



Alberta



# REPORT TO COMMUNITY+

- 2023 / 2024 -



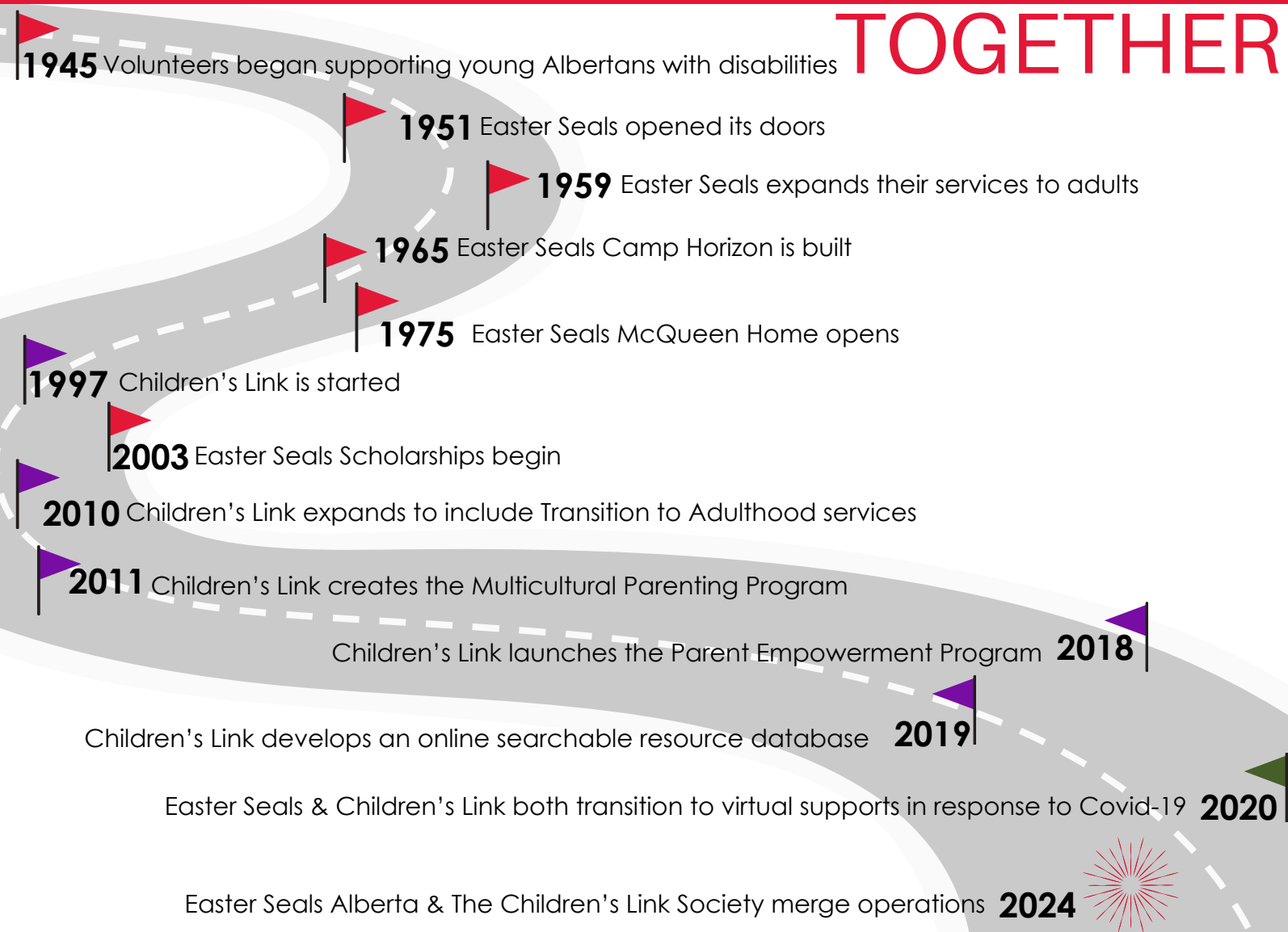
Last year saw a significant milestone in our organizations journey to support and celebrate individuals with disabilities and their families. Easter Seals Alberta and The Children's Link Society officially merged operations in April 2024, creating a partnership that enhances capabilities and strength, while expanding reach across Alberta.

