



2025 IN REVIEW

Highlights of the year





Our Mission

To build inclusive
communities where
individuals on the autism
spectrum can thrive

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Letter from the CEO and Chair

Dear Friends,

Belonging is not a nice-to-have. It is foundational.

This past year at Canucks Autism Network (CAN), we witnessed what happens when children, youth, and adults on the autism spectrum are given space to move, play, grow, and simply be, without barriers or judgment. We saw confidence build on the ice, friendships form on the field, and families discover they were not alone.

None of this happened by accident.

Because of your generosity, as donors, sponsors, and partners, thousands of participants experienced moments that might seem small from the outside but can make a life-changing difference. For some, it meant a successful transition into a new activity, for others, a meaningful step toward independence and a newfound sense of belonging.



Beyond our direct programming, your support also helped strengthen the broader community through CAN's training and accessibility initiatives. This year, first responders, teachers, mental health practitioners, and professionals across the travel and customer service sectors gained the knowledge, confidence, and tools to better understand and support Autistic individuals. These efforts are creating ripple effects, building communities that are more accepting, welcoming, and inclusive for all.

This report is a reflection of what we achieved together this year. Inside, you'll meet participants and families whose stories bring our impact to life, see the measurable outcomes your support made possible, and learn how we continue to grow responsibly while staying true to our mission.

Thank you for believing in inclusion, for investing in community, and for standing alongside Canucks Autism Network. We are deeply grateful and incredibly proud to share this year with you.

With appreciation,



Britt Andersen
Canucks Autism Network CEO



Mark Zastre
Chair of the Board





Our Dream

A future where every individual on the autism spectrum is understood, accepted, and supported in all community spaces

We Believe

- That every child on the autism spectrum has the right to play sports.
- That every individual on the spectrum and their family has the right to meaningful social connections.
- That every Autistic youth should be supported during important transitions into adulthood.
- That every community should take action to include and support individuals on the spectrum.
- That every Autistic individual has the right to equitable access to meaningful employment.
- That people on the spectrum have the right to an active voice: to be heard, valued, and seen.





Our Focus Areas



Children's Programs (3-12yrs)

Highly supported introductory opportunities that help participants build social connections, develop skills, and grow their confidence.

Programs rooted in: sports and recreation, arts and science, and social connection.



Youth and Adults Programs (13yrs+)

Autism-affirming community-based opportunities designed to support important transitions into adulthood.

Programs rooted in: mental health & wellness, employment & life skills, recreation, and social connection.



Family Experiences (All ages)

Fun, inclusive activities for the whole family, with opportunities to connect with other local families.

Seasonal experiences offered in: Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Nanaimo, Victoria, Kamloops, and Kelowna.



Training and Accessibility Consultation (Across Canada & beyond)

Asynchronous online courses, in-person workshops, and customized consultation across sectors, including support for sensory-friendly events and spaces.

The CAN Difference

Our unique approach is rooted in guiding principles that honour individuality, amplify strengths, and foster genuine belonging.

Autistic-informed and community-led: We are committed to increasing Autistic representation across our organization and creating meaningful opportunities for Autistic individuals to design, lead, and shape our programs.

Community-based delivery: We deliver programs directly in the communities where participants live, building strong local presence, trust, and visibility.

Provincial leadership in programming: We are a provincial leader in delivering high-quality programs for Autistic children, youth, and adults, reaching communities across the province through an unmatched breadth and volume of programming.

Accessible by design: Our programs are highly subsidized, with fee assistance available, ensuring financial barriers never prevent participation.

Autism-affirming delivery: All programs are strengths-based and autism-affirming.

National leadership in training: We are a national leader in customized autism training that advances inclusion across the broader community.

Individualized support across the spectrum: We support Autistic individuals across the spectrum, scaling staffing to meet higher support needs while fostering independence for those requiring less support.

Bridging inclusion beyond our programs: We create meaningful bridges to community participation by training others to understand, support, and include Autistic individuals across a wide range of settings.

Your Support in Action



636

Programs
Delivered



486

Program Staff
Employed



483

Active
Volunteers



2,200

Community
Members Trained



97

Training Workshops
Delivered



13,841

Family Experience
Attendees Welcomed



224

New Members
Each Month



27,725

Autistic Individuals and
Family Members Supported



Every number represents a moment, and every moment was made possible by you. Thank you for making our work, and this impact, possible.



