

2022-2023

Annual Report

A Year in Review



Better Together



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

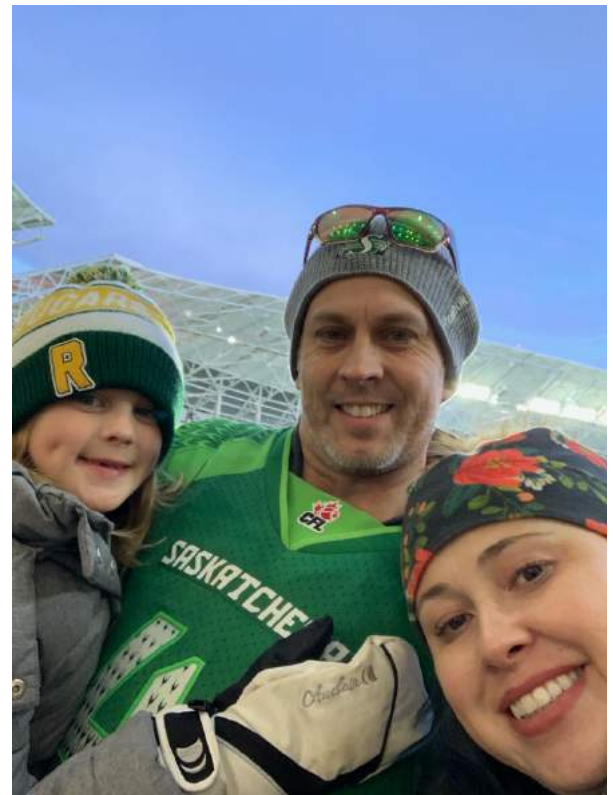
On behalf of the Student Researchers, Core Members, families, staff, supporters, funders, and Board of Connectors, I am pleased to welcome you to our Annual General Meeting. Your presence today reaffirms your commitment to the innovative work of Astonished!. In the last year, we fully returned to in-person activities, both on campus and in the community! While there are still virtual options available, it is wonderful to have the opportunity to meet in ways that are meaningful, accessible, and comfortable for everyone. The Walk and Roll fundraiser took place in person, and our annual fundraiser returned to an in-person gala. Both events were well-received and well-attended.

I would like to note the 10th anniversary of Bonnie's engagement with Astonished!. Bonnie began her Executive Director role with the organization in the fall of 2012. She has helped grow the organization with passion, integrity, and poise. The leadership Bonnie has demonstrated is exemplary. On behalf of the organization, we offer our greatest gratitude.

In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, we recognize the opportunity we have 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.

Enjoy your summer, everyone!

Sincerely
Brenda Rossow-Kimball





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear members and friends of the Astonished! Community,

Over the past year I have continued to witness a community that is indeed #bettertogether. I have observed a community having fun, offering support to one another and working towards their own goals and interests. 2022-2023 brought us our first full year of 'in-person' programming since Fall 2019.

I continue to be thankful for the community that supports the work of Astonished! Even in the midst of high inflation and continued uncertainty, people, businesses, and government have continued to support the vision and values of Astonished. For this, I am grateful.

In 2022-2023, we had many noteworthy accomplishments including:

- Continuing to offer 3 person-centered programs in the areas of self-discovery, recreation/leisure, and teaching/learning;
- Piloting the Big Sky Outdoor Adventure Program (summer 2022);
- Continuing to respond directly to Core Members' strengths, dreams, and needs;
- Engaging in research, teaching, and learning opportunities with students and faculty from the University of Regina;
- Managing the 10th Annual Grow Gratitude campaign, the 8th Annual Walk and Roll, and our annual spring fundraiser;
- Facilitating workshops and educational and interactive series.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued involvement in Astonished!. Your interest, presence and the gifts that you share enable us to continue to build an inclusive community. We encourage you to share the story of Astonished! with your friends, family, and work place.

Cheers,
Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

MANY THANKS

Communications

Brenda MacLauchlan

Board of Connectors

Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball-Chair

Taylor Carson - Vice Char

Rhea Boysen - Secretary

Deneeca Ludwar - Treasurer

Nora Davis

Dr. Michael Dubnewick

Dr. Helen Pridmore

Nikita Rathwell

Finance Committee

Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

Sandra Brandt

Deneeca Ludwar

Program Advisory Committee

Kelsey Culbert

Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

Nora Davis

Brenda MacLauchlan

Melissa Turbuck

Spring Fundraiser Committee

Tanisha Beaudry

Bonnie Cummings-Vickaryous

Nicholas Cuthbert

Avery Ottenbreit

Deb Ottenbreit

Kamila Sanborn

Katherine Taylor

Melissa Turbuck

Elisa Wong

Dr. Brenda Rossow-Kimball

Placement Students

Makayla Bodnar, Emma Carter, Mafaie Castillo, Nicholas Cuthbert, Althea Euraoba, Kate Foster, Zain Khan, Amanda Larose, Samantha Machanik & Chloe Roberts

OVERVIEW

The Big Sky Centre for Learning and Being Astonished! Inc. is a registered charity based in Regina, Saskatchewan. We work in an 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 an 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! Together we have created 4 core programs:

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





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.



