



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

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Issue #18

SOCIAL INCLUSION

In February, I went to a skating event through the Special Olympics BC Winter Games. They were great skaters. Seeing this event, I think that's why people believe in inclusion and abilities and want more inclusion to show we have more abilities than you think. Why is special Olympics beneficial? Because they offer inclusive programs called Unified Sports and they also offer choice and opportunities. They give all of us as athletes chances to compete and show our abilities. I support Special Olympics very strongly.

Special Olympics has made me think a lot about inclusion. We should be treated like everyone else and be given choices and freedom. We should be in control of our service delivery. I agree with inclusion, not segregation, because we want to reduce stigma and discrimination. We want to give our input on policies which affect us all through boards of directors and in society. I believe in choice for inclusion.

This month, look for articles and stories about inclusion then let us know what you think.

IN THIS ISSUE

Feature Articles

Recipe

Blazer Report

Quotes

Upcoming Events

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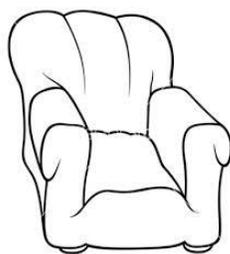
Social Inclusion

By Lisa Coriale

What is social inclusion? Social inclusion is where “all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity” (taken from website). What does it mean to you? I believe that sometimes our society places labels on concepts that some do not fully understand or do not know how to handle correctly. Everyone needs and desires to belong and I believe that feeling included is vital to our survival as human beings. Social inclusion is more than just a label or something that we do; it is a lifestyle that should be practiced every day. Social inclusion can happen anywhere, anytime and can be an everyday occurrence. I believe it is about accepting people for who they truly are without any preconceived notions. It should be promoted and cultivated which could result in heightened self-esteem. Many people with disabilities want to live full lives as much as possible.

We might have to carry out things differently. We want to be treated equally. We often desire to be involved in our communities. Social inclusion should be promoted in all aspects of our communities such as schools, universities, places of employment, pubs, restaurants and many others. This concept does not only effect people with different

abilities but it effects everyone at one time or another. Many people with disabilities overcome a variety of situations on a daily basis. Social inclusion should not be one of those difficulties. Many people with disabilities have the same insecurities as others. We all want to be a part of something whether it be small or great to feel valued. We have to begin to remove the attitudinal and physical barriers. We must stop placing ourselves into categories and we have to tell others to do the same. It is time to be ourselves and educate one another about who we truly are.



Krystian's Corner

Did you know Special Olympics International has a program called Unified Sports?

I believe in social inclusion. There is a unified sports team which fits with all mandates of service providers for inclusion. Many service providers don't know about Special Olympics unified sports because it's very new. It's in Canada but it's still evolving in Canada. It's an inclusive sports program to compete and win medals with people with similar abilities and capabilities. It's a Special Olympics international program

and we are very excited for this change.

Dreams are coming true for inclusion. Change is coming. This is what self-advocates and service providers are calling for with inclusion, not segregation. And, I also believe in choices too for inclusion.

Thanks to all the self-advocates for advocating for themselves and others. Thanks Special Olympics International and all the service providers.

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

~ Barack Obama



Breakfast Anyone?

Ben & Krystian are starting a breakfast club! You are invited to join them once a month for some good food and great conversations - it will be a blast! Bring a friend or, if you have any clients or anyone at all who wants to come please support them and bring them to our very own Kamloops Breakfast Club.

For more information e-mail Krystian at:

thekamloopselfadvocate@yahoo.com



The Music of 'Inclusion'

Krystian recently connected with John, a musician with the band Inclusion. Here is what John had to share about the band.

What kind of music do you play?

We play all kinds of music depending on how much we like the songs. We started playing uplifting, feel good songs and as we became more skilled we began to add some danceable songs. We recently played our first successful dance at Inclusion Powell River's 60th Anniversary festival.

We borrow from all genres and lately have added in some old time rock and roll songs. We have a number of blue grass, blue grass gospel, blues songs, percussion songs etc. We are now slowly producing our own songs.

We often change a word or two in the songs to make it suitable for all ages and stages. We are always looking for contemporary songs that express our core values.

When did you start the band?

I started the band exactly 10 years ago in March. I got together with two young men, one who played the piano and one who played the Q-chord. I brought my guitar and after the first practice I realized

(1) that we were going to be a band and (2) that I was going to have to go home and practice to keep up. My djembe player showed up at our first gig and he's been with us ever since. We realized quickly that we needed a singer so I invited a woman I knew, who sings really well, to join us and she did. She stayed with us for about eight years.

When did you realize this was your calling?