Belonging in Play

Where Confidence Begins

For many participants, stepping into the gym, pool, or rink is about more than learning a skill. It's about feeling seen, supported, and safe to try.

This year, thousands of children found that safe space through our programs. With highly trained staff, encouraging volunteers, and a focus on individual needs, participants showed us what's possible when given the opportunity to thrive.

For some, that meant learning how to take turns or follow a routine. For others, it meant discovering a love of movement. For all, it meant belonging.

Children's Programs (3-12yrs)

Weekly Programs

Skate | Swim | Multisport | Baseball
Gymnastics | Hockey | Music | Movement to Music
Caregiver & Child Music Program

Summer Camps

Baseball | Multisport | Tennis | Golf
STEM | Gymnastics | Ultimate Frisbee
Volleyball | Integrated Camp

Virtual Programs

Coding | Advanced Coding | App Development
Science | Drawing | Art | Generation Health



Why It Matters

Inclusive play builds more than physical skills. It supports emotional regulation, social connection, and lifelong confidence, outcomes that extend well beyond the walls of our programs.

"Seeing the smile on my son's face and his excitement to go to these programs has definitely been the highlight of my year. We have attended many other programs through local rec centres and nothing has even come close to CAN. Being a part of CAN has not only given our son the chance to try new things, but to also do things without the fear of being judged or left out. This is the best thing for a mother to see." — Rebecca, CAN Parent



Program Spotlight: CARES - A New Caregiver-Focused Program

This unique program was specifically designed to target the social, emotional, and psychological challenges that can arise among caregivers of children with complex needs. It provides a safe space to build skills, share experiences, and connect with others, while fostering resilience.



Partner Spotlight: Jays Care

Thanks to the continued support of Jays Care and their commitment to inclusive sport, 1,099 participant spots were filled across our spring and summer baseball programs. Together, we share a belief in the power of sport to foster inclusion, build confidence, and strengthen community connections.





Belonging in Growth

Youth & Adult

For many Autistic youth and adults, joining a program is about more than building a skill. It's about feeling seen, understood, and empowered to explore their potential.

This year, hundreds of youth and adults discovered that welcoming space through our programs. Guided by trained staff and knowledgeable volunteers, youth and adults showed us what's possible when individual strengths are recognized and authentic selves are celebrated.

For some, that meant developing confidence in social settings.
For others, it meant gaining independence through life skills or employment readiness.
For all, it meant connecting with others and feeling a sense of belonging.



*Youth Mental Health and Wellness Programs
proudly supported by TD Bank Group*

Why It Matters

Our youth and adult programs foster social connection, positive mental health, and self-confidence, equipping participants with the resilience and skills to thrive in every area of their lives.





Youth & Adult Programs (13-17, 18+yrs)

Weekly In-Person Programs:

Outdoor Active | Fitness | Skate | Swim | Walking Club
Rock Climbing | Craft & Connect* | Baseball
Basketball (new in 2025)

Pop Ups:

Kayaking | Rock Climbing | Snowshoeing
Basketball | Paddle Boarding | Rowing
Yoga | Music to Move Your Mood
Dungeons and Dragons* | Disc Golf | Canine Cuddles
Kindred Farm | Birding* | Set Sail Basics
Explore Nature | Shoreline Cleanup | Brewery Nights

Virtual:

Dungeons and Dragons* | Creative Writing*
Autistic Youth and Well Being*
Healthy Relationships, Sexuality, and Autism
Autistic Dating Group* | Book Club (new in 2025)

****Autistic-led***

Drop Ins:

Autistic Community Group*

Women's Peer Group ♀ *

Movie Club

Workshops:

Confidence Workshop for Autistic Women and 2SLGBTQIA+ Community*

Dating while Autistic for Women and 2SLGBTQIA+ Community *

Demystifying Sex + Dating – Q & A and Discussion

Climate Café

Summer Camps:

Baseball

Paddleboarding

Employment Programs & Services:

Skills Training Employment Program

Ready, Willing & Able

***Autistic-led**



Partnership Spotlight: YMCA Kamloops

YMCA Kamloops has been a long-standing partner, supporting the delivery and expansion of our highly subsidized swim programming. In Fall 2025, the partnership grew with the launch of the **Y-Minds Youth Program**, which helps Autistic teens experiencing anxiety build coping skills in a safe, supportive environment. We look forward to continuing to grow this partnership with the launch of a new program with the YMCA and School District in 2026.

