

The LINK

February 2021



Welcome back to the LINX newsletter and the 1st of 2021!



The Hearts & Heroes of LINX

It is so hard to believe that it has been a year since the last Hearts & Heroes event. It feels like just yesterday we were rushing around to get the silent auction set up, eagerly anticipating the reverse 50/50 draw, admiring the art produced by the Photography Class, and booging on the dance floor to the sound of Sweet Vintage Rides! The last year feels like a blur in a lot of ways, I suppose.

At the top of the things I've learned in the past 12 months, is that Hearts & Heroes isn't just an annual fundraiser for LINX. Nothing like a global pandemic to help us reflect on the *real* Hearts & Heroes of this organization...

Our Hearts – Our clients. There has not been a single day in the last year that I haven't felt inspired by the resilience and growth they've shown. In a time where the general population is struggling so deeply, our clients have been absolutely incredible. From overcoming the obstacles and frustrations that come with navigating a virtual world, using Emotional Management & Self Care to support their mental health, and practicing proper PPE wearing & social distancing to ensure they are ready to come back when it is safe, to keep everyone healthy. I speak on behalf of the entire LINX team when I say, we are so proud.

Our Heroes – Our Staff & Supporters. I am sure the staff is sick of hearing it, but YOU ARE ROCKSTARS. With every last minute schedule change & virtual session, the LINX staff has been so flexible and unbelievably hard working. Being a part of this team fills me with pride. Job Coaches, Instructors, Outreach, Support Homes, Respite, fellow Management & Admin - Thank you.

Our supporters – The City of Leduc, Connectivity Dance Studio, Leduc Fellowship Church, Leduc Martial Arts Academy and Schrader Holdings, without your support we wouldn't have been able to physically see our clients face to face and we wouldn't be looking to the future with such optimism. Our employers who have kept clients at work, or have known when it was no longer safe to do so. Thank you for always keeping us in mind and prioritizing the health & safety of our community. We look forward to the day we can all get back to business as usual.

While I am disappointed that I don't get to put on my dancing shoes, eat a delicious meal surrounded by the LINX family, and help raise money for this organization I am so passionate about, I feel so blessed to be a part of this inspirational team. I am looking forward to making the next Hearts & Heroes event our most successful yet, and can't wait to see you there! We have something special planned for the entire month of February for Hearts & Heroes along with a final celebration on sometime in the summer (specific date TBD) so stay tuned for more details!

Katie Presse and David Tuff – Hearts & Heroes Co-Chairs



Order your delicious chocolates to support Leduc LINX Connect Centre!

Orders are due by March 12th, 2021

Pick-up will be March 29th, 2021

To order:

* Fill out the fundraising information form (need a form? Email David at linxinfo@linxconnect.ca and I'll send one over) and bring in to LINX (101-4906 49 Ave) with cash or cheque

* Order online (visit our facebook page for more details)

Orders can be paid via cash, cheque, or e transfer to linxadmin@linxconnect.ca (please make sure to calculate GST when totalling up your order)

For more info; call 780-980-9423 ext 220 or email linxinfo@linxconnect.ca

Executive Director: Nicole Fuhssel
Email: linxexec@linxconnect.ca,
Emergency cell 587-989-5691

Residential Manager:

Ronni DeLeavey

Email: linxres@linxconnect.ca
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Day Program Manager:

Katie Presse

Email: linxday@linxconnect.ca

Business Manager: Laurie Savill
Email: linxadmin@linxconnect.ca

Office Assistant: David Tuff
Email: linxinfo@linxconnect.ca

Dates to Remember:

February 1st to 28th, 2021 –
A special Hearts and Heroes
COVID Edition Fundraiser (more
info to come)
March 12th, 2020 – Purdy's
Orders Due
Summer Date TBD – Hearts and
Heroes Celebration and Final
Draw!
(more info to come)

Board Members

Daniel Roberts – Chairperson
Brandon Sonnenberg – Vice
Chairperson
Ann Kurlovich – Treasurer
Maria Semrau – Director
Annis Mattiussi – Director
Don Loucks – Client Rep

LINX Bottle Pick-Up
Give us a call, and we
will pick up your
bottles and give you a
charitable tax receipt
for your donation!



Executive Director Report:

We're baaaaaack!!

As has everyone else, we have spent the last nine months in survival and reinvention mode. I have always been so proud of and grateful for our clients, staff, families, Board, and all of our supporters, but I never could have expected how amazingly they would rise to the occasion each and every time we needed them to. They have all made this something that we can now look at as an opportunity to grow and improve, rather than only something we have to get through.

We have been busy implementing safety procedures in our day and residential programs to ensure that everyone can be kept not only safe, but flourishing. Our day program is moving towards a new semester soon. They will be presenting some new and some favourite classes that will start virtually but will smoothly transition into face to face classes. They are getting ready to welcome our clients back into their employment sites and community placements as soon as they can. Our residential team has been going non-stop with our support homes, and are picking up steam with our outreach and respite hours opening up more.

