



Spinal Cord Injury Alberta
Lésions Médullaires Alberta

A photograph of a family walking on a paved promenade lined with palm trees. In the foreground, a man in a black t-shirt is seated in a wheelchair, facing away from the camera. He is holding the hand of a young child in a light blue shirt. To the right, a woman in a black sleeveless dress is walking towards them, also holding the child's hand. The background shows more palm trees and a modern building under a bright sky.

Making a Mark that Matters.

2014 Annual Report

New Name, Same Service

On November 1, 2014, the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) changed its operating name to Spinal Cord Injury Alberta (SCI Alberta). We're excited about our new image but want everyone to know that we still offer the same important services: client service coordination, Aboriginal services, information, peer support, community development, and active living.

We changed our name for two main reasons. First, we wanted to capture the fact that our services are for people with all levels of injury (paraplegia, quadriplegia, complete and incomplete) and all causes (external injury as well as disease). The new name also makes us easily identifiable in the community - people may not know what paraplegia and quadriplegia are, but most will know what a 'spinal cord injury' is.

Just like those living with SCI, we are still adapting to our new identity. We thank everyone who has helped us on this new path. We look forward to turning our focus back to what we do best: helping people with SCI adjust, adapt and thrive!

Our Mission

To empower persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence and full community participation.



Making a Mark that Matters.

No matter who we are or what we do in life, we all want to leave our mark on the world.



I'm proud to say that I work with a lot of great people who make a mark in communities throughout the province every day, and do it in amazing ways. Our staff, though small in size, is big on impact. They change the lives of people with SCI and other physical disabilities each time they meet someone newly diagnosed with a spinal cord injury, or assist them and their family upon returning home. They leave behind a legacy of strong individuals, living full lives while managing their disability.

Every curb cut created, accessible housing unit developed, and adapted physical activity program implemented is a testament to the hard work of our staff and volunteers, and makes a lasting contribution to improving the lives of people with physical disabilities.

Those of you who knew us as the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) may wonder if our goal, mission and services have changed now that we are Spinal Cord Injury Alberta. They haven't. We continue to work alongside the same community partners to empower persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence and full community participation. We are grateful for the mark left behind by more than 50 years of dedicated staff and volunteers. This report shows how we have changed our province over the past year. We are excited to see what the next 50 years bring!

Who Helped Us Make Our Mark in 2014?

We have a large team of dedicated volunteers helping us to make our mark on the community. We'd particularly like to thank our volunteer Board of Directors. These 15 individuals, 10 of whom have a spinal cord injury, provided us with valuable leadership and support this past year. We thank them all!

Ned Shillington, Chair, Dale Williams, Timothy Hill, Ray Royer, Margaret Conquest, Harvey J. DeCock, Shamel Elsayed, Kent Hehr, Eleanor Sugarman, Ron Jewitt, Paul Nemetchek, Souheil Saab, Mark Wilson, Chris Schamber, Connie Berkshire

Client Service Coordination

Our Client Service Coordinators (CSCs) are an integral part of people's lives from the time they are injured or diagnosed, until they are re-established in their communities. CSCs provide encouragement, information, assistance with accessing services, and advocacy. They help people see beyond their disability and recognize their potential to make a positive contribution to the community. In 2014-15, our CSCs worked with 410 people from across the province. A total of 91 were injured or diagnosed within the last two years.



Mark of Success:

