

### ***How can I, or my child with autism spectrum disorder, obtain work experience?***

Early exposure to work through volunteering can be an important first step in getting a job and exploring one's career interests and abilities. Many individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) graduate from high school without any work or volunteer experience and as a result, face great difficulty obtaining or maintaining a paid job in their chosen field. Volunteering provides real-time training and is an excellent way to learn work skills and develop a resume for obtaining paid employment.

- Consider asking family and community members about possible volunteer openings at their place of work.
- Assume, or assign, responsibilities at home such as taking out the trash, washing the dishes, and feeding/walking pets in order to teach appropriate work habits.
- If you receive FSCD or PDD funding, utilize your developmental aide or support worker to assist you, or your child, in obtaining and maintaining volunteer work until you or they are as independent as possible in those tasks.
- As an opportunity to practice self-advocacy, call local businesses and organizations to ask about possible volunteer openings.

## RESOURCES

The Resource Centre (a Sinneave Family Foundation initiative) does not endorse or guarantee the exhaustive, complete, accurate or up-to-date nature of information provided and does not assume any risk for the outcome of information or referrals provided.

### **Autism Asperger's Friendship Society (AAFS)**

AAFS provides respite and social and recreational programs to people with ASD. Volunteer opportunities involve peer mentorship for the individuals accessing their services.

**Phone:** 403-246-7383  
**Email:** [info@aafscalgary.com](mailto:info@aafscalgary.com)  
**Website:** [aafscalgary.wildapricot.org](http://aafscalgary.wildapricot.org)

### **Bethany Care Centre**

Volunteering involves accompanying residents to church services, playing the organ or piano, visiting with residents, assisting at mealtimes, bringing pets in to visit, accompanying residents and staff on community outings, helping with yard work and gardening, or working in the tuck shop.

**Phone:** 403.284.6047  
**Website:** [bethanyseniors.com/get-involved/volunteer](http://bethanyseniors.com/get-involved/volunteer)  
**Application:** <https://app.betterimpact.com/PublicEnterprise/f91b76ec-8556-42d0-8709-1fabb7975f83>

### **Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids Society**

Volunteer opportunities include make lunches, buy groceries, and delivering lunches to schools. Group or independent volunteer work is available. Volunteering at the Main Kitchen (433 Macleod Tr. SE: Downtown Calgary) involves making sandwiches, preparing vegetables and snacks for lunches, as well as helping to clean up the work area.

**Phone:** 403.264.7979  
**Address:** 315, 223 – 12th Avenue SW, Calgary, AB T2R 0G9  
**Email:** [info@bb4ck.org](mailto:info@bb4ck.org)  
**Website:** [bb4ck.org](http://bb4ck.org)

## Calgary Food Bank

Volunteering includes sorting food and distributing food hampers.

**Phone:** 403.253.2059  
**Address:** 5000 – 11th Street SE, Calgary, AB T2H 2Y5  
**Email:** [info@calgaryfoodbank.com](mailto:info@calgaryfoodbank.com)  
**Website:** [calgaryfoodbank.com](http://calgaryfoodbank.com)

## Meow Foundation

The MEOW Foundation is a volunteer operated program that works to find homes for stray cats. There are a number of roles including Adoption Centre cleaners, foster parents and event coordinators.

**Phone:** 403.230.6033  
**Address:** 105 – 12th Avenue SE, Calgary, AB T2G 1A1  
**Email:** [volunteer@meowfoundation.com](mailto:volunteer@meowfoundation.com)  
**Website:** [meowfoundation.com/get-involved/volunteer](http://meowfoundation.com/get-involved/volunteer)

## Telus Sparks Science Centre

Volunteer opportunities vary based on season. You can attend an information session prior to applying for a position to learn about the organization, available positions, and benefits and expectations for volunteers. This opportunity requires a security clearance through the Calgary Police Service, two references, and completion of an online volunteer form. Opportunities include programming, prototyping (testing potential activities and exhibits), working at the front of house as a greeter, assisting with special events and workshops, administration and more.

**Phone:** 403.817.6800  
**Address:** 220 St. George Drive NE, Calgary, AB T2E 5T2  
**Email:** [info@sparkscience.ca](mailto:info@sparkscience.ca)  
**Website:** [sparkscience.ca/support/volunteer](http://sparkscience.ca/support/volunteer)

## The Calgary Zoo

The zoo welcomes both adult volunteers, and youth aged 14-17 for their KidzKonnnect program. They look for those with an interest in conservation and nature, animals, plants and people. Volunteers must be willing to commit to a year of learning, teaching and making meaningful connections. Opportunities include connecting with visitors in various exhibits, greeting visitors at Front of House, and assisting with special events and gardening.

**Phone:** 403.232.9300  
**Address:** 1300 Zoo Road NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7V6  
**Website:** [calgaryzoo.com/volunteering](http://calgaryzoo.com/volunteering)

## CalgaryArea.com

This online resource helps to locate volunteer opportunities throughout Calgary.

**Website:** [calgaryarea.com/index.php?p=volunteer](http://calgaryarea.com/index.php?p=volunteer)

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