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Belonging in the Workplace

The **CAN Skills Training Employment Program (CAN-STEP)** runs over 11 weeks and provides Autistic youth and adults with the opportunity to build valuable skills through classroom training and paid work experience.

The **Vancouver** CAN-STEP program, funded by the Government of Canada's Opportunities Fund, continues to thrive, with **65 graduates to date and a 54% employment rate.** Originally set to conclude in December 2025, the program has been extended through March 2027 in recognition of its strong outcomes and ongoing success.

Building on this momentum, CAN-STEP expanded to **Kelowna** in 2025 with support from the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Fund. To date, **19 participants have completed the program, with 58% securing employment** — a particularly impressive outcome given that Kelowna recorded the highest unemployment rate in the country in December.

It is estimated that 80% of Autistic individuals are unemployed.

CAN-STEP Graduate Story: Andy

Andy joined the CAN-STEP program in Kelowna eager to build skills and gain employment experience. **Through dedication, growth, and a strong work ethic, he completed 120 hours of work experience at Save-On-Foods, where he consistently demonstrated initiative and reliability.** His dedication earned him a position as a General Clerk following his placement.

Through CAN-STEP, Andy developed essential workplace skills, including communication, critical thinking, and industry certifications such as First Aid and Food Safe, helping build both his confidence and employability.

When asked about his favourite part of the CAN-STEP program, Andy shared:

"Earning money for lunch, making friends, and learning to think critically about work, especially about attitudes in the workplace."

Andy's journey reflects what CAN-STEP is all about: building skills, fostering independence, and creating meaningful employment opportunities.



Ready, Willing and Able (RWA)

is a national initiative that engages, educates and supports employers to hire people on the autism spectrum or with an intellectual disability. Canucks Autism Network is a provincial delivery partner of RWA in British Columbia.

The RWA program in Vancouver and Kelowna continues to perform strongly, with both employer engagement and job seeker navigation performance ranking among the top in Canada.

Successes:

78 Autistic job seekers hired in Vancouver and Kelowna

19 Autistic job seekers connected to employment supports in Vancouver





Spotlight: Animating your Future

To mark National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, we launched Animating Your Future, **a webinar series for Autistic job seekers and students exploring careers in digital animation and game design.** Featuring industry leaders like EA Sports and Atomic Cartoons, the six-session series drew 265 attendees, including participants from overseas.



Belonging in the Community

Family Experiences continued to see strong demand this past year with a total of 13,841 attendees across 42 events.

Seasonal experiences were delivered across Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Nanaimo, Victoria, Kamloops, and Kelowna.

Activities included:

- Mini golf
- Sensory-friendly movies
- Holiday lights
- Farm visits
- Learn to Fish
- Waterparks
- Relaxed concerts & more!

Sponsor Spotlight: ITC Construction

In 2025, we introduced an exciting new Family Experience in the Fraser Valley: Farmfest! The event featured a wide variety of activities from farm animals and a zipline to giant bouncy pillows, a climbing wall, and even a dunk tank starring some of our most beloved staff. A designated quiet space was also available, ensuring families could take a break from the sensory-rich environment when needed.

Farmfest was a resounding success, welcoming more than 1,500 attendees and receiving generous sponsorship support from **ITC Construction, DB Perks Aquatics, and Centaur Products.**



"At ITC Construction Group, we believe strong communities are built by supporting families where it matters most. Partnering with Canucks Autism Network and supporting CAN Family Experiences allows us to help create inclusive, joyful moments where children and families can connect, feel supported, and simply have fun. Seeing the smiles on their faces is a powerful reminder of the impact these experiences have."



Building Belonging Beyond

Launch of CAN Learning Hub

Launched in April 2025, the CAN Learning Hub has quickly become an online destination for accessible, self-paced learning. It serves key sectors including educators, first responders, mental health practitioners and crisis line workers, customer service professionals, and the travel industry.

