



Provincial Autism Centre

"Support Means Success"



2010-2011 | Annual General Report

June 23, 2011

Chairman's Annual Report

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Parent

Krista Lettues
Parent

Tracey Avery
Parent

As the incoming chair of the Provincial Autism Centre, 2010-11 brought many opportunities and historic moments for the autism community in Nova Scotia.

Last June, Walk the Walk for Autism, in its inaugural year, raised over \$50,000 across the province for programs and services. I would like to extend our gratitude to Will McKeen from Momentum IT Group along with their dedicated team for working with the Centre, and our autism partners across the province, to make the walk a success. Momentum also worked with the Centre to create a new, innovative way to shop for Valentine's Day with the Red Auction, an online auction website. In its first year, the Red Auction promises to be an annual success for the organization.

We enjoyed participating in the second annual Walk the Walk for Autism on June 18 this year. It is too early to provide a full tally of the proceeds but once again we had a substantial turn out of individuals and teams of walkers for this very worthwhile fundraising event that also provides an opportunity for those whose lives are informed by the spectrum to feel a sense of common support.

The sixth annual Autism Golf Ball event raised over \$100,000 for the Provincial Autism Centre. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of outgoing committee co-chairs Michael Dunn, and Lynn Coveyduck. Their time and commitment over the last three years raised approximately \$300,000 for the Centre's programs and services. I would also like to take this opportunity to

welcome back Rob McInnes to the Golf Ball Committee as Sponsorship Chair for 2011, and Lisa Pottie as Operations Chair. A heartfelt thanks goes out to our presenting sponsor Scotiabank; our Gold Tee sponsors, and the many hole sponsors and volunteers who continue to make this event a resounding success.

Growth continues to be a theme at the Centre and last fiscal year was no exception. On behalf of the board, I would like to welcome Glenna Paynter-Parsons to the team as the new Office Manager. Marcia McInnis, the Centre's Employment Support Coach, joined us last September and Scott Read joined the team in November as the Centre's Education and Employment Manager. We also welcomed a familiar face to the team this year. Vicki Harvey, joined us as the Community Outreach Coordinator. I would also like to thank Carmen Holm, the Centre's Occupational Therapist and Robyn Bradshaw, the Communications and Development Coordinator.



I wish to make a special note of thanks and appreciation to our Executive Director Cynthia Carroll. All who work in the non profit sector will know of the extensive demands placed on this position and Cynthia has continued to go above and beyond the call of duty to provide daily direction to the operations of the Centre and assist the Board with the strategic planning and oversight role. I know I speak for the entire Board in saying that we are very grateful for Cynthia's tireless work for both the Centre and the larger autism community across the province.

A historic moment that continues to linger for all of us at the Provincial Autism Centre, occurred on April 12, 2011, when the government of Nova Scotia, under the leadership of Premier Darrell Dexter, announced the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Action Plan during a press conference at the Centre. This Action Plan is the first of its kind in Canada. Perhaps the most significant announcement in the plan was a 4 million dollar increase in EIBI funding, which will ensure that every child diagnosed with autism under the age of six years will have access to the early intervention and treatment they need to support long-term, positive outcomes. During this press conference the Minister of Justice, Ross Landry, also announced the expansion of Project Lifesaver throughout the province. Project Lifesaver is a locator system supporting people with Alzheimer's Disease and Autism. This system, which was piloted in Kingston, NS, supports families caring for children and adults at risk of wandering off. By decreasing the amount of time required to locate a missing loved one, the hope is that another tragedy, like the loss of James Delorey from Cape Breton in 2009, will be prevented. Although the Centre was not the beneficiary of direct funding during the announcement we look forward to a continued relationship with the provincial government and ongoing work to ensure that families in Nova Scotia have greater access to the services they need.

We are about to embark on our second year as the organizer of the Autism Summer Camp ably managed by the Camp Committee headed by Board member Tracey Avery. The Camp provides a tremendous opportunity for children on the spectrum to experience day camp activities with one to one supervision and

provides the parents of the children with a few well deserved hours of respite.

