CILT's Parenting with a Disability Bulletin

Volume 11, Issue 4 August 2009

PDN UPDATE

Peer Support Group for Mothers and Prospective Mothers With a Disability RETURNS

Back by request and popular demand, the Parenting With a Disability Network (PDN) proudly presents the return of our Peer Support Group for moms and prospective moms with a disability.

Our first meeting will take place on Saturday September 19, 2009 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto, 365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902 (Bloor and Sherbourne).

If you would like to attend, please contact Nancy at (416) 599-2458, ext. 227 or by TTY at (416) 599-5077, or email to peers@cilt.ca.

Attendant services will be provided. Childcare will be available but must be requested by September 4, 2009. Please note that this is a scent-free event! We hope to see many of you there.

Exciting News for Access2Entertainment Card Holders

It is an exhilarating time for Access 2 Entertainment card holders because the program is expanding its scope to include a selection of cultural and recreational attractions across Canada. Over the past few years the Access 2 team has received many requests from card holders and their families to extend the benefits of the card beyond movie theatres to other venues and attractions.

We are pleased to announce that starting in August 2009 selected new venues across Canada will be accepting the Access 2 Entertainment card. Using the same card that you use at the movie theatres, you will now be able to bring your attendant in for free to attractions that are brand new to the Access 2 program.

Enjoy live music and theatre at the Harbour Front Centre, or engage your mind at the Royal Ontario Museum. Explore the newly renovated space of the Art Gallery of Ontario or witness in the breath taking views of Toronto's skyline from the CN Tower. Just show your card and no questions asked. For updates and a complete and comprehensive list of new attractions that are accepting the card, please visit www.access2.ca.

In addition to the exciting expansion of the Access 2 Entertainment program for existing card holders, we are also pleased to offer an opportunity for prospective card holders in the Greater Toronto Area. In celebration of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto's 25th year anniversary, and with the support of a generous gift from the Dickson Play Fund, Access 2 Entertainment is offering free Access 2 cards to the first 1000 eligible CILT members and people with disabilities who sign up in the Greater Toronto Area. To view the details please visit www.access2.ca for more information.

Since 2004, Access 2 Entertainment has been committed to expanding recreational opportunities for people with disabilities and helping businesses improve their customer service standards. To date, over 31,000 people have signed up for the Access 2 card. Many of these card holders could attest to the success of the program and its ability to reduce isolation for people with disabilities, promote a healthy lifestyle and facilitate access to a broad range of recreational, leisure, social and entertainment opportunities.

The achievements of the Access 2 Entertainment program have been in large part due to our sustained partnership. Disability organizations and corporate Canada have worked astoundingly well together and have lifted the Access 2 program to new heights.

The disability organizations that originally collaborated to develop the program and continue to advise and promote it include: Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, Canadian Abilities Foundation, Canadian Association of the Deaf, Independent Living Canada, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Canadian Paraplegic Association, Easter Seals Canada, Multiple Sclerosis of Canada and People First Canada.

The Adaptive Technology Resource Centre (ATRC) at the University of Toronto and diversityworX subsequently joined the core group to support the ongoing development and expansion of the program.

The Motion Picture Theatres Association of Canada, led by Cineplex Entertainment, is the program's founding industry partner.

Easter Seals Canada is the managing partner and processes the Access 2 card applications and ensures delivery of the card.

For more information, or to apply for an Access 2 Entertainment Card, please

PARENTS' CORNER

Making Your Baby Laugh Excerpted from "Be Prepared: A Practical Handbook for New Dads

Because babies have little control over their environment, they think it's hysterical to disrupt yours.

Just as your partner is uniquely qualified to breastfeed, you are uniquely qualified to provide comic relief for your baby. That's not saying your partner won't be able to conjure up some baby laughs. But when it comes to understanding the infant sense of humor, you've got the edge, because it's probably not that different from your own. If you've ever enjoyed The Three Stooges, Bugs Bunny, or any Mel Brooks movie, then you've got all the tools you need to create your own baby stand-up routine.

You'll discover your baby's favorite jokes through trial and error, and sometimes completely by accident. A random sneeze may trigger a belly laugh, and an apple rolling off a table may send him over the edge. But if you're ever stuck for material, here are some time-honored gags, broken down into categories that will hopefully leave your baby drooling for more:

Dad as Baby

- Put his/her pacifier in your mouth backwards, try to suck on it, and then spit it out in frustration.
- While he's/she's drinking his/her bottle, try to drink from the other end.
- Crawl around on the floor and have your partner chase you.

The Revenge of Dad

- Pretend to eat the baby like a giant ear of corn.
- Smell his/her feet, make a disgusted face, and push them away, saying "stinky feet!"
- Curl the baby like a barbell, and when he/she gets close to your mouth do a giant raspberry on his/her stomach.

Baby causing Pain to Dad

- Build a block tower, and when he/she knocks it over, cry loudly.
- Lying next to the baby, close your eyes and snore loudly. When he/she pokes you, lift your head up and say, "I'm trying to get some sleep around here!" and lie back down. Repeat.
- Hold a piece of the baby's food close to him/her, and pretend not to notice when he/she takes it from your hand. Then look at your empty hand and say, "Hey, that's my food!"

Dad causing Pain to Dad

- Hit yourself in the head with an empty plastic bottle, and then imitate Homer Simpson's "D'oh!"
- Trip over one of the baby's toys and do a big pratfall onto the couch.
- Hold a water pistol or spray bottle in your hand. Point it at your face, look at the trigger, and say, "I wonder what this does." Squirt yourself and scream.

Parenting Rights

By Savitha Thampi, Law Student Volunteer This article originally appeared in the June issue of ARCH ALERT. Reprinted by permission.

Child protection is an issue of fundamental importance in our society. Unfortunately for parents with disabilities, children are often taken from them in the name of "child protection." Sometimes, the reason for taking children is simply because the parent lives with a disability. Courts, surprisingly, have not often examined whether this practice constitutes discrimination.

In Ontario, child protection is primarily addressed through the operation of the Child and Family Services Act. The paramount purpose of the Act is to promote the best interests, protection, and well being of children. The Supreme Court of Canada stated, in 1994, that the Act is one of the least interventionist child protection regimes in Canada. Since then, however, the interventionist powers granted to child protection organizations – children's aid societies—through the Act have grown. Correspondingly, the application of child protection laws to parents with disabilities has also grown.

Insidious biases are, disturbingly, operative with respect to child protection cases involving parents with disabilities. Parents with disabilities often face early state intervention due to previous involvement, because of their disabilities, with

certain government agencies. Consequently, such parents are targeted more frequently than parents without disabilities in child protection matters.

The practice of predictive or presumptive unfitness also poses a difficult barrier for parents with disabilities to overcome. Judges often make an assessment of parental fitness that is not based upon empirical evidence of unfitness, but on the possibility that a parent may be unfit in the future. This involves a high degree of judicial speculation and subjectivity with the potential for serious inconsistencies.

While the concept of an ideal parent remains undefined, the ideal of middle-class parents without disabilities is often used as a comparator group against which parents with disabilities are judged. This leads to inappropriate standards of parental fitness being applied to parents with disabilities. It is crucial for courts to keep in mind that while the manner in which parents with disabilities perform parental tasks may be different from parents without disabilities, performing tasks differently should not be deemed to constitute unfitness.

There are also social disadvantages, such as income insecurity, that disproportionately affect persons with disabilities and may be viewed to affect their ability to parent. When such social disadvantages are given weight by a court, there is a disproportionate impact upon parents with disabilities.

General social service agencies, which sometimes fail to provide accommodation to parents with disabilities, may also contribute to the problem, because the agencies may bluntly testify that their services cannot assist a certain parent with a disability whose ability to parent is put into question. Such agencies may dismiss the ability of an individual with a disability to parent on the basis of not learning certain parenting skills without ever considering whether, with accommodation in the form of extra time or repeated instruction for example, the parent is able to learn and benefit from the agency's services.

It is essential for courts to be diligent, in cases involving parents with disabilities, to ensure that discriminatory child protection practices are not operative. Courts should be cautious about accepting 'evidence' led by children's aid societies suggestive that because of disability, a person cannot parent.

One recent Canadian case that addressed the problems faced by parents with disabilities was rendered by the Yukon Territorial Court in 2002. In R.A.(Re), the Judge stated that "[i]t is incumbent upon government, community and families of the developmentally handicapped to provide the support and resources to give practical significance to their rights to parent."

Parents with disabilities are clearly subject to discrimination through the application of child protection legislation. All parents should, however, be treated equally and respectfully. Addressing biases and practices that promote the

differential treatment of parents with disabilities will result in the law being applied with fairness, and re-affirm our societal commitment to equality, while maintaining the state protection of children. It is essential for parents with disabilities to ask courts to decide, in future cases, whether the removal of their children constitutes discrimination, contrary to their right to equality under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. With further judicial interpretation of the rights of persons with disabilities to parent, the more likely it will be that children's aid societies and the rest of the child protection system will be modified to work harmoniously with the rights of persons with disabilities.

Child Vitamins and Healthy Eating

This information developed in collaboration with: Canadian Paediatric Society, Sick Kids and Shoppers Drug Mart 2003

Your child's body needs vitamins to work properly. Vitamins cannot be made in the body, so all vitamins must come from what your child eats and drinks.

Should I give my child vitamin supplements?

Breast milk contains enough of every vitamin except vitamin D. If you breast feed your baby, he or she may need extra vitamin D. This is especially important in the winter when babies are not out in the sun as much. Sunlight helps the body make vitamin D. Speak to your doctor or HEALTHWATCH Pharmacist about a good product and dose for your baby.

Commercial baby formulas contain vitamins, including vitamin D.

If you feed your baby formula instead of breast milk, your baby does not need extra vitamin D. Children over age one should eat foods from each of the 4 groups listed in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. If they do, they will not generally need vitamin supplements.

Consider a supplement if your child has a poor appetite or irregular eating habits. Eating only vegetarian meals that do not contain dairy or meat products can be dangerous for young children. Vegetarian eating may not give your child enough iron, calcium or vitamin B12. It may be important to give your child extra vitamin supplements.

When someone takes large amounts of vitamins, it is called megavitamin therapy. There is no scientific proof that this therapy helps any childhood condition. In fact, megavitamins may harm your child. Some vitamin pills, especially those with high amounts of vitamins A, E and D, can be very harmful if taken in too large amounts.

Healthy Eating for Preschool Children: How can I make the most of mealtime?

- If your child is messy while eating or is awkward with forks or spoons, ignore it.
- Promote independence. Your child needs time to practice eating skills.
 Success helps children feel good about themselves.
- Give your toddler a variety of foods at a meal that he or she can eat with their fingers or a spoon.
- If your child eats very quickly, encourage him or her to slow down by talking between spoonfuls.
- Give your child a choice of what to eat. For example, let your child choose between 2 vegetables. Once your child has made a choice, say how pleased you are that he or she is eating a vegetable.

My child is a fussy eater. What should I do?

Many young children go through periods of fussy eating. This is a normal part of growing up. Your child may want to eat a certain food in a certain spot at a certain time and in a certain way. Some children eat what appears to be a small amount of food, but are healthy, active and growing normally. As long as your child is growing well there is generally little cause for concern.

What if a child is not healthy and growing normally?

If your child is a fussy eater and is not healthy and growing normally, take him or her to a doctor. Do not force your child to eat a specific food. However, a hungry child given a choice of foods will more likely eat something. Give your child many healthy and favorite foods to choose from.

How can I develop good eating habits in my child?

Your child needs to develop healthy eating habits for a lifetime at a young age. Mealtime is a good time to teach your child healthy eating habits.

Here are some tips:

- Serve your child well-balanced meals that include a wide variety of nutritional food prepared in a variety of ways.
- Ask your child to help you do the grocery shopping. This may make him or

her more interested in food. If your child is old enough, he or she can also help prepare and serve the food. Never allow young children near hot food or liquids on the stove.

• Never use food as a reward or punishment.

Healthy Eating for Older Children

What does Canada's food guide recommend for healthy eating?

The guide published by Health Canada recommends that children eat a variety of foods from each food group every day. For children age 4 and older, the guide recommends the following:

Grain Products- at least 5 servings per day

Use whole grain and enriched products whenever possible.

Examples of 1 serving of grain products:

1 slice bread 30g coldcereal 34 cup hot cereal

Examples of 2 servings of grain products:

1 bagel, pita or bun 1 cup of pasta or rice

Vegetables and fruit- at least 5 servings per day

Choose dark green and orange vegetables (such as Brussels sprouts, spinach, carrots, squash) and orange fruit (such as cantaloupe and apricots) more often.

Examples of 1 serving of vegetables and fruit:

1 medium size vegetable or fruit (such as carrot, potato, apple, banana)
½ cup fresh, frozen or canned vegetables or fruit (such as frozen broccoli, melon, canned peaches)
1 cup salad
½ cup juice

Milk Products- 2 to 4 servings per day

Choose lower-fat dairy products more often for children over age 4. Children 4 to 9 years should have 2 to 3 servings per day. Youth 10-16 years should have 3 to 4 servings per day.

Examples of 1 serving of milk products:

1 cup milk 50g hard cheese, 2 slices of soft cheese 3/4 cup yogurt

Meat and Alternatives- at least 2 servings per day

Use leaner meats, poultry and fish more often, as well as dried peas, beans and lentils.

Examples of 1 serving of meat or alternatives:

50g meat, poultry or fish 1/3 can fish (such as tuna) 1 egg ½ cup beans 1/3 cup tofu 2 tbsp peanut butter

Need more information?

Ask your doctor or HEALTHWATCH Pharmacist. You can get a copy of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition/pube/foodguid/ . Ask your pharmacist about suitable vitamin preparation for your child.

This information developed in collaboration with: Canadian Paediatric Society, Sick Kids and Shoppers Drug Mart 2003.

GRAND PARENT'S CORNER

We always talk about parents with a disability, but what about grandparents with a disability? Just like parents, grandparents also play a special role in our children's lives. There are very possibly more grandparents out there living with disabilities than there are parents, due to the aging process, and many times disability can be acquired through the aging process.

Oddly enough, many parenting newsletters or magazines focus on parents and hardly ever mention grandparents. This is strange because they were obviously parents first, before they became grandparents. As parents, we sometimes like to feel as if we are quite knowledgeable on the parenting front, when in fact, we, as well as our children have much to learn from our grandparents.

The following article was found at www.A-better-child.org. I thought it was quite enlightening and would like to share it with you at this time. I would also like to devote a regular column in the PDN bulletin just to grandparents.

The Role of a Grandparent

The experience of being a grandparent is unique for everyone. Grandparents often speak of the joy of being with their grandchildren. At the same time, grandchildren appreciate the fact their grandparents love them no matter what. For some grandparents, seeing grandchildren may be difficult due to divorce, remarriage, or geographic distance. Whether you are a grand-parent, stepgrandparent, or a grandparent raising a grandchild, you are an important person in your grandchild's life.

Grandparenting Styles

Although grandparents may express similar feelings about their experiences, the styles in which they grandparent can be different. Each person brings their unique self to the experience of grand parenting. Factors which may influence grand parenting styles include: culture, ethnicity, gender, race, family traditions, family structure, and personal history.

Researchers who study grand parenting have identified various styles. These styles include family historian/living ancestor, the nurturer, the mentor, the role model, the playmate, the wizard, and the hero.

Family Historian/Living Ancestor

As the family historian/living ancestor, grandparents share the stories of the past. These stories may be about relatives, important events, family traditions, the grandparent's own childhood or the grandchild's parent growing up. As the stories of the family are passed on, the grandchild gains a positive image of aging and their place within the family. Grandparents and their stories can be the "glue" which keeps the family together and contributes to family identity.

Nurturer, Mentor, and Role Model

Grandparents who serve as nurturers provide encouragement and support to the family in times of crisis. Whether serving as the babysitter, the chauffeur, the confidante, or the caregiver, the challenge is to find a delicate balance between encouragement and control. Grandparents mentor by teaching, sharing skills and talents, providing advice and listening to their grandchildren. As a role model grandparents provide grandchildren with examples of hard work and family loyalty. You may not realize the influence you have on your grandchildren until you hear them repeat something you said or imitate something you have done. There are many areas in which grandparents serve as nurturers, mentors, and role models to their grandchildren.

Playmate, Wizard, and Hero

The next three styles invoke the tender emotions of grandparents. Many grandparents thrill at the opportunity to be a crony or playmate with their grandchild. They speak with enthusiasm of time spent reading books, playing games, and sharing mutual interests with their grandchildren. Grandparents also play the magical role of wizard. At young ages, grandchildren are mesmerized by tricks and will stare wideeyed asking "how did you do that?" truly believing grandpa pulled a coin out of their ear. What a fun time to be a grandparent!

Finally, grandparents also fill the role of hero. Although you may think of the word "hero" in a different way, grandparents who always listen and who are consistently available to provide support are heroes. Grandparents may be the one a child turns to when they carry a burden too big to share with anyone else or they may serve as an emotional safety net to an older child when making an important decision.

GET INVOLVED

Invitation to Attend an Accessible Transportation Service Consultation

<u>To Accessible Transportation Users and Advocacy Groups</u> for People with Disabilities

Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) Division, Policy and Planning Services under the direction of the Licensing and Standards Committee will be hosting consultation sessions in order to review accessible transportation service in the

City of Toronto. The Committee has requested that MLS report its findings at the November 5, 2009 meeting.

As part of the reporting process, ML&S will be meeting with Torontonians with disabilities that use wheelchair accessible transportation services. We are asking you to refer two of your clients who use accessible transportation or staff who advocate on behalf of people with disabilities to participate in a discussion on how to better meet the transportation needs of people with disabilities. Topics will include:

- challenges in using wheelchair accessible transportation
- availability of wheelchair accessible transportation service
- on demand wheelchair accessible vehicles
- cost of service
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards and ML&S

Time: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Date: September 28, 2009
Place: City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Committee Room 1 (2nd Floor)
RSVP: by September 10, 2009 to Dawn Morgan at (416) 397-5464
or dmorgan1@toronto.ca.

ASL Interpreters and attendant care services will be provided. If other accommodations are needed in order to participate in this session, please indicate the type of accommodation when you RSVP.

First Ever Support Group for Blind Adults Living With Diabetes

The first-ever BALANCE for Blind Adults support group for people living with Diabetes begins on Monday September 24, 2009 at 2:00 PM. It will run for eight to ten weeks, with a two to three hour session each week.

Topics covered are as follows:

- The types of diabetes
- The ideal makeup of a diabetes support team
- Independent control and monitoring of blood sugar using adaptive skills and devices
- Diet and meal planning

- Benefits and adaptation of physical exercise and activities
- Delivery and measurement of insulin, injection guidelines, and oral medication
- Avoiding complications such as Neuropathy, Heart, Blood Vessel and Kidney Disease, Foot or dental Complications and Skin Conditions.

To register for the group, contact Tom Dekker at (416) 236-1796, extension 25, or Email t.dekker@balancefba.org

Help Change Business Practices Toward People with Disabilities!!

CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY

Many people with disabilities face challenges when trying to access everyday goods and services.

Ensuring accessible quality customer service to all is becoming a business and legal imperative.

BALANCE, in association with PSN - Performance Solutions Network and LLR & associates are seeking your opinions. We want to understand the major barriers and issues you experience when attempting to access every day goods and services and quality customer service. We also are seeking your ideas and suggestions on what can be done to make your customer service experiences better.

Your experiences and ideas are important!! We are conducting a Customer Service Survey and Focus Groups to help ensure we have a clear understanding of the issues most important to you. The results including your ideas, uggestions and concerns will be included in a report. This report will be used to inform businesses, organizations and government on how to potentially improve accessibility to their goods and services and how to enhance their Customer Service to ALL.

We need your help! Have your say! To COMPLETE THE SURVEY online go to http://www.psncorp.com http://www.psncorp.comsurvey_howto.html.

OR JOIN US AT A FOCUS GROUP

SEPTEMBER 23rd or 30th, 2009 at 6:00PM at BALANCE for Blind Adults Training Centre

720 Spadina Avenue, Suite 206, Toronto

* A light supper will be provided

To attend one of the FOCUS GROUPS, please contact Deborah at (416) 855-7500 or to complete the survey online go to http://www.psncorp.com/survey_howto.html>

Invitation to Join the Toronto Regional Champion Campaign

"Mayor David Miller invites young women leaders to be mentored by Toronto Women Councillors in the Toronto Regional Champion Campaign".

The Toronto Regional Champion Campaign is a mentoring program connecting young women with Toronto's women councillors. In an effort to increase women's participation in municipal politics, the program aims to inspire and familiarize young women with the job of a municipal councillor. Participants will be matched with a woman councillor to gain insight into the work and experiences of a city councillor as well as the work of the City of Toronto.

Eligibility Criteria:

Are a young woman between 18 and 26 years of age; and - live in Toronto; and - have engaged with organizations such as tenant councils; school councils; youth, advocacy, arts, community, cultural, social or religious organizations; or have done some committee, volunteer or organizing work; and can commit to fulfilling the time requirements between November2009 and May 2010 of 6 daytime hours per month, attend a minimum of 3 daytime meetings and 3 evening seminars over 6 months.

Application deadline: September 14, 2009

Obtain an application form online http://pammcconnell.ca/fcm/toronto_campaign.

How to Apply:

Submit your:

- (1) completed application,
- (2) cover letter and
- (3) resume either by mail or hand

delivery to:

Toronto Regional Champion Campaign City Hall, 100 Queen Street (West), 2nd Floor, Suite A7, Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2 or

E-mail Cassandra Fernandes, Diversity Management and Community Engagement Consultant, City of Toronto at cfernan1@toronto.ca or

Fax: 416 696-3645 with the heading "Regional Champion".

WHAT'S NEW AT CILT?

CILT's Open House and Annual General Meeting

This year's Annual General Meeting is taking place on Thursday September 24, 2009 following an open house, scheduled from 3-5 p.m. The AGM beginS at 5:30pm to 8:00 p.m. atCILT's new location, 365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902, (Bloor & Sherbourne). This year's AGM will be an extra special event, as we will be celebrating the official opening of our new location as well as the 25th anniversary of CILT.

Watch your mailboxes for formal invitations!

Consumer Questionnaire

You should have received a Consumer Questionnaire in the mail. We hope that you were able to take some time to provide us with your feedback around program planning and CILT's services. We are always looking for input!

Fall Peer Support Program Line-up

All events take place at:
Centre for Independent Living in Toronto
365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902 (Bloor & Sherbourne)
(416) 599-2458, ext. 227, by
TTY at (416) 599-5077 or email to peers@cilt.ca

September 2009:

BINGO NIGHT:

Thursday September 17, 2009 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm Refreshments and attendant services provided. RSVP by September 10, 2009.

COFFEE CLUB:

Wednesday September 30, 2009 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm Refreshments and attendant services provided. RSVP by September 23, 2009.

October 2009:

COFFEE CLUB:

Tuesday October 13, 2009 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm Refreshments and attendant services provided. RSVP by October 6, 2009.

MOVIE NIGHT:

Tuesday October 27, 2009 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm Refreshments and attendant services provided. RSVP by October 20, 2009.

COST: \$2.00

MOVIE: 'Mall Cop", Starring Kevin James

November 2009:

COFFEE CLUB:

Tuesday November 10, 2009 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm Refreshments and attendant services provided. RSVP by November 3, 2009.

BINGO NIGHT:

Tuesday November 24, 2009 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Refreshments and attendant services provided. RSVP by November 17, 2009.

PARENTING WITH A DISABILITY BULLETIN is a publication of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) Inc. To become a member of the Parenting with a Disability Network (PDN) or to submit an article to the PARENTING BULLETIN, contact CILT at:

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Tel: 416-599-2458, x227

Fax: 416-599-3555 TTY: 416-599-5077 E-mail: pdn@cilt.ca Website: www.cilt.ca

The PARENTING BULLETIN is also available in large print, on audiotape or by e-mail.

Articles on products, agencies or services are for information only and are not meant as endorsements.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and may not reflect the views of CILT.

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