

Pearson Centre a  
Model of Food Security

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Swing into Spring  
2016 a Hit!

# transition

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC



***Food Security***

The right to affordable food.

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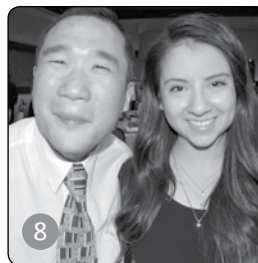


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# editorial

| BY KAREN MARTIN

**W**e need to be talking more about access to affordable, nutritional food for people with disabilities. We also need to be taking action on this issue because too many people with disabilities are going hungry or are eating non-nutritional foods. *A Study of Food Security Programs at Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation, 2012*, states that, "Households most likely to be experiencing significant food insecurity earned under \$20,000 annually."

Through DABC's project, *Let's Talk Food Access: Enhancing Community Food Programs for People with Disabilities Experiencing Food Insecurity*, we have begun the dialogue. We partnered with the Gordon Neighbourhood House (GNH) in the West End of Vancouver and the

Grandview Woodland Food Connection (GWFC) in East Vancouver. Both of these organizations have strong food programs and both work from a Right to Food philosophy which is grounded in a human rights approach to food.

Ian Marcuse of the GWFC, asks us in the article on *Dignified Food Access for All*, "Imagine if accessible quality food was a basic human right." Chantille Viaud of GNH writes about GNH's commitment to developing initiatives where accessibility is at the forefront.

By building these new partnerships with GNH and the GWFC, blogging about food resources, developing a *Let's Talk Food Access* toolkit, and holding workshops, we facilitated connections between individuals with disabilities and local food program organizers and resources in these communities. This project provided an opportunity for local program organizers to share information about their food programs, to hear from people with disabilities about their barriers to accessing healthy, affordable food, and to talk about what communities and individuals can do to create change.

We heard how people have difficulty, because of their disability,

**Access to community food programs and resources is critical to the health and well-being of people with disabilities. But, as one participant put it, "The whole charity model of food is not a sustainable system."**

getting to stores to purchase food, having enough money to buy good quality food, difficulty preparing and cooking food, and the barriers they experience accessing local food programs in their communities. Furthermore, people with disabilities told us that the meals and food at various food programs are often of low nutritional value and frequently they are given food that is expired.

The food program organizers we spoke with were also concerned about the issue of food quality. People with disabilities often had negative experiences at food programs—abusive behaviour and a lack of understanding about disabilities and chronic illnesses by staff, volunteers and other users of the programs. The food program organizers who participated in our project want to create inclusive and welcoming environments. We will all work together to create these spaces.



Access to community food programs and resources is critical to the health and well-being of people with disabilities. But, as one participant put it, “The whole charity model of food is not a sustainable system.” Another participant said, “Spending all of your time chasing after low-cost food is exhausting.” The Farmers on 57th Community Supported Agriculture Model, which Jen Rasleigh writes about in her article on page 12 is an excellent example of community engagement and relationship building with the residents of George Pearson.

Action on food security needs to be looked at in relation to the social and economic inequalities in our society. We cannot advocate for access to food without advocating for poverty reduction, affordable housing and accessible transportation. We also need to change social attitudes towards people with disabilities.


Where do we go from here? More and more conversation and collaboration. People with disabilities and disability organizations need to talk to community food program organizers about accessibility and disability issues. Community food program organizers need to work with the disability community to break down barriers. The disability

community needs to get involved in local food networks working on food security issues. If there isn't a food network in your community, talk to organizations in your community about starting one. There is information in this edition about existing food networks in BC.

And, as always, advocate, advocate, advocate for the participation and inclusion of people with disabili-

ties. Community education and a willingness to work together across sectors are critical to creating the change we want.

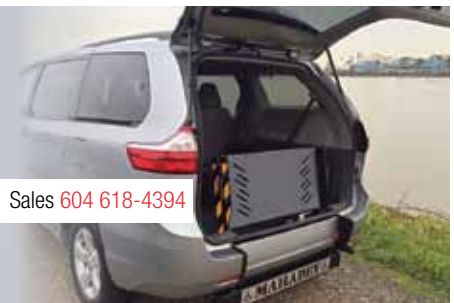
This Transition is full of community programs, resources and tips for improving food security and building community.

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

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# Dignified Food Access for All

The Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Networks | BY IAN MARCUSE

Imagine if accessible quality food was a basic human right. How might this improve nutritious food access for those who cannot afford healthy food? Sadly, many people are struggling to access good food, especially those on limited incomes.

In response, Vancouver has established Neighbourhood Food Networks (NFNs) in order to help improve food access for those community members who are struggling financially.

These NFNs are highly responsive to neighbourhood needs, work through a food justice and anti-poverty lens, and have a mandate to support healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food access.

**Programs like our bulk food club source fresh fruits and veggies at a 40% cost savings. Mobile food markets bring quality produce to neighbourhoods where there are few grocers.**

My Network, the Grandview Woodland Food Connection, operates out of the Britannia Community Centre and works within the Grandview Woodland community of East Vancouver.

Unlike food banks and similar organizations which principally address basic food provision, we focus more on skillbuilding and education along with food access.

Programs such as school gardening, community kitchens, food workshops, youth meal programs, and bulk food clubs, all support participants' food access and individuals

capacity building. Other NFNs are involved in mobile pocket markets, community gardening, intergenerational cooking programs, and community meal programs to name a few.

While such programs do not necessarily address the systemic condition of poverty resulting in food insecurity, they can still significantly help those households improve their food situation.

Programs like our bulk food club source fresh fruits and veggies at a 40% cost savings. Mobile food markets bring quality produce to

PHOTO: SYBIL KUEH



neighbourhoods where there are few grocers. Community kitchens bring together people of all walks of life to prepare and eat food while sharing ideas about healthy eating.

Moreover, many of our programs are very social, recognizing a more dignified and holistic form of food sharing that is a powerful means of community building that is the foundation of social change.

Inclusion is vitally important in the food movement, if we are to achieve equitable food access. For this reason, we are thrilled to partner with Disability Alliance BC and the Let's Talk Food Access initiative to explore and better understand food access as it affects people with disability.

