As the newest board member, I would like to share some of the highlights of the GRIT Annual General Meeting, Monday, October 22, 2012. The AGM was held at the beautiful Edmonton Petroleum Club, which was a lovely way to celebrate the close of GRIT’s 30th anniversary.

We had many reasons to celebrate as we met the campaign goal of $30 000 for 30 years! It was wonderful to see so many current and past families, staff, and community members mingling and getting to know each other. It was an honor to hear from Emma Pivato, one of the founding parents of GRIT, whose life continues to inspire inclusion and advocacy. Her grassroots effort to provide a fulfilling childhood for her daughter has developed into the thriving program that GRIT is today.

There was an insightful parent panel, focusing on stories of the personal decisions to include their child within the school and community. Another inspiration was photos of past GRIT graduates being successfully included in their community today.

We thanked three directors - Victor Bilodeau, Sharon Estrada and Dianne Romanchuk for their hard work and support as they move on from GRIT. GRIT also welcomed two more directors onto the board: Charles Rothman and myself.

I am looking forward to this upcoming year and thank you for this opportunity to share my passion for advocating of inclusion for all children.

Recreational Power Sports, partners Steven Lazowski (left), Andreas Kuppe (right) and Curtis Duffy (missing) presented GRIT Board President, Shyla Masse, with a $1500.00 cheque and challenged other individuals or businesses to meet or beat their donation to our 2012-13 campaign of: “Our Children, Our Inspiration”

See page 3 for more information on how YOU can support The GRIT Program.
Parent Workshop

Understanding and Speaking to our Family’s Vision for Inclusion

This action packed Saturday is designed based on information from alumni families who tell us the importance of taking time to reflect on our values for our child’s inclusion and our readiness, as parents, to advocate for our vision as we strive for meaningful inclusion in our community and transition to school.

Saturday January 26, 2013
9:30 – 3:00 p.m. @ GRIT office
*Lunch and on-site childcare provided*

Facilitators: Barb Reid, Executive Director and Alumni GRIT Parent

As a value, inclusion is much more than an educational placement for a child with a developmental disability. Inclusion touches all aspects of family life and decision making. This workshop will offer opportunities for parents to further explore the meaning of “inclusion” and provide time for parents to reflect and create a written vision statement to guide their priorities and future decisions for their child’s life.

A vision statement becomes an essential tool to build understanding of your values, hopes and dreams, and has been known to open doors for creating a positive partnership between family and school staff.

Plan to attend this interactive session where parents will:
♦ Explore your personal value and meaning of “inclusion”.
♦ Understand your role as an informed decision maker regarding your child’s future.
♦ Write a vision statement to guide your child’s meaningful inclusion.
♦ Explore steps to effective advocate for your vision with school personnel.

NOTE:
For onsite childcare, please register by phone 780-454-9910 before January 16th.
On workshop day, please bring children by 9:15, so the workshop can begin at 9:30.

“Read in Week” with the Honourable Heather Klimchuk!

Thank you to the Honourable Heather Klimchuk for reading to our playgroup children on Friday, October 5th. The children were mesmerized listening to Honourable Klimchuk read a few of her favorite children’s stories.

Following her time with the children, Honourable Klimchuk spent an informative session with our Parent 2 Parent group who shared their experience of parenting, community inclusion, and their hopes and dreams for their children.

Thank you Honourable Klimchuk for visiting the GRIT Program and for your genuine care and compassion.
GRIT Updates—Cont’d

“Our Children, Our Inspiration”

As the holiday season draws near we ask you to join us as we launch our 2nd annual fundraising campaign.

Thanks to strong families with a vision, dedicated and caring staff, along with financial support from community partners and friends we can continue inspiring inclusive futures!

$50 buys a visual picture schedule

$150 buys onsite child care for parent workshops

$300 buys an iPod Touch

$900 buys an adaptive chair

Make A Donation Today:

√ on our website  √ by phone    √ by payroll deduction/matching

√ by mail    √ in person at our office.

