



THE STARS OF
ISTAR
2021



Message from the Clinic Director



I couldn't be more pleased to share our stories with you. The year has gone by quickly and while much has changed, we are still working remotely for the health and safety of our clients, volunteers, donors and staff. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered our way of working and while that has been challenging at times, it has also allowed us to be creative problem solvers. This year, we ran our adult, teen and children intensive clinics and refreshers entirely through virtual care. I was so impressed with how well the clients and clinicians adapted to the virtual care model. We trained students from the University of Alberta, Western University and the University of Toronto and all were tremendously creative and eager to learn about stuttering therapy. Through our virtual training workshops we were able to train working clinicians

from around the world in our therapy approach — and they in turn will be able to help more people who stutter globally.

It has been an exciting time for innovation, but we certainly miss connecting with each of you face to face. It is my hope that we will be able to do that in the near future. I would like to express my gratitude to our team, our clients, our students, our volunteers, our colleagues and our donors for your continued support and dedication. ISTAR has survived these challenging times — and celebrates a 35-year legacy — because of the loyal relationships we have with all of you. Thank you so very much! I hope you enjoy reading these stories and that they remind you of all the good there is in this world.

Sincerely,

Holly Lomheim, MSLP, R.SLP, S-LP (C)

Clinic Director, Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research

Message from the ISTAR Foundation Chair



This year, ISTAR celebrates 35 years of helping people who stutter transform their lives!

My name is Craig Pilgrim and I have the privilege of serving as chair of the board of directors of the ISTAR Foundation, a not-for-profit society established to assist the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) in achieving its mission. The ISTAR Foundation is proud to

contribute to the work of ISTAR. Together we have successfully co-hosted several public fundraising and awareness-building events in support of ISTAR. We hope to do more of these in the near future.

Despite not being able to host in-person events, members of the ISTAR Foundation board have been steadfast in our support of ISTAR's work with people who stutter. Our members attend and participate in ISTAR virtual graduation events, volunteer our time to speak with clients and serve on this board.

Foundation board members are (alphabetically): Lars Christensen, Anwar Haq, Nicholas Henger (previous Elks representative), Erin Johnson, Shamez Kassam, Tony Kinnon, Nazir Kassamali (Treasurer), Heather McLeod (incoming Elks representative), Michael Niven (Vice Chair) and myself. Biographies of each member can be found online at ualberta.ca/stuttering-speech-therapy.

I want to thank you for your generosity and dedication. Whether you've supported clients who need financial assistance to receive therapy or whether you've attended a final speeches event, you have made an impact.

As we look ahead to this year, I ask you to continue to support ISTAR and the foundation. ISTAR's motto is "Every voice matters" — and the next voice you help could be the voice that changes history.

We hope you enjoy these stories and that you'll join us in celebrating 35 years of ISTAR helping children, teens and adults speak more confidently.

Sincerely,

Craig Pilgrim

Foundation of ISTAR Chair

Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR)

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TO US, **EVERY** VOICE MATTERS

Talking on the phone, ordering your own food, and saying your own name are all relatively simple tasks that we do on a daily basis.

However, for nearly 300,000 Canadians, this is not a reality. Individuals who stutter or are experiencing communication challenges struggle to use their voices each and every day.

ISTAR can help.

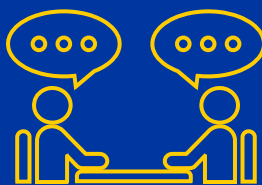
The Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) offers specialized treatment to children, teens and adults who stutter. In Addition, ISTAR conducts research into stuttering, and offers advanced professional training for speech-pathology students and clinicians while also raising awareness about stuttering and its treatment.

ISTAR is committed to ensuring that people who stutter are aware of treatment options and have an opportunity to receive the treatment they need.



