

THE CITIZEN

Connecting People with Their Community



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA

CLBC Newsletter - November 2007

Volume 3 Issue 6

One Poem, Reaching Many



Out of thousands of submissions, Donna Turenne's poem about her daughter Camille who has special needs, was selected and published in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Children with Special Needs* book. Read about her story on page four.

What's Inside

Photo Contest



Order of Canada



Hollywood Players



Measuring Up 2010



Community Living Month



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Lois Hollstedt



The work of CLBC volunteers has been growing over the past two years. I want to acknowledge the role they have played to ensure CLBC remains focused on the issues that matter to people with developmental disabilities. The gift of time that our volunteers have given has been fundamental in ensuring CLBC is working for everyone we support. Volunteers help determine policy directions, safety improvements, monitor services, talk about the challenges of day-to-day operating processes, ensure a system for resolving complaints is in place and so much more.

CLBC is a large system, and we need consistency in how the offices across the province run. However, we must always be accountable for the public dollars that are entrusted to us, while still supporting individuals and families the best we can. Many volunteers from the community continue to help CLBC balance these dual roles. The working groups, training and development sessions and consultation processes have ensured our work is relevant. There are thousands of hours of volunteer time invested in our policies and procedures and the CLBC Board of Directors is grateful for our volunteers' commitment. We have come a long way in two years, and we could not have achieved what we have without our volunteers.

We are beginning to hear from the hundreds of volunteers on our community councils. One area of discussion is understanding how budgets are allocated and the role community councils play in helping communities decide where they might focus future spending. Scarce resources will always be a challenge, but understanding individual and family needs will ensure budgets get the best value for individuals, families and communities.

Sharing the successes of CLBC with our community leaders is another role that community councils are considering. As we work towards inclusion, having the community understand what is possible begins with a one-to-one discussion with leaders. Politicians, the media, service clubs and business leaders all need to know what CLBC's work involves and what are our challenges.

Community councils comprise people who are "in the know." They are parents, self-advocates, service providers and citizens interested in understanding our issues. With our dedicated and knowledgeable staff, they provide a perspective at a local level that is necessary to ensure leaders understand local challenges. This aspect of our volunteers' structure is critical to our success and to our accountability.

Thank you to all our volunteers for your time and dedication. 🦿

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INSIDE VOICE

The self-advocate's perspective.

WORKING HARD ON MY OWN

By Tony Cuglietta

My name is Tony Cuglietta. I am a self-advocate from Kamloops. I live with my roommate and girlfriend, Tracy-Jo Russell. I have worked at Safeway for 16 years and I've owned my own business for 10 years. Tracy-Jo and I live in a home that I bought 11 years ago. My house has an upstairs and downstairs; it has one bathroom and two bedrooms, a sun deck and a small backyard. We have a nice, open kitchen and

living room. It feels great to be free and live independently. I get to make my own decisions, and I have a say in all the areas of my life.

I have been active in the Kamloops Self-Advocacy Group for four years now. My role as a self-advocate is to help

I became interested in landscaping when I worked with my dad because he encouraged me to believe that I could have my own business.

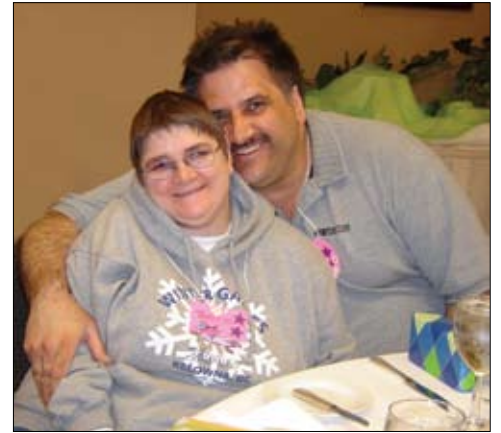
other self-advocates in my community to know their rights, and to be supportive about their life choices and teach them how to be leaders. It is important for me to listen and help people solve problems. I was also nominated to sit on my local community council for CLBC. When I was chosen for this, I felt excited that I could help make a difference.