2022-2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CORE PROGRAMS

- ATLC
- SOCIAL CLUB
- SUMMER LITERACY
- BSOAP

INNITIATIVES/PILOTS

- SERIES
- BSOAP

2022-2023 A!TLC HIGHLIGHTS



Astonished! Teaching and Learning Centre (A!TLC)

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.

2022-2023 A!TLC HIGHLIGHTS

- Dedicated time for each Student Researcher to work on individualized goals and areas of interest;
- Off Campus Activities: Bar Day at Trifon's , Corn Maze at Cedar Creek Gardens, Planting day with Clare Parker Homes;
- Weekly yoga sessions co-facilitated by Student Researcher Rebekah Lindenbach and Ruth Blaser from 'Yoga for Every Body';
- Participated in a 6-part Truth and Reconciliation Workshop at the First Nations University of Canada & 2 Ribbon Skirt Workshops;
- Developed and delivered presentations to City of Regina employees on 'Disability Etiquette' (Fall 2022);
- Workshops on: Human and Animal Rights (Fall 2022), Wellness (Fall 2022), Code of Conduct (Fall 2022), Gardening (Spring 2022), Adapted Physical Activity (Winter 2023);
- Adapted Physical Activity Sports Day with the Saskatchewan Wheelchair Sports Association (Winter 2023);
- Making the Video for the Gala (Winter 2023);
- Student Researcher program lead days (photography, scavenger hunt, video game, music therapy, Grey Cup, obstacle course);
- Planted and tended to the Accessible Garden plot at the South Zone Community Gardens.





2022-2023 SOCIAL CLUB HIGHLIGHTS

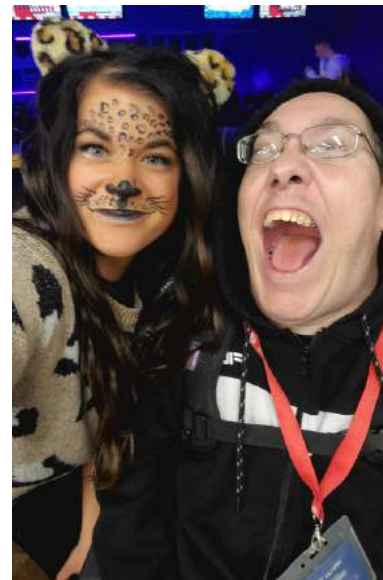
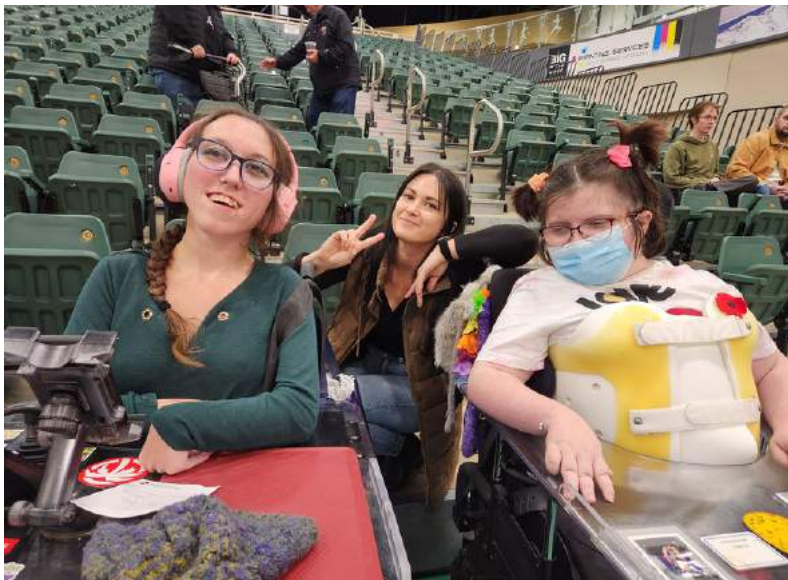
On a monthly basis, Astonished! offers an inclusive, social recreation, and/or physically active event to the Astonished! Core Members. This program is carried out through the vision and planning of the Astonished! Leadership Team. Volunteers assist with event implementation.

