



OPTIONS NEWSLETTER

Fall 2008

Hitting the Mark

311A-393 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3B 3H6
PH: 947-0194 (TTY)
Toll F: 1-800-6633043
FAX: 943-6625
Email: thecentre@ilrc.mb.ca
Web: www.ilrc.mb.ca

Chairperson

Mel Graham

Vice -Chairperson

David Kehler

Treasurer

Grant Young

Secretary

Zephania Matanga

Member-at-Large

Larry Crouse

Directors

Vic Stone

Judith Rossowski

Ken Shachtay

David Parker

Executive Director

John Young



Created/Edited through
the ILRC Options Newsletter
Committee The content of this
newsletter is not necessarily a

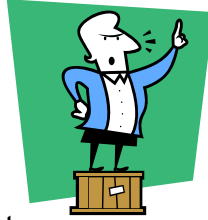
reflection of ILRC alone; it is a
reflection of our consumer population.

in Independent Living

Options – Fall 2008

From the Soap Box

A John Young Perspective



Hitting the mark in Independent Living is one essential goal this entire community is constantly seeking to attain. How do we hit the target and what are the consequences if we miss?

The question of targets and remaining 'on target' is not new to the non-profit community. Every agency must provide a series of deliverables or outputs in order to meet the satisfaction of funders and the persons receiving the end product of programs and services. Staying in *range* of the metaphorical target, however, is another matter that demands focus and attention. After all, we won't hit anything if we stray too far from the pulse of community activity.

A non profit must keep its ear to the ground and be fully aware of the developments in the community that might affect the program 'arrow' or shot. Maintaining ILRC's success requires a delicate balance of competent and dedicated staff and a gathering of information and supports from partner service providers and government. Fundamental awareness of trends and developments is key to ensuring a community group is equipped to deliver.

Funders and bureaucracies must also strive to stay on the mark. Here are some examples of when their arrows fly true: improvements to accountability at the upper echelons of management and government recognition of innovative programs like Personal Attendant Community Education and Equal Access to Independence, programs that allow the community to generate momentum into the future.

Hitting goals is not an art performed once; it must be done repeatedly, quite often for each individual program in play. Doing so requires much more than a well-constructed compound bow or a proficient darts player. The reality is any agency can take a shot; however, very few can hit the board and fewer still can replicate the feat on a daily basis.



Board Corner

By Mel Graham

When it comes to making mistakes or missing the mark, it can sometimes make a difference *who* you happen to be. A minimum-wage earner can get fired on the spot by her manager for giving a Timbit to a crying toddler. Meanwhile just down the road, George W. goes on his merry way in spite of an – oops! – erroneous invasion of a country that didn't have weapons of mass destruction after all (what's a few hundred thousand lives here or there; talk about missing the mark). Maybe it's simpler than that: who in authority gets to define what's a mistake in the first place?

I remember a French language teacher telling me how much she enjoyed teaching *musicians* because they didn't care about getting their pronunciation corrected when they got it wrong. Musicians tend to transfer their technique to similarly creative activities like language-learning. They learn to step outside of themselves, into the moment, and forget about hard-centred patterns and rhythms. Basically, they just *play*.

True, we wouldn't have a recognizably adult world for long if we were all to abandon things like goal-setting and mistake-avoidance. We can learn much from the spontaneity of children at play – kids aren't concerned about screwing up. They mimic, they do the task as best they can and they have fun. This doesn't often work in the adult world, but there is some value to it.

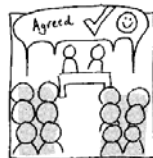
Options – Fall 2008

We must recognize that self-consciousness, the undue fear of failure, toeing the line, and the terror of making a mistake can really hold us back. As we negotiate an incredibly complex society, we have to find and walk that *fine line* that, somehow, manages to combine responsibility and resolve with joyousness, with genuine authenticity. All converts to IL know that you have no chance of getting anywhere unless you're autonomous, unless you can truly think independently. Traditional professionals may condemn you to unhappiness and frustration; you'll never live up to their notions of perfection no matter how hard you try. But you will be far greater a person if you *do* try, and don't get so caught up with what might happen if it doesn't work out as you planned.

Decades ago, blind folks undergoing the "rehabilitation process" were told that if they were at a street corner and someone offered to take them across, they should accept the offer even if they didn't want to go in that direction. That may have had some public relations value for charitable agencies; it may have even factored into the prevalent idea at the time that all blind people were saintly. In reality, though, it did very little for the self-image of the blind people so advised. There was a lot of resentment, too.

Now if you're looking for mistakes – there you have a real loo-loo!

Dear Advocacy



When I visualize this Options theme "Hitting the mark in IL", I see a dart hitting a bull's eye, or a hammer hitting a nail. It makes me think of a process that is clear and fast. One of the best lessons I have learned in Individual Advocacy is that sometimes the target is not quite clear, and the course of action not always fast. But something we've all experienced is that feeling of knowing something isn't right, and that something needs to be done about it. For

over three years I have been working with a consumer, a woman with Dystonia who lost her drivers license not because of an inability to operate a car, but because of strong perceptions that people who use wheelchairs should not be able to drive. This issue became a very tangled web of miscommunication and discrimination which has left this consumer unable to drive out to Southern Manitoba to visit her family. Through this whole scenario, her doctor has been in complete support of her ability to drive, and in a world that seems to put so much value on Doctors' opinions, we were blown away that this information seemed to make no difference to the decision makers involved. Over the past three years, we have tried to get support from various lawyers, as well as government bodies who were responsible for over-looking such matters, seemingly with no success. Despite all the barriers and closed doors, she remained a remarkably strong and determined woman who decided to listen to the feeling in her gut that told her to keep perusing what she knew was right. Although this issue is not over, we have recently been successful in finding a lawyer who not only specializes in disability issues, but has an intimate knowledge of the Drivers Licensing system!! The point I'm trying to make is: the target is not always clear, and the path is not always straight. But with strength, determination, creativity and support, you will accomplish more by persevering and redirecting every time you hit a roadblock, than you will by giving up. Thank you to this consumer who has inspired me throughout our time working together!

Empathic Modeling

By Marcel Renard

I helped Joanne with 2 sessions called Empathic Role-Modeling in 2008. We begin at the open space in ILRC. 4 or 5 persons are each handed a White Cane then they are blind-folded. I give them a few tips on how to use the White Cane. They have to find the front washroom by the

Options – Fall 2008

front desk. Being blind folded, they have to use their ears, so I walk in front of them carrying a orientation device for them to follow the sound. When they get to the washroom, they have to wash and dry their hands, and then make their way back to the open space. Still blind-folded, they are shown different odd small gadgets for identification, including getting correct change out of a change purse. I also did 2 sessions with PACE (Personal Attendant Community Education.) I did the Adaptive items such as a Laptop with a screen reader also a scanner with speech and OCR which stands for optical character recognition and other items such as a talking watch, a money identifier, etc. Both programs are starting up again in September 2008.

“One Small Step for Man... “

By Doug Lockhart

Have you ever been to the moon? How about Brandon? It wasn't long ago that we thought landing on the moon was a pipe dream. For many people with disabilities in Brandon, they probably have felt that the opportunities for independence and control over daily choices and decisions were just wishful thinking as well. Today people with disabilities in Brandon and area have “lift off” with a new IL Centre acting as a vehicle for change as we explore new opportunities with the appropriate resources and support.

Over the last few months, ILRC has taken the time to poll the community through interviews, surveys and 1-1 conversations to get a sense of what is needed in Brandon and the results are in. The most common gaps tend to be: housing and the staff resources to support people to live independently; along with transportation; disability awareness; advocacy and the opportunity to have a central point of access for information and referral.

ILRC brings 24 years of experience and is prepared to unite and develop the disability community in Brandon to ensure people with disabilities have the opportunity to take control over the issues they face daily. An example of our presence can be illustrated through our current involvement in the Self and Family Managed Care program. One Family Manager stated, “Family Managed Care is much more suited to my Dad and Mom’s needs and hiring people for what they are actually needed for is working out better than we could have hoped.” Other Brandon community members are more interested in the potential ILRC offers. One mother stated, “What happens to my daughter when I can no longer assist her with everyday situations. Who will care for her?”

“They (people with disabilities living in Brandon) need reliable, steady, care assistance and ILRC would certainly provide that.” *Brandon resident*

“The development of an IL Centre in Brandon could expand services for people with disabilities to include: housing, transportation, employment and other social services. As Mayor of Brandon, I wish to convey my support to locate an Independent Living Resource Centre in Brandon.” *Mayor Dave Burgess*

“I am pleased to support the services implicit in an ILRC in Brandon supporting people with disabilities to live independently and ensure full participation in their communities”. *Drew Caldwell MLA Brandon East*

“The ILRC would be a great opportunity to address the needs of disabled people in Brandon through numerous positive programs that would be provided, such as self advocacy, DART and Kids on the Block.” *Shawn Leiman, Principle of Valleyview School*

Just as with the first landing on the moon, there is a need to be filled with a willingness to succeed and that is a great first step for the

Options – Fall 2008

people of Brandon who are on their way to making these dreams come true.

Networking

By Heidi Hellsten

Most of us are not born *schmoozers*. Practice and preparation will help you develop the skills it takes to be effective at an information session, job opportunity, career fair or other networking opportunities. As difficult as it may feel at first, the ability to meet and make a positive impression on people is very important to ensure that you obtain the information to achieve your ultimate goal. Here are just a few tips on the “How to’s” of Networking.

- Start with a purpose. Make sure that you know why you are attending any networking function and what you want to get out of the event.
- If you are provided with a name tag, be sure to wear it on the right side to provide an easy sight-line to your name when shaking hands.
- Have an effective hand shake – you have probably been on the receiving end of at least one hand shake that is a “bone-crusher” and one that is like a “limp fish!” Practice your handshake to make sure it is firm.
- Introduce yourself! Your introduction should be no more than 15-20 seconds long. Tell the person who you are, if you represent an organization and if possibly, why you’re attending.
- A great way to introduce yourself is by saying your first name twice and then your surname. (I’m Heidi. (pause) Heidi Hellsten) this gives people time to catch your name.
- If you have a business card, offer a card and ask the other person for one of his or hers. The best time to do this is when

you leave one another. This is a great way to close the conversation.

- Once the event is over, your networking doesn’t stop! Make sure to follow up with the people you have made contact with. Keep in contact, share information and offer to assist them in any way you can.
- Send a thank you note acknowledging the contact that you have made and how important it is to you.