Tracy-Jo and I own a landscaping business called "TYMS," which stands for Tony's Yard Maintenance Services. I have had a driver's license for 21 years, and I have my own truck and trailer that keeps me in business. It carries all of my equipment and helps me get to my jobs. I currently have 10 customers. Tracy-Jo's role is to help me with the labour and act as the company secretary.

I became interested in landscaping when I worked with my dad because he encouraged me to believe that I

could have my own business doing what I loved. So in 1997, I started my own business. I went to Kamloops Community Futures with my idea and asked for help. They helped me write a business plan and apply for grants. With their help, I received a \$7,500 grant. With that grant I bought lawn mowers, rakes, shovels, gardening tools, a shed to store my equipment, business cards, flyers to advertise my business and a truck. Then I started pounding the pavement to market my business.

I went to businesses, community message boards, grocery stores, realtors, apartment managers, put signs on my truck and talked to a lot of people. I had to hire some help because I became so busy. I stayed busy like that for five years, and just now for the past while it has been slow. I am going to work at building my base of 10 customers back up to 20 customers. If I get too busy I want to hire self-advocates because I want to see self-advocates leave day programs and have real jobs that pay a good wage. I want to help people so they won't be poor, because people with disabilities have so much potential! ✨



Tony Cuglietta and his girlfriend, Tracy-Jo.

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

PUTTING WORDS TO AN UNSPOKEN FEAR

COVER STORY

By Donna Turenne, *Author, One Mother - to Another*

My daughter Camille, who is 15 years old, has Dravet's Syndrome, an Epilepsy disorder that has caused her to have uncontrolled seizures since she was four months old. As a result of the seizures and other factors relating to her Epilepsy disorder, Camille has special needs. As parents, Camille's father and I have definitely been protective of her. Along with her safety, our priority has been to help her maintain good self-esteem. One of my fears, as a young mother and as a mother of a child with special needs, was for people to not accept her for who she is.

I used to always be one step ahead, explaining to people that my child has special needs so they would accept her right away, and we wouldn't have to face those horrible moments where we might hear a cruel comment or someone would look at her in a peculiar way. There are no physical signs indicating my child has special needs as she is rather high-functioning for a child with Dravet's syndrome. It was as though I felt the need to put a sign on her head saying: "I have special needs," hoping people wouldn't be judgmental.

I wrote the poem "One Mother - to Another" about 10 years ago. What led me to write the poem was the day I experienced one of my worst fears and, as a result, experienced deep, personal healing. I was sitting amongst other mothers watching my daughter in a regular swim class. One mother was talking about how more instructors were needed for the swim class and I agreed. But then she started commenting on how one particular child was taking away from the others. She



Donna, with her daughter Camille, reading the poem "One Mother - to Another" in the recently-published Chicken Soup for the Soul: Children with Special Needs book.

actually proceeded to point through the glass window so we could all see that child as she said, "See, that kid - the one in the yellow bathing suit!" Before I even had a chance to look, I felt a deep sense of grief as I realized that the child she was referring to was mine. This was that very moment I feared and had tried so hard to prevent.

Immediately after she made the comment, I claimed the child she pointed to as my own and told her that I was quite proud of being her mother. I told her how grateful

we were that our daughter was actually here and alive, how much she has faced in her little life, and how much swimming and being with other children meant to her.

After swim class, my daughter and I headed straight home where I sobbed like I have never sobbed before. I then wrote the poem as quickly and easily as I have ever written before. I realized that I finally accepted where we were in life. I didn't have to be one step ahead anymore. I didn't have to do a pre-amble at every event she attended. If people didn't accept her for who she was, then that was too bad for them.

