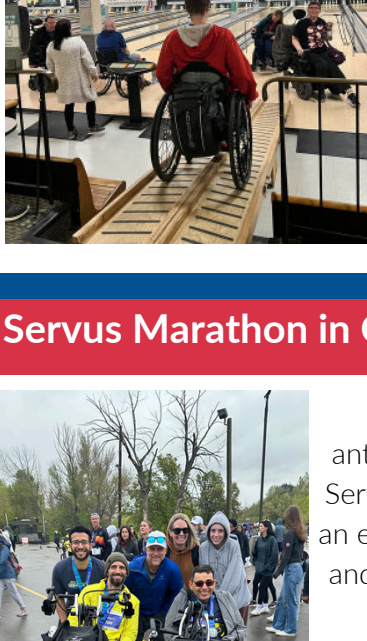



Intro + Last Month's Recap

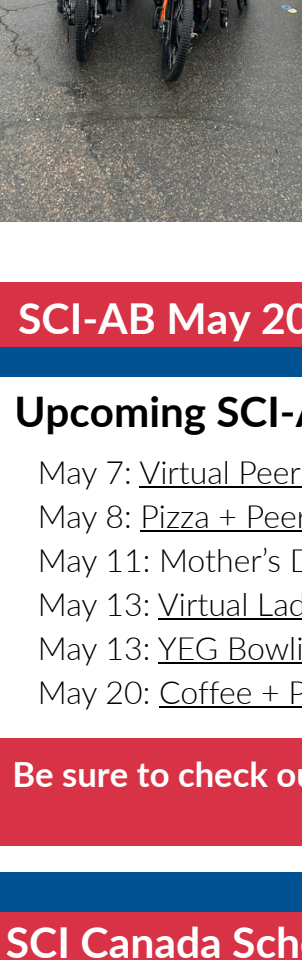


It is great to be able to enjoy the sunshine and the warmer days! The melted snow and warmer days make it much more accessible to get outside and enjoy some fresh air. This month we have lots to look forward to – the Servus Marathon is coming up at the end of the month, adaptive spring programming is starting up, and Rey and VAD are both hosting awesome community events! May also marks National Physicians Day, Nationals Nurses Week, Mental Health Awareness Week and of course Mother's Day!

Last month we had our first peer bowling session in Edmonton, and we are looking forward to making this a regular offering! For more new peer program offerings --- keep reading!



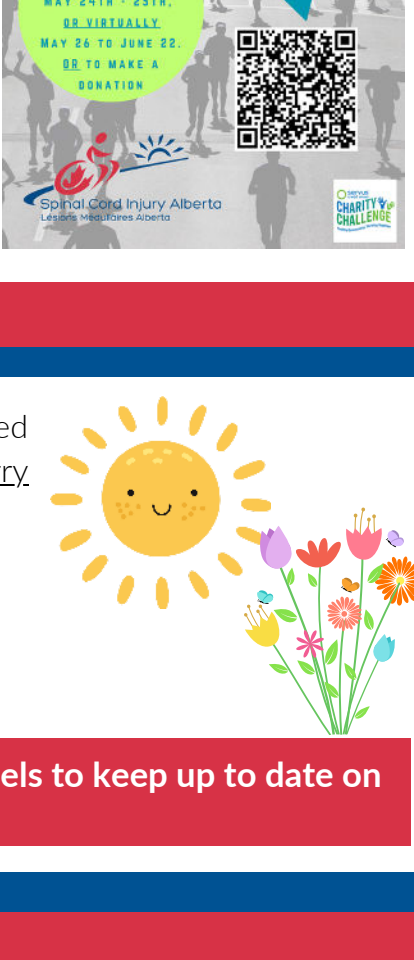
Servus Marathon in Calgary



Spring is in the air and it means that one of the most anticipated events of the year is just around the corner – the Servus Calgary Marathon! You can create your own team, join an existing one, or donate to support. Once again, peer mentor and powerhouse Shamel Elsayed, is racing and fundraising on behalf of SCI-AB and his co-workers at Cenovus.

