

# **Inclusive Sport and Recreation Collective Virtual Meeting Minutes**

*June 7, 2021*

*11:00am-1:00pm*

*Zoom Meeting*

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- 1) Welcoming of attendees – David Legg**
- 2) History of the Special Olympics – Johnny Byrne (Transcript provided by Otter Transcript Application)**

I'm focusing on our Special Olympics growth within Alberta and also talking a bit about how that started and why, why do we have the structure and what we do in Alberta right now. Special Olympics provides programs for people with intellectual disabilities and but the thing is that we don't have a special Olympics brand that goes on athletes that it's like "alright if you have an intellectual disability, you can only be within Special Olympics." And I think that's one of the great things about movements like this is that we realize you have a chance to share and I know that this is an opportunity for people with intellectual disabilities. Currently, let's just say pre COVID We're anticipating will be at these numbers again but we have 3400 athletes that are in the community settings. We have close to 1000 athletes and unified partners in our school settings. So something that we're really excited about is the community impact that we were able to make there we were currently serving about 160 Different communities around Alberta, and that would be through our 26 community based clubs. So really good broad reach and that will be everywhere from Medicine Hat to Grand Prairie to Fort McMurray so we do span the province. Now what I wanted to do here is sort of explain how that growth come from, what was the impetus behind that and I've got to go back, globally and they will the great things for us as a movement as a country is that part of the seeds for Special Olympics were sown in Canada.

It started with research, they talked about the research that we're doing, where it's currently being done, but at that point it was an individual Dr Frank Hayden, who took it upon himself to do research around people with intellectual disabilities, and physical activity, and at that point it was trying to show, it's not the intellectual disability that causes people to be less physically active, and to be not as healthy, it's the fact that people aren't given the opportunity to be physically active, and at that point that was one of those kind of things that was just assumed it's like okay if you have an intellectual disability you have Down Syndrome you have anything else then you're going to be overweight, and you're not going to be able to be physically fit. And so Dr. Frank Hayden just sort of said, I don't think that's the reality. And surprise surprise, he did a study, he put individuals with intellectual disability through a physical activity regime, and they got healthier and they got the results that everybody else saw and then that sow the seeds and that got out there and that was something that started conversations and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver and in the US.

At that point, they were running programs and decided okay, we want to make something out of this and they started work with Dr. Hayden. Then in 1968, the first Special Olympics Games are held and then everyone decided okay this is going to be a movement, and then it expanded beyond just being a games

because of Dr. Frank Hayden. He was one of the individuals that help expand Special Olympics outside of the US and Canada. US and Canada are the first two programs and then they moved around the world and Dr. Frank Hayden was one of the individuals initially that brought it to other continents and was a champion the movement which was really exciting and then in Alberta. It was once again it wasn't Special Olympics that started getting people physically active, there was many different groups and individuals and parents and things like that saying need to have opportunities for individuals we need to get them physically active so those, those are the roots in in programs for people with intellectual disabilities.

Then with the opportunity to be involved in Special Olympics they saw okay this is going to provide as a framework, this is going to be providers and network, and then specialist programs started to emerge, or evolve from what was existing in community so in Grand Prairie, Lethbridge, Calgary, Red Deer. That's where the Special Olympics movement started to grow. And then from those communities, then in 1980 the first Special Olympics, national games. They were, and it's not the first special example against what the first Special Olympics National Games held in Alberta, were held in Calgary in 1986. So that was a big thing for our movement in 1980 was actually when Special Olympics officially became incorporated in Alberta, so that's when we were a legal entity. And so following up from that came our first national games there so then we saw, obviously, a lot of growth, a lot of interest around that. And we started to see that community expansion and so all of our community expansion was done by volunteer led organizations. The parents, volunteers, educators, recreation enthusiasts developed our community network and those are all volunteer run and they run our programs and we're all part of that global entity so they're all incorporated as part of our Special Olympics Alberta. Through that special effects Alberta is part of Special Olympics Canada and then we have that larger network of being directly incorporated as part of Special Olympics international so that's sort of where that framework networking. There were a couple of other dates and things that really stuck out to me when I looked at okay well what are some of those things that we want to point out when it comes to growth, and sort of that broader spectrum in 2001 was the first time that our special big events were added to the Canada games so in London, Ontario. We had swimmers, so we already had people, we already had on the in the Paralympic side he had the intellectual disability classification, but then we also had a special Olympics division that was created.

So that was a big move for the movement just within the sport sector on that partnership because I think that was one of those key things for us. The other, I would say one of those seminal moments for us as a movement as well would have been in 2015. When unified sports were launched in high schools and that was a big moment for our movement in both in the inclusion side of things, but then also it is providing high school students with an opportunity to partner, people with and without intellectual disabilities just play together, and that really opened the doors. I think the response we've seen in in Alberta High Schools has really shown that there is an appetite for that there when we provide a framework, so that's something that we've seen really exponential growth since that's been evolved that has been very exciting. Then sort of we come to where we're at today. And obviously in the post COVID world, it's sort of where are we going from here but I think one of the things that I found exciting when we look at that growth, but I think what we've seen, and through meetings like this, and through gatherings through the act of Alberta coalition, and just different groups coming together to figure out okay, like how do we do this better together. I think that's an exciting thing that we look at how it's not the right how do we take this what we're doing and just focus on ourselves, it's like okay there is a real opportunity here for us as a movement, both in the disability sector and in a disability sport organizations, but that larger like active Alberta and how do we work together to provide maker communities healthier and what's our role in that? I really do see disability sport as being a leader in that and that's one of those kind of things where I don't necessarily think we've always looked at ourselves like that but I think we now see that value and realize

all sports are in that same place so I think it's an exciting place to be in now in 2021 and where we've come really seeing Special Olympics continue to be that partner in the community and looking at more opportunities to have partnerships, amongst our sport organizations and groups, especially as we look at organizations that are strapped for resources and strapped for opportunities and looking at facility challenges it's like Okay, are there opportunities for us to look at that and I think the more we do that, and the more we take opportunities like this I think we'll all be stronger so that's a quick overview of the Special Olympics or where it started and sort of where we're where we're at right now.

### **3) History of Paralympic Sport in Alberta – Dr. Robert Steadward (Transcript provided by Otter Transcript Application)**

Thank you for your update and history on Special O.

So one of the interesting things when we look at adapted physical activity in Alberta is it actually set the stage to growing and developing it in Canada. Because some of the leaders when we talk about, you know, my good friend Frank Hayden who I've known for 60 years who was really the Godfather he's iconic not only for Canada but even though the games were held in Chicago in 68, It was Frank who went down there and developed them and, and ran the games, but prior to that, in, I would say in the late 50s and early 60s in Alberta, at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and the University of Calgary.

Primarily there was a woman who was on the faculty in Edmonton at the UofA by the name of Dr. Pat, Austin, and I called her “the bear”, because she was a scratch golfer, she was a very big lady and she even had to prove her age when she went into the national seniors championships because they didn't believe she was that old and qualified. But Pat was the one who started really the whole area of adapted physical activity in Canada. As a result of the research in fact she was involved with Frank Hayden in those early days in doing research that helped him also move on to develop the special movement. She was working with a woman who started a private school. Evelyn Unger and Evelyn Unger’s school was primarily for learning disabled children and intellectually ability, they call them intellectual disability, we call them intellectually ability, children, which was basically the foundation for how the special grew out of that school. In fact, that was my first assignment as a student back in the mid 60s was working with the intellectually disabled children in her school in a swimming program. And then that school became known as the heritage school, which then later on was named after Tevye Miller, a well known Edmontonians, and a judge, and it's now called the Tevye Miller school, and it's housed in the Alberta School for the Deaf, which I'll get to in a couple of moments so really Pat Austin back in the 50s and 60s was the one who really developed adapted physical activity for all children with disability. And of course, in those days, most of the children were either stay at home, institutionalize, and the odd one you'd find in a school, if you really looked hard. So it was very different in those early days of development. Now, about the same time, as I was involved here with adapted physical activity in in Edmonton. Then, another lady by the name of Claudia Adams started the adapted physical activity program at the University of Calgary primarily out of her interest with intellectually disabled because she knew I was involved in Edmonton primarily with the physically disabled, even though my start was with Evelyn Unger. And then from there I went to the School for the Deaf, and then I went to other physically disabled athletes so Claudia Adams back in about 67 or 68 was really developing adapted physical activity in the Calgary area so those are really kind of the important times of our history. And then as I said, the Evelyn Unger school was privatized until 89 and then it became joined the public school board, and then actually I was speaking with, because I wasn't sure how Tevye Miller and School for the Deaf fit in. And so I phoned the principal of the Alberta School for the Deaf, who's has a dual role she's the principal of the Alberta School for the Deaf and the principal of the Tiffany Miller school for learning disabled, and she was a former student of mine, a number of years ago at U of A. Her name is Sandra Mason and Sandra's father

