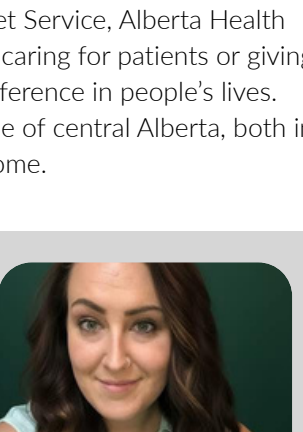


## SCI-AB Peer Conference Recap



## Meet the New SCI-AB Staff!

Max Merland is the new peer coordinator for in Calgary! He's a father to the happiest little man and his golden retriever, Nina, Max is a C6 quadriplegic, but was a (happy!) red seal chef prior to covid shutting down restaurants, then worked everything from tig welding and heavy machinery to Computer-Aided Drafting and Mechanical Engineering. Now, he spends his time 3D-Printing adaptive tools, playing games with his family and trying his best to help out where he can!



Max Merland



Sarah Powell

Sarah Powell is the new Community Access Coordinator in Red Deer! She is a Registered Nurse with over nine years of experience across various hospital settings, long-term care, and home care. She's deeply committed to her community and brings that same compassion and dedication into her work every day. Beyond her role in healthcare, Sarah has been an active volunteer in the community with organizations such as The Mustard Seed, Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids, Seniors Secret Service, Alberta Health Services, Red Deer Public School, and The Lending Cupboard. Whether she's caring for patients or giving back through volunteer work, Sarah is driven by a desire to make a real difference in people's lives. Sarah lives in Red Deer with her young family and is proud to serve the people of central Alberta, both in her professional life and in the community she calls home.

## Chantel Mae Torio

Chantel Mae Torio is a new Community Access Coordinator in Southern Alberta. She is based out of Calgary and supports the CAPCC program in Southern Alberta as well. She completed her Diploma in Business Administration - Major in Management, at Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in 2024. Chantel was inspired to apply her skills in a role that supports individuals with disabilities. Her previous work experiences strengthened her passion for helping people achieve their goals, interest and live more meaningful, independent lives. Through her work in CAPCC program, Chantel sees each day as an opportunity to create a positive and lasting impact, not only for the clients she supports, but also in building a more inclusive and empowered community. Chantel enjoys spending time with family and friends, and has a love for traveling, where she finds joy and inspiration in discovering new places, cultures and experiences.



