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Families Matter

Imagine!

'Dafne' Touches Hearts at VIFF

Contributed by *Alicia Neptune, Communications Specialist*

Films presented at the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) often bring new perspectives and compelling characters to the screen. The genuine, funny and touching *Dafne* is no exception. *posAbilities*, Kinsight, and the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI) sponsored the film's Canadian premiere at VIFF. The screening at the Vancouver Playhouse on October 9th was a perfect way to celebrate Community Inclusion Month.

The title character, a bright young woman with Down syndrome, lives her life to the fullest and raises the spirits of everyone she encounters. But when her mother dies unexpectedly, she must help her father cope with grief. She convinces him to go with her on a weekend hike across the countryside to visit her mother's grave, and they

begin to rebuild their relationship during the long walk. Directed by Federico Bondi and starring the truly superb Caroline Raspanti as *Dafne*, the film celebrates life and love even in the wake of difficult times.

Despite the fact a death sets the story in motion, the film is brimming with humour. Hearty laughter frequently filled the theatre. Much of the humour comes from *Dafne* herself, who speaks her mind and doesn't hold back. But her unselfconscious honesty charms everyone around her, including the audience, and helps her form genuine connections. After her mother's death, her friends and coworkers offer much-needed support and affection. *Dafne*, in turn, supports her father. While they sometimes snap at each other, the pilgrimage to her mother's grave solidifies

the bond between them. Her unwavering strength and love help them both begin to heal and move on.

Equally joyful and bittersweet, the film is ultimately about the relationships that make our lives meaningful. *Dafne*—both the film and the character—will stick with me for a long time.



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

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



Celebration of Arts

Our **15th Annual INCLUSION Art Show & Sale** was a joyous, art-filled day. Artists and art-lovers came together in an event that celebrated creativity, community, and diverse abilities. From art demos, to live entertainment, to our Art + Identity display, to the hundreds of artworks in various mediums, there was so much to see. Year after year, the show demonstrates the ability of art to break down barriers and perceptions of disability.



We are thankful for the opportunity to put on a show of this magnitude every year. We would like to thank our sign language interpreters from the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Douglas College, our sponsors - the BC Government Employees Union and the City of Vancouver, our silent auction contributors, Art Show Committee and volunteers, dedicated team members, artists, families and guests. Visit www.posabilities.ca/celebrating-15-years-inclusion-art-show/ for more photos and highlights!

IMPACT Youth Employment Research Project



A new initiative for secondary school students with diverse abilities, ages 14-19

Contributed by Kalena Kavanaugh, Manager, posAbilities Employment Service

We're excited to announce that we are participating in a collaborative research project to advance youth employment success. Alongside other community living organizations and UBC's Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship, we look forward to discovering how we can best provide participating youth with the knowledge, tools and experiences they need to be prepared for their future careers. Throughout the research study, participants will:

- ✓ Go on a journey of self-discovery and explore part-time employment opportunities
- ✓ Build their confidence and leadership skills at a series of workshops
- ✓ Teach us about the kinds of support that are needed in order to be successful when exploring the world of work
- ✓ Meet new people and develop a circle of connections

The IMPACT Youth Employment Research Project will run from April 2020 – September 2022 in all three areas we support: Vancouver, Burnaby/New Westminister and Maple Ridge.

We invite you to call 604-291-1902 or email employment@posabilities.ca to learn more about this project and how you can get involved!



Nominated for Non-Profit of the Year!

Contributed by April Carmody, Team Manager

The Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Chamber of Commerce held its annual Business Excellence Awards luncheon on December 4th. We are excited to announce that *posAbilities* was nominated for the **Non-Profit Organization of the Year award!** On behalf of the leadership team, I would like to acknowledge and thank the team at Selkirk Centre for Community Engagement. They made amazing contributions to building up community connections, spirit and partnerships. Hats off to *posAbilities* Employment Service, Shared Living, and Laurel Behaviour Support Services as well, whose teams also serve the area. It is through your combined efforts, and deep commitment to our values, that we were recognized by this nomination.

Come celebrate with us at our Festive Party on Tuesday, December, 17th! For more information, contact Sasan at Selkirk at 604-476-0510.



Fernando's Holiday Message

I can't believe the end of the year is around the corner!

2019 saw the unveiling of our new strategic plan - Vision 2028. Unlike our previous strategic plans, which set goals in three year increments, our current strategic plan sets an ambitious overarching vision of "Good and

Full Lives" for everyone; consequently, requiring a much longer runway to achieve. Thus, Vision 2028. *posAbilities* chose this goal because we believe that the strategic emphasis should be on the ends, on a broad vision, not the means. The milestones we intend to achieve along the way give an inspirational look at how the Association will play a pivotal role in transitioning to a future where resilient and inclusive communities work with us to care for each other.

I thank our dedicated team members for providing high quality social care services and for their continued commitment throughout the year. It is this work that makes the difference in the lives of the people we serve. Their positivity, expertise, creativity and initiative allow us to continually improve on meeting the needs of our communities.

The 1920s became known as the Roaring Twenties. It was a period of economic prosperity full of progress. We don't know how history will define the next decade, however we will do our best to work towards our aspiration of "Good and Full Lives" for everyone by focusing on what matters most to the people we serve - leading good and full lives.

Wishing you and your families joy, warm memories, good health and a new year filled with happiness and peace.

Fernando Coelho,
Chief Executive Officer



London Calling

Contributed by Alisa Levenstein, Shared Living Provider

When Nancy first moved in with our family in November of 2010, she told me "I go London". It seemed important to her. She told me about the Queen, Princess Diana, and Buckingham Palace... it was her dream to visit London. I promised her when she moved in that I would do everything I could to help her take her dream trip.

Fast forward to 2015, Judith (Shared Living Coordinator) and I began conversations about what a trip to London would involve, who could accompany her, and some possible funding ideas. In 2016, I started helping Nancy plan her trip when we discovered her passport had expired and no birth certificate could be found. The process of obtaining all of her needed documentation was exhaustive, but Nancy was the sole of patience. After more than a year of work, with encouragement from Judith and Louise (Shared Living Coordinator and Manager), everything began to fall into place.

The next part of the trip planning was miraculous. I mentioned to a previous staff member of Nancy's that I was trying to arrange a trip to London, but I couldn't leave the other individual I support behind and finding respite was proving difficult. And then came the most amazing offer - Maria (previous staff member) wanted to take Nancy to London and invite her to stay with Maria's niece, Araceli, and her family living just outside of London. Maria would take her vacation time and they would travel together and see all the sights Nancy had dreamt of for so many years!

With finances in order, documents gathered, weather report consulted and everything packed into one medium suitcase, Nancy left with Maria for 10 days of joyful new adventures. They visited so many places, but special to Nancy were: Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Westminster Abbey, Kensington Palace, St James's Palace, St Benedict Abbey and Parliament House.

They also enjoyed beautiful lunches in the parks, went on the Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tour, Thames River Tour, and took the "Tube" around London. They went for High Tea three times, indulged in a mani-pedi and massage, enjoyed different kinds of food like Korean, Indonesian and Thai, and of course, did lots of shopping!

Maria's generosity and enthusiasm made Nancy's London trip incredibly memorable. Nancy was welcomed into Araceli's family, and was included in family meals and outings with her husband Omar and daughter Sarita. Their time together flew by and soon it was time to return to Vancouver. With *posAbilities'* support and Maria and her family's generosity, Nancy's dream came true.



