



VISION

Working together to build inclusive communities for people of all abilities.

MISSION

SaskAbilities supports people experiencing disability with programs and services to enhance their lives.

VALUES

We treat people with respect, honesty and compassion.

Our programs and services are client-centred, goal-oriented and accountable.

We value teamwork, excellence and innovation.

Working together to build inclusive communities for people of all abilities.



SaskAbilities

ConnectAbilities

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In honour of Easter Seals™ Canada celebrating 100 years, SaskAbilities caught up with former camp counsellor, Gary Gullickson, who spent the summer of 1955 and 1956 working at Camp Easter Seal. Reminiscing about those early days of Camp, Gary, now 85 years old, holds dear the precious memories and lifelong friendships he made there many decades ago.

Growing up with an aunt who experienced disability, Gary was aware of and sensitive to those with varying abilities. Gary remembers his motivation for applying to work as a counsellor. "I joined the Camp Easter Seal staff the summer of 1955, which was only the second time Camp was offered and then I came back in 1956. I was just 19 years old and had finished my first year in university. I always loved camping – I was a Scout camper and worked previously at a church camp, so I was pretty geared up to be able to help offer that experience to others. I didn't have much experience working with individuals who had mobility issues or mental and physical challenges but that that didn't deter me."

Gary's goal was always to show campers a good time and allow them to feel a sense of adventure and freedom they likely didn't have in their day-to-day lives. "The first summer I was working, Camp Easter Seal was out at Crystal Lake which is just north of Yorkton. Campers were housed with camp counsellors in large bell tents and there weren't a lot of amenities. There were outdoor biffies [bathrooms] and we pushed wheelchairs through the sand on the beach and through bushes with no groomed

trails. It was a very rustic setting, but the campers never complained. They loved being there. They loved the atmosphere," describes Gary.

In August of 1955, Gary recalls Camp moving from Crystal Lake to Katepwa Lake in the Qu'Appelle Valley. The best was yet to come though for Camp Easter Seal. In the summer of 1956, Gary would return to his post as camp counsellor, traveling to Little Manitou Lake. "The thing that struck me right away was the beautiful stone building and the fact it was a developed site with cottages. It was a marvelous upgrade from what we had previously," remembers Gary of his first visit to Camp Easter Seal's permanent location. "Campers would return year after year, and it was like their established summer holiday. It was the thing they looked forward to all year round – the opportunity to be out at Camp."

Some of Gary's fondest memories are, of course, the campers! "In my first camp group, I had a young man who was a double amputee and had prosthetic legs. I was absolutely amazed by his agility and speed – without the use of his prosthetics. He could climb trees, run and was able to use his strength and leverage what he could do in a way that really impressed me. He became a very close friend of mine and lifelong contact." Perhaps one of the most memorable campers Gary encountered was an individual whose nickname said it all. "Another camper I remember fondly is a guy nicknamed Tex. He

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In the hallways of SaskAbilities

It is not an understatement to say that almost every day, SaskAbilities staff have the pleasure and privilege of helping better the lives of individuals experiencing disability – and their families. This is especially true for Rehabilitation Services at Provincial Services in Saskatoon. SaskAbilities staff member, Tracy Good is one of the lucky few who often has a front row seat to such celebrations.

As a new employee of SaskAbilities I've had the pleasure of witnessing many wonderful moments within the hallways at the Provincial Services building on Louise Avenue. This building houses rehabilitation programs such as Orthopaedic Services and Special Needs Equipment.

Our youngest clients range from babies getting fitted for helmets to help shape their heads all the way to seniors who are assisted with devices and strategies to increase their mobility. There is so much good work going on inside these walls with many moments of celebration.

A very special observation that really touched me happened when I was covering the reception desk. One day a family arrived after a three-hour drive – Mom, Dad, big sister and little brother, a young client. He was about 8 years old, in his wheelchair being pushed by Mom, as he could not do it himself. It was his turn to go in, so client and Mom headed down the hall to their appointment while Dad and big sister went off to grab McDonald's to bring back for the family. It was to be a long appointment.

I was busy doing paperwork until much later I heard noises from down the hallway that caught my attention – it was that family. They were so excited! Here he was, with a BIG smile on his face, coming down the hallway with his new motorized wheelchair – that he was driving himself!



