



2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT





OUR MISSION

To provide comprehensive and innovative supports and services to those affected by autism spectrum disorder.

OUR VISION

Individuals with autism spectrum disorder lead meaningful, engaged lives.

Message from the President

2018 was about establishing the strategic plan for the Centre for the next five years and 2019 has been about taking real steps forward to achieve that plan.

The Board has focused heavily on what's needed to provide increased services to our diverse community. A large part of that work is being done by the Space Committee, whose role is to examine what we need and where we need to be to serve adults in employment readiness and to support young adults in their Quest for Independence. The Centre currently has three apartments as part of the Quest program, which has allowed us to open up 10 more spots for participants since this time last year.

We continue to seek out opportunities to increase the number of people served by the Centre. We are broadening our offerings, establishing new partnerships and listening to our members and the wider community about where the gaps in service are, and how we can help fill them in order to ensure that individuals with autism spectrum disorder live meaningful, engaged lives.

I would like to take the opportunity to express the Centre's deep appreciation for our departing board members. Collectively, they have served for nearly 30 years, contributing significantly to the organization. Don Kwas has been on the Board for 10 years, serving as President for four of them. Dani Perl has been on the Board for eight years as our treasurer. We are fortunate that both Don and Dani will continue to lend their expertise to the Centre as members of the Space Committee. Ty Kim is the founder of the U of A Centre for Autism Services Alberta Students' Association and has also been on the Board for eight years. We wish him all the best as he dedicates his time to medical school. Laura Banu was also with us for nearly four years and will be missed.

With several new board members joining us this year, I am looking forward to new energy and new perspectives. It's an exciting time to be a part of the Centre and I am thankful to be a part of such a strong team— not only on the Board itself, but also the excellent senior management team and all the staff at the Centre. Thank you for all that you do.

Kiri Wysynski

Message from Executive Director

What a year it has been! Once again the Centre continued to grow and expand programming. We are delighted to announce that we now have three Quest for Independence apartments, two in the Old Strathcona neighbourhood and of course our original apartment within the Centre. We also wrapped up the Worktopia program and, along with all of our national partners, were awarded another three years of funding through the Opportunities Fund! The Centre was also awarded funding from the Government of Alberta - Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, to further explore gender differences in employment for those on the spectrum.

The Centre has always been a place of innovation and this year did not disappoint. I'm grateful for the support of the Board in setting a strong vision and for always ensuring that programming and resources adhere to our mission. I'd also like to say a huge thank you to all of the staff at the Centre—none of what we do could be accomplished without them. Thank you for an incredible year, everybody!

Deborah Allard Usunier

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Laura Banu, Chair
Samantha Labahn, Vice Chair
Kiri Wysynski, Past Chair
Miori Mathews, Treasurer
Sandra Hodgetts, Secretary

Don Kwas, Board Member at Large
Ty Kim, Board Member at Large
Dani Perl, Board Member at Large
Heather Brown, Board Member at Large

2018-2019

WHAT'S NEW



Meet the Calgary Team!

We're so excited to introduce you to our new Calgary team! This very active, innovative group started with us in September 2018.

Left to right: Adrienne Dunbar, Occupational Therapist; Arianna Bailey, Speech Language Pathologist; Kerry Campbell, Director of Clinical Services and Speech Language Pathologist; and Lillian Saltel, BCBA-D (Board Certified Behaviour Analyst - Doctorate).

NEW TERRITORY



NUNAVUT

In response to a call to action from **CASDA** (the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance) to support Northern First Nation Communities, the Centre sent a clinician to Nunavut. On two occasions, our team traveled to Rankin Inlet and provided support to:

