

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY JUNE
2023 - 2024

**Empowering Communities, Inspiring Change:
A Year of Impact and Growth**



VISION

*All autistic people have
a life full of possibilities.*



MISSION

*To enhance the lives of autistic people through
knowledge, services and inclusive opportunities.*



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we look back on another year of impactful work, we are filled with gratitude for the continued support and dedication of our community. This year has been marked by significant achievements, and it is thanks to the collective efforts of our team, partners, and supporters that we have reached these milestones.

We are particularly excited to share the launch of our Beyond the Spectrum: Presentations & Workshops, a new series of online educational sessions now fully managed by Autism Edmonton. These sessions, which cover crucial topics, have been well-received for their relevance and practical insights. Led by Autistic self-advocates and other field experts, these sessions are designed to provide valuable knowledge and support to our community.

Our commitment to addressing the critical needs of our members has been evident through several key initiatives. The expansion of our Housing and Employment services and the introduction of the Sensory Experiences Rental Program have significantly enhanced the support we provide. Additionally, our active participation in numerous resource fairs and the success of our discussion groups further demonstrate our dedication to fostering connection and support within the Autistic community.

This year has also highlighted an increasing demand for our services. Our League program saw a remarkable 65% rise in participants, emphasizing the urgent need for expanded adult services and opportunities. Additionally, our Pantry Program distributed 1,483 hampers to individuals facing food insecurity, reflecting another area of growing demand that we are committed to addressing.

As we enter the final year of our strategic plan, we are focused on building on our successes and ensuring the sustainability of our services. The ongoing increase in demand presents both challenges and opportunities, motivating us to continually adapt and innovate. This pivotal year will be crucial in consolidating our achievements, refining our strategies, and preparing for future growth. We are committed to ensuring that our programs meet the evolving needs of our community while laying a strong foundation for continued support, inclusivity, and equity.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our Board of Directors for their invaluable guidance, and to our exceptional staff for their continued dedication. To our generous donors, your support is vital to our mission, and we are deeply appreciative of your contributions.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. Together, we are making a meaningful difference and paving the way for a brighter future for Autistic individuals and families in our community.

With sincere appreciation,

Melinda Noyes
Executive Director

Lisa Laferriere
Chair, Board of Directors

WORDS MATTER

IDENTITY FIRST LANGUAGE



Autism is an integral & inseparable part of a person's identity.

The words we choose can significantly impact those around us. By adopting respectful and inclusive language, we create a more positive and supportive environment. Embracing inclusive language involves being attentive, intentional, and adaptable to the communication preferences of others. We engage with individuals who have lived experiences to continuously refine and enhance our language practices.

Our experience shows that many people favor "identity-first" language, such as "autistic person," as it acknowledges autism as an integral and inseparable part of a person's identity. We recognize and honour this preference and strive to reflect it accurately in this report.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Autism Edmonton acknowledges with respect that we gather on the traditional lands of Treaty 6 Territory, known as Amiskwacîwâskahikan, Edmonton. The footsteps of diverse Indigenous peoples have marked this territory from time immemorial – Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Dene, Nakota Sioux, and Métis – whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to enrich our communities.

We pay our respects to the elders, past and present, who have stewarded the land, water, and life of this region. We also acknowledge the legacy and impacts of colonization. As we move forward, we are committed to working together to foster equality and inclusiveness, learning from the past to build a better future. As treaty members, we embrace our shared responsibility for stewardship of this beautiful land and community, guided by the collective wisdom and traditions of Indigenous cultures.

BEYOND THE SPECTRUM

WORKSHOPS & EDUCATION

Autism Edmonton is thrilled to unveil our brand-new series of online learning sessions focused on Autism and Neurodiversity! These sessions, previously offered through Autism Society Alberta (ASA) and their Family Resource Centres (FRC), are now coming directly to you, created, moderated, and facilitated by Autism Edmonton.

Beyond the Spectrum has become a vibrant hub for valuable educational opportunities, covering essential topics such as education, housing, and employment. These sessions feature dynamic subjects including FSCD, Transition to Adulthood, Reducing Barriers for Neurodivergent Voting in Federal Elections, Financial Planning, and many more!

We are excited to bring you insights from Autistic self-advocates and other field experts, ensuring that each session delivers valuable, firsthand knowledge and expertise. Alongside these new offerings, Autism Edmonton continues to provide foundational courses like Autism 101 and Autism 201, as well as specialized training in Abuse Prevention and Response Protocol (APRP) and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI).

