

Newsletter

North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity



Past-President's Message

Dr. JoonKoo Yun | East Carolina University | Greenville, North Carolina

Greetings from North Carolina!

Since we began publishing the NAFAPA Newsletter regularly, it has become somewhat of a tradition for the board president to start the newsletter by sharing information and updating the members on NAFAPA news. Trust me, I am not returning as president! Justin Haegele, the current board president, asked me to write a message for this issue since it will be my last newsletter as a board member. I greatly appreciate his consideration! Serving for nearly six years as president-elect, president, and now the past president has been a tremendous privilege and honour.

Reflecting on the last six years, there have been many significant initiatives, especially under the leadership of Stamatis Agiovlaitis, who had a visionary approach. This included the initiation of the Allen W. Burton New Investigator Award and off-biennial conference year virtual meetings. I believe these were successful and provided positive benefits to the members and the larger Adapted Physical Activity Community. Also, I learned an important lesson: the board needs financial resources to support great initiatives. As many of you remember, we passed the membership fee in 2016, but we did not have the logistics to manage the fees effectively. At the last membership assembly at Brock University, we amended our bylaws to elect a treasurer. Under the leadership of Justin Haegele and the tireless efforts of Laurel Malone, our treasurer, we were able to reinstate our 503C tax status. I am also pleased to inform you that the board has approved a \$50 membership fee for two-year professional memberships and a \$25 fee for two-year student memberships. We will start collecting these fees for the upcoming 2024 NAFAPA conference. These funds will be used for many essential needs, such as maintaining our website, covering expenses related to off-year virtual meetings, and building future initiatives.

In addition, I want to remind you of the call for nominations for The Patricia Austin Graduate Student Award, The Dale A. Ulrich Leadership Award, and the Allen W. Burton New Investigator Award. I know there are many outstanding, highly qualified individuals, so please do not hesitate to nominate someone or self-nominate for these awards. You can find more detailed information at the bottom of this newsletter and on our [website](#). I am really excited to see you all at the 2024 NAFAPA Conference in Ithaca, NY. Abstract [submission](#) will be open until March 31, 2024. Lastly, I want to extend my thanks to John Foley for organizing the 2024 NAFAPA conference. I hope to see you all there!

Researcher Highlight



Dr. Meghann Lloyd

Community Spotlight



The Steadward Centre

Student Highlight



Nikki Matthews

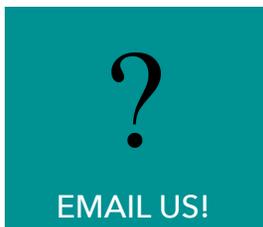
Tips for Young Scholars



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In Memoriam

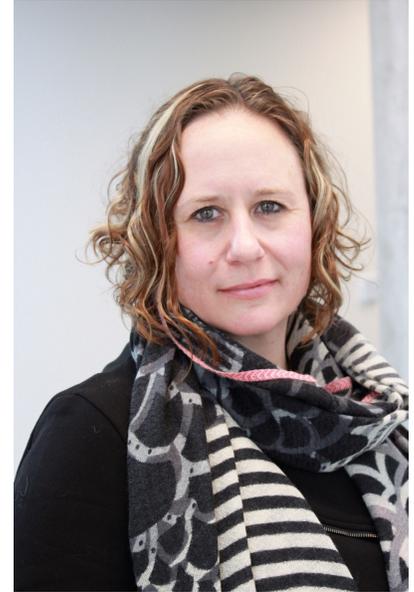
Announcements



Researcher Highlight

Dr. Meghann Lloyd | Ontario Tech University | Oshawa, Ontario

Dr. Meghann Lloyd joined Ontario Tech University in 2010 and is a faculty member in their Kinesiology program; she is also a Senior Research Associate at Grandview Children's Centre. Dr. Lloyd's research focuses on the motor development, physical activity, and health of children, youth, and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Currently, she has two funded projects and has just applied for a CIHR grant to investigate the health of Special Olympics participants. Dr. Lloyd is actively recruiting Master's and PhD students for the following two studies (Canadian students or Permanent Residents take priority).



