

ALDA

UPDATE

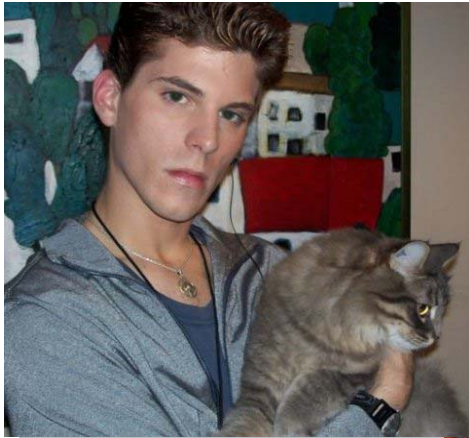
Express!

Winter Edition

Adult Learning Development Association
Suite 608
409 Granville Street
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6C 1T2
Telephone: 604-683-5554
Fax: 604-683-2380
E-mail: enquiry@alda-bc.org
Website: www.alda-bc.org

It's never a Drag!

Looking back, I first realized that I had a learning disability when I was in grade one and pulled out of class to attend "art therapy". This was a good thing because it provided the one-to-



one support I needed and also taught me a tactile way of learning. It also taught me the bare basics of learning because I learned how to have the patience to focus on something from beginning to end; and for someone who was later diagnosed with ADD, Dyslexia and a Bipolar Disorder this was difficult. My challenges can often mix me up in my learning so, having the creative focus and energy gave me an interest in what was being taught. I have since aspired to continue with my art and also perform as a Drag Queen. The painting above represents my love for architecture and the bare essentials of life. The bottom



of the picture shows a place where we live (home), surrounded by the beauty of water and land. The middle represents the love for learning such as a library and a way to follow the stars. The top of the picture is a reflection centre for us to see what is all

around us. To me, this picture also represents the past, present and future. To compliment my

artistic abilities, since the age of 14, I have also been performing as a Drag Queen.



Performing is a way for me to have fun, feel confident and to empower others and myself. When I was younger, I remember enjoying musicals and my grandmother was also a ballet teacher as well as, Miss Vancouver two years in a row. So, I come from a family of important performers and judges. I like performing because "I get to

play a different role.” The persona I take on as a Drag Queen really depends on the night, feeling and mood that I am in. This really allows me to continually evolve as a performer and helps me engage and make connections with the people around me.



Performing has taught me how to be my own boss, go outside the norm of the 9-5, run my own business and work around my disabilities. Although art and performing are a big part of my life, I am also involved in other activities that help me stay connected with youth in the community. For example, I am a mentor for the ALDA Youth Prep program. This involves me coming in and speaking to other youth about my experiences and to offer encouragement and support. Discussions may be around coping with disabilities, employment, school or just about life in general. I am also involved in other community

Share what you know!

ALDA's Mentorship Service can always use your input. If you are an adult with life experience then you qualify!

Our members, participants and clients love to hear what it's been like for you, where you're at now and where you'd like to be eventually.

They gain valuable insight into how to handle the small things in life that can be so hard to master when you have a learning disability.

The impact can be very subtle... yet tremendous!



Call 604-683-5554



organizations that focus on helping youth with difficulties and I continue to volunteer in any way that I can. Through all my experiences, I've learned that labels we live with can be very judgmental but once you can commit to yourself and reflect on your positive traits you can become what you want to be from it.

James

ALDA | Adult Learning Development Association

Suite 608 - 409 Granville Street,
Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6C 1T2

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Closed Weekends and Holidays

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Content submissions are welcome but may be subject to editing for content or brevity!

Helping people work with learning disabilities!

