

February 2018



# NEWS

The AIM Program is a Saskatchewan-based non-profit organization that provides innovative services for individuals 0 to 21 years old with Down syndrome and their families.

## Greetings from the AIM Team,

We are celebrating the beginning of our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of programming. Our doors opened on January 5, 2015, with 40 families and 3 years later we now have 91 families signed up.

We are excited to announce Global TV and Corus have partnered with us in raising awareness about the AIM Program across Saskatchewan. Stay tune for promotional pieces being aired on Global TV and Shaw US Avails.

We are thrilled to have continuous government support. We hosted Minister Eyre and Minister Merriman who met and observed the Social Skill Builders in action and had an opportunity to meet parents on January 17, 2018. We are hosting an MLA reception. Details below. If you are interested in attending, contact us.

A tremendous amount of work by the AIM Team, Board, Family Advisory Committee, volunteers, supporters, donors and community members has been accomplished this past year. Without everyone's passion and commitment we could not offer the innovative services needed to support children and young adults to reach their unique potential. Throughout the newsletter are highlights of programming being offered and upcoming events.

Your feedback is important to us. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions and suggestions or set up a time to come visit our space at [tammy.ives@aimprogram.ca](mailto:tammy.ives@aimprogram.ca) or 306-381-6243 ext.2.

Together we are making a difference! We look forward to seeing you in 2018.

Tammy Ives, Executive Director

We continue to develop and grow a dynamic committed team, with a variety of expertise and skill set. Our team started with 4 and now we are 11.

**Top:** Jayce Sutherland (Teacher and Learning Assistant), Leanne Hoefl (Music Therapist), Yvonne Mckenzie (Learning Assistant), Abby Holubetz (Administrative Coordinator),

**Bottom:** Tammy Ives (Executive Director), Sarah Comeau (Senior Speech Language Pathologist), Lanette Grimm (Senior Learning Assistant), Michaela Olson (Student Music Therapist), Jennifer Lucyk (Support Worker), Deborah Cook (Literacy and Inclusion Specialist)



## Highlights and updates of Programming:

40 parents responded to a survey conducted in November 2017. 95% agreed or strongly agreed that AIM programming has impacted changes in their child related to one or more of the following: expressive language, social, receptive language skills, confidence, engagement and participation in activities, fine motor skills, reading skills.

**The Speech Language Pathologists have met and worked with 80 learners either individually or in small or large groups.**

*"I learned so much from actually watching Sara interact with our student. It gave me so many good ideas to try to implement in the classroom."*  
- Classroom Teacher

**The Literacy and Inclusion Specialist leads the Everyone a Reader program with the support of our Teacher/Learning Assistant. They presently provide individual reading instruction for 23 learners of varying ages. With additional funds we hope to expand this program.**

*"Thank you, Deb for believing in Megan's continued learning and mentoring her. You gave me the confidence and courage to follow through with Megan's interests. Because you wouldn't take no for an answer Megan has been successful in obtaining her babysitting, WHMIS, and food safe certificates. Megan is studying for her First Aid which will be taken in March."*  
- With gratitude, Shelley (parent)

**Our register Occupational Therapist (OT) is a new Addition to our team. The primary focus of the OT is early intervention like the Bridge program for ages 2 ½ to 6. Our therapist sees older learners on a consult basis and increased funding would provide more opportunity for all age groups to access OT services.**

*"The School Readiness Program for my son was so very helpful. Meghan was able to provide practical strategies around handwriting and cutting that we could use at home. When he started school his teacher and EAs saw a big difference regarding his focus and skill in printing. Thank you!"*  
- Parent

### Early Learning Programming

Thank you to the Community Initiative Foundation, Saskatoon Community Foundation, and Government for their funding support which allows us to provide intensive programming for children with Down syndrome between ages 0-6.

### The Discovery Program

A big thank you to everyone who shared our FB post to let families know about our Discovery Group. We grew from 2 to 8 babies involved! The Discovery Group is the first experience families have at AIM. The goal of the program is to introduce parents and caregivers to techniques that will aid in their child's development of speech, language, sensory processing, social skills, and motor skills.

*"Our son really seems to thrive at AIM and connects with everyone involved in the program. IT is really valuable having programming and services (as well as expectations) tailored to children with Down syndrome."*  
- Parent



Highlights and updates continued...