I don't recall exactly. I started years ago working at support services for people with diverse abilities in Ontario. I met a young man who played the piano with one hand. He could play any song you could name and played both melody and chords at the same time. I thought about it then but I didn't have the guitar skills I needed. Sadly he passed away before I ever did anything with him. I always regretted that and decided that if the opportunity presented itself ever again I would act on it.

What is the band's mission, vision, mandate?

"Our dream is to promote inclusion and create opportunities for community members of all ages to see, first-hand, the ability levels and performance competency that can be achieved by anyone with a desire and a goal. We wish to spread the message that while some people achieve goals more easily than others, most worthwhile goals can be reached with time, effort and perhaps

someone who believes in you. We are more alike than different and folks facing different challenges belong not only in our communities but equally in our businesses, our activity groups and even in our circle of friends."

In a word, our mission is Inclusion. Sometimes people confuse access with inclusion and I think that often people with life challenges/disabilities are often excluded from meaningful conversations, life relationships and activities. Yes the curbs are somewhat smoother and valiant efforts are made to ensure that people can get to events but they are often there by themselves, or with parents, other people with disabilities, paid staff. We'd like to see that change.

How do you believe in reducing stigma by your music?

First we want to say, to people with diversabilities, that anything is possible. All of you have something to offer even if it's just giving of yourself. That may be the best gift.

If there's something you've always wanted to do or learn there is probably a way to learn it. *It's never too late to start!* My keyboard player has been learning piano for years. My Q-Chord player only started playing two years before I met him. Everyone learns at different rates, but if you really like something stay with it.

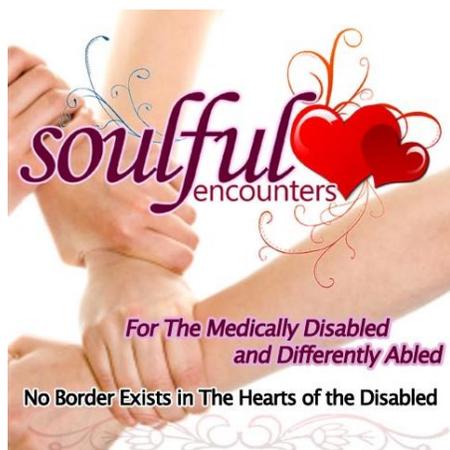
Do you have any tips for people starting bands such as yours and how to do it?

The formula is simple really. Find your gift and then find a way to develop it. (There are often retired people in your community who are experts and who might assist and act as mentors.) Then find a group in the community where you can go to share learning it, or doing it, with others who share your interest. The arts are often good because they are open to everyone and there are a wide variety of choices to try. *It's never too late to start!*

The group has one cd called: Inclusion, music for everyone, we all have gifts

The group and the cd label can be seen at their website:

www.musicforeveryone.ca



Soulful Encounters - Connecting the Disabled Dating and Friends Community

This information comes from the Soulful Encounters web-site. Contact them for more information.

Disabled individuals find real support, compassion, and friendship through our disabled community and disabled dating Web site. The name Soulful Encounters and the hearts logo are a constant reminder of this Web site's primary mission -- to provide a place where the medically, mentally and physically disabled can nourish their souls and awaken their hearts.

The founder and site administrator of the online social networking disability site SoulfulEncounters.com is Louise Maxwell from London, Ontario, Canada. Louise works with a team of specialists with diverse knowledge in psychology, social work, and clinical pharmacy, which provides an open-mind attitude and compassionate outlook. For more than twenty years, Louise worked in the medical field going above and beyond her duties to help patients who were disabled or handicapped in any way.

Then in her thirties, she discovered for herself the realities of life when you can no longer care for yourself. For more than ten years, Louise was house-bound after a debilitating car accident in Saudi Arabia, far from home. A series of failed back surgeries and life-threatening complications in the operating room left her hospitalized for months at a time. Eventually, she was termed a living miracle but her ordeal has left her in constant physical pain and limited

movement – and a greater understanding for the exclusion and biased assumptions that disabled people encounter every day.

SoulfulEncounters.com works with various disabled people and organizations to connect those who are physically and medically disabled and provide support, friendship, and a love filled social networking community. This Web site is not a place for the preconceived notions of people who cannot understand the circumstances of its members. At SoulfulEncounters.com, members treat each other with the dignity and respect that everyone deserves, regardless of class, race, religion, or sexual orientation. This is your opportunity for a brighter and richer life. Join SoulfulEncounters.com now – it's free. You have nothing to lose...and everything to gain.

Soulfulencounters.com



Curry Vegetable Soup

What you need...

- 2 c. milk
- 3 c. frozen mixed vegetables
- 2 packages of cream of leek soup mix
- 2 T. curry powder
- 6 c. water

pepper

In large pot, combine:

soup mix

water

curry powder

Turn dial to MAX. Bring to a boil (you'll see steam and bubbles), stirring often.

