



# Mission & Values

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## Our Mission

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*To provide a family centred, early education program which will assist the child with special needs to be fully included in family life and community.*

*To provide the information and support necessary for the successful transition to and full inclusion in a community school.*

*To promote public education and public awareness in support of inclusion and inclusive communities.*

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## Our Values

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### *Family Centered Practice*

GRIT values the uniqueness of families. Through collaboration, a flexible partnership is created. The family is the constant in a child's life; they hold a central role in informed decision making and choices for the well-being of their child and family. Meaningful opportunities for active participation, learning, and strengthening of advocacy skills for the entire family are an integral aspect of our program. The family gains confidence in their abilities to positively influence their future.

### *Community Inclusion*

Inclusion is rooted in the belief that "we all belong". All children have the right to participate in natural settings, regardless of their diverse abilities. When children are included, they are active and valued participants in typical family life, community, and in their neighborhood school. An inclusive community is a welcoming community where each member experiences the feeling and reality of belonging.

### *Learning Through Play*

Young children learn through play. Guided play forms a strong foundation for ongoing social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Through play, children learn to make sense of their world, to practice skills, to imagine, and to create a valued role for themselves. Play builds experience and confidence; it is the real work of children.

### *Learning Organization*

The most valuable asset of an organization is its people. GRIT families and staff are involved and passionate. They learn together, seek knowledge, and discover innovative practices for their work. Through constant dialogue, respect, and trust, people and ideas evolve and grow.

# Reflections

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## Reflections from the Executive Director

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As we look forward and celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we celebrate significant change in our communities and schools. Over the past three decades there has been a shift away from the dark history of institutionalization and isolation of individuals with developmental disabilities to a time where society has greater understanding, empathy and acceptance of the diversity and the strengths and gifts each individual contributes to create the communities in which we live, learn and work.

These are exciting times in inclusive early childhood and education. As I look back on GRIT's growth as a learning organization, I am in awe at the magnitude of our program's influences in the community and our accomplishments. We have carved out a unique identity rooted in our core values: We are a leader in providing inclusive experiences for children to meaningfully participate and learn through every day opportunities, we are guided by the experiences and vision of families who have the skills and confidence to advocate and positively influence their future, and we are life-long learners benefitting from the passion and commitment of so many individuals who have shared their wisdom with our amazing organization over the past 30 years.

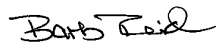
As we look ahead, we have rich opportunities to extend our experience and knowledge beyond our doors and into the broader community. We have opportunities to support Alberta's framework for *Action on Inclusion* and create a brighter future for all children and families, starting with the early years.

As a non-profit organization, we are most appreciative of our funding through Alberta Education and the new Ministry of Human Services. However, the quality of our services would not be the same without the generous contributions made by community minded individuals and companies who have chosen GRIT as their charity of choice. Most notably, we recognize **Joe Lamba** and his family and the partners of **CPI Construction** for their ongoing financial support.

In closing, I express my deepest gratitude to the amazing group of woman, our GRIT staff, who share their knowledge, energy and passion for the education of our young children and their families each and every day. Each staff member contributes in their own special way to the spirit of our GRIT community.

We are honored to share this journey of *Inspiring Inclusive Futures* with families. I can't wait to see what the next ten years will bring!

Kind regards,



*Only together can we create a future of  
inclusion and unity - unknown*



# Board of Directors

## Directors 2010-2011

### Acknowledgement of the GRIT Board

- Guided development of GRIT's Policies and Procedures
- Volunteered for GRIT fundraising activities, public speaking engagements and media interviews
- Represented GRIT on AACL Board (Alberta Association for Community Living) and ERC (Edmonton Regional Coalition)
- Sat on Edmonton Public Schools Trustee Advisory Committee for inclusive education
- Learned about role of Board and commitment to financial sustainability
- Took time to join staff for lunches to get to know the work they do
- Provided ongoing support and guidance to Executive Director
- ...and much more

We acknowledge each of GRIT's Board members. Your time, energy and commitment to our work is greatly appreciated. We are stronger with your support and wisdom!



