



COMMUNITYLIVINGREPORT



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA



Message from the Chair

By Lois Hollstedt

As 2005 winds down, I want to offer my sincere good wishes to you and your families for a wonderful holiday season.

The year has been full of change for all of us at CLBC and for those of

you in our community. Change is always a challenge. But challenges usually mean growth and that is our hope for our collective future. Thank you all for your individual contributions to our work toward developing the best system of services for people with developmental disabilities in Canada.

May 2006 bring you satisfaction in your daily life, sprinkled with times of joy and happiness.

Sincerely,
Lois Hollstedt,
Chair of Community Living BC

CONTENTS

Message from the Chair	1
Inside Voice: a column by self advocates	1
Reflections on Inclusion	2
Presentation by student Andrea Vojtko to the Coquitlam School Board	3
North Shore Community Living event photo	4
What does "Community" mean to me?	4
Employee Profile: Tally Bains	6
Contact us	6

INSIDE VOICE

A column by self advocates

Amanda Lennard, CLBC Board Member, talks about life as a live-in caregiver and housekeeper.

After I left Venture Training, I had taken a Long-Term Care Aid course. I tried to make it as a living for myself – I worked at care homes, but I got laid off. I had an idea of trying to get a job as a housekeeper and/or caregiver. I told my friends about it. Through friends, I met a man I worked for as caregiver and housekeeper. He was a Norwegian from Norway named Ole, an elderly man whose wife just passed away. He was lost without his wife. He needed help with meals, laundry, and care for his pets, to do errands and be his companion. At first I hesitated

because he was an elderly man. I was a bit young.

Ole and I became best friends. He respected me, he trusted me and I trusted him. When Ole became bed ridden, my Long Term Care Aid course came in handy. I looked after Ole by cooking his meals, doing laundry, house work, and personal care. I also took care of his two cats. Also, I did errands, such as shopping and banking. I would buy the groceries and bring the rest of the money and receipts to Ole at his bedside. Ole was also on medication for various medical needs, such as blood pressure, etc. I was responsible to pick up his prescription from the drug store. Sometimes I had to buy clothing, usually pyjamas or bedding for Ole.

Ole's nephew Ted

...continued

DECEMBER 2005
Vol.1 No.12



COMMUNITYLIVINGREPORT

The Newsletter for Community Living BC



Amanda Lennard

from Kamloops came for visits. He would help me with the grocery shopping and carry it back in his truck. Ole gave Ted and me money to go and have lunch in a restaurant. Ted and I would bring lunch from the restaurant to Ole in a container for him to eat.

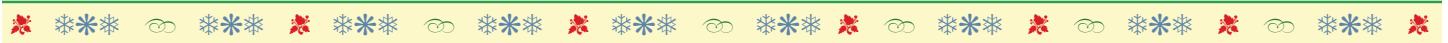
Ole liked me to sit at his bedside for hours to talk to him, or just be quiet. Ole was the best person I ever met. He said I am just as good as other people even if I'm a bit challenged. Ole used to say people judge you because you came from a dysfunctional family, went to special classes or sheltered workshops. He said in his words, "that I was kicked from pillar to post." I was very fortunate to meet Ole, it was a god send.

Ole sometimes had visitors such as friends or relatives. They sometimes stayed for days. I made meals for them. As Ole's health turned worse, it was getting hard for me to care for him. He was in and out of hospital. The hospital officials suggested we should have homemakers and RN nurses to help take care of Ole

and me too. So they came in the daytime and leave in the evening, and then I would look after Ole. When the homemaker came in the daytime, I was supposed to go out. I said I'm very tired, been up nights with Ole.

Then one day the RN nurse came and said Ole has to go to the hospital. She called an ambulance to take him to the hospital. I was alone at his place. I visited Ole nearly every day, his health was much worse. Then he had a birthday at the hospital. I baked him a birthday cake, bought him flowers and birthday card. I had someone help me to take these things to the hospital to have a birthday party for him. Ole was delighted; we donated the rest of the cake to the staff and patients on Ole's behalf. I made Ole happy, I was happy and we both cried. It was very emotional and moving. I felt very lucky to have met him. To know him, he was my best friend.

A week later Ole passed away in his sleep. I got the news and I was devastated. At Ole's funeral there were lots of relatives and friends. I had a reception at Ole's house. We had coffee, tea and lots to eat. Ole made a big difference in my life. I also inherited his estate. He told me to believe in myself, even though some did not believe in me.



Reflections on Inclusion

By Jai Birdi, Manager, CLBC

I recently had the opportunity to attend a conference organized by the National Association of Community Living to advance inclusion of Canadians with disabilities. Although this was not the first national conference I had attended, I certainly found this one to be of particular interest.

