



AGM REPORT 2024

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AGENDA: 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 5, 2025 – Via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER 7:00
2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
3. WELCOMING MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY
 - Introductions via Mentimeter
4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF 2023 AGM (Held June 2024)
7:10
 - Discussion
 - Motion to accept the minutes of the 2023 AGM
 - Vote
5. PRESIDENT’S 2023 MESSAGE – BLAIR DWYER 7:15
6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE –MICHELLE SCHMIDT 7:20
7. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER’S MESSAGE (see AGM report)
8. TREASURER’S REPORT– BRENT SHIRLEY 7:30
9. APPROVAL OF 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (APPENDIX B)
 - Discussion
 - Motion to accept the Independent Review on the 2024 financial statements (Appendix B)
 - Vote
 - Motion to accept the uses of the two Internally Restricted funds for 2024 (Appendix C and D).
 - Vote
10. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS FOR 2025/26 7:35
 - Discussion
 - Motion to approve the Election Slate for Board of Directors for 2024/2025.
 - Vote
11. DISCUSSION OF APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR 2025 7:40
 - Discussion
 - Motion that DMCL Chartered Professional Accountants be appointed To Conduct a Review of unaudited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2024. 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
review of unaudited financial statements for the year ended
review of 2024 tax return

12. MOTION REQUIRED TO APPROVE ALL ACTIONS BY THE BOARD IN 2024 7:45

- Discussion
- "Motion that...all acts, contracts, proceedings, appointments, elections and payments made and taken by the directors of ACT Autism Community Training Society since January 1, 2024, referred to in the minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings and the minutes of committee meetings be approved."
- Vote

13. ADJOURNMENT: 8:00

- Discussion
- Motion to adjourn
- Vote

DRAFT 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

June 12, 2024 – Via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance: Brent Shirley, Blair Dwyer, Blair Whelan, Kenzie Curby, Shannon Muir, Anne McCaw, Brenda Fossett, Marna Nelson

Board Member Regrets: Juliani Kusmanto

Members in Attendance: Tegan Scott, Mary Ellen Ross, Pat Mirenda, Coralee Curby, Louise Broadley, Preetinder Narang, Anne Millerd, Jemana Elsharkawi, Javier Herrera, Mary Yamashita, Izabelle Stevens, Siyu (Suzanna) Chen, Paola Colozza

ACT Staff in Attendance: Michelle Schmidt, Jordan Ayton Thurm, Eva-Maria Rauter, Linda Leung, Remi Castonguay, Riley Job

ACT's New Logo and Land Acknowledgement (Michelle Schmidt) 7:00

CALL TO ORDER (Blair Dwyer) 7:04

WELCOMING MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY 7:05

[Javier Herrera, Mary Yamashita, Izabelle Stevens, Siyu (Suzanna) Chen, Paola Colozza join zoom meeting]

Introductions via Mentimeter

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF 2022 AGM (Held June 2023)
7:07

- Minutes were reviewed after the last meeting by the Board.

Motion to accept the minutes of the 2022 AGM

Vote via Mentimeter

Anna McCaw Moves; Shannon Muir Seconds; Passed Unanimously

PRESIDENT'S 2023 MESSAGE – BLAIR DWYER 7:09

- Michelle and the team have shown their work in summary on the report.

- I want to concentrate on fundraising. As you can see from the financial statement, ACT has been using the reserve funds during this transition. We operated on a technical deficit as we had specifically set aside funds for specific projects. Now we must focus on fundraising to continue to do good work.
- The Board has formed a committee for fundraising with an invitation to members who have fundraising experience to join this committee. The function of the committee is to take an in-depth look at certain projects and make recommendations to the board.
- This is important for ACT's future as we rely on donations, primarily from individuals. We receive generous help from the Herring Sale and individual donations, but we really want to try and get donations from foundations. A personal contact will get people through the door. If any members have a connection with a charitable foundation, give your name to Michelle or me and we will get you on the committee.
- To give a donation people must be confident that it will be used wisely. ACT's reputation has been good for using money wisely and getting good results with the funds. The other piece of fundraising is to "Toot our own horn".
- My main message is to encourage anyone with fundraising experience or who is outgoing to join our fundraising committee.
- Thank you to the members for coming and to Michelle and staff for a productive year.
- Mary [Chat question]: How can we join the committee? Should I connect with Michelle?
- Anyone who is interested in joining this committee can contact Michelle Schmidt.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT –MICHELLE SCHMIDT

7:14

- I would like to first touch on the highlights, initiatives and changes that have occurred in ACT during my first full year in this role.
- Staff changes in 2023: After years of dedication, Stephanie left ACT to start her family and take on a new position at Canuck Place Children's Hospice. Khang Nguyen and Eli Neptune also left the staff during 2023 to take on new opportunities. Mary-Ellen Ross, one of ACT's volunteers for many years left her volunteer spot in 2023, handling our social media with grace and integrity. Anyone who has been in an outward-facing role will know it is not always an easy position to be in.
- We introduced our "Friends of ACT" for people who are non-voting members. "Friends of ACT" can access some perks (outlined in the AGM Report).
- ACT is a founding member of the BC Disability Collaborative. Pat Miranda, who is in this meeting as a member, is the chair of that organization. We have been busy planning a summit that will be held next week, with 42 different organizations joining to lift the voice of children and youth with disabilities.
- Last year we spoke about our desire to focus our efforts on supporting members of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. Our Indigenous bursaries have increased by 257% in 2023. Our total for regular and Indigenous bursaries awarded was over \$55,000.
- The AID Search: Remi has been reviewing this and making important changes. We discovered that the software being used was not ideal in terms of Google's ability to find us. In 2024 we are in the process of migration, as a conclusion of the result of the challenges we faced.
- We conducted a website audit to ensure that the user experience is exceptional. Some necessary changes were noted.

- Community Outreach and Collaboration: We created a new position which was initially held by Eli Neptune and is now filled by Allison Balfour.
- Two Advisory Committees – The Indigenous and Autistic Advisory Committees were formed. Izabelle, Javier & Kenzie (ACT members in attendance) are members of the Autistic Advisory Committee.
- Program Development Officer position is filled by Jordan Ayton Thurm (who was previously the Administrative and Event Coordinator).
- Eva-Maria Rauter is ACT's new Event and Marketing Coordinator.

Questions:

- Izabelle [Chat question]: Is it okay for me to vote as a non-board/paying member?
- Blair Dwyer: During the AGM members can ask questions, and members vote on the motions.

MESSAGE FROM THE FINANCIAL CONTROLLER – LINDA LEUNG

7:23

- Brent will go through the 2023 Financial Statements.
- This was part of a Three-Year Plan with Internal restricted funds being used for all the good work done.
- Michelle is bringing different ways to deliver what the community needs based on feedback from partners and community individuals. ACT staff are going out in the community more and promoting by getting ACT's name out there. With all this work in 2023, we are hoping in 2024 will provide ACT with more opportunities for funding and grants.
- The hope is that by the end of 2024, ACT will be able to serve the community in a long-term financially sustainable way. This will require more work from ACT staff, ACT's board and members.
- Thank you to everyone who supported and contributed to ACT in the many ways.

TREASURER'S REPORT – BRENT SHIRLEY

7:26

- We changed our auditors this year to DMCL Chartered Professional Accountants.
- There were no issues with the previous firm, but they had proposed a significant fee increase for the 2023 audit.
- Last fall we went to three different firms for quotes and accepted the proposal of DMCL. So far, they have worked well, with some startup issues and the fees are in line with what we were quoted.
- We continued to draw down cash during 2023 from the reserves set aside two years ago. At the current rate of expenditure these reserves will be fully used by the end of 2024.
- Going forward, we hope to increase revenue this year by about \$200,000 and by an additional \$200,000 in 2025. To help achieve this goal we have set up a fundraising committee.
- Review of 2023 revenue and expenses:
 - Workshop revenue almost doubled but expenses more than doubled.
 - Gaming revenue did not change.
 - Sponsorship revenue was up by \$43,000.
 - Donations were down about \$10,000.

