

Disability Stereotypes and  
How to Change Them

One Year Anniversary  
of Tax AID DABC

Inclusion or Exclusion?  
Disability Portrayal

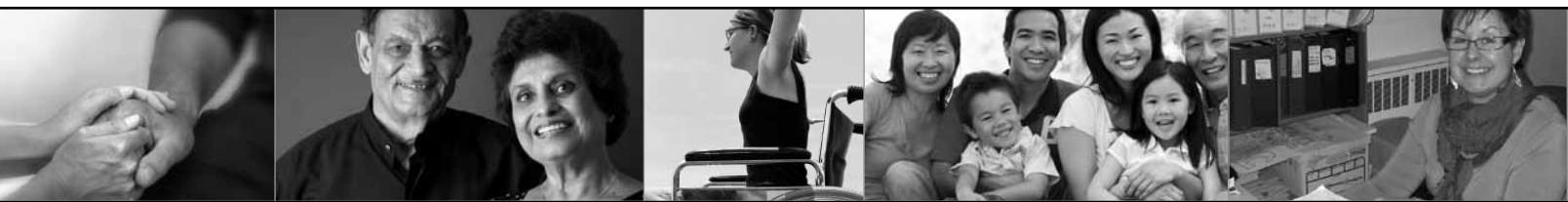
# transition

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC

## Portrayal of Disability in Popular Culture

FALL 2016





# We couldn't do it without you.

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

BC Association for Individualized  
Technology and Supports for People with  
Disabilities

BC Government and Services Employees  
Union

BC Housing, HAFI Program

BC Hydro Employees Community Services  
Fund

Canadian Union of Public Employees of BC

Canadian Union of Public Employees of BC  
Local 1936

Canadian Union of Public Employees of BC  
Local 1004

City of Vancouver

Council of Canadians with Disabilities

Emergency Management BC, Ministry of  
Public Safety and Solicitor General

Government of Canada's Social  
Development Partnership Program-  
Disability Component

Health Sciences Association of BC

Home Medical Equipment Dealers  
Association of BC

Hospital Employees Union, People with  
Disabilities Committee

Klein Lawyers LLP

The Law Foundation of British Columbia

Murphy Battista LLP

Notary Foundation of BC

Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network

Provincial Health Services Authority

Simpson Thomas and Associates

TELUS Employees Charitable Giving  
Program

Trial Lawyers Association of BC

United Way of the Lower Mainland

Vancity

Vancity Credit Union Fairview Community  
Branch

Vancouver Coastal Health

Vancouver Foundation

Vancouver Taxi Association

Wheelin' Mobility



---

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

# inside

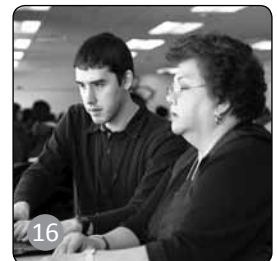
## featured articles

<b>Editorial</b> by Suzanna Uchatius	4
<b>Disability in the Media 101</b>	7
<b>Mainstream Media: A Lost Opportunity</b> by Salina M. Dewar	8
<b>Disability Stereotypes and How to Change Them</b>	20
<b>Opinions from DABC</b>	27



## selected content

<b>In Memoriam: Jeanette Andersen</b>	10
<b>Important MSDSI Regulation Updates</b>	13
<b>Disability Rate Increase and Changes to the Subsidized Transit Pass</b> by Sam Turcott and Jane Dyson	11
<b>STADD and the One Government Approach</b>	14
<b>Employing People with Disabilities at Vancity: A Win-win Plan</b> by Kristin Bower	16
<b>Farewell to our Colleagues</b> by Jane Dyson	19
<b>Building on a Decade of Work in Emergency Preparedness</b> by Karen Martin	25
<b>CPAC Navigator: Helping Youth Find Their Way</b> by Jeanette Morton	30



## regulars and others

<b>New DABC Guide on Disclosure</b>	12
<b>Advertise with DABC</b>	15
<b>Book Your DABC Workshop</b>	17
<b>Tax AID DABC: One Year and \$540,000 Later</b> by Sam Turcott and Salina Dewar	22
<b>DABC's 2016 AGM</b>	28



# editorial

BY SUZANNA  
UCHATIUS

## Inclusion or Exclusion? Disability Portrayal in Popular Culture

Society rolls along the highway of the familiar and when a marked difference is introduced, society usually balks and pushes it away. We seem to prefer observing from a distance, rather than to embrace, to listen and to take it in.

Popular culture is the music, the movies, the TV shows, social media, the clothes and the celebrities of the day. So, how does disability or difference fit into all those niches? What are voices of popular culture saying today and who do those voices belong to? Are those voices accepted by the people? And, who does the term “people” include and exclude?

In approaching this loaded and red-hot subject, I'd like to begin by posing some questions.

### How are people with disabilities portrayed?

First, I'd like to point out that women, Aboriginal people, people of colour, the LGBT community and other minority groups still have a long way to go to acquire an authentic, strong and accepted voice in popular culture. Half of the world's population, namely women, are still fighting the battle

for full portrayal in media. All of the groups I've mentioned have become stronger only when they have had a direct collaborative voice in media production.

Where does that leave the voice of disability? Let's take a quick look at recent mainstream “disability movies.” In *I Am Sam*, Sean Penn plays a cognitively disabled man seeking custody of his daughter; in *The Elephant Man*, John Hurt is a mistreated disfigured person who is deeply intelligent and sensitive; in *A Beautiful Mind*, Russell Crowe portrays a mentally ill brilliant mathematician; in *Forrest Gump*, Tom Hanks plays a cognitively-challenged man who is present and active in many historic American moments; in *My Left Foot*, Daniel Day-Lewis plays a man with cerebral palsy who becomes an artist; and so on.

So, how do these movies portray disability? The answer is, in a sentimentally, warm and fuzzy manner. In all of these movies, the non-disabled characters in the movie are enlightened and inspired by the disabled person.

I see this as the crux of the whole issue: disability is portrayed as inspiring in most popular culture. The Latin origin of the word inspire is “*inspiratio*”: to breath in, to be divinely inspired. This is a weighty, sanctimonious label to have to bear and it is precisely what is deeply ingrained in the portrayal of disability in popular culture today.

Viewing disability as inspiring places it on a distant pedestal, removing it from a place in general society. It is not an “us,” but rather a “them.” The non-disabled viewer has a safe, outside place from which to observe and to rationalize, “I am not that.” They are not encouraged to identify with a fellow human being and see that: “This person is just like me!”

### What would a positive portrayal look like?

I think it would mean the disabled person is portrayed as an authentic, truthful human being who embodies the full spectrum of humanity's emotional and behavioural range. That would include the good, the bad and the ugly: hate, love, fear,

anger, compassion, selfishness and more. Human beings are messy, complicated creatures.

Shortly before I wrote this editorial, a new movie was released that shows just how little things are changing in some quarters. This latest example of what I would term “disability porn” is a British production titled *Me Before You*. A young woman takes a caregiver job for a cranky, rich quadriplegic young man (disabled due to a transformative accident). They fall in love and it’s all wonderful, until he contemplates suicide because his life will never be what it once was.

The majority of reviewers wrote about sobbing through the movie and how emotional the story was. A few reviewers claimed the opposite. They objected to the fact that the actor in the wheelchair was not a person who uses a wheelchair, and that suicide was shown as a better option than life with a disability. The majority of these critics were strongly connected to disability, either themselves or those close to them.

From this, it is clear that we have two very separate groups who are consuming popular culture.

I’m perplexed as to why an actor who uses a wheelchair could not be found. Really? And what about the major difference that is not mentioned in this movie, namely, the

difference between people who are born with disability and those who acquire it due to a transformational incident?

The young man in this movie knew what it was to live without a disability. After his accident, he would need to find his way into a new life, a new identity. That would be the connector for the many folks who saw the movie who would think, “This could happen to me and I identify.” From the perspective of a person living with a disability, life is full of innumerable joys, struggles and relationships, and how dare this character label disability as not worth living?

Herein lies the great divide. For disability to have full-fledged ownership and presence in popular culture, the structure of that very culture needs to be shaken and shifted. That leads to the next question—namely how to define inclusion.

