



Community Living BC presents



*"Widening our World!"*  
2011 CLBC Recognition Awards

#### AWARDS PRESENTATIONS

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| May 5th  | <b>Vancouver Island Awards Presentation</b> (Parksville)                 |
| May 17th | <b>Interior Region Awards Presentation</b> (Kamloops)                    |
| May 25th | <b>Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Regions Awards Presentation</b> (Ladner) |
| June 8th | <b>North Region Awards Presentation</b> (Prince George)                  |





## About WOW!clbc

In April 2009 CLBC launched an annual community recognition award —**WOW!clbc**. WOW stands for “Widening our World” and reflects the exceptional contributions people have made and continue to make towards ensuring community inclusion and full citizenship for the individuals served by CLBC and its community living partners throughout the province.

WOW!clbc awards are presented to individuals and groups in four major categories who work with creativity, compassion and commitment to foster “good lives in welcoming communities” The categories are: Self-Advocate, Family Member, Community Partner, and Service Provider.

The 2011 WOW!clbc awards are presented to two recipients selected from each of five regions. This year’s winners are:

### Fraser Region

Brenda Gillette — *Service Provider*  
Surrey Association for Community Living — *Service Provider*

### Vancouver Coastal Region

Mara St. Onge — *Service Provider*  
Paul Gauthier — *Community Partner*

### Interior Region

Marilyn McLean — *Community Partner*  
Margaret Milsom — *Service Provider*

### Vancouver Island Region

Musical Band ‘Inclusion’ — *Self-Advocates*  
Inclusion Works! — *Family Members*

### North Region

Safeway Terrace — *Community Partner*  
Denton Delaney — *Service Provider*

The stories of these 2011 award winners are contained herein. It is the hope that by showcasing and celebrating their achievements, others in communities throughout BC will feel inspired to follow in their footsteps.



## Our Selection Panel

CLBC is honoured to have worked with six dedicated community living partners who served as the 2011 WOW!clbc Awards Selection Panel. Nominations were received from January 10th to April 10th. The selection panel reviewed and tabulated the results of a diversified field of nominees to choose the two highest scoring nominations within each of five CLBC regions.

### Maddie Addison

Madeleine Addison is co-chair of the Surrey/Delta Community Council, which she says is a most rewarding experience.

She has spent her career working with community agencies providing programs to newcomers to Canada and seniors, and presently works with the Canadian Mental Health Association in establishing a branch in the South Fraser Region.

As a resident of Surrey, she is interested and involved wherever she can be, in working towards an inclusive, healthy community, where all residents can thrive and live their best lives.

Madeleine appreciates the role she played on the Selection Committee for the WOW awards. She saw it as a learning experience; just knowing more about the wonderful initiatives in the province. She found reading the nominations was inspiring and confirmed her belief that determined people, with the support of others, can do anything.

### John Dawson

John Dawson and his wife Heather have been residents of Campbell River for over 40 years and Home Share Providers for the past 10. They have been caregivers for people with disabilities in their home, working with CLBC to provide a safe, comfortable environment, while creating opportunities for independence and self growth.

John's parents were instrumental in the institution of programs for people with disabilities in the 1970's in Campbell River and with that early groundwork, John has continued to support these programs and work to foster and promote their continued ongoing success.

John has been a certified coach for Special Olympics for the past 10 years and is Head Power lifting Coach for the local chapter as well as coaching 5 pin bowling in Campbell River.

John has served on the North Island CLBC Community Council for several years and chairs a Knights of Columbus Walkathon fundraiser for Special Olympics yearly, raising over \$15,000.00 for S.O. programs in the area.


He continues to mentor and support people with disabilities and has volunteered for many committees and positions fostering inclusion of these individuals in the community.

### Bill Hustler

Bill Hustler is currently Vice Chair of the South Island Community Council. He and his wife Mary have three children. Jim, the youngest at 58, lives in a home share in Sidney. Bill says "It is just great and Jim is happier than he has been for years and perhaps ever."

Both Bill and Mary have been involved in community living since the early 1950's and have spent much of their free time helping out as much as they could. Bill has been active in 12 Community Living organizations over the years as well as working with two Provincial





groups. He has been close to CLBC since the beginning and served as a member of the Community Living Victoria board for 10 years. Bill notes that he is rapidly approaching his 84th birthday and it is his intention to continue to be involved as long as he can make a meaningful contribution.

### **Caitlyn Sassaman**

Caitlyn Sassaman joined the provincial government as a communicator in 1998, where she worked in the Ministries of Children and Family Development, Health, Community Development and Environment as a media spokesperson, communications planner/writer, website developer, event coordinator and manager. For the last two years, Caitlyn has been a Community Relations Specialist for CLBC in the Vancouver Island, Vancouver Coastal and North regions. In this role, Caitlyn supports and works with managers, staff and Community Councils to connect with local people and organizations, and support and develop projects and initiatives that can help build public awareness of CLBC's vision, mandate and supports, and foster the growth of inclusive, supportive communities. She lives with her husband, Brian, and daughter, Zoe, in Victoria, B.C.

### **Jan Weber**

Jan is married with three children – a twin son and daughter and a son with Down's.

Jan's involvement in the community started when the children were small in the early eighties with the integration of special needs in the regular class room with full support for the teacher.

Jan was a board member for four years and sat for two years as Director of the Richmond Society for Community Living.

Having served six years on the board, Jan moved on to the High School as a PAC member, and Special Olympics volunteer.

In 1993, Jan was responsible for the registration for the Canadian Down Syndrome Society held in Burnaby.

In 2003, he assisted Self-Advocates who were participating at the World Down Syndrome Congress.

At present, Jan is a Community Council member in Richmond and is busy organizing the volunteers for the Canadian Conference to be held in Richmond in May 20th to 22nd, 2011.

### **Lisa Kongsdorf**

Lisa is a social worker with a BSW, RSW who has been working with individuals with a variety of disabilities at Independent Living Vernon for over 8 years. Her role at Independent Living Vernon is quite diverse as she assists individuals with employment and career options (Employ-Ability Manager), helps with advocacy and has a significant fundraising role as well (Special Events Coordinator). Lisa has a 20 year old daughter who has a physical disability and she herself has been dealing with Multiple Sclerosis for a number of years and very involved with the local MS Society. She is involved in the community on a number of fronts as she has two young boys ages 6 and 9 who enjoy hockey and soccer and attend a Christian school that she helps to the best of her abilities. Lisa is also a foster parent of a 30 year old daughter and foster 'nana' to 4 wonderful grandchildren. Lisa also serves on the Vernon Community Council.

## 2011 WOW!cIBC Honourees

### The Musical Band “Inclusion” (Vancouver Island Region)

Often when we talk about an outstanding contribution to community living, we are thinking about how community members reach out to people with developmental disabilities. This nomination goes a step beyond that definition. It includes people with disabilities who reach out to contribute back to their community. The band “Inclusion” from Campbell River, B.C. is a group of musicians, who have been playing together for six years. What makes this group unique is that three of its musicians are people with developmental disabilities. The band members include Justin Fong (Q-chord), Andrew Wilkes (keyboard), Dwayne Bryant (percussion), John Hollywood (guitar), Kim Thyne (vocals) and Gail McIntosh (vocals). Ed Leo helps with the band’s equipment. The band members met, six years ago, through their affiliation with the Campbell River and District Association for Community Living. They began to meet, after hours, and gradually developed a repertoire, which has since made them a familiar voice in the Campbell River music scene.

The group released their first CD in 2008 and is planning another CD in the near future. As an integral part of the Campbell River music scene, the group has increased the profile of people with developmental disabilities and demonstrated that people with developmental disabilities also have unique gifts and talents.

The truly amazing thing about the members of Inclusion is the extent to which they give back to their community. The band members volunteer their time to play at community events and gatherings, such as the Campbell River Farmer’s Market, the VIHA Children’s Health Fair, the Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion Tour, the Walk Away from Racism, the Mennonite Central Committee World Relief Fair and the Canada Day Parade, just to name just a few. They have played at many of these events for several consecutive years. They play regularly at various senior’s residences including Ironwood Place, the Adult Care Society at Altrusa House, Yuculta Lodge, Evergreen and New Horizons Seniors Residence.