4 STUDENTS

4 CLASSROOMS

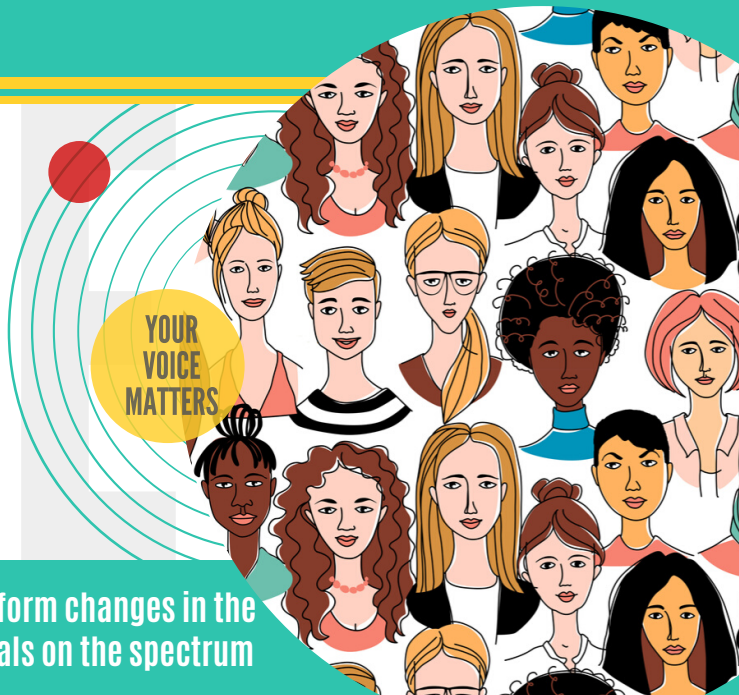
3 DIFFERENT SCHOOLS

Through remote access, six schools in Nunavut also received professional development on Principles of Learning and Functions of Behaviour.

MAKING A
DIFFERENCE IN
THE LIVES OF
AUTISTIC
WOMEN IN THE
WORKPLACE

AUTISM WOMEN'S NETWORK OF EDMONTON

In the summer of 2019, the Centre worked to recruit a diverse group of women/gender non-binary adults on the spectrum to participate in facilitated sessions about employment experiences. These sessions began in September 2019!



GOAL

To learn from our participants' experiences and inform changes in the workplace for women/gender non-binary individuals on the spectrum

CHANGING OUTCOMES



272

INDIVIDUALS & THEIR FAMILIES

THIS YEAR, 272 INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE SUPPORTED BY THE CENTRE'S THERAPEUTIC SERVICES, INCLUDING: SPECIALIZED SERVICES, EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES, THE START PROGRAM, BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORTS, MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIALIZATION PROGRAMS

166 Edmonton Families

34 Calgary Families

68 Students supported in 3+ Fort McMurray school divisions: Fort McMurray Catholic Schools, Fort McMurray Public Schools and Northlands School Division - Janvier
27 of these 68 families also accessed home support

THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

PEEPS

Parents Encouraging Early Play Skills

Now in its second year, this group intervention program is for parents and their young children with autism. It supports the development of early play and socialization skills.

17 KIDDOS
& THEIR PARENTS

AGE RANGE 2 years 9 months to 5 years 11 months



Lil' Movers
Gross Motor Skills OT Group

Food Explorers
OT Group

Kids Klostet
OT Group

Halloween Extravaganza
Practice trick-or-treating at the Centre!

36 FROM **22**
KIDDOS FAMILIES

START PROGRAM

37 FAMILIES ENROLLED

Children Aged 2-8 with Caregivers

The Start Program utilizes Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) methodology, teaching parents and caregivers practical strategies to support their child in early language development.

"Our son is in a different place now with his speech: he says words all throughout the day, he is more confident and it's so great to hear his voice! He is not just scripting, he is saying meaningful words that help him get what he needs and help him connect with us."

- Start Program Parent



Facing Your Fears

Ages 8 - 12

Facing Your Fears is designed for children on the autism spectrum who are having difficulties managing their anxiety.

This program uses cognitive behavioural principles to help children identify their anxiety and fears, as well as learn supportive strategies to better manage these feelings.



PEERS for Teens

Ages 13 - 17

Making and keeping friends can be hard for everyone, but it can be a special challenge for teens with autism. In this 14-week program, teens learn:

- How to enter and exit conversations
- Choose appropriate friends
- Handle teasing and bullying
- Use electronic communications safely

PEERS for Young Adults

Ages 18 - 29

Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS) is an innovative, evidence-based program designed for young adults with autism who want to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

The skills taught in the PEERS program are essential for adulthood and can also help pave the way for securing meaningful, successful employment.

"I THINK WE AS PARENTS CAN LOOK AT AUTISM LIKE A MOUNTAIN: IF WE HOLD OUR CHILD'S HAND AND LOOK FOR THE RIGHT HELP, WE CAN CLIMB IT TOGETHER."
- CENTRE MOM

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

182

Teens and young adults accessed programming related to increasing independence, learning employment skills and enhancing practical living and social skills.

