

SPRING 2026

# imagine!

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INSPIRING STORIES AND COMMUNITY UPDATES



**posAbilities**

*The Imagine newsletter is written, curated and published by  
posAbilities' Community Engagement Team 2026©*

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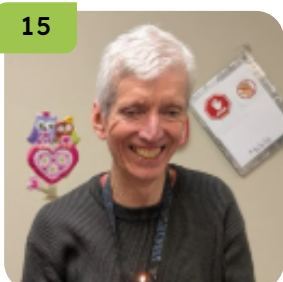
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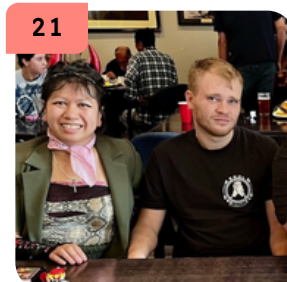
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# CREATING SPACE TO BELONG

## Outsider Art, Community, and Creative Possibility

Across studios, exhibitions, and emerging platforms like [Connection Salon](#), a growing movement is reshaping how we understand art, creativity, and community. Sometimes described as “outsider art,” this work resists narrow definitions and instead opens space for underrepresented artists whose voices and perspectives have historically been overlooked. What emerges is a different way of seeing, experiencing the work, and being together.

Katie Cutbill, Studio Coordinator for Alternative Creations Studio, says: “Outsider art isn’t about fitting in—it’s about expanding the space so more people can belong.”

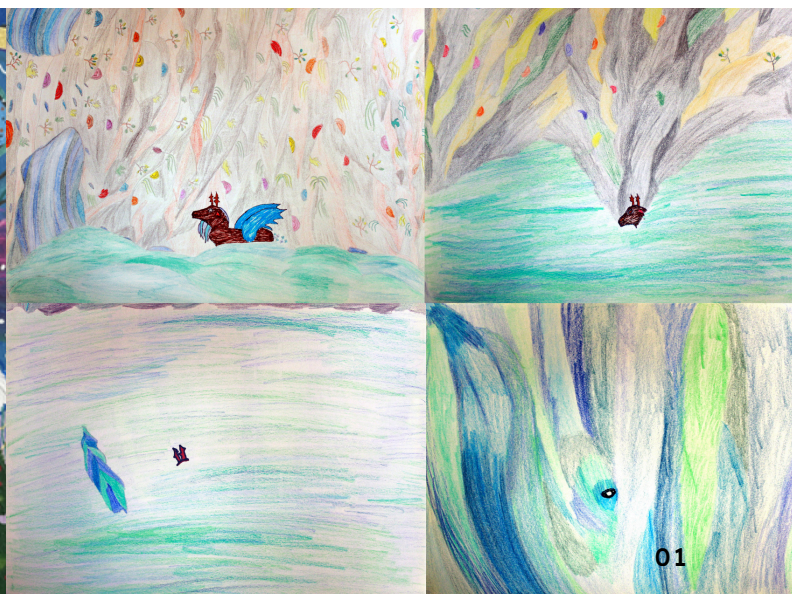
Systems change isn’t easy work, and Katie is building a team to help move the dial towards expanding community inclusive art studios and engagement across the city. The [Connection Salon](#), originally founded by artists experiencing mental health challenges, was a natural place to start. After hosting the “Grow Like a Forest Show” at their hub in Yaletown, The Gathering Place, a seed was planted. Artists in the Salon also wanted to participate in a broader rethinking of systems that have long prioritized conformity over exposure, and care, too.

“They didn’t need to adapt — the systems around them needed to expand.”

Katie and Alternatives were also recently featured in “The Outsider”, the bimonthly newsletter of the Connection Salon Artists Collective. [Take a peek here.](#)

“Oh the Places You’ll Go” - Rachelle DeSousa

“The Glaciers are Melting” - Delenn Schober



At the heart of this shift are artists like Julia, Ross, Katie and Aaniya, who are working in the community living sector. They are trailblazers, serving in newer roles that have been developed to foster community inclusion, using some of the same structure and support that is provided by Community Living BC for day service. What makes this arts program unique, is the intentionality of cultivating relationships in Vancouver’s east side arts community, combined with the service research and development expertise of our leadership at posAbilities.

