

SPRING NEWSLETTER

March 2026

Board News & Information

The following individuals comprise
Elves' 2025/2026 elected volunteer
Board of Directors:

Jason Fleury, President (ECS
Parent)

Stephanie Atkin, Vice President
(CM)

Peter Jansen, Treasurer (CM)

Peter Oliver, Director (AP)

Lydia McKernan, Director (AP)

Khrystine Simpson, Director (SP)

Anna-May Choles, Director (CM)

Christine Lapierre, Director (ECS
Parent)

Sandra Schweitzer, Director (CM)

Natalie Viesel, Director (ECS
Parent)

Terry Wright, Director (AP Parent)

Blayne Blackburn, Executive
Director

(SP – School Program) (AP – Adult
Program)

(ECS – Early Childhood Services)

(CM – Community Member)

Active Elves' Board Committees

Bylaw/Policy Committee

Anna-May Choles, Jason Fleury, Terry
Wright, Blayne Blackburn.

Location/Planning Committee

Jason Fleury, Gene Hochachka, Chris
Idenouye, Terry Wright, Blayne
Blackburn.

Fundraising Committee

Anne-Marie Jackson, Heather Fonteyne,
Chris Maksylewicz, Jasmine Abu-
Msameh, Raewyn Edwards, Teresa
Vano, Natalie Viesel, Blayne Blackburn.

Parent Advisory Council

Cathy Furtak (Adult Program Parent)
Lynn Gourley (Adult Program Parent) Bill
Gunter (Adult Program Parent),
Roxanna Hilton (Adult Program
Parent), Blayne Blackburn.

Board Meetings

Elves' Society holds ten regular Board
Meetings each year, as well as our
Annual General Meeting each
November.

Annual General Meeting: Nov 19 2025

Last Regular Board Meeting: Mar 18
2026



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Golf Tournament

Elves upcoming Golf Tournament will be held on,

May 28th, 2026, at The Ranch Golf & Country Club.

Keep an eye out for an email with registration details.

Your gift of time helps our success and allows us to provide innovative services which otherwise we would not be able to do. Please consider giving a gift of time and volunteering for this profitable fundraising event for Elves. If you require any information, please contact the Elves Child Development Centre at 780-454-5310

Easter Raffle!

Keep an eye on your social media and emails as we will be having an Easter 50/50 raffle starting on March 23rd.

DRAW DATE: April 2nd at 12pm.

Elves thanks you all for your support!

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SPRING NEWSLETTER

Message from the President Elves Board of Directors

On behalf of the Elves Board of Directors, I am pleased to provide a spring update. As we approach the end of the school year, the Board has been very active following our AGM and the election of new members. Over the past several months, we have focused on strengthening our governance practices to ensure the direction of Elves is led thoughtfully and with a clear vision for the future.

Over the coming year, we will be updating our strategic plan and continuing to grow our Board practices so we can do our very best in leading the organization.

We are proud of where Elves is today and where we are heading through 2026. Key areas of focus for the organization include health and safety, staff wellness in response to the growing complexity of our population, capital planning and addressing infrastructure challenges, and improving organization-wide effectiveness to build on innovative and leading-edge practices.

We look forward to the summer and wish you all the very best for the remainder of the year.

Sincerely,

Jason Fleury
Board President
Elves Special Needs Society

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SPRING NEWSLETTER

Executive Director's Message

Dear Elves Community,

As I write this greeting and update, the weather is warm and there is a hint of spring around the corner. It is raining today and signs of fresh renewal are starting. It reminds me of the incredible growth that we see at Elves as the seasons change. There are “milestones” along the way that tie to the seasons in our programs. At the beginning of the school year, goals are set and it is the time of change, new routine and hope of what the year will bring. Winter, spring and summer breaks come and go. Goals that were set are monitored, adjusted and progress is measured. Like big seasonal changes, there are incremental steps along the way that lead to larger steps, change and in some cases transformation.

