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Empowering people with developmental disabilities



Discover a new worldview at the Wide Angle Media Film Festival

Contributed by the producers of WAM

Co-producers **Kickstart Disability Arts and Culture, Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion** and **posAbilities** are excited to present **Wide Angle Media (WAM)**, a disability media festival featuring commissioned shorts, international films and workshops, March 22-25 2012 in Vancouver. On Friday, March 23 plan to attend a celebratory Gala, featuring the World

Premiere screenings of the five short films commissioned by WAM. These include works by acclaimed writers, actors, directors and producers: **Matthew Kowalchuk, Jan Derbyshire, Laurence Cohen, David Cormican** favourite storyteller and raconteur **David Roche** and multi-media artist **sylvi macCormac**. A second screening of this program runs Sunday afternoon.

One of the features, **Penguins** (are so sensitive to my needs) by Matthew Kowalchuk (Writer, Director, Producer), is the story of Peter, an advertising writer who is under the gun to create an ad for a fledgling coffee company, only hours away from his deadline. The film is partly live action and part animation. **Will**, by Laurence Cohen (Director) and David Cormican (Producer), features a paranoid and

confused Canadian soldier of German descent who becomes trapped in an impact crater during WWI, realizing he will not survive the ordeal, he commits to killing a similarly trapped neighboring German soldier named Karl (Michael Hyder).

Sanity for Beginners, by Jan Derbyshire (Writer, Director, Actor) and Teri Snelgrove (Producer), features a comic docu-fantasy about the 'craziness' of psychiatric labeling and drugging. As part of this suite, discover the message in David Roche's (Writer/Actor) first film, **School of Beauty**, directed by Adam Grant Warren, and take in this mother and daughter tale, **Patience and Absurdity**, featuring sylvi macCormac (Writer, Actor Co-Director) and Paula Cole (Producer, Co-Director).

Other films not to be missed include **Café Chat** (animation), **John and Michael**, and **Shadi In The Beautiful Well**, each of which reflects the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Filmmakers who are Deaf or hard of hearing submitted a range of films - from the dramatic to purely hilarious! Check out **Hearing Test**, **Deaf Muggler** and **Hands Solo** to name a few. Other films reflect the experience of mental illness and hidden impairments, see **Painting with 14 Personalities** and **Breaking the Silence** to name a couple.

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Characters from 'Penguins' by Matthew Kowalchuk



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

Contact Monique Nelson, Family Services/Communications Coordinator

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www.posAbilities.ca

Wide Angle Media: BC's first disability media festival

Continued from Cover Page

Films run Thursday March 22 to Sunday March 25 at The Roundhouse, with works from the UK, Belgium, Israel, Spain, Australia and across Canada. The screenings are organized by themes including: love and relationships, politics, drama, artistic and experimental, provocative and more, and range from two- to 50-minutes long. WAM also presents films with sexual content in a late Saturday screening.

The festival includes workshops to support filmmakers with disabilities, aiming to provide knowledge and skills that will assist them with taking their creative property to the next level – mainstream distribution. Workshops expressly for filmmakers run Thursday to Sunday at the National Film Board, encompassing creative writing, software, social media and how to fund film projects.

For tickets and more info, please visit www.wideanglemedia.ca Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to see film trailers and to keep up with festival happenings.



Diversity Committee Holds First Agency-wide Event

Contributed by Sara Hoshooey and Lori Underwood for the Diversity Committee

On January 24th, staff representing cultures from around the world brought traditional foods to Head Office for a Multicultural Potluck. Staff enjoyed trying new foods and learning about new cuisines and dishes. This event was organized by the Diversity Committee which was established to increase cultural events throughout *posAbilities*. The potluck was the kickoff event to quarterly multicultural events to be held throughout the year at various day programs.

The remaining cultural events will be held:

March 2012 – New Transitions

June 2012 – Aegis

November 2012 – Vancouver Life Skills

Stay tuned for the announcements of these cultural events and how you can get involved.

INTERNAL MUSINGS

CARF Survey A Success!

Submitted by Gord Tulloch, Program Director



Achieving and maintaining CARF accreditation is a commitment by *posAbilities* to engage in continuous quality improvement. Specifically, focusing on the unique needs of each person served and monitoring the results of our services. Our work is measured against rigorous international standards and peer reviewed by colleagues who work for similar

organizations across the globe. This provides us with valuable feedback on the areas that we can improve upon, as well as exposure to the best practices in our field.

Last week was accreditation 2012! We were visited by five CARF surveyors who spent three intensive days with us (February 21-23). The survey went very smoothly. Surveyors commented on the

dedication and commitment of staff and identified a long series of strengths in the different program areas (Community Employment, Community Integration, Host Family Services, Respite, Community Housing, Supported Living, Behaviour Consultation). To learn more about CARF, please visit www.carf.org

While we look forward to receiving the report in about two months and addressing the recommendations within it, we are confident that we will see another three year accreditation outcome. This survey was another positive and validating experience. Indeed, this is our fourth survey and each one gets a little easier because every year we are getting better at embedding the standards into our systems and practices. Next time we won't even break a sweat!

Thank you to everyone for all your work in preparation for this survey, including coordinating it, hosting surveyors at your program sites, arranging to have persons served available to talk to, and chauffeuring the surveyors across the Lower Mainland to our different program locations. It was a real team effort!

SHARING OUR DREAMS

Strategic Plan Focuses On Developing Strengths

Contributed by Fernando Coelho, CEO

Spring is a time for new beginnings and what better way to embrace it than by launching *posAbilities*' new strategic plan for 2012-2015. Setting a sound strategy requires that we take a close look at our environment, organizational strengths and challenges. A few months ago, we invited our stakeholders to participate in that process by hosting a series of consultation sessions. Based on the information gathered, we set three key directions to pursue over the period 2012-15:

1. Strengthening Family and Community Relations
2. Strengthening Our Work Force
3. Strengthening Our Services

posAbilities' values: person-centered, inclusion, diversity, learning, excellence and innovation will continue to guide us on our path.

Over the next few weeks we will develop an operations plan. This plan will be our guide in developing and rolling out initiatives that will assist us with making progress in each of the key areas. We look forward to your contribution to strengthening our foundation over the coming years. I would also like to thank you for your dedication to delivering *posAbilities*' vision and mission in the work that you do.



Presenting the USpeq Employee Climate Survey Contest Winners

Our congratulations to Ken and Amber, both shown here with their new Samsung Galaxy Tablets. The two winners were chosen by a random draw for participating in the USpeq (You Speak) Employee Climate Survey. A response to the survey will be released in March.



Volunteers Appreciated For Contribution to Meals on Wheels

Two persons served through the PACT program were appreciated for their contribution to the local Meals on Wheels Program at an annual Christmas luncheon. A good time was had by all!

About Town



Penny enjoys contributing to the Salvation Army, a charity that supports people in need in her community.

VLS Experiences Asian Culture

Danzante Caldera on behalf of the mid-week group

Japan was recently chosen as the focus of a "Culture and Armchair Travel" session at Vancouver Life Skills. **Danzante** is a support worker with the program and took this opportunity to teach language skills as well. He worked with the group to create a Haiku, a traditional form of Japanese poetry. Haiku poems are about nature and express emotion. Enjoy!

Vancouver in Late Winter

Cloudy Late Winter,
Sleepy, Tired, Lazy, Dark Day,
Waiting for Spring Leaves.

PROGRAM NEWS BEAT

Aegis West Challenges You!

Contributed by Amanda Anderson

Aegis West Day Program is excited to announce their participation in "The Biggest Mover Challenge" with the City of New Westminster. The challenge promotes healthier living by participants being active for a minimum of 30 minutes per day. All participants are awarded points based on their individual participation with prizes awarded at the end of the 12 week challenge. In the spirit of this challenge, Aegis West has started a new daily exercise program. We are making more of an effort to live a healthier and active lifestyle by starting our day off with a minimum of 30 minutes of stretching and exercising.

There are many benefits of being active and we would like to challenge everybody at *posAbilities* to commit to a healthier lifestyle. We encourage others to join us at Aegis West for our morning stretching and exercising program and other daily activities that promote a healthier lifestyle.

If you are interested, please contact Amanda or Simone at Aegis West.

Let's Get Moving!



Safety Presentation Hits Home with Job Seekers

Contributed by *posAbilities* Employment Service



On Thursday January 19, 2012 the Employment Service was fortunate to have **Steve Grenzberg** Occupational Safety Officer from **WorkSafeBC** present the ins and outs of safety on the job to the staff and persons served of the Employment Service. Steve brought with him a wealth of knowledge regarding: employee rights and responsibilities; how to be safe at work; resources on how to remain safe in the work place; how to report injuries at work; and where to register and take courses to gain safety skills.



This picture was a big hit!

Steve also brought with him a number of photographs and comics and plenty of stories to help show us as employees how to prepare for work and the importance of taking responsibility to remain safe while on the job.

There was a lot of learning and benefit from the presentation and this was exhibited in the feedback and the quotes stated below.

"I learned to stick to the right side of the pathway when carrying dirty dishes and yell "hot" if I am carrying hot items" – Veronica

"I learned about ladders and climbing" – Walter

For further information on how to keep yourself safe at work, visit www.worksafebc.com

Coquitlam Here We Come!

Contributed by **Nicholas Watkins**, Clinical Director, Laurel Behaviour Support Services



I've been sitting here at my desk conjuring up songs from my past that speak of moving. I've come up with *On the Road Again* by Willie Nelson, *I Can See for Miles* by The Who, *Hit the Road Jack* by Ray Charles, and *Go Your Own Way* by Fleetwood Mac. With a chuckle, I also remembered the opening song to the TV Show, *The Jeffersons*

(Remember the song, *Movin On Up?*). But none of the lyrics seem to fit.

Perhaps this means that *posAbilities'* **Laurel Behaviour Support Services (LBSS)** just might need to write its own song. And there's a lot to write about, after-all, Laurel is the oldest autism service provider here in BC. Perhaps an LBSS song could reference the many scholarly research articles published by Laurel staff back in the 1980s—there were quite a few! Perhaps we could mention how the Laurel House, became the Laurel Group, and then the Laurel program at MAPCL, and now *posAbilities'* LBSS.

As we continue to push ourselves toward continued excellence, change becomes part-and-parcel of our work. And change is again on our horizon! In April, *posAbilities'* LBSS will be moving to 204 Blue Mountain Street in Coquitlam. This move places LBSS in the same location as **Simon Fraser Society for Community Living (SFCL)** and **SHARE Family and Community Services**. Both these agencies have demonstrated definitive leadership with integrated teams and while we are just co-locating for now, we are excited with the potential for sharing and synergies.

posAbilities' LBSS will continue to serve families all across the Lower Mainland, Greater Victoria Area, and Southern Interior. With 20 Consultants strong, LBSS is looking forward to developing new partnerships while still offering exceptional behavioural services!



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www.DontSweatItServices.com

FAMILIES MATTER

Outreach through information sharing and support



Contributed by Monique Nelson,
Family Services/Communications
Coordinator

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P (604) 299-4001, local 270.

posAbilities and the **Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI)** offer a series of workshops to facilitate life time planning for the family unit, themed around personal and financial planning for relatives with a disability. The agencies recently hosted three powerful workshops on Building

Support Networks, facilitated by Aaron Johannes, Susan Stanfield and Shelley Nessman of Spectrum Society for Community Living. We thank Community Living BC for funding these events. A list of resources for self-study can be found at www.posabilities.ca/your-posabilities/families/personal-support-networks. We also hosted a workshop on financial planning with experts in estate law, taxation and investing.

This summer, look forward to workshops about how to support decision for your relative or friend with a disability through Representation Agreements, and emergency preparedness to name just two topics! For more information, visit our web-site or contact us.

We are also pleased to support the **Vancouver Parents Transition Group** which is lead by coordinators who have 'been there, done that!' This group provides information and support to families whose sons/daughters are 14-17 and who are currently working through the transition process. Things to learn about and consider include: transitioning of support services, choosing a home, finding a job or continuing with post secondary education, disability benefits, financial planning and more. The group welcomes all families, and meets monthly throughout the school year, alternating between Vancouver Eastside and Westside. The next meeting is March 7! For more information, visit <http://vptg.wordpress.com/> or email transitionparents@gmail.com.

Please see the back page of this newsletter for a list of upcoming Youth Transition Resource fairs in communities throughout BC. Come out and say hello while picking up valuable info! For event details, visit our calendar at www.posAbilities.ca

New program helps people with disabilities and seniors modify homes



Contributed by
BC Housing

Would a new ramp, handrails or walk-in shower help you maintain your independence at home? BC Housing's new Home Adaptations for Independence (HAFI) program

helps people with disabilities and low-income B.C. seniors make home modifications that will allow them to continue living at home. Through HAFI, homeowners and landlords with eligible tenants can apply for financial assistance of up to \$20,000 for improvements that make their home more accessible and safe.

HAFI is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia through the Canada-B.C. Affordable Housing Initiative, with \$15 million in grants/forgivable loans available to qualifying BC residents over the next three years.

Eligibility requirements, an application guide and application forms are available at www.bchousing.org/HAFI, or by calling BC Housing at 604-646-7055, by emailing hafi@bchousing.org, or visiting any BC Housing office. If you live outside of the lower mainland, call BC Housing toll free at 1-800-407-7757 extension 7055.

posAbilities Family Advisory and Self Advocates Committees Seek Additional Representatives

Did you know that *posAbilities* has two committees that are actively engaged in shaping how we deliver services in the community? Soon we will begin implementing our next Strategic Plan, and with it, our work in strengthening Family and Community Relationships.

We welcome family members and the individuals whom we serve to learn more about the important role that these committees play in our organization and to join us at the table.

For more information, please visit "your *posAbilities*" and contact either Monique Nelson at head office or Simone Brandl at (604) 522-5524.

We continue to host monthly meetings of the **Parent Support Network**, a group geared towards the support needs of senior families, whose sons and daughters are typically over 35 years of age. New families and siblings are welcome! For more information, contact Monique Nelson.



Conference filled with informative workshops for self advocates!

The **BC People First Society (BCPF)** is pleased to host a conference and Annual General Meeting from May 11-13, 2012 at the Hilton Metrotown hotel in Burnaby. BC PF is a movement that is making sure that people with labels are involved in all decisions that are made about their lives. This takes unity and leadership. This conference is for all people who are labeled to learn and share together.



The theme of the conference is "Nothing About Us, Without Us." There are a variety of presentations, workshops and social events planned. Guests can learn about interesting topics like how to be safe when travelling around the world, how to choose and keep a good advisor, what's happening in terms of real work for real pay in this province, how to speak up, network and self advocate, how to share your story, finding belonging for LGBTQ individuals, the history of institutions and more!

For more information contact: Ludo VanPelt at 604-522-3302 or email bcpf98@yahoo.ca You can also check them out on Facebook or visit their blog at bcpeoplefirst.wordpress.com.



Guests at the Pub Night Fundraiser included: John Cox, former president of People First of Nova Scotia, and currently working on a book, *Getting Included: How labelled people have impacted inclusion*, Aaron Johannes, local Advisor, Lorie Sherritt, President of BC People First and Jim Oulton, former advisor for People First Nova Scotia. **Photo credit: Krista Menges.**

Can You Dig It Launches A New Web Site

Contributed by Cinthia Pagé,
Project Coordinator

Can You Dig It (CYDI) is entering its 3rd growing season and is ready to 'grow' to the next level by engaging more gardeners in more communities. To assist with this outreach, the team is excited to launch a new website – www.cydi.ca This site will help us share the experience, present the initiative and offer resources to those who are already involved, as well as those who wish to create their own inclusive food-growing gardens.

The new and improved website features inspirational videos, guidebooks on how to create and manage your inclusive garden, essential gardening information, beautiful pictures and delicious recipes! A blog will be used to share our latest news and receive feedback from gardeners, volunteers and visitors.

