

# AUTISM RESOURCE CENTRE

REGINA SASKATCHEWAN

APRIL  
2017



*...finding colour in the spectrum*

*Above: Mirela, Kelsey Malek-Longpre, Mckenzie Herbert and Troy Dean.*

## APRIL 2ND—WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS/ACCEPTANCE

April 2<sup>nd</sup> marked World Autism Day, inviting the world to learn more about friends, families, peers, co-workers, and neighbours from all backgrounds that are on the autism spectrum.

Today, one in every 68 children are diagnosed with autism, so if you think that you haven't met a person with autism, chances are that you will soon. Here, at the Autism Resource Centre (ARC), we joyfully celebrate the gifts that autism brings to our community. It is our aim to empower young people to develop their abilities and share their perspectives with the world.

This month we are honoured to share Mirela's story of growth and accomplishment! She recently finished the Autism Works Pre-Employment Program at ARC, and was hired as a Kitchen Utility Worker with Victoria Estates, a local retirement community.

Due to her willingness to learn, and her desire to do a great job, responsibilities at work quickly expanded, and Mirela says her favourite part of work is, "getting to know the residents and finding the items that they want for whatever they need."

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## RECEIVE ARC BY EMAIL

To join—email us at  
[info@autismresourcecentre.com](mailto:info@autismresourcecentre.com)

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Mirela is enjoying the opportunity to build relationships with her coworkers and is even taking on extra shifts.

Victoria Estates Executive Director, Tyler Grose shared that Mirela is a wonderful addition to the Victoria Estates team: "Mirela arrives early to work every day, with a huge smile on her face! She works extremely hard when she is here, and has an amazing eye for detail. Her positive attitude and strong work ethic have allowed her to integrate quickly with the staff and residents. Not only is her attitude contagious, but also the kitchen staff is far more friendly and patient with each other.

The team appears to be working better together, and there are a lot more smiles and laughter coming from the kitchen."

Great job Mirela! Thank you for letting ARC be a part of your journey.

*Photo on the Left: Mirela and Tyler Grose (Executive Director of Victoria Estates).*

If you want more information on hiring an employee with autism, **please contact ARC at (306) 569-0858.**

## FRIENDSHIP IS A CHOICE! PEERS®



ARC finished its first 16-week PEERS® program, which was focused on how to make and keep friends. We saw concrete development in the social skills of our five dedicated participants. Together we learned that "friendship is choice", alongside a variety of direct relationship building skills. The program helped our young people feel more socially empowered and gain confidence in their everyday interactions.

Key topics included dating, online safety, as well as handling bullying and entering and exiting conversations. Participants were encouraged to have a plan in place to use these skills before leaving each PEERS® session. Practice with social coaches and ARC staff demonstrated how to continue using new tools throughout daily life.

Here is what one of our social coaches had to say about the program:

***"PEERS® was great at putting what we take for granted into real world examples and practice...PEERS® creates a safe and practical environment for learning/adapting/ changing".***

Keely, Chanda and Logan will miss spending each Monday with the first PEERS® group, but we know they are now more prepared for new and exciting relationships. If you are interested in information about future PEERS® sessions at ARC, please email [chanda@autismresourcecentre.com](mailto:chanda@autismresourcecentre.com).

## SOCIAL DROP-IN NEWS

Our spectrum adults asked to try new creative activities, so March was an art-filled month for our Social Drop-In crew. A professional artist came to ARC and taught everyone how to paint. We have some amazing artists amongst us and the end results of our paintings were impressive! It wasn't just the painting that made the night fun however; it was the laughter, the high fives and beautiful mistakes that turned into masterpieces, which made the night memorable.

We also went to the Mackenzie Art Gallery to learn more about First Nations Art and artists as well as participating in drawing projects and learning how to weave on a loom!

The evening was the perfect mixture of observing, learning and enjoying something new. We had so much fun with our March art explorations that we will definitely do it again!



**Social Drop-In happens every Wednesday evening from 6-8 PM.**

Please email [logan@autismresourcecentre.com](mailto:logan@autismresourcecentre.com) for more information. We can't wait to see you there!

## ARC PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

The Parent Support Group has started up again at ARC. This support group is specifically for parents or guardians of older teenagers or adult children who have autism. Parents can come and meet other parents, share in conversations, and find support in each other. Being a parent can be difficult at times and the transition from teenager to adulthood can be stressful for parents. Issues our adult children face such as finishing High School, finding and maintaining employment, housing and independent living, friendships, safety, dating and sexuality, can be difficult to navigate for families and parents. Having the support of people

who are walking a similar path can make a difference—people who are there to support each other during the struggles and celebrate with each other during the successes!

We meet on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Autism Resource Centre (3663 Sherwood Drive). Food and refreshments are provided at each meeting. If you would like more information about the Parent Support Group or if you would like to be put on the meeting notification list please contact Jennifer at (306) 569-0858 or email [jennifer@autismresourcecentre.com](mailto:jennifer@autismresourcecentre.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**APRIL  
22<sup>ND</sup>**

### ARC SUMMER PROGRAM REGISTRATION DAY

Saturday April 22, 2017 at the Autism Resource Centre. Doors open at 9:30 AM.

**MAY  
24<sup>TH</sup>**

### SPRING FLING DANCE

Social Drop-In Spring Fling dance coming May 24, 2017! Location to be announced.

**AUGUST  
19<sup>TH</sup>**

### 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GET ACTIVE 4 AUTISM

Thursday, August 19, 2017 at AE Wilson Park. Event starts at 10 AM. Make sure to save the date in your calendar!

# BUILDING BLOCK PROGRAM



ARC recently partnered with Street Culture Project to offer a new program called the Building Block, which supports Indigenous youth who may have autism and are at an increased risk of not accessing appropriate support services. The main goal of the program is to plan for, and connect with employment as well as engage with the broader community.

Evan Whitestar, from Mother Theresa Middle School, acknowledged the beginning of our first two semesters by leading us in a smudging ceremony and teaching us all how to make dream catchers.

In a short time, we saw significant changes in social skills, confidence and goal setting within each participant. Also, thanks to a grant from the First Nations and Métis Sponsorship Fund, we were able to host a Building Block graduation celebration with community supporters from Access Communications, Buffalo Boys Drum Circle and both ARC and Street Culture Project. To close graduation, the Buffalo Boys Drum Circle shared a very special performance with us.

The Building Block facilitators look forward to supporting the ongoing goals that these young people set for themselves.



# COOKING PROGRAM

The past three months of our cooking program have been fantastic—filled with delicious comfort food and great friends. We have focused on quick, nutritious dishes that are easy to make at home like omelettes, stir-fry, skillet and pastas. Our chefs love the opportunity to tweak recipes and share how they cooked the dishes.

The recipes we use in cooking are broken down into easy-to-follow steps, and are excellent for beginner cooks looking to gain some cooking skills, including grocery shopping and following recipes. If any extra help is needed, budding chefs can always ask their cooking coach what to do next, and we make sure that everything they learn is done safely and quickly!

Our regular cooking program will resume again in September, and we will offer small afternoon cooking sessions over the summer. If anyone would like ideas for excellent step-by-step recipes to practice with in the meantime, just email Brendan at [brendan@autismresourcecentre.com](mailto:brendan@autismresourcecentre.com).

Thank you to our  
Cooking Program sponsor:

**SaskTel** 