started the Alberta School for the Deaf. Back in 1955, prior to that for two or three years he was trying to decide and trying to with other parents about how and where our children experiencing hard of hearing and deafness are going to fit into society, fit into community, fit in into schools etc. So it was her father actually whose name was Dave Mason, who started a school with his father who was from Montreal, and, and Dave was the first PhD educated person in Canada, who's totally deaf. He's a unbelievable individual, and he was really the rocks or pillars of everything for creating and building this school, and it was a residential school up until about 1992, and then the children started to stay more at home are the older high school students were boarded in houses if they were from out of town. So those two schools now work together in Edmonton, and at the time in those days, there wasn't any other kind of school that existed in Canada, let alone in other parts of our province. So that was the, of course, the situation with the School for the Deaf and that's where I guess I again I cut my teeth and working with children living with a disability because I was the assistant to coaching the hockey team of the School for the Deaf. But I didn't know anything about sign language so it was an education, they really educated me and the pranks that were pulled and they were, It was the most wonderful experience I had in my early days so that was in the 60s. Now moving on to Terry Miller, how the School for the Deaf amalgamated with them because School for the Deaf in about 1996, 1997, at the same time as the Tevye Miller school, both came together and came under the umbrella of the school board so they were fully included and integrated so that didn't, and that was a really an important thing to be, because there were already consultants that existed in the school boards, certainly in Calgary and Edmonton and I think Lethbridge as well to try to include more of these children into the school system.

Now I'm just going to throw out if you don't mind a few dates and times as how the adapted area sort of progressed from there and then branched into the sport because we look at it, we've got the special O and as you know, the International Paralympic Committee also had an organization with in IFMHA which was the International Federation of mentally handicapped athletes. And then cerebral palsy and amputee, etc, etc. But back in about the mid 50s there was a group of people that were patients at the University Hospital, and they wanted to get a little more active. So, they went to this place called the Glenrose school hospital, and they started playing basketball, so they became known as the "handi catties", but that didn't last too long. So, back in 1964 which I was there for the handicapped he sorta ended up creating PSA the Paralympic sports association, who have now partnered around the province and PSA was there for sport, it was there for recreation, it was there for multi disabled people. They weren't there, just for spinal cord injury, there was a lot of different disabilities that were part of that program and about the same time that the Paralympic sports association was created in 1964. There was a gentleman hanging out in the mountain slopes in southern Alberta by the name of Jerry Johnston, and he was the one that then started and built-up the CAVS-Association for disabled skiers and once again he, he wasn't focusing on one disability group. He was focusing on a sport, and that was really an important difference that we experienced in it throughout the world is are we a disability organization or are we a sport organization.

So, Jerry started developing disabled skiing back in Alberta. In the mid 60s. Then, in 1967, Canada's 100th birthday. What happened at that time Winnipeg was hosting the Pan American Games, and that was a time where we got together in the Pan American games. And so, that is a place where we discussed and talked about creating a national organization for athletes with a disability, with a physical disability. So that's the seed that started to germinate, to create the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association. And then the first thing they wanted to do. While there were groups across Canada already. And if you're interested there's the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports back in 2017 rewrote a book on the history and you can get a copy of that book.

So we did write a book on the history of the Canadian wheelchair sports, but we had to have the games we had to have national games and Toronto, you know, didn't really want to host them in fact I thought they'd be a natural, because at that time, Dr Bob Jackson, who was an orthopedic surgeon in Tokyo in 1964, the Olympics, and I said you've got to do something in Canada. So he came back, and then 1967 that's when we created the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association. But, University of Alberta in Edmonton hosted the very first Canadian Wheelchair Games and again they weren't just for spinal cord injury, because there were people that would participate, who were Spinal Bifida who were cerebral palsy who were amputees right so there were physical disabled. But, but we didn't have intellectual disabled at the time, and, and rightly so because Dr. Hayden and all his people were already organizing the game for special O down in Chicago. A couple of other things that same year, we had to pack up our bags and get over to Tokyo, for the Paralympics the first Paralympics that we in Canada, participated in, in that year there, then between about 1968, 1971, 1972. There was a group of individuals in Calgary who were keen to get a wheelchair organization together, because at the time the only thing that existed was PSA. So, we, we work together with the people from Calgary, but then the provincial government said well we're not going to fund the club, and the only club at the time, officially registered was PSA. So then in 1971, I had a couple of people sitting around the swimming pool training up in Edmonton, and I said guys, we've got to create a provincial organization, so we can get money from the government.