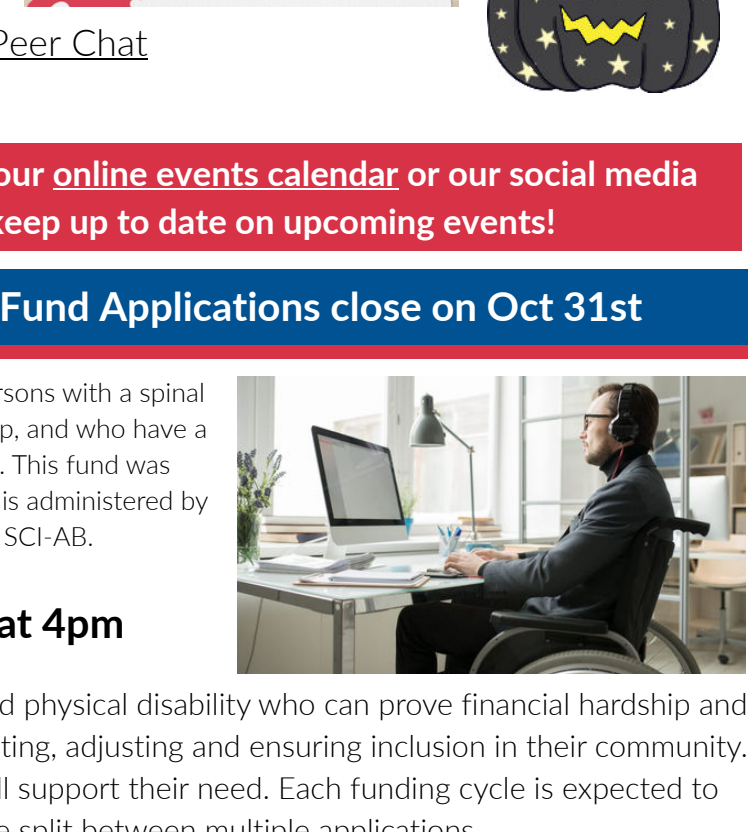
Felecia Tolsma

Felecia Jade Tolsma is one of our Client Service Coordinators in Edmonton. She completed her diploma of Social Work in the year of 2020, at Grant MacEwan University. Upon completing her schooling, Felecia became a Case Manager at Bliss Center for the next five and a half years. She is excited to share her enthusiasm for the community and working with the SCI Community. Felecia thoroughly enjoys sharing her knowledge about community supports and resources with the population she serves. In her free time Felecia enjoys playing the piano and chasing her cats around the basement. Felecia looks forward to working with you.

## SCI-AB October 2025 Events:

### Upcoming SCI-AB Events in October:

- Oct 1/8/15/22/29: [Wheelchair Pickleball](#)
- Oct 13: [Offices Closed for Thanksgiving](#)
- Oct 14/28: [Virtual Ladies Peer Chat](#)
- Oct 16: [Art with Peers at the AGA](#)
- Oct 16: [YEG Peer Dinner | PYRO Sherwood Park](#)
- Oct 21: [Coffee + Peers at the Glenrose](#)
- Oct 21: [Peer Pool Met Up \(Clarview\)](#)
- Oct 27: [Aging with SCI/Degenerative Disabilities Peer Chat](#)
- Oct 30: [Pizza + Peers at the Glenrose](#)



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

## Alberta Paraplegic Foundation Accessibility Fund Applications close on Oct 31st

Accessibility Funding is an open application focused on supporting persons with a spinal cord injury anywhere in Alberta who are experiencing financial hardship, and who have a significant need for support to adapt and adjust in their community. This fund was established in 2024 through the R. Vance Milligan Memorial Fund and is administered by The Alberta Paraplegic Foundation (APF) in partnership with SCI-AB.



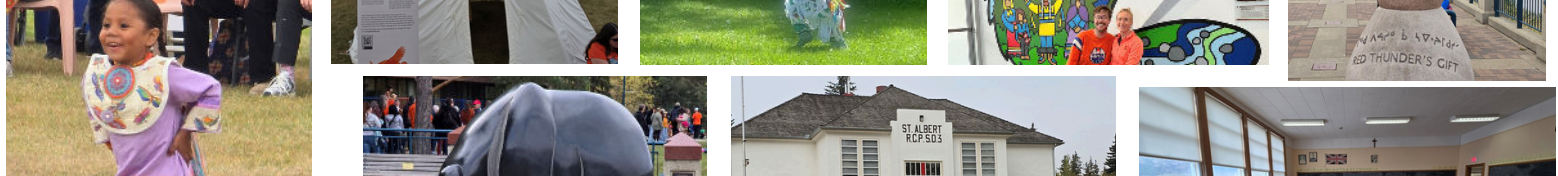
### Applications will close on October 31st at 4pm

Any person living in Alberta with a spinal cord injury or related physical disability who can prove financial hardship and that the request is critical to support the individual with adapting, adjusting and ensuring inclusion in their community. Applicants are encouraged to apply for the amount that will support their need. Each funding cycle is expected to provide a total of \$50,000. Funds may be split between multiple applications.

- Applicants must show:
- Demonstration of need - A personal impact statement has been included demonstrating a compelling need for the service/item.
  - Financial Need - The applicant has provided ample evidence of their financial need.
  - Connection to community inclusiveness - The applicant has clearly expressed how this item/service positively impacts their ability to participate with their community.
  - Description of item/service is clearly connected to the demonstration of need.
  - Financial Need - The applicant has provided ample evidence of their financial need.
  - Alignment with funding priorities
  - Sustainability - This is a one-time project and if ongoing, the applicant demonstrates how the need will be sustained.

