



HOPEFUL STEPS



News Letter of the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme - December 2002

Health Minister Keeps his Promise



Minister of Health, Dr. Leslie Ramsammy on Thursday December 12, 2002, kept a promise he made to the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GCBRP) eighteen months ago. On that day, Dr. Ramsammy officially opened a ramp, at the head office of the Ministry of Health on Brickdam, Georgetown. The ramp has been constructed to facilitate wheel chair access to the building.

According to a senior official of GCBRP, "Minister Ramsammy has been one of the leading advocates for better conditions for person with disabilities. The ramp is just one visible example of his commitment to improving the lives of persons living with disabilities. There are many

others."

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At the 9th Annual Conference of the GCBRP which was held at the Guyana Public Service Union Sports Club, Thomas Lands, Dr. Ramsammy had said in his feature address that it was a shame that buildings were constructed without ramps which would help the disabled to gain easier access to them.

The Health Minister then promised to have the Ministry of Health's building at Brickdam remodelled with a ramp to accommodate persons with physical disabilities. The steep stairs made

wheel chair access to the Ministry difficult. He also promised to take steps to ensure that all public buildings being constructed in future will be disabled-friendly.

Shout it out

Christmas is a season of goodwill, hope, love and joy. For many of us we have to give thanks that we are alive and have reasons to hope and expect a better future. Millions of people in other parts of world are not so fortunate. So, as we go forward in 2003, it is imperative we shout our message of love, hope, and needs to the world! A single voice can be drowned out by the winds. Many voices, speaking in unison can create a roar loud enough to be heard above a raging storm! The more individuals blending into one voice, the more widely that message is likely to be heard.

As persons with disabilities, we cannot afford to be silent and withdrawn. We have to come forward and let the world know about us. Only then will we be respected.

I have observed that most of the volunteers and friends of the disabled are women. I wonder if men are afraid to come out. If that is so, we have to work harder to encourage them to do come out and lend a hand. I know that there are men out there who are willing to assist, but they may not know how to do so. We have to guide them.

I challenge you volunteers, wherever you are, to seek out others who can assist. Maybe it will just be one person or two or maybe three to five people. They may refuse at first. But, we have to be persistent and wear them down. This is one area in which being a nuisance is for a good cause. Start with your neighbours, friends, loved ones, work mates or family members. Discuss your concerns and needs with them and ask for their advice and suggestions. This is one way of getting them involved. I am confident that Christmas 2003 will see us with many more male volunteers fighting the good fight.

May God Bless all of us

Leon Walcott
Editor

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Mrs. Deslyn Fraser

Lovely Lass Village, West Coast Berbice..

Ms. Nicole Nicholson

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(home).

34 Graduate

Thirty-five volunteers from the West Berbice area, recently completed a one-year Volunteer Training Programme aimed at improving their capabilities in assisting persons with disabilities. The Training Programme was a joint effort by The Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme and the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education of the University of Guyana.

Course Co-ordinator, Gwendoline Glasgow noted that the course was both challenging and rewarding. She explained that as part of the programme, volunteers were required to work with at least two persons with disabilities. They were also expected to spend at least forty contact hours with the persons with disabilities and their family members, along with 20 contact hours as a group for monitoring, supervision, visits, feedback and evaluation.

The programme was funded by AIFO of Italy and special prizes were awarded to the following persons:

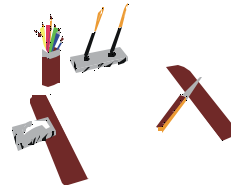
- Ms. Millicent Ross, PWD and trained teacher, for the most outstanding and improved volunteer .
- Mrs. Chandra Kowlessar, parent of PWD, for the volunteer with the best attitude .
- Mrs. Elizebeth Chuffoon, parent of a PWD, for the volunteer who worked with most families (four).
- Mrs. Princess Ince, volunteer with best attendance .
- Ms. Lonette Benjamin, community worker, for volunteer with the most outstanding inclusive education work done in school.
- Ms. Alexis Melville, teacher, for volunteer with the best display of folder with profiles
- Mr. Roland Spencer, PWD and trained public servant, for being the most outstanding volunteer.

