



**Canadian Autism**  
Leadership Summit

Sommet canadien du  
**Leadership en autisme**

# **Canadian Autism Leadership Summit 2025**

## **Impact Report**

August 2025

# Canadian Autism Leadership Summit 2025

**Hosted annually by Autism Alliance of Canada, the Canadian Autism Leadership Summit is a cornerstone event where lived experience, research, and policy meet to discuss Canada's autism strategy.**

The Canadian Autism Leadership Summit (CALS) is a fundamental gathering that brings together Autistic self-advocates, families, researchers, policymakers, and service providers from across Canada to discuss Canada's Autism Strategy.

As the largest and most steady program for national discourse on autism, CALS furthers collaboration, guides policy change, reinforces our collective voice, and fortifies our commitment to building a more inclusive Canada.





# Highlights

**3  
Days**

**16  
Supporters**

**10  
Sessions**

**60+  
Presenters**

**310 +**

Total attendees

**145 +**

Organizations

## Highlights on Day 1

- Strategies in finding inclusive housing.
- Research presentations aligned with the Canada's Autism Strategy in 3-minute lightning rounds.

## Highlights on Day 2

- Exploring preferred language in Francophone communities and the French Language Guide.
- Government actions to improve access to autism screening, diagnosis, and services.



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## Highlights on Day 3

- Understanding Autistic people: challenges and pathways to progress.
- Federal policies to boost economic outcomes for Autistic individuals.

**The Fourth Annual  
Jim and  
Ginette Munson  
Autism  
Leadership Award:  
presented to Kelly  
Bron Johnson**

### Notable speakers:

**Elder Vince  
Kicknosway**

**Senator Marilou  
McPhedran**

**Senator Wanda  
Thomas Bernard**

**Senator Jim Munson**

**Senator Leo  
Housakos**

**Stephanie Cadieux**

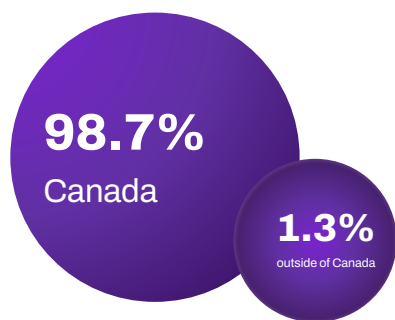
**An Evening of Art  
& Advocacy:  
Celebrating  
creativity and  
calling for change  
in the autism  
community**



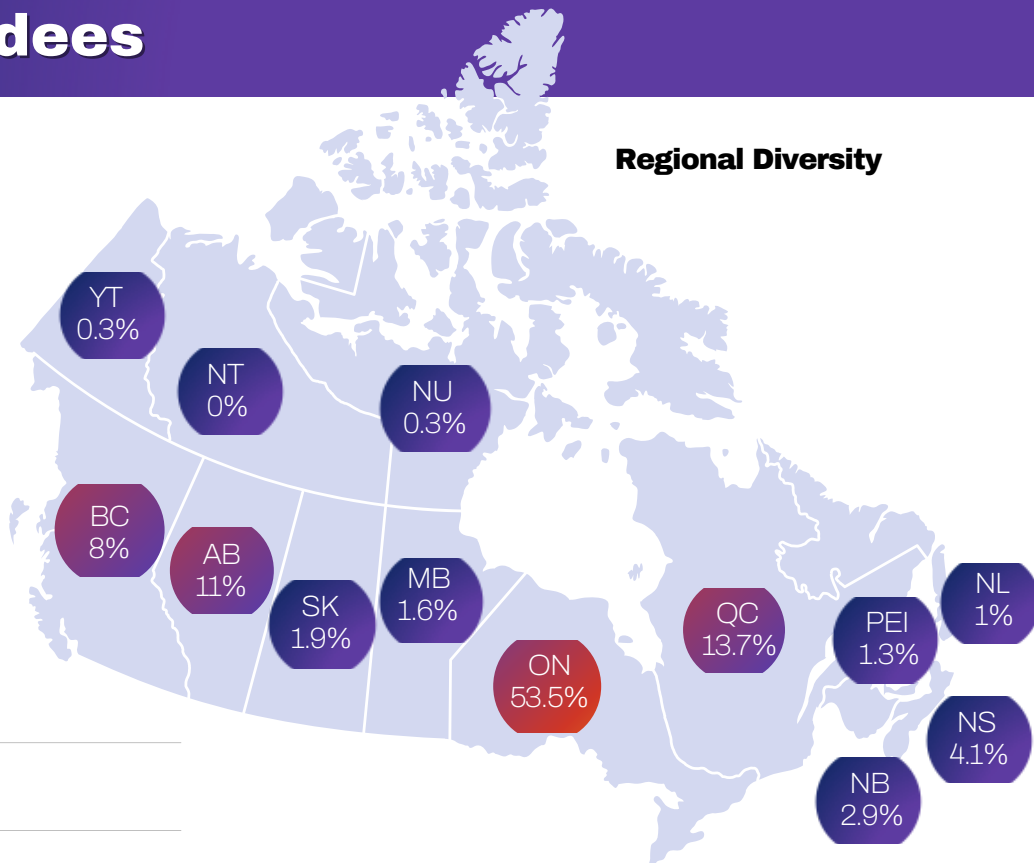
**National  
Autism  
Network:  
introduced by  
Dr. Karen  
Bopp**

