

THE CITIZEN

Connecting People with Their Community



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA

CLBC Newsletter - April & May 2009

Volume 5 Issue 3

Sharing more than a home



Colleen Sound (left)
and Leslie Leo (right),
have been roommates
since 1975.

See page four to
read their story.

What's Inside

Home Sharing



Employment Learning Tour



Family Independence
Fund



CLBC Staff
Conference



WOW!clbc
Recognition Awards



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Lois Hollstedt, C.M.



The 2008-09 annual report is in the final stages of preparation and this gives us an opportunity to look back and review what we have achieved. Our objectives were to increase the number of people being served within the resources provided, to improve our communications, to continue to improve our systems and to support our staff.

Some highlights include:

- ✦ CLBC served almost 700 more adults and 1,000 more children and youth with special needs in 2008/09.
- ✦ A total of 12,015 adults and 10,784 children and youth were served.
- ✦ Individuals and families receiving direct funding to purchase adult respite services increased by 175 to 580.
- ✦ CLBC's website was visited by 81,202 individual people, an increase of 11,055 visits when compared to 2007/08.
- ✦ With 820 new readers, our newsletter, The Citizen, increased circulation to 3,422 every two months.
- ✦ 17 Community Councils, with over 200 volunteers are in their second year of operation.
- ✦ More people with developmental disabilities are finding real work for real pay employment.
- ✦ "Freedom to Belong", a video about the rights of people with developmental disabilities, has been well received and is available on our website under News and Events > Media Room.
- ✦ We closed the year with a small surplus of 17/100 of 1 % on expenditures of \$722.9 million.

The year ahead will continue this agenda and will see work on several major projects such as:

- A new electronic contract management system to increase accountability.
- Integration of children to MCFD and realignment of CLBC.
- \$1 million innovation funding to increase new ways of providing service
- Implement a program to expand eligibility to adults who do not meet our current criteria - \$2.6 million in this year

The agenda to continue to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities is ambitious. With the ongoing enthusiasm and support of government, our staff, volunteers and community partners our vision of good lives in welcoming communities will guide our work. We look forward to the challenges ahead. ✦

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INSIDE VOICE

STARTING A LIFE TOGETHER

By Michelle and Hugh Holt

We met seven years ago at Delta Community Living Society's Workplus program, where we have worked for many years. We are now out working in the community part time and getting paid for doing it.

We decided three years ago to move in together. Mom suggested we could move into the suite in their house. We have been learning to take care of our suite with the help of Mom and Poppa. It has been a tough learning experience, but we are getting much better at it.

On Christmas Eve 2006, Hugh got down on one knee in front of his Mom and sister and brother-in-law, Marilou and Michael, and all of my family and asked me to marry him. Apparently Poppa and Hugh went out and shopped for my engagement ring! It was quite a surprise, but I did say "Yes."

On August 16, 2008, Hugh and I realized our dream wedding in my Uncle's lovely back yard. Most of our friends and family were there. It took a lot of planning and a lot of hard work, but it was worth it. We really had a good time at our wedding, and everyone was so happy for us, especially our old friends and our families.

My brother and sister-in-law, Shawn and Tracy gave us a honeymoon night stay at the Pacific Inn. It was great. Shawn came back and took us for breakfast in the morning and then he took us back out to Uncle Rob's for our gift opening.

We went back to work for about three weeks, and then we went to Hawaii on our honeymoon. We let Mom and Poppa tag along, and they had a good time too. Their room was just down the hall from ours. Our hotel room was on the 22nd floor and we could see all of the other hotels down below. The swimming pool and hot tub were up on the roof, another 10 floors up. We were up there almost every night just after dark, and all of the lights were very pretty down below. We could see the moon on the ocean as well.



Michelle and Hugh Holt celebrate their wedding day.

We went to a luau where Mom and I learned how to do the hula, and when we came off the stage there were 100 men waiting to be kissed. Hugh and Poppa were two of them. That was fun for all of us!

We also went to a dinner theatre where we saw the Society of Seven who have been performing the same show for over 30 years. They did impersonations of many famous people and it was lots of fun.

Hugh and Mom swam with the dolphins at Sea Life Park. Poppa and I were content to take pictures for that one and just enjoy the rest of the park.

We went to the flea market at the Aloha Stadium, the International Market Place and Maui Divers, where Hugh and I bought each other an oyster with a pearl. They blessed them when they came out of the shells, and said a little prayer and rang a little bell so that we would have a long and happy married life.

We left Hawaii a week after we got there, and flew home all night. We want to go back there again. We hope to get a better paying job in the future so that we can travel more.

And yes, married life is great! ✨

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.

TWO FRIENDS SHARE MORE THAN A HOME

COVER STORY

By Amanda Barros, *Quality Service Analyst - North Vancouver Quality Service Office*

Leslie Leo remembers moving in to the top floor of her Lonsdale home in North Vancouver in 1970, when she was only five years old. She can still recall the meeting and the earnest conversation between her parents and Duna Levy, who became her caregiver and with whom she lived for almost 35 years. They talked about her education, and her future life. Leslie can remember walking up the flight of stairs to the rooms upstairs and settling into her bedroom as she moved to North Vancouver.

Leslie can also remember her now-best friend Colleen Sound moving into the second upstairs bedroom a few years later, when Colleen was four years old. Ever since, Colleen and Leslie have lived side by side like two peas in a pod.

Leslie and Colleen have immersed themselves in the North Vancouver community since they were very young.

As children they attended Prince Charles school. Later, Colleen attended Highlands School and Leslie graduated from Windsor High. Leslie has been working as a volunteer at Margaret Fulton Centre for the past fifteen years and Colleen has been working at Amity Options for just as long.

Both are very active in BC Special Olympics and have participated in many sports including swimming, bowling, softball, track and field, soccer, and rhythmic gymnastics. They have travelled around the province representing their communities in many events: Leslie travelled to Halifax to compete in rhythmic gymnastics, and to Prince George and Campbell River to compete in swimming. Both are self-advocates and active participants with North Shore ConneXions Society, and love attending computer classes, as well as the Internet Café, social events, and their favourite dancercise program "Move 'n' Groove."

Leslie and Colleen are proud of their First Nations heritage, and visit with their families whenever possible. Leslie is the youngest of twelve siblings and hails from Lil'wat Nation in Mount Currie. Colleen is

the youngest member of her family who are members of the Sechelt Nation.

For many years, Leslie and Colleen were blessed with the love and support of Duna Levy, their long time caregiver and dear friend. Duna was a well known North Vancouver personality and was very active with other parents and caregivers in the early days of building the community support organizations. She dedicated her life to their care and upbringing, and often said that they were her salvation. Her most important contribution was to provide them with tools and skills to live active, independent and full lives.

When Duna passed away in 2004, her daughter and son-in-law, Carol and Jamie Reid, stepped in to continue to support Leslie and Colleen. The very day of Duna's passing, Carol and Jamie moved into the family home to ensure that Leslie and Colleen could continue to live together and thrive in the environment they have become so attached to. Although Colleen and Leslie continue to miss Duna and look to her photos frequently, it is hard for them imagine a life without Carol and Jamie there, as friends, cheering squad and as family.

Colleen and Leslie have gone through a lot together as best friends. In 2003, they were struck by a car while crossing the street in a marked crosswalk. Colleen pulled her friend out of the path of an oncoming car, and her good deed was recognized with a Bravery Award. In 2009, Leslie was hospitalized and Colleen was a daily visitor, sharing stories, videos and good cheer as Leslie regained her mobility with weeks of physiotherapy.

Since 1975, Colleen and Leslie have lived side-by-side as roommates, team mates and best friends. Leslie likes to supervise and make sure Colleen does all her jobs at home, and Colleen, with the timing of a sitcom, always answers "Yes, Dear" with a laugh. They share a passion for the Vancouver Canucks and can often be

heard laughing and cheering on their heroes and loudly booing the opposition.

