



CASE STUDY

Geneva Centre for Autism

The Geneva Centre for Autism empowers individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and their families, to fully participate in their communities.



BACKGROUND

For more than 40 years, the Geneva Centre for Autism has worked to empower individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. The Centre, located in Toronto, Ontario, was named for an international conference on autism that took place in Switzerland in 1974. The Geneva Centre started later that year as an annual residential camp that helped build the life skills of autistic individuals. In 1984, the Geneva Center started offering year-round non-residential services after it became clear that there was a greater demand and need for their services. Since then, the Centre's mandate and mission has continued to expand. Today their services and resources are accessed annually by tens of thousands of people. As part of their work, they offer extensive online training for families and professionals. Each year, thousands of Ontario teachers receive autism training during professional development (PD) days. "We've grown tremendously over the past 15 years and we've become one of the lead agencies, especially within our (sector). We provide services seven days a week, all day and most evenings, to clients between two years of age and age 99," said Marie Coelho, Manager of Operations at the Geneva Centre. Remote Learner (now a Learning Pool company) has been providing eLearning hosting and support for the Geneva Centre for Autism for over ten years. Remote Learner has been helping them grow and develop their system and maintain the online courses that provide training to teachers, families and individuals.

THE CHALLENGE

In the early 2000s, the Geneva Centre found its growth limited by time and money. The Centre had a number of workers who traveled across Ontario to deliver training beyond Toronto. Their ability to deliver much-needed training and support was stymied by travel times and the number of staff available. They knew they had to invest in elearning.

“We had a big team and we traveled across the province to deliver face-to-face training... We needed a platform so that a teacher could have a place to access additional resources and updated information about their training,” said Lin Zhang, Web Administrator for the Geneva Centre.

Along with wanting to expand its reach, the Geneva Centre wanted to offer more. They had a solid core of training packages but wanted the freedom to add courses and resources to their portfolio. The most efficient way to achieve this goal was through the creation of an online training portal. They wanted a Learning Management System (LMS): one that could meet some key challenges.



Extend the reach and content portfolio of the Geneva Centre

The Geneva Centre wanted to extend the range of its training programs, and also expand the content of its training portfolio.

Looking for Full Technical Support

While the Geneva Centre had skilled in-house online education experts, their expertise was mostly in course design. They wanted the ability to place their technical support and service entirely in the hands of their LMS solution provider and host.

It had to be Open-source

One of the early requirements for the Geneva Centre was an open-source platform, one that was not tied to a vendor's schedule for updates and improvements. They knew from the start that they wanted an LMS solution provider that had deep experience with an open-source training solution.

THE SOLUTION

Leverage Scalability of Stream LMS

Learning Pool's Stream LMS solution allows the creation of as many courses and class instances as are required and is able to host extensive resource libraries in a range of media formats.

Let Learning Pool Handle the Support

Learning Pool offers 24/7 technical support, along with easily accessed online training and support from design experts and customer success managers.

An Open-source Foundation

Stream LMS is based on Moodle®, the most widely-used open-source LMS software in the world.

THE RESPONSE

“Our elearning team has grown pretty dramatically over the last 10 years and our training needs have grown as well. We have about 30,000 users.

There is no limit or license for how many students we can have or how many courses we can offer. That is something we like quite a bit. Because of that, we can offer a lot of online courses.

We can bring an open online course to the general public so that everyone has free time can go on and be trained and get important information about autism.”

Zhang



THE OUTCOME

Expanded Reach, Expanded Offerings

Since partnering with Learning Pool, the Geneva Center has been able to dramatically expand both the reach and breadth of its services and training.

No Technical Worries

The Geneva Centre for Autism has come to rely on Learning Pool for a level of technical support and elearning expertise support that goes above and beyond expectations.

"All the (Learning Pool) staff that work with us have been awesome. They go beyond their job duties sometimes... They try their best to solve problems. I just wanted to stress how much respect I have for the technical support team at Learning Pool. They are the most important reason we have stayed with the company so long," said Zhang.

A Constantly Updated Platform

In the 10 years since they chose a Learning Pool solution, the Geneva Centre has enjoyed a constantly updated and cutting edge training solution. The suite of plugins and tools available for their use grows every day, created by a global community of open source developers.

Easy Onboarding as the Team Expands

Learning Pool constantly keeps its training and online resources updated, making it easy for new staff at the Geneva Centre to get onboard, and letting current staff stay up to date.

"We do like the training Learning Pool has provided us. We take advantage of the free online courses whenever we have a new team member come on board. We offer them training through Learning Pool... So they can get trained quickly and get on board with our day-to-day tasks. It has been really helpful and we've got great feedback from our team," said Zhang.



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www.learningpool.com

UK +44 (0) 207 101 9383
US (857) 284-1420

hello@learningpool.com