Clients range in age from

2 TO 82



PROGRAMS

Stuttering Therapy, Communication Improvement Program (CIP), Accent Modification, Teasing and Bullying (TAB), Telehealth, Virtual Reality and more



More than

4,100

clients impacted to date



Over **97** publications on stuttering and speech



Total number of remote visits **1,991**

Total number of hours remote **2,460** hours held remotely



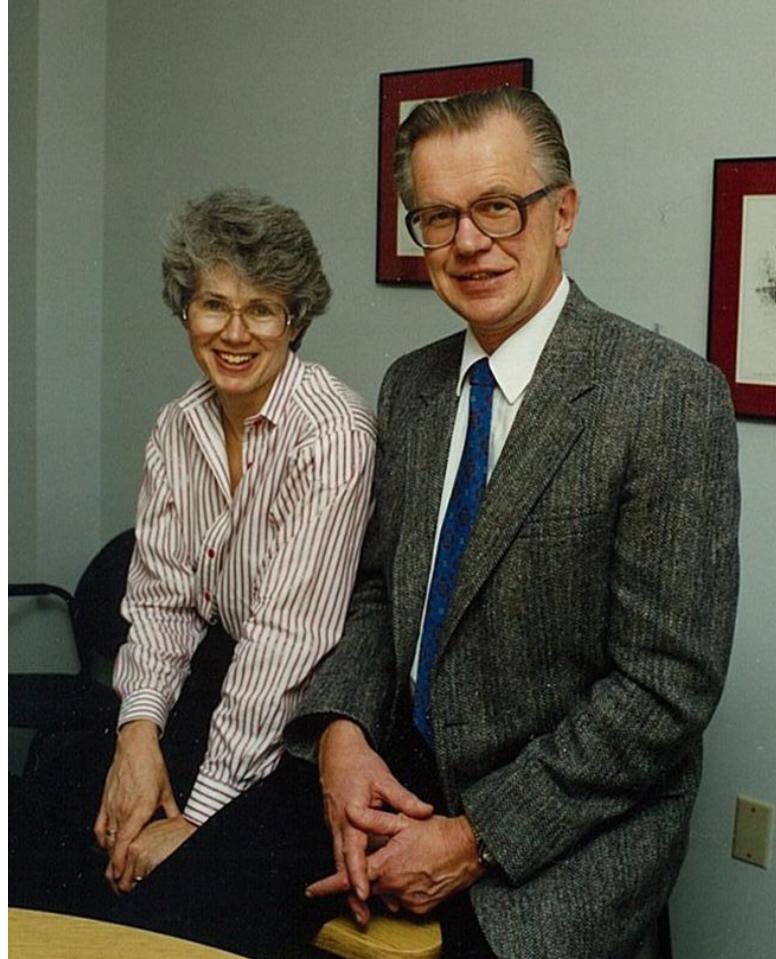
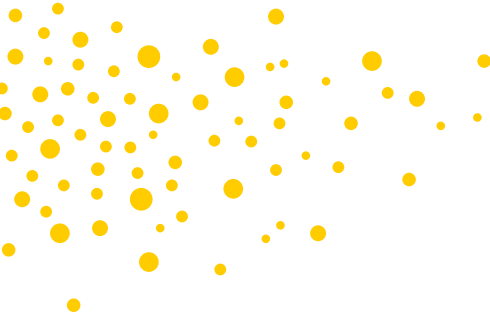
Two offices:

EDMONTON
CALGARY

Although COVID-19 limited in-person events over the past year, ISTAR delivered the following virtual workshops, presentations and training sessions:

- Hosted a webinar on stuttering therapy presented to Speech Audiology Canada (May 2020)
- Held a two-day basic Comprehensive Stuttering Program workshop presented virtually to 21 international and local SLPs and students (Aug 2020)
- Provided a workshop to Speech & Hearing BC for their annual conference on the topic "Virtual care and modifications to intensive therapy for clients who stutter and have other special needs" (Oct 2020)
- Three ISTAR clinicians participated in a virtual class discussion with University of Florida students regarding the Comprehensive Stuttering Program (Nov 2020).
- Hosted a virtual booth at the U of A Open House (Oct 2020)

The ISTAR Foundation continues to support ISTAR, and although there was not a fundraiser held due to the pandemic in 2020, they are working on other ideas to build awareness and raise funds for ISTAR. Individual Foundation members and their exclusive contacts donated \$4,000. Thank you for your generosity!



STAR DONOR

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

How ISTAR's clients became part of the family

By Anne-Marie Aguilar

For years, when clients visited the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) for intensive speech therapy, Julia Boberg's smile was the first thing they saw when they opened the door. She helped them feel at home.

