

# Easter Seals Alberta

## 2022 Report to Community





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# Humble Beginnings

What is today known as Easter Seals Alberta has a long lineage of support from passionate volunteers and community service groups. Motivated by the polio epidemic, in 1945, the **Children's Hospital Aid Foundation** launched the Easter Seal Campaign, the first of its kind in Canada. The original seal featured an Easter lily and raised \$4,761. This led to the establishment The Coordinating Council for Crippled Children (Alberta) in 1948 to streamline support programs working to provide aid to children with disabilities.

It quickly became apparent that support was needed to offset the costs of living with a disability at any age, so in 1959 the council expanded services to assist physically disabled adults. As an organization, it consisted of volunteers working in rehabilitation, medicine and government. In the coming years, the council, alongside the **Kinsmen Club of Calgary** secured a permanent location for the popular camp program, now known as Easter Seals Camp Horizon.

Over the years, the organization, now known as **Easter Seals Alberta**, has established many programs under multiple names. Our history has reflected the needs of the time. As new disability-related organizations formed and others folded, and government policy and activities changed, our organization maintained focus on the needs of Albertans with disabilities.



# Easter Seals Alberta

Life with a disability can be expensive. Together, we strive to ensure that the resources individuals need for an independent and full life are available. You make this possible through our main supports:



## **EASTER SEALS CAMP HORIZON**

provides year-round inclusive camp experiences for individuals of all ages with disabilities and medical conditions. Camp offers a unique opportunity for campers to build self-esteem and independence. Activities challenge their mind and body while creating lasting friendships and lifelong memories.



## **EASTER SEALS MCQUEEN HOME**

is a self-governed, nine-bedroom home in Edmonton for individuals with a disability looking to achieve more independence, greater inclusion in the community, and access to employment, education and recreation.



## **ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS**

provides critically needed equipment and support to those who qualify physically and financially. This includes the Equipment Loan Program, home automation program, disability travel card, Give a Kid a Lift program, and scholarships.



## **VIRTUAL PROGRAMS**

create human connections in an inclusive environment. Expanding on the fun we have at camp, virtual program encourages participants to enjoy the skill development and friendships built at camp from the safety of their homes.





# Guided by Community

Easter Seals Alberta is governed by our incredible volunteer board of directors. These individuals dedicate their time and expertise to shaping our future by providing intellectual capital and strategic resources to fuel our success. But, most importantly, they serve on behalf of YOU.

Christina White Prosser	Trevor Brick	Graeme Auchincloss	Stephen Connelley
Adam Darbellay	Susan Anderson	Vineeta Maguire	Anne Ewen
Dan McPhee	Makrina Morozowski	Dorothy Arts	Kathy Sorenson
Helene Forero	Heather Tyminski	Kyle Scott	

Dear community,

Easter Seals Alberta has a longstanding history of supporting people with disabilities and medical conditions. From our humble roots to where we are today, our mission to provide support and programs for people with disabilities has stayed the same. This year was no exception. I am excited to lead an incredible team and continue the excellent work we have been doing over the last 70 years to ensure stability and growth in the future.

This year, we were thrilled to reopen Easter Seals Camp Horizon after our two-year closure and share in the pure joy that camp brings to all of our campers. In addition, we continued to support our clients through the Accessibility Supports Program, providing long-term equipment loans and various scholarships. Further, we continued to host virtual programs as a way for clients to connect consistently throughout the year and had another safe year for our residents at Easter Seals McQueen Home.

To accomplish our mission in today's changing landscape, we must evolve, innovate, and lead the transformation of our programs and services to best serve our clients, campers and people with disabilities and medical conditions. I look forward to another fantastic year as we continue to further our vision of inspiring potential, building community and enriching lives.

**Katherine Such**  
Chief Executive Officer





**“It was a great honour to represent kids and adults with disabilities. Easter Seals Alberta gave me the opportunity to feel needed, important, and a valuable part of a team with a purpose.”**

## Meet our Ambassador, Alex

Alex Mertens, the 2022 Easter Seals Alberta ambassador, first heard about Camp Horizon when she was 15. Born with Cerebral Palsy, Alex uses a wheelchair or walker for mobility. She describes herself as optimistic, determined and strong.

Alex began her duties as ambassador at the launch of our Paper Egg campaign with a new community partner, Smitty's Restaurants. The role came naturally to Alex, as she felt strongly about the programs offered at Easter Seals and spoke with a passion that won over every crowd.

Alex wanted everyone to feel comfortable, so she joined us at camp to tour new campers around. Her favourite event was speaking at the grand opening of the brand-new Splash Park.

Alex enthusiastically tackled each opportunity to share her story, and her confidence in public speaking grew in spades. We're excited about what amazing things she will do next!



# Together, we're **#UnstoppABLE®**

With your support, we made incredible impact to inspire potential, build community and enrich lives. Here's a quick breakdown of the numbers from 2022.



**2,157**

Clients Served



**2,968**

Gifts Made



**2,060**

Volunteer Hours



**107,015**

Hours of Support



# Easter Seals McQueen Home

Easter Seals McQueen Home was developed to fill a gap in accessible housing; to provide a supportive living environment and community for people with disabilities that require assistance to live independently.

After several challenging years, McQueen Home in Edmonton was overjoyed to welcome friends and family once again to visit at their outdoor barbeque. Because McQueen truly is home for the nine full-time residents, celebrating together with their families felt long overdue and greatly appreciated.

A new resident joined McQueen in 2022. Daniel fit in seamlessly and connected with the group by watching hockey and playing video games together.

Over the last year, McQueen expanded its team by bringing on a Registered Nurse, increasing the quality of life and meeting the resident's needs. A new cook also added some excitement to mealtime. Residents have spent time getting to know her while enjoying her fantastic food.



**The incredible staff at McQueen  
Home provided 78,840 hours of  
client support in 2022!**



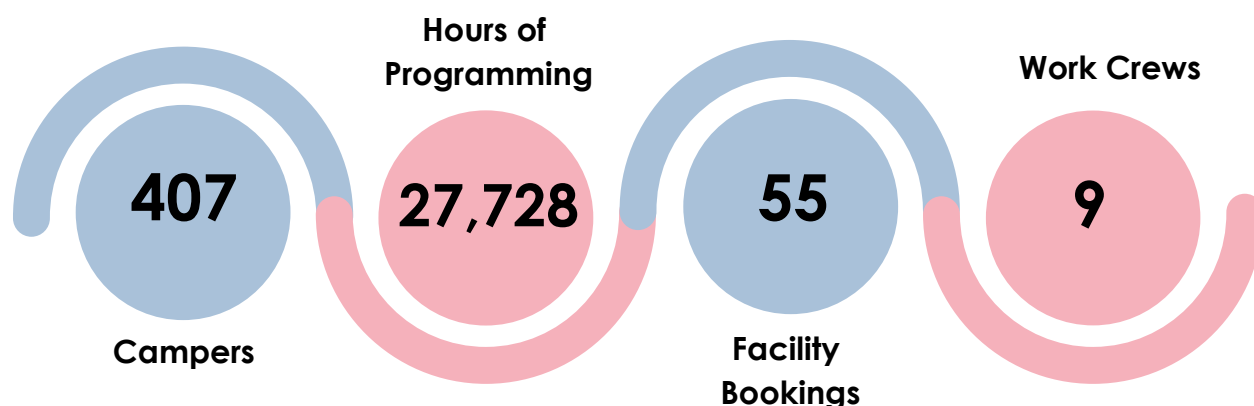


# Easter Seals Camp Horizon

Since 1965, Easter Seals Camp Horizon's mission has been to provide children, youth, and adults with disabilities and medical conditions with life-changing outdoor recreation experiences.

After an extended COVID closure, we were overjoyed to announce the camp's re-opening for people with disabilities and medical conditions in 2022. The reopening was no small feat, as it required significant investments in infrastructure upgrades, certifications, program rebuilding to facilitate cohorting, and hours spent on planning, recruitment, training and communication.

With the support of our community, we welcomed back excited campers. From high-flying, courage-boosting adventures to late-night, life-long friendship-building campfire confessions, 2022's camp season will fuel a lifetime of memories for our campers.







## Re-Open for Adventure

Camp Horizon welcomed our community and supporters back to Camp in 2022! We celebrated our Splash Park opening, toured the facility at our Open House, carved pumpkins at the Halloween Howler, hosted corporate work crews and showed off some camp improvements!



# Fueling Future Leaders

Easter Seals Leadership Programs, proudly supported by the RBC Foundation in support of RBC Future Launch, is a commitment to helping young Canadians prepare for the jobs of tomorrow through the Horizon Mentors program. This program is offered to experienced campers (aged 16+), wanting to learn skills for effective volunteering and hands-on mentoring of other campers. Campers will develop skills in leadership, camper supervision and relationship building.

## Meet Jamie

After losing his hearing at the age of three, Jamie began to learn American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate. While ASL offered Jamie a voice, he has faced many challenges and has had to work hard to converse with friends and family. Jamie describes himself as persevering, determined and adventurous.

Jamie joined other Easter Seals campers this summer as part of the Horizon Mentors program. "I'm not really the type of person to make friends a lot, which is a bit frustrating, but I'm used to being alone," says Jamie. At camp, Jamie learned to connect with people with different disabilities and make friends. "It gave me the opportunity to teach the campers activities, become a better communicator, and overcome my nerves when speaking to a crowd," says Jamie.

Jamie loved the addition of the new splash park to the things he could do at camp and how much the counsellors accepted and supported him. He believes that every Canadian with a disability would benefit from the opportunity to have fun at camp, push their boundaries physically through accessible activities and meet people that have disabilities like them.

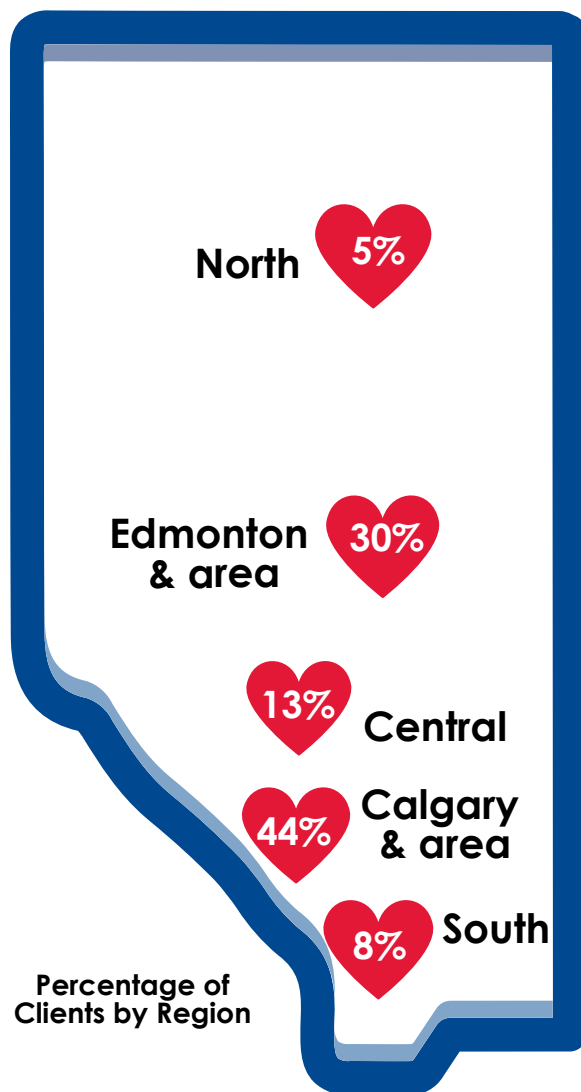
**"Everyone was very interested in learning [from me], so I feel I brought something for them to learn." - Jamie, 2022 Horizon Mentors program participant**



# Accessibility Supports

Accessibility Supports provides vital equipment and support to enable persons with disabilities to be independent and active in their communities. This includes the Equipment Loan Program, Home Automation, Scholarships, Disability Travel Cards, and the Give a Kid a Lift Program.

This year, our Accessibility Supports team focused on community outreach. They reconnected with vendors, community partner agencies and health professionals to strengthen relationships. These partnerships will help provide better care for the people we serve across the province. They also worked to refine our application and review processes, expediting processes and allowing for enhanced client communication.



For many Albertans, support programs are needed now more than ever. While government programs do provide support, our Equipment Loan Program exists to be a funding option for individuals who have exhausted all other resources for accessibility equipment.

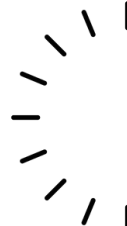
Total Equipment Pieces **74**

Total Value of Equipment Provided **\$202,730**

Total Scholarships **\$33,500**

Total Clients Served **94**





## Equipment Loan Program

Equipment support can make all the difference in the life of a person with a disability. The Equipment Loan Program provides a chance for our clients to participate, stay active and be included. We celebrate the lives you've changed with your donations through this program.





## Sun Life Workplace Readiness and Mentorship Program

The Workplace Readiness Scholarship and Mentorship Program is a brand-new initiative that started in 2022 with the generous support of Sun Life Canada. The program aims to help students living with disabilities succeed in school and successfully transition into the labour force. Recipients are provided with both a financial scholarship and matched with a mentor who will provide guidance and prepare them for the transition out of high school.