Both Leslie and Colleen have loved music since they were very young, and boast an impressive collection of music CDs and DVDs. Their favourite singers are Shania Twain, Elvis Presley, and Michael Jackson – and they have intimate knowledge of the details of their lives, loves and family stories. They are avid soap opera fans and watch the *Young and the Restless* at every possible opportunity, commenting audibly and passionately on the rights and wrongs of life in Soap Opera Land.

Many people in the North Vancouver community know Leslie and Colleen personally, and they scarcely go anywhere without meeting and greeting friends from all walks of life. Leslie is well known and respected for her kind and compassionate personality; Colleen, for her confidence and cheerful outlook. Together, they are a dynamic duo and have the respect and affection of all who know them. ✧

Be sure to read future issues of The Citizen for more stories about home sharing.



Leslie Leo (left in all photos) and Colleen Sound (right) have made many memories together as roommates for 34 years.

EMPLOYMENT TRAIN MAKES TOUR OF PROVINCE

Get on the Train: A Learning Tour on Employment made stops in six communities across BC during two weeks in late April and early May. At each stop, a one-day event combined local stories and practices with knowledge networking from around the province. Each of the day-long events featured local presenters during a session in the morning. The afternoon sessions featured a traveling panel who shared innovative practices that are happening in other communities, as well as a chance for discussion and dialogue about employment for people with disabilities.

The tour was the idea of the Innovation sub group on employment chaired by Janice Barr. Members are Meaghan Feduck, Bill Tidsbury, Jason Zwall, Joanne Crawford, Barb Penner, Richard Faucher. This tour was a great example of partnership in action. All participants brought resources to the table to ensure a great learning opportunity throughout BC. The leadership of Linette Baker helped to keep the train on its tracks.

The tour began in Victoria on Monday, **May 27**. Community Living Victoria and partner Garth Homer hosted a day jam packed with information. Community Living Victoria started the morning with a description of their supported employment services, targeting the importance of relationships with employers and their long term service provision to the people

involved in their services. Garth Homer talked about their transformation from congregate day services to real work for real pay in integrated settings. They transformed in response to the changing needs of the people they were serving.

Can Assist shared information about their proposal to Service Canada to serve youth, and their existing adaptive technology services. Tyse is a Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD)-funded service. They serve anyone from 15 to 60 years of age and focus on youth. Information was shared on formal assessments for employment. Local employers Starbucks and St. Michaels University shared their experiences of hiring people with disabilities. The highlight of the morning was Ken Marriot sharing some insights into marketing employment services.

On **April 28**, the tour was at the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI). The topic for the morning included a presentation by the Competitive Employment Network, comprised of six organizations that have worked together to promote employment options for people with developmental disabilities supported by their agencies and within their community. The group presented the various initiatives they have undertaken: training curriculums for Supported employment, Self Employment and in development Customized



In Vernon, Sherry Adam of CBI Consultants describes how challenges can be overcome with creativity.



Participants in Burnaby hear a presentation from the Competitive Employment Network.

Employment (written by Cary Griffin). BACI described their journey to include employment as a priority within their agency.

On **April 29** the tour was in Whiterock, hosted by Semiahmoo House Society and CBI Consultants. This session provided an overview of Semiahmoo and CBI's involvement in the Customized Employment Demonstration Project funded jointly by CLBC and MHSD. They shared some of their inspirations and beginnings of creating great support services through stories that demonstrated their success.


On **May 4**, Career Development Services, a division of the Trail Association for Community Living, hosted a morning in their newly renovated space in downtown Trail. They presented a video of several real life stories of people that have achieved their employment goals through working in one of CDS's social enterprises or employment in community. The individuals talked about how their work was "not just a job" and how it has changed their lives. The stories from CDS were one of the main highlights of the tour.

Kindale Developmental Association hosted the tour on **May 5** at the People Place in Vernon. The local Rotary partnership was the focus of the morning. This project is run by local Rotarians. Rotarians hire people with the support of an employment agency. There is a DVD that showcases the project that is available to anyone interested. You can contact Lori Skinner at

Lori.Skinner@gov.bc.ca for more information.

