

## **Autism Society Canada celebrates its 35th Anniversary in 2011 “No chance for university graduate – Danny’s story”**

Danny Melvin may be shy, but he has a lot to say! (This is typical of many of the individuals living on the autism spectrum). He is involved in the Autism community in Nova Scotia and is a member of the advisory committee for Autism Society Canada. Danny is proud to be a part 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 advisory members like Danny - 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. Danny’s involvement as a member of ASC’s advisory committee of adults on the spectrum has opened him up to new experiences that have brought him out of his shell, and provided him with a sense of leadership.

A graduate of St. Mary’s University, Danny holds an undergraduate degree in Political Science. He is the president of Autistic Self-Advocacy Council of Nova Scotia which holds meetings once a month and is a past editor for Autistics Aloud Newsletter; an eight page quarterly which shares life stories and opinions of individuals on the spectrum. Despite his accomplishments, finding employment has proven difficult for Danny. “I’m a University graduate and I have recently updated my resume. I am someone who hasn’t quite lived up to my potential yet, but I don’t want pity, I want a chance.” Danny’s plight is all too familiar. The message that needs to be relayed to employers as well as employees is that autism is not limited to one extreme. Rather it is a spectrum, with individuals who vary along the spectrum. Danny is a bright and capable individual who just so happens to have Autism. “You run into one of us during the course of your day and you probably don’t even realize it. Some of us have families; some of us didn’t get diagnosed until we were adults. You yourself might even be autistic, and not even know it.” Today Danny continues to help Autism Society Canada to spread awareness and lobby the federal and provincial governments for more funding geared toward resources that cater to individuals with ASDs.

Autism Society Canada supports Danny 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](http://www.autismsocietycanada.ca), or contact us at **866-476-8440**.

ASC’s Provincial member society in Nova Scotia is the Provincial Autism Centre.

<http://www.provincialautismcentre.ca> or 877.544.4495