### Meet Sam

**"This scholarship has been super helpful in preparing for job interviews. Having a disability means I need to stand out more on my resume, especially in the tough job market after COVID. Being able to have help writing a polished resume and cover letter will hopefully help me find a job when I graduate next summer. "**



## Phyllis Davidson Scholarship

Created in loving memory of Phyllis Davidson, The Phyllis Davidson Scholarship program offers post-secondary academic financial assistance to students living with disabilities that require mobility aids.



### Meet Jeslyn

Jeslyn is in her first year at SAIT in the Architectural Technologies Program. Born with Congenital Muscular Dystrophy, she has not let being a wheelchair user slow her down.

After graduating, Jeslyn hopes to use her education to work for a home builder and specialize in accessibility design. She is also involved in sledge hockey, downhill sit skiing and has won gold and silver medals at provincial level para-swimming.



## Scotiabank Accessible Technology and Mentorship

Easter Seals partnered nationally with Scotiabank for the Supporting Students through Accessible Technology and Mentorship Program, which recognizes that the cost of accessible accommodations, specialized technology, learning aids, attendant care, support services, and accessible transportation can be a barrier for students living with disabilities academic success.

The scholarship aims to reduce financial barriers and prepare students to transition out of high school by pairing them with a volunteer mentor.

**“This piece of technology is going to improve my access to programs that will help me academically, keep me calm, and connect me to my mom,” says Cameron, one of the 13 Supporting Students through Accessible Technology and Mentorship Program 2022 recipients.**

## Give a Kid a Lift

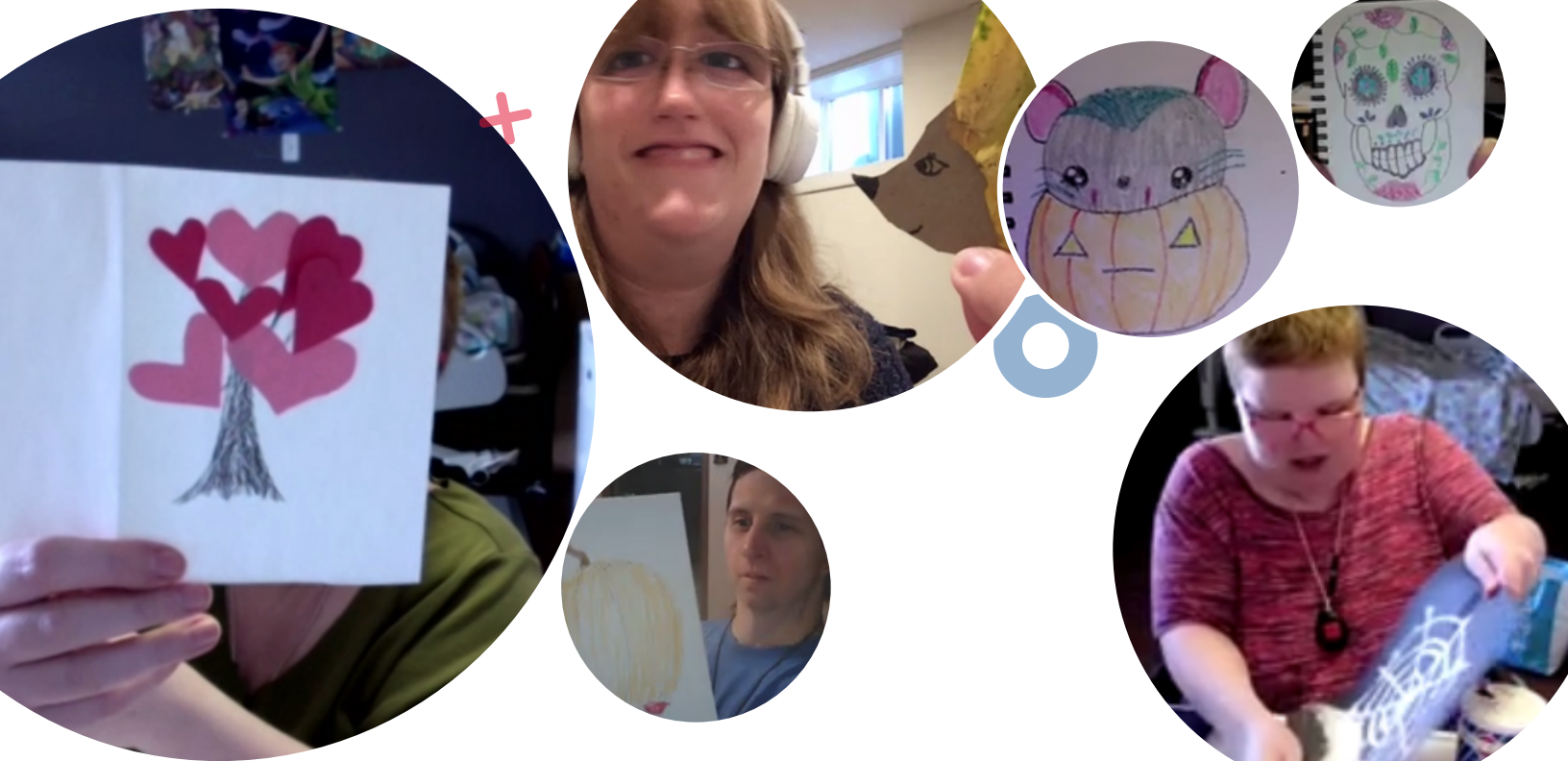
The Give-A-Kid-A-Lift program provides a residential elevator in the home of a family with a disability. In April 2022, Easter Seals Alberta, Garaventa Lift and UpperCut Elevators installed an elevator in the Henry's family's home.