We accept Visa, MasterCard, Cash & Cheques.

Web site donors will receive their tax receipt immediately by email. *GRIT’s Charitable Tax Number 131527723 RR0001

Grit Mentors (2012-13)

Grit mentors are a group of Developmental Specialists who have been with GRIT for a minimum of five years.

√ The Mentors are a great resource and provide support to new Developmental specialists.

√ Mentors can assist in providing program ideas, board maker, and where to find supplies and the greatest toys.

√ Mentors take an active role at GRIT by assisting in the special events hosted by GRIT such as the staff Christmas party and various fund raising events.

√ This year the Mentors have chosen to support the United Way Coats for Kids and Families by collecting coats at the office from October 23rd to December 3rd.

**As of November 13, GRIT mentors have delivered 41 coats, 38 hats, 6 mittens, 6 scarfs and 1 pair of ear muffs to the Campaign! Last day for drop offs at the office is November 30th!**

2012-13 GRIT Mentors (left to right)

Front Row: Danielle Gauld, Laura Blakley, Karusha Rose

Back Row: Julie Steinke, Dianne MacDonald, Kendra Womacks, Rhonda Misanchuk, Maria Makowiecki
Never miss a golden opportunity! Special thanks to quick thinking staff members Julia Schole and Maggie Gibson, along with Board President Shyla Masse, for talking about our program to Premier Redford after bumping into her in the parking lot of the Edmonton Petroleum Club following our Annual General Meeting. Good job ladies!

This is Premier Redford’s Response!

Dear Ms. Reid:

It was a pleasure to meet you and your colleagues recently. Thank you for the copy of GRIT’s 2011–2012 Annual Report. On behalf of the Government of Alberta, please accept my sincere congratulations as Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (GRIT) celebrates 30 years of inspiring inclusive futures.

My government shares GRIT’s belief that social and educational inclusion enhances a child’s well being, development and prospects for life-long learning. Our hope is for every Albertan to have the opportunity to develop to their potential, supported by enduring relationships, healthy families and safe communities.

I commend you for the valuable, collaborative work you all do, especially using a strength-based perspective, which focuses on kids’ assets and talents. My government is proud to support inclusive communities, and the grant GRIT received through Culture’s Community Spirit Program is an investment in strengthening Alberta’s families and communities.

Again, congratulations on 30 years of serving the community, helping families, and helping to make equality of life and well-being possible for all children and families.

Yours truly,

Premier of Alberta

Parent P.O.W.E.R.
Play Opportunities Within Everyday Routines

Thursdays 9:30—11:00 am
February 7th to March 21st

Parent POWER is a six week play and learn group for you and your child. During this group, you will be guided through strategies you can use to enhance the quality of interactions you share and responses you experience with your child.

For more information, see enclosed brochure.

Parent 2 Parent
EVENING SESSIONS

We have had such a great turnout for Evening Parent 2 Parent and I am very excited about the upcoming year. Here is a list of the dates for the next sessions. If you are new to P2P and require childcare, please let Sherri know ahead of time to ensure we have enough staff.

December 12th   January 16th
February 13      March 13th
April 10th       May 8th

They all run from 6:30—8:00 pm
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!!!
DECEMBER STAFF LUNCHEON (in lieu of Community Learning Workshop series)

Tuesday, December 18, 2012

This year’s luncheon will take place on Tuesday, December 18 from 12:30 till 3:00 pm at the Edmonton Petroleum Club at 11110—108 Street. The luncheon provides an opportunity for team building and recognizes the contributions and work of our staff. Since the luncheon takes place in the afternoon, morning programs will progress as usual. The luncheon is paid by monthly contributions made by staff to the social fund. We look forward to seeing ALL staff. If for any reason you are NOT able to attend, please call 780-454-9910 by December 16 to ensure we have accurate numbers for the caterer.

