

In the Stream

Winter 2009

CILT's 25th Anniversary

By Nancy Barry

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) Inc., as well as the fifteenth anniversary of the Direct Funding Program.

In commemoration of this significant achievement, I thought it would be interesting to take a journey into the past, looking at the history of how CILT got started, highlighting important landmarks along the way that aided in transforming CILT into the successful, one-of-a-kind, consumer-driven organization that it is today.

Centre for Independent Living “A Case Study”:

© Information taken from “Centre for Independent Living in Toronto: A Participatory Evaluation”; Centre for Research & Education in Human Services, 1988.

In the early 1980s, agencies serving people with disabilities found that consumers were frustrated with the limitations of disability specific organizations. In an attempt to respond to consumers' needs, representatives from different organizations formed a steering committee in 1982. The Community Occupational Therapy Association (COTA) was the driving force behind this committee. The steering committee also consisted of a number of interested consumers.

The initial goal of the committee was to establish an information centre that was aimed at assisting people through the maze of human services. A proposal was written and in 1984 COTA received a developmental grant from Health and Welfare Canada to fund a Centre for Independent Living. The administration of the organization was handled by the Board, but COTA hired a consultant to assist CILT in establishing itself. Following the stipulations of the funding grant, a needs survey was developed and carried out with the assistance of the Advisory Committee.

By 1985, CILT was registered as a “non profit corporation” and program development was underway. The founding principles of other independent living centres (ILCs) in Canada were adhered to by CILT:

- Non-profit

- Cross disability
- Consumer controlled
- Community based
- Promoters of integration and community participation

Eventually a needs survey was conducted verifying that what disabled people in Toronto wanted was an Independent Living Resource Centre; Until CILT became incorporated, the Community Occupational Therapy Association (COTA) was our sponsoring agency. Even once we had Corporate status, Health and Welfare Canada needed to be convinced that we could be a financially accountable organization;

We then contracted an accounting firm called Progressive Accounting Services which had an impressive track record of accounting for community-based non-profit agencies. By 1986, we were completely independent of COTA.

The programs that were then developed by CILT included the following:

1982-85:

Formation and Incorporation

1985

- Information and Referral
- Self Advocacy
- Registries (Housing and Attendant Care)

1986

- Peer Support Network
- Information Forums - Transportation, Housing

1987-89

- Public Education Program
- Radio Connection; Access Connections begins
- Newslines
- New projects began – such as surveying the network of Literacy
- Programs in Toronto for Access resulting in a report; the Radio Connection began, as a means of getting the word out to ever increasing numbers of often isolated people with disabilities; new funding by City of Toronto, Health and Welfare Canada.

1990

- The birth of the Direct Funding Program (DF); for the first time there was serious attention paid to the idea of giving people with disabilities a grant of money so they could hire, train and manage their own attendants rather than provide money to an agency that was supposed to dispatch attendants to PWD's;
- In response to inquiries for attendant services throughout Ontario the first edition of the Attendant Services Directory was produced;
- Woodedden Consumer Conference; Disability Network (CBC co-production begins);
- The Radio Connection evolves into the Employment Connections and "Disability Network", the first ever TV show focused on disability issues in cooperation with CBC. Eventually this show evolved into MOVING ON which was still viewed on television until recently;

1992

- Focus on I.L. and Participation in Research and The Literacy Book published;
- Youth Connection began;
- 1993

- The Directory of Accessible Restaurants was developed;
- 24 Hour Newslines was established to ensure that print disabled individuals still had the means to ensure access to information;
- Direct Funding in Ontario Pilot (DF) begins; A tri-ministry initiative (Health, Community and Social Services and Citizenship) along with significant disability community players and operated by CILT;

1994-95

- Full United Way Membership granted giving us credibility in a whole new forum;
- Award-winning Abuse Prevention Video and Youth and Disability Abuse Prevention program was launched;

1996

- The Project Information Centre (PIC) operated for MOH transferred to CILT from another local disability organization that terminated. PIC coordinates applications for managed attendant services in Toronto;

1997-99

- First Official Evaluation of the DF Pilot was done by the Roeher Institute. The results of this evaluation were extremely positive showing that direct choice, control and flexibility of attendant services contributed positively to health status;
- 4th Edition of Attendant Service Directory produced as well as the Annotated Abuse/Prevention Bibliography;
- Human Rights Policy (anti-discrimination and harassment policy and procedures) developed and implemented;
- The Parenting Book for Persons with a Disability was published;

2000-04

- CILT becomes a participant in the HRDC - Navigating the Waters project; an employment project for people with disabilities;
- New statistics system introduced;
- CILT website launched;
- New library software acquired and system implemented;
- Anti-racism implementation plan developed;
- Nurturing Assistance Guide published;
- DF Program engages in a massive recruitment drive which reaches 700 persons;
- Project Information Centre becomes the central clearing house for all applications for managed attendant services in Toronto;
- New on-line resources developed i.e. the "Directory of Attendant Services in Ontario (formerly the Green Book)"; and the Attendant/Consumer Job Roster;
- The Student Attendant Service Fund (SASF) a contingency fund established to enable persons with disabilities who require attendant services at College or University to attend College or University;

2005-08

- Disability Rights Promotion International Human Rights Monitoring Project;
- United Nations Day for People with Disabilities in partnership with other organizations and the City of Toronto;

2006-08

- Gateways to Cancer Screening Project;

2008

- Safe Engaged Environments Disability (SEED) project funded by the City of Toronto through the Community Safety Investment Program;
- Access Award (Nancy Barry) for the Gateways to Cancer Screening Project;
- Addressing Disability in Cancer Care in partnership with CancerCare Manitoba/University of Manitoba;
- CILT moves to 365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3L4.

Budget 2009 Highlights: Implications for People With Disabilities

Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB):

The maximum amount of the WITB supplement for persons eligible for the Disability Tax Credit would also increase in proportion to the increase in the maximum WITB entitlement for single individuals.

Increasing Withdrawal Limits Under the Home Buyers' Plan:

To provide first time home buyers with additional access to their Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) savings to purchase or build a home, Budget 2009 proposes to increase savings to purchase or build a home, Budget 2009 proposes to increase the HBP withdrawal limit to \$25,000 from \$20,000 in respect of withdrawals made after January 27, 2009. It is also proposed that the increase apply to HBP withdrawals made for the purchase of a more accessible or functional home where the individual making the withdrawal is made for the benefit of a DTC-eligible person who is related to the individual making the withdrawal. This is the first increase in the withdrawal limit since the HBP was introduced in 1992.

First Time Home Buyers' Tax Credit:

It is also proposed that the First Time Home Buyers' Tax Credit be made available to existing homeowners in respect of a more accessible or functional home purchased by an individual eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) or for the benefit of a DTC-eligible person who is related to the individual purchasing the home.

Accessibility:

Providing \$20 million in each of two years to improve the accessibility of federally owned buildings for people with disabilities.

Enhancing Accessibility of Federal Buildings:

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have barrier-free access to government buildings. Budget 2009 provides \$20 million on a cash basis in each of the next two years to improve the accessibility of federally owned buildings for Canadians with disabilities. This investment will be used for a number of accessibility improvements, including the installation of tactile signs into federally owned buildings.

Sports:

The Government of Canada has also made significant investment in support of excellence, enhancing summer and winter Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

The Government also recognizes the importance of sports participation by Canadians with intellectual disability. In recognition of their work, funding for Special Olympics Canada will be increased to \$1.5 million for 2009-10.

Tax Relief for Low and Modest Income Canadians:

Created the Registered Disability Savings Plan, which helps parents and others save to ensure the long-term security of a child with a severe disability.

Addressed the outstanding policy recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities by extending eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit and increasing the Child Disability Benefit and the maximum amount of the Medical Expense Supplement.

Annex 5 Home Buyers' Plan:

Special rules apply to facilitate the acquisition of a home that is more accessible or better suited for the personal needs and care of an individual who is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit, even if the first-time home-buyer requirement is not met. These rules will also be modified to provide the same \$25,000 withdrawal limit.

Previously Announced Measures:

Extension of the 2008 deadline for the Registered Disability Savings Plan contributions, announced on December 23, 2008.

Strategic Training and Transition Fund:

Budget 2009 is providing \$500 million for the Strategic Training and Transition Fund to be invested over two years to support the particular needs of individuals whether or not they qualify for EI. Funding will be provided according to each jurisdiction's share of the unemployed across Canada and will be administered through existing Labour Market Agreements with provinces and territories to ensure appropriate accountability and reporting.

Investments in Knowledge Infrastructure:

Dedicating up to \$2 billion to repair, retrofit, and expand facilities at post-secondary institutions.

Increasing Investments in Federal Infrastructure Projects:

Increasing funding to VIA Rail by \$407 million to support improvements to passenger rail services, including higher train frequencies and enhanced on-time performance and speed, particularly in the Montreal-Ottawa-Toronto corridor.

Citizens With Disabilities - Ontario (CWD-O) "Together We Are Stronger"

Citizens With Disabilities—Ontario (CWD-O) has been working on new and creative ways to get members involved, informed and in touch with each other. For example, they are planning to launch some interesting and informative "Webinars" starting in February. Topics will be of interest to persons with disabilities - such as tax tips, improving attendant services, transportation, and research on disability issues.

You will have ways to contribute to briefs and documents in progress, access news on disability issues, hang out with other members in a virtual lounge, and much more.

CWD-O will keep you informed by email, and once their website (new and improved!) is up and running again, you will be able to get all the latest, any time you like.

In the meantime, please mark June 11, 2009 in your calendar to attend their 2nd Annual General Meeting. It will begin at 7 pm and be held online in our virtual conference room. Wherever you may be in Ontario, you will be able to join in. Formal notice will follow soon. CWD-O hopes to see you soon on their new website at www.cwdo.org.

Ontario Supports Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)

© Ministry of Community and Social Services; November 30, 2008

McGuinty Government Helps Families Save For Children With Disabilities

Ontario is making it possible for social assistance recipients to take advantage of Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs).

Like the Registered Education Savings Plan, RDSPs allow family members and loved ones to save money tax free until withdrawal. The program helps people plan for the future needs of children and adults with disabilities.

Changes to Ontario's social assistance rules will make sure that both RDSP assets and withdrawals are fully exempt. This means:

- RDSP contributions do not impact eligibility for social assistance
- People on social assistance can take money out of an RDSP without affecting their social assistance payments.

To further help social assistance recipients with disabilities save for their future, Ontario is also increasing the amount they can receive as a gift or payment from a trust from \$5,000 to \$6,000 a year.

QUOTES:

“This is about making it easier for families to save for their children with disabilities,” said Ministry of Community and Social Services, Madeline Meilleur. “We are making sure that people can put money into an RDSP without it affecting their eligibility for disability support.”

“The message from the Ontario government is clear. It trusts families to help their relative with a disability and has opened the door for them to secure the future for their loved one. In twenty years, we'll look back on this as a watershed moment, for people with disabilities.” said President and Co-Founder of Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network Al Etmanski.

QUICK FACTS:

- Any individual that is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit may establish an RDSP.
- British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland have also announced that they will fully exempt both RDSP assets and withdrawals.

BELL CANADA IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, IT WILL UNDERTAKE A VARIETY OF STUDIES AMONG PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT DISABILITIES.

What is the objective of this research?

The objective of the studies is to gain insight into the way people with disabilities use various telecommunication technologies, in order to better serve their needs. This research may help improve the design of new products and services in terms of usability and functionality.

What form will the research take?

The studies will be carried out by Ad Hoc Research, a market research firm, in the form of surveys, focus groups or individual interviews.

You will be asked to participate in at least three studies in the coming months. You will have the opportunity to express your opinions and points of view on a variety of subjects. More importantly, you will play a critical role in influencing the technology of tomorrow.

Monetary incentives will be offered: \$20 for completing a Web or telephone survey; \$50 for participating in a 30-minute in-depth telephone interview; \$100 for participating in a 1½ hour interview in your home; and \$125 for attending a 1½ hour focus group downtown. Whenever necessary, we will handle arrangements and pay for accessible transportation. Please note that no incentive will be offered for the questionnaire that you will complete for registering to our research panel.

If you are interested in participating, please call us at 514-937-4040, extension 136, or visit our Web site at www.adhoc-opinion.com/Bell_standard (or www.adhoc-opinion.com/Bell_simplified for a simplified version).

Bell is very committed to making this project a success but cannot do so without your help and cooperation. We thank you in advance for your support of this initiative.

Canadians With Disabilities Win Another Historic Transportation Access Battle

© Information taken from ILC's (Independent Living Canada) website

www.cailc.ca

On November 8, 2008 the Supreme Court of Canada denied Air Canada and WestJet's request to appeal the decision of the Canadian Transportation Agency which requires the airlines to accommodate persons who need additional seating space because of their disability.

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) launched this action in 2002 to remove a long-standing barrier to the travel of persons with disabilities. People with disabilities who required an attendant in flight to assist them with services not provided by flight attendants and persons with disabilities who required additional seats were having to pay for two airfares. This decision now brings planes into line with other modes of transportation such as rail, bus and marine who do not charge for additional seats.

"We celebrate this decision and are thrilled to see the removal of another long-standing barrier to our mobility and travel," said Pat Danforth, Chair of CCD's Transportation Committee. "What continues to be a concern, however, is that we are being forced to pursue legal action to ensure accessibility of our national transportation system. Where is the federal government's leadership on this issue? We urge the Government of Canada to regulate access standards for persons with disabilities on all federally regulated transportation systems," said Danforth.

"We have been victorious in two major transportation access battles in the past 8 years," said Marie White, Chairperson of CCD. "First we fought VIA Rail's purchase of inaccessible passenger rail cars all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada and now we have made the airlines more accessible as well," said White. "These victories are to be celebrated but they could have been more appropriately handled through the development of access regulations by Transport Canada," said White.

CCD urges the Government of Canada to move away from voluntary codes of practice and regulate the industry to ensure that the equality guarantees of the Charter are made real and that Canadians with disabilities have equal access to the goods and services of Canada. CCD urges the airlines to speedily implement this decision. Access for Canadians with disabilities has been denied long enough. Canadians with disabilities take heart that the Courts have upheld, and continue to uphold, the equality rights of persons with disabilities.

Beginning January 9, 2009, eligible customers with disabilities booking flights for domestic itineraries will qualify for extra seating for themselves or an attendant at no additional charge. This service will be offered for flights on all Air Canada,

Jazz and Tier 3 airlines that fly on Air Canada's behalf, although you should be aware the configuration of certain smaller aircraft may not allow this in all cases.

For flights to and from the United States, Air Canada will continue to offer a 50 percent discount off certain fares for an extra comfort seat for attendant travel.

People with disabilities, including by reason of obesity, are advised to make the airline aware of their special needs at the time of booking. Generally, Air Canada will require 48 hours' notice in advance of travel but in some situations may require 72 hours. In cases where the airline receives less notice, Air Canada will make all reasonable efforts to fulfill the request. Taxes, fees and charges will not apply to the free extra seats used by the disabled person. However, for the attendant, fees and charges imposed by the Government and by the Airport authorities (with the exception of Gander Airport, Newfoundland) will have to be charged. No advance seat selection is permitted when requesting extra seating.

In order to be eligible for extra seating at no charge, passengers will be required to submit a doctor's certificate of the individual's disability. Passengers will also require medical approval demonstrating fitness to travel. For passengers requesting extra seating for reasons limited to obesity, the airline will retain the information on file and the authorization for extra seating will remain in effect for two years in order to facilitate future travel.

Eligible customers requiring additional space for their own use will be assigned a single reservation and ticket. Their seats will be assigned in advance of their flight by the Air Canada Medical Services desk so that their disabilities can be best accommodated. Additionally, such passengers should be aware that extra seating is not available on Beech aircraft and in Executive Class, and may be restricted on CRJ regional jet and Embraer aircraft.

For passengers requiring an attendant, Air Canada will also require the disabled passenger to obtain a medical certificate and medical approval to travel. Customers who are non-ambulatory and non-self reliant and those who have vision, hearing or cognitive impairments that make them unable to receive safety related messages at critical stages of flight must be accompanied by an attendant.

For more information about this new service and the broad range of other services Air Canada offers people with disabilities, customers should go to www.aircanada.com and then look under "Information and Services", where they will find a section on "Customers with Special Needs", under the "Travel Information" heading. Also, customers can contact Air Canada Reservations or their travel agent.

Retailers are Beginning to Design Web sites for Disabled Consumers

© Internet Retailer, January 20, 2009

Retailers including Canadian Tire Corp. and Home Hardware Stores Ltd. are making their e-commerce sites more accessible with innovative technology that provides web page navigation without a conventional keyboard or computer mouse.

Canadian Tire and Home Hardware Stores have deployed technology from Essential Accessibility that gives people without full motor skills the ability to navigate web pages without regular use of a mouse or keyboard. The software comes in a variety of applications, providing handicapped computer users multiple ways to control web pages.

