

education watch:

an update on inclusive education

Volume 4, Issue 1 – Spring 2012

New Brunswick Premier David Alward takes part in Book Launch in Fredericton

The publication of a case study book on inclusive education was a project that involved more than 100 teachers, parents, professors and advocates. Many of them joined NB Premier David Alward on February 9 in Fredericton at a “New Brunswick Book Launch”. *Exploring Inclusive Educational Practices Through Professional Inquiry* is a publication of SENSE Publishing in The Netherlands.

Gordon Porter, one of the book editors, as well as contributors Brian Kelly and Diane Richler, were at the event. Ten individuals who provided commentaries on the cases were able to attend as well.

Premier Alward paid tribute to the individuals who produced the book. He noted that it drew on the experience and knowledge of many New Brunswickers. Sharing this



L-R: Brian Kelly, Diane Richler, Gordon Porter, Hon. David Alward.

knowledge with others both in NB, in other parts of Canada, and abroad, is a positive contribution to creating inclusive schools. He noted his personal experience with inclusive education and the positive impact it can have on our communities. NB Minister of Education Jody Carr also shared his congratulations on the completion of the book.

Diane Richler, Past president of Inclusion International, spoke about her own experiences in New Brunswick schools and the contribution the experience in the province and in Canada have had on international initiatives.

The session was jointly sponsored by the New Brunswick Association for Community Living and CACL. Krista Carr, NBACL Executive Director, facilitated the event and Joy Bacon, NBACL President, and Michael Bach, EVP of CACL, added their best wishes to the individuals who made the book a reality.



50 years

Canadian Association
for Community Living

Association canadienne pour
l'intégration communautaire

Diversity includes. On se ressemble.



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A Story of Resilience

By Bendina Miller, Past-president of CACL

As I reflect on over 42 years as an educator I can't help but think of sources of inspiration that fueled my passion during my career and continue to bring powerful memories. I'm honoured to share one of the most heartwarming stories as I contemplate how fortunate I am.

From 1973-1975, I was a teacher at Alberta Childrens' Hospital School in Calgary. I had an outgoing charismatic 12 year old in my class. I'll call him Robert. Robert was well-liked and admired by both his peers and staff. Sadly, during my time as his teacher both of his parents passed away and a relative who took Robert and his sister into her home decided that



she could not care for him. Robert happened to have some complex medical needs. To make a long story short my husband and I took Robert home and were seriously considering adopting him when relatives in another city decided to have him live with them. That was the last I knew about Robert. Until 38 years later!

In May 2011 my phone rang and the voice on the other end of the line identified himself as my former student, Robert! He had Googled my name in an attempt to track me down and invite me to his 50th

birthday party. You can imagine my surprise when I heard his voice.

I learned that the relative did not keep Robert, and as a result he spent years being shuffled through the Alberta foster care system. Not the future we had hoped Robert would have.

What truly inspires me about Robert, however, is that given his history he could well be angry and disenchanted. In fact, Robert remains positive about life and was excited about celebrating his 50th birthday. I was able to attend that celebration and have since contemplated Robert's resilience and positive attitude. They have allowed him to live life with the 'glass half full'. I continue to learn so much from him and am delighted to share this story of perseverance with you. I feel blessed to have this former student in my life after so many years.

Déirdre Smith Recognized for Contributing to Knowledge about Inclusive Education

Sal Amenta presented the **National Inclusive Education Award** to Déirdre Smith at a ceremony held in Toronto on February 28, 2012. He noted the contribution she has made to teachers in Ontario by co-ordinating the policy development of over 300 "Additional Qualification" courses and programs for teacher and leadership education. Ms Smith is the Manager of the Standards of Practice and Education Unit of the Ontario College of Teachers. A former school principal, education consultant, special education administrator, teacher educator, youth counselor, classroom teacher and professional facilitator, she has demonstrated insights into ways to

support teachers with the challenges of inclusion.

Deirdre Smith is co-editor of a new book of case studies on inclusive education published by SENSE Publishing, *Exploring Inclusive Educational Practices through Professional Inquiry*. With co-editor Gordon Porter, she collected, analyzed and prepared for publication 25 stories told by teachers, principals, parents and others about the realities of making inclusion a reality in schools and classrooms. Smith has made presentations on inclusion in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and New Brunswick in conjunction with Inclusive Education Canada.



Déirdre Smith receives "National Inclusive Education Award" from Sal Amenta, Chair of Community Living Ontario's Education Committee in Toronto.



