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SPINAL CORD INJURY SASKATCHEWAN INC.

MISSION

To assist persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence, self-reliance and full community participation.

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Message from the Executive Director

SCI Saskatchewan Board of Directors and the HR Team continue to deliver services and support our clientele and communities through the advancement of the strategic goals throughout this challenging time.

During the first few months of the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions, the SCI Sask HR Team maintained access to information and communication with our clients and partners. The Provincial Office continued operations with core administrative team; the Regional Office was closed from April to June. Our Client Service Coordinators worked remotely and prioritized connecting with our clients to discuss concerns and challenges individuals living with physical disabilities were experiencing during social isolation. The most noted concerns were uncertainty, mental wellness interruptions, anxiety, and lack of access to medical services. Working collaboratively with the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Government of Canada, Government of Saskatchewan and Cross-Canada bodies of expertise in the disability field, SCI Sask shared relevant information and updates on the website of www.scisask.ca. Both offices initiated an integrated return to organizational operations in July 2020; as of August 31 2020 both locations are open to client and public visitations, preferably by appointment, and with maintenance of pandemic precautions.

The SCI Sask Annual General Meeting was successfully held virtually on June 19 2020, and the Board of Directors continue to meet on a virtual platform. The 2019-2020 Annual Report can be found on our website at www.scisask.ca.

SCI Sask operations required an intensive review and serious consideration to the virtual capacity in existence. The need for major technological improvements is evident, and actions are initiated towards the provision and implementation of equipment and means to enhance proficiency in the delivery of service, client and community engagement, professional development and accessibility enhancements.

Despite the pandemic challenges, SCI Sask continues to successfully moved forward in many areas. Highlights of each of these initiatives can be found within this Fall 2020 Para scope Publication, and include:

- the delivery of the Senior Emergency Response Initiative in three southern communities
- the positioning of the Research Support Officer in the Provincial Office
- the enactment of the Peer Mentorship Network via Virtual Platform Project
- the hosting of a SW Practicum Student from September to December 2020, and
- the RHFAC Accessibility Assessment with the Government of SK Pilot Project.

It is a goal of SCI Sask to reinvigorate and enhance our relationship with Rehabilitation Centres and Specialists. It is known that, unfortunately, spinal cord injuries and, via congenital or chronic situations, physical disabilities continue to occur. SCI Sask strives to ensure connection, support and provision of resources to individuals when they are discharged and/or residing in their respective community. Individuals returning to their home community or relocating community, typically require supports to manage the many facets of their altered life journey.

SCI Sask continues to advocate to the Government of SK, mainly the Ministries of Health and Social Services, to support and fund alternate living accommodations for people living with sci and physical disabilities in the community, with the level of care necessary to meet their respective care needs. Where individuals can successfully reside impacts the opportunity for family engagement, fosters the continuation of married or partnered life, enhances social and community interaction, facilitates education and employment opportunities and advances the ability to lead a participatory quality of life.

SCI Saskatchewan actively participates in endeavors to enhance the accessibility and universality of the built environment. Further to the SCI Sask Accessibility Strategy, which can be viewed at www.scisask.ca, we are engaged with the Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization (CASDO), the RHFAC Accessibility Professionals Network (APN), the Government of Saskatchewan Building Standards and Licensing Branch, The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and City of Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee (SAAC). Through these alignments, SCI Saskatchewan advocates and promotes full inclusion for all citizens living in our province.

Best wishes and stay safe,
Laurel Scott

Organizational Update

PEER MENTORSHIP NETWORK COORDINATOR AARON WRIGHT

I joined the HR Team full time on September 1st for a term position as our PMN Project Coordinator, participating as a member of the SCI Sask team until March 31 2021. My wealth of knowledge and varied experience through past relationship and contract positions with SCI Sask for over two years facilitates a positive connection into this role. Throughout my involvement with SCI Sask my understanding of the organization, the clients and the community has grown immensely and will assist in the execution of the service goals and objectives.

The focus of my position as PMN Coordinator is the implementation of a virtual platform for our Peer Mentorship Network, that will connect individuals across the province to build upon and enhance the peer mentorship networks. Further to this main objective, SCI Sask will engage in additional education and training for the Peer Mentors, as well as delivering upon the plan for future PMN groups through the virtual platform.

I am excited to be part of this new opportunity and to be managing this crucial direction in virtual capacity and realize significant results for SCI Sask Services.

SCI SASK RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFICER NIGEL FERNANDEZ

I would like to take this opportunity to personally introduce myself as Nigel Fernandez. Currently I am the Research Support Officer for Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan, in a term position. My primary role is to research, document, promote, track and analyze data related specific to the areas of business, housing, transportation, restaurant and housing sectors and to assist in the development of an accessible services catalogue. I am a person living with a spinal cord injury and am a student at the University of Saskatchewan. My previous work relates to Business, Kinesiology, Neuro Rehabilitation and above all, exploring psychological research methods relating to neurological injury. It is my pleasure to serve Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan. Together, with your assistance, let's remove one barrier at a time.

SW PRACTICUM STUDENT BRYNN MURPHY

My name is Brynn Murphy, I am 21 years old and in my fourth and final year of a Bachelor's of Social Work Program through the University of Regina. I am very active, as I have played soccer and volleyball my whole life, and recently began coaching volleyball in the last few years. I enjoy spending time at the lake with my family and enjoy doing lots of physical activities outside. Most of my recent work experience is related to working with adults living with intellectual disabilities, which I enjoy very much. I was fortunate enough to have my Practicum placement at Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan where I can further my interest and experience working with people living with disabilities, but in a new and different way. I am hoping to work in fields related to Disabilities, Justice, Mental Health or Addictions in my future social work career.



LA CHARITIES 2020 ANNUAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

LA Charities is a charitable organization that supports local non-profit groups in Saskatoon and area. LA is derived from the founders last names, Letts and Arguin. LA Charities supports Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc. typically by hosting an annual charity golf tournament at the Harbour Golf Club in Elbow SK.

Christopher Letts and Andy Arguin initiated the concept to form LA Charities after two personal friends were affected by spinal cord injuries. Joined by a third director Mitch Stevens, LA Charities generously donates to Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc. each year through dedicated fundraising events and financial donations. Through these committed resources, Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc. has established the LA Charities Post-Secondary Education Scholarship. The scholarship provides financial assistance to individuals living with a spinal cord injury or other physical disability to obtain post-secondary education. This scholarship is awarded annually by Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc. to individuals living with spinal cord injury and other physical disabilities who are entering or continuing with post-secondary education.



Patrick Bitaruke, LA Charities Scholarship Recipient 2020

Thank you to the LA Charities Scholarship Selection Committee for awarding me with this scholarship. I am so passionate about entering into the Office Administration Program. Taking this program will open doors for me by getting a job that I can be successful at. I am ravenous to succeed with a full time job so that in the future I can be able to support myself financially. I have been a client of SCI Sask since 2013. Volunteering is important to me; I am a volunteer at the Pasqua Hospital, as well at the Harvest City Church and Salvation Army. Thank you again for awarding me with this Scholarship.

Sincerely,
Patrick Bitaruke



Selali Tettevi, LA Charities Scholarship Recipient 2020

I am honored and excited to be a recipient of the 2020 LA Charities Post-Secondary Education Scholarship and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you and the Scholarship Committee for your support of students who need it most. This award will help me focus on earning credentials in Leadership and Innovation, opening up opportunities to me in the workforce following graduation from Thomson Rivers University and helping to realize my dream of becoming an entrepreneur in the not-so-distant future. Once again, thank you for the vote of confidence and the post-secondary education scholarship. I am committed to my studies and hope that one day, I too will be in the position to make another student smile.

