



The Kamloops Self-Advocate: A Newsletter for People with Diverse Abilities

January 2015

Issue #16

CELEBRATE OF LIFE

For some who don't know, it's "Celebration of Life" month. It's kind of like new beginnings, but without all the hard work for the new year. We just found out that this month exists; it happens every January.

Celebration of Life month is to remind us that life isn't all about hard work or being perfect, like trying to quit smoking. It's to celebrate our life and everything it has to offer. It's important to not let life pass you by. Life can be hard sometimes, but instead of dwelling on that celebrate everything life has to offer. Take a vacation when needed. It can be hard to celebrate life when you are sick, so celebrate that you have support and others to care for you. Have your favorite soup or take a

bubble bath. Celebrate social inclusion for people with diverse abilities. You can celebrate with cake or watch a movie with friends. Social inclusion can be part of life.

We often have an unfortunate tendency to forget we are alive. You can celebrate in lots of different ways as you can see. Remember don't let life pass you by. We need to celebrate life all the time not just on special occasions or at funerals. Celebrate everything life has to offer all people.

We hope everyone has a great new year from the Kamloops Self-Advocate newsletter team.

IN THIS ISSUE

Feature Articles

Recipe

Blazer Report

Quotes

Upcoming Events

Contact us at:

thekamloopsselfadvocate@yahoo.com

743 Nicola St., Rear., Kamloops, BC, V2C 6G4

Celebration of Life and Diversity

By Lisa Coriale

Our society is made up of a wide variety of people, people of different cultures, ethnic backgrounds, religions and abilities. Celebrating life could be a series of snapshots that can remain for a moment in time or last a lifetime. Every moment should be treasured and celebrated no matter how long it lasts. People with diverse abilities have the right and deserve to celebrate life as much as anyone else. The world is made up of a montage of people with different abilities. We all have various ways of expressing ourselves.

I have had many opportunities to celebrate life. As I remember some of these moments, maybe some of yours will come to mind. I celebrate life when my little nieces and nephews climb onto my chair and into my lap to give me a hug or kiss, when I have coffee with a family member or a group of friends and when I write or read in my room. My bigger celebrations include wheeling across the stage to receive my degrees and doing a book signing for my recently published children's book.

Other ways of celebrating could be volunteering somewhere in the community and helping someone in need. Receiving a kiss from the people you love may be just what you need after a difficult day. Celebrating life can

be made up of small or large feats; it does not matter. I believe we must attempt to live our lives to the fullest no matter our backgrounds and abilities. There are many different ways to celebrate life. Sometimes making it through a routine day that is physically, mentally and emotionally demanding is something worth celebrating. These are moments that are pieced together as a beautiful mosaic for people with diverse abilities.



Krystian's Corner

Social inclusion to me is being with a wide range of friends. Friends are important for our quality of life.

I am asking CLBC to get a petition and asking the editorial board for Self Advocate Net website about a friendship program and social inclusion. The friendship program is to enhance the lives of people with developmental and mental disabilities to have friends with or without disabilities, making friends with a range of people, taking part in special events and much more.

That's social inclusion to me. People get exposure by being our friends and see behind a diagnosis. They can learn about sensitivity at the same time and reduce stigma and have fun.

BENEFITS OF INCLUSION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act states "30 years of educational research has demonstrated that students with disabilities learn more when they are included in general education classes than when they are taught in special education classes."

Students with disabilities, educated in general education classrooms, are more likely than their peers who are educated in separate classrooms to:

- Acquire reading and math skills
- Graduate from high school
- Go on to post-secondary education
- Have better communication skills
- Obtain meaningful employment,
- Have friends and meaningful social relationships
- Be welcomed and contributing members of their communities.

Let our New Year's resolution be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word.

~ Goran Persson



Joking Around

What animal keeps the best time?
A watch dog!

What dog loves to take bubble
baths?
A shampoodle!

What type of markets do dogs
avoid?
Flea markets!

What happens when it rains cats
and dogs?
You might step in a poodle!

What lights up a soccer stadium?
A soccer match!

What's big, scary, and has three
wheels?
A monster riding a tricycle!

When is a baby good at
basketball?
When it's dribbling!

What is harder to catch the faster
you run?
Your breath!

*Your success and
happiness lies in you.
Resolve to keep happy,
and your joy and you shall
form an invincible host
against difficulties.*

~ Helen Keller

What is Self Advocate Net?

Self Advocate Net is a website which belongs to self-advocates in B.C. They have articles on what self-advocates want to see published. They have an editorial board to help develop their website and to approve story articles they want published each month. People can write articles for Self Advocate Net and there is a submit story idea box. The website is:

selfadvocatenet.com.

Self-Advocate Net is a good way to get what we want done and to advocate for change in ways that are beneficial. The purpose is to get ideas, priorities and points of view of people with diverse abilities. As well, it is a way to share the goals and dreams of people with diverse abilities, resources, information, and opportunities for people with diverse abilities.

Self-advocates can post what they are doing across BC and post their leadership and voice. There are stories on hope, inspiration and successes on the website as well. Self-advocates can give advice regarding supports and services from agencies and government, for example, getting programs to have inclusive programs where anyone can participate and be equal members of the community. Also, it is a way to discuss more of the programs we want CLBC to offer.



Sexuality and Disability Myths and Facts

Sexuality isn't something we talk about a lot, but it is a natural and normal part of being human. We hope you will find this information interesting. It was taken from: http://sexuality.about.com/od/disability/p/disability_sex1.htm

There are many common myths about sexuality and disability. Most start with the biggest myth of all, which is that people with disabilities are all the same, and that you can talk about them as one single group. This is completely false. There is no one thing that can be said about people living with disabilities, they don't all have the same experience or the same perspective. But many people with disabilities are treated the same by the non-disabled world. And it is these attitudes, the physical, emotional, and psychological barriers that are the greatest obstacle to full sexual expression.

Myth: People with disabilities and chronic illnesses are not sexual:

Fact: All humans are sexual, regardless of how we express our sexuality. People with disabilities are denied sexual rights in part to keep them outside of mainstream society, and probably in part

because people with disabilities are treated as if they are children, and children are also excluded from having any sexual rights. People living with disabilities are as sexual and express their sexuality in ways as diverse as everyone else, although we don't get to see this as much because mainstream culture only shows us one image of sexual expression.

Myth: People with disabilities and chronic illnesses are not desirable:

Fact: What turns us on sexually is unique to each individual. We are raised to think that sex is for the young and beautiful, that if you don't resemble a twenty-three-year-old supermodel, no one will want you or if you can't produce multiple G-spot orgasms on cue or perform like a stud, you're not worth going to bed with. But none of us meet these standards, and desire is enflamed by an unpredictable mix of things (looks, personality, values, timing, etc). We only see the supermodel scenario so over time we come to believe it, and question whether anyone would ever find us attractive or worth loving.

Myth: There is a right way and a wrong way to have sex:

Fact: We are raised being told many lies about sex and this is the biggest one. The truth is there are no rules as to what sex is (although I'd like to suggest the fact that it be between consenting adults is a good simple one). Sex doesn't have to look like, sound like, or smell like anything other than that which is turning the people on who are involved. Some people say sex should be

spontaneous, and that can be hard if you have a disability. But the fact is that we all plan for sex more or less.

Myth: People with disabilities and chronic conditions can't have "real" sex:

Fact: It follows that if there's a right way to have sex, and you can't have it, then you can't have real sex. It's true that not all of us can run down the beach, roll in the sand with music swelling in the background, and have a sexual romp without ever mussing our hair. It's also true that not all of us want to do that. Most of us have awkward uncomfortable sex, most of us masturbate much more than we have sex with other people, and most of us don't talk about it. So we pretend that there's a real kind of sex, and if you don't look the part, you can't play the game. This is simply false.

