

# Treasures Family Newsletter

March 2024

## Important Dates

Mar 1	Elementary Education/Jr high OFF
Mar 8	Elementary Education/Jr high ATTEND
Mar 10	Daylight Saving <i>Spring Forward</i>
Mar 13	Renfrew's Helping Kids Soar Gala No Afternoon Classes
Mar 15	Elementary Education/Jr high OFF
Mar 22	Elementary Education/Jr high ATTEND Last Day of Classes <i>for all children</i>
Mar 25	Spring Break
Mar 26	Spring Break
Mar 27	Spring Break
Mar 28	Spring Break
Mar 29	Good Friday <i>Schools Closed</i> Spring Break

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25<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Helping  
Kids  
Soar Gala

Celebrating Renfrew's  
**50<sup>th</sup>**  
Anniversary

March 13, 2024  
*The Westin Calgary, 320 4 Ave SW*

**5:30pm:** Cocktails & Auction Viewing  
**7:00pm:** Dinner & Program  
*Dress: Semiformal/Black Tie Optional*

Special musical performance by  
*Tom Jackson*

**OUT!**

# Executive Message

## News from the Executive Team

### Renfrew's Gala is Sold Out!

Our event is sold out however there are still many ways families and friends can support the event. We have opened a portion of the silent auction for bidding - anyone can bid! We will release the remaining items on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Please use this link to access the site [www.renfrewgala2024.com](http://www.renfrewgala2024.com) and go in a view the items and place a bid. There are also opportunities for you to purchase raffle tickets to Turks and Caicos and/or 100 Bottles of Wine – good luck!

As you know our Gala will continue to support our Capital Campaign to raise funds to build our new Legacy School in Bears paw. This school will also provide an expansion of services to Junior and Senior

High School. Please join us and help us with our campaign as we Help Kids Soar - now to Grade 12!



Givergy Fundraising Website:

[Helping Kids SOAR Gala - Celebrating Renfrew's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary](http://www.givergy.com/Helping-Kids-SOAR-Gala-Celebrating-Renfrews-50th-Anniversary)



**Janice McTighe**  
Executive Director



**Kim LaCourse**  
Associate Executive Director



**Nicki Wilson**  
Associate Executive Director

### Thank You

Thank you sincerely for the many, many ways you help Renfrew and for trusting us with your children. Our doors are always open. We are available to meet with parents at any time:

**Janice McTighe**  
Executive Director

**T 403.219.5388 F 403.291.2499**  
[janicemctighe@renfreweducation.org](mailto:janicemctighe@renfreweducation.org)

**Kim LaCourse**  
Associate Executive Director  
**T 403.219.5386 F 403.291.2499**  
[kimlacourse@renfreweducation.org](mailto:kimlacourse@renfreweducation.org)

**Nicki Wilson**  
Associate Executive Director  
**T 403.291.5038 ext. 1643**  
[nickiwilson@renfreweducation.org](mailto:nickiwilson@renfreweducation.org)

**Warmest Regards,**

*Janice, Kim & Nicki*

### Transitioning to Other Programs

As we venture towards spring, we realize how fast this school year has gone. We know that many families from our Preschool Programs will leave us as their children reach school-age. If you require any support with this transition, please contact the Manager or Family Support Worker at your child's school. As well, students in our Elementary Education Program who have reached their final year in our classrooms will move on to new experiences. Again, please feel free to contact the Elementary Education Managers or Family Support Worker for assistance with this transition.

### Spring Break

March will go by quickly as we prepare for Spring Break. The last day of classes is March 22<sup>nd</sup>, and we will welcome children back on April 9<sup>th</sup>. We wish you and your family an enjoyable Spring Break.

### Parent Advisory Councils

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Parent Advisory Councils. They have put a lot of time and energy into attending meetings, planning wonderful events and fabulous fundraising opportunities. All funds raised at each location directly supports the activities/events for the children.

