



Between Friends
2019 Annual
Impact Report

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message from the board chair & ceo

There are some years that really test us. In the thick of these times, it's a blur of forward motion without clear understanding of how each moving part is propelling us onward. 2019 was one of those years for Between Friends.

For those of you who are new to the organization, you should know one key thing: Between Friends is a family. We care deeply about our members, we care deeply about the work that we do, and we care deeply about one another. Many of us have forged lifelong friendships with the people we have met at Between Friends.

Did you know that each noon hour the entire office staff eats lunch together? This simple daily activity is one of the primary building blocks of our fun loving culture. This is the time and place our staff gets to know one another really well. In true Between Friends fashion, everyone is included, everyone matters, and everyone gets to share their stories.

The lunchroom was missing a very key person for much of 2019. Kelsey Claeys-Ostermann, our Manager of Membership Services, bravely fought a battle with cancer for the better part of the year and found her resting place in late November. Kelsey's vivaciousness and tenacity are missed every day, especially during lunch. Her stories and animated delivery made us laugh relentlessly. We encourage you to read more about her incredible work with Between Friends on page 11. Kelsey and her family are forever a part of the Between Friends family and we are so grateful to have had her in our lives.

We knew the one thing that would get us through this difficult time was to focus on delivering the programs that put a big smile on our members' faces and nourish us all. Those smiles helped us move through the year with courage in our hearts. Thank you to each and every one of you who has been involved with Between Friends. Your deep connection to our mission and vision fuels our work and betters our entire community. We hope this report gives you a better glimpse of the wonderful people and programs that make Between Friends unique.



Suzanne Jackett | CEO



Garth Johnson | Board Chair

board of directors

Garth Johnson	Chair
Jessica Yarnell	Vice Chair
Peter Drag	Treasurer/Secretary
Gerry David	Director
Bradley Fox	Director
Megan Brett	Director
Rhodri Meredith	Director
Cory Vance	Director
Ellen Bolton	Director
Crispin Arthur	Director
Sarah Hammond	Director
David Arienze	Director
Naminder Sandhu	Director
Suzanne Jackett	CEO


about us

Between Friends is a Calgary-based non-profit organization that provides social and recreation programs for people with disabilities. For almost 40 years the group has worked to increase community awareness and foster positive attitudes towards individuals with disabilities, with the ultimate goal of inclusion. Dedicated staff, volunteers, members and parents have contributed to the social and emotional well-being of thousands of Calgarians by providing them with a place to connect, grow, and belong.


Children, youth and adults with disabilities seek social and recreational activities that are fundamental to enriching self-esteem, quality of life, as well as mental and physical health. These programs become pivotal in the lives of our participants as they decrease the degree of isolation they may face. Activities are customized to all ability levels to maximize enjoyment, and help participants challenge and grow their individual potential.




between friends programs & services

**Camp Bonaventure**


A true outdoor summer day camp at Riveredge Park and our satellite Northeast camp at 1000 Voices at the Genesis Centre, where friendship and fun flourish for ages 4 to 17.

**W.E.S.O.A.R!** Weekend & Evening Social Opportunities, Activities & Recreation


A variety of social and recreational group activities like bowling, swimming, movie nights, and dancing, for all ages during the fall, winter, and spring.

**I.C.A.N!** Inclusive Community Activities with No Barriers

A service that promotes social inclusion through training and consultation with community recreation providers such as the Pumphouse Theatre, Calgary Public Library, City of Calgary, and others. Any community based activity can provide a Between Friends I.C.A.N! experience.

**Adventurers**

A summer program for adults ages 18 and older that is customized to varied interests, including day trips and vacation retreats.

