

FALL 2025

imagine!

INSPIRING STORIES AND COMMUNITY UPDATES



*The Imagine newsletter is written, curated and published by
posAbilities' Community Engagement Team 2025©*

SUMMER FUN!

Camp Sasamat

Contributed by Amy Chang, Team Leader

The Supported Living Network program hosted another fun-filled camp experience this past September with 41 campers attending this year! People from throughout the Lower Mainland gather once a year to hang out, socialize, meet new people, enjoy good food and fun times up at the Sasamat Outdoor Center for what is known simply as “Camp Sasamat”.

What could you possibly find up at Lake Sasamat where all the excitement happens??

Canoe rides

Activities for everyone

Merriment

Prizes with games

Sleeping bags to snuggle up in

Adventure away from home

Snacks and delicious meals

Aquatic outings out on the lake

Music, dancing and karaoke every night

All-camp events - something to do for everyone

Trail hiking around the lake





ROOTS

Contributed by ROOTS team

It seems that summer went by so fast! Although we are not quite ready to say goodbye to the sunny days, we're looking back and cherishing the happy moments. Here are a few highlights from our summer 2025!



Annual Picnic

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for this year's agency-wide picnic! It was wonderful to see so many smiling faces, enjoy great food, and share laughter and fun in the sun. From the games and music to the delicious treats and team spirit, the day was a true celebration of our amazing community. We're grateful for your energy and enthusiasm—and already looking forward to next year!



Photo Credit: Alek Storms



Photo Credit: Alek Storms



STAGE DOOR DIALS UP THE LAUGHS WITH “EMERGENCY 911”

If laughter truly is the best medicine, then “Emergency 911” was just what the doctor ordered! Stage Door Theatre’s latest production had audiences in stitches from curtain up to final bow, proving that even in the midst of medical mayhem, humour is the ultimate remedy. Audience members left the theatre with sore cheeks from smiling and a renewed appreciation for the healing power of humour.

Social Media Lead, Hannah, shares: “The original skits kept everyone laughing all night long. I went with family and friends of all ages, and we were cracking up right alongside the full house on closing night. From cheeky hospital humor to perfectly timed fart jokes, the show delivered clever comedy from start to finish. With whimsical costumes, lively sets, and a cast full of spunk, Emergency 911 proved to be in excellent condition all the way through!”





MENSTRUAL MATTERS: MAKING MENSTRUAL HEALTH ACCESSIBLE IN ASL

We're thrilled to share an exciting new resource created to make menstrual health education more inclusive and accessible for the Deaf community: Menstrual Matters: Understanding Menstrual Health in ASL.

This groundbreaking ASL video series, produced by Periods for All in collaboration with Link! SRS, has officially launched on YouTube and TikTok. You might spot our very own, Rebecca Leckie, in the videos – a passionate educator and advocate who played a key role in bringing this vision to life.

For too long, people who use ASL have had very limited access to information about menstrual health. Menstrual Matters fills that gap by offering a welcoming, inclusive space for learning. The videos cover a wide range of topics including:

- What is a Period
- Menstrual Cycles
- Common Concerns and Myths
- Menopause

Each video breaks down complex information into simple, accurate, and affirming content for people of all ages and gender identities who menstruate, or simply want to understand more about it.

“This whole thing started as a dream to make menstrual health education accessible in ASL,” says the Periods for All team. “Without community support, it would’ve stayed just that—a dream. But here we are, and we’re getting goosebumps thinking about the people who will finally have access to information they’ve been waiting for.”

The launch marks more than just the release of a few videos, it’s a milestone in health equity and accessibility. By combining visual storytelling, ASL, and inclusive education, Menstrual Matters helps dismantle stigma while empowering Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals with essential knowledge about their bodies.

The creators are calling on everyone—community partners, educators, and advocates—to help spread the word. Every view, like, and share helps boost visibility so these videos can reach more people who need them most.

“We’re not just launching videos,” says Holly Johnston and Carly Pistawka from Periods for All.

“We’re opening doors for people who’ve been left out of these conversations for far too long.”

Let’s help amplify this message!

