



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

CASDA HOSTS THE 8th ANNUAL CANADIAN AUTISM LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

March 28, 2022, (Toronto, Ontario): On April 4 and 5, 2022, the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance (CASDA) is once again hosting the 8th Annual Canadian Autism Leadership Summit (CAL2022). The themes of this year's hybrid (virtual and in-person) conference mirror those chosen by the Public Health Agency of Canada, as they lead the creation of the National Autism Strategy: equity, diversity and social inclusion in policy development; the evolution of evidence-informed supports across the lifespan, and; progress in employment programs and disability supports.

CAL2022 will also serve as the platform to present the first annual Jim and Ginette Munson Autism Leadership Award on April 5th - presented to a person who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to improving the lives of Autistic persons in Canada.

One of the most anticipated events to be held during CAL2022 will be the panel, "Towards a Canadian National Autism Strategy: International Learnings and Lessons from around the World," composed of subject experts and government officials from around the globe sharing insights on autism strategies developed in the Netherlands, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Malta.

"While we hope to bring all of our attendees together again in person in the coming years, we are once again hosting our annual Summit virtually, but with a twist," says Dr. Jonathan Lai, Executive Director at CASDA. "In addition to being hosted online, we will also be hosting locally run, smaller-scale, in-person satellite events in eight cities across Canada, where participants can connect with others in-person near their home."

CASDA has been at the forefront of calls for a National Autism Strategy (NAS), launching the [Blueprint for a National Autism Strategy in 2019](#), and following up with a [Roadmap towards a National Autism Strategy in 2020](#). The organization

also oversees the national [Ready, Willing & Able](#) inclusive employment program with Inclusion Canada. The Summit is the key community event where hundreds of thought leaders, including Autistic people, support providers, and policymakers, join together to share ideas, experiences, and discuss gaps in policy that impact Autistic people living in Canada, and their families, across the country.

Hosted by the brilliant Autistic stand-up comedian, author and speaker, Michael McCreary, CALS2022 will feature over 60 presenters that will be leading 6 panel discussions, 4 workshops, and over 20 presentations. CALS 2022 will also provide ample networking opportunities, with increased efforts at making the event more inclusive and accessible for all.

“It is imperative that we continue to remove barriers for people to access the incredible content offered through our Summit,” says Debbie Irish, Chair of CASDA’s Board of Directors. “Attendees from coast to coast will be able to enjoy live translation of presented content in English and French, and are welcome to attend smaller in-person events run by members of the CASDA community.”

Registration to CALS2022 is open until April 1st by visiting: cals2022.eventbrite.com. More information on CALS2022 can be found CASDA’s website: www.casda.ca/cals/

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