- We received some new grants totaling \$45,000.
- We now provide ASL at workshops, but the associated costs were more than the related grants covered.
- The bursaries that we provide are up, which is great, but we need money to support that.
- The first meeting of the fundraising committee is next Wednesday at 7 o'clock with three or four volunteers from the board at this point.
- Javier: Can you increase the screen to show the figures?
- Brent: The figures can be found in the audited financial statements.
- In summary we will need to find additional sources of funding to maintain our current level of community support over the remainder of this year and for next year. Hopefully we can find additional sources of funds as our current special reserves will be exhausted by the end of 2024.

Blair Dwyer: The Auditors gave us a clean bill of health; they were pleased with the financial statements. It is now up to the members to approve the financial statements.

Motion to accept the Independent Auditor's Report on the 2023 financial statements

Vote via Mentimeter

Brent Moves; Blair Dwyer Seconds; Passed Unanimously

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS FOR 2024/25

7:35

- There is a slate which has been put forward. Some Board Members are being re-elected, and some are being elected. Board Members starting their second year of their two-year terms do not need to be reelected.
- Blair Dwyer: Blair Whelan served four two-year terms and is retiring from the Board. Thank you to Blair.
- Board Members up for re-election:
 - Shannon Muir, Dr. Brenda Fossett, Blair Dwyer, and Brent Shirley.
 - Shannon Muir is stepping down due to heavy workload.
- Call for Board nominations from the membership.
- Kenzie Curby is an Interim Board of Director who is up for election.
- Siyu Chen has put her name forward for election. Siyu Chen is up for election for a two-year term.
- Siyu Chen: From Vancouver, Autistic Student, passionate about Autistic lived experiences, particularly children and youth. Wants to join the Board and contribute. Michelle met Siyu Canadian Autism Leadership Summit. Siyu was honoured to receive award.
- Izabelle Stevens put her name forward for Board Director.
- Izabelle Stevens: Sunshine Coast. Worked with ACT previously and on the Autistic Advisory Committee. Certified social support worker. Advocating for Autistic and disabled Youth with support needs. Member on Board of Directors for FSI. Local work for advocating within community. Very interested in working with ACT and would love to be able to contribute further.

These Board Members are up for re-election for their second two-year term:

- Shannon Muir | elected in 2021 [retires in 2028]
- Dr. Brenda Fossett | elected in 2021 [retires in 2028]

This Board Member is up for re-election for their third two-year term:

- Blair Dwyer | elected in 2020 [retires in 2027]

This Board Member is up for re-election for their fourth two-year term:

- Brent Shirley | joined in 2017 [retires 2024]

These board members are starting the second year of their first two-year term:

- Juliana Kusmanto-elected in June 2023 [retires 2030]
- Marna Nelson-elected in June 2023 [retires 2030]

This board member is starting the second year of their second two-year term:

- Anne McCaw–re-elected in June 2023 [retires 2030]

Motion to approve the Election Slate for Board of Directors for 2024/2025.

Vote via Mentimeter

Blair Dwyer Moves; Mary-Ellen Seconds; Passed Unanimously

DISCUSSION OF APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR 2024

7:43

Discussion

Motion that DMCL 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

Brent Motions; Blair Dwyer Seconds; Passed Unanimously

MOTION REQUIRED TO APPROVE ALL ACTIONS BY THE BOARD IN 2023

7:44

Discussion

“Motion that...all acts, contracts, proceedings, appointments, elections and payments made and taken by the directors of ACT Autism Community Training Society since January 2, 2024, referred to in the minutes of the Board of Directors’ meetings and the minutes of committee meetings be approved.”

Vote

- Blair asks for people to vote on that motion.

Passed Unanimously

WHAT SHOULD ACT FOCUS ON IN UPCOMING YEARS

7:46

Menti Meter Discussion

- This is an opportunity for the members to have valuable input on where ACT should focus and be listened to by the Board.

[Submitted on Mentimeter]

- Mental Health
- Supporting Autistic youth who have lost developmental milestones due to the pandemic.
- Money!
- Events, Fundraising, Strategic Planning
- Financial matters-making sure ACT is solvent.
- Adulthood Support

- Transitioning to adulthood.
- Self-advocacy for autistic children and youth.
- Current trends in treatment and support.
- Supports for siblings.
- Advocating for disability to be upped to be a livable amount / reflect the current economy.
- Focus on information, resources and supports PDA/demand avoidant profiles. This is a rising conversation in schools within the community and scary/harmful information is being provided.
- Self-advocacy for autistic children and youths.
- More collaboration with other groups supporting individuals with developmental disability.
- Community events with families with lived experience.
- Advocacy.
- Assisting self-diagnosed adults who cannot afford diagnosis.
- Medical health care and medical support for autistic adults.
- Supporting assent-based interventions.
- Support for nonspeaking autistic people.
- Awareness training.
- Mobile training (mostly support via online training but just in case there are additional opportunities).
- Advocating for autism funding to be individualized/meet the needs of the individual instead of just the same amount for everybody.

Discussion

- Michelle:
 - If you received our newsletter this week you will see we are now offering Targeted Tailored Training, specifically the work Allison is doing with Connect Parent Group that we're working with SFU and Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre on to adapt the group to parents of autistic children. We are also working on Managing Distressed Behaviour.
 - I see a lot of suggestions on advocating for disability, and although this has not been discussed in the meeting, it is noted in the report that there is a potential National Autism Framework that we hope to see move forward.
 - We sent a poll out recently to see if there was an interest in Autistic aging. ACT has previously put a lot of attention to Autistic children and youth. Lots of autistic adults are late diagnosed, particularly women and girls and the supports are not there for them.
 - Please reach out any time if you have any suggestions on presenters.
 - We've seen a shift in trends with people preferring to attend events virtually. In-person events cost us a lot more to put on – e.g. Focus on Research with many speakers and panelists.
- Anne McCaw: Are these suggestions being captured?
- Michelle: Yes, they are.

ADJOURNMENT:

7:51

Motion to adjourn

Vote

Blair: Passed Unanimously.

Blaire Dwyer: Welcome to the new Board Members Izabelle Stevens and Siyu Chen. Farewell to Shannon Muir and Blair Whelan.

Michelle: Thank you to Anne Millerd who recommended a grant to ACT which we were successful on. This shows how important our members are.

Adjourned:

7:53

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone and thank you for taking the time to attend this Annual General Meeting.

As usual, I will leave it to Michelle to summarize the work that ACT has contributed to the community over the past year.

I want to thank everyone who responded to last fall's fund-raising drive. That campaign raised \$75,000 in badly-needed funds. Thank you. With the herring donation of \$33,000 and funds from monthly contributors, we were able to keep the doors open.

ACT has received a 2025 Grant from BC Gaming and continues to seek funding from other sources such as charitable foundations. We are interviewing fundraisers to assist with this. It will take some time for any new fundraiser to make a large impact, so expect another ask from ACT this fall. With perseverance, hard work and your support, I believe that we can have ACT continue to provide much-needed fact-based education. In light of what is happening south of the border and the "cleansing" of health information from web sites, good information is needed more than ever.

I asked last year for any members who might be able to give assistance in respect of fundraising and I will repeat that call this year. If anyone has an interest in generating fundraising ideas, or if anyone has any fundraising experience, please give your name and address to me or to Michelle.