Left: Roger Melanson, MLA Dieppe, Lt.-Gov. Hon. Graydon Nicholas with students from Dieppe, NB; Far Right: Hon. Jody Carr, NB minister of Education.

Students Make Inclusion Work

Conseil des élèves at Mathieu-Martin, Dieppe, District 1 in New Brunswick received the National Inclusive Education Award at a ceremony attended by Lt. Governor Graydon Nicholas, Education Minister Jody Carr and MLA Roger Melanson. The students were nominated by the Vice-principal of the school, Mireille Bertin-Post.

For the student council at Mathieu- Martin High school in Dieppe, NB, true inclusion means ensuring that people with a disability have a place at the table, not only as participants, but as decision makers.

When student, Jamie Vautour proposed to have a role on the Mathieu-Martin student council responsible for students with special needs, the council jumped at the opportunity. This would be the first position of its kind on any Francophone New Brunswick student council. This position ensured that students with a disability had barrier-free access to

all activities and student events and Jamie took his role very seriously. Because of his input, accommodations and adaptations were made to ensure that all students, including students with a disability had every opportunity to be a full part of student life, not only in the school, but on school outings and other student events.

The student council's vision has inspired students with special needs to become involved in active committees such as the student radio and the spirit committee. It has also inspired students to consider the daily realities of people with a disability such as special transportation, accessibility of places and ensuring that there is barrier-free access so that students can participate without obstacles.

It is for breaking down barriers, confronting discrimination and ensuring that all students have opportunities not only to participate, but to contribute to school life.

Educators taking part in Inclusive Education Workshop in Brockville – February 27, 2012



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Inclusion at “Work”

A research team from Brock University (St. Catharines, Ontario) in partnership with the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board has completed a research study examining the inclusive experiences of high school students with intellectual disabilities.

For many years, Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board has been recognized as a leader in inclusive practice. At the invitation of the school board, researchers were given an opportunity to examine inclusive practices at the secondary level in relation to students who were transitioning into the workplace.

Focusing the research on the voices of the student participants, these young people with intellectual disabilities were given the opportunity to talk about their schooling experiences, the work place, their friendships, and their hopes for the future. Assisted by their project manager, Krystine Donato, and graduate student, Jennifer Servos, researchers Drs. Sheila Bennett and Tiffany Gallagher collected the voices of individuals with intellectual disabilities as well as information from the community that surrounds them: teachers, educational assistants, parents, peers, job coaches and employers.

All in all, 21 interviews with students with intellectual disabilities were completed, transcribed and analyzed. Students with intellectual disabilities were asked to discuss, among other things, whether they liked going to school, their activities after school and on weekends, whether they felt that they did a good job in their workplace, and whether they felt valued by their peers. Along with the interviews, students with intellectual disabilities were also asked to respond to survey questions such as, “Do you look forward to going to school; school is interesting; my classmates are nice to me; students in my class help each other a lot and people at work help me.” Accompanying these data were 152 surveys sent to teachers, educational assistants, parents, job coaches, employers and peers of the students.

While data analysis is ongoing we have chosen to highlight a few of the beliefs and practices around inclusion as reported by the students with intellectual disabilities and peers. It is important to note that only a small portion of the questions asked are included below. They were chosen as cross section of the overall findings.



Tiffany Gallagher and Sheila Bennett, Brock University professors

Students with intellectual disabilities:

“I look forward to going to school”	95% agree
“I like to work hard at school”	81% agree
“Classmates are nice to me”	95% agree
“Friends help me”	81% agree

Peers:

“I felt scared or angry when I learned that students with disabilities would be included in my class”	91% disagreed
“My thinking about people with disabilities has become more positive since experiencing inclusion”	86% agree
“This year or in another year I became a friend to a student that was disabled and in my class”	71% agree
“In the future I hope to continue to have students with disabilities in my class”	71% agree

The ongoing review of the data set is providing positive and encouraging affirmation of the status of inclusive education as it unfolds on a day-to-day basis in these schools. The research team has plans to extend the data collection into additional high schools. As well, the research team will be partnering with a community agency to talk with employers and individuals within the workplace where people with intellectual disabilities are employed. This will provide important information that will help to construct a detailed picture of adult community involvement for people with intellectual disabilities and a description of inclusion at “work.”

Ontario Professor's Research Highlights Exclusion of Children with Disabilities



Anne Snowden, a nurse and professor at the Odette School of Business at the University of Windsor in Ontario has recently completed a report, *Strengthening Communities for Canadian Children with Disabilities*.

