



## Greetings from VAD!



This has been a dynamic year of change at the Voice of Albertans with Disabilities. We have welcomed new staff: Maureen Murphy-Black, Teresa Yagos, Michelle Bissell, new board members: Kristin Jennings - Edmonton, Tarah Patterson - Grande Prairie, and Sharde Davies - Lethbridge. With new people come new ideas and approaches. This newsletter highlights some of the accomplishments of the past year and new initiatives for 2018.

I, Meloney Patterson, Executive Director, thank all of you who welcomed me to my new role with VAD and look forward to our ongoing work. Seasons greetings and best wishes to you and your family from Voice of Albertans with Disabilities.

I, Meloney Patterson, Executive Director, thank all of you who welcomed me to my new role with VAD and look forward to our ongoing work. Seasons greetings and best wishes to you and your family from Voice of Albertans with Disabilities.

## 2017 Highlights

- Voice of Albertans with Disabilities became our new name.
- VAD was proud to release the new logo as part of the name change.
- The *Creating Accessible Hotels in Alberta* Project resulted in the production of three tools found online at: <http://vadsociety.ca/what-we-do/projects-and-research>
  1. Templates on Best Practices for Accessible Hotel Rooms and Bathrooms
  2. A Guest Checklist to Assess Accessible Hotel Accommodations
  3. A Hotel Accessibility Self-Assessment Guide for hotels to examine key accessibility elements.
- VAD held a Spring and Fall ADF Forum. Both were well attended with members providing advice and direction.
- We continue to expand our communication channels with social media using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn,



VAD Relationship Networks—Powerful Voices

Google Plus and Constant Contact to reach members and raise awareness of issues.

- The VAD membership network model has been reworked to include Individual and ADF membership streams.
- We proudly launched the first annual *Accessible Driver Appreciation Day* on November 15 with terrific feedback from service providers.
- VAD participated in [#GivingTuesdayCa](#) for the first time this year. We plan to make this an annual event with more interaction from our members to support this annual fund-raising opportunity.
- An information pamphlet by priority areas for people with disabilities for the municipal elections was developed.
- We partnered with member organizations to raise awareness on disability issues relating to municipal elections.
- This was an active and growing year for advocacy in the Ride Transit Program in Edmonton.
- Educational and Disability Awareness presentations were given to over 900 participants this year.



## Looking Forward to 2018

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities is launching a number of initiatives in 2018 to build on our 44 year history of having a strong united voice that promotes full participation in society.

Individual membership, iVAD, is being revitalized. A dynamic group of people have come together and started discussions about how people with disabilities can best influence legislation, policy and services in Alberta. They are individuals who want to be heard and want to support and participate in research and projects, support individuals with disabilities by raising awareness about frontline issues with programs and service providers, receive and distribute news and views around disability issues. We plan to have a place on our website for people to submit issues and concerns. We welcome





Website: [www.vadsociety.ca](http://www.vadsociety.ca); Email: [vad@vadsociety.ca](mailto:vad@vadsociety.ca)  
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: @VADisabilities

Individuals who want to be an ally to a person with a disability, become part of the collective, and have a unified voice.

Organizational members, through ADF, are gearing up to focus on Accessibility and Staff Retention in the Disability Sector. Organizational members have direct representation, objectives that relate to individuals with disabilities, strength of VOICE and collaboration. Organizations can participate in research and projects. ADF is a place to raise awareness about frontline issues affecting the community and present and distribute news and views around disability issues. Groups and organizations that want to be an ally to families of a person with a disability are welcome to become part of the collective and have a unified voice, participate in VAD events and conferences to network and unify the disability sector.



The first Think Tank on Staff Retention is going to be held on January 18, 2018.



VAD is developing strategies to have a local presence throughout the province and develop corporate sponsors. Your networks and contacts are welcome in this effort.

VAD is also looking forward to the first annual conference in the fall of 2018 in conjunction with the fall forum.

If you would like more information on the planning for 2018, you are most welcome to contact our office at 780-488-9088 or email [vad@vadsociety.ca](mailto:vad@vadsociety.ca).

## Article Corner

See what the Calgary Ability Network and Disability Action developed for Municipal Elections in Calgary by following this link: <http://vadsociety.ca/blog/2017/09/elections-sheet>.

Read a great article *RDSP— A Huge Win for Advisors and Clients*. Frank Di Pietro, CFA, CFP, is Assistant Vice President with Mackenzie Investments based out of Toronto. He is an advocate and a strong believer in the RDSP and its benefits for people living with disabilities. Follow this link: <http://vadsociety.ca/blog/2017/12/the-rdsp--a-huge-win-for-advisors-and-clients>



## Shared Office Space for Rent

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities is offering a shared office space for rent. The office is 19'10" x 10' and includes one desk and space for a small desk or table. Rent is negotiable per month and includes utilities and furniture.

Access to the following items are negotiable:

- Phone system with voice mail
- Telephone reception and call forwarding
- Access to the boardroom for meeting space
- After hours cleaning
- Access to photocopier

Location is 10423-178 Street, Edmonton. Please call Meloney to make an appointment to view the office space at 780-488-9088 or email [execdir@vadsociety.ca](mailto:execdir@vadsociety.ca).

We are a non-profit society that actively promotes full participation in society and provide a voice for Albertans with Disabilities.



*Together, We Hold the Power!*

**Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity**