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Garden Initiative Growing Strong

Contributed by Cínthia Page

Are you interested in contributing to your community by planning and building new gardens in your neighborhood?

If so, *Can You Dig It* (CYDI) can offer you this opportunity! We invite individuals to create a food-growing garden at their house and to coordinate community garden hubs that are open to their neighbours. By participating in one of our inclusive gardens, gardeners and volunteers contribute to social inclusion, empowerment and giving back to their community. They also have access to fresh organic produce for their families. In our gardens we grow food, and we cultivate relationships!

We are currently recruiting new gardeners for 13 of our community inclusive gardens throughout the Lower Mainland. Now in our second year, we are pleased to announce that we have doubled the number of inclusive gardens in our program! This success results from working together with many enthusiastic gardeners and citizens.



Approximate locations of CYDI community-inclusive gardens.

Continued on Page 1

PosAbilities employment service open house - April 29, from 12 noon until 5pm.
718 - 12th Street
New Westminster
BC V3W 4J9



Do you have a story for our newsletter or web-site?

Please contact Monique Nelson, Family Services/Communications Coordinator at (604) 299-4001 or email mnelson@posabilities.ca.

www.posAbilities.ca



Cinthia Page

Garden Initiative Growing Strong

Continued from Front Page

We welcome you to join us in the planning and building of our newest community garden at 4410 Kaslo in Vancouver, right across the 29th Ave Skytrain station. Our first meeting is on Sunday, March the 6th. Please contact Cinthia at canyoudigit@posabilities.ca to learn how to get a plot and get involved, or visit www.posAbilities.ca for more information. We are looking forward to growing with you!

Thank you to our community partners and generous sponsors of the *Can you dig it!* project:



United Family Child Care Providers Society (UFCCPS)

Ryerson United Church

West Coast Seeds

Mainland Sawmills

GOING SOCIAL CREATES NEW *posAbilities*

Social Enterprise Furthers Community Inclusion

Contributed by Mary McGivern

Three of *posAbilities*' work experience programs have realized such success that they themselves are graduating! EcoRangers has been providing recycling services for over 15 years, and has grown its client list to over thirty businesses in Vancouver and Burnaby. The Aegis Employment and Development Program, now ten years old, has gained a great reputation for providing quality lawn mowing, rubbish removal and moving services. And, Ladybug Art Gardens, formed in 2008 to provide gardening training, has already developed a long list of paying customers. The result? *posAbilities*' first social enterprise.

Social enterprise a relatively new term in North America. It refers to a mission driven organization which applies market-based strategies to achieve a social purpose. Rather than maximizing shareholder value, the primary aim of a social enterprise is to generate profit to further its social and/or environmental goals.

As a leading service provider, *posAbilities* recognized the opportunity to bring the concept to our own community and will launch its first business this Spring. The still to be named enterprise will offer quality home and garden maintenance services to residential and commercial customers in the Lower Mainland, with an emphasis on environmental responsibility. The expertise of our gardening

services division includes lawn mowing, planting, trimming, weeding and garden cleanup. Also available for sale will be custom garden art and hanging flower baskets. Our home maintenance division will provide such services as recycling, rubbish removal, power washing, outdoor cleanup and winter maintenance (snow removal, hanging Christmas lights).

Over the next few months, we will be engaging a very capable crew of over twenty men and women, who have previously participated in Aegis Work Crew, EcoRangers and Ladybug Art Gardens with plans for growth over the next few years.

Plans are in the works to create more social enterprises, based on the strengths of our persons served. According to **Gord Tulloch**, Program Director, "The

creation of social enterprises here at posAbilities will serve to remove barriers to employment and offer a more flexible approach to work. The ability to bring about positive change to people and communities is enormously rewarding. We're very excited for the future."

So next time your lawn needs mowing or you purge your house of unwanted junk, if you want to make a real impact in your community, hire the crew. You'll receive quality service at a fair price and help our persons served gain financial independence. Let us do it for you!