# About the Attendees

## International Diversity

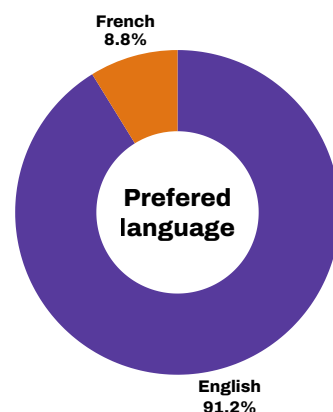
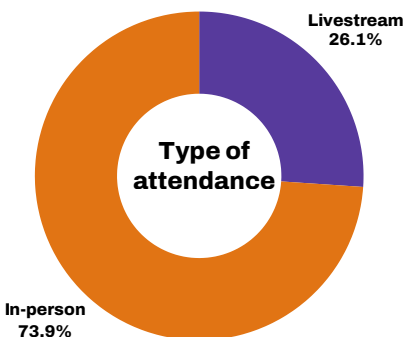
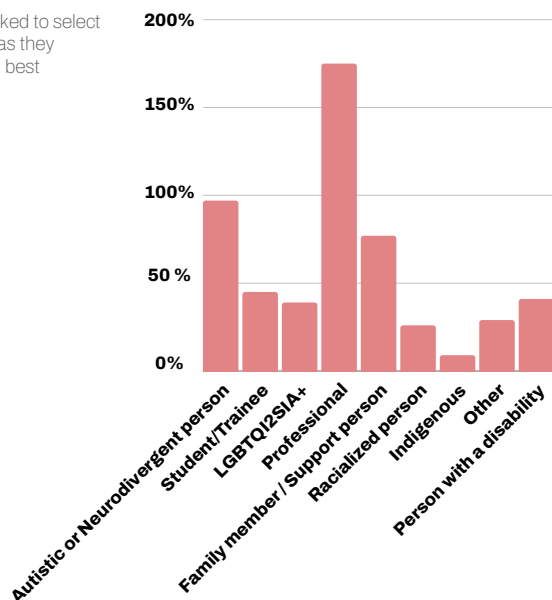


## Regional Diversity



## Presentation Diversity of Attendees

Registrants were asked to select identities (as many as they prefer) that they feel best represented by.



## Here's what attendees had to say:

Autism Alliance of Canada is committed to incorporating learnings and feedback from our members and from our community. To this end, a survey was distributed to attendees throughout the Summit to capture their experiences and input. This feedback will guide Autism Alliance of Canada's collective work moving forward and inform the planning of the 12th Annual Canadian Autism Leadership Summit.

Overall experience

7.9/10



Likelihood to recommend CALS to others

8.5/10



**TWO SESSIONS THAT STOOD OUT TO MANY ATTENDEES**

1. Improving Screening, Diagnosis and Services
2. Public Awareness, Understanding, and Acceptance



# Quotes

**“CALs is an incredible opportunity to connect with leaders across Canada and learn from individuals and groups that are doing important work to improve the lives of neurodivergent Canadians and their families.”**

**Fakhri Shafai, AIDE Canada**



**“Let’s seize the opportunity to unite experience, expertise, and research to coordinate efforts and achieve results.”**

**Tanya MacLeod, Sinneave Family Foundation**

**“What comes next depends on us all.”**

**Dr. Jonathan Lai, Autism Alliance of Canada**



# Acknowledgements

We want to thank our remarkable supporters, who played an instrumental role in making CALS2025 an enormous success:



## Champion Level Partners

- [The Sinneave Family Foundation](#)
- [The Joyce Family Foundation](#)
- [Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation](#)
- [The Azrieli Foundation](#)

## Investor Level Partners

- [Autism Home Base](#)
- [Geneva Centre for Autism](#)
- [Canucks Autism Network](#)
- [Kids Brain Health Network](#)

