and assuming that because someone has a disability, they're not able to contribute to society. That's one of the things that I find is hardest to overcome. Don't make assumptions, and don't limit people. As human beings, we limit ourselves, and we especially have a tendency to limit people with disabilities because of assumptions that they are unable to do a job that you and I are able to do. It's a lack of awareness of what disability is all about.

I had employment goals and wanted a job, and the DDRC has helped me to stay on track and provided support whenever I needed it. I have been working for Calgary Fasteners Ltd. for just over twelve years. I've worked here for so long that it feels like home, and I have had a chance to grow my skills and personality over that time.



Andreas Walther,
North East Team Client

New stories are posted on our Facebook page every Wednesday – you can find them at <http://bit.ly/HumansofDDRC>.

DDRC Receives Level II CET Accreditation

by Aurora Graveland-Daines

After months of hard work and dedication, the DDRC has once again achieved Level Two accreditation from our Creating Excellence Together (CET) audit in March.

CET accreditation is a requirement for all agencies in the disability services sector. Level One accreditation must be satisfied in order for agencies to receive funding from the Alberta government (through Persons with Development Disabilities, or PDD), and ultimately continue providing services to clients.

Clova Lehr, Director of Services with ACDS, presented the DDRC with its accreditation certificate, and explained some of the commendations the Agency received, including managing risk, supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve personal control, gaining competitive employment, and safeguarding individual rights.

“DDRC is an employer of choice. That means people love to work there because they go above and beyond in what they do,” Lehr said.

In order to receive Level Two accreditation, an agency must fulfil additional standards set out by the Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS), and score at least 90 per cent on Level One. With this latest audit, we have earned at least 95 percent in every possible area of excellence.

This accomplishment ranks the DDRC among the top agencies in the province; there are currently 26 agencies offering disability services in Alberta that have Level Two accreditation.

Accreditations for CET levels last for three years, so the DDRC will next see ACDS surveyors around the building in 2020.



Clova Lehr presents the CET certificate to board member Tom Shindruk.



CEO Helen Cowie celebrates the “superheroes” that make the DDRC successful.



DDRC employees attend the CET announcement event.

Holiday Open House

Come celebrate the season with free food and fun!

December 14, 2017 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

DDRC Gym 4646 Sarcee Rd. SW

Introducing the CHOICES Program

by Aurora Graveland-Daines

The DDRC is pleased to announce the rebranding of Career and Leisure Services to CHOICES as of September 18, 2017.

According to Helen Cowie, CEO of the DDRC, the update to the program name was made to better reflect the services and support that the DDRC provides to a wide array of individuals with developmental disabilities.

“All we’re changing really is the name of the program to suggest to people that this is about clients’ choice, and about meeting their expectations,” Cowie said.



Community Resource Worker Sadia and client Robert learn how to make butter in the Learning and Leadership Centre.

The CHOICES program provides community-based support to adults with developmental disabilities. The program focuses on increasing the overall quality of life of our clients and ensuring they are being fully included in their communities. Individual client goals may include the areas of volunteering, civic engagement, building relationships, and developing independence.

Linda Rayner, Director of Quality and Standards, said that clients will not experience changes or interruptions to their services due to the rebrand. “The clients can expect to receive the same quality of service,” she said. “The name actually reflects the idea of clients having their choices in terms of goals and what they would like to achieve.”

CHOICES currently provides about 7,700 hours of support to 140 clients each month.

Being an included member of the community is of the utmost importance for all people, and that aim is one of the most important for the program. Cassandra



Clients Sarah and Ada at the Rutland Park Community Garden this summer.

Therens, one of the Team Leaders of CHOICES, feels that communities are ultimately made stronger when everyone is included and has a say in them.

“Community inclusion matters because every individual has skills and abilities to contribute to make their community a better place,” she said.

Therens also mentioned the positive impact that inclusion can have on other areas of people’s lives.

“Inclusion improves the quality of life and overall happiness of the individuals we support. It also gives everyone the opportunity to gain friendships and make choices.”

Congratulations to the 2017 Inclusion Awards Nominees!

Together we are building a Calgary where everyone belongs.

Adam Cairns

Andrea McMillan

Anne Mbugua

Anni Nielsen

Austin Clem

Bow Valley College

Centre for Excellence in Foundational Learning

Bow View Manor

Brad Van Buskirk

Brian Malkinson

Christiane Blanchard

CJSW 90.9 FM

Comprehensive Care Coordinators

Daniel Sapong

Don McKay

Emily Holland

Evangeline Cabanas

Flore Aliko

Gibson Energy Inc.

Girl Guides of Canada

Heart and Stroke Foundation

Humanities 101

St. Mary’s University

Jessica Boulter

Jessica LeRuyet

Kelly Johansson

Kristin Aquino

MacEwen Hall

Food Court Team

Máire O’Carroll

Marcos Parrado

The Military Museums of Calgary

Mount Royal University Recreation Centre

PACE Team

Paige Sampson

Rhonda Davidson

The Rhythm Project

Ruba Zoughaib

Sabrina Ambrogiano

Samuel Chu

Sandra Jansen

Sandra Jimenez

Shawn Williamson

Travelodge

Calgary University

Trelena Maloff

Viorica Radencovici

Wissam Shalaby

Whitney Stout

Zachary Iwaskow

Award winners’ names in green.

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!



www.everyonebelongs.ca

everyone belongs™ is a DDRC initiative.

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

Thank You to Our Inclusion Awards Sponsors!



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:



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