

This edition's theme:

MENTAL WELLNESS

CLBC MAGAZINE

Spring 2023



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA

CELEBRATE **DIVERSE** **ABILITIES**

Stories from around British Columbia

The power of giving back

For Luke Smith of Smithers, a sense of wellbeing comes from contributing to his community.

Pages 8 & 9



MESSAGE FROM Ross Chilton, CLBC CEO



Many paths to mental wellbeing

Welcome to the Spring 2023 Edition of Celebrate Diverse ABILITIES Magazine. It seems hard to believe, but it has been more than three years since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thankfully, we now have opportunities to connect with each other in person as well as protection from vaccinations and boosters.

While we have all made efforts to protect the physical health of ourselves and others, this time has also highlighted the very important role of mental wellness in our lives.

Taking care of our mental health and wellbeing lets us better enjoy our lives and the people we share them with. We can be more creative and learn new things. We're also better prepared for when we do face challenges.

Recognizing this, the CLBC Editorial Board has chosen "Mental Wellness" as the theme for this edition. Self advocates from across B.C. share their stories and insights about the many ways they support their own mental wellness. This includes exercise, creative pursuits, meditation and storytelling to name a few.

Our cover story for this edition, found on pages 8 and 9, features Luke Smith of Smithers. For Luke, a sense of wellbeing comes from finding ways to give back to his community. "Giving back makes me feel good. I get excited about it and it helps contribute to a positive mindset," he says. I hope you enjoy reading Luke's story, and all of the stories shared in this edition.

You can also find recent news from CLBC on pages 4 and 5, including an update on work to create CLBC's accessibility plan. Getting input from people and families we serve has been an important part of this process and we thank everyone who has contributed.

Video can be an effective tool for sharing information in a way that is accessible and engaging. On page 15, you can learn about videos that CLBC has created to share information about our Strategic Plan and vision, as well as a unique, culturally safe Indigenous housing project.

Thank you for reading this edition. I hope you can take away something from the stories that will have a positive impact in your life.

Sincerely,

Ross Chilton

CEO, Community Living BC

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MESSAGE FROM The Editorial Board

CLBC Editorial Board Members, from left to right:

Top row: Akshay Sachdeva (Surrey), Shaun O'Leary (Victoria), Matthew Yeomans (Chilliwack), Natasha Bidinoff-Gardiner (Nelson). **Bottom row:** Bryce Schaufelberger (Mission), Lara Gunkel (Vancouver), Brandon Wilkinson (New Westminster).

Special thanks to Editorial Board members and CLBC staff who provided writing and technical support to the authors in this edition.

Finding wellness within

Hello! We are the CLBC Editorial Board made up of self advocates and community living leaders from across the province. Our role is to work with Community Living BC to improve communication with the people they serve and to find ways to share the stories and contributions of people with diverse abilities in B.C. Working together on this magazine has been a one way to let CLBC and the broader community know what we think is important.

The theme for this edition of Celebrate Diverse ABILITIES Magazine is "Mental Wellness".

If you're human, you go through stuff. Anxiety, depression and stress can affect all of us in our day-to-day lives. For many people with developmental disabilities, isolation and loneliness is also something they experience. With the pandemic taking place over the last few years, more people across society have experienced those feelings and understand how mental health can be impacted.

We feel there is an important opportunity to change perspectives about mental health and wellbeing, now that it is being talked about more than ever. When we don't share how we're feeling, it's easy to get stuck in our own minds, like a dark hole.

Expressing yourself and talking about how you are feeling can be therapeutic. It can really help to bring people together to talk about these ideas openly. It leads to new opportunities for strengthening our mental wellness.

In this edition, self advocates from across B.C. share stories about different things they do in their daily lives that contribute to their mental wellbeing.

One message we want to emphasize is that there are people around you to connect with, and there are resources there to support you. You're not in this alone. (Find links to mental health and wellness resources at: CommunityLivingBC.ca/mental-health-resources.)

We hope you enjoy these stories and take away some information that can help support your own mental wellness. As always, we look forward to your feedback and ideas for the next edition of Celebrate Diverse ABILITIES Magazine.

Sincerely,

The CLBC Editorial Board

CLBC welcomes Minister Sheila Malcolmson

CLBC welcomes the Honourable Sheila Malcolmson as the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and Minister responsible for CLBC.

