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posAbilities
Empowering people with developmental disabilities

Building Caring Communities with John McKnight

On Monday, May 5, 200 citizens gathered at the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre in Vancouver to listen to the legendary John McKnight. As per tradition, John treated us to stories about how to bake a 'successful community cake', how a small town received a free community centre from the Knights of Columbus, the cast of characters who made these assets possible and much, much more. In over 30 years of study and practice, John has collected 3,000 stories. He prefers to call them case studies since institutions such as the universities that support his work are more accepting of that frame. Participants were riveted by John's words, which were sometimes whispered; they yearned to take away even one key lesson from the scholar who has the knowledge to assist with transforming community development practices in B.C.

Each story was truly impactful because it centred on identifying the unique gifts of a variety of characters in our communities - citizens who are often overlooked: the "town drunk", the person who has been viewed as oppositional since the eighth grade, the fellow who has a bipolar disorder, a physical or developmental disability. The ability of citizens to contribute is directly linked to the perspective from which we view them. John challenged us to see these people's gifts rather than the labels they may carry.

John advised that community can meet the needs of its citizens only when all citizens are welcomed and are able to make a contribution based on their passion, gifts, or skills. This is the shift that he seeks to encourage community developers to embrace - a focus on community assets over the traditional service model of conducting needs assessments and creating services to fulfill those needs. On this topic, he added, "Needs surveys count up emptiness and misery. Community doesn't need that." We learned that the conditions for a successful community include its citizens volunteering to share their gifts and talents with their neighbours.

In one story, we met a woman who had lived in a rural institution all of her life - almost 60 years. Through a change in service delivery, she was suddenly moved into an urban community. The last three years of her life were spent in this new community with a family who valued her contribution as the Grandma that they had always wanted. One of his closing tales was about a trip to his native Ireland. He was in pursuit of some bait to go fishing in the local lake. In conversation with the shopkeeper, he soon discovered that everything he needed was on the path to the store, he simply had to overturn the stones. The lesson is a simple one: trust in community. Community has the capacity to meet its citizens' needs. The key ingredients are the contribution of individuals' gifts, the mobilization of associations, the expanding circles of care within its institutions (business, government, not for profits), a defined space (land), and participation in the exchange of gifts and assets.

Continued on Page 2



Do you have a story for our quarterly newsletter or website?

Staff writer/editor: Aamir Sheriff

Email: communications@posAbilities.ca or call (604) 299-4001 ext. 235.

Connect with us! Search for posAbilitiesCA



www.posAbilities.ca

Building Caring Communities with John McKnight

Continued from Cover Page

In the morning of that same day, John met with the Community Connectors from Building Caring Communities, and engaged them in an enlightening discussion. He and the connectors exchanged stories and lessons learned from their work in the community. The challenge he put out at the end of the session was for the team to be the catalyst of a culture that is kind and welcoming. It was inspiring for the Connectors to discover that their Building Caring Communities team might be the largest of its kind in the world! To add to that, John gladly offered his continued guidance as they continue their good work.

*John McKnight has had a profound impact on our understanding of community. In *The Careless Society* (1996), a seminal work, he shows how a society becomes increasingly careless as it assigns responsibility for caring to systems and institutions. Care is a free and personal gesture that cannot be replicated in professional services. He also co-founded the methodology of Asset-Based Community Development – a way discovering the natural assets in community (skills, passions, resources, spaces, etc.) and of engaging and empowering community-members to solve local challenges. The event was co-hosted by **posAbilities** and PLAN Institute.*



Disability Consultation Report: Moving Together Toward an Accessible B.C.

Contributed by Justine Chubb

B.C. has a vision of becoming the most progressive region for people living with disabilities in Canada. Through a recent public consultation process, the provincial government engaged citizens who are striving to reach the same goal.

