



April 2025

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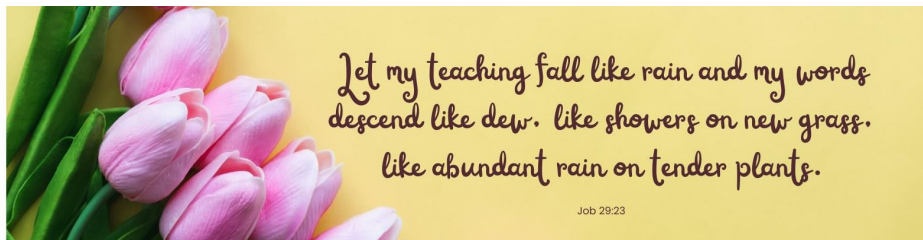
Meet GreenShield+ Our New EFAP

Autism Celebration Month

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Thank you to our Administrative Professionals!

Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness



Spring Rest: Re-establishing Healthy Routines

Spring Reset: Re-establishing Healthy Routines

As the days grow longer and the snow begins to melt (finally!), spring offers the perfect opportunity to pause, refresh, and realign with healthy habits that may have slipped during the winter months. There's something about the return of sunshine and fresh air that naturally encourages a bit of a reset—both physically and mentally.

After months of darker days, indoor routines, and winter fatigue, spring invites us to:

- **Get moving again** – whether it's a walk around the block, stretching in the sunshine, or finally digging out that bike, movement can lift our mood and energy.
- **Refresh our spaces** – a clutter-free desk, classroom, or home corner can bring mental clarity. Even small acts like opening a window or adding a plant can make a difference.
- **Nourish well** – as more fresh produce comes into season, it's a great time to reintroduce colourful, energizing foods into our meals.
- **Reconnect with intentions** – this season is about growth. What small steps can you take to support your well-being this spring?

If winter left you feeling a little off balance, you're not alone—and you don't need to make big changes overnight. Rebuilding routines can be simple, joyful, and even something to look forward to.

Let this be a gentle reminder: it's okay to begin again.



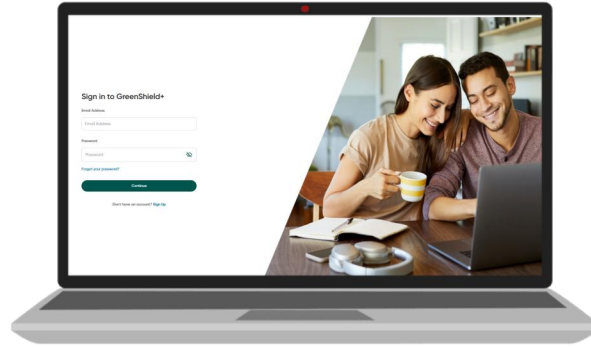
April is a perfect time to reflect on personal or professional growth this year. What are you proud or grateful for?

GreenShield+ Our New EFAP

Access EFAP Support

Our [Employee & Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) has transitioned to [GreenShield+](#). All ECSD employees have access to this confidential service, which connects you and your dependants with professional counsellors, coaches, as well as health, legal, and financial experts as part of your employee benefits.

- Visit greenshieldplus.ca to sign up, or
- Call 1-833-707-4747 (toll-free, 24/7/365)
- Your **ASEBP ID#** is required to sign up. If you are unsure of this number, you can call GreenShield+ above, or contact benefits@ecsd.net.
- Our **Organization Code** is ECSD.



Need Immediate Crisis Support?

GreenShield's services can be accessed for immediate crisis support. This might look like:

- **Emotional Distress:** Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed.
- **Trauma:** Experiencing the aftermath of a traumatic event at home or at work.
- **Relationship Problems:** Experiencing conflict or difficulties in a relationship.
- **Substance Use Issues:** Struggling with substance use or addiction.
- **Bereavement:** Grieving the loss of a loved one.

Seeking Immediate Crisis Support?

Call 1-833-707-4747

(TOLL-FREE, 24/7/365)

If there is a risk of imminent danger, please call 911 immediately.

April is Autism Celebration Month at ECSD



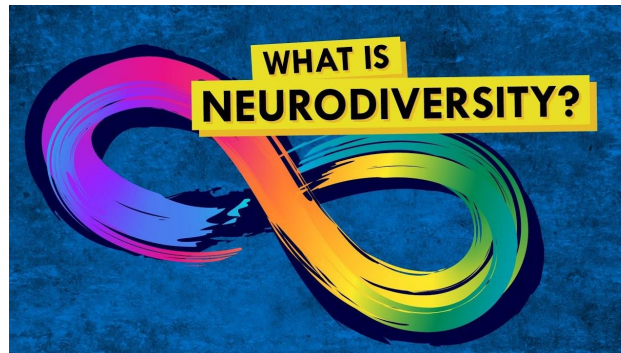
Everyone's brains work in unique ways. Some of us love spicy foods, while others prefer simple fare. Some individuals communicate their ideas by speaking with ease, while others prefer to write, take pictures, dance or express themselves in other ways. You may use calendars, map apps while driving, or other visual supports to help get through the day. Each of us has different passions – 3D printing, gardening, reading “romantasy” books, pickle ball or other sports, TV shows, and more.

Neurodiversity is the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many ways that are different from each other. There is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving – in fact, these differences can be viewed as valuable strength rather than deficits ([Harvard, 2021](#)). This includes neurological differences such as autism, ADHD and others, which are sometimes called *neurodivergence*. They are all natural, expected variations in brain development - all equally valid and worthy of belonging.

Creating a welcoming workplace involves learning about other people's ways of being, thinking and doing, as well as recognizing these differences as valuable. The goal is to understand, accept and celebrate neurodivergent people's differences, while leveraging strengths and passions to enhance everyone's work.

Neurodivergent people's brains work in unique ways that give them unique strengths and support needs. For example, non-autistic people may find that autistic people communicate and connect in a way that feels unfamiliar. Because schools and workspaces may be designed for “most but not all,” autistic people may also experience sensations that feel overwhelming, such as loud noises and bright lights, but may really like other sensations to stay regulated. People with dyslexia benefit from access to assistive technology that support with reading and writing. People with mental health conditions may benefit from a a range of strategies, such as opportunities to engage in wellness activities at work.

Ways to Celebrate Autism Celebration Month



1. Learn from Neurodivergent People: Learn from people with lived experience. Learn more by listening to podcasts, videos and more. Here are some examples to get you started.

- [What Exactly is Neurodiversity?](#), *How To ADHD with Jessica McCabe*
- [TEDx Talk: Why Everything You Know About Autism is Wrong](#), *Jac Den Houting, PhD*
- [Uniquely Human Podcast](#), *Barry Prizant and Dave Finch*
- [Autism, Neurodiversity and Academic Achievement Lab](#), *University of Alberta*

2. Get to know people on your team: Ask team members' about their strengths, individual preferences, needs, and goals to work effectively together.

3. Be flexible with others' communication style: Recognize that some people have different styles of communication. Avoid assumptions about a colleague deliberately breaking rules or being rude. Ask with curiosity, coach and support each other.

4. Accept differences in how others move, think, communicate and interact. Accept and encourage colleagues to be as they are. Many autistic (and other) people use *camouflaging/masking*, working hard to present a 'socially acceptable' version of oneself to try to fit in. Everyone at work deserves to be accepted as they are.



A child's drawing on brown paper depicting environmental themes. The central element is a globe of the Earth. Surrounding it are various elements: a recycling symbol (three green arrows), a sun with rays, a wind turbine, a tree, a mountain, a fire, a 'no smoking' sign (a cigarette with 'THANK YOU' written on it), stars, and clouds. A hand is visible, coloring the globe with a green marker.

Why is Earth Day important? Earth Day highlights the urgent need to address environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity. It serves as a reminder that our actions have a profound impact on the health of our planet and encourages us to adopt eco-friendly practices.

Impact of Earth Day. Earth Day has led to significant environmental policies and initiatives, including the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the passage of landmark legislation like the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. It continues to inspire individuals, communities, and organizations to take meaningful actions to protect the environment.

How can you help and celebrate Earth Day?

