



# member to member connection

Breaking through barriers for workers who have children with special needs

N° 46 Summer 2023

## *I am so happy to tell you my news:*

As some of you know, Jordan my son has cerebral palsy and is visually impaired. When Jordan was 13 years old, he had to have 8 surgeries in 1 day. Rehab was 85 days in Bloorview, Toronto. I took a leave without pay for 3 months to drive back and forth to be with Jordan while he recuperates, Brian my husband would come on weekends.

When Jordan got to high school, they told us that Jordan would only get a 14 credit certificate. In grades 9 & 10, the school put Jordan into 2 credit courses each semester (when he would have taken 2 other courses, the school filled his time with stretches and catch-up). After grade 10, Jordan said 'ENOUGH, I don't need stretches or catch up, I want a 32 credit diploma.' He has been in high school for 5 years (the 5<sup>th</sup> year he had to catch up to credits he missed out on in grades 9 & 10).

The Student Awards of Excellence have been established to recognize and honour students that demonstrate a strong commitment to academic excellence and the values and actions found in our Catholic Graduate Expectations. The student representative will show and demonstrate outstanding qualities outlined in the Ontario Catholic Graduate.

Expectations:

1. Discerning Believers
2. Effective Communicators
3. Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinkers
4. Self-Directed
5. Collaborative Contributors
6. Caring Family Members
7. Responsible Citizen

One student per year gets this award and that award goes to JORDAN! We couldn't be more proud! Such a go getter!

**Letter Carrier**  
**Burlington, ON**





"I could not be more happy to have such an amazing brother."



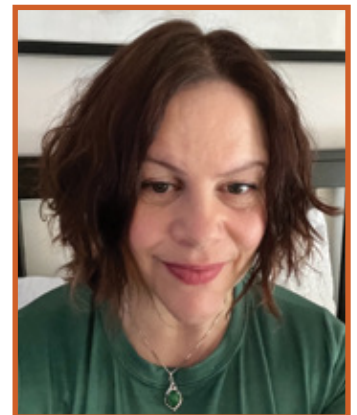
***Along with the season changes*** going into spring/summer, the *Special Needs* and *Moving On* projects have been making changes too.

First, Gail, who has been Project Coordinator for over 20 years, has retired. We all wish Gail a great retirement and hope she enjoys some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

Replacing Gail will be Dorothy, who has also been with the projects for many years. Brenda will now move into the Member Support Coordinator position. And last, but certainly not least, our newest member of the team is Benita, who will be taking over the Administrative Coordinator position replacing Brenda.

***I'd like to take this opportunity*** to introduce you to Benita Brett-Zubkavich the newest staff member to join our team. Benita replaced Brenda, on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, as our front-line person in the Administrative Coordinator position. She will likely be the first English voice members will hear when they call the office.

Benita has many years of experience working in administrative settings. These settings include for-profit, not-for-profit, post-secondary and legal fields. Benita achieved her MBA at Cape Breton University with an undergraduate degree (BA) in Human Services Management. Benita has deep roots in Nova Scotian heritage and has expressed how happy she is to contribute support to our members from her desk in our Baddeck office.



We are delighted to have Benita join our team and look forward to working together to support member's needs.

When my brother was 5, he was diagnosed with autism. I was only two so I didn't really know what that meant. But now I've learned lots about it and met some other kids with autism and similar stuff.

Luke is 13 now, and I am 10 and a half and I could not be more happy to have such an amazing brother. He really likes cherios, raffi and drawing letters. In fact he drew this. 😊 SJB!

**Postal Clerk  
Sherbrooke, NS**





## CUPW PROGRAM EVALUATION UP-DATE

The Report from the *CUPW Program Evaluation Up-date* is out! And we want to thank members for their valuable in-put through the "Member Check-in Interviews". Over 400 members with children in the *Special Needs Project*, and 140 members from the *Moving On Project* took part in the interviews. We know it was not an easy task, but your thoughtful contributions will help us to continue to build-on and improve the *Special Needs* and *Moving On* projects for members now, and in the future.

We partnered with Eviance (Canadian Centre on Disability Studies) to undertake this in-depth analysis of the responses you provided. Eviance is a not-for-profit, consumer-directed, and university-affiliated national organization dedicated to disability issues. It is guided by, and works out of the values of inclusion, equality, and accessibility.

