

THE CITIZEN

Connecting People with Their Community



CLBC Newsletter - March 2008

Volume 4 Issue 2

Renovations, creating **INDEPENDENCE**



What's Inside

Accessible Playground



Home Sharing Sessions



Who is a Self-Advocate?



Service Plan Summary



Discovery Goal-Based
Planning



The Family Independence Fund (FIF) provides renovations to homes of those who have family members with disabilities. Ashley (above) and her family are one of the recipients of the FIF grant and Ashley loves her new, accessible bathroom. See page four for the full story.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Lois Hollstedt



The Community Living BC (CLBC) Board of Directors is looking for a new self-advocate board member to replace George Fulcher, who has recently resigned due to health-related reasons. The board would like to thank George for his keen interest in the creation of CLBC and his faithful attendance. When his health started to become a challenge for him, he decided the responsible decision was to allow someone else to take his position on the board. The board of directors will be interviewing applicants for this vacancy throughout the next few weeks.

George brought his 17 years of experience as a former Woodlands resident to the board. His ability to talk about the life that he and his wife Rose have built in their community has helped many people to see the possibilities for individuals to live a good life and a life they want.

George has been a long-time advocate for individuals who have a disability. He has spoken out on issues related to the treatment of people living in the Woodlands Institution. He also spoke to the challenges individuals with disabilities face in everyday life, such as a lack of transportation in small communities.

His good humour made him a delight to work with and he was always ready to move the business meeting along toward a vote.



The CLBC Board of Directors sends their best wishes to George and his wife Rose for a great life in their new community in Black Creek. ✨

George Fulcher (left) with CLBC board member Joan Rush (right) at the 2007 CLBC staff conference.

This Issue

Inside Voice	3	CLBC Service Plan Summary	9	Teen Proud of Her Parents	13
Grant Gives Freedom	4	A Home of Her Own	10	Journey of Discovery	14
Accessible Playground	6	Get to Know	11	Phil St. Luke Day	15
Who is a Self-advocate?	7	Connecting with Communities	11	Family Independence Fund	15
Training for the Nationals	8	Home Sharing Sessions	12	Contact Us	16

INSIDE VOICE

The self-advocate's perspective.

COUPLE PROMISES TO STAY TOGETHER

By Len and Val Marcotte

Most people thought they shouldn't get married, but Len and Val knew they should. They beat the odds together.

Len and Val met each other in 1980 at the Port Alberni Arrowsmith House where they both lived at the time. In 1981, Len moved out of Arrowsmith House and got his own apartment.

Over time, their feelings grew stronger for each other and they decided they would like to get married. No one at the Arrowsmith House had ever been married, and Len and Val's families and support staff did not think it was a good idea.

In 1982, Len bought an engagement ring for Val. It took months for Len to pay off the ring, but he did and kept it a secret from Val while they continued to court each other.

In the spring of 1983, Len proposed to Val and gave her the ring he bought for her. Len asked Val's parents for permission to marry their daughter, but they said no at that time. Against the advice of many people, Val moved into Len's apartment anyway.

Val called her mom and said she was living with her boyfriend and that they were going to get

married. After that, they could see that Len and Val really wanted to be together, so her parents then approved of Val getting married to Len. Len and Val then bought wedding rings, which again took a long time to pay off.

As a couple, Len and Val faced many barriers. In 1984, not many people with developmental disabilities were getting married. Len and Val were married on September 22, 1984 at Val's parents' house in Port Alberni, where their family and friends attended the ceremony. They were married by Reverend Clary from the Elim Tabernacle Church. Len was 34 years old and Val was 25 years old. They had their honeymoon at the Beaufort Hotel and walked home to their apartment the next day.

This year Len and Val will be celebrating 24 years of marriage and they continue to have a great relationship. They say the secret to a great marriage is to work together as a team, to give and to take and to understand that an equal relationship is a two-way street.



Today, Len and Val receive services from the Port Alberni Association for Community Living to assist in various independent living skills and community interaction. ✨

Inside Voice is published in each issue of The Citizen. If you are interested in writing for this column, please call Chris Rae at 1-877-660-2522 or e-mail editor@communitylivingbc.ca to discuss.

FAMILY INDEPENDENCE FUND GIVES FREEDOM

COVER STORY

Hoping to find a home and a community that would best suit her needs, Melissa Yaretz and her family moved from Surrey, BC to Sicamous, BC in April 2006. Melissa Yaretz has Cerebral Palsy and will be 19 years old this May.

Since Melissa has limited mobility, she is dependent on her electric chair to get around, but the new home in Sicamous made things even more difficult. The Yaretzes' new home had a long, gravel driveway and almost every time Melissa went on the driveway in her electric chair, she would get stuck.

Melissa's chair is over 300 pounds and her mother wouldn't be able to help her move, therefore they would be left stranded outside on the driveway all morning or afternoon until someone could come to help them.

As well, Melissa's area of the house was in the back and was not accessible to the driveway or other parts of the home. If Melissa wanted to sit outside on the deck or leave her area of the house she would have no way of doing so. Melissa's family wasn't able to afford the renovations to the driveway and deck they knew they needed for her. Already, they had completed a number of changes in the home that had left them struggling to pay for all of it.

The Yaretz family then decided to apply for the Family Independence Fund, hoping to receive a grant to complete the renovations they needed; they were accepted. Soon, their home was buzzing with construction workers paving their driveway and building an accessible deck that is covered and has a ramp.

Melissa now has doors that open from her part of the house to the deck, which connects to a ramp that takes her to the newly paved driveway. "Independence to

Melissa means she wants to be with her family, to live with her family," says Liza Yaretz, Melissa's mother.

"As well, to her it means being able to do what she feels is right for her – to have the freedom to choose to do things without barriers. The renovations have given her freedom and the option to get out of the house if she wants to."

Melissa has graduated from high school and is an aspiring artist. Her family is working on applying for another grant to continue renovations on their basement to create rooms for a live-in caregiver for Melissa.

The Yaretz family is very appreciative of the grant they received from the Family Independence Fund. "If there wasn't the Family Independence Fund, we wouldn't have been able to do any more renovations," adds Liza. "The paved driveway and the renovated deck were essential to Melissa's day-to-day life, not to make things look prettier. Without these changes, her basic needs wouldn't have been met." ✖

"The renovations have given her freedom and the option to get out of the house if she wants to."

About the Family Independence Fund

The Family Independence Fund helps families throughout BC who have children or adults who have a developmental disability living at home. Grants from the Family Independence Fund help with the care of the family member by providing one-time grants to support projects such as home renovations — including lifts, elevators, ramps, flooring, door widening or vehicle modifications — that enable the individual with the developmental disability to live in the family home and access their community. The Family Independence Fund was established with financial assistance from Community Living British Columbia. For more information, please visit the Giving in Action website at www.givinginaction.ca.

Ashley Gawdin loves music, concerts and watching videos. She loves people, is a social butterfly and is always happy to have new friends. But because Ashley has a rare chromosome deletion and a form of autism, she is not able to have the independence that other girls her age might.

When the Gawdin family from Richmond, BC first applied for the Family Independence Fund (FIF), they were hoping for a \$15,000 grant to renovate and expand Ashley's bathroom. Because of her disabilities, Ashley wasn't able to get in and out of the bathtub by herself and would fall if she was left alone in the shower.

Ashley's mother would have to lift her in and out of the bathtub which became too much of a strain as Ashley got older. The other option was to have her mother shower with her, which Ashley refused to do. Unlike many other people who love to relax in their bathroom in a warm shower, Ashley found having a shower was a stressful and negative experience.

After the Gawdin family thought more about the original renovation plans – they realized they only needed changes to the existing bathroom that would cost \$2,000. They reapplied and were accepted.

Soon, contractors arrived at their home and started to turn Ashley's bathroom into a safe and accessible place. "I know it's not a lot of money, \$2,000," says Roni Gawdin, Ashley's mother, "but we are so grateful not to have had to worry about it. We would have had to wait a long time to be able to manage paying for it."

The contractors put in strong towel bars that Ashley could hold onto. They inserted a rounded handle that clamped onto the edge of the tub for getting in and out. Also, they added a slanted bar along the inside of the shower wall, and a sliding bar on the shower head so




Ashley Gawdin enjoys being in her shower now that a grant from the Family Independence Fund helped her family get it renovated.

"We would've had to wait a long time to be able to manage paying for it."

Ashley could adjust it to fit her height. The only thing her mom has to do is turn the shower on to the right temperature so that it isn't scolding hot.

Ashley's mother is so happy that she doesn't have to struggle to have Ashley take a shower – Ashley loves it! "It was especially nice to see Ashley's face when she first stepped into the bathroom," she adds, "That was the best part."

They painted the bathroom Ashley's favourite colour, Sponge Bob Yellow. As well, they put in a new tap on the sink where there used to only be one knob. The old tap confused Ashley and put her at risk of her burning her hands. Now, the sink has two knobs, one for hot and one for cold, and Ashley has learned to only turn on the cold tap. Ashley and her family are so happy that she now has a bathroom that is accessible and safe for her.

For more information about the Family Independence Fund, turn to page 16. 

COMMUNITY INITIATES AN ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND

The opportunity to interact with other children and families at a playground does not exist for pre- and school-aged children who have physical disabilities in the entire Lower Sunshine Coast. The Cedar Grove Accessible Play Park Committee plans to change that.

An official committee was formed in 2005 to begin raising funds for a new play park at the Cedar Grove Elementary School. More than just new playground equipment, they have committed to creating an accessible community-gathering place for children and families to enjoy.

The committee has raised \$40,000 so far and is presently applying for grants from as many sources as possible, as they will need \$196,000 to build their dream playground. They hope to begin the construction of the new playground within the next year.

“To raise this much money has been a challenge in a community of only 25,000 people,” says Diane Henley, a member of the Cedar Grove Accessible Play Park Committee, “But the community has been very supportive.”

The committee has many activities planned, such as a large community raffle, a fundraiser in partnership with the local Tim Hortons and a Rick Hansen Schools in Motion Awareness Day. All those events are planned to help raise money as well as awareness of how much an accessible play park is needed in the Lower Sunshine Coast.

The existing structure was erected 15 years ago. It is made of pressure-treated wood, which is now known to pose a health threat to children playing on it. The equipment is deteriorating, inaccessible and in need of replacement. The playground’s surface consists of pea gravel that is difficult to negotiate with a four-wheel-drive stroller or for anyone who requires walking aids.

“There are 250 children with special needs in the Cedar Grove district,” adds Henley. “That is a lot of children who aren’t able to use and enjoy the playground, and we are going to change that.” The play park is in a growing area of many young families and the committee envisions that the future playground will be a destination for many families on the Lower Sunshine Coast to come and enjoy.

The old structures will be replaced with specially-designed equipment for the fun and enjoyment of all children. Accessible surfacing will cover the area under the structures, and blacktop paths will provide access from the adjacent parking lot and connect the areas of play with the shaded picnic spots and bench seats.

An accessible First Nations Medicine Wheel (a circular shape made of large boulders) will be included for reflective and quiet play, and there will be shrubs and shade trees planted throughout the area. Colourful children’s artwork will join a mural that has already been created by Cedar Grove Elementary students, and a wooden shape project built by the students last year.

The Cedar Grove Elementary students have also been involved by drawing dream playground pictures for a community display, voting on equipment structures and participating in fundraising initiatives.

The Cedar Grove Accessible Play Park Committee is determined to make this project a reality and a success. They are committed to making the play park accessible and playable for all individuals to enjoy.

For more information on this initiative or to help with fundraising please contact Diane Henley at wychu@telus.net. ✨



The deteriorating slide (above) in the Cedar Grove community playground is over 15 years old and isn’t accessible for children or parents who have physical disabilities.

WHO IS A SELF-ADVOCATE?

By Gladys Duran, *Self-Advocate Peer Advisor*, & James White, *Facilitator, People Planning Together*

When someone says, “They are self-advocates,” what comes to mind? What does it mean to be a self-advocate? Is it someone who can speak on their own, or someone who attends regular self-advocacy meetings? Is it someone who lives independently or has a steady job?

What about the people who are not able to speak using words? What about the people whose only means of communication are their actions, reactions and various sounds?

“The most important thing to know about who a self-advocate is that self-advocacy is about every person’s thoughts, ideas, dreams, wishes and voices being heard, through whatever way he or she is able to communicate,” says Aimee Morry, Community Living British Columbia’s self-advocate advisor.

Self-advocates want to have the same opportunities as every other citizen. They want to enjoy their lives in their home, neighbourhood and community. They want to make decisions about the things that are important to them, such as who their friends are, which people are involved in their life, who they love and care about, where they will work, live and spend their free time – the same choices that any other citizen wants. As well, self-advocates want to live in a community where their rights and freedoms are honoured and respected.

Gladys Duran, the self-advocate peer advisor for the Semiahmoo House Society, believes it is very important for people to listen to an individual, through whatever way they communicate.

“When I started my day program, the staff members were really nice. They tried to help me in many ways – being in a support field, that’s what they are supposed to do. But sometimes they forgot to listen and

allow my voice to be heard before they made decisions that affected me. When staff members take the time to step back and actively listen and watch, they can then approach an individual and ask them if this is what they want. That way, the individual is the one to have the final say about their life.”

Duran believes that every individual is a self-advocate. She says a self-advocate is someone who can advocate for themselves through words, writing, talking, behaviours, actions, body language and sounds.

“When someone is excluded from advocating for themselves, you are taking their rights away,” says Duran. “They need to be the person who leads their plan in life. The only one who knows the most about the individual is the individual themselves; so you need to take direction from the expert.”

James White, facilitator for People Planning Together, adds to this by saying, “To think that someone cannot advocate for themselves

because they can’t talk is a myth. If a person says something but does something completely different in their behaviour, it is clear that the behaviour is the real communication. Therefore, people who can’t use words to speak out loud can advocate for themselves with their behaviours, facial expressions or sounds such as anger or happiness.”

According to White, every person he has supported during his 22 years in the field is a self-advocate. “In the beginning, my enthusiasm to get things done for people led me to forget to listen to the individual first. Instead, I acted in a way that I thought I knew was best,” says White. “I learned the hard way about people and their requests. It really made it easier for me and gave the individual the voice they wanted to lead the type of life they desired, and all I had to do was listen.” ✖

“Self-advocacy is about every person’s thoughts, ideas, dreams, wishes and voices being heard, through whatever way they are able to communicate.”

SPECIAL OLYMPIANS WIN MEDALS

By Rick Davison, *Dawson Creek Daily News*

Dawson Creek athletes all came home with medals, beaming smiles and a load of memories from the Canadian Special Olympics in Quebec City.

Figure skater Colton Giesbrecht won a silver medal at the competition in late February and early January. The 18-year-old used his experience of a dozen years skating with the Mile Zero Figure Skating Club to place second in the competition in Quebec City.

Giesbrecht said the competition was “easy” and there were “no problems” as he performed his routine, which was set to the theme from Star Wars, along with some select elements.

Giesbrecht is no stranger to competition as he was at the Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse a year ago and also placed second in the provincial competition to earn a berth at the Quebec City competition. He travels with the local club and competes at two or three events every season.

Dara Watson, 29, made the most of her first appearance at the national level and won five medals in the snowshoe competition. She had a silver medal in the relay and bronze medals in the 100, 200, 400 and 800-metre distances and says that along with the medals, she will fondly remember the many athletes and cheering spectators at the opening ceremonies.

Skier David Johnston, 36, already has a load of medals from previous Special Olympic competitions and added a couple more from this year’s event. He won a gold medal in the slalom and a silver in the Super G to go along with

medals he has won at events in Toronto, Kelowna, Kimberly, Calgary and Winnipeg. He was also fourth in the downhill and a second Super G race in Quebec City.

There is the possibility that all three athletes could be moving on to an international competition based on their performances at the national championships, but that has yet to be determined. 🦄



Golden pair: Figure skater Darlene Jakubowski shows off the two gold medals she won at the National Special Olympics Winter Games in Quebec City in late February. Jakubowski lives in Fort St. John, but trains with Dawson Creek’s Mile Zero Figure Skating Club. (photo courtesy of Rick Davison)

CLBC PRESENTS THREE-YEAR SERVICE PLAN

CLBC has released its three-year service plan for 2008/09 to 2010/11. The three-year strategic plan sets out CLBC's goals and how they will be reached. Input from individuals and families in the community plays an important role. CLBC's Board of Directors, dedicated staff and many community and government partners are working together to achieve the goals in the Service Plan for Community Living BC.

The role of CLBC is to help adults with developmental disabilities and children and youth with special needs and their families live full and active lives in their communities. The service plan lays out ways that CLBC can improve its services and supports for individuals and their families. These include greater co-operation with government partners, more feedback from community members and plans to address changes happening across the province.

One of the goals of the service plan is to strengthen the relationship between CLBC and its government partners. CLBC and the Ministry of Health have set up cost-sharing plans. CLBC continues to have discussions with the Ministry of Education on plans to work together to help children with autism or challenging behaviours remain in school and with their families. CLBC is also working with the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance on a demonstration project will help adults with disabilities get equipment and assistive devices. They also plan to create more job opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities through a customized employment program.

CLBC has built a partnership with a group of service providers called the Innovation Support Network. They are committed to creative support and service options in the community. One of their goals for the coming year is to create more job opportunities for the people they support.

CLBC has also created an Advisory Committee to the board and 17 community councils across the province.


Both of these groups give important feedback. The Advisory Committee provides the board with a provincial point of view. It makes recommendations on ways to improve the quality of CLBC's services. The community councils are made up of volunteers. They represent the 17 Community Living Centre areas across BC. The councils let CLBC and its community partners know how they are responding to the needs of individuals and families. People with developmental disabilities can make contributions to the process. Along with their families, they have a say in how CLBC improves its programs and services and help create more options.

As the number of people in BC grows, there are more people who need support. Also, CLBC's ability to identify people who need services has increased. As

well, people with disabilities are getting older. So are their families and the people that care for them. This makes providing more supports challenging.

The CLBC service plan includes many ways to address these changes. Individualized funding and direct payments give some individuals and families flexible

amounts of money for support and services. These include support to move from a group home to a house or apartment and support to learn new skills. Person-centred planning is another approach that helps individuals live their lives as they envision them. Also, new community-based crisis response networks are more effective than what was done previously. A new comprehensive information management system has also been introduced.

To read the entire report, along with the goals, objectives and performance measures, please visit CLBC's website under [Policies and Publications > Corporate Reports > Service Plan](#). 

The service plan lays out ways that CLBC can improve its services and supports for individuals and their families.

SELF-ADVOCATE FOUND A HOME OF HER OWN

By Sandy Lawrence, Team Member, Residential Options Project

Maggie is 28-year-old aboriginal woman from North Island. When she was a child, Maggie was placed in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development several different times from September 1980 to 1998, along with her sister. Maggie lived in several foster homes and group homes for children. When she turned 19 years old, she was placed in several Intensive Adult Care Resources, eventually living in two different group homes.

Maggie lived in her last group home placement with an elderly woman who did not share any of Maggie's interests. Maggie often stayed in her bedroom and wasn't interested in going out on the weekends.

Four years ago, Maggie was working on an individual plan with Donna from Future Focus Services. One of Maggie's dreams was to have a place of her own; so Future Focus began helping Maggie acquire the skills she needed to live on her own. Maggie began by walking by herself to her own medical appointments, taking her medication on her own and shopping by herself downtown.

Initially, she was reluctant to ride on a bus and preferred to walk everywhere. After some coaching, Maggie starting taking the bus

and has now become a regular bus rider. One of the bus drivers is very friendly and Maggie has memorized his route. Maggie has ridden every bus route in her community.

Last year, Maggie demonstrated that she was ready to live on her own. Future Focus Services found a lovely little two-bedroom house close to downtown for Maggie to live in with a roommate. Maggie

a young woman from the college nearby applied and was accepted.

In November, Maggie and her roommate moved into their cozy, little home. They share the furniture in the house, and they each have their own room. Maggie's room has a little sitting area where she can watch TV. Her room is full of stuffed animals of every sort.

Maggie loves animals and it is very clear that animals love her. Her roommate's two cats, Whiskey and Soda, are never far from Maggie's side.

Once a week, Maggie rides Dawn, a caramel-coloured Fjord horse with a black stripe down her mane. Dawn and Maggie have a trusting relationship that allows Maggie to ride on her own.

Maggie also works on a farm during the week. She cares for the rabbits and feeds the goats.

There are many new experiences ahead for Maggie now that she has become independent and is living on her own. Maggie's close friends and family are very proud of all she has accomplished. 🦋



Maggie standing in front of her new home that she shares with her roommate and her roommate's cats.

wanted to be close to town and be on a bus route. But things stalled when she tried to find a roommate. The search was narrowed to only people she knew or program participants.

Maggie was getting very frustrated with having to wait to move in and soon felt it was time to find out how other people find roommates.

