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# Exploring Technology and More in Regina



They've already starred as spies and superheroes, princesses and villains, not to mention investigated the ghost bus and been ghosts themselves.


But this summer, participants in the Regina Quality of Life (QOL) program got the chance to explore their movie-making skills and other interests further thanks to a new approach to technology training.

In the past, technology training was an open program where those participating in the sessions could choose whatever they wanted on a given day. Sometimes, it was virtual escape rooms on an iPad; other times, it was building small circuits or creating movie trailers and other short videos starring themselves. So, this summer, the QOL team made time for participants to dig deeper into the areas that interest them the most. There were four weekly sessions, each focusing on different

topics such as presentations, robotics and coding, virtual escape rooms, movie-making, and social media.

But that's just one aspect of an action-packed summer that saw participants outside as much as possible, learning about and trying their hands (and feet and arms) at track and field events and Zumba. Participants also learned about music festivals around the globe, participated in camping activities, and entered the vast worlds of Harry Potter and Anne of Green Gables.

"It's always a fun challenge to find activities and create programs that participants like and that can support them in everyday life," says Kim Kinnear, Senior Supervisor of Quality of Life services.

"Crafting programming around what they like best just makes sense." 




# A SPECIAL CAMP DAY

On July 19th, Little Manitou Beach was buzzing with new and familiar faces as visitors cruised down Easter Seal Way en route to Camp Easter Seal for the first in-person Camp Day since 2019! The anticipation and excitement filled the air as people gathered together, smiling, connecting, and taking in the scenic views and green spaces.

Camp Day 2023 was also the celebration of the completion of the Camp Capital Campaign, with many visitors and supporters getting their first tour of the grounds since construction began in 2019. While everyone appreciated the necessary structural upgrades and newly paved walkways, it was the addition of the accessible treehouse that caught everyone's attention, from board members to public dignitaries. "I walked up to the treehouse - I hadn't been here since that was built, and it was a highlight of the tour for me," said a smiling John Gunderson, Mayor of Watrous. A permanent plaque was also unveiled in front of the historic chalet, recognizing the generous contributors to the Camp Capital Campaign.

A special THANK YOU goes out to the many individuals who made this year's Camp Day memorable, including the many camp staff who were on hand to welcome guests, give tours, and prepare a hearty lunch! We would also like to recognize the event's host, Emily Hurd, Saskatoon Regional Director and the many individuals who brought greetings forward, including SaskAbilities board member Bruce Acton; Saskatoon - Grasswood MP, Kevin Waugh; Honourable Donna Harpauer, Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and MLA for Humboldt - Watrous; His Worship John Gunderson, Mayor of Watrous; and Her Worship Poppy Peterson, Mayor of the Village of Manitou Beach.

Of course, it wouldn't be Camp Day without hearing from campers, such as camper Raoul Proulx, who shared his love of Camp. Thank you so much, Raoul! Finally, Camp Manager Steve Grove deserves a special mention for his interview skills and passion for ensuring every camper has the BEST SUMMER EVER!

We can't wait to see everyone again for Camp Day 2024. 



## Camp Manager's Log

*September 2023*


I am happy to share that we welcomed over 600 campers to Camp Easter Seal this camping season. It was a hot summer, and everyone loved the water activities in the pool, visits to the beach, and water games around Camp, along with campfires, dances, and more! It was lovely to welcome everyone from 6-year-olds to 50+ and every age in between. This summer, we had a diverse camper population that reflected the diversity of communities across Saskatchewan and created an inclusive camp experience for all.

There were great collaborations with the local community in 2023. Watrous Interlake Human Resources Corporation, a local company that works with individuals experiencing disability, participated in day programming with campers. We also continued to maintain and create meaningful existing and new partnerships with the local Village of Manitou Beach and the Town of Watrous. These reciprocal relationships are crucial to the success of Camp Easter Seal.

We invited parents to Camp this year! This new initiative allowed younger children to attend Camp with their families and familiar support. This helped new campers get climatized to our surroundings and familiarized parents with Camp, giving them a glimpse into their child's Camp experiences in years to come. And touring everyone around

the Camp's wonderful facilities and green spaces made for a great first introduction.