Study 1: Motor Skill Intervention for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A 5-year follow-up funded by a SSHRC Insight Grant

The overarching objective of the proposed research is to generate knowledge about the long-term trajectory of motor skill development in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and how motor skills enable participation in childhood contexts that support the development of social, communication, and behavioural skills. To accomplish this, we are conducting a 5-year follow-up study on a cohort of children with ASD who participated in a fundamental motor skill intervention between 2017-2020, when they were 3-5 years of age. A second cohort of age and sex-matched peers with ASD who did not receive the early motor skill intervention is also being recruited. A sub-group of participants will be interviewed to explore the lived experiences in the motor domain and physical activity preferences of 8-10-year-old children with ASD. Specifically, the objectives are:

- (1)** To examine the longitudinal trajectory of motor, social, communication, and behavioural skill development of children with ASD, as well as participation in childhood activities (e.g. community sport).
- (2)** To determine whether 5 years after a motor skill intervention, there are meaningful differences in motor skill proficiency and physical activity when compared to participants who did not receive the intervention.
- (3)** To determine whether 5 years after a motor skill intervention, there are meaningful differences in social, communication, and behavioural skills when compared to participants who did not receive the intervention.
- (4)** To explore the lived experiences and preferences for physical activity of 8-10-year-old children with ASD from the perspective of the children.



Study 2: Building knowledge and understanding of the intersection of race and disability in accessing paediatric rehabilitation services – funded by an SSHRC Partnership Development Grant

There is a critical need to address this lack of disaggregated race-based data in paediatric rehabilitation to provide equitable, culturally-safe care. The experiences of people with disabilities are shaped by racial and ethnic status, religion, language, and socioeconomic status, and yet, very little research involves these intersections in the Canadian context for paediatric rehabilitation and developmental services. There is some evidence that healthcare professionals serving individuals with disabilities from racial and ethnic minority groups face an even greater dilemma about serving the needs of their clients due to the multiple axis points of race and disability status. The research questions proposed in this grant are community-led (i.e., driven by needs and questions identified by Grandview) to better understand the clients they serve, reduce barriers, improve access, and advance all aspects of clinical practice in the spirit of client and family-centred care. The research questions driving this partnership grant include:

(1) What are the population demographics of clients accessing and/or waiting to access Grandview programs and services; and how do clients rate the inclusivity/sense of belonging, access, quality, wait time, cost, location, and range of services provided by Grandview?

(2) What are the lived experiences of racialized families, who have children and youth with disabilities, related to biases, barriers, and/or inequities when accessing Grandview services?

Interested?

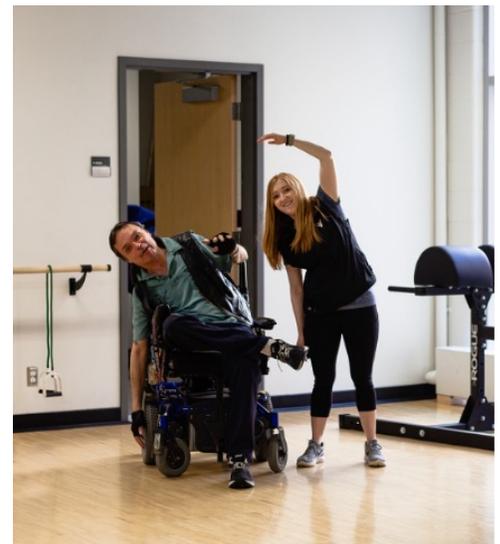
If you are a Master's or PhD student, interested in getting involved in the above-mentioned projects, please contact Dr. Lloyd for further inquiry and to express your interest.

Email: meghann.lloyd@ontariotechu.ca

Community Spotlight

The Steadward Centre for Personal and Physical Achievement | University of Alberta | Edmonton, Alberta

The Steadward Centre for Personal and Physical Achievement (TSC) is a teaching and research centre housed within the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, AB. TSC offers physical activity, sport, and recreation programming for adults, youth, and children experiencing disability through 1:1 training, fitness and recreation classes, an accessible fitness centre, Functional Electrical Stimulation exercise, para sport, and more! The mission of TSC is to inspire individual achievement in adapted physical activity and para sport by applying innovative research, widely sharing expertise, and delivering highly successful programs with, and for, individuals experiencing disability. Founded in 1978 by Dr. Robert Steadward, TSC recently celebrated their 45th anniversary! To see The Steadward Centre in action and learn more about Dr. Steadward's legacy, check out the [45th-anniversary special presentation](#).



At The Steadward Centre, their work is guided by core values:

- Living with an impairment is best understood by those living with an impairment. They are the experts.
- We are only as strong as our relationships—within our team, with our partners, and with our members.
- More can be accomplished in partnership than alone.
- Sharing our insights and perspectives can provoke new ways of thinking, spark discussion, and inspire action.
- Asking questions and learning from others allows us to constantly improve and grow.
- Adapted Physical Activity and para sport development should be available to all who choose to participate.

Programming

When The Steadward Centre first began, it was originally known as the Research and Training Centre for Athletes with Disabilities and focused primarily on providing training for athletes with physical disabilities. However, for the majority of the Centre's existence, TSC has provided programming in fitness, recreation and sport for participants who self-identify as experiencing disability across the lifespan, from young children to older adults. Today, TSC's offerings are reflected in three areas; Free2BMe, para sport, and adult fitness and recreation.

Free2BMe programs combine play, sport, and fitness for fun and engaging physical activity experiences! Instructors support whole child development for children and youth experiencing disability by providing physical activity and fitness that focuses on physical literacy and supports the development of skills and knowledge towards active lifestyles while building choice and independence in a fun, social environment.

TSC's Para Sport and Athlete Development program includes sport-specific training in para swimming and para athletics, physical conditioning, and para coach education workshops. TSC engages with athletes experiencing disability who participate throughout the athlete development pathway, from recreational to competitive sport. Athletes receive individualized programs focused on the demands of each sport and the unique abilities of each athlete.



Adult programs at TSC are designed to promote, foster, and assist participants in becoming more independent and self-determined individuals, with the confidence to be physically active and fully engaged in their communities! There are many options for participants to get active; structured, individual and group programs, a specialized fitness facility for those who want to drop in for workouts, and Functional Electronic Stimulation using a bike as the exercise modality.



Research and Development

In line with the core values of asking questions, learning from others, and sharing expertise to provoke action, TSC continues to contribute to research, connect across communities, and develop new initiatives.

In new research, TSC has partnered with [The Canadian Disability Participation Project](#) to further research into play experiences among children with disabilities. This long-term project extends nationally and includes play research in a variety of domains, such as community and public spaces, schools, risky play, and more. TSC has also appointed their [first-ever research affiliate](#), Dr. Adalberto Loyola Sanchez, and is excited to begin a lasting relationship in research and practice to improve the access and quality of adapted physical activity in Edmonton.

The Steadward Centre is dedicated to building connections to inclusive and adapted physical activity across communities- from play to sport. Through [Promoting Inclusive Play in Alberta](#), TSC has developed and partnered with evidence-based resources to improve inclusivity and accessibility to quality play opportunities on playgrounds. These resources include online learning for recreation leaders, play lesson plans, and the comprehensive Inclusive Playground Playbook. In sport, TSC provides professional development for coaches and sports organizations with the resource [Becoming Para Ready](#). Becoming Para Ready supports administrators to become more proactive, more 'ready', to welcome and integrate para athletes into their sports programs.



Within the Centre, a gap identified based on members' feedback and staff observations is the need to develop young adult (18-30 y.o.) program options that meet the likes, interests, and preferences for being physically active among this demographic. In late 2023, TSC launched a [Young Adult Advisory Committee](#) to learn how to best create and market programs for young adults experiencing disability. This group has met twice, with interest and membership that continues to grow!

TSC is excitedly embarking on the next 45 years! If you would like to connect or continue to follow the journey, email tsccic@ualberta.ca or [sign up for news](#).

Student Highlight

Nikki Matthews | Acadia University | Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Nikki Matthews is a first-year Master's student at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia completing a research-based Master of Applied Kinesiology. Nikki's academic career began in 2018 when she moved from Bradford, Ontario to Wolfville, Nova Scotia to start her bachelor's degree in Kinesiology with Honours. After graduation, Nikki continued her work at Acadia as a research assistant for a year before beginning her Master's under the supervision of Dr. Emily Bremer, Assistant Professor of Kinesiology and Tier II Canada Research Chair in Healthy Inclusive Communities.

Nikki's choice to attend Acadia University was greatly influenced by the Acadia Sensory Motor Instructional Leadership Experience (S.M.I.L.E.) Program, an adapted physical activity and physical literacy program that pairs university students with individuals with disabilities to work on motor, cognitive, and social goals through purposeful play. Throughout her undergraduate degree, Nikki volunteered as an Instructor paired 1:1, as a Program Leader supporting the facilitation and supervision of programming, and as a Student Director overseeing and supervising program sessions. Her time at S.M.I.L.E. provided her with invaluable experience working with participants, creating and facilitating APA programming, and working with families, students, and faculty. While starting initially as an influence to simply attend Acadia, Nikki's volunteer work with S.M.I.L.E. was ultimately the spark that influenced her decision to both study and work within the field of adapted physical activity and inclusive communities. While completing her Master's, Nikki currently works as a program coordinator for the Acadia S.M.I.L.E. Program and the Axxess Acadia Inclusive Post-Secondary Program.