The alignment of organizations was a natural one, as both share a common goal: to empower individuals with disabilities to reach their full potential and ensure families have the robust support they need.

The merging of operations saw team expansion to ensure high-quality support delivery and enhancement of scope of services.

The combined resources also allows for increased holistic supports, addressing the needs of the community more fully. From recreational programs to independence-building initiatives, we are poised to offer a broader, more integrated range of services.

# LINKED TOGETHER





# INSPIRING POTENTIAL. BUILDING COMMUNITY. ENRICHING LIVES.

Easter Seals Alberta is a registered charity that has been connecting Albertans with direct services, programs and advocacy since 1951. For nearly three quarters of a century, Easter Seals Alberta has grown and established a number of different programs and supports. The organization's history reflects the needs of the times and has always maintained the same mission; to provide services that foster inclusion, independence and recreation for individuals with disabilities and medical conditions.

Since our humble beginnings, funds raised by community have supported mental wellness, education, research, and social wellbeing of people with disabilities. Today, we continue this legacy through our evolving supports and programs.

## **EASTER SEALS CAMP HORIZON**

Camp Horizon is a fully accessible camp located just outside of Bragg Creek, AB, providing year-round inclusive camp experiences for individuals of all ages with disabilities and medical conditions. Camp offers a unique opportunity for campers to experience life-changing outdoor recreation activities, while building self-esteem and independence. Activities challenge their mind and body while creating lasting friendships and lifelong memories.

## **EASTER SEALS MCQUEEN HOME**

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.

## **EASTER SEALS ALBERTA'S FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE**

The Easter Seals Family Resource Center is a trusted hub providing vital guidance and resources to families and caregivers of children and youth with disabilities. Our compassionate support spans all stages of life, helping families navigate complex systems, access funding, connect with service providers, and engage with natural supports. Available both in-person and virtually, our services are designed to meet families' unique needs. Our team is dedicated to helping families thrive and reach their full potential.



# CELEBRATING COMMUNITY

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible work we've accomplished together. The 2023/24 year has been a time of growth and change, and we celebrated the meaningful merger of The Children's Link Society and Easter Seals Alberta—truly becoming Linked Together.

This partnership has strengthened our ability to support more children, youth, and families, and we're filled with excitement as we look ahead to what's possible.

Being Linked Together is more than just combining two organizations. It's about joining our hearts, our efforts, and our shared passion to create a stronger, more compassionate community. It's about working together to ensure that those who need us most—whether children with special needs or families facing tough challenges—get the care and support they deserve.

This year, we've made great strides in providing essential services and resources to those we serve. Thanks to your generosity and support, we've been able to make a meaningful difference in many lives. Whether through our programs, our advocacy, or simply being there for families, we've created lasting impact—together.

As we look forward, we are filled with hope and optimism. The future holds so many possibilities, and we know that by staying Linked Together, we will continue to grow, reach more people, and make an even bigger difference. We are incredibly grateful to have you by our side on this journey.

Thank you for being such an important part of our community. We couldn't do this without you, and we can't wait to see all that we will achieve together in the year ahead.

With heartfelt thanks,

Katherine Such  
Chief Executive Officer  
Easter Seals Alberta Society



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"I strive to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. I make it my mission to visit and have engaging conversations with various adults in the school daily, as I firmly believe that having these connections and taking the time in my day to build relationships with people make it easier to have hard conversations about inclusivity when it matters," AidenLee



## MEET OUR 2024 AMBASSADORS

At Easter Seals Alberta, we are proud to have two incredible ambassadors who have dedicated themselves to advocating for inclusion, independence, and the well-being of individuals with disabilities. Their voices have resonated across the province, raising awareness for critical programs, services, and initiatives that empower people to live full and independent lives.

Through their passion and dedication, our ambassadors have helped shine a light on the challenges faced by persons with disabilities while championing the importance of accessibility, community support, and meaningful opportunities. Whether through public speaking, fundraising efforts, or personal storytelling, they continue to inspire change and foster a more inclusive Alberta for all.

We are honoured to celebrate AidenLee and Elise - two remarkable individuals whose advocacy and leadership are making a real difference.

