

# THE CITIZEN

Connecting People with Their Community



COMMUNITY LIVING  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

CLBC Newsletter - September 2007

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## Sharing Their Talents



"Peace, Love and Joy" music group perform in the 2007 Special Woodstock along with program facilitator Tina Fabbro. See page four for full story.

### What's Inside

Photo Contest



Community Award



Accessible Channel



Residential Options DVD



International Conference



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Rod Gunn



Shortly after our son was born, we were told by his doctors that he probably wouldn't live through puberty. Others told us that we should place him in Woodlands, the only "residential option" available at the time. Well, he survived puberty, and he never went to Woodlands, and this August our son, Kristian, celebrated his 35th birthday.

I was fortunate during my years working at CKNW to see many of the Woodlands residents attend our "Orphans Fund Day" at Playland in Vancouver. Unfortunately, these few hours once a year, were the only hours that many of the residents left the institution. When I was in high school, a group of us volunteered to spend a day at the institution as a "buddy" for residents who had no family to assist them on a picnic outing on the Woodlands grounds. When the event ended, we left, but they never did.

These were a few of the memories that I recalled as I wandered amongst the guests, unable to distinguish former residents from friends, parents and dignitaries at the recent dedication of the Woodlands Memorial Garden. That itself, was an uplifting recognition as we work for total inclusion and acceptance in our society.

As I passed through the reclaimed grave markers, I noticed many residents had died on the same day or mere days apart. Statistically this seemed strange to me. No group in society would die at such a rate if they were provided with the medical care and loving attention that we all take for granted. I couldn't help but wonder how these residents had died, why they had died, and finally, why were they in Woodlands at all? These questions are unanswerable today, but they should remain with us nevertheless.

Like most of the guests at the dedication there was time for joyful reunions with folks we hadn't seen for some time. Stories were told of what it was like to live in Woodlands, (many residents for decades) a somber reflection on the fact that Woodlands was deemed necessary to exist at all and finally the strongly-voiced commitment that such a place should never exist again. The facts belie that commitment however.

While we have been successful in BC in closing institutions and providing a variety of residential options in communities around the province where the support of friends and family is available, across this country and around the world the institutional model is still alive and well. We have a responsibility to demonstrate to others that we can live together in our communities and benefit from the sharing of gifts every individual possesses. ✖

"We have a responsibility to demonstrate to others that we can live together in our communities and benefit from the sharing of gifts every individual possesses."

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# INSIDE VOICE

*The self-advocate's perspective.*

## A WONDERFUL PLACE TO WORK

By Brad Best

**M**y name is Brad Best and I'm a self-advocate from Burnaby, and I am an employee at Save-On-Foods. My work experience started at Douglas College and Vancouver Community College to learn skills to find a job. With my past jobs, the employers would only hire me for work-experience practicums, so I did not earn a wage for the work I did.

My practicum work experience included office duties, bus boy, janitor, mailroom clerk and delivery. Other jobs I have held include working with an accountant, contract janitor and stocking shelves.

My past work experiences were hard because I was not paid or treated very well. My employers did not understand my disability, and I found it hard to work within those conditions, so I left to find work somewhere else.

*"I am paid a good and fair wage and I'm treated with dignity and respect."*

Today I work at Save-On-Foods and have been there for four years. I work 16 hours each week. We are a very busy store right in the heart of Metrotown's Station Square. We operate long hours because it is important for people to get their grocery shopping done.

Save-On-Foods is a wonderful place to work. We are a full-service grocery store chain owned by BC's very own Jimmy Pattison.

My job at Save-On-Foods is a utility clerk, which is basically a janitor. In the spring of 2005 I was promoted to head janitor. I felt honoured! My duties include sweeping, mopping, emptying full garbage cans, wiping down tables and recycling. I also am responsible for taking the garbage to the compactor and operating

it when it is full. Another part of my job is to respond immediately if a customer accidentally knocks over glass items to make sure people do not injure themselves. I have my own janitorial space in the back; it is full of mop buckets, brooms, a sink and heavy floor equipment.

I am very excited to have this job; it is the best thing that has ever happened to me. The best part about my job at Save-On-Foods is that employees are unionized. This means that I am paid a good and fair wage and I am treated with dignity and respect. My employer cares about me as an employee.