Thank you for everyone for your support, and we hope to see you on race day! **The event can be done in person, or virtually as well, so it can be done from anywhere in the province!**

Sign up here:
<https://raceroster.com/events/2025/88010/servus-calgary-marathon-2025/pledge/team/737999>



SCI-AB May 2025 Events:

Upcoming SCI-AB Events in May:

May 7: [Virtual Peer Chat with Terry](#)

May 8: [Pizza + Peers at the Glenrose](#)

May 11: [Mother's Day](#)

May 13: [Virtual Ladies Chat](#)

May 13: [YEG Bowling](#)

May 20: [Coffee + Peers at the Glenrose](#)

May 19: [Victoria Day Offices Closed](#)

May 21: [Virtual Peer Chat with Terry](#)

May 21: [YEG Peer Dinner](#)

May 24: [Servus Marathon in YYC](#)

May 27: [Virtual Ladies Chat](#)

May 28: [YEG Peer Dinner](#)

May 31: [VAD NAAW BBQ in YEG](#)



Be sure to check out our [online events calendar](#) or our [social media channels](#) to keep up to date on upcoming events!

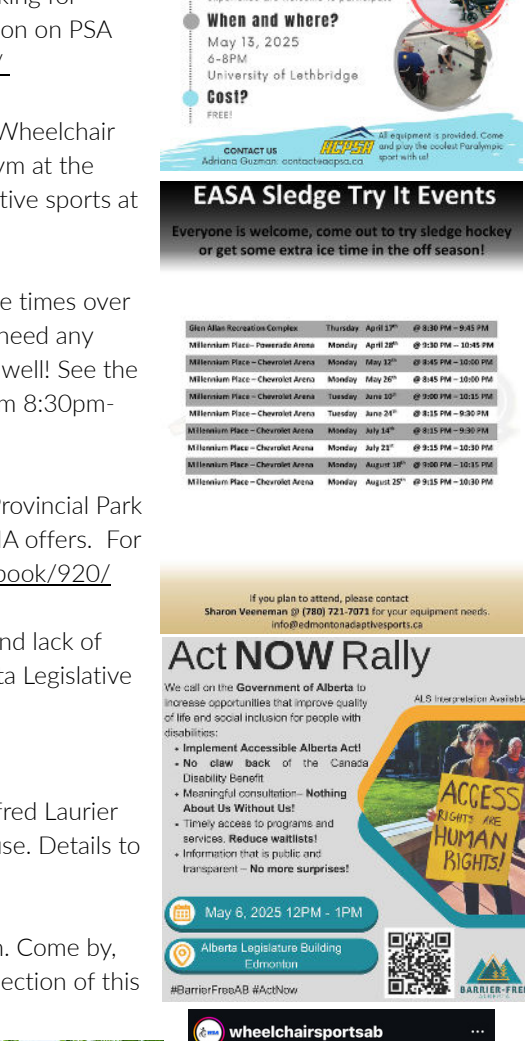
SCI-AB Scholarships Available

There are several scholarships available to those with SCIs in Alberta, but the deadlines are coming up quick! Applications must be submitted by midnight on May 31 (EST), so don't delay!

- Copnick Hilliard Scholarship (\$1,500)** – For Canadian students with a spinal cord injury.
- Sun Life Financial Scholarship (\$1,500)** – For peer support volunteers (letter from corporate member required).
- Kirby Rowe Scholarship (\$1,000)** – For students in management and leadership, honoring William Kirby WSA's legacy.
- Thomas O. Parker Scholarship (\$1,500)** – For students pursuing career development after high school.

Apply today and take your next step toward success!

Check out: <https://sci-can.ca/application-scholarship> for more information or to apply!



In the Community + Across the Province:

For those looking to give adaptive boccia a try, programming will be starting up across the province! There will also a try it day opportunities in Lethbridge on May 13th from 6-8pm at the University of Lethbridge, for those wanting to try out something new. It is a great sport, adaptable to all ability levels, and requires precision and strategy. For full programming check out: <https://www.acpsa.ca/>.

The Paralympic Sports Association (PSA) adaptive golf program is now in full swing and looking for participants. It will take place at the Victoria driving range in May and June. For more information on PSA program offerings or to sign up, check out: <https://www.parasportsab.com/we-offer/>.

There will be more opportunities for other activities as the weather warms up, so stay tuned! Wheelchair Sports Alberta (WSA) has an adaptive sports try it opportunity every Thursday at the main gym at the Glenrose from 2-3pm, there is a rotating try it schedule. There is also now the option to try adaptive sports at the Terwilliger Recreation Complex on Thursdays from 4:15-5:15pm every week!