The findings confirm that SNP and MO continue to make a positive difference in members lives. Members indicated the projects have contributed to a greater sense of well-being – for their children, themselves, and their family. Having said this however, members also said it has been more difficult to identify new supports and resources for their children. There was an increased sense of not feeling connected and being less hopeful that things

can change for the better – particularly when it comes to securing opportunities for their children to learn new things and make friends. This raised the question about whether COVID-19 played a role?

The report set out 12 recommendations for CUPW to consider. This included such things as,

continuing to promote and share information about the projects with members, locals and CUPW leadership. To consider increasing the amount for funding provided to members through the projects and a way to acknowledge and support exceptional needs.

A recommendation, I am sure will be well received by members, is to adopt simpler formats for gathering information from members by making interviews and reporting less intrusive. And finally, to find a way to bring members in the projects together

to talk about specific topics and to share valuable insights about work and issues related to their children's needs.

We will take the time needed to fully consider the findings and recommendations as we seek to improve upon the projects and ensure that they continue to meet the needs of members and their children.



Raffael is an energetic, funny and considerate boy. He loves drawing, especially hockey players. This year, he's practising to be a goaltender. He always wanted to become a goalie. He is good and very disciplined. Here is one of his drawings. Maybe he'll have the chance of seeing it here?

**Letter carrier**  
St-Lin, Laurentides, QC



## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

by Parker White. Taken from the Abilities Magazine issue 131/ Winter 2022.

Post-secondary education can be a thrilling experience full of new challenges, a chance to meet lots of new people, and it can foster great memories.

Whether young or old, first time going or returning—post secondary comes with a lot of excitement but also a lot of stress.

It's important to start on the right foot to get the help you need before you start. Here are five things that I wish I had realized and acted upon:

### Resources and supports available.

It can feel overwhelming entering a new school, or residence. Whether it's accessibility concerns, mental health needs, or other supports like social and financial, resources can feel out of reach and the way to ask for help somewhat confusing. Most schools now have a "resources" webpage that outlines the different supports offered with contact info. It is also worth checking to see if your school has an "advisor" or "peer mentor" that you can arrange to meet for advice. Even if you think you may not need these supports, it's



worthwhile to have them on standby so that you can easily access them in the future if the going gets tough.

Here are some common resources—keep in mind they might have slightly different names and programs/ supports depending on the school:

1. **Student Advisement** (can help with academic questions), Accessible Learning (facilitates equal access for eligible students with disabilities), Student Rights & Responsibilities (handles behavioural issues with students that are non-academic), Counselling & Health Services (to help with mental health and medical needs), Athletics, Tutoring, Career Services, Clubs, Leadership Programs, and more.
2. **Set Realistic Boundaries.** Focusing on classes, grades, assignments, clubs, social life, and planning for life after college can be an all-consuming battle for your time and energy. It's easy to get overwhelmed, so it's important to set realistic boundaries about what you can handle. This can look like making a schedule, carving out time to relax, spending time with friends and family or investing in hobbies to help relieve any stress. If you feel like you're becoming burnt out take a step back and re-evaluate your wellbeing, adjust your timelines and overall goals.
3. **Have Good Support Systems.** Lean on your outside support systems - your friends, mentors, and family. Whether it's help spell checking a paper, or having a night out to relax, those who know you well can be a help during stressful times. Attending a peer support group or mental health sessions from local organizations can be beneficial too.
4. **Know Program Coordinators and Professors.** Your program coordinator, and your professors are there to help you when you're struggling with assignments or course concepts or disability/ health related issues. Your program coordinator knows the ins and outs of your program, and can help you manage your class load, give tips for pacing yourself and transfer credits if possible.



### 5. **Living on Your Own & Living in Residence.**

Whether living in an apartment or student housing, living with a roommate or in residence can feel like a major step. Most buildings have basic accessibility features, but that doesn't always mean a space is completely accessible to everyone. Prior to moving in, ask to look around, or book a tour. Look up transit options beforehand, make a schedule and plan for getting groceries, doing laundry, and make connections around you. And above all make sure you budget for rent and living expenses.

Be kind to yourself, and to take it one day at a time. It won't always be a walk in the park, but you're not alone. There are, supports from both the school, and in your life that can help you through the rough patches as you work towards building your future career.