Thank you again for your interest in the work that ACT does and for your ongoing support.

Blair Dwyer

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Members, Friends, Partners, Supporters, and Stakeholders

It is with deep appreciation and hope for the future that I present the 2024 Executive Director's Report for the Autism Community Training Society (ACT). This year marked a period of both resilience and reinvention for ACT, as we continued to adapt to shifting funding landscapes while deepening our commitment to the autism community across British Columbia and beyond.

OUR IMPACT IN 2024

Despite financial constraints, ACT delivered on our core mission: providing evidence-informed resources, training, and support to autistic individuals, their families, and professionals who serve them. Highlights of our year include:

TRAINING AND EVENTS

- 8 online training events, two 10-week sessions of Mindfulness and Compassion in Parenting training, 7 Managing Distressed Behaviour trainings, and 2 free "ACT Chats" to nearly 1,250 registrants for 5,850 hours of training. Registrants included parents, educators, community professionals, and self-advocates.
- Continued success of our Autism Videos at ACT (AVA) with over 90 free videos including 6 new videos, viewed on multiple platforms worldwide.

AUTISM INFORMATION DATABASE (AID)

- Almost 2500 AID Information Resources, almost 400 research resources, more than 70 invitations to participate in research projects, X news articles, and more than 1000 Canadian resources as we expand our scope across Canada. In addition, we continue to post news including blogs, and events. All information has been vetted.
- Introduced search tags for intersectional identities (e.g., 2SLGBTQIA+, newcomer, Indigenous) to improve accessibility.

CHALLENGES

FUNDING INSECURITY

ACT continues to operate without core government funding since 2017. While we have sustained our work through careful budgeting, partnerships, and the generosity of donors and volunteers, this model is not sustainable long term.

In 2024, we:

- Initiated the **SAVE ACT SERVICES** campaign Looking to the future, advocacy campaign to raise awareness of our critical role in the autism ecosystem.

- Submitted grant proposals to X major funders, including new applications to support culturally relevant resources for Indigenous and newcomer families.
- Held constructive meetings with senior representatives from the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Ministry of Education.

We are grateful for the support of families, professionals, and school districts who continue to stand with ACT and urge the province to recognize the value of accessible, community-informed training.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Our strength continues to be in our **community partnerships and advisory structures**:

- ACT's **Autistic Advisory Committee** grew to include 10 diverse members offering strategic input across projects.
- ACT was an active member of the **BC Disability Collaborative Network** and supported intersectoral efforts to address housing, health, and employment gaps.
- We are proud of our long-standing relationships with universities and **schools across the province**, and numerous local organizations working alongside us to improve outcomes for autistic people.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

ACT marked our **20th anniversary year in November 2024**—a powerful milestone. Moving forward, we are launching a year-long campaign to:

- Communicate with key stakeholders to learn about the stories, families, and professionals who've made ACT what it is today and to receive input regarding next steps.
- Mobilize support for ACT's continued survival and growth and develop sustainable revenue streams.
- Reimagine how we can co-create with autistic leaders and expand our digital reach.

We will also be:

- Expanding our programming and developing more content tailored for racialized and rural communities.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

As Executive Director, I am profoundly proud of the ACT team—staff, board members, volunteers, and our network of advisors and presenters—who continue to serve with commitment and creativity in the face of uncertainty.

More than ever, families and professionals need trusted, culturally respectful, and accessible resources. ACT remains committed to meeting that need, guided by our values of inclusion, learning, and collaboration.

To everyone who has stood by us: [thank you](#). Your support fuels this work and reminds us that ACT is not just a service provider—it is a community.

With gratitude,

Michelle Schmidt,

Executive Director

Autism Community Training Society

ACT STAFF IN 2024

CORE STAFF:

Executive Director: Michelle Schmidt

Financial Controller: Linda Leung

Administrative & Training Coordinator (January 2024)/Admin. Program Development Officer (February to December 2024): Jordan Ayton Thurm

Digital Communications Coordinator: Ryan Quiring

Community Liaison Officer: Allison Balfour

Manager, Autism Information Resources: Rémi Castonguay

Administration, Events, and Marketing Coordinator: Eva-Maria (March to September 2024)

SUMMER STAFF:

Autism Resource Research and Database Assistant (Canada Summer Jobs): Xenon Tyner

Content Creator – Writing (Canada Summer Jobs): Riley Job

STUDENTS:

- Practicum Students, Business, Capilano University: Kushal Shah, Diljot Singh & Neha Srigiri (January – April)
- Vancouver Community College Student (Stepwest): Khushpreet Kaur (February to August 2024)
- Co-op Career Educator, Faculty of Arts | Arts Co-op Program, The University of British Columbia: Riley Job (September to December 2024)
- Practicum Student, Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation Program, University of Calgary: Cassidy Decker, September to December 2024 (and on to April 2025).

INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- The Indigenous Advisory Committee continues to meet quarterly.

AUTISTIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- ACT formed the Autistic Advisory Committee, with the long-term goal of learning from Autistic people as they share opinions and perspectives, study issues, and develop recommendations for services and training. Through ongoing collaboration, the Autistic Advisory Committee shares their lived experiences, informing our approach to services,

training, and resource development. Their insights are instrumental in ensuring ACT provides truly neurodiversity-affirming offerings that empower the Autistic community.

VOLUNTEERS

During 2024, we had 1 volunteer create regular blog postings, 1 volunteer provide extensive Mandarin language translation, 1 volunteer work on identifying and fixing broken links.

MEMBERSHIP

ACT currently has 73 voting members.

FRIENDS OF ACT

As discussed at last year's board meeting, ACT has created a category of non-voting members: "Friends of Act", which number 10,100. "Friends of ACT" receive the following:

- Exclusive Savings on Events: Unlock a 10% discount on all ACT events, whether you attend in person or tune in via web-streaming.
- Premier Access to ACT's Resources: Be at the forefront of the action with early access to events, videos, AID resources, and the latest news.

AUTISTIC COMMUNITY UPDATES

AUTISM ALLIANCE OF CANADA

January 9th, 2024: Meeting with Jonathan Lai, Sergio Cocchia (PAFN), Louise Witt and Nancy Walton (Autism Support Network), Karen Bopp (now with the Office of the RCY as well as on the Board for the Autism Alliance of Canada) with regrets from AutismBC and CAN. Met to discuss having a BC representative provide a BC response to the Federal Autism Framework (to be announced) at the Canadian Autism Leadership Summit in April 2024.

NATIONAL AUTISM STRATEGY

The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health, tabled Canada's Framework for Autism in the House of Commons, and the Public Health Agency of Canada released the country's first National Autism Strategy. You can read the official government release [here](#).

For the first time, the federal government is committed to ensuring Autistic people and their families are fully included in Canadian society, and their challenges are no longer overlooked. This day represents years of hard work and persistence, a testament to your advocacy, lived experiences, and dedication to creating a better future for all Autistic Canadians and their families.

Read our media response and blog post which provides more information about the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy from our perspective. We have also prepared a table of the measures and actions from the documents for your quick reference.

Key Functions & Roles of the National Autism Network

MCFD'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) engaged MNP LLP (MNP), in partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC), to conduct an evaluation of the piloted children and youth with support needs services (CYSN services) that are being delivered through:

- Goal-Focused and Developmental Services delivered through Pilot Family Connections Centres; and
- Disability Services and Provincial Services delivered through MCFD.