Inclusion is a popular byword thrown about nowadays with much abandon, when it is actually a very complicated and often misunderstood process. Inclusion is an action. It can be very frightening for both sides, disabled and non-disabled, and requires empathetic give and take.

Society rolls along the highway of the familiar and when a marked



Inclusion can be very frightening for both sides, disabled and non-disabled, and requires empathetic give and take.

difference is introduced, society usually balks and pushes it away. We seem to prefer observing from a distance, rather than to embrace, to listen and to take it in. Enduring inclusion needs to provide a place of reflection, a place where people who are non-disabled and disabled can share their life experiences with each other.

| continued on next page

## Editorial, continued from previous page

My daughter experienced one of her first rejections due to disability, but with perseverance on both our parts she stepped into inclusion. The lesson for me: choose carefully when to intervene and balance support with the respect of challenge.

In popular culture, this would require that the vast world of media in all its forms do a number of big things, some of which are beginning to happen.

The doors to educational possibilities in the arts must be made accessible to people with disabilities. If we want characters with disabilities to be played by actors with disabilities, they need to have access to the crafts of acting, writing, production, media and technical skills. The great

creative diversity of disability offers a vast, undiscovered storehouse of remarkable perspectives. If fully harnessed, it could transform the whole outlook of popular culture as we experience it today. Shared collaboration leads to representational ownership and that is true inclusion.


How do we do that?

A big question. I can only approach this from a personal perspective. I have a daughter who was born with brain damage that causes speech, physical and cognitive differences. One of my most memorable experiences clarified for me what authentic inclusion is.

While we were vacationing in Tofino, BC, I was sitting reading my book as my three-year-old daughter played on the beach. Two little children ran up to her and said something. She babbled back to them in her unique language and they frowned, not understanding her and ran away. I watched from behind my book, with every fiber in me wanting to run and pick her up to protect her from the brutal shunning she had just experienced. Something held me back as I wept behind my book.

About five minutes later, the two children came running back, grabbed my daughter's hand and ran off with her to play together. What happened? The two children had probably gone back to their parents, said that the girl they met talked weird and the parents encouraged them to play with her anyway. My daughter experienced one of her first rejections due to disability, but with perseverance on both our parts she stepped into inclusion. The lesson for me: choose carefully when to intervene and balance support with the respect of challenge. I need to allow my child to experience the full spectrum of life as much as possible and not lock her in a protective bubble.

Inclusion in life, for all of us—disabled, non-disabled or different in any way—is only fully lived by experiencing love, loss, pain, joy, failure, winning and losing. To have a place in popular culture to support true inclusion, all of us must reach out to those outside our comfort zone. Together, we must all listen, share, support and invest ourselves in what it takes to influence and own public presence in today's popular culture.

SUSANNA UCHATIUS HAS WORKED IN THEATRE FOR 40 YEARS, MAJORING AS DIRECTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT. SHE HAS A BFA FROM THE SFU SCHOOL FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS AND HAS DONE FURTHER STUDIES AT UBC AND SITI THEATRE NY, AMONG OTHERS. AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THEATRE TERRIFIC IN VANCOUVER SINCE 2005, SHE BRINGS A DEEP PASSION FOR ACTORS OF "ALL ABILITIES" USING THE PROCESS OF "RESPECT OF CHALLENGE." FIND MORE AT [WWW.THEATRE TERRIFIC.CA](http://WWW.THEATRE TERRIFIC.CA) OR FACEBOOK—THEATRE TERRIFIC. 



## Disability In The Media 101

### Jenni Gold's "Gold test"

Filmmaker Jenni Gold has developed what she calls the "gold test" for works of fiction that feature a character with a disability.

Like the Bechdel test for women in movies, Ms Gold's test asks that the project meet certain criteria, including that the story not be about the disability and that the character not be solely defined by their disability.


See the full article by Victoria Ahearn, including Jenni's votes on films that pass and fail the test at <http://tinyurl.com/ze8894m>.

### CinemAbility

Ms Gold's documentary, *CinemAbility*, takes a detailed look at the evolution of "disability" in entertainment by going behind the scenes to interview filmmakers, studio executives, film historians and celebrities. It uses vivid clips from Hollywood's most beloved motion pictures and television programs to focus attention on the powerful impact that entertainment and the media can have on society.

For more information about the documentary, see <http://www.cinemability.com>.

### I AM PWD

I AM PWD is a joint venture of Actors' Equity Association, the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. The organization advocates for employment of people with disabilities in the media industry and also provides resources for those who want to work in the industry. A Canadian organization, "Lights, Camera, Access!" is working toward increasing the presence of people with disabilities. Learn more about I AM PWD at <http://tinyurl.com/gl25fz6> and Lights, Camera, Access! at <http://tinyurl.com/grwoxvh>. 

*Injuries from a car accident can affect you and your family. Call Klein and get the compensation you deserve.*



Injured in a Car Accident?  
*Call Klein*

*"Thank you for handling my case and understanding my situation. You worked wonders to assist me and it will not be forgotten."*

– Lori

**KLEIN • LAWYERS** LLP  
*Personal Injury & Class Action Law*

**604.874.7171**  
[www.callkleinlawyers.com](http://www.callkleinlawyers.com)



Top Personal Injury Firm



Most Outstanding  
Class Action Law Firm



## Mainstream Media: A Lost Opportunity by Salina M. Dewar

These characters serve as a means of normalizing and validating characters with disabilities, but I think media could go much further in its positive and authentic portrayal of characters with disabilities.

**M**ainstream media has been an important means of challenging the barriers faced by people who do not meet the “usual” social standards. And, media could do more to help educate society and “normalize” the existence of disability.

We could see a variety of stories that feature people with disabilities, including stories that focus on the character’s disability, and stories where the focus is something else. Unfortunately, mainstream media does not generally represent disability well because of the limited stories it tells and because of who gets to tell the story.

Historically, the two main plot lines for the story of disability have been either “disability is something to fear” or “disability as a maker of undaunted heroes.” In the fear category are stories like *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* where dis-

ability is something hideous, and love is warped and impossible. In the undaunted hero category, are stories like *Pollyanna*. Stories in this category are sometimes called “inspiration porn”<sup>1</sup> because the purpose of the person is to exceed the expectations of those without disabilities. These stories encourage others to criticize people with disabilities who cannot or will not meet the *Pollyanna* ideal.

More recently, characters with disabilities have been appearing in situations where their experience with disability is more realistic and relatable. In *The Other Sister*<sup>2</sup>, Carla, who has a cognitive disability, is independent and dynamic. She challenges others’ expectations for her by going to college, having her own apartment and getting married, and she does this with realistic moods and struggles.

As other activists have pointed out, however, Hollywood has not provided much room for actors with disabilities. In particular, those with obvious physical or cognitive impairments are absent and therefore can’t shape the way disability is presented in the media.

In the 1980s, the popular television show *The Facts of Life* had a recurring character with Cerebral Palsy in the form of Gerri, the socialite Blair Warner’s cousin. Gerri specifically addressed disability and perception, and was shown as someone who was moved beyond the “hero” in the eyes of her family, to an independent, very human character. While Gerri generated a lot of positive fan attention, she only appeared in 12 episodes.

Two recent examples of recurring characters with disabilities are Lauren Potter as Becky Jackson, a cheerleader with Down Syndrome in *Glee*, and RJ Mitte’s portrayal of Walter (Finn) White Jr., in *Breaking Bad*. These characters serve as a means of normalizing and validating characters with disabilities, but I think media could go much further in its positive and authentic portrayal of characters with disabilities.

In *Breaking Bad*, Finn’s disability is used with Walter White’s cancer, to create tragedy that forces Walter to cook and sell drugs to provide for his family. *Glee*’s portrayal of Becky is more dynamic, and the show ad-



dresses romance between a person who has a disability and someone who does not. Becky's romance is a refreshing departure from the predictable caregiver-turned-lover plot line that is usually the way that Hollywood solves its difficulty with a romance where one person has a disability.

The recent movie and book *Me Before You*<sup>3</sup> show that mainstream media is still struggling with disability. Predictably, the character with disabilities, Will Trainer, has many desirable features to "make up for" his disability. He is handsome, rich and worldly from all the extreme sporting and travelling he did before an accident paralyzed him.

The story deals with the struggle for independence that many people with severe physical impairments face. Unfortunately, it also rein-

**There is no reason, for example, that Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz* could not be portrayed by an actor with a physical or cognitive disability. Imagine that!**

forces the fears many people have that life with a disability would not be worth living. Will asserts that he cannot be in a relationship with Louisa because he does not want her to "miss out" and he considers ending his own life.

It is essential that we have programs and plot lines written and directed by people with disabilities, starring actors with disabilities, featuring plots where disability is not a tragedy, and where disability only

appears because the actor happens to have a disability.

There is no reason, for example, that Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz* could not be portrayed by an actor with a physical or cognitive disability. Imagine that! Part of equal participation in society is seeing our story in our community's art, and being able to tell our story the way we want to. Mainstream media could help expand the definition of what it means to be beautiful, desirable, valuable etc. It remains an untapped resource for creating a culture of respect and understanding around disability.

<sup>1</sup> See Karrie Higgins' Blog featured in the Huffington Post on September 21, 2015, where she describes the assumptions attached to inspiration porn and the harmful effect it has on people with disabilities. Online: Internet [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karrie-higgins/not-your-inspiration-porn\\_b\\_8172842.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karrie-higgins/not-your-inspiration-porn_b_8172842.html), last accessed June 23, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> 1999. Directed by Garry Marshall and starring Juliette Lewis as "Carla."

<sup>3</sup> The book was written by Jojo Moyes (who does not have a disability) and published in 2012 by Pamela Dorman Books. The film is directed by Thea Sharrok and was released on June 3, 2016 by Warner Brothers, and stars Emilia Clarke and Sam Claflin, who are well-known British actors.

**SALINA DEWAR IS A TAX PROGRAM ADVOCATE WITH DABC'S TAX AID PROGRAM. T**

## ABOUT TRANSITION

### Editorial Statement

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

### Planning Team

Jane Dyson, Nicole Kiyooka, Ann Vrlak

### Editor and Layout

Ann Vrlak

### Cover Design

Fiona Gamiet

## Subscriptions and Ads

*TRANSITION* is published four times a year by Disability Alliance BC. Subscriptions are \$15/year (individuals) and \$25/year (groups).

Any advertising in *TRANSITION* is for readers' benefit and does not constitute an endorsement by the Disability Alliance BC.

## Submissions and Reprints

Comments, articles and graphics are welcome for consideration. Publication not guaranteed.

*TRANSITION* content may be reprinted without prior permission, as long as the material is published in its entirety, along with this citation: "From *TRANSITION* magazine, Disability Alliance BC, [edition date]."

## Contact Us

Disability Alliance BC  
204-456 W. Broadway,  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3  
T: 604-875-0188 F: 604-875-9227  
*TRANSITION* general:  
[transdisabilityalliancebc.org](mailto:transdisabilityalliancebc.org)  
Ads:  
[transitionads@gmail.com](mailto:transitionads@gmail.com)  
Web:  
[www.disabilityalliancebc.org/transition](http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/transition)  
DABC general:  
[feedback@disabilityalliancebc.org](mailto:feedback@disabilityalliancebc.org)

## In Memoriam

### Jeanette Andersen




---

BY CHRISTINE GORDON

Jeanette Andersen spent much of her adolescence in an iron lung looking at the world through a tiny mirror positioned near her head.

There is a beautiful photograph of her from this time, gazing lovingly at her mother. That loving gaze is one that Jeanette gave to so many people in her life—family, friends and strangers. She possessed a remarkable openness to the world, perhaps because she had spent so many years with only a mirror. Her presence always took the rough edges off life because she was sincerely kind, generous and empathetic in any encounter with anyone.

She forgave everyone even when they behaved badly. She believed that there was always a solution as long as good people came together and forged one. She was the quiet diplomat in any gathering, always looking for the best in people and usually finding it because people wanted to meet her expectations.

Jeanette was involved in so many projects like: working to make her eventual home, Noble House, a model for accessibility; helping to create the Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program; collaborating with other Board members at Disability Alliance BC to enable equality and inclusion for people with disabilities; and, advising the City of Vancouver through its Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee. Jeanette rarely said no to an opportunity to advise, bear witness or testify.

She mentored Pearson residents because she loved her home and she wanted others to have the chance to create their own.

Jeanette was a founding member of PROP and an active TIL user. She and Heather Morrison became our peer leaders when PROP was created and Jeanette retained this role until her death.

Losing both Simon Cox and Jeanette within the last few months is quite a blow for all of us at BCITS. Their loss compels us to reflect on their legacies. One of Jeanette's legacies will surely be that an open heart can change the world.

---

BY JANE DYSON

We are all very sad about the passing of long-term Board member Jeanette Andersen, in June.

Jeanette was on DABC's Board for over 15 years and held a number of key positions, including Board Chair. She was a great friend and support to many of us, and we all miss her greatly.

Jeanette was a peer mentor with our CARMA program at George Pearson Centre. She lived at Pearson for over 30 years before moving into her own apartment in Vancouver's Noble House. Jeanette attended many key meetings with our funders representing the Board as we reported on our work. She was happy to participate and was a lot of fun to work with.

Our sincere condolences to all Jeanette's family and friends and a special hug to Jeanette's long-term friend Jimmy. **T**

## Disability Rate Increase and Changes to the Subsidized Transit Pass

| BY SAM TURCOTT AND JANE DYSON

People receiving Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefits from the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI) started receiving a small rate increase September 1, 2016. This increase is accompanied by changes to the existing BC Bus Pass Program.

The new system was announced in last spring's provincial budget. Disability Alliance BC (DABC), many other community groups and people in the disability community expressed concern following the announcement. The community was disappointed by the small increase and concerned that the changes would result in people becoming more isolated because they would essentially need to choose between much needed additional income and transportation. DABC and several other community stakeholders met with MSDSI Minister, Michelle Stillwell, about the budget announcement. In response, the Minister announced in June that the existing \$45 administrative fee would be eliminated.

So what does this mean for people receiving PWD after September? The net result will be that PWD recipients will be slightly better off financially. The maximum monthly shelter and support rate for a single person is now \$931 (up from \$906). They will also receive a \$52 Transportation Support Allowance which will either be added to their \$931 to bring their monthly cheque up to \$983 or they will get a monthly bus

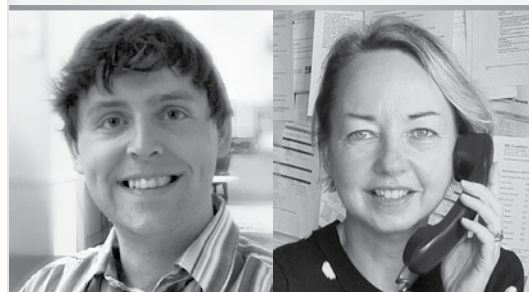
pass. The new Transportation Support Allowance replaces the Special Transportation Subsidy which used to be paid annually to people in transit-served areas who were unable to use transit.

As noted above, PWD recipients no longer pay the \$45 annual bus pass administrative fee. They can keep their pass indefinitely, rather than needing to reapply each year. They are able to switch back and forth between the pass and the extra \$52 on a monthly basis, if they give notice in advance.

Any rate increase is welcome, but we are disappointed that the first increase since 2007 is so small.

While DABC appreciates the innovations MSDSI has implemented over the last few years, for example, the Annualized Earnings Exemption, an increase to asset levels, and the exemption of cash gifts, the inadequate PWD rate continues to be of great concern. We have again expressed our position to the Minister about the rates and are working with our community partners on this urgent issue.

If you receive PWD benefits and want to start or stop your bus pass for November 1, you should notify the Ministry no later than October 5. People receiving PWD who have the Comforts Allowance, Room and Board, or a PWD top-up payment will also get the benefit of the rate increase and the new Transportation Support Allowance. **T**



PWD RATE INCREASE AND TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCE

### People receiving other benefits

The new maximum PWD rate for a single person is \$983.42. This means people whose income falls below this amount, for example, individuals who are receiving CPP-D, can apply for a top-up to equal \$983.42. They can receive \$52 of this either as a bus pass or in cash.

### People receiving Comforts Allowance

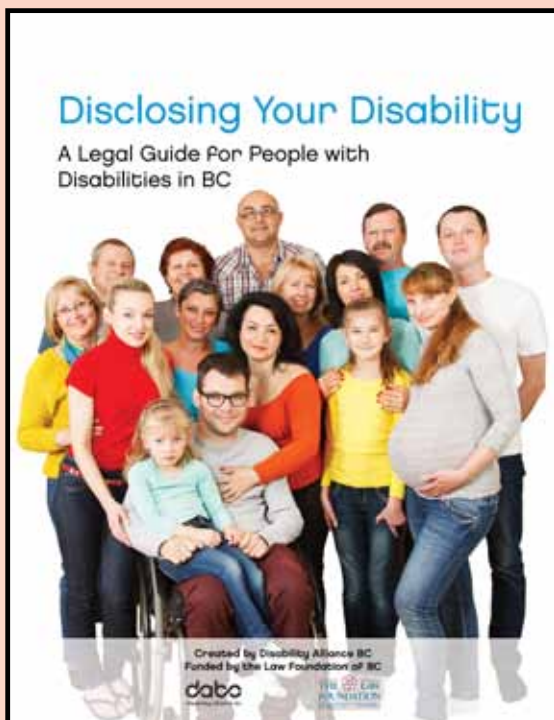
Recipients of this \$95 monthly allowance will receive an increase of \$25 a month and the \$52 monthly transportation allowance either in cash or as a bus pass.

### People living in room and board

These individuals will receive a \$25 a month increase and the \$52 monthly transportation allowance either in cash or as a bus pass.

**SAM TURCOTT IS MANAGER OF TAX AID DABC AND JANE DYSON IS DABC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**





## New DABC Guide

### When and How to Disclose Your Disability in Employment

We thank the Law Foundation of BC  
for their generous support of this project.



*Disclosing Your Disability: A Legal Guide for People with Disabilities in BC* explains the process of decision-making and planning necessary when considering disclosure to an employer.

Should you disclose your disability during the job application process or wait until after you have been hired? If you are currently employed and have a new disability or a condition that has worsened, what should you say to your employer? How much information should you offer? How much information can an employer demand? Should you say anything at all?

The process is concerning because of the stigma and assumptions about disabilities and chronic health conditions.

The information in the *Disclosing Your Disability* Guide will help you explore and fit together the puzzle pieces involved in working with a disability.

One person who was interviewed for the Guide said, “[I]f you tell them ahead of time, you open yourself up for discrimination before it happens. If you don’t tell them ahead of time, you open up the possibility of shocking them. It does come up as a barrier.”

*Disclosing Your Disability* is available free of charge on our website.

**DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE COPY**  
<http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/docs/disclosureguide.pdf>

## Important MSDSI Regulation Updates

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI) introduced a number of changes to the rules governing provincial disability assistance on September 1, 2016, in addition to those related to the bus pass we've outlined on page 11.

Disability Alliance BC is pleased with these changes. They provide more flexibility for people receiving the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefit and make PWD easier to access for some individuals.

In August, we provided a number of community updates explaining the changes MSDSI has implemented. Here's a compilation of the information we sent out:

### Streamlined access to PWD for some individuals

Nurse practitioners can now complete Section Two of the PWD application. Before September 1, only physicians could fill out Section Two.

The following groups are now considered "prescribed classes," by MSDSI. They can apply for PWD using a new two-page form:

- Community Living BC (CLBC) clients, including people eligible for the Personal Supports Initiative
- People who qualify as disabled under Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D)
- Recipients of Palliative Care Benefits (PharmaCare Plan P)
- People eligible for the At Home Program

**Disability Alliance BC is pleased with these changes. They provide more flexibility for people receiving the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefit and make PWD easier to access for some individuals.**

People who are turned down for PWD through this new process can ask for a reconsideration or reapply using the standard PWD application form.

### Annualized Earnings Exemption (AEE)

PWD recipients who exceed their AEE limit and who consequently stop receiving assistance can quickly transition back to assistance the following calendar year, as long as they continue to submit their monthly cheque stubs.

MSDI will use clients' monthly reports to automatically re-establish PWD assistance in the new calendar year or if their income falls below the PWD rate.

People who stop receiving assistance because they have exceeded their AEE keep their \$52 monthly transportation allowance and their Medical Services Only (MSO) coverage. **T**

## SUBSCRIBE



Get all that TRANSITION has to offer, 4 times a year. Choose to receive TRANSITION in print, by email or read us online.

Please add me to your mailing list. I am enclosing my \$15 annual subscription fee.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Prov \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Please check one:

I'd like to receive TRANSITION in the following format:

- ☐ PDF (by email)  
☐ I'll read it online  
☐ Paper (by mail)

Please make cheques payable to Disability Alliance BC (DABC) and send to TRANSITION, c/o DABC, 204-456 W. Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3.

**THANK YOU!**

# STADD and the One Government Approach

**S**ervices to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) was a program launched in 2013 and is currently available in various communities in British Columbia.

STADD aims to improve the experience of youth and young adults with developmental disabilities during the transition to adulthood, by coordinating a “one-government approach” to transition planning.

Youth with developmental disabilities and their families have the support of integrated teams made up of staff from different partner agencies. These teams work together so roles and responsibilities in transition planning are clear and implemented.

The STADD navigator makes sure team members come together and

also ensure that the youth’s voice is heard.

Ashley’s story is a good example of the one-government approach in practice.

Ashley had a diagnosis of autism as well as a developmental disability and she was supported by a worker from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

MCFD provides supports to children with developmental disabilities. When they turn 19, young people may apply to Community Living BC (CLBC) for services. Ashley had already been found eligible for CLBC services, but had not yet begun the processes required to access these services.

She was also exploring alternative education opportunities outside

the school district and her possible living situation after she turned 19. These goals required enquiring into and accessing services provided by other agencies.

When Ashley turned 18, her MCFD social worker referred her to STADD. At the time, Ashley was having regular meetings with her support team. The STADD Navigator, in consultation with the social worker, decided those meetings were the best venue for collaborative transition planning.

The STADD Navigator met monthly with Ashley, her family, her foster family and her social worker at the MCFD office. As time went on, additional members came on board to join Ashley’s support team. Eventually, Ashley’s support/case team included:

- Her biological family
- An MCFD social worker
- Her foster mom
- A Community Living BC facilitator
- A Home Share contract agency
- A Developmental Disability Mental Health Team representative
- Health Services Community Living staff member
- A behavioural consultant
- A speech and language pathologist
- A representative of the Public Guardian and Trustee

First, Ashley’s team members worked together to complete Ashley’s Picture document on STADD’s electronic system called Collaborate.





STADD supports the idea that transition planning needs to be based on a comprehensive picture of the individual in order to be appropriate and effective. Collaborate makes it possible for information from several sources to be housed in one place, so a full picture of an individual's needs and goals can emerge. Information-sharing through Collaborate meets the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The team used the Picture as the basis for Ashley's transition plan. The transition plan grew to include her goals, anticipated milestones and action items for team members. Team members then worked to fulfil their responsibilities associated with their distinct roles. The team discussed Ashley's health and physical support needs, and what a full, meaningful life would mean for her.

At focus groups in the fall of 2015, representatives of partner agencies shared their thoughts about STADD's collaborative, one-government approach. The following are some of their comments.

*There seems to be less closed door, silo problem-solving and more committee problem solving.*

*There is better connection with service providers and sharing of client information.*

*We felt that our role was valued by STADD which motivated us.*

*I find that there are resources in the community that I didn't know existed. I became aware of them because of STADD.*

*With STADD coming in, the sides that people were working on loos-*

*ened and people began to work together. There is a go-to person and everyone knows one another, their roles, and their part. We have ongoing questions so it helps to have a point person in all areas.*

The STADD Navigator had this to say about the cross-ministry team that worked to support Ashley:

*A team effort with representation from all ministries was needed to address Ashley's complex needs. The integrated planning process provided a framework for both informal and formal supports for her. Each person who was involved in planning had a unique relationship with Ashley and worked together to obtain the services that she needed.*

STADD is currently implementing its one-government model in Prince George/Haida Gwaii, Nanaimo/Courtenay, Kamloops/Merritt, the Fraser region, and the Granville Youth Health Centre in Vancouver. Future expansion to other sites across the province is being planned.

To find out if the STADD service is available in your community, and for more information, call 1-855-356-5609 or 250-356-5609.

If you have a worker from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the worker can help you contact STADD.

You can learn more about STADD in the Spring and Summer 2016 editions of Transition. **T**

## ADVERTISE WITH DABC



Share information about your business or organization with our growing network. It's a way to invest not only in your business, but in the dignity and independence of people who live with a disability. Advertising revenue helps support DABC services and programs.

### TRANSITION MAGAZINE

We have a wide range of ad sizes to choose from, on either black ink or colour pages, with prices for budgets large and small.

You can design the ad or we'll do it for you at a reasonable cost. And, you can book one ad or a series. The more you book, the more you save.

We also offer a 35% discount for not-for-profit organizations.

### E-NEWS ADVERTISING

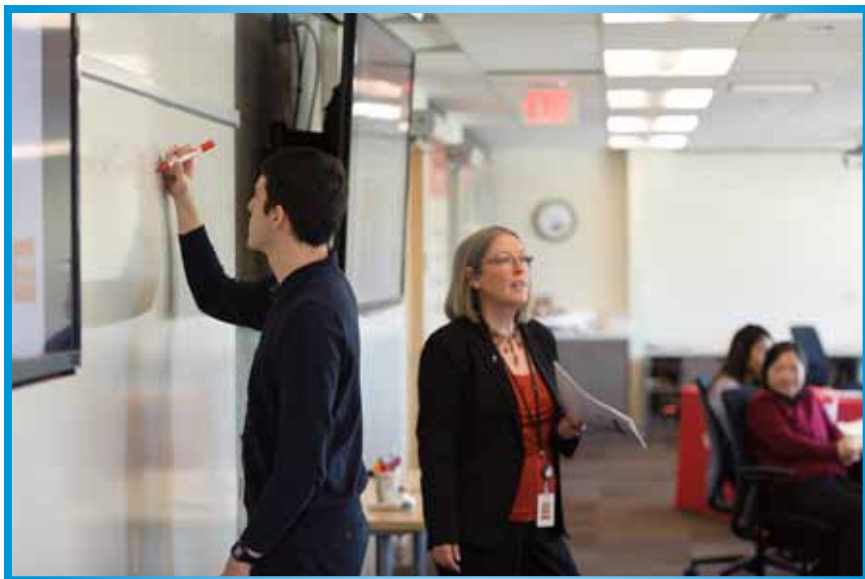
We are also now offering ad space in our monthly e-newsletter, *Our Voice*.

- Reach our growing list of subscribers with options from monthly to one-time ads.
- Choose from three ad types to fit your needs and budget.

### INFORMATION

For information on advertising with DABC, please contact Ann at 604-875-0188 or [transitionads@gmail.com](mailto:transitionads@gmail.com).

**[DISABILITYALLIANCEBC.ORG/ADVERTISE.HTM](http://DISABILITYALLIANCEBC.ORG/ADVERTISE.HTM)**



## Employing People with Disabilities at Vancity: A Win-win Plan | BY KRISTIN BOWER

In British Columbia, there are about 334,000 people aged 15 to 64 who identify as having a disability.\* When you think about a person with a disability, what comes to mind? Do you immediately think about limitations or do you focus on the person's abilities?

Vancity believes that hiring people with disabilities makes good business sense. It also supports our vision of developing an inclusive workplace.

Here's one of the reasons why. The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation reports that 90% of employees with disabilities rate average or better in job performance, and have better attendance records compared with employees without disabilities.

However, the reality for British Columbians with disabilities is that finding employment is challenging.

- The employment rate for people with disabilities is only 59.1%, considerably lower than the 74.3% for British Columbians without disabilities.
- Some 63% of individuals receiving income assistance in BC are people with disabilities.
- Many people with developmental and psychiatric disabilities have trouble accessing employment.

The most vital element in the success of any new organizational strategy is support from your executive management team. Vancity's President and CEO, Tamara Vrooman, is the co-chair of the Presidents' Group, a group of BC business leaders, convened by the provincial government in 2014. The group's mandate is to champion advice, education, employment and consumer opportunities leading to improved outcomes for people with disabilities.

At Tamara's request, we began to consider how we could pilot some disability employment programs within our organization. In January 2016, the Workplace Inclusion (Win) Pilot was launched.

Twenty-two Vancity branches in Greater Vancouver and Victoria participated in a six-month pilot. Each branch created a permanent, part-time administrative position for someone with a disability.

Since the program's inception, we've hired 22 people in administrative support roles in our branches in Vancouver, Victoria, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Langley, Surrey, Burnaby and Richmond.

We are committed to championing the right of people with disabilities to be employed. Our experience has been that people with disabilities are highly productive, motivated and loyal employees—qualities all businesses value.

*"Getting a job is more difficult for people with disabilities. One major reason is the existence of misconceptions—we are seen as people who need help and cannot work as efficiently as 'normal people'. As a person living with blindness, I have experienced many barriers to employment. Vancity recognized my skills and talent and hired me. I really enjoy working for Vancity, and I am proud that my workplace respects my disability and accommodates me."*—Alyas Omeed, People Solutions Intern.

Another key element in the success of this pilot has been partnering with experts in the area of disability employment such as: the Open Door Group, posAbilities, CanAssist, Avia, The Neil Squire Society, the BC Centre for Ability, Inclusion BC and

Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI).

The path toward creating a truly diverse and inclusive workplace includes ups and downs. Here are some lessons we learned along the way:

- **Plan:** There are no shortcuts if you want this work to be effective. Take your time in planning.
- **Collaborate:** Find strong diversity subject-matter experts and partner with them. Don't try to do this alone.
- **Engage:** Your organization needs to be committed—work with your senior leaders, identify key influencers and stakeholders within your organization, and talk to employees.
- **Test:** It won't be perfect at the start and that's OK—that's how you learn, innovate and become better.

**Twenty-two Vancity branches in Greater Vancouver and Victoria participated in a six-month pilot. Each branch created a permanent, part-time administrative position for someone with a disability.**

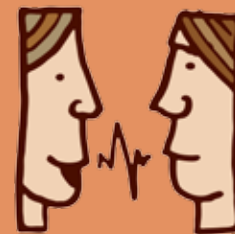


- **Reflect:** Evaluate and then try again. Learn from mistakes, make changes and keep moving forward.
- **Seek knowledge:** There are many great articles and blogs on this topic—Google diversity and inclusion for more information. Connect with people in organizations who are doing interesting work in these areas. Research interesting diversity and inclusion conferences and events.
- **Be empathetic:** Your organization is on a journey. Give yourself, your leaders and employees the space to make mistakes.

Our WIN pilot program has deepened our understanding of the difficulties experienced by people with disabilities and challenged us to look at our existing beliefs. Although our workplace inclusion pilot program is complete—this is just the beginning for us. Hiring people with disabilities is aligned with our values and will be part of our ongoing strategic plan.

\* Source: Labour Market Outcomes of Persons with Disabilities in British Columbia—report from the Province of British Columbia: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/LabourIncome/LMIGateway/SpecificPopulationGroups.aspx>

KRISTIN BOWER IS THE CONSULTANT, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT VANCITY SAVINGS AND CREDIT UNION. KRISTIN IS AN ACTIVE ADVOCATE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE WORKPLACE. SHE VOLUNTEERS WITH PARTNER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AS A COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT AND SPEAKER, WRITES A BLOG CALLED *ADVENTURES OF A SURVIVOR* ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, AND SITS ON THE VANCOUVER COMMUNITY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY LIVING BC. **T**



## BOOK YOUR DABC WORKSHOP

### Disability Benefits

We provide workshops across BC on provincial and federal disability (CPP-D) benefits. We also do workshops on the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) and the Disability Tax Credit (DTC), and income tax filing clinics through our Tax AID DABC program. We can tailor these free workshops to fit your needs and knowledge level.

To book your workshop, please contact Val at 604-875-0188 or [feedback@disabilityalliancebc.org](mailto:feedback@disabilityalliancebc.org).

### Strategic Inclusive Training for Emergencies

This workshop teaches employers and community organizations how to create inclusive emergency plans for the workplace or building occupancies.

See details on these emergency preparedness workshops at [www.disabilityalliancebc.org/epworkshops.htm](http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/epworkshops.htm) or please contact Karen Martin at 604-875-0188, [karen@disabilityalliancebc.org](mailto:karen@disabilityalliancebc.org).



# TRANSITION Ads and Sponsorships

COLOUR PAGES			
Ad size   position	Number of editions booked		
	1	2-3	4
COVER PAGES			
Outside back cover	2200	1900	1700
Front inside cover	n/a	n/a	n/a
Back inside cover	n/a	n/a	n/a
INSIDE PAGES			
Full page	1235	1050	850
2 columns	915	770	650
3 column   large	870	740	620
3 column   small	455	375	325
2 column   small	410	350	285
2 column   mini	340	280	245
1 column	455	375	325
1 column   mini	275	235	200

BLACK PAGES			
Ad size   position	Number of editions booked		
	1	2-3	4
COVER PAGES			
Outside back cover	n/a	n/a	n/a
Front inside cover	1200	1020	850
Back inside cover	1000	850	660
INSIDE PAGES			
Full page	950	800	650
2 columns	700	600	510
3 column   large	675	550	485
3 column   small	350	300	250
2 column   small	315	265	225
2 column   mini	260	225	190
1 column	350	300	250
1 column   mini	210	180	150

**Non-profit organizations receive a 35% discount. Prices subject to change without notice.**

## TRANSITION Sponsorships

Sponsors have a unique opportunity to promote their business to our community network with a high profile Sponsorship.

### Premiere Sponsorship

- A 1/2 page, colour banner ad on the back cover
- Two inside colour pages to profile and promote your organization, service or business
- A hyperlink from the TRANSITION PDF and web page to your website/email
- A quarterly thank you in our e-newsletter, for one year

### Feature Sponsorship

- A 1/3 page, colour banner ad on the back cover
- One inside page to profile and promote your organization, service or business
- A hyperlink from the TRANSITION PDF and web page to your website/email
- Two thank yous in our e-newsletter



### Ad Design

Sponsors may design their own banner ad or we will design it for you at no charge. We can also design interior pages for you from text and graphics you provide.

### Contact Us

For more information on advertising or sponsorships, please contact Ann at 604-875-0188 or [transitionads@gmail.com](mailto:transitionads@gmail.com).

# Farewell to our Colleagues | BY JANE DYSON

As we mentioned in our Spring issue of *Transition*, Robin Loxton our longtime advocate and Advocacy Access Program director retired in April. Those of you who know Robin will not be surprised to hear that he didn't want a lot of attention about his retirement, and we have respected his wishes.

Robin worked at DABC for over 25 years, during which time he assisted thousands of people with disabilities. A fantastic advocate, he excelled at providing one-on-one service and in policy analysis.

We all miss Robin, but he still drops by the office from time to time to see us which is great. Thank you for all your years of selfless service Robin, you're the best!

This summer we also said goodbye to our fabulous book-keeper/finance coordinator of many years, Nancy Hiew. Like Robin, Nancy did not want a lot of attention about her retirement, and also like Robin, worked selflessly for DABC and the disability community.

Thank you Nancy for all your patience, kindness and hard work, you did a fantastic job for DABC.

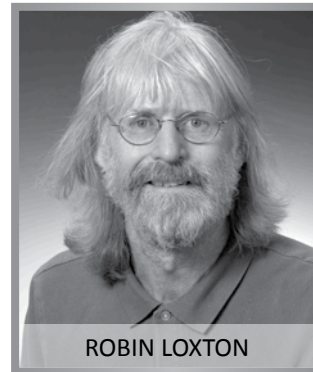
DABC's Board, staff and volunteers all wish Robin and Nancy all the very best for their well-deserved retirements.

Shelley Hourston has been the director of DABC's HIV/AIDS (ADAP) and Wellness and Disability Initiative (WDI) since 1998. Due to changes to the funding priorities of the Provincial Health Services Association (PHSA) we made the difficult decision to not apply for funding to PHSA for ADAP/WDI for 2016/2017. Consequently, for the time being this work has ended.

An experienced Appreciative Enquiry facilitator, Shelley's participation in DABC's work has always brought a positive and creative energy.

Shelley will be seeking alternative sources of funding for her work with us. As well, she will continue to represent DABC on UBC's advisory committee for Patients and Community Partnerships for Education.

We all miss seeing Shelley around the office, and we are sincerely grateful for her years of hard work for DABC and the disability community. **T**



ROBIN LOXTON



NANCY HIEW



SHELLEY HOURSTON

# Disability Stereotypes and How to Change Them

Not only are people with disabilities stereotyped, the full range of disabilities is not reflected in media portrayals.

**A** Canadian Association of Broadcasters report found that disabled “individuals are viewed as the objects of pity and depicted as having the same attributes and characteristics no matter what the disability may be.”

Similarly, the website *Media and Disability*, an organization advocating for broader representation of people with disabilities, points out that “disabled people, when they feature at all, continue to be all too often portrayed as either remarkable and heroic, or dependent victims.”

Not only are people with disabilities stereotyped, the full range of disabilities is not reflected in media portrayals. Lynne Roper of Stirling Media Research Institute, in her article “Disability in Media,” notes that “wheelchairs tend to predominate... since they are an iconic sign of disability...”

## Victim

Perhaps the most common stereotype of people with disabilities is the victim, a character who is presented as a helpless object of pity or sympathy. Jenny Morris, in her article “A Feminist Perspective” in the collection *Framed: Interrogating Disability in the Media* describes images of disability in the media as “...a metaphor...for the message that the non-disabled writer wishes to get across, in the same way that ‘beauty’ is used. In doing this, the writer draws on the prejudice, ignorance and fear that generally exist towards disabled people, knowing that to portray a character with a humped back, a missing leg or facial scars, will evoke certain feelings in the reader or audience.”

## Hero

The flip side of the victim stereotype is the hero, the character who proves her worth by overcoming her disability. Roper calls this type the *Supercrip*: “Supercrips are people who conform to the individual model by overcoming [their] disability and becoming more ‘normal’, in a heroic way... An example of a ‘Supercrip’ is the Irish writer Christy Brown, who described his book *My Left Foot* as his ‘plucky little cripple story’.” While at first glance this may seem to be a better stereotype than “victim”, a positive stereotype is still a stereotype.

## Villain

The third common stereotype is the villain. Throughout history, physical disabilities have been used to suggest evil or depravity, such as the image of pirates as having missing hands, eyes and legs. More recently, characters have been portrayed as being driven to crime or revenge by resentment of their disability. As Roper puts it, “popular cultural images of disability commonly perpetuate negative stereotypes, and often pander to the voyeuristic tendencies of non-disabled audiences.”

Mental illness is often presented as a motivation for villains. Media and Disability points out that “some disabilities receive particularly poor representation. Mental illness has all too frequently (and disproportionately) been linked in programs with violent crime, even though there is no evidence to support this mis-portrayal.” Dr. Peter Byrne, a psychiatrist at Newham University Hospital in London and an expert on the portrayal of mental illness in film, has said that “mental health stereotypes have not changed in over a century of cinema.” Nor are these stereotypes only found in dramatic films, he says: “If anything, the comedy is crueler.”

## Solutions

Media producers have recognized that they must make efforts to better represent persons with disabilities.






“Mental illness has all too frequently (and disproportionately) been linked in programs with violent crime, even though there is no evidence to support this mis-portrayal.”

For instance, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation provides a guide for producers to use in portraying persons with disabilities on-screen. It consists of three questions:

- Does the portrayal patronize the disabled person?
- Does the portrayal victimize the disabled person?
- Does the portrayal demonize the disabled person?

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) has added material on portrayal of disabilities to its Equitable Portrayal Code. As a result of its report, the CAB has pledged to “address issues identified in the research relating to the portrayal of persons with disabilities in television programming.”

For the full article on solutions for the issue of media portrayals of people with disabilities, see <http://tinyurl.com/zb7a9yr>. 



DABC CHAIR  
PAT DANFORTH

## Join DABC's Visionaries Circle

To promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

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

Joining is easy. You choose how.

- You can set up monthly donations in seconds at [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org) by searching for “Disability Alliance BC.”
- Or, set up a monthly credit card donation by contacting Nancy at 604-875-0188.

Thank you for your support!

# Tax AID DABC

One Year and \$540,000 Later **BY SAM TURCOTT**

Tax AID DABC celebrated its one year anniversary on July 15, 2016. The program, run by Disability Alliance BC, helps people with disabilities on PWD and PPMB benefits get caught up on their unfiled income taxes, free of charge.

Over the last year, Tax AID DABC advocates have filed more than 799 years of taxes and helped 303 people with disabilities access an estimated \$540,000 from benefits including the GST credit, BC carbon tax credit, working income tax benefit and child tax benefit. The service can also make it easier to access income-tested benefits such as subsidized housing and MSP premium assistance.

In its second year, Tax AID DABC advocates will continue to offer free tax filing support to people with disabilities around British Columbia. The service is available to people in all parts of the province and there will be an increased focus on helping people living in the BC interior, the North and Northern Vancouver Island.

**If you're receiving PWD or PPMB assistance, it's understandable that filing years of income tax returns can feel like just another way for government to peek into your life and pounce on you if you have made a mistake.**

## Reasons to be Excited about Filing your Tax Return | **BY SALINA DEWAR**

I bet if we asked most of the people who have had their income tax returns prepared by Tax AID at DABC, they wouldn't say they were excited or happy when they first connected with us.

If you're receiving PWD or PPMB assistance, it's understandable that filing years of income tax returns can feel like just another way for government to peek into your life and pounce on you if you have made a mistake. For many people, this fear has led them to ignore their tax returns for years.

Well, fear no more! For most people living in BC and receiving PWD or PPMB benefits (even if they have other sources of income), we can

help. We can file up to ten years of simple income tax returns and, believe it or not, this can be a rewarding and liberating experience.

Our clients often tell us that filing their income tax returns has lifted a huge weight off their shoulders. It means they have extra cash to help take care of debt that was weighing on them or cover much-needed expenses, and they can cross one big item off their to-do list.

If numbers are the subject of your worst nightmares, you can pass them on to us. If you are overcome by newfound courage once you're caught up on your tax returns, we can point you to resources to help you do your own taxes next year. We can also point you toward resources you may not even know are available, like the Disability Tax Credit which may help offset taxes you owe or paid previously, and that is required to open a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).

If you do owe taxes from earlier years, your refund could help you pay off this debt and we may be able to suggest how to stop the interest and penalties on what you owe.

For most of our clients, they won't owe money on their tax returns. Most will be getting back up to ten years of GST/HST payments, BC Low Income Carbon Tax Credits and basic refund amounts. This usually results in more than \$500 per tax year returned to the client which in turn means thousands of dollars for people getting caught up on multiple years.

I always enjoy meeting new clients and am happy to help them conquer their fear of taxes and government forms. This year, I want to connect with people all over our beautiful province. I learn something from every client I have the opportunity to help. Your stories matter and, most importantly, you matter. It is our pleasure to help you get the benefits from filing your income tax returns!

**Our clients often tell us that filing their income tax returns has lifted a huge weight off their shoulders.**



vancouver  
foundation



SALINA DEWAR AND SAM TURCOTT

## Contact Tax AID DABC

Tax AID advocates provide filing services in-person and remotely. If you are interested in hosting a visit from Tax AID advocates in your community, please email [taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org](mailto:taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org) or call Disability Alliance BC at 604-872-1278 or toll free 1-800-663-1278.

SAM TURCOTT IS MANAGER OF TAX AID DABC AND SALINA DEWAR IS THE PROGRAM'S ADVOCATE.

## TRANSITION THANKS

DABC and Transition thank everyone who contributed their experience and ideas for this Transition on Portrayal of Disability in Popular Culture. Our sincere thanks to:

**Suzanna Uchatius**, Theatre Terrific

**Kristin Bower**, Vancity Credit Union

**Salina M. Dewar**, Tax AID DABC

**Jeanette Morton**, Cerebral Palsy Association of BC

**Sam Turcott**, Tax AID DABC

**Trace Ekdahl**

**Brianne S.**

**Marilynn Quigley**, STADD

**Karen Martin**, DABC Coordinator of Accessibility and Inclusion Training

And, thanks as always to our super hard-working volunteers who help us get Transition out four times a year. They help with everything from inputting to mailout. Thank you everyone!





# Let DABC Help with Your Income Taxes—Year Round

---

Do you receive Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefits or Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) benefits?

Do you know there are significant benefits to filing your income taxes?

Are you behind in filing your taxes?

Our program, Tax Assistance and Information for People with Disabilities (Tax AID DABC), provides free assistance with income tax filing for people who have not filed for multiple years. Please see details inside this Transition.

## Since July 2015:

- we helped people with disabilities receive a total of over \$540,000 in tax refunds and benefits
- we helped people file 799 years of tax returns

## Contact Tax AID DABC

Full details at [www.taxaiddabc.org](http://www.taxaiddabc.org)

Phone 604-872-1278

Toll Free 1-800-663-1278

[taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org](mailto:taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org)

## Building on a Decade of Work on Emergency Preparedness

DABC has received funding from Emergency Management BC to work with local emergency management programs in different regions of BC over the next two years. | BY KAREN MARTIN

DABC first started working on emergency preparedness and people with disabilities in 2006. We brought together individuals with disabilities, representatives from disability organizations and the emergency management sector to form a committee to address this issue.

Over the years, we have raised awareness about integrating the needs of people with disabilities into local emergency planning and response, and have delivered training for individuals, community organizations, institutions and government programs in many communities throughout BC and Canada.

In 2012, our committee received an Award of Excellence for our work which was presented to us at the annual Emergency Preparedness conference in Vancouver.

When our committee first came together, we talked a lot about what would be the best way to convey to first responders (police, fire, ambulance) and first receivers (Emergency Support Services, health) what the needs of people with disabilities will be in emergencies and disasters. We wanted to present the information in a way that was easy to understand and easy to use. Then we came across the Functional Needs Framework developed by disability organizations in the United States as a response to large disasters and the unmet needs of

people with disabilities that often resulted in fatalities (such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005).

### What is the Functional Needs Framework?

In a nutshell, the Functional Needs Framework (FNF) breaks down a range of needs into functions such as: hearing, seeing, mobility, speech, learning, understanding, and so on. Then it looks at five key “needs” areas we call CMIST: Communication, Medical, Independence, Supervision and Transportation. For more in-depth information, you can look at DABC’s publication, *Learning CMIST* on our website.

For emergency planning and response purposes, looking at a person’s needs from a functional perspective is an easy way to understand how to accommodate them without having to fully understand multiple disabilities or the person having to disclose the details of their specific disability. For example, from a disability perspective, Ellen is a person with Cerebral Palsy. From a functional perspective, Ellen has mobility and communication needs, and will need some physical help in evacuating or accessing emergency services and resources in the community.

| continued on next page



## | Building On a Decade of Work, continued from previous page

### A FNF for Every Community Project

DABC has received funding from Emergency Management BC (a program of the provincial government) to work with local emergency management programs in different regions of BC over the next two years. The program's goal is to increase local capacity to respond to the needs of community members with disabilities in emergencies and disasters.

### Accessibility 2024

The government of British Columbia has made a commitment to becoming the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities by 2024. Emergency Preparedness is one of the 12 building blocks of the *Accessibility 2024 Action Plan* which has the goal that "Every community in BC has accommodated the needs of persons with disabilities in its emergency planning by 2024." The government has said it will measure success, "by the number of community response plans

in BC that comply with a Functional Needs Framework."

DABC was very pleased to see emergency preparedness and the FNF identified as one of the building blocks in this plan and we thought, "How do we make this happen?" So, we made a proposal to the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation and Emergency Management BC to work with local governments to ensure the success of this goal.

### So, What Will the Project Look Like?

Working closely with local emergency programs, DABC will make recommendations on how to integrate the FNF into their planning and response. We will provide training on the Functional Needs Framework and CMIST. To help with this training, we have developed a toolkit for local governments that covers topics, such as: defining accessibility; understanding alternative formats; using plain language; communication and interaction tips focusing on different disabilities; and, using CMIST planning worksheets.

DABC will be responsive to each community's priorities by identifying key areas they want to focus on and building on any work they

have already begun to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are included.

Examples of areas of focus are: communicating with the public during emergencies; mass evacuations; public education on personal preparedness; Emergency Support Services (ESS) response; and, accessible facilities and services.

### Our First Community Partners

Work with these communities is already underway: North Shore (City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver and District of West Vancouver); City of Burnaby; City of Surrey; City of Langley and Township of Langley; City of Prince George and the Fraser-Fort George Regional District; City of Victoria; City of Nanaimo; the Strathcona Regional District; and, the Town of Oliver.

### How Local Programs Can Participate

We welcome any local government emergency programs interested in DABC's consultation process and integrating a Functional Needs Framework into local emergency plans. Please contact Karen Martin, Project Coordinator at, [karen@disabilityalliancebc.org](mailto:karen@disabilityalliancebc.org) or 604-875-0188.



KAREN MARTIN IS COORDINATOR OF ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION TRAINING AT DABC. T



## Consider Planned Giving to DABC

The DABC has a Planned Giving program that enables you to think ahead about causes or organizations that you may want to financially support beyond your lifetime.

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

### Benefits

By writing down your wishes, you will have increased peace of mind and control over your finances. You can provide a significant future donation without reducing your income today. A gift in your will to a registered Canadian charity is also tax-deductible. And, your Planned Gift helps the DABC to be here in the future for those who need us.

### To Learn More

If you would like more information, please contact Nicole at the DABC at [nicole@disabilityalliancebc.org](mailto:nicole@disabilityalliancebc.org) or 604-875-0188. She will send you DABC Planned Giving information.

You can also download our brochure and information sheet from [www.disabilityalliancebc.org/supportadvertis.htm](http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/supportadvertis.htm). Thank you.

## Opinions from DABC

Two of our volunteers share their thoughts on disability in popular culture.

### TRACE EKDAHL

Disability has come a long way in film and television—or has it?

1960's *Psycho* gave the public the term “psycho killer” and brought on an era of using mental illness to explain motive in horror films. 1967 brought us the thriller, *Wait until Dark*, a film about a recently blinded woman who is a victim of bad guys.

On the bright side of the coin, the story of *Ironside*, a paraplegic police consultant, came to TV. This was a small, but progressive step for the 1960's.

The 70s and 80s continued the negative stereotypes with horror films and TV shows like *The A-Team* where a person with PTSD is portrayed as erratic and over-the-top.

There was some progress in the 80s with the television series *Life Goes On*, starring Chris Burke, an actor who has Down Syndrome. His character Corky lived his life in “mainstream society.”

In the 90s, the TV show, *ER*, had a lead character who used crutches for mobility. The show also featured a character with HIV who kept her job.

The new millennium gave us *Monk*, a television series about a man with severe obsessive compulsive disorder. While it was a comedy, it did shed light on the illness and may have contributed to the prevalence of people self-diagnosing with OCD.

One of the most promising films was 2015's *Mad Max: Fury Road*. The character of Furiosa is an amputee, but there is no mention of the disability and no origin story for the missing hand.

So, while progress has been slow and disabilities are often still mishandled, changes are being made in Hollywood. Celebrities are disclosing their disabilities, such as Billy Connolly with ADD, Tom Cruise with dyslexia and Demi Lovato with an eating disorder.

Are we being represented in Hollywood as we should be? Not yet. Will we be in the near future? I believe with more people opening up about our disabilities, forward progress is not just possible, but inevitable.

### BRIANNE S.

Characters with disabilities are often shown as needy, helpless, unintelligent, and unable to function or contribute to society.

We can sometimes be talked down to or used to “help” people without disability appreciate their own life more. I have personal experience with some of these things, growing up as a person with a disability, and I've seen them often in TV shows and movies.

There are many ways people with disabilities are portrayed in the media, most of which, in my opinion, are still not very positive. **T**



## DABC's 2016 AGM

We held this year's AGM on July 9 at Vancouver's Italian Cultural Centre.

It is extremely important to us to have as many members as possible attend our AGM, and we would like to sincerely thank everyone who braved the torrential rain to attend! We had a great meeting and enjoyed an excellent presentation from our guest speaker Sargeant Jason White of the Metro Vancouver Transit Police.

DABC members expressed their sincere appreciation to a number of Board members whose terms are now up, including Derek Isobe and Johanna Johnson. Their years of tireless service have made an enormous difference to our organization. We also welcomed new Board members Elizabeth Lalonde from Victoria and Michelle Hewitt from Kelowna.

Next year will be DABC's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we hope to welcome even more members to the AGM. See you all in 2017!

**Our thanks to  
Sargeant Jason White  
of the Metro Vancouver  
Transit Police who  
spoke about safety  
issues for people with  
disabilities.**





# SUPPORT DABC

## BECOME A DABC MEMBER

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

Please become a Disability Alliance BC (DABC) member today. You can be a voting member or a non-voting member, and we welcome both individuals and groups.

I accept your invitation to join the DABC and enclose my membership fee of \$15 (individuals) and \$25 (groups).

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

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

You can also become a member or donate online at:  
<http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/supportadvertise.htm>.

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVALUABLE SUPPORT

#### Please check the applicable boxes:

- ☐ New membership or ☐ Renewal  
☐ Voting Member or ☐ Non-voting Member

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Prov \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## ABOUT US

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

### FRONT LINE SERVICES

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

### PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

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

### MAKING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

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

### FREE PUBLICATIONS

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

## CPABC Navigator: Helping Youth Find Their Way

BY JEANETTE MORTON—CPAC NAVIGATOR

After exams are written and the mortarboards thrown in the air, high school graduates make their way into the future. For youth with disabilities, however, moving forward in life after high school presents many challenges. Becoming an adult means that many services and resources they have relied on throughout their lives come to an abrupt end.


The Cerebral Palsy Association of BC (CPABC) is proud to offer our Navigator for Youth Transitioning to Adult Services to help youth, young adults and their families find the supports they need. Unlike government navigator programs, the Navigator recognizes that people with physical disabilities without significant developmental delays may still require help navigating a complex array of services and agen-

cies. You do not have to be eligible for Community Living BC (CLBC) to seek assistance from our Navigator.

Stacy, who uses a wheelchair for mobility, moved from a remote northern town to the city to attend college. “When I turned 18, I lost a lot of services and supports. I felt like I was on my own and had no idea where to start. Guidance, support and advocacy would have been nice.”

Until the age of majority, children’s services and schools are the conduits for the delivery of these services. Upon graduation, young adults and their families don’t know where to turn to find the supports that they need. The loss of services can get in the way of a youth’s developing independence and put additional pressures on their family to provide personal care and supports. Future educational opportunities can be restricted, as well as housing and professional opportunities—not by the individual’s talents, but by the lack of accessibility supports.

The CPABC Navigator for youth is a free service to help youth and young adults find their way through the patchwork of agencies to find and secure the resources they need to plan and enjoy a bright future without limits.

To talk to the CPABC Navigator, call 604-408-9484, or email [jeanne@bccerebralpalsy.com](mailto:jeanne@bccerebralpalsy.com). 



### Returning to Work with Chronic Pain

Returning to work when you’re in pain can be daunting. You may worry about how it affects your ability to do your job. You might have questions about how to talk with your employer and colleagues about your situation and what you need.

**Live Plan Be** is a new online self-management tool for people living with pain. No matter where you are on your journey with pain, you choose what to focus on and how you want to participate. Whether you’re ready to transition back to work or are trying to get a handle on your symptoms, Live Plan Be is a safe, private, self-paced online tool that can help.

**Live Plan Be** is a free resource created by Pain BC and funded by the Ministry of Health.

**Live Plan Be** has four major components:

**Pain education:** Learn about topics most relevant to you.

**Peer support:** Share stories and ideas with people who understand what you’re going through.

**Self-assessments:** Track your symptoms and their impacts to better understand your health.

**Action planning:** Set realistic goals for yourself that move you toward a better quality of life.

Pick and choose what works for you, but know that you have a supportive community waiting to welcome you. Visit [www.liveplanbe.ca](http://www.liveplanbe.ca) to start your journey.







we are all  
connected

Suite 204, 456 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3  
(604) 875-0188 • fax (604) 875-9227 • tty (604) 875-8835  
trans@disabilityalliancebc.org • www.disabilityalliancebc.org



# A New DABC Project

## A Functional Needs Framework for Every Community

DABC has received funding from Emergency Management BC to work with local emergency management programs in different regions of BC. Over the next two years, we'll help communities increase their local capacity to respond to the needs of people with disabilities in emergencies and disasters.

This project will fit into the government of BC's Accessibility 2024 Action Plan that has prioritized inclusion of people with disabilities in emergency planning.

For more on this new project and how local government emergency programs can become involved, please read the article inside this edition.

Thank you to Emergency Management BC for their support of this project.