Some people who have disabilities may have a hard time finding a job. I found it hard to find one too until I was hired at Save-On-Foods. Don't give up on yourself, and always try your best, because your dreams can come true too! Put your happy face on, and believe in yourself! 🦋

**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](mailto:editor@communitylivingbc.ca) to discuss.



*Brad Best loves his job at Save-On-Foods*



# TINA FABBRO: CONNECTING PEOPLE

COVER STORY

**W**ith the belief that every individual should be able to be a part of their community, Tina Fabbro has gone above and beyond to ensure that happens in the community of Ladysmith, BC. She understands the difficulties of trying



*Tina Fabbro, Ladysmith & Area Community Link program facilitator.*

to find that sense of belonging in a community and has seen how important it is for every individual to have a sense of purpose. Letting nothing get in her way, Tina has created programs to help teenagers and adults with developmental disabilities achieve their goals by providing a way for them to share their talents with the community.

After graduating from Malaspina University College in Duncan as a Community Support Worker in 2003, Tina's first job was an on-call position at Nanaimo Supportive Lifestyles, a service provider that organizes day programs for adults. Tina appreciated her job, but felt it wasn't satisfying her belief that it's

important for everyone to be able to show what they are capable of through their work and not only recreational activities.

Soon after, she contacted a group from Ladysmith named "From School to Where" – a collaboration of teachers, parents and self-advocates who were concerned about what would happen after students with developmental disabilities completed high school. After 12 years in the same school they didn't fit into the regular day programs, and they weren't able to obtain work experience because the teaching assistants were not allowed to drive the students off school property. "From School to Where" wanted individuals to transition more easily from school to a job. As well, Ladysmith was often their hometown and parents didn't want to have to move their child to Nanaimo to find the support they needed.

This prompted Tina to start her own business: Ladysmith and Area Community Link. Together with a parent advisory group they had two goals: to increase community involvement and to find jobs for the individuals who "fell through the cracks" in terms of support. Tina was successful in applying for a contract to obtain funding through Community Living BC. With a small budget and just one student for 20 hours per week, Tina started her programs.

Living outside of Ladysmith, Tina

knew she couldn't expect others to be part of the community if she wasn't. So she participated in Ladysmith community events and fundraisers, joined the Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce and the Ladysmith's Women's Business Network. "Starting out was hard, people didn't have the time to listen to me," says Tina, "But because of the involvement I've had with the Chamber of Commerce and the Ladysmith Women's Business Network, I'm well respected in the business community."



*Peace, Love and Joy has their Friday practice s (left to right): Rebecca Jantzi, Amy McMillan*

Tina continues to work with students who are in high school to prepare them for a job after they will graduate. She works one-on-one with the students and businesses to match them accordingly. To this day, a company has never turned down the opportunity to employ one of

her students. Tina explains, "As a community, we take care of our own people."

But it doesn't stop there. Tina saw more opportunities for her students to develop their potential. Today, Ladysmith and Area Community Link teaches cooking classes in a local church and in return, they cook lunch for the reverend. They have swimming sessions with high school students once a week and recently Kiwi Cove Lodge provided the group with a piece of land to form a community garden. Working together, Tina's students learn how to produce fruits and vegetables and

our partnerships."

One of the most successful activities they have underway is a music group. Seven members, along with a retired bassist, get together each week to practice playing music. Equipped with rhythm instruments, they gather in a circle and take turns singing their favourite songs. The music group, "Peace, Love and Joy" (named by one of the self-advocates) has performed all over Ladysmith and Nanaimo in coffee shops, senior citizen homes and during the grad ceremony for the community support workers at Malaspina University College.

Last year, they recorded a song on a CD and sold over 50 at Christmas. Their goal is to perform at the BC Children's Hospital. Amy, currently in Tina's programs including the music group, describes Tina: "She is always the first person to make you smile and she always makes us laugh when we perform music. She makes me want to try new things."

There are so many people whose lives have been influenced by Tina. Jacob was the first student Tina worked with over two years ago. Today he has four jobs: he is a grocery store greeter, a paper carrier and works at Carlo's Place and Bob's Music. "People tell me they make a point to shop at the grocery store when Jacob is there because he




*Kiwi Cove Community Garden. (left to right): Camille Marquis, Sheena Chapman, practicum student and young and old volunteers help plant and seed the garden to grow food for the Ladysmith food bank.*

makes their day – that's all because of Tina," says Lorraine Peters, Jacob's mother.

Another story is of an 18-year-old who always dreamt of being a police officer. Diagnosed with epilepsy, this dream is not possible for him. But Tina believed there was something she could do. During a leadership course, she met a local police officer who told her at least seven police cars need to be washed every week. Today, with Tina's help, the 18-year-old is the lead car washer for the police, and is washing the cars every week. He has plans to expand the business.

And there's the young man with autism who after months working with Tina 10 hours a week, now has a job at Safeway working 20 hours a week. "His only requirement," Tina says, "is to be treated nicely."

When asked what the best thing about her work is Tina responds, "What really thrills me is the students' potential – I really believe that everyone has something to give and everyone can contribute." 



*session, singing and dancing away. Sheena Chapman, Camille Marquis.*

donate the produce to the local food bank. "Starting out, we didn't have a special building for us to work out of," says Tina, "so it forced us to be creative and build partnerships with businesses and the community. But the big difference is, we give back to



# PEOPLE PLANNING TOGETHER

By Gladys Duran, Self-Advocate Peer Advisor, Semiahmoo House Society

**P**eople Planning Together (PPT) is a program that helps self-advocates have a voice in planning their own lives. Self-advocates participate in a two-day training course taught by their self-advocate peers where they learn to look at their current lives and plan for the future. The participants are lead through a number of exercises that make them think about interests, likes, dislikes, challenges and dreams.

At the completion of the program, the participant has a clear understanding of what actions they and their support network need to take to help them achieve the lifestyle they wish for.

Originating in Pennsylvania, Semiahmoo House Society brought this program to their self-advocates in 2005. Since then, Semiahmoo House Society has trained five self-advocates to teach the course and have had many people participate in the training.

James White, certified trainer for PPT, believes that this PPT program is an effective way to ensure that the self-advocate's voice plays a major role in deciding how they wish to live their own lives. "I have been very impressed with the self-advocate trainers and the participants' commitment to applying themselves to this important training," said White.

"I am a trainer for the program, and I have found that



Self-advocates Cindy from Vernon and Craig Muirhead at the training course with the Semiahmoo House Society.




(left to right): Cherry Cabarlo, Ryan Cameron, Gladys Duran, James White and Craig Muirhead working in the People Planning Together program.

the exercises are easy to follow, have plain language and can help people to identify and express what is really important to them," said Gladys Duran. "I also find that self-advocates appreciate and enjoy it when another self-advocate who leads them through the process."

"Being a leader of the program, and a self-advocate, I have grown in my skills and knowledge and have moved forward in achieving my goals through my own voice," she said. "Being heard and knowing your voice counts is very important to self-advocates. Semiahmoo House Society and I encourage self-advocates and service providers to bring this People Planning Together program to their community. Semiahmoo House Society trainers can either complete the course work for you or connect you to the right place to teach your own trainers," she added.

Be part of the solution by helping people to evaluate their lives and identify their dreams so they can have the strongest voice in planning their own lives.

For more information please contact Gladys Duran, a Self-advocate Peer Advisor for the Semiahmoo House Society, at 604-536-1242 Ext. 244 or e-mail her at [g.duran@shsbc.ca](mailto:g.duran@shsbc.ca). 

# RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS DVD PRODUCED

By Andrea Baker, Manager, Residential Options Project

The fabric of residential support within BC has become increasingly rich and highly personal. Services are evolving along with our understanding of how to best support adults with developmental disabilities.

Today, options are really defined by the dreams of the individuals and families we support. Their dreams provide us with excitement and inspiration. They help define us and give meaning to our lives.

With this in mind, CLBC will soon release, *Living Our Dreams: Alternatives to Traditional Residential Options*, along with an accompanying resource guide. The video and guide present the stories of several people from within BC who have explored alternatives to traditional residential options and who are now living their dreams.

