

Autism Society Canada celebrates its 35th Anniversary in 2011 “Giving voice to those who are silent – Kristian’s story”

After joining Autism Society Manitoba, and as an adult living on the spectrum, Kristian realized that the voice of the adult living on the autism spectrum needed to be heard. His initiatives led him to join 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 Kristian - 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 member of ASC’s Advisory Committee of Adults on the Spectrum, and as an adult living on the spectrum, Kristian lends his voice, and provides a unique adult perspective on autism: he is actively involved in aiding ASC to accomplish its mandate.

During his time at the University of Winnipeg, Kristian has been involved in advocating for disability rights for students with the aid of the disability services, Students for Inclusion, and the University of Winnipeg student disability advocacy group. Off campus, he has recently embarked on a new journey of running social skills groups to students on the autism spectrum. It has proved to be a rewarding experience as it has enabled him to connect with the next generation of individuals on the spectrum, get an understanding of what issues are important to them, and provide a mentoring role as someone who overcame many of the same challenges they are now facing. This summer Kristian embarked on a venture with his mother Lynn Hooker, to develop an independent business called H.A.L.E (Help Autism Live Everywhere) Autism. The purpose of the business is to not only promote the social skills groups that he currently organizes, but to expand to other projects and ventures that can educate the community on the issues that involve individuals on the autism spectrum. “My hope is that H.A.L.E Autism will be able to provide opportunities for all individuals with autism to live independently, and get the right services so they may be able to achieve their true potential as individuals.” Like all of ASC’s advisory members, Kristian is passionate about increasing awareness and making resources to individuals on the spectrum and their families more accessible. He has made great contributions to the Autism community and lends a strong voice in the fight for a National Autism Strategy.

Autism Society Canada supports Kristian and his family 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: **866-476-8440**.

ASC’s Provincial Member society in Manitoba is Autism Manitoba.

<http://www.autismmanitoba.com> or 888.444.9563