**Camp Fun’zAmust**

A fun summer outdoor sleep away camp in partnership with Easter Seals Camp Horizon, adapted and accessible for ages 7-17 and 18-40.



vision

An inclusive community where people with disabilities reach their individual potential and are recognized as valued citizens.

mission

Between Friends provides quality social, recreation, and development opportunities so that people with disabilities can connect, grow, and belong.

values

The core values that guide agency activities and decisions are captured in the acronym F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Fun | We provide opportunities for smiles and laughter with friends. |
| Respect | We respect all people and resources. |
| Inclusion | We focus on abilities and build community. |
| Equity | We provide support so that everyone can be successful. |
| No Barriers | We adapt to the changing needs of our members and strive to diminish obstacles to participation. |
| Diversity | We create a welcoming atmosphere for all. |
| Skills | We encourage the growth and development of everyone involved with our organization. |

key messages

- Connecting**
Between Friends provides unique opportunities for individuals with disabilities to have social interaction with peers who may or may not have a disability.
- Growing**
Between Friends members develop self-confidence, a sense of accomplishment, and a sense of responsibility.
- Belonging**
Our focus is on shared interests over individual differences. These shared interactions and experiences often become the foundation of understanding and lasting friendships.



“My son loved camp because of the staff, volunteers, activities and field trips. He was in three other camps this year and told me that he ‘ONLY wants to be in THIS one next summer’.”

– Sue, parent

blossoming in the garden

The horticultural therapy garden at **Camp Bonaventure** was created in response to one question: **how do we satisfy the need for nature-based activities in the summer without leaving the Camp?**

The solution was to literally bring nature into Camp by creating a garden that not only provides beautiful food but also teaches participants about nature and helps them develop relationships with others through working together towards a common goal. With the support of **Nutrien**, 2015 marked the beginning of a great adventure, and four years later, the garden has come so far!

Over the years, as the garden grew & changed, our talented Horticultural Therapist, Janet Melrose, has been the constant. Janet has carefully curated activities for our members of various ages to help them find a sense of belonging. Each year a variety of edibles and flowers are grown such as potatoes, strawberries, beans, sunflowers and carrots. The time in the garden allows our participants to have fun, learn, take responsibility, and practice the skills they have acquired during previous years.

In 2019, with the support of the Allardyce Bower Foundation, we successfully implemented a solar-powered drop irrigation watering system. This development was a huge step towards the vision of an ecologically sustainable environment that embraces and supports all that inhabit it. The water harvesting allowed our participants to be more engaged as the garden responded to their efforts and rewarded them with flowers, great growth, and abundant harvest.

Another amazing achievement in 2019 was the addition of a Food Forest. This area of the garden was newly filled with all sorts of edible perennial plants like cherry trees, apple trees, and berry shrubs. Thoughtfully placed at the east end of the garden, the Food Forest fosters a sense of security and safety for everyone gardening there.



“The impact of the garden, be it the tangible or intangible, is profound. We have produced more, and a bigger variety of, plants while using the new infrastructure to improve our efficiency and to work towards a more ecologically sustainable future. **But the impact on our participants might be even more visible than the harvested fruits and vegetables.** More and more campers and **W.E.S.O.A.R!** participants became actively engaged in the garden – they are energetic, motivated and focused, exhibiting a greater span of attention and discipline to complete their tasks at hand.

When something of value is provided to people, they themselves feel valued – and this notion has proved itself in many of our participants’ stories.”

– Janet Melrose, Horticultural Therapist



W.E.S.O.A.R! *Weekend & Evening Social Opportunities,
Activities & Recreation*



“Because it’s hard for my brother to make friends, we as a family feel Between Friends W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs are a good place to help develop social skills. We want the best for him, and also recognize he has to face the world. We want him to see society. This program is a good way to show him real life, but still feel safe.”

– Geraldine, sister of participant

it’s a family affair

No one would have ever guessed that nineteen years ago, when Stacy first brought her young son Darian to Between Friends’ **Camp Bonaventure**, that the two of them would eventually lead a **W.E.S.O.A.R! (Weekend & Evening Social Opportunities, Activities & Recreation)** Program together.

