



## ANNUAL REPORT 2008

"BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY"

Report for January 1, 2007 - December 31, 2007

8/18/2008



# ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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## DESCRIPTION OF AGENCY SERVICES:



The Ability Society was founded in 1979 by parents of children with Cerebral Palsy. As a team we are committed to enhancing the lives of children, youth and adults with special needs and seniors to achieve their highest potential within our communities.

As we continually evolve, our goal continues to be to build a caring community. The Ability Society provides a range of services to children and youth with any type of special need, chronologically or cognitively under the age of eighteen.

The services we provide to these individuals with special needs include: Computers and their adaptation equipment (i.e. speech recognition software), Adapted toys, recreation/leisure equipment, hobbies and art interests, Micro switches, Environmental controls, Employment programs and Computer training programs.

*"Don't fear change, embrace it," Anthony J. D'Angelo.*



*A picture from our archives, cutting the ribbon at the grand opening of The Technical Resource Centre (TRC is our former name).*

### Mission Statement

Building a caring community.

### Mandate

The mandate of the Society is the provision of innovative, appropriate, and needed technical aids to individuals with any type of special needs, seniors, their families, and support systems. In simple words, we provide access to technology that is used as a tool by a person with a special needs and seniors to live with dignity.

### Location & Contact Information

#### Calgary Office

600, 906 8th Ave SW Calgary, AB  
T2P 1HP

(403) 262-9445

(403) 262-4539 FAX

#### Edmonton Office

#203, 10235 - 124 St Edmonton,  
AB T5N 1P9

(780) 442-2740

(780) 453-7006 FAX

## PRESIDENT/CEO'S MESSAGE

The search for stability is ubiquitous. Is there a magic potion that can give either an individual or an organization a fighting chance to attain stability? For thousands of years up to my grandparent's time, land was the thing that gave person stability. Whether you were a prince or a pauper, if you had land you stood a good chance of achieving some measure of stability. So my grandfather, a poor immigrant from the Ukraine, worked hard as a farmer and assembled some land, which he gave at his retirement to my father so that he could have a good chance in life and have stability.

My parent's generation soon found that land lost its place as the magic potion. Crop failures, low prices and escalating input costs seemed to overpower even the hardest work effort. My parents realized that land wasn't going to give their children a stable future. The magic potion for their generation then became a good career. Their vision was that whether you were an engineer, teacher, nurse, etc., a career gave someone the best chance for stability. So off the land and to university I went.

It wasn't long into my career that economic upheavals, corporate downsizings or restructurings, etc. battered every career I could see. Although there was nothing wrong with having a good education and a career, it in itself provided no assurance of stability. So what to do with my own children and my own life for that matter? What I decided was the best thing I could give them and myself to achieve stability was the ability to handle change. My belief is that anyone who is able to tolerate considerable ambiguity, to incorporate into one's life the increasing pace of change, to recreate them when necessary, etc., is the type of person who can create for themselves and the people around them a sense of stability. It is only by embracing change in its fullest measure can we hope to achieve stability in its fullest measure.

The Ability Society has undergone tremendous change in the past several years. Certainly we are a very different organization than we were even one year ago. We are totally different than we were even four years ago. We have gone in that time from an organization almost totally dependent on its traditional funding sources to being this year almost totally independent. The vast majority of our revenues are now self-generated. Our goal is to be a totally independent organization financially by the end of 2008. Total financial independence is a claim that only very few nonprofit organizations can make.

This past year has had no shortage of milestones. We now have Friends International operational, albeit currently on a limited scale, but is a program that will grow in size and scope in the upcoming years. That has been a big change for us. We have also begun in earnest our next level of entrepreneurial involvement, which is Social Enterprise, by successfully purchasing our own office building. This is another huge change. The concept of Social Enterprise will henceforth drive the majority of the change for the

Ability Society for the next several years. There are many, many other items of change that I could recount.

But one thing has remained the same throughout the years of my involvement with this organization. That one thing is the dedication and professionalism of the staff and Board of this fine organization. We are blessed to have all our senior staff and a good number of our Board members with several years of tenure with us. We also have several new individuals who have brought to us new passion and expertise. Whether old or new, they have all brought incredible stability to the Ability Society throughout this incredible change. As always, its not where you go or what you are doing that is the most important....it's who you are with that is the most important. It is both humbling and satisfying to be involved on this journey with this outstanding group of people. The journey continues.

*Adrian Boback*

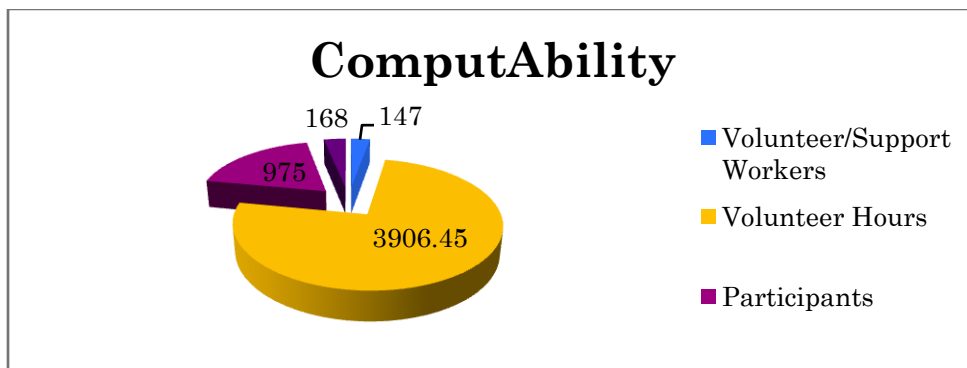
*"If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living," Gail Sheehy.*

## OUR CALGARY PROGRAMS:



ComputAbility is a volunteer driven program that provides persons with special needs and seniors the ability to become more independent and have a higher quality of life by obtaining computer literacy skills.

