Meet VTuber Ironmouse

Why Some Say "No" to Influencing Deals

How DABC Uses Social Media

transITION

SPRING 2025

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC

SOCIAL MEDIA

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editorial by Margaux Wosk

Social media has been transformative in helping me connect with my community in ways I never imagined.

My name is Margaux Wosk. I am Autistic, and I create content online. My online presence has become a place to show and sell my designs, and to advocate for Autism and disability rights. It reflects my passions, amplifies my voice and allows me to address issues that are important to me.

Social media has been transformative in helping me connect with my community in ways I never imagined. As an Autistic person, traditional networking methods were often challenging, but platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Threads and X (formerly Twitter) have allowed me to engage with people who share my values and experiences.

People engage with my work in various ways. Some reshare my posts, participate in discussions or attend my speeches and presentations.

These connections have bolstered my confidence and equipped me with problem-solving skills that extend beyond the virtual world. For example, when I sell at markets or present to audiences, I find myself more prepared because of the interactions and feedback I've had online.

Controlling the Narrative

One of the most significant impacts of social media is how it shifts perspectives on disability-related topics. It gives people with disabilities the power to control our narratives and challenge societal misconceptions.

That said, voices outside our community sometimes attempt to co-opt our stories. These voices are often not people with disabilities, but individuals adjacent to them. I believe their perspectives are valuable, and there is a time and place for those contributions. Too often, though, they interject into conversations meant to center the disabled person's voice, inadvertently overshadowing the narratives of those of us with lived experience.

A New Advocacy Space

Social media has grown into a powerful platform for advocacy work. It's a tool to reach a target demographic, while also expanding accessibility.

Some people may feel more comfortable engaging online than in person due to physical, sensory or social barriers. As a result, social media bridges gaps for those who might otherwise be excluded. It creates a space where individuals can connect, learn and advocate in ways that align with their comfort levels and abilities.

I've been able to recruit new members for organizations like BC People First and involve more individuals in advocacy efforts. This engagement has broadened my reach and deepened my impact.

Community organizations can use social media to engage their audience and draw attention to important issues, events and petitions. For instance, at BC People First, we've seen significant growth and enhanced networking opportuni-

ties with other organizations. This collaborative approach has proven essential to boost our message.

Connecting with Others

For many of us, a big plus has been social media's ability to help people with disabilities find peer groups and social supports. From learning about events, to joining Facebook groups and other online communities, these platforms connect people who might otherwise feel isolated.

Personally, it has expanded my social circle and given me a greater sense of purpose in my advocacy and interactions. It's amazing to witness how these virtual spaces foster connection, support and a shared sense of community.

I'm not saying social media is without its limitations. There are individuals and communities that still get left behind, particularly those without reliable internet access or the means to participate in digital spaces. Also, algorithms often favour more prominent voices, leaving smaller creators or marginalized individuals struggling for visibility.

This disparity highlights the importance of continuously striving for inclusivity, not just online, but everywhere.

Social media has been a cornerstone of my journey as an advocate, creator and member of the disabled community. It has allowed me to expand my audience, connect with others and drive meaningful change, while remaining mindful of those who might still face barriers.

> It gives people with disabilities the power to control our narratives and challenge societal misconceptions.

In this Transition, you'll meet people living with disability who have become entertainers and influencers on social media. They are using the power of these platforms to expand ideas and assumptions about disability and create new opportunities wherever they can. And you'll learn more about how DABC is using social media to advance their mission.

MARGAUX WOSK IS A PROUD AUTISTIC ENTREPRENEUR, DISABILITY ADVOCATE AND THE FOUNDER OF RETROPHILIAC, A BRAND THAT SPECIALIZES IN DESIGNING DISABILITY- AND LGBTQIA2+-INCLUSIVE MERCHANDISE SUCH AS ENAMEL PINS, PATCHES, STICKERS, AND KEYCHAINS. BASED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, MARGAUX SERVES AS THE PRESIDENT OF BC PEOPLE FIRST, WHERE THEY ADVOCATE FOR THE RIGHTS OF DISABLED INDIVIDUALS AND PROMOTE SELF-ADVOCACY. MARGAUX IS REDEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ADVOCATE FOR THE DISABLED COMMUNITY, STRIVING TO MAKE THE WORLD MORE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE.

Creativity Has Always Been Part of My Life

Growing up, I was inspired by my mom, an artist who practiced calligraphy and created beautiful watercolour inscriptions. Watching her work ignited my passion for creativity and self-expression at a young age.

As a teenager, I began selling vintage clothing on eBay under the moniker "Retrophiliac." That name became an integral part of my journey, sticking with me as I continued to evolve creatively.

It wasn't until my late teens and early 20s that I started using the Retrophiliac name for my visual artwork. My art is vibrant and inspired by my love for 1960s and 1970s pop culture. Listening to bubblegum pop from that era, I experiment with paint markers on canvas board, bringing a sense of nostalgia and colour to life.

While my focus has shifted to designing accessibility tools and advocating for inclusivity in recent years, I still enjoy visual art. Though I haven't had the time to revisit it, as the current version of Retrophiliac is what keeps a roof over my head!

Visit Retrophiliac
http://retrophiliac.etsy.com
www.shopretrophiliac.com

Lauren's Likes

DABC's Lauren Stinson shares some of her favourite social media personalities in this Transition. Meet RJ, Paul, Matthew and Mr. Maple.

RJ ROGGEVEEN | Doctor

RJ Roggeveen is the first medical student in a wheelchair to attend Dalhousie Medical School in Nova Scotia, Canada.

RJ transitioned to male in 2018, then lost significant leg movement due to a fall in 2021. On RJ's Instagram @rj_adapted, he shares his journey of becoming a surgeon. He also touches on other parts of his life, such as adaptive surfing, accessible travelling, wheelchair training tips and his life as a trans man.

"Sharing my experiences was helping others," says RJ. "When I got into medical school, I wanted to show that it's possible to succeed, even if you haven't seen someone like yourself in the field." (Dalhousie University News, December 18, 2024).

Through his social media, RJ explores how he and the school have made the medical program accessible, including classroom design.

Recently, RJ gained experience and created more accessibility changes by participating in his first surgery. New procedures were implemented, to keep his wheelchair sterilized in the operating room and allow him to use a standing power wheelchair during operations.

"A lot of the work that I'm doing now [is making sure] that procedures are in place for when I leave. […] [T]he hope is that more medical schools will take on setting up those procedures without having admitted a [disabled] student already," says RJ.

RJ ROGGEVEEN

"Sharing my experiences was helping others," says RJ. "When I got into medical school, I wanted to show that it's possible to succeed, even if you haven't seen someone like yourself in the field."

"You can wait for us to get into the program and then make it accessible or you can make it accessible and [disabled] people will come into the program" (Good Morning-America, December 16, 2024).

RJ's documentation of his schooling experience is educational and provides a much-needed blueprint of how a wheelchair user can navigate medical school.

His story makes becoming a doctor a realistic goal for disabled youth. He is helping to build a new future where wheelchair users can thrive.

Blazing a new career path for youth with disabilities is beautiful to see! In RJ's future, he is going to continue to forge new paths for the trans, gay and disabled communities. RJ is fundamentally changing this world, and I am excited to witness the more accessible world that he is helping to create!

PAUL CASTLE | Artist

Paul Castle is a legally blind author and illustrator. He has lost over 90% of his vision to Retinitis Pigmentosa which will progress until he is completely blind.

Born in Canada, he currently lives in Seattle with his husband, Matthew and guide dog, Mr. Maple.

Paul has written and illustrated the *Pringle & Finn* series and *Adoroscopes: A Cosmically Cute Field Guide to the 12 Signs of the Zodiac*. *Pringle & Finn* follows two wedding cake bakers who travel around the world delivering their beloved cakes.

Paul's social media accounts follow his art journey as a blind illustrator. They also highlight his relationship with his husband, Matthew, focusing on how they navigate the world as a team. Their Instagram channel has more than a few videos of Matthew pranking Paul.

