



Saskatchewan Abilities Council Bulletin

Regina QOL Centre Empowers Being, Belonging, Becoming

The person-centred approach to Quality of Life (QOL) services at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council has added an exciting new layer to life enrichment—one evident in the expanded sense of possibility at the Quality of Life Centre at the Regina Branch.

“The Quality of Life Centre is a physical place, but it is also a holistic service that looks at enriching each person’s opportunities for being in, belonging to and becoming part of the community,” says Corey Hadden, Regional Director. “We provide the supports individuals need to navigate life experiences and to get more out of those experiences.”

There are currently 6 staff members and 21 participants at the Quality of Life Centre. Staff members focus on establishing a rapport and sense of trust with each of the participants. These are important stepping stones to helping individuals identify personal interests and goals.

“We go beyond the obvious in terms of exploring the possibilities of life,” says Carmen Donald, Quality of Life Coordinator at the Regina Branch. “Often, our participants don’t know what all the possibilities are; this is the first time they’ve had an opportunity to discover what’s inside them. Our job is to introduce them to a whole array of ideas that align with their ‘likes’ and then to make connections that allow them to participate in the activity or have the experience.”

While participants meet at the Quality of Life Centre and often participate in



Participants enjoying Quality of Life programming at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council - Regina Branch

onsite activities, the focus is very much on creating opportunities for community-based experiences. QOL staff members are innovative in seeking out opportunities and actively making them happen. They make connections in the community to enable individuals to do things they’ve always wanted to do, whether tending a community garden plot or going with friends to the Queen City Exhibition. They also explore opportunities to engage in volunteer and learning experiences, enhancing a sense of belonging in the community. Instead of just taking individuals on an outing to the local library, QOL staff members seek out ways for everyone to become more involved in library programs, such as a summer reading club or a literacy book club. A visit to a local gallery can open the door to becoming more involved in making art.

“I think that’s what makes our program a cut above. We make individuals aware of the

opportunities, we make connections so they can participate in those opportunities and then create a comfort level so they are okay trying out new opportunities,” says Tanja Ignatiuk, Program Manager. “We help the participants explore who they truly are. Staff members are adept at getting to know who that person is. What creates anxiety? What brings joy? What have they tried that went well that we can build on? What hasn’t gone so well that we can try again with different supports?”

Quality of life looks different to each and every individual. “We’re not looking to fit people into our programs and services,” Ignatiuk says. “We’re looking to fit our services into our participants’ lives.”

Quality of Life is all about creating meaningful opportunities within the community and developing skills that enhance quality of life for each individual.

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Saskatchewan Abilities Council
2310 Louise Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2C7

Regina Branch Clients Inspire Each Other

Since meeting a few years ago at the Regina Branch Training Centre, Dan Robillard and Lillian MacDonald have become good friends. Although they're about the same age, Dan was a Training Centre rookie, while Lillian was a 27-year veteran of the sewing department. Dan was keen on getting a job in the community. Lillian didn't give it much thought until she saw Dan achieve his goal, and then she was inspired to try too.

Dan and Lillian both found community-based employment through *Partners in Employment*. But they missed the sense of community they had shared at the Training Centre. Quality of Life services have filled the void, providing social, recreation and leisure supports.

DAN'S JOURNEY

Dan Robillard came to the Council through *Partners in Employment*. He wanted to get a job in the community, but needed to improve his work skills. At the Regina Branch Training Centre, he moved through the wood products, sewing, assembly and maintenance departments. He returned to *Partners in Employment* with greater self-confidence.

Dan's first work placement was with TJ's Pizza. It was to be his last placement—TJ's loved Dan's work ethic and quickly hired him as a permanent part of their team. "I enjoy my new job," Dan says. "I had some trouble with workplace skills, but the support from *Partners in Employment* makes me feel comfortable asking questions." In fact, he's doing so well that TJ's is investing in upgrading his skills.

Although he found success on the employment front, Dan was missing his friends at the Training Centre—especially



Dan Robillard

Lillian. He tapped into the expanded Quality of Life services at the Regina Branch to add balance to his life. It became clear to staff that Dan enjoys being social, so they created opportunities to meet people; they also made sure to arrange activities he and Lillian could enjoy together.

With a community-based job and an active social life, Dan feels more connected to community and friends. "Reach for your goals," he says, "Whatever you're reaching for, you keep reaching and going, and it will come to you."

LILLIAN'S JOURNEY

After 27 years in the sewing department at the Regina Branch Training Centre, Lillian MacDonald was ready for a change. She had seen many people pass through the department over the years, and while she knew many of them moved on to jobs in the community, she hadn't thought about making the move herself ... until she met Dan.



Lillian MacDonald

Lillian and Dan became friends during his stint in sewing. When he moved on to *Partners in Employment* and then landed a permanent job on his first work placement, well, Lillian was inspired. She enrolled in *Partners* and tried two placements before landing a permanent job at Old Navy. "When I first started the program, it was a big change," she says. "But I found a good job and I tell my friends to try *Partners*."

Like Dan, Lillian's move into community-based employment left a void in her social life. She had Camp Easter Seal to look forward to, but she missed the daily contact with friends at the Training Centre. Now that Dan was working, they hardly saw each other.

Lillian then accessed Quality of Life services so she and Dan could do things together, but it has expanded her world in many other ways. She's fulfilling a long-time wish of joining a book club, and staff continue to help explore her interests. Today, she's not only enjoying a job in the community, she's enjoying a richer life experience.

OUR MISSION

The Saskatchewan Abilities Council works with people of varying abilities to enhance their independence and participation in the community through vocational, rehabilitation and recreational services.

OUR VALUES

At the Council we treat people with:

• Respect • Honesty • Compassion

Our programs and services are:

• Client-centred • Goal-oriented • Accountable

We value:

• Teamwork • Excellence • Innovation



Thank you for your part in helping children living with disabilities succeed!

AROUND THE COUNCIL

EASTER SEALS™ DROP ZONE

The Easter Seals™ Drop Zone is right around the corner! This year marks the 10th Anniversary for the Saskatoon event on August 25th, and the 9th Anniversary in Regina on August 22nd. Participants have the opportunity to be a Superhero to children and youth living with varying abilities in Saskatchewan, and rappel 22 storeys down one of the city's tallest buildings. If you can raise \$1,500 and have courage and heart... we want you! If you would like to CHALLENGE YOURSELF and CHANGE LIVES visit www.thedropzone.ca.



THANK YOU SAFEWAY

On June 12th to 28th, Canada Safeway stores across Saskatchewan rallied to "Help Feed Ability" in our province. Customers had the opportunity to donate \$2 to earn 5 bonus Air Miles or \$3 to earn 10 bonus Air Miles. Together we raised over \$20,000 in support of Easter Seals™ Saskatchewan programs. Thank you to Safeway management, staff and patrons for helping to make this year's "Help Feed Ability" campaign an outstanding success!



THANK YOU BOSTON PIZZA

This year marked the 3rd Annual Boston Pizza Day for Camp Easter Seal. Boston Pizza and the Saskatchewan Abilities Council partnered, once again, to send Saskatchewan children and youth living with disabilities to Camp Easter Seal. Throughout the month of June, Boston Pizza guests had the opportunity to purchase a Camp Card for \$2 and participate in a unique online auction with Grasswoods Auctions. On June 24th, a portion of all net sales from across the province was donated to Easter Seals™ Saskatchewan.



Join the Saskatchewan Abilities Council today!

Yes!

I know my membership will help improve the quality of life for thousands of people living with disabilities in Saskatchewan.

Enclosed is my membership contribution of:

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2310 Louise Avenue
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www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca

CAMP CORNER

In addition to the hundreds of campers that travel to Camp Easter Seal, this summer we were pleased to host a number of sponsor groups and special events.

Camp Opening

In preparation for the camp season we were pleased to host groups from the Prairie Lily Good Sams and the SaskTel Pioneers who came out to stain decks and clean and dust the chalet, dining hall and cabins. Their hard work ensured that camp was clean and ready to receive campers on May 26th.

C21 Recognition Ceremony and Work Day

On May 20th Saskatchewan Abilities Council staff and Century 21 offices from across the province gathered at Camp Easter Seal to celebrate over \$1.5 million raised for Easter Seals™ Saskatchewan. To recognize Century 21 for their outstanding contributions and symbolize our deepening roots a rock was unveiled and a tree planted as permanent fixtures at camp. C21 owners, agents and staff then rolled up their sleeves and worked to clean the camp grounds.



Camp Day

Camp Day, held on July 28th this year, is a unique opportunity for Easter Seals™ Saskatchewan supporters to tour Camp Easter Seal and see camp programs in full swing. One highlight of the day was the official opening of Cabin #14, the newly constructed cabin funded by the Draggins Rod & Custom Car Club of Saskatoon.

Easter Seals Ambassadors, Jaycee Culham (Regina), Jamie Frerichs (Saskatoon) and Brooke Perepeluk (Yorkton), were happy to cut the ribbon to this modern and fully accessible cabin that can accommodate eight campers.



Staff Profile

Adam Holmes is a Quality of Life Coordinator at the Regina Branch of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. Adam relocated from Peterborough, Ontario to Regina and was originally hired in the Industrial Assembly department of the Training Centre. He was excited to head out west for new opportunities and challenges.

Adam took a great interest in the various programs and activities offered at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council and decided to seize upon an opportunity for a position in the Quality of Life service stream helping individuals build independent living skills



Adam Holmes

through safe and challenging outings in the community—the perfect job for Adam. One of the highlights of this role includes coordinating Drop-In Centre activities at the South Leisure

Centre in Regina which is always well attended by individuals in the community.

“The main thing with participant engagement is putting power in the hands of the people I serve. It’s important to be goal focussed and get to know people. I like presenting the individuals I support with a wide variety of options and finding out what their interests are and how to support them.”

In his spare time, Adam makes cigar box guitars and banjos and has sold his crafts to high-profile musicians—Colin James, Gord Downie, Corb Lund, Frank Turner—to name a few. His craft is in high demand, but he insists he’s more of a hobbyist. Adam’s big focus in his life is his toddler at home. “I love spending time with my phenomenal little girl. I have an awesome family and the most amazing wife and partner I could ask for.

Adam is excited about working at the Council and enjoys interacting with QOL participants. “It’s all about being, belonging, and becoming—being a mentor, making impossible things seem possible, and making it a community. It’s all about relationships in the community.”

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Provincial Services

(Saskatoon) (306) 374-4448

Regina (306) 569-9048

Saskatoon (306) 653-1694

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We welcome your comments.

Saskatchewan Abilities Council

2310 Louise Avenue

Saskatoon SK S7J 2C7

phone: (306) 374-4448

fax: (306) 373-2665

email: funddevelopment@abilitiescouncil.sk.ca

www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca

Charitable Business #: 10795 5221 RR0001

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- Support Services
- Training

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- Farmers with Disabilities
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- Camp Easter Seal
- Life Enrichment
- SLYP-Out
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