Neil Squire

2024 – 2025 Annual Report

40 YEARS

Table of Contents

Message from the Chair of the Board

This is just a brief note, as we have reached the milestone of helping 100,000 persons with disabilities across Canada. This report highlights our work over the past year, work that reflects the dedication, compassion, and innovation of our entire team.

A huge thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who made this possible.

Yours truly,

Josh Vander Vies
Chair of the Neil Squire Board
2024 and 2025

40 Years of Assistive Technology Enabling Employment for Canadians with Disabilities

Since 1984.

Inspiration, Legacy, Impact.

Celebrating 40 years of the Neil Squire Society.
#40YearsOfImpact

40 YEARS **Neil Squire**

40 Years of Assistive Technology Enabling Employment for Canadians with Disabilities

Over the last year, we celebrated a truly remarkable milestone — our **40th anniversary** and **100,000 people served across Canada**. On June 19th, 1984, our founder Bill Cameron established our society to continue the work he started with our namesake, Neil Squire, who had recently passed away.

After a car accident had left Neil paralyzed, his cousin Bill worked with him to build a device that would allow him to communicate more easily, using sips and puffs and a teletype machine, which was eventually upgraded to a computer. Bill soon recruited a dedicated group of volunteers, including engineers and occupational therapists, working together to use technology to give Neil more independence.

It didn't take long for the mission to expand to serve more persons with disabilities, and Bill and his team were pursuing innovative projects in research and development, teaching digital literacy skills as a key to independence, and offering assistive technology assessments and solutions under the guidance of skilled occupational therapists. Through all of these projects ran a consistent a theme — assistive technology enabling employment for Canadians with disabilities.

Forty years later, our work continues that spirit of collaboration. With five areas of focus — Employment, Assistive Technology, Collaboration, Innovation, and Digital Literacy — our Society employs a wide range of experts, including engineers, occupational therapists, and employment specialists for a holistic approach to service.

A participant who comes to us needing help with employment can find help in every aspect of the process, from the job search itself to upgrading the digital skills they would need on the job to customized assistive technology solutions.

Every one of our solutions is tailored towards the participant's needs — the most important voice in the process is the participant themselves. From personalized one-on-one job support in our **Creative Employment Options** program to customized assistive technology from our **Makers Making Change** and **Solutions** teams, we work together to help people with disabilities get the support they need.

For forty years, Neil Squire has been the Canadian leader in assistive technology. Our **Makers Making Change** assistive device library hosts over 200 open-source designs, including low- and high-tech solutions developed by our research and development team, as well as designs sourced from the community. Our assistive technology experts remain at the cutting edge, staying on top of the latest advances in AT and emerging technologies like AI.

In the past fiscal year alone, we served over **11,300** persons with disabilities. Cumulatively, since our inception, we have served over **100,000** individuals.

Here are just a few highlights from this year:

Innovation: Our **Makers Making Change Program** delivered **3,872** assistive technology devices to people with disabilities, held **242** STEM events, and utilized **7,806** volunteers.

Assistive Technology: Nationally, **Solutions** served **5,943** individuals. We provided **1,715** disability supports through **WorkBC Assistive Technology Services**. **Hearing Solutions** provided **2,265** in-person appointments. And we had **2,201** inquiries come through our **AT Help Desk**.

Employment: Our employment programs across Canada supported **1,056** participants with disabilities and we launched a new employment program for youth with disabilities, **Empower3D**.

Digital Literacy: This year, **1,337** individuals from **42** cities across **7** provinces participated in our digital literacy programs. We provided a combined **5,920** hours of computer tutoring and tech support, and we helped **97%** of our digital literacy participants enhance their employability.

Collaboration: Our **Hacking for the Holidays** campaign raised over **$147,000** and through the campaign we adapted **2,058** toys and switches for kids with disabilities in Canada, we hosted **84** events and we engaged over **2,600** volunteers.

And it goes without saying, four decades wouldn't have been possible without your support — we owe a heartfelt thank you to all of our participants, volunteers, supporters, partners, and everyone who has been a part of our journey.

Innovation

Volunteers at our Holiday Hackathon fundraising event.

Innovation

For over 40 years, we have built a strong international reputation for our work in creating technologies and solutions to enable people with disabilities to achieve their potential in educational, vocational and personal pursuits.

We're the first organization in Canada to revolutionize how people collaborate on assistive technology projects. Through our **Makers Making Change** program, we leverage the capacity of community-based makers, disability professionals, and volunteers to develop and deliver affordable open-source assistive technologies to people with disabilities. This year we delivered **3,872** Assistive Technology devices to people with disabilities across Canada.

Highlights From the Year

Over two days in August, eight youth with disabilities from British Columbia took part in our first ever Adaptive Gaming Virtual Day Camp, co-hosted by our friends at Technology for Living. In November over **230** volunteers helped us hack over **400** devices — **243** toys and **163** switches — for kids with disabilities at our Holiday Hackathon.

With funding from the Government of Canada, we launched our **Clubs That Care** initiative. Youth leaders across Canada can apply for a micro-grant to engage their communities in building assistive devices for Canadians with disabilities.

One-Off Customization and Fabrication

There are over 200 open-source devices in the **Makers Making Change** assistive device library, free for anyone to use. But many of the devices began from a need in our community.

"Every design we approach is to serve a need. I mean we don't just build tech because tech is cool — we build it because it has a purpose," says Justin Pezzin, Director of **Makers Making Change**.

Take the Tube Opener design that's been a staple in our library — it began as a solution for one artist whose barrier to making art was that they couldn't open a paint tube. Our team worked with them to create a simple design that allowed them to open paint tubes, and to make art. Now, in our assistive device library, it's served many people with a wide range of disabilities.

One of the most recent additions in the library is the Musical Grasping Training Aid, an assistive device which plays music when grasped, came from a request from a

clinician in the community to help teach a child with a disability cause and effect. The Chatterbox, an auditory switch scanning AAC device that our team is currently working on, came from a request from the Surrey School District and was developed in consultation with them.

"One of our core values is 'nothing for us without us,' that's front and centre for our entire team. We work very hard to bring users and caregivers and clinicians into our design methods," explains Justin. *"Every step along the way, we're considering the end user and having real people engaged in the process."*

> **"Every step along the way, we're considering the end user and having real people engaged in the process."**

And once a design is finished, it goes in our assistive device library, free for anyone to make. Our devices are designed with an eye for customizability — our switches and joysticks can be printed with many different toppers and designs to accommodate a wide range of disabilities, with the option for even further customization by individual makers.

"It has always been designed with the goal of being highly reproducible by makers," Justin says. *"We've designed it in a way where when someone says, 'Hey, I need that customized,' now we just take that same device, we print a different file and now we have a customized device in minutes."*

Equipped with 3D printers, laser cutters, and a meticulously organized inventory of tools and components, our offices are fully prepared to build devices that serve th needs of our community.

Departmental and Staff Collaboration

Staff across all departments work together to provide pe sonalized, practical support to all of our participants. We use feedback loops to ensure continuity for each individual's journey toward enhanced independence.

Our **Makers Making Change** team often works in collaboration with our other programs, complimenting their skill in design and innovation with the expertise of our many highly-trained specialists.

![Innovation]
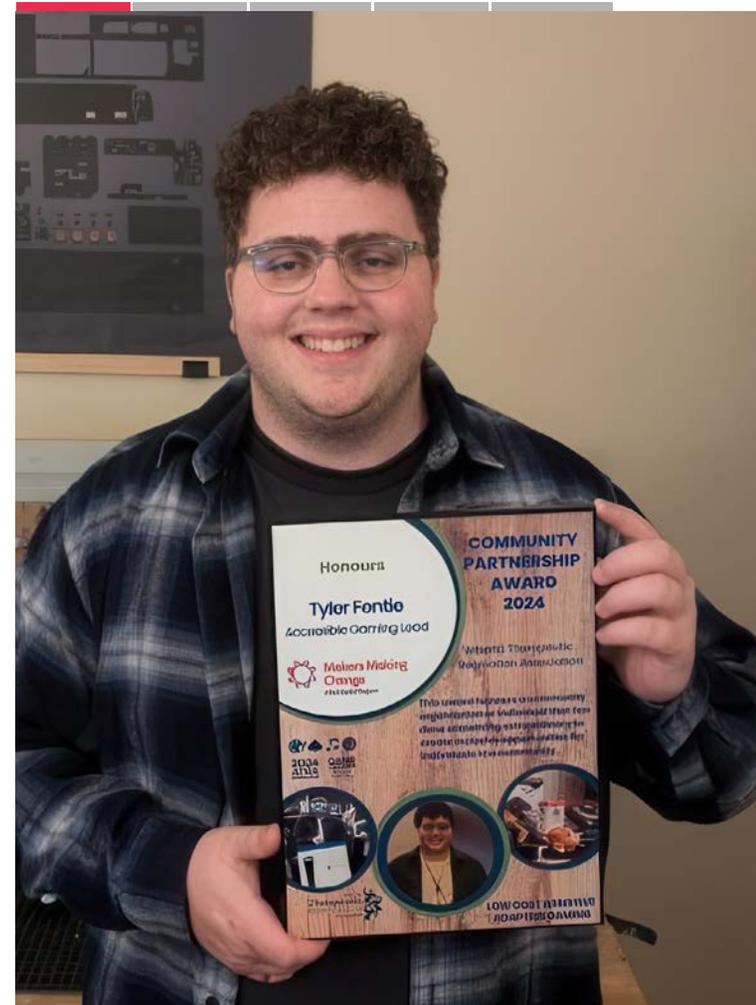
Tyler Fentie, receives the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association Community Partnership Award.

Innovation

Justin Pezzin showing off some 3D printed and adapted toys for children with disabilities.

Makers Making Change frequently serves as an in-house vendor for our **Solutions** program, providing devices from the assistive technology library — from high-tech solutions including joysticks that control computers and smartphones like the LipSync, to more simple solutions like a Pen Ball — as prescribed by our occupational therapists to assist people with the disabilities in the workplace. Devices are often also used to support participants in our digital literacy programs like **Distance Computer Comfort**.

Makers Making Change also works with **Solutions** on custom solutions. One recent example involves developing a way for a client to activate a switch with their foot. **Makers Making Change** worked with the **Solutions** team to ensure the set-up and measurement were all done to the client's needs.

*"I think it's always an important part of why I really like partnering with the **Solutions** team. They are trained to do that initial intake and assessment and proper ergonomics. And then we work together from the technical side to help support the needs that have been assessed,"* says Justin. *"And that's the thing where I think the partnership really is something more than either one on their own, I think together we actually have something really special."*

All of these assistive technology solutions make a big difference in employment for people with disabilities.

> **"The partnership really is something more than either one on their own, I think together we actually have something really special."**

*"Accounting is a great example. Say I have to click in five places to do this. We can create a switch and they then apply the software, which again Jody on the **Solutions** team really is great with the software side of things. We're really good on the hardware side of things. That makes a really good solution for a client. Instead of buying a commercial switch for $100, when you can do a $10 or $30 switch that's been made by our 3D printer. It's a much more effective use of that funding as well, so the client can potentially do more with the funding than they could before."*

Makers Making Change has also been working with our **Hearing Solutions** audiologists on a button-activated device making it easier to do hearing testing with young kids.

"I think that's another neat area inside the Neil Squire umbrella with so many teams who are actively out in the community with users and community members who have needs, and then being able to utilize the skills of the Makers Making Change team to create those devices or even prototypes of potential products that could go further down the road. It's kind of a neat match and that's kind of a unique value I would say that Makers Making Change offers to a broad scope of programs."

Research in Action

Technology evolves at an incredible pace — imagine that in the time it takes to develop a specific solution or an accommodation for a device, the technology in question may already be outdated. While developing solutions allowing people with disabilities to access technology still remains a priority, it's also important to influence accessibility on a broader scale.

That's where our internal research and development team comes in. With funding from Accessibility Standards Canada, our research and development team conducts innovative research that informs accessibility standards, ensuring that future technologies are accessible for Canadians with disabilities. To conduct our research, we collaborate with disability organizations across Canada. This approach strengthens community engagement and highlights the critical role research plays in driving meaningful change.

"Our goal is to identify trends where technology is leaving people with disabilities behind, and the Accessibility Standards Canada funding allows us to do that research in an effective way," says Harry Lew, Manager of Research and Development. *"There's a direct translation between the research that we do and some standard down the road."*

"We are a key player in that area because we have that internal research and development capability."

Ensuring access to emergency services and communications is an important area of focus. Having previously studied the accessibility of potential next-generation ways to contact 911, our research and development team identified the need to study

Innovation

Innovation

the accessibility of emergency alerts. This is especially important as Canadians with disabilities may need more time to react during an emergency where access to help and services may be limited.

> **"We are a key player in that area because we have that internal research and development capability."**

We are exploring how emergency alerts affect people with disabilities directly and how communities and emergency officials can coordinate inclusive evacuation strategies

"We're flooded with a lot of information on the alerts and there's a lot of things that you need to do and understand. Having it in a format that is relevant and accessible to you is really important," Harry explains. *"When it does affect you directly, you need to access it instantly and you have to understand the information."*

Our research and development team have conducted a survey receiving feedback from people with a wide range of disabilities — mobility, cognitive, hearing, vision, deafblind, and speech — on the barriers they faced in understanding emergency alerts, and how the alerts can be improved.

"We've been trying to reach out to communities that have been underserved," Harry says.

Having conducted the survey, they are now beginning to work with focus groups, testing different types of emergency alerts. This is particularly timely research with an opportunity to make an impact, as the CRTC is conducting consultations on improving the National Public Alerting System.
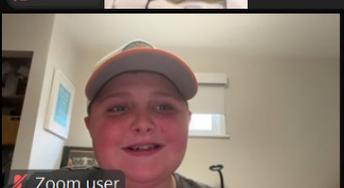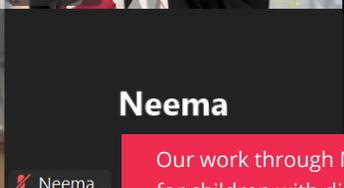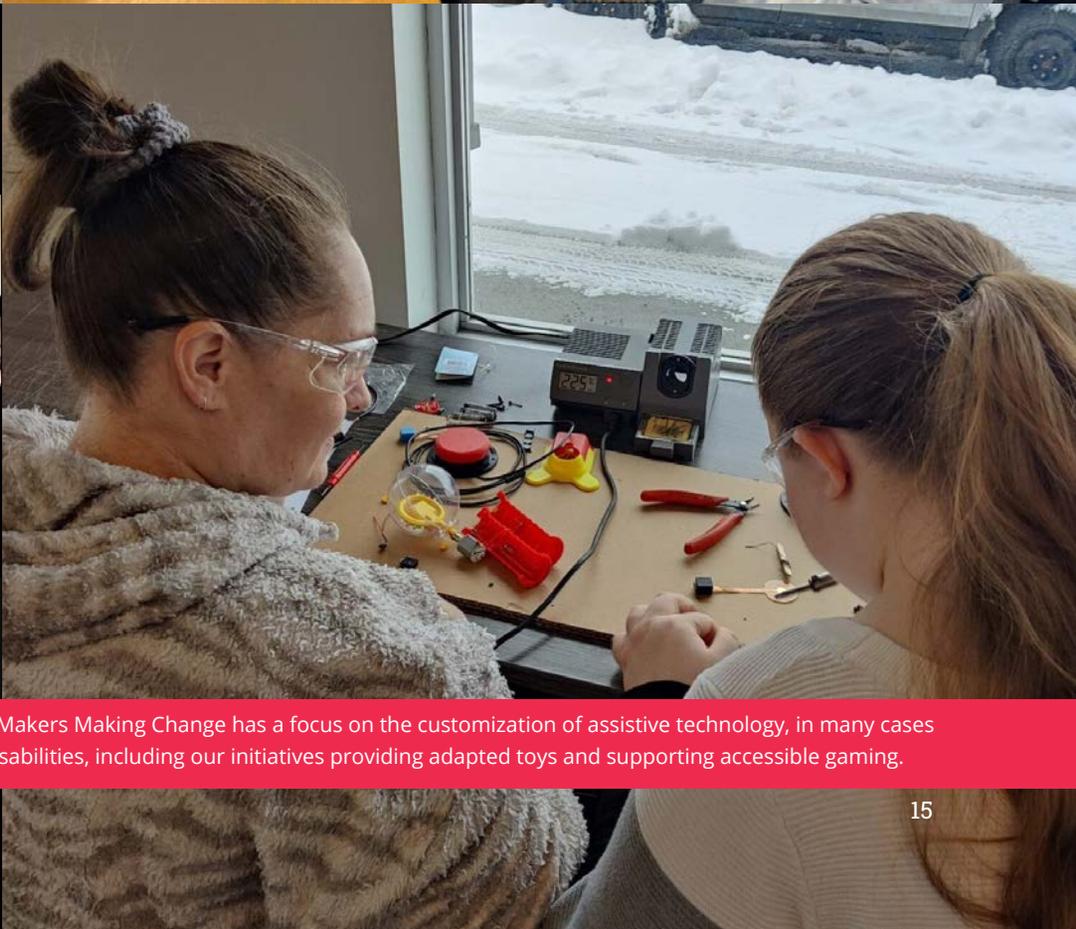
Our work through Makers Making Change has a focus on the customization of assistive technology, in many cases for children with disabilities, including our initiatives providing adapted toys and supporting accessible gaming.
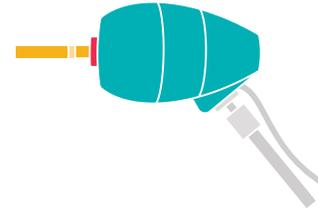
Innovation

Makers Making Change: Canada Wide

Makers Making Change connects people with disabilities to volunteers who can build affordable assistive technology

