

The Citizen

Connecting people with their community



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA



Community Living Month Kicks Off

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The annual celebration acknowledges and encourages inclusive communities and opportunities for all British Columbians.

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Lois Hollstedt, C.M.

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OCTOBER IS COMMUNITY LIVING MONTH AND I WANT TO TAKE THIS

opportunity to acknowledge the many people who make our support system of services for people with developmental disabilities one of the best in the world. British Columbia has been a leader in developing community supports for individuals and families to live good lives.

I want to first acknowledge parents and families for their leadership over the past 50 years in creating our current system. I remember visiting Tranquille in the 1970s when it was deemed to be a good option to keep people in large institutions. Parents, families and community members took the lead in helping to educate policy makers about community options. Thanks to all of you for your early and continuing leadership.

The staff who work in organizations that deliver many of the support services have also been hard working leadership pioneers, finding new approaches to ensure people have choices about how they live, work and play. They spend their entire professional life looking for new and more effective ways to ensure people both manage and excel. Our system is rich with their good ideas, good humour and positive results. Thanks for choosing this area of work and bringing your daily dedication to it.

The business community has provided both donations, many dedicated volunteers to our work, and are one of the important change agents in making people with disabilities more visible. In greater numbers they are recognizing an untapped potential pool for valuable staff additions and we celebrate their vision and involvement. We thank you for your leadership and support.

Governments in British Columbia have been supportive of the vision to make inclusion a reality in our province. Over the years we have moved toward real integration with regular progress year after year. Change is never easy for any of us but we have seen courage and decisive action by governments to adjust policy and provide resources towards improving our approaches and our outcomes. Provincial and local governments have been strong supporters so thanks to both the elected and professional staff in government for learning about our issues and taking action to make lives better.

A strong voice for change has come from people living with developmental disabilities. The voices of self-advocates have been leading the dialogue and I want to acknowledge their ongoing leadership in creating understanding. You are the best teachers and without your stories we would not be where we are today. Thank you for sharing your experiences and pointing to a new path.

CLBC will continue to listen to all the voices that contribute to our work of helping people to live good lives in welcoming communities. We appreciate your interest and dedication and your partnership in building a better system. ■

Living a busy life of work and play

By Lynnetta Beingessner

“We are passionate about helping people understand what the life of a self-advocate is like”

— Lynnetta Beingessner, Self-Advocate



Lynnetta enjoys spending time with her new grandson Jesse.

MY NAME IS LYNNETTA

Beingessner. I live in Invermere, which is a tiny town in the Kootenays. Invermere is between Golden and Cranbrook. I have lived here since I was five years old.

I live in an apartment on my own and am a newly single woman. I am getting back into the swing of single life, going back to doing Karaoke and some of the other things I love. One of my brothers lives near me. He is a musician and plays in different places around town. I really love to go and listen to him wherever he is playing.

I am a member of the Self-Advocate group in Cranbrook. Right now we are working on an awareness program. We are passionate about helping people understand what the life of a self-advocate is like. We have a lot of fun and it is worth the trip which is about one and a half hours each

way by car. I will be going to a conference for Self-Advocates in October. I will be travelling to Vernon with my mom to attend. I will be seeing some old school friends there which makes me excited and kind of nervous.

I have a pretty busy life. I am just going back to my job working for the Post Office. I do a mail run five days a week. I am really excited to be going back to my job.

I also volunteer with elderly people. My mom has worked in a care home since I was young, so the people I visit at the home have known me for many years. I love to spend time with them. We play games and go for coffee or a walk. I think I am good company for them and I love it! I also do a bit of volunteer work as an adult candy striper at the hospital. I sit with people who are very ill and keep them company. I am a real people person.

But I guess the most important thing in my life right now is my new grandson Jesse. He is two months old and he is such a good boy!

I love to take care of Jesse and do the Grandma thing. He has grown so much since he was born. I have been knitting him slippers. He is starting to smile which is the best! I am very proud to be his Grandma.