Our adult program follows similar processes with setting goals at the beginning of each year, engaging families and loved ones in the process and measuring progress at regular intervals. While personally, the thoughts each fall of the coming of winter and the actual days of cold become tougher and tougher as I age, the excitement and energy within our adult program and new activities is energizing, even in the coldest of days. The simple ability to see the good in the current season, teaches me to stop and be grateful a little more than I do.

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Executive Director's Message (cont.)

Spring is an exciting time for Elves as an organization too. One of my areas of focus has been looking to the future and the challenge ahead with our infrastructure needs. Both facilities have served Elves very well over the years, but we find ourselves at a crossroads today. We don't have the facilities to support growth. We are beginning a capital planning exercise to explore some options for us and make some decisions to ensure we are ready and positioned for the future. We need to address our space challenges to maintain the current excellence and strength of our programs, but also explore ways to help more students and adults that need us.

There will be more information coming shortly on how you can get involved in helping influence the infrastructure direction for Elves. We have been built on the vision and care of parents and families and it is so important to continue this legacy to make sure families, parents and loved ones continue to shape the organization into the future.

Wishing you all a safe spring.

Sincerely,

Blayne Blackburn
Executive Director



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Principal's Message

We have now completed our February Parent/Teacher IPP Meetings and the final set of Parent/Teacher IPP Meetings are scheduled to take place between May 20 and June 9, 2026. Our March Open House will be on March 27th for our prospective intakes to visit Elves and learn more about our programs. We hope you have a restful time over Spring Break and look forward to the final months of the school year with your children.

DATES TO NOTE FOR 2025/2026

PACES- Strategies of Therapy.....	March 20, 2026
MARCH OPEN HOUSE.....	March 27, 2026
Spring Break & Easter.....	March 30– April 6, 2026
<i>Staff/Students Return.....</i>	<i>April 7, 2026</i>
ECS Demonstration of Learning.....	April 17, 2026
IPP Writing Day <u>Gr1-12 ONLY</u> No School.....	April 17, 2026
PACES-Setting up Successful Summer.....	April 24, 2026
Teachers' Day in Lieu NO SCHOOL.....	May 15, 2026
Victoria Day NO SCHOOL.....	May 18, 2026
Elves Golf Tournament.....	May 28, 2026
Graduation Day Kindergarten (CDC)	June 17, 2026
Graduation Day Kindergarten (EAYC).....	June 18, 2026
Graduation Day Grades 1-12 (EAYC).....	June 19, 2026
Last Day of School (800/Kinder).....	June 24, 2026
Last Day of School Grades 1-12.....	June 26, 2026
Last Day of School (400).....	June 29, 2026
Last Day for Staff.....	June 30, 2026

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Principal's Message (cont.)

Year 1/2 (400) Students

Elves' Therapy Team are in the process of completing assessments between now and May 2026 to determine current skills and eligibility for continued programming. Families of children who are assessed and have progressed to the point of no longer qualifying for programming at Elves, will be assisted in finding mild/moderate or community programs for their children to attend. If your child qualifies to attend Elves again, you do not need to re-register with us. Your child may be placed in a different classroom based on their age and learning needs. Please advise your classroom teacher or Family Support Worker if you do not wish for your child to continue attending our program in 2026/2027.

Transitioning Kindergarten (800)/School Age Students

The Elves Family Support Workers will be assisting our Kindergarten families as well as those School Age families who will be transitioning into their community schools for the 2026/2027 school year. If the receiving school would like to schedule a visit or discussion with the Elves team, please advise your classroom teacher or Family Support Worker to make arrangements.

Kiera Meidinger,
School Principal



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Adult Program

The Elves Adult Program is proud to share that it has recently successfully completed the Creating Excellence Together (CET) accreditation process. This important accreditation ensures that disability service providers are meeting the seven Standards of Excellence identified by the Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS) as essential for delivering high-quality, person-centered services. Achieving this milestone reflects the dedication of our staff and the strength of our community in supporting meaningful experiences and opportunities for all participants.