*Victor Bilodeau, President*, is the proud parent of a GRIT alumnus. Victor teaches Strategic Management and Management Information Systems at the MacEwan School of Business. He has extensive experience consulting with businesses across many industries and enjoys spending time with his family, travelling and learning.



*Shyla Masse* and her husband Ronan have 3 children; Meagan 15, Blade 8, and Carson 6. Carson graduated from the GRIT Program last year and is now included in grade one at Beacon Heights Elementary. I had always planned to be a full time, stay-at-home mom but I had no idea just how big this job would be! We keep very busy juggling the schedules and needs of our family. I am very involved in my children's education; I am the chairperson of our school council, vice-president of the GRIT board of directors, and a member-at-large for the AACL (Alberta Association for Community Living) executive committee. During our three years with the GRIT Program I took advantage of many of the learning opportunities afforded to me, and through all that I've learned, I have developed a beautiful vision and a deep passion for inclusion that is sure to keep me advocating for years to come!



*Gordon Lucyk, Treasurer*, is an instructor at Grant MacEwan University's School of Business and acts as Coordinator of the International Business Major. He holds an MBA in Strategy and MA in International Studies and has worked and studied in the US and Europe. Gordon was born in Edmonton and is married to Tina, a classmate in his MBA program in Philadelphia. He somehow was able to get her to move to Edmonton's balmy winters from the cold climate of the Philippines. He was previously involved with the George Spady Centre, an inner city shelter for individuals who are homeless due to life challenges, as Treasurer and later Board Chair. This is Gordon's second year on the GRIT Board.

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# Directors 2010-2011

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**Sharon Estrada** is a GRIT Alumni parent and has served on the board for 3 years. Sharon and her husband, Anthony have three children, Marcus (8), Eric (5) and Audrina (1). Their eldest son has down syndrome and is in an inclusive classroom at their community school. Sharon is inspired by the work and achievements of GRIT which help her and her family to be strong advocates for their son and inclusive education. Sharon works for Calforex, a foreign currency exchange. Sharon and Anthony are members of the Edmonton Down Syndrome Society and Canadian Down Syndrome Society. Sharon looks forward to continued growth in her role on the board.



**Sandra MacKenzie-Keating** has worked with young children and their families for many years. She is currently a psychologist in the 1 2 3 Go! Program at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital and works in the community with the Alberta Health Services Early Intervention Program. Sandra has served on the Birth to Three Society Board, volunteered on the Magic Moments Fundraising Committee and the Alberta Early Years Conference Committee. Sandra is married and has two children. Sandra is honored to have served on the GRIT Board for the past four year and is resigning.



**Angela Wilson** began her career as a Television Reporter with CBC Regina, but she soon moved behind the cameras and became a Field Producer for numerous television programs, a Production Coordinator and Researcher, the role of Head of Corporate Production at Partners In Motion, a Regina-based television production company where she was awarded a *Saskatchewan Motion Picture Association Award* for her role as Producer. Currently, Angela is the Communications Specialist with Success By 6, a community initiative managed by United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. She completed her Masters in Public Administration and is a proud mother of a baby boy.



**Jayson Barclay** was born and raised in Edmonton. He graduated from the Certified Engineering Technologies Program at NAIT. Jayson is currently a Project Manager and partner of CPI Construction, a major contractor in Edmonton. Jayson has been married for 20 years, loves traveling and golfing. He is also the President of the Society of American Wines. Jayson's first year as a member of the GRIT board has provided insight into the experiences of families raising children with special needs.

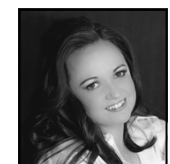


**Gail Boutillier** represents the board as a current parent with The GRIT Program. Her background includes a Bachelor's in Special Education and a Master's of Education. Gail has many years experience sitting on several different boards including The United Way, the Boys and Girls Club, the Alberta Winter Games and was secretary of the Faculty association of Keyano College in Fort McMurray where she taught for 16 years. Her son is in his second year with GRIT.



