



MLPD Update **MLPD** July 2011

Newsletter of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities

Produced by the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
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Provincial Coordinator's Report

by Diane Driedger

The past few months have been very productive and successful for MLPD. We have held exciting events and have tackled many accessibility issues.

Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW) May 29-June 3, 2011

MLPD Co-Chair Harry Wolbert chaired the MAAW planning committee on behalf of MLPD for the second year. MLPD hosted the Kick Off for MAAW at Portage Place Edmonton Court on May 30th at noon. There were about 40 people who took seats for the event and many other passers by who stopped to take in speeches and entertainment. Grant Nordman spoke on behalf of the Mayor, Sharon Blady spoke on behalf of Jennifer Howard, Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities. MLPD was happy to have Rico John play African drums and sing songs from Trinidad and Tobago as well

as those he composed himself. Two of his songs are printed in the current issue of the newsletter. Marie Annharte Baker read poetry about her experience as a First Nations woman with disability. MLPD staffperson, Bonnie Bieganski read her poem "Spring" that appeared in our last newsletter. Harry Wolbert and Louise McKean co-chaired the event. Thanks to everyone who participated!

MLPD also co-hosted, with Council of Canadians with Disabilities, a Forum entitled, Who Chooses? End of Life Issues and Persons with Disabilities. Around thirty people attended this panel discussion held June 2, 2011 at the Millennium Library. Please see Colleen Watter's article in this issue for more on the Forum.

Annual General Meeting

MLPD held its AGM on June 23, 2011 at the Union Centre. Around fifty people attended the meeting which had a very full agenda. First, a Transportation Forum was Chaired by Nick

Ternette, MLPD Transportation Chair, to discuss the new draft Handi-Transit cancellation policy. Members had the opportunity to voice their opinions. Jess Turner has an article about the Forum in this issue.

The results of the MLPD election for the new Council were also accepted at the AGM. Please see the last page of the newsletter for a listing of the Council and the Executive members. The Council of Canadians with Disabilities Award was awarded to Gail Finkel and Ainley Bridgeman (posthumously) for their tireless work on recent changes to the Manitoba Building Code.



Left to right: Award recipient Gail Finkel, Harry Wolbert, MLPD Chair and Wayne Bridgeman who accepted for Ainley Bridgeman.

MLPD was please to launch, along with DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) Manitoba the "Closing the Gap" disability rights pendant. Designer Hilary Druxman has donated 100% of

the net proceeds for the pendant to MLPD and DAWN Manitoba. The pendant is selling well through MLPD office and through Hilary Druxman's website and store. The following is an excerpt of the card that comes along with the pendant: "MLPD and DAWN create public awareness about the human rights of people with disabilities. We are all human beings and have the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else. Don't let the gap in understanding come between us!"



Closing the Gap Disability Rights Pendant.

Who Chooses: End of Life Issues and People with Disabilities **by Colleen Watters** **MLPD Ethics Committee Chairperson**

On May 31, 2011 in conjunction with Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW), MLPD and Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) held a very successful forum entitled: "Who Chooses: End of Life Decision-Making and People with

Disabilities" to raise awareness about the relevance of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba (CPSM) Statement and Manitoba Health policies on the lives of people with disabilities. The session was moderated by Rhonda Wiebe (MLPD Ethics Committee member). Speakers included Jim Derksen and Dean Richert (MLPD Ethics Committee members) and Valerie Wolbert and Catherine Rodgers (People First of Canada). Following the presentations, there was an open discussion and suggestions for action were brought forward. These included further work on the CPSM and Manitoba Health policies on end-of-life issues and the possibility of holding a follow-up forum in the fall of 2011 or the winter of 2012. The forum was videotaped and is now online (YouTube) for public viewing. Thank you to Paul Graham, a media professional, for capturing the event on video. The video can be viewed at: <http://www.mlpd.mb.ca>

In June, MLPD sent a letter to the Hon. Theresa Oswald, Minister of Health, urging her department to reconsider the establishment of an end-of-life review panel to deal with issues of withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatment. We recommended that her Ministry

continue to work with the (CPSM) to alter its Statement to remove the alleged absolute power for end-of-life decisions that it now places with physicians and asked her to legally mandate physicians to consult with patients and their proxies in all matters of life and death decisions.

MLPD Transportation Forum

by Jesse Turner

On Thursday, June 23, 2011, MLPD held a public forum on the proposed changes Handi-Transit is considering with regards to service delivery as an opening feature at this year's AGM. A number of community members were present to air their concerns and to give feedback on the proposed changes. Looking back, MLPD assisted in the creation of Handi-Transit back in 1977. Handi-Transit was created to provide disabled community members with an accessible and safe method of transit equivalent to the service provided by public transit. The general consensus at the public forum was that the proposed changes to Handi-Transit would only serve to undermine the notions of providing equivalent service to persons with disabilities. The feedback recorded at the public forum will

be shared with Handi-Transit when the service provider's committee convenes again in late summer.

Community members feel that service, equivalent to that of public transit, should be the basis of all policies and structures related to Handi-Transit. One of the most concerning changes being proposed by Handi includes the timeframe in which trips can be cancelled by before users are charged. Currently, users are able to cancel a trip up to 30 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time without being charged. Handi-Transit is proposing that cancellations made before 11:00am the day before travel will not be subject to cancellation fees. This change greatly limits flexibility for users, changing the cancellation window from 30 minutes to an entire day. For instance, a user can no longer cancel a return trip and decide to take the bus home instead if the weather is nice that day. With that being said, a user can only cancel with such short notice once per month before facing charges. The proposed change includes:

- Up to two scheduled trip requests (one return trip) cancelled by the registrant more than three hours before the scheduled pick-up

per calendar month are not subject to fees.

- Up to two scheduled work trip requests (one return trip) cancellation by employed registrants per calendar month (to accommodate shift changes or meetings) are not subject to fees.
- All other scheduled trip requests cancelled by the registrant are subject to fees with escalation of charges in excess of two occasions (one return trip) per ten trips scheduled.
 - first cancellation/ 10 trips – no charge (reminder letter sent)
 - second cancellation/ 10 trips – no charge (reminder letter sent)
 - third cancellation/ 10 trips – equivalent of two adult cash fares
 - fourth cancellation/ 10 trips – equivalent of three adult cash fares
 - fifth cancellation/ 10 trips – equivalent of four adult cash fares
 - amount owing exceeds \$30.00 – suspension of

service until paid in full

A similar escalation of charges will be issued for 'No Shows', except that fees will commence upon the second 'No Show'. Also, the escalation of charges for "No Shows" will be recorded within a "January to June" and "July to December" window.

In order to curb cancellations and to encourage users to cancel trips following these proposed policy changes, Handi-Transit is also proposing to offer an incentive to users who avoid 'No Show' and cancellation charges. The proposed change includes, "registrants who do not incur 'No Show' or cancellation fees for 20 trips will be credited the equivalent of two adult cash fares. Although this incentive provides moderate compensation for adhering to the proposed policy changes, general consensus at the public forum was that users value the freedom to cancel scheduled trips within a half an hour window more so than being provided with a credit. For members of the community who are able to use public transit, there is a great deal of flexibility as to which route and at which time a user can catch a bus. It is felt that the independence and flexibility of Handi-Transit users should also be respected. Some felt that

Handi-Transit should devise a brochure of pointers that will help users avoid 'No Shows' and cancellations as opposed to penalizing users outright.

Another way attendees of the public forum felt that their independence was being undermined have to do with the changes to the 'Pick-up Window' Handi-Transit is proposing. Handi-Transit is proposing that users be at the ground floor level of the pick-up location 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time (currently five minutes) and that users wait up to 20 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time (currently 10 minutes) before calling in to check on the whereabouts of the driver. This change alters the pick-up window from 15 minutes to 30 minutes in total, which is significant for user dealing with pain, fatigue or sensitivity to extreme weather. With regards to the proposed "Pick-up Window" change, the general consensus is that this change is unfair and unnecessary if Handi-Transit is in the process of installing GPS systems in their vehicles. The GPS system should help drivers stay on track and help mediate 'No Show' discrepancies.

Proposed changes to Handi-Transit subscriptions include:

- Any subscription with more than four 'No Shows' or cancellations in a calendar month will be suspended; the registrant will have to book trips by reservation and are not eligible for a subscription for the next 12 months.
- Registrants who have had a subscription revoked twice will no longer be eligible for subscription service.

It is felt that graces offered to users who miss a few scheduled trips should also apply to users who rely on subscriptions. The reasons for missing or cancelling trips for those who have a subscription are similar, or even more relevant, compared to other users. Those who have subscriptions usually do so because of work or school, therefore a user's meeting or class schedule may change without their control.

Other concerns raised at the public forum include:

- Details surrounding drop-off and pick-up locations are still unclear.
- Handi-Transit should develop back-to-back trip to accommodate childcare

- drop-off, and allow children as passengers (charged children's fare, free under 5 years old).
- Handi-Transit need to hold social trips in greater regards, and offer bookings later at night (hours of operation should be equivalent to public transit).
- Policy in regards to additional passengers is unclear.
- Weather should not be the only reason for waving 'No Shows' or cancellation, as the health of users can change daily or even more frequently.
- Handi-Transit would benefit more so overall from better scheduling.
- Lastly, an independent survey should be conducted as to why users cancel.

Overall, it is felt that Handi-Transit would operate better if the service provider communicated more efficiently with users. There is concern that changes to the current policies will only serve to further complicate things for users, therefore it was suggested that Handi-Transit develop a user manual which clearly explains all

policies, structure, and fees and distribute the manual to users. Also, the service would be better managed if changes were made to the structure of Handi-Transit's committee. Currently, the director of Handi-Transit chairs the committee. MLPD's transportation committee feels this structure creates a conflict of interest, and has brought up the issue with government officials. It is hoped that Handi-Transit's committee will nominate an unbiased chair and have a government official participate in the committee as well, in order to make the committee more neutral. With the aging population, the number of Handi-Transit users will continue to rise, therefore Handi-Transit must develop efficient ways of dealing with the growing demand that is in the best interests all parties involved.

TRANSIT INCONSISTENCIES NETWORK (TIN) at MLPD

We have launched a Transit Inconsistencies Network (TIN). We are asking riders to document problems and exceptional service in regards to Transit and Handi-Transit by noting time, date, number of the driver or taxi driver, and nature of the complaint or compliment, and submit it to the MLPD. We have forms for this purpose. You can email or call the office the information. We will be submitting your complaints and compliments to the Transit staff on a regular basis. We hope that action will be taken to address your concerns. In addition, we also encourage users of accessible taxis to make complaints direction to Gary Stillson, Acting Chief Taxicab Inspector at 945-0289. When you make a complaint about quality of service or lack of service, please let MLPD know as well.

Calling All Interested MLPD Members!!

Even though the weather is hot and summer is in full swing, this is still a busy and exciting time for the MLPD! The new executive are meeting throughout the summer and setting up initiatives for the provincial election. We are also wanting to meet with federal MP's to talk about the importance of continuing to fund groups like ours through the Council of Canadians with disabilities.

So come and join the Election Strategy Subcommittee and let's hold our provincial candidates feet to the fire about dealing with issues that impact people with disabilities. Contact Paula Keirstead or April D'Aubin to join this committee.

If you want to meet and talk with federal MP's to let them know what important work our organizations do for persons with disabilities then contact Terry McIntosh and join the federal MP Lobby Subcommittee.

EVERY PERSONS INPUT AND PARTICIPATION IS WELCOME AND NEEDED! COME MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

RebELLEs Conference by Bonnie Bieganski

If you'll remember back to the January 2011 Update article called, 'RebELLES with a Cause,' you'll remember it was an article bursting at the seams "with excitement at an upcoming opportunity to be involved with greatness" at the 2nd RebELLEs Pan-Canadian Young Feminist Gathering.

Young Canadian feminists gathered together in Winnipeg over the 2011 May long weekend for the 2nd RebELLEs Pan-Canadian Young Feminist Gathering to fight the rise of the right, defend women's rights and continue to improve the lives of girls and women in home communities and worldwide. The weekend event was filled with action, anger, tears, discussion, networking and laughter and celebrating as the core issues of feminism today were bravely approached. These core issues are violence against women, peace and demilitarization, anti-racism and decolonization, environmental justice and poverty as well as anti-capitalism.

Over 350 young feminists from across Canada and Quebec came to Winnipeg over the 2011 May long weekend for the 2nd

RebELLEs Pan-Canadian Young Feminist Gathering including many with invisible disabilities. I met one young feminist whom required sign language interpretation and a number with mental disabilities.

Throughout the gathering, workshops were facilitated with the goal of creating a set of resistance actions, alternatives and demands for each of these action areas. It was to be then taken to the larger group and collectively adopted as one document to guide the RebELLEs movement's political actions.

The workshop, 'Women with Disabilities,' was led by a young feminist who did not identify as having a disability. The first forty-five minutes of the workshop focused on alternative communication and little to do with feminist issues. Only part of the workshop was spent determining the basic human rights, equal opportunity to education, employment, health care and sexual health information. to an able bodied person first. And if a person with disability might have a job, they are not given equal access to transportation.

When I think of feminism, I think of passion for current issues, self empowerment, and movement towards something greater. I would have liked to see more of

these qualities in the workshop on women with disabilities. The barriers women with disabilities experience are to rights that all women have or are in pursuit of.

What I'm getting at is commonality and equality, the two very basic pursuits in feminism and the disability community.