Prizes of appreciation were presented to:

- Mr. Franco Macera AFIO Representative
- Mr. Gregory Glasgow Chairman, National CBR Committee
- Mrs. Geraldine Maison-Halls National Adviser, Guyana CBR Programme
- Mr. Samuel Small A.A, Director, IDCE University of Guyana
- Mrs. Barbara Thomas-Holder, Co-ordinator, Social Work Unit, University of Guyana.

Congratulations to all the successful volunteers. They are: Nicola Lucinda Aaron, Sandra Abrams, Rosaline Bovell, Lonette Benjamin, Shaundelle Natasha Benjamin, Eslyn Bennet, Ernestine Blair, Elizabeth Chuffoon, Wyneth Chapman, Iris Culley, Margaret Davidson, Mary Bowman-Fraser, Aliceson Ann Fraser, Audrey Durecka Garraway, Princess Veronica Ince, Holly Ann Joseph, Nadera Johnson, Chandra Kowlessar, Rohinie Kowlessar, Sandra London, Allison Lynton, Andrea Marks, Hardai McDoom, Cicely Mc Kenzie, Alexis Melville, Kleada Moore-Thompson, Joycelyn O' Donoghue, Dhankoomarie Ramroop, Millicent Ross, Latchmin Azeez, Roland Spencer, Carol Williams, Myrtle Whyte and Tawia Lynch.

From the desk of the National Advisor



- Mrs. Geraldine Maison Halls

As we begin this new year, let me extend warmest greetings to the members of the CBR family and the many friends of the programme. Over the last year, CBR received support in various forms from a wide range of local and international organisations, government departments and many interested individuals. We are extremely appreciative of the diversity of support for our organisation, as these have all contributed to the enrichment of the programme.

The end of 2002, saw the conclusion of the 3-year National Work Programme, which had been developed and adopted after an extensive consultative review of the CBR Programme. The Building Community Capacity Project (BCCP) provided technical support for the whole exercise. The implementation of the 2000-2002 National Work Programme coincided with the funding cycle from our main funding partner, Amici di Raoul Follereau Foundation (AIFO), with co-funding from the European Union.

December proved to be a very busy month for the CBR Programme, as we received a number of very special persons from Italy. We were pleased to welcome Ms. Francesca Orтели, the Project Manager in AIFO as well as two members of the AIFO Board, Dr. Salvatore Amaro and his wife Anna. Prior to the arrival of the AIFO team, the end-of-project evaluation of the CBR Programme was started.

The assessment of the 3-year work plan at the national level was conducted by Ms. Estella Schneider, the external evaluator from the United States of America, while Dr. Sarah Gordon, the local evaluator was responsible for the assessment of the programme in the six regions (2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9). Preliminary feedback has been most encouraging and we look forward to receiving the final report, which will help us in the development of the 2003-2005 Work Programme.

We feel very excited about the possibilities for this new year. We recognise that among our priorities for the year will be a greater focus on public awareness and advocacy, as more and more persons with disabilities 'make their presence felt and their voices heard'. In this regard, the CBR organisation has been providing active support for the launching of a National Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) early in 2003.

If you have never had any contact with a CBR group, do not let the year go by without getting in touch with the National CBR Resource Centre and Office, 107 Carmichael Street, Georgetown (Tel: 226 6946/226 5780; e-mail: guycbr@sdnp.org.gy).

We look forward to hearing from you, as we seek to expand the scope and reach of the CBR Programme during this year. You can make a difference.

Reaching out to the North West District

As part of its effort in extending its programme of providing rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities in as many parts of Guyana as possible, several members of the National Committee of the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GCBR) made a fact-finding visit to the North West District (Region One) from November 28 to November 30, 2002.

The team was led by National Committee Chairman, Mr. Gregory Glasgow, Ms. Patricia Fredericks - CBR Regional Co-ordinator (Region Nine), Ms. Vesta Jeffrey - Secretary, National CBR Committee. During the visit, the CBR team met with officials of the Regional Administration of Region One (Barima-Waini).

Mr. Glasgow explained the role and work of CBR to members of the community. The Regional Chairman of Region One said that he is eagerly looking forward to the sewing group, functional literacy classes and nutrition classes. He further advised that he can target the villages in the region for the nutrition programmes. He suggested that three persons from each village be trained at Mabaruma and that the Resource Person could be a teacher from the Secondary School, in the township. The Regional Chairman indicated that he is also interested in the teaching of Project-Writing. The acting Regional Health Officer was asked to compile a list of persons with disabilities in the region for CBR.

Some of the needs identified at Mabaruma are: training for youths, restructuring of the Community Library and training of persons in the school system to work with persons with disabilities.

The Village Captain at Kamwatta, Mr. Maurice Henry and the Expediter of the Ministry of Local Government in Region One, Mr. Derek Harte have been named as contact persons.

Rotary Day of Sports

The Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GCBR) played a very active role in the "Day of Sports for the Physically Challenged" held by the Rotary Club of Georgetown (RCG) by carting off most of the prizes.

The event was held at the Thirst Park Ground on Sunday October 13, 2002, and was organised in keeping with the Rotarian motto for 2002-2003, "Sow the Seeds of Love" and attracted participants from 18 institutions for the differently-able from across the country.

The opening ceremony took place at around 8:30 am and was followed by a total of 25 different events.

There were races which saw amputees testing their skills (mixed); egg and spoon (boys and girls open); needle and thread (visually impaired) and armless relay.

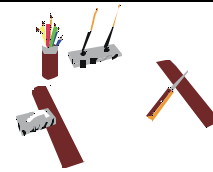
Persons of both genders, in the 8-11, 12 -15, 16-21 and 22 and over age groups, participated in the various activities.

In addition, a medical team, several Rotaractors and other officials worked enthusiastically and in co-ordination, to ensure the event's success.

His Excellency, President Bharrat Jagdeo, Minister of Health, Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, US Ambassador to Guyana, Mr. Ronald Godard and President of the Guyana

Olympic Association, Mr. K.A. Juman Yassin
were among those in attendance.

From the desk of the Chairman



Mr. Gregory Glasgow

countries forward in creating inclusive communities.

From October 29 -31, 2002, I had the opportunity to attend the 7th World Congress on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in San Luis, Argentina, South America.

The theme of the congress was *"The Life Cycle of the Child with Disabilities: Policies and Programs that Promote Full Inclusion."*

Four Hundred persons from fifty different countries from around the world attended and fully participated in discussing the theme and also shared what their countries have done and will do to promote full inclusion of the child with disabilities in the community.

I was able to explain what was the situation in Guyana as it relates to the inclusion of children with disabilities in the community; and to specifically highlight the work the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme was doing, as a Non-governmental organisation (NGO) at the governmental and community levels to promote this and other issues that affect children and families.

Since 1992, people from countries around the world have been getting together every two years to share policies and programmes that promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in the everyday life of the communities in which they live.

At this International meeting of policy makers, young people with disabilities and their families, service providers, and community partners plan strategies to move

The Congress explored the following topics as they affect the various stages of a child's growth and development:

- **Educational policies**
- **Social services and health care.**
- **Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and how they interact with government on issues that affect children and families.**
- **Family members: How to build partnerships with professionals and advocate for their children.**
- **Young adults with disabilities and their transition to a productive adulthood.**

Presentations on these topics were made by expositors, after which, participants went into plenary sessions to discuss what was happening in their countries in relation to these issues.

Let me express thanks and appreciation to the National Commission on Disability for selecting me to attend the Congress and the United Nations Development Programme for making the funds available for me to travel.

On behalf of the National Community Based Rehabilitation Committee, and on my own behalf, I would like to take this

opportunity to wish everyone *a Rewarding 2003.*

10th Anniversary highlights



Some of our Special guests.

The Critchlow Labour College was the venue as the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GCBRP) held its three-day 10th Anniversary Conference from July 19 - 21, 2002 under the theme: "Less Barriers, More Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities".

Ms. Kellyann Ifill, Ms. Rose Ann Foster and Clevedon Mayers, of Barbados were special invitees at the Conference. Other special invitees included Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, Minister of Health and PAHO/WHO Resident Representative, Dr. Bernadette Theodore Gandhi.

Joint Chairpersons for the Opening Session were Mrs. Patricia Fredericks and Mrs. Jeannette Jordan of the National Community Based Rehabilitation Committee. Mrs. Ionie Chatoor of the East Coast Community Rehabilitation Committee welcomed the guests and made the various introductions.

During the session, CBR National Adviser, Mrs. Geraldine Maison Halls, reported on the organisation's activities during the past year; and Mr. Mayers, who headed the delegation from Barbados, described Guyana's CBR as an example of the most successful NGO he has seen in the world. The Barbados delegation presented a gift of a wall clock in the shape of the map of Barbados to



Mr. Clevedon Mayers, Head of the delegation from Barbados and his Executive Assistant, Ms. Emily Lynch.

the Guyana CBR.

Other activities at the opening ceremony of the three-day conference included a message from BCCP by Mr. Muneshwar Persaud; and testimonies by Mr. Lloyd Griffith and Ms. Jennifer Summer - persons with disabilities. There was also an exhibition of craft showcasing the skills of those persons, who prefer to be referred to as the "differently able".

The second day of the Conference featured a Panel Discussion under the theme: *Breaking Barriers for Development*; the CBR Annual General Meeting and the CBR Awards

Ceremony. Panellists for the Discussion were Mrs. Geraldine Maison Halls - Chairperson, Leon Walcott - Moderator, Mrs. Gillian McFarlane, Ms. Kellyann Ifill (Barbados) and Ms. Rose Ann Foster (Barbados). On the final day of the Conference, >

10th Anniversary Highlights

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Panellists: from left, Ms. Rose Ann Foster and Ms. Kellyann Ifill (Barbados), Leon Walcott - Editor of **Hopeful Steps** and Moderator, Mrs. Gillian Mc Farlane and Mrs Geraldine Maison Halls - GCBR National Adviser.

Sunday July 21, the CBR Regional Committees presented their reports. This session was co-chaired by Mr. David Burnett and Ms. Millicent Ross. The closing session was co-chaired by Ms. Alana Ifill and Ms. Hermina Thomas. The feature address was delivered by Mr. Clifford Thorne, Chairman of the District of Columbia Rehabilitation Council on Disability.

On this day, also, several cultural items were performed by artistes from the Rupununi CBR and by Mr. Sean Thomas who gave several renditions on the drums.

Highlighting positive developments in the lives of the persons with disabilities

since the programme was introduced 16 years ago, Mrs Maison Halls emphasised: "Of importance, is the increasing level of self-esteem and solidarity among persons with disabilities."

In addition, she said "a number of individuals are assuming leadership roles - not only in the disability movement, but also in the community programmes and organisations".

Citing some of the positive changes seen over the years, Mrs. Maison Halls listed:

- ** Increased access to public sector programmes and services.
- ** More persons having access to rehabilitation services
- ** More children in the regular school system and more adults gaining employment
- ** The mainstreaming of children with disabilities in Primary Schools in the West Demerara - with the support of the Building Community Capacity Projects (BCCP).

UNICEF's Assistant Programme Officer, Ms. Violet Speek, comparing the situation in 2000 to the present, remarked: "We acknowledge the progress that can already be noted since our report two years ago."

Greetings from BCCP

The Building Community Capacity Project (BCCP) extended greetings to the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GCBRP) on the occasion of its 10th Annual Conference. Over the years BCCP has been very supportive of GCBRP in a number of ways.

The message reads: BCCP is very pleased to be invited to share this special opening ceremony of your 10th Conference with you. We would like to congratulate you the members, volunteers and beneficiaries for making the effort to be at this Conference which we are sure will chart a course for the next year that will be beneficial to many families and your communities. It is most commendable that the programmes which you identify are geared at helping people who are not always given a fair chance to become all that they can.

We support you, that these are important programmes that ought to be a part of any caring community. You are very well positioned to contribute meaningfully to the process of national development and more specifically to the development of people with disabilities. Congratulations to all of you for this honourable work.

All of this would not have been possible however, had it not been for the Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GCBRP). The Building Community Capacity Project (BCCP) which is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) aims to increase the capacity of 21 Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) to deliver their programmes in a more effective and efficient way. BCCP has had a very productive relationship with GCBRP for the past three years.

This relationship was established initially and strengthened over the years

because we recognise and identify with the noble aims of this organisation and because we are impressed with its contribution to the development of people with disabilities. Over these years, our support to the CBR has enabled it to grow from strength to strength.

Our recent focus has been to assist the organisation to develop itself and to professionally manage its programmes in order to expand and sustain the flow of benefits and services to its members, clients and the communities. In this regard, BCCP with CIDA funding, continues to provide several types of technical assistance that serves to strengthen the management capacity of CBR and improve its income generation.

We are very appreciative of the work of CBR. We are aware of the challenges ahead. We are proud to be associated with people like you who have the motivation and desire to see things change. It will take time and patience but remember that there are organisations like BCCP which is always willing to support your mission.

BCCP and CIDA would like to wish you a very fruitful and energising conference.

BCCP was established in Guyana in 1996 to assist in to strengthen the private voluntary sector so that it can play a more important role in the social, economic and democratic development of Guyana and become a critical element of Guyanese civil society.

The purpose of BCCP is to assist NGOs and community based groups to develop and professionally manage their programmes in order to provide services and sustainable benefits to their members, clients and/or communities.

The Director of the local BCCP office is Ms Anne-Marie Chagnon while Mr. Keith Burrowes is the Finance Manager.

In The Regions

Region Three

Persons with disabilities in Region Three (West Demerara/Essequibo Islands) have benefited from two separate visits by physiotherapists during the past three months. During September, 2002, four physiotherapists from Italy visited the regional DPO to observe activities and offer advice where necessary.

In October, Ms. Helena Mazzona, another Physiotherapist held two workshops on caring for persons with cerebral palsy. Ms. Mazzona also visited several homes and interacted with PWDs and their families.

The region also participated in the Day of Sports for persons with disabilities, organised by the Rotary Club of Guyana and held at the Banks/DIH Sports Club ground at Thirst Park.

Region Four

East Coast CBR

Regional elections were held during the Annual General Members meeting held at the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLI) at Cove & John, East Coast Demerara. The following Office bearers were elected - Gregory Glasgow - Chairperson; Wendy Mitchell - Vice Chairperson; Patricia Mally - Secretary; Viola Bradford-Charles - Assistant Secretary/ Treasurer; Sean Thomas - Treasurer; Judith Lepps - Committee Member; Pamela Chance - Committee Member; Rita Bruce - Committee Member and Terrence Dhainy - Committee Member.

The two representatives on the National Committee are Gregory Glasgow and Ionie Chattoor. In addition, a joint parent

training workshop was held and a parent support group was formed with Joycelyn Benfield as Chairperson, Wendy Mitchell - Vice chairperson and Gem Marcus - Secretary. Committee members are Judith Lepps, Rita Bruce, Norma Jardine, Roopnanand Sankar, Doris Dash and Desiree Barclay.

Enmore Activities

At Enmore, the Church of Christ International extended an invitation for persons with disabilities on the East Coast, their family members, and the volunteers to receive medical services free of cost. The Church brought qualified personnel to carry out special services.

Sports

Forty persons including P.W.Ds and volunteers participated in a Day of Sports for the physically challenged. The East Coast Demerara DPO won the prize for the group with the highest points. They shared a trophy jointly with the Linden Centre for Handicapped children.

A successful fundraising take away lunch was held. Lunch was served at the Enmore Church of Christ and the CBR Resource Unit at Cove and John. A profit of about \$30,000 was realised from each venue.

Envelope Making Project.

The envelope-making project is at present being conducted. We are about half way through the project and twelve young adults and six adults with disabilities are the participants.

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From Page 10**New Volunteer Training.**

The Kuru Kururu volunteer training programme is presently in the 5th month out of the six months period for theoretic work. There is an average of about 23 volunteers.

Educational Achievements

Ryan Henry who is a P.W.D attending the Annandale Secondary School at Annandale, East Coast Demerara has gained the second highest number of passes in the 2002 CXC Examinations. Congratulations to Ryan Henry as well as the faithful and hardworking volunteer, Mrs Dally Cromwell.

Employment & Housing .

Four PWDs are employed by the Bakjah Health Movement. Some of them were able to receive living accommodation at the DIPAK building.

Resource Centres.

There are two Resource centres that are operational - one at Beterverwagting and one at Cove and John. At present we are in the final stages in relation to acquiring land for the proposed new E.C.D Resource Centre.

Evaluation

A visit was made to the resource centres for evaluation to be conducted by American evaluator, Mrs. Esthel Smider.

East Bank C.B.R

During the year 2002, the East Bank Resource Unit was involved in sewing, smocking and various craft production. The

visually-impaired were taught Braille, Tie-dying, making floral arrangements, Card-making and the ancient art of bottle-painting. In the New Year, the Unit would be doing Hammock-making, among other things.

Achievements

Two young adults from our unit were successful at the Open Door Centre. One person benefited from a training programme in sign language. Two persons from the unit were presented with wheel chairs by Food For the Poor and Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL) presented the unit with five gallons of paint to enhance the appearance of the building. DDL also made a commitment to repair the bridge and the ramp.

Fundraising

A food sale and take-away lunch were held. There was also a Sale of Work.

Christmas Party. Our annual Christmas party was held on December 16, 2002 at the Diamond Community Centre Ground at Diamond, East Bank Demerara. Donations came from families, friends and volunteers. It was a challenging but good year.

Corentyne CBR

The Corentyne Community Based Rehabilitation Programme held several important activities during the year. These are a three-day literacy workshop, held from April 8 to 10, 2002 and attended by 20 participants and a two-day Empowerment Workshop for the Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPO). In addition, twenty-five volunteers completed a one-year training programme which was held at the No. 53 Community (*Turn to page 12*)

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Corentyne CBR

Centre. The Guest Speaker was Mr. Stanton Lambert of the Adult Education Association New Amsterdam Branch.

The charge was given by Ms. Brenda Johnson, representative of the New Amsterdam Branch of the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA). Certificates were presented by Ms. Mayleen Welch.

From May to September 2002, Hermina Thomas, Myrna Trotman, Annette Welch and Natalie Ramotar attended Workshops on Proposal-Writing, Advocacy and Financial Management hosted by the Carter Centre.

A week of activities to celebrate eight years of existence was held by the Resource Unit from 22-26 September. The week of activities began with a Church Service at the Resource Unit, and included an Open Day Exhibition, Ice Cream sale, HIV/AIDS session in collaboration with Comforting Hearts, a Berbice-based Non-Governmental Organisation and a concert.

Theodore Alexander was presented with a basket of groceries and clothing for parents and Melvoyce Kendall (Teacher Baba) was the volunteer whose services were honoured for the year. She was presented with a food hamper in November.

Disability Awareness Activities

A video on activities of the differently abled persons was broadcast on the Little Rock Television Station on December 3, 2002.

25 Parents attended a session on coping skills at Whim Nursery School on Monday

December 2, 2002.. The facilitators were Hansranie Mohabir and Hermina Thomas. Handouts containing information on disabilities were distributed to persons in New Amsterdam and Corentyne on December 3, 2002.

Region 9 Activities

The Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation Programme (GBCR) held several activities in Region Nine (Rupununi) during 2002.

The CBR Co-ordinator of that area, Mrs. Patricia Fredericks visited several villages and interacted with residents.

CBR was able to lend support to several income generating activities in the various villages. For example, sewing machines were presented to a group at Karasabai in the South Pakaraimas District of the Region whose official name is Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo.

Around the



World

Disabled woman swims across Lake Erie

A Thornhill woman with cerebral palsy has completed a marathon swim through the waters of Lake Erie to raise awareness about the disease. Terri-Lynn Langdon, 20, emerged from the lake dizzy and tired, but happy on the evening of Saturday August 31, 2002 about 12 hours and 55 minutes after her swim began.

"I was excited for her. I knew she was capable of accomplishing it," said her coach, decorated marathon swimmer Vicki Keith, speaking from the shore of Lake Erie at the end of Langdon's 20-kilometre swim.

Langdon, a sociology student at Wilfrid Laurier University, had slipped into the calm lake waters at around 7 a.m. in Sturgeon Point, N.Y., cheered on by local fishermen and a group of supporters. Langdon's father rode alongside in a support boat as she used her arms to pull herself through the water at a blistering pace of 1.5 km/h.

Afflicted with spastic cerebral palsy from infancy, Langdon has trouble controlling her legs and relies 90 per cent on her upper body to swim.

Via Rail refuses to widen doors for wheelchairs

Via Rail, a Canadian Railway company has rejected a demand to widen doorways on its trains to allow for bigger wheelchairs. The Council of Canadians with Disabilities had asked for the alteration on Via's new fast trains.

"It is true that the largest possible wheelchairs won't be able to go through, but

the average wheelchair will," says Malcolm Andrews, a company spokesperson.

Those with wheelchairs wider than 71 centimetres will have to transfer to special onboard chairs. But a lawyer for the council said the restriction will bar many disabled people from using the trains. Those with trunk control problems, balance problems, chronic pain, those who require oxygen and those who have frequent seizures are unable to transfer to another chair.

"Things are getting worse in terms of accessibility," says David Baker, a lawyer who represents the council.

Disabled performers link up

A new international body has been set up to provide a voice for artists with a disability across the globe. The International Guild of Disabled Artists and Performers had its inaugural conference in Adelaide, South Australia, in March 2002.

Initiated by New Zealand writer, comedian and activist Philip Patson, the guild has been set up to promote and foster disability arts and culture on a world scale.

The International Guild of Disabled Artists and Performers has three main aims. Firstly, to develop audiences of disabled and non-disabled people who are wanting to see the art.

The guild will also foster the role of non-disabled people in disability arts and culture, giving them a resource to create maximum potential for disabled people to express themselves.

Mentoring up-and-coming and professional artists by other disabled artists is also key on the new guild's agenda.

Message from the President of AIFO

It is an honour for me as AIFO's President to take this the occasion of the 10th National CBR Conference to send to you this brief message. AIFO considers persons with disabilities as persons with full rights: Right to have an education, to have a job, to have a family, right of voting and so on. AIFO also considers them as persons of worth, of human and social values as brotherhood, friendship, and creativity.

CBR is a useful tool to establish, to prevail these rights and these values just as if it comes from the needs of persons with disabilities, from their families, and just as if it grows within a generous and full of life community as the yours. Raoul Follereau used to say that a community is powerful not because of its own economic balance, but just when it is able in defending the weakest and poorest rights.

With this thought and on behalf of AIFO I wish to you a fruitful Conference.

AIFO President

Enzo Venza



AIFO New Executive Committee: From left: Francisco Colizzi, Susanna Bernoldi, Enzo Venza, Enzo Zecchini, Sergio Zovini, Luigi Gravina, Bitter Salvatore.

Message From Mr. Franco Macera, AIFO Country Representative in Guyana - 2002 Conference

In his message which he read, Mr. Franco Macera said that he was "very glad to be here to join all of you at this 10th National CBR Conference." Mr. Macera also said, "I would also say thank you to all those who spent hours or days travelling to be here, regardless the long distances and the difficulties of transportation in Guyana, particularly in the raining season."

He highlighted some of the progress made by GCBRP and the Ministry of Health in removing some the barriers faced by persons with disabilities. He pointed out, "in my daily job I have the chance to be in the field to see where and how CBR works. Just recently I had the opportunity to spend some days at the Disabled People Organisation Camp organised this year at the beautiful Emerald Towers and I've seen the enthusiasm of persons differently able and their families arriving from different regions of Guyana meeting there for a week, and receiving training, and producing very nice handcrafts, and above all enjoying and sharing their needs, knowledge and hopes."

