



# 2016-2017 Annual Report





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## Message from the Chair

Greetings Core Members, Board of Connectors, Astonished Staff, volunteers, members, donors, former board members and guests.

It is fitting that our AGM falls on the date of the summer solstice. While cultures around the world mark this day as one of rebirth, fertility, religion, remembrance, or growth, I see this day as one of awakening. I am reminded of how quickly time passes as daylight begins to lessen, yet somehow I am able to spend more time with family and friends. There may be more work to tend to in gardens, yards, and fields, but these efforts will offer new opportunities to spend time breaking bread with others in the cooler months.

Not much different are my observations of the work of Astonished. Everyone who knows ‘who we are’ and ‘what we do’ have contributed to an awakening, of sorts. Astonished has reminded us that time passes quickly and that there is still a great amount of work to be accomplished to achieve an authentically inclusive society. There are times our work requires more effort, but the outcomes allow us to be with each other to celebrate our successes.

On behalf of Astonished, I offer our most sincere gratitude to all of you who have embarked on this journey of awakening, nurturing, fostering, and growth.

Warmly,



Brenda Rossow-Kimball, Board Chair  
Astonished!



## Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of Astonished!

I returned this past September (2016) to the Astonished! Team in the role of Executive Director after coming back from maternity leave. Your warm welcome and genuine care motivates me to continue to work diligently to carry out the vision of the Astonished! Community.

I would like to thank Rhea Boysen for her good work while I was away. Her dedication and hard work contributed to the success of the past year.



2016-2017 was another incredible year marked with many noteworthy accomplishments including:

- continuing to offer 3 person-centered programs in the areas of self-discovery, recreation, and teaching & learning which respond directly to each Core Members' strengths, dreams, and needs;
- welcoming 4 new Core Members;
- engaging in research, teaching, and learning opportunities
  - developing and delivering presentations to multiple University of Regina classes,
  - delivering two presentations at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport conference;
  - collaborative research project with Dr. Randy Johner entitled Inclusivity Unmasked;

- continuing to grow and respond to the Astonished! Profile in the wider community;
- managing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Grow Gratitude fundraising campaign, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Walk and Roll, and multiple fundraising activities/events including the Annual Spring Gala.

In all that we do, Astonished! keeps the focus on building a culture that is grounded in the strengths perspective and dedicated to the motto 'better together'. We continue to be honoured and humbled by the support of the Astonished! Community as well as the wider community in Regina and beyond. I thank you for your active involvement in enabling the work of Astonished! and ultimately the work of the Astonished! Core Members. I encourage you to share the work and the story of Astonished! with your friends, family, and work place.

With Gratitude,



Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

## Many Thanks

### Board of Connectors

Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball - Chair

Dr. Randy Johner - Vice Chair

Joy Lindenbach - Treasurer

Karen Clark - Secretary

Alykhan Bhanji - Member

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### Finance Committee

Sandra Brandt

Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

Joy Lindenbach

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### Global Fundraising Committee

Ruth Blaser

Rhea Boysen

Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

Heather Dorgan

Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball

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### Spring Gala Planning Committee

Rhea Boysen

Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

Deb Ottenbreit

Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball

Katherine Taylor

### Program Advisory Committee

Kelsey Culbert

Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

Judy Humphries

Dr. Randy Johner

Brenda MacLauchlan

Katherine Taylor

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### Astonished! Communications

Brenda MacLauchlan

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### Human Resources Committee

Karen Clark

Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

Brian Mitchell-Walker

**Many Thanks to our placement  
students and program volunteers**

## Astonished! Staff

### **Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous – Executive Director**

Bonnie, originally from Aylsham, Saskatchewan, moved to Regina upon graduating high school. She has completed a BKin in Adapted Physical Activity and Sport and Recreation Administration. Bonnie has over a decade of experience working in the disAbility field. As a sessional lecturer, she instructs in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies in the areas of Adapted Movement Science and Recreation Administration. She is a founding board member of Creative Options Regina and has sat on the board for eight years. Bonnie's philosophy is grounded in the Strengths Perspective and she is dedicated to creating opportunities for adults with complex physical disAbilities to live a life according to their strengths, dreams, and needs.

### **Katherine Taylor - Program Coordinator**

Katherine comes from small town Saskatchewan, where she grew up on a farm and went to high school in Yorkton, SK. After graduating from high school, Katherine moved to Regina to attend University. After convocating from the University of Regina, with a degree in Kinesiology, Katherine's career and interests took her to Saskatoon. While there, she worked as an Exercise Therapist in a Physiotherapy clinic after becoming a certified CSEP-CEP. After spending a year and half in the city of bridges, Regina was still calling her home. After making the move back to Regina, Katherine was ecstatic to find Astonished!

Katherine still has a passion for health and wellness field, but can't imagine life without her A! family.





# The Big Sky Centre for Learning and Being Astonished! Inc. Overview

The Big Sky Centre for Learning and Being Astonished! Inc. is a Registered Charity based in Regina, Saskatchewan. We work in **inclusive community** to address barriers facing young adults with complex physical disAbilities (Core Members) by creating opportunities for teaching and learning; social, recreational and cultural engagement; and for employment and housing.

The **Astonished Guiding Principles and Values**, developed in the early years, and always a work in progress, continue to guide us:

### Who we are and how we work together

- Astonished! focuses on **young adults** with complex physical disAbilities and **their particular place in a vibrant and diverse community**.
- Astonished! **celebrates creativity, capacity, diversity**.
- Astonished! believes that **inclusion is individual**, and starts with the dreams, strengths, and needs of the individual.
- For Astonished! inclusion means we are **better together**, and is always a work in progress.
- Astonished! **affirms interdependence**.

### Astonished! Values Community

- Astonished! believes in building and nurturing **respectful, resilient community** and a culture of inclusion and respect.
- **Astonished!** works to **create spaces and places of belonging** where all ages, abilities, races, incomes, genders, and sexual orientations can offer their gifts and time, and receive the gifts and nurture of others through living, working and playing together.
- **Astonished!** respects **Earth and the natural world** which offers teachings about resilience, change, diversity, healing, and community that contribute to our vision and work.
- **Astonished!** encourages and supports **arts and artists**. We live out inclusion and accessibility in language and communication, facilities and activities, while we build and sustain the well-being of community.

### Consensus

- **Astonished!** respects our humanness; **we try our best, learn from mistakes**, and hang in with each other through rough times as well as easy times.
- **Astonished!** makes decision by **consultation and consensus**.

## 2016-2017 Astonished! Programs



### 1. The Astonished !Teaching and Learning Centre (A!TLC)

The A!TLC is a place where young adults with complex physical disAbilities become Student Researchers. Established in January of 2013, A!TLC provides unique opportunities designed around each individual's particular strengths,



dreams, and needs. Astonished staff, volunteers, and placement students support each Student Researcher as they determine and navigate a program PATH or areas of interest unique to them. Additional program content is designed around common areas of interest. Further, Student Researchers are leaders and work with the University Community in research and teaching about disAbility and inclusion.

A!TLC highlights and accomplishments from the 2016-2017 year include:

- recruiting and shaping 13 practicum/placement students from numerous faculties including the Faculties of Education, Kinesiology and Health Studies, and Social Work;
- welcoming and shaping numerous student volunteers;
- working with a Graduate Student on a research project;
- participating in a mental health mini workshop series;
- developing and delivering presentations in Kinesiology 120, Kinesiology 241, Kinesiology 342 and Social Work 860;
- weekly Yoga sessions co-facilitated by Student Researcher Rebekah Lindenbach and Ruth Blaser from 'Yoga for Every Body';
- dedicated time for each Student Researcher to work on individualized goals and areas of interest as highlighted in each Student Researcher's submission.

## A!TLC Student Researcher Submissions

*Kelsey Culbert*



Photo credit: John Loeppky and Kelsey Culbert in *Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People*. Photo by Chris Graham Photo. Globe Theatre, 2016

My name is Kelsey Culbert. Most people who know me well would say that I am a busy individual who is passionate, determined and always happy. I think it is fair to say that I go after what I want and I work hard to accomplish my goals. A!TLC enables me to think about my goals and identify how to achieve those goals. Over the past year my goals have been centered around: a) motivational speaking and writing, b) teaching others about disAbility, c) being involved in the Campus for All initiative as a student and d) increasing my navigation skills. To work towards these goals of I have delivered multiple presentations to various classes at the University of Regina, co-collaborated on a research project that is slated for publication this fall, created and performed 'Neither Heroes Nor Ordinary People at the Globe Theatre and the Cathedral

Arts Festival, and practiced my navigation skills on the track at the University of Regina.

