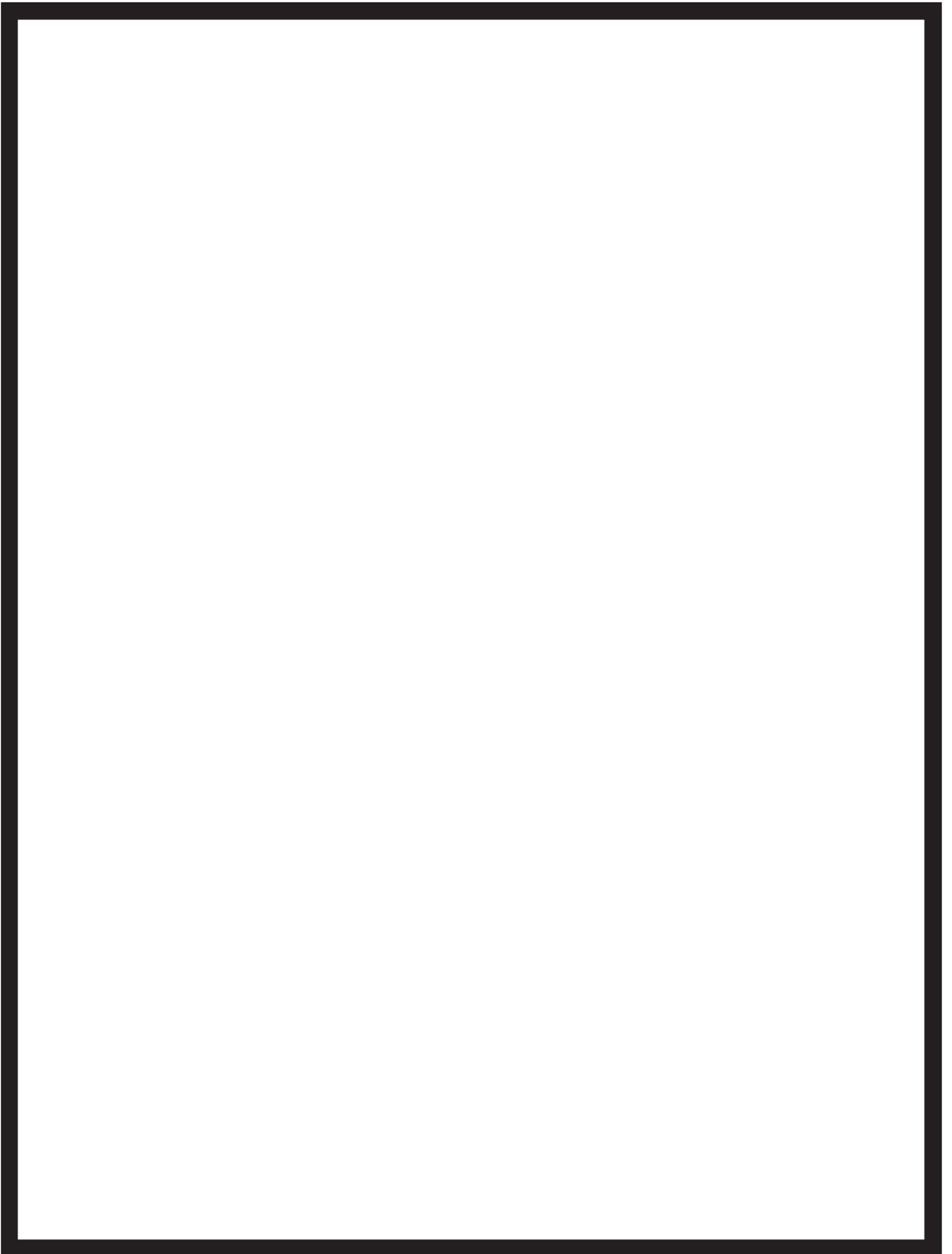




2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT



**Autism
Services**
of Saskatoon



Our VISION

“That all individuals with autism have the opportunity to live with dignity and to reach their full potential.”

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Our MISSION

“Autism Services continuously strives to deliver the highest standard of support, advocacy, and service to individuals with autism and their families and caregivers.”

From our Board Chair

Throughout this report you will see responses to the question posed to each department: “What is the passion that drives your department?”