You can support this initiative by:

- Watching the videos on [YouTube](#) or [TikTok](#) (@PeriodsForAll)
- Subscribing to the channels for future updates
- Sharing the series within your networks and communities

Contact: Periods for All - hello@periodsforall.org





Disability Arts and Culture

21st Annual INCLUSION Art Show

The posAbilities INCLUSION Art Show & Sale is back for its 21st year! Join us in celebrating creativity, community, and inclusion. We're excited to announce that this year's show will be a two-day event with over 40 independent artists and 14 studios registered.

Explore original works across a wide range of media, including painting, collage, illustration, photography, pottery, art cards, jewelry, glassware, textiles, and more.

This year, we're also honoured to present an Indigenous Art Showcase, celebrating the voices and creative visions of Indigenous artists within our community

Event details:

- **Date:** Wednesday & Thursday, October 22 - 23
- **Time:** 10:30 am - 7:30 pm
- **Location:** Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre - 181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver

Accessibility: Free admission, ASL interpretation, sensory kits, a safe and inclusive environment, and light refreshments.

Curiko Experience – Explore and Reflect at the INCLUSION Art Show

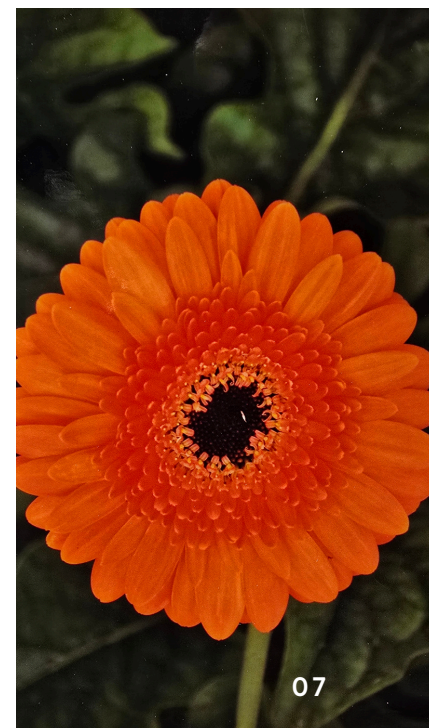
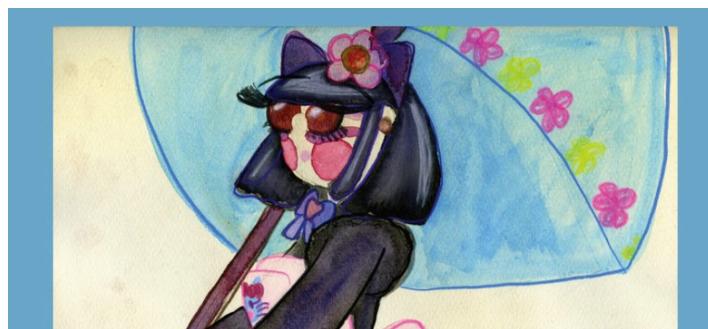
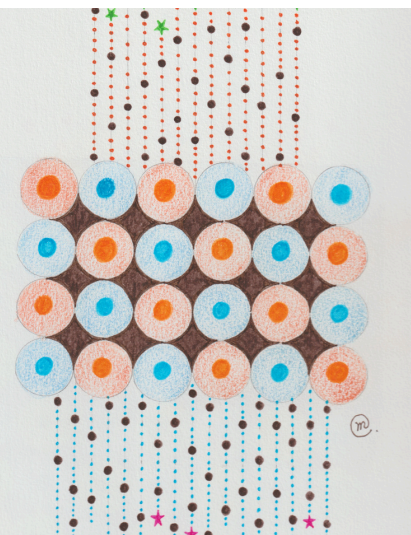
Join Maria to experience the beauty of art at the INCLUSION Art Show, where you'll explore how art makes you feel and have the opportunity to sketch and reflect on what inspires you.

Date: October 22 - 23

Time: Various hours

Location: Roundhouse Community Centre

Sign up here!



