

thriving. connected. happy.

Aspire VIEWS

RICHMOND



August 2024



Happy 35th Anniversary to David and Sheryl!
Celebrating at the Flying Beaver.

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Message from the CEO

It won't be long now before the season changes from summer to autumn. This annual change always brings feelings of optimism as well as excitement for what is new. Aspire has had its share of changes in the past few months – just in time for a new season to begin.

Our management team has been short-staffed over the past year, and I am grateful for all the staff who have stepped up in these challenging times. After a thorough search, we have hired our new Director of Supported Living, Ann-Marie Prendergast.

We also said goodbye to one of our homes, 2nd Avenue. Having been with Aspire for nearly 3 decades, it has been a bittersweet change full of memories. Liesl Price was the Senior Counsellor of 2nd Avenue, and she writes about her experiences in this issue as well.

Treehouse Early Learning Centre has just completed a new playground that was 3 years in the making. A celebration of the new playground is scheduled for later this summer.

We have welcomed additional new administrative staff – Sue, Meaghan and Jacky, and we welcomed back Tiffany from Independent Living from her maternity leave. We have also welcomed many new staff to the Aspire programs and homes and said goodbye to others. A warm welcome to all new staff joining the Aspire family.

Happy last days of summer to all of you! I hope to see many of you at Aspire's Annual Family Picnic in September.

Shannon Crofton

Director of Supported Living

I'm excited to introduce myself as the new Director of Supported Living. With over a decade of experience in the community living field, I've had the privilege of working with both children and adults with support needs, as well as supporting caregivers who play such a crucial role in their family members lives. Each experience has deepened my commitment to creating environments where everyone can thrive.

Originally from Ireland, I made the move to Canada in 2016 and have been lucky enough to continue my passion for supporting individuals, families and staff ever since. My goal is to help us all live out our mission of supporting thriving, connected, and happy lives.

I'm looking forward to getting to know each of you better and becoming part of this wonderful community. Thank you for the warm welcome—looking forward to the future.

Ann-Marie Prendergast



Aspire Views and Aspiring Voices

Aspiring Voices is the video/audio companion to the Aspire Views newsletter, making each newsletter more accessible for those who wish to listen to rather than read each article. New episodes of Aspiring Voices are released the month after its corresponding newsletter is published.

Shintaro Tachihara, Manager of Children Respite and Family Resources



[Click here for the June 2024 newsletter episode](#)

2nd Avenue – A Legacy

The passion I have for this field today is because of my experiences within this home and the lives of the women who called it home.

2nd Avenue was a home with inspiring vision and great expectations, opening its doors in 1996. A home that excelled in supporting three uniquely different women over the years to become leaders of their own lives -Kathy, Sandy and Dena.

I can only believe that all those who walked through the doors touched and contributed to what it became. Life was lived here. Laughter, Joy, Celebration, Pain, Sorrow, Learning, Experiencing, Family, Friends, Expression, Compassion, Empathy, Frustration, Anger, Dancing, Singing, and so much more.

Respect ME, Be Real With ME, Hear ME, See ME.....Is this not what we all want in life?

Being a part of their lives, sharing their lives, and growing with them is something I will cherish always. Being able to share our stories, our lessons, strength, fears, hope, vulnerabilities, grief, determination, pain and laughter with others is what I hope will continue to inspire all of us.

The amazing team that shared the struggles with me, there are no words to describe how much I appreciate you all. I have no doubt each one of you will continue to inspire and touch the lives of many to come.

Shannon, you were there from the beginning and fought to end, I look forward to the future. Thank You.

Carrie, we got through this, all of us, because of the support you have given, I cannot extend enough gratitude and thanks. If I was given an opportunity to do it all over again, I would.....in a heartbeat.

Aspires 2nd Avenue closed in 2024. It is our hope and dream that Dena will continue to strive to be the leader in her own life. To all the direct support workers within Aspire, believe me when I say you are the heart and soul. You will be overwhelmed with emotions many, many times. Embrace them, learn from them, then share them. Advocate....be advocates for the ones you support, for yourselves, for your co-workers.