“Between Friends has played such a huge part in who Darian has become,” Stacy remarked. So much so, that after completing the Volunteer In Training (V.I.T.) Program, Darian jumped at the chance to give back as a **W.E.S.O.A.R!** volunteer. He now helps Between Friends to provide the same transformational opportunities he experienced himself. “You always hope that your child can be the most that they can be – and being part of **W.E.S.O.A.R!** Programs has helped Darian grow and become a leader.”

Now each week, the duo ventures out to Vecova Recreation Centre, ready to jump into the pool alongside an excited group from the Between Friends **W.E.S.O.A.R!** Rec Swim Program. It’s hard to tell who has more fun – Stacy, Darian, or the participants themselves!

Stacy admits, “we both love being in the water, and what I appreciate is that we don’t need to get dressed up or pretend we’re something we’re not.”

**“Everyone who attends programs is
totally themselves all the time,
and we get to be that way too.”**

Not only have the **W.E.S.O.A.R!** Programs created a sense of community for Stacy and Darian, but they have found that working together has fostered a sense of purpose for both mom and son.

“At first, I wasn’t sure how Darian would react when he was placed as a volunteer in my **W.E.S.O.A.R!** Program, but he took to it well. There is something satisfying about working together. The time together, laughter, and problem-solving that goes on [in the program] strengthens and deepens our relationship.”

Through their involvement, Stacy and Darian are not only fostering a sense of connection and belonging for our members, they have also found the same with each other as they continue their Between Friends journey!

“I can’t say enough about just how much Between Friends gives and what their programs mean to its members. We are proud to be part of such a fantastic organization.”