Sincerely,
Selali Tettevi

ENTREPRENEURS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

*"Hand-made
just for you
with love."*

STACEY WALTER



CREATING BETTER JEWELRY OPTIONS FOR THE DISABLED WITH STACEY WALTER

When you scroll through her Facebook page, you'll be blown away by the beauty of her jewellery designs. You'll also find descriptions like: "Silver Elephant Pendant. Made on 24 inch silver with deep blue seed bead accents. Beaded chain with a magnetic clasp with a 3.5 cm hanging silver elephant pendant with blue gemstones. Fashionable and Affordable. Hand-made just for you with love." Stacey Walter is an artist and entrepreneur. She answered some questions for us.

How did the idea for your business come about?

I started with the idea that there should be more and better jewellery options for the disabled. I wanted necklaces that I and others could wear that didn't hang down to your belly. Or didn't require someone else to do up the tiny little lobster clasp. To aid in, and simplify how your necklace does up. Most of my necklaces are done up with a magnetic clasp.

What was your key driving force?

I love doing it. Getting the opportunity to make a career out of something you love is a no-brainer.

How many hours a day do you work on average?

I work when I can. If I am sick in bed I don't work. It all depends how I feel and what else I have planned that day. If I'm making jewellery, I like to keep my day open, I can easily lose track of time and even forget to eat. It really is a labour of love.

What motivates you?

Seeing the smiles on people's faces when they find something just for them.

What is your favourite aspect of being an entrepreneur?

You set your own hours and you are your own boss.

You can find 'Stacey's Beaded Designs' at
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1403807493213244/>

Interviewed by Christine Van Der Merwe SCI SASK, Client Service Coordinator





CATCHING DREAMS WITH PETER BEAR

Peter Bear hasn't always had an eagerness for creating dream catchers. In fact, the job came to him more out of necessity than desire. But, once he started, he was hooked.

Originally from Flying Dust First Nation, Peter was born with Muscular Dystrophy, which affects his mobility and causes his muscles to weaken over time. It was at Flying Dust about 20 years ago that Peter was taught how to make dream catchers by his wife.

At the time she was working on an order of twenty-five dream-catchers that were going to Cuba, and she needed a hand. Since that day, Peter figures he has created well over one thousand dream catchers, although he's never taken the time to count. It's just become a passion.

Taking anywhere between one to five hours to complete for each one, Peter admits that he has yet to crown any particular one as his "favourite".

As Peter explains "They are all so different, so it's hard to choose!" If you are interested in Peter's dream catchers, you can view more on his Facebook page, Petels Betels, or you can contact him by phone at 306.441.5214.

Interviewed by Delynne Bortis, SCI Sask Client Service Coordinator



ADORABLE HANDMADE PUPPETS BY LOUISE GOWDIE

Louise Gowdie designs and creates puppets that are so adorable and authentic, that you just want to start a conversation with one – after you've given it a hug. She donates the majority to the Cancer Clinic, Paediatric Unit, Day Surgery; Wascana Rehabilitation Centre and gives away many more. In order to raise funds to keep the venture going, she also sells them, mostly out of hand and via word-of-mouth.

How many hours a day do you work on average?

"I work between 6 to 10 hours a day. Each puppet is an individual design I develop while I make them. Each one takes between 6 – 12 hours, depending on size and details."

How did the idea for your business come about?

I took a couple to a medical appointment and asked the nurses if they would like them for their little patients coming out of surgery. They were so enthusiastic and eager. That's how it all started."

What has been your most satisfying moment in business?

"I'm mostly not there when the kids get them, but I hear the stories from the nurses. When a little one comes out of surgery, groggy and scared; one of these puppets can really turn that moment around. It's a very comforting toy. I'm told they often keep them beside them and form strong bonds with the little creatures."

What motivates you?

"I've been asked why I give them to kids in Palliative Care. If one of my little puppets can make just one moment easier for a child, or their parent...that's more than I can ask for."

