



## Relationship-Building Organizations

Below are a few not-for-profit organizations that are not referenced elsewhere on this website and that emphasize social interactions and building relationships. The Good Practices in Action section of this website also offers other examples and can be read at: <http://www.ibelong.ca/index.php/good-practices>

### **Friend 2 Friend Social Learning Society**

<http://www.friend2friendsociety.org/index.php>

For children and teens on the Autism spectrum, the Society is based in Vancouver BC. It works “to enhance reciprocal social interaction, communication, imaginative play, and friendships between individuals on the autism spectrum and their typically developing peers.” It provides innovative programs for those aged 3 to 18 and training opportunities for parents, educators and other professionals.

### **You’ve Gotta Have Friends**

<http://www.youvegottahavefriends.ca/>

You’ve Gotta Have Friends brings people together to connect socially. It is community based and is sponsored by the Langley Community Living Association.

### **The Spectrum Society for Community Living**

<http://www.spectrumsociety.org/default.aspx>

The Spectrum Society for Community Living, located in Vancouver, does much cutting-edge work to support inclusion and “strengthen the capacity of individuals and their personal support networks, augmenting rather than replacing natural supports.” On its website, note especially the link to “**101 Ways to Make Friends**,” also known as The Personal Support Networks Project. Click on “PUBLICATIONS” to find good articles, including one on what it is to be truly “person-centered.” The Society publishes a monthly e-newsletter.

### **Autism Aspergers Friendship Society – Calgary**

<http://www.aafscalgary.com/>



The emphasis of this Society is on building social relationships. “We recognize that everyone has very unique social abilities and we do our best to expand on those skills. The outings are in a group atmosphere with AAFS leaders promoting socialization among the participants.”

### **The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (OHCC)**

<http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/inclusive-community-organizations-a-tool-kit>

The OHCC has developed a free downloadable Tool Kit to assist community organizations in becoming more equitable, diverse and inclusive than they are at present.

### **L’Association de Montréal pour la déficience intellectuelle (AMDI)**

<http://www.amdi.info/francais.html>

AMDI was founded in 1935 by a group of parents who wanted their children to have a “normal” life. It offers a number of services—workshops, residences, camps.

### **Asset-Based Community Development**

[www.abcdinstitute.org](http://www.abcdinstitute.org) .

Asset-Based Community Development is an organization founded by American pioneering activist John McKnight. It emphasizes the assets that each individual living in a particular neighbourhood or community brings to the whole. It provides a strong challenge to the “deficit” mode of thinking.

### **The UK Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities**

<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/about-us/>

A multi-faceted education and advocacy organization in the UK, the Foundation is concerned that many young people find it hard to build and maintain social networks and to find a range of opportunities including work. Its booklet *Prepared for the Future?* is meant to prepare families when a young person is leaving school or college. The Foundation has also created a workbook for young people called *My Kind of a Future*, to help young people plan for their own future. All of its booklets are free and available for download from its website.

(Note that in the UK the term “learning disability” is used instead of the common North American terms “intellectual disability” or “developmental disability”.)

### **Faith-Based Organizations:**

Some families place a high priority on their young person being supported in their own faith tradition. Several not-for-profit services are provided by various faith groups in the larger urban centres. Here are a few examples.



## **Mary Centre**

<http://www.marycentre.com/default.asp>

Mary Centre, located in Toronto, is a Catholic faith-based service that is open to anyone. It offers outreach as well as residential services. “We identify what is most important to the individual and respect their right to make their own choices, and we assist them in integrating all of the components that will achieve a rich and satisfying life.”

## **Christian Horizons**

<http://www.christian-horizons.org/>

Christian Horizons is a Christian faith-based (Protestant) organization offering a range of services to approximately 1,500 individuals and their families. It serves centres across much of Ontario. “We will honour God and value people in all we do and with all of our resources.”

## **L’Arche**

[www.larche.ca](http://www.larche.ca)

L’Arche has 29 communities across Canada. The communities are quite small compared to other organizations. They centre around a shared communal life in homes and day settings. L’Arche has Catholic roots but is ecumenical and open to people of other faiths. Its faith composition tends to reflect that of local populations.

## **Jewish services**

Several Jewish services in major centers support people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Jewish cultural and food traditions are upheld, but participants do not have to be Jewish.

For an example, see Reena, in the Good Practices in Action section of this website:

<http://www.ibelong.ca/index.php/good-practices/reena/>

*\*If you know of any other good organizations that do work around relationship-building, please share them in our Community Forum.*