Whenever I am happy about something, you will hear me say, “Hunky Dory.” That is my favorite thing to say. So when I think of my life here in Invermere, I think, “Hunky Dory!” ■

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 email editor@communitylivingbc.ca

With work and dedication, Self-Advocate Conference comes together

By Greta Cooper, Team Assistant, Vernon Community Living Centre



CONFERENCE PLANNING

is no walk in the park. On October 19 and 20 a dedicated group of self advocates will be able to appreciate the results of numerous phone calls, meetings, speechwriting, menu, decoration and workshop planning. About 75 people from the Thompson Cariboo region and as far south as the Kootenays will attend what is planned to be the first of many Interior Self-Advocate Conferences.

“There was interest amongst Self-Advocates to see some leadership development,” says Bill Tidsbury, CLBC Community Planning and Development manager. The idea for the conference came about two years earlier through a leadership event explained Bill.

Self-Advocate project assistant Sarah Hall invited people from Kelowna, Kamloops and Vernon to meet with an Alberta group called Leadership Today. The main feeling expressed by the Self-Advocates who attended was that they wanted to speak up for themselves better and learn how to help others. They

wanted to become better leaders. The group was also enthusiastic about the possibility of a conference.

Last fall, Ted Dekker took over the Self-Advocate project assistant role from Sarah. Ted is the main contact person for the conference. His job has been to move the planning process forward. With a committee and supports he’s managed to put it altogether.

Kicking off the conference is keynote speaker Cory Johnson, a young man born with cerebral palsy who suffered a stroke at the age of 11. He’s described as a person who lives life to the fullest and uses his life experiences, inspirations and education to overcome barriers and challenges. He’ll present two workshops: “Is a disability a disability or is it your perception?” and “Speaking up for your rights.”

Day one will wrap up with dinner, socializing and some dancing. The next morning the conference will continue with more workshops including: Laura Klassen & Linda Evans presenting “Accessing Your Community,” Tricia

Lins & Mandy Bremner talking about leadership, and Tracy Jo Russell and Tony Cuglietta hosting a workshop on employment.

The conference promises to be inspiring, educational and a great social opportunity. Bill says he’s been very impressed with the leadership development that has taken place amongst the whole group, and the way that Self-Advocates have taken hold of their own thoughts and ideas. ■



Sarah Hall (left) and Ted Dekker (above) have both worked as Self-Advocate project assistants to bring the Interior Self-Advocate Conference from an idea to a reality.

Once upon a council meeting

by Rasika Aklujkar

“...stop putting so much pressure on yourself to always sound intelligent about everything, just be your unique self.”

—Rasika Aklujkar

RASIKA AKLUJKAR HAS SERVED ON SEVERAL COMMITTEES, councils and boards, including work with Richmond Society of Community Living, People First and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Currently she serves on the Richmond Delta CLBC Community Council as a minute taker. With her story below, Rasika hopes to share with other Self-Advocates some of the lessons she's learned from her experiences:

Once upon a time there was just a person with a disability volunteering for an organization after many years of being a participant in its programs. The next thing this person is being asked by service providers to provide their input on these services. Not many people know everything about the services. They have to learn about them. Also not many people are able to speak to a crowd of people. They have to be motivated by a person who can mentor them. Just being a participant in a program may not be enough.

When they come to this level do you know what they see? They see the managers, parents and a receptionist taking the minutes. This picture can be overwhelming. This can be frustrating.

My message to the people in the position of the Self-Advocate is that I know what it feels like to be on a team or a council because I was once in this position. The first time around it was a frustrating and

overwhelming experience for me as well. Sometimes it felt like too much talk and no action but without talk there are no decisions made and therefore there is no action.

It's good to start by joining a committee. It gives you the topics to talk, think and learn about. Small steps help us with the big steps. I started out at this level and it helped me. To find out topics that really interest you, join in on a project that focuses on the topics of real concern. Through this, I have gained a lot of experience with employment and education issues.