3,872
Assistive Technology devices were delivered to people with disabilities

230
Assistive Technology devices were shared on our website

7,806
volunteers were utilized

242
STEM events were held with

4,936
Youth STEM Participants

142
unique gamers were served

306
gamer sessions were held

1
GAME Checkpoint was launched

9
total GAME Checkpoints

2,058
toys and switches were adapted for kids with disabilities through our Hacking for the Holidays campaign
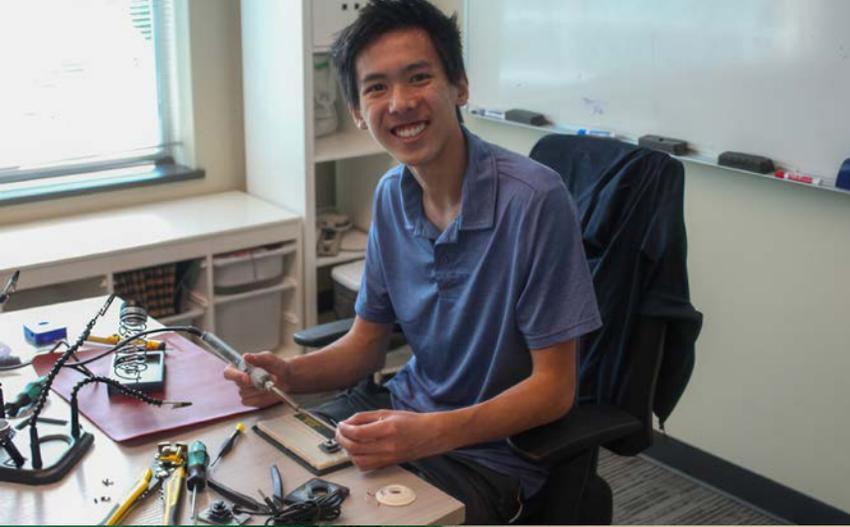
With funding from the Government of Canada, our Makers Making Change program engages youth volunteers in activities that teach hands-on skills and develops interest in STEM education, all while giving back by providing assistive technology to Canadians with disabilities.

Assistive Technology
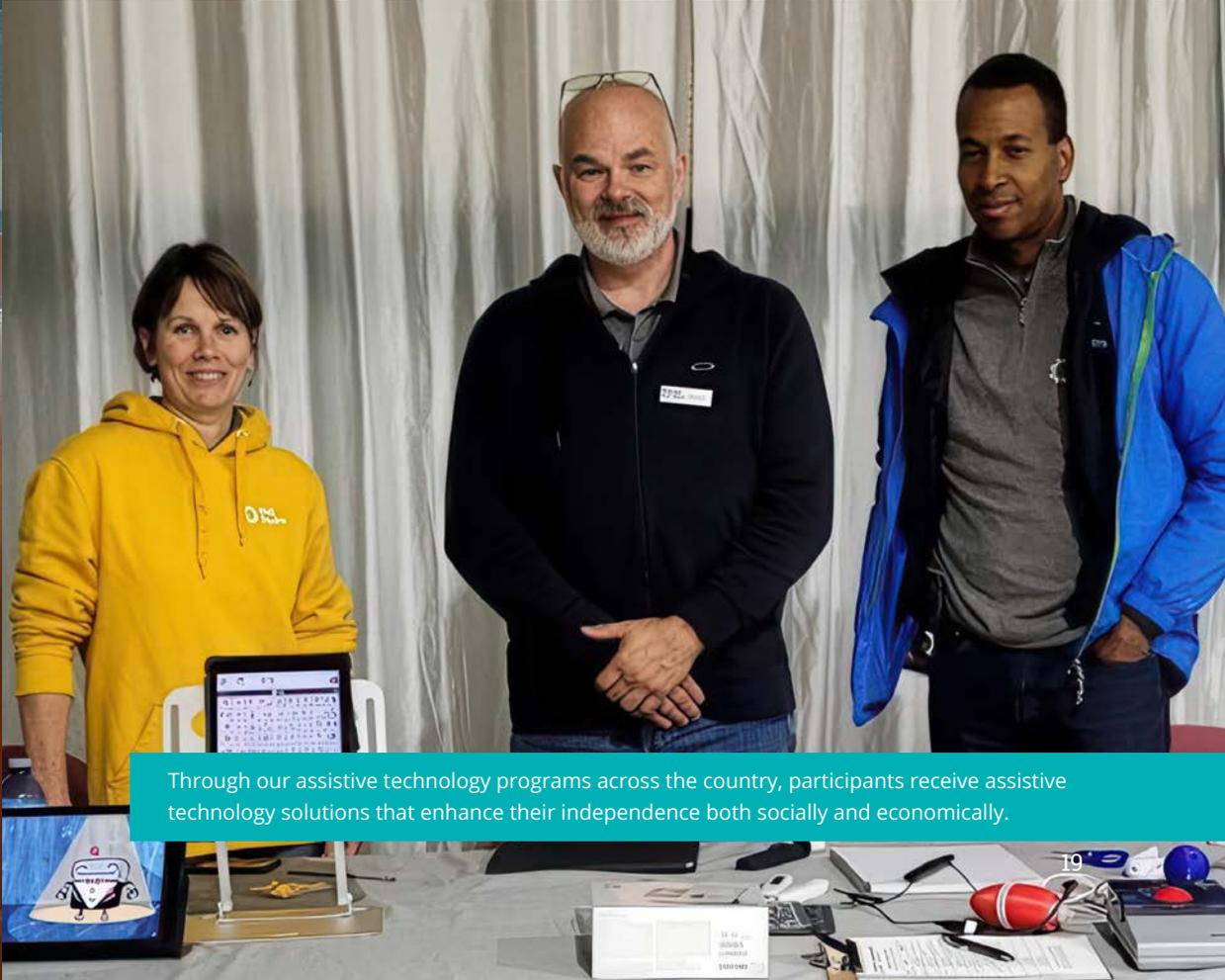
Through our assistive technology programs across the country, participants receive assistive technology solutions that enhance their independence both socially and economically.

Assistive Technology

Jody Dickerson demonstrating the Meta Quest

We are the Canadian leader in assistive technology, from innovation right through to trialing and implementation. We find the most effective ergonomic or assistiv technology solutions to target each individual's specific needs.

We offer a range of assistive technology services to support individuals with disabilities in their daily lives, workplaces, and communities. From personalized assessments through **Neil Squire Solutions**, to specialized hearing care via **Neil Squire Hearing Solutions** in Greater Vancouver, these services aim to enhance accessibility and independence. **WorkBC Assistive Technology Services**, operated by Neil Squire, provides funding in British Columbia for a variety of work-related supports, including assistive technology, ergonomic equipment, and vehicle modifications. Additionally, in New Brunswick, our **AT Help Desk** connects users to current information and guidance on finding and using assistive technology.

Highlights From the Year

Through **WorkBC Assistive Technology Services** we provided **1,715** disability supports in British Columbia. In the past decade, we have provided approximately **12,000** employment related disability supports to almost **11,000** people across British Columbia through our provincial Assistive Technology programs.

This year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our **AT Help Desk**, a free, bilingual service in New Brunswick that supports people with disabilities by providing expert, vendor-neutral advice on assistive technology. The **AT Help Desk** has answered nearly **5,000** inquiries, offering personalized, affordable solutions that often transform lives

The Cutting Edge of Assistive Technology

Our in-house team of occupational therapists and assistive technology specialists remain on the cutting edge of assistive technology.

For Jody Dickerson, an assistive technology trainer, AI tools have both made communicating with clients — allowing her to tailor responses to participants with different language comprehension levels and abilities to focus — and lesson planning more efficient and tailored to a participant's needs

"I can better tailor information to them," she shares.

Free, online AI tools are often helpful for participants with ADHD and other executive functioning disabilities, allowing users to generate to-do lists that make tasks more manageable by breaking it into small parts, to edit the tone in their emails, and more. However, as with all AI tools, Jody cautions that it still has to be your work, and to always read through it.

"The idea that I took from worldwide experts at an assistive technology conference is let it do the work for you, not the thinking," says Jody. *"So, you can let it make your checklist, but you need to think whether that checklist makes any sense. And there's things where AI just gets completely wrong. But this is one of the tools that can be really helpful for people and it's just there, it's free, it's an easy one to introduce people to."*

> **"[AI] is one of the tools that can be really helpful for people and it's just there, it's free, it's an easy one to introduce people to."**

Assistive technology training offered through **Solutions** and **WorkBC Assistive Technology Services** plays a big part in helping people both maintain employment and find employment. Useful for people with a wide range of disabilities ranging from spinal cord injuries to repetitive stress injuries, Dragon, a dictation program that allows people to navigate their computer without using a mouse and keyboard, is one of the most common solutions that people need on their way to employment.

"A lot of people come in, are in job search and they're often not even sure what kind of job they might be getting. So often I'm teaching just general computer access — how to do everything you need on a computer using Dragon," explains Jody, who also often guides participants through using macros — combining multiple different functions into one easy-to-use function — to make using Dragon much more convenient.

With many different specialties working under the same roof, participants are ensured to get well-rounded service.

"The main thing is that you can't ignore that it's a person doing the thing. So, I might help them do the thing on the computer, but they need the OT who makes sure that they can reach the mouse in the first place and can sit comfortably and do it, and they're not going to get injured," Jody says.