The Tutor Assisted program provides one-on-one computer training at the participant's pace. Individuals are matched to a qualified volunteer tutor who will provide one-on-one goal oriented computer training for a minimum of one hour per week. We offer a range of training from basic skills to MS Office and Internet to Web design and programming. We even custom design training programs to suit individual needs.



The **Support Worker Assisted** program focuses on educational and recreational software and allows individuals to work on a computer along with their Support Worker, family member, or friend.

**DID YOU KNOW?** *ComputAbility has been a successful program at the Ability Society for 7 1/2 years!*

A word from **Linda Jensen (ComputAbility Program Facilitator)** Working with the volunteers and clients at the Ability Society is the most self fulfilling rewarding job that one can have. Working along side others who are not forced to be there but want to be there is the best because you get to see smiles on everyone's faces and the happiest people that are doing something they love to do, giving to others. You get to meet all kinds of people and learn lots of new things from the volunteers and the clients you are helping. At the Ability Society I have met so many fascinating people and its always interesting listening to the different stories of why someone decided to come here to be a volunteer or to be a client. A lot of times I feel like my clients and the other volunteers are tutoring and teaching me much more than I am to anyone of them, learning about their lives, the countries they came from, and their cultures.

*Linda Jensen*

*"Change your thoughts and you change your world," Norman Vincent Peale US clergyman (1898 - 1993).*

### Antonietta– A Participant in ComputAbility

I am Antonietta and I attend the Ability Society to learn computer skills. Since I started to attend I've learned how to open and close a program. My favorite thing to do is play Spider Solitaire on the computer I find that the time goes by so fast. Linda has helped me learn how to open the internet and look at website about the country I come from. With great difficulty I learn a bit more each time. I have a tutor that I use to help correct spelling or my dictation. English is my second language.



Antonietta (in blue) with Marijana (computer tutor) pictured to the left.

At the age of sixty my mind is not the same I need to repeat steps over and over again. I do meet with many wonderful people; I do look forward to go to the Ability Society. Three hours a week is not enough practicing to improve a great amount, I would like to attend much more and practice over and over again. It is a good location at the downtown centre. It is important for me to be at Ability Society. It is peaceful place with many other attendees to learn computer with many opportunities to explore the internet worldwide.

*Antonietta*



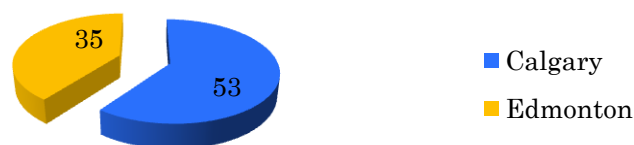
**Early Birds** are a personalized and unique program which includes Specialized Services & Futureways. These programs service the diverse needs of children diagnosed with special needs.

**Specialized Services** focuses on children 2-12 years with severe special needs. Home based Therapy with Program Assistants.

A child in Specialized Services may have access to a clinical team of therapists (as indicated in their Specialized Service Contracts) that include: Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Physiotherapist, and Program Assistant.



## Families Served



## Futureways

Futureways focuses on children

8-12 years in Calgary  
12 - 18 years in Edmonton

The Futureways program looks to work with children and youth in a format that consists of traditional one-on-one therapy and group therapy sessions.

Children participate in weekly group sessions, held within the community and directed by a clinician developed curriculum.

Children are paired with a Futureways Program Assistant (PA), who will work with them in a variety of settings, including in the home, in the community and in the group setting.

An Individualized Service Plan (ISP) will be developed and personalized for each child to ensure that the areas of need or concern are addressed during the six month contract period.

# friends

## INTERNATIONAL

**Friends International** is about connecting people and about investing in Social Capital through short-term international *voluntourism* (volunteer + tourism) projects which will foster global connections in the spirit of friendship, reciprocity and a mutual respect.



*Friends International* allows individuals, families and groups of all ages the opportunity to expand their horizons and become active global citizens through safe, unique, well-organized international volunteering

opportunities that mix the power of sharing with the adventure and excitement of tourism.

The picture above is of a Cambodian boy in the village of Chamcar Bai. The picture to the right is a woman demonstrating the new water filtration system that Friends International assisted with.



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has," Margaret Mead U.S anthropologist & popularizer of anthropology (1901 - 1978).*



**Equipment Lending Library - (28.5 Years)** - The Ability Society has a lending library containing assistive devices. These assistive devices can provide participant's with special needs to enjoy in independent computer access, improve augmentative communication, adapted toys or sporting goods, and some environmental controls. *Note: The Equipment Lending Library requires an upgrade of computer access hardware and software.*

**VoiceAbility-(10 Years)** - This is a voice-recognition training program for adults with special needs. It is designed to teach individuals how to use voice recognition software for purposes such as education, employment, volunteerism or leisure. The program provides individuals with special needs the opportunity to expand on their knowledge of computers and computer programs to assist in becoming an independent, active member in their community.

**Assessment, Training and Education Services (26Years)** - Through personal assessments, the Ability Society can offer persons with a special needs computer access options, augmentative communication devices, adapted toys, environmental controls, alternate power mobility and switches.

Working one-on-one assists us to determine what type of equipment will be most useful to each individual, depending on their current environment, situation and goals.