From December 3, 2013 to March 11, 2014, the passion, concerns and hopes of individuals with disabilities, along with family, friends, advocates and community members, were expressed and heard. There were almost 30,000 visits to the website (<http://engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper/>) and close to 1,150 people participated in 23 accessible, in-person consultation sessions around the province. In total, more than 7,500 comments were received and the Disability Consultation Report is the government's attempt to summarize and reflect the ideas, suggestions and solutions put forth.

As ideas flowed in, themes began to emerge that formed the foundation of this report. The 12 dominant themes include: Inclusive Government, Accessible Service Delivery, Accessible Internet, Accessible Built Environment, Accessible Housing, Accessible Transportation, Income Support, Employment, Financial Security, Inclusive Communities, Emergency Preparedness, and Accessible Consumer Experience.

One of the more prominent themes heard in every community and across all platforms of this consultation is the desire to work and contribute to their communities. Significant concerns and barriers were identified that make it difficult for individuals to secure employment. People strongly expressed how the government needs to play a much larger role in hiring and retaining people with disabilities, and how they should be more recognized and supported within the BC Jobs Plan. To view the full report (several formats available) please see: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper/disability-consultation-report/>

The provincial government's next step is to convene 300 representatives from the disability community, government and the business community at a Summit on June 16, 2014 in Vancouver. The goal of the two hour meeting is for participants to discuss a shared action plan that will lead to the long-term realization of B.C. becoming the most progressive place in Canada for people living with disabilities. Participation in person may be still be possible, please contact the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities for details. Another option open to all, is viewing a web cast of the event. You will find Summit details online: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/disabilitywhitepaper/about/the-summit/> as well as the consultation report and a message from the Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation, the Hon. Don McRae.

TransLink Commits \$1 million to provide over 30,000 additional taxi trips for HandyDART customers in 2014

TransLink is committing \$1 million to provide over 30,000 additional taxi rides for HandyDART customers in 2014, in response to customers' need for more travel service. This will help more people with disabilities get where they need to go, based on a proven successful pilot program in 2013 where the use of taxis helped meet customers' travel needs and TransLink's commitment to financial responsibility.

"Our goal is to help more people with disabilities get where they need to go by creating greater access, flexibility and independence in trip planning and travel through these additional taxi rides," said Doug Kelsey, Chief Operating Officer, TransLink. "We know that door-to-door public transportation is important to the people who use it, and this funding will help more people with disabilities travel throughout the region in 2014."

Deepi Leihl, an advocate for improved transit, stated, "This is interesting news and I am very happy that TransLink has put more funding into a service that was really needed."

Custom transit, branded as HandyDART, is a public transit service for people with disabilities who are not always able to use conventional transit. These additional taxi trips will add to the existing service provided by dedicated HandyDART vehicles. The increased use of taxis will be based on the customer's individual needs and ability to take a taxi, and funding will also support safety and service training and initiatives to ensure customers experience the same high level of service regardless of the type of vehicle they're travelling in.

A pilot program conducted by TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company from April to November 2013 demonstrated that increased use of taxis can meet customers' needs for independence and flexibility in a way that is cost effective. The taxi pilot resulted in 11,000 additional trips for custom transit customers. The pilot program also found that customer satisfaction improved when taxi drivers have enhanced safety and service-related training on how to best serve people with disabilities.

For more information about this announcement, contact Merrilee Ashworth at Merrilee.ashworth@translink.ca or call 778-375-7742.

Save the Date: INCLUSION Art Show | October 23, 2014

Showcase preceding the main event aimed at building a more inclusive arts community.



Preparations for **posAbilities'** annual art show are in full swing and given that this is our 10th anniversary, we have plans for an incredible celebration! We highly encourage you to save the date of

Thursday, October the 23rd, 2014 – this celebration of art will be a day to remember. The 2014 show offers a few new twists, including an expanded time frame and an evening showcase the night prior the main event. All festivities will take place at Heritage Hall in Vancouver, with artists and guests encouraged to embrace the “black and white” theme, a fitting tribute to the retrospective vibe of the show. Please join us in spreading the word and invite the artists you know who have previously participated to register again this year. The official registration process will begin after Labour Day and continue until the end of September.

