

GENERAL INFORMATION

Board of Directors

Bruce Acton	Saskatoon
Brenda Bancescu	Regina
Paul Blackstock	Saskatoon
Bonnie Cherewyk	Saskatoon
Kyle Christ	Saskatoon
Henri de La Garde	Saskatoon
Michelle Hunter	Regina
Stan Lautsch	Swift Current
Andy Livingston	Saskatoon
Nicole Onufreychuk	Saskatoon
Sandra Ruff	Yorkton
William Schwarz	Regina
Jonathan Tremblay	Regina
Lawren Trotchie	N Battleford

President: Andy Livingston
Executive Director: Ian Wilkinson

ConnectAbilities is published three times a year, including the summer edition called SPLASH, and distributed free of charge to members of SaskAbilities. Articles printed in the newsletter may be reproduced with written permission from SaskAbilities. For more information on our programs, products, and services, please contact one of our offices located across the province:

Regina	(306) 569-9048
Swift Current	(833) 526-5299
Yorkton	(833) 444-4126
Prince Albert	(306) 922-0225
Moose Jaw	(306) 693-3020
Saskatoon:	
Kilburn	(306) 653-1694
Provincial Services	(306) 374-4448

We welcome your comments.

SaskAbilities
2310 Louise Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7J 2C7



E-MAIL:
communications@saskabilities.ca

ONLINE:
saskabilities.ca

Publication Mail Agreement No.
40069020 Return Undeliverable
Canadian Addresses to:
SaskAbilities
2310 Louise Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2C7

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE



Under the guidance of a group of certified coaches from Saskatchewan Rowing and the Saskatoon Rowing Club, participants experienced stepping in and out of the boat, balancing with the oars, and mastering proper rowing techniques. Each participant received one-on-one support while

practicing on solid ground before testing their skills on the water.

Partnered with expert rowers and certified coaches from the Saskatoon Rowing Club who handled the stern and bow, participants took turns in pairs, occupying the middle seats and applying their training. Participants did exceptionally well despite a few wobbly entrances and exits from the boat. In fact, one individual enjoyed the experience so much that they decided to continue their training. "Since the OnWater camp with SaskAbilities, one of the participants is now regularly rowing with us every Tuesday and Thursday in our adult rowing program," shares Nicole. "They are doing really well, and it's pretty amazing to see how they have taken to the sport since being introduced to it through this collaboration with SaskAbilities."

To learn more about Saskatchewan Rowing or the Saskatoon Rowing Club, please visit their websites at www.saskrowing.ca or www.saskatoonrowingclub.com.

JOIN SASKABILITIES TODAY!

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

General Donation Membership Donation

Name _____
Address _____
City/Town _____ Postal Code _____
Email _____
Phone _____

Enclosed is my 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



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.

ConnectAbilities



The Easter Seals™ Drop Zone event made a triumphant return to Regina, bringing together superheroes from across the province for an epic cause! This year, 59 participants descended the sleek, 21-storey Hill Centre Tower II — an all-glass building — in support of providing children and youth experiencing disability with the opportunity to attend Camp Easter Seal.

Drop Zone 2024 came with one minor curveball: wind! Initially set for Saturday, August 31, the event was rescheduled to Sunday, September 1, as a safety precaution. But like true superheroes, participants and volunteers pressed on, undeterred, showing up the following day for the event.

One of those superheroes was first-time rappeler Trevor Rieger, Captain of the Prairie Sun Solar team, who raised a staggering \$6,090 of the group's total \$7,545. "I was challenged to do the Drop Zone by my daughter, who works at Camp Easter Seal," laughs Trevor. "And I'm always up for a good challenge!" With a few other connections to SaskAbilities, including his brother, Rob Rieger, Supervisor in Wood Products at the Regina Branch, and a sister-in-law, a past camp counsellor, Trevor was determined to raise some funds and support a good cause. "This event definitely pushes you out of your comfort zone. On the day of, I had to do a few practice rappels. My brain and body were saying, 'Don't do it,' but then there's that part of you that says, 'You have to.' It was a strange experience, but I'm glad I did it. Of course, it was all for a great cause," shares Trevor, adding that while this was his first Drop Zone, it might not be his last!

While the fundraising continued with an online raffle that wrapped up late October, current totals

for the Drop Zone event are well over \$100,000. "I love this event. It's so unique; there's nothing else like it in the city. It forces people to step outside their comfort zone, and it's so empowering for people who have raised money and then get to experience the thrill of rappelling down a 21-storey building. The look on people's faces, that determination and excitement, it's so rewarding to be a part of that. Each year, we look for ways to make the experience and event bigger and better, and we are already thinking ahead to Drop Zone 2025," expresses Donna Mouffler, Community Relations Coordinator at the Regina Branch.

To learn more about the Drop Zone event, please visit www.thedropzone.ca or email events@saskabilities.ca.

SOFT SKILLS TRAINING: Leveraging VR Technology


Imagine being able to watch yourself in an interview, delivering a speech, or leading a workshop, all with the goal of refining your communication, delivery, and body language. Thanks to advanced technology, this is now a reality! Partners in Employment in Swift Current utilizes an innovative software called Bodyswaps, paired with a virtual reality (VR) headset, to help clients strengthen their skills and boost their employability.

Bodyswaps software provides clients with immersive VR simulations that mirror real-world situations, such as managing challenging customers or addressing workplace conflicts. These simulations allow individuals to practice navigating these scenarios in a safe and supportive setting, encouraging the development of best practices and increasing self-awareness.