The results of the work are available [here](#).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY INCLUSION – VANCOUVER CLBC COMMUNITY COUNCIL BC

Jordan, Allison, Kushal, Diljot and Michelle promoted ACT's work at this event in Vancouver, January 27, 2024.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING CONFERENCE

The 3rd Annual Canadian Health and Wellbeing in Developmental Disabilities (HWDD) Conference, occurred online Feb 7-8, 2024. ACT's Information Resource Manager, Rémi Castonguay, served on the program committee of this conference. His work involved several meetings to plan themes and details of the program (keynotes, workshops, etc.) and reviewing dozens of workshop and poster proposals. Rémi also attended a few sessions to represent ACT and learn about important equity questions in Canadian health care settings. ACT was officially recognized as a Promotional Partner in the context of the conference. Our logo was visible in a variety of context in the conference virtual platform.

OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

February 7, 2024: Systemic Review of the Child Welfare System Engagement Session

This was the first in a series of monthly updates that the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) will be sending to key partners and advisors as we undertake what is one of the most significant projects in the history of the RCY. The project involves three elements: 1) an investigation (sacred story harvest) into the life circumstances leading up to the tragic death of an 11-year-old First Nations child who was living in extended family care; 2) an accompanying systemic review of British Columbia's systems of child well-being, with a strong focus on how those systems serve First Nations, Métis and urban Indigenous children, youth and their families; and, 3) convenings of advisors, partners, rights and title holders, subject matter experts and

others to inform RCY's understanding of current systems of care, assist RCY's analysis and "sense-making" of the findings and identify opportunities for meaningful systemic and structural change.

FIRST CALL ADVOCACY MEETING

February 21, 2024: Karen Bopp, Executive Advisor for Children and Youth with Disabilities: RCYBC Update on Children & Youth with Disabilities

Discussion: MCFD CYSN consultation, Discussion #1 – The Parents and Professionals Plan

Background materials:

- P+P Plan Mar 1, 2023 (gov.bc.ca)
- RCY-CYSN-Research-Review_FINAL.pdf (rcybc.ca) (Pat Mirenda's report) or her slides summarizing Key Components of Effective Service Delivery for Children and Youth with Support Needs and Their Families (gov.bc.ca)

AUTISM ORGANIZATION MEET AND GREET

February 29, 2024: Michelle coordinated a meeting of those invited to the January 9, 2024, meeting as well as the ED from the Square Peg Society and other members of the Autism Support Network, to have all of us in the same room to discuss our respective roles and work. Thanks to Canucks Autism Network for hosting.

BC-ABA 2024 CONFERENCE

ACT sponsored BC-ABA's annual conference held March 2nd through 4th, 2024. Rémi and Jordan attended the event and had an information table to share ACT's resources with BCBAs and students who attended the in-person component held at the University of British Columbia.

PALS GALA FOR AUTISM

Allison represented ACT, thanks to complementary Gala tickets from PALS, April 6, 2024.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF AUTISM RESEARCHERS (INSAR)

ACT continues to be a member of the International Society for Autism Research and Michelle attended the Annual Meeting in Melbourne, Australia, April 30 to May 3.

BC CONFEDERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (BCPAC)

ACT applied for and was accepted for an annual sponsorship application for this year, as well as exhibit space and promotional opportunity registrations for our Spring Conference May 3, 2024, and the Fall Summit. Allison and Rémi represented ACT to promote products or services relevant to K-12 public school families, and to connect with and support parent leadership around the province.

AUTISM ALLIANCE OF CANADA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Michelle attended the 2024 Annual General Meeting on May 16, 2024.

FOUNDRY YOUTH & FAMILY WELLNESS FAIR—NORTH SHORE

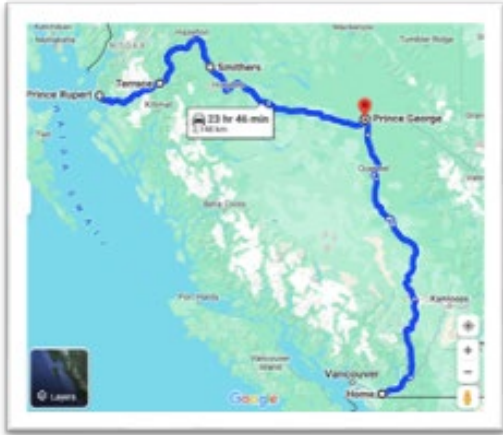
June 8, 2024, Civic Plaza, outside North Vancouver City Hall: Eva-Maria, Jordan, Allison and Michelle represented ACT at the Foundry North Vancouver Youth & Family Fair, June 8, 2024. Alongside a multitude of youth service providers, we showcased our organization, connecting youth and parents with valuable resources.

NEURODIVERGENT WORKING GROUP – FOUNDRY YOUTH SERVICES

Board members Kenzie Curby, Izabelle Stevens, and Advisory Committee members Robie Brown, Henry Au, Javier Herrera, Damon Kirsebom, and Elsbeth Dodman presented on [Transitions to Adulthood for Neurodivergent Youth](#) on October 9.

AUTISMBC & ACT HEADED NORTH AND THEN WEST: ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT| COMMUNITY-LED ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

In partnership with AutismBC, ACT held four in-person community engagement sessions *July 22-25th* in Prince George, Smithers, Prince Rupert, and Terrace. People, organizations and industry groups within B.C. were invited to provide input on draft recommendations for Accessible Service Delivery and Employment Accessibility standards under the Accessible British Columbia Act. For a copy of the report, see Appendix E.



SOUND SENSITIVITY IN AUTISM RESEARCH

Michelle attended a Kids Brain Health Network event on November 14, 2024. Elina Birmingham & Siamak Arzanpour presented their research to date. This Project will help youth engage more comfortably in their daily lives by detecting and filtering out distressing sounds. On November 27, 2024, Michelle was a guest at a follow-up \$500,000 cheque presentation ceremony.



SEASONAL CELEBRATION, MLA JANET ROUTLEDGE

December 16, 2024: Michelle represented ACT to share information regarding resources and to accept the BC Gaming Grant certificate.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN AGENDA (WCA) UGANDA

ACT continues to work with Kennedy Kosko of WCA, a community-based charity in northern Uganda with the agenda “peace and security through health and education for the most vulnerable women and children”. We are pleased to see that with our support, WCA has completed research regarding Autism in Uganda and has also begun work on their website [HERE](#).

BURNABY AND SURREY BOARD OF TRADES

ACT joined both the Burnaby Board of Trade and Surrey Board of Trade and Several ACT staff have attended networking events, cultivating valuable connections with other businesses within our community. These memberships provide new opportunities for partnership and building our platform across business sectors.

RADIO EXPOSURE

- Radio advert to promote our Focus on Research 2024 event Mental Health, Suicide, and Autism [HERE](#).
- Radio advert to promote Friends of ACT discount [HERE](#).
- Radio advert to promote Neurodiversity 101 & Autism Acceptance is being revised due to pronunciation issues.

OUTREACH COLLABORATION: RURAL, REMOTE & INDIGENOUS

Wuikinuxv Nation

Act's first rural and remote community outreach to Wuikinuxv was January 24th through 27th. The Wuikinuxv Nation has been there under various names since time immemorial. Archaeologists have found settlements in the area that are 10,000 years old. What is now Wuikinuxv is an amalgamation of many settlements that had their permanent villages in the lake and Koeve and on Calvert Island. Contact brought the Nations disease, conflict, and a different economic climate. It introduced money as the currency of the day instead of trade-able goods."

