

The Citizen

Connecting people with their community



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA



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Rick Mowles, CEO

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ON FEBRUARY 1, 2010, CLBC IMPLEMENTED THE ONLY DEDICATED program in North America for adults who have significant challenges with day-to-day living, and are diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (officially known as Pervasive Developmental Disorder).

The Personalized Supports Initiative (PSI) provides eligible adults with FASD or ASD with an individualized approach to help them maintain or increase their independence. The PSI builds on existing supports they may already have, and can include supported living, respite, employment support, skill development and homemaker support. Families and individuals apply directly to their local CLBC office where a PSI facilitator works with them to confirm eligibility, assess needs, create individual plans for support, and coordinate existing or needed services.

Prior to the implementation of the PSI, adults who didn't meet CLBC's DSM-IV criteria were not eligible for supports. It was recognized that many of these individuals were at high-risk; individuals with FASD and ASD have neuro-developmental disorders, and frequent challenges can include being easily victimized, being isolated, under housed or homeless, and difficulties with problem solving, social situations and organization of personal affairs.

CLBC's approach to the PSI supports our vision of "good lives in welcoming communities" by building community and organizational awareness and capacity. One of CLBC's first steps has been to forge and strengthen partnerships with community agencies, provincial ministries, federal agencies and medical associations to improve assessment, diagnosis and coordination of supports to help improve individuals' lives.

Successes have included creating a pilot project to test an individualized support networking software for families and individuals, strengthening assessment coordination with health authorities, and looking at ways to support transition for people in the justice system who may have FASD.

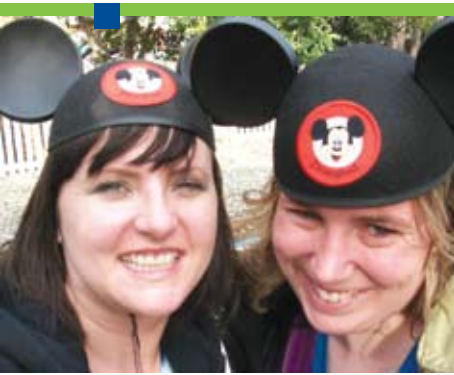
The PSI is also creating opportunities for CLBC to expand research and knowledge about how to better support people with FASD or ASD. CLBC staff specifically track data, eligibility numbers, application numbers and service access for future planning and to improve the program.

We have seen much progress in the first five months of this program. I want to thank our partners and CLBC staff for their dedication, commitment and resourcefulness in helping to improve the lives of eligible adults with FASD or ASD, and to the families and individuals who have applied for the PSI. You are helping to create new opportunities, research and options for this group of adults.

To find out more about the PSI, please visit the CLBC website under Individuals & Families > Personalized Supports Initiative. ■

A passion for travel

By Sheenagh Morrison



Sheenagh (right) shares a laugh with her friend Rhian at Disneyland.

MY NAME IS SHEENAGH and I wanted to write about my last trip to Disneyland. I travelled there in January of this year to visit my friend who lives in Los Angeles.

Last August, I decided I wanted to see my friend. I hadn't seen her in a long time and I missed her. She works at Disneyland.

So I started to think about what I would need to do to go down and visit her. I needed to make sure my passport was valid. I needed to decide how much money I would need to save. I needed to decide when I would go and for how long.

I bought my plane ticket and then I started to get excited.

On the day I left, I got to the airport and talked to the person who worked for the airline. I explained that I have a disability and would need some support. They were very helpful. They helped me fill out all the forms and also let me get on the plane early. That helps me to be less anxious.

When I got to Seattle, it took a bit more work to have a good experience. I had a five-hour wait for the plane and there was a breakdown in communication so I had to tell my story a few times before I got the support I needed. When I saw my friend in LA at the airport, I just ran to her and felt so relieved to be done flying.

We spent two days at Disneyland. I got in for free because my friend works there. We had lots of adventures there. I loved a ride called California Soaring. We got stuck on the gondola ride for 45 minutes. We just sat there looking down at the park and watching the sun set, not sure when the ride would start moving again. That was some experience!

I am planning another trip to Disneyland with my friend Amanda and our support worker. I really want to travel with her because she loves roller coasters and so do I. We want to go on all the big roller coasters in the park next time.

You could say that I am passionate about travelling. I have been to lots of places like New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, the Maritimes and San Francisco. I love to travel and am already planning my next trip. I love seeing new places, eating different kinds of food, meeting new people and seeing how they live and how it is different from my life. ■

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

A day of building community

ON JUNE 16, 75 SOUTH ISLAND SELF-ADVOCATES gathered in Victoria for the first “My Community: A Self Advocacy Conference”, a day filled with learning, networking and fun.

The conference was organized by self-advocates Mary Emmond, Candace Williams, Jessica McCartney, Michael Langridge and Ava Williams, with support from Becon Support Services, Kardel and Garth Homer Society staff, and community and South Island Community Council volunteers. A graphic facilitator, Lisa Arora, documented discussions with pictures. Video footage of the day for a short video on the event was taken by AVC Audiovisual, and Bone Creative, a local graphic design company, donated their expertise to create the conference materials. Local agencies, businesses and presenters provided door prizes and the bags for the delegate packages. CanAssist, an organization dedicated to developing technologies for people with disabilities, was also at the conference to show participants some of the innovations they’ve built.

“We helped plan the logo, the activities, door prizes, delegate packages and t-shirts, and thank you letters to the presenters, volunteers and sponsors,” said Mary. “Organizing an event like this gives you confidence.”

Organizers took great care to make sure it was a green event (almost everything used could be recycled), that everyone had a chance to participate, and session topics were relevant to participants. Discussions included building safeguard networks, how to prevent bullying, leadership and self-advocacy, and a discussion about deinstitutionalization. Mary, Jessica, Candace and Ava took turns introducing speakers, and Michael provided karaoke during coffee breaks.

“The topics and speakers we chose were what self-advocates said they wanted to learn about, particularly bullying,” said Candace.

The all-morning “Building Personal Support Networks” session was led by Aaron Johannes and Susan Kurliak from Spectrum Society for Community Living. Delegates were asked to brainstorm ideas about how to make friends and build safeguard networks. During discussion groups, Aaron and Susan asked participants to write down their ideas. This input will be used to develop a plain-language version of CLBC’s “Belonging to One Another” booklet on safeguards.

During the lunch hour, participants ate together and mingled while 10 self-advocate leaders from Victoria participated in a roundtable discussion with Becon Support, BCACL and BC People First staff to talk about opportunities for leadership around the province.

The afternoon featured four sessions that delegates could attend. “Self-Advocacy and Leadership: A Provincial Context” was led by Tricia Lins, a CLBC self-advocate project assistant from 100 Mile House, and Sky Hendsbee, a member of LACL and BCACL’s Self Advocates Caucus. Participants identified and discussed the qualities of leadership, and named some of the people they consider leaders, such as President Barack Obama, Martin Luther King, Princess Diana, Terry Fox, Pierre Trudeau, and their moms and dads.

A highlight for many was “Call it Safe: Things you can do to Prevent and Handle Bullying” led by Shelley Nessman, CLBC’s Self-Advocate Advisor. These sessions encouraged people to talk about their experiences with bullying, and to identify how to be safer in their community. Participants were supportive of one another as they shared their stories and learned tips for staying safe.

Self-advocate Peter Bourne, who lived at Woodlands, and Fred Ford, who teaches disability studies at the University of Victoria, led “Deinstitutionalization: Finding Out, Getting Out, Speaking Out”. Fred and Peter provided a history of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization, and talked about current policies in Canada. Participants shared their many experiences about living in institutions, and agreed that community inclusion is crucial for the future.