Hired in Fund Development, Tracy will often cover the front reception desk at Provincial Services – always keeping her eyes and ears open for heartwarming stories to share.

It brought tears to my eyes to see such a big difference in him. He entered our front doors fully relying on Mom to push him around. I suspect he had never really felt what it was like to be independent in his mobility. To see and hear them cheering him on “not too fast”, “watch out for the coat rack”, “be careful...” as he, all by himself, was directing the chair (well, our clinician was tethered to him for safety). It was an emotional moment and I was choked up, seeing the complete joy on his face and in his body language.

This young boy no longer must rely on others to push him around to get him where he needs to go. He has control and can go where he wants, when he wants, however FAST he wants. Can you imagine his excitement and that newfound feeling of FREEDOM?!

I was so glad that the whole family was there to share in the pure joy of that exciting moment. Most of all, I was so grateful to be able to witness the impact SaskAbilities made on this young boy, his family and to be able to share it with all of you.
- Tracy Good

MEMORY LANE Continued from previous page

had cerebral palsy and he arrived at Camp when it was at Crystal Lake riding a big, beautiful horse. Most campers arrived by car or bus! Tex had a strong attachment to the things that are ‘cowboy’, including a cowboy hat he loved to wear. He stabled the horse in the trees just outside Camp and would go for rides during his time there. Tex was one of those long-term campers, and he returned to Camp for many years. I came to know him here in Saskatoon and he and his wife became lifelong friends with my wife Audrey and me. But his arrival into Camp that first year was quite the novelty and something I’ll never forget,” exclaims Gary, who no doubt has more stories to share.

Camp impacted Gary greatly – including how he responded to children experiencing disability in his classroom. “After University, I went on to teach school and I became very sensitive to those children in my classroom who were struggling or experiencing disability in some way. I was aware of the need to understand, appreciate and value all of those young students. I also became

involved as a swimming instructor for SaskAbilities and taught many of the individuals who were out at Camp and were continuing with the swimming program throughout the year in Saskatoon.” Wanting his own daughter Nancy to experience the impact of Camp, Gary nudged her to take an apprenticeship opportunity during her high school years. “She had a marvelous time out there and it was an experience I really encouraged her to have because I had such a wonderful time with such fond memories. Nancy really came to love Camp as well.”

Having since visited Camp a few times over the past 65 years, Gary can’t believe the evolution of the facility and all the support from the community. Marveling at what campers get to enjoy now, Gary wouldn’t change anything about his experience including having to bathe in the lakes. Noting that many of the campers and camp counsellors he’s stayed in contact with have since passed away, the fond memories are what Gary holds onto now. “I learned far more and took away so much more than I could have ever imagined.” 🌿

'RBC Summer Camp' returning in 2022



The SaskAbilities Yorkton Branch received funding in 2021 to offer the RBC Future Launch's 21st Century Skills & Leadership Project – dubbed 'RBC Summer Camp'. The 10-year initiative created in 2017 by RBC is intended to help prepare young Canadians for the workforce through "unlocking the potential of young people in Canada by addressing three critical gaps: experience, skills and networking." In 2019, RBC partnered with Easter Seals Canada on the project, and donated \$300,000 to help youth experiencing disability build skills and gain invaluable work experience to further their success in the workforce.

Youth Employment Specialists Kate Lass and Jacquie Matatal, the two program coordinators, created a dynamic program for underserved youth between the ages of 15 and 25 in both Yorkton and Kamsack. Addressing important topics such as communication and teamwork, types of jobs, self esteem, financial literacy, workplace expectations, resumes, job searches, and the importance of mental health, schedules for both groups were filled with games, activities and community and workplace tours. "Overall, I believe the camps were a great success for our first year. The participants learned some new skills which will provide them with a great fundamental base for employment," explains Kate.

A highlight for many of the participants was getting to meet community leaders and visit businesses in their respective cities. One of those businesses was of course the RBC Branch in Yorkton. "The students in attendance were so engaged and being able to present to them was an absolute pleasure. Over the course of the camp we covered three courses from the RBC Future Launch Series: 'Making the Resume Make Sense', 'Making the Job Interview Make Sense' and 'Making Money Make Sense'. We also enjoyed a tour of the Yorkton

Branch. The students had lots of questions and were genuinely interested in the material being presented. Many of them had really great questions as well," mentions Trevor McLachlan, Parkland Community Market Manager for RBC in Yorkton, of his experience and involvement.



Feedback from participants and community partners was extremely positive, with most saying they would return for another year. "It's really wonderful! I see these experiences as opportunities for my younger staff to mentor and teach and you learn so much from others. Without question I would do this again next year. We had a lot of fun," says Krystine, Manager of the Fields Store in Kamsack.

Program coordinators Kate and Jacquie are making tweaks to enhance participant's experiences for 'RBC Summer Camp' 2022. They aim to provide youth experiencing disability with an opportunity to expand their skill set and be open to possibilities they may never have considered for themselves. "Being able to connect individuals experiencing disability to youth employment programs allows us, as employment specialists, to really explore and find out what unique skills each individual has." notes Jacquie of the impact programs like RBC Summer Camp can have on participants. 🌱

A Word from our Executive Director



It is with optimism and careful consideration that we focus on moving forward, together in 2022.

This is an exciting time at SaskAbilities as we finalize the details of our

first in-person Annual General Meeting since the COVID-19 pandemic began two years ago. This year's AGM will be hosted at the Yorkton Branch with Members given the option to join virtually through the Microsoft Teams platform. Further information can be found on the SaskAbilities website. I am especially proud of the great work and many client success stories shared in the 2021 SaskAbilities Annual Report. The published document will be available at the upcoming AGM, and available on the website shortly thereafter.

This year is also one of great celebration as Easter Seals™ Canada turns 100! SaskAbilities and Easter Seals™ Saskatchewan will be hosting many activities and events throughout the year including '100 Dinners for 100 Years' to mark this important milestone. SaskAbilities is also celebrating the launch of its new mobile-friendly website, utilizing the accessiBe software. Thank you to the staff involved, including those in our Information Technology department who made it their mission to ensure a more inclusive, user-friendly experience on our website, accessible from any device.

I hope you enjoy the stories shared in this March ConnectAbilities as they reflect the things that bring us joy and make us hopeful at SaskAbilities: community, connection and innovation. Remember to visit us online for the latest stories, updates and activities.

Sincerely,

Ian Wilkinson



SaskAbilities

GENERAL INFORMATION

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NOTICE OF 72ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SASKATCHEWAN ABILITIES COUNCIL INC. (SaskAbilities)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, pursuant to *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 1995* and the bylaws of SaskAbilities, that the 2022 Annual General Meeting of SaskAbilities will be held on Friday, April 8, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at 162 Ball Road, Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The Annual General Meeting will be held for the following purposes:

- Receiving the minutes of the 71st Annual General Meeting held on April 9, 2021
- Electing directors
- Receiving the President's Report
- Receiving the Executive Director's Report
- Presentation of audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2021
- Appointment of auditors
- To transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

If you plan to attend, please register before April 1, 2022 by contacting Janet Dzik by telephone at (306) 374-4448 or by email at jdzik@saskabilities.ca

Individuals may attend in person at 162 Ball Road, Yorkton, Saskatchewan or join the meeting virtually. For instructions on how to join virtually, please visit: saskabilities.ca/AGM.

To be eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting, individuals must have purchased a 2022 membership in SaskAbilities on or prior to March 8, 2022.

Copies of the audited financial statements will be available at www.saskabilities.ca on or about March 8, 2022. Charitable Business Number: 10795 5221 RR0001.

JOIN SASKABILITIES TODAY!

I know my membership will help improve the quality of life for thousands of people experiencing disability in Saskatchewan.

Name

Address

City/Town Postal Code

Email

Phone

Enclosed is my membership contribution of:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$150 ☐ Surprise us! \$

☐ BY CHEQUE:

Please Make Cheque Payable To:

SaskAbilities
2310 Louise Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2C7

☐ BY CREDIT CARD:



CARD #:

Name on Card:

Expiry Date: /

Signature:

Or to join online visit our website: saskabilities.ca



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