"The counsellors and campers make me feel cared for, and comfortable enough to share my point of view, which I believe is so important for everyone. As such, I have felt good enough about myself to reach out and help others around the camp when I notice they might be struggling," Elise



# CAMP HORIZON - CAMPS

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. Camp offers unique opportunities and activities for campers to build self-esteem and independence, while creating lasting friendships and life long memories.

In 2024, we celebrated a magical summer season at camp, made spooky crafts at the Halloween Howler, and enjoyed a surprise visit and gifts from Santa and Mrs. Claus at Christmas Camp.

"I've seen a lot of difference in my confidence. I feel like I can ask more questions and also I understand how to better help people that need extra help. It was great to learn these different skills, do the activities and help with camp," Brett, Leadership Camp Participant

**506  
CAMPERs**

**18,976  
support  
hours**

**2532  
Volunteer  
Hours**

**8,400  
program  
hours**

"Knowing there was support staff to take care of the kids but also the opportunity of meeting other kids like her was fantastic," Alison, Madison's mom, Kids Kidney Camp

"I feel grateful that Maddy is able to attend a camp that is accommodating to her needs. As medical parents, it's hard for us to leave our children because we're so used to being the caretaker. Camp allows us to take a breather and have time for self-care. We can 'forget' about the medical stuff for a few days and it reminds us that our kids are kids too. They need to have real life experiences," Jessica, Maddy's mom, Summer Camp



# FUELING OUR MISSION



At Easter Seals Alberta, we are committed to creating life-changing experiences for children and individuals with disabilities. One of the ways we make this possible is through our year-round Camp Horizon facility bookings and outdoor education programs, which help support our camps and other essential services.

While our summer camps are the heart of our mission, our work doesn't stop there. During the off-season, we open our facilities to community groups, schools, and organizations for weddings, events, retreats, and outdoor education programs. These bookings not only bring people together in a beautiful and accessible setting, but they also play a crucial role in supporting our mission.

129  
Facility  
Bookings

**The revenue generated from these events, in addition to support received from our generous donors, allows us to subsidize camper fees by almost 70%, making it possible for more families to send their children to camp—regardless of their financial situation.**

Each event and booking made at our facilities has a direct and meaningful impact. From school groups benefiting from outdoor learning experiences to organizations hosting important events, these bookings provide the necessary funds that help ensure our programs remain affordable and accessible. These experiences also help sustain our camp and education programs, which, in turn, improve the lives of those we serve.

We are deeply grateful to the many community members, organizations, and partners who continue to support us in this way. Your choice to book with us during the off-season helps create opportunities for countless individuals who benefit from our services. Without your support, we would not be able to continue offering our life-enriching programs at such an accessible rate.

Thank you for being an integral part of our mission and for helping us make a lasting difference in the lives of children and families across Alberta. Your support, through facility bookings and outdoor education, is invaluable, and we are excited to continue working together to create brighter futures.







# MCQUEEN HOME

The concept for Easter Seals Alberta's McQueen Home was recognized in 1972, to fill a gap in available group living options for people with disabilities.

Founded by Ruth Peterson, the home was created with the vision for her son Gerry, to have a place where young adults with disabilities could thrive and actively participate in their community.

In 1975, McQueen Home became a reality in Edmonton, marking Canada's first accessible home for adults with physical disabilities.



Today, McQueen Home is a nine-bedroom residence designed for individuals with high personal care needs requiring support to live independently. With 24/7 staffing, including a Licensed Practical Nurse and health care attendants, the home provides a safe and secure environment for residents with varying disabilities and medical conditions.

The dedicated staff ensure the house feels like a home and residents are encouraged to connect with their community through volunteering, attending courses, working part-time, and spending quality time with family and friends.

*"The community here at the house is a family atmosphere. We come together and do things for each other." Chad, Resident*



Residents enjoy activities around the house year round, including shared meals, playing board games and celebrating holidays. In 2024 the home welcomed family and friends for a Christmas celebration and their annual outdoor barbeque, fostering a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere.

With many hockey fans in the home, it was an exciting time when the Edmonton Oilers were in the playoffs, making it all the way to the Stanley Cup Final!





# EMPOWERING FAMILIES

The world of disability supports can feel overwhelming. Often parents or caregivers can feel lost, unsure of where to start, or just in need of a helping hand. The Easter Seals Alberta Family Resource Center (FRC) is here to guide and empower individuals every step of the way.