## Exhibitor Level Partners

- [Kerry's Place](#)
- [Kristin Light](#)

## Supporter Level Partners

- [McMaster Autism Research Team](#)
- [Autism Nova Scotia](#)
- [Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work](#)
- [Autism Resource Centre](#)

## Presenter Level Partners

- [Air Canada Foundation](#)
- [Autism Ontario](#)

# Thank you to our top supporters

## Champion Supporter

### The Sinneave Family Foundation

Thanks to the Sinneave Family Foundation's support through the National Centre for Autism Collaboration (NCAC), #CALS2025 is more accessible to Autistic people across Canada - with livestream access for 82 attendees and supports that help reduce participation barriers. We're grateful for your partnership!



The Sinneave Family Foundation is an operating foundation dedicated to collaborating with individuals, communities, and organizations across Canada with a vision that people live, learn, work, and thrive in their communities, and realize their desired futures.

The mission of the foundation is to reduce barriers and enhance opportunities for Autistic youth and adults.



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## Champion Supporter

### The Joyce Family Foundation

A big thank you to the Joyce Family Foundation for their support of CALS through the NCAC. Their commitment helps ensuring Autistic perspectives and community-led insights remain at the heart of conversations across the country.



The Joyce Family Foundation (formerly The Joyce Foundation) is a private, family foundation created by Canadian entrepreneur Ronald V. Joyce (1930-2019). His philanthropy reflects a deep-rooted sense of responsibility to give back to his community.



The Joyce Family Foundation is dedicated to supporting the social, economic and emotional well-being of children and youth by empowering them to develop into healthy, confident, independent contributors to Canadian society.



# Thank you to our top supporters

## Champion Supporter

### Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation

A big thank you to the Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation for their support of CALS through the NCAC. Their commitment helps amplify Autistic perspectives, elevate community priorities, and foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration.



Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation is dedicated to in securing essential funding to enhance patient care and well-being.



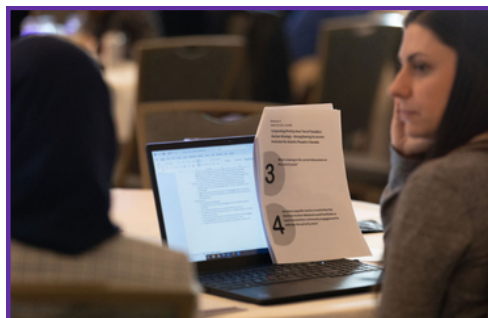
Its mission is to inspire and steward gifts that support medical equipment, patient amenities, innovative research initiatives, and the essential redevelopment of clinical care spaces across four hospital sites and two regional specialty health care facilities.



## Champion Supporter

### Azrieli Foundation

We're deeply grateful for the continued support of the Azrieli Foundation. Their commitment to research, education, and inclusion is helping create meaningful change for Autistic people and their families across Canada.



Fulfilling the philanthropic legacy of David J. Azrieli z"l, the Azrieli Foundation has been funding institutions as well as operating programs in Israel and Canada since 1989.



Driven by a strong belief in the powerful role and responsibility of philanthropy, the Foundation empowers people by supporting a broad range of organizations, facilitating innovative outcomes and increasing knowledge and understanding in the search for practical and novel solutions.





# Thank you to our top supporters

## Presenter Supporter

### Air Canada Foundation

Thank you for your generous donation of flights to Autism Alliance of Canada to support the attendance of individuals with lived experience at the 12th Canadian Autism Leadership Summit (CALS2026).



"Through its programs or other initiatives, the Air Canada Foundation provides financial or fundraising support to Canadian-registered charities focused on improving children's health and well-being. Through our main pillars, we help kids spread their wings."



## Presenter Supporter

### Autism Ontario

Thank you for your generous contribution towards the Canadian Autism Leadership Summit and supporting the session "Unpacking Priority Area Three of Canada's Autism Strategy – Advancing Data Collection, Public Health Surveillance, and Research"



Autism Ontario is a charitable organization with a history of over 50 years representing the thousands of people on the autism spectrum and their families across Ontario.



## Special Shout Out

### Autism Home Base

Thank you for your generous contribution towards the Canadian Autism Leadership Summit and providing a Zen Den for our attendees.



Autism Home Base organizes community-based social and recreational activities for families to participate in alongside others who share the same interests.



Learn more about Autism Alliance of Canada  
[www.autismalliance.ca](http://www.autismalliance.ca)

Become a member  
[autismalliance.ca/membership](http://autismalliance.ca/membership)

E-mail us  
[info@autismalliance.ca](mailto:info@autismalliance.ca)

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