

**Expression of Interest in becoming a Student Researcher with**

**Astonished! Teaching and Learning Centre**

**Background Information:**

Astonished! is a registered non-profit 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. One of our four program areas is the **Astonished! Teaching and Learning Centre (A!TLC).** A!TLC launched at the University of Regina in January 2013.

**Program Overview**

A!TLC is a place where young adults with complex physical disAbilities become Student Researchers. Unique opportunities are designed around their particular strengths, dreams (interests), and needs. Program content, consisting of individual and group activities, is fluid. Each semester we work together to identify common interests for group-based activities. Astonished! staff support each Student Researcher to determine and navigate a program PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) unique to them. Individual program content is then designed around each Student Researcher’s PATH and identified strengths, dreams, and needs. Some examples of Student Researcher dreams include ‘becoming a fiction and non-fiction writer’, ‘learning new things to help me move forward in my life’, ‘being part of the university life’, ‘teaching others about the experience of disAbility’ and ‘increasing social and recreational opportunities’.

In addition, Student Researchers are leaders and work with the University community in research and teaching. They develop and deliver presentations and workshops about disAbility and inclusion. Student Researchers partner with University of Regina Academic Staff to conduct and participate in research. At the A! TLC we welcome University of Regina student volunteers and placement students. We seek out and welcome opportunities to teach others about disAbility.

**Fall 2021**

Astonished! is now welcoming two additional Student Researchers to A!TLC. Currently seven Core Members participate in A!TLC.

Interested Core Members are asked to complete this expression of interest and submit it to [BCV@beingastonished.com](mailto:BCV@beingastonisehd.com) by August 16th, 2021.

Note:

1. At the start of the pandemic, Astonished transitioned all programs to virtual delivery. At this time, we do not know what the fall will look like for program delivery (online, in-person, or a blend). Please indicate on your expression of interest if you are interested in either of the delivery options, or if you would prefer to defer your potential acceptance until we are in-person again.
2. A!TLC starts on Thursday, September 2nd, 2021. We realize this is a very quick turnaround for your potential acceptance. Please note that you can choose to start A!TLC any time during Fall 2021 or defer your welcoming to January 2022.

*Traditional In-person Delivery*

Pre-pandemic, the A!TLC ran from 1:00-4:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, September-June with breaks for holidays. In the summer we offer a Summer Literacy Program which all Core Members who participate in A!TLC can also attend (3 sessions per week). Program participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from the University of Regina (when A!TLC is in-person). Occasionally we also visit other local community spaces.

*Virtual Delivery*

Due to the pandemic, ATLC currently runs from 1:00-4:00 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday via zoom. If required, and if permitted by current health guidelines, Astonished can work with you to try and find a program volunteer to support you in your home during program hours. *Please note the volunteer cannot assist with personal care or transfers and lifts.*

*Blended Delivery*

As we navigate the pandemic, a priority is to ensure Core Members, volunteers and Astonished staff are safe. This fall we may need to offer a blended delivery of in-person and virtual programming.

**Requirements**

* Active Astonished! Core Member[[1]](#footnote-2). Contact (bcv@beingastonished.com) to help you meet this requirement if you aren’t a Core Member.
* Committed to Social Inclusion
* Desire to work cooperatively with the existing team of Student Researchers, staff, and companions
* Willingness to share what it’s like to live with a disAbility, as well as knowledge and experience regarding inclusion and/or exclusion
* Committed to developing and working on a Program PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrow’s with Hope)
* Provide a companion/attendant if you require personal care during program hours or arrange for a companion/attendant to meet you at the University to support your care needs. Note: Astonished staff provide support for eating/drinking, taking off coats and re-positioning in wheelchairs.
* Transportation to and from program activities (Astonished staff will meet you at the entrance to the University).

* Astonished! encourages all Core Members, companions, staff and guests to be vaccinated against Covid-19.

**Application Process**

Interested Core Members who meet the above criteria can express interest in becoming a Student Researcher by filling out the application included below. Completed applications must be submitted through mail or email by August 16th (email to BCV@beingastonished.com). As part of the application process applicants and their families/support people may be contacted for an interview. Interviews will take place in late August if deemed necessary.

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| Applicant Information | | |
| Name: | | |
| Date of birth: | Core-Member ☐\* | Phone: |
| Current address: | | |
| City: | Province: | Postal Code: |
| Email Address: | | |

If your expression of interest is selected, please indicate when you would like to start participating in A!TLC (September 2nd, 2021, a certain date in the fall or January 2022).

If we are still offering virtual programming or blended delivery are you interested in being part of the program in September? If not, please indicate if you would still like us to consider your application for a time when we are back to face to face programming.

In an effort to get to know you better, please list any activities you participate in and elaborate on your interests.

Please identify any personal care, or other support matters that you will require. *Please note as indicated above, applicants who require personal care are required to provide their own companion/attendant for every session.*

Share with us why you are interested in becoming a Student Researcher with the A!TLC.

1. Young adults 18-35 years of age with complex physical disAbilities, who support the dream, vision and guiding principles of the organization are Core Members and as such are not required to pay membership fees. We do however require a membership form to be completed. For more information please visit http://www.beingastonished.com/become-a-member/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)