2019 by the numbers



825
total members



155
new members



737
families



712
total volunteers

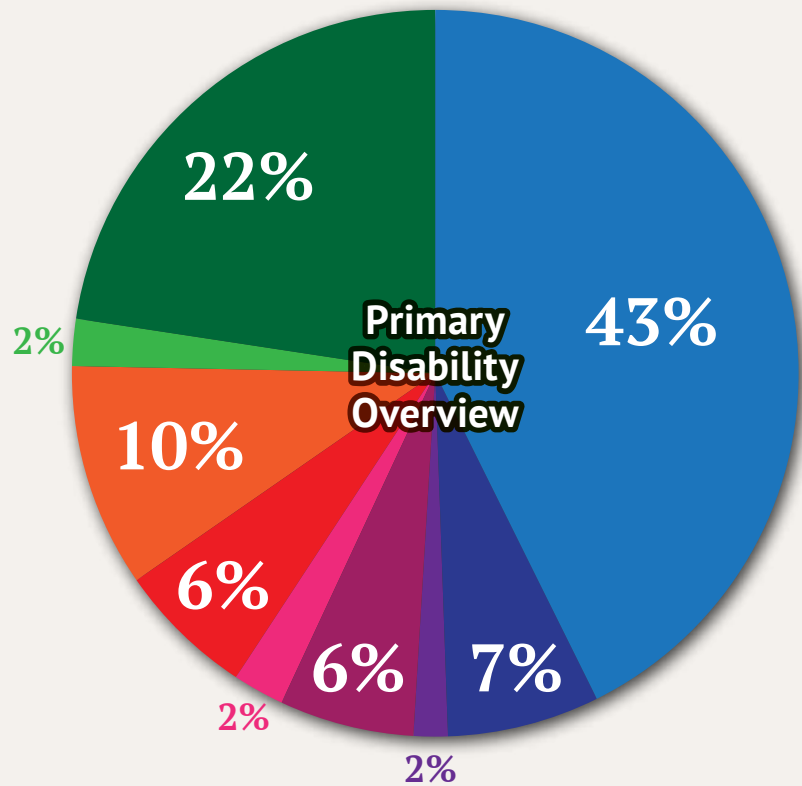


21,055
volunteer hours



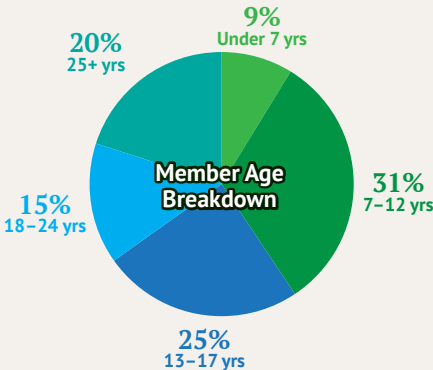
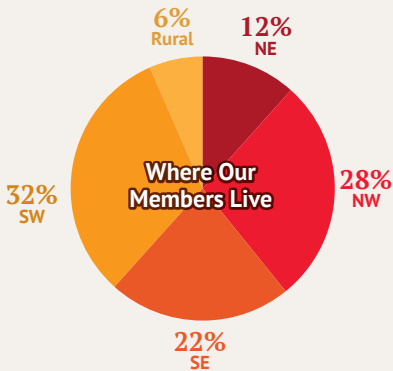
\$315,825
saved wages
(based on 2019 Alberta minimum wage)

membership breakdown



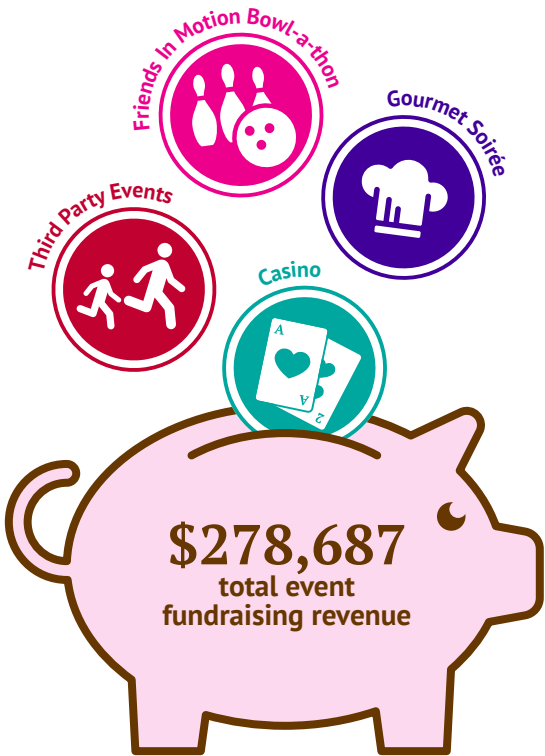
One of the unique things about Between Friends, is that it's a pan-disability organization. In recent years, the number of members on the Autism spectrum has increased significantly.

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Learning Disability
- Cerebral Palsy
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder
- Down Syndrome
- Developmental Disability
- Typically Developing
- Other



fundraising events

Our fundraising events are critical to our financial sustainability. They also serve to raise awareness of Between Friends and provide our supporters with fun and memorable experiences. Thanks to everyone who came out to our events in 2019.





I.C.A.N! Inclusive Community Activities
with No Barriers

“Cesar is an amazing, happy, and kind human being. He also has Autism, but this doesn’t define him or make him disabled, on the contrary, this makes him a natural fighter. He started attending Between Friends Camp Bonaventure 5 years ago, then began the I.C.A.N! program with SOGO Adventure running in 2017.”

“From the beginning he showed so much joy in it and with the help provided he has become more independent and confident in his skills. His growth has been remarkable. My words to Between Friends will always be thank you.”

– Cesar’s mom

an extraordinary person and her extraordinary legacy: remembering Kelsey Claeyes-Ostermann

Between Friends, has been fortunate to have a number of influential individuals who have crossed our paths and worked with us over the years; each person leaving their mark and ultimately making our organization better.

One woman in particular possessed more gumption and bravado than you could ever imagine, along with a deep passion and vision for the entire organization and its members. She truly embodied the values of Between Friends. Her name was **Kelsey Claeyes-Ostermann**.

