

This edition's theme:

INCLUSION AND EQUALITY

CLBC MAGAZINE

Winter 2018-19



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA

CELEBRATE DIVERSE ABILITIES

Stories from around British Columbia



Setting the pace

For Orrin Milne, running has become a way to stay active and connect with people in his community of Vanderhoof.

Orrin (centre) celebrates the holiday season with fellow members of the Vanderhoof Masters Running Club.

Pages 10 & 11

MESSAGE FROM

CEO Seonag Macrae

Finding inclusion and equality in many ways and places

Welcome to the Winter 2018-19 edition of Celebrate Diverse ABILITIES, developed by CLBC's Editorial Board and written by self advocates in British Columbia.

For this edition, our theme is "Equality and Inclusion." For the authors whose stories you can read in these pages, there are a range of activities, places and relationships where they find a sense of equality and a feeling of being included. For Orrin Milne, who is featured on the cover, joining a running club in his hometown of Vanderhoof and competing in half marathons makes him feel included in his own community, and in the athletic community across the province. On pages 14 and 15 we share the story of self advocates who have been hired as advisors for CLBC. For them, the role offers a sense of equality and an opportunity to guide CLBC's work. As Alexander Magnussen puts it, these "are not token roles. We are on level ground with other CLBC employees. We come with valuable expertise that CLBC needs in order to do its job." I'm sure you will enjoy reading these stories and learning about people's experiences as much as I have.



This past fall has been an eventful one, with the recent celebrations of Community Inclusion Month, Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, RDSP Awareness Month, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It has also been a busy time across the province, with CLBC launching its new Welcome Workshops, and welcoming nearly 200 attendees to 39 sessions so far. You can read more about these workshops in the News section of this magazine (pages 4 and 5), along with updates about new CLBC board members, an inclusive housing plan developed with Inclusion BC, and more.

On a personal note, I wanted to share with you that I have decided to retire from my post as CEO of CLBC as of April 1, 2019. I have enjoyed every chance I had to meet and work with the individuals and families CLBC serves since I began this role in 2014. While there will be more opportunities for me to say goodbye over the coming months, I want to thank everyone who has supported our efforts to strengthen CLBC services over the past years.

Thank you as always for reading. I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and a great start to the new year so far. We look forward to sharing many more success stories and keeping you updated in 2019.

Sincerely,

Seonag Macrae

CEO, Community Living BC

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MESSAGE FROM The Editorial Board

CLBC Editorial Board Members are:

left to right: Lee Kissinger (Victoria), Nathan Bodie (Victoria), Sam Milton (Gitsegukla), Amber Rainshadow and Glimmer (Victoria), Bryce Schaufelberger (Mission), Jennifer Dosanj (Surrey).

not pictured: Gerald Oesch (Chilliwack)

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

The importance of equality and inclusion

Hello! We are the CLBC Editorial Board made up of self advocate and community living leaders from across the province. Our role is to work with Community Living BC (CLBC) to improve communication with the people they serve and to find ways to share the stories and contributions of people with diverse abilities in B.C. Working together on this magazine has been one way to let CLBC, and the broader community, know what we think is important.

December 3rd was the United Nations International Day for Person's with Disabilities (IDPD), or Diverse Abilities as many of us like to say. The theme for 2018's IDPD was "Empowering People with Disabilities: Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality." We want to recognize this important day and share in the celebration by writing about the contributions and successes of those with diverse abilities. So for this edition of the magazine, we asked people to share stories about equality and inclusion.

You will read stories about people with diverse abilities who feel a sense of equality because of where they work, contribute or connect in their community, as well as because of friendships they have or teams they belong to.

For us on the Editorial Board, equality is about honouring that we are all human, that we are all the same even if some of us need extra help to access opportunities in our communities. New Editorial Board member Amber Rainshadow says, "Equality is when others don't actually see the disability anymore. They see you for who you are and the way of life that works for you." We believe equality and inclusion is possible when we all support each other to participate, make contributions, and have friendships.

If you would like to share your story about equality and inclusion visit www.selfadvocatenet.com and click on the Submit Your Story Idea button.

We'd like to thank all the members of the self advocacy community and others with diverse abilities who contributed their story to our magazine.

We look forward to your feedback and suggestions for the next edition of Celebrate Diverse ABILITIES.

Sincerely,

The CLBC Editorial Board

CLBC welcomes new board members

Seven new members have been appointed to the Board of Directors for Community Living BC. The seven new board directors are:

Jake Anthony, self advocate, professional actor and inclusive theatre instructor with City of Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services.

Katherine Bright, principal, Katherine Bright Consulting.

Nelson Chan, chief financial officer for the Capital Regional District, Capital Regional Hospital District and Capital Region Housing Corporation.

Marnie Larson, chief executive officer, StarGarden Corporation.

Julia Payson, executive director, Canadian Mental Health Association, Vernon and District branch.

Simon Philp, market vice-president — commercial banking CIBC.

Patricia Sullivan, chair of the Capital Regional District Arts Advisory Council.

“My thanks also go to the outgoing board members who have helped shape CLBC over the last few years,” said Minister Shane Simpson. “Thank you to Diane Friedman, Eileen Stewart, David Babych, David Everett, Mike Watson and Jane Holland for their advice and compassion for the important work that CLBC does for people with disabilities throughout our province.”

CLBC News

Inclusion BC and CLBC launch inclusive housing plan



Inclusion BC and CLBC launched a collaborative three-year plan in November to increase inclusive housing options in B.C. The full plan is available on the CLBC and Inclusion BC websites, and was shared with stakeholders at the BC Non-Profit Housing Association's Housing Central conference.

To increase inclusive housing, over the next three years Inclusion BC and CLBC will collaborate in four areas: **Data and Resources; Identity and visibility; Affordability and finance; and Inclusive design**

The plan was developed by a 14-member Inclusive Housing Task Force (IHTF) established by Inclusion BC and CLBC. The IHTF invited more than 60 resource people for a full-day forum in January 2018 to create the framework of the plan. Participants included people with disabilities, family members, developers, builders, elected officials, city planners, Indigenous groups and community organizations.

Visit www.communitylivingbc.ca to read the inclusive housing plan.

First CLBC Welcome Workshops well attended

Nearly 200 people have attended new CLBC Welcome Workshops held across the province to learn about how CLBC serves adults with developmental disabilities. The four in-depth workshops — **Getting Started, Community Connections, Planning Choices and CLBC: The Real Deal** — are held over four weeks and help individuals and families connect with each other while learning about CLBC, its services and community options.



The presenting team for the South Island CLBC Welcome Workshops helps people feel better informed about what to expect when applying for services, and more connected to other families and their community.

A total of 39 workshops have been held so far across the province. They are part of a revamped welcome and planning process CLBC adopted this fall, and open to people already eligible for CLBC services or who think they might be.

In conjunction with the new workshops, CLBC collaborated with the Family Support Institute which launched myBooklet BC, a new site and on-line tool well-received by families and discussed in the CLBC workshops that enables people and families to create a personalized information booklet that they can share with professionals.

Each workshop is led by a team that includes a family member, a self advocate and a CLBC facilitator. Depending on the community, the workshop series may be held in a school, community centre or a CLBC office. Individuals and families who already know they are eligible for CLBC services also have the option at any time of year to be welcomed one-on-one by a CLBC facilitator. Read more about the workshops on page 12 of this magazine.

New advisors help improve CLBC services

After observing the value that they have brought to CLBC's work and in light of our commitment to employment, a new role has been created at CLBC for people who have the expertise and experience of a person living with a developmental disability. The new part-time, auxiliary staff members will provide expertise for various research, development and improvement projects as Strategic Initiative Advisors.

To begin, they will be supporting work on projects that include better serving people with multiple, complex needs; the new approach to planning with people and families; inclusive housing; implementation of the 2018-19 *include Me!* survey, and a project to update CLBC's catalogue of services.

Read more about CLBC's new strategic initiative advisors on pages 14 and 15 of this magazine.