Turn dial to 3. Simmer for 5 minutes (set a timer). Keep stirring.

Add:

milk

mixed vegetables.

Stir. Cook for about 8 minutes (set timer). Stir occasionally until vegetables are tender.

Tips for Safe Online Dating

John M. Grohol,
Psy.D. December 15, 2003

Dating services have been around for decades, but it's only been in the past 6 or 7 years that they've really taken off online. Here are a few tips:

Staying Anonymous for A While

It's best to use the dating service's internal, secure messaging system until you feel as though you know the person to some degree. This ensures that when you do run into the inevitable creep online, you remain anonymous and safe.

Be Realistic

Prince (or Princess) Charming may very well indeed be waiting for you online, but you should also set your expectations just a little bit lower. Most of your dates will turn out to be duds. That's just the statistics! Don't believe that everyone who shows interest in you is worth your time.

Use Common Sense

Go slowly with new contacts and get to know the person via messaging and emails first. Then proceed to phone calls if you still feel safe, attracted, and curious. Finally, setup a first date when the time is right.

Proceed Slowly and Listen to Your Instinct

Take things at your pace. Always talk to the other person by telephone at least once before agreeing to meet for your first date. Ask for a photo (if they didn't provide one in their profile) so that you can be assured of meeting the right person. Don't feel the need to give out your phone number if you're not comfortable doing so. Remember, you don't have to meet everyone you communicate with online.

First Dates Should Be in Public

Agree to meet in a public place. Most people find a restaurant is ideal. Let a friend or two know that you'll be out on a date and if possible, have your cell phone with you at all times, on and charged.

Be on the Lookout for Red Flags

Look for:

Avoids answering directly to questions.

Demeaning or disrespectful comments about you or other people.

Inconsistent information.... includes marital status, children, employment, where they are living, but also things such as age, appearance, education, career

Is nothing like the way they describe themselves in their online profile.

Physically inappropriate or unwanted behavior (e.g., touching, kissing).

Pushes quickly to meet in person.

Avoids phone contact.

Be Sexually Responsible

Know your partners' sexual background by asking direct, frank questions about the number of partners he or she has been with, whether protection was always used, how well they knew the people (was it mostly serious relationships or just one night flings?), and whether they have any known sexually transmitted diseases. Yes, it's not easy to talk about these sorts of things, but it's important to do so before your first night in bed. When in doubt, definitely use a condom.

Remember, you're the only person you have to answer to at the end of the day. If you don't feel comfortable in any

particular situation, that doesn't mean you're a bad person or you're not ready for dating. It simply means that you're not comfortable with the other person in this situation. You don't need to apologize for needing to leave a date or anytime you feel you are in a threatening situation. Your safety should always be something that is on your mind throughout the entire dating process. Relax your guard when you've met the person face-to-face and feel entirely comfortable with who they are and how they relate to you and those around you. Keep an open mind, an open heart, and most of all, your common sense.

Taken from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwV98AMJnak>



Special Olympics Opening Ceremonies

By Ben

The best things about the opening ceremonies were the music, the dancing, and bringing in of the torch.

There was a local dance group which performed. The music was another local person – 2 songs by the same artist. They were excellent.

The atmosphere was exciting. It was really nice to have the ceremonies at TCC.

There were lots of volunteers. They helped to make things run smoothly.

Before the torch was brought into the stadium, a video was played to show its journey in coming to Kamloops. When the RCMP brought the torch into the building, the room exploded with cheers and applause.

The place went totally ballistic when the athletes arrived at TCC. It was a truly memorable experience. By the end of the ceremony, it was feeling like fun, fun, fun. Everyone was looking forward to the upcoming two days of events.

“On the field we are teammates; off the field we are friends.”

~ Motto of Unified Sports

Correction Notice:

We missed the trademark symbol in the February Transforming Stigma™ article about Mike Veny. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

The Institute for Community Inclusion

Krystian found an institute in the United States that is dedicated to

community inclusion. Here is what Quinn Barbour had to say in response to Krystian's interview questions.

What is the Institute for Community Inclusion?

The Institute for Community Inclusion helps people with disabilities to be part of their communities. This means having access to health care, education, a good job, and every other aspect of life. We do this through research, for example, looking into the best ways to support people to find jobs. We also do trainings, for example, teaching hospital staff how to communicate better with patients who have disabilities. You can find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/communityinclusion>.

Why was this institute created for community living?

We were created by President John F. Kennedy in the 1960s. President Kennedy had a sister with intellectual disabilities. He saw that she and other people with disabilities were often excluded from community life. So he started some centers based at universities across the U.S. The purpose of the centers was to find ways to improve the lives of people with disabilities. We were (and still are) one of those centers. But today we work with all kinds of disabilities, not just intellectual disabilities.