So that's when the Alberta Wheelchair Sport and Recreation Association was created, and then went from there and I had to hustle there because about a month after I did that I took the Canadian team down to Jamaica for the Pan American Games. So, these things really happened quickly during that period of time from about 66-67 through to the 1971 big important area on the development of adapted physical activity, as well as sport. Just a couple of other things, then we know that in 1976 Canada hosted for the first time, multi disable multi sport Paralympics because we in Canada, already had organizations for other disabilities besides spinal cord injury of course in Calgary the ABS, Blind Sports started in, I think 1975. In order to qualify and get a team to the National Games multi disabled games in Toronto, just before the Paralympics. So that became an important aspect as well. the federal government took our money away from the Paralympics because we'd invited South Africa, even though they had a mixed racial team, but that money was used to create a new national organization called CF SOD Canadian Federation of sport organization for disabled because at the time, only CW USA existed. So, during that period of time, that's when inclusion integration, started to really develop within the NSOs and they started taking more of an interest in more supporting nature to help our athletes develop at that particular time. At the same time, another organization started in Alberta, right after the Paralympics in Toronto called Toronto Olympiad. And that was the Alberta MPT Sport and Recreation Association, under the leadership of Bob Wade and many of his peoples, so all these things started sprouting up. Then, of course, Jerry Johnson and his sister in law decided to bring hockey or racing sledge back to Canada. So we could start sled racing and or sledge hockey in this province and nationally and we know what's happened since then. Para ice hockey now for both men and women have developed grown and become in creative and clever credibly successful, and, and I'll be much happier when they take the gold away from the Americans in Beijing next year.

There was no legitimate democratic organization running sport for athletes living with the disability in the world. So again we and Canada, more specifically and Merck Clinger who worked for me at the time and myself, we put a proposal together said here's a new structure, and we had a meeting with a number of countries, and as a result, in 89, the International Paralympic Committee was born, and we know the success, it's experienced over the years, and I'm not going to talk about anything that happened after 1989, with the International Paralympic Committee because one, I was the founding president until 2001. So I was much more involved, internationally than I was, nationally, even though I was president of CFO at

the time, but I wasn't as much involved in the province, but I must admit I was greatly concerned with Adapted Physical Activity integration inclusion in the schools, what's happening in our province because lots of good things were happening, but we didn't know what was happening. So, like this is our, you know, 25 years ago I gathered together a group, much like we're seeing right here to talk about how we can better work together to understand what is happening as far as inclusion in the area of sport, recreation Research School and if any of you want any more information, you know, my phone number, I'd always be pleased to chit chat with you at any time.

#### **4) Updates from People/Organizations around Alberta**

Tara Chisholm with Medicine Hat Adaptive Sport and Recreation: Planning on running in person programming in the spring (Adaptive Golf and Paracycling). Also do a partnership with Medicine Hat Little League for Challenger Baseball. And then for the first time ever, partnering with City of Medicine Hat to help assist them to run inclusive summer camps.

Jill Moore-Special Olympics Alberta: Running virtual programs for a year. Plan to move forward with a soft start to summer programs.

Michelle-SO Volunteer Community Manager: Works with Jill.

Brian Torrance – Ever Active Schools

Should start a talk and put link in chat for it

<https://www.alberta.ca/child-and-youth-well-being-review.aspx>

Tring to build planning capacity for September 1<sup>st</sup>. I will bring attention to a survey that the Ministry of Children's Services is doing about Child and Youth well being, during the pandemic, and this is guiding future action that that ministry and hopefully the whole government can take around child and youth well being, so they do reference sport and recreation quite a bit, but I think it would be most important for this group to take that survey and also put in written submissions about the importance of inclusive sport and recreation programming. In terms of our health, health, and economic recovery.

Scott Godfrey - AAFC Calgary: Online programming occurring and a dance class. Working with Lacross to develop a lacrosse program. Working with USA lacrosse to offer a wheelchair lacrosse program.

Sam Chang – Eastside Memorial Football Club: Worked previously with Alberta Cerebral Palsy Sports Association with their para soccer program which is now transiting to EMFC in Calgary to run soccabilities.

Jamie McCulloh, Rocky Mountain Adaptive: Had a fairly successful winter even in COVID. Summer Programs planned for June 1 (paddle sports, kayak, canoeing, stand up and sit down paddle board, hiking program for ambulatory and all abilities, road and mountain bikes). Bowhead REACH program (electric bike) for private lessons. Multisport summer tryout camps.