As a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ and disabled communities, Paul has faced his share of online criticism. His books have been negatively "review-bombed" online, and some bookstores have cancelled book orders. However, Paul, Matthew, and Mr. Maple have built a strong, positive and supportive online community to counter all the negativity.

Talking about their relationship, Matthew said, "All relationships require compromise, being there for each other physically, mentally, emotionally. Our relationship is a very visual example of how I am there for Paul and what I can do to accommodate him. However, even if you're in a relationship without a physical disability, you still have to be there for your partner," (Interview with Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation [GLAAD], September 2024).

PRINGLE AND FINN

Paul and Matthew's posts show how people living with disability can enjoy healthy, fulfilling and fun relationships. They share their experiences and the ways they support each other through challenges and triumphs, emphasizing the importance of mutual encouragement in achieving their goals. Watch Paul and Matthew's "Our Story" to learn more about this amazing couple!

Paul Castle's Instagram accounts are @paulcastlestudio and @matthewandpaul.

LAUREN STINSON IS A COMMUNITY ADVOCATE WITH DABC'S ACCESS RDSP PROGRAM.

Paul's social media accounts follow his art journey as a blind illustrator. They also highlight his relationship with his husband, Matthew, focusing on how they navigate the world as a team.

Why I Say No to Influencing Deals

BY LARISSA CRAWFORD

I like to think my resistance to many of the opportunities that come my way contributes to the industry shift I want to see—one where brands embrace the needs and accommodations of disabled content creators.

Through my work, I receive quite a few influencing requests from organizations or businesses who want me to endorse their work through my connections and audience.

I turn down about 90% of these and, no, it's not because I don't need the income (I actually really need it). It isn't even because I'm too busy to take them on.

So why, especially in this economy, do I pass up what most people see as "easy money?" Let me explain.

As a young mother of two and small business owner, I live with several chronic pain disabilities and acquired brain damage.

In many ways, I was forced into entrepreneurship and contract work. I had to leave my government and non-profit roles due to discrimination–particularly an ableist resistance to my occasional remote work that was a medical accommodation.

Despite having the technology to support me, management refused to embrace the innovation that my disabilities could have fostered. This led to health complications and multiple life-saving hospitalizations.

That experience pushed me to create Future Ancestors Services, a next-generation speakers bureau focused on decolonized relationships with time and productivity, in the pursuit of climate and social justice.*

As a public speaker, with an organically grown social media following, I began taking compensated influencing opportunities in 2020 to diversify my income.

This was when the myth of social influencing as "easy" or "accessible" money quickly crumbled. Let me share some of the red flags I've learned to spot.

Aggressive Deadlines and Entitled Urgency

Many campaigns impose tight deadlines, preying on influencers' financial insecurity. This lack of flexibility excludes disabled creators, forcing us to sacrifice well-being and perpetuating systemic barriers to accessibility.

Not Allowing Time for Authentic Engagement

Authenticity is at the heart of the trust I've built with my audience. Many campaigns prioritize speed over sincerity, pushing creators to endorse products or services before we've had the chance to evaluate them fully. This undermines my ability to deliver honest opinions and risks eroding the credibility I've worked so hard to establish.

Deliverables Without Clear Goals

Many campaigns treat creators as tools for quick visibility, rather than partners in creating meaningful impact. Campaigns with unclear or vague goals leave influencers guessing how to connect with their audiences, while shouldering the emotional and creative labour to make the campaign successful.

Unbalanced Compensation

Many offers ask for unpaid labour, such as sharing feedback or amplifying campaigns. Even paid offers often undervalue the time and effort needed, sometimes not even meeting minimum wage when calculated hourly.

Saying "no" to these opportunities has cost me hundreds of thousands of dollars. But saying "yes" to work riddled with red flags has cost me far more in compromised health, caregiving responsibilities and other income streams.

How Influencing Can Work

That said, I have been able to work with progressive companies that let me use my social media in real and healthy ways to make an impact, to all of our benefit. These clients share a few things in common:

- They allow enough time for testing products, drafting reviews and creating content. If tight deadlines are unavoidable, they explain why and acknowledge the challenge.
- They ask for my rates and, if budgets are tight, they're up front about what they can offer. When financial compensation isn't possible, they propose alternative forms of payment and ask what would be meaningful to me.
- They accept my request to subcontract a medical support person, photographer or videographer to assist with content creation.
- They provide briefing decks, documents and contracts that outline their goals, helping me shape impactful content.

As a business owner who prioritizes hiring disabled entrepreneurs, I've seen how accessible practices spark innovation. They build trust, foster healthier work environments and position us as leaders in our fields.

I like to think my resistance to many of the opportunities that come my way contributes to the industry shift I want to see—one where brands embrace the needs and accommodations of disabled content creators.

By rethinking accessibility and treating us as partners, not content machines, companies can ease the hidden costs of content creation for disabled influencers while cultivating deeper, more authentic audience engagement.

LARISSA CRAWFORD PROUDLY PASSES ON MÉTIS AND JAMAICAN ANCESTRY TO HER DAUGHTERS, ZYRA AND ĀTEA. SHE IS A PUBLISHED INDIGENOUS, ANTI-RACISM AND CLIMATE JUSTICE RESEARCHER, POLICY ADVISOR AND RESTORATIVE CIRCLE KEEPER WITH OVER 16 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE. LARISSA HAS LIVED EXPERIENCE AS AN INDIGENOUS AND BLACK WOMAN, A SURVIVOR OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND POVERTY, A PERSON LIVING WITH CHRONIC PAIN DISABILITIES AND BRAIN DAMAGE, SOMEONE WHO HAS LIVED IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN SETTINGS, AND A YOUNG MOTHER. HER EXPERIENCE POSITIONS HER TO CARRY OUT HER RESPONSIBILITIES AS A FUTURE ANCESTOR WITH UNIQUE INSIGHT.

LARISSA IS THE FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF FUTURE ANCESTORS SERVICES, A NEXT-GENERATION SPEAKERS BUREAU IN COMMUNITY IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY, INDIGENIZATION, DISABILITY AND MORE.

FUTURE ANCESTORS SERVICES INC.

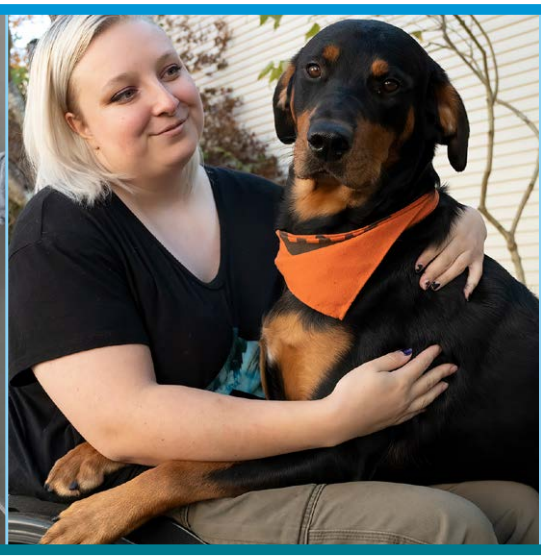
PHOTO: FEATHER PHOTO

*Read more about this important topic: Temporal (De)Colonization: Shared Expectations.

"Future Ancestors Services prioritizes a decolonized experience of time. Collectively we work together with our clients and stakeholders to consider how diverse cultural understandings of time can be incorporated into our work, events and personal spaces."

THE RIGHTFIT

MATCHING WHEELCHAIR USERS TO ACCESSIBLE HOUSING



The Right Fit is a multi-partner service designed to address the crisis in wheelchair accessible housing.

We help match affordable, accessible homes and independent living supports with people who need them in the Vancouver region.

For questions about the program,
to learn more how to be involved, and for media inquiries, please contact:
Isabelle Groc, Right Fit Program Manager
rightfit@dabc.ca https://therightfitbc.org

Need a Vacant Accessible Unit?
If you are a wheelchair user or an organization representing wheelchair users, please contact:
The Right Fit Navigation Team
navigation@therightfitbc.org 604-777-7576

Have a Vacant Accessible Unit?
If you are a housing provider in the public or private housing market, and have an accessible vacant unit, or you would like to learn about our Accessibility Checklist, please contact:
Anna Chow, Accessible Housing Coordinator
housing@therightfitbc.org

Disability Alliance BC (DABC) is the Right Fit's sponsoring organization and oversees the program. The Individualized Funding Resource Centre (IFRC) is responsible for client management.

