

YEAR IN REVIEW 2021/2022

JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022



OUR VISION

All people on the autism spectrum have a life full of possibilities.

OUR MISSION

To enhance the lives of people on the autism spectrum, through knowledge, services, and inclusive opportunities.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year has continued to be tough for everyone. The Autism community has no doubt continued to experience further social isolation and financial constraints, leaving many feeling mentally, physically and emotionally drained. While navigating new challenges and obstacles, we have continued to provide our essential services to more individuals than ever.

Our commitment to the Autism community and the love and respect we share with them has been the driving force in all we strive to accomplish. This year we saw a 118% increase in individuals needing support, linking over 3,680 individuals to services and resources. We supported 668 individuals with food insecurity through our Pantry Program, a whopping 141% increase over last year, and provided 4,194 respite hours, a 59% increase over last year. Despite an ever-changing economic environment and the cancellation/postponement of key fundraising events, we continued to deliver this support.

We are proud to have welcomed back the Cycle for Autism this past June at Gold Bar Park after a two year in-person hiatus, successfully boosting our fundraising, public profile and member engagement. We rely upon fundraisers like this to ensure that we can bring individuals, their families and supporters back together to reconnect with their community, and are eager to watch this event continue to grow! We are also counting down the days to our upcoming Opening Doors for Autism Gala and Auction; this is a fantastic fundraiser and engagement opportunity for our sponsors, donors and supporters. Having postponed this event to 2022, we are keen to welcome back these champions to this incredible event that will sustain our organization for the next two years.

Autism Edmonton is launching our newly minted three year strategic plan with passion, innovative approaches and a view to the future. Our vision is that all Autistic individuals live a life full of possibilities. We can do this only thanks to you: our Autistic children, youth and adults, alongside parents and caregivers, generous partners, supporters and staff. Your ongoing support throughout these challenging times helps Autistic people live their lives to their fullest potential. We are excited to see what the next year has in store and the growth our organization and community will continue to experience.

Ray Wong
Chair, Board of Directors

Melinda Noyes
Executive Director



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

Issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion affect everyone. A world where all Autistic individuals live a life full of possibilities is only possible if everyone is part of the solution.

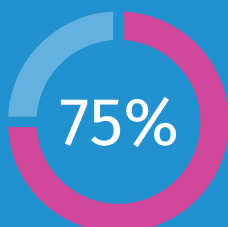
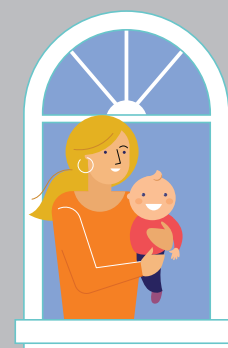
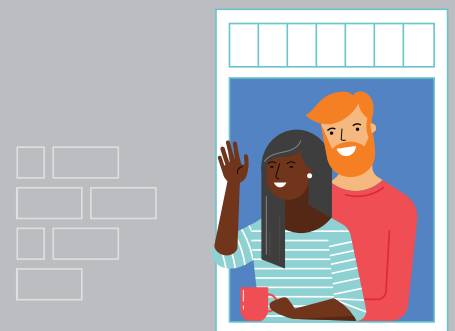
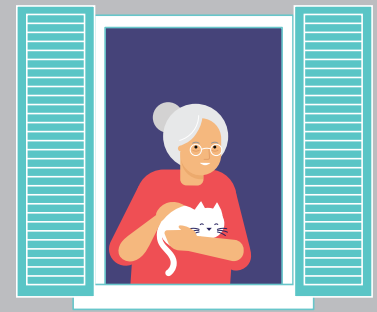
Autism Edmonton is committed to ensuring that these issues are at the organization's heart and top of mind in all that we do. Equity ensures that as we make steps towards an inclusive world, no one is left behind, diverse perspectives create a space for meaningful and appropriate engagement for everyone, and inclusivity empowers a sense of belonging and connection in our community.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are critical in driving innovative solutions to service gaps, helping us inform systems change, and promoting promising practices. We believe there is always room to grow, there is always more that we can do to be an equitable and inclusive organization, and we pledge to lead by example.