**Dianne Romanchuk** has worked for Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL) for twenty four years in the role of office clerk. She is an active volunteer with Gateway Association for Community Living, supports her local community league events, and is a member of the Red Hat Club. Dianne is hard working, outgoing and enjoys meeting people.

## New Director 2011-12



**Crystal Wimpney** is the mother of one son, Hunter (3). She is currently working at Stantec Consulting Ltd. as a Project Assistant and Safety Advisor. She also brings her love of coordinating events (former President of Women's Golf League) to the BEES committee at Stantec (Buildings Engineering Entertainment Society), organizing special events such as golf tournament, curling bonspiels and many more exciting events. Crystal is currently working on her designation of Life Coach with Personal Best Seminars and Certified Hypnotherapist with Full Circle Hypnotherapy. She continually inspires herself and others to reach their full potential in life through spiritual accountability.

## 1. GRIT is well known as an exemplary leader in inclusive early childhood education and community inclusion

Activity	Outcome for GRIT families, staff and community
Created new GRIT logo, tagline and Facebook page	A refreshed image of GRIT's contributions and influences within inclusive learning and inclusive futures
Hosted two fundraising activities (CPI Wine Tasting and Hope and Harmony)	Raised our community profile and funds. New sponsorship and board member
Presented GRIT's values, practices and outcomes at two international conferences in the USA (TASH and the International Early Intervention Society)	Increased awareness of parent advocacy and leadership as an outcome of effective early intervention
Three community presentations: Glenrose Autism Clinic, Edmonton. Preschool Assoc., and the Max Bell Policy Institute	Enhanced knowledge for referrals and partnerships with GRIT
GRIT staff participation in community early learning coalitions (ECMap)	Increased knowledge of GRIT's city-wide support for inclusive early learning



Carl Semashkewich,  
Stan Colville, Barb Reid  
& Jayson Barclay,  
CPI Construction Fundraiser,  
November 2010

## 2. GRIT has strong collaborative partnerships with community agencies and schools.

Activity	Outcome for GRIT families, staff and community
Set primary goal with Edmonton Public Schools to ensure clarity of role of developmental specialist in kindergarten programs	Developmental specialists support all children as a member of the classroom team
GRIT Executive Director and Board members invited to participate in the Inclusion Advisory Committee with EPS Trustees	Meaningful parent involvement was upheld as a priority for new district policy
GRIT is represented on the Early Year Continuum Project steering committee	Inclusion and diversity of children and families is valued within the context of school readiness
Profile and connect with other community services and programs that may benefit GRIT families (ie. Parent Link in GRIT Newsletter)	Increase family's awareness and access to other community services

### 3. GRIT builds skills, knowledge and confidence of community programs to successfully include all children in playschool, childcare and kindergarten.

Activity	Outcome for GRIT families, staff and
Created belief statements to supplement our value of community inclusion	Clear statements demonstrate how inclusion is lived each day. A shift from value to “action on inclusion”.
Implemented “Quality Inclusion Rating Scales in four community programs	Increased community center’s understanding of factors impacting quality inclusive program supports.
Designed and delivered four workshops to introduce a coaching framework Two staff attended provincial workshop on coaching	Increased awareness of GRIT’s role as “coach/ mentor” for building staff and families’ strengths and knowledge. New visit form created to guide our coaching practices
Designed GRIT’s Pyramid of Intervention	Increased understanding and application of universal strategies to support inclusion.
Designed and presented a model for supporting an Inclusive Early Learning team to support community programs	Enhanced information/ ideas to guide future discussions regarding gaps and access to support needed for community programs to provide quality inclusion

#### Letter to Alumni Parent

*“I was apprehensive to have a student with Special Needs in my class this term. In 10 years, I've never taught anyone with Cerebral Palsy. I was intimidated and worried about what I would have to offer her. Little did I know what I would receive as a teacher back from a student. The student has been one of the most eager, happy and fun students I have taught. She has brought me so much perspective to my teaching career, my practice of being a musician and as a person, she has taught me to appreciate the smallest things in life that I am so very thankful for. In this case, the student has given more than the teacher. Thanks for including her in my class. I trust that our school will take care of her needs - She loves this school and I feel she gives more to this place than some of the best “artists” we produce. I have especially found her academic growth vastly increase with support of her skilled EA. Her adaptations to the curriculum have been very accurate and she has produced quality work. Her perspective on Globalization is very strong and she knows exactly what is going on and what we are talking about through our various topics .....Amazing stuff.....*