[Learn more here!](#)

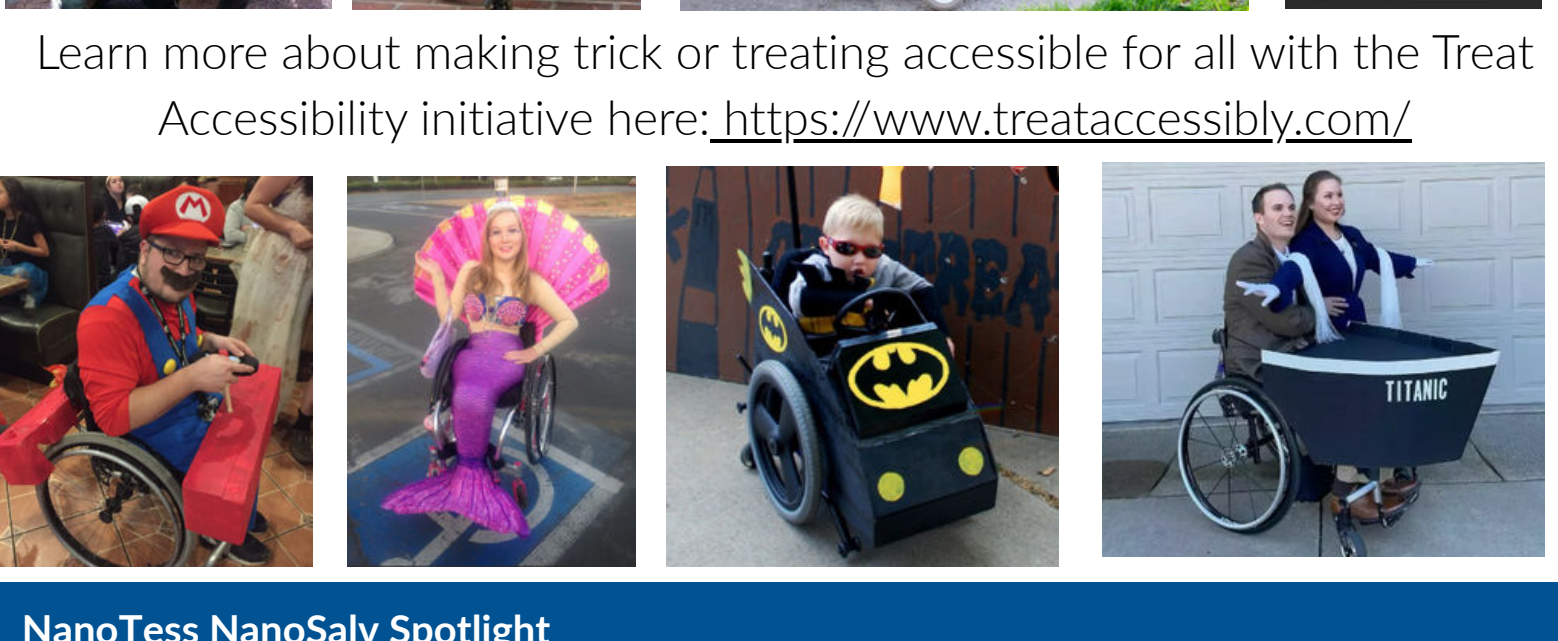
## Check out some of the stories from last years recipients for inspiration!



