



connections

Message from Connection



Client families adding an artistic flair to our new look

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Staff and volunteers at the 20th Anniversary Celebration

The leaves are beginning to change and the smell of autumn is in the air. As summer comes to a close, we celebrate the season of harvest, of gathering with family and friends to enjoy the bounty of seeds sown and carefully tended. And that is exactly what this newsletter celebrates as well.

This past spring Connections turned twenty. Twenty years ago, a small seed of hope was planted for families impacted by an intellectual disability when Connections was established, and now 20 years later we were overwhelmed by the bounty of support, kindness, generosity and accomplishment that that seed has become. Our 20th Anniversary celebration was not only a fundraising success, but also showed our great success in the many friendships that have been built over the years.

Seeds were also planted this past year to create a new logo and brand identity for Connections that represents what we have become and where we intend to go. The new logo and identity you see here as well as all of the new features on our website are the fruits of our labour.

Fall is also a time of change, a period of transition, and Connections is experiencing a time of transition too. With changes in funding, in the demand for our programs and even internally, Connections must adapt to weather any storm ahead.

In this issue we want to tell you about those changes, but mostly we want to share our stories of success, our harvest and our spoils, with those who deserve it most, the supporters, family and friends of Connections that have made it possible over the past 20 years. Thank you again for helping us to nurture the seed we sowed 20 years ago into what it has become today.

Jessilyn Yuhas, *Fund Development Coordinator*

At the Connections strategic planning meeting last November it was determined that after 20 years, Connections was in need of a new visual identity to better represent the organization as we move forward.

With a great deal of support from communications firm, Appetite, Connections was able to create a new logo and brand identity that better reflected who we are and the work we do. The new puzzle piece logo was unveiled at our 20th anniversary celebration by board president Peter Cheung, who explained that “Connections is just one piece of the puzzle in improving the lives of families with intellectual disabilities. There are three unique puzzle pieces that will all function as Connections’ logo, because we do not offer one size fits all solutions but rather tailored and unique solutions to assist individual families. “

We were also able to create new video for Connections, with talented videographer, Danny Cox, that showcases the work that Connections does and the impact we have on the lives of our clients. The video can be seen on our new and improved website, re-worked by web designer extraordinaire Jordan Polson at www.connections counselling.ab.ca and on You Tube. We are very proud of our new look and extend a special thank you to Virginia Webster and Jonathan Herman at Appetite, Jordan Polson, and as well as the Calgary Foundation and Social Venture Partners who helped to fund the rebranding initiative.



Board President, Peter Cheung unveils our new logo



appetite

Bentall Stampede Support

Once again Bentall Real Estate got into the Stampede spirit and helped Connections wrangle up some great donations during their Stampede breakfast and lunches. Through a lunch at Energy Plaza, and at Foothills Industrial as well as a breakfast at Livingstone Place, Bentall tenants and staff helped Connections to raise over \$1700!

Special thanks to Art Skow, Nancy Strome, Anita Ferland and Courtney Pearce of Bentall for all of their continued support.

Fall Casino Fundraiser

On September 2nd and 3rd our wonderful volunteers made our Casino Fundraiser a huge success. Our sincerest gratitude goes out to: Doug Harder, Susan Ple-suk, Ed Kuntz, Debra Bray, Chris, Lisa and Melissa Tuplin, Roger Hamilton, Gavin Preston, Gerry Hart, Patti Turnquist, Stacie, Judith and Robert Tidlund, Pat Morris, John Kirkpatrick, Melanie McPherson, Lindsey Cartwright, Maureen Walls, Agnes Foong, Alice Wong, Bob and Jan McInnis, Peter Cheung, Kathy Prosser, Laurie Smith, Tracy Collyer, Dell, Leah, and Adie Pohlman, Lauren Raymore, Amy Leblanc, Lorna Selig, Kim Mikkelsen, and Donna and Tom Cashin.

Congratulations to Lauren and Jan who have been invited to Denver on September 23rd to share their expertise.