We know that the PACs have a few more exciting plans before the year ends, so please watch for notices to come home.

Please follow us on all social media platforms and take a moment to write a Google Review so we can share with the community the experiences of our families first-hand. Simply search for Renfrew Educational Services on Google and look for the "Write a review" button. Please share your happiness with our programs for others who are looking.



# Family Support



## COFFEE & CHAT

Family Support offers a variety of Coffee & Chat groups during the school year. This is a great opportunity to connect with other Renfrew parents & guardians!

Please reach out to the Family Support Worker at your Renfrew location if you require help with transportation.

### Telus Spark Science Centre

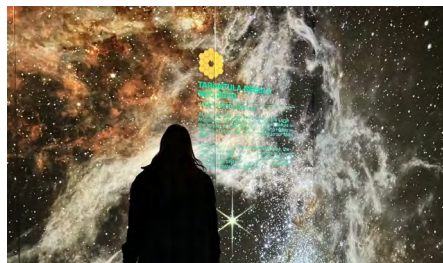
220 St George's Drive NE



Renfrew is pleased to announce that we are part of Telus Spark's Community Connections Program again this year! This partnership allows Renfrew to access a limited number of tickets to the Telus Spark Science Centre. If you are interested in exploring this exciting facility with your child(ren), please join us! Renfrew will provide a limited number of free admission tickets.

Come check out the newest exhibit in the Digital Immersion Gallery! This exhibit is called **SPACE: A Journey to the Moon and Beyond**.

"Fly through a technicolour nebula, kick up dust on the moon, and witness Saturn's rings up close in this out-of-this-world immersive experience. Explore the galaxy through the James Webb telescope, with science seamlessly woven into each scene, creating a unique space exploration encounter."  
*(From the Telus Spark website.)*



**PARKING:** Please note that you will be required to pay for parking (\$7/day) if you choose to park in the Telus Spark parking lot. You can pay for parking at the machine located beside the front doors or you can download the ParkPlus App and prepay for your parking session (Zone 8310).

- Adults must come with a child and children must be accompanied by an adult. Parents and guardians are responsible for transporting and supervising their children.
- If you require help with transportation, please contact the Family Support Worker at your Renfrew school.

**Registration is limited!**

**March 21, 2024**

Morning: 9:15am

Afternoon Group: 1:00pm

Please register by **March 14, 2024**

**April 23, 2024**

Morning Group: 9:15am

Afternoon Group: 1:00pm

Please register by **April 16, 2024**

Register for these sessions by emailing Sarah Livingstone at [sarahlivingstone@renfreweducation.org](mailto:sarahlivingstone@renfreweducation.org)

**In your email, please include the following information:**

- Which date are you registering for?
- Which group are you registering for? Morning or afternoon?
- Your name and the name of your Renfrew child
- The Renfrew location that your child attends
- How many people are attending
- The ages of all people attending
- If you are bringing a support aide

*Renfrew's Family Support Program is dedicated to the well-being of the families and children we serve. Our program offers a variety of family-centred services to facilitate connections and to support families in the home, neighbourhood and community. Every Renfrew school location has a Family Support Worker.*

### The Family Support Team

The Family Support team is available if you have questions, need resources, are looking for ways to increase your social connections or if you would just like to talk. The following is a list of the Family Support Workers and their contact information.

### Renfrew Schools



**Cory Francis**  
Family Support Worker  
**Team Lead**

Janice McTighe Centre  
403.291.5038 ext. 1351  
[cfrancis@renfreweducation.org](mailto:cfrancis@renfreweducation.org)



**Sarah Livingstone**  
Family Support Worker

Bowness Centre  
403.291.5038 ext. 1811  
[slivingstone@renfreweducation.org](mailto:slivingstone@renfreweducation.org)



**Emily Stevenson**  
Family Support Worker

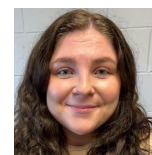
Child Development Centre  
403.291.5038 ext. 1244  
[estevenson@renfreweducation.org](mailto:estevenson@renfreweducation.org)