Assistive Technology

"I'm excited about what my future may hold. Because of all the time and effort the team invested in me, I feel that my chances of finding employment are greatly improved. I want to send a big thank you to everyone who helped make this all possible!" – Hailey, WorkBC Assistive Technology Services participant

Assistive Technology

WorkBC Assistive Technology Services participant, Ahmed.

Solutions: Canada Wide

Solutions is a team of healthcare professionals who specialize in using assistive technology and ergonomics to find the most effective individualized solutions to me the needs of people with disabilities at home, school, or in the office

5,943
individuals were served nationally

94%
enhanced their employability

52%
gained employment or returned to school

WorkBC Assistive Technology Services: British Columbia

WorkBC Assistive Technology Services, operated by Neil Squire, provides funding for assistive technology or supports to assist people with disabilities to gain and sustain employment or community attachment. Services are provided to employers, employees, and self-employed individuals in British Columbia.
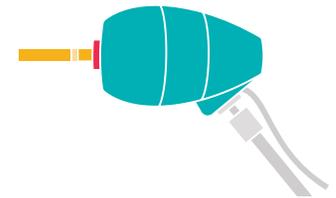
1,377
ATS applications were received

983
employers were served

592
ATS agreements were signed

1,363
assessments were completed

1,715
total disability supports were provided

Hearing Solutions: Burnaby, British Columbia

Hearing Solutions is a fully equipped hearing health centre dedicated to the prevention and treatment of hearing loss, offering compassionate and client centered service in the Greater Vancouver area.

2,265
in-person appointments were provided

520
consultations, training, follow-ups, and other hearing aid services were provided

899
people were provided with ear cleaning / ear wax removal

149
hearing aid fittings were provided

697
hearing and tinnitus assessments were provided

1,304
new clients have been served this past fiscal year

Assistive Technology

1
was the age of our youngest client

103
was the age of our oldest client

2,874
clients have been served in-person since we opened our hearing clinic doors

AT Help Desk: New Brunswick

The **AT Help Desk**, serving the province of New Brunswick, is designed to help people with disabilities access up-to-date Assistive Technology information and to receive support related to the sourcing and use of Assistive Technology. Our goal is to help reduce the employment gap for persons with disabilities by providing easy access to vendor-neutral, up-to-date information regarding Assistive Technology solutions for education and/or employment.

The continued success of our uniquely innovative **AT Help Desk** reflects the Government of New Brunswick's forward-looking decision to implement a transformative programming framework.

2,201 inquiries were received

1,134
were for AT suggestions or sourcing

980
were for troubleshooting

228
were for training

111
were inquiries about services

Employment

Creative Employment Options participant, Emily.

Employment

Our employment programs support individuals with disabilities in building skills, gaining experience, and achieving their career goals. From personalized job readiness training through **Creative Employment Options**, to hands-on learning in manufacturing for youth via **Empower3D**, we offer a range of tailored services. Our regional employment programs, **Job Focus**, and **Group Employment Skills**, provide flexible, one-on-one and group support to help participants work towards full or part time employment, volunteer work, or self-employment.

Highlights From the Year

This year, our employment programs across Canada supported **1,056** participants with disabilities. Our popular **Creative Employment Options** webinar series — which included webinars on using AI and social media in the job search — had a total of **674** registrants from nearly all provinces and territories across Canada, providing valuable and free resources to job seekers with disabilities, and employers interested in hiring people with disabilities.

In November we launched our new employment program for youth with disabilities, **Empower3D**. Available across Canada, the program gives youth with disabilities the opportunity to develop their skills and gain valuable work experience in the manufacturing sector.

Technology and Employment

Our employment programs work in collaboration with programs across our five areas of focus — Employment, Assistive Technology, Collaboration, Innovation, and Digital Literacy — to ensure that our participants have the skills and access to technology to thrive in the workplace. Our **Empower3D** participants learn how to assemble electronics as part of their manufacturing skills training in a course by our **Makers Making Change** team.

Creative Employment Options participants receive assistive technology assessments from our **Solutions** team of occupational therapists, which is particularly helpful for participants with invisible disabilities. Participants also often receive training in our digital literacy programs when they need to upgrade their skills for employment — perhaps they are looking to switch careers and need new skills, or they have a long employment gap and need to brush up on Microsoft Word.

Creative Employment Options participant, Austin, with his employer.

"Technology and assistive technologies are integrated in every aspect of our work when we support clients," explains Patty Lavakittichaiyant, National Program Manager for our **Creative Employment Options** program. *"We have well-rounded types of services, sometimes all of the services are kind of intertwined according to the client's needs."*

Our employment specialists also guide participants in using new technologies like AI in the job search process, including many who have never used it before. We are currently setting up internal advisory committees to study all facets of AI for people with disabilities, particularly in relation to their job seeking and long-term employment opportunities.

"Of course, we do encourage clients to effectively use AI to reduce the time spent on some of the tasks," Patty shares. *"Mindfulness around how to best use AI is something that we constantly talk to clients all the time. We kind of try to teach clients to think of it as an assistive tool, rather than having it doing the all the work for you, because it will never replace an actual human. So, the mindfulness and education around that is a big thing right now for us in terms of educating clients, helping them use AI effectively while being cognizant of potential risks."*

![Employment logo]

"I used to fear that my employer would look at my disability rather than look at me. I am glad that I don't have to hide it anymore. The Neil Squire Society made that possible." – Rodger, Creative Employment Options participant

Our employment programs enable Canadians with disabilities from coast to coast to live with more independence and fulfillment.

Creative Employment Options: Canada Wide

Creative Employment Options, offered across Canada, helps people with disabilities prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. This unique, comprehensive and participant centered program is designed to develop the skills required to help individuals achieve their employment goals.

Employment

411 participants were served across the country

177 participants gained employment or became self-employed

78 participants returned to school or stayed in school

130 participants received a wage subsidy intervention

185 youth participants were served

54 Indigenous participants were served

Group Employment Skills: Saskatchewan

Group Employment Skills, offered in Saskatchewan, helps participants build their skills and learn how to successfully find employment. This individualized program provides both a group and one-to-one supportive learning environment.

Group Employment Skills: Saskatchewan

94 participants in Saskatchewan were served

86 participants enhanced their employability

1,260 staff facilitation hours were used

76 participants gained employment or returned to school

Additional Atlantic Canada Employment Programming

Through our regional offices in Moncton and Fredericton, we offer a full slate programs from pre-employment to employment, such as **Job Focus**, to our **AT Help Desk**.

551 additional participants in our Atlantic Region were served
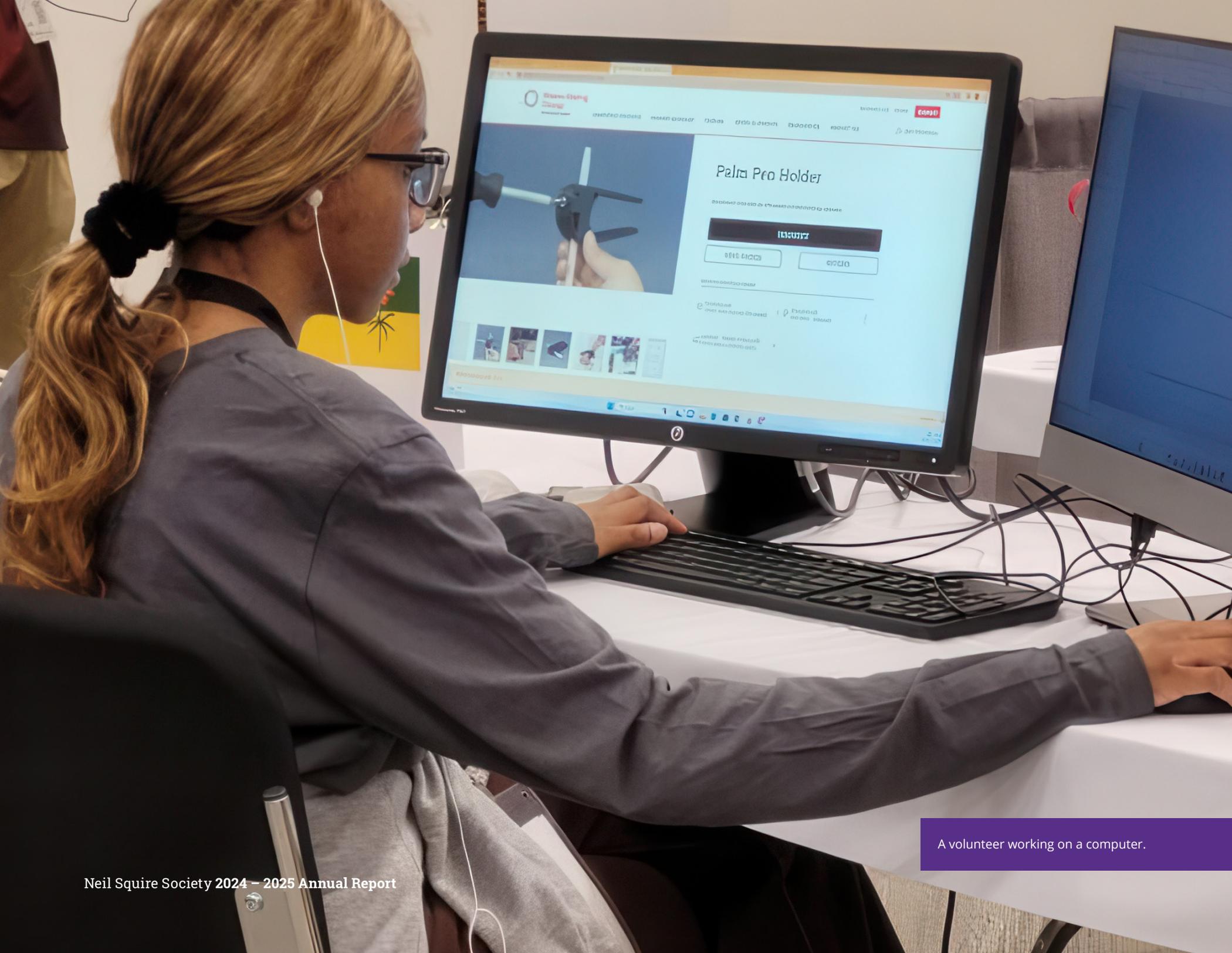
Digital Literacy

A volunteer working on a computer.