As spring approaches, our staff and program participants are looking forward to the many festivals and community events that make the season so enjoyable. We are especially excited to kick off the season with a visit to the Children's Festival in May, a long-standing favourite.



Spring also means it's time to start thinking about gardening, and we are looking forward to growing a variety of vegetables and plants together. As in previous years, some of the vegetables harvested from our garden will be donated to the local Food Bank, allowing participants to give back to the community while enjoying the rewards of their hard work.

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Adult Program (cont.)

This time of year is also important for reflection and planning. Our team is currently reviewing each participant's successes and progress over the past months and working with them to set new goals for the year ahead. Individual Support Plan (ISP) meetings will take place throughout April and May. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for families, guardians, and caregivers to connect with staff, celebrate participants' accomplishments, and collaborate on future goals.

While we have been happy to welcome a few new participants into the program in recent months, we also take a moment to honor Normand Collin, who had been a cherished member of our community since 1994 and whose presence touched the lives of many.

The Elves Adult Program will never forget you, Norm.



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Elves FASD Respite Program

Elves' FASD Respite Program

The children at Respite have enjoyed a wide range of activities like Smart Board, Gym, Indoor soccer, Gross motor games, Dance and more. The program has also offered a wide range of craft projects and creative art activities. We had recently welcomed visitors such as Kompany Family Theatre.

Upcoming Important Dates

March 21: Family Support Group- Wellness group activity for Caregivers (10-11) Please come in to join Kathleen Rogers our Family Support Worker to engage in a special Spring themed craft. Contact Kathleen or Raelee to RSVP and for more information.

March 28: No Respite

Apr 4: No Respite

Apr 18: Family Support Group-Coaching Families: Supports and Strategies (10-11) Please come in to join Kathleen Rogers and guest presenters from Coaching Families.

April 24: PACES Virtual Coffee and Connect session: Setting up a Successful Summer (9-10).

The header features the title 'SPRING NEWSLETTER' in a large, bold, green, sans-serif font. The text is centered and framed by a decorative border of colorful flowers and green stems. The flowers include blue, yellow, orange, pink, and red varieties. The stems are green with small leaves and yellow dots. The overall design is bright and cheerful, typical of a spring-themed newsletter.

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Elves FASD Respite Program (cont.)

Reminders:

Mealtimes: Please send an appropriate lunch and snacks with your child as we have limited food supply in our food bank to supplement. Please remember to send appropriate outdoor wear with your child so we can enjoy outdoor activities when the weather permits us to.

Donations:

We are currently accepting donations the following items:

- Gently used toys ages 3 and up
 - Art Supplies, Fresh modeling clay or Playdoh in sealed packaging.
 - Food bank items like nonperishable food like canned soup, alpagetti, instant noodles, individually wrapped snacks like granola bars, bear paws, goldfish crackers, fruit cups, applesauce or pudding etc.
- Please contact Kathleen or Raelee to schedule a time for donation drop off. Please note that we are a nut free facility so we can only accept nut free foods.

Respite Program 2026/ 2027

If you are interested in the FASD Respite Program for the 2026/2027 year, please contact us to discuss registration. We have a limited number of spots available. Priority is established by individual needs. Respite families will be contacted in July/August to confirm acceptance.

Respite Contacts:

Program Coordinator
Raelee Grier

Email respite@elves-society.com
Phone: 780-454-5310 ext. 233

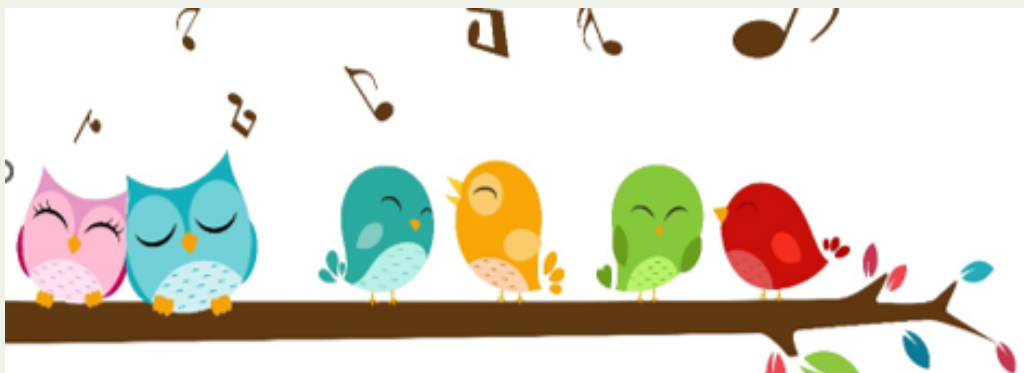
Family Support Worker

Kathleen Rogers
Email: elvessw@elves-society.com
Phone: 780-454-5310 ext. 236

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Speech & Language Pathology

Everyone loves music, but did you know that it's also a great tool to support language and communication skills? Music makes language fun and exciting and it's a wonderful way to connect with your child. It's also free, doesn't require any toys, and you can sing pretty much anywhere! A good place to look for songs if you want some ideas is YouTube > Super Simple Songs. Choose a few and see which ones your child likes the most.



For early communicators:

Once your child is familiar with some songs you have chosen, they know what to expect and you can use this as an opportunity to help develop and work on turn taking, requesting, and refusals. Some good songs to try are "If You're Happy and You Know It", "Ring Around the Rosy", and "Row, Row, Row Your Boat".

Start the music routine the same way each time so your child knows what to expect.



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Speech & Language Pathology (cont.)

For early communicators:

- Plan your child's turn. Their turn could be making a sound, movement, gesture, or finishing a line in the song.
- Is your child having fun? When the song ends, encourage them to request 'more'. You can use the sign for 'more', point to the 'more' symbol on their core board, or encourage them to say 'more'.
- Think your child wants to stop or choose a different song? Help them to show refusal by saying or signing 'stop', or by pointing to the 'stop' or 'different' symbol on their core board. Then, pick a new song and keep on singing!

To build language:

- Music and rhymes are a great way to highlight language and build on your child's vocabulary. You can choose songs with animals or parts of the body or any vocabulary that you would like your child to learn. Some good examples are "Old Macdonald", "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes", and "The Itsy Bitsy Spider".
- Stress important words that you want your child to learn by saying them louder and slower.
 - Go slow- make sure the pace of the song is slowed down to make it easier for your child to participate and understand everything.
 - Act it out- many songs have actions, so make sure to add those actions in! This can help your child to better understand what the words mean.

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SPRING NEWSLETTER

Elves Nursing
Department

As we welcome the arrival of spring, we are excited to embrace the season of renewal, growth, and increased outdoor activity. Our Health & Nursing Team remains committed to supporting every individual's well-being while fostering a safe and nurturing environment.

Seasonal Health & Wellness

With warmer temperatures and more time spent outdoors, spring offers many opportunities to engage in physical activity and reconnect with nature. We encourage students and participants to take part in walks, group activities, and outdoor learning experiences whenever possible.

Spring often brings an increase in seasonal allergies, as well as lingering cold and respiratory symptoms. Please continue to monitor for:

- Runny nose, cough, fever, or fatigue
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Reminder: If your child or family member is unwell, please keep them home and notify the program as needed. This helps reduce the spread of illness and keeps everyone safe.

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SPRING NEWSLETTER

Elves Nursing Department
(cont.)

Allergy Awareness & Safety

With increased pollen and outdoor exposure:

- Watch for signs of allergies (sneezing, itchy eyes, congestion)
- Ensure allergy and anaphylaxis plans are up to date
- Check that emergency medications (e.g., epinephrine auto-injectors) are current and not expired
- If there have been any changes to your child's or family member's allergies, please inform the nursing team.