**Emily Voisey**  
Family Support Worker

Thomas W. Buchanan Centre  
403.291.5038 ext. 1606  
[evoisey@renfreweducation.org](mailto:evoisey@renfreweducation.org)

### First Nations



**Alexa Connolly**  
Family Support Worker

Bighorn Health Centre  
Mini Thni / Stoney Health (Morley)  
[aconnolly@renfreweducation.org](mailto:aconnolly@renfreweducation.org)

## Summer Programs!

It's hard to believe that summer is just around the corner! Registration has started for some summer programs and spots can fill up quickly. If you are interested in summer programming for your child(ren), check out these website links below:

### Between Friends Club (Camp Bonaventure)

- ▶ Registration is open!
- ▶ <https://betweenfriends.ab.ca/camp-bonaventure/>

### Vecova Summer Camps

- ▶ Registration is open!
- ▶ <https://vecova.ca/summer-camps/>

### Easter Seals Camp Horizon

- ▶ Registration is open for children ages 8 years and older. Easter Seals Alberta's Camp Horizon is a fully accessible camp located just outside of Bragg Creek, Alberta. Built in 1965, its mission is to provide children, youth, and adults with disabilities and medical conditions with life-changing outdoor recreation experiences.
- ▶ <https://easterseals.ab.ca/camp-programs-registration/>

### Trico Centre for Family Wellness

- ▶ Registration opens March 5<sup>th</sup> (members) and March 7<sup>th</sup> (public)
- ▶ <https://tricocentre.ca/activities/child-and-youth-programs/summer-day-camps/>

## News from Calgary Public Library



### March Break at the Library

Keeping little minds busy and entertained the entire March Break can be a struggle. Reading is a great option, but sometimes it's nice to do something different. For younger children, active learning is the primary objective at Calgary Public Library's Early Learning Centres. Children between 6 – 12 years may also enjoy the Questionarium. A dedicated space at six locations, children can explore activity tables, interactive furniture, and designed spaces. Find the location nearest you.

<https://calgarylibrary.ca/connect/students/>

### Building family bonds through literacy

Fostering literacy at home isn't just about decoding words, it's about building bonds and creating a love for learning for all ages. Whether it's family game night, virtual Storytime, or even cooking together, there are many ways to nurture the love of reading with your family.

Read more:

<https://calgarylibrary.ca/library-news/building-family-bonds-through-literacy/>

### Storyteller in Residence

Be part of a digital community story circle to tell your story. Visit a Community Story Booth with Marie Bryce, the Library's 2024 Storyteller in Residence. Record video or audio, or write your story down. Marie will use the recordings and words to create one final story project. Marie's storytelling style includes traditional tales, movement infused, spoken word, and video. She is passionate about community building and is taking the Storyteller in Residence project to Shawnessy, Central, Memorial Park, and Saddlestone libraries for this project.

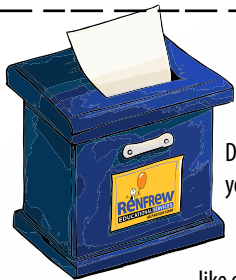
<https://calgarylibrary.ca/storyteller-in-residence/>



# Important Dates

March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Elementary Education/Jr high OFF	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 Elementary Education/Jr high ATTEND	9
10 Daylight Saving Spring Forward	11	12	13 Renfrew's Helping Kids Soar Gala No Afternoon Classes	14	15 Elementary Education/Jr high OFF	16
17	18	19	20	21	22 Elementary Education/Jr high ATTEND Last Day of Classes for all children	23
24	25 Spring Break	26 Spring Break	27 Spring Break	28 Spring Break	29 Good Friday Schools Closed Spring Break	30
31	<p><b>Coming up:</b></p> <p>Apr 1 - 8 Spring Break      Apr 19 Elementary Education/Jr high ATTEND            Apr 9 Classes Resume for all children      Apr 26 Elementary Education/Jr high OFF            Apr 12 Elementary Education/Jr high OFF</p>					



## Renfrew's Suggestion Box

Do you have an idea or suggestion you want to pass on to us? A question that you want answered? Something about Renfrew that you like or don't like?