During the October Greg Hanley event Allison connected with a parent from Wuikinuxv who was looking for guidance on how to access support and assessments for her son. After 3 months of planning including securing access to funding and completing extensive paperwork to support the Autism Assessment, Charmaine Miranda, PhD,

Registered Psychologist (Founder of Compass Clinic) and Allison travelled to Wuikinuxv. During their time there, Allison supported the school and family to help promote inclusion and Autism understanding. Allison also accepted walk-in appointments to speak with community members about autism specifically, and neurodiversity in general. The community and Chief were very welcoming and appreciative of the support. An Elder asked that Allison return to Wuikinuxv to continue to guide the community's knowledge. Dr. Miranda conducted an Autism Assessment at the school and confirmed an Autism diagnosis, in addition to supporting the family with the next steps. ACT will continue to support this family as requested.



This community is only accessible by aircraft and as a result has extremely limited services and so our support was particularly appreciated.

“On behalf of HWB, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to every one of you for your support during our program in Wuikinuxv the other week. We feel exceptionally fortunate to have such a dedicated and strong team of professionals partnering with us on trips like this. It was mentioned that everyone has a unique story of how they got connected to HWB. It resonated with me, realizing that our young charity has had the privilege of meeting extraordinary change-makers and a group of individuals committed to supporting communities facing challenges in accessing these types of services, closer to their homes. I often take for granted the ability to walk out my door and access such services. Being able to offer that to others and make a small difference in someone's day is why we created HWB. Wuikinuxv, being one of the most remote communities in Western Canada, magnifies this point I believe. To the Autism Community Training team and Compass Clinic, I want to acknowledge the incredible story of your services the other week. I tip my hat off to you for the remarkable work you did for a family. Thank you.”

~ Owen McClung-Sitnam (CEO Helicopters Without Borders)

BC DISABILITY COLLABORATIVE



ACT Continues to engage in individual advocacy and support in schools and community and is also a founding member of the [BC Disability Collaborative](#). Our work in 2024 included the following:

- [February 22, 2024, Letter to Premier and Ministers \(pdf\)](#)
Response to the 2024 Budget
- [February 28, 2024, Press release \(pdf\)](#)
Public statement on the 2024 Budget
- [April 30, 2024, Response from Minister Grace Lore, MCFD \(pdf\)](#)
- [May 31, 2024, Signatory on Letter to the Premier and Ministers](#)



- [June 4, 2024, Signatory to Canada Disability Benefit letter \(English pdf\)](#)
 - [French version \(pdf\)](#)
- [June 19-20, 2024, Summit](#)
- [July 22, 2024, Submission to the Accessibility Directorate](#)
 - [Regarding the Accessible BC Act Standards](#)
- [November 22, 2024, BC Disability Summit report](#)
- [November 25, 2024: Social media campaign press release](#)



[AUTISM ORGANIZATIONS IN BC](#)

ACT deepened its engagement with autism organizations across British Columbia to enhance collective impact and better serve Autistic individuals and their families. Through consistent communication, shared initiatives, and strategic partnerships, ACT has worked to promote a more coordinated provincial network of support.

ACT regularly contributed to cross-organizational efforts by sharing training opportunities, co-hosting community events, and collaborating on policy responses relevant to provincial service delivery. Our team also maintained and updated online directory, ensuring that families and professionals could access accurate and up-to-date information on autism services and advocacy organizations throughout BC.

As part of our commitment to transparency and public awareness, ACT featured community organizations through our social media, and website. This work supports ACT's broader goal of creating an informed, connected Autism community and highlights the importance of amplifying diverse voices and services across the province.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

ACT is currently active on the following social media channels: Facebook (9,500 Followers), Instagram (600 Followers), and LinkedIn (400 Followers). Our current priority is to grow our following on Instagram and LinkedIn to reach a wider audience on social media. LinkedIn provides great networking opportunities with professionals in the Autism community and helps us identify potential speakers for events.

We are also developing a communication plan to reach out to specific stakeholders for each event, to expand our outreach and increase attendee numbers.



LOGO

ACT unveiled its new logo at the Annual Focus on Research Event: Mental Health, Autism, and Suicide.



FUNDRAISING

SPONSORSHIP DOCUMENT

During 2024, ACT created a sponsorship document. The document is in Appendix G.

SAVE ACT SERVICES CAMPAIGN

During November 2024, we launched the “SAVE ACT Services” campaign with a specific call out to our membership and “Friends of Act”, which will be elaborated upon below. Our aim was to rally support for our organization and to ensure that ACT’s vital work will continue for years to come. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we raised \$75,745.20.

ACT continued to write letters of intent to various funders and to apply for local and provincial grants.

DONATIONS IN 2024

Individual donations in 2024 saw a considerable increase from 2023, due to over \$35,000 raised from our Save ACT Services campaign during November and December of 2024. ACT is most grateful to the many donors who give what they can and the two generous donors who matched up to \$30,000 of what was raised during this campaign. Our sincere gratitude to all 2024 donors, including those named and anonymous on our [Donor Recognition Page](#).

	2024	2023	Difference
Individual Donations	\$103,767	\$32,623	+\$71,144
Herring Sale	\$33,000	\$19,397	+13,603
TOTAL	\$136,767	\$52,020	+84,747

LIVE EVENTS & TRAINING

During 2024, ACT held 8 live events, 2 sessions of Mindfulness and Compassion training, 7 Managing Distressed Behaviour trainings, and 2 free “ACT Chats” to nearly 1,250 registrants for 5,850 hours of training. The content for many of these was directly informed by email subscribers’ feedback via community surveys, ensuring we address topics and contents most relevant and current to the community.

Attendees continue to prefer to stream from their home or office on their own time, and ACT will continue to adapt with creative ways and methods of delivering information and training to increase accessibility and inclusion.

COMPARING LIVE EVENTS IN 2024 WITH 2023

In 2024, ACT decreased the number of in-person live and larger events to offset expenses, while developing smaller size training of 20 to 30 attendees. For specific information, please see Table 1: *Live Events during 2024 compared with 2023*. For attendee feedback, please see Table 2: *Live Event Details and Participant Feedback*.

Table 1: Live Events from 2022 to 2024

Year	Number of Events	Number of Attendees	Attendees Difference	Total Training Hours	Hours Difference
2024	8+ smaller size trainings	1,244	-585	5,843	-9,782
2023	11	1,829	539	15,625.50	+4,913.25
2022	7	1,290		10,712.25	

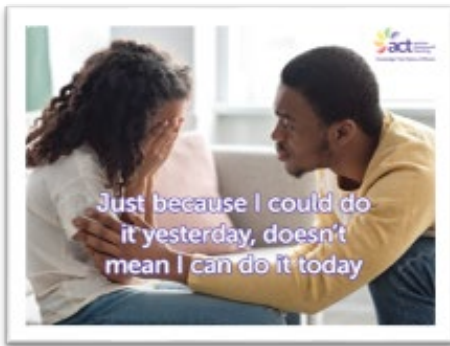
Table 2: Live Event Details and Participant Feedback.

