



AGM REPORT 2021

ISSUED JUNE 10, 2022, IN PREPARATION FOR THE JUNE 16TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AGENDA: 2021 Annual General Meeting.....	1
DRAFT 2020 Annual General Meeting Minutes	2
President’s Message 2021	7
Executive Director’s Report 2021.....	9
ACT Staff in 2021	10
Live Events & Training in 2021	11
ACT’s Website & Social Media	13
Information Resources in 2021	14
Motion required to Approve all Actions by the Board in 2021.....	16
Election Slate for Board of Directors 2022/23	16

AGENDA: 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JUNE 16, 2022 – VIA ZOOM

1. CALL TO ORDER 6:30
2. WELCOMING MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY
 - **Introductions via Mentimeter**
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF 2020 AGM (Held June 2021) 6:40
 - **Motion to accept the minutes of the 2020 AGM**
4. PRESIDENT’S 2021 MESSAGE – ALISON NAROD 6:45
5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – DEBORAH PUGH 6:50
6. VIDEO: INTRODUCING ACT’S NEW AID SEARCH 7:00
7. TREASURER’S REPORT– BRENT SHIRLEY 7:05
8. APPROVAL OF 2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (APPENDIX A)
 - **Discussion**
 - **Motion to accept the Independent Auditor’s Report on the 2021 financial statements**
 - **Vote**
9. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS FOR 2022/23 7:15
 - **Discussion**
 - **Motion to approve the Election Slate for Board of Directors for 2023/2023.**
 - **Vote**
10. DISCUSSION OF APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR 2022 7:30
 - **Motion that BBA Accounting Group Inc., Chartered Professional Accountants be appointed as Auditors of ACT Autism Community Training Society, to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting, or until their successors are duly appointed, and that the Board of Directors be authorized to establish the remuneration of the Auditors.**
 - **Vote**
11. MOTION REQUIRED TO APPROVE ALL ACTIONS BY THE BOARD IN 2021 7:35
 - **“Moved that...all acts, contracts, proceedings, appointments, elections and payments made and taken by the directors of ACT Autism Community Training Society since January 1, 2021 referred to in the minutes of the Board of Directors’ meetings and the minutes of committee meetings be approved.”**
 - **Vote**
12. ADJOURNMENT: 7:40
 - **Motion to adjourn**

Please note: ACT’s June Board Meeting will follow the AGM – only members of the new Board of Directors are required to attend but all members are welcome to observe.

DRAFT 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 17, 2021 – VIA ZOOM

Board Members in Attendance: Dr. Alisa Lipson, Alison Narod, Anne McCaw, Blair Dwyer, Blair Whelan, Brent Shirley, Denise Ching, Jennifer Branston, Kenneth Cole, Karen Kalynchuk, Nicole Provost

Board Member Regrets: None

General Membership in Attendance: Pharid Jaffer, Bo Sang Lee, Tegan Scott, Juliani Kusmanto, Pat Mirenda, Shannon Muir, Roberta Niccoli-Morrison, Paola Colozzo, Richard Stock (left 7:05), Brenda Fossett, Preetinder Narang, Tess Garrow, Louise Broadley, Anne Stoll, Patrick Dwyer, Magdela Markiewicz, Teresa Beckley, Georgina Robinson, Vanessa Fong, Carey Henry, Sawsan Salih, Jemana Elsharkawi, Michelle Schmidt, Mary Swan, Tony Yue

Staff in Attendance: Deborah Pugh, Linda Leung, Mary Yamashita, Ryan Quiring, Stephanie Porter

- | | |
|---|------|
| 13. CALL TO ORDER BY ALISON NAROD | 6:30 |
| 14. WELCOMING MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY | 6:30 |
| 15. INTRODUCTIONS VIA MENTI.COM | 6:35 |
| 16. ACT'S WORK IN 2020/21 – VIDEO | 6:40 |
| 17. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF 2019 AGM (Held August 2020) | 6:45 |
| Motion to accept the minutes of the 2019 AGM
Moved by Blair Dwyer; seconded by Pat Mirenda. Passed unanimously. | |
| 18. PRESIDENT'S 2020 MESSAGE BY ALISON NAROD | 6:55 |

I would like to welcome nearly 20 new members who have joined ACT – Autism Community Training in time for our 2020 Annual General Meeting. We now have nearly 60 members who broadly reflect the diversity of our community. Autism affects all cultures, races and religion equally. We are building our membership to reflect our community which includes those who are aboriginal or are immigrants, as well as having the experience of being autistic adults, siblings, parents, community professionals, researchers and clinicians. These multiple perspectives enrich ACT's ability to serve those with neurodevelopmental conditions. The most important value we are seeking as we build ACT's membership is to identify those who think beyond their own personal priorities and work to help all members of our community, especially those who are least able to advocate for themselves.

