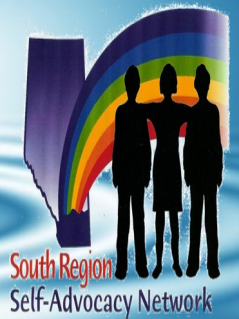



The Ripple


MAY / JUNE 2017




MEET THE NEW SRSAN EXECUTIVE



Kevin Layton: I am the new Chair for the SRSAN Executive. I oversee meetings and make sure that they run smoothly and on time. I also make sure that everyone else is doing their jobs. I started out as a non voting member of SRSAN, supporting my wife. Eventually I became a voting member. I decided that if I was going to be a part of SRSAN I may as well go big, so I ran for Chair. The voters had faith in me and here I am. It is humbling that a group as big as SRSAN trusts me with this job. I have a background in radio, which I think has helped me with public speaking. I think to do this job well you also have to be a go getter. If you are shy or nervous you sure won't be that way for very long! My experience serving on other boards has also been helpful to me. I am a member of People First and am the Past President for the Lethbridge and Alberta chapters. My name will also be on the City of Lethbridge election ballot again this Fall. My absolute favorite hobby is WRESTLING!

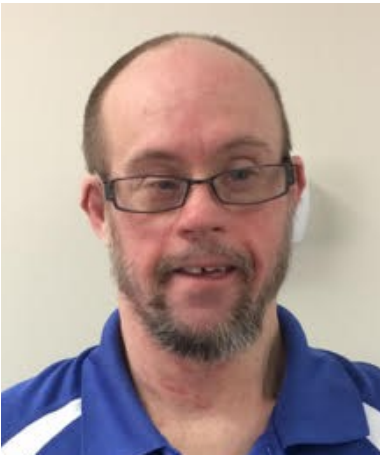


Shawna Howarth: I am the Vice Chair for SRSAN. My job is to fill in for the Chair person if he is sick. I also write down notes of all the things we need to do and attend all meetings. Last November we had a vote and someone nominated me for this position. In order to do well I need to be able to stay on task and stay on topic. I am also working more on my public speaking. Right now I am a part of the fundraising committee for SRSAN. In my spare time I like to hang out with my friends. I recently got a Fitbit and have been trying to be very active. I also love playing with my dogs.



Kassy Heine: I am the SRSAN Treasurer. I take care of all of SRSAN's money. I got voted into this position last year when we were in Taber. I am very happy about this new job. Working with money is new to me. I have been practicing a lot because you need to be good at counting money. You also need to be a good reader when you are Treasurer. I am a member of the SRSAN conference planning committee and we are starting to plan our conference for 2018. In my free time I love to swim and go for walks and drives, especially with my mom.

MEET THE NEW SRSAN EXECUTIVE (CONT.)



Randy Chandler: I am the SRSAN Secretary. At each SRSAN meeting I take minutes and write down names for motions. I also keep track of members that attend. When I was nominated for Secretary, there was two people running, we had a vote and I got picked! To do this job well I need to be organized, be able to read and write well and be a good listener. I am also part of Voices at Quest. For fun I like to do Special Olympics bowling and curling. I love to watch sports on TV and go to the gym. I am also a volunteer for SAIPA where I answer phones, work on the computer and do other office work.



Cheryl North Peigan: I am a Director for the SRSAN Executive. I give support and encouragement to my fellow Executive members as well as to SRSAN members. I help others apply themselves, do good at their jobs and be who they want to be. I have been a SRSAN member for a while but last November I did a speech at the election and got voted in in to the Executive. To be a good Director you need to be outspoken and be able to speak publicly and remember the things that you want to speak about. You also need to be good at supporting others and providing encouragement. I also sit on the fundraising committee for SRSAN and like coming up with new ideas. My favorite things to do are dancing and singing. I love performing for others. It is also very important to me to keep active and busy.



Kelly Tower: I am a Director on the SRSAN Executive. When we have SRSAN meetings I help with set up and clean up. I help make decisions for SRSAN and I help out other board members. I go to meetings for the SRSAN Executive and help plan what happens at our network meetings. I was voted into this position in November 2016. It is important to be friendly, help others and listen, to be a good Director. It is also important to support others in their roles and to help the new board that will come after our term. Right now I am also part of the Conference Planning and Education committees. In my free time I like to bowl and go swimming. I also like to walk my dog, or my dog likes to walk me!

