



CARLY & LENNY'S SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

In our first letter, we introduced you to the newly engaged couple, drum roll please... Carly Erber and Lenny Smart! The pair connected seven years ago in the sewing department at SaskAbilities. Today, they are both familiar faces in the halls at the Saskatoon Branch as long-time participants in the Quality of Life day program. Both are also seasoned campers, attending Camp Easter Seal at Little Manitou Lake each summer with their core group of friends.

Carly and Lenny built a solid foundation of friendship over the years, and their relationship turned into a true partnership. Growing together in love, Lenny surprised Carly on June 15th and asked her to begin a new chapter of their relationship as husband and wife. Carly, of course, said YES! Their relationship and evolving love story, much like every couple, also includes a support system, a collection of people who are truly cheering them on.

“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 to stay in day programming together and doing things that help us explore our full potential and just really enjoying our time together.”

– Carly Erber and Lenny Smart

Carly and Lenny’s support network is extensive and far-reaching. Of course, the couple has their personal friends, families, and relatives, but they also have their supportive community at SaskAbilities. In fact, to pull off and plan the surprise proposal to Carly, Lenny needed the help of a few key people within their

network. “Over the last little while, Lenny had been sharing with us he was ready to take that next step with Carly, which was an engagement. It was exciting to hear of his vision and plans. He talked to her parents beforehand, and I know there was a family ring involved. Just the fact that he chose to propose here at SaskAbilities was extremely special. I think it’s a testament to the community we have here and the positive bonds not only between participants but also between participants and staff. It was a thrill for Carly and Lenny and for all of us who witnessed and had a part in helping Lenny pull off the surprise. Then to be able to throw a party to celebrate them and their love was a lot of fun,” shares Emily Hurd, Regional Director at SaskAbilities’ Saskatoon Branch.

Garnering help from Carly’s family, Lenny first made sure to ask his soon-to-be parents-in-law for their daughter’s hand in marriage. Witnessing Carly’s friendship with Lenny bloom organically, Carly’s mom wanted what every mother wants for their daughter – happiness. “Lenny called us and asked us how we would feel if he asked Carly to marry him. I told Lenny that if that is what he truly wants, then absolutely we would support him in his decision. Then we told him not to buy a ring because we had one, and he was excited to hear that! Originally, I thought we had until August 10th because that was the original date he set, but he just got too excited and wanted to do it before he went to Camp Easter Seal so, I had to rush a little to get the ring sized – but it all worked out. It’s an exciting time for them, and we are very supportive of their relationship. Carly deserves the happiness and love that everyone else in the world gets. Their relationship won’t be without some difficulties, but really, whose isn’t,” expressed Crystal Erber of her daughter’s engagement to Lenny.

CONTINUED ON OPPOSITE...

We all have a vital role to play in building inclusive communities for people of all abilities in our province. We invite you to 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, transit services, and assistance for independent living. Mobilize your support in ensuring individuals like Carly and Lenny have a supportive environment to choose what their future looks like, individually and as husband and wife.

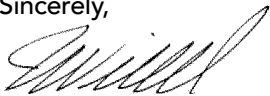
"To get to share special moments like these with participants is really remarkable. Carly and Lenny have been so intentional with how they invite us into their story, and again, it is a testament to the relationships they have built with fellow participants and staff that they would want to share such an important moment in their lives with all of us at SaskAbilities. They are such role models to all of us, and I know they have an inspiring future ahead of them. We are here to support and celebrate them along the way."

– Emily Hurd,
Regional Director, SaskAbilities Saskatoon Branch.

Noting the "fantastic" support from SaskAbilities over the many years that Carly has been attending programming, Crystal is excited to see her daughter and Lenny celebrated by everyone at the Saskatoon Branch. "We are incredibly grateful for SaskAbilities and all they've done. They threw a party for these kids, and I'm telling you, Carly came home with beautiful flowers, a cake, and two elegant bride and groom wine glasses – it's really been amazing the effort the staff and participants have put into celebrating them. It's just wonderful to see."

Carly and Lenny celebrated their fourth anniversary together on August 10th and now, as a newly engaged couple. While the two had an exciting summer of celebrations and parties together, they, of course, didn't miss their respective weeks out at Camp Easter Seal. Carly's engagement ring was on full display as she happily shared news of her and Lenny's engagement with friends and staff.

Sincerely,



Ian Wilkinson,
Executive Director



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