The day wrapped up with closing remarks from Beacon Support Services staff Kristen Kay and Ava, who thanked participants for making the day such a success. Delegates responded with smiles and cheers.

“I made new friends today and learned a lot. It was a good day,” said one participant.

Victoria’s two self-advocacy groups, Self-Advocates for a Brighter Future and Victoria Self-Advocates applied for and received funding for the conference from the BCACL Self-Advocates Seeding Innovation (SASI) project. Support for SASI was provided through CLBC innovation funding. SASI supports self-advocates to create projects in their communities that strengthen self-advocacy, give back to the community, bring people together, and build leadership. ■



Above: Self-advocates take part in the “My Community” conference in Victoria.



Left: CLBC’s Self-Advocate Advisor Shelley Nessman (centre) enjoying the conference with Candace Williams (left) and Mary Emmond (right) who both worked on organizing the event.

Accessible adventures

A LOVE OF THE WATER HAS HELPED NICOLE HIUTIKKA OF LADYSMITH REALIZE an entrepreneurial dream. Nicole is the owner of Adapt-A-Kayak, a business that rents out equipment to make kayaks stable and accessible for people who have mobility issues.

Nicole has a developmental disability and knows what it is like to want to break down barriers and go beyond one's limitations. The equipment that Adapt-A-Kayak rents allows people of any skill level who have mobility barriers to kayak.

"She loves the water and the kayak and she knows how to use the paddles," says Leigh Pedley, an employment specialist with Community Link Ladysmith, who helped Nicole set up her business.

Through Sealegs Kayak Adventures, a person will have a guided tour in a two person kayak with the adapted equipment attached to the kayak. The equipment consists of pontoons that sit on either side of the kayak for stability and a one arm rig for people with limited use of their arms or who tire easily.

"The deal is that Nicole would own the equipment and Bud Bell from Sealegs would rent it out. The equipment is built in a unique way to promote people's independence and safety," says Leigh. She also notes that people who simply have a fear of the kayak tipping over could also use the equipment to get out of the water.

Nicole believes that every person should be able to enjoy the amazing experience of kayaking in Ladysmith Harbour, where seals swim in the water below and eagles fly overhead. As well as being the owner of the company, Nicole is also involved in marketing Adapt-A-Kayak by going to meetings and promoting her business. "It really involves her so she's not just in the background," says Leigh.

Besides keeping her busy and active, the business has boosted Nicole's confidence and helped her to become more independent.

"In Nicole's case, she hasn't been confident in speaking in the past but now she's willing to try to talk more."

If you're in Ladysmith and interested in taking a tour in an adaptable kayak, visit Sealegs Kayaking Adventures in the Eco-Adventure Center on Transfer Beach. ■



Nicole Hiutikka takes to the water in an adapted Kayak with Bud Bell of Sealegs Kayak Adventures.

Bridging the community through art

ART, IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS, IS A WAY for people to come together and connect in the spirit of interest and relationship. Inspired to bring an event to the Comox Valley that would be engaging and innovative, a group of self-advocates involved in The Friendship Project were successful in gaining support through the Self-Advocates Seeding Innovation (SASI) project to host a six-event art and culture expo called “The Art Of Friendship”.

This group of adults created a vision of what this event would look like, collectively deciding the expo’s direction and locations. The adults quickly discovered that it would be important to include a member of the arts community as a planning partner. The group posted an ad, conducted interviews and hired a local videographer. Inviting a planning partner into this journey was a great way to directly link The Art of Friendship Expo to the arts and culture community in the Valley. Connection, to the arts community, in many ways started long before the actual expo.

The Art of Friendship included a variety of events which brought the community together and assisted folks of all ages and interests to connect. It also raised awareness about diversity and the possibilities in regards to friendships between all community members.

The expo was incredibly well received and would not have been possible without the support of Reel Films At Frelones, The Zocalo Café, Music Maxx, Courtenay Recreation and the group of musical performers and artisans who contributed their work and gifts. A community collage continues to make appearances within the

community, most recently at the Local Colors Festival as part of Market Days in downtown Courtenay. Following the expo, the adults had the opportunity to come together and talk about how they feel the event impacted and inspired the community:

“We got to support each other through the project.”

“It gave us the chance to take charge and to organize events.”

“People who may have only gone to one event, came to a few.”

“It gave awareness of what friendship, and the Friendship Project, are all about.”

To learn more about the Friendship Project, and see photos from this event, you can go to Facebook and search for “The Friendship Project”. ■



Highlights of the Art of Friendship Expo:

- A heavy metal drum clinic hosted by a self-advocate
- Two film screenings at a local grass roots movie house (Benny and Joon and 50 First Dates)
- An art exhibit opening featuring upwards of 30 pieces submitted by local artists, which included a community collage. This community collage was inspired by the individual collages of the self-advocates, and was on “interactive” display for 5 days in a local café for customers to contribute
- A community barbeque
- Musical performance to close the event

Two thumbs up

By Greta Cooper, Team Assistant, Vernon Community Living Centre

REVELSTOKE'S KENT PLAMDON

is a gentle person with an engaging smile. He's lived in Revelstoke his whole life and is an older brother to Brady. He loves the people who live in his community, loves the mountains, hiking and the great outdoors. Kent recently turned 19 and transitioned to the world of adult services.

Among the activities that fill Kent's time are writing a monthly movie review for Community Connections Society's monthly newsletter, where he displays his gift of clever writing and includes his own 5 star rating system. The editor of Revelstoke's on-line paper has indicated an interest in publishing Kent's reviews.

"More than anything Kent is a good person and we're very proud of him," says his mother Merilee. She also commends the people who have played a role in his life, including Jane McNabb of Family & Youth Resources. Jane approached the family when Kent was born, and worked with him up until a few years ago. "She's one in a million," says Merilee. "I don't think we would have gotten this far without her support."

Shannon Moorhead of Community Connections has been Kent's vocational worker since 2008, at the time when she first launched the supportive employment program. She describes him as polite, courteous and

a pleasant person to work with. His first job placement involved bussing for A&W and he worked so well that although he started off with her support, "halfway through I faded out and he worked basically on his own."

Shannon's co-worker Kim Wiggins and Kent have been touring the area, familiarizing him with local businesses. Last summer he was employed at the Visitor Centre and Kim helped prepare him to take BC Tourism's mandatory courses. On busy days, the Visitor Centre sees upwards of 400 visitors, all wondering what to see and do, where to stay, and what to eat while in Revelstoke. The Chamber of Commerce manager was pleased with Kent's polite and positive attitude and his performance and has welcomed Kent back again this year. Shannon explained that this job experience definitely increased his self esteem and he will now be working independently.

Kent has a creative streak a mile wide and has always dreamed of designing a comic book, taking photos, drawing pictures and writing stories. Kent is one of a close-knit group of four friends who are avid movie and video game buffs. A couple of the group plan to visit Germany in a few years and Kent said he'd like to travel with them as an established writer. He would love to interview popular horror movie writer Wes Craven and movie star Johnny Depp.



Kent Plamdon is polite and positive when helping visitors at Revelstoke's Visitor Centre.

"We want Kent to spend time on things that are useful socially, and he should be encouraged, rather than be worried about what he can't do." Among his future plans, he and his father are going to open their own vehicle detailing business. For now, Kent continues to write his movie reviews and see where life takes him. As his sweat shirt says, "Impossible is Nothing." ■

Talking about transition

By Greta Cooper, Team Assistant, Vernon Community Living Centre

ON JUNE 10, CLBC, THE MINISTRY OF Children and Family Development and School District 23 put on a transition fair in Salmon Arm and invited families with a son or daughter in grade 9 to 12. Over 100 people attended to learn how they could make a smooth transition for their son or daughter into the world of adult services.

After an introduction by the presenters, everyone was invited to visit and ask questions about adult special education and disability services, employment, day programs, counselling, assessment services, and advocacy.

Bruce and Monique Krahn were an excellent parent resource because they've personally lived the transition. They live in Sicamous and have a 20-year-old son who receives CLBC supports.

They feel many people are looking for more clarity as to what their rights are and what should be available for them. "Sometimes, it's not very obvious," says Bruce.

The Krahns shared their personal experiences of finding support in the community with many of the parents in attendance. "They sort of know what's out there but they often don't know where to start to get the help that they need," says Monique.

CLBC Facilitator Lori Skinner commented that both her and MCFD social worker Lori Lucier received many questions in respect to how to navigate the system, and that the fair was an important part of making the transition process more family-friendly. ■



Parents Bruce and Monique Krahn share their experiences with other families.

Upcoming event

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

This conference will provide education and informative updates on psychiatric, behavioural and complex health components specific to individuals with Developmental Disabilities, and showcase best practices in the field. The conference is sponsored by UBC Interprofessional Continuing Education in cooperation with CLBC.

SCHEDULE

Pre-Conference Workshops: September 29, 2010

Conference: September 30 - October 1, 2010

VENUE

The Coast Plaza Hotel & Suites, 1763 Comox Street, Vancouver

MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.interprofessional.ubc.ca, or e-mail at ipad@interchange.ubc.ca or (604) 822-7524.

To learn about this and other upcoming events around the province, please visit the events calendar at www.communitylivingbc.ca under What's New > Events. ■

Supporting independence

NICHOLAS MIHIC, 23, OF LANGLEY has been an employee at Pacific Injection Mouldings since late 2006 and is hard working, reliable and responsible. In addition to working, Nicholas takes horseback riding lessons, piano lessons, yoga and volunteers at a shelter for cats.

Since February 2008, Nicholas, who has high functioning Autism, has worked towards the goal of living on his own. In May, he realized this goal when he moved into his own apartment.

“For people with Autism, changes can be tough, and moving out on his own was a big adjustment,” says Nicholas’s mother Pam.

To help Nicholas live independently, he and his family were looking for support to develop skills for taking care of daily household activities and building a network of community connections.

Pam heard about Community Living BC’s Personalized Supports Initiative (PSI) through the Langley Association for Community Living.

CLBC introduced the Personalized Supports Initiative to provide services and supports for adults who have both significant limitations in adaptive functioning and either a diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD is officially referred to as Pervasive Developmental Disorder).

PSI provides an individualized and personalized approach to meeting the needs of eligible adults by coordinating existing community supports to help people to maintain or increase their independence.

Personalized supports may include social, employment, financial, respite and living supports.

“I wanted help with learning about cooking, laundry, shopping and chores,” says Nicholas.

For the first month in his new place, a support worker visited Nicholas and helped show him how to do many of the household chores around his new apartment, including doing the laundry and using the kitchen to prepare and cook his own meals.

Nicholas now has a new support worker who is helping him focus on safety issues, such as not letting strangers in at the door and the proper procedure to follow if there is a fire alarm or power outage. He is also teaching Nicholas about transportation to get himself around in the community and back home again.

“Nicholas takes the bus to horseback riding lessons or community events and sometimes takes taxis. He’s learning how to call a taxi, give directions and pay,” says Pam.

“His support worker is really getting to know Nicholas and is helping him work on social connections with his neighbours and building friendships in the community,” says Pam. “It gives Nicholas a new perspective as he’s not always having to rely on his mum and dad. It has definitely increased his independence.”

To learn more about the Personalized Supports Initiative, please visit www.communitylivingbc.ca and go to Individuals & Families > Personalized Supports Initiative. ■



Nicholas Mihic has developed important household skills like preparing meals and cooking for himself.

Co-operative Innovation

A PASSION FOR supporting peers to do planning for the future is turning into a business venture for a group of self-advocates from the Lower Mainland.