Rather than maximizing shareholder value, the primary aim of a social enterprise is to generate profit to further its social and/or environmental goals.

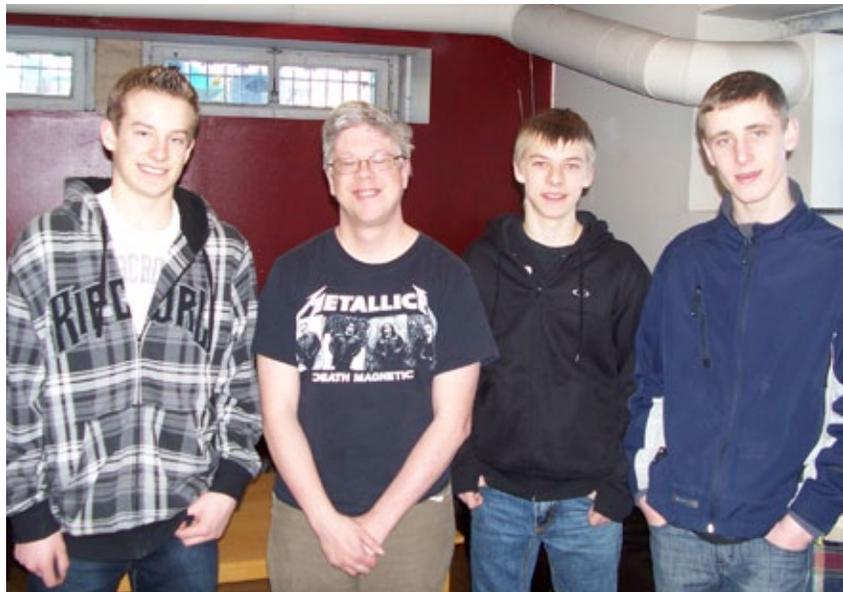
SHARING OUR DREAMS

Students participating in Youth Philanthropy Initiative Choose posAbilities

Contributed by Monique Nelson

Stage Door rolled out the welcome mat, embracing three students from Heritage Woods Secondary School in Port Moody on February 25, 2011. Grade 10 students **Daniel, Nicholas** and **Clayton** are taking part in the school's Youth and Philanthropy Initiative, "a one-of-a-kind experience that engages young people in creating social change and gets them growing compassionate communities." They spent a day at the program site learning about the history of the community living movement, *posAbilities* values, programs and services, and observing a rehearsal for an upcoming production. There was also ample opportunity to mingle with the actors and to ask questions. Now that they have completed their research, the students will present their findings to the school community through a 10 minute group presentation. They will be seeking a grant to assist us in achieving our mission. It was a super day for all involved and a pleasure to meet this dynamic trio and we thank them for choosing *posAbilities*. Stay tuned for more information about this initiative in the near future.

In the photo (left to right): Nicholas, Colin, Clayton, Daniel.



posAbilities promotes stakeholder news program using social media



Excerpt from story written by Lisa Bailey, Axiom News

Through social media channels, *posAbilities* aims to enhance communications as well as the relationships that lie at the heart of the organization.



A Facebook page, Twitter account and story blog were launched Jan. 17, coinciding with the start of the *posAbilities Today* online news program that chronicles *posAbilities*' strengths, achievements and successes and what's possible when people work together.

Noting that 10.5 million Canadians alone log onto Facebook every day, family services/communications co-ordinator Monique Nelson says *posAbilities*' new platform provides an opportunity to connect effectively and efficiently with staff and stakeholders, as well as share on a broader scale the organization's key messages of inclusion and empowerment of people who have a disability and celebrate their successes.

"Social media platforms are channels to have authentic conversations and we think that that is an asset to developing even stronger relationships and sharing more knowledge and information with people."

To learn more or contribute a story lead contact Monique Nelson at (604) 299-4001 local 270 or email mnelson@posabilities.ca



Bowling for Ribbons!