Connecting with, advocating for, and designing programs for harder to reach community members who may be isolated, have mobility limitations, face illness or other barriers, challenges us to deepen our food justice practice. Collaborating for greater impact, as we are doing with DABC, will improve food access for all.

## Learn More

**Vancouver Food Networks:** <http://vancouverfoodnetworks.com>

**Grandview Woodland Food Connection:** <https://gwfoodconnection.wordpress.com>

IAN MARCUSE IS COMMUNITY FOOD DEVELOPER AT GRANDVIEW WOODLAND FOOD CONNECTION. 

## Defining Food Security

- **Food security.** Access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.
- **Food insecurity.** Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

More information at <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/local-food-justice/>

## Global Movement Toward a Right to Food

What do countries around the world have to say about the right to food? This list shows the number of countries that have adopted laws.

- Adopted or drafting a framework law—19
- Constitutional, explicit as a right—23
- Constitutional, implicit in broader rights or as directive principle—41
- Direct applicability via international treaties—103
- Committed by ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—160

The right to food, and its variations, is a human right protecting the right for people to feed themselves in dignity, implying that sufficient food is available, that people have the means to access it, and that it adequately meets the individual's dietary needs. The right to food protects the right of all human beings to be free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. If people are deprived of access to food for reasons beyond their control, for example, because they are in detention, in times of war or after natural disasters, the right requires the government to provide food directly.

For more information about the right to food, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/right\\_to\\_food](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/right_to_food)

## What is Food Justice?

Food justice is a viewpoint that looks at access to fresh, healthy, affordable food as a human rights issue, similar to the right to availability of clean air and water as a part of their basic human needs. Food justice goes beyond access, taking into account structural barriers that prevent everyone from having access to fresh, healthy, affordable foods.

Structural barriers are systemic inequities that prevent or prohibit equitable distribution and/or access to basic needs. Here are examples of how various organizations define food justice:

- "Food justice is communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food." (Source: <http://www.justfood.org>)
- "Food justice seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly." (Source <http://www.foodjustice.org>)



# Swing Into Spring 2016 Swung!

| BY JANE DYSON

Our fourth annual Swing Into Spring gala was a huge hit. We surpassed our fundraising target thanks to all our good friends and supporters who attended the gala, our sponsors, auction and raffle donors, and volunteers.

We were delighted to welcome back CBC's *On the Coast* **Stephen Quinn** as our emcee, and entertainer **David C. Jones**. We were also thrilled to welcome fabulous man-about-town **Fred Lee**. Fred very kindly helped get the word out about the success of our gala and took some lovely photos of our **Employee of the Year Award winner, Aaron Lee of Vancity**, and the folks from **Wheelin' Mobility, DABC's Employer of the Year** (you can see Fred's pictures on the opposite page). We congratulate our Award winners; it was a pleasure to meet you and your nominators, and to recognize your outstanding accomplishments.

This year, we had something new: a quiz game. Stephen Quinn and Sterling Sterling AKA David C. Jones were our excellent quiz game hosts. We had some extremely competitive game players, and it was a very lively event. We will definitely be bringing this back at next year's gala! Also new this year was the beautiful music played by cellist **Christina Rzepa**.

Thanks to **WestJet's** generosity, we had a very successful raffle ticket event this year. Ellen, the lucky winner of two return tickets to any WestJet destination, was thrilled when she came to the DABC office

to pick up her tickets, as you can see from her photo. We wish her all the best for a fabulous trip.

We made presentations to two very special DABC staff members who are retiring. **Advocacy Access Program Director, Robin Loxton**, retired on March 31<sup>st</sup> and **Nancy Hieuw**, our **Finance Coordinator** will be leaving us this summer. We will miss them very much, and are deeply appreciative of their years of dedication to DABC and our clients.

Many people made Swing Into Spring 2016 possible, too many to mention here. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make our gala such a great success. A very special thanks to **Nicole Kiyooka** for all her hard work and meticulous planning. Thanks also to **Chloe Klaus**, **Tory Class** our amazing gala mentor, **Christina Day**, **Jodie Lorenz**, and our wonderful volunteer **Veronica Ryu**.

And our sincere thanks to our generous gala sponsors for supporting DABC and the disability community. See you all next year! **T**



OUR WONDERFUL MC, CBC'S STEPHEN QUINN AND DABC E.D. JANE DYSON



CHRISTINA RZEPA PERFORMING ON THE CELLO



EVENT VOLUNTEERS ENJOYING A WELL-DESERVED MEAL



ELLEN, WINNER OF THE RAFFLE FOR WESTJET TICKETS



L-R: VANCOUVER CITY COUNSELLORS RAYMOND LOUIS AND ANDREA REIMER; PAUL GAUTHIER; VANCOUVER MAYOR GREGOR ROBERTSON



LIVE AUCTION WINNER CARLA TERZARIOL:  
CANUCKS TICKETS AND ALEX EDLER STICK



LIVE AUCTION WINNER WAYNE ROBERTSON:  
TIGH-NA-MARA RESORT AND BC FERRIES



LIVE AUCTION WINNERS GREG DOHENY AND  
JOHANNA JOHNSON: SWIRL WINE TASTING



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## Have I Been Discriminated Against? What Do I Do Now?

BY RICHARD B. JOHNSON (LAW CORPORATION)

**T**his article is the third installment of a three-part series about disabilities and the workplace.

In the second installment in this series, I touched briefly on when you can tell if discrimination has taken place or is occurring.

### Have I been discriminated against?

To recap, discrimination happens when you face an adverse impact or negative fallout as a result of your race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, or criminal or summary conviction offence unrelated to your employment.

Sometimes you can tell immediately if discrimination has occurred. For example, you can be pretty sure discrimination has taken place if you are subjected to comments or jokes about your disability, or if you are demoted for taking medical leave.

That said, many employers are sufficiently aware of human rights to avoid dismissing you during a medical leave or telling you they

don't wish to work with you to find workplace solutions for your disabilities or medical restrictions. As legal counsel, we are often left to "connect the dots" and build a circumstantial case based on events that took place after disclosing the disability.

As I touched on in the last issue of *Transition*, disclosure is critical in terms of accessing the protections the law provides you. If an employer is unaware or could not tell from the circumstances, that you have a mental or physical disability, then we cannot expect the employer to accommodate and they cannot be held liable for discrimination.

Even if disclosure has occurred, it may not be absolutely clear if you are facing discrimination.

One example of a situation where discrimination may be unclear is: What if you are passed over for a promotion or other opportunity? Your employer is likely discriminating against you, if you are undoubtedly qualified for the role/opportunity and your disability is the sole distinguishing feature between you and the chosen candidate.

Another example is: What if your employer refuses to make the

**If you have been subject to discrimination in BC, then your recourse is usually to proceed with a complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal.**

accommodations you request? Whether this is discriminatory or not will depend on: a) the reasonableness of the requested accommodation, and b) whether the accommodation is something the employer or school can provide without undue hardship. If the requested accommodation can be provided without undue hardship (such as a modified desk arrangement or equipment, or modifications to lifting, bending or sitting requirements), and you have medical verification that the accommodation is necessary for you, then the refusal to provide it is likely discriminatory.

While employers certainly have the right to govern and manage their workplaces, they must do so in keeping with the requirements of the *Human Rights Code*, the relevant privacy legislation (which protects employee information and



confidentiality), and the employer's duty of good faith in carrying out the employment relationship.

### **If there has been discrimination, what can we do next?**

While there is no substitute for specific legal advice on one's case, discrimination raises key types of legal claims: 1) discrimination under the *Human Rights Code*, and 2) constructive dismissal.

If you have been subject to discrimination in BC, your recourse is usually to proceed with a complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal. The Tribunal has broad power to adjudicate complaints and award remedies including damages for injury to your dignity, wages lost due to the discrimination, and potentially reinstatement to your position if dismissed. However, reinstatement is very rarely awarded since, by the time the case is heard and a decision issued, the employee has been fired and the parties have been in litigation against each other for some time.

Beyond discrimination under the *Code*, the discrimination sometimes creates a toxic work environment or a situation in which the employee simply cannot carry on his or her duties. This situation could result in a constructive dismissal. Essentially this means the employer alters a fundamental term of the employee's employment or allows a demeaning, hostile or otherwise unworkable environment to exist for the employee.

Constructive dismissal claims are usually dealt with by way of an action through the Courts. Therefore, in some cases of significant discrimination, my clients have the right to pursue a Human Rights Complaint through the BC Human Rights Tribunal and a Court claim for severance. In some jurisdictions, both issues can be dealt with in one action.

Constructive dismissal can be a complex issue, depending on the level of hostility and the employee's access to alternative employment elsewhere. Legal advice is always important when faced with a potential constructive dismissal. Briefly stated, where a constructive dismissal occurs, this could provide the employee with a claim for severance, and potentially bad faith and other damages against the employer.

### **Act fast!**


One of the most critical issues in human rights cases is timing. Since the BC Human Rights Code requires that a complaint be filed within six months of the discrimination, the onus is on the employee to move quickly to raise the concern. If it goes unaddressed, file a complaint quickly. If a dismissal is also involved, there is a two-year window in BC to sue from the date of dismissal.

In my experience, most people have good instincts when it comes to

**What if you are passed over for a promotion or other opportunity? Your employer is likely discriminating against you, if you are undoubtedly qualified for the role/opportunity, and your disability is the sole distinguishing feature between you and the chosen candidate.**

assessing whether they are facing discrimination at work. They often come into my office with a "hunch" that the employer has acted inappropriately in some way, but are unsure of their exact rights under the law or what to call the behavior. In most cases, the "hunch" is correct and what my client felt was unfair treatment was, in fact, discrimination contrary to the *Human Rights Code*.

There are remedies and protections available to you. Listen to your gut instincts and seek advice right away when you feel things just aren't right at work.

**RICHARD B. JOHNSON (LAW CORPORATION) WORKS WITH KENT EMPLOYMENT LAW IN VANCOUVER. YOU CAN REACH RICHARD AT 604-266-7006, OR [HELP@KENTEMPLOYMENTLAW.COM](mailto:HELP@KENTEMPLOYMENTLAW.COM). FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.KENTEMPLOYMENTLAW.COM](http://WWW.KENTEMPLOYMENTLAW.COM). **

KAREN AGESON (RIGHT) WITH A  
HAPPY CSA SHAREHOLDER



## Pearson's Farmers on 57th a Model For Food Security

BY JEN RASHLEIGH

It's early March at George Pearson Centre at Cambie and 57th. The first solidly warm, almost spring day. Four brand new farm interns are getting their first taste of back-breaking work, turning rows of soil with pitchforks and shovels, stooping to shake out weeds.

Jess Henry and Karen Ageson, who manage the farm, are offering up massive bouquets of flowering kale—bright yellow on dark green foliage. The interns stop to admire them, with broad grins that reveal their spring fever.

"Can you believe how much the flowers smell like honey?" I am doubtful, remembering that kale belongs to the cabbage family, but amazingly, the kale flowers smell strongly, sweetly, of...well, honey. The interns laugh about riding the bus home with an armload of flowers, attracting jealous stares from

fellow riders. "One of the perks of the job."

Our interns are working at the one-acre farm called Farmers on 57th located on the grounds of Pearson. The interns work one full day each week in return for all the organic veggies they can eat and a hands-on, season-long learning opportunity. One intern is a social worker, who works with people with disabilities living independently in the community. "When I signed up to be a season-long intern, I thought 'Do I really want to commit to being here on Fridays, my day off?' And then I realized, 'Well, yes! I really do!'"

Pearson is a long-term care facility, part of Vancouver Coastal Health and home to over 100 residents. Since 2009, it's also been home to the Farmers on 57th Project. The farm site was a green expanse of lawn when I had the idea to locate

a community-integrated urban farm on the 28-acre property. Her proposal bounced around Pearson, until it landed on Sarah Wenman's desk. As a member of the CARMA team, Sarah saw it as a perfect fit with CARMA's mandate to help residents reach their goals and support Pearson to be more home-like. She started working on gathering the support of local management and staff. CARMA's Christine Gordon took the idea to the DABC (BCCPD, at that time) requesting that the organization sponsor the project. The DABC agreed and has helped to integrate farm activities into the Pearson community.

From the start, the vision for Farmers on 57th was three fold: educational, productive and therapeutic. The market garden fulfilled the productive part of the mandate, asking questions such as "How

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



# Working together for all British Columbians

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BC GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE EMPLOYEES' UNION





# Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Questions and Answers



Transition recently published an article about STADD, or Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities, a program that provides Navigator services to young people with developmental disabilities who are transitioning to adulthood. Here is more information about STADD: how it works, where STADD is available and how to access the program.

## **Q: Is STADD a new agency?**

A: STADD has been operating since December 2013 in a number of communities. STADD brings existing ministries, authorities and agencies together to support a “one-government” approach to service delivery. It is a partnership among the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (SDSI), Community Living BC (CLBC), schools and school districts through the Ministry of Education, and health authorities.

## **Q. What exactly does a “one-government approach” mean?**

A: Young people with developmental disabilities often do not know what supports are available to them after they turn 19. Many find they have to contact different offices and agencies for information. With STADD, an individual or family may find information, develop a transition plan and access the supports they need through one service, the STADD Navigator.

## **Q: How does STADD work?**

A: STADD Navigators are key to the “one-government” approach. Navigators are trained to be aware of the various resources available for youth in transition. They work closely with partner agencies so that young people have the support of effective and well-functioning teams. A STADD Navigator can make the transition experience both easier and smoother for a youth and family.

## **Q: So is STADD like an employment or residential placement agency?**

A: STADD is not a placement agency that refers individuals to specific services, such as an employment agency or a residence. Successful transitions require more than just connecting individuals with one or two services. Research has found that transition planning, a systematic way of preparing for the future, produces more solid and sustainable results. STADD Navigators do not “place” people; they work with youth, families and partner agencies to develop solid transition plans. Transition plans cover not

just employment or a place to live, but take into account all the youth’s expressed needs and goals.

## **Q: What is unique about transition planning in STADD?**

A: Young people and their families are the drivers of transition planning in STADD. Transition plans are based on a full picture of the young person. Others may have ideas and input into a plan, but the plan is based on youth and families’ decisions and preferences. Transition planning in STADD is also distinct because it is a collaborative process. Navigators and staff of partner agencies work together with the youth and family—a much more effective way than working separately and alone.

## **Q: What is the difference between STADD and Community Living BC (CLBC)?**

A: CLBC provides specific supports and funding to youth transitioning to adulthood, including help in finding a place to live and community inclusion activities. STADD does not provide funded services, but Navigators can help youth and their families to contact organizations—including CLBC—to see what supports they may be eligible for.

## **Q: I already have a CLBC facilitator. Do I need to participate in STADD?**

STADD is a voluntary service that helps youth who are eligible for CLBC services and their families to

find and access formation, services and supports. Youth and families who feel they have the assistance they need from CLBC facilitators already may not need the added support of the STADD Navigator service.

**Q: Who is eligible for the STADD Navigator service?**

A: STADD supports are available to a young person who is eligible for CLBC because of a developmental disability or who meets CLBC eligibility requirements for the Personal Supports Initiative.

**Q: Is there an age limit?**

A: Youth between the ages of 16 and 24 may apply for the STADD service. Early access to STADD is encouraged for more effective transition planning.

**Q: If I am eligible for STADD, how do I start?**

A: You can call 1-855-356-5609 or 250-356-5609 to see if the STADD program is available in your community. STADD is currently operating in Prince George/Haida Gwaii, Nanaimo/Courtenay, Surrey, and Kamloops/Merritt and some surrounding communities. It is beginning to expand across the Fraser Region and later this spring into the Granville Youth Health Centre (Vancouver). If you have a social worker with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, they can help you contact STADD. If you are already working with CLBC, CLBC staff can also help you contact STADD. 



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!

# Gordon Neighbourhood House

| BY CHANTILLE VIAUD

One of the key conversations we're having these days at Gordon Neighbourhood House concerns accessibility issues. What does accessibility look like? What is an accessible space? How do we create awareness and a commitment to creating spaces that are available and accessible to people?

We understand that this goes beyond conversations about physical spaces and that we need to begin to discuss accessibility in terms of how we can integrate accessibility initiatives into our programs. If these questions are not being addressed, we're simply not doing our job for our community.

In Vancouver's West End, one in three people live in low-income households. We know that people with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to poverty and, if some people aren't able to access emergency food sources, we are keeping people who are most vulnerable hungry.

We are partnering with the Disability Alliance BC (DABC) to support change in our community. Part of what we admire about DABC's work is that they, too, are committed to challenging a system where people who live with disabilities are faced with discrimination. Both organizations sit on the Poverty Reduction

**We know that people with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to poverty and, if some people aren't able to access emergency food sources, we are keeping people who are most vulnerable hungry.**

Coalition, where we are advocating for a province-wide Poverty Reduction Strategy because we believe that there is nothing inevitable about poverty.

DABC supports the engagement of communities in an ongoing learning process to understand the barriers faced by people in a community, with the aim of making organizations more accessible. Working together, we are committed to developing initiatives where accessibility is at the forefront of our program development process. This is the work of a neighbourhood house.

In the past year, we have launched several new programs centered around food security including a new hot vegan pay-what-you-can lunch, along with four new community kitchens.

Currently, we are constructing a new urban farming site, as well as several community herb gardens.

One initiative that is doing especially well in providing emergency food access is the weekly community food hub which works in partnership with the Greater Vancouver

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Food Bank. This food hub is designed to provide emergency/charitable food access to people who are nutritionally vulnerable in our community.


In spite of this, we know that only 25 percent of people who need to access these types of resources actually do have access.

If we're going to do this critical work and be effective, we need to understand the reason for this and bring down the barriers that prevent people from accessing the most basic of needs.

We were excited that DABC presented a session at the Vancouver

Food Summit on May 19th, a sold-out gathering of community food practitioners and stakeholders in Vancouver. Their session, entitled: "More than just a ramp: food accessibility," challenged folks to think critically about accessibility in their own programs, and to see where policy changes in government are required to further remove barriers and decrease food insecurity.

For more information about Gordon Neighbourhood House, phone 604-683-2554 or visit our website at <http://gordonhouse.org/>.

CHANTILLE VIAUD IS DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY FOOD PROGRAMS AT GORDON NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE. 



**In the past year, we have launched several new programs centered around food security including a new hot vegan pay-what-you-can lunch, along with four new community kitchens.**



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\*Law Corporation



EDDY MORTEN, ACCESSIBILITY  
PROJECT COORDINATOR AT QUEST

## Quest Food Exchange

### A Dignified Approach to Food Security Challenges

BY CALVIN LEITNER

According to a 2015 Statistics Canada report, over 4 million Canadians experience varying degrees of food insecurity. Yet, according to consulting firm Value Chain Management International, \$31 billion worth of food produced in Canada each year ends up discarded. What does this mean to food security in Canada? Is hunger an issue of food production or food redistribution? Is there a way to redirect this food and make it accessible to those in need?

Quest Food Exchange (Quest) is a not-for-profit organization that does just that, providing dignified access to a variety of affordable and healthy foods to individuals facing food security challenges in British Columbia.

Working in collaboration with food supplier partners who donate their surplus food, Quest is able to recover a variety of food and other products from every branch of the local food industry, including wholesalers, supermarkets and farmers. Operating refrigerated delivery trucks that are able to pick up large quantities of various goods, Quest's main distribution centre features

a quality control department that ensures the freshness of all items, while large refrigerator, freezer and dry goods sections ensure products are stored appropriately to maintain product integrity. Items received in bulk are repackaged to more reasonable portion sizes and protein items are frozen to maintain peak freshness.

All of this product is made available via Quest's four not-for-profit grocery markets, featuring locations in Surrey, Burnaby and East Vancouver, with a fifth market location opening in North Vancouver in late Spring of 2016. Not open to the general public, these markets offer people facing food security challenges the opportunity to access a large assortment of healthy and affordable food and other products with dignity, in a safe and welcoming environment. Clients are referred by hundreds of Quest's social service agency partners, and can pick and choose what suits their dietary and personal needs at a minimal cost. "Quest is our silver lining. When the dark cloud of poverty qualifies you for support services, often it is demoralizing and demeaning," recalls longtime client Renette. "Shopping at Quest and being able to buy inexpensive products that we use every day is uplifting in a difficult time."

Dignity and accessibility are important to Quest, with its 2020 Dundas


**Working in collaboration with food supplier partners who donate their surplus food, Quest is able to recover a variety of food and other products from every branch of the local food industry, including wholesalers, supermarkets and farmers.**

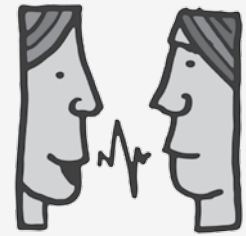
market location introducing braille signage and audible scanners in October of 2014, making it the first grocery market in Canada to offer these services for Deaf-Blind and Blind individuals. This came out of a meeting between Quest and former Paralympian Eddy Morten two years ago. Morten, who is deaf with very limited vision, described how a quick trip to the grocery store isn't possible for people who are deaf-blind. A simple shopping trip means relying on the assistance of others, and with the cost of an interpreter costing \$50 per hour, it is an enormous financial burden for many. "I first learned of Quest after I had lost my job. Struggling to find employment due to my dual disability, I became a client after a recommendation from a good friend," recalls Eddy.

Morten joined the helper training program at Quest to spearhead this project. Thanks to a fundraising event sponsored by Whole Foods and support from Vancouver Community College, Teresa MacGillivray and Joshua Foundation, Quest was successful in raising funds to start the project and to hire Morten as the project coordinator. As a found-

ing member of the BC Association of the Deaf-Blind (now the Deaf-Blind Club of BC), Eddy has been a leader in his community for more than twenty years and has been a driving force behind improving accessibility services.

"This was a natural step for our organization," says Elizabeth Lewis, Executive Director of Quest Food Exchange, British Columbia's largest food exchange program. "Our primary mandate is to reduce hunger with dignity. By adding braille signage and audible scanners to our stores, we are providing members of the blind, the deaf and the deaf-blind communities with the ability to shop independently. This is significant for people who rely on the help of others for completing everyday tasks most of us take for granted."

For more information about the Quest Food Exchange, phone 604-602-0186 or visit their website at <http://www.questoutreach.org>. 



## 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).





# Welcome to the Garden Club and Community Kitchen

by Sarah Wenman

**W**hen Hansu, a resident of George Pearson Centre, was asked what she was excited about growing in her garden, she replied, “Tomatoes! They taste so good, oh, boy, oh, boy, when they’re warm from the garden. My niece was thrilled to get anise hyssop. They couldn’t find it anywhere and the kids love it. Same with lemon cucumbers.”

Hansu is one of the thirty or so resident gardeners who participate in Garden Club at Pearson. When another resident, Tony, was asked what his gardening advice for others would be, he said, “Get involved in the gardening program. It’s good for the mind and good for people to get out and enjoy the fresh air.”

The accessible gardens were built by Farmers on 57th in 2009, with the help of volunteers, a Vancity Credit Union grant, the use of VCH land, and key support from DABC and the CARMA project. Garden Club has been growing ever since. Together, we’ve built a sense of community around food, flowers, gardening and conversation. The club runs from April to September, coordinated by Jen Rashleigh and myself, with the assistance of the Pearson Recreation staff, volunteers and Master Gardeners. This weekly program is part of the larger Farmers on 57th project which includes a productive farm also on the Pearson land.

Sometimes it gets a bit wild at Garden Club. Last year, we were given a small seedling. That tiny plant grew into a pumpkin that reached 242 lbs. People couldn’t wait to see it grow every week. And when it was time to carve it up, nothing went to waste—CARMA distributed the weighty chunks of pumpkin to residents, visitors and staff of Pearson. It was a fine example of a community sharing in the local harvest! That one pumpkin made its way into many soups and loaves.

An important feature of Garden Club is that residents have their own garden plot, gardeners have a sense of ownership and accomplishment. Some plots are in-ground beds, with the advantage of growing more variety and larger plants. There are tabletop beds, so a person using a wheelchair can get a close look at their burgeoning plant life.

With these elevated gardens, it’s possible for most residents to get their hands in the soil. Even this small act of touching and smelling soil is empowering. Research shows that exposure to healthy organic soil has benefits to emotional health and cognitive function. While Pearson residents face many health issues, many say they are able to forget them while in the gardens.

Access to green space improves health and wellbeing. It is easy to see this in action at Garden Club, as people marvel at the bounti-

ful wilderness of the gardens. As well as individual gardens, there are heritage apple trees, raspberry bushes and flower beds. Flowers are picked weekly and turned into beautiful bouquets. For everyone, and particularly for the residents who cannot eat by mouth, the smell and colourful sight of flowers is a welcome stimulation that brings great joy.

Another powerful component is that Pearson gardeners choose what is grown and how it is grown, while they are physically enabled by volunteers. Garden successes and losses are their own. While the garden-owner has the final say, the process is often a collaborative experience, learning together about different gardening strategies. We are lucky to have passionate volunteers who stay for the whole season. This is particularly important because it can take time and perseverance to learn how to interact with people who communicate in non-traditional ways. Relationships with people grow as the plants do.

It is important that the food harvested at Garden Club is consumed by the residents themselves, whenever possible. The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” Many of the people who live at Pearson have particular barriers to accessing nu-

**With these elevated gardens, it's possible for most residents to get their hands in the soil. Even this small act of touching and smelling soil is empowering. Research shows that exposure to healthy organic soil has benefits to emotional health and cognitive function.**

tritious food. They have difficulties with chewing and/or swallowing which makes some foods difficult to consume safely.


To meet this need, we harvest fresh fruit and vegetables from the gardens and turn them into living smoothies and juices. Nothing could be more nutritious than organically grown and freshly harvested food. It is healing in another way—it gives Pearson residents the opportunity to share their harvest with others.

The opportunity to share the harvest doesn't end there. It can also be donated to the monthly community kitchen that takes place at Pearson. CARMA's ABLE Community Kitchen is coordinated by myself and Shannon Huddleston, funded by the DABC and supported by volunteers.

We create a homecooked meal primarily from fresh, frozen and canned foods, all derived from Farmers on 57th gardens.

Last year, we made pickled green beans with garlic, freshly harvested and immediately processed into jars. We finished the last jar in February, at Community Kitchen. Michael, a newcomer to Pearson said, "This is the best thing I've ever eaten!"

Personally, both Garden Club and Community Kitchen are among the most rewarding projects I've been a part of. I hope that in the future redevelopment of the Pearson lands we can continue the meaningful project we've grown here.

It's simply too valuable to leave behind. 





BARBARA COLLIER



GLENDA WATSON HYATT

# The Gift of Communication

BY BARBARA COLLIER AND GLENDA WATSON HYATT

Speaking and understanding what other people are saying are skills that many of us take for granted. We communicate to express our feelings, thoughts and opinions, to ask questions, to get things that we want, to give information, and to understand what others want to communicate to us.

Most of the time we do not think about the wonderful gift of communication unless we, or someone we love or support, loses it.

## People who have communication disabilities

There are approximately 440,000 Canadians who have significant communication disabilities which are not caused by a hearing loss and that impact every aspect of their lives. They may have cerebral palsy, autism, a cognitive disability, an acquired brain injury, aphasia after a stroke, dementia, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (or ALS), Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis or other conditions that affect how they communicate.

For some people, their speech may be difficult to understand or they may have difficulty putting their thoughts into words. Many people have little or no speech and they may communicate using body language, pointing at items, facial expressions or they may use pictures, letter boards or communication devices.

Some people may have difficulty understanding what others are saying. People who have had a stroke or acquired brain injury may also have difficulty understanding or processing what others are saying.

Regardless of the cause of a person's communication disability, or their cognitive abilities, people who have communication disabilities have a legal right to use community services in the same way as everyone else. In Canada, and in many countries, their right to full and equal access to goods and services is protected by accessibility and human rights legislation.

## Accessibility Laws

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was passed in 2006, "to promote, protect and ensure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all people with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity." At this time, 180

**Most of the time we do not think about the wonderful gift of communication unless we, or someone we love or support, loses it.**

countries, including Canada, have signed the CRPD. The rights of Canadians with disabilities are also protected by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and provincial human rights legislation. As part of the agreement with CRPD, provinces across Canada are developing law to legislate businesses' and organizations' accessibility.

Some people with disabilities are clearly benefiting from this legislation. For example, people with mobility disabilities can expect to have ramps to get into buildings and people who have sensory disabilities can expect to have documents in alternate formats. However, many people with communication disabilities continue to experience major barriers when using businesses and organizations because their accessibility requirements are not well understood and often not included in accessibility legislation and guidelines.



## Communication Access Now Project

Communication Access Now (CAN) is a three-year, Canada-wide project that is promoting awareness of communication access for people who have communication disabilities. CAN is funded through the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program and is operated by Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC) (<http://www.cdacanada.com/>). CDAC is a national, nonprofit organization that promotes social justice, accessibility and inclusion for people with communication disabilities.

CAN's goals are to improve access to businesses and organizations for people who have communication disabilities. Across Canada, CAN is working with government groups, accessibility advisors and policy makers on ways to include communication access in their policies. CAN is also informing people with communication disabilities about their rights and how to communicate their accessibility requirements when using services.

## Communication Access Symbol

CAN has developed a communication access symbol with input from people with communication disabilities and the public. The com-

munication access symbol shows two people interacting: giving and receiving information, listening and watching.


We encourage businesses, services and organizations to display the symbol to let customers, clients and patients know they welcome people with communication disabilities, and are willing and able to interact with them. We're pleased that thousands of communication access symbols can now be seen across Canada.

For more information on our work at Communication Disabilities Access Canada, please visit us at [www.cdacanada.com](http://www.cdacanada.com).

### About the Authors

Barbara Collier is the Executive Director of CDAC and Project Manager of the Communication Access Now project. Glenda Watson Hyatt is the Social Media Coordinator with CDAC.

For further information, contact: Lois Turner, Regional Coordinator, BC, CAN Project at [lois.turner@gmail.com](mailto:lois.turner@gmail.com).

The communication access symbol is available for download from the CAN site (<http://www.communication-access.org/communication-access/communication-access-symbol/>) 



## COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

While people who have communication disabilities have individual needs, there are a number of general accommodations that can be made to improve access to services.

- Talk directly to the person, not to someone who might be with them.
- Do not underestimate a person's ability to make decisions.
- Watch and listen. People may use speech, body language, a communication board, other devices or human assistance.
- Ask the person what you can do to make communication go smoothly.
- Be patient. It might take longer for an individual with a speech or language disability to communicate.
- Tell the person if you don't understand. They may want to repeat or change their message. Sometimes it helps to move to a quiet place, so you can focus on communicating.
- If the person has difficulty understanding what you are saying, use everyday language, speak clearly or show the person what you are talking about.

## Memorial | Simon Cox

April 5, 1948 – March 25, 2016

BY CHRISTINE GORDON Simon was a strong force in creating the current golden age of assistive technology. He catalyzed research and development by encouraging his colleagues to pay attention to assistive technology and by encouraging countless bio-medical engineers and technicians to enter the field.

He was the honest broker, bringing together engineers and end-users and promoting inventive ways to solve problems.

He always conveyed a sense of excitement and hope to people with disabilities and to engineers because he was always convinced that there was a solution no matter how challenging the problem.

Simon applied his skills as an engineer, a problem solver, a motivator and, above all, a mentor to people with disabilities who dreamed about becoming more independent.


Personal service was a vocation for Simon and he did not seek the limelight that he richly deserved. He was beloved by the people he served because of his empathy, compassion and respect for them. He

demonstrated leadership every day by promoting their interests ahead of his own and by rejoicing in every one of their accomplishments. As a consequence, the people that Simon served were empowered by their contact with him and many have gone on to become inventors, entrepreneurs, artists, professionals and peer mentors.

His professional work and his character brought people with disabilities out of the shadows and into the world.

Simon would be the first person to say that he was lucky to be able to contribute his knowledge, skill, empathy and compassion to the field of assistive technology over more than 30 years.

Yet, it is we who knew him who were lucky that we had a chance to be in his orbit. And what an orbit it was because when you were with Simon you could travel anywhere his limitless imagination and curiosity could take you.

It was a privilege to know him and to serve with him. 



Simon was a lovely, kind man who I'll miss deeply. He was always a great support to me and Disability Alliance BC. RIP Simon. **Jane Dyson, DABC Executive Director**

## A Global Day of Protest for ME and CFS

According to a 2010 Statistics Canada survey, 20% of people living with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) experience food insecurity—the highest level of 23 chronic health conditions.\* This list includes people living with epilepsy, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, the effects of stroke and other conditions.

On May 25/16, a global ME/CFS protest was held by #MEAction. #MillionsMissing is dedicated to the millions of ME/CFS patients missing from their careers, schools, social lives and families, due to the debilitating symptoms of the disease. At the same time, millions of dollars are missing from research and clinical education funding. And millions of doctors are missing out on proper training to diagnose and help patients manage this illness.


For example, in the 2016-2017 year, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) has invested only \$0.11 per ME/CFS patient in Canada. In comparison, four other similarly disabling chronic diseases are receiving an average of \$158.58

per patient. That's a shocking 1,442 times less funding per patient for ME/CFS (see graphic below).\*\* Given the level of disability ME/CFS causes and the number of Canadians affected, the lack of resources devoted to research is even more staggering.

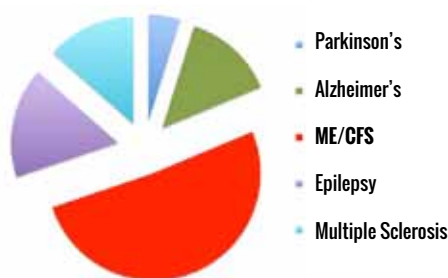
#MEAction believes this inequality in bio-medical research must end now to bring ME/CFS out of the shadows and bring much-needed hope to people living with ME/CFS.

Due to the debilitating nature of ME/CFS, many of the protests worldwide are virtual ones. In Canada, an email campaign was launched, sending a call to action to MPs across the country.

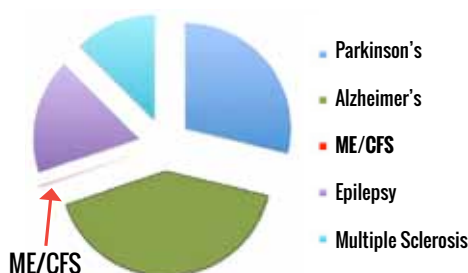
Learn more about #MEAction and how you can support the various events in the #MillionsMissing campaign at <http://www.meaction.net>

\* From the National ME/FM Action Network, Quest Newsletter, Summer 2011, *The 2010 Canadian Community Health Survey*.  
\*\* Extracted from the CIHR funded research database at [http://webapps.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/funding/Search?p\\_language=E&p\\_version=CIHR](http://webapps.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/funding/Search?p_language=E&p_version=CIHR) 

Number of Canadians Living with Five Chronic Diseases



Percentage of Canadian Research Funding for Five Chronic Diseases



# 350,000

### Reasons to File Your Taxes

Income tax filing season may be over, but if you haven't filed your taxes yet you may still be eligible to receive hundreds or even thousands of dollars in tax benefits. Tax AID DABC has helped secure more than \$350,000 of tax benefits for people with disabilities around the province. If you receive PWD or PPMB benefits, have a simple tax situation and need help with unfiled taxes over the last 10 years, Tax AID DABC can help you get caught up for free. Call or email us today to request assistance.

### Request a Tax AID Workshop

Tax AID DABC advocates are available to host tax filing clinics and workshops. If you are interested in hosting a workshop in your community, please call or email us for more details.

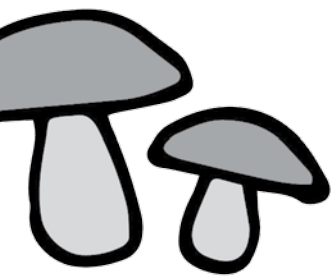
**Phone** 604-872-1278

**Toll Free** 1-800-663-1278

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







From the DABC Blog

## How to Get Involved in Food Security

### Bulk Buying Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to assist community groups who want to start a bulk buying club in their community.

[http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/Publications/Bulk\\_Buying\\_Club\\_Best\\_Practices\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/Publications/Bulk_Buying_Club_Best_Practices_Toolkit.pdf)

#### What is a Bulk Buying Club?

A bulk buying club is a group of people with similar food preferences who come together to buy food in bulk. All participants of a bulk buying club are involved in the planning, shopping, sorting and delivering of food. These clubs enable individuals to work with a group of like-minded people to get more with their food dollars.

All Bulk Buying Clubs have the same underlying purpose: to provide nutritious food at a lower cost for a group of people.

### BC Food Security Gateway

The BC Food Security Gateway is an online resource that provides BC communities with up-to-date food security information.

The Gateway is meant to inform and link you to projects, initiatives and organizations in British Columbia, as well as publications, tools, guides and news so that you can contribute to building food security in BC.

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) manages the Gateway in partnership with the Public Health Association of BC (PHABC).

Check out their website which has an interactive map of BC to find food security networks and food policy councils in your community at: <http://bcfoodsecuritygateway.ca/>

### BC Food Network Committed to Dignity and Integration

The BC Food Systems Network links people all over the province involved in community-level action related to food. The Network highlights the way food issues cross cultures, sectors and age groups. Through social media, email networks and annual meetings, they share insights, initiatives, strategies and critical analyses of events in the food system. They hold an annual gathering every year where they share their work and exchange ideas.

The BC Food Systems Network is committed to principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity and use Tides Canada's Accessibility Policy and Plan for working with people with disabilities. Membership in the Network is open to any person or group who supports their mission and democratic, inclusive process. Check them out at: <http://bcfsn.org/>

### Vancouver Food Networks and Food Justice

Across Vancouver, there are networks of committed people focusing on food justice and resilience at the neighbourhood level. The creation of these Neighbourhood Food Networks (NFN) represents the desire of community members, organizations and agencies to collaborate on foodbased initiatives and programs. The Neighbourhood Food Network Working Group provides a space for NFN representatives from across the city to collaborate and act with a unified voice.

Disability Alliance BC considers these Food Networks to be vital to the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities in neighbourhoods across Vancouver. The NFNs provide opportunities for people with disabilities to get involved in food issues in their communities.

Here are some Community Food Networks activities:

- Community and school gardens connect people around the rich experience of growing food, and foster environmental stewardship.
- Celebrations involving food meet physical, spiritual, social and emotional needs, while at the same time increasing community awareness around food security and reducing social isolation.
- Accessing food includes drop-in meals, bulk-buying clubs, mobile

produce markets, emergency food access and more. NFNs acknowledge and work to break down barriers that prevent people from accessing nutritional, affordable, and personally-acceptable food.

- NFNs share knowledge and resources around every level of our food systems. Education and engagement takes the form of workshops, lectures and films, advocacy, and research.

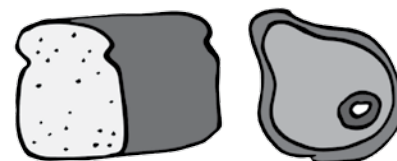
To check out the Neighbourhood Food Network in your community go to: <http://www.vancouverfood-networks.com>.

## Lower Mainland Free and Low—Cost Food Map

Burnaby Food First maintains a map and printable flyer with a basic list showing where people in the Lower Mainland can find meal programs and food free or at low cost. The map can be found at:

<http://burnabyfoodfirst.blogspot.ca/p/free-low-cost-food-resources.html>.

Basic information is provided on the map, but for details on the programs and services, contact the organization at the details provided.



Burnaby Food First strives to ensure that this list is up-to-date, but if you find that a service or program is no longer available at a particular site or wish to see certain services or organizations offering free and low-cost food, please contact them.

Visit the DABC blog: <http://blog.disabilityalliancebc.org> 

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– Lori

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### Editorial Statement

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

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## Subscriptions and Ads

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## New DABC Publication



*Disclosing Your Disability: A 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* will be available free of charge on our website soon. Watch for announcements in our e-newsletter and social media.



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





# 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

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

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## 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.

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**THANK YOU!**

PEARSON, CONTINUED FROM P. 12

much can one grow organically in a small urban farm?" "Can it support the livelihood of a young farmer?"

The sod from the ample lawn came off in early spring of 2009, followed by tilling and hauling out rocks and boulders by hand. The City donated and delivered six truckloads of topsoil, and the swelling urban farmer community helped shovel topsoil and get the farm growing.

Amazingly, the garden was producing enough produce to fill a Farmers Market stall just three short months later.

By year two, the farm switched to a CSA or Community Supported Agriculture model. In this approach, families commit to being shareholders in the farm, with a \$600 annual share paid early in the year. In return, they get a weekly overflowing harvest box from June to October (about \$30/week). They benefit from a rich relationship with their food grower, developed through weekly visits to the farm. And they can be as involved as they like in the pleasures of the seasons: digging potatoes, weeding or picking herbs.

The advantages of the CSA Model for the farmers are compelling. Imagine, by the start of the season they already have their total income for the year—no more marketplace uncertainties. No more time spent selling at market which can fill 12 labour hours every week. And they know exactly how much they need to harvest every week. There's no waste and no leftover heavy squashes to lug back home.


The farm has been incredibly successful in producing food. It provides 40 families with all their vegetables from June through

October. It's been equally successful at growing community, running a season-long Grow Your Own Food course. It also hosts tours for: school and boy scout groups, permaculture students, urban farm interns, and even City of Vancouver social planners. The market garden donates local organic vegetables each month to Pearson residents through the community kitchen, run by Sarah Wenman.

So when VCH announced its plans to redevelop the entire 28 acres of Dogwood Pearson property in 2014, Farmers on 57th was invited to be part of the Redevelopment Advisory Board. Participants in the planning process were intrigued by the idea of an urban farm as part of the new community, and the farm fit the mandate of the City's 2013 Food Strategy.

When the City released its policy statements for the Pearson-Dogwood site, an urban farm was included. And at the Open House in early March 2016, a one-acre urban farm was featured right at the heart of the planned Pearson-Dogwood site.

It's an exciting time of possibility for the farm, now in its eighth year. And it's a good time for enthusiasm, as spring warms the soil, and baby seedlings spring up in the greenhouse. To stay tuned on the growth, visit the Farmers on 57th website at <http://farmerson57th.ca/>.

JEN RASHLEIGH IS A FOUNDER OF FARMERS ON 57TH. SHE ALSO CO-LEADS THE GEORGE PEARSON CENTRE GARDEN CLUB. 



# 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.

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# Swing into Spring

## Our Great Swing Into Spring Sponsors!

This year's Swing Into Spring fundraiser and celebration was our best ever, thanks in no small part to these amazing event sponsors. A sincere thank you to them for their incredibly generous support.

### Presenting



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### Friends



Our sincere thanks also go to everyone who supported our fundraiser through donating auction and prize items, and buying tickets and tables. The money raised through Swing Into Spring means we will be able to help more people with disabilities.



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