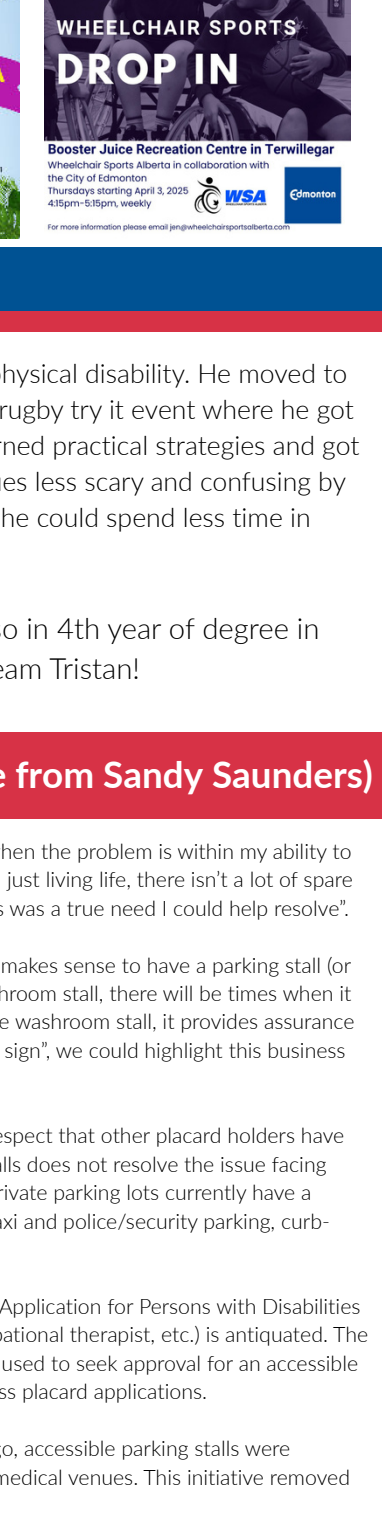
For those looking for extra ice time in the sledge hockey off season, EASA will be hosting free ice times over the spring/summer. Please contact Sharon (780-721-7071) if planning to attend, and if you need any equipment. No experience is necessary, and family/friends are welcome to come and play/try as well! See the poster for all spring/summer ice times. For May, the ice times will be on May 12th and 26th from 8:30pm-10pm at Millennium Place Chev Area in Sherwood Park.

Rocky Mountain Adaptive will be partnering with AB parks to host a try it camp in Cypress Hills Provincial Park from May 17-18th. There will be kayaking, biking and a chance to learn about other activities RMA offers. For more information, or to sign up, check out their website: <https://rockymountainadaptive.com/book/920/>.

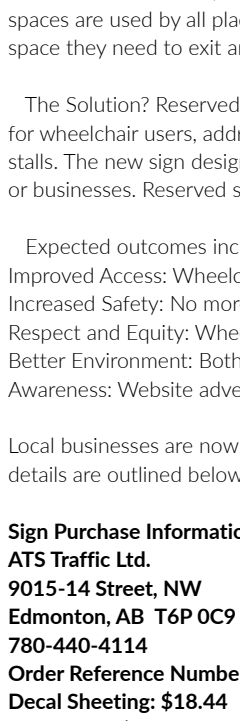
For those who want to add their voice to the AAN protest to advocate against budget cuts and lack of provincial accessibility legislation. The rally will take place on May 6th from 12-1pm at the Alberta Legislative Grounds, hope to see you there! For more information on the initiative, check out: <https://www.barrierfreeab.ca/>.

Reyu will be hosting their annual Walk/Run/Roll event on May 31st, it will take place at Sir Wilfred Laurier Park in the Edmonton river valley. This is a great way to get some fresh air and roll for a good cause. Details to sign up are here: <https://www.reyu.ca/events>.

Finally, VAD will be hosting a NAAW wrap up BBQ event at Borden Park site #1 from 12-2pm. Come by, enjoy some BBQ and come say hi to us at the SCI-AB table! For more information, see the final section of this newsletter! Or visit their website at: <https://vadsociety.ca/>.