Events typically take place throughout the community. 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 valuable experience.

We are thankful for our collaboration with the City of Regina. Astonished! receives funding from the City of Regina Social Development Grant - Annual Activity to partially fund the Social Club. 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.”



2022-2023 SOCIAL CLUB HIGHLIGHTS



IMAX MOVIE NIGHT, VARIETY NIGHT, SASK. RIDER GAME AT BP'S, MACKENZIE ART GALLERY, BBQ IN THE PARK, BOWLING, COUGARS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GAME, HOLIDAY FEAST, MOVIE NIGHT ON CAMPUS, VALENTINE'S SOCIAL, ADULT SCIENCE NIGHT & PAINT NIGHT WITH CLARE PARKER HOMES

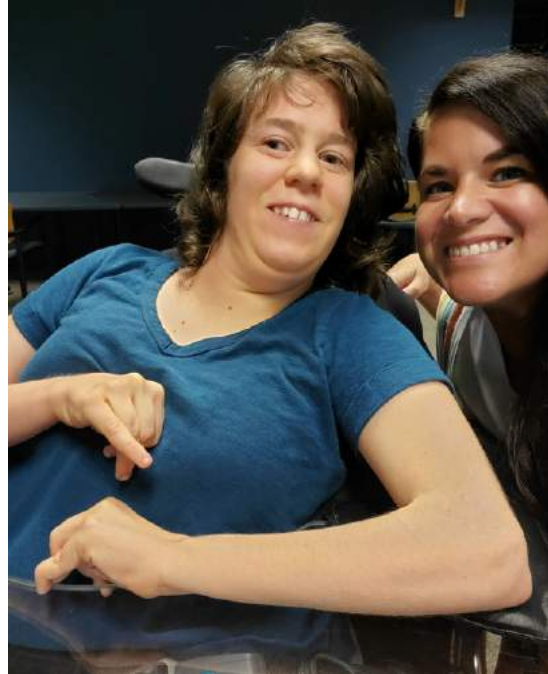
2022/2023 SUMMER LITERACY HIGHLIGHTS



Astonished! is developing, and delivering literacy services specific to the strengths, dreams, and needs of Core Members.

For the first time since summer 2019, Summer Literacy 2022 was offered in-person with 14 Core Members participating. Summer staff were creative in planning a summer of fun and engaging literacy. Core Members participated in a book club while simultaneously working on their comprehension and retention skills. Core members also explored creative writing, health, technology and cultural literacy.

2022-2023 SUMMER LITERACY HIGHLIGHTS



2022-2023 BIG SKY SUMMER OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Piloted Summer 2022, the Big Sky Summer Outdoor Adventure program was a 10 week program that aimed to provide young adults experiencing complex physical disabilities with opportunities to participate in accessible recreation and leisure opportunities within the city of Regina. We are thankful for the support we received from the City of Regina through their Sport and Recreation New Initiative grant.

Astonished! staff planned and facilitated meaningful summer recreation and leisure opportunities intended to explore the Queen City and get Core Members out and active. Core Members were challenged to participate in new recreational and leisure activities alongside friends and supports.

From June to August, Astonished's Big Sky Summer Outdoor Adventure program offered weekly activities including, nature trekking/scavenger hunt, amazing race, pizza in the park, outdoor sports and games, community festivals/events, and outdoor movies.



2022-2023 BIG SKY SUMMER OUTDOOR ADVENTURE HIGHLIGHTS



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. This year saw us welcome back in-person volunteers and multiple placement students from the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, Social Work and Nursing. We continue to seek out and build partnerships with University Faculty and explore mutually beneficial collaborations.

COMMUNITY PROFILE AND FUNDRAISING

Key Successes



*Campaign
goals
reached*

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 equal to a minimum of our annual operating budget.

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



Partnerships

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, the community, and our annual contract with Community Living Service Delivery we were able to meet the 2022-2023 budget and build towards establishing a healthy operating reserve.

- 2022 Grow Gratitude Campaign (\$19,738)
- 2023 Spring Fundraiser (\$45,481)
- Walk and Roll (\$34, 729))
- Grants & Foundation Support (Lorne and Evelyn Johnson Foundation at the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation; Canada Summer Jobs Grant; The City of Regina Social Development Grant; City of Regina Sport and Recreation New Initiative Grant; Community Initiatives Fun; Intact Better Communities Program)



City of Regina