"Although we only acquired Bodyswaps this spring, it's a tool that benefits everyone—whether you're in leadership or management, a job seeker entering the workforce, or already part of a team. There's training for everyone," shares Dillon Currie, Community Connector. "Many of staff and participants have tried it, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Bodyswaps is an incredible tool offering an innovative approach to developing key soft skills that are valuable in any workplace and career path. The range of training modules available is truly impressive."

Working with people in the community continuously, the Partners



in Employment team sees the relevancy of utilizing software and technology to help individuals enhance their skills and reach their career goals. "There are times when we get feedback, either from an employer or a job seeker, that some skills need to be developed either to get a job or maintain current employment. This technology, combined with our support, helps bridge the gap between where job seekers are now and the soft skills they need to develop in order to find and maintain employment success. It also doesn't hurt that it's immersive, interactive, and fun," admits Dillon, eager to continue to share the technology with clients and colleagues. 

GETTING INTO CHARACTER WITH FREE MY MUSE

Day Program participants at the SaskAbilities Yorkton Branch have been enhancing their creative storytelling skills with Carrie Pengilly, Artistic Director of Free My Muse Theatre Co. From princesses in distant castles to thrilling animal adventures, each session invites participants to collaborate in crafting a fresh and exciting narrative through improvisation.

Acting as a guide to ensure everyone's ideas are heard, Carrie welcomes participants to engage at any level they feel comfortable with, whether as an observer or main character. Engaging and treating each person like a creative artist, Carrie has seen a difference in how participants interact. "There is an awareness of how each person's contribution matters, how each person comes into the tapestry of creativity with their respective offering, and how each has merit. Each of them has such a respect for the other as creative artists."

"I play the role of the narrator linking each scene together as we begin, but it's the participants who immediately bring their ideas to life through their interpretations and interactions of the story and characters."

– Carrie Pengilly, Free My Muse Theatre Co.

Program participant Bailey is one of many who look forward to Carrie's sessions. "I like to be a princess, but I also like to play the part of an evil stepmother," quips Bailey with a sly smirk. Known for choosing more "sassy characters," Bailey put her acting chops to good use, performing alongside Carrie at the Together We Shine conference and giving the audience some good laughs.



"When Carrie comes in, the energy is up, and the party begins," shares Tara Schuster, Support Facilitator. "She doesn't waste any time getting into a storyline, and everyone is so engaged in what's happening next and where the story is going. It's exciting to see these grandiose stories unfold where there's a hero, protagonist, and antagonist – sometimes, things go sideways. But all the story pieces are there; collectively, they make it happen. After Carrie's sessions, Bailey is one of the first people to ask when she's coming back again, so we know she's providing a one-of-a-kind experience for participants."w

To learn more about Free My Muse Theatre Co., please visit www.freemymusetheatre.com. 

The Final Sunset of the Season!


Camp Manager Steve reflects on another adventure-filled summer.

Summer 2024 was a fantastic camp season! We welcomed over 600 campers and 72 staff members, making for a busy, fun-filled time. This year, we rebooted our Leader in Training (LIT) program for youth who had completed grades 10-12. Five participants worked in the kitchen, maintenance, and program areas for six weeks, also studying *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. It was an honour to witness their growth.

At Camp Easter Seal, we focus on what we have, viewing obstacles as opportunities. Despite the varying weather—cold and wet early in the season, hot and dry later—we adapted our programs to suit the campers' needs. Rain or shine, many of our campers had the best week of their year.

After a hiatus since 2019, we were thrilled to relaunch our boating program. Watching a camper in a motorized wheelchair roll onto the pontoon boat for a lake ride was a powerful reminder of our commitment to being fully accessible.

A highlight of the summer was watching campers try their hand at archery, part of our "putting camp back into Camp Easter Seal" initiative. We focus on providing experiences campers can't get elsewhere. Alongside archery, each camper created a signature Camp Easter Seal tie-dyed t-shirt and painted a rock for our growing "rock snake" that lines the path to the treehouse. Most campers chose to leave their rock behind, creating a visual reminder of the diversity of people who visit us each year.

As I photograph the sunsets, marking the shift in seasons, I reflect on how Camp is not just a location; it's a community of campers, staff members, volunteers, and supporters who make our work possible. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who helped us create another unforgettable summer at Camp Easter Seal. 



"It was a very positive experience for all of us. Not only was it great for our son Nash, but we found it very beneficial for our other boys to meet and spend time with other siblings who share a similar family dynamic. We just loved being able to get away as a family and have it be inclusive for all of our kids. It was also great not to have to meal plan or cook! Such a bonus!"

– Allie & Wyatt Jacobi, Family Camp 2024 Participants

SASKABILITIES ROWING 'ONWATER'

Program participants from the Saskatoon branch were immersed in a three-day rowing camp hosted by Saskatchewan Rowing and the Saskatoon Rowing Club from August 6 to 8. The adventurous group of six spent the first few days learning new skills and practicing on stationary rowing machines before venturing on the South Saskatchewan River.

"The OnWater camp with SaskAbilities participants was so much fun – everyone did such a great job. Programs like these are an opportunity for the rowing clubs across the province to continue to open the doors of our sport to everyone and be more inclusive. We want to let folks know that this sport can be adapted to the individual, and anyone can do it. Anyone can row!" – Nicole Golden, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Rowing Association

In preparation for their rowing debut, participants moved from the indoor machines to practicing in a single-seat boat on the grass.



CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE