

THE RIPPLE 2024

AISH INCREASES IN 2024

In 2024, the amount of money given to people on AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) is going up. Starting from January 1, 2024, it will increase by 4.25%. So, if you receive AISH, you will get an extra \$76.

This is the fourth time it's gone up in the last ten years. The first increase happened in April 2019, and it went up by \$400 at that time. In 2019, they started adjusting AISH to match the rising cost of living. They did it again in 2022 to keep up with inflation.

People have mixed feelings about this latest increase. While it's always good to get more money, some think the amount isn't enough. With the cost of living going up in the province, an extra \$76 doesn't solve all the problems. Many AISH recipients have to be really good at budgeting just to cover their basic needs. Food and rent prices keep going up, and there's often not much money left over for anything fun.

A report from the Canadian food bank gave Alberta a "D" grade in 2023 when it comes to poverty. From 2019 to 2022, there was a 73% increase in people using food banks in Alberta. People with low incomes usually spend more than half of their money on things like transportation, internet, and groceries, leaving little for anything else.

Housing costs have also gone up, and there's a shortage of safe and affordable places to live. This has pushed some people into homelessness or into homes that don't meet their needs. Just having a place to live doesn't mean everything is okay.

Now, let's talk about how they decide to increase AISH. Every year, the government checks the cost of living in Alberta to see if they should give more money to AISH recipients. They use something called the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Alberta, which tracks how prices change for things like food, housing, and transportation.

If they can't use the CPI, they work with the Minister responsible for the Financial Administration Act to figure out the increase. To calculate it, they compare the average prices of things from October 1 to September 30 of the current year with the prices from the same period in the previous year. The percentage change in prices is then used to adjust AISH benefit amounts.



Meet the Writers

Annette Melnychuk

Annette was born on January 7th, 1973, in Elsa, Yukon. She's lived in different places like Quesnel, BC, and Lethbridge. Annette enjoys doing various activities such as taking walks, doing crafts, coloring, and sewing. She's especially excited about her new sewing machine. When she's not busy with her hobbies, she enjoys watching YouTube videos and spending quality time cuddling with her cat.

Last year, Annette joined the Ripple newsletter team, and she has proven to be a valuable member. Being part of Ripple and SRSAN is important to her because it gives her a platform to support important causes, assist others, and be a voice for those who might not have one. Annette is also using these opportunities to meet new people, work on her shyness, and make new friends.

Looking ahead to 2024, Annette has some goals in mind. She wants to learn sign language and hopes to find a job. She's already taken steps towards this by volunteering at the Salvation Army as a greeter and at the food bank, where she helps prepare meals – a perfect fit for someone who loves cooking.



If you happen to be around the Salvation Army, consider stopping by to say hello to Annette. Your friendly greeting would surely bring a smile to her face!

Meet the Writers

Cheryl

Meet Cheryl , a lifelong learner from Lethbridge, Alberta. She's lived in Lethbridge her whole life and loves it. She has some interesting hobbies and is part of a special program called Nova. Let's learn more about her.

Cheryl really enjoys riding horses.

She's a big fan of learning. Not just in school, but she loves reading and discovering new things all the time. She thinks learning never stops, and that's a great attitude!

Music is another big part of Cheryl's life. She loves singing and making music. Her singing voice is beautiful, and she loves sharing her music with others.

Cheryl is a member of the Nova Program which is a group that puts on performances for the community and she brings her love for singing and telling stories to the group.

Joining the Ripple community was important to Cheryl. She wants to share her love for writing and stories with more people. She believes that stories have the power to connect us, make us think, and bring us closer together. Through Ripple, she hopes to inspire and create a sense of togetherness in her community and beyond. Stay tuned for some of her creative writing in our creative corner.





CORNER

4 biggest winners by Cheryl

Once there were four amazing girls and the four needed roommates. One of the girls Carissa Jewels had decided to put out a note on Instagram to make this request go viral. Immediately Carissa received 3 responses, she was astounded. Many people had responded to the add.

One summer day Carissa had an interview with Skyline, a company who were known for hiring painters and drawers. Carissa was moved because her talents happen to be mostly drawing, her painting skills were not the best as she was a beginning artist.

Skyline had no problem. Coloring was also a part of the job.

Shawna Blue was the first to answer the add for a roommate. Cheryl was next. Cheryl knew her Cousin Kara also needed a place to live so when Cheryl went to look at the place, she brought Kara with her.

Shawna Blue's life achievement was to become a doctor. Not just a regular doctor but a surgeon. For Shawna she must finish her college and aim for a degree. After graduation she found a full-time job and is now a full-time surgeon making \$ 350,000 a year.

Carissa and Shawna hit it off right away. Cheryl was the second person to answer the roommate add. Cheryl was a musician as well as a singer and a dancer. It is a wish for Cheryl to become a professional Musician.

Cheryl had been struggling for a while to make her dreams come true. She continued to take gig after gig to help smooth out her life and to put some money away to get back on her feet.

In the meantime, she will take any jobs that she can. Cheryl was down on her luck when she saw the add for the roommate which help turn things around and she became Carissa and Shawna's Roommate.

Next Cheryl had recorded a song and decided to take the tape station to station. Cheryl's life was about to change. The song she had worked on for days and nights had paid off. Producers that heard the song wanted to record it in the studio. She was contacted by a company called Woodstock who wanted to record the song. Once the song was released it made it to the charts and after a week it went to number 1.

Kara was in line to become the 4th roommate. Carissa Jewels had agreed that Kara Lynn would be able to move in as soon as possible. Kara is a novelist; Kara needs to be writing a book to be a real professional. Kara is a very dynamite writer. Let's head into Kara's future. Kara has an editor that she works with. Her name is Sonja Banks. Sonja works with Kara and gives Kara ideas and writing suggestions. On November 23, 2024 Kara finished her book and it was a success. After the book was edited and released it was a hit. Now Kara is a professional novelist. Just like Jackie Collins and Michael Creighton. Kara's first book is called Secret lives. It has made \$750,000. The publisher asked to change her name from Kara Crying Head to Kara Lynn Nightingale.

Changing her name to Nightingale would be easy for customers to recognize and would bring in more money. Kara's Career was about to skyrocket.

The four roommates, Carissa Jewels, Shawna Blue, Cheryl Payton and Kara Nightingale all are now living highly successful lives, living comfortably and their lives are rich and fulfilling.

CREATIVE

WAYS TO KEEP YOUR HEART HEALTHY

By Ed Zaizer

NUTRITION

Food is very important to keeping your heart healthy. Eating more fruits and vegetables and less sugar is a first step.

Keep your meals colorful which will help to make sure you are getting enough vegetables

NUTRITION

making sure to have a balanced diet can be hard. Take time to find out some good recipes before you go grocery shopping to have the food on hand you need.

EXERCISE

Staying active is very important. keep that blood pumping by skipping, weightlifting, swimming or just going for a walk.

MENTAL HEALTH

Taking time to reduce stress can keep your heart healthy. Try some deep breathing or yoga . Talk to someone when you are struggling.

TYPES OF EXERCISE

Cardio and weights are both important to keep your heart healthy. Skippling, Walking and Swimming are all great types of exersize

MENTAL HEALTH

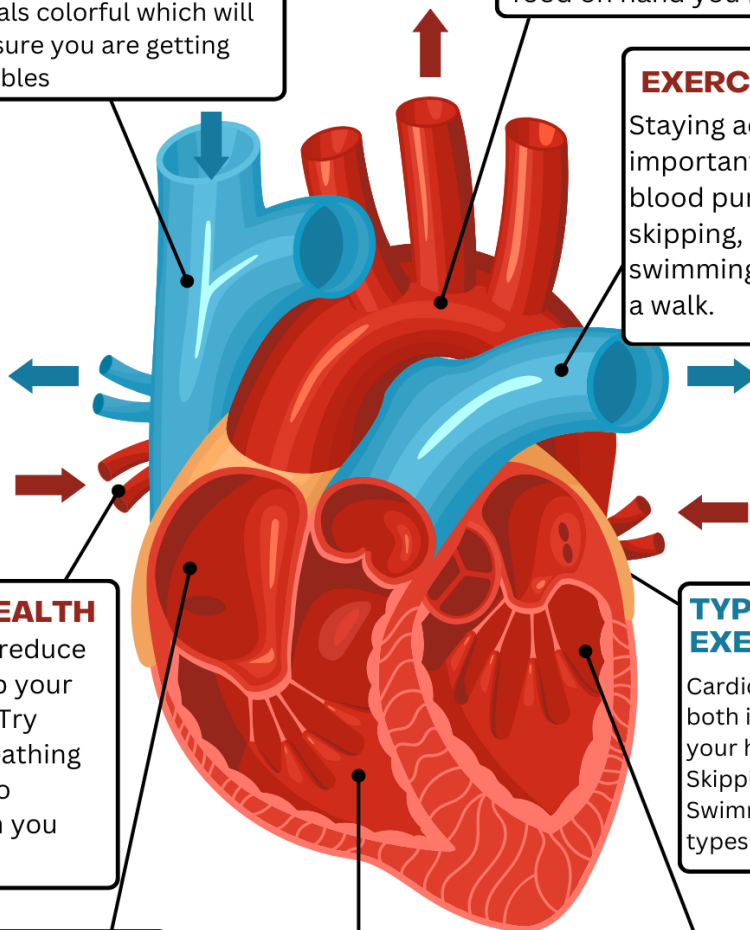
Taking time to reduce stress can keep your heart healthy. Try some deep breathing or yoga . Talk to someone when you are struggling.

EXERCISE

Start slow and build up your routine. Slow and steady will make it easier to stick with a plan. HAVE FUN!!!

LAUGHTER

Laughter is a great way to reduce stress and lighten the load on your heart. Watch a funny movie or laugh with your firends



TIPS FOR BEATING THE WINTER BLUES

BY JOHN KELLER



it's okay to feel
your feelings

Mind over matter

Winter blues are more common than you might think. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that people in northern climates usually experience during the fall and winter months, when there's less sunlight. I'd like to share some ways to practice self-care when feeling the winter blues, which you can also use to help keep them at bay. Taking these steps doesn't mean you won't ever feel sad, but they will assist you in moving through the symptoms.

Don't be afraid to feel the feelings

Emotions need motion. When we stuff feelings down or try to stop them, they can come back tenfold. Have you ever tried keeping a beach ball underwater? When you release it, it comes back up with so much force. So, feel those feelings. The only way out is through and let the tears flow. Researchers say that, when we cry, we release "feel-good endorphins" that help us manage pain (both physical and mental). While it may not always feel like it, the old saying, "this too shall pass," is true. If you start getting concerned that you're crying too much (that is, more than usual) or can't seem to stop, talk to your doctor.

Take care of your physical and mental well-being

During winter, we may feel the impacts of getting less sunlight. The sun's ultraviolet rays help us produce vitamin D, which is vital for our mental health. The fastest way to come back to the here and now and disengage from the mind chatter is to "stop and smell the roses." Literally. Go outside, take a deep breath and feel the breath entering your body. What does it smell and feel like? Does it freeze your nostril hairs? Is it crisp, wet, warm? Feel it move into your belly, then give it a deep-barreled exhale. Now pick up some fresh snow, taste it, feel it, throw it using all your senses. Next, lay down and swing those arms to make a snow angel! Grab a carrot, a few twigs, roll that snow and make a snowman. Paying attention to our senses helps bring us back to simpler times, come back to the basics and, after a few deep breaths, feel a lift in our spirit! I know it may sound trivial but connecting to your five senses (and childhood) provides a fresh perspective and can-do wonders to help lighten the winter blues.

Get some sleep

Don't underestimate the power of sleep. It impacts our whole self: mind, body, and spirit. To maximize your healing zzzs, follow these healthy sleep suggestions: Keep a consistent sleep schedule. Get up at the same time every day, even on weekends or during vacations. Set a bedtime that's early enough to get at least seven hours of sleep. Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy. If you don't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get up till you feel ready for sleep. Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. Use your bed only for sex and sleep. Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing. Keep the room at a comfortable, cool temperature. Limit exposure to bright light in the evening. Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime. Watch what you eat and drink before bedtime. Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet. If you're hungry at night, eat a light, healthy snack, not a heavy meal. Avoid caffeine in the late afternoon or evening (perhaps have chamomile or lemon balm tea instead). Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime to avoid those too-early morning trips to the bathroom.



TIPS FOR BEATING THE WINTER BLUES

BY JOHN KELLER



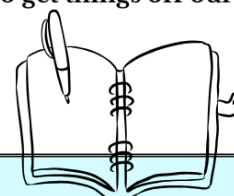
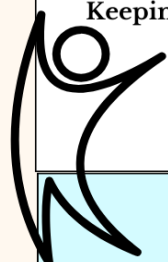
Practice Gratitude

Put your pen to paper and write. No matter what is happening, there is always something to be grateful for. Acknowledging situations, people, and things creates an energy and will attract more of that gratefulness. Not sure where to start? I feel grateful for my breath, waking up, warmth, my bed. Being grateful for waking up reminds me of my Auntie Tish, who we just lost to cancer last fall. When I went to visit her on her death bed, she said, "When I wake up, I give thanks that I didn't wake up dead!" It's a funny statement, yet so profound.

Perhaps you might be grateful for what has brought you to this moment. Every. One. Of. Us. has gone through stuff that has led us to this time and place. Remind yourself of the times you've come through hardships. What did you do then? What resources or people did you rely on? What skills did you develop: resilience, persistence, determination, grace, patience?

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves of what helped us before (and could also help us now). I can recall a time I had the flu, and I remember thinking, "How am I even going to get up, let alone go to work." Fast forward a few weeks and someone reminded me of the week I was off sick with that bad flu. Ah, I had forgotten, because when we feel good, we forget what it's like to feel bad.

Keeping such a journal is also beneficial for our mental health. It's a wonderful way to get things off our chest and a great reminder of our experiences and reflections.



Engage in activities that bring you joy

To me this means taking care of yourself and being a top priority in your own life. Some might think that's being selfish, but when you're in care of yourself you're better equipped to manage life's challenges and be there for others.

Self-care is also very individualized. It's not just about bubble baths, spas, and exercise. It includes things like healthy boundaries, healthier food choices, making those medical appointments, decluttering your space, creating a budget, calling a friend, and so on. I like to do things inspirationally (I refer to them as INSPIRED actions). The key is finding something that brings you joy and allows you to be your authentic self.

What are you thinking?

Take a good look at what you are actually thinking. What is your internal dialogue? Would you say these things to a friend or loved one? Are you your own worst enemy? Are your thoughts healthy for you, or are they making you unhealthy? It's easier to get into bad mental habits during winter's short days and long nights. I invite you to be mindful of the things you are saying to yourself, and challenge negative thinking if it starts to develop. For strategies on changing negative thinking, look to self-help books and to cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which is a great support for developing healthier thoughts. CBT is based on the idea that our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are interconnected, and that changing one can change the others.

Support Superstars

Here at Ripple, we want to give special recognition to our fantastic support team. This month, we want to express our sincere thanks to Lana Seebeck. Lana does many important things: she helps lots of people in her job, and she's also a dedicated coach for bowling and Bocce ball in the Special Olympics. Lana always sticks with us to make sure we reach our goals and get what we need. She's reliable, smart, and a great team player. Most importantly, Lana knows how to make work and coaching enjoyable. Lana, we really value your support! Thank you for everything you do!



If you have a support staff that you would like to recognize send an email to advocacy@saipa.org. Please include the name of the person and a short description of why you want to recognize this person and contact information for the nominating person.



SRSAN BOARD 2024

We would like to say thank you to all of the board directors that have been with the SRSAN board over the last year

Keelae Blackwood and Kassy Heine thank you for your hard work and dedication over the past year.

We would also like to congratulate the new board members who were voted in January 24, 2024

Edmund Zaizer is our new CO-Chair, Clinton Mulongo and Annette Melnychuk will be joining us as the new board directors.

Chair– Lonnie Bull Shields

Liasion– Kelly Tower

Secretary– Randy Chandler

Director– Melodie Scout

Treasurer– Melissa Vanderveen

2024 SRSAN Meetings

March 21– Crowsnest Pass

May 22nd—Medicine Hat

July 17th– Brooks

September 13th– Citizen Walk About

October 24th-Taber

November 20th– Lethbridge



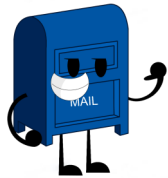
February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Groundhog Day	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Super Bowl	12	13	14 	15 National flag of Canada day	16	17
18	19 family day	20	21	22	23	24 Full Moon
25	26	27	28	29 LEAP Day		

March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 disability support worker recognition day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 International Women's Day	9
10 Daylight savings time	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 	18	19	20	21 SRSAN – Crowsnest pass	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 Good Friday	30
31 Easter Sunday						

Tell Us What You Think



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**The Ripple newsletter is created with
pride for you by the following Self
Advocates:**

**John, Annette, Brady, Ed, Kevin, Brielle,
Melodie, Landon, Shannon, Cheryl,
Shawna,**

Carissa, Danielle and Gracie.