Digital Literacy

Since day one, we've offered volunteer-led computer skills tutoring to support individuals with disabilities. Gaining digital literacy can significantly enhance independence, open doors to vital resources, and strengthen connections with family and friends.

Computer Comfort offers free, one-on-one computer tutoring in a welcoming, client-centered environment, along with a refurbished donated computer for home use if needed, and ongoing technical support. Its online counterpart, **Distance Computer Comfort**, extends the same personalized learning experience to people with disabilities across Canada, offering flexible scheduling and remote access s participants can build their digital literacy skills from the comfort of home.

Highlights From the Year

This year, **1,337** individuals from **42** cities across **7** provinces participated in our digital literacy programs. We provided a combined **5,920** hours of computer tutoring and tech support, and we helped **97%** of our digital literacy participants enhance their employability.

With support from Google.org, we're working to improve the accessibility of Blockly and make coding more inclusive for students with disabilities. This initiative is designed to break down barriers and empowering youth with disabilities to develop valuable STEM skills.

Digital Literacy is the First Step Towards Employment

In today's workplace, digital literacy — being able to use a computer, knowing how to use email and navigate the internet — is a must. Often, the first step to achieving employment is ensuring your digital literacy skills are up to par.

Our programs **Computer Comfort** and **Distance Computer Comfort** help Canadians with disabilities to obtain the necessary digital literacy skills to thrive in the workplace, from basic training in using the computer, smartphone, and tablet, to detailed lessons with programs that come in handy at work like Word and Excel, as well as training in using assistive technology.

When participants in our employment programs lack the digital literacy skills they need in the workplace, they are often referred to our digital literacy programs to upgrade their skills. And many participants in our **Distance Computer Comfort** and **Computer**

Comfort programs go on to participate in our **Creative Employment Options** program and into the workforce.

With an in-house team of engineers, occupational therapists, and assistive technology specialists, digital literacy participants have access to assistive technology solutions from our **Solutions** and **Makers Making Change** teams.

And our digital literacy training doesn't just help people with disabilities trying to obtain work, it also serves people maintaining employment or making their job easier with our training. Nathan, who has cerebral palsy and received training on the speech recognition software, Dragon, through our **Distance Computer Comfort** program, explains how our program has made his workday easier.

"Whenever I'm having those high pain days or low mobility days, just to be able to still get work done, or if I have a day where I have a lot of writing and a really high volume, just to be able to keep up with the demand by going to that voice to text, taking a bit of the load off of my hands, off of my fingers, and letting me get more things done and be more productive with my day," he shares.

"It's funny. You don't often associate office work and white-collar work with physical burden, but the reality is if you have any sort of fine motor challenges, it can be difficult to type all day or to sit in one spot all day and get things done."

Digital Literacy

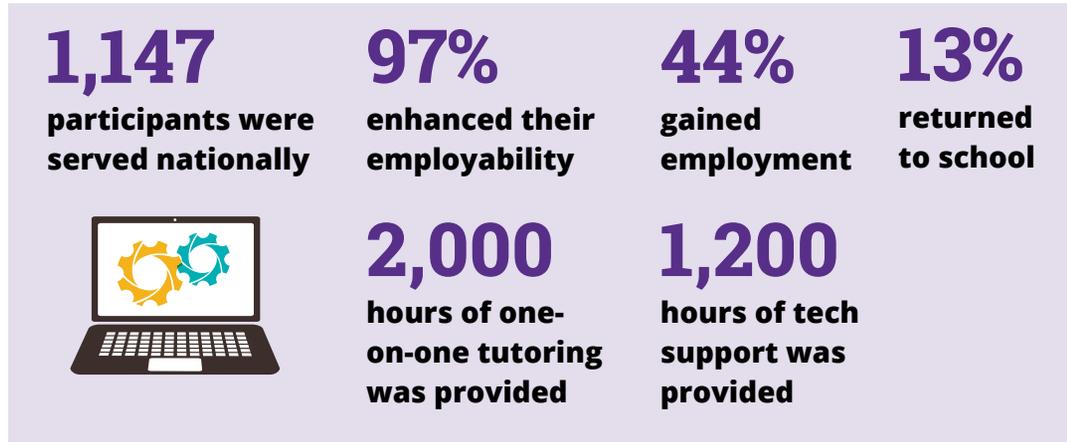"I just have learned so much and I'm looking forward to using all of that knowledge that I have with my volunteer positions." – Lisa, Distance Computer Comfort participant

Our digital literacy programs help participants increase their employability, or in many cases for participants currently employed, help them learn skills that they can use at work, reducing pain and increasing productivity.

Computer Comfort: Canada Wide

Computer Comfort offers one-on-one computer tutoring at no cost to qualifying participants in a supportive, client-centred environment; a refurbished donated computer for the home, if needed; and ongoing technical support.

1,147
participants were served nationally

97%
enhanced their employability

44%
gained employment

13%
returned to school

2,000
hours of one-on-one tutoring was provided

1,200
hours of tech support was provided

We served participants with the following disabilities: arthritis, brain injury, cerebral palsy, chronic pain, developmental disabilities, epilepsy, learning disabilities, multiple sclerosis, mental health disabilities, post-traumatic stress disorder, spinal cord injury, stroke, vision impairment, other impairments.

Computer Refurbishing: Burnaby, British Columbia

Our **Computer Refurbishing** program, available in the Greater Vancouver Area, provides donated computer for the home and ongoing technical support. We are a Microsoft® Registered Refurbisher.

100+ refurbished computers were provided to participants across Canada

Digital Literacy

Distance Computer Comfort: Canada Wide

The **Distance Computer Comfort** program, available online anywhere in Canada, offers one-on-one tutoring through a virtual classroom. Without even having to leave home, participants can learn how to use their computer, tablet, or smartphone.

190
participants were served across the country

7
provinces were home to participants we served

42
cities were home to participants we served

2,500
hours of one-on-one tutoring were provided

26
volunteers were utilized

4
Computer Comfort partner sites were utilized

220
hours of remote support were provided by our staff. They assisted participants in troubleshooting issues with their computers and mobile devices.

Digital Literacy

Of the participants who took part:

The **Distance Computer Comfort** program, available online anywhere in Canada, offers one on-one tutoring through a virtual classroom. Without even having to leave home, participants can learn how to use their computer, tablet, or smartphone.

91% participants enhanced their employability

9% participants gained employment

10% participants moved on to volunteer opportunities

5.5% participants moved on to training or educational opportunities

Digital Literacy

Of the volunteers who took part:

The **Distance Computer Comfort** program, available online anywhere in Canada, offers one-on-one tutoring through a virtual classroom. Without even having to leave home, participants can learn how to use their computer, tablet, or smartphone.

53%
volunteered with Neil Squire for the first time

62%
are either continuing client pairings into 2025/2026 or are waiting to be paired with clients

26
volunteers connected from the following provinces across Canada: 15 from BC, 1 from Alberta, 2 from Saskatchewan, 6 from Ontario, 1 from New Brunswick, and 1 from Nova Scotia

900
Approximate hours of tutoring completed by our our British Columbia based volunteers

As pre-employment programs, our expectation of **Computer Comfort** and **Distance Computer Comfort** participants is that they would move on to an employment program, however, nearly 44% and 10% of our participants respectively found employment right away.

By way of demographics, **Computer Comfort** participants generally have the lowest education and least amount of employment experience of any of our programs, so we are exceptionally proud of these outcomes.