AUTISM EDMONTON WILL:

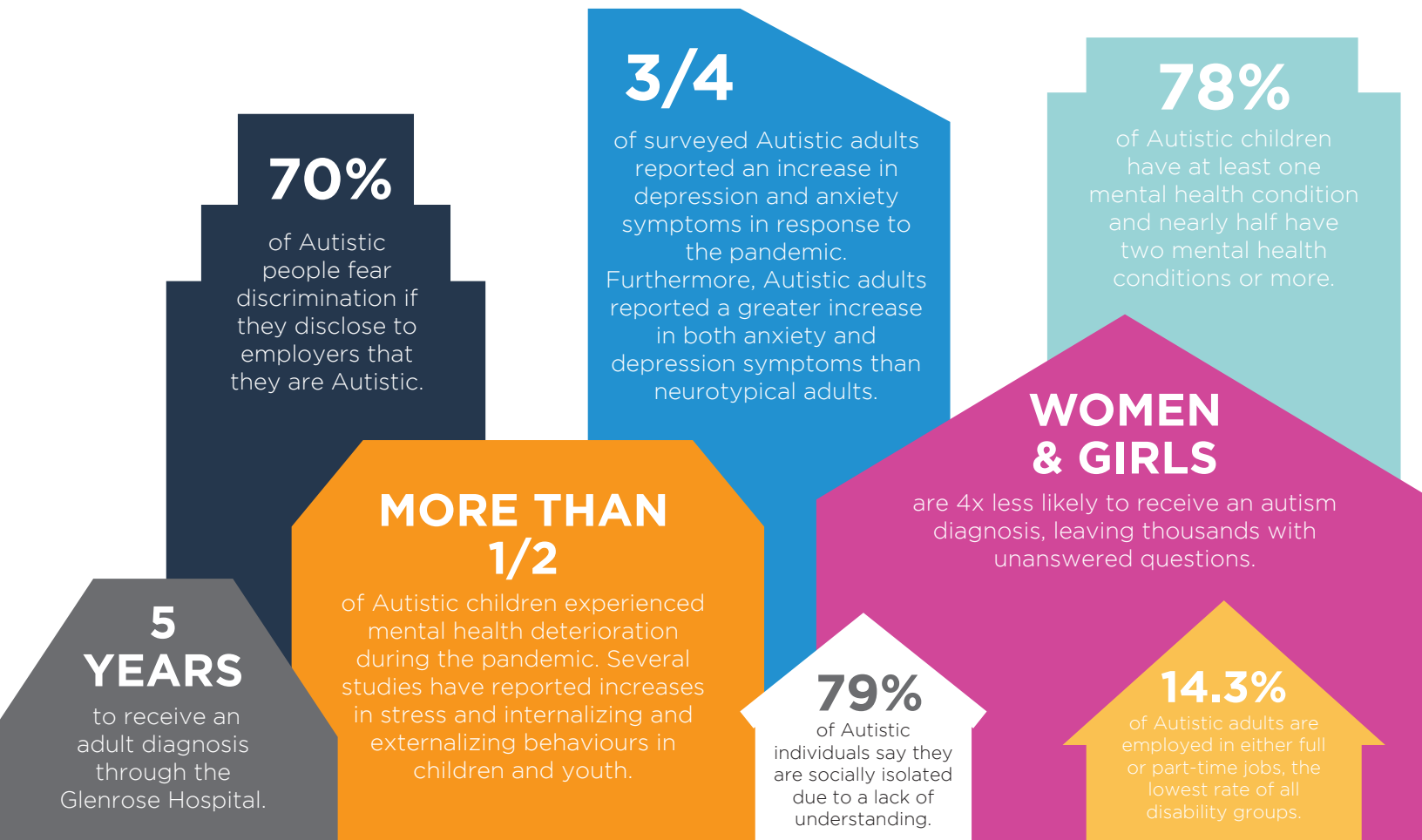
Autism Edmonton continues to fill service gaps where it can to provide support programs and services to meet the needs of Autistic people, their families, allies, and communities.

- **Encourage and engage a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organizational culture.**
 - Provide our staff and volunteers with the tools and knowledge to practice inclusive behaviours in everything they do on behalf of Autism Edmonton.
 - Review our organizational processes to remove barriers, increase accessibility and expand diverse representation within Autism Edmonton.
- **Apply an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens to our activities, including programming, fundraising, advocacy, research, and community engagement.**
 - Continue to be led by the voices of Autistic individuals in our community.
 - Continue to identify the voices of Autistic individuals who are underrepresented in our community today and understand and address the unique challenges they may face.
- **Make space for continuous dialogue and storytelling.**
 - Continue to engage with our community regularly to collect feedback and identify opportunities that better support our community.
 - Document and share stories that showcase a broad range of lived experiences and identities.



Of Autism Edmonton staff and Board Members are either neurodiverse or have lived experience.

WHY AUTISM EDMONTON IS ESSENTIAL



OCCASIO

4194

RESPITE HOURS

(↑ 1556 HOURS FROM 2021)

133

NEW PARTICIPANTS



"**Occasio** is such a safe haven for our daughter, she has a lot of struggles at school and we are so comforted knowing she has something that has been made for kids like her. **Occasio** gives us so many options and a variety of different activities, we love that there are opportunities for siblings and friends to be involved as being able to bring her brother to some events gives them a unique bonding experience."



"We couldn't be more thrilled with the **Occasio Junior** program. Our son is absolutely ecstatic to go every time. Even though he may not do all activities to completion, he doesn't stop talking our ear off on the way home about how much fun he's had. Your staff truly are absolute gems, they really understand our kids and we couldn't appreciate you all any more for what you've provided to our family!"



"Thank you for everything you do for our Autistic kiddos! We have two boys registered in the **Occasio SR** program and are really glad we found it. **Occasio** gives our boys access to activities they may have never tried, with the proper supports in place, and gives my wife and I time together that we really need. We are so happy to be part of this program, thanks for everything you do!!"



DISCUSSION GROUPS

<p>PARTNERS OF AUTISTIC ADULTS</p> <p>84 PARTICIPANTS 12 MEETINGS</p>	<p>AUTISTIC ADULTS</p> <p>167 PARTICIPANTS 13 MEETINGS</p>	<p>THE GOLDEN JOURNEY SENIOR SUPPORTS</p> <p>46 PARTICIPANTS 6 MEETINGS</p>
<p>PARENTS OF AUTISTIC ADULTS</p> <p>47 PARTICIPANTS 12 MEETINGS</p>	<p>LGBTQ2S+</p> <p>54 PARTICIPANTS 12 MEETINGS</p>	<p>WOMENS PEER</p> <p>16 PARTICIPANTS 3 MEETINGS</p>



THE PANTRY FOOD SUPPORT PROGRAM

1220 HAMPERS
(141% ↑ FROM 2021)

\$61,500 VALUE OF HAMPERS

668 INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED

30 NEW INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING FOOD SECURITY



ADVOCACY

156

Individuals supported through a collaborative and person-centered approach.

"The **League** is an inclusive environment where being my Autistic self is no longer my worry. In a world where I constantly contrast my experiences of how I interact with how others expect me to interact, it's nice to enjoy a group of people, safe in the knowledge that I will be asked about it if anyone has a problem; it's a group where I only have to worry about enjoying myself."

"The **League** events and opportunities afforded to me by the Autism Edmonton are great. As an example, I was unaware of a place in Edmonton that taught cooking and allowed you to eat the meals you created. I never thought I was looking for that, but it was a great experience nonetheless."

THE LEAGUE

441 PARTICIPANTS

42 NEW PARTICIPANTS

EDUCATION

158
AUTISM 101
OF PEOPLE RECEIVED

362
AUTISM 201
OF PEOPLE RECEIVED

25
NCVI
OF PEOPLE RECEIVED



118%
INCREASE
FROM PREVIOUS
YEAR

3687

INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED
& LINKED TO SERVICES
& RESOURCES

AUTISM EDMONTON IS SOCIAL

1727
TWITTER
FOLLOWERS

958
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS
307
NEW
FOLLOWERS!

492
LINKEDIN
FOLLOWERS

4410
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS
530
NEW
FOLLOWERS!



AUTISTIC LION'S CLUB

Autism Edmonton is working to support the creation of an Autistic Lions Club (Previously known as Strathcona Lions Club.) The goal is to create a network and platform for volunteering and service for autistic individuals and their families/friends. Lions is an established international organization with two autistic groups already in Australia and one just starting in Montreal.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

Autism Edmonton is honoured to lead the FRC program alongside the Autism Society of Alberta and Autism Calgary. The FRC program is in partnership with the Autism Society of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Peace Autism Society, Chinook Autism Society, Inclusion Lethbridge, and the Crowsnest Community Support Society and started in June of 2021.

The FRC program coordinators provide:

- Services that focus on strengthening parenting and caregiver knowledge.
- Social support.
- Coping and problem-solving skills.
- Access to community support and resources.
- Improving child and adult development.
- Building resiliency and fostering well-being.

The program also focuses on connecting families with a peer network of other families to share lived experiences and find a local community.

Of the many things the FRC program does, one of the items we are most proud of is unveiling its online resource website. There are currently over 500 resources listed on the website, as well as various tool kits, government agencies, and recorded training sessions.

Search parameters are straightforward and cascade down to resources needed. They can quickly be sorted by:



Region



Disability



Age



Resource

The Family Resource Centre is excited to announce several new workshops accessible to individuals across the province.

- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCi) will be continued to be delivered now with an autism-specific component.
- New training in Low Arousal Training (crisis management and de-escalation strategies)
- New training in Psychological First Aid
- New training in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

The Family Resource Centre recently added Lisa Nicholson to their team of coordinators. Lisa is dedicated to supporting a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) awareness campaign where she shares and supports a basic understanding of the RDSP.

HOT TOPICS ACROSS THE PROVINCE

AISH

Help with Individual Support Plans

Help Managing Agreements

FSCD

PDD

Finding Support Staff (Respite)



The FRC team will deliver these courses across the province to Autism Edmonton, Autism Alberta, & Autism Calgary members.

There have been over 28 unique types of training sessions offered since July of 2021. The sessions covered topics like how to recruit respite, complex behaviours, First Nations English Dialects and Speech Pathology, with many more popping up monthly.

TRAINING INFORMATION SESSIONS

56 # OF SESSIONS **1456** # OF PEOPLE

AUTISM 101

10 # OF PRESENTATIONS **310** # OF PARTICIPANTS

1818

OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED ACROSS THE PROVINCE

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Autism Edmonton works closely with many different organizations across Alberta and Canada. At Autism Edmonton, we stand alongside Autistic individuals and the life-enhancing work we do would not make the impact it does without these partnerships.

ECHO AUTISM

Autism Edmonton is part of the Glenrose Hub team that utilizes the ECHO Autism Model to mentor and guide community practitioners, educators, and advocates, creating local expertise and increasing access for individuals with autism and their families. We work together to equip all communities to care for and support Autistic individuals and their families through best practices, regardless of geographic location.

AIDE CANADA

Autism and/or Intellectual Disability Knowledge Exchange Network (AIDE Canada) is a tool to connect community members to the information and resources they need. Autism Edmonton collaborates on many resources and information guides on the AIDE Canada website that are accessible to anyone.

ASPIRES

Autism Edmonton works closely with ASPIRES. They are our sister resource for housing based out of Calgary.

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Autism Edmonton works closely with the Faculty of Social Work and David Nicholas on several research opportunities and projects.

MACEWAN UNIVERSITY

Autism Edmonton partners with MacEwan University on many different project. The Faculty of Social Work teams up with the Autism Edmonton Team to help further develop the programs and services we offer.

CTSS

We started a partnership with Victim Services, now identified as Edmonton's Crime and Trauma-Informed Support Services (CTSS), in the fall of 2021. The collaboration was intended to explore an information exchange and support necessary accommodations to an individual, with a diagnosis of Autism, within the judicial process. Since this time, Autism Edmonton and CTSS has maintained a flow of information sharing and education for both the neurodivergent community and the judicial system, using a trauma-informed approach. Autism Edmonton has had the remarkable opportunity to educate judicial professionals as well as be educated by Edmonton CTSS's team. It continues to be an educational pleasure in working with the evolving Crime and Trauma-Informed Services and we will continue to utilize each other's expertise to better meet the unique needs of our community members.

GLENROSE REHABILITATION HOSPITAL

Autism Edmonton and the Glenrose have created a program together called "Family Navigators". Once a family has received a diagnosis from the Glenrose, the diagnostic team will send the family's contact information to Autism Edmonton so that we can assist them in finding resources and supports within the community that meet their current and future needs.

AUTISM CANTECH!

The Autism CanTech! Program supports the development of inclusive and accessible workplaces and removes barriers for Autistic professionals to getting employed. Autism Edmonton supports students from this program through paid internships and supports program development through an advisory role.

CACT

Our Children's Autism Collaborative Team is a vital source of information around services that children and families access throughout Edmonton. With over 20 agencies in attendance every second month, Autism Edmonton can collect the data and resources we need to support children and families and inform the government and agencies of the current needs of our membership.

THE SINNEAVE FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Sinneave's vision is that autistic adults live, learn, work, and thrive in their communities and realize their desired futures. Autism Edmonton continues to partner with them on many different projects as our visions align perfectly. Presently, we have links to SFF around housing, employment and the FRC's.

EDMONTON'S FOOD BANK

Our partnership with Edmonton's Food Bank is a core part of our programming. Our Pantry program relies on this partnership to assist with food security for our Autistic membership in a safe, sensory-friendly and understanding environment.

AUTISM SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

Autism Edmonton partners with ASA on many different projects but most recently is part of the Autism Alberta Family Resource Centres. Autism Edmonton works alongside the Family Resource Coordinators, and provides training and materials to the coordinators as well as free training opportunities for families and individuals with any disability across the province.