Having a home of their own has allowed them to express their individuality. It has provided them with a sense of control over their lives and an understanding that their preferences and choices are respected. It has improved the quality of their lives and has provided them with new opportunities. Most significantly, it has strengthened their family connections and has allowed them to develop meaningful, mutual relationships with others.

In October and November 2007, CLBC will be organizing information sessions for individuals and families on this topic. We will show the video and facilitate a discussion about the various residential options that are available to adults with developmental disabilities. All are encouraged to come out and hear about the types of homes people are choosing, how individuals are being supported and the creative solutions that have already been developed. Sessions will also provide you with the chance to connect with other individuals and families who are considering alternatives to traditional residential options.

For further information about these resources or about information sessions that have been scheduled in your community, please visit the CLBC website or contact your local community living centre. ✖



Left: Edward Mann, one of the individuals featured in the CLBC DVD, *Living Our Dreams: Alternatives to Traditional Residential Options*, recycles in his community. Right: Edward goes for a walk over the Capilano Suspension Bridge.

## CLBC FACILITATOR INSPIRED BY FAMILY



*Award winning facilitator,  
Gurtej Singh Gill, in Surrey.*

One of CLBC's facilitators, Gurtej Singh Gill from Surrey, received the 2007 Top Community Supporter award featured in Surrey's local newspaper, The Leader.

After 20 years of experience working with children, youth and families dealing with physical or developmental disabilities, Gurtej Singh Gill has much enthusiasm for his job. After spending his college years volunteering for the Pingla Ashram in India, helping individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, he knew that it was what he wanted to do for the rest of his life.

His participation in various organizations and government services in Canada and India such as the Mainstream Association for Progressive Community Living, the Ministry for the Punjab Government, Assisted Living for Seniors, Progressive Intercultural Services Society and finally as a facilitator for Community Living BC in Surrey has made a difference in many lives.

In 1998, Gill was awarded the Provincial Award for Community Service by the Punjab Government in recognition for his efforts. This summer, the 2007 Community Leader Awards has recognized him as the Top Honour Recipient Community Supporter as a facilitator for CLBC and an active citizen in his community. Gill shares his approach to community to living and his passion for his job.

***Q: Why did you choose to help those with physical and developmental disabilities?***

**A:** It has a lot to do with my father and my grandfather, who now have both passed. They influenced me a lot and guided me. Both of them were very involved with fundraising and supporting the Pingla Ashram – a residence for over 350 people with physical and developmental disabilities in India. My father always gave 10 per cent of his income to the Pingla Ashram. When I attended university for my masters degree, he told me to volunteer at the there and after volunteering for years, I knew that I wanted to continue to help people with physical and developmental disabilities.

***Q: Tell me about your idea of a three-prong approach to your work and life?***

**A:** I believe there are three aspects of community living: your personal life, family life and workplace. My belief is that each area must be balanced. Meaning, you need to be satisfied with your personal life, respect your family and achieve humility and respect at your workplace. If one is out of balance, either you are stressed at work or have difficulties with your family, you have to re-examine that area of your life. If you make sure all those aspects are balanced together, you can ensure you will be a wonderful contribution to your community and a valued citizen. On a daily basis I examine each aspect by asking these questions: Am I happy? Is my wife happy? Am I stressed at work? And I determine what I need to do to satisfy each aspect and in return, I become a valuable citizen for my community.

***Q: What is the best part of your job as a CLBC facilitator?***

**A:** I really enjoy my job, but the best part of my job is talking to the families of people with developmental disabilities that are in need of support. They have so many things to say and really need someone to listen to them and help them find a solution. So I listen to them, and they tell me their story, and when they leave I always see smiles on their faces – and that is the best part of my job. 🙌