Distance Computer Comfort's Reach Across Canada
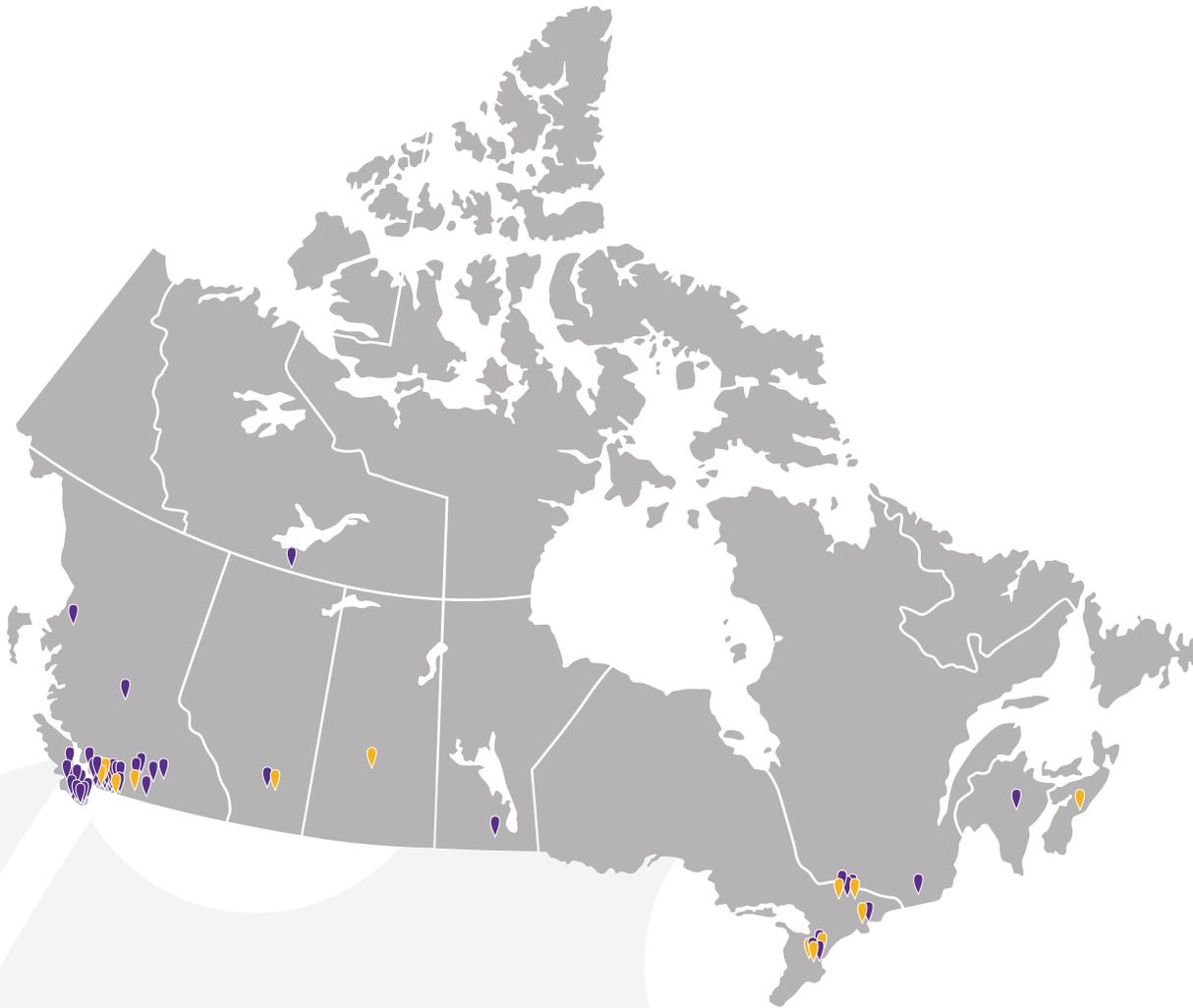
Digital Literacy

◉ Participant locations:

British Columbia: Abbotsford, Burnaby, Chemainus, Chilliwack, Comox, Crofton, Delta, Duncan, Kamloops, Keremeos, Langford, Langley, Maple Ridge, Mission, New Westminster, North Vancouver, Penticton, Port Alberni, Prince George, Richmond, Saanichton, Salmon Arm, Salt Spring Island, Sechelt, Sidney, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver, Vernon, Victoria, White Rock, **Alberta:** Calgary, **Manitoba**: Winnipeg, **New Brunswick:** Lutes Mountain, **Northwest Territories:** Hay River, **Ontario:** Bolton, Kingston, Nepean, Orleans, Ottawa, Toronto, **Quebec:** Montreal

◉ Volunteer locations:

British Columbia: Aldergrove, Burnaby, Delta, Penticton, Pitt Meadows, Richmond, Surrey, Vancouver, **Alberta:** Calgary, **New Brunswick:** Saint John, **Nova Scotia:** Prospect Bay, **Ontario:** Markham, Ottawa, Pickering, Toronto, Whitby, York, **Saskatchewan:** Saskatoon

Collaboration

Head office staff at the 40th anniversary celebratio

Collaboration

Danielle Lafleur is presented with the 2024 Student Poster Outstanding Research Award (1st Prize).

Our Expertise Under One Roof and Beyond

One of our greatest strengths at Neil Squire is having all of this expertise under one roof. This allows for customization and collaboration between our staff to provide the very best solutions for our participants.

By partnering with like-minded organizations, school districts, rehabilitation and developmental hospitals, makers with disabilities, employers, and many others, we are uniquely positioned to support people with disabilities across Canada. These collaborations allow us to share knowledge, co-create innovative solutions, and deliver services that are more inclusive, accessible, and tailored to individual needs.

Highlights From the Past Year

June 19th, 2024 officially marked our   th anniversary. Our offices across Canad celebrated the milestone with barbecues and open houses, opening our doors to the community and sharing the work we do with pride. We celebrated our anniversary with friends old and new, and acknowledged everyone who made it all possible — our participants, volunteers, staff, supporters, and partners.

Our **Hacking for the Holidays** campaign raised over **$147,000**. With your support we were able to adapt **2,058** toys and switches for kids with disabilities in Canada. We hosted **84** events, with events in every province, and engaged over **2,600** volunteers.

In March, our fifth annual Swing Into Spring Princess Ball fundraising event took place in Regina. All proceeds from the Princess Ball went towards our Prairie Region's Solutions for Schools initiative, donating Assistive Technology Education Kits to elementary schools in Saskatchewan for students with disabilities.

Outreach and Networking

Our **Creative Employment Options** program's outreach efforts span across multiple provinces and territories, from coast to coast to coast, coordinated from our regional offices in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick. This yea we connected with nearly 500 employers and service providers, including disability organizations, universities and other post-secondary institutions, and organizations serving equity-deserving communities such as youth, immigrants, and Indigenous peoples. These connections took place through corporate meetings, job fairs, information booths, networking events, group presentations, formal networking sessions, panel discussions, and speaking engagements.

Our **WorkBC Assistive Technology Services** outreach efforts in British Columbia included participation in over **1,000** corporate meetings, job fairs, booths, and networking events. We also conducted more than **500** group presentations, formal networking sessions, panel discussions, and speaking engagements. Our networking activities with Boards of Trade, Chambers of Commerce, business networking groups, small business owners, WorkBC Centres, and disability organizations allow us to extend our outreach across the entire province.

Continuing our Legacy

Our collaborations enable us to continue the groundbreaking work we began over forty years ago: using assistive technology to open doors to employment for Canadians with disabilities. Together, we are helping ensure people of all ability have the opportunity to live, work, and play without barriers.

Collaboration

Director of Innovation, Chad Leaman, and Nancy Cameron, daughter of Bill Cameron, the founder of Neil Squire Society.

Collaboration

Of the hundreds of events we participated in this year, here are a some highlights: we are everywhere from schools to rehab hospitals to fundraising and networking events.

Visit our website to read our latest success stories:

https://www.neilsquire.ca/category/success-stories/

Visit our website to read our latest news stories:

https://www.neilsquire.ca/category/latest-news/

Cerebral Palsy Alberta participants take part in a Makers Making Change adaptive gaming event.

From assistive technology builds to job fairs to open houses, and even a Princess Ball, you'll likely find us at an event in a community near you. We hope to see you at a future event!

Leaving
a Legacy

Leaving a Legacy

A planned gift is personal and meaningful and allows you the opportunity to give in a way that leaves a lasting legacy.

To learn more about Neil Squire's planned giving program, please contact:

Chad Leaman, CAE

Director of Innovation

604-473-9363 ext. 173

chadl@neilsquire.ca

Government Funders

Opportunities Fund, Employment and Social Development Canada
Government of Canada

Social Development Partnership Programs – Disability Component, Employment and Social Development Canada
Government of Canada

Youth Employment and Skills Strategy, Employment and Social Development Canada
Government of Canada

Canada Service Corps, Employment and Social Development Canada
Government of Canada

Canada Summer Jobs, Employment and Social Development Canada
Government of Canada

CanCode, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
Government of Canada

PromoScience, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
Government of Canada

Community Gaming Grant, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Government of British Columbia

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Government of British Columbia

WorkSafe BC

Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
Government of New Brunswick

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Government of New Brunswick

Social Development
Government of New Brunswick

WorkSafe NB

Ministry of Immigration and Career Training
Government of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority

Saskatchewan Workers and Compensation Board

City of Regina

Major Donors

Accenture

Access Communications

Air Canada Foundation

Andrew Mahon Foundation

Avnet

BC Paraplegic Foundation

BLG

Bourassa Savaria Foundation

Car Boys Auto Repair

Catherine O'Connell

Cedar Valley Investments

Central Valley Adult Learning Association

CGI

Coast Capital Savings Credit Union

Daniel McDonald

Digital Alberta

District of North Vancouver

EA - Electronic Arts

Edmonton Community Foundation

Etienne Blanchard

Fredericton Community Foundation Inc.