There is nothing more precious and rewarding as time shared.

With all my sincerity,
Liesl Price



Sandy



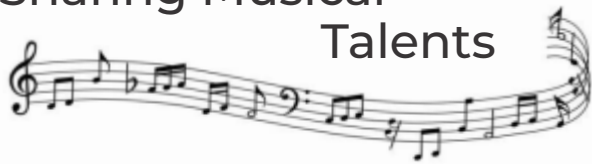
Dena



Kathy



Sharing Musical Talents



Dan Pooransingh is an accomplished electric guitar player, and DJ. He describes his music style as eclectic drawing from various genres and influences. Dan has carved out a role as a music therapist and his performances underscore his dedication to using music as a tool for self-employment, connection, healing, and joy.

He regularly showcases his talents at two Aspire day programs: Quantum and Synergy. These programs provide him with platforms to connect with diverse audiences and share his passion for music.

Dan's performances are well-received and he is known for his ability to create playlists that captivate large audiences. Dan occasionally collaborates with Reid Scally, a participant from the Quantum program. Reid, who plays acoustic guitar and harmonica, complements Dan's electric guitar, forming a harmonious and captivating duo.

More recently, Dan has expanded his music therapy services to perform at senior's facilities in Richmond to enhance the well-being and quality of life for the residents, as well as performing at other venues and events.

Jack Okwieka, Aspire Employment Services

Support at the Office

Rasika has been part of Aspire for a very long time. She has participated in, and volunteered for many programs over the years. When the opportunity came up to help the Independent Living program and lend her office skills, she jumped at the opportunity!

One afternoon she dropped by our office to help put together annual document packages - photocopying, collating, filing. She did it all and with a smile on her face from start to finish.

Thank you Rasika!

Colin Wong, Independent Living





SUMMER FUN *Aspire* Photo Album



Youth Employment

Aspire Youth Employment has participated in the IMPACT Youth Employment research project for the past 5 years. Each year we offer a 3-month summer program to support youth to develop their work readiness, and work experience.

During July our youth participated in a job simulation activity where they worked cooperatively to plan and operate a mock restaurant/café. It was meant to see how the youth would work and interact with one another in a team setting and allowed us to assess skills such as leadership, communication, adaptability, ability to take direction, willingness to compromise, and more.

The youth chose the name of the business, the theme, and planned their mock food menu (appetizers, main courses, desserts, drinks). They also picked and assigned roles for each other (manager, chef, food prep worker, waitstaff, cashier, host, bartender, and busser). They decided to create a jungle/nature/animal themed restaurant and named it the Jungle Cafe.

On the day of the event, we arranged and decorated the Seedlings multi-purpose room to simulate a restaurant setting. The job simulation ran for 1 hour, and the youth got to experience the full range of duties involved in running a Café, as they welcomed and seated customers, took orders, prepared meals and served mock beverages and meals to their customers.

Denise Ticman, Employment Services

"It was great fun and a great learning experience for all involved!"



Summer Student at Aspire

Each year Aspire applies for grant funding through the Federal Government Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) funding stream. This year we were fortunate to receive increased funding to hire more positions.

Katie was hired in the spring to work at Youth Connections. She is not the first in her family to work at Aspire. Her parents met many years ago while working in the same program she's been working in this summer. In looking for opportunities, she was attracted to Aspire to complete her 3rd-year Child & Youth Care working practicum as a summer student because knew others that were happily employed at Aspire.

Katie described her experience this summer as:

- It's been an incredible experience.
- She's received a lot of support.
- Her learning has been challenged and she's learned a lot.
- There have been new experiences.

When asked if Katie would like to continue working at Youth Connections, she said she would be happy to continue casually when back home during university breaks. We wish Katie all the best as she continues her Child & Youth Care degree and look forward to seeing her again when she's home during school breaks.