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Email your suggestion to:  
**Renfrew@renfreweducation.org**

or use this form, remembering to include your name and contact information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# Disability Parent “Cheat Sheet”

Created by: PAC (Parent’s Action Committee) | Janice McTighe Centre Renfrew Educational Society

*Welcome Fellow Renfrew Parent! The aim of this cheat sheet is to provide parents who are new to Renfrew or new to their disability parenting journey some tips and info we wish we had known earlier! This list is by no means exhaustive, and it will continue to be updated on a yearly basis by PAC. This list is created by, and for, parents of kids with disabilities.*

## Disability Parenting Pro Tips

- Don’t Doom Scroll! Have an intention in mind when turning to Google before aimlessly Doom Scrolling you child’s medical condition(s). Know that much of what is available on Google, especially regarding information about rare diseases, is not always up to date or accurate.
- Seek out other parents of kids with disabilities. Building connections and friendships with parents navigating similar journey is essential to keeping the isolation and loneliness of disability parenting at bay. You are NOT alone!!! Your journey as a parent may not be what you expected, and it may look very different from your friends with typically developing children, and that is okay!
- Seek out Social Media Groups (Facebook, Instagram, etc) related to your child’s medical condition. The POACH Facebook Group ([Parents of Alberta Children’s Hospital](#)) is a very active and informative group. There are also local FB groups for finding respite/therapy aide providers that can be useful ([Calgary Respite Connection for Special Needs Children](#), [Connecting Autism Professionals & Families - Calgary & Area](#), [Calgary Therapy/Developmental Aide Connections for Special Needs Children](#), [Reach Higher Support Services](#)).

## Books About Disability Parenting

- Raising a Rare Girl - Heather Lanier
- My Own Blood - Ashley Bristowe
- Special - Antidotes to the obsessions that come with raising a child with a disability - Melanie Dimmitt
- Untethered: Growing Up With My Autistic Son - Carolyn Cooper, RN, PHD
- The Boy Who Could Run But Could Not Walk - Karen Pape, MD
- Allies & Obstacles: Disability Activism and Parents of Children with Disabilities - Allison C. Carey, Pamela Block, & Richard K. Scotch
- Ghost Boy - Martin Pistorious

## Podcasts About Disability Parenting

- **Rare Disease Podcasts:** *Once Upon a Gene, The Rare Life, The Power of Community, Rare in Common, RareCase - The Global Genes Podcast*
- **Cerebral Palsy Podcasts:** *My Life Without Limits (CP Alberta), Let's Talk CP - Cerebral Palsy Foundation, ParentWise*
- **Autism Podcasts:** *Affect Autism, Sharing the Spectrum: An Autism Canada Podcast, ASD Engage, Moms Talk Autism, Autism Family Resource Podcast, Quirky & Autistic Parenting Podcast*
- **Speech Language (SLP) Podcasts:** *Speech & Language Kids Podcast, Speech Science Podcast, Talking with Tech, Strength in Words, Conversations in Speech Pathology*

## Local Resources

### CP Kids & Families

<https://www.calgarycp.org/>

This organization provides services for any child with a disability, not just Cerebral Palsy. Their very affordable Adapted Bike Program provides adapted bikes to children of all ages and abilities, and they also offer Learn to Ride classes year-round (indoor and outdoor). CP Kids & Families also runs annual summer camps, an infamous Movement & Music Class, & offers an equipment rental program & grant program!

### Unlocking Hope Counselling

<https://www.unlockinghope.ca/>

Emily Jackson is a social worker, parent of a child with a disability, & a former Renfrew parent! She provides counselling for parents of kids with disabilities, and she is an amazing resource & support for disability parents. FSCD provides funding for parents for counselling and psychological services, and Emily can direct bill to FSCD. Unlocking Hope Counselling is affiliated with CP Kids & Families.