Self-advocates Gladys Duran, Barb Goode and Ryan Groth are all trainers in a process called People Planning Together (PPT).

PPT teaches people who receive comprehensive services, such as residential supports, to take a leadership role in planning their life. People are supported to develop a Person Centered Description (PCD) after actively participating in a PPT class. The PCD is then used to assist an individual to create a plan or make changes to their support plan, or any other plans they may have.

Until recently, Gladys facilitated PPT sessions with James White, who supports the process as a mentor. When James became a facilitator for CLBC and a participant in CLBC's leadership program, PPT seemed like a natural fit for a person centered project.

"PPT is an incredibly empowering process for

both trainer and participant," says James. "It fits beautifully with CLBC's vision of good lives for people."

In a PPT session, Gladys approached Ryan and Barb to see if they would be interested in being trainers and joining her to do more sessions around the province. The answer from both was a resounding "yes".

The group was awarded a Self-Advocates Seeding Innovation contract from the British Columbia Association for Community Living which received funding through CLBC's Innovation program.

Barb explains, "We wanted to do something unique, something that others haven't done before. Really, we are helping people to find their niche in life."

As the group met and started to make plans, they realized that there might be an opportunity to create work. They began to talk about and research the idea of forming a worker's cooperative. The result was the formation of the ESATTA Cooperative. ESATTA stands for Empowering Self Advocates to Take Action.



Ryan Groth and Gladys Duran work together as People Planning Together trainers.

In addition to providing PPT training, the group presents workshops on a variety of subjects. When asked about the workshops, Ryan says the group hopes to be hired to present to self-advocates and staff. They are currently working on a self esteem workshop called "Light Your Path While Living in the Fast Lane" and are in the planning stages of creating presentations about internet safety, loneliness and how to incorporate a worker's cooperative.

If you are interested in ESATTA training sessions, creating a custom made workshop for your agency or group, or if you have any questions, you can contact esatta.coop@gmail.com. ■

The power of “Hi”

“Start with Hi is a message for everyone in our community.”

— Jason Zwaal, Manager, Sunshine Valley Community Services



Joel Bedard puts up posters to share the message of Start with Hi with his community.

THE EXCHANGE OF SIMPLE GREETINGS is the starting point of all relationships. A simple “Hi” has the power to make us feel wanted, welcome and safe. The community of Grand Forks is making a positive difference in each other’s lives one “Hi” at a time.

Grand Forks Sunshine Valley Community Services (SVCS) is excited about CLBC’s “Start with Hi” initiative. The agency is using it as a platform to build awareness about inclusion in Grand Forks and foster more friendships and connections into people’s lives. SVCS helps build community by offering services for people with developmental disabilities which create opportunities for friendships and other community connections, paid employment based on the person’s skills, talents and interests, and overall leading a good life.

“Start with Hi is a message for everyone in our community,” says Manager of SVCS, Jason Zwaal. “It is easy for all us to understand and the message does not single out people with developmental disabilities.” For the last few years, SVCS has been working on establishing personal support networks in the Grand Forks area for the individuals they serve. “Our focus is to make connections between people who share common interests and hobbies,” says Zwaal.

Jeff and Peter are one of those connections. Both men live in Grand Forks and they first met and started to get to know each other in the shallow end of the pool over the span of a month or so. What started with “Hi” and the shaking of hands, evolved into small chats and joking around together. As time went on and they got to know each other better, Jeff invited Peter to visit his donkey farm. At the farm, they chatted endlessly and exchanged laughter while feeding the donkeys. Now, a year later, the two men continue to see each other at the pool and look forward to the opportunity to say “Hi” and share a few laughs.

The staff at SVCS was keen to develop an action plan to increase awareness about Start with Hi in Grand Forks. Strategies include a local Facebook group, monthly articles in the Grand Forks Gazette, presentations at community meetings and City Council, local stories on the Start with Hi website, and a booth at the fall fair.