### *Chloe's OFSSA experience!*

In April, Chloe was doing her usual walk around the school and went into the gym. She stumbled on the Track and Field meeting, the Coach asked if she was there for the meeting! Without hesitation her EA said YES why not. After getting all the details about what was involved, 2 EA's in her class volunteered to stay after school, practise with her and attend the Track meets.

Much to our surprise Chloe LOVED all the extra attention and participating in a school event.

When it came time for the first Track meet, our entire family as well as her EA's & Teachers attended. We were all cheering for Super Chloe! 4 track meets later, Chloe qualified for OFSSA.

When the Coach asked us if we'd be interested in going, we said ABSOLUTELY!

We planned the trip to Toronto to watch Chloe compete. It was amazing to see all the runners as well as the athletes from the other divisions. Chloe was treated like a "track star" and was accommodated and supported by her 2 EA's the entire time.

When it came time for Chloe's BIG RUN, she was so happy to see all the participants, parents and volunteers cheering for HER, as she was waving and smiling to everyone along the way.

Now she didn't win the race, but she WON the love of the crowd!

As parents of special needs children, you never think that you will be sitting in the stands with thousands of other parents cheering on your child. It was so emotional for both of us that our Chloe had gotten this far and crossed that finish line!

**Letter Carrier  
Windsor, ON**





## ***Electronic deposit security***

*From: Financial Consumer Agency of Canada*

Make sure you are using an official app from your financial institution to deposit a cheque electronically. By doing so, your financial information will not be stored on your mobile device.

When you use your financial institution's official app, all financial information is securely encrypted. Your personal information is turned into an unreadable code as it is sent to your financial institution electronically. Your financial institution uses special information, such as a password, to de-code the information and deposit your cheque securely.

Avoid using public or free Wi-Fi connections when making an electronic deposit or any other financial transactions.

### **FRAUD RISKS**

There are two types of fraud that could occur with electronic cheque deposit: double presentment and identity fraud.

#### ***CADDAC – Canada's Advocate for ADHD***

Has your child been diagnosed with ADHD? CADDAC, the Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada is a national not-for-profit organization that seeks to promote a better understanding of ADHD and improve the lives of Canadians affected by ADHD.

Through their website you can find information about ADHD, sign up for parenting courses, webinars and newsletters, get assistance from a Resource Navigator, and join support groups for both adults with ADHD and for parents of children with ADHD across Canada.

For more information on how CADDAC can be a resource for you, visit <https://caddac.ca/>.

You can also call 1-800-807-0090 or email [info@CADDAC.ca](mailto:info@CADDAC.ca) for assistance in finding resources.

### **Double presentment**

Double presentment is when the same cheque is deposited twice.

### **Depositing a cheque**

Make sure to only deposit a cheque once, either in person or electronically. If you mistakenly deposit a cheque more than once, contact your financial institution immediately.

After completing your deposit, mark the front of the cheque so that you know it has been deposited.

Purposefully depositing the same cheque more than once is considered fraud. Fraud is a serious criminal offence that is punishable by a prison sentence.

### **Identity fraud**

Identity fraud is when someone steals your personal information and uses it to their advantage, like to access your bank account.

Because electronic cheque deposit requires you to log in to your financial institution's app, you could be at risk of identity fraud:

- if you haven't protected your mobile device with a password and it falls into the wrong hands
- if you use public or free Wi-Fi connections when making an electronic cheque deposit

Using public and free Wi-Fi connections can expose the personal information you store on your mobile device to fraudsters, especially if you are logged in to your financial institution's app.

Protect your personal information when using electronic cheque deposit by:

- using passwords to protect your device using a private and secure internet connection.
- logging out from your financial institution's app when you are finished.



## DO YOU NEED HELP FINDING RESOURCES FOR YOUR CHILD?

As a member of the *Special Needs and Moving On* Projects you have access to the SNP/MO Support Navigator whose role is to help you find the resources and supports you need.

We know it can be overwhelming to manage all the aspects of modern life while working and raising a family; trying to find help for a child with special needs adds yet another layer of complexity. After all, there are only so many hours in a day! We would like to help and that is how the role of the Support Navigator and the development of the Disability Supports project came into being.