Call for Crafters: A Magical Market Experience Awaits at Project EveryBODY Inclusive Market Fair 2025

Are you an artist, maker, or entrepreneur with a disability? Apply now to be part of the Project EveryBODY Inclusive Market Fair on December 3, 2025 at the Roundhouse Exhibition Hall, 181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver. Showcase your work, share your story, and connect with the community. Vendors receive a free booth with no registration fee. Space is limited and assigned on a first come, first served basis.

Applications close November 12.

Apply here: [Vendor Application Form](#)
Event details: [Event Page](#)



SECTOR NEWS

Celebrating Inclusion and Community

The months of September and October mark two significant celebrations in our community — Disability Employment Awareness Month and Community Inclusion Month. Together, they remind us of the value of diversity and the importance of creating spaces where everyone can thrive.

For the children, youth and families we serve, Fall also marks a return to school. It is time to establish new routines, to set goals, and to develop Independent Education Plans. It can also be a time for advocacy. Ensuring children receive essential school-based supports can feel like an uphill battle. Please see our [recent blog](#) to access an Inclusive Education resource hub developed by Inclusion Canada, and check out our [Community Resources](#) to find links to family support groups that can provide support, guidance and hope. Community connections can be the key to surviving and thriving in our world.

At posAbilities, we work towards a future of good and full lives, for everyone. These months highlight the progress being made toward inclusion and the ongoing work required to ensure that people of all abilities are fully supported to live, learn, work, and belong.

Turn the page to learn more about what's happening in our community!



Photo Credit: Galen Exo

Opening Doors to Inclusive Employment

September is **Disability Employment Month in BC**, a time to celebrate the talents and achievements of people with disabilities and the employers who champion inclusive hiring. Every day, individuals across the province contribute their creativity, skills, and dedication to the workforce — often transforming workplaces for the better.

On September 19th, we spent the day celebrating local inclusive employment champions at Open Door Group's 12th annual **Untapped Workplace Inclusion Awards**. Representatives from posAbilities Employment Service (PES) and our Social Media Fellowship were honoured to attend. We're especially proud to celebrate one of our own: **Hannah Nolan**, Social Media Fellowship Lead who received a nomination for the **Untapped Inclusion Champion Award (Individual)**. The nomination recognized Hannah for her leadership, storytelling, and advocacy in advancing accessibility and inclusion through digital platforms. Her work exemplifies how inclusive hiring practices empower both individuals and organizations to grow.

Hannah shares: "I'm truly honored to be recognized among such incredible champions for inclusion! The work toward greater accessibility and equity is ongoing, but events like this, hosted by the amazing Open Door Group, leave me feeling so inspired and hopeful. Grateful to be part of this journey!"



We also marked this important month with the **launch of our new posAbilities Employment Service (PES) website**, a one-stop resource for job seekers and employers who want to learn more about inclusive employment. The new site showcases success stories, offers practical tools, and explains why creating equitable workplaces benefits everyone. Visit www.pesworks.ca to explore how you can help open doors to opportunity.

To learn more about the broader impact of inclusive hiring, see **Business in Vancouver's** feature article, [How Inclusive Hiring is Changing Workplaces](#).



Inclusive workplaces start here.

We believe inclusion strengthens everyone. By welcoming diverse talents into the workforce, we open doors for job seekers, support families, enrich businesses, and build a more vibrant community.

I am an employer

I am a job seeker



Photo Credit: Galen Exo

Film, Dialogue and the Power of Storytelling

October's **Community Inclusion Month** invites reflection, dialogue, and action. Films and talkback events offer an opportunity to explore pressing social issues that shape the lives of people with disabilities. We recommend viewing the following documentaries, which are a stark reminder that we need to continue to lift the voices of self-advocates, and to challenge the institutional thinking that still influences our systems today. People's lives depend on it.

At this year's **Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF)**, **Life After** captured national attention for its exploration of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD). The documentary followed the stories of American and Canadian persons with disabilities who had requested to end their lives, and highlighted that the choice was made due to inadequate supports making them feel as though they had no other viable alternative. To learn more, purchase the film or request a screening, [click here](#).