I would like to thank our many volunteers and board members who contribute time to committees and take on advisory roles at the Centre. This year Carol Smillie, Dale Godsoe and Brenda Murray all completed terms on the board. Each have played a significant role in the growth of the Centre and will be missed. As these board members move on, we welcome new members including, Dave Martin, retired Scotiabank executive and Dave Nicholson C.A., Principal, Grant Thornton to the board.

I would also like to thank the following board members:
Marc Paris, Green Jacket Chair, Finance Committee
John Oliver, Chair of Finance, Major Gifts Committee
Kristie McAllister, Advocacy Committee, Human Resources
Krista Lettues, Communications and Advocacy Committee
Tracey Avery, Camp Committee
Dr. Susan Bryson, Programs, Research Committee, Advocacy Committee
Ian Sutherland, AGB Committee and currently leading the organization's name change
Joan Craig, Secretary, Founder, Inspiration and much more!

In conclusion, I am humbled and inspired by the work of the Centre, the fantastic contribution of our Board, staff, volunteers and community across the province who support the goals and objectives of the Centre and the continuing enrichment of the lives of persons on the spectrum and their families. It is truly a privilege to be involved.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott C. Norton Q.C.
 Chair

From the Desk of the...

Executive Director

Hope is the theme of my report this year as I reflect on the many exciting moments over the last 12 months. The Provincial Autism Centre embarked on many firsts in 2010-2011, and kicking it off was the transition of the summer camp from the Autism Society of Nova Scotia. More than 45 families utilized the camp last summer, and this year we have more than 60 children coming to camp. Our Autism Golf Ball event was another outstanding success, raising more than \$100,000, and honouring Michelle Gardiner as our Stewart McKelvey, Autism Green Jacket recipient. December brought a time of celebration, with the renaming of our library to the Robert J. Craig Autism Resource Centre. Jack, Joan and Robert (Bob) Craig were all present for the dedication. It was a night to remember.



In February, the Centre launched a new and exciting annual fundraiser called The Red Auction, with the support of Momentum IT Group. This exciting online auction makes Valentine's Day shopping for a loved one easy. This event also built new relationships and partnerships in the business community creating greater awareness for autism.

April brought hope with the official response by the government to the Autism Management Advisory Team (AMAT) report. Although they did not respond to the 53 recommendations in the 125 page report, they did release an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Action Plan for the Province. This Action Plan has five key priority areas that we hope will continue to enhance services for families and people living with autism in the coming years. It is also the first of its kind in Canada, and our autism partners across the country are hopeful that other provincial governments will follow Nova Scotia's lead and create ASD Action Plans across the country, including a national strategy.

The Centre continues to educate and advocate across the province with presentations in Sydney, Yarmouth, Amherst, Caledonia, Sheet Harbour, the South Shore and the Valley. We offered autism educational sessions through the Tele-Health System at the IWK, which allowed the sessions to reach a province-wide audience for the first time in the Centre's history.



The Centre is also a member of the Provincial Employability Table for Persons with Disabilities, that is working with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education; a member of the Disability Strategy Group that is working with the Department of Community Services; a member of the Nova Scotia Partnership for Respite Support; the Nova Scotia representative on the National board of the Autism Society of Canada; a board member with the Capital Health Research Ethics Board; a member of Special Education Programming and Services (SEPS) for the province; and a member of the Autism Council of Nova Scotia. Involvement in these working groups, committees and boards ensures that autism does not get left off the provincial cross-disability agenda and autism issues in Nova Scotia are represented at the National level.



Spring brought rain and tried to dampen our hope, but on June 18th, in partnership with autism organizations throughout the province, Walk the Walk for Autism, Stepping in the Right Direction raised over \$100,000 across the province under sunny skies. It was a joyous and memorable day that will linger with all of us for some time. Families participating in the Halifax walk came from Prince Edward Island, New York, Sydney and throughout the HRM and surrounding area. Perhaps the most inspirational story of the day belongs to Mark Smith, an amazing father of a remarkable little boy, named Lex. Mark is the founder of Just Parents, a member of Bedford-Sackville Autism Support Group and a member of the Provincial Autism Centre. On the morning of the walk, Mark left home at 4:30 a.m. and walked over 35 km, from Mount Uniacke to the Halifax North Commons to raise awareness for autism. It took Mark 7 hours and 1 minute to complete this unforgettable journey. These are the moments that inspire us all and give us hope.

In closing, I would like to thank our dedicated team; Robyn, Carmen, Marcia, Glenna, Scott, Vicki, Stephanie, Melissa and our Centre volunteers, Clinton, Danny, Kyle and Allistair. To the many donors and volunteers that make our programs and events possible, thank you. To our Board of Directors; your leadership, guidance and direction has supported the growth of the Centre over the last eight years.

Lastly, I want to thank the many families and people on the Autism Spectrum that walk through our doors and into our lives everyday. Their strength, stories, support, struggles and resiliency are the foundation of hope that drives our mission forward to make services in Nova Scotia better for people living with autism, today, tomorrow and in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Carroll
Executive Director

From the Desk of the...

Community Outreach Coordinator

The Provincial Autism Centre recently created the role of Community Outreach Coordinator; however the Centre has outreach activities at its core. From the day it opened its doors, the Centre has offered support and services to families and others whose lives are touched by autism. I am thrilled to contribute to that outreach as the Coordinator.

We have run 4 successful Education Sessions this year, covering topics such as Wills and Guardianship, Understanding Good Research, a Social Workers Forum, and Emergency Preparedness: Ready for Anything. All four sessions have utilized Telehealth technology, allowing participants from around the province to see the presentation from their community site. We are grateful to the IWK Health Centre for hosting the presentations and facilitating the use of Telehealth technology. The Education Sessions will take a break for the summer, while we plan new sessions for the fall. If you have an idea for an education session, please contact me. I am always looking for new suggestions.

Community Outreach often means going into the community. Along with other team members from the Centre, I have gone to several schools this year to give presentations to students in different grades. Creating awareness in the classroom goes a long way toward developing understanding and acceptance. I have also delivered an information session to members of the Nova Scotia Secondary Students Association (NSSSA) who were preparing to support diverse students at an Inclusion Conference. I sat in many community booths this year, promoting autism awareness with the public, and I have spoken with community groups about the programs available through the Provincial Autism Centre.



The completion of the Autism Information and Resource Kit for newly diagnosed families is a very important outreach which the Centre took on this year. The Kit is filled with information and materials to help families in their journey. It is a valuable and useful tool. I was very pleased to be a part of this project, and look forward to more work creating materials to which will help raise awareness.

Chatting with families is one of the most enjoyable parts of this position. I am always happy to talk about the centre and what we can offer to the community. As the role continues to evolve, I look forward to exploring new ways to promote awareness, to connect with community and to share what the Provincial Autism Centre has to offer.

Vicki Harvey
Community Outreach Coordinator



They say time flies when you are having fun – I guess that's why the past 9 months has seemed to go by in a week or so! My name is Glenna Paynter-Parsons and on August 31st, 2010 I had the extreme good fortune of beginning my new career as the Provincial Autism Centre's Office Manager. This has been the most challenging and absolutely rewarding position that I have ever had the pleasure of taking on.

For those who I haven't yet met – I look forward to doing so in the coming year. To those whose acquaintance I have made – I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the warm and supportive welcome as I began my career with the centre. I look forward to continuing to learn and grow in my new role.

This has been a year of firsts - I have experienced my first Autism Golf Ball; my first Holiday Open House – where it was my privilege to meet Robert Craig to whom our library was dedicated; my first Holiday Ask mail out – where volunteers from the community came together to help the centre; the launch of our inaugural Red Auction for Valentine's Day; my first Bluenose Run – where I proudly walked the 5K with the Centre; my first Walk the Walk for Autism; and of course, my first fiscal year-end audit and all the paperwork that entails.

Since joining the Centre, I have had the good fortune to enlist Angela Welsh Sampson, from Simply Your Office, as my Simply Accounting mentor – her guidance and leadership have been absolutely invaluable! I have had the chance to review and become familiar with the way things were being done in the office and the library, and have recommended several changes have been implemented that should help to streamline processes.

