



2023

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



Between Friends
connect • grow • belong

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board of directors

January 2023 to May 2024

Cory Vance	Chair
Jessica Yarnell	Past Chair
Naminder Sandhu	Vice Chair
Chris Turcato	Treasurer / Secretary / Director
Peter Drag	Director
Gerry David	Director
Bradley Fox	Director
Crispin Arthur	Director
Sean Bower	Director
Taso Arvanitis	Director
Amber Dunleavy	Director
Ian Hendy	Director
Rupi Bergamin	Director
Kim Presser	CEO

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Message from the CEO & Board of Directors

As we reflect on the past year's achievements and challenges, it is evident that our commitment to providing inclusive social, recreation, and development opportunities remains steadfast.

Between Friends continues to be a leader of inclusivity, offering quality programs and services to individuals representing diverse groups. Whether it's through our recreational outings, skill-building workshops, or social gatherings, Between Friends remains a place where individuals of all abilities can thrive. We have continued to expand our programs and experience higher fill rates which translates to a greater outreach, with increases of over 36% and 46% respectively.

At Between Friends, inclusivity is not just a goal; it is the cornerstone of everything we do. We firmly believe that everyone, regardless of ability, age, gender, race, gender identity, religion, or culture, deserves the opportunity to participate and belong. Our Inclusion Services strategy hopes to accelerate the growth and expansion throughout the corporate and business community by providing both online and in-person training options.

The impact of Between Friends extends far beyond the walls of our organization. By providing meaningful opportunities for socialization, skill development, and personal growth, we are empowering individuals to lead fulfilling lives and contribute positively to society. Our partnerships with other community organizations, businesses, and volunteers further amplify our reach and influence, creating a ripple effect of inclusivity and compassion. **We successfully relaunched Friends In Motion as an Olympic style event with more than \$107,000 raised. Our 2nd Annual Golf Tournament at Silvertip also raised \$107,000.**

This year we are excited to announce we will be **expanding into Red Deer**. We will start with a version of Camp B and look to extend our offerings in a measured approach. This has been an eye opening experience to find another city that is just over an hour away from Calgary that is more than 20+ years behind in offering inclusive programming.



Cory Vance
Chair



Kim Presser
CEO

The early wins and synergies we have experienced have been remarkable. We are looking forward to reporting back next year on the first year's successes.

None of our achievements would be possible without the support of our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners. Their passion, commitment, and generosity are the driving forces behind everything we accomplish at Between Friends. We extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every individual and organization that has contributed to our success this past year.

As we look to the future, Between Friends remains steadfast in its mission to break down barriers, foster inclusivity, and empower individuals of all abilities. We are excited to build upon the momentum of the past year and explore new avenues for growth, innovation, and impact. With your continued support, we are confident that the best is yet to come for Between Friends and the communities we serve. We also continue to research social enterprise opportunities that will help us continue to evolve for years to come.

I am honored to have served as the Chair of Between Friends for the past two years and excited to have **Naminder Sandhu** bring her experience and talents as she transitions into this role.

Our Board has gone through some changes, but we feel we have a strong core of committed individuals to help guide the organization into the future. While I take pride in our collective accomplishments, ongoing support from our donors, individuals, and corporations remains crucial for our continued success.

Sincerely,

Cory Vance

About Us

Between Friends is a charitable organization that provides quality social, recreation and development opportunities so that people with disabilities can 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.

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.

key messages

connect

Between Friends provides unique opportunities for individuals with disabilities to have social interaction with peers who may or may not have a disability.

grow

Between Friends members develop self-confidence, accomplishment and a sense of responsibility.

belong

Our focus is on shared interests over individual differences. These shared interactions and experiences often become the foundation of understanding and lasting friendships.