Myth: People with disabilities are a bad choice for romantic partners:

Fact: Relationships are hard and full of compromise, and a good relationship involves equal compromise and work from the people in it. People who partner with people with disabilities are often told how noble they are, as if being non-disabled makes you a great catch, and having a disability makes you nothing but a liability. The fact is that living with a disability doesn't mean you can contribute less to a relationship. You may do less of the heavy lifting, but how important is that in a relationship? Also, if you live long enough, you will eventually be in a relationship with someone with a disability.

Myth: Disabled people have more important things than sex to worry about:

Fact: We all value sex differently, and for some people it's the most important thing in their life. If you live with a disability or chronic illness you will likely have people around you telling you that you've got more important things to deal with, that sex is a luxury you can't afford. This is tied in with the myth that people with disabilities are childlike and need to be told how to prioritize their lives. This attitude is held by many non-disabled people, and even some disabled activists claim that talking about interpersonal issues and disability is bad because it fragments the cause.

Myth: People with disabilities are not sexually adventurous:

Fact: Living with a disability does not necessarily impact your sexual tastes or choices (even though it can impact who you get to have sex with). It is assumed that people with disabilities are sexually passive and non-initiators. People don't believe that someone who uses a wheelchair might want to be tied up and spanked, or that a man with no legs gets off dressing up as a ballerina. These are false assumptions, but they fit in with the general myth that all anyone wants is to be just like everyone else, so if you're different already, surely you must want to be sexually conservative, right? Wrong!

Myth: People in institutions shouldn't have sex:

Fact: One of the greatest barriers to developing a positive sexuality is a lack of privacy. This is nowhere more evident than in institutions like rehab hospitals, hospices, group homes, and nursing homes. Most institutions systematically deny residents the right to be sexual. No locks on doors, no privacy, the right of staff to treat people as objects to be carted around, talked about and controlled, are just a few of the ways that institutions make it clear that sexuality is not acceptable. Sexual rights are human rights, and people living in institutions have the right to be sexual on their own terms.

Myth: Sex is private

Fact: If you use attendant services, live in an institution, or aren't able to monitor your own body responses, privacy is a very different thing. We're told that sex is a private thing, but one of the most common sexual fantasies is about having sex in a public place. Having privacy can make having sex easier, but if we aren't able to lock our doors or we have to request private time, we still have the right to be sexual, and to expect those around us to facilitate that by giving us as much privacy as we ask for.

Myth: People with disabilities don't get sexually assaulted.

Fact: If you aren't seen as sexually desirable in our culture, you won't get sexually assaulted, right? Wrong. People with physical disabilities are far more likely to be victims of sexual assault, statistics suggest between 2 to 10 times more likely. This abuse

ranges from pervasive power abuses by medical and rehabilitation staff to rape and other forms of sexual assault, forced confinement, physical abuse, and more. Supports for disclosure of the abuse, legal action, and counseling are scarce for people with disabilities. This is especially true in institutions.

Myth: People with disabilities don't need sex education.

Fact: We're all sexual, and we all need education. Sexual ignorance is an enormous obstacle for all of us when trying to figure ourselves out sexually. Our situation is made worse when we are systematically denied access to the little bit of sex education most people get. Some people say that the reason non-disabled people deny people with disabilities access to sex education is because they believe that it will encourage them to want sex, and that will open up a can of worms.



Including Samuel

Dan Habib made a movie, Including Samuel, about his experience with his son, Samuel. Krystian contacted Mr. Habib to find out more and this is what he found out. You

What was your reason behind making this film?

Four years ago, I sat at my son Samuel's hospital bedside at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center as he lay in a medically

induced coma. He was four years old and had developed pneumonia from complications following surgery. Samuel's neurologist, Dr. James Filiano, encouraged me to be a photojournalist in the midst of my fear. 'You should document this,' he said.

I began working on Including Samuel. The 58-minute documentary film that was released nationally this fall. Samuel's life is the central thread through the film, and I want viewers to learn a lot about him beyond the fact that he has a disability. He wrestles with his brother. He loves t-ball. He wants to be an astronaut when he grows up.

Making this film helped me face my fears and biases head-on, both as a director and as a father. The film became my outlet for processing this new reality in our lives. As a father, I wanted to show the general public why I felt so strongly that inclusion is the most important factor to giving Samuel and other children with disabilities the opportunity for a happy and fulfilling life. As a journalist, I didn't want to sugarcoat the issue. I wanted the film to be as complex as the reality of successful inclusion.

In the film, inclusion is handled differently by everyone who encounters it. Do you think this is a good thing, or should the process be more standardized?

Today, inclusion is still happening inconsistently throughout the country. It varies state-to-state, town-to-town and classroom-to-classroom. Joe Petner of the

Haggerty School (featured in the film) says that we should not have to reinvent inclusion every time we try it; that for inclusion to be successful, it has to be a transferable model, not dependent on extraordinary leadership or funding. He says the most important factor in making inclusion work well is a community's commitment to the spirit of inclusion; the details will fall into place if that overall commitment is there. I do think leadership at the administrative level is critical to making sure teachers have the training and planning time they need to be successful.

How has putting this movie out changed you and your family's life?

I asked a lot of my family by making this film, especially my wife, Betsy. She is a much more private person than I am, and it is not her nature to be so public about our private life. But she believes as deeply in inclusion as I do, so she supported the mission of the film. She is a professional fundraiser and helped me raise money for the film, and she was involved in decisions every step along the way.

Early on in the filmmaking process, I told the family that they would have veto-power over the content of the film. So when it came time to review the rough cut, there were parts that I cut either because Betsy, Isaiah or Samuel didn't feel comfortable with it, or one of them felt it didn't accurately reflect their feelings. I'm glad it was a team effort - that has made the film's success a lot more gratifying for all of us,

because it truly reflects all of our feelings and creative ideas.

Do you think that after viewing this film people will view people with disabilities differently?

Yes, I think the film will affect the way people see disability. People with disabilities have always existed - but in the past they were marginalized much more than now. We still have a long way to go, but I think people understand more and more that people with disabilities are a part of the diversity of humankind, just like people of different ethnicities, sexual orientations, etc.

I have no problem with Samuel using a wheelchair for the rest of his life. He can have an incredibly happy and fulfilling life, as long as society continues to evolve and fully include people with disabilities in all aspects of our community.

To be continued...in February, Mr. Habib will talk more about inclusion.

To find out more about the movie or to order a copy, you can go here:
<http://www.includingsamuel.com/home.aspx>

Every time you tear a leaf off a calendar, you present a new place for new ideas and progress.

~ Charles Kettering



Thoughts from Andrew on Accessibility

Accessibility means a lot of different things to different people. In my opinion, accessibility means that all people with diverse abilities are able to participate and be included in the same activities and opportunities as anyone else. For people with certain abilities, that could mean physical accessibility for their walkers, wheelchairs and canes for access to establishments or events; for others, that may mean proper lighting, creative, polite, approachable and mindful staff or fellow participants. For others, accessibility may mean something else such as access to their medical records.

It's rewarding to be able to participate and enjoy all aspects of an experience while maintaining independence. As anyone can

imagine, wanting to be a part of something and being unable to contribute can leave a person feeling bummed out. It's always nice when people get creative and come up with new ways to include everyone.

While Kamloops has many inclusive opportunities right now, my hope is that in the near future accessibility and inclusive opportunities keep growing in our community for everyone.



Make Your Own Chicken Nuggets

Chicken is one of Krystian's favourite foods and he found this recipe on the Kraft recipe site.

What You Need:

- 1-1/2 lb. Boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-1/2 to 2-inch pieces
- 1 pkt. SHAKE 'N BAKE Chicken Coating Mix
- 3/4 cup KRAFT Original Barbecue Sauce

Make It:

HEAT oven to 400°F.

MOISTEN chicken with water; shake off excess water.

