



100 John West Way
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 6J1
(905) 727-3123
aurora.ca

Application to Receive Funds

The Aurora Mayor's Charity Golf Classic has raised over \$1 million to date and has financially assisted several community organizations to provide much needed services to residents living in the Town of Aurora. Recipient selection is conducted annually by the application review and disbursement committee of the Town of Aurora Mayor's Charity Golf Classic and is based on the information provided in this application.

Funding Criteria and guidelines;

- Individual applicants and community groups must demonstrate financial hardship or a limited means to retain funds in another manner. Individual applications demonstrating financial hardship will be kept confidential.
- Individuals and organizations may not receive funding for more than two consecutive years.
- Funding requests for more than \$5,000 in a calendar year will not be accepted.
- Funding requests for more than 50% of an initiative will not be considered and applicants must demonstrate how the remaining funds will be or have been obtained
- Applications should demonstrate a benefit to the residents of the Town of Aurora that receiving the funding will provide
- Successful applicants will be required to report back in any way they deem appropriate regarding the utilization of funds within six (6) months of receiving funds

Name of Individual or Community Group *

The Lighthouse Learning and Development Centre

Address

Street Number and Name *

222 Edward Street

City/ Town *

Aurora

Province *

Ontario

Postal Code *

L4G 1W6

Contact Information

Email Address *

laura.m@lhldc.com

Phone Number *

(416) 894-4248

On a separate document, please outline your initiative and any supporting documentation you have. The information being provided should align with the funding criteria guidelines found above. Please attach your documentation with this this form.



"If they can't learn the way we teach,
we teach the way they learn."
- O. Ivar Lovaas -



April 3, 2025

Dear Town of Aurora/Application to Receive Funds,

I am writing on behalf of The Lighthouse Learning and Development Centre, a proud member of the Aurora community for the last 10 years. As a non-profit, female-run organization, we have built a reputation as a vital resource for families and individuals affected by autism, offering behavioral interventions, educational support, and more. As an integral part of the Aurora community, we strive to provide a safe, nurturing environment for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Over the years, we have expanded our services to meet the growing needs of the community, including offering adult programs. Our Career Connections Program, which partners with local corporations in Aurora, has been an incredible success, providing meaningful employment opportunities and professional development for neurodiverse adults. However, one challenge that remains is the lack of funding options to support these adult programs.

This is where we are seeking your support. The adult programs at The Lighthouse offer a crucial service to individuals who would otherwise be left without the necessary resources to build and maintain careers. Unfortunately, the lack of funding for adults with ASD has made it difficult for many families to afford this invaluable service. We are reaching out to request financial assistance to help subsidize the cost of these programs and ensure they are accessible to families in need.

Our funding request aligns with the guidelines for the following reasons:

- **Financial Hardship:** The families we serve often face financial hardship due to the unique challenges associated with raising neurodiverse children and adults. By offering subsidies for our adult programs, we can reduce the financial burden on these families and make our services more accessible.
- **Community Benefit:** The Lighthouse is deeply embedded in the Aurora community, and our programs directly benefit local residents. By supporting our adult programs, we are not only enhancing the lives of individuals with ASD but also



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contributing to the broader social and economic fabric of Aurora. Our Career Connections Program, in particular, fosters collaboration between local businesses and neurodiverse adults, providing valuable workforce development.

- **Sustainability:** The requested funding will allow us to continue to offer these critical services while we work on securing additional long-term funding sources. We are committed to ensuring that no individual is excluded due to financial barriers, and this funding will play a pivotal role in making that happen.
- **Adherence to Funding Guidelines:** We are requesting a subsidy of \$5000.00 to help reduce the financial burden on families. This amount does not exceed the \$5,000 funding limit set by the criteria, and it will be used exclusively for the direct support of our adult program participants. We are committed to ensuring that this funding will be utilized in a transparent and responsible manner, and we will provide a report on the use of the funds within six months of receiving the funding.

We are grateful for the opportunity to apply for this funding and are confident that with your support, we will be able to continue to serve the Aurora community in a meaningful way. We look forward to the possibility of partnering with you to make these vital programs more accessible to the families who need them most.

Thank you for considering our request. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Many thanks,

Laura McLennan
Director of Development
Laura.m@lhldc.com
416-894-4248



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The Beginning

On **November 24, 2014**, I was told that if I **punished** my son, I could **fix** him. Fix him—like there was something wrong with him.

That moment came **8 years and 2 months to the day** after I first sat in a doctor's office and heard the words: "**Your son has autism.**" And now, here I was again, listening to someone tell me that my beautiful, incredible boy was somehow **broken**—that I needed to fix him.

The Journey

For **8 years and 2 months**, I had fought endlessly—trying to convince the world that my son was **worthy**, that he deserved **not the world, not the impossible—just basic respect**. That night, I had enough. **The Lighthouse was born.**

Six months later, we registered our **first student**. My son's world **changed**, and with it, I hoped that so many other families would finally get what they had always deserved—a **chance**.

Over the last **10 years**, The Lighthouse has grown, breaking down barriers while providing **world-class intervention** at the most **affordable** cost possible. The Lighthouse has partnered with the Els for Autism Foundation® to bring their acclaimed adult services to Ontario — a program unlike any other in Canada! Els for Autism® was established in 2009 by Liezl and Ernie Els, and Marvin R. Shanken. The Els Center of Excellence® campus is located in Jupiter, Florida and serves as a hub for disseminating innovative, evidence-based programs for families and individuals impacted by autism spectrum disorder (ASD) across the lifespan. Ernie Els has more than 70 career victories; four major championships: the U.S. Open in 1994 at Oakmont and in 1997 at Congressional, and The Open Championship in 2002 at Muirfield and in 2012 at Royal Lytham & St Annes. He is one of six golfers to twice win both the U.S. Open and The Open Championship.

But here's the truth: **our fight has never stopped.**

Despite our dedication, our relentless efforts to **secure grants** have been **shut down time and time again—without explanation, without transparency**. Instead of wasting energy battling a broken system, we are putting our energy into making these programs happen **on our own terms**.

This **September** marks our **10th anniversary**.



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The Fundraising Campaign

And in honour of that milestone—and the fact that it only took 6 months to turn The Lighthouse from an idea into reality—we are launching our **first-ever fundraising campaign: 6 Months** www.6months.ca

From **World Autism Awareness Day (April 2nd)** to our **10th Anniversary in September**, we will host **6 months of events, activities, and fundraising**—to make up for every grant that has been denied and to show the world what **6 months can do**.

The First Event

Our **first in-person event** will be:

All In for Autism

- Date: **Wednesday, April 30th** (the last day of World Autism Awareness Month)
- What: A **fun casino night**
- Where: hosted at our **centre in Aurora** (222 Edward Street, Aurora, ON)

The Request

To make this event a success, we need **you**.

We are reaching out to our **valued partners, friends, and families** to help us bring this incredible night to life.

There are so many meaningful ways you can help make a difference, and we are truly grateful for your support.

- Purchase a Table – \$1,000.00: We'll place your ad on the table during our event and share your business information on our social media every day throughout April, in honor of World Autism Awareness Month.
- Donate a Prize: Big or small, every prize makes an impact — whether it's a single item, a collection of gifts, or a grand prize, your contribution adds excitement to the event and helps us raise even more for our cause.



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- Make a Cash Donation: Every dollar counts, and we'll show our appreciation by listing and sharing our donors weekly throughout April to celebrate their generosity.

Your kindness and support remind us why we do what we do. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey and showing us that truly, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE IN 6 MONTHS.

Help us show the world what 6 months can do.

If you can contribute or would like to get involved, please reach out. Let's make this a night to remember.

With gratitude and determination,

Serena Thompson

Serena Thompson
Executive Director