The INCLUSION Art Show, our traditional celebration of art, will take place on Thursday, October the 23rd from 1-8 pm. By opening our doors earlier, we can provide more time for artists from outside of Metro Vancouver, families and guests to participate. The show will include all types of art, including paintings, glasswork, photography, crafts, pottery, small collections and much more. We hope that this year, even more artists, family members, friends and arts aficionados will join us. This event is open to the public and admission is by donation.

Jodie Bergeron, a member of the Art Show Committee, was recently reminiscing on her experiences from previous art shows. She says “I remember people who purchased artwork telling me how great this

event was, and what a bonus it was to walk in that night.” She also remembers how happy and proud the artists were to display the tags indicating that they were the talent behind all the wonderful artwork in the room.

On the evening of Wednesday, October the 22nd, we will host a showcase featuring a variety of artists who have participated in the INCLUSION art show over the years and have original paintings for sale. This event will be more intimate and geared towards a specific purpose, which is to foster relationships between artists, civic and business leaders. Our goal is to develop a more inclusive arts community and greater public access and appreciation of the artists. If our vision for this event comes to fruition, you will begin to see the featured artists participating in more art shows and selling their work through local cafes, galleries, public spaces and more.

For the showcase, we request that all participating associations chose their ‘ten best’ original paintings. How do we define “best?” That’s a good question and one that will be determined by the artists and the studios representing them! As a guideline, the art show committee has suggested that the pieces reflect the passion and commitment of artists who have grown over the past decade, and who wish to move forward with their careers. Independent artists are also welcome to show their best piece.

The 10th anniversary is a time to reflect on the accomplishments of the all of the artists who have made the annual show such a success and to set new goals for those who are seeking even more exposure. We hope that the spirit of INCLUSION prevails both inside and outside of Heritage Hall, enriching our communities.

To experience this and more, be sure to mark the date in your calendar and contact the Art Show committee at artshow@posAbilities.ca if you have any questions.

INCLUSION Art Show: Callout for Reflections

Contributed by Jodie Bergeron

Hello Everyone. This year marks the 10th anniversary of our annual INCLUSION Art Show and we want to make it a special year! One of our many initiatives is a collection of reflections. We invite you to reflect on your experiences at the Art Show over the past few years, and answer 2-3 of the questions below. We are looking for the moments over the years that you remember – the really meaningful ones that touched you. From our experiences, we will create a collection of stories that will capture the spirit, evolution and history of the art show. We also welcome your photos!

These questions can be about any year – if you can remember, please mark the submission with the year. We encourage you to write about specific things that you remember.

1. **What was your favorite moment?**
2. **Did you have a favorite submission from a specific artist?**
3. **What do you love about the show?**
4. **Did you hear any positive feedback from random people in the crowd?**
5. **What was the response from any of the families of the artists?**
6. **Was there a piece of art work that you purchased? Is it hanging in your office or home? What was it about that piece that led you to purchase it?**
7. **Did you get the biography of the artist? Why was that important to you?**
8. **Was there a piece you wished you had purchased, and why did you like it?**
9. **Did your art show experiences help you build a relationship with somebody else that was present?**

We would love to hear your thoughts and to receive any photos that you have by June 30, 2014. Please email all submissions to Jodie at JBergeron@posAbilities.ca or send them by interoffice mail to my attention at head office.



Celebrating the Life of Anne Barnes

It is with sadness we announce the passing of Anne Elsie Barnes on Wednesday evening, March 26, 2014. Annie loved music and most often would be found swinging to the music with a big smile on her face. Her cheery disposition will be missed by many.

She was born in Refuge Cove, West Redondo Island and lived most of her life at Woodlands until November 1990, when she moved to Vista House in Burnaby. For the past couple of years, she resided at Evergreen House in Coquitlam.

FAMILIES MATTER

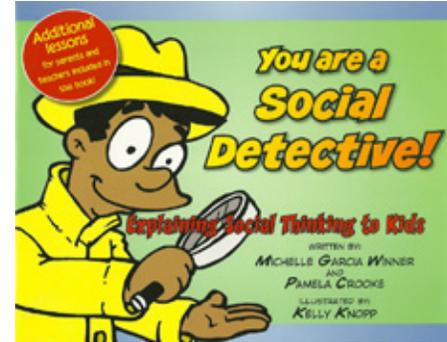
Contributed by Monique Nelson

Over the past few months, **posAbilities** has made some significant strides in supporting families across BC. We are pleased to announce that Laurel Behaviour Support Services (LBSS) is now available to children and youth in the central region of Vancouver Island and to adults in the southern interior! The team is excited to begin working with its partners to add capacity to regions where there is need and to improving the quality of life for more individuals and families. Consultants have also been busy locally, offering team training and workshops to Support Workers with other organizations and families.

New workshops for parents and caregivers include [The Triple P positive parenting program](#), which is fully funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) for families of children with developmental disabilities. Sessions run in various communities, so please contact Sareth Ly by email sly@posAbilities.ca or call 778-945-1430 to learn more and register. The other arm of our children's services – life skills, is once again hosting the amazing day camp "Summer Blast," which focusses on developing social and community access skills through day trip outings. The camp runs from 9am-3pm throughout the summer and children typically participate for one or two weeks. This camp is funded by MCFD, however, activity fees do apply as. The camp serves youth in Burnaby, New Westminster and the Tri-Cities and requires a referral from a social worker. To learn more, visit our website or contact Amy Glass by email aglass@posAbilities.ca or call 778-945-1434.

Other specialized training offered this summer, includes a functional social skills training program for children ages 8-11. The small group sessions will run for 10 weeks (Vancouver and Surrey) by a

Behaviour Consultant and are based on the social thinking curriculum "You are a Social Detective" by Michelle Garcia Winner and Pamela Crooke. There is a fee for this service, please [see the poster for details](#) or contact Sareth Ly at 778-945-1430.



I am pleased to share that we recently completed our Spring Series of educational workshops on personal and financial security. Sessions were co-hosted with the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion and designed to complement the offerings of others such as the Vancouver Parents of Youth in Transition Group and Simon Fraser Society for Community Living. All sessions were full and lively. Together we learned about the new changes that apply to Wills, Estates and Trusts, the Registered Disability Savings Plan and more! We also hosted our first Movie Club event – the screening of the film *Gabrielle*, followed by a facilitated discussion about independence, relationships and the roles of families and caregivers in fostering a good life. In closing, I would like to remind everyone that we have a Senior Parents Support Network that meets once monthly (September to June) to learn, share and connect. This month, we have post-poned our day time meeting so that we can participate in the [Pub Night Fundraiser for the 10th Annual Inclusion Art Show](#). Come join us!

To learn more about parent support, please contact myself, Monique Nelson at (604) 299-4001 local 270.

Oxford Superheroes



In recognition of the Oxford Superheroes, the City Of Port Coquitlam put a new post on Cambridge Avenue, and also sent the fellows a thank you card, volunteer pins and free courtesy passes for city parks and recreation.



