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EDITORIAL

It’s at the heart of our mission to listen to British Columbians with disabilities about what’s important to them.

For this TRANSITION, we reached out to groups and individuals around the Province to hear about the most crucial issues in different regions and communities, and what changes would have the most positive impact.

We were not surprised to hear that poverty and a lack of decent affordable housing are endemic problems for people with disabilities, across all regions. The root of the problem is, of course, the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) rate of $906 which is woefully inadequate whether you live in Vancouver, Campbell River or Cache Creek.

Many of the individuals and groups we heard from called for the PWD amount to be increased. One person who responded to our questionnaire, who lives on the Sunshine Coast, told us that he pays 80% of his disability benefits on housing, leaving him $200 a month for all of his other expenses. He says that more subsidized housing is badly needed in his community. He also cites lack of services such as home support and a social worker. Lack of these supports has left him feeling isolated and he believes his mental health has deteriorated as a result.

A respondent from Cache Creek reminds us that rural areas have fewer services than urban centres. And, a lack of services close to home means people have to travel further to access what they need. However, accessible transportation is also lacking in rural areas, so people living on low incomes often become more dependent on friends and family. When people feel uncomfortable asking for help, they become increasingly isolated because they cannot afford to leave their homes.

In fact, the Canadian Council of the Blind in Northern Vancouver Island reports that one of the most important issues for people with vision loss in their region is accessible transportation, as well as high levels of unemployment.

Prince George’s Handy Circle Society told us that the three most important issues in their area are employment, transportation and accessible public buildings. They would like to see incentives for employers to hire more people with disabilities.

The Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association also cites unemployment and a lack of safe, affordable housing as major problems for their clients. We heard from Port Alberni about the need for a gym/rehab facility, so that people with disabilities can workout in a supportive environment.

While larger urban centres like Kelowna have more services, there are also more people seeking help. The Okanagan Advocacy and Resource Centre has stretched its service mandate to include tenancy issues, in an effort to keep up with demand. Okanagan Advocacy reports that, in addition to poverty and Kelowna’s lack of affordable housing, growing gaps

As a provincial organization, BCCPD’s mandate is to help British Columbians with disabilities and work with organizations across BC. In addition to the hundreds of people we assist in our office each year, we provide workshops on provincial and federal disability benefits, and emergency preparedness. In 2012, we gave 24 workshops in Victoria, Kelowna, Prince George, Fort St. John, Nelson, Princeton, Port McNeil, Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. We also help clients in BC’s different regions with tribunal submissions, information requests and access to programs in their communities. Our province-wide database of community organizations receives regular updates about programs and services, our e-newsletter and TRANSITION.
in services have led people to access already stretched faith-based volunteer services. To help address these gaps, they suggest government services be better structured to deal with the populations they serve.

In Metro Vancouver, there are more accessible transportation options than in other areas of the province, more community agencies and accessible buildings. However, the region differs little from the rest of the province with respect to poverty and homelessness.

A great many of the people who come to us for assistance are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Some clients are so hungry, we organize food for them from our staff room, so that they have the strength to continue their appointment with us.

As the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition’s Trish Garner indicates in her article on page 10, BC has the highest poverty rate in Canada and is one of only two provinces without a poverty reduction plan. British Columbians with disabilities need better supports: better income supports, better employment supports, more affordable, accessible, safe housing and more accessible transportation options.

As you read these articles and stories, and reflect on your own region, consider the upcoming provincial election. One way to be heard about your concerns on disability services and programs is to talk to the candidates running in your area. Ask candidates what they would do to improve some of these intransigent problems people with disabilities continue to face in daily living.

We would love to keep the conversation going with you. Consider writing to TRANSITION about disability issues in your area—maybe we can start a Voice From the Regions column! If you’d like to send us your thoughts, please email us at trans@bccpd.bc.ca.

In the meantime, we’ll continue to work on your behalf to improve services and programs, and to advocate for ways to fill the gaps you’ve identified.

JANE DYSON IS BCCPD’S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
From the Okanagan

Hello, from the Okanagan Advocacy and Resource Society. Our official mandate is assisting people with chronic mental illness, but we have expanded to include tenancy issues because of the need.

Major areas of work for us—way ahead of other issues such as CPP-D—are income assistance and tenancy. We also provide information and referral, information on the mental health system, and host the Access Pro Bono summary advice clinics.

We need in-depth knowledge of both tenancy and welfare law because there is a frequent intersection between the two for our clients. Many clients also have problems with debt.

Here are the biggest problems in the Okanagan.

Services are poorly coordinated. Kelowna is large, so we have more services than smaller towns, but there are serious challenges for the public around knowing what services are available, and where to go for information and appropriate referrals. We get many referrals from other organizations that are not within our mandate and some people call us simply because they don’t know who else to contact.

Poverty is, of course, a huge problem, along with housing. We have had one of the tightest housing markets in years, so people with disabilities often have poor housing.

We are experiencing more and more service gaps, while the public has the mistaken assumption that services are there for people with mental illness. For example, if someone is essentially hiding from the larger community because they have difficulty coping with people and daily situations, there should be outreach and casual services to help them. People often have to know what they want and from where in order to get help, and for some people with mental illness that isn’t possible. To fill these gaps, we are seeing more people go to faith-based and volunteer services that may have uneven standards and skills with mental illness, or which may restrict services on the basis of faith. We are seeing some aspects of the institutionalization of poverty in the non-profit sector.

Government services need to be structured realistically to deal with the populations they serve. There is a lot of unnecessary work created by people giving inaccurate or incomplete information, and a lot of errors that can have a serious impact on people’s lives and finances.

There still seems to be a tacit assumption within government services that clients have a certain level of mental or emotional functioning—even when it is known the service population will have a large segment of people with various challenges.

More subsidized housing is drastically needed, with accountable management that abides by the letter and spirit of the Residential Tenancy Law.

And, just to offer one outside-the-box suggestion, there are many clients who could benefit from a micro-lending program that has clear standards and boundaries, so they could get away from “payday” loans.
Dog Research Study Needs Participants

Do you have an opinion about the impact of canine friendship on the lives of people with disabilities or chronic health conditions? A new research project called “The Role of Dogs” is seeking input from people with disabilities living with service dogs, as well as non-dog-owners.

A research group at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, is conducting this study. If you have questions, contact Mariko Yamamoto, Ph.D. at maryamamoto@ucdavis.edu. Please note that the surveys will be open until the end of March only.