Camp Day 2023 was an absolute blast! On July 19th, supporters and dignitaries came together to share the magic of Camp, tour the facilities, and share some special time with campers. We were fortunate to have great weather when the sun came out. It was fantastic to see the collaboration among staff members from across the regions and the participation of community leaders and supporters. The highlight of the day was unveiling a plaque commemorating the completion of the \$3.8 million Camp Capital Campaign, which started in 2019 and provides a solid foundation for years to come. We are already looking forward to next year's Camp Day!

I take this opportunity to thank all of the sponsors, donors, partner organizations, and supporters who contribute to Camp Easter Seal. Your contributions positively impacted campers' experience and helped make this camp season the BEST SUMMER EVER! 

*Steve Grove*  
*Camp Easter Seal Manager*

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# BEING A KID AGAIN

As the activities wind down for the Summer Fun crew at the Swift Current Branch, we caught up with volunteer Ben McEachern to get an update on all the fun adventures in southern Saskatchewan. From July to August, participants put their dance moves to good use in Zumba classes, made friends with the goats at Grotto Gardens in Maple Creek, and visited Scotty the 13-metre-tall tyrannosaurus rex at the T. Rex Discovery Centre in Eastend. While there has been a lot of learning and excitement for the 33 Summer Fun participants, perhaps the most significant impact was on volunteer Ben.

"I was a kid once. I miss those days. When you're a kid, you want to grow up so fast. Then, when you become an adult, you realize, 'Hey! this isn't as fun!' Volunteering, I got to hang out and be part of the fun again," laughs Ben. This was especially important to the 41-year-old volunteer, given the many health issues he experienced early on in his life due to a condition he carries called Hydrocephalus. Having had at least ten surgeries, Ben encountered more health complications when he was diagnosed with Epilepsy at 15.

Having his childhood interrupted by health issues, Ben can relate to children and youth accessing SaskAbilities recreational programming. "My struggles aren't the same as everyone else's. But we all have something. If I can help any of these kids or anyone else down their path, that makes me feel good," exclaims the dedicated volunteer who was first introduced to SaskAbilities through the Cognitive Disability Strategy (CDS) program and SaskAbilities' Partners in Employment services. Using volunteering to enhance his work experience, Ben also values connection and socializing, which is why he also loves participating in day programming at SaskAbilities.

No stranger to rolling up his sleeves and getting to work, Ben cites being from a small Saskatchewan village as another reason he's so passionate about helping. "For any functions to happen in Hazlet, it requires volunteers. That's why they already know the answer anytime SaskAbilities staff ask if I'm interested in volunteering. It's what I like to do. I like to help," affirms Ben, who is already looking forward to next year's Summer Fun season. 🌱

# SUMMER FUN FRIENDSHIPS IN BLOOM

Flowers and foliage aren't the only things that bloomed this summer. Yorkton's Summer Fun program was full of bright and budding friendships as new and returning participants quickly made genuine connections in a short amount of time. With a tight group of 10 children between the ages of 6 and 14, Summer Fun Coordinator Brandi McManus absolutely delighted in watching friendships form almost effortlessly from the first day.

With fast friendships formed, introductions and group integration were quick and easy, a benefit considering the jam-packed summer schedule of activities, adventures, and themes – including Super Mario Week! The spirit of friendship also followed the group into the community. Local businesses and community groups welcomed the Summer Fun crew with open arms this year!

"We really want to thank everyone who continues to support Summer Fun in the community, including Boston Pizza, Matty's Fun Centre, Dairy Queen, Teapro Bubble Tea, and the Yorkton Municipal Airport. The partnerships we form give a sense of belonging while creating inclusive communities for all. They really echo the relationships formed within our Summer Fun Program." – Brandy McManus. 🌱

# YORKTON'S Project Butterfly

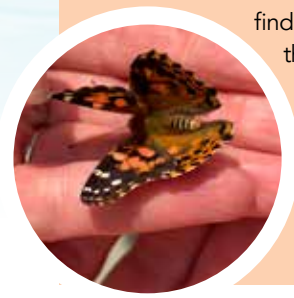
The day program in Yorkton had an exciting experience raising and releasing two sets of five monarch butterflies this summer. Beginning their nature project in June, 15 interested participants took on the task of feeding, nurturing, and tending to the needs of the insects through the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly. After five weeks of patiently waiting for the shedding of the cocoon, participants released the beautiful monarchs from the safety of their indoor netted cage to the great outdoors.

Reflecting on their experience, participants and hands-on 'butterfly keepers' Judy and Tenille learned a lot from their time raising and releasing one of the most iconic and endangered species of butterflies. "It is important to release the butterflies into the wild so they can learn how to find food and take care of themselves. It was also important because butterflies are important to the planet, so it was good to let them go," explained Tenille, who

was present when the butterflies were released.