Live Event Details and Participant Feedback	Date(s)
<p>Treatment Extension: Skill-Based Treatment Generalization & Maintenance Design Webinar, a follow-up to the October 2023 session.</p> <p>Presented by Dr. Greg Hanley, BCBA-D; FTF Behavioral Consulting Inc.</p>	February 16 (Web Stream Only)
<p>Neurodiversity 101 & Autism Acceptance,</p> <p>Presented By Morénike Giwa Onaiwu, PhD</p>	March 5 & 7 (Web Stream Only)
<p>Focus on Research 2024, Mental Health, Suicide, and Autism,</p> <p>Presented by Anne V. Kirby, PhD, OTR/L, Jessica Schwartzman, PHD, Lisa Morgan, M.Ed. CAS, Rachel Mosely, PhD, Shari Jager-Hyman, PhD, Bobbi Duncan-Ishcomer, with a virtual panel consisting of Autistic Advocates, Alex Jacobs, Rachel Kripke-Ludwig, Izabelle Stevens, moderated by Grace Iarocci, PhD & Elina Birmingham, PhD</p>	April 4 & 5 (In-person & Web Stream)
<p>ACT Chat: An Introduction From Nurture Learning & Development.</p> <p>Presented by Kate Chase, PhD, SLP, BCBA & Emily Lee, OT, BCB</p>	April 25 (In-person & Web Stream)
<p>Autism And Sexuality Education: Centering Pleasure In Prevention</p> <p>Presented by Morrigan Hunter</p>	May 1 & 3 (Web Stream Only)
<p>Taking Steps to Overcome Restrictive Eating and Transform Mealtimes: Resources & Handouts (5, one hour sessions), Lauren Hershfield (OT), Elise Fairey (RD); The Feeding Group</p>	May 22 to June 19 , 2025 (Web Stream Only)
<p>Treating Food Selectivity Without Tears: Resources & Handouts</p> <p>Presented By Dr. Kelsey Ruppel, BCBA, Laba; FTF Behavioral Consulting</p>	September 20 (Web Stream Only)
<p>"Executive Functioning Skills with Sarah Ward: A Webinar Series".</p> <p>Presented by Sarah Ward</p>	September 12, 19, 26 & October 15 (Web Stream Only)
<p>Going to Bed Without Tears: Assessment and Treatment of Sleep-Related Problems: Resources & Handouts</p> <p>Presented by Dr. Mahshid Ghaemmaghami, BCBA-D; FTF Behavioral Consulting</p>	Friday, November 1 (Web Stream Only)
<p>ACT Chat: Language Matters: Transforming Healthcare for Neurodivergent People Mental Health, Suicide, and Autism.</p> <p>Presented By Angie Ip, MHSc, MD, PhD; Mac Landerholm, Autistic advocate & Sarah McGowan, SLP</p>	November 29 (Web Stream Only)

Managing Distressed Behaviour Training—the Low Arousal Approach Presented by Allison Balfour (and Heather Lavigne & Sharon Power)	April 20, June 1, June 15, August 12, 13, 14 & October 19,
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TARGETED, TAILORED TRAINING

As 2024 began, many Canadians were struggling to meet the financial demand of increased costs of living, while also dealing with the notable events that continue to happen around the world. This meant that fundraising took new directions. Specifically, the ACT team created the following revenue streams:



Targeted Tailored training is available as follows:

1) Learn Strategies to Apply in Home, School and Community Settings: ACT's Training Tailored for You

- Practical Functional Assessment/Skill-Based Treatment
- Universal Protocol Implementation and Support
- Managing Distressed Behaviour: Using Low Arousal Approach
 - Managing Distressed Behaviour : Professionals: April 20; Parents: June 1
 - Managing Distressed Behaviour Day 2: Parents and Professionals: June 15

2) Informative Workshops & Presentations: Autism Training Tailored for You

- Workplace
- School Assemblies/Classrooms

3) Autism Acceptance (Assemblies) at Your School

TEACHERS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, TIE-BC

Michelle presented on Autism, *Framing Autism: Shifting Views, Changing Outcomes* at the Teacher of Inclusive Education conference on October 25.

BC ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS CONFERENCE

November 7th and 8th: Jordan and Rémi attended the BC Association of School Psychologists Conference, where ACT had a booth.

FRAMES OF MENTAL HEALTH: THE STIMMING POOL

November 13th. Michelle, Ryan, and Jordan attended, and ACT had a booth. Javier Herrera and Kenzie Curby were the esteemed discussants.

ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT TRAINING—CULTURALLY ADAPTED FOR FIRST NATIONS, INUIT, AND/OR MÉTIS CAREGIVERS

November 20 and 21: Partnership between Kids Brain Health Network, Canadian Association of Mental Health, and PAFN. This two-day in-person workshop will focus on caregiver wellness by introducing a culturally adapted form of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) alongside the teachings of traditional knowledge keepers. The workshop was facilitated by an Indigenous mental health clinician and an Indigenous caregiver—[Louis Busch](#). During the workshop, caregivers will be invited to participate in sharing circles and experiential activities to explore new ways to engage with difficult thoughts and emotions.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

To remain current in relation to the practical, evidence-based, and political landscape and vet potential presenters, in addition to professional readings, staff have attended several professional learning events including

- January through March: Rémi completed *Fundamentals of Records & Information Management* through the University of Toronto
- January 17: Michelle attended [PARC Speaker Series: Dr. Lonnie Zwaigenbaum - Improving Healthcare for Autistic Children](#)
- February 23: Michelle attended Using AI to Edit Grant Proposals Confirmation
- March 11: Using AI as a Personalized Grant Reviewer
- March 24: Michelle attended Additional AI Uses to Support Your Development
- April 2: Michelle attended Inside the Grantmaker's Black Box
- April 8: Michelle & Jordan attended Identify and Cultivate Meaningful Partnerships
- April 22: Michelle & Jordan attended Maximize Growth by Partnering With Businesses
- May 2: Michelle & Jordan attended AI 101: A Beginner's Workshop for Grant Professionals
- May 2: Considering the Impact of Alexithymia alongside Autism
- May 6: Michelle & Jordan attended Increase Your Impact Through Nonprofit Partnerships
- May: Jordan completed nonprofitready.org *Fundraising Essentials Certificate*
- May: Jordan and Khushpreet attended Accelerate Your Growth in 2024 Webinar
- May 20: Michelle attended How to Cultivate Local Government Support Confirmation
- June 3: Michelle attended Unlock Partnerships With Financial Institutions

- June 5: Michelle attended Geneva Centre presents The Shift: Autism Inclusion & Cultural Competence
- June 6: Michelle attended Midlife Matters
- June 11: Michelle attended [AI 201: Advanced Strategies for Grant Professionals](#)

- June 14: Michelle attended the 10th Annual Not-for Profit & Charity Seminar. Presenters included accountant Russ Vroege and Claire Jensen, CEO We are the Northern.
- July: Jordan Completed Charity Village Online: Grant Seeking Course
- August 13: Jordan and Michelle attended Grant Station's AI for Grantseekers: Tools, Tips, and Tricks

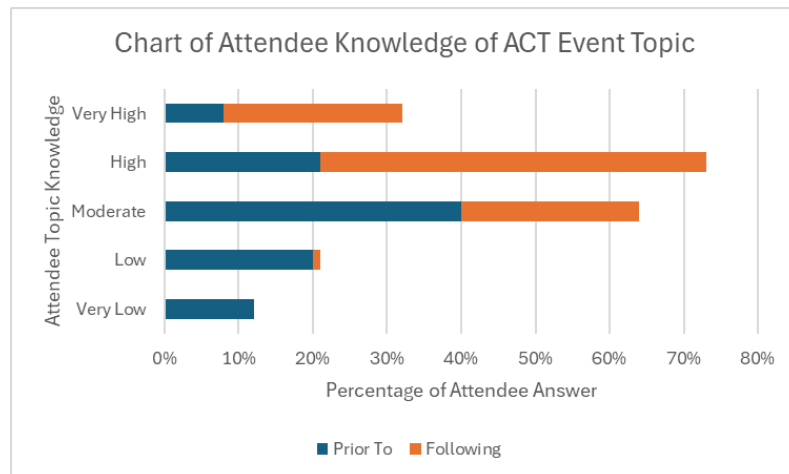
DEMONSTRATED IMPACT

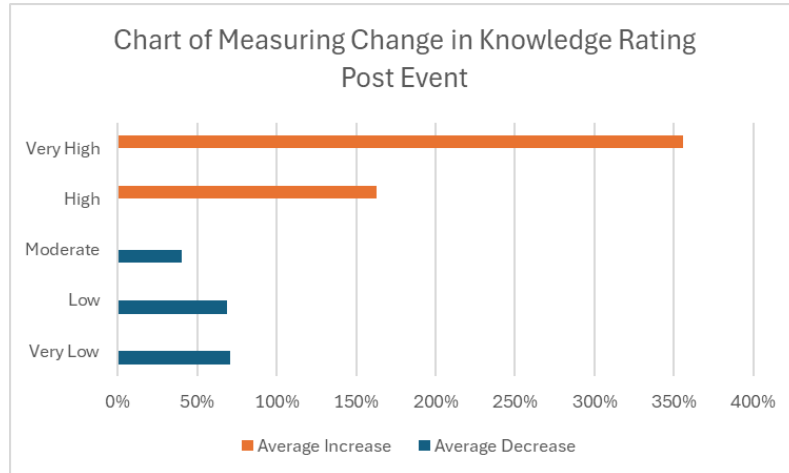
The following Survey Result Data is Collated from:

- 5 ACT Events
- 6 Survey Topics
- 122 Attendees

Event Title and Dates:

- A Compassionate and Collaborative Approach with Dr. Gregory Hanley – October 19-21, 2023
- Virtual Maintenance and Generalization Follow-Up Webinar – February 16, 2024
- Neurodiversity 101 & Autism Acceptance – March 3 & 5, 2024
- ACT's 2024 Focus on Research: Mental Health, Suicide, and Autism – April 4 & 5, 2024
- ACT Chats: SLP and OT Support for Autistic Children & Families – April 25, 2024
- Autism and Sexuality Education: Centering Pleasure in Prevention – May 1 & 3, 2024





EVENT TRAINING REVENUE

In 2024, ACT held 8 live events, 2 sessions (10 nights per session) of the Mindfulness and Compassion in Parenting training, as well as 7 days of the small-size classes of the Managing Distressed Behaviour training. In addition, ACT started customized training at the request of two small BC communities during the Fall. ACT’s registration revenue in 2024 was \$124,063, while event sponsorships totaled \$45,000. To keep event expenses low, many of the events were web streamed only, while transitioning more to smaller size customized training heading into 2025.

POPARD SPONSORSHIP

ACT is grateful to the Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders (POPARD) for their sponsorship to many of ACT’s events. \$40,000 was sponsored by POPARD for several events during January to May of 2024. Unfortunately, during June 2024, POPARD notified ACT that they would not be in a financial position to sponsor events for the remainder of that year due to facing an overall deficit that will be carried into the next school year.

BURSARIES

General bursaries are offered to anyone for whom registration costs are an attendance barrier. In addition to offering free ACT Chats and discounts to ACT partners and sponsors, during 2024, ACT provided financial subsidies for 8 paid events, and 2 sessions of the Mindfulness and Compassion in Parenting training. For detailed information, see Table 4: *General Bursary Program*.

Table 4:

General Bursary Program 2023 to 2024

Year	Applications ¹	Registrations ²	\$ Amount Awarded	
2024	60	52	\$10,245	63% decrease
2023	174	128	\$27,525	

The Indigenous Bursary “program” offers free registration to anyone who identifies as Indigenous, or anyone who works for an organization that supports Indigenous people. During 2024, ACT continues to bring awareness to and connect with Indigenous Communities and Organizations. Details in Table 5: *Indigenous Bursary Program 2023 to 2024*

Table 5: Indigenous Bursary Program 2023 to 2024

Indigenous Bursary Program 2023 to 2024				
Year	Applications	Registrations	\$ Amount Awarded	Annual Change in Registrations
2024	32	32	\$8,665	57% decrease
2023	122	75	\$28,075	257% Increase
2022	25	21	\$4,200	110% Increase
2021	10	10	\$2,200	

Total Bursaries

ACT saw 92 applications for bursaries, with 84 individuals benefiting from ACT bursaries. For specific information see Table 6: *Total Bursaries*.

Table 6: Total Bursaries

Applications	Registrations	\$ Amount Awarded
92	84	\$18,910

¹ Applications refers to the number of potential registrants who applied for a bursary.

² Registrants refers to the number of bursary applicants who followed through with registration. We are working to ensure that all bursary applicants recognize that they must also register for the event.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

ACT’s website, online newsletter, and social media content are important channels for our community to access information about events, services, information, and news. Thanks to Eva-Maria, Riley Job, and Cassidy Decker for ensuring consistent media posts through 2024. 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. Traffic has fallen since the significant increase in traffic brought about by pandemic-related increases, as well as the AID not being indexed on Lucidea’s Presto. We hope to see increased traffic with new staff to support communication efforts, rebuilding the AID with control over its SEO and indexing, and new events, training, services and information on the website to generate traffic. For detailed information, see Table 7: *Online Platform Statistics*.

Table 7: Online Platform Statistics

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Website page views	530,000	401,500	377,000	332,000
ACT Newsletter Subscribers	9,300	9,000	9,000	10,100
Facebook Followers	8,400	9,200	9,400	9,500
Video views on Vimeo	60,300	53,000	50,300	32,400
Video views on YouTube	50,600	60,700	44,500	27,500
AVA videos at end of year	77	79	86	92

AUTISM VIDEOS @ ACT [AVA]

As of the end of 2024, ACT had hosted 92 free online videos (edited versions of our live events) available on [Autism Videos @ ACT](#). The 6 new videos added to AVA in 2024 reflect the diverse topics that are of importance to the Autistic community and are also often relevant to those with other disabilities.

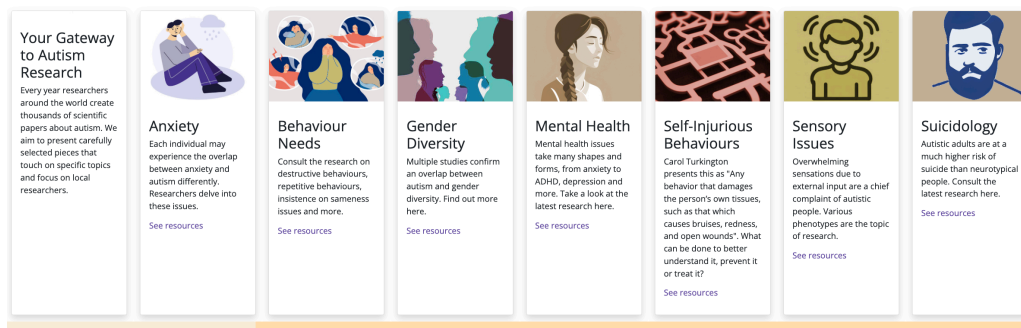
New AVA Videos in 2024

- Autism, Sexual Health, and Safety: Empowering Community
- SLP and OT Support for Autistic Children & Families
- Transitions to Adulthood for Neurodivergent Youth
- Neurodiversity 101 & Autism Acceptance

- Mental Health, Suicide, and Autism
- Language Matters: Transforming Healthcare for Neurodivergent People

BROADENING THE SCOPE

We continued to expand the scope and functionality of our Autism and Intellectual Disabilities (AID) Search platform over the past year. You can explore the Hub [HERE](#).



DATA MAINTENANCE & MIGRATION

Records in need of repair, inspection, or deletion have been identified and updated, thanks in part to the hard work of Rémi Castonguay and several volunteers.

