

# connection

A photograph of three young people standing in a hallway. On the left, a young man with glasses and a red cap wears a light blue floral shirt and makes a hand gesture. In the center, a young woman with glasses wears a grey 'AERO-NY 87' long-sleeve shirt. On the right, a young man in a red and black jacket points towards the camera. The hallway walls are decorated with various posters, including one with 'CJSW' and 'NEXT LEVEL'.

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giving voice to the life and  
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**Spring 2019**

## A Message from Our CEO



Spring has arrived in Calgary, and with the change of the season comes new stories of growth and success from DDRC clients in *Connection*.

In this issue, you'll read about the latest in DDRC's Learning and Leadership Centre, our new LINK

program, and as always, stories written about and by clients. In their own words, art, and contributions to *Connection*, DDRC clients are able to share their own experiences, comment on important issues, and showcase their talents. We are thrilled to continue to pass this magazine to our donors, networks, and clients.

As you read through, we hope you'll take note of a few upcoming important dates and events for our agency. Our annual **Vipond Charity Golf Classic** is set to be held at the Earl Grey Golf Club for the 39th year on Monday, June 24th, as we look to add to the lifetime total of \$2.2 million raised for DDRC programs at this event. The DDRC's **Stampede Breakfast** is booked for Thursday, July 11th, and save the date for the 2019 **Inclusion Awards** on Wednesday, October 2nd.

If you would like to participate in the Vipond golf tournament, sponsor or donate to any of our events, I encourage you to e-mail us at [info@ddrc.ca](mailto:info@ddrc.ca).

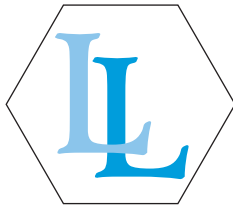
Enjoy reading about the latest successes and news from our organization, and I hope to see you soon at one of our community events!

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](https://www.facebook.com/DDRCCalgary)) or Twitter ([@DDRC\\_Calgary](https://twitter.com/DDRC_Calgary)).

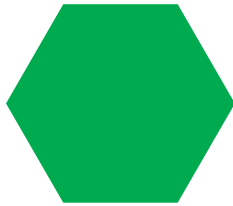
Helen Cowie, LLB; MBA

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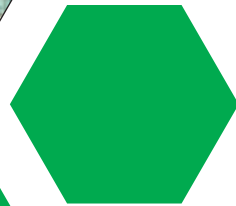
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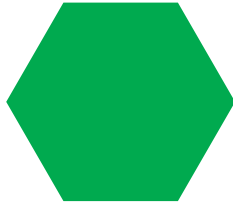
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Editor: EmmaLee Taylor  
Contributors: Bultum Mohammed, Cieran Roemer, Audrey Veltri, PBS Team  
Graphic Creation: Alex Gonzalez

## Learning and Leadership

Communication is essential to building connections and relationships—the foundation of creating inclusive communities where *everyone belongs*™. The hearing world places an emphasis on verbal communication, but this is not always an individual's natural way of communicating. For those who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, hard of hearing, or non-verbal, verbal communication can be difficult and uncomfortable, if not impossible.

When you're unable to communicate, it's easy to not just feel isolated, but to actually be isolated. Language and communication are how we express our thoughts and feelings, and without them, we may be unable to express ourselves. When someone is unable to communicate, the power to participate in discussions and decisions affecting their lives is taken away from them. To better support clients facing communication barriers, the DDRC launched the LINK program in the winter of 2018.

LINK coordinator Cynthia Pominville works one-on-one with clients to find a system of communication that works best for them. Depending on the client, this can mean creating communication books, finding and setting up the right augmentative communication device, or learning American Sign Language (ASL). Helping clients learn a standard form of communication opens channels of communication not only within the DDRC, but with the greater community as well, because they're using a language that other people know and understand.

