

Understanding COVID-19
Disability Benefits

Board Members
Look Ahead

Working in Partnership
More Important Than Ever

transition

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC



LOOKING AHEAD AT DABC

Thank you for helping us grow.

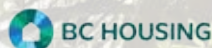
Programs and Projects

BC Housing
City of Vancouver
Community Foundations of Canada
Insurance Corporation of BC
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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
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We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of BC.



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editorial by pam horton

It has been powerful to see the way disability groups have mobilized to support each other, as we work through the issues caused by the pandemic. These partnerships will continue.

Who would have thought our world would turn upside down. COVID-19 has changed our lives radically, including making us aware of shortcomings within our social systems across the country and around the world.

At DABC, these changes were doubly difficult because they came as we moved from our home of 30+ years on West Broadway into a new office in downtown Vancouver.

Most staff will continue to work from home until COVID-19 is brought under control, but we look forward to the day we can bring all our staff into the office and help our clients face-to-face. Until then, we will continue providing all our programs remotely—over the phone, through virtual meetings or by good old-fashioned mail.

You'll learn about many DABC staff and board priorities in this Transition. In this editorial, I'd like to highlight a few other issues we'll be working on in 2021—some are long-term areas of focus and some are emerging.

One overarching goal will be to carefully monitor how all levels of

governments follow through on their commitments.

We will remind them, as often as necessary, that they cannot ignore people with disabilities or leave us at the end of the line.

It has been powerful to see the way disability groups have mobilized to support each other, as we work through the issues caused by the pandemic. These partnerships will continue.

In the Spring, we hope to see a draft of the proposed BC Disability Act. We will be involved in this process all along the way and update you on this important new legislation.

In one of the most heartbreaking pandemic stories, Ariis Knight died alone, unable to communicate, when her caregiver was denied access to the hospital because of COVID-19. Working with our partners, we were able to convince the BC Government to change this policy.

We will keep working to ensure that communication needs like these are met. With the increased demands on our hospital systems, we continue to be concerned that people with disabilities may not be triaged properly no matter why they are in the emergency ward.

And, although masks are now mandatory, there is still a segment of the population who are not able to wear them. We appreciate it every time Dr. Bonnie Henry mentions this in her briefings, but it is an ongoing area for DABC to ensure no one is denied equal community access because they can't wear a mask.

For those people with disabilities living in the community, but receiving care equivalent to someone in long-term care residences, DABC is advocating for their place in the line for the COVID vaccine—not because of their age, but because of their compromised health. Access to vaccines and personal protective equipment are crucial issues for those who receive community-based care.

In other words, some of the cracks in our social systems that were always present are wider now, and DABC will continue our work across multiple areas to ensure people with disabilities and our priorities are top of mind. *Nothing about us without us.*

We hope that 2021 will gradually return to a hybrid of the normalcy we still faintly recall.

Happy 2021 everyone, and hope to see you in person soon.

PAM HORTON IS CHAIR OF OF DABC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS. 

The DABC office is remaining closed and our staff are continuing to help clients remotely. Here are the contact details for our core programs.

Appointments can be booked by email or phone, but email may be the most efficient way to reach us. Thank you for your patience during this extremely busy time. Stay safe, everyone!

Advocacy Access

If you require help accessing provincial disability benefits or resolving another provincial Ministry issue, or help with Canada Pension Plan-Disability applications or appeals, contact Advocacy Access:

Email advocacy@disabilityalliancebc.org

604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-free)

Tax AID DABC

If you are a person with a disability who requires assistance filing your income taxes, contact Tax AID DABC:

Email taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org

236-477-1717 or 1-877-940-7797 (Toll-free)

Book an appointment online at <http://disabilityalliancebc.org/direct-service/file-income-taxes/tax-appointment/>

Access RDSP

If you require help accessing the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) or Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), contact Access RDSP:

Email rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org

604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-free)

<https://www.rdsp.com/supports-and-services/>

Disability Law Clinic

Our Disability Law Clinic can help British Columbians with disabilities with legal issues related to their disability rights:

Email LawClinic@disabilityalliancebc.org

(236) 427-1108



How to Access DABC Services During COVID-19



Settling into Our New Home

| by Cynthia Minh

Like all of you, those of us at DABC experienced a lot of change over the last year. One of the biggest was saying goodbye to our home of many years at Broadway and Cambie and moving into our new offices at 605 Robson Street.

Being at the heart of downtown Vancouver brings a new energy to our work. We now share a building with the Law Foundation of BC and the BC Human Rights Tribunal, among other services that are relevant to the communities we serve.

The new environment has helped us to modernize some of our practices, while preserving the sense of openness we cherish at our workplace. We've been digitizing our office procedures to enable us to work well remotely.

The layout of the new office space makes it easy to navigate. Our executive offices, administrative support and Law Clinic share one side of the office. Direct services, including our Advocacy Access, Tax AID DABC and Access RDSP programs share the other. Our advocates' desks now look westward over the streets

We miss the feeling of communal support, the bustle of our office and, most of all, we miss seeing all of you. When we open our doors, we hope you'll enjoy our new space as much as we do.

of our downtown core. We feel as much a part of the city as ever.

But our move hasn't come without its compromises. One of our greatest concerns in the process was making sure our space remained accessible to our clients.

The first time you visit our office (which will be soon we hope), there are a few changes to be aware of. Our office is no longer next to the Broadway-City Hall station (Canada Line), but is now just a few blocks from the Granville station (Expo Line), the Vancouver City Centre station (Canada Line) and the Granville Street bus stops.

Perhaps the biggest adjustment is the size of our office space.

We were able to host large meetings and social events in our old boardroom, but our new boardroom is set up for cozier gatherings. Our reception area is also smaller which we expect will limit our capacity to accommodate walk-in appointments.

Even with these challenges, we embrace the opportunity for innovation that comes with every great change. In this Transition, you'll read more about DABC's Accessibility Committee and our partnership with Emily Carr University. Together, we are developing new office designs that will improve the wayfinding at DABC.