Outdoor Safety & Sun Protection

- As we spend more time outside:
- Send a hat and sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher recommended)
- Dress in layers, as spring weather can be unpredictable
- Stay hydrated throughout the day
- Practice proper hand hygiene, especially before meals and after outdoor activities
- Ensure appropriate footwear for wet or muddy conditions
- Staff will support with reminders and assistance as needed.

This is also a great time to promote healthy habits such as balanced nutrition, regular sleep routines, and emotional well-being. Nursing staff are available to support individuals in setting and maintaining personal wellness goals.

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Elves Nursing Department
(cont.)

Insect Bites & Environmental Risks

Spring increases exposure to insects and outdoor hazards:

- Be aware of bee/wasp stings and potential allergic reactions
- Check for ticks after outdoor activities
- Notify the program if your child or family member has a known insect allergy
- Seek medical attention if there is unusual swelling, rash, or difficulty breathing.

Hydration & Nutrition

With warmer temperatures and increased activity:

- Please send a refillable water bottle daily
- Encourage regular hydration at home
- Pack nutritious snacks to support energy and participation



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SPRING NEWSLETTER

Elves Nursing Department
(cont.)

Nursing Services & Health Support

Our nursing team continues to provide essential care, including:

- Daily health monitoring and assessments
- Medication administration and documentation
- Support for chronic conditions and individualized care plans
- First aid and emergency response

Medication & Care Plan Reminders

Spring is an important time to review health information:

- Notify us of new or adjusted medications
- Submit any updated medical forms or care plans
- Inform us of any recent changes in health status
- Ensure all emergency contact information is current

This is especially important for individuals with conditions such as asthma, diabetes, seizures, or complex medical needs. Open communication with our nursing staff helps us respond quickly and effectively to individual needs.

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Elves Nursing Department
(cont.)

Illness Prevention & Infection Control

Although winter has passed, seasonal illnesses such as colds, flu, and other infections may still circulate. Preventing the spread of illness remains a top priority.

We ask for your cooperation in:

- Keeping individuals home if they are feeling unwell (fever, cough, vomiting, etc.)
- Reporting symptoms or diagnoses to staff promptly
- Reinforcing proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs/sneezes).

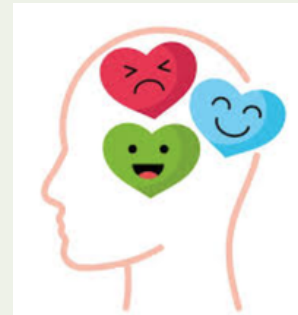
Nursing team continues to follow enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures to maintain a healthy environment for everyone.



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Elves Nursing Department
(cont.)

Mental Health & Emotional Well-being



Spring can be an energizing time, but transitions and changes in routine can also impact emotional well-being. Seasonal changes can also impact mood, energy, and behavior like:

- Changes in sleep routines due to longer daylight hours
- Increased restlessness or “spring fever”
- Anxiety related to upcoming transitions

Our staff continue to support positive mental health by:

1. Encouraging social connection and inclusion
2. Providing structured routines and calming strategies
3. Offering a supportive and understanding environment
4. If there are any concerns regarding emotional or behavioral changes, please reach out so we can work together to provide support.



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Elves Nursing Department
(cont.)

Important Reminders

- Submit updated health and consent forms if required
- Label personal belongings (water bottles, jackets, sunscreen, etc.)
- Inform staff of any absences or health concerns
- Ensure individuals come prepared for both indoor and outdoor activities

As we move into this vibrant season, we look forward to continued growth, learning, and connection. Thank you for your ongoing support in helping us maintain a healthy and safe community for all.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy, and active spring!

— Health & Nursing Team



SPRING NEWSLETTER

**If you have any questions or feedback, please reach out to our
Child Development Centre at 780-454-5310 or at our
Adult and Youth Centre at 780-481-5335.**

The Elves Team