They will be presenting “ Best Practices for Supporting Lifelong Parent Child Relationships” at the 2010 A Chance to Parent International Conference, which is sponsored by The Association for Successful Parenting.

20th Anniversary Celebration



Pat Morris takes a break with anniversary volunteers for a photo op

On Sunday May 15th, Connections celebrated our 20th anniversary with a dinner, silent auction, games, speeches and live music at The Yardhouse in Kensington.

The Yardhouse generously provided food and venue free of charge so that all ticket proceeds could be retained within the organization for program delivery for our client families. Yardhouse—thanks again from the bottom of our hearts.

Our silent auction was incredible thanks to donations and support from:

- Pat Morris
- Susan Plesuk
- Michelle Wolfe
- the Keg
- Kensington Riverside Inn
- The Living Room
- Rosebud Theatre
- Rosebud Country Inn
- Fitness Together
- Calgary Roughnecks
- Kananaskis Golf Club
- Brad Zummwalt
- Ten Thousand Villages
- Mark Hamilton
- Red Rose Florist
- Adam Corbett
- Debbie Bradley
- Spa Ritual
- Silver Springs Massage
- Lindsey Cartwright
- White and Brite New Smile
- Silverwing Golf Club
- Plaza Theatre
- The Laugh shop
- The Calgary Vipers
- Essential Spa
- Northmount Wellness Clinic
- Kensington Wine Market
- Swizzlesticks Salon & Spa
- Becka Dee Photography
- Storybook Theatre
- Canmore Golf and Curling Club
- Heritage Pointe Golf Club

Volunteers, including the Tuplin and Pohlman-Raymore families and friends, who kept the evening running smoothly, while magician, That Funny Magic Guy, Jason Wherun gave of his time to keep the crowd entertained. Musicians, Brad and Matt Saunders, Cor Neilson and James Potvin, also volunteered their talents and had everyone dancing along to their soulful upbeat tunes. All in all, the evening allowed us to raise over \$10 000 for Connections, and connect with supporters, friends and family to celebrate 20 years of helping families impacted by intellectual disability.



Jessilyn Yuhás and Lisa Tuplin happy that all the planning was worth it!

A BIG Announcement—a Note from Agency Director Pat Morris

As Jessi mentioned, Connections has a lot to celebrate in 2010. It's been exciting to unveil our new logo, showcase the new video and launch our redesigned website. Even more exciting was our celebration in May. Connections has grown in many ways over the past 20 years and celebrating with the staff and board members was a great way to acknowledge their collective contributions to that growth. To be amongst our Friends of Connections and other supporters was also very affirming. As I've said before however using a different analogy, each person is indeed a piece of the puzzle, an important part of Connections.

I am also pleased to announce Connections will pilot a new group this fall as a pre-cursor to research to be initiated in 2011 in Alberta and then nationally. Connections' staff will be working closely with Dr. David McConnell of the University of Alberta and a renowned expert in working with parents with intellectual disabilities. Two of our staff will be facilitating this group, providing valuable insights and input and be involved in training and mentorship of other service providers once the research begins.



It has been a privilege being a part of an organization with strong values, a dedicated staff and supporters who enable Connections to provide important services and supports to individuals and families in our community.

-Pat Morris, Agency Director

I must also mention that I will be leaving my position as Agency Director at the end of January 2011. While the time is right for me to make this decision, it was not an easy one. It has been a privilege being a part of an organization with strong values, a dedicated staff and supporters who enable Connections to provide important services and supports to individuals and families in our community. Over the past 11 years, the growth and changes has been amazing, and I'm proud to have been a part of that.

There have been and will continue to be many challenges, including on-going funding challenges. At this time I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all for your commitment and support both to Connections and myself over the years. I am confident that, with all of our ongoing support, Connections will move forward with determination, building on the strong foundation of the past 20 years, always in the pursuit of excellence.

