

The Citizen

Connecting people with their community



COMMUNITY LIVING
BRITISH COLUMBIA



The importance of “Hi”

PAGE 11

Self-advocates talk about what can be achieved when we all Start with HI.

BC celebrates
Community
Living Month

PAGES 4-5

Message from
Minister
Moira Stilwell

PAGE 6

Update on the
include Me!
initiative

PAGES 8-10

Finding his
path to
employment

PAGE 13



Doug Woollard, Interim CEO

Contents

- 3 Making a connection
- 4 BC celebrates Community Living Month
- 6 Message from the Minister
- 7 Providing inclusive educational experiences
- 8 *include Me!* survey process well underway
- 9 Meeting features *include Me!* initiative
- 10 *include Me!* with Tricia and Jen
- 11 Start with HI begins with you
- 12 Exploring new opportunities
- 13 Finding his path to employment
- 14 Getting down to work on employment
- 14 Maple Ridge recycling contract renewed
- 15 Event launches three new publications
- 15 Government supports learning program
- 16 Sharing the wisdom of families

IT HAS BEEN A BUSY FEW MONTHS SINCE OUR LAST EDITION OF THE CITIZEN. As usual, there is a lot going on as we work to deliver on the objectives of our 2012-2013 Strategic Plan. In this edition, we are highlighting a few of the initiatives CLBC has been working on to better support adults with developmental disabilities in BC. Visit the “What’s New” section on the homepage of the CLBC website to get current updates.

On September 5, the Honourable Dr. Moira Stilwell was appointed Minister of Social Development. You can read a message from Minister Stilwell on page 6. The Ministry of Social Development and CLBC are making progress towards improving services for people with developmental disabilities and their families and delivering on the 12 recommendations released in a report earlier this year. Part of this work includes promoting new measures to improve service quality, consulting with individuals, families and service providers about services and supports, and increasing employment opportunities for the people CLBC serves.

This October marked the 14th consecutive year we have celebrated Community Living Month in British Columbia. Communities across the province have once again raised awareness and recognized the contributions and achievements of people with developmental disabilities, as well as the hard work of individuals, families and partners in building inclusive communities. I encourage you to read about some of the many events and celebrations on pages 4 and 5 of this edition of *The Citizen*.

This Community Living Month, CLBC is also expanding our popular Start with HI initiative. Start with HI emphasizes the importance of small actions like saying “Hi”, which can be the first step toward making a connection with people. These connections can give people with developmental disabilities a greater sense of safety, belonging and welcome in community. Read more about this exciting initiative on page 11 and visit www.startwithhi.ca to see videos featuring six self-advocate spokespersons. You can also connect with the initiative at www.facebook.com/StartwithHi and look out for the posters at your local CLBC office and in your community.

In Vancouver, the CLBC Community Action Employment Plan Summit took place on October 22 and 23. At the summit, representatives worked to develop a three-year plan for BC to achieve the highest employment rate for people with developmental disabilities in North America by December 2015. We share employment success stories of self-advocates, as well as an update on the Summit, beginning on page 12.

CLBC is honouring outstanding employers through the 2012 WOW!clbc Recognition Awards. The theme of this year’s awards is “Inclusive Employment” and we have called on employed self-advocates to nominate an employer or co-worker who goes above and beyond their role to create a welcoming workplace where everyone feels valued and respected. Nominations have been collected during Community Living Month and awards will be presented throughout November and December. Stories of the nominees and winners will be featured on the CLBC website and in future editions of *The Citizen*.

Community Living Month has once again been a wonderful opportunity for CLBC to affirm our commitment to delivering improved quality service to the people we serve. It was also a chance to celebrate the thousands of families, friends, volunteers and service providers who contribute every day to the quality of life of so many people in communities across BC. On behalf of our board of directors and staff, I want to thank you all for your ongoing inspiration.

Sincerely,

Doug Woollard
Interim CEO, Community Living BC

A SELF-ADVOCATE'S PERSPECTIVE

Making a connection

By Tracy Jo Russell

HI, MY NAME IS TRACY JO RUSSELL.

I live in Kamloops and I am one of the self-advocate spokespersons for the Start with HI initiative. I am pleased to share what the initiative means to me and what we can accomplish through small actions like saying “Hi.”

I have experienced being judged by other people for most of my life. I was born with a disability and this makes me who I am. I was taught to never give up and never be afraid to try something new because you never know what you can do unless you try.