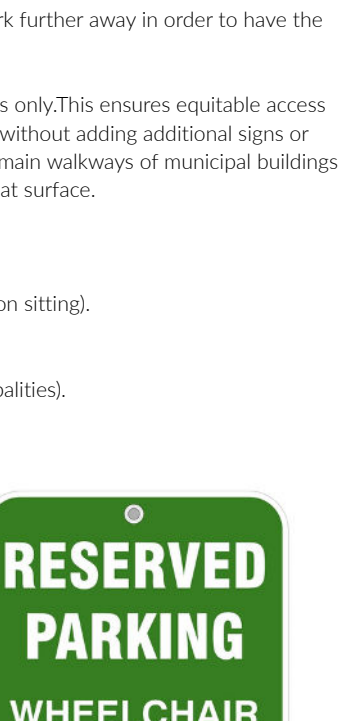


New Staff Feature: Tristan Kowal | Peer Coordinator



In 2022 Tristan had a COVID-19 infection that led to neurological issues and physical disability. He moved to Alberta in 2023 to get the support he needed to live. He went to a wheelchair rugby try it event where he got connected with SCI Alberta. With peer support and access to healthcare he learned practical strategies and got access to resources to manage his condition. Peers also made neurological issues less scary and confusing by explaining how he can prevent complications and recognize earlier signs so he could spend less time in hospitals.

Tristan is a new peer coordinator at SCI Alberta in Edmonton. He's also in 4th year of degree in therapeutic recreation. Awesome to have you on the team Tristan!



SWITCH THE SIGN Initiative | Wheelchair User Parking Spaces (Feature from Sandy Saunders)

Sandy Saunders has always considered herself to be a quiet advocate for persons who use wheelchairs. "I tend to speak up when the problem is within my ability to solve. While working full time, raising a family, pursuing hobbies, keeping fit, volunteering, spending time with friends, and just living life, there isn't a lot of spare time to advocate. When it became more of a challenge the past few years to access parking, and parking that was safe, I felt this was a true need I could help resolve".

If a private business or municipal building has an accessible washroom stall for use by persons who use wheelchairs, it equally makes sense to have a parking stall for two reserved for wheelchair users. Will this reserved parking stall always be used? No. Similar to the wheelchair accessible washroom stall, there will be times when it is vacant. The reserved parking space is in place and available for wheelchair users for when it is needed. And like the accessible washroom stall, it provides assurance of safety for a wheelchair user (with the stall width, toilet height, grab bars). If we had one business to be the first to "switch the sign", we could highlight this business as doing the right thing.

Wheelchair patrons have a unique need when it comes to parking that is different from other approved placard holders. We respect that other placard holders have been approved for their mobility needs, and it is not our business to question their placard approval. More accessible parking stalls could not resolve the issue facing wheelchair users. Reserved parking for wheelchair users may be viewed by some as multi or two-tiered. Some municipal and private parking lots currently have a variety of parking options - accessible placard holders, senior, limited mobility, families with small children, expectant mothers, taxi and police/security parking, curb-side/on-line shopping. Reserved parking space for wheelchair users is about accessibility and safety.

A letter to appropriate provincial ministers was sent May 2024 with detailed feedback on how to improve the Parking Placard Application for Persons with Disabilities form. The form's section that is to be completed by a healthcare professional (physician, registered nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, etc.) is antiquated. The definition options for the healthcare provider to select from are too general in scope and timeframe. Perhaps if the form that is used to seek approval for an accessible parking placard was reviewed and the eligibility definitions redefined/redefined for clarity, healthcare professionals may approve less placard applications.

Accessible parking was originally dedicated to wheelchair users only, ensuring safe and close access to facilities. Forty years ago, accessible parking stalls were introduced at the university's unique needs of people using wheelchairs, giving them easy access to public places, businesses, and medical venues. This initiative removed barriers and provided safe, close parking for people using wheelchairs.

However, as time passed, so did an increase of placard holders. Today, more people with a variety of disabilities have access to accessible parking. But not all use a wheelchair. As a result, it has become increasingly difficult for those who use wheelchairs to find accessible parking close to their destinations. This is because the same spaces are used by all placard holders, regardless of their specific mobility needs. Creating wheelchair users are often forced to park further away in order to have the space they need to exit and enter their vehicles; and/or navigate crowded parking lots, therefore unsafe situations in both scenarios.

The Solution? Reserved Spaces for Wheelchair Users: Dedicate one or two parking spots closest to entrances for wheelchair users only. This ensures equitable access for wheelchair users, addressing their unique needs while still accommodating other placard holders. These spaces will be reserved without adding additional signs or stalls. The new sign design differentiates from the existing blue wheelchair logo for clarity. Place signs at the closest entrances and main walkways of municipal buildings or businesses. Reserved spaces are minimum 8.5 feet; 9.5 feet is preferred stall width to accommodate van lift or ramp; stall is on flat surface.