For more information on the work SVCS is undertaking, please contact Jason Zwaal at svcs.manager@telus.net.

To learn more about Start with Hi, please visit www.StartwithHi.ca and www.facebook.com/StartwithHi. ■

Inclusion builds strong communities

By Stephanie Cadieux, MLA for Surrey-Panorama

OUR GOVERNMENT AND CLBC UNDERSTAND THAT INCLUSION IS

a vital part of a strong community, and it takes the collaborative work of individuals, families, organizations, businesses, governments and local leaders to make it a reality. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of inclusion and some great examples that illustrate the work being done.

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. CLBC is committed to providing education, support and leadership to encourage networks and partnerships that help adults with developmental disabilities feel safe and secure wherever they live. This organization and its hard-working staff have done outstanding work to promote inclusiveness. For example, Start with Hi, a CLBC public awareness initiative, supports this commitment by encouraging all British Columbians to say “Hi” to a person they see regularly who has a developmental disability.



Inclusiveness is about bringing people together and allowing all members of society, regardless of ability or challenges, culture or age, to have opportunities to be a part of their communities. Whether through work, play or volunteerism, ultimately it's about equality – financial, services, support, and attitudes. We all want the same opportunities to have jobs, connect with others and lead happy and fulfilling lives. Inclusion goes both ways. As the process takes shape and becomes more successful, those with developmental disabilities include others in their lives.

The Surrey Now has shown their commitment to inclusiveness with their PossAbilities publication. This bi-monthly addition to their regular paper is a great step forward, providing news, stories and profiles of people changing their lives and educating others on what inclusion means. I applaud Surrey Now for their leadership in dispelling the issues surrounding misinforming and misunderstanding. Inclusion is better achieved through education.

The challenges of developmental disabilities, and disabilities or challenges of any sort, are diminished through inclusion. The Surrey Public Library understands this and part of their inclusion efforts are to make plain language books available at their branches. Reading improves your quality of life and everyone should have the chance to experience the joys of literacy. Ensuring there are books available for a range of reading abilities enables more people to enjoy books. This is a good example of inclusion.

Over the years, I've had the good fortune to know a number of individuals who have taught me about inclusiveness, and about seeing people's abilities. One of the most important of these folks is self-advocate and community leader Barb Goode. Barb and I were on a committee together that advised on inclusion issues for 2010 Legacies Now. From Barb, I learned a lot about the need for plain language and the desire and ability of all citizens to contribute in a meaningful way.

It is about being fair, being equal, and letting everyone have the same opportunities to enrich their lives and the communities they live in. British Columbia, including my riding of Surrey-Panorama, is one of the best places to live and our commitment to inclusiveness is a big part of that. ■

Discovering the power of unity

A HUNDRED MEN AND WOMEN GATHERED in Burnaby from June 17 to 19 to share and learn together. The 2010 Power in Unity conference, supported by CLBC, was organized by the BC People First Steering Committee for people who have been labeled with a disability. The result of the two-day conference was the resurgence of a powerful voice and a strong sense of unity across the province.

People First is a national grassroots movement by and for people with disabilities, but the BC chapter has been dormant for several years. The steering committee hosted the conference to revive the organization and elect an official board of directors. In addition to the conference, the group has recently obtained grants and funding to resume its mission to “support people who have been labeled to speak for themselves and help each other, making sure what they say is heard.”

Self-advocacy groups, agency representatives, and independent individuals attended to have their voices heard. On the first day, workshops explored how to ensure inclusion, close institutions, share stories, engage youth, and find group advisors. Large group sessions were a chance to build consensus and hear about the rights of people with disabilities. On the second day, a special workshop made possible by the BC Association for Community Living educated

participants on the “Past, Present and Future” of People First. An Annual General Meeting at the end of the two-day conference resulted in the election of a board of directors for the provincial organization.