**Children's Resource Centre - (8 Years)** - The Centre is a no cost facility and is available to children of all ages (including those cognitively under the age of 18), with any type of special needs. A variety of adaptive toys, recreational equipment, sport and diversionary activities will be accessible for loan through the agency's equipment lending library.



*"In a progressive country change is constant; ...change... is inevitable,"*  
Benjamin Disraeli British politician

(1804 - 1881).

## EmployAbility (Calgary)

Canada

The Ability Society attempted to run a 12 week life skills/Beginning Business Skills course. Participants were to earn \$8.00/hr to attend to become more employment ready. They would attend for up to 30 hrs/ week and receive a \$500.00 completion bonus. In addition they would be supplied with a bus pass during the program. The program was designed for any person with a disability and /or special need. It was to have a maximum number of 14 participants between the ages of 15-30 years. Due to the low enrollment we had to cancel this project. We are interested in running this program in the future. If you or you know someone that this program would be ideal for please call the Ability Society and place your name on our list.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS IN CALGARY

The Ability Society has been a continuous series of changes, some more drastic than others some subtle, yet all moving towards building a better community and agency. The biggest changes seemed to occur later in the year when the new senior management team was put into place (Adrian Bohach \* President & CEO, Deidre Norris \* Director of Operations Edmonton, Daylin Pillay \* Manger of Information Technology, & Kelly Gurtin \* Director of Operations Calgary). The greatest results of the changes I see are in our amazing staff. We are very fortunate to have the combined talents of our clinical & non-clinical team.

Robin Swift is a Chartered Psychologist with over 11 years of experience working in the field of mental health. She currently divides her time between her position as Psychologist with the Early Birds Program at the Ability Society and her Private Practice. Her insight and collaboration with our Psychologist/Behavior Therapist team is a key element to the team.

Jade Powers took over as the Clinical Coordinator & Supervisor of Specialized Services. While in this new position she has done so much to organize the children's hours, establish organization where there was none, assign therapist to children and to be a general advocate for children with special needs.

We added two new full time therapists who have vibrant ideas and are real team players. Lisa McBride our new Occupational Therapist continually amazes me with her creative ideas and her fun approach to all tasks. Lisa's glow in the dark and egg tooth brushing experiments has become a gigantic hit with the children. Lyse Cormier is our new Speech Language Pathologist. Lyse is the biggest "kid" we have on staff with several innovative ideas she frequently surprises those around her.

Kathy Burns took over as Therapist Assistant and her ability to create board games & other personalized tools for the clinicians to use is a huge asset to the team.

Our part-time staff is just as creative and passionate about providing the best quality care available. Lisa Bauche, Rita Coleman & Leanne Byl all provide valuable insight and collaboration.

***DID YOU KNOW?** Leanne Byl has been with the Ability Society since Sept 2005, making her our most senior clinician we have on staff. Leanne has experience in orthopedics, neurology, rehabilitation, with her main area of interest pediatrics.*

Outside of the clinical staff we have the Program Assistants whom work hard to implement the plans of the clinical staff and the families. Without the program assistants we could not deliver a well rounded program.

A special thanks to Shannon Kostur our oldest Program Assistant she has been with us since September 5, 2005. In addition we also thank Bernice Barefoot (Oct 21, 2005) and Elizabeth Anderson (Dec 12, 2005) for their commitment and continued support.

Linda Jensen working part-time has taken over the responsibilities of running the ComputAbility program. She has a lot of passion and personal experiences that will allow her to relate well with the participants.

Twyla Burns has worked very hard on a few projects helping with a great deal of organizational & research projects.

Thank you to all those staff I have not individually mentioned, they all worked hard to provide the best service to those families we serve. At the Ability Society we have always been blessed with finding the best people. Here is to another year of improving the things we do right and correcting the things we are still learning from.

*Kelly Gurtin*

*"We must become the change we want to see," Mahatma Gandhi (1869 - 1948).*

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Pledge Day 2007



When: 6:00am - 6:00pm, on Friday  
December 14th, 2007

Where: Westin Calgary (320 - 4th Ave.  
SW)

Pledge Day is a 12 hour live radio broadcast from the lobby of the Westin Hotel. Pledges of financial support are called in by CHQR listeners. Individuals, retailers and corporations who have raised funds for the Calgary Children's Foundation throughout the months prior to Pledge Day are welcome to present their cheques on-air. We also invite local celebrities and sports personalities to be

a part of the radio program.

The following is a list of beneficiaries who received grants from the Calgary Children's Foundation in 2007:

Safe Haven Foundation of Canada, Connections Counselling and Consulting Foundation, Boys and Girls Club Community Services, Albert Park / Radisson Heights After School, Alberta Easter Seals, Calgary Learning Centre, Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta, P.A.C.E. Rehabilitation Program, Kids' World Outreach Society, [Ability Society of Alberta](#), G.R.I.T. Calgary Society, The Janus Academy, Between Friends Club, Calgary Counselling Centre, Canadian Diabetes Association, Glamorgan Community Association, Community Kitchen Program of Calgary Society, Foothills Youth Association

(This write-up borrowed from <http://www.am770chqr.com/Community/CalgaryChildrensFoundation.aspx>).

During the event we discovered a star reporter Aidan MacDonald, he did such a superb job he got a donation of \$1000.00 by himself. See Aidan pictured below!