Professor Snowden and her research team conducted interviews with 166 families in Regina, Fredericton and Toronto. They also conducted several focus groups.

The researchers report three key findings – they are:

1. Community programs and services that engage children and youth with disabilities and their families are challenging for them to access and navigate.
2. Children and youth with disabilities and their families want to engage in community programs and activities that enable social interaction and development in a way that helps them feel part of the community.
3. Children and youth with disabilities and their families need to be better connected to networks of personal and professional support.



The full report can be accessed by the following link:

<http://sandboxproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/SandboxProjectDiscussionDocument.pdf>

As an additional reference you can check out Andre Picard's article, *Don't shut disabled kids out of society*, in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* of January 30th 2012.

UPEI Professor Releases Book on Inclusion A Life in Inclusion: A Collection of Writings

Carla DiGiorgio, Professor of Education at the University of Prince Edward Island has just completed a new book that will be informative to parents, teachers and others with an interest in inclusive education.

This book collects and organizes the research and writing of an extant life in inclusive education. She writes: "As a parent, teacher, professor and researcher, I have had access to a great many educational settings and have had the opportunity to research and think about how inclusion relates to the daily lives of students, parents, educators, and policy makers. I have tried to connect my findings and thoughts chronologically to show how my work has developed. I hope you enjoy this book. There will be more!"

Carla DiGiorgio is an associate professor of Education at University of Prince Edward Island. A

former teacher for many years, she brings to her teaching, research and writing, a wealth of experience and education. Her areas of interest include the sociocultural aspects of inclusive education, from social and economic to cultural and educational capital. She has explored various aspects of inclusive education from the perspectives of stakeholders, policy, and curriculum. Her work spans francophone and anglophone, Canadian and international settings. She is currently editor of the *Canadian Journal of Education*. You can reach Carla at <http://education.upei.ca/faculty/digiorgio-dr-carla-digiorgio>.



Carla DiGiorgio



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District Leader Saluted for Commitment to Inclusion – Laurie Keoughan, Miramichi, New Brunswick

The New Brunswick Association for Community Living honoured Laurie Keoughan who completed a career in education in December 2011. Mr. Keoughan was nominated by Connie Daily, a member of the Miramichi-based District 16 Student Services Team. The ceremony was held at Government House in Fredericton during “National Inclusive Education Month” in February.

Mr. Keoughan formed the district committees which advanced the inclusion of “at risk” students within regular school settings instead of off-campus sites. This promoted a sense of belonging and allowed for greater diversity of educational opportunities for the students.

“A defender of the underprivileged and an advocate for the fair and just evaluation of all students of their abilities, at all extremes of aptitude, Laurie Keoughan has had a 35 year career in education. He has worked as a

social studies and history teacher, vice principal, methods and resource teacher, methods and resource consultant at the District level and finally as Superintendent for School District 16.

Keoughan served on the Board of the Miramichi Autism Resource Center and built a vital link between the schools and the Autism community, facilitating better communication and effectively mediating issues.

As a Director of Camp Sheldrake, a local outdoor adventure supper camp for youth and teens, he supported inclusionary practices at the camp and arranged for professional development for camp counselors while quietly ensuring that students with an intellectual disability enjoyed all of the opportunities the camp had to offer.

A strong advocate for inclusive education, Mr. Keoughan lead district committees toward differentiated learning practices and project-based learning in a number of schools in District 16. He



L-R: Hon. Jody Carr, Minister of Education, Laurie Keoughan, Hon. Graydon Nicholas, Lt.-Governor of NB.

has also arranged for District 16 Student Services support staff to act as partners and teachers with school-based programming and transition of students with special needs.

Mr. Keoughan recognized early on the positive impact of assistive technology could make in the lives of his students. He supported the use of SMART Boards and other SMART technology in engaging students in the learning. In June of 2010, he was a key participant in having Miramichi declared as the first “SMART Showcase Community in the World.”



Laura LaChance is an Ontario parent active in efforts to support inclusive education. She is a board member of the Canadian Down Syndrome Society. She is also a member of Community Living Ontario's Education Committee.

Sal Amenta is the Chair of Community Living Ontario's Education Committee. A retired teacher, he is a passionate advocate for inclusion in Ontario schools. He is seen here speaking to a session in Toronto held on February 28 during National Inclusive Education Month.



Students cause Re:Action 4 Inclusion

By Natalie Hamilton, Wednesday March 7, 2012

They arrived on Friday as strangers but parted ways on Sunday united in their quest to build more inclusive school communities in Ontario.