In case you have missed our building news... we are moving! If you want to keep an eye on the progress, we are going to be on the east side of the building at 5708-47 St. We will be moving into FOUR workrooms with new Chromebooks for everyone, TWO meeting/training rooms, a lunchroom, a staff lunch and computer room, EIGHT bathrooms, and our Snoezelen room is back! We can't wait for you to see it!

As we blaze ahead, remember what LINX stands for...

L-Learning – we have learned that nothing can stop us from providing services to our amazing clients!

Inclusion – look out world, we are on our way back into it!

N-Networking – we reconnecting with our old networks and building our new ones!

XeXcellence – with clients like ours, and staff like ours... we know we can expect nothing less!

Day Program Report:

Virtual Burnout, Digital Fatigue...I hadn't even heard these terms until recently. With so much of our day to day making the move to a virtual platform, it may feel like the majority of our time is spent in front of a screen. While I am so thankful for the privilege we have at LINX to adjust our supports and responsibilities to digital mediums, I can say that sometimes the abundance of screen time is draining! Here are some tips to help combat Virtual Burnout if you are feeling the same...

1. **Make your environment comfortable!** You may not be able to control the length of online meetings or the number of them, but you can control your level of comfort. Sitting in an ergonomically designed, comfortable chair for instance can make a huge difference! I also find that dimming the brightness of my screen and keeping the volume at a lower level helps tremendously!
2. **Moments to move!** When online meetings are back to back, sometimes it may be hard to move our bodies and change our focus. I suggest taking a couple of minutes between online sessions to walk around or do some light stretching.
3. **20-20-20 Rule!** Every 20 minutes take your eyes away from the screen, look at something 20 feet away, and hold that gaze for 20 seconds. This small refocus can happen with minimal distraction from the meeting and can help to avoid dry eyes, headaches or straining of the eyes.
4. **Disconnect!** If you have a break from online meetings or classes, take that opportunity to get outside for a walk, have a face to face chat with a family member or roommate, do some yoga or mindfulness exercises. Disconnect! If we spend all of our time bouncing from one screen to the next, whether it is scheduled or free time, the likelihood of Virtual Burnout is increased.

Stay safe & healthy everyone!

Residential Program Report:

What an interesting year it has been. If you told me last year that the clients would be staying home with the Support Home providers for a year with little to no face to face day program I would have told you that was crazy and not doable. Guess what?! The Support Home Providers rearranged schedules to look as much like what people would have been doing as possible. Then they needed to learn how to support the clients with online LINX learning. Monthly meetings were held on line as well. We had to learn new safety procedures and create a process to open respite back up to have it close back up after 4 months. If you live in a Support Home or are a family member of a client who lives in a Support Home please thank them. They have more than met the challenges that COVID has thrown at us.

The SIL program has also been amazing. We hired a few times during COVID to make sure that we could cover every one. We explored many different ways to provide services that were essential. Once grocery shop per week and the ever changing safety protocols were often a challenge to get used to. Staying home has been difficult for many SIL clients who are used to working 5 days per week, going to classes, and attending many social and physical activities throughout the week. Thank you for being flexible with your schedules, the new protocols, and the different staff who have shown up to support you. Dig out those self-care kits and emotional management tool boxes.



A Note from our Business Manager:

Wow!

What a crazy year this has been. I hope this finds everyone and their loved ones safe and healthy. Who would have thought something like this could actually happen? But it did and I have to say as hard as it has been on all of us it has also brought out the strength and resilience in our clients and staff. I have watched Nicole, Ronni, Andrew and then Katie quickly respond to our new world of safely delivering services to the clients. I have visited the workrooms to say hi to clients while Mary and Robynne have provided services virtually. I have witnessed the personal strength and determination Ben, Brady, Karla, Sam and Rose have shown in continuing to ensure our clients are supported in the safest and best way they can be at this time. They have stepped outside our old normal and thought of new ways and ideas of what they could do. I know our support home providers have stepped in to fill in the empty spots the day program left when LINX had to stop in-house services. We have also all had to follow new safety protocols to protect clients and staff alike.

For myself, I foolishly thought my job would be lighter with not having the agency open the way we were used too. Well, I was wrong!! This situation that has been thrust upon us has not been easy on anyone.

But together we are strong. Together we shall persevere. Together we shall conquer. And together we will be again.

I miss you all,
Laurie



Highlight:

Wear proper PPE for the task at hand. This includes wearing a mask when out in public. Gloves should be worn when required (a good example being when cleaning). It is starting to get colder and colder out so a warm toque, gloves and jacket is a good recommendation as well.

Maintain proper social distancing (a minimum of 6 feet apart)

Our "... of the month" Club!

There are so many people who make our world a better place. So, we have decided they needed individual recognition. Please help us celebrate our Client of the Month, Residential Staff of the month, Day Staff of the Month, and Admin staff of the month. If you see someone in any of these categories that you would like to see recognized, please let us know!

Client of the Month: Shawn Gray

What drew you to LINX originally?

I had just moved here from Kamloops and was looking for a new job and to make friends.

What is your favourite LINX memory?

Learning to draw.

What are three words to describe LINX?