Grade 10 Teacher, Edmonton Public Schools

*inspiring inclusive futures*

## 1. GRIT is well known as an exemplary leader in inclusive early childhood education and community inclusion

Extend website to include: family and community testimonials, links to research and practice, and promoting GRIT sponsorship

GRIT presentations to community referral sources: CASA and Community Health Clinics

Distribute "Community Learning Workshops" series widely across the Edmonton area

Provide an orientation for community programs supporting children enrolled with GRIT

*Grad & Year End Picnic - June 2011*



*We are less when we don't  
include everyone*

Roland Gutierrez

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## 2. GRIT has strong collaborative partnerships with community agencies and schools

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Enhance partnerships with local school boards through creating a shared vision for parent choice in kindergarten.

Establish a new committee of community partners to facilitate ongoing dialogue and strategies for supporting equitable access to resources to support inclusion in community pre-schools and child care centers.

Deliver Triple P parenting program co-facilitated with a new community partner

Distribute new information on a minimum of five community program and services to families through newsletter, parent groups, etc.

*Inclusive Education Team of the Year  
Beacon Heights Elementary School  
June 2011*



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## 3. GRIT enhances skills, knowledge and confidence of community programs to successfully include all children in playschool, child care and kindergarten

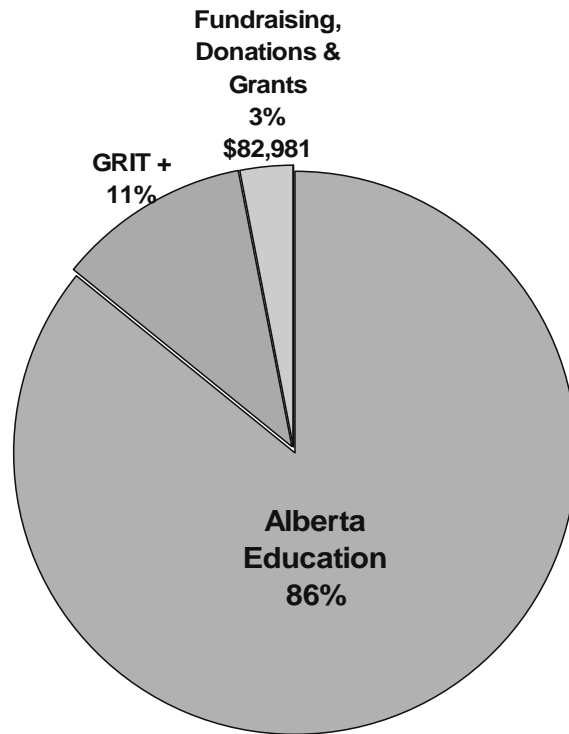
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Develop a pilot project with MacEwan Demonstration Childcare Center

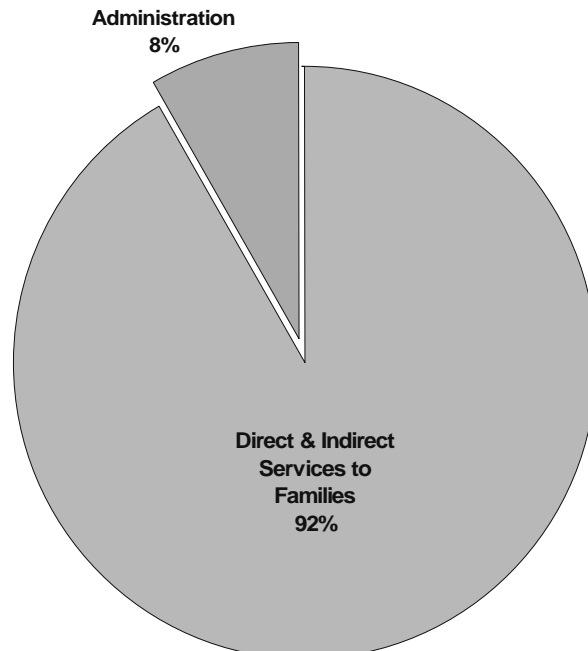
Pilot implementation of GRIT's new pyramid model

Develop minimum of four workshops with follow up coaching to enhance community access training and supports for quality inclusion.