Remember, it's not a weakness to ask questions about roles and responsibilities. Understanding them is much more important.

Look back at your own experiences and use them. Also, stop putting so much pressure on yourself to always sound intelligent about everything, just be your unique self. ■

Community Living Month kicks off



Bailey Lytle and Kathy Davis take a break from all the activities at the One Day Together event.

COMMUNITIES ACROSS BRITISH

Columbia are celebrating Community Living Month this October. An annual event, Community Living Month acknowledges the hard work of individuals, families and community members to create inclusive communities and opportunities for all British Columbians with developmental disabilities. In recognition of its importance, the communities of Vancouver, Burnaby, Victoria, Prince George, Kelowna and the Province of British Columbia have officially proclaimed October Community Living Month.

In Victoria, Community Living Month celebrations began a few days early with the One Day Together event on September 27. Organized by Garth Homer Society, Kadel, Community Living Victoria, Beacon Support Services and CLBC, the event was a celebration of diversity, community and humanity.

Held at the outdoor area at Juan De Fuca Recreation Centre, the event featured a baseball tournament, face painting, a dunk tank, a three point basketball competition, a "Self-Advocates for a Brighter Future" tent, and a BBQ. Heather, one of the self-advocates featured in CLBC's "Start with Hi" initiative was on hand to throw out the first pitch at the baseball tournament.

"We wanted to make sure it wasn't just a community living event but an event for the whole community," says Kristen Kay of Beacon Support Services.

Organizers promoted the event not only with local agencies, but also through malls, libraries and recreation centres. Self-Advocates were involved in every stage of planning and pulling off the event which attracted around 400 people of all ages from the community.

David Calder, an Olympic silver medalist in rowing at the 2008 Beijing Summer Games, was also on hand. He got up and talked to everyone attending about the importance of community, and how the support of his community was so important to reaching his athletic goals. David also presented the prizes to the winners of the afternoon's baseball tournament. The event wrapped up in the early evening with dancing and music provided by the band "Trainwreck."

"I've heard back from several people who attended and they all felt it was a fabulous day and a wonderful event," says Kristen. ■

Heather enjoys being part of the Start with Hi initiative





Helen Rutherford, Edmond Choy and Rhonda Connell serve ice cream at the One Day Together event.

“Trainwreck” puts on a lively performance to end the festivities.



Olympic silver medalist David Calder talks about the importance of belonging to a supportive community.

“The inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community enables all citizens to contribute their gifts, talents and abilities and to procure their rightful place at home, at school, at work and in community.

The Provincial Government wishes to acknowledge the role that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, friends and supporters play in the development of inclusive communities for all citizens.”

From the official Community Living Month Proclamation from the Province of British Columbia

CLBC celebrates Community Living Month by starting with “Hi”

TO CELEBRATE COMMUNITY LIVING

Month, Community Living BC is inviting British Columbians to participate in events across the province as part of the “Start with Hi” initiative to raise awareness about building safe, welcoming communities.

CLBC believes adults with developmental disabilities and their families have the right to pursue good lives in welcoming communities. Part of a good life is feeling safe where you live, go to school, work and play. Small actions like saying “Hi” can be the beginning of a small connection that can give people with developmental disabilities a greater sense of safety, belonging and welcome in the community. Great things can happen through small actions. CLBC asks that everyone just start with “Hi” and take it from there.