The last session was **May 7** in Prince George. Appropriately, the morning presentation was done around a train. AimHi did a fabulous job with the highest number of people in attendance. Their presentation was about their journey and strategies for real work for real pay in integrated settings. The People in Place partnership (that includes several employment agencies funded by a variety of sources) presented their collaborative approach to employment services in Prince George.

Presentations made by resource experts throughout the tour included Linette Baker, the tour facilitator, discussing supported employment at Community Living Victoria, Janice Barr sharing the Competitive Employment Initiatives on Training and re-inventing day services, Sheila Adcock showcasing how social enterprise can be used as an assessment tool and training ground for future employment in community, Sherry Adam showing how challenges can be overcome by creativity, and Barb Penner updating everyone on the CLBC Employment Advisory Group discussion paper: A Pathway to Employment.

A report on the learnings and highlights of the Employment Tour will be posted on the CLBC website under [What We Do > Employment](#). 



In Prince George, participants share their thoughts following a presentation on AimHi's Infinite Employment Solutions.



Jade Owen from Community Living Victoria records some of the ideas to come out of the Victoria stop of the learning tour.

STAFF CONFERENCE DRAWS ON POWER OF COMMUNITY

Community Living BC staff, along with self-advocates, families and stakeholders, gathered on April 20 and 21 for CLBC's fourth annual staff conference.

The conference, which was titled "The Power of Community", provided a unique opportunity for participants to learn from each other and meet new people.

Unlike previous conferences, participants did not attend scheduled workshops or sessions. Rather, they worked as members of randomly assigned learning teams made up of CLBC staff, self-advocates, professionals, family and community members.

Each team was presented with a fictional scenario involving an individual or child and their family. Working together over the two days of the conference, teams identified

a blend of paid and generic services and informal community supports available to all citizens that might help the person achieve a good life.

A large group of resource experts in areas ranging from housing to employment to health and recreation were on site to provide assistance. A number of presentations were made by resource experts.

As well, teams had an opportunity to use CLBC's Community Resource Database in a computer lab and to contact agencies by phone to get more information.

One the second day, teams made presentations to report on what they had learned.

This format capitalized on the power of conversation and the idea that ideas lie within all of us if we are

given a chance to engage with others.

The conference also featured a keynote address from Sue Swenson, an advocate from Minnesota and the mother of three adult sons, including a 26-year-old man with severe disabilities. Sue has been a leader and significant contributor on disability policy in the United States. She was appointed by the Clinton White House as a Commissioner for developmental disabilities.

Other highlights included a martial arts demonstration by Sirota's Alchemy Martial Arts Centre and the presentation of the WOW!clbc awards.

A CLBC team of about 60 staff members joined the more than 59,000 people who took part in the Vancouver Sun Run, prior to the start of the conference. ✕



(above) Sue Swenson delivers the keynote address.



(top right) Members of one of the many learning teams prepare their presentation.



(bottom right) Conference participants visit exhibits set up by the many resource experts in attendance.

WOW!CLBC AWARD WINNERS HONOURED

On Monday evening, April 20, at CLBC's annual staff conference, the first WOW!clbc recognition awards were given out.

WOW! stands for "Widening Our World" and the awards are intended to recognize the exceptional contributions people have made and continue to make towards ensuring community inclusion and full citizenship for the individuals CLBC supports.

By the March 20 nomination deadline, over 50 nominations had been submitted in five different categories: Family Member, Community Partner, Service Provider, Self-Advocate, CLBC Employee.

The selection panel was made up of Maria Glaze (Resource Parent with the Family Support Institute), Pat Hanbury (Interim Executive Director of the Family Support Institute), Jane Holland (Advocate for Service Quality) and Andria Teather (Executive Director of Vancouver Foundation's Giving In Action Society).

The panel chose from the 50 plus deserving nominees to determine the top 10 award winners for 2009.

At the Monday evening recognition dinner, the recipients were presented with a framed WOW!clbc certificate by the Honourable Claude Richmond, former MLA for Kamloops and long time community living champion.

Later, the official WOW!clbc awards, a glass globe on a pedestal, were delivered to the winners.

In addition to accepting their awards, WOW!clbc recipients, along with their nominators, filmed videos telling their own individual stories. These videos can be viewed online at www.WOWclbc.ca.

The nomination process for the 2010 WOW!clbc Recognition Awards will open in January 2010. Keep an eye on the CLBC website under [What We Do > WOW!clbc](#) for more information. ✨



Nolan Fallowfield, accompanied by Delbert Boles, receives his recognition certificate from Hon. Claude Richmond. Nolan was honoured for his work with Quesnel's self-advocates' group. He also runs his own business, A Taste of Braille, which produces menus, documents and books in braille and large print.



WOW!clbc Award winners and their nominators get together after the awards presentation.



Jean Scriver proudly displays her WOW!clbc Award. Jean was honoured for her countless hours of community service.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING GIVES MOBILITY TO FAMILY

From an article by Andrew Bergland, Reporter - Dawson Creek Daily News

A little-known government grant has given a Peace area family the gift of mobility.

Jack Hamilton is a 60-year-old man with the mind of an infant. At eight months of age he sustained a neck injury and as a result of improper medication was left to live out his life as an infant; body still aging but mind never developing.

Hamilton lived with his parents until their deaths a number of years ago, then was taken in by his sister Linda Phillips and her family. He now lives comfortably on a scenic horse ranch 42 km from Dawson Creek, but the distance can prove troublesome when it comes to traveling into town.

The family recently had a visit from a wheelchair specialist who came up from Vancouver to fit Hamilton for a new wheelchair and caught Phillips off guard with an unexpected offer.

"She just said 'Would you like a wheelchair accessible van?'" Hamilton recalled. "I thought she meant that it would be nice if we had one but then she said 'No, I mean free. Would you like a wheelchair accessible van for free?' and I just started to cry."

The specialist was referring to a \$30 million program funded by Community Living BC called the Family Independence Fund (FIF). It was created in 2006 in order to give those living with disabilities the chance to improve their lives.

Hamilton and Phillips received a total of \$51,500 through the FIF, which covered not only a wheelchair van, but some wheelchair friendly renovations as well.

"I applied in November, and I got a letter back really quickly and they gave \$42,200 towards a wheelchair van. They also gave us funding to widen our front door, a cement walk to the back of the house and a patio made to park him in out of the wind so he can watch us because we train horses."

The wheelchair van is a 2007 Dodge Caravan, which received a rear entry conversion in Ontario. This means

there is ramp built into the floor allowing for easy boarding and lifting.

The ability to get into a car may not seem like a big deal for the average person, but will be a big life improvement for both Hamilton and Phillips, who explained she can load him into the car but it's a difficult act requiring her to bear her brother's entire weight. "My other caregiver and I took him to Grande Prairie a few weeks ago, the two of us got him into the van, and he smiled the whole day because he had not been out all winter."

Phillips said she's really pleased with the help she received from the government and wished her parents could have had similar help when Hamilton was growing up.

Since its creation, the Family Independence Fund has helped 325 families who have received \$10.5 million.

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



Linda Phillips and her brother Jacky Hamilton, who she cares for in her Peace area home. Phillips assures Hamilton is prone to smiling ... just not when he gets woken up in the middle of his nap.

INNOVATION

Are you looking for new and innovative ways to invite friendship into your life or into the life of someone you support? *101 Ways to Make Friends* just might be for you.

In 2007, CLBC funded four “Personal Support Network” demonstration projects to explore strategies for assisting people with developmental disabilities to enhance their circles of friends, family members, associates and neighbours. These projects were part of CLBC’s Safeguards strategy which is aimed at ensuring that people with developmental disabilities are able to live, work and play in safe and caring communities. Susan Kurliak and Aaron Johannes of Spectrum Society for Community Living were the leads on one of these projects.