Every organization needs trained, experienced, professional staff (and volunteers) to be successful. To be remarkable...their people must be inspired by passion. Passion for the children and families they support, passion for the specific field of work they've chosen, passion around their personal responsibility for contributing to a supportive working environment for everyone.

In my four years on the Board, the past two as Chair, I've been amazed and inspired, time and time again, by the dedication and commitment of the people who strive to fulfill the mission, and who embody the values of Autism Services of Saskatoon.

And I have been humbled and inspired by the journeys of the children and families, living with ASD, who turn here for services and supports.

It is their stories...the challenges and the successes...that will continue to propel us forward.

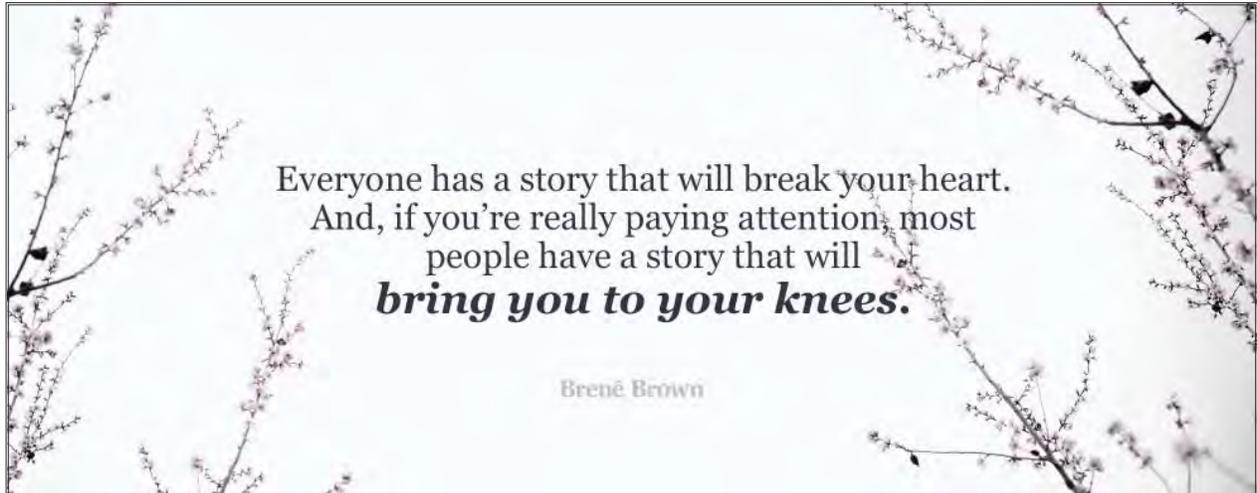
I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to outgoing board members – Allison Laughren, Leland Kreklewich and Andrew Donlevy – for your valued and appreciated insight, advice and commitment. We are pleased to welcome Nathan Reis to our board for the upcoming year.

Justin McGhee

Board Chair



From our Executive Director



This quote from the work of Brené Brown expresses for me the driving force that inspires, motivates and compels the work being done by Autism Services of Saskatoon.

We hear these stories. Every. Single. Day. We strive to pay attention. And we strive to do what's needed to support our clients, families and one another to get up and carry on. Every. Single. Day.

Just carrying on is not enough of course. We want to see clients and families grow and thrive. We want to provide the necessary therapy, services, programs and supports that ensure that will happen. We innovate, we implement, we improvise, we evaluate, we train, we learn. We repeat. Every. Single. Day.

Over the past year, new referrals to our agency increased yet again. In 2017-2018, 156 new families turned to Autism Services for support as they embarked on an unexpected, uncertain and for many, an unwelcome new template for their life story.

They share this journey with us and they need to be able to trust that we will be there with them. We also need to be there for the over 600 existing member families whose needs continue to change and evolve as their child grows and enters new developmental stages and challenges.

Imagine for just a moment if every month, 13 children (with family units attached) came to your door, desperately seeking services and supports. Of course, you would do whatever you could to help. That many of them need your help on an ongoing basis means you get stretched thinner and thinner in your capacity to respond. That does not mean you don't continue trying. Every. Single. Day.

We know there are many families who need more than we are able to provide with our existing funding levels – whether from government, grants/foundations, donors, fundraising events. We continue to advocate with our government funders for increased funding to close the “unmet needs” gap. We seek and apply to new grant sources. We share the compelling service needs with donors and help them to make informed giving decisions. And we continue to undertake successful fundraising events.