Networking can be highly rewarding. Remember the most important part is that you treat networking as an exchange of ideas, information and experience. Be comfortable in sharing your talents, experiences, and ideas and most important: HAVE FUN!

Patience for Patients

By Margita Tobolkova

Have you ever been hospitalized? I have spent the last four months as a resident of a North End hospital. For the right reasons, mind you, I did get lots of help, most of the staff were kind to me and others. Luckily, I am on my way to be released to home care. At last I will be able to cook meals, watch my favorite movies on tapes, play on the computer and be with my dog.

While here, I was able to get everyone, staff and residents enthused about the Kids on the Block show. I hope they can come and do a performance while I am still here.

I was able to watch pigeons and robins feeding and cleaning their young ones’ feathers. Although I am not a bird watcher, it was quite fascinating to observe. Now the birds are strong enough to fly to freedom, just as I will be soon.

I have picked up new names since I’ve been here, such as “mama”, “baba” or “Sweetie” that reminds me of my age.

Options – Fall 2008

I watched the Olympic games on a hospitality network TV, and it cost \$ 10.00 per day. “Highway Robbery”, I say ...

All in all, I look at this experience with mixed feelings. On one hand, I was helped but on the other there was a lot of frustration, occasional depression and plenty of hateful medicine. Now I just look forward to going home.

But I am grateful to live in a country that looks so well after sick people like me. Thanks a million for the loving care I have received.

I hope your spring and summer was more successful.

VolunteeringWhat are the Benefits?

By Heidi Hellsten

You may think of volunteer work as a waste of time, or something that people who don't have to be concerned about income do to fill their time. Volunteer work is for people who don't need money or who are bored, right? Wrong. Volunteer work is not just for people wanting to fill their time, it can also be a great way to enhance your resume, help your community and make you feel good about yourself.

Volunteer work helps you to see that you are needed and important and that you can make a difference in the community. When you volunteer, an organization depends on you and you can gain a new sense of purpose and well-being.

If you are looking for a new job and wish to upgrade your skills, volunteering may be just the way to do this! You can find volunteer work in just about any area and it gives you experience that prospective employers will not be able to overlook. Volunteering shows that you are ambitious and enthusiastic. It also shows that

you take your work seriously and are interested in keeping your skills up to date. It is important to note that when you volunteer for a community organization, you may also be able to use that organization as a reference in obtaining a job.

Volunteering offers incredible networking opportunities. Volunteering allows you to meet new people and make possible employment connections. Not only can you develop life long personal and professional relationships, you can also become aware of possible job openings.

Volunteering offers opportunities to practice skills in a safe and risk free environment.

Volunteering is a great way to experiment, practice and try out new techniques and skills. It offers you the opportunity to build your self-confidence through practice.

If you are looking to develop your skills or are looking for opportunities to contribute to the community and the ILRC, please call Heidi to make an appointment to discuss the many opportunities that are available at (204) 947-0194.

“There is nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer”

New Faces, New Places



By: Lori Ross

LRC would like to welcome the following new team members to the Centre:

Thandi Undie is a Social Work student from the University of Manitoba who will be doing her placement with Qu'Appelle Housing starting in September. She has been filling in for Melody

Options – Fall 2008

Jones as the new IL Community Living Consultant.

Kelly Dagdick is our new PACE IL consultant. Kelly was previously employed by WRHA in Health Care for 30 years. Her vast experience has already proven to be a valuable asset for the PACE program.

Natalie Pirson – Information and Referral Consultant. Natalie is the newest member to the I/R office with Gary. She also works at the MTS centre as Event Staff.

Zöe Kagan (who was a volunteer puppeteer) with the Kids on the Block Program has recently taken on the coordination of the program and we are happy to welcome her to the Centre.

As we welcome new staff to the Centre, we would also like to extend our appreciation and say goodbye to a few staff who are moving on to new challenges:

Melody Jones, who has been with the Qu'Appelle Tenants as their Resource Coordinator, has accepted a position at Employment & Income Assistance – as an Employment Counselor. We wish her well.

Michelle Palansky, who has been with the Centre coordinating our Kids on the Block program, has left us to go back to school.

Erin Biddell has been working this summer with t Disabled Sail Manitoba. She is continuing with her education.

Christine Peters was our DINE consultant. Christine came to us as a student of Nutrition at the University of Manitoba and assisted us with a variety of other programs such as PACE, Leisure Ed and with our Healthy Living campaign.

We must also say goodbye to Jarrett Rempel who has been a summer student/staff as well as

a Leisure Ed staff for a few years. Recently married, Jarrett will now be teaching his own students. Congratulations and keep in touch.

Our extraordinary Individual Advocate Amber McBurney has also left to pursue her studies in Social Work. Good luck Amber

Finally, Darlene Marcoux who celebrates her 20th year with the Centre this Fall, has recently Semi-Retired. She will be enjoying her new young grandson Aidan. Darlene will remain working at the Centre on Thursdays and Fridays. Her main priority will be to continue producing the ILRC Options Newsletter. And as I always like to say about people leaving the ILRC in the words of one of the Eagles songs – “You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.” So it is with Darlene.

The theme of this edition is “Hitting the Mark” and in keeping with that theme we believe the Centre has continued to support the INDEPENDENT LIVING philosophy by enabling people/consumers and or staff to broaden their horizons and reach for their dreams, whatever they might be.



In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we learned of the passing of three ILRC supporters and friends this year. Lucie Lemieux Brassard was appointed to the Council for Canadians with Disabilities, National Council of Representatives and served on the Council for many years. Lucie was also the co-founder of IL in Quebec. Lucie was passionate about disability rights and accepted many volunteer responsibilities. She was an avid traveler and voiced concerns to government regarding the transportation barriers she encountered.

Debbie Bean, Executive Director of Reaching E-Quality Employment Services, an advocate for individuals with disabilities in finding

Options – Fall 2008

employment. We recognize her achievements and impact on the community.

George Dyck sat on the ILRC 's Family Kite festival and was a great supporter of the Centre and friends. Our condolences to their families.

The Independent Living Resource Centre cordially invites you to attend the 24th Annual General Meeting

**Thursday, September 18, 2008
ILRC office
3rd floor of Portage Place Mall**

6:30 pm	Registration
7:00 – 8:00 pm	General Meeting
8:00 – 9:00 pm	Reception

During this time, we will be accepting membership dues for those who have not paid in 2008. A paid membership is required in order to vote at the 2008 Annual General Meeting.

As a member you are also entitled to our quarterly newsletters, notices of upcoming events and you support the work we do at the Centre.

- helping people who come in to the Centre asking about the different programs such as PACE (Personal Attendant Community Education), with applications and general information about the programs
- doing the meter mail
- transcribing books in the ILRC library into the computer to be put on disc for archiving purposes and so that the information can be accessed by all

I enjoy working with the people at ILRC and I appreciate the skills I have learned and the people I have met.

Keeping PACE in Brandon

BY Jodie Jephcote

The PACE program in Winnipeg has, for the last number of years, been hitting the mark for all participants, funders, consumers and the community as a whole. Graduates from the program are still maintaining the 90% employability rate that was cited 2 years ago. We are always increasing the number of volunteers, both within the community and classroom, as well meeting and even exceeding the required number of graduates and Social Assistance recipients to meet our funders' expectations. As such, it is no surprise that the PACE program has been the leader in propelling the ILRC to another community, to hit the mark with our expertise and knowledge there. We are currently in the process of moving this mark to the next largest target we have in Manitoba, namely, the city of Brandon. Work has already begun in setting up the systems, policies and the training site in Brandon. This expansion has been made possible through a funding resurgence from the Province of Manitoba's MarketAbilities initiative that was announced at our centre in Winnipeg on December 3rd, 2007, the United Nations

My Volunteer Experience

By Susan Renard

I have been working at the Front Desk Reception at ILRC since June, 2008. I work on Thursdays and Fridays. My duties include:

- answering the telephone
- update the employee log on the computer for the day

Options – Fall 2008

International Day of Persons with Disabilities, by Minister Gord Mackintosh. We are all excited about this new venture and witnessing the IL Movement gear up and move out into the rural communities of Manitoba. ILRC Winnipeg believes that the PACE program is necessary in supporting consumers' independence, and will hit the mark with the entire community of Brandon. I would like to thank the Province of Manitoba, Department of Family Services and Housing, for recognizing the inherent need of community-driven programs and services. In your policy development and funding allocations, you have *hit the mark* for the disability community.



Danny Smith with Session 20 PACE students

Little Mountain Park

By Mathew Ferguson

The last ILRC outing of the summer was a fabulous success. The weather totally cooperated, which made for a gorgeous day. The participants enjoyed kite flying, baseball, and one of the hit events of the summer: the scavenger hunt. Before any of the events began, there was another gracious barbeque.

Lunch was followed by the baseball game. Even though it was enjoyable by all who participated, the game was no comparison to the one held earlier in the summer. After a little breather from baseball, it was time for the scavenger hunt to take place.

Before the hunt started, all the groups were warned to stay together which prevented anyone from going missing this time. There were 3 teams and each team was searching for either hearts or clubs. This would lead them to the finish line. Even though my team had a tour guide, to avoid getting lost, the tour guide selectively forgot where the cards were hidden (ha ha).

The Little Mountain Park event was a hoot for all. The hard work put in by the ILRC staff paid off once again for their consumers.

Accessibility for One; Accessibility for All

Lori Timmerman

When planning for the ILRC First Step to Camping trip I knew that the first and most important step was to find a place that was wheelchair accessible. I didn't think that this would be so hard, but after quite a few phone calls, I wasn't having much luck. We were looking for a cabin or retreat centre that would fit approximately 20-30 people. Finally, after searching for a little while, I decided to check out somewhere a little closer to Winnipeg. Reading the location's website, it said *fully wheelchair accessible* including the cabins. I called and yes indeed they did have wheelchair accessible cabins available for rent in May and June. This seemed perfect, as it's so close to Winnipeg, just 8 minutes outside of the Perimeter.

Luckily, we decided to go take a look at the cabins to see what they look like and test just how accessible they really are. I had no doubt in my mind that if they say they're fully wheelchair accessible they must be.... well not quite!!!! The cabins had beautiful ramps going up to the doors and then one big step to get into the cabin. Well obviously that doesn't make it

Options – Fall 2008

wheelchair accessible. I informed the location staff that their cabins weren't fully accessible and that a ramp would have to be built. They were to have someone go out there and fix it. In the end the cabins were fixed to be wheelchair accessible. The cabins being accessible were the most important thing, as that was where everyone would be sleeping. Unfortunately not everyone in a wheelchair was able to get out onto the porch overlooking the lake. It's fortunate that the location is so close to Winnipeg so that we were able to go out there to make sure it was accessible. If someone is planning an outing and they aren't able to go out there before-hand, they are relying on the information that they are given. If a place isn't wheelchair accessible when one gets out there this can pose an inconvenience.

It's important that places that advertise as fully wheelchair accessible truly know what that means. Accessibility means different things to everyone. If a cabin has 2 stairs it's accessible to me, but not to a person who uses a wheelchair. If you are going away somewhere far and they advertise as fully wheelchair accessible, it's important to understand their point of view of what they mean by fully wheelchair accessible. Accessibility for one should mean accessibility for all.

NOW AVAILABLE: ILRC promotional posters.

These posters explain the work our centre does as well as some of the programs and services we offer. For convenience, the posters come with tear off sheets for individuals to take away ILRC's contact information.

Service organizations who are interested in obtaining copies can contact Heidi here at the Centre either by telephone (204) 947-0194 or through email heidih@ilrc.mb.ca

A Great Vacation, Far and Near

By Danny Smith

I had a wonderful summer this year, as I went to Calgary to see my family. I saw my brother, my three nieces and their family. I took an attendant along with me and we did our entire visit enjoying suppers and evenings spent with them. I spent my 85th birthday with my brother, which was great. He picked us up just before dinner, and was our transportation for the evenings. Each day we traveled on the Light Transit Rail (L.T.R.) which runs from one end of Calgary to the other and is a very fast train. It has its own set of rails and travels at 80 km an hour. The most amazing thing to me was getting on with my electric wheelchair and not being tied down. Each trip was very safe. We saw a lot of downtown Calgary thanks to the LTR. Traffic is very heavy no matter what time of day it is.

Back in Winnipeg, I got an opportunity to go out to Fort White Centre. I often wondered what it was like. Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) held a camping weekend so I went out on a Saturday and came back on the Sunday. There is a place to set up tents plus cabins and I stayed in a cabin where there were 4 bunks. Each cabin had 4 bunk beds plus a washroom.

During the day they had 4 different kinds of tents and they demonstrated how each one was put up and the time it took. The meals were good and we sat around a bonfire and sang and toasted marshmallows. We stayed in the main meeting room until we wanted to go to bed.

We could go and do some sailing and so I got to go sailing on the Saturday and sailed again on Sunday. They have four sail boats. You drive up to the boat in your own chair and then get

Options – Fall 2008

lifted in and out of the boat by a Hoyer lift. There is a guide that goes with you and sits behind you. You are right up in front with the controls and the guide actually lets you sail the boat on your own with instructions from him on what to do. Can you imagine what a thrill it was for me? It was the thrill of a life time.

Fort Whyte Centre is not far from Winnipeg, but when you're out there you feel you are miles away from the city and it is a very relaxing place to be. Just a great time.

Sailing in the Great Outdoors

By Matthew Ferguson

The ILRC day at Fort Whyte Center was a tremendous success. Thirty five participants enjoyed the day in the great outdoors with almost perfect weather. The participants experienced sailing, fishing, and hiking. There was also a gracious barbecue lunch and suppers which was made possible by the ILRC staff.

Sailing was a worthwhile experience for numerous participants. For example here is a quote from a sailor.



"I'm glad I went to Fort Whyte yesterday because it was a good time. I didn't know what to think of sailing, but I'm glad I did it because it

was a real blast! It was nice to see the geese walking around. I think it was a real adventure for a lot of the ILRC consumers". *WSB*

For myself my sailing expedition was quite an adventure. In the afternoon I had the opportunity to go sailing. Unfortunately, the wind turned nasty and ran me ashore. I had to be picked up by a motorboat. An important tip for future sailors is that the seat in the boat is quite slippery. It might be an idea to bring a non-slip pad to prevent individuals from sliding. Apparently, pillows are available from Disabled Sail.

Big thanks to Doug Lockhart and the ILRC staff for organizing this event.

Did you Know?



In order to continue to meet the needs of the ILRC consumer population and in order to continue to provide quality computer use & Internet access: As of June 1st 2008, Access to the CAP/Computer site at the Independent Living Resource Centre will be 'ILRC Members Only.' A \$5.00 membership fee or two hours of volunteer work are required.

The Manitoba Liberal Party Disability Task Force is holding a public forum on Rapid Transit from a disability perspective. Anyone and everyone is welcome to attend on September 8th at 5:30-7:00 p.m. located at Liberal Party HQ – Molgat Place on 635 Broadway. Contact Harry Wolbert at 294-6062 for more information.

The Volume 8 issue of Access Winnipeg is now available at ILRC. Get your guide to accessible discounts for seniors, including:

- Accommodation
- Dining
- Shopping
- Services

Options – Fall 2008

The Westminster Transitional Housing Program has one vacancy which will be available in the very near future. Contact Heidi Peters, Housing Project Coordinator, at 940-1723 for more information.

The Community Employment & Income Assistance Education Program is at the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities Office every second Monday from 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. to discuss individual rights and responsibilities for participants of the employment and income assistance program. Contact Paula Keirstead at 989-1911 if you have any questions.

There is a new Internet search engine on the World Wide Web. Check out www.cuil.com.