They would be the ones to miss out on the beauty she so freely brings to the world. My poem put into words a fear I needed to express and a reflection of the acceptance and healing I came to as a mother of a child with special needs.

I never planned on publishing the poem. But friends had commented on how the poem had touched them

personally and that it reached more than only parents of children with special needs, that the poem could have been talking about the pain and worry of any parent of a child with any number of challenges in life.

What led me to write the poem was the day I experienced one of my worst fears and, as a result, experienced deep, personal healing.

Then one day last year, I heard *Chicken Soup for the Soul* was compiling a book about children with special needs, so I thought I would submit the poem.

After I began to receive feedback from people who had read the poem, I realized how much of an impact the poem was having on other parents who have children with special needs. It was humbling to hear how my poem validated what other people were trying to express for so long. One

woman said, "I've had so much bitterness toward society at times, due to the responses of people toward my daughter. This poem simply cleansed me. I cried like a baby the first time I read it. You have put into words exactly what I could not say without bitterness in my heart."

That was my ultimate goal for publishing the poem—for parents to relate to my experiences through the poem and in return be so grateful, that it would help others find peace as well, by putting words to an unspoken fear. I thank God for helping me turn some of my own personal grief into something that could help others. 🙏

To contact Donna Turenne, e-mail her at: dturenne@telus.net and share how her poem has impacted you. To purchase *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Children with Special Needs*, please visit their website at www.chickensoup.com or visit your local bookstore.

One Mother — to Another by Donna Turenne

See the little girl, who stands out most
and has troubles following suit,
who forgets a lot, and talks out of turn
and to others doesn't "seem" very cute.

"She's disruptive"... "Doesn't listen,"
"Shouldn't be with all the rest,"
You see it ... we hear it,
"She holds your son back from his best."

We see your looks of disapproval
through eyes that have never seen,
the struggles that we face each day,
the place where she has been.

We hear you talk, ... those things you say
though you fail to really listen,
to the voice whose words seem disregarded
"Our star," who to us, does glisten.

She comes home after school, to laugh and play
with her sister and baby brother,
she's tucked in at night, with a hug and a kiss
just the same, as any other.

She wakes each morn, with a yawn and a stretch
and wonders of each new day,
what things she'll see, what things she'll do
in her world ... in her own way.

She puts her shoes on – one at a time
and kisses me goodbye,
to stand in "the group" next to your little one,
Who draws away – her wondering why.

She's young right now, and sees the "good"
although in time, that's bound to change
she may hear those words, and see those looks
that will make her "feel" - but strange.

If I could make a wish tonight
I'd wish to make it right,
not for a different, or shinier star,
just that ours would forever, "feel" bright.

To that little girl, who stands out most
and has troubles following suit,
who forgets a lot, and talks out of turn
"We love you... You're You... and You are cute!"

PROGRAM INCREASES INCLUSION IN BC COMMUNITIES

By Rebekah Mahaffey, *Coordinator, Measuring Up*

An initiative from 2010 Legacies Now will assist communities in becoming more accessible and inclusive for everyone. Measuring Up is both a guide and a process that focuses on creating accessible public spaces, and promoting employment opportunities and community involvement for people with disabilities and with mobility issues.

2010 Legacies Now – the not-for-profit society, dedicated to working with BC communities to discover social and economic opportunities resulting from hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games – created Measuring Up after two years of consulting and research. This process brought together

a wide range of organizations serving people with disabilities, municipal and business leaders, political representatives, individuals with disabilities and other community members.


Measuring Up is helping communities create opportunities for all British Columbians to participate in the social and economic well-being of their communities.

Measuring Up leads communities through the process of assessing and improving how

well they meet the needs of people with disabilities, but also addresses the needs of parents pushing baby carriages, seniors, tourists carrying luggage and people with injuries or illness. With 14 per cent of British Columbians living with a disability and an ever-increasing senior population, Measuring Up is helping communities create opportunities for all British Columbians to participate in the social and economic well-being of their communities.

People with disabilities are under-represented and under-utilized in BC's workforce, despite being well-educated and viable options for employers. Additionally, people with disabilities represent over \$25 billion in spending power each year in Canada, but have difficulty shopping in businesses that are not accessible. By increasing accessible employment opportunities and improving public spaces, recreation facilities, restaurants and shops, Measuring Up is assisting communities in becoming more accessible and inclusive, so all British Columbians can benefit.

In addition, the Province of BC, through the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, established a \$2-million Measuring Up Accessibility and Inclusion Fund in April 2007 to support communities in implementing Measuring Up. In September 2007, 30 communities across BC were awarded Measuring Up grants totalling \$580,000. The next application deadline is January 31, 2008.

For more information on how to implement Measuring Up in your community or on how to apply to the fund, please visit www.2010LegaciesNow.com/MeasuringUp/, or e-mail MeasuringUp@2010LegaciesNow.com. 



INFO SESSIONS PROVIDE POSSIBILITIES

By Andrea Baker, Manager, Residential Options Project

Individuals and families have repeatedly told CLBC that it is difficult to begin planning alternatives to traditional residential services without having some sense of what is possible. To provide that sense, CLBC facilitated 21 information sessions for individuals and families across the province in October and November. The sessions featured the new *Living Our Dreams* DVD, and participants were provided with a copy of the *Living Our Dreams* resource guide.

Approximately 700 people attended the regional information sessions throughout BC. It has become obvious that the topic of residential options is of high interest. Discussions were energetic, informative and ultimately reinforced our belief that people within this province are searching for viable person-centred residential options. Many of the individuals and families we met have a clear vision of their ideal future. In some cases, the necessary supports and services already exist within their community and the next logical steps are apparent. However, many others haven't been able to obtain exactly what they need within the available options. For those individuals, the journey has often been complicated and frustrating.

We hope the *Living Our Dreams* DVD and resource guide will help families generate some ideas of what can be possible, particularly in a time when new funding is limited, person-centered alternatives to traditional resources must be developed.

If you are considering a non-traditional residential option, you may also want to have a heart-to-heart conversation with a service provider in your community. Like individuals and families, many agencies have expressed an interest in developing

a wider range of residential options. If an agency doesn't currently offer an option an individual or family needs, they may be willing to work together to develop person-centred residential supports to meet your unique needs.




Chip (left) and his step-dad, Larry Harrison, at the *Living Our Dreams* information session, holding the new *Living Our Dreams* resource guide.



For a copy of the *Living Our Dreams* resource guide, please contact your local CLBC Community Living Centre. The DVD will be available on CLBC's website within the next few months. In the meantime, you can borrow a copy of the DVD from your community facilitator. As well, keep in mind that you do not have to develop a plan alone. CLBC facilitators are available to help you develop an individual support plan and solidify your vision.

Thank you so much to the following agencies for hosting *Living Our Dreams* sessions in their community: Society for Community Living, Clements Centre Society, Community Living Victoria, Fort St. John Association for Community Living, Future Focus, Garth Homer Society, HOMES Society, Kootenay Society for Community Living, Milieu Family Services, Nanaimo Association for Community Living, North Shore Disability Resource Centre, Pioneer Lodge Group, Quesnel Community Living Association, Richmond Society for Community Living, Ridge Meadows Association for Community Living, Simon Fraser Society for Community Living, Vancouver Resources Society, and Williams Lake Association for Community Living.

Thank you to everyone for helping us spread the word about the sessions and making everyone feel so welcome. 

CLBC PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS CAPTURES COMMUNITY LIFE

Thank you to everyone who participated in the CLBC photo contest this year. We received many great photos from all over the province of individuals and their friends and families in the community.

The photos were judged by three staff members at CLBC headquarters. Judges graded each photo on composition and how well it represented the people in their community.

Our first place winner is Noelle Typusiak, a service provider from Vernon. Her photo has captured Stacy and her cousin tubing on Kalamalka Lake — Stacy's favourite summer activity. Noelle will receive a \$50 gift certificate.

Also shown are the runners-up in the contest. A big thank you to everyone who submitted a photo. And remember, please feel free to send photos to *The Citizen* to be included in future issues. ✨

1. Stacy (left) tubing on Kalamalka Lake with her cousin Monica (right). Photographed by Noelle Typusiak. **2.** Norman Collerman has a great time in the mud pits at a service provider's summer home at Coreen Lake. Photographed by service provider, Cathy Durfeld. **3.** Mia Morry after she enjoyed her chocolate pudding. Photographed by family member, Keely Sutherland. **4.** Chris Greer spends the day on Newcastle Island, BC. Photographed by Clay Tree Society community support worker, Tanya Taylor. **5.** Lyle Sturney jams with local musicians at Williams Lake's courthouse square. Photographed by service provider, Alan Trenzek. **6.** Richard Cottle enjoys a tour of the local fire hall. Photographed by Clay Tree Society community support worker, Tanya Taylor.



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CONGRATULATIONS



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MUSIC GROUP LIVES THEIR DREAM

By Sandra Lawrence, Manager, The Hollywood Players

The Hollywood Players began with an idea to develop a theatre group in Cowichan Valley. However, it quickly became apparent that everyone was actually more interested in forming a band.

Our first show was in 2002. The Hollywood Players played at the Cowichan Railway Museum on the outdoor stage where they performed songs from the musical, *Grease*. That same year, they performed the same two sets at the first Special Woodstock at Providence Farm.

The Hollywood Players practice every second week for two hours starting three to four months prior to Special Woodstock. The song list is developed from songs chosen by each member, and then the director puts the songs into sets. Sometimes the members bring their own CDs, and sometimes the songs are chosen from the director's collection.

In 2003, the songs chosen were titled, "An Eclectic Review" and in 2004, "The Sounds of the 60s and 70s." Unfortunately in 2005, The Hollywood Players were not able to perform at Special Woodstock because of the volunteers' work commitments.

But they returned in 2006 with "Walk the Line." The popularity of the movie that year prompted everyone to each choose a particular song from the film.

This summer, The Hollywood Players returned with "Songs from the 50s to the 90s," and were honoured to be second to the closing act of Special Woodstock.

Our popularity has grown, and so has the size and diversity of the group. The players range in age from an



Nancy and Phil, members of The Hollywood Players singing on stage for Special Woodstock.

energetic five year old to our oldest member at 64. The five year old added himself to the show this year and showed us all how well he could dance and sing. Perhaps one year we will see him with the microphone too.

Each of the players have grown over the years. Some stepped up to the microphone to perform a solo in their first year and showed how much their dedication and hard work could pay off. Some stayed in the

background, preferring to accompany the soloists, until they finally took the microphone and sang with all their heart and soul.

The audience embraced us with their laughter, their joy and their tears. And just as we thought we were done for the year, we received an invitation to play at the Clements Centre's 50th anniversary. What an honour – a Saturday night gig! We look forward to the new year and the chance to perform at this wonderful event.

Our dream was to have T-shirts with our name on them, and thanks to three very beautiful women, that dream came true.

Since its inception, The Hollywood Players have talked about going to Hollywood, but anywhere out of town is a great success for this group. And thanks to a wonderful group in Ladysmith, The Hollywood Players had their first road trip to Nanaimo in October for Community Living Month. What a great event!

Now their dreams are focused on playing for CLBC at one of the conferences. The Hollywood Players' mantra is: Keep dreaming. Keep focused. And practice! Practice! Practice! 🙌

GOV'T PROGRAM CREATES TAILORED WORK

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) and the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA) are working together to support individuals with developmental disabilities to find jobs in their communities. CLBC and MEIA are leading an employment project that invites community agencies across BC to create customized employment options for individuals with developmental disabilities. The commitment to expand employment opportunities supports the BC government's goal to "Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors."

