

2001 was a good year for GCBR Programme

On behalf of the CBR family (for we are a family) and on my own behalf, I wish to extend warmest wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2002 to all our friends, benefactors, beneficiaries and indeed all of Guyana.

Last year was a pretty successful year for us as most of our programmes were completed. However, the year nearly ended on a not so good note. This was because a few insensitive police ranks stationed at Weldaad Police Station on the West Coast of Berbice used some very uncomplimentary words to describe our physically challenged brothers and sisters who were participating in a peaceful march on Saturday December 1, 2000, to commemorate **International Day of the Disabled**. A similar march, called a **Public Awareness March** was held in Georgetown on the same day. During 2002, we will be increasing our efforts to educate and assist persons, especially our public servants on how to deal with persons with disabilities.

In this edition of **Hopeful Steps**, I will share with you some tips on communicating with persons with disabilities.

It is important to remember that persons with disabilities are like everybody else. Open and relaxed communication works best with everyone. Statistics reveal that one in five people, in the world lives with a disability.

Sometimes people are uncomfortable around people with disabilities because they don't know how to act or what to say. While you should just relax and be yourself, here are some general tips to make communicating easier:

1. First and most important- people with disabilities, like everyone else, deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. People with disabilities have different personalities and different preferences about how to do things. To find out what a person prefers, ask..
2. When you meet someone with a disability, it is appropriate to shake hands- even if a person has limited hand use or artificial limbs. Simply touch hands (or the person's prosthesis) to acknowledge his/her presence. Shaking the left hand is also fine.
3. Always ask before you assist a person with a disability, and then listen carefully to any instructions. Do not interfere with a person's full control over his/her own assistive devices. For example, before you push someone who uses a wheelchair, make sure to ask if s/he wants to be pushed. Likewise, never move crutches or communication boards out of the reach of their owners without permission.
4. Remember, many persons with disabilities want to serve as well as be served and enjoy assisting others.
5. People with disabilities do not always want to make details of their disability the first topic of conversation.
6. Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to perform certain tasks.

Leon Walcott - Editor

If you have an event, or you know a person with a disability who has a story to share with us, please feel free to contact us. Send all the information to:

The Editor
Hopeful Steps
Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme
107 Carmichael Street
North Cummingsburg
Georgetown

Small Change Bottle Project Launched

The Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GCBR) launched its Small Change Bottle Project on Saturday December 8 at Nigel's Supermarket at Robb Street, Georgetown.

The event was declared open by Minister Health Dr. Leslie Ramsammy who praised Mr. Nigel Johnson (at right in the picture), proprietor of Nigel's Supermarket for his fine gesture. The Minister also applauded the CBR for their continuing efforts at training and educating persons with disabilities.

The project, is one in a series of Fund raising events organised by GCBR in order to assist in the financing of its country-wide training activities. Project Co-ordinator Gwendoline Glasgow explained that these bottles with the CBR labels will be placed at checkout counters of supermarkets and stores in Georgetown. Customers leaving the store will be asked to drop their coins in the bottles.

CBR shows appreciation for training camp held

THE Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (CBR) in Guyana expressed appreciation, on Saturday October 20, 2001, to individuals and organisations for assisting to make its recent vocational training camp a reality.

It was done through the staging of 'Afternoon of Exhibition and Appreciation' at Guyana Motor racing and Sports Club (GMR&SC), on Thomas Lands, Georgetown, which featured the sale of exhibits produced by persons with disabilities who participated in the one-week exercise at Camp Madewini, East bank Demerara, from September 2 to 9, 2001.

Co-ordinator of that project was Mrs. Gwen Glasgow and the products sold at the exhibition included tie-died materials, wooden towel racks, breadboards, fabric-painted jerseys, tablecloths, place mats and bed sheets.

Guests were also treated to a display of talents by three differently abled young women, Donetta Jardine, Rohini Kowlessar and Tawana Wayne. The young ladies put on a show which included modelling and a preview of costumes for Mash 2002.

From the desk of the National Advisor

-Mrs. Geraldine Maison Halls

I am so pleased to extend warmest wishes for 2002 to all the members of the CBR family and to the many friends and partners of the Programme. The GCBRP values greatly the contributions that you made during the past year and we look forward to your continued support in the new year.

The year 2001 can be described as a very exciting period for the organisation, as we saw the increased level of recognition and interest shown in the programme from organisations across the world. Communication was received from places such as, Nepal, Eritrea, Canada, Holland, India, the United States of America, and even from the Caribbean. At the local level, requests are frequently received from other organisations or agencies for information and the participation of the CBR organisation in different fora. Those contacts have helped in strengthening partnerships and facilitated efforts to ensure that appropriate attention is given disability issues in related areas of programme planning and development.

The CBR programme is one of the NGOs in Guyana that have been officially recognised by UNICEF and during 2001, the organisation was invited to participate in the three preparatory meeting for UN Special General Assembly on Children, which was scheduled for September 2001. Other international conferences to which CBR was invited include the International Workshop on Poverty and Health sponsored by Amici di Raoul Follereau Foundation (AIFO), the main funders of the programme, and the Annual Conference of AIFO.

Further recognition of the programme was seen in December, 2001, when a group of five persons from Barbados came on a PAHO/WHO sponsored study tour to Guyana to observe the CBR programme. It was a fruitful experience for the visitors as well as the volunteers and persons with disabilities and their families. The group was able to visit the CBR programme on the East Coast Demerara, West Coast Demerara and in Kurukururu. Also included in their tour itinerary were courtesy calls on the PAHO/WHO country representative, Dr. Bernadette Theodore Gandi, the Hon. Minister of Health Dr. Leslie Ramsammy and representatives of the National Commission on Disability.

The CBR organisation sees itself as an agent of change in realising the vision:
"in which persons with disabilities are respected as valuable citizens, integrated into the social life of the country and contributing their talents and skills as supported by each other and the society at large. They live independent lifestyles having equal access to social, economic and cultural benefits. In particular, children with disabilities have nurturing and caring homes supported by communities and social institutions.

The year 2001 was indeed a fruitful year for the CBR programme and this was due in no small measure to the work of committed volunteers together with persons with disabilities and families and the many supporters of our programme. You have made the difference in the lives of so many individuals!

Open Door Centre holds Workshop

The Guyana Vocational Centre in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) held a two-day workshop on the 29 and 30 November at the Ocean View International Convention Centre at Liliendaal, Greater Georgetown.

At the workshop, held under the theme, ***An enabling environment towards realising the potential persons with disabilities***, presentations were made by ILO Senior Specialist in Human Resource Development and Vocational Training, George Gamerdinger; Chief Executive Officer of the Private Sector Commission, David Yankana; Caribbean Congress of Labour Representative, George DePeana and Chairperson of the National Commission on Disabilities, Evelyn Hamilton.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- to identify factors which would enhance training as a means of reducing the vulnerability of persons living with disabilities;
- to determine the factors which would contribute to the removal of discriminatory practices towards persons with disabilities in the labour market;
- to increase the awareness of the concepts and practices of working with persons with disabilities;
- to foster a working relationship between government ministries, agencies, NGOs and other organisations.

The Vocational (Open Door) Centre is located at the Mildred Mansfield Youth Club building at D'urban Street, Werk-en-Rust, next to the Carnegie School of Home Economics. It

provides a wide range of vocational training and services for people with disabilities.

More attention for disabled persons

- Health Minister

Minister of Health, Dr Leslie Ramsammy observed, in a message on International Day of Disabled Persons - 2001, that a "new era beckons, one that is committed to recognise that even though we are differently able, we all have the same right to a dignified life."

The theme for year's observance was "**Promoting the Positives and Abilities of Persons with Disabilities.**"

The Minister noted that the problems disabled persons confront are not all related to health issues, Dr Ramsammy asserted that an effective response must revolve around an intersectional approach. The message said that the Ministries of Education, Labour, Human Service and Social Security, and Youth, Sport and Culture are all important players "as we develop an enabling environment for persons with disabilities."

Dr. Ramsammy said that the establishment of the National Commission on Disability which has the "potential to bring together a cohesive approach to the issue of disability."

He acknowledged too the contributions of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programme, the low vision centre at the Georgetown Public Hospital, the Guyana Society for the Blind and the Building Community Capacity Programme (BCCP).

The launching of Open Doors, a training facility for disabled persons, is also a positive development which needs to be expanded, the message said.

From the desk of the Chairman, *Mr. Gregory Glasgow*

I take this opportunity on behalf of the National Community Based Rehabilitation Committee (NCBRC) and on my own behalf, to extend to the GCBRP's National Advisor, each regional CBR committee, co-ordinators, facilitators, other members, Disabled Persons Organisations, office staff, supporters and friends, a happy, prosperous and successful 2002.

It is my sincere hope that 2002 will bring us all success and development in our personal lives and that of the organisation.

In the year 2002, we will continue to work towards consolidating and expanding on the achievements which we have made in the year 2001. Most of you may recall that the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme / Circle of Solidarity Raoul Follereau Foundation (GCBRP/CSRFF) has a National Programme covering the period 2000-2002. In the National Programme we had identified four major programming areas:- Community Based Action Programme, Income Generation, Development of Disabled Persons Organisation, and Volunteer Recruitment and Training.

We have been moving towards achieving our goals and objectives in these programming areas and we can say, that we are satisfied with the achievements made to date.

In the year 2002, the organisation will also be placing greater emphasis on the following three areas of programming:-

Resource Mobilisation and Development; Advocacy and Public Awareness; Research and Programme Development

At the National level, we cannot, alone, make these areas of programming a reality and success. It is the membership, partners and sponsors who will enable us to achieve the desired results. With this in mind I ask that you continue to give the same high level of support, commitment and co-operation you did in 2001.

Let me also express sincere thanks and appreciation for the high level of commitment support and service, which you all gave in the year 2001.

Let us continue to work for the development of persons with disabilities, so that they can realise their potentials and attain their rightful place in society.

In The Regions

Community Based Rehabilitation Research Centre Grove East Bank.

East Bank Research Centre continued to give support to Persons with disabilities (P W D) and their family members also volunteer. The Disabled People Organisation (D P O) which is an arm of CBR meets twice monthly for specific activities, and interact with other P W D and volunteers.

Meetings

On the second Monday of each month, the Executives of the Regional Committee have their Statutory Meeting General Members meetings are held quarterly.

Training

Introduction to Community Based Rehabilitation

A twenty-hour training programme commenced on 8th of October, 2001 and was completed on 9th November, 2001. Participants and their facilitator Mr. Basdeo Singh met twice weekly for two hours. Mr. Basdeo Singh is a trained teacher and also a trained CBR volunteer.

The twenty-hour module, used, offered a chance for participants to develop new attitudes, beliefs, values and skills to assist persons with disabilities to be included in every sphere of community living.

The course also dealt with issues related to children, youths, and adults with disabilities. Among the issues discussed - vision, hearing and speech, behaviour modification and teaching strategies.

Objective

To sensitise participants about the role of rehabilitation workers for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstream of society. Participants were drawn from a wide cross section of the community - Parents and family members of PWDs, Teachers, Health Workers and Volunteers. Sixteen participants completed the course. Closing exercise was scheduled for 17th December, 2001 at 12:30 hrs.

Braille Programme

Eight visually impaired persons are currently being trained to write and read Braille.

This programme began on the 1st of October, 2001. Participants and their facilitators would meet twice monthly for six months.

The facilitators are Miss Sharon Harris and Mrs Jeanette Jordan. The main objective of this course is to improve the literacy skills of the persons with visual impairment in the DPO.

Mrs Jeanette Jordan has completed a one year IDCE programme called Introduction to Sociology and graduated with credits.

Congratulations for a job well done!

East Bank of Demerara

Miss Annette Satoya Regional Co-ordinator, participated in a two-week workshop in *Sign Language and Communication Skills*. This workshop was held from 6th August to 20th August 2001. The knowledge gained has enabled her to work with persons with Hearing and Speech Impairment on the East Bank of Demerara to improve their communication skills.

A Capacity Building Workshop for PWDs and committee members was held on the 26th November, 2001. The topics covered were Basic Book keeping, Report Writing and Accounting.

Events

1. Sale of work and food items would be held on 30th November, 2001

Venue: Diamond Market Place

Time: 10:30 hrs - 14:30 hrs

2. Annual Christmas Party 17th December of December, 2001 at Resource Centre Grove, East Bank Demerara.

Greetings

Officers and members of East Bank Regional CBR Committee take this opportunity to wish our National Advisor, Mrs Geraldine Maison Halls and the entire CBR family in Guyana a God Blessed Christmas and continued success in the year 2002.

CORENTYNE CBR RESOURCE CENTRE

NEWS SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

Home visits to encourage Old Volunteers to return to the Unit are continuing with some success.. Janet Walrond is back with the group and is involved in spearheading a programme Decorative Craft

Rehabilitation Assistant Sharon Maranjie, Anneeka Gueverra, Roquelin Bennett and Tonsha Cummings attended a workshop at St. Francis Xavier Club in collaboration with the Building Community capacity Project (BCCP). on *"Women and Children at Risk"* from October 22 - 24 2001.

A Family Fun Day was held on Sunday November 11, 2001, at the Resource Unit Compound.

A second workshop on *"Women and Children at Risk"* was attended by Anneeka Gueverra and Roquelin Bennett on November 7 - 9 at St. Francis Xavier Youth Club.

British High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr. Edward Glover and a team visited the Resource Centre in Port Mourant and promised to assist in any way he could.

A Training programme for new volunteers continued at Number 63 Village on the Corentyne, Berbice on Saturdays from 14:00 - 16:00 hours. Miss Sandra Samaroo, Juanita Henry and Natalie Ramotar continue to facilitate sessions in their various fields.

Annette Welch and Hermina Thomas continue to facilitate awareness programmes at Nursery Teachers Workshop in Central Corentyne.

Region 9 Holds 4th Regional Conference

The Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GBCR) held its 4th Regional Conference on November 17th and 18th 2001, at St. Ignatius village in Region 9 (Upper Essequibo/Upper Takutu) under the theme *"Linking Efforts In Communities For the Development Of All"*

Forty-one persons attended the conference which brought volunteers and physically challenged persons together from the five Sub-districts of this vast region.

The keynote address was given by Mr Vincent Henry, Regional Chairman of Region 9, who reflected on the work the CBR has done in the region on 'Early Childhood Stimulation' and which has surely contributed to the success of children in this region. He thanked and praised the CBR volunteers for their work especially in this "International Year of Volunteers".

Mrs. Geraldine Maison Halls, National Advisor of the GCBR, in her opening remarks thanked everyone for keeping the CBR family in the region together and brought greetings from Italy where she attended an International Conference of the CBR recently.

Greetings were also given by Mr Gregory Glasgow, Chairman of the CBR National Committee and Ms Jeanette Jordan also of the National Committee.

Sub-districts also reported on their activities over the last year and put together and submitted their Action Plans for the year 2001-2002.

Cheques were handed over to the facilitators to assist in meeting expenditures for several projects to be undertaken in the Sub-Districts.

The Conference programme was interspersed with cultural items, and a mini exhibition of items from each Sub-district lent colour to this event.

This Conference will be followed up by mini conferences in each Sub-district. The first two were held at Nappi on the 11th December, 2001 and at Sand Creek on the 14th December, 2001. Coinciding with these conference were observances for the *International Day of Disabled Persons*.

A poem from Essequibo Coast CBR

Let us Live

We are flowers of one Garden
We may be slow but leave us to our peace
We will meet you at the end of the race

We came into the world to live
Just like you do
So stop treating us like some old shoe.

Wake up! Support us that we become equipped.
And we will enrich your lives
Instead of making them burdensome

Listen to our needs and we will get on well indeed
Meet us all the way when we meet today
To learn about sharing our mutual ways

Freedom of movement for us to move around
And to take a trip into town
I will need a bus ride
To maintain this independent role
I need access to available transportation

To move freely with in my community '
I need rails, ramps and lifts
In order to maintain my dignity

I want to have access to clubs, schools, store and pubs
Thus taking my rightful place in society.
I am not looking for charity

Thus asking that you put in place the necessary facilities
That will help me to develop
My individuality

Around the World

Disabled prisoner sues

A man who claims he was treated unfairly by the prison service because of his disability has won a landmark victory, last year. The case will have implications for other disabled prisoners. The man, who does not want to be named, was sent to Horfield prison in the United Kingdom after being sentenced to nine months in February 1998 for handling stolen goods.

He was later transferred to Leyhill Open prison but sent back to Horfield because of his mobility impairment, even though Leyhill is accessible.

Horfield is meant for people who have committed serious offences, and is much stricter, with limited recreation, entertainment and visits.

The man brought the case under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), and was given £3,500 compensation by the Home Office in an out of court settlement. It also covered all his legal costs.

Northwest Air Faces Discrimination Fine

Northwest Airlines (Nasdaq:NWAC) was last year charged with discriminating against passengers with disabilities and the U.S. Department of Transportation said it was seeking the largest civil penalty ever against a carrier, more than \$3 million.

On hundreds of occasions, the nation's fourth-largest airline allegedly took a long time getting wheelchairs, left passengers on aircraft for extended periods of time, and left passengers

at the wrong gates which made them miss connecting flights, according to the agency's enforcement office.

Blind Phone users to see

"Blind mobile phone users in Italy will soon be able to 'read' text messages. The Italian mobile phone company TIM say they have come up with a system to develop software that can translate text messages into spoken voice mails."

Diabetics Face Air Security Hurdle

"The new business and security realities at U.S. airports have made life more complicated for people with diabetes. The American Diabetes Association has confirmed that some people with Type 1 diabetes, many of whom rely on injectable insulin to survive, have reported difficulties carrying their medications through airport security checks."

University sued

A group of current and former deaf students has sued the University of California, accusing the Berkeley and Davis campuses of not providing adequate services for the hearing-impaired. The lawsuit, filed in Alameda County Superior Court in the USA, said the campuses have not furnished deaf students with interpreters or rendered other services in a timely fashion, or not at all -- in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

New Co-ordinator appointed

Ms. Minerva Gill has been appointed Fund-raising Co-ordinator of the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme with effect from November 1, 2001. She brings to the post over 20 years of experience in providing training to persons with disabilities..

New AIFO representative

Mr. Franco Macera has been appointed the new Italian Association: Amici di Raoul Follereau - AIFO Project Co-ordinator in Guyana.

Mr. Macera holds a Masters degree in Health Services Management. He also possesses a Degree in physiotherapy. His areas of interest are training and continuing education of rehabilitation workers, Project planning, implementation and evaluation, with particular

Myths about PWDs and employment

Myth 1 They have a higher turnover.

In actual fact a person with a disability tends to stay in their job for much longer because they appreciate how hard it was to get it in the first place.

Myth 2 They are less productive.

In a number of surveys of large companies in developed countries, the job performance of people with a disability was average or better.

Myth 3 They are a safety risk.

Again companies employing people with a disability report less accidents and no increase in insurance costs.

Myth 4 They are too costly and demanding.

There is no evidence to suggest that employing a person with a disability costs more or that they are demanding of time and attention.

Myth 5. They would be an embarrassment to the organisation.

There are too many testimonials from satisfied employers to negate this myth.

Myth 6. They won't fit in.

Discrimination in the workplace diminishes significantly

reference to projects concerning rehabilitation in developing countries.

Welcome Eva

Meet Eva Tomei, a student from Proviencia in Italy. Here is her story.

I arrived in Guyana on December 1, 2001 as a student of physiotherapy because I was interested in doing a thesis on the activities of the CBR. I was interested in working with children and when I contacted Francesca Ortali from A.I.F.O. she talked to me about this project.