Alternative Creations Studio and Gallery is home-base for a Community Engaged Artist Lead, Studio Coordinator, and a team of Art Facilitators. All are working together alongside community artists, creating exciting shows like *Ritual Held*, by Julianne Chlady, and *Sound Drawing Drawing Sound*, curated by Ross Birdwise.

At Alternatives, this philosophy takes form through collaboration. Artists and facilitators work side by side, sharing materials, decision-making, and authorship. The studio becomes more than a place to produce art—it becomes a living model of the inclusive communities we hope to build: grounded in curiosity, mutual respect, and care. “We model in the studio the kind of communities we wish to create in the world.”

Art work is produced onsite at the studio, or installed by community artists in our warm, inviting, and fully accessible Gallery space on Venables just west of Commercial Drive. To meet the artists and take a virtual tour, visit [Alternatives’ website](#) and to learn more about historic collaborations, visit [ArtRise](#).

This spirit of co-creation is vividly expressed in projects like *Sound Drawing Drawing Sound* by Ross Birdwise. Inspired by graphic scores—visual alternatives to traditional sheet music—the project invites participants to explore the relationship between sound and image in fluid, unexpected ways. A drawing might become music, a sound might inspire video or movement. Roles shift, authorship expands, and the creative process becomes a shared dialogue.

“A drawing might become music; a sound might become an image—the process is the artwork.”





Importantly, the work also centers around consent and agency. Some artists choose to show only video interpretations of their work rather than original pieces, reminding us that inclusion is not just about access, but about honouring individual comfort, boundaries, and voice. The result is an evolving, exploratory practice — one that values process as much as outcome.

The previous exhibition that built on these ideas, was *Ritual Held*, by artist Julianne Chladny. In this experience, ritual is expressed as a form of care through drawing, repetition, and everyday gestures. The exhibition invited participation through a public workshop, where attendees brought in meaningful objects, shared stories, and created art together. These moments of collective making highlight how art can foster connection between artists and audiences, as well as within the artistic community itself. “Small, shared acts—drawing, ritual—can transform how we relate to one another.”

One of the exhibition guests, Hannah Nolan shared: “Julianne’s work was not only technically exceptional, but brought with it such a sense of calm. I especially loved the interactive installation that brought the community in to draw, or share words on how the artwork made them feel in relation to how we care for ourselves.”

For underrepresented and outsider artists, the message emerging from these spaces is clear: your way of seeing, being and creating is valued. You do not need to reshape your work to fit existing systems. Instead, new frameworks are being built—ones that recognize the strength of difference, the value of rest and sustainability, and the power of community.

“Like trees, we’re stronger when our roots grow together.”

To learn more about Alternative Creations Studio, please visit [www.alternativesart.ca](http://www.alternativesart.ca) or contact Katie Cutbill, Studio Coordinator, by phone 604-322-0585 or email to [Katie.Cutbill@posAbilities.ca](mailto:Katie.Cutbill@posAbilities.ca)

# A PLACE WHERE I BELONG

## Community-Made Film Igniting Conversation and Care



In honour of Pride Month and in celebration of BACI's 70th Anniversary, co-executive producers of the documentary "A Place Where I Belong" will screen the film with a talk back panel at New Westminster's Anvil Centre, on June 18th from 6:30–9:00 PM. Enjoy free admission, snacks, and good company!

The documentary follows six 2SLGBTQIA+ people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities as they navigate identity, love, family rejection, self-advocacy, and systemic barriers through Connecting

Queer Communities (CQC), an innovative non-profit program. As the participants find safety and solidarity within CQC, their stories—ranging from joyful coming-out moments to painful losses—pose a pressing question: what happens to a community when the one safe place it has ever known may be taken away?

More than a portrait, the film is a catalyst. Screenings have become organizing moments: attendees leave moved and mobilized, and community groups use the film as an entry point for listening sessions,

mutual-aid projects, and new local programming. Educators and service providers report that the film changes how they see the people behind policies and statistics—prompting more person-centered conversations in classrooms, agencies, and boardrooms.