"At Home Hardware, we recognize the importance of accessibility in all dimensions of the customer experience," says CEO Paul Straus. "It's more than just the right thing to do. It's good business practice."

A disabled shopper, after arranging to download or receive a CD of free software from the retailer, simply needs to be able to exert pressure on an electronic device, such as with a fingertip press by someone who can't move his hand side to side, or, for a paralyzed quadriplegic, with a head movement.

In one "radar mouse" application, for example, a red line that extends from the center to the outer edge of a web page slowly circles the page like a second hand on a watch. Once the shopper sees that the line is approaching a particular section of a web page—a shirt for sale, for instance—she engages the finger-or head-activated device to stop the moving line; a second press of the device will send an icon up the line toward the shirt; when the icon lands on the desired point of the page, such as the Buy button for the shirt, the shopper activates a third press of the device to make a purchase.

The same application works with an on-screen keyboard that enables the disabled shopper to enter information such as billing and shipping information. Essential Accessibility charges retailers a flat monthly fee per web site, depending on traffic volume and page views or other site activity, says Simon Dermer, managing director. Other applications support better deployments of technology designed to make sites more usable by blind people.

SSB Bart Group, for example, provides a web-based accessibility management platform, which shows whether a web site supports the deployment of assistive technologies like screen readers that turn images into audio files for blind people.

Screen readers include JAWS for Windows by Freedom Scientific Inc., Window-Eyes from GW Micro Inc., BrowseAloud by Texthelp Systems Ltd., and Easy

Web Browsing from IBM Corp. Microsoft Corp.'s Vista operating system comes with the built-in Narrator screen reader as well as other tools including a text magnifier and an on-screen keyboard.

For more information, go to

<http://www.internetretailer.com/dailyNews.asp?id=29121>.

Day of Pink: February 19th, 2009: What will you be wearing?

The International Day of Pink is coming up on February 19th, 2009. It is an opportunity for you to celebrate diversity with thousands of people across the world.

How it works...

- Wear pink on Feb 19, and encourage your school, office or community group to join in.
- Go to: www.DayOfPink.org to register as an individual or group (and win cool prizes!)
- Request FREE resources (Posters, Stickers, Buttons) from www.DayOfPink.org
- Find out more about activities you can do in your school, community, business or organization.
- Learn about the causes of discrimination and what you can do to solve this problem.
- Learn about other amazing community organization you can use to promote diversity.
- For more information, please contact us at: info@dayofpink.org

More information:

On February 19th, 2009, over 100,000 people across North America will participate in the "Jer's Vision" pilot project, the International Day of Pink. The Day of Pink is the International Day against Bullying, Discrimination and Homophobia in schools and communities. The event invites everyone to celebrate diversity by wearing a pink shirt and organizing activities in their workplaces, organizations, communities and schools.

The Day of Pink was started by youth in Cambridge, Nova Scotia. On their second day of high school they saw a colleague being harassed and called a 'fag' because he wore a pink shirt. That week, countless students rallied together by wearing pink shirts, standing up to bullies, homophobia and discrimination.

The National Capital Region Gay-Straight Alliance Network (a group of youth representing Diversity Clubs in the Ottawa Valley) were so moved after hearing about this, that they contacted those youth to create the International Day of Pink (www.dayofpink.org) in an effort to share this story and day of action with people all over the world.

The goal of the International Day of Pink (DayOfPink.org) is to bring the message that bullying, discrimination and homophobia can be stopped by working together. The organization encourages participating groups (schools, business & community organizations) to not only wear pink in support of Diversity, but also hold events and activities that will engage their community.

The International Day of Pink is also proud to offer free resources to help you promote the event, engage your community and make a difference.
Why this is important?

Across the world discrimination continues to be the leading source of conflict. Discrimination is racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, anti-Semitism. ...and many others. These social diseases affect how we work, study and treat one another; and they create barriers, bullying/ harassment and hate/violence. The Day of Pink is more than just a symbol of a shared belief in celebrating diversity, but also a commitment to being open minded, understanding of differences and learning to respect each other.

Who are the National Capital Region GSA Network & Jer's Vision (the organizations behind Day of Pink)?

The National Capital Region GSA Network, a Jer's Vision program, facilitates leaders from national capital region Gay-Straight Alliances, Diversity Clubs, and Student Councils to come together to discuss discrimination and plan activities to promote diversity. "Jer's Vision" is Canada's national organization to support and encourage the work of youth to address discrimination in their schools and communities. Through art, community, education, youth initiatives, and partnerships with a variety of established national and community organizations, we provide youth with the tools and the resources to promote diversity and end discrimination of all kinds. "Jer's Vision" runs over 40 initiatives, using the talents of 800 volunteers, and serving thousands of people annually. We are proud to have received awards from the Province of Ontario, City of Ottawa, Toronto Pride, and Do Something Inc. For more info, go to <http://www.dayofpink.org> .

Mona Winberg Dies at Age 76

By Nancy Barry

Mona Winberg, long-time disability activist and known for her column on disability issues for the Toronto Sun, passed away on January 19th from pneumonia. Winberg was 76 years old.

Her writing career began when she was 16 years old when she started writing for the newsletter of the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy, and in 1972, she was the first disabled person to become president of the organization. Winberg was known for her lobbying efforts with Wheel-trans and her public speaking engagements throughout Canada. She started writing for the Toronto Sun in 1986, in response to the fact that the paper never seemed to address disability issues. She wrote for the Sun for ten years.

Winberg was a recipient of many awards over the years, including the Clancy and Fred Gardiner awards, her induction to the Terry Fox Hall of Fame, and in 2001 Mona was named to the Order of Canada. She will be missed!

The Accessible Channel

The Accessible Channel, a national, English Language described and closed captioned basic HD digital TV specialty service.

On Tuesday, 24 July 2007 the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) approved and supported an application from The National Broadcast Reading Service Inc. (NBRS) for a license to set up a unique English-language TV service — The Accessible Channel (TACtv). By regulation, TACtv will be part of the basic digital package of TV programming offered by all distribution companies — cable systems and satellite direct-to-home services.

The channel will acquire the most popular TV programs from conventional and specialty TV services and foreign-rights holders. All TACtv programs will be described and captioned so that at any time of the day they can be enjoyed by a viewer with low or no sight or low or no hearing — a world first. And viewers can access TACtv on the regular family TV set, allowing viewers with a disability to enjoy TACtv broadcasts in the company of their family, their friends, their neighbours and other acquaintances — a huge overall market.

NBRS was set up almost two decades ago. Its first licensed service was VoicePrint — a national audio program service. Just prior to going on air in late 1990, NBRS was granted charitable status by Revenue Canada.

In the years since, NBRS through a second division, AudioVision Canada, pioneered video description in Canada. Its unique approach to describing cinematographic works makes it suitable for open broadcast — and that's why with the support of broadcasters across Canada, sighted and non-sighted viewers can watch the programming together without any loss of enjoyment by either.

You may contact The Accessible Channel at 1-866-509-4545 or visit their website at tactv.ca. The Accessible Channel Inc. is controlled by The National Broadcast Reading Service Inc.

Doc Hotline may be the right medicine

© *Torstar News Service; January 26, 2009*

Health Help is on the way for 500,000 Ontario residents without a family physician, who have generally been forced to go to walk-in clinics or emergency rooms when they need medical attention. Starting next month, a new hotline will help match people with a doctor in their area willing to take on new patients, the Toronto Star has learned.

The government will institute a special 1-800 number, where a Telehealth Ontario staffer will take down a health history and pass it on to a nurse who will help find a family doctor.

"This is a made-in-Ontario solution," Health Minister David Caplan told the Star of the program to be launched in February. "We will be the first jurisdiction, I am aware of, that is doing this."

Still, critics point out the program, called Health Care Connect, will not deal with the core problem: A shortage of doctors.

Dr. Douglas Mark, who practices in Scarborough, also wants to know where the doctors will come from to care for 500,000 people.

Free Services for Newcomers to Canada

Do you or someone you know have problems with Walking, Talking, Hearing, Seeing, Learning, Illness or troubling thoughts or feelings?

Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre Settlement Program gives you:

- Information and referral to programs and services (education, health care, employment, housing, legal, childcare, special needs, and others) to help you settle in Canada and make the most of your life.
- Help getting and completing application forms for OHIP, SIN, CCTB, Immigration and Citizenship, passports, birth certificates and other government forms.
- Group information sessions on settlement and how to get involved in our community and Canadian society.

Get useful information and support, and meet new people!! Call Tara at Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre (905) 629-1873 ext: 257 (voice); (905) 629-3589 (TTY). FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE This free service is provided as part of the Immigrant and Settlement Adaptation Program funded by the Government of Canada through Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

COMMUNITY NEWS UPDATES

Active and Able Programs at Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre

Check out the Winter session of our Active and Able Program designed for persons with disabilities or health barriers:

- **Accessible Youth Programs:** youth enjoy inclusive activities at our accessible Youth Centre. Include pre-employment services, workshops/skills training, Peer Support Art Group, social drop-in. Some attendant services provided. Free.
- **Chair Tai Chi Class:** practice gentle movements that improve flexibility, energy, relaxation. Thursdays Jan. 8-Mar. 26. 11am-Noon (\$12 for 12 weeks)
- **Barrier Free Access to Swimming:** enjoy attendant-supported leisure swimming. Tuesdays Jan.13-Mar.31. Noon-3pm. Free. Info: call 416 690-8804
- **Staff-Assisted Hot Tub & Pool Program:** enjoy attendant-supported access to hot tub and pool. Fridays Jan 9-Mar. 27. Noon-3pm. Free with \$5 annual membership.
- **Gentle Motions 1-Water Movements:** practice low-impact exercises in accessible Hot Tub. Lift chair or stair access. Thursdays Jan.8-Mar. 26.

10-10:40am. (\$20, 12 wks)

- **Bluffers Peer Support Group:** Adults share ideas and peer support in this self-directed club. Activities include workshops, discussions and outings. Every other Friday: 2-4pm. Free with \$5 annual membership.

Other services include Advocacy & Counselling; Wellness/fitness Programs; Information & Referral; and Free Workshops.

Winter session starts the week of Jan. 5 and runs for 12 weeks. Registration is ongoing and can be done at the centre's reception. Program subsidies are offered. Annual Membership: \$5. Attendant services are provided for some programs. For information, please call David Meyers at 416 396-7606 or email at david@bbnc.ca Location: Birchmount Bluff's Neighbourhood Centre, 93 Birchmount Rd. Scarborough (at Kingston Rd).

RAISE YOUR VOICE 2009!

Voices from the Street, a collective of individuals who use their personal experiences with homelessness and poverty to educate the public and push for change, is looking to recruit new members.

YOU GET:

- 12 weeks of intensive training in public speaking, leadership, conflict resolution, diversity issues, and facilitation
- A small cash honorarium of \$60 per week for participating
- A TTC Metropass
- A hearty lunch on the days you are training
- A connection to others who have similar experiences and a desire for change.

YOU GIVE:

- Your time (every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm from March 31st to June 18th)
- A desire to speak openly and publicly about your personal experiences with homelessness and poverty
- An ability to work well with others and a respect for diversity
- A passion for social justice and a desire for change
- Your leadership skills back to your community.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Voices from the Street, please submit a letter (legibly written or typed) detailing why you would like to join, what

you feel you would bring to the group, any leadership experience you have, and details about your previous or current involvement in the community. Letters should be submitted by February 27th, 2009 to:

VOICES FROM THE STREET
C/O ONTARIO COUNCIL OF ALTERNATIVE BUSINESSES
1499 QUEEN STREET WEST, Suite #203
TORONTO, ON M6R 1A3
FAX: 416 504-8063 E-MAIL: speakersbureau@bellnet.ca

For those interested in more information, Information Sessions will be held on February 18th at 1:30 pm at the Gerstein Centre (100 Charles Street East) and on February 10th at 1:30 pm at the Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses (1499 Queen Street West, Suite 203). Attendance at these sessions is encouraged, but not mandatory. TTC tokens will be available.

Scarborough Centre for Employment Accessibility

The Scarborough Centre for Employment Accessibility is open to ALL job seekers, including a range of disabled clients, unemployed/EI and Reach back clients, newcomers, women, visible minorities, Ontario Works, ODSP, Aborigines, over 45's, youth and Francophones.

The Scarborough Centre for Employment Accessibility is a walk-in Employment Resource Centre to assist Persons with Disabilities (PWD) who are job ready clients to prepare for employment or self-employment, as well as develop the skills necessary to maintain that new employment.

Services include access to a variety of specialized related employment information, equipment, self-help resources, materials and tools. Walk in and wheel chair accessible services are provided to clients who require minimal assistance and who wish to use the resources available to them in the ERC. Resources include access to computers with large screen monitors, printers, Braille printers, hardware and software that will assist clients with visual and hearing impairment. SCEA provides access to the world-wide web Internet (including Web-4-All) access, telephones including TTY (sign language interpreters), fax machines and photocopying services. Clients have access to a variety of job search material, occupational directories and community information in hard copy and electronic format. All of their services are FREE.

They regularly conduct numerous specialized free tutorials/workshops (to name a few: resume/cover letter writing, interview skills, positive thinking, coping with disabilities, employment group sessions etc), to assist you in conducting a successful work search. For more information or to register for a workshop, call (416) 396-8100. Their February workshop schedule includes:

February 2 & 19 - Gain Relevant Experience at a Practice Firm, by Employment Accessibility Exchange

February 4 - Communicating at Employment Fairs, by Mazemaster/Youthabilities

February 4 - Developing a Spending Plan, by InCharge Debt Solutions

February 10 - TDSB EAST JOB FAIR at Scarborough Civic Centre

February 11 - Positive Thinking & Coping with Anxiety, by Mazemaster/Youthabilities

February 17 - Assertiveness Training, by Mazemaster/Youthabilities

February 18 - ODSP and Ontario March of Dimes Info Session

February 20 - Transitions to Employment, TDSB

February 25 - Understanding Your Credit and Credit Report, by InCharge Debt Solutions

February 26 - How to Dress for a Winning Interview , by Fashions that Move

Chesswood Employment Resource Centre (CERC)

Chesswood Employment Resource Centre is a walk-in service centre whereby clients who are looking for work and require minimal staff assistance can obtain employment related information and free use of resources with the goal of assisting them to find employment. This assistance includes FREE use of computers with internet access, professional workshops (see calendar), reference material, Employer sessions, labour market information, photocopying, laser printers and fax services. You will find the staff very friendly and helpful. You can save time, money and frustration when looking for work. It is also a great place to network with other people who are looking for work and meet employers in their employer information sessions each week.

The Chesswood Employment Resource Centre will offer the following FREE job search/employment special events and workshops for the month of February:

February 2, 2009: Hospitality Co-op Program for ESL job seekers information session 1pm-2pm

February 6, 2009: Pre-Employment Program for Immigrant Women by

Immigrant 1pm-2pm Women On The Move

February.10, 2009: RCMP Recruitment Session 10am-12 noon

February 12, 2009: Gain Work Experience at Pieces of History Practice Firm
9am-11am

February 12 or 26, 2009: What Job is Right for You? by Assisted Job Search
Program 1pm-4pm

February 13, 2009: Career in Accounting as a CMA by Certified Management
9am-12 noon by Accountants Ontario

February 19, 2009: Networking Techniques and Building Relationships
10:30am-12 noon by Mazemaster

February 19, 2009: Diversity Recruitment at CIBC for PWDs, Newcomers and
Aboriginals, 1pm-3pm

February 20, 2009: Transitions to Employment 1pm-4pm

February 23, 2009: Volunteer Opportunities for Youth by Katimavik Experience
1pm-3pm

February 24, 2009: Positive Thinking by Mazemaster 10:30am-12 noon

February 25, 2009: Pivotal Integrated HR Solutions Recruitment Session
1pm-3pm

February 26, 2009: Communicating & Interviewing by Mazemaster
10:30am-12 noon

Please check the above schedule information on workshops and special events taking place in February. Space is limited, so please sign up by calling (416) 395-9559 or email to cerc@tdsb.on.ca or drop in to their centre. More information is also available on the CERC website at www.next-steps.ca.

People in Motion 2009

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 2009!!**

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

**Friday June 5, 2009 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday June 6, 2009 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Queen Elizabeth Building, Exhibition Place

FREE ADMISSION!

Fully accessible building

Complimentary Show Guide

Attendant Services Available

Food and Beverage Area

First Aid On-site

Ample Parking

Some exhibitors will have products to purchase on-site!

**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.

Region of Peel's Trans-Help New Extended Hours of Service

Effective January 1, 2009, TransHelp hours of operation are extended to 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., seven days a week.

Monday – Friday **6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.**

Saturday **6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.**

Sundays/Holidays **6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.**

Saturday/Sunday/Holiday service and trips that cannot be accommodated by buses during regular service hours are provided by the following taxi companies:

For trips originating in Bram City 905-455-7777
Brampton:

For trips originating in Blue and White 905-274-4444
Mississauga :

If in doubt, call Bram City in Brampton or Blue and White in Mississauga .