### 5 Things to Remember When Using ASL

1. Palm orientation
2. Hand shape
3. Movement
4. Facial expressions
5. Body placement

Small groups of clients with different hearing levels are introduced to ASL and Deaf Culture through the LINK program's Sign Café, a series of eight workshops hosted by Learning and Leadership. LINK coordinator Cynthia connects DDRC clients with Deaf and Deaf-Blind people by interpreting video presentations—connecting DDRC clients to Deaf people across Canada. Clients participate in finger spelling contests and play Sign Bingo and Guess Who to practice what they've learned. Even the Community Resource Workers can't help but jump in and join the learning!

Having hearing DDRC clients in Sign Café learning ASL is important because this gives them the tools to have a small conversation with peers who use sign as their main method of communication. In their own words, clients who use ASL to communicate are "very happy" to see others learning ASL, because they know the potential for new conversations and friendships begins with communication. Sign Café opens the doors for communication so no client feels isolated because of a communication barrier.

By empowering clients with communication tools, the DDRC remains committed to including people with developmental disabilities in the community in real and meaningful ways.



Donald signs for french fries (left), Shirley signs nice to meet you (middle), Jaclyn practices the alphabet (right).

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.

# Positive Behaviour Supports

by the PBS Team

The Positive Behaviour Support (or PBS) Team is a great resource available to staff and clients who would like support to address a wide variety of goals. Many clients access PBS services to work on behaviour so they can learn things like how to manage their emotions when they are feeling stressed, how to engage in more positive behaviour that will help them achieve their goals, or how to develop more positive relationships with staff, peers, co-workers, employers, friends, family, and other members of the community.



Ryan volunteering at The Military Museums of Calgary.

Ryan Denhoff is one DDRC client who has taken advantage of our PBS services to help achieve his goals. Ryan seemed to have a hard time getting motivated, and would get frustrated when PACE staff encouraged him to work on job skills. When he got frustrated, it was difficult to help Ryan reach the potential we all knew he had.

After spending some time with Ryan, the PBS team started to understand that it wasn't an issue with Ryan's motivation; in fact, he very much wanted to find some meaningful work. Ryan just needed to have tasks broken down into smaller, more manageable steps and know when to ask for help, learn some relaxation strategies to help him stay calm when he was starting to feel frustrated, and to understand how his actions were seen by others.

Working with Ryan, his family, and Community Resource Workers (CRWs), the PBS Team developed strategies that would encourage positive behaviour and outcomes. With this behaviour plan, everyone supporting Ryan understood his needs and could work together. Today, we all know Ryan as someone who takes great pride in his volunteer work and as a good role model to others around him for how to keep an eye on our own behaviour.

Not all DDRC clients require a formal behaviour plan. PBS can also provide support to staff and clients in informal ways. This was the case for client Elise McCowan. Elise's CRW Brittany McFarlane approached PBS when she noticed Elise was feeling overwhelmed with the responsibilities of graduating from high school and heading out into the working world.

The PBS process for informal supports often starts the same way as for a client who will likely require a behaviour plan. PBS will put the client on behaviour tracking and monitor those behaviours for a week or two prior to going to

visit the client, allowing them to understand in which environments the behaviour does, or does not, occur. DDRC's behaviour tracking form, designed by PBS Specialist Steve Slopek, is one of the most comprehensive forms out there. The form tracks up to five behaviours at once, provides frontline staff a link to the client's behaviour plan (if one is available), and creates an extensive report for PBS staff to examine data and investigate behaviours of concern.



Elise volunteering at the gift shop at The Military Museums of Calgary.

The form also provides a way for frontline staff to communicate with the PBS team. Staff can leave comments, questions, or concerns on the form and PBS is able to respond, with the date highlighted to alert staff that PBS has left a comment. Furthermore, PBS is able to ask staff questions about situations and behaviours, provide suggestions to staff if needed, and provide positive feedback to staff when a strategy has worked well.

