

**CHILDREN DON'T NEED MORE TOYS...  
THEY NEED MORE ADVENTURES**



# OVERVIEW

- Why the Ocean?
- Why Surfing?
- Movement with Attention
- Surfing: Occupation as a means and as an ends.
- The occupational injustices addressed by Surfing the Spectrum
- Event Organisation
- Serving volunteers & participants
- Obtaining and Retaining volunteers



# WHY THE OCEAN?

**"WHEN PEOPLE ACCESS THE WATER, WHEN PEOPLE ACCESS THE OCEAN, IT HELPS THEM FORM A NEW SET OF HABITS, A NEW SET OF MEMORIES, A NEW SET OF PATTERNS IN THEIR BRAIN. IT HELPS THEM DESCRIBE THEMSELVES WITH A NEW STORY."**

**WALLACE J. NICHOLS**



A man and a child are in the ocean. The man is wearing a dark cap and a dark shirt, and the child is wearing a blue cap and a blue shirt. They are both looking towards the left. The water is bright and shimmering. In the background, other people are visible in the water.

# **AUTISM AND WATER: THE SUPREME SENSORY STIMULUS**

# WHY SURFING?



# MOVEMENT WITH ATTENTION

**"NOTHING HAPPENS UNTIL SOMETHING  
MOVES."**

**ALBERT EINSTEIN**



# MOVEMENT WITH ATTENTION

- **A YOUNG CHILD'S BRAIN FORMS 1.8 MILLION NEW CONNECTIONS PER SECOND - THAT IS A LOT OF POTENTIAL!**
- **ATTENTION IS AN ACTION...IT IS 'ATTENTIONING'**



# **SUCCESS AT SURFING REQUIRES:**

**1. REPETITION**

**2. DETERMINATION**

**3. STAMINA**

**...ATTRIBUTES THAT MANY CHILDREN WITH AUTISM POSSESS.**







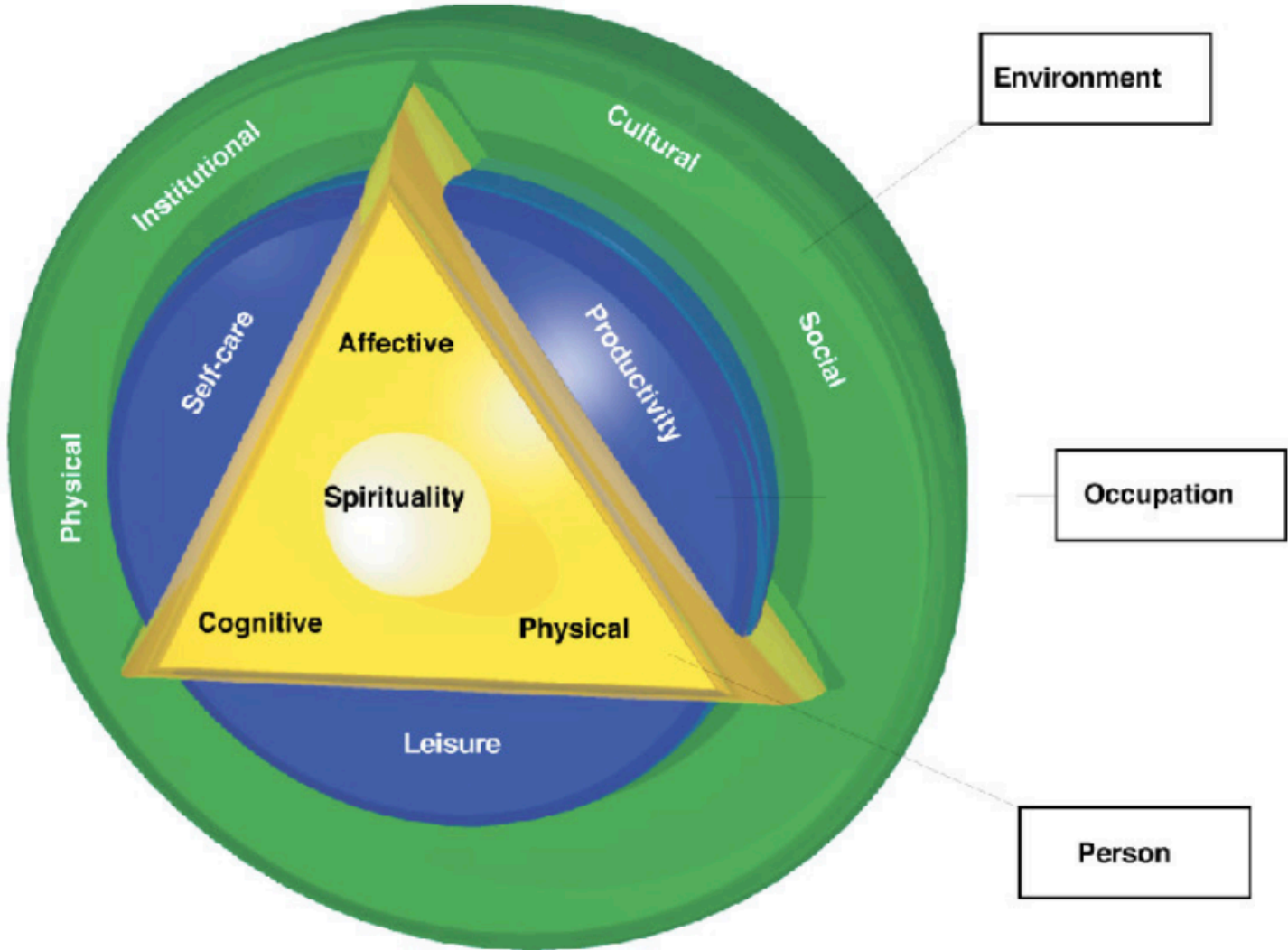
**SURFING IS KNOWN FOR  
IT'S UNIQUE LANGUAGE,  
RULES AND VALUES, ALL OF  
WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
IDENTITY.**