*Sean Davis*

Hi, my name is Sean and I am a Student Researcher at Astonished! Over the past year, I have been developing a lot of my PATH work. Some of those things include improving navigation skills, practicing communication skills, becoming more assertive, and increasing social activities - like scheduling dates with my friends. I have also completed a few presentations for different classes at the university. Some of my bigger interests are in sports. I am a big fan of the Regina Pats, the Saskatchewan Roughriders, the Toronto Blue Jays, and the Toronto Maple Leafs. Back in February 2016 I had moved into Cheshire. I have been settling in over the past year, and trying to make my room feel more like my own. Over the past year, some of my favourite events at Astonished! were going to the sports games with my friends, and going to the Adult Science Night at the Saskatchewan Science Centre.



*Kennen Dorgan*



My name is Kennen Dorgan, I'm from Grenfell Sk. In the past year, I have spent a lot of time working on literacy and learning about technology. My goal is to have my own cell phone so I can text my friends and family. So to achieve that I have been learning to read. I've also been learning about different apps and functions of cell phones. I enjoy practicing and learning about photography as well. I did a presentation for the kinesiology students this past year that focused on the strength based perspective. I shared with them some stories and told them about the resources I use in my day to day life.

*Kaitlyn Hoar*

I have had a very active year planning and reaching some of my goals. I completed the 21km Queen City marathon, took the COR Saint John's Ambulance course, planned a steak night on my own with my aide and was responsible for sourcing out and collecting all product donations. I am very social and love planning and attending different events. For example, I am a member of the Astonished! Leadership team and I plan monthly events for the Astonished! Core Members. Recently, with Bonnie, I also co-planned the Astonished! Volunteer Appreciation event and I am planning the upcoming BBQ Fundraiser at M&M meats. With the help of Astonished! and CBC Newscast, I was lucky to meet people from the disabled hunters group, 306. I am now an honorary member. There is over 700 members in this group. One of my favorite accomplishments this past year was getting my tattoo which I have wanted for a long time. The tattoo is a symbol which means where there is a will there is a way. This is something I live by. I am looking forward to planning and exploring other options that I would enjoy and like to add to my Path.



*Rebekah Lindenbach*



I am Rebekah Lindenbach and I am awesome. My PATH does everything to support my awesomeness! I like creating community. This is an essential part of all my PATH projects. For example I team with Ruth Blaser to lead Yoga for Every Body once a week in the Astonished! Teaching and Learning Centre. I like how everyone is becoming more comfortable with yoga and with all of us doing yoga together. Yoga is helping us to be more flexible together. Another example would be my quilt. I wanted to spend more time with my friend Deb Ottenbreit. Making a beautiful quilt together was a fun way to do this. Because of this my family and Deb's family became closer friends. I hope that my future PATH might include another project with my friend Deb.

*Avery Ottenbreit*

Over the past year, I have been working on many different PATH goals and interests. I have participated in a presentation for a class at the U of R, I have worked on a presentation about Spain, and completed a lot of research on accessible travel, with a focus on Europe. I am also continuing to work on my cooking skills, I have attended a cooking class, and I am trying different recipes out. I usually try to cook around twice a week for my family. Another one of my PATH goals was to have more social outings. I completed this by having friend dates randomly throughout the last few semesters. A highlight and major goal I completed with one of my closest friends was getting a tattoo together. Another ongoing goal on my PATH is that I am very interested in working with dogs and researching training facilities. I am hoping to get some training experience with Katherine's new puppy, and other dogs at the training facilities I have researched.



## 2. Summer Literacy



Astonished! is researching, developing, and delivering literacy services specific to the strengths, dreams, and needs of Core Members. In the Summer of 2013, Astonished! offered a pilot program to explore and respond to the strengths, dreams, and needs of 5 Core

members. Since summer of 2013 we have offered the program annually.

The summer session in 2016 had 10 Core Members, with 1 core member receiving one-on-one pre-literacy lessons and 9 core members receiving group lessons. Through fun, creative, and age appropriate activities, program content focused on reading comprehension, retention, creative writing, financial literacy, technology, and social media. Program sessions took place both inside a traditional classroom as well as outside at the University of Regina. In addition, an optional evening literacy session took place at local community establishments and parks. Here, the Core Members participating in the program enjoyed various activities that use literacy such as Scrabble, Pictionary, Charades and various apps.

For additional support we hired two summer students to assist with program development, implementation, and evaluation. We are pleased to be offering the program again in summer 2017 with 11 Core Members.



### 3. Social Club

On a monthly basis Astonished! offers an inclusive, social recreation and/or physically active event to the Astonished! Core Members. This program is carried out through the vision and planning of the Astonished! Leadership Team. Volunteers assist with event implementation. Events take place at various local businesses and establishments, as well as at the University of Regina. These events provide a great avenue for building inclusive community as core members gather with and meet new friends; potential Core Members have a chance to see what Astonished! is all about; and university students have a chance to form meaningful relationships and gain experience.

