



inclusion

WINNIPEG

For People with Intellectual Disabilities

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A PATH FORWARD FOR THE SACHVIES



The Sachvie family, left to right: Matthew (and Rose), Sheila, Dave, Mark, and Laura. Parents Sheila and Dave say: "Our goal is to continue to raise awareness in our community of the support that Inclusion offers to advocate for our children's future"

After years of helping out with Inclusion Winnipeg's Fall For Fashion, the Sachvie family found they were the ones who could benefit directly from Inclusion – building a PATH forward for their youngest son.

The Sachvie family's history with Inclusion stretches back more than 15 years when Dave first asked his employer – Deloitte – to become a *Fall For Fashion* sponsor. Sheila began volunteering on *Fall For Fashion*'s coordinating committee, eventually serving as chairperson for five years before transitioning her role in 2022.

Seventeen year-old Mark, the youngest of their three children, lives with an intellectual disability, so when it came time to start planning for Mark's life after high school it was only natural the family would turn to Inclusion.

A conversation with Youth Inclusion Facilitator Megan Scott earlier

this year led Sheila to attend an Inclusion workshop on a person-centred planning process called *Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope* (PATH). It was, she says, very encouraging.

PATH is a facilitated process that gathers a person's friends and supporters together to make an action plan for the future. Highly collaborative and creative, it starts with the person declaring a desired outcome – called the North Star – and then everyone works together to identify the steps and supports needed to achieve it.

Each step is recorded on a large sheet of paper, resulting in a colourfully visual map.

By the end of the PATH session the person has communicated where they want to go, and what and who they need to support their journey.

Mark had his own PATH session with Inclusion a few weeks after the workshop, bringing together his family members, some of his school

teachers, and Megan as the trained facilitator.

At first, says Mark: "I was thinking, like, why am I doing this?" But Megan got the group talking about things he liked to do and the strengths they'd noticed in him, and soon Mark was listing some favourite activities and offering his short-term goals to be recorded.



In the end, Sheila says, the session was wholly uplifting: "It was such a positive experience for Mark and our family and so heart-warming to see the tremendous support circle that Mark has to help him plan for his future!"

Like many young people his age Mark isn't ready yet to declare a long-term employment goal. Connecting more with friends, joining in more school activities – maybe even getting one of his top picks for a job working part-time in a movie theatre: these goals are now prominently visible on his current PATH.

He's already checked a couple off, and his family and supporters have a workable action plan for supporting Mark that will be updated as his interests and goals evolve.

Mark's parents both believe having a PATH is an extraordinary asset.

"We just want for Mark what we want for all of our kids," says Dave. "To be happy and fulfilled and have that sense of connection and belonging. So, for us, having this kind of opportunity to prepare for early adulthood is absolutely critical."

A BLUEPRINT FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



Minister of Education & Early Childhood Learning Wayne Ewasko

If you're a parent, the report to Education Minister Wayne Ewasko from his Advisory Council on Inclusive Education – On the Path to Inclusion in K to 12 Education System: Supporting Our Diverse Learners in Achieving Their Full Potential – is well worth a read.

When the province released its update to their K to 12 Education Action Plan earlier this year, sharp-eyed readers might have seen the

word ‘inclusion’ referenced only briefly. That’s unfortunate, because buried within the revised action plan is a report containing some smart, workable suggestions for ramping up inclusion in our education system.

Submitted by the Minister’s Advisory Council on Inclusive Education, its 15 members were hand-picked from educational organizations and social and mental health service agencies.

Asked to advise on and make recommendations for advancing inclusive education in Manitoba, the group met repeatedly for more than a year before hammering out a final report that identifies seven areas for focus (see sidebar), along with 24 recommendations for action.

The recommendations are aimed at focusing Manitoba’s education system on: strengthening the concept of students’ ability or presumed competence, continuously improving student outcomes, ensuring equity, and promoting greater well-being and inclusion.

Successful implementation, they stress, will require extensive collaboration – not just with educators and other professionals – but “... with all those involved and impacted, including students, parents and families with lived experience.”

Janet Forbes, Inclusion Winnipeg’s Executive Director and Advisory Council member, says the whole process was an eye-opener. “What struck me all the way through was that nobody around the table was debating whether inclusive classrooms were the right thing or not,” says Forbes.



“And it was broader than just inclusion for students with intellectual disabilities,” she adds. “It was *any* student who needed some additional supports.”