Henry is ten years old and lives with a rare disease that has caused a decline in mobility. Previously, Henry's parents had to carry him up and down the stairs, but with the new elevator, they can ensure everyone's safety.

**Henry's parents told us, “Henry is able to go where he wants, whenever he wants in our home. He is able to take off with his sister to play together without a parent needing to follow behind or carry him.”**

Henry and his family have experienced newfound freedom and independence thanks to the new elevator!





# Virtual Programs

## Adventure Camp at Home

Easter Seals Alberta's online program, Adventure Camp at Home, delivers a virtual experience that mirrors what our traditional camp program offers – connection, education, empowerment and play. It encourages participants to meet daily in a virtual environment to explore themes together through games, arts and crafts, music, movies and even virtual field trips.

In 2022, Adventure Camp at Home hosted **397** online sessions with **1,784** attendees. To address the gap in opportunities for adults with disabilities, and to better support current and new participants, we fully transitioned to adult-focused programming.

Thanks to the Canada Summer Jobs program, we were able to add additional virtual programming staff over the summer, adding specialized programs that ensured current and new participants had access to the support and services they needed.

## Christmas Camp

Christmas Camp 2021 was hosted virtually so participants could socialize and celebrate while remaining safe. During December, **30** participants attended **124** online sessions and were provided donated treats and activity kits, including art projects, escape room, chocolate making, singalongs, cookie decorating and a festive movie.





# A Decade of Dedication

## We Care

We Care is a charitable organization that collaborates with the Food and Hospitality Industry to send kids with disabilities to camp. For over 40 years, they've funded 141,000 days at Easter Seals camps across Canada! In 2022, We Care provided \$31,328, for 125 days of camp to Alberta. Canada-wide, they've raised 1.1 million, funding 4,400 days of camp. What an incredible partner!



## Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation

Corey Smith, Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation Chair, shared how important it is to provide accessibility equipment for those across Oil Country. "On behalf of the EOCF, Evander Kane and the other Edmonton Oilers players who contributed to this donation, we are proud to support Easter Seals Alberta to help them further their mission while reducing the overwhelming cost for families," says Corey.



## Edmonton Civic Employees Charitable Assistance Fund

This year, we celebrated a nearly decade-long partnership with Edmonton Civic Employees Charitable Assistance Fund (ECECAF). The \$65,000 donation to our Equipment Loan Program will continue to ensure Edmontonians have independence and freedom with mobility.







# Century 21



Thanks to the generous contributions of participating Century 21 brokerages in Alberta, we would like to acknowledge the 2022 Kids to Camp Club members and Golden Heart Award Recipients. These realtors donated or raised over \$2,100 to help send kids to Camp Horizon:

Ciaran O'Neill

John McNeill

Deborah Clark

Jeffrey LeBlanc

Julie Vesuwalla

Ralph Sears

Robert McIntyre

Diana McIntyre

Miranda Freedman

Together with Century 21's continuous support and philanthropic spirit, 30 kids in 2022 had the opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills and have an incredible time at Camp Horizon.





Kevin Karius Celebrity Golf Classic,  
Presented by Prism Flow Products, July 2022



Paper Egg Campaign,  
Easter 2022



Chestermere Show and Shine,  
August 2022



JC Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament  
Presented by Century 21 Foothills, August 2022

**Community events helped  
us raise more than \$250,000!**





## Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. Thank you to everyone who helped Camp Horizon prepare to welcome back campers after a two-year closure, assisted at one of our many community events, volunteered for a shift at our casino or fundraised for our support programs.

This year, we were supported by 2,060 volunteer hours from more than 300 volunteers. Many hands make for light work; we couldn't do it without YOU!







# STRONGER THAN EVER



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