

# What's happening in the community?

## March 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Free Community Yoga Lethbridge	3	4 Lunch & Listen Global Drums Lethbridge	5
6	7	8	9 SRSAN Meeting: Taber Free Community Yoga Lethbridge	10 Advocating for Change Lecture Lethbridge	11	12
13	14	15	16 Free Community Yoga Lethbridge	17	18 Generations Gala Lethbridge	19 Project Connect Lethbridge
20	21	22	23 Free Community Yoga Lethbridge	24	25	26 Black History Month Celebration City Hall Lethbridge
27 Black History Month Celebration Galt Museum Lethbridge	28	29	30 Free Community Yoga Lethbridge	31 Nomina- tions close for Clarence Marsh award and Ally Recognition Award		



### Mission

SRSAN teaches people with disabilities to advocate on behalf of themselves and others. We are a united voice which promotes equality, opportunities, and inclusion for us, by educating the community about our dreams and what we can achieve.

## Self-advocacy changes lives!

*By: The Newsletter Crew*

Here at The Ripple, we are all self-advocates. To us, advocacy means standing up for your rights and making your voice heard. You can advocate for yourself, or someone can advocate for you.

We are part of SRSAN; SRSAN is a group of people with disabilities who learn to speak up for themselves to get what they need. SRSAN helps us to be more confident in ourselves and have more confidence in the community. Being part of a group of people who face the same challenges helps us feel like we're not alone.

Some challenges people with disabilities might have include transportation, finding jobs, finding a place to live, and finding good people in our lives to support us. People with disabilities can also be bullied because they are different.



These are the kinds of things we need to speak up about. If we don't speak up, people don't think people with disabilities have a voice. If we don't speak up, other people can make choices about our lives and we don't get a say in what happens.

We have the right to a normal life: doing things like going on a date, asking questions about relationships and having our rights respected. Speaking up helps us do this.

When we speak up, it gives us confidence, self-esteem, and it makes us proud. Speaking up for ourselves makes us feel empowered because we are making decisions about our lives.

Speaking up changes people's attitudes about people with disabilities. It shows people that we don't let our disability stop us.

**Our advice to self-advocates:** Don't give up! Change might be slow, but when it happens, **YOUR VOICE** could be the reason why!

# Advocacy in Action: Access-a-ride

By: The Newsletter Crew

Getting around the city is important. Lots of people use Access-a-ride to do that. We interviewed a self-advocate and the manager of Access-a-ride for this article because the city extended the hours for Access-a-ride.

Who can use Access-a-ride? People with disabilities and anyone who might have trouble using transit. Access-a-ride used to run from 6:45 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., but now they run until midnight.

This happened because Ryan Gerstenbuhler, a self-advocate in Lethbridge, spoke up to city council. Ryan uses a wheelchair, and that's why he needs to take Access-a-ride. Ryan can use transit when the weather is good, but when it's bad, he has trouble getting to the bus stop. Ryan didn't think it was fair that Access-a-ride shut down sooner than the city bus.



So, he decided to speak up. Ryan did this by writing a letter to council and showing them pictures of the inaccessible bus stop. Ryan also told them he had a dangerous situation trying to get through the snow and ice. Ryan made a presentation to council and let them know what happened. Because Ryan spoke up, the city extended the hours in December.

We asked Ryan if he was nervous to speak up. He told us he was nervous at first, but felt like it was too important not to say anything. Ryan was unable to do fun things in the community, like going to a late movie or late supper. Now, he can.

Access-a-ride manager, Philippe Guerra, told us that they are trying to make booking Access-a-ride easier. You can book 7 days in advance or 2 weeks in advance. He told us now, people can book on the same day. Philippe told us they are also working on a way for people to book online, but the website isn't ready yet.

Ryan says speaking up is important to him and it makes him feel good. **He encourages everyone to use the new Access-a-ride hours so the city sees how important it is.** If you need to book Access-a-ride, call 403-329-6464 Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Ryan won a Lethbridge Inclusion Award Dec. 3 for speaking up to make Access-a-Ride better. He won in the champion category for being someone with a disability who is making a difference. **Above: Ryan at the awards ceremony with Ross, the person who nominated him.**

**Congratulations, Ryan!**



# What's happening in the community?

## February 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Nominations open for Clarence Marsh award and Ally Recognition	2	3 Winter Walk Day Lethbridge	4	5	6 Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament
7	8	9 Footprints in the Landscape Speaker Series Lethbridge	10	11	12	13 2016 Alberta Winter Games Medicine Hat
14 Valentine's Day Alberta Winter Games Medicine Hat	15 Family Day Alberta Winter Games Medicine Hat	16 Alberta Winter Games Medicine Hat	17	18	19	20 Pow Wow International Lethbridge
21 Pow Wow International Lethbridge	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Right To Love Lethbridge Board Game meet up Taber					

This newsletter raises awareness about self-advocacy, inclusion and community. It also provides information on how to be a better self-advocate, how to speak up and how to help other advocacy groups and their friends. If you have information, events or ideas you would like to see in the newsletter, please contact us!



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Email:  
Coming soon!



## What a song can say *By Shannon Kehler*

*The song: Better when I'm Dancing: Meghan Trainor*

**“When you finally let go and you slay that solo  
Cause you listen to the music, sing , oh, ey, oh  
Cause you’re confident, babe  
And you make your hips sway  
We knew that you could do it, sing oh, ey, oh”**

When he is dancing, he feels he can do anything. Let loose and you can do anything you set your mind to. When people feel motivated, they can do lots together. If we have confidence, we can go down the path together and feel the power of accomplishment. You should be proud that you accomplished what you set out to do and showed others!



## What happened at the SRSAN meeting *By Gwen Rowley*

This is Gwen, your ripple reporter letting you know what happened at the Jan. 28 SRSAN meeting. The meeting happened at Hillcrest church in Medicine Hat.

Alicia Visser from Lethbridge Association for Community Living gave a presentation about the Registered Disability Savings Plan to help people with disabilities save for the future. This was very informative. If you want to know more about this, you can call Alicia at 403-327-2911.

We had reports from CORE, SASH, Taber Special Needs and PEAK and others who told us what was happening in the community.

We were also asked: “If you could talk to your MLA, what would you ask?” Some of the questions were about: transit, AISH, and whether government can be more flexible to change and respond more quickly.

Two new members were voted in to the SRSAN and SAIPA boards. Sandy Layton is on the board for SRSAN and SAIPA. John Steer was voted on to the SRSAN board. The next meeting will be in Taber on March 9. Location to be decided.



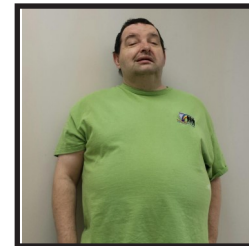
**It’s that time of year again! From Feb. 1—March 31, SAIPA and SRSAN are accepting nominations for the Clarence Marsh Memorial Award and the Ally Recognition Award. For more information, visit [www.saipa.info](http://www.saipa.info). Winners will be announced in May 2016!**

# Who’s behind The Ripple?

## Meet our crew!



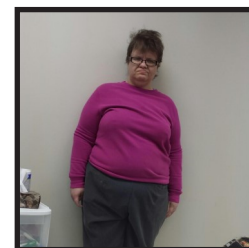
**Nicole MacDonald:** I have been a part of the newsletter since September 2015. I am an active member of my community, doing activities such as guide leader, and Special Olympic athlete. I’m excited to be part of the newsletter crew because it helps me learn new things. I am originally from Manitoba; I moved to Alberta two years ago.



**Peter Langridge:** I am 43 years old and enjoy being involved with SRSAN. During the week, I work hard completing my recycling route at the University of Lethbridge. I enjoy bowling, power lifting and making phone calls. I am very social and enjoy meeting new friends. I like to show my community what I am capable of. I am passionate about advocacy and want to help educate the surrounding community.



**Gwen Rowley:** I’m excited about being part of The Ripple because I’ve never done anything like this before. I’m up for the challenge! I grew up in Nova Scotia, moved to Alberta and found my true love. We raised two boys, Ben and Chris and the rest is history!



**Shannon Kehler:** I have worked for the Ripple for a long time and write articles. I live in Lethbridge and like working on the computer and hanging out with friends.

**Katlyn Schmidt:** I have been with the Ripple about two months. I’m really good friends with Shannon, who is on the Ripple team as well. I like to watch TV, go bowling and swim. I also like animals. I went to Catholic Central High School and live in Lethbridge with my dad.



**The Ripple did the story Access-a-ride thanks to a tip from PEAK Vocational Services. If you have a story or idea for the Ripple, let us know! Our contact information is on page 7.**

# Right To Love *By Gwen Rowley*

In February, Cupid draws his bow and love is in the air. The Ripple decided to write an article on the right to love for people with disabilities.

There is a Right To Love Group in Calgary. Some of the things they believe are: people can love whoever they want; people can have support for the choices they make about love, sex and relationships; and people have the right to decide whether they want to have a baby or not.

Lethbridge will be starting their own Right To Love group on February 29. They will be meeting on Mondays at the SAIPA office from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The leaders of the group will be Anna from SAIPA and Tannia from Arches (formerly Lethbridge HIV Connection). To keep the group small, there will be a maximum of 15 people in a group.



The group is being started so that people with disabilities have a safe place to talk about sex and sexuality. No questions are off limits. The leaders of the group are there just to steer the group in the direction they want to take. There are no set lessons. The group will learn from each other's experiences and stories.

What makes a healthy relationship? Relationships are as varied as the cloud patterns in the sky, but we do know that in every relationship, there are some things that are the same. These include: both being on the same page, supporting each other, allowing growth in your partner, respecting each other's boundaries, and communication. These things are all important, but every couple is different.

I interviewed mothers who have children with developmental disabilities to get their take on The Right To Love group. In this issue, we talked to Alicia about her son, George. George has autism.



She said talking about sex and sexuality was very controversial, but that this group can help to have discussions about it. Her dream for George is that he can talk to her about any topic he wants. Her dream for George is that he has a loving relationship one day. **For more information on Right To Love Lethbridge, call Anna at 320-1515 or Tannia at 328-8186.**

***This article has touched on a few things about relationships, but The Ripple isn't going to stop there! Next issue, we will feature more on the Right To Love, including an interview with parent Pat Robb!***

# Respect: give it to get it! *By Peter Langridge*

Having your rights and needs respected is a very important part of self-advocacy. Getting respect is important, but being able to show respect can be just as important. If you can show respect, people will see you as a caring and capable citizen!

## How to be respectful in the community:

**Listen:** We want people to listen to us and hear what we have to say. But, it is important to be able to listen to others as well. Don't interrupt people when they are talking; wait until they have finished talking before you start.



**Notice body language:** Along with their words, pay attention to a person's actions, and the sound of their voice. This can tell you a lot: whether they have time to talk, if they are in a rush to go somewhere, or just how they're feeling.



**Be on time:** Whether you have an important meeting to get to, or you're just meeting a friend for coffee, being on time matters. It shows that you care and take promises seriously. If you can't go or are running late, make sure you let the person know so you don't keep them waiting.



**Use your manners:** Saying simple things like "please" and "thank you" can show people you are polite and appreciate their actions.



**Don't judge:** There is often a lot more to people than what we see on the outside. The ideas we have about people can sometimes be wrong and hurtful. Get to know someone before getting ideas about who they are.



**The bottom line: Treat others the way you want to be treated!**



## Movie Review: I Kissed a Vampire

Trey is not your average teenager after befriending a new exchange student who viscously bit him. Slowly he realizes it was more than a bite. She had transformed him into a vampire with fangs and an urge for blood. Now he struggles with being around his girlfriend: every time she comes around, the thirst gets stronger. How can he control his hunger?

**RATING: 10 out of 10:** I thought the movie was a great laugh and have watched it several times now. Definitely a favourite! I recommend this for everyone.