# WILD & WET RIDES

By George Arambasich, *TIER Support Services*

**T**hey asked for it, they got it! This year, for their annual summer barbecue, TIER Support Services teamed up with the Lake Country Board and Ski Club (LCBSC) for a watersports day on beautiful Wood Lake just outside of Kelowna. As requested by their program participants, TIER spent Friday, August 24, out on the water, skiing, tubing, swimming and laughing! The LCBSC and other friends of TIER generously volunteered their time and tournament boats to teach a group of approximately 80 individuals how to water ski, and take them on tube and boat rides. Back on the beach, everyone enjoyed hotdogs and hamburgers barbecued on the Boyd's Autobody '57 Chevy Grilling Machine, and several action-packed games of bocce, Frisbee and beach-ball volleyball. To top the day off, there were prizes for everyone. We just can't wait for next year! 🦋



(Top: Left to Right) TIER Support Services employee, Thor Ludvigsen, and the Boyd's Autobody '57 Chevy Grilling Machine; Kelsey Wyse (left) and Maria Schmitke (right) laughing it up. (Centre) Wayne Melvin enjoys the sunshine on the tube. (Bottom: Left to Right) Wayne Melvin and Owen Wilson watch as Ryan Courtemanche rides behind the boat; Misty Tuck drives the boat.

## A JOURNEY FOR A LIFE WITH MEANING

By **Debbi Salmonsens**, Resource Development Manager, Deafblind Services Society of BC

Catherine was born in 1952 and after a difficult delivery, the doctors told her parents she might not survive. After four months in intensive care, her parents took her home to enjoy what remaining time they had. Soon they noticed she did not respond to normal sounds and sights. A doctor confirmed she was deaf. Also, she was slow to develop in other areas. She did not walk until she was five and was unable to develop speech. Despite these obstacles, Catherine was a bright and curious child and showed an ability to learn.



During a time when society thought children with special needs should be “out of sight and out of mind,” and parents of children with special needs were pitied and had few, if any, support systems, Catherine’s parents wanted her to have a normal life.



(Top) Catherine as a child and today (below) a happy adult.

As Catherine grew, the family realized providing a safe and stimulating environment at home was becoming impossible. With the urging of specialists, her parents put her in Woodlands School when she was 12. They hoped she would receive both the physical supports and therapy she needed, along with learning opportunities they could no longer provide her. But

while visiting regularly, they realized Woodlands was not what they had hoped for.

One day they received notice from Woodlands that Catherine would be transferred to Tranquille in Kamloops – not a choice, an announcement. They tried to think of the positive aspects: a drier climate, a smaller

institution and a rural setting. But after she was moved, she disintegrated quickly.

Over time, it was clear Catherine wasn’t eating. Her chewing reflex didn’t work and the staff members weren’t taking the time to feed her. The ward she shared with 25 women and only one staff member was like a prison. The beds were horrible – pretty much cages with rubber mats.

Catherine’s mother wrote numerous letters asking government officials for help to change the situation, but had no success. Although heart wrenching and difficult as it was, she continued to visit regularly.

Catherine’s life became a hellish cycle of wild tantrums, sedation and restraint with no means or ability to communicate. Her weight dropped to 85 pounds and she developed severe eczema. Catherine’s family realized she would die if she remained there, so without knowing how they would support her, and with objections from the professionals, they took her home.

Being deafblind, Catherine’s needs were unique, but they continued to try to find better care options. Together with another family of a deafblind daughter, they founded the Deafblind Services Society and established a home with special adaptations in which the two women could live along with staff who were trained to communicate with the deafblind.

Today, Catherine can communicate her wants and needs with sounds, signals and picture symbols. She is an enthusiastic cook and housekeeper and has learned to understand basic banking. She has a volunteer job at a church, sees her family regularly and has developed close relationships with her staff and a few friends.

Catherine’s life now has meaning, dignity, and happiness – what everyone deserves. She was lucky to have an incredibly strong family who took risks and fought battles. Today Catherine is proof that with the ability to communicate and help to find our abilities and strengths, everyone is capable of learning, being more independent and living a meaningful life. 🦋

## CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT

By Brian Salisbury, Director of Strategic Planning, CLBC

CLBC and its community partners will host an international conference in Richmond from March 10-12, 2008. Entitled *Changing the World One Person at a Time: Canadian Perspectives*, the goal is to help service providers think about how to individualize their supports and services. Organizers expect participants from across North America and overseas.

