



FALL NEWSLETTER

October 2026

Board News & Information

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

Jason Fleury	President (ECS Parent)
Peter Jansen	Treasurer (CM)
Peter Oliver	Director (AP Parent)
Lydia McKernan	Director (AP Parent)
Khrystine Simpson	Director (SP Parent)
Anna-May Choles	Director (CM)
Christine Lapierre	Director (ECS Parent)
Sandra Schweitzer	Director (CM)
Natalie Viezel	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)

Board Meetings

Annual General Meeting: Nov 18, 2026
Last Regular Board Meeting: Sept 30,
2026





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Message from the President Elves Board of Directors

On behalf of the Elves Special Needs Society Board of Directors, I am pleased to extend warm greetings as we begin the fall season.

The 2026-27 year marks an exciting new chapter for Elves as we adopt five strategic priorities to guide our organization into the future:

1. Building long-term resilience and effectiveness
2. Prioritizing the well-being and safety of our community
3. Optimizing operational efficiency, governance, and administration
4. Driving innovative and impactful services tailored to student and client needs
5. Leveraging an inclusive and supportive community by amplifying diverse voices

The Board remains committed to supporting Elves' long-term sustainability, continued growth, and delivery of high-quality programs and services. Our governance responsibilities include oversight of organizational priorities, health and safety, staff well-being, facility planning, and responsible stewardship of the resources entrusted to Elves.

We continue to work closely with the Executive Director to advance these strategic priorities while maintaining a strong focus on accountability, effective governance, and long-term planning.





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Message from the President (Cont.)

Elves Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our dedicated staff, families, and community partners for their ongoing support and commitment. Together, we continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the individuals and families we serve.

Wishing everyone a rewarding and successful fall season.

Warm regards,

Jason Fleury
Board President
Elves Special Needs Society





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Executive Director's Message

Greetings families and friends of Elves,

With the change of season upon us from summer to fall and the chill in the air, it is similarly a transition period at Elves. Many of our people accessing services in the adult program have changed schedules over the summer, as well as our staff. The Day Program is back in full swing with seasonal fall activities and regular programming. Our school program welcomes many students back and begins new relationships with children and families new to Elves. It is a time of high energy, individual program planning, and settling into a new school year, routine, and learning activities.

Over the past several weeks, we have welcomed back many familiar faces and greeted new children and families to our programs and services. The energy that comes with a new season brings renewed opportunities for learning, growth, and connection, and it has been wonderful to see both familiar and new faces participating in programs and activities across Elves.

We continue to work closely with students, adults and families throughout the Elves community to establish shared goals and review progress together. I am grateful for the many staff at Elves committed to providing high-quality, person-centered services each and every day that respond to the unique strengths and needs of each person we serve.





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Executive Director's Message (Cont.)

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners for your ongoing dedication and support. All your efforts and contributions help make it possible for Elves to continue delivering meaningful programs and services to children, adults, and families in our community.

I hope to see many of you at the upcoming Annual General Meeting on November 18, 2026. Society Membership applications are available until October 31, 2026. You do not need a membership to attend the AGM, but you do to be a voting member.

We are also currently searching for additional Directors to serve on the Elves Special Needs Society Board. Family of students or adults in service remain a priority for Elves to have on our Board. Our by-laws specify that 6 of our 12-member Board need to be parents of a child or an adult at Elves.

We are also looking for prior experience serving on a non-profit Board, human resource expertise, fundraising experience, or professional experience in education, mental health/regulated health profession or small business. Any interest is welcome!

If you would like to hear about serving on the Governance Leadership Team at Elves and helping lead the organization into the future, please reach out to me at 780 454 5310.

Thank you for being part of the Elves community. I wish you and your families a wonderful fall season.

Warm regards,

Blayne Blackburn
Executive Director





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Principal's Message

On behalf of all the staff at Elves Special Needs Society, we are pleased to welcome you to the 2026/2027 school year and we hope that you had a safe and healthy summer with your families. The School Program is currently planning to 189 serve children and 87 School Age students. Our classroom and resource teams are looking forward to continuing to get to know all of our students and we thank you all for allowing us to be a part of your child's educational journey.

I will be going on maternity leave effective September 11, 2026 and returning back to the Principalship in August 2027. In my place will be Ron Bacchus who be acting in a role as Chief Operating Officer and School Program Manager. His first official day with Elves will be Monday, September 14, 2026. All processes for supporting the Elves School Program will continue and any needs that would have previously been directed to the Principal's office will all be managed and taken care of by Ron Bacchus. He will continue to be supported by our very capable teams and looks forward to getting to know you and your children this school year. Thank you and wishing you and your families all the best for a wonderful school year!

