

A LOVE STORY



Carly Erber and Lenny Smart met seven years ago while they were both working in the Sewing Department at SaskAbilities. The two hit it off immediately as friends, spending many years since that first meeting getting to know each other during day programming at the Saskatoon Branch. Always seen together and outwardly supportive of each other's passions, hobbies, and accomplishments, friends and family members suspected the two were an item long before they made it official on August 10, 2019.

After spending much time apart due to the pandemic and relying solely on virtual chats and texting to communicate, their bond was tighter than ever when Carly and Lenny finally reunited back at SaskAbilities in 2021. In their time apart, their relationship very clearly deepened. Fast forward to this year, after much thoughtful consideration and secret planning, Lenny popped the big question. On June 15th at SaskAbilities with the blessing of Carly's parents and a family heirloom, her great aunt's wedding ring in hand, Lenny asked Carly to marry him and she, of course, said YES!

Love is always worth celebrating! SaskAbilities is proud to create supportive environments where program participants like Carly and Lenny can explore their independence, autonomy, friendships, and connections. Providing programs and services that are person-centred, goal-oriented, and accountable, SaskAbilities helps clients carve out their paths in life based on their definitions of happiness.

There was just something about Lenny that caught Carly's attention from the beginning. "I felt like I knew from the start that he was the one. I still feel that way to this day. There was just something familiar about him, it was like I had known him for much longer even when we were just friends. I know I can trust Lenny with anything, and he knows he can trust me. I think us being best friends from the start was the perfect beginning to our relationship," expresses Carly of her and Lenny's early foundation of friendship. While both agree they rarely fight, they also admit (while smiling and laughing) to already occasionally "bickering like an old married couple."

For Lenny, it has been Carly's unwavering support and friendship throughout the years that truly made him fall in love with her. "Carly is just an amazing woman to be around. I was lucky enough to have her as my best friend and now I'm looking forward to having her as my best friend and wife. She's always supportive of the ideas I have. When I wanted to go to the City Council to push for accessible sidewalk ramps on Kilburn Avenue, she was encouraging, and I think that's important. You want to be with someone who you can celebrate with, someone you can rely on. We are both in

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Carly Erber and Lenny Smart

Join SaskAbilities in their vision of building inclusive communities for people of all abilities. Become a Member and join the many individuals across Saskatchewan who believe that everyone in our community has a right to access sustainable employment opportunities, person-centred programs and services, mental health support, and independent living. Mobilize your support in ensuring individuals like Lenny and Carly have a supportive environment to choose what their future looks like, individually and as husband and wife.



wheelchairs so there are things and experiences we can relate to and talk about that other people don't understand," explains Lenny of his relationship and close bond with the future Mrs. Smart.

Many staff and program participants at SaskAbilities have caringly watched and witnessed the evolution of Carly and Lenny's relationship, including Renee, the Quality of Life Coordinator at the Saskatoon Branch. "This is the natural progression in their relationship. This is something you would want to see happen between two people who love each other as they do. Just like anyone, they should be able to experience the continuation of their relationship in a different way. We are looking at different things for them now, like supportive independent living or home care services so they can live independently and experience all there is to marriage and an enduring relationship," shares Renee of the continued support provided for both Carly and Lenny through SaskAbilities as they begin to plan for their future together.



While Carly and Lenny's future is certainly theirs to create, they can also count on the support and encouragement of "their community" at SaskAbilities. The couple was recently at the centre of celebrations on August 11th during an engagement party hosted at the Saskatoon Branch with a very evident theme of "love." Though both Carly and Lenny are excited to get started on wedding planning and eventually exchanging their vows, they are both still riding high on cloud nine from all the excitement and festivities hosted in their honour. "SaskAbilities has been a big part of our story. Everyone is genuinely happy for us. The staff here are all so supportive –

no one has been down on us or against this. It is an environment where anything is possible if we put in the effort, we can make it happen for ourselves. We both plan on staying in day programming together and doing things that help us explore our full potential and just really enjoying our time together," shares the couple of the positive impact SaskAbilities has had on their relationship.

Join or renew your membership and help us continue to create inclusive communities where individuals experiencing disability have access to programs and services that promote personal growth, connection, and independence. Your Membership includes voting privileges at our Annual General Meeting, our ConnectAbilities and Splash newsletters, and the comfort of knowing you are making a meaningful impact on the lives and families of individuals experiencing disability across Saskatchewan.

Sincerely,

Ian Wilkinson,
Executive Director

With a gift of \$25, \$50, \$75, or a leadership gift of \$150, you will make a meaningful difference today. In recognition of your generosity, Member Leaders, those who give \$150 or more, will be highlighted in our Annual Report, a provincial publication illustrating our progress and achievements. You can also choose to support SaskAbilities through automated monthly donations which is easy and convenient. You can become a leader in your community for as little as \$12.50 per month, about the same as a weekly coffee! Please donate. Your support changes the lives of individuals accessing programs and services through SaskAbilities, like Carly and Lenny!