In recent years, an important development in the disability field is the focus on helping the people they support to lead more socially inclusive lives. The key is a commitment to innovation. The conference will feature providers from across Canada who have “walked the talk” and have a long history of implementing innovative approaches. Participants will learn the latest ways these agencies are responding to unique needs. Importantly, BC participants will have an opportunity to help re-shape the way supports and services are provided in this province.

Along with 30 years of experience in planning, providing, and evaluating human services, Dr. John O'Brien, the keynote speaker, has written numerous articles and given presentations on individualized supports, service system changes and person-centred planning. Dr. O'Brien is sought nationally and internationally for his ability to facilitate groups dealing with complex social change. He is a recognized developer of person-centred approaches to individual and organizational planning.

Participants will learn the latest ways these agencies are responding to unique needs.

Another major presenter is Dr. Michael Kendrick, an independent international consultant in human services and community work. His interests, involvements and writings

include leadership, service quality, creating safeguards for vulnerable persons, social integration, innovation, values, advocacy, the role of individuals and small groups in creating advances, evaluation, alternatives to bureaucracy, personalized approaches to supporting people and human service reform.

Organizers plan to have one to two agency representatives from across Canada share their stories in one of five key areas that are seen as

- How did they begin individualizing their supports?
- What planning process was used to identify people's potential and how has this made a difference in their lives?
- How were individual innovations fostered over time?
- How have quality supports been maintained?
- What challenges were faced in transforming existing supports and services into more person-centred options?

essential to achieving individualized outcomes:

Each plenary will have break-out session to provide participants with practical information.

Organizers want to “mine” the conference proceedings to identify key ideas that can be included in a made-in-BC strategy for service providers interested in individualizing their existing supports and services. A draft strategy will be developed by a “prospecting” team during the conference and will be presented at the closing plenary for feedback. The final plan will be available following the conference.

Registration details will be posted in the fall in the Events section of CLBC's website. If you have any questions e-mail Brian Salisbury, CLBC's Director of Strategic Planning, at [Brian.Salisbury@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Brian.Salisbury@gov.bc.ca). ✉



## A DREAM COME TRUE

By Heather Reid, *Alberni Valley News*

This summer, Leonard Schwartz's dreams came true. Schwartz is a huge fan of Sissy Spacek and recently he got to meet her.

Schwartz is a 44-year-old man who has Down Syndrome. He spends a lot of time at the Port Alberni Association for Community Living (PAACL) with staffer Dave Parsons. "This is the No. 1 interest in his life," Parsons said.

He explained that about three years ago, the association's wood shop stopped operating as a workplace due to philosophical changes in working with people with disabilities. Rather than a factory operation, the wood shop is now a place for people to use as much, or as little, as they like.

Schwartz had been kept busy in the shop and when that changed, Parsons said he was at loose ends. Parsons said Schwartz started playing a lot of video games and through that, he discovered the Internet and started spending time online.

Schwartz is not overly verbal; he started trying to communicate something to people at the PAACL but they weren't getting it. "He dragged us up to the video store," Parsons remembers. Schwartz went to the S-section and picked up a copy of *The Straight Story*.

"On the cover was a picture of Sissy Spacek," Parsons said. In the 1999 movie Spacek plays the main character's adult daughter, who has a development disability.

Schwartz started creating art with pictures of Spacek. Parsons said he covered his lunch box with the Texan actor's face and made many collages. Schwartz also started writing again.

"He changed his name to Spacek," Parsons said. Although it's not legally changed, Spacek is how Leonard is known and Sissy wrote on her photo to him "to Leonard 'Spacek' Schwartz."

The former director of the PAACL, Susan Barr, heard that Spacek would be on Vancouver Island this summer.



*Leonard Schwartz with his autographed picture of Sissy Spacek. (photo courtesy of Alberni Valley News)*

Parsons and other staff got on the phone trying to get in contact with the star. Once they reached her people, Parsons said Spacek was "instantly supportive."

Three weeks went by, then the call came and Parsons and Schwartz had one day to get organized and get down to Sidney, where Spacek was filming a made-for-TV movie based on the book *Pictures of Hollis Wood* by Patricia Reilly Giff.