Inclusive Education

- Accessing Resources

Click here
for more
resources



Navigating and accessing resource supports for families and their loved ones can be a daunting task, particularly if you are undertaking this on your own. Knowing who to talk to and what resources to consider makes this potentially challenging task easier -

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!



Meet Shintaro Tachihara,
Manager, Family Resources
– Aspire Richmond

Shintaro shared with us, that he has the privilege of connecting with families and their loved ones from birth through all of life stages, while supporting them in identifying opportunities in the community that suit their individual wants and needs. Some of the things that Shintaro supports family's with are:

- Finding programs
- Completing applications
- Finding and assisting with grant applications
- Connecting with inclusive and accessible organizations
- Advocacy

An example of how Shintaro has supported was a family wanted support in accessing resources to participate in certain programs. He assisted with liaising between the different funding agencies and arranged a meeting to advocate for services. When a family is interested in applying for the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation, he can arrange a time to meet with family's so they can complete the application together.



Meet Ruth Shannon,
Resource Parent
– Family Support Institute BC

The Family Support Institute (FSI) was established in 1986 by a group of parents who wanted better lives for their loved ones living with a disability. An invaluable part of FSI is their Family Resource Parents. Family Resource Parents are trained volunteers who have lived experience and a desire to help other families. The Richmond community is fortunate to have Ruth Shannon as one of the Richmond Resource Parents. Ruth is the proud mom of Richard who is 33 years old and lives with a genetic disability. As a past CLBC Community Council Chair and a long-time member of Aspire's Inclusive Education Committee, Ruth's brings perspectives of both a mom and an advocate. These experiences give her the insight and understanding to support and mentor other families.

Richmond Parents for Transition Group (RPFT)

RPFT began eight years ago with the purpose of providing parents and guardians who have a loved one aged 12-19 years old with a disability. The focus of RPFT is to provide opportunity to network, share resources and materials, as well as information about the transition process from high school to young adulthood. Community Professionals are always welcome to attend any of the RPFT presentations. 4-5 presentations are offered throughout the school year; each presentation is based on families needs and interests. All presentations are recorded providing parents access to the information at any time.

The most popular topics are:

- CLBC: What's It All About
- Persons With Disability (PWD) Pension
- Day Programs,
- Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP),
- Representation Agreements, Employment,
- Post-Secondary Education,
- Housing, an
- Mental Wellness.

Three facilitators support RPFT: Eve Minuk – Retired Teacher, Richmond School District; Emily Tan – Richmond School District and Shintaro Tachihara – Aspire Richmond.

Family Support Institute: A provincial not for profit society committed to supporting families who have a family member with a disability at no cost.. [Family Support BC | Calendar | Family Support](#)

findSupport BC: Connects individuals with disabilities to different resources based on their age, disability, region, and city. [Find Support BC](#)

Inclusion BC: A federation of members that work together to build inclusive communities.. [IBC | Inclusive Education](#)

We would like to hear from you. If you have any community resources, or topics you would like covered in the Inclusive Education section of the Aspire newsletter, please contact Info@aspirerichmond.com.

The Inclusive Education Committee consists of parents, self-advocates, Richmond School District educators and Aspire staff. Our responsibilities include promoting opportunities and materials for inclusive educational practices benefiting families, educators and students as well as making recommendations to the Aspire Board for advocacy related to public education issues and changes that affect students with developmental disabilities. If you're interested in becoming a member of the Inclusive Education Committee, connect with Carrie at cmclellan@aspirerichmond.com.



Join us at our

SUMMER

CARNIVAL

FAMILY PICNIC

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 5 2024

4pm-7pm
Brighthouse Park, 7000 Minoru Blvd



Scan/Click here to register by Aug 23



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



artwork: Tom Wainwright and Riley Koyanagi



Scan/Click here to RSVP by Sept 3, 2024

September 9, 2024
Dinner: 6pm Meeting: 7pm
Richmond Caring Place, Room 340
7000 Minoru Blvd, Richmond

thriving. connected. happy.

Aspire Richmond

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