I also want to thank Ernie Chan, our Information Management Coordinator student. Since his arrival, a full library audit has been conducted and our membership files have been updated.

At a recent Human Resources Association of Nova Scotia meeting, the guest speaker gave a talk on mentoring and the importance of working together as a team to build a successful organization – and I couldn't help but feel that if only all "teams" supported each other like the staff, volunteers and members of the Provincial Autism Centre – then the world would be a significantly better place!

I have worked with some good teams in the past but I have never had the absolute privilege of working with a more welcoming and supportive group of individuals as I have here at the Centre. Many organizations talk about "respect" and "teamwork" but this team absolutely embodies the essence of what teamwork and support should be. People absolutely come first here at the Centre. This is a job that doesn't just allow me to feed my family – it truly feeds my soul by allowing me to help others and to make a positive difference in this world. I am proud to be a member of the Provincial Autism Centre team!

Glenna Paynter-Parsons
Office Manager

From the Desk of the... Communications/Development Coordinator

I am grateful each year as I write this annual report as I reflect on everything that we have accomplished, and how much of an honour it is to serve our clients and supporters as the Provincial Autism Centre's Communication and Development Coordinator.

It has been a dynamic year, and I have enjoyed the many initiatives that make what we do possible, and increase awareness of our work and mission. April of 2010 saw us host our first Autism Awareness Month Open House. This relaxed event was enjoyed by staff, board members and the diverse visitors who came to reflect, celebrate, and network with Centre staff and members of the community.

The Running with the P.A.C. team achieved great success at the Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon in May, earning over \$3,000 in 2010 and setting the stage for the extraordinary accomplishment of the team in 2011. This passionate and growing team earned over \$8,000 in 2011, and I am truly looking forward to this fine event again next year.

On June 19th, communities across the province participated in Walk the Walk for Autism - Nova Scotia's first annual awareness walk for autism. With walks held in Halifax, the Annapolis Valley, the South Shore, and Cape Breton, people all over the province were invited to walk together to raise awareness and support for autism programs and services in their own communities.

This event raised over \$53,000.00 province-wide, and included over 1,000 participants. All funds raised by this event were used to support local autism programs and services in the host communities.

In Halifax, the walk raised over \$20,000.00 for the Centre's summer camp and other programs in the HRM. At the writing of this report, we are just about to mark the second annual Walk the Walk for Autism, this time with an amazing seven locations!

This year's registration numbers have more than doubled and we expect the event to be a great success. Now that's a step in the right direction!

Looking back to the fall of last year, I was pleased to support the 2010 Autism Golf Ball with greater involvement in the Silent Auction, and this year I am delighted to continue with this as well as helping on the creative sub-committee for the development of the event poster, and assisting Sponsorship Chair Rob McInnes.



2010 Bluenose Team



The winter saw another successful direct mail campaign for the holidays, and the launch of the first annual online event called The Red Auction. Thanks to our presenting sponsors Momentum IT Group and the many generous businesses, vendors, and individuals who made this event possible. We were able to reach a whole new supporter base and create powerful new relationships in the business community - and the positive feedback we received was simply amazing! I am looking forward to building on The Red Auction's inspiring beginnings, and seeing continue to grow as one of the Provincial Autism Centre's key fundraising initiatives.



In addition to these exciting events, I have continued to support the Major Gifts Committee and developed numerous funding proposals and packages, as well as built relationships with a number of foundations and granting organizations over the last year. I am grateful for the professional development opportunities I have received, including attending the Association of Fundraising Professionals-Nova Scotia (AFP) Conference in 2010 and the AFP's International Conference in Chicago in 2011, as well as numerous education sessions, additional Raiser's Edge Training, and participating in the AFP-NS mentorship program.



I would also like to extend special thanks to the Centre for allowing me to work with the new editor of Autistics Aloud, MC Keith, as the publication's staff facilitator. Autistics Aloud continues to be a valuable and unique contribution to the community, and a forum for people on the Autism Spectrum to have their voice heard. It is an honour and a profound personal pleasure to support this fine publication.



