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# Black Spruce



Volume 13, Issue 3  
July – Sept 2010

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The Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) is your disability resource centre. We offer a variety of resources, supports and opportunities for people who have disabilities. Our programs include: Information and Networking, Individual Advocacy, Peer Support, Volunteer, Career Development, Adaptive Technology, Independent Living Internships, free Computer Access, and Research & Development. The ILRC actively promotes all aspects of Independent Living.

## Message from the Newsletter Committee

By: Joey Power

Its summertime and the flowers are in bloom! As always, there are many things to look forward to at the ILRC during the upcoming summer months.

On June 17, 2010 the ILRC held its 12th Annual General Meeting, so we have a new board of directors for the year 2010-2011. ILRC summer students will have a great start on June 28, 2010. Make sure to come out to the Annual ILRC Barbecue on August 14th, 2010 to meet and greet new board members, summer students, and mingle.

## **ILRC Breaking News – Staff Changes!**

It is that time of year again when we get to provide some wonderful youth with summer jobs. This year we have 5 summer students working with our staff. In the Garden we have Dylan Bridger, the SWAP Student is Susan Langer, the Office/Consumer Satisfaction Survey Student is Samantha Lyver, Events Coordinator is Natelle Murphy and our Computer Tech Summer Student is Lesley Chard. Please take the time to say hi when you drop by.

## **The ILRC 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**

On Thursday, June 17, 2010, the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) held its 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year the AGM was held at the Bethesda Pentecostal Church Hall.

The ILRC AGM is an opportunity for the general membership to gather and discuss the definitive moments of the past year, remember past community members and elect new members to the ILRC Board of Directors. Over the past year such moments and past community members included:

- Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Canada

- The launch of the new ILRC website
- The introduction of the ILRC Awards
- ILRC Volunteer Day 2010
- The remembrance of Jennifer Lythgoe, Billy Whitten and Gwen Yetman.

As always, the personality, character and dedication of the ILRC community was reflected in the 15 nominees. By the end of the evening, 9 members were elected to the ILRC Board of Directors.

The ILRC Board of Directors for 2010-2011;

Roger Baggs; Chair  
Cynthia Howlett; Vice Chair /Treasure  
Brianna Hookey; Secretary  
Gerard Bylde and Annette Powell;  
Members at Large  
Cecilia Carroll; Past-Chairperson  
Directors; Brian Conway, Paul Morgan,  
Deborah Gilbert, Betty Osmond,  
Charmaine Davidge, Jessica Bartlett,  
Nikki MacDonald, Joey Power, Alaina Butt, David Swain.

The general membership also elected Catherine Rodgers as the IL Canada Representative for the ILRC.

Congratulations to both the newly elected Directors and the IL Canada Representative!

## **ILRC News**

### **Disability Rights Promotion International**

**By: Paul Morgan & Brian Conway**

In August 2009, the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) received a Research Grant for a project called the 'Disability Rights Promotion International.'

The mandate of the project was to take information from interviews completed with consumers worldwide on the barriers and challenges they have faced in the past 5 years. All interviews were to be compiled, put into a document and sent to the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

St. John's was one of only 4 Cities in Canada chosen for the research. There were 50 Interviews carried out in each City and the St. John's Project was coordinated by Susan Ralph, former Core Program Coordinator with the ILRC

In St. John's, 11 consumers were asked if they would be interested in becoming trained as Interviewers for the Project. The training took place at Memorial University over the course of 6 days and was delivered by Marcia Rioux of York University and Steve Estey of Disabled Peoples' International. The training included mock interviews and techniques on how to get consumers to provide as

much information as possible about the barriers and challenges they have experienced.

The Project started in October 2009 and was completed in April 2010. It was a great opportunity for real people to tell their personal stories and was very much in keeping with the independent living philosophy.

### **Think about it: Benefits of ILRC Membership**

**By: Crystal John**

At the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC), membership means accessible knowledge, support, and inclusion.

There are many benefits to becoming a member of the ILRC. There is no cost to join, and the atmosphere is one that promotes abilities. The ILRC services and programs support the breakdown of barriers that prevent individuals from making informed decisions on the lifestyle(s) of their choice.

So how can we get more out of being a part of the ILRC?

We can certainly continue to identify (as individuals) the services we need to have a quality of life that meets, or exceeds, our own standards of living.

We can also take advantage of the opportunity to engage in program activities by volunteering and providing

input to staff or board members on how to improve access to services. For example, the ILRC Newsletter Committee is made up of volunteering ILRC members. In addition to information that is circulated by the Information Networking Coordinator, the Newsletter Committee keeps members of the ILRC informed about a variety of cross-disability issues within the City of St. John's.

It is through the ILRC's individual services, events and peer support groups such as the Annual General Meeting, Annual Barbeque or Dinner Club that we have the opportunity to appreciate a sense of community belonging.

On that note, it makes a lot of sense that "membership to the Independent Living Resource Centre in St. John's is open to individuals who support the principles of Independent Living and the objectives of the ILRC" (from the ILRC Individual Membership Form).

**For a copy of the 'ILRC Individual Membership Form'**  
**Please refer to the contact information listed at the back of the newsletter**

## **What's happening in the Community?**

### **An Affordable Housing Coordinator for St. John's** **By: Catherine Rodgers**

Housing is one of the basic human needs. For many people with disabilities, secure housing is the key to an independent life and to being included in the community. With little room for expansion, the City of St. John's is facing a housing boom and affordable housing remains unattainable for many.

In order to deal with our newfound prosperity and its effect on housing, the City of St. John's has recently hired an Affordable Housing Coordinator. The Coordinator will be responsible for bringing together stakeholders and compiling research and recommendations around affordable housing in the City.

Many people with disabilities will be looking closely at these reports and recommendations, given Canada's recent ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). The Articles of the Convention speak specifically to living independently and being included in the community. Article 19 recognizes:

The equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take

effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community.

The Article further states that persons with disabilities get to choose where they live and with whom, that they have support to live in the community, and that they not be isolated from the community or obliged to live in a particular living arrangement. Other Articles of the Convention, like Article 26, also speak about making sure that people with disabilities can have maximum independence in their lives and be supported to participate and be included in the community and in all aspects of life, beginning at the earliest possible stage. This includes having appropriate housing.

The Convention also recognizes the importance of housing again in Article 28, stating that people with disabilities have a right to an adequate standard of living – including having enough food, and clothing, and living in appropriate housing. The Convention recognizes that living with a disability costs more than living without a disability and that people should not live in poverty simply because they have a disability.

Given that many of the articles of the Convention will be implemented at the local level, it is encouraging to see our City prepare for one of the most challenging issues – housing. Many in

the disability community will be watching with great interest as the work and research from this new position are released.

## **Newfoundland & Labrador (NL) Housing**

**By: Amanda Lush**

### **Transfer Form**

NL Housing has created this new form to make it easier for people who wish to move from one NL housing location to another. The transfer form requests that you identify the reason you want to transfer and to provide any supporting documentation you may have for your request.

The following information is needed when applying:

- Only completed applications with an attached “option C” printout will be accepted.
- If you have any special needs (accessibility, medical, etc.) please attach a written letter from the appropriate professional (physician, social worker, etc.).
- If HRLE is making rental payments on your behalf, please ensure that your HRLE file number is filled in on the front of this form.

### **Housing Application Form**

NL Housing is requesting that anyone who has put in an application for NL Housing but has not yet received housing that they need to reapply every year. It is recommended that you keep a record of when you apply so that you can reapply at the same time the next year. Keep a check list of the items you need to have to complete an application for NL Housing.

## **What is a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)?**

The RDSP is a new federally registered savings plan that is delivered by the Canada Revenue Agency. It is designed to ensure long-term financial security for people with disabilities. Beneficiaries may receive the added benefit of government grants and bonds. The RDSP, grant and bond are an initiative of the Government of Canada. Independent Living (IL) Canada encourages people to apply for RDSP's. This savings plan aligns with the Independent Living philosophy – encouraging people with disabilities to plan for their long term financial security and the future costs of disability needs. Please contact your local Independent Living Centre for more information.

### **Who can have an RDSP?**

Any person can be a beneficiary as long as they:

- Are eligible to claim the Disability Tax Credit (DTC)

- Have a Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Are a Canadian resident
- Are under the age of 60.

### **Did you know?**

Even with no financial contribution, you may be able to receive up to \$1000 annually to invest through the Canada Disability Savings Bond, if you meet the criteria.

If financial contributions are made by you, your family or your guardian you may be eligible for additional financial contributions from the federal government through the Canada Disability Savings Grant Program.

Grants and bonds are paid directly into your RDSP until the age of 49. The lifetime contribution limit is \$200,000 per plan. There is no annual contribution limit to an RDSP.

Legally authorized parents or guardians can establish an RDSP on behalf of a person with a disability who is a minor or who is unable to enter into a contract. Having an RDSP does not impact Federal Benefits. In NL, RDSP benefits do not impact existing provincial social assistance support programs.

### **Did you know?**

- Growth of your RDSP contributions is not taxable until you take your money out (see the Canada Revenue Agency website for further details).

- When you decide to take your money out, it can be used for any purpose.
- There are still incentives for someone over 49 years of age to open a plan.
- You can contribute until the age of 60.
- Savings are tax-free.
- Depending on your province you may be able to access this money without impacting your federal or provincial disability benefits.

## How to open an RDSP?

### Identify the beneficiary

The beneficiary of the RDSP is the person who meets the above requirements and will receive the money in the future.

### Identify the RDSP holder

The holder of the RDSP is the person or organization that opens and manages the RDSP (if required).

### Contact a financial organization

Several financial organizations offer the RDSP. To open an RDSP and apply for the grant and bond, complete a registration form.

### Where to get an RDSP?

The following financial organizations offer the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), grant and bond:

- Bank of Montreal. 1-800-665-7700

- Bank of Nova Scotia. 1-877-929-4499
- CIBC Securities Inc. 1-800-465-3863
- Les Fonds d'investissement FMOQ inc. 1-800-641-9929 (Québec residents)
- Royal Bank. 1-800-463-3863
- TD Canada Trust . 1-866-280-2022

## ILRC Groups and Upcoming Events

### Peer Support Group Activities at ILRC Project Funding

We have received funding from the Community and Inclusion project, 2010-2011. The project, called **Peer: My Point, Your Point**, will support persons with disabilities to be included in the social, artistic, and cultural activities of our community. Peer support group members will express their points and enjoy art from a cross disability perspective.

Activities will include focus groups and site visits to local art galleries, centres, and events. Peer support group members and staff will meet with partners and discuss the accessibility of their events and activities. This project will support the participation of peer support group members in events sponsored by the Arts Community. Are you interested? Contact Trudy Marshall.

## **Workshop Development**

Members of the men's group and women's group are working on workshops to be delivered in the peer support groups. Would you like to join them in sharing your ideas and skills?

## **Peer Support Group**

Members come together to share experiences, skills, knowledge, information, and wisdom with each other.

## **Paint Group**

Please drop in every Thursday afternoon from 2:00pm – 4:00pm in the ILRC kitchen to share your talents with us. Help us show that art can be created and shared cross disabilities.

## **Dinner Club**

Thank you for meeting with us on:

Tuesday July 20, 2010, 6:30pm- 9:00pm,  
P.J. Billingtons, Kenmount Road  
Friday, September 17, 2010, 6:30pm-  
9:00pm

## **Women's Group**

Women meet at the ILRC Kitchen (or in the community). Come join us on:

Monday, July 12, 2010, 7:00pm – 9:00

pm

Saturday, September 11, 2010, Brunch,  
Farmer's Market, Time to be determined.

## **Men's Group**

Men get together on the **first or last Monday** of every month in the ILRC kitchen (or in the community). Come join us on:

Monday, July 26, 2010, 6:30pm - 8:30  
pm

Men's Group will not meet in September but will meet in October.

## **Men's and Women's group**

Men and Women will meet on:

Monday, August 16, 2010, 6:30pm - 8:30  
pm

Contact: Trudy Marshall

Email: [peer@ilrc-nl.ca](mailto:peer@ilrc-nl.ca)

Contact Trudy to discuss how to make the group more accessible for you.

Tickets for transportation are available if needed (except Dinner Club). Please book your own sign language interpreters for Men's Group and Women's Group.

## **Young Adult Group**

Young adults with disabilities come together once a month at the ILRC. The group share information, get connected, and share common interests all while having some fun and meeting a new network of people.

Sat, July 24, 2010, 8:00am - 3:00pm  
Thurs, Aug 12, 2010, 5:00pm - 7:00pm  
Thurs, Sept 9, 2010, 5:00pm - 7:00pm  
Contact Amanda  
Email: amanda@ilrc-nl.ca  
Please book your own sign language interpreters. Metrobus and Wheelway tickets are available if needed. Please arrange your own ride.

### **Computer Seminars Offered**

Computer Workshops will be held once every two weeks. Please call or email the ILRC to find out what the topics will be, or just drop by and be surprised!  
For more information, or to register for a workshop

Contact: Donna Greene  
Email: donna@ilrc-nl.ca

### **Creative Corner**

#### **A Tribute to Gwen... By: Trudy Marshall**

Gwen Yetman was a volunteer and former board member of the ILRC. She was a founding member of Women's Night and was active in the paint group and Dinner Club at the ILRC.

Gwen was very active in several disability organizations, especially those involved in social and recreational pursuits. Gwen was a strong woman who spoke her

mind. People just didn't get away with telling Gwen that she couldn't go or do – she blazed the path and made it easier for others by breaking down the walls in front of her.

We have all learned from Gwen. We will miss you at the Dinner Club and the Women's Night. Gwen, I will miss you.

Trudy Marshall, Coordinator,  
Volunteer and Peer Support Programs

### **In Memory of Ian George Pollett (1968 – 2010)**

**By: Edward Sawdon**

It is with great sadness that I mark the passing of Ian George Pollett, 1968-2010. Ian was a good friend and valued colleague. Ian was very active with several community groups and was a long-time supporter and volunteer with the Consumers Health Awareness Network NL (CHANNAL) and the Schizophrenia Society of NL. I will miss Ian and remember him with great fondness.