Expected outcomes include:

- Improved Access: Wheelchair users will have closer access to businesses and public buildings.
- Increased Safety: No more navigating busy parking lots or unsafe distances between parking spots (from the lower height of a person sitting).
- Respect and Equity: Wheelchair users will feel more welcomed and respected by places of business and in their communities.
- Better Awareness: Both businesses and municipal buildings will be more accessible to all.
- Barrier Removal: Website advertising and social media location posts of reserved spaces for wheelchair users (by businesses and municipalities).

Local businesses are now being approached, and a solution is offered to order a sign for \$42 : details are outlined below:

Sign Purchase Information
ATS Traffic Ltd.
9015-14 Street, NW
Edmonton, AB T6P 0C9
780-440-4114
Order Reference Number: 1120-50084764
Decal Sheet(s): \$18.44
Metal Sign: \$42.00

Thank you for spearheading this initiative Sandy! We hope to see more of these signs around soon! Check out the [media coverage here](#) or check out the [article online here!](#)



Technology Spotlight : New Bowhead Wheelchair




Known for their revolutionary adaptive bike design, Bowhead is now venturing into the world of wheelchair design. They are now unveiling the new Era model. It combines sleek design and unparalleled functionality to create the ultimate mobility solution. Their Fit-For-Life™ system allows seating specialists and users to easily adjust the chair as needs change, all with a single tool. Another cool function is that it can adjust to accommodate changing needs instantly!

For more information in this new chair check out their website:
<https://www.bowheadcorp.com/era>

Did You Know? Boa® Adjustable Lace-less Shoelaces

Boa® shoelaces are redefining ease and independence in everyday footwear. With a quick-turn dial system, they eliminate the need to tie traditional laces—perfect for individuals with limited finger function or dexterity challenges. Boa® systems can be adjusted using just one hand, or even with the tip of a crutch or cane, making on-the-go changes simple and accessible. The customizable fit also allows for expansion throughout the day, offering relief for those who experience foot swelling.

Comfort, control, and confidence—dialed in.



New Upcoming Peer Program Offerings

Our new peer coordinator Tristan is taking the lead on several new exciting peer initiatives. These programs are still in the works, but here is a sneak preview of what to expect:

- Peer Led Bowling Program at Bonnie Doon Lanes on Tuesday Evening with Guy for 7/person, RVSP and pre-pay here to reserve your spot!**
- Swimming program** for those with SCIs or related physical disabilities. This is a great opportunity to gain confidence and skills in the water in a safe and controlled setting. Complete the form via QR code or link on swim poster to get the program rolling. Or [fill the form here](#)
- Monthly wheelchair skills program** providing support to learn and practice wheelchair skills, to maximize your independence to go where you want to go, and building the confidence to try. There will be component for manual wheelchairs, as well as power chairs and potentially scooters as well. However, we are seeking volunteers to help support the program as spotters (no previous experience is needed). For an idea about what to expect for the wheelchair skills program check out Dalhousie University's wheelchair skills program website: <https://wheelchairskillsprogram.ca/en/> (We hope to use this program as a template!)

For more information about either of these programs or to inquire about volunteering, reach out to Tristan at Tristan.Kowal@sci-ab.ca



Research Study Spotlight: Medication Self Management

MedManageSCI is an online toolkit designed for adults with SCI, caregivers, and healthcare providers. MedManageSCI is now live and we are looking for feedback! Before accessing the toolkit, if you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the consent form and surveys by clicking on this link:

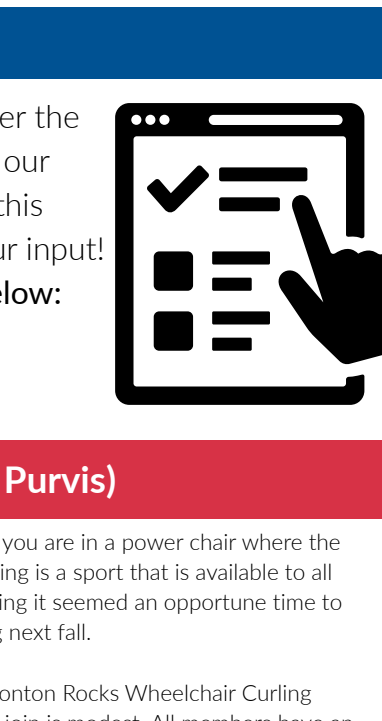
<https://redcap.utoronto.ca/surveys/?s=JFKD14ER44YEDDE>

Please note: as soon as you complete the surveys, you will be redirected to the toolkit (website).