Part of the process of writing my president's message for ACT's 2020 Annual General Meeting is reflecting on the opportunities that 2020 provided for ACT to innovate, to better meet the needs of isolated families who have long struggled in the face of a lack of accessible information and training. When I wrote my last message to our membership for our last AGM, held in August 2020, we all were looking forward to re-establishing our normal lives within a few months. From the vantage point of June 2021, we are again hoping for a return to normality. However, 18 months into this pandemic, our society has learnt valuable lessons about using technology to serve isolated citizens, as well as its profound limitations.

The pandemic forced ACT to focus all our efforts on providing online information resources and training. This was possible because this is an area in which we have invested for many years. This has meant our ability to serve isolated families in all areas of British Columbia and across Canada has

blossomed. Part of our pandemic response was to focus on practical training, aimed at family members, and made available at no cost. This was only possible thanks to the support of our presenters, donors and sponsors.

The result has been that the many isolated families who have members affected by neurodevelopmental conditions, even if they live in large cities, have benefited. We are especially encouraged by the positive feedback from those who are long use to being neglected by virtue of their difficulty in accessing training opportunities, because they live outside of the Lower Mainland. Importantly, most of our 2020 events were recorded so that they can be watched, free of charge via Autism Videos @ ACT. Effectively these are a resource library of evidence-based practice available internationally to benefit those affected by autism and related neurological disorders worldwide. While ACT has been grateful for the opportunity to extend our service to autistic individuals and their families during the pandemic, we also recognize that we must continue to advocate for those who are marginalized by a range of additional, inter-related factors including poverty, aboriginal status and difficulty in communicating in English. We cannot help them if we restrict our work to online resources.

ACT has worked hard over the last 18 months to collaborate with other organizations focused on the wider community affected by neurological conditions. This will continue as we do our best to keep the provincial and federal government focused on evidence-based solutions to the pervasive, systemic discrimination that mitigates against marginalized communities. In particular, the horror of the discovery of the remains of 215 aboriginal children found in Kamloops last month, on the grounds of a residential school, must inspire us to continue questioning authority and demand that we end our current systemic discrimination which forces so many families, especially aboriginal families, who have children with neurological conditions, to give their children up to foster care because they are denied the services that allow them to keep them at home, safely.

Finally, in addition to thanking my fellow board members and ACT's able staff, I want to thank the membership of our organization which provides our small organization with such a depth of expertise, whether professional or from the perspective of lived experience.

19. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

7:00

The formal Executive Director's Report has been included in the AGM Report circulated.

To echo some of the themes in the President's Report, the strength of ACT, and where we have to maintain our perspective, is that we do not represent, work with, advocate for, or train just one view of autism. Autistic individuals are indeed individuals; they have a wide variety of needs depending on their personalities, likes and dislikes, family strengths, where they live in the province and what cultural background they have. In developing our training program and resources, we have to be aware that what we offer is not always relevant to everyone all the time. We must try to think the needs of smaller groups within the community as well. To respond to the needs of individuals, we have to go broad.

I would also like to ACT's membership to think about the diagnosis numbers we are seeing now. When my son was diagnosed, autism was seen as rare, diagnosed in a few of a thousand children. Now, 1 in 37 children in British Columbia are receiving Autism Funding. Between 2019 and 2020, at least 2,000 children were added to this number, and there is a long waiting list for diagnosis. The average age of diagnosis in BC is still over 6, and most children are not receiving early intervention.

The reality is that children become adults, and age out of supports. We have seen an increase in the number of adults seeking diagnosis, and we have nowhere to turn them to. For adults, not having a diagnosis and the overlap with mental health conditions is significant. Prior to the pandemic, ACT was working with Vancouver Coastal Health to pressure them to expedite a system for adult diagnoses. We are now going back to VCH to increase that pressure again and restart this committee. We also see systemic problems with Child and Youth Mental Health services. The situation remains the most difficult in the interior and the north, significantly impacting Indigenous communities.

It has been a tough year - the toughest year I have experienced as ACT's Executive Director - and yet with all the negative context, we feel proud and privileged to be able to continue working, contribute and support our community. I would like to recognise the commitment of ACT's four staff members, in addition to myself, that have done this work, but also the continuing support from the Board and our membership - especially those that took part in the pandemic presentations in April and May, which was an amazing response. Even though we worked really hard, we could not make up for the MCFD's absence. What has really embittered families was the denied rollover of autism funding. Yet for those families in isolated communities, they haven't been able to use their funding anyways even prior to the pandemic.

I would also like to acknowledge Simon Fraser University for their partnership this year, especially in the survey assessing impact of the pandemic on families. It is my belief that this research aided in the electing of the new MCFD Minister and the publishing of Representative of Children and Youth's report that followed. The results of the survey were extremely significant in how desperate families were; however, we know the people that responded were in urban areas with an average income of \$80,000, spoke English and had access to a computer. If the situation was so severe for them, we have to think about the families that didn't participate.