*"Change is the constant, the signal for rebirth, the egg of the phoenix," Christina Baldwin.*

### 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Company Picnic (Calgary)

Our 1<sup>st</sup> Company Picnic was Challenger Rotary Park. We had a variety of staff, volunteers, used the playground area for the kids. Hamburgers, hotdogs & more were provided. We hope to improve upon this event next year.



held June 2, 2007 at Calgary had great weather and a good turnout of clients & their families that came. We also had a bouncy house for the kids. Salad were provided. We hope to improve upon this event next year.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Company Picnic (Edmonton)

We held our First Annual Family Picnic on June 9 at Laurier Park. Approximately 40 people attended and from all reports, it was a resounding success. We are planning our Second Annual Family Picnic for August 2008.

### Christmas Party

**December 6, 2007 at 5:00 PM**

The Delta Bow Valley

209 - 4th Avenue SE, Garden Patio



*This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year we held our Christmas Party at the Delta Bow Valley. We had approximately 80 guests; staff, volunteers, board members & their guests. We had a variety of gifts that the guests drew for.*

*Our Volunteers were recognized and presented with a pen & pencil set. Kerry Kaminski has been volunteering for ComputAbility since the program began. He often assists those learning voice recognition, Access and JAWS.*

## United Way Get Caught Red Handed Event & Campaign

This year the Ability Society came together and we had 100% staff & Board Member contribution. The results of our efforts were that we raised \$3324.00 and increased the money raised over last year by 281%...Wow that's a huge increase. Heather Innes of the United Way of Calgary & Area nominated the Ability Society for the Spirit of Gold Award.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS IN EDMONTON

Greetings from Edmonton! As many of you know, 2007 was a year of substantial growth and change for the Edmonton office of the Ability Society. I cannot begin to list all of the individuals who were instrumental in this growth and change but you all have my profound appreciation.

I would be remiss, though, if I did not specifically mention two individuals. Nadine Fulmer, our Futureways Coordinator and Early Birds Service Coordinator, joined us in January. She brought with her a wealth of experience, organizational skills and creativity, all of which were utilized on a continual basis. Praise Lam, our Occupational Therapist, joined us in July and has been instrumental in the success of the Early Birds program due to her unique combination of technical skills, personality and attitude. The program would not be where it is today without her involvement. My thanks, as well as the thanks of the agency go to you both for the amazing jobs you have done.

Here is a recap of some of the year's events:

We started the year settling into our new office on 124 Street (which is conveniently located close to Second Cup, Chocolaterie Bernard Callebaut and what I've been told is some of the best gelato in Edmonton). We were grateful to receive a large donation of office furniture and computer workstations from eduCORE, which was essential in setting up our new space. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to those who worked cheerfully and tirelessly to facilitate the transition to the new office. It was a wee bit unsettled for awhile...

In March, the Ability Society reached another milestone and hired an Accounting Assistant. We are excited about this addition to our team and are confident that we will be able to provide increased support to our clients and other stakeholders as a result. This position is currently based in Edmonton but works on behalf of the agency as a whole.

## EDMONTON-HERE IS A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMS OFFERED IN 2007:

### AchieveAbility

As part of our employment programming, the Edmonton office offered an AchieveAbility program in conjunction with Service Canada. Through this project youth facing barriers to employment participated in a 32-week program to enhance their employability skills.

The program commenced with 16 participants; many participants completed the entire program and others gained permanent employment before the program finished.

It was an honour to work with these youth and we look forward to doing so again with another AchieveAbility program.

### ComputAbility

2007 saw the advent of our ComputAbility program in Edmonton, which is modeled on the program offered in Calgary. It is a no-cost program to assist people with special needs and seniors to achieve a greater level of computer literacy to facilitate their involvement in education, employment and/or volunteerism.

We had approximately 20 participants in the program throughout the year, learning a variety of computer skills.

### Early Birds – Specialized Services

The Early Birds program is our longest-standing program in Edmonton, having started in September 2004. Most of our Early Birds – Specialized Services clients are kids between the ages of 3 and 15. In 2007 we were blessed to work with an amazing variety of families, welcoming 11 new families to our service over the course of the year.

### Futureways

The Edmonton Futureways program provided a number of workshops for youth with special needs, in conjunction with Family Support for Children with Disabilities. Three different workshops were offered throughout the year: Building Friendships, Personal

Development and Peer Pressure & Bullying. A total of 28 youth were involved in the various workshops and the program was well-received.

In closing, I would like to thank all of our clients, past and present, for giving us the opportunity to work with you. I would also like to express my profound gratitude to each and every staff member for making 2007 an exciting and successful year for the Ability Society and the clients we serve. Without you, our mission of building a caring community could not become reality. Here's to moving ever closer to achieving that reality in an ever-widening community.

*Deidre Norris*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair

George Larson

### Vice Chair

Andrew C. MacLachlan

### Past Chair

Dr. Sandy Smith

### Directors

Jon Ouellette

Doug Marlin

Don Thompson

Herb Coburn

Jerilyn Wright

Rob Beamish

Stephanie Stimpson

Martin Lambert

Adrian Bohach

**DID YOU KNOW?** *George Larson & Dr. Sandy Smith have served on our board for 6 years.*

## Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors.....George Larson

The Ability Society found its genesis and a special sense of community originally in Calgary. It now is spreading that genesis....and genius, geographically to the rest of Alberta and soon to British Columbia. With the launch of the Friends International movement, that genius will be spread throughout the world. We are excited about that!! As an organization, we have gone down the road of social entrepreneurship where few in the nonprofit sector have gone...and we've done it successfully. We are excited about that too!!