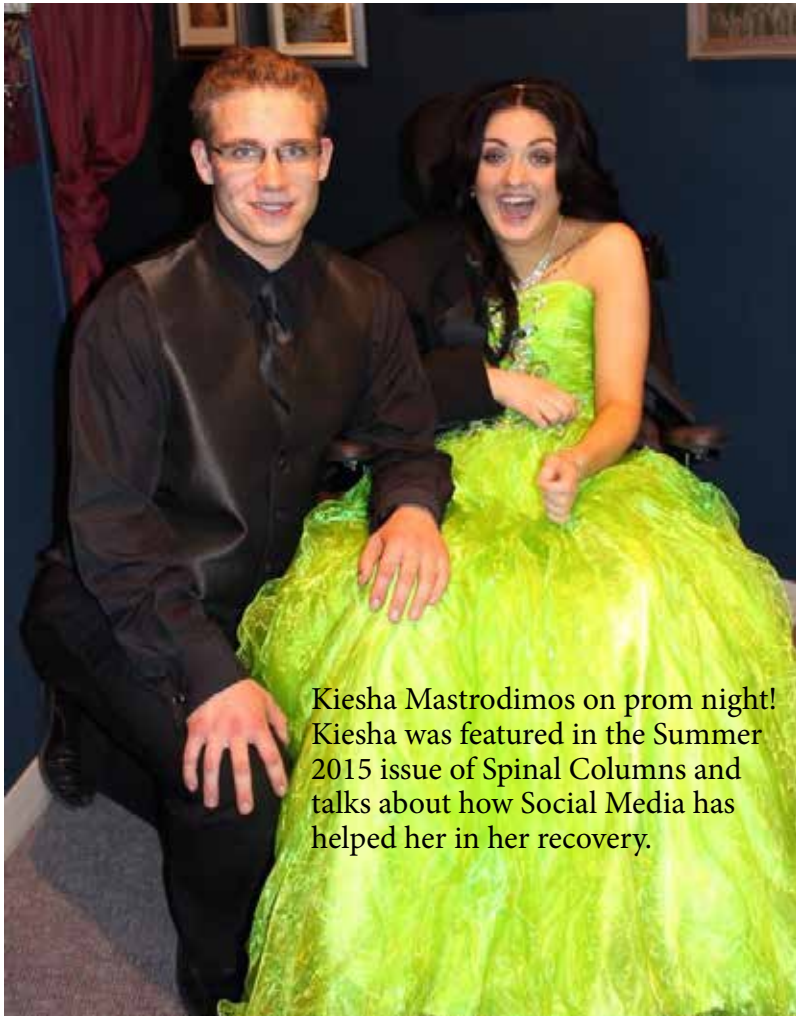
Cecil

"In February of 2011, I had an abscess removed from my spine which caused me to become a quadriplegic. After several months of rehabilitation, I was transferred to a long-term care facility in Grande Prairie. It totally changed my life and the lives of my family members. I met with the client services coordinator from SCI Alberta in the fall of 2011. Since then she has really helped me get on with living my life with an SCI. She helped get me back into life in the community. She helped get me assessed for self-managed [home]care and I moved out of the group home into my own place. She helped me get a modified van and I returned to driving, which has given me great freedom! She's also helped me access several funding sources for equipment and travel to medical appointments."

Now that Cecil is adjusting to life with SCI, he is giving back to his community. He has worked nearly 300 hours as a volunteer for SCI Alberta in the areas of fundraising, peer support and peer programming. Cecil played an instrumental role in the Grande Prairie Chair-leaders Enabling Access Event, has volunteered at tradeshows, was part of a delegation that met with Grande Prairie City Council, and assisted with our Community Living Attendant Training program.

Communications

More people than ever are connecting with us through social media. The information we provide lets them know about new findings in the world of SCI treatment and technology, lifestyle issues, program changes, and SCI Alberta events. We have a successful YouTube channel which has been viewed over a quarter of a million times by people all over the world. We are now on Instagram where we hope to grow our network!



Kiesha Mastrodimos on prom night! Kiesha was featured in the Summer 2015 issue of Spinal Columns and talks about how Social Media has helped her in her recovery.



Marks of Success

- Over 80,000 hits per month to our provincial website.
- Over 1000 "Likes" on Facebook.
- Over 800 Followers on Twitter.
- Two issues of our provincial magazine, Spinal Columns.
- 1124 subscribers to our email newsletter, Wheel-E.
- Over 600 subscribers on YouTube

Peer Program

Our organization was started by a group of injured war veterans, providing support to others on a volunteer basis. Today, despite all the changes we've undergone, our peers remain a pivotal part of the services we provide. Peers provide the irreplaceable knowledge of those who have personal experience living with spinal cord injury. They provide new clients with living proof that there is life after SCI, and they show them how to attain it. Throughout the last year, we held 74 events where peers could spend time with one another, create friendships, and explore new activities. We also matched 23 individuals with an ongoing mentor.

On September 19, 2014 we organized a peer conference called "Living Well with a Spinal Cord Injury" in cooperation with the Foothills Hospital. Ninety people attended. Presenters talked about nutrition, adaptive sports and travel. The day was rounded out with a fashion show and story told by the designer who lives with an SCI.



Teri Thorson (right) started her own fashion line called "Normal? Fashions"

Mark of Success:

Recovering from quadriplegia since her encounter with a moose two years ago, has taken all of 19 year old Julia's* energy. Julia completed rehabilitation and graduated high school before returning home after her 18th birthday. It was then that she met SCI Alberta's Peer Mentor, Holly. Holly taught Julia how to adapt to living with SCI and what to expect as she grows older. With Holly's help, Julia says she started to feel "normal" again.

*not her real name

Aboriginal Services

We pride ourselves in being able to provide culturally appropriate services to the Aboriginal and Métis population both on and off reserve. One quarter of the clients we serve identify as Aboriginal or Métis. Ten per cent were injured in the last two years. Our Aboriginal services team is uniquely qualified to work with them to access services which are often organized quite differently than those from other backgrounds.