## Revenue 2010-11



## Expenses 2010-11





The GRIT Program  
Statement of Operations  
For the year ended August 31, 2011

	2010-11
<b>REVENUES</b>	
Grants	
Alberta Education	2,411,667
FSCD (GRIT+)	312,991
Community Spirit Grant	16,420
Donations	44,053
Fundraising	19,335
Investment Income	3,173
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,807,639</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Instructional	
Developmental Specialists	1,024,371
Consulting Teams	845,709
Parent resources, instructional supplies, outside contracts, staff training, transportation	335,268
GRIT+	278,802
Administration	230,805
<b>Building &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>88,156</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,803,111</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR 2010-11</b>	<b><u>4,528</u></b>

Note: To minimize any potential disruption of our agency services in case of financial hardship, we are currently working to achieve a operational reserve of funds equivalent to three months of costs.

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## What parents say.....

(excerpts taken from June 2011 Program Evaluation)

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- ♦ *100% told us they were provided the information needed to make informed decisions for their child and family*
- ♦ *92% are confident they know how to help their child develop and learn.*
- ♦ *89% told us they are confident that they can tell when the interventions chosen are working for their family.*
- ♦ *85% are confident that they have the skills to help their child participate in family routines and activities.*

### *Areas for Growth*

- ♦ *58% of families felt they know how to connect with program and services in their own communities to benefit their family.*  
- **We will do better—Goal 2011-12**

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## GRIT employees say....

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- ♦ *100% say they are supported to understand GRIT's values of inclusion, play, family centered practice and learning.*
- ♦ *100% find meaning and purpose in their work.*
- ♦ *98% say they are asked to provide input into decisions or to solve problems*
- ♦ *98% are satisfied with GRIT as an employer and would recommend GRIT as a place to work*

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## What community partners say....

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- ♦ *“It was a pleasure to work with the team from GRIT. They provided some great strategies that I was able to incorporate in the whole class. Keep up the great work!”* Kindergarten Teacher
- ♦ *“The whole team was fantastic—very helpful and a wealth of knowledge!”* Kindergarten Teacher

# Volunteers

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Sincere heartfelt appreciation to the many hands and hearts that contribute to GRIT in so many ways.

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**#140 Pathfinders Group**



*“The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others.”*



# Donors

## Sincere appreciation and thank you to the many generous people for their kind donations.

S & D. White  
S. Kulchisky  
G & M Bodet  
t. Epp  
W. Zerb  
P. Segal  
G. Braeuer  
Hl. Carpenter  
E. Hornland  
H. Sadowski,  
P. Kelly  
C&D Armstrong  
E & D. Bruce  
S & N Armand  
Webster-Kotak  
D & K Kaukinen  
M. Cooper  
A. Round  
L & D Sadownyk  
M. Doxsey  
P. Sywenky  
C. Gennings  
R & A Sadownyk  
C. McLeod  
K. Bain  
G. Boutillier  
K. Reid  
R. Elashuk  
L. Prince  
L. Worobetz  
R. Masse,  
L. Dancause  
Heidi Meldrum  
The Herber Family  
Gina Bloank

The Lohin Family  
Probhjot & Nanvneet Lam-  
ba  
Community Spirit Founda-  
tion  
Streamline Logistics  
Margaret Thibault  
The Lumague Family  
The Magee Family  
The Murray Family  
The Ranger Family  
The Cranna Family  
Jordan & Rebecca Bruce  
Beattie Homes  
J. Tryon  
Lumague Family  
Rivera Family  
CPI Construction  
ACI Architecture Inc.  
Frisbee Studios  
Emma Pivato  
Jelly Fish Designs  
The deMoissac Family  
Nicole Allard  
Jerry Haynes  
Alex Pagnotta  
McFee Family  
Jody Beaton  
Anonymous \$500.00  
Alta-Fab Structures Ltd.  
Heather Doroshenko  
Janis Swanwick  
The Dugan family  
Julia Schole  
Anikka Ribbonleg