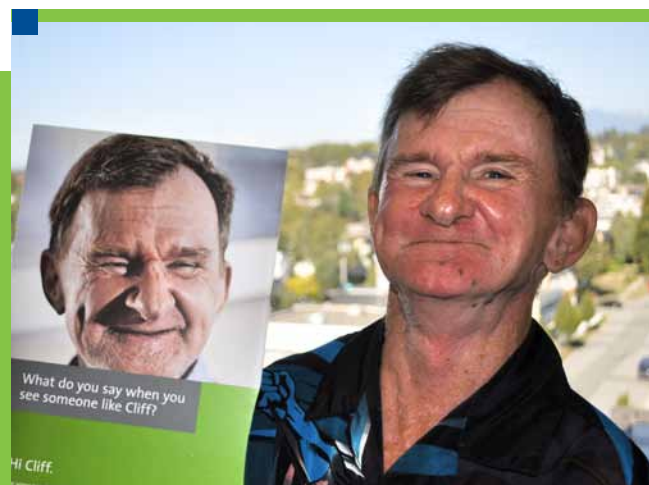
The “Start with Hi” events provide an opportunity for the public to participate in activities to celebrate Community Living Month. The first event took place on Saturday, October 3 at Oakridge Mall in Vancouver and was a great success.

Further events will be taking place at:

- Victoria, Tillicum Mall on Saturday, October 17
- Kelowna, Orchard Park Centre on Saturday, October 24
- Prince George, Pine Centre on Saturday, October 24

“I was very excited to be invited to take part. When I heard, I thought, ‘I want to be involved in that.’ People tell me they see my picture in the paper or they tell me they saw my poster. My life has really changed. This helps Self-Advocates be more aware of their surroundings because people say “hi” to them rather than ignoring them. They know that there are people out there who can help.”

— Cliff, Self-Advocate



Above: Cliff with his poster.

Left: Emin and Vancouver City Councillor Dr. Kerry Jang were at Oakridge Mall on October 3 to help tell the public about “Start with Hi.”

“My son is autistic. The friendly acknowledgement from those around him has an immeasurable impact on him. We are very grateful to those who greet him with a warm hello and have taken the time to get to know him.”

—from a story posted on StartwithHi.ca

The website, www.StartwithHi.ca, is informative and interactive. The site features videos of six British Columbians with developmental disabilities who share their different experiences and stories about inclusion. The site also encourages British Columbians to share their own written stories of inclusion and acknowledgement on the site, or on Facebook, Twitter or Flickr. You can visit the “Start with Hi” fan page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/startwithHi. There are already over 2,000 fans with more joining every day.

CLBC also attended the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Annual Convention which was held from September 28 to October 2 at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

CLBC and the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD) shared an exhibit at the convention’s Municipal Marketplace, which featured over 200 exhibitors from around the province. CLBC staff were on hand to promote inclusive employment, community inclusion and the “Start with Hi” awareness initiative. ■



Right: Posters from CLBC's Start with Hi initiative



Left to right: John Davies, manager of CLBC's Vancouver Community Living Centre, and Rachel Schmidt, Community Relations Specialist for CLBC, join Cairine MacDonald, Deputy Minister of MHSD and Asmeret Ghebremedhin, Senior Project Analyst for MHSD, to promote inclusive employment, community inclusion and the “Start with Hi” awareness initiative at UBCM's Municipal Marketplace.

A chance for real work and real pay

By Hannah Sutherland, Peace Arch News

WHEN ERIC SHERER RECEIVED HIS FIRST UNIFORM, a shirt with 'Fieldstone' printed on the chest, he wore the garment proudly to Semiahmoo House and showed his friends. Soon after, his first paycheque became the new object of admiration, and was tacked on his wall at home.

Since being hired at South Surrey's Fieldstone Artisan Breads a year ago, the 22-year-old, who has Down syndrome, has gained a newfound sense of ownership, accomplishment and pride.

"He's blossomed, he's come out of his shell, he's much more comfortable with himself," Fieldstone owner Paul Hanley said. It's why Semiahmoo House's Customized Employment Program strives to match people with disabilities with meaningful employment. "It's a rite of passage. Everyone should be entitled to work," program co-ordinator Kyli Lum said. "It's community inclusion. If they have the ability to work, why wouldn't we allow them to?"