Admitting to having mixed emotions letting the butterflies go, Judy was excited and sad to say goodbye – although one of the butterflies wasn't so quick to leave. "When it was the last day, everyone wanted to release them, but one of them didn't want to leave. Rainbow didn't want to go. All the other butterflies flew away, but Rainbow kept coming back to Tenille and me. We eventually brought her back in, and one of the staff members had to release her later in the day."

With growing interest in science and nature activities, Erin Stacheruk, Day Program Supports Facilitator, is confident Project Butterfly will see another iteration come spring 2024. "The support workers and participants come up with these ideas, they look them up, decide what they want to do, and then we do them. Given how successful the group was in raising the butterflies this year, I'm sure we'll be doing this again next spring". 🌱



# Having (Summer) Fun in Regina!

The sun is beaming down as Summer Fun participants hastily make their way around the park, knocking items off their lists. Flower? Check. Pinecone? Check. Bark? Check. Acorn? Wait... no acorns here.

That little blip in the nature scavenger hunt didn't break the smiles of the Our Time Sunshine crew, part of SaskAbilities Regina's Summer Fun program. Instead, it let participants learn a little more about nature and the trees around them. Bonus: the spray park nearby provided a reprieve from the hot sun and flushed faces after the last item on the nature checklist had (or had not) been found!

"We really just wanted to make the summer fun and memorable for everyone," said Breanna Glover, one of the Summer Fun facilitators. "And with all the activities we're doing, the kids can feel really welcome and can develop their social skills and confidence."

Once again, Regina hosted participants ages 6-18 across the Our Time Sunshine groups of

6-10 and 11-14 and Night Flight for teens 15-18. Days were filled with everything you'd expect from summertime adventures - arts and crafts, afternoons spent in pools and splash parks, and some truly unique experiences. Did we mention more scavenger hunts?

Venturing out into the community, participants went on an insider's tour of Mosaic Stadium, home of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. The older group got a sneak peek of the musical SPAMALOT! during a dress rehearsal of the Regina Summer Stage production. The Night Flight crew also got a chance to try their hands at Skee-Ball, Mario Kart, foosball, and loads of other games during a trip to Baller's Rec Room, while the younger groups toured the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame and Museum. "We're fortunate to have partnered with some great community organizations like the Roughriders, the Sports Hall of Fame, ListentoDis, and the Office of

the Treaty Commissioner to learn the history of Indigenous peoples in the province. It made it possible for everyone to experience something new," concludes Glover. 🌱



# SUMMER FUN KICK-OFF!

SaskAbilities' Summer Fun Program commenced its 45th season in Saskatoon on July 3rd with anticipation by welcoming back 23 familiar faces and meeting seven new participants. With the support of a dedicated team of volunteers and Summer Fun coordinators, participants enjoyed two full months of adventures, making memories, and forming friendships!

Programming included two groups of participants, with the first group connecting weekly every Monday and Wednesday, and the second group gathering every Tuesday and Thursday. In the first few weeks, the Summer Fun crew spent time getting to know one another at "meet-and-greets" while also exploring the SaskAbilities Saskatoon Branch, community, and surrounding park trails. Highlights included board games, visiting Gabriel Dumont Park, waving to everyone onboard the Prairie Lily while walking on the trails, yummy snacks donated by Honey Bun Café, and glow-in-the-dark mini golfing at Mar's Mini Golf.

Summer Fun participants also experienced a lot of excitement while checking out the 47th Annual Downtown Sidewalk Sale in Saskatoon. Photos were taken with superheroes; there was a trip down a very tall and bumpy slide, and everyone enjoyed some refreshing Freezies to cool down. Saskatoon Dog Rescue was also at the sale with some puppies that took to many participants, including Jessica. We suspect the feeling was very mutual!



Next up on the roster of fun activities planned, participants experienced splash parks, wet paint pottery, scavenger hunts, a highly anticipated visit to the Saskatoon Forestry Park and Zoo, exciting adventures at the Saskatoon Exhibition, and, of course, more tasty snacks.

The fun and adventure would not be possible without community support. Summer Fun coordinators worked diligently to make connections with the local business community. They would like to thank everyone who donated generously to make this summer truly one for the memory books in Saskatoon! 🌱

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