Every few months, the group invites other local musicians to participate in a musical performance night at the Campbell River Community Centre. These evenings, popular with Inclusion’s dedicated fans, raise funds to support local charities or needs. Over the years they have helped raise thousands

### Self-Advocate

Self Advocacy means speaking up and speaking out for your rights. Many people with developmental disabilities who are speaking up for their rights call themselves “self-advocates.”



“Inclusion”



of dollars for charities like the Campbell River Food Bank, the Salvation Army, Haiti Earthquake Relief effort, the Hope Outreach Society for homeless people, the Campbell River Hospital Foundation Telethon, and even the family of a local young boy with cancer, as well as many others.

This year they added to their accomplishments by partnering with The City of Campbell River Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture to combine their music with a "Kids on the Block" puppet show, to promote awareness of people with disabilities to school children and other community groups. The new group, currently called "Inclusion and Friends" is a larger integrated group and is part of the Passages Day program at the Association for Community Living. They have recently begun performing at venues around Campbell River. The band's nomination came with 65 endorsements from loyal fans – a testament to how much their efforts are appreciated. Check out Inclusion's music at [www.musicforeveryone.ca](http://www.musicforeveryone.ca). (Nominators–Ross and Layne Hammond)

## Family Member

Person(s) who is related, or who has served as foster family, to an individual with a developmental disability

## Inclusion Works! (Vancouver Island Region)

Inclusion Works!, is a small group of committed, like-minded families, all with 19 year old sons and daughters who joined together to be more self-sufficient and promote effective community inclusion through a family governance model. Their goal is to rely less on traditional service provision, by pooling their human and financial resources and fostering natural partnerships with the educational, business, non-profit and government sectors for their mutual benefit.



Inclusion Works!

Inclusion Works! started in September 2010, providing appropriate activities 7 hours daily, 5 days a week for seven individual participants. Participants can be part of IW! for up to five years by which time they will be much better prepared to "go out into the wider world." and live inclusive lives. This timeframe mirrors the transition time their peer group might spend in getting prepared to move on to the next stage in their lives.

All IW! participants have been deemed eligible for CLBC support. To date, the families have leveraged the support that is currently available from CLBC – 55.5 hours



of individualized funding – into 210 hours of full time community inclusion – work and work experience, volunteering, continuous learning, physical fitness, recreational and cultural activities in community. To maintain individualization and flexibility, Inclusion Works! can grow to up to ten individuals once sustainable funding is secured.

Since its inception eight months ago, IW! has involved an impressive number of community partners including Community Living Victoria (acts as host agency), South Island Distance Education, Garth Homer Society, the University of Victoria (Faculty of Education, Schools of Child and Youth Care, Social Work and Applied Theatre), CanAssist, Camosun College (Community and Educational Assistant Program), LifeTime Networks, Power to Be, Oak Bay Recreation, Adaptive Communications (Speech Pathology) and Finding the Balance (yoga).

Inclusion Works! is modeling community inclusion and is already changing the attitudes and practice of a number of the more traditional service providers and community and public organizations serving adults with intellectual disabilities. The wider Greater Victoria community is also benefitting from interacting with IW! participants and their families. (Nominators–Catriona Johnson and Veronica Berlando)

### **Marilyn McLean** (Interior Region)

Marilyn is noted for her professionalism, her compassion and her commitment to improving the lives of people with developmental challenges.

Not only has Marilyn dedicated her professional and career training for over thirty years to serving students with special needs, she has also volunteered tirelessly and passionately since 1978 to improving the lives of people with special needs through her involvement with Special Olympics. Following is a listing of her involvement and the recognition she has received:

- Committee member for establishment of Special Olympics 1978 -1980.
- Charter member of B.C Special Olympics (1980).
- Director, B.C Special Olympics (1980-1982)
- Chairperson, Kamloops Special Olympics(1981-1989/2004-present)
- Coach, Rhythmic Gymnastics (1986-1989/2004-present)
- Trainer, National Coaching Certification Program Course Conductor, Technical Level 1, The Special Olympic Athlete (1990-1995)
- Recipient, Harry Red Foster Award for Outstanding Service to British Columbia Special Olympics(1989).
- Inductee to B.C. Special Olympics Hall of Fame (2002).
- Coordinator of Volunteers for BC Special Olympics Winter Games (2003)

Self-advocate and Community Council member-Tony Cuglietta- summed up Marilyn's involvement as follows: "She's fantastic and she's the best-she helps us a lot".



Marilyn McLean

Marilyn walks the talk and through her hard work, dedication and involvement with Special Olympics she makes a huge difference to the lives of those she comes in contact with. (Nominators – Ross Spina and the Thompson-Cariboo Community Council)

## Community Partner

Individuals or groups (organizations) that provide generic community services or programs that are inclusive of people with developmental disabilities.



Paul Gauthier

## Paul Gauthier (Vancouver Coastal Region)

Paul's own life story is a testament to the fact that the limitations to success of individuals is a function of the limitations in knowledge or viewpoint of those around them – as opposed to the individual themselves. Paul was told what his life would be when he became an adult and moved out of care (essentially, a life in a palliative care senior facility). He chose to define his own reality instead – which included becoming a Paralympic silver medalist, foster parent, father and husband, and Coordinator of the BC Personal Supports Network (BCPSN).

Paul's life experiences and achievements clearly inform his work with BCPSN – and how he does it. First, its structure: the concept of "supernavigators" – information brokers who inspire and help others to think outside the box to achieve their goals. Super-navigators take on the valuable role of supporting individuals to navigate the many systems out there and to complete an application process that has the individual at the centre. Clearly, Paul knows what people are really looking for – information, encouragement and problem-solving support.

Second, how Paul uses information sharing opportunities about the work of BCPSN, to concurrently support others to make a paradigm shift from viewing "disabilities" as "problems to be fixed" to unique characteristics that are "opportunities to be explored".

For example, the stories Paul shared about how adaptive technology and equipment (originally designed for physical challenges or impairments) has been used to support those with developmental disabilities to reach employment goals and level of autonomy others would have deemed impossible, opens a door of possibility many of us had no idea how to find. This coupled with sharing his own story triggers the paradigm shift. We realized that our perceived definition of what is possible is simply perception; that there are always ways for one to reach their dreams; and that the limitations lie with the inability for the rest of us to believe it, support it, and then get out of the way and let it happen.

By focusing on what IS possible and sharing concrete examples, Paul creates a fertile ground to move from "this individual has many problems and how can we obtain dollars to help them", to "what I've been perceiving as barriers maybe aren't." From a "we're stuck, these are problems/deficits, and who will help us" mentality to a "we can accomplish anything; where and how do I get started; what part can I play; and boy am I excited about this!"

Paul is an ideal candidate for this award because he has defied the artificial barriers our paradigms create to live his life on his own terms and is passionate about seeing this happen for others. Any opportunity to showcase and promote Paul's work and message is a move towards sustaining the momentum of his work which is why I believe recognition through this award would be a great investment in bringing "inclusion" to the next level. (Nominator–Zainum Bahadshah)

### **Safeway Terrace (North Region)**

The Safeway store in Terrace is recognized for providing a positive work experience for three individuals. CLBC has a Supported Employment contract with Provincial Networking Group Inc that works with community partners to place individuals into jobs that are "real work for real pay".

It is a pleasure to go to Safeway and see the individuals at work, they are pleasant, helpful, and always smiling.

One individual started in 2007. He pays union dues and is a full member of the Safeway Team; he is included in all Safeway staff functions.

Another individual started in March 2008 and within four months of being employed, the store management recognized that something stood out about him; he was always smiling and happy at work and willing to do the jobs they asked of him. They wanted him to be the "face of Safeway" meaning that when customers came into the store they wanted the customers to see someone happy and welcoming. They recognized his good work by making him the senior shift person on his shifts on the weekend. He helps supervise the other service clerks in his area of the store. This is quite a difficult task but Safeway Terrace management believes that he is up to it and are helping to teach him the social skills and supervisory skills needed for this job.

The third individual started in May of 2010, PNGI worked with Safeway on customizing a job for her. Staff soon noted what a hard worker she was and wanted to find ways to keep her on after the summer was over. She has great customer service skills.

Safeway Terrace management saw the potential in these individuals and wanted to be inclusive in their workplace. They made it happen. They make sure that all three have the opportunity to attend staff functions, invitations, rides, and have a buddy system on their schedule. They take an interest in their workers health and safety issues, and make sure that they get home safely. (Nominator–Lillian Tugwell)





## Service Provider **Denton Delaney (North Region)**

Individuals and/or agencies that are funded by CLBC to provide direct services, supports and/or programs to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Dengarry Professional Services Ltd. has provided support to adults with intellectual disabilities in Quesnel since April 1987 and in Prince George since 2009. They have teams established in both residential and day programs from which they can draw resources. Their Directors all have backgrounds in nursing. Denton and Garry are Registered Psychiatric Nurses and Carol Delaney is a Register Nurse.

Denny Delaney and his staff of Dengarry Professional Services Ltd. are recognized because they have gone above and beyond the role of being a service provider to the individuals that they serve.



Denton Delaney

There is the story of two young women who were not working out well in the 'normal' format of a cluster living situation. One of the young women has extreme seizure disorders. Denny thought outside the box and developed a cluster that met their needs; he provided homes to two other individuals and made two parents very happy with the services that their daughters were receiving. They leased a four-plex building with two of the apartments

having connecting doors where the staff could look after the two young women and make their meals for them. Another young woman in the four-plex contributes her grocery money and she eats with them for almost every meal. That way the staff are sure that they are eating healthy meals and have contact with them on a daily basis.

Denny leased another building for young men who just turned 19 years old and who have high behaviour needs and were getting evicted from their apartments. Denny is able to ensure that there is staff to ensure these young men conduct themselves appropriately so that there is no worry of a landlord evicting them; and no worry of disturbing neighbours in the building.

The staff ensure that the four young men are grocery shopping and eating healthy meals.

Denny and his staff ensure that these young men who have very little life skills can live in a safe place, have their independence and have food to eat. Denny and his staff feel that it is important to ensure that the individual's basic needs for shelter and food are being met. Then there is the bonus of the staff being on site and available to the young individuals as they need them and to help them learn essential life skills.

Denny and his staff are proud of the success their organization has realized in supporting their clients in meeting their needs and achieving their goals. Their philosophy is based upon respect for the individual and adjusting their approach to support by recognizing strengths and needs. Improving quality of life is a fundamental measure of the support they provide, which they survey through

ongoing observation and periodic interviews. Their organization believes in engaging the participation of all members of a client's support network as appropriate. They embrace diversity and differing points of view in order to improve services, with the recognition that sometimes members within a team need to compromise in order to move forward. They provide supports to individuals with mental health disorders, addictions, seizure disorders and a multitude of other diagnoses. They have a vast amount of experience working with various professionals and training personnel in providing this type of support. Accountability to persons served, families, funding agencies, etc. is treated with utmost priority and their documentation process reflects this. The agency ensures client information for personnel providing direct support is thorough and current. Record keeping and reporting standards are strictly adhered to, with confidentiality at the heart of all information transfers whether verbal or written. Denny and his staff pride themselves on learning about individuals holistically and how their particular challenges affect them, then gearing staff training to best support the person. They have provided Behaviour Management Intervention Policies in regards to challenging and aggressive behaviours. They endorse positive feedback and formal recognition for exemplary work, with the understanding that a friendly and comfortable workplace translates into an enjoyable home for individuals receiving services to live in.

The 'bottom line' is that they are there when needed and help out the best way they can so that the needs of the individuals are looked after appropriately.

It is a joy to work with them and I have total confidence in their abilities to meet the needs of our individuals. (Nominator–Karen Ellison)

### **Mara St. Onge (Vancouver Coastal Region)**

I have known Mara for four years and been consistently impressed and inspired by her energy and commitment to people with developmental disabilities.

For these four years, Mara has been a stalwart and important member of the Vancouver Community Council. Her attendance and contributions have been exemplary. She has greatly helped in informing the Council about Home Sharing, a service she has been providing for many years.

Mara has assisted individuals who have shared her home to live a full and inclusive life and made them part of the community through, for example, holding block parties which they help to organize and run.



Mara St. Onge





Last year, Mara held a successful Chill Mixer workshop – “Making Friends, Keeping Friends” – at the YMCA. The booklets and strategies she created for the workshop have been admired for their creativity and effectiveness and presented participants with the opportunity both to make and maintain new friendships.

Currently, Mara is running a series of workshops at the YMCA called “Friends, Fitness and Fun” that include a variety of health, fitness and friendship development activities. Once again, parents report the effective and successful nature of the program Mara has created.