Who We Are

403
total youth

247
total adult

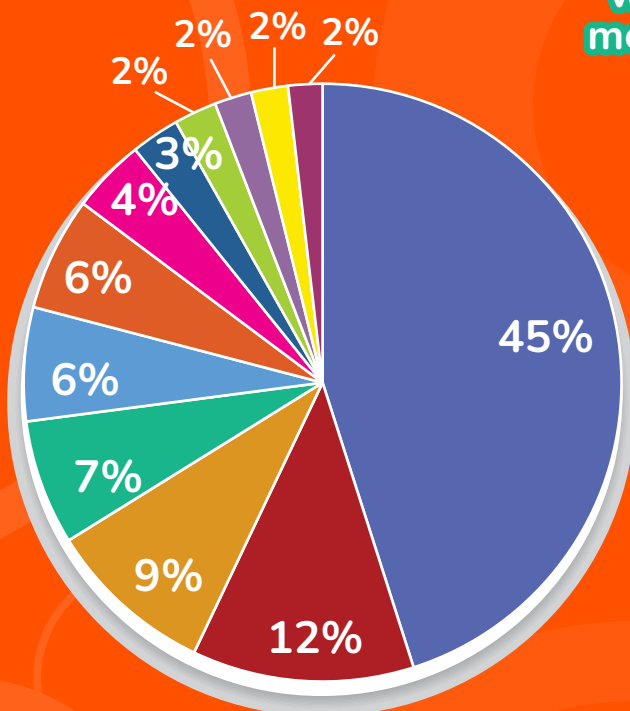
650
members

250
volunteers

565
members with
individual
memberships

85
members
with family
memberships

7400
volunteer
hours



member breakdown

Between Friends is an organization that supports many individuals with one or more disabilities. In 2023 more than 45% of our members were on the Autism spectrum.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Autism Spectrum Disorder | Cerebral Palsy | FASD/FAE |
| Other* | Down Syndrome | Brain Injury |
| Developmental Disability | Global Developmental Disability | No Disability |
| ADHD/ADD | Intellectual Disability | Epilepsy |

* Epilepsy, Learning Disability, Spina Bifida, Blindness/Visual Impairment, Undiagnosed, Andermann Syndrome, Deafness, Fragile X Syndrome, Mental Illness, Rubinstein Taybi Syndrome, 21q22 Genetic Microdeletion, CHD2 Genetic Deletion, Cri-du-Chat Syndrome, Tetrasomy 18p, William's Syndrome, Selected "Other" as an option

Accessibility Award 2023

For Between Friends, accessible spaces are crucial for us to run our programs in a way where our members can be safe, get out into the community, and of course, have fun!

So, we were very honored to be nominated for the **2023 Accessibility Award for Advocacy** from the City of Calgary. We would like to give a quick shout-out to Accessible Housing's **Bridge to Home Program** and **Akram Jomaa Islamic Centre** for being the winners of the 2023 Advocacy Award. It's truly wonderful that we can acknowledge the efforts within our community that strive to enhance Calgary's accessibility and ensure it's a welcoming place for everyone to live.

Because ultimately, that's why we do the work that we do – **to help make Calgary a space where anyone can do anything at any time.**

Between Friends has been providing a wide variety of social and recreation-based programming for over 40 years. We have worked with thousands of Calgarians, and often have gotten to watch a lot of them grow up. In this time, we have also watched the City of Calgary change quite a bit. But when you work within this community, it becomes almost second nature to walk into a restaurant or a store and immediately notice areas where their accessibility could be improved.

Small aisles, no automatic doors or buttons to open the doors, really sharp corners, products placed on really high shelves – unfortunately, this is all still very common. Even bathrooms that claim to be accessible often have fixtures placed in odd spots, the stall isn't large enough, or maybe there is no braille on the signage, but they still have a wheelchair symbol on them, so everything is fine. It's the bare minimum that most spaces will adhere to.