Vancouver

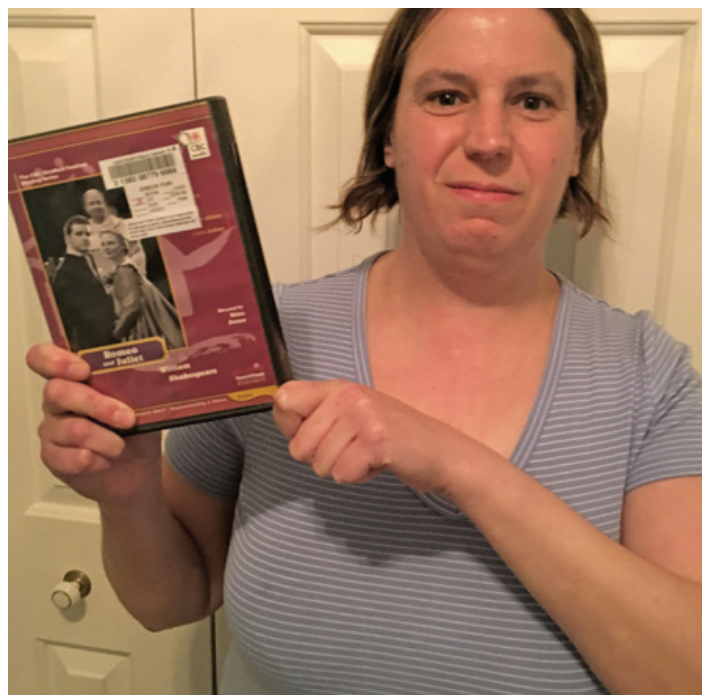
Booking a trip to the library

by Natalie Popov

One place I feel included is at the Vancouver Public Library. I go there every day but not Tuesday. I enjoy going to the library because it's fun!

In the morning I get up and get ready to head out to the Vancouver Public Library. I take the Canada Line Skytrain and get off at Vancouver City Centre.

When I get there, I talk to the librarians, ask them how they are, and talk about the weather. The librarians help me find books and DVDs. They are friendly. I enjoy reading about history.



Natalie checks out books and movies that interest her on her regular visits to the library.

I usually take out Star Wars and any other movie that catches my attention. Every time I go I borrow books and movies. I walk around the whole library.

One time I was on a computer and I put my money into the print machine and it ate my money. I called the librarian on the phone and she came and helped me. It made me feel great.

Another time I left my cell phone at the library and the staff called my dad and told him that my phone was at the library. I was scared but after I felt happy that they found my cell phone. I think the staff at the library are very helpful.

After I am finished at the library I go back to Richmond again. I feel proud going to the Vancouver library by myself!

Vancouver Public Library in downtown Vancouver.



Richmond

Loving the work I do

by Mark Downey

For the past three years, I have volunteered at Steveston Community Centre, which is nearby where I live.

I volunteer Friday evenings for up to four hours with youth and young adults. I assist at the front desk to check people in, make sure they write their name, pay the drop-in fee for basketball and receive a wrist band for access to the gym.

Sometimes people try to sneak into the gym, so I compare the numbers of people on the list and in the gym. If the number isn't the same, I tell my co-worker and he goes to the gym to do a wristband check.

I also go around the outside with my co-worker at around 10:00 pm to make sure people aren't smoking, drinking or lighting firecrackers.

Since I've been volunteering in my community, I have met new people and have felt helpful. I am proud of myself even though I feel tired the next day.

Looking back on the past three years, the staff have changed but acceptance is still there. I plan to continue as long as I can because I enjoy it.

When my previous supervisor was planning to leave, he gave me some great advice. He told me to stay and continue the great work I'm doing. He reminded me that I have the right to walk away if I stopped enjoying the work. He communicated inclusion and equality in my life and I'll always remember him for that.



“Since I’ve been volunteering in my community, I have met new people and have felt helpful.”

MARK DOWNEY

Kelowna

Matthew is one of the team at Kelowna's Gospel Mission and has made strong connections with his colleagues over the past five years.



Making friends and giving back

by Matthew Jacobsen

My name is Matthew Jacobsen. This is the story of my amazing workplace where I have been working for the last five years. I work at Kelowna's Gospel Mission. It is a shelter for homeless people of Kelowna. I like being part of an organization that does good work.

My job is to sort lots and lots of bottles and cans that get donated. The money they make goes to help more people. I like going to work because I feel like I am part of a family. The staff are friendly and everyone knows my name.

A few months ago, my bosses had a meeting with me and told me they were going to give me a raise. I really liked that they asked if there was anything that they could do to make my time at work even better than it is.

One of the coolest people is one of the cooks. His name is also Matthew. We kid around a lot and he makes me coffee or hot chocolate.

I like it when I have my lunch in the lunch room and get to talk to the other staff. Sometimes I just hang out in the staff room before I head for home.

And then at the end of the year we have a staff party which is so much fun. One time they had a talent show and I danced on the stage and everyone cheered and clapped like I was a celebrity.



