

Disability and Climate
Change through
an Artist's Lens

People Living with
Disability Feeling
the Heat in BC

Editorial: Social Inequities
are Multiplied During
Extreme Events

transition

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC

CLIMATE JUSTICE
AND DISABILITY

SUMMER 2024





Planned Giving

Make generosity your legacy today.

Being there for people we care about is one of the most gratifying things in life.

Regardless of our means, legacy giving is a great way to extend our generosity beyond our lifetime. No matter our age, there's no time like the present to set good intentions in motion.

Wherever you are in your planning, let us know if you're considering a legacy gift to Disability Alliance BC (DABC). We are glad to support your decision every step of the way.

Your Planned Giving support to DABC will protect the dignity and independence of people living with a disability.

Why Consider a Planned Gift?

There are many benefits to Planned Giving. By writing down your wishes, you will have increased peace of mind and control over your finances. You can also provide a significant future donation without reducing your income today.

A gift in your will to DABC will help us 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 through your Will to a charity and a tax receipt will be issued.

We're Here to Help

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 us at 604-872-1278 or feedback@dabc.ca. We will send you DABC's Planned Giving information to review with your financial planner, lawyer, family or friends.

Learn More Online

dabc.ca

Planned Giving Brochure

<https://tinyurl.com/33cvw83s>

inside

featured articles

Editorial by Karen Martin.4

People with Disabilities are Feeling the Heat
by Rowan Burdge6

Building Inclusive Resilience by Mike Prescott8

Addressing Global Climate Justice Issues
Here in Canada by Bounmy Inthavong12

Climate, Disability and Art by Caitlin French16

Indigenous Perspectives.17

Supporting People Living with Spinal Cord Injury
During Heat Waves by Amanda Maxwell. 20

Understanding the Intersections of
Climate Impact and Disability by Alex Price.22

Empowering Communities through Mobility Justice
by Sasha Rodríguez and Farinaz Rikhtehgaran.30

Staying Cool Isn't Easy! by Anonymous.31

DABC Updates: BC Heat Events and
Emergency Resources33

selected content

DABC Disappointed in Benefit Announcement 11

Accessibility Projects Promote Inclusivity 14

Advertise with Transition 21

DABC Behind the Scenes by Helaine Boyd24

Conversations with the Canadian Human Rights
Commission | by Salina M. Dewar28





editorial

| by Karen Martin

People living with disability are disproportionately affected by emergencies and by increasing climate crises.

This edition of Transition magazine is devoted to climate justice.

The extreme heat events and wildfires we have experienced in BC in the last four years have served as warnings—not only about climate changes, but how people with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups are impacted.

What We Know

Reports from the United States and other jurisdictions, such as Australia, tell us that people with disabilities, in particular, are disproportionately affected by disasters.

An independent review was prepared on the 2017 flood and wildfire season, *Addressing the New Normal: 21st Century Disaster Management in British Columbia: report and findings of the BC Flood and Wildfire Review*. On a positive note, the review did highlight the impacts on Indigenous communities in BC,

but it lacked any significant information on how people with disabilities and seniors were affected.

This is a crucial gap, since people with disabilities make up [27% of the Canadian population](#). In BC, 45% of people 65 or older and 56% of those over 75 live with a disability. And, approximately 35% of Indigenous people in Canada have a disability or chronic illness.

People Facing Additional Risks

Planning that includes people who are most at risk is one of the core challenges of climate justice.

The Health Canada website outlines who is most impacted by climate change: people with existing health conditions, Indigenous peoples, and those who face challenges in taking protective measures.

There are also many factors that affect a person's vulnerability to health impacts from climate change: culture, income, education, housing quality, and the physical environment both natural and human-built.

So, existing inequities around disability, poverty, racism, colonialism, gender identity, geographic location and access to health services, all play a huge role in who is most at risk due to climate change. This will continue unless we do things differently.

The risk for people with disabilities and seniors became tragically apparent in 2021. There were 619 deaths directly related to BC's heat dome. The majority of people affected were over 70 years of age and/or had chronic illnesses.

The 2023 wildfire season in BC was the most devastating in recorded history. Tens of thousands of people were forced to evacuate their homes, and hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed.

These events tell us that the existing social and economic inequities are multiplied throughout a disaster—from preparedness to response to recovery. And the pre-existing vulnerabilities I have mentioned can turn a hazard into a disaster, with dramatic and unequal consequences for equity-deserving groups.

All levels of government, businesses and non-profits must make equity and climate justice the starting point for climate change planning.

What We Need to Do

People with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups need to be at the center of federal, provincial, regional and local government climate change plans and strategies that include mitigation and adaptation.

Climate change is here, and it will continue to impact our health, jobs, housing (including where we live), food production and access to food, and the natural and human built environments.

Through the climate justice lens, equity-deserving groups are disproportionately at the forefront of climate crisis impacts, but not at the forefront of planning.

All levels of government, businesses and non-profits must make equity

and climate justice the starting point for climate change planning. It needs to be embedded within all their strategies and actions by working alongside equity-deserving groups in a meaningful way.

This Transition covers a range of perspectives looking at some of these disproportionate effects; the many ways “poverty multiples risk”; some of the creative responses by community organizations to support vulnerable individuals; describing ongoing climate justice advocacy; and more.

KAREN MARTIN WAS DABC'S EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROJECTS COORDINATOR FROM 2006-2022, WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ON EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE IN BC. SHE IS A LEADING EXPERT ON EMERGENCIES AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN CANADA. 



What is Climate Justice?

Climate justice is an approach to climate action that focuses on the unequal impacts of climate change on marginalized or otherwise vulnerable populations.

Climate justice wants to achieve an equitable distribution of both the burdens of climate change and the efforts to mitigate climate change. Climate justice is a type of environmental justice.

It examines concepts such as equality, human rights, collective rights, and the historical responsibilities for climate change. This is done by relating the causes and effects of climate change to concepts of justice, particularly environmental and social justice.

Generally, those who are the least responsible for climate change often suffer the greatest consequences.

Wikipedia, May 7, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_justice

People with Disabilities are Feeling the Heat

BY ROWAN BURDGE



In 2021, BC made headlines for an unprecedented heat dome that resulted in the death of 619+ individuals. As a T1 diabetic and anti-poverty advocate, the heat dome profoundly impacted both my lived experiences and advocacy work.

Like many renters, my apartment has no centralized AC or cross-breeze, and it was unbearably hot. My insulin was less effective and my blood sugars rose, leading to confusion and difficulty regulating my temperature and glucose levels. It was a particularly dangerous time for many of us disabled folks, as emergency services were overburdened and underprepared.

A Sign of Things to Come

The heat dome foreshadowed climate catastrophes we may face and how people with disabilities are excluded from climate planning and response.

People we work with at the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition reported injuries, fear and panic. Some had friends and neighbours who died. Their trust in authorities was affected. People were afraid to access cooling centres because of language barriers, fear of COVID-19 or having their undocumented status reported.

On top of all these concerns, people experiencing poverty, especially those receiving income and disability assistance, often live in precarious or substandard housing. This creates conditions for higher risk, like sanitization barriers, smoke inhalation, mould, pests and food insecurity. Many people felt unsafe advocating for their rights for fear of losing their housing. We heard reports of landlords locking cooling spaces, banning AC units or not turning off the heat.

Through my role with the Coalition, I was invited to be a panelist at the [Coroner's Inquiry into the Heat Dome](#). Few community-based organizations or people with lived experiences were involved which meant that critical, specialized knowledge was missing from this crucial discussion. For instance, antipsychotic medications often prescribed to treat schizophrenia can affect the body's ability to

regulate heat. People with schizophrenia [were four times more likely to die](#). Yet, no schizophrenia-specific advocates were invited.

Effective climate strategies must involve equity payment to people with lived expertise for their input, and provision of childcare, transportation and food. Often, lived experience is tokenized, missing or exploited which erodes trust and perpetuates stigma.

Climate policies are created without proper consultation with marginalized communities and then fail to protect us.

Poverty Multiplies Risk

[Poverty was shown to be the most likely indicator of death](#). This makes it clear that affordable housing, childcare, adequate income, free transit, food justice and a wide suite of poverty-reduction policies can mitigate climate harm.

Poverty eradication is a core tool for protecting marginalized groups from extreme weather.

Poverty eradication is a core tool for protecting marginalized groups from extreme weather. Affordable, accessible, adequate housing options for everyone, including the [right to heating and cooling and energy affordability](#), help keep communities safe.

Poverty and disability are deeply entwined. The rates and clawbacks for disability assistance keep people in deep levels of poverty.

And, living with disability is expensive. I have spent tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket on life-sustaining diabetic supplies because we do not have adequate Pharma-care to help pay for prescription medications.

The recent federal budget, with its decision to underfund the Canada Disability Benefit, slashed hope for many who believed a new disability-focused benefit was coming that would make a profound impact on disability poverty in Canada.

Mitigation Strategies

Initiatives like issuing free cooling devices and ensuring stronger tenant protections would help marginalized communities navigate extreme weather. We also need more trees in low-income neighbourhoods, access to public washrooms and drinking fountains, and strategies for those made vulnerable by colonization, ableism and racism.

Too many cooling centres are inaccessible. We need strategies to cool people in their homes. The cost of cooling is a barrier, and the disability community is impacted explicitly by both poverty and climate-related concerns.

There are many viable solutions to keep people safe. Without creative structural intervention for disability poverty, however, many folks with disabilities remain vulnerable to extreme weather. Abject poverty continues to impact people with disabilities severely, and that is preventable and unacceptable.

I believe we can collectively build a society that is radically more caring and that there has never been a more urgent time to organize thoughtful, inclusive, intersectional climate policy work centering disabled brilliance and expertise.

ROWAN BURDGE (SHE/THEY) IS THE PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR OF THE BC POVERTY REDUCTION COALITION. THEY ARE A DISABLED, QUEER WHITE SETTLER LIVING ON THE UNCEDED, STOLEN LANDS OF THE X̱MƏØḴIY̱ƏM (MUSQUEAM), S̱W̱X̱W̱Ú7MESH (SQUAMISH), AND SƏLILWƏTƏʔ (TSLEIL-WAUTUTH) NATIONS. ROWAN IS A CHRONICALLY ILL ADVOCATE AND ORGANIZER WHO WORKS TOWARDS POVERTY ERADICATION. 

Resources

[The biggest risk during BC's deadly heat dome: Poverty](#)

[BC's most vulnerable still unprotected from extreme heat after 2022 review, advocate says | CBC News](#)

[Community, not just policy changes, could save lives in the next heat dome, say experts](#)

[Climate & Labour Campaign - Worker Solidarity Network](#)



From Our Climate Justice Writers

“These events tell us that the existing social and economic inequities are only multiplied throughout a disaster...” [page 4](#)

“Poverty eradication is a core tool for protecting marginalized groups from extreme weather.” [page 6](#)

“I experienced how important it is to be prepared for emergencies when wildfires raged outside my home in Kelowna, BC.” [page 8](#)

“Our actions must be not just about adapting to climate change, but also about upholding universal human rights.” [page 12](#)

“The grief that I feel for the planet in this age of climate crisis runs parallel to the grief I feel for my body.” [page 16](#)

“Many Indigenous leaders say the root problem of climate change is colonialism.” [page 17](#)

“Before receiving this device, there were many times I would want to call 911 because I felt delirious [from the heat] and I was scared.” [page 20](#)

“There are important lessons to highlight from the experiences of climate impact on those living with disabilities.” [page 22](#)

“This project aimed to provide transportation services from hot built environments to cooling centers...” [page 30](#)

Building Inclusive Resilience

How our communities can be thinking about climate justice during emergency planning. | by Mike Prescott

The challenges that climate change presents for all of us are amplified for people with disabilities. We are already seeing the catastrophic events and long-term impacts it is having on our environment and our communities.

Our ability to anticipate and adapt to all these effects defines our resilience—as a city, a community and even as an organization. And resilience is especially important to people with disabilities because it impacts our safety and inclusion.

We can be personally resilient, too. We can develop our own plans now, using tools like the [C-MIST Guide](#) developed by Disability Alliance BC (DABC).

My Family's Wildfire Experience

I experienced how important it is to be prepared for emergencies when wildfires raged outside my home in Kelowna, BC.

My family includes two manual chair users, and an aging mother with limited mobility and vision living in a retirement residence. Once the fire jumped Okanagan Lake and smoke filled the air, we had to make a quick decision to stay or go even though our neighbourhood wasn't on evacuation alert at that time.

Kelowna had constructed a makeshift evacuation centre in the local arena. However, the images and stories shared through the media showed a pretty shocking lack of awareness and accommodation of the needs of people with disabilities. There were reports of many people needing to sleep in their cars in the parking lot.

Knowing that accessible accommodations are hard to find at the best of times, our family still decided to leave the region sooner rather than later—a luxury our financial situation gave us that many others did not have.

Ultimately, the firefighting response minimized damage in the region, but it did expose a huge need for people with disabilities to be involved in future planning. Expectations are that wildfires and climate change events are only going to increase.

And, as bad as it was in West Kelowna, wildfires and floods in the Villages of Lytton and Cache Creek destroyed almost all of their infrastructure. They are rebuilding their communities from the ground up.

Advocating for Inclusion

These events highlight the need for advocacy at the community, regional, provincial and national levels.

For our part, DABC has taken steps by developing a [checklist](#) that communities can use to include people



I experienced how important it is to be prepared for emergencies when recent wildfires raged outside my home in Kelowna, BC.

with disabilities in emergency exercises and promote inclusive resilience. We need to build on this work by finding ways to embed inclusion into organizational resilience strategies, rather than as separate plans or processes.

For places like Lytton and Cache Creek, these tragedies are also opportunities to build accessible infrastructure from the beginning.

DABC has reached out to these communities to provide guidance around best practices, as they make decisions in the short-term. We are also helping them form their Acces-

sibility Committees, once they are ready to come together (please see below for more on these Committees). We have found authorities in these jurisdictions are aware of the importance of accessibility and are incorporating standards that will limit the need to do costly upgrades in the future.

The Accessible Organizations Project

One of the main goals of DABC's Accessible Organizations Project is to help organizations establish Accessibility Committees. I see a pivotal role for these committees around climate justice. They can:

- Help address the short and long-term impacts of climate change on accessibility.
- Provide guidance on solutions for both daily participation and plans for emergency events like floods and wildfires.
- Set up policies and practices to deal with long-term impacts.

We encourage those developing and managing emergency responses to invite local committees, across all sectors (i.e., local government, police, libraries, education) to be partners in an inclusive resilience strategy.

To ensure Accessibility Committees can play a meaningful and effective role:

- There must be a commitment to meaningful engagement by all stakeholders in the design and testing of resilience. This needs to include all the involved systems, e.g. communications, accommodations, mobility, safety.
- Financial resources and training are needed to build capacity to advise organizations.
- At the regional, provincial and national levels, cross-jurisdictional co-operation is needed and people with disabilities should be equal partners in this effort.

We have the opportunity and the know-how to build inclusive and resilient systems that proactively prepare for the consequences of climate change, as well as other disruptions like pandemics or political unrest.

MIKE PRESCOTT, PHD, IS A SOCIAL SCIENTIST WHO HAS FOCUSED ON THE MOBILITY CHALLENGES PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FACE. HE WAS MANAGER OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM PRIOR TO THE 2010 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES. HE CURRENTLY WORKS WITH COMMUNITIES ACROSS BC TO DEVELOP ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIES AND IS THE PROJECT MANAGER FOR DABC'S ACCESSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS PROJECT. 