The tour’s recent stops demonstrate that ripple effect. A screening and talkback at the BC CEO Network connected filmmakers to community-living decision-makers; a McGill student-union event sparked reflections among future social workers; and presentations in Victoria, including a CLBC Board briefing, opened doors for continued partnership and resource development. Two screenings in Kamloops—one reserved for self-advocates—led local participants

to discuss creating their own supports modeled on CQC. On the festival circuit, the film took home Best Canadian Feature at ReelOut in Kingston and made its European premiere at Écrans Mixtes in Lyon, with further selections lined up in Muskoka and Calgary.

A City of Vancouver grant is funding additional resource materials for support workers and families who care for and journey alongside queer folks. These materials will be available at the screening and on request.

To learn more about the film, storytellers and upcoming screenings and impact events, please visit [A Place Where I Belong](#).



# June 18, 2026

## Anvil Theatre, New Westminster

A Film By Rheanna Toy

# A Place Where I Belong



**Reception:** 6:30pm **Screening:** 7pm

**Discussion with director and people from the film:** 8pm



Kinsight

posAbilities

CLOUDSTREET media

# CELEBRATING CREATIVE SUCCESS

## Jenny Story

The Vancouver Indie Film Festival celebrates bold, original storytelling - and this year, one artist stood out. Jenny Story, an autistic animator, author, and actor, recently won top honours for her short animation “Wild Sleepover.” The film’s success didn’t stop there, earning another award at a film festival in Los Angeles.

“I bring stories to life through character, emotion, and imagination.”

Jenny is a concept artist, character designer, and animator working across both 2D and 3D. Her work is known for its expressive characters and strong storytelling, shaped by her training and unique perspective.

Her experience spans animated music videos and short films, with roles including storyboard artist, animator, character designer, and editor. She’s also known as a collaborative artist who brings professionalism and curiosity to every project.

A graduate of Vancouver Film School, Jenny holds diplomas in 2D Classical Animation and 3D Digital Character Animation.

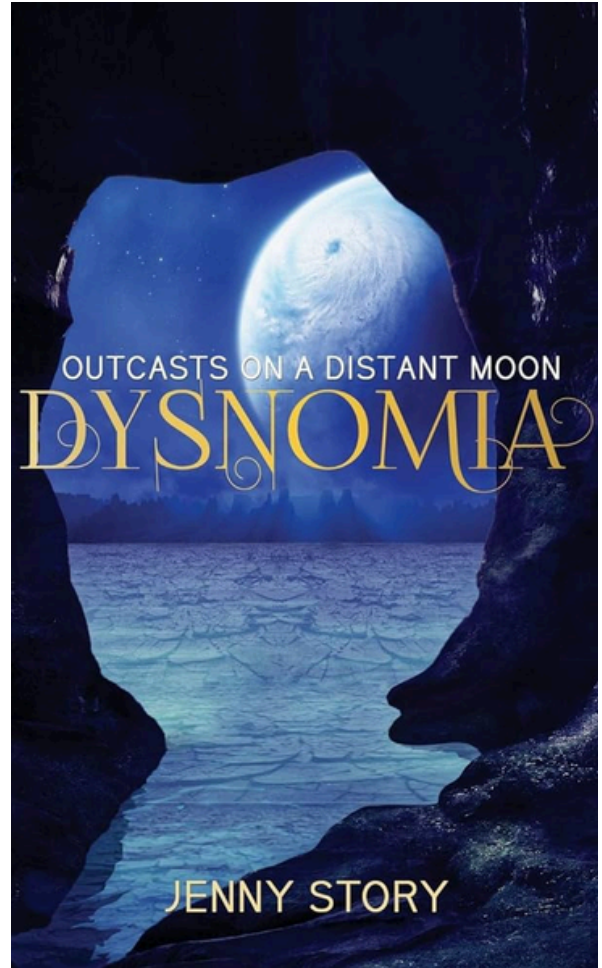
Beyond film, Jenny is a bestselling author and illustrator. Her books, including “Dysnomia: Outcasts on a Distant Moon” and “Dysnomia: Home Lies In Your Heart”, have received strong recognition (available on Amazon). Her first novel reached bestseller status in pre-orders, with major retailers ordering hundreds of copies ahead of release. Her writing has also been recognized by the INAP Awards and the Book Excellence Awards for Young Adult Fiction.