Through discussion on Elise's behaviour tracking form, along with a few visits in the community, PBS was able to determine that Elise

would benefit from some relaxation techniques and our Distress Tolerance Workbook, which helps clients learn to solve problems, and teaches them what to do if the problem is not immediately solvable. While she and CRW Brittany worked diligently through the workbook, PBS monitored behaviour through behaviour tracking. Over the next five months, Elise's behaviour tracking consistently showed improvements and it was determined by our Positive Alternatives Resource Committee that she had developed the skills she needed and no longer required PBS support.

Elise has been doing excellent since seeking PBS support. She found a lot of helpful tips in the Distress Tolerance Workbook and uses different strategies in different situations, based on how she's feeling. In January, she started volunteering at the Military Museums of Calgary's gift shop. Her love of the military and airplanes comes from her Uncle Dan and maternal grandfather. She feels volunteering at the Military Museums would not have been an option for her prior to PBS support.



The PBS Team from left to right Robyn Shields, Angelica Martin, and Steve Slopek.

Client Name: None assigned		NO CURRENT BEHAVIOUR PLAN							
When the frequency of the behaviour is rated from 0 to 3, use the following scale:									
0	This behaviour was not observed during the shift	Behaviour 1:	None assigned						
1	This behaviour was observed once during the shift	Behaviour 2:	None assigned						
2	This behaviour was observed several times during the shift	Behaviour 3:	None assigned						
3	This behaviour was observed repeatedly throughout most or all of the shift	Behaviour 4:	None assigned						
		Behaviour 5:	None assigned						
[If the date is highlighted with orange, the PBS Team has a comment for all staff to review]									
Month	Date	Shift	Support Worker Name	Location(s)	In Service (Y/N)	Behaviour Ratings	Major Incident (Y/N)	Support Worker Comments	PBS Staff Comments
						Beh. 1 Beh. 2 Beh. 3 Beh. 4 Beh. 5		(e.g., specific triggers noticed, changes observed, new behaviours, positive or restrictive practices used and whether they worked or did not work, outcomes achieved)	(e.g., behaviour plan start/stop, changes to tracking, action items from support meetings, observation noted)

An example of the PBS behaviour tracking form.

## Accessible Airwaves

Radio is a powerful communication tool and a low cost medium that reaches more people than any other media platform. Since its invention, radio has sparked new conversations and broadcast new ideas into people's homes, schools, hospitals, and workplaces—a personal and interactive platform where people can exchange ideas and share their views and experiences. By having discussions about our lives and priorities, radio helps build a community.

Dedicated to giving voice to the life and experiences of people with disabilities, Accessible Airwaves is a monthly radio podcast program on CJSW that is produced, run, and edited by people with disabilities. Each month's episode features interviews and stories related to a single theme or topic that affects people with disabilities. Affectionately referred to as The Collective, the five members, including DDRC clients Adam Cairns; Morgan Gehring; Kais



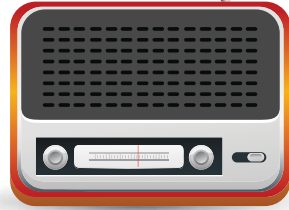
Members of The Collective from left to right Adam, Morgan, and Michael.

Mussa; and Michael Parker, have a production meeting once a month where story ideas are pitched, interview assignments are decided, and editing deadlines are finalized.

Aside from providing useful information about resources for people with disabilities, Accessible Airwaves is also about personal development, starting conversations, and connecting people of all abilities. For music lover Morgan, Accessible Airwaves is an exciting opportunity to learn more about the music and radio industry, while discussing important issues and using her voice to advocate and make a difference in the world.

