



Time for a vacation?



Image source from pablofausto on flickr

Albertans with physical disabilities will have five more parks to enjoy with their families this summer, plus a new place to fish in the Castle Wildland Provincial Park next summer.

The five parks are being improved as part of a \$3 million plan to create accessible experiences in 15 provincial parks by 2020. In addition, Alberta Parks will create a barrier-free fishing experience in the Castle Wildland Provincial Park in 2018.

The accessible fishing venue in the Castle Wildland Provincial Park will feature a boardwalk around Bathing Lake. Over the next four years, more than \$20 million will go to access routes, inclusion projects, camping, signage, picnic areas and hiking trails in the Castle parks. The province will also begin construction this year on two additional replacement cabins at William Watson Lodge in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, scheduled to open in 2018. The \$2.8 million project follows the completion of two other replacement cabins at the popular destination, which supports seniors and persons with mobility challenges.



AccessNow

Try a great free service. The AccessNow.me website and phone app is all about sharing accessibility information around the world. Search for specific locations with the accessibility features you require. Find the location's accessibility issues, for example it says it's accessible but has stairs to washroom, or it is completely accessible and a great spot to dine...your feedback helps this great social tool locate accessible shops and services.



Creating Accessible Hotels in Alberta

The *Creating Accessible Hotels in Alberta* Project is now in the report writing and recommendation development phase. Information has been collected through a literature review, surveys/interviews with 162 people with disabilities and 40 hotel managers across Alberta and an examination of the results of 7 hotel assessments completed between August 2016 and February 2017. We thank all the people who have provided us with their knowledge and experience throughout the data collection phase. We also appreciate the input to the Advisory Committee by the Alberta Hotel and Lodgings Association, Alberta Municipal Affairs, the City of Edmonton, the Human Rights Commission, and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

We anticipate a final report will be available by June 2017 which will outline current practices, helpful tools to assess and increase accessibility, and recommendations for action.

Project funded by  Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund

Alberta Home Care

The Alberta budget showed an increase in funding for home and community care. While this is good news, people with disabilities are concerned because the focus of the home care program is on medical services like personal care and medication assistance.

"Services that may be associated with helping people remain at home that aren't strictly health care are really the responsibility of others to provide," said Dr. James Silvius from Alberta Health Services (AHS).

The light housekeeping work provided by AHS in the past has enabled many individuals to live independently and they are disturbed that this independence may be lost. People on AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) can't afford to pay for a private service.



Website: www.vadsociety.ca; Email: vad@vadsociety.ca
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: @VADisabilities

Board Members Needed



Would you like to make a difference in your community? We are looking for board members from all areas of the province who are 18 years of age or older, who can commit to a

two-year term and have access to email. Priority will be given to those individuals with a disability or who have disability awareness.

Familiarity with activities of non-profit organizations, including projects, programs and resource development, as well as having board experience, fundraising experience or leadership skills, that you could bring to our Board of Directors would be an asset although not a requirement.

For more information on Voice of Albertans with Disabilities, please visit our website at www.vadsociety.ca or email vad@vadsociety.ca.

Apply for the Education for Life Bursary

Each year, Voice of Albertans with Disabilities provides financial support to students with disabilities who are continuing their education as post-secondary students. Funding is available through our Education for Life bursaries (usually \$500), the Elsa Marie Lodewyk Memorial Bursary, \$1000, and the Pembina Pipeline Corporation Bursary, \$2000.

The application deadline for the 2017-2018 year is July 15, 2017. Visit the link www.vadsociety.ca/what-we-do/bursaries-and-awards for full details and the application form. Call 780-488-9088 or 1-800-387-2514 if you have any questions.



Alberta Disabilities Forum Spring Meeting

The spring Forum Meeting held on March 9 reflected some of the many changes at Voice of Albertans with Disabilities. Our new Provincial Coordinator, Meloney Patterson, chaired the meeting. Speakers included Corrine Saad, ED of the C5 Group, Mezaun Lakha-Evin, Associate ED of the Cerebral Palsy Association in Alberta and Chair of the Calgary Ability Network, Orrin Lyseng, acting ED of the Alberta Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, and Margot Brunner-Campbell, Vice-President of our Board of Directors.

The focus for this meeting was on collaborative working groups. ADF members who attended used this information to discuss moving forward with a large body of previous work, *Valuing and Supporting Alberta's Not for Profit Disability Organizations*.

It was appreciated that everyone in the room was able to hear the presentation and discussion thanks to Lee Ramsdell, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-Edmonton, who set up his own loop system.



Meloney Patterson and Orrin Lyseng

ADF AISH Update

On March 2, 2017, government representatives from the AISH program met with members from the ADF AISH Working Group, Guy Coulombe, Spinal Cord Injury, and Meloney Patterson, ADF Provincial Coordinator, to discuss recommendations outlined in the ADF paper submitted to them in January. They invited us to outline in a letter our recommendations for suggested improvements to the AISH application forms, their processes and eligibility adjudication criteria. We strongly reiterated the call for cost of living increases as outlined in the AISH Working Group paper.



Together, We Hold the Power!

Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity