

## In the Stream

Spring 2007

### 2007 Federal Budget: Implications for People with Disabilities

*Summarized by John Mossa*

The following is a summary of the 2007 Federal Budget as it pertains to people with disabilities directly and indirectly in three main areas:

1. Investing in Canadians;
2. Investing in the Health of Canadians; and
3. Knowledge Advantage.

#### **Investing in Canadians: Brief Highlights**

When Canada is strong, it has the means to protect, defend and support its people. Helping others is central to who we are as Canadians. That is why Budget 2007 is:

- Introducing a new Working Income Tax Benefit of up to \$500 for individuals and \$1,000 for families. This will reward and strengthen incentives to work for an estimated 1.2 million low-income Canadians, helping them over the "welfare wall."
- Helping parents and others save toward the long-term financial security of persons with severe disabilities with a new Registered Disability Savings Plan.
- Creating an Enabling Accessibility Fund with \$45 million over three years to contribute to the cost of improving physical accessibility for persons with disabilities.

#### **Working Income Tax Benefit: Helping People over the Welfare Wall**

For too many low-income Canadians, working can mean being financially worse off than staying on social assistance. For example, a single parent who takes a low-income job can lose a large portion of each dollar earned to taxes and reduced income support. In addition, he or she could also lose in-kind benefits such as subsidized housing and prescription drugs, and can often take on new work-related expenses. This situation is often referred to as the "welfare wall," which discourages many low-income Canadians from getting the jobs that they and their family need.

Budget 2007 fulfills the Government's commitment to introduce a Working

Income Tax Benefit (WITB). A WITB of up to \$500 will be provided to single individuals with earnings greater than \$3,000 and net income less than \$12,833. Single individuals with earnings of \$5,500 or more and net income less than \$9,500 will receive the full \$500 amount.

A WITB of up to \$1,000 will be provided to couples and single parents with family earnings of \$3,000 or more and net income less than \$21,167. Couples and single parents with earnings of \$8,000 or more and net family income less than \$14,500 will receive the full \$1,000 amount.

The WITB will be provided as a refundable tax credit, effective for the 2007 tax year, with payments beginning in 2008. For 2008 and future tax years, families will be able to apply for an advance payment of one-half their estimated annual entitlements. The WITB will be generally available to individuals 19 and older, not attending school full-time.

### **WITB Disability Supplement**

An additional supplement will be provided for low-income working Canadians with disabilities, as these individuals generally face even greater barriers to workforce participation.

Employed individuals who are eligible for the disability tax credit (DTC) will qualify for the disability supplement of the WITB. Benefits from the WITB will start when the earnings of the DTC-eligible individual reach \$1,750. The disability supplement will increase with individual earnings up to a maximum annual amount of \$250.

- For a single individual, the disability supplement will be reduced at net income of \$12,833, and will be eliminated at \$14,500.
- For single parents and couples, the disability supplement will be reduced at family net income of \$21,167, and be eliminated at \$22,834 (\$24,500 where there are two working DTC-eligible adults).

### **Helping Parents Save to Ensure the Long-Term Financial Security of a Child With a Severe Disability**

Budget 2007 acts on the recommendations of the Panel by announcing the introduction of a new registered disability savings plan (RDSP). The plan will be available commencing in 2008 and will be based generally on the existing registered education savings plan (RESP) design. An individual eligible for the disability tax credit (DTC), their parent or other legal representative, may

establish an RDSP. The DTC-eligible individual will be the plan beneficiary. The plan will consist of three elements:

1. Parents, beneficiaries and others wishing to save will be able to contribute to an RDSP. Contributions to an RDSP for a beneficiary will be limited to a lifetime maximum of \$200,000. Contributions will be permitted up until the end of the year in which a beneficiary attains 59 years of age.
2. Annual RDSP contributions will attract Canada Disability Savings Grants (CDSGs) at matching rates of 100, 200 or 300 per cent, depending on family income and the amount contributed, up to a maximum lifetime CDSG limit of \$70,000. An RDSP will be eligible to receive CDSGs up until the end of the year in which the plan beneficiary attains 49 years of age.
3. Canada Disability Savings Bonds (CDSBs) of up to \$1,000 per year will be provided to RDSPs established by low and modest-income families, up to a maximum lifetime CDSB limit of \$20,000, and will not be contingent on contributions. The maximum annual \$1,000 CDSB will be paid to an RDSP where family net income does not exceed \$20,883. The CDSB will be phased out gradually for those with family net income between \$20,883 and \$37,178. These income thresholds are for the 2007 taxation year and will be indexed to inflation for 2008, when RDSPs become operational, and for subsequent taxation years. An RDSP will be eligible to receive CDSBs up until the end of the year in which the plan beneficiary attains 49 years of age.

Contributions to an RDSP will not be deductible and will not be included in income when paid out of an RDSP. The investment income earned in the plan will accumulate tax-free. CDSGs, CDSBs and investment income earned in the plan will be included in the beneficiary's income for tax purposes when paid out of an RDSP. Only the plan beneficiary, or the beneficiary's legal representative, will be permitted to receive payments from an RDSP.

To ensure that RDSP payments do not reduce federal income-tested benefits, amounts paid out of an RDSP will not be taken into account for the purpose of calculating income-tested benefits delivered through the income tax system, such as the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the goods and services tax credit. In addition, amounts paid out of an RDSP will not reduce Old Age Security or Employment Insurance benefits.

Provinces and territories provide income support for persons with disabilities through means-tested programs. The Expert Panel noted that, for the RDSP program to be effective, RDSP assets should not disqualify a plan beneficiary from receiving provincial or territorial income support provided to persons with

disabilities. The Expert Panel also noted that payments from the plan should supplement—not reduce—income support provided under these programs at least until the level of income support plus RDSP payments exceeds the Low Income Cut Off for the province or territory.

### **Enabling Accessibility Fund**

Canada's New Government is committed to helping all Canadians, regardless of physical ability, participate fully in their communities, whether this means taking part in an activity at a community centre or having easy access to the local grocery store. To do this, Budget 2007 proposes the creation of an Enabling Accessibility Fund.

This fund will contribute to the capital costs of construction and renovations related to physical accessibility for persons with disabilities. Approved projects will have strong ties to, and support from, the communities they serve. These projects could include new construction, such as abilities centres that offer programs to individuals of varying physical abilities. Smaller projects such as adding a ramp to an existing building could also be funded. Details of the Enabling Accessibility Fund will be developed by the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development in partnership with the provinces and community groups over the next several months. Budget 2007 commits \$45 million over three years for this fund.

### **Eliminating Capital Gains Tax on Charitable Donations to Private Foundations**

Charities play an invaluable role in Canadian society. They provide support for a wide variety of activities from health services to education, museum exhibits, and places of worship, protection of the environment and diverse programs for disabled children.

To better encourage charitable giving, Budget 2006 eliminated capital gains tax on donations of publicly-listed securities to public charities. This measure has been welcomed widely by Canadians and has encouraged a significant increase in donations to charities since it took effect last May.

### **New Horizons for Seniors**

Canada's New Government is committed to ensuring that seniors continue to have a good quality of life as they age. Canada's seniors have a richness of skills, experience and knowledge to share with each other and the wider community in which they live. Human Resources and Social Development

Canada's New Horizons for Seniors program enhances such opportunities. Safety and security is also very important for seniors. This will be another focus of the program.

Investments in Budget 2007 will allow the New Horizons for Seniors program to enhance opportunities for seniors to share their rich life experiences, benefiting both young and old. This will permit the program to provide capital assistance for community buildings and for equipment and furnishings related to programs for seniors. Support will be provided for education programming to reduce elder abuse and fraud. Budget 2007 provides an additional \$10 million per year, which will bring the total budget for the program to \$35 million per year.

## **2) Investing in the Health of Canadians**

- Providing \$300 million for a vaccine program to help protect women and girls against cancer of the cervix.
- Providing \$2 million to the Canadian MedicAlert Foundation to help the No Child Without program provide free MedicAlert bracelets to children.
- Establishing the Canadian Mental Health Commission, with \$10 million over the next two years and \$15 million per year starting in 2009–10. This commission will lead to the development of a national mental health strategy.

## **3) Knowledge Advantage**

- Providing \$500 million per year starting in 2008–09 to provide labour market training to help people who are not eligible for employment-insurance-related training get the skills they need and employers want. Any Canadian who needs training will be able to get training.
- Helping graduate students cover the cost of education with \$35 million over two years and \$27 million per year thereafter to support an additional 1,000 students through the Canada Graduate Scholarships.
- Investing \$30 million in The Rick Hansen Man in Motion Foundation in 2006–07 to translate research into practical benefits for Canadians living with spinal cord injuries.

See more Federal Budget details go to <http://budget.gc.ca/2007/bp/bpc1e.html>

## **2007 Provincial Budget: Implications for People with**

## **Disabilities**

The following is a summary of the 2007 Provincial Budget as it pertains to people with disabilities directly and indirectly in these 6 main areas:

1. Investing in Children and Families
2. Education
3. Health Care
4. Infrastructure
5. Affordable Housing and
6. Seniors

### **1. Investing in Children and Families**

The 2007 Budget focuses on support for families and children. A key proposal is the new Ontario Child Benefit (OCB), which will provide an additional \$2.1 billion over five years to help 1.3 million children a year when the program is fully phased in. The program will begin with a down payment in July 2007 of up to \$250 per child under age 18 and rising to a maximum of \$1,100 annually per child once the program is fully implemented by July 2011. It will treat all children in low-income families equally, whether their parents work or receive social assistance. This ought to help parents who receive social assistance to make a transition to work. They will continue to receive support for their children after initial employment.

#### **Other proposed supports for families and children include:**

- The proposed Federal Working Income Tax Benefit to Ontarians receiving social assistance.
- The Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program will see an increase by two per cent.
- Increasing the hourly minimum wage to \$10.25 by 2010. Starting on March 31, 2008 there will be three additional increments of \$0.75 each.
- Providing \$127 million to municipalities for affordable housing. \$185 million will be given for 27,000 new housing allowances and \$80 million for off-reserve aboriginal housing.
- Enhancing Workplace Safety and Insurance Benefits for approximately 155,000

injured workers by 2.5 per cent on July 1, 2007 and January 1, 2008 and 2009.

- Increasing Legal Aid Ontario funding by \$51 million over three years, to enhance access to legal services for low-income women and children and other vulnerable Ontarians.
- Allowing seniors more flexibility in accessing their locked-in retirement income via the new life income fund.
- A \$25 million enhancement to current child care programs in 2007–08. This will grow to \$50 million annually starting in 2008–09.
- Expanding the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program;
- Establishing a College of Early Childhood Educators.
- Investing in children’s mental health and centres.

### **Developmental Services**

The government is enhancing services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families in communities across Ontario. The government will invest more than \$200 million in additional operating funds over four years to strengthen capacity in developmental service agencies. Seven million dollars in capital funding will provide for much needed repairs and maintenance to developmental service community agencies. With this new funding the government will have invested more than \$500 million in developmental services since 2003.

### **Children’s Treatment Centres**

Children’s Treatment Centres are community-based organizations that provide approximately 40,000 children annually with such services as physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy. The government’s total annual funding to these centres will have increased by almost \$30 million between 2003-04 and 2007-08. This includes \$10 million announced in the 2006 Ontario Budget to provide services to almost 5,000 children and youth across the province. An additional \$4 million will begin in 2007-08.

## **Children's Mental Health**

The province is building on its investments to 250 child and youth mental health centres, and 17 hospital-based outpatient programs by providing \$8 million to address gaps in local service needs and reduce wait times. As of 2007-08, the government will have increased funding in these areas by nearly \$80 million since 2003-04 including enhancements announced in the 2004 Budget.

## **2) Education**

### **Investing in Programs to Reach Every Student**

The budget plans for better student achievement and higher secondary school graduation rates by:

- Investing \$18.3 billion in Grants for Student Needs (GSN); funding to school boards in the 2007-08 school year, will increase by \$781 million from last year.
- Investing \$28 million in 2007-08 for elementary specialist teachers, bringing the total to an additional 1,900 teachers over the last three years;
- Investing \$4.5 million to train almost 25,000 teachers and \$1.2 million to train school vice-principals and principals to address bullying.

### **Reaching Higher in Postsecondary Education**

Under the Reaching Higher plan, the Budget is investing a cumulative \$6.2 billion in the postsecondary education sector by 2009-10. The government is continuing to improve quality, access and accountability by:

- Raising total base operating grants to colleges and universities to \$4.0 billion in 2007-08.
- Providing more than \$580 million in student financial aid through the Ontario Student Assistance Program in 2007-08.
- Re-introducing upfront grants to benefit nearly 60,000 students, and limiting student debt to \$7,000 per completed year of study.
- Capped tuition increases – following two years of tuition freezes – at an average of five per cent annually, or \$100 for 90 per cent of college students and \$200 for 70 per cent of university students.



- \$390 million more for the postsecondary education and training sector, with a proposed extension of the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit in 2012.

### **3) Health Care**

The Budget is providing \$37.9 billion in health spending in 2007–08, a 29 per cent increase from 2003–04.

#### **Shortening Wait Times**

Ontario's Wait Time Strategy improves access to health care and reduces patient wait times in five areas: cancer surgery, cardiac procedures, cataract surgery, hip and knee replacements, and magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography (MRI/CT) scans. In this Budget, the government is announcing that it plans to add pediatric surgeries to the strategy. Wait time reductions since 2005 are down in all five areas including:

- Cataract surgeries: wait times down to 128 days or 41 per cent
- Knee replacements: wait times down to 133 days or 30 per cent
- Cancer surgeries: wait times down to 13 days or 16 per cent.

#### **Improving Access to Doctors, Nurses and Other Health Professionals**

Health Force Ontario's innovative health-human-resource strategy to help facilitate the supply and distribution of human resources across the province. Key components of this strategy include:

- Hiring 8,000+ more nurses by 2008. Eighty-nine million dollars, to aid every new Ontario nursing graduate with the opportunity for full-time employment. Providing an increase of \$14 million for additional nurses in long-term care homes.
- Training for more doctors – first-year medical school enrolment will be increased by 23 per cent between 2004-05 and 2009-10.

By the end of 2008, 150 Family Health Teams are to be fully operational to provide care to more than 2.5 million Ontarians in 112 communities. In addition, by 2007-08 the number of Community Health Centres will rise to 76 from the current 54.

The government shall improve access to emergency care by investing an additional \$143 million during 2007-08 via the Emergency Department Action Plan to:

- Improve physician coverage to increase the efficiency of emergency departments across the province.
- Invest \$35 million for more home-care services and supports to keep people healthy and at home.
- Support the development of 1,750 new long-term care beds and replace 662 long-term care beds to help discharge patients from hospitals.

### **Promoting Better Health and Preventing Illness**

With this Budget, the government is continuing to prioritize health promotion by:

- Providing an additional \$2.5 million to the Communities in Action Fund, raising the total to \$7.5 million per year, to encourage Ontarians to participate in sports and other physical activities.
- Investing \$41 million in community infrastructure and multi-use facilities to promote physical activity, sports and wellness in various communities throughout Ontario.

The government is further investing in public health by:

- Providing approximately \$20 million, thus growing to approximately \$40 million per year, for colorectal cancer screening for those aged 50 and older – the first program of its kind in Canada;
- Providing funding for the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion to provide financial support during future public health emergencies.
- Providing \$1.5 million by 2009, increasing to \$2.5 million by 2011 to enhance capacity of regional communities to respond to HIV/AIDS.
- Investing approximately \$7 million to expand addiction treatment programs.

### **4) Infrastructure**

This Budget builds on the government's infrastructure investments by providing

\$5.9 billion in 2007-08. Highlights include investments in health care, education, and facilities for vulnerable populations' infrastructure.

The 2007 Budget is announcing \$48 million in 2006-07 to support social and community infrastructure improvements, increasing the capacity of the social sector to provide quality services. Investments would include:

- \$10 million for hospices
- \$5 million for community citizenship centres
- \$15 million for community recreation centres
- \$18 million in support for vulnerable populations, including developmental services.

Through the ReNew Ontario plan, the government is investing more than \$5 billion in health care infrastructure by 2010. These targeted capital investments include:

- Funding more than 100 major projects to build new hospitals and modernize older hospitals, and reduce wait times.
- Investing more than \$200 million in new and upgraded medical and diagnostic equipment.

In addition, the government will provide \$127 million to municipalities for new affordable housing and the rehabilitation of existing housing.

### **5) Affordable Housing**

The 2007 Provincial Budget, with the support of the federal government, proposes \$392-million trust funds to:

- Help low-income working families with children pay their rent with a new \$185 million housing allowance program that will begin in January 2008.
- Support off-reserve Aboriginal housing with an allocated \$80 million investment, in partnership with Aboriginal communities, for up to 1,100 off-reserve housing units.

### **6) Seniors**

The government is proposing to introduce a new life income fund (LIF) that will increase income for pensioners in retirement and permit up to 25 per cent of their

locked-in funds to be unlocked. The new LIF, and other modifications to the rules governing locked-in accounts, would give pensioners who hold locked-in retirement savings transferred from employment pension plans more flexibility in managing their retirement income. Other proposals to benefit seniors include:

- Enhancing the Ontario Property and Sales Tax Credits for seniors for the fourth time in four years; and
- Allowing individuals to split certain types of pension income for tax purposes with a spouse or common-law partner. This would provide Ontario income tax savings of about \$170 million to Ontario couples with eligible pension income in 2007.

For more information on the Provincial Budget, please visit [www.ontariobudget.ca/english/](http://www.ontariobudget.ca/english/).

## Out With the Old and In With New: A New Look and Feel for CAILC

*by Nancy Barry*

CAILC has launched their official new look in honour of their 20th anniversary. Since the beginning, CAILC's logo was never changed and they didn't really have a slogan. The original logo was red and white with a maple leaf running through it on the left side

This new logo conveys an image of "collaboration, diversity, movement, synergy, energy as well as optimism and hope that reinforced a positive passionate feeling, somehow changing the way people think about disability" (Traci Walters, 'The Perspective' Winter 2007).

Many people, especially the general public, have no idea that the term "Independent Living" is associated with disability and a philosophy of self-determination. Most think it's more about the physical aspects of Independent Living, such as the daily activities which encompass the concept of 'living on one's own'. But as we all know, the Independent Living philosophy is deeply rooted in the independent living movement that represents a vision of consumer control and choice within the community. Rather than focusing on limitations and dependency on professional interventions, the emphasis is on quality of life and involvement in the community through a society which is based on consumer control; cross-disability; community; integration; and full participation.

The colours of the logo are also very important (for colour photo, see front

cover). The number '4' seems to play relevance. The four colours can remind us of many key IL concepts, such as that there are 4 core programs to ILRCs: Information and Referral; Peer Support; Independent Living Skills Training; and Service Development. There are 4 principles of the IL philosophy: Choice; Control; Flexibility; and Risk taking. There are 4 pillars to our Canadian IL Movement: Empowerment; Accessibility; Inclusion; and Opportunities.

***"Promoting a New Perspective on Disability"*** was chosen as the slogan, so it would be action orientated, meaning embracing the word 'disability' as something positive versus negative. "It's all a matter of perception or perspective by ourselves first and then by others" (Traci Walters, 'The Perspective' Winter 2007).

### McGuinty Government Helps Postsecondary Students with Disabilities

Chris Bentley, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, announced that the McGuinty government is changing its college tuition policy for students with disabilities while helping ensure they can succeed at college or university and beyond.

"We're taking steps to strengthen linkages between postsecondary education and employment so that students with disabilities can pursue meaningful careers," said Bentley. "We're also changing the college tuition policy for students with disabilities to reflect the longer period of study some may need to obtain skills and training."

The McGuinty government is providing a total of more than \$40.7 million in 2006-07 to help students with disabilities succeed in post secondary studies, an increase of 22 per cent since 2003-04. This includes a \$4 million investment in 2006-07 as part of the government's Access to Opportunities strategy to help colleges and universities provide new supports and services to students with disabilities.

The McGuinty government is also revising the college tuition fee policy to cap tuition fees for students with permanent disabilities who may take longer to complete their program. Under the revised policy, college students with disabilities will pay tuition fees equivalent to students completing the program in the regular period of time and will thereafter pay \$20 per course.

In 2006-07, Humber College will receive nearly \$1 million to support 849 registered students with disabilities. In addition, Humber will benefit from an additional \$900,000 in Access funding that is allocated for interpreter services for all five Greater Toronto Area colleges.

"The Colleges of Ontario have become increasingly accessible to students with disabilities, as they should," said Dr. Robert A. (Squee) Gordon, President of Humber College. "The funds received from the Ontario government have been instrumental in significantly improving support for thousands of students aspiring to take their places as contributing citizens of this province." The McGuinty government's new \$4 million investment will be used to support a range of initiatives, including:

- Developing more tailored career and employment counselling for students and graduates with disabilities, to help them find meaningful employment and facilitate their entry into the job market.
- Carrying out learning assessments to determine the nature of a student's learning disability.
- Developing transition plans to help students as they move from high school to college or university.
- Helping visually impaired students receive their course materials, textbooks and required readings quickly.
- Helping colleges and universities provide interpreter and other services to deaf, deafened and hard of hearing students.

Providing more access for students with disabilities is the latest way the McGuinty government is working to provide more opportunities for Ontario's students. Others are:

- Increasing full-time enrolment at colleges and universities by 86,000 students since 2002-03, bringing participation in postsecondary education to historic levels.
- Doubling investment in student aid by 2009-2010 to help families with the cost of higher education. Enhancements to student aid will benefit 145,000 students this year.
- Investing \$55 million by 2009-10 in the Access to Opportunities strategy, to help postsecondary institutions deliver programs to improve access for persons with disabilities, francophones and Aboriginal peoples.

For more information, contact Tanya Blazina, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, at (416) 325-2746.

## Canadians with Disabilities Celebrate Supreme Court Decision

© Council of Canadians with Disabilities Press Release, March 23, 2007

The Supreme Court of Canada overturned a decision of the Federal Court of Appeal that allowed VIA Rail to run inaccessible passenger rail cars with impunity. The Court sent a clear message to VIA Rail, and indeed all Canadians, that service inaccessible to Canadians with disabilities will not be tolerated. Canadians with disabilities view this decision as a victory for accessible transportation in Canada. This was a David and Goliath like battle, where people with disabilities waged a protracted legal battle against VIA, a crown corporation which seemed determined to keep inaccessible passenger rail cars in service. Ultimately, the protection afforded by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms resulted in the Supreme Court taking a strong stand for a rail service usable by both people with and without disabilities.

Unlike VIA Rail, the Supreme Court of Canada, like the disability community, has been convinced that a universal, rather than a segregated, approach to service design is what ultimately will serve Canada the best. With a universal approach, services and products are designed in a manner that they can be used by people with the widest range of functional abilities. The impact of a universal design approach is less exclusion, fewer people being left behind, more participation and more opportunity for everyone.

The Renaissance cars, at issue in this case, were bought by VIA at bargain basement prices because they would not have been allowed on the tracks in the United States, Australia or Europe due to their poor design. The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) found that the trains failed to measure up in the following respects: no accessible washrooms in the coach car, the wheelchair tie-down only accommodated a child's wheelchair, the doorways are too narrow, there is insufficient space for a service animal, the so-called accessible suite is in fact inaccessible. The Supreme Court has saved the day and in effect had the courage to say—the emperor is wearing no clothes. Despite the \$130 million of taxpayer dollars that has been spent by VIA Rail, the Supreme Court has had the courage to say VIA got it wrong with these cars and must do what is necessary to correct the problem.

Unlike the Federal Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court was not willing to accept a rail service where people with disabilities could only travel on the days the accessible cars were in service. Analyzing this problem with an equality rights lens, the Supreme Court of Canada determined that the type of service offered by VIA Rail was counter to the commitments made to people with disabilities in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

When then Minister of Transport David Collenette made the announcement that VIA Rail would be receiving \$400 million from the Federal government, he

promised that any new rolling stock would be accessible to Canadians with disabilities. The Supreme Court's decision will make this promise come true for Canadians with disabilities.

This case has been a long and arduous journey for the disability community. It has expended a great deal of time and resources. While the outcome is all that we have dreamed of, we are asking the Federal Government to take the necessary regulatory action to prevent a similar boondoggle in the future. The disability community is seeking a regulatory framework, similar to what exists in the U.S., that would prevent inaccessible transportation equipment from ever being purchased or put into operation in Canada. Canadians with disabilities know as well as anyone the scarcity of resources for needed services and infrastructure. It is our objective that when resources are expended that they are being used in a manner that will benefit all Canadians.

For More Information Contact:

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Mr. Claredon Robicheau, Member, CCD Transport Committee  
- (902)769-2474 Bilingual

**Canada and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities: Government steps back from Leadership on Human Rights of People with Disabilities** by Steven Estey, Chair of the International Committee, Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) and was the NGO representative on Canada's Delegation to the Ad Hoc Committee at the United Nations. Article first appeared in ARCH ALERT, February 9, 2007

(Editor's Note: Steven Estey was a member of the Canadian Delegation to the Ad Hoc Committee on the UN Convention to Protect and Promote the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Over the past 5 years he attended all 8 Ad Hoc Committee meetings, each of which was two weeks in duration. Steven has also coordinated CCD's consultation on the Convention here in Canada. Steven's contribution to this initiative is a substantive piece of work. ARCH Disability Law Centre would like to thank Steven Estey for submitting this article as a guest writer.)

Canadians have followed with pride the excellent work done by Canada at the



United Nations, where for the past five years our Delegation to the Ad Hoc Committee has consistently shown leadership in the elaboration of a new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

My Organization, the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), recently wrote to the Prime Minister to thank him, and to applaud Canada's leadership role on this issue. In that letter we noted that through law reform and jurisprudence, Canada has a long history of making human rights protections meaningful to people with disabilities. We further noted that through the work of our delegation, Canada had effectively brought this experience to the UN discussions. This important new human rights convention, we said to the Prime Minister, has been the beneficiary of Canada's thirty years of leadership and innovation on disability issues, as well as our strong record in other areas of international law. We were indeed proud of our country!

In light of this expansive history of leadership, and our effusive letter to the Prime Minister, we are troubled by recent media reports that his government has decided to step back from its leadership role at a crucial moment in the life of the new treaty.

The first great hurdle that any new UN treaty faces is to gain sufficient signatures and ratification to enter into force. Mindful of this, the UN General Assembly provided members a period of grace between the December 13, 2006 adoption date, and the date upon which the treaty would be opened for signature, March 30, 2007.

When we wrote to Prime Minister Harper on January 8 2007 we did so mindful of Canada's historic leadership, and further mindful that Canada acted quickly to sign both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). We had not expected less for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Clearly, like the CRPD, both the CRC and CEDAW enter into areas of shared jurisdiction and no such delay was experienced in signing those treaties.

Certainly we appreciate and support the need for ongoing consultations with Provincial and Territorial Governments, in particular with regard to ratification of the CRPD. However, we believe that through the five year Convention negotiating process sufficient consultation has been done to enable Canada to take the next step and become a signatory to the Convention. We recognize the need for further consultation in advance of ratification, and we look forward to a consultation process that will be open and transparent and inclusive of the disability community.

People with disabilities, our families, and our allies in Canada and around the world have steadfastly supported Canada's participation in the development of

the CRPD. Less than two weeks ago we wrote a thank you note to the Prime Minister.

CCD urges Prime Minister Harper to support the aspirations of Canadians with disabilities and sign the UN Convention on March 30, 2007 with a view to ratification as soon as possible.

We call upon all concerned Canadians to contact the Prime Minister and your local MP, to support Canada's continued leadership and specifically our joining with many other UN Member States for the historic signing ceremony on March 30, 2007.

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**New ODSP Rules for Earnings and Employment effective November 1, 2006** *(This article first appeared in ARCH ALERT February 9, 2007. Permission to reprint granted.)*

ODSP has new rules for earnings and employment that went into effect on November 1, 2006. The key changes as of November 1, 2006 are:

- amount exempted from monthly income calculations will now be a straight 50% of earnings;
- each eligible adult with earnings or net positive income from self-employment will receive new \$100 Work-Related Benefit each month;
- maximum deduction for informal child care costs has been increased to \$600 per child per month;
- maximum deduction for disability-related work expenses has been increased to \$300 per month;
- Employment and Training Start-Up Benefit (ESUB) has been increased to \$500 in any 12-month period and expanded to cover expenses related to starting any approved employment-related activity;

- up-front child care benefit has been increased to \$600 and expanded to cover expenses related to starting any approved employment-related activity;
- new Employment Transition Benefit (ETB) of \$500 in any 12-month period is available to recipients leaving ODSP with employment earnings;
- drug, dental and vision care benefits have been extended to recipients, spouses and dependent children leaving ODSP for employment until equivalent coverage is available from the employer.

In addition, the following changes to the ODSP rules were made:

- 12-month limitation on rapid reinstatement for grandparented FB recipients has been removed; and
- ODSP-adjudicated recipients are entitled to rapid reinstatement where medical review dates passed.

If you have any questions about these changes, contact your local community legal clinic.

## Moscoe Wants to Eliminate Current Disabled Parking Program

*by Nancy Barry*

Howard Moscoe, says the Handicapped Parking Permit system needs to be revamped and replaced by one that is “free of abuse”. But are his intentions punishing the wrong people?

Moscoe says he’s trying to eliminate fraud committed by thousands of Canadians who access these permits and don’t need them. According to a recent article in the Toronto Star, “more than 470,000 permits are in circulation just in Ontario alone.” He says that this is unfair to people with disabilities who actually require those parking spaces designated to those displaying a permit. His suggestion is that we scrap the current program and replace it with something that works.

Are his ideas really helping the right people? Currently, those with disabled permits are allowed to park, with a displayed permit, in “no parking” zones, metered parking areas and side streets. Moscoe is trying to say that people with disabilities should have to pay by putting money in parking meters like everyone else; that by not expecting us to pay, we are being treated “differently” than everyone else and that just because we are disabled, doesn’t mean we are poor.

I think this is bogus. I think this is just another “money making tactic” for the city. How is someone with a disability, who drives their own vehicle, but has difficulty

with fine motor skills, supposed to put coins into a parking meter? This is one of the most absurd ideas I have ever heard. Instead of going after those who really need the parking permits, Moscoe should be asking himself "how can we prevent those who are not disabled from accessing these permits?"

Sandra Carpenter, CILT's Independent Living Program Manager, was interviewed extensively by the media about this topic. She raises the point that many people with disabilities are on fixed incomes and can't afford to pay parking.

Moscoe says that if people can afford to drive their own modified vehicle, then they can afford to pay parking. He is making the assumption, as many non disabled people do, that because a person with a disability has access to a modified vehicle that they have money. This is not necessarily true. It doesn't mean that the person with the disability is driving the van; perhaps it is owned and being driven by a family member to transport the person with the disability to where they have to go. Moscoe doesn't seem to have thought the whole issue through before making his comments to the press.

As Sandra commented to a Toronto Star reporter, "Until we have a comprehensive plan (for dealing with the entire issue), I don't think we want any ad-hoc solutions. We don't want to make a bad situation worse."

### CPAO and SWIFTRADE Bring More Jobs to Canadians with a Disability

On April 18, 2007, Swift Trade Inc. announced a new employment initiative for people with a disability, and presented CPA Ontario with a major donation to support its Programs, and celebrate the 25th anniversary of Employment Services this year. Swift Trade's effort is based on a similar and highly successful program started by the firm in British Columbia in 2006.

Swift Trade Inc. began in 1998 as Canada's first direct access trading firm. Today it is the country's leading equity trading firm with over 120 offices in 22 countries around the world. The company was named #7 on the Profit magazine's hottest startups in 2001 and #2 on the 100 fastest growing companies list in Canada in 2004. Learn more by visiting their website at [www.swifttrade.com](http://www.swifttrade.com).

CPA Ontario is a community based organization that has evolved to become a leader in assisting people with spinal cord injury and other physical disabilities to ensure that they have meaningful, productive and independent lives. Founded in 1945 by returning WWII veterans, the organization now has more than 10 offices in Ontario, and last year served more than 1,000 clients. You can log on to their website at [www.cpaont.org](http://www.cpaont.org).

For more information contact Brown & Cohen Communications & Public Affairs Inc. at (416) 484-1132, and speak to Natasha Bolotina at extension 5, or email to [natasha@brown-cohen.com](mailto:natasha@brown-cohen.com) or Charlene Lunau at extension 4, or email to [charlene@brown-cohen.com](mailto:charlene@brown-cohen.com). You may also contact Bev Jenkins, CPA Ontario, at (416) 422-5644, extension 212 or by email to [bev.jenkins@cpaont.org](mailto:bev.jenkins@cpaont.org).

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Heritage Skills Development Centre (HSDC)

**Heritage Skills Development Centre (HSDC)** is a not-for-profit charitable organization established in 1993, with a mission to promote the health, social, cultural and economic self-sufficiency and well-being of refugees, new immigrant women, at-risk youth and other marginalized individuals, so that they and their families can enjoy and contribute to the opportunities that Canada offers. Our programs and services include:

Basic Sewing & Fashion Design, Computer & Internet Training, Employment Preparation, and a host of social programs.

HSDC current has Job Placements, Internship and Volunteer Opportunities in the following areas:

- Administrative Assistant & Clerical Assistant
- Computer Tutor
- Computer Technical Assistant / I. T. Trouble Shooter
- Creative Writing Assistant / Newsletter Editor
- Database Assistant
- Document Editing Assistant
- Event Coordinator / Volunteer Coordinator
- Fashion Designer / Dress-Making Tutor
- Fundraising Assistant
- Legal Assistant
- Marketing / Communication Assistant
- Program Development Assistant
- Proposal Writing Assistant
- Research Assistant
- Website Development Assistant

Note: They are very flexible on days and times, this could be arrange to suite your need.

### The benefits of volunteer participation with HSDC:

- Will receive reference letter, enabling you to get employment
- Knowledge of potential employers, jobs and other valuable information
- Opportunities to network, make new friends, share ideas of common interest and concerns
- Opportunities to participants in our numerous training programs
- Opportunities to acquire Canadian work experience

Intake Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

For more information, please call (416) 345-1613 or visit them at 400 McCowan Road, Ground Floor (McCowan Rd. & Eglinton Ave. E. / Danforth E.)

### Variety Village Summer Camp - July 2 to August 31, 2007

Register now for the 2007 Summer Camp at Variety Village! Variety Village offers many full- and half-day camps to participants of all ages and abilities. Camps are often a combination of sports, games and training activities and encourage participants to learn and develop new skills. Camps also enhance self-esteem and increase personal fitness levels. Variety Village camps are always fun and fill up quickly. So don't delay and register today! Variety Village is located at 3701 Danforth Avenue, Scarborough. For more information, call (416) 699-7169 or visit their website at [www.varietyontario.ca](http://www.varietyontario.ca)

### The Earl Bales Club – Spring 2007

All programs take place at the Earl Bales Community Centre on Friday evenings from 7pm to 9pm. The Earl Bales Community Centre is located at 4169 Bathurst Street (at Sheppard). For more information on the events listed below, call Brian or Mary Anne at (416) 395-7873.

- May 11, 2007 – Movie Night
- May 18, 2007 – Pizza Night
- May 25, 2007 – Nature Hike
- June 1, 2007 – Arts and Crafts
- June 8, 2007 – Special outing

## The Mix Community Club

### Our History:

The Community Club was established in May 2004 and was formerly known as "The Sharing Group". On February 24, 2005 we incorporated as a registered nonprofit organization. The Mix Community Club was created from the unique vision of several staff from Community Living Toronto who wanted to fulfill the need for an organization that would specialize in supporting people with disabilities in the facilitation of organizing their own social club; that would offer community entertainment for the purpose of socially integrating the mainstream society with the disabled community. The Mix Community Club has become the first social club where individuals with disabilities provide first class social entertainment for the community. This revolutionary community organization is inspired and organized by people with disabilities.

### Our Vision:

People with disabilities have the right to experience social inclusion, integration and enjoyment with the whole community. We exist to bring individuals with disabilities to the social forefront of our society by giving them the equal opportunity of socially participating and contributing towards the social entertainment of the mainstream community. We believe there are no disabilities but only people with different abilities.

### Our Mission is 3 Fold:

**Supporting** people with varying disabilities in the operation of their own social club for the participation and enjoyment of the entire community. **Promoting** awareness towards, "social inclusion/integration for people with disabilities" and **Providing** dynamic and diverse social entertainment for the whole community to share and enjoy together.

### Our Unique Social Approach:

We have developed a revolutionary, inspirational and unique approach to social interaction which we have called, "Community Social Integration". Traditionally there have been two methods for social integration; Straight integration and Reverse integration. The Mix Community Club has combined both these methods together to form what we call Mutual integration. This method

encourages both people with disabilities and without disabilities to socially integrate together at the same time. This revolutionary social approach is:

1. Providing social integration for people of different ages, cultures, backgrounds and abilities.
2. Cultivating awareness towards social accessibility for people with varying disabilities.
3. Encouraging community and family participation in an unique, diverse, inclusive, meaningful inspirational, exciting and personally rewarding social environment for the whole community.

### **Our Affiliations & Partnerships:**

The Mix Community Club is affiliated with Community Living Toronto (this organization provides support to people with intellectual disabilities). We are also affiliated with and have partnered together with, The Toronto International Deaf Film Arts Festival, Drama Way, Right 2 Express Magazine, Maytree Foundation and The Community Head injury Resource services of Toronto.

### **Our Participants & Events:**

Our participants come from over 30 different community organizations throughout the Greater Toronto area that provide services for people with physical and/or intellectual disabilities, along with the many community people with and without disabilities that participate with us every month. We organize special community events by bringing in the best bands, musicians and entertainers our community has to offer to perform at The Mix on a charity basis. We organize annual Elvis, Multicultural and Gospel Fests. We also organize an annual, "Community Idol" event every August that is a big hit with the community. Special community events are organized around annual holidays, like Valentine's Day, Halloween, Christmas and New Years. We are currently averaging between 250-300 people.

### **Community Recognition:**

The Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty along with his Minister of Community and Social Services, Sandra Pupatello have applauded our innovative organization and the positive impact it is making in our community and abroad. The Honorable Minister Sandra Pupatello was our special guest on Friday February 24, 2006 at The Mix Community Club. The Mayor's, Premier's and Prime Minister's offices have also contacted us expressing their interest in setting up a visit to one of our upcoming events. Stories and interviews on The Mix Community Club have been featured on City TV, The Toronto Star, The



Metro News, The Scarborough Mirror, The Toronto Sun, The Abilities Magazine and Omni TV's show Agenda with Paul Cook. Media and press interest in the United States has also been expressed.

### **Revolutionary Organization:**

The Mix Community Club is revolutionizing the way people socialize. Most social environments are segregated by age, culture, special interest, music and abilities but The Mix Community Club is breaking down all social barriers for participation. We have taken social integration from theory into practice for individuals with disabilities. We have talked about integration for the disabled community for many years, always expecting them to integrate into their own communities, but we have failed ourselves as a community to socially integrate with them.

Community Integration has already been realized for most individuals that were institutionalized due to their disability, but social integration has not yet been fully developed for them. The Mix Community Club is leading the way in providing community programs and events that are socially integrating the mainstream society with the disabled community. Traditionally people with disabilities have socialized within their own segregated social environments, but now for the first time in our history they are experiencing regular social inclusion, integration and enjoyment with the entire community at The Mix! This is what makes us unique and the first social experience and organization of its kind!

We are the social entertainment equivalent to Variety Village's recreational program for children and adults with disabilities. Our social club is making a positive impact and transforming difference in our entire community by providing many of the socially neglected and forgotten people of our society with social integration, diversity and enjoyment. Seeing ourselves through the eyes of other people and realizing that we could easily find ourselves in their circumstances is creating lasting community compassion and understanding towards those that are physically and/or intellectually disabled. Anyone of us could, through any unforeseen accident or illness, become a person with disabilities, therefore it should be everyone's social/human responsibility to help those that depend on us to provide them with the community social integration that they deserve and that means so much to them. Will you help us bring social awareness and participation towards Social Inclusion and Integration for people with disabilities? The social diversity that we are bringing to our community is evident in the wide range of participants that are a part of our monthly community social events. A representation from almost every group of people in our society is always present at our events.

Come and join this exciting social experience for yourself. Social integration involves the whole community and it begins with you! Bring all your family and friends out to our next dynamic event and experience an exciting, family-friendly, transforming and personally rewarding social experience. Come and socially mix

it up! Join us at The Mix!

There are many organizations that provide recreational, therapeutic, occupational, vocational and residential services/support to people with disabilities but The Mix Community Club is the only organization providing social accessibility through the means of integrated community social entertainment. The Mix Community Club is the unique contribution of people with disabilities towards the social participation and development of the integrated social entertainment scene of the community". For more information, log on to [www.mixcommunityclub.com](http://www.mixcommunityclub.com).

### 17th Annual People in Motion 2007

**People in Motion** is for people with disabilities, seniors with special needs, family members and friends, therapists, home care providers, facility managers, special educators and insurance representatives.

Everyone is welcome to this fun and enlightening event which features mobility aids, adapted vehicles, rehabilitation, home healthcare products, travel and leisure activities, corporate and government services, employment opportunities, computer aids, disability publications, associations and more.

See and compare everything under one roof at one time. **More than 120 exhibits!** If you have attended before, see it again! There are always new exhibitors with exciting new products and it is important to be aware of changes to existing technology.

MARK THE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW AND  
PLAN TO ATTEND PEOPLE IN MOTION 2007

Canada's Largest Exhibition for Disabilities  
More than 120 exhibits including 16 new displays!

**Friday June 2, 2007 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.**  
**Saturday June 3, 2007 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Queen Elizabeth Building, Exhibition Place**

FREE ADMISSION!

- \* Fully accessible building
- \* Attendant Services Available
- \* First Aid On-site
- \* Some exhibitors will have products to purchase on-site!
- \* Complimentary Show Guide
- \* Food and Beverage Area
- \* Ample Parking

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE BRING YOUR RESUME!

For more information call 1-800-745-6555 or fax (705) 538-1988. Visit their website at [www.people-in-motion.com](http://www.people-in-motion.com).

### The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic's 13th Annual "Tribute" Fundraiser

You are invited to a special fundraising evening of music, food and celebration, including hors d'oeuvres, complimentary cocktails, prizes and our famous Silent Auction! Proceeds will support the Clinic's programs and services for women survivors of violence in our community. The event takes place **Wednesday, June 13, 2007** at our new location, the C Lounge, 456 Wellington Street West, doors Open at 6:00 p.m. and the Silent Auction ends at 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$45.00 each. To order tickets, please call the clinic at (416) 323-9149 Ext. 237 or visit them online at [www.schliferclinic.com](http://www.schliferclinic.com).

## CILT NEWS

### CILT's Pandemic Influenza Planning Initiative

*by Kimberly McKennitt, PDN Coordinator*

With spring finally here, we can all breathe a sigh of relief that another flu season has passed! That doesn't necessarily mean we're out of the woods in the months ahead or that, come October, we shouldn't be ready for flu season to rear its head once again. Are you wondering why we're talking about the flu when summer's just around the corner? The answer is simple: there's no better time to prepare for tomorrow than today.

In recent years there has been a lot of talk in the media about an avian flu pandemic. If it does reach Canada, it could have a much greater impact than the SARS crisis of 2004. To prepare for the possibility of a flu pandemic and its potential effects on the social and health services we all rely on, the City of Toronto has been engaged in a number of initiatives to assist organizations in maintaining their essential services.

CILT is one of these organizations. As part of our efforts to be prepared, we are currently working on developing a plan that will strive to ensure that our essential services continue to be delivered with as little interruption to our consumers as possible. Stay tuned for more details in the months ahead.

In the meantime, if you'd like information regarding pandemic influenza, fact sheets, prevention tips and more, visit the City of Toronto's website at [www.toronto.ca/health/pandemicflu/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/health/pandemicflu/index.htm) and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's website at [www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/emu/pan\\_flu/pan\\_flu\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/emu/pan_flu/pan_flu_mn.html).

## NEWS FROM THE PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Bingo & Pizza Night

**On Thursday May 24th, 2007 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.** CILT's having a Pizza and Bingo Night. Come try your luck at winning some nifty prizes. Pizza and beverages will be served. Attendant services will be provided for light support. If you are interested in attending, call Nancy at extension 27 by May 17th.

## CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale:

### Wheelchair Accessible Van

1999 GM 150, RED VAN  
(Kitchener area)

- Wheelchair accessible, fully automated lift system
- New Tires, battery, everything updated.
- Only 76,000 km!
- Automatic tie down locking System

Asking: \$24,000 or best offer

Contact: Gerard at 894-1068 or email: [gerard.fahrenkopf@sympatico.ca](mailto:gerard.fahrenkopf@sympatico.ca)