For more information contact a Customer Service Representative at 905-791-1015.

Cell Phone Users: If you are away from home and your ride is late, you can make a free call to TransHelp on your cell phone: Rogers or AT&T Customers: Dial *THLP (*8457); Bell Customers: Dial #THLP (#8457).

Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy hosts a Mini Workshop Series

The first workshop is:

"Making Sense out of Dollars and Cents Workshop"

Are you a person with a disability living on a limited income?
Do you find yourself short of cash at the end of the month?
Do you find budgeting confusing?

Are you having problems paying your bills?

The Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy invites you to join us for the first in a series of mini workshops on:

*Tuesday February 17th 2009
1:00-3:00 pm*

*OFCP Community Room
1630 Lawrence Avenue West
North York ON M6L 1C5*

Attendant services will be provided upon request and light refreshments will be available.

Space is limited If your interested in coming, please register with Lynn at 416-244-9686 extension 231 or email to lynn@ofcp.on.ca by Monday February 9, 2009.

Life Stage Transitions Project

In partnership with the Easter Seal Society, Ontario March of Dimes is launching a new consumer directed support service for youth with disabilities. As many people know, once an individual turns 18 they no longer qualify for many important services. The shift to adult services is assumed to be the responsibility of the individual and the supports for this transition are minimal.

The Life Stage Transitions project is looking to mitigate the difficulties of this transition by providing youth with a Transitions Navigator to help identify available services in the areas of: Independent Living, Employment, Education and Recreation. This service also offers the option of a Peer Advisor. This relationship will provide youth with an arena to voice their concerns and queries both safely and confidentially with someone who has lived experience transitioning to adulthood. If you are a youth with a physical disability between the ages of 16-29 and would like to get involved or hear more about this service contact Antonia Hammer at 416 425-3463 ext.7209 or ahammer@marchofdimes.ca

Career Opportunities for Persons With Disabilities

Have you considered a career in the banking industry?

- Overview of Employment Opportunities in the Banking Sector
- Qualifications Needed
- Interview Process
- Preferred Application Methods

St. Clair West Employment Resource Centre proudly presents their Guest Speaker Series with Amy Wong, a Recruitment Officer and Manager of Sales and Specialist Roles. The event will be held on Thursday February 12, 2009 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. To attend this FREE session, please register via phone at: 416-654-5566 or in person at St. Clair West Employment Resource Centre, 1345 St. Clair Ave. West, 2nd Floor @ Lansdowne Toronto, Ontario M6E 1C3 Tel: 416-654-5566; www.look4work.humber.ca. This Employment Ontario program is funded in part by the Government of Canada.

CILT NEWS

CILT's New Location

By Nancy Barry

We have finally settled in to our new home at 365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902. It's a lovely place and everyone seems very happy. We are looking forward to showing all of you our new home very soon. We will be having a 'formal' open house in the early spring and we are hoping to see many of you at our new space.

Please note that aside from the address, most contact information has remained the same. However, staff telephone extensions now have a "2" in front of them. For example, my extension has always been 27, but it is now 227. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Centre for Independent Living in Toronto
365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3L4
(416) 599-2458; TTY: (416) 599-5077
Fax: (416) 599-3555; Email: cilt@cilt.ca
www.cilt.ca

2008 Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards: November 27, 2008

By Nancy Barry

Access Award for Disability Issues:

The Access Award for Disability Issues is intended to honour people or organizations that have made or are making a significant or ongoing contribution, beyond legislated requirements, to the well-being and advancement of people with disabilities. Examples of contributions include consideration of access requirements in the design of a new or renovated building, a job training or creation program, a transportation service, a recreational program . . . virtually anything that permits people with disabilities to lead more independent, fulfilling and productive lives.

CILT was nominated for its work on the “Gateways to Cancer Screening Project”, and we won. I was the lucky one to accept the award on behalf of CILT. I feel extremely fortunate to have been asked to accept, because as many of you already know, this project is near and dear to my heart.

Sandra Carpenter, our Executive Director, accepted the award with me. It was definitely a night to remember.

Sandra asked me to formally accept the award and give the acceptance speech:

As we all know, cancer is one of the leading causes of death in Canada. Through my work at the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto, I was hearing many dark stories from women with disabilities about their experiences in attempting to access cancer screening services within our health care system. These stories, coupled with my own personal experiences, made me fear that we weren't alone; that there were others facing similar experiences, or even worse, not being screened at all.

With the support of our Executive Director, Sandra Carpenter, we were able to form partnerships with other key agencies and acquire enough funding from the Canadian Cancer Society in order to hold five focus groups in Toronto, through which we were able to hear the experiences and explore the needs of women with mobility disabilities when accessing breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening.

This award does not belong to me alone, nor is it solely derived through the efforts of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto. We couldn't have done it without the help and support of the following people:

Sharmini Fernando, Canadian Cancer Society
Linda Muraca, Breast Clinic, Mount Sinai Hospital
Dr. Jan Angus, Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto
Lynn Penberthy-Ritchie, St. Michael's Hospital
Fran Odette, Springtide Resources
Samira Chandani, Ismaili Cancer Support Network
Lucy Costa Nyman, Anne Johnston Health Station
Julie Devaney, Project Coordinator
Lisa Seto, PhD Student, University of Toronto
Kimberly McKennitt, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto
Tara Geraghty
Catherine Girard

AND

... to all of the focus group participants who entrusted us with their personal stories, that provided the very foundation of the Gateways to Cancer Screening Project. Their insights and expertise is what led us to so many positive recommendations for improving screening access.

There is still much work to be done in the days and months ahead. We have many exciting plans in the works for implementing recommendations made by focus group participants, but I couldn't ask for a more supportive team to do that work with.

Thank you.

ACCESS AWARD: Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)

Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) operates on the philosophy of the Independent Living movement which was developed in response to traditional models of providing rehabilitation services. CILT's aim is to develop and implement dignified social services rather than create

dependencies. They encourage people with disabilities to take control of their own lives by exercising their right to examine options, make choices, take risks and even make mistakes.

CILT is the founding partner and has driven the Gateways to Cancer Screening Project, which sought to explore the experiences and needs of women with mobility disabilities who require breast, cervical and

colorectal cancer screening. Other project partners include the Canadian Cancer Society, Mount Sinai, Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto, St. Michael's and Springtide Resources.

Gateways to Cancer Screening was explicitly designed to be user-driven. The project brought together women with experience in disability rights activism, community work, clinical practice and women's health research. At small focus groups, led by fellow wheelchair users, participants were encouraged to share their experiences of cancer screening. Recommendations for positive change flowed from the discussions.

The ultimate goal of the project is to ensure that the recommendations will reach the healthcare professionals and organizations that offer cancer screening.

"We would like to develop a creative resource that would allow health care settings across the province to learn from and implement these important improvements to access, screening and early detection."

Introducing Carling Barry: Peer Support Program Assistant

Hello everyone and Happy New Year! You may have heard about me in the newsletters or to RSVP to me for some of our events. I will now formally introduce myself.

My name is Carling Barry and I am the peer support program assistant. I work with Nancy on many things such as workshops, the volunteer program, newsletter, events and resources.

Before I got this job I was a volunteer with CILT, while taking three courses a semester at Ryerson University, in the Disability Studies Program and also volunteering at Rye Access and Access Centre.

I am in my third year of the Disability Studies Program and working here, so far, has given me the hands-on experience of what I am learning in class and in my textbooks. I feel very fortunate.

RyeACCESS is a Community Service Group of the Ryerson Students' Union that works to address the non-academic needs of students with disabilities. RyeACCESS offers resources, advocacy and support and develops educational

campaigns to identify barriers on campus and push for the necessary awareness and change. RyeACCESS also provides student-centered services and supports to students with disabilities, according to the Ontario Human Rights Code, in order to facilitate academic success and access to the university.

As you can see from the activities just mentioned, I am a disability advocate and activist who fights to get equal rights, access and accommodations that are needed in this society that until recently, have not been on the agendas.

With a group of students at Ryerson, we put together a week of Disability Awareness on campus last year with a few events such as Barrier Labeling. The primary goal of the campaign was to create awareness about the physical barriers that students with disabilities face on campus.

We also had guest speakers come to discuss disability in many different ways. I put together an idea that if we want to change people's understanding and level of awareness of disability, we need to 'go big' - or 'go home'. So Rye Access and I 'went big', and we got the Honorable Lieutenant Governor, David C. Onley, to discuss disability.

The reason I thought that Onley would be the best for this job was because accessibility issues are important, and hearing from someone who's big in the media, with so much experience behind him, is vital to raising awareness. David Onley is in a position to talk more about accessibility-related subjects and help people with disabilities. He understands that we have voices as well.

Within my new position as Peer Support Program Assistant, I hope to continue to advocate for accessibility, help to break down barriers, and support independent living. I look forward to assisting Nancy in all that my job entails and I look forward to working with and meeting you all!

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM UPDATE

BY NANCY BARRY

The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto presents two workshops on Nutrition and Healthy Living for People with Disabilities

Want to get rid of those Holiday Left over pounds?
Having trouble sticking to your New Year's resolutions?
Want to get back into the healthy swing of things?

You can sign up to one of two interactive workshops providing information, strategies and resources from Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide

Dates: Wednesday February 25, 2009 OR

Wednesday March 25, 2009

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Place: CILT Board Room, Suite 902

365 Bloor St. East (at Sherbourne St)

Cost: FREE !

R.S.V.P by Feb 18, 2009 to John Mossa at 416-599-2458 ext. 238 or Nancy Barry at ext. 227 or by TTY at 416-599-5077. Light refreshments will be served. Attendant Services & Childcare will be provided. Other accommodations may be available upon request before Feb 18, 2009.

Annual Mid Winter Gathering

Members of the PDN and Prime Timers are invited to join us for an afternoon of fun and refreshments AT OUR NEW LOCATION !!

Saturday February 21, 2009

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902

(Bloor & Sherbourne)

R.S.V.P by calling Nancy at (416) 599-2458, extension 227 by "no later than" February 13, 2009. Attendant Services and Childcare are available upon request.

Toonie Movie Night

Tuesday March 3, 2009

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902

(Bloor & Sherbourne)

This month's feature is:
"Mama Mia"
Starring:
Meryl Streep, Pierce Brosnan and Collin Firth

Description: 20-year-old Sophie Sheridan (Amanda Seyfried) lives with her mother Donna (Meryl Streep) on the small Greek island Kalokairi where Donna runs a hotel called Villa Donna. Sophie is planning to marry her fiance Sky (Dominic Cooper) and wants her father to be present to "give her away," but does not know who he is. After reading Donna's diary from 20 years ago, she concludes he is one of three men: Sam Carmichael (Pierce Brosnan), Harry Bright (Colin Firth), or Bill Anderson (Stellan Skarsgård). Without telling her mother and fiancé, Sophie mails invitations to all three ("I Have a Dream"), and hopes to find out which is her father.

Duration: Approximately 108 min

RSVP to Nancy at (416) 599-2458, x227, by TTY at (416) 599-5077 or by email to peervolunteer@cilt.ca by "no later than" February 24, 2009.

Attendant services may be provided upon request.

For just a toonie, you will get:

A current movie flick
Popcorn & a beverage
Good company

Please bring EXACT change!