To participate in the anonymous survey you must be 18 years or older and either:

1. A person with a disability other than visual or hearing disabilities, or

2. Family member of people with disabilities (other than those with visual or hearing disabilities) who have a service dog.

For this study, service dogs are defined as “dogs that have received specific training to assist their partners with disabilities other than visual or hearing disabilities.”

- Survey for people with disabilities: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RQYZNHC
- Survey for caregivers/family members of service dog partners: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RMQU6PV

Interested in reading more about pets and people? The Center for Companion Animal Health at UC Davis has a great list of Internet resources on the human-animal bond.

Visit http://tinyurl.com/d8w-w9w5.
Everyday Resilience: Humour

Researchers have connected humour and our sense of well-being for decades. Laughter releases endorphins—sometimes called natural opiates—which reduce pain sensation, increase relaxation and have a positive effect on mood.

Our sense of humour has been linked to increased self-esteem, and lower levels of loneliness and depression. Laughing with others has the added benefit of social connection and shared communication. People with a sense of humour also score higher on assessments measuring perceived quality of life.

Despite the benefits of humour, it can be difficult to laugh when we’re feeling physical or emotional pain, or when we feel isolated and afraid. Like other positive psychology tools, humour may be something that comes naturally to you or it may feel unfamiliar or difficult. With a bit of practice, however, we can all learn ways to access humour and take advantage of endorphins when we need them most.

A few suggestions for filling your humour reservoir:

• Watch television shows or movies that you find funny.
• Visit your public library or bookstore to find amusing stories, books or videos.
• Spend time with friends or family members who like to laugh and make you laugh.
• Look for humorous radio programs in your area or find comedy radio programs/podcasts on the Internet (http://tinyurl.com/cck4wp).
• Take a comedy class—learn how to write and tell jokes. Visit Stand Up for Mental Health, for ideas or for shows in your area. (http://www.standupformentalhealth.com/).
• Check out Laughter Yoga (http://www.laughteryoga-canada.org). There is also an online laughter yoga club or you can read about how to start your own!
• Watch laughter yoga videos at Laughter Yoga International (http://tinyurl.com/aqrj5ij).
• Visit the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor for ideas (http://www.aath.org/).
• Think about what amuses you or makes you laugh. Write funny stories/observations in a journal or share your thoughts as a blog!

From Vancouver Island

For a start, people with disabilities need affordable and adequate housing.

On the disability pension, I can’t afford to eat properly or get the dietary supplements I need. Although I get the transport supplement, I can’t afford to drive very much.

My biggest concern is money. I hope to win the lottery because I can see no other means of getting enough to allow me a respectable retirement.

I donate $37 a month to help a child in Bangladesh. That small amount is far more effective there than here.

I think there are many of us who suffer with illegal, inadequate and unsafe housing. Rents are so high, we can’t afford a decent home. Since 2007, I’ve tried sharing various accomodations, but it’s been very hard to find someone suitable.

I hope this gives you some indication of not only my plight, but a window on a whole section of people with disabilities.

As a caregiver for my spouse, who has a mobility problem from the results of a hip and knee replacement, vascular surgery and open heart surgery, I find it nearly impossible to get him to a place to strengthen his muscles which he needs desperately.

I have looked into privately operated gyms who tell me they are not set up to deal with these problems, and therapy at our hospital is very limited.

What we need is a place people like my husband can go, and pay a fee if necessary, to have supervised workouts with a caregiver/spouse who would be responsible. Maybe this facility could use donated equipment that hospitals have discarded.

My husband would appreciate getting out with others who have similar disabilities, and get the exercise he needs to keep going and get stronger.

I would like to see something in our city for people with disabilities, seniors and others to use.

Mentally and physically this would be such a good thing, and a real help to someone—a spouse or another caregiver—caring for a person with disabilities at home.

Online Course

The BCCPD is developing an e-learning training course based on our handbook, Workplace Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities. The topics the e-course will cover include: evaluating your workplace and practices; involving your staff; areas of responsibility; and implementing your plan.

People taking the course will be able to work online at their own pace and will receive a certificate at the end of the course.

Stay tuned to our Facebook page and e-newsletter for announcement of the e-course launch in Spring 2013.

Committee Wins Award

What a great way to end the year! BCCPD’s Emergency Preparedness Committee was presented with an Award of Excellence at the 25th Annual Emergency Preparedness Conference, in November 2012.

The award was given in recogni- tion of the committee’s education, training and collaborative work in the field of emergency planning and response for people with dis- abilities.

Contact Karen Martin: karen@bccpd.bc.ca | 604-875-0188 http://www.bccpd.bc.ca/our work/emergency.htm
We Need a Poverty Reduction Plan for BC

BY TRISH GARNER

The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities is an active member of the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (BCPRC), a provincial network calling for a poverty reduction strategy for British Columbia.

Our goal is to build community support to compel provincial policy makers to implement a comprehensive poverty reduction plan with legislated targets and timelines.

An effective plan would boost the incomes of low-income households, including raising welfare and disability rates, and provide much-needed public services, such as social housing, community health care, universal child care, and education and training.

Over the past year, the BCPRC has grown to represent over 375 organizations throughout BC and has successfully changed both public and political discourse. Last winter, we launched a creative communications project called “BC’s Hardest Working” (bcshardestworking.ca) which tells the stories of 100 people around the province, who are working poor or on income assistance. The project raised public awareness about the inadequacy of the minimum wage, and welfare and disability rates, and the fact that social policy meant to support people has been severely eroded over the last decade.

In the new year, we continued to build on our strengths and increased our momentum in the lead-up to the provincial election. Earlier in the spring, we hosted a video conference to engage and mobilize our supporters to act within their local communities.

Key speakers updated them on the campaign’s two key messages: “We all pay for poverty” and “Poverty is not inevitable.” In relation to the first, the cost of poverty in BC is estimated at $8-9 billion per year, when we consider the health care costs, criminal/justice costs and lost productivity. In contrast, a poverty reduction plan costs less than half, at approximately $3-4 billion dollars. You can access the research from the Canadian Centre of Policy Alternatives, including a short video, here: http://www.policyalternatives.ca/costofpovertybc.

The real question is not “Can we afford to reduce poverty?” but “Can we afford not to?” It’s time to fix the hole in the roof, instead of mopping up the water on the floor.

In relation to the second message, BC is now one of only two provinces left without a poverty reduction plan, despite having the highest poverty rate in Canada. Other places are saving lives and money by tackling poverty directly, rather than dealing with the consequences. It’s time BC did too.

With the upcoming provincial election, we must continue to make poverty and the need for a
provincial poverty reduction plan a central issue.