Volunteers, staff and interested supporters have invested their resources of time, talent, money and in-kind assets so that their local communities, and in fact international communities, can be improved. Our Mission is "to build a caring community"....wherever that may be. There is a special sense of community in everything that we do that explains the very essence of the Ability Society.

This sense of community should not be taken over-romanticized or taken for granted. It requires active participation, high standards, risk taking and the occasional mistake. One of the sturdiest strands of the fabric of our community is our volunteers, Board and dedicated staff. Without their exuberance and commitment, our results would have been much more humble.

Welcome to our 2007 results!!

*George Larsen*  
Board Chair

## Getting to Know The Chairman of Our Board

### George Larson – Bio

Born and raised in Alberta, George embarked on a banking career in Edmonton with the Bank of Montreal in 1961. For the next twenty-five (25) years he held various positions in the banking industry in Western Canada, culminating in directing the activities of a Western Canadian Mortgage Banking firm as Chief Executive Officer.

In 1986 he became active in the commercial real estate brokerage business as General Manager of a Calgary-based firm that grew into a national publicly traded full service brokerage. He partnered with a group of senior agents to purchase the Western Canadian offices from the public company in 2001 and remains active as a Principle in this endeavor. The company encourages its employees to be active in the community and is pleased that eighteen different charities,

agencies and non-profit organizations benefit from this involvement.

Proud to be an Albertan and grateful for the opportunities that the province has provided, George is most thankful for his five children, all of whom remain in the province. He also has four grand children and is ever conscious of the need to remain socially vigilant so that they can enjoy the quality of life that Albertans should rightfully expect.

Having been a long-standing admirer of the work done in the community by the Ability Society, he became active as a member of the Board of Directors in 2002 and was subsequently named Chairman in 2005. He remains an enthusiastic supporter of the role the Ability Society plays in making Alberta a better place to live, and in its attempts to become more fiscally independent through the pursuit of a "social enterprise" model of service provision.

*George Larson*

**DID YOU KNOW?** We were originally named the Technical Resource Centre.

*"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself," Andy Warhol, The Philosophy of Andy Warhol US artist (1928 - 1987).*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### Our IT system of the Ability Society

Calgary's office uses Small Business Server 2003 with 25 Users. We have 50 workstations in total, this includes all staff and program based computers. In Calgary we have a variety of Operating Systems being used. Our goal is to update the server and provide staff with a consistent Operating Systems & Microsoft Office Package. Both offices' internet is provided by TELUS ADSL.

Edmonton's office runs as peer to peer computers, in other words it has no server. They have 25 computers in total for staff use and program use.

We are still working on new website site for the [abilitysociety.org](http://abilitysociety.org); it will be completed in 2008. [Friendsmovement.com](http://Friendsmovement.com) has not updated for a while but changes are planned soon.

*Daylin Pillay,*

Manager of Information Technology

**DID YOU KNOW?** Daylin has lived in South Africa, Scotland, England, Ontario, Manitoba, & New York. He has travelled to Quebec, Saskatchewan, BC, Washington, California, Mexico, Nevada, Montana, North Dakota, Illinois, Ohio, Hawaii, Maryland, Virginia, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, Florida, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Washington D.C., New Jersey, & Vermont.

*"Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better," King Whitney Jr.*

2007 Key

Volunteers

Adam Gusul

Adriana DeLauw-Hartley

Antonietta La Marca

Asit Kumar Mahapatra

Barb O'Neil Taylor

Carol-Ayn Crowley

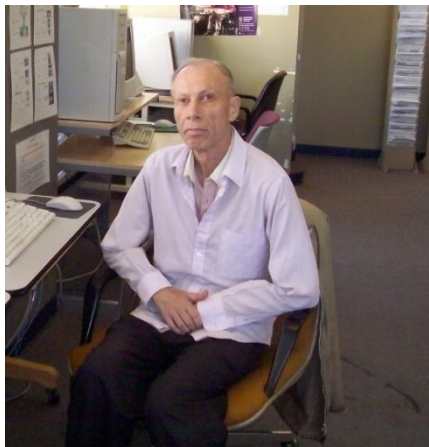
Donna Beregon



Ellen Ziebart	Leela Iyer	Phillip Parenteau
Fornando Fonseca	Leonard Burns	Rafael Martinez
Garry Cooke	Linda Jensen	Rob Chow
Gavin Kim	Mario La Marca	Robert Rappel
George Allen	Megha Sharma	Robin Rosewood
Guseppe Benacchio	Michael Ji	Sandy Marr
Janet Quon	Michelle Jablonski	Satwinder Gill
Jodi Ouellette	Mike Enns	Shutian Jiang
JongHwa Lim	Morgan Hansen	Steven Cohen
Kathy Lick	Patrick Yu	Tony Otis
Kerry Kaminski	Philip Gledhill	Walter Kiefer

## Volunteer Bio – Phil Gledhill

After leaving the hospital I arrived at a halfway house in 2001 on a long weekend. With absolutely nothing to do, I decided to play around with a desk-top computer. This was pure desperation as I had sworn off computers after being main frame operator years ago. As per usual my curiosity kicked in and I started to learn on my own.



Having seen an Ability Society ad at this place in Claresholm, I made contact immediately on returning to Calgary that winter. I had a little tutoring but found it more fun to learn on my own. I finally realized I needed a practice outlet to help in remembering and so I started tutoring.

At first I was quite disappointed. My clients were more interested in socializing than learning. But when you realize this is where they are in life, the job is to motivate them to learn. Now I really don't want to just teach by the book and it is much more rewarding.