Although many individuals express an interest in entering the workforce, the options are limited for people with developmental disabilities.

Students who are graduating from high school and many others are not able to find a job and are forced to abandon their employment goals. As they become frustrated, they then choose an alternative that is less than ideal and doesn't provide an income.

Customized employment means individualizing the employment

relationship between employees and employers to satisfy both their needs. Customized employment might include self-employment or other strategies that lead to jobs where responsibilities are negotiated and customized on an individual basis.

Over the next few months, CLBC and MEIA will travel across BC to obtain feedback from self-advocates, their families and service providers about existing employment options and will identify successful practices, highlight creative support strategies and encourage innovation in customized employment.

The goals of this process are to raise awareness about employment and its role in creating and maintaining meaningful lives within community, find an outlet for innovative ideas that have already been created, stretch creativity beyond current options like dog-walking and recycling and forge new partnerships with business communities.

At the end of the process a procurement request will be issued to seek innovative approaches to employment programs. CLBC and MEIA will provide annual funding for a number of programs for at least three years. The successful proponents will create innovative options for employment with clear, measurable outcomes.

There are a number of ways to develop a sense of self-worth and value in the community; obtaining meaningful employment is certainly one of them. Understanding the importance of this is the heart of this employment initiative. The ultimate goal is real work for real pay.

If you have any questions, contact David O'Toole, CLBC's manager of organization support by e-mailing David.OToole@gov.bc.ca or by phoning 604-220-6759. ✎

CLBC and MEIA have created funds for a major employment project that involves community agencies across BC to form customized employment programs for individuals with developmental disabilities. . . The ultimate goal is real work, for real pay.

COMMUNITY LIVING MONTH EVENTS

Across the province, community organizations hosted events to celebrate Community Living Month, which honours the achievements of people with developmental disabilities in inclusive, supportive communities.

To kick off October as Community Living Month, the Cranbrook Society for Community Living hosted the Kootenay Region Association for Community Living's Annual Fall Conference with seminars from Brian Salisbury, CLBC's director of strategic planning; Aimee Morry, CLBC's self-advocate advisor; and Paul Wheeler from the Semiahmoo House Society.

Self-advocates enjoyed Aimee Morry's presentation, Leadership and Innovations for Self-Advocates; Susie Mayson from the Department of Developmental and Mental Health Service's presentation, Personal Relationships; Marlene Chernekov's Healthy Living Choices; and dramatist



Self-advocates from Ladysmith and Area Community Link painting a mural for the community at the Community Living Month event at Gyro Park.

As well, Cranbrook's mayor and council proclaimed October as Community Living Month. On October 19 a pancake breakfast for community leaders titled Appetite for Awareness was hosted by CLBC, R.E.A.L.M. and The Pioneer Group. About 25 individuals from the community attended, including MLA Bill Bennett, a city councillor, the president and manager of the Chamber of Commerce, local service club members and business people.

There was also a Community Living Month celebration on Vancouver Island at Nanaimo's Gyro Park on October 3. As an outreach initiative, the event raised \$246 for the Haven Society, which provides services to women and children, youth, families and men who have experienced violence.

The Nanaimo Supportive Lifestyles, Nanaimo Association for Community Living, Ladysmith and Area Community Link, Skaana music group, Clay Tree Society and the Explorers Day Program all participated in the day's events. There was a kickball tournament, music, mural painting, Halloween mask decorating, and a barbecue. Despite getting rained on all day, everyone had a great time and walked away with big grins on their faces. Congratulations to everyone who participated. 🦿



Self-advocates and other Nanaimo community members celebrate winning the kickball tournament at the Gyro Park Community Living Month celebration.

Norma Kilpatrick's, Everybody is a Star. Self-advocates who participated in Everybody is a Star, also performed for everyone at the dinner. Seventy delegates attended the various seminars and 130 people attended the dinner and dance.

