

THE CITIZEN

Connecting People with Their Community



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA

CLBC Newsletter - November 2008

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Inspiration through art

Ray Tai proudly displays his artwork at the fourth annual Art Show for BC Artists with Developmental Disabilities. The event was put on by the Mainstream Association for Proactive Community Living.

See page four for the full story.

What's Inside

The Encampment



Family Independence
Fund



Accessible Gardens



Community Living Month



Photo Contest Results



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Lois Hollstedt, C.M.



International Volunteer Day is Friday, December 5. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those people who volunteer their time to ensure CLBC has a broad base of people helping to guide and provide our work. The hundreds of people across BC who sit on our Community Councils, working groups, task forces and participate in our consultations ensure our work is grounded in the reality of everyday life. The gift of time that each individual provides is so important to the way CLBC is being built and I want to extend our appreciation to all of you.

We have listened to your advice and implemented your suggestions as we have moved forward. One of the places where change is underway is the makeup and role of the Board's Provincial Advisory Committee. The role of the committee is to advise the Board on emerging issues. The committee indicated that the existing make up of one member from each of the nine regions around the province was not working for them. They indicated that the task of providing feedback to the Board needed to come from a broader base.

At the same time, we heard from the 17 newly-formed Community Councils that they needed a system of feedback to the Board on issues that connected them provincially. The Community Councils were set up to function locally, but members said the ability to share ideas between councils is a to way expand ideas and bring province-wide concerns to the surface.

The two dialogues with these volunteers has resulted in the Board discussing a new approach that would see the Provincial Advisory Committee made up of one representative from each of the 17 Community Councils. A draft of the proposed Provincial Advisory Committee to the Board is being circulated to Councils to give their feedback by the end of January. We will look for ways to improve the communication with all of the councils though this expanded committee.

The new approach will ask more people to volunteer to get involved in our provincial thinking. I know how precious all of our time is, but finding better ways to realize the vision of good lives in welcoming communities depends on that involvement.

On behalf of the Board and our staff, I give my sincere thanks to all of our volunteers. Your ongoing dedication continues to inspire and motivate us.

I also want to take this opportunity to wish everyone holiday greetings. I hope you and your family have a joyful season and that 2009 is full of health and happiness. ✨

This Issue

Inside Voice	3	Music Therapy	10	Seniors' Group	14
Art Show	4	Artist Recognition	10	Accessible Gardens	15
The Encampment	6	Community Living Month	11	CASE Conference	16
Family Independence Fund	7	Home Sharing	12		
Photo Contest Results	8	Big Brothers Big Sisters	13		

INSIDE VOICE

The self-advocate's perspective.

LIVING A BUSY FULFILLING LIFE

By Sheenagh Morrison

My name is Sheenagh Morrison. Let me tell you a little bit about myself.

I'm a self-advocate living in Victoria. I also live on my own. I am in the Supported Apartment Living Program through Community Living Victoria. I've been in my own place for six years now.

I live in my own apartment and I get support from community support workers with cooking and cleaning. There are ten of us in the supported apartment

living program. We have dinners together, we go to movies and we have games nights where we play board games together. We have parties at Christmas time with our families and friends.

I work at the Thrifty Foods in Hillside. I started off as a janitor and now, after talking with my supervisors,

I am a courtesy clerk. I also do radio ads for them and I'm also on the Smile Team for events in the community. I have been there for almost two years.

I am a swimmer on the Victoria Special Olympics team and I have been on that team for eight years now. I'm an advanced swimmer on the team.

I also love hanging out with friends and going out for coffee or a meal and walking dogs with my exercise buddy from Recreation Integration Victoria.



Among her many activities, Sheenagh Morrison enjoys taking care of the animals at Beacon Hill Children's Farm in Victoria.

My exercise buddy and I meet once or twice every week and we have become friends. When it's cold, we go to a movie or bake cookies.

I also work at Beacon Hill Children's Farm. I've been there for five years now. I started off as a volunteer and now I am paid staff. At the farm I do everything from cleaning out the barns to delivering baby goats. That was a great experience.

I also help out with out trips to seniors homes where we take the baby animals to see the seniors.

