

# Annual Report

2018-2019





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## Message from the Chair

On behalf of the student researchers, core members, families, staff, supporters, funders, and board of connectors, I am pleased to welcome you to our Annual General Meeting.

Over ten years ago, Astonished! began as a conversation that centred around equality, dignity, and hope. Young adults living with complex disAbilities and their families understood that *having choice* is the best way to ensure that one's strengths, dreams, and needs are acknowledged, expressed, and realized. Years of passion and determination have led us to this, our 11th AGM.

To whom can we attribute the success of Astonished? We are so thankful for countless supporters; donors, gala attendees, sponsors, and cheerleaders. We have exceptional leadership within the organization (Executive Director, Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous and Program Coordinator, Katherine Taylor). We have great visioning from the student researchers and core members. The companions, family members, volunteers, and placement students who live alongside us help support Astonished in all its endeavours. Just as the Astonished motto states: *We are better together.*

We are so happy you have joined us on this journey.

We are grateful for the opportunity to be stewards of goodness and equality on Treaty 4 Territory, the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Lakota, Nakoda, and homeland of the Métis.

Warmly,



Brenda Rossow-Kimball



Brenda, Wilder & Ian

## Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of Astonished!

I am pleased to submit the 2018 Annual Report for Astonished! Inc. I am proud to say that this report goes beyond reporting on financial performance to also include an overview of annual operations, fundraising highlights, and a summary of our relationship with the University of Regina. Over the past year we have seen growth in our operations, an increased presence at the University of Regina, and increased engagement with the community. I am proud of our growth and our collective efforts to stay true to the vision and values of Astonished!.

I am happy to report that 2018-2019 was another great year! Noteworthy accomplishments include:

- continuing to offer 3 person-centered programs in the areas of self-discovery, recreation/leisure, and teaching/learning which respond directly to Core Members' strengths, dreams, and needs
- collaborating with Inclusion Regina on a multi-week Let's Connect Initiative (fall 2018)
- collaborating with Harbour Landing Village on a multi-week Healthy Relationships and Sexual Education series (Fall 2018)
- collaborating with REALM on a Community Connections 3-part series (Winter 2019 - ongoing)
- welcoming 6 new Core Members
- engaging in research, teaching, and learning opportunities
  - presenting at the 15th Annual Conference of the Canadian Disability Studies Association (May 2018)
  - presenting to Community Living Service Delivery (Fall 2018)
  - representation on a panel at the Adapted Physical Activity Symposium (Fall 2018)
  - developing and delivering presentations to multiple University of Regina classes (fall 2018 & winter 2019)
  - working with Dr. Johner on a research project entitled Building Bridges with Digital Story Telling (ongoing)
  - working with Dr. Rossow-Kimball on a research project entitled Creating Spaces for Young Adults with Complex Physical DisAbilities to Communicate Strengths (ongoing)
  - community partner for the VOICE Lab
- managing the 6th Annual Grow Gratitude campaign, the 4th Annual Walk and Roll, and multiple fundraising activities 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 by the support of the Astonished! Community. 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 story of Astonished! with your friends, family, and work place.



Bonnie Cummings - Vickaryous



Bonnie & Ryan

## Many Thanks

### Astonished! Communications

Brenda MacLauchlan

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### Board of Connectors

Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball - Chair  
Dr. Randy Johner - Vice Chair  
Mitchell Rice - Treasurer  
Rhea Boysen - Secretary  
Karen Clark - Member (on leave)  
Taylor Carson - Member  
Heather Dorgan - Member

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### Finance Committee

Sandra Brandt  
Bonnie Cummings  
Mitchell Rice

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### Global Fundraising Committee

Ruth Blaser  
Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous  
Heather Dorgan  
Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball

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### Program Advisory Committee

Kelsey Culbert  
Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous  
Judy Humphries  
Dr. Randy Johner  
Brenda MacLauchlan  
Katherine Taylor

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### Spring Gala Committee

Rhea Boysen  
Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous  
Deb Ottenbreit  
Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball  
Katherine Taylor

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*Adeena and Brooklyn (SRS Placement Students)*

*Thank you to our 2018-2019 program  
volunteers and placement students!*

## The Big Sky Centre 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.

We work towards inclusive community where young adults with complex physical disAbilities can share their dreams, explore their strengths, and lead others to a more authentically inclusive society.

Over 50 adults with complex physical disAbilities make up our 'Core Membership' and represent Astonished!

### Astonished! Programs

1. The Astonished! Teaching and Learning Centre (A!TLC)
2. The Astonished! Social Club,
3. Summer Literacy Program,
4. Path to Future Endeavours.

## Astonished Guiding Principles and Values

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, and 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 decisions by **consultation and consensus**.



## 2018-2019 Program Highlights

### Astonished Teaching and Learning Centre

A!TLC is a place where Core Members 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.



2018-2019 A!TLC Student Researchers

### 2017-2018 A!TLC Highlights

- dedicated time for each Student Researcher to work on individualized goals and areas of interest
- creative and short story writing seminars
- tour of Mosaic Stadium
- App Series: Instagram Series (Fall 2018)
- App Series: Travel Apps (Winter 2019)
- Seminar Series on Canada's Food Guide
- Seminar Series on mental health and coping mechanisms
- Voice Lab projects
- weekly yoga sessions co-facilitated by Student Research Rebekah Lindenbach and Ruth Blaser from 'Yoga for Every Body'
- developed and delivered presentations to numerous University of Regina faculties



Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball

### A!TLC Student Researcher Submissions

*Kelsey Culbert*

Those who know me often call me Hollywood because I'm here, there and everywhere. Over the past year at Astonished, I have been able to explore my interests and goals with definite clarity. Some of the goals I am currently working on include expanding my network with public speaking and exploring new opportunities in the voice lab through my podcast called 'less inspiration, more conversation'. I have also been increasing my knowledge in budgeting and money management through practical activities such as going to the mall, restaurants and downloading apps. Also, I have been writing and blogging. Additionally, I am continuing my enrolment as a fourth year campus for all student at the University of Regina. I have also been enjoying expanding my involvement with 'listening to dis voice' by continuing to build my show called 'neither heroes nor ordinary people', as well as actively raising awareness and fundraising. Everyday I continue to advocate and educate those on disability, particularly self-advocacy. I have thoroughly enjoyed being given the opportunity to expand my interests and goals.

*Sean Davis*

Hi, my name is Sean Davis and I am a Student Research at Astonished! for four years.

My goals include improving my navigation skills, planning social events and activities, practicing communication skills, and becoming more assertive. Also, I have done a few presentations for different classes at the University of Regina. My interests include surfing the web, listening to music, and sports. My favourite sports teams are the Regina Pats, Saskatchewan Roughriders, Toronto Blue Jay, and Toronto Maple Leafs. I really enjoy the Social club events with Astonished! And I look forward to Astonished! Summer Literacy Program with working on reading more fluently.

*Kennen Dorgan*

Hi my name is Kennen Dorgan. I am a very loving and outgoing girl and I am a Student Researcher at Astonished! This year my goal was to try out voice lab, and hang out with my Astonished! friends. The biggest goal I have had for the past few years is improving my literacy skills, and I want to learn how to read and text so I can get a cell phone and communicate with my friends and family on my own.

For my PATH days, I love having more time to spend with friends, being able to go do more coffee outside of the university and I get to explore more of Regina! Moving to the city is still a plan that I have and I am slowly working towards it and one day it will be a dream come true!



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### *Kaitlyn Hoar*

Hi! My name is Kaitlyn Hoar and I am a student researcher for Astonished! and I was also on the leadership team. I enjoy and look forward to planning and attending social events. In the past year with the support of Astonished, my family and friends I have focused on social opportunities and planned many events. I also worked with a committee to plan the 2018 Pizza and Pasta fundraiser. I also made some new good friends and look forward to more planning and social events or just hanging out with friends



### *Rebekah Lindenbach*

Life seems to be some combination of what you plan and what happens. Rebekah Lindenbach loves to plan but she is adaptable when her plans are changed. Since the last annual report Rebekah has explored Banff and Jasper National Parks. She created a book, *Our Wonderful Wicked Summer Trip*, to share her experience with others. The A! summer literacy 2018 book, *Wonder*, was one of Rebekah's favourites. It explored family and friend relationships. Rebekah could relate to this; she is an auntie to five nephews and two nieces. This year Rebekah has focused on nurturing her friendships by having weekly friend dates. It has been a great way to deepen her friendships. For three years Rebekah has been team-teaching Yoga for Every Body. Rebekah, and her teaching partner, Ruth Blaser, love seeing how the A! Student Researchers, staff, and volunteers are dropping into the yoga zone with more and more capacity. Rebekah and her aunties planned to have already moved into their new Regina home, but that plan is still in the works. For sure it will be done by the fall of 2019! One of Rebekah's favourite activities is to lie on the massage table under trees while visiting with friends. She recommends you give this a try. It is very relaxing.



### *Avery Ottenbreit*

My name is Avery Ottenbreit and I am a student researcher with Astonished! My friends and family would describe me as sassy, funny, kind, and an animal lover. This past year for my PATH I have been working on blogging, baking, leisure time, and getting started in the Voice Lab. I enjoy attending Yoga for Every Body once a week and also like the A!TLC seminar series. My favourite activities with A!TLC over the past year was exploring apps and doing crafts.



