

education watch:

an update on inclusive education

Volume 3, Issue 1 – Spring 2011

Seeds of inclusion planted in Uxbridge this spring

High school youth prepped for leadership at secondary school

Ryan Rogers – March 28, 2011

Student-led activist organization Re:Action4Inclusion continued spreading motivational speaker Norman Kunc's message of community inclusion at Uxbridge Secondary School (USS) to fight segregation and promote unity.

Organizers prioritized Grade 9 students to plant the seeds of change, with hopes they will germinate into leaders of inclusion until their graduation from USS.

Co-organizer Bethan Morgan, 17, says her group wanted to start with the younger students because their term at USS is just beginning.

"If we start at the bottom, they can bring it on and set a good example for kids coming in next year, and build a foundation over time," says Morgan.

Kunc, a speaker, writer and consultant of 25 years, shared his



Kimberly Gavan (top), Norman Kunc (centre) with Re:Action4Inclusion members of Uxbridge Secondary School Sue Park (left) and Bethan Morgan (right).

stories of growing up through the education system with cerebral palsy and being in a segregated school until he was in Grade 7.

He says once he was integrated into a common school, fellow students were still uncomfortable with people who were different. Kunc examined what it is that makes people uncomfortable, and suggests that it lies in fearing the unknown.

His presentation called "Story of the Stranger" addresses his findings by challenging students to get to know the people in their schools and

community and find the threads of experience that are common amongst them.

These stories and similarities establish authentic relationships of inclusion, the goal of his speaking series.

The next step after the presentation will be to reconvene the students to see how they felt about the presentation and see how they can incorporate inclusion into their daily habits.

Morgan hopes students will heed Kunc's call and expand their cliques to

Continued on page 2



Canadian Association
for Community Living

Association canadienne pour
l'intégration communautaire

Diversity includes. On se ressemble.



inclusive
education
Canada



Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.

Learning from the Comfort of Home:

Community Living Ontario presented inclusive education webinar series

Almost 400 families pulled up a chair and settled in for information sessions about inclusive education from the comfort of their own homes. By tuning into a free webinar series, parents learned more about creating a vision for their child's inclusive education, heard from experts, and networked with others.

Through the Community Inclusion Initiative, Community Living Ontario developed a monthly webinar series on inclusive education including:

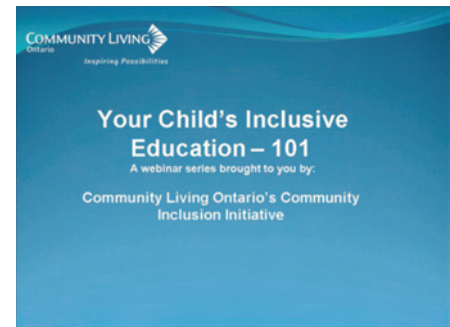
- "Asserting Your Vision for Your Child's Education" – January, "The Individual Education Plan (IEP) – February, and
- "The Individualized Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) – A Look at All Perspectives" – March.

Community Living Ontario wanted to reach out to families who aren't able to get away for day or weekend-long workshops, but who still need information to help them get the type of inclusive education they want for their son or daughter.

The series was designed to give families the information they need when seeking a quality education that includes the expectations of academic success and inclusion in regular classrooms for their son or daughter who has an intellectual disability.

Although in-person workshops are still popular, the take-up on the webinar series was quite remarkable indicating that people appreciate receiving information on how to advance their vision of an inclusive education and navigate the school system.

Written with files from Natalie Hamilton, *Axiom News*.



Find details from <http://www.communitylivingontario.ca/>

British Study says – Schools need help with 'special needs influx'

Schools in England need new teaching methods to deal with an influx of children with increasingly complex special needs, a report warns. The study says more disabled children are surviving to school age, and new conditions, such as foetal alcohol syndrome, bring a range of needs.

The Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Research Project, funded by the Department for Education, says urgent action is needed to help schools serve a new generation of children with special needs and disabilities "never seen before in the education system".

These include foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, attachment disorder, rare chromosomal disorders, some mental health problems, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, sensory impairment, autism, fragile X syndrome, the long-term effects of drug use during pregnancy and the long-term effects of premature birth.

The researchers have also developed a set of briefing and guidance notes, with advice for teachers in handling pupils with complex special needs. The study

says there have been rapid increases in the number of children with the most complex special needs. It says research shows the number of children with disabilities in Britain has risen from 700,000 in 2004 to 950,000 in 2009.

Department for Education figures show that over the same period the number of children with profound multiple learning difficulties increased by nearly 30%.

Chief author of the report Professor Barry Carpenter said: "Rare disabilities and other conditions are on the increase. "There are also more and more children coming into the system with mental health problems."

The report concludes: "This is not just an issue for special schools - teachers in mainstream schools need to be aware of these trends because they are increasingly likely to encounter children with problems they have not seen before. "We need urgent action to alert teachers across the system to this fast-growing trend and prepare them for it. Without proper training teachers will struggle to cope with these new challenges and children will not get the support they need."

Seeds of Inclusion

Continued from page 1

learn more about the people around them, and hear their stories.

She says every student in that assembly already has one thing in common — they've heard Kunc's message.

The young leaders in communities are able to continue to stay engaged with one another through the Community Living Leaders' Facebook page.

Reprinted from *Leaders*, the online news source of Community Living Ontario.

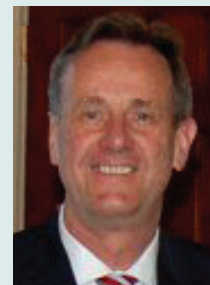
Special Recognition Award –

Superintendent Alex Dingwall, School District 18, Fredericton, N.B.

For his contributions to putting New Brunswick on the map as a leader in Inclusive Education

CACL and NBACL made a special award to Alex Dingwall, Superintendent of Schools in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Mr. Dingwall played a varied role in NB education over the 25 years since inclusive education was mandated in the province. A native of Montreal, Dingwall served in northern and southern NB as well as a time as Director of Student Services in the Department of

Education. He was recognized for his leadership and for the caring and respectful way he worked with students, parents and teachers. He received the recognition in Fredericton during Inclusive Education Month.



Alex Dingwall

Manitoba Looks Ahead

Community Living Manitoba in Partnership with Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children held an special meeting in Winnipeg last month during Inclusive Education Month 2011. Excerpts of the discussion – by CLM Advocate Anne Kresta:

A number of concerned parents, teachers, administrators and disability advocates came out on a cold and frosty evening in February to discuss progress and challenges in inclusive education in Manitoba. Together we heard from Manitoba Education, Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children and Community Living Manitoba and then brainstormed what we all saw were some next steps in moving the inclusive education agenda forward over the next 5 to 10 years. Here are the results of that discussion:



Priority Area 1: Supporting Teachers

Training in appropriate use of support strategies (ie; communication books - what should be included, what should not be included); Co-teaching and teacher mentoring - this is especially necessary as there will be larger numbers of teachers leaving the system as they enter retirement. There is a need for succession planning. Training in Universal Design for Learning so that all students benefit from being in the inclusive classroom

Priority Area 2: Supporting Families

Parents report needing to have some kind of baseline training in how the system will work to support their child. Advocacy work is at time exhausting and they need to know who to turn to and how to work effectively within the system. Parents report sometimes needing someone to turn to who has “clout” within the system. Universal report cards may provide a more inclusive and meaningful way to report on a student’s progress in the curriculum and within their

IEP goals as they apply to the curriculum. Parents report having experienced delay tactics, personality conflicts, misinterpretation of policies and practice and need to have someone to speak with and for them in these circumstances.

Priority Area 3: Inter-sectoral Dialogue

Inter-sectoral meetings that discuss how students are being supported or can be supported by different programs and services that are available through Health, Justice, Family Services and Consumer Affairs and Education – helping students and parents with the service navigation piece. – parents reported that this communication has been a challenge for students with complex medical needs who rely on a nurse and cannot attend school without a specific nurse because there is no “Plan B” in place when the nurse is away ill or on holidays.

Priority Area 4: Knowledge Sharing

It is important to share innovative practices from various school divisions among themselves and then among their staff. If schools could schedule common PD Days that allow many more teachers and practitioners to get together to share experiences, strategies etc.

The use of “Inclusion Blogs” or webinars was discussed.

As a result of this session, a letter was composed and sent to Ministers of Education, Family Services and Consumer Affairs, Justice, Health and Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors urging cooperative action. Participants look forward to hearing from the ministers and working through these recommendations in the months to come.



**Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.**



Ontario students ask:

How is it possible to spend four years in the same school and at Commencement not know everyone in your graduating class? Where have my fellow students been?

Through the efforts of the Community Inclusion Initiative in Ontario people who have disabilities, their families, and youth are gathering, asking questions and looking for change. Our schools are a mirror of our communities, and need to be rich and robust places of opportunity where people learn together.

In addition to quality education being a right for all students, it is also the cornerstone of a person's citizenship. The typical school experience is pivotal in shaping opportunity for employment, ones relationships, contributions to community and a vision for the future. The Community Inclusion Initiative in Ontario has created opportunities for emerging youth leaders to connect through a dynamic youth leadership series. Together these students are creating awareness, challenging myths and shifting the culture of their schools to a welcoming place that celebrates diversity. These groups of highly energized high school students believe; they need to know one another more, to spend time together, to study together and take responsibility for one another. *"We probably don't have all the answers, but we want to be able to try, and being kept apart from one another denies us that chance!"*

It is with this influence that Canadians who have a disability are more likely to be supported by their peers to participate fully in all aspects of their school and broader communities. The Youth Leadership series is ***A Call to Action***, and the invitation is being taken up with enthusiasm and continues to build momentum for change. Inclusion is not simply a disability issue, but rather a social justice issue for all citizens. Ontario students are now asking one simple, yet powerful question; "If you believe that youth are a key ingredient to making our communities welcoming places. What are you prepared to do to help us? "

School Improvement & School Inclusion

The New Brunswick Department of Education's School Improvement Service is conducting school reviews in 20% of the Anglophone schools of the province annually. The director of the project is Inga Boehler who reports that 24 schools have been reviewed to date in this first year of full implementation of the service. Some interesting observations on school programs and practices are already emerging. Inclusion in schools is an area of focus. We will seek a more thorough update from this team at a latter date. Here are a few of the preliminary findings:

- Some Observations on Inclusion
 - Elementary schools flag and respond to learning challenges more quickly
 - Schools are less well equipped to manage severe behaviour challenges
 - Pyramids of academic and behaviour intervention are not systematically established in many schools
 - Student Services Teams are not equally able to mobilize services and supports
- Use of Personnel: Resource & Methods Teacher (R&M)
 - R&M not in classrooms; often see pull-outs vs. R&M teacher in classrooms monitoring individual student progress and working with the teacher
 - R&M teacher is less effective when student services team is not working collaboratively with teachers (admin, guidance, R&M)
- Use of Personnel: Teacher Assistants (TA)
 - Often the TA is primary person working with a student vs. TA is part of team planning for students with exceptionalities
 - TA schedules do not meet student needs
- Instructional Practice & Differentiation
 - In many classrooms can't tell which student has an Special Education Plan;
 - Student acceptance of all peers and varied assignments among students (observed at all levels of the system) and willingness to help when help is needed
 - Very little differentiated instruction; whole-class instruction is still the norm
- Flexible Grouping
 - Grouping/re-grouping is not yet carried out well; multi-age groupings are not being used effectively
 - Pyramids of intervention not entrenched; need school-wide and strategic approach.
 - Not clear about what is streaming and what isn't – sometimes still within-class exclusion
- Behaviour & Bullying
 - Lack of resources for students with high behaviour needs (SIW, Guidance); safety issues
- Other Observations re: Inclusion
 - Greater awareness (staff and students) of particular types of student conditions/challenges
 - Some high schools finding ways to foster independence and build school belonging
 - Outside agencies sometimes not providing needed supports and attending meetings

Information based on notes from the NB School Improvement Review Team, March 2011.

Puppet troupe educates people about disability issues



The Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL) is celebrating another successful year of spreading the message of inclusion to schools, daycares, camps, and other organizations around Saskatchewan.

For more than two decades, the SACL has promoted awareness of disability issues through the educational puppet show Kids on the Block. The focus of Kids on the Block is to increase acceptance and appreciation of differences, which are central to our communities.

Through the use of 4-foot puppets, Kids on the Block is able to educate and dispel myths relating to individuals who have disabilities in a manner in which children can feel comfortable asking questions.

"Kids on the Block plants a seed for parents and teachers to expand upon," said Rachelle Hosak, the SACL's Youth Coordinator. "Children hear the words 'autism' or 'Down syndrome' from the puppets and they bring the words home to ask questions about it."

The Kids on the Block program is a 45-minute show that includes four skits about various disabilities and related issues. Children are introduced to topics such as visual impairment, spina bifida, Down syndrome, multiculturalism, abuse, muscular dystrophy, feelings, and other issues.

As one elementary teacher stated, "The presentation clearly gives a message of friendship and understanding peoples' differences. Students have a better understanding of disabilities now."

For additional information about the Kids on the Block program, or to book a Kids on the Block performance, please contact Rachelle Hosak at (306) 955-3344 or e-mail rachelle.hosak@sacl.org.



Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.

Former MP Leads Inclusive School



Hon. Jody Carr, NB Minister of Education, MLA for Dalhousie Donald Arsenault, Guy Arsenault, Marlene Munn, NBACL President and Lt. Gov. Graydon Nicholas.