### The Bridge Program

The Bridge Program's 2017/2018 class began this fall at capacity with 13 learners ages 2 ½ to 6. The class is made up of 10 children with Down syndrome and 3 peers without Down syndrome. The program runs Tuesday and Thursday mornings. It is lead by the Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist and Music Therapist along with the support of 3 learning assistants.

100% of parents stated in the survey that they noticed and felt AIM had an impact on improvement in their child's skills since the beginning of the Bridge Program.

### Social Skill Builders

The Social Skill Builders Group began in the fall of 2017 with 8 middle aged learners. This unique group provides learners with an opportunity to practice speech, language, and social goals in a motivating social environment. Social Skill Builders meet once a week and is lead by the Speech Language Pathologist along with a learning assistant.



### Community Connections Club

The AIM program recently began offering the Community Connections Club, this group has a focus on helping teens and young adults develop independent living skills, such as; grocery shopping, meal planning, laundry, budgeting, taking public transit, etc. The Community Connections Club meets three times a month. Each month includes instruction on a new skill and a chance to practice this skill in the community. Currently this group has 4 learners enrolled and is lead by our Occupational Therapist with our Speech and Language Pathologist joining once a month.

*"I hope you can appreciate how much you are improving life for these kids! You are opening a lot of doors for them! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! May God bless you and your family!"*

- Parent

### Intensive Summer Programming

28 children ages 2 ½ - 13 with Down syndrome attended AIM's intensive summer program in July of 2017. The children attended every day for 1 week for 2 hours. It was lead by our Speech Language Pathologist, Literacy and Inclusion Specialist, Occupational Therapist, and Music Therapist with additional support from two learning assistants.

Survey results stated that 100% of the families that participated would access summer programming again. 95% of the families rated the effectiveness of this program in meeting the needs of their child either a 4 or 5 (out of 5).

### Social Media

We are always trying to increase our presence throughout the province and have increased our activity on Facebook. We encourage people to "like" our page and stay up to date with events surrounding the AIM Program. Please feel free to leave us a review on Facebook, share posts and tag families you may know that could benefit from our innovative services.

### Website

Our website is also getting a major overhaul, thanks to the generous support of **Stealth Media!** Watch our Facebook page for the link.

## THANK YOU!

AIM's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop was held on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Regina and Saskatoon. Thank you, **SaskTel** for sponsoring this event for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row.

AIM's **Family Advisory Committee** worked hard to plan various events to bring our families together. These events included the Fun day in the Park in Warman in August and the Annual Holiday Party which was held at the Francis Morrison Library in December. Thank you, Family Advisory Committee, for all you do!

We also want to thank the **volunteers** for taking time out of their schedules to help us out! If you are interested in volunteering at the AIM Program or would like to sit on the Board of Directors or the Family Advisory Committee, please contact Tammy, [tammy.ives@aimprogram.ca](mailto:tammy.ives@aimprogram.ca)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ➤ March 12, 2018 – MLA RECEPTION

You are cordially invited to celebrate making a difference with interactive dialogue and appetizers!

Monday, March 12, 2018  
5:00pm – 7:00pm

Regina, The Saskatchewan Legislature,  
Room 218

### ➤ March 21, 2018 – WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY CELEBEATION

Enjoy us for fun activities, cake and refreshments as we celebrate World Down Syndrome Day! Don't forget to rock your socks!

Wednesday March 21, 2018  
3:00pm – 5:00pm

Saskatoon, The AIM Office  
3314 Millar Avenue

### ➤ March 24, 2018 – Dine for a Difference

AIM's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Fundraiser! Join us for a night of Food, Live Music, Parent Panel, Live/Silent Auctions, Photo Booth, Raffles and more! Tickets for this event are available at the AIM office or through our website

[www.aimprogram.ca](http://www.aimprogram.ca) single tickets are \$75 or purchase a table of 8 for \$525.

Saturday March 24, 2018  
Cocktail hour begins at 6pm

Saskatoon, The Western Development  
Museum

AIM's Family Advisory Committee is collecting live and silent auction items. If you would like to donate an item or help us with connecting with sponsors/businesses, please contact us and we will provide you with a "letter of request".

Please RSVP to these events by contacting us at (306)381-6246 ext.1 or email [admin@aimprogram.ca](mailto:admin@aimprogram.ca)