Minister Malcolmson was appointed to the role in December, and previously served as the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. She is the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Nanaimo and was elected in a by-election in 2019, and re-elected in 2020.

In March, Minister Malcolmson met with self advocates, who joined in-person and virtually, at CLBC Head Office in Vancouver to hear their stories and discuss topics and issues that are important to them.

CLBC looks forward to working together with Minister Malcolmson to advance the priorities in CLBC's new Strategic Plan and the Reimagining Community Inclusion work plan.

The Honourable Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, connects with self advocate leaders at CLBC Head Office.



CLBC News

New members join CLBC board

CLBC is pleased to welcome J. Alain (Al) LeFebvre of Prince George and Stephen Lee of South Delta to its Board of Directors. Mr. LeFebvre began his term in November and Mr. Lee began his term in January.

"I am pleased to have Alain and Stephen join us," said Board Chair Michael J. Prince. "They bring exceptional leadership skills that will help CLBC to deliver its mandate. They also each bring lived experience as parents of individuals who live with disabilities. This makes them uniquely qualified to contribute to our efforts."

Alain LeFebvre lives in Prince George. He is a retired Office Managing Partner with KPMG where he was an audit partner with clients in the public sector including healthcare, municipalities, local government agencies, education, not-for profit entities, charities, foundations and government funded organizations.



New CLBC Board Members Alain LeFebvre of Prince George (left) and Stephen Lee of South Delta (right).

He has served on boards for Prince George Association for Community Living (AiMHi) and the BC Association for Community Living (now Inclusion BC) and its foundation.

Stephen Lee lives in South Delta. He is the Chief Executive Officer of Musqueam Capital Corporation, a wholly owned entity of the Musqueam Indian Band. He is responsible for overseeing Musqueam's extensive real estate and asset holdings. His experience spans 30 years in senior finance and leadership roles in various industries in private and public companies.

Creating CLBC's accessibility plan

The Accessible BC Act became law in June 2021. The new law aims to remove all types of barriers to make B.C. more inclusive and accessible for everyone. Eventually, accessibility standards will be created for employment, service delivery, built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education and procurement.

To meet the requirements of the new law, CLBC is creating an accessibility advisory committee, and is currently working on a public accessibility plan and feedback mechanism to be completed by September 1, 2023.

During the fall, CLBC completed an internal assessment and gathered input from people and families we serve and service providers through workshops and a public survey.

Thank you to everyone who shared their input. This has given us valuable information on barriers that people may face when: receiving information about CLBC; coming to CLBC offices and meetings; talking to CLBC staff; and applying for a job and working at CLBC.

CLBC took what we heard from people and what we discovered internally and put together CLBC's Baseline Accessibility Report. You can learn more, and read the report on [CommunityLivingBC.ca](https://www.communitylivingbc.ca) under [What's New > News and Stories](#). The public plan will be published once it is completed.



Community inclusion plan supports people to thrive

The B.C. government and members of the community inclusion sector have released the *Re-imagining Community Inclusion (RCI) Workplan* to support people with developmental disabilities to be fully included and thrive in their communities.

The RCI initiative was first launched in May 2018 by the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction in collaboration with community living partners from across the province, including CLBC.

This resulted in the 2019 report, *Re-imagining Community Inclusion*. The report provides a vision where "people with diverse abilities thrive fully and equally with everyone."

The RCI workplan focuses on four key areas to help achieve that vision:

1. Develop more flexible housing options
2. Ensure people have more and better employment opportunities
3. Work with partners to improve access to health and mental health services
4. Ensure services to Indigenous people are Self Determined

You can learn more about the workplan, and the many different groups who helped to develop it, by visiting the CLBC website under [What's New > News and Stories](#).

Victoria

Finding strength in storytelling

by Shaun O'Leary

I have been living with autism since a very young age. Despite this, I have been blessed with health and opportunity. Getting this label didn't change me. I already was who I was.

I had a very challenging childhood and by the time I got to high school I did not have many options. Faced with doubt moving out of my senior year, I heard about an initiative at the University of Victoria called STEPS-Forward. This program allows students with disabilities to earn a university education.

Nobody wants to be the odd person out or to be treated differently. Having the same opportunity as my peers to go to university changed my life and helped me realize that a normal life was possible. I was able to earn a four-year diploma and build my confidence.

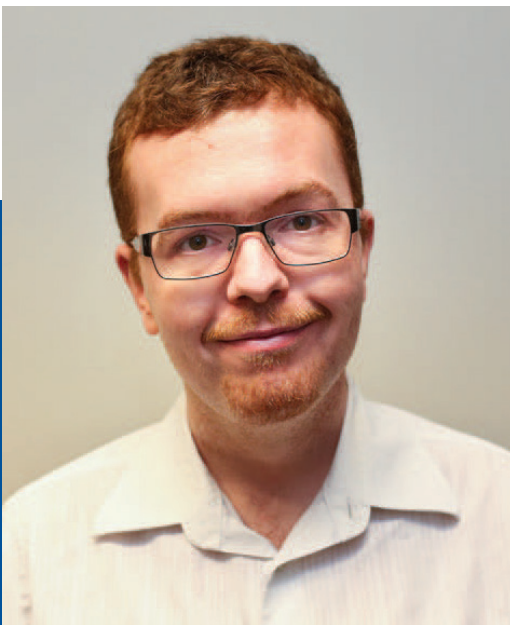
For me personally, it was a game changer. Before UVic, I was a little lost and very concerned about my future. Without purpose and direction, it is hard to achieve a positive impact for myself and others.

When I graduated, I was prepared for the workforce, had friends, and felt confident to move into the adult world. I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to get involved in the community, and I support this initiative because it made such a positive difference to my mental health.

While being a UVIC student, I became a radio broadcaster for the campus station. I have remained on as a host for CFUV 101.9 FM. My show is called *Interesting Conversations* and my job is to interview public figures, including Donovan Bailey and Rick Hansen.

In eight years I have covered 250 life stories. This experience has really opened my eyes. I have learned so much from my interviewees. Without this chance for inclusion, I don't know where I would be today. I can tell you that prior to this experience, I was unconfident, uneducated, and very much needing a change in my life. Today, I am proud to be the first ever alumnus on the provincial STEPS-Forward board of directors. I became President of the board in November 2021.

These experiences have positively impacted my life today, and my future, which thanks to the equal opportunity given to me, is very bright!



Listen:

Shaun's radio show *Interesting Conversations* airs on Wednesdays at 11:00a.m. on CFUV 101.9 FM.

You can also learn more about the show, and listen online, by visiting: cfuv.uvic.ca

Strategies for a positive mindset

by Ilse Neels

Staying active and feeling useful and independent are some of the ways I take care of my mental health.

I work at Quik's Farm Ltd. I have worked there for almost a year now. I also recently started a job at Smits Cheese Shop. I price their products. Sometimes I put labels on their Greek yogurt. It is a very fun and friendly environment to work in.

I go to a wonderful day program called Bèka. There is always something new going on. Every week I work at a little store where I weigh and bag candy. On Tuesdays, I go to a flower business and put stickers on flower sleeves.

On Wednesday mornings, I assist in the preschool class at my church. Sometimes the kids make me laugh with their funny comments. Last week, when they were playing doctor, they asked if they could take my blood pressure. That really made me laugh!

Staying healthy and strong is another way to look after my mental health. I have been walking in my walker for about 25 minutes a day. My goal is to strengthen my leg muscles even more and I hope to be able to walk up to 45 minutes in the next few months.

My therapist is my favourite person to be with because she gives me adjustments that help my body feel better. This my number one top favourite tip for mental health.

Rosedale



Ilse supports her mental wellness by staying active, getting outside and connecting with others.

I like to get fresh air when it is nice out. Fresh air makes me feel motivated. Hanging out with friends and family makes me feel good too. I enjoy card making, writing, painting and baking with my friend. These creative outlets really help me to feel my best.

I hope you liked reading my story and feel free to try some of these things for yourself. I wish you a nice day!

The power of giving back

For Luke Smith of Smithers, a sense of wellbeing comes from giving back to his own community, something that he does in a variety of ways. "Giving back makes me feel good. I get excited about it and it helps contribute to a positive mindset," says Luke.

Volunteering came naturally for Luke, following the example of his mother Donna who has been actively involved with Ducks Unlimited for 20 years. Since he's been old enough, Luke has always been looking for ways to contribute, asking himself, "What more can I do?"

In 2019, this spirit of giving back inspired Luke to find a way to support kids with cancer in his own community of the Bulkley Valley. This idea sparked a year-long journey to find ways to raise money for the Bulkley Valley Community Cancer Care Team (CCCT). This team supports patients with cancer and their families who are in need of financial assistance for travel and accommodation at cancer care centres in B.C. and Alberta.

Part of Luke's inspiration was also to show others what's possible. "I can help with raising funds and supporting

causes. I want other people who have a disability to see they can do it too," says Luke. "I want to let people know that they can make a difference. That's my number one thing, to encourage other people."

With Luke's drive and determination, and support from his family and community, momentum built. His fundraising efforts included growing out his hair and donating it to Wigs for Kids BC, raising donations, making and selling antipasto, and coordinating an online auction with more than 125 items contributed by local businesses.

In total, Luke's efforts raised \$14,550 and he was able to personally present the cheque to the CCCT.

The incredible work also earned Luke an unexpected recognition. He was nominated for and won the Smithers District Chamber of Commerce 2020 Community and Business Award for Citizen / Volunteer of the Year. "I was very happy about that. I did not expect this award. I just really wanted to help."

In addition to his volunteer efforts, Luke has also worked as a service clerk at Safeway for 10 years. He says that connecting with customers, supporting his fellow employees and being proud of the work he does all help with a sense of wellbeing as well.



(Photos from left to right): Luke is an important member of the team at Safeway in Smithers, where he received the Community Engaged Champion Award for his contributions to the community.

Luke recently came in first place in the Haida Gwaii Totem to Totem race. (Photo via Haida Gwaii Observer)

Luke presents a cheque for money he raised to the Bulkley Valley Community Cancer Care Team. (Photo via Deb Meissner, Smithers Interior News)

Luke donates his hair as part of his many fundraising efforts. (Photo via Deb Meissner, Smithers Interior News)

“I want to let people know that they can make a difference. That’s my number one thing, to encourage other people.”

Luke Smith

In the small community, Luke’s coworkers are proud and supportive of his many contributions. Highlighting his efforts to give back, Luke’s manager nominated him for a Sobey’s national award. Sobey’s Corporation, which owns Safeway, has more than 144,000 employees across Canada. In March of last year, Luke was one of only four employees in B.C. to receive an award, being recognized as a Community Engaged Champion.

“I was really surprised when I was told by my boss and coworkers. It really was fun and exciting,” says Luke. “I really appreciate that they put my name in for that.”

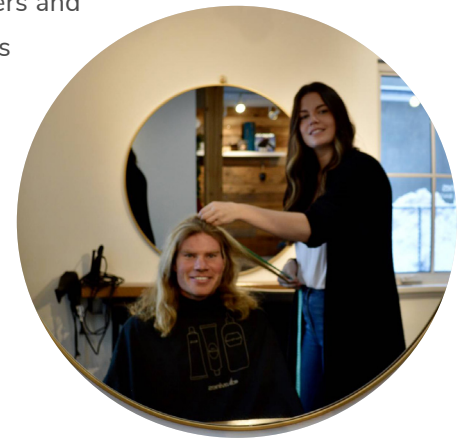
With all the recognition, Luke’s dad Rod says, “People use to know me around town as Donna’s husband. Now everyone says, ‘Oh hey, you’re Luke’s dad!’”

Another way Luke keeps a positive mindset is through exercise and athletics. A competitive runner, Luke took

part in his first 10-kilometre race in 2019, running in the Haida Gwaii Totem to Totem race. He finished second among a field of 42 runners. Due to the pandemic, the race was on hiatus until 2022, when Luke entered again. This time he came in first place.

He says the benefits of exercise can help everyone feel better. “It takes a while for your brain to get into it, and get going, but then you do and it’s great. It doesn’t have to be an hour. It could be half an hour or less. Just try to move and do something. Anything helps.”

From fundraising and volunteering to physical activity to supporting coworkers and customers, Luke shows that there are many ways to boost our mental wellbeing while also giving back.



Victoria

Happy living life my way

by Cheyenne Goos

I do my best to keep a positive mindset. For me, it's about having choices and independence, like being able to work and swim. It's also about having friends and supportive parents who believe in me.

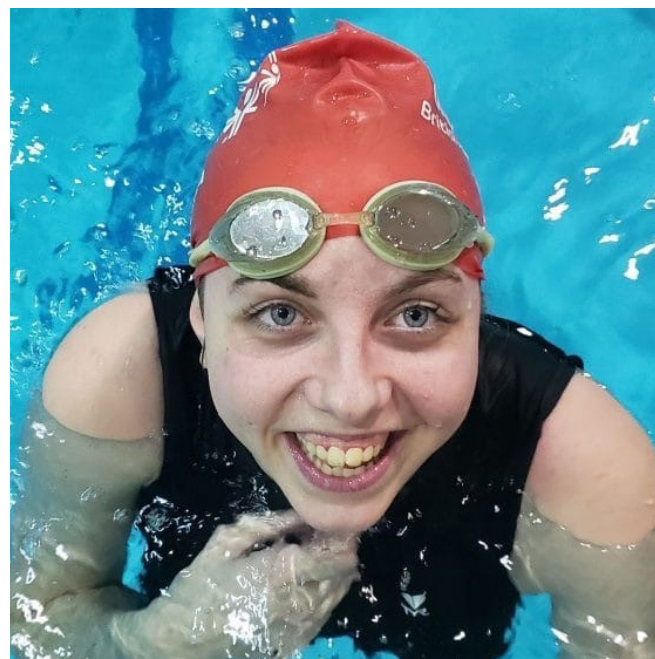
I'm from Victoria where I live in my own place and work full time. I started to think about moving out when I was 18. I wanted to be independent and have my own rules. I live in a suite in the house of my respite family.

I make enough money to pay my rent and bills and put some savings away too, so I can travel if I want to.

I'm a dishwasher at St. Michael's private high school. I've worked there for seven years. It gets me out of the house. I have lots of friends at work.

In my free time I swim with Spirit Orcas and Special Olympics. Spirit Orcas is an ocean swimming team. I came up with the name. There are seven people on the team right now. We swam the ocean in Bella Bella and are still planning on swimming in the English Channel.

I grew up in a supportive and loving home with my mom and dad. My mom was always there for me. She did all the important parts of what a parent does. My dad was there for me too. He helped with different things like budgeting and teaching me about fixing cars.



Having choices in life, independence and supportive friends and family help Cheyenne keep a positive mindset.

I can't really remember when I realized my mom had a disability. She was just a normal mom to me. It wasn't about disability in our house. It was about helping each other and finding others who could help us figure out what we needed.

Some people just think differently. Like for me, sometimes I need help learning and understanding new words. My tongue gets twisted sometimes. My disability just means I need some help learning new skills.

Sometimes I feel shy and need help getting into my comfort zone. It helps when someone I trust comes with me at first so I can feel confident, then I'm good on my own.

I look forward to continue swimming and to keep on working at my job. I may even try a second job one day.

I definitely want to stay living on my own and maybe with my boyfriend one day. I think about having kids. But not until after I get married. I'm not in any hurry for that.

Right now, I just want to live my life to the fullest.

Creativity boosts confidence

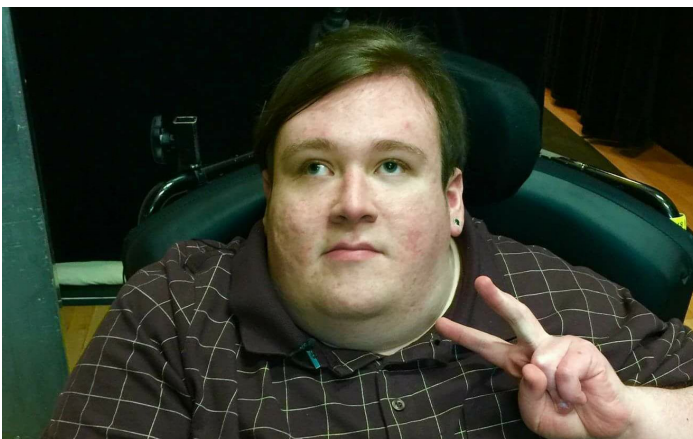
by Brandon Wilkinson

For me, being happy and having a positive mindset comes with opportunities to be creative and confident and feel like you belong.

I'd say I had a rough childhood. I was bullied at school and didn't have too many friends. Things got better in high school. I got to know more people and even a few friends. Having more people in my life started to broaden my horizons.

I moved out when I was 20. My mom and I were very used to living together. So, like any other kid moving out, it was hard. Today I live in a group home in New Westminster.