Sincere regards,

Pat Morris, RSW
Agency Director

For the adults who plan them and the agencies that sponsor them, Sibshops are best described as opportunities for brothers and sisters of children with special health and developmental needs to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context. They often reflect an agency's commitment to the well-being of the family member most likely to have the longest-lasting relationship with the person with special needs.

Sibshops acknowledge that being the brother or sister of a person with special needs is a good thing for some, others a not-so-good thing, and somewhere in between for many. They reflect a belief that brothers and sisters have much to offer one another - if they are given a chance. Sibshops seek to provide siblings with opportunities for peer support. Because Sibshops are designed (primarily) for school-age children, peer support is provided within a lively, recreational context that emphasizes a kid's-eye view.

Our Sibshops dates for fall include:

Sibshops : Ages 8-11, Cost:\$45.00

Orientation – Thursday, October 21, 2010, 6:30 – 8pm

Sessions: 9:00am – 12:00pm, Saturday's, October 23, 30, November 6

Early Start Sibshop: Ages 6-7, Cost: \$15.00

Session: 9:00am – 12:00pm, November 6

Sibventures Monthly Group: Ages 8-11 For kids who have attended a Sibshop session

Cost: Annual Registration fee of \$25.00

Once a month - 6:00 – 8:00pm September 20, October 13

Location: Renfrew Main School – 2050 – 21 St. NE Calgary

Junior and Senior High Teen Events

3rd Wednesday of each month beginning in September 2010

For more information or to register for Sibshops

Contact us at 403-209-1100



The Future of Connections - Funding and You

With many changes happening in the not-for-profit sector, including cuts in the governmental funding environment, it is becoming increasingly important for Connections to establish more funding from sources outside of traditional government agencies.

In response, Connections plans to launch a campaign called 1000 X \$100 in an effort to raise \$100 000 for our organization in 2011. This funding will go towards continuity of our programs as well as assisting those families that may be on a waitlist due to funding constraints.

The idea behind the 1000 times \$100 program is that if just 1000 individuals, groups, businesses, teams or foundations donate just \$100 over the course of a year, less than \$10 a month, we have reached our goal. What we are hoping is that each of our supporters will reach out to their networkers and encourage the teams that they belong to, their groups of friends, their coworkers or the members of their families to come together to donate \$100. This could be as easy as establishing a toonie jar donation every Friday at the office, or encouraging your group of friends to set \$2 aside each time they grocery shop to be donated to Connections at the end of the year.

We truly believes that if we all just do a little bit, if we all act as one small piece of the puzzle and then come together, we can create a huge difference and a beautiful picture for Connections' future.

For help creating a 1000 x \$100 initiative of your own, contact Jessilyn Yuhas at funddevelopment@connectionscountselling.ab.ca

In appreciation

To realize our vision we rely on the generous support of our funders, community groups, schools, service clubs, foundations, and individuals who give of their time, money and talents. We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of our Individual Donors, Donors Choice supporters & Volunteers without whom Connections could not continue the work we do.

Funders

Region 3 Calgary and area,
Child and Family Services
United Way Donor's Choice
Persons W/ Developmental Disabilities



Partnering Agencies



Our Mission

We exist to empower, strengthen, and support:

- Parents with intellectual disabilities;
- Children who have a family member with a disability;
- Families and caregivers

by providing long term programs, counselling, and education.

Our Vision

At Connections, our efforts are focused on achieving this goal:
"People with intellectual disabilities and their families are valued and reach their potential."

All of our Generous Donors

Be a piece of the Connections Puzzle. Donate online now by:

1. Going to our website at www.connections counselling.ab.ca
2. Clicking the Donate with Canada Helps icon on the right hand side
3. Entering a donation amount and choosing a one time or ongoing donation

Connections Counselling and Consulting Foundation Charitable Registration Number: 890700347RR0001

Sunalta Professional Building 203, 1603 10th Avenue S.W. Calgary, AB T3C 0J7

Telephone #: (403) 209-1100

Fax #: (403) 274-1235

Website: www.connections counselling.ab.ca