They then developed a one-day workshop in which they talk about what was learned from all four projects. Workshops are hosted by groups and agencies in each area. “The workshops bring together a unique mix of family, staff and individuals,” says Aaron. “It’s an opportunity for people to share stories and hopes, and take a journey with us, to think about friendship and how networks can support a person to be less vulnerable in their lives. It has been wonderful to meet so many people.”

Participants are able to tell their stories, list challenges they encounter as they work to connect the individuals they support, and get creative about problem-solving together, finding new and innovative ways to overcome barriers.

Aaron and Susan began keeping a list of tips folks with disabilities and those who care about them had shared and this grew into the “*101 Ways to Make Friends: Ideas and Conversation Starters for Folks with Disabilities and their Supporters*” book.




Their book is available on Amazon.ca and through other online booksellers in four different countries, and in bulk through their site www.101friends.ca. It is being

used by several groups of self-advocates and a number of schools have become interested.

Leadership is a key component of the workshops and conversations – individuals supported in a leadership role in their own lives and relationships (often facilitated by family, staff and friends) quickly see a shift in how community responds to them. A person with a network of people that are not paid to be there is someone with dreams and goals, not just someone with needs being taken care of by a professional.

“*101 Ways to Make Friends*” has had a positive affect on its authors as well. “It’s been great to see what others are up to around the Province. This movement has momentum – it builds on the history of community living in BC - and that translates into positive things for people across BC.” Susan says this work fits with Accreditation as standards are in alignment with this process of networking. Policy and operations can refocus and be used to open doors for people rather than creating more barriers.

For more information about the book, e-newsletter, upcoming workshops and upcoming DVD, go to www.spectrumociety.org and be sure to check out the website at www.101friends.ca. 



Aaron Johannes and Susan Kurliak.

DRIVER'S LICENSE MEANS FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY

With six inches of snow on the ground last November, Justin Pytaluk took his road test and passed to become a new driver.

As well as earning his licence, Justin is also the proud owner of a red Ford Topaz with racing stripes and Mustang wheels he added himself.

Justin was able to buy the car through Capital Motors, the Ford dealership where he works. "I was able to negotiate a really good price," says Justin.

The dealership worked out a payment plan with Justin where they would take money off each paycheck towards the price of the car. "It's all paid off now and it's mine," he says with a smile.

As well as providing Justin with more freedom, having a license has also earned him some extra responsibilities at work. "I'm a new lot attendant. I get to drive all the new cars and trucks. I keep everything organized and make the lot look nice," he says.

Besides driving to and from work everyday, Justin has also taken a few longer trips, including driving from Dawson to Edmonton.

"I just love the freedom. It's great," he says. ✖



(above) Justin proudly displays his BC driver's license which he earned in November.

(below) Justin takes a break from driving to pose with his red Ford Topaz.



CLBC STAFF HELP MAKE MCHAPPY DAY A SUCCESS



Facilitator Nicole Valliere (l) and Analyst Lesley Streloff (r) pitch in at the the Trail McDonalds during McHappy Day.

On May 6, McDonald's restaurants across Canada celebrated McHappy Day. On this day every year, proceeds from food sold at every McDonald's are donated to children's charities in the local community.

This year, McHappy Day donations in Trail benefited the Trail Association for Community Living's children's program.

Analyst Lesley Streloff and Facilitator Nicole Valliere, both from CLBC's Castlegar office, were approached by the Trail Association and asked to contribute some of

their time to helping out at the local McDonald's on McHappy Day.

"It was an interesting experience and really busy that day," says Lesley.

While she was in the back helping prepare the food, Nicole was up front at the counter helping customers and filling orders.

"They only asked us to come in for one hour, but next time they can book us for longer because it was so great to be part of this project," says Lesley. ✖

IMPROVING YOUTH TRANSITION PLANNING

In April, CLBC hosted a community forum to discuss transition planning for youth with special needs to support their successful entry into adult life.