There is a website out there that expresses how the lives of people with disabilities can be exciting and fulfilling, instead of depressing & boring as is often portrayed in the media. Check out: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/>

There is quite a comprehensive website for people with disabilities who wish to travel. Check out: <http://www.access-able.com/> It talks about everything from tips for travelers with disabilities to the degree of accessibility within a certain destination.

In keeping with the travel-related topic, there is a website called <http://www.independentliving.org/VacationHomeSwap.html> in which people with disabilities can swap or rent vacation homes. It is a fantastic way to see other parts of the world while ensuring your living arrangements are suited to your individual needs.

Set to go in effect in 2009, Canadian Transportation Agency has passed a new law which allows people with “severe disabilities” to travel with an attendant at no extra charge on domestic airlines operating flights within Canada.

Consumers can check out www.Writing.com which welcomes writers of all levels. As well as <http://fictionwriting.about.com> and www.freelancewriting.com

Universal Health Care in Canada – Hit or Myth?

By Robert Mitchell

The Canadian Medicare system was designed to provide all Canadians with affordable, quality medical coverage, without the need for costly private insurance models or procedures. In 1961, shortly after all provinces had signed on to Tommy Douglas’ innovative model, our country was the envy of the world. Free health care? What a marvelous concept ...

Health care spending in Canada accounted for nearly 11% of the Gross Domestic Product in 2007 – that is over \$160 Billion. Canadians are facing record wait times for major elective surgeries and referrals. Manitoba is home to the dreaded concept of ‘Hallway Medicine’, as of yet still unresolved. “[We are] a country in which dogs can get a hip replacement in under a week and in which humans can wait two to three years.” (*New York Times*, 2006) Canada is well below the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) average of 3.0 doctors per thousand residents – we sit around 2.0. Consider also one in nine ‘trained-in-Canada’ doctors is practicing medicine in the United States.

Canadian healthcare is lethargic, it pressures the federal tax coffers, and it is no longer able to meet the rising demands of a growing population. It wasn’t meant to be this way – Tommy Douglas’ Co-operative Commonwealth Federation aimed and took a shot at an idea that was fair for everyone. Where then, have we gone wrong? Why is Medicare failing?

Options – Fall 2008

The actual construct from 40 years ago was flawed to begin with. Although meant well, the government was pushed into the role of administrator, monitor, regulator and evaluator for all costs and quality of health care. What was considered praiseworthy in reality created a near-monopoly that placed intolerable demands on government (*A Third Way Forward, Zitner and Kelderman*) There isn't an organization alive that can guarantee abundance and quality of a service or product: not Trump, not the Mafia and not the Government of Canada.

In Homeric fashion, then, we appeal to the Muse: whatever shall we do to salvage health coverage in our country? If I need major surgery, I should prefer to have it done in reasonable time and certainly before *the Winnipeg Jets make their return to the NHL*.

The solution is simple enough: divert the stress on resources from the One Source – government – and place it in the hands of other service agencies that are qualified and able to deliver. The concept of Third Party service agencies is not new: there are over 100 health-care co-operatives operating in Canada today. When bureaucracy fails, the community steps up. We empower third parties, government remains the independent source of regulation, ensuring that quality of care is consistent and that medical staff are compensated equally no matter what tier they operate in. But actual care, monitoring and decisions are delivered from 3rd party agencies, those agencies that are closest to the people whose lives they affect. PACE (Personal Attendant Community education) is an example: community-trained attendants placed in the community, alleviating the stress of Regional Health Authorities who are stricken with attendant shortages.

Clearly a solution must surface. Don't go looking for answers from the government though – they are a little busy at the moment.

National Federation of the Blind Conference

By Joanne Legault

In June of this year I had the opportunity to experience the National Federation of the Blind's Annual Convention for the first time.

The NFB is an organization made of 52 state affiliates, 700 chapters and 50,000 members.



The founder and first President of the NFB was Dr. Jacobus TenBroek, who was born in Alberta Canada and later moved to the USA with his family after becoming blind. Dr. TenBroek had been mentored in his youth and taught about the importance of self-organization of the blind by Dr. Newel Perry of the California School for the Blind. In the early part of the twentieth century, Dr. Perry himself had organized the alumni of the California School for the Blind in order to-- as he put it-- "escape defeatism and to achieve normal membership in society."

Attending the largest gathering of blind people anywhere in the world was quite a unique opportunity. There were 3,000 participants with 5 from Canada and worth noting that 4 of which were from Winnipeg. Ruth Hogue and husband Paul were in attendance as Ruth is a

Options – Fall 2008

representative for diagnostic devices which distributes talking glucometers.



The convention's agenda was 40 pages long with more meetings than one could possibly attend at one convention.

Participants ranged in ages from 5 years old to seniors. First time attendees ranging from rookies and yes there were meetings for that category as well called the rookie roundup to 30 year attendees many of which because of their experience were ambassadors. Ambassadors with years of experience could almost answer any question you had about the NFB and many of which could quote highlights of speeches given in previous years.

I thought that this was quite remarkable. Then it all began to make sense to me that I related it to the fact that these speeches were given and through collective action positive social change followed through the advocacy work of the national federation.

The NFB convention was so inspirational to me. I met other parents, teachers, orientation and mobility instructors, blind lawyers, blind scientists, blind leaders, and many, many new friends. It allowed me to see about three-thousand blind individuals like myself making

their way through airports, hotels, restaurants, and more. I also had the opportunity to attend the parents' division meetings and workshops and meet other parents with the same concerns that I had. Some of them had already gone through a lot of the same experiences as I had, and were so helpful in giving advice. I was understood in a different way by individuals who have overcome the same doubts and concerns I experienced.