Louise works from home and sells her puppets for \$25 each. She can custom make them per individual order. Contact Louise at louise.gowdie@sasktel.net

Interviewed by Christine van der Merwe SCI Sask, Client Service Coordinator



*"It's the look
on kids' faces
– how can you
put a price on
that?"*

LOUISE GOWDIE



CAMPONI HOUSING

Accessible and Affordable



In the City of Saskatoon, the challenges of finding suitable, sustainable housing are ever-present for many individuals and families. Some of the struggles relate to affordability, some to ethnicity, some to size or location, or perhaps even just simple availability. Unfortunately, many also struggle to find housing due to simple or complex accessibility needs.

Camponi Housing Corporation is a Métis founded non-profit Indigenous organization that has been providing affordable housing to the city of Saskatoon since the early 1970's. For almost 50 years, Camponi has been prioritizing the needs of Métis families, other Indigenous families, and all others in need with the work they do in the community. Up until very recently, their portfolio included only a small number of homes that provided any accessibility access for the residents.



That started to change in the last few years – through some acquisitions and some renovations, a few more fully accessible homes were added to the portfolio. However, the company recognized they were just scratching the surface of a significant need in the city.

Through partnership with the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, CHMC, and the City of Saskatoon, Camponi Housing undertook a project to develop 6 brand new fully accessible homes – purposely designed and built with the families that would call it home in mind. Three older homes were demolished and in their place, Camponi constructed 3 large duplexes; four 3-bedroom homes, and two 2-bedroom homes. Each home is completely accessible, featuring large roll-in showers, facilities, and appliances designed with accessibility prioritized.

The organization was also keen to recognize that families consist of a blend of able-bodied family members as well, and have built homes that are comfortable for everyone.

Early in 2020, six families moved into their new homes. There are a variety of living situations and accessibility challenges, and the new homes have answered them all very well. One of the residents is a Métis person named Clayton Roy. Clayton suffered a spinal cord injury, and struggled to find housing for himself and his teenage son and nephews. As he searched for housing, Clayton said that the biggest challenges they faced were affordability, and the fact that most of the housing was not accessible at all. He spent more than a year searching for housing before being connected with Camponi. During that time, they lived in an apartment that was cramped, very expensive, and rented from a landlord not always understanding of his circumstance. Life changed for Clayton when he was introduced to Colin Farnan at SCI Sask. Colin told him about Camponi's new accessible housing and made that connection. Clayton says, "Having the right supports and connections made a big difference!"

Clayton and his family have now been living in their new home for about half a year. Clayton says his new home has "completely changed" his life. In speaking with Camponi's WrapAround Services Coordinator, Clayton said, "my home is like a mansion compared to my old housing. It is new, my son and nephews have big rooms of their own, appliances are up to date... It's more accessible in every sense of the word." The home is more centralized and close to the river and the paved trails of Meewasin Valley as well.

Clayton said, "We fit in and feel more comfortable, the neighbours are accepting and friendly. Camponi is the best landlord I've ever had. They are affordable and the extra help from [WrapAround Service Coordinators] Heather and Nicole and Camponi, as a whole, has made a big difference!"

Despite the success and response to their most recent project, Camponi Housing has identified that there is a very significant housing gap in the city for individuals with accessibility challenges. Those challenges amplify when those families also face the challenges of searching for housing as Indigenous People. That has spurred the organization to incorporate universal accessibility into the design of their exciting new development on Hart Road in the Blairmore Suburban Centre. The ambitious project, breaking ground in the coming months, will consist of over 150 homes, Camponi's new office space, and several public and community areas. Most importantly, the entire ground floor of the Montreal Walk-up Style development will feature purpose-built, fully accessible housing. The entire office space will also be completely accessible, with an elevator serving all three floors and the entire building built to be universally accessible. In total, the project is set to add approximately 70 fully accessible homes to the city, all with affordable rents and WrapAround Services support on site.

The team at Camponi is very excited to be getting closer and closer to being able to move more families in to housing that they can finally call HOME! If you or someone you know would like to learn more about Camponi Housing Corporation, the services they provide, or their new project, you can go to their website at www.camponi.ca or contact them directly.