The program emphasizes real work for real pay, and helps clients find a position that suits their interests and skills. Upon acquiring a job, a customized employment

staff member goes through the training with the new employee, adapting the instructions for the individual.

Lum spent a month with Sherer at Fieldstone, and continues to check in regularly. "We're here to problem-solve," she said. "We're not setting them up for failure, neither the participant or the business." Lum said businesses still tend to be apprehensive about getting involved. "It's been a bit of a hard sell."

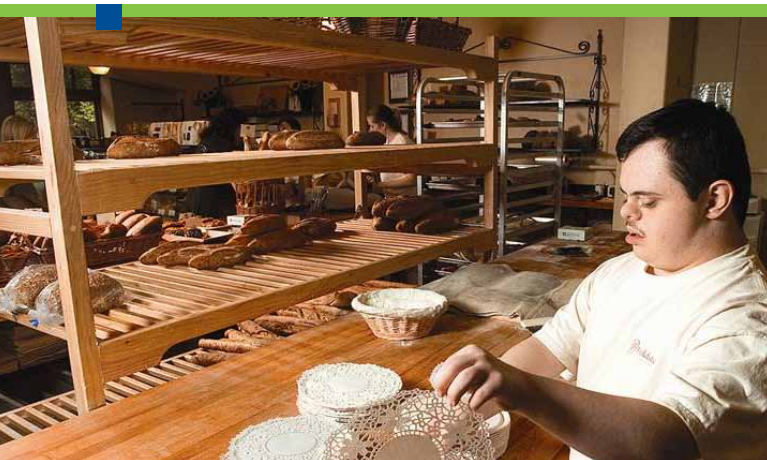
Hanley, who jumped onboard with the program when approached a year ago, can't understand why. "Everyone loves him," he said of Sherer. "He's just made an impact on all our lives. "Customers know Eric, all the other businesses in the complex know Eric. It's just a no-brainer for other businesses."

Hanley said Sherer is dependable, always smiling and has never been late or missed a day. The role has given him confidence, and he now talks to customers and jokes with staff.

"Let's get more Erics into the workforce. There's nothing to be scared of. You have to understand, it's not going to be easy, but in the end, you're going to have an amazing staff member. I haven't had any problems. I don't ever have to worry about him."

Sherer works 12 hours a week over three days, taking the HandyDART to the bakery, where he does dishes, makes boxes and vacuums. He is one of three people who have been hired in South Surrey/White Rock with support of the program, which has been offered over the last year by Community Living BC and the Ministry of Housing and Social Development.

"He feels like everyone else," mother Roswitha said. "He goes to work just like myself, my husband and my daughter, and is paid for a job well done. People who do not have disabilities take for granted that they will get a job in their community and be paid for their work, but for people with disabilities, that is not often a reality. Semiahmoo House is changing that reality." ■



Eric Sherer is working at Fieldstone Artisan Breads through a Semiahmoo House Society program that encourages employment for people with disabilities.

Music program provides a place for freedom of expression

WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU

connect professional musicians with a crowd of enthusiastic people willing to sing, dance and play music?

It's not a riddle – it's the formula for a weekly joyous coming together of up to 200 people, from teenagers to the elderly, at the Christ Community Church on Holland Avenue in Victoria.

The Namaste music program evolved organically, starting seven years ago in the kitchen of a day program run by Terry Flatt. Flatt's neighbour of 14 years was a well-known international jazz guitarist, Mark Atkinson. Atkinson started to come over to play for the people attending Flatt's day program. The result was immediate chemistry, and the number of people wanting to come grew rapidly. This encouraged Scott White, bassist and co-founder with Atkinson of the "Bill Hilly Band," to work to expand the program to as many people as possible. Flatt approached the Church beside his house to ask if they could use their space. The Church said yes, and ever since there's been music played there on Friday mornings from 10:30am to 11:30am.