By the end of this year, we will go back to charging for our events, but we will have a healthy bursary program for low-income families, autistic adults, and Indigenous communities. ACT will also continue work with families who speak English as a second language. You will note that MCFD decided to give ACT the remaining funds from the Parent and Child Early Coaching (PACE) Project. It was a remarkable project but a surprise to ACT to be provided these funds to use for our programs. It will provide financial stability as we develop our training program, in the years to come.

20. TREASURER'S REPORT- BRENT SHIRLEY

7:07

We have just completed the audit for the year ending December 31, 2020. As in past years, we received a clean audit opinion, which speaks to the quality and dedication of ACT's staff in keeping our financials in good order.

We ended 2020 with an excess revenue of approximately \$73,000. This is an improvement over 2019, where we had a deficit of \$26,000. This gain can be attributed partially to the government assistance provided through COVID programs, which aided in covering a fair portion of our expenses such as salaries. In 2020, ACT was successful in applying for a BC Community Gaming grant for the first time, receiving \$110,000 which helped support specific programs. ACT did not recognize any of the PACE Project funding in 2020, as there were no associated expenses, and the project was winding down but not completed. ACT then received the unexpected news that the money not spent on the project will be ours to use in the future, over the next two or three years.

The financial statements were posted on the AGM resource page for members to review, however, you will find no unusual items that I have not spoken to.

Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report and the Independent Auditor’s Report on the 2020 financial statements

Moved by Brent Shirley; seconded by Pat Mirenda. Passed unanimously.

21. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS FOR 2021/2022 7:15

Eight of ACT’s directors are up for re-election this year:

- President: Alison Narod - rejoined the board in 2017 – (4th year as President) - one-year term
- Dr. Alisa Lipson - joined in 2015 (for a one-year term)
- Karen Kalynchuk - joined in 2017
- Brent Shirley - joined in 2017 - (4th year as Treasurer) – one-year term
- Jennifer Branston – appointed in February 2021
- Dr. Kenneth Cole - appointed in February 2021
- Anne McCaw - appointed in February 2021
- Nicole Provost [elected in 2020 stepped down temporarily]

Motion to approve the Election Slate for Board of Directors for 2021/2022.

Moved by Blair Dwyer; seconded by Michelle Schmidt. Passed unanimously.

22. PROPOSED NEW BY-LAW [APPENDIX B] 7:17

Back in 2016, there was a major revision of the legislation ACT that governs ACT, the Societies ACT. At the time, we took the opportunity to revise the bylaws. The new bylaws are easier to navigate. We revised our membership rule and how new members are introduced. Because the society is getting larger and have more members, limitations were added to how the society can grow. A new member will have to be recommended by an existing member. This also helps to prevent any takeover from a party interested in our financial holdings. The governance committee recommended the bylaws to the board, and the board recommended the bylaws,

Motion to approve new by-laws as recommended by ACT’s Board of Directors

Moved by Blair Dwyer; seconded by Anne McCaw. Passed unanimously.

23. DISCUSSION OF APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR 2021 7:23

Brent Shirley: BBA Accounting Group has been our auditors for several years now. They have done a good job from my perspective and have been very professional in how they have managed the process and kept their fees low.

Motion that BBA Accounting Group Inc., Chartered Professional Accountants be appointed as Auditors of ACT Autism Community Training Society, to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting, or until their successors are duly appointed, and that the Board of Directors be authorized to establish the remuneration of the Auditors.

Moved by Brent Shirley; seconded by Blair Dwyer. Passed unanimously.

24. MOTION REQUIRED TO APPROVE ALL ACTIONS BY THE BOARD IN 2020 7:26

“Moved that...all acts, contracts, proceedings, appointments, elections and payments made and taken by the directors of ACT Autism Community Training Society since January 1, 2020 referred to in the minutes of the Board of Directors’ meetings and the minutes of committee meetings be approved.”

Moved by Shannon Muir; seconded by Michelle Schmidt. Passed unanimously.

25. MEMBERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS VIA MENTI.COM 7:27
Deborah: As we said earlier, we will be reviewing your suggestions and see how we can make our programs as effective as possible.

26. ADJOURNMENT: 7:30

Motion to adjourn

Moved by Jemana Elsharkawi; seconded by Denise Ching. Passed unanimously.

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 2021

After four years as President of ACT - Autism Community Training, I am now stepping into the role of past-President as of this AGM. It has been a significant period for ACT and the autism community in general and I have very much enjoyed the opportunity to work with ACT's committed staff and my fellow board members to support families and autistic adults in the face of constant change. There have been a number of important challenges over the last four years. These include:

- In 2017, the Ministry of Children and Family Development [MCFD] stopped providing funding for the contract that ACT had ably fulfilled for 15 years, instead providing parent support via MCFD employees. This meant ACT lost two-thirds of its funding and staff; but the board and staff, with tremendous community support, decided to refocus on providing community-level training and curated evidence-based information so that families could continue to access independent information both via ACT's products and through linking to excellent sources internationally.
- Our focus on online resources and training meant that by 2020, when the pandemic disrupted every aspect of society but most especially the lives of children and adults with disabilities and their families, ACT was well positioned to respond. ACT now provides a robust array of offerings including live presentations, panel discussions, videos and specialized resources, as well as ACT in Chinese.
- Throughout the pandemic, ACT has supported families to articulate their opinions of MCFD's policies. In 2021, Simon Fraser University researchers, Professor Grace Iarocci and graduate student Vanessa Fong, partnered with ACT to produce an important report widely covered by Canadian media exposing the high degree of parental alienation from MCFD's policies and practices.
- Then in October 2021, MCFD announced the ending of individualized funding, including the Autism Funding Program by 2025. In response, ACT's Board has directed staff to collaborate with other disability organizations to focus on the need for the government to provide detailed plans of how it will fund and implement evidence-based services within the planned Family Connection Centres. I am particularly proud of how quickly ACT's staff developed resources on our website to give distressed families the opportunity to articulate their concerns, as well as providing them with advocacy tips in seven languages, in addition to English.

While the next few years are likely to be difficult for the disability sector in BC, I can assure ACT's membership, our donors, and all of those who benefit from our services, that ACT's Board Members and Staff will continue to focus on the needs of the most vulnerable; both by the direct information and training services we provide, and our commitment to advocating for those who are marginalized by a range of additional, inter-related factors including poverty, gender, aboriginal status and difficulty in communicating in English.

It is worth noting that while ACT had to reintroduce fees for our live presentations in 2021, our registration fees have not increased, and we have continued to provide bursaries to ensure equity of access. In addition, in recognition of the chronic neglect of Aboriginal children, ACT instituted a new, ongoing, bursary program in 2021 to support capacity building within aboriginal communities by providing bursaries.

At the end of 2022, ACT's founder, Deborah Pugh, will be retiring as Executive Director. Having helped Deborah begin ACT nearly 20 years ago, I would like to thank her for all of her amazing work and foresight in developing this organization from the ground up. She has taken it from a "dog and pony show" travelling to the main centers in the province to provide face to face training, to an organization that provides online, interactive training, topical videos, and evidence-based information to folks in their homes and wherever people have internet around the world, not only in English, but in a number of languages. She has collected and inspired a diverse team of staff and board members over the years and has produced top level education and training to our community and beyond. I want to convey our appreciation of her achievement of an organization, independent of government and commercial pressures, that focuses on the needs of autistic adults and children to be surrounded by those who understand their diverse needs and supports them in reaching their goals. I wish her more time for her garden and her family.

Finally, I would like to thank the three board members who are retiring this year: Karen Kalynchuk, Dr. Kenneth Cole and Nicole Provost – each of whom has made a significant contribution to the autism community in British Columbia, apart from their service to ACT which has been greatly appreciated.

Alison Narod

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2021

This is the 17th and final Annual Report that I will write for ACT. Those who know me well will know that report writing has never been my favorite part of being Executive Director but there is a silver lining to reviewing all of 2021. I have been surprised, once again, at just how much ACT's small team accomplished in one year. This is especially striking because all our normal ways of planning and providing training had to be constantly revamped throughout 2021 in response to the pandemic.

The big picture is fairly simple to convey: live events [11]; Social Thinking subscriptions [4 pre-recorded events]; new online videos [12] and a brand-new search engine for the Autism and Intellectual Disability [AID] database with over 2,500 records [the old version of the AID was searched 26,000 times in 2021].

You will see from the details below that ACT provided access to training in 2021 at the same level as 2019, in addition to providing over 4,400 subscriptions to 2,300 registrants for pre-recorded Social Thinking courses, thanks to the support of the Provincial Program for Autism and Related Disorders [POPARD]. This does not include the viewers on ACT's YouTube channel who increased from 16,700 in 2020 to 50,600 in 2021 – responding to the free online videos that we have developed for Autism Videos @ ACT.

Beyond the statistics, there are many aspects of ACT's work which are more complex to explain, in part because we are a unique organization internationally. We are a not-for-profit that respects research and looks for the evidence-base for programs; but we are not part of a university. We work closely with academics from around the world, especially with our partners at Capilano University, University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, who have a wealth of experience of translating research into good practice. Most are members of ACT and have been terrific partners through tough times.

Our focus is also broader than just training. ACT is also about bringing high quality information directly to families, autistic individuals and the community professionals who support them, so that informed decisions can be made. We respect research but our primary audience is not researchers and clinical specialists. We focus on team-based, community-level training of educators, clinicians, and caregivers because shared knowledge is vital to the success of autistic individuals across their lifespan. Learning about a variety of approaches, with the focus on the practical, is essential to meet the diversity of our community. ACT shares resources we produce and link to excellent resources developed by other organizations internationally - to offer a wide-range of evidence-based information. The AID which is overseen by the [International Advisory Panel](#), including researchers, clinicians and those with lived experience. Our information is available 24/7 and is easy to share with other team members.

ACT promotes multiple approaches to supporting autistic individuals, depending on their profile; we do not have commercial relationships with our presenters. No commercial organization can reach ACT's supporters by paying ACT for access.