1. **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:** Make a conscious effort to reduce waste, reuse items, and recycle materials. This simple practice can significantly decrease your environmental footprint. [Get creative and build crafts using recycled materials](#).
2. **Plant Trees:** Trees absorb carbon dioxide and provide oxygen, making them essential for a healthy planet. Join [a local tree-planting event](#) or plant trees, shrubs, or flowers around your school or backyard.
3. **Clean-Up Events:** Organize a clean-up activity with a [local organization](#) or collect garbage around your school. It's a great way to make a visible impact.
4. **Educate and Advocate:** Spread awareness about environmental issues and advocate for policies that protect the planet. Share information on social media, join environmental groups, and support eco-friendly businesses.
5. **Enjoy Nature:** Spend time outdoors and appreciate the beauty of nature. Go for [a hike](#), visit a [national park](#), or simply take a walk in [your local green space](#). Or simply, take learning outdoors.
6. **Encourage safe and active travel** options (walking, cycling, scooting, wheeling) on your way to school and around the neighbourhood. These eco-friendly options help to reduce carbon emissions and build health and wellness. You can even register for a [Earth Day Walk and Wheel event](#).

Every small action counts towards creating a healthier, more sustainable world. Let's come together to celebrate Earth Day and make a positive impact on our planet!



Test your Earth Day Knowledge:

Use this trivia quiz to challenge yourself (and your students) and spark some interesting discussions about our planet and how we can protect it. Have fun and happy Earth Day!

EARTH DAY

TRIVIA




- When was the first Earth Day celebrated?
 - 1965
 - 1970
 - 1980
 - 1990
- Which planet is known as the "Blue Planet"?
 - Mars
 - Venus
 - Earth
 - Jupiter
- What is the main purpose of Earth Day?
 - To celebrate the end of winter
 - To promote environmental protection
 - To honor space exploration
 - To celebrate the invention of the internet
- Which of the following is a renewable energy source?
 - Coal
 - Oil
 - Solar power
 - Natural gas
- What percentage of the Earth's surface is covered by water?
 - 50%
 - 60%
 - 70%
 - 80%
- What is the most common type of waste found in the ocean?
 - Glass bottles
 - Plastic debris
 - Metal cans
 - Wood
- What is the process by which plants make their own food using sunlight?
 - Respiration
 - Photosynthesis
 - Digestion
 - Fermentation
- Which of these materials is NOT recyclable?
 - Glass
 - Plastic
 - Paper
 - Styrofoam
- What is the term for the variety of life on Earth?
 - Ecosystem
 - Biodiversity
 - Habitat
 - Biome
- How long does it take for a plastic bottle to decompose?
 - 10 years
 - 100 years
 - 450 years
 - 1000 years



B, C, B, C, C, B, B, D, B, C



Administrative Professional's Day is April 23

Administrative Professionals Day is April 23! Although there are many important roles in every school division, the role of administrative professional acts as the glue that binds them all together!

Administrative professionals are at the front lines of communication -- answering phones, greeting visitors, welcoming new families, and scheduling appointments. They are the keepers of school records, and dispensers of sage advice. And they are always there with a tissue when a

child's feelings are hurt, a calm voice when parents are upset, and a sympathetic ear when employees are stressed. All while continuing to exhibit grace under pressure.

Anyone who works at ECSD knows, administrative professionals are the ones who keep things running smoothly, and they do it with a smile on their faces.



To all our ECSD administrative professionals, your hard work does not go unnoticed. Thank you for all you do to keep us going!!!

Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness



National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week: April 20-26, 2025

National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week (NOTDAW) raises awareness about the critical need for more donors across the country and encourages [Canadians to register their decision](#) and to talk to their loved ones about organ donation.

Why it matters

- More than 4,000 Canadians await a lifesaving organ transplant. Each year hundreds of Canadians die waiting.
- 90 per cent of Canadians say they support organ donation, yet only 32 per cent have actually registered their decision.

The numbers:

- 90: Percentage of Canadians who polls show support organ and tissue donation.
- 32: Percentage who have actually registered their decision to be a donor.
- 8: Number of lives that can be saved by one donor.
- 75: Number of patients who could receive tissue from one donor.
- 4400: Number of Canadians awaiting a lifesaving organ transplant.