During 2024, the Digital Communications Coordinator and the Information Resources Manager working together to prepare for migrating the AID from Lucidea/Presto to a more contemporary solution, [Algolia](#). As a reminder, the current AID software had prevented us from obtaining adequate visibility on Google and other search engines, which was the main rationale behind the migration. User interviews were also conducted to learn about the positive aspects and shortcomings of the current AID Search. These user interviews helped provide a fresh perspective on the current AID, how it meets needs and how it may be improved. The migration is on target to be completed prior to the end of February 2025, which is when ACT would otherwise need to renew its Lucidea License.

LANGUAGE SUPPORT

We continued to make progress in the language support aspects of our AID Search platform. Volunteers Sophie Wang and Sujung Kim augmented AID information resources with Mandarin and Korean content, respectively. This effort not only enhances accessibility for users but also reflects our commitment to serving diverse linguistic communities within our user base. Sujung has translated our basic ACT Autism information to Korean. This became a new page on the main ACT website, [자폐증 \(자폐 스펙트럼, 자폐 범주성 장애\) 관련 자료 - 한국어 - ACT's Autism Resources in Korean](#). We continue with our plan on adding a similar page in Persian/Farsi, an expanding community in Vancouver Metro. Addressing language needs remains a priority as we continue to expand our reach.

USAGE

In previous years, web usage of the Autism & Intellectual Disability (AID) resources was elevated due to the 2020–2021 pandemic. This trend continued into 2022 but declined in 2023. Reflecting this shift, usage statistics for AID saw a noticeable drop during that time. Another long-standing issue has been AID’s limited visibility on Google, which significantly impacted its reach. This was a key factor behind the recent migration of AID to a new, more searchable database platform—Algolia.

As of 2024, the updated AID is now visible to search engines. We are optimistic that this change will lead to increased traffic and a broader user base in 2025. In fact, we are seeing increased visits to Canada Resources, which expands our reach beyond BC, and to AID Information Resources. All of these resources are now visible on search engines.

Table 8: AID Usage Data

Page Title	URL	2023	2024
Autism & Intellectual Disability (AID) Search – Home Page	https://aid.actcommunity.ca/Presto/home/home.aspx	11,500	9,200
Autism Information	https://www.actcommunity.ca/information/	5,293	4,200
BC Community Resources	https://www.actcommunity.ca/bcresources/	9,262	5,800
Search results (any URL viewed related to AID)	/Presto/search/	11,553	9,000
	Total	37,608	28,200

MESSAGE FROM THE FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

The year 2024 was one of transition. While ACT, with remaining reserve funds, were connecting more than ever with communities across British Columbia, we also had financial challenges due to economic conditions that had also impacted many non-profit and government funded organizations.

As a result, during the year, ACT leadership and the board strategically reviewed our structure and services and made the necessary decisions to reorganize our staff to reduce operating costs and remodel our services to ensure financial stability and accountability to our communities and supporters, including our staff, donors, and partners.

Heading into 2025, ACT will continue to prioritize our core mission of supporting and collaborating with individuals and organizations in the Autism and disability communities, with increased focus on generating revenue opportunities. With the commitment of our board, staff, and members, I am hopeful ACT will continue to serve the communities, with their support and direction.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Brent Shirley

APPROVAL OF 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (APPENDICES A, B, C & D)

- Discussion
- Motion: to accept the Independent Review on the 2024 financial statements
- Vote

MOTION REQUIRED TO APPROVE ALL ACTIONS BY THE BOARD 2024

APPROVAL OF 2024 ACTIONS BY THE BOARD

- Discussion
- Motion: that all acts, contracts, proceedings, appointments, elections and payments made and taken by the directors of ACT Autism Community Training Society since January 1, 2024, referred to in the minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings and the minutes of committee meetings be approved.
- Vote

ELECTION SLATE FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025

APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2024

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 2024/25 board members can be viewed here:

www.actcommunity.ca/about-us/board-members

ACT's Board strives to include people with living experience as well as diverse personal and professional backgrounds so that the society benefits from their experience.

Discussion

EXECUTIVE

President – Blair Dwyer

Vice President – Anne McCaw

Secretary – Marna Nelson

BOARD MEMBER RETIRING AFTER SERVING 4, TWO YEAR TERMS

BRENT SHIRLEY

We extend our deepest gratitude to Brent Shirley, who is stepping down after completing an incredible eight years of service with ACT.

Brent's steady leadership, financial expertise, and unwavering commitment to ACT's mission have been instrumental to our stability over the years. Serving four consecutive two-year terms, Brent has guided ACT through significant transitions, supported sound financial decision-making, and ensured that our resources were managed with integrity and transparency.

Beyond the numbers, Brent brought a thoughtful presence to every Board meeting—always prepared, always engaged, and always willing to ask the hard questions that helped ACT remain accountable and mission-focused. His contributions have strengthened ACT's foundation and helped us continue to serve the Autistic community across BC with trusted information, training, and support.

Brent, we thank you sincerely for your dedication and service. You leave behind a legacy of professionalism, generosity, and care that we will carry forward with gratitude.

BOARD MEMBERS STARTING THE SECOND YEAR OF THEIR FIRST TWO YEAR TERM

- Kenzie Curby—elected in June 2023
- Izabelle Stephens—elected in June 2023
- Siyu (Suzanna) Chen

BOARD MEMBERS STARTING THE SECOND YEAR OF THEIR THIRD TWO-YEAR TERM:

- Blair Dwyer

BOARD MEMBERS UP FOR RE-ELECTION:

For the first year of their second two-year term:

- Juliana Kusmanto—elected in June 2023
- Marna Nelson—elected in June 2023

For the first year of their third two-year term:

Anne McCaw–re-elected in June 2023

ACT MEMBER UP FOR ELECTION AS A MEMBER-ELECTED DIRECTOR:

Kinder is mother of two children, one of which is on the Autism Spectrum. Kinder is a strong advocate for her son and all children with disabilities or diverse abilities. Kinder has relentlessly advocated for more resources for children in the education system. Although her son is now a young adult, she is still actively involved in his career planning. Kinder is also an active member of the Parent Support Network and continues to help families navigate available resources. Kinder has also supported ACT families who children have complex medical conditions. Kinder is employed with the federal government, and in her role she also volunteer as an Employee Assistance Program Representative to support employees and their families with various personal or work-related issues, often including mental health support, counseling and other resources. Kinder is also a member of the CISM team (Critical Incident Stress Management) that provides support to colleagues and other individuals who have experienced a traumatic or stressful event. Finally, Kinder is a member of the Canada Border Services Autism (CBSA) committee that works with Vancouver International Airport Authority to support the "I CAN Fly" program. Currently, CBSA is creating their own Autism Resource and Sensory kits to help families while they are going through the CBSA program.

THE SLATE FOR THE 2024/25 ACT BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) President – Blair Dwyer
 - 2) Vice President – Anne McCaw
 - 3) Treasurer – TBD
 - 4) Secretary – Marna Nelson
 - 5) Directors:
 - a. Juliana Kusmanto
 - b. Kenzie Curby
 - c. Siyu Chen
 - d. Kinder Khullar
-
- Motion: to approve the slate for the 2024/2025 Board of Directors.
 - Vote

APPENDIX A: ACT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2024 (REVIEWED BY DMCL)

**APPENDIX B: 2024 USES OF THE INTERNALLY RESTRICTED ED
TRANSITION FUND (AS REPORTED TO DMCL) FOR THEIR REVIEW
OF 2024)**

**APPENDIX C: 2024 USES OF THE INTERNALLY RESTRICTED
TRAINING TRANSITION FUND (AS REPORTED TO DMCL FOR THEIR
REVIEW OF 2024).**

APPENDIX D: CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE TO JUNE 5, 2025.



APPENDIX E: ACCESSIBILITY SESSIONS REPORT

APPENDIX F: REBRANDING

APPENDIX G: SPONSORSHIP DOCUMENT