Future Focus Services then placed an ad in the newspaper looking for a roommate for Maggie. Soon,

Get to Know Rachel Schmidt



Rachel Schmidt joins the communications department on a 12-month assignment as a community relations specialist for CLBC. She has an extensive background in social work, community development and communications, and recent field experience as a facilitator in the South Interior region. Her diverse career began at Woodlands and Glendale and from there Rachel specialized in counselling, advocacy and family law. She spent three years teaching in the field at a community college, and then ventured into outward bound and environmental education programs. Rachel found her niche eight years ago when she went to film school and has been working in media ever since.

Rachel's home base is in the West Kootenays where she lives on a large acreage in the mountains with her partner John, her 9-year-old son Elijah and their black lab Sierra. Rachel has a passion for the outdoors and enjoys the backcountry. She has climbed many mountains and would love to participate in an eco-challenge one day. Rachel also enjoys city life, especially the arts, culture, food and shopping.

The focus of Rachel's work these days is human rights issues. She has traveled to many parts of the world to report on and document injustices. She is a documentary filmmaker with her own production company and has been on assignment in West Africa and Thailand. She recently completed production on a film about two aboriginal youth struggling to belong in a mostly-white community in rural BC. The film was funded in part by the National Film Board of Canada. Rachel is currently pursuing her MA in Communications and filming a documentary about HIV/AIDS in Africa and Canada. ✂

NEW POSITION WILL BE CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

Rachel Schmidt, CLBC's first community relations specialist, will be traveling the province to liaise with field staff, community councils and service providers to strategize the best opportunities to engage stakeholders in the greater provincial community. The key role of the community relations specialist position is to develop media plans for regional media and identify local people, projects and initiatives for building public awareness. Initial focus will be on developing a network of contacts with key government representatives at the federal, provincial and municipal levels, as well as with the business communities, to inform and educate them about the role of CLBC and the individuals we support.

Rachel is looking forward to working in partnership with Community Planning and Development, Quality Services and the community councils to promote CLBC and inspire a rich dialogue about inclusion. ✂



Rachel Schmidt filming some footage on the summit of the Stawamus Chief near Squamish.

HOME SHARING SESSIONS HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS

By Andrea Baker, Manager, Residential Options

Home sharing has been in the community living spotlight for the past several months. The release of the universal standards and improved monitoring tools in April 2007 was only the beginning. Since then, CLBC has issued the *Handbook for Home Sharing Providers* and has developed policies that support the integrity of this residential option. CLBC has also established a provincial working group to highlight and enhance successful practices in home sharing.

Home sharing describes a situation in which an adult with a developmental disability shares a home with someone who provides ongoing support. Support may include a furnished room and other space in the home, assistance with self-care and relationship building, life skills, meal preparation, personal care and use of community resources and generic services.



Home sharing session participants work together on an activity with the help of a session leader.

Home sharing is a very broad and flexible label that includes a wide variety of arrangements. In some situations, home sharing involves very close relationships. In other situations, the home sharing arrangement is characterized by more independent relationships.

To further this initiative, CLBC has been offering free information sessions across BC. In general, the sessions are very interactive. Although some lecture is

incorporated, the sessions rely heavily on exercises and various group-learning activities to teach the concepts.


Home sharing information sessions cover the following basic topics: CLBC and the role of the home sharing provider, successful practices and continuous quality improvement, standards for home sharing, Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA) and financial accountability, reporting expectations and guidelines, important CLBC policies and strategies to create good lives in welcoming communities.

Home sharing describes a situation in which an adult with a developmental disability shares a home with someone who provides ongoing support.

Over 700 people attended the 30 sessions

between October 2007 and February 2008. While the vast majority of participants were home sharing providers under direct contract with CLBC, all sessions included some additional participants, including CLBC staff, service providers, potential home sharing providers, family members, self-advocates and home sharing providers with an agency.

After each session, participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the session. The response so far has been overwhelmingly positive. Most participants have appreciated the opportunity to take part in training that directly relates to the type of support they provide. As well, they have enjoyed meeting other home sharing providers and having their specific questions answered.

If you are a home sharing provider and haven't had the opportunity to participate, you are encouraged to register for an upcoming workshop. There are at least 14 sessions scheduled during March and April. Dates, locations and registration details are posted on CLBC's website under [What We Do > Residential Options > Home Sharing](#). 

TEENAGER IS PROUD OF HER PARENTS, NO MATTER WHAT

By Crystal Gauthier, 13

The dictionary defines a disability as, “The state or condition of being disabled.” But that is not the way I see it. People who have a disability are unique and interesting just like anyone else. They have talents and the greatest personalities, just like my parents, Mike and Jo-Anne Gauthier.

Even though my parents have disabilities, they do the most amazing things that people who don't have disabilities wouldn't even dare to do. They go out and show the world all the things they can do and do everything the best they can, even through the obstacles they face day-to-day.

I am thirteen years old and my life is very different compared to most teenage girls, especially my life at home. I'm asked to do things that would seem simple to most people, but are difficult tasks for my parents.

There are days when I don't care and I don't want to do anything – but I stop and think about how it is a difficult thing for them to do, and I change how I feel, as they are always there for me when I need something.

What I find difficult is how people think that because someone has a disability they are not able to do things as well as they want them to. Therefore, it's hard for my parents to do certain things like get a job, and do certain things in everyday life. But there are many people who see those who have a disability the same as anyone else and they make my parents feel really good about themselves and the things they do.

There are many people who see those who have a disability the same as anyone else and they make my parents feel really good about themselves and the things they do.

Some people can be very harsh, ignorant and judgmental – and that is very hard for me to deal with. Some people say mean things that are just unacceptable to say. They think people with disabilities are not the same as them, so they think they can just say things that are rude and unreasonable.

There was a boy in my old elementary school that had seen me with my dad. The next day, he teased me about it and said things that were really uncalled for. It hurt my feelings a lot and it still bugs me today when people say anything bad about my parents or people who have disabilities in general.

But you know what? They don't matter and I know that. Because they don't know what it is like to have a disability or what it is like to live with people who have a disability. I've noticed that people who have a disability are nicer than most that don't.

I couldn't imagine my life without my parents. They are the most important people in my life and they are absolutely amazing in all they do in their everyday life, especially with everything they have to deal with. I thank them so much for everything they do for me. They are amazing and I love them. 🦋

CLBC IS CONTINUING ITS JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY INTO 2008

By Doug Woollard, Vice-President of Community Planning and Development, CLBC

In November of 2007, 23 facilitators and two managers representing all regions of BC met to explore the process of coaching others to learn Discovery Goal-Based Planning (DGBP).

The Discovery Goal-Based Planning approach is a process which links needs, wants, strengths and assets to relevant goals and then identifies necessary supports and services with an evaluation plan to measure the achievement of the goals.

DGBP is acknowledged as having one of the most significant roles in exploring an individual's dreams.

Through DGBP, needs and wants are identified and strengths and assets are embraced. Through DGBP, unique elements of an individual are valued; they drive the planning process.

DGBP has been used as a tool for family members of individuals who have a developmental disability to explore their needs and to determine what supports they require. CLBC has committed to change how

DGBP is acknowledged as one of the most significant roles in exploring an individual's dreams.

as supports and services are explored and applied as a necessary means of achieving goals. Individuals and families are encouraged to apply this way of thinking when exploring supports with their family members.

The old way of placing an individual into a particular program simply because there is a space available is disappearing. People are realizing that their dreams

have value in their lives.

CLBC has acknowledged the need for more creativity in the search for supports. In addition, CLBC also needs to acknowledge that evaluating and monitoring

how goals are being reached through supports, help ensure satisfaction and accountability.

All CLBC facilitators across BC will be provided training through the DGBP course. DGBP coaches will be available in every region of BC. Upon completion of the course, facilitators will be available to explain this process in detail to individuals and their

families. Discovery Goal-Based Planning will become a common standard of practice in planning beginning in 2008.

The DGBP coaches unanimously expressed an expansion in their thinking after the completion of this course. It was a discovery process for themselves as coaches and for our provincial coaching team. Having their horizons widened was empowering for them as a group.

The coaches are excited about sharing their knowledge with colleagues across the province and are enthusiastic about supporting families in exploring ways to find supports that will enhance their quality of life.

Discovery Goal-Based Planning is one more step in the journey of growth in how supports are explored for people who have developmental disabilities and their families. The improvement of the quality of life will be measurable, visible and present in communities – communities that include everyone! ✨



Community Living BC facilitators at the training course to become Discovery Goal-Based Planning coaches.

COUNCILLOR SEEKS RECOGNITION FOR FAMILIAR FACE

By Alli Vail, News Reporter, Parksville Qualicum News

Flying Phil may get his own day. Parksville city councillor Chris Burger wants to name March 7 Phil St. Luke Day.