Since its launch, we've developed seven new courses tailored to priority community sectors, alongside 38 internal training courses to strengthen staff knowledge. Each course was developed with the support and expertise of Autistic advocates, community partners, and subject matter experts. **The impact has been significant, with community members completing over 1,000 hours of learning through the Hub,** and CAN staff logging more than 5,300 hours of online training.

Sharing Expertise Through Conference Presentations

During the fall, CAN participated in six conferences, showcasing our training services and strengthening connections with community partners. Highlights included presentations at **TravelAbility, the BC School Trustees Association, BCRPA, and Autism Alliance events.**



New Partnership with Surrey Police Service

CAN was pleased to begin a training partnership with the Surrey Police Service with three pilot workshop sessions for frontline teams occurring in 2025. The partnership will be expanded in 2026 including the development of scenario-based skills training, online learning, and additional live workshops.



Advancing Accessible Air Travel

This year, Autism Aviation Days expanded to **Kamloops Airport** (YKA), marking an exciting milestone for the program. In partnership with the Air Canada Foundation, we were thrilled to host our inaugural event at YKA, welcoming more than 20 families with individuals on the autism spectrum.

At **Vancouver International Airport** (YVR), we welcomed 70 participants to “Learn to Fly,” continuing a program we have proudly delivered since 2014. In addition, YVR funded the development of our new Learning Hub travel course, further advancing our shared commitment to making travel more accessible for everyone.



Autism Acceptance Games

In 2025, CAN partnered with nine sports teams across BC to deliver Autism Acceptance Games:

Abbotsford Canucks

Coquitlam Express

Kamloops Blazers

Kelowna Rockets

Langley Rivermen

Nanaimo Clippers

Vancouver Canucks

Vancouver Football Club

Victoria Grizzlies

A variety of sensory adaptations were implemented to make facilities and games autism-accessible, including CAN autism training for arena staff, a designated quiet room for fans needing a break, and CAN Sensory Kits. These kits provide calming sensory tools, game schedules to support predictability, and noise-cancelling headphones to help reduce sensory sensitivities.

"I just wanted to say thank you so much for the incredible experience at the Vancouver FC Autism Acceptance Game! It was Leon's very first soccer match ever and it was absolutely wonderful. From the quieter atmosphere, to the other thoughtful accommodations, everything was just perfect. We felt so welcomed and supported. Even the rain couldn't stop us from having the best day and feeling like we belonged. Leon had a blast, and it's a memory we'll cherish forever. Thank you again for all your effort to make sport more inclusive for our families."



Why It Matters

Sensory-friendly events and spaces are important because they **make environments more accessible and inclusive** for individuals with sensory sensitivities, including many Autistic people. By minimizing potentially overwhelming stimuli and providing supportive accommodations, more people can participate comfortably, build connections, and engage in community activities.





Partnership Highlight: Lifesaving Society of BC & Yukon

With generous support from the **Azrieli Foundation** and in collaboration with the **Lifesaving Society**, we **launched an online and in-person training program for swim instructors in January 2025**. The training equips instructors with the tools and knowledge to successfully support and include neurodivergent swimmers. Following pilot sessions in Vancouver, Surrey, and Whitehorse, the program rolled out province-wide and is now mandatory for certification and recertification, with more than 908 instructors across BC having completed the training.





Event Spotlight: Jet Classic Charity Golf Tournament

Fueled by their shared passion for giving back, friends Brett Johnston and Jeff Lynch came together to host the 4th Annual Jet Classic Charity Golf Tournament, presented by Woola, in support of Canucks Autism Network.

Every drive, putt, and high-five helped power our mission, raising an incredible \$39,891 this year and an all-time total of \$102,982.



Fundraising and Special Events



Supporter Spotlight: Home Restaurant

In celebration of Autism Acceptance Month, Home Restaurants across BC baked up kindness, selling cookies all April long in support of CAN.

Thanks to their incredible community, more than 12,000 cookies were sold, raising an amazing \$18,800! With this campaign, Home Restaurants' lifetime giving has now reached an impressive \$147,599.70

The Village – A collective of compassionate monthly givers

CAN's monthly giving club, The Village, brings together a community of caring supporters who believe lasting change happens through consistent support. Their monthly gifts help ensure Autistic individuals and their families can access the programs, resources, and understanding they need, today and into the future.