Parsons said that everyone was "fantastically nice," when they arrived on the set on the second to last day of shooting. Parsons said he could tell the actors and crew were tired but they went out of their way to make Schwartz feel welcome. Spacek particularly made time for them.

"It was just us and her," Parsons said. Schwartz presented Spacek with a collage he made and Spacek gave him a deluxe crew hoodie and autographed photo of herself. After watching a few scenes, Parsons said he figured that was it for the visit, when suddenly the director got out of his chair and let Schwartz take his spot. Wearing a headset, Schwartz watched Spacek work on her scenes then she would come out and look at the monitor with him and talk about it, Parsons said.

Parsons said he's still impressed by how the whole crew went the extra mile and how sincere Spacek was. And Schwartz still has a big smile on his face. 🦋

## DESCRIBED TV CHANNEL ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

Imagine you've tuned into the latest episode of CSI. The dialogue is gripping with yelling, screaming and cries of terror – he's trying to rescue her, but he can't get to her. She's scared, he's running. It's climaxing with each sentence, and suddenly – it stops. There's no sound and you have no clue what's happening.

This is often the experience for Canadians who are blind or are vision impaired when they attempt to watch a popular TV show or movie. But with the recent approval by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for The Accessible Channel, this will no longer be an issue.

Envisioned by The National Broadcast Reading Service (NBRS), a registered non-profit charity, their belief is that "all media should be accessible to everyone, and that means all manner of media including TV and movies," says Bob Trimbee, president of NBRS.

Anticipated to be operating by spring 2008, The Accessible Channel will provide 100 per cent "described" programming and 90 per cent captioned programming of popular TV shows and movies. Voice-overs added to the soundtrack will describe the visual elements of a movie, TV show and documentary, news broadcast and even a commercial, during the moments when dialogue has ended.

A CRTC broadcasting public notice states, "The importance of achieving increased accessibility also springs from the fact that television is clearly a key tool for social integration. Television is an essential source of information for Canadians, enabling them to involve themselves knowledgeably and effectively as members of Canadian society."

With the recent technological advances, producing described programming is much easier. According to the NBRS website, The Accessible Channel will be a 20-cents-a-month add-on to the basic digital cable already available.

"With The Accessible Channel," says Gerald Weseen, chair of the NBRS volunteer board, "people will know that just because they're blind or vision-restricted,

they're not excluded from programming that everyone else has access to."

*Described* programming is not a new concept; most TV sets have a Secondary Audio Programming (SAP) option. But what makes The Accessible Channel stand out is how it is in-sync with the show, describing what is happening exactly as it occurs on the screen. Most SAP options are delayed or do not flow through properly. "Our first-run programming will allow families, friends and spouses of vision-impaired individuals to watch and enjoy a show together," says Trimbee.

NBRS hopes that broadcasters will catch on to this way of programming and will realize the potential of the market resulting in an increase of described programming made available. By providing constant *described* TV, it has the potential to reach eight million homes every year.

"I grew up in the mountains of BC," says Trimbee, "so I understand what it's like to not have access to information or be able to watch TV. But with today's technology and The Accessible Channel, there is no reason why anyone should be left in the dust."

For more information on The Accessible Channel and to view a demonstration video please visit:

[www.nbrscanada.com](http://www.nbrscanada.com) or [www.voiceprintcanada.com](http://www.voiceprintcanada.com). ✖



# FILMS ON AUTISM AND DEAFNESS AT VANCOUVER FESTIVAL

## Autism: The Musical



**H**enry, the son of Stephen Stills (of Crosby, Stills and Nash), relates to the world through a near-encyclopedic knowledge of dinosaurs. Fourteen-year-old Lexy, on the cusp of adolescence, has a new interest in boys. Wyatt, precociously verbal and terrorized by bullies, has a passion for orchids. Adam taught himself to play blues harmonica before he was two, and has recently taken up the cello. In addition to their interests and activities, all of these kids also have some form of autism.

Director Tricia Regan's riveting documentary follows five different families participating in The Miracle Project (a theatre program created specifically for children with special needs) as their kids write and perform their own musical productions. For more information please visit: [www.autismthemusical.com](http://www.autismthemusical.com).