My sincerest thanks to my colleagues and our supporters, and most of all to the community that we serve. I look forward to what the coming year, and years, will bring.

Robyn Bradshaw
Communications and Development Coordinator

From the Desk of the... Education & Employment Manager

Autism Works



I was given the opportunity to work as the Education and Employment Manager for the Provincial Autism Centre back in November of 2010. Having come from a background of working with people with autism, I marvelled at the Autism Works program and was excited by the chance to help the program grow and further educate the public on the inherent strengths that those on the spectrum possess as far too often the strengths of individuals are overshadowed by immediacy of the deficiencies. I was also pleasantly surprised upon rediscovering just how many strengths there actually are for people with autism in the workplace.

In March 2010, the Provincial Autism Centre (PAC) partnered with Employment Nova Scotia to launch Employer education and awareness in the workplace, as part of the Autism Works program. The goals for the Autism Works program in the 2010/2011 fiscal year were as follows:

- An employer database of 100
- 50 presentations to HRM employers
- 5-10 presentations outside of the HRM
- Increased autism education in the community
 - o Employer manual
 - o Public education campaign
- Increase employers hiring people with autism

Employer Database:

The goal for the Employer Database was to reach 100 employers. As of March 31, 2010 that goal was reached with the employer database reaching 101 employers.

50 Presentations to HRM Employers:

51 potential employers were reached in the fiscal year through presentations. Some of the highlights for me was the major presentation at the Chamber of Commerce which was very well received by those in attendance. Much of what I love about presenting and educating employers is seeing that spark when they realize the potential that individuals on the spectrum possess. "I had no idea that they could . . .", and variations of, is a common response.

5 – 10 Presentations outside of the HRM:

The focus of these presentations shifted from potential employers to cross-disability groups. Cross-disability groups already had contacts in their respective communities and also served clients with autism. These presentations helped to serve the rural autism communities by augmenting the supports already established, but also, in the course of these presentations, surveys were done to help the Centre gather information from these organizations on what their needs for better support were.

The surveys demonstrated a strong support of the potential Job Coach Training Module, and further highlighted the fact that many cross-disability groups have little knowledge about autism and require further training to make their programs more effective in servicing their autistic clientele. Having spoken with individuals from these different organizations and hearing their enthusiasm for the training, makes me enthusiastic about delivering the program.



Increased autism Education in the Community:

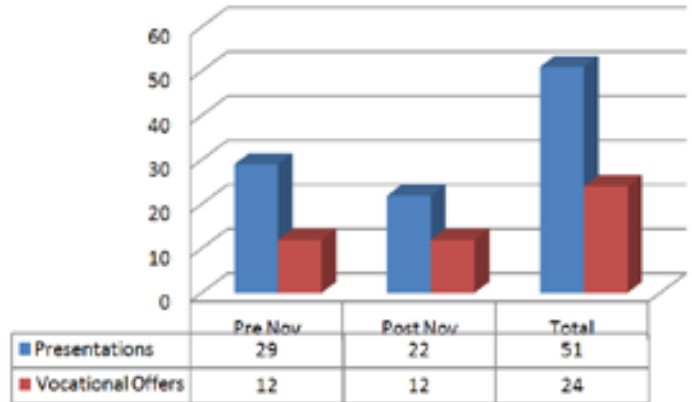
One initiative we took was to mail out an information package to 59 organizations outside of the HRM, and hand delivered to 19 organizations within the HRM. This mail out had in it, the 'Employer Manual'; a comprehensive and detailed report for employers who work with people on the spectrum.

A public campaign for the program launched in September 2010, with 45 commercial spots resulted in over 949,000 viewings. This campaign had employers speaking to employers about the benefits of hiring someone with autism. Within the first week the campaign launch, we had five vocational offerings from Employers in the HRM area.

Increase employers hiring people with autism:

Since November 2011 there have been 92 e-mail correspondences to employers in the HRM. Of those 92 e-mails, 37 employers have contacted the centre. From these 37 contacts, 11 presentations were made which reached 22 different employers. Out of the 16 employers presented to, there were 12 vocational offers. Prior to November 2010 there were 29 presentations and from those 29 presentations there were 12 vocational offers. The total number of presentations including the Chamber of Commerce presentation was 40, reaching 51 employers, resulting in 24 placement offers, as seen in the chart to the right, with 'Presentations' representing the number of employers presented to.