Our success relies on ACT's small staff collaborating intensively. They continue to do a terrific job and I shall miss their collective creativity and determination to overcome the many obstacles we face in our work. Staff productivity is strengthened by our active Board of Directors who are available collectively and individually to provide advice and guidance. I have always been grateful that the Board's focus is supporting the most vulnerable in the disability community. This includes speaking out on government policy, when necessary, which has become increasingly vital since the beginning of the pandemic.

ACT also relies on our general membership for critical feedback and creative ideas. Consisting of those with lived experience, researchers, presenters, clinicians, they keep us in touch with pressing issues. In recent years, the needs of autistic women and girls, challenges affecting autistic adults generally, and mental health have been prioritized.

Key to ACT's ability to carry on, are our donors [large and small] and sponsors who played an enormous role in enabling ACT to work independently - focusing on helping families make informed decisions by providing objective information, free of external pressure.

I would also like to recognize the ongoing partnerships we have developed with POPARD, which has enabled us to support professional development for thousands of teachers. Another key sponsor for ACT for a number of years is Oceanside Fisheries – our January Herring Sale has become a feature of ACT's annual calendar. We also acknowledge ongoing support from BC Charitable Gaming which provides our only source of core funding from a government source.

A special thanks to our BC-based presenters and panelists with lived experience who continued to contribute throughout 2021, despite the multitude of barriers that faced them. Their willingness to prioritizing supporting families, despite the many demands on their time is greatly appreciated as it has been the backbone of our work.

My final thanks go to the autistic individuals and their families who have made my work with ACT so fulfilling for nearly two decades. I have learned so much from my fellow parents [including the vital need for a sense of humour] to help me raise my own autistic son and they have inspired my work. I have seen many young people grow up and flourish and I have shared with parents the pain of early, unnecessary, death. Above all I have learned to be less judgemental, to constantly challenge my own assumptions and prejudices, and to follow the evidence, tempered by the experience of autistic individuals and their families.

The next few years will be difficult for our community because of the current political and economic climate in British Columbia which is so challenging for those affected by disabilities. However, I am certain that under new leadership ACT will continue to innovate, advocate and collaborate in the interests of all of those with neurodiversity and their families with the support of our committed board and staff.

Deborah Pugh

ACT STAFF IN 2021

Executive Director - Deborah Pugh

Financial Controller - Linda Leung

Manager, Autism Information Resources - Stephanie Porter

Administrative & Training Coordinator - Mary Yamashita

Digital Communications Coordinator - Ryan Quiring

Content & Communications Officer - Khang Nguyen

LIVE EVENTS & TRAINING IN 2021

ACT held 11 live events in 2021, providing over 21,000 hours of training to nearly 4,000 registrants. [In addition, 2,300 registered for a Social Thinking subscription.] Due to the public health challenges posed by COVID-19, all events were held virtually. Most were professionally videoed. A few used Zoom. Five of the events were offered free as part of ACT's Fall 2020/Spring 2021 training series. See below for a complete list of 2021 trainings, including attendee feedback.

Much of ACT's training in 2021 was focused on the needs of families and autistic adults, with presentations featuring local experts and those with lived experience. There were two 'Focus on Research' days. The University of British Columbia [UBC] project focused on improving early intervention supports for children with neuro-diversities in BC. The research carried out by Simon Fraser University [SFU] analyzed the results of a family-focused survey rating MCFD support for families during the pandemic. In addition, ACT partnered with SFU on a research project to establish an evidence-base for the effectiveness of a 10-week compassionate parenting program, 'Self Care for Carers'. An expert in this area, Dr. Georgina Robinson presented the course in Spring and Fall 2021 sessions, which was free for registrants so that it could be assessed without cost barrier. The response of participants (all parents of autistic children) was very positive and statistically significant. SFU will present their findings at the Canadian Psychological Association's conference in 2022.

Comparing Live Events in 2021 to 2019

ACT's training program in 2020 was highly unusual because of the pandemic, so a comparison of data for 2021 relative to 2019 has been provided below. We held four more events in 2021 than in 2019. The significant increase in familiarity with online training, as a result of the pandemic, increased the number of people registering online to 4,000 in 2021, an increase of 1,300 over 2019. As attention spans tend to be shorter online, ACT shortened our schedules in 2021 - many presentations were held as one-day workshops instead of two, resulting in virtually the same number of hours of training delivered.

Year	Count of Events	Count of Attendees	Total Hours of Training Delivered
2019	7	2,687	21,349
2021	11	3,997	21,274

Social Thinking Subscriptions – A New Initiative

In addition to the numbers trained via our live events, ACT negotiated special rates for subscriptions to four Social Thinking pre-recorded online courses for Canadian registrants in Spring 2021. Registrants were able to access the courses anytime and as many times as they wished over a two-month period. In total, over 4,400 subscriptions provided over 37,000 hours of training to 2,300 individuals. Nearly 2,000 of these subscribers were BC educators registered through ACT's partnership with POPARD.