It is the obligation of women to stand up to the face of adversity, to show the world that they are deserving of those in which they are denied. It is no different for us women with disabilities so I call to my peers, young or old, to do something...any little thing...to change people's minds about who we really are and just exactly what we are capable of. Let's leave behind bitterness, self-pity, and the stereotypes these generate and give momentum to the vicious circle. Instead let's convey a message to empower young women with disabilities, strengthen our connection to all women and people, celebrate the

Inspiration to this generation and the next.

Have an issue that you think MLPD should be addressing?

Email mlpd@shawcable.com

Thumbs Up Project Report by Derek Legge & Daniel Halechko

The mapping of the target area, Windsor Park, was done and a local group of disabled adults (Trailblazers) delivered our Helpful Hints for Access to all local businesses. They also put up notices in the area asking for community input. We noticed several wheelchair ramps added to private homes and delivered a letter asking for their views on local barriers or access along with a copy of the MLPD newsletter. There were 21 homes with ramps in Windsor Park.

We have visited most churches, convenience stores, park areas, medical and dental offices, restaurants and have sadly observed the apartment block situation. So many apartment buildings were three storey and partly into the ground (inside stairs) or had outside

stairs. Only two places were decently accessible out of about 16 buildings, not including Manitoba Housing which had two locations with part of each being accessible.

We wrote to a dozen local businesses to seek sponsorship for disabled parking signs to give away where needed. Only Moe Dupuis Enterprises purchased four, which have been distributed. We have given out five Thumbs Up certificates to 3 churches, a hotel, and a training centre that have made good efforts to be more accessible. All stores in strip malls are being visited to record entry access and washroom access where available to the public. Each visit usually results in discussion about any barriers.

When power doors are out of the question, we suggest a wireless door chime that would alert the reception that someone needs assistance with the door. These cost less than \$30. Safety hazards, like all glass doors or tripping hazards are pointed out as well, for those with a visual disability.

Daniel is beginning the planning to start the accessibility review of the Wolseley area as the next neighbourhood. MLPD

members who live in this area might be approached to assist in that campaign.

Thumbs Up certificates were issued to the following places in Windsor Park:

*Windsor Park United Church - designated parking, good ramp, power doors, recent addition of elevator to basement hall, accessible washrooms both upstairs and down, space in pew area for wheelchairs and a pull-out ramp enabling a wheelchair choir member to be upfront with the choir.

*CanadInn Windsor Park - recent addition with good inside ramping, more accessible washrooms, better designated parking, color and texture changes on stairway and plans to eliminate a switchback ramp at the entrance to put in an elevator.

*Prince of Peace Lutheran Church – designated parking, buzzer at door to be added, seating in pew area for wheelchairs, large print Sunday bulletin, newer sound system and recently added accessible washroom.

*ASAP Advanced Schooling and Professional Services - recently relocated to an accessible location because former location

was difficult to enter in a wheelchair and had no accessible washroom. The other location could not be improved.

*Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens Catholic Church - designated parking, power doors, newly renovated interior with accessible washrooms, wheelchair seating in pew area, enhanced sound system.

The certificate states “For their on-going interest and commitment to making their premises an accessible and safe environment for all of its customers, members and clients”. While there were usually more things yet to improve at each place, the certificate is to recognize what they have done and hopefully encourage them to keep on making other improvements.

Ability Axis Employment Expo **by Bonnie Bieganski**

Ability Axis is a project of Diversity World, an organization that strives to reduce employment barriers. The purpose of Ability Axis is to engage in activities that will support the ongoing efforts of the many individuals and organizations in Manitoba that are focused on creating greater employment opportunities for

people with disabilities. The intention of the Employment Expo was to feature a job/career fair and celebrate the current and future contributions that Manitobans with disabilities can make to Manitoba's workforce.

This spring I attended the Ability Axis Employment Expo. Upon arrival, I attended a workshop called, 'Your Own Business: Self Employment & Entrepreneurship.' The workshop was coordinated by Susan Bater from Community Futures Manitoba and Lindsay Dandeneau from Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade. The panel of entrepreneurs with disabilities was to tell their experiences and insights on how they were able to build their business ventures. I am very interested in starting my own business within the next 5 years so you can imagine how thrilled I was to see this on the Ability Axis Employment Expo schedule! The workshop was more of inspirational and motivational presentation.

To anyone interested in attending the Ability Axis Employment Expo in 2012, I would encourage visiting each booth and speaking with their representative even if you do not think they have an interest in a person with a specific disability along with the particular

background that you have. Doing so provides experience with presenting yourself as an ideal employee, gives you an opportunity to network, provides experience in communicating with potential employers, gives you great exposure to workplaces that are open to hiring somebody with a disability, and lastly, you're given the benefit of being part of a community that understands the struggles that go with being a person with a disability seeking fair and just employment that is also fulfilling.

