

Karis Social Media – Strategy & Administration

Updated as of: May 1, 2024

Section A: Social Media Strategy

Background

As we go forward and establish our new brand in the public eye, we are excited to present a unified, organization-wide social media strategy. This strategy ensures a social media presence that speaks in one voice, reflects our new brand excellently, builds brand equity and engagement over the long term, and engages more public audiences with our values, vision and mission. This strategy also provides clear direction on how social media is to be used, will inform related policies, will equip district social media leads, and provides clarity on an overall public organizational voice and how it is applied to specific ongoing or one-time observances.

For many years now, Karis Disability Services has maintained a social media presence as a way to share our local and global work within the communities we serve across Ontario & Saskatchewan. This has been accomplished by posting on various organizational accounts on platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook. These pages and accounts were created by the Communications team at times, as well as by various employees and districts. The Communications team would post directly on the ‘corporate’ (those titled “Karis Disability Services”) and district pages and accounts, and district “social media champions” also posted on their district pages which Communications would sometimes re-post back onto the corporate pages. In the past, corporate posts have mainly included organizational updates and statements, stories and photos, and acknowledgments of a wide variety of dates and events. Posts on the district pages have mainly consisted of “as they happen” photos, such as documenting an excursion enjoyed by people using our services, and staff celebrations and events. Other staff members have also created and posted on other accounts related to specific Karis programs.

This following strategy builds on the foundations of this past work, while informing a revised way forward.

Our Social Media Purpose, Objective, and Core Audience

The Opportunity: Social media can create connection and spaces of belonging for engaged followers. It is an important brand-building tool to connect with key audiences, advocate, build awareness, and shape beliefs and perceptions.

At Karis Disability Services, social media will be an important tool to help us express our values and share our vision and mission through social media-relevant content, to invite the public to celebrate and include people with disabilities. As a public-facing platform, social media will also help build brand affinity and equity over the long term so that people looking for services, future employees, families, donors, funders, and engaged community members will choose Karis. Social media will also allow us to share and engage others with our strategic plan, and play a key role in driving traffic to our website.

The content we post and the way we engage with other people and organizations on social media platforms also act as an avenue to live out our values, vision, and mission.

Purpose: To actively contribute to achieving our vision: “People with disabilities belong to communities in which their God-given gifts are valued and celebrated.”

Objective: A cohesive, audience-centric, organization-wide, social media presence that grows brand equity over the long term in alignment with our values, vision, and mission.

Audience Priorities: It is important that the way we write and the types of content we post reflect the core of ‘why we exist’ – the people we exist to serve - people with disabilities. This is why they are at the centre of our social media audiences. They may not make up the largest number of our followers, but we hope this changes as we grow our social media engagement. As we invite the public to celebrate and include people with disabilities, it is important that our content is accessible and relevant to the people we exist to support.

Therefore, people with disabilities are at the centre of our focus audiences because they are the “why” of our vision and will become our primary market for services in the future. We want our posts to help them feel valued and included. This means our social media presence is facilitated with this audience in mind. Other close-in audiences (such as family and staff) are impacted through how we relate to and celebrate people with disabilities.

The structure below shows how our content applies to each group and what we want each group to get from our social media platforms.

Secondary Audience: *current staff, sector umbrella groups, disability services organizations, funders*

They are invited to engage with our social media content, however we connect with them more directly through other mediums.

Primary Audience: *people with disabilities and their families, donors, volunteers, churches, community-engaged publics, media, prospective employees*

We market to these external groups to invite them to support our vision and mission and inspire them to support our work or purchase our services.

The “Why of our Content”: *People with Disabilities*

They are why we exist and why we post the way we do. All posts should be applicable and accessible to this audience.

Our Social Media Content Pillars

The social media content pillars remind us ‘why’ we are posting the content we do. It ensures we keep an audience-centric lens and relevance of ‘what’s in it for them’ in every content choice. It reflects our brand and leadership voice of being engaging, relational, and others-centric. All content should fall under one of these focus areas.

Social Media Strategy Objective

A cohesive, audience-centric, organization-wide, social media presence that grows brand equity over the long term in alignment with our values, vision and mission.

Content Pillars

Inspiration

Demonstrating our vision through inspiration

Content types:

- Videos, photos
- Quotes
- Stories and anecdotes
- Organization updates and celebrations*

*with audience-centric context

Education

Growing interest in and understanding of disabilities

Content types:

- Educational resources
- Ideas and ‘how to’s’
- Learning opportunities
- Community resources & tips

Invitation

Inviting people to get involved

Content types:

- Volunteer
- Ask for input or feedback
- Invite to events
- Consider jobs
- Submit art
- Donate
- Advocate
- Purchase services

Lending Our Voice

Helping ‘all boats float’ in our sector

Content types:

- Sector advocacy
- Affirm, thank or congratulate others whose work is aligned with our vision*
- Promoting accessibility

*funders, partners, sector groups, etc

Inspiration examples: Photos and “Reels” of program outingsexcursions, a quote from a family member, recognizing dates, “mission moments” (examples of “... work[ing] together with people with disabilities to accomplish their goals and nurture communities where everybody belongs.”)

Education examples: Disabilities 101, advocating for accessibility, sharing upcoming webinars

Invitation examples: You can get involved!, Asking questions of audience “what’s your favourite..”?

Lending our voice examples: “Excellence In Action” for partners, MPs (visits, congratulate disability advocacy), strategically interacting with others’ social media posts.

Our Social Media Guardrails

These social media guardrails inform how we will present our brand voice on social media. They also inform our public voice in general. Social media content and public engagement with various topics must always do the following:

1. Reflect our values.
 - a. Valuing People, Fostering Belonging, Serving Others, Celebrating Gifts
2. Follow our brand guidelines.
 - a. See brand playbook.
3. Reflect our brand personality and character.
 - a. Personality (e.g. how we act, talk, and interact): Open-Minded, Approachable, Compassionate, Engaged, Courageous
 - b. Character (e.g. who we are, what makes us unique): Trustworthy, Credible, People-Focused, Forward-Thinking, Faithful
 - c. See brand playbook for more details on these characteristics
4. Use accessible elements.
 - a. Always include ALT text descriptors for images and avoid the use of word-heavy images (graphics) and collages.
 - b. All videos should include closed captioning. If this is somehow unavailable, the accompanying description should have details of what is said in the video.
 - c. The content and design of posts should be close to fully accessible (AA aligned).
 - d. See p. 28-31 of the brand playbook and the following webpages for more information about accessible content: [AODA Accessible Writing](#), [Web accessibility made simple: WCAG 2.0 AA explained, Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#)
 - e. Hint: use [Hemingway Editor](#) to check that sentences are simple and fall in the 6th-grade or lower grouping (the ideal target is grade four or lower).
5. Share content through stories.
 - a. Show versus tell; while many organizations talk about their work or observe important events by making a statement, Karis prefers to show how that statement is true.
 - Examples: Instead of posting a graphic that says: “Merry Christmas,” post photos of people supported celebrating the holidays with “Merry Christmas” as the caption. Instead of saying “we create communities of belonging,” share a story about someone finding belonging through their connection to Karis programs.
6. Share about people through a strengths-based lens.

- a. Show the strengths of the people. Focus on their gifts and don't use patronizing language or present them as a victim. Think about how you would like someone to tell a story about you.
7. Be audience-centric:
 - a. Put the audience first. Don't highlight Karis as the hero.
 - Example: Instead of "You can help us create a community of belonging," use "You can create a community of belonging."
 - Pretend the audience is asking "why is this for me?" and ensure the post makes the answer clear.
 - Ask: if I was the audience, would this be a good use of my time to read this? Is this important to me?
 - Help the audience see themselves in the post.
8. Stay in our lane.
 - a. Refer to the Decision-Making Guide below to ensure we stay within our chosen organizational voice lane of expertise.
9. Fall within a content pillar.
 - a. These are our social media areas of focus. If content does not fit within a defined pillar, we should question whether it is relevant to share.

Specific to our 4th pillar, our content may also:

10. Lend our voice to highlight others and help our whole sector succeed.
 - a. When our sector succeeds, people with disabilities succeed. As a sector leader, we can lend our voice and influence to help 'all boats float' for the good of those our sector serves.
 - b. Highlighting the great work of other organizations and leaders, where it aligns with our values and vision and voice, is a way to also build our own credibility and brand.
 - c. As leaders, we want to advocate for things that help the sector, such as new legislation that helps everyone, and encourage and celebrate funders and partners who are part of making this happen.

Our Public Brand Voice - Decision-Making

This decision-making guide helps us decide what our organization will comment on publicly. While this strategy has a social media focus, it becomes a public voice so these same principles apply to all public-facing communications.

‘Our Lane’ at Karis Disability Services includes our core, unique organizational identity areas. These are our areas of expertise. One way to think about what is ‘in our lane’, is to consider whether we would want the media to think of us first and ask us to comment as a leader and expert in that area. Areas that are ‘table stakes’ (i.e. what all organizations need to do/work on) are not differentiators or unique to us.

As with any social media posts, the social media guardrails must be applied when posting about anything listed below.

‘Our Lane’:

- Disability
 - We advocate for people with disabilities and offer services to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Therefore, issues like accessibility and a person’s right to self-determination (i.e. through accessible voting) are in our lane.
- Christian Faith – specifically as it pertains to disabilities
 - We believe that when someone is born with disabilities, they are created purposefully in the image of God. This impacts how we love people and invites us to value the whole person. We don’t force our faith on others; we invite people of faith to join us in making faith communities, and the rest of our world, inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities – our fellow image-bearers.
- Direct Support Professionals
 - Our sector and organization depend on the hard work of caring DSPs. We will advocate for and celebrate this work corporately, within our sector, and support and develop the people who work in this role.
- Canadian social service and not-for-profit sectors
 - As a large Canadian not-for-profit and charity, we recognize the important value this sector brings to our country and communities. We will support legislation that aids the not-for-profit sector and highlight other heroes (i.e., social services organizations) working hard to benefit our communities. This may include advocating for tax benefits or highlighting the importance of accreditation for charities.
 - As a Canadian organization, we observe core Canadian celebrations and recognize that our voice’s impact (as a large Canadian charity) may be felt across the country.

Therefore, these are the areas we will focus on corporately on social media:

- Special days of observance
 - Examples: International Day of Persons With Disabilities, Disability Pride Month, Christmas, Thanksgiving, Canada Day, DSP Week, Non-Profit Appreciation Week (*please see later section for full list of observed days*)
 - Events that impact someone with a disability within a community we work in
 - Global tragedies that obviously impact people with disabilities
 - May be reviewed for alignment to our lane as they happen
 - Posts should highlight the disproportionate impact on people with disabilities
 - When commenting, elevate other voices who lead in the area impacted (Muslim voices for an event that impacted a Muslim community)
 - Global stories in countries we work in (partners, disability stories, tragedies)
 - Organizational partner news related to disability
 - Stories and articles about the intersection of faith and disability
 - Major Karis Disability Services supporter recognition/ celebration (major sponsors, funders, volunteers, neighbour association, major donor, Foundation)
 - Stories and anecdotes from across our programs
 - Select third party fundraiser recognition
 - Corporate celebrations*
 - Examples: ACMs, Belongathon, spiritual life conference, milestone events
- *in a way that reflects the guardrails e.g. audience-centric

For areas not listed above, the following guidelines apply:

- Districts may post about additional areas as they pertain directly to a person supported and what they are celebrating.
 - Example: The West district page posts photos of a person supported celebrating Diwali with their housemates, and our main page re-shares West District's post. This celebrates a person with a disability as they celebrate a holiday that matters to them.
- Avoid using our social media as a marketing tool for other organizations
 - This relates to our audience-centric social media guideline.
 - Exceptions may be made for the corporate sponsors of our fundraising events as long as these posts have the event/a 'thank you' as the focus.
- Avoid numerous employee milestones posts
 - This is internal, employee-centric information, not public, audience-centric.
 - Districts are encouraged to limit milestone posts and use storytelling language to make them audience-centric – what's the 'so-what' of this for the audience (i.e. George celebrates 30 years of supporting

people with disabilities because all of our lives are better when everyone belongs).

- Once a year, related to the Milestones event, the main page may highlight 25, 30, and 35 years of employment in a story-centric way.

How Karis Disability Services, as a brand, relates to special dates & observances:

As an organization, we celebrate observances and dates that relate directly to our organizational identity as they pertain to an intersection of disability. These are dates and observances that are in our lane of expertise.

- Examples: DSP Appreciation Week, Disability Pride, Canadian and Christian Faith holidays
- Post examples:
 - “We are celebrating DSP Appreciation Week with handmade cards for all of our hardworking Direct Support Professionals!”

We recognize observances and dates that are priorities for fostering belonging and inclusion for people with disabilities. We recognize and acknowledge these and the way they may intersect with the areas in “our lane” (our core expertise). For the three other significant areas of inclusion, as chosen by the Karis Senior Leadership Team, we will highlight how they are being celebrated at the intersection of the topic and people with disabilities. When commenting on them, we prioritize elevating the voices of people with lived experiences in both the topic and disability.

- These three areas are: Truth and Reconciliation, Black History Month, LGBTQ2S+ Pride
- Post examples:
 - “Today we recognize Black History Month by highlighting the important work of Black disability advocate <name> who.....”
 - “During Pride Month, we celebrate the gifts and contributions of people who use our services and employees from the LGBTQ+ community. Eliza reflects on her time with...”

How We Engage with Other Pages Online

To create communities of belonging and encourage interaction with our posts, it is important to engage with others online. Karis Disability Services uses a personal, yet professional, voice when interacting with others. Always refer to our brand character as outlined in the Brand Playbook and the social media guidelines above. This means that comments and posts should sound casual and simple while maintaining appropriate professionalism in the content discussed and the pages we choose to interact with.

- Engage with other developmental services agencies, not with meme pages or celebrities.
- Emojis should be used in alignment with our brand character and should relate to the topic of the post. For example, adding a book emoji to a post about someone reading a lot of books or a smiley emoji to a post about someone having a fun day at the park. Rude or unrelated emojis should not be used in comments or posts.
 - For accessibility, don't use emojis mid-sentence, just use one or two relevant ones at the end of a sentence or paragraph.

Engaging with other developmental services organizations also contributes to the principle of lending our voice to celebrate and support others.

Company pages should only follow and interact with other professional pages, not personal accounts of staff and people supported.

- We may, however, repost or interact with a personal account if they specifically tagged Karis Disability Services and the content is related to a company event or people we support.

When responding to questions via social media Direct Messages, refer people to information on our website whenever possible. Or, refer them to a specific district's contact information.

Responding to comments on our posts:

- We generally don't respond to comments on our posts if they are a simple positive statement such as "this is great" or "how cool!"
- If someone asks a question in a comment, we may refer them to a part of our website which holds the answer or ask them to contact us another way to continue the conversation.
- If a comment includes derogatory or hateful language, especially toward someone in a marginalized community, it will be deleted and reported.