For this study, we will ask you to complete baseline surveys on some background information, medication use, thoughts about medications, self-efficacy, and quality of life. You will then be re-directed to the MedManageSCI website where you can explore the full toolkit. After one week, we will send you another survey to get some additional feedback on the toolkit. At this time, you will have the opportunity to participate in an interview if you would like to provide more in-depth feedback. Finally, after 3 months of having access to the toolkit, we will send a final survey to look at your medication use, thoughts about medications, self-efficacy, and quality of life.

For each survey you complete, you will receive a \$25 gift card. If you complete all three surveys, you will be entered into a draw for a \$200 Amazon gift card. We thank you for your support with this project! Please reach out to Lauren at medsci.study@utoronto.ca if you have any questions.

Check out the all of the current research study opportunities here!
<https://sci-ab.ca/research-opportunities/>



SCI-AB Peer Program New Mentor + Mentee Shoutout

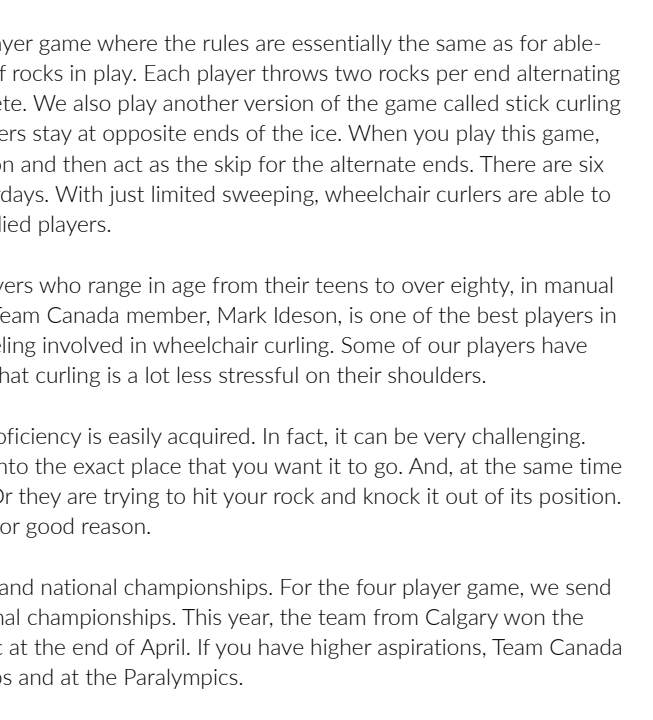
The peer program is the basis of how SCI-AB came to be. Peers supporting peers and the invaluable lived experience perspective. Learning the ropes from someone who has been there and gets it. There are several facets to our peer program.

From educational sessions, peer social meetings, one on one peer connections, and much more. We are always looking for more peer mentors to add to the roster to help to connect with those who are newly injured, or those who have new questions as they move into a new stage of life.

The peer mentor training consists of an online course that can be completed on your own time, as well as a peer mentor profile that will help make matches with those in the community who have requested support.

For more information on becoming a peer mentor, contact kendra.erhardt@sci-ab.ca

To sign up to be a mentor or mentee, complete this form:
<https://forms.office.com/r/Vm4AMuLMHC>



Save the Date for our Peer Conference on September 18th in Calgary!



SAVE THE DATE

2025 PEER CONFERENCE

Living Beyond Limits

Thursday September 18th 2025

Calgary

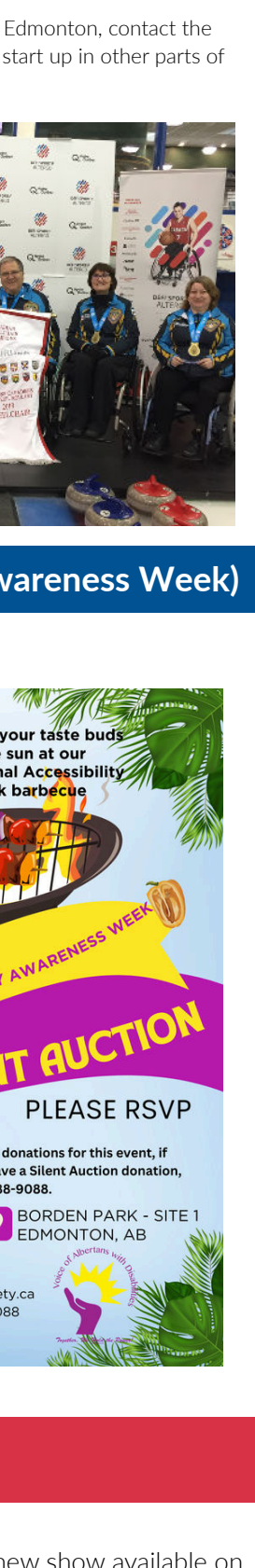
New Quarterly Survey Roll Out for Program Review

We are also conducting a peer program evaluation tool that has been developed over the last year in our SCI-Canada peer working group. This will help us see the value of our programs and see where improvements can be made. By receiving (and reading) this newsletter you are a valued member of the SCI-AB peer program, and would love your input!