Just keep working hard and you will reach your goals. If you put your mind to what you want to do you can accomplish it. I worked to reach my goals of living independently and finding paid work and my dreams came true. 🦋

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.

ART SHOW PROVIDES INSPIRATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

COVER STORY

The fourth annual Art Show for B.C. Artists with Developmental Disabilities was held on October 16 at Heritage Hall in Vancouver. It showcased the work of artists with developmental disabilities from around the province and also served as a way to celebrate Community Living Month.

This event is hosted by the Mainstream Association of Proactive Community Living and gives the public an opportunity to see the work of artists from around the province and meet the artists themselves. More importantly, it allows the artists to show off their talents and creative vision through the many pieces of art on display.

During the evening, there were over 350 pieces of art on display, as well as musical performance, prizes and food and drinks.

The event drew a huge crowd to the venue in Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighbourhood. It received a lot of publicity with post card invitations sent to various businesses in the neighbourhood, an

announcement on Facebook and in local community papers, and invites to CLBC offices, members of Parliament and anyone else who might have been interested. In fact, the event has grown so much that organizers are looking for a larger venue for next year.

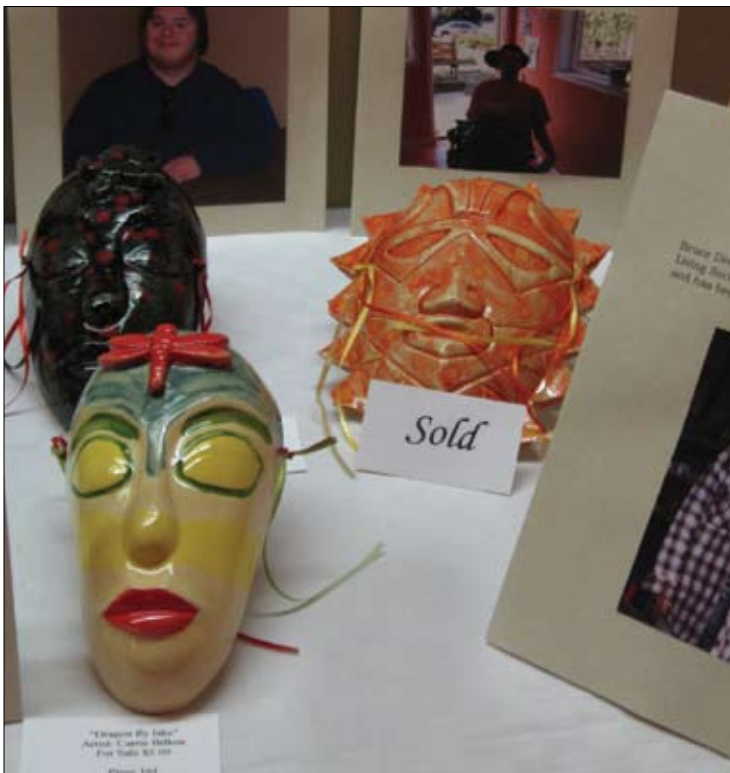
"Many of the artists attended the show and stood proudly by their artwork. You can see it on their faces with their beaming smiles. This gives people the opportunity to meet the artists first hand and hear about how the pieces were created," says Arran Henn, Master of Ceremonies for the Art Show and Global Television weather personality.

Henn has been the MC for the past three years and is extremely proud and honoured to be involved with the event. Among her many tasks are welcoming the crowd, introducing the musicians, interviewing the artists and giving away fantastic raffle prizes to make it a really enjoyable night.

"The artists display a great sense of pride in their art. This evening is an event for them. Everything we do is geared towards the artists and ensuring they are recognized for the bold faith they show in displaying their art for the public to view. Art is personal and in that, we believe it takes a lot of courage and bravery to put your work on display. Watching the artists interact with the public and discuss their works is a pleasure and the keen sense of interest the public takes is just as great," says Henn.

The event promotes awareness and equality for people with disabilities and allows the public to recognize the talent that is out there. It is also an opportunity for the artists to meet each other and engage with the community.