We often like to say that we are working ourselves out of a job. Between Friends envisions a world where our programming does not have to exist because the infrastructure is created with accessibility in mind,

and "disability" is just a word. Everyone just is, and there are no barriers to participating in society. Of course, we are not there yet. Awards such as the City of Calgary Accessibility Awards for Advocacy, Transportation & Design, and Universal Design are currently necessary to showcase organizations that are actively trying to make a change, and hopefully encourage others to do more.

At the same time, we hope that one day these awards cease to exist. One day, we won't be awarding businesses who make their services inclusive to everyone with no barriers, that will be the standard. It's really hard to say if any of us working with Between Friends will live to see the society we aim for, but it won't stop us from putting the hours in to make sure that our programs are a space where everyone can grow, connect, and belong.



Member Spotlight

Eric Tinling

Our focus at Between Friends has always been to create an inclusive community, where an individual's personal potential is reached. We offer multiple programs that focus on helping those who mean the most to us grow and develop their personal skills. Our focus on individual member development helps many members become personnel within our organization. They often begin as participants, move through the volunteer and leader in training programs, and in a full circle moment, they become personnel within our programs! By providing the support needed, we are able to see our members grow into personnel who leave meaningful impact within their communities.

Eric started in the Wolverines group at Camp Bonaventure in the summer of 2016.

At first, he felt shy and quiet, not knowing anyone in the group. This didn't last long, as Eric soon began to form friendships with participants, volunteers, and leaders and became an integral part of the team. Eric has since aged out of Camp Bonaventure, and now participates in W.E.S.O.A.R! where he loves building social connections with people who have similar interests to him (Bar Buddies is his favourite program!).

In 2022, Eric began volunteering at Camp Bonaventure, where most people know him better as "Potter". Every morning, Eric can be found leading all of the songs at Flag and engaging participants of every age. Eric loves getting to work with the next generation of kids, and providing them a space where they can be happy. One of his favourite parts of becoming a volunteer has been growing alongside the volunteers and leaders that he has known since 2016.

Eric's involvement with Between Friends doesn't stop there. He frequently participates in both promotional and fundraising opportunities, including sharing his story on the radio, speaking in videos about Camp Bonaventure, and helping out at Friends in Motion in both 2023 and 2024.



“Between Friends really changes your life.”

Eric has also made time over the past few years to come to Camp Bonaventure staff training and share his story of finding a place where he can belong. The impact that his story has on both returning and brand new staff is incredible, encouraging them all to build meaningful connections with their participants, and understand the impact that they themselves have on the kids they work with each day.

Because of your support, stories like Eric's continue to be possible at Between Friends. Thank you for helping us foster a place where our members can continue to belong.



Inclusion Services

In 2023, our Inclusion Services team made significant strides toward our vision of creating inclusive communities where everyone, regardless of their background or abilities, feels welcomed and supported. Through the dedicated efforts of our team, the year marked a significant period of growth and accomplishment for our Inclusion Services.



This past year, we forged new partnerships, expanding our reach into various communities.

In 2023, we partnered with: **MusicBox Children's Charity, Tuscany Residents Association, Mahogany Homeowner's Association, StoryBook Theatre, Glenmore Gymnastics, and Youth Central.** We've also collaborated on projects with the Cumming School of Medicine Community Engaged Learning, Ever Active Schools, and Centre for Newcomers.

"Between Friends has been an integral partner in our continued efforts to offer inclusive and accessible programming at StoryBook Theatre. The kind, knowledgeable, and friendly staff at Between Friends provide helpful ongoing support and working with them has been an incredibly positive experience. [...] Our staff who have completed Inclusion Training through Between Friends have reported

how impactful it has been in their work with our Theatre School students and as a Program Coordinator, I have seen the positive effect that Inclusion Training has had on our team's ability to effectively support our students so that any student who participates in our programming can participate fully and have a meaningful experience. The positive feedback that we frequently receive from families about the inclusivity of our programming is a testament to that impact. I am so grateful to Between Friends and their vital support in the ongoing development and implementation of inclusion practices in our organization." - StoryBook Theatre

Recognizing the importance of education in fostering inclusive environments, we initiated the development of a new online inclusion training program. This training, tailored to provide a foundational understanding of inclusion with a focus on the disability community, aims to equip any individual and organization with the knowledge and tools needed to create welcoming spaces for all.