THE NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

ADULTS WITH ASD HAVE THE
LOWEST EMPLOYMENT RATE
IN CANADA

79% OF CANADIANS
ARE EMPLOYED
49% OF CANADIANS WITH
DISABILITIES ARE EMPLOYED

ONLY 11% OF PEOPLE WITH
ASD IN CANADA ARE
EMPLOYED

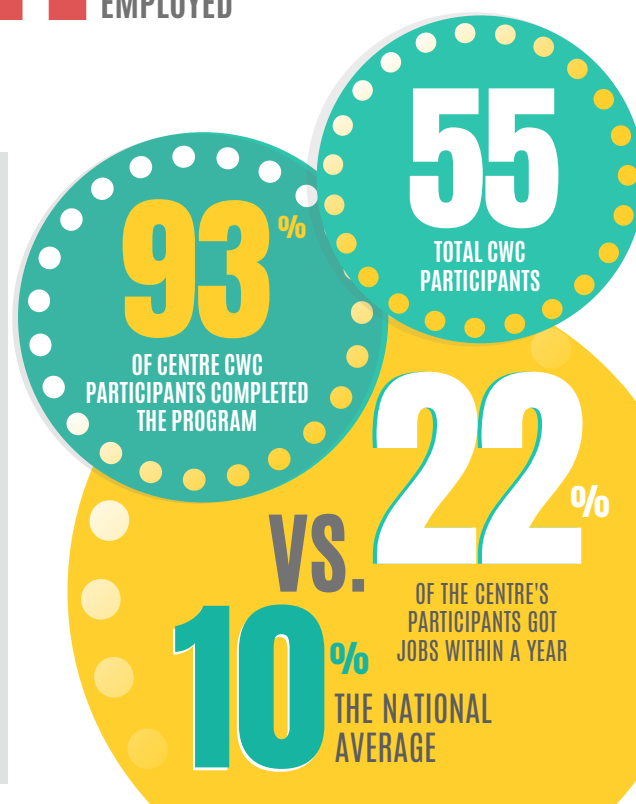
CommunityWorks Canada[®]



AGES 15-21

This innovative program provides a structured opportunity for high school students with autism to prepare for future employment and build their résumés while volunteering in their community. Supported by peer mentors, CommunityWorks Canada (CWC) participants make important contributions to community organizations while developing work skills, time management skills, problem solving and social communication skills.

The three year federal funding for CWC through the Government of Canada's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities Program and Worktopia wrapped-up in March 2019. The Centre is now working with the provincial government and other funders to keep developing employment opportunities for youth and adults on the spectrum. With this change, the program adjusted its participant age from 15-21 to 14-17.



DID YOU KNOW?

THE CENTRE IS THE DESIGNATED NATIONAL TRAINER FOR THE COMMUNITYWORKS CANADA PROGRAM. WE HAVE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED THREE SITES ACROSS CANADA: MIRIAM FOUNDATION, GENEVA CENTRE AND AUTISM NOVA SCOTIA

In the last three years, the Centre has worked to break down barriers, educate employers and raise awareness of autism spectrum disorder through the CWC program. In doing this, the Centre has worked with 15 community partners to help support this great program.

THIS YEAR'S CWC COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Edmonton's Food Bank
- Edmonton Humane Society
- Edmonton Area Land Trust
- Reuse Centre
- Goodwill
- Ronald McDonald House
- Capital City Clean Up



EmploymentWorks

AGES 15-64 National Project

FORMERLY
EMPLOYMENTWORKS
CANADA

The EmploymentWorks National Project (EWNP) program has been designed for individuals with autism who are seeking opportunities to develop the skills necessary to obtain meaningful and sustainable paid employment. It is a peer/coworker supported program that uses adult learning principles to focus on the development of social skills, communication and job skills in a variety of workplace settings and teams.

EmploymentWorks under the umbrella of Worktopia wrapped-up in December 2018 and the redesigned program, EmploymentWorks National Project, launched on April 1, 2019, with funding from **Government of Canada, Sinneave Family Foundation and Autism Speaks Canada**. We are excited to be part of this national initiative that focuses on changing the dismal employment statistics of individuals on the spectrum. EmploymentWorks National Project supports adults aged 15-64 in a six-month-long program (previously 15-29 in a three month program).

8 PROJECT PARTNERS

7 PROVINCES

3 YEARS
APRIL 1, 2019 -
MARCH 31, 2022



Sinneave
FAMILY FOUNDATION



Autism Society
Newfoundland & Labrador



SHARED TARGETS

780

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS NATIONALLY

90%
COMPLETE THE
PROGRAM

75%
ARE ACTIVE IN
THE LABOUR
MARKET

60%
RETURN TO SCHOOL
&/OR GET A JOB
WITHIN A YEAR

EWNP COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Royal Glenora Club
- Edmonton Area Land Trust
- Evolve Strength
- Husky
- Technology North Corp.
- Gregg Distributors
- Goodwill
- Goodlife Fitness

FAVOURITE WORK LOCATIONS

GOODWILL  **ROYAL GLENORA**
TECHNOLOGY NORTH CORP.

EWNP HAS BEEN TRENDING TOWARDS AN OLDER AGE GROUP **AGES 30+**

"The most important thing I learned was how to communicate with people in the workplace." - EWNP Participant

SKILLS PROGRAMS & MORE



QUEST FOR INDEPENDENCE

The Quest curriculum builds skills of independence for living and integrating into the community. Questers learn how to prepare meals, keep house, manage money and social engagements. They develop vocational skills through job sampling and explore their communities through social, leisure and recreational activities.

2 NEW COMMUNITY APARTMENTS

Thanks to an anonymous donor, Quest's first off-site apartment in Old Strathcona began operating with participants in Fall 2018. A second off-site apartment was secured in the summer of 2019!

QUEST COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Ronald McDonald House
- Meals on Wheels
- Edmonton's Food Bank
- Street Performers Festival **NEW!**
- Anthony at Your Service
- Pure Industrial Real Estate Trust (PIRET)

ACTIVE FOR LIFE 2.0

A new and improved Active for Life!

- A YMCA certified trainer co-leads all classes with the Centre's kinesiologist
- YMCA staff completed Autism 101 training to learn how to better support participants
- A reference manual was created for all trainers
- The program now incorporates the importance of overall wellbeing in conjunction with physical fitness, better supporting participants in becoming healthy, independent adults



Teaching teens to navigate the city via public transit



Teens learn essential cooking skills and how to grocery shop

Teen Social Night

Ages 13-17

Just for Teens

Ages 13-17

Young Adult Social Night

Ages 18-29

ENRICHING LIVES 460

Children, teens and young adults with autism participated in art programs, sports and recreation programs, and camp

RECREATION & LEISURE PROGRAMS

CHILDREN 5 AND UNDER

Learn to Skate



CHILDREN 6 - 12

Junior Chef
Fun with Art
Kickstart Soccer
Basketballers
Taekwondo
Learn to Skate



TEENS 13 - 17

Exploring Art
Teen Basketball
Taekwondo
Teen Social Night
Just for Teens



YOUNG ADULTS 18 - 29

Creative Expression
Active for Life 2.0
Young Adult Social Night



MOST POPULAR  PROGRAMS



FUN WITH ART EXPLORING ART
CREATIVE EXPRESSION



Mathieson Erickson, Age 18

Branching Out Art Show

100 ATTENDEES with the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts
\$1,570 SALES TO ARTISTS

48 ARTISTS 1 TELEVISION FEATURE ON
GLOBAL EDMONTON

MEET KIKI

He's a spunky 16-year-old boy with a contagious enthusiasm and zest for life. He's an athlete whose second home is on the basketball court.

Kiki is on the autism spectrum and has been a member of the Centre for Autism Services Alberta since he was eight. When he began participating in the Centre's community recreation programs, he struggled with communication and self-regulation. The Centre team and Kiki's family took note of these challenges and made the choice to enroll him in Specialized Services (SS) to provide further support and help him work on his communication skills and self-regulation.

After only a few months of SS, the change in Kiki was noticeable to staff, family and his peers. His communication and overall ability to focus improved tremendously. He was able to express his needs more effectively and without frustration, and therefore able to get more involved with programs he loved. Kiki was able to concentrate on tasks and skills like dribbling and shooting a basketball without distraction. As a result, his incredible skills began to evolve.

