



The VOICE of Albertans with Disabilities

September 1, 2023

Welcome To Liam Connelly

VAD would like to welcome Liam Connelly as our Interim Executive Director.

Mr. Connelly, as Senior lawyer of Corpus Juris Group advises small business in the areas of Intellectual Property, Privacy Law, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) issues and Employment Law. He worked in conjunction with Connelly Consulting, on legal / policy aspects of records and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) issues, for the Edmonton Police Services and for Alberta Blue Cross. His current work also involves him into the realm of social justice issues dealing with the revolving door of those in the criminal justice system.



He was in house legal counsel to a non-profit startup that hopes to make a difference for those caught in that system. His

back ground involves being a Tribunal Chair for CPPD and has helped on a number of AISH Appeals.

He holds a B.A. Honours in Legal Studies from Carleton University, with a focus on Law, Economy and History. Liam went back to his family's roots in Scotland where he studied Scots, English and European Law. He undertook his Articles and was called as a Barrister and Solicitor to the Bar of Alberta in 1998. He returned to the UK to undertake his Masters in Intellectual Property where he was awarded First for his Dissertation on The Inter Jurisdictional Treatment of Trademarks and Domain Names. That year he was awarded the Moraio Atoke Memorial Prize. He resides in St. Albert, Alberta, is a member of the Knights of Columbus and St Albert Rotary.

Mr. Connelly joined Athabasca in the spring of 2005 and currently teaches as a Tutor in Communications, Legal Studies, and Jurisprudence, and as an Academic Expert in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations.

We look forward to working with Liam in our time of transition.

Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program

About the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program: Our program offers a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs with disabilities to access tailored resources, mentorship, and guidance. Through workshops, one-on-one mentor sessions, and networking events, participants gain the skills needed to realize their business dreams.

The Power of Partnership:

We are thrilled to share that this program is made possible through our partnership with the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program and Community Futures offices in Western Canada. This collaboration ensures that eligible individuals can participate completely free of charge—an embodiment of our collective commitment to breaking barriers and empowering entrepreneurs with disabilities.

How You Can Help:

Join us in spreading the word about this invaluable opportunity through:

- Extend our reach by sharing program details on your social media platforms. You can find posts about the program on our LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram feeds or, with the attached ready-to-share content and visuals to make it easy for you.





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- **Direct Outreach:** If you know of individuals who could benefit from this program, please share the information directly with them. Details and registration can be found at <https://www.dreambusiness.ca/edp/>. Your recommendation holds the power to be life-changing.
- **Inclusion in Communications:** If you have newsletters, blogs, or community bulletins, consider featuring an article about the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program. We can provide you with compelling content and success stories.

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

As we celebrate SCI Awareness Month, show your support for our community by raising awareness.



<https://sci-ab.ca/>

remains on one or both sides with an incomplete SCI and there is potential for improvement.

While an SCI is a life-altering diagnosis, rehabilitation, adaptive equipment, treatments and accessibility are improving all the time. Organizations around the country help those with SCI to access mobility equipment such as accessible vehicles, scooters, lifts, and wheelchairs. They also offer support through volunteers, social networking and more. Find the organization for you at Ability Center.

Making Dreams a Reality:

By championing this program, you contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Together, we can amplify the dreams of entrepreneurs with disabilities and pave the way for their success.

The application deadline is August 30th.

National Spinal Cord Injury Month

National Spinal Cord Injury Month (National SCI Awareness Month) in September honors the courage of those with spinal cord injuries and their families. The observance also aims to educate the general public regarding SCI and improve the support for those with SCI.

Those with SCI face obstacles most people rarely think about. Depending on the severity of the injury, someone with SCI may require:

- A wheelchair adaptive home.
- Outside support and assistance.
- Around-the-clock medical care.
- An adaptive vehicle, wheelchair lift, or ramps.
- Businesses that accommodate their mobility equipment.

The causes of SCI are often caused by accidents such as motor vehicle accidents, falls, and sports and recreational injuries. Other causes of SCI include acts of violence or surgical complications.

An SCI is either complete or incomplete. A complete SCI results in complete paralysis below the injury and is usually permanent. Alternatively, some function



Accessible Navigation to Employment Program



Scan for more information.

Become a Leader in Accessible Practices for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Canadians.

We are looking for employers ready to take the next step in providing inclusive and accessible work experiences for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HOH) community.

The unemployment rate for D/HOH Canadian adults is 32% higher than the national rate.

You can help us change this.

The Accessible Navigation to Employment program has been designed to build academic and practical skills for members of the D/HOH community and support job placements to bridge the gap between employers' labour needs and D/HOH participants' employment needs.

The Accessible Navigation to Employment Program provides the resources and tools you need to create the accessible workplace that you envision, at no cost to you.

Join us today.







The Accessible Navigation to Employment project is funded by the Government of Canada's Skills for Success Program.

Together, We Hold the Power!

Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity



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HOW TO OBSERVE #SCIAwarenessMonth

All through September, SCI Awareness Month offers opportunities to get involved.