Self Care Raffle

In the spirit of self care, GRIT is fortunate to have some amazing support in putting together a self care raffle package for our staff. Tickets are $5.00 each and can be purchased by seeing Heather at the office or at our luncheon. Watch for the basket to be on display in the prep room soon.

The winning ticket will be drawn at the staff luncheon at 2:30 pm on Tuesday, December 18th. You must be in attendance to win! Proceeds will help purchase an iPad for our children’s resource library. Don’t miss your chance for some self care pampering!

JANUARY WORKSHOP SERIES

**Check your workshop calendar for more information and registration.**

Tuesday, January 29—“Option”
Goal Setting (GRIT Staff only) (am)
Yoga for Young Children (pm)

Wednesday, January 30—“Core”
Now We’re Communicating (am)
Observation & Assessment (pm)

Upcoming Workshops:

**Saturday, January 26**
Visioning Workshop—Parents Only—GRIT office from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. This action packed Saturday is designed based on information from alumni families who tell us the importance of taking time to reflect on our values for our child’s inclusion and our readiness, as parents to advocate for our vision of See more information on Page 2.
GRIT Updates—Cont’d

Poor Weather Driving Policy
When road conditions are unsafe due to a travel advisory warning the child’s safety is always first. On these days, we encourage the child’s program to be carried out at home.

If the developmental specialist or consultant are unable to travel to the child’s home due to road and weather conditions, (i.e. rural, distance, highway travel, etc.) the developmental specialist should come to work at the GRIT Office.

Alternately, they may choose to take a day without pay.

Always inform the parent and the GRIT office of any absences, 780-454-9910 choose #1 for the health line.

Staff Health Line
As per the Guide to Programming, Page 17 if developmental specialists are unable to come to work for any reason it is your responsibility to:

1. Call the parent and determine whether the parent wants a substitute if one is available.
2. Leave a message on the GRIT Health Line (voice mail box #1) when absent from work for ANY reason. Include a confirmation of whether the parent wants a substitute for the day.
3. If a consultant is visiting on that program day, the DS must call and leave a message for the consultant(s) in their personal voice mailbox.

NOTE: Leave of Absence, New Procedures
Requests for personal leave of absences are strongly discouraged for all staff. We encourage you to plan time away during program breaks.

If an absence request is made, it must be submitted in writing using the new “Leave of Absence” form to the Human Resource Coordinator a minimum of 14 days in advance. All approved leave of absence is without pay. Staff do NOT discuss any request with the family until approval is given in writing by the agency.

After approval, the developmental specialist completes the following process:

♠ Discuss and share the written approval with the parent/guardian.
♠ Determine if the family would like the option of a substitute. If YES, the developmental specialist will contact Cheryl O’Connor, Resource Coordinator at ext. 217 a minimum of one week in advance.
♠ A resource Coordinator will follow up with the family.

The New Leave of Absence form can be found in

Kindergarten Christmas Concert
If the child you work with requires your assistance to participate in the Kindergarten Christmas concert outside of program hours, GRIT will pay up to 2 hours of additional time. Please include this information on your time sheet with an explanation in the comment section.
As December approaches, the winter fun begin! Introduce your child to the wonder of the season with a variety of activities!

Quick ideas:

* Have your child paint with old mittens. This is a great activity for children to be creative without getting their hands messy.

* If your child enjoys science here is a great winter experiment bring snow inside have the child put a mitten on one hand. Now have the child place snow in each of their hands. In which hand does the snow melt fastest. You can talk about warm and cold, little or a lot and fast and slow.

* If it is too cold too get outside why not bring the snow inside. Fill a container and make snowballs, bury objects in the snow or add some food coloring. Talk about how it feels, cold, fluffy or sticky. If your child doesn't like the cold feeling, try a snowy dough snowman.

**Mitten match**

Cut out several mittens in different sizes and colors out of construction paper. Then match the mittens with their pair. You can put numbers on the back side and then use them for number games. The different sizes are great for concepts such as big and little. You can also hide the mittens and work on directions such as over, under, on top and under.

**Scavenger Hunt**

On a warm winter day, go on a scavenger hunt. Hide a mug, package of hot chocolate, and cookies in different colored bags and hide them throughout the yard. Show your child a picture of each bag and encourage them to follow you. You could try moving different ways, such as hopping, skipping, or crawling. This is a fun way to also work on counting and color recognition. Once you have found all the bags, go inside for a warm yummy treat.

**Songs and Stories**

Snowflake Song (To the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Snowflakes, snowflakes all around
Gently falling to the ground
Snowflakes, snowflakes in the air
On my nose and in my hair
Snowflakes, snowflakes all around
Gently falling to the ground.

Two fun books to read are The Mitten Tree by Candace Christiansen and The Hat by Jan Brett.

Both are great stories that would be fun to be read with some props such as different colored mittens or the animals in the story.
Purpose

- This website provides parents and professionals with up to date information to help individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Highlights

- A series of online learning modules that includes information on assessment and identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Understanding and recognizing behaviors and characteristics
- Transition to adulthood and employment
- Evidence based practices and interventions

Why we like it

This website offers the opportunity to learn a wide variety of skills. It has been developed to be user friendly. It is an interactive program that teaches individuals how to use research based intervention for home and the classroom and how to apply it to everyday life. These modules can be accessed for free by signing up and creating your password. You can pick and choose modules that suit your learning.

Some of the available Modules are:

- Language and Communication
- Parent-Implemented Intervention
- Social Narratives
- Sensory Differences

December & January at a Glance

December 3
International Day of
Persons w/Disabilities

December 7
Parent 2 Parent (am & pm)
Playgroup (am & pm)

December 12
Parent 2 Parent (evening)

December 14
Parent 2 Parent (am & pm)
Playgroup (am & pm)

December 18
Staff Luncheon (pm)

December 24, 2012 —January 6, 2013
Christmas Recess

January 7
Programming resumes

January 11
Parent 2 Parent (am & pm)
Playgroup (am & pm)

January 16
Parent 2 Parent (evening)

January 18
Parent 2 Parent (am & pm)
Playgroup (am & pm)

January 25
Parent 2 Parent (am & pm)
Playgroup (am & pm)

January 26
Visioning Workshop

January 29
Workshop Series—Option

January 30
Workshop Series—Core
IMPORTANT INFORMATION on RDSP's, CANADIAN DISABILITY SAVINGS GRANTS AND BONDS


The RDSP is a long-term savings plan to help Canadians with disabilities and their families save for the future. The "beneficiary" of the RDSP is the person who will receive the money in the future. Anyone can contribute to an RDSP if they get the written permission of the RDSP holder (the person or organization that opens and manages the RDSP).

There is no annual contribution limit to the RDSP, but there is a lifetime contribution limit of $200,000. The deadline for contributions each year to an RDSP is December 31 of that year.

To help you save, the Government pays a matching grant of up to $3,500, depending on the amount contributed and your family income. The Government also pays a bond (see below) of up to $1,000 a year into the RDSPs of low-income and modest-income Canadians. Grants and bonds are paid until the year the beneficiary turns 49.

Earnings accumulate tax-free, until money is taken out of the RDSP. To encourage savings, grants and bonds must remain in the RDSP for at least 10 years. There is no impact on federal benefits, such as the Canada Child Tax Benefit, the Goods and Services Tax Credit, Old Age Security, and Employment Insurance.

To open an RDSP and apply for the grant and bond or to get further information, contact your participating Financial Institution. Many banks offer information sessions on the RDSP to give families further information.


The Canada Disability Savings Grant is a matching grant that the Government will deposit into your Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) to help you save. The Government provides matching grants of up to 300%, depending on the amount contributed and the Beneficiary's Family Income. The maximum grant is $3,500 each year, with a limit of $70,000 over your lifetime. Grants are paid into the RDSP until the year you turn 49 years old.

