



# Abilities Centre: Who We Are

# Unlocking Potential

## Who we are, what we do

**We exist to unlock potential through accessibility.**

Whether it's breaking down barriers, co-designing innovative new programs based on research and lived experiences, or investing in staff with training and development opportunities, everything we do is aimed at unlocking the potential that we see around us.

Our vision is a better, barrier-free life for all Canadians. To realize our vision, we'll need to evolve as an organization and keep this national ambition at the forefront of our actions and aspirations.

Our mission is to reimagine accessibility and redefine the way Canadians live, work, and play. To effect this scale of change, we'll need to think bigger. We must simplify our story so it can travel better and invest in ourselves to prepare for this mandate.



## Our Purpose:

Unlock potential through accessibility

## Our Vision:

A better, barrier-free life for all Canadians

## Our Mission:

Reimagining accessibility and redefining the way Canadians live, work & play

## Our Local Objective:

Co-design innovative, accessible solutions that address the needs of our community



# Balanced Scorecard Overview



## Dimensions

## Balanced Scorecard Outcomes

<b>Social Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build our reputation as a national leader in accessibility and inclusion</li><li>• Improve our participants' quality of life and well-being</li><li>• Create greater impact to drive increased systemic accessibility</li></ul>
<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to sustain our funding</li><li>• Grow our revenue base</li><li>• Leverage the Durham Centre's revenue to support our core operations</li><li>• Maintain healthy Capital Expenditure reserves</li></ul>
<b>Internal Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand Abilities Centre's programs in Ontario and Canada</li><li>• Utilize research and lived-experience insights to enhance our offering</li><li>• Maintain a sustainable, viable shared services model that supports our growth</li><li>• Strengthen Abilities Centre's brand in Ontario and the communities we operate in</li></ul>
<b>Learning &amp; Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grow and enhance the Team's skillset to meet the evolving needs of our communities</li><li>• Attract, engage, and retain top-level talent</li><li>• Continue to model best-in-class organizational accessibility and inclusivity</li><li>• Connect employees to Abilities Centre's Values and Vision</li></ul>

# Our Values

The five values that support our overarching value of inclusion are:

**Person-centred:** prioritizing the needs and well-being of individuals in decision-making and actions, ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

**Genuine:** committing to communicating information and behaving in a way that is authentic, honest, and aligned with stated priorities and principles.

**Flexible:** adapting and adjusting to changing circumstances, environments, and situations to consider new approaches and ideas that are accessible and inclusive.

**Innovative:** challenging the norm and thinking of new and creative ways to achieve goals and best practices, while taking calculated risks and embracing change.

**Collaborative:** seeking out and valuing the input of others and those with lived experience to work together and build an inclusive community.



# Our Strategy:

We view our facility as an **Innovation Hub**, a dynamic space that is not only utilized for the purpose of developing, testing, and scaling programs but contributes to discussions and the sharing of knowledge that contributes to the communities where we deliver programs.

At Abilities Centre, we use evidence-informed knowledge and experience along with thoughtful and innovative research methods to identify gaps in our community and create programs to meet those needs. **Research** at Abilities Centre is embedded into programs and services and is used as the framework in which we conduct our work and achieve our mission and vision.

We believe that ongoing learning to grow our understanding of **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility** (IDEA) and to better support members of our community is an essential component of our role. We focus on embedding IDEA strategies into all our programs, collaborations, and projects to ensure we build strong, trusting relationships, especially when working with persons with disabilities and minority groups.

Developing **partnerships** with organizations and academic institutions as programming and research collaborators is key to advancing our purpose, capturing the voices and stories of the individuals that we represent, and identifying gaps within the disability sector so that program development and expansion can directly align with the communities we serve.



# Programs

## Membership based services

We offer a range of membership options for individuals of all abilities to use our fully accessible facility, including special pricing for seniors and students, and for those members looking to enjoy our 200m indoor track. Fitness assessments, personal training, group classes, and member-based programs for all ages and abilities are available year-round.

## Life Skills Programming

Abilities Centre prides itself on creating innovative and engaging daytime and evening life skills programming for individuals of all levels and abilities. All Life Skills programs are geared to provide strong foundational skills that enhance the learning experience for participants, allowing them to successfully transition into community life and the goals that are most important to them, including education, employment or independent living.

## Employment Services

Abilities Centre Employment Services offer a range of pre-employment and employment programs virtually and in-person for people of all abilities facing barriers to employment. The employment programs focus on assessing participants' skills, goals, values, and strengths. Individuals learn about the importance of professionalism, a positive attitude, and the power of networking.

## Therapeutic Recreation

Therapeutic Recreation (TR) uses community and activity-based programming to improve wellbeing, physical and mental health as well as functional capacity for individuals. TR specialists work in the community and in schools to help individuals build, learn/maintain life skills, increase independence and resilience, improve quality of life and help participants find what they are passionate about.



