Aspire RICHMOND

thriving. connected. happy.

VIEWS

February 2025

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at Aspire Richmond Seedlings ECD Hub

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Supported by the Province of British Columbia

Aspire gets a new van!

Avenues LIFE Services Program has a new van to support the particpants to explore their community! This is no ordinary van mind you; it is a 2024 Dodge Promaster wheelchair accessible van that replaces Avenue's recently retired 2004 van. We are tremendously grateful for the support we received for this vehicle through the Community Prosperity Fund created by the Province of British Columbia. If our previous van is any indicator, we will be using this to support individuals for the next 20 years!

50/50 CASH LOTTERY

Aspire Richmond recently launched a 50/50 Cash Lottery fundraising initiative. The lottery began in November and ran until the end of January. We sold $5,530 worth of tickets. On February 3rd, we drew the winner: Kevin Moore. He will receive $2,765.00.

Congratulations Kevin!

For our first foray into the world of lotteries, we are happy to be able to award this tidy sum to a grateful winner.

~ Sue Street, Manager Fund and Community Development

Message from the CEO

Inclusion BC is excited to host its annual conference, a cornerstone event for learning, connection, and community building. This year marks Inclusion BC's 70th anniversary, and to celebrate, they are partnering with Inclusion Canada and Aspire Richmond to present a national event. Aspire is honoured to be part of this special milestone.

The conference, themed *Everybody Belongs!*, offers a unique opportunity to connect, share insights, and access the latest resources on inclusion and diversity. The event welcomes everyone, including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, family members, advocates, educators, government representatives, volunteers, disability support workers, and all allies committed to fostering inclusion and diversity.

Join us from June 19th to 21st at the River Rock Casino in Richmond, BC, for this incredible gathering. Don't miss this chance to celebrate and advance inclusion together!

We hope to see you there!

~Shannon Crofton, CEO

click/scan here to watch a video about the conference

click/scan here for conference details

Aspire RICHMOND

INCLUSION & BELONGING

CHILD CARE CONFERENCE

January 24-25 2025 | Richmond BC

thriving. connected. happy.

Aspire's Children's Services recently achieved a goal by hosting a conference at Seedlings ECDH. The two-day conference, which centered on the themes of inclusion and belonging, was made accessible to educators at a low cost, thanks to funding from the City of Richmond Child Care Professional & Program Development Grant.

This event provided a valuable opportunity for the Richmond Child Care Community to come together and focus on fostering inclusivity and accessibility. Educators had the chance to connect, grow, and learn from one another, rekindling old connections and establishing new ones.

True to the conference's theme, participants expanded their knowledge of inclusive practices through a series of learning sessions. These sessions covered a range of topics, including creating inclusive outdoor environments, developing spaces where everyone feels welcome, understanding the neurodiverse community, creating inclusive pedagogical spaces in the field of education, and incorporating Métis teachings into the classroom.

The conference's Friday evening concluded with an impressive performance by the Mayday Choir. On Saturday, the attendees were honoured with a welcome from Dr. Elder Roberta Price, who graciously shared her knowledge and teachings. The event concluded with a panel discussion featuring individuals who have experienced Aspire's Inclusive Child Care programs, including representatives from the 3-5 Daycare, School-Age Child Care, and Youth Connections, as well as an educator.

Attendees were delighted to receive an Aspire swag bag, which included a generous donation from Dan-D-pak.

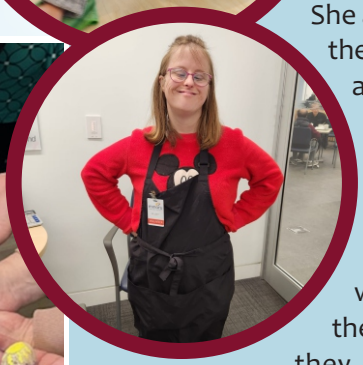
The conference was a success, embodying the spirit of inclusion and accessibility, and leaving a lasting impact on all who attended.

~ Carrie Mclellan-Haqq, Director of Children's Services

"I LOVE THE SENIOR CENTRE!"

- Kelsey

Since October, Kesley has been volunteering at the Senior Centre once a week as a cafeteria host where she clears trays and dishes from the tables. She also cleans tables during the slower periods which are few and far between.



It's a pleasure assisting her even though she rarely needs it. I get to watch her interact with the diners, and how much they interact with her. She chats them up and provides a helping hand while they give friendly greetings, small talk, showing off Christmas sweaters, and providing a warm embrace here and there.