Our signature event – Gatsby Night for Autism – held the first ever “Sponsor-a-Program” auction in 2017 and this raised enough money to sponsor 35 camp or other program registrations. Not having to turn away any child because of financial need elicits the most phenomenal feeling of gratitude for those caring donors – from the families, staff and volunteers.

As you peruse this report, our hope is that you enjoy learning more about another amazing year of service and what was accomplished. Most importantly, we hope you know how important your contributions are and how much we appreciate your interest in our Mission and Vision.

We hope you will be inspired to journey with us as we strive to bring about the micro and macro change needed to make Saskatchewan a place where people impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder truly have the opportunity to live with dignity and to reach their full potential.

Lynn Latta

Executive Director





Our Team

Leadership & Management

Executive Director - Lynn Latta

Director of Finance - Shirley Kloeble

Director of ABA Little Tots - Sunbul Rai*

Lead Therapist - Desirae Boutin

Director of Adult Support Programs - Glenda Kpelly

Manager Day Program - Caitlin Stickney

Residential Managers - Jenny Besenski, Ryan Cupid

Director of AIP - Eileen Deswiage

Senior Consultant - Lauren Brandt

Mental Health & Wellness Team - Whitney Fraser, Nicole Espeseth

Director of Family Programs - Alex Scott

Coordinator - Megan Seto

Office Manager - Sharon Schneider

Development Coordinator - Carol Tebay

*on leave

Board of Directors

Chair - Justin McGhee

Vice-Chair - Jennifer Mathews

Treasurer - Geoff Jones

Leland Kreklewich

Molisa Stanzeliet

Jessica Michel

Allison Laughren

Andrew Donlevy

Mary Newton

Theresa Reid-Shea

Rylund Hunter

Our Services: ABA Little Tots

What We Did in 2017-2018

- provided Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapy to 12 children each year
- each child received 20 hours per week through behavior therapists and an additional 5 hours per week of parent implemented therapy
- out of the 5 days of therapy one day of therapy was implemented by the behavior therapists in the home environment
- one day per month the children attended field trips to work on skills in different environments and therapists implemented incidental teaching
- parents attended one workshop per month and received individualized parent coaching once every two weeks
- we also ran a peers group for graduated clients to work on social skills
- in addition to this, ABA Little Tots staff worked with Autism Intervention Program (AIP) staff in running a kindergarten transition program for children to work on skills in a group setting that would be required in a classroom setting

Marks of Success

- each individual child gained skills in different developmental domains and they were successful with new experiences and activities out of the therapy centre environment
- the ABA Little Tots program is important because it helps children learn skills to use in different settings to be the most independent and successful as they can be; we target skills in a number of areas including: language and communication, self-help, behavior management, imitation, social, play, leisure, visual performance, and academic skills

“The passion that drives our department are the everyday small successes we get to celebrate with the children on a daily basis.” - Desirae Boutin, Director of ABA Little Tots Program

“If a child cannot learn in the way we teach....we must teach in a way the child can learn.” - Dr. O. Ivar Lovaas



Our Services: Adult Support Programs

What We Did in 2017-2018

- successfully transitioned two individuals into new group home settings (one new participant moved into Evergreen and one existing participant moved from our SILP suite to an upstairs placement on Lennon Crescent)
- we welcomed another participant into our Day Program and have been able to work with his team to offer supports that are currently working well for him
- person centered care included two of our participants doing 5 km walks with Fun Run and Autism Speaks, and one of them did Color Me Rad; we were able to fit the staff to the participant's needs and make their dreams a reality
- two participants went on a trip to Banff and Calgary and two went on a trip to Edmonton; these are truly valuable experiences for learning, spending time relaxing, and building relationships; one of the highlights expressed after the trip to Edmonton (besides going out to eat and going to West Edmonton Mall) was the opportunity to travel and spend time with a staff member's husband who was a volunteer and has become a true unpaid friend