Google

Granville Island Hat Shop

Greg Pyc

ILLAHIE Foundation

Information Services Corporation

Investors Group

Kathleen Parton

Mary Frances Laughton

McInnes Cooper

Nikki Langdon

Northeastern University

OpenRoad

RBC Foundation

Salesforce

SaskPower

Scott Rutherford

Scraper Corporate

Sean Wilson

Sherry Law

South Saskatchewan Community Foundation

SpencerCreo Foundation

Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation

TD Canada Trust

The Canada Life Assurance Company

Toronto Foundation

Trottier Family Foundation

United Way Maritimes

University New Brunswick

Venture for Canada

Walsh Foundation

West Vancouver Memorial Library

Weyerhaeuser Canada

Workday

Worlds UNBound

Individual Donors

Acera Benefits

Affinity Credit Unio

Ailo

All In Event Services

Andrew Pope

Beverly Grasse

Big K Clothing

Brian Megas

Brian Pritchard

Captive

Caroline van Wyngaarden

Chad Leaman

Clay Braziller

Coast To Coast Assistive Tech Consulting

Colleen Courtney

Derrick Andrews

Desimark

Edward Jones

Evelyn Macdonald

Evergreen Home for Special Care

Gary Birch

Gordon Watt

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Hudson Social Group

intaGEN Wealth Inc.

James Harrott

Justin Pezzin

Kenneth N Birch

Lorraine King

Madeline Cheng

Melissa Joyal

Michael Brown

Microsoft

Mohsen Hajihassan

Munesh Raman

Murillo Household

Nathan Toevs

Paul Percival

Prairie Heart Counseling

Rachin Kumar

Ripplinger Financial

Robin Firkins

SaskTel

Shawn Campbell

Stephen and Margaret Heddle

Tall Tree Construction

Timothy Park

Toronto Public Library

University of Western Ontario

Vida Colango

Virolai Holding Corp.

Wealth Blueprint Strategies Inc

Western University Occupational Therapy students

Yasmin Juma

Neil Squire Society
Statement of Financial Position
As at March 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Assets		
Current		
Cash *(Note 4)*	1,171,639	841,074
Accounts receivable *(Note 5)*	973,301	1,943,454
Prepaid expenses	214,160	196,355
	2,359,100	2,980,883
Tangible capital assets *(Note 6)*	18,354	35,004
	2,377,454	3,015,887
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities *(Note 7)*	451,186	425,624
Deferred revenue *(Note 8)*	1,477,577	2,146,232
	1,928,763	2,571,856
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	130,337	109,027
Invested in tangible capital assets	18,354	35,004
Internally restricted	300,000	300,000
	448,691	444,031
	2,377,454	3,015,887

Approved on behalf of the Board

_____
Director

_____
Director

Statement of Operations

Neil Squire Society
Statement of Operations
For the year ended March 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Revenue		
Contracts *(Note 10)*	13,559,996	13,719,642
Services and training fees	1,325,457	1,180,628
Recoverable costs *(Note 13)*	2,585,640	2,494,177
Donations - cash	158,746	91,875
Donations - in kind	440	2,190
Gaming	145,000	135,000
Interest income and other	444,611	322,584
	18,219,890	17,946,096
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits *(Note 12)*	9,974,220	9,987,579
Client equipment *(Note 13)*	2,585,640	2,494,177
Rent	890,732	991,230
Consulting and contracts	890,281	424,154
General and administrative	880,687	880,141
Client supports	863,854	834,655
Wage subsidies *(Note 13)*	810,289	832,925
Equipment, maintenance and lease	412,631	450,391
Travel	349,148	349,966
Materials and supplies	325,153	367,061
Marketing and program development	207,505	253,396
Amortization	24,650	41,272
Donations - in kind	440	2,190
Total expenses	18,215,230	17,909,137
Excess of revenue over expenses	4,660	36,959

Board Members

Josh Vander Vies, Chair

Marie Burgoyne, Vice-Chair

Brian Pritchard, Past-Chair

Colin Bell, Treasurer

Laurie Hill, Member

Scott Rutherford, Member

Executive Team

Gary Birch, Executive Director

Greg Pyc, National Operations Manager

Rachin Kumar, Director of Finance

Regional Directors

Cheryl Colmer, Central Regional Director

Beverly Grasse, Regional Director / Employment Specialist, Atlantic Region

Nikki Langdon, Solutions Departmental Specialist / Prairie Regional Director

Charles Levasseur, Solutions Departmental Specialist / Regional Director / Assistive Technology and Learning Disability Specialist

Greg Pyc, Western Regional Director

Management Team

Zorana Ciric, WorkBC Assistive Technology Services Program Manager

Geordie Cree, Chief Information Office (Pro Tem)

Patty Lavakittichaiyant, National Program Manager

Chad Leaman, Director of Innovation

Harry Lew, Manager of Research and Development

Justin Pezzin, Director of Makers Making Change

Munesh Raman, IT Manager

Katrina Tilley, Manager of Occupational Therapists

Suzanne Wiens, Director of Communications

Executive Committee

Josh Vander Vies, Chair

Colin Bell, Treasurer

Marie Burgoyne, Secretary

Brian Pritchard

Scott Rutherford

Gary Birch (ex officio

Audit and Financial Management Committee

Colin Bell, Chair

Patrick Ho

Gary Birch (ex offici

Rachin Kumar (ex officio), Advis

Marketing Committee

Judy Hutchins, Chair

Jackie Connelly

Laurie Hill

Brian Mavrow

Brian Pritchard

Gary Birch (ex officio

Austin Cozicar (ex officio

Suzanne Wiens (ex officio

Client Services Committee

Laurie Hill, Chair

Marie Burgoyne

Gary Birch (ex officio

Cheryl Colmer (ex officio

Rob Attwell, Advisor

Fundraising Committee

Brian Pritchard, Chair

Brian Mavrow

Gary Birch (ex officio

Chad Leaman (ex officio

Technology and Partnerships Committee

Scott Rutherford, Chair

Jaimie Borisoff, Advisor

Drew Collier, Advisor

Alan Bridgeman, Advisor

Leon Salvail, Advisor

Gary Birch (ex officio

Chad Leaman (ex officio

Staff Certifications and Professional Affiliations

Our front-line personnel hold recognized professional certifications, ensuring a high standard of service and expertise. We are actively engaged with several key affiliated organizations, whos networks play a vital role in supporting our outreach efforts and collaborative initiatives.

Professional Certifications

Health and Rehabilitation

Advanced Certification in Cerumen Management

Assistive Technology Certificate Program (ATACP)

Assistive Technology for Learning Disabilities (ATLD)

Assistive Technology Professional (ATP)

Assistive Technology Technician and Writer

Applied Ergonomics (AE)

Applied Learning Disability Specialist (LDGC)

Canadian Counselling Certification (CCC

Certificate in Ergonomics (Cert. Ergonomics

Certification in Tinnitus Retraining Therapy – Jastreboff Hearing Disorders Foundatio

Clinical Certification with Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (Aud (C))

Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC

Human Service Counselor (HSC)

Learning Strategist for Learning Disabilities (LSLD)

Licensed Counselling Therapist (LCT)

Registered Audiologist (RAUD)

Registered Hearing Instrument Practitioner (RHIP)

Registered Nurse (RN)

Registered Occupational Therapist (OT)

Registered Rehabilitation Professional (RRP)

Registered Social Worker (RSW)

Rehabilitation Assistant (RA)

Social Work Technician (SWT)

Widex Zen Therapy Accreditation

Career Development and Administration

Advanced Employment Supports Specialty Certification

Business Network International, Master Connector Certification

Business Technology (ABT)

Certified Association Executive (CAE

Certified Career Development Practitioner (CCDP)

Certified Career Transition Specialis

Certified Employment Specialis

Certified in MBT

Certified Vocational Professional (CVP)

Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA)

Customized Employment Trainer Training

Human Resources Management Certificatio

Marketing and Job Development Certificatio

Medical Office Administration (MO

National Career Development Certificatio

New Brunswick Teachers Certificate

Nonprofit Sector Leadership and Innovation Certificatio

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and Threat Assessment Training Level 1&2 Certificatio

Post Graduate Certification in Education (PGCE)

Registered Return to Work Disability Manager

Registered Vocational Professional (RVP)

Return to Work Disability Management Certification (RTWDM

Series 99 – Operations Professional Certificatio

Standard First Aid and CPR / AED Level C

Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention for Employees certificat

Engineering and Design

Electronics Technician

Certified Usability Analyst (CUA)

Professional Engineer (PEng)

Rehabilitation Engineering Technologist (RET)