THE BLIND MAN COMING by Rico John

This little girl living in West
Broadway
Posed a question to her mother
one day
Mammy how come some people
living in style
And people with disabilities
suffering all the while
It ain't right mammy
Mammy it ain't right mammy
It ain't fair mammy
We must learn to share mammy

The blind man coming
Blind woman coming
Hear the cane tapping
It sounds like rapping
O yo yoi, Ah yai yai
O yo yo yoi, Ah yai ya yai

Maybe glaucoma, detached retina,
pigmentosa
Or destruction of the macula
Mammy shine the light let me see,
mammy shine the light let him see
Where he is going
So many obstacles in the way
But that is life for him every day
While he is living
Observe the white cane
Respect the white cane
Don't miss the white cane
Lend him a helping hand
And try to understand
That disabilities are part of
societies
Mammy shine the light, mammy
shine the light

She decide to do something about
this
She made her way to
the government office
But try as she might
Nothing came in sight
To arm the disabled with their
God-given right.

Blind Woman coming
The Blind man coming
Hear her cane tapping
It sounds like rapping
O yo yoi, Ah ya yai
O yo yo yoi, ah ya ya yai
Maybe glaucoma, detached retina,
pigmentosa
Or destruction of the macula
Observe the white cane
Respect the white cane
Don't miss the white cane

Don't diss the white cane
Lend her a helping hand
and try to understand
That disabilities are part of
societies
Mammy shine the light, Mammy
shine the light.

*Song Written and composed by Rostant
Rico John - 2009*

IT AIN'T NICE by Rico John

It ain't nice to be blind
It ain't nice to be blind
Some people treat you unkind
Sending you out of your mind
Some treat you like a child
Like you going wild

Tap tap tap tap
Tap tap tap tap
Tap tap tap tap
Tap tap tap tap

Talking to mannequins, walking
into walls
Stepping of the pavement, trying
not to fall
It ain't nice to be blind

It ain't nice to be blind
It ain't nice to be blind
Some people treat you unkind
Sending you out of your mind
Some treat you like a child
Like you going wild

Tap tap tap tap

Tap tap tap tap
Tap tap tap tap
Tap tap tap tap

Watch out for that pole.
Watch out for the step.
Be careful of that hole.
Are you some kind of schlep
It ain't nice to be blind

It ain't nice to be blind It
ain't nice to be blind
Some people treat you unkind
Sending you out of your mind
Some treat you like a child
Like you going wild
Tap tap tap tap
Tap tap tap tap
Tap tap tap tap
Tap tap tap tap
It ain't nice to be blind

*Song written and Composed by Rostant
Rico John - April 2011*

Show and Save Book By Derek Legge

The MLPD will again be selling the \$15 Show and Save Book with the reusable discount card. We want to try and pre-sell as many books as possible before they come out at the end of August. If we sell 100, we are \$6.50 each book. These are very good gift ideas and have lots of deals.

If you want one for yourself, call Josie and get on our buyer's list

now. Even more helpful, consider taking on the challenge of finding at least 5 friends who will buy one and we will deliver them to you once they arrive. If you are willing to take on this challenge, call and register with Josie **now.** This is an easy way for members to help support the MLPD.

Upcoming Events:

Beyond Bed & Bath
FYIndependent
Independent Living Symposium
Friday, October 14, 2011
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Canad Inns, Polo Park
1405 St. Matthews Avenue
Presented by: Independent
Living Resource Centre

New Option to Donate!

MLPD is a Canadian registered charity. For an alternative method of donating, go to our website and look for this icon on the top right hand corner.



Or go to CanadaHelps.org and search 'MLPD – MANITOBA LEAGUE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES INC.'



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Who We Are

The MLPD is an organization of people with disabilities that works on concerns affecting the lives of people with various disabilities in Manitoba.

MLPD strives for improvement in areas such as accessibility, education, employment, housing, transportation, income security, and support services.

The MLPD supports Manitobans with disabilities with social policy research and consultation, public education programs, information and referral services.

MLPD Staff:

Diane Driedger (Provincial Coordinator), Josie Concepcion (Office Manager), Derek Legge and Daniel Halechko (Thumbs Up Project - Coordinators)

The 2011/2012 MLPD Provincial Council:

Paula Keirstead (Co-chair), Jesse Turner (Co-chair), Harry Wolbert (Vice- Chair), April D'Aubin (Secretary), Ken Bristow, (Treasurer) Zephania Matanga, Carlos Sosa, Nick Ternette, Mindy Tucker, Colleen Watters

This newsletter is available in alternate media upon request.

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