- Donate – Donations support research, support organizations, and improved accessibility. Join or organize a fundraiser to show your support.
- Advocate – Support of those with SCI includes advocating on their behalf.
- Share – Take to social media and share information regarding fund-raisers, volunteer organizations, resources, or even your own story.
- Support – Spend time with loved ones with SCI. Listen and learn from their experiences and support their goals.
- Post your events and stories on social media using #SCIAwarenessMonth.

that comes to an end. Adjusting to the seasons of life with a disability can be a challenging transition, for not only those of us with a diagnosis, but for the whole family. So many of today's population take their health for granted, until a pivot in their life journey occurs. Although we can't go back in time as Michael J Fox from Back to the Future did, we can always choose to learn from the many bumps along the road.

Learning to cope with our disability challenges may impact our Mental Health, but it is always our choice to see our cup as half full vs half empty. Yet, when the rubber hits the road, you are still in control of your life and there are many ways to improve your independence, sense of empowerment, and outlook. No matter your disability, it CAN be possible to overcome the many hardships you face as you choose to enjoy a full and fulfilling life, one attainable step at a time.



Margot Brunner Memorial Link

Here is the link to Crossroads for Margot's Celebration of Life memorial. This link will allow you to watch the celebration of life from your home. The event will take place September 8, 2023 at 1 pm.

<https://www.crossroadschurch.ca/livefunerals>

While living with a disability isn't easy, it doesn't have to be a tragedy. Always remember you are not alone, many of us are further along the journey and have gained many tools and wisdom nuggets to share. At Voice of Albertans with Disabilities, we love to gather lessons learned and collaborate by sharing ways to not just survive but thrive. You Can, too.

It can be incredibly challenging to accept your disability. Please remember that refusing to accept the reality of your limitations keeps you stuck, preventing you from an attainable step forward. While grasping hold of new amazing opportunities to grow, make a choice to embrace your next life pivot. Trust that in time, your lows will become less intense, and you will begin to find your new normal, resetting your journey's path. Be patient with yourself, every small step forward counts. Eventually, you'll get there.



VAD President Message

I love this time

of year as I feel pulled in from the symbolic connection with nature. The rich profusion of colors and the abundance of harvest from the land in preparation for autumn all beckons me into a time of self-reflection. It reminds me of a quote from William Shakespeare, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Whether I am tending my garden or traveling down a road being lifted by the scenery of grain harvest or listening to the birds as they begin their journey south, I am always reminded to reflect on my life journey as the seasons change. This autumnal time I find full of many hidden blessings waiting for me to grasp while also preparing for winter. I have found that the cycles of nature offer many gifts of wisdom for me to reflect on. The cycle of our years can become annually enriched by the lessons of the fall, as students return to school and college, we reschedule our calendars with programs and activities ready for new beginnings and reflecting on the summer

Yes, having a disability does change your life in big ways. So, remember to reach out for encouragement, emotional support and resources from VAD to help smooth each step you take.

Community connection can truly reduce the impact your limitation challenges may have on your life. Staying connected to others makes an amazing difference in your mood and outlook. We are all companions along this journey, our lives are not without hardships, but let's work together to smooth out the bumps along our paths.

Choice is a powerful tool when pivoting from the Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANT's) that may arise. Challenge yourself to stamp out any dissatisfaction that might bubble up on blue days. Despite your best efforts sometimes our present



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50TH Anniversary



Join VAD for a afternoon celebration of our 50th anniversary. There will be food and refreshments as we gather with friends, allies, and neighbours for a joyous celebration. Please **RSVP** before September 15, 2023 to reserve your spot.

SEPTEMBER, 21, 2023
11:30 AM TO 2:30 PM

YOU ARE INVITED

WWW.VADSOCIETY.CA - 780-488-9088

challenges or the weight we feel being place upon us, may hold us back. But it doesn't have to, the action of choice is powerful. What if we choose to see through cheerful visions of the blessings that come from the gift of a new day or start of a new season. The value of our future potential can never be measured. Choosing to embrace the tiny kindling of our mental, physical, emotional and spiritual gifts may ignite within us motivational flames. Imagine your most powerful desires or life dreams that you may have kept secret your whole life or may have shared them, you may have achieved some, yet others may seem unreachable. Take permission now to begin your own quest over the year that lies ahead. Allow this year to be the beginning of your own new path, leading you ultimately forward with an open heart. With insight into your own experience, allow the wisdom of the days and seasons to inform and guide your own year of discovery. May there be peace upon your path!

Katrina

Invitation

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities would like to invite you to join VAD for an afternoon celebration of our 50th anniversary. There will be food and refreshments as we gather with friends, allies, and neighbours for a joyous celebration.

Please RSVP before September 15, 2023 to reserve your spot at 780-488-9088 or e-mail Teresa@vadsociety.ca to confirm attendance.

Event Details:

September 21, 2023

11:30 AM to 2:30 PM

406, 11010-101 street NW

Edmonton, Alberta T5H 4B9

We look forward to your participation in our special day.

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