Also included in the event was an evening screening of the Freedom Tour Film at UBC’s Robson Square. This National Film Board documentary is the story of the fight for the rights of all people with intellectual disabilities to live in community.

In addition to support from CLBC, the conference was also made possible by the BC Association for Community Living, People First of Canada, Spectrum Society for Community Living, Community Living Society and the Burnaby Association for Community Living.

The event was well received by delegates. “This conference”, said one participant “was very beneficial and helpful for all self-advocates who are insecure about their rights and their lives. We all need to be strong with our voices, have faith and be willing to share our stories. I’ve enjoyed the past two days and am proud to be a member of People First.” ■

The newly appointed BC People First Board celebrates at their conference.



On the airwaves

EVERY FRIDAY AFTERNOON, WILLIAM SNELGROVE TAKES TO THE AIRWAVES OF CJSF 90.1 FM to play a selection of music for his listeners.

The opportunity arose through William's participation in the Employ-Ability pre-employment program at Neil Squire Society. Participants in the program evaluate their personalities, skills, values and interests and also research different opportunities to decide which path they would like to pursue.

"William expressed a real interest in radio announcing. We wanted to make sure he knew what the role would entail," says Anu Pala, a Job Developer with Neil Squire Society.

After learning more about the skills and responsibilities involved in working on the radio, William was eager to find an opportunity to be on the air.

A connection was created with Simon Fraser University's co-op radio station CJSF 90.1 FM and one of the station's radio shows called "Jambalaya". Inspired by the Cajun dish, "Jambalaya" features a mixture of many different musical styles.

He visited the radio station for an introductory meeting to learn about the work that goes into programming, producing and announcing on the radio. William, who is blind, was already efficient working with computers by using a screen reading program called JAWS.

In March, William did his first show and he's been on air every Friday since then. To prepare for the show, he chooses the music he will be playing from the radio station's collection. He then researches the artists and songs he will be playing to find interesting details to share with his listeners.

"Right now, I'm focusing on talking more on the air between songs and finding more information about the music and artists I play on the show," says William. "The people at the station are very nice. It's been a great experience so far. It really helps my confidence."

"He's demonstrated resourcefulness and creativity and comes up with all sorts of interesting facts about the artists and music he plays. He's really enjoying it, and we're thrilled to see it," says Chris Wright, Employ-Ability Program Coordinator. "This is a great opportunity to expand his skills and knowledge about the field."

Through this experience, William is building a portfolio of his work to show off the skills he's developed.

"It's already going great and I think it will just get better," says William.

To listen to William's show, tune in to CJSF 90.1 FM on Friday afternoons from 1:00pm to 2:00pm. You can also listen online by going to www.cjsf.com and clicking on the power button at the top left corner of the website. ■



William Snelgrove shares interesting information about the music he plays every Friday on CJSF 90.1FM.

We're listening

AS A RESULT OF FEEDBACK FROM INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY councils, the CLBC website has been improved to ease navigation and enhance accessibility.

On the home page, you will find information on CLBC's 10 most asked questions, links to social media sites, as well as a video clip of Heather, a self-advocate who appears throughout the site to tell you about important content and help you contact CLBC if you need further assistance. Below Heather's videos, you can click a button to print out CLBC's contact phone number on a full page.

Every page of the site features a "Listen" button, which can be clicked to hear an audio version of the text. You will also find a "Contact" button at the top of each page and a site map at the bottom.

Navigation of the site has been improved by identifying frequently accessed information, streamlining maps of CLBC offices and Community Councils, and creating more user friendly menus. ■

Hi, I'm Heather.
Do you need help?



Play Video

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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, e-mail info@communitylivingbc.ca

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COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA

7th Floor – Airport Square
1200 West 73rd Ave
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V6P6G5
Phone: 604 664 0101
Fax 604 664 0765
Toll Free: 1 877 660 2522

CLBC is a Crown agency of the government of British Columbia and is committed to being carbon neutral by 2010.