MEET THE NEW SRSAN EXECUTIVE (CONT.)



Sandy Layton: I am the SRSAN/SAIPA Liaison and this is my last year in this position. My job is to share news between the SRSAN and SAIPA Boards by attending board meetings for both organizations. At these meetings I am very attentive so I can share the information that is important. I also need to be mindful of what I can not share. I am on a lot of other committees too, I am the President of the South Chapter of People First, part of the SRSAN fundraising committee, and SRSAN focus group to redo our mission and value statements. In my free time I love to do any kind of arts or crafts. I can knit, crochet, paint and do beadwork. I am currently making baby dolls. I like computers and I love writing.



Keelae Blackwood: I am a Director on the SRSAN Executive. My job is to attend SRSAN meetings, listen to what the members want and help them achieve those things. When we had nominations in November I was sustained in to my position, there was no vote, because we had the right number of people needed for the job. Some qualities that I think are important for a Director are being patient, easy going, understanding, and well spoken. You also need to be a good listener. I am also the secretary for the LACL board. For fun, I love to do crafts and shop!

dates
to
Remember



Mother's Day: May 14th

Next SRSAN Meeting: June 8th in Medicine Hat

Pie It Forward: June 12th—16th

Father's Day: June 18th

First Day of Summer: June 21st

2017—2018 Workshop Schedule Release: June 30th

Let's Talk About...The AISH Overhaul

AISH provides \$1 billion each year to assist about 55,000 Albertans. Those of us who receive AISH can face many roadblocks in actually getting these benefits.

Recently, we got some good news about AISH. The government is doing a full review of AISH to make some things better! Human Services Minister Irfan Sabir said, "We are absolutely committed to making sure that we have more [clear and reliable] program application throughout the province and we will make needed and necessary changes,"

We learned about some of the changes the government will be making to AISH, these include:

- A new, plain language website
- Shorter application for people returning to AISH
- Simpler forms
- User friendly guides
- Letters to update people on their application
- Training for staff

AISH
stands for:
**Assured Income
for the Severely
Handicapped**



We think this is great! There were lots of barriers in the past like difficult forms, long waits, inconsistency and a program that was not very flexible.

As self-advocates, we think that it is very important for the AISH process to be as simple as possible. We want AISH to have clearly set criteria and for the rules to be consistent yet flexible to individual people. We are hoping to be able to see some of these changes soon. AISH is so important to us and we are so grateful to have it, we just want it to be the best it can be!

At the SRSAN meeting in June, we will be collecting ideas to pass on to the government about AISH to help them in their work to make this program better!

Let's Talk About... Minimum Wage and AISH

Most of us have heard the excitement about minimum wage going up. By 2018, minimum wage will be \$15/hour. The NDP government has said that this is the amount of money needed in Alberta to live a good life. Let's do the math on that:

Minimum Wage Worker earns:

(40 hours per week at \$15 per hour)

\$2400 per month

AISH Recipient earns:

\$1588 per month

To us, this doesn't seem fair and there are no planned changes to AISH income. As self-advocates we feel that the income gap is being shortened for everyone except people living with disabilities. Some of us are lucky enough to be able to work a little bit on top of receiving AISH and that does help. But what about those of us who aren't able to work? Is this enough money for us to live? The last time AISH was increased was in 2012 and our economy has changed a lot since then.

One response that the government has had to this issue is that AISH recipients do get support with personal and health benefits. This is true and these supports do help out a lot. However, you can not use these benefits to pay your rent or buy your groceries. If the cost of everything else is going up and minimum wage workers are being paid more to make sure they can afford the necessities of life, we need to have AISH re-evaluated too.

As self-advocates we feel that we need to speak up about this issue. We need to voice our concerns and we need to make sure that we are being treated the same as everyone else. We need to make sure that our needs and quality of life is just as important as everyone else's.

How can we advocate for ourselves?

- We can write letters to our government
- We can make sure that our peers know about these issues
- We can make others are aware of our needs
- We can do our best to make extra income when we are able



If you want to learn how to advocate for yourself, you can call the SAIPA office!