Edward Sawdon  
Email: Sawdon\_edward@yahoo.com

**Important Dates to Remember**  
July 1<sup>st</sup> Canada Day Centre Closed  
August 4<sup>th</sup> Regatta Day

August 14<sup>th</sup> ILRC BBQ  
Rotary Sunshine Park

## Word Scramble

We have provided a list of words which need to be unscrambled. Have fun and try to unscramble them. We will provide the unscrambled words in the next edition. We have included the answers to the Volunteer Word Scramble.

### Answers to Volunteer Word Scramble

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| tmea rwko   | Team Work   |
| lheigpn     | Helping     |
| ervutnoel   | Volunteer   |
| prieocten   | Reception   |
| nregignad   | Gardening   |
|             |             |
| ieshds      | Dishes      |
| tncaniameen | Maintenance |
| ifrdsen     | Friends     |
| ufn         | Fun         |
| mjyetonen   | Enjoyment   |

### Summer Work Scramble

|           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| rsumem    | - - - - -       |
| bqb       | - - -           |
| nsyun     | - - - - -       |
| tpssro    | - - - - -       |
| mgsea     | - - - - -       |
| adnaa yda | - - - - - - - - |
| miwignm   | - - - - - - -   |
| cpinci    | - - - - -       |
| gtnnnai   | - - - - -       |
| ncvtiaao  | - - - - - - -   |

## Wanted Volunteers!

### Peer Match- Self esteem, depression, coping with stress

Job Description: Middle-aged single mother to support another single mother  
Time Commitment: Once a week or once every two weeks  
Location: To be discussed

### Peer Match- Computer Support

Job Description: Support two Volunteers to create a power point presentation on accessible transportation.  
Time Commitment: Friday afternoons from 1:00pm – 3:00pm for 3 months  
Location: ILRC CAP site

### Peer Match- Around Violence

Job Description: A young woman to support another young woman around issues related to violence  
Time Commitment: two hours once a week or every two weeks  
Location: To be determined

### Peer Match- Around Depression

Job Description: A young woman to support another young woman around depression and isolation  
Time Commitment: two hours once a week  
Location: By Telephone

### Program Support- Excel

Job Description: To input Volunteer hours into an excel spreadsheet

Time Commitment: two hours every two weeks. Location ILRC

### **Do you have a Great Voice?**

Job Description: Read information onto an audio tape or CD to make information accessible for others.

Time Commitment: To be discussed

Location: ILRC

### **Wanted Newsletter Journalists & Editor**

Job Descriptions: Newsletter Journalists and Editor – layout and plain language

Time Commitment: To be discussed; meetings afternoon.

Location: ILRC and by email

### **Do you have great computer skills?**

Job Description: Support individuals or groups to learn computer skills. Try out and learn about state of the art Adaptive Technology.

Time Commitment: Choose your schedule. 9:00am-4:00pm, Monday to Friday

Location: ILRC

Contact: Trudy Marshall

Email: peer@ilrc-nl.ca

### **Note: We do screen our volunteers**

### **'Making the Case for Peer Support' From Peer Support members at ILRC. Part 1.**

The Mental Health Commission of Canada invited all people in Canada who use and/or deliver mental health peer

support to be involved in their project, 'Making the Case for Peer Support'. The ILRC held focus groups in the fall of 2009. A leadership working group coordinated the focus groups and wrote the questions in plain language. Group members and Peer Match participants also chose to answer the survey by phone, email, or mail. Members, staff, and volunteers of the Peer Support Program, ILRC submitted a Response to 'Making the Case for Peer Support' in November 2009. A summary of our responses to the commission on Peer Support will be presented in the Black Spruce over the next few issues.

Peer Support members were asked, 'In your own words, how do you define peer support?'

They said that Peer Support is when: people who support each other 'have shared experiences or issues in common' and 'people helping people towards inclusion and independence.'

Peer Support members also talked about what Peer Support is not. There was a discussion of whether peer support is friendship. Peer support members identified a peer match as, 'someone to provide companionship' and 'someone to chat with.' They identified that peer support may lead to friendship and that friendship can be a more complicated relationship.

Alternate Formats: The Black Spruce is also available in Braille, CD, Large Print, Audio-Cassette, Audio CD and online at [www.ilrc-nl.ca](http://www.ilrc-nl.ca).

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Submission should be a maximum of three quarters of a page or 750 words in length.

The Black Spruce provides a way for people to share opinions, thoughts and ideas. The articles may not always reflect the goals, values and mission of the ILRC. The ILRC does not endorse any products, services, ads or businesses in any way. It is the responsibility of the consumer to make an informed decision.