A 2018 study done by the Government of Canada determined that Newfoundland and Labrador has the largest population of people on the Autism Spectrum with a total of 1,167 cases amongst youth between the ages of 5 and 17. ASD affects 1 in 57 people in the province compared to 1 in 66 nation-wide.

Kintsukuroi is the ancient Japanese art of repairing broken pieces of pottery with gold lacquer and understanding that the mended piece is more beautiful for having been broken and that which holds it together becomes more important, more special than the pieces it is holding together.

It is a philosophy that speaks to human perseverance and echoes our ability to rebuild ourselves after tragedy, learn from our mistakes and become better, more enlightened and ‘beautiful’ beings than we once were.

It sheds light on the paths that connect each portion to the whole and celebrates the unique history and characteristics behind each piece of pottery.

The Elaine Dobbin Centre for Autism is a small vocational facility in St. John’s, NL. The building (at right) – initially designed as office space – was an appropriate case study for what ‘not’ to do. It features small classrooms with limited circulation space, poor acoustic planning, fluorescent lighting and clutter.

Through an in-depth interview with the Program Coordinator, information on what takes place within their programs came to light. The ‘Adult Leisure Group’ was particularly interesting and led to a discussion on ASD and dating that determined the design and program direction for Junctions.

The following facts formed the mission at Junctions, which is to prepare young adults for independent living, including the ability to approach, socialize and connect with others.

1. The average life expectancy for people with ASD is around 70 years old.
2. Primary caregivers for people with ASD, especially children and young adults are their parents.
3. One of the leading causes of death for people with ASD is suicide.

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The Elaine Dobbin Centre for Autism is an existing vocational facility in St. John’s, NL. The Junctions facility will be an addition to the Elaine Dobbin campus.

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The work of Magda Mostafa and her development of the Autism ASPECTSS Design Index guided the design for Junctions from start to finish.