The forum brought together youth and families, community partners and representatives from government ministries. Participants had the opportunity to learn from youth and their families about their hopes, experiences and unique perspectives. Hosting the forum is one of a number of activities that CLBC is currently involved in to explore what is needed to improve transition planning for youth in BC.

The forum began with an opening presentation by Sue Swenson, who is an advocate from Minnesota and the mother of three adult sons including a 26 year old son with severe and profound disabilities. Sue has been a leader and significant contributor on disability policy in

the United States. She was appointed by the Clinton White House as a Commissioner for developmental disabilities. Sue's opening remarks provided an overview about how we can create sustainable responsive communities for youth with disabilities.

Sue was a motivating and inspiring speaker who reminded us that good transition planning begins long before a child becomes

“Transition is more than an administrative process. Rather, transition is a value driven approach to help young people make a successful entry into life as full participating adult citizens.”

Daniel Steere (1993)

a teenager. It begins very early in our children's lives as we imagine their futures as fire fighters or astronauts. It is based on the same kinds of dreams and aspirations that all children and parents have. She talked about the important role of teachers and other supporters, during these early years, who may encourage these hopes and dreams. Sue helped us to think about how we can create opportunities to support those hopes and

dreams to generate good outcomes. Sue also helped us think about the practical ways that we need to work together to address transition planning in collaboration, in systems and in policy.


Participants heard from a panel of speakers including parents, youth and a CLBC Facilitator who shared their stories and ideas about transition planning. Presenters talked about how important it is to plan early with accurate information and how stressful it is for youth and their families to prepare for transition. Presenters also talked about the many areas that need to be addressed in a transition plan including goals for employment, post-secondary education/training, community recreation, friendships and safeguards.

Participants heard how families want their children to be able to transition into adult life in ways that will support their participation in the community. One parent, who has a younger child, explained that families do not want to be offered segregated programs now or in future.

In the afternoon, participants worked together in small groups to identify concerns and create solutions together in BC.

People talked about the need to make sure planning is Person-Centred and is based on each youth's vision for their own life. There was discussion about creating opportunities for youth leadership development. Participants also talked about how important it is for all supporters and service providers to be working together in a timely fashion during this critical period of a youth's life.

Participants commented on how much they learned and how much they enjoyed the day. One parent commented that it would be good for many more families to have the opportunity to participate in forums about youth transition planning.

The Youth Transition Planning Forum was an important opportunity for youth and families, community partners and representatives from government ministries to begin to develop solutions for the challenges that youth and families experience. 

COUNCIL WORKS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS

In the fall of 2008, CLBC's Surrey Community Council distributed a survey to over 900 adults with developmental disabilities and their families receiving services through CLBC.

Established in 2007, the Surrey Community Council is one of 17 around the province created to provide feedback to CLBC regarding concerns those with disabilities and their families face. They also ensure CLBC is doing good work and make recommendations about how funding is spent.

The survey was created as a way to reach out to the local community and identify key concerns and areas of need.

"We wanted to capture the concerns of the area and find out what's happening out there right now," says Marie Sabine, Vice Chair of the Surrey Community Council. "This was something we could really sink our teeth into and get working on. It's making people feel quite excited."

When the surveys were returned and the results reviewed, three major areas of concern were identified:

1. Housing, home support and access to resources for individuals with aging parents.
2. Keeping connected with others and having a healthy balance between work, life-long learning, and leisure activities.
3. Safe and available transportation.

The survey results have provided a good starting point from which more research can be conducted and more information can be gathered. This research will provide information to help guide the council's work and assist them in providing formal recommendations to CLBC.

The issue of aging parents is the first the council has decided to explore. For Marie, whose own daughter has a developmental disability and recently moved into her own place, the issue is close to home.

"Even as our children reach adulthood, parents


continue to worry about their kids. Being the parent of a special needs child brings a lifelong set of worries for our children's welfare. This is particularly true as we, the parents, get older," says Marie.