Both these programs have been for, as she puts it, “people with special abilities”.

Mara also contributes her time and considerable skill to the fund raising efforts of the YMCA.

Mara does all this while maintaining a happy and well ordered home for her husband and two delightful children! (Nominator – Peter Swayne and the Vancouver Community Council)



Branda Gillette

### **Brenda Gillette (Fraser Region)**

Brenda is the Executive Director for the Chilliwack Society for Community Living (CSCL). This agency was started on January 4 1954, making it 57 years old this year. Brenda has been with CSCL for more than 35 years and has been the ED for the majority of this time. That in itself is a major achievement!

Brenda has spent her entire career working tirelessly as a strong advocate for individuals and their families with a clear goal of “good lives in welcoming communities”. Under her leadership, the CSCL has grown from a small grass roots organization to a major player in the community living field. The agency provides a wide range of residential and community inclusion options for individuals living in Chilliwack, Agassiz, Yarrow and Hope areas. Services are provided to both children and adults.

Brenda’s extensive experience, long history and incredible energy allows her to be a mentor for many agencies and organizations (including CLBC) within the province. She gives freely of her time and expertise as will be noted from the following list, that only highlights some of her accomplishments:



Brenda is:

- Mock Surveyor for accreditation and regularly mentors agencies in other parts of the province
- A valued participant in the Upper Fraser CLBC Community Council
- A Community and Social Services Employers' Association Board member
- Involved with the Leadership Team for the CEO Net
- Instrumental in helping to define and build the Upper Fraser Community Response Network
- A member of the Steering Committee for Social Services at the University of the Fraser Valley and has been a guest speaker for many of their classes
- An active and thoughtful member of the Upper Fraser Ethics Committee

On top of all this, Brenda represents one of six organizations that have been involved in the Employment Training Network. This group has developed curriculum to train Community Support Workers in the development/delivery of supportive employment to day program participants.

Under Brenda's leadership, the Chilliwack Society has continually shown itself to be innovative and creative, even in times of fiscal restraint. In 2009, in response to CLBC's Employment First Initiative, Brenda and the CSCL Management Team began to look at how they could realign their service to encompass the Employment initiative. Although the agency has supported a very successful Supported Employment Program for many years, they were able to identify a number of individuals in existing day services that had the desire for employment, but would need ongoing support in order to be successful. In order to successfully transform existing day programs to a service that would focus on employment and social connections with minimal staff support, the Agency recognized there would need to be buy-in at all levels of the organization – supported individuals, board, family and staff.

The Agency began by interviewing individuals in day programs to understand their individual goals; then interview staff to determine their interest in supporting people to achieve their employment goals. The Agency then began a Work Wise Club, to bring those interested individuals together to promote employment. The Agency invited Community Partners to provide work experiences for those identified individuals. From the Work Wise Club, eight individuals have been identified to move on to the new RISE program.

In addition to meeting the employment goals of individuals, the Agency realized the importance of maintaining existing social relationships with peers. In addition to employment, there has been a strong emphasis in supporting these individuals to develop and maintain social connections. Their lives have a good balance and as a result, they are more likely to continue with their employment positions.

It has been both gratifying and exciting to watch the progress of these individuals who started out in RISE wondering "who was their key worker?" to becoming their own key worker, as they take control of their own lives. The goal now is to continue to offer this experience and option to more individuals.

Brenda Gillette has led the Chilliwack Society for Community Living to make real and sustainable differences in the lives of the many individuals supported in her community. (Nominator–Annelie Kitzmann and Elaine Holub)

### **Surrey Association for Community Living (Fraser Region)**


The Surrey Association for Community Living (SACL) is recognized for its role in championing and coordinating the two-year Literacy Pilot Project for Adults with Developmental Disabilities. The program was initiated in April 2009 with the first class beginning in January 2010. Classes ran until March 18, 2011. Funding was provided by Human Resources Skill Development Canada with in-kind support from SACL.

The pilot demonstrates the use of specifically designed curriculum and an innovative teaching methodology that fits the needs of adults with developmental disabilities. SACL successfully engaged community partners including Surrey School District #36, the Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce, the City of Surrey, Surrey Food Bank, Guildford Public Library, Chapters and Kidsbooks, Rotary Club, Starbucks, Safeway and Save-on-Foods. The community was also engaged and participated on committees such as the Measuring Up Committee, the Transition Advisory Committee and the City of Surrey/White Rock Literacy Implementation Team.

Separately and collectively, these committees promote literacy learning opportunities and generate ongoing funding support.

The program has given participants increased confidence. They see themselves as learners and have developed coping skills. Participants have improved their listening, reading, writing and math skills and have made new friends in the process.

Members of the CLBC Surrey/Delta Community Council were invited to observe a class and interview participants. They found the participants not only enjoyed taking part in the program; they felt their skills had improved and they expressed their enjoyment in the class interaction.



One very shy member of the class developed the confidence to interact with her peers; after six months in the program her mother noticed her daughter's improved confidence and coping skills. This individual is now learning to take public transportation so she can enrol in the Access Program at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

One adult "with severe anger management issues", displayed not one single incident of aggressive behaviour in six months. He asked for the spelling of words to write up the grocery list at home, demonstrating his enthusiasm for learning.

Another individual, afraid to walk unassisted to the second-floor classroom quickly learned to do this without support, as well as manage Handydart on her own.

Individuals with no sound symbol recognition learned to demonstrate their learning with pictures. Their pictures became clearer and more detailed.

All individuals improved their ability to listen and draw inferences from the stories read to them. They learned math skills through the use of the Power of 10 Cards.


Using the SmartLearning approach, individuals improved their reading and writing skills, as well as their reading fluency. One individual whose reading comprehension far exceeded her independent reading level found a new love for books through the use of books accompanied by CDs.

All the participants made new friends and some met outside of class for coffee or an activity.

With improved literacy and social skills, the individuals left the program with higher expectations of themselves – an important first step in finding their own way in the world around them.

The words of one individual sum up the value of program:

"You have to keep this program running! I don't know what people will do without it. People should not be sitting at home like couch potatoes or playing on the computer or Play Station all day. What would your boss say if you sat like a couch potato all day? "You're fired!" How will people become better readers and writers if you take the program away? This program helped me, but I want to get even better! I want to get a job." Kyla Blair (Semester Two Adult Learner). (Nominator–Surrey/Delta Community Council)



## Margaret Milsom (Interior Region)

Margaret is the president and founding member of The Central Okanagan Professional Caregiver Society (COPCS). The Society was formed in 2008 with the following purpose: to support professional caregivers who are funded through Community Living British Columbia, to promote education and training opportunities for members and to foster an inclusive community for adults living with developmental disabilities.

Margaret has worked tirelessly to provide support and training for homeshare providers and the membership has increased to around 80 members. She is a huge advocate for all of the individuals and homeshare providers that are supported under CLBC. Margaret gives hundreds of hours of her own personal time to the COPCS by her creating a quarterly newsletter, recruiting new members, speaking at events, organizing workshops and just being available to other homeshare providers to answer questions and provide support.

Last year Margaret organized a workshop for homeshare providers titled "Compassion Fatigue" presented by Jan Spielman. This year she has arranged for Norman Kunc to present a workshop on creating paid employment opportunities for individuals with severe disabilities.

Margaret has organized social activities for the members and their "families" that have included summer picnics, overnight retreats at the Naramata Wellness Center and Christmas dinners with gifts and door prizes! Her fund raising efforts are renowned and she has secured discounts for the membership at dozens of local businesses and services. She has been instrumental in assisting other regions to develop similar organizations.

As a homeshare provider herself, she constantly creates positive experiences for the people in her life including creative employment opportunities and community inclusion activities.

Margaret has had a huge positive impact on the community and her successes should be acknowledged!

On behalf of the members of Central Okanagan Professional Caregivers Society we are honoured to have Margaret Milsom receive a "Widening Our World Award!" (Nominator-Jack Sawatzky)

## Recognition Webpage



Each year, the winners of the WOW!clbc awards are featured on CLBC's community recognition web site. They, together with their nominators, tell their own individual stories

about the special contributions they've made and the positive impact they have had on the lives of others in their communities and across the province.

We invite everyone to visit CLBC's WOW!clbc Recognition website at:  
[www.WOWclbc.ca](http://www.WOWclbc.ca)