

The Citizen

Connecting people with their community



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA



Working inspiration

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Lois Hollstedt, C.M.

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CLBC WILL MARK AN EXPANSION OF SERVICE IN PROVIDING SUPPORT

to a new group of adults with complex needs when it begins to accept applications for the Personalized Supports Initiative (PSI) on February 1, 2010.

The PSI establishes a new set of criteria for adults who are currently not eligible for services under CLBC’s existing criteria. Adults with a diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), plus significant limitations in adaptive functioning, may now be eligible for supports that help them maintain or increase their independence.

The PSI will be a unique approach to service that will strive to develop an individualized and personalized approach to meeting the needs of the adults who are eligible. This may mean help to coordinate existing supports, or to provide access to services such as supported living, respite, employment support, skill development and homemaker support.

Facilitators in CLBC offices throughout the province will work with adults and their families to confirm eligibility, assess needs, create individual plans for support, and coordinate existing or needed services. Individuals or their families interested in applying will find the application form and more information about the PSI on the CLBC website under What We Do > Personalized Supports Initiative.

The PSI marks the beginning of providing services to a distinct group of adults that have not been previously eligible through any ministry or agency program. This work could not have been completed without the dedication of cross-ministry and CLBC staff, families and members from the community living and disability sectors who provided their recommendations that set the direction and focus for the PSI. We thank them for their work, and for helping CLBC improve its services to this new group of adults and their families. ■

Singing helps woman find her voice

By Ruth Stanton

“When I get overwhelmed by too many options, I have to take time to think and talk to friends.”

— Ruth Stanton, Self-Advocate



Ruth attended CLBC's Start with Hi event in Prince George during Community Living Month in October.

I AM A SELF ADVOCATE from the North. I grew up in Cranbrook and Creston and moved to Prince George about five years ago.

I went to school in Cranbrook. High School was not a great time for me. I am proud that I didn't quit. I hung in there and graduated but it was not easy.

I found school to be a lonely place but one thing that got me through the tough times is singing. I love to sing and would spend a lot of my school day in the music room. The music room became my community. One of my fondest memories was singing in the choir.

One year, Frank Mills performed in our town and our choir performed with him. It was Christmas time and so on top of our usual Christmas performance, we also sang at that concert as Frank Mills' backup. Now that I am finished school, I sing in the choir at church.

Another passion of mine is working with children. My

dream is to take courses in Early Childhood Education and work with pre-school age children. My favourite age group is 3 and 4 year olds. So right now I have been trying to upgrade my courses and get into college. Math is my biggest barrier and I need to have Grade 10 level math to get into the courses I want.

Sometimes the choices get really overwhelming. When I get overwhelmed by too many options, I have to take time to think and talk to friends. My mom and sisters, I have three, also help me to think through some things and make some decisions.

I am involved with the Self Advocate Group in Prince George and I love it! I have made some great friends in this group. We are pretty active. Right now we are planning an employer appreciation event for businesses and people who hire self advocates in Prince George. We want to honor and thank those employers and we also want to raise awareness about the good

things that self advocates can do as employees. We are good workers. Our goal is to find more jobs for people. Our group is being coached by an advisor from Aim-Hi which is the agency in Prince George where we meet.

Other than that, our group meets regularly, supports each other through good and bad times. We go to the pub, the mall and all the places that friends go together. I met one of my best friends in this group. In fact, I was a bridesmaid at her wedding a couple of years ago.

I have to say that I love living in Prince George! I came here from the Kootenays and never went back. Prince George is home to me now and that is fine with me. ■

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

Family opens their home and hearts

story by Barry Gray, photographs by Ursula Heller

EVERY SEPTEMBER, WE ARE AMAZED

that another year has passed with Sherry in our family. This year it has been fifteen. Sherry was born in Nelson in 1965, so our rural home near Nelson seemed like a good fit when her family were looking to relocate her after eight years in the Extended Care ward of an Okanagan general hospital. For eight years, her roommates had been octogenarians so the switch to a family with two pre-teen aged children was profound. Sherry took to it as well as our family took to her.

Our children were ten and twelve and quickly adopted Sherry as a mix between an auntie and a sister. Sherry had spent the final years of her childhood in a children's care home in Vernon and seemed to remember being surrounded by kids. So the change from elderly roommates to a bustling family life was very positive for Sherry. Not to mention all the visiting friends of our children who in turn were also positively affected by her presence. Sherry's family too, felt the change was the best thing that could have happened for her. On top of that, she now lived closer and they could see her more than once or twice a year.

Barry, with Sherry, left, and Maggie, right, listen to his son Tobias play guitar in their home.

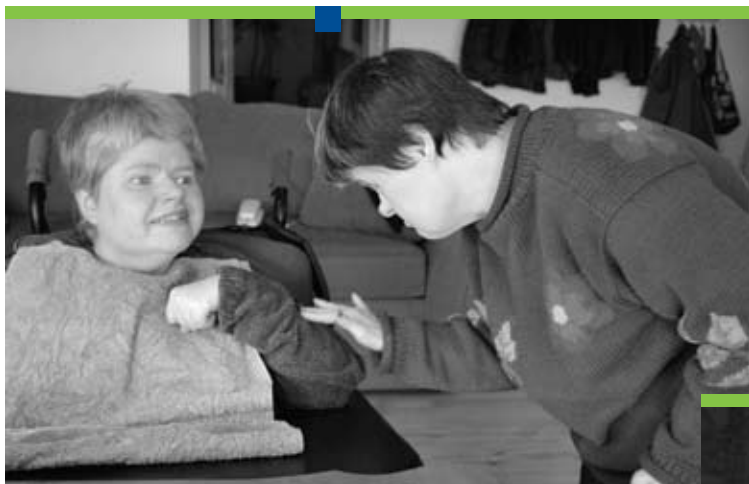
We often hear of the fear and trepidation that families experience when their loved ones move into Home Share situations. Such was not the case here. Sherry's sister in Nelson had been the strongest advocate to have Sherry moved from institution to family setting. The staff in the hospital were some of the most caring people I've met, but they just didn't have the time to give Sherry the attention she needed to lead a fulfilling life. Being in a family home created a calm atmosphere for Sherry, which greatly improved her quality of life.

Whenever our children, now 25 and 27, visit home, they are immediately drawn to Sherry who was always there through their teen years and was such a big part of their lives, just as they were part of hers. The love between them is still deep.

We also mark another day to honour another person joining our family. That day is December 5, when Maggie came to live with us six years ago. Maggie is approaching her senior years and has spent most of her life in institutional care. We don't know many details of her time in Woodlands and Tranquille before she came to Nelson about 30 years ago. In Nelson, she lived in several group homes before the decision six years ago to try the Home Share model.

In the fall of 2003, we had already been identified as the family with whom Maggie would be going to live. There were arguments against the move, including fears that Maggie would miss out on social outings in Nelson, that she would no longer see her long time friends from the group homes and that she would be isolated "out in the country." In our opinion the fears were unfounded.





Left: Sherry and Maggie share their daily greeting.

Below: Barry and Ursula's daughter Mona shares a moment with Sherry, who she's known since 1994.



There were initial transitional issues, but Maggie soon came to realize that her life in our home suited her very well. Maggie became a calm, happy person who reveled in the undivided attention she received and who seemed to drop the defense mechanisms she needed in a large group setting of people with various and diverse needs and personalities. Maggie was able to become the person she wanted to be. Maggie and Sherry are no competition for each other and have become close friends.

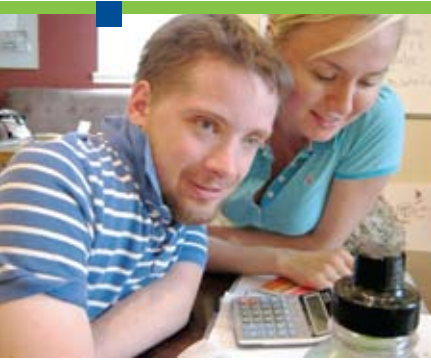
People who have known Maggie for many years, including her former caregivers, often comment on the Maggie they now know when they see her with us or with our respite workers in Nelson. She visits her old friends. She attends events at many local community halls. She still regularly goes to her Special Olympics bowling league. She has made trips to see her siblings and they have come to see her. She knows every coffee shop in Nelson.

Far from wanting to blow our own horns, because most caring, sensible people could do what we do and have done, we want this report to be a call to support the Home Share model of caregiving.