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*Landon*

Hello, my name is Landon Sawden! I'm a Student Researcher at Astonished! and a student at the University of Regina majoring in Psychology. I've been a Student Researcher for the last 3 years and some of the goals that I work on with Astonished! are improving my literacy skills, planning on moving out in the future, and working on being a better writer. The thing I enjoy most about A!TLC are PATH days because I get to work on my goals that I set for myself. Another thing I like is doing class presentations in other faculties around the university with Astonished!. Overall, I thoroughly enjoy Astonished! and all the programming it has to offer such as A!TLC, Social Club and Summer Literacy!



*Katherine & Kennen*



*A!TLC PATH time*



*Sean & Parker*

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### 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. The program is now offered annually.

Summer 2018 had 10 Core Members, with 1 core member receiving one-on-one literacy lessons and 10 core members receiving group lessons. Through fun, creative, and age appropriate activities, program content focused on reading comprehension, retention, creative writing, financial literacy, health 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. There, the Core Members participating in the program enjoyed various activities that use literacy such as trending apps and games, board games and using numerical skills.

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 2019 with 15 Core Members.



*2018 Summer Literacy*

## 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. Thank you to the Community

### 2018-2019 Events

- Adult Science Centre Night
- Variety Night
- Wascana Park
- Farmer's Market
- Annual Summer BBQ
- Saskatchewan Roughrider night at Western Pizza
- Halloween Bake-off/Party
- Cougar Hockey Game
- Holiday Feast
- Movie Night
- Regina Little Theatre
- St. Patrick's Day Party at Birmingham's

Initiatives Fund for their grant which partially supported the Social Club program from December 2017 - November 2018.

I am pleased to announce a new collaboration thanks to the funding provided by the City of Regina. As of May 01, 2019 Astonished! will be receiving a City of Regina **Social Development Grant - Annual Activity**. In the letter accompanying the grant the city wrote "Your program provides supportive, meaningful, and accessible social, recreational, and cultural activities to young adults with complex physical disabilities. The committee acknowledged that your program responds to a great need in community and aligns strongly to the City's social development priorities."

Continuing to build on the A! Dance Project, a pilot dreamed up by Jake Sawa and presented to Astonished!, we continued to offer dance sessions throughout the 2018-2019 reporting period. Similar to last year we have continued to collaborate with the City of Regina to offer dance sessions through the City of Regina's What's Your Style Dance Night. This collaboration continued to see Core Members have the the opportunity to explore their own rhythm and movements in traditional and non-traditional ways and brought increased awareness of our strengths to the community.



## Astonished! and 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



*Dr. Pridmore & Dr. Jones (VOICE Lab Demonstration Day)*

### 2018-2019 Highlights

- welcoming and mentoring 15 practicum/placement students from numerous faculties including the Faculties of Education, Kinesiology and Health Studies, Nursing, Social Work and the University of Calgary
- welcoming and shaping numerous student volunteers
- presenting in Kin 120, Kin 341, KHS 300, ECS 200, EPSY 400 & SW
- collaborating with 14 groups of Kin 342 students on the 2018 Walk and Roll
- presenting at the 15th Annual Conference of the Canadian Disability Studies Association
- collaborating with the VOICE Lab team and engaging in projects and research associated with the lab.
- working with Dr. Johner on a research project entitled Building Bridges with Digital Story Telling
- working with Dr. Rossow-Kimball on a research project entitled Creating Spaces for Young Adults with Complex Physical DisAbilities to Communicate Strengths

## Community Profile & 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 set a goal to work towards building an operating reserve of \$200,000.

We continue to build awareness of Astonished! in the community and at the University of Regina.

Through the persistent work of the Global Fundraising committee, staff, 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 2018-2019 budget and build towards establishing a healthy operating reserve.

## 2018-2019 Fundraising Strategies

- 2018 Grow Gratitude Campaign (\$19,9001)
- 2019 Spring Gala (\$55,106)
- Kanuka Dress Down for Success (\$816)
- Pizza & Pasta Fundraiser (\$3,527)
- Prairie Gold (\$2,750)
- Project Sponsorship (\$5,000)
- Projet Barre Fundraiser (\$1,670)
- Summer Raffle (\$2,205)
- Walk and Roll (\$33,864)
- Wine Tasting with the Willow (\$380)
- Grants & Foundation Support
  - J.B.L Foundation
  - Lorne and Evelyn Johnson Foundation at the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation
  - Summer Jobs Grant
  - Community Initiatives Fund



## 2018-2019 Donor Numbers

- ~ 605 Donors
- 6 Monthly Donors

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