We're here to offer customized, continuous support designed to meet the unique needs of your family at every stage of life. Together, we'll work to overcome obstacles, connect you with the right resources, and empower you to build a strong support network for your loved one.



## **Family Support: Empowering Families Through FSCD & PDD Services**

Navigating the world of disability supports can often feel overwhelming, and many parents and caregivers find themselves uncertain of where to begin or how to access the resources they need. At Easter Seals Alberta, we understand these challenges deeply, and we are committed to supporting families at every step of the journey.

As the official Family Resource Center for Calgary and Southern Alberta, we offer tailored, ongoing support to help families understand, access, and manage Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) and Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) programs. Whether you're new to these services or need help maximizing existing support agreements, we are here to make the process smoother, simpler, and more accessible.



## **Our Family Resource Center is dedicated to:**

- Offering guidance to help families understand the available programs.
- Connecting families with the right resources and services at every stage of life.
- Providing the information and tools needed to make informed decisions and overcome obstacles.
- Helping families build strong, reliable support networks for their loved ones.





# FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE



## Supporting Families Through Transitions to Adulthood

The transition to adulthood for a young person with a disability can be a stressful and uncertain time for families. We are here to provide information, resources, and ongoing guidance to help families navigate this significant life change. Our goal is to ease the burden of these transitions, ensuring families feel confident and well-equipped to support their youth as they enter adulthood.



## Guidance Through Guardianship & Trusteeship

For families supporting a young adult with a disability in Alberta, the process of navigating Guardianship & Trusteeship can be complex and daunting. Our team is here to help guide you through this process, offering support as you complete your application. We work to ensure families feel informed and prepared, providing peace of mind as they make decisions that will impact the future of their loved ones.



## The Equipment Loan Program

Independence and safety are key for individuals with disabilities, and our Equipment Loan Program makes it possible for Albertans to access long-term mobility equipment. This program offers wheelchairs, walkers, and other essential mobility aids to individuals who qualify both physically and financially. By providing this equipment, we help individuals live more independently and confidently, without the financial burden of purchasing the necessary tools for mobility.

The work we do is crucial because it ensures that families do not have to face these challenges alone. By offering expert guidance and connecting families with the right resources, we help reduce stress and improve access to vital support services. Ultimately, we are able to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, ensuring they receive the care, resources, and opportunities they deserve.



Together, we are building a stronger future for families across Calgary and Southern Alberta—one where every individual has the support they need to thrive. Thank you for being a part of this journey with us.





**173**  
Guardianship &  
Trusteeship  
Applications

**53**  
Scholarships  
\$85,000  
Awarded

**1000+**  
Agency  
Partners

**2,343**  
Professional  
Touchpoints  
Made

**11,724**  
Transition to  
Adulthood  
Touchpoints  
Made

**7,894**  
Family  
Support  
Touchpoints  
Made

**70**  
pieces of  
equipment  
provided

**THE FAMILY  
RESOURCE  
CENTER IN  
NUMBERS**






# SCHOLARSHIPS

Easter Seals Alberta's scholarships provide crucial financial support to students with disabilities, empowering them to pursue higher education and achieve their career goals. These scholarships help reduce financial barriers, fostering greater accessibility and inclusivity in academic institutions.

By investing in the education of individuals with disabilities, we not only enhance personal growth and independence but also contribute to a more diverse and skilled workforce.

## Maguire Family Scholarship

This gift was developed to provide financial support to students with disabilities who face significant barriers to accessing higher education. It has a focus on those in rural or underserved communities.



*I am a counselling student currently in my undergrad degree. I am a childhood brain cancer survivor & due to the treatment I developed visual impairments that consider me under the spectrum of being legally blind, a hearing impairment causing me to need to use hearing equipment/tools, and a reading learning disorder.*



*The Maguire Scholarship allowed me to focus on my studies and that I did not have to overwhelm myself by trying to handle full time school & a job. With the support of the Maguire family I am able to pursue my passion for helping others," Mikayla.*

## Accessible Technology and Mentorship Program

Easter Seals partnered nationally with Scotiabank for Supporting Students through the Accessible Technology and Mentorship Program, which aims to bridge the gap that the cost of accessible accommodations, specialized technology, learning aids, attendant care, support services, and accessible transportation can create for students living with disabilities.