Tuesday, Oct. 2, 4:30 p.m.  
Pacific Cinematheque  
\$7.50

Friday, Oct. 5, 7 p.m.  
Vancity Theatre  
\$9.50

Sunday, Oct. 7, 6 p.m.  
Empire Granville 7 Theatre 5  
\$9.50

## Hear and Now

**D**irector Irene Taylor Brodsky tells the fascinating story of her deaf parents who, after living in near silence for 65 years, decide to have cochlear implant surgery (still the world's only prosthetic sense). Hear and Now will be a compelling journey for all audiences, but is a particular must-see for anyone who is losing their hearing, or knows someone who is.

"By framing her parents' marriage as an enduring love story, Taylor Brodsky suggests an idyllic silent world disrupted by the late-in-life addition of this new dimension. Before surgery, the couple appears holding hands on long, wordless walks or working together to read lips in group conversations. Friends since the age of three, when they met as classmates at the Central Institute for the Deaf, the pair learned to navigate their disability together." - Peter Debruge, *Variety*

Friday, Sept. 28, 7 p.m.  
Pacific Cinematheque  
\$9.50

Friday, Oct. 5, 11 a.m.  
Pacific Cinematheque  
\$7.50



Tickets are available on the VIFF website at [www.viff.org/home](http://www.viff.org/home), by phone (604-685-8297) or at ticket outlets. Please note: as Visa is the official credit card of the festival, it is the only credit card accepted. Tickets may be purchased with cash at either the Vancouver International Film Centre or the Granville 7 Theatre. A \$2.00 yearly membership must also be purchased to see any of the films at the Vancouver International Film Festival. Please visit their website at [www.viff.org/home](http://www.viff.org/home) for more information on shows and purchasing tickets. ♿



## CLAY TREE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

The Clay Tree Society was incorporated in Nanaimo as a non-profit society in May 1957 with the diligent efforts of parents who wanted a safe place for their children to go. It opened its first program with six participants, slowly growing in numbers and size. Now 50 years later, Clay Tree is celebrating its 50th anniversary with seven programs supporting 72 individuals from 18 to 70 years old.

Dan Bateman, who first came to Clay Tree in 1965 said, "I've seen all the changes here. We went from one little building and six of us to a great big place where I can come and go and do what I enjoy."

To commemorate October as Community Living Month, Clay Tree Society will host a 50s dinner and dance to honor 50 years of providing support in their community.



(Back: left to right): Mark Weatherby, Dan Bateman, Juli Stevenson, Richard McLellan, Deborah Munday (Front: left to right): Shauna Costello, Janine Gibson, Cicely Ovens, Bernadette Hatton

**Place:** Cavoletti Hall in Nanaimo

**Date:** Saturday, October 20, 2007

**Time:** 6 p.m. - 1 a.m.

**Cost:** \$20 per ticket

- available for purchase at  
838 Old Victoria Road

**Dinner:** catered banquet style

**Live band:** 50s and 60s rock

Chevy Ray & the Fins

- toonie bar
- open to all friends of Clay Tree ✨

## 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. In order for us 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](http://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](http://www.hotmail.com) or [www.yahoo.ca](http://www.yahoo.ca). ✨

## LAST CALL FOR SHUTTERBUGS

As you head back to work or school after the summer break, you're reunited with friends and colleagues. We'd like you to capture those moments.

*The Citizen* is accepting its final entries for its second annual photo contest. The contest is free and is open to anyone with access to a camera. We are looking for photos that best capture the people in your community.

Winning photos will be featured in a photo spread in

the November edition of *The Citizen*, and top winners will also win great prizes. Please visit [www.communitylivingbc.ca/news\\_and\\_events/PhotoContest.htm](http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/news_and_events/PhotoContest.htm) for full contest rules and regulations.

Contest deadline is October 31, 2007.

So when you head out the door this fall, don't forget your camera – the winning photo might be right before your eyes! ✨



## 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](mailto:editor@communitylivingbc.ca).

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

If you have a general question about CLBC, please e-mail: [info@communitylivingbc.ca](mailto:info@communitylivingbc.ca).

For the most up-to-date information on CLBC, please visit our website at: [www.communitylivingbc.ca](http://www.communitylivingbc.ca).



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