Inclusion starts with friendship

Creston

My name is Shell and I am a caregiver in Creston, B.C. I have been supporting Janeen for almost 20 years now. Travis moved in with us over two years ago. Travis's parents gave consent on his behalf to have this story and photograph submitted. Janeen gives her own consent and was very happy to have me share it.


This is a story about friendship. Travis and Janeen are best friends. Travis is a man of few words. Janeen is hard of hearing and this has limited her opportunity for meaningful conversations, until she met Travis.

They clicked at first sight. Janeen was instantly thrilled to find the "little brother" she always wanted. Travis calls her "Nina" and although she is like an overly protective sister he never had in his life, he blossomed under her "mother hen" personality. Janeen took it upon herself to try to teach sign language to Travis and now they have their own unique way of communicating. She says that Travis is the only person that listens to her.

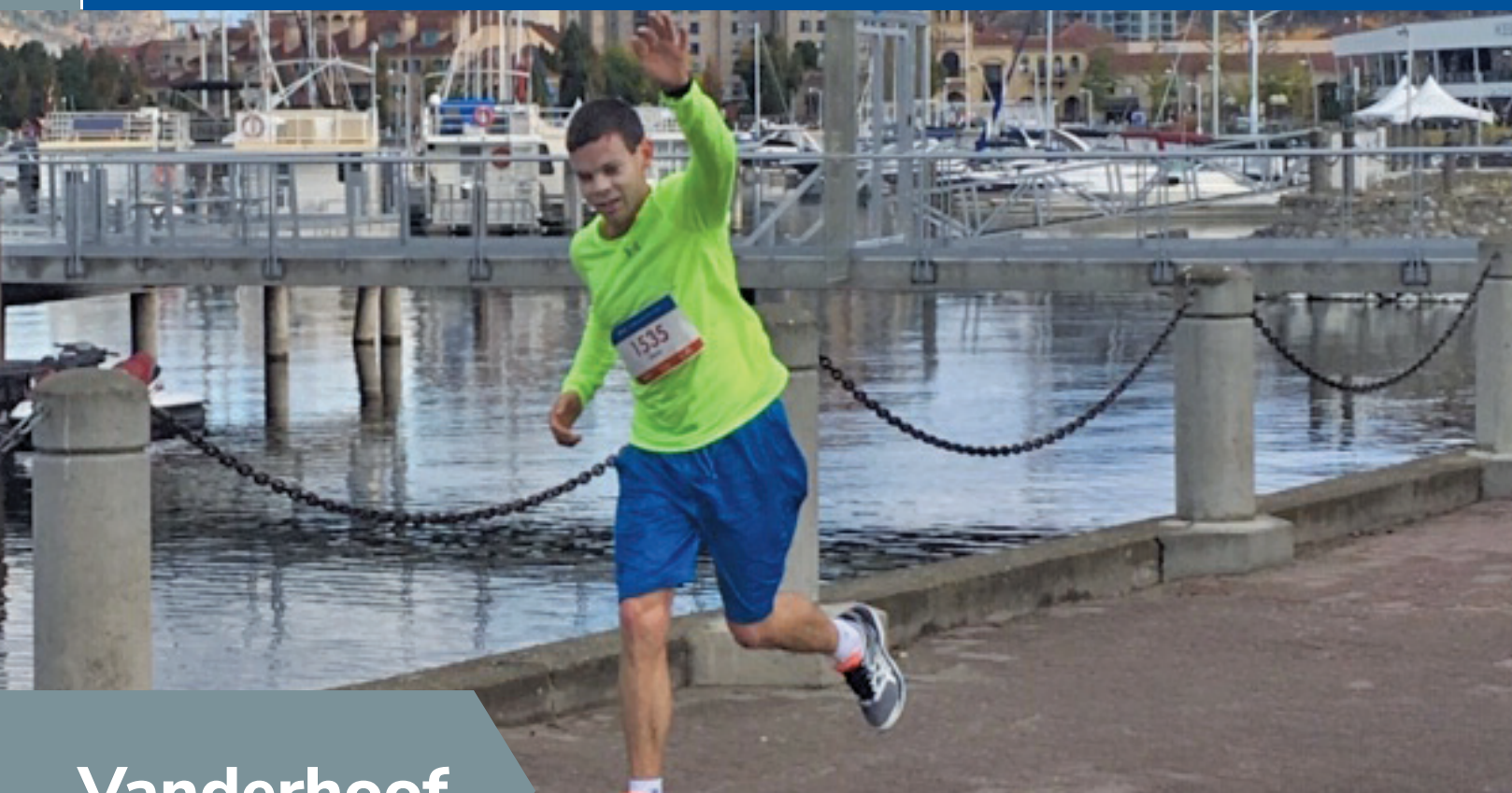
Travis and Janeen have a unique and special bond. They enjoy picking berries, playing music, dancing, and swinging under the Linden tree. Together they care for the cats and watch the birds. Travis likes "watching

