

This edition's theme:

**“Where I feel welcome  
in my community”**

CLBC Magazine

*Summer 2016*

**Celebrate**

# ***Diverse* ABILITIES**

*Stories from around British Columbia*



COMMUNITY LIVING  
BRITISH COLUMBIA



## **Finding my voice**

Through Toastmasters, Ruth Stanton has gained speaking skills and confidence.

***page 11***

## MESSAGE FROM CEO SEONAG MACRAE



# Highlighting where inclusion happens

Welcome to the third edition of “Celebrate Diverse ABILITIES,” developed and written by self advocates in British Columbia.

It has now been a year since we first launched this publication through the guidance and input of the CLBC Editorial Board. During that time the board has wished farewell to departing members and welcomed new ones, all of whom have played an important role in helping to identify and highlight stories of inclusion from communities across the province.

In this edition, self advocates talk about the places where they feel welcomed and included in their own communities. We also get the chance to hear from community organizations, centres, clubs and businesses about why inclusion is important to them and how they work to be welcoming to everyone, including individuals with diverse abilities. I invite you to read these stories beginning on page 6.

Continuing to enhance inclusion in community is always a focus for CLBC. For example, CLBC has set a goal for the Community Action Employment Plan to have 25 per cent of the individuals CLBC serves reporting an income. You can read more about this and other CLBC news updates on pages 4 and 5.

I would like to wish everyone a wonderful summer season and I hope that you have a chance to get out and take part in the many community events and activities that are taking place at this time of year.

We look forward to continuing to keep you updated with news and success stories through this “Celebrate Diverse ABILITIES” magazine, as well as our CLBC website and social media channels. Thank you as always for reading!

**Seonag Macrae**

CEO

Community Living BC

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Message from the CEO</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Message from the Editorial Board</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CLBC News Updates</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>Regional Stories</b>	
<b>Fraser</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>Interior</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>North</b>	<b>10-11</b>
<b>Vancouver Coastal</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Vancouver Island</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b>Glossary &amp; Crossword</b>	<b>16</b>



*A special thanks to Editorial Board members and CLBC staff who provided writing and technical support to the authors of our the stories and articles in this edition.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

# Where we feel welcome in community

We are the CLBC Editorial Board made up of self advocates and community living leaders from across the province. Our role is to work with CLBC to improve communication with the people they serve. Working together on this magazine has been one opportunity to share what people labelled with a developmental disability think is important.

The theme for this edition is “where I feel welcome in my community.” We are proud to recognize places across the province that go above and beyond to make sure all people feel welcome to do everyday things like bank, shop, meet friends for coffee, work or volunteer, and join a local club or activity. We believe a welcoming community is a place without judgement where you are greeted and appreciated for being you.

A welcoming community has people who reach out and help one another, and is a place willing to change to become more inclusive of those with diverse abilities.

We’d like to thank those community members and organizations who took the time to be featured in our newsletter, and of course a big thank you to the authors who contributed their stories.

Please remember to visit [SelfAdvocateNet.com](http://SelfAdvocateNet.com) for more amazing stories, or to submit a story of your own. We look forward to your feedback and suggestions for the next edition of Celebrate Diverse ABILITIES.

Sincerely,

**The CLBC Editorial Board**



**standing, left to right:** Tamara Russell (Parksville), Scott McGillan (Williams Lake), Sandra Slind (Vancouver), Bryce Schaufelberger (Mission), Alex Li (Vancouver), Astrid Koenig (Sooke), Robyn Appleton (Sooke), Jhenna Owen (Kamloops), John O’Neill (Nelson). **seated, left to right:** Roshni Kashyap (Port Coquitlam), Maggie Litster (Vernon), Michelle Goos (Victoria).

## CLBC setting strategic goals for next three years

This is the final year of CLBC's current strategic plan, and work has now begun to identify its direction for the next three years. Feedback received from many individuals, families, service providers and other groups about future needs is being incorporated into the plan. This includes feedback gathered in consultation sessions and interviews across the province last summer, information gathered from our annual service satisfaction surveys, and extensive input gathered on many recent projects.

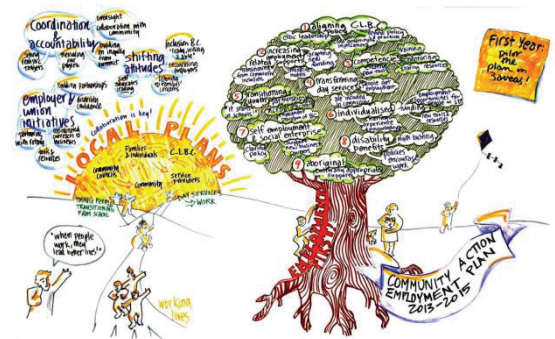
At the annual meeting between the CLBC Board of Directors and the Provincial Advisory Committee, we had an opportunity to hear from a number of self advocates and family members about what is important to them. "Our priority is to determine how to improve services as we face strong growth," says CLBC CEO Seonag Macrae.

CLBC aims to have its new strategic plan in place by December 2016.

## Employment plan marks success and looks ahead

This year marks the third anniversary of the launch of the Community Action Employment Plan (CAEP). As of March 2016, over 1,800 more people CLBC serves are reporting income.

To build on this success, on June 30, CLBC launched *2016-2019 Priorities for the Community Action Employment Plan*, which outlines work that will take place over the next three years. The updated plan also sets a new three-year goal: to have 25 per cent of individuals served by CLBC reporting income, or about 5,000 people. The focus will be to create local employment action plans across B.C. to advance employment and meet the needs of specific communities. To learn more, and to find regular updates, please visit [www.communitylivingbc.ca/community-action-employment-plan](http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/community-action-employment-plan).



## Scholarship supports learning and development

Successful applicants for the 2016 CLBC – BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) Scholarship have now been selected. This is the third year of the scholarship fund and we are pleased to announce that 44 applicants from across B.C. have been awarded funds to pursue their educational goals ranging from post-secondary training to music and art lessons to developing job skills. Congratulations to all of the successful applicants and thank you to everyone who submitted an application. The 2017 CLBC-BCGEU Scholarship Fund will open early next year and information will be posted on the CLBC website.



To read CLBC news updates, visit:  
[www.CommunityLivingBC.ca/News](http://www.CommunityLivingBC.ca/News)

To read Self Advocacy stories  
from across B.C., visit:  
[www.SelfAdvocateNet.com](http://www.SelfAdvocateNet.com)

## Forum explores inclusive housing

CLBC hosted a one-day Housing Forum in March 2016. This meeting brought together many different people to explore and discuss inclusive housing as there is sometimes disagreement about what makes housing truly inclusive. Participants included self advocates, family members, Community Councils, service providers, BC Housing, and community groups such as BC Non Profit Housing Association, Inclusion BC and Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network, along with CLBC staff.

Although CLBC does not have a role in building or providing housing, it supports individuals through residential services and is also often asked to support projects run by other organizations. Following the housing forum, a committee was created to continue to develop an inclusive housing framework, and to identify ways to promote inclusive housing. You can read a report about the forum and the proposed framework on the CLBC website under [\*\*Initiatives > Inclusive Housing\*\*](#).

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## Project seeks to expand support options

CLBC began working with service providers this year to create a new support option for the people CLBC serves. The project is called Advancing New Support Options (ANSO). The goal of the new support option is to help people CLBC serves to get a job, be involved in community, develop skills and build support networks.

This new support option is being designed by five teams from around the province. Each design team includes a self advocate, family member, service provider and CLBC staff member. In March, the design teams from Powell River, Victoria, Kamloops, Langley and Delta met in the Lower Mainland. When the teams met, they took part in a “Design Dive” led by InWithForward, an international service design firm. This was the start of a three-month process to design their different support option ideas.

During the summer, the design teams will meet again in the Lower Mainland to put their ideas together into one support option design. Then they will begin testing the design in Fall 2016. Updates on the project will be shared on the News page of the CLBC website.

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## CLBC refreshing social media channels

To more effectively meet the needs of the individuals and families CLBC supports and the many service providers and stakeholders that it works with across the province, this summer we will be refreshing our online social media channels.

Stay tuned in August and September when we will be sharing more details on CLBC’s Start with Hi, Self Advocates and Families Facebook pages, as well as the @CLBC\_Connect Twitter channel.





## REGIONAL STORIES: FRASER

# Where everybody knows your name

by JP Maher

I have been going to Mission's first Tim Horton's on almost a weekly basis since its official opening and the staff there have gotten to know me by name.

The manager, Calvin Adams, also says hello to me on a regular basis and this makes me feel included and welcomed in his establishment. He and his employees always ask me how I am doing whenever I'm down there. The staff have gotten to know that I order extra large French Vanilla cappuccinos. So they get it ready for me whenever I go in there by myself or to meet friends.

Visiting Tim Horton's is also a way for me to interact with other citizens of Mission, where I have been living since June 1, 1984. It's very comforting to know that the Tim Horton's in Mission is very welcoming towards people with disabilities like myself and that I have the right to sit down there and talk to my friends, as well the staff and other people who say "hi" to me.

My friends and I also like the fact that the manager, Calvin, listened to a letter we sent requesting installation of automatic door openers for people with disabilities, as well as for parents with small children and strollers. The letter was submitted by our local Self Advocacy Group in Mission when Tim Horton's underwent renovations. This made me feel like I have strong voice in my community and was a very rewarding experience for me. Calvin shows a great amount of respect towards myself and fellow people with disabilities in Mission.

Sometimes, some of the workers at Tim Horton's will joke around with me because they know me. It's nice to know that I'm shown a lot of respect when I go there on a weekly basis. My safety is not in jeopardy when I go and interact with people down there because the staff respect and care for my safety and well being.

My friends and fellow self advocates laugh when I say that if you need to talk to me and get advice on how to solve a problem, just find me at my office: Tim Horton's.

In closing, I would like to thank Calvin Adams and his staff for a job well done at the Mission Tim Horton's!

***"It's very comforting to know that the Tim Horton's in Mission is very welcoming towards people with disabilities like myself and that I have the right to sit down there and talk to my friends."***

**JP Maher**





**Mission &  
Chilliwack**

# Feeling welcome at work

*by Justin Forseth*

Hello! My name is Justin and I live in Chilliwack, B.C. and work at Decades Coffee Club.

Decades is a place people come to hang out and drink good coffee. I have worked there for seven years. I work on Tuesday and Friday.

The jobs I do are clean tables off, pour coffee and talk to people. Decades is a fun place to work because of the people.

I like my work. I love all the staff at Decades. My managers are Ron and Amy. They are great because they support me and treat me well.

Customers recognize me and I know more people in my community because of my job. It feels good going to a job where people are friendly and appreciate me.

The best thing about my job is talking to people. Decades is a welcoming place in my community.

*Justin has been a member of the Decades Coffee Club team for seven years and loves connecting with the community through his job.*



***“Justin brings a smile and joy with him every time he’s on shift. The guests really like seeing Justin and interacting with him.***

***He also brings a great sense of community and helps show that everyone has skills, talents and abilities that they can bring to a job.”***

**Ron Laser, Owner of Decades Coffee Club**

## REGIONAL STORIES: INTERIOR

# Recognizing accessibility efforts

*by Okanagan Accessibility*

We are Okanagan Accessibility (OA), a group formed here in Vernon B.C. Our aim is to bring about positive change in the community regarding accessibility, particularly for individuals like us who have special needs, or as we like to say, 'diverse abilities.'

To us, inclusion means being able to access places in our community just like everyone else, with accommodations made to remove any barriers that might be in the way.

We meet once a month and discuss areas in our community that we feel could improve their accessibility, or places that we feel have made great adaptations in order to be accessible and inclusive of everyone.

One organization here in Vernon that we at OA feel deserves special recognition for their efforts to be accessible is the Schubert Centre.

The Schubert Centre is a non-profit society and community centre. You can find anything happening there from Scrabble Club to Weight Watchers to Meals on Wheels delivering over 800 meals each month to seniors and others in our community who have a hard time getting out. Our self advocate group meets there, which they kindly allow us to do rent-free.

There are many reasons we find the Schubert Centre to be so accessible, particularly for individuals like us with diverse abilities. It is located downtown and can be easily accessed by transit, Handy Dart, wheelchair, scooter and on foot. The front entrance doors and washrooms are all wheelchair-friendly with lots of room to move around.

The Schubert Centre is more than just physically accessible as it also has staff and volunteers who are always extremely friendly and helpful every time we visit.



**Okanagan Accessibility is a group that works to bring positive change in the Vernon community around accessibility.**





The Schubert Centre is located at:  
**3503 30th Avenue in Vernon, B.C.**



# Responding to the needs of community

*with Jack Gareb, Schubert Centre Manager*

Okanagan Accessibility met with the centre's Manager Jack Gareb recently, to ask him a few questions about the inclusiveness of the Schubert Centre.