Since the program started playing at the Church, it's seen a who's who of Victoria's skilled, professional musicians. The rotating roster of musicians playing every week is managed by Calvin Cairns, a well-known Canadian fiddler. He has helped to draw musicians such as singer/songwriter Carolyn Mark, violinist and teacher Daniel Lapp, Chris Frye, lead singer and guitarist

for "The Bills," and Devon McCafferty, a guitarist and singer who is also the band's front man.

Those that give of their time "are great musicians and great humanists, who can see past the disabilities to the community," says Flatt. They also have to be able to play a very broad range of songs, from "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" to AC/DC's "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap," as the participants choose the playlist.

Flatt says the success of the program does not hinge on him or the musicians. It's the people who come each week. The philosophy of Namaste is to give the audience what they want, that's what makes it work. "People can be who they want to be, when they want to be," says Flatt. "It doesn't matter how they look or behave. It's a chance for freedom of expression in public, and to show their love of music and people."

Participants choose the songs they want to hear and sing. The stage is set-up with a drum kit, piano, microphones and amps. People can choose an

instrument they want to play. The stage becomes crowded with the musicians, the regulars and those who have gotten the nerve for the first time to stand in front of the crowd. Couples and singles dance in front of the stage. Reunions of friends take place throughout the audience. It's a raucous, entertaining, energetic and joyful coming together.

Everyone is welcome at Namaste and the weekly event has drawn as many as 250 participants at one session. For many, it's the highlight, a much anticipated event. What do people have to say about it? "It's the best kept secret in Victoria."; "I love coming to see my friends."; "I can sing, I can sing!" ■



Family Governance in Action

THE IDEA FOR THE SUPPORTING EVERYDAY LIVES

Project took shape as the result of a common challenge experienced by families who require regular care for a family member. Karen De Long remembers how taxed she felt when faced with looking for another caregiver for her adult son. Around that same time she attended a Michael Kendrick workshop on family governance. His message of family authority struck home.

Karen got in touch with three other families with similar needs. Each of the families had a son in the 20 to 30 age range with considerable personal care needs. “As your adult children age, there is a point where you can’t be both a caregiver and a parent,” says Karen. Always having to negotiate with changing staff and training them in your son or daughter’s specific needs becomes exhausting and detracts from your ability to perform your primary role as a parent.

When the families got together it became clear that each of them had been looking for a solution in isolation and that getting together would provide them with the opportunity to both support one another and seek a joint solution. It made sense to join forces in a similar way as described in the family governance model explored by Michael Kendrick.

Karen and the other parents she was in contact with appreciated the support they had from agency staff. However, they also felt strongly that the unique care needs of their family members combined with their own hours of paid work called for more flexibility.

Through their collective involvement in the BC Association for Community Living and the Family Support Institute, they became aware of the CLBC Innovation Grant program and decided to make an application. Together, they created a proposal that was inclusive of each family’s needs. The key goal of the proposal was to ensure stable, quality care for each of the four young men involved. The idea was to pool the grant funding to hire a coordinator who could take some

of the burden of administrative chores off the shoulders of the families. After a series of discussions with CLBC, the grant arrived and the project was launched.

The first step was interviewing for the coordinator position. They feel fortunate in choosing Sara Fretheim to act as the project coordinator. It wasn’t long before they began to feel the positive effects of her involvement.

For Sara, taking on the job as project coordinator was a natural outgrowth from her previous involvement with families in the community. Sara is enthusiastic about the work and feels privileged to be able to work with families that demonstrate such determination and resiliency in the face of difficult challenges. Remarking on her role, she says it’s a pleasure to contribute to stress reduction for the families. Her work is varied and sometimes she has to balance people’s schedules with unpredictable events or crises that arise. The varying schedule requires lots of negotiation and she tries to give consideration to the needs of all the families and young men whose service she is coordinating. According to Sara, the job of coordinator requires a person to be flexible and to adjust to varying demands and workload. She further explains that the role requires a person to be prepared to offer leadership where required while also being sensitive to family direction at other times.

