

June  
2026

# VIEWS



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### Small gesture with big impact

As Aspire geared up for its CARF Accreditation Survey at the end of April, Quantum delivered a thoughtful (and deliciously practical) touch to the preparations—Wellness Bags, commissioned by our Leadership Team.

Carefully put together with both comfort and last-minute survival in mind, these little bundles of encouragement had it all: chocolates for a quick mood boost, teas for a calming pause, and jam and honey for a touch of sweetness when it's needed most. And of course, tucked inside—beautiful thank-you notes, because appreciation should never be an afterthought.

A small gesture, perhaps—but sometimes it's the smallest things that carry us through the busiest days.

“Prepared with care, shared with heart—because even in the busiest moments, a little sweetness goes a long way.”

- Wioletta Okwieka-Reduch,  
Manager of Quantum LIFE Services



### Aspire Housing Survey

Earlier this year, Aspire sent out a Housing Needs Survey to better understand the housing needs, preferences, and future planning considerations of families who have adult children with developmental disabilities. Thank you to everyone who participated in this Survey. Your input reinforces a clear and urgent reality: many individuals continue to live at home longer than planned due to limited accessible and appropriate housing options.

At the same time, respondents highlighted what matters most: safe, affordable, and inclusive housing that supports independence, stability, and connection to community.

The summary on the next page provides a brief snapshot of what we heard. If you want to read a deeper dive of the results, visit the Aspire Richmond website - Resources page or [click here](#).

These insights will help guide Aspire's advocacy and planning as we work toward more responsive housing solutions for our community, while maintaining thriving, connected and happy lives.

Stay tuned for future focus groups to discuss housing in more depth.

-Shannon Crofton, CEO

## CARF Accreditation 2026



Aspire recently completed our CARF Accreditation survey in late April; an important review that helps ensure our services continue to meet high standards of quality, safety, and person-centered care.

Over three days, surveyors met with individuals, families, staff, and community partners, visited our programs and homes, and learned firsthand how we support people across our services.

What made this survey especially meaningful was the experience itself. The surveyors were engaged, knowledgeable, and deeply connected to the work. It truly felt like a peer review, as they understood our work because they have lived it themselves.

The overall experience felt peaceful and collaborative. We felt heard and seen, and it genuinely felt like the surveyors belonged here alongside us. We only wished there had been more time to spend together.

As part of the process, the surveyors also provided thoughtful recommendations and suggestions on where we can continue to improve, helping guide our ongoing commitment to quality and growth.

We will receive a formal CARF report in approximately one month. Following that, Aspire will develop and submit a plan outlining how we will respond to and implement the feedback received.

Our next CARF survey will take place in March or April 2029, and in the meantime, we remain committed to learning, growing, and continuously improving the supports we provide.

Most importantly, we are grateful to the individuals, families, and community partners who shared their voices. Your input is a vital part of the process and helps ensure we continue to evolve and strengthen our services.

- Sue Jones, Director of Quality Assurance and Respite Services



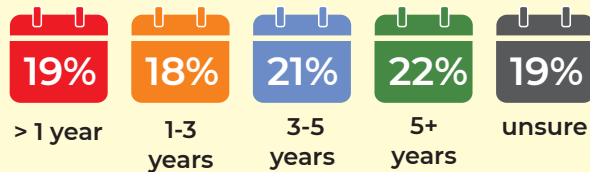
# Housing Survey 2026 Summary of Results

## Survey Respondents



77 Total  
86% Parents

## When is Housing Needed?



## Current Living Situation

83% live at home with family



<1% live independently

## Future Housing Preferences

- 44% 24/7 Staffed Home
- 42% Independent with support
- 34% Shared Living with Peers
- 31% Living with Family
- 31% Other/Unsure
- 10% Home Share



respondents selected all that applied

## Biggest Housing Challenges

- 38% Availability of Appropriate Housing
- 21% Financial Cost
- 21% Concerns about Safety
- 9% Lack of Appropriate Funding
- 6.5% Lack of Appropriate Housing Model
- 5% Other



respondents selected their single top priority

## Support Need Priorities

- 78% Social & Recreational Opportunities
- 69% Transportation Assistance
- 64% Medical/Health Support
- 57% Budgeting & Financial Management
- 42% Employment Supports



respondents selected all that applied

## Top Housing Priorities

- 45% Safety and Security
- 43% Proximity to Family
- 6.5% Access to Healthcare Services
- 4% Access to Public Transit
- 1.5% Community Inclusion Opportunities



respondents selected their single top priority

## Accessibility Priorities

- 66% Sensory-Friendly Spaces
- 36% Other
- 22% Accessible Vehicle/Parking
- 19.5% Wheelchair Accessibility
- 14.5% Special Adaptations
- 10% Adjustable Heights in Kitchens



respondents selected all that applied

## Biggest Worry About the Future

- 49.5% Quality of Care
- 24.5% Stability of Home
- 19.5% Affordability
- 4% Social Isolation
- 2.5% Other



respondents selected their single top priority

## Transition Planning

72% are either not working with CLBC on housing options, or not actively engaged in planning

# Avenues Visits BC & Alberta Guide Dogs

Recently, participants and staff from Avenues day program had the opportunity to visit BC & Alberta Guide Dogs for a very special and memorable outing.

The group spent the day learning about the incredible work that goes into training guide dogs and supporting individuals who rely on them for greater independence and mobility. During the visit, we were welcomed by staff and given the chance to observe two different training sessions.

The first session featured younger dogs that were early in their training journey. Participants enjoyed watching the puppies practice important foundational skills, including focus, obedience, and confidence-building activities. It was wonderful to see how patience, consistency, and positive reinforcement help shape the dogs as they begin learning their future roles.

The second session introduced us to older dogs who were further along in their guide dog training. Watching these highly skilled dogs respond to commands and navigate different situations was truly impressive. Participants and staff were fascinated by the strong partnership between the trainers and the dogs and gained a deeper appreciation for the dedication involved in the training process.

One of the highlights of the outing came after the demonstrations, when everyone had the opportunity to interact with and pet the dogs. There were plenty of smiles, laughter, and meaningful moments shared throughout the visit. The dogs brought so much joy to the group, and many participants talked about how calm, friendly, and intelligent they were.

Experiences like this provide valuable opportunities for learning, community connection, and new experiences. The visit also sparked great conversations about accessibility, inclusion, and the important role service animals play in supporting independence.

Avenues would like to thank the team at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs for welcoming us and providing such an engaging and educational experience. It was a day our participants and staff will remember fondly.

- Adam Warren, Manager of LIFE Avenues Day Service



# A Heart-Led Capstone: Richmond Student Brings Inclusive Design to Life

When passion meets purpose, meaningful change often follows. For Kylie, a high school student at Richmond Christian Secondary, that purpose was deeply personal—and it guided her toward a capstone project that bridged creativity, compassion, and community impact.

As part of her assignment, Kylie was tasked with designing and creating fidget toys for children to use as self-regulation tools. Rather than approaching the project as a purely academic exercise, Kylie grounded her work in lived experience. Her brother is on the Autism Spectrum, and through him she has seen firsthand how thoughtfully designed sensory tools can support focus, emotional regulation, and comfort.

“I wanted to create something that truly mattered,” Kylie shared through her actions and dedication. “Something that came from the heart.”

To help bring her idea to life, Kylie connected with Virginia, a consultant with the Supported Child Development (SCD) program at Aspire Richmond. Recognizing the thoughtfulness behind Kylie's project, Virginia supported her vision by inviting her to join a childcare visit for an opportunity to observe and interact with children, facilitating interviews with SCD consultants, and providing feedback during the process of creating her designs. The most exciting part was to help identify a meaningful way to test the effectiveness of the fidget toys in a real-world setting.

That opportunity came through Seedlings Daycare, where children could engage naturally with the tools Kylie had carefully crafted. Both Seedlings Daycare and the SCD program are operated by Aspire Richmond, making the collaboration a natural fit and a strong example of how interconnected programs can work together to support innovation and learning.

Kylie spent time at Seedlings observing how the children interacted with her fidget toys. She watched closely—taking note of how small hands explored textures, how attention shifted, and how the toys supported moments of calm and focus. This observation phase was a crucial part of her capstone, allowing her to reflect on what worked well and how thoughtful design can make a real difference in children's daily experiences.

What stood out most was not just the functionality of the toys, but the intention behind them. Each piece was created with care, empathy, and an understanding of diverse sensory needs. For the children at Seedlings, the fidget toys were engaging tools. For Kylie, they were a tangible way to give back to a community that reflects her own family's journey.

This project highlights the power of youth leadership, inclusive design, and community collaboration. Kylie's work serves as a reminder that meaningful learning extends beyond the classroom—and that when students are encouraged to lead with empathy, the results can ripple outward in powerful ways.

Aspire Richmond is proud to support partnerships like this one, where students, professionals, and programs come together to nurture understanding, inclusion, and growth. Kylie's capstone is more than a school project—it's a testament to what can happen when young people are empowered to turn compassion into action. We wish Kylie all the best and hope that one day she may consider Aspire Richmond as a place to work!

- Virginia Chiu, SCDP Consultant



# The 2026 Gill Award: Call for Nominations!

Aspire Employment Services is thrilled to launch the second annual search for the Gill Award for Excellence in Workplace Inclusion. This award recognizes outstanding companies that go above and beyond to create welcoming, supportive work environments where everyone can thrive.

## Remembering Jagbir Gill's Legacy

This special award honours the memory of Jagbir Gill, a remarkable young man who entered the workforce in 2019. Jagbir's incredible work ethic, quick wit, and dedication left an indelible mark, changing hearts and minds about the power of inclusive hiring.

## Celebrating Our Inaugural Winner

Last year, the first-ever Gill Award was proudly presented to Mothers Choice Products.



Mothers Choice beautifully demonstrated what is possible when an employer sees beyond a resume to recognize true potential. Over a nearly six-year partnership, they wove Jagbir into the very fabric of their company—welcoming him into their business family, attending Canucks games together, and supporting his Special Olympics journey. As one colleague shared, Jagbir truly changed lives by showing how an inclusive hire can make an outstanding contribution to corporate culture and business.



Mothers Choice receiving their award at the 2025 Aspire Employer's Appreciation event

## Do You Know an Inclusive Employer?

We know there are more incredible employers out there building workplaces rooted in mutual respect. If you know a business or organization leading the way in workplace inclusion, we want to hear about them! Help us celebrate their impact and keep Jagbir's legacy alive.

Let's continue to champion inclusive excellence together!

- Annabel Melnyk, Manager of Employment Services

Scan/Click here  
to Submit Your  
Nomination



# Home Share Adventures

David and Sheryl, part of the Aspire Home Share program, had a very successful trip to Powell River in April. David particularly enjoyed the multiple ferry rides, often standing at the front window to enjoy the "captain's eye view" of their travels.

They stayed at the Beach Gardens Resort, and Sheryl did some treasure hunting at the BC Ferries gift shop where she found a lovely pair of earrings and a fancy purple cap!

This was the couples first visit to Powell River, and they are excited for more adventures to come!

- Shawna Takahashi, Manager of Home Share



# Aspire Annual Outcomes Management - What We Learned in 2025

Every year, Aspire reviews how our programs and services are working. This helps us understand what we are doing well and where we can improve. It also helps make sure we are supporting children, youth, adults, and families in ways that truly meet their needs.

A big part of this process is listening. In 2025, many families shared their feedback through surveys. We conducted peer to peer interviews with more youth and adults than ever before. We also interviewed or surveyed other professionals that work with Aspire, such as child care centres, businesses, funders, contracted caregivers, and others. This is an important step to ensure everyone connected to Aspire has an opportunity to share their voice.

Aspire operates many programs supporting the community across the lifespan, and each program area has specific measurable indicators to gauge their effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility and the experience of service.

Across our children's programs, families continue to report very positive experiences.

The Infant Development Program supported 274 children and families, and satisfaction remains high. At the same time, wait times have slightly increased as more children need longer and more complex support.

The Supported Child Development Program worked with 503 children and 106 child care centres. The program continues to have a strong positive impact in child care settings, with high inclusion scores and strong feedback from families and centres.

Our Child Care programs - Seedlings and Treehouse early Learning Centre - are also doing very well, with high enrollment and satisfaction, although waitlists remain a challenge.

Youth Connections continued to provide meaningful opportunities for 28 youth. Activities are closely matched to each young person's interests, and families report very positive experiences. Demand for this program is higher than the number of available spaces, which means there is still a waitlist. New planning approaches are being introduced to further strengthen goal setting and person-centred supports.

For adults, Aspire's programs continue to grow. Life Services programs are supporting more individuals than ever, and a new program is planned for 2026 to increase capacity. Even with this growth, satisfaction remains high.

Outreach participants are building connections in the community and working toward goals in all areas of life; this program will continue to make improvements in how supports are documented.

Employment Services supported individuals in finding and maintaining work, with many people in jobs that pay above minimum wage and include workplace supports. Despite challenges in the job market, both participants and employers report positive experiences. The Richmond HandyCrew Cooperative introduced a new way of tracking outcomes in 2025. Results showed strong satisfaction from customers and members, along with steady work participation. This program will continue to strengthen how it tracks skills and training in the coming year.

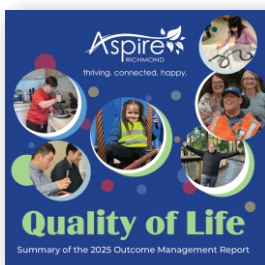
In our housing programs, individuals report feeling satisfied with their homes and supports. Home Share continues to demonstrate positive outcomes in stability, community participation, and goal achievement. Independent Living reported the need for improvements in documenting support and increasing direct support time. The Supported Living homes noted the need for strengthening documentation and communication planning.

The Respite program continues to provide effective and valued support to families, individuals, and caregivers. While there were some delays in matching caregivers this year, improvements in recruitment and screening are helping to strengthen the program overall.

Overall, the 2025 report shows that Aspire's programs are making a positive difference, with high satisfaction across many areas. The report helped us identify areas to focus on and make improvements.

Thank you to everyone who shared their feedback. Your input helps us learn, grow, and provide better support every year. If you didn't have the opportunity to respond to the survey, talk to an Aspire Program Manager and they can give you the survey for 2026!

- Kami Davis, Manager of Technology



## Want more information?

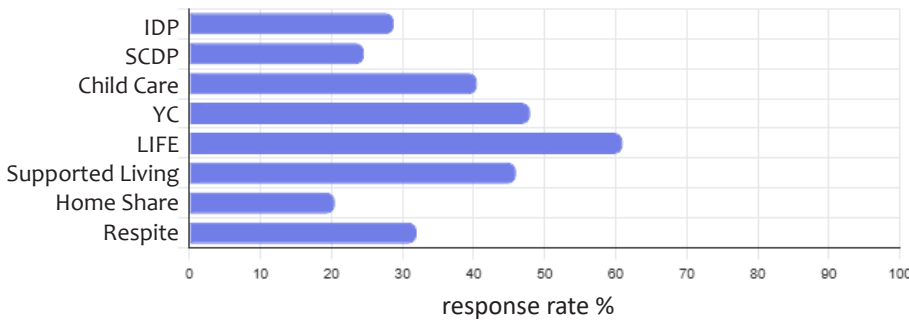
The detailed Outcome Management Report for 2025 can be found on the Aspire Richmond website, in the Resources section. In addition, there is also an easy-read version of the report focussing on the Quality of Life framework.



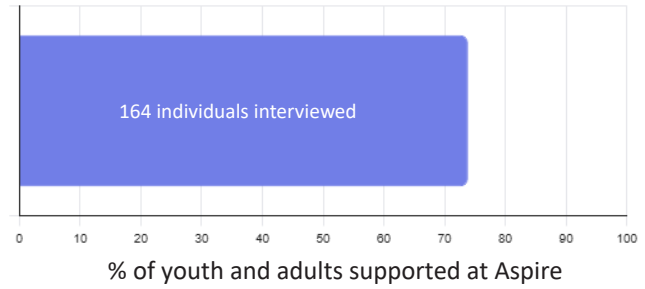
Aspire Richmond  
Resources

# Aspire Annual Outcomes Management - Demographic Information 2025

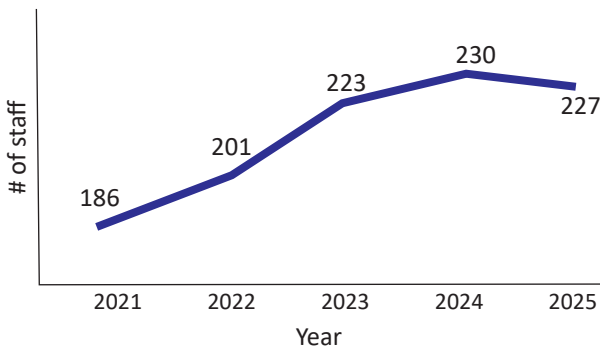
Family Survey Response Rate 2025



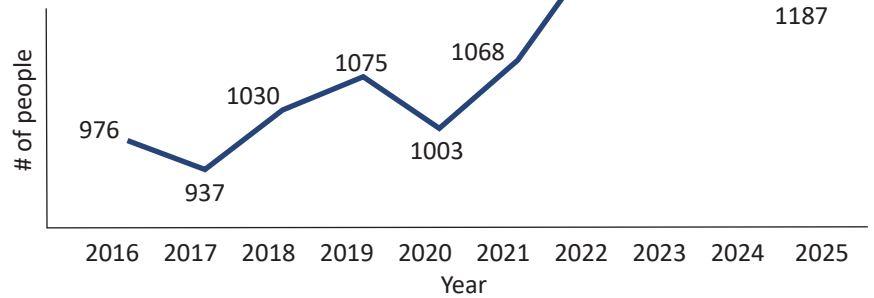
Supported Individuals Peer-to-Peer Interviews



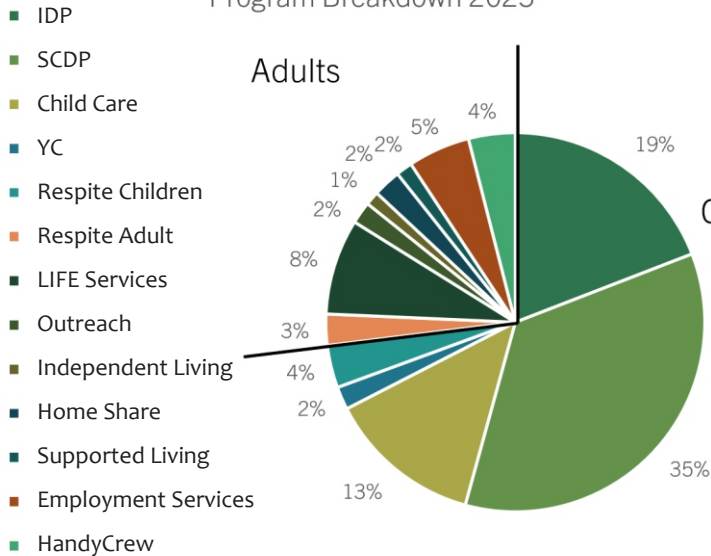
How many people work at Aspire?