ADD 3 or 4 chicken pieces at a time to coating mix in shaker bag; shake to evenly coat. Place chicken in 15x10x1-inch pan. Discard any remaining coating mix.

BAKE chicken 15 min. or until done (juice will run clear). Serve with barbecue sauce.

Substitutions:

To save on costs, you can substitute chicken thighs for chicken breasts.

Serve with other great-tasting dipping sauce options, such as Catalina dressing or salsa.

For more information or recipe ideas, you can check out the web-site:

<http://www.kraftrecipes.com/recipes/shake-n-bake-chicken-nuggets-56004.aspx>



Options & Opportunities

Krystian got in touch with Options and Opportunities to ask more about their programs. Here is what they had to say:

How do people who don't have disabilities respect our differences at Options and Opportunities on Thursdays for arts and crafts?

Our weekly art drop-ins (Thursdays at 10am) are open to all, as our workshops host those living with and without disabilities. If you're open to expressing yourself creatively you are welcome to join each week. "Disability" is incidental here.

How do you invite people from the community to take part?

We initially hosted some outreach workshops at Kamloops Art Gallery and that really got the ball rolling. After that, word-of-mouth has led to more and more people attending each week from various organizations beyond ICS, including Thompson Community Services and Inclusion Kamloops.

What do they like about being part of Options?

Our participants enjoy our wide range of programming that obviously includes a huge arts-based component, as well as community outreach, wellness-oriented activities and much, much more.

What suggestions for service providers do you have for community inclusion and client driven programs and support?

Programming is purely client-driven. Whatever we have on our monthly calendar is reflective of ongoing participant direction. Our programming is consistently diverse and constantly changing.

Why is it beneficial to be included in the community without disabilities?

"Disabilities" don't define us as people. They can be a part of who we are, but human beings are not so one-dimensional. They are multi-faceted.

What should possibly be done to make this more a reality across BC?

At O&O, we are constantly exploring lasting community

connections in order to build relationships as well as educate people.

What do people in the community without disabilities need to know about people with disabilities?

We're the same and we're different - just like you!

What do your clients like about being included in the community without disabilities?

We appreciate inclusivity and a diverse society - how boring would life be if we were all exactly the same?!

What do your clients like about your program?

Ask them! Thursdays are a great day to do that at our weekly art drop-ins. We're located behind Kamloops' Old Courthouse on the corner of 1st Ave. and Seymore in the heart of downtown. For more info call us at 250-372-3710.



Jenna's Blazer Report

In December, we had our teddy bear night and it was real success. There were tons of bears out on the ice. After teddy bear night, they went to the hospital and other organizations to deliver the stuffed animals.

We had a Booster Club Christmas dinner where the boys (Blazers) came and had dinner, then they went and sat on Santa's knee to get a present.

Upcoming Events

Let us know if there are community events that

people might want to hear about!

January at the Big Little Science Centre – Special events happen on many Saturdays at the centre. Check out their web-site for upcoming events.

Jan. 3rd – Apr. 18th Indoor Farmers Market at Sahali Centre Mall Open the 1st & 3rd Saturday from Jan 3 - April 18. Farm produce, baked goods, arts, crafts and more.

Jan. 11th North Shore Community Centre Dinner

Monthly community dinner open to all adults every second Sunday of the month at 5:00pm. In January, the dinner local musical talent. Tickets must be purchased in advance.

Jan. 12th SUSA Meeting at Desert Gardens – Come check out the self-advocacy group.

Jan. 23rd, Family Literacy Night at Sahali Mall 6-7:30 p.m.

Community Futures Thompson Country
Great ideas can be tomorrow's new businesses. If you have an idea, CONTACT US TODAY!
#230-301 Victoria ST. Kamloops, BC, V2C 2A3
T: 250-828-8772 or 1-877-335-2950
www.communityfutures.net info@communityfutures.net



Thompson Community Services

TCS strives to enrich the quality of life for each individual we support.

Telephone: 250-828-1508
Website: www.thompsoncommunityservices.com