The surveys will be open until June 30th. The links to complete the surveys are below:

Peer Program Survey

Client Services Coordination Survey



Accessible Activity Showcase: Adaptive Curling (Feature from Martin Purvis)

There are not many sports that can be played at almost any age especially for those of us in wheelchairs. Or perhaps you are in a power chair where the opportunities to compete in sports are almost non-existent. Heavy wheelchair curling is a sport that is available to all ages and many disabilities. Now that we are wrapping up our 24/25 season of both recreational and competitive curling it seemed an opportune time to start you thinking about whether curling is something that you might be interested in trying next fall.

There are two wheelchair curling associations in Alberta: the Calgary Wheelchair Curling Association and the Edmonton Rocks Wheelchair Curling Association. In Calgary, our recreational curlers practice almost every Saturday from October to March and the team to join is modest. All members have an opportunity to travel to Lacombe twice a year for a fun bonspiel with the Edmonton players and we are able to subsidize the travels cost using our casino funds.

Wheelchair curlers primarily play two different games. The first is the traditional four player game where the rules are essentially the same as for able-bodied players except there is no sweeping. This makes for a challenging game with lots of rocks in play. Each player throws two rocks per end alternating with the opposition and there are eight ends. These games take over two hours to complete. We also play another version of the game called stick curling or sometimes two stick. In this game, there are only two players on a team and the players stay at opposite ends of the ice. When you play this game, using just six rocks, you will throw all six rocks for one end alternating with the opposition and then act as the skip for the alternate ends. There are six ends and the game lasts about two hours. This is the version that we usually play on Saturdays. With just limited sweeping, wheelchair curlers are able to compete successfully against able bodied players.

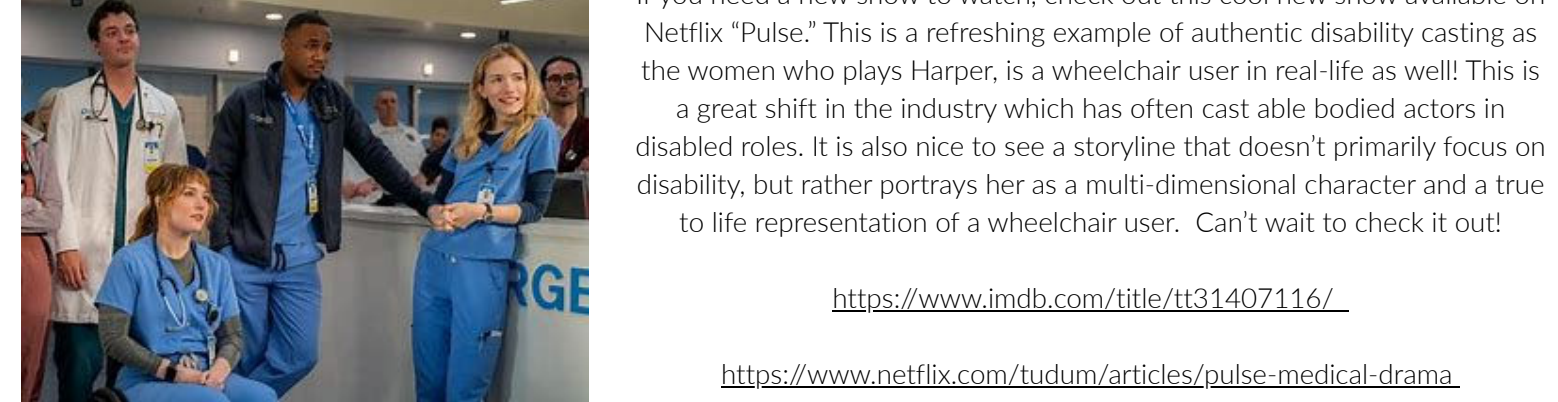
Wheelchair curling has many advantages over other sports for the disabled. We have players who range in age from their teens to over eighty, in manual or power chairs and include disabilities such as MS, spinal cord injuries and amputees. A Team Canada member, Mark Ideson, is one of the best players in the country and he is a quadriplegic. Unlike some other sports, there is very little wheeling involved in wheelchair curling. Some of our players have previously played sports like basketball or tennis and they really appreciate that curling is a lot less stressful on their shoulders.