"I believe it enhances the lives of the people we serve. I believe it gives the community a glimpse of the 'abilities' that people with disabilities have and how they can be contributors to their community on a scale most people wouldn't think or conceive of," says Don Devries, the co-chair of this year's event and also event organizer for the past three years.



Masks on display are surrounded by profiles of the artists.

Not only did the artists get to show their work, many of them sold pieces to the hundreds of guests in attendance.

"Artists receive 100 per cent of their sales. The show is always a success when you consider the look of pride on the faces of the artists. They sit by their art and speak with people coming in and out of the venue. It's a great opportunity for inclusion which is why we host the show in conjunction with Community Living month in October," says Devries.

One of the artists at the show, Ray Tai, was recently accepted into the Emily Carr University of Art and Design. This is a proud achievement for him and his family and an inspiration for other people with developmental disabilities.

"I felt very proud of my work as it gave me a sense of recognition since I worked so very hard. But I felt very nervous on the stage," says Tai.

He uses pastel colors and then paints on top of the paper to complete his paintings. "I draw whatever I see that comes into my mind," says Tai.

For the second year in a row, Tai will produce the Christmas card for 2010 Legacies Now, an organization



There were over 350 pieces of art for guests to look at and buy.

that is dedicated to strengthening arts, literacy, sport and recreation, physical activity and volunteerism in communities throughout BC leading up to and beyond the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. This experience is an opportunity for Tai to further his artistic abilities and will give him more knowledge of the art industry.

For more information on the Art Show and to see a gallery of photos taken at the event, please visit Mainstream Association for Proactive Community Living's website at www.mapcl.org. ✎



A huge crowd turned out to view the art, interact with the artists and enjoy the evening's entertainment.

ENCAMPMENT EXHIBIT SHARES IMPORTANT STORIES

In late September, Rachel Schmidt, Community Relations Specialist for CLBC, joined creative collaborators from across Canada in Ottawa for The Encampment. For three nights from October 2 to 4, critically acclaimed Canadian artist Thom Sokoloski presented his large-scale public participatory art installation on Major's Hill Park in Ottawa.

Like an archaeological dig, The Encampment unearthed the history and stories of individuals who have lived and are living with intellectual disabilities from across Canada. Seventy white nineteenth-century expeditionary tents, each containing a unique perspective on the past and present, were illuminated from within.

Workshops were held in seven cities across Canada. The Creative Collaborators first researched the histories and stories of intolerance and exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and then collaborated with Studio SM to transform their findings into visual presentations to be housed within the seventy illuminated tents. This massive glowing optical artwork was not only visible to those visiting the work, but also from the National Gallery of Canada, the U.S. Embassy, Chateau Laurier and Parliament Hill.

Rachel chose to design a tent inspired by Grace Chen, a young woman with Down Syndrome who currently receives services and supports from CLBC. Grace published a book in 2006 entitled "Cinderella Grace, Vancouver Princess," a classic Cinderella tale with a twist. Grace's story was featured in the November 2006 issue of The Citizen.

Rachel spent time with Grace and her family at their home in North Vancouver and discovered that the princess in the book is a real person. The book documents Grace's own life, her dreams and hopes for her future, but it is also an ode to the prince in the story who she cares deeply for. His parents have discouraged him from having a girlfriend and Grace waits patiently for her Prince Charming in real life.

The tent itself was designed with fairy tale elements, a

long Cinderella gown and diamond tiara, excerpts from Grace's book written like old love letters on crinkled paper, Bridal magazine images, Asian jewellery and cards with sparkly hearts. To represent the tension and barriers people with disabilities face when yearning for love relationships, the Cinderella gown was roped off with a twine web, so that visitors to the tent could not move past the web.

This unique and creative opportunity was successful in raising CLBC's national exposure and building new relationships with communities across Canada. Rachel Schmidt had the opportunity to speak at a national press conference about CLBC and her work. She met with the Canadian Association for Community Living and was interviewed by the Ottawa Citizen. Community Living BC was included on the back of a national program along with other provincial Community Living Crown Agencies and numerous provincial associations. ✨



(above) The interior of the CLBC tent tells Grace Chen's story with fairy tale elements including a long Cinderella gown.

(below) Tents are set up in Major's Hill Park in Ottawa to form The Encampment art installation.



FUND MAKES HOME AND COMMUNITY MORE ACCESSIBLE

Life has changed immensely in the past year and a half for Robert and Linda Vaughan and their son Stephen, who has a developmental disability and needs a wheelchair to get around.

The changes began for the Nanaimo family one day as they were watching the news and saw a story about the Family Independence Fund. The fund is set up to help families throughout BC who have children or adults with developmental disabilities living at home. One-time grants are provided to support projects such as home renovations and vehicle modifications that provide greater independence and accessibility for people with developmental disabilities.

After seeing the story, the family looked up the fund online and took the necessary steps to make an application that would change Stephen's life for the better.

The family received \$25,000 toward a vehicle conversion for their van and \$48,000 towards home renovations. Stephen was given the freedom and independence that he desperately wanted.

"It has been a real life changing experience for him" says father Robert.

Numerous design features ensure the family's home is now accessible for Stephen. For example, a power opener was installed on the exterior door to allow him to come in



Stephen Vaughan and his mother Linda in their house as it is being renovated to give him more freedom to move around.

and out using a remote control, doorways were widened allowing Stephen to navigate easily around the ground floor in his wheelchair, and the bathroom is equipped with a roll-under sink and roll-in shower for greater ease of use.

"When I go home at night, I'm able to walk around freely and now he has been given that same luxury," says Robert.

The vehicle conversion has also made life much less stressful and problematic for the Nanaimo family compared to a year and a half ago. The van used to have manual seats that caused problems for getting Stephen's wheelchair inside and made long trips next to impossible. The upgraded vehicle can hold his motorized wheelchair and he can

comfortably enjoy the ride in the van and the scenery outside.

"His life is a thousand times better and he can have his freedom and independence being able to move his power operated wheelchair around the house with ease rather than worrying if he falls or hurts himself crawling around, but now we don't have to worry about it," says Robert.

The Family Independence Fund is administered by Vancouver Foundation's Giving in Action Society. The Fund was established with financial support from CLBC. For more information on the fund, eligibility and how to apply, please visit www.givinginaction.ca. ✖

CLBC 2008 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS: CAPTURING COMMUNITY

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

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.

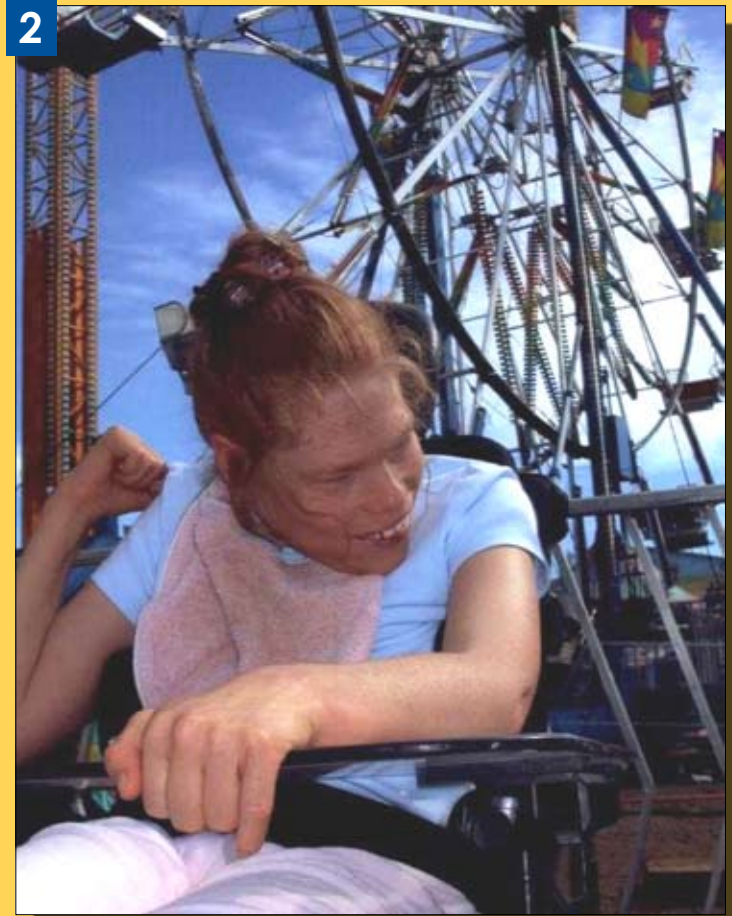
Our first place winner is Mary Lee Tondreau, a service provider from Chilliwack. Her photo captures Neil Fromhart at Shuswap Lake in August, enjoying a boat ride and watching some friends being towed on a tube. Mary will receive a \$50 gift certificate.