"Being a monthly donor means I get to help out every single month and I've seen firsthand the difference that consistent, ongoing support can make. It's incredibly rewarding to know that my contributions are helping to make a positive impact in the lives of so many individuals and families in our community." - Christina

"Being part of The Village means we're investing in CAN's future, so it can continue to be there for families like ours".
- Shawn & Leslie

2025 CAN Pro-Am

The 7th annual CAN Pro-Am, presented by Dallas Watt Demo Ltd., **raised an incredible \$1,011,310** in support of Canucks Autism Network.

The event kicked off with a luncheon at the Westin Bayshore, generously sponsored by TD Bank Group. That evening, Draft Night, sponsored by Sportsnet 650, brought added excitement as teams selected an NHL Alumni for their roster based on overall fundraising rankings. CAN legend Bob Shanks led all participants in individual fundraising, while the Constructors once again claimed top fundraising team honours.

A powerful highlight of the event came from a longtime CAN participant, now a CAN support worker and CAN hockey coach, who shared how the organization helped shape his life and gave him the confidence to achieve goals he once thought were out of reach.



"If you told me 10 years ago that I would graduate, go to college, learn to drive, and book acting roles, I would think that's impossible. Because back then, I didn't think I could do things that other people could do. But Canucks Autism Network showed me that I CAN. They made me the best version of myself. I wouldn't be where I am today if I didn't have CAN in my life." - Carter M

ELEVATE

On Thursday, June 5th, nearly 300 CAN supporters stepped into a time machine and travelled back to the 80s for the 2nd annual ELEVATE event, hosted by SKY Helicopters. Like a scene straight out of Back to the Future, guests mingled, dined, sipped, and danced the night away alongside a fully decked-out DeLorean.

The 80s-inspired theme was in full effect, with neon looks, big hair energy, and even a few guests rolling in on actual roller skates. The night also featured live music worthy of a mixtape, caricature drawings, classic arcade games, scenic helicopter rides, and an electric atmosphere that helped **raise an incredible \$202,125** in support of CAN.





Going the Distance

In 2023, we welcomed Zahida and her daughter Shayna into the CAN family, and they quickly made a lasting impression. **Shayna's joyful presence brightens every space, and together this athletic duo has gone the distance to support CAN.** From fundraising for our signature Sports Day event, to participating in the Vancouver Island Trail Running Series, and even completing the Royal Victoria 5K side by side, they proudly support CAN every step of the way.

Their motivation is personal. Shayna has benefited from CAN's multisport, baseball, swimming, skating and summer camp programs, while the pair have enjoyed family events like canoeing, hiking, mini golf, corn mazes, and train rides.

As Zahida shares, *"I learned early on that CAN has a double meaning. Beyond the organization's name, it reflects the belief that Autistic individuals CAN do anything they set their minds to - a truth I've proudly witnessed firsthand."*





Our Team

- 1** full-time office staff in **Kamloops**
- 1** full-time office staff on **Vancouver Island**
- 5** full-time office staff in **Kelowna**
- 45** full-time office staff in the **Lower Mainland**
- 486** program staff
- 961** volunteers
- 9,805** volunteer hours logged





Board of Directors

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Saba Naqvi
Garth Stoll, Treasurer
Julia Ward
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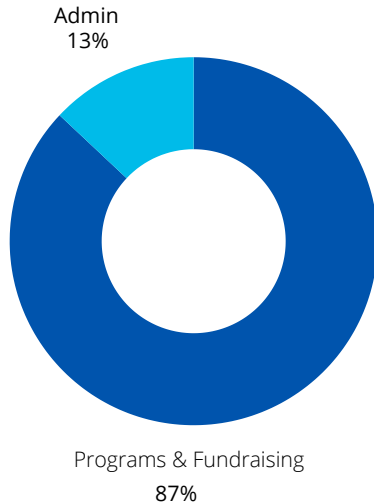
1 in 25 kids in
BC is Autistic