Live Event Details and Participant Feedback	Date(s)
<p>Toilet Training for Everyone Presented by Pat Mirenda, PhD, BCBA-D & Katie Rinald, BCBA</p> <p><i>"Pat and Katie were amazing. I feel empowered now that I have effective tools and stronger understanding in order to be a better trainer for my son. Thank you so much for providing this workshop!" - Parent</i></p>	Feb 3 - 4, 2021

[Continued on next page]

Live Event Details and Participant Feedback	Date(s)
<p>Self-Care for Carers – A Mindful Self Compassion Program A 10-week, small group program for parents of children with autism Facilitated by Georgina Robinson, PhD & Zoey Ryan BSc, PCC</p> <p><i>“This program has been an amazing way to connect with my kiddos. It’s all around been an opportunity that allows me to feel something for me again, so I can reflect calmness and be present for my children again. I am very grateful”.</i> - Parent</p>	<p>Spring 2021: Apr 7 - Jun 9</p> <p>Fall 2021: Oct 6 - Dec 8</p>
<p>Turning the COVID-19 Crisis into Opportunity: Rethinking the family supports to build resilience Presented by Grace Iarocci, PhD & Vanessa Fong, PhD Candidate Featuring a panel with moderator Dr. Anthony Bailey; Panelists included Deborah Pugh, ACT; Bosang Lee, Here & Now Society; Lori Gauthier, Parent & Indigenous Advocate; Carey Henry, Parent</p> <p><i>“The needs of the families are so clearly spelled out here. We know this anecdotally, but to have research backing what programs should be implemented is crucially important - and hopefully is a step towards government services being more appropriately responsive.”</i> – Professional</p>	<p>Apr 16, 2021</p>
<p>Supporting Early Social & Communication Development through Parent Coaching Presented by Pat Mirenda, PhD, BCBA-D; Paola Colozzo, PhD, RSLP; Veronica Smith, PhD; Wendy Ungar, PhD and other members of PACE - Parent & Child Early Coaching Project</p> <p><i>“The more we can empower parents, the better! It is so rewarding as a therapist to see a child improve and to see the parent grow in confidence with the knowledge that they can help their own child. Thank you again.”</i> – Professional</p>	<p>Apr 23, 2021</p>
<p>Improving Family Mealtimes, One Bite at a Time Presented by Lauren Binnendyk, PhD, BCBA-D & Chantal Juilfs, M.Ed. BCBA</p> <p><i>“I am happy to see that ACT has heard the needs of many parents who have challenges and are willing to get this information out there for anyone who needs help. I didn’t know so many parents have this same issue as myself with picky and difficult eating habits.”</i> - Parent</p>	<p>Jun 3, 2021 Nov 26, 2021</p>
<p>Autism and Sexual Health: Access, Education, and Intervention Presented by Landa Fox, MA, BCBA - Certified Sexual Health Educator</p> <p><i>“The facilitator was outstanding, and very enthusiastic. I had a few light bulb moments and I finally have a better understanding of how to approach a difficult subject. I learned so much and I am very thankful I attended this event.”</i> - Parent</p>	<p>Jun 4, 2021</p>
<p>Executive Function Skills with Sarah Ward – Webinar Series Presented by Sarah Ward, MS, CCC-SLP</p> <p><i>“Thank you for this information loaded series. It actually was even better having the series sessions broken up as they were as Sarah has SO much amazing information that she teaches that I find my brain needs time to process.”</i> - Professional</p>	<p>Four Sessions: July - Aug 2021</p>
<p>Sleep and Neurodiversity: Learn to Achieve Healthy Sleep Presented by Hilary McClinton, M. Ed. & Nicole Shallow, M. Ed., BCBA</p> <p><i>“Thank you so much. Incredibly relevant to our adult daughter. She was very focused on the presentation and wanted to talk afterwards about applying the ideas to her situation. Very grateful for her bursary. A tremendous gift.”</i> - Parent</p>	<p>Oct 1, 2021</p>

[Continued on next page]

Live Event Details and Participant Feedback	Date(s)
<p>Zooming In with Social Thinking: Strategies for Concrete Learners Presented by Ryan Hendrix, MS, CCC-SLP</p> <p><i>"I'm an EA in my second year and I'm noticing more and more that I want to assist with, and I had a list... This presentation really gave me lots to work with and I feel confident."</i></p> <p>- Para-professional</p>	Oct 22 - 29, 2021

ACT Bursaries in 2021 – New Indigenous Initiative

After our free series of 13 workshops wrapped up in June 2021, with many government subsidies for charities ending, ACT returned to charging event registration fees. Rates were kept as low as possible as so many people have suffered financially throughout the pandemic – especially those affected by disability. Our long-standing bursary program was resumed. Priority continues to be given to low-income registrants, especially autistic adults and family members. We also provided bursaries to those affected by disabilities other than autism. In July 2021, ACT announced a new bursary program to provide free registrations for Indigenous organizations and families as a practical way of providing support to communities that continue to be severely marginalized. [Read the announcement.](#) In 2021, ACT awarded over \$10,000 in bursaries to 115 recipients, which does not include the over 3,250 free registrations for the first five events in 2021.