Do you believe in leveling the playing field for people with disabilities and without?

We believe that everyone, with and without disabilities, has things they're good at and things they aren't good at. The trick is to find ways for people to use their skills, talents, and interests in their communities. For many people with disabilities, expectations are low—for example, their family may not expect them to get a job or to live independently. We think it's important to encourage high expectations of all people. That's the only way to see what people can achieve.

Should service providers support us with choice and inclusion and social inclusion? Do they need to give us choice and listen to our choice?

Sure, service providers should work with each person as an individual and support them to try, fail, succeed, and make mistakes along the way—just like everyone else.

Why is community inclusion beneficial?

People live fuller, richer lives when they are included in their communities. There are also health benefits to community inclusion. For example, people with Down syndrome used to die at a very young age when most of them were living in institutions. Today, now that most people with Down syndrome live in their communities, they are living longer.

Do you believe in self advocacy?

Absolutely! Everyone should have a shot at self-determination. That means being able to make choices, take risks, and build the life YOU want—not the life someone else thinks you should have. Self-advocacy means speaking up for yourself to achieve these goals. We think self-advocacy is a basic human right!

www.communityinclusion.org



Accessibility

By Andrew Embury

This winter I have noticed that the snow was gathering up and creating piles of snow, known as berms. The berms of snow are extremely difficult for the disabled community to get around during the winter season downtown.

The areas that I can see the city improve on, in my opinion, where the users of the Handydart and City Bus will likely agree with me, are the piles of snow at each stop for public transportation, including two near where I live. Because of the piles of snow that are left after it snows, the buses usually have to go to the next few stops after the one that has been

selected by the riders on the bus. The City Bus has a difficult task of putting their ramps out at each of the stops and depending on how much snow is built up.

For the Handydart however with door-to-door service, they have a less of a struggle with the snow but more with the driveways that the snow is on. Sometimes I have noticed that there has been ice with snow on top. Most of the people that I have been with on the Handydart have had to take it very carefully with the snow and ice. A person that is in a wheelchair like me when there is some snow and ice are helped to the door of the business or home.



Jenna's Blazer Report

The Blazers are fighting with the Vancouver Giants for a spot for the play-offs. So far, the Blazers are out of a playoff spot, but we did win two games this weekend. They beat Victoria and they beat Vancouver. The regular season ends in March.

The Blazers are making the games fun by having theme nights like country-western night and pyjama night. If you participate, they give you tickets for door prizes.

Gina's Success Story

Krystian had a chance to meet with Gina, a young woman who has found a new job and moved into her own apartment.

What do you do for fun & for social inclusion?

I like going to the movies and Blazers games with my friends from Special Olympics bowling. I do fun outings with People in Motion as well. I also do things with my new roommate.

Are you in Special Olympics?

I am in Special Olympics bowling. I like seeing my friends and my team is called the Mighty Ducks

Where do you work?

I work at a new thrift store called Nine Lives where I do pricing, cleaning and putting things on the shelf.

What else do you do for social inclusion?

I volunteer at the Food Bank twice a week where I sort food. I go skiing once a week through adapted sports at Sun Peaks.

Do you like your new apartment?

I like that it is close to the library and the grocery store. I like my new roommate and living in an apartment building with other people.

What do you like about your roommate?

Web-sites you might find interesting:

Special Olympics Italy Loves to Play Unified

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YcWQ-N3hMk>

InDepth: SOCIAL INCLUSION and Disability

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZCYMeVHNw>

<http://www.playunified.org/>

I like her because she is nice and I have known her since elementary school. She works at Insight which is an agency supporting mostly elementary school kids.

What other sports do you like to do for fun?

I enjoy golfing, skiing and bowling

Light it up Blue

Light it up Blue is April 2nd 2015 and is World Autism Awareness Day. Around the world people use blue light for buildings and in the community to raise awareness for Autism.

There are t-shirts you can purchase on the website Autism Speaks and this helps with the fundraising that many people are doing for Autism in their communities. You can start your own team to

start fundraising and even do the walk in Kelowna on September 20, 2015.

Upcoming Events

Let us know if there are community events that people might want to hear about!

March 5th -14th Kamloops Film Festival runs at the Paramount.

Mar. 13th Cinderella Movie by Disney opens in theatres

Mar. 20th Let It Be: A Celebration of the Music of the Beatles at Interior Savings Centre

Mar. 26th – Apr. 4th WCT: The 39 Steps, a hilarious whodunit at the Sagebrush Theatre

Apr. 2nd – Light it Up Blue – Autism Awareness Day



Community Futures
Thompson
Country

Great ideas can be tomorrow's new businesses. If you have an idea,
CONTACT US TODAY!



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