St. Luke is a fixture in Parksville and can be seen walking around the whole community, waving to people and popping into local businesses to say hello.

“I would like to see at least a day in his honour,” Burger said.

He said he’d like to do something to celebrate someone who is a non-political celebrity.

“I thought this would be a nice gesture for him,” Burger said.

He said St. Luke is the city’s unofficial ambassador.

“Think of the example he sets,” Burger said. “He works with the Society of Organized Services (SOS). He visits local businesses. He’s physically active. He will assist anyone. He’s always cheery.

“He exemplifies a lot of great qualities.”

St. Luke even has a fan club on Facebook with 1,782 members.

“You have touched so many of our lives, Phil. I think I must have seen your smiling face since 1977,” wrote Mary Pat Thompson. 🙋

**Since this article was published, the proclamation was passed by the council — it is official, March 7 is now Phil St. Luke Day in Parksville, BC.*



Parksville city councillor, Chris Burger (right), honoured Phil St. Luke (top), by dedicating March 7 as Phil St. Luke Day in Parksville — a gesture of how much Phil has impacted the community.



STAY CONNECTED WITH CLBC

It is a major priority of Community Living BC to communicate with the people they support, their families, service providers and stakeholders. We strive to provide the most up-to-date information in a timely and consistent manner.

And we need your help. To provide better communication, we need to collect your contact information. If you are interested in receiving the latest news from CLBC, please visit the ‘Contact Us’ section of

our website at www.communitylivingbc.ca, fill out the contact form and provide us with your contact details. If you do not have access to the Internet, please call 604-664-0101, to provide our receptionist with your name, address, phone numbers, affiliation and e-mail address.

Free access to the Internet is available at all public libraries across BC. You can also sign up for a free e-mail address at www.hotmail.com or www.yahoo.ca. 🙋

TWO FUNDS GIVE FAMILIES FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The Giving in Action Society provides grants to families living in the province of British Columbia through two funds - the Family Independence Fund and the Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund. These grants enable families to stay together by addressing accessibility issues in their home and community.

The Family Independence Fund is a \$30-million fund provided by Community Living BC. The fund helps families who have children or adults with developmental disabilities, keep their family member at home by providing one-time grants for home renovations or expenses related to wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

The \$10-million Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund was established with the support of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. It assists families living with children and youth with special needs from birth to 19 years of age.


Requests for renovations to expand the size of the house are ineligible. However, additions to facilitate independent living for individuals over 16 years old may be considered.

The application process has two stages. First, families are required to submit a letter of inquiry. Successful applicants will then receive a full application package to submit within six months.

Families can apply for assistance with both renovations and wheelchair-accessible vehicles at the same time.

The funds are being paid out in grants over a three-year period that began in January 2007.

Both funds are administered by the Giving in Action Society which is supported by the Vancouver Foundation.

For more information on the funds, eligibility and how to apply, please visit www.givinginaction.ca. 

CONTACT US

The Citizen is published every two months by CLBC's Communications department. It is your information source for news that's relevant to the individuals and families CLBC supports. The views and opinions expressed in *The Citizen* are not necessarily those held by CLBC. We are always on the lookout for inspirational stories about people in the community. If you know of an event that others might like to know about, an issue that invites debate, or news worth reporting, let us know. While we appreciate story ideas and submissions, *The Citizen* reserves the right to edit content for accuracy, grammar and space, but strives to maintain the integrity and voice of the author.

If you have a story suggestion or feedback on the newsletter, please e-mail editor@communitylivingbc.ca.

To receive the electronic or paper version of *The Citizen*, please visit www.communitylivingbc.ca/who_we_are/contact.htm and click on either E-mail or Paper Newsletter Sign-up.

If you have a general question about CLBC, please e-mail info@communitylivingbc.ca.



CLBC is a Crown agency of the Government of British Columbia and is committed to being carbon neutral by 2010.

This newsletter has been printed on FSC certified paper and is 50 per cent recycled fibre and 25 per cent post-consumer.



Community Living British Columbia

7th Floor – Airport Square • 1200 West 73rd Ave.

Vancouver, British Columbia • V6P 6G5

Phone: 604-664-0101 • Fax: 604-664-0765 • Toll Free: 1-877-660-2522