Principal Guy Arsenault and his staff at **LE Reinsborough School** in Dalhousie, N.B. were awarded the Inclusive School Team Award by NBACL and CACL. The citation read at the ceremony reads as follows:

Many parents who are about to send their children off to their first day of school are often faced with the fear of the unknown. What will happen when my child goes to school? Will he be safe, will he be included? Will he be

accepted by his peers? Will he be supported when he is faced with challenges? Will he be challenged to do his best?

Crystal Payne, a mother of a student who attends LE Reinsborough School in Dalhousie, N. B. was also faced with these questions. Her son, Keagan, who has a disability, requires specialized supports. Crystal credits the teachers and principal, Guy Arsenault with being committed to

teaching all children while fostering in them a sense of self-esteem and pride and celebrating their successes.

Working together is vital to ensuring that a student is well supported in reaching their full potential. Keagan's teachers were very receptive to recommendations by his pediatric rehabilitation team and used some of the techniques they learned to support him in his learning. At the beginning of each school year, Keagan's teacher, teacher assistants, specialists and therapists meet to discuss ways to provide him with the best possible support.

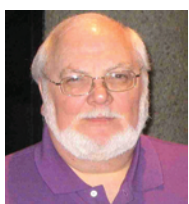
Keagan loves school and enjoys being with his peers. He attends school outings and participates in special events from concerts to fund-raising.

"From my son's very first day at school over three years ago, our family has been treated with dignity respect and value, in my opinion some of the most important things that can be afforded a family."

It is for this that the Mr. Guy Arsenault and the team at LE Reinsborough School have received the National Inclusive Education Award.

Is inclusive education realistic? You bet it is!

Gordon Porter – Submitted to Community Living Ontario, March 29, 2011



Gordon Porter

dilemma.

It is great to be a visionary and support inclusion in a theoretical sense – but what do you say when confronted with the reality of poor practice in the school and classroom.

The examples are quite common. We have all heard about:

- teachers who have a child in their class ... but ... don't really think that is the best place for him;
- teachers who are willing but declare

they have no training or experience with a child with special needs;

- a school principal who agrees to accept a child but only if supports that are not available are provided;
- a school that agrees to a child's placement but if anything at all doesn't go well – the deal is in off;
- a school permits inclusion but fails to ensure the teacher has access to a resource/support teacher or a paraprofessional when needed.

These and other things can and do happen.

Schools may not properly train and support their teachers; districts may say no money is available for needed accommodations; teachers may say the child's placement in the class will disrupt other children's learning; principals say the child with special needs will simply take up too much of

the teacher's time.

And so it goes. In the face of all these and other challenges it is easy to conclude that inclusive education may be a worthy goal, however it is not easy and it may well be unrealistic!

BUT ... it doesn't have to be that way. We have more than enough examples of quality inclusive education in Canada to demonstrate it can be done. Check out the examples provided in the interviews with school leaders on the Inclusive Education Canada website (www.inclusiveeducation.ca). They tell the stories of success in schools in throughout the country. The gloomy and dark descriptions of inclusion are outweighed by these stories of people who are making it happen now.

The fact is teachers can develop – and keep – positive attitudes toward

including kids with diverse needs in their classes. Principals can provide leadership and support their teachers and their students. Districts can develop policies and programs that empower and make quality inclusive education a reality.

The dark and gloomy reality of today's inadequate inclusion programs can be changes. Working to make inclusion successful can lead to more positive outcomes for our children in

the future.

We need to focus on the fact that access to an inclusive education is a right – one now included in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 25) – as well as human rights legislation in Canada.

Not only is inclusion a right – but it is also good educational practice.

In my experience schools that are successful and provide quality education can provide inclusive

education – if they chose to take on the challenge.

Teachers, principals and parents can mobilize to make inclusion not only a progressive vision – they can also make it a reality. Problems can be solved, challenges can be met.

Thousands of teachers in Canada are doing it today. More need to do it in the days ahead.

So – is inclusive education realistic? You bet it is!



Pondering the Obstacles to Inclusive Schools

Bendina Miller, President of CACL

I retired as Superintendent of Schools in BC's Rocky Mountain School District in July 2010. In the months since, I've reflected on my 42 years in education and am struck by a number of questions. I had the good fortune of teaching students in grades 1 to 12 and in working in 4 provinces, both in school districts and with Ministries of Education.

Even before entering the profession I had a passion for inclusion and had the good fortune of working with and learning from colleagues and families who shared my passion. As such, I have been witness to outstanding educators, supported by dedicated families, who have enabled students to learn together and achieve tremendous success.

