



Photo: People First of Canada

Cast and crew from *The Freedom Tour*. The film chronicles members of People First of Canada and people advocating on behalf of themselves, who travel across the prairies to collect stories of survivors from institutions who are living in the community. The Freedom Tour involved people who have an intellectual disability behind the camera and in other areas of the development of the film.

Community Living Holds Ceremonies to Reflect Lives Lived in Institutions

Local associations encouraged to organize closure activities, celebrate community living

By Natalie Miller

Community Living Ontario is encouraging local associations to take part in the historic closure of the province's three remaining large institutions.

The provincial association is holding A Reflection on Lives Lived and a Celebration of Community Living on Tuesday, March 31.

While Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls, Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia and Southwest Regional Centre in Blenheim

are expected to shut their doors before March 31, the government's targeted date for closure, Community

Living is keeping that date as a symbolic milestone. The closure of these institutions which have housed people who have an intellectual disability for decades reflects

"Everyone is invited to join Community Living Ontario in a province-wide reflection to remember the lives lived in institutions and to celebrate the move to community living."

— Gordon Kyle, director of social policy and government relations

the advocacy efforts of the provincial and local associations, families and people who have an intellectual

disability. With the government's support of these efforts, people will now live in community settings.

"Everyone is invited to join Community Living Ontario

in a province-wide reflection to remember the lives lived in institutions and to celebrate the move to community living," says Gordon Kyle, director of social policy and government relations for Community Living Ontario.

The association invites people to join them by holding a community-wide event, hosting a small ceremony in their of-

See 'Closing' pg 4

Award Winners Focus on What's Working to Promote Inclusive Education

Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement wins Ontario's CACL Inclusive Education Award

By Camille Jensen

By changing their strategy to focus on the positive steps being made towards inclusive education, the Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement (BDACI) was able to help transform a high school not known for accepting students who have a disability into a successful example and

advocate for inclusion.

For these efforts and others, BDACI was named the Ontario recipient of the Canadian Association for Community Living's (CACL) Inclusive Education Award.

Beth French, BDACI's executive director, says they are pleased to be recognized and that the acknowledgment

See 'Award' pg 2

Student Lands First Job Through Mentoring Initiative

Passport initiative building confidence, self esteem

By Deron Hamel

Matt Ritchie, a Grade 10 student at Parry Sound High School, landed his first job this past summer thanks in part to the guidance and support he received from his mentor, Lorne Michaelis.

When Matt expressed interest in working at the Cabana, a snack bar at nearby Waubuno Beach, in the summer of

2007, Lorne helped Matt prepare for his job interview.

Lorne, along with Andrea Johnston, the Community Living Passport mentoring co-ordinator for north central Ontario, coached Matt and two of his classmates who had also applied for jobs at the Cabana, through the job interview process.

See 'Mentoring' pg 2

Sign a Petition in Support of Community Living

Canada-wide effort targets 10,000 signatures

By Natalie Miller

Canadians who believe people who have an intellectual disability should live in the community and not in institutions can express their support by adding their names to a petition.

As of Feb. 23, 5,408 people had signed the Declaration of Support for Community Living, calling

for the country's remaining institutions to be closed.

"We're trying nationally to get 10,000 signatures," says Rick Tutt, chair of Community Living Ontario's deinstitutionalization working group.

"To make this declaration a success it is estimated that we will need a minimum

See 'Provinces' pg 3



Students Matt Ritchie and Miguel Arroyo (centre) found jobs at Home Depot as part of Community Living Ontario's Passport Mentoring initiative. Also pictured is Home Depot general manager Chuck Reimer (left) and mentor Lorne Michaelis (right).

Mentoring Co-ordinator Has Seen First-hand the Difference the Initiative Has Made in the Lives of Students Involved

Continued from front

This involved having the students dress as they would for a job interview, and practicing drills where Lorne would ask them questions typically asked by an interviewer.