The province says the next step is to begin working with the Student Services Inclusive Education Committee to develop an implementation plan to respond to the Council’s recommendations.

Read the full report by visiting https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/action_plan/docs/minister_advisory_report.pdf

THE SEVEN FOCUS AREAS:

- 1. Inclusion as a Shared Value
- 2. Professional Learning Needs of Educators to Develop Inclusive Mindsets and Practices
- 3. Enhanced Classroom-Level Supports that are Inclusive in Nature
- 4. Supports for Student-Specific Needs and Planning
- 5. Classroom-Based Formal Assessment and Screeners
- 6. Clinical Services to Support Student-Specific Needs and Planning
- 7. Working Together: Moving Forward on the Path to Inclusion

WE’VE COME A LONG WAY

Prior to 1958, school-age young people with different needs were not allowed to attend school or receive an education in Manitoba. That’s despite the fact that the Public Education Act stated that ev-

ery person between the ages of 6 and 21 should have the right to attend school.

That same Act, though, also stated that if the Board of Trustees of a school di-

vision believed that a person attending in their school district had “a mental deficiency,” they could stop them from coming to school.

ANNUAL SUMMER GET-TOGETHER PHOTOS



Families, friends and community members gathered together for a great evening at St. Vital Park last July for our annual summer get-together. A special thank you to Tall Grass Prairie and Pita Pit for generously providing food for this event!

OUR 65TH ANNIVERSARY IS COMING UP!

Even we find it hard to believe that December, 2023 will mark our 65th year of supporting people living with intellectual disabilities in our community.

We’re already planning ways to celebrate this momentous year with you all!

Look for updates and announcements on our website and on social media.

KIANA'S GETTING MORE PREDICTABLE

And that's a good thing

Kiana loved her job at Ikea Winnipeg but staying organized and focused on her workplace tasks was a constant struggle. Luckily, her supervisor discovered there's an app for that.

Kiana Scott, 25, can't say enough good things about Routine Factory, the organizational support software that's changed her life for the better in so many ways.

She lives with autism, and for nearly two years her supervisor at Ikea had been wracking her brain for ways to help Kiana better understand her daily duties and stay focused on them until completed. Then one day in 2020, she called Kiana over to her computer to look at a piece of software called Routine Factory.

It was specifically designed for people with intellectual disabilities looking for more structure and predictability in their lives. Especially appealing to Kiana were the clear, visual daily and weekly schedules, along with reminders, digital assistants – even a feature for signaling her emotions.

"I connected with it right away," she explains, "because it's very visual and I'm a visual learner." And the more Kiana scrolled, the more excited she became.

The pair quickly got in touch with Inclusion Winnipeg's Aron Jenkins, the program coordinator who's heading up a project called Remote Job Coach, funded by Canadian Association for Supported Employment. Aron's been researching, supporting and promoting technological supports across Canada for people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace, and he's a big fan of the workplace-focused coaching software called Routine Factory.

Soon, Aron had set up a customized coaching/scheduling framework for Kiana that included workplace and home routines, tasks and goals: all accessible through her phone or home computer.

In joint consultation between Kiana, her mother, her supervisor, and Aron, each item added was custom-tailored to Kiana's personal need for information and learning – whether in text form, photographs, video... or all three.

"So anything I needed to do, at home or at work, we could take a picture of that or we would do a video and then I would know what to do and how I was supposed to do it," she explains.

Not surprisingly, setting up such a customized and detail-rich tool has been time-consuming for all invol-



At work, at home and at school, Kiana Scott says Routine Factory has been transformational.

"Then I would know what to do and how I was supposed to do it."

Already a presence on Tiktok, with thousands of views on her autism-themed videos, Kiana aims to become a digital media journalist. She's taking broadcasting & media communications courses at a local college: meaning, of course, all of her many school activities and related events have also been entered into the software.

ved, but Kiana says the results have been well worth it. Her workdays go more smoothly and her chores at home have been getting completed more predictably – and, she laughs, with less drama. She's even found the time and confidence to go back to school.

She beams at the thought of all of the people supporting this hugely positive change in her life, and says she's particularly grateful for her supervisor at Ikea: "She's one of those amazing people who never gave up on me."

THERE'S A NEW ROUTINE IN THE WORKPLACE



Aron Jenkins, Project Manager, Canadian Association for Supportive Employment

Inclusion's Aron Jenkins is spreading the word about a software that can coach people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace, at home, and in school.