My interest in attending a conference on the theme of inclusion increased when I first read a statement on benefits of inclusive education – benefits not just for students with disabilities, but for all students.

"Coming into contact with diverse children and youth with or without a disability has helped to shape my life, values, and attitude," wrote Andrea Vojtko, a student who participated in the BC Association for Community Living Youth project as a part of the federally funded community inclusion project, "Pathways to Citizenship." Andrea gave a powerful presentation to the Coquitlam School Board, which BCACL shared at a meeting of national partners of the Community Inclusion project on November 1 in Saskatoon (see following article).

The above theme was further captured in a discussion and concept paper, "Communities for all: Innovation and change in community systems," drafted and submitted to Social ...continued



COMMUNITYLIVINGREPORT

The Newsletter for Community Living BC

Reflections on Inclusion

continued

Development Canada by the Canadian Association for Community Living (Oct. 2005). The paper noted, *"Inclusion is not an issue only within the domain of the disability community but rather an issue of importance to all members of the community."*

As implied by the conference theme, "A National Family Agenda Forum to Advance Inclusion of Canadians with Disabilities," the conference provided a strong focus for not only families supporting children and adults with disabilities, but also for the wider communities.

Issues of discussion included: accessing disability

supports, end of life care, supported decision making, family economic security, inclusive communities, planning for the future, family leadership and networking. A plenary and workshops on a theme of genetic technologies and its usage in diagnosing medical conditions provided a heartfelt reminder of the Eugenics movement and of the debate on pro-life versus pro-choice.

As this conference and the national partners meeting were held just a couple of days after Community Living Month, these forums provided excellent and invaluable opportunities to reflect on the vision and principles of Community Living British Columbia – and even perhaps gave us momentum to dream and work towards creating a unique and inclusive society for all!

Presentation by student Andrea Vojtko to the Coquitlam School Board

I am 17 years old and am what most people would call a "typical" or "normal" teenager. Today I will be speaking to all of you about the importance of Inclusive Education. I'm sure that almost everyone here has heard how important inclusion is to people who have a disability, but I am going to advocate to you how important Inclusive Education is to those students, like me, who don't have a disability. Coming into contact with diverse children and youth with or without a disability has helped to shape my life, values and attitude.

Throughout my schooling, I've seen a lot. I've seen fights, I've seen ridicule..., but.... I've also seen learning. Not just the learning from teachers, but more importantly the lessons taught from one student to another. Take, for example, my boyfriend. Now, he didn't always have the open mind that he does today. At the beginning of our school year he

told me that a boy who has a disability was in his class. I encouraged him to talk with this boy. The response I got back from my boyfriend was, "Well, I dunno Andi... what if he can't talk back to me?" Well, as the semester wore on, waves between them turned into conversation, conversation into a secret handshake and the handshake into a blossoming friendship. But low and behold, their friendship started all because they were in the same class as each other!

I hope that through my speaking today, I have gotten across the fact that having students with disabilities in the same classes as us "typical" students, will not disrupt our learning time with the teacher. Being integrated with students of ALL abilities will only strengthen our morale, patience and understanding. Perhaps with those three key traits, my generation and generations to come will become better law makers. Perhaps one day, some of us will be sitting in your seats trying to decide what to do with funding and we too will realize, as I hope all of you do, that education is a right – regardless of "ability."



COMMUNITYLIVINGREPORT

The Newsletter for Community Living BC



Pictured on a recent trails clean up as part of **Community Living Month activities in Squamish**. The group were on their way to the local Tim Horton's, who kindly provided refreshments after the outing. The staff of Sea to Sky Community Services Society want to thank their Squamish Tim Horton's, a valued and long term community partner. The Society has placed several self advocates in employment positions with Tim Horton's successfully for the past six years, in a very inclusive and supportive environment.

Back Row, left to right - Nancy Norman, Life Skills Worker, Sea to Sky Community Services Society; Jeramy Boyd, self advocate; Myrna Weckwerth, CLBC Social Worker; Joy Davies, self advocate; Jessie Bauer, self advocate.

Front Row, left to right - Nick McDermott, self advocate; John Harvey, member of the Squamish Trails Society and Life Skills Worker, Sea to Sky Community Services Society; Phil Fitzmaurice, self advocate.



What does "Community" mean to me?

North Shore group uses photos to tell the story

It's a good question -- and one that most of us would probably think is fairly easy to answer. Our sense of community can come from the friends we make around our homes, whether they are trees and gardens nearby, the kinds of recreation programs we enjoy, our jobs, or how easy it is to get there -- by bus, train or bicycle. And that's just the short list!

During Community Living Month, the North Shore Association for the Mentally Handicapped decided to run a creative, art-based program that asked individuals to define community and community living through a series of personal photographs.

Andrea Baker, Director of Family Services and Community Development, says, "We work in the community living field and operate on the assumption that we all know what community living means... For us, there was value in breaking that term down and putting it to the people we support





COMMUNITYLIVINGREPORT

The Newsletter for Community Living BC

What does “Community” mean to me?

continued

for definition. The intent was to learn about individual priorities and preferences. We wanted people to define community and community living in very personal terms."

Andrea and her co-workers had organized a similar project in 2004 when they asked participants to send in their personal stories defining community and community living.

Andrea says, "Although we encouraged people to use other forms of creative expression, our use of the term "story" proved to be a barrier for participation. Despite a lot of initial excitement within the community, the response was quite poor. Only a handful of people submitted stories. The feedback we received afterwards indicated that many found the exercise in narrative expression to be quite challenging. Still, it was apparent that people were passionate about the subject."

So this year they took a slightly different approach and offered each participant a disposable camera.

The request for photographs went out to all of the individuals they serve: approximately 400 people. North Shore staffing teams were also quite enthusiastic about the project and quickly got involved.

Andrea says, "We wanted to give the people we support a creative venue to voice their thoughts and impressions. Of all forms of creative expression, photography seemed to have the most potential to accomplish the goal we had set. We encouraged people to take or submit photographs that show the good, the bad, and even the ugly side of community living. Participants could draw from their own photo libraries or take photos and send them in to us."

The response was overwhelming. Hundreds of photos were collected and then displayed at the agency's



Making Connections Party on October 26th.

For the evening, the group displayed the photographs on colourful poster board. Photos were loosely grouped according to themes and spread around the venue.

Andrea says, "We resisted the urge to caption or interpret photographs and instead, allowed participants who were on-site to explain the pictures they had submitted. This was one of the most exciting parts of the project. Individuals were excited to have their photographs displayed and to view the pictures others had taken. It made for a very dynamic and interactive event. Over 150 self-advocates, family, agency personnel and community members attended the open house and photo showcase."

North shore staff tell us that people have continued to submit photographs since the event. They feel the project was inspirational and thought provoking.

Andrea says, "We are meeting this week to decide how to permanently display the photographs and catalogue all the submissions. Ultimately, we will develop a display for the main reception area of our head office and will probably develop something for a couple other key locations."



COMMUNITYLIVINGREPORT

The Newsletter for Community Living BC

Employee Profile:

Tally Bains, Manager of Finance

Tally came to CLBC after working for the BC Cancer Agency and the Provincial Health Services Authority. She says, "My goal is to create a positive work environment where people feel supported and enjoy coming to work. We take time out to do fun things such as holding holiday parties, and going out for dinner or movies as a team."

Tally has set clear goals for her team, including: streamlining business processes and using best practices; providing timely and accurate financial information to help managers make informed decisions; and providing excellent customer service to all customers.

Tally says, "For me our customers are the families and individuals we serve every day, as well as our service providers, managers, clbc executive and board members." She adds, "The staff I have hired each bring something unique to their job and contribute to the team environment."

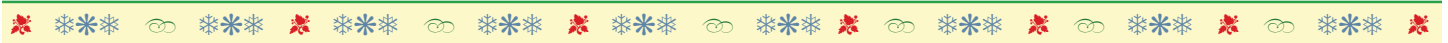
Tally also leads a busy personal life. She was two years old when her parents brought her and her



Tally Bains (bottom left) with coworkers at their Halloween party.

six siblings to Canada from India. Today she is married with two children and still finds time to run marathons - she has run two full marathons and five half marathons – camp, hike and cycle.

Tally says her two main personal goals are to complete her Masters degree in Business Administration and run a triathlon before she turns 40. She also enjoys travelling and has visited Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, India, England, Germany and the U.S.



CONTACT US

You can find all the latest information on our website: www.communitylivingbc.ca

Receive Our Newsletter: To be included in an email distribution list to receive our newsletter, or if you have feedback on our current newsletter, please email us at:

newsletter@communitylivingbc.ca

If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by

mail, contact our call centre or write to us.

CLBC Call Centre

Hours: 10am to 6pm, Monday through Friday.
Ph: **604-660-CLBC** (toll free: **1-877-660-2522**)

Please send feedback and story suggestions to:

Community Living British Columbia
Suite 101, 3705 Willingdon Avenue
Burnaby, BC. V5G 3H3
Email: info@communitylivingbc.ca