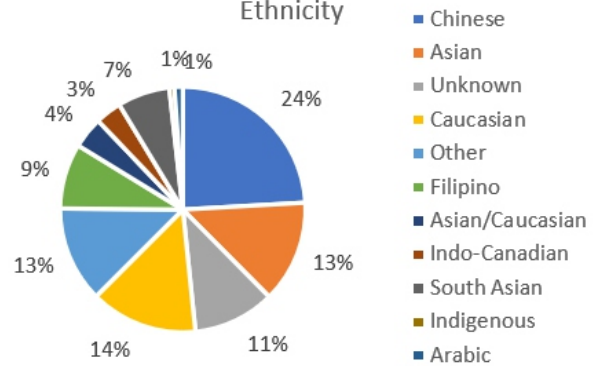
How many people participate in Aspire programs?



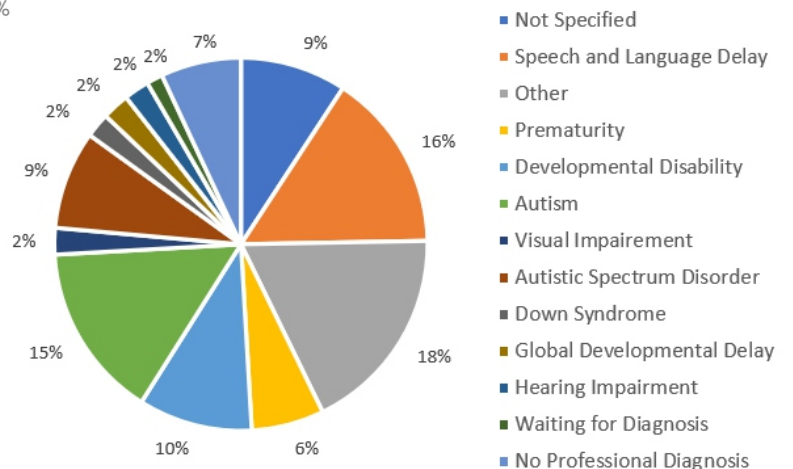
Program Breakdown 2025



Ethnicity



Primary Medical Diagnosis



In 2025, Aspire supported 1187 children and adults. Some individuals participate in more than 1 program at Aspire.

Scan/Click  
for more  
resources!



# Inclusive Education

## Getting the Most out of Summer Break for Parents and Children

Summertime is a wonderful time to enjoy outdoor activities with family. This article examines what Summer Break can look like for busy families and how parents/guardians can get the most out of their July and August months. This article is also intended as a reference for parents to ensure that their children are ready to return to school in September.

### Key Strategies

**Keep to a Schedule as Much as Possible:** This ensures that each day is predictable and follows a general routine so that parents do not have to create a new program for their children for every day of the summer. This also helps children to know what each day will bring, which helps with self-regulation.

**Embrace the Outdoors:** Fresh air does wonders for our well-being. This also builds in exercise time for children and adults alike. Time outside can be a walk of any length, a visit to a playground or park, or a picnic or other activity. Spending time outdoors boosts mood and reduces stress for everyone.

**Tech Break:** Limit social media and screen time for children to improve emotional self-regulation and sleep quality. All screens should be turned off at least one hour before bed and for at least one hour after wake-up in the morning.

**Physical Activity:** Plan weekend outings that represent enjoyable, low-stress exercise like swimming or hiking.

**Spend Some Time Doing Hobbies:** Engaging children in creative hobbies like painting or baking is fun and promotes a sense of accomplishment.

**Continue with Regular Expectations:** Continuing with regular expectations for children such as tidying their bedrooms or helping with the dinner dishes ensures consistency of routine and also helps to build a sense of shared responsibility and teamwork in the home. Research also informs us that cleaning one's living environment (and keeping it tidy) can also improve focus and reduce stress.

**Connect Socially:** Organize play dates for your child to spend time with friends; take turns hosting/supervising a small group. This gives parents and guardians a break and keeps young people socially engaged.

**Regular Bedtimes:** Maintain the same sleep schedule in the summer that your children typically have during the school year. Sleep schedules should be the same on weekdays as weekends.

**Pace Yourself:** Remember that Summer Break is a marathon, not a sprint. It's important for parents/guardians to ensure that they are taking time for themselves, as well.

**Avoid Over-Planning:** Keep your schedule flexible to allow for spontaneous things to happen.

- Carrie McLellan-Haqq, Director of Children Services and member of the Inclusive Education committee

*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 are interested in becoming a member of the committee, reach out to Carrie [cmclellan@aspirerichmond.com](mailto:cmclellan@aspirerichmond.com)*



Wishing you a wonderful, safe summer!





## Sun Run 2026

Team Aspire was back on the roads this year to take on the challenge of this year's Vancouver Sun Run! A total of 43 team members set their early alarms and made the journey to downtown Vancouver to compete in the 2.5km and 10km races. It was another glorious day in the sun for the race, which weaves through iconic stretches of downtown Vancouver, wrapping up at BC Place for post-race festivities. The training started well before race day this year – everyone put in the work to make sure their body and mind would be ready for the challenge. We are so proud of everyone who raced this year – your medals are well deserved! Training for 2027 starts now!

- Matthew Taylor, Outreach Specialist



## Fascination Creatures - are you brave enough?

It's never too late to learn! Quantum recently hosted a visit from Mike's Critters, and the room was full of excitement. Not only did we get the chance to hold and pet a variety of fascinating creatures, we also learned so much about them along the way. A fun and unforgettable experience for everyone involved!

- Wioletta Okwieka-Reduch, Manager of Quantum LIFE Services

Ryan attends one of Aspire's LIFE day services, and also has a job with Handycrew. When Handycrew was short staffed, Ryan had the opportunity not only to get extra work hours but also got to work on one of his personal goals to build something. He helped put together some furniture for one of our programs.

Thank you Ryan!

- Lisa Sarai,  
Manager of Synergy LIFE Services



Antony had an unforgettable night at the Journey concert at the Pacific Coliseum in April.

Surrounded by music, lights, and energy, he danced the night away and loved every moment.

- Shawna Takahashi,  
Manager of Home Share



HandyCrew held a shredding event on May 16th. Three members actively participated in the event, working together to shred approximately 116 pounds of paper dropped off by community members.

The event provided a valuable service, helping individuals safely dispose of confidential documents. It also offered an opportunity for members to build practical skills, contribute to a meaningful activity, and engage directly with the community.

Overall, the event highlighted the positive impact of collaboration, community engagement, and skill-building in action.

- Katherine Ollson, Manager of HandyCrew



## Aspire welcomes a new Supported Living Home

In late April, three young men began an exciting new chapter as they moved into their new home.

As lifelong friends, it was a special moment to take this next step together, building a home filled with connection, laughter, and shared experiences. With the support of their families, friends, and the Aspire team, they are settling in and making the space their own.

We're so excited to see what's ahead for this trio — a future full of friendship, fun, and new memories.

- Ann-Marie Prendergast, Director of Supported Living



## Celebrating Earth Day!

On April 22, 2026, many people from across Aspire gathered at Pendleton House to celebrate Earth Day 2026.

Our gathering began at the front of the house with planting of 2 new Japanese Maple trees.

The Pendleton community invited us to share snacks and drinks to celebrate this special occasion.

The party then moved into the garden part of the backyard where several planters were prepared for seeds. Many of the individuals were excited to plant seeds - zucchini, beets, cucumbers, beans, chards, and other varieties that will soon be harvested. The event was very fun, community-oriented, and welcomed many of us to the hospitality of the Pendleton home.

The consensus was to make it into an annual event of celebrating nature and each other.

- Martin Grund, Manager of Facilities and Fleet



From Picnic Blankets  
to Game Board Battles!  
Join us for our annual



Wednesday  
Sept 2, 2026  
4pm-7pm



Eat! Play! Laugh!

Brighthouse Park  
7000 Minoru Blvd  
Richmond

Registration  
will begin in  
July - check your  
email!



[www.aspirerichmond.com](http://www.aspirerichmond.com)  
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## MEMBERSHIP with



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We operate in part, by contributions  
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Single Membership: \$10/year, \$100/lifetime  
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