Autism Edmonton currently sits on the following Boards and Committees:

Autism Alberta Board

P-Tan Board (Provincial & Territorial Autism Network)

Cantech! Employer
Focus Group

CASDA Working Groups/
Summit Planning

KBHN Steering
Committee

Echo Committee

Deb Barrett
Fund Committee

Autism Alliance
Planning Committee

AIDE Canada Prairie Hub

Alberta Abilities Network

Autism Research Centre

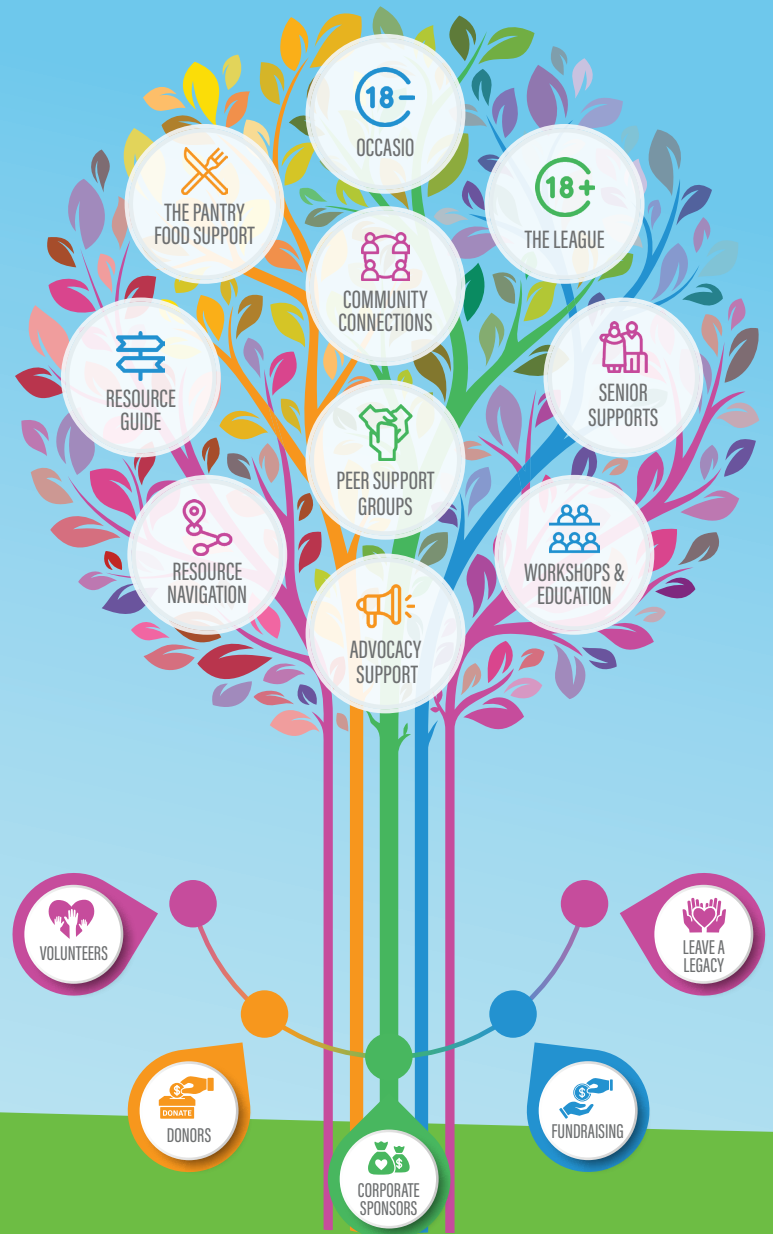
LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

Autism Edmonton is dedicated to filling critical service gaps where it can. Through consultation with our membership, it was a wake-up call that employment and housing were two significant needs not being met for Autistic individuals.

85% of Autistic adults are unemployed and feel their employment potential is overlooked.

Though these individuals may receive other income supports, many feel unfulfilled and desire meaningful employment. Through this consultation, it was noted that two-thirds of the same individuals are facing homelessness due to a lack of adequate housing.

Through meaningful conversation and partnership, Autism Edmonton is excited to announce two new programs to help satisfy these gaps.



EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Autism Edmonton is excited to announce its recent partnership with Meticulon Consulting Inc. The program aims to assess employment readiness so that Autistic individuals are supported in their growth, wants and needs. Autism Edmonton is building partnerships with various employers to create opportunities for employment for job-ready individuals. The employment coordinator will provide individuals who require additional support with the resources they need to become job-ready. This initiative's key component is educating employers on better workplace practices for inclusion and diversity.