"Part of being a responsible parent of a developmentally disabled adult child is addressing these issues before they become a crisis. The worst situation for a family is having alternate care arrangements made for our children after we die. Because I love my daughter, I have done my best to address this concern before I am too old to deal with the issue. This is possible through services provided by CLBC," she says.

Once they have done work on the issues faced by aging parents, the council plans to move on to the other concerns that were raised by the survey: transportation and community connection. This is work that Marie says she and the council are excited to undertake.

"I've been a Community Council member for two years and find it engaging, rewarding and interesting," she says.

Each CLBC region around BC has a Community Council consisting of self-advocates, family and community members.

To learn more about the work of the Surrey Community Council, or any of the other Councils around the province, please visit the CLBC website under [Your Community > Community Councils](#), and search for a Council using the map. 

"We wanted to capture the concerns of the area and find out what's happening out there right now."

Marie Sabine
Surrey Community Council
Vice Chair

Get to Know **Caitlyn Sassaman**



Caitlyn Sassaman joined the CLBC Communications Department as a Community Relations Specialist for a one year contract that began in February.

As a post-secondary student, Caitlyn studied arts and literature. After school, she and her partner of 23 years, Brian, opened up a retail book and music store in Victoria that was in operation until 2001. In 1998, Caitlyn joined the provincial government as a communicator where she worked in roles as a media spokesperson, communications planner/writer, website developer, event coordinator and manager. Her interests primarily being in the social service fields, over the years Caitlyn has worked with the Ministry of

Children and Family Development, Health, Community Development and Environment.

Caitlyn's family was originally from New England and moved to Canada in 1975. They lived in the Kootenays on 10-acres where they raised cows, chickens, pigs and horses. She currently lives in Victoria, her home since 1983, with her daughter Zoe, Brian, and their cat, Sammy. Caitlyn enjoys reading, writing, movies, cooking, hiking, travelling, photography and creating pottery.

In her role as a Community Relations Specialist, Caitlyn will be working with managers and staff to identify local people, projects and initiatives that can help build public awareness of CLBC's vision, mandate and supports, and foster the growth of inclusive, supportive communities. Since February, Caitlyn has met with many managers and staff in her areas of responsibility (Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland and the Northeast), has worked with them to identify local profiling opportunities for CLBC, has met with municipalities and other organizations on the Island and the Lower Mainland, and has supported strategic CLBC communication efforts to raise the organization's profile on the provincial level. Caitlyn looks forward to meeting and working with more staff as her travels across the province continue over the summer and fall. ✂

STAY CONNECTED WITH CLBC

It is a major priority of Community Living BC to communicate with the people we 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. ✂

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE PROVINCE

'The Boys Inside': An Autism and Asperger's Community Project

Details: Six youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) will share their personal stories with audiences following a screening of the film "The Boy Inside." The purpose of the project is "to help children with autism and their families lead satisfying lives and experience greater inclusion in their communities" says Lynn Skotnitsky, the Project Chair. The project is funded by a CLBC Innovations Grant.

Date: Thursday, July 9, 6 pm - 8:30 pm


Place: Surrey Arts Theatre

More Information: The event is free to attend. For reservations, please contact Lesley Wells at lesleywells@shaw.ca. For more information and to arrange interviews please contact Lynn Skotnitsky at lynn@coachforjourney.com or 778-327-9641

Safe and Secure Registered Disability Savings Plan Contest

Details: British Columbians with a developmental disability and their family members can visit any London Drugs pharmacy to obtain the new "Safe and Secure: RDSP Edition" book. London Drugs and Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) have launched a contest giving families and individuals the opportunity to win one of three \$1,500 RDSP contributions. The purpose of the contest is to raise awareness of the RDSP and future financial planning possibilities.

Date: The contest will feature three draw dates on Monday, June 15, Saturday, August 15, and Thursday, October 15.

More Information: To enter the contest, and to learn more about the RDSP, please visit: www.plan.ca/Resources_SafeSecure.php. 

For more information on these and other events, please visit the CLBC website under [News & Events > Events > General](#).

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.

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