Toby Esterby
Executive Director
Camponi Housing Corp.
SaskNative Rentals Inc.
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pick my
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from
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NEUROSASK LIVES ON

'NeuroSask: Active and Connected' initially started as an evidence-based knowledge mobilization initiative during the early phases of the covid-19 pandemic. The intention was to continue to support the health and wellness of individuals in SK living with neurological conditions while community-based and health authority programs were closed. The research team consisted of University of Saskatchewan researchers and clinicians in rehabilitation science, neurology, and pharmacy, patient and family advisors, and partnering community-based organizations including SCI Sask, MS Society of Canada, and Parkinson's Canada. The team collaborated to design and deliver this free virtual program for people with neurological conditions.

The development and launch of 'NeuroSask: Active and Connected' was supported by a Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation 'Covid-19 Rapid Response' grant, along with matched funding contributed by the research team. The objectives of the NeuroSask initiative were to use a virtual platform to provide evidence-based information on physical activity, mental health, and social support for individuals with neurological conditions, and to use the platform as an avenue to provide updates from health care providers on rapidly changing information specific to Covid-19 and neurological conditions, while gaining insight on the current needs and concerns of program participants.

The initial NeuroSask initiative launched as a 10-week program April 21-June 25 2020. It was delivered every Tuesday and Thursday and consisted of a 30-minute 'Active' session followed by a 30-minute 'Connect' session. The initial program had over 800 people register. 250 participants completed a feedback survey. Interestingly, results from the feedback survey showed that even outside of the pandemic, 65% of participants preferred an online program, while 17.5% had no preference, and only 17.5% reported that they preferred in-person. When asked if participants would attend if NeuroSask continued to be offered, the result was a unanimous 100% YES! The results of the survey and the advocacy of participants resulted in continuing the program. A version of NeuroSask lives on! A 30-minute seated movement class led by a neuro-physiotherapist, is still offered every Tuesday and Thursday at 2:00pm SK Time. On most Thursdays, the movement class is followed by a connect session featuring a guest speaker. The program runs as a drop-in and participants are welcome to join the Tuesday/Thursdays sessions whenever it works for them.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this happen, to all who participated in our initial 10-week program, and to everyone who continues to participate. While the program is called NeuroSask, the name reflects where the program is physically located and it is not limited to people living in SK. Anyone who might benefit can join, we do want to be inclusive.

Registration still open:

<https://rehabscience.usask.ca/neurosask/>

Contact:

Email: neurosask@usask.ca

Sarah Donkers BSc, MSc, PhD, MPT Faculty, U of SK, College of Medicine, School of Rehabilitation Science

Making it easier to get back on track



Concerned about UTIs? You're not alone.

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¹Source: IC user survey (Countries: US, UK, DE, NL, FR, IT), January 2016 (n=2942)

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PM-09171

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING AFTER SPINAL CORD INJURY

Swati Mehta, PhD, Scientist, Heather Hadjistavropoulos, PhD, Professor, Danielle Earis, HBA



Why is it important?

Individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) can experience high levels of emotional distress, pain, and dependency, leading to decreased quality of life and increased health care costs. A Canadian study examining needs of people with spinal cord injury (SCI) revealed that only 43% consider that their emotional counselling needs are being met. Additionally, many persons with SCI are less likely to use mental health care services due to stigma, insufficient transportation, time to travel to appointments, inadequate financial coverage, and/or access to services. However, learning skills that promote overall mental health has been linked to improvement in mood, functional independence, and pain. The skills related to self-management can also help to decrease rates of hospitalizations and length of hospital stays.

Internet-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy (ICBT) has the potential to overcome many of the barriers to accessing mental health services among those with SCI, by improving the flexibility of treatment and reducing stigma and costs. It has a strong evidence base for improving psychological outcomes as well as quality of life and overall disability among various populations including chronic pain, fibromyalgia, tinnitus, and cancer. The Online Therapy Unit (OTU) at the University of Regina and Lawson Health Research Institute, Western University, aimed to examine if ICBT can help improve overall mental health and quality of life among persons with SCI. We also wanted to look at participant perspectives on the ICBT program and gain an understanding of how to improve ICBT for future delivery.