Sherry and Maggie have been our best teachers. We are the lucky ones to be blessed with such a living situation. It is the proverbial win/win situation. Families have the privilege of sharing their homes with a special needs person, that person benefits greatly and British Columbia makes a positive statement to the world by offering such a program. ■

Ursula Heller and Barry Gray have been involved in Home Sharing for more than eighteen years. Ursula is a photographer who specializes in social documentary photography. Barry is a teacher and writer. Together they have published six books and are working on another.

Building skills and expanding knowledge



Christopher Ham, with support worker Alekesandra works on his math skills.

WHEN CHRISTOPHER Ham graduated from New Westminster Secondary School last June, his mother Nancy Clarke wanted his education to continue in a meaningful way. Through the use of Individualized Funding from CLBC, that goal is being realized.

Christopher, along with two other students, Amit Kainth and Jaspreet Sidhu, are participating in T.E.A.M. (Together Exploring Alternative Models for Life), an educational program designed for their needs. The three became friends in high school and their families wanted to foster that friendship and their learning.

It was important that the program gave the young men opportunities to continue learning in an engaging and relevant way. “It’s studying, learning, because everybody should strive for more knowledge. Just because school has ended doesn’t

mean they should stop learning. Also, they deserve some fun,” says Nancy.

To run the program, the families turned to Pat Numata, a recently retired New Westminster Secondary School teacher who has taught in New Westminister for more than 30 years, including 19 years with special needs students.

Along with her experience, Pat has brought a strong passion for education to the program. “Personal growth isn’t just about health,” says Pat. “We’re educating for lifelong learning.”

Pat, Christopher, Amit and Jaspreet, along with support staff from Community Living Society, meet Monday to Friday, from 8:30am to 3:00pm. In the morning, the focus is generally on literacy and math skills. Among their lessons, the young men learn about counting money and budgeting, finding and asking for information, and giving and following directions.

“If they’re on the bus, I want them to feel comfortable asking questions about getting where they want to go. We’ve learned about giving directions using cross streets. It’s about having a strategy to find the information they need,” says Pat.

In the afternoon, the young men are often out in the community with their support workers applying the skills they’ve learned. They’re currently working on a resource book of local information, including the names of businesses and the services they offer.

They also study a variety of subjects including geography, learning about where Vancouver is in Canada and where Canada is in the world. As well, they keep up on current events. Recently the boys have been tracking the Olympic Flame as it makes its way across Canada, and at the same time learning about the history of the Olympics.

“Christopher is thriving,” says Nancy, “They’re busy and they’re learning relevant life skills and things about their own community and the wider community.” ■



(left to right) Alekesandra, Amit, Jordan, Christopher, Madeline and Jaspreet meet during the week in a space at Thornbridge Gardens in New Westminister.

Listening to families

SYLVIE ZEBROFF IS THE FIRST FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Advisor for CLBC. Her role is to help CLBC to be a more family friendly organization, and to build the capacity and resiliency of individuals and families. Currently, Sylvie is working closely with Shelley Nessman, CLBC's Self-Advocate Advisor, on a series of meetings this spring with self-advocates and their families called "You, Me and CLBC". (Please see the sidebar for more information about the dates, times, and locations of the meetings.)

Before joining CLBC, Sylvie's personal and professional experiences included working as a grass roots advocate and CLBC Community Council member, studying community rehabilitation and disability studies at the University of Calgary, and working in the disability health research field with the Disabilities Health Research Network. Sylvie is also a parent of two children, Megan, 18, and James, 15, who has autism.

Sylvie is very excited at the prospect of working and meeting with families, and helping to strengthen knowledge and information-sharing with families and CLBC through networking initiatives, partnership building, brain-storming and training opportunities, and regular and reciprocal communication. If you'd like to speak with Sylvie, please contact her by e-mail at Sylvie.Zebroff@gov.bc.ca, or by phone at 250-470-8327.

Shelley Nessman

Shelley has worked with individuals with disabilities and their families for 30 years. As the Self-Advocate Advisor, she supports staff at CLBC to identify issues and explore solutions that affect self-advocates, and help identify opportunities to support the development of an organizational culture that is sensitive to the needs and issues faced by self-advocates and their families. You can contact Shelley by e-mail at Shelley.Nessman@gov.bc.ca. ■



CLBC Family Partnership Advisor Sylvie Zebroff with her children Megan and James.

