



The VOICE of Albertans with Disabilities

January 4, 2022



Alberta Ability Network is presenting a virtual event introducing the new Advocate for Persons with Disabilities in Alberta, Greg McMeekin.

When: January 11, 2022 / 2-3 PM

Register for the event and submit any questions that you would like the Advocate to address, time permitting: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/meet-your-new-advocate-for-persons-with-disabilities-in-alberta-tickets-231149643807>

*The option to submit questions will be presented to you during the registration process on Eventbrite.

Biography

Greg McMeekin has a law degree from the University of Calgary and a bachelor of arts in mass communications from Carleton University. Despite many physical challenges, he made history when he was called to the Alberta Bar in 2016. McMeekin has extensive personal and professional experience working with people with disabilities, their support networks and other stakeholders. He believes strongly in empowering people with disabilities to reach their full potential and looks forward to being part of a team that is focused on improving the quality of lives of people with disabilities. He has worked at Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, Legal Aid Alberta, and has volunteered on various councils, advisory committees and boards working to improve accessibility, most recently as Chair of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

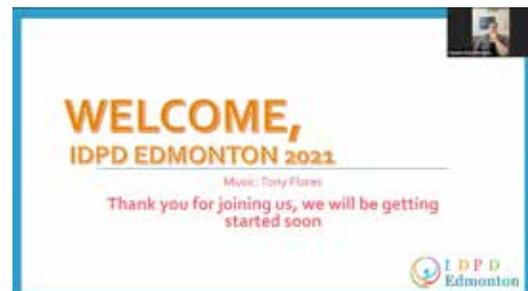
Watch Now!

IDPD 2021 Video is up

December 3, 2021 IDPD Edmonton hosted an event for International Day for Persons with Disabilities. If you missed it you can now watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/UKZbJ6agXzQ>

There was a welcome from new Mayor Sohi, the Accessibility Advisory Committee of Edmonton and Awards presented by members of the Premier's Council

The 5 speakers included the inspiring Paralympians Carrie Anton, Vivienne Forest and Morgan Bird. Sierra Roth encouraged everyone to find their why for moving and Chanel Keenan, Intersectionality Coordinator for the Seattle Kraken, shared her insight into working with the NHL team. The event closed out with an interview and the musical stylings of Tony Flores.



Centre for Race and Culture Roundtable talks Ableism, Accessibility and Advocacy

The next session in the CFRAC series "Challenging Discrimination Through Community Conversations" is about Ableism, Accessibility and Advocacy in our Community. It will be hosted online January 12 from 5-6 pm. Register here to attend: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/cdcc-session-6-ableism-accessibility-and-advocacy-in-our-community-tickets-232409963457>

Panel Opportunity: A discussion on diagnosis, disclosure and access needs in the Workplace

Our friends over at Autism CanTech are looking for people with a variety of disabilities from a variety of work experiences to be a part of a 2 hour panel on January 11. If you're interested email Sam at accessibility@vadsociety.ca and they can forward your information to event organizers.

Mustard Seed Needs Your Help

For over 35 years, The Mustard Seed has been a safe, supportive haven for individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness. We offer services and supports to



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those in need with the goal of helping them make positive, lasting change in their lives.

We come alongside our community, offering a hand-up rather than simply a hand-out, and journey with them as they move towards a life of wellness and independence.

Edmonton Urgently Needed Items Men & Women's:

- Winter Coats
- Underwear
- Sweat Pants
- Winter Pants
- Winter Boots
- Gloves / Mitts
- Running Shoes
- Long Johns
- Hoodies
- Socks
- Hats



Hygiene Items:

- Shaving Cream
- Razors
- Deodorant
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Face Cloths
- Soap
- Travel-Size Shampoo & Condition

Other:

- Bottled Water
- Reusable Water Bottles
- Gloves
- Hand Warmers
- Notebooks
- Digital Watches

<https://www.theseed.ca/services>

211 - USING THE PROGRAM

Calling 211 and pressing 3 provides triage and dispatch of Crisis Diversion teams.

Crisis Diversion teams respond to non-emergency crisis calls from EMS, EPS, Peace Officers and the 211 Crisis Diversion Hotline

Calls from 211 can come from private citizens, business, community agencies or the person in need themselves

The more crisis details provided, the smoother and

more successful the response will be. Helpful information includes full name, date of birth, physical description, location of where teams can find them, location of where they may need to go, any mobility/ health issues.

Estimated wait times will be given by the 211 operator. Response times are often impacted by bad weather, call volume, the number of teams available and peak crisis times which are between 11am & 11pm in the Summer 11pm & 6am in the Winter.

Priority is often given to individuals exposed to extreme weather.

WHEN TO CALL 211

- A person is intoxicated or otherwise impaired
- A person is sleeping in a lobby, or unsafe space
- A person is dressed inappropriately for the weather
- A person feels unsafe, but no threat of violence is present
- A person is confused, disoriented, or may be experiencing a mental health crisis

WHEN TO CALL 911

- A person has overdosed or is not breathing
- A person is violent or is threatening violence
- A person is exhibiting violent behaviour and is refusing to leave
- A large group situation where safety is uncertain
- A person is asleep in a snowbank for an extended period of time

<http://crisisdiversionedmonton.ca/using-the-program/#whentocall211911>



VAD's New Website in 2022

VAD is excited to announce that we are creating an accessible new website!

Our main goal in launching this new website is to provide our clients, staff and others with a more intuitive and user-friendly experience that clearly states who we are, what we stand for, and what we can achieve for our clients with a focus on web accessibility and inclusiveness.



Together, We Hold the Power!

Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity



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The website will feature a refreshed look, improved navigation and a handful of features which will make the overall experience more impactful on desktop, mobile and tablet. We will also be launching a new blog where we'll be publishing regular content on the topics that the community is passionate about.