The Start with HI initiative encourages everyone to try to be more connected and to start this by saying Hi. Do not to be afraid to say the wrong thing or to reach out to people with developmental disabilities because we're just like everyone else. We feel, think, say and do the same things, just like you. We have lives and families and our connections with other people are very important to us. Feeling that you a part of your community is a really important step in being welcomed and included. If you're not connected you can become isolated and lonely and depressed. Connection means you can be involved in more things in community and be happy and successful and not be afraid to get out there and be part of all the wonderful things that happen in our communities.

As a spokesperson for Start with HI, I have enjoyed travelling around the province and meeting new people. I took a trip to Castlegar once and in the airport I ran into someone who had seen my poster and we said “Hi” to each other. He asked me why I was travelling and I told him about Start with HI. He said that the message is important because everyone needs to feel connected and important to each other, whether they have disabilities or not.

I told him it was my first time travelling and I was a little nervous. He helped me check in for my flight and also said if I needed assistance with anything he would be happy to help. I think this is a great example of the ways that saying “Hi” can make us feel more connected and safe in community.

I work at Safeway and they are great about putting up my posters in the stores. All of my coworkers are excited and interested to learn about Start with HI and see the new posters and videos that are on the website. I look forward to talking with the staff and customers about this program and helping them to see how to make connections with people with developmental disabilities.

Everyone needs connections in their lives, at work, at play and in their neighborhoods. Don't be afraid to say “Hi” to someone with a developmental disability. You never know when it could be the beginning of a lasting connection and friendship. Making connections is one way to build safer communities where everyone can be accepted and welcomed. It's just so easy. Say “Hi” and see what happens.

You can read more about the Start with HI initiative on page 11 and be sure to visit www.startwithHI.ca and www.facebook.com/startwithHI to connect and share the message. ■

Inside Voice is published in each edition of The Citizen. If you are interested in writing for this column, please call Chris Rae at 1-877-660-2522, or e-mail editor@communitylivingbc.ca.



Tracy Jo talked about the Start with HI initiative at the “Importance of Belonging” event in Vancouver during Community Living Month.



Tracy Jo's poster message encourages people to start making a connection with HI.

British Columbia celebrates Community Living Month

THIS OCTOBER MARKED THE 14TH YEAR OF CELEBRATING Community Living Month in British Columbia. This month recognizes and celebrates the achievements of people with developmental disabilities.

Across the province, communities celebrated the contributions and achievements of people with developmental disabilities, as well as the hard work of individuals, families and partners in building inclusive communities. Celebrations and events included art exhibits, fashion shows, BBQs, picnics, concerts, dances, transition fairs, conferences, walks, book launches and a floor hockey tournament.

You can see photos from some of the many events on these pages and we will be sharing more photos and stories in the online edition of The Citizen on the CLBC website under [What's New > Newsletter](#). ■



Self-advocates learned about rights, safety, healthy relationships and becoming leaders in their communities at the 13th Annual Self-Advocacy Leadership Institute. The event took place from October 5 to 7 in Abbotsford.

Start with HI spokesperson Cliff Stacey and North Vancouver MLA Jane Thornthwaite share the importance of saying “Hi” at the Community Living Month Celebration in North Vancouver on October 16.



People enjoy live music, sunshine and dancing at One Day Together in Victoria on September 15. This event has been the early kick off to Community Living Month events in Victoria for the past three years, and brings all citizens of the community together in friendship, food and fun.





Artist Melissa Usipuk showcases a “Celebrate Diversity through Art!” cake at an Art Show opening reception in Nelson on October 11. The event was hosted by Nelson CARES Society’s Supported Employment Program. The art exhibit was on display for all of Community Living Month.



Darlene Jeff displays a collection of her artwork which was on display at posAbilities’ 8th Annual Art Show in Vancouver on October 25. To read an extended story on this event, including more pictures, see the online edition of The Citizen on the CLBC website under What’s New > Newsletter.



The Quesnel Self-Advocacy Group held their annual walk on October 13 to celebrate Community Living Month and promote inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.

WOW!CLBC AWARDS

During Community Living Month, CLBC received many nominations for the WOW!clbc Recognition Awards.

The theme of this year’s awards is “Inclusive Employment” and we called on employed self-advocates to nominate an employer or co-worker who goes above and beyond their role to create a welcoming workplace where everyone feels valued and respected.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented during November and December. Stories of the nominees and winners will be featured on the CLBC website and in future editions of The Citizen.

Message from the Minister

By Hon. Dr. Moira Stilwell, Minister of Social Development

ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2012, I WAS HONoured TO BE APPOINTED MINISTER OF SOCIAL Development and minister responsible for Community Living BC. Getting up to speed quickly on my assignment has been a priority and so my first month on the job passed by very quickly. In looking forward to the second month, I was reminded that October would be Community Living Month. There were lots of events, gatherings, concerts and celebrations taking place throughout the month and I enjoyed attending some of these as I made my way around the province. I was excited to participate in Community Living Month this year and join the celebration of achievements.

As it's possible that we may meet in the course of my travels, I suppose you might want to know a bit about the person coming to visit. My background is in health care. I'm a radiologist and physician, and worked at BC Women's Hospital for nearly a decade. In addition to my involvement in promoting health, both as a parent, volunteer and physician, I'm also actively involved in my community. Finding ways to deliver services that improve people's health and well-being is at the heart of what I do every day.

As Minister of Social Development, I'm fully committed to continuing the progress government has made this year towards improving services for people with developmental disabilities and their families. As well, I will ensure government provides regular updates on those advancements. The following website is a good source for information and updates: www.sd.gov.bc.ca/pwd/isst.html.

In May and June, self-advocate consultations took place with 48 individuals in 16 communities around the province, giving people input on decisions that affect their lives. As well, a reference group has been created, including individuals, family members and community members. This group will provide feedback on the work we're doing to create a more integrated approach to service delivery. I understand the reference group has met and are highly engaged.

This summer Government also hosted two competitions on the BC Ideas website. The Ministry of Social Development is contributing \$30,000 to the top two ideas about how we can create positive change in the lives of people with developmental disabilities. One of the competitions was for ideas on how to foster more inclusion so people with developmental disabilities can live fully in their community. In the weeks ahead, you'll have the chance to vote for your favorite idea at www.changemakers.com/community/bcideas.

There's lots of work underway. Government will continue its work to improve services and with the support of every one - of you and our partners - we will achieve the goal of a culture of diversity in BC. Thank you for the work you do and most especially, thank you to family members for your contributions. ■



Honourable Dr. Moira Stilwell,
Minister of Social Development.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

Over the next month, the Ministry of Social Development is hosting community engagement workshops in 14 communities throughout the province to get feedback on the proposed integrated service delivery model.

Developing a more integrated service delivery system is an important part of the work that needs to be done to deliver on government's commitment to improve services for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Everyone's experiences and input counts, so whether you're a self-advocate, family member, service provider, health practitioner, educator or local agency staff – your participation matters! Your feedback is important to ensure government is heading in the right direction with this proposed model.

Workshops are taking place from October 30 to November 27. For more information about a workshop near you and how you can attend, please visit: www.sd.gov.bc.ca/pwd/isst.html.

Providing inclusive educational experiences

UP TO 25 STUDENTS WITH developmental disabilities will now have the opportunity to attend classes and gain campus experiences at BC colleges and universities under a two-year, \$400,000 investment with STEPS Forward's BC Initiative for Inclusive Post-Secondary Education, funded by Community Living BC.

STEPS Forward's BC Initiative for Inclusive Post-Secondary Education is a unique organization that helps youth with developmental disabilities participate in classes and all aspects of campus life using the support of classmates, professors and other resources, to encourage inclusive, university-level experiences. It's the only organization of its kind in BC.

"STEPS Forward has led the way in making post-secondary education an option for people with developmental disabilities in BC. With the support of CLBC through this new funding, STEPS Forward can now build on the great work they have done opening the doors to inclusive post-secondary institutions for people with developmental disabilities."

Faith Bodnar,
Executive Director of
the BC Association for
Community Living (BCACL)

The goal is to help students with developmental disabilities integrate more easily into campus life, community activities and workplaces. STEPS Forward provides personal support for each student to attend classes, do homework and exams, as well as to identify a career goal and find employment related to their studies.

"Going to college or university on an inclusive basis means our sons and daughters sit in classes beside BC's future doctors, teachers, employers and government leaders. In the diverse community that makes up the post-secondary campus, our sons and daughters learn, laugh, hang out and take up their rightful place among their peers as valued citizens of the college or university," says Judith Mosoff, parent and past President of STEPS Forward. "As with other young adults, the inclusive post-secondary experience fosters the relationships, development of curiosity and confidence that lead to a richer life."

"Inclusive campuses are good places for young people with developmental disabilities to become valued citizens and prepare for satisfying careers," says Tamara Hurtado, STEPS Forward Executive Director. "We are extremely pleased to have this stable funding and would like to thank CLBC and the government of BC for enabling us to focus on supporting young adults to develop skills, make friends and prepare for their careers at their local post-secondary college or university."

Over the next two years, CLBC will evaluate the program to find out how

PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES INCLUDE:

EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY OF
ART + DESIGN
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,
VANCOUVER AND OKANAGAN
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
NICOLA VALLEY INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

well it enables students to pursue employment, build relationships and use the natural supports available. The funding for STEPS Forward will support government's ongoing work to improve services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families. It will help deliver on recommendations in the 12-point plan released earlier this year, which includes improving support for transitioning youth, increasing employment planning and supporting innovation.

To read past stories of STEPS Forward participants featured in The Citizen, please visit the CLBC website under What's New > Newsletter. In the June 2012 Edition you can read Manpreet's story "Reaching her goal" and in the October 2011 Edition you can read Sharalyn's story "An enriching experience". Learn more about STEPS Forward at www.steps-forward.org. ■

include Me! survey process well underway

By R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd.

THE INCLUDE ME! SURVEY PROCESS IS OFF TO A GREAT START and surveyors had already completed over 150 interviews by the end of September.

R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. would like to congratulate everyone on a job well done at getting the surveys underway. A special thank you to all service provider staff and over 20 surveyors for their hard work and continued efforts to successfully administer the surveys to adults with developmental disabilities. This is an important initiative that enables people to have a say about their quality of life.



The past few months have been exciting for us at R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. With the help of Jennifer Wheadon and Tricia Lins from CLBC, we have completed five surveyor training sessions in Vancouver, Burnaby, Chilliwack, Powell River and Sechelt. We have also worked closely with the 16 service providers participating in the *include Me!* initiative who have been contacting survey participants and scheduling interviews.

We hope to keep the momentum rolling into the coming months and look forward to hearing from more individuals. If you have received an invitation from your service provider to participate, we hope that you will get back to them and say, “include Me!” If you have questions about participating in the *include Me!* survey, please contact us at includeme@malatest.net or by phone at 1-800-665-5848, ext. 429. ■

QUALITY OF LIFE

... is represented by eight domains that provide an indication of an individual's quality of life in three broad areas:

- independence
- social participation
- well-being

The eight domains are:

- emotional well-being
- interpersonal relations
- material well-being
- personal development
- physical well-being
- self-determination
- social inclusion
- rights



Elise and Cecily, *include Me!* surveyors, take part in a surveyor training session in Sechelt.

Meeting features *include Me!* initiative

From the Fall 2012 edition of Simon Fraser Society for Community Living's (SFSCCL) newsletter

THE SIMON FRASER SOCIETY IS EXCITED TO BE participating in CLBC's *include Me!* initiative. This initiative will help us to better understand what the people we serve think and feel about their quality of life and the supports and services that SFSCCL is providing to them. It is an excellent opportunity for us to hear directly about the wants and needs of the people we serve. It will give us insight into what the survey participants' lives are like now and how we can support them to better achieve their hopes and dreams.

At the 58th SFSCCL Annual General Meeting, Brian Salisbury, Director of Strategic Planning for CLBC, along with *include Me!* surveyors Chantelle Hyde and Jerry Laidlaw, provided an overview of the initiative.

Individuals are interviewed using the Quality of Life survey called "My Life". The survey is based on Dr. Robert Schalock's framework. Dr. Schalock has many years of experience in researching and measuring quality of life. The survey asks 50 questions in eight different areas which are grouped under three categories: Well-being, Independence and Social Participation. What makes this initiative unique is that the interviewers themselves have a developmental disability. They are trained and supported by the research team and form a critical part of the project team.

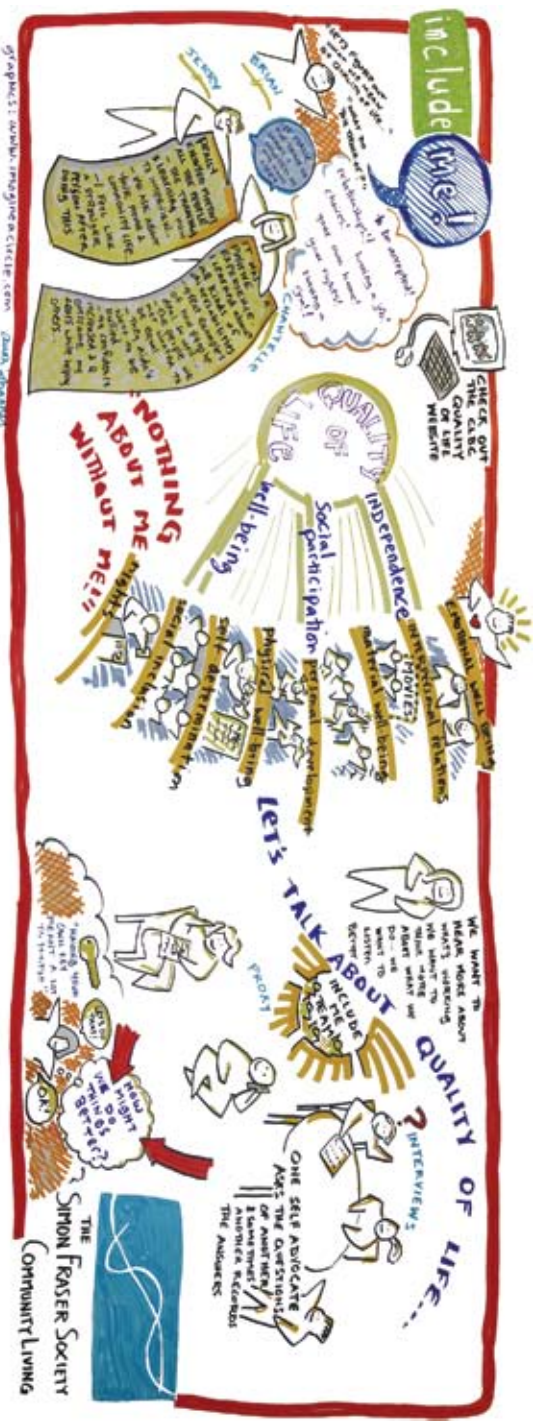
Brian told our guests that through this initiative CLBC is building a culture of continuous quality improvement in service delivery, innovation and planning. The information that is collected will be reported to SFSCCL and to CLBC

in aggregate form so there is no individually identifying information. What it will provide is important perspectives from the people we serve about whether we are meeting our shared mission: that people live good lives in inclusive communities that offer choices and opportunity.

Our presenters Jerry and Chantelle travelled from Mission and Richmond respectively to talk about their employment experiences as self-advocate interviewers with the *include Me!* initiative. They shared with us that some of the people they interviewed talked about wanting to fit in, not wanting to be bullied, and wanting to have friends who are not paid staff. Some survey participants talked about wanting to be comfortable and happy in their homes. Both Chantelle and Jerry said that their training and experience as interviewers was very positive. Some survey participants answered the questions on their own, others were supported to use other forms of communication such as pictures or pointing, and still others had proxies who answered on their behalf. (*Learn more about proxies on the next page.*)

Chantelle told us that the survey questions could "help us get what we want" and indeed, while interviewing others, she began to think more about what she wanted in her life.

While Brian, Chantelle and Jerry talked with us, we were delighted to observe Aaron Johannes from Spectrum Society created a graphic recording of the conversation that we are keeping to inspire us. (You can see the *include Me!* graphic below.) ■

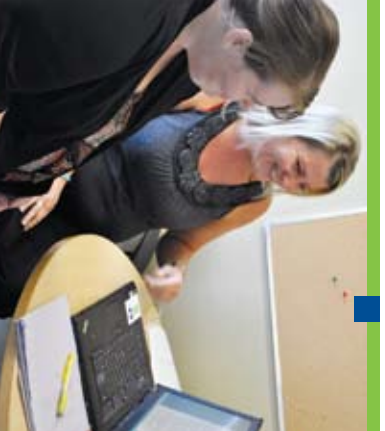


include Me! - with Tricia and Jen

By Tricia Lins, Self-Advocate Project Assistant, and Jennifer Wheadon, Regional Lead

HELLO EVERYONE. WE ARE BACK IN ACTION AND BOY have we been busy! For those of you who haven't met us in person yet, we are the team on the ground for *include Me!*

Tricia is the Self-Advocate Project Assistant and Jen is the Regional Liaison. We have been travelling all around the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Regions. We have been having so much fun talking to self-advocates, families, support people and staff about quality of life.



include Me! team members
Tricia Lins, Self-Advocate
Project Assistant, and Jennifer
Wheadon, Regional Lead.

there and fast learners too. They got started right away with the first of the Powell River Association for Community Living surveys. We all had a great time.

After that, we hit the road again (in a car this time). We presented to the Spectrum Society for Community Living management team. Then we held an information night for individuals, family members and support people. They

We recently spent two days

had some really good things to say. Aaron Johannes from Spectrum created a really cool graphic to show *include Me!*

On the way to Chilliwack, we got stuck in some major traffic. Luckily, Tricia brought her road trip crackers or we would have been really hungry from missing lunch. The Chilliwack Society for Community Living management team had lots of fun with our presentation. A helpful tip: never play with your cell phone when Tricia is presenting or you will pay the price. Fortunately, they were good sports and had quite the laugh!

in Powell River. Tricia was a little nervous about the bumpy plane ride, but we made it through. We held an information night for individuals, staff, and families to tell them all about *include Me!* They really appreciated it and lots of people volunteered to participate in Tricia's demonstration of the surveys. The next day we helped out in the surveyor training. They are a great

The Simon Fraser Society for Community Living held a big *include Me!* BBQ party. They even had a huge cake with the *include Me!* logo made of icing. There were so many people there that we could hardly count them all. Everyone was so excited. We love parties and we would love to be invited to more of them.

Finally, we jumped on the ferry and travelled to Sechelt. We spent the whole day with Sunshine Coast Association for Community Living's network of people. They were so friendly and nice. They had even more awesome things to say about quality of life and some people said they wanted to get involved in the *include Me!* initiative as surveyors.

group of surveyors over there and fast learners too. They got started right away with the first of the Powell River Association for Community Living surveys. We all had a great time.

The Self-Advocate Committee of North Shore Connections Society for Community Living also invited us to join their meeting. They had a lot of great questions which we were more than happy to answer. We really enjoyed meeting this great group of self-advocates.

We are ready to hit the road again. Let us know if you would like a visit from us to talk about *include Me!* To get in touch, visit: www.communitylivingbc.ca/include-me. ■

What is a proxy

and how are they chosen?

If an individual is not able to answer the survey questions on his own or prefers not to, two people who know him well will be invited to complete the survey on his behalf. These surveys are called proxy surveys.

Wherever possible, the individual is asked to identify who he would like to use as proxies. Proxies must have known the individual for at least a year and must have a reasonable idea of how the individual would respond if he were answering the questions on his own. Proxies are often family members, but sometimes friends or even staff who have known the individual for a long time can be asked to serve as a proxy.

Start with HI begins with you

COMMUNITY LIVING BC BELIEVES ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES and their families have the right to pursue good lives in welcoming communities. This October, for Community Living Month, CLBC launched the second phase of the Start with HI initiative, first introduced in 2009. CLBC encourages all British Columbians to say hi and start to make our communities safer and more welcoming places for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Start with HI asks everyone to acknowledge people with developmental disabilities in our communities with a simple greeting of “Hi.” Our goal is to raise awareness so that we can all increase the safety and sense of belonging for people with developmental disabilities.

The idea came out of feedback from people with developmental disabilities who said a small act, like saying “Hi,” has a huge impact and can help a person feel included and safer in their community. This public awareness initiative includes posters, a website and online videos featuring six self-advocate spokespeople at www.startwithHI.ca. On the site, the self-advocates explain why the greeting matters to them:

Amy: “Just like you, when someone greets me, I feel good. So start a good feeling with Hi!”

Cliff: “When we say Hi to each other, we’re making our community stronger.”

Emily: “Saying Hi makes me feel like part of the neighbourhood.”

Manjeet: “When you say Hi to me, I feel included. Don’t you?”

Mannie: “A conversation is a way to get to know each other a little.”

Tracy Jo: “When we say Hi to each other, we may find something in common.”

By taking a small action – greeting someone on the street or helping them catch the right bus – people can help individuals with developmental disabilities have a stronger sense of belonging, and feel safe and welcome in their neighbourhoods and communities.

So, if you’re a shop-keeper, bus driver, neighbour, letter carrier, bank teller or community member, here’s what we’re asking you to do. Start by saying “Hi” to a person that you see regularly who has a developmental disability. Who knows, a smile and a greeting might lead to a conversation and you may even find something in common. By reaching out and starting a sense of belonging with Hi, you’re making your community safer for all.

Visit www.startwithHI.ca to watch all of the video messages from the self-advocate spokespeople. Be sure to also visit www.facebook.com/startwithHI to connect and get regular updates about the initiative. ■



At www.startwithHI.ca, you can watch videos of the self-advocate spokespeople talking about the importance of saying Hi.



The six posters share messages about what can be accomplished by starting with Hi.

Exploring new opportunities



Ginger Lau displays her hand-made jewellery creations, which she also sells through her Etsy webstore.



One of Ginger's specialties is creating wire bird nest pendants such as the one above.

GINGER LAU HAD A PART-TIME

job working as a certified Cardiology Technologist in a small clinic in Burnaby. She was looking for another employment opportunity to increase her hours and fit her schedule.

Ginger began working towards this goal with a Customized Employment Specialist from CBI Consultants last October. Ginger's initial focus was on getting another part-time job in her field. While she explored this goal, she also wanted to look at the possibility of self-employment.

Through the discovery process, which is a way for people to find their skills, strengths and interests, it became clear that Ginger enjoyed making wire jewellery. She had some success in the past selling her hand-made treasures to people she knows. However, Ginger wanted to reach a wider audience. Setting up at a craft fair or a farmer's market didn't appeal to Ginger because of the cost, so she decided to start up an online business through [Etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com), an online market place.

Along with her Employment Specialist, Ginger figured out how much she needed to charge for her jewellery relative to her material cost in order to make a profit. They also researched and decided what she needed to charge for shipping.