Friends, fun, and work (opportunities? yes).

What is your favourite part about working with LINX?

Meeting new friends and playing games.

If you had to eat one meal, every day for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Pizza.

If you were stuck on an island, what three things would you bring?

Movies, CD's, and iPad.

What did you want to be when growing up?

An actor.

What is the one thing you can't live without?

My cat.



Day Staff of the Month: Sam Costinak

What drew you to LINX originally?

I have wanted to work in this field for a long time. When I was younger, my brother would speak about his support workers with such empowerment, dignity and pride. I wanted to be that person. LINX seemed like the right place to pursue that.

Before working at LINX, what was the most interesting job you've ever had?

I worked at 101.7 CIVL Radio Station as the Promotions Coordinator and Music Director. I had a 1 hour time slot for my own radio program that featured local music.

What are three words to describe LINX?

Independence, Care and Integrity.

What is the favourite part about working for LINX?

Being a part of a really cool team that puts value on each and every individual to empower and support experience and growth. Both staff and clients set a great marker on what inclusion means because I feel it. Thanks ya'!!! ☺

If you had to eat one meal, every day for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Pickles, Olives and Kombucha. Everything that is pickled, brined and fermented.

If you were stuck on an island, what three things would you bring?

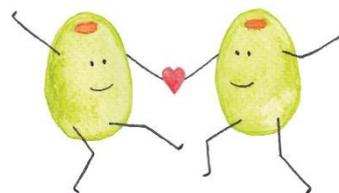
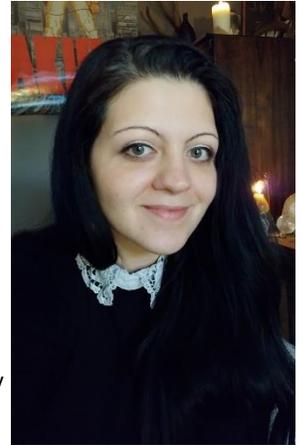
An endless musical library, arts and crafts supplies and my best friend.

What did you want to be when growing up?

An Astronaut!

What is the one thing you can't live without?

I have not had him all too long but now that I do, my cat, Tiberius.



Our "... of the month" Club!

Continued...

Residential Staff of the Month: Kula Kaikai

What drew you to LINX originally?

Awesome support home program.

Before working at LINX, what was the most interesting job you've ever had?

I worked as a Community Resource worker.

What are three words to describe LINX?

Supportive, Inclusive and Fun.

What is the favourite part about working for LINX?

The supportive environment.

If you had to eat one meal, every day for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Potato leaves sauce.

If you were stuck on an island, what three things would you bring?

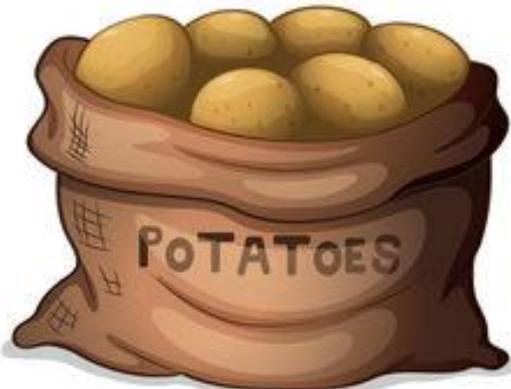
Lotion, food, and body wash.

What did you want to be when growing up?

A Social Worker.

What is the one thing you can't live without?

My family.



Admin Staff of the Month: David Tuff

What drew you to LINX originally?

I've had quite a bit of experience doing office work but never for a company that I felt was making a real difference. LINX drew me in because I wanted to help make a difference in changing people's lives for the better.

Before working at LINX, what was the most interesting job you've ever had?

One of the most interesting jobs I've had is one I still do, working as a free-lance artist (primarily for comics but I've worked on everything from logos, graphic design, tattoo design, band logos/album covers to comics). One of the best things about it is that no commission is ever exactly the same so I'm always working on something new and I've gotten to travel all across Canada for comic conventions to sell my art (a few highlights being Toronto and Vancouver). I'm looking forward to making my way into the States for conventions once gatherings are back to being allowed.

What are three words to describe LINX?

Inclusion, fun, and dedicated.

What is the favourite part about working for LINX?

Currently, I'd say my most favourite thing about working at LINX is that everyday seems to bring something new so my workday is always changing. I'm very excited for the new building where I will get to greet/and build rapport with the clients everyday.

If you had to eat one meal, every day for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Tough question but if health did not play a factor, my homemade veggie black bean burger w/ fried onions and cheese, a side of poutine, strawberry milkshake, and a dessert of skittles/sour keys. From a more healthy but still delicious point of view, broccoli and garlic stir fry would be my go to :)

If you were stuck on an island, what three things would you bring?

My family (I'm counting this as 1, my wife Nichole and two daughters Lily and Calla), a stereo with a magical unlimited power supply (music is essential), and a vast library of books.

What did you want to be when growing up?

Rockstar! Playing the drums :) (followed closely by lawyer... lol)

What is the one thing you can't live without?

Music.