The Accessible Organizations Project assists organizations, disability groups and individuals with disabilities to work together to make BC more accessible and inclusive for citizens and visitors.

We support over 750 Prescribed Organizations to meet the requirements of the *Accessible BC Act*.

There are three main steps in our work with Prescribed Organizations. We help them to:

- Establish a Committee
- Develop a Plan
- Get Feedback

Learn more about what we do and how we can help. <https://bcaccessibilityhub.ca>



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.

Need a Vacant Accessible Unit?

If you are a wheelchair user or an organization representing wheelchair users, please contact:
Isabelle Groc, Right Fit Program Manager
rightfit@dabc.ca
<https://therightfitbc.org/>

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 more about our Accessibility Checklist, please contact:
Dalton Finlay, Project Manager/Navigator
Individualized Funding Resource Centre Society
RightFit@IFRCSociety.org
604-777-7576

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.

DABC Disappointed in Benefit Announcement

On April 16th, 2024, the federal government released Budget 2024. In the Budget was new information about the *Canada Disability Benefit Act (CDB)* which received Royal Assent on June 22nd, 2023, but has yet to come into force.

Budget 2024 revealed the following updates about the CDB:

- The CDB will likely provide a maximum of \$2,400 per year to eligible Canadians with disabilities.
- Only people with disabilities ages 18-64 who live on low incomes and have been found eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) will be eligible for the CDB.
- Eligible Canadians will likely begin receiving CDB payments as of July 2025.

While DABC is happy to see a timeline for the enactment of the Canada Disability Benefit and the government’s recommendation against clawbacks, we are extremely disappointed to learn about the DTC eligibility requirement and the proposed \$2,400/year cap.

The federal government will provide \$243 million over six years, beginning in 2024-25, and \$41 million per year ongoing, to cover the cost of the medical forms required to apply for the Disability Tax Credit, and therefore the CDB.

The federal government is calling on provinces and territories to ensure that CDB payments are not clawed back from provincial or territorial income/disability supports.

While DABC is happy to see a timeline for the enactment of the Canada Disability Benefit and the government’s recommenda-

tion against clawbacks, we are extremely disappointed to learn about the DTC eligibility requirement and the proposed \$2,400/year cap.

It can be very difficult for people with disabilities to be approved for the DTC, due to its strict eligibility requirements. And, most important, \$2,400/year is woefully inadequate. It will not lift most people with disabilities who are eligible for the CDB out of poverty.

DABC will continue to provide feedback to the government on the development of the Canada Disability Benefit. 



Free Employment Support for People with Disabilities

Neil Squire’s **Creative Employment Options** program offers:

- Individualized career and personal development
- Job search support and virtual training
- Distance learning technologies
- Ergonomic and/or assistive technology solutions
- Potential wage subsidies

Contact us today!

T 1 877 673 4636 E info@neilsquire.ca
www.neilsquire.ca/creativeemployment



Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities





Addressing Global Climate Justice Issues Here in Canada

BY BOUNMY INTHAVONG

Climate change represents a profound crisis of inequality. It manifests not only as an environmental catastrophe, but also as a stark disparity in how its burdens are shouldered. Marginalized populations, especially those at the intersection of race and disability, often bear a disproportionate share of these burdens and have historically been excluded in climate discussions.

What Research Tells Us

At Race and Disability Canada, we have reviewed a great deal of research around these issues. Here are some things we have learned.

- Individuals with disabilities are more vulnerable in disasters, with mortality rates 2-4 times higher during events such as famine and drought ([Handicap International Canada, 2021](#)).
- Eighty-percent of people with disabilities reside in low to middle-income countries—regions with high climate vulnerability and insufficient resources to help with safe migration or resettlement ([UNHCR, 2021](#)). For example, in countries such as Afghanistan and Syria, where rates of disability are higher, people with disabilities face the compounded effects of climate change, the historical legacies of colonization and systemic racial inequalities. These factors increase political instability and hinder people's access to resources and safe environments.
- Over 40% of refugees are hosted in highly climate-vulnerable countries ([UNHCR, no date](#)). Among these, an estimated 12 million are people with disabilities, (GM-DAC analysis based on UNHCR 2020 and WHO 2011).

Migration Becomes Life-threatening

These individuals face obstacles made worse by climate-induced migration. The lack of accessible evacuation routes, appropriate shelter accommodations and essential services show the deep-rooted systemic negligence. These issues reflect a failure of policy and a deficit of empathy that leave people with disabilities to face the harshest realities of climate change with inadequate support.

Our actions must be not just about adapting to climate change, but also about upholding universal human rights.

As a result, people with disabilities forced to migrate due to climate change experience multiple impacts. Physically, the absence of accessible transportation and housing amplifies relocation risks. Psychologically, the trauma of displacement is heightened by the loss of personal care networks and familiar settings. Socially, the isolation for many individuals with disabilities worsens as traditional community responses to the influx of migrating people become overextended ([UNHCR, 2021](#)).

More Research is Needed

The research to-date shows the acute need for accessible and inclusive climate adaptation strategies ([Pham and Saner, 2021](#)). However,

Eighty-percent of people with disabilities reside in low to middle-income countries—regions with high climate vulnerability and insufficient resources to help with safe migration or resettlement.

there is a gap in research focusing on the human rights dimensions of displacement and migration for people with disabilities.

Disability-focused research that does exist calls for the integration of accessibility into disaster response. Yet, this often fails to translate into action, with people with disabilities frequently excluded from conversations and decision-making (Kelman et al., 2015).

Our Work

Race and Disability Canada's mission is to support organizations and different levels of government in understanding the intersections of race and disability, so that programs and supports here in Canada are accessible and barrier-free.

Culturally-relevant services and supports are needed that acknowledge and are responsive to the lived realities of people with disabilities from countries hit hardest by climate change, as many are racialized and automatically marginalized as the "other" in Canada.

We need an intersectional approach in climate mitigation and adaptation planning, one that includes the perspectives of organizations representing a spectrum of disabilities and those experiencing multiple forms of discrimination. This col-

laboration should extend to groups often overlooked, such as individuals with intellectual, psychosocial, and visual disabilities, as well as people from Indigenous communities.

Where We Need to Go

In the face of the climate crisis, our response must be environmentally sound, fundamentally just and embracing of an intersectional lens. Our actions must be not just about adapting to climate change, but also about upholding universal human rights.

For people with disabilities facing migration, it means securing the right to move safely and with dignity.

The imperative for action grows along with the climate crisis. Our response will define the resilience of our communities and the depth of our commitment to justice in the face of climatic upheaval.

BOUNMY INTHAVONG IS A RESEARCHER WITH RACE AND DISABILITY CANADA. 

Reference

Kelman, I., Gaillard, J. C., & Mercer, J. (2015). Climate change's role in disaster risk reduction's future: Beyond vulnerability and resilience. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 6(1), 21-27.

subscribe for free

Would you like to receive Transition FREE in your inbox three times a year?

Email the [Transition Distribution team](#) and ask to be added to our email list. Be sure to include your:

- first and last name
- email address
- organization (if applicable), and
- a phone number (optional).

You can also read current and past editions [online](#) in PDF or text-only format.

become a member

You can also receive Transition and support DABC by becoming a member. Visit our [Membership Page](#) to learn about your membership benefits and what your membership means to us.

transition

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC

Parenting with Disabilities



thank you

Accessibility Projects Promote Inclusivity

This article highlights three of the twelve now-completed projects that were funded by DABC's 2022/23 Accessibility Projects Grants. It describes some of the exciting work done to support people with disabilities throughout BC.

This was the fifth year of the grants, funded through the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and administered by Disability Alliance BC.

You can see descriptions of all projects funded during this year of granting in the [Spring 2023](#) edition of *Transition* and learn more about the program [here](#).