Get to Know Lisa Bourget

Lisa Bourget is the new community planning and development manager in Kelowna. Lisa has over 15 years of experience working with individuals with disabilities and their families, directly and as a manager. She has supported people in numerous capacities including: integrated day cares, overseeing adult programs (home and day options), providing respite to teenagers with special needs and crisis outreach. Lisa has worked for Community Living BC since August 2006, when she started as a facilitator in the Simon Fraser Region. Lisa has a four-year-old boy, Garrett, who is obsessed with hockey and superheroes. Her husband, Rick Taylor, also works in the industry and is currently working for the Department of Developmental and Mental Health Services. Another big part of their family is their two Husky dogs, one of which will even smile for you. Lisa loves to cook, entertain and work on house projects. In general, Lisa is always moving and doing something. Lisa is very passionate about working with individuals with differing abilities and their families, who have in return, taught her so much. Lisa grew up in the South Okanagan and is enjoying the warm, dry climate and living close to her family. ✂



Rob Wicharuk



Rob Wicharuk, the new community planning and development manager for Cranbrook and Castlegar, was born and raised in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. He received a diploma in criminology from Mount Royal College in Calgary. He then moved back to Saskatchewan to attend the University of Regina, where he entered the school of social work and worked towards his bachelor of human justice. While at school, he also began working at the Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw, an institution providing residential care to individuals with developmental disabilities. As he had spent three years providing direct care to individuals with developmental disabilities, he realized he had “stumbled” into a field that was extremely rewarding. So in 1994 he became a social worker in Moose Jaw. Rob began at the field level of the Community Living Division, and for the last six years worked as a regional supervisor and then as regional manager, in the Community Programs Branch, managing the two northern regions of the province. Although his career in Saskatchewan was extremely rewarding, he always had a desire to live in the Kootenays. When the opportunity arose this summer, he decided to make the move. Rob looks forward to contributing to CLBC, and providing leadership in the movement to provide “good lives in welcoming communities” for people with developmental disabilities, children with special needs and their families. ✂

TRAINING COACHES IN PERSON-CENTRED THINKING

By Brian Salisbury, *Director of Strategic Planning, CLBC*

On October 30 and 31, 2007, two one-day workshops helped service providers train coaches to support their efforts to provide effective person-centred planning to adults with developmental disabilities and children and youth with special needs.

The workshops, led by Michael Smull, director of Support Development Associates, brought official closure to a joint project between CLBC and 21 community partners known as From Good To Great (FGTG). An outcome of the project is that agencies will develop their internal capacity by training coaches with skills in person-centred thinking and planning.

FGTG was launched with a June 2005 conference in Vernon that explored what is meant by person-centred thinking. The project's goals were to learn how to help agencies develop successful person-centred plans, identify

“Hope is always generated when a group of people come together who share common beliefs and intentions. It excites me to know so many people are learning, sharing and growing together as we move from good to great practice in our efforts to create systems that are truly person-centred.”

needed training materials and share information. FGTG participants had regular conference calls to explore ways to address practical issues and share what they learned.


Project achievements included a survey that gave a snapshot of how planning support is provided in the 21 agencies, and the creation of a workbook and CD to assist individuals, families and service providers to develop successful plans.

“Hope is always generated when a group of people come together who share common beliefs and intentions,” said Cathy Anthony, a parent and coordinator of the Family and Individual Support Program for the Simon Fraser Society for Community Living. “It excites me to know so many people are learning, sharing and growing together as we move from good to great practice in our efforts to create systems that are truly person-centred.”

Smull, who has worked with people with disabilities for over 30 years believes that resources spent on training are not used effectively if they don't help staff transform knowledge and skills into work habits. Coaching can lead to the development of a helpful set of skills in many areas within an organization.

Coaches can help in the process of moving people from a life where services are the focus to a community life where people are happy, safe and have friends and meaningful activities and community connections. They can also provide their agency and other stakeholders like CLBC with feedback on policy and practice.