When COVID-19 hit, hastily-created social distancing requirements meant there simply wasn't room for 'extra' people in a workplace.

"Employers weren't as eager to allow job coaches in their workplaces," explains Inclusion Winnipeg's Aron Jenkins. "So we had to find a way to support individuals with intellectual disabilities from a distance."

Amazingly, at the time, Jenkins was leading a project called Remote Job Coach that involved researching software packages for their ability to support workers with intellectual disabilities in the workplace. After testing a number of different softwares for ease-of-use, cost and support options, he favorited an app called Routine Factory.

It had been developed years earlier by Ger Apeldoorn, a father in the Netherlands whose three sons all live with autism. Seeing their daily frustrations and anxiety when trying to focus on a complex task or stick to a schedule, he set about creating a highly visual and easy-to-use software application that would add more structure and predictability to their day.

It uses photos, colors and detailed text-to-speech instructions to make a day's schedule more accessible. Complex tasks are broken down step-by-step into visual instructions, and everything can be completely personalized for the individual.

Overall, the app offers users predictability: constantly showing them what was scheduled to happen at any one time and what was supposed to happen next. As others began hearing about the software it would eventually migrate, along with the people it supported, into schools and workplaces.

For now, each user's schedules are largely built by Jenkins, with users and their family members and supporters also contributing. It's a heavy workload, but so successful has the project been that the Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) is funding Jenkins to take the remote job coaching app to employer groups, educators and parent groups across Canada.

"It's got so many benefits," says Jenkins. "It really helps build confidence, independence, better time management, and reduces stress and anxiety."

And, he adds: "The other side of it is that, once it's set up, it's also a huge time-saver for the job coach or support person."



READY, WILLING & ABLE AT ST. CHARLES

People with an intellectual disability or on the autism spectrum only have a 20% employment rate in Canada: one in five. A federally-funded employment program called Ready, Willing and Able – and Inclusion Winnipeg – aims to improve those numbers.

Cory Kartusch, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Winnipeg’s St. Charles Country Club doesn’t mince words when talking about the Ready, Willing & Able employment program: “It’s really pretty simple,” says Kartusch. “Organizations need staff and Ready, Willing, and Able is there to help you.”



The congenial COO speaks from experience; St. Charles added two new seasonal employees to their 160-member staff this summer through RWA, and he says Inclusion Winnipeg’s Labour Market Coordinator, Sergio Sousa, made sure the experience was nothing but positive.

“Our first connection there was with Sergio,” Kartusch remembers. “He was fantastic: he just walked us through how RWA works and what the process was for hiring and what to expect.”

A national initiative that’s active in 30 communities across Canada, RWA is designed to increase the labour force participation of people with an intellectual disability or on the autism spectrum.

Inclusion has been leading the initiative in this city since 2017, and Executive Director Janet Forbes says the project has a unique strategy. “The goal,” she explains, “is to connect candidates with the ‘regular’ jobs; the jobs that anybody would be applying for.”

Instead of asking employers to create a new job category or customize an existing one, a project-funded Labour Market Facilitator contacts employers to discuss the unique abilities of people in this untapped talent pool, rather than their disabilities.

Employers with job openings who agree to consider hiring someone with an intellectual disability or ASD are asked for the job description, which the facilitator then fans out to supported employment agencies across Winnipeg to be matched with suitably-skilled clients.

Funding for the initiative was renewed last November. Since then, Inclusion’s coordinator has found employment for 25 more Winnipeggers with an intellectual disability or on the autism spectrum, and shared over 200 new jobs from existing partners and new employers.

St. Charles has a long history of supporting Inclusion Winnipeg, including annually hosting the fundraising St. Charles Vipond Classic golf tournament.



COO Cory Kartusch credits the entire employee team for making the RWA program such a great experience at St. Charles.

It was actually Vipond Classic committee-member Jon Kilfoyle who first suggested getting involved with the RWA program, then the whole committee plus the management team – and then the entire staff – also got on board.

“In this day and age, finding new employees is sometimes challenging, and Ready, Willing, and Able was another avenue for finding a couple of employees that we needed,” says Kartusch.



The many compassionate members of the St. Charles Country Club raised an astounding \$125,000 for Winnipeggers with intellectual disabilities through their Annual St. Charles Vipond Classic golf tournament this past June. Winning team members shown here celebrating their win at the 19th hole are, from left to right: Richard Wowryk, Travis Muhr, Riley Moskal & Adam Terwin. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated!