In the Stream

Winter 2008

Investing in Futures: An Independent Living Approach to Education Savings Incentives By John Mossa

In spring of 2007, our national organization, the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) launched **Investing in Futures: An Independent Living Approach to Education Savings Incentives.**[i]
It is a three year national project that will support member Independent Living Resource Centres (ILRCs), like CILT, to provide post-secondary education and savings resources, tools and supports to parents with disabilities as well as the parents of children with disabilities.

Investing in Futures has three specific Project Objectives:

- To promote and facilitate methods of post secondary savings to parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities;
- To design and implement a national outreach, training, and awareness campaign on the educational savings plan initiative to be delivered through member ILRCs across Canada; and
- To facilitate diverse partnerships at the local, regional, and national levels.

The project will enable participants to take advantage of existing government education and savings incentives such as the Registered Educational Savings Plans (RESPs), Canada Educational Savings Grants, and the Canada Learning Bonds. CAILC will enhance CILT'S capacity to support parents with disabilities and parents with children with disabilities in accessing education and savings information, and to access training in order to help support local communities. This project aims to ensure that interested individuals have access to financial institutional services and financial literacy programs that will enable long-term educational savings.

With CAILC's support over the next 3 years, CILT's role is to provide information packages, develop community partnerships, facilitate workshops/information sessions, write informative newsletters such as, 'In the Stream', and record the number of participants attending workshops as well the number of RESP/Savings Plans opened by parents with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities who wish to disclose.

CAILC has already developed seven information sheets which can be downloaded at http://www.ilcanada.ca/article/information-sheets--391.a
Here is a summary of the seven information sheets.[ii]

Information Sheet 1: Registered education Savings Plan

A Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) is an effective way for family and/or friends to save toward a child's education. It offers tax benefits and allows you to take advantage of special grants. There are different kinds of plans to choose from, so it is wise to shop around.

There are different kinds of RESPs:

- Individual plans
- Family plans
- Pooled Funds / Scholarship Trust Plans

Here are the benefits of RESPs:

- No taxes are charged on the interest earned while it is in the RESP plan so your money will grow faster.
- No Bank Account: You don't need to have a bank account to open up an RESP.
- No Money to put in a Plan: You do not need to deposit any money into a plan to potentially qualify for the $2,000 Canada Learning Bond.

Easy access to Government Grants:

- Opening an account could qualify you for the Canada Learning Bond ($500 in the first year and then $100 annually for fifteen years).
- Making a deposit could qualify you for up to $500 in Canadian Education Savings Grants.
- Residents of Alberta can qualify for up to $800 Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan.

Where do I open an RESP?

You can open an RESP through banks, credit unions, mutual fund companies, investment dealers and scholarship plan dealers.

What do I need to open an RESP?

- Birth Certificate for your Child
- If your child was not born in Canada, a citizen certificate or a permanent resident card is acceptable.
- Social Insurance Number for both you and the child
- Only $1 is needed to open an RESP

How do I apply for a social insurance number?
Visit your local Service Canada Centre or go to www.servicecanada.gc.ca

How do I apply for a birth certificate?
Differs from province to province: check with your local ILRC or your provincial government.

How Do I Get Started? Solutions:

- ✓ Get a Birth Certificate for your child and Social Insurance Number Cards.
- ✓ Go to financial institution of your choice (bank, credit union, or group plan dealer).
- ✓ Be informed and ask questions.
- ✓ Bring one looney ($1) with you to open the account.
- ✓ Contact John Mossa at CILT for more information and assistance at (416) 599-2458 ext.38, TTY (416) 599-5077 and/or by e-mail at ilskills@cilt.ca.

Information Sheet 2: Types of Registered Education Savings Plans

An RESP is a special savings plan that can help you, your family, or friends save for a child's education after high school. There are 3 basic types of Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs): (1) Individual Plans, (2) Family Plans, and (3) Group Plans.

Individual Plans: Any one can open an individual RESP and anyone can contribute to it. This includes parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends. You can even contribute to an individual plan for yourself.

Family Plans: You can have one or more beneficiaries (student), but each beneficiary must be related to the contributor. The beneficiaries must be under 21 when they are named. Contributions can only be made until a beneficiary turns 21.

Group Plans are also known as Pooled Funds: Offered by Group Plan Dealers and known as Scholarship Trusts. Each plan has its own rules. There are both pros and cons of this kind of plan versus the individual or family plan.

Service Fees: Some RESP providers charge service fees and some do not. Some may also limit the amount of money you can put into a plan and tell you how often you can contribute.

Other things to consider: How long before your child goes on to post secondary education? This factor may help you in deciding what kind of plan to choose.

What you need to know:

- Some plans require automatic or monthly deposits, and some do not.
- Plans with minimum monthly deposits have different minimums.

- Some plans have service charges and some do not.
- Some plans invest in GICs/savings accounts, while others invest in the stock market which is more risky.
- You need to consider how much risk you are willing to take.
- Some plans have consistently shown better annual returns (more $ in your RESP) than other plans.

Solutions:

- ✓ Go to government websites to learn more. One good site is http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/learning/education_savings/index.shtml
- ✓ Shop around before you open an account. Service charges and plans differ. Find the one that best suits your needs.
- ✓ Be informed and go to ***Information Sheet #7*** for pertinent questions to ask.

Information Sheet 3: Canada Learning Bond

The Canada Learning Bond (CLB) is funded by the Federal Government. Children who qualify can receive up to $2000.00 toward higher education even if you don't have money to invest!!

Facts to Remember:

- You can get the $500 Canada Learning Bond if your Child was born after January 1, 2004.
- If you get the National Child Benefit Supplement as part of the Canada Child Tax Benefit (sometimes called the family allowance or baby bonus payment), you could receive another $100.00 per year for up to 15 years as long as you continue to receive the National Child Benefit Supplement without investing any money.
- Over time, the Canada Learning Bond could add up to $2,000 in grant money (plus interest) for your child's education after high school.
- You will need to open a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) in order to receive the grant if you are eligible.
- The Canada Learning Bond will be deposited right into your child's RESP.
- At some financial institutes, opening an account may be free, while others may charge a fee.
- The first deposit of the Canada Learning Bond includes $25.00 to offset any fees.

To qualify for a Canada Learning Bond:

- Your child must be a Canadian Resident
- Have a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Have been born on or after January 1, 2004

- And you must be entitled to receive the National Child Benefit Supplement.

You do not need money to invest if you don't have it. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other family members and even friends can contribute to the Plan. If you or your family and friends contribute, you can also get 40 cents for every $1.00 up to $500.

Solutions:

- ✓ Ask your local bank, credit union or other financial institution about the Canada Learning Bond.
- ✓ Don't have a birth certificate or a social insurance number? Your financial institution or CILT can advise you of how or where to apply.

Information Sheet 4: Using Your Registered Education Savings

Your plan should be for your child or the person named in the plan to start drawing money out of the Registered Educational Savings Plan (RESP) once he/she enrolls in a qualified post-secondary educational program.

Facts:

Qualified educational programs include:

- Apprenticeships & programs offered by a trade school, college or university.
- Usually a qualified educational program is a course of study that lasts at least three weeks in a row, with at least 10 hours of instruction or work in one week.

Part-time studies:

- RESP funds can be used for either full or part time study in a qualified program.

Keeping an RESP open:

- An RESP can stay open for a maximum of 26 years.
- There is no age limit for opening an RESP.
- If the recipient has a disability, he/she may keep the plan open for 31 years, five years longer than a regular RESP.

How soon can the person(s) named in the plan start using the money?

- The student can start receiving the money from the RESP as soon as he or she is finished high school and enrolled in a qualified program.

- To find out more about qualified education programs ask your RESP provider or call the Consumer Financial Agency of Canada at 1-866-461-3222.

What to do if the person named in the RESP does not continue education after high school?

- Wait for a period of time and the individual may decide to continue post-secondary studies later.
- Transfer the money to a brother or sister's RESP.
- Transfer the money you invested into your RRSP to help you save for your retirement.
- Withdraw the money, but ask how much tax you might have to pay.
- The Canada Learning Bond portion cannot be transferred and must be returned to the Government of Canada.

Before closing out an RESP:

- ✓ Do not act too quickly.
- ✓ Investigate your options and speak with someone from the company that you purchased the RESP from.
- ✓ Consult your local Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) to ensure that you have considered all your options, or to be referred to a qualified financial advisor for a second opinion.

Information Sheet 5: Canada Education Savings Grant

The Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG) is money that is added to your Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) by the Federal Government.

Tips to maximize educational savings for your child:

- For every $1 that you deposit into the (RESP), up to $2,500 per year, the Government of Canada will deposit an extra 20 cents.
- In real dollar terms, that means up to $400 could be added to your (RESP) every year.
- If your net family income was less than $37,178 in 2007, you could be eligible to receive the enhanced Education Savings Grant (CESG).
- The government will deposit an additional 20 cents (40 cents in total) for every $1 you deposit into the RESP up to $500 and 20 cents after up to $2,500.
- If your net family income is below $74,357, the Government of Canada will give you 30 cents for every $1.00 up to $500 and 20 cents after up to $2,500.

- No matter what your net family income is, the grant provides at least 20 cents for every dollar up to $2,500 annually.

The benefits of using all available government programs to benefit your child:

Parent / family / friends deposit if Income is less than $37,178

Minimum deposit (open)	$ 1
First deposit (up to)	$500
CESG deposit (40 cents per $1.00 on first $500)	$200
Total RESP balance on first $500 (20 cents per $1.00 up to $2,500)	$701

Parent / family / friend deposit if income is less than $74,357

Minimum deposit (open)	$ 1
On your first deposit of	$500
CESG deposit (30 cents per $1.00 on first $500)	$150
Total RESP Balance on first $500 (20 cents after up to $2,500)	$651

Solutions:

- ✓ Go to your bank, credit union or financial institution and ask to open a RESP.
- ✓ The various grants are automatic. Your RESP application will contain the information needed by the government to determine what grants will be added to your RESP.
- ✓ If you can afford it, set up an automatic monthly deposit into your RESP in order to take maximum advantage of the available grants.

Information Sheet 6: Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan

The Alberta Centennial Education Savings Plan (ACES) provides up to $800 in Alberta grants for an Albertan child's RESP. The child must have been born or adopted in 2005 or later and parents/guardians must be residents of Alberta**.** If you would like more information on this fact sheet you can download it at http://www.ilcanada.ca/article/information-sheets--391.asp

Information Sheet 7: Know the Ins and Outs of Investing in RESPs

A Registered Educational Savings Plan (RESP) can be an effective way to save for post-secondary education, but different plans have different features, risks and costs.

Questions that Investors should ask!!

Have you compared the different types of RESPs?

Different types of plans are available at banks, credit unions, mutual fund companies, investment dealers or scholarship plan dealers. Before you commit, be sure you understand all your options.

What fees are you expected to pay, and when?

You may have to pay sales fees when you open a plan, plus other costs as long as you hold the plan.

Do you have a choice about when and how much you contribute?

Most plans let you decide when and how much to contribute, up to the annual and lifetime limits. Some plans require you to make contributions according to a set schedule. In this case, if you miss a payment, your plan may be cancelled and you could lose your earnings. You will receive your contributions back, less any fees.

What kinds of post-secondary programs qualify?

Programs offered by colleges, universities, trade schools, and other certified institutions are eligible for an RESP. For more information, visit www.canlearn.ca.

When and how will you receive payments from the plan?

To receive payments from your plan, students must show proof of enrolment in a qualifying program to their plan provider, sometimes by a certain deadline. Some plans make payments on a set schedule, while others let you decide. Some plans do not pay out earnings until a student starts the second year of a program.

What if the student does not go on to post-secondary education, or does not complete their program?

You receive your contributions back, less any fees. In most cases you will receive your earnings. Some plans may keep these earnings and share them with the remaining members.

What if you sign up for a plan, but change your mind?

For group scholarship plans, you can cancel the plan at no cost within 60 days of signing the application. For other types of plans, this time frame may depend on the type of investment you bought. Information is provided by the Ontario Securities Commission at www.osc.gov.on.ca.

Solutions:

- ✓ Don’t open an RESP unless you feel comfortable with the information and answers to your questions.

- ✓ If you need support, don’t hesitate to contact CILT and/or talk to your local bank, credit union, group planner or financial planner.

Your Feedback & Upcoming Information Sessions/Workshops

Your feedback is very important to us! We would like to know if these seven information sheets were helpful and clear. We want your input and/or questions that you would like addressed in an information session/workshop. We will be planning several information sessions in March and April. We also would like to know if you have opened any RESPs because of this project so that we can report any success of this project to the Federal government. You can call John Mossa, Independent Living Skills Trainer at (416) 599-2458 ext 38, by TTY at (416) 599-5077 or by e-mail at ilskills@cilt.ca.

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[1] **This project is funded by the Canadian Government though the Department of Human Resources and Social Development.**

[2] **This series of Information Sheets was created for the Investing in Futures Initiative funded through the Canada Education Savings Program, Human Resources and Social Development Canada. Find the series at www.cailc.ca.**

Reaction to Landmark Canadian Transportation Agency Decision:Disabled Canadians Jubilant to Have Transport Barrier Removed © Council of Canadians with Disabilities, January 10, 2008.

The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) released a landmark decision concerning the right of individuals with disabilities to travel by air without having to pay for a second seat, for an attendant or other use, to accommodate their disability. In a historic decision in the “One Person, One Fare” case, the agency has recognized the right of these individuals to have access to a second seat when traveling by air in Canada without having to pay a second fare.

The CTA decision acknowledged the importance of a number of established human rights principles underlying the arguments of the complainants in the case, noting that these principles dictate that persons with disabilities have the same rights as others to full participation in all aspects of society and that equal access to transportation is critical to their exercise of that right.

“The Canadian Transportation Agency recognized the fundamental soundness of our arguments, which have a strong foundation in existing human rights jurisprudence,” said David Baker of *bakerlaw*, legal counsel for the complainants in the case. “While the number of people who will benefit and the actual cost to the airlines are larger than in any previous case, the principles applied by the Agency in its decision were clearly established by the Supreme Court of Canada in its March 2007 CCD (Council of Canadians with Disabilities) v. VIA Rail decision," said David Baker.

Disabled Canadians said the decision had the potential to make an enormous difference in their lives. "This is about independence," said Sandra Carpenter of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto. "It's about our ability to be part of Canadian society and to have barriers to our participation removed."

The decision was many years in coming – the late Eric Norman, Joanne Neubauer, and the Council of Canadians with Disabilities filed the original complaint with the CTA in 2002, seeking to establish a situation of equality for passengers with disabilities who travel with attendants. For many years, Canadians with disabilities traveling by train, bus or marine service have been permitted to use a second seat without cost when one was required. But airlines such as Air Canada, Westjet, and Jazz have not been bound to obey this policy, meaning that many Canadians with disabilities have been forced to effectively pay double what others pay to fly.

Now that all seems set to change. For more information or to comment on the decision, contact:

Mr. David Baker, Legal Counsel, 416-533-0040 Ext 222

Ms. Sandra Carpenter, Acting Executive Director, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto, 416-599-2458 Ext 36

Ms. Joanne Neubauer, 250-881-1936

Mr. Jim Derksen, CCD Policy Advisor, 204-781-4187

Ms. Pat Danforth, Chair, Transportation Committee, 250-595-0044

Mr. Laurie Beachell, National Coordinator CCD, 204-947-0303

Mr. Claredon Robicheau, Member CCD Transportation Committee
(available for French interviews), 902-769-2474

CHS Releases Position Paper on Discrimination and Audism to Coincide with International Day of Disabled Persons

The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) recently released its position paper on Discrimination and Audism.

“Like people with any disability, Canadians who are Deaf or have a form of hearing loss continue to experience discrimination,” said Gary Malkowski, CHS Special Advisor to the President, Public Affairs. “It is happening not only in the workplace but even when accessing *vital* services the rest of us take for granted such as education, health care, and housing.”

The position paper, developed as a tool to educate on issues of discrimination as they relate to culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing Canadians, discusses specifically the forms of discrimination rooted in “audism”. A key term often unfamiliar or misunderstood, audism is defined as the notion that a person’s superiority is rooted in their ability to hear and speak.

The growing prevalence of hearing loss in Canada makes this form of discrimination an increasing concern. Currently, the average age in Canada is 39 years; by 2030 it will be 45 years. Couple this with statistics that show hearing loss as the third most prevalent chronic condition in older adults and the most widespread disability, it is a disability poised to climb dramatically in numbers as our population ages.

“Our vision is to work towards ensuring that attitudes change and barriers come down,” said Kelly Duffin, CHS President and CEO. “That includes some of the more subtle forms of discrimination, for instance, an apartment is given to someone else because a landlord is reluctant to rent to someone who is Deaf or a person with a hearing loss not hired for a job because of ‘safety concerns’. It happens and it’s unfair. Our intention is that this paper will serve as an essential reference for government, employers, and media to move us closer to a society where all people are respected and included.”

Since 1940, The Canadian Hearing Society has been the leading provider of services, products, and information that remove barriers to communication, advance hearing health, and promote equity for people who are culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing.

You can read the full position paper at:
http://www.chs.ca/info/publicaffairs/pdf/CHSPositionOnDiscrimination.pdf

Backgrounder

The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) was incorporated in 1940 to provide services, products and information to culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing people and to educate the hearing public. CHS is governed by a board of directors, the majority of whom are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing. The organization is funded by government, internal revenue generation including fundraising, and the United Way.

Unique in North America, CHS offers a complete roster of essential services under one roof through 27 offices including sign language interpreting to bridge the gap between Deaf and hearing people; one-on-one language development for deaf children using play as the medium of learning; employment services; sign language instruction; speechreading training; and, the most complete range of communication devices that assist and augment communication including TTYs (text telephones), visual smoke detectors, baby monitors and alarm clocks.

Terminology:

Language is a powerful tool – it both shapes and is shaped by ideas, perceptions and attitudes. And it’s these very attitudes that can pose the most difficult barriers for people who are culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing.

The following terms describe people, their language of communication and self-identification. As an organization which serves these communities and educates the hearing public, we avoid using terms such as “hearing impaired” or “normal or abnormal hearing” or colloquialisms such as “falling on deaf ears.”

Oral deaf: This term is generally used to describe individuals with a severe to profound hearing loss, with little or no residual hearing. Some deaf people use sign language such as American Sign Language (ASL) or Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) to communicate. Others use speech to communicate, using their residual hearing and hearing aids, communication devices or cochlear implants, and lipreading or speechreading.

Culturally Deaf: This term refers to individuals who identify with and participate in the language, culture, and community of Deaf people, based on sign language. Deaf culture, indicated by a capital “D,” does not perceive hearing loss and deafness as a disability, but as the basis of a distinct cultural group. Culturally Deaf people may also use speech reading, gesturing, spoken language, and written English to communicate with people who do not sign.

Deafened: This term describes individuals who grow up hearing or hard of hearing and, either suddenly or gradually, experience a profound hearing loss. Deafened adults usually use speech with visual cues such as captioning or computerized note-taking, speech reading or sign language.

Hard of Hearing: This term is generally used to describe individuals whose hearing loss ranges from mild to severe, and occasionally profound. Hard of hearing people use speech and residual hearing to communicate, supplemented by communication strategies that may include speech reading, hearing aids, sign language and communication devices. The term “person with hearing loss” is increasingly used and preferred by this constituency.

Cool Ways to Beat the Winter Blues By Nancy Barry

Sourced and Edited by Nicole Nichols, Fitness Instructor & Health Educator

Winter is in full force. As the days get shorter and the nights get colder, even the best of us can get a little down. The "winter blues" are characterized by the mild depression, lack of motivation, and low energy that many people experience during this cold season. Luckily, there’s a lot you can do to both prevent the blues from coming on and get yourself back to normal if they’re already here.

1. **Exercise**
   As if we needed another reason to get fit! Exercise isn’t only for maintaining your weight and staying healthy. It’s great for relieving the stresses of life. Plus, the effects of a good workout can last for several hours after you hit the showers. You’ll have more energy throughout the day, and your metabolism with stay elevated too. Exercise also helps your mind by releasing those "feel good chemicals" that improve your mood. If possible, choose exercises that are appropriate for you and your abilities (i.e. swimming, leg lifts, stretching).

2. **Eat a Healthy Diet**
   What and when you eat has a great affect on your mood and energy. Avoid refined and processed foods (like white breads, rice, and sugar). These foods are not only devoid of the nutrients your body craves, but they zap your energy levels and can affect your mood—causing depression, lack of concentration, and mood swings. Try to incorporate more complex carbohydrates (whole wheat breads, brown rice, veggies, fruit) and get your daily 8 cups of water. These healthy foods provide your body (and mind) with nutrients, and stabilize your blood sugar and your energy levels.

3. **Get Some Sun**
   Most people know that sunlight provides us with Vitamin D. But did you know that it also improves your mood? Winter days are shorter and darker than other months, and because of the cold weather, a lot of people spend

less and less time outdoors. Lack of sunlight can cause many people to become depressed—without knowing why! Similar to exercise, sunlight exposure releases neurotransmitters in the brain that affect mood. Try to spend a little more time outdoors (and don't forget the sun block—even in the winter). Keep your shades up during the day to let more light in. Sit near windows in restaurants and during class. Try changing the light bulbs in your house to "full spectrum" bulbs. These mimic natural light and actually have the same affects on your mind as the real thing.

4. **Act on your Resolutions**
   A recent study showed a strong link between healthy behaviors and depression. Women who exhibited healthy behaviors (like exercising, not smoking, etc.) had less sad and depressed days than those whose behaviors were less than healthy. Although researchers studied women, the results are likely similar in men.

5. **Avoid Binge Drinking**
   Staying in with a cold beer or a nice glass of wine may seem like the only thing to do in the winter months, and many people who feel down also tend to turn to alcohol when they're feeling down. But alcohol is actually a depressant, and rather than improving your mood, it only makes it worse. Avoiding alcohol when you are already depressed is a good idea. Moderate drinking is fine for most people, but binge drinking (defined as having 5 or more drinks in one sitting) is never a healthy choice. The morning after will have you feeling sick, depressed, and even more tired, which will affect many aspects of your life. This will make your low energy and bad mood even worse.

6. **Treat Yourself**
   Having something to look forward to can keep anyone motivated. Winter seems endless! But if you plan something exciting, your mood improves when you're anticipating it and when the event actually comes. Plan something that's exciting to you—a weekend trip, a day at the spa, a party (but keep #5 above in mind), or special event like a play, girls (or guys) night out, or sporting event.

7. **Relax!**
   You're busy! Work, class, family, friends, appointments, meetings—even if you enjoy being busy, everyone needs some time off. Don't be afraid to say "No" to extra opportunities (covering a shift for a co-worker, bringing food to your son's class party). Try to spend a few minutes each day doing nothing! Read a book or magazine, sleep in on the weekend, go to bed early, try some meditations, or take a yoga class. Relaxation, especially in the form of yoga, can alleviate stress and leave you with a calm energy. Mental exercises like meditation and positive thinking can help keep

depression at bay.

8. **Embrace the Season**
   Instead of always avoiding the cold and the snow—look for the best that it has to offer! Bundle up well and spend a little time outdoors, even if it's for just a few minutes a day. Seeing winter in a positive light, with all the fun activities that it has to offer, will keep your spirits high.

9. **Get Social Support**
   Don't underestimate the power of friends, family, mentors, co-workers, and neighbors. Who can you turn to when you're down and need a pick-me-up? Keep a mental list of these special people and don't be afraid to ask for help or encouragement when you need it. Something as simple as a phone call, a chat over coffee, or a nice email or letter can brighten your mood.

10. **Catch some Zzzz's**
    People naturally want to sleep a little bit more during the winter. But with all we have going on, sometimes sleep is the first thing to go. With a little time management, and some self-discipline, you can meet your shut-eye needs. Aim for 7-8 hours each night, and try to keep your bedtime and waking time consistent. That way, your sleeping patterns can normalize and you'll have more energy. Try not to oversleep—those 12-hour snoozes on the weekend can actually make you MORE tired. Don't forget naps! A short (10-30 minute) afternoon nap may be all you need to re-energize midday.

The Dr. E. Bruce Hendrick Scholarship Program

The Dr. E. Bruce Hendrick Scholarship Program was established in 1990 and is supported and directed by the Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario. It was named in honour of Dr. E. Bruce Hendrick as a tribute to his dedication, on-going support and outstanding service to our members, and was established to encourage and support students with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus to develop independence and responsibility for their own future educational directions; and to assist students to pursue higher education with the ultimate goal of obtaining a degree or graduate certificate or diploma.

The awards are valid at any accredited university or college, technical or trade school, career institute or school of business. The number and amount of awards will be decided on a yearly basis and are good for one academic year.

The program is administered by the Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario and is open to Canadian citizens with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus, residing in the province of Ontario. The selection of the award recipient will be made by the Program Advisory Committee. When making its decision, this committee will take into account the applicant's motivation, self-awareness, and goal setting, as well as potential for success. The Committee (in consultation with the successful applicant) will determine how funds will be paid. Notification of awards will be made in May annually.

Recipients must enter/attend their chosen academic program in the year of application. Requests for deferment will be considered only in unsual circumstances such as illness. Proof of registration must be submitted before the award can be paid out. In the event that the student does not complete the academic program, he/she must submit documentation stating the reasons for his/her inability to complete the proposed course load in order to be considered for future scholarships.

Applicants must use the current year's application form to qualify. Forms may be obtained by mail from:

Spina Bifida & Hydrocepalus Association of Ontario
Dr. E. Bruce Hendrick Scholarship Program
555 Richmond Street West
P.O.Box #103, Suite #1006
Toronto, Ontario M5V 3B1

The completed application must be returned by mail to the address above, along with the following:

- academic transcripts, including the most recently completed semester. For students still in secondary school, a copy of the second semester mid-term report, or, if the school is not semestered, a copy of the last report issued;

- the medical assessment form (not required if you have previously applied, unless your situation has changed);

- one letter of reference from an adult other than a family member, such as a minister, youth group leader, coach, volunteer supervisor or employer;

- one letter of reference from a teacher, principal, guidance counsellor. If you are already attending a post-secondary institution, one letter must be from one of your professors or instructors;

- a letter from you (the applicant) describing why you think you are deserving of this award-this is your opportunity to tell us about yourself; how spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus has affected your education and your life in general; a goal you set for yourself and how you achieved it; and any other information that you feel would be helpful for the Program Advisory Committee to make their decision.

The application deadline is always the last business day of April yearly. (Applications received after this time can not be considered.)

MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Living Social Impact Study

An international study is being conducted by The MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Living Social Impact Study Team, an independent Canadian research group. This study will examine the social disruption a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis has on victims and their families, from the perspectives and viewpoints of the people who are wrestling with MS on a daily basis. This is a project conducted by persons with MS for persons with MS and is concerned exclusively with the social aspects of this disease.

The information collected from the study will be used to prepare a “User's Handbook” with practical advice that comes from the people who know the issues best, providing workable information for people searching for practical advice on how to live successfully with MS, written in plain language and available in a number of formats at no cost.

MS is a disease with an incredible number of variations. Not one person approached will satisfy the needs of everyone in the study. A segmented format is being applied to ensure that each person need only complete those sections of the survey that directly relate to their personal experiences, while accommodating the variations in how the disease manifests itself in different people and changes over a course that can span several decades.

This project is international in scope, and participants with MS and their families are invited to take part in this study. A website is under development for ‘MS Living’, and until it is operational, all communication should be via e-mail to msliving@eagle.ca . The survey and its results will be available on the website in Word 2003 and text format. Other sections will deal with a number of topics that are integrally important to persons impacted by MS.

Did You know……..? Interesting Tidbits

Stylist On-Call's In-Home and On Location Hairstyling Program

Stylist On-Call's Fall/Winter Mobile Hairstyling Service Outreach Program is officially underway and accepting referrals from community healthcare workers on behalf of clients throughout the GTA and surrounding areas.

Established in 1980, Stylist On Call has provided people in the community with all types of in-home hairstyling services. Stylist On Call currently serves over 300 areas throughout the GTA and surrounding areas. It provides in-home service to seniors and people with disabilities. Clients receive a full range of hairstyling services including cuts, wash and sets, blow-dry styles, perms, colour treatments and highlights all at prices starting from $15.

For the past 27 years, the professional team of stylists has been providing hairstyling services to clients in the comfort, convenience and safety of their own home or hospital room.

Both seniors and special needs clients that require the Stylist On Call service may qualify to deduct a portion of their services from their year end income tax.

For more information contact the office, Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 416-630-5001 or 1-800-863-2887.

Vet on wheels

Gerrard Mobile, a professional service in the convenience of clients' Homes, has been proudly serving the Toronto area for over six years. Vet on Wheels provides general practice for cats and dogs. Hours are 8 a.m. to 12 a.m., 7 days a week. Other services offered include:

* Delivery of Prescription Cat and Dog Food
* Physical Exam
* Vaccination
* Medical
* Heartworm Test
* Surgical (Referral)

For further information, please contact Gerrard Mobile Veterinary Services at 416-284-4610, by fax at 416-284-9114, or email to badriahmad@yahoo.com, Monday to Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to 12 Midnight.

The MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Global Dinner Party: Saturday, February 23, 2008

Since 2003, the annual MS Global Dinner Party (GDP) has united MS organizations around the world. MS supporters worldwide host a dinner party event for MS. This global event raises funds for MS nationally and internationally, promotes awareness of the disease and supports national MS societies in the global movement to find the cause and a cure for MS.

Events can range from formal catered dinners to casual home gatherings. Instead of bringing a gift for the host, everyone invited is asked to make a donation to support the fight against MS. The event does not have to include food - a quiz or film evening could be organized or a play or concert performed.

To make participating in the GDP even easier, we provide all the materials national MS societies and individual hosts need to promote the event, including registration forms, invitations, donation cards and posters.

Take part and support the MS global movement! Register your event at www.msif.org/en/get_involved/msif_events/ms_global_dinner_party/gdp_organising.html.

Looking for a Seneca College student with MS

Are you or do you know of a Seneca College student with MS? If so, the Toronto Chapter of the MS Society would like to speak with you regarding a possible interview. Please call Lynn Laccohee at 416-967-3032.

That Really Grinds My Gears! By Nancy Barry

Have you ever been in a situation that really “grinds your gears”? The first time I heard that expression used by the infamous Peter Griffin on the hit sitcom, “Family Guy”, I couldn’t stop laughing. And then I thought, “hey, what a neat expression!” And, “Boy, can I relate to that!”

Yes, Peter Griffin is a fictitious character, but I think we all have found ourselves in situations that really “grind our gears”, or that really frustrate the heck out of us, especially as people living with disabilities. I think that releasing frustration can be a positive thing, as long as it’s done in a way that doesn’t harm others, but most importantly, that empowers us to try and find solutions to difficult scenarios.

For example, you know what really grinds my gears?

- When people park their vehicles in handicapped parking designated areas who do not have a sticker, and/or who don’t even have a disability. That really grinds my gears!

- When people see me sitting in my wheelchair, waiting patiently for the elevator, then dash in front of me when it arrives, forcing me to have to wait for the next one. That really grinds my gears!

- When people are walking toward me, not watching where they are going, simply because they are talking to the person next to them or are window shopping, and bump into me and look at me as if it's my fault. They act as if I view my power chair as a toy, when really, it's a substitute for my legs. Sure, I have to look where I'm going, but so should everyone else! That really grinds my gears!

- When I go to a restaurant or into a department store with my "non disabled" husband, and the service person directs all their questions and comments to him, about me, as if I'm not even there. What's up with that? They think that because I don't have the full use of my legs, that my mind or my mouth doesn't work? That really grinds my gears!

- When I go to and from work everyday on the GO Train and people are sitting in the wheelchair accessible seating area because they're too tired or too lazy to walk up three steps to the next car. And then when they see me enter, they don't make a move to get up and sit somewhere else until I ask them to. That really grinds my gears!

I'm sure that many of you can relate to some or all of the scenarios I just described. We'd like to hear some of yours, even if they are weird. In fact, the weirder, the better. It makes for good entertainment and can teach us all a lesson or two at the same time.

So I would like to dedicate this new column to all of you out there who feel like letting off a little steam and sharing stories with the rest of us about what grinds your gears as someone living with a disability, and what solutions you have attempted to use the solve the situation, and if that solution has worked for you. I think this is a fun way for all of us to learn from one another.

If you'd like to share, please email a scenario that really grinds your gears to peervolunteer@cilt.ca, or call me at (416) 599-2458, extension 27.

COMMUNITY NEWS

19th Annual People in Motion 2008

People in Motion is for people with disabilities, seniors with special needs, family members and friends, therapists, home care providers, facility managers, special educators and insurance representatives.

Everyone is welcome to this fun and enlightening event which features mobility aids, adapted vehicles, rehabilitation, home healthcare products, travel and leisure activities, corporate and government services, employment opportunities, computer aids, disability publications, associations and more.

See and compare everything under one roof at one time. ***More than 120 exhibits!*** If you have attended before, see it again! There are always new exhibitors with exciting new products and it is important to be aware of changes to existing technology.

MARK THE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW AND PLAN TO ATTEND PEOPLE IN MOTION 2008

Canada's Largest Exhibition for Disabilities
More than 120 exhibits including 16 new displays!

Friday June 6, 2008 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday June 7, 2008 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Queen Elizabeth Building, Exhibition Place

FREE ADMISSION!

* Fully accessible building
* Attendant Services Available
* First Aid On-site
* Some exhibitors will have products to purchase on-site!
* Complimentary Show Guide
* Food and Beverage Area
* Ample Parking

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE
BRING YOUR RESUME!

For more information call 1-800-745-6555 or fax (705) 538-1988. Visit their website at www.people-in-motion.com.

2008 CPA Ontario Membership Forum: ***Sex, Wheels & Relationships III***

When: Thursday, February 14th, 2008

Time: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Location: Canadian National Institute for the Blind

1929 Bayview Avenue (North of Eglinton), Toronto

The CPA Ontario Membership Forum is an opportunity for members to meet and learn, and enables consumers, their partners, health care professionals and researchers to share their experiences and learn from the experts. Morning sessions are particularly geared toward members working in health care, while the afternoon provides an opportunity for those living with SCI (Spinal Cord Injury) or related disabilities, to network and gain the benefit of lived experience from their peers. Come for the morning, the afternoon, or stay all day!

This forum is **free** to all CPA Ontario members. Non-members pay $10 for the forum for entry and receive a full year's membership.

Morning: Healthcare Professional presentation topic outline:

Psychological Effects of Disability on Relationships – Discussing the changing dynamics and roles in a relationship, whether family or romantic.
Speakers: Esther Ignagni, Educator, Ryerson Intro to Disability Studies,
Jen Paterson, Teaching Assistant.

Pregnancy & Women with SCI and related physical disabilities -Discussing the implications of disability on conception, carrying and giving birth.

Erectile Dysfunction & Men with SCI and related physical disabilities - Discussing the implications of disability on achieving and maintaining an erection as well as the enjoyment of intimacy.

PM: Peer to peer discussion group topics:

Dating and contraception – How to meet people as a person with a disability, body image and self esteem, changing expectations, talking about disability, implications of disability on methods of contraception.

Supporting your partner after disability – gradual or sudden onset of disability affects both partners physically and emotionally – how to support each other.

Parenting with a disability – how to approach and adapt the responsibilities of being a parent with a disability, accessing help, how and where to get adaptive equipment (cribs, high chairs, etc.), directing care via a third party.

Power imbalance in relationships – dealing with the changing dynamics and gender roles that result when one partner in a relationship lives with disability.

Erectile dysfunction – how to deal with the emotional and physical challenges presented by this condition, medications, who to talk to for help.

Pregnancy and disability – sharing the scientific and creative solutions for the challenges of becoming pregnant as a woman with a disability.

Confirmed Presenters:

Lisa Bendall – Author, *After Disability* (Keynote)

Esther Ignagni – Educator, Ryerson School of Disability Studies

Jenn Paterson – Teaching Assistant, Ryerson School of Disability Studies

Lew Boles – CPA Ontario Peer Support Volunteer

Lynda Roy – Health Promoter and Coordinator of the SexAbility Program, Anne Johnston Health Station

Susan Davidson – CPA Ontario Peer Support Volunteer

Fernando Resende – CPA Ontario Peer Support Volunteer

Robin Simmons – Social Worker, Birchmount Bluffs Community Centre

Rob Murphy – SCI Pilot Coordinator, Hamilton Health Sciences Centre

Flavio Pagliero – CPA Ontario Peer Support Volunteer

Angie Farquar – CPA Ontario Peer Support Volunteer

SPACE IS LIMITED – Sign up today at memberforumrsvp@cpaont.org

For information on this event please contact Ann Kennedy at 1-877-422-1112 x249 or email ann.kennedy@cpaont.org.

Share Your Experiences and Learn to Effectively Tell Your Story

The Ethno-Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario (ERDCO) will host workshops and public meetings this winter. They are calling on ethnocultural and/or racialized persons with disabilities to get together to share knowledge and experience.

Are you wanting to increase your ability to make contributions to your community? Have you felt excluded/left out because of your disability and culture, race, religion and/or gender?

Please contact ERDCO if you are interested in participating in this workshop. Attendant and ASL services will be provided. They will be soon be circulating information on dates and locations of upcoming events. Call ERDCO 416-657-2211 or email them at erdco_ca@yahoo.ca for more information. This project is funded by the Access, Equity and Human Rights grants program, City of Toronto.

Call for Youth applications for the 2008 Youth Exchange

The Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALA) will bring 50 young people from across Canada to Ottawa for the experience of a lifetime. This program is a partnership between ALA and the YMCA Youth Exchanges Canada program which is funded, in part by the Department of Canadian Heritage. The eighth annual ALA Youth Exchange will be held in **Ottawa** at Carleton University from **June 27th to July 3rd, 2008**.

The Youth Exchange is a celebration of the diversity of disability and Canadian culture. It exposes participants to a wide variety of active living opportunities, provides a cultural experience through interaction with people from across Canada, and inspires and enhances personal leadership qualities. Participants of the Exchange will have the opportunity to learn about community involvement and the advocacy process.

ALACD encourages young Canadians between the ages of 14 and 17 as of June 1st, 2008, to sign up before the February 1st, 2008 deadline. Space is limited!

The cost to participate is **$500 per selected participant which** includes all activity fees. Travel, accommodation, meals, attendant care services (if required) will be provided by the YMCA. The Alliance is dedicated to an inclusive environment and if needed, the Alliance will help you with your fundraising efforts.

For more information on the 2008 Youth Exchange or the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability please visit our website www.ala.ca, contact **Nadia Smith** at **1-800-771-0663 xt.23** or **TTY 1-866-771-0663**, email at nadia@ala.ca .

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Executive Director for the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) Inc. www.cilt.ca

CILT, the largest consumer governed resource centre for people with disabilities in Ontario is seeking a hard working, energetic and innovative leader. Operating on the independent living philosophy, CILT affirms the right of persons with disabilities to control their own lives and live independently. CILT is an accredited member of the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres.

Based in Toronto with a staff of 17, CILT offers a wide range of independent living resources for people in the region. CILT also manages the Direct Funding Services Program for the Province of Ontario.

A challenging and rewarding opportunity for the right person, the Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the overall management and program delivery of the Centre with management of a $25 million budget. S(he) will, implement the policies and mandate of the Board, be the voice of the Centre and represent CILT to media, government representatives and related agencies.

CILT seeks a professional who is a strong originator, communicator and implementer of ideas. This individual will possess excellent interpersonal and communications skills with the capacity to work with a broad range of stakeholders. Building effective relationships and networking with members, donors, business, government, other agencies and the disability community is essential. We are seeking a highly motivated and energetic team builder with a creative and innovative approach to problem solving, implementing business strategies and delivering results.

The ideal candidate will have a graduate degree in a relevant field or demonstrated equivalent skills and abilities, plus relevant professional development in leadership and management. (S)he will have a demonstrable track record of program leadership and development as well as experience with not-for-profit organizations. Experience and knowledge of disability issues is crucial. The successful candidate will have effective public speaking and interpersonal skills as well as proficiency in MS Office, use of the internet and various data bases.

Application Deadline: March 14th, 2008
Term: Open

Apply in confidence to Personnel Committee c/o Centre for Independent Living in Toronto, at info@cilt.ca and/or by mail at 205 Richmond St. W. Suite 605, Toronto Ontario, M5V 1V3.

For a detailed job description, contact Ms. Andrea Murray, Inquiries Generalist - at info@cilt.ca.

CILT offers a competitive salary and benefits package, commensurate with experience, and an excellent work environment.

CILT is an organization with a strong commitment to the philosophy of independent living and the principles of access, equity and diversity. People with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

CILT NEWS

Ten Years of the PDN (Parenting With a Disability Network)

By Kimberly McKennitt, PDN Coordinator

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Parenting with a Disability Network, the only network of its kind in Canada for parents with disabilities, those considering becoming parents and the professionals that work with them. Founded at CILT by a group of highly dedicated women – including Linda Davis-Bonar, Enza Ronaldi, Nancy Barry, Susan Forster, Lenka Petric, Elaine Stewart, Heather Sloman, Sue Riley and Ora Prilleltensky – the PDN emerged at a time when parents with disabilities had access to very few, if any, resources or supports to help guide them through the challenges of raising children, and a time when people with disabilities who were considering a life with children faced such stigma that many doubted or abandoned their pursuit of parenthood.

For the more than 200 current members who attend our social and educational activities or receive our information, peer support and quarterly newsletter, a lot has changed in 10 years. Some of that change is the result of the PDN's efforts over the years and its many obvious successes. We published the *Parenting Book for Persons with a Disability: From planning your family to raising adolescents*. We developed the nurturing assistance model and published *Nurturing Assistance: A Guide to Providing Physical Assistance for Parents with Disabilities*. We've held workshops on important topics such as pregnancy, birthing, sexuality, creating a will, stress management, diet and nutrition and the many trials and tribulations of raising happy and healthy kids. We've attended seminars and conferences, engaged in a number of agency partnerships and facilitated important connections between our members and the media, service providers and others. And we write, print and distribute a newsletter that's received by 225 people across Ontario, Canada and around the world.

I had a lot of positive response to the last PDN newsletter, our 10th Anniversary Edition. Much of that response was because many of you were so pleased to see the return, however brief, of many of the network's former stars. Nancy Barry, who currently runs the Peer Support and Volunteer programs at CILT, wrote about her role in the launch of the PDN and how happy she is to see the program still thriving. Tracy Odell, the undisputed pioneer of the nurturing assistance model and a life-long disability advocate, offered her insights into the realities of parenting with a disability. Susan Forster, a former CILT employee now at CALIC, discussed her experiences as a mother with a visual disability and how social perspectives on parenting with a disability have changed since she helped launch the PDN. We dug deep into the PDN vaults to retrieve and reprint an article by Linda Davis-Bonar on how reaching out and connecting with other parents with disabilities can be truly empowering and transform your life. And to do just that, we asked Ian Parker, CILT’s current manager of the Direct Funding program, to write about his experiences as a Dad with a disability, the joys of parenting and how disability enriches his family.

Articles like these and the others that regularly appear throughout the year are, in many ways, the very heart and soul of the PDN. The reason I say that is because they connect us all in one simple, very fundamental way: sharing. Whether you’re telling your own story or reading someone else’s, it’s the sharing of experiences, tips, joys, struggles, failures, victories and any of life’s (and parenting’s) less monumental moments that let us know that we’re not alone, that others have faced the same obstacles and that they can be overcome.

As the Program Coordinator of the PDN and as a mother, I know this is true. Parenting is not easy. And so, in PDN newsletters to come, I hope to include more stories, however long or short, from parents and prospective parents with disabilities who can make it a little easier because they understand just how vital sharing is to sustaining the PDN and its membership. Also, I would be very interested in hearing from any grandparents out there who I know could add a valuable, new perspective to our network.

In the past, I’ve made phone calls, sent emails and talked to many PDN members about submitting articles. Some have, others have not. For those who have, please consider another. There’s no limit to how much you can share. For those who have not, I recognize that life is hectic, time is short, we’re all tired and very few of us are born authors. But writing a short article, a brief anecdote or even a Top Ten list can make all the difference for someone who could use advice on getting past an obstacle or even just a little help through one of those tough days as a parent. Please drop me a line at pdn@cilt.ca or give me a call at 416-599-2458 extension 34.

Volunteer Program Update: CILT’s Volunteers Attend the “Terry Fox Hall of Fame Luncheon” By Nancy Barry

The ***Terry Fox Hall of Fame*** is a tribute to the courage and spirit of Canadians who have triumphed over their disabilities and to those who have helped them strive toward their goals. It marks the achievements of physically disabled persons who have provided inspiration, hope and help to others. It honours individuals who have worked for Canada’s citizens with physical disabilities. The Terry Fox Hall of Fame officially opened in February 1994.

On Monday November 5th, 2007 CILT’s volunteers attended the CFPDP (Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons) Luncheon for Terry Fox Hall of Fame Inductees. We had a great lunch, followed by opening remarks made by the Honourable David Crombie. Lieutenant Governor, David Onley, made a lovely speech, followed by a presentation to this year's inductees: Elizabeth Grandbois, Joanne Smith and Lauren Woolstencroft.

Elizabeth Grandbois:

Elizabeth Grandbois has worked tirelessly to increase public awareness and understanding of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) since she was diagnosed with the disease 10 years ago. When she found out how little was known about the disease, she felt she had to do something. Elizabeth's Concert of Hope first took place in 2001, and over the next 6 years the concerts have raised $2.5 million for ALS research and support services. Elizabeth also published "In Dreams", in 2002 as an inspiration to other people living with ALS and a one hour documentary "Elizabeth's Hope" has been shown to more than 8,000 viewers nationally and internationally.

Joanne Smith:

A reporter, producer, activist and a powerful force for change, Joanne Smith lives her life to the fullest. After becoming paralyzed at age 19, in a car accident, she developed an active interest in media and disability related issues. As a reporter and producer for private and public broadcasters in Canada, she uses her career to dispel misconceptions about people with disabilities and to address issues that affect them so they can live with greater acceptance and independence in our society. Joanne is a dedicated mentor and volunteer for many disability organizations across Canada.

Lauren Woolstencroft:

One of Canada's best kept secrets is Paralympic alpine skier Lauren Woolstencroft, a congenital triple amputee, who last season was 1st overall as well as 1st in the slalom and Super G in World Cup standings. In 11 World Cup starts this year, the defending World Cup champion won 10 medals – 9 gold and 1 silver. During her skiing career, Laruen completed an electrical engineering degree at University of Victoria and she currently works for BC Hydro.

Peer Support Program Update

By Nancy Barry

Toonie Movie Night:

This is CILT's latest Peer Support activity. Toonie Movie Night will begin in February, and will occur bi-monthly on a "pilot" basis. In other words, we will see how popular this new activity becomes before deciding whether or not it will be a permanent peer support activity. If attendance is on the higher side for the first few events, then Toonie Movie Night will continue. If not, then as with the Coffee

Club, it will be discontinued.

Mid Winter Gathering:

The Prime Timers are getting together with PDN members for their annual "Mid Winter Gathering" on Saturday February 23rd. Join us for an afternoon of fun and refreshments, raffles and other goodies. Hope to see you there!

Gateway to Screening– Project Update:

The analysis of all of the data collected at the five focus groups has been completed. We are now entering the analysis into the computer and a report on the project outcomes should be finalized toward the end of February; at which time, a special launch of the report will take place.

On January 24th, Linda Muraca (Mount Sinai Breast Health Clinic), Sharmini Fernando (Canadian Cancer Society) and myself presented an outline about our project to the Mount Sinai Hospital *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Planning Committee*. It went very well and the hospital has posted our presentation on their website in the hospital.

The Gateway Project Committee is now planning to submit an application to *Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo 2008,* which is an annual showcase of innovative initiatives that are driving health care system renewal in Ontario. It's an opportunity to celebrate the hard work of Ontario's health care providers and to learn from their ingenuity.

Presented by Ontario's 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINS) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Expo reflects six themes that are helping to make a difference:

- Meeting Community Needs Through Integrated Care
- Improving Quality and Patient Safety
- Improving Efficiency Through Process Redesign
- Innovations in Health Information Management
- Innovations in Health Human Resources
- Innovations in Health Promotion

The Gateway to Screening Project would fit nicely into the first category. So the project committee is in the process of filling out the application to present at the Expo, which takes place in April. We are very excited to see that things are moving along nicely. Stay tuned for current project updates.

Peer Support Workshops:

In the upcoming months, CILT will be hosting a number of peer support workshops on topics including self esteem, how to cope in an unhealthy relationship, body image, and more. You will be notified by mail when a workshop is coming up.

Book review by Susan DeLaurier

Pointing it Out: Safety for those of us who use augmentative communication by Barbara Collier

Pointing it Out emerged from the Augmentative Communication Community Partnerships – Canada (ACCPC) Speak Up Project (2001 – 2004) after thirty adults who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) came together to discuss what they had in common. One of the things that they did have in common, unfortunately, was that most of them had experienced some form of abuse and indignities at one point in time. The hope is that this book will provide information to allow AAC users to gain enough confidence to advocate for themselves.

One of the key points mentioned is that the type of subtle abuse that usually happens, such as verbal abuse or withholding services, can sometimes lead to much more serious offences. A contributor to this book has said that if people do not know their rights then they may not even know when abuse is happening to them. Abuse happens when people's rights are not respected.

Practical steps are outlined for AAC users to assess their situation, and resources are given such as information from the ARCH Disability Law Centre and Consumer Rights for Long Term Care Services and websites. Important not only for consumers, but for anyone who works with them, is the acknowledgement that using these resources and confronting the abusers takes a lot of courage. Many consumers have very practical reasons to avoid confrontation with a person they rely on, such as fear that services will be withdrawn or worsen if they file a complaint.

It is important for people working with AAC users to know that that there are many kinds of communication devices, and what feels comfortable for one person, may not necessarily be comfortable for someone else. Examples of the variety of augmentative systems include gestures, facial expressions, pictures, symbols, communication boards and specific things such as voice output devices.

People with disabilities and severe speech disorders are much more likely to experience physical, mental and sexual abuse because they cannot communicate effectively. To reduce the risk of becoming a victim it is necessary to have the skills to make informed decisions in order to access health, social and justice services. Pointing it Out shows people how they can start taking charge of their own lives.

To inquire about purchasing copies of Pointing It Out, you can email to accpc@sympatico.ca. For information about ACCPC and its projects, visit their website at www.accpc.ca