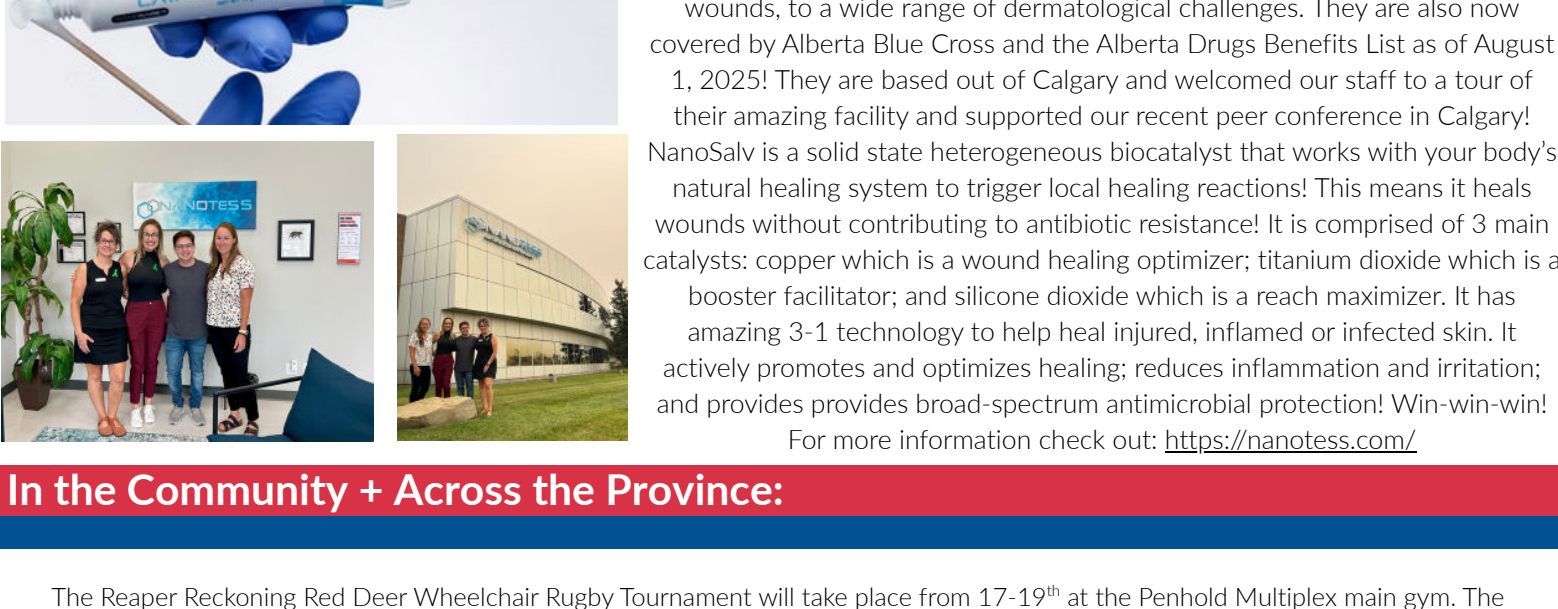
## Truth and Reconciliation Day - Sept 30<sup>th</sup>

September 30<sup>th</sup> marked National Truth and Reconciliation Day. We paused to honour the survivors of residential schools, their families, and the children who never came home. We recognize the deep and ongoing impact of colonialism and are committed to walking the path of reconciliation with humility, awareness, and action.

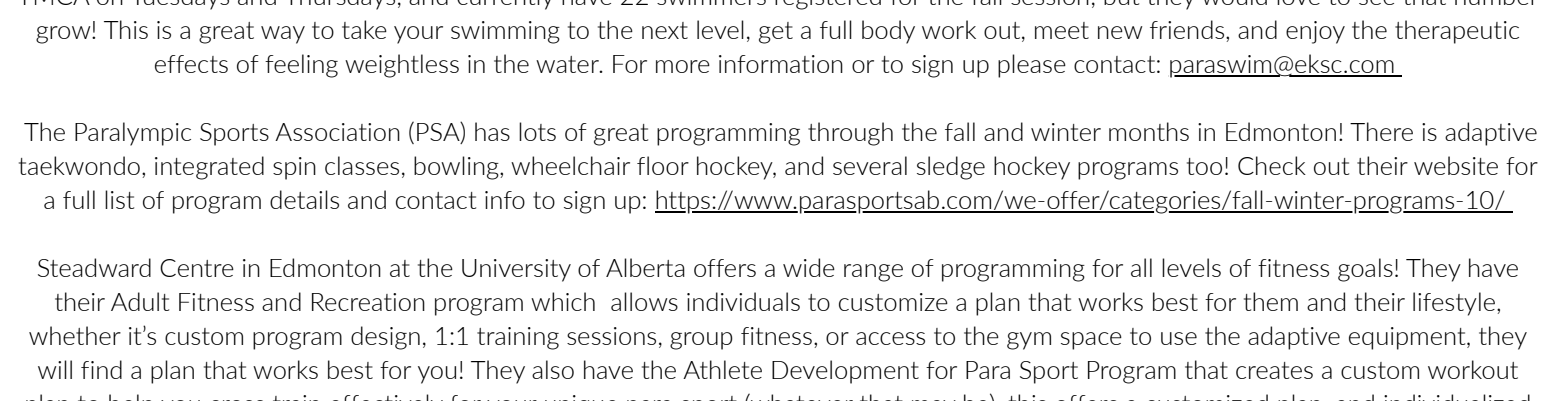
At Spinal Cord Injury Alberta, we acknowledge the truth of our shared history and stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. Reconciliation is not a single day-it's a continuous journey. Let us listen, learn, and uplift Indigenous voices. Let us commit to meaningful change. Let us act with compassion and truth.



