

The VOICE

Volume 16, No. 3

Spring 2008

BC Self Advocacy Foundation Update

On April 24, 2008 the BCSAF Board of Directors presented our three-year Strategic Plan to the membership. We would like to share our plan with the readers of *The VOICE*. The three-year plan will help us stay focused. Our plan will also help us report on our work to self advocates in BC. Please check out our new mission and vision statement and our six goals.

MISSION STATEMENT

The British Columbia Self Advocacy Foundation is a provincial group run by self advocates, for self advocates. We help people with developmental disabilities become leaders. We teach the public about issues that are important to us. We do this by providing training, plain language information, and by supporting self advocacy groups and special projects.

VISION STATEMENT

BCSAF sees a future where the voices of people with developmental disabilities are heard and respected.



- Goal #1:** BCSAF is an effective provincial self advocacy organization that has resources to benefit people with developmental disabilities.
- Goal #2:** Self advocates know their rights.
- Goal #3:** Self advocates get better service from government ministries and organizations.
- Goal #4:** Former residents of BC institutions are well supported, and the public knows why institutions must stay closed.
- Goal #5:** Self advocates have more access to plain language information.
- Goal #6:** Self advocacy is strong, and self advocacy groups are connected to each other.

In this issue...

BCACL Caucus Year in Review
BC People First Recruiting Being a Special Olympic Athlete and more...

BCACL Caucus Year in Review . . .



Front Row: Tony Carter (Mission) Karla Verschoor (Staff Support), Jo-Anne Gauthier (Cranbrook), Shelley Marinus (Courtney)

Second Row: Mike Gauthier (Cranbrook), Leanne Froese (Kelowna), Sherry Shortman (Kamloops), Darryl Davis (Prince George)

Back Row: Olive Horie (Staff Support), Lyle Lexier (Vancouver), Jenny-Lynn McVicar (Caucus Chair-Port Coquitlam) Ludo Van Pelt (New Westminster), Jerry Laidlaw (Mission), Tanya Norman (Powell River).

The Self Advocacy Caucus wrapped up their 2007 – 2008 work plan at their final meeting of the year, on April 23 and 24. For those of you that do not know, the Caucus is made up of fourteen self advocates from across BC. Together we work on issues important to self advocates. The Caucus makes sure that action is taken on these issues at provincial and local levels. This is what the Caucus worked on:

1. The Caucus helped translate the BC Association for Community Living's Employment Policy into plain language.
2. The Caucus collected information relevant to self advocates on issues such as disability benefits, housing, transportation and community living services and distributed that information to others in their home communities.
3. Caucus members delivered a leadership workshop for young adults with developmental disabilities in October at Douglas College.
4. The Caucus designed and will deliver a workshop on board and committee participation at the June 2008 "Tools for Change" conference in Surrey, BC.

The Caucus will hold its annual election at the BC Association for Community Living Conference. The conference will be held June 12 – 14, 2008 at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel in Surrey. The Caucus elections will happen on Saturday, June 14. Any self advocate from BC who is at the conference can vote in the Caucus elections. We hope to see you there.

How to Get Involved

The Voice would like to hear from you! We are interested in stories from self advocates. You can write about your work, or your self advocate group, or your family. Or anything else you want other self advocates to know about.

The Voice is a small paper, so we may make your story shorter to fit on the page. We love to hear from you. Please write, phone, fax or e-mail us at:

The Voice

BC Self Advocacy Foundation
#227 – 6th Street
New Westminster BC V3L 3A5

Phone: 604-777-9100

Fax: 604-777-9394

E-mail: kverschoor@bcacl.org

Being a Special Olympics Athlete

By Lyle Lexier, Vancouver

I started out as an athlete in five-pin bowling and swimming in 1997. They were the first two sports I participated in for four years.

I like being an athlete because it gives me exercise and I make new friends. I get to go on trips to competitions and I've been to two provincial games, which was a lot of fun.

I went to the 2005 Summer Provincial Games in Comox, BC where I won one gold, one silver, and one bronze medal in swimming. Also, I went to the 2007 Winter Provincial Games in Kelowna, BC where I won three more medals. But the highlight for me was going to the Canadian National Games in Quebec City where I won two gold medals and one silver medal in cross-country skiing.

I am heavily involved in Special Olympics. During the winter, I do cross-country skiing, swimming, five-pin bowling, figure skating, and fitness. In the summer, I do bocce

ball, track and field, walking and running, and soccer. I also have a pen pal in Manitoba who is in the Special Olympics.

In addition, I have Asperger's (a high-functioning form of autism). At age 47, I live on my own, have a full-time job, speak five languages (English, Hebrew, French, Spanish, and German), and I have a passion for dinosaurs.

The Special Olympics has taught me to do my best and compete as a team member and to congratulate fellow Special Olympics athletes. It also has taught me to always try my best. If you win medals, trophies, and ribbons – great! But the main thing is to just have a good time.

If you want to know more about the Special Olympics, go to the following link on the Internet: I'm A Fan Of The Special Olympics on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2226524550&ref=ts.



Lyle Lexier, a Special Olympics athlete from Vancouver.

Without a Home

By Jo-Anne Gauthier, Cranbrook



Jo-Anne Gauthier, a mother from Cranbrook.

I live in the town of Cranbrook. My church held an event to build awareness about homelessness.

On April 8, people in my town were asked to spend the night outside. Roughly 30 people were at the park at night fall. When I got there everyone had tents, except for one crazy person – me. I had a summer sleeping bag. I was cozy as I tucked in for the night.

By one a.m. in the morning, it started getting very cold. In the morning my sleeping bag was covered with frost. It was a very scary night. I was not sure I was going to wake-up.

In the morning, we went to church for breakfast. It was a good experience. I feel very lucky for the life I have. Every night I pray for those who don't have a home.

Word Search

R	e	t	y	u	j	l	l	l	V	e	r	b	s
E	y	b	j	k	S	U	P	P	O	R	T	f	n
S	h	w	c	k	l	d	s	b	T	y	u	o	s
P	j	r	y	n	s	v	h	a	E	r	q	m	s
O	P	L	A	I	N	L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E
N	q	n	h	j	s	l	y	u	b	x	D	s	r
S	y	u	s	R	I	G	H	T	S	b	V	a	v
I	a	s	d	f	g	h	j	k	l	w	O	s	i
B	F	C	O	N	T	R	O	L	a	y	C	i	c
I	R	q	a	z	e	d	c	r	f	O	A	v	e
L	I	t	g	b	u	j	m	i	k	P	C	l	s
I	E	t	C	O	M	M	U	N	I	T	Y	i	l
T	N	g	O	w	d	c	r	f	v	l	i	o	k
I	D	b	N	s	i	e	r	g	j	O	d	i	h
E	S	n	T	z	i	h	v	d	s	N	f	u	f
S	q	u	R	t	u	r	s	v	m	S	b	y	s
o	d	i	O	w	s	u	C	H	O	I	C	E	S
k	g	p	L	o	i	s	d	r	y	d	j	t	v
j	h	E	M	P	L	O	Y	M	E	N	T	r	b

Find and circle the words that are bold and underlined below, inside the box of letters above.

It is okay to ask for **SUPPORT** to live on your own. – Richard McDonald

All self advocates need to know their **RIGHTS**. – Richard McDonald

It is important to have **CHOICES** in your life. – Marcy Baldwin

It is your right to ask for things in **PLAIN LANGUAGE**. – Marcy Baldwin

It is important to know your **OPTIONS**. – Richard McDonald

It is important to have **CONTROL** of your own life. – Richard McDonald

With rights come **RESPONSIBILITIES**. – Marcy Baldwin

EMPLOYMENT means real work for real pay.

We all have the right to live in **COMMUNITY**. – Marcy Baldwin

Self Advocates have the right to **VOTE**. – Richard McDonald

Self **ADVOCACY** means power in your own life.

– Richard McDonald

Having **FRIENDS** is a very important part of having a good life. – Rita Leedholm

Joker's Corner

How do you communicate with a fish?

Drop a line.

Submitted by Conrad Alberts

BC People First is Recruiting an Advisor

By Ludo Van Pelt

President of BC People First

People First is an international organization of self advocates with chapters all over



Ludo Van Pelt
– President of
BC People First

the world. The BC group is looking for an advisor. We are looking for someone we can depend on.

We are looking for someone who will ask us how we want to be supported. We want to help self advocates develop skills for a better life.

If you know someone who is interested, please let us know by calling 604-777-9100 and ask for Karla. For more

information on BC People First, please visit our booth at the 2008 BCACL Conference.

A Public Announcement

By Aine Rothwell

I am pleased to announce that the North Shore Association is now the North Shore ConneXions Society and the ConneXions Centre's new name is The Summit!!

There was a public, opening gala event at the Chief Joe Mathias Recreation Centre to launch the new names on Saturday, March 29, 2008. The name changes made a huge difference to everybody who lives on the North Shore.

I have written a poem about the name change.

Guess what,
guess what I have heard
all over the universe.

The best news,
exciting news someone had told me.
Guess what just happened
just recently.

Yes, that's right

The Association on the North Shore
just turned to the North Shore ConneXions
Society.

Someone whispered it in my ears,
tell me

and shout it all over the world.
Oh, I feel like singing,
like dancing.

I'm just so happy and excited to share to
everyone
this joyful news,
this wonderful and amazing news.

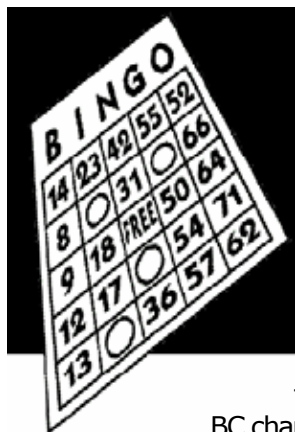
Oh, how I smile at the thought of it,
oh, how incredible this news really is.

Yes, Yes!!

Finally our brand new society had really come
at last.

Oh, I am really looking forward for
The North Shore ConneXions Society
launch to begin on Saturday March 29th, 2008.

The Voice would like to thank



**Boardwalk
Gaming
Centre**

for their support of
BC charities, including the
BC Self Advocacy Foundation.
7093 King George Hwy 401b, Surrey
(604) 590-3230

Join the BCSAF

Do you want to help people with developmental disabilities become full citizens in their own communities? Join the BC Self Advocacy Foundation!

It costs only \$2 a year for each self advocate and \$10 a year for self advocacy groups.

Contact Karla Verschoor at 604-777-9100 ext. 519 for more information. Or e-mail her at kverschoor@bcacl.org to find out more about membership in the BCSAF.

What does “Self Advocacy” mean?

Self advocacy is people learning to speak up for themselves. Many people with disabilities call themselves self advocates. This is because they want people to know they are speaking for themselves and are looking after their rights.

If you would like more information on self advocacy, call Karla Verschoor at the BC Self Advocacy Foundation at 604-777-9100.

If you want to start a self advocacy group in your area, the BC Self Advocacy Foundation can come and talk with you about how a self advocacy group works.

Subscribe!

You can subscribe to *The Voice*, and get every issue in the mail. A subscription costs \$5 for two issues. *The Voice* is free if you are a self advocate.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Mail this form to:

The Voice, BC Self Advocacy Foundation
227 - 6th Street, New Westminster, BC V3L 3A5
or call us at 604-777-9100