Revenue from Training in 2021

In 2021 ACT began the transition out of pandemic mode to a more normal environment, both in terms of public health and economic stability. ACT's net revenue (event revenues minus direct event expenses) from those events we charged for in 2021 was over \$116,500, an increase on 2020 (\$79,300) when most of our events were free. Despite sponsorship, providing our *free* COVID-19 training events in 2021 required ACT to pull from our reserves as we ran these at a loss of nearly \$23,000. Funds raised from training are very important to ACT's ability to continue our services as they cover staff salaries and overheads.

ACT'S WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

ACT's website, online newsletter, and social media content are important channels for the autism community to access information about ACT's events, services, information, and news. In addition, we share information from other organizations - from summer camps and opportunities to engage in research to the latest government policy announcements.

Below are some key statistics for ACT's online platforms. They demonstrate that ACT's engagement with is growing steadily. While website page views dropped from 2020 to 2021, this was mainly due to the switch in 2021 from hosting our free web stream series on our website to an external host, which is not tracked in ACT's website stats. View more of ACT's accomplishments [here](#).

	2019	2020	2021
Website page views	392,000	557,000	530,000
ACT Newsletter Subscribers	7,900	9,000	9,300
Facebook Followers	6,600	8,100	8,400
Video views on Vimeo	31,700	59,200	60,300
Video views on YouTube	3,900	16,700	50,600
AVA videos at end of year	60	66	77

AUTISM VIDEOS @ ACT [AVA]

As of the end of 2021, ACT hosted 77 free online videos (edited versions of our live events) available on [Autism Videos @ ACT](#). The 12 new videos added to AVA in 2021 [list to follow] reflect the diverse topics that are of importance to the autism community and are often relevant to those with other disabilities. AVA continues to grow in popularity - total views have increased by 300% since 2019 – partly because of the reliance on online resources necessitated by pandemic precautions. In total, AVA videos were watched 110,900 times in 2021, a 36% increase over 2020. Viewers on ACT’s YouTube channel increased from 16,700 in 2020 to 50,600 in 2021.

New AVA Videos in 2021

- [Supporting Indigenous Families Affected by Autism through Engagement and Research](#)
- [Combating Compassion Fatigue for Families and Caregivers of Children with Special Needs](#)
- [Helping Your Child with Autism Thrive in Sport and Recreation](#)
- [Make It Stop! Understanding and Preventing Problem Behaviors](#)
- [Building Community Recreation Skills](#)
- [Parents are Teachers Too! Embedding Instruction into Daily Routines and Activities](#)
- [Toilet Training for Everyone – Revised and Expanded](#)
- [Autism and Sexual Health: Access, Education, and Intervention](#)
- [IEPs...Why They Still Matter!](#)
- [Turning the COVID-19 Crisis into Opportunity: Rethinking Family Supports to Build Resilience](#)
- [Supporting Early Social & Communication Development through Parent Coaching](#)

INFORMATION RESOURCES IN 2021

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW & IMPROVED “AID SEARCH”

In 2021, over 26,000 searches were made on the Autism Information Database – with 67,000 resource pages viewed. While popular, ACT has been working on a replacement for the AID for several years. ACT’s new ‘Autism and Intellectual Disability Search’ is a sophisticated platform which vastly improves the searchability of the 2,500 information and community resources that ACT has collected over the past decade. These are constantly updated with the best available, including what ACT develops in-house. [Visit the new AID Search](#).

The new AID has a modernized interface, produces search results faster and allows for easier resource navigation through filters, search refinement, and categories. Users can easily refine their searches and save them for future reference. It is also able to link relevant information resources to BC community resource entries. For example, if a user is searching for a dentist, information resources on how to prepare for a trip to the dentist are also provided. The platform also supports maintenance of resources, using tools that search for broken links; so that ACT can maintain the resources efficiently and save users disappointment.

ACT’s staff prioritizes practical resources on a wide range of topics that can support family members, educators and community professionals looking for specialized information written in plain language. This is necessary because autism affects individuals and their families very differently and in every aspect of their lives at home, in the community, at school and at work. Random internet searches can often provide questionable results that lead families of newly diagnosed children to spend years, and a great deal of money on bogus “cures”, rather than learning how to support their child appropriately. The AID also contains records in dozens of languages other than English, to support Canadians who need this information in their primary language. This is also valuable to users internationally.

Work on the AID project intensified in 2021 as the pandemic highlighted how vital accessible, credible, online resources are to families, community professionals and autistic adults. The official launch of the new AID Search was on World Autism Day - April 2, 2022. Many thanks to all of ACT's members who helped to test this tool before it was launched publicly.