Janeen watching TV" and he claps and laughs out loud, whenever she laughs. Their favorite thing to do together is picnic in the park. Janeen has struggled whenever it comes to sharing treats, but since Travis is in her life, she has become generous and makes sure he gets his fair share. Whenever they are apart, each one speaks of the other in a worried tone. When they reunite, they quickly head bump, link arms and take off, Janeen chatting merrily and Travis giggling and whispering in her ear.

The immediate spark between Travis and Janeen has grown into a beautiful brother and sister bond, a very lasting and special friendship.



"The immediate spark between Travis and Janeen has grown into a beautiful brother and sister bond, a very lasting and special friendship."



Vanderhoof

Orrin runs in the Kelowna Sun Rype half marathon.

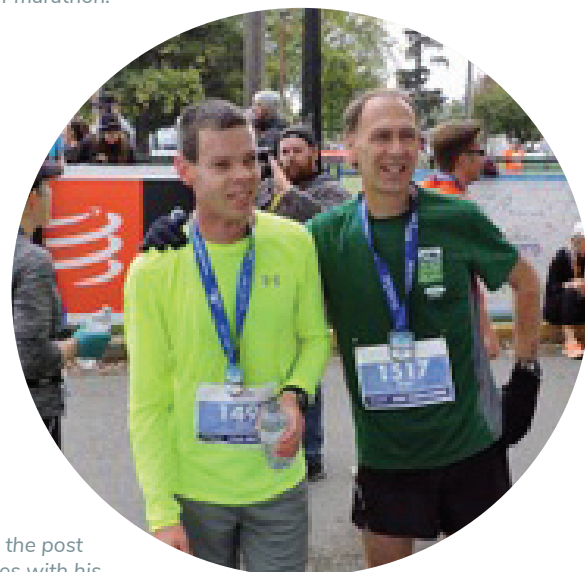
Setting the pace

by Orrin Milne

My name is Orrin Milne. I'm a runner. I run most Tuesday nights at the Vanderhoof Masters Running Club. I have a slower pace, but the whole group has different speeds and paces so that makes us the same.

I started running 12 years ago when I was 20 years old. I do like to get out and enjoy the weather and stay fit.

I have a running coach named Brian Nemethy. He used to be my 5th grade teacher. It was hard for me to join sports in high school, so Brian encouraged and supported me to become a runner. He helped me with a running schedule where I worked up to running eight kilometres a day.



Orrin enjoys the post race festivities with his running coach Brian Nemethy.

Brian organizes the 8km Wild Goose Chase race in our town of Vanderhoof. When Brian told me about this event I was happy to take part. I can run this race in 41 minutes and 55 seconds.

In 2008 I made it a goal to run in a half marathon. I succeeded at this goal with the help of good friends who ran with me. Now I have run in 10 half marathons! My last one was in October at the Kelowna Sun Rype half marathon. I ran 21kms with 900 other runners. My time was 1 hour and 44 minutes and 34 seconds. This was one second faster than last year.



I also run to meetings and to and from my job. I work at Jim's Independent Grocer. It's just across the train tracks on the other side of town. I have worked there for 12 years and I am a happy employee.

Running has helped me get to know people all over town. People recognize me because of my running style. I've just learned as I go. It's hard sometimes, but if you try over and over you can achieve your goals. I've learned there's no right or wrong time to come across the finish line.

“Running has helped me get to know people all over town.”

ORRIN MILNE

Above: Orrin proudly displays his competitor number and medal from the 2018 Sun Rype half marathon.

Right: Orrin celebrates the recent holiday season with fellow members of the Vanderhoof Masters Running Club.

Back row (left to right): Brian Nemethy, Ken Simon, Jennifer Little, Wanda Nemethy, Jeremy Seely.