We have asked all four political parties for their positions on each of the policy areas included in our strategy, as well as analyzed their platforms. We will release the detailed results shortly before the election.

None of the parties have gone far enough in their commitments. The Liberals have made some small positive changes in the past year and promised a little more, but substantial policy measures must be put in place. The NDP have committed to a poverty reduction plan, which has some important features, such as legislated targets and timelines, community involvement and accountability measures, but the policy changes need to be more comprehensive.

All political parties must address the deep poverty in this province and promise to raise welfare and disability rates, so those who can work are able to get back on their feet and those who cannot are able to live a life of dignity without resorting to charity.

We need your help in making sure candidates throughout the province hear our collective call for a bold poverty reduction strategy that will make a real difference within our families, our communities and our province. Together we can make a difference!

TRISH GARNER IS THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER FOR THE BC POVERTY REDUCTION COALITION.

JOIN THE CALL AS AN INDIVIDUAL OR ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION AND GET INVOLVED AT HTTP://BCPOVERTYREDUCTION.CA.

Thank you to these organizations, companies and government departments who support our work on behalf of people with disabilities.

BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities
BC Hydro Employees Community Services Fund
BC Rehab Foundation
Canadian Co-operative Association
City of Vancouver
Council of Canadians with Disabilities
Government of Canada’s Social Development Partnership Program-Disability Component
Health Sciences Association of BC
Homelessness Partnership Strategy–Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
The Law Foundation of British Columbia
The Law Foundation of Ontario
Legal Services Society of British Columbia
No Frills Pharmacy (Loblaws)
Notary Foundation of BC
Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network
Provincial Health Services Authority
TELUS Employees Charitable Giving Program
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Vancouver Coastal Health
Vancouver Foundation
Vancouver Taxi Association
WorkSafe BC

We couldn’t do it without you.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of BC.
The Future of George Pearson Centre

George Pearson Centre is home to 120 residents and 19 acres of green space. Major redevelopment plans are underway, and people with disabilities and organizations are having input.

To ensure residents’ voices are heard during the redevelopment planning, the Pearson Residents’ Redevelopment Group (PRRG) has formed. The PRRG will help communicate between key decision makers and residents.

The redevelopment is an opportunity for dialogue about inclusive communities for people with disabilities. How can the redevelopment support people with disabilities, optimal health, and independence?

**Goals**

1. Enable George Pearson Centre residents and their families to participate in the redevelopment.
2. Ensure that George Pearson Centre residents and their families have access to plain language communication about redevelopment activities, site planning and transition options.
3. Promote the ability of George Pearson Centre residents...
and their families to develop unique, indigenous options for the site redevelopment.

Here are some of the key recommendations the PPRG is putting forward:

- Universal design should be applied to all building and landscape design on the redeveloped site. People with disabilities must be included at every stage of the redevelopment, from design to construction, to ensure that the site is universally accessible.

- Residential facilities should be designed and developed at the smallest possible scale, based upon the diversity of residents’ needs and goals and connected in a physical and social campus.

- The complex care residence should maximize opportunities for at-grade level access and outdoor exposure.

- The shared residential housing options should have self-contained, active kitchens and lounge areas and each home unit should have dedicated staff.

- Residential housing options should maximize privacy.

- All residential housing should maximize the use of environmental controls and assistive technology, in order to enable residents to independently manage their environment.

- People with disabilities should be able to access the whole site through a network of accessible pathways.

Elections provide organizations such as ours with an excellent opportunity to ask the political parties that are running where they stand on issues that are important to their communities’ interests. It’s also a great chance for individuals to contact the various candidates running in their ridings and ask them what their position is on the issues that they care about. Attending all candidates meetings is another great way to learn about what the candidates have to say and how the parties’ positions differ, to see how good the candidates’ debating skills are and gauge their ability to respond to questions.

At the time of writing, BC’s May provincial election is five months away and we are still in the early stages of determining what our questions will be to BC’s Liberal, NDP, Conservative and Green parties. However, we can say we will be asking the parties questions on at least the following topics.

### Increasing Provincial Disability Benefits

One of our projects for the last 18 months has been to produce a paper calling for an increase to BC’s provincial disability benefits. The paper is entitled *Overdue: The Case for Increasing the Persons with Disabilities Benefit in BC*. It was written with our community partners the BC Association for Community Living (BCACL), Canadian Mental Health Association (BC Division), Community Legal Assistance Society (CLAS) and the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC).

In addition to an increase to the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Benefit of $300 to $1,200, we’re proposing that the PWD be indexed to keep pace with the rising cost of living so that inflation does not continually erode the ability of PWD recipients to afford food, shelter, clothing and other basic needs. We’re also asking for a shelter assistance program similar to the SAFER (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters) to help close the gap between the cost of housing and the amount people with disabilities can afford to pay. We will ask leaders of all four parties if they will implement the proposals if they were to form the next government.

### ICBC Accident Benefits (Part 7)

For several years, we have been advocating for fundamental changes to Part 7 (Accident Benefits) of BC’s Motor Vehicle Act.

All British Columbians injured in motor vehicle accidents can receive medical and rehabilitation services from ICBC. Through Part 7, people receive a maximum of $150,000 lifetime payout for rehabilitation and medical expenses. Other funding provided through Part 7 includes money for homemaker services (up to $145 per week for two years) and wage loss (up to $300 per week for two years).

The amount people receive through Part 7 has not been increased for over 20 years and is clearly inadequate. Power wheelchairs, for example, cost $15,000-
$30,000 or more and usually last for about five years. If the individual is at fault, they cannot file a tort or “not at fault” claim for expenses not covered by ICBC. We will be asking all the provincial parties if they will commit to increasing Part 7 benefits. We are proposing that rehabilitation and medical expenses be increased to at least a lifetime maximum of $300,000 and that homemaker’s benefits be increased to $225 per week or 50% of the cost of professional care services.

Woodlands School Survivors

We have been helping the survivors of Woodlands School for more than 10 years to urge the Province to recognize and provide compensation for the abuse they suffered while at Woodlands. In July 2010, the BC Supreme Court approved a settlement agreement to which former residents can apply for compensation for sexual, physical or psychological abuse for $3,000-$150,000. Tragically, only individuals who were at Woodlands after August 1st, 1974 can apply. We have continued to work with the survivors to convince the Province that justice will only be served if all survivors, regardless of when then were at the institution, have the opportunity to apply for compensation. Sadly, the oldest Woodlands survivors are still waiting to have their abuse recognized by being included in the terms of the settlement agreement. We will be asking all the political parties if they will commit to including all the former residents of Woodlands in the agreement.

EATI

Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative (EATI) provides funding to assist British Columbians with disabilities to access the equipment and assistive technology they need to achieve their employment goals. This includes funding for assessments, trialing, training and repair. Using the person-centered Participation Model, EATI assists people to plan and implement their personal strategy for overcoming functional barriers to an employment goal. Since 2009, EATI has provided over $5 million of assistive technology to more than 800 people with disabilities across BC. Funding for EATI comes through the federal/provincial Labour Market Agreement which expires on March 31st 2014. It is crucial for the disability community that this innovative program continues: we will be asking all the political parties if they will ensure that EATI is an integral part of any renewal of the Labour Market Agreement.

If you support our proposals, please ask candidates from all the parties what their position is on these issues. We’d love to see any responses you receive.

Crackers’ Story in Print

BY SHELLEY HOURSTON

Dennis Robertson, author of the new book Crackers…Come Hear: A True Story about a Hearing Assist Dog, is a long-time friend of the BCCPD. We met in 2003, when Dennis offered to share stories about his professionally-trained hearing assist dog, Crackers.

Crackers, a Lancashire Heeler, came to Dennis through Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) in California and he was on-call day and night to alert Dennis to door bells, telephones, sirens and other sounds of daily life. After training together at CCI, Crackers came to live with Dennis in the interior of BC. There was a period of adjustment and Dennis confided that during their early days there were times when Crackers “behaved like a food processor with the lid off.” It didn’t take long, however, before an extraordinary bond developed.

Crackers excelled in his job, helping Dennis manage life with profound hearing loss. The two some enjoyed a remarkable friendship forged through the inevitable ups and downs of life. In Crackers…Come Hear, Dennis offers a window to his 14 years with the little dog with “donkey ears.” Their mutual respect and loyalty shines through in poignant stories that will make you laugh, cry and marvel at the strength of the human-animal bond.

For more information or to order, visit http://www.crackerscomehear.ca.
From the Interior

In our small area of Cache Creek, home care used to be for the things people could not do for themselves: personal grooming, meals and household chores. Now people can’t get home care for most daily living help.

For people on a fixed income, the cost of paying for this needed care is getting out of reach. Even if workers are there for 15 minutes, they charge for one hour.

Isn’t it better to keep people in their own home and own environment? Or, if they are a couple who need some assistance, doesn’t it make sense to keep them together? The cost to house people in care facilities instead doesn’t make sense to me.

Also, there is a new drivers test for seniors which involves using a computer. I know people who have never used a computer, so they fail the test and lose their license. That loss of independence is very hard: they can’t get their own groceries, visit family or go to appointments without help. Not everyone has people who can support them and a lot of us feel we’re imposing to ask for help.

People who receive PWD should be able to get additional benefits more easily. I am a T-6 complete paraplegic who has been using a wheelchair for 33 years and receiving CPP-D and PWD.

On one occasion, I went to the Ministry of Social Development office—got ready, drove into town, spent money on gas—to get the nutritional supplement form. I was refused the form which I later found out was not MSD policy.

After over an hour on my pay-as-you-go phone and many trips to MSD, I found I didn’t qualify for any additional support for my health issues.

The system needs to be more accessible for people like myself living in rural areas. Have more forms available online. Make it easier to phone the Central MSD office. How about doctors letting us use their fax lines for forms?

There should be more support for people with disabilities who live in remote areas, not less!

Make Your Home Safe for Independent Living

Are you a low-income senior or a person with a disability who wants to live safely and independently in the comfort of your home?

Do you have difficulty performing day-to-day activities?

Does your home need to be adapted to meet your changing needs?

If so, you may be eligible for financial assistance under the Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) program.

Find out today if you are eligible and if you meet all of the requirements as a low-income homeowner or as a landlord applying on behalf of an eligible tenant.

To apply or learn more, visit www.bchousing.org/HAFI

You can also contact BC Housing:

Phone: 604-646-7055

Toll-free: 1-800-407-7757 (ext. 7055)
Planned Giving
You’ve always been there for others. It’s part of who you are. Now, you can continue to give beyond your lifetime.

The BCCPD has a Planned Giving program. Planned Giving is the opportunity to think ahead about causes or organizations that you may want to financially support beyond your lifetime.

You can take the time now to gather information and leave instructions in your will.

By planning ahead, you can research charities, or have someone research charities for you, that fit your values. You won’t feel rushed or pressured to make a decision and you can ensure that your money is spent in the way you want.

Benefits
There are many benefits to Planned Giving. By writing down your wishes, you will have increased peace of mind and control over your finances.

Through Planned Giving, you can provide a significant future donation without reducing your income today.

A gift in your will to a registered Canadian charity is tax-deductible.

And, your Planned Gift helps the BCCPD to be here in the future for those who need us.

Tax Savings
You can realize significant tax savings with Planned Giving. For example, stocks, bonds and mutual funds that you may have in a trust can be transferred in your will to a charity and a tax receipt will be issued.

A bequest from your estate of cash or RRSPs will reduce the taxes that your estate will be required to pay.

Other ways of donating give twofold value: by naming the BCCPD as the beneficiary in a life insurance policy, you do not incur any costs now and a tax receipt is issued when the estate is settled.

To Learn More
Our donors are important to us and we’ll work with you to be recognized in the way that you’d prefer.

If you would like more information about Planned Giving, please contact Nicole at the BCCPD at nicole@bccpd.bc.ca or 604-875-0188. She will send you BCCPD Planned Giving information for you to review with your financial planner or lawyer, family and friends.

HELP BCCPD CELEBRATE 35 YEARS
Please join all of us at BCCPD to celebrate 35 years serving the disability community.

Our host for the evening is Mark Madryga of Global TV. You’ll also be serenaded by guitarist Don Alder, entertained by comic David C. Jones and inspired by a salsa dancing troupe!

Make silent auction bids on spa packages, Bard on the Beach tickets, original art by PJ Artman, and much more.

Thursday, April 4, 2013
Holiday Inn, 711 West Broadway
Time: 5:30-9:00
Door prizes, appetizers and cash bar.
Tickets: $75
Group Discount: 5 tickets for $300
Full details and tickets at http://bccpd35th.eventbrite.ca.

For more information, contact Nicole at nicole@bccpd.bc.ca or 604-875-0188.
Landmark Case on the Right to Education

In late 2012, a North Vancouver family won a landmark court case that ruled the North Vancouver School District discriminated against their son who has dyslexia.

For 15 years, Jeff Moore’s family has pursued the case through the courts. They hope this victory will help other children with learning disabilities get the support they need in public schools.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that, by cutting services to Jeff without providing alternatives, the school made it impossible for him to get the education guaranteed to all children in BC.

“Adequate special education...is not a dispensable luxury,” the highest court ruled. “For those with severe learning disabilities, it is the ramp that provides access to the statutory commitment to education made to all children in British Columbia.”

The school district must reimburse $100,000 to the Moore family for the private school Jeff attended.

YOUR VOICE COUNTS
BECOME A BCCPD MEMBER

Numbers matter. The more members we have, the stronger our voice in the community.

Please become a BCCPD member today. You can be a voting member or a non-voting member, and we welcome both individuals and groups.

I accept your invitation to join the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities and enclose my membership fee of $15 (groups and individuals).

I am also including a tax-deductible donation of $__________. (Donations over $10 are tax deductible).

Please check the correct boxes:
- New membership or ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Voting Member or ☐ Non-voting Member

Voting members are people with disabilities and self-help groups where at least 50% of members have a disability.

Name ____________________________________________

Organization ______________________________________

Address __________________________________________

City/Prov___________________ Postal Code ____________

Phone _______________ Email _________________________

BCCPD, 204-456 W. Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3.

Please return your payment/donation with this form to:

BC COALITION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BCCPD.BC.CA
We’re pleased to announce our new self-help workbook, *Going to the CPP Disability Review Tribunal*. It’s designed to help people request a hearing, prepare their case and make their presentation to the Review Tribunal.

The workbook complements the online training course on CPP-D that we have produced in partnership with PovNet. It is available on our website and accompanied by a brief introductory video.

Please contact Valerie at feedback@bccpd.bc.ca or 604-875-0188, if you would like to have the workbook mailed to you.

We have designed an evaluation survey which is available on the workbook download page (www.bccpd.bc.ca/money.htm) or provided with copies we mail out. We’d really appreciate it if you would take a minute to help us by completing the survey.

**Thank you to the Law Foundation of Ontario, Access to Justice Fund who made this project possible.**

Advocacy Access has combined two of our BC Disability Benefits Help Sheets into one updated publication: *Help Sheet 9, Employment, Education and Training for People with Disabilities*. Updates to other Help Sheets have also been made to reflect policy changes by the Ministry of Social Development in 2012. All Help Sheets are available for free from our website library (www.bccpd.bc.ca/money.htm) or by contacting Valerie at BCCPD.

Our Wellness & Disability Initiative/AIDS & Disability Action Program is delighted to announce two new resources featuring Vancouver meditation instructor, Deborah Prieur. *Mindfulness Meditation for Stress Reduction and Self Care* is a video introduction and *Guided Meditation on the Breath and Body Sensations* is an audio guided meditation.

DVDs can be purchased for $6. Contact Shelley at wdi@bccpd.bc.ca or call 604-875-0188 (or toll free to leave a message 1-877-232-7400). See both videos on our YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/user/TheBCCPD.
Is there anything to be learned from having multiple sclerosis?

Reframing the diagnosis as an opportunity for an education is a challenging task, but members from the South Vancouver Island MS Chapter tackled the subject.

Group members had no problem saying that MS is a disease of loss, that it takes away a person’s physical abilities, puts stress on relationships and sidelines careers.

Everyone acknowledged they had educated themselves about the disease, but the question of whether MS had taught them anything useful was a huge stretch.

What it might mean to gain knowledge or skills from the disease eventually made sense when a member said she had learned to communicate with the medical profession. Then someone else said, “Now I can now speak out in a large group.” Suddenly, a flood of learning experiences flowed from group members. These positive learning outcomes fit primarily into two categories: personal growth and creativity.

**Personal Growth**

Other people in our group agreed they had become more assertive, especially when it came to speaking with health professionals about their personal care. They now feel confident to say, “I don’t feel heard…I don’t agree…or…no” in conversations. And, people found these new skills transferred to interactions with family, friends and even strangers.

Group members also said they were better at making choices, setting boundaries and being more outgoing. The demands and tribulations of MS helped many to be more empathetic and thoughtful of others. Some took this a step further by volunteering to assist people in need or organizations dear to their heart.

With loss, came the decision to “let go.” Physical abilities are often compromised, but members learned to adapt to a cane, walker, wheelchair or scooter to be active. People acknowledged that adapting to new situations is a learned skill that requires acceptance and flexibility. Learning to let go taught members to do things differently, whether it was driving with hand controls, exercising from a chair, or hiking with a walker or scooter.

Most of us with MS can’t move quickly. It can take a long time to do a simple task.

Learning to slow down and accepting that things take longer is not easy, but people found that patience paid off with less emotional angst.

Members decided that if it takes longer to get dressed, cook a meal or get out the door, why fight it? Life is more peaceful when you’re not rushing.

Developing a sense of humour taught some members not to take life so seriously. Laughing at the antics of MS lessened the stress. Uncoordinated fingers that flip cutlery off the dinner table is known as “sticky finger syndrome” in one household.

There are no guarantees with MS, so people learn to live in the moment, appreciating the little things life has to offer—a new approach for many of us. Members said they had learned to focus on the present, centering their attention on a friend’s conversation, rather than what they were going to say next. Taking on the practice of Transcendental Meditation is how one group member stays in the moment.
Creativity

MS provided the opportunity for members to discover hidden talents in the arts. One member took up painting in the hope that it would take her mind off the pain. Not only did she find she could paint through the pain, but she found she was skilled with the brush. Painting proved to be a favourite activity of many in the group. Another person wrote about living with MS. It helped her cope with the trauma of the disease. To her surprise, the articles were printed in publications for people with disabilities. Another person discovered her ability with a camera, taking photographs of flowers which she made into bookmarks and gave away as gifts.

Amazingly, a disease that takes so much can also provide teachable moments. By being open, aware and proactive, self-help group members learned new skills. They didn’t give in to the disease, but took advantage of the situation they found themselves in. They demonstrated they are not victims, but scholars of their lives.

At the end of the discussion, there was a bubbly, euphoric feeling amongst the members for what they had achieved.

About Our Group

Support and education are priorities of the South Vancouver Island’s Living Well with MS Self-Help Group that meets once a month for two hours. The democratic group has met regularly for the last eight years.

The meeting starts with a creative visualization, followed by participating in a sitting yoga pose. These activities help focus and solidify the group. Next, we discuss what is happening in the group and at the chapter. Then, we have a “check-in” where people talk about their MS and how it affects their lives. We all value the chance to share our frustrations and successes. Meetings end with an educational speaker or an activity. Group members select topics for this part of our meetings—they have varied from nutrition to the concept of “play.”

I want to thank all members of the South Vancouver Island Chapter’s Living Well with MS Self-Help Group for their thoughtful and insightful contributions to this article.
Greetings, from the Handy Circle Society in Prince George. Our mission is to serve anyone with a disability or special needs, and their families. We provide a wide range of services, including:

- Offering a drop-in centre/CAP SITE (a computer access centre).
- Promoting public awareness of disability.
- Providing a place for people with disabilities to voice their concerns and discuss relevant issues.
- Providing peer counseling.

- Providing workshops/seminars/conferences on topics, such as: financial security, computers, web design, online social safety and self-help skills.
- Operating an accessible resource centre.
- Publishing a quarterly newsletter to promote and inform the disability community.

The most important issues in our community and region are:

- Transportation
- Jobs
- Accessible public buildings

It would make a huge difference to people with disabilities in Prince George, if funding and programs were put in place:

- To ensure all public buildings are accessible.
- To provide more safe roads and sidewalks.
- To create incentives for employers to hire a person with a disability.

Learn more about the Handy Circle Society at [http://www.handycirclepg.ca/index.html](http://www.handycirclepg.ca/index.html).
A few years ago, I wrote an article for TRANSITION called “Kindness Power Tools” (http://tinyurl.com/a3o3kwn) in which I described listening as a powerful act of kindness. In my experience, a meaningful, sincere conversation with an attentive listener is a precious gift.

I’ve since reflected on other kindness power tools, especially for people who may feel socially isolated or uncomfortable interacting with others due to shyness or low self-esteem. While not immediately obvious as an act of kindness, curiosity is my second power tool of choice. Let me explain.

Curiosity as a kindness power tool is closely related to listening. Curiosity leads to questions which, when posed to another person, create a connection. This connection can in turn open a conversation—an opportunity for listening.

Most of us have experienced inappropriate curiosity/questions which feel invasive or even threatening. Curiosity as a kindness power tool involves practicing “gentle” or “pure” curiosity, without the weight of assumption, accusation or judgement.

Kind curiosity has the intention of learning, understanding or sharing. Used in this way, curiosity can be a bridge between two individuals who may or may not know each other.

As a simple example, you might slow your pace as you approach a person you’ve seen in your neighbourhood, but never engaged in conversation. Making eye contact you say, “I’ve been admiring your shopping tote. Can you tell me where you got it?” By conveying sincerity through your body language and tone, you offer an opportunity for conversation. You may not be planning to purchase a shopping tote in the near future, but your interest does need to be genuine for a connection to happen.

Practicing curiosity is also a self-kindness (self-compassion) power tool. Kind or gentle curiosity offers a way of anticipating the future without dread or fear. In learning to suspend the expectation that “bad things might happen,” we can intercept anxiety and negative thinking that can lead to feelings of sadness or depression. When life challenges do appear, our curiosity helps us gather more information and respond more appropriately. Mark Twain once said about anticipating the future, “I have been through some terrible things in my life, some of which actually happened.”

As a final note about curiosity as a self-kindness tool, researchers have found that people with high levels of curiosity are healthier, more creative, enjoy better attention and motivation, are more joyful and experience greater personal development.*


Contact Shelley at wdi@bccpd.bc.ca or 604-875-0188 with your stories about curiosity or listening as kindness power tools, or for information about how to join Pay It Forward BC, BCCPD’s kindness movement.
Growing Big in Small Places

Jeanette Andersen says you don’t need lots of space or experience to nurture your green thumb.

There’s barely enough room for Jeanette Andersen to roll onto her south-facing balcony, but that’s just how she likes it. A lilac tree dangles from the ledge, pots full of chives, parsley and rosemary clutter her balcony floor, and a blooming vine grows up along the wall.

“So far I’ve just got some things from last year,” she says, “but I’d still like to plant some leafy greens. Kale maybe. I still can’t get over the Swiss chard from last year—it was amazing what grew! For some reason, when you’re growing [herbs or vegetables] yourself, they taste so much better,” she says. “My chives are just delicious.”

Gardening has played a role in Andersen’s life since she was a girl, thanks to her mother, who was a passionate gardener. “It’s such a pleasure,” says Andersen. “You get to see things grow and come to fruition. It’s like life on a smaller scale.”

Andersen was paralyzed from polio when she was 16 and made her home at the George Pearson Centre for the next 30 years. When David Tarrant, the host of CBC’s Canadian Gardener, began giving monthly gardening workshops to residents, she became one of his most loyal followers.

“He would give talks on all kinds of gardening subjects and take us out to his events at the VanDusen Gardens and other places,” says Andersen. “He got my interest going and from there, it just grew.”

She hasn’t looked back since. When Andersen moved to a housing co-op 20 years ago, she put Tarrant’s lessons into action. She planted a balcony garden and became the chair of her co-op’s garden committee, a position she’s held for 17 years. “I can’t do the hands-on stuff, so I learn what I need to learn and direct other people so they know what to do,” she says.

Under her helm, her co-op built its first rooftop garden, complete with a small blueberry bush, a strawberry patch, a rose bush and a four-foot tall apple tree which she says produces an abundance of excellent apples.

“I just love the way people react when they see the blueberry bush and the strawberries. They’re always so surprised and excited,” says Andersen, who always tries to plant what people like best.

For the past three years, she’s also served on the board of the Disabled Independent Gardener’s Association (DIGA), so she knows all about the challenges other gardeners with disabilities face, especially those who live in condos and apartments. But Andersen says there are solutions.

Andersen recommends novice gardeners start with perennials—plants that come back each year. “Then slowly go beyond that. If you’ve got a balcony, gradually grow your favourite vegetable and your favourite flower.”

When it comes to pots, she suggests going for plastic instead of clay. “It’s more durable, it’s lighter and the plastic holds the fluid better.”

Finally, if you do have a yard, Andersen recommends you have someone help you build a deck or a raised container up to three feet high, so you can work more easily from your wheelchair.

Most importantly, Andersen says people should try reaching out to others in their community. “Find a local garden club and see if they’ll help you set something up. Most people who enjoy gardening, they love it. Even if they can give you only a couple hours a week you can actually do quite a bit. Just go for it.”

For those in Vancouver, DIGA offers workshops, one-on-one support, volunteer help and fully accessible plots in two community gardens.

Thanks to Tetra, another organization made up of volunteer engineers and technicians, custom-designed assistive devices, such as adapted hand tools, garden stools and devices to transfer from a wheelchair to the ground, are provided to DIGA members whenever possible.

Visit http://www.disabilityfoundation.org/diga or email diga@disabilityfoundation.org.
From the Sunshine Coast

By far the biggest issue for a person with a disability living in my area is poverty. I am referring mostly to those living on the PWD benefit. The primary reason for this poverty is the low shelter rate given to those receiving benefits. I am not in subsidized housing, so I am paying 80% of my total benefit on my living expenses. This leaves me with about $200 a month for food, clothing, etc.

Consequently, I live in fear of not being able to make it through the month. I worry that there will be an additional expense, like special orthotic shoes or prescription glasses or over-the-counter medicines I won’t be able to afford.

If the shelter rate was doubled (from $375 to $750) this would more closely reflect the current market rates for a one-bedroom apartment or studio (well, not in the Lower Mainland!). And the food portion of the benefit would not have to be used to make up the difference.

The second biggest issue for a person with a disability living in my area is the lack of affordable or subsidized housing. I was recently told that subsidized units were for seniors with a disability. This wasn’t true ten years ago. However, with the increased demand, people under 55 years of age with a disability, are not put on the waiting list.

More subsidized units are needed to keep up with the community demand. Here on the Sunshine Coast, we have the highest rates of both people with disabilities and seniors in the province.

The third issue is the lack of support services for people with disabilities. I am fortunate that, through a Mental Health program, I qualify to have someone come to pick me up and take me to the food bank twice a month. We also have a volunteer shopping service (for $5) and one local pharmacy delivers my prescriptions. I hope all communities across this province have such help available.

The fourth issue is isolation and lack of ability to take care of my home. Some home support would be most appreciated. It’s a shame this service was discontinued some years back. I could really use a person to come in twice a week to make sure I am doing all right and to help with some cleaning.

The last thing I want to mention is mental health. It should be taken for granted that if someone does not get the support they need in their community and feels helpless and even hopeless, anxiety and depression will begin to factor into this person’s disability. If I’d had a social worker available to talk to when I first became disabled and unable to work–to help me work out the difficulties of finding an affordable home, linking up with support services, providing some coping skills—I believe I wouldn’t have become more disabled because of anxiety and a major depressive episode.

Teaching Empathy by Helping Kids with Anxiety

Diagnosed with social anxiety disorder at a young age, Darlene Wierski-Devoe’s daughter thrived in supportive environments but was limited otherwise. Wierski-Devoe’s own childhood was the same. In an effort to help raise awareness of this debilitating disorder, Just Like You was born.

What does anxiety feel like? “Every day is spent in fight-or-flight moments. While others see this as insular behavior, inside all an anxious child wants is to play with other kids and to be included,” says Wierski-Devoe.

In 2008, Wierski-Devoe started blogging at RaisingSociallyAnxiousChildrenBlog.com, and using social media to connect with other parents of socially anxious children.

Just Like You is part of a project to help children with “invisible needs,” by educating their classmates to surround them with a village of support. Just Like You (illustrated by Sharon Pickering), is told from the perspective of a young girl struggling with “the anxiety monster.”

Wierski-Devoe says, “The purpose of the book is to teach children and adults alike not to give up on these kids; to keep asking them to play or to join in or to be a friend.”

You can contact Darlene Wierski-Devoe at (905) 875-4316 or darlene@talkbreathelive.com.
Disability Rights are Labour Rights  | BY BARRY O’NEILL

When it comes to diversity issues, trade union leaders and frontline union activists have never shied away from “talking the talk” of equality. But talk is cheap: backing up our commitment with decisive action that makes a difference in people’s lives takes a lot of hard work.

To be sure, the struggle to improve the rights of workers with disabilities has been a gradual process. Incremental change has taken place over several decades. At CUPE BC, we’re especially proud of the work that our Persons With Disabilities Working Group has done and the gains it has made for our members with disabilities, since the group was established in 2004. This includes:

- Development of a Disability Rights Handbook for the membership. The handbook was designed as a resource tool to ensure that members are aware of their rights to be accommodated and how far the employer’s obligations go with respect to the duty to accommodate. It also provides contact information for a variety of organizations that offer disability-related services.

- A membership survey on disability issues. This was the first time at any level in CUPE that a membership survey related to disability was done. It helped us ensure that decisions made about the membership are firmly grounded in what our members with disabilities tell us first-hand. Significantly, it told us that 25 percent of CUPE members self-identify as having a disability.

- Work with CUPE’s Equality and Union Development reps to ensure that disability issues are part of mainstream Union courses. For example, for the past fifteen years, CUPE has been providing one-day duty to accommodate courses for our members and for joint union-management sessions. We’re one of the only unions to provide regular training in this area. Furthermore, anyone who wishes to become a CUPE shop steward these days is required to have training in a certain number of equality-related modules, one of which is disability rights.

- Lobbying for disability-related benefits, including improvements to disability pensions, the HandyDART transit system for people with disabilities, and others.

- Efforts to ensure that our conventions and schools are fully accessible.

We also support the work of CUPE’s Persons with Disabilities National Working Group which launched a six-month campaign on December 3, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Our plans include financial and logistical support for the BC group to conduct a BC Division event as part of the national campaign; a promotional video that will celebrate the work and determination of our members to ensure that all CUPE members—including those with disabilities—are able to
Disability issues aren’t some convenient cause that we attend to in our spare time. They are part of our daily business as labour activists.

Personally speaking, my own awareness improved a great deal about a decade ago in a most unfortunate way: a very serious motorcycle accident that severely damaged one of my legs. The physical pain and awkwardness I endured on the long road to recovery raised a number of access issues that people with permanent disabilities face every day. The experience was certainly an eye-opener for me.

Of course, there is a lot more we can do as unions to make a difference for disability rights. The key is to listen to what our members—especially people with disabilities themselves—tell us. As James Baldwin once put it, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

BARRY O’NEILL IS PRESIDENT OF CUPE BC WHICH REPRESENTS 85,000 PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS IN BC.

unions matter

Workers in child care facilities, community social services, casinos, call centres, aboriginal services and health care are joining the B.C. Government & Service Employees’ Union.

Why? Because joining the BCGEU gives you a stronger voice and conditions to make your workplace better.

Join us. To learn more about joining BCGEU, call 604-291-6062 or visit www.bcgeu.ca
The Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB), BC-Yukon Division, serves all of BC and the Yukon, through 16 local chapters. We assist the visually impaired and blind community which includes people who are deaf, blind and many people with other multiple disabilities not related to vision loss.