# OUR PURPOSE



# SURING THE SPECTRUM- PURPOSE



Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement

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# SURFING: OCCUPATION AS A MEANS & AS AN ENDS



# **SURFING AS A MEANS.... CASE STUDY**

Name: Jimmy

Age: 9

Diagnosis: ADHD, ASD, Tourette Syndrome

## Goals:

- Emotional Regulation: Controlling, aggressive and violent behaviours
- Sensory Integration: Jimmy is overwhelmed by certain sensory inputs, particularly auditory and tactile inputs.
- Postural Stability: Desk work, sitting tasks are challenging for Jimmy
- Fine Motor: Jimmy cannot currently tie his shoes or complete some self care tasks such as opening packets, or using scissors.



# EMOTIONAL REGULATION

## Within the surfing session

- Use of the Alert Program
- Bringing awareness to engine levels during session.
- Bringing awareness to other surfer's engine speeds.

## How it is being integrated in everyday life:

- *Identifying triggers- i.e sensory overload*
- *Identifying strategies – with visual aids*
  - Language: 'Is your brain busy?'
  - Breathing exercises
- Finding a quiet, dark space
  - Having Alone time

# SENSORY INTEGRATION

## Within the Surfing session

- *Body Awareness:* Attuning Jimmy to his body and it's position in relation to the surfboard, to the ocean and to himself
- *Proprioception:* Attuning Jimmy to the natural environment as a source for sensory modulation

## How it is being integrated into daily life:

- Recognition of own sensory needs:
- Movement- swinging in the backyard
- Headphones in the car if the music is too loud
- Increased confidence and persistence





# POSTURAL STABILITY



# FINE MOTOR



## Within the Surfing Session

- Utilising a backward chaining approach to the following activities:
- Tying up boardshorts
- Zipping up wetsuit
- Waxing surfboard

## How it is being integrated into daily life:

- Backward chaining approach in self care tasks.
- Increased patience to complete or attempt these tasks.

# **SURFING AS AN ENDS...**

**PERFORMANCE OF THE ACTIVITY IS THE FOCUS- SURFING IS THE GOAL!**



# TACTILE AVERSION/SENSORY DEFENSIVE





# REDUCED BALANCE AND COORDINATION



# ADDRESSING THE OCCUPATIONAL INJUSTICES EXPERIENCED BY THE AUTISM COMMUNITY



# OCCUPATIONAL DEPRIVATION:

A state of preclusion from engagement in occupations of necessity and/or meaning due to factors which stand outside the immediate control the the individual.





“Watching the kids have the best time from something they might not be able to do regularly.”

“Thankyou so much for everyone giving up their time. Smiles on our kids can be few and far between.”

“Watching my child engage with others and enjoy herself”