Front row (left to right): Claire Radcliffe, Orrin Milne, Jessica Seely, Alexis Seely.



Playing an important role in CLBC's new Welcome Workshops

This fall, CLBC launched a new approach to planning with people and their families. One exciting part of this new approach are the new CLBC Welcome Workshops currently being hosted in communities all around the province.

The CLBC Welcome Workshops are a series of four two-hour workshops that welcome people new to CLBC by sharing valuable information about resources in the community and about how different supports and services fit together in the big picture of adulthood.

The four workshops are:

- 1. Getting Started**
- 2. Community Connections**
- 3. Planning Choices**
- 4. CLBC - The Real Deal**

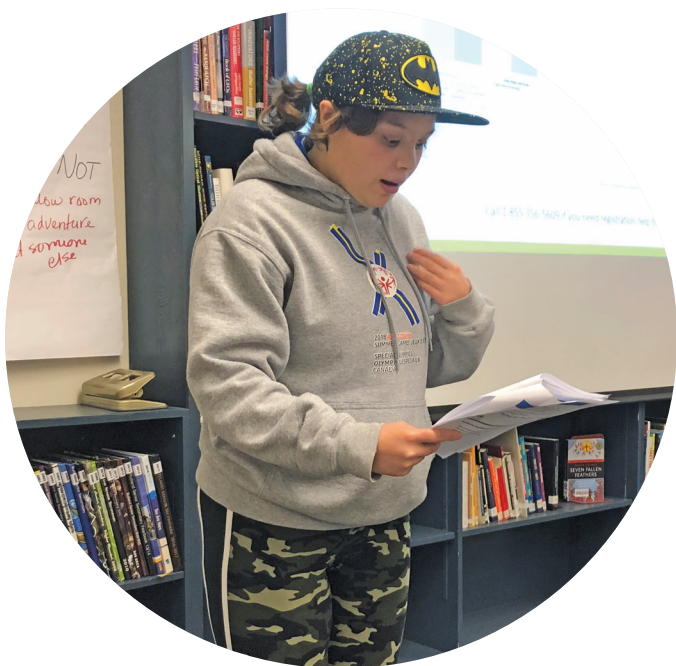
People with disabilities and family members had a big role in designing the Welcome Workshops and had the idea that Welcome Workshops be led by a team of three people: a CLBC facilitator, a family member, and person who receives services from CLBC.

Shameera Rosal from Kelowna is a young woman who receives services from CLBC and who is now contracted by CLBC and working on the Welcome Workshop presenter team in her community.

Shameera shares how being included as an equal partner in the Welcome Workshops has been an empowering experience.

You can read her story on the next page.

Learn more about the Welcome Workshops on www.CommunityLivingBC.ca under **How do I get support? > Attend the CLBC Welcome Workshop Series.**



Shameera Rosal shares her story with attendees at a CLBC Welcome Workshop. You can read Shameera's story on the next page.

Sharing my message

by Shameera Rosal

I'm a Welcome Workshop presenter in Kelowna. I'm part of a team of three presenters. It's important to have three perspectives on the team so there's equal chance to share our story and inspire families and people to have a life to look forward to.

Our team just finished a workshop series at Rutland Secondary School where I graduated in 2014. It felt good to be there helping out and contributing my leadership skills. I'm also a third year student at the University of British Columbia Okanagan. I study Anthropology and Geography with the support of STEPS Forward, the BC Initiative for Inclusive Post Secondary Education. I am one of the Self Advocates on the TYDE Research Project and I have a job on campus in the Equity and Inclusion office. I also work at Dairy Queen and swim professionally with Special Olympics. I just won silver at the 2018 National Games.

I'm excited to be a Welcome Workshop presenter because I like public speaking and talking about what it feels like to contribute and be included in community. I like being asked to do things that build my independence and the ability to make choices.

"I hope by telling my story there will be more equality and inclusion for people with diverse abilities."

SHAMEERA ROSAL

Kelowna

When I'm at work or studying on campus or swimming, nobody treats me different. I feel respected and equal to everyone else.

I want to help people realize that even though I have a disability, it doesn't prevent me from living my life to the fullest. I want people to know that I have a "good life." This is a good message to share at the Welcome Workshops because many parents and kids don't know what's possible, especially after high school. I hope by telling my story there will be more equality and inclusion for people with diverse abilities. I hope all people with diverse abilities will be inspired to work towards having good lives.



