



# Alberta Ability Network Human Rights Table

## Date/Time:

April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 - 1:00 PM – 3:00PM

## Location: Zoom

**Chairs:** Mezaun Lakha-Evin, Sean Crump

### In Attendance:

Alison Stutz Deaf & Hear Alberta  
 Benjamin Bruce (Centre for Sexuality)  
 Cal Schuler (Calgary Alternative Support Service)  
 Cam Stewart Alberta Human Rights Commission  
 Dan Pederson (Community Advocate)  
 Deborah Abiola Alberta Human Rights Commission  
 Dom Shaw Premier's Council on the Status of People with Disability  
 Gilary Guzman  
 Haley Weiss (Selections Career Support Services)  
 Katherine Such (Easter Seals AB)  
 Katie Dodd (Children's Link)  
 Keri McEachern (Self-Advocacy Federation)

Margot Brunner (Voices of Albertans with Disabilities)  
 Mezaun Lakha-Evin (Alberta Ability Network)  
 Meri Topchieva (Alberta Ability Network)  
 Omofola ILRCC  
 Phillip Ney Inclusion Alberta  
 Sam Mason (Voices of Albertans with Disabilities)  
 Stella Varvis (Alberta Law Reform Counsel)  
 Teneille Bradley Accessible Housing  
 Tessa Turner (Action Coalition of Human Trafficking Alberta)  
 Tony Flores (Community Advocate)  
 Tyler Cooley  
 Valeria Palladino (Edmonton Epilepsy Association)

## Meeting Minutes

Welcome  
 Land Acknowledgement  
 Breakout Rooms  
 Meeting considerations  
 Review of last month's meeting minutes

### **Spotlight Series:**

#### **Champions of Inclusion Award- Cam Stewart**

- Cam played an instrumental role in the development of the Indigenous Engagement Strategy for Rotary International with the aim of expanding their services to a more diverse group.
- Over the last two years, Rotary International has proactively fostered relationships with all indigenous groups in the surrounding area of Calgary by organizing meetings and creating a community of practice.
- Presently, there are approximately 11 Rotary clubs in Calgary, and one is planned for each jurisdiction in the near future.
- The award ceremony, where Cam was recognized, was held in Cape Town, South Africa, where five other individuals from around the world were also celebrated for their contributions towards addressing exclusion.
- One of the awardees had worked towards reducing discrimination and violence against transgender people in India, addressing their human rights violations.

## Topics of Discussion:

### **Barrier Free Alberta Subcommittee update**

- BFA is actively targeting all candidates running for the Provincial election parties, and encouraging them to include accessibility legislation in their platforms.
- To raise awareness about the campaign, BFA has sent emails to all Chambers of Commerce throughout Alberta and all Community Associations in Calgary.
- While BFA heard back from 5 NDP candidates and presented to 2 of them, no response was received from the UCP or Alberta Party.
- The Chambers of Commerce expressed interest in organizing a meet and greet, but no date has been confirmed yet.
- BFA acknowledges and appreciates the subcommittee for their hard work, without which the campaign would not have been possible.
- While the number of individual supporters has increased from 100 to 200 in the last month, more support is needed as over 25% of Albertans have disabilities.
- To mark Equality Day, a media release was issued on April 17th, which received some media responses resulting in an article featuring Chris Ryan and Sam Mason discussing Barrier-Free Alberta.
- If interested in reading the article, please click here <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/advocates-want-promise-of-alberta-accessibility-legislation-in-election-platforms-1.6818981>.
- Chris Ryan was also featured in an article discussing accessibility, please click here to read <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/opinion-chris-ryan-alberta-accessibility-legislation-wheelchair-transit-1.6798361>.

### **Media Blitz**

- Please find the link to the media kit here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ulc7NHK96ZVYLVsSeBGjAo1uSU4zHzj2?usp=sharing>
- The media kit for the campaign comprises all social media assets, including image descriptions, potential blurbs for social media, and graphics for agencies and individuals to post on April 27, 2023.
- Additionally, a sample endorsement and a QR code to the support page have been included, where interested individuals can sign up to offer their support.
- The media kit also contains templates for various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

### **Election campaign activities**

- BFA has conducted several presentations, including those made to Marie Renaud, Dave Dale, the Accessibility Advisory Committee of Grande Prairie, and a candidate out of Ponoka.
- During the Alberta Federation of Labour convention, Mezaun attended and provided information on behalf of BFA.

### **Inaccessibility in Calgary and Area**

- Dan attended an event in Airdrie, where he encountered accessibility barriers such as the absence of ramps or elevators to access the second floor where the event was taking place.
- The booths at the event were also inaccessible, and Dan had to sit on the corner of the booth to view the stage properly.
- This highlights the significance of having accessibility legislation in place to improve the experience of individuals with disabilities.



## NDP/Alberta Party platform update

- The NDP has included accessibility legislation on their platform, which can be found here: <https://www.albertasfuture.ca/public/download/files/228383>
- Similarly, the Alberta Party has also included accessibility legislation on their platform, which can be accessed here: <https://assets.nationbuilder.com/abparty/pages/2707/attachments/original/1675179105/2022-APPA-Member-Passed-Policy-BookRev1.pdf?1675179105>
- Both party platforms have been made available on both the BFA and AAN websites.
- We encourage everyone to share the BFA campaign and support website with their staff, family, and friends through newsletters or any other means of communication available.

## Public Relations Firm

- We have been presented with an opportunity to collaborate with a public relations firm to advance our goal of getting accessibility legislation on the government's agenda.
- Despite making progress over the past 20 years, we realize that we need to scale up our efforts, and this partnership offers the possibility of making significant headway.
- The cost of this collaboration is \$2,500 per month, with a total cost of \$10,000 for just over three months. However, given the potential impact of legislation that can positively affect the lives of a million Albertans, we consider this to be a small price to pay.
- Mezaun will be reaching out to those who are interested in contributing towards the cost of this collaboration.
- If you or anyone you know is interested in this opportunity, please contact [mtopchieva@cpalberta.com](mailto:mtopchieva@cpalberta.com) to request the proposal.

## Monthly newsletter update

- We will be posting a new newsletter when the writ drops on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Action items:

- If your logo isn't on the Barrier Free Alberta website or if you haven't signed up as a supporter, please click here to do that <https://www.barrierfreeab.ca/support>.

Wrap-Up/Adjournment

## Next meeting:

**Date:** May 22nd, 2023

**Time:** 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

**Location:** Zoom