

  
MLPD Update **MLPD** May 2012

## **Newsletter of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities**

Produced by the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities  
105-500 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 3X1  
Telephone: 204.943.6099 (Voice/TTY) Toll Free: 888.330.1932 (MB Only)  
Fax: 204.943.6654  
[www.mlpd.mb.ca](http://www.mlpd.mb.ca)



**MLPD Update** **May 2012**  
**Newsletter of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities**



**Award Recipients and Presenters**

**MLPD Celebrates Political Allies, Then Back to Developing Recommendations for Government**

On March 21, 2012 at the Manitoba Legislature, Manitobans with disabilities honoured seven provincial politicians who are leaders on disability issues: Muriel Smith, Jon Gerrard, Tim Sale, Bonnie Mitchelson, the Hon. Gord Mackintosh, the Hon. Dave Chomiak, and the Hon. Jennifer Howard. The honorees, from the Conservative, Liberal and NDP parties, received “Closing the Gap”, unisex jewelry created by MLPD and DAWN Manitoba celebrating the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the new MLPD

anthology, *The Voice of People with Disabilities: Making A Difference in Manitoba*, which describes how the disability community has been removing barriers for 38 years.

One unique characteristic of the seven honorees is they listen to the disability community. MLPD Co-chair Paula Kierstead reminded participants, “The success of all our efforts is really evident tonight. It is evident by you being here, by the incredible anthology, and by the fact that some political folk got it right. They actually figured out what we are talking about and they made the decisions that needed to be made so that Manitobans with disabilities could be full participants in our society.”



In their comments, the honorees recognized the disability community's contribution to Manitoba. The Hon. Jennifer Howard stated, "It has been my absolute gift to work with this community, and to be a member of this community at the same time. It is my privilege to work with you and learn from you. And I always consider this community like a best friend. You know, like your best friend tells you, you have got to pick it up a little bit there, Howard, you have to move a little faster, you're falling behind, but they're always there on the hard days to remind you of the things that we have accomplished and that's why events like this are important."

At end of the night, Jess Turner, MLPD Co-chair, and Dale Kendel recognized additional MLAs who advanced disability issues: Doug Martindale, Saul Miller, Rene Toupin, Don Orchard, Sharon Blady, Judy Wasylycia-Leis, Bud Sherman, DreCaldwell, Gary Filmon, Denis Rocan, Howard Pawley, Lloyd Axworthy. "Our list of political allies is not exhaustive. We have named many, but there are others who have championed issues, and I would invite all of you, our participants, to continue to add to that list other elected officials you know who have been champions of disability issues and worked to

build a more inclusive and accessible Manitoba," commented Chris Summerville, event emcee and Executive Director of the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society.



John Stapleton at the Poverty Workshop

On March 22, 2012, Paula Keirstead, MLPD Co-chair, facilitated a workshop on poverty which brought together the disability and poverty communities and government to develop recommendations to improve the lives of Manitobans with disabilities living in poverty. Poverty researcher John Stapleton presented information on the five programs that provide income to Canadians with disabilities. Participants prioritized the following activities: changing attitudes, advocacy, legislative reform, making improvements to housing, employment opportunities, income support system, and health care.



Poverty Workshop Participants

MLPD partnered with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, the Allan Simpson Memorial Fund and the Manitoba Disabilities Issues Office to organize these events. Call Diane at 204-943-6099 to purchase a “Closing the Gap” pendant or to join MLPD’s work to eradicate poverty.

## **MLPD Speaks Out on Made in Manitoba Accessibility Legislation**

On Tuesday, May 7, 2012, members of the disability community shared views with Manitoba’s Access Advisory Committee (AAC) about how to remove barriers and make Manitoba accessible. Nothing new, right? Wrong! While Manitoba’s disability community has been talking about access

since the 1970s, something different was happening at the Victoria Inn, where over 100 people gathered with many more participating via the internet. Unlike at other meetings on access issues, other sectors—business, education, municipal governments, and academics—joined the conversation. On Tuesday, educators and university students, the Mayor from Steinbach, Councilors from Portage la Prairie and Winnipeg, business people along with members of the disability community described for the AAC the path that barrier removal should follow. In Manitoba, access is now being recognized as a feature of society that benefits everyone, not just people with disabilities. Jim Baker, President of the Manitoba Hotel Association, stated, “Accessibility is an opportunity to do more business with more people.” The Hon. Jim Rondeau, Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs, stated, “An inclusive society benefits everyone.” This is the message that the Manitoba League has been advocating since 1974.

The Hon. Jennifer Howard, the Provincial Minister mandated to address disability issues, has instructed the Accessibility Advisory Council to draft

recommendations on accessibility legislation by June 16, 2012. The Council will include what it hears from the public in its report to Minister Howard. The focus of the consultation was the AAC's Discussion Paper on Accessibility Legislation. The end product will be "Made in Manitoba" access legislation.

Jim Derksen, AAC Chairperson and Yvonne Peters, AAC Co-chair, explained the workings of accessibility legislation. Peters explained that the legislation will provide the foundation for the province's barrier removal activities and the regulations, which will be written later, will provide more in-depth guidance on how barrier removal will happen. On Tuesday, participants discussed the foundation. Prof. Debra Parkes, University of Manitoba Faculty of Law, facilitated the meeting.

The Manitoba League of Persons with Disability (MLPD) was represented at the meeting by members of the Executive Committee, Committee chairs, and staff.

The MLPD spoke out about the Preamble, Purpose, Application and Duties of Municipalities. We told the Council that the new Accessibility Act should frame a

role for the organizations of people with disabilities in barrier removal. During the discussion of the Act's Purpose, we called for assurances that the following areas would be covered by the legislation: communication, transportation, electoral process, arts, culture, recreation. In the discussion about the approach to standard setting, concern was raised about how this would be resourced. Historically, community groups, compared with industry, have been under-resourced when participating in standard setting bodies. During the discussion of Municipal Responsibilities, we suggested the creation of a provincial fund that would assist small municipalities to become accessible.

If you did not attend the consultation and want to add your views on Made in Manitoba accessibility legislation, the AAC is accepting written submissions. The MLPD Council will draft the outline of its submission at its May Provincial Council Meeting. MLPD Committees have been invited to participate in this meeting. Submit your views to the AAC by emailing them at [accesscouncil@gov.mb.ca](mailto:accesscouncil@gov.mb.ca). Submissions are due by June 5, 2012.

## **The Voice of People with Disabilities: Making a Difference in Manitoba Report** **by Deanna Ng**

This book is a collection of reflections, stories, experiences and work of people within or supporting the Disability Community. It reflects the past 30-40 years of change in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and the world in the Disability Movement. The authors share their experiences as persons from different backgrounds in different areas, which they have advocated for or seen change.

The first reflection is by the Honourable Jennifer Howard on the development of the Disability Movement and the partnership between government and Manitobans with disabilities in creating change towards a more accessible community.

The next two articles are from the MLPD Co-Chairs, Paula Keirstead and Jesse Turner – stories of their experiences and history of advocacy with the MLPD. The article that follows describes the great impact that Allan Simpson had on was in the Disability Movement. The next section is “Creating Change”. This includes articles such as the history of accessibility in the

community, feminist views, the Deaf Community, and the creation of political offices such as the Disabilities Issues Office (DIO).

The section, “Inclusion” follows. It has stories of people advocating for inclusion into the community facing many barriers such as physical barriers, lack of services, inadequate legislation, and discrimination. The history of MLPD is described and the things that MLPD has accomplished such as the creation of different organizations and partnerships such as the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC), and Reaching-Equality Employment Services (REES). It also describes partnerships such as with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD). The next short sections that follow discuss areas of advocacy that include; housing, education and work, human rights, transportation, and disability studies. In each section, there have been great improvements. Housing discusses places such as Ten Ten Sinclair as a leader in accessibility, Fokus Housing, and self-directed home care. The section on education and work discusses developments like REES, the creation of supported employment groups, and the success of people with disabilities finding employment and attending post-secondary education. The section on human rights discusses

the creation of the clause on rights of people with disabilities in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Vulnerable Persons Act and other legislation to allow for a more inclusive society. The transportation section describes improvements in Winnipeg Transit (being made universally designed) and accessible taxi cabs. The Disability Studies section describes the creation and advancement of courses to take at a joint program between U of W and RRC for undergraduate studies and a multi-disciplinary master's degree at the U of M that educates students on the Disability Movement with a social model emphasis.

This book reflects the history and work of the Disability Community in the Disability Movement and is a story of success. MLPD has a few hard copies of this book. You may also get it online at:

<http://www.mlpd.mb.ca/download/making-a-difference-in-manitoba-2012.pdf>

**Thumbs Up for Access  
Project Community Edition  
Newsletter Report  
by Daniel Halechko**

We got our feet wet during during the first year of the community edition of the Thumbs Up project. The results we anticipated did not turn out as planned. We quickly became aware that Wolseley was a much more commercial area than the predominately residential Windsor Park. The first audit of Thumbs Up Community Edition took place in Windsor Park, and the second took place in Wolseley.

In Windsor Park, our strategy was simple: to promote our project through posters, ads in community newspapers and by means of identifying wheelchair ramps throughout the community. We would leave information about our project and encourage them to contact us. None of these methods resulted in a single person contacting us.

Some discussion did take place with churches, mall stores, medical centres and similar establishments, that resulted in eight recognition certificates being given out to recognize a demonstrated interest in accessibility.

When it came to Wolseley we took a somewhat different approach. We tried to learn from our mistakes. Instead of plastering the buildings with posters, we took

a slower, methodical approach which consisted of walking up and down every street looking for possible accessible buildings. Spotting one we would approach the building and tell whomever we come across that we work for the Thumbs Up Project of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities and that we are currently completing an audit of Wolseley in terms of accessibility. We hand the person a copy of our bulletin Helpful Hints and ask if we can have a tour of the building.

This method seemed to work better given the different population profile. In contrast to the sprawling suburbia of Windsor Park; Wolseley proved to be a densely populated community of older, walk-up apartment blocks and shoulder to shoulder three story houses. There are ten churches in the Wolseley area. Despite the fact that the majority of the churches are large, old, brick structures; eight of the ten are accessible.

What also was very interesting is that the number of recipients receiving certificates of recognition was very skewed when comparing the two areas, with Wolseley receiving 67 compared to only 8 for Windsor Park. This remains a mystery to be solved. In fact, the research to

date raises more questions than answers. For example, why is there a preponderance of accessible medical centres in Wolseley (7) compared to 1 in Windsor Park.

In December 2011 we completed the first year of the two year project. We started the second year in April 2012. Our Advisory Committee met and provided some direction for this year's project activities. They decided we should continue with our audit and identified the two areas we should assess; 1) Portage Avenue from St. James Street to Westwood, and 2) Osborne Village Corydon Business Assoc. to Stafford.

A new and important activity our project will take on is the hiring of a facilitator fully-trained in barrier free design to train several disability consultants and facilitate 3 or 4 community information sharing workshops.

Finally, we intend to put our findings on our web site and work with ILRC to promote the accessible structures we uncover on the ILRC computer network.

## **The Bus Fare Increase by Deanna Ng**

As you have heard, the City of Winnipeg increased the bus fare 5 cents in January. So now the bus fare is \$2.45 per trip. It was going to jump another 20 cents this spring. We fought long and hard to keep the fare reasonable. At our Transportation Committee meeting, Nick Ternette Chair of our Transportation Committee said that Winnipeg would be the only city in Canada to use a fare increase to pay for the new Rapid Transit. This was unreasonable.

MLPD was involved in advocating against the unfair bus fare hike. We along with many others have made this effort successful. This has been done by letters, online petitions, media involvement, attending the Winnipeg City Council meetings, and spreading the word. The events had good turn out from members from MLPD and the community.

There were a series of meetings with the City of Winnipeg. The first public meeting was on Monday March 5<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 until late afternoon. Jesse Turner, MLPD Co-Chair spoke on our behalf. Over 100 people showed up.

The second public meeting was Executive Policy Committee on (EPC) Tuesday, March 13 starting at 9:00 AM. Ken Bristow, MLPD Treasurer spoke against

the increase. The EPC said no to the fair but the final decision wasn't until the next meeting. The Province of Manitoba who funds half of the City of Winnipeg Transit already said they would not support the City in this.

The third public meeting was Tuesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:00 AM and going all morning. Some MLPD members attended this meeting and there was no need to speak. City Council had their vote and it was against the fare hike.

However, Rapid Transit won't pay for itself, but the City has other sources of funding they can appeal to such as the Federal and Provincial Governments. For now, our bus fare will not be hiked so drastically.

The Rapid Transit involves 13 different routes from the new Balmoral Station (was Greyhound Inter-City Bus Station) at the University of Winnipeg downtown. It goes to the Graham Transit Mall and goes on Main Street to access the Transitway at Queen Elizabeth Way & Stradbrook. Then it goes on the Transitway stopping at Harkness, Osborne, Fort Rouge Stations, and then to the Jubilee Overpass. Then the exit is at the Jubilee Overpass where you then go south on Pembina Highway.

For more info on the Rapid Transit please visit:

<http://winnipegtransit.com/en/southwest-transitway/rapid-transit-route-path/>

## **Get on Board for Manitoba Access Awareness Week 2012** **by Colleen Watters**

The Province of Manitoba proclaimed June 3-9, 2012 Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW) to raise awareness of the barriers people with disabilities face that impact their full participation in society and to promote the removal of these barriers. MAAW 2012 is being organized by a Steering Committee composed of community organizations (including MLPD) and representatives from Manitoba's Age-Friendly communities.

MAAW events this year include:

- MAAW Kick-Off at the Forks, Winnipeg, June 4 at noon
- Independent Living Resource Centre Lunch and Learn, daily June 4 – 7 at noon
- Disability Awareness Orientation for Employers, corporations and businesses, Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, June 7 at noon

- MAAW Achievement Awards Luncheon, Legislative Dining Room, June 8 at noon
- MAAW Celebration in Rossburn, June 8.

The Disabilities Issues Office (DIO), and the Steering Committee are also having an Ambassadors Program: matching people with disabilities and MLAs for a personalized experience of MAAW and to raise awareness of disability issues.

For further information about MAAW 2012, please contact Colleen Watters at (204) 945-5304 or [colleen.watters@gov.mb.ca](mailto:colleen.watters@gov.mb.ca)

## **Housing Crisis and Perhaps Some Options?** **by Deanna Ng**

If you are new to Winnipeg or are looking for a new place, where do you go? Clark Brownlee Right to Housing Coalition Coordinator on the Right to Housing Coalition website (<http://righttohousing.ca/>) noted that, between 1992 and 2009 there were 5473 apartments available, but many were being converted into condos. 200 condo conversions a year means that 200 families with low income have

to relocate in a city with 0.8% vacancy rate.

The ever lessening vacancy rates were agreed upon by both Bartley Kives and Murray McNeill from the Winnipeg Free Press at 0.7%. Kives's in his June 12<sup>th</sup> article, "Housing in Crisis City's Blowing a Chance for Growth," commented on the city's growth last year. This growth was 1.3 per cent, or about 9,000 newcomers to Winnipeg. Between 2003 and 2010, the Winnipeg property value went up from \$15.1 billion to \$30.8 billion. This is not good if you are looking for an apartment. That made vacancy rates decline to 0.7 per cent.

McNeill agreed with this in his June 10 article, "Need an Apartment? Good Luck City's Rental Vacancy Rate Drops Even Lower." McNeill explained this is the lowest provincial rate in the country. The national average vacancy rate is 2.9 per cent. Lai Sing Louie from the market survey by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp stated there were 15,805 newcomers arrived in Manitoba in 2010, with almost three-quarters of them moving to Winnipeg. A survey in the fall of 2010 found 356 of the 835 rental units that disappeared from the market in 2010 became condos.

What if you have a disability, and live on a tight budget? Where

do you find accessible affordable housing? Some may suggest Ten Ten Sinclair. But space is limited, there. Dave Martin, Senior Advisor on Disability Issues from the Province of Manitoba explained that when Ten Ten was built in 1975, it really was the only available non-institutional housing option for people with disabilities. The founders wanted it to be transitional housing where adults with disabilities would learn independent living skills through the Learning Through Living Program. Once they learn independent living skills, they move on. However, now some of the suites, accessible ones, are for people without disabilities. This causes tension among neighbours.

So then, where do you go from here? There are a few solutions, but they are planned works in progress.

Fokus Housing is one solution. They are a group of universally designed housing units around the city. There, tenants have self-managed supported living. Each tenant has their own suite but share a pool of supported living resources. Tenants live independently and make their own decisions on how they choose to live. However, there are no suites available yet, but they do post vacancies on their site. For more

information please call: 339-9268  
or visit:  
<http://www.fokusmanagementinc.ca/>

Place La Charrette (3389 Pembina Highway) is a \$10.7 million project in St. Norbert. It will support 37 households in a 31 unit apartment complex and 6 ground-level bungalows. All homes will be universally accessible. Rent will be at median market rent (MMR) levels for Winnipeg. However, half of the units will be rent subsidized.

At Home/Chez Soi is a project that is home to people with mental health concerns and facing homelessness. In 2008 the Canadian federal government gave \$110 million towards this experiment. Participants were recruited and research started since 2009. This study will end March 31, 2013. This is a Housing First approach to a recovery-oriented approach, where participants choose to join. It provides immediate access to independent housing through rent subsidies and mental health supports depending upon tenants' needs. In similar studies, there were positive results such as improved housing stability, improved quality of life, and reduced costs for public services. Their aim is to look at quality of life in a control group (without the supports) and an experimental group (with the project supports).

For more info, go to, BMJ Open called: *The At Home/Chez Soi trial protocol: a pragmatic, multi-site, randomized controlled trial of a Housing First intervention for homeless individuals with mental illness in five Canadian cities* (Goering et al, 2011). To access the article go to:

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/bmjopen-2011-000323>

What is our government doing about the current housing crisis? Kerri Irvin-Ross, Minister of Manitoba Housing & Community Development wrote a report on the Manitoba government website called, "Manitoba Housing & Community Development Strong Communities Action Plan." The province invested \$196 million in social housing, renovations to improve the quality of housing, maintain buildings, and help community revitalization efforts. They are making 75 homes more accessible. The government is working with agencies to convert and manage housing projects to meet people's needs. There will be \$85-million added for social housing renovations in 2011/2012. They are also making new housing environmentally friendly.

They are supporting households with rent geared- to-income (RGI) assistance to increase the supply of affordable

apartments through: partnerships with different organizations, providing decent housing programs. The government will use \$129 million for the construction of over 700 new affordable apartments as part of a commitment to build 1,500 new affordable homes over five years (April, 2009 to March, 2014). Currently, 327 homes are accessible and 380 are visitable. The government is committed to making 628 homes paid by rent supplements in an effort to provide 1500 families with rent-geared-to income over these five years (April, 2009 to March, 2014). The province is committed to \$4.3 million in home projects. Right now, the government is creating 793 affordable apartments and supports 872 families with rent-geared-to incomes (RGI), assistance in the remaining three years of their commitment. For more info visit:

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/public/hcd\\_strategicframework\\_web.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/public/hcd_strategicframework_web.pdf)

Gord Mackintosh Minister of Family Services and Housing did a report called, "*HomeWorks A housing strategy and policy framework for Manitoba.*" This report stated in the Winnipeg Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), the apartment vacancy rate in October 2008 was 1.0 per cent and in April 2009, it was 0.9 per

cent. A balanced market is considered to have a 3.0 vacancy rate. Winnipeg's vacancy rate is expected to remain very low for a while. As of April 2009, there were 53,906 apartments in Winnipeg, 3,300 fewer homes than in 1992. Since 2007, about 1500 homes have been added, but this is not enough. For more info please visit:

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/public/homeworks\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/public/homeworks_booklet.pdf)

This is not a new idea. Single-parent families relying on one income are more likely to be in core area housing (28.5 per cent) than any other group. Aboriginal women are more likely to live in single-parent households than non-Aboriginal women. Almost 40 per cent of children in single-parent families are living in poverty. (*Manitoba Child and Family Poverty Report Card 2008*).

Statistics Canada data indicates that the number of adults and children with disabilities in Manitoba increased from 14.2 per cent of the population in 2001, to 15.7 per cent in 2006. This presents problems in looking for accessible affordable housing. (*Manitoba Child and Family Poverty Report Card 2008*).

What about existing home owners? If you have a disability and own your own home, you

could seek the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities (RRAP) through the Province. This is a forgivable loan to pay for modifying the houses or apartments to meet the needs of people with disabilities. It does not have to be repaid if certain conditions are met.

To be eligible, tenants must have low income, renovations must be housing related, and be required for a person's disability such as making a ramp, chair lift, bathtub lift, a wheel-in shower, height adjustments to kitchen workspaces and cupboards, or making handrails. You need to get approval before making changes to your home.

The forgivable loan depends on the actual cost of the eligible renovations. The maximum loan is between \$16,000 and \$19,000, depending on where you live. If the cost of repairs is higher than the loan amount, you must pay the difference.

You can also be a landlord renting apartments, or rooms to families with low income, depending on where the place is, and rent is below the Median Market Rents (MMR). For example in Winnipeg, it must be below \$665.00 for a one-bedroom or below \$890.00 for a two-bedroom suite. You can be a homeowner whose home is worth

less than \$175,000 and family income is less than the Housing Income Limit (HIL) for your area and family size.

What else does the city have in mind? The Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) is a project from the three levels of government, who are committed to revitalizing our inner-city, is by making affordable housing for families with low income and helping people at risk of becoming homeless.

The government and organizations are combining resources to better communicate, cooperate, and share information. The info office is at 361 Hargrave Street. Since opening in 2000, the WHHI, has committed funding to help build, repair or rehabilitate thousands of inner city homes and help programs and services for homeless families.

Plans to improve the city's housing were developed by the local neighbourhood group and residents, to create safe, quality, and affordable housing to strengthens families and create better neighbourhoods.

Giving dignity to homeless families is done through housing. The city would like to address, prevent and reduce homelessness. These projects are funded under the Government of Canada's Homelessness

Partnering Strategy and delivered through Service Canada/Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). WHHI staff work closely with the different groups in this.

It is useful for these partnerships to help different groups improve their neighbourhoods, get services, and get resources to effect change. Encouraging citizens to take pride in their community is a step to making an area better.

They may use different sources and services such as the RRAP – to help home owners and landlords' buildings be healthy and safe. RRAP within the City of Winnipeg is administered at WHHI. For more information, call the WHHI at: 940-3070, located at: 361 Hargrave Street or visit: <http://www.whhi.ca/>

The Neighbourhood Housing Assistance NHA program is a forgivable loan up to \$10,000.00 for major repairs to a home located within a certain neighbourhood such as; Lord Selkirk Park, Point Douglas, Spence, West Broadway, and William Whyte. For more info, call WHHI at the number above.

The Minimum Home Repair Program MHRP is a City of Winnipeg program that funds home owners to do minor critical repairs so their home is safe and healthy. MHRP is available in:

Spence, Point Douglas, and William Whyte. If your home has a critical minor repair needed in these neighbourhoods, call WHHI.

Manitoba Hydro offers customers repayable loans to help make their homes more energy efficient. These loans are added to your energy bill for added monthly payments. These can include; adding insulation, sealing air leaks, upgrading windows, etc. For more info about the Power Smart Residential Loan call; 1-888-624-9376

The Home Renovation Tax Assistance HRTA program is available through the City of Winnipeg Property Planning and Development department. This is a tax credit of up to \$1,500.00, if your home was built before 1974 and values less than \$90,000.00. For more info call 986-2376 or visit: [www.winnipeg.ca/ppd](http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd)

What else is the City doing about this ever growing problem? *Sarah Cooper, the Housing and Community Development Researcher for CCPA Mb.* wrote an article on March 24, 2011 called "Housing Improvement Zones: A focused and grassroots approach to housing development." She understands the urgency of the affordable housing crisis in Winnipeg, especially for families with low incomes. The HRIR provides

funding for housing programs in the five different Housing Improvement Zones (HIZs) in Winnipeg. These five are; Spence, West Broadway, Centennial, William Whyte and Point Douglas. Each zone has a Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (NRC), which deals with organizations such as; Spence Neighbourhood Association, West Broadway Development Corporation, Central Neighbourhoods Development Corporation, and North End Community Renewal Corporation. The NRCs build community through this funding.

The housing crisis has been going on since October 2010, when property prices were rising, and there being very little rental vacancies - 0.8 percent. High numbers of people with low income live in these areas. They live in crowded conditions, spending over 30 percent of household income on housing, and often their home needs major repairs. In 2006, 33.1 percent of inner city homes required minor repairs and 14.4 percent were in need of major repairs, compared with 28 percent and 6.9 percent in more wealthy areas.

Downtown, the median household income is \$31,773 compared with \$55,812 away from downtown, and almost 40 percent of households live below the

poverty line. She noted the Housing Improvement Zones may have improved in the last ten years, but we still have a long way to go especially for low vacancy rates. The City of Winnipeg's work with the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative and HRIR is a step towards addressing these problems, but we have a long way to go.

If you are interested in housing issues, please consider joining the MLPD Housing Committee

## **Bullying is a Problem by Eva Beaudoin & Deanna Ng**

It was very difficult for me (Eva) in school as I was the only one with a disability in a mainstream school. I had my circle of friends when I started school but in grade 2 I was put back because I was "SLOWER" than the rest of my friends. This is when the bullying began all because I was different. Here is one of my incidents of bullying in school.

When I was in grade five, I went to put my coat on so I could go home at the end of the day. Let me say my school had a new part which was open area and this is where my classes were. When

the doors were open the cold air would blow right down the hallway. I found it too cold to put on my coat so I went into the bathroom to put it on.

I was standing there in the washroom when she turned around and decided I wasn't supposed to be there; she pushed me against the wall and started to punch me in the stomach. Let it be said that she was known to be a tough kid who loved to fight.

There was another classmate in the washroom and she ran for a teacher and the principal. The principal was gone but the teacher came and pulled her off me. The next day the principal came and pulled me out of class and he made this tough kid apologize and told her that she wasn't to pick on me again and she never did.

This was the one time that I was defended by the principal. After I moved on to junior high this did not happen again even though classmates went to the teacher and reported it.

Bullying is a common thing and has tragic effects. Jesse Mirsky wrote an article, "Teen accused in Mitchell Wilson bullying case found not guilty" in the Postmedia News on March 5, 2012. Eleven-year-old Mitchell Wilson died as a result of bullying on Labour Day 2011. He had

muscular dystrophy which the kids knew about. He killed himself because he could not face the boy accused of bullying him in court. His step-mother caught two boys attacking him and the one was found out and was to go to trial. The courts said the evidence wasn't enough so they couldn't charge him. The ongoing bullying plus the pain from this incident are other factors which lead to his death.

The CBC News had an article on March 5, 2012, "Accused bully found not guilty in Ontario case; Mitchell Wilson, 11, committed suicide following alleged assault." It discussed the adults' perspective of the incident. Even though the accused 13-year-old boy was found not guilty, Mitchell Wilson's father said that Mitchell would rather have the law be fair than bent in his favour. The courts could not believe witnesses and Mitchell's descriptions, which they thought may be faulty. However, his family believed him. His Aunt encouraged people who are bullied to speak up. The family wants no retribution but to have Mitchell's voice to continue to be heard. They continue to grieve the loss of Mitchell Wilson.

This is a problem. How many more young people have to die from bullying? How many more have to suffer from the pain?

How long do they have to suffer even later on in life?

The National Crime Prevention Centre wrote a report called, "Bullying Prevention: Nature and Extent of Bullying in Canada," in 2008. Bullying is harmful acts repeated over-time, in where the bully has power over the victim. It can be physical - punching, kicking, or biting, verbal - threats, name calling, insults, or racial or sexual comments, and social exclusion - spreading rumours, ignoring, gossiping, or excluding.

The report found that the effects of bullying do not disappear with time. For example, the Journal of the American Medical Association reports that people who were bullied tended to have higher levels of depression and poorer self-esteem in adulthood, even if as adults, they were not bullied anymore.

In Canada, roughly 6% of high school students, age 12 to 19, report bullying others weekly, 8% report that they are victims of bullying weekly, and 1% report that they are both bullied and bully others weekly. 10-15% of bullying cases are physical, another 10-15% of cases are verbal, and the rest are social bullying.

Students who take part in social bullying are not likely to get caught. Instead, their harmful

intentions are hidden because the consequences cannot always be noticed. In one Canadian study, 41% of all students in grades 4 to 7 reported that they were victims of bullying and/or bullied others monthly. 7% of these students said they were victims of social bullying weekly, and 2% reported that they bullied other students socially weekly. Girls are more likely than boys to bully and be victimized socially.

When I (Eva) moved on to Junior High the bullying and incidents got worse and more frequent. The one incident that comes to mind is when my boots were stolen. May I say that this incident happened in the middle of winter. My locker was in the basement along with other girls in my class. There was one locker that was not being used by anyone, so we used it to put our boots in.

At the end of the day I went to put my books in my locker and go home. One thing was wrong though I couldn't find my boots anywhere they were gone someone had stolen them and I ended up walking home in my shoes. I knew inside that my tormenters had taken them or at least one of them did. I had about a 10 minute walk home in -20 weather and when I got home I was asked where my boots were

and I told my mum that they had been stolen. She was angry and called my dad who called the principal at my school. This was the first time my parents were to have a meeting with the school about the bullying that was going on. I went with my parents to the meeting but, was not part of the conversation and waited outside of the office. I never knew if anything was done about the person who stole my boots but, one thing I do know is the bullying continued.

According to the National Crime Prevention Centre, "Bullying Prevention: Nature and Extent of Bullying in Canada," in 2008, stopping bullying is a school wide approach. This includes creating and adopting anti-bullying policies and initiatives. This includes staff knowing their roles, responsibilities and procedures, students following a code of conduct, and there being consequences for bullying. It also provides improvements in the way bullying incidents are addressed. A successful approach involves a few factors. Positive leadership and relationships between adults and students decreases the instances of students choosing aggressive behaviours and has better educational outcomes such as security, improved academic achievement, and positive relationships. On the other hand,

doing nothing about bullying, causes students to be more unhappy and unsafe.

Using positive and negative consequences helps students think before acting when negative behaviours are consistently identified and reprimanded quickly. Helping students recognize harmful thoughts of bullying and know the consequences that follow, will help them learn to replace negative thoughts (choosing to bully) with more positive thoughts that will lead to positive actions that result in greater rewards.

Parents and teachers need to be aware of bullying in the school. When they know about it, bullying will happen less. Consistent and appropriate action needs to be taken in response to bullying.

It is the responsibility of adults involved to help students to understand the consequences of negative choices and that respect is important. Students who are bullied need support in developing confidence and positive relationships.

Commitment has to be long-term. Students who choose to bully usually do so over a long time and they need to keep being reminded that bullying won't be tolerated. Any intervention needs to be gender and age specific and focus on building social skills such

as interpersonal skills, assertiveness, empathy and conflict resolution.

What about the parents and families? Brenda High, Director, Bully Police USA Inc. in, "Suggestions for Parents When Dealing with Bullying." advises parents that they need to get the story straight. Listening to the child is very important. Letting the child know you understand them and will be there for them is necessary for good communication. The child may need to be taught to be assertive.

Allow the school the benefit of a doubt. It is good to give them enough time to work out minor problems to the child's and parent's satisfaction. A "fair" amount of time is about one school week. Teachers can give updates on what is going on daily.

Documentation is very important. Examples of documentation may be voice recorded statements, typed statements, witness reports, or pictures of injuries, places, or people. Take notes of meetings with school staff. Give copies and let them give feedback. It is essential to stay calm and not be verbally aggressive towards school staff, the other parents, or the bully.

If your child is being bullied online, copy everything. Save all

emails or instant-message conversations. Computer technicians can find internet provider addresses of offending websites. If a child is getting threatening emails, the local police department may be able to help or lead you to a private investigator with computer skills. Websites have permission to disclose personal information about Visitors or Members, or information regarding your use of the services or websites where law enforcers can have permission to see the data.