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. Neil Fromhart enjoys being out on the boat on Shuswap Lake. Photographed by service provider Mary Lee Tondreau.
2. Patricia Schiffelers soaks up some sun at the fall fair in Port Alberni. Photographed by Patricia's mother Christa Schiffelers.
3. Nick (top left), Tyler (right) and Jesse (bottom left) share a laugh at the marina in Squamish. Photographed by self-advocate Jeremy Boyd.
4. Richard and Brittany take a dip to cool down in Westwood Lake in Nanaimo. Photographed by Tanya Taylor, a staff member at Clay Tree Society for People with Developmental Disabilities.
5. (left to right) Cissy, Melanie and Shane eat popsicles as a perfect treat for a hot summer's day. Photographed by service provider Dan McRoberts.
6. Caleb Wacholtz dribbles a basketball while his cousin Samantha Dumont watches. Photographed by Caleb's mother Rita Wacholtz.



COMMUNITY LIVING



CONGRATULATIONS



MUSIC THERAPIST SHARES THE POWER OF RHYTHM

By Greta Cooper, CLBC Team Assistant

Salmon Arm is truly blessed with special talent. These sentiments were expressed by CLBC Analyst Susan Gollan and particularly directed towards local music therapy provider Larry Keats, or the "Slammin' Salmon" as he's better known.

Keats has been involved off and on since 1996 under a professional support contract for children and adults. He has brought his special gift of music to CLBC from his own background as the drummer for the Salmon Armenians, a group who in 2007 won the prestigious music

award for the Okanagan's Best Blues Band.

His form of therapy involves the power of rhythm and drumming and utilizes various instruments. Today's session began with egg shakers which are colored plastic egg shaped devices which hold objects that make clattering noises when shaken.

"Wally your job today is to find a beat," says Keats.

Aided by a CD recorder and microphone Keats keeps the sessions personal and to the

delight of all, cleverly uses each participant's name to demonstrate the rhythm sequence, "W-a-l-l-y, r-e-a-d-y?" Then musical instruments are changed and everyone's favorite "Born to Be Wild" turns into a lively production. As with all good things, the time passes much too quickly.

Together with the North Okanagan Community Council and the Caregivers Association of Salmon Arm, CLBC hosted a family dance to celebrate citizenship during Community Living Month. Larry Keats and The Salmon Armenians performed. 🦋

BC ARTISTS GAINS NATIONAL EXPOSURE

Gail Ferguson, who lives in Dawson Creek, recently received exciting news. One of her pieces of art will be included in a show presented by the Pan-Canadian art exhibition held in Ottawa from November 18 to 21 during the National Conference of the Canadian Association for Community Living.

The piece, entitled "Nicihciy," Cree for my hand, was created in early 2008 and was one of three submitted works.

At an early age Gail became interested in creating various forms of artwork with wax crayons, coloured pencils and felts being her medium of choice. She is a free spirit and only works on projects as she chooses. Many of her inspirations come from single items, which are outlined. She then adds various shapes and letters. Colour combinations range from subdued pastels to vibrant primaries.

Gail prefers to work on a small scale with most projects being 8.5" by 11" or under. She is generous with her compositions and gives them to appreciative friends and support staff. Currently, Gail is experimenting with mini projects that are 2" by 5" and as the woman evolves so does her artwork.

A person of few words, Gail's deep emotional life is communicated thorough her art work. She was diagnosed with Down Syndrome and educated in a segregated school system. From home, she moved into a group home and later into an apartment with a roommate. Currently Gail spends her days at the Opportunity Centre, a day options program, where she learns various life skills and has the freedom to express her passion for art daily.

This British Columbia artist continues to create from inspirations surrounding her community, daily life and her native heritage. 🦋



Gail Ferguson and her art piece entitled "Nicihciy," Cree for my hand.

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.

In Nanaimo, a number of agencies came together to host a day of fun and activity to kick off Community Living Month on October 1. One of the activities was a kickball tournament, an idea that was originally suggested by participants in Nanaimo Supportive Lifestyles. The game was perfect because, with some slight rule changes, people in wheelchairs or with mobility aids are able to participate.

Several agencies put forth teams made up of people with disabilities, staff members and anyone else in the community who wanted to play. The winning team was Skanna Community Resources Ltd.

The event also featured a BBQ hosted by the Nanaimo Association for Community Living and a dunk tank hosted by the Explorer Day Program. Staff from various agencies and local CLBC offices offered themselves up to be dunked in exchange for charitable donations.

Ladysmith Community Link also arranged the painting of several community art murals. Each year the art is sold and the money, together with the funds raised from the BBQ and dunk tank, is donated to a local charity. The charity is different each year and is not connected to people with developmental disabilities. Rather, it reflects how people with disabilities are valued and contributing members of the community who like to give back and lend a helping hand.

This year, the event raised \$662 which was donated to the 7-10 Club, a local charity that provides breakfast and bagged lunches to anyone in need in Nanaimo.

In Prince George, AiMHi presented their fourth annual Fall Fashion Show on October 23 with the help of many of their community partners. Models who volunteered for the show were made up of self-advocates, service providers and CLBC staff.

The event presented many beautiful moments of discovery and growth. As the audience watched, people were transformed from shy and unsure of their ability to confident and self-assured players. Many returning models knew from past experience how to get the

crowd going and did so with graceful skill. Models who were experiencing the event for the first time found it to be a daunting experience, yet they too found their inner strength and seized the moment walking proudly down the decorated runway.

Attendance increased over last year with 125 tickets sold. The event was also featured in a full-page photo spread in The Prince George Citizen and in a slide show on their website. The slide show can be viewed at www.youtube.com by searching for "AiMHi Fashion Show."

Elsewhere around the province, there were art shows, open houses, community clean ups, essay contests, family picnics, dances, Halloween parties and a whole range of events. Congratulations to everyone who participated in Community Living Month and helped to make community inclusion a reality. 🦋



Rebecca Jantzi throws a ball at the dunk tank during Community Living Month celebrations in Nanaimo. (Photo by Neil Gaudet)

HOME SHARING CREATES RELATIONSHIPS

By Laura Walz, *Powell River Peak*

A Powell River couple feel like they have an additional member of the family through their participation in home sharing.

Caroline Jobe and Bruce Nygard have opened up their home to Pat Kyer, a person with a developmental disability. "He's included in a lot of things with us, even with our friends," said Jobe. "If we're invited anywhere, he goes with us."

Kyer, who has lived with Jobe and Nygard for five years, has his own suite, which has a door into their house. He cooks for himself and has part-time work in the community. He walks the couple's dog and helps around the outside of the home with landscaping and mowing the lawn.

"We're just guiding him through his life," Jobe said. "The whole idea is inclusion. He has a home here because he feels part of our family."

Jobe and Nygard's situation is one of many which fall under the home sharing program, which is run by both Community Living BC (CLBC) and the Powell River Association for Community Living (PRACL).

The demand for home sharing opportunities is increasing, said Mary Dowdall, CLBC's community planning and development manager for the Coast North Shore region.

"As people get older, as people transition out of school, they want to move out on their own as they are 19, 20, 21," she said. "We have more people wanting to live, not



Part of the Family: Pat Kyer (left) and Bruce Nygard (right) cook up a tasty meal on the barbecue. Nygard and his partner Caroline Jobe participate in a home sharing program. Kyer has lived in a suite in their home for five years. (photo by Caroline Jobe)

necessarily in a staffed residential home, but in a roommate situation or a basement suite." Home sharing describes a situation in which an adult with a developmental disability shares a home with someone who provides ongoing support, Dowdall explained.


