

Autism Society Canada celebrates its 35th Anniversary in 2011 “Spreading Autism acceptance – Chris’ story”

Chris McIntosh plays an integral role in the Victoria, B.C. autism landscape: he provides support to individuals and families impacted by autism as well as sitting on the board of many organizations. For example, Chris is the British Columbia representative to the board of Autism Society Canada (ASC), an organization that was started 35 years ago with the goal of helping parents find information and supports for their children living with an autism spectrum disorder.

Today, 35 years later – and with the help of board members like Chris - ASC has grown to become the largest collective voice in the Canadian autism community. Provincial and territorial autism societies and their member groups provide direct support to people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) and their families all across Canada. As a board member, Chris sits alongside other parents and individuals affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder who play an active role in aiding ASC to accomplish its mandate.

After searching many years for an explanation of why he was so different from the people around him, Chris received a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome and has become very active in the autism community in B.C. and across Canada. He got involved with families and the autism community in B.C. in September 2009, when British Columbia cut its early intensive therapy program for children with autism. He co-founded Families for Autism Intervention Resources (FAIR), an organization supporting families and individuals on the autism spectrum. He is also on the Steering Committee for the Pacific Autism Family Center, a member of the Advisory Council for Autism Community Training, a member of the Advisory Council for ASC and he lends his time to various other organizations in British Columbia. Chris is extremely passionate about autism awareness. However awareness is not enough: “Autism acceptance is required. Acceptance cannot come without understanding. As such, one of my goals is to work hard to increase people's understanding of autism.” While spreading his message of acceptance, Chris has made appearances on radio shows, attended conferences and has been published in many newspapers in British Columbia. On September 9th in Sydney, British Columbia, Chris will take part in a symposium organized by Autism Community Training entitled "Addressing Autism Spectrum Disorder across the Lifespan: A Symposium on Building a British Columbia Where Adults with ASD Can Thrive." Chris is just one of the many dedicated individuals on the spectrum lending their voices to autism awareness.

Autism Society Canada supports Chris and other adults living on the spectrum by advocating on a national platform on their behalf. After 35 years of experience working with the Canadian autism community, ASC knows that the time is now to develop the foundation of a Canadian Autism Strategy, so individuals across Canada can access high quality services for their Autism related needs. For more information log on to www.autismsocietycanada.ca, or contact us at tel: **1-866-476-8440**.

ASC's Provincial Member society in British Columbia is Autism Society British Columbia

<http://www.autismbc.ca> or 1-888.437.0880