



## **Winnifred Stewart Association**

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Does WSA provide services to children?**

The Association does not provide services to children. Individuals are eligible for services only if they are over the age of 18. There is the perception that the Association provides services to children based on memory of the Winnifred Stewart School, which operated from 1953-1982. It was the first school in Canada for children with developmental disabilities and filled a huge need for education for this group until the public education system integrated children with disabilities in the 1980s. The Association began providing services to adults in 1982 once the children from Winnifred Stewart School left to be a part of the regular education system.

#### **How is WSA funded?**

The Association receives on average 71 per cent of its annual budget from the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Board- Edmonton Region for salaries and limited operating expenses. The remaining 29 per cent is derived from program fees, room and board payments, product sales and contracts, fund raising and interest. An average of \$800,000 is fund raised from private and corporate donations and grants. Our administration and fund raising costs average 8.2 per cent of our total budget.

#### **How long has WSA been around?**

The Association has been in service to individuals with developmental disabilities since 1953.

#### **Who was Winnifred Stewart?**

Mrs. Winnifred Parker Stewart was a woman who out of circumstance, became a very influential person in Edmonton's history. She was a nurse whose son Parker was born with Down syndrome. Seeing the lack of educational opportunities for him and other children like him, Mrs Stewart set out to fill that need. She sought out a small group of parents who were also looking for specialized education for their children. Together, they created the Winnifred Stewart School, and it expanded over the years to eventually serve more than 400 children a year. Fundraising efforts led by Mrs Stewart involved the community, and generated revenue to make the school self-sufficient for more than 30 years.

#### **What types of activities are WSA clients involved in?**

There is a strong focus on tailoring activities and services to the wants and needs of the individuals accessing WSA, with an emphasis on community involvement. Clients are involved in festivals and events, access public recreation facilities and join in on as many community activities as possible. Many individuals work in various positions at local businesses or volunteer for other charitable and not-forprofit organizations. For those individuals who are not able to or who choose not to participate in community-based activities, WSA has a variety of interesting activity areas and options in its three locations, including computers, a packaging workshop, sensory stimulation rooms, gym, art, etc.



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### **How does a person with a developmental disability access WSA services?**

Individuals wishing to become a part of WSA require eligibility for funding from the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Board- Edmonton Region. Once eligibility has been confirmed, the individual can contact the Association at 453-6707 and speak with one of the Program Managers about day services and residential services options. If there is a vacancy, all arrangements for intake will be completed by the family with the Program Manager of the services selected. More information about our services and intake can be found at [www.winnifredstewart.com/services/request](http://www.winnifredstewart.com/services/request).

### **How can I become involved?**

The Association is always looking for community partners and volunteers to not only further the mission of the organization, but to work with clients to achieve their goals and dreams. Partnerships can be as simple as assisting an individual to learn about a new type of work by job shadowing at your company. It could mean spending time with an individual who shares an interest in a hobby you are active in. Partners can also contribute by working with the Association to meet funding needs or to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes on a project. If you are interested in becoming involved with the Association in any capacity, please contact the Association at 453-6707 or go to our website at [www.winnifredstewart.com](http://www.winnifredstewart.com).

### **I have never met someone with a developmental disability before, what do I say/do?**

Sometimes you can recognize if a person has a developmental disability- they may have the facial features commonly associated with Down syndrome, or may behave in a manner that would indicate they may require a certain level of support in their lives. Often, you may not be aware a person has a developmental disability until you have spoken with them for a while. What is important to remember is to speak with the person the same as you would speak with any other adult- respectfully and without assuming they will not be able to understand or respond. It's about our clients having respect and dignity- not being politically correct. Speak to the person, not to the support person who may accompany them. We encourage you to look at the PERSON before you look at the disability, for having a disability is the same as someone without a disability who wears glasses or who has freckles- its just part of who they are. People with disabilities face many social challenges every day- they are often stared at, laughed at or discriminated against because of their disability. We encourage you to behave in a manner that will not contribute to these types of challenges- such as not parking in an accessible parking spot. If you are in doubt about how to assist a person or whether they would like assistance to begin with, please ask. Our clients prefer the term "developmental disability" instead of "handicapped" or "mentally challenged." Our clients are hurt by all references to and use of the word "retarded".