ACT IN CHINESE

In 2021, ACT secured support to enrich the [ACT in Chinese](#) page, our Chinese-language information hub for families on autism and supports in BC, with new resource pages. The additions included the Chinese translation of the [New Diagnosis Hub](#), a step-by-step guide for families on setting up their Autism Funding and intervention teams, and [What to do while waiting for an autism assessment](#), which provides steps families can take while they wait for their appointments. This includes services they can access in BC without a diagnosis, information on autism interventions they can explore, and free resources from ACT and other organizations.

RESOURCES DEVELOPED IN RESPONSE TO MCFD'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS FRAMEWORK

Families were severely shocked in October 2021 by the announcement from BC's Ministry of Children and Family Development [MCFD] of its plans to end individualized funding, including autism funding, as of 2025. Over 20,000 families with autistic children have access to this funding currently. The lack of detailed information from MCFD about the implications of these changes on their children's individualized programs increased their fears. MCFD's promise to increase the numbers of children eligible for service was seen as an empty promise without a commitment to a commiserate increase in funding, to ensure that all disabled children would receive high quality services. Families fear the new framework will lead to more waiting lists, less choice of service providers and a profound decline in service quality for all disabled and neurodiverse children. In response to MCFD's announcement, ACT moved quickly to publicize community concerns, develop a platform for streamlined information about the proposed framework, and provided advocacy tips to families. The following is a summary of this work:

Survey

The day following the announcement, ACT circulated a survey for families to allow them to share their questions and concerns about the new framework. In a week we received over 500 responses. Most expressed common themes of frustration, fear, anxiety, and anger that such a dramatic change was being introduced without community consultation. Over 150 representative excerpts were posted on ACT's website "[Initial Feedback from the Community](#)" and were referenced in the BC Legislature. Media coverage was significant.

Gathering Information Resources

ACT developed a special section of our website within days of the MCFD announcement. "[New MCFD Framework for Children with Support Needs](#)" brought together all of the information releases available from MCFD, responses from families and community organizations, community initiatives such as rallies and petitions, as well as various media reports. In the first six months after its inception, this page received nearly 1,500 visitors. ACT staff continues to update as new information becomes available.

ACT's MCFD Advocacy Tips - Translated into 7 languages

In response to the concerns of so many distraught parents, uncertain to whom and how to voice their concerns, ACT developed "[Advocacy Tips](#)" in November 2021. As MCFD only provided information in English, ACT partnered with community volunteers to create our "[Translated Advocacy Tips](#)" in Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Punjabi, Farsi, Hindi, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

MOTION REQUIRED TO APPROVE ALL ACTIONS BY THE BOARD IN 2021

“Move that all acts, contracts, proceedings, appointments, elections and payments made and taken by the directors of ACT Autism Community Training Society since January 1, 2021, referred to in the minutes of the Board of Directors’ meetings and the minutes of committee meetings be approved.”

ELECTION SLATE FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022/23

According to ACT’s by-laws, it is the role of the general membership to elect the Board of Directors. Not all of ACT’s Board Members are up for election during the same year to ensure continuity. And some are sometimes up for only a one-year term to balance the timing when terms end. All bios for ACT’s 2021/22 board members can be viewed here: www.actcommunity.ca/about-us/board-members

ACT’s Board strives to include people from diverse personal and professional backgrounds so that the society benefits from their experience. For example, over the coming months, the Board will seek to identify another Chartered Professional Accountant, to be mentored by our current Treasurer Brent Shirley.

The slate for the 2022/23 ACT Board of Directors is as follows:

Executive

President – Blair Dwyer

Past – President – Alison Narod

Vice President – Anne McCaw

Treasurer – Brent Shirley

Secretary – Jennifer Branston

General Board Members

Denise Ching

Dr. Alisa Lipson

Blair Whelan

Shannon Muir

Dr. Brenda Fossett

These board members are up for re-election for a two-year term

- Alison Narod - rejoined the board in 2017 [retires 2025]
- Denise Ching – joined 2020, will retire in 2023
- Dr. Alisa Lipson – joined in 2015 [retires 2023]
- Blair Whelan – elected in 2016 [retires 2024]
- Brent Shirley - joined in 2017 [retires 2025]
- Blair Dwyer – elected in 2020 [retires 2027]

Two new board members have agreed to serve beginning in June 2022:

- Shannon Muir, Registered Speech Language Pathologist in private practice. Shannon is on the Registry of Autism Service Providers and has been an active supporter of ACT since 2005. She has extensive experience as a volunteer heading refugee sponsorship initiatives.
- Brenda Fossett, PhD, BCBA-D is on faculty at Capilano University. Brenda has done a number of presentations for ACT. She is also an experienced teacher for the deaf. A member of ACT, Brenda is on the Registry of Autism Service Providers and has a small private practice.

These board members are starting the second year of their two-year term and are not up for re-election:

- Jennifer Branston – appointed in February 2021, elected June 2021. Jennifer has committed to staying on the board.
- Anne McCaw – appointed in February 2021, elected in June 2021.

Stepping down from the Board in June 2022

- Dr. Kenneth Cole
- Karen Kalynchuk
- Nicole Provost