From start to finish, it can take up to 20 hours to put together an episode, with much of the time spent on the back end piecing together clips and adding intros and outros. Recently, veteran member Adam has taken on a leadership role. As the longest active member of The Collective, he's having fun showing Michael, the newest member, the behind the scenes work involved with putting together a radio program. This includes showing Michael how to manage the sound board and level the volume between different microphones, transition between clips, and the sound editing Logic Pro X program. Much like photo editing, it can be tempting

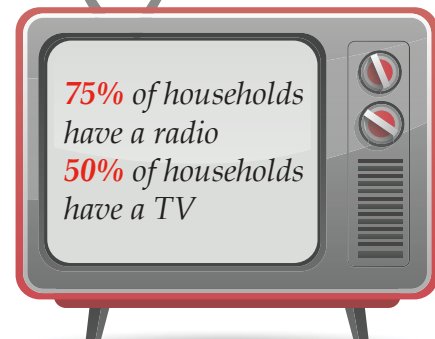
Invented in 1895



to overedit and make an interview sound flawless, but as Adam notes, "You still want to have the human emotion in the interview," and the key is finding the right balance.

Not only accessible to consume, Accessible Airwaves works within the radio industry to ensure that the creation and production of radio programs are accessible as well. Michael is currently working with the National Campus and Community Radio Association to update their guidebook on radio accessibility, which covers everything from how to make sound rooms accessible to appropriate language choices to inclusive training to different accessible technology. He's also been invited to present on the importance of accessibility at the 2019 National Community Radio Conference, which is being held in Toronto this year. If you happen to be in Toronto in June, you can check out Michael's presentation!

Accessible Airwaves since 1989



## Active Optimism

by Bultum Mohammed

My name is Bultum Mohammed. Bultum means strong, confident and to grow as a person. In Ethiopia, there is a really tall tree name Oba Bultum. The person who gave me the name "Bultum" was my father. He chose it because it was my grandpa's name. My parents immigrated to Canada from Ethiopia in 1996. I was born and raised here in Canada. I completed my high school diploma in 2018 from Robert Thirsk High School. After that, I went to Bow Valley College and completed Basic Math 2 last semester.



Bultum and CSW Ramanjeet Nanarh after a swim.

My hobbies include being active. I try to go to the YMCA every week, where I play basketball, work out, and go swimming. I also have a creative side and like to draw, listen to music, and love to dance. I like video games, movies, comedy and TV shows. I am very competitive at video games and basketball because I really like to win. If I lose at a game, I work hard and try my best to become a better player. I like to spend time with friends and family, I like to go on vacation.

My goal in life is to become an entertainer. I like comedians, such as Kevin Hart, Russell Peters, Trevor Noah, Chris Rock, Steve Carrell, Dave Chappelle, Drew Carey, and Eddie Murphy because they make people laugh. I want to

become an entertainer because I like to entertain people and make them feel happy. I joined the DDRC's PACE program in September 2018. I joined to learn more life skills and become independent using different services provided by the DDRC. PACE is helping me build my confidence, by helping me learn what I'm good at, build my resume, and prepare for job interviews. I have applied to many jobs that are in this field. Having a job in this field would make me feel great, because it would help me gain experience, and I would also like to meet new people. I'm also working on getting my driver's license, and I think I will be prepared to take the test really soon.

I mentioned that I'm part of the PACE Team, but I also use respite services that are provided by Comprehensive Care. Ramanjeet, a Community Support Worker, helps me visit places in Calgary like Chinook Mall, Cross Iron Mills, Calaway Park, Stampede Park, Flying Squirrel, and Telus Spark. Last year, I went to Calgary Stampede with Ramanjeet. It was fun, we went on rides, saw a rodeo show, got to see an Acrodunk basketball team and met the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles!



Bultum playing a game of pick-up basketball.

# Investing in Your Child's Future: Education Planning for Children with Disabilities

by Audrey Veltri



You want the best for your child who has a disability – including a postsecondary education to give them a strong start in life – so you've probably started saving for that day when they're off to college or university. You may even have set up a registered education savings plan (RESP) for your child – always a good savings strategy – but you might not be taking full advantage of the benefits of your RESP or have all the information you need to access other savings and grant options that can significantly add to your child's education nest egg. Here's a rundown of the educational funding options for children with disabilities.