Jen Leo – The Steadward Centre: Cautiously looking to spring and summer to open up for folks to get more active. Looking at how to integrate drop I activities. Looking ahead to the fall for a full reopening. Talked about the Canadian Disability participation project and its Fostering Quality Participation Framework. Also, sent letter off to Minister from ISR group. Thank you for the support.

McKenzie Bender - Steadward Center: Outdoor program called River Valley adventures to explore outdoor games and activities. Talking about doing an adaptive bike club to teach kids how to ride bikes.

Susan Lethbridge Sport Council: Trying to stay up to date with the resources available out there. New program in Pincher Creek area for adaptive outdoors (fishing, padding, hiking) with Adabtable Outdoors Organization.

Karen O Neil-Canadian Paralympic Committee- Ottawa: Preparing for the Paralympic Games in Tokyo. Government of Canada funding for Community based sport (\$80 million). There is also funding in the federal budget for event hosting. Trying to ensure that the community based funding gets to the community.

Paula McKenzie – Calgary Track and Field Association: Pilot a grassroots program for athletes aged 8 to 11. We are also looking to recruit more para athletes for the next quadrennial. Hosting the Cal Taff Track Classic meet which will be serving as a qualifying series for the Tokyo Paralympic and Olympic Games. I'm the chair for the Legion national track fields, which will be held here in 2024 and 2025 parasport hasn't typically been too involved in that section of track, but with our sort of grassroots all the way through to Paralympic athletes or pathway, we feel that it's very important that we sort of get the Para side of that going. So as the chair now we've sort of entered into talks with the Legion Dominion command and all the other stakeholders there and so what we're hoping for is to include more pair events and that in 2024 2025.

Brandi Heather – Amped2Play: Has a new book called Return to Play. Now being used as an educational resource for school teachers and educators. Connecting with Boys and Girls Club in Cochrane Alberta to support inclusive programming for their summer camps.

**Brian Torrance commented in chat**: “For orgs looking to host sport events in Alberta here is funding from Travel Alberta. <https://industry.travelalberta.com/programs-tools/tourism-investment-program/coop-investment/destination-organization-mice-sporting-2021> “

Ozzie Sawicki- CADS Alberta Program director: CADS National works as a group of provinces, every second Friday we meet just to talk about what are the status in different provinces, what are the planning strategies to get training going for the fall for instructor training etc. So there's a lot of things that are happening that are in good preparation leading into October November December, so that by January we can have a full program that's operating, we expect our numbers in terms of membership will come back significantly because I think people are just going nuts, not having social connection, and are looking forward to the social elements of being part of a program, as much as the physical elements of being part of a program. So we're getting a lot of inquiries as to what's happening is the program on, etc. The other thing that's happening a lot right now is Canada Winter Games for 2023, those preparations have begun. Funding is there we're working closely with Alberta Alpine Ski Association in preparation for that. The other positive I guess that's come out of this is that it's allowed time for communication discussion and negotiation with groups across the province, so we have two to three new zones that are going to open up for 2020 to two which include Fort McMurray in Lloydminster.

Karina Maximchuk: PSA Executive Director: PSA will be doing summer programming this year with 2 weeks of multi sport camps in person, a golf camp and a sledge hockey camp. Also starting up adaptive kayaking and adaptive cycling this spring.

Jen Sales - Wheelchair Sports Alberta: Developing a partnership with Cornhold Canada to start para cornhole. Red Deer is looking to do a wheelchair pickleball demo that they will be supporting with. Also looking to support bobsled Alberta with some grants to try to buy a para bobsled. Upcoming throws have a go day for para track and field. Crossfit organization in Red Deer is looking to get a para program running. Possibly a wheelchair rugby program starting up in Red Deer. WSA just closed their grant

requests and have over \$200,000 in requests come in. Working a sledge partnership in the Peace River region with PSA. Was able to get a deal on foggers to clean equipment so if people are interested please contact Jen as she was able to get them at a better rate than usual.

Leah Payton with the Government of Alberta Sport: Branch has been busy with roundtable discussions on moving forward into the next stages and how to keep organizations and rec facilities.

**Brian Torrence commented in chat:** “If anyone needs free (paper) masks (PPE) .....please email me at [Brian@everactive.org](mailto:Brian@everactive.org). Kids and adult sizes.”

Shanna Carrillo – Alberta Schools Athletics Association: Working with Special Olympics Alberta in the Unified Sports program. Being running virtual events all year. Looking towards the fall and seeing how to support teachers with in person programming again.