Kelsey made such an impact on everyone she encountered – her family, community, and her friends & colleagues at Between Friends.

It was no surprise how quickly she transitioned through the organization – starting as a member of the Fund Development team and eventually becoming the Manager, Membership Services. **Between Friends wasn’t just a job Kelsey went to Monday to Friday, it was the place she found her purpose and her voice; and what an incredible honour that was for Between Friends.** Kelsey proudly represented our cause with a voice that was kind, genuine, caring, and strong.

Kelsey was a natural leader – not the kind that demands respect, but the kind that garners it easily. People listened to what she had to say and valued her opinion. In return, she valued theirs and made sure everyone felt included in all settings. Her spreadsheets were immaculate. Her personality was bold. Kelsey was open and honest... and hilarious in that openness and honesty. She made us laugh—a lot.

Her door was always open for her colleagues. Whether it was work related or personal, Kelsey never turned anyone away. She always seemed to know exactly what to say to make people feel better and she handled every situation with compassion.



In her role, Kelsey was a champion of inclusion. She worked with recreation providers in Calgary to help them better include people with disabilities and allow our members to explore community recreation opportunities outside of Between Friends. Along with her team, she successfully, and amazingly, increased the number of Community Recreation Partners we had from 6 to over 40 in just one year. Thanks to her, places like the Calgary Public Library, Pumphouse Theatre, the Genesis Centre, and so many more, are better equipped to serve people with disabilities.

Kelsey’s work was impactful beyond words. She was instrumental in making our city more inclusive now and for the future. Kelsey propelled Between Friends closer to our Vision through her passion and her resolve. Her legacy is tremendous and will be honoured for years to come.

Kelsey, we miss you. Thank you for always being your wonderful self. We learned so much from you. You made each and every one of us better.

subsidy & fee assistance

“Between Friends’ Fee Assistance program is like **warm hands that help carry the heavy financial burden off our shoulders**. It has always been accessible, considerate, relieving. It has made our son’s life so much **happier** and **his smile so much brighter**. He talks about Between Friends’ Camps all year long.”

- Parents of participant

2019 subsidy & fee assistance

Program	Subsidy	Fee Assistance	Total Financial Assistance Provided
W.E.S.O.A.R!	\$296,043	\$8,075	\$304,118
Camp Bonaventure	\$235,112	\$36,458	\$271,570
Adventurers	\$92,862	\$20,743	\$113,605
Camp Fun’zAmust	\$25,768	\$4,552	\$30,320
TOTALS	\$649,785	\$69,828	\$719,613

true costs

Program	Average Cost to Between Friends per Space	Average Advertised Cost to Families per Space	Average Financial Assistance Provided per Space	Number of People Accessing Fee Assistance
W.E.S.O.A.R!	\$464	\$128	\$119	68
Camp Bonaventure	\$1,342	\$866	\$467	78
Adventurers	\$1,353	\$555	\$798	26
Camp Fun’zAmust	\$1,039	\$790	\$379	12



Adventurers



“I have been a member for many years. The summer trips & programs are my social life. Over the years I have done things that never would have been possible without Between Friends. I am now in a wheelchair - but have mobility and am still included in everything as when I was not in a wheelchair. The staff and volunteers never leave anyone out of anything.”

- Tamara, vacationers participant



“I love Aktion Club because it gives me a chance to give back to others. It gives me a chance to do something good while being with my friends. I’ve made lots of good friends in Aktion Club. I love that Aktion Club gives us a chance to have new opportunities and learn new things. Aktion Club makes me feel more confident and independent. My family says I’m more resilient too. It makes me happy to keep busy, to belong to a group and to help others.”

– Allyson, member

together in Aktion

Aktion Club is a community focused volunteer group for adults living with disabilities and **Aktion Club YYC truly feels like one big happy family.**

In partnership with the **Kiwanis Club of Calgary Northmount** and Between Friends, Aktion Club YYC provides opportunities for adults with disabilities to develop initiative and leadership skills, serve their community, integrate into society, and demonstrate the dignity and value of citizens living with disabilities.