Marks of Success

- knowing that each participant is satisfied and happy; when they feel safe and are content they achieve more and more; one participant, who would only leave his home with his parents, has now trusted staff enough to put on shoes and go outside into the yard
- seeing roommates engaged in conversation with each other (including a new roommate) without staff intervention
- a few of our participants have developed strong friendships with each other, and one has willingly assisted another in learning the ropes of the Saskatoon Transit System; this means travelling across the city by bus to pick up a friend, and then take the bus to various destinations including, shopping, place riel, appointments and coffee; having unpaid friends and developing bonds that will last a lifetime is truly a gift!
- Adult Support Programs are important because we support peoples' quality of life and provide opportunities for enrichment in their homes and communities; participants have the choice to live the kind of life they want; they feel valued and engaged enough to want to stay permanently in the comfort of their homes, communities and work places



"We find joy in helping people reach their goals, learn new skills and be the best they can be (no matter what differing abilities they have)." - Glenda Kpelly, Director of Adult Support Programs

"Autism Services of Saskatoon is a caring operation. My sons have wonderful place that is more than a group home. It is filled with people who truly make it a home. They have grown in too many ways to mention here. Autism services puts the person first and they provide many things money cannot purchase. Thank you Autism services for your investment in people." - Janet Sebelius, parent

Our Services: Autism Intervention Program (AIP)

What We Did in 2017-2018

Saskatoon Area of Service

- AIP has grown in diversity of programming offered, with multiple skill levels of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- acquired an Occupational Therapist (OT) to expand our program
- reduced waitlist for services through AIP
- designed and piloted the PERMA group for parents (positive self care for parents)
- developed a partnership with the Open Door Society able to provide services to ESL families
- was able to collaborate and access resources from the Mental Health & Wellness Team (MHWT) to help with our clients and provide support for our families dealing with complex needs
- provided ongoing Educational Trainings for outside agencies - Central Urban Metis Federation (CUMFI), and Saskatoon Public School Division (SPSD)
- continued building relationships and collaborating with community agencies - the AIM Project (Ability in Me), SPSP, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS), and Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP)

Rural & Remote Areas of Service

(eastern areas of former Saskatoon Health Region, and contracts with former Keewatin Yatthe & Athabasca Regional Health Authorities)

- travelled regularly to these areas to provide consultative, therapeutic, education, training, and awareness services and supports to families, communities, schools, and collateral agencies; 76 days were spent in Humboldt and area communities; 1 week out of every month was spent in northern communities including Canoe Narrows, Cole Bay, Jan's Bay, Beauval, La Loche, Clearwater, Turnor Lake, Buffalo Narrows, Dillon, Ile a la Crosse, Green Lake; Stony Rapids, Fond du Lac, Black Lake, and Uranium City
- arranged for a child from the Athabasca area to attend a week of summer programming through Autism Services' Family Programs in Saskatoon



“The passion that drive us is... working with parents/caregivers to build better relationships with their children with ASD and seeing the deep connections families have when working with them during this difficult period.” - Eileen Deswiage, Director of AIP

Marks of Success

Saskatoon Area of Service

- providing something for people while they're waiting for a block of service; providing more consistent service throughout the experience with the program; more parents are connecting and can help each other with self-care plans
- waiting times for services have been reduced
- positive parent feedback regarding Parent Management Training (PMT); parents indicated great successes in helping manage their child's behaviour; the strategies they learned have improved quality of life for the whole family unit
- AIP provides a comprehensive suite of services accessed through a single entry point; services include referrals to OT, SLP, Consultant, ESL-specific, MHWT
- we also provide opportunities for parents to connect and build relationships outside the groups

Rural & Remote Areas of Service

- regularly requested to work with school staff to support children's success in schools
- Parent Management Training (PMT) requested and provided in Humboldt with 8-9 parents attending the 11 sessions
- family in Wakaw spearheaded and got many other families, schools, and community supporters involved in a Walk to raise funds for Autism Services
- arrangements made for school staff from Fond du Lac to come to Saskatoon for training on ASD and strategies to support students in the classroom

"PMT was extremely enlightening to us, as we learned a whole new way to parent... It honestly helped us to realize we weren't alone in our walk, and that we weren't going totally crazy in what we were dealing with..." - Holly & Darcy Van Loon



Our Services: Mental Health & Wellness Team (MHWT)