Contributed by Rae Dhesi

Kim Dhesi who is one of the actors at Stage Door bowled in a Bowling Tournament on Saturday, 12 February at the Town and Country Bowling Lanes. Teams were from Richmond, Delta, Burnaby, and Vancouver. Kim's team came in First and he also received a prize for the highest improved average. Good work Kim!



Story Power

with David Roche and Marlena Blavin

Storytelling Workshops for Self-Advocates and Families Learn storytelling skills to boost your advocacy efforts!

These workshops will focus on the development of skills in the art of storytelling in a safe and supportive learning environment. From overcoming stage fright to sharpening performance skills, people will be encouraged to take creative risks and grow according to their own personal starting point. Everyone has a story to tell based on their life experience.

Wednesday March 30, 2011

Session 1, daytime: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Session 2, circle for 'tweens and teens: 3:15 pm - 4:30 pm

Session 3, evening: 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Where: Heritage Hall - 3102 Main Street (at 15th), Vancouver

To register or for more information:

Please call: (604) 299-4001

or email info@posabilities.ca

by March 28, 2011. Seating is limited.

More info about David and Marlena:

www.davidroche.com

PROGRAM NEWS BEAT



Stage Door Presents Film Festival

Contributed by Don House, Stage Door

posAbilities Stage Door announces it will be presenting a Film Festival of their works. For 6 months now the troupe has been working on some projects involving video. It all began with 2 mentors who came to the program to teach them how to make films from concept to completion. Dan and Marley (Graduates of the SFU Film School) gave the group the basics, and then they took the ball and ran with it. They are presenting some digital shorts, including 2 works created with our mentors, as well as "The Stage Doo (sic) Comedy Thing" which is a collection of sketches presented as a half hour comedy show. The festival will run for 3 nights, April 27, 28, & 29 at 7:PM at the Stage Door theatre, 3102 Main Street. (please note it will be the same program running each night). Hope to see you there.

ALSO Stage Door announces "The Crazy Hat Dance", March 31. See our web page for details or call 604-872-1252.

posAbilities Stage Door Presents
CRAZY HAT DANCE
with DJ "Mad Hatter"

Spinning out of Control!
MARCH 31, 2011
Wear a Funny Hat!

Heritage Hall - 3102 Main Street (@15th Ave)
Time: 6:30 to 9:00 PM
Tickets: \$10 in Advance at Stage Door or \$12 at the door.
Call for information: 604-872-1252

SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS SERVED

Assistive Equipment Available for BC Residents with Disabilities

Contributed by Paul Gauthier

BC residents with a disability are eligible for funding through an initiative created, in partnership with the BC government, by the BC Personal Supports Network (BCPSN). The Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative (EATI) provides equipment and assistive devices as well as assessments, trialing, and/or training for people with disabilities who are over 18 and pursuing an employment goal.

In short, the EATI program is for anyone who meets the enrollment criteria and wants to work even if they don't feel they are ready to do so right away.

For the past two years, the EATI has helped build the vitality of communities by assisting hundreds of British Columbians pursue employment goals and lead healthier, more empowering lives. BCPSN has found that participating in the EATI program and pursuing employment can help people positively contribute to their communities and pursue meaningful relationships. In fact, current recipients find equipment provided through EATI has not only improved access to employment but has also contributed to increased independence and fulfillment in all areas of life.

An example of this success is a recipient who received tools such as a tablet computer and an electronic reader. He has now been able to work at a grocery store to stock the shelves, because he is able to use the electronic reader to read the labels aloud. The tablet computer reads work emails and documents aloud, and he is now able to read his own personal emails in privacy.

What this means, is anyone who is making a step towards employment - including volunteering with the goal of employment - could be eligible to receive whatever equipment or devices needed to help achieve employment goals.

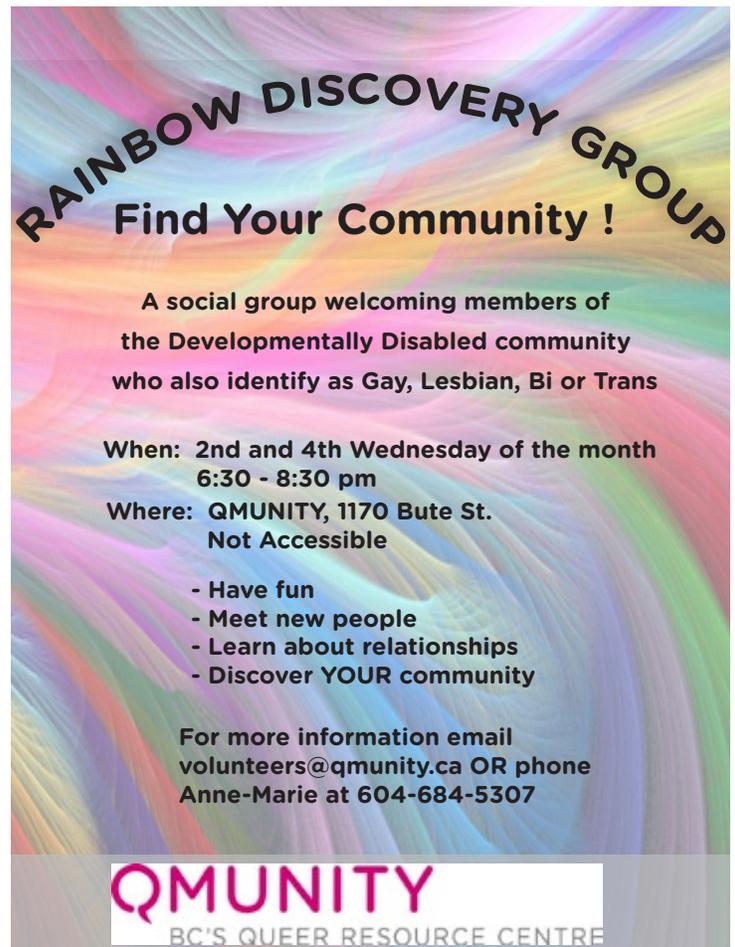
A few examples of the equipment provided through EATI include power wheelchairs, assistive technology (laptops, tablets & electronic readers that assist in overcoming a functional barrier), vehicle modifications and much more. Vehicle modifications include (but are not limited to): wheelchair lifts, steering devices, electronic control touch pads and mechanical hand controls.

Funding through EATI is limited so if you think you may qualify, please inquire immediately. You can learn more about the program by visiting the website at www.bcpsn.org or contacting them directly at 1-877-333-7554 or EATI@BCPSN.org.

Jo Dickey Foundation Grants for wants, not needs.

Supports individuals with mental or physical challenges through small grants to help improve a person's quality of life.

For more information, contact Nina Pickburn at 604-875-6516 or visit www.jodickeyfoundation.ca



RAINBOW DISCOVERY GROUP
Find Your Community !

A social group welcoming members of the Developmentally Disabled community who also identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bi or Trans

**When: 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month
6:30 - 8:30 pm**

**Where: QMUNITY, 1170 Bute St.
Not Accessible**

- Have fun
- Meet new people
- Learn about relationships
- Discover YOUR community

For more information email volunteers@qmunity.ca OR phone Anne-Marie at 604-684-5307

QMUNITY
BC'S QUEER RESOURCE CENTRE

Spring into Triple P Positive Parenting Program

Contributed by Natalie Hamilton of Axiom News



posAbilities is investing in a training program with the ultimate goal of empowering parents and caregivers so they can effectively resolve behaviour challenges that surface while raising children.

The association, which helps people who have a developmental disability lead meaningful and healthy lives,

is bringing the Triple-P Positive Parenting Program (Triple P®) to the Lower Mainland.

posAbilities, which offers behaviour consultation services, is training 20 of its consultants across the Lower Mainland. The five-day training program begins Feb. 21.

Triple P is described as a scientifically-proven family support strategy for parents and caregivers of children and youth. Developed by professor Matt Sanders and colleagues from The University of Queensland in Australia, the program aims to give parents the resources to address common social, emotional and behavioural problems.

posAbilities consultants will receive training in Stepping Stones Triple P, an intervention program to help parents of children with disabilities.

posAbilities team leader **Jennifer Oliver** is gearing up for the launch of the training program and its anticipated benefits for consultants, families and people served.

"This program is branching across the world," Jennifer says. "It has a lot of excitement behind it because it has been shown to be so effective."

"It's very timely and exciting that it's coming to Vancouver and other Lower Mainland communities and I'm looking forward to seeing the results."

Most of *posAbilities*' consultants have training in positive behaviour supports but not specifically through Triple P. The education will help build consistency and since it's evidence-based, *posAbilities* can track the results.

"Empower parents so they feel they have the skills and tools to identify and change the behaviours themselves."

Consultants currently work with caregivers on an individual basis to help equip them with the resources to handle parenting issues as they arise. Since they can't be in the home all of the time, the goal is to "empower parents so they feel they have the skills and tools to identify and change the behaviours themselves," Jennifer explains.

posAbilities will also be holding workshops for caregivers in the coming months and hopes to be able to offer them in communities around the province over the next two years. "We want to make it accessible for families."

Finally Real Tears Contributed by Nina Pickburn (*posAbilities* Family Member)

It was a Sunday morning, November 28, 2010. As usual, **Manuel** and I had planned a long drive to visit Manuel's favourite places. Soon after we were on the road Manuel started to have petit mal seizures which he does have from time to time. The seizures became more and more frequent, after the sixth one I took Manuel to Mt. St. Joseph Hospital Emergency where he had three more. Manuel's health is deteriorating little by little; he had to have his meds increased twice in 13 days.

I mentioned to the attending physician that possibly Manuel's Dilantin (Phenytoin) levels were too low. It did turn out that his Dilantin was low.

After the I.V. was in place and blood work done, we waited 6 hours as the needed test had to be done at St. Paul's Hospital. Manuel was quiet, comfortable and warm in bed, it was then that out of the blue Manuel started to, silently sob, real tears came down his face, I was shocked as Manuel had never cried before. I asked him if he was sad and he said yes, I explained to him that it was okay to cry, all people cry when they are sad.

Even though it was truly heart wrenching to see my beloved son sobbing like that, I also was somehow relieved to see that contrary to what some professionals believe, that autistic people do not show their emotions, here is Manuel feeling so very sad and showing his sadness freely. This is a huge breakthrough—finally real tears.

Family Advisory Committee Discusses Service Redesign

Contributed by Jan Wood, Sr. Program Director

Our committee gathered to learn about the status of Community Living BC's (CLBC), adult services redesign process at *posAbilities*. Our CEO, **Fernando Coelho**, reported that the first phase of the process was almost complete. Within our organization, only a few individuals were still in transition to their new homes. Individuals have moved into a variety of residential models, meeting their current and future support needs. Although many folks moved into settings of greater independence through Host Family Services or other models, others were able to secure a home that was specialized to meet higher health care or behavioural support needs. While *posAbilities* closed some group homes, we have also acquired a new and fully accessible residence in New Westminster through our partnership with BC Housing.

Fernando also shared that as of November 2010, CLBC had achieved approximately 70% of the funding efficiencies that it had set out to find through the process. The BC Association of Community Living has developed a committee to monitor the spending of these funds with the goal of ensuring the money is appropriately spent.

We know that there will be a second phase of the redesign process beginning in the new fiscal year. This will be a review of all community inclusion programs. *posAbilities* is preparing for changes in this area and is working on improving its life skills programs as well as introducing supported employment and other employment services for the individuals we support. Change will be a constant in the year ahead and will be on the committee's agenda for future discussions.

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Parent Support Network – going strong after one year!

Monique Nelson, Family Services/Communications Coordinator

posAbilities supports many adult persons served, whose caregivers may be retired and/or facing health care challenges. Through this network, we hope that families can gain the support and information that they need in a relaxed, social setting.