*Phil Gledhill*

## Special Thank-you

A special thank-you to our Volunteers, many of our programs & services could not run effetely without their support. Most of our volunteers dedicate their time in ComputAbility however we have volunteers who have taken the time to help our clients or programs in some unique ways:



- Ⓞ read mail for a legally blind couple
- Ⓞ locate, donate & find valuable office equipment
- Ⓞ work on improving literacy skills with a client
- Ⓞ sort equipment
- Ⓞ provide shoes & clothing donations for our clients
- Ⓞ learn some assistive technology
- Ⓞ provide food hamper & baked goods for our clients at Christmas time
- Ⓞ write thank-you poetry for volunteer recognition
- Ⓞ assist with special events, set up
- Ⓞ create a ComputAbility logo
- Ⓞ complete various administrative tasks
- Ⓞ haul computer monitors and parts to electronic recycling centre

## National Volunteer Week – April 2007

We were proud to honor our volunteers with a box of chocolates. National Volunteer Week celebrates the countless efforts of those who take time to help others.

## International Volunteer Day – Dec 5, 2007

Because our Christmas Party was on Dec 6, 2007 the day after International Volunteer Day we combined our Volunteer Recognition with the celebration. Volunteers were awarded a boxed pen & pencil set as a thank-you.

## Special Appearances by Volunteers

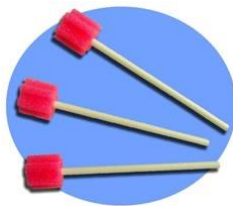
Phil Parenteau & Rob Rappel graciously donated some of their time to demonstrate on camera for Shaw TV how & why they tutor participants in ComputAbility. Phil being legally blind is an amazing tutor and our best typing instructor. Rob has no/little short term memory needs to write everything down so he can remember who his students are and what they are learning. Rob is a highly skilled tutor and is often requested.

## STAFF ROLES (WHAT DO WE DO ANYWAY)

Often clients, volunteers and other staff don't truly understand what other people's roles are in the agency. Here we will look at a few of the roles.

### What Does The Speech Language Pathologist Do?

At the Ability Society our speech-language pathologist (SLP) is one part of a team of clinicians working towards goals developed with the parents. Specifically the SLP focuses on helping individuals (usually children) to communicate successfully. The SLP will help assess, educate and provide strategies to prevent or improve language skills.



## What is The Role of The Occupational Therapist?

Occupational Therapists (OT) are concerned with an individual's ability to perform everyday activities that are important in an individual's life. Often an individual's ability to participate or perform daily tasks is affected by illness, disease, disability or disorder.

Occupational Therapists examine age-appropriate tasks and address areas that interfere with the child's ability to perform these tasks successfully. The Ability Society's program is play based, simply put we use play to help teach skills to children. Pictured above & below are special products an OT may use.





Art work created by a Specialized Services participant.

## Understanding the Role of the Behavior Therapist

The Behavior Therapist role involves refocusing undesirable behaviors to desirable ones. The Behavior therapist with the assistance of the parents identifies goals they would like to see the child accomplish. Once these goals & maladaptive behaviors are identified the Behavior Therapist strategizes ways of replacing negative behavior with healthier types of behavior.

Pictured is Jade Powers, Clinical Coordinator & Supervisor in Calgary. Jade is an Art/Behavior Therapist.



## A Closer Look at the Therapist Assistant's Role

As Therapist Assistant for Specialized Services and Futureways my job is to creatively make unique items, this may involve



designing a game, making a visual strip or researching new ideas & products. Often the Clinicians request a specialized item for children in our program. Each child has different goals and this requires careful planning to ensure the product made is appropriate to their level of understanding and age. Typical areas that may be worked on will include sensory, social, or language skills. For example many children need to use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS).

Pictured above and to the left are various games, PECS and tools Kathy has made for our clients.

*Kathy Burns*

*"Life is like an ever-shifting kaleidoscope - a slight change, and all patterns alter,"  
Sharon Salzberg.*

## Program Facilitator

The role of the Program Facilitator is to run, market, recruit & evaluate. At the Ability Society the role of the Program Facilitator is to take a program and develop it as it was a small business. You must market the program; manage personal dynamics of the clients and volunteers. Understand how to evaluate and grow a program.

## STAFF LIST 2007

Abromeit, Naomi	Calgary	Artale, Jessica	Calgary
Alvey, Alana	Calgary	Atherton, Judith	Calgary
Anderson, Elizabeth	Calgary	Barefoot, Bernice	Calgary
Anderson, Alex	Edmonton	Bauche, Lisa	Calgary
Arruda, Denis	Calgary	Beaty, Andrea	Edmonton