Kiki's passion and talent for sports has been evident from the moment he enrolled in the Centre's community recreation programs. The sports programs at the Centre provide opportunities for children, teens and adults to develop their fitness, play sports in supportive environments, and integrate into community programs and settings. The Centre offers its own programs, works with community partners to provide adapted programs, and fosters inclusion in Edmonton through training, mentoring, and supporting staff in community-based programs. The Basketballers program, one of the first that Kiki participated in when he started with the Centre, is designed to build children's confidence and skills while having fun. Children practice skills like dribbling, passing and shooting while learning about teamwork and game play concepts in a fun and supportive environment. Kiki's mother, Jeruto, says, "He's very good with his cross motor skills. The Centre gave him the opportunity to use and develop those skills early."

Since getting so involved with sports at the Centre and consequently at school, Kiki is able to socialize, is calm and able to communicate his wants and needs.

"YOU KNOW, IT ALL REALLY HELPED HIM. IT'S THOSE SKILLS THAT HE LEARNED WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER WITH THE CENTRE THAT HE'S ABLE TO USE TODAY."

Today, Kiki regularly communicates his feelings with thumbs-up or down and frequently verbalizes a few words in a sentence. When you're in his presence, his enthusiasm is infectious. His face lights up every time you mention basketball or sports—he is undoubtedly very passionate about these activities. He has a brilliant smile on his face throughout our chat about his love of sports and chimes in regularly with cheers of excitement, punctuating each of these moments with a happy high-five or thumbs-up.

Kiki and his family have been valued members of the Centre since he was eight-years-old. He's taken part in summer camps, art programs, soccer, swimming, Shop, Cook and Learn, and his favourite (and arguably the one that has had the most impact on his life)—drumroll—basketball. Throughout his time at the Centre, there's not only been a change in Kiki's outcome and skill development, but also to his family dynamic. The family loves to play sports together and are very active: volleyball, soccer and basketball fill much of their summer. With the skills Kiki learned through his years with the Centre, his family has been empowered. It's much easier for the family to spend time together doing the things they love. His mom says, "We go to the track every week as a family and it feels normal for a few minutes".

"And he's goooood at bowling. He always beats me!" When asked if he's a better bowler than his mom, Kiki responded with a BIG smile, a laugh and vigorous nod.

"We really appreciate the support and the funding that helps families and kids with disabilities. It allows them to be involved in things that they may not have otherwise been part of. And we really appreciate what the Centre has done for us and connected us with."

"Hey, Kiki? This place is nice, hey? We'll stay."

A big thumbs-up with a smile,

"YES."



298 children and teens attended **SUMMER CAMP**



AGES 3-5

LITTLE ACES

Transportation Week
Music Week
Animal Week

AGES 5-12

CAMP ACE

Adventureland
Movin' and Groovin'
Scientists in Training
Superhero Week
Nature Explorers
Sensational Explorations
Creative Campers
Fun with Fitness

AGES 13-19

TEEN CAMP

Star Dreams Drama Camp
Artists' Studio Camp

Computer Science Camp
Adventure Trek Camp
Photography Week
& Apple Camp
Microsoft Store Camp*
NEW & MOST POPULAR!

COMMUNITY PROGRAM PARTNERS

- Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts
- Microsoft Store West Edmonton Mall
- Apple Store Southgate
- Citadel Theatre
- Kinsmen Sports Centre
- University of Alberta Faculty of Science
- Jamie Platz YMCA
- Qi Creative
- Extreme Edge Skating Club
- University of Alberta Student Group: Centre for Autism Services
- Alberta Students' Association
- MacEwan University Student Group: Autism Awareness Club (AAC)



**MY SON IS HAPPY TO COME,
SO THAT SAYS EVERYTHING.
- CAMP PARENT**

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



1,154

EDUCATORS, COMMUNITY LEADERS
AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IMPACTED

26

WORKSHOPS
ACROSS ALBERTA

10⁺

COMMUNITIES SERVED

EDMONTON AND SURROUNDING AREAS, CALGARY, GRANDE PRAIRIE, FORT
MCMURRAY, HIGH LEVEL, CAMROSE, COLD LAKE, JANVIER AND NUNAVUT