The fact that so many people can play this sport does not mean that a high level of proficiency is easily acquired. In fact, it can be very challenging. Imagine pushing a rock down 120 feet of ice with no sweeping. This makes for a challenging game with lots of rocks in play. Each player throws two rocks per end alternating with the opposition and there are eight ends. These games take over two hours to complete. We also play another version of the game called stick curling or sometimes two stick. In this game, there are only two players on a team and the players stay at opposite ends of the ice. When you play this game, using just six rocks, you will throw all six rocks for one end alternating with the opposition and then act as the skip for the alternate ends. There are six ends and the game lasts about two hours. This is the version that we usually play on Saturdays. With just limited sweeping, wheelchair curlers are able to compete successfully against able bodied players.

For those who are interested in competing, we send teams to the stick curling provincial and national championships. For the four player game, we send teams to the provincial championships and the winner represents Alberta at the national championships. This year, the team from Calgary won the championship and they are headed to the national championships in Boucherville, Quebec at the end of April. If you have higher aspirations, Team Canada competes internationally at the world championships and at the Paralympics.

Another very important aspect of wheelchair curling is the social life. Almost every curling club includes a bar and curlers gather together after a practice or a game in a friendly atmosphere of fellowship and camaraderie. At competitions, the winners of the game will often buy the losers a drink.

For more information, contact the Calgary Wheelchair Curling Association at info@calgarywheelchaircurling.com or if you are in Edmonton, contact the Edmonton Rocks Wheelchair Curling Association via their [Facebook page](#). We would love to see wheelchair curling organizations start up in other parts of the province. Let us know if we can help in any way.



Community Shoutout – VAD BBQ Event for NAAW (National Accessibility Awareness Week)

National Accessibility Awareness Week or NAAW will take place from May 25 – 31!

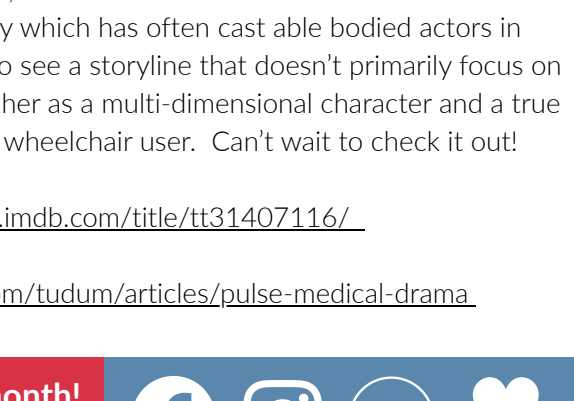
NAAW was established to improve understanding and knowledge of Canadians on accessibility and disability inclusion, reduce stigma and attitudinal barriers towards persons with disabilities, and shares best practices and lessons learned related to NAAW activities.

It is an opportunity to celebrate the valuable contributions of Canadians with disabilities. It is also a time to recognize the efforts of individuals, communities and workplaces that are actively working to remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion.

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities will be hosting a NAAW Wrap Up Community BBQ on May 31, 2025.

Members, volunteers, general public, stakeholders, and government officials are all invited to join us in Borden Park for this event to wrap up National AccessAbility Week. We will provide food, refreshments, and networking opportunities for everyone attending.

SCI-AB will be there with a table set up, come by and say hi, and enjoy some BBQ! RSVP to vad@vadsociety.ca if attending. Hope to see you there!



In the Media: New Show on Netflix "Pulse"

If you need a new show to watch, check out this cool new show available on Netflix "Pulse". This is a refreshing example of authentic disability casting as the women who plays Harper, is a wheelchair user in real-life as well! This is a great shift in the industry which has often cast able bodied actors in disabled roles. It is also nice to see a storyline that doesn't primarily focus on disability, but rather portrays her as a multi-dimensional character and a true to life representation of a wheelchair user. Can't wait to check it out!

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt31407116/>

<https://www.netflix.com/tudum/articles/pulse-medical-drama>

Springing outta here—May the sunshine be with you! Until next month!

– Kendra + Terry + Tristan