## RESP Basics

Taxes on the earnings inside an RESP are payable in the hands of the child and are deferred until the child withdraws the money while attending a post-secondary institution. An RESP also offers 'free' government money through the Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG) program, which provides a 20% top-up grant to the first \$2,500 contributed each year and could add as much as \$7,200 in extra capital over time. Additional grants may also be available to RESP holders through the Canada Learning Bond (CLB).

## Added Value of an RESP for a Child with a Disability

An RESP for a beneficiary who is eligible for the disability tax credit (DTC) must be collapsed at the end of the 40th year after it was started. This means you have five extra years to continue contributing to your child's RESP and enjoy

**Audrey is a mother of a child with autism and a financial planner with a passion for supporting families and non-profits. She hosts workshops for DDRC families and is a tremendous advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.**

the considerable added value that comes from the magic of compounding interest inside a tax-deferred plan. If your child is eligible for the DTC and is unable to pursue post-secondary education, then starting in 2014, you may be eligible to transfer the accumulated income in the RESP to the child's registered disability savings plan (RDSP). Students with disabilities can also claim the non-refundable education income tax credit at the full-time rate, even if the student does not meet the full-time attendance requirement.

## Government Sources for Educational Funding

When a child with a disability is ready for college or university, they may qualify for the Canada Study and/or Access Grants funded by the Government of Canada. They may also be eligible for assistance from provincial bursary programs.

- The Canada Study Grant for the Accommodation of Students with Permanent Disabilities can provide up to \$8,000 per loan year to help pay for exceptional education-related costs associated with a disability. These costs may include tutors, oral or sign interpreters, attendant care for studies, specialized transportation (to and from school only), learning disability assessments, note takers, readers, and brailers.

- The Canada Access Study Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities is awarded to students with permanent disabilities who have demonstrated financial need. It is intended to assist in covering the costs of accommodation, tuition, books, and other education-related expenses up to \$2,000 per loan year.

## Scholarships, Awards, and Bursaries

To further complement education savings, investigate the many scholarships, awards, and bursaries available through non-governmental associations and schools themselves.

- Associations such as the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada offer various awards.

- Contact the Awards Office at your college or university of choice.

- A Financial Aid Directory is available through the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) [www.neads.ca](http://www.neads.ca).

## Other Investment Options

You need every advantage you can get when saving to help your children pay for post-secondary education. Consider non-registered investment strategies that can deliver important savings beyond RESPs.

- Most people think of life insurance as basic financial protection for loved ones but a permanent life insurance policy can also help fund your child's education.

- A properly structured age 40 trust can be an effective means of accumulating capital for education. With this strategy, it is important to keep in mind government assistance guidelines.

- Tax-advantaged mutual funds and monthly income portfolios are mutual fund options for education savings.

It's important to put education and financial plans in place as early as possible. We can help establish a well-designed program that will consider the many available options, help your children reach their full potential, and help you to achieve your hopes for their future.





Monday, June 24, 2019

**Play-your-own-ball, best net 3 of 4 Stableford points tournament**

**All proceeds to charity, with more than \$2.2 million raised since 1981**

**Registration is \$375 per person or \$1400 for a team of four**

**1:00 pm shotgun start. Lunch, tee gift, prizes, live auction, dinner**

*New this year: Sunday Night Drive Chip & Putt contest. 7:00pm bag drop, prizes, cocktails, contests, and social.*



To register, email [vipond@ddrc.ca](mailto:vipond@ddrc.ca) or visit [www.ddrc.ca/vipond](http://www.ddrc.ca/vipond)



**DDRC**  
Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary

## Creative Connections

A space dedicated to providing DDRC clients with an opportunity to demonstrate their creative pursuits in the community.



Leonka's Peanut Dancing in Daisies (above), Caribbean Calm (right), and her contribution to a Calgary Stampede exhibit using Shibari tie-dye technique (far right).