Tom is a member of the Blood Band and has had a spinal cord injury for more than thirty-five years. Things were a lot different then than they are today. Being Aboriginal added another dimension to his recovery and return to the community. In a video that can be viewed on our YouTube channel ("SCI Alberta"), he describes how he came to accept his new reality and move forward. "I had to look at it as 'the old Tom' died in that ditch in 1979 and the new Tom had to find a way to adapt.' I had to learn how to become independent." Tom married, had children, and went to college. Once upon a time, he was a client, went on to work for SCI Alberta and served on our Board of Directors. Today he wears many hats, including that of magazine publisher, writer and community leader.

Community Development

Helping people become ready to return to the community is only one part of what we do at SCI Alberta. The other part is helping the community to be more welcoming to them when they arrive. Our community development work includes educating people about the barriers to independence in the community and working collaboratively to implement solutions.

Examples of our work include accessibility audits of public buildings and outdoor spaces, advocating for the creation of more affordable, accessible housing, and creating disability advisory committees that represent a cross-section of the disability community. These committees communicate with their respective city and municipal councils on matters affecting people with disabilities. It is important for us to have a physical presence in the city, so we established new office space in three communities by partnering with other organizations to share rent and equipment.



Community Development Cont`d.

Marks of Success

Addressing Accessible Housing

We're helping tackle the problem of accessible housing shortages in several communities across Alberta. This past year we provided input on the development of four accessible housing units that will be part of an affordable housing complex in Red Deer. We are now working with the project team to ensure that the health centre, meeting room, parking lot and sidewalk are also accessible. In Edmonton, we participated in the Visitability Task Force, whose aim is to ensure that visitable housing is included in the new neighbourhood that will replace the downtown airport.

Creating Inclusive Communities

Community inclusion requires that public places and spaces are wheelchair accessible. In Calgary, our community developer was hard at work last year, completing accessibility assessments of hotels, parks, and convention centres. Five assessments were also completed in Medicine Hat, including the YMCA.

Relationship Building

Our success in addressing community issues depends upon good relationships with other disability organizations. We were, and are, hard at work in Fort McMurray, Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie developing joint advisory committees to liaise with city council. In Lethbridge, we are gaining traction in our ability to capture the attention of city council on matters that are important to people with disabilities.

Fitness and Wellness Centre

Fitness is an essential part of living well with a spinal cord injury. Regular physical exercise increases strength, improves cardiovascular performance and maintains bone density. At the Spinal Cord Injury Fitness Centre in Calgary our staff and trained volunteers from Mount Royal University help individuals with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities achieve their fitness goals and make exercise a regular part of their lives.

There is an assortment of adapted equipment at the Centre, including standing frame elliptical trainers, recumbent trainers, raised mats and hoists. Early in 2014-15, the Centre received its first Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) bike. This amazing piece of technology sends electrical impulses to the nerves which then move the leg muscles. The movement helps users increase their bone density, muscle mass and cardiovascular output.



Mark of Success:

Stewart, who has quadriplegia, has been using an FES bike regularly for the last year and a half. His machine records his progress and in only a year and a half, he has "travelled" 3000 km. "Which," he says, "puts me somewhere east of Sudbury on my way to Newfoundland."

In 2014-15, we designed fitness programs for 36 people who now have the opportunity to utilize an FES bike regularly as part of their fitness routine.

Information Services

For many years, SCI Alberta has been the “go-to” source for information on all things SCI. In the past year, thousands of hours were spent answering people’s questions on health, housing, finances, employment, equipment, and more. Some requests take a few minutes to address and others take days. We squeeze as much information as we can into our magazine Spinal Columns, our monthly e-newsletter Wheel-E, our Facebook page and Twitter, but that will never replace the “human touch,” which we pride ourselves on being able to provide.

More Marks of Success



Community Access for Persons with Disabilities

We are a contracted service provider to the Government of Alberta for the *Community Access for Persons in Continuing Care program (CAPCC). Last year we helped over 350 adults under 65 living in long-term care travel outside their residences for such things as shopping, concerts and family events. Funding pays for their transportation, admission fees and a companion to accompany them. For those who spend a majority, if not all, of their time in a care facility, these opportunities are a true blessing!

Helping Way Fund

People with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities often need "emergency" funding to help them with essential items ranging from a properly fitted wheelchair cushion to unexpected wheelchair repairs or essentials such as rent or winter clothing. When all other sources of funding have been exhausted, individuals turn to the Helping Way Fund. The maximum grant is \$1000 per year and there is very fast turnaround. This fund is made up of contributions from the Harvey DeCock Society, Alberta SCI Solutions Alliance and individual giving. Last year, more than \$7,000 was distributed to 19 individuals in need.