If you have ever wondered:

- what you can do to continue to provide for your child's safety and happiness?
- whether or not you, or your child is ready for more independence?
- how much responsibility your child's sibling(s) can take on?
- if your financial plan will meet your child's needs?
- if your child is ready to move out of the family home?
- how you can bring support for your child into your existing home?
- is there funding to help you realize your dreams?

... then this may be the network for you!

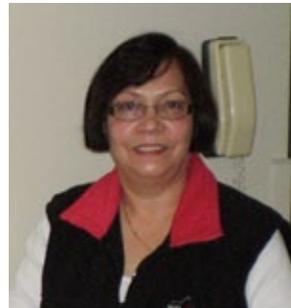
The network meets on the 4th Thursday of each month from 9:30 until 12 noon at *posAbilities* head office in Burnaby. Meetings include guest speakers, with upcoming topics to include Social Media – Engaging and Safeguarding our relatives; Developing Personal Support Networks, and Passing the Torch – when Sibs take over the primary advocate role.

For information, please visit our web-site page (under the tab 'your *posAbilities*'), event calendar, or contact Monique Nelson, Family Services/Communications Coordinator by calling (604) 299-4001 extension 270.



A warm welcome to our newest staff members:

– **Heather Lewis** at Reception, **Jim Hauck**, Team Manager, **Angie Lau**, Host Family Services Coordinator and Laurel Behaviour Consultants: **Joy Tan**, **Leilani Llacuna** and **Elyssa McKee**.



Pizza Party At Lakeside House

In the late fall, *Can You Dig It* was in the running for a \$25,000 Grant through Pepsi's Refresh everything contest. The winner is determined by popular vote on-line. Although we did not win the big prize, we did want to acknowledge our supporters along the way. **Maria** of Lakeside house was a regular voter and entered her program in a prize draw for a Pepsi and Pizza Party. Congratulations Maria – a good time was had by all!

Coming Events

March 5 – L'arch Art Show – Fundraiser, with proceeds to the organization

March 12 – Art Re-Sale, Fundraiser, with proceeds to the BC Association for Community Living

March 15 – Transition to Adulthood Resource Fair, Burnaby School District

March 6 – Kaslo Community Garden Sign-Up, Can you dig it!

March 17 – Fraser Region Self-Advocates Conference, Community Living BC

March 29 – Transition to Adulthood Resource Fair, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows School District

March 30 – Story Power with David Roche, *posAbilities*, Kickstart Disability Arts and Culture and BC Legacies Now

March 31 – Crazy Hat Dance, Stage Door

April 9 & 30 – Securing the Future – Personal and Financial Planning for people with disabilities

April 12 – Transition to Adulthood Resource Fair, North Vancouver Transition Planning Council.

April 18 – Group meeting, Parents of Youth with Disabilities in Transition, East Vancouver.

April 27-29 – Film Festival produced by Stage Door

April 29 – *PosAbilities* employment service open house

For more information – please visit www.posAbilities.ca event calendar, or www.bcacl.org

Family Advisory Committee Discusses Service Redesign

Continued from Page 7

The committee has discussed that the process has been disruptive and stressful at times for families, persons served and agency staff. It has created some anxieties as we encountered many challenges along the way. The committee also understands that services need to be creative and flexible and should ebb and flow as needs change. Services also need to be financially sustainable in order to meet the requirements of the future.

Family members shared their experience of participating in the moves of their relatives into a new home or service model as a result of service redesign. Questions were raised pertaining to home sharing, (Host Family Services), in particular and will be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting. For example, people are interested in learning more about the average length of stay and stability of Host Family arrangements. Also discussed was the importance of creating clear, open communication in order to develop trusting relationships with new caregivers.

The committee is comprised of a variety of representatives, all of whom speak to the interest of a number of services and communities where support is provided. If you are interested in participating as a representative, please contact **Monique Nelson**, Family Services/Communication Coordinator at (604) 299-4001, local 270.