EDUCATOR WORKSHOPS
IN NUNAVUT —————→ **6**

94

VOLUNTEERS **9,491** HOURS



UNIVERSITY STUDENT GROUPS



The CFASA Students' Association at the Discovering Autism Conference

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CENTRE FOR AUTISM SERVICES ALBERTA STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

DISCOVERING AUTISM

CONFERENCE

180

ATTENDEES

Keynote speaker Dr. Jonathan Weiss, PhD, Associate Professor at
York University and Clinical Psychologist. **MENTAL HEALTH IN AUTISM.**

MACEWAN UNIVERSITY **RENAMED AND BACK IN ACTION!** AUTISM AWARENESS CLUB (AAC)

This seven member executive held numerous events on campus to raise awareness of autism spectrum disorder

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

One of the Centre's Creative Expression artists, Mathieson Erickson (pictured on pg. 8), was commissioned by NAIT's Culinary Arts Program to create three Alberta-themed pieces of artwork. These pieces were gifted to the program's international guest chefs in May. Mathieson created these beautiful works in one weekend! Such an amazing accomplishment and we are so proud!



EMPOWERING FAMILIES

465

FAMILIES ACCESSED RESPITE, FAMILY NIGHT, FAMILY-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS



12

CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

CONNECTING FAMILIES AND PROVIDING SHARED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Task Analysis
Play Dates and Making Friends
Desensitization
Collaborating with Schools

ABCs of Behaviour
Social Skills Coaching
AAC Adventures
Safety First

Sexuality
Navigating an Autism Diagnosis
Parent Panel Discussion
Visioning Workshop with Gateway Association

ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES



Monthly Family Night

Families have the opportunity to connect and support each other



HOLIDAY FAMILY PORTRAITS

22

FAMILIES

An autism-friendly environment that gives families the opportunity to capture precious holiday memories they may not otherwise have

Candy Cane Lane

33 CHILDREN

40 ADULTS

Providing a supportive environment and removing any barriers families may experience when participating in community activities

57

families accessed Respite

INCLUDING

424

children

RESPITE

Giving caregivers an opportunity to take a break and have some time to themselves while knowing their children are enjoying themselves in a safe, supportive environment

VALLEY ZOO NIGHT!

367 ATTENDEES

79 FAMILIES

An autism-friendly experience at the Edmonton Valley Zoo!



OUR SUPPORTERS

**EVERY DONATION, BIG & SMALL,
MAKES A DIFFERENCE.**

WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO ENRICH THE LIVES OF SO MANY INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT!

The Centre would like to express our deepest appreciation and acknowledge all of our donors for their contributions. We value every gift—whether you choose a one-time donation or to give monthly—every dollar does towards supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorder lead meaningful, engaged lives.

\$500 - \$999

- Debra Cerney
- Ryan Family
- Automotive Recyclers of Canada

\$1,000 - \$4,999

- Kwas Family
- Jennifer McMillian
- Laurie Bronson
- Brian Knapper
- Goguen Family
- Joseph Denis

\$5,000 - \$9,999

- Rick and Brune Sinneave

\$10,000+

- Anonymous Centre Family
- Anonymous Securities Donation



Sinneave
FAMILY FOUNDATION



WORKTOPIA™
Opportunities that matter.

Canada



**AUTISM
SPEAKS®
CANADA**



Alberta
Government



YEG CYCLE
SPIN STUDIO

Gateway
Rotary
Club



AGLC
Alberta Gaming &
Liquor Commission





**ROBUST REDS
SEDUCED BY RED**

— \$75,000+ RAISED —

SOLD OUT!

THE CENTRE'S BIGGEST
CORPORATE SUPPORTER



GIVE'R CLASSES

RAISED \$5,680



\$2,000+ DONATED

Two of our members got married and asked that their guests donate to the Centre in lieu of giving gifts!

RBC EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER

DONATION 

GIFT MATCHING CORPORATIONS

ATCO EPIC
SUNCOR **RBC**

**\$2,000 DONATED BY THE
CENTRE FOR AUTISM SERVICES ALBERTA
STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**



THANK YOU!



The Centre for Autism Services Alberta is proud to be accredited in *Behavioural Consultation Services - Autism Spectrum Disorder - Children, Adolescents and Adults*, a standard of excellence awarded by CARF International.

