



Family Focus

CDBRA Newsletter

Late Summer 2006

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Fun in the Summer Sun!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



As I sit in our new office, I can't believe summer is already half way over. So much has happened to the CDBRA since I started here as Executive Director on January 17, 2006. We have grown and accomplished so much in those short seven months and we should all feel so proud of the amazing organization that we are building!

Before I provide you with an update on what the CDBRA-BC has been up to, I'll introduce myself.

My name is Erin Jeffery, and for those of you who I haven't had the pleasure of meeting or corresponding with, I am the new (or not so new now) Executive Director of the CDBRA-BC Chapter. Prior to joining the CDBRA-BC, I worked in Public Relations, Corporate Communications and Investor Relations for both a Public Relations firm and a local biotechnology company. I bring to the organization years of communications experience in addition to an event planning, fund raising, marketing and administrative background. And for those of you who HAVE met me, you also know I come with boundless energy and enthusiasm.

These seven months with the CDBRA have been illuminating and exciting. I have never had the pleasure of working with such a welcoming and inspiring community and I hope that I can bring years of successes and celebrations to it.

January - March

The first quarter of 2006 has been filled with growth for the BC Chapter. I started in early January and the board was kept busy bringing me up to speed on our assorted projects and programs. In addition, we were afforded the opportunity to become a beneficiary of the Endeavour Auction, which takes place in early November. This event will provide the CDBRA-BC with an excellent opportunity to do some fundraising in addition to increasing awareness of the deafblind community.

April - June

April 1st marked the hiring of Allison Mail as our full time Early Intervention Program Coordinator. Allison had been working with the CDBRA-BC for two days a week, but with an increase in funding thanks to the Ministry of Children and Family Development, we were able to hire her on a full time basis.

The final week of June was Deafblind Awareness Week. Together with the Deafblind Services Society of BC we embarked on our first ever province wide awareness campaign. All information on the campaign, in addition to information on our generous sponsors the Provincial Outreach program for Students with Deafblindness, the Provincial Well-being program for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind, the Family network for Deaf Children and the BC Association of the Deafblind can be found on the Deafblind Awareness Week website at www.deafblindawareness.org.

Deafblind Awareness Week finished on June 27 with the celebration of Helen Keller's birthday at our Deafblind Awareness Week banquet. The event was well attended and we had amazing entertainment provided by Max-i-mime and the Spotlight Dance Centre.

At the end of June, we moved our office to a shared space at 713 Columbia Street in New Westminster. We are sub-letting from the New Westminster Community Development Society, and they are turning out to be fantastic neighbours. We look forward to a great relationship with them in the future.

July

SUMMER TIME IS HERE!

The Summer Intervention program began on July 4, and we are thrilled to announce that we have more families than ever participating with 57! The generous funding from MCFD only goes so far, and we have only been able to offer 20 hours a week to most families, but are confident that we can increase those numbers for next year.

In addition to the Summer Intervention program, we are once again running the Summer Recreation program in the Lower Mainland and on the island and have started a pilot program in the Okanagan. We are very excited about this new location for the Summer Recreation program and look forward to using it as a model for other pilot programs throughout the province. So far, the Summer Recreation Program events have been well attended and we have received some fantastic feedback! We will use this feedback to make next year even better!

August and Beyond

Our Summer Retreat will be taking place from August at Victory Hills Residence in Burnaby. This once again promises to be a great event, providing our families the opportunity to get together, socialize, exchange stories, support each other, enjoy the food and make connections.

In September, the CDBRA-BC Chapter will be well represented at the National CDBRA Conference on Deafblindness "Celebrating Potential". Allison and Wylie Bystedt, our Chapter Board President, will be presenting on the successes of our Early Intervention program.

In October, our board will be holding a Strategic Planning session which will be essential for giving direction to Allison, myself and the board as to how the chapter will grow and expand.

This has been a great year so far for us, and the second half of the year looks to only get better!