Thus, my questions –

- If we know that inclusion can mean success for all students then why don't we include all students?
- Why do school districts continue to operate segregated schools, resource rooms and educational settings which exclude students who have been identified as having a disability?
- What can we do to make the difference?

While my questions may seem pessimistic, I continue to feel great optimism about achieving an inclusive future. That optimism is based on Canada's commitment to the United

Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Canada ratified the Convention on March 11, 2010 and with that ratification 10 provinces, 3 territories and the federal government have stated their support for the Convention which includes Article 24, The Right to Education.

In agreeing to the Convention Canada has a moral obligation to 'ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning enabling persons with disabilities to participate in a free society.' Article 24 goes on to set expectations that children with disabilities have the right to attend school in the communities in which they live and that reasonable accommodations must be provided to ensure effective education. In addition, the Convention states that measures must be taken to employ educators who have appropriate qualifications and that continuing professional training must be provided to ensure support for persons with disabilities.

So, with the powerful support of the UN Convention why do we still have school districts, supported by provincial/territorial governments, placing students in segregated environments?

One explanation could be that school districts and possibly governments aren't even aware of the Convention and the moral obligation to inclusive education that it brings.

- I would suggest that we can make a difference by bringing the UN Convention – Article 24, to the attention of our governments, school districts and educators in our local schools.
- I would suggest that if inclusive education is a reality in our schools we could provide recognition that they are, in fact, meeting the expectations set out in the Convention.

If, on the other hand, inclusion has not been achieved it could support efforts to draw the district's attention to the rights outlined in Article 24. I firmly believe that, together, we can make the difference. I also firmly believe that we can only make the difference by continuing to be strong, active advocates in sharing the power of the UN Convention with our community partners. It's about shifting attitudes and building confidence that inclusive education is a right and that with the appropriate supports it is successful and results in improved education for all students.



**Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.**

University of Victoria Library Staff Recognized with National Inclusive Education Award

Two University of Victoria McPherson Library staff members will be receiving a National Inclusive Education award from the CACL and the British Columbia Association for Community Living. **Shailoo Bedi** and **Carlie Graham** are being recognized for their leadership in making the McPherson Library an inclusive learning environment and workplace for students with developmental disabilities.

For a student, being fully included in a University or College means more than just attending class. It means having equal access to all aspects of post secondary life: recreational activities, employment opportunities and access to common learning spaces

such as the library. Carlie and Shailoo have taken the initiative and to advance inclusive education at a post secondary level.

Shailoo Bedi, the Director of Systems and Client Services at UVic's McPherson Library, has been instrumental in creating a way for students with developmental disabilities to access part-time "student assistant" employment at the library. Typically these positions have only been open to students taking courses for credit.

Carlie Graham, Manager of the Music and Media department at McPherson Library, has employed a student with a developmental disability for the last three years,

taking leadership within the University as a whole to promote what needs to happen to make student positions successful within the University.

"Both Shailoo and Carlie model to the university community as a whole what it means to be a fully inclusive service," writes Jessica Humphrey, Director at the STEPS Forward Inclusive Post-Secondary Education. "Because the library has taken leadership in defining auditing students with developmental disabilities as fully participating, it changes the way that others within the University – students, faculty and staff – see the value and potential of students with developmental disabilities."

These two individuals are shining examples of how accommodations and changes in approach for one student can help others to see the value and potential of students with developmental disabilities in all aspects of university life.

PEI Minister of Education Salutes Educators for Inclusion Work

Prince Edward Island Association for Community Living was pleased to take part in Inclusive Education Week in February 2011. The association was encouraged by the high caliber of educators who were nominated for the inclusion awards. Five inclusive education awards were presented on February 18 by **Hon. Doug Currie, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development**.

The following are some of the testimonials for these deserving award recipients:

Rebecca Knauff, Rainbow Daycare: "Rebecca is a strong advocate for not only children with autism, but all children. She has a gift for teaching and remarkable insight into the multifaceted learning styles of children with autism."



Marcia Pridham, Resource Teacher, Westisle Composite High School: "Marcia has worked hard at bringing non resource-based students into the Resource Room and has helped resource-based students to join the larger community. She is a one of a kind teacher."

Alanagh MacDougall, Parkdale Sherwood Headstart: "Alanagh adapts activities so that everyone can participate. Alanagh's adaptations are invisible; designed to never draw attention; they are "all in the run of daily activities."

Rachelle Gauthier, Principal, Ecole St. Augustin and Dream Team: "When a young student with autism entered grade one in this small Francophone school, rachelle and her team welcomed him and they have maintained a community of

caring ever since. Principal Gauthier often volunteered to provide support during recess and helped her student learn new social skills during play"

Kevin Stonefield, Principal, Montague Intermediate School: (as written by present and former students and parents): "He cares about where all students go after intermediate and tries to keep in touch with everyone. " His door is always open. He has the type of leadership qualities where he leads by example rather than authority."

There has been great progress made in PEI with Inclusive Education in the last few years. However there is much more to do and recognizing these educators strengthens that effort. PEI ACL collaborates with Education Partners on best practices and together they promote full community participation.

Student Services Team at Hampton High School in New Brunswick wins Inclusive School Team Award

Creating a “common learning environment,” that is, places where students study, recreate and work within and beyond the school grounds makes a significant difference in fostering a culture of inclusion where everyone has a sense of belonging.

Principal Celinda Van Horne and the Students Services Team of Hampton High School spent the past four years transforming their school into a fully inclusive environment. The student services team provided teachers and paraprofessionals with information and training on Universal Design. Each year the changes were visible and obvious. This was a first for the school, but has proven to be so successful that more teachers have requested this training.

A special needs room was replaced with a student centre where the Guidance Counsellor and other staff worked with students. The room which used to house students with high needs has since become an office for the Resource teachers and paraprofessionals. Students who once ate their lunches in the resource room now eat in the cafeteria with their peers.

Each of the school’s three resource teachers work closely with the teachers to provide guidance, resources and support in their efforts to ensure that all students are participating fully and to the best of their abilities.

“The principal has also been instrumental in establishing



Far Right – Hampton High Principal Celinda Van Horne, next to Lt. Gov. Graydon Nicholas and NBACL President Marlene Munn. Hon. Jody Carr, Minister of Education at the left next to three members of the School Student Services Team.

a school atmosphere that is welcoming and respectful to all students, visitors and other staff members,” says Julie Stone, an Inclusive Education consultant who nominated the Student Services Team for the award. “In fact, she is often seen outside greeting students as they come off the buses.”

It is for their commitment to transforming their physical and working environment where all students had opportunities to participate and learn to their fullest potential that the Student Services Team was presented with the National Inclusive Education Award.

Segregated Schools for Students with Intellectual Disabilities



Segregated school in Woodstock NB – Peter Pan School – closed in 1983.

Canada still has provinces and school districts and boards that have segregated schools for students with intellectual disabilities. This is the case despite the more than 25 years since the Charter of Rights & Freedoms came into force

in Canada. Indeed, this discriminatory practice continues despite the Charter and human rights laws and despite compelling evidence that such schools and classes are not needed to provide these students with a quality education.

But in some communities they continue. Guess what? You don’t typically find them in the small rural parts of the country or in the least prosperous parts of the country. Segregated schools are found most easily in some of our biggest, wealthiest cities.

Why is that? A good question. The reasons are varied but inevitably connected to lack of vision; specific interests that resist change; lack of leadership; and mindless adherence to following the path of least resistance. While these

programs may be well intentioned, they are a remnant of the past and do not meet the expectations we have for our children in 21st Century Canada.

We want to build an information bank on the segregated schools for students with disabilities still operating in Canada. We want to raise awareness that these institutions are not needed and that there are practical and successful alternatives to them found across Canada. In many communities good alternative approaches exist and even in the same provinces as the remaining segregated schools.

Our primary interest is schools that serve students with intellectual disabilities. Typically they are stand alone schools but some may be located in a wing or section of a school serving other students, but is a completely separate operation. We welcome your help in developing this data bank. If you have personal knowledge of these schools please send your comments to InclusiveEducation@cacl.ca. We will share what we learn on our website – www.inclusiveeducation.ca



**Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.**

National panel members share insights about making inclusion work

Partners present free webinar Feb. 28

Natalie Hamilton – February 2011

Educators who can make a positive impact on inclusion in Canada are tuned into a webinar hosted by Inclusive Education Canada, Community Living Ontario and the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL).

In celebration of February being Inclusive Education Month in Canada, the organizations presented *School Inclusion: Critical Issue for Leaders* on Monday, Feb. 28 from noon to 1:15 p.m.

"We thought it would be a good conclusion (to Inclusive Education Month) for a national panel to deal with some of the issues," says Gordon Porter, director of Inclusive Education Canada.

The session targeted professionals who hold leadership positions from principals to resource teachers to others who are responsible for inclusive education.

"It was focused on leadership and the critical issues in leadership that can make inclusive education a reality."

Three speakers with distinct perspectives addressed issues facing school and district leaders in making inclusion both possible and successful. Each speaker gave a short presentation, discussed the topics and took

questions from participants.