# Programs



## Post-Rehabilitation & Health

Post Rehabilitation programs support individuals transitioning from rehabilitation treatment into community-based programs that enhance their journey to improve their overall well-being and quality of life. These classes are developed and delivered with our community partners in the health sector and facilitated by trained and certified instructors.

## LEAD Canada

Through our LEAD program, we work with municipalities, school boards, and public and private sector organizations to define and embed inclusion and accessibility into strategic planning, daily operations, program environments, and organizational culture. LEAD challenges organizational systems and processes to create transformational change that enables full and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in the communities they live, work and play.

## Physical Literacy

At Abilities Centre, we work with practitioners and educators in schools, community recreation centres, and municipalities to develop a holistic understanding of Physical Literacy beyond traditional sport. The program fosters the importance and need for physical literacy development in recreation, movement, and activities of daily living.

## ASAD

ASAD is the first sports academy for high school-aged student athletes on Olympic, Paraspport, and Special Olympic high-performance pathways and caters to athletes across a variety of sports. ASAD programming includes performance nutrition, mental performance, seminars on healthy sleep, technical sessions, and strength and conditioning sessions.

## Mixed Ability Sport

Mixed Ability Sport takes a universal design approach to building sport environments by promoting full inclusion not only for individuals with disabilities, but also for those returning to sport, those who are new to sport, and those who have played at the highest levels. All individuals are equal, valued members of the club and regularly engage in team practices, competitions, and social engagements.



# Abilities Centre Impact:



## Community Hub:

- Winner of the **2022** Whitby Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Award in the Not-For-Profit category
- Winner of the Durham Region Readers' Choice Diamond Award for 'Best Recreation Facility' for the second year in a row
- Implemented an IDEA Advisory Council to ensure continuous improvement in the areas of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility
- Grew membership back to **1,700+** members while exceeding mandated health & safety protocols
- Created the My Vaccine Why campaign which was centered around the experiences of Canadians with disabilities. The videos were viewed by over **2,200** individuals and shared with over **68,000** social media feeds and **1,900** organizations
- Hosted two sensory-friendly vaccine clinics accessed by over **450** community members
- For the past two years, Abilities Centre has hosted the Festival of Trees holiday market event for small businesses to sell and advertise their goods and to bring the community and members of Abilities Centre together to enjoy the festivities and activities of the holidays. Over the two years, over **3,600** people attended, **92** vendors participated and close to **\$80,000** was raised to support our programs and services

## Research:

Abilities Centre has become a key community partner in several large-scale research programs and projects:

- Launched a Joint Research Ethics Board (JREB) in partnership with Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences
- Contributor to Canada's Parallel Report in response to the United Nation's review of Canada's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Contributing partner in the development of a Canadian Report Card on the Physical Activity of Children and Youth with Disabilities
- Partner with the Canadian Disability Participation Project (CDPP) and University British Columbia on the COVID-19 Disability Survey for persons with Disabilities
- Co-application on a Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Connection Grant for the "Co-creation of an interactive technology digital program-evaluation toolkit for Canadian physical activity programs for people with disabilities"

## Therapeutic Recreation

- Implemented Therapeutic Recreation across **3** school boards, **16** schools and impacted more than **300** students
- Delivered community based Therapeutic Recreation programming to almost **200** individuals

## Skills Development

- More than **200** pre-employment, employment and life skills related workshops were delivered to almost **300** participants

## Post-Rehabilitation

- Close to **270** classes were delivered with over **300** enrollments

## LEAD Canada

- Facilitated LEAD with over **25** organizations with close to **445** participants participating in the process
- Facilitated the Disability Inclusion workshop to **460** individuals

## ASAD

(Academy for Student Athlete Development)

- **75%** increase in female participants in the ASAD program
- First national ASAD location in North West Territories launched in 2022

## Physical Literacy

- Facilitated workshop with **8** school boards with **42** schools and **49** teachers participating, and **25,013** students indirectly impacted by the workshops
- Facilitated workshop with close to **300** community recreation staff, camp staff, and high school and post-secondary students



## Mixed Ability Sport:

- Hosted the first every Mixed Ability Rugby tournament in Canada
- Collaborated with sport clubs and governing bodies to send the first ever Canadian Mixed Ability Rugby team to Cork, Ireland to participate in the International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament
- Certified almost **145** coaches in Mixed Ability Sport

## Jumpstart:

Over the past 5 years, Abilities Centre has been one of Canadian Tire **Jumpstart's** largest national community partners, with an investment of **\$1.7** million dollars over 5 years (2018-2022) to impact 100,000 children and youth through. At the conclusion of our five year partnership Abilities Centre programming impacted **131,315** children and youth:

- **34,587** children and youth were impacted through direct program delivery
- **96,271** children and youth were impacted through our secondary reach, working with educators and community recreation leaders to enhance their capacity in delivering and sustaining inclusive programs in their environment
- **250** field trips delivered in over **200** schools across Ontario
- **516** teachers and educators trained
- **407** municipal recreation and camp staff trained





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[abilitiescentre.org](https://abilitiescentre.org)