Sharing Music & Talents

A support agency here in Lethbridge is working hard to showcase the many talents of Self-Advocates. They recently put on their 8th Annual Talent Show where Self-Advocates and support workers work together to share music and talent. A lot of practice and hard work went into preparing for this show that took place at CASA this January. Two members of The Ripple crew who participated were able to share with us what this experience meant to them.

What do you love most about this Talent Show?

“I love dancing and my performance had a lot of body movement. We had to have lots of energy. My group did a circle dance. We got to pick our own song and we chose “Honey, Honey” from Mamma Mia. This show took a lot of commitment and we practiced for a very long time. Doing this talent show makes me happy and I felt proud of myself. This talent show is important to us and we want to keep it going.”



Have you always loved music and singing?



“When I was a little girl I loved music. I took music in school and also continued at home on my own. I was in the school choir and one year there was a bad ice storm and I couldn’t go to my talent show. At home I performed for my relatives instead and they loved it! I enjoy music because it gives me a chance to show my talents. I loved the A&W root bear song that always came on after school. One day I was home and I started singing to it. After the song ended my Nana helped me to practice. Music inspires me and I love to sing.”

Community Events in Lethbridge and Crowsnest Pass

Bellcrest Days—Hillcrest & Bellevue—Annually in June

Fiesta de Cinco de Mayo—Multicultural Centre—Lethbridge—May 5

Taste of Downtown—Lethbridge—May 9 & 10

Fort Whoop Up Opening Day— Lethbridge —May 14

Neighbour Day— Lethbridge—June 17

Shakespeare in the Park—Lethbridge—June 29 & 30

The Polar Plunge

This February, 125 people from our community dove into Henderson Lake raising over \$23,000! Thank you to these brave souls who did this in minus 14 degrees!

We interviewed Greg from Peak Vocational Support Services and asked him about this event.



K.S: What is the Polar Plunge?

Greg: The Polar plunge is an event for raising money and awareness about Special Olympics.

K. S: Why did you want to participate?

Greg: I wanted to help out because I think the Special Olympics are very important to the community because they provide opportunity for people to put their talents on display.

K.S: How much money did you raise?

Greg: I raised \$700, donated by family and friends.

K.S: On a scale of 1-10, how cold was the water? Will you do the Polar Plunge again?

Greg: It was definitely a 10! It was super cold! I would absolutely do it again, it was fun!



Greg (left) and Matt (center) from Peak Vocational Support Services taking the Plunge for Special Olympics

Community Events in Taber, Brooks and Medicine Hat

Adults Painting Class—Duchess Library—Brooks—May 17

Brooks Bombers Baseball Game—Brooks—June 1

1st Annual McBowl—Medicine Hat— May 6

SPCA Superhero Fun Walk—Medicine Hat—May 13

Farmers Market—Medicine Hat—Every Saturday in June

Carnage in Coaldale—Coaldale—June 4

Lions Club Show & Shine—Redcliff—June 17

New to The Ripple!



The Ripple Newsletter raises awareness about self-advocacy, inclusion and community. We are self-advocates who try to speak up for ourselves and help others to do the same.

We want to answer your questions!

If you have a question that you would like us to answer in our next edition of The Ripple contact our Editor at:

**403-320-1515 or via email at
jenn.hyggen@saipa.info**

ASK THE RIPPLE

I'm new to Lethbridge, where are the best places to make friends?

The Ripple Crew ideas are:

- ⇒ Join a Bible study group
- ⇒ New Connections Dances (more info to come next issue)
- ⇒ Round Table Board Gamerie
- ⇒ Restaurants
- ⇒ Doing paid or volunteer work
- ⇒ College or University class
- ⇒ Park Place Mall
- ⇒ Join a Self-Advocacy group
- ⇒ Join an art or dance class at CASA
- ⇒ The Bowman Art Centre
- ⇒ Public swimming pools
- ⇒ Interfaith Community Kitchen
- ⇒ Going for walk – Henderson Lake
- ⇒ Public Library

Transit Focus Group

A few Lethbridge volunteers from SRSAN have come together to talk about transit. We have been talking about why we do and do not use city busses and access-a-ride, what's good about transit, what could be better, and what are our dreams for transit. Our group has come up with a few ideas that we have presented to the City of Lethbridge and we are waiting for a meeting to talk to them about how we can work together.

Watch the next edition of The Ripple to find out more about this advocacy work!