## What does the Schubert Centre do, and who do you serve?

We are a community centre that mainly serves senior members of the community. The Society has 1,300 members. However, last year over 5,000 individuals of all ages used the centre.

## What are the ways the Schubert Centre tries to be a welcoming place for people with diverse abilities?

We've made provisions for those with accessibility challenges: washrooms are accessible, there are automatic door openers, and we recently installed hearing assist loop systems.

When we learned that the washroom doors were too heavy for our clients, we replaced them with lighter doors and installed electric door openers.

## Why is it important to your centre to be inclusive to all?

It's important to make the centre accessible to everyone, otherwise they wouldn't be able to participate in all the events we offer here.

If we didn't do this, they wouldn't come, and it's important to us that everyone feels comfortable when they're using the centre.



**The Schubert Centre in Vernon offers accessible facilities for everyone in the community.**

## REGIONAL STORIES: NORTH

# Developing skills and building connections

*with Mike Carr, Club President of Prince George Toastmasters*

### What does Toastmasters do?

Toastmasters International is a non-profit educational organization that operates clubs worldwide to help people build their competence in communication so that they can gain the confidence to lead others.

### What are the ways your chapter of Toastmasters tries to be a welcoming place for people with diverse abilities?

We are supportive of anyone who wants to apply themselves and learn. Our self-paced program is driven based on what the member wants to learn at the pace that they are comfortable with.

### Why is it important to Toastmasters to include people who have diverse abilities?

Toastmasters is an inclusive group that includes people from different ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds, ages, education levels and professions.

People who want to learn to be better speakers and leaders have common challenges and experiences. Having a physical or developmental disability doesn't change this fact. For us, it is far more significant that a person be willing to learn and to work to apply themselves than it is that they live with a disability. Anyone who is willing to try can learn from our program.



**Ruth Stanton with her fellow members of the Prince George Toastmasters club. The club was originally started in August 1977, and is one of over 15,000 clubs around the world.**





Learn more about Prince George  
Toastmasters club online at:  
[www.pgtoastmasters.com](http://www.pgtoastmasters.com)



## Finding my voice

by Ruth Stanton

I joined my local Toastmasters in Prince George ten years ago. I joined Toastmaster to get out of my box and overcome my shyness.

Over the years I have completed two of the Toastmasters work books. One is about leadership and the other is about how to give speeches. You have to do 10 speeches and then you get recognition for your wall.

When I go to the meeting I have a role for the night like being the 'timer' or the 'topics master'.

I like how we can all be ourselves at the meeting and everyone sees us for who we are. It has been a good way to meet friends. I've learned how to make silly lists and how to run a business meeting and just so much more.

There are four of us from the AiMHi office, as well as students from the University of Northern British Columbia and others from the community. It is very inclusive. I would recommend joining Toastmasters to others who have diverse abilities. We are all welcome!

***"I like how we can all be ourselves at the meeting and everyone sees us for who we are."***

**Ruth Stanton**

Ruth has built her confidence and developed speaking and leadership skills through her participation in Prince George Toastmasters.





## REGIONAL STORIES: VANCOUVER COASTAL



To find a range of information about Registered Disability Savings Plans, visit: [www.RDSP.com](http://www.RDSP.com).

# Planning for the future

*by Zorica Medved*

I recently attended a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) workshop at the Burnaby CLBC office. I already have an RDSP but I was a bit confused on how it all works. Rick from Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) presented on the RDSP. The RDSP is a Canada-wide registered matched savings plan for people living with disabilities who are eligible for the Federal Disability Tax Credit. Here's what I learned:

- For every \$1 (up to \$500) put into my RDSP account, the federal government can (if your income is below \$87,123) match with up to \$3 each year. And for every \$1 (up to \$1000) put into my RDSP account, the government will match with up to \$2 each year. This means if you or others put in a total of \$1,500 a year, this is matched to a total of \$6,000 a year. This is the Canada Disability Savings Grant.
- For people living on a low-income (less than \$25,356), the federal government will put in \$1000 each year for 20 years. You do not have to put in any money to get this \$1,000. This is the Canada Disability Savings Bond.
- For people living on an income between \$25,356 and \$43,561, you can still receive a partial bond.

Anyone can contribute to your RDSP including family and friends. I started mine two years ago and when I have a job I contribute money into my RDSP. When my parents understand more, they will contribute like for my birthday or monthly. That could be the same for other family and friends too.



*Zorica learned all about the RDSP at a recent presentation by Rick from PLAN.*

Your RDSP money can be invested and grow interest. You should talk to a financial planner or accountant to learn more about investments. Once I decide how investment decisions are made, it can really start to grow.

The RDSP does not affect your Persons with Disability (PWD) benefits. It does not get clawed back and it does not reduce disability benefits payments. I can choose what to do with the money when it comes out. There are no restrictions on how it can be spent. You can contribute up to age 49 and then there's a ten year wait period. If you have an illness in that time, you can also take out this money to help. I live with my parents and they are getting older. In the future, I might need a different place to live, extra money to get extra support, or want to travel or visit friends. My RDSP can help me do this. I recommend everybody get one!



To find out about the next RDSP workshop in your community, call PLAN at: **604-439-9566**.



**Vancouver  
& Burnaby**

# Making a positive difference

*with Helen Yee, Branch Manager, TD, Coal Harbour, Vancouver*

## What does TD do and who do you serve?

Toronto Dominion (TD) is a bank with more than 160 branch locations across B.C.

## What are the ways that TD tries to be a welcoming place for people with diverse abilities?

When someone visits a TD branch, they are valued, respected and supported. We call this “comfortable banking,” which means everyone is treated well. Our employees strive to make a positive difference in everyone’s day. Specifically, for people with diverse abilities, we work to accommodate them and remove barriers. Employees get some training on accommodating disabilities, but good service is mainly because our employees are passionate about helping customers and are very good at accommodating all sorts of needs.



**Aine Rathwell, self advocate and TD customer, speaks with TD’s Coal Harbour Branch Manager Helen Yee about her banking needs.**

## Why is being a welcoming place for people with diverse abilities important to TD?

At TD, we make customers feel comfortable and supported regardless of background, religion, race, disability, gender or sexual orientation. Diversity is not a one-time project or initiative; it is part of who we are at TD and everything we do. It’s all about making people comfortable as soon as they walk in the door of the bank.

## Setting up an RDSP

The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) helps Canadians with disabilities and their families create greater financial security and achieve peace of mind for the future.

The RDSP is offered by all major financial institutions in Canada.

You can open an RDSP account with TD by visiting any TD Direct Investing location or TD Canada Trust branch, or you can speak with an Investment Representative at:

**1-800-465-5463 or  
TTY 1-866-966-6061**

## REGIONAL STORIES: VANCOUVER ISLAND

# The perfect recipe for belonging

*By Robyn Appleton*

One of the things that I have been learning over the past three years is how to cook better because it is something I really like doing. I really like looking at recipes and finding new and yummy things to cook. I look for recipes in magazines and cookbooks, but mostly online.

My mom and dad really like the food I cook. Their favourite is a sun dried tomato salad dressing I make. My favourite recipe is chicken parmesan. I also feel good about cooking because it gives Mom a break.

My support worker is helping me with cooking. An important part of cooking involves going shopping to buy the things I need. We work together to make up a list and then go shopping. I used to need a lot of help finding the things I need but now I am very independent.

We have two grocery stores in our small town of Sooke, Village Food Markets and Western Foods. I go shopping at both of them. The staff of both stores always treat me courteously and respectfully.

There are certain staff in each store who expect me to come in and ask me what I am cooking on that day.

Once, I forgot one of the ingredients and the cashier teased me about it and we had a good laugh together.

I did have a problem with one of the cashiers in the store not giving me the right change. My support worker pointed this out and she corrected it immediately. My support worker also talked to the store manager about the incident and he was very caring.

The kindness and respect of the staff at both of the grocery stores makes me feel really good. Because of the way they treat me I feel like I belong and am part of the Sooke community.



***“The kindness and respect of the staff at both of the grocery stores makes me feel really good.”***

**Robyn Appleton**





Sooke

# Serving the needs of community

*with Village Food Markets and Western Foods in Sooke*

## What does Village Food Markets do, and who do you serve?

We are a full service locally owned and operated grocery store serving the community of Sooke and surrounding areas.