At the **KPU Surrey Campus**, Dr. Fiona Whittington-Walsh facilitated a Community Inclusion Month event, co-hosted by Kwantlen Polytechnic University, BC People's First, and BC's Self Advocate Leadership Network. The 2024 documentary film **These Four Walls: A Documentary on the Manitoba Developmental Centre** was shown, followed by a keynote presentation by Dr. Michael Bach, internationally renowned researcher and community leader on ways to advance the full inclusion and human rights of persons with disabilities. The film is available through the People First of Canada website, [click here](#).



Photo Credit: Galen Exo



Photo Credit: Galen Exo

Also on the topic of human rights – is the right to love. Together with InWithForward, Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion and Kinsight, we continue to seek out opportunities to increase social awareness and effect change in the way people of all ages, genders, orientations and abilities are included in our society. We are proud to be a part of the Connecting Queer Communities (CQC) initiative and Co-Executive Producers of the film, **“A Place Where I Belong”**.

Our feature film has been connecting audiences, sparking conversations, and raising awareness about the experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/D). In September, its world premiere was at the Vancouver Queer Film Festival (VQFF), drawing packed audiences and strong media coverage. Producer Rheanna Toy, Cloudstreet Media was honoured to receive the Narrative Change Award, the first Canadian feature ever to do so. Presented by activist and actor Rain Dove, the award celebrates films that challenge outdated narratives and inspire social change.

The screening included a vibrant drag show with Amanda Peters, Whore-ia Estefan, and Jaylene Tyme and a 40-minute panel featuring voices from the 2SLGBTQIA+ and ID/D community. Audience surveys reflected meaningful impact: “This is the most important film I’ve seen in years” and “I laughed and cried. It’s a true eye opener.”

The event also raised \$1,250 for CQC and created new connections with potential long-term funders.

Since its World Premiere, the film has been screened at Cinema Diverse – Palm Springs LGBTQ+ Film Festival (U.S. Premiere), and at the Serving It Right Conference in Prince George, BC, a conference for front-line workers.

Next steps include partnering with Story Money Impact to plan future Canadian screenings focused on social impact, developing a discussion guide to accompany the film and facilitate learning, and expanding festival submissions and exploring additional screening opportunities. Let the impacts ripple...



Nominations Open!

Self-Advocate Leadership of the Year Award 2025

Do you know someone that should be nominated for the 2025 Self-Advocate Leadership of the Year Award?

BC People First is proud to present this award in celebration of self-advocacy and the power of self-advocates. This award goes to someone in BC who has shown leadership and knowledge throughout the past year in the field of advocating for the rights of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Nominations are due **November 10, 2025**.

More information: [Award details](#) and [nomination form](#).



Curiko Experience – Writing Short Stories with Kate

Come join our creative writing group for a fun and relaxed afternoon of storytelling! Whether you're just starting out or have been writing for years, this is a welcoming space to spark your imagination and share your voice.

If you're in the mood for a cozy, fall-themed experience, this is the perfect way to spend your Saturday. [Sign up here!](#)

Where: Curiko Studio (4926 Imperial Street, Burnaby)

When: Saturday, October 25, 3:00pm



FAMILIES MATTER

Grandmama's Café: Serving Community, Comfort, and Connection in Kerrisdale

There's a new warmth brewing in Kerrisdale — and it's coming from **Grandmama's Café**, a cozy, family-run spot with a heart as big as its menu. Purchased by longtime resident **Gary Tang** and his family in June 2025, the café reopened a month later after a few loving touches — fresh paint, a refreshed menu, and a renewed mission to serve both great food and great purpose.

For Gary and his wife **Esther**, who is also the café's main chef, Grandmama's is much more than a business — it's a **non-profit venture rooted in inclusion and community spirit**. Together with a small team of full- and part-time staff — including several individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities — they've created a welcoming space that feels like home for everyone who walks through the door.

"We've lived in Kerrisdale since 2000," Gary shares. "It's been a wonderful place for our children to grow up, and we wanted to give back to our neighbourhood by creating a place where everyone feels comfortable — especially those who need a little extra support."

The relaxed pace of Kerrisdale made it the perfect home for Grandmama's, where the rhythm of work is thoughtful and unhurried. "That atmosphere really suits our team," Gary explains. "It allows them to thrive and feel confident at work."