Matt's teacher, Bonnie Smith, videotaped the mock interviews and as a group, they analyzed the videos to discover their strengths, as well as the areas that needed improvement.

"Then the students went out into the community for the job interviews that they had set up for themselves and they were able to get (meaningful) employment for the summer," says Andrea. "It was a wonderful experience for everybody."

Matt says he has enjoyed being a part of the project, joking that he loved his job at the Cabana because "you can eat some of the profits."

Lorne says he has seen first-hand the difference the initiative has made in the

lives of students involved, including an increase in confidence and self-esteem.

"I see a lot more self-esteem in the students," says Lorne. "There is more determination in knowing what they want to do, and they've developed the skills to (accomplish) what they want to do."

Matt and Lorne are now exploring opportunities together so Matt can learn new skills and pursue other interests, including drumming, playing cards and work opportunities at Home Depot.

Bonnie says the students involved with the initiative find visits from mentors to be "inspirational and motivating."

"Andrea and Lorne, as well as other mentors, have added a dynamic learning experience to our classroom," she says.

"The students are very receptive to learning from others who have overcome barriers similar to which they currently find challenging."

National Report Card on Inclusion Released at CACL Conference

Tracks progress made across country in CACL's 10 priority areas

By Camille Jensen

OTTAWA - A tool to inform the progress of the Canadian Association's for Community Living's (CACL) 10-year agenda for change was unveiled during the organization's 50th anniversary conference.

The National Report Card on Inclusion provides a mechanism to comment on and track the 10 objectives outlined in the CACL's 2005 strategic plan through benchmarks, current assessments and key areas that need improvement.

Cam Crawford, CACL's director of research and knowledge management, presented the report card to delegates during the closing plenary.

"The purpose of the report card is not to do an assessment of how associations for Community Living are doing their job and it is not to be used to

criticize," says Crawford.

"It is used to inform and stimulate thinking about what we need to do in order to build on the progress that has been achieved and what we can do more of to make things better for people who may, in many experiences, be facing a lot of difficulty."

Crawford acknowledged local associations from across the country for their efforts to collect hard-to-find information for the update by contacting their provincial and territorial ministries responsible for social services. Other information was found through census reports from organizations such as Statistics Canada.

While there are advancements to be proud of, Crawford says there are still difficult things that require sustained attention.

For instance almost half (47 per cent) of the Canadian public is "not very" or "not

at all" comfortable being around people who have an intellectual disability.

Only 33% of the Canadian public is fully supportive of inclusive education of children who have an intellectual disability.

More than 70 per cent of adults who have an intellectual disability are unemployed or out of the labour force.

Crawford says the update sends the message for everyone to "pull together and keep going."

"It's going to require a lot of work, effort and building on the last 50 years in order to create more inclusive futures for people with intellectual disabilities in the next 50."

The National Report Card is the second of its kind released since CACL adopted its 10-year plan in 2005.

To read the full report card, visit www.cacl.ca.

Award to Highlight the Larger Subject of How to Promote Inclusive Education

Continued from front

offers encouragement and enhanced credibility as the association continues their work towards promoting inclusive education. She credits BDACI's president, Nancy McNamara for her involvement and efforts towards inclusion.

While the accolades are a nice pat on the back, French says she wants the award to highlight the larger subject of how best to promote inclusive education.

"It's very nice for us to be recognized but I think what's most important is that there be recognition of the issues with respect to inclusion of kids who have an intellectual disability in the school system," says French.

According to French, their association experienced real progress towards that goal after deciding to change their approach. She says for many years the association was

supporting families in their efforts to have their child included in the classroom and found the process "quite discouraging," noting they made little progress.

"We decided that what we really needed to do was to switch that around a bit and highlight a positive accomplishment and that was when we started to think about the partnership we had with the Upper Canada District school board," recalls French.

Already having good relations with the school board, BDACI focused their attention on the Brockville Collegiate Institute (BCI), which had the reputation as a highly academic school and not welcoming of students who have a disability.