Who participated?

Participants were recruited through rehabilitation facilities, community groups, and social media across Canada. Anyone with an SCI experiencing emotional distress such as worrying, fatigue, loss of interest were able to participate. 20 participants were included (10 males and 10 females) with average age of approximately 56 years.

What did we do?

Interested participants completed a screen online through the OTU website (www.onlinetherapyuser.ca).

Participants were then contacted by telephone to further discuss their needs and to determine if the program would be a good fit for them. Once enrolled, participants were provided log in information to complete an 8-week guided ICBT program through the OTU website. All participants received weekly lessons on developing skills to how to manage their thoughts and behaviours for example activity pacing, assertiveness training, sleep hygiene, and coping with pain. A trained guide contacted participants by email and/or telephone weekly to address questions and provide encouragement in completing the self-study activities.

Once participants completed the study, they were interviewed about their perspectives on ICBT program and their outcomes.

What have we found so far?

We found that participants experienced a decrease in their symptoms of anxiety, depression, and grief after completing the program and at a 3-month follow-up period. Participants also experienced improvement in their quality of life including increase in their resiliency, self-efficacy, and participation in community activities. 95% of participants reported that they were very satisfied with the program and found it worth their time. 90% of participants stated that the program helped to increase their confidence in self-managing their symptoms. All participants stated that they would recommend the program to others.

When participants were asked about their experience with the ICBT program, several stated they appreciated the accessibility and flexibility of the online delivery. Additionally, they valued the motivation and support received from the guide. "I like that she sends me an email and it is like a check-in. It gets you on track...I do like that I can contact her anytime I want. Every week, just getting an email from her, sending emails and she responds...I don't feel alone, I think for the first time. For me, once a week is enough."

Some concerns participants had regarding the program included the course timeframe and personal barriers, such as symptom interference, that made it difficult to complete the modules. "I realize you have to have a sort of timeline or else people would take forever and wouldn't move ahead. It was a little too quick for me. Especially the identifying the thoughts and beliefs, because that was such an ah ha! part of it for me."

Concerning ICBT outcomes, participants liked the skills that the course offered. Many of the participants have also begun prioritizing their mental health. "Mental health is also important. I'm not sure how I would've rated it before the course, probably a lot lower. But now that I've experienced this program, I can see how it plays a greater role in my life."

"I DON'T FEEL
ALONE,
I THINK FOR THE
FIRST TIME."

-PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Suggestions to improve the ICBT course included increased support from the guide, less reading, discussion forums with other SCI patients, and additional external resources.

What do we know now?

This study showed that ICBT was able to help improve mood and quality of life among those with SCI. It was shown to be a feasible and acceptable form of treatment for managing emotional wellbeing. For future directions, the participants' suggested improvements should be considered so ICBT courses are enhanced for those with SCI.

What's next and how can you help?

We are currently evaluating the effectiveness of a guided ICBT program compared to an information only control group through a large randomized controlled trial. We need to continue to improve the program by incorporating participant feedback. We would also like to acquire more perspectives from a diverse group of individuals because of the unique nature of each SCI experience and its outcomes. Please contact Swati Mehta (swati.mehta@uregina.ca) for more information on how you can help and get involved. You can also visit our website (www.onlinetherapyuser.ca/sci) to apply to the program. Participants of the program will receive up to \$50 in Amazon gift cards for their involvement.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge all of our research participants, community partners, and funders for their support.

Swati Mehta, PhD is a Scientist at Lawson Health Research Institute and Adjunct Assistant Professor at Western University who is interested in improving mental health and quality of life after SCI.

Heather Hadjistavropoulos, PhD, R. D. Psych, is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Regina and Director of the Online Therapy Unit and Psychology-Wise Lab with an interest in improving access to mental health care.

Danielle Earis, HBA, is currently a medical student at the University of Saskatchewan who worked on this research project as part of her honours thesis.

The pilot study was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation post-doctoral research fellowship. The current randomized controlled trial is funded by the Craig Neilsen Foundation.

The Board is seeking interested community-minded individuals to become a member of the SCI Sask Board of Directors. The Board of Directors promotes inclusion of individuals living with a disability in decisions, consultations and policy-making. Demonstrated qualities that contribute to the success of the Board include:

- ☐ commitment of time, interest and willingness to serve
- ☐ outstanding communication and interpersonal skills
 - ☐ good judgment
- ☐ integrity and a strong sense of ethics
- ☐ the skills to work effectively with others
 - ☐ a willingness to learn and grow

Please contact the Nominating Committee Chairperson Lynn Archdekin at lynn.archdekin@scisask.ca or call 306.652.9644 for additional information.

The SCI Sask Vision, Mission and Services are found on our website at

www.scisask.ca



SCI SASK IS SEEKING INTERESTED COMMUNITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE SCI SASK JOINT ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE



ACCESSIBILITY ensures people living with a disability may fully participate in all aspects of society including physical, architecture, communication, attitude, technology, education, legislation, as well as policies and practices that create, increase or sustain universal design in the built environment.

The primary responsibility of the Accessibility Committee is to ensure tactical, comprehensive and strategic activities are undertaken to increase the awareness and understanding of accessibility within the broader community, while cultivating positive change which will bring about the conditions for independent living and community inclusivity, including the same choice, control, and freedom as any citizen – at home, at work and as members of the community.

Please contact
Executive Director Launel Scott at launelscott@scisask.ca
or call 306.652.9644 for additional information.

PEER MENTORSHIP NETWORK NEW VIRTUAL PLATFORM



Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc. is moving forward with advancements in our Peer Mentorship Network. Thanks to the Community Initiatives Fund, SCI Sask is enhancing its network connection tools through virtual platforms.

Currently, a software has been selected and is in development for our Peer Mentorship Network. This software will connect mentors with mentees virtually through the SCI Sask website. With the current times of COVID-19, this is an amazing breakthrough for our network. This will assist SCI Sask to serve our clients, and also provide enhanced channels to support individuals and their families living in remote, rural, and northern communities during these challenging times and into the future.

SCI Sask serves over fifteen hundred individuals with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities across Saskatchewan. The Peer Mentorship Network is a proven success as we connect people with lived experiences with individuals who have acquired a new spinal cord injury or other physical disability. The SCI Sask Peer Mentors engage in specific training and enhanced learning opportunities to become certified in their roles. Peer Mentorship has the capacity to enhance emotional wellbeing, health-related quality of life, and personal coping ability, self-esteem, productivity and longevity.



Rob Shaw, Peer Mentorship, October 2019

"I have been working with SCI Sask for just over two years now through contract roles and this is the most exciting impact I am able to take part in yet. The new virtual platform will be groundbreaking for our Peer Mentors, Peer Mentees, and HR team. I am excited for the development to be finalized and a soft launch to happen just before Christmas of 2020!" (Aaron Wright, PMN Coordinator)

The virtual platform is expected to be fully operational by February 2021.

SCI Sask invites you to contact us for more information about our Peer Mentorship Network and increase the connection across Saskatchewan. Please contact us at sciinfo@scisask.ca or check our website for updates at www.scisask.ca



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SCI SASK ACCESSIBILITY RESEARCH SURVEYS



Spinal Injury Saskatchewan is pleased to announce that we are currently conducting Accessibility Assessment Surveys in the areas of Business, Housing, Restaurants and Hospitality, and Transportation sectors. The purpose of this research is to work collaboratively with businesses, organizations, agencies and individuals to develop a framework that will address the accessibility, inclusion and participation factors that impact those living with a physical disability. More importantly, this research will allow SCI Saskatchewan to evaluate, interpret and analyze some of the challenges and/or barriers that individuals may face. The results will assist SCI Saskatchewan to accurately assess the needs and identify any potential gaps in these sectors.