What We Did in 2017-2018

- the new Mental Health & Wellness Team (MHWT) was made possible through a grant from Autism Speaks Canada, beginning in April 2017
- although an individual consultant provided resources around mental health & wellness prior to this, the formation of the Team expanded our therapeutic services to increase supports and counselling for individuals and their families (up to age 29); referrals come to the MHWT via AIP, ABA Little Tots, and our Intake Coordinator
- more mental health & wellness groups were offered in the areas of young adults with ASD, caregiver resilience, and self-care groups, as well as more comprehensive educational groups for newly diagnosed members; two very successful groups were Facing Your Fears (ages 8-13 and their parents, addressing anxiety) and Connections (age 18+, addressing stigma, resiliency, coping skills, and social connections)

Marks of Success

- encouraging feedback from both participants and caregivers regarding the new groups; parents in the Facing Your Fears group have said they are now much better equipped in supporting their child to become less anxious
- the waitlist for the MHWT counselling services has been reduced from 7 to 3 months
- the MHWT is important because it gives individuals and families access to supports that look at wellness in a holistic and dynamic manner (including mental, physical, emotional, social aspects), helping all aspects of life to be healthy and vibrant; sadly, mental and emotional health are not often prioritized for individuals with ASD; this can lead to poor emotional and mental health and hygiene, which can lead to the development of anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders;
- through this Team, Autism Services can now better educate, encourage, and support the Autism Services Community and the family system with the principles of living well and thriving instead of just surviving

"We are passionate about seeing Autism Services members and families conquering fears, overcoming obstacles, building balance and self-compassion, and acknowledging the strength, wisdom, and power they have..." - Whitney Fraser, Autism Social Worker

Mental Health issues arise in 70% of individuals that receive the ASD Diagnosis.

"...Whitney and Nicole are running a program that is desperately needed." - Cathy McFaul



Our Services: Family Programs

What We Did in 2017-2018

- successfully served 203 unique participants over the course of the year (totalling 565 program spots); this included 80 unique individuals in our Summer Day Camps
- our Financial Assistance program was accessed by 30 individuals, totalling 112 program registrations
- further development of the Engineering for Kids program, including Aerospace Engineering, Master Machines, and Pirates Academy; this program keeps growing in popularity
- switched our Fun-in-the-Gym program to Can-Am Gymnastics; this has been a positive new partnership

Marks of Success

- creating positive impact for individuals by providing recreational activities that may be unaccessible to individuals with ASD; when we get our clients up and moving, we are teaching them that being active increases their wellbeing, their mindset, and their health
- we also create a culture of autism awareness within our community when we partner with other Saskatoon agencies and organizations to host many of our programs; for example, the YMCA delivers some of the best Autism centered swimming lessons and strength training programs in Saskatoon
- demand for our programs continues to increase each year; we have had to start wait lists for over half of our programs
- excellent service delivery - positive feedback from parent program evaluations
- popularity of our programs among staff; we receive far more staff requests to work our programs than we have available spots to hire them
- in addition, we provide opportunities for volunteers, students and staff to explore this area of work and to gain experience through our programs by working directly with individuals on the autism spectrum

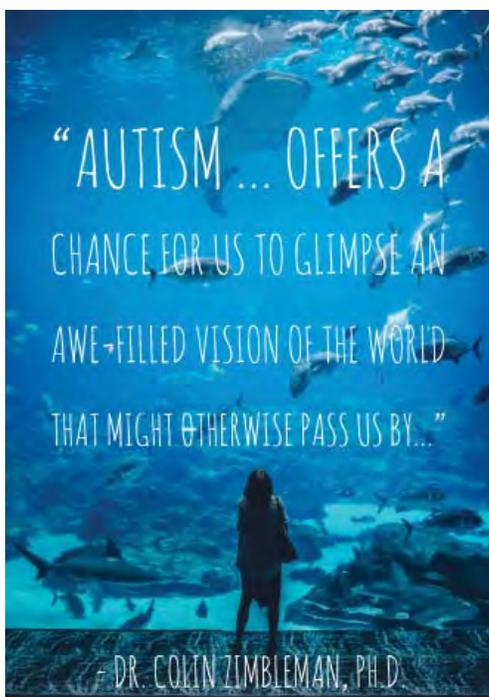
“Our proudest moments occur when we stop in at our programs and see the smiles on the children’s faces, the wonderful feedback from countless parents and the amazing work from so many casual employees and on-site coordinators.” - Alex Scott, Director of Family Programs

“My son’s experience with the family programming has been very positive. He has been able to participate in activities that he normally wouldn’t be able to and because of that he has gained self-confidence, which for our children is sometimes a rare thing.” - Sarah M



Our Services: Centralized Service Team (CST)

Total # Clients Seen	70
Total Diagnostic Referrals	62
ASD Diagnosis Confirmed	37
Total Consultative Referrals	8
Male/Female Clients	54/16
Youngest Client Seen	2 yrs 10 mos
Oldest Client Seen	17 yrs 8 mos
By Health Region (Monthly Appointments) *	
Prince Albert (formerly PAPHR)	13
Unity (formerly HRHA)	13
Lloydminster/Battlefords (formerly PNHRA)	10
Nipawin (formerly KTHR)	11
By Health Region (Traveling Clinics)	
AHA (Athabasca) March 2018 clinic	4
Ile a la Crosse (formerly KYHRA) May 2017 clinic	8
La Ronge (formerly MCRRHA) April 2017 clinic	11



The Centralized Service Team (CST) was formed in 2010/2011 as a collaboration between the Saskatoon Health Region and seven Central/Northern Health Regions, supported by the Ministry of Health under the Autism Framework. The CST provides enhanced services to clients and their families in as close proximity to their home health region as possible, providing diagnosis and consultation.

Each month, one of the four central regions send their clients to Autism Services for a diagnostic appointment with the CST. The team also travels to the three Northern health regions annually to do diagnosis and consultations.

Autism Services manages the administration and coordination of the team and contracts with each practitioner individually for their service. The CST is comprised of a pediatrician, an occupational therapist, a psychologist, and a speech language pathologist.

Advocacy



Our advocacy work as “public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy” is grounded in our Vision statement: “That all individuals with autism have the opportunity to live with dignity and to reach their full potential.”

Our volunteers and staff demonstrate their public support of this cause every day; both in the direct work done with clients and in the public awareness and fund raising initiatives they get involved in.

Advocacy may be on the small, individual case-by-case basis; or it may encompass a much larger audience and have broad policy and/or funding implications. One is not more important than the other; both are needed if the Vision is to be realized.

We work collaboratively with all levels of government, other collateral partners and individuals to generate support for the array of services and supports necessary to ensure an inclusive and barrier-free society for people living with ASD.

A few of the more systemic initiatives include:

- prepared an in-depth response to the Ministry of Health in response to the threat of a 10% cut to the budgets of non-profits working in the mental health field; after consideration of the significant implications across Saskatchewan, the Ministry did not implement the cut
- served on an ad-hoc committee for SARC – to work on the implementation of individualized funding options for adults, including a draft contract and information package
- worked with other Saskatoon community based mental health organizations on advocacy issues to the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Ministry of Health; met with several candidates during the provincial election
- continue to serve on the working group to help develop the policies and processes related to the Individualized Funding initiative for parents with young children; this included a survey (summer of 2017) targeting broad cross-section of people, organizations, etc. that intersect with issues around the needs of children/families living with autism spectrum disorder
- was involved in a province-wide workshop exploring the issue of diagnosis of ASD in Saskatchewan; pressed the issue of the need for access to diagnosis, given the long wait list in several areas and the requirement of a diagnosis to access the Individualized Funding for children under 6
- worked with Search & Rescue Saskatoon and the Saskatoon Police Service on the implementation of a program that provides “locator bracelets” for vulnerable persons who may wander and become lost
- provided a Letter of Support to Persephone Theatre as they pursued grant funding to create/ provide “Relaxed Performances” for children/youth on the spectrum



Autism Awareness Month (April)

What We Did

- blitzed over 30 partner, sponsor, and funder organizations thanking them for their support and telling them about Autism Awareness Month
- held events over the course of the month (Autism Day at Lawson Heights Mall, Ryde YXE Ryde for Change, Pancake Breakfast & Art Auction); Trivia Night at Amigo's was held in March but considered part of our Autism Awareness events
- local partners sold Autism Puzzle Pieces in their businesses to raise awareness
- posted frequently to our Facebook page throughout the month
- had TV and radio interviews with local media (including CTV, Global, and the Saskatoon Media Group)

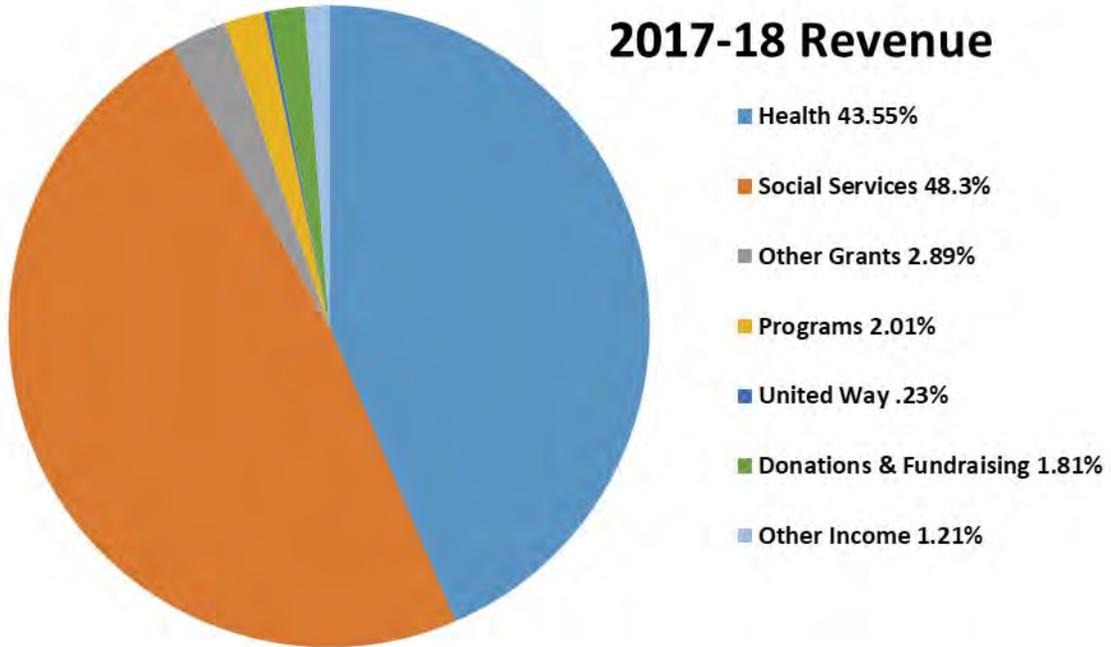
Marks of Success

- new partnership with Ryde YXE to raise Autism awareness and money
- increased media interviews compared to the previous year
- launched our first annual staff music video celebrating Autism Awareness Month
- increased interest (both from the public and our membership); e.g., more public engagement at the Mall event and higher attendance at the Pancake Breakfast
- Autism Awareness Month is important as it support our advocacy work as a key way to educate, and to increase awareness and acceptance of Autism Spectrum Disorder throughout the local Saskatoon community