You, Me and CLBC

Meetings to provide information about CLBC, and to gather input from self-advocates and families on CLBC planning and priorities, will be held in:

February 21
Campbell River
1:00pm - 3:30pm
Campbell River
Community Center

February 28
Kelowna
1:30pm - 4:00 pm
Parkinson Recreation
Centre

March 3
Prince George
6:30pm - 9:00pm
Civic Center

March 11
Powell River
6:30pm - 9:00pm
Town Centre Hotel

March 13
Mission
1:00pm - 3:30pm
Mission Leisure Centre

March 17
Victoria
6:30pm - 9:00pm,
University Club of
Victoria, UVic campus.

March 24
Dawson Creek
6:30pm - 9:00pm
Nawican Friendship
Centre

March 27
Vancouver
1:30pm - 4:00pm
Mount Pleasant
Community Centre

Hockey brings community together

ON THE EVENING OF NOVEMBER 21, SNOW BEGAN TO FALL IN NELSON BC.

Hockey fans made their way to the arena to cheer on their local hockey team, the Nelson Leafs. When they arrived, they were greeted by self-advocates and staff from CLBC and Nelson Cares Society. A series of Start with Hi posters were on display in the windows around the arena and each fan received a towel, which they could use to wave and cheer, that read, “Nelson Leafs Support Community Inclusion.”

When the hockey teams took to the ice, the announcer welcomed a special guest, Tracy Jo Russell, who is featured in CLBC’s Start with Hi initiative. Tracy Jo spoke to the audience about her own disability and the importance of saying hello to people with developmental disabilities. She explained that saying hello makes people feel important, included and keeps them safe. During the intermission, Tracy Jo autographed posters for the fans and handed out Start with Hi buttons and bracelets.

Staff from the local CLBC office in Castlegar partnered with Nelson Cares Society to host this treasured community event. Alison Roy, Measuring Up and Supported Employment Coordinator from Nelson Cares Society, said they wanted to recognize the Nelson Leafs because of their commitment to community inclusion and to providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

During the game, Mark Knapik, a student from LVR Secondary School presented the November Volunteer of the Month award to the Leafs’ Jacob Perich. Perich was recognized for his work around the community particularly the Nelson Leafs’ “Reading Buddy Program” at the library, which he organized.

This was truly an inclusive community event, a good time was had by all and the Leafs won the game. For more information on Start with Hi, and to see more of the pictures from this event, please visit www.StartwithHi.ca. ■



Above: Tracy Jo hands out Start with Hi bracelets and buttons and talk to fans about community inclusion.



Left: Fans wave their towels and cheers on the Nelson Leafs to victory.

All it takes is “Hi”

from a story by Cameron Orr, Smithers Interior News

LEONA BARENDREGT IS A HARD working 26-year-old. Her time is split between three jobs, some of which she has had for nearly a decade, and in 2007 she took courses at the Northwest Community College studying computers. She also likes to boast about her large family (she has three sisters and seven brothers).

As easy as she makes life seem, she has her share of challenges. Leona is part of a tight-knit group of people in Smithers who have a developmental disability. Leona's is Down Syndrome, and she is helped by a vast support network of friends and family.

Down Syndrome is, in scientific terms, a condition where a person has extra genetic material, causing delays in a child's development. Problems associated with it vary but a scientific definition of a condition doesn't tell the story of a young woman who seems to be having the time of her life living in Smithers.

“I love it here,” said Leona, noting that she has lived in Smithers her entire life.

Some of her large family forms the basis of a support group, which meet with her about four or five times a month. They help her out as she plans out her future and right now are helping to raise funds to get her an apartment in town.

She is a busy person, especially when you include the fact that she's a Special Olympic athlete in bowling, curling and swimming.

Smithers has opened its arms to her and she says that nothing is out of reach to her, and everyone has been very friendly. That view of the community is shared by Leona's big sister, Clara Hofsink, who also runs the Recreation and Social Development program at the High Road Service Society.

“The help that the community has been giving has just been phenomenal,” she said.

Her program helps develop socialization and friendship building for persons with disabilities. “The opportunities that they're having through this program are just endless,” she said, pointing out that participants get to ride horses and skate.

The number of people who drop in fluctuates, partially determined by the particular activity planned for the day, but runs between 10 to 15 people each morning. That's a number, said Hofsink, that is increasing.

People are referred to the program by Community Living BC. While the public at large has become very supportive, there was an adjustment period when the group first started getting out into the community.

“I feel, when I first started going out in the community, you can see apprehension with the public, they're not so sure where they stand with the individuals,” she said. “Once we do it on a regular basis it's amazing how

the community has been warming up to the individuals.”

In a report she provided at High Roads' recent annual general meeting, she said that the individuals are very blessed to live in Smithers.

Hofsink is also pleased with CLBC's Start with Hi initiative, which encourages all British Columbians to say “hi” to a person they see regularly who has a developmental disability.

“I support [the initiative] 100 per cent,” said Hofsink. “My other sister, she at one point said to me, when she came away from church a few of times, ‘If only they would say ‘hi’ I'd be happy. Nobody says ‘hi.’”

“So when I hear this it really warms my heart to hear how they're trying to implement a program like that because it does mean a lot to them when people say ‘hi’ and not stare.” ■

Passion paves the way to employment

WHEN EMMA BEGAN WITH T.I.E.R.

Support Services, she wanted to work at a paid position. Any paid job would be fine. “Doing what?” was the question.

In the past, Emma had worked at a local hotel, as a laundry aide. Her parents knew the owners and managers and the position offered a nice safe spot for Emma. However, it was not her passion.

The job coach started to get to know Emma as a full “discovery” was completed. During this process, they discovered that Emma loved to be around children and loved to swim. Emma has a long history swimming with the Special Olympics, winning many awards.

The job coach used a volunteer opportunity as part of the “discovery”. Emma volunteered in the childcare area at the community aquatic centre and was very successful with the children. Her job coach then contacted the aquatic centre to see if there may be any paid work which would be related.

After some discussion, the lead instructor came up with the idea of Emma working with the children, in the water, with the swim classes. They further customized this

opportunity to Emma’s strengths and also addressed her needs. They met her comfort level for transportation needs, afternoon hours, 2-hour shifts, being around children and swimming. It also addressed her parents’ needs to keep Emma safe.

Now, very successfully, Emma is volunteering at the community aquatic centre and is working with the staff there to study for her Swim Assistant certification. Once certified, this customized position will secure Emma with a sustainable paid position and she will be an integral part of their swimming class team.

Emma hopes to write her exams in March. The aquatic centre also used Emma’s story and picture in their spring program guide, opening the door for many others to follow her path. ■



Working inspiration

ALL IT TAKES TO INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE IS A willingness and openness to explore the options. Chris Joynson's experience on Saltspring Island is a stellar example of what can happen when employers and community find ways to include someone's unique abilities.

Chris is a friendly and enthusiastic person who has a developmental disability. Since moving to the island at age 14, Chris has been supported by the Gulf Islands Family Together Society (GIFTS), a community-based organization started by families to help connect relatives with developmental disabilities to their community.

Through GIFTS' work with local employers, Chris has four paying jobs: cleaning at GIFTS, storefront maintenance for a local real estate company, stocking shelves at the local Country Grocer, and stocking and facing shelves at Mouat's Home Hardware, the only hardware store on Saltspring.

Manager Kim Young, Chris's supervisor at Mouat's, has hired four people through GIFTS, and says the experience has enriched her business and provided a great learning opportunity for everyone involved.

"It's fulfilling and inspiring to see these four employees grow and gain confidence. I'd say to other employers, give hiring a person with a developmental disability a chance. By working with them, you can find out how well they can contribute."

A person with a developmental disability may need to focus more on using a specific skill that he or she excels at in the workplace. Yet their employment can bring very positive benefits to an organization – diversity, development of supervisory skills, and better team morale. Employees who work with a person with a developmental disability often say it contributes to a more positive work environment. Many employers say they have seen business increase as people like to support an inclusive company.

"Employment has given Chris an opportunity for independence and self-reliance," says Erin Fawcett, one of Chris's GIFTS support workers. "He enjoys having his own money, and to be able to purchase things he may want or need. It gives him a sense of well-being and being in charge."

Chris also volunteers his time at the local fire department where he helps with recycling, general maintenance and testing the radios and sirens. On other days, he can be found volunteering at the food bank and local dump.

"I am so happy," says Chris. "I like all of my jobs and I enjoy working. I have many friends in the community who help me and I help them."

"Chris is popular and well-known in his community," says Erin. "He brings so much joy wherever he goes, and feels very much a part of his community. Being connected also means that he is safe and secure in community, a feeling that all people need." ■



Art builds creative partnerships and friendships

STUDIO 366 IS LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN

Nanaimo, BC in the Arts District. A colourful and vibrant storefront studio with warm and welcoming art in the windows, the gallery is a gathering place where artists of all abilities can come together to create and have conversations based on their love and interest in art. No labels need apply.

Studio 366 is a volunteer operated project of Start with Art Nanaimo (SWAN), a non profit society with the goal of building inclusive and supportive community with art. Their aim is to present opportunities for artistic expression that can inspire and encourage new and emerging artists to bring their art to life in the Central Island region. “Art needs to be accessible and available to all people,” says Eve Reinarz, artist and member of SWAN. “No matter your background in art or your artistic abilities, everyone is welcome to drop in. Art is everywhere, if we have a more artful life we will all be happier,” says Eve.

Tina Fabbro, an artist, member of SWAN, local service provider and a member of the Central Island Community Council, believes that art is a tool to build community. “It is exciting to walk into a community art space and see art hanging on the wall from diverse artists. When we identify as artists it opens up exciting possibilities for creative partnerships and friendships,” says Tina.

Camille and Yvonne are two artists who like to work in the studio. Camille has been an artist all of her life and her art is quite popular.



Nanaimo Artists Tina Fabbro, Camille Marquis, Yvonne Vander Kooi, Debbie Melnick, Eve Reinarz and Titia Jetten at Studio 366.

“I have a hard time parting with my art, it is a part of me,” says Camille. Yvonne is a painter and enjoys being part of a community art studio. “I am a proponent of art and community and how it is a great vehicle for people to come together and cross barriers,” says Yvonne.

If you find yourself in the Nanaimo area, drop in and check-out Studio 366. You might even discover your inner artist. For more info on Studio 366 and SWAN visit their website at <https://sites.google.com/site/startwithartnanaimo/home> or email artspace366@gmail.com. ■

The road to independence

MY NAME IS RICHARD

Hansen and I was born at Vancouver General Hospital on November 1, 1943. I was the youngest of three children born to Edith and Lyman Hansen. I had a happy life with my family but because I was born with Cerebral Palsy, I had special needs that my parents thought could best be handled living in an institution. So in 1953 I went to Essondale for a short time before finding a bed in Woodlands where I stayed until 1964.

In 1964, I was one of many people to be transferred to Tranquille in Kamloops, BC. This was going to be my new home where I could get more education and learn life skills like working in the kitchen and counting money.

I stayed there until 1970 when I was placed in my first boarding home in North Kamloops. It was a nice change from life in the institution. I could go out to the shopping centre and come back home without supervision. I could go

bowling, go to movies, buy presents and go to church socials and out for meals.

I was finding some independence and liked it a lot. I also worked part time doing odd jobs like paper shredding, sorting hangers, making garden and surveyors stakes, making rugs and book binding. I also volunteered at local thrift shops and the food bank. I had lived in six different boarding homes in Kamloops before starting home sharing in 2007 with people in the community.

I am now home sharing in Nanaimo, BC and want to continue living more independently in the community where I feel like I can be an important person. My goal for 2010 is to share memories with good old friends and make new friends.

Some things that make me happy are listening to music and watching good old classic movies. I first knew that music was a big part of

my life when Red Robinson started on radio in the 1950s. I used to listen to his radio shows and play records on an old phonograph that my parents had. That's where I really started to like music a lot. I really like the music from "American Graffiti", instrumental bands like "The Ventures", Duane Eddy, and Elvis. "Best of the DJs in BC Radio: Today and Yesterday" is a favorite morning radio show that I like to listen to.

Some of my favorite people that I look up to are Dick Clark, Red Robinson, Casey Kasem, Rick Hansen and Wayne Gretzky. I also like the Vancouver Canucks, Vancouver Giants and BC Lions teams. ■



Community Sessions: Consulting with the Aboriginal Community

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

are culturally, geographically, economically and socially diverse. However, they share a common need to access resources and services for people CLBC supports.



CLBC Aboriginal Advisor
Donna Good Water.

