

# Active Living for Everyone

*The ALRC's Programs and Services Encourage Inclusion*

**"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: what are you doing for others?" — Martin Luther King Jr.**

**Y**OU WHEEL YOURSELF into your local community recreation centre hoping to participate in today's open swim. Your first obstacle is the high counters in which staff must awkwardly bend over to speak to you. Next, the hall leading to the change room is cramped and people have to constantly dodge your chair. The change room door is not automatic, so you struggle to open it before finally being assisted by another swimmer. The challenges are not over yet. The change room stalls are too small for your chair, the showers are again too small and finally there are no ramps leading into the pool or hot tub and no railings. What do you do? Many people may call it quits and go home, but at the Active Living Resource Centre for Ontarians with a Disability (ALRC), the staff and volunteers want to get you connected with accessible and enjoyable recreation opportunities so you can **get active now**.

In February of 2000, a group of stakeholders with the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability – Ontario (ALACD-Ontario) gathered to brainstorm ways to reach people with disabilities who were looking for active living or recreation opportunities. In January 2003, the result of this meeting came in the form of the Active Living Resource Centre for Ontarians with a Disability (ALRC), a one-stop shop for facts on active living, practical resources, programs in your community and "how to" materials that enable individuals with disabilities, families and caregivers, and professionals within the field to access information. Visit the resource section of their website ([www.getactivenow.ca](http://www.getactivenow.ca)) or call the toll-free telephone line (1-800-311-9565) for more information.

The ALRC offers several services for teachers, students and professionals all over Ontario that are integral to getting



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everyone involved in recreation and sport. The services include the following:

- an interactive search through the resource section of the ALRC's website ([www.getactivenow.ca](http://www.getactivenow.ca)) that helps users choose activities and find programs in their community
- over 10,000 inclusive activities and programs in communities across Ontario, with more being added every day
- Wintergreen Equipment Loan Program, for children, youth and seniors, where equipment can be borrowed to encourage people to actively participate in programs or try new activities
- inclusion workshops tailored towards the community (municipalities, camps, non-profits) including presentations to community groups on inclusion, disability awareness and active living that can be tailored to a specific audience
- a variety of resource materials geared towards the disability community, including more than 60 fact sheets for a wide range of activities, including variations and modifications to make them more inclusive
- media resources, including videos and public service announcements for radio, print and television

The ALRC not only connects itself to people looking for active living opportunities, but also partners with several provincial and municipal organizations in hopes of raising awareness and funds for continuation of the ALRC's programs.

Canada Games recently partnered with the ALRC to add inclusive opportunities to their Canada Games Day Cards. Future versions will include adaptations to include children with various physical or intellectual disabilities.

Wintergreen Learning Materials has been a phenomenal partner for the equipment loan program. They donated equipment to the ALRC, and work with us to develop new bags of gear (for example, for youth at risk and seniors).

Finally, Northern Links promotes active living for people in Northern Ontario. The ALRC is extremely excited about collaborating on future projects to expand awareness in the North.

The ALRC has made great strides toward creating an inclusive society in which all Ontarians can lead healthy, active lives. As their services continue to evolve and expand, they look forward to partnering with several more organizations to provide active living opportunities for Ontarians of all abilities. Spread the word and **get active now!**

List your programs or services with the ALRC today!

## Active Living Resource Centre for Ontarians with a Disability

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