SCI Sask is also conducting an Accessible Housing and Service Survey directed to individuals living with physical disabilities. The Survey is inserted in this Parascoped Fall 2020 Newsmagazine. Your participation is voluntary; however, your responses will greatly assist in the development of a more inclusive community. Furthermore, all data will be kept confidential. The results of the surveys will be primarily evaluated using a Likert Scale Model and will be instrumental in providing strategic recommendations on inclusion, accessible design and accessibility.

The survey itself should take no longer than fifteen to thirty minutes to complete and may be submitted by mail, phone or online. With this in mind, I invite you to take advantage of this exciting opportunity and return it to SCI Saskatchewan by Monday November 16, 2020 Your participation is greatly appreciated. Let your voice be heard!

You may contact SCI Sask for further information at sciinfo@scisask.ca or by calling 306. 652. 9644. You may also view the SCI Sask Accessibility Strategy on www.scisask.ca.

Nigel Fernandez
Research Support Officer
nigelfernandez@scisask.ca



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For example, if you booked a pickup for 7:30, the bus will arrive between 7:30 and 7:50.

REGIONAL INITIATIVE SUPPORTS SENIORS

"Seniors have helped shape the Canada we know and love today, supporting seniors during this difficult time is essential".

(The Honourable Deb Schulte, Minister of Seniors)

Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan in the time of this precedence situation of COVID-19 kept the mission statement alive through a Senior Initiative to engage with the seniors within Saskatchewan.

The pandemic situation presented an immediate need for vulnerable seniors, living in isolation, detached from family interactions, surrounded by anxiety and uncertainty, plus the additional challenges to access services to maintain their daily living. No doubt issues relate to all people, however these magnified in intensity when it comes to seniors. Restrictions due to the pandemic had made it difficult to be engaged with leisure activities as well.

The Senior Initiative allowed SCI Sask to bring a smile to the faces of our seniors living with physical disabilities. The SCI Sask Senior Initiative was allocated to the regions of Regina, Swift Current and Moose Jaw. Under the direction of the Saskatchewan Health Authority, in consideration of limitations and restrictions during the pandemic, SCI Sask approached seniors living in these communities. SCI Sask offered our partnership and support through a number of activities including; Father's Day activity at Cypress House Swift Current, Musical Concert at Providence Place Moose Jaw for Seniors, individual lunches for Seniors living at Huston Heights Regina, gardening tools and plants for Seniors at Pioneer Village Regina and dinner and bird feeders for Prairie Pioneer Independent Living in Swift Current.

The initiative also provided gift baskets containing various items and gift cards as well as cleaning services for some clients and the capacity to reach over 800 seniors.

It seemed to be a minor effort during the major issue of the pandemic, however it achieved a huge stimulus that put a smile on the faces of many isolated souls. SCI Sask listened to the stories and concerns, and received thanks and acknowledgement for the immediate actions undertaken and in planning for innovative approaches to facilitate future strategies.

Contributed by Farzana Nazir
SCI Sask Regional Office Coordinator



Expansion of SCI Sask services was made possible in part by the United Way Regina's Covid-19 Seniors Response Fund funded by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Programs.





THANK YOU SASKATCHEWAN

SCI Sask hosted two Day of Giving events in 2020; Saskatoon and Area was held on May 28th and Regina and Area was held on August 27th. These were community fundraising activities where individuals, families, friends, businesses and co-workers came together in support of individuals with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities.

SCI Sask Fund Development endeavors, like many other community-based organizations were extremely hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. SCI Sask partnered with Rawlco Radio to bring forward a new fund development venture. The Day of Giving events occurred virtually though radio promotion and connection. Throughout these days we had SCI Sask HR Team members, board directors, and clients share their stories with the community. Throughout the two events, the entire community of Saskatchewan was engaged with SCI Sask and supported our mission to assist people with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities. THANK YOU!!!

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