We are currently seeking volunteers to coordinate gardens and to develop cohesion amongst the gardeners. Community gardens are a great place to connect with people, learn new skills, get empowered and grow your own food. But really, the focus is on community building. Partners, neighbours and volunteers play a crucial in the success of the gardens.

Within *posAbilities*, we are pleased to announce that one of our Burnaby residences is opening up its backyard to the community. In April, we will have 12 new raised and wheelchair accessible garden plots to plant. If you are interested in a plot, please contact us.

At CYDI, we grow food, celebrate contributions and cultivate relationships! For more information about the gardens and learn how you can get involved, please visit www.cydi.ca, contact canyoudigit@posAbilities.ca. We can all plant a seed!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

posAbilities Employment Service welcomes new staff

Contributed by Seema Tripathi, Employment Specialist

The saying goes "good things come to those who wait" and this is how the Employment Services Manager feels when it comes to putting a diverse and dedicated team together. **Leah Webb** our third Employment Specialist, came onboard in August 2011 and has been a welcome addition to the team. Leah brings a wealth of knowledge having worked in the employment sector assisting individuals with disabilities in finding gainful employment. As a native "North Shorer" Leah says she loves the outdoors. A great deal of her time is spent exploring the mountains – whether it be running, hiking, or biking the trails or riding the snow covered slopes on her snow board. She has also travelled extensively through 30 plus countries and lived abroad for two years.

Also onboard as the Community Connector is **Amber Hagan**, who joined the team in October 2011. Amber's role has her assisting individuals to



independently pursue activities and interests in their community when not at work. Having worked as a Community Support Social Service Worker for three years along with a natural understanding of the benefits of employment for individuals with developmental disabilities, Amber quickly bonded with the Employment Service Team. In her off time Amber is kept busy with her family and enjoys hosting dinner parties that allow her to experiment with new recipes.

Coming Events

Event details are regularly posted to our calendar, please see www.posAbilities.ca for more info or call Monique at (604) 299-4001. For province wide events of interest, check out www.bcacl.org

Vancouver:

- March 3 – Reason to Care Art Re-Sale Fundraiser for BC Association for Community Living
- March 3 – AMSA Diversity and Health Fair – free!
- March 7 – Vancouver Parents Transition Support Group – topic of the month: housing
- March 22-25 – Wide Angle Media Festival, visit www.wideanglemedia.ca for info!

- April 1 – Celebrate World Autism Awareness Day with us at the Canucks Autism Network Family Festival
- April 12 – Come to the Crazy Hats Dance hosted by Stage Door

Burnaby

- March 3 – Families Promoting Employment First, co-hosted with BACI & the Family Support Institute
- May 11-13 – Calling all Self Advocates: BC People First Conference and AGM is in town!

Salmon Arm/BC Southern Interior

- April 2 – Visit us at "What's Next?" Youth Transition Resource Fair

Maple Ridge

- April 3 – Visit us at "Life After School" – annual Youth Transition Resource Fair

North Vancouver

- April 10 – Visit us at the annual Youth Transition Resource Fair

Richmond

- April 12 – Visit us at the bi-annual Youth Transition Resource Fair

DISCOVER A NEW WORLDVIEW AT

WIDE ANGLE MEDIA FESTIVAL
THE DISABILITY MEDIA FESTIVAL
FEATURING COMMISSIONED SHORTS, FILMS & WORKSHOPS
ROUNDHOUSE & NFB VANCOUVER
MARCH 22-25

SCHEDULE & TICKETS AT
WWW.WIDEANGLEMEDIA.CA

CHARACTERS FROM 'PENGUINS' BY MATTHEW KOWALCHUK

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straight | Spectrum Society FOR COMMUNITY LIVING | ROUNDHOUSE | CITY OF VANCOUVER | COMMUNITY LIVING BRITISH COLUMBIA | CYS | Super CHANNEL | W | ACCESSIBLE MEDIA INC. | AMI | KBO | NFB | C | CMPA | FRONT ROW | SWITCH UNITED | Simply.ca