Which made sense, since she was family.

Julia's husband, Einer Boberg, founded ISTAR in 1986. His own experience with stuttering inspired him to pursue a career in speech-language pathology to understand what caused stuttering and help others who were suffering.

"I didn't know anyone who stuttered before I met Einer," Julia says. "Seeing how stuttering affected him has given me a great sympathy for people who stutter. I understand the bravery it takes to work to gain control of their speech."

Einer and Julia built ISTAR with the help of Deborah Kully, a student clinician who later became clinic coordinator. Together they made the institute a world-renowned centre of excellence in stuttering treatment and research. Julia worked as office manager for 14 years and served as a member of the ISTAR Foundation's board of directors for 34 years, only retiring in the fall of 2020. "I always found it fascinating, meeting clients and seeing the difference

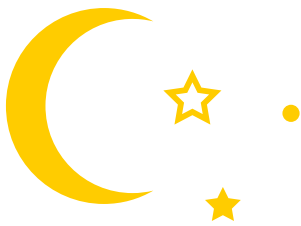
receiving therapy can have in a person's life," she says. "It completely transforms them."

In her time as office manager, Julia saw how hard the clinicians and volunteers were working, but didn't realize the impact she also had on clients. Many of them were anxious about starting treatment, but Julia's warmth and smile made people feel at home.

"I remember the wonderful atmosphere and feeling of cooperation, and determination," she says. "Everyone working together, doing the best we can for all of ISTAR's clients."

Einer passed away in 1995 but ISTAR remains close to Julia's heart. Now retired from the Foundation board, she continues to attend as many of the client final speech presentations as she can. And four years ago, Julia and her son, Peter, created the Dr Einer Boberg Memorial Endowment, which provides additional financial support to clients so that they can access treatment programs at ISTAR.

"Once you get help from a program like ISTAR, you feel devoted to it," says Julia. "The clients and the clinicians, they're like family. Everyone comes together to create a warm community that carries on."



STAR VOLUNTEER

LONG-TIME ISTAR VOLUNTEER RECEIVES CRUCIAL SPEECH THERAPY THANKS TO DONORS

Donor-funded program helped OT grad access speech services after stroke

By Amanda Anderson

As an occupational therapist, volunteer and donor to rehabilitation services, Lisa Pashniak never imagined she'd one day be on her own rehabilitation journey or on the receiving end of donor generosity.

But in April 2020, Pashniak found herself recovering at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital—the same place she completed a practicum during her time as an occupational therapy student at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine.

In March she suffered a brain aneurysm and, subsequently, a stroke. She felt like her head was going to explode. Doctors performed emergency surgery.

"When I regained consciousness, I realized I was stuttering," Pashniak says. She was diagnosed with severe cognitive and motor speech deficits and was told she would need speech therapy.

Pashniak panicked—she knew the urgency of speech rehabilitation after stroke, but with many services locked down due to COVID-19, she worried there would be a lengthy wait for therapy.

So she decided to reach out to ISTAR, a U of A organization she knew well.

Pashniak, who graduated from the University of Alberta with an MSc OT degree in 2015, is a long-time ISTAR volunteer, as well as a donor. "I had an interest in speech pathology because my brother had a stutter growing up. He didn't have the benefit of therapy as a child," she says. Seeing the impact ISTAR's clinicians had on clients of all ages inspired Pashniak to pursue a career in rehabilitation medicine.

When ISTAR's clinic director found out about Pashniak's stroke and the wait time for treatment, she suggested she apply for the ISTAR Client Assistance Program (ICAP). Pashniak was eligible for funding and within days began working with a speech-language pathologist at ISTAR's Calgary office.

Pashniak started her speech therapy on time thanks to the generosity of donors who make ICAP possible. Donors like the REALTORS® Community Foundation (RCF), a charitable organization that has supported ISTAR since 2008.

"Bringing REALTORS® together to move communities forward is RCF's mission," says RCF board member Nicole Mackoway. "We see ISTAR as a fantastic program that is doing just that—removing boundaries created by communication disorders to allow people to achieve new goals and dreams."

While she still has some distance to go when it comes to reaching her goals of clear speech, Pashniak is confident ISTAR set her on the path to success.

"My speech is a lot better. I hope to keep improving using the techniques I learned at ISTAR—the most important, for me, being to practice, practice, practice. And to slow down!

"And to the REALTORS® Community Foundation, I offer my heartfelt thanks. Without assistance from them and from ISTAR, I have no idea how long it would have been before I was able to find my voice again."

2020-2021 AT A GLANCE



\$282,795

donated to support
stuttering treatment
and research



7

students completed
clinical placements



7

students completed
research placements



394

clients received treatment
(388 Canadian and
6 international)



53

total Number of
ISTAR Volunteers



6,237

total number of
therapy visits to ISTAR



Thank you for changing lives, one donation at a time.

Special thanks to Alberta Elks Foundation and the Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children and all of the members of the Elks Lodges, the Royal Purple Lodges and the Elks Royal Purple Lodges.

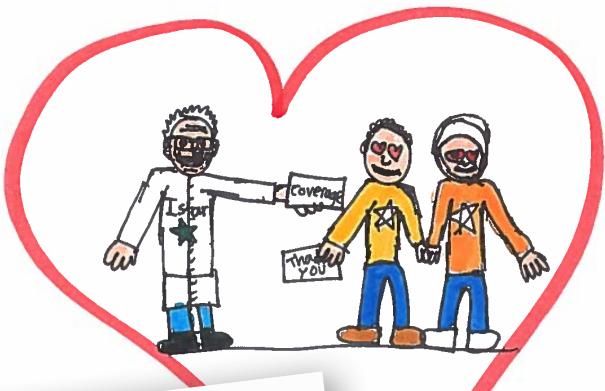


THANK YOU!



Dear ISTAR Donors

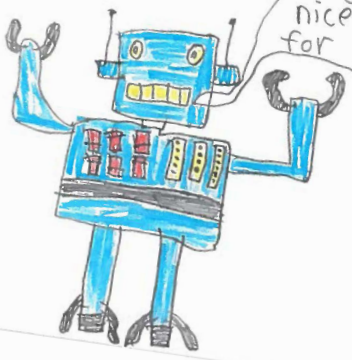
Hello, ISTAR donors. Thank you for financially supporting us by donating generously, for Sami's stuttering therapy. At first, we thought that this service is too expensive for us, but you miraculously helped us. We believe this would make a huge positive impact for Sami's life and career. We are writing this letter, to show our gratefulness towards you and your team. Again, A big thank you from our heart, and we wish each one of you the strength and ability to continue this great job, and change other people's life, like you changed ours.



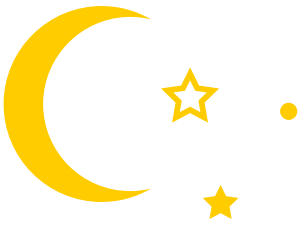
THANK YOU
FOR HELPING
me!!  
LOVELAKIA



Thank you for the Helping me



thumbs
UP



STAR RESEARCHER

NEW RESEARCH ON VIRTUAL CARE WILL EXPAND ACCESS TO ISTAR

Q&A with ISTAR's research director Dr. Torrey Loucks

How does virtual care compare to ISTAR'S in-person programs?

ISTAR's in-person programs help clients' speech become more fluent and natural while improving their attitudes towards stuttering and communication. Virtual or remote care should not be confused with virtual reality. Our virtual or remote intensive programs are the online version of our established in-person intensive programs. Similar to our in-person treatment, remote care is all about one-on-one client and clinician interaction, except on Zoom. All of our online sessions are clinician directed.

How have patients responded to ISTAR'S online services?

Patients have shown a great willingness to adapt and work on their stuttering via online interaction. The few gaps are where some people remain hesitant about online services or are unsure how to access remote delivery.

Can you tell us about your research on virtual care?

Our research will test whether ISTAR's remote service delivery is as effective as in-person treatment. We will test this by: 1) comparing the reduction in disfluencies; 2) comparing speaking rates that are comfortable for clients; 3) comparing how clients and naive observers perceive their speech naturalness after therapy; and 4) comparing attitudes toward communication and fluency.

The goal is to have 50 people participate in the intensive online program. So far, the research has only focused on adult clients, but in the future we hope to expand this study to include children who complete the intensive online treatment.

How do you see this research helping people?

We hope the research will benefit people who may not be able to access ISTAR's in-person services due to, for example, mobility issues or the costs of travelling to Edmonton.

What are the next steps?

We want to know how remote treatment affects clients on a physiological level. We will monitor speech movement control, brain activity and other measures including heart rate, skin conductance and skin temperature. We already have solid data that shows the beneficial outcomes of ISTAR's in-person therapy, so we expect to see that online care approximates those results. With this new study we can better understand how ISTAR's programs help clients in terms of objective fluency but also subjective improvements in communication and physiological changes in speech control.

Torrey Loucks holds the ISTAR Research Chair in Stuttering at the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta

Answers have been edited for length and clarity.



Misael, second from the left with his mom, Jeymi and his siblings Cesia, and Edwin at the Muttart Conservatory

STAR CLIENT

HOW ISTAR HELPED ONE BOY AND HIS FAMILY FIND THEIR VOICE

By Anne-Marie Aguilar

From a young age, Misael Orellana struggled to communicate. His parents noticed that he was talkative at home but became quiet in social settings like school. By the time he was in Grade 1, Misael was stuttering, which kept him from speaking up in class and developing close relationships with his peers.

Misael received speech therapy for the duration of elementary school, but it didn't resolve the stutter. As he got ready to start junior high, his parents saw him increasingly stressed about social settings and academics. "He was worried," says his mother, Jeymi.

His Grade 4 teacher told Misael's parents about the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research.

"For my boy, for my family, their support makes change possible," says Jeymi. "I'm so thankful for their help."

Misael, now 11, completed a week-long intensive program in January 2020, which had him work with a clinician for three hours a day. His therapy culminated in a four-day camp with other children who stutter. Together the kids practiced their fluency skills, shared their experiences and celebrated their success while having fun at the zoo and other field trips.

Attending the camp was a turning point for Misael, who became a leader among his peers. "Prior to treatment, he was really easy to engage with adults but very, very quiet—very introverted," says Ashley Saunders, one of ISTAR's speech-language pathologists and Misael's clinician. "When he met the other kids at camp, it was really nice to see him come out of his shell."

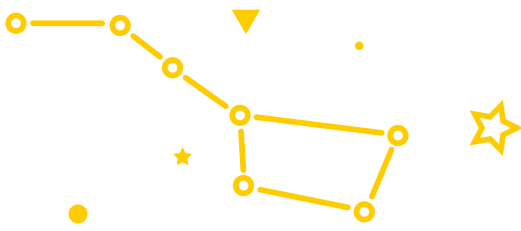
The camp gives kids camaraderie and perspective, says Saunders. "Quite often, kids don't actually know other children who stutter. So it can be a really nice opportunity for them to be able to make some friends and feel like, OK, you understand what I'm going through."

Today Misael feels more confident in his communication skills and speaks smoothly for this interview. "I used to keep on getting stuck and saying the same word all the time," he says. "I am all better now. When I speak in class I don't have to be stuck on the same word."

With the support of Elks of Canada and ISTAR, Misael is ready for junior high.

"Thank you for helping me to speak better."

Courtesy Canadian Elk magazine



STAR CLINICIAN

“IT’S A MAGICAL FEELING WHEN YOU SEE SOMEONE ELSE LIGHT UP”

ISTAR clinician Ashley Saunders shares passion and community impact

What inspired you to become a speech-language pathologist?

I always wanted to be an SLP. In high school I thought I would go into nursing like the rest of my family, but I wasn't as in love with the field as everyone else seemed to be. I registered for a professional placement course at my high school and was placed in the hospital's child development department. I immediately fell in love with the diversity of speech pathology. It wasn't until years later, however, that I had the chance to work with a teenage client who stuttered. That sparked in me a fascination to learn more about the disorder and eventually specialize in this area.

How did you find out about ISTAR and why did you choose to work at the institute?

ISTAR has a well-known reputation — I'd learned about its programs during my undergraduate degree. I wanted to work at ISTAR as it's one of a few centers in the country that specialize in fluency.

Where did you complete your schooling?

I completed my undergraduate degree in the speech and language sciences at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. I completed my Master's at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York. Their program provided a unique opportunity to complete a specialty placement in fluency disorders. This was important to me because I hoped it could lead to a job at ISTAR once I returned to Canada to work after school.

How did you feel when you first started at ISTAR? How does the work you do make you feel every day?

It felt like a dream come true. I love what I do and I love the meaningful impact I'm able to have on the livelihoods of the people that I work with. It's a very rewarding feeling.

How has working at ISTAR helped you grow and learn as a clinician?

It's definitely not an easy job, and it has come with a steep learning curve. However, it has not only helped develop my clinical skills, but also myself as a person.

What is your favourite thing about working at ISTAR?

It's hard to choose a single favorite thing! Working with such a variety of different client ages provides so many different types of satisfaction.

With my younger clients I really just enjoy getting on the floor and being able to play. With my adult clients I love being able to have higher level and deeper discussions and really learn about them. Another favourite part is when a child, teen, adult, or parent has an 'A-ha moment' or I see all of the education and practice come together and click. It's such a magical feeling when you see someone else light up with excitement and enjoyment.

Answers have been edited for length and clarity.



STAR STUDENT

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

ISTAR experience inspires student's career

As an undergraduate student at the University of Alberta, Madison Sader knew she wanted to work in health care and help people. A brief foray into nursing proved not the right fit for her, but exposed her to the rehabilitation professions, including speech-language pathology. Working closely with SLPs during her nursing program sparked her interest in communication disorders and prompted a switch to psychology and linguistics.

Motivated by this newfound direction in life, Madison attended a conference organized by the Organization of Alberta Students in Speech (OASIS) where she learned about the work of ISTAR, the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research. She was keen to see its impact in action, so she applied for and was selected as ISTAR's 2019 summer research student.

Madison's ambition to help others fit in perfectly with ISTAR's 35-year history of doing the same.

"ISTAR provides individuals with the tools they need to live the life that they want," she says. "It helps people meet their communication needs, because the ability to communicate is so essential to our daily lives."

Now in her third year volunteering with ISTAR, Madison helps the therapists prepare materials and assists with research studies. "A lot of clients come in with speech-related limitations that we take for granted in our day-to-day lives, such as ordering at a restaurant or drive-thru."

Being a part of clients' progression and seeing their increased confidence gives her a great sense of accomplishment.

Currently in her final year of a master of science in speech-language pathology at the U of A's Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, she credits her time at ISTAR with shaping the person she is today and the SLP practitioner she will become.

"The biggest lesson has been how to create a supportive environment and establish therapeutic relationships with clients," she says. "Celebrating the little victories and providing that sense of empowerment in individuals is what makes ISTAR so special."



CONGRATULATIONS

— TO THIS YEAR'S — **SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

**Elks & Royal Purple Fund for Children,
Deborah Kully Scholarship recipient:**

Levy Stewart-Bernard, University of Toronto

**Deborah Kully Scholarship in
Stuttering Treatment and Research:**

Mathieu Figeys, University of Alberta

**Deborah Kully/Alberta Elks Foundation Scholarship
in Stuttering Treatment and Research:**

Spenser Day, University of Alberta

Sadie Streight, University of Alberta

**Dr. Einer Boberg/Alberta Elks Foundation Memorial
Graduate Award in Stuttering Treatment and Research:**

Kirsten Mulder, University of Alberta

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE



STUTTERING THERAPY

More than 30 years of research and experience underlie our therapy approach. First published as the Comprehensive Stuttering Program in 1985, the program was continually evaluated and improved. Results of treatment are very positive and rigorous studies evaluating long-term outcomes have been published in scientific journals.



COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Communication Improvement Program (CIP) offers a treatment option for people wanting to improve their communication abilities. The program shares facilities and staff with ISTAR, with which it is affiliated. Since its inception, CIP has helped clients of all ages with widely differing needs develop the communication skills that are so important to social and educational success.



VIRTUAL CARE

If you are not able to travel to Edmonton or Calgary and stay for a complete therapy program, we can help. Using video conference systems, we have been able to provide therapy to many people who live outside of Edmonton and Calgary. Virtual care is a viable alternative to in-person sessions for those with communication challenges.

Visit istar.ualberta.ca for more information about all of our programs and services



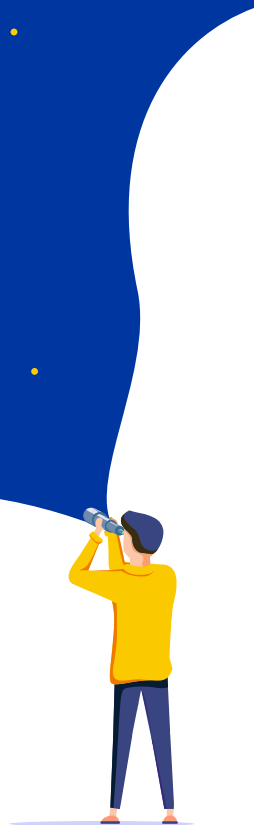
**WHEN YOU SUPPORT ISTAR THROUGH PLANNED GIVING
YOU BECOME A PASSIONATE SUPPORTER COMMITTED TO
HELPING PEOPLE WITH COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES
FIND THEIR VOICES.**

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**HELP MORE PEOPLE WHO STUTTER FIND THEIR VOICES
TODAY, DONATE AT ISTAR.UALBERTA.CA**

OR CONTACT

**JOHN VOYER, ASSISTANT DEAN, DEVELOPMENT
780.248.5781 | JVOYER@UALBERTA.CA**



Thank you for your gift!

Gifts can be made online at uab.ca/give2istar or by completing this form.

1. Your contact information:

Name _____ Home address _____

City _____ Prov. _____ Postal code _____

Email _____ Cellphone _____

I'm a U of A Donor Staff Alumnus/a _____ (Year of Graduation / faculty / School)

2. Please specify the fund you would like to support:

ISTAR Edmonton ISTAR Client Assistance Program

ISTAR Calgary ISTAR Client Support Fund

Dr. Einer Boberg Memorial Endowment

Undesignated donations will be allocated to the University of Alberta's University Fund. Donations made to endowment funds are invested in perpetuity. Investment earnings are used to advance the specific purposes of the fund.

3. Please specify your pledge amount:

One-time/Immediate gift

\$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

Monthly gift*

\$5 \$10 \$25 Other \$ _____

Ongoing OR Number of payments _____

4. Payment method:

One-time gift by cheque to: University of Alberta - ISTAR

Recurring bank withdrawal (void cheque required)

Credit card (monthly gift, one-time gift)

VISA MasterCard American Express Union Pay

Name on card _____

If corporate card, company name _____

Credit card # _____

Expiry _____

5. Memorial/Tribute gift (optional):

My gift is in honour/ memory of:

Full name _____

If in memory of, name of the next of kin (if known)

Address of honouree/next of kin (if known)

The University of Alberta will send a notification of your gift to the honouree or next of kin, providing your name and address. The amount of your gift will not be included. If you do not want to notify the honouree or next of kin, please check the box below:

Please do not provide notification of my tribute gift.

6. Donor recognition (optional):

The University of Alberta may produce materials that publicly recognize and celebrate donors. If you do not wish to have your gift publicly recognized, choose one of the following:

Do not publish name or amount — make this gift anonymous

Publish name but not amount

7. I would like more information on (optional):

Establishing a named scholarship or bursary

Donating securities

Remembering the University of Alberta in my will

I have already included the University of Alberta in my will, but had not previously informed you.

8. I have reviewed the information on this form and confirm it is accurate.

Signature _____ Date _____

**The University will begin charging payments in the next payment cycle. Recurring bank withdrawals will be processed on the first business day of the month; recurring credit card payments will be processed on the 20th day of the month. These can be cancelled at any time by calling us at 780-492-7587.*

The personal information requested on this form is collected under the authority of Section 33(c) of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will be protected under Part 2 of that Act. It will be used for the purpose of alumni engagement and philanthropic activities. Questions concerning the collection, use or disclosure of this information should be directed to the FOIP Liaison Officer, Office of Advancement, University of Alberta, 3-501 Enterprise Square, 10230 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5J 4P6, (780) 492-7400. Charitable Registration #10810 2831 RR0001.

