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editorial

by Ted Kuntz

Over the last twenty years, a substantial shift has occurred. It is now understood that individuals with differing abilities have a right to belong in the community.

The world of disability was much different 20 years ago. In 1989, my son Josh was the first child with significant disabilities to be admitted to his neighbourhood school. This advancement was not without significant effort.

The first educational placement offered for our son was a segregated setting dedicated solely for children with significant disabilities. The other children were restricted to their beds and non-verbal. This is not what we had in mind for our son.

As a result of our steadfast refusal to accept anything less than full inclusion in his neighbourhood elementary school, Josh was finally accepted. The event was such an anomaly that his enrollment was front page news on our local community newspaper.

Josh's first day of school gave a good indication of what was to come. Josh's mom took him to school that day. When she returned home, Cathy was in tears. "It was awful," she said. "What was awful?" I asked.

"It was like we were invisible. I knew people saw us because they moved out of the way when I approached with Josh in his wheelchair. But no one acknowledged us or said 'good morning' to us."

Cathy knew what to do. She knew she needed to educate the parents and children about our son. She immediately got to work creating a storybook about Josh. She took photos from our photo album and pasted them into a small book. With a coloured marker, she told the story of Josh. She explained his medical condition in five-year-old language, and she assured the children that Josh was just like them.

The next day Cathy asked Josh's teacher if she could read the "Story of Josh" to the students. What happened next was a harbinger of the changes that would begin to occur in communities around the country. Josh's teacher asked if we would permit the storybook to stay at

the school, and whether the other children might be able to sign it out and take it home with them for the night.

The next morning was the first evidence of a community learning to welcome individuals with a disability. As we wheeled Josh to school a parent approached with their child. "Good morning Josh," they began. "I'd like to introduce my son to you." "We read the story of Josh last night.

Actually we read it three times." The next day, another parent approached and a similar experience occurred. And again, and again until Josh was fully welcomed into his neighbourhood community.

What we came to learn is the community is a place of welcome and hospitality. It is filled with compassionate and caring people. However, the years of institutional care had deprived the community of the opportunity to welcome and learn how to be in relationship with individuals with a disability.

Over the last twenty years, a substantial shift has occurred. It is now understood that individuals with differing abilities have a right to belong in the community. They have a right to attend their neighbourhood school, and to receive the same

level of medical care and consideration available to every citizen.

It is now understood that an individual with a disability can and should make a contribution to his or her community. And it is understood that individuals with differing abilities can be in rich and fulfilling, reciprocal relationships.

We've also made advancements in our policies, practices and resources for securing a good life for individuals with a disability. Canada became a world leader when they introduced the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) that provides a vehicle for parents and the community to contribute to the financial well-being of an individual with a disability, and for the individual with a disability to acquire wealth and financial security.

British Columbia became the first province in Canada to formally recognize the validity of relationships in decision-making with the establishment of the Representation Agreement.

Changes have also occurred with shifts in our expectation of housing, moving away from institutional and segregated housing to "home share" and intentional communities like L'Arche and co-housing where individuals with disabilities live with individuals without disabilities.

These shifts were inspired by the vision of Canadian Jean Vanier.

Employment is increasingly available to individuals with a disability as we have learned how to modify workplace environments and adjust expectations to accommodate individuals with differing abilities.

What has shifted substantially in the last 20 years is an understanding of the importance of belonging, not only for individuals with disabilities, but also for all individuals. We all benefit by having rich networks of support.

The journey of welcoming and including individuals with a disability has transformed our communities into kinder and gentler places where we all have a right to belong and a responsibility to facilitate belonging.

The last 20 years has been a transformative time in our maturing as a community. While there is much more work to be done, the changes in expectations, understanding, and our ability to be inclusive have been truly remarkable. Much of the credit goes to the pioneering families and self-advocates who held the vision of belonging and inclusion.

TED KUNTZ IS CHAIR OF PLAN INSTITUTE'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS. **T**



Cathy knew what to do. She knew she needed to educate the parents and children about our son. She immediately got to work creating a storybook about Josh.



WHAT'S CHANGED IN 20 YEARS?

An Interview with Johanna Johnson

Do you feel social attitudes about disability have changed over the last 20 years?

I feel that they've improved for people with visible disabilities. But it's stayed the same and maybe gotten a bit worse for those with invisible disabilities.

What about awareness and perception of disability in government? What's it like today and compared to 20 years ago?

Government is interesting because it has made improvements generally, but it continues to neglect the large and diverse needs of people with mental illnesses and the elderly.

Over the past 20 years, things have definitely improved for certain disability groups, but so they should and, of course, they still have a way to go. In the areas that I feel have been neglected by government, I

Government panders to the voting majority and the party's donors. Sadly, politics is not always about helping people.

think it's because it will take a lot of money or resources, and the groups affected can't fight for it.

What's the biggest challenge in working with government around progress on disability issues?

Government panders to the voting majority and the party's donors. Sadly, politics is not always about helping people.

What do you think is the biggest strength of the disability community or disability advocacy?

The unrelenting spirit humans have to make life better for themselves, the people around them and future generations.

What do you see as the most important issue for disability advocates to focus on for the next 10 years?

I have had (and still do have) a good life, but that's because I have had the support of many people (family being a huge part of it), money, an excellent education and a very loud voice. Unfortunately, I am an uncommon case.

Disability advocates need to focus (and do focus) on people who are missing part of my support framework. This is a huge undertaking that requires extreme public and government support.

How do we do this?

Aside from the brilliant work that DABC currently does, I don't know. An ongoing relationship with the party in power, while often difficult, is important and DABC works hard at this. My hope is that we can keep up the work we've been doing.

The community of advocates we have at DABC is priceless and have

made stunning efforts to turn the small support they are given into gold.

I'm not sure what the next ten years will bring, but I know that before we can make deep changes we need community and governments' that are simply much less selfish.

If you're an "older" writer, what do you see in younger people with disabilities? Do you feel their attitudes and experiences are different from yours at their age?

I've seen into the future and it is exciting. I'm a teacher in a grade one class and the other day I needed a substitute teacher to cover me for the afternoon. The teacher that came in for me was a confident young woman who did a great job with the class (and I have some tough kids).

When I saw the students the next day, they told me the sub was great and she was in a power wheelchair. The day is coming when a person shows up for a job and the fact that they live with a disability is of no consequence. I like to think this is the future!

The day is coming when a person shows up for a job and the fact that they live with a disability is of no consequence. I like to think this is the future!

How would you rate the following, from 1 to 5, with 5 being the best?

General public awareness,	3
Government awareness	2.5
Government programs	2.5
Income assistance/ benefits	2
Medical/home support	3
Transportation	3
Housing	2
Employment/education	3

JOHANNA JOHNSON IS AN ADVOCATE AND TEACHER. 

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Matching Housing and Wheelchair Users

Pilot project starts testing better fit for wheelchair users and affordable housing | BY DAWN STEELE

Disability Alliance BC has launched the first phase of a pilot partnership to help providers of affordable, accessible rental housing better match suitable vacancies with wheelchair users in Metro Vancouver.

Current challenges relate in part to the region's affordable housing crisis, with many wheelchair users experiencing extreme difficulty due to especially long waits for accessible homes. Securing support services and equipment for independent living is typically a lengthy process, so scarce wheelchair-accessible vacancies are often gone before wheelchair users are ready to move in. Home seekers also struggle to identify which homes have the specific accessibility features they need.

DABC teamed up with key partners to address these challenges with a three-year pilot project called **The Right Fit**. Funded by the Vancouver Foundation and the BC Rehab Foundation, The Right Fit Pilot Project (RFPP) will test new approaches to support wheelchair users, providers of affordable and accessible housing, and agencies that provide supports for independent living in Metro Vancouver.

The RFPP will identify and test improvements in phases, with Phase 1 just getting underway. The initial focus will be on wheelchair users receiving provincial PWD benefits

who have applied for wheelchair accessible housing through The Housing Registry on BC Housing's website (see also RFPP Eligibility on the opposite page).

BC Housing has invited housing providers who are members of The Housing Registry to participate, and is offering them limited financial support to reserve units for RFPP applicants, while wheelchair-users arrange for home supports and special equipment.

Working with a team of "navigators" at the Individualized Funding Resource Centre, the RFPP will also test a new case management process to help connect home seekers with housing and service providers. Navigators will provide support and coordination to smooth the process and help participants match the right tenant to the right home with the right supports.

Provincial and regional authorities will also test streamlined processes for approving home supports and special equipment for independent living. Other goals include identifying barriers and exploring options for an enhanced inventory of accessible housing in Metro Vancouver's large and diverse housing market.

The Right Fit Pilot Project is led by Disability Alliance BC in partnership with the Individualized Funding Resource Centre, BC Housing, City of Vancouver, Fraser Health Authority,

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. The project is generously funded by the **Vancouver Foundation** and the **BC Rehab Foundation**.

“Thanks to the support of the Vancouver Foundation, the BC Rehab Foundation and our project partners, we are able to start helping wheelchair users access housing,” said DABC Executive Director Jane Dyson. “We’re very grateful for everyone’s commitment to collaboration and learning.”

“These are complex challenges and we don’t expect changes to happen overnight,” Dyson added. “But the more support we get, especially from interested housing providers, the more we can do in facilitating a better fit between wheelchair users and the housing they need.” 

RFPP Eligibility

Phase 1 RFPP participants must be:

- Eligible for subsidized housing under BC Housing’s qualifying criteria (see <http://tinyurl.com/y9a67nua>);
- Power or manual wheelchair users who need fully wheelchair-accessible housing and personal supports (24/7 wheelchair users only, not scooters);
- Currently living in Vancouver Coastal Health Region or Fraser Health Region and seeking housing within Metro Vancouver;
- Aged 19 - 64; and
- Approved for provincial PWD (Persons With Disabilities) benefits.
- Phase 1 will accept only applicants who have applied for wheelchair accessible subsidized housing through The Housing Registry for housing within the Metro Vancouver Regional District.

For more information about the project or to apply, contact:

Paul Gauthier, Executive Director and Navigator,
Individualized Funding Resource Centre.

Email: RightFit@IFRCSociety.org Phone: 604-777-7576



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WHAT'S CHANGED IN 20 YEARS?

Josh Vander Vries on Attitudes and Priorities

Do you feel social attitudes about disability have changed over the last 20 years?

I do feel that social attitudes about disability have improved over the past 20 years, along with most things. That's my general attitude though—I feel most things are always improving.

I think it's also important to remember that attitudes about disability come both externally from society and internally from people with disabilities ourselves. We should care about monitoring and influencing both.

What about awareness and perception of disability in government?

What's it like today and compared to 20 years ago?

Disability awareness in government is on the rise. Several politicians with mobility and vision disabilities have served in federal, provincial and municipal governments. How that affects perception of disability in society and government is hard to say. I know I enjoy having politicians with visible disabilities in the media, especially on non-disability files.

I think it's also important to remember that attitudes about disability come both externally from society and internally from people with disabilities ourselves. We should care about monitoring and influencing both.

People with disabilities taking heat for leadership are also a positive part of this evolution. So far, I'm not aware of any modern politicians who have had their actual disability play as big a role as that federal cabinet minister in the Munsinger Affair of the late 1950s though (see this fascinating story at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_S%C3%A9vigny).

What's the biggest challenge in working with government around progress on disability issues?

The biggest challenge is...government. The state rightfully has limited reach into the lives of Canadians. Real progress on disability issues will require a multi-faceted approach with the public, private, entertainment, art, charities and other sectors. Relying and focusing on government to the exclusion of all else is a recipe for spinning our wheels.

What do you think is the biggest strength of the disability community or disability advocacy?

Everyone in the world is either disabled or knows or loves someone who is. This is a catalyst for almost everyone to desire to do better when it comes to disability. The *Americans with Disabilities Act* is an often-cited example of exceptional bipartisanship, in an ever-polarizing United States. There is clearly a will, and where there is a will, there is a way.

What do you see as the most important issue for disability advocates to focus on for the next 10 years? How should they do this?

It's critical for the disability movement to move past internal existential questions like person-first language and inspiration porn. I alternate between using "disabled" people and those "with disabilities" in these questions and day to day.

I recognize some advocates insist on person-first language and won't adopt it in long and difficult disputes. Personally, I feel person-first language apologizes for disabili-

ity and I adopt the British style of “I am disabled”—someone disabled by things outside of themselves and proud of his identity. We would never insist on saying “a person who is French” to prove they’re a person first.

The same goes for the discussions emerging recently decrying the use of portraying successful disabled people, and labeling it as “inspiration porn.”

The reality is that disability can be ordinary and exceptionally positive and exceptionally negative. The amount of digital ink spilled saying that the positive portrayal of disability undermines disability issues should be used to find solutions to the real disability matters of anti-discrimination, accessibility and support.

How would you rate the following, from 1 to 5, with 5 being the best?

General public awareness, acceptance	3
Government awareness, acceptance	4
Government programs and services	3
Income assistance and benefits	2
Medical support, home support	1
Transportation	Canada 2 Vancouver 4.5
Housing	2
Employment and education	Employment 2 Education 4

If you’re an “older” writer, what do you see in younger people with disabilities? Do you feel their attitudes and experiences are different from yours at their age?

I’m heartened by what I hear from young disabled Canadians, when they speak of usually limitless aspirations, just like I think I did when I was younger. I hope in 20 years that disability leaders will be complaining that the movement needs to stop harping on and on about accessibility.

“That was solved years ago in hard-fought battles,” they will say. “The real issue is the police giving out too many speeding tickets to law-abiding hover wheelchair users.”

JOSH VANDER VRIES IS A LAWYER IN VANCOUVER. **T**



PHOTO: DEVIN MANKY

I recognize some advocates insist on person-first language and won its adoption in long and difficult disputes. Personally, I feel person-first language apologizes for disability...

WHAT'S CHANGED IN 20 YEARS?

Pam Horton Gives a Long-term Perspective on Advocacy



Do you feel social attitudes about disability have changed over the last 20 years?

For many people, it's very natural for them to see people for who they are and the disability happens to be just a part of that. But sadly, there are folks who only tolerate and see disability as something to pity, and do their best to ignore and avoid.

I notice a positive difference in many businesses, banks, restaurants and other public places. More often people sit down or crouch down to come down to eye level for conversation. We're welcomed and, per-

sonally, I don't often see the body language that says "Oh no, what do I do now?"

The built environment is far more accessible than it was 20 years ago, though there will always be room for improvement. Youngsters are teaching their parents in some cases which is great to see. In others, parents are teaching their children by their own positive example.

What about awareness and perception of disability in government? What's it like today and compared to 20 years ago?

When I met Ed Desjardins many years ago, he said to me, "Pam, by going out into the community and being visible, you'll begin to see people's attitudes change." The biggest strength is that people with disabilities are more visible today than even 10 years ago, and we're organizing and showing our strength in numbers.

I have more interactions with local government than provincial or federal and I've noticed improvements in the last 20 years. Unfortunately, there is sometimes back pedalling and a need to retrain when staff retire.

People are more comfortable asking questions now than I've ever noticed before.

What do you think is the biggest challenge of the disability community or disability advocacy?

The biggest challenge is ensuring that, not only do they listen to you, but they also hear your words and try to understand. It took a long time for governments at all levels to accept that people with disabilities can speak on their own behalf.

What do you think is the biggest strength of the disability community or disability advocacy?

Visibility. When I met Ed Desjardins many years ago, he said to me, "Pam, by going out into the community and being visible, you'll begin to see people's attitudes change."

The biggest strength is that people with disabilities are more visible today than even 10 years ago, and we're organizing and showing our strength in numbers.

We live down the hall from you, we cross paths in the community, we shop at the same stores, we go to the same bank. We are your friends.

The age of technology has opened so many doors for people with disabilities and strengthened the

community’s numbers, but not everyone can afford those things. One of the saddest things is that not all of these resources are available to everyone.

What do you see as the most important issue for disability advocates to focus on for the next 10 years? How should they do this?

I find it hard to zero in on one single issue. To me, it’s the security of housing and finances.

If you’re an “older” writer, what do you see in younger people with disabilities? Do you feel their attitudes and experiences are different from yours at their age?

Younger people with disabilities are coming into a world where transportation is readily available to them and where technology is easier to access. Their attitudes are very different from mine.

Today’s 30-year-old has had access to the internet and technology. This all came about after I retired. I consider myself a veteran of disability advocacy and particularly when it comes to public transportation, the hard work has been done.

Today’s younger people with disabilities have come into a time when many of the barriers have been broken down.

PAM HORTON HAS BEEN A PASSIONATE DISABILITY ADVOCATE ON MANY ISSUES, AS WELL AS A HARD-WORKING DABC BOARD MEMBER. 

How would you rate the following, from 1 to 5, with 5 being the best?

General public awareness, acceptance	4
Government awareness, acceptance	3
Government programs and services	2.5
Income assistance and benefits	2
Medical support, home support ^{1, 2}	3/2
Transportation ³	4
Housing ⁴	2
Employment and education ⁵	3

More Comments from Pam

¹ There is still a lack of programs available for people with certain medical needs, especially mental health services.

² It’s very frustrating as a person living with MS and needing daily assistance to be evaluated against traditional home support. There isn’t enough consideration to individual needs. We are all judged by the same template.

³ All levels of public transportation are accessible, we just don’t have enough of it.

⁴ There’s not enough purpose-built housing for people with various disabilities or at an affordable rate.

⁵ There are more opportunities in employment and education, but access to them is not always easy.



We couldn't do it without you.

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

Air Canada Foundation

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BC Government and Services Employees
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Canadian Union of Public Employees of
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City of Vancouver

Community Futures British Columbia

Council of Canadians with Disabilities

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Department of Justice Canada, Victims
Fund

Emergency Management BC, Ministry of
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Government of Canada's Social
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Work BC Employment Services



We gratefully acknowledge the
financial support of the
Province of BC.

Myths about the Disability Tax Credit

There are some misconceptions that cause people to miss out on the RDSP. | BY SAM TURCOTT

Since the 2016 launch of Access RDSP, Disability Alliance BC has been working in partnership with **Plan Institute** and the **BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society** on the **Access RDSP** project. We are able to do this work because of the support of the **Vancouver Foundation**.

The purpose of Access RDSP is to help people apply for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) and open a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). We want to see more British Columbians qualify to open an RDSP.

Since the program began, advocates have found some common myths about the DTC and RDSP that prevent people from applying. Here are a few we see most often:

Myth 1: You Need a Sponsor to Apply for the DTC

This is not true—ever. Some for-profit businesses make money by helping people qualify for the DTC and then taking a significant percentage of any tax benefits they get back. People living on low income may not receive money back on their taxes when they qualify for the DTC and are told by these businesses that they need to find someone in their family to “sponsor” their application. This is not true. You can qualify for the DTC, even if you do not receive money back right away.

This is important because you need the DTC to open an RDSP which can help people living on low income to receive tens of thousands of dollars from government grants and bonds.

Myth 2: You Need to be Completely Disabled to Qualify for the DTC

Qualifying for the DTC depends on how your disability affects you. However, people tend to think the requirements are much stricter than they actually are.

You will qualify for the DTC if the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) agrees your disability will last one or more years and that it causes you to be “markedly restricted” in **one of the following areas**: vision, hearing, speaking, walking, eating, dressing, eliminating or mental functions necessary for everyday life. A marked restriction can mean you are unable to do something, such as walking, or that you require a substantially longer amount of time to do it, such as walking three times slower than someone your age without your restriction.

You do not need to be restricted in more than one area to qualify. This means, for example, that people who are legally blind, deaf or those who use a wheelchair, but who are not affected in any other areas, typically qualify for the DTC very easily.

If the CRA does not agree you are markedly restricted in one of the areas listed above, they will still approve you if they agree you have multiple restrictions that cause you to be markedly restricted overall. For example, if you have arthritis and irritable bowel syndrome you may qualify because some of the time you are restricted in walk-

ing and some of the time you are restricted in eliminating, and overall you have a marked restriction.

It is also possible to qualify if you are not restricted by your disabilities, but require significant life-sustaining therapy averaging at least 14 hours per week. The important thing to remember is that you only need to qualify in one of these areas to be eligible for the DTC.

Myth 3: Qualifying for the DTC or RDSP will Reduce Other Benefits

People with disabilities who rely on monthly income support programs, such as BC disability assistance (Persons With Disabilities benefits) or Canada Pension Plan Disability, do not lose benefits by getting the DTC or RDSP. This is true for almost all of the provincial and federal support programs in Canada.

There is no age limit for the DTC, but there is an age limit to open an RDSP. You can open an RDSP until the end of the year you turn 59, but will only get government grants and bonds if you open the RDSP by the end of the year you turn 49. Children of any age can also qualify for the DTC and RDSP.

Learn more about Access RDSP on page 25 of this Transition and at <http://disabilityalliancebc.org/direct-service/help-with-the-rdsp-and-dtc>.

SAM TURCOTT IS PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY ACCESS AND MANAGER OF TAX AID DABC. 

Our 2017 AGM

BY PAT DANFORTH AND JANE DYSON

This year, we were honoured to have the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, as guest speaker at our Annual General Meeting.

Minister Qualtrough is responsible for leading the creation of new federal accessibility legislation. She spoke about the extensive consultation she has been engaged in across Canada on disability issues in order to craft the legislation: 18 public hearings and an online consultation which together resulted in the participation of over 6,000 people.

The Minister graciously responded to the many questions from participants about the new legislation, and gave very generously of her time. We were also thrilled to welcome Minister Qualtrough's mother and son to our AGM. Sketch, a DABC volunteer's dog, was a great hit with the younger Qualtrough!

This year, we said goodbye to two of DABC's long-time Board members, Lucy Goncalves and Chris Loscerbo. Lucy and Chris were hard-working members over their many years of service, and we will miss them.

We had an excellent turnout at this year's AGM, and we would like to sincerely thank all our members, staff and volunteers who took the time to attend. It's so important to the strength and vibrancy of our organization for our members to get together with staff every year and hear about DABC's work. See you next year!

PAT DANFORTH IS DABC CHAIRPERSON AND JANE DYSON IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 



L TO R: PAT DANFORTH, JANE DYSON AND MINISTER QUALTROUGH



JANE DYSON PRESENTS CERTIFICATES TO CHRIS LOSCERBO AND LUCY GONCALVES



MINISTER QUALTROUGH SPEAKING TO THE CROWD AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS

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WHAT'S CHANGED IN 20 YEARS?

Talking with DABC's Sam Turcott

Do you feel social attitudes about disability have changed over the last 20 years?

Observing social change is difficult. It's like trying to watch a stalactite grow or a glacier move—only harder since the most important changes are intangible. The pace of change is slow and almost always imperceptible in the moment. We can only really reflect on it with the benefit of significant hindsight.

I do think social attitudes about disability have improved over the last 20 years, but my intuition is that this change might not have been as big as the change in attitudes in the 20 years before that.

Of course, there are still lots of people who are poorly educated about the experiences and needs of people with disabilities and there's

The pace of change is slow and almost always imperceptible in the moment. We can only really reflect on it with the benefit of significant hindsight.

certainly still pockets of prejudice that exist even today in Canada.

I would like to see many more opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the workforce. I worry that there's still a lot of latent discrimination that occurs despite prohibitions on discrimination in human rights legislation.

What about awareness and perception of disability in government?

What's it like today and compared to 20 years ago?

There are some good things and some really bad things when it comes to the relationship people with disabilities have with government.

On the positive side, people with disabilities presently hold positions, not only as elected representations, but also in both the provincial and federal cabinet. It's genuinely great

that more people with disabilities are represented in government.

However, many other people with disabilities have an antagonistic relationship with government. The significant power imbalance that exists between people who receive government disability benefits and the people who deliver those benefits is concerning.

Many people with disabilities find the experience of accessing benefits very demoralizing. Individually, there are a lot of good public servants out there who really do their best to be accommodating and mindful of the needs and challenges of people with disabilities, but there are also a lot of horror stories that people with disabilities tell each other about their interactions with government.

What's the biggest challenge in working with government around progress on disability issues?

Money.

What do you think is the biggest strength of the disability community or disability advocacy?

People usually do this work for the right reasons. The people I work with are so invested and dedicated. They would be advocates regardless of whether or not it was their job and they really care about the people they support.

What do you see as the most important issue for disability advocates to focus on for the next 10 years? How do we do this?

So much of our work needs to be dealt with one day at a time. It's also important to have a view towards the bigger picture as well though.

It's completely unacceptable that having a disability is still one of the biggest determinants of poverty in our society. We also have a lot of work to do to ensure that people with disabilities have access to adequate affordable housing and that homecare support is available to those who need it.

SAM TURCOTT IS PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY ACCESS AND MANAGER OF TAX AID DABC. **T**

The significant power imbalance that exists between people who receive government disability benefits and the people who deliver those benefits is concerning. Many people with disabilities find the experience of accessing benefits very demoralizing.

How would you rate the following, from 1 to 5, with 5 being the best?

General public awareness, acceptance	3.5
Government awareness, acceptance	3
Government programs and services	2
Income assistance and benefits	1.5
Medical support, home support	2
Transportation (in Metro Vancouver, for people able to use mass transit)	4
Housing	1
Employment and education	2



we are all
connected

Enter our **"Whisk Me Away" Raffle** for a chance to win a pair of return plane tickets!

Call Justina at 604-875-0188 or email jloh@disabilityalliancebc.org for more information about raffle tickets!

FALL FLING

Please join us for a fun-filled evening at our Fall Fling Fundraiser on **Wednesday, October 4th, 2017**, as we celebrate DABC's 40th Anniversary!

This year's event will be held at the **Italian Cultural Centre** (3075 Slocan Street) where there will be:

Live entertainment, Dinner, Drinks, Live and Silent Auctions, a Raffle, Outstanding Employer and Employee Awards, a Quiz Game, and MORE!

Tickets are now on sale!

For information about ticket sales, Please visit www.disabilityalliancebc.org or contact Chloe at 604- 875-0188 or chloe@disabilityalliancebc.org



We're thrilled to welcome back **Stephen Quinn** of CBC as our host, and comedian extraordinaire, **David C. Jones**.

This year, we are also pleased to welcome musician and accordion player, **Katheryn Peterson!**

Keep In Touch!



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HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

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WHAT'S CHANGED IN 20 YEARS?

The Big Picture with Pat Danforth

Do you feel social attitudes about disability have changed over the last 20 years?

Many things have changed in the last twenty years at the local, provincial, federal and international levels. In 1997, our public transit system was at the beginning of being accessible to folks who do not climb stairs. The system is now pretty friendly to people with mobility disabilities, but has a long way to go for people who are blind or have low vision, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The 1990's saw a lot of work done with employment equity and changing the workplace to look like the community it serves. Unfortunately, BC's 2001 dismantling of the human rights commission has meant that people living with disabilities are less likely to find and maintain work. Too many need to rely on our inadequate income assistance programs to cover the extraordinary costs of disability.

Measuring social attitudes, is for me, a task left to others. As I get older, I have less patience in being concerned about peoples' attitudes towards disability. I believe if we enforce laws we have, we will be further ahead.

Unfortunately, there continues to be a lack of awareness of what our rights are under the BC Human Rights Code, the Canadian Human

Rights Code, the Canadian Constitution and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

What about awareness and perception of disability in government? What's it like today and compared to 20 years ago?

The BC government tends to think of the population of people with disabilities as people who receive benefits because this is where there is focus and need for change.

We advocated for a separate funding stream for individuals who, because of their disability, had extraordinary costs. That has morphed into what we have today and, unlike other provinces, we do not have a universal program to cover or help cover the costs of equipment or supplies related to your disability. So, many individuals remain on provincial benefits (PWD) because there is no other way to cover these costs.

What's the biggest challenge in working with government around progress on disability issues?

I believe the fulfilling of commitments is the biggest challenge because of the continued piecemeal approach and lack of continuity with government change. It's necessary to repeatedly re-educate government representatives. Because of the provincial/federal divide, there is often confusion and stumbling blocks. And, because there



I do believe we'll need to work toward full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including the optional protocol.

is a focus on employment, people who don't work are less likely to get the services needed. Programs are provided based on a number of different definitions of who lives with a disability, so we spend time trying to fit people into those definitions.

What do you think is the biggest strength of the disability community or disability advocacy?

Our biggest strength is being able to align with many organizations to define what we need and push to make it so. Our ability to work on a one-to-one basis with individuals also means we can help at the individual level.

**TRIAL
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Proud supporters of the BC Coalition to End Distracted Driving.



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distracteddrivingkills.ca

What do you see as the most important issue for disability advocates to focus on for the next 10 years?

I do believe we'll need to work toward full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including the optional protocol. The Convention clearly defines what needs to be done. We need to focus on the content and get the buy-in from government. We can do this through our national organization, Council of Canadians with Disabilities, and through DABC.

What do you see in younger people with disabilities? Do you feel their attitudes and experiences are different from yours at their age?

I sincerely believe that younger people living with disabilities expect access and will raise issues around barriers they experience. My concern is they may not know the history of why we are where we are today.

How would you rate the following, from 1 to 5, with 5 being the best?

General public awareness, acceptance	3
Government awareness, acceptance	3
Government programs and services	3
Income assistance and benefits	2
Medical support, home support	2
Transportation	4
Housing	3
Employment and education	3

PAT DANFORTH IS CHAIR OF DABC. **T**



INVITE DABC TO HOST A WORKSHOP

DABC provides workshops across the province to share information on provincial and federal disability benefits, the Registered Disability Savings Plan, Disability Tax Credit, income tax filing and emergency preparedness.

Most of our workshops are provided free of charge, across BC. However, we ask that a minimum of ten participants be confirmed for workshops outside of Metro Vancouver.

For more information or to request a workshop, please go to: disabilityalliancebc.org/programs/workshops. Or contact Val at DABC at 604-875-0188, feedback@disabilityalliancebc.org.

Tax Filing

Our Tax AID DABC program provides workshops on simple income tax filing issues for people with disabilities, common tax filing credits, options for dealing with tax debt, options for filing your income taxes, strategies for communicating with Canada Revenue Agency, and other programs that can be accessed through income tax filing.

Disability Benefits

DABC advocates provide workshops on provincial disability benefits (Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and the Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers (PPMB) benefits), as well as federal disability benefits (Canadian Pension Plan-Disability). The workshops include information about financial and medical eligibility criteria and the supplementary supports that are attached to PWD and PPMB. The workshop can be tailored to the needs of the organization or group.

RDSP/DTC

Access RDSP advocates provide workshops on the eligibility criteria for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC), strategies for communicating with your doctor, options if your DTC application is denied, eligibility criteria for the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), tips for communicating with your bank, information about Canada Disability Savings grants and bonds, best practices for maximizing RDSP benefits, and accessing the Endowment 150 grant.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness

DABC offers workshops to businesses, provincial and local governments, and community organizations on how to create emergency plans that include people with disabilities and seniors. These workshops may be provided at no cost when funding is available.

CMIST and the Functional Needs Framework

CMIST stands for the following needs: Communication, Medical, Functional Independence, Supervision, and Transportation. This approach to emergency planning and response offers a different way to consider the range of needs of the people in your local community.

The Duty to Accommodate is part of the BC Human Rights Code. You will learn what the law says about providing public services in a way that is accessible to all citizens and how to implement solutions to address accessibility.

The CMIST workshop can make your emergency planning and response more comprehensive and inclusive.

We provide half and full-day workshops (half-day workshops are offered only in Metro Vancouver). Through presentation, table top exercises and group discussions, you will gain understanding of how disabilities impact a person's ability to respond in emergencies, and you will take away planning and response solutions you can implement to meet those needs. 

Access RDSP

Change your tomorrow today



Disability Alliance BC, Plan Institute and BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society in a new partnership.

Information and Support on the **Registered Disability Savings Plan**



CONTACT OUR PARTNERS



BC ABORIGINAL NETWORK ON DISABILITY SOCIETY

For Indigenous people with disabilities, contact BCANDS and we can help you with the RDSP process. We can assist with the DTC application, filing taxes, and opening the RDSP account. Phone: (250) 381-7303 ext. 204 | Toll Free: 1-888-815 -5511 (TTY Accessible) | rdsp1@bcands.bc.ca



DISABILITY ALLIANCE BC

To access DABC's RDSP and DTC services, or to request one of our workshops, please contact us at: Local: 604-872-1278 | Toll Free: 1-800-663-1278 | rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org



PLAN INSTITUTE

We can provide you with information on the RDSP, future planning, and the Endowment 150 (free \$150 for BC residents).