As a result of this effort, Ginger's online store was launched in the winter of 2012. While only being in business a short time, Ginger has experienced success selling her items.

Ginger's specialty is wire bird nest pendants, which can be worn as solo pendants or as part of a charm set. Ginger always tries to pick out the best quality material for her craft. Her earrings often feature Swarovski crystals and platinum plated earring hooks. Her pendants often contain semi-precious stone beads. Ginger's store banner on Etsy says it all: her jewellery really is elegant, timeless and beautiful.

"I enjoy creating things and seeing materials getting transformed into a piece of jewellery. I get a thrill and sense of accomplishment seeing the final product," says Ginger.

Ginger enjoys learning her craft and often finds inspiration from other sellers on Etsy. The business has provided her with a creative outlet for her skills, as well as a second employment opportunity.

You can visit Ginger's online Etsy store at: www.etsy.com/shop/ginger9880. ■

Finding his path to employment

By Norm Waunch, Community Ventures Society

THROUGH GAINING VARIOUS EXPERIENCES AND SKILLS, Omid's EMPLOYMENT

path has led him to a rewarding job that he enjoys. He is originally from another country and English is his second language. While Omid is limited in his speech he is able to communicate his goals and interests.

While attending Pinetree Secondary School in Coquitlam, Omid participated in the Work Experience Program which was available for students who had barriers to employment. The program consisted of classroom work, where students learned the skills needed to get a job, and hands-on work experience to learn specific job skills. The students in the program receive work placements starting in Grades 10 to 12. This gives them the opportunity to try at least three different employment areas based on their interests.

Omid's work placements were at: Amsterdam Greenhouses where he prepared the pots for planting by filling the pots with dirt and putting them on trays; Winslow Centre where he collected the recycling for the building; and A&W Restaurant where he cleaned tables and ran the dishwasher. In all of his jobs, the evaluations that came back indicated he was eager to learn and to take on the tasks assigned to him.

After graduating, Omid became involved in the Community Ventures Society's (CVS) Community Integration program called the Tamarack Program. This program focuses on vocational skills, volunteerism and advocacy classes. Omid was very quiet and hardly spoke. However, he had hidden qualities that came out when he moved to the more employment-focused Community Integration Program. Omid is more vocal and engages in conversations with friends at CVS and staff.

Through the discovery phase of his employment search, Omid indicated his interest in finding work in the community, specifically his desire to work in a bakery like his mother. After many enquiries, Jae Park, the owner of the new Inno Bakery in Port Coquitlam indicated an interest in hiring Omid.

At Inno Bakery, Omid's duties include recycling cardboard, sweeping, washing the floor, cleaning display counters and helping with the baked goods. He has been working at the bakery for a little over two years now and says he very much enjoys his job. ■



Omid has been a valued employee of Inno Bakery in Port Coquitlam for over two years.

Getting down to work on employment

ON OCTOBER 22 AND 23, APPROXIMATELY 160 PARTICIPANTS FROM AROUND THE province, including self-advocates, families, service providers, CLBC and government representatives, teachers, instructors and staff from schools, and employers gathered at a Summit in Vancouver to create the Community Action Employment Plan. The three-year plan, which has ownership both within CLBC and community, will move the province towards a goal where British Columbia has the highest rate of employment among people with developmental disabilities in North America.

Leading up to the summit, local conversations were hosted and individual interviews were conducted to gather information on employment. More than 700 people from all over the province, including nearly 100 employers, contributed their knowledge and experience through surveys posted on CLBC's website. A team of volunteers reviewed over 200 pages of collected data and boiled it down into themes. The themes, which included changing attitudes on employment, building confidence and managing transitions, were presented at the Summit along with key actions required to reach the goals.

The summit featured conversations that identified priority areas of work and generated action plans that can be implemented in the next three years. Participants' passion, energy, experience and willingness to roll up their sleeves and get the work done made the Summit a success. Aaron Johannes created an illustrated graphic, and pictures and video interviews recorded the highlights of the event. Attendees left the Summit energized and committed.

"At the Summit, groups were meeting and discussing what they can do to reach our employment goals in BC. The energy was amazingly positive and the gathering was a definite success," says Barb Penner, CLBC Employment Initiative Coordinator. "People are happy that we are getting together, rolling our sleeves up and getting down to the work." ■

Maple Ridge recycling contract renewed

THROUGH A CONTRACT BETWEEN COMMUNITY LIVING BC AND THE RIDGE MEADOWS RECYCLING SOCIETY, more than 20 adults with developmental disabilities work to sort and process the tonnes of recyclable products that the Maple Ridge Recycling Depot receives daily. This \$270,000 annual contract has been extended to September 30, 2014. This ensures that the individuals will be able to continue working in the Ridge Meadows Recycling program as long as it meets their needs and the recycling society is able to provide the work. CLBC works closely with the society to ensure all of the participants are supported and enjoying their work experiences. ■

"The supportive work program is an important part of the way that Ridge Meadows Recycling Society operates. We are so pleased that Community Living BC recognizes the value of this unique program and is making this longer term commitment."