Presentations & Vocational Offers

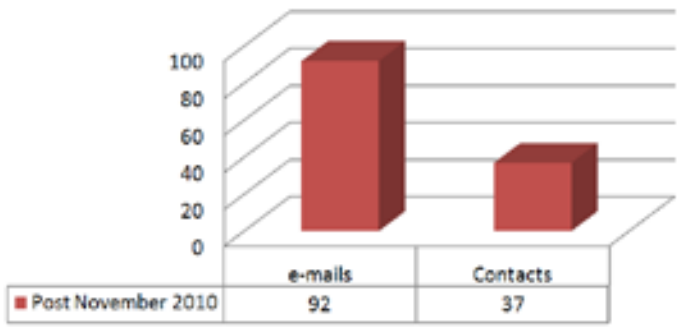


In summary, the Autism Works program has continued to grow. With the implementation of the Autism Works: Pre-Vocational Program, a program designed to educate and train high school students on the spectrum for work placements after they graduate, and the design of the Job Coach Training module, the program is enabling education and awareness in the community, both in the HRM and across Nova Scotia. The Autism Works program is also still operating at a steady 87% retention rate. Overall the program has seen tremendous success.

I have enjoyed my first 7 months here at the Provincial Autism Centre; from the Blue Nose Marathon to Walk the Walk. I have enjoyed working with the PAC team and volunteers, and a special Thank You to Stephanie for all her hard work. I look forward to seeing how the students do in their work placements in the Pre-Vocational pilot and setting up the Job Coach training modules in the fall.

Scott Read
Education and Employment Manager

Autism Works Contacts From November, 2010 - March, 2011



From the Desk of the...

Employment Support Coach

The Autism Works program is dedicated to providing information and resources to improve the well-being of adults on the autism spectrum. While continuing to expand these resources, we hope to better meet the needs of individuals and their families living with autism. Building mutually beneficial relationships with businesses and our clients has been one of the program's primary goals. We are pleased to report that this year we have established new business contacts while upholding existing relations.

Since its launch in 2009, Autism Works has continued to thrive. Our first year has provided the program with a solid foundation to build upon, and we are delighted that our efforts and hard work are prevailing in its second year. Currently, the program's momentum is great and our mission to help adults on the spectrum find and maintain employment has never been stronger. We will continue to make every effort to successfully service and help as many clients as we can.



The program currently has 26 clients at varying stages of their job development. We have 10 clients in paid work positions, four clients are in programs to help build their skills, seven clients are in volunteer placements and five clients are working towards their goal of finding meaningful employment along with support from the Centre. At the Provincial Autism Centre, we work with individuals on their short and long term goals, resume and cover letter writing and interview skills. Some of our clients benefit from pre-vocational guidance which helps prepare them for their upcoming workplace. Some of these areas include time management, team building and rapport and stress relief.



Our database continues to grow as we bring awareness to new businesses about our program. The businesses on board not only provide a supportive and safe working place, they recognize the hard work and dedication from our clients. We would like to extend a sincere thank you to Stone Hearth Bakery, Sobey's, Cambridge Suites Hotel and Chebucto Connections for being part of our mission in providing a positive work experience for our clients.

Autism Works received great support from local media in 2010 and 2011. In conjunction with CTV, we produced a commercial for our Autism Works program which featured four of our program's clients and two of our employers, Halifax Marriott Harbourfront and JYSK. In April 2011, during Autism Awareness Month, Global News did a story about Autism Works. It featured one of our clients and her employer at her place of work, Point Pleasant Child Care Centre. The feature sparked community interest as it outlined the benefits of hiring an individual with autism.



As the Employment Support Coach, I would like to thank our dedicated volunteers and employers for their continued support of our ongoing efforts to help adults on the spectrum find vocational success. Together we can make a positive impact on our community, which in turn can hopefully lead to province-wide awareness. Moving forward, our goal remains on supporting individuals in order to gain workplace confidence and independence.