Financial Statements Excerpt
Summarized Statement of Revenues and Expenditures
 Year ended March 31, 2015

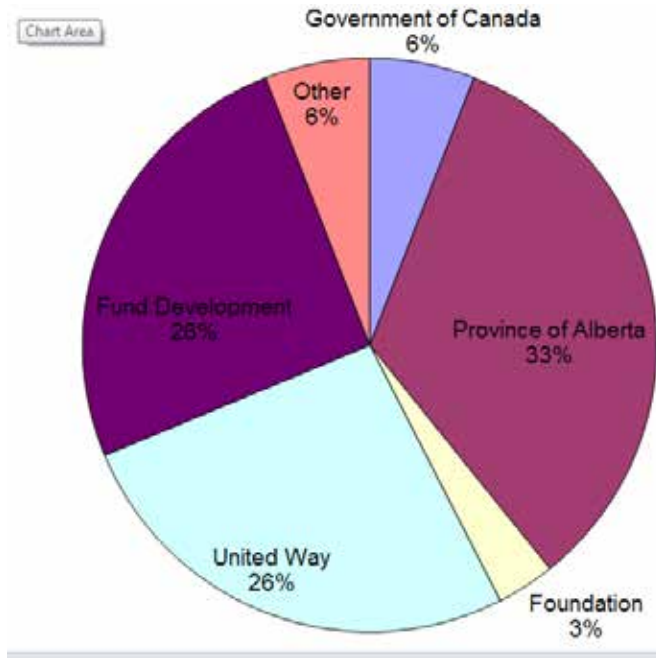
	2015 \$	2014 \$
REVENUES		
Government of Canada grants	192,489	254,107
Province of Alberta grants	1,084,642	1,041,974
United Way grants	854,713	855,306
Foundation grants	107,122	138,997
Fund development:		
Non-receipted	696,737	769,507
Receipted	129,323	150,446
Other revenues	192,581	180,458
Total revenues	3,257,607	3,390,795
EXPENDITURES		
Client and community services	2,430,756	2,639,150
Fund development	299,088	291,973
General and administrative services	500,879	484,243
Amortization of capital assets	31,597	52,561
National assessment	9,684	9,684
Total expenditures	3,272,004	3,477,611
Excess of revenues over expenditures	(14,397)	(86,816)

Summarized Statement of Financial Position
 As at March 31, 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
ASSETS		
Current assets	1,100,954	1,267,354
Capital assets	53,795	53,973
	1,154,749	1,321,327
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities and deferred contributions	699,848	851,350
Deferred contributions - capital assets	47,542	48,222
Net assets	407,359	421,755
	1,154,749	1,321,327

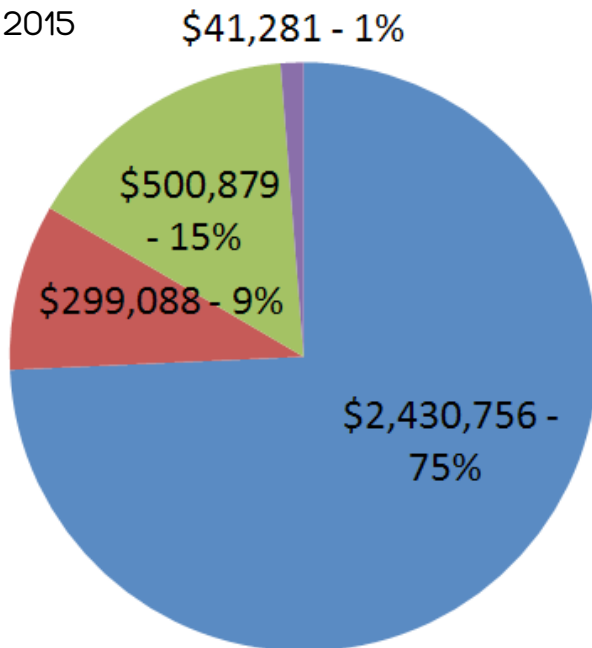
Complete audited financial statements are available on request.

Revenue Sources 2014 2015



- Client and community services
- Fund development

Expenses 2014 2015



- General and administrative services
- Amortization & national assessment

Now that you've read about the various ways we've impacted the community over the past year, we'd like to invite you to make a mark too! We invite volunteers and individual or corporate donations. Just call us at 1-800-654-5444 and ask to speak to our fundraising coordinator.

For more information about our programs and services, visit our website at www.sci-ab.ca. Audited financial statements are available on request.

Last year Spinal Cord Injury Alberta helped more people than ever adjust to life with SCI and other physical disabilities, overcome isolation, and live healthy, independent lives.

We couldn't do it without your support.

Thank you so much!



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Connect with us....

www.sci-ab.ca



Government of Canada

*Community Access for Persons in Continuing Care (CAPCC) is a program of the Government of Alberta, Human Services with coordination provided by Spinal Cord Injury Alberta and other community agencies.

Charitable Number: 11883 5016 RR0001