CLBC wants to increase awareness of, and access to, culturally appropriate, safe supports and services for Aboriginal peoples in a way that recognizes the importance of Aboriginal tradition, the knowledge and experience of communities, and the issues that impact Aboriginal people.

In February and March 2010, CLBC will be holding consultation sessions throughout BC inviting Aboriginal people with developmental disabilities or individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) with significant limitations in adaptive functioning, self-advocates, family members, elders, community members, service providers, leaders, youth and CLBC staff.

The sessions will include discussions on the needs and challenges of Aboriginal adults with these special needs, and how CLBC can better develop connections with Aboriginal communities. There will also be a chance to learn about the services CLBC funds in communities.

Through the sessions, CLBC will gather feedback and recommendations regarding gaps, needs and services.

There is no cost to attend. People interested in attending a session are asked to pre-register so organizers can ensure the number of people can be accommodated. The registration form can be found on the CLBC website under [What We Do > Aboriginal Initiative](#). For more information on these sessions, please contact Donna Good Water, CLBC Aboriginal Advisor, at Donna.Good.Water@gov.bc.ca. ■

Join us at these sessions:

March 2 - **Kamloops**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Kamloops Henry Grube Centre

March 4 - **Lytton**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Lytton Memorial Hall

March 5 - **Kelowna**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Kelowna Friendship Centre

March 15 - **Duncan**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Quw'istsun' Cultural and
Conference Centre

March 16 - **Vancouver**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Vancouver Aboriginal
Friendship Centre Society

March 17 - **Chilliwack**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Sto'lo Nation
Government House

March 22 - **Terrace**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Terrace Nisga'a Society
Community Room

March 24 - **Prince George**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Prince George Native
Friendship Centre

March 26 - **Fort St. John**
9:00am - 3:00pm
Royal Canadian Legion -
Branch #102

Strength and perseverance

“We’ve learned so much from him. He grounds us, and brings us back to the reality that it is the simple things in life that are most important.”

—Iggy’s mother Carol

IGGY IS AN INDEPENDENT AND DETERMINED 18-YEAR-OLD.

He lives on Vancouver Island with his mom, Carol, and his father, “Big” Iggy. His interests are computers, swimming, kayaking and hockey. He’s an active member of his community, his school, and has a quick and witty sense of humour.

In April, “Little” Iggy will be 19 years old and work is underway on the transition of services. He and his family have been working on his transition to adult services with staff from CLBC, his high school, the Band and service providers.

“Iggy is incredibly active and well-known in his community and in his school,” says his mother. “He has been very involved in making sure the local community is accessible for people with disabilities. It’s important to us that these connections are maintained.”

It hasn’t been easy to plan for this transition. The family is thankful for the vision, support and perseverance of the people involved in the transition planning. They are helping connect Iggy with supports to attend university, find a job, and live independently while still being connected to his community and culture.

“My advice to other families is to start this process early. The resources are there, but you need to be proactive, take action, and be consistent and clear about the needs,” says Carol.

In the meantime, Iggy is working on being able to walk across the stage to accept his diploma in April when he graduates. Iggy uses his manual or electric wheelchair for most of his mobility needs, however he is determined to walk with the support of his walker on his graduation day. His mother has no doubt that he will succeed.

“We are very proud of him, and of the young man he’s become,” says Carol. “We’ve learned so much from him. He grounds us, and brings us back to the reality that it is the simple things in life that are most important.” ■

Exhibition showcases local talent

“WE ARE ARTISTS” IS AN EXHIBITION THAT WILL SHOWCASE THE artistic efforts of local artists in Kelowna who have developmental disabilities. This will be the first exhibition of its kind at the Kelowna Art Gallery and will be an invaluable opportunity to both connect a population that typically experiences minimal access to the arts, and to challenge dominant perceptions about people with developmental disabilities.

Sara Lige, a local artist and founder of Cool Arts, is the guest curator of the exhibition. Since its inception in Kelowna in 2003, Cool Arts has offered arts instruction and art-making opportunities to local adults with developmental disabilities in the Central Okanagan.

The exhibition opened November 28, 2009 and runs to March 21, 2010 at the Kelowna Art Gallery’s Front Project Space. The Kelowna Art Gallery, located at 1315 Water Street, is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm, Thursday until 9pm, Sundays from 1pm to 4pm, and closed Mondays. ■



Kelowna artist Scott Gould.

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