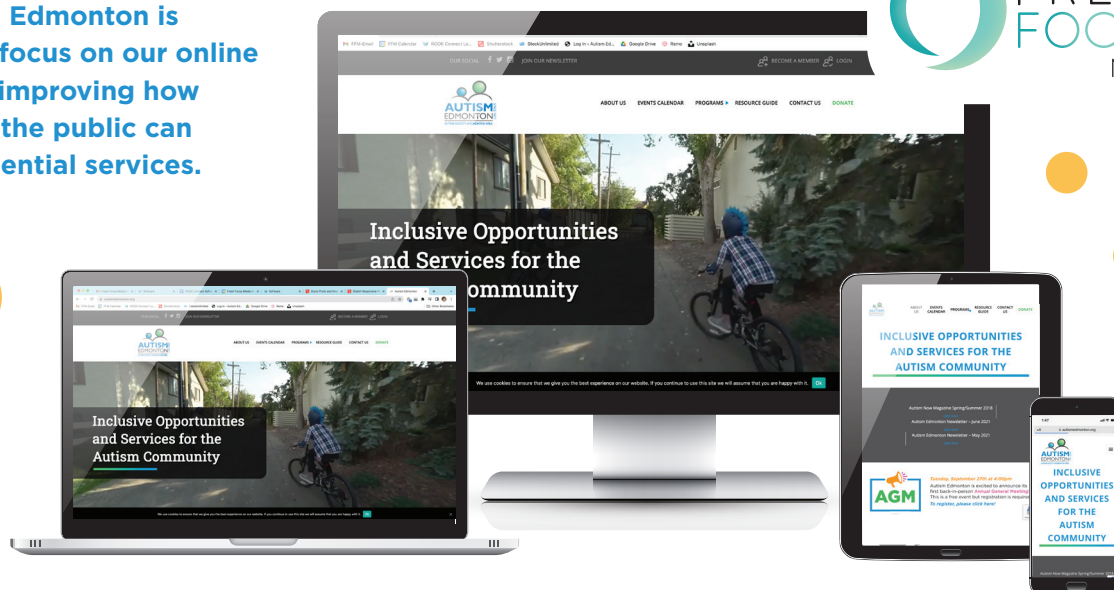
HOUSING PROGRAM

This initiative aims to create a network of housing options for Autistic and Neuro-diverse individuals. This program strips down the needs of what our members require to feel safe and comfortable at home and aligns them with housing options that fit those needs. The Housing Coordinator will be there to provide support to individuals seeking and maintaining appropriate housing, as well as to landlords who are involved in the program.



NEW YEAR, NEW LOOK, NEW ADVANCEMENTS

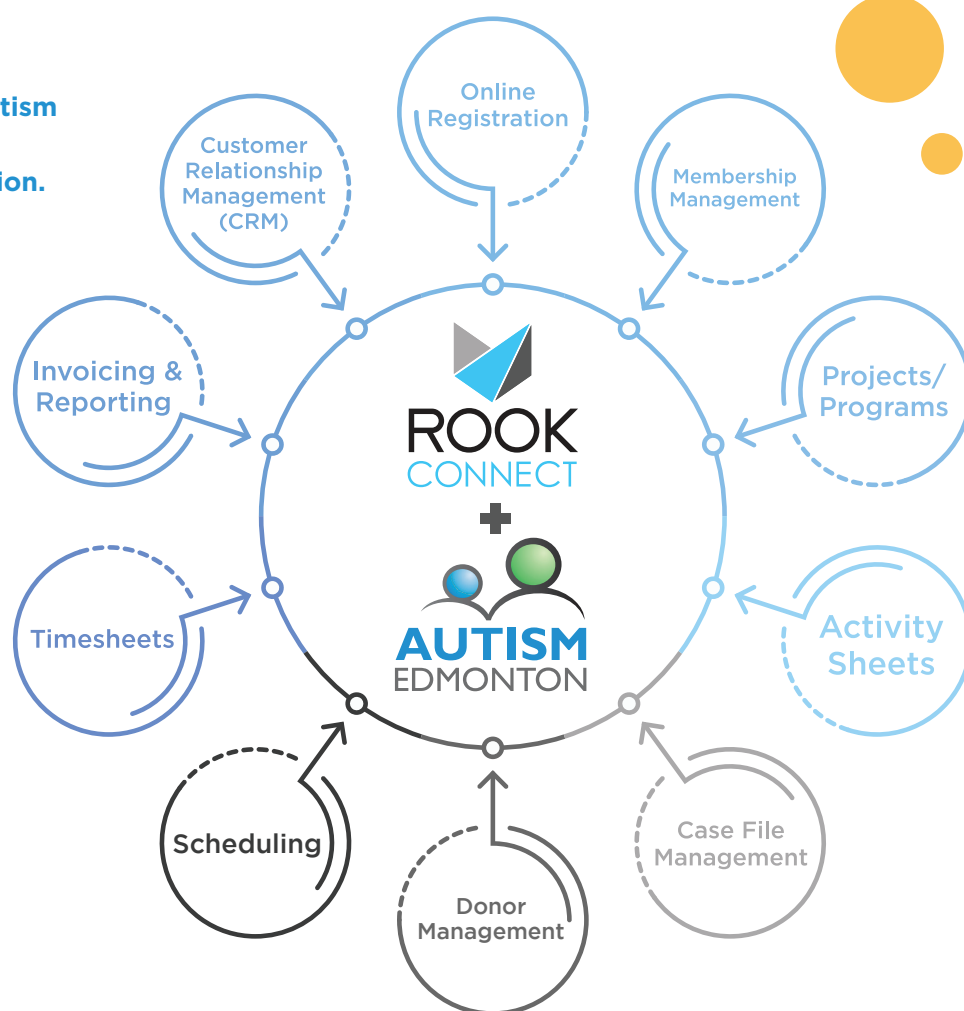
Partnering with Fresh Focus Media, Autism Edmonton is putting a real focus on our online presence and improving how members and the public can access our essential services.