In her undergraduate degree, Nikki completed her Honour's Thesis that investigated the impact and feasibility of virtual physical activity-based programming for individuals with disabilities, under the supervision of both Dr. Emily Bremer and Dr. Roxanne Seaman. Through her undergraduate position as a research assistant and honours student, Nikki has had her work presented at the NASPSPA conference in 2022 and published in *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*. Since her undergraduate research, Nikki has been working as a research assistant on numerous projects addressing childhood development, community-based-adapted physical activity programming, inclusive programming across virtual mediums, and family engagement research.

Nikki's research interest revolves around better understanding the motivators and barriers influencing healthy lifestyle behaviours for individuals with a disability and their families. Her Master's thesis is a mixed-methods needs assessment, framed by Social Cognitive Theory, to explore the interactions between caregiving for an individual with a disability, the impact of caregiving on mental and physical health, and caregiver physical activity behaviours, to better understand motivators, needs, and barriers, in achieving a healthy active lifestyle. Through understanding these influencing factors, Nikki hopes to highlight the current positive influences, as well as gaps, in current services and programming throughout varying regions of Nova Scotia to direct attention to effective strategies and mechanisms for supporting family units.

Outside of work and research, Nikki enjoys hiking, snowy walks, and swimming. Since moving to Wolfville, she has loved exploring the different trails, beaches, and scenery the province has to offer. She is also an amateur chef and is always testing out new recipes. When she is not exploring or cooking, you may find her working on different riddles, brain teasers, or puzzles.

Email: nikki.matthews@acadiu.ca

Tips for Young Scholars

Dr. Terry Rizzo | California State University | San Bernardino, California

Have you ever wondered what it will take to succeed in adapted physical activity (APA) or adapted physical education (APE)? If so, here are a few thoughts that may help guide your future success as a scholar and leader.

Follow Your Passion

If you are not passionate about a career in APA or APE find another career pathway. Assuming you have passion for the discipline (Kinesiology) and profession (APA or APE), then pursue your passion enthusiastically and without hesitation. Follow your aspirations and do not settle for giving anything less than your best effort. Plan on serving as an advocate for people with disabilities by advocating for social justice and maximizing individual capabilities.

High-Quality Educational Foundation

Secure high-quality academic preparation in kinesiology, and APA, or APE from elite top-rated institutions. Earn relevant degrees and certifications. Make yourself marketable by having a strong background in a cognate area related to APA or APE. Most kinesiology departments are interested in hiring high-quality versatile academicians who offer some academic flexibility to enhance their programs. Study with the best, most productive scholars in the profession. When you study with the best scholars you develop high-quality productive behaviours that eventually will lead to success.

Acquire practical experiences in various settings related to your anticipated career pathway. For instance, obtain experience in APE and general physical education (GPE) in public schools, special education schools, and rehabilitation centres. Stay current with research, socio-educational policies, and trends in the discipline. Attend and present your work at state, regional, national, and whenever possible, international conferences, workshops, and seminars.

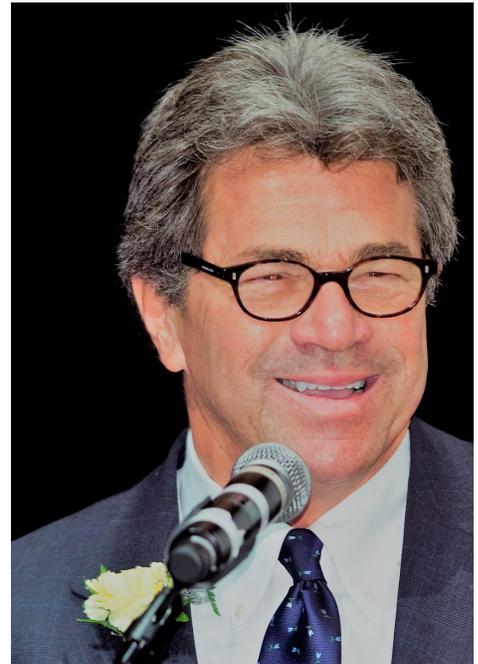
Develop a Professional Network

Meet and work with high-quality colleagues. Sharing ideas will provide valuable insights, mentorship, and potential collaborative opportunities. Identify professionals who may serve as a mentor to help navigate your professional development. Mentors can help you pursue your passion and provide opportunities for practical experience. Build your communication skills and stay current with technology. Always engage in continued professional development.

Teaching Skills

To excel as a scholar in higher education, you must have academic expertise, demonstrate effective teaching behaviours, and have personal attributes for effective teaching. Cultivate a comprehensive conceptual understanding of APA or APE.