In line with our commitment to accessibility and information dissemination, we began the development of an Inclusion Services website. This platform will serve as a centralized hub for resources, information, and support related to inclusion. By directing learners and partners to this comprehensive resource, we aim to enhance awareness and facilitate meaningful engagement in inclusive practices.

As we reflect on the achievements of 2023, we are inspired by the progress we have made and energized by the opportunities that lie ahead. In the coming year, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing the cause of inclusion, breaking down barriers, and creating a more equitable society for all.

Family Profile

Bergamin Family

This year, we wanted to highlight a family who has recently joined Between Friends, and who have embraced our community with open arms. Sharing their experiences, expertise, wisdom, and enjoying everything we have to offer. Meet the **Bergamin family**. We had the privilege of asking some questions to **Rupi Bergamin**, Nick's mom, about their experience with Between Friends, and the impact the organization has had on them.

Nick started his journey with Between Friends in 2020, when he first moved to Calgary from Ottawa during the early stages of the Pandemic. "We first heard about you from my sister, Kiki, who owns Pinnovate DIY studio. She has had Between Friends participants in her studio to do projects, and knew of the great work Between Friends does through her broader community of friends". At the time, Between Friends was adapting to delivering virtual programs as a way to give social opportunities throughout the pandemic to our members. "Online was fun, but challenging for Nick as being online is not the easiest way to make new friends..." Rupri shared "But once the in person activities began, he signed up - and immediately made new friends... now he seems to know everyone!".

Rupi shares that Nick has continued to make new friends, and has been enjoying exploring other parts of the province through our Adventurers program. He continues to try new things that he hadn't done before, like going for Brunch at the Zoo, or visiting a farm. He continues to develop independence through engaging in these outings with his new friends, which Rupri shared is vital for his growth and happiness.



"The most important thing for his entire family is that he is happy... and there is nothing that makes Nicholas as happy as Between Friends."

"As a special education teacher and principal, I know the importance of our children (and adults) having strong social skills". She continues that it's vital for members to get to practice and develop their social skills in a safe place. Developing friendships and socializing in a meaningful and inclusive way is the key to unlocking anyone's happiness. "Basically..." Rupri continues "He feels valued at Between Friends. We cannot thank the staff and volunteers enough for helping Nicholas find his 'Happy Place' in Calgary".

2023 by the Numbers



Grants & Foundations
57%



Special Events
14%



Government
11%



Individual Donors
10%



Corporate Donors
7%

Friends in Motion



\$107,409

Golf Tournament



\$60,975

Circle of Friends



\$17,995

(37 monthly donors)

Donor Awards

We cannot survive without our donors and we would like to acknowledge just a few of the many who make sure that our doors stay open and our programs and services continue!

Northmount Kiwanis

Kids need people to look out for them, and Northmount Kiwanis is doing just that. A supporter since Between Friends opened its doors more than 40 years ago, Northmount Kiwanis has been one of Between Friends' most impactful supporters, donating close to \$250,000. On top of their substantial financial contributions, they have also volunteered countless hours every year at Camp Bonaventure, and support our fundraisers like Friends in Motion. Our connection with Northmount Kiwanis is close, as many of our members also engage in our joint venture with them - Aktion Club. As the only service club for adults with disabilities, Aktion Club meets regularly to volunteer and engage in the community while being themselves, working together with friends and developing leadership skills. We're incredibly grateful to Northmount Kiwanis for their generous support over the years, and look forward to continuing to foster this relationship in years to come.

Sue Acorn

A long time supporter of Between Friends, Sue joined the organization in 2004 when she took the position of Operations Manager. Sue was a key member of the team for 9 years before retiring in 2013. Since then, Sue has continued to generously support the organization every year, joining the Circle of Friends (monthly giving program) in 2009, and donating yearly to events like Friends in Motion and our campaigns. Sue is a friend, a mentor and a genuine supporter of Between Friends. Thank you!

TD Securities

The TD Securities Underwriting Hope Foundation is a colleague-driven initiative that embodies the culture of care and empowers TD Securities employees to play an active role in giving back and enriching their communities. Dating back to 2015, TD Securities Underwriting Hope Foundation has donated an amazing \$230,000 to Between Friends in support of our W.E.S.O.A.R! Programs. In 2024, on top of their generous giving, their employees will be volunteering at Camp Bonaventure, cleaning up the community garden, volunteering with the campers and creating unforgettable programming through our Days of Caring. Thank you for the ongoing support, we cannot wait to see what is next!

Evelyn Dewar

Evelyn's (Ev) time with Between Friends began in 1995 when she joined the Between Friends Board of Directors. After holding positions such as Director, Vice Chair and Chair of the Board, Ev stepped down in 2003 but her commitment to support the organization had really just begun. Ev has been one of the longest standing members of the Circle of Friends (monthly giving program), with donations dating back to the early 2000's. Ev, you are a true inspiration to us and we are beyond grateful for your continuous support.

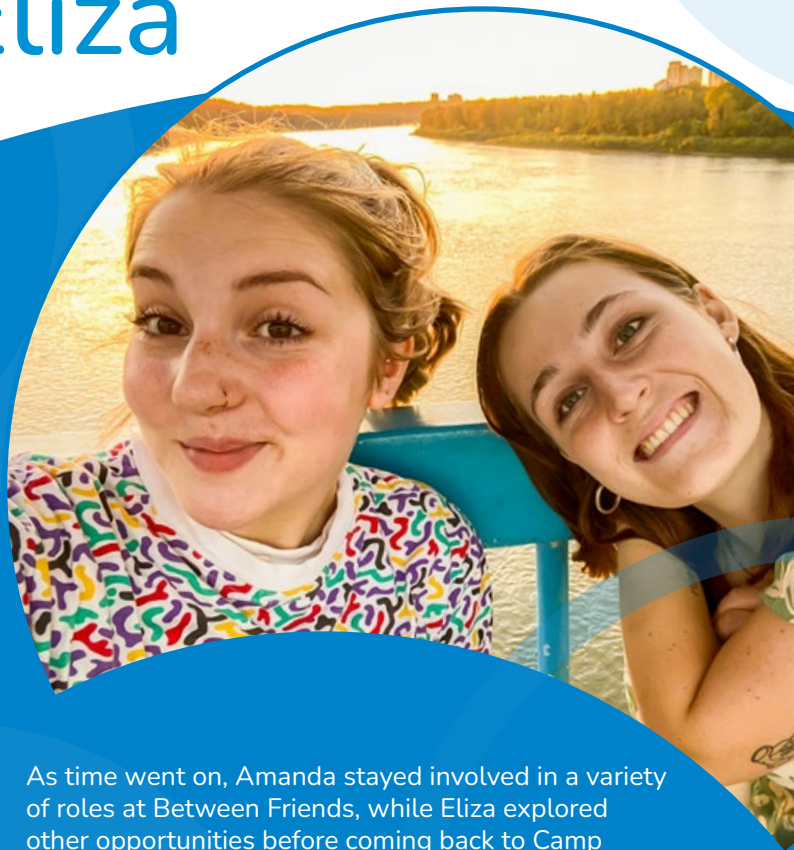
Personnel Spotlight

Amanda and Eliza

Since they were just 12 years old, Amanda and Eliza have shared a bond as youth interested in making a difference and joining the Junior Volunteer Program at Between Friends Camp Bonaventure. Amanda's journey began at a Volunteer Fair held at her school that she was eager to join and after signing up for a week with the Badgers, she quickly signed up to volunteer more weeks at Camp that summer.

It wasn't long before Amanda became friends with Eliza, a kindred spirit whose dedication to the campers mirrored her own. Together, they dreamed of making a difference, full of ideas and driven by passion. From asking their parents to drive them to the dollar store after camp to buy supplies for DIY sensory bags, to brainstorming ways to create the most inclusive summer experience for campers, their friendship blossomed while sharing dreams and aspirations.

Eliza reflected fondly on their shared experiences, saying, **"After a summer of swimming, crafts, and shaving cream fights, I knew I wanted to go back again. I had learned so much about myself and had the greatest time with the people I had met."**



As time went on, Amanda stayed involved in a variety of roles at Between Friends, while Eliza explored other opportunities before coming back to Camp B after the pandemic. No matter what, they are always there for each other, cheering on each other's achievements like finishing high school, getting into university, moving to a new city, and so much more!

As they grew from teenagers into young adults, their dream of becoming Membership Supervisors together came true in the summer of 2024. It means a lot more to them than just a job. It shows them how strong their friendship is, celebrates the countless memories shared over the years, and reminds them of the shared values.

"I thought of how far we had come since our awkward teen years," Eliza shared, **"this summer, we are both so happy to be coming back as Membership Supervisors. Truly a full circle moment!"**

Amanda echoed these sentiments, expressing gratitude: **"Between Friends, and the people who work there like Eliza, have made me a better, more aware person, and I am confident I would not be where I am or who I am, without them."**



2023 Financial Statements

The Calgary Between Friends Club Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2023. Audited by Czechowsky, Graham & Hanevelt Chartered Professional Accountants. Full financial statements available online at www.betweenfriends.ab.ca

Extracts from Audited Financial Statements

Assets	2023	2022
Current	\$1,394,263	\$1,148,641
Endowment fund	\$1,688,237	\$1,660,916
Property & equipment	\$113,589	\$145,934
Restricted cash	\$2,307	\$32,458
Total Assets	\$3,198,396	\$2,987,949
Liabilities	2023	2022
Current	\$44,860	\$46,459
Deferred contributions related to operations	\$706,406	\$439,700
Deferred contributions related to casino	\$54,566	\$94,882
Deferred contributions related to property & equipment	\$93,929	\$146,563
Total Liabilities	\$899,761	\$727,604
Net Assets (includes endowment fund)	\$2,298,635	\$2,260,345
TOTAL	\$3,198,396	\$2,987,949

Statement of Operations

Revenue	2023	2022
Fundraising	\$1,050,032	\$974,517
Programs	\$634,925	\$524,931
Government grants	\$153,581	\$138,807
Investment income (interest & endowment fund)	\$84,633	\$54,891
Total	\$1,923,171	\$1,693,146
Expenses	2023	2022
Direct costs	\$1,686,031	\$1,493,232
Operating expenses	\$276,480	\$253,496
Total	\$1,962,511	\$1,746,728
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	(\$39,340)	(\$53,582)
Other income (unrealized gain on long term investments)	\$77,630	(\$119,598)
Excess of Revenue Over Expenses	\$38,290	(\$173,180)

thank you to
our fundraising
champions,
sustainers
& leaders

We wanted to say a huge thank you to our incredibly generous donors who have supported us throughout 2023. Because of your support, we have been able to continue offering the programs and services our members have come to know and love. We are incredibly fortunate to have a group of loyal supporters.

@calgarybfc



betweenfriends.ab.ca



Stone Creek Resort



Club of Calgary
at Stampede Park



FASKEN

Own tomorrow

Lily Street
Foundation



Canada



Between Friends
connect • grow • belong

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

Charitable Registration No:
11921 7925 RR0001