"Home sharing is a very broad and flexible label that includes a wide variety of arrangements," she said. "In some situations, home sharing involves very close relationships. The individuals within the home share not only their physical space, but also their lives. The members of the home spend a lot of time together and are actively involved in one another's daily activities."

In other situations, the home sharing arrangement is characterized by more independent relationships. "The members of the home generally go their own ways

and come together at specific times or for specific purposes," Dowdall said.

Home sharing is an opportunity to share "your life and your home with somebody," said Lynn Roberts, PRACL program manager. "We're looking for many variations of home sharing. It's a residential option, which means that your imagination is the only limit of how it can work."

People are compensated based on the amount of support provided, added Roberts. "It's on an individual basis," she said. "The plan is individual, the pay is all individual."

The organizations also match an individual with a home sharing provider, Roberts added. "We try and match like interests and needs," she said. "The provider will also have needs that they want matched." 

PROGRAM CREATES MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES

Most of us are familiar with the work of the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. For over 90 years, the Big Brothers Big Sisters program has made a difference in the lives of children, youth and their families by facilitating a friendship where one is needed. In Canada, over 26,000 children currently are matched in one-to-one mentoring relationships.

Many young people with disabilities leave school without adequate experience and skills for community inclusion. Many adults with disabilities have overcome these challenges and gained valuable experience that they can effectively share.

Mission, BC volunteers Linda Golightly and Bonnie Hamilton approached the local Big Brothers Big Sisters organization to utilize their proven mentoring program and connect adults with disabilities from the community with students with disabilities from high schools.

"It seemed logical to extend the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring concept to youth at the high school level," explains Linda.

Mentoring contributes to successful transitions. "We saw the success of mentoring for elementary school age children and felt it could be effective for older youth who are

challenged to make the transition to adulthood," says Bonnie, who was then temporarily employed with Big Brothers Big Sisters (Abbotsford, Mission, Ridge Meadows).

"We modified our programs with increased levels of support and coordination to address the unique needs of youth with developmental disabilities who are in transition to adulthood," adds David Sheach, Big Brothers Big Sisters Executive Director.



(left to right) Recent Mentor graduates Jerry Laidlaw, Amanda Peebles and Colleen Provost.

In the fall of 2007, a Steering Committee was formed that includes representatives from the Mission Association for Community Living (MACL), Mission Public Schools, Community Living BC (Upper Fraser CLBC), Big Brothers Big Sisters and Mission Self Advocates.

The project idea had immediate support from the Steering Committee, with CLBC and Mission Association for Community Living offering financial support.

"This idea is a great fit for those we support. We wanted to expand the networks of community support and services for people with developmental disabilities," says Robert Keys, MACL Executive Director.

Further, Mission Public Schools provided free space at Frasersview Elementary school, and donations of office and furnishings flowed in. The vision was becoming a reality.

Four mentors have completed the screening and training program and received their official mentor status from Big Brothers Big Sisters. They're now anxious to be matched to their "Littles". They're looking forward to building lasting friendships and to helping guide them by experience, through the changes that come

with leaving school, getting that first job, and attaining the greater independence that comes with adulthood.

"I just like being able to help", comments Colleen Provost, one of the recent new mentors. "We can all learn from each other's experiences."

For more information on the program, please contact Big Brothers Big Sisters of Abbotsford, Mission, Ridge Meadows at 604-852-3331. ✨

SENIOR PARENTS' GROUP LAYS OUT THE WELCOME

By Greta Cooper, CLBC Team Assistant

What happens to my son or daughter if something happened to me? A valid question, and for those who have adult children with developmental disabilities living at home, it takes on different proportions.

Clutching his cane, 85-year-old Vic Stutsky has been widowed for barely a year. Maureen, his 65-year-old daughter, lives with him and is his sole responsibility. Stutsky credits his late wife Fern, a true blue advocate in the field of developmental disabilities, for making all the decisions while he generally worked away from home.

Then suddenly he was thrown into the position of being sole decision maker and was lucky enough to attend a senior parent's group in Vernon.

"I'm sure glad Julie dragged me out," he says.

Hired through a Community Living BC innovation grant, and hosted by Kindale Developmental Association, Julie Armitage is a family resource developer who is phenomenal in her role.