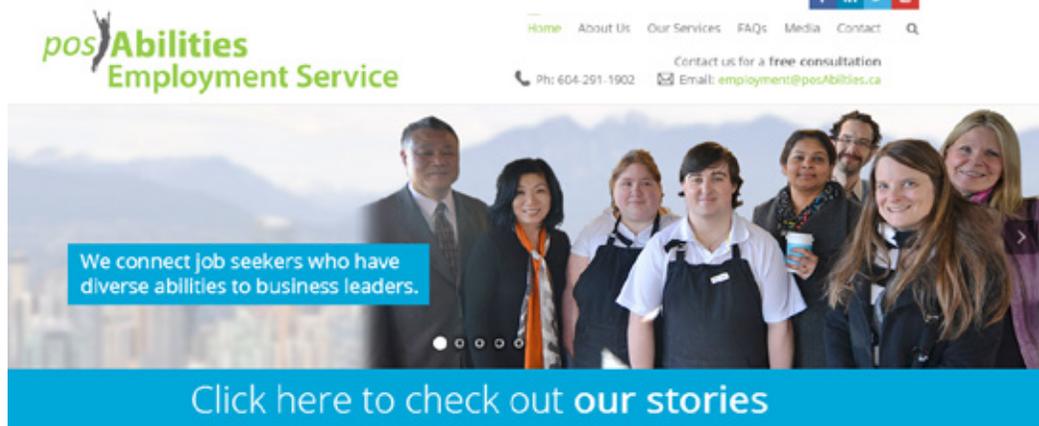
Pierre Miner participating in Pitt Meadows' 100th year anniversary celebrations.

New Employment Service Website Provides Ideal Place to Share Stories

Contributed by Kalena Kavanaugh

posAbilities Employment Service continues to grow with the demand for effective services by job seekers with diverse abilities. As our employer partners know, giving all job seekers an equal opportunity to access the labour market is a good business decision. Companies that have taken this step have seen benefits such as higher employee morale, improved customer service and greater productivity. Our mission is to continue to expand our network of connections and to build relationships in the community in order to support **even more** individuals with getting their feet onto the career ladder! To assist us with this endeavour, we recently launched a new website www.PESworks.ca, serving as the foundation for sharing our stories, details about our service and how to get involved.

The site is built around story telling featuring **videos** of the lived experiences of recently employed job seekers, caregivers/family members and employers; more stories posted to our **Career Chat** blog (which is open to comment); and photos and fun bits about life at work on our **media page**. One example of a fun story with some serious messages, is the recently posted **'Gotcha Awards'** video. This piece captures the reactions of local employers who are champions of inclusive hiring, when pounced upon unsuspectingly by the Employment Service team, complete with their balloons, trophies and fanfare! Our thanks to the three New Westminster businesses



who were honoured that day: Starbucks and Taqueria Playa Tropical on Sixth Ave and Save-on-Foods just around the corner on Columbia. Watch the video here <http://tinyurl.com/k8x6eyy> and subscribe to our YouTube Channel **posAbilitiesCA** to see more!

If it is service details that you are after, you'll find brochures, posters and FAQs online and don't forget to visit our event postings to discover when the next job club meet-up or employment camp will begin.

As the site is new, we'd greatly appreciate any feedback on its contents and welcome the opportunity to answer any unanswered questions that you may have.

Give us a shout and we'll gladly provide more information or a free consultation to discover how we may work together: call 604-291-1902 or email employment@posAbilities.ca.

Quick Facts About posAbilities Employment Service

Did you know... that over the past 12 months, 66 persons served were hired in communities across Metro Vancouver?

Did you know... that currently 20 individuals are in the job coaching stage?

Did you know... that we have three offices in Vancouver, New Westminister and Maple Ridge?

Broadway House - Good Friday Parade

Friends from Broadway House enjoyed participating in a Good Friday parade and lunch in Vancouver.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Judy sharing her love with cats at the Richmond Animal Protection Society

Judy and Neema Spreading their Love to Animals at RAPS

Contributed by Amanda McPhillips

For the last few months Neema and Judy from Richmond Life Skills have been volunteering at the Richmond Animal Protection Society (RAPS) every Friday afternoon. The duo arrives at the shelter and greets the staff before visiting each of the three cat rooms. Most of the cats are eager to receive the love and affection these ladies have to offer. Neema often uses a cat wand to play with the cats. The kittens always love it, and Neema is good at enticing even some of the older cats to play with her. Judy is a bit of a cat whisperer. She talks to the cats, who are often talk back to her, probably saying, "please pick me up and take me home!". On top of giving lots of cuddles and love, the RLS ladies help fold laundry and are always offering to do any other tasks that are available.

RAINBOW DISCOVERY ALLIANCE

Opening our community to people with developmental disabilities.



The Rainbow Discovery Alliance Welcomes Spring With a Karaoke Social

Contributed by Tianna Wattum

On Wednesday, May the 14th, the Rainbow Discovery Alliance (RDA) kicked off the season of spring in great fashion! The group met at the Hub in Vancouver to enjoy an evening of karaoke, food, dancing and catching up with each other. Everyone who attended had a great time singing solo and group karaoke, participating in a fun group activity and learning the "cup song". They will be practicing the "cup song" at the next social.

The RDA is happy to announce that the group will be getting together for socials at the Hub on the second Wednesday of every month. The next one is coming up on Wednesday, June 11th. The Hub is located at 251 East 11th Avenue, Vancouver.

Colin was one of the people who attended the event. He says he enjoyed singing, meeting new people and making new friends, whom he hopes to see again at the next social. He also hopes that the word spreads about these events so that even more people are able to attend!

As an organizer of this event, I enjoyed many things about this first of many monthly RDA socials. We had a new participant join us whom I'd never met, so word is getting out about the RDA. It was great to see people expressing themselves in song, their dress and through conversation. We've created a safe space where people can just be themselves, and that is a beautiful thing!

The Rainbow Discovery Alliance is a community based support network for individuals with developmental disabilities who identify as LGBTQ and their allies. For more information, contact Tianna Wattum at rainbow@posAbilities.ca or visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RainbowDiscoveryAlliance.



Recognizing our Couriers for their Hard Work

Contributed by Kimberly Nikkel for the A-Team

Our 1st Annual Internal Courier Recognition Brunch was a roaring success!

We wanted to say a special thank-you to Allen, Brian, Graeme, Margaret, Pak Ho, and Penny for all of their hard work and dedication to delivering the internal mail throughout the many programs every week.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed gathering together to see one another and enjoy the delicious food. They all received personalized gifts which made it an extra special day!



posAbilities Shares at the Stone Soup Festival

Contributed by Caroline Dagg and Patricia Arias

On Saturday May 10, 2014, the **19th Annual Stone Soup Festival** was held at the Britannia Community Centre in Vancouver. The Stone Soup Festival is a celebration of local food, art, environment, and community. This year's event included a food market, local artists, community groups, talks/workshops, live music, children's activities and free soup! It is a popular annual event in Vancouver that attracts many locals.

posAbilities shared in this event along with many other local community groups and individuals. We led a children's craft activity of decorating potting cups and planting various vegetable seeds in them, giving out temporary tattoos, and answering questions about *posAbilities* and its various initiatives. Paty (a staff member from our Alternatives program), our four volunteer children (Gabriela, Sadaf, Samaa, and Zahra), and Sandra and David (from East 38th) were busy leading the kids' activities and chatting with the public. The best part of being involved in the Stone Soup Festival is always "the coming together of people (neighbours) of different cultures and backgrounds though the common celebration of community through gardening and food."

Variety – The Children's Charity Presents posAbilities With New Sunshine Coach



Variety Board Member Geri Young presents the keys to Sunshine Coach No. 580 to Monique Nelson, Director of Community Engagement, *posAbilities* Association.

Variety – The Children's Charity was pleased to present Sunshine Coach No.580 to **posAbilities** and we were equally pleased to gain their support! The wheelchair lift-equipped bus replaces a fifteen-year-old vehicle used to transport children in the Lower Mainland to *posAbilities*' community integration and Summer Blast camp programs. Through these programs, children and youth are given an opportunity to discover the skills and resources needed to become active participants in their communities.