Continuing to build on the A! Dance Project, a pilot dreamed up by Jake Sawa and presented to Astonished, we continue to offer 4 dance sessions a year. These sessions give Core Members the opportunity to explore their own rhythm and movements in traditional and non-traditional ways.

#### 2016-2017 Social Club Events

- Theatre performance at the Artesian
- Variety Night
- Wascana Summer Celebration
- Regina Red Sox game
- Annual A! Summer BBQ
- Bowling & Pizza night
- Halloween Howl
- University of Regina Cougar Basketball game
- Annual A! Holiday Feast
- University of Regina Cougar Hockey game
- Movie & Pizza
- Adult Science Night at the Science Centre



#### 4. PATH to Future Endeavors

Astonished! is currently determining a way to learn more about Core Members strengths, dreams, and needs as they relate to vocation. Highlights from the past year include:

- December 2016 marked the completion of Core Member Ryan Ross' contract with Astonished! From January 2013 to December 2016 Ryan held the position of Astonished! Facebook Manager. With this position Ryan was supported by the Astonished! Program Coordinator and was responsible for the content that appeared on the Astonished! Facebook page. Ryan lives in Regina and is a resident at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre. Over the years Ryan's position was made possible by a grant from Human Resources Development Canada as well as a partnership with a private organization. We are thankful for the opportunity to have supported Ryan in his vocation dream;
- contracting with the Astonished! Leadership Team to plan the monthly Social Club Events. For the 2016-2017 year, 2 Core Members were on the team and had the opportunity to develop program and event planning skills;
- Kelsey continues to add experience to her growing resume by serving on the Astonished! Program Advisory Committee. Here, Kelsey is learning skills related to leadership, strategic planning, decision making, and promotion.



## Astonished! & the University of Regina

Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Regina, Astonished! and the University collaborate on research and inclusion opportunities. This reciprocal partnership provides great opportunities for young adults with complex physical disAbilities and the U of R student body, faculty, and staff to learn from each other.

We demonstrate a model for social inclusion in an accessible post-secondary education environment.

Over the past year Astonished! and the University have continued to work together on common areas of interest within the framework of the University of Regina's strategic plan and Astonished's mandate. The MOU enables Astonished! and the University to work together to:

- develop inclusion workshops for students enrolled in the Faculties of Education, Social Work, Journalism and Kinesiology and Health Studies;
- create, implement, and evaluate teaching, learning, and research opportunities related to social inclusion and other areas of mutual interest with students, staff, and faculty;
- create opportunities for students and faculty to increase their personal and professional capacities to learn, work, and play with people who experience disAbilities;
- ensure that the U of R is supportive in locating, confirming, and sustaining accessible physical campus space to be used by Astonished! for its programming.



Highlights from the past year include:

- welcoming and mentoring 13 practicum/placement students from numerous faculties including the Faculties of Education, Kinesiology and Health Studies, and Social Work;
- welcoming and shaping numerous student volunteers;
- working with a Graduate Student from the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies on a research project;
- developing and delivering presentations in Kinesiology 120, Kinesiology 241, Kinesiology 342 and SW 860;
- partnering with 5 groups of students from Kin 342 to plan and implement the Astonished! Walk and Roll as part of their course assignments;
- partnering with the Justice Studies Student Society on their Justice for All fundraising event;
- continuing to work with Dr. Randy Johner on a research project entitled Inclusivity Unmasked.



## Fundraising

The Astonished! Board of Connectors and Staff are responsible for raising the annual budget. The Global Fundraising Committee along with the Board of Connectors have also set a goal to work towards building an operating reserve of \$200,000. With the hard work of the Board of Connectors, staff, volunteers, many core members and their families, and with support from our long-time donors, new donors, and the community we were able to meet the 2016-2017 budget and build towards establishing a healthy operating reserve.

### 2016-2017 Fundraising Strategies

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Grow Gratitude Campaign (Fall 2016)
- 2 Wine Tasting Events
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Walk and Roll
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Halloween Howl
- Proceeds from Kaitlyn Hoar's Annual Steak Night
- Proceeds for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual M&M Meets BBQ Fundraiser
- Support from 2 Foundations
  - JBL Foundation
  - The G Murray and Edna Forbes Foundation at the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation
- Grants
  - Canada Summer Job Grants
  - 2 grants from the Community Initiative Fund
- Donations from various groups
  - Highland Curling Club
  - Sunset Unite Church
  - FCC Dress Down for Success
- 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Gala





### Contact Information

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