Leonka Kaluha likes the joy beautiful artwork brings to others. In 2018, she was thrilled to have her fluid acrylic piece, *Peanut Dancing in Daisies*, included in Indefinite Arts' Albertan Perspectives exhibit. Peanut was so popular in Hong Kong and Seoul, that an exhibition visitor bought him in July. Her creativity and artwork goes beyond canvas and paper, though, as she's also had her designs used on scarves and socks. In the future, she'd like to use tape as a blocking technique for paintings and create a paper lantern.



For the last four years, Cory Stevens, an Integrated Living Services client, has enjoyed going to Indefinite Arts once a week. Over the years, he has found that he has a passion for creating stylized versions of artwork. Below are Cory's pieces of a cow skull and the Titanic.



Cory's drawings of the Titanic (left), and a cow's skull (above).

## Smart Choices

by Cieran Roemer

Hello, my name is Cieran. This is my story.

Every Thursday, I attend [Everyone Belongs™] Toastmasters. At Toastmasters I present "Word of the Day", "Joke of the Day", or "Thought of the Day". Crysta, the Toastmasters leader, gives me these tasks and they are my responsibility. Everyone is encouraging at Toastmasters. In the past, I was too nervous to do public speaking. My parents didn't know that I was nervous. Now they know about Toastmasters and they remind me to fulfil my responsibility. They want to encourage me, so I can speak clearly. Toastmasters is supposed to be encouraging, we need to listen and to be respectful and encouraging.



My life is all about friends and memories of people that are around me. One thing I like about the DDRC is being in Toastmasters,

because it's a place where I feel like I belong. Responsibility is one of my goals, and at Toastmasters I get to practice being responsible.

At first, I was nervous, just a little, to attend the Transitional Vocational Program (TVP) at Mount Royal University. My parents encouraged me to join TVP so that I could continue to improve my reading, writing, focus, and technology skills.

**"One thing I like [...] is being in Toastmasters, because it's a place where I feel like I belong."**

TVP has given me the opportunity to continue doing math and spelling, and get better at both. When I was in high school, I used to do math and I struggled. Now, it is easier. When I do reading for my spare time, I always have a new book in front of me. My reading has improved since joining TVP. Literacy is giving me enjoyment and helps me focus and stay on task. I've made more friends at TVP and continued old friendships.



Cieran giving a speech at the Everyone Belongs™ Toastmasters club (below left), and Cieran with Louise Nesterenko owner of Books Between Friends and fellow volunteer Liz (above).

The reason why I wanted to look for volunteer opportunities is to continue volunteering like I did while in high school. I used to help out at a seniors home, and that was good because I helped lonely people. I gave those people company. I helped them go bowling and play other games. Volunteering gave me responsibility, and the chance to make new relationships. I like volunteering because it makes me feel like I belong.

For the last two years, I have been going to volunteer at Books Between Friends on Wednesday afternoons. Books Between Friends is a book store. They have only donated books and sell them for charity. I help out the owners, Louise and Bob. I sort donated books, find books with rips and tears and take them to "happy land". "Happy land" is the place where ripped and torn books go to be recycled. Louise and Bob have given me the title "Volunteer Captain" as I am a role model, showing new volunteers how to do things. I have a goal of volunteering, and Books Between Friends helps me meet my goal. I like feeling like I am helping raise money for charity.

I also volunteer at events around Calgary. This past fall, I volunteered at Beakerhead, where I helped with the Skybridge Syncopation installation. It was pretty cool, because I got to tell people how the sound they made in the plus 15 was creating the light show that was happening in the plus 15 around them.

Thank you for reading my story.

P.S. On March 28, 2019, Cieran completed the Competent Communicator program! She is now looking forward to participating in Toastmasters' new Pathways program.

# Stampede Breakfast

live music

fun activities

prizes



Thursday, July 11th, 2019

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.

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