Save all written notes, even if they are not technically bullying. Do not throw them away as they can be used to identify a bullying pattern or possibly identify handwriting.

If the child is being bullied in phone conversations, try to get the verbal bullying on your answering machine or on tape. Screen your calls. Take down the phone number, date the call came in, and time of day or tape it. Written notes can also be used in court. You can call the phone company and block the call.

Serious offenses must be handled by the police, which will be entered as a criminal juvenile record. School Administrators must be aware of and report serious bullying. Parents of students who do bullying may be liable for damage caused, and can

receive a note saying there was misconduct by their child as evidence against them. It is parents' and the schools' legal responsibility to stop bullying.

If nothing is being done, write a letter to the Principal of the school. If nothing then write letters to School Board Members separately. If nothing, write a letter to the Superintendent. Be sure to keep a copy in your file of all these letters. You may need to go to a School Board meeting and speak out. It will help many other victims of bullying, as well. You may write multiple letters to the Manitoba Department of Education and to separate members such as the Deputy Minister or to the Minister of Education.

You may consider the media. Write a letter to the Editor of different papers such as the *Winnipeg Free Press* or the *Winnipeg Sun*. Be respectful but state the facts. You may go to the TV stations. Work together with other families who experience the same struggles of bullying.

Do not let anyone, like school staff blame the child, who is the victim of the bully. Often adults are at fault because they let it happen and that allows bullies to continue because they can.

If all else fails, seek a lawyer. If this is a case of a major harassment situation, such as a

physical or sexual assault, call an Attorney within 24 hours. Don't be harassed by the school division. You have rights.

For more info visit:

[www.bullypolice.org](http://www.bullypolice.org).

### **Employment & Income Security Committee**

The next meeting is on Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-3:00 PM in the MLPD boardroom and chaired by Ken Bristow. If you are interested in attending or have any suggestions/ideas call Deanna Ng at 943-6099 or email:

[deanna\\_mlpd@shaw.ca](mailto:deanna_mlpd@shaw.ca)

### **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 directly 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.



### **Save the Dates**

#### **Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW) events:**

- MAAW Kick-Off at the Forks, Winnipeg, June 4 at noon
- Independent Living Resource Centre Lunch and Learn, daily June 4 – 7 at noon
- Disability Awareness Orientation for Employers, corporations and businesses, Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, June 7 at noon
- MAAW Achievement Awards Luncheon, Legislative Dining Room, June 8 at noon
- MAAW Celebration in Rossburn, June 8.

## **MLPD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Date & Time:** Thursday, June 28<sup>th</sup>  
from 5:00-7:00 PM

**Where:** Union Centre 275  
Broadway (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)

**What:** Come hear about MLPD's Accomplishments this year, including the Financial Literacy project with Community Financial Counselling Services (CFCS)!

There will be refreshments, election of a new Council and the CCD award presentation

**Questions:** Please call Deanna Ng at 943-6099

## **"DISCOVERING WELLNESS" FORUM**

**Who:** DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN) Manitoba

**What:** How do women with all types of disabilities, maintain wellness?

What barriers prevent us from living a healthy lifestyle?

What has worked for you in your life?

**Why:** This is a great opportunity to participate in sharing your hopes, fears, ideas, and other day to day experiences.

Following the Forum, DAWN Manitoba will hold a series of Workshops in the Fall on topics such as Leisure/Exercise, Nutrition, and more!

**When: Saturday, May 26, 2012**

**Time: 11:00 am-3:30 pm**

**Registration begins at 10:30 am sharp**

**Where: Society for Manitobans with Disabilities**

**Room 203- 825 Sherbrook St.**

**Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**RSVP: by Monday, May 14, 2012**

**Contact: DAWN office**

**Phone: 204-975-3275**

**E-mail: [dawnmb@mts.net](mailto:dawnmb@mts.net)**

**Refreshments and lunch will be served**

## **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](http://CanadaHelps.org) and search 'MLPD - MANITOBA LEAGUE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES INC.'





**MLPD Update** **May 2012**  
**Newsletter of the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities**

## **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), Daniel Halechko (Thumbs Up Project - Coordinator), Deanna Ng (Program Assistant)

### **The 2011/2012 MLPD Provincial Council:**

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

**This newsletter is available in alternate media upon request.**

Produced by the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities  
105-500 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 3X1  
Telephone: 204.943.6099 (Voice/TTY) Toll Free: 888.330.1932 (MB Only)  
Fax: 204.943.6654  
[www.mlpd.mb.ca](http://www.mlpd.mb.ca)