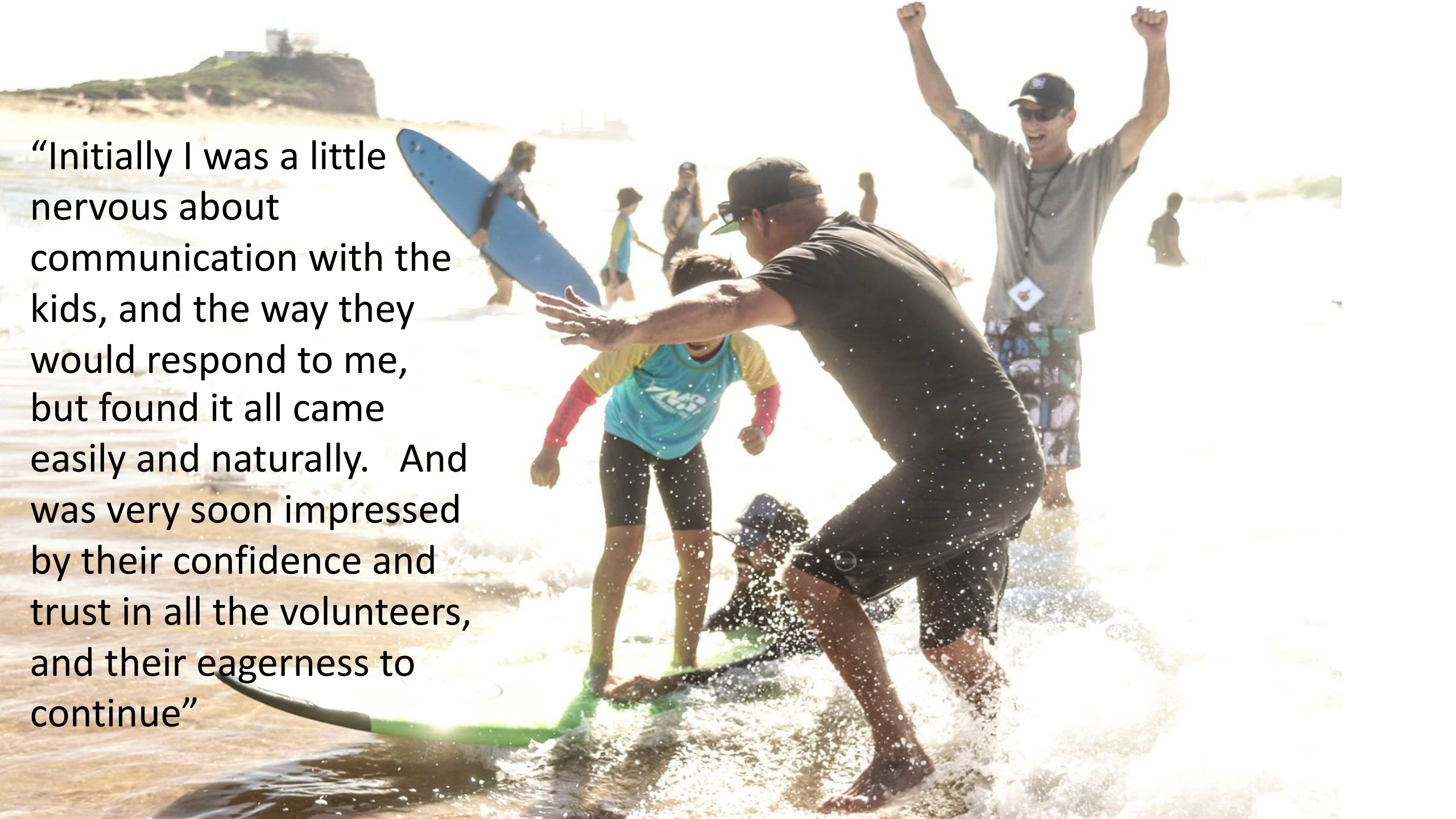


# OCCUPATIONAL MARGINALIZATION:

Exclusion from participation in occupations based on 'invisible' norms and expectation about who should participate in what occupations, how when and why.



“Initially I was a little nervous about communication with the kids, and the way they would respond to me, but found it all came easily and naturally. And was very soon impressed by their confidence and trust in all the volunteers, and their eagerness to continue”



“Thank you all so much! It's so great to have such a supportive community it's great to know we are not the only ones that know our children can achieve anything they set their minds to!”



# **SURFING THE SPECTRUM EVENTS**



# Event Organisation

- **Simply Surfing!**
- 30 minute sessions- 9am-2pm
- Environmentally friendly events
- Focus on skills development, and social relationships



**Autism  
Community:**

Flexibility and  
Adaptability

**Volunteer  
community:**

-Support page

-Event brief

-Breaks!!



# **VOLUNTEERS**

**AS YOU GROW OLDER YOU WILL DISCOVER YOU HAVE TWO HANDS.  
ONE FOR HELPING YOURSELF, AND THE OTHER FOR HELPING OTHERS.**





**THE BEST MOMENTS IN OUR LIVES ARE  
NOT THE PASSIVE, RECEPTIVE,  
RELAXING TIMES...**



# WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Events for 2018-2019 Summer:

-November

-January

-March

Expressions of Interest  
for volunteers:

[amblacker@gmail.com](mailto:amblacker@gmail.com)

[www.facebook.com/surfthespectrum/](http://www.facebook.com/surfthespectrum/)