EDUCATION

Training Information Sessions of Varied Subjects:

36
SESSIONS

1428
PARTICIPANTS

Non Violent Crisis Intervention:

3
WORKSHOPS

70
PARTICIPANTS

Autism 101

28
SESSIONS

999
PARTICIPANTS

Autism 201

19
SESSIONS

554
PARTICIPANTS



SOCIAL STATS

 **INSTAGRAM**
TOTAL FOLLOWERS: 3,071 NEW FOLLOWERS: 1,769

 **FACEBOOK**
TOTAL FOLLOWERS: 6,400 NEW FOLLOWERS: 626

 **X/TWITTER**
TOTAL FOLLOWERS: 1,788

 **LINKEDIN**
TOTAL FOLLOWERS: 928

SUPPORT SERVICES



THE LEAGUE

- 819 PARTICIPANTS
- 56 NEW PARTICIPANTS
- 45 ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

**League Participants are
Up 65% over last year!**

OCCASIO

- 731 PARTICIPANTS
- 162 NEW PARTICIPANTS
- 389 ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
- 4369.5 RESPITE HOURS

DISCUSSION GROUPS

- AUTISTIC ADULTS DISCUSSION GROUP:** 128 PARTICIPANTS, 10 MEETINGS
- LGBTQ+ DISCUSSION GROUP:** 61 PARTICIPANTS, 10 MEETINGS
- THE GOLDEN JOURNEY DISCUSSION GROUP:** 79 PARTICIPANTS, 11 MEETINGS
- PARENTS OF ADULTS DISCUSSION GROUP:** 99 PARTICIPANTS, 10 MEETINGS
- AUTISTIC WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP:** 161 PARTICIPANTS, 17 MEETINGS

THE PANTRY

- 1,483 HAMPERS DISTRIBUTED** Value of \$81,565

IN THE PAST YEAR, AUTISM EDMONTON HAS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN 25 RESOURCE FAIRS, ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES & ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE EDMONTON REGION TO RAISE AWARENESS AND PROVIDE VALUABLE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SERVICES. THESE EVENTS HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN CONNECTING WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND PROFESSIONALS, FOSTERING A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF AUTISM, AND EXPANDING OUR OUTREACH EFFORTS.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CHILDREN'S AUTISM COLLABORATIVE TEAM (CACT)

MEETINGS: 5
PARTICIPANTS: 101

At Autism Edmonton, we proudly facilitate the Children's Autism Collaborative Team (CACT), a dedicated group of professionals committed to supporting autistic children and their families. This collaborative effort brings together experts and agencies from across the Autistic community to engage in open, roundtable discussions. These sessions are designed to share knowledge and resources, covering a range of essential topics such as respite care, Program Unit Funding (PUF), Specialized Services, and Behavioral Developmental Supports.

Our primary goal is to foster an environment where agencies can exchange insights on the available programming for autistic children, explore challenges and solutions in service delivery, and streamline the referral process to ensure families receive the support they need. Together, we are building a stronger network of care for the autism community.

TRANSITIONS RESOURCE COMMITTEE

MEETINGS: 10
PARTICIPANTS: 226

Autism Edmonton proudly leads the Transitions Resource Committee, a collaborative group dedicated to supporting individuals as they transition into adulthood. This committee brings together representatives from various organizations to connect, share insights, and discuss new programming that specifically addresses the needs of young people aged 16-17 as they prepare for adulthood. Through regular presentations and discussions, the group stays informed about emerging programs and services. With new participants and organizations continually joining, the Transitions Resource Committee plays a crucial role in ensuring a seamless transition to adulthood for individuals in the Autistic community.

LAUNCH OF AUTISM EDMONTON SENSORY EXPERIENCES RENTAL PROGRAM

Autism Edmonton proudly launched our Sensory Experiences Rental Program. These thoughtfully designed spaces provide a calming and supportive environment, making them ideal for events, schools, and community gatherings. By making these spaces accessible, we are advancing our commitment to community inclusion, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their sensory needs, can fully participate in shared experiences. During its inception the Sensory Experiences Rental Program had appearances at the Maskwacis Education Schools Commission Graduation Powwow, Folk Fest, a Realtors Open, the Sampson Cree Powwow, Artisan Markets, the 2024 Autism Alberta Alliance Event, and so much more!

EMPLOYEMENT BY THE NUMBERS



EDUCATE EMPOWER EMPLOY

14

INDIVIDUALS
SUPPORTED
TO SECURE
MEANINGFUL
EMPLOYMENT

7

COHORTS
HOSTED
IN THE
EMPLOYMENT
PROGRAM

2

EMPLOYMENT
ACCOMODATION
SESSIONS
HOSTED

5

EMPLOYMENT
PARTNERSHIPS
DEVELOPED
WITH
EMPLOYERS

HOUSING

21 NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED
IN SECURING HOUSING

10 INFORMATION NIGHTS HOSTED

9 HOUSING PROVINCIAL MEETINGS HOSTED
WITH OVER 750 ATTENDEES EITHER
VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON

LAUNCHED THE **ALBERTA PROVINCIAL
HOUSING ROAD MAP** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
AUTISM ALBERTA.

A SEVEN SECTION RESOURCE THAT HELPS
AUTISTIC PEOPLE FIND HOUSING IN ALBERTA,
WITH A FOCUS ON LIVING AS INDEPENDENTLY
AS POSSIBLE.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND
ON THE AUTISM ALBERTA WEBSITE.



"Thank you for allowing me to connect with you for several of my issues this year. From connecting with you for my autistic housing needs and explaining some of the challenges and discriminations that I have faced with property management groups/landlords throughout the past year. To some challenges with gaining support for some of my autistic needs, and relaying feedback or concerns from sessions you have hosted that I have been a participant of. I truly appreciate all the support and communication you have provided throughout this year. I also appreciate your willingness to connect with me through email, understanding that this is the best communication option for me means a lot to me. Thank you for everything you have done to support me, I am very appreciative of everything."

- AHNA Program Participant



CONNECT WITH US

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