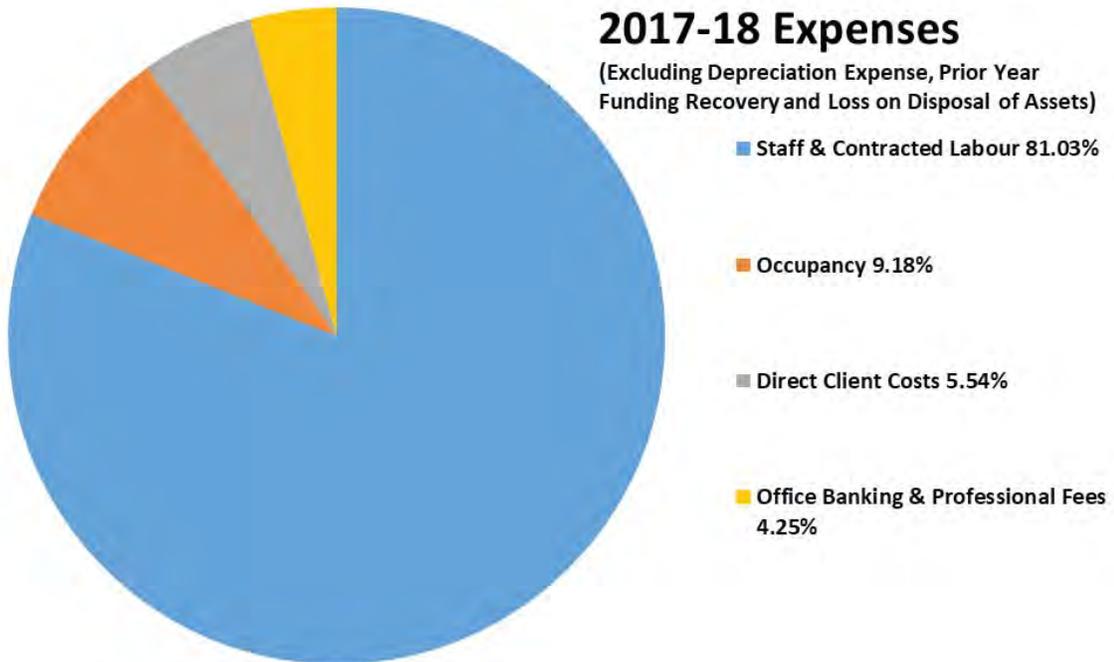
Financial Update

2017-18 Revenue



2017-18 Expenses

(Excluding Depreciation Expense, Prior Year Funding Recovery and Loss on Disposal of Assets)



Fund Development & Communications

Communications Work

- increased marketing and media presence for April's Autism Awareness Month
- beginning in September 2017, the Development Coordinator assumed management of the Autism Services Facebook page (previously managed by a volunteer member)
- press releases to local media in December resulted in coverage of our Sensitive Santa and/or Skating with Santa events by all major local media channels (CTV, Global, CBC, Saskatoon Media Group, and the StarPhoenix)

Fund Development Work

- furthered development of the Fund Development Committee by establishing Committee Terms of Reference and Committee Chair roles and responsibilities (approved by the Board in November 2017)
- call for new Fund Development Committee members went out in March 2018 resulting in the addition of four new members; the Committee is now better positioned to create a Fund Development Plan and provide direction in this area

Fundraisers

Gatsby Night for Autism - April 21, 2017

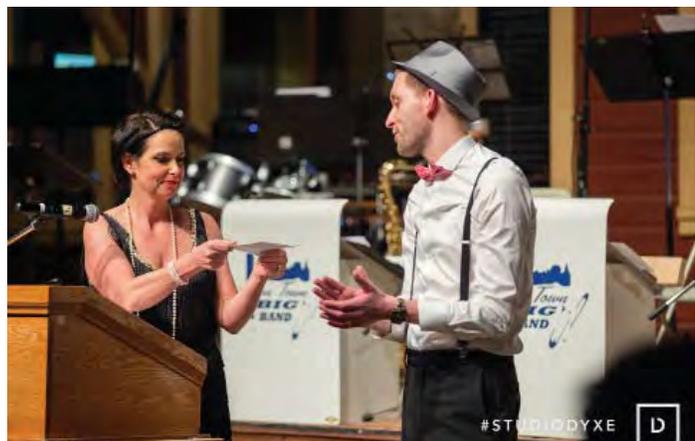
- raised over \$40,000 for Family Programs (excluding Development Coordinator contract fees); increased event tickets compared to 2016 (at 214 tickets); increased sponsorships and donations by \$7,000 (\$32,000 in total)
- introduced the Sponsor-a-Registration auction which resulted in sponsorships for 35 sessional and day camp registrations (\$7,050 raised)

Premier Showcase - September 29-30, 2017

- annual Wine & Spirits Raffle at the TCU Premier Showcase
- raised \$7,000 over the two evenings

3rd Party Fundraisers

- ABA Steak Night - \$14,000
- Paprika's Madness - \$2,500
- Candle Lake Ladies Golf Evening - \$2,500
- Wakaw BBQ - \$1,200
- Stephen/Kai Fundraiser - \$800



Our Funders, Donors, and Sponsors

Grants and Foundation Donors



Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation | Helpone Foundation Inc. | Leslie & Irene Dube Foundation

Corporate Donations



Saskatoon Road Runners Association Inc. | University of Saskatchewan
Allied Denture Clinic | NCS Minerals Ltd.

Gatsby Night for Autism Sponsors



Kova Engineering (SK) Ltd. | SaskTel | Buckberger Baerg & Partners LLP | RBC
Confederation Chiropractic | Ashmeade & Low Investigations | McDougall Gauley LLP
Breck Construction | Virtus Group LLP

Family Programs Registration Sponsors

37 individuals and companies raised over \$7,000 to sponsor 35 program registrations

Individual Donations

Over 190 individuals donated over \$50,000 for programs and services

Thank you to our partners for their generous support



**Autism
Services**
of Saskatoon