Remembering Laurie Beachell

It is with deep sadness that the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) announces the passing of Laurie Beachell, who died from complications of pneumonia in December 2024.

Heather Walkus, CCD's Chairperson said, "Canada has lost a remarkable and dedicated champion of disability rights. Laurie served as the National Coordinator of CCD from 1984 to 2015."

Under Laurie's leadership, CCD participated in several court challenges aimed at holding the Canadian government to its promise of equality for people with disabilities. While Laurie savoured CCD's legal victories, he was also quick to point out that equality for people with disabilities was a very slow business and seemed to only move by centimetres. Still, he continued to believe in the power of using the law to promote human rights of people with disabilities.

He was a strong supporter of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and spent his latter years with CCD, working on ways to ensure that the Convention could be implemented to improve the lives of disabled Canadians.

He was a member of the federal advisory panel that recommended the creation of the Disability Tax Credit.

Laurie also recognized the importance of relationships. As such, some of us regarded him as the ultimate "schmoozer" and expert at making personal connections and getting people on side with the disability agenda. He spent much of his day

Under Laurie's leadership CCD participated in several court challenges aimed at holding the Canadian government to its promise of equality for people with disabilities.

"working the phones," having conversations with senior government officials, key politicians and community leaders, discussing and strategizing on how to best achieve the objectives of the disability community.

We are truly grateful for the profound human rights legacy he has left to CCD.

On behalf of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, April D'Aubin, Yvonne Peters, Heather Walkus

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Vacancy Control: A Digital Advocacy Success Story

| by Emily Rogers

The response was overwhelming. Within 12 hours, our video had been viewed over 50,000 times and had received hundreds of comments and shares.

Vacancy control—a rent control policy that limits rent increases between tenancies—has been central to Together Against Poverty Society's (TAPS) advocacy efforts for many years.

As one of the most effective measures to address BC's housing crisis, it remains one of our top policy priorities.

In the summer of 2022, we adopted a new approach using TikTok to raise awareness about vacancy control. This was ahead of the Union of BC Municipalities conference, where local government leaders from across the province would be discussing the issue.

Our objective was clear: to encourage people to contact their local representatives in support of vacancy control.

The response was overwhelming. Within 12 hours, our video had been viewed over 50,000 times and had received hundreds of comments and shares. When we spoke to politicians at the conference, they told us they had seen the video and had heard from their constituents about vacancy control more than ever before. This immediate reaction demonstrated TikTok's potential as a powerful digital advocacy tool.

Engagement with our videos was remarkable. Some posts received over 100,000 views, with thousands of people sharing their personal experiences, from excessive rent increases, to landlord pressure tactics and illegal evictions.

While many comments expressed strong support for vacancy control, some feedback challenged our position. In response, we developed a series of "myth-busting" videos to address misinformation and provide renters with accurate, accessible perspectives on BC's housing crisis.

The Challenges of Social Media Advocacy

There is a common idea that digital content such as TikTok videos are created flippantly or spontaneously, and some certainly are. Our experience was quite the opposite.

Each video required careful planning and strategic execution to align with trending formats, while maintaining clarity and accuracy. Our campaign lead, Emma White, dedicated significant time and effort to produce engaging content that resonated with audiences.

Policy discussions were particularly challenging. For example, longer videos allowed for nuance, but reached a smaller audience. Balancing engaging storytelling with substantive policy explanations required extensive trial and error.

Accessibility remains a key consideration. Social media platforms often overlook users with visual or cognitive processing differences, and older demographics may be less inclined to engage with this type of media.

However, TikTok also helped us reach audiences who find traditional media inaccessible, broadening access to our campaign in other ways.

A Lasting Impact

Our TikTok campaign extended beyond the digital space, generating interest from traditional news outlets and directly influencing policy makers. Several elected officials informed us that our videos played a role in shaping their discussions on vacancy control.

As we continue advocating for vacancy control, TikTok remains an essential component of our outreach strategy.

EMILY ROGERS IS DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AT TOGETHER AGAINST POVERTY SOCIETY.

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DABC's Flagship publication since 1977

From its early years in print, to its current form as a digital magazine, Transition has been an integral part of DABC's history and a hub for the disability community for over four decades.

With content ranging from policy news to personal stories, the pages of Transition provide a trusted platform where writers and readers with direct lived experience and other contributors working in the disability sphere share perspectives.

We publish three times a year, with each edition presenting a timely theme relevant to the community. Past editions have focused on topics such as Parenting With Disability, Disability Justice, Respecting Disability Language and Identity, and Healthcare: Navigating an Ableist System.

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Our current readership includes policy makers, healthcare and housing providers, organizations serving the disability community, and individuals spanning a wide range of lived experiences with all disabilities.

See our Media Kit for rates and details.
https://dabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/DABC_MediaKit.pdf

Bridging Social Media Engagement to Systemic Advocacy Efforts

Our Facebook followers' clear and vulnerable feedback provided DABC with an opportunity. We used the feedback to support our advocacy around the abolishment of the spousal cap and to highlight this important issue in the media.

BY CHLOE KRAUSE

This summer, Disability Alliance BC (DABC) shared a request from CBC Vancouver on our social media platforms. They wanted to invite people with disabilities to talk about their experiences with dating.

The post received strong feedback from our followers on Facebook who took the conversation in a different direction. People pointed out the unfairness of the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefit spousal cap (please see below), and the fact that many disabled people are facing far more pressing issues than dating.

Day-to-day issues like insufficient disability benefit rates, poverty, and unaffordable and scarce housing often prevent people with disabilities from entering the dating world.

We were very appreciative of the strong engagement and opinions that people shared on the post. We sent a summary of this feedback to CBC. Much to their credit, CBC learned from the experience and made it the focus of their dating segment which can be streamed here.

CBC then reached out to Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) Sheila Malcolmson and interviewed her on air about the spousal cap. From the interview, it was clear the Minister is very aware of the harms the spousal cap creates for PWD recipients.

They later interviewed DABC Executive Director Helaine Boyd about the same issue.

What is the Spousal Cap?

DABC feels very strongly that the spousal cap is unjust. This cap restricts a person's disability income based on a partner's/spouse's income. There are many negative impacts of this policy.

- It creates an unequal power dynamic between partners.
- In scenarios where a person on PWD is in a live-in relationship with a non-disabled person, the cap assumes that the non-disabled partner is responsible for the disabled partner's livelihood and well-being. This is an outdated, patriarchal idea.
- Particularly for people who identify as women/femmes, this can create a level of dependence on the non-disabled partner that may lead to spousal abuse.
- It creates a level of financial dependence for the disabled partner. They may feel they cannot end a relationship.
- Receiving PWD prevents people from entering into relationships on an equal footing or even deters prospective partners because of the expectation that they become financially responsible.

For these reasons, the PWD system is actively encouraging and influencing people on PWD to remain single or make it very difficult to find and sustain a relationship. The spousal cap is in direct opposition to a person's right to independence and equal opportunity. It discriminates against people with disabilities.

DABC has advocated for an end to the spousal cap over many years. We've repeatedly brought the spousal cap up in conversations and committee meetings with the MSDPR. DABC advocates, many of whom are people with disabilities themselves, feel very strongly about this issue. Most recently:

- We mentioned the spousal cap in our recommendations to the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- We supported a petition on the cap in 2021.

Our initial Facebook post asking people with disabilities to reach out to CBC Vancouver to share their thoughts on dating was a misstep. We did not include an acknowledgement of the strong feelings the

subject matter might raise in the disability community.

We are, however, very heartened by the dialogue it created among our Facebook followers, CBC Vancouver, DABC and Minister Malcolmson. Our Facebook followers' clear and vulnerable feedback provided DABC with an opportunity. We used the feedback to support our advocacy around the abolishment of the spousal cap and to highlight this important issue in the media. Everyone's comments were heard.

A Positive Side of Social Media

The anonymity of social media can often inspire toxic behaviours, but the chain of events and frank discussion this Facebook post generated is an example of social media's beneficial side. Exchanges like these can lead to lasting positive impact for people with disabilities in BC.

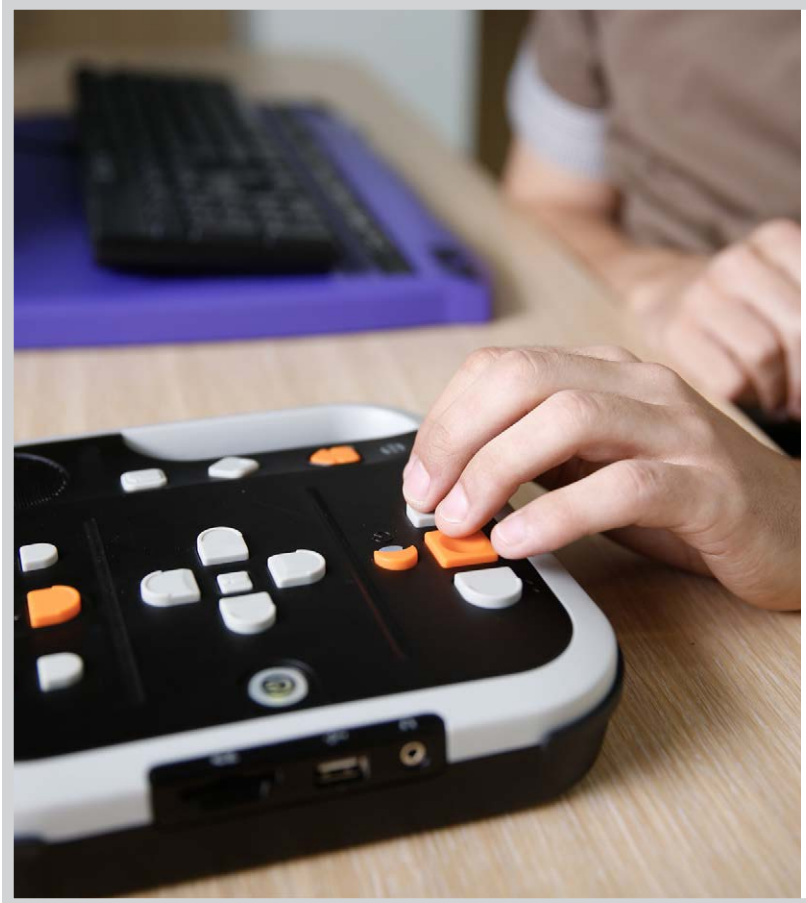
In this instance, people with disabilities were able to provide direct input on a piece of legislation that impacts them negatively – as the saying goes, "nothing about us, without us." We are grateful to CBC Vancouver for further facilitating this conversation.

We like to think that this chain of events led to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction including their consideration of changing the rules on the spousal cap in the publication of their new Poverty Reduction Strategy (page 34).

> For these reasons, the PWD system is actively encouraging and influencing people on PWD to remain single or make it very difficult to find and sustain a relationship.

DABC is hopeful that further conversation and advocacy will inspire the abolishment of the spousal cap in the near future. We will continue to advocate for this crucial change.

CHLOE KRAUSE IS DABC'S BOARD AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR.



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From Isolation to Community

I by Kelcie Miller-Anderson

I had been lucky to have a strong community and friendships around me in “real life.” But there is a completely different level and type of connection that comes from friendships within the disability community.

When I first became a wheelchair user, social media became a lifeline for me. I was in over my head, especially when it came to embracing my new identity and regaining my sense of self.

I felt really alone and disconnected. I had one friend who was a wheelchair user, but they lived on the other side of the country.

I had been lucky to have a strong community and friendships around me in “real life.” But there is a completely different level and type of connection that comes from friendships within the disability community.

I’d never really understood the impact of online communities or had online friendships. But social media became a place where I was able to find other people who just “got it.” They’d been through it too.

I went from feeling isolated and alone with my disability to having a community of people that understood what it was like.

I started posting and sharing after being diagnosed with a handful of rare diseases. The first time I heard of mitochondrial disease was the day I was diagnosed.

I’m not sure why, but I immediately felt a responsibility to raise awareness and lend my voice to this thing that had completely changed my life.

So, I started sharing a series using the hashtag #mileswithmito about my adventures and travels living with mitochondrial disease. Within the first year, what had started as a place to raise awareness, became my lifeline.

Around this time, my body started to decline. I went from walking, to a wheelchair and then to a power chair in less than a year.

I won’t lie. When I became a wheelchair user I was scared. I was so worried it was going to put an end to my travels or limit the dreams and goals I had for myself.

But I started following other wheelchair users online who were out there doing incredible things: traveling the world solo, starting companies, heli-skiing with sit skis, modelling, dancing. Online, I saw first-hand there was no limit to what was possible.

Social media has played such a huge role in my disability journey, especially when it comes to learning to be a better advocate and learning about disability justice in general.

One of the things I’ve tried to do with my page is bridge the gap between our disability community and those who don’t identify as disabled, or haven’t necessarily had a lot of exposure to disability advocacy.

I think social media is a great way to create content that can reach into the non-disabled community to introduce and educate on topics of disability with the hope of welcoming new allies and advocates.

KELCIE MILLER-ANDERSON IS AN INNOVATOR AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR BASED IN CALGARY. SHE CURRENTLY SPLITS HER PUBLIC SPEAKING BETWEEN FUTURE ANCESTORS AND HER ENVIRONMENTAL STARTUP, MYCOREMEDY. SHE LOVES TO USE SCIENCE AND INNOVATION TO SOLVE BIG PROBLEMS. KELCIE HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED AS AN UP-AND-COMING LEADER IN BOTH OIL AND GAS, AND SUSTAINABILITY, AS WELL AS RECEIVING NUMEROUS AWARDS FOR HER WORK AS AN ENVIRONMENTALIST, INNOVATOR AND SCIENTIST. SHE IS ONE OF CANADA'S TOP 20 UNDER 20, NEXT 36, AND A MANNING YOUTH INNOVATION AWARD WINNER.

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thank you

Social Media and DABC

BY CHLOE KRAUSE

Have you checked us out on social media yet?

Disability Alliance BC (DABC) runs social media accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn and Bluesky (please see the article on page 27 about why DABC is leaving X, formerly known as Twitter).

Staying connected to BC's disability community and other reputable organizations in the disability sphere is central to our social media presence. We welcome respectful comments and feedback from our followers on our posts and re-posts.

Information-sharing is another key purpose for DABC's social media use. To the best of our ability, we strive to keep our thousands of followers up to date on:

- Policy changes affecting people with disabilities
- DABC workshops, webinars, programs and publications
- DABC job and volunteer opportunities
- Disability-specific programs/workshops/resources from other reputable organizations
- News articles from reputable sources about disability issues, particularly within BC
- Opportunities for people with disabilities to take part in research studies relating to disability issues

Social media allows for engagement with our followers that can incite positive change and support systemic advocacy efforts. For an example of this, please see our article "Bridging Social Media Engagement to Systemic Advocacy Efforts" on page 14 of this Transition.

In this case, momentum on the issue of spousal caps for people receiving provincial assistance happened naturally, inspired by feedback from our followers.

We also use social media to issue calls for action to our followers and government bodies that have the power to enact policy changes that can better the lives of people with disabilities, particularly in BC.

As an intersectional organization, DABC also shares posts marking official days/weeks/months meant to bring awareness to people who live with disabilities and other intersecting identities (e.g. Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia).

Awareness-raising can include bringing light to challenges or celebrating contributions.

The social media landscape is ever shifting. At some point, DABC may leave certain platforms and join others. Whatever ends up happening, we'll keep you updated. We hope to see you online!

CHLOE KRAUSE IS DABC'S BOARD AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR.

Accessibility Projects 2024/2025 Grant Recipients

In partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, DABC selected 14 organizations for up to $40,000 in funding for Accessibility Projects that will take place in 2025.

These projects will increase accessibility for people with disabilities throughout the province, with a focus on community engagement. Here are this year's recipients.

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society (Sunshine Coast) for the Accessible Emergency Response for All Project

This project's goal is empowering every individual to have equitable access to emergency response planning, focusing on those with a mental health disability who otherwise may not have the resources or capacity to create their own plan or emergency kit.

Pride in Art Society (Vancouver) for the ASL Interpretation and Translation of Exhibits and Community Programs Project

This project will increase the accessibility of SUM gallery and Queer Arts Festival programming for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. It will increase capacity to have ASL interpreters and videos at all workshops, residencies, programs, exhibitions and openings.

BC Wheelchair Sports Association (Richmond and Victoria) for the Junior WC Rugby Program Expansion Project

This project will focus on expanding the junior wheelchair rugby program by piloting a new junior wheelchair rugby camp, providing new training/competition opportunities for current participants, and continuing to recruit new junior participants to the sport through Have a Go events.

Opportunities Career and Legal Advocacy Services Society (Northern Vancouver Island) for the Regional Disability Benefits Navigator Pilot Project

By combining personalized support with accessible resources, this pilot project will help ensure that all eligible individuals can fully understand and utilize their financial options and entitlements.

Mayday Club Youth Choir for Autism Advocacy Society (Abbotsford) for the Radio Broadcasting, Voice Acting, Sound Engineering Project

Mayday Club's new project for neurodivergent and disabled youth will teach sound engineering, voice acting, and radio broadcasting. Participants will create podcast episodes talking about inclusion, broadcast on local radio, and receive professional training in sound equipment, voice acting, and career development.

Periods For All (Vancouver) for the Menstrual Matters: Understanding Menstrual Health in ASL Project

This video series aims to provide accessible and informative content on menstrual health using ASL, empowering the deaf and hard-of-hearing community with essential knowledge including self-care, advocacy, and product options to manage periods.

Employ to Empower Foundation (Vancouver) for the Leave No Entrepreneur Behind: Empowering Low-Income Entrepreneurs with Disability Project

This project supports low-income entrepreneurs who live with disabilities to progress their business, whether it is to make their first sale or to apply their skills and experiences to leading their own workshops, becoming mentors, and guest speaking at community gatherings.

Salt Spring and Southern Gulf Islands Community Services Society (Salt Spring Island) for the (ART) Art and Recreation Together Project

This initiative is a collaboration between the three organizations that provide services for developmentally disabled children and adults in the community to provide a dynamic and inclusive activity-based program focusing on expressive arts, sports and celebration.

Mayday Club's new project for neurodivergent and disabled youth will teach sound engineering, voice acting, and radio broadcasting.

Prince George Sexual Assault Centre Society (Prince George/ Northern BC) for the Together We Can Project

This project will provide a peer-led all-gender support group for survivors of gender-based and sexual abuse/violence, specifically focusing on providing in person outreach, education and advocacy to those with disabilities.

Women Transforming Cities International Society (Provincial) for the Civic Education Workshops for Accessible Participation in Local Government Project

By hosting civic education workshops, this project will demystify local government processes so that folks with disabilities can shape their hometowns into inclusive communities where they feel a strong sense of belonging.

VIDEA (Provincial) for the Leaders of Today Project

Leaders of Today will enhance the leadership capacity of youth and young adults ages 16-35 with disabilities across BC.

Mental Health Recovery Partners Society (South Vancouver Island) for the Training by and for Lived Experts Project

This project will offer accessible Peer Support Training and upskilling for current or aspiring peer supporters and provide meaningful artistic and storytelling workshops for participants to learn new and applicable tools for expressing themselves

Crimson Coast Dance Society (Nanaimo) for the Mixed Abilities: DanceAble Project

DanceAble participants will gain dance and choreography skills as they collaborate in creating and presenting a group performance at a public theatre.

OneAbility Foundation (Provincial) for the OneAbility Games (OAG) Community Project Resource Kit Project

The OneAbility Games will bring together people with disabilities to participate in an all ages, multi-disability, multi-sport program and co-create an open-source program resource kit that participants can access leading up to the inaugural OAG in May 2026. T

Memorial

DABC Board Member Chris Loscerbo passed away on November 26, 2024, surrounded by his family. He was a loving father to two children. He will be deeply missed.

A passionate sailor, Chris spent summers with Laura and friends at Northern Harbour on Lake of the Woods. After a diving accident in 1988 left him with quadriplegia, Chris found new ways to pursue his love of sailing and the outdoors. He moved with his family to Vancouver Island and discovered adaptive sailing. He helped establish a branch of the Adaptive Sailing Association in Ladysmith, BC and was a devoted board member of DABC.

Chris was also committed to fundraising for spinal cord injury research, organizing the annual Rodney Stanes Memorial Golf Tournament for 14 years. He founded BC Wheelchair Friendly Services Inc., providing accessible RVs and track chairs to enable those with disabilities to travel on their own terms.

In his own words, "Don't be afraid, just go for it. It's a wonderful life."

Yes, We'd Like to Donate to DABC

Your support will help us continue our advocacy and frontline support of people living with a disability.

❒ $50 will contribute toward the cost of matching a disabled family with accessible housing

❒ $100 will help fund disability education workshops for doctors and social workers

❒ $500 will support legal representation for a person with a disability who has experienced discrimination

❒ Other $_____

How to Donate

You can donate by cheque or online by credit card. You can choose to make a one-time or monthly donation. We will send a charitable tax receipt for any donation over $10.

Cheque donations can be sent to our office, along with this tear off donor form. You can make a secure online credit card donation in seconds through Keela. Or, call us at 604-872-1278 and we will help you make your donation.

You can also support our work with an annual membership fee. Memberships are $15 for individuals and $25 for groups. Join at dabc.ca/support-us.

Thank you for your support.

How Influential!

BY ERIC SHINN

"On the web, everyone will be famous to fifteen people"
David Weinberger, Philosopher

I had to laugh when I learned that in social media marketing industry terms, I can be considered a "nano-influencer." Apparently an electron microscope is needed to measure my online presence. I'm that popular.

According to the M+B annual benchmarks report, I would need more than 10,000 followers to achieve "micro-influencer" status. But, even at my nano level, I was recently able to haggle $5 off a $25 t-shirt, when a vintage shop keeper accepted my offer of a 20% discount in exchange for tagging their store's account in my social media.

Not a bad deal for a couple of hundred views by potential local customers!

This is the spirit of influencer marketing at the grassroots level. Fair price for sponsored content is recognized by all involved parties, for some form of mutual added value.

Increasingly, brands are recognizing the benefit of working with aligned influencers to expand their audience reach. And individuals are recognizing the value of their personal brand and online presence to monetize some of the content they share. Hey, the tech platforms profit from our online activity, why can't we?

Becoming an influencer is not an event. It's more of an acknowledgment of the peer pressure that arises organically from living in community. Not everyone identifies with the term "influencer," but that doesn't mean someone can't charge for influencing, while leveraging their social network reach to amplify their values.

Influencer partnerships with non-profits are understandably on the rise, as cause-driven advertising seeks new audiences to take action on social campaigns.

M+R Benchmarks Report 2024 data show that among responding non-profits surveyed, "About half reported working with social media influencers. Among non-profits with paid influencer campaigns, 50% used those partnerships for fundraising, 75% for advocacy or volunteer asks and 79% for education or persuasion."

The data show that, for influencers seeking to collaborate with non-profits, audience size does matter, but bigger is not necessarily better to work with.

Influencer partnerships with non-profits are understandably on the rise, as cause-driven advertising seeks new audiences to take action on social campaigns.

Going rates per post vary by platform and audience size, ranging anywhere from $5-$100 dollars for a single-platform post by a nano-influencer, to hundreds or thousands of dollars for cross-platform content posted by mid-tier and macro influencers.

At DABC, we contracted influencers for the first time in 2024. We worked directly with Marco Pasqua and Margaux Wosk to expand the reach of the RDSP Awareness Month Campaign in October.

Disability influencers are a growing group getting in on this monetization. They leverage their online presence and lived experience with disability to elevate their profile as community advocates, while raising public awareness about important issues.

In 2024, Google introduced it's "Rising Influencers with Disabilities Fellowship," a six-month program supporting 15 North American content creators including Canadians Anne Mok and Mara Lauren.

Announced by Laura Allen, Google's Head of Strategy and Programs, Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, this example signals how companies with Diversity-Equity-Inclusion initiatives actively seek partners with disabilities to make good on their corporate social responsibility promises. They are also respecting that people with disabilities are a valuable audience representing one in four consumers.

At DABC, we contracted influencers for the first time in 2024. We worked directly with Marco Pasqua and Margaux Wosk to expand the reach of the RDSP Awareness Month Campaign in October. We wanted to promote the launch of our new DTC Medical Fees Fund.

Within a few months, we raised over $2,000 for the fund! While it's an imperfect science to put a dollar value on each influencer post promoting the campaign, it's invaluable that people with disabilities can now refer to the helpful advice shared on Marco Pasqua's YouTube Channel as he discusses the benefits of opening an RDSP with Access RDSP's Liss Cairns. And it was an iconic moment when Margaux Wosk announced the DTC Medical Fees fund in their speech at Jack Poole Plaza during the Accessibility for All rally.

This is testament to the fact that, for all the disability advocacy and engagement that happens on social media, we still live in real life. It's here that we are working to strengthen the actual social networks of community. The true value of maintaining relevance, authenticity and trust remains priceless.

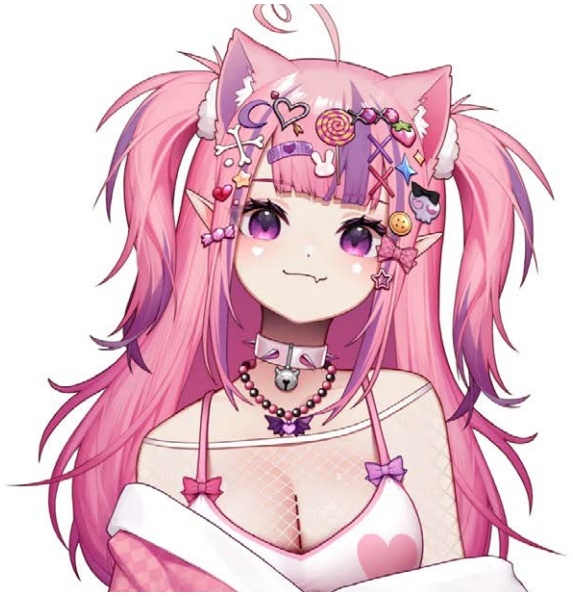
ERIC SHINN HAS BEEN DABC'S FUNDRAISING MANAGER SINCE 2022, AND HAS JUGGLED JOURNALISM WITH PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISING THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER. HIS TORONTO STAR "NETWORKERS" COLUMN ABOUT NEW MEDIA INFLUENCERS IN 2001 WAS THE FIRST VIDEO BLOG PUBLISHED BY A NEWSPAPER IN CANADA. MOST RECENTLY, HE WROTE FOR SAD MAGAZINE ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES CANVASSING DOOR-TO-DOOR FOR VANCOUVER CHARITIES.

NON-PROFIT INFLUENCERS BY THE NUMBERS

BY PLATFORM
Instagram: 94%
TikTok: 63%
Twitter/X: 24%
YouTube: 20%
Twitch: 4%

BY TIER (NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS)
Nano (1K-10K): 77%
Micro (10K-100K): 85%
Mid-tier (100K-500K): 66%
Macro (500K-1 Million): 45%
Celebrity (1 Million+): 47%

From M+R Benchmarks Report 2024



Meet Ironmouse

by Lauren Stinson

Ironmouse is a trained opera singer and VTuber. A VTuber is an online entertainer who uses a virtual avatar and real-time motion capture to express their emotions and movements.

For Ironmouse, the avatar allows her to maintain her anonymity, while creating and streaming content from the comfort of her bed.

Ironmouse has a chronic illness called Common Variable Immune Deficiency, or CVID, that leaves her highly susceptible to infection and impairs her lungs. As a result, she cannot leave her bedroom or physically interact with other people. She is also often on oxygen.

Because of CVID, Ironmouse has a distinctive voice that perfectly suits her anime girl persona and adds a special charm to her character.

She often jokes on streams and interviews about her concern that someone might reveal her identity because of her unique voice.

Her content includes chats, videos, singing, occasional voice acting, games, travel Vlogs and fan art showcases.

She said, “I’m streaming because I want to hang out with people. I want to have a good time and laugh. I want to make memories with people” (Washington Post interview, 2022).

Her disability and the unpredictability of her health make planning her online streams difficult. So, they often lack structure. Instead, her streams focus more on building community and connections, and being positive.

Because of this lack of structure, the fact that she does not show her face, and her unique voice, Ironmouse receives a lot of hate mail.

> “I kind of became a zombie in my life. But with streaming, I feel like slowly I’ve been regaining pieces of me again and finding myself."

Some people are confused and angered by her success. She receives hundreds of negative messages during her live streams, every time she goes online!

But, Ironmouse’s positive, kind and funny personality has gained a strong online following and support.

She became the most-subscribed Twitch channel of all time (as of September 2024, but was surpassed recently) and is currently the most-subscribed female VTuber.

She also gives back to the community.

In June 2023, she hosted a 30-day subathon, donating half of her subscription income to the Immune Deficiency Foundation (IDF). She fol-

Ironmouse has shown the power of community and friendship, leading her to become one of the world's most successful online streamers of all time.

lowed this with a 30-day subathon in September 2024, again donating half of her earnings to the foundation.

In 2023, Ironmouse won Content Creator of the Year at The Game Awards, making her the first VTuber to get the award.

In 2024, she won the Best VTuber award and was nominated for Streamer of the Year.

Ironmouse's success has allowed her to access better healthcare for her CVID and to become a more active Twitch streamer. It has allowed her to gain confidence, community and connection.

"I think with a lot of people who (live with) a disease, sometimes you kind of forget who you are and lose yourself in the process," Ironmouse said in the Washington Post interview.

"I kind of became a zombie in my life. But with streaming, I feel like slowly I've been regaining pieces of me again and finding myself. I don't feel like a zombie anymore. I feel more alive."

One of the most significant mental health issues for the disabled community is social isolation. So, many disabled people find their community and connections online.

Ironmouse has shown the power of community and friendship, leading her to become one of the world's most successful online streamers of all time.

You can find Ironmouse at https://www.youtube.com/@IronMouseParty and listen to a January 2025 interview on YouTube, "Ironmouse Responds To Your Invasive Assumptions."

LAUREN STINSON IS A COMMUNITY ADVOCATE WITH DABC'S ACCESS RDSP PROGRAM.

An officially licensed Ironmouse Nendoroid Action Figure by GOOD SMILE COMPANY VShojo (released September 2022).

Contact Tax AID DABC for free income tax assistance and other tax-related issues.

We can file multiple years and self-employment taxes.

We offer drop off services and one-on-one appointments in-person, over the phone, through video conference, by email or by mail.

CONTACT US

- Call or text 236-477-1717
- Email taxaid@dabc.ca.
- Book your appointment online https://www.taxaid.janeapp.com
- Visit https://taxaiddabc.org

tax aid dabc

Tax Assistance & Information for People with Disabilities

dabc disability alliance bc taps ACTIVE SUPPORT AGAINST POVERTY BRITISH COLUMBIA

CONTACT THE TAX AID REGIONAL PARTNER NEAREST YOU FOR LOCAL SUPPORT

- **LOWER MAINLAND (AND ALL OF BC) |** DABC | 236-477-1717 | Toll Free 1-877-940-7797
- **INTERIOR | KELOWNA |** Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society | 250-763-4905 ext. 215

☑ Yes, our income tax services are FREE.

Am I eligible for Tax AID DABC services?