Ninety-eight students representing 44 high schools participated in the Re:Action 4 Inclusion youth leadership conference March 2-4 at the Geneva Park YMCA in Orillia.

Witnessing their transformation from students to community-builders first-hand excites Linda White.

"They were not afraid to get to know each other, they celebrated in their own diversity and had a genuine honesty to embrace the power in each of their own stories knowing that all their stories had a purpose," White, community inclusion co-ordinator for Community Living Ontario, tells Community Living Leaders.

They attended the conference with the common desire for their schools to be more welcoming and accepting of students who have a disability.

"They actually became a community on to themselves – the kind of community we talk about wanting all the time and advocate for," White says. "It made me feel very optimistic about the future."

Community Living Ontario's Community Inclusion Initiative and partners presented the conference that zeroed in on how to build school environments that engage all youth. Students heard about the inequities

"It made me feel very optimistic about the future"

students who have a disability sometimes face when they don't have the opportunity to be immersed in all aspects of high-school life. They learned about the mutual benefits of inclusion.

"It provided a forum to hold the discussion – which students say is not happening," White adds. "It gave people the chance to learn from a variety of perspectives and think more broadly of the implications of segregation."

Kingston Grade 11 student Shaniqua Liston, Re:Action 4 Inclusion youth advisory committee



Shaniqua Liston, Ruth Tamas and Emily Clapperton with the Voyager Guitar made from 63 pieces of Canadian history representing communities, various cultures and stories at the Re:Action 4 Inclusion conference March 2-4, 2012 in Orillia, ON.

member, was impressed by what she saw unfold.

"I know that the conference made a difference not only by the people talking to me about it, but you could tell by how interactive they got," Liston tells *Community Living Leaders*.

"You could tell by their energy, their enthusiasm, their insight. By the welcoming and warm inclusive environment, you could tell that each student took away (a lot) from this weekend."

White is currently recruiting new student leaders for the youth advisory committee.

Interested high school students can e-mail White via lwhite@communitylivingontario.ca explaining their reasons for wanting to join the group.

From: Community Living Ontario Website:
www.communitylivingontario.ca



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International Collaboration

Inclusion International is a global federation of family-based organizations advocating for the human rights of people with intellectual disabilities worldwide.



By Inés Elvira de Escallón,
Inclusion International Consultant for the Americas

For over forty years Inclusion International has been committed to the promotion of these human rights and our organization now represents over 200 member federations in 115 countries throughout five regions including the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, Africa and the Indian Ocean, the Americas, and Asia Pacific.

Inclusive Education

The Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (CRPD) provides a frame and guidance of II work, making Inclusion International's key priority areas of focus. Education is one of them. The CRPD states that students with intellectual disabilities have the right to be included in the regular school with the supports they require (Article 24).

For Inclusion International, Article 24 means:

Article Summary	Implications	Current Situation
Students with intellectual disabilities have the right to be included in the regular school with the supports they require.	Children go to school with their peers in regular classrooms with the supports they need to learn, be included and belong.	After 15 years of the Salamanca Statement in which inclusive education was said to be the way to educate students with a disability II wanted to learn how much progress had been made in these years. We consulted our members all over the world and published <i>II Global Report – Better Education for All: When we are included. People with an Intellectual Disability and their Families Speak out on Education for All, Disability and Inclusive Education 2009</i> .

International Collaboration

In the Global Report prepared in 2009 we learned that:

- In any country children with disabilities are the bigger minority group out of schools
- Access to education drops off significantly in rural communities and in developing countries
- Inclusive education happens in pockets at the country level, cities, districts and school boards
- Segregated schools, only for students with disability, are common to find in almost every country that participated. Only Italy and the Province of New Brunswick in Canada could be set as examples of inclusive education as the only choice for students with disability to receive their education, in neither place segregated schools can be found.
- Globally there is a lack of teacher training for inclusive education

On the other hand we found that:

- Parents want their children to be included in the regular education system with the needed support
- Most of the people that participated, as well as local and international organizations (UNESCO; UNICEF) recognize that inclusive education provides a better education for All including people with disability

The challenge is not any more if inclusive education is the way to provide education for all but how it should be given.

The question we heard over and over was: What does inclusive education look like?