DATES TO NOTE FOR 2026/2027

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • National Day for Truth & Reconciliation (no school) | September 30, 2026 |
| • IPP Parent/Teacher Meetings | October 1-21, 2026 |
| • Thanksgiving (no school) | October 12, 2026 |
| • Picture Day [students @AYC] | October 28, 2026 |
| • Picture Day [students @CDC] | October 22, 2026 |
| • Remembrance Day & Fall Break (no school) | November 11-13, 2026 |
| • PD Day (no school students) | December 11, 2026 |
| • Winter Break (no school) | Dec. 21, 2026-Jan. 3, 2027 |

Kiera Meidinger
Principal
Elves Special Needs Society





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Elves' Family Support Workers

Elves' Family Support Workers

We would like to welcome Tracy Blais to our Family Support team. She comes to us with a wonderful background in supporting youth and families in schools and in the home. Tracy will be primarily based out of the Child Development Centre centre. Please welcome her to the team as you meet her during IPP meetings in October.

Our Family Support Workers are here to help you every step of the way. Whether you are looking for community programs, recreation opportunities, information about services, help understanding reports and forms, or guidance as your child transitions beyond Elves, we are ready to help.

No question is too small. Reach out by phone, text, email, or through your child's communication book, and we will connect with you to explore resources and supports that fit your family's needs.

Tracey Blais
Family Support Department
10825 – 142 Street NW
Edmonton AB T5N 3Y7
Phone: (780) 454-5310 ext 230
Email: tblais@elves-society.com

Angela Vardy, BSW, RSW
Family Support Department
10419 – 159 Street
Edmonton AB T5P 3A6
Phone: (780) 481-5335 ext 212
Email: sw4@elves-society.com

Kathleen Rogers, RSW
Family Support Department
10825 – 142 Street NW
Edmonton AB T5N 3Y7
Phone: (780) 454-5310 ext 236
Email: elvessw@elves-society.com



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Adult Program

While Alberta is facing an unprecedented pumpkin shortage, there is no panic at the Elves Adult Program. Our clients and staff are a creative bunch, and we are certain they will come up with some interesting alternative solutions for our upcoming Halloween party! Fall is in general a season filled with celebrations, including Thanksgiving and the Harvest Fair, both of which we take quite seriously over here.



Our community has also expanded since the summer, as we happily welcomed three new participants: Fatima, Geanine, and Layne. They are a great addition to our Program and have already made friends and jumped right into our lively schedule of events and activities. At the same time, we said a bittersweet goodbye to Micheal, who moved far from Edmonton to start an exciting new chapter in his life.

Fall also brings a renewed sense of fervor for professional development among our staff. This season features participation in ACDS webinars and the renewal of important in-services, such as training on lifts and transfers and dysphagia. We are also beginning a specialized series focusing on various medical diagnoses that many of our participants live with. The goal of these sessions is to raise awareness and deepen our team's competence and knowledge, ultimately enhancing the quality of the support we provide.





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Elves FASD Respite Program

Important Dates

September 11, 2026: PACES Virtual Connect: Introduction to Supports and Services 9-10

September 12, 2026: Coffee and Connect: Caregivers Meet and Greet 10-11

October 10, 2026: No Respite: Thanksgiving long weekend

October 17, 2026: Coffee and Connect: Supporting Individuals with FASD 10-11

November 14, 2026: No Respite: Fall break

November 21, 2026: Coffee and Connect: CSS-Coaching Families 10-11

FASD Respite Program September 2026- June 2027

Elves' FASD Respite Program has limited spaces available. Contact Raelee Grier

[for further information at respite@elves-society.com](mailto:respite@elves-society.com) or 780-454-5310.

The Respite team has welcomed new and returning Participants and Staff this September as we look forward to the year ahead!

Please Remember** to send your child to Program with appropriate outdoor gear as the weather as the seasons are changing.

If your child will be absent from the Program, please call/text Raelee at 780-920-5342 or call 780-454-5310.



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Speech & Language Pathology

BACK TO SCHOOL

Going back to school can be hard! Here are some tips to help your child understand the new routine and to share about their day.

USE VISUALS

- Show your child a **picture of the bus** before it comes in the morning/afternoon
- Show a **picture of Elves** before getting ready for the day!
- Use a **calendar with pictures of school vs. no school** to help them understand when they are going



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Speech & Language Pathology (cont.)



TRY A SOCIAL STORY

What is a social story?

- A story to help a person understand what to expect during a new activity or routine
- Helps a person know what to do in that situation
- It can help a child know what to expect at school!
- Here's an example of one!