*"While my disability affects my day to day life in regard to physical tasks, it has no impact on my cognitive abilities. School has always been a safe space for me because it can prove exactly what I'm capable of.*

*I can't score a 3-pointer or the touchdown that brings a team to victory, but I can apply newton's laws to determine the velocity of those objects the moment they leave a players hand," Amy*



# SCHOLARSHIPS

## Norman Denoon Memorial Scholarship

Established in memory of Norman Denoon, this scholarship offers post-secondary academic scholarships to students living with disabilities or medical conditions, that have made a significant contribution through volunteerism or advocacy.

*"Although it can be a challenge to have two disabilities in a world that does not cater to one-handed or neurodivergent people, I thrive on challenges and look forward to overcoming any obstacles in my way with joy in my heart and a smile on my face!" Ingrid*



## 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.



*"When I am finished this degree, I am really hoping to continue my post-secondary education even further. I am thinking of perhaps doing a Master's degree in Engineering if possible," Sam*

After his first year at University, Sam started using a mobility scooter and wheelchair to help conserve energy so he wasn't so drained all the time.

## Workplace Readiness Mentorship Program

The Workplace Readiness Mentorship Program is proudly supported by Sun Life Canada. The program aims to help students succeed in university and transition into the labour force.

*"Once I'm done my Radio Broadcasting diploma I will become a contributing member of my community and the society. I can't wait to see what opportunities might come my way," Kale*



# EVENTS

## Red Shirt Day

Thank you to everyone that wore red on May 29, 2024 to support individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers. Last year was the 6th anniversary of the movement, held on the Wednesday of National AccessAbility Week each year. In preparation for National AccessAbility Week and Red Shirt Day, AidenLee, our Northern Easter Seals Alberta Ambassador, fundraised and shared his story to promote accessibility within the community.

Throughout the month of May 2024, AidenLee visited local elementary schools to educate children on accessibility and showcase adaptive sports. He also organized a series of fundraisers, including a cake auction and candy sales with a local bakery to raise awareness. To support him, AidanLee's school designed custom red shirts for Red Shirt Day!

*"I don't want to be going somewhere that I have planned with my family and my friends and then I miss out on doing something because it's inaccessible," Aidan*

## Hockey for Horizon

The first annual Hockey for Horizon game took place in Bragg Creek on January 27, 2024. In partnership with John Barlow (MP, Foothills), the event was a big success, raising money to send campers to Camp Horizon. Participation by NHL Alumni and celebrities, Rich Preston, Craig Levie, Colin Patterson and George Canyon, made for an exciting day. Thank you to our sponsors for their support and all the players for their fundraising efforts.

*"You can't help but fall in love with the cause. We've had fundraisers in the past that have been good but we really wanted something in close proximity to the camp, and we had some great volunteers jump on board right away," John Barlow, MP Foothills*





# EVENTS

## Dancing With the Easter Seals Stars – Edmonton & Calgary

Last year we were thrilled to introduce the inaugural Litco Law Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars events in Edmonton and Calgary. The events saw 11 local community leaders compete in front of live audiences at our Gala dinner events on October 8 in Calgary and October 18 in Edmonton.

Contestants worked with professional staff at Arthur Murray Dance Studios, to put their routines together to an 80's dance theme. Competition took place in front of family, friends, colleagues, and our selected panel of judges, consisting of local media, sponsors and dance professionals. The two events brought together the disability sector, community and business leaders from across Alberta, all in support of Easter Seals Alberta programs and services.

## JC Anderson Golf Tournament

For over a decade, JC Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament supporters have helped make an incredible legacy of ensuring individuals with disabilities and medical conditions can attend Camp Horizon. JC had a vision to ensure kids with disabilities had a place to play and belong, no matter their diagnosis. The annual tournament took place on August 22, 2024, across from the Anderson family ranch at the picturesque Sirocco Golf Club. Thanks to our incredible community of sponsors, supporters and golfers, the 2024 JC Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament, presented by Century 21 Foothills, was a smashing success! Together we raised more than \$85,000 to support Easter Seals Camp Horizon!





**Easter  
Seals**<sup>TM</sup>  
Alberta



**Inspiring Potential. Building Community. Enriching Lives.**

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