On the bill was Jody Carr, New Brunswick's Education and Early Childhood Development minister, Bendina Miller, a former school district superintendent in British Columbia and president of CACL, and Calvin Fraser, secretary general of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Carr will provide an update about what's happening in the area of inclusive education at the provincial government level.

Miller shared her thoughts from the perspective of a retired senior educator.

Meanwhile, Fraser offered his insights about what's necessary for inclusion from the standpoint of teachers.

"He has a perspective from Canada's teachers — the people who have to make it happen in the classrooms," Porter says. "It's a small group but there were very interesting perspectives represented here."

CACL executive vice-president Michael Bach facilitated the webinar.

The event was free and further events are being planned. Anyone with a computer, web access and speakers can take part.



Jody Carr, Education and Early Childhood Development Minister, N.B.



Bendina Miller, former school district superintendent, B.C., and president of CACL



Calvin Fraser, secretary general of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

Chilliwack Teacher Recognized with National Inclusive Education Award

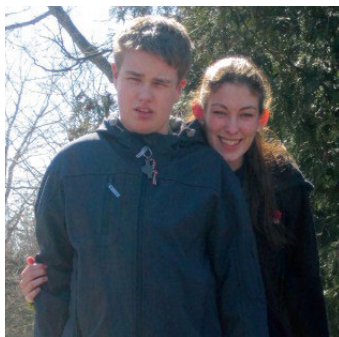
Glenda Gaudette, a learning assistance teacher at Sardis Secondary School in Chilliwack will be receiving a National Inclusive Education award from the CACL and the British Columbia Association for Community Living. She is being commended for her role in promoting a culture of inclusion at the school, while ensuring that students with special needs have full access to all courses with the support they need.

Ms. Gaudette has been

recognized as part of National Inclusive Education Month, celebrated during February 2011 across Canada.

Ms. Gaudette's collaborative team approach includes the participation of the school as a whole: students, parents, teachers, administrators and district staff. Rather than existing as a separate program, the Sardis learning assistance centre has promoted an inclusive, diverse culture of

inclusion and friendship, supported by everyone at Sardis. Students with special needs are thus recognized for their abilities and have equal access to all classes and recreational activities, with the supports they need to succeed. Glenda Gaudette and Sardis Secondary are shining examples of how an entire school can come together and make inclusive education a reality. Congratulations Glenda and Sardis Secondary!



Becky Alves and her brother Alex. Becky, an advisory member of re:Action 4 Inclusion at her school, is a strong advocate for creating inclusive classrooms.

Student advocating for brothers' rights

'I want to teach people that they need to get to know people for who they are and not for the challenges they may have,' says Becky Alves

Deron Hamel – March 30, 2011

ORILLIA, Ont. – Becky Alves has seen her younger brothers who have autism included and excluded in the school system. When they're included, Alex, who's in Grade 10, and Todd, in

Grade 8, thrive, she says. For this reason Becky wants to ensure her brothers are included all the time.

Becky, a Grade 12 student at Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute (IDCI), is taking action to make school systems more inclusive so all students can thrive in environments where they learn alongside their peers.

As a re:Action 4 Inclusion advisory member at IDCI, Becky and seven of her schoolmates are working to make IDCI's environment more inclusive for students who have a disability.

The message she's spreading at school is simple: disability doesn't define a person. "I want to teach people that they need to get to know people for who they are and not for the challenges they may have," Becky tells Community Living Leaders.

When Alex and Todd are included in regular classrooms, other students interact and engage the young men, she says. "But now they're both in special education classes and it's totally different," Becky adds.

With her youngest brother entering IDCI next year, Becky says she's motivated to change things so Todd will experience inclusion throughout his high-school years.

Change, she says, needs to stem from shifts in attitudes about how people perceive others who have a disability.

"People like students and staff need to realize that there are options other than what is already in place, and I think that everyone needs to be open minded to the fact that there can be inclusion in schools," she says.

"Even though (inclusion) is not common at our school right now, it can be in the future, and they need to be open to that in order to make it happen."

Community Living Leaders caught up with Becky at re:Action 4 Inclusion's third annual youth conference held in Orillia March 25-27. At the conference, which is run by students for students, youths were armed with information from guest speakers and interactive activities that promote collaboration to help build inclusive schools and communities.

Despite the current climate in many schools, Becky says she's seeing positive things that are giving her hope for the future. Some schools and districts, Becky notes, are making conscious efforts to become more inclusive.

"And that makes me think that maybe eventually my school can be like those ones," she says.