In 2020, Jenny received the Autism BC Self Advocate Award, recognizing her leadership and advocacy.

She has also appeared on screen, cast in the first season of “The Assembly” on CBC Gem and returning for its second season. Following that experience, she was invited as a guest on “The Social”, alongside Arlene Dickinson. [Watch it here!](#)

Jenny’s journey has been supported by her mother, Janet Walmsley, whose encouragement has helped her pursue both creative and business opportunities. Together, they have helped build a path for Jenny to share her work, connect with audiences, and grow her career.



Jenny’s success is a powerful reminder of the importance of diverse voices in the arts. Her work continues to open doors—not only for herself, but for others who see their experiences reflected in her stories.







## Storybuilding

The Storybuilding section helped participants explore the concept of the Invisible Self. Each participant was invited to draw, write, or select imagery that represented the observable traits that they carry or identify with. On the inside of a folded paper, several prompts engaged their introspective learning, where they took note of secrets, traits, ideas, or imagery they associated with the self that is not so easily externalized nor perceived.

## Skills

To expand on their skills, participants explored Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities through discussions, case studies, and creative activities.

Inspired by cities such as Copenhagen and Singapore, they analyzed real urban examples to practice critical thinking and developed communication skills through group discussions on creating greener, safer, and more inclusive cities.

## Nature

Last but not least, through Nature, we explored the impacts of climate change on Vancouver's winter. The group played eco-friendly bingo, sharing sustainable behaviours they already engage in, and learned about the different aspects of climate change, including its drivers, both local and global impacts, adaptations, and individual action. We finished by creating action plans of sustainable behaviours to engage in, while celebrating current efforts to do so. Participants shared feelings of increased awareness and knowledge, along with actions that they were excited to take.





# A JOYFUL JOURNEY

Contributed by East 38th

*Editor's note: Although Spring is underway, this piece captures a story from the Winter season, enjoy!*

On an early Sunday morning this past winter, Joy set out with great excitement for a special trip to the North Pole Express in Squamish. With her staff team, she eagerly began her journey, looking forward to the magical train ride ahead. Despite steady rain throughout the day, the trip continued as planned. Upon arrival, several challenges emerged. The rain-soaked gravel road made it difficult to maneuver Joy's walker, and she was understandably hesitant to walk in the wet conditions. Her team remained patient and supportive, ensuring her safety every step of the way.

At the train station, another obstacle appeared in the form of stairs leading up to the train. Joy was unable to go up and down the stairs, and at that moment, staff made the difficult decision not to pursue the ride, prioritizing her safety and comfort. Just then, a train coach arrived and generously offered the use of a chair lift. Joy's face instantly lit up, her excitement shining through as she eagerly pointed toward the train.

Once onboard, Joy was absolutely delighted. During the ride, she had a video call with her Mom, who was deeply thankful that her Joy was able to experience such a special trip to Squamish. Her joy and enthusiasm throughout the ride were truly priceless. Despite the challenges and struggles along the way, the experience became a heartfelt reminder that with patience, support, and kindness, meaningful and magical moments can always be created and cherished.



# JOURNEYS BEGIN AT CATHY'S CAFE

*Contributed by Amanda Kim, Team Leader*

A few months ago, I read an article about Cathy's Café that was featured in the E-News and shared it with Limitless. It used to go by another moniker-- Grandmama's Cafe, a homey eatery that provides warmth, comfort, and deep connection not only through its meals but also through its people. Together with Suc & Jeremiah from Limitless, who will be starting their training/volunteer program there to build up skills for employment, we went to check out the café. We were all excited as the program was set to commence soon! Faith, who was running the program, shared with us that the café will be participating in the Hot Chocolate Festival, with 5% of their proceeds generously being donated to posAbilities.



Fast forward to today, Suc and Jeremiah have been making wonderful progress through their volunteer work at Cathy's Cafe. They started in January and have continued to grow in confidence, developing new skills with each passing day in a supportive and welcoming environment. Through this experience, they learned how to prepare simple drinks, serve customers with care, and greet customers with a warm and friendly attitude. They also built strong habits in maintaining personal hygiene as well as the cleanliness of their work areas, forming essential skills for any workplace.

Beyond their daily tasks, Suc and Jeremiah gained valuable opportunities to socialize, communicate, and build positive relationships with both customers and staff. These interactions helped bolster their confidence and encourage greater degrees of independence. With the support and guidance provided by the staff at Cathy's Cafe, not only did Suc & Jeremiah get acquainted with practical job skills, but they also discovered important life skills that will benefit them in the future.

Limitless is truly grateful for the opportunity given in order for Suc and Jeremiah to learn, grow and thrive through this meaningful volunteer experience. We are proud of their dedication, commitment and continued progress. Thank you Cathy's Cafe for opening its doors to the Limitless Program!

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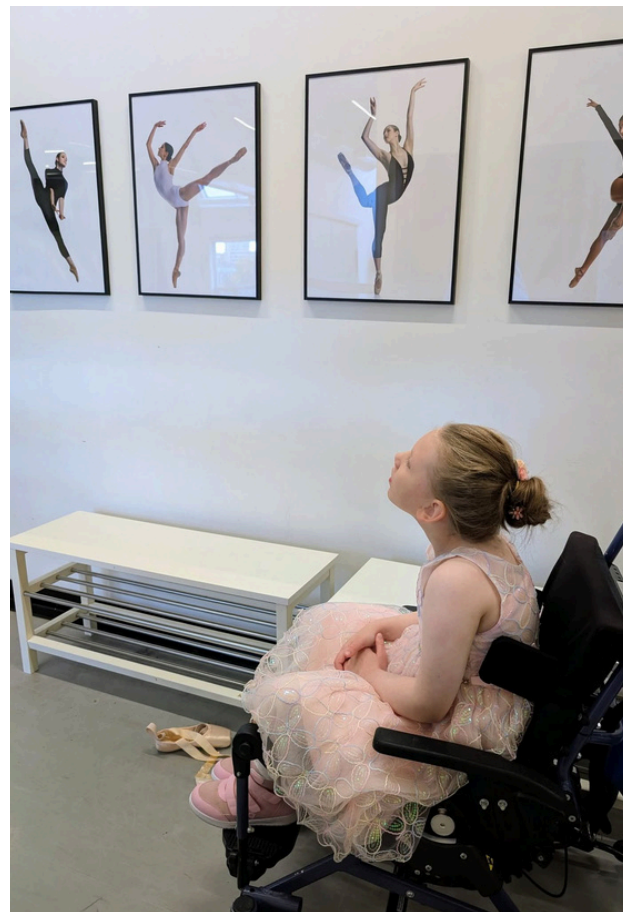
## MAKING FRIENDS, HAVING FUN



Buddy Club is a welcoming social group where adults can meet people, make friends, and have fun together. The group meets about once a month at different times, with activities like bowling, movies, dances, and outings around the Lower Mainland. Events are planned to be affordable (usually \$25 or less), accessible, and easy to get to by public transit. Everyone is welcome, and we do our best to support different access needs. You can come on your own or with a friend—and you're always invited to share your ideas for future events. Join Buddy Club to meet new people, try new things, and enjoy time together. For more information, call David at 604-834-6061.

# DANCING WITH JOY

We were pleased to receive a gift certificate to Arts Umbrella and would like to congratulate Alice, our recipient! Alice's mother, Roxanne, shares with us: "She is truly enjoying the Parent and Me dance program, where children get to move, dance, and socialize. Alice gets a chance to feel like a kid herself instead of having her days centered around her therapies or hospital appointments. Most importantly, she loves dance, and being nonspeaking, she lights up when she sees dancers or dance performances on the screen. She took the class with the same teacher before and really loved it. Thanks to the Arts Umbrella gift certificate, she gets to continue participating, which means a lot!"





# AEGIS NEWSLETTER FOR FEBRUARY 2026



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY



## CHINESE NEW YEAR—THE YEAR OF THE HORSE



Red Envelopes

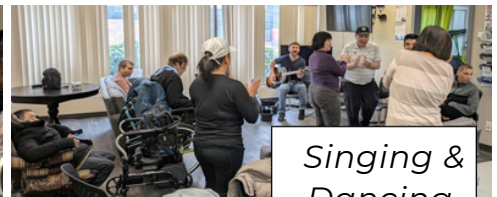
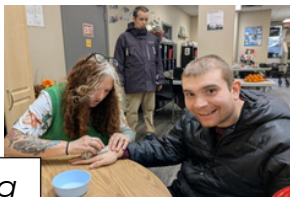


## VALENTINE'S DAY

## SING ALONG



Getting Tattoos



Singing & Dancing



## CAFÉ FRASERSIDE



Be Kind!

## PINK SHIRT DAY



Check out what Aegis has been up to during the month of February! Springtime feels more lively with joy shared together. Thank you Aegis for the submission!

# CREATIVITY ON DISPLAY

*Contributed by RSN*

Richmond Social Network is excited to announce a new exhibition at the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex, showcasing beautiful works by our talented artists. We extend a heartfelt thank you to the Richmond Arts Coalition for the invitation and for hosting this exhibition, with support from the Richmond Community Foundation and the City of Richmond.

We hope you'll stop by and support these amazing artists! The exhibition is on display at the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex (7660 Minoru Gate, Richmond) until June 1. Check out the [Facebook page](#) for more information, or for purchasing inquiries about the artwork on sale!



# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

*Contributed by Stage Door Theatre*



## Ideation

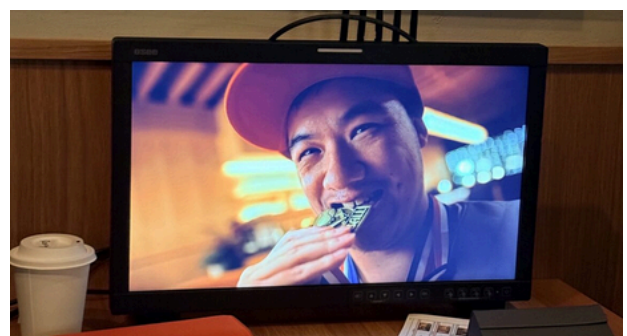
This past January, David Osier from DDA (Developmental Disabilities Association), looped Elliott (one of our Stage Door actors) in regarding a Public Service Announcement that was in the works. David then contacted Stage Door after learning that they had several actors that may be a good fit for the production as well. We set up an initial visit so that he could meet some of our folks and brief us on the project. David then asked Nicholas and Philip if they would like to be a part of the PSA as well, to which they enthusiastically agreed. After a successful audition and screen test, it was decided that Elliott, Nick, and Philip would all be involved.

## Filming

Filming took place for two days in February. With the help of family and staff support, the guys were on location in two different Vancouver restaurants. The first day was for everyone involved in the PSA, and the second day was for Philip to do some additional scenes. We were impressed with the professional way our actors were treated. The experience of being in the makeup chair, the costumes, and being surrounded by the professional camera, microphones, and lights was impressive. When asked if he would like makeup, Philip replied “I want it all”.

## Thoughts

It was an absolute pleasure being a part of this filming project. Philip, Nick, and Elliott were so proud and excited to participate, and a source of pride for all of us. One of our favourite moments was Philip proudly telling us he was “going to be famous”. Moments like that show just how meaningful this experience has been.



The PSA also features Alexina, who was cast as a photographer. In one of her recent interviews on CTV, she revealed her thoughts on the production: “For me, it’s an opportunity to share who I am and not to be held back because I have a disability. I was able to demonstrate my interests and who I am, who I am meant to be, and that a person with a disability can do great things if given the opportunity to shine”.

This project has truly been something special - developing a strong connection with DDA, making a real difference for our guys, and creating a positive impact through social media (one of Elliott’s personal goals). Stage Door is incredibly proud to have been involved in this journey and to meet so many wonderful new people along the way. The PSA is titled “What We’re Like”- it is live on various social media platforms and can be seen during featured commercial breaks on CBC.





# SECTOR NEWS

## Changes Ahead for Child Disability Supports

The Government of British Columbia is planning changes to how funding is provided for children with autism and other support needs. As reported by CBC News (read more: [CBC article on new autism funding changes](#)), a new “needs-based” system is expected to begin in 2026.