Leona Summers' Summer

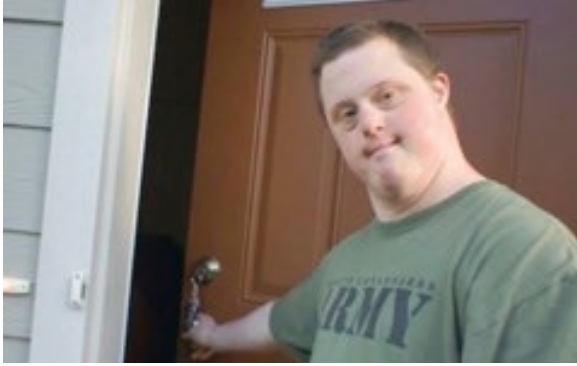
Contributed by Leona Summers

Hi, I'm Leona Summers and I live at Como Lake house in Coquitlam. I went to see my friend, Colleen, and her family in Nanaimo this summer. A team member took me on the ferry and I was so excited and anxious to see my friend at the Nanaimo ferry terminal.

Colleen and I did lots of fun things on my holiday. We went to my favourite place in the world - the mall! I bought a necklace, two blouses and a pair of pants. We got our nails done, went to the rodeo and met a clown and enjoyed many home cooked meals - Colleen is a good cook. We also went to see an action movie at the theatre where I had candy, pop and popcorn - the only way to enjoy a movie.

Once my vacation was over, a team member came to the island to pick me up. I excitedly told her about my holiday but was happy to be going home. I missed the team members from Como Lake. On the ferry ride back, we had lunch in the cafeteria and took lots of photos. We finally arrived home and I was greeted and welcomed by everyone. I was happy to see them and I told them all about my vacation. I really enjoyed my visit and look forward to another holiday on the island with Colleen - I'll miss her!

Reflecting back on 2019, I can say it was a year that has gone by much too quickly! My son has successfully transitioned out of high school and is fully enjoying life as a young adult in Burnaby. I have been living this journey and learning along with other families, some of whom are interested in Community Living BC's Individualized Funding stream, while others are exploring a variety of new and standing inclusion services. If you know of families who are in the planning stages, please let them know about these upcoming workshops.



On January 25, 2020 from 10am-1pm, the **Vancouver Parents Transition Group** is hosting its annual housing workshop. Come connect with other parents, learn about the various housing options and opportunities for young adults with disabilities and ask self-advocates, other families, and shared living providers about their experiences with residential supports. Over the lunch period, there will be an opportunity to split into smaller groups to dig into topics like: shared living, supported independent living, and the path towards home/shared ownership. For more information, please email Yuko McCulloch at TransitionParents@gmail.com



On January 31, 2020 from 10am-12pm, the **Autism Society of BC's** Burnaby chapter will be presenting the following panel presentation and Q&A session for families: Transition from the Front Lines – Navigation and Lived Experiences. RSVP to attend in person or watch the event through our Facebook Live broadcast. For more details and to get the poster, please email SHui@AutismBC.ca or contact me at mnelson@posAbilities.ca



On another note, I would like to encourage all individuals, families and caregivers to complete the **Inclusive Housing Survey**. The data generated will inform representatives of the Inclusive Housing Task Force, co-chaired by Community Living BC (CLBC) and Inclusion BC, on people's current and desired housing, including when they hope to access housing. By answering questions in this online survey, you can help the Task Force and its partners in their efforts to increase access to housing. The survey is still open! Grab a cup of your favourite winter brew and take a few minutes to share your experience: <https://bit.ly/34zVApO>

act Autism Community Training

ACT's Special Needs Resources Guide for Schools

ACT'S SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS
 ACT'S LIVE & WEB STREAMED EVENTS
 ACT'S INFORMATION DATABASE



www.actcommunity.ca

Lastly, **ACT – Autism Community Training** has developed new resources to address the mental health, gender and cultural needs of individuals and families. Visit their website, and check out these two guides: ACT's Special Needs Resources Guide for Schools and ACT's Guide to Mental Health Resources: <https://bit.ly/360k9N1>. The Autism Information Database is full of valuable resources, some translated into Chinese and Punjabi.

In closing, I would like to wish all of our readers a joyful holiday season, filled with peace, love and hope. If you need a hand finding any resources to support your journey, please visit our community resources page, or contact me at (604) 299-4001, local 270.