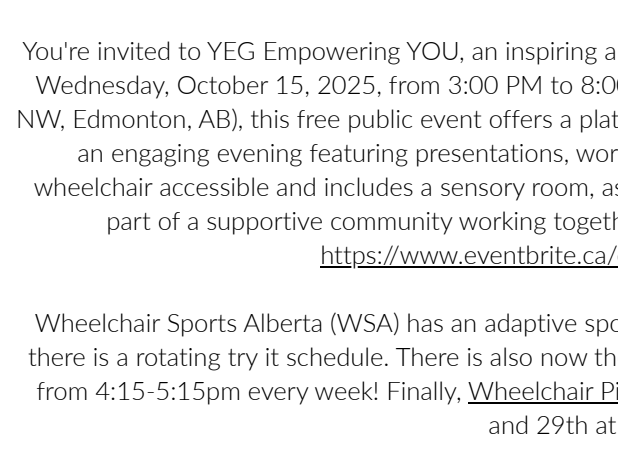
## Looking for some fun wheelchair halloween costume ideas? Find inspiration + let your creativity shine!



Learn more about making trick or treating accessible for all with the Treat Accessibility initiative here: <https://www.treataccessibly.com/>



## NanoTess NanoSalv Spotlight



Nanotess is changing the game in wound care, helping heal wounds quicker and getting people back to living their lives! Nanotess is a Canadian made, award winning, Health Canada authorized medical device. This technology has been used to increase the speed of healing wounds, from small skin tears to chronic wounds, to a wide range of dermatological challenges. They are also now covered by Alberta Blue Cross and the Alberta Drugs Benefits List as of August 1, 2025! They are based out of Calgary and welcomed our staff to a tour of their amazing facility and supported our recent peer conference in Calgary! NanoSalv is a solid state heterogeneous catalyst that works with your body's natural healing system to trigger local healing reactions! This means it heals wounds without contributing to antibiotic resistance! It is comprised of 3 main catalysts: copper which is a wound healing optimizer; titanium dioxide which is a booster facilitator; and silicone dioxide which is a reach maximizer. It has amazing 3-1 technology to help heal injured, inflamed or infected skin. It actively promotes and optimizes healing; reduces inflammation and irritation; and provides broad-spectrum antimicrobial protection! Win-win-win! For more information check out: <https://nanotess.com/>

## In the Community + Across the Province:

The Reaper Reckoning Red Deer Wheelchair Rugby Tournament will take place from 17-19<sup>th</sup> at the Penhold Multiplex main gym. The tournament will start Friday at 5pm and end Sunday at 3pm (approximately).

Special shoutout to Red Deer Reapers Rugby player Kim who will also be playing on the all women's Northern Lights team for Rugbymania 2025 tournament in November in Prague which will see teams from all over the world come and play! Learn more about the tournament here: [https://rugbymania.cz/?page\\_id=357](https://rugbymania.cz/?page_id=357)

Red Deer will also host the first Sledge Hockey Tournament of the season on October 25 + 26 at the G.H. Dawe Arena. Check it for some exciting sledge hockey action with teams from Lacombe, Edmonton, and Calgary battling in the first tournament of the season!

There is a brand new para swim program launching in Edmonton! Mathew Mossey previously coached the Steadward Bears para swim team, but this year they have moved the para swim program to the Keyano Swim Club. They will be swimming out of the downtown YMCA on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with currently have 22 swimmers registered for the fall session, but they would love to see that number grow! This is a great way to take your swimming to the next level, get a full body workout out, meet new friends, and enjoy the therapeutic effects of feeling weightless in the water. For more information or to sign up please contact: [parawim@ksc.com](mailto:parawim@ksc.com).

The Paralympic Sports Association (PSA) has lots of great programming through the fall and winter months! In Edmonton! There is adaptive taekwondo, integrated spin classes, bowling, wheelchair floor hockey, and several sledge hockey programs too! Check out their website for a full list of program details and contact info to sign up: <https://www.parasportsab.com/we-offer/categories/fall-winter-programs-10/>.