Berger, Luci	Calgary	Krapohl, Kim	Edmonton
Bohach, Adrian	Calgary	Kusch, Amantha	Calgary
Boivin, Audrey	Calgary	Lam, Praise	Edmonton
Brittain, Emma	Edmonton	Lazar, Phyllis	Calgary
Brompton, Delyth	Edmonton	Lepage-Fortin, Audree	Edmonton
Burns, Kathy	Calgary	Little, Roberta	Edmonton
Burns, Twyla	Calgary	Little, Maureen	Edmonton
Byl, Leanne	Calgary	Lobo, Elsie	Edmonton
Chamberland, Valerie	Calgary	Matheson, Susanne	Calgary
Chandiramani, Alka	Calgary	McBride, Lisa	Calgary
Chevrier, Brenda	Calgary	McClure, Christie	Calgary
Coleman, Rita	Calgary	McGill, Lindsay	Calgary
Cormier, Lyse	Calgary	McLellan, Danielle	Edmonton
Coubrough, Cara	Edmonton	Miller, Sherri	Edmonton
Davies, Caitlin	Calgary	Movold, Jeff	Edmonton
Deswart, Indea	Calgary	Mulder, Jessica	Edmonton
Duncan, Sandra	Calgary	Mundell, Rachelle	Edmonton
Ebel, Dana	Edmonton	Newman, Sandy	Calgary
Ferrer, Michael	Edmonton	Norris, Deidre	Edmonton
Fisher, Alicia	Calgary	Orchard, Kerry	Calgary
Frisky, Allison	Calgary	Pennycook, Heather	Edmonton
Fulmer, Nadine	Edmonton	Peters, Martha	Calgary
Fung, Rosalyn	Edmonton	Peters, Laura Lee	Edmonton
Gold, Vanessa	Calgary	Pillay, Daylin	Calgary
Gonsalves, Kimberly	Edmonton	Powers, Jade	Calgary
Goyette-Marsh, Judy	Calgary	Prins, Megan	Calgary
Gurtin, Kelly	Calgary	Rempel, Karen	Calgary
Hajdu, Luiza	Calgary	Robert, Aliece	Calgary
Hamilton, Debbie	Calgary	Rose, Deborah	Edmonton
Hardalau, Natalia	Calgary	Rowley, Norma	Calgary
Hatton, Sasha	Edmonton	Satanovsky, Diana	Edmonton
Hefler, Hannah	Calgary	Sathasivam, Manjula	Calgary
Hopley, Pauline	Edmonton	Sawatsky, Krista	Calgary
Hrynchyshyn, Louise	Edmonton	Sherstabetoff, Ruth	Calgary
Hunter, Chelsea	Edmonton	Sliwkanich, Alicea	Edmonton
Hyatt, Tina	Calgary	Spiegel, Camelia	Calgary
Insley, John	Edmonton	Stephenson, Chantal	Calgary
Jabbour, Debbie	Edmonton	Summach, Rebecca	Calgary
Jablonca, Frances	Calgary	Tang, Kuen	Edmonton
Jensen, Linda	Calgary	Tram, Clarissa	Edmonton
Jeppesen, Danielle	Calgary	Urlacher, Anna	Edmonton
Johnson, Alyssa	Calgary	Warring, Amendeep	Calgary
Knechtel, Jennifer	Edmonton	Wilcox, Hope	Calgary
Kostur, Shannon	Calgary	Zorrilla, Catalina	Calgary

**DID YOU KNOW?** Jade Powers is an acrylic artist. She paints painting (no abstract art) and Mandela's in her spare time to relax. Jade used to be a stained glass artist until she moved and left behind her studio.

## Staff Profiles

In this section we are featuring some of our staff. We in no way can feature all the staff in this report. Those who are not featured are equally respected and appreciated.

### Bernice Barefoot (Program Assistant – Specialized Services)

My name is Bernice Barefoot. I have been working with the Ability Society since Oct. 2005. I moved to Strathmore in 2003 from Elk Point AB. I have three children; two sons and a daughter as well as two grandchildren and two daughters in laws. I recently acquired two stepsons, another daughter in law as well as another grandchild when I married my second husband Barry, 4 years ago.



I received my Diploma in Early Childhood Development in Medicine Hat AB. I have received training in Intensive Behaviour Intervention with the Autism Partnership and took a sign language course at the University of Calgary last year. I have gone to several workshops to upgrade my skills. I am currently working with a child with severe global delays. I have a great team of therapists from the Ability Society to support me in the work I do. I am lucky to be able to work in a field where something as natural as play can be therapy for a child. Previously I have worked in daycares, schools, and in home with the children. Most of my work has been with children that have special needs or disabilities such as Autism, FAS, Selective Mutism, and those needing behavior and developmental intervention.

I feel that I have been blessed with the children I have had an opportunity to work with as they have taught me so much more than I could have imagined. In working with children that have language delays or no speech it is often the parents wish that the child could just tell them what they need in life. I feel I have been doing my job when I hear a parent say "Oh my Gosh, I wish he would just stop talking for five minutes". It is always rewarding to watch a parent evolve into an advocate for their child, since so many of them are at a loss of what to do when we first meet them.

Bernice Barefoot

### Daylin Pillay (Manager of Information Technology)

Daylin is an avid golfer and has enjoyed playing golf for almost 10 years. He was involved in charity golf tournament at Mount Royal College and his team won first place for Texas Scramble. Daylin plays on a golf league every summer.

Daylin started playing squash in 2001 and is a member of a squash league. My rank in Alberta is 1000th.

He loves spending some time with Coco his Chocolate Labrador. He is teaching Coco some basic sign language such as sit, cookie, friends (shake hands), no, and bathroom.

As Daylin says "Enough about me"!

Daylin Pillay

## Leanne Byl (Occupational Therapist)

Leanne works with the Ability Society as an Occupational Therapist. She has been a practicing Occupational Therapist since 1992. She is beginning here fourth year of employment with the Ability Society.

Leanne grew up in Northern Saskatchewan where she finished her high school education. She attended Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, earning her Chemical Technology Diploma. A few years later she attended the University of North Dakota for her Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy Degree. Leanne and her husband have had the opportunity to live in communities in Saskatchewan, North Dakota, Washington, British Columbia and now Alberta. Leanne and her family have lived in the Calgary area for 11 years. The Byl's enjoy many family activities including traveling, camping, hockey, BMX racing, enjoying their acreage home. Leanne also has her individual hobbies. She enjoys running, her most recent accomplishment is finishing the Stampede 10km run; quilting, which she just began last fall; BMX racing in which she is trying to qualify for the 2009 World BMX Competition in Australia.