To achieve these outcomes, agency staff who provide planning support require opportunities to engage in structured practice with feedback. This is why building coaching capacity is a strategic organizational investment.

Participating agencies want to build on what was learned in this two-year project and through the coaching workshop to transform their practice. Their goal is to help people build better lives for themselves as well as accomplish this in a sustainable way. As Smull said in the workshops, great stories about people's lives must become the rule, not the exception. 

PAVING THE ROAD TO SUCCESS WITH EMPLOYMENT

By Ed Columbus, Director of Operations, Vernon and District Association for Community Living

Every year, community employers, Vernon and District Association for Community Living (VDACL) supported workers and community employees get together to enjoy good food, good company and to share the milestones that have been reached on the road towards independent living.

Liane Nystrom and Sandra Urquhart, of Progressive Solutions Inc., were honoured at the 2007 annual employment barbecue hosted by the Tri-Lakes Rotary Club of Vernon. Progressive Solutions Inc., an international software developer for the wood industry, was also recognized as Employer of the Year on August 15, 2007 at Creekside Park in Vernon.

The employers were honoured based on a vote by VDACL staff and participants of their Community Employment Program. The award acknowledged the opportunities the employer has made for individuals with developmental disabilities by providing a supportive and positive work environment for the program's participants. Plaques were presented to the winning employers by Barb

Keith representing the Rotary Club, and Ed Columbus, director of operations.

VDACL currently supports 32 participants in full- or part-time paid employment through its Community Employment Program. This year VDACL has enrolled four new employers and successfully placed six individuals in paid, community employment.

VDACL's qualified vocational counselors provide one-on-one assistance through individual case management and assessments and find an appropriate employer for participants. VDACL has been successful in securing

many contracts throughout the community, helping to maintain community lands, retail outlets and condominium developments.

Considered an exceptionally worthwhile and popular program, VDACL has hopes for additional funding to expand the number of individuals and employers in its service. VDACL believes that if individuals have the desire to gain employment, they should be given every opportunity to do so. ✎



(front, left): Barb Keith, vice president of Tri Lakes Rotary; Ed Columbus, director of operations for VDACL; Liane Nystrom and Sandra Urquhart (behind), present Cathy Isles (centre) from Progressive Solutions with the Employer of the Year Award for 2007.

STAY CONNECTED WITH CLBC

It is a major priority of Community Living BC to communicate with the people they serve, 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. ✎

CLBC BOARD CHAIR RECEIVES ORDER OF CANADA

Lois Hollstedt, CLBC Board of Director's Chair, was invested as a Member into the Order of Canada at the ceremony presided over by Governor General Michaëlle Jean. The ceremony took place at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on October 26, 2007.

Over the last four decades, Lois Hollstedt has dedicated herself to improving the lives of women and children. Founding president of the YWCA of Kamloops, and later CEO of the YWCA in Vancouver, and now, acting as the CLBC Board of Director's Chair, she has played a leading role in the establishment of day care centres, art programs, residences for single mothers, as well as a home for battered women and their children. Other initiatives she has championed include research on fetal alcohol syndrome and an employment program to help disadvantaged women move from social assistance to the workforce.

The Order of Canada is Canada's highest honour for lifetime achievement. Three different levels of membership—companion, officer and member—honour people whose accomplishments vary in degree and scope. Appointments are made on the recommendation of an advisory council, chaired by the chief justice of Canada. ✨



Lois Hollstedt with the Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, at the investiture ceremony.

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, feedback on the newsletter, or would like to subscribe to a paper version of *The Citizen*, please e-mail: editor@communitylivingbc.ca.

To receive a link to a PDF version of *The Citizen*, please e-mail: newsletter@communitylivingbc.ca.

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

For the most up-to-date information on CLBC, please visit our website at: www.communitylivingbc.ca.



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