"Kelsey has been a lovely host at the Minoru Seniors Centre. She embodies warmth and kindness in everything she does. Her energy lights up the room, and her sweet, caring nature makes her an absolute joy to be around." - Abbas Bhimji, Community Development Coordinator, Minoru Seniors Society

This isn't new for Kelsey. She volunteered at the former Senior Centre near the library, so this is old hat for her. And volunteering is in her blood - she also volunteers at Seedlings twice a week.

~ Colin Wong, Manager, LIFE - Transitions

The Magic of Rainbows at Treehouse

Rainbows have fascinated humans for centuries and for the children at Treehouse they are nothing short of magic. Children often use art to process their emotions, express themselves, and make sense of the world. Rainbows, with their bright and cheerful colours, might represent hope, positivity, or even a sense of order in a sometimes chaotic world. When the children at Treehouse repeatedly draw rainbows, it might mean they are:

- Exploring colour: The repetition of the rainbow allows them to experiment with their favorite colours or new colour combinations.
- Expressing emotion: Rainbows often symbolize happiness, and their presence in drawings can reflect a child's joy or optimism.
- Reinforcing familiarity: Children gravitate toward patterns and images they recognize and enjoy. Rainbows are often associated with comfort and fun.
- Simplicity of the form: Rainbows are easy to draw, making them accessible even to toddlers. The repeating arc pattern feels satisfying and achievable.

The educators at Treehouse have been supporting the children's love of rainbows by encouraging their creative ideas.

Here's how:

- They have supplied crayons, markers, paint and pencil crayons (the favorite tool).
- When a child drew a rainbow, the educators would ask open ended questions like, “what made you want to draw this today?” or “how do you think the rainbow appears in the sky?”.
- The educators use their interest as a springboard for other activities, like discussing emotions tied to colours, exploring weather, and learning about light.

Rainbows have been more than just a beautiful natural phenomenon to the children at Treehouse, they have been a portal to creativity, wonder and learning for the children.

~ Angela Yodogawa, Manager of Treehouse early Learning Centre

Building Community Connections

Over the last few years, Friday lunches at the local Ironwood McDonald's have become a cherished tradition for Quantum participants. While the food is always enticing, it is the warmth, kindness, and inclusion of McDonald's manager, Chris, that truly make these visits unforgettable.

Chris is the first to greet us as we walk through the doors, his genuine smile setting the tone for the meal. He knows each of our orders by heart and ensures they are prepared quickly and correctly, leaving no detail overlooked. His happy and kind approach transforms a simple lunch into something special every single time.

Chris doesn't just serve food; he creates a sense of belonging. His warmth makes us feel valued and at home, turning an ordinary fast-food restaurant into a place where friendships flourish and connections grow.

Thank you Chris, for going above and beyond to make us feel like VIPs. Your kindness and dedication are a shining example of what building community truly means.

~ Wioletta Okwieka-Reduch, Manager of LIFE - Quantum

RICHMOND
HandyCrew
COOPERATIVE

604-241-4113
www.handycrew.ca

Need a hand? ... we can help!

Richmond HandyCrew Cooperative was established over 15 years ago to offer employment for individuals who have a developmental disability. HandyCrew operates as a business cooperative – bringing together individual members, their families and the business community.

HandyCrew is governed by the Co-operative Association Act of BC with membership consisting of the supported individuals, their families and other people who share the vision of an inclusive community.

HandyCrew provides a valuable service offering a reliable work crew to complete indoor and outdoor residential and commercial projects. It is a co-operative owned by the workers who are personally committed to the Co-op's success. The workers are dedicated to building a business that provides quality service with affordable pricing to Richmond residents.

A Successful Respite Match

Wilhelm and Kristen have been matched in Adult Respite since February 2019. Kristen goes above and beyond with every individual she has provided respite for and has offered us referrals for recruiting new caregivers. Respite has a Referral Bonus Program for active caregivers. If their referral successfully completes a minimum of 6 months with an active contract, the caregiver receives a $50 gift card of their choice. We've given out a lot of gift cards and have retained many caregivers over the years!

When asked what they like about Respite, Wilhelm said, "I like having a good time and going out. I like going to Britannia Shipyards and Steveston. It's always fun when I go out with Kristen and my favorite thing is telling her all about Warhammer."

Kristen said, "I get to hang out with my friend Wil. I have had the privilege of working with Wilhelm for almost 6 six years! It never feels like work when I see him. One of our favorite things to do is go to the Britannia Shipyards. It is well suited for us since Wil loves history so much and I think that it's really cool there. It has been great building such a friendship with him and we have become so close that I lookout for him like I do for any of my own family members."

~ Kevin Moore, Manager
of Adult Respite

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

Aspiring Voices
LISTEN & WATCH

Click here for a playlist of all episodes

Employer Spotlight: Go Auto – Driving Inclusion and Career Success

At Aspire Richmond, we love celebrating businesses that open doors for people with developmental disabilities, proving that inclusive hiring is more than just a good idea—it's a winning one. This month, we're shining a light on the Go Auto Group, who have partnered with Aspire's Employment Services to provide meaningful opportunities for neurodiverse individuals.

Go Auto employs five people from the Aspire community in three of their dealerships—Audi, Jaguar Land Rover, and Volkswagen. These workplaces aren't just car dealerships; they're places where careers thrive and contributions are valued.

Meet the Team at Go Auto

- Emily and Anastasia, based at Audi, have both worked as warranty scanning clerks for an impressive 14 and 12 years respectively. Their incredible attention to detail and commitment to quality have made them invaluable members of the Audi team.
- Kayla and Amy, working at Jaguar Land Rover, bring 7 years of dedication to their roles as scanning clerks. Their hard work, accuracy and reliability has been integral to the organization's regulatory compliance and documentation for the warranty and parts departments.
- Edgar, has been with the Volkswagen service department as a lot attendant for 4 years. Edgar's positive attitude and solid work ethic washing and detailing customer's cars, quickly earned him the respect of the entire Service Department team.

Building Inclusive Workplaces

Go Auto's commitment to inclusion stands out as a model for other businesses. By creating supportive environments and seeing the value each person brings, they've built workplaces where everyone can succeed. With the right training, supports, and workplace culture, their employees with developmental disabilities have achieved fulfilling, long-term careers.

What Can We Learn from Go Auto?

This partnership is proof that, with progressive attitudes and collaboration, individuals with developmental disabilities can thrive in the workplace. It's also a reminder for families that the path to employment isn't a solo journey—supportive employers like Go Auto and allies like Aspire Richmond can partner to open doors and set people up for success.

As we continue working toward a more inclusive community, Go Auto's efforts remind us all: hiring inclusively isn't just the right thing to do; it's a smart business move.

Aspire's Employment Services extends a big thank-you to Go Auto for creating opportunities for people with developmental disabilities—and for demonstrating the power of inclusive hiring in action.

~Annabel Melnyk, Manager of Competitive and Customized Employment

Drive for Ability Scholarship Program

Surjit and Pardeep Dhinjal have been raising funds for Aspire Richmond for over 14 years! What started out as a car rally has evolved into an annual fundraising campaign and now a Scholarship Program supporting individuals from Aspire Richmond.

These scholarships can be used for post-secondary schools, speech assessments and/or other needs that you may need help with.

Visit the Aspire Richmond website for more details:

www.aspirerichmond.com/resources/drive-for-ability-scholarship/

Scholarship Criteria:

- Resident of Richmond BC
- Canadian Citizen and/or Permanent Resident
- Receives services from Aspire Richmond
- Age 5+
- No GPA standing is required
- Submit proof of paid registration, in their first or subsequent years at a recognized post-secondary institution in a trade, technical, vocational, or academic program in Canada
- For children under 17 - proof of registration and/or letter from a speech pathologist, occupational therapist or other program(s) listing number of hours per week
- Include references or a letter of appreciation to the people who have helped you prepare and have encouraged your post secondary education future (where applicable).

EXTENDED DEADLINE

Applications accepted from October 1, 2024 to February 28, 2025 with the recipient winners announced in April 2025.

Scan/Click Here to Apply!

Scan/Click for more resources!

Creating smoother transitions

Power struggles at home can occur when a young person is not following a request from a caregiver. Being met with resistance can be a very challenging position for a person to find themselves in, especially when it is felt strongly that the request is reasonable and in the best interests of the child.

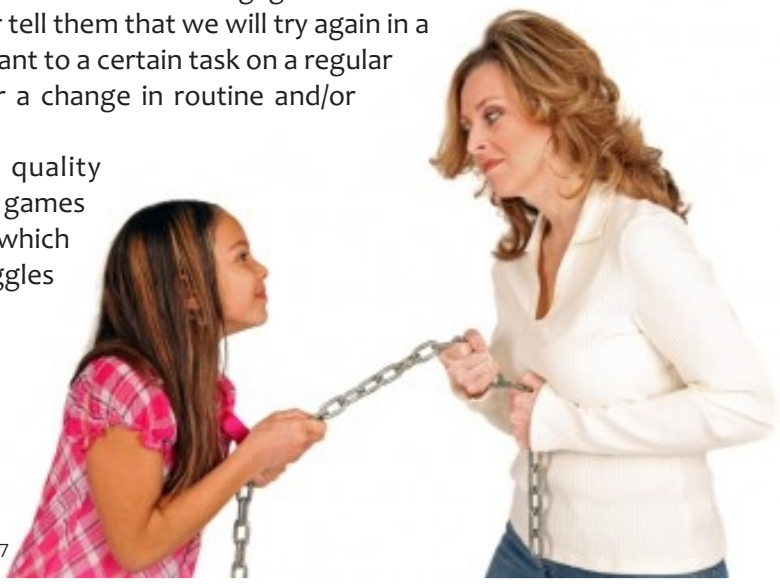
As with all supports and strategies around behaviour, maintaining positive relationships is foundational and prevention and early intervention are key.

Triggers for Power Struggles can Include:

- Feelings around the importance of the task, for example, the need for the child to put on a coat to go outside on a cold/rainy day.
- Time factors, for example, the need to leave the home to get to school on time.
- Perceived or actual pressure regarding what needs to get done, for example, brushing one's teeth.
- Transitions, especially from a preferred activity to a non-preferred activity.

Advice for Avoiding a Power Struggle:

- Know that stress is a natural human response to being met with resistance. Be kind to yourself around this.
- Disengage immediately if you find yourself in the initial stages of a power struggle—this can be done simply by stopping any further requests/instructions and remaining silent. Try to recognize the signs of a power struggle very early on in the exchange. Disengagement might also mean taking a few steps back while continuing to actively supervise the child from a reasonable distance of a few feet away. Take a deep breath.
- Remember that behaviour is communication and is not personal. A child being resistant to a particular activity is not a reflection of the caregiver's skills.
- Communicate with other adult family members around this. Ensure an aligned and coordinated team approach.
- Ensure a predictable routine as much as possible as a way to reassure the child and put them at ease. Outline the day with the child in the morning, or at bedtime the night before, using supportive language and positive terms.
- Offer frequent positive feedback and encouragement for desired behaviours.
- Anticipate, and plan around, times of the day and activities that tend to be challenging for the child. Work on designing strategies to make the experiences, and especially non-preferred tasks, as enjoyable as possible for the child, like playing music during the task.
- Remember *can't* versus *won't*. A child who is saying no is not able to engage in the task at this time. If that is the case, provide an A/B choice or tell them that we will try again in a few minutes (possibly set timer). If the child is resistant to a certain task on a regular basis, resulting in a pattern of behaviour, consider a change in routine and/or strategies around this.
- Most importantly, spend time participating in quality activities with your child every day, such as playing games and reading books. This builds a strong relationship which can help to reduce the likelihood of power struggles taking place.



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.

FAMILY DAY

Richmond community events celebrating Family Day

Family Day Fun in Richmond
February 14 - February 17, 2025 Various times at various Richmond Community Centres

Children's Art Festival - Richmond Cultural Centre
February 17, 2025 - 10am-4pm

Otosan - Gateway Theatre
February 9, 2025 - February 22, 2025
10am and 1pm

Come share a cup of coffee with the CEO!

Have you ever wanted to share some creative ideas, thoughts or suggestions with Aspire's CEO?

Here is your chance!

Come meet Shannon Crofton
to share a coffee and a conversation.

This is open to all individuals, staff and families.

March 12, 2025
2pm-4pm

At Richmond Caring Place: 170-7000 Minoru Blvd

RSVP if you can to 604-279-7040, or just drop in!

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Shannon Crofton | CEO

MEMBERSHIP

with

Aspire RICHMOND
Thriving. Connected. Happy.

Aspire Richmond is a non-profit, member driven organization. We operate in part, by contributions of your membership fees.

It is time to sign up or renew your membership today!

Membership fees:

Single Membership:	Family Membership (2 votes):
$10/year	$15/year
$100/lifetime	$150/lifetime

Sign up or renew your membership online today!

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