

## **Autism Society Canada celebrates its 35th Anniversary in 2011**

### **“Being Committee Chair means being a positive role model for others – Tom’s Story”**

Tom Jackman is an adult living with Asperger’s Syndrome in St. John’s Newfoundland and Labrador. He is also the current Chair of Autism Society Canada’s Advisory Committee of Adults on the Spectrum. As Chair, Tom is always on the lookout for projects that the committee can get involved with in order to advocate for people on the autism spectrum. Sometimes this means writing articles that feature this unique committee, while other times Tom attends conferences to share his experiences with others.

Today, 35 years later – and with the help of dedicated advisory committee members like Tom - 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.

Tom became the Chair of the Advisory Committee to lend his voice to the national autism platform, and he is committed to being a positive role model for people living on the autism spectrum. In his role as Chair of the Advisory Committee, Tom keeps discussions on topic, encourages participation by all members, and represents and advocates for the group’s opinions on a national platform. He is also the liaison between his committee and the Board of Directors for ASC. “My experience as Chair has helped me to become more confident when speaking with people about autism. It has also helped me communicate and interact more effectively with individuals both on and off the spectrum.” Tom also serves concurrently on the board of the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador. He is extremely passionate about autism awareness and lends his time to efforts such as Racing 4 Autism, which races Targa Newfoundland, for Autism Awareness.

The Advisory Committee of Adults on the Spectrum - the first of its kind in Canada - is made up of adults living with an ASD, who make recommendations to the Board of Directors on key issues affecting the autism community. The committee also highlights ASC’s commitment to increasing the acceptance and the participation of individuals with an ASD within the organization. The Advisory Committee’s input results in more effective policy development, strong consensus surrounding the needs of adults living with an ASD, and a first person voice to advocate for the right resources to accomplish ASC’s mandate.

Autism Society Canada supports Tom and his community 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](http://www.autismsocietycanada.ca), or contact us at 866-476-8440.

ASC’s Provincial member society in Newfoundland and Labrador is Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (ASNL).

[www.autism.nf.net](http://www.autism.nf.net) or 709.722.2803