The following are banking institutions that can give you further information:

BMO Bank of Montreal. 1-800-665-7700
Bank of Nova Scotia. 1-877-929-4499
CIBC Securities Inc. 1-800-465-3863
The RBC Royal Bank. 1-800-463-3863
The TD Waterhouse Canada Inc. 1-866-280-2022

***Information throughout the year is also available through PLAN Edmonton—you can contact them at:

#103, 18304-105 Ave, Edmonton T5S 1R5, Tel: (780) 488-2422
If your family is in need of support over the Christmas holidays for toys or a Christmas hamper, please call 780-414-7695 after November 15 to refer yourself. An application for the Christmas Bureau will be taken over the telephone.
Parent Information and Learning Opportunities
Please remember that GRIT will reimburse parents for learning opportunities outside of GRIT.

Learn Together – Grow Together
Family Learning Program at
One World...One Centre

Free FAMILY fun and LITERACY program
For children 3 to 5 years old!
To register please call 780 638 6810  Genesis Early Learning Centre,
Edmonton Catholic Schools

Families will meet once a week for 10 sessions, have fun and learn new ways of using stories, rhymes, songs and books with your child.

Program Information:
10 Sessions
Tuesdays from 9:00 – 11:30 am
Block One: October 9 – December 11, 2012
Block Two: January 8 – March 19, 2013
Block Three: April 2 – June 4, 2013

One World ... One Centre, Mosaics, 12050 – 95A Street

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ARTHUR FLEISCHMANN
Co-author of CARLY’S VOICE: BREAKING THROUGH AUTISM
As a top ad man for nearly two decades, Arthur Fleischmann knows about communications and marketing. But he’ll be the first to tell you that for all his experience, his 17-year-old daughter Carly—who is severely autistic—knows more about, say, the power of social media to motivate people than anyone he’s ever met.

6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JANUARY 31ST - FEBRUARY 2ND, 2013

JOIN US FOR ANOTHER AMAZING OPPORTUNITY!

• LEARN FROM LEADERS AND SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD
• NETWORK WITH COLLEAGUES AND RECONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS
• RECHARGE YOUR CREATIVITY AND PASSION
• GAIN A FRESH PERSPECTIVE AND NEW SKILLS TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES
• CHECK OUT OUR VENDORS AND SHOP FOR NEW PRODUCTS AND GREAT DEALS
• ENJOY THE FABULOUS FOOD AND SERVICE AT THE MARRIOTT

CHECK OUT WWW.CHILDERNSAUTISM.CA OR CALL (780) 495-9235 FOR MORE INFO

Detailed session descriptions will soon be available online along with information on a number of Telehealth sites
The GRIT Program
14930 - 114 Avenue
Edmonton, AB

Phone: 780-454-9910
Fax: 780-455-1806
E-mail: gritprog@gritprogram.com
Website: www.gritprogram.com

The GRIT Program’s Mission Statement

To provide a family centered, 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.

Do you know how far your donations dollars to GRIT can go?

For example......If you donate $500 to GRIT, you receive a $200 tax credit. That means your $500 donation only costs you $300! And GRIT can take that $500 donation and have it matched by the Alberta Government (Culture & Community Spirit) to make $1000!!!! In other words we turn $300 into $1000!!

Please keep GRIT in mind for your 2012 tax donations by:

▸ designating GRIT as your charity of choice through United Way payroll deduction
▸ donating online at CanadaHelps.org* For more information, see our website at www.gritprogram.com
▸ monthly donating on your Visa or MasterCard
▸ GRIT Staff payroll deductions

For more information please call either Sue, ext. 202 or Heather, ext. 200.

All donations to GRIT support the children’s growth and learning, and enhancement of GRIT’s service to families. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Thank You

GRIT would like to thank everyone for their kind donations.