

28 March 2021

**Letter of Support for Councillor Bresciani and Councillor Shaw's Motion to Increase Recreation and Leisure Activities for People with Disability – MN21-2**

Mayor Masters and Members of Council,

Our names are Velvette and Robert Neumann. We are writing you to express that we strongly support Councillor Bresciani and Councillor Shaw's motion to increase recreation and leisure activities in Regina for people with disability.

This motion is one that holds a place near to our hearts, as we have a 22-year-old daughter with a disability. Throughout her life, we have found it very challenging to find leisure activities that are inclusive to our daughter's needs. While we have managed to find suitable activities over the years, the options have been few and far between in our city. For a young woman who wants to engage with her peers—both those with disability and without—not having many opportunities and options for accessible leisure and recreation can be confusing, frustrating and sometimes isolating.

As Councillor Bresciani and Councillor Shaw noted in their motion—recreation and leisure activities help to improve quality of life, physical and psychological health, and well-being.

They also help teach important skills, create a sense of belonging and offer an opportunity to build social skills and relationships with peers.

This rings true for all people with all levels of ability—however people with disability have less access to these recreation and leisure activities in our city and, thus, are less able to experience the important benefits that are associated with them. This doesn't have to be the case—we simply have to make an effort and a point to be more inclusive.

Inclusive and specialized recreation and leisure activities will also encourage further participation in activities, as they provide safer, non-threatening spaces in which people with disability can participate and enjoy themselves without facing some of the challenges or barriers that they would in non-inclusive settings or activities. These safe spaces should not only include the facilities and activities, but also more accessible transportation options to and from activities.

We must take steps forward to create more inclusive spaces for people with disability. The reality for too long has been that people with disability must find ways to adapt to the status quo in order to be included. We need to change this way of thinking and, instead, intentionally create spaces in which people with disability can participate and thrive in our city.

We believe this motion is a step in the right direction to do just that.

Respectfully,

Robert and Velvette Neumann