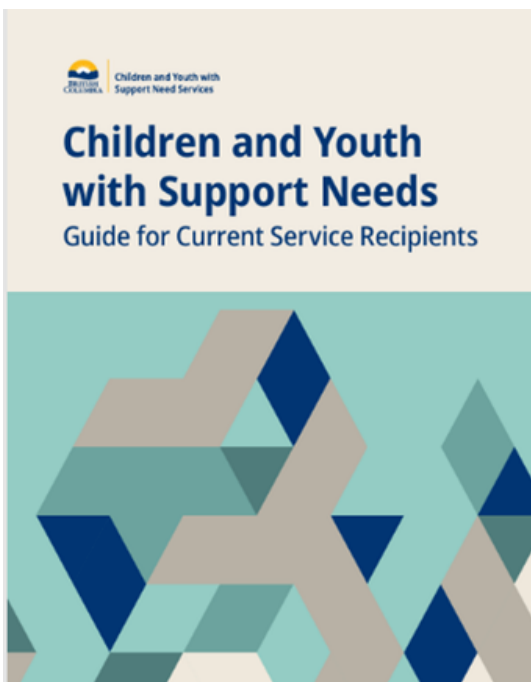
With this approach, funding will be based on a child’s level of support needs rather than a specific diagnosis. The new model is expected to include a core benefit for children with higher needs, additional income-tested supports for some families, and increased access to public services such as therapies and community programs.

The province has said the goal is to make supports more flexible and accessible to a broader range of children, including those who may not yet have a formal diagnosis. At the same time, families and sector organizations have raised questions about how needs will be assessed, how funding levels will be determined, and what the transition will mean for children currently receiving support.

To learn more, please visit the government’s website, and read the Children and Youth With Support Needs Guide for Current Service Recipients, found [here](#).

Families can [sign up for updates](#) directly on the Ministry’s website and are encouraged to contact their social worker with any questions or concerns about the changes.

Organizations like posAbilities will also be monitoring developments and sharing updates with the community as more information becomes available.



# FAMILIES MATTER

Across BC, families are lifting the voices of their loved ones through music, and generating leads for employment by organizing local performances. Breaking into the music industry is no easy feat, and we'd like to celebrate Mary Lau, Guy Picard, Ben Postmus and their families, for setting the stage for some fantastic entertainment this summer!

We'd like to formally invite you to check out these live performances, and to keep these musicians in mind for upcoming gigs in your community, or your place of work. It takes a village. Let's show them all some love and support for all they do to help advance inclusive employment!



# DREAMS IN MELODY

WHERE MUSIC MEETS LOVE

A space for gifted people to showcase their talent

*Featuring:*

LEAH SO      MANUEL HII      RYAN XIE

SUNDAY  
MAY 31, 2026  
5:30 PM UNTIL 7:00PM

AT LOEWEN PIANO HOUSE  
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RICHMOND, BC V6V 1J4

FREE PARKING

**DONATION**

*Experience the pure joy, incredible talent, and inspiring spirit that shines through the music of these remarkable pianists!*

**GET TICKETS**

**ROCK4Autism.com** Presents

# The Luc & Friends Band

HATS    T-SHIRTS    CD'S BY LUC

BROWNSVILLE PUB  
11940 OLD YALE ROAD  
SURREY BC

MAY 15 2026  
7:00 PM - 11:00 PM

# REMARKABILITY FEST

EVERYONE WELCOME

By Donation

Nakusp - Nakusp Rec Park July 22, 6:30 - 8:00  
Trail - Gyro Park - July 23, 5:00 - 8:30  
with second band La Deferlance  
Castlegar- Harry's Hall July 24, 6:00 - 8:00

**CELEBRATING INCLUSION AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY**

Music • Food • Vendors

**FEATURING THE BAND ROCK SQUAD**

Columbia Basin trust    DIVERSE BAMBAY HOUSE WATER TOGETHER    HARRY'S HALL    ARTS COUNCIL    Regional District of Kootenay Boundary

# Do you have a story for our newsletter?

Connect with us: [communications@posabilities.ca](mailto:communications@posabilities.ca) | 778-945-1438



*We acknowledge that our work takes place on Indigenous lands across British Columbia (BC). These lands are the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of BC First Nations. We recognize and celebrate the many Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit, who live here. Their cultures, knowledge, and teachings continue to care for the land, water, sky and all living things. Visit [Whose Land](#) to learn more.*