Connecting Queer Communities (CQC)

BY KELSEY SAVAGE

CQC is a project that aims to connect 2SLGBTQIA+ adults with cognitive disabilities and/or who are neurodivergent with the broader queer community of the Lower Mainland. Now a multi-year project run by Real Talk, CQC prioritizes the needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ people whose disabilities significantly impact their ability to access queer community, and who may not have support to do so.

We do this by subsidizing transportation, event fees, and other community participation costs, as well as providing staff support at events.

We also conduct outreach aimed at folks living in homophobic and/or transphobic contexts, and work with 2SLGBTQIA+ and community

living organizations to identify and address access barriers.

The project's activities were chosen by our Planning Group. The 2023 calendar included organizing 25 social events, running outreach booths and presentations to community living organizations, and conducting research and development meetings exploring the barriers facing group members.

In December 2023, CQC achieved two milestones.

First, we developed and delivered a professional development workshop for QMUNITY staff on how to build disability confidence within their services. Soon after, our Peer Coordinator was the first-ever 2SLGBTQIA+ neurodivergent person in the province to co-deliver a Queer Inclusion workshop to community living staff.

CQC MARCHING WITH QMUNITY IN THE 2023 VANCOUVER PRIDE PARADE - AUGUST 6TH, 2023





PROJECT MANGER LAURA MACKENROT WITH PREP KITS

We know from participant feedback that CQC had a deeply positive impact on their lives. One participant said: “I don’t want to hide anymore. I am thankful for CQC to offer this kind of opportunity to allow me to know myself. My true self.”

Emergency Preparedness for the Blind, Deafblind and Partially Sighted Community

I BY CHANTAL OAKES

The Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC) is a national charitable organization of primarily blind, deafblind, or partially sighted members, committed to increasing awareness of our rights to ensure our equal participation. Our aim for the Personal Response to Emergency Preparedness (PREP) project was to equip individuals across BC with the knowledge, tools and accessible online resources to confidently and safely cope in the event of an emergency.

Our project manager, Laura Mackenrot, planned workshops to meet participants’ accessibility needs. Seventy participants received templates to help them create their

personal emergency plan. Each participant was also given a basic kit with emergency items which could assist them for a period of 72 hours.

Our networking opportunities during this project were invaluable. We connected with many organizations serving the blind community and sought a variety of presenters from the federal, provincial and municipal governments. This was appreciated by everyone who attended the workshops.

The PREP project created a positive and safe environment for people who are blind, Deafblind or partially sighted to ask questions and gain important knowledge about handling emergencies.

One of the participants shared: “The PREP project [...] has given me the knowledge and tools needed to cope in the event of an emergency and the confidence that I would have the ability to manage if I were to find myself alone.”

It’s Time to ROAR!

I BY KATHLEEN O’NEIL

For many of us, connecting with others online comes naturally. For people with developmental disabilities, it may not be easy or as safe.

To address this, ROAR (Respectful Online Affirming Relationships) was created and launched in 2023 by Powell River Educational Services Society (PRESS). This free, easy-to-use social networking site has been specifically designed to support individuals aged 19+ with developmental disabilities to build meaningful connections with their peers.



ROAR LAUNCH PARTY, DECEMBER 2023.

As one participant put it, “I like ROAR because I hate bullying. It feels safe to chat with my friends now.”

The website launch party was held at a social club in December. Prizes were awarded to all participants in a series of games that helped build skills to identify, approach, and get to know people who might be potential friends. The launch also included an orientation to the ROAR website and an opportunity to be supported in registering. It was a huge success!

ROAR BC is a friendly, accessible, supportive, and safe place for people with developmental disabilities to connect online.

PRESS is now looking for CLBC-funded service agencies in the Comox/Courtenay and Sechelt areas that would like to support the people they serve in building social connections. ROAR staff will come to your community and host an entertaining and educational launch party for your clients at no cost to you.

Reach out to Maddie Yule at maddie.yule@pressbc.com. 



Climate, Disability and Art

The grief that I feel for the planet in this age of climate crisis runs parallel to the grief I feel for my body. | by Caitlin French

I have just finished a Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) degree at Emily Carr University and my thesis work investigated the idea of solastalgia—“the pain or sickness caused by the loss or lack of solace and the sense of isolation connected to the present state of one’s home and territory” (Albrecht)—and the ways the landscape of my body has changed from the diseases I live with.

I share my body with endometriosis, multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis, and I have lost organs and abilities to these diseases.

I wanted to communicate my thesis work without coming off as feeling sorry for myself because I know that everyone carries grief in some way or another. I invited the viewers to reflect on their own losses and how those also parallel the losses the earth is experiencing.

I have been working with a constellation motif throughout the MFA program. It is a map of dots that, if overlaid on my body, shows where I have been changed by disease.

In my thesis exhibition, *Rituals of Loss*, there are two woven photographs with this constellation motifs. One photograph is of the melting Svínafellsjökull glacier in Iceland. The melt has been speeding up each time I visit, but it is still slow.

The other shows the cloud of smoke rising over West Kelowna just before wildfire crested the hill on August 13, 2023. The McDougall Creek fire was strikingly fast and witnessing the fire crest the treeline and engulf the mountain felt like a dream.

The photos are completely woven on a Jacquard loom. I break the photograph into seven layers from black to white (in grayscale) and I assign different weaving structures to each layer. The Loom opens up the warp thread and dictates which pixels in the image will be black (the warp) or white (the weft).

Each piece takes hours to complete and requires concentration and laborious movements. This labour is a way to find the parallels between the receding glacier and the abilities of my body receding. The actions taken to weave the cloth process my state of being. Each step grows as my body and the ice disappear.

This labour is a way to find the parallels between the receding glacier and the abilities of my body receding.

At the end of each weaving session, my MS starts to rear its head in body tremors, my voice stutters and I have difficulty walking. These effects wear off by the end of the day, but I consider them a part of the work—an offering of my body to the land in crisis.

The constellations on the front of the woven pieces are ochre collected from the sites where I took the photos. It is mixed with cherry tree sap (a binding agent) and water, and frozen into half-sphere moulds. Once frozen, I placed the ochre-ice cubes on the front of the woven works to melt into their constellations.

These two works were hung as a part of an installation of natural materials where I invited the viewer to enter a ritual space. The show is now taken down, but I will continue to work with the constellation motif, using weaving as ritual.

I invited the viewers to reflect on their own losses and how those also parallel the losses the earth is experiencing.

I am heading back to Iceland this summer to work and collaborate with my beloved Svínafellsjökull glacier. As climate change continues to alter the planet, and as my body is changed by disease, I will continue my research on this kinship.

CAITLIN FFRENCH IS A LAND-BASED ARTIST AND AUTHOR WORKING IN EAST VANCOUVER, CANADA. HER RESEARCH MAPS THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE ANTHROPOGENIC WORLD AND THE ONGOING IMPACTS OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS AND ENDOMETRIOSIS ON HER BODY. FFRENCH HAS RECENTLY PUBLISHED “GATHERING COLOUR: FORAGING MAGIC & MAKING ART FROM THE WORLD AROUND YOU” AND COMPLETED HER MASTER OF FINE ARTS DEGREE AT EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY. 



Indigenous Perspectives

Climate Change and Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous peoples have respectfully lived with the natural world, and have a deep connection to the land, water and ecosystems. Through this intergenerational experience and observation, Indigenous peoples were amongst the first to notice climate change and also have critical knowledge for navigating and adapting to it... Climate change is often understood as an “environmental” issue. But many Indigenous leaders say the root problem of climate change is colonialism.

<https://climateatlas.ca/indigenous-knowledges-and-climate-change>

One Woman’s Advocacy

As climate change increasingly threatens the environment on the South Island of New Zealand and the people who depend upon it, [Kera Sherwood-O’Regan](#) has become a vocal advocate not only for her fellow Māori—the Indigenous people of New Zealand—but also for people with disabilities. Having been diagnosed with fibromyalgia in her 20s, she seeks to ensure that Indigenous people, people with disabilities and people like her at the difficult intersection of the two have a voice at the table.

<https://www.colorado.edu/globalclimatesummit/learn/climate-change-indigenous-communities-kera-sherwood-oregan>

Community is the Solution

Despite [a wide range of] risk factors, the BC Coroners Service investigations into the 2021 BC heat wave found that a “disproportionately low number of Indigenous People died during the extreme heat event.” The report suggests that this may have been because of under-reporting and makes a recommendation for consultation with Indigenous Peoples “to ensure their voices are heard and their needs around heat planning understood.” This case study aims to address this gap through meaningful collaboration with Indigenous Peoples...

<https://climateinstitute.ca/publications/community-solution-2021-extreme-heat-emergency-experience-british-columbia-first-nations/>

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 by calling or texting 236-477-1717, or send us an email at taxaid@dabc.ca. You can also book an appointment online at <https://www.taxaid.janeapp.com>.



Are you eligible for our services?
Please see the opposite page to learn more.
Program details at <https://taxaiddabc.org>.



Tax Assistance & InFormation For People with Disabilities



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 straightforward, 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



Supporting People Living with Spinal Cord Injury During Heat Waves | BY AMANDA MAXWELL

The extreme heat events caused by climate change have dangerous impacts for people with disabilities. People living with spinal cord injuries (SCI), in particular, have difficulty thermo-regulating, including impacts to the ability to sweat. This can lead to unconsciousness or worse. Environmental temperatures as low as 29°C can result in death.

In 2023, in partnership with BC Hydro and Technology for Living (TIL), Praxis Spinal Cord Institute launched [SCI Climate Futures](#) as an emergency response to health issues posed by heat waves.

The first phase provided free portable cooling devices to individuals with disabilities—vests, towels and personal neck AC units. BC Hydro funding and TIL assistance covered costs, while Praxis facilitated rapid user testing and deployment.

“I got my summer back,” said Paul Tubbe, a participant in the program. As a paraplegic with a T5 AIS

“Before receiving this device, there were many times I would want to call 911 because I felt delirious [from the heat] and I was scared.”

D SCI and a traumatic brain injury, he was impacted by the summer heat waves. “Before receiving this device, there were many times I would want to call 911 because I felt delirious [from the heat] and I was scared. So, using this cooling vest has given me clarity, normality....and fun.”

The initial program gave 140 individuals greater health security. All participants reported improved health and independence.

Asking people living with SCI and their caregivers about their experiences is helping define priorities for heat wave mitigation.

“We soon realized that cooling centres are not effective for people living with disabilities,” said Praxis Project Coordinator Yasmin Passos.

“Commuting to [cooling centres] when temperatures affect consciousness is challenging,” Passos said. “Our engagement showed that the majority of people living with disabilities don’t have access to cooling devices, either residential or portable. Both their homes and the commute to a cooling center are unsafe.”

An SCI Climate Futures second phase, [AccessCool](#), is now under-

way. It has identified strategies to help manage extreme heat events in the built environment for people with SCI. Our hope is to accelerate the adoption of new technologies.

As in all Praxis initiatives, an Integrated Knowledge Transfer in Practice approach made sure that people with lived experience with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities shared their perspectives in all stages of the program.

We also worked with the City of Vancouver Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction team. As a result, this team is exploring the findings and recommendations to scale access to portable cooling devices for city residents with physical disabilities.

“When we started SCI Climate Futures, it was clear there was a lack of awareness about the impacts of heat waves and how life-threatening they could be for people living with disabilities,” said Passos. “People with disabilities need to be a part of climate change action conversations, sharing their reality, specific needs and perspective.”

For more details on the project or to support fundraising, please email ypassos@praxisinstitute.org.

AMANDA MAXWELL IS A FREELANCE SCIENCE WRITER AND MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS LEAD FOR PRAXIS SPINAL CORD INSTITUTE. 

Advertise with Transition

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.

Readership

- Over 3,000 magazines emailed to subscribers
- Featured on our website
- Theme articles promoted through our blog and social media
- Distributed to libraries, community centres, MLA offices and other public facilities

Non-profit Discounts

We're glad to offer all Transition advertising, including ads bundled with our e-newsletter advertising, at a 25% discount to non-profit organizations and a 35% discount for non-profit organizations who are also DABC members (minimum cost per ad \$50).

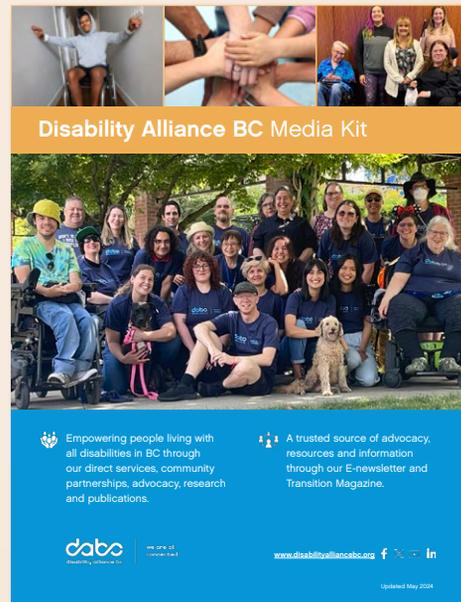
Choose Bundled Ads

Combine Transition magazine and Our Voice e-newsletter advertising into a package bundle to amplify your message, while achieving savings for your ongoing support. Our Voice offers readers regular updates including news, events, opportunities and more.

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





Understanding the Intersections of Climate Impact and Disability | by Alex Price

There are important lessons to highlight from the effects of climate impact on those living with disabilities.

As other writers in this Transition have mentioned, people living with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by climate risks and disasters.

Over the past year, SPARC BC has surveyed over 5,000 adults in the province on a broad range of social development topics. Among the key questions, the survey asked if people have been negatively impacted by a variety of climate change events over the past 12 months. People with disabilities reported much higher negative effects than the general adult population in BC (see Figure 1).

When we take a closer look at each of the critical climate events, the burden of impact weighs heavily on those living with at least one disability.

For instance, nearly half of people in the survey reporting negative impacts from seasonal water shortage (49.2%), flood (48.7%), long-term

water shortage (47.6%), and ocean acidification (47.7%) also reported living with at least one significant disability. In addition, approximately 40% of those reporting past year impacts from heatwave/extreme heat (43.7%) and wildfire (39.6%) also reported living with a disability.

There are many intersecting risk factors that make some populations and communities more sensitive to negative climate impacts.

Table 1 lists some of the most prominent climate impact risk factors and shows how they are distributed between those living with and without disabilities.

Notably, analyses show that people living with a disability are 1.5 to 6.0 times more likely to report an intersecting risk factor commonly associated with negative climate impacts, compared to the general population.

Some Conclusions

There are important lessons to highlight from the effects of climate impact on those living with disabilities.

For one, despite a limited focus on this community in the research literature, recent data confirms that negative climate impacts are more likely to affect British Columbians with disabilities than the general population.

We also now understand that those living with disabilities are more likely to report key risk factors commonly associated with negative climate impacts.

The findings are clear. The relationship between climate risk, negative impacts, and those living with disabilities is complex, intersectional, and requires holistic approaches. These approaches may help lessen the exposure of at-risk populations and communities to climate events. However, their greatest value may be in guiding efforts to address underlying social, economic and health risk factors.

Questions?

To learn more, please feel free to contact SPARC BC at info@sparc.bc.ca or 604-718-8501.

ALEX PRICE IS THE ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPARC BC. [HTTPS://WWW.SPARC.BC.CA](https://www.sparc.bc.ca) 

Figure 1 | Source: SPARC BC General Population Survey, September 2023 (n=5,010)

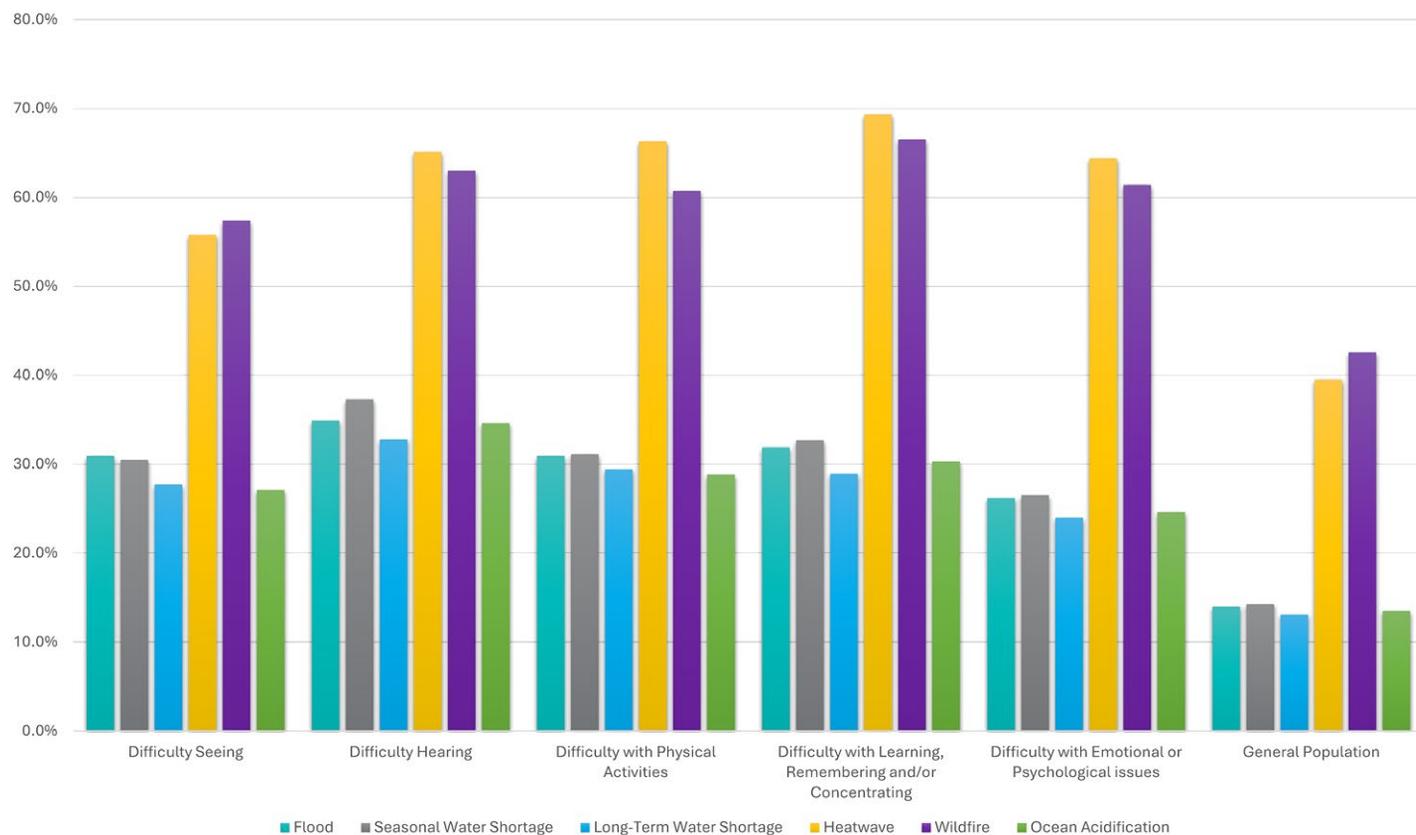


Table 1 | Prevalence of key intersecting risk factors among those with disabilities and the general population
 Source: SPARC BC General Population Survey, September 2023 (n=5,010)

Risk factors	People living with disability (%)	General population (%)
Income less than \$50K	42.0%	24.8%
Poor or fair self-reported general health	32.3%	8.8%
Elevated depression symptoms	41.5%	10.8%
Elevated anxiety symptoms	40.4%	12.7%
Weak sense of community belonging	59.1%	42.0%
Precarious housing (worried about losing housing)	28.1%	11.1%
Worried about running out of food	52.2%	21.3%
Food insecure	46.5%	17.7%
Transportation insecurity	32.0%	9.4%
Trouble paying for basics of living	67.0%	36.1%

Other Benefits of The Disability Tax Credit (DTC)

You may know that being approved for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) can enable you to open a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). But did you know about the other benefits and credits it can help you access?

Contact DABC's Access RDSP Staff at Local: 604-872-1278, Toll-free: 1-800-663-1278 or rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org.

If you're employed

The DTC will allow you to claim:

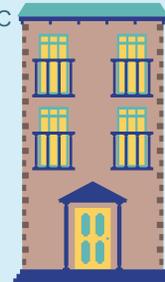
- Up to **\$737** through the supplement to Canada Workers Benefit (CWB)



If you own a home

You may be eligible for:

- Home Buyer's Amount of up to **\$10,000!** People with DTC do not have to be first-time home buyers
- The Home Accessibility Tax Credit, which covers certain expenses concerning accessibility-related renovations



If you have children

The DTC can help you claim:

- The Disability Amount for Children
- The Child Disability Benefit amount of **\$3,173**
- Increased child care deductions
- Age limit extension to Children's Fitness and Art amount (no longer available after 2016, but may be claimed for the previous year)



If you have medical or caregiver expenses

The DTC can allow you to claim:

- Certain medical expenses (can also claim a Disability Supports Deduction) **e.g. Attendant Care Services**
- Caregiver Credit: People with DTC do not have to provide another supporting document from medical practitioners

If you have a trust

The DTC might help you save on the taxes you pay on your earnings through:

- Eligibility for qualified disability trust status
- Preferred beneficiary election option

If you're a full-time student

The DTC can allow you to claim:

- Certain education-related benefits



www.rdsp.com

Access RDSP
Change your tomorrow today



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.

Planning Team Helaine Boyd, Liss Cairns, Cynthia Minh, Pam Horton, Lauren Stinson, Ann Vrlak

Editor | Designer Ann Vrlak

Cover Designer Fiona Gamiet

Administrative Assistant Livia Turnbull

Proofreaders Chloe Krause, Danielle Gauld

Subscriptions and Ads

Transition is published three times a year by Disability Alliance BC. Any advertising in *Transition* is for readers' benefit and does not constitute an endorsement by Disability Alliance BC.

Submissions and Reprints

Articles and creative work are very welcome for consideration from individuals and organizations. Publication and editing of submissions are at our discretion. *Transition* content may be reprinted without prior permission, when accompanied by this citation: "From *Transition* magazine, Disability Alliance BC, [edition date]."

Contact Us

Disability Alliance BC
1450-605 Robson Street,
Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3
T: 604-872-1278 F: 604-875-9227

Traditional, ancestral, and stolen
Territories of the Musqueam
(x^wməθk^wəyəm), Tsleil-Waututh
(Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh)
and Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh
Úxwumixw) Peoples

Transition general and advertising:
transition@dabc.ca

Online:
[dabc.ca/category/publications/
transition/](http://dabc.ca/category/publications/transition/)

DABC general:
feedback@dabc.ca

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/supports-and-services/>

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

If you are a wheelchair user looking for wheelchair accessible housing in the Lower Mainland, contact The Right Fit:

604-777-7576

rightfit@ifrcsociety.org or rightfit@dabc.ca

www.therightfitbc.org

Learn More About Us

dabc.ca/

Programs and Services

dabc.ca/programs/

Core Program Brochures

dabc.ca/category/publications/brochures/



DABC Behind the Scenes

Here is a look inside the public policy work we do to help bring about positive change for people with disabilities | BY HELAINE BOYD

Individual Advocacy

DABC offers individual advocacy for clients on specific issues where our expertise lies and where we have a funded program.