The menu reflects the same care and thoughtfulness. Customers rave about the **tuna melt sandwich** — a tribute to Gary's late wife, **Cathy**, and their daughter **Faith's** favourite meal — as well as the **spicy chicken waffle breakfast**. Gary's personal pick? The **chef's salad with Esther's secret sauce**, a healthy and delicious option that keeps guests coming back for more.

Behind the scenes, Grandmama's is proud to **source ingredients locally**, supporting nearby chefs and bakers while finishing everything fresh in-house. And yes, for the breakfast lovers — **all-day breakfast** is still a mainstay, with waffles, toasts, eggs, and open-faced sandwiches served from morning till close.

But what truly sets Grandmama's apart is its mission. Inspired by Cathy's dream of creating opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities, the café is now a **training ground for life and job skills** — a place where their daughter **Grace** and others can learn, grow, and belong. In the new year, Faith will return from New York to help carry that vision forward by expanding the café's employment training program.

Each day, Grandmama's brings together food, community, and comfort in small but meaningful ways. As Gary recalls, one recent visitor from Abbotsford was so moved by the café's uplifting atmosphere and music that he reached out later to say the experience had inspired him deeply.

That's the heart of **Grandmama's Café** — a place where kindness flows and confidence grows alongside every cup of coffee served.

Grandmama's Café

Operations Lead: **Gary Tang**

Appointments/Information, please call: **778-859-2333**

Location: 5687 Balsam Street, Vancouver:

Hours: Open Monday-Saturday, 9 AM – 4 PM

Follow them on Instagram: [@grandmamascafe](#)





Families Together, Rocking for Autism and More

On September 28, 2025 **Rock4Autism 9** made its return to Port Moody's Legion Hall 119, showcasing the talents of musicians on the autism spectrum and those who identify as neurodiverse, and celebrating the power of music to foster creativity and connection. Started by the Picard family to create awareness, acceptance and employment for folks on the autism spectrum, this annual event is a much anticipated dose of good vibes year after year!

The 2025 Show featured **Rock Squad**, with lead singer Marshall hailing from Sayward, a community on Northern Vancouver Island, supported by **Luc and Friends**; the **Mayday Youth Choir**; and **Jennifer Diamond and Friends**. Together they delivered decades of rock, and we sang, danced and socialized all afternoon! Event proceeds from food sales, a 50/50 draw and raffle tickets were donated to the **Autism Society of BC**.

It's events like this, that can ladder folks up to more opportunities – like an appearance onstage at the **2024 Project Everybody Festival** (December 3, 2024), a live concert in the Kootenays (July 24, 2025), and currently in the planning stages – a **Luc and Friends Summer Tour**!

Families supporting families is one of our biggest strengths as a movement in BC. In this case, these two dads – **Guy Picard** and **Ben Postmus**, who hit it off right away – are carving out a path to inclusion through music. Last October, Ben, the founder and Executive Director of Diverse Family Roots Society in the Kootenays, reached out to Guy to see if Luc and Friends would be interested in heading over to Trail for their first **Celebration of Inclusion** event, to be held outdoors at Gyro Park.

Guy, of course, agreed! Then they got down to business. Ben secured funding from the **Trail Arts Council**, so that Luc and Friends could be paid for their gig, and had support for their travel and accommodation costs. Given that Trail's **Music in The Park** series of events is a huge draw in their community, Ben took advantage of the profile and saw an opportunity to shine a spotlight on inclusion. The Celebration of Inclusion concert was a success for all involved, with guests asking for this fabulous band to come back!

These two proud papas are now planning a summer tour for 2026, visiting several Kootenay communities. To learn more or to get involved, you can find them on Facebook or online: Ben Postmus, Executive Director, www.diversefamilyroots.ca | Guy Picard, Co-Founder, www.rock4autism.com.

Rock on dads, rock on!



Do you have a story for our newsletter or website?

Connect with us through communications@posabilities.ca
or call 778-945-1438.



This issue of imagine! was created on the ancestral territories of the Coast Salish and Interior Salish peoples, including the x^wməθkwə́y̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh nations. We are grateful for their care and teachings about the land, water, sky and life that they sustain. May we honour these teachings by accelerating equity, embracing diversity, and fostering inclusion in the communities where we live and work.