

## Autism Society Canada celebrates its 35th Anniversary in 2011 “Aspergian Love – Georges’ story”

Georges Huard, like many others on Autism Society Canada’s Advisory Committee of Adults on the Spectrum, does not fit any particular stereotype. Instead, he is an example of the great diversity that exists within the Autism community. George is proud to be a part 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 Georges - 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 the advisory committee, George sits alongside other individuals living on the spectrum and plays an active role in aiding ASC to accomplish its mandate.

Diagnosed with Asperger’s in 1995, Georges has had his bouts of loneliness. However, he quickly realized that his quirky habits and deep interests in technology could lead to employment opportunities. Today, Georges is employed at Université de Quebec as a computer technician. His passion has allowed him to extend his interests and improve his social skills. He has been in a five year long distance relationship and looks forward to what else life has in store for him. When speaking to individuals on the spectrum, one topic that stands out as being particularly difficult is relationships. “Simply having Asperger’s is enough to turn off many people. We have many quirky tendencies that could hinder a relationship.” For Georges, the internet has served as a great tool; it has introduced him to individuals with whom he has a lot in common. Unfortunately, the resources to help those with ASDs in areas such as sex education and relationship building are limited. It is a topic that is often overlooked; a sad reality especially when individuals on the spectrum are often vulnerable and easily misled. Resources need to be provided in schools to provide young adults with the tools needed to build and maintain healthy relationships. Furthermore, training for counsellors and teachers is necessary to understand the best ways to share information with a child with an ASD. “In today’s society, if couples have problems in their relationships they go to a counselor, but try finding a counselor who knows about ASDs.” Friends, family, books and the internet become one’s only resources when the information is not available in their communities. Georges has managed to find love; something we are all aspiring to find whether we are living on the spectrum or not. “My boyfriend and I have similar interests and often share our perceptions of the neurotypical world. We like to vacation together, hike, watch the sunset and take photos of butterflies—we’re not your stereotypical gay couple; we don’t even hang out in the village!” Georges has found a balance that works for him and his partner who also has Asperger’s Syndrome. He continues to be a great contribution to ASC’s advisory committee.

Autism Society Canada supports Georges, his partner 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 Quebec is Fédération québécoise de l'autisme et des autres troubles envahissants du développement.

<http://www.autisme.qc.ca> or **514.270.7386**

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