

### ***How can I, or my loved one on the autism spectrum, 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. People with volunteer work experience may have an easier time obtaining or maintaining a paid job. Volunteering provides real-time training and is an excellent way to learn work skills and develop a resume for obtaining paid employment while giving back to your community.

- Take on responsibilities at home such as taking out the trash, washing the dishes, and feeding/walking pets in order to practice work habits.
- If you receive FSCD or PDD funding, utilize your developmental aide or support worker to help you obtain and maintain volunteer work. You can work together to gradually build independence in volunteer roles at a pace that suits you.
- If you receive PDD funding, many agency day programs can support you to volunteer in the community in a group-supported activity or individually with a support worker. Ask your PDD worker about the details.
- Consider asking family and community members about possible volunteer openings at their place of work.
- Build on your self-advocacy skills by calling or emailing local organizations to ask about possible volunteer opportunities. If they have a website, you can look there for information about volunteer roles, applications, and requirements.
- Many organizations have dedicated volunteer programs. It might be easier to land a volunteer role if they already have volunteer programs in the organization. There may be an application and/or interview process. You may need to provide references and/or complete a Police Record Check depending on the requirements.

## 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. Volunteer roles, openings, and applications are available on their website.

**Phone:** 403.284.6047

**Website:** [bethany seniors.com/get-involved/volunteer](http://bethany seniors.com/get-involved/volunteer)

## **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. Volunteer roles and applications are available on their website.

**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)

## **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)

## **Calgary Food Bank**

Volunteering includes sorting food and distributing food hampers. Volunteer applications are available on their website.

**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)

## **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. Volunteer applications are available on their website.

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

## **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. Applications are available on their website.

**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)

## **Propellus**

An online search tool for hundreds of volunteer positions in the Calgary area. Short term, long term, under a variety of search categories.

**Website:** [propellus.org/](http://propellus.org/)

### **Society for the Treatment of Autism (STA) - Diverse Volunteer Opportunities**

Is a supported group program that provides opportunities to volunteer in different settings and develop employment skills. The program has 12 sessions, 2.5 hours each. Costs associated. Contact the Program Coordinator via the contact information below for registration and additional details.

**Phone:** 403.991.7823  
**Address:** 404 94 Ave SE, Calgary, AB T2J 0E8  
**Email:** GreigJ@sta-ab.com  
**Website:** [autism.ca](http://autism.ca)

### **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)

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