We provide free tax-filing support to people receiving disability supports including: Persons with Disabilities (PWD), Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB), Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D), WorkSafeBC (WCB) or the Disability Tax Credit (DTC). We also assist people with disabilities with income below $35,000 and those with family incomes below $42,000.

What if I Haven't Filed Taxes for Years?

We can help people file their taxes for up to 10 previous years.

What if I Don't Have All My Tax Documents (T5007, T4s)?

Don't worry! We will help you locate tax slips that the government already has on file.

My Income is Low. Why Should I File Taxes?

There are many advantages to filing your income taxes! Our clients usually receive $500 to $900 in income tax credits for each year they file. People eligible for an income tax refund, and those with dependent children, often receive much more.

If you haven't filed your taxes for multiple years, your refunds may grow dramatically.

Other benefits you may be eligible for include:

- GST Credits
- BC Sales Tax and Climate Action Tax Credits
- Canada Workers Benefit
- Canada Child Benefit
- Registered Disability Savings Plan Grants and Bonds

Income tax filing can also help you qualify for MSP Premium Assistance coverage, subsidized housing, and other income-tested benefits.

New Drop Off Service

Have all of your tax slips ready? If you are living in Vancouver and your tax situation is straight-forward, you can now drop off your tax information to our advocates for faster support. Bring in your ID and tax slips to our office. You can pick up your package when your taxes are ready.

What Should I Do Next?

Contact Disability Alliance BC or one of our Regional Partners. We'll set up an appointment to meet with you. Call us today! We're here to help.

CONTACT THE TAX AID REGIONAL PARTNER NEAREST YOU FOR LOCAL SUPPORT

- **VANCOUVER ISLAND | VICTORIA |** Together Against Poverty Society | 250-361-3521
- **NORTHERN | PRINCE GEORGE |** Active Support Against Poverty Society | Toll-Free 1-877-563-6112

What Seniors Think of Social Media

| by Margaret Fraser

Social media has become a place where millions of people communicate and connect. However, using it depends on some things that not everyone has, from technical to cognitive skills, physical abilities and access to technology.

Seniors or people with some disabilities just may not find social media a viable option for connecting and staying informed.

I live in a strata building of 58 units, where 42% of the owners are over 60 years of age, with 10 aged 80 to 90. One owner is a woman who has a registered disability. The majority live alone and independently, with help from family, some home care and supportive neighbours.

I recently started a community e-mail process for important news updates. It became clear that my neighbours have very different attitudes toward technology and social media, as well as different degrees of ability to use them.

For example, anyone who retired in the past ten years probably used computers, so email and Zoom meetings were a part of life. For others, young family members help seniors in their family get "set up" on a social media platform, but using it may still be challenging.

As we age, we become slightly more fragile, forgetful or isolated. Sitting down to a computer isn't automatic

Seniors or people with some disabilities just may not find social media a viable option for connecting and staying informed.

for us. It can become a confusing chore. Just to give you an idea of what I mean, many older folks find a medic alert button confusing!

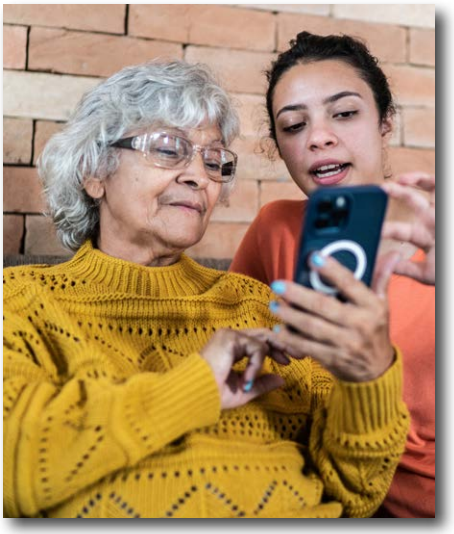
Plus computers can leave us vulnerable to online scammers that are not always easy to spot.

Staying connected with loved ones or friends as we age also depends on our ability to keep track of who is who, what we still have in common and changes in living situations. And it depends on our experiences, health and personalities, too.

One 85-year-old neighbour ran their own business for many years, but they have never had a computer, email address or cell phone. They prefer to remain private.

One 94-year-old is very sociable and walks around the block every day, and chats with everyone. She only uses Facebook because her daughter set it up and explained how to use it. Using a cell phone is just fine for her!

I am not advocating for any particular method to connect with family and friends which may become easier for some people once you "get the hang of it."



For all of these reasons, social media is not a meaningful way for some seniors to get and stay connected to others. And others simply may not like it, even if they're able to use it.

I know there are definitely pluses to staying connected through social media, but actual human interaction and conversation can't be duplicated online.

Studies have shown that actual humans, interacting and talking, has unparalleled social and mental benefits to age in place.

OVER THE COURSE OF HER 40-YEAR WORKING LIFE, MARGARET FRASER WORKED IN A VARIETY OF ROLES WITH, AND ADVOCATED FOR, PEOPLE WITH A BROAD RANGE OF DISABILITIES, FRAIL AND ISOLATED SENIORS, YOUTH AT RISK, NEW IMMIGRANTS AND ADULT LITERACY GROUPS. SHE HELD HANDS-ON ROLES AS WELL AS POSITIONS IN MANAGEMENT, AND LEARNED MUCH ABOUT HOW FOLKS PROGRESS THROUGH LIFE–MORE THAN A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION CAN PROVIDE. ORIGINALLY FROM SCOTLAND, SHE IMMIGRATED TO CANADA IN 1983. SHE REMAINS AN ACTIVE VOLUNTEER IN NORTH VANCOUVER.

transition

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

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Transition general and advertising:
transition@dabc.ca

Online:
dabc.ca/category/publications/transition/

DABC general:
feedback@dabc.ca

DABC stepping away from X

Disability Alliance BC (DABC) has decided to join other non-profits and service providers in stepping away from the social media platform X (formerly Twitter).

We will keep our account, but will no longer actively use the platform. Please note, you will not be able to reach us through X.

X owner Elon Musk appearing to give a Nazi salute at Donald Trump's inauguration was the final straw.

We have been concerned for some time about X's policy shifts under Musk's ownership.

It's clear that its users are no longer sufficiently protected from harassment and hate speech. This goes against DABC's organizational principles of providing a safe environment for people interacting with us and using our services.

This is not a decision we made lightly.

We understand that there is still a vibrant disability community on X and we regret that we will no longer be able to use the platform to share important information with this community.

We encourage our followers to stay connected with us through our Facebook and LinkedIn accounts (facebook.com/DisabilityAllianceBC and linkedin.com/company/4863769).

We have been concerned for some time about X's policy shifts under Musk's ownership. It's clear that its users are no longer sufficiently protected from harassment and hate speech.

We have also set up a Bluesky account (bsky.app/profile/disaballiancebc.bsky.social) and will be learning the ropes in the coming weeks.

You can also keep an eye on our blog (dabc.ca/blog), contact us through direct communication methods, and sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at https://signup-can.keela.co/newsletter-subscription52.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support of DABC.

Connect with DABC

About Us

Our vision is for people, with all disabilities, to live with dignity, independence, and as equal and full participants in the community. We envision a future where people with disabilities are recognized for their inherent worth as individuals, and as valued members of society.

We're proud to share our Mission Statement and Values.

Services and Programs

Our **Advocacy Access Program** provides one-on-one assistance with provincial and federal (Canada Pension Plan Disability) income supports and other benefits. The **Disability Law Clinic** provides free legal advice to people with disabilities about human rights and discrimination. We also offer advice to people having problems with their disability benefits. **Tax AID DABC** helps people with disabilities living on low incomes to file their income taxes year-round. **Access RDSP** helps people with the Disability Tax Credit and with opening a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). The **Right Fit Program** helps to match affordable wheelchair-accessible homes in the Vancouver region with people who need them.

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

Growing Partnerships

We stay 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 help sheets in reader-friendly language. Resources are provided free of charge, either by mail or download.

How to Support Us

You can support our work by:

- becoming a member
- making a one-time or monthly donation
- advertising your business or organization in Transition magazine or our e-newsletter, or
- considering a planned giving legacy to DABC.