Leanne Byl

## Special Appearances by Staff

Adrian Bohach had a lengthy interview by the CHQR staff during Pledge Day. He was also a guest on the Rutherford Radio show he discussed Social Entrepreneurship a fairly new concept here in Calgary.

Jade Powers our Clinical Coordinator & Supervisor spoke about Specialized Services for our clients at the same event.

Kelly Gurtin was interviewed at the Day of the Disabled event. The topic this year was focused on technology. One of our volunteers Satwinder Gill is one of the organizers of this yearly event.

Kelly Gurtin also provided the introduction to the agency in the volunteer piece filmed by Shaw TV. Two staff members appear in the video as their students (Lisa McBride & Twyla Burns).

*"One person can have a profound effect on another. And two people...well, two people can work miracles. They can change a whole town. They can change the world." Diane Frolov and Andrew Schneider, Northern Exposure, Cicely, 1992*

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

ABILITY SOCIETY OF ALBERTA ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



## Statement of Operations and Net Assets

Year Ended December 31, 2007

REVENUE	2007	2006
Fee for service	\$ 1,422,500	\$ 1,482,833
Grants and donations	2,043,764	496,287
Casino and fundraising	99,977	-
Memberships and other income	1,061	200
Interest income	367	119
Rental revenue	16,920	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,584,589	1,979,439
Contributed services	288,705	320,138
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,873,294	2,299,577
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Amortization	21,583	16,445
Bad debts	-	18,000
Contributed services (Note 6)	288,705	320,138
Insurance	6,126	3,095
Bank and finance charges	10,574	11,057

Interest on bank loan and long term debt	101,449	-
Marketing	3,236	3,651
Memberships	358	432
Office	36,710	27,097
Professional fees	10,902	11,021
Property taxes	19,007	-
Purchased consulting services and program costs	122,566	206,410
Rental	215,325	164,059
Repairs and maintenance	7,587	5,135
Salaries and wages	1,409,430	1,362,778
Telephone	19,501	19,348
Travel	10,403	5,076
	<hr/>	
	2,283,462	2,173,742
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	1,589,832	125,835
UNRESTRICTED (DEFICIENCY) NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF		
YEAR	110,165	(15,081)
	<hr/>	
	1,699,997	110,754
INVESTMENT IN PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	(1,732,637)	(589)
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS (DEFICIENCY) - END OF YEAR \$	(32,640)	\$ 110,165

*"Miracles: You do not have to look for them. They are there, 24-7, beaming like radio waves all around you. Put up the antenna, turn up the volume - snap... crackle... this just in, every person you talk to is a chance to change the world..." Hugh Elliott, Standing Room Only weblog, May 6, 2003*

## INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THE ABILITY SOCIETY & OUR PROGRAM?

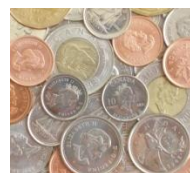
There are several ways to support the Ability Society.

### 1) Monetary Gift's

- a. Make a donation in your own name to help support the Ability Society.
- b. Make a donation in memory of a loved one.

Please send all monetary donations to:

Attention: Deidre Norris  
203, 10235 124 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5N 1P9



Donations of \$20.00 or more will receive a charitable receipt.

### 2) In-Kind Donations (Volunteering or a donation of your time)

#### a. Computer Tutor

The computer tutor must have a desire to assist persons with special needs to learn how to use a computer. Working primarily one-to-one, at the participants pace, demonstrating & explaining various computer skills. Tutors are not expected to know everything, and would only be tutoring subjects they feel comfortable teaching. Tutors are provided manuals.

#### b. Equipment Lending Library

This position is for a person who enjoys sorting, labeling, and organizing. This position can be completed anytime during our hours of operation.

#### c. Children's Resource Centre

This position is for a person who enjoys sorting, labeling, and organizing toys. This position can be completed anytime during our hours of operation.

#### d. Administrative

This position is as needed and has various administrative tasks such as shredding, photocopying, filing.

#### e. Special Events Volunteer

To assist with setting up and running events.

### 3) In-Kind Donations (products or equipment) Some In-Kind Donations will receive a charitable receipt.

- a. Arts & Craft Supplies
- b. Office Supplies
- c. Computer's & Software
- d. Toys (Educational), Children's Books
- e. Prizes for Staff & Volunteer Recognition



- f. Books on Special needs such as Autism, toileting, picky eaters, etc.

## RECEIVING A COPY

If you would like to receive your own copy of this document please follow one of the steps listed below:

**Read it on-line:** go to our website ([www.abilitysociety.org](http://www.abilitysociety.org)) and click on the Annual Report. Due to environmental & economic cost concerns our preferred method of delivery is to have you read it on-line or have it sent electronically.



**Electronic Version:** send your E-mail address and request to [info@abilitysociety.org](mailto:info@abilitysociety.org)

**Hard Copy:** (we have limited printed copies due to environmental concerns; this report was printed on 15% recycled paper and on 11x17 in order to fit 4 pages per sheet of paper).

- a. Call to have one sent to you.  
In Calgary call the Ability Society @ (403) 262-9445  
In Edmonton call the Ability Society @ (780) 442-2740



- b. Pick one up at one of our offices listed below:  
Calgary - 600, 906 8th Ave SW  
Edmonton - #203, 10235 - 124th Street