It was the recreational therapist of my group home that introduced me to the power of theatre and the opportunities for confidence and belonging that come with being on stage. My first performance was a comedy show with Realwheels Acting Academy. Each skit was based on the struggles of a person with disabilities, but it also showed community that even with barriers we can achieve what we put our minds to.



New Westminster

This had a hugely positive influence on my mental health. After performing for the first time, I felt like being on stage was my calling. Working together with other people with disabilities opened my eyes to things I didn't know were possible for me. On stage we work as a team and all help each other. This was an important part of building my confidence and being comfortable with who I am as person.

It was through theatre that I met more people. I got introduced to someone involved in music and I started learning how to play bass guitar. It feels good to show that people with disabilities can do more than what many able-bodied people think we can do.

My mom visits me once a week and brings my dog and that's something I look forward to. There have been some hard parts in my life so far. But if those things didn't happen, I wouldn't have become involved in theatre, or learned how to do things like build abstract art with Lego blocks.

I lost my sight and don't see colours. I have discovered how to build with my other senses, letting my hands and mind guide me in my creations. This calms my mind and is another way I stay positive.

I look forward to being on stage again, to travelling with my family, meeting more people, and learning to do things I didn't know were possible. These are the things that make me smile and give me hope for another day.

Taking part in theatre and other creative pursuits has had a positive influence on Brandon's mental wellness.

Sharing our lived experiences

Meditation elevates my mood

by Akshay Sachdeva

I sometimes do feel stuck and it can negatively affect my mindset. I may be thinking the same thoughts over and over about challenges I'm facing around friendships or work or wanting to have more independence.

For me, meditation is one way that I've found that helps to keep a more positive mindset and protect my mental wellness.

When I meditate, I find somewhere quiet. I close my eyes and then repeat a certain word or sound again and again. It doesn't have to be the same word every time, just something spiritual or calming. I focus on the sound of my voice and it helps my mind to relax.

I learned about meditating through watching videos and following the techniques. There are a lot of videos and places to find information online about meditating if you think it's something you want to do.

Another important element for me is to be self-aware. We can't control all of our thoughts, and negative thoughts can still come no matter what you do. But if I am mindful of my thoughts, I can realize when they are moving in that direction, and I can use meditation as a way to calm my mind.



For Akshay, meditation is an important tool for supporting his own mental wellbeing.

Part of being self-aware also means that sometimes you know when you do need to speak to somebody and get help.

For me, having meditation helps me feel that I have a tool I can use to have some control over my mind and my feelings. It gives me the ability to support my mental wellness.

Embracing a positive outlook

by *Natasha Bidinoff-Gardiner*

As people, we are stronger together than being alone. To have a healthy wellbeing, we need connection.

For me, I've always been troubled in the areas of communicating with people, my comprehension, articulating my words and thoughts, blanking out, trying to remember what I want to say before it disappears, not being able to pull files out of my head to express my points of view and not knowing much of the world. This has made it difficult to have real genuine connections. Not having the abilities to connect with others very easily has made me an introvert when really, I believe I am more on the extroverted side.

I keep positive, hoping one day I will fully belong on this little planet of ours. Heck, I just want to enjoy life and be happy, connect with and meet interesting people, and travel the world. We live one life and I want to celebrate along with accomplishing satisfying work. I don't know how I lucked out, but I found my love partner. I thought I was going to be alone for the rest of my life.

When I do feel negative thoughts and feelings coming on, I try and find ways that will help lessen the harshness of life. I don't have people in my life to lean on, so I try to keep to a schedule, get the right amount of sleep, eat healthy foods, exercise, sing, get creative artistically and keep upgrading at school to develop myself.

It is important to remind ourselves to send positive messages to ourselves and to focus on the right thoughts that will help our wellbeing. The longer we dwell on things, the longer we are stopping ourselves from becoming the best happy self we can be. We can't control what other people do but we can control what we can do. What we believe is what we are.

If we choose to fight for the things we want in life, we can achieve so much more than being focused on how life is terrible, and not feeling obligated to change it. It's better to keep trying than to never try at all.

I stumbled upon a piece of paper one day back in high school. I forgot about it for some time but when I found it again, I loved the message. It read, "An old man told his grandson 'My son, there is a battle between two wolves inside of us all. One is evil. It is anger, jealousy, greed, resentment, inferiority, lies and ego. The other is good. It is joy, peace, hope, humility, kindness, empathy and truth.' The boy thought about it, and asked, 'Grandfather, which wolf wins?' The old man quietly replied, 'The one you feed'."

I love the idea that what we put our energy into grows. It takes time to grow the parts of our minds to be naturally positive. If you tell a negative message to yourself, well correct yourself and tell yourself the opposite. Most importantly, believe in your positive self. Remember, you are what you believe.



Natasha keeps a healthy outlook on life by focusing on the positives.

Surrey

This story was originally published on SelfAdvocateNet.com. Visit the site to find stories shared by self advocates from across B.C. or to submit your own story idea to be featured.



My happiness project

by Stacey Kohler

I worked on a big and important project this past year called My Happiness Project. I wanted to do this for the International Day of Happiness. Being happy is important to me so that's why I wanted to do a project on it.

What I did was make a list of some questions to ask when I interviewed people like my friends and staff. I asked them things like: Why is being happy important?; What do you do to be happy?; What places make you happy? I also asked them to share a happy memory.

I had support from some staff to write down the questions on a big whiteboard so I could read them while asking people. I also had support with filming. I made happy props that were fun emoji smiley faces for people to hold while they were being filmed and for when we took pictures after. I printed the emojis and glued them onto sticks for people to hold.

To make this all happen, I had planning meetings with the people who supported me. We had to figure out what questions I should ask, what emojis should be on the props, when our filming day would be, and how we would let everyone know about it.

We filmed for a couple of days to make sure we got everyone who wanted to be part of it. After the filming, I helped do voice recordings, chose music, added colours to the video, and edited. I had an excellent support team to help me finish my project and it was successful! I am very proud of myself.

We uploaded the video to the UNITI Facebook page and to YouTube. International Day of Happiness is important to me because of my mental health. It is important that you have a good and happy heart. My goal is that one day I can make another video that can go to a film festival so that everyone can see all the hard work that I do.



You can watch Stacey's video on the UNITI YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/@uniti4all.

International Day of Happiness

The United Nations International Day of Happiness takes place on March 20.

This day recognizes that an important part of progress around the world should be about increasing human happiness and wellbeing.

Learn more at: DayOfHappiness.net.

New CLBC Videos

CLBC's Strategic Plan builds for the future

CLBC's 2022-25 Strategic Plan is a guiding document for our work. The plan was created with individuals, families and service providers to inspire people about the future, and to focus our activities on what's most important.

CLBC's vision is for everyone in British Columbia to experience communities of belonging and lives with connection. The plan is helping CLBC to work towards this vision, to strengthen our relationships with the individuals and families we serve, and to ensure that our actions align with our commitment to the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

You can watch videos on the CLBC website to hear what self advocates, families, service providers and CLBC CEO Ross Chilton think about CLBC's vision and strategic plan.



Self advocates, family members, service providers and CLBC's CEO share their thoughts about CLBC's vision and the 2022-25 Strategic Plan in new videos.

Visit CommunityLivingBC.ca/Strategic-Plan to watch the videos and learn about the 2022-25 Strategic Plan.

Kikékyelc shows the meaning of belonging

Kikékyelc is a unique housing development operated by Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services in Kamloops. It is home to Indigenous Youth, including those supported by CLBC, as well as Elders.

Kikékyelc came together through partners working together to create a model of culturally safe housing for Indigenous Youth.

CLBC has created a new video to share the story of Kikékyelc and inspire communities to think about the different kinds of inclusive, accessible and culturally-safe housing that can be created.



The video, *Kikékyelc: A Place of Belonging*, was shown at the Housing Central Conference and the Indigenous Disability and Wellness Gathering during the fall.

Watch the video at: CommunityLivingBC.ca/Belonging

BC People First: Self advocates supporting self advocates

BC People First Society (BCPF) is a non-profit provincial organization that is part of the international People First movement. BCPF has been the independent voice of self advocates in B.C. for over 40 years, emphasizing the importance of “nothing about us, without us.”

Among the resources that BCPF provides for members are Peer Mentors who can help people learn more about rights and self advocacy. There are also opportunities for people who want to share their own skills to sign up as Advocacy Mentors, who can be a source of information for others about self advocacy work and projects in community.

BCPF members also work on a range of projects including plain language translation, advocacy awards and presenting on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Becoming a member of BCPF is free for self advocates in B.C. Learn more about BC People First, including their work and how to become a member, by visiting www.BCPeopleFirst.com



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