



A timely new publication by the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities

Celebrating 35 Years

The MLPD continues to have a strong presence in our community on this our 35th Anniversary. We remain the only cross-disability advocacy organization dedicated to serving the needs of all Manitoban's with disabilities. Since our last issue of the ALERT the MLPD has been busy advocating for improved public services. We have also taken the time to listen to the needs and concerns of our membership. On February 05, 2009 the MLPD took part in the University of Manitoba's Access Awareness Day. We also made a presentation before the Executive Policy Committee at City Hall on March 11, 2009 to air some of the concerns that we had around the city of Winnipeg's 2009 budget. Recently, the MLPD co-hosted a public forum with The Joint Committee on disability related employment and income assistance issues. The purpose of the forum was to explore the idea of a proposed Manitoban's with Disabilities Act. We want to thank all of our members who took part in this event for making it such a big success. Finally, the MLPD would like to extend a word of thanks to Grant Mitchell and the Manitoba Law Society. They recently held a fund-raiser: the 1st President's Run in Support of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities. All proceeds went to the MLPD. Thank you for sharing in our dream of a more inclusive and accessible Manitoba.

Spring brings out nice weather...and AGMS

After much hibernation spring looks to be upon us. Now that many of us are able to get out in our community many local organizations will be holding their annual general meetings. Below are a few dates to note :

CCD June 6-7

1010 Sinclair Housing June 11

Canadian Paraplegic Association June 16

ACL Winnipeg June 17

Continuity Care June 23

REES June 24

If any of these are of interest please call the organization for more information.

MLPD Onwards and Upwards Event Report

On Friday January 30th, 2009 at the Ellice Café the MLPD held a gathering for our members to reconnect with fellow members and learn more about our operational plan drafted by Jim Derksen. Key points that were highlighted included talk of restructuring committees. Members also had a chance to share their thoughts on how the league can continue to represent the needs of members and the community. Suggestions included prioritizing and focusing on the issues that are most important as well as addressing issues as they emerge and occur.

Some current issues are poverty, education barriers for students, job barriers and the need for more accessible affordable housing with disabilities and income assistance. Another highlight included the "thumbs up program" which will focus on making local area businesses and establishments more accessible. Also mentioned was the idea of creating a course on public policy so that members and the community can become more aware and educated when dealing with changes in public policy. The event was considered a success and council would like to thank all those that attended and provided valuable input. Thank you for supporting us!

Don't forget to join us as we celebrate 35 years! Our open house will be held here at the League office from 3-7 pm on Thursday April 16th. Refreshments will be served

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Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Bulletin

An RDSP is a long-term savings vehicle intended to help parents and others save for the long-term financial security of a person with a severe disability.

As you may know it became available to Canadians across the country as of December 2008 and Canada is the first country to offer such a unique savings plan..

While not comprehensive in its scope and has garnered its fair share of criticism, the RDSP program still offers benefits particularly for families with children and young adults with disabilities.

I would urge you to visit the following website links or other resources available to gain knowledge and to determine if you are eligible for these benefits:

- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada at 1-800-622-6232, TTY: 1-800-926-9105 or visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca/disability

- Email, rdsp-reei@hrsdc-rhdsc.gc.ca
- ILRC in Manitoba has made a video describing the details; the website the address is www.ilrc.mb.ca

Highlights:

RDSP is only a "small piece in a much larger puzzle", it is intended to be used as one tool of financial long-term savings. Money put into your RDSP will be sheltered so individuals receiving social assistance can save without their payments being affected. Please check with your social worker or income assistance coordinator for details on provincial guidelines. Being on a low fixed income may not exclude you from enjoying long-term savings benefits. BMO, CIBC and RBC are now accepting applications until December 31st, 2009.

Reminder : membership fees are due April 1st. Enclosed is a renewal/application form.

Challenges:

- To qualify, you must be enrolled in the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) program. You can visit the CRA web site; www.craarc.gc.ca/disability or call 1-800-959-8281 (TTY users call 1-800-665-0354)

- A person 50 years and older will be unable to receive the matching government grant or bond. For individuals who are finding employment in their 30-40's means less time to contribute to their RDSP

In summary this is a valuable long-term savings opportunity for person's with disabilities. It merits your investigation in spite of it's shortcomings. As with other disability organizations the MLDP will be paying close attention to the upcoming 3 year review to provide constructive feedback, help stream-line the program and also help by raising awareness among potential RSDP beneficiaries.

Louise McKean B.S.W.
MLDP council member

We are trying to use e-mail as much as possible to send updates on MLPD activities. If you have e-mail, please send your e-mail address to Josie at MLPD@shawcable.com

The 2008/2009 MLPD Provincial Council:

Harry Wolbert (Co-chair), Terry McIntosh (Co-chair), Dean Richert (1st Vice-Chair), Colleen Watters (2nd Vice Chair), Clare Simpson (Treasurer), Ross Eadie (Secretary), Gary Dyson, Zanna Joyce, Paula Keirstead, Louise McKean, Pauline Mason, Theresa Swedick, Ted Roots (Souris Branch)

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