For current members, we are creating member Login section with access to areas specific to VAD membership. This new website will have online donation and payment capabilities as well as online forms for ease of use when contacting VAD.



Watch for the launch in the next couple months as we release the new website to the public.

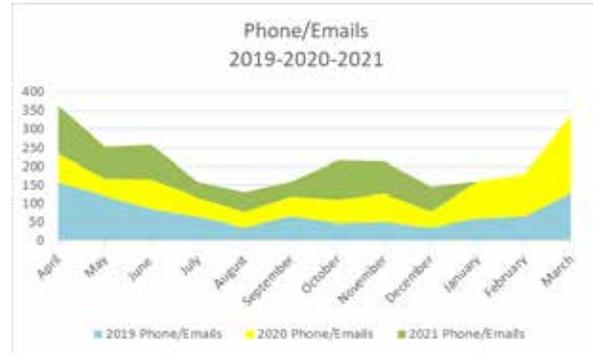
2021 Yearly Reporting

(January to December)

VAD's staff provide support and referral services to people with disabilities, their families and advocates. Requests for information and support are received through the following activities:

Telephone Calls and Emails

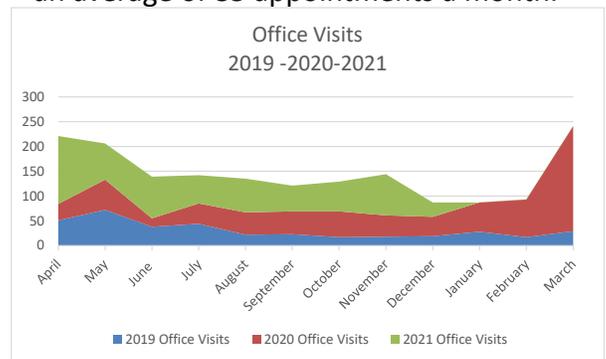
- During this reporting period VAD received a combined total of 993 phone calls, and emails coming into the office - that's over 83 hours of phone time doing intake scheduling calls, not including telephone appointments that take anywhere from 15 to 90 minutes each.



- The majority of the contact we receive are from people inquiring about programs and services for people with disabilities (AISH, Appeals, CPPD, Human Rights and Self Advocacy). We are able to either help directly (filling out forms and providing information), or we refer them to agencies and organizations whose work is relevant to the nature of the respective inquiry.

One-on-One Consultations

- During the reporting period, VAD had approximately 1000 in-person and virtual office visits, where the majority of consultations involved assisting clients with applications for AISH, CPPD, and AISH Appeal forms. An average in-person appointment is 30 minutes or more, that's an average of 494 hours of appointment time in 2021 or an average of 85 appointments a month.



Website

- VAD website provides information about VAD activities and programs and services available to persons with disabilities in Alberta.
- VAD had a monthly high of 1200 website sessions during this reporting period.



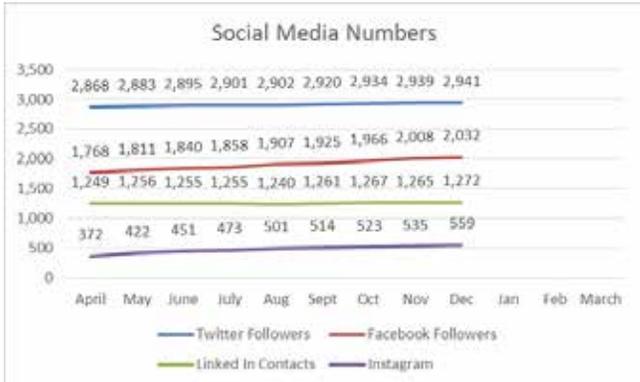
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- VAD continues to grow in our social media in 2021:
 - from 2811 to 2941 Twitter followers
 - from 1648 to 2032 Facebook followers
 - from 1111 to 1272 Linked In followers
 - from 0 to 559 Instagram followers



Disability Awareness Presentation Program

In 2021, VAD conducted numerous disability awareness presentations, consisting of 53 disability awareness presentations with over 1180 participants. Please note that all presentations were held virtually due to Covid-19.

VAD Organizational Membership

VAD organizational membership includes 50 organizations that have paid to come together with a united voice on issues of importance to Albertans with disabilities. There are 41 organizational members and 9 corporate members to date. VAD shares information and collaborates with federal, provincial and municipal government to affect positive changes in the lives of Albertans with disabilities. The next membership drive will start in April of 2022.

iVAD Membership

This network is a cross-disability group of individuals with lived experiences who are interested in increasing awareness of existing barriers to inclusion and developing capacity around solutions to accessibility, accessible and affordable housing, employment, transportation and social isolation. iVAD has 76 members in 2021, including 10 volunteer board members.

WE INVITE YOU TO HOST A

VIRTUAL LUNCH N' LEARN

BOOK TODAY

LEARN ABOUT VAD SERVICES

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities offers many services. Learn about the great work we do and how we can collaborate with your organization today.

FREE EVENT
www.vadsociety.ca

VAD Services include:

- Disability Awareness Presentations
- Accessibility Assessments & Training
- One-to-One Support & Referrals for AISH, CPPD, DTC, LAP, and more.

BOOK TODAY! ↓

MORE INFORMATION:
 780-488-9088 OR [VAD@VADSOCIETY.CA](mailto:vad@vadsociety.ca)

VOICE OF ALBERTANS WITH DISABILITIES

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Interested in joining us?

Call us at 780-488-9088 or email vad@vadsociety.ca
 Looking forward to your help!

[WWW.VADSOCIETY.CA](http://www.vadsociety.ca)

WE NEED HELP WITH:

- Fort Road Bingos
- West End Bingos



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