

# THRIVING IN LOVE

Love is infectious. Love is healing. Love is that potent ingredient that motivates and gives people the confidence and security to tackle anything life throws their way. Everyone deserves to find that special person who loves them unconditionally. In our last two letters, we have shared how Carly has found that person in Lenny, and Lenny has found that person in Carly. Their supportive community could not be happier that they have found such a wonderful match in each other.

***"Their love story began with them just talking – either on the phone or seeing each other through their screens for about a year and a half. They didn't see each other in physical form at all during that time. The first time they saw each other was back at SaskAbilities, and the staff were the ones who helped facilitate that because they knew how important it was for both Carly and Lenny to reconnect. So really, SaskAbilities has played a huge part in their relationship."***

– Crystal Erber, Carly's Mom

The foundation of a lasting and loving relationship is friendship. As we shared in the first two letters, Lenny and Carly built a solid friendship of mutual support and deep trust over many years before realizing their relationship had evolved into something more: a true partnership. Then, the unexpected happened, and the pandemic hit, which prevented the new couple from seeing each other face-to-face for over a year. "It's definitely not the ideal way to start a relationship," laughs Carly, looking at Lenny. "But I think we learned a lot about communication, and we both really tried our best to put in the effort. It helped that we were friends first," she adds. "And we had a strong enough friendship that we both trusted each other, and if it didn't work out, we knew we would still remain friends," explains Lenny of the chance they both took to explore a partnership.

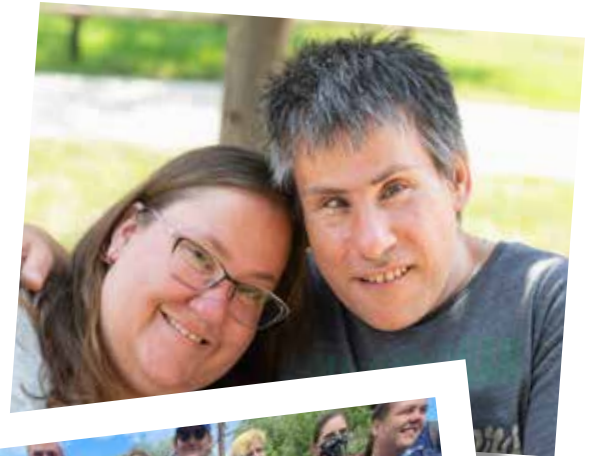
The chance they took paid off! Since Lenny's surprise proposal to Carly on June 15th, the newly engaged couple had a whirlwind summer of celebrations, engagement parties, photo shoots, and, of course, their respective weeks at Camp Easter Seal. The excitement and joy swirling around them is both authentic and palpable. They are genuinely in love. "I felt like I knew from the start that he was the one," admits Carly of their initial connection, meeting in the Sewing Department of SaskAbilities. While Lenny's "intuitive knowing" didn't kick in quite like Carly's did, it was their growing friendship and constant support of each other over the years that made things clear

for him. "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," expresses Lenny, looking at his wife-to-be.

***"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 things for them now like supportive independent living or home care services so they can live independently and experience all that there is to experience in a marriage and relationship."***

- Renee, Quality of Life Coordinator, Saskatoon Branch

CONTINUED ON OPPOSITE...



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 newsletters, and the comfort of knowing you are making a meaningful impact on the lives and families of individuals touched by disability across Saskatchewan.



*"Lenny and I are similar in some ways and opposites in others. I think that's a good thing. I always want to support him with what he is doing, and he's always encouraging me to go for things. At SaskAbilities, we both have an opportunity to explore our own interests and more of who we are with the support of staff and people who do care about us. That's important to both of us."*

**– Carly Erber**

Lenny and Carly have made it abundantly clear they value their time and support at SaskAbilities and will remain in day programming to explore activities and opportunities that help them grow as individuals and as a couple. Seen as positive role models, Lenny and Carly share their kindness, compassion, and drive with other participants at SaskAbilities. They are an integral part of the community at the Saskatoon Branch and Camp Easter Seal. Each brings their own skills, abilities, personality, and flare to activities, events, and programs. As a couple, they model what a mature, healthy, and happy partnership looks like – something our community and world can benefit from witnessing. They are thriving in their relationship and in their supportive community.

Inclusive communities are not built on words; they are built in the individual actions and collective activities we engage in to make them happen. Since 1950, SaskAbilities has been leading the way with

supportive programs and services, enhancing the lives of individuals experiencing disability in the province. "As supports, we really want our relationship with the individuals we serve to be led by them. We have as much or as little involvement depending on what the individual communicates. Our intention is always to empower people to take the lead and offer individuals like Lenny and Carly the support they want or need at various places and phases of life," explains Regional Director of the Saskatoon Branch, Emily Hurd, on the person-centred approach to programs and services at SaskAbilities.

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 support SaskAbilities through automated monthly donations, which is easy and convenient when you join our Monthly Giving Club. 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!