The Autism Works Program continues to build its strength as more of our clients become gainfully employed. These individuals act as an inspiration and resource to others living with autism who are seeking employment. I look forward to sharing more achievements with you next year.

Marcia MacInnis
Employment Support Coach



Autism
Works



From the Desk of the...

Occupational Therapist

Since our meeting together one year ago there are have been many exciting developments to our programs and Occupational Therapy services here at the Provincial Autism Centre.



Teen and Adult Social Groups:

This year we made the decision to transition to a volunteer model with our teens and adult social groups. In the fall, we trained a large number of volunteers and they have since taken a very dedicated approach to facilitating the social programs, making the transition a success. The teen groups devised their own social group schedules which was empowering and ensured activities were appropriate for the groups. The adult groups continue to meet at the Centre and often choose to go out into the community together. This month, the groups are finishing. The teens have had a pleasant closure with a family potluck and a visit from the music therapist (Anna Plaskett) at the Centre. The adult groups have each chosen a special activity to complete their year together.

Autism Arts:

What a great time we have had! Due to the increasing number of interested families we had a number of new participants join us throughout the three sessions. This brought different dynamics and new challenges to each session to ensure all the young artists had a successful experience. The new children/teens and challenges were well supported by myself, the art educators, and our fabulous volunteers; all working together to create an appropriate environment for all participants. We currently have an exhibit upstairs in the Newman Daughters Gallery at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia; please take the time to visit this and view some fantastic pieces of art.

Life Skills:

This fall a new life skills program for individuals on the spectrum 18+ commenced. The program was designed in modules including food/kitchen hygiene, basic cooking, basic money management; time management and personal hygiene/health were covered. The program was well received but was not without its challenges of having groups of individuals with very different levels of needs. The program will recommence in the fall, building on the previous pilot year and expanding the module topics.



Yoga:

Yoga has run for the year with a regular set of participants. They have come a very long way in their ability to be still, silent, and to just breathe while they move through postures. Before Christmas the group went to the studio where I teach. This was a new experience for everyone but it was enjoyable. I hope that next year we will see some new yogi's joining us.

Summer Day Camp:

The 2010 year of the summer day camp ran smoothly and was extremely well supported. We are presently headed into our second season of running the camp and have received increased interest by families. In order to accommodate as many children as possible we have made some changes to enrollment. The interest has been so great that we have 60 children filling our spots!

This summer I will continue to assist the camp team with ensuring each camper's needs are appropriately addressed in the best means possible to ensure an enjoyable experience for all. Let's hope for the sun to shine for us!

**Student mentoring:**

Each year, we have a large number of students interested in completing a school placement with us. This year we saw the return of a previous Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) and a new OTA student. They have been extremely helpful in the delivery of programs and administrative tasks that are required. Over the summer I will be supervising two more OTA students who will be assisting at the summer camp.

**Education and Occupational Therapy Consultation:**

Over the past year I have completed a number of education sessions. I have been to the L'Arche homes in Halifax and Truro to provide information on adults with autism. Vicki Harvey and I visited a number of schools in the HRM area to deliver autism education sessions to students from Primary to grade 6, who have classmates with ASD. These have been great and have opened the door to visit schools and provide consultation on students with ASD who are awaiting Occupational Therapy services through the local health boards. I have also continued my role with providing support and consultation to families living with autism in Nova Scotia through email, telephone, and walk-ins.

In conclusion, it has once again been a very expansive and busy year for occupational therapy services here at the PAC. I only envision the service to develop even further in the upcoming years as we reach out to more and more individuals and families in need of support and services.

Carmen Holm
Occupational Therapist

From the Desk of the... Autism Self-Advocacy Council

In the past 12 months, the Autistic Self-Advocacy Council of Nova Scotia has met on the second Wednesday of every month at the Provincial Autism Centre. Our discussions tend to be quite lively and we impart some personal anecdotes that we all seem to relate to, as well as being a place where members can talk about what is troubling them currently, and we can help each other through moral support or getting active with their issues.