- Call our disability planning hotline at 1-844-311-7526
- Take the RDSP tutorial or apply for Endowment 150 at www.rdsp.com
- RDSP info sessions and other future planning workshops at planinstitute.ca



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 DABC 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 DABC 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 DABC 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 Justina at the DABC at jloh@disabilityalliancebc.org or 604-875-0188. She will send you DABC Planned Giving information for you to review with your financial planner or lawyer, family and friends. 

SUPPORT DABC

BECOME A DABC MEMBER

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

Please become a Disability Alliance BC (DABC) 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 DABC and enclose my membership fee of \$15 (individuals) and \$25 (groups).

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

Please return your payment/donation with this form to: DABC, 204-456 W. Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3.

You can also become a member or donate online at: <http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/about-dabc/become-a-member>.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVALUABLE SUPPORT

Please check the applicable 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 _____

ABOUT US

Our mission is to support people, with all disabilities, to live with dignity, independence and as equal and full participants in the community. We champion issues impacting the lives of people with disabilities through our direct services, community partnerships, advocacy, research and publications.

FRONT LINE SERVICES

Our Advocacy Access Program provides one-on-one assistance with provincial and federal (Canada Pension Plan Disability) income supports and other benefits. Our Tax AID DABC program helps PWD and PPMB recipients to file their income taxes year-round.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Our projects respond to community need and increase people's ability to participate and contribute.

MAKING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

We keep connected with a large network of community organizations across BC and regularly provide them with updates about issues of importance to the disability community.

FREE PUBLICATIONS

We publish a range of capacity-building self-help guides and advocate resources, in reader-friendly language. Resources are provided free of charge, either by mail or from our website.

6 Things to Keep in Mind When Talking about Federal Accessibility Legislation

| BY THE COUNCIL OF CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES

The federal Government plans to pass an accessibility act to make Canada more inclusive. It will be consulting Canadians about the legislation through a survey and in-person consultations.

Here are six key points the Council of Canadians with Disabilities recommends to emphasize at consultations:

Use the act to implement the CRPD

Legislation is a way to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which Canada ratified with support from all political parties and jurisdictions. CRPD Article 4, states countries shall "(a) ... adopt all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the ...Convention..."

Nothing about us without us

The philosophy NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US guided the CRPD's development and Canadians with disabilities expect the same approach during the drafting of our new Act.

Name the Act appropriately

The title of the Act should be the National Accessibility and Inclusion Act. Adding the concept of inclusion frames a "big tent" approach with the scope to address the broad range of issues affecting Canadians with various disabilities, and Deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

Inclusion effectively preserves and promotes respect for the inherent human dignity of people with disabilities, and Deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

Focus on federal issues

The new Act will address matters in federal jurisdiction. Focus the conversation on remedying barriers found in such areas as banking, broadcasting, Employment Insurance, federal investments in affordable housing, the National Building Code, the Canada Health Act, federal taxes, the post office, cross border passenger transportation (air, rail, marine, interprovincial bus), Aboriginal lands and rights, federal programs for women, criminal law, immigration, the national capital, official languages within the federal sphere, citizenship, voting in federal elections and control of drugs.

Barriers in these areas contribute to the poverty, isolation, discrimination and unemployment experienced by people with disabilities, and Deaf and hard of hearing people, as well as sub-standard health care.

For example, currently, some groups of people with disabilities have access to publicly-funded habilitation/rehabilitation services and others do not. Increased use of individualized funding should be implemented to give people with disabilities choice in the rehabilitation/habilitation they receive.

Have conversations with provincial/territorial officials about barriers in restaurants, schools, hospitals, retail stores, taxis and social assistance.

The Act must go beyond voluntary guidelines

Please see CCD's web page for full details on their recommendations around legislative reform, compliance measures, and more.

Strong measures to support implementation

The Act needs to authorize effective regulations, compliance and enforcement measures, and significant resource allocation for consistent implementation throughout Canada, so that tangible outcomes will result from this Act.

FROM THE COUNCIL OF CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES WEBSITE: [HTTP://TINYURL.COM/YAFLXYSB](http://tinyurl.com/yAFLXYSB)

Working together for all British Columbians



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ABOUT TRANSITION

Editorial Statement

The views and opinions expressed within the pages of *TRANSITION* are not necessarily those held by the total membership or Board of Directors. The material presented is meant to be thought-provoking and to promote dialogue.

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Join Our Visionaries Circle

Jane Dyson, DABC Executive Director

Help DABC to promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Be part of our Visionaries Circle with monthly giving: the best kind of support you can offer. Even a small amount goes a long way and provides a more stable funding base we can count on to plan and provide our programs and services.

Joining is easy. You choose how.

- You can set up monthly donations in seconds at www.CanadaHelps.org by searching for "Disability Alliance BC."
- Or, set up a monthly credit card donation by contacting Terry at 604-875-0188.

Thank you for your support!

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For more information on advertising or sponsorships, please contact Ann at 604-875-0188 or transitionads@gmail.com.

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