

Sinneave
FAMILY FOUNDATION

2021 IMPACT REPORT

The Voices of Impact
Collaborating, Innovating, Sharing





President's Message

The Sinneave Family Foundation has evolved in its approach by embracing valuable lessons learned through a full year of virtual operations in 2021. We will continue to reduce barriers to access through technology, remaining mindful of when in-person service and connection is most valuable. We will also continue to listen and enhance our understanding of how to include the perspectives of those with lived experience as we work collectively to improve outcomes in education, employment, and housing. We hope the stories shared in this report help bring to life to how impact grows when we work together to improve futures for autistic youth and adults.

I want to acknowledge and thank Sinneave's staff, board of directors, autistic advisors, and community partners for their respective contributions to our collective achievements and impact in 2021.

Sinneave's Strategy

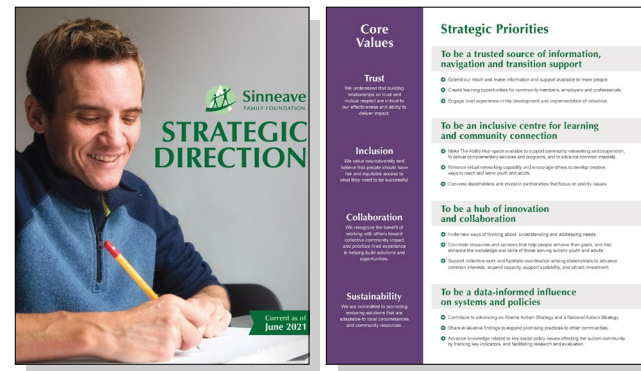
The Sinneave Family Foundation (Sinneave) is an operating foundation that is committed to enhancing opportunities for autistic youth and adults to live, learn, work, and thrive in their communities and realize their desired futures.

Through our work we have learned that sustainable solutions must be embedded within existing systems.

We collaborate with various stakeholders to improve outcomes for autistic youth and adults. Our organization facilitates innovation, learning, connection, and the measurement of shared impact through collective work. We operate out of our Calgary-based facility, The Ability Hub, where we proactively engage with individuals, families, organizations, communities, and systems to:

- Provide reliable information and navigation to programs, services, and supports.
- Create barrier-free access to virtual or hybrid learning and connection activities such as workshops, programs, online resources, and courses.
- Connect interested parties to collaborate in transforming challenges into opportunities.
- Amplify the voices of those with lived experience, creating opportunities to share perspectives and contribute to the innovative process.
- Invite new ways of thinking and co-create, test, and evaluate innovative approaches to addressing the needs of autistic youth and adults.
- Identify lessons learned and promising practices to share with others.

The Sinneave Family Foundation invests in a portfolio of purposeful community based initiatives and high impact projects focused on improving outcomes in education, employment, and housing. We contribute experience in braided funding models as well as project and data management skills that support the implementation and evaluation of our collective efforts.



Our Team



Advancing Inclusion, Equity, Diversity and Accessibility (IDEA)

Sinneave strives to be a leading example of an inclusive employer, facility operator, community partner, and social innovator. Advancing IDEA is a journey and we remain committed to the following staff-identified priorities: Leadership and Accountability, Goals and Action, Education and Training, and Measurement and Evaluation.

In 2021, staff completed an e-course entitled Being a Mindful Employee: An Orientation to Psychological Health and Safety and participated in a specially tailored two-part training series called Anti-Oppressive Communication in Action. We know that training alone is not enough for change, but it is an important starting point to enhance our understanding.

We aim to meet the accessibility needs of our employees and target audiences by using closed captioning and other accessibility tools, and by complying with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to the extent possible. To aid us in improving our communication, we commissioned Autistic experts to prepare a **Communications Guide** that offers succinct and actionable ideas and strategies to employ in our work, and to share.

Our ongoing journey to advance IDEA within and beyond our organization is focused on promoting safety, respect, and belonging, while amplifying voices and empowering people through opportunity. We seek to address systemic and structural barriers to well-being by operationalizing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility across all areas of our work and by promoting leadership and accountability.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we gratefully acknowledge that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

Post-Secondary Education

Individuals who pursue education beyond high school are more likely to experience greater financial and employment security. The number of autistic adults seeking a post-secondary education is increasing and many face barriers to achieving their educational and professional goals.

Exploring areas of interest, applying to schools, accessing appropriate supports, and developing relationships with student peers are just a few of the elements that need to come together for students to thrive in their post-secondary education experience.

Following are some 2021 highlights of how our collaborative work supported post-secondary success.

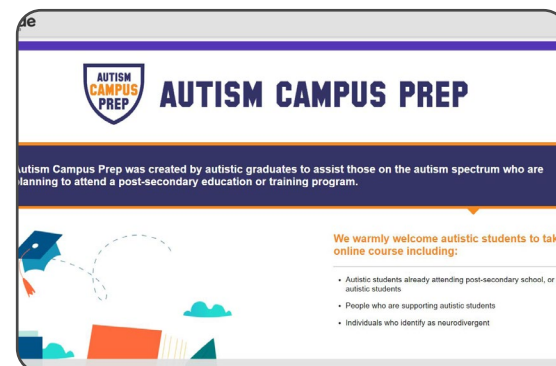
Connecting People to Resources

In 2021, we provided Information and Navigation services and learning opportunities for autistic youth and adults with continued education goals.

- 12 People attended a **Launch into Life!** virtual workshop to help answer the question “is continued education for me?”
- 20 Individuals registered in our **Launch + Skills** program with goals of applying to post-secondary, navigating campus life, and building skills of independence.
- \$10k Awarded through our **Richard Haskayne Post-Secondary Scholarship** for autistic Albertans pursuing a post high-school education, training, or vocational program.

Innovating Solutions

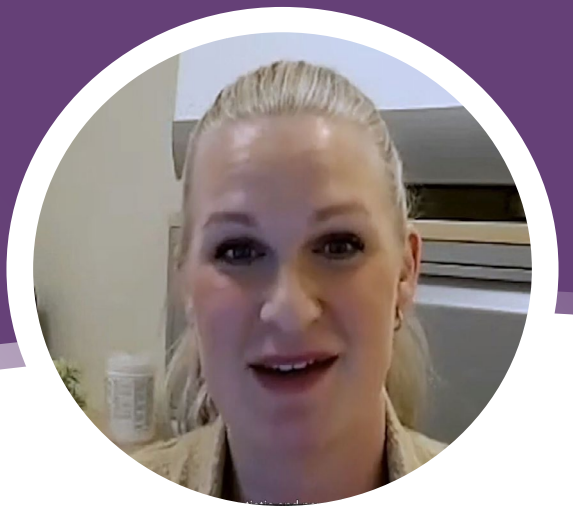
In early 2021, we worked with a Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) to co-create and offer an online course entitled Autism Campus Prep, through AIDE Canada’s online learning platform and the UCalgary Student Success Centre webpage.



AIDE Canada’s Online Learning Platform

“This is helpful for the University as we provide outreach for things like workshops or strategies and services as a whole... it is important for neurodiverse students to feel supported and represented in their schools and workplaces. We aren’t providing equitable services if we don’t support Neurodiverse students.”

- Neurodiversity Support Advisor, University of Calgary



UCalgary Student Success Centre Webpage

Collaborating

Community engagement for the mutually beneficial creation and exchange of knowledge and resources is increasingly the norm with post-secondary colleges and universities in Alberta. In 2021, Sinneave initiated targeted conversations with University of Calgary Offices of Advancement, Student Experience and Teaching & Learning to explore ways to enhance supports for transition to post-secondary learning and to enrich the on-campus student experience.

We also collaborated with a multi-institutional group of researchers to secure a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Engagement Grant that aims to ensure that students are supported on college and university campuses, and that practices, resources and structures on campuses enable autistic students to enjoy a strong quality of campus life and attain educational success.

Sinneave continued to work collaboratively with **UCalgary’s Student Wellness Services** to provide transition supports to students entering post-secondary schooling, to better understand current supports on campus, to make positive changes in services, and improve accessibility through the implementation of the new position, Neurodiversity Support Advisor – Student Success Centre.

Informing Systems Change

In 2021, Sinneave and UCalgary began to lay the foundation for an initiative aimed at enhancing work-integrated learning opportunities for neurodiverse students.

Our Shared Impact

- 51 People returned to school through our collective work with regional partners.

Employment

There is a strong connection between meaningful work and overall well-being. In the most recent Canadian Survey on Disability (2017), 33% of autistic people between the ages of 20 and 64 reported being employed, and 14% identified employment as their only source of income. We have learned that there is a complex ecosystem of supports, skills, and strategies that can help people gain employment and thrive in the workplace.

The skills involved in creating a resume, searching for a job, interviewing, and time and stress management, as well as access to a job market with inclusive employers, are fundamentals that support employment success.

Sinneave takes an ecosystem approach to improving employment outcomes for autistic youth and adults by combining our partnerships and collaborations with innovative skill building programs and experiential learning opportunities. Below are some 2021 highlights of our work on improving employment outcomes.

Connecting People to Resources

Through our Information and Navigation service we connected autistic youth and adults to programs and resources to support their employment goals.

41

Individuals were registered in our **Launch + Skills program** to focus on specific employment-related skills.

516

EmploymentWorks program participants were provided access to curated LinkedIn Learning courses for on-demand education to support their employment readiness.

10

Video previews and job sampling vignettes were created to provide opportunities to learn about typical day-to-day activities on the job.

Innovating Solutions

Following the success of the EmploymentWorks program virtual expansion in 2020, Employment & Social Development Canada increased funding for Sinneave and our project partners to serve an additional 150 participants in 2021, in recognition of the ongoing need for online training opportunities.

Concurrently, Sinneave embraced the opportunity to sustainably improve access to employment readiness supports by leading the collaborative development of a self-paced eLearning version of the EmploymentWorks program. We engaged a group of EmploymentWorks graduates as advisors in the Fall to inform the development of an **accessible eLearning course**, with a targeted launch in the Spring of 2022.

“

My hopes for the future are that we successfully improve the EmploymentWorks program to be even better at including and even better at teaching.

- EmploymentWorks Graduate, Lived Experience Advisor

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“I find that it's very involved in the learning and adaptability of, especially those on the spectrum...it's really nice to connect with those who are similar, and this enhances that.”

- EmploymentWorks Graduate and Lived Experience Advisor



322

Individuals participated in the EmploymentWorks program to develop the skills necessary to obtain employment, through 7 partner organizations across Canada.

481

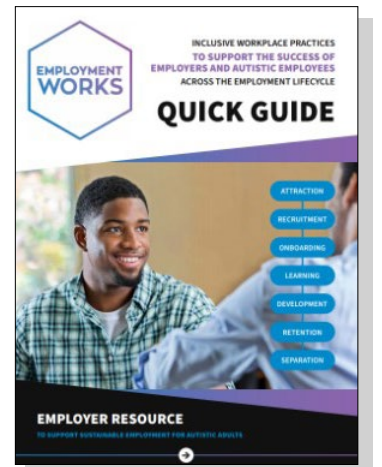
Participants and graduates of the EmploymentWorks program engaged in the labour market.

Sharing What We Have Learned

Early in the year, Sinneave released the **Success in the Workplace Employer Toolkit: Strategies from Autistic Employees**, a comprehensive collection of resources to meet the needs of autistic employees and those who hire them.

Employers asked for help in synthesizing the information, and we responded by creating the **Employer Quick Guide**, which contains highlights from the Employer Toolkit.

For employers seeking a better understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace, **#ExperienceAutism** paired a Sinneave professional with an autistic adult to discuss specific principles and strategies to support successful workplace relationships.



Informing Systems Change

During Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, we hosted a multi-stakeholder hybrid panel to discuss **change imperatives and opportunities** within our sphere of influence to meet three desired outcomes: more persons with disabilities employed, more inclusive workplaces, and enhanced collaborative partnerships with community partners.

Our Shared Impact

250

Individuals employed.

Housing & Supports

A key milestone of adulthood is to live as independently as possible, yet about 70% of the autistic adults who connected with us in 2021 continue to live at home with their parents.

Access to appropriate and affordable housing, an income, skills of independence, access to variable supports and social networks are examples of what can help people who may be living independently for the first time to thrive.

Below are some 2021 highlights of our work to improve outcomes in housing and related supports.

Connecting People to Resources

Through our **Information and Navigation** services we connected people directly with resources to support them on their housing journey.

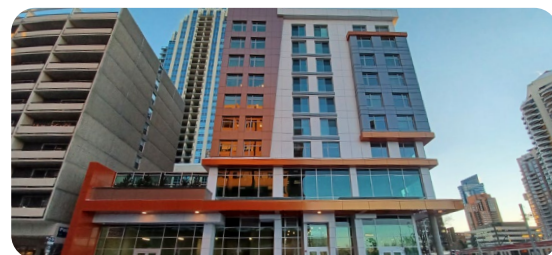
- 20** Individuals registered in our **Launch + Skills** program to build independent living skills.
- 187** People accessed our **Thinking about Moving Guide**, which provides a step-by-step process for adults who are starting to consider independent living.
- 92** Individuals were connected with our **Housing Specialist** to explore current local housing opportunities.
- \$6k** Provided through our **Directors Award** to support housing-related costs such as sensory adaptations, or assistance with one-time costs such as damage deposits.

In response to landlords' interest in neurodiversity, **#ExperienceAutism** connected interested parties with a Sinneave professional and a person with lived experience to discuss strategies that support positive landlord/tenant relationships.

Innovating Solutions

Sinneave proactively sought opportunities to collaborate with community partners, and provided facilitation and project management support to advance two new housing projects that resulted in 25 new homes for autistic Calgarians.

2021 Projects:



Legacy on 5th

An affordable housing development in downtown Calgary, owned and operated by HomeSpace, is now home to 20 adults who have light levels of support provided by Autism Calgary and social activities planned by Autism Asperger's Friendship Society.

"Everyone is completely unique and different, and getting to know the person and who they are, and what they want, and what they need is key in the success of this [collaboration]."

- Autism Asperger's Friendship Society, Social Support Provider



Bishop's Manor

An affordable housing development in the Bridgeland community of Calgary, owned and operated by Forward Housing, is now home to 5 adults who either do not require formalized support or who bring their own supports with them.

Sharing What We Have Learned

Evaluation of new housing projects is key to our collective ability to replicate successes, and to learn from and address things that did not go as well.

On National Housing Day, November 22, 2021, we hosted a community partners' panel webinar entitled **Innovative Collaborations: Autism and Affordable Housing**, featuring the Legacy on 5th project. We also developed a webinar summary from the project to share our experiences more broadly.

Informing Systems Change

In 2021, we participated with stakeholders from across Canada in the national **Housing through an Autism Lens Solutions Lab**. We heard perspectives from hundreds of autistics, their parents, support providers, and professionals about the "double cliff" in the lifespan of autistic adults where significant vulnerabilities arise. The first cliff occurring in early adulthood and the second cliff occurring during the transition to seniorhood.

Below are some key project metrics:



Our Shared Impact



Collaborating

The Sinneave Family Foundation understands the importance of collaborating with others to address gaps in services, improve resource accessibility, and enhance opportunities for autistic youth and adults to thrive. We believe a connected community and cross-sector collaboration helps us respond to emerging needs in supporting the well-being and success of those we serve.

The following are highlights of how we collaborated on work to address systemic barriers.

Autism Society Alberta

At the end of 2020, Sinneave partnered with Autism Society Alberta and provincial leaders to create and administer a survey that enabled Autistics and families across the province to share concerns and opportunities related to program accessibility, service quality, and critical gaps in policy, programs and services. Findings from this report supported a successful grant application to establish **Autism Alberta's network of Family Resource Centers** across the province.

This year, Sinneave complemented this new provincial grant with funding to help address capacity needs in rural communities, specifically the Peace River Region, and to acquire instructor training that enhanced resource capacity and education delivery in mental health first aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, and sexual health training.

“

...this support is snowballing; especially the grant to do train the trainer... working together we provide training province-wide now, which is critical in rural areas where they have nothing.

- Carlos Pereira, Resource and Training Manager, Autism Edmonton

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Autism Society of Edmonton Area

Sinneave provided a grant for Autism Edmonton to purchase computers and ancillary equipment for additional staff members brought onto the team to support new and expanding activities. Technology additions and upgrades have supported Autism Edmonton to deliver:

2000 Wellness calls to their membership.

300 Social events (both in person and virtually).

50 Virtual support group sessions.

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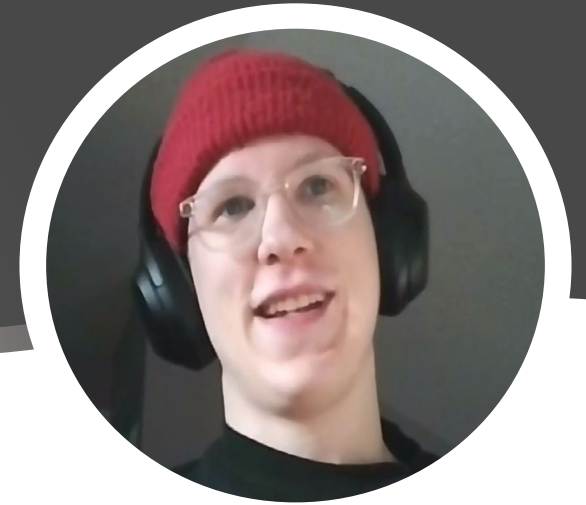
From the onset of [the] pandemic Sinneave has funded us for all the technology we needed to go virtual and continue to run Autism Edmonton safely.

- Morine Rossi, Programs Lead, Autism Edmonton

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“The impact of this work is that it will reduce the prejudice that is around people who are neurodivergent or have autism. By talking about these things and creating policies for these people, it will allow these people to achieve everything that they are meant to.”

- Autistic Self-Advocate



Autism and/or Intellectual Disability Knowledge Exchange Network (AIDE Canada)

Sinneave continued to co-lead the AIDE Canada Prairie Hub in collaboration with Autism Calgary, playing an important role in influencing the development of more accessible resources for autistics and families including communities that may be isolated geographically and culturally. In addition to hosting three webinars on the AIDE Canada platform, we also created and shared the Launch into Life! Quickstart Planning Tool, an accessible resource to help people think about life after high school and to feel more confident and better prepared for the future as they transition to adulthood.



Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance (CASDA)

Sinneave remained an active member and strong supporter of CASDA and the work the organization does to coordinate national conversations about autism, and bring community voices to the federal government to help guide the development of a National Autism Strategy. In 2021, Sinneave:



- Participated in **policy working groups** that have brought voice and priorities from Alberta to leaders at the federal level on issues related to housing, employment and access to supports and services;
- Joined in developing an **Autism Data Collaborative** that brings together data scientists, researchers, clinicians, advocates and policy makers to create a comprehensive and integrated data collaborative for autism and other disabilities; and
- Committed funding to support a platform for autistic people to contribute to policy discussions through the **Canadian Journal of Autism Equity**, a novel autistic-led ejournal that focuses on critical issues in a variety of equity settings and how they intersect with public policy.

Systems Change

Sharing Experiences and Expertise to Inform Public Policy

Sinneave demonstrated its ongoing commitment to advancing an Alberta Autism Strategy and a National Autism Strategy by contributing experience, expertise, in-kind support and funding to a variety of conversations, working groups, and policy briefs related to autism and disability policy.

The following are some highlights of Sinneave's systems engagement in 2021.

Collaborating to Create a National Autism Strategy



The **Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)** is the government agency in charge of creating a **National Autism Strategy**.

The **Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS)** has been contracted by PHAC to report on the science of autism. This report is due in Winter 2022.

The Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) implemented a national framework for consultation to gather information from stakeholders. Sinneave contributed to this engagement process by:

- Participating in policy discussions related to Social Inclusion and Economic Inclusion.
- Sharing views and experiences through an online engagement hub survey.
- Contributing to community conversations about how services and programs could better meet the needs of Autistic people and promote inclusion.
- Encouraging and informing autistic Albertans and families how to participate in opinion surveys and focus groups.
- Contributing to the development of policy recommendations as members of working groups convened and facilitated by the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance.

The CAHS' **autism assessment report** will be submitted to the Public Health Agency of Canada and publicly released in early 2022.



The knowledge and experience The Sinneave Family Foundation has brought to the table for the development of a National Autism Strategy has impacted the strategy at the national level. They have supported autistics and trainees across the country to inspire them to carry on the work of autism equity and advocacy.

- Jonathan Lai, Executive Director, CASDA



"Sinneave's leadership in outreach activities with provincial-supported employment networks have advanced employment as a critical focus area of Autism Alberta's Alliance."

- Lyndon Parakin, Vice President, Autism Society Alberta

Connecting Stakeholders to Advance Policy Dialogue

During Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, we **convened a panel of thought leaders** from across Alberta for a discussion to identify opportunities and change imperatives that would improve employment outcomes for Albertans with disabilities. Participants provided compelling rationale for the Government of Alberta to enhance its new Jobs Now program with a renewed Employment First Strategy that recommits to:

- Supporting Albertans with disabilities to obtain, maintain and advance in employment;
- Working with employers to create more inclusive workplaces; and
- Enhancing service provider partnerships and networks.

In collaboration with UCalgary, Sinneave engaged health policy students to analyze barriers to employment created by the link between income support and health benefits in the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program in Alberta.

The students used the National Collaborating Centre for Health Public Policy's **Framework for Analyzing Public Policies** to assess the status quo as well as three policy alternatives against the following six dimensional criteria to formulate a **recommended policy alternative** that will inform Sinneave's engagement in related policy dialogue:



Equity & Inclusion



Acceptability



Effectiveness



Cost



Feasibility

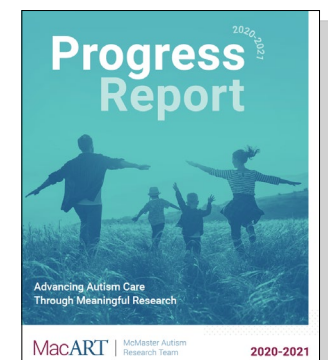


Unintended Consequences

Supporting Innovation in Evidence Generation

Sinneave was pleased to collaborate with **McMaster Autism Research Team (MacART)**, which serves as a platform for scientists, policy makers, trainees, educators and community advocates to come together with Autistics and their families to conduct meaningful research.

Sinneave also contributed to the establishment of the McMaster Children's Hospital Chair in Autism and Neurodevelopment, which sets a roadmap to build on MacART's ongoing collaboration.



2021 Shared Outcomes



51

Individuals Returned to School



250

Individuals Employed



43

Affordable Housing Units for Autistic Adults

We worked directly and virtually with our community to build capacity.

We offered information and navigation services, created innovative skill development programs, provided learning opportunities, and supported the autism community through scholarships and grants.

Direct Service

- 676 People served through Information & Navigation
- 126 New Enrollments in our programs
- 805 Skills Coaching Sessions provided
- 339 Attendees at Workshops
- 36 Attendees in Skills Groups

Community Support

- 23 Recipients of Directors Award totalling \$23,000
- 5 Scholarships totalling \$15,000
- 6 Leveraged grants to organizations totalling \$118,200
- 3 Event sponsorships totalling \$11,600
- 2 Local events supported totalling \$3425

Our Reach

- 34629 Website visitors
- 2090 Facebook followers
- 574 Twitter followers
- 445 LinkedIn followers
- 1782 Newsletter subscribers



The Directors Award will be able to help me get set up in my very first place, it will give me a sense of accomplishment and pride, it will eliminate stress and worry throughout the moving process, and will also provide me with items that I can hold onto for years to come.

- Directors Award Recipient



Having a better independent living situation would be hugely helpful to my mental and physical health.

- Directors Award Recipient



Board Chair's Message



Mike Lambert, Board Chair

In 2021, it was my distinct pleasure to chair the Board of Directors of The Sinneave Family Foundation as the organization continued to create opportunities for autistic adults throughout a full year in virtual operations.

Our experienced and engaged Board of Directors worked with the executive team to refresh the Strategic Direction. The journey continues, and in 2022 the leadership and staff will apply the lessons learned through adapting to pandemic conditions, while furthering collaborations and partnerships that expand Sinneave's reach and impact in reducing barriers and enhancing opportunities.

In 2021, three Board members retired from the Board: Rick and Brune Sinneave; and Bill Karny. On behalf of the Board I want to express a heartfelt thanks to each of them for their many years of committed service and guidance. They remain our biggest supporters.

We value the important contributions of autistic individuals, their families, our staff, community partners and governments as we work to improve outcomes in education, employment and housing for autistic Canadians. Thank you to each of you for your roles and commitment to our shared impact.



Cobus van de Venter, Dawn Leonard Gaudreault, Evan Spiropoulos, Garry McCulloch (Investment Committee Chair), Susan Mallon, Ian Holloway (Governance and Program Committee Chair), Laurene Beloin, Melinda Noyes, Mike Lambert (Board Chair), Roby Brar (Audit and Risk Committee Chair), Scott Morrow

Community Expertise



Katherine O'Neill (Governance and Program Committee), Paul Constance (Audit and Risk Committee)

Retired Board Members



Bill Karny, Brune Sinneave, Rick Sinneave



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