We try to focus on issues for adults on the autism spectrum, such as employment, housing, and getting the right diagnosis for people on the autism spectrum so that they can access the right public services. We hosted a conference in 2009, but since then we have not been able to do another since then, so any engaging with the public has been confined to panel discussions on public screenings of movies such as "Temple Grandin" and "Mary and Max" as well as being present when the provincial government under Premier Darrell Dexter had his press conference to release their Action Plan for people on the autism spectrum. In each case, I helped to maintain a foothold for ASAC in the public consciousness by stating my reactions and getting quoted in the media. We also intend to have a more proactive role with the province, the medical community, and other institutions, particularly in regard to the province's Action Plan.

Every month I produce a "Member's Bulletin" where I find what is considered to be relevant stories related to autism, such as medical studies, legal issues, or representations in the media, such as the recent six-part documentary by retired journalist



Robert MacNeil called "Autism Now", in which at one meeting we were able to see two 12 minute segments from his documentary. These bulletins are sent out by e-mail and give members a chance to comment on certain issues, and they have been appreciated from the feedback I have gotten so far.

The year before, we helped to sponsor the first annual "Walk the Walk for Autism" on June 19th of last year, and we intend to play a visible role in the upcoming one as we did in the last one. We also have a new volunteer, Stephanie Berry, who acts as our secretary and keeps notes and helps with organization. Our plan in the near future is to facilitate access to adult services for autistic people and to ask the provincial government to clarify any vagaries in the Action Plan in regards to adults.

Danny Melvin
Founding Member, ASAC-NS

In fall 2010, former editor Danny Melvin expressed to me that he was seeking a new editor for the publication. I agreed to assume editorial duties in time for the Winter 2010 issue, and have been editor ever since.

There have been some changes, hopefully for the good, in Autistics Aloud. It is one of my goals to recruit a more diverse and extensive group of Spectrum writers for the newsletter, and I plan to hold a writing workshop in the near future. The latest Autistics Aloud contains guidelines on how to contribute to the next issue, and I have started a new gmail address to allow me to access the editor's e-mail box from outside the Centre. I am opening the door to poetry and other styles of writing, as well as art and photography, to hopefully entice more people with ASD's to try contributing to Autistics Aloud.



The Summer issue is in the works now, and I am looking forward to recruiting new contributors for this and future issues. I appreciate the contributions of Allistair Fraser and another writer who has contributed articles under the name Sydney Kelly. Above all, thank you to Robyn Bradshaw, who has been of great help with everything, and the Autism Centre itself, for this opportunity.

I look forward to the road ahead as editor, and I also hope that if you or someone you know on the Spectrum may want to try writing for Autistics Aloud, you give it a shot!

MC Keith
Editor, Autistics Aloud

Provincial Autism Centre Committees

We would like to extend a special thank you to all of the board members, professionals, parents and volunteers that contribute to the many committees here at the centre. Although not always visible to everyone who visits the centre, the work done by these committees goes a long way in ensuring everything at the centre operates smoothly.

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Handmade yoga earrings by yoga participant



Paul Jocy, Special Olympics Medallist with Cynthia Carroll



Camp Staff 2010



Edible Art



year at the Centre

Jack, Robert and Joan Craig



Summer Camp Outing



Autism Arts



Autism Arts



Agenda | Annual General Meeting

June 23, 2011 - 11:00 AM

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Upstairs Seminar Room, Newman Daughters Galley

Welcome and Introduction to Board Members

Scott C. Norton, Q.C.

Notice of Meeting and Regrets

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

from June 23, 2010

Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2011

John Oliver

Appointment of Auditors

John Oliver

Nominating Committee Report

John Oliver

Amendments to By-laws

Ian Sutherland

Name Change

Ian Sutherland

Board Chair's Report

Scott C. Norton, Q.C.

Executive Director's Report

Cynthia Carroll

Presentations by:

Autism Works Participant (Pre-vocational Program)

James

Autism Arts Participant

Alex

Summer Camp Parent

Colleen Fewer

Adjournment/Closing

Autism Arts Exhibition and Viewing