It looked to Canada and the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) for support in making it possible for people to visit inclusive schools. Gordon Porter, the Director of Inclusive Education Canada, sponsored by CACL worked with Inés de Escallón to link the Colombian parent group Asdown, along with a Colombian funding organization Fundación Saldarriaga Concha to arrange a study tour to New Brunswick. The study tour made it possible for school leaders, teachers and others from Colombia to see how inclusive education can work at the school and classroom level.

The Study Tour

During a week in April 2010 fourteen individuals from Colombia joined us in New Brunswick with Gordon Porter providing a link to schools, officials and



Members of the Study Tour from Colombia in New Brunswick in 2010.

parents with experience in inclusive education. It was a unique experience for the participants and allowed them to understand and create a vision for an inclusive education in their own community. It was an enriching experience for each one of the participants.

The group included people from Bogotá and Medellín; they were: a school principal and the psychologist from a private school, Nuevo Gimnasio; 2 teachers who were awarded the study tour by Fundación Saldarriaga Concha and Fundación Compartir, in recognition of their classroom practices promoting inclusive education; university teachers; school teachers and a member of Fundación Compartir, the organization that makes a yearly award well known in Colombia, Premio Compartir al Maestro.

The study tour included lectures, discussion sessions with the Human Rights Commission of New Brunswick, the NB Ministry of Education, local school board personal, superintendents and school principals. The most valuable part of the study tour was the opportunity to visit several schools that had open doors and welcomed the visitors. They were pleased to demonstrate how inclusive education works in each of their schools.

The week in Canada made a difference in developing a vision for inclusive education for each of the 14 participants. Even more important, many of them were able to make important changes in the places they are working and today their efforts back home in Colombia are part of this successful story.

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The Stories

Strategic alliances: Fundación Saldarriaga Concha promoted a Conference on Inclusive Education: Education for All in October 2011 in which Gordon Porter, Diane Richler and Inés de Escallón represented Inclusion International.

Changing a vision: Premio Compartir al Maestro from Fundación Compartir is promoting a study that will introduce criteria for the award to teachers who practice inclusive education.

<http://www.palabramaestra.premiocompartirmaestro.org/editoriales.php?id=15>

Their latest publication *Palabra Maestro* has some reflections from Gordon Porter for teachers

<http://www.palabramaestra.premiocompartirmaestro.org/notitotal.php?idn=96&idt=4>

In English <http://palabramaestra.premiocompartirmaestro.org/notitotal.php?idn=103&idt=4>

Best Practices: After Astrid Cáceres returned from the study tour, she focused her work at the Secretariat of Social Inclusion in Bogotá to make inclusion work for children with disability in the early years. The plan provides for 4,000 students with a disability to be supported to attend kindergarten financed by the Secretariat. You can read about the successful story and how the vision is implemented. Una apuesta regional por la primera Infancia y la Inclusión Social

<http://palabramaestra.premiocompartirmaestro.org/notitotal.php?idn=98&idt=5>

Teachers as good examples: Gladys Amalia Murcia Pinilla 2010 award winner as a teacher whose practices promote inclusion tells her experience as a teacher and what she learned by participating in the NB Study tour. Cómo Maestra mi principal pregunta es la inclusión.

<http://palabramaestra.premiocompartirmaestro.org/entrevistas.php?id=23>

School practices: Luz Stella Uricoechea, principal of El Nuevo Gimnasio, took part in the Study Tour. In October 2011 she spoke at the II International Congress for Families in Bogotá Colombia. It was organized by Inclusion International, Asdown, OSF and Fundación Saldarriaga Concha. Luz Stella talked about some of the things she learned on the Study Tour:

- “I now understand that if my school is good for the child with a disability, it is good for his/her brothers and sisters. So now I ask the parents who want their disabled child to attend our school to send all their children to our school.”
- “I understood natural supports in a better way, as well as the concept of natural proportion – you need to respect this in school and classroom enrollment.”
- “We learned how a vision of inclusion and



Gordon Porter visits staff of El Nuevo Gimnasio, Bogota; principal Luz Stella, standing on his right.

seeing how it works provides a framework for change and improvement at a school like ours (El Nuevo Gimnasio) that supports inclusive education.”

The study tour gave participants an understanding of the possibility to make inclusive education a reality. It provided inspiration and examples of ways they could re-focus their work and in doing so change the lives of many children – children who have been excluded from school because of their disability.

The positive results of the 2010 Study Tour have resulted in strong interest in a second one in 2012.



Students at El Nuevo Gimnasio, Bogota.