One of her aims is to find out what

issues senior parents are facing and identify where the gaps are in support.

One area is caregiver sustainability, "A lot are getting burnt out and tired," she says.

This seniors' group is working on a resource guide based on shared information and experience, but Armitage said the major focus will be to see that families have a plan in place or a "life book" as it's called.

"In the event of a crisis or emergency we're not all scrambling to figure out who's going where, what's going to happen," says Julie.

Stutsky feels some relief now that he has some options, but he's not going to hurry into anything.

Over the years the main contact for his family was CLBC facilitator Phil Kowalski who recently retired. Vic said it was comforting to call Phil or have him over to their home. Now their file has been turned over to a new facilitator and they're starting all over again and doing it differently.

The history of this seniors' group model began with Kowalski, Johanna Burko and a few other

dedicated people who realized the need for plans and support. Rena Ludwig has now stepped into Phil's role and said she's there to support and cheer Julie on.


"People really connect with her. She has so much energy, is so focused and is putting everything into this project," says Rena.

Senior parents in Enderby, Lumby, Cherryville, Armstrong, Vernon, Revelstoke, Falkland and Oyama are encouraged to call Armitage even if they are receiving CLBC services.

"If you can help one family get their plan in place so that they are reassured that everything is going to be okay and their family member is going to be looked after, I think that's important," says Julie.

Being part of a group allows people to share experiences and get ideas from others on what's working and what's not.

"You make connections with people that carry through for a lifetime."

For more information about this group, please contact Julie at 250-307-5216. 



(left to right) Anna Rose Fricker, Vic Stutsky, Julie Armitage and John Thistlewood discuss the issues faced by senior parents of children with developmental disabilities.

ACCESSIBLE GARDEN ALLOWS PARTICIPATION FOR ALL

Community Living BC has teamed with The Kamloops Foundation and The Boag Foundation to fund the creation of an accessible community garden.

The garden was built by participants, staff and volunteers of the Gardengate Training Centre in Kamloops and is called "Growing Food ~ Growing Futures Accessible Gardens."

Among the many features are four wooden 4 foot by 8 foot raised beds and a circular raised bed built from blocks. The garden also has a compacted gravel surface between all the beds making it wheelchair accessible.

An official grand opening was held during the summer. It featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a Salsa Challenge Open House which were well attended by the local community and representatives from the local papers.

While the gardens are open and ready to be used, the project will continue to grow as more features are added. The next phase will involve the building of a shade structure and two table gardens specifically designed for people in wheelchairs.

The garden did see some use during the end of the warm summer season and people are looking forward to planting it again next spring. ✨



(left) A commemorative plaque on the entrance gate thanks the project's sponsors.



(below) Beyond the entrance gate are four rectangular raised beds and one circular raised bed in the centre.

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. ✨

CONFERENCE EXPLORES SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

On November 13 and 14, the 14th annual Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) Conference took place in Vancouver at the Westin Bayshore Hotel.

The conference, called Working Matters 2008, was hosted by CASE and the BC Association for Community Living with CLBC as a title sponsor.

Guest speakers included leading thinkers in workplace inclusion from as far away as the United Kingdom. Susan Scott-Parker, founder and chief executive of the UK-based Employer's Forum on Disability, delivered the opening keynote address. She inspired the audience to think of the reasons why people with developmental disabilities are skilled workers.

On the second day of the conference, Erin Riehle delivered the keynote address. She spoke to what the expectations of employment services are from a business perspective. She also described what she did to streamline the process of hiring people with

disabilities, including comprehensive training for youth transitioning from school.

Workshop sessions explored cutting edge practices, innovative ideas and regional projects. Barb Penner, CLBC's Employment Initiative Project manager, helped to present a session called Customized Employment: A Partnership at Work.

Over 70 service providers attended a session to develop the framework for a BC Employment Network.

The exhibitor hall displayed quality products and services related to supported employment.

Above all, the conference offered people with developmental disabilities, the organizations that serve them, and the employers who hire them, a valuable chance to hone their skills, challenge their thinking and engage in networking to build inclusive workplaces across the country. Congratulations to CASE and BCACL on a productive and informative conference. ✨

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.

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