Our main services centre around:
- Community networking
- Individual mentoring
- Recreational and social programs
- Advocacy
- Public awareness
- Education

We strive to help anyone experiencing any level of vision loss, whether they are members of the organization or not. We welcome and encourage sighted members, as well as visually impaired and blind members.

For most people with vision loss, the availability and cost of transportation are major barriers, especially in rural areas.

The unemployment rate in the blind community is the highest of all disabilities—so many people live on very low incomes.

Access to and affordability of assistive devices are also on the list of major challenges to people with vision loss and/or blindness.

There is also a lack of funding for Library Services for the Blind.

To help people in our community, we would love to see:
- Better access to public transportation, such as HandyDART.
- An increase in the provincial disability income program which could include a transportation allowance.
- Ensure that a program, such as the current Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative (EATI), continues to be funded.
- Funding to the Library Services for the Blind to ensure equal access.


In Vancouver, two unique organizations—one a not-for-profit advocacy and education organization (EASE, Equitable and Accessible Sexual Expression), the other a for-profit sexual coaching service (Sensual Solutions)—are teaming up to help create better access to intimacy for people with spinal cord injury and other disabilities. Terry LeBlanc, a spinal cord injury BC board member who is also a quadriplegic, says, “Sexuality seems to be stripped from you with the onset of a sudden disability, and it predominately happens to young adults in the prime of life.” Read more, in SPIN magazine, Autumn 2012, [Partners for Pleasure](http://sci-bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Spin-Fall-2012-online.pdf).
congrats to the winners of our year end party trivia contest. the team of christine gordon, paul, sarah and matteo gauthier, and jane dyson got the highest score, without cheating on the web (unlike another team who will not be named, including sam bradd, ann vrlak, valerie stasiewski, chloe krause and annette murray).

in our e-newsletter, we put out a call for a kind soul who would paint the bccpd waiting area. we're so grateful to doug linfitt for giving our worn reception space a fresh look.

a huge thank you to doug for donating his time and energy to our office renewal. a wonderful year-end present!

are you experiencing symptoms such as:

- excessive fatigue not related to activity or relieved by rest
- increased weakness in unaffected and/or previously affected or paralyzed areas
- muscle and joint pain
- reduced endurance
- sensitivity to cold
- difficulty sleeping
- problems breathing and swallowing
- sensitivity to anaesthetics and medication

if you are having difficulty with one or more of these symptoms and you had polio previously, you may have post polio syndrome.

it is important to inform yourself about this condition. tell your doctor.

for more information contact our office:

post polio awareness and support society of british columbia

phone: 1-250-655-8849
fax: 1-250-655-8859
email: ppass@ppassbc.com
www.ppassbc.com
From the Fraser Valley

Our organization, Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association (FVBIA) provides services and supports to people with acquired brain injuries and their families.

An acquired brain injury that is a permanent injury to the brain tissue itself causes a complex and often bewildering range of changes to a person’s physical, behavioural or emotional function. These injuries can range from mild to severe and may be as a result of trauma (accident or assault), a medical condition (stroke, infection, tumor), hypoxia (lack of oxygen) or poisoning.

We provide a variety of services and programs throughout the Fraser Valley; including case management services, support groups, art/photography groups, health and wellness programs, and leisure and drop in programs.

Every brain injury is unique, as are the needs of the people who sustain them. The changes that occur after a brain injury will largely be determined by the area(s) of the brain affected, how the brain is injured and the severity of the injury. There may also be psychiatric and/or addictions issues that co-exist with a diagnosis of acquired brain injury.

Most of the people we support are on a limited income provided through the Persons with Disability (PWD) benefit, from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. The housing portion of the benefit is very low, so most people need to use part of the support portion to pay their rent. Earnings exemptions for people receiving PWD are beneficial, however many of our clients are unable to find sustainable work because of their unique cognitive and physical challenges.

The struggle to find safe and affordable housing in the Fraser Valley, as well as throughout British Columbia, impacts all kinds of individuals and families affected by acquired brain injury.

Here are just a few of our clients’ stories.

For example, a couple recently had to relocate from their modular home park because the park is being redeveloped. They received a modest amount for their home, but then had to find similar housing elsewhere at $850 per month versus their previous modest home park fees of approximately $300 per month.

A young mother with acquired brain injury had a very difficult time finding a safe and affordable home that would allow children. She looked for weeks and eventually found an appropriate unit which costs well above the housing allowance provided through PWD. This meant she would have to use community kitchen and food bank programs, in order to put food on the table. However, she was afraid to use the services and her child was going without healthy food. She is now able to receive a small BC housing rent supplement which has decreased her stress and made it possible for her to use some of her PWD income for food and other necessary expenses.

A woman with an acquired brain injury was evicted because she had a companion dog that was undergoing training. She eventually found an appropriate apartment, but it was more expensive. She is unable to increase her income by working and the increased rental cost significantly impacts her quality of life.

Finding safe, affordable housing is a tremendous challenge for people with acquired brain injury. Landlords are not always able to cope with perceived eccentricities which result in a high eviction rate. A large number of people that participate in FVBIA services are receiving small pensions or PWD and live in poverty. Their options for housing are severely limited and they are often relegated to unsafe areas which increases their exposure to abuse.

Increasing the PWD and housing allowance, as well as more low income housing options in every community, would have a very positive impact on people’s lives.
We’re Here To Help With CPP Disability

Were you previously working and now have a disability?
Do you need help to apply for CPP Disability or appeal a denial of benefits?

How Can BCCPD Help?
BC Coalition of People with Disabilities is an expert in Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D) advocacy. We provide:
• in person, one-to-one assistance
• assistance by phone
• free self-help publications on what CPP is, how to apply and how to appeal a denial (available in English, Traditional Chinese and Punjabi)

What do I need to know about CPP-D?
CPP-D has several advantages over provincial disability benefits. And, recipients may receive provincial (PWD/PPMB) disability benefits in addition to CPP-D in the form of a top-up, if their CPP-D benefits fall below the provincial minimum.

Please contact us to learn more.
CPP-D Advocacy Program
Telephone: 604-872-1278 | Toll-Free: 1-800-663-1278
Website: www.bccpd.bc.ca
Online Program information: OurWork/Advocacy Access
Online Self-help CPP resources: Library/Money & Income Supports

Funded through the generosity of the Law Foundation of BC
Celebrating 35 YEARS

Thank you to the Province of BC for their continuing support.