- If a comment is simply unpleasant, such as questioning our colour scheme or disliking our collaboration with a certain Member of Parliament, we may choose to respond if applicable.
 - If this comment comes from staff or a person supported, we will have their leadership colleague follow up with them offline.
- Discretion may be used to “hide” comments that are exceedingly patronizing or feel inappropriate when they are not directly derogatory or hateful (which would require deletion and reporting). District admins should connect with the Social Media Coordinator when considering this option.
 - Example: a commentor referring to people supported as “cute” or “well cared for”
- If our organization’s validity or practices are called into question, or an accusation against us or a staff member is made in a comment, the comment should be addressed with information about how to send this on to the appropriate staff member, and the commentor may be contacted via direct message by the communications team to continue the conversation out of the public eye. It is important that such comments are addressed and not deleted to garner trust in our organizational transparency.
 - Any responses/ replies/ messages should be approved by the Director of Marketing and Communications.
 - Staff members should not respond directly to these comments or posts.
 - Any such comments made by staff, a person supported, or a family member of Karis should then be forwarded to the appropriate Area Manager or Executive Director for immediate follow-up.

If you see a concerning comment or post about our organization, please screenshot it and send it to communications@karis.org.

Responding to direct messages

- We generally don’t respond to messages if they do not ask a question or require further information (ie messages that simply say “Hi” or “I like Karis”).
- Responses to questions may include a referral to a different point of contact and/or a part of our website that holds the answer.
- It is recommended to direct the conversation to more appropriate channels, such as the appropriate email or phone contact if further discussion is required.
- If a message includes derogatory or hateful language, especially toward someone in a marginalized community, it will be reported.
- For unpleasant or confrontational messages, discretion should be used to determine whether a response requires input or approval by the Director of Marketing and Communications before it is sent.

- If our organization’s validity or practices are called into question, or an accusation is made against us or a staff member, any replies should be approved by the Director of Marketing and Communications.
 - Any such messages sent by staff, a person supported, or a family member of Karis should then be forwarded to the appropriate Area Manager or Executive Director for immediate follow-up.

Corporate voice in engaging with political parties:

- We celebrate improved legislation for people with disabilities.
- We do not re-post politicians based on personal preference or party affiliation, but based on the content they share and if it is relevant to “our lane” and vision.
 - We do not promote political party campaigns.

We may re-post an announcement, from any party, about increased disability benefits or the importance of supporting developmental services.

Section B: Administration

Processes/ Administration Strategy

Content collection process

- District-specific content is collected by the district’s Social Media Champion.
- For corporate page content, Social Media Champions may forward content directly to the Social Media Coordinator from their regular channels of content collection. The Social Media Coordinator will also send out a monthly call-out to regular content contributors with any specific requests for the coming months (i.e. holiday celebrations or day observances).
- People submitting content to be published must verify the photo consent of any people included in images.

Note on posting methods:

- If a topic is only in “our lane” through intersection (i.e. Indigenous issues intersected with disability), prioritize re-posting others who have a bigger stake in that event before making an organic post (i.e. a local Indigenous organization).
 - If making an organic post, prioritize “showing” with pictures or a story rather than simply “telling” with a graphic.

All pages

- Social media account passwords should be changed with staff turnover.
- We don't advertise for other organizations – even for a good cause.
 - We may show the vendors at a Karis fundraising craft fair to advertise for the fair, or thank vendors from our event, but we don't directly advertise for others. Note the “why is it for me” audience-centric principle.
 - We can thank those who support our mission.
- Use graphics available in our Canva brand kit, or have new graphics approved by the Marketing team to ensure brand alignment.

Corporate “main” pages

- Available social media posts for each month will be scheduled and approved, by the last day of the previous month (November 30th for everything that will be posted in December).
 - If there are dates that will have content closer to the day, those will be placed on the Airtable calendar with a note that content will be provided later (i.e. a family camp re-cap)
- Approval process:
 - Marketing Manager to approve monthly schedule in advance.
 - Director of Marketing to approve any crisis response, responses to negative feedback, posts that come up throughout the month.

Privacy and consent

- For the safety of people supported, only first names should be included in posts. Do not use street names, house names, or provide specifics about a location they visit frequently (i.e. specific work location, park name).
- Only photos of people who have consented to photo use shall be posted on any social media platform.
- Ensure full house exterior and house number is not visible in photos posted so a location cannot be tracked.

District Page-Specific Instructions

- All district page profile photos will depict the Karis logo. Facebook page banners may be customized with photos from the district.
- New social media champions should receive strategy and best practices training from the marketing team Social Media Coordinator

- To avoid institutional language, do not use house numbers (i.e. Toronto 1). Instead, you may say “A home in Toronto” or “Jeff’s home.”

Areas for Social Media Champions post on District pages (may be reshared on main pages)

- Local events, stories, photos, videos
- May feature people supported celebrating observances not posted about directly on the main page

Employee milestone guidelines:

- Milestones alone are internal, employee-centric information, not audience-centric.
- Post milestones in one or two grouped posts with story content rather than posting each one individually. If there are more than 20 employee milestones in your district, consider only posting the longest employee milestones or those not posted on the corporate page (we may highlight 25, 30, and 35 years).
- Posts should follow the rest of the guiding pillars (i.e. storytelling approach, audience-centric).
- Turn these posts back to the “why” behind their work, building up credibility and sharing a story.
- These posts should only occur once a year.
- Example: Include an employee’s highlight from their time working here with their photo and a photo of them in a group.

Evergreen Observances For All* Social Media Pages

*the Social Media Coordinator will prepare and post content for these dates on main pages and may also post directly to the district pages (after giving advance notice to district Champions) for major celebrations.

To be reviewed as necessary

January

1: New Years Day

4: World Braille Day

24: International Day of Education (Global)

February

Black History Month

Third week: Nonprofit Appreciation Week

Family Day

14: Valentines Day

March

First Friday: Employee Appreciation Day

3: World Prayer Day

8: International Women's Day

20: First Day of Spring

21: World Down Syndrome Day

April

World Autism Month

Good Friday

Easter

National Volunteer Week (3rd week)

2: World Autism Day

May

Community Living Month

Karis DSP Appreciation Week (13-17 in 2024)

Canada Mental Health Week

Second Sunday: Mothers' Day

June

LGBTQ2S+ Pride Month

Third Sunday: Father's Day

21: National Indigenous Peoples Day

27: Canadian Multiculturalism Day

July

Disability Pride Month

1: Canada Day

August

19: World Humanitarian Day

September

8: International Day of Charity

9: International FASD Awareness Day

23: International Day of Sign Languages

30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

October

Disability Employment Awareness Month

Thanksgiving

10: World Mental Health Day

November

Indigenous Disability Awareness Month

11: Remembrance Day

December

Advent

3: International Day of People with Disabilities

24: Christmas Eve

25: Christmas Day

Channels

All of our social media channels should help highlight and direct people toward the Karis brand, and to learn more about our Karis Disability Services on our website. This builds brand equity and helps people become aware of our full scope, be inspired in multiple ways, and discover all of the ways they might get involved and make a difference themselves. Having a limited number of high-impact Karis Disability Services social media pages with consistent follower engagement will help us build our brand and brand awareness in a much faster way than having numerous program-specific pages. It also ensures a consistent representation of our brand voice.

Note: the brackets indicate the number of followers for each page as of October 2023.

- Main – Facebook (3300), Instagram (1028), LinkedIn (5031), Twitter (1676)
- Districts
 - North – Facebook (624), Instagram (253)
 - South – Facebook (333), Instagram (134)
 - East – Facebook (704), Instagram (460)
 - West – Facebook (165), Instagram (171)
 - Central East – Facebook (704)
 - Central – Facebook (257)
 - Saskatchewan – Facebook (736), Instagram (130 followers)
- Global: Facebook (414), Twitter (147)
- Disability and Faith Forum Twitter (1300 followers)
- Karis Disability Services Family Camps (Private, closed Facebook group) (256 members)