### Vecova Recreation Centre

<https://vecova.ca/>

Vecova offers a wide range of recreational programming for people with disabilities, including kids! They have a warm therapeutic pool, and also offer a variety of programming. They also welcome kids to practice in their walkers or wheel chairs in their gyms or around their building. This is an inclusive and welcoming space for families with children with disabilities.

### Autism Calgary Family Swim

<https://autismcalgary.com/swimming/>

With the purchase of an annual membership, Autism Calgary offers free swimming at Vecova on Sunday afternoons throughout the year for children with autism & their families (you can attend a maximum of twice per month, subject to ticket availability). The number of participants is kept lower than typical pool capacity to keep the experience sensory-friendly. It is a welcoming environment.

### **SMILE Therapy**

<https://smiletherapy.ca/>

Is an innovative private therapy clinic specializing in children with developmental delays. They provide a wide range of services (occupational therapy, speech language therapy, and physiotherapy), including therapy intensives, group classes, & access to a Trexxo Robotic. They can bill directly to FSCD for BDS and Specialized Services contracts, or to health benefit plans.

### **CP Alberta**

<https://www.cpalberta.com/>

CP Alberta offers a Hydrotherapy Class at Vecova Pool. Your child does not need to have a diagnosis of cerebral palsy in order to access CP Alberta's programs. They also offer adapted dance programs, as well as parent meet up play groups for new parents and their infants/toddlers with disabilities.

### **Hope for Cerebral Palsy**

<https://www.hopeforcerebralpalsy.com/>

Provides funding for early intervention intensive therapy for kids diagnosed with cerebral palsy (occupational therapy, physiotherapy or speech therapy as needed for children 5 and under).

### **Access 2 Card - Easter Seals Canada**

<https://access2card.ca/>

Allows caregivers (parents, aides, etc.) to access certain venues for free with payment of the child's admission (ex: The Zoo, The Science Centre, & Heritage Park). Some venues (eg. Calaway Park) offer a skip-the-line option for children who cannot manage large crowds & long waits but would otherwise enjoy the experience. This makes family outings more accessible & affordable

## **Social Media Resources**

### **Facebook**

- [Parent's of Alberta Children's Hospital \(POACH\)](#)
- [Rare Disease Day](#)

### **Instagram**

- [Amanda Atkins](#) - Parent of a Child with a Disability & Psychologist
- [Rare Disease Day Official](#)



## **Dates of Awareness & Significance**

- 2nd Monday in February International Epilepsy Day
- 2nd Sunday in February Autism Sunday
- Last day in February Rare Disease Day
- March 21st World Down Syndrome Day
- March 26th International Purple Day for Epilepsy Awareness
- April 2nd World Autism Awareness Day
- 3rd Thursday of May Global Accessibility Awareness Day
- May 14th Apraxia Awareness Day
- May 26th-June 1st Canadian AccessAbility Week
- June 13th World Albinism Day
- September 7th World Duchenne Awareness Day
- September 8th World Cystic Fibrosis Day
- September 9th International Cerebral Palsy Day
- September 9th International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Day
- September 19th Aortic Disease Awareness Day
- September 23rd International Day of Sign Languages
- September 25th International Ataxia Awareness Day
- Last week of September International Week of the Deaf
- October National Disability Employment Month
- October 6th World Cerebral Palsy Day
- 2nd Thursday of October World Sight Day
- October 12th World Mental Health Day
- October 25th World Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day
- November Indigenous Disability Awareness Month
- November 1st-7th Canadian Down Syndrome Week
- December 3rd International Day of Disabled Persons

## **Welcome to Holland**

- By Emily Perl Kingsley

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So, you must go out and buy new guidebooks. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away...because the loss of that dream is a very, very significant loss.

But...if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things... about Holland.