Steadward Centre in Edmonton at the University of Alberta offers a wide range of programming for all levels of fitness goals! They have their Adult Fitness and Recreation program which allows individuals to customize a plan that works best for them and their lifestyle, whether it's custom program design, 1:1 training sessions, group fitness, or access to the gym space to use the adaptive equipment, they will find a plan that works best for you! They also have the Athlete Development Program for Para Sport Program that creates a custom workout plan to help you cross train effectively for your unique para sport (whatever that may be), this offers a customized plan, and individualized support through strength and conditioning workouts to help development and performance along your unique sport pathway. They also offer Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) programs that is designed for individuals with paralyzed muscles. By placing electrodes on the skin, FES uses electrical currents to stimulate and activate the muscle which is combined with functional movement on a FES bike. The FES program also includes general access to the gym. Learn more here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/steadward-centre/programs-and-registration/index.html>

You're invited to YEG Empowering YOU, an inspiring and inclusive event dedicated to uplifting individuals with disabilities. Taking place on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM MDT at The Atrium at NorQuest College Main Campus (10215 - 108 Street NW, Edmonton, AB), this free public event offers a workshop for entertainment, exhibitors, and access to valuable community resources. Enjoy an engaging evening featuring presentations, workshops for connection, awareness, a market, and door prizes. The venue is fully wheelchair accessible and includes a sensory room, as well as dedicated spaces for Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ communities. Come be a part of a supportive community working together to create opportunity, foster inclusion, and inspire change. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/veg-empowering-you-2025-tickets-1665312457389>

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! Finally, [Wheelchair Pickleball](#) will continue on Wednesday evenings this month on October 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29th at the Glenrose main gym from 6:30-8pm!

The Alberta Cerebral Palsy Sports Association has programming across the province! They have several programs available for all ability levels! There is para soccer, powerchair soccer and bocce. For more information check out: <https://www.acpsa.ca/>

[Rocky Mountain Adaptive](#) has lots of awesome activities to do in the fall! They have adaptive mountain bikes, accessible paddleboards, kayaks and more! Between biking, hiking and paddling, it is a great way to enjoy the mountains before the snow falls and temps drop!

The Wheelchair Curling Club in Calgary will be offering a free try it event to kick off their season on October 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM at the Garrison Curling Club. For more information on wheelchair curling check out the feature piece that was sent in by Martin Purvis at the bottom of the newsletter!

Ultimate Para Sports will be starting up an [adaptive scuba program](#) out of Cochrane at the SLS Centre. The try scuba offers para-free on Tuesday evenings, and then it is \$550 if you want to complete your own open water certification! Ultimate Para sports also offers para-cycling programs at various levels, and guided meditation classes as well. Check out their full list of programming here: <https://www.ultimateparasports.com/our-programs>

This fall Dancing Across Barriers will also be offering a wheelchair dance class in Calgary on Thursday evenings from 5:45pm-7:45pm starting Sept 18<sup>th</sup>. If you require a wheelchair to move, DAB 2025 is the tap dance program for you. If you have even been curious or wanted to try wheelchair (tap) Dance, this program has what you have been looking for. Starting Thursday, Sept 18<sup>th</sup>, and hosted at Braeside; for nine weekly sessions, we will tap, skip, and roll toward celebrating all that is Adaptive, Para and Wheelchair Dance. To register: go to [www.lacrossingbarriers.org](http://www.lacrossingbarriers.org)



## Research Study Spotlight:

This research team at the University of Calgary had previously contacted the SCI community regarding a study titled "Kneeless Assessment of Secondary Blood Pressure-Associated Spinal Cord Injury." As part of this study, they are conducting a short follow-up questionnaire to assess blood pressure-associated challenges experienced by individuals living with spinal cord injury. This study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board (REB21-0045).