To give one example, our Advocacy Access program has legal advocates that can support people in applying for provincial and federal disability benefits, represent clients in reconsiderations and appeals, and generally support any issues that arise from being a PWD or CPP-D client.

Systemic Public Policy Advocacy

We carry out systemic public policy advocacy work on a federal, provincial or municipal levels by lobbying government and policy decision-makers to make changes in policy and law. As we are a provincial non-profit, most of our public policy advocacy work is conducted on the provincial level, but we will carry out advocacy work on the municipal and federal level when we feel that the issue at hand will also affect people with disabilities in BC.

We try to focus our advocacy work based on the knowledge and expertise we have developed through carrying out our direct services and programs. We often base our advocacy work on systemic issues raised by our clients.

Committee Advocacy

Much of our systemic advocacy work involves arranging meetings with politicians and government staff, writing letters, issuing statements on our website, raising issues in the news, and joining campaigns. We work with the two advocacy groups we are official members of, Council of Canadians with Disabilities and BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, as well as in solidarity with many of our community partners. We also conduct systemic advocacy through committee representation on a variety of topics.

How Can You Get Involved?

If you want to see meaningful, impactful change in our society for people with disabilities, and you have a personal story/experience that you wish to share with DABC, you are welcome to reach out to us at advocacy@dabc.ca

We often compile stories and experiences from our clients and network to use within our advocacy materials, including letters and campaigns. Please note that no personal, identifiable information will be shared to the government or the public without your consent.

If you want to stay current on our advocacy work, please read the [DABC blog](#) where we post news relevant to the disability community, including our advocacy work.

Accessible BC Act Consultations

This summer, the Province rolled out public consultation to seek feedback on two draft standards under the *Accessible BC Act*.

- The Accessible Service Delivery Standard
- The Employment Accessibility Standard

Over the past year and a half, I have been working to develop the Accessible Service Delivery Standard, alongside other members of a technical committee.

These draft standards will have concrete requirements for both the public and private sectors to remove barriers related to employment and service delivery across BC.

Give Your Feedback by July 31

This is an important opportunity to provide input that will help shape the standards. Learn how you can give your feedback at <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/accessiblebcactstandards/>.

HELAINE BOYD IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DABC. 

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.](#)

Access RDSP
Change your tomorrow today



vancouver
foundation

Conversations with the Canadian Human Rights Commission | BY SALINA M. DEWAR

It became clear that a lot of hard work and important feedback was going into the Report that could be used in our advocacy work outside of the CRPD progress review.

On a Thursday morning in February 2024, I found myself sitting in a small room surrounded by disability advocates. Two weeks earlier, I didn't know I'd be speaking to staff from the Canadian Human Rights Commission on behalf of Disability Alliance BC (DABC).

How Did We Get Here?

In 2022, ARCH Disability Law Centre in Toronto, reached out to our Disability Law Clinic (DLC). They asked

if we would be interested in taking part in a "Parallel Report" on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Specifically, we were asked to review our Federal Government's report in response to some issues identified by the UN CRPD Committee.

Between October 2022 and January 2024, with input from my DLC colleagues, I reviewed drafts of the Parallel Report that were prepared

in response to Canada's report to the UN.

It became clear that a lot of hard work and important feedback was going into the Report that could be used in our advocacy work outside of the CRPD progress review.

Together, we came up with some recurring themes for potential national and regional advocacy. We learned that the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) was interested in the Report. They asked that we send representatives to two days of meetings with some of their staff.

With the encouragement of my manager and Executive Director, I travelled to Ottawa.

What Did We Talk About?

The Parallel Report Group spoke to the CHRC staff about the common themes and challenges we had found. Because our group included members from across Canada, CHRC staff got a sense of regional differences, around ableism in health-care, for example.

Our conversation was about more than the Parallel Report itself. While I had envisioned speaking about Article 5 (Equality), I also spoke about barriers in access to justice. Some of us also shared concerns about MAiD in its current form and about the harmful impact of the lack of statistics specific to

LEFT TO RIGHT: KERRI JOFFE, ARCH; ELSIE TELLIER, ARCH; SALINA DEWAR, DABC.
PHOTO BY ELSIE TELLER.



the experiences of people with disabilities.

I had the chance to hear perspectives that were very different from mine which I will carry forward in my advocacy work.

We concluded our discussion with the CHRC staff by considering how the CHRC, advocates and organizations may be able to work together on issues affecting people with disabilities.

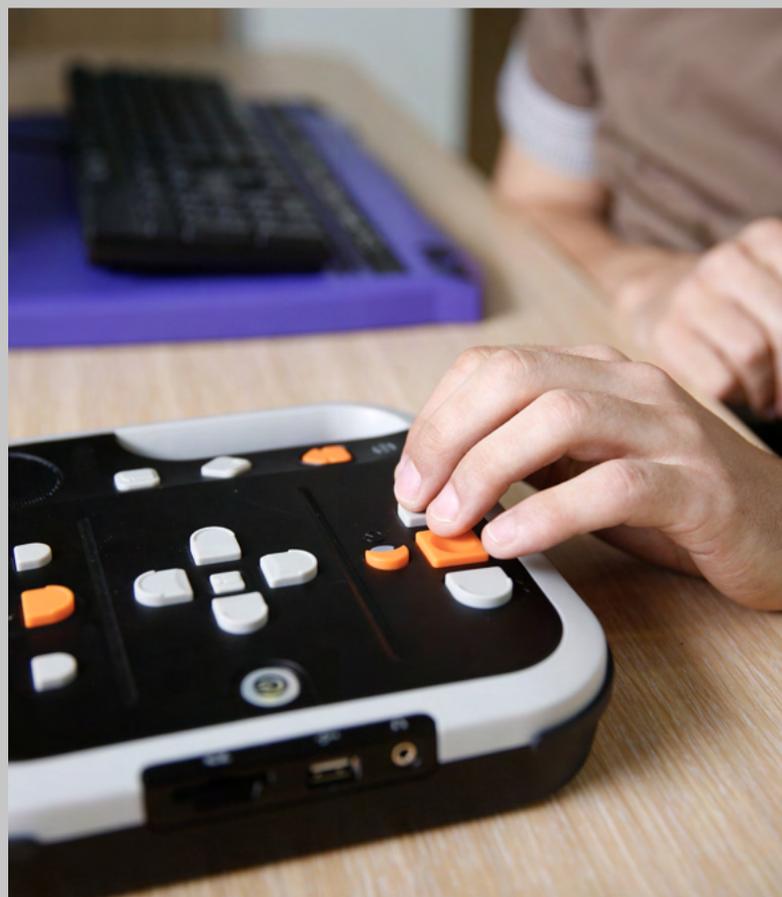
Each time I spoke up, I considered questions like: “Whose voices aren’t we hearing?” and “How can I raise awareness about issues I know to be true from the hundreds of conversations I’ve had with others who can’t be here, without telling a story that isn’t mine to tell?”

I’m not sure exactly what will come from our meetings with CHRC, but I look forward to it. It was a very meaningful experience and I am

grateful to everyone who made it possible for me to speak on behalf of DABC.

As a person with disabilities and early life challenges, it was an opportunity I will never take for granted.

SALINA M. DEWAR IS A LEGAL ADVOCATE WITH DABC’S DISABILITY LAW CLINIC. SHE IS A PERSON LIVING WITH VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE DISABILITIES. T



WorkBC

Assistive Technology Services

Are you employed, self-employed, or seeking employment?

Funding is available now for hearing aids, vehicle modifications, ergonomics, and other assistive devices you may need for work!

1-844-453-5506
workbc-ats.ca



This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Empowering Communities through Mobility Justice

| by Sasha Rodríguez and Farinaz Rikhtehgaran

Climate change has shifted from a distant concern to the defining reality of our era, impacting communities worldwide. The increasing frequency of extreme events underscores the urgent need for preparedness and protection, especially for vulnerable populations.