"Community partnerships with organizations like *posAbilities* are very important to us," says Bernice Scholten, Executive Director of Variety. "When we work together we're able to provide support to more children in British Columbia who have special needs."

On behalf of *posAbilities*, CEO Fernando Coelho would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Scholten and everyone on her team for the generous contribution. Fernando adds, "Our mission is to integrate individuals with developmental disabilities into the broader community, with the vision of helping to create a more inclusive society. The Sunshine Coach is a key component that facilitates the work we do."

The spacious coach is a welcomed resource that will be shared amongst several programs to optimize its use for persons served who face significant cognitive or mobility challenges to accessing public transportation.

CARAMEL COFFEE HOUSE

& SOCIAL
CLUB

Everyone is welcome!

Bring your own lunch from home.....and your dancing shoes too!

Live music with Anthony - FREE ENTRY FOR ALL
fully accessible space

TUESDAY , 27th MAY - 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

318 Keary Street, New West (upstairs)

Join us for an afternoon of music, dancing and community.

This is the first monthly event of the year!!

For information email
rbanadera@posabilities.ca or mkang@posabilities.ca





Upcoming dates:
PosterMyWall.com June 24 July 29 Aug 26 Sept 30 Oct 28 Nov 25 Dec 30

CONGRATULATIONS

On behalf of our organization, I would like to recognize and thank the following employees for their years of service to **posAbilities**.

Your dedication to persons served, your peers and our stakeholders is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Fernando Coelho, CEO

20 Years of Service

Allie Foster

15 Years of Service

Robbie LaMarre

10 Years of Service

Joane Arce

Charito Wiseman



Charito Wiseman



posAbilities staff had a good workout while having fun together at the Vancouver Sun Run (right) and the Woman2Warrior race (top). The fundraising race supports Easter Seals Camps for children who have special needs. Way to go teams!



Allie Foster's 20 Year Journey with posAbilities

Contributed by Aamir Sheriff

Allie Foster first started with one of **posAbilities'** founding organizations, Proactive Society, as a life skills worker in the Richmond Life Skills program. Now, 20 years later, I asked her to reflect on what has motivated her to stay with our association for so many years. With pride, she replied, "It's my job – and I enjoy the everyday moments – the jokes, the smiles and the hugs." Over the years, she has assisted individuals with various aspects of their lives, including employment, recreation, taking transit on their own and being more independent. Now, she is a residential care worker working "asleep overnight" shifts twice a week. She finds this to be the perfect balance since it allows her to spend plenty of time at home with her four children.

When I asked about her approach towards her work, she shared this simple, but important message: "As we learn to better ourselves, we add more tools to our toolbox so that we have more to offer others." Thank you Allie for all your years of service, and we hope there are many more ahead!

Vancouver Community College and Canadian Cancer Society Honour posAbilities



On Thursday, May 15, **posAbilities** received an Employer Appreciation Award for being an Outstanding Practicum Host. Employers nominated for this award have gone above and beyond to support the learning outcomes for students from Vancouver Community College through practicum programs and employment opportunities.



On Monday, April 14, the Canadian Cancer Society presented **posAbilities** with their Community Champion Award. This is in recognition of our ongoing commitment to workplace wellness, for building on foundational elements that support the work (i.e. strong wellness committee), for creativity in leveraging community resources and for

genuine commitment to supporting staff and creating a healthy workplace environment. **Congratulations everyone!**

Year 5 Marked by Continued Growth and Collaboration



Folks from our Supported Living Network were excited to be part of the community garden build.



Can You Dig It (CYDI) is an initiative by **posAbilities** that supports communities to create welcoming and inclusive food-growing gardens where everyone belongs. Currently in our 5th growing season, CYDI has been engaged in the creation of 36 gardens throughout the Lower Mainland. In our latest update, we bring you news about our partnership with the City of Surrey and our work building a budding coalition.

Community Garden Build at Lionel-Courchene Park in Surrey a Great Success!

On Saturday, May 24, Can You Dig It partnered with the City of Surrey to build a new community garden at Lionel-Courchene Park in Surrey. People from various groups were there to volunteer their time, and it was great seeing everyone work so hard to build a community garden in just one day!

Those who came out to the garden build worked together to shovel soil into the plots, begin the planting process, create pathways among the garden plots using woodchips, create wooden signs and paint decorative stones. Everyone had a great time, and seeing the garden come together so nicely motivated everyone to keep up the hard work. There was smiling, laughter, teamwork and collaboration all around!

"I'm always amazed at what we can do when people come together, when we use people's passions and gifts," says Cinthia Pagé, project coordinator with Can You Dig It. The surrounding community is really interested in being involved with the new garden! This includes interest from groups such as William F. Davidson Elementary, Johnston Heights Secondary, Fast Track Education Centre, Mountainview Montessori School, Foundation Church and more. A local company, Westcoast Instant Lawn, was kind enough to donate the soil, demonstrating that businesses are also more than happy to support initiatives like these. This event was also featured in the Surrey Leader newspaper: <http://tinyurl.com/kyohqpy>.

Half the growing space will be managed by DiverseCity as a program garden to foster social inclusion and empowerment of new immigrants and refugees. Plots in the other half of the garden are available to the community. If you wish to own a plot at Lionel-Courchene Community Garden, contact Cinthia Page at CPage@posAbilities.ca.

Budding Community Garden Coalition Forms

Can You Dig It invites you, community garden members and lovers, to be part of its Community Garden Coalition. This is a series of events for community gardening enthusiasts to connect, learn and share best practices about creating community gardens that are inclusive, safe and participatory. The goal is to create an environment where members of the community can connect and host events together outside of growing food.

These events are self-managed, and therefore include fundraising aspects, planning for the future and relevant governance. Participants in the coalition are exposed to many opportunities, such as organized food donations, a garden buddy system, plot use, education on best practices for gardening and gardening support. Look forward to more sharing events in June:

Thursday, June 5th | 7-9pm | In partnership with Village Vancouver | McBride Fieldhouse – 2250 West 4th Ave, Vancouver

Thursday, June 12th | 7-9pm | In partnership with Food for Thought | Alexandra Neighbourhood House – 2916 McBride Ave, Surrey

Each session features a guest speaker from the community garden community, graphic facilitation and time to connect with others. For more news and updates, please visit www.CYDI.ca and pop by our face book page.



Building Caring Communities

Our Mission

Our mission is to build more connected neighbourhoods where people are known and have relationships with others. We are trying to do two things:

- (1) Build unpaid networks of support (friends) around people, and connect individuals to activities and associations in their neighbourhoods.
- (2) Grow and thicken the ties of connection wherever we go.

We are a representation of organizations interested in building more caring communities. The organizations that are currently involved include: [posAbilities](#), [Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion](#), [Simon Fraser Society for Community Living](#), [Inclusion Powell River Society](#), [Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network](#) and [Spectrum Society for Community Living](#).

We came together based on a grant from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, which made it possible to hire Joe Erpenbeck from the ABCD Institute. He is working with our agencies so that we can get better at this work.

Why Are We Doing It

The people we support in services are often socially isolated. This can be shown in surveys and quality of life indices, particularly for persons with developmental disabilities. At the same time, there is considerable research that shows that social relationships are critical to our physical, mental and economic wellbeing. Our goal is to facilitate connections that will develop into friendships and meaningful relationships.

We use the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) framework that was created by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann at Northwestern University. This method focuses on the gifts or assets that are inherent in every person and in every neighbourhood.

The social services system often sees people in terms of the things they “need” and ignores all the great things they have to offer. Our work in building both relationships and community is based on the gifts, passions and skills that everyone brings with them. We work in neighbourhoods in search of places of hospitality and look for ways to support people in sharing their gifts with others.

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