Inclusion International will be once more sponsoring a study tour in New Brunswick during the week of

April 21st to the 27th. Many educators and officials in Colombia are eager to participate. In addition we have confirmation of attendance from people from Ecuador. Inclusion International looks forward to positive results from this study tour. We are grateful to the people of New Brunswick, the communities, the educators and the parents who inspire and enrich the work of others all over the world.

Three Inclusion Awards – PEI

By David MacDonald – david@peicanada.com

To celebrate Inclusive Education week, Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Alan McIsaac presented national certificates of recognition from the Canadian Association for Community Living.

PEI Mom's praise earns school special inclusion award – Montague School

Montague Consolidated Schools' efforts to provide an atmosphere of inclusion for all students have garnered it a 2012 National Inclusion Education Award from the Canadian Association of Community Living (CACL). This award was one of three handed out on PEI, with one award each for the Eastern, Western and French School Districts. It is awarded to individuals, non-profit groups or organizations who have made positive contributions to inclusive education.

Montague Consolidated was nominated for the award by Brudenell parent Martha MacLean, whose 10-year-old daughter Margaret who has Down Syndrome and is non-verbal is a student there. Ms MacLean's nomination letter said the entire staff, from principal Tim Murphy to teachers and educational assistants to the custodians and bus drivers, as well as students, have provided an atmosphere of true inclusion for Margaret.

Ms MacLean's letter stated that "no activity" in the school is out of reach for Margaret. "When she is in the classroom, her homeroom teacher Jennifer Sirois ensures she is fully included in whatever activity may be going on," her letter said. "During her recess breaks, she plays with her peers, not EAs. Her friends



L-R: Minister McIsaac; Jackie Charchuk, Special Education Consultant at the Western School Board; Paula Wilson-Walsh, representing the staff of Montague Consolidated School; Treena Burke, Educational Assistant at Westwood Primary School; Jane Wilson, Special Education/Resource Specialist at Montague Intermediate School; Velma Durant, Physical Education teacher at École Evangeline; Peter Meggs, Special Educational Coordinator at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

like to take turns pushing her on the swings.

Principal Tim Murphy said the staff doesn't always get recognition for the work they do so he appreciates the fact it was a parent who nominated the school for the award. "Each child has to be looked at individually. We have to respect that and basically support them so they can be successful." While the award focuses on students with special needs, Mr Murphy points out that the school's inclusion efforts focuses on all students' individual needs.

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Three Inclusion Awards – PEI

Continued

Ms MacLean said Margaret isn't just a child with special needs, but a student at the school just like anyone else. "There is no differential from a parent's point of view - that's what inclusive education is and should be," she said. "If every school was like Montague Consolidated, I think parents of kids with special needs would have a much more positive view of the education system."



Déirdre Smith and Jacqui Specht at Inclusive Education workshop at University of Western Ontario held in London on February 29 during National Inclusive Education Month. Gordon Porter and Ms Smith were speakers at the event sponsored by the Community Inclusion project of Community Living Ontario and Inclusive Education Canada. Professor Specht is the director of the Centre for Inclusive Education at the Faculty of Education. The Centre coordinated local arrangements for the workshop. Kimberley Gavan of CLO made the event happen.

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Contact us through our website: www.inclusiveeducation.ca
or by email: InclusiveEducation@cacl.ca
Please send us information, comments or feedback.

Profile of Inclusive Education **Mary Dundan School, The Pas, Manitoba**

What does inclusive education look like? A visit to Mary Duncan School in The Pas can shed some light on a great model for embracing student diversity. Tara Manych, school principal, encourages all of her students to come to school ready to learn, while acknowledging that "every student also comes with their own story, background and challenges."

This community school has students that range in age from 10 to 65 years and encourages the desire to learn and succeed at whatever level students may find themselves. Not only are the students important partners in the learning process, but all staff, administrators, teachers and educational assistants, work together to address the wide range of learning needs that exist in each of their programs.

Students and their families work with the school to determine what will work best for them in terms of how they learn, what they need for the future and how to reach their goals. Physical education is a big part of daily life, as well as the many after school programs that make this school not just about education, but about community.

What was once a school that students were sent to as a last resort, has become a go to place for many students and their families with the high quality teaching, inclusive programming and sense of belonging that students have once they enter its doors.

There is also a profound sense of hope that is encapsulated in a statement on their website: "Your choice to come to school is the first step towards achieving your dreams."

To learn more about Mary Duncan School and its many innovative programs, visit www.maryduncanschool.ca or contact Tara Manych at tmanych@ksd.mb.ca.