The feeling of excitement that usually comes with moving to a new office has shifted, given the extraordinary events of last year. The changing restrictions forced us to develop practices to match our modern office space. For many staff members, the transition to remote work has been difficult, but we know that these improvements will only strengthen our capacity to work when we return to "normal" at the office.

Despite the restrictions, a few of our staff members were able to work in our new office under the recommended safety protocols. The opportunity to see some friendly faces reminded us of the community we are all missing.

In truth, we don't know what the space will feel like when it is full of people again. When we reopen our offices, it will feel like a new experience for everyone.

We miss the feeling of communal support, the bustle of our office and, most of all, we miss seeing all

of you. When we open our doors, we hope you'll enjoy our new space as much as we do.

We look forward to welcoming you into our new home.

CYNTHIA MINH IS PROGRAM MANAGER AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR OF ACCESS RDSP AT DABC. **T**



OUR VIEW FROM THE 14TH FLOOR!



THE RECEPTION AND WAITING AREA.



PART OF OUR BRIGHT WORKING SPACE.



Meet Lucy by Chloe Krause

Lucy's a one-year old chihuahua mix who loves cuddles, the sun, and her elderly cat-brother Sheamus. Begrudgingly, he's decided she's okay, too.

My partner and I rescued her September 26/20. We don't believe she was mistreated in her previous home, but her owners surrendered her because they acquired more dogs than they could care for.

It was a little challenging when she first arrived—moving from sunny California to chilly, rainy Vancouver was quite a shock for our delicate Chihuahua princess. We could hardly get her to step on the wet grass! Fortunately, she will now brave it. Her growing selection of warm coats and sweaters donated by friends seems to help!

We are beyond grateful that Lucy has come into our lives. She's done wonders for our mental health (which my partner and I both struggle with) during these gloomy winter months, and she's brought us laughter and joy during the isolation of the pandemic. She's much loved, and she loves us back!



Tax Assistance & Information For People with Disabilities



It's Tax Time!

Contact Tax AID DABC for Free Assistance.

SPECIALIZING IN MULTIPLE YEARS OF RETURNS

Program Manager | Disability Alliance BC

taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org

<https://taxaiddabc.org>

Appointments During COVID-19

You can book your remote appointment with DABC online at

<http://disabilityalliancebc.org/direct-service/file-income-taxes/tax-appointment/>.

We also offer our services by email and mail. Please send your tax slips and photo ID to taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org. We will contact you for follow-up.

Tax AID DABC helps people in BC receiving PWD (Persons with Disabilities) or PPMB (Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers to Employment) benefits to file their income taxes.



vancouver
foundation



CONTACT THE TAX AID DABC REGIONAL PARTNER NEAREST YOU

- METRO VANCOUVER & FRASER VALLEY | VANCOUVER | DABC | 236-477-1717 | Toll Free 1-877-940-7797
- INTERIOR | KELOWNA | Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society | 250-763-4905 ext. 215

 **Yes, our income tax services are free.****Am I eligible for Tax AID DABC services?**

We help people who are receiving:

- Persons with Disabilities (PWD) or
- Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers (PPMB) to Employment benefits.

What if I Haven't Filed Taxes for Years?

We help prepare simple income tax returns for the most recent tax year, as well as for previous years. One of our specialties is to help people who have multiple years of taxes to file.

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

Don't worry! We'll contact government agencies to help you find them.

My Income is Low. Why Should I File Taxes?

There are many advantages to filing your income taxes! Our clients usually receive \$400 to \$600 in income tax credits for each year they file. People eligible for an income tax refund, and those with dependent children, often receive much more.

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

Other benefits you may be eligible for include:

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

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

What Should I do Next?

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

CONTACT THE TAX AID DABC REGIONAL PARTNER NEAREST YOU

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



Understanding COVID-19 Disability-related Benefits

| BY SHARAREH SAREMI

If you're unsure which COVID-19-related benefits are available and if you qualify, you're not alone! We've prepared this article to help you understand your options and how to apply for benefits.

Both the provincial and federal governments have announced supports and measures to assist people with disabilities.

This information is up-to-date as of the time of writing, but government policies around COVID-19 are changing rapidly. If you plan to apply for one of these benefits, please check government websites for the most current information.

Federal Benefits

In October 2020, the federal government announced the end of the previous COVID Emergency Response Benefit.

It was replaced with the **Employment Insurance (EI)** program and the **Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)**.

Under current COVID regulations, you only require 120 insured hours to qualify for EI benefits of at least

\$500 dollars per week before taxes. If you are not eligible for EI, you can apply for the CRB which provides \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks, if you have stopped working or had your income reduced by at least 50% due to COVID-19.

You must have earned at least \$5,000 in 2019, 2020 or in the 12 months prior to the application date. These earnings must be from employment income, net self-employment income, or maternity and parental benefits from EI. You won't qualify if you have quit your job or reduced your hours voluntarily, on or after September 27, 2020, unless the government decides it was "reasonable" for you to do so.

Both EI and CRB are considered exempt income for people on income assistance, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), hardship assistance and Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) up to September 2021.

There is also a **Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB)** which provides \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks.

This amount is per household for workers who are unable to work at least 50% of the week because they must care for a child under the age of 12 or a family member because:

- Schools, daycares or care facilities are closed due to COVID-19, or

- The child or family member is sick or requires quarantine, or
- The child or family member is at high risk of serious health consequences because of COVID-19.

The CRSB is considered exempt and will not be deducted from your financial assistance from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR).

Provincial Benefits

The provincial government also announced the **BC Recovery Benefit**: a one-time, direct deposit payment for eligible families, single parents or individuals who are residents of BC. Benefit eligibility is based on net income from your 2019 tax return.

Families and single parents with a net income up to \$125,000 are eligible for \$1,000 (with reduced benefits for those with a net income of up to \$175,000). Individuals with a net income of up to \$62,500 are eligible for \$500 (with a reduced benefit amount for those with a net income of up to \$87,500). These benefits are also exempt and will not be deducted if you are a MSDPR client. People have until June 30, 2021 to apply for the BC Recovery Benefit.

If you are currently a recipient of income assistance, hardship assistance, disability assistance or comforts payments, and have been a recipient since before April 2020, and are not receiving federal

benefits (CRB, CRSB, CRCB or EI), the **BC Recovery Supplement** will automatically be added to your cheques in January through March 2021 (February through April benefit months). Each eligible adult will receive \$150 per month.

A rent increase freeze, previously set by the provincial government, has been extended until July 10, 2021. If your rent was due to increase December 1, 2020, you do not have to pay the amount of the increase until July 10, 2021.

This does not include commercial tenancies, non-profit housing tenancies where rent is geared to income, co-operative housing and some assisted living facilities.

Learn More

Here are some resources where you can find more information about these benefits, eligibility and how they interact with disability benefits.

Federal Government

<https://tinyurl.com/2r6bzeqr>

Provincial Government

<https://tinyurl.com/iyv0dmb5>

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction


Toll-free 1-866-866-0800

DABC Advocacy Access Program

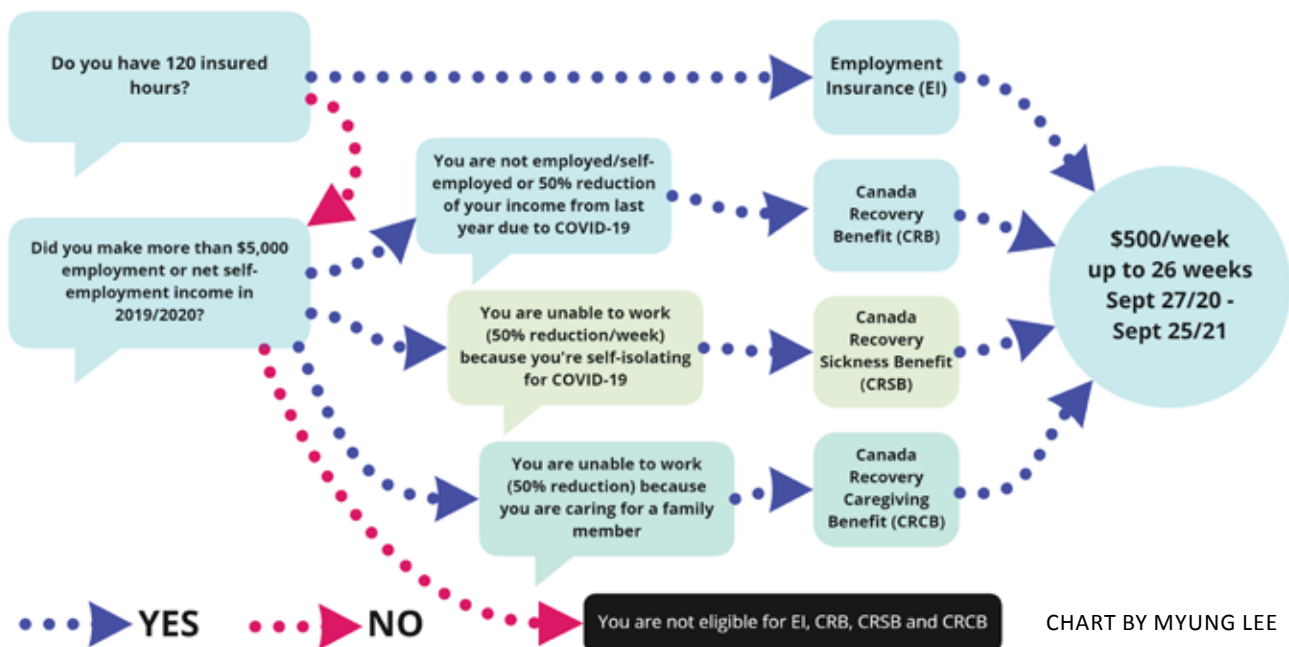
604-872-1278

Toll-free 1-800-663-1278

advocacy@disabilityalliancebc.org

SHARAREH SAREMI IS AN ADVOCACY ACCESS PROGRAM ADVOCATE. 

After CERB





• BY JOHANNA JOHNSON,
VANCOUVER

Over the past 10 months, the public has seen some of the limitations and neglect that exist in both long-term health care and in education, especially for people with disabilities.

The recognition of these failings is one of the few positive outcomes of the pandemic. While I have hope for the future in these areas, I sadly have great pessimism for how far the public will go to rectify these travesties.

Throughout my life (with a disability) and my career (as an educator), I am continually struck by the neglect of those who are the most vulnerable and often have the smallest voice.

As I write this, all I can think of is the children that have been unable

to see or interact with their peer groups due to the lack of funding and staffing. A year in a child's life is a precious and irreplaceable thing. Computers have bridged some gaps, but if you have a physical, financial and/or familial impairment, technology is meaningless.

Throughout my life (with a disability) and my career (as an educator), I am continually struck by the neglect of those who are the most vulnerable and often have the smallest voice.

In the coming year, DABC will continue our advocacy to significantly increase funding and resources where they are needed to improve access and support for people with disabilities.

• BY MICHELLE HEWITT, KELOWNA

March 10, 2020, was the day COVID-19 began to get serious for me. I was taking part in a competition—Three Minute Thesis—where I explained my research to an audience in three minutes.

I felt conscious of my surroundings in a new way—the buffet table of finger food, the way people leaned over me in my wheelchair.

I was talking about how people in their 20s, 30s and 40s are living in Long-term Care (LTC) facilities, even though the average age in our LTCs is 85.

I was explaining that the care they were receiving wasn't necessarily

bad, but it was the wrong care for them. Like going to the dentist for a broken arm.

Then, when the pandemic hit, my classes went online. To be honest, it was a great thing for me. I have severe fatigue and being in class from bed is about as perfect as it gets. But then the news stories started to roll in.

The lack of PPE. The lack of staff. Maggots on used dressings in the hallways. People left in dirty bedding, unfed and unchanged. The shock and horror that people with disabilities were facing these incredible challenges and many lives were being lost.

Each time the news talked about the huge toll faced by our seniors in these LTCs, I knew every single facility also housed people under the age of 65—including people far younger, with young children of their own.

As the pandemic took root around the globe, many in the health care systems started to talk in terms of "building back better."

With years of research ahead of me, I began to think I should shift my research focus. Surely all this goodwill would lead to changes for these younger people in LTC too, and I would have nothing left to write about.

At some point over the summer, news of working groups, task forces and all manner of special groups started to appear. With each report I read, I searched for any variation of the word "disabled." I'm still searching and have yet to find it.

The voices of the younger people in our long-term care system were absent before COVID-19 and continue to be absent now.

So, how can I play a part in this needed change? Fundamentally, my approach to research has changed.

Consider the typical “one bath a week” rule in many LTCs. For most people, this represents a challenge to your basic dignity—the lack of independence to control your personal hygiene. Initially, my research would have looked at why policies like this exist and how we encourage institutional change through policy change.

The voices of the younger people in our long-term care system were absent before COVID-19 and continue to be absent now.

But, really, it’s just becomes policy “whack-a-mole.” We might change the bathing policy, then need to deal with food or visitors or any of the myriad quality of life policies that make our LTCs especially unsuitable for young adults.

Instead, my research is going deeper.

It’s looking at decisions that made it seem acceptable that younger adults with high personal care needs live like this. It’s at the level of our societal values and assumptions.

Unless we change these basic assumptions in our care system, we will not prioritize the changes that need to be made to all levels of support.

We need to change the way society views people with disabilities, even those who are not seen or heard from.

It has not always been this way—for better or worse—and it doesn’t have to be this way.

It’s a bit like following a map and making choices at every intersection.

Sometimes you make a choice based on the best information you have at the time, sometimes you make the choice because you know the place you want to go to is just down that next road, and sometimes you make the choice just because you pick right rather than left.

Very quickly, you end up forgetting why you made the choices you did.

Examining our values, for me, is about examining this journey and trying to see how we learn from that to make a better journey now.

What does this mean for me in the next year? In many ways, it’s more of the same—listening to people with disabilities in LTC, gathering their stories and trying to mobilize for action.

However, there’s also a need to be more aware—to be aware that in this haste to “build back better,” some parts of the system that affect people with disabilities most keenly, run this risk of being “built back” in the same dysfunctional ways.



• BY JAKE ANTHONY, BURNABY

The arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines is a bright light of hope at the end of what’s been a very long, dark tunnel. I’m cautiously optimistic, but also a bit fearful of what lies ahead for all of us in 2021.

As an example, it is so important that people with disabilities in long-term care or who are living with compromised immune systems are a top priority for receiving vaccinations. And, during a time when so many people with disabilities are facing serious financial, health-related and emotional struggles, it is essential that the BC government continue with current disability assistance, as well as providing additional pandemic support in 2021.

DABC has been advocating, and will continue to advocate strongly, for this additional financial aid moving forward.

We’ve seen this pandemic bring out both the best and the worst in people. I hope all of us can learn to be more kind, empathetic and compassionate with one another.

Everyone’s voice, personal needs, quality of life and well being matters. DABC will work collaboratively with our community partners and advocates, as well as with the provincial government, to ensure that nobody is left behind. **T**

COMINGS AND GOINGS



Congratulations to our Executive Director of Operations, **Justina Loh**, who had a baby girl—Jubilee— on November 28th! We wish Justina and her family good health and joy. Justina will be on maternity leave until December 2021.



Karen Martin will be filling in as Executive Director of Operations while Justina is on leave. Karen has been with DABC since 2004, and has developed and coordinated many projects over the years. Karen is happy to be stepping in to carry on Justina's great work for DABC until she returns.



A message from Helaine Boyd

I am beyond excited to join DABC in my new role as Co-Executive Director, responsible for Programs and

Policy, and am looking forward to effecting positive change for people with disabilities across the province.

Within the first few weeks on the job, I have met (virtually) so many impassioned, determined, kind and welcoming people across the province and nationally. Each day, I have been invigorated in my motivation to champion the rights of people with disabilities when I meet with fellow members of the disability community. I am reminded how important it is that in every meeting or discussion I am part of, to make space and time for people with disabilities to be heard, acknowledged and respected.

For those who haven't yet met me, I recently moved back home to Vancouver after working overseas for the past six years in the humanitarian sector. I decided to return home so that I could be near my grandmother, who is blind and hard of hearing, and who receives home support care. I am especially close to my grandmother as she raised me and has always been there for me since I was born. Now more than ever, it is my time to be there for her.

While overseas, I worked across five continents on various projects related to removing and destroying landmines, and particularly with providing assistance to landmine survivors, victims and their families.

For the past eight years, I have worked hard to improve disability inclusion in the humanitarian sector, and am happy and grateful that I get to now work alongside others

in the disability community here in my home province to make positive and lasting change.



At the end of November 2020, we said a fond farewell to our Executive Director of Policy and Programs, **Erin Pritchard**, who has moved on to other endeavours. During her relatively short time at DABC, Erin, in partnership with DABC colleagues and other community organizations, helped to enact tangible, positive changes for British Columbians with disabilities.

In addition to supporting our Advocacy Access staff, much of her systemic advocacy work focused on ensuring that people with disabilities are supported during the COVID-19 crisis. Notably, she worked extensively with DABC staff lawyer Andrew Robb and other community leaders to lobby the government to allow people with disabilities to have an essential support person accompany them in medical settings during the pandemic. Her lobbying efforts also contributed to the implementation of the \$300/month COVID-19 supplement for people receiving provincial income assistance and disabilities.

We are very grateful to Erin for her outstanding work, and wish her all the best. **T**

AT DABC IN 2020/21

ANNETTE MURRAY

An Irreplaceable Advocate Retires

I miss your infinite wisdom, your sardonic wit, your level-headedness, your calm presence, your laugh and your calling us “big tiggreses.” You are one of a kind. Lots of love, Celia.

I’m so very glad we got to work together. I learned a lot from you just from sitting nearby, and I love your passion and wit. I know you are missed by me and others at the office. Much love, Salina

Annette, it has been such a privilege to have you as my co-worker all these years. I have enjoyed our conversations and your sense of humour. Karen

You are already sorely missed and will continue to be for some time to come. You’ve been compassionate, knowledgeable and forever ready and willing to help others. It’s my greatest hope that your retirement is joyful, filled with peace and love, and is as fulfilling as you desire it to be. Terry

Dear Annette: I was very lucky to have you as my neighbour at the office. Our many chats about life, the universe and everything often made my day. Thank you for being some-

one who talks about things that matter and taking time to connect. I’d be very happy to stay in touch. Lots of love, Ann Vrlak

I would like to thank you for your kind support. You were an amazing co-worker. I will never forget the things you have done for me. Miss you. Fay


It’s been a great pleasure working with you and it was my privilege to know you. DABC won’t be the same. We will all miss your hard work and dedication. Myung Lee

Dear Annette: You are a legend in your own time! How will DABC manage without you? Thank you for your empathy, commitment, passion and knowledge. People with disabilities have much to thank you for. Christine

Dear Annette: I will really miss you. I so love and appreciate your sense of humour and your dedication to your clients. We’ve had such good laughs over the years. Take good care. Chloe



Thank you for your empathy, commitment, passion and knowledge. People with disabilities have much to thank you for.

Dear Annette: You are so missed at the office. We miss your experience, your work ethic, and your passion for our clients and the disability community. Thank you again for everything you’ve done at DABC. We’ll never find someone like you again. Justina Loh 

Accessibility Projects

2020 Winners

Organization	City	Grant	Project Name
Embrace Arts Foundation	Victoria	\$14,550	Artist to Facilitator
Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Vancouver	\$40,000	Deafblind Intervenor Services
Learning Disabilities Society of Greater Vancouver	Vancouver	\$32,000	RISE TEAM
BC Wheelchair Basketball Society (BCWBS)	Vancouver	\$40,000	Connect 2 BC Wheelchair Basketball (C2WB)
Intrepid Theatre Company Society	Victoria	\$39,450	Theatre for All: Building Access for Artists and Audiences
Stroke Recovery Association of BC	Vancouver	\$15,600	Young Stroke Survivors of BC: LEAP (Learn, Engage & Achieve Potential)
Visible Art Society (dba grunt gallery)	Vancouver	\$21,550	Digital media & captioning community learning
The British Columbia Lions Society for Children with Disabilities	Vancouver	\$40,000	Compass Program Pilot Project
Cinevolution Media Arts Society	Richmond	\$40,000	Accessible Online Presentation Platform
VocalEye Descriptive Arts Society	Vancouver	\$22,000	VocalEye Almost Live Zoom Program
Kootenay Brain Injury Association	Castlegar	\$37,750	Whole Health Community Teams
LDABC The Learning Curve Society	Victoria	\$35,700	Virtual Learning Accessibility Project
St. John Society (British Columbia and Yukon)	Vancouver	\$35,700	Community Transfer Program
The Disability Foundation	Vancouver	\$35,700	Bridging Entry to the Workforce; A Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI)



Disability Alliance BC #1450 – 605 Robson Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3

T: 604-875-0188 **E:** ap@disabilityalliancebc.org

Our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction for funding the accessibility projects grants.



Paulo Guerrero enjoying his new accessible home found by the Right Fit Program. Photo: Isabelle Groc

News from the Right Fit Program

DABC's housing program, Right Fit, transitioned from a pilot project launched in 2017 to a full-fledged program in 2020.

Right Fit is a multi-partner service designed to address the crisis in wheelchair accessible housing by matching affordable, accessible homes and independent living supports with people who need them in the Lower Mainland.

The Right Fit has matched a total of 34 clients as of February 1, 2021, which includes:

- 14 individuals with disabilities (for a single tenancy), and
- 20 families with at least 1 family member with a disability (multiple person tenancy)


We recently added a housing accessibility coordinator to our team to work with housing providers on the supply of wheelchair accessible units.

We currently have over 100 clients waiting to be placed in accessible housing units in Greater Vancouver.

Right Fit was featured in the BC Non-Profit Housing Association's magazine and on their website. You can read more about us and one of the clients we helped at <https://tinyurl.com/ychljmfe>.

We recently designed a new logo. Our team has put a lot of thought into how to present ourselves to the world and this logo represents many people with disabilities' path to housing: it is never a straight line and there are many corners along the way.

If you're a housing provider or someone in need of housing, please see our contact details on this page.

Right Fit is here to help our clients navigate this journey. 



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Would you or someone you know like to receive the Right Fit newsletter? We will be happy to add you to our list. Please contact us at rightfit@disabilityalliancebc.org.

ARE YOU A HOUSING PROVIDER?

If you are a housing provider interested in learning about how we can help you, please contact us at jackie@disabilityalliancebc.org.

ARE YOU A WHEELCHAIR USER IN NEED OF HOUSING?

If you are a wheelchair user in need of housing, please get in touch with us at dalton@ifresociety.org.



board members around the province

• JULIA LAMB, CHILLIWACK

In the year ahead, I want to build upon 2020's community work to increase accessibility. We all saw our workplaces, schools, and organizations shift because of COVID-19. Communities quickly became more accessible as we stayed home and services of all kinds went virtual.

This kind of expanded access is something the disability community has been advocating for, for years! I want to see access remain a priority in 2021 and for this expansion to continue.

This will be the second year working with my hometown of Chilliwack to promote access and inclusion with a cross-disability panel of local residents.

Asking the question, "Who are our cities for?" has brought us personal stories, collaboration and planning that we will roll out in the year ahead.


I am looking forward to seeing our work evolve into action items for our city and want to strive for access to be built into the foundations of every community.

Access barriers can exist within many areas, and intersect with our diverse lived experiences. Communities must move forward with and for all of us.

For example, if housing were universally accessible and more available, many people would finally be able to access equal freedom in finding safe, affordable and livable spaces

Asking the question, "Who are our cities for?" has brought us personal stories, collaboration and planning that we will roll out in the year ahead.

Conversely, as we see people's needs ignored, we see that extremely limited access to housing is a barrier to vital needs being met.

I look forward to being a part of DABC, working for and representing these intersections, and the cross-disability community across our province. 



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The Importance of Partnerships

by Andrew Robb and Salina Dewar

In March 2020, DABC's Disability Law Clinic joined the community of social justice advocacy organizations.

We are finding our place among the programs that support and advocate for people with disabilities in BC. We benefit from our partnerships with other advocacy and legal programs, and hope our partners do too. Without question, we are stronger when we work together!

The Law Clinic has a mandate to provide legal assistance to support disability rights, anywhere in BC. We advocate for people with disabilities in two main ways:

- Advising and assisting people with disabilities about specific legal issues relating to their disabilities.
- Advocating for policy changes that will benefit people with disabilities, at all levels of government and in the private sector.

When we advocate for policy changes, we strive to ensure our recommendations reflect a consensus among people with a wide array of disabilities.

A great example of our Disability Law Clinic's advocacy intervention occurred when hospitals imposed new visitor restrictions at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic—changes which clearly did not take the needs of people with disabilities into account. DABC and the Disability Law Clinic worked with our partners to prepare recommendations to government to improve visi-

tor policies to ensure people with disabilities can have their essential support people with them.

Our recommendations were reviewed and supported by family members of people with disabilities and partner organizations, including: Inclusion BC, the Family Support Institute of BC, the Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network, the Individualized Funding Resource Centre, and many other organizations concerned with the rights and well-being of people with disabilities.

With so much support from our community, we knew the government would have to listen to us and we were right!

Just a few weeks after we sent our recommendations to the provincial government, the Ministry of Health issued new guidelines that made it much easier for people with disabilities to have their essential support people in the hospital with them, without compromising patient safety during the pandemic. This was a remarkable success story and it could only have been done through collaboration with our partners.

As part of DABC, the Law Clinic's goal is for people with disabilities to live with dignity and independence in the community. To achieve that goal, the Law Clinic strives to be a useful resource for other organizations that serve people with disabilities. This includes health authorities, government agencies and




The Clinic can also support your organization to advocate for change in government policies affecting your clients. And we are happy to provide legal education to service-providers and to provide legal support to their individual clients.

other non-profit organizations.

The Clinic can also support your organization to advocate for change in government policies affecting your clients. We know that collaborating with others often makes a bigger impact and we welcome opportunities for new ways to collaborate. And we are happy to provide legal education to service providers and to provide legal support to their individual clients.

If you would like to work with us to address a systemic issue or if you have clients who require legal assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at (236) 427-1108 or by email at LawClinic@disability-alliancebc.org.

ANDREW ROBB IS STAFF LAWYER WITH THE DLC AND SALINA DEWAR IS CLINIC ASSISTANT. 



Aiming for Excellence in Accessibility

| by Chloe Krause

Earlier this year, DABC formed an Accessibility Advisory Committee, led by Myung Lee and comprised of DABC staff and volunteers.

The committee's aim is to make DABC a leader in accessibility in our physical space, and in the areas of communications, digital accessibility and customer service.

Because we moved to a new location in 2020, the committee's first task has been to work on wayfinding/accessibility for the new office.

The committee has met several times to brainstorm and make recommendations, and has been assisted by Jone Ko, a co-op student from Emily Carr (ECU) who has been working on potential designs for the new space.

Jone is close to finalizing his designs with feedback from the committee, although implementation has been delayed due to the COVID-19.

At the same time, DABC has been working in partnership with Emily Carr University on another accessibility project. This is the second time we partnered with Emily Carr.

Previously, ECU students worked on brainstorming ways to make our old office more accessible.

This year, another design class led by Eugenie Cheon, worked with us to design a DABC History Wall.

The history wall in our West Broadway office featured valuable information and photos about past DABC staff and colleagues, accomplishments and campaigns. However, it was outdated and not particularly visually appealing!

The committee's aim is to make DABC a leader in accessibility in our physical space, and in the areas of communications, digital accessibility and customer service.

Five groups met over several sessions with DABC staff, members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, volunteers and friends. The first sessions functioned mainly as "ice-breakers" and later sessions focused on DABC's past and present, and what participants would like to see on a new history wall.

The students' final drafts for our new wall were varied in design and content. You can see some of the designs on the opposite page.

Like the wayfinding project, implementation of the History Wall has been delayed due to the pandemic.

CHLOE KRAUSE IS DABC'S BOARD AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR. 





• **BY ELIZABETH LALONDE,
VICTORIA**

For this board update, I'd like to share information from various organizations in the blind, deafblind and low vision communities in BC.

Pacific Training Centre for the Blind

I am founder and Executive Director of the Pacific Training Centre for the Blind (PTCB). The PTCB is an award-winning, grassroots, charitable organization, currently based in Victoria, BC. We are the only accredited blindness-service provider in BC, accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

We currently offer blindness skills training (e.g. independent travel with the long white cane, assistive technology and Braille) to anyone who is nineteen years of age or older and is blind, deafblind or who is experiencing vision loss living in, or able to travel to, Victoria. All

our instructors are either blind or deafblind.

Since the pandemic began, the PTCB has been providing most of its programs via telephone, conference-call and through audio classroom.

PTCB.CA

Camp Bowen Society

The PTCB is partnering with the Camp Bowen Society for the Independence of the Blind and deafblind, often shortened to the Camp Bowen Society. The Society operates the Camp Bowen summer independence camps, independent living skills training, and outreach programs for people who are blind, and low vision.

CAMPBOWEN.CA

Bowen Island Recreation, Training and Meeting Centre Project

This project is a new initiative of the Camp Bowen Society and the PTCB to create a recreation, training and meeting centre. The centre will house a 10-month intensive skills training program.

BOWENISLANDCENTRE.CA

Canadian Federation of the Blind

The Canadian Federation of the Blind (CFB) is a grassroots membership organization committed to the equality and empowerment of blind Canadians. Through advocacy, public education and mentoring, blind

people work for change, promote a positive perspective on blindness, and together gain confidence and skills.

CFB.CA

National Network for Equitable Library Service

The National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS), launched in 2013, is the only public library available to Canadians who are blind or who have other challenges in accessing print.

NNELS is a repository of content owned and sustained by Canadian public libraries.

As of April 2020, there are nearly 40,520 titles in the NNELS collection, available in English and French and in multiple formats. Audio-books are available in both human narration (90% of audiobooks) and synthetic voice (10%).

NNELS.CA

VocalEye

VocalEye is a non-profit society, registered charity and the first live descriptive arts service for the blind in Canada. Its mission is to provide greater access to theatre, arts and cultural events for people of all ages who are blind and partially sighted. VocalEye provides theatre companies and other arts organizations with the support necessary to make their productions and events more accessible to these audience members.

VOCALEYE.CA 

Download DABC's Free Self-help Resources

Did you know DABC has a library of help sheets, self-help guides and resources for individuals, organizations and community planners? Here are some of the free resources you can download from our website.

BC Disability Benefits

We have over 15 Disability Benefits Help Sheets that are our most popular downloads. You'll learn about applications and appeals for the PWD and PPMB benefits; health benefits and nutritional supplements; filing income taxes for people receiving PWD and PPMB; PWD applications for people with disabilities living on reserve, and more.

Canada Pension Plan Disability

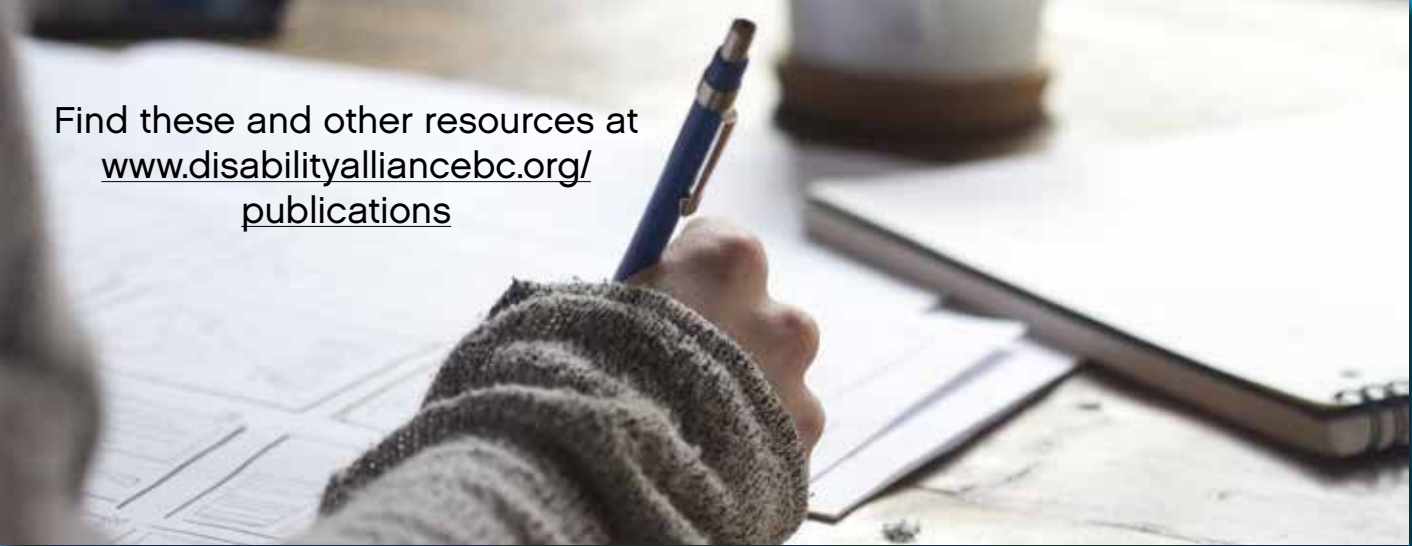
In the CPP-D section, you'll find our application and appeal guides for CPP-D, as well as a benefits checklist.

Registered Disability Savings Plan and Disability Tax Credit

We've created guides and help sheets on these key financial tools for people with disabilities and for health professionals who want to help their clients access these tools.

Other

- Anti-violence resources to help people with disabilities understand the steps they will go through if they have been a victim of a crime. We have also created resources for front line anti-violence workers.
- Emergency Preparedness guides on inclusive emergency planning for community partners.



Find these and other resources at
[www.disabilityalliancebc.org/
publications](http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/publications)

DTC RESOURCES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Access RDSP has created two new booklets to help health professionals support clients with Disability Tax Credit applications:

- **A Nurse Practitioner's Guide to the Disability Tax Credit**
- **A Guide to the Disability Tax Credit for Occupational Therapists**

The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) offers significant benefits for people with disabilities who qualify.

With these guides, we explain the different sections of the form and offer suggestions for supporting patients' applications.

For more information, please contact the Access RDSP Outreach Coordinator at DABC at 604-872-1278 or rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org.



vancouver
foundation



ACCESS RDSP IS A PARTNERSHIP OF BC ABORIGINAL NETWORK ON DISABILITY SOCIETY, DISABILITY ALLIANCE BC AND PLAN INSTITUTE, MADE POSSIBLE WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE VANCOUVER FOUNDATION.

THANK YOU TO THE BC NURSE PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR COLLABORATION ON THIS RESOURCE.

Savings on Internet Services

by TELUS

Internet for Good™ is a program offered in BC and Alberta to eligible Canadians with disabilities and their families.

Program highlights include:

- Internet connectivity for \$9.95/month (plus applicable taxes) for 24 months; regular pricing thereafter
- Speeds of up to 25 megabits per second (where available) and up to 300 gigabytes of data per month
- Option to purchase a low cost refurbished computer through BC Technology for Learning
- No contract or cancellation fees
- Digital literacy support available at any of our TELUS Learning Centres
- Access to free TELUS Wise® training and tools to participate safely in our digital world

Eligibility for people with disabilities

Internet for Good™ is available in BC to people who receive the BC Persons with Disabilities (PWD) benefit or the Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefit (CPPD).

Documentation needed

Approved documentation identifying you as a current recipient of the PWD benefit includes:

- CRA Statement of Canada Pension Plan Benefit T4A(P)

- BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Confirmation of Assistance statement

Program in schools

We have empowered schools across Alberta and BC to extend our Internet for Good™ offer directly to families in need.


If you have school-aged children and are in need of Internet access, please discuss your situation with your child's teacher or Principal. The Principal will request codes from TELUS on behalf of families in need. Once families receive a code from their Principal, they can call TELUS at 1-866-835-8744 to redeem the offer.

Eligibility for low-income Canadian families

The program supports low-income Canadian families in BC who have children under the age of majority and are currently receiving the maximum Canada Child Benefit.

Documentation needed

A Canada Child Benefit (CCB) statement showing your family net income of less than or equal to \$31,120.

See full details, eligibility requirements and how to apply at <https://tinyurl.com/yes7z9mb> or contact Telus at internetforgood@telus.com. 

ABOUT TRANSITION

Editorial Statement

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

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transition@disabilityalliancebc.org

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<https://disabilityalliancebc.org/category/publications/transition/>

DABC general:
feedback@disabilityalliancebc.org

A man with a beard and a young girl are looking at a smartphone together. The man is leaning over the girl, and they are both looking at the screen. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with mountains.

Planned Giving

You've always been there for others. It's part of who you are. Now, you can continue to give beyond your lifetime.

Planned Giving is the opportunity 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.

Why Consider a Planned Gift?

There are many benefits to Planned Giving. By writing down your wishes, you will have increased peace of mind and control over your finances.

You can also provide a significant future donation without reducing your income today.

A gift in your Will to DABC will help us to be here in the future for those who need us.

Tax Savings

You can realize significant tax savings with Planned Giving. For example, stocks, bonds and mutual funds

that you may have in a Trust can be transferred in your will to a charity and a tax receipt will be issued.

We're Here to Help

Our donors are important to us and we'll work with you to be recognized in the way that you'd prefer.

If you would like more information about Planned Giving, please contact Karen at DABC at karen@disabilityalliancebc.org or 604-875-0188. She will send you DABC's Planned Giving information to review with your financial planner or lawyer, family and friends.

Download our Resources

- Brochure (<https://tinyurl.com/yxbmn3b2>)
- Information Sheet (<https://tinyurl.com/yxnghs5f>)

Learn More About Us

- www.disabilityalliancebc.org

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THANK YOU!



• BY SARAH CHEUNG, VANCOUVER

I have learned a lot about myself through this period of unbelievable change. When 2020 started, I didn't think social distancing and working remotely would become the new norms. But, if nothing else, last year continually showed me that humans can adapt in ways I did not think were possible.

At the beginning of the year, I was working with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction as part of the Work-Able Internship Program.

When the lockdown restrictions were imposed in March, I transitioned to working remotely and had to re-learn how to do my work without physically being in the office.

The support I received from my team and people in the community was incredible. I felt extremely cared for, even though I was in a kind of isolation, like most of us. I am in awe of how we have supported each other in this extremely challenging time.

And, however difficult the COVID restrictions have been for our physical and mental health, I am grateful for the doors it has opened. I am optimistic for what 2021 will bring because 2020 proved that accessibility in the workplace is possible.

Like other people with disabilities, I asked past employers if working remotely would be feasible, but was



usually met with hesitation or resistance. Workplace accommodations were seen as an inconvenience or a duty to meet accessibility standards, rather than a human right.

Now, working from home is the norm. The playing field has been levelled.

I am excited to see how workplace accessibility will improve even more in the year ahead, and I will continue to advocate for full inclusivity and flexibility in the workplace.

I am optimistic for what 2021 will bring because 2020 proved that accessibility in the workplace is possible.

I plan to continue advocating for people with disabilities on as many fronts as possible.

In addition to serving on the Board of Directors of DABC, I also sit on the City of Vancouver's Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and Cure SMA's Advisory Committee.

I'm a Social Worker by training, so I always aim to use that expertise, as well as my lived experience, to advocate for marginalized or vulnerable individuals. It is my dream to help create an inclusive community that values the strengths and resilience of all its citizens. Let's hope that 2021 brings us all closer to that goal. **1**



Connect with DABC

ABOUT US

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

FRONTLINE 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. Access RDSP helps people with the Disability Tax Credit and with opening a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).

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

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

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

FREE PUBLICATIONS

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

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).

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

Please return your payment/donation with this form to:
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Please check the applicable boxes:

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☐ 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.

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Our rent for the new DABC offices has increased by 100%.

If you support DABC's work, please consider a one-time contribution or become a monthly donor. Our monthly donors help us to create a funding base we can count on.

Please visit our Support page at <http://disabilityalliancebc.org/support-us> for ways you can give.

Thank you for helping us continue our work on behalf of people with disabilities.

Use our Disability Tax Credit App


Did you know that Access RDSP offers an online Disability Tax Credit (DTC) app?

The app is a self-help tool designed to give your healthcare provider the information they need to fill out your DTC Certificate application form.

Here's how it works:

- The app takes you through some basic questions to get some sense of your restrictions and your eligibility for the DTC.
- We compile your responses in documents you can download and print.
- You take your responses to your healthcare provider when you discuss the DTC.
- Your healthcare provider can use your responses to help them fill out the form.

To access the new DTC Online app, go to: <https://disabilityalliancebc.org/dtc-app>.

To learn more about how Access RDSP can help you apply for the RDSP and the DTC, please contact us at rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org, 604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278. 



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Sometimes it's hard to know what you can do to help.

When you join DABC's Visionaries Circle with monthly giving, you'll be providing the best support possible. Even a small amount goes a long way and provides a stable funding base for planning our programs and services.

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

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3 column large	\$650	\$555	\$465
2 column small	\$300	\$250	\$210
1 column	\$340	\$280	\$245
1 column mini	\$200	\$175	\$150

BLACK ONLY ADS			
Ad size position	Number of editions booked		
	1	2	3
COVER PAGES			
Outside back cover			
Front inside cover	\$900	\$765	\$635
Back inside cover	\$750	\$635	\$495
INSIDE PAGES			
Full page	\$710	\$600	\$485
2 columns	\$525	\$450	\$385
3 column large	\$500	\$410	\$365
2 column small	\$240	\$190	\$170
1 column	\$265	\$225	\$185
1 column mini	\$155	\$135	\$110

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CELEBRATING OVER

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YEARS

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