It is essential that you know relevant theories, methodologies, and practical applications relevant to professional practice. Have a passion for effective teaching to ensure success. The basic skills needed include but are not limited to, effective communication skills, effective instructional strategies grounded in



research from effective teaching, knowledge of assessment instruments and their use, and adaptability to accommodate a diverse set of students. Experience suggests the use of a student-centred approach. That is, understand student needs, their culture, and strengths and weaknesses. Most importantly, teach students how to think critically and independently about issues impacting the discipline and the profession. Just as you benefit from a mentor, so will your students. Serve as a mentor by guiding their professional development. Offer students a wide range of opportunities for success. Teach them the importance of professional development and technical literacy. Finally, demonstrate high ethical standards of conduct. Foster a culture of academic integrity and model appropriate behaviours.

Research

You need appropriate academic preparation to obtain a collection of skills to become a successful researcher. For instance, acquire a complete educational background in APA or APE, PETE, special education, or another cognate area. You need a robust background in experimental design, statistical applications and data analysis, theory building and its use to drive research.

Develop strong critical thinking and analytical skills to assess the quality of research, learn to identify research gaps, and design studies that address important issues. Learn to foster collaboration with interdisciplinary teams, including professionals from special education, rehabilitation, and related fields. A collaborative approach can enrich the body of knowledge in the discipline and profession. Likewise, collaborative efforts with scholars may help you develop and extend your line of inquiry.

As a researcher, you should develop an ability to adapt to different research contexts and methods. Develop an ability to adjust your research agenda according to unanticipated challenges and/or new insights. Cultivate problem-solving skills to manage difficult challenges and unique situations that will arise when conducting research. Research is challenging and setbacks are unavoidable. Learn to overcome obstacles as you advance the body of knowledge.

A professional career can be an exciting experience complete with intellectual stimulation, meaningful connections, and the pleasure of nurturing future leaders and thinkers. Note that a career in higher education allows you to engage in diverse roles, from inspiring students to groundbreaking research that can shape institutional policies. Your career can open the door to endless possibilities, new challenges and opportunities to make a long-lasting impact on socio-educational policies.

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In Memoriam

Jane Arkell, Executive Director, of the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD) passed away on December 27th, 2023.

Jane was the Executive Director of the Alliance from its inception in 1989. Jane dedicated her career to access and the inclusion of people with disabilities, with a focus on physical activity, recreation, and sport. Jane firmly believed that leading a physically active life had a profound impact on a person's physical, mental, and spiritual health. In turn, these benefits lead to greater social inclusion, employment readiness, and reduced loneliness. Throughout her career, Jane was a tremendous champion of these beliefs. Jane impacted the lives of countless people with disabilities, as well as people she mentored or met professionally.

Canadians working in Adapted Physical Activity likely came across Jane in their careers and those of us who knew Jane professionally and personally will feel we have lost a valued colleague and dear friend. Our thoughts at this time are with Jane's family. See [link](#) for the family's notice.

Announcements

North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity 2024 Conference



Location: Ithaca, NY

Dates: Wednesday, September 25 - Friday, September 27

Abstracts: The abstract submission is open until March 31, 2024. Please submit your abstract via this [link](#) or through our [website](#).

Early bird registration opens on May 1st, 2024, we look forward to seeing you there! For more information, check out our [website](#).

NAFAPA is calling for nominations and applications for the [NAFAPA Awards](#)

- **The Patricia Austin Graduate Student Award** is offered to outstanding graduate student research in adapted physical activity. Deadline: May 1st, 2024. Check out this [link](#) for specific requirements or contact our president-elect, [Dr. Meghann Lloyd](#).
- **The Allen W. Burton New Investigator Award** recognizes a new investigator who has begun and is very likely to continue making significant scientific contributions to the field of Adapted Physical Activity. Deadline: April 15, 2024. Check out this [link](#) for requirements or contact our president, [Dr. Justin Haegele](#).
- **The Dale Ulrich Leadership Award** is the most prestigious award offered by NAFAPA. The award recognizes a distinguished career of outstanding professional contributions to the field of Adapted Physical Activity. Deadline: April 15, 2024. Check out this [link](#) for requirements or contact our past president, [Dr. JoonKoo Yun](#).



Applications to Host the 2026 NAFAPA Symposium

If interested, please submit your application to our president Dr. Justin Haegele by May 1st, 2024 via jhaegele@odu.edu

Opportunity to Submit Announcements

Do you have an announcement to be featured in the November 2024 issue of the NAFAPA Newsletter? If so, please contact the editors today!

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