Sara’s responsibilities include screening and short listing potential support staff and assisting families with the selection of the best individual. The decision of who to hire always remains in the family’s hands. Sara offers her best advice based on her experience and areas of expertise. Each of the young men involved is a unique individual and has service tailor made for their particular needs. Consequently, support workers have to be matched for specific skills and the right personality.

Once staff is in place, she also provides some of the training and orientation they require. Sara coaches the staff in how



Wendy Langridge, Brent Langridge, Karen De Long, Helen Stovell, Angelo Aucelluzzo, Sara Fretheim.

best to work with the individual young men and provides them with background on each person's likes and dislikes. This seems to ensure a sound footing for the building of trusted relationships essential to quality support.

In addition to the more administrated chores, Sara also has used her community knowledge and connections to enhance the young men's community involvement. Karen says she appreciates this aspect of the project because without active engagement in community activities, young people with more complex care needs can end up "stuck in a pattern of social isolation." In addition to the coordination of service and support, Sara has prepared a report on potential housing options for the four young men.

Wendy, another of the mothers involved, relates an exciting example of Sara's involvement. She managed to re-connect one of the participants to a friend from school. Karen says it's great to know that you son is able to go out and visit a friend without having mom tag along. This reflects one unexpected outcome of Sara's contribution, the parents involved are experiencing an improved relationship with their sons. Wendy's son Brent, speaking on behalf of the four young men involved, says he can sum up their feeling about the project in three words: "Great, cool and wonderful." ■

Innovation at CLBC

CLBC's Innovation committee makes funding available each year on a one-time only basis for projects that help create sustainable, person-focused approaches to developing, funding and implementing needed supports and services. Innovations are new or significantly improved ideas, goods, services, processes or practices. CLBC needs and welcomes innovations that improve people's lives.

The Innovation committee provided the grant to the Supporting Everyday Lives Project to explore the use of a more focused model of service coordination.

Update on Flu Vaccines and the H1N1 virus

Simple Steps for Protection

1. Stay home when you're sick or have influenza symptoms. Get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.
2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
3. Cough or sneeze into your arm, not your hand, or cover your mouth with a tissue, and throw the tissue away immediately.
4. Wash your hands with soap and water or, if these are not available, use hand sanitizer or disposable hand wipes.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Practice other good health habits like getting plenty of sleep, being physically active, managing stress, drinking plenty of fluids, eating nutritious foods, and avoiding smoking.

H1N1 is a New Flu Virus

The H1N1 flu (human swine flu) is a respiratory flu caused by type A influenza virus. The strain of H1N1 flu affecting people worldwide is a new variant of the influenza virus. Since this is a new strain, people have limited natural immunity to protect against the virus. To date, the majority of the H1N1 flu virus cases in British Columbia have been relatively mild.

Flu Spreads Easily

Seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu can both spread from person to person through droplets from coughing or sneezing by people who are infected with the flu. People may also get the flu by touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Germs can live on hard surfaces for up to two days and on hands for up to five minutes. It is important to wash your hands frequently, and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Seasonal Flu Vaccine

Every year, B.C. offers free flu vaccine to British Columbians considered to be at high-risk for complications from the flu. For the 2009/10 flu season, the seasonal flu vaccine will initially be offered to people 65 and older, and residents in long-term care homes.

The seasonal flu vaccine, or "flu shot," contains inactivated (i.e. killed) viruses based on worldwide tracking of flu viruses, and predictions about which strains will circulate that season. The 2009/10 vaccine contains three flu viruses: one flu A/H1N1 virus, one flu A/H3N2 virus, and one flu B virus.

Any flu vaccine only protects against respiratory illness caused by the flu virus. The vaccine does not protect against the viruses and bacteria that cause colds or what is commonly called "stomach flu."