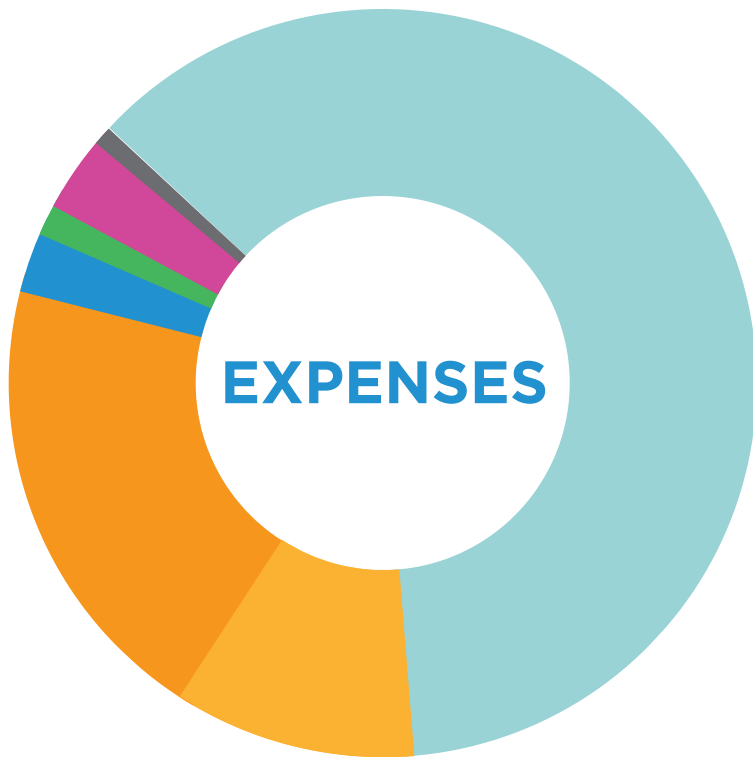
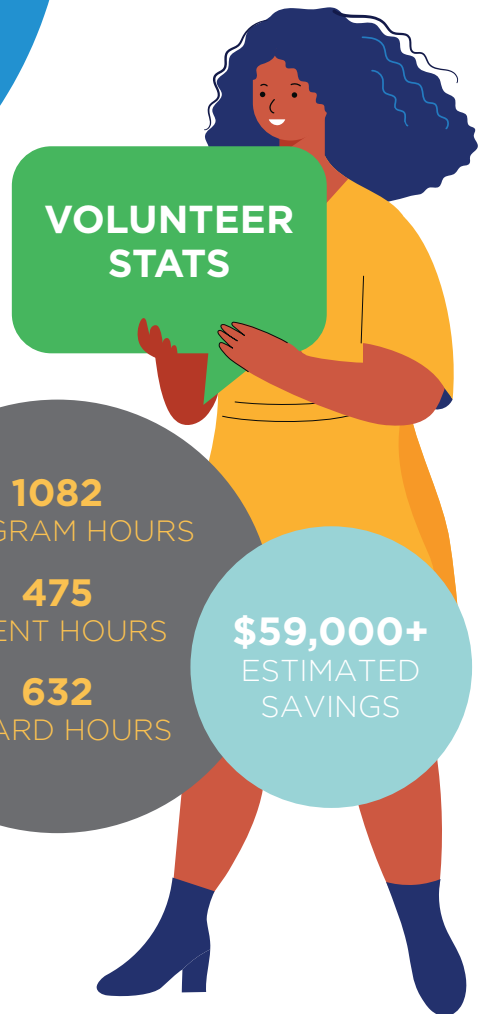
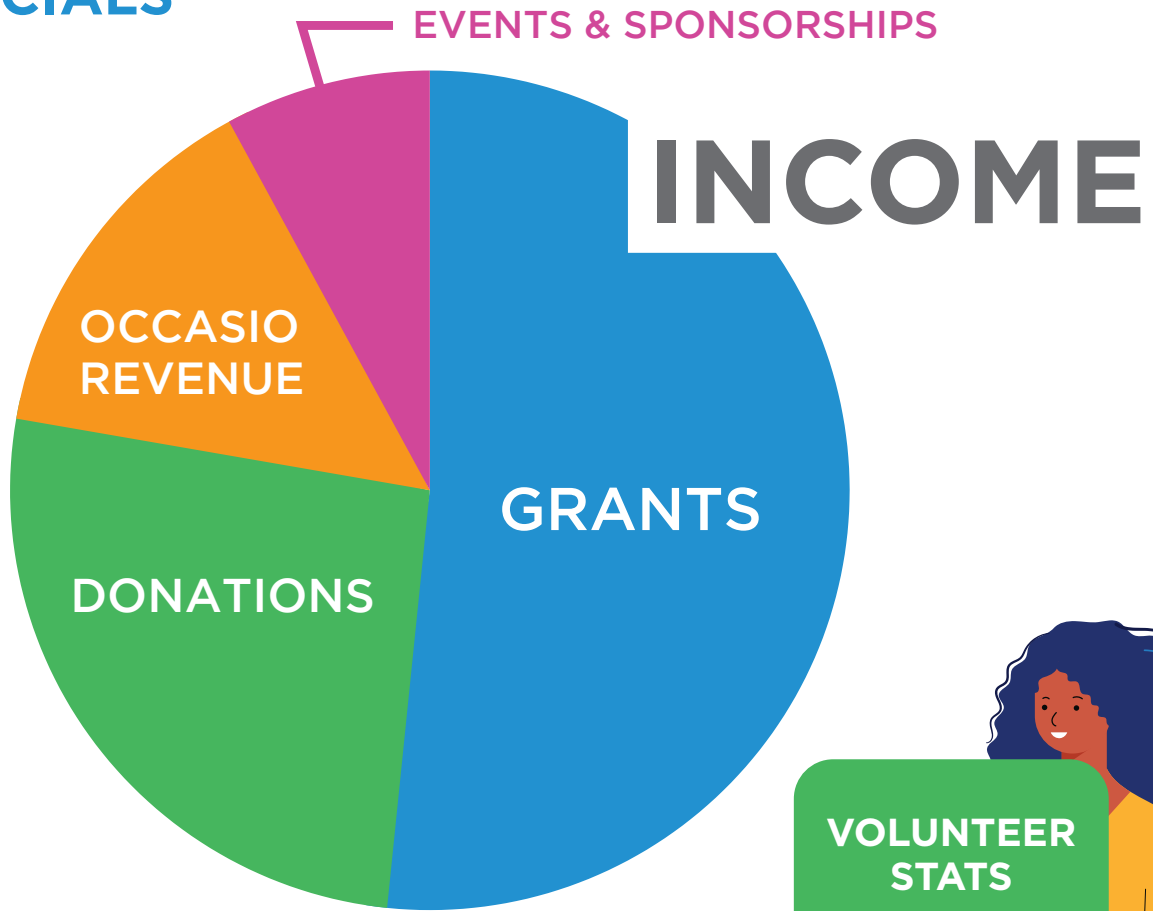
This includes reevaluating what information we're delivering and how we're delivering it to those in need. You'll notice that we're upgrading our look, making our material and valuable content more accessible, easier to read and more dynamic. Thinking about the community we serve and leading the way for those in need, Autism Edmonton is dedicated to making a difference!

Partnering with ROKK Connect, Autism Edmonton has launched an all new Membership Management Application.

With the goal of not only streamlining internal operations, but increasing the overall effectiveness of how we can deliver for our membership, Autism Edmonton is working with ROKK Connect on improving our systems overall, so we can take our services to the next level!



FINANCIALS



- Salaries, Wages and Benefits
- Rent, Facilities & Maintenance
- Other Expenses
- Occasio Expenses
- Program Development Expenses
- Board Support
- General Administration
- Fund Development & Marketing Cluster

CONNECT WITH US

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