## What are the ways Village Food Markets tries to be a welcoming place for people with diverse abilities?

We have friendly, helpful, courteous staff who are willing to offer help to shoppers with various needs. We accept work experience placement through the schools to provide skills for work placement. We are always open to suggestions to improve service to the public

## Why is this important to your store?

We pride ourselves on customer service and providing a pleasant shopping experience for all.



**Village Food Markets and Western Foods serve the community of Sooke.**

## What does Western Foods do, and who do you serve?

Western Foods is a full service retail grocery store. We'll serve all those who come in.

## What are the ways Western Foods tries to be a welcoming place for people with diverse abilities?

We have recently improved the accessibility to our store by changing our entrance way doors and widening our checkouts. Those with licensed working dogs are welcomed in the store. We are always more than happy to assist with carrying out items for any customer. We have provided work experience for high school students with diverse abilities. We offer free deliveries from Monday to Friday, and on Thursday mornings we have a lady who will shop and deliver groceries for people who are shut in or those with diverse abilities for a small donation.

## Why is this important to your store?

It is important to us that we give our best service to everyone, that we are good community members and that we make all feel welcome in our store.



## GLOSSARY & CROSSWORD

Use the clues below to solve the crossword puzzle. All of the answers are words and phrases that appear in this edition of the magazine.

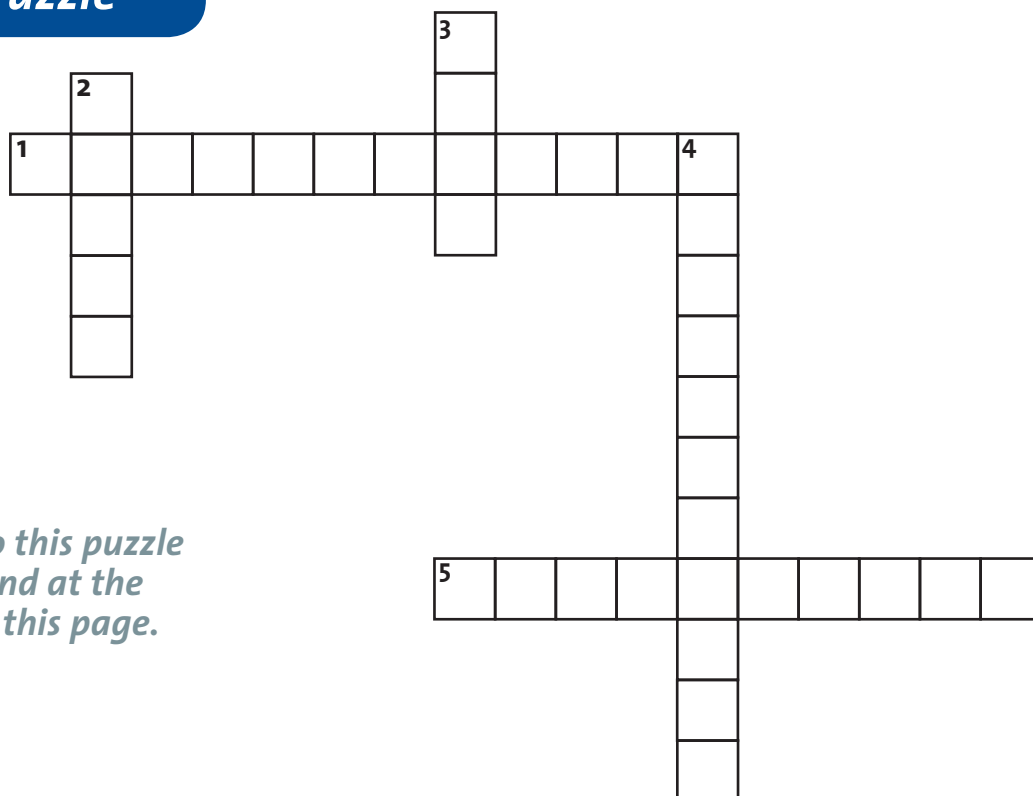
### Across

- 1 -** An organization that helps people improve their public speaking, communication and leadership skills
- 5 -** Designed to be used or understood easily by everyone.

### Down

- 2 -** A type of meeting where people share ideas and talk about different issues.
- 3 -** A type of savings plan that helps people with disabilities plan for the future.
- 4 -** Money that is given to help pay for school, training courses or educational books.

### Crossword Puzzle



*Answers to this puzzle  
can be found at the  
bottom of this page.*

## CLBC Contact Information

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