- 250: Average number of Canadians who die each year waiting.
- 6: Number of times more likely you are to need a transplant than become an organ donor.
- 90+: Age of Canada's oldest organ donor.
- **2: Number of minutes it takes to [register your decision](https://donateyourorgans.ca) to be an organ donor online**



ECSD's People of Hope



How does your school or department support Staff Wellness? We want to hear about your walking crew, see photos of your staff room shout-out board, and give our amazing sites the chance to show off. Get in touch with staffwellness@ecsd.net.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the October "Thanks-Giving" draw! We'll continue to highlight submissions and shout outs to our staff for the rest of the school year.

Shireen Mohammed is an EDIAR consultant in Learning Services. She always makes everyone she comes in contact with feel welcome and heard. She's a great advocate for students and staff and is ready and willing to do whatever she can to help. Shireen helps to brighten staff and students' days whenever she works with them. I'm grateful for her advocacy and relationship and culture building. - *Rhema Kennedy, St. Alphonsus*

I'm incredibly grateful for **Karla Almuina** at Blessed John Paul I Elementary School, and their support since my first year in Edmonton. They've been a reliable support system, both at work and in my personal life. - *Alina Beardy, John Paul I*

Mary Jeanne Miller is a substitute teacher with our Division. I am so grateful for MJ because she often goes above and beyond the call of duty. For example, if she is not scheduled to supervise on the day she subs, she will throw an orange vest on and go outside to relieve one of the teachers. You should see the look on the face of the lucky recess coverage recipient! It has been me once or twice, and I can tell you, it's like winning the lottery! She also volunteers her time for the school. MJ (and her husband who she recruits quite often) can be spotted in our Mary Garden during the seasonal changes. They are usually busy clearing the beds or planting new seedlings in the spring. Mary Jeanne also brings to school delicious cookies for the staff on

occasion. She is so giving of her time and effort! I am so grateful for this amazing woman! - *Carmen Markowski, St. Mary*

Curtis McCann at Monsignor Fee Otterson is an incredible colleague who is always willing to step up and help - with a smile. Whenever he sees you he takes a moment and truly cares about where you are at. - *Jackie Fetter, Monsignor Fee Otterson*

I would like to recognize **Susie Sirman**, a Secondary Science Consultant in Learning Services, for her exceptional contributions over the past month, especially considering her newness to the role. Susie has consistently gone above and beyond to address the needs of Secondary science teachers and department heads. Her professionalism, creativity, and strong work ethic have made her an invaluable colleague. I feel fortunate to work alongside Susie and am excited about the future of Secondary Science in ECSD. - *Monica Posteraro, Learning Services*

Corey Nahayowski at Archbishop O'Leary High School is the Fine Arts/Modern Languages department head at our school and works tirelessly to support both staff and students. She is teaching general music, jazz band, guitar, piano, and choir. Corey is helping educate our future professional musicians, music teachers, and sound engineers. She creates multiple opportunities for our students to share their love music with our school community and beyond. - *Jennifer MacCormac, Archbishop O'Leary*

I am grateful to have had **Jennifer Kwan** as a coworker because when I started with the division last year. She's a Mental Health Therapist at Austin O'Brien and she immediately made me feel welcome as part of the student services team. There are countless times when I consulted with Jen regarding students and families, and she was always willing to offer support and share her extensive knowledge. Being new to AOB, Jen was patient, kind, understanding, and helped me feel like a valuable member of the school team. - *Hollie Kimmins, Archbishop O'Leary*

Other Dates in April



Good Friday - April 18

Easter Monday - April 21

Health Promotion Days

- [IBS Awareness Month](#)
- [National Oral Health Month](#)
- [Parkinson Awareness Month](#)
- [Rosacea Awareness Month](#)
- [National Caregiver Day](#) – April 1
- [World Autism Awareness Day](#) – April 2*
- [National Dental Hygienists Week](#) – April 4 to 10*
- [World Health Day](#) – April 7*
- [World Osteopathic Healthcare Week](#) – April 14 to 20
- [World Hemophilia Day](#) – April 17*
- [National Organ and Tissue Awareness Week](#) – April 18 to 24*
- [Canadian Fertility Awareness Week](#) – April 20 to 26
- [World Primary Immunodeficiency Week](#) – April 22 to 29*

- [National Immunization Awareness Week](#) – April 23 to 30*
- [National Day of Mourning](#) – April 28*



Edmonton Catholic Schools
STAFF WELLNESS