Our Support Navigator, Isabelle Tanner, is based in the small, beautiful but world-renowned tourist town of Baddeck at Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia but she can assist members across the country, in both English and French. If you are looking for information on disability supports and services for your child, Isabelle can help you with this.

To date, some of the resources that Isabelle has been able to provide for members includes autism and ADHD/LD resources, speech therapists, behavioural therapists, tutoring agencies, recreational activities and day/summer camps, activities for families, and respite for parents.

The *Special Needs and Moving On* Project's bilingual Support Navigator, Isabelle Tanner, is available 3 days a week to provide support. In general, that will be on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9am-5pm AST and on Fridays from 9am-4pm AST. Isabelle can be reached by phone at 902-295-1645 or by email at [supportnavigator@specialneedsproject.ca](mailto:supportnavigator@specialneedsproject.ca).

Another resource to help you find services and supports is the CUPW/UPCE-PSAC Disability Supports website portal (<https://www.disability-supports.ca>) which works in conjunction with 211.ca.

***Ready, Willing and Able*** (RWA) is a national employment program jointly sponsored by Inclusion Canada and the Autism Alliance of Canada, and their member organizations. This partnership receives funding from the Government of Canada to help connect job seekers with an intellectual disability or on the autism spectrum with businesses who seek to have an inclusive workplace.

RWA is designed to increase the labour force participation of people with an intellectual disability or on the autism spectrum. The project does this by sharing job opportunities from businesses who are looking to hire inclusively with employment agency partners in 30 communities across Canada. These agencies may also assist in providing post-secondary and/or employment training, help connect job seekers with competitive employment opportunities and provide additional supports or accommodations that may be necessary for the job.

RWA provides the employer with knowledge about the benefits of inclusive hiring, hiring support, coordinated access to qualified candidates who have an intellectual disability or ASD and on-the-job supports for both employer and employees hired via RWA.

RWA is active in 30 communities across the country:

**Newfoundland and Labrador** – St. John's  
Metropolitan area  
**Prince Edward Island** – Queens County region  
**Nova Scotia** – Halifax and Dartmouth  
**New Brunswick** – Fredericton and Saint John  
**Quebec** – Montreal  
**Ontario** – City of Toronto, Greater Toronto Area and Mississauga  
**Manitoba** – Winnipeg  
**Saskatchewan** – Saskatoon and Regina  
**Alberta** – Calgary and Edmonton  
**British Columbia** – City of Vancouver, Metro Vancouver Regional District, Kelowna, Vancouver Island  
**Yukon** – Whitehorse  
**Northwest Territories** – Yellowknife  
**Nunavut** – Iqaluit

For more information, check out the Ready, Willing and Able website: <https://readywillingable.ca/about/>



"We have a boy who can never get enough physical activity."

### **Guillaume, my very active little man,**

goes to school because of his friends. We quickly realized that he had some trouble learning and staying focused in class, so we had to get him evaluated. Of course, it was ADHD, but not just a little; we don't do things by half in our family. Severe ADHD, severe impulsivity, and opposition. We have a boy who can never get enough physical activity, and even though he is being tutored four times a week, he is in a special class where he can learn at his own pace. The program helps our family through financial relief, every season, when I get funds from CUPW. The *Special Needs Program* understood I needed a little more to provide for my kids, who also have dyslexia/dysorthographia.

My boy is 13 years old now and is showing great tenacity with the help of his teachers and tutors. Without his participation to this program, it would have been harder for him.

Thank you for your help.

**Postal Clerk**  
**Les Cèdres, Qc**



### **Digital Newsletters**

If you want to read or share a digital version of the newsletter you can find it at the address below. To view past copies of the newsletter click the "Downloads" button on the top right corner of the page. Enjoy!  
<https://membertomemberconnections.com>

### **Member-to-Member Connection**

is the newsletter of the *Special Needs and Moving On Projects*. It is produced by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Union of Postal Communications Employees-Public Service Alliance of Canada.

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Phone: **1.800.840.5465**

Fax: **1.902.295.2296**

E-mail: **info@specialneedsproject.ca**

Website: **www.specialneedsproject.ca**

Please send letters by e-mail or to:

**PO Box 237, 65 High Street**  
**Baddeck, NS B0E 1B0**



**CUPW-SCFP 1979**