**Kim Day, Executive Director
Ridge Meadows Recycling Society**

"These jobs allow people the opportunity to do meaningful work, interact with others in our community and have a stable, welcoming work environment. I want to thank Community Living BC, on behalf of the community, for providing a longer term commitment to the program."

**Ernie Daykin, Mayor
Maple Ridge**



David Johnson makes opening remarks to kick off the Summit.

Event launches three new publications

THE SPECTRUM PRESS INAUGURAL BOOK launch in 2011 was a huge success, bringing people together to help celebrate the new social enterprise publishing house, which specializes in books and media by, for and about people with disabilities.

As part of Community Living Month 2012, on October 13, Spectrum Press held an event celebrating the launch of three new books, as well as a set of six fun and motivational posters by artist, author and Spectrum Society Director Aaron Johannes.

Spectrum Press is a social enterprise of Spectrum Society for Community Living which has supported people with disabilities and multiple challenges in their neighbourhoods around greater Vancouver for more than 25 years.

The book launch event took place at the Bonsor Recreation Centre in Burnaby and included meet and greets with the authors and book signings. Spectrum Press's three new publications are:

Getting to Community: Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities in their Pursuit of the Good Life

From Institutions to Individuals: On Becoming Person-Centred

The ABCs of Ability (Be sure to check the next edition of The Citizen to read a story about the creation of this book.)

Learn more about Spectrum Press, and their book titles available, by visiting: www.spectrumpress.myshopify.com. ■



Book launch attendees check out new titles from Spectrum Press.

Government supports learning program

THE CANADIAN INCLUSIVE LIVES LEARNING INITIATIVE (CILLI) is a one-of-a-kind learning program for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Developed by the Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship (CIC) at the University of British Columbia, the program is designed to teach, support and inspire people to build their own skills and vision for having an inclusive life. It is based on the ideas of human rights, inclusion and innovation, and helps individuals with developmental disabilities and their families build a life plan and set the stage for a meaningful and inclusive adult life.

On Tuesday, October 16, the Honourable Dr. Moira Stilwell, Minister of Social Development, visited the Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship to announce funding of \$20,000 for the CILLI program. CILLI's learning program pilot began in September 2011. The funding has enabled the centre to do a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot, consult on the curriculum and modify it for the second group of 22 students who began in September 2012.

“The enthusiasm with which CILLI has been received by participants speaks to both its value and to the desire and commitment of people with disabilities and their families to take control over their lives,” says Dr. Tim Stainton, co-founder of CILLI and Director of the UBC Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship.

You can learn more about CILLI at: cic.arts.ubc.ca/learning/canadian-inclusive-lives-learning-initiative.html. ■

North Vancouver MLA Jane Thornthwaite and Minister of Social Development Dr. Moira Stilwell (back row) view a demonstration of the CILLI online discussion forums by program participants Manjeet Changass and Jerry Lairdaw.



Sharing the wisdom of families

FROM OCTOBER 19 TO 21, FAMILY MEMBERS, self-advocates, caregivers, service providers and friends came together to share their experiences and celebrate supporting one another at the 2012 Family Focus Conference.

Hosted in Langley by the Family Focus Society, the conference was titled “Life in Abundance – Harvesting the Wisdom of Families.” The conference continued a 23-year tradition of Family Focus organizing conferences for families by families.

Over 120 participants attended the three-day gathering, which included pre-conference sessions on the Friday. “This event really tapped into the wisdom of families who have the experience of raising family members with disabilities,” says Dan Collins, Executive Director of the Langley Association for Community Living.

The conference featured more than 20 workshop sessions with 36 different speakers, covering a range of topics from youth transition to employment to the Registered Disability Savings Plan. The three keynote speakers were Dr. Pat Mirenda from the University of British Columbia; Donna Thomson, a parent, advocate and author of “Four Walls of my Freedom”; and Jack Syran, CLBC Vice President of Strategic Initiatives. CLBC supported the conference as a lead sponsor and Jule Hopkins, Manager of Service Accountability and Safeguards, presented information about the Start with HI initiative.

“As a parent, it was amazing to learn from the presentations and keynotes and to hear family members sharing their stories,” says Karen De Long, Director of Community Development for the BC Association for Community Living. “I think we all left inspired.” ■

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