Please find the link to the online survey using the link below. The survey is accessible from PC, Android and Apple devices: [https://survey.ucalgary.ca/jfe/form/SV\\_65pZ6O0YeMC5m62](https://survey.ucalgary.ca/jfe/form/SV_65pZ6O0YeMC5m62)

Should you have questions related to their project, please do not hesitate to contact the research coordinator on this project, at [Meagan.smith1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:Meagan.smith1@ucalgary.ca)



## Advocacy: Alberta Disability Assistance Program (ADAP) Rally



Join in the community for a rally at the Alberta legislative grounds north plaza in Edmonton on October 30<sup>th</sup> from 12pm-2pm! ADAP is a deadly ableist plan, and we won't be quiet! We are gathering to say no to forced transfers off AISH and to say no to deeper poverty. This rally is organized by the People's Alliance for Disabled Albertans (PADA) - disabled people, families and allies. We are showing up to raise our voices as the government's plan would move most people on AISH to ADAP with a \$200 lower base rate. Reclassification without real choice equals a greater risk of poverty and harm. We are demanding equitable access, income security and dignity for all disabled Albertans. Bring a sign, bring your friends and bring your voice. Show up! Speak Out! Fight ADAP!

-Zachary Weeks  
Alberta Accessibility Advocate

## Did You Know? | Wheelchair Curling

- ### Why Try Wheelchair Curling?
- It's fun and it's challenging plus you'll get to play with a great group of people! After practice, you can join the group at the bar.
  - It's inclusive. We have players in both manual and power wheelchairs with a variety of disabilities.
  - You can play recreationally or competitively. Every year, we send at least one team to the provincial and national championships. Individuals in power chairs are welcome to compete along with those in manual chairs.
  - It's inexpensive. Come and try it for free and if you wish to continue, it only costs \$50 for the season and we provide the equipment.



### How Does Wheelchair Curling Work?

In regular curling, players slide out from the hack. But in wheelchair curling, we push the rock down the ice from a stationary position using a special stick. As we push the rock, it is given either a clockwise or an anti-clockwise rotation which causes it to curl in the direction of the rotation. We push the rock towards a set of rings (called the house) at the other end of the ice sheet. A rock can stop in front of the house where it's called a guard, it can stop in the house which is where you need to be to score points or it can be thrown hard enough to knock an opposition rock out of the house. This is called a take out. Of course, there is no sweeping in wheelchair curling which just adds to the challenge and to the fun.

We play three types of games. One is similar to the traditional able-bodied game with four players on the team. Each player on the team throws two rocks alternating with the opponent while the skip calls the shots and holds the broom as the target. After both teams have thrown eight rocks, the end is complete and the score is determined by whose rocks are closer to the center of the rings. We play a total of eight ends and the game usually lasts over a little over two hours.

Another game we play is called stick curling or sometimes two stick. In this game, there are only two players on a team, stationed at opposite ends of the sheet. One player throws six rocks, alternating with their opponent, while the other player holds the broom as the target. The game lasts for only six ends and it is completed in about an hour. When able-bodied players play this game, there is only limited sweeping allowed and, as a result, wheelchair curlers are quite competitive. The stick curling community has welcomed wheelchair curlers and some of our members have competed at provincial and national championships. The third game is similar to stick curling but the first two rocks are prepositioned. When played competitively, the teams must be mixed gender.

If you are in Calgary and you would like to give wheelchair curling a try, please come out to our first session on Saturday, October 18, 4:30 PM at the Garrison Curling Club. We practice most Saturdays throughout the winter and if you let us know in advance, we will be better prepared to welcome you. Our email address is: [info@calgarywheelchaircurling.com](mailto:info@calgarywheelchaircurling.com)

If you are in Edmonton, contact the [Edmonton Rocks Wheelchair Curling Association](#). Their contact information is on their Facebook page.

- Martin Purvis

## October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

At Spinal Cord Injury Alberta, we celebrate the talents, dedication, and achievements of employees with disabilities who contribute meaningfully to workplaces across Alberta and beyond. Employment is a vital part of independence, self-worth, and community connection.

This month, we renew our commitment to breaking down barriers, promoting inclusive hiring practices, and creating accessible work environments where everyone's skills are valued and nurtured.

Let's continue to raise awareness and advocate for equal opportunities, because everyone deserves a chance to thrive in their career. Together, we can build workplaces that reflect the strength of diversity and inclusion!



## "Hoping you have a spook-tacular October!"

- Kendra + Tristan + Max