BDACI joined the school's accessibility committee and worked extensively with the principal, Dave Coombs, who agreed to meet with BDACI families and staff.

"BDACI found ways to teach BCI staff about the high degree of curriculum modification and innovative accommodation needed by students with developmental disabilities. BCI learned to connect this with its board's efforts for differentiated instruction, character development and school improvement," said Marilyn Dolmage, inclusive education consultant, in a letter nominating BDACI for the award.

The efforts of BDACI and the high school also caught the attention of the Ministry of Education, which funded a research project to learn how the high school was able to develop and sustain motivation and strategies for effective inclusion of students who have a disability.

The CACL Inclusive Education Awards highlight National Inclusive Education Week, which took place Feb. 15-22.

New Book: Kirby's Lane

Kirby's Lane...A Well Travelled Path is a collection of true stories about people who have an intellectual disability that shows their valuable social roles and relationships. Visit www.communitylivingontario.ca.

DSW Apprenticeship

There is now an alternative route to become a developmental support worker (DSW) through a two-year apprenticeship program. For more information, visit www.communitylivingontario.ca.

Read more stories

Check out more Community Living Leaders stories online at www.communitylivingontario.ca. To share a news tip contact the newsroom at 1-800-294-0051 (Canada) or 705-741-4421.

Local Association to Hold Quiet Celebration of New Opportunities for People

Community Living North Grenville to unveil photo collage on March 31

By Natalie Miller

Participating in a church service or going to the hairdresser are just two examples of how people who have an intellectual disability are becoming involved in the community now more than ever.

On March 31, Community Living North Grenville will unveil a photo collage of men and women enjoying everyday activities made possible through new living arrangements.

By the end of March, Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls, Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia and Southwestern Regional Centre in Blenheim will close their doors. For decades, these three large institutions have housed hundreds of people who have an intellectual disability.

The provincial government announced in 2004 it was

closing the facilities and helping people, with the support of their families and service providers, move into more community-based settings.

Community Living North Grenville is marking the historical date with an internal "celebration for the individuals we support," says Brenda Dillabough, manager of adult day supports for the association.

"The focus is on living in the community," she says.

North Grenville has helped people transition from Rideau to the community. The photo collage showcases some of the new opportunities people are experiencing as a result. However, the local association has chosen to keep its celebration low-key given its proximity to the community of Smiths Falls, which has encountered job losses as a result of the institution closing.

"We're extremely excited it's going to close but out of respect for the staff and the community as a whole we're going to do something internal. We're in a community that has very mixed feelings but we also have people we support who are thrilled. Secretly we're cheering but we want the community to work with us too."

Dillabough says she expects other Community Livings will hold larger-scale, community events to mark the occasion.

"We do hope there will be big celebrations from other associations."

The closure of these institutions reflects the ongoing efforts of the provincial and local associations, families and various advocates and was made possible with the support of the Ontario government.



Active in Community

Huntsville resident Linda McEachern leads an active life in her community. She attends literacy classes, works at the local Chamber of Commerce and also volunteers. Having lived at two institutions for a combined 25 years, McEachern says she didn't think these opportunities would be possible.

Challenges

By Linda McEachern

*I never thought I'd make it out in the community;
When everyone saw I had an intellectual disability.
Some people don't know us or how to treat us.
We need to talk things out and not make a big fuss.
I use to keep quiet; afraid people wouldn't listen; plus,
I didn't want anyone mad at me
when I stuck up for my own right.
Life isn't easy but you don't get anywhere when we fight.
Going forward;
Not going back to the old way!
I tell myself; "Never give up and you'll be o.k."
Try something new,
Do things you really want to do.
There's more fun ahead of you!
In the institution they did not do anything for us.
Learning to read, write and spell,
Are now things I do well.
At the literacy council I can learn one on one
and I can do it;
As well as computers, money and arithmetic.
I went to the library to study and
learn how they live in another country.
Don't always get someone to do things for you
that you can do yourself.
Gardening, fishing, sewing, crafts or play a
musical instrument from the shelf!
I've learned to put on make-up, do laundry and
started a new job.
Bible study, cooking, swimming, bowling;
Be creative and you won't have to sob.
Listening to music helps people calm down:
joking, laughing and friends to talk to all around!*

Provinces Need Every Encouragement We Can Offer: Tutt

Continued from front of 10,000 names, so that provincial, territorial associations and People First groups from across Canada can take the declaration to their respective governments in the quest to close all institutions."

Launched in August 2007, the Institution Watch website is an initiative of a joint task force created by the Canadian Association of Community Living (CACL) and People First of Canada designed to bring deinstitutionalization back to the national agenda and develop a plan to make the issue a national priority.

While Ontario's remaining large institutions will close by March 31, facilities operate elsewhere in Canada. "The real push here is for the rest of the country," Tutt says.

"Many provinces are teetering on the verge of abandoning plans to maintain or expand these archaic forms of housing and are ready to move on to community alternatives. They need every encouragement that we can offer."

Tutt suggests associations can spread the word further by including a message about the campaign and a link to the petition in their newsletters. Tutt encourages members to forward the request to families, employees and people who advocate for themselves.

To reach a broader audience, Tutt proposes contacting local media as smaller papers may run a small blurb at no cost, and/or posting a sign-up list in local grocery stores or community centres and

then adding those names to the petition. "Encourage service clubs, business associations and town councils to get on board," he adds.

Don Gallant, national co-ordinator of the community inclusion initiative with CACL, earlier told Community Living Leaders this is a first for Canada and it has the chance to make a big impact.

"I'm not sure that we've ever had, as a country, a declaration that spoke specifically to this demand — the request to close institutions," he said.

"I think it's a very powerful declaration." (with files from Jason Thompson)

View the declaration and petition at www.institutionwatch.ca

AODA Standards

Public review of the Accessible Information and Communications Standard is closed. The employment standard is now open for public review until May 22. Further updates at www.mcsc.gov.on.ca.

56th Annual Conference

Inspiring Possibilities, Community Living Ontario's annual conference and AGM, will be held at the Ambassador Conference Resort in Kingston June 3-6.

Sign Up for E-News

Community Living Leaders has a new electronic newsletter on issues of importance to everyone in the community living movement. Send your name and e-mail address to webmaster@axiomnews.ca.

COMMUNITY LIVING
Ontario
Leaders
Inspiring Possibilities

Community Living Leaders is published by
Community Living Ontario

240 Duncan Mill Road, Suite 403, Toronto ON M3B 3S6
Telephone 416-447-4348 • Fax 416-447-8974
Toll Free 1-800-278-8025

www.communitylivingontario.ca

President: Dianne Garrels-Munro • Executive Director: Keith Powell

Contents may be reproduced without seeking further permission if used in proper context and with the following credit line: "Reprinted from Community Living Leaders, the newsletter of Community Living Ontario."

Closing of Institutions a Very Significant Moment in the Community Living History

Continued from front
 fice or by providing support to people to do something reflective in their own homes. Community Living Ontario has distributed candles wrapped with the People First of Canada deinstitutionalization ribbon, a non-denominational reflection, a sample news release and copies of the People First's National Film Board documentary, *The Freedom Tour*, to local associations.

"At some point in your association's history, you have touched the lives of people who have lived in large facilities," Kyle says.

Community Living offers a few suggestions for the reflection activities, such as

organizing a working group that includes people who have lived in institutions and their families. The working group can help determine what type of celebrations reflect the community it supports best.

In addition, Community Living will host an event on April 1 at Queen's Park to recognize the government and all three political parties for their roles in the closure of institutions and support of community living.

"This is a very significant moment in the community living history indeed, in the history of social policy in Ontario," says Kyle. "And one about which we should all feel proud."



Jessica is featured in the television and radio ads for the CACL's national public awareness inclusive education campaign.