My primary focus was to attend the adaptive technologies exhibits. The exhibit areas were always busy with demonstrations of products and many people having the opportunity to try hands on and ask representative questions about products that may only otherwise be accessed by viewing on the internet.

Definitely the most popular item was the KNFB reader which is basically a fully accessible cell phone for those with print impairments that also uses its camera function to scan menus bills documents etc and translate all to speech with the portability of only a cell phone.

Many contacts were made for adaptive technologies from a cross disability perspective to develop a hands-on demonstration centre.

This convention has hit home with its "power and unity of purpose". Clearly this organization is working towards the same goal as the ILRC and that is to make positive social change through collective action.



Options – Fall 2008

Where's my Wheelchair Dude??

By Darlene Marcoux

This year it turned out to be a great year for traveling. I went on two trips this Spring. First destination Las Vegas. That was great fun with very little to no problems.



My second destination was to Calgary for a friend's wedding with my family. We were so excited, that is until we landed in Calgary. Once I deplaned, I was met by a representative from West Jet

and was told that they had a problem with my electric wheelchair. I remembered in Vegas that they had unplugged every single connection and so I thought that was the "problem" he was speaking of. I was wrong! The rep from West Jet led me into an office and pointed out my chair – "Oh my God what happened to my chair?" His reply was, "Well we are not too sure. We think it might not have been tied down in cargo". As he is trying to explain this to me I burst into tears as I saw my trip disappearing right before my eyes. It looked like a plane hit my chair. The damage was incredible. What are they going to do about this? "Well," the rep went on to say, "we are doing our best to rent you another one. But it is Sunday and we are finding most places are closed. We can give you one of West Jet's manual wheelchairs until we get one to you tomorrow. West Jet will not be working out any of the details from this point on. There is a 3rd party that will negotiate between West Jet and yourself." He went on with his explanation. Then they brought me the loaner. Well, I could have put all my family into that chair with me. I asked for a smaller version and they complied.

Now keep in mind at this point, I was very upset so my detailed thinking is not as clear as it could

have been. My family and I started off on our adventure. We arrived at our rental van and I went to take off the pedals for transferring, I realized that none of the armrests or foot pedals came off. My son-in-law ran back to get me another one with the parts that come off. Well, he returns with the same chair and explains "no one is at the baggage office". Seems they saw the going was good and left for the weekend, leaving us with the wheelchair.

I was in contact with the company that West Jet referred me to and we worked every day to find an electric wheelchair in Calgary. (Seems Alberta doesn't rent electric wheelchairs, just manuals and scooters) which neither would have worked out for me. I kept saying "Where's my Wheelchair Dude??" Their reply was *we are doing our best*. In the end I got one on Wednesday evening and we were headed home on the Friday. We had to go on the Internet to figure how the controls worked; it could not have been any more complicated. But, in the end we had it running. I basically spent 3 ½ days in bed before we were able to secure a chair for me. *Great way to spend a holiday*. For someone who is very independent, it was hard for me to rely so much on my family for my care. West Jet is renting me an electric wheelchair currently as I have to wait for an assessment and then my new electric wheelchair.

In recalling my experience with West Jet, I have heard other people's problems with airlines: everything from inadequate seating, to airline staff that have no training in lifting a person on to their seat, to problems concerning equipment that travel with them.

I am in the middle of writing a strongly-worded letter to West Jet explaining to them my experience with their company, and strongly encouraging them to have a mandatory Disability Awareness component in their training to front line staff. I can't wait to hear their reply; hopefully it won't be 'we're working on it.'

Options – Fall 2008

The ILRC Cookbook, *Doing More With Less*, contains recipes that are simple, inexpensive and accessible. Included in the cookbook are nutrition tips and an easy symbol key to help find the recipes to fit your individual need. Contact Gary Dyson at 947-0194 to purchase a copy for \$15.00.

Registered Disability Savings Plan

by Gary Keith Dyson

What does RDSP stand for and what does it mean? Well it stands for Registered Disability Savings Plan. The purpose of the RDSP is to allow money to be invested tax free until withdrawal. This is to help parents and others save for the long term financial security of a child with a disability. It provides a person who has a disability and is currently receiving the Disability Tax Credit another option for savings.

This new program will be starting on December 8th 2008. All forms and policies can be found on Canada Revenue Agency website. Information can also be found on the PLAN website. ILRC will have links set up shortly on the I & R portion of the ILRC website that will take you directly to the RDSP information you need.

Anyone who is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit and is a Canadian resident or parent or legal representative of a person who is a

resident in Canada and is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit will be able to register for the RDSP.

Anyone can contribute to your RDSP or to a RDSP set up for a child; however, each person is allowed for the life time of the plan to have no more the \$200,000 contributed. There is no annual limit on how much you can put into an RDSP, so if you come into a windfall, either a lottery winning or an inheritance, and you have that \$200,000 you can put it all in at once. If you place the full amount in at once you will be losing out on potential Canada Disability Savings Grants and Canada Disability Savings Bonds because you place everything all in one year instead of spreading out year to year..