Other authors in this Transition refer to the 2021 heat wave in British Columbia and its tragic toll on isolated seniors. Recognizing this, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST) advocates for mobility justice in BC, emphasizing the critical role of transportation in emergency preparedness and support for vulnerable communities.

The Seniors on the Move (SOTM) program is at the forefront of BEST's projects. SOTM facilitates seniors' access to community resources and removes barriers to shared, public and active transportation options.

We launched the "Cool Riders" pilot project in the summer of 2023. This project aimed to provide transportation services from hot built environments to cooling centres, ensuring the well-being of seniors during extreme weather.

Collaborating with organizations like the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, we identified areas with vulnerable populations

as targets for intervention, such as Menno Court, a low-income housing complex in East Vancouver. An under-used bus from ASK Friendship Society, fully accessible for seniors with mobility challenges, was used for transportation.

Throughout the project, our team provided seniors with crucial information on heat safety, and distributed essential items such as industrial fans, cooling pads and first aid kits. We also created a map tailored for Menno Court residents, showing nearby green spaces, cooling facilities, and nearby public transportation.

On one of the hottest summer days in 2023, our team relocated 26 seniors to cooling centres in Vancouver. This provided respite from the heat, created connections between community members and fostered community resilience.

BEST recognizes that many participants had mobility disabilities, highlighting the critical need for accessible transportation options. We are also committed to diversity and inclusivity, offering resources in multiple languages to ensure equitable access for all community members. As pioneers in mobility justice—working in the field since 1991—BEST remains committed to advocating for the needs of seniors and vulnerable groups, addressing transportation infrastructure gaps,

This project aimed to provide transportation services from hot built environments to cooling centers, ensuring the well-being of seniors during extreme weather.

and providing essential support during times of crisis.

Join BEST in advocating for accessible transportation options and supporting vulnerable communities during times of crisis. Together, we can work towards a more equitable and resilient future for all.

Learn more about SOTM <https://www.seniorsonthemove.org>.

Become a member and donate: <https://www.best.bc.ca/get-involved/membership>

SASHA RODRIGUEZ IS THE SOTM PROJECT MANAGER AND FARINAZ RIKHTEHGARAN IS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR. 





Yes, I'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 at CanadaHelps.com. 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.

Staying Cool Isn't Easy!

BY ANONYMOUS

Hot. I don't handle heat well. I'm not built for it and I don't particularly enjoy being in higher temperatures.

Weather conditions can cause extreme fluctuations in temperature. In the morning, it can be really cold and by late afternoon it can be really hot, so it's hard to know how to dress.

As part of my morning routine, my care worker helps me dress mostly my "lowers," as I call it. If it gets hot later in the day, I'm stuck wearing whatever I put on in the morning. I worry I could get heat stroke easily.

Sometimes I just don't have enough water for the day. I'm always cognizant about my kidneys because of living with Spina Bifida. As I've gotten older, I am more aware of this, so I do my best to stay hydrated, especially when I'm out in the hot sun.

Cooling off isn't easy. It's hard to find shade to cool off because a lot of treed areas are not wheelchair accessible. This is a worry for me and also for my dog! I want us both to get out of the sun.

At home, my balcony can get very hot because it's concrete. There are lots of trees nearby, but they don't bring in any shade.

I also have Psoriatic Arthritis that impacts most of my joints, head to toe. Sunshine can help, but at a certain point I also need the cold to calm it down. I often do contrast baths to help, alternating between hot and cold bowls of water.



I would like to see more areas that create shade and have water fountains. Bus stops come to mind. I know there are more water spray stations for dogs in recent years.

That's great for my dog, but how about us!

New Home for Our Benefits Resources

DABC has new, simpler-to-access pages for our free disability benefits resources: BC Disability Help Sheets and Canada Pension Plan Disability Guides.

All the current translations, provided by MOSAIC, are also available.

BC Disability Benefits <https://dabc.ca/publications-bc-disability-benefits-help-sheets/>

CPP Disability <https://dabc.ca/publications-cpp-disability/>



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

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

TD Bank

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.



DABC UPDATES: BC HEAT EVENTS AND EMERGENCY RESOURCES

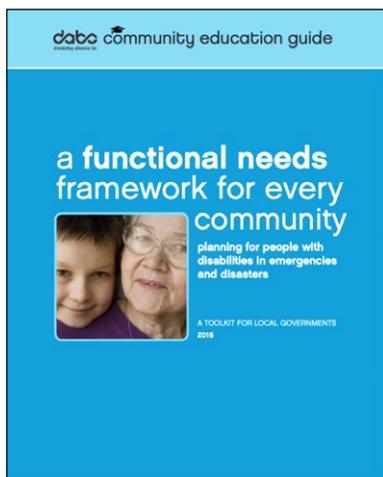
Early Work Around Emergencies Planning

DABC was a pioneer in Canada around inclusive emergency preparedness. In the early 2000s, we undertook a range of workshops, trainings and publications coordinated by Karen Martin (the author of this edition's editorial). Our aim was to educate all sectors of the community on how to create plans and responses that “left no one behind.”

The key guides and reports from these projects can be found on our website at <https://dabc.ca/category/publications/emergency-prep/>.

One series, *A Functional Needs Framework for Every Community*, offers step-by-step guidelines for communities to establish inclusive planning and response, including these titles:

- Planning for People with Disabilities in Emergencies and Disasters
- Including People with Disabilities in Emergency Exercises
- C-MIST Personal Emergency Planning



BC Hydro's AC Program

BY SHARAREH SAREMI

The extreme heat that we have experienced in recent years is extremely dangerous for everyone, but particularly for people who are low income, live with a disability or are elderly. In the summer of 2023, the provincial government provided \$10 million for BC Hydro to expand its Energy Conservation Assistance Program (ECAP) to include free, publicly-funded, portable air conditioners (AC).

This program was intended to assist people with low income to access portable air conditioners. However, in order to qualify, applicants must meet the income qualification for ECAP which is currently \$39,700 for a single person. This excludes anyone with more income, but still can't afford an expensive air conditioner.

One exemption is available to people who have received a recommendation letter from their regional health authority's Home Care Program. However, this is problematic, too. We know that many people with disabilities are not eligible for this program.

There is another obstacle for renters. They need their landlord's permission to participate in ECAP, so anyone whose landlord refused to sign the documents, anyone who didn't feel comfortable asking their landlord to sign the documents, or anyone living in a precarious housing situation without a formal landlord, was not able to participate in this program.

So, while the program did help some, the restrictions around who could qualify meant that many people who most needed air conditioners were unable to get one.

SHARAREH SAREMI (SHE/HER) IS DABC'S ADVOCACY ACCESS PROGRAM MANAGER.

Pearson Residents Helped Through Heat Waves

BY SARAH WENMAN

George Pearson Centre (GPC), a long-term residential care facility, is home to many people with disabilities whose health can be jeopardized in extreme heat. GPC was built in 1952 and did not have AC until recently.

When the first heat wave hit GPC, staff kept residents cool with stand alone fans and cold cloths, and kept the wards stocked with ice water.

Soon after, the facility acquired large area, portable AC units which were placed in the hallways near residents' rooms. Because of new provincial requirements, each resident's room now has its own AC unit permanently installed.

GPC also has many windows and doors for air flow—all bedrooms have outside doors to a shady garden patio. During BC's extreme heat waves, residents who are mobile took advantage of our treed spaces!

SARAH WENMAN IS WITH DABC'S COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTS MENTORS ASSOCIATION (CARMA) PROGRAM. 

Connect with DABC

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.

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 opposite 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.

I accept your invitation to join DABC and enclose my membership fee:

- Individual \$15 Group \$25

Please 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 _____

We thank you for your support!



we are all
connected

Suite 1450, 605 Robson Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3
(604) 872-1278 • fax (604) 875-9227
transition@dabc.ca • dabc.ca

O V E R

47

YEARS OF ADVOCACY

Thank you to the Province of BC – Community Gaming Grants for their continuing support.