CACL Launches National Inclusive Education Campaign

Local associations encouraged to use media resources to initiate partnerships in their communities

By Jennifer Higgs

The Canadian Association for Community Living's (CACL) Inclusive Education — No Excuses Campaign is being launched across the country with the message that all kids belong in an inclusive classroom.

The campaign includes television, radio and newspaper public service announcements (PSAs) that feature a child who has an intellectual disability and some common excuses people give for supporting a segregated school setting.

"The aim of the message is to say all kids belong in regular classrooms and that there is no reason for them not to be there," says Michael Bach, CACL executive vice-president.

The national awareness campaign ads encourage people to visit the No Excuses website, www.no-excuses.ca, that has more information and action steps to support the initiative.

During National Inclusive Education Week, Feb. 15-22, an eight-page CACL supplement was published in the National Post.

Bach says they recognize that making inclusive education possible takes support, teacher training, enabling public policies and school administrator leadership.

"We don't want those reasons and those realities to be held up as excuses for not moving forward on inclusive education," says Bach.

"The CACL knows this is about pretty fundamental systemic transformation, we know that takes time, we want to be partners in that cause but we need to get the message out that there actually aren't excuses for moving forward."

Bach refers to the results of a national poll that only a third of Canadians fully support inclusive education of children who have an intellectual disability. He says this is because people make the usual excuses, such as those featured in the ad campaign; holding the other children back, drawing attention away from others and taking too much of the teacher's time.

Some people may find the campaign too aggressive, says Bach, but it is meant to really challenge people to think about the reasons commonly used to argue children do not belong in regular classrooms and question if they are legitimate reasons.

Lea Parrell, president of Harmony Marketing, created the marketing plan.

"We are trying to make sure that the public understands that it's not just the kids with the intellectual disabilities that are benefiting (from inclusive education), it's the other kids that are benefiting from this experience," she says.

Parrell contacted her associates Dennis Edell and John Farquhar, who own and run Wild Mouse

Advertising, and asked if they would consider taking on CACL pro bono as their charitable client. They agreed and asked their vendors to contribute.

The campaign will run for six months and then they will assess the public reaction and the next steps for the CACL to continue to build its national identity.

Wild Mouse developed the PSAs and approached Brown Entertainment, who came on board and donated everything except hard costs. Parrell says they are now working with MIJO, who has given "amazing charitable rates," to distribute the television and radio ads across the country.

"It was just amazing what people did and how they came to the table to help the organization out," says Parrell.

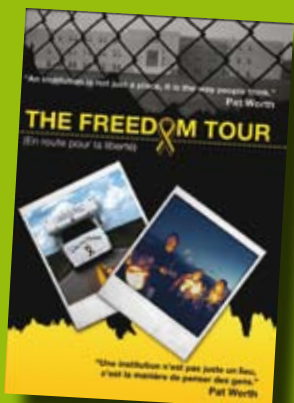
Provincial/territorial Community Living associations are distributing information to local associations about how they can approach other media outlets to run the PSA.

"We want to engage the local and provincial/territorial associations in the campaign as a way of them using our resources to initiate a conversation with key partners in their own community, to take another step in actually building inclusive schools in their own communities," says Bach.

For more information about the campaign, contact the CACL at 416-661-9611.

Freedom Tour & Candlelight Remembrance

In celebration of community living and the closure of institutions join Community Living Ontario, People First of Canada, People First of Ontario and the School of Disability Studies at Ryerson University March 31 for a screening of the Freedom Tour followed by a candlelight reflection.



RSVP to anna@communitylivingontario.ca or call 416-447-4348 ext. 221.



10th Annual Community Living Day at the Legislature

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Join us as we celebrate the closure of institutions in Ontario. This is an opportunity to recognize Members of Parliament and our community partners who have worked so hard to bring about this historical event. We hope to see you there.

Co-sponsored by Community Living Ontario and Community Living Toronto. Visit www.communitylivingontario.ca for more details.