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CANUCKS AUTISM NETWORK MAKES AUTISM TRAINING UNIVERSALLY-AVAILABLE TO RECREATION PROVIDERS
Free E-Learning Module launches in partnership with BC Parks and Recreation Association



Vancouver, B.C. (January 8, 2019) – In an innovative effort to increase accessibility for individuals with autism in community recreation, Canucks Autism Network (CAN), in partnership with BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), has launched a free E-Learning Module for recreation providers across BC. Funded by the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD), the online resource represents an unprecedented collaborative effort among government, recreation, and the non-profit autism sector.

The one-hour online module outlines behaviours associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as effective strategies for supporting children and youth with autism in recreation settings. The interactive module also highlights interviews with experienced recreation leaders who have successfully implemented these strategies, which include communication tips, behavior support, and teaching tools. The E-Learning Module can be accessed at no cost at elearn.bcrpa.bc.ca or canucksautism.ca/recreation.

“Canucks Autism Network has been providing workshops to the recreation sector since 2012, and demand grows exponentially every year,” said Dr. Stephanie Jull, VP of Programs and Training at Canucks Autism Network. “This new online training module provides an exciting opportunity to spread knowledge and build capacity across BC and beyond, creating a positive impact for the thousands of families living with autism in our province.”

The project began after CAN successfully pitched the need for a widely-accessible online resource to the MCFD in 2017. With 1 in 66 Canadian children diagnosed with autism, and over 16,000 children and youth with autism in BC alone, MCFD recognized the growing need for community accessibility.

“All kids deserve the opportunity to participate in sports and other activities.” said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development. “I’m pleased that MCFD could collaborate with CAN and BCRPA to bring this specialized training to recreation providers so that they can provide the supports kids need to join in with their peers.”

Research shows that individuals with autism are far less likely to participate in community recreation than their typically-developing peers. Furthermore, research indicates that physical activity can increase attention and cognition while decreasing anxiety, among children and youth with autism.

“We are thrilled to be presenting this valuable E-learning module in partnership with CAN, said Rebecca Tunnacliffe, CEO of BCRPA. Our members who manage and work in recreation facilities across BC hold very highly the importance of creating a positive experience for all their participants. This module will directly assist staff to amplify their awareness of the needs of autistic individuals, and implement strategies to provide them with a positive experience so they will want to return again and again.”

Since 2012, CAN’s province-wide team of training facilitators has delivered hundreds of workshops to well over 10,000 individuals in the public sector across BC. In addition to supporting the sport and recreation sectors, CAN’s live training team builds capacity for first responders, education staff, and a variety community spaces including YVR, Science World, and the Vancouver Aquarium.

CAN is proud to unveil three online training resources for various sectors in January 2019. In addition to the launch of the E-Learning Module for recreation providers, CAN has also released an online training module for first responders and will be unveiling an online resource for sport coaches in late January.

For more information, or to book a live training workshop, please visit canucksautism.ca/training.

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About Canucks Autism Network (CAN)

Canucks Autism Network provides year-round sports and recreation programs to individuals and families living with autism, while increasing awareness and providing training in communities across BC.

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