Shameera (left) proudly displays her silver medal in swimming which she won at the Special Olympics 2018 National Games.

New Strategic Initiative Advisors contribute to CLBC

The Editorial Board is excited to share that CLBC has created a new position called the Strategic Initiative Advisor. Strategic Initiative Advisors come with the lived experience of having a developmental disability and work on projects to help CLBC figure out how to do things better for those they serve. A big part of their job is to share their expertise, as well as gather ideas from others who also have diverse abilities, so that CLBC can continuously get better at supporting people to have "lives filled with possibilities in welcoming communities."

Congratulations and welcome to CLBC's new Strategic Initiative Advisors! They are: Michelle Goos (Victoria), Alexander Magnussen (Surrey), Jerry Laidlaw (Langley), David Johnston (Dawson Creek), Shelley DeCoste (Kelowna), Debbie Reece (Vancouver), Elizabeth Hamilton (Vernon), and Drew Derosier (Kelowna).

On these two pages you can read their thoughts about their new roles with CLBC.



Alexander Magnussen: "Tokenism is when a 'special person', who is usually on the low end of the totem pole, is magically placed higher in order to fit some kind of quota or to make someone else look good. Strategic Initiative Advisors are not token roles. We are on level ground with other CLBC employees. Because of our lived experience we know what it's like from the inside out. We come with valuable expertise that CLBC needs in order to do its job."



Jerry Laidlaw:
 "I have been volunteering on boards and for CLBC for many years. It is a dream come true to be a paid employee. I've learned that my ideas are good and have equal value. I help teach CLBC staff about self advocacy and what it means to be listened to and treated with respect."



Michelle Goos:
 "I feel more meaning and purpose in my life. I'm doing something that will hopefully change something for the better. I hope this job will open more eyes to see we have something to offer and it will open more doors for other people to be hired."



Drew Derosier: “This Strategic Initiatives Advisor Role with include Me! has been a very rewarding experience for me. Having the chance to help people advocate for themselves is very close to my heart. I love the opportunity to give people who otherwise wouldn’t have a voice, a voice.”

Shelley DeCoste: “I want families to see their child in me. To see what’s possible when you have the right support. We’re for once doing the teaching, instead of being taught. Many of us have had a rough time with money and not having enough. But this isn’t about the money. It’s about being recognized for what we CAN do.”



Debbie Reece: “The role has been a great opportunity for me in many ways. I have been able to develop my skills, learn brand new skills, grow my network, and spread the word about the importance of quality of life. There is a great sense of accomplishment and pride having worked in this role.”

David Johnston: “I’ve always wanted to work with people with diverse abilities. Ask anyone. It’s been my dream. I present about inclusive employment in my community and how important it is to find purpose through your passion. It is my passion to help people and now I work for CLBC helping to make things better for others.”



Elizabeth Hamilton: “I love getting into conversations with others about quality of life and what quality of life means. This advisor role has helped me become an advocate, helping other people to have a voice of their own.”

Sharing self advocate stories and voices

CLBC continues to support the B.C. Self Advocate Net (SAN) website. Each month up to eight new stories are published by the people CLBC serves showcasing their voices, gifts and experiences. Authors of successful submissions are paid \$100. Story ideas can be submitted by clicking the Submit My Story button on the SAN website.

Also hosted on SAN is the B.C. Self Advocacy Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau is an opportunity for decision makers, service providers and the community at large to learn directly from people with diverse abilities by hiring speakers to present on topics such as inclusive employment, housing and rights.

For more information about SAN, the Speakers Bureau or the CLBC Editorial Board, please contact CLBC's Self Advocate Advisor at Jessica.Humphrey@gov.bc.ca.



Visit:
www.SelfAdvocateNet.com

People Planning Together Training comes to B.C.

People Planning Together is two-day training for people labelled with a developmental disability who are interested in taking a leadership role in planning a life they desire. This training is facilitated by people who also live with a label of developmental disability.

During the training, people spend time identifying the things that are important to them to be happy. People also spend time identifying the things that are important for them to stay healthy and safe.

It's all about deciding what works for you and how others can best support you to be happy and healthy at the same time.

Interested in registering for a 2019 workshop in your community? Interested in hosting a People Planning Together workshop at your organization?

Contact Self Advocate Advisor, Jessica Humphrey at Jessica.Humphrey@gov.bc.ca or 778-679-2691.

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