Reprinted from *Leaders*, the online news source of Community Living Ontario.



re:Action4Inclusion

Ontario High School Youth Challenged to Take Action!

Community Living Ontario is calling on youth to engage in what they describe as – "an awesome volunteer opportunity". They are asking young men and women to be a leader in making their school and community an inclusive and welcoming place for all students and citizens.

There are two opportunities to choose from!

- **re:action4Inclusion Conference Committee** – Once a year, students from across the province come together to network, learn and explore ways to ensure our schools and communities are welcoming to people of all backgrounds and abilities. We are looking for motivated youth to help plan and provide leadership at our 3rd annual re:action4Inclusion conference - March 2011.
- **Youth Advisory Committee** – Provide your thoughts and ideas on how youth can be supported to build communities inclusive of all people; be host to a one-day regional event to promote inclusion in your area; and assist the conference committee with the re:action4Inclusion conference.

Young people who want to get engaged are asked to sign up for one of the committees by contacting Linda White at linda@communitylivingontario.ca, by June 27th.



**Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.**

Resource Teacher Monique Hughes wins Inclusive Teacher Award

Monique Hughes' motto is "Children need to be happy, safe and learning." Ms. Hughes is a Resource teacher at Centennial Elementary School in Saint John.

Her nominator and Principal Tina Estabrooks, says that Ms. Hughes, "Personifies inclusive practices at all times and in all aspects of her work."

80% of students who attend Centennial Elementary live in low income homes. In addition to this, there are many students who struggle with a variety of challenges, which, due to their personal circumstances, do not receive the proper diagnosis. Many of the school's population are also transient and it is common for these new students to arrive at the school without any information regarding their needs and abilities.

This may seem rather daunting to

any teacher, but not to Monique Hughes. She is the first person to greet each new student. She ensures that she, along with administration, and the classroom teacher are quickly and fully aware of the child's academic and social aptitude and she moves quickly to develop a plan to ensure that the student feels secure and has success.

She regularly visits their classroom and works closely with families and teachers to ensure that the student feels welcome and included.

Ms. Hughes believes that, "students must experience success to want to succeed," is the underpinning of the learning plans that she develops for her students. She is committed to activities and programs that help ensure that all of her students are given the same opportunities to succeed. Ms. Hughes is also seen as a



Monique Hughes and Marlene Munn, NBACL President.

mentor in her field and is often invited to attend seminars to promote new initiatives and practices.

To Ms. Hughes, the development of the whole child is key to ensuring their success. It is for this that Monique Hughes was presented with the National Inclusive Education Award.

Photo: Hon Jody Carr, NB Minister of Education, Monique Hughes, Marlene Munn, NBACL President and Lt. Gov. Graydon Nicholas.

Honouring an inclusive education visionary:

A lifelong community living supporter recalls the career of a mentor

Kristian Partington – February 28, 2011



Donna Marcaccio

Donna Marcaccio, executive director with RYGIEL Supports for Community Living in Hamilton, had the pleasure of working with the recipient of

Ontario's 2011 Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) Inclusive Education Award for more than 35 years.

In fact, it was Jim Hansen's guidance that altered her career path as a young woman and she sought to honour her mentor's legacy by nominating him for the prestigious award.

Hansen was relentless in his pursuit for inclusive education, Marcaccio recalls, and as a young volunteer supporting people who have a disability, she was inspired by his passion.

Hansen is a retired superintendent with the Hamilton-Wentworth District Catholic School board. When he began his crusade four decades ago to help one little girl and her family find a place within a community school, there was no precedent for such action.

But he saw the family's desire for inclusion and wouldn't take no for an answer.

"I remember sitting in his office with parents and he would say to them, 'If that's what you want, we're gonna make it work,'" says Marcaccio. "That was his mindset — where there's a will there's a way."

She says his passion was infectious and he was able to impart his mission to peers throughout the board because he carried about him a sense of trustworthiness. In his professional life, she says, he engaged people and they caught the same fire within themselves.

His model spread throughout the province and beyond, she

says. People would move to the area so they could involve their children in his board and eventually, people would travel there from across the globe to see how inclusion changed lives.

There was opposition in the early days, she remembers, "but he was never defeated by it," and he was never afraid to admit that he needed help. He called upon the best minds in the field for support and amassed a small army of people to take up the call when necessary.

Though Hansen paved the way for inclusive education, Marcaccio warns it should never be taken for granted. Her hope is that by honouring her mentor, whom she agrees is a true pioneer, the CACL can keep the message alive that inclusion is a gift for everyone.

Reprinted from *Leaders*, the online news source of Community Living Ontario.



**Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.**