Early Intervention Program Coordinator's Report

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ALLISON MAIL

We've had a very busy spring and early summer with the Early Intervention Program. I've had the opportunity to visit Fort St. John, Chetwynd, Victoria, Enderby and Salmon Arm. I am always struck by

the warmth and caring that I find no matter where I travel in BC. Our families are the best and it's always a treat to meet a new little one!

The other exciting tidbit involves my being asked to join the Early Intervention Advisory Group of the BC Early Hearing Program. What a great honour to be a part of this incredible group. I know that many of our family members with older children are celebrating this innovative program since it will mean that no longer will there be any missed opportunities for learning due to undiagnosed hearing loss.

Of course June is always a busy month as we prepare for children transitioning to preschool and kindergarten. June is also when we gear up for the Summer Intervention Program. This year we have 6 children involved with the EIP-SIP program, the most we've had since we started to include children ages 2.9 years and older with the school age SIP kids.

Watch for our next newsletter when I will tell you all about my conference with Dr. Jan van Dijk. He is the grandfather of deafblindness and the person who initially started the whole cue calendar system! I get shivers just thinking about it. . . wonder where my autograph book is?

President's Report

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WYLIE BYSTEDT

As the Board President of what I consider to be the greatest chapter of the CDBRA I have the opportunity to be involved in activities at the local, provincial, national and international level. The presidents of the BC Chapter have, for the most part, been marked by individuals who have worked hard and have sacrificed family time and money to do the job of president. I think of my predecessor Maureen Davidson and the many times she traveled from her home in Cranbrook to attend to chapter business in Vancouver. And when I first joined the BC Chapter, more than 12 years ago, Art Carrott was president and Ali Akbar was on the board and they frequently traveled from Vancouver Island to attend meetings in Vancouver.

This minor stroll down memory lane was brought on by the upcoming Canadian conference. This year it is being hosted by the Manitoba chapter but I remember in 1996 when it was the BC Chapters turn to host the Canadian conference. Many of the individuals that were on the BC Conference Steering Committee are still involved – Brenda McAlister from BCADB, Joyce Olson from POPDB, Jane Sikorski now with DSS, Mary Arnason and myself with many others spent countless hours working on a conference that we could all be proud of.

As I work with the Manitoba chapter I see that same commitment to do the best job and host the best conference they can. There are many of us from British Columbia that will be attending the conference this year and some of us will have the pleasure of presenting. Allison Mail and myself will be presenting on Early Intervention, Linda Mamer, Joyce Olson, Gerald Harris, Rebecca Shields will also be presenting. We are also sending along additional volunteers – Erin Jeffery, our chapter Executive Director and Sarah Bystedt, a sibling, will be attending and volunteering.

I am sure we will come back with pictures and stories and information from the more than 26 sessions, plenaries and keynotes that there will be to participate in. If you would like information on attending or volunteering you can call our chapter office or check out the conference website at www.cdbra-mb.com.

This we are hosting our Annual General Meeting on August 11, 2006 right before our annual summer BBQ. We did this a couple years ago and it was very popular, so we've decided to try it again. Come for the meeting, but stay for the steak!

We also have room for new directors on our chapter board. If you would be interested in becoming a board member please email me at wylie@coyoteacres.ca or again, call the chapter office and talk to Erin.

It's the middle of the summer which for us means we are halfway through our Summer Intervention Program. I had a great time watching this year's video with my summer intervenor and would love to hear from other families about some of their experiences with the videos. This is the second video that we have had the opportunity to make available through the Summer Intervention Program and is part of our ongoing goal to increase the resources that our members have access to. A small home library of effective material can frequently make a huge difference when dealing with new school staff, ministry staff, summer or weekend help, extended family members – so take every opportunity to share the books and videos with those around you. And tell us about it.

I'd also like to do a bit of online scrapbooking with pictures from our summer. If you have a great picture from your summer that you wouldn't mind sharing on our website please forward it to me or Erin. I have one of Morgan with some sheep trying to eat grain from her lap and another of her swimming with funky goggles on – wait till you see them!

Calendar of Events

September 21-24, 2006

*"Celebrating Potential" 7th Canadian Conference on Deafblindness
Winnipeg, Manitoba*

This year's conference will bring together hundreds of delegates from around the world. These medical professionals, teachers, researchers and community social service providers and families will further their knowledge and strategies to create more opportunities for those we serve.

November 4, 2006

Endeavour Auction 2006- Fairmont Hotel Vancouver

The CDBRA BC Chapter is a beneficiary of this landmark event. ENDEAVOUR is Canada's Vancouver based – largest, single event charity auction. ENDEAVOUR 2006 will mark the charity's 41st successful year. At that time over 650 guests will successfully bid on between 700 – 800 unique items and experiences. In addition to being a financial beneficiary at the event, our chapter will be introduced to the guests attending in addition to donors. Its sure to be a fantastic event for us!
<http://www.endeavoursociety.com/>

November 30-December 1, 2006

Provincial Outreach Program for Children with Deafblindness Annual Conference and District Partner Meeting- Richmond Cultural Center

The POP Team offers an Annual Conference to share current resources, materials and suggestions for programming with a larger group of people. This conference offers the opportunity for people who often feel very isolated to come together and learn from each other, while establishing connections for further networking.

Nov. 30, 2006

Emotional Development in the Learner with Deafblindness

Dec. 1, 2006

CHARGE Syndrome

Guest Speaker: David Brown

David Brown is currently working as an Educational Specialist with the California Deafblind Services Project. Prior to this he worked with SENSE, the National Deafblind Association of the United Kingdom. David enjoys an outstanding international reputation for his work in the field of Deafblindness, and is a frequent guest speaker and lecturer around the world.

Registration Forms will be available in September, 2006

For more information call 604-668-7810

Email: deafblind@richmond.sd38.bc.ca

Website: <http://public.sd38.bc.ca:8004/DeafBlindWeb/Training/annual>

Member Stories

GRADUATION TIME - LIZ TWAITES

Let me tell you both Ron and I never in our wildest dreams would have thought this to be a possibility way back when Jeff was a wee boy! But here we are 13 years later, laughing joyfully and crying at the same time.

Jeffrey, for those who haven't had the pleasure of being put under his spell, is just simply the sweetest boy ever! Happy and easy-going and loves to be around people. All through his school life Jeffrey made friends young and old. School has been the biggest joy for Jeffrey by far. Where else could you find the one on one attention that every child yearns for! He responded!! From teacher, to custodian, to the amazing people who worked with Jeffrey making sense of his day-to-day life... his Intervenors! School was definitely the right place for Jeffrey. But let me tell you it is a two way street in that regard because school needed Jeffrey! The students he met will take with them an understanding of the extraordinary challenges of being deafblind as a result of interacting with Jeffrey in class or on the playground or in the swimming pool. Jeffrey's Intervenors have helped facilitate the learning process. What lucky people we all are.

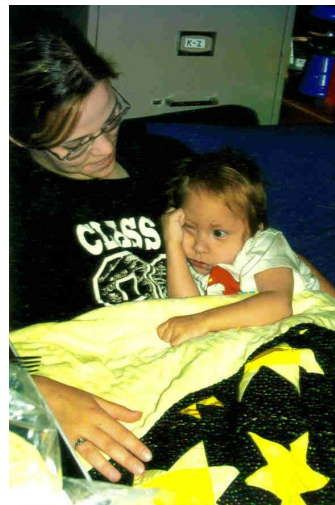
I do have to say that when passing out the kudos, I must send them out to the whole team. . Right from the very start I have to say the advocacy of Brenda Mackenzie, who at the time was with CNIB, was invaluable. She strongly advised us to get the Provincial Outreach Program on board when it was time to enter into kindergarten. Since having POP on the team, I really felt that their consultations contributed to the success of Jeffrey's education. POP is one of many groups who have been instrumental, but the nitty gritty of the team, the Intervenors, who implemented and explored new ways of making Jeffrey's world make sense are the stars! Our appreciation for Ellen, Linda, & Shannon is infinite! Past Intervenors, Jennifer and Kelly are also greatly appreciated.

I don't know why we have been so lucky with our school experience, but maybe it has something to do with who we are and our willingness to share Jeffrey so that everyone can benefit from him being who he is. I don't like to hear people say that we were given Jeffrey because we are special. I think he has had a big impact in bringing out the best in us as parents and people. We have benefited. All the friends and people we have met through the elementary school time have been exceptional! And that's why I say we are joyful that Jeffrey has made it to this milestone in his life, but so very sad to leave the friends we have had at the elementary school.

Cute Cuddly Cue Quilt

ALLISON MAIL

Barb Daley, one of our Regional Support Workers, decided to create this beautiful quilt for Kaitlynn for her trip to BC Children's Hospital as a cue to help her transition from home to her long stay in the Lower Mainland. She chose bright, vivid colours for contrast and a simple visual design for the patterned side to engage Kaitlynn. For the backing she chose a very soft silky yellow side good for cuddling value.



Lindsay, an Intenor, is seen cuddling Kaitlynn in her finished quilt.

Look for next month's newsletter for the instructions on how to make this amazing quilt.

CDBRA Website

We are happy to announce that our CDBRA-BC Chapter Website will be updated by the first week in September! Check out the new site at www.cdbrabc.ca . This site will have extensive information on deafblindness, chapter activities and special member sections!

Feedback Forum

We want your feedback! Is there something that you feel we should be doing better? Is there something that you feel we are doing well? Do you have a story for the newsletter? Anything else? Please let us know by phone, fax, email or mail! We would love to hear from you!

Websites & Resources

Deafblind Awareness Week BC

<http://www.deafblindawareness.org>

Sense International

<http://www.senseinternational.org.uk/>

CDBRA National

<http://www.cdbra.ca/>

Deafblind Services Society of BC

<http://www.deafblindservices.com>

Canadian Hearing Society

<http://www.chs.ca/>

Canadian National Society for the Deafblind

<http://www.cnsdb.ca/>

Canadian Helen Keller Centre

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

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

<http://www.cnib.ca/>

Deafblind International

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

George Brown College

<http://www.gbrownc.on.ca/Marketing/FTCal/comsrv/C108.html>

Provincial Outreach Program for Children with Deafblindness

<http://public.sd38.bc.ca:8004/DeafBlindWeb/>

DB-Link- The National Information Clearinghouse on
Children Who Are Deaf-Blind

<http://www.tr.wou.edu/DBLINK/>

Kudos

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It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes a community to help. We could not be where we are without the generous help of the government, donors, sponsors, volunteers and board of directors. Here are a few names that we want to say THANK YOU to...

The Ministry of Children and Family Development-as the funders of our programs, they offer us generous support and guidance

Mountaintop Meats, Coyote Acres Ranch, Favourite Things Gifts, Linda Mamer, Yonder Wood Corporation, Steve King, Joey Tomatoes, Barkerville, Serenity Esthetics, Rain Studio and Hair Salon, Red Bug Bijou designs, Gaia Handbags, EQ3 and soon to be more for their generous donations to the Endeavour Auction on behalf of the CDBRA.

Our fantastic Board of Directors-Wylie Bystedt, Pat Tombe, Katherine Simola, Ellen Faustman, Mary Arnason, Linda Mamer, Lee Wilcox and Liz Twaites for volunteering their time and expertise

Our Chapter members for making us the second largest and strongest chapter in Canada!

New Address and Contact Info

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Our new address is

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713 Columbia St

New Westminster, BC

V3M 1B2

Fax number-604.517.6137

Erin/Chapter contact

Phone-604.517.6174

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Allison/Early Intervention Program contact

Phone- 604.517.6175

Email- allison@cdbra.bc.ca