Learn more, donate or become a member at dabc.ca/support-us. Or, fill out and return the form on the next page. Your support will help us continue our work on behalf of people with disabilities across BC.

Follow Us

Want to know more about our work? Check us out online.

Become a Member

Numbers matter. The more members we have, the stronger our voice in the community. Your membership plays a pivotal role in helping us advance our mission.

You can become a Disability Alliance BC member today as a Core (voting) member or an Allied (non-voting) member. Core Members are people with disabilities and self-help groups where at least 50% of members have a disability. We welcome both individual and group members.

Membership Fees:

Individual $15 Group $25

1. Sign up online at Become a Member, or

2. Return your payment with this form to: DABC, 1450-605 Robson Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3.

Please check the applicable boxes

❑ New membership or ❑ Renewal ❑ Core Membership or ❑ Allied Membership

Name _____ Organization _____

Address _____ City/Prov_____

Postal Code _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Thank you for your support!

dabc
disability alliance bc

Thank you for helping us grow.

Program and Project Funders

BC Community Gaming Grants

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Catherine Donnelly Foundation

City of Vancouver

Employment and Social Development Canada

ESDC, Lu'ma Native BCH Housing Society

Insurance Corporation of BC

Island Health Authority

Law Foundation of British Columbia

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Vancouver Coastal Health

Vancouver Foundation

Dedicated Funders

BC Hydro Employees Community Services Fund

Canada Helps Giving Fund

PayPal Giving Fund

Provincial Employees Community Services Fund

TELUS Employees Charitable Giving Program

And generous donors like you!

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC HOUSING

A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO THE DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

Created by Access RDSP in partnership with Island Health Authority, with thanks to our funders BC's Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the Vancouver Foundation.

Download the booklet.

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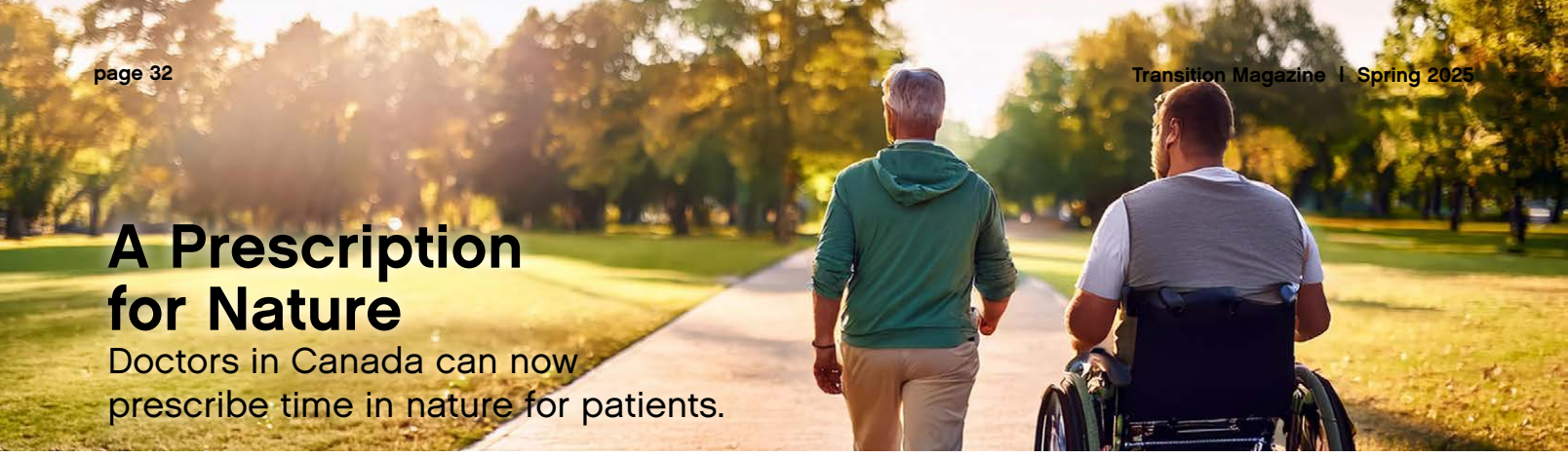

A Prescription for Nature

Doctors in Canada can now prescribe time in nature for patients.

What began as a grassroots movement is now celebrated in national health policy and endorsed by the Canadian Medical Association. Healthcare professionals can prescribe nature time for their patients.

PaRx, Canada's national nature prescription program, is built on research from hundreds of studies that have shown spending time in nature has a positive effect on our health. Driven by health-care professionals who want to improve their patients' health by connecting them to nature, PaRx makes prescribing time in nature simple and effective.

Research shows that people who spend at least two hours in nature each week report significantly better health and well-being. Science suggests that the most efficient drop in cortisol (stress hormone) levels happens between 20-30 minutes, each outing.

Why prescribe nature?

- It's free, effective and has no side effects. Many people can increase the time they spend in nature, no matter what their physical abilities are or where they live.

Research shows that people who spend at least two hours in nature each week report significantly better health and well-being.

- Writing it down works better. Studies suggest that written prescriptions are more motivating than spoken advice.
- Most people trust their health-care providers. Surveys show that doctors and nurses consistently rank among the most trusted professionals in the country.
- Prescribing nature is good for the earth. Research shows that people who are more connected to nature do more to protect it.

Which health care providers can use PaRx?

Any healthcare professional governed by a regulatory body or college in Canada can register to become a PaRx prescriber. From physiotherapists and physicians, to nurses and counsellors, PaRx has over 10,000 prescribers registered across the country.

How can you get your provider on board?

If your healthcare provider is not registered with PaRx, consider telling them about PaRx during your next appointment and direct them to parkprescriptions.ca.

I received a PaRx prescription. Now what?

Log in to Your PaRx on the website and fill out the online form using your healthcare provider's unique PaRx code.

Make the most of your nature prescription with these tips:

1. Make green tweaks to your routine. Substitute outdoor activities for indoor ones wherever you can.

2. Write nature into your schedule. Prioritize your date with nature by putting it in your calendar.

3. Phone a friend or family member. Involving others increases your chances of developing healthy habits.

4. Do what feels right for you. The health benefits of nature start to add up when you feel like you've had a meaningful nature experience.

Visit parkprescriptions.ca T

DABC Workshops

Outside of our direct services, DABC also provides training and workshops to community organizations, health care providers, businesses and government on a variety of topics.

If you are an organization that wants to collaborate, please visit https://disabilityalliancebc.org/program/workshops/.

You can also follow our social media for more information on workshops available to the public.

Contact DABC Programs and Services

DABC offers in-person and remote appointments. However, please note that in-person services are available by appointment only. Below is the contact information for our core programs–to book your appointment or ask about the services and support we can provide.

Advocacy Access

If you need help with provincial disability benefits or CPP Disability, contact Advocacy Access:
advocacy@dabc.ca
604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-free)

Tax AID DABC

If you are a person with a disability who needs assistance filing your income taxes, contact Tax AID DABC:
taxaid@dabc.ca
Call or text 236-477-1717 or call toll-free 1-877-940-7797
Book your appointment online at https://www.taxaid.janeapp.com

Access RDSP

If you need help with the Disability Tax Credit or Registered Disability Savings Plan, contact Access RDSP:
604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-free)
rdsp@dabc.ca https://www.rdsp.com

Disability Law Clinic

Our Disability Law Clinic can help with legal issues related to disability rights:
236-427-1108
lawclinic@dabc.ca

The Right Fit

For questions about the Right Fit Program and for media inquiries, please contact:
Isabelle Groc, Right Fit Program Manager
rightfit@dabc.ca https://therightfitbc.org

If you are a wheelchair user looking for wheelchair accessible housing in the Lower Mainland, please contact:
The Right Fit Navigation Team
navigation@therightfitbc.org 604-777-7576

Learn More About Us

Programs and Services dabc.ca/programs/

Core Program Brochures dabc.ca/category/publications/brochures/

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we are all connected
Suite 1450, 605 Robson Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3
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OVER
48
YEARS OF ADVOCACY
Thank you to the Province of BC – Community Gaming Grants for their continuing support.