What are the Canada Disability Savings Grant and Canada Disability Savings Bonds? If you contribute to a RDSP and the family income or individual income of the beneficiary is under \$74,357 per year then the plan will receive 300% of the first \$500 and 200% on the next \$1000. So if a contribution of \$2500 is made, you will get in grant money a total of \$3500, to give your RDSP a total of \$5500 without even earning any type of return. If the income level is over \$74,357 then you would only get 100% of the first \$1000. A maximum grant amount that each beneficiary can receive in total is \$70,000.

If a beneficiary's family or individual income is also less then \$20,883, then they would also be entitled to receive the Canada Disability Savings Bonds, of a \$1000 per year. If the income is between \$20,884 and \$37,178 then the Canada Disability Savings Bonds amount will then only be \$500 per year, up to a maximum amount of \$20,000 per beneficiary. Any income level over \$37,178 a year will not receive any Canada Disability Savings Grant.

Grant money and Savings Bonds money will go into a RDSP up until the beneficiary turns 49 years old. Contributions can only be made up until the beneficiary turns 59 years old. By the

Options – Fall 2008

time you are 60 you need to start taking money out of the RDSP. You may want to speak to a financial advisor when it is time to do the withdrawals to make sure you have enough to last you for certain amount of years.

You can withdraw if needed at anytime from RDSP if you have your money invested in investments that allow you to get access to your funds at anytime with out any hold backs or penalties. If you are only withdrawing the contribution amount that was put in then there is no problems with doing the withdrawal. Any grant or bond money that the government placed in during the last 10 years will then have to go back to Revenue Canada, however any returns the grant and bond money had made in your investment you get to keep.

Withdrawing from the RDSP will not cut back any federal income sensitive benefit programs like GST, old age security, disability CPP. As for the province of Manitoba at the time of writing this article the province hadn't yet determined how any RDSP withdrawals will affect their income sensitive benefit programs. The idea behind the RDSP is to have it not affect any income sensitive benefit program, but all provincial income sensitive benefit programs are run by the provinces and they do have the authority to decide if RDSP withdraws will affect them or not. By the time the plan is ready to be opened up on December 8th 2008 the province should have decided how this may or may not affect their income sensitive benefits program.

If you want to open up an RDSP plan for your self, or for a child you will need to check with your financial institution to confirm that they will be offering the plan to their clients as not every financial institution in Canada will be offering this plan.

For more detailed information on the RDSP you can contact PLAN either by mail at 260 – 3665 Kingsway Vancouver BC V5R5W2 by phone 604-439-9566, or by e-mail at

inquiries@plan.ca You may also contact Revenue Canada at 1-800-959-8281

Once there was a Dream

By Elegline Merquita

I saw Dad fading away as I stretched my arm to touch him. I heard him say “this is my “TWIN”. I cried for his downfall. I was 8 years old when he had the accident. My disability and his didn't actually affect my youth but I felt guilty.

My disability was never a hindrance in my life. I accomplished what I wanted, but it took courage, discipline, determination and perseverance to gain confidence.

Believing in yourself is the best attitude to have when challenges and trials come your way. I remain focused on the important things and I think that improved my life. We are the ‘Aces’ of our lives and we can always be creative in handling our disability.

In 2003, I came to Canada, and got involved with the Independent Living Resource Centre. I dreamt of bringing Canada home, its systems, processes and everyone having a positive attitude.

Of course, ILRC was behind my journey. They have inspired me, accepted me, and have taught me unselfishly to believe in myself and in my abilities.

I want to take this opportunity to thank ILRC and the staff who encouraged me from the very beginning of my journey. My dream is to work in the disability community where I can offer hope and inspiration to individuals with disabilities and their families. I believe in working as a team. We can make it. Fly high ILRC.

Options – Fall 2008

Summer Fun at ILRC



More Summer Activities With ILRC



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Your membership helps us in programs, production and mailing costs of this newsletter. Being a member has its benefits in that you can vote at our next annual meeting, you receive our quarterly newsletter, and most of all you support the Centre and what we do. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so. The cost is **\$5.00**.

Please inform us about the following:

I prefer not to receive any mailings from ILRC.

I would like to be placed on or remain on the ILRC mail list.

Name: _____

I prefer to receive my newsletter in this
Format:

Org. Name: _____

Phone: _____

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Audio tape _____ | 5. Braille _____ |
| 2. Large print _____ | 6. Disk _____ |
| 3. Email text only _____ | 7. Print copy _____ |

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

ILRC STAFF

<p>Executive Director: John Young Operations Manager: Lori Ross Senior Program Coordinator: Doug Lockhart Controller/Accountant: Thom Lamont Payroll: Assistant to the Executive Director: Robert Mitchell Reception: Penny Siemens Information & Referral: Gary Dyson, Natalie Pirson Independent Living Skills/Peer Support: ILRC Staff Individual Self-Advocacy: Volunteer Consultants: Heidi Hellsten Core Program Coordinator: Joanne Legault</p>

<p>Senior Community Living Coordinator: Jodie Jephcote Community Living Coordinator: Thandie Undi Community Living Staffing: Terry McIntosh Leisure Education: Danielle Balcaen, Michaela Egonia, Lori Timmerman, Personal Attendant Community Education: Kelly Dagdick Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Project: Robert Mitchell, Heidi Hellsten Community Development: Heidi Hellsten, Lori Ross Kids on the Block: Zöe Kagan Options Newsletter: Darlene Marcoux</p>