Alicen Clark (monthly)  
Nick Middlebrough (monthly)  
Patricia Dika (monthly)  
Lynn Fraser  
Shoppers Home Health Care  
Myles Jensen (United Way  
Payroll  
Deduction)  
Barrett Westerlund (United  
Way  
Payroll Deduction)  
The Dang Family  
MediChair  
Elizabethan Catering  
Fox Run Golf Course  
The Mohammed Family  
Phoenix Fence  
JB Refrigeration  
Romanovsky & Associates  
Absolute Enchantment  
RBC Royal Bank  
Kristina Zuk—Lisa Sphia  
Edmonton Journal  
Jellyfish Designs  
Executive Tinting  
Panago Pizza  
Grimshaw Trucking  
ABC Wedding Rentals  
Qniza/Choca  
Recreational Sports  
Ruth Baerg, Party-Lite  
Save On Foods  
ChristinaCameron  
Ricci Hair Salon

Northlands  
Frisbee Studios  
Barb Rowe  
SPetals on the Trail  
Atco Electric  
Cheryl o'Connor  
Thread Hill  
Danielle Gauld  
E&D Bruce  
Pickell Family  
JD Danmar Automotive  
Thomas Family  
Affinity Dental  
Karen Porkka  
True Serenity Massage  
Awards Unlimited  
City of Edmonton Parks  
Danyluk Family  
Flowlab Creating Movement  
Scivoletto Sound Studio



*A vision without a task is a dream  
A task without a vision is drudgery  
But a task with vision can change the world.*

Black Elk

***Community Spirit Foundation***— The Community Spirit Program is a matching grant for individual cash donations received by The GRIT Program. Annual grants vary from year to year. This year we were fortunate to receive \$16,420.00 in matching grants!



# Fundraising



*\$30,000 For 30 Years*

Our goal is to raise **\$30,000** each year in personal donations to create a future where GRIT's quality services to families are maintained.

*With your support, children with developmental disabilities have hope for an inclusive future!*

### **How can you help? Imagine.....**

- ◆ **\$25.00 will** .....support a child's understanding of daily routines with a *picture schedule*
- ◆ **\$75.00 will**.....provide *onsite child care* for parents to participate in evening workshops
- ◆ **\$150.00 will** .....provide an *adapted toy* to support a child's play
- ◆ **\$300.00 will**.....provide an *iPod touch* for a child to communicate with his peers
- ◆ **\$700.00 will**.....provide *wheelchair transportation* for a child to and from playschool for one month
- ◆ **\$900.00 will**.....provide a "*tomato chair*" for a child to join his family at the dinner table



**EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS!!**



### ***Make a donation today!***

- √ on our website    √ by phone
- √ by mail        √ in person at our office.

We accept Visa, MasterCard, Cash & Cheques.



### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!**

**Help us break a record!! For the first time ever GRIT needs over 120 Volunteers ALL IN ONE WEEK!!! Come meet new friends and have fun while supporting a great Cause!!**

**Casino        March 13 & 14, 2012**

**Oilers 50/50    March 16, 2012**

For more information contact: **Heather Luciw** at 780.454.9910 or [gritprog@gritprogram.com](mailto:gritprog@gritprogram.com). @ [www.gritprogram.com](http://www.gritprogram.com)

# Community Sponsors

The GRIT Program recognizes our major community sponsors for their generosity in supporting families and children.

## PLATINUM SPONSORS



The DATA Group of Companies



EDMONTON PETROLEUM CLUB



Recreational POWER Sports

ELIZABETHAN CATERING SERVICES LTD.



Romanovsky & Associates



H & W Produce

Cosmos Greek Taverna

Dovercourt Community League

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OPTIMIST CLUB