Aktion Club members are so genuinely eager to spend time together and do good in the community. They always ensure that everyone is part of the conversation and feels included; so it is no surprise that so many friendships (and relationships!) are formed in this group.

It not only provides a tangible avenue to build a sense of belonging through volunteerism, it also provides an incredible social opportunity for members to connect with their peers. **What makes Aktion club unique & special is the volunteerism.** What the members have created amongst themselves is a safe, warm, and inclusive environment, and if you’re a newcomer to Aktion Club you will quickly be welcomed with warm smiles and hugs. **There’s something truly special about the bond each member has with one another; it’s an incredible community!**

When asked what makes Aktion Club so wonderful, many members commented about how it’s a place to make new friends and be in the company of other people. Aktion Club members also love their monthly community initiatives such as volunteering at the Calgary Zoo making popcorn and pinatas for the animals or sorting donated items at the Mustard Seed to support the homeless in our community. Each month, the group comes together to decide on what volunteer and fundraising projects they want to tackle next. **These two hours are full of laughs, camaraderie and, of course, snacks!**

Aktion Club’s volunteerism in the community demonstrates their valued roles in a society that is so fortunate to have them. **This group truly exemplifies Between Friends’ vision of an inclusive community where people with disabilities reach their individual potential and are recognized as valued citizens.**



The Calgary Between Friends Club

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2019

Audited by Czechowsky, Graham & Hanevelt Chartered Professional Accountants. Full financial statements available online at www.betweenfriends.ab.ca

extracts from audited financial statements

Assets	2019	2018
Current	\$596,501	\$513,610
Endowment Fund	\$1,486,305	\$1,368,976
Property & Equipment	\$59,386	\$54,606
Restricted Cash	\$6,300	\$32,400
Total Assets	\$2,148,492	\$1,969,592
Liabilities	2019	2018
Current	\$80,884	\$74,903
Deferred contributions related to operations	\$145,385	\$91,600
Deferred contributions related to casino	\$10,355	\$67,824
Deferred contributions related to property & equipment	\$54,790	\$72,934
Total Liabilities	\$291,414	\$307,261
Net Assets (includes endowment fund)	\$1,857,078	\$1,662,332
TOTAL	\$2,148,492	\$1,969,592

statement of operations

Revenue	2019	2018
Fundraising	\$1,087,036	\$1,247,238
Programs	\$859,961	\$850,600
Government Grants	\$217,385	\$201,453
Investment Income (grant & endowment fund)	\$38,548	\$37,130
Total	\$2,202,930	\$2,336,421
Expenses	2019	2018
Direct Costs	\$1,853,684	\$1,954,590
Operating Expenses	\$307,289	\$312,632
Total	\$2,160,973	\$2,267,222
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$41,957	\$69,199
Other income (unrealized gain on long term investments)	\$152,789	(\$14,034)
Excess of Revenue Over Expenses	\$194,746	\$55,165



Camp Fun'zAmust

“This year Tom went to Camp Fun'zAmust. It was the first time in his life he had attended a sleepover camp and he loved it. It was not easy at first, but because the staff care so much, he made it through and grew as a person as a result. The impact of this camp will remain with Tom for the rest of his life.”

– Scott, parent

thank you to our fundraising champions, sustainers, & leaders



The Gwyn Morgan
& Patricia Trottier
Foundation



Shapiro Family
Foundation



Robert Rivard



FASKEN



between friends

connecting · growing · belonging

205 8989 Macleod Trail S
Calgary, Alberta T2H0M2
403 269 9133

betweenfriends.ab.ca | [@calgarybfc](https://www.instagram.com/calgarybfc)



*We wish to thank each and every one
of our donors for the support they have
provided in 2019. Your generosity makes
all of this possible!*

Charitable Registration No: 11921 7925 RR0001