Accessibility and Indigenous
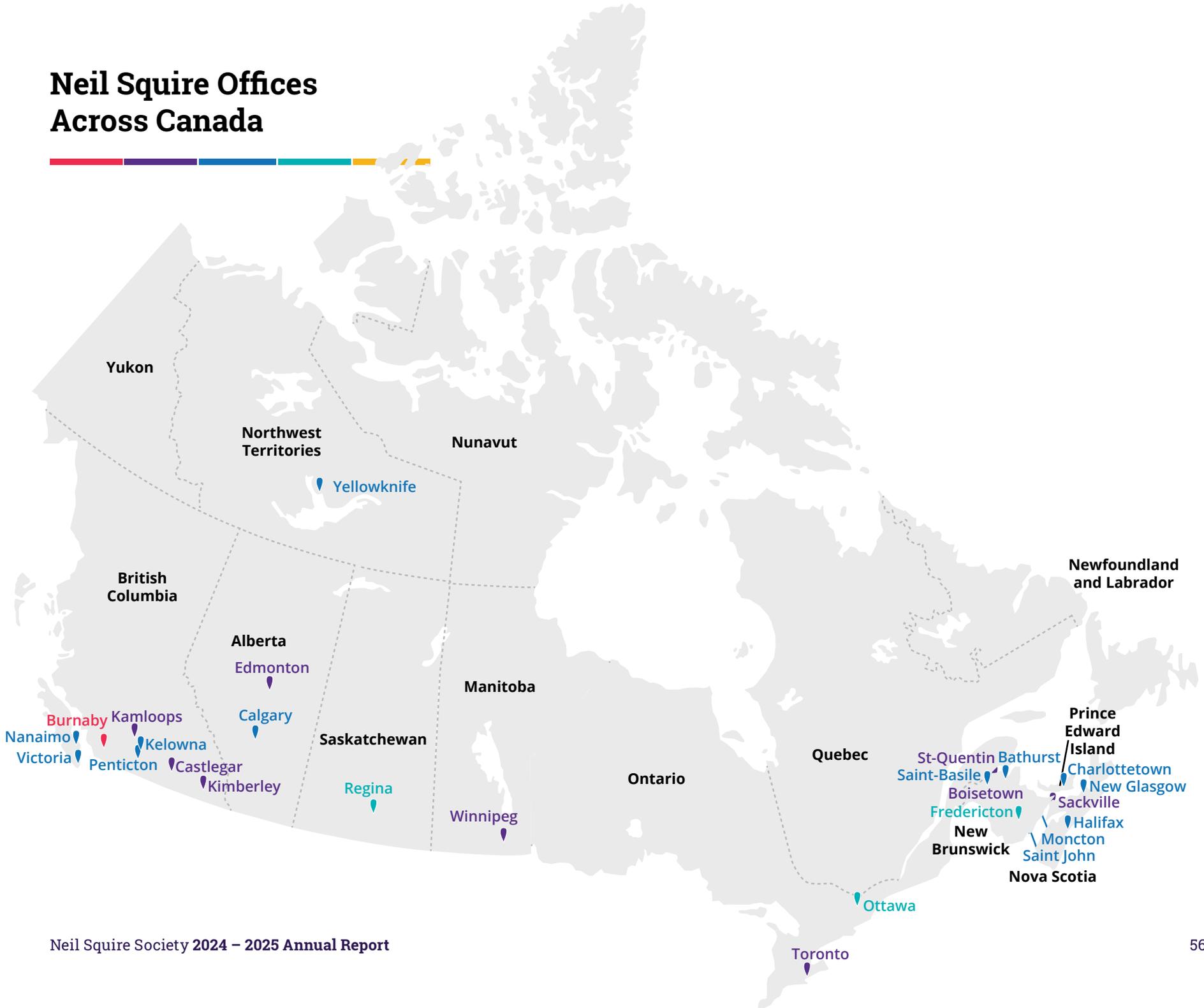
4 Seasons of Indigenous Learning

Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC)

Visit our website to see our professional affiliations:

https://www.neilsquire.ca/about/ourteam

Neil Squire Offices Across Canada

Yukon

Northwest Territories

Nunavut

British Columbia

Yellowknife

Newfoundland and Labrador

Alberta

Edmonton

Manitoba

Burnaby Kamloops

Nanaimo Kelowna Calgary

Victoria Penticton Castlegar

Kimberley

Saskatchewan

Regina

Ontario

Quebec

Winnipeg

Prince Edward Island

St-Quentin Bathurst

Saint-Basile Charlottetown

Boisetown New Glasgow

Fredericton Sackville

New Brunswick Moncton Halifax

Saint John

Nova Scotia

Ottawa

Toronto

Neil Squire Head Office:

Burnaby, British Columbia

Neil Squire Regional Offices:

Regina, Saskatchewan (Prairie Regional)

Ottawa, Ontario (Central Regional)

Fredericton, New Brunswick (Atlantic Regional)

Neil Squire Offices:

Victoria, British Columbia

Nanaimo, British Columbia

Kelowna, British Columbia

Penticton, British Columbia

Calgary, Alberta

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Moncton, New Brunswick

Saint-Basile, New Brunswick

Bathurst, New Brunswick

Saint John, New Brunswick

Halifax, Nova Scotia

New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Staff Satellite Offices:

Kamloops, British Columbia

Castlegar, British Columbia

Kimberley, British Columbia
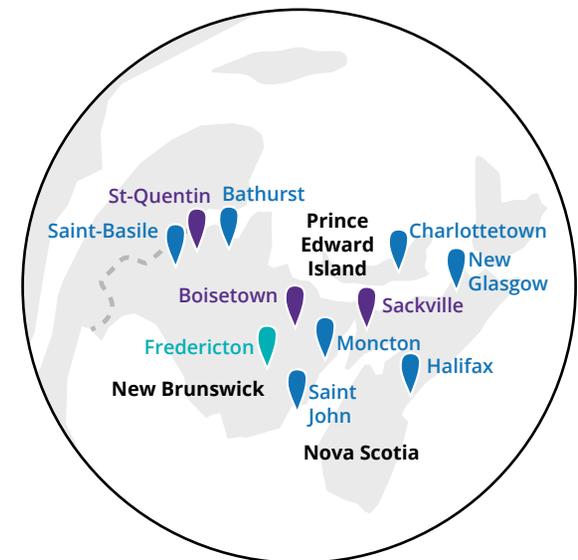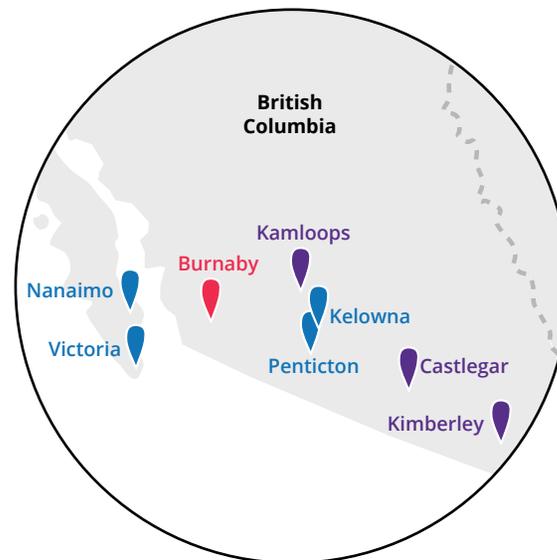
Edmonton, Alberta

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Toronto, Ontario

Boisetown, New Brunswick

Sackville, New Brunswick

St-Quentin, New Brunswick

Neil Squire Offices Across Canada

Head Office & Western Regional Office

400 – 3999 Henning Drive

Burnaby, BC V5C 6P9

T 604.473.9363

F 604.473.9364

Toll Free 1.877.673.4636

Our Western Region serves all regions in British Columbia including Vancouver Island, Vancouver, Coast & Mountains, Thompson Okanagan, Kootenay Rockies, Cariboo, Chilcotin, Coast, and Northern BC & Haida Gwaii. Our Head Office is home to our Solutions Assistive Technology Lab and our Hearing Solutions hearing health centre.

Prairie Regional Office

1353 Broad Street

Regina, SK S4R 7V1

T 306.781.6023

F 306.522.9474

Our Prairie Region serves communities across Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. With offices strategically placed in Regina, Calgary, and Yellowknife, we maintain strong, ongoing relationships within the rural, Indigenous, and northern communities that shape this region. Provincial funding ensures that programs in this region are locally supported and focused on regional priorities.

Central Regional Office

815 St. Laurent Blvd, Room 218

Ottawa, ON K1K 3A7

T 613.723.3575

F 613.723.3579

Our Central Region, with our office located in Ottawa, serves all of Ontario and Quebec. Our Central Region works in close coordination with all other regions to share resources, insights, and best practices.

Atlantic Regional Office

440 York Street

Fredericton, NB E3B 3P7

T 506.450.7999

F 506.453.9681

Our Atlantic region has two specialized offices to better serve the region's diverse needs: the Assistive Technology Specific Office in Moncton and the Employment Specific Office in Fredericton. These dedicated offices work collaboratively with other Atlantic Regional offices to provide tailored expertise and support, ensuring comprehensive solutions are delivered across the region.

Neil Squire

www.neilsquire.ca

www.makersmakingchange.com

www.neilsquiresolutions.ca

www.neilsquirehearingsolutions.ca

www.athelpdesk.org