TALKING ABOUT THE DAY

Instead of asking "What did you do at school today?". Create LESS pressure. Try:

Check the communication book and read about their day!

- → Ask a specific question (e.g., "Did you play on the playground?")
- → Make comments (e.g., "You played with blocks!", "you made a beautiful craft!", etc.)
- Model phrases (e.g., "I like school!", "I had fun today!", "I was sad today", etc.)



My name is Hannah.



I go to school at Elves and am in Room 9.



At school I will get to have snack, play with toys, and sing songs!



I will have fun at school!



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Occupational Therapy (OT)

WELCOME TO OT!

HOW CAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT) HELP MY CHILD?

- Occupational Therapy Practitioners are highly trained healthcare professionals that evaluate and assist children that are having difficulty participating in meaningful activities or "occupations" that are needed to conduct their daily routines and live their life to the fullest.
- For a child this may include the development of life skills such as learning at school, playing, completing self-care tasks, relating to others, and fulfilling their role as a family member.
- In the schools, Occupational Therapy Practitioners address the needs of students experiencing delays, disabilities, or health challenges through therapeutic intervention to promote skill advancement, the use of compensatory strategies, adaptations to the child's equipment and environment, and/or modifying the curriculum or activity.
- Occupational Therapy Practitioners also collaborate with teachers, parents and others to identify and modify barriers that restrict a child's success and model strategies for others to use that will extend the benefits of direct intervention.



WHY WOULD MY CHILD BE REFERRED TO OT?

- Fine Motor Difficulties: Holding crayons, pencils and other small objects, stringing beads, using clothing fasteners, manipulating toys.
- Eye-hand Coordination Difficulties: Scissor use, puzzles, ball skills.
- Visual Motor Delays: Printing, drawing, forming shapes, coloring.
- Visual Perceptual Delays: Sorting, matching, figure ground, scanning, letter reversals.
- Self-Care Delays: Dressing, feeding, using utensils, tying, bathing & shampooing, grooming.
- Sensory Processing Difficulties: Delays in adaptive responses to sights, sounds, movement, taste, touch.
- Decreased Strength: Manipulating resistive materials, moving against gravity, sustaining body positions.
- Decreased Range of Motion: Limits in moving arms, fingers, legs, head, or other body parts.
- Social Difficulties: Interacting with others, following routines.

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Contact Information: Saly Habashy | Ot1@elves-society.com | 780-454-5310 ext. 227



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Elves Nursing Department

Fall Safety Reminders – Elves Day & School Program



As the fall season arrives in Alberta, cooler weather, wet leaves, frost, and icy walkways can create safety risks. Let's work together to keep our students and clients safe, warm, and comfortable.

Fall Safety Tips

- Dress for the Weather: Ensure students and clients have warm jackets, hats, gloves, and appropriate footwear.
- Prevent Slips and Falls: Watch for wet leaves, slippery floors, frost, and ice. Report hazards promptly.
- Support Safe Mobility: Follow care plans, use prescribed mobility aids, and assist with walking and transfers as needed.
- Supervise Outdoor Activities: Provide appropriate supervision during playground time, outings, and transitions.
- Monitor Well-Being: Watch for shivering, discomfort, or unusual changes in behavior, and report concerns.
- Keep Areas Safe: Keep hallways, entrances, and walkways clean, clear, and free of hazards.



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Elves Nursing Department (cont.)

♥ A Friendly Reminder

Safety is everyone's responsibility! A little extra care, patience, and teamwork can help prevent falls and keep everyone safe.

Let's enjoy the beautiful Alberta fall season while continuing to provide safe, caring, and supportive environments for all our students and clients.

Warm fall wishes,

Elves Nursing Staff



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IMPORTANT REMINDERS

PARKING REMINDER

Please Note: Parent and visitor parking is available at designated locations only. To ensure safe student transportation and smooth traffic flow, please follow the parking guidelines below.



CDC (10825 142 Street NW)

Parent and visitor parking is available on the west side of the parking lot (the side closest to 142 Street).

The area directly in front of the school is reserved for school buses only from **8:30-9:30 AM, 11:00 AM-12:30 PM, and 2:00-3:00 PM**, Monday through Friday.

EAYC (10421 159 Street NW)

Parent and visitor parking is available on the north side of 104A Avenue (opposite the school) at any time.

The south side of 104A Avenue (school side) is reserved for school buses only from **8:30-9:30 AM, 11:00 AM-12:30 PM, and 2:00-3:00 PM**, Monday through Friday.

The designated Parent Parking area at Door 6 remains available during these times.



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**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