H1N1 Vaccine

The H1N1 vaccine has been developed and is expected to arrive in British Columbia in November when it will be available free of charge. Everyone who wants or needs the vaccine is expected to be able to receive it by Christmas. This year, the predominant strain of seasonal influenza is the H1N1 virus. While those people who are 65 and older or live in long-term care homes should still receive the seasonal flu shot this year, for the majority of the population, the flu virus they need to protect themselves against is the new strain of H1N1.

For more information about the H1N1 virus and planning in BC to combat it, visit www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1. For handwashing and flu protection posters, see www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1/toolsandresources. ■

New website will connect families and support workers

RECRUITING SUPPORT WORKERS

for personal support needs and community participation can be a challenge for people with disabilities and their families. Through the support of an Innovation Grant from Community Living BC, The Family Support Institute is pleased to announce a new initiative, Supportworkercentral.com, a BC-wide website launching in November 2009 to provide a central location for families to post job profiles and recruit support staff.

This innovative idea will allow families supporting individuals with a disability to connect with freelance support workers who have the qualifications to meet a variety of support and respite needs. The site will include important information on the Canada Revenue Agency and payroll administration.

Service providers offering support worker services will be able to advertise on the site and search for support workers who make their profiles available to agencies. Families, service

agencies and support workers will have access to job opportunities and support worker profiles from across BC. The web site will also help families connect with other families in their communities.

Visit www.supportworkercentral.com for more information and watch for the official launch of the website in November. ■

Creative recycling results in artwork and income

By Greta Cooper, Team Assistant, Vernon Community Living Centre

CREATE-A-MANIA IS THE BRAINCHILD

of Betty Worthington, art program co-ordinator for Mainstreet Connections, a program run by Kindale Development Association. On a visit to Vancouver, Betty discovered a place where people could go pick out what they wanted from recycled items and use those items in artistic projects. Being a thrifty person, Worthington's philosophy is "use what you have."

She presented the idea to her art class in Vernon last year and soon it took on a life of its own. "It went crazy when we started," says Betty.

The response from local businesses has been very positive. Participants approached businesses with their idea and they received all kinds of donations: stickers, watch batteries, paint samples, shoelaces, leather, wood,

paper, cloth and jewellery. One of the projects participants have worked on involved a long mirror, with tea cups split in half and attached. "Stuff like that just sells like hotcakes," says Betty.

For each piece of art that is sold, the artist receives half and the other half goes back into the art program. All of the materials that are used to create the art are donated so the money generated benefits both the artists and the program. Create-A-Mania participants are also looking at creating craft bags to sell.

This year they introduced recycling education along with craft making into some local schools, including Hillview Elementary. On a recent visit, they brought canvasses which were donated by an artist who was no longer in business and realized they could be recycled. Teacher Sara Blundell said the education and assistance in the classroom has been really positive for all involved. ■



Angie Babchuk works with Thomas Davies and Erika Poulton who are busy creating their summer picture project.



Calling all photographers

The Citizen is still accepting entries for its fourth annual photo contest, and this year we've added a little extra. As well as your photos, we want to hear your stories.

Inclusion is the theme of this year's photo contest and we're looking for photos that show what inclusion is all about. With your photo, we'd also like a short story telling us about how your photo or photos show inclusion. It doesn't need to be a long story. We're looking for about 100 to 150 words.

The contest is free and is open to anyone with a camera. The best photos and stories will be featured in the December edition of *The Citizen*, and top winners will also receive prizes.

The deadline for submitting entries is Wednesday, November 18. For full contest rules and regulations, please visit: www.communitylivingbc.ca and then go to News & Events > Photo Contest.

Remember, when you head out the door, don't forget your camera!

CONTACT US

Submit

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

Questions

If you have a general question about CLBC, email info@communitylivingbc.ca

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 submission, *The Citizen* reserves the right to edit content for accuracy, grammar and space, but strives to maintain the integrity and voice of the author.

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