**Belonging
starts here**

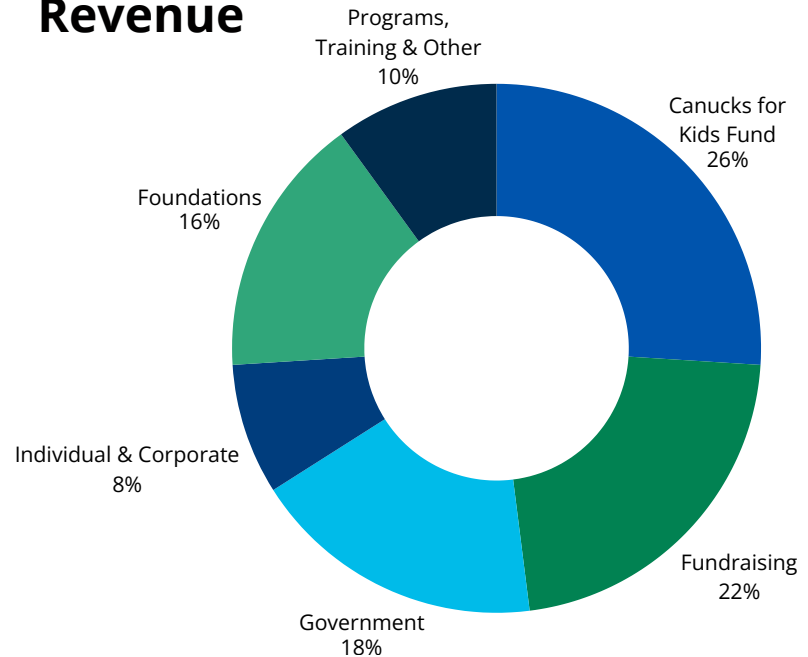
Financials



Expenses



Revenue



**Your support fuels more than programs. It fuels possibility.
And a more inclusive tomorrow.**

Letter from the Treasurer

The past fiscal year represented a very strong year for CAN, reflecting sound financial management and resilience in the face of ongoing economic uncertainty.

Revenue exceeded expectations, driven by the continued success of fundraising events such as CAN Pro-Am and ELEVATE, as well as the recognition and deployment of additional secured foundation funding to support operations, program delivery, and training services. These reflect sustained funder confidence in our mission and impact. The resulting operating surplus enabled CAN to replenish reserves, strengthening our balance sheet and long-term financial sustainability.

Expenses were carefully managed throughout the year, with cost savings achieved through vendor reviews and efficiency improvements across several systems and processes, including payroll. Program spending came in below budget thanks to

careful management and conservative planning. Despite some challenges in a few prototype programs, participant numbers remained comparable to prior years.

The year also brought meaningful strategic progress. Our CAN-STEP employment program expanded into Kelowna, broadening our reach and deepening our impact. Our training programs are continuing to grow and reach new audiences.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend sincere thanks to our funders, donors, sponsors, and partners. Your continued investment and confidence enable the organization to plan responsibly and deliver meaningful impact to the communities we serve. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and commitment.

In summary, CAN ends the year in a strong financial and strategic position. With strong reserves, diversified revenue streams, and growing programs, the organization is well positioned to deliver impactful programming in the year ahead and support individuals on the autism spectrum to thrive.



Garth Stoll (Treasurer)

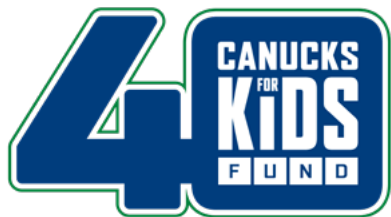


I just wanted to send my appreciation to the camp staff and volunteers. Emily and Jamie had so many moments of feeling safe, capable & confident! Everyone that interacted with the kids was so sweet and kind. We've seen such change in them feeling able to try new things, "fail" and be ok to try again. Being able to drop them off and know they would be loved and supported without my constant presence was healing for me as a mom. We had such an amazing summer with CAN and can't wait to see how we enter the school year with these confident and calm little humans.

- CAN Parent

Thank you!

Special thanks to our core funder,
Canucks for Kids Fund!





Canucks Autism Network

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Registered Charity #82247 2957 RR0001

Canucks Autism Network acknowledges that our offices are located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Syilx Okanagan Nations – and that our work takes place in the territories of Indigenous peoples across the province, including the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.