


MLPD Update **MLPD** May 2013

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 busy and fruitful. Accessibility Legislation was introduced in the Manitoba Legislature in April. Many MLPD members were present at the reception at Minister's Howard's office and to witness the First Reading in the Legislature from the visitor's gallery. After Minister Howard read the bill, the visitor's gallery broke into resounding applause.

MLPD looks forward to the process of drafting standards for the different aspects of our lives: employment, customer service, education, to mention a few. The Accessibility Legislation may be passed by the end of this Legislative Session in June.

MLPD had its funding from Family Services renewed for the June 2013-14 fiscal year. We are most appreciative of the financial support from the Province.

On another note, the federal grant that we receive through the

Council of Canadians with Disabilities has been cut by 35% for this year. Due to this cut, we have looked hard and long at our situation, and have had to make some changes.

The MLPD office will now be closed on Fridays. Our next *Update* will be coming out in October 2013, as we will not publish a July issue. We will have three issues of *Update* this year. Unfortunately, we have had to make the decision to eliminate the Communications Assistant position at MLPD. Deanna Ng has worked so hard and so dedicatedly in this position. After March 15th, Deanna will work one day a week with the Thumbs Up Project. We are sorry to see her go. Thanks for all your work, Deanna!

We have a leaner staff going into this fiscal year, however, MLPD's Committees and Provincial Council continue to do many hours of volunteer work on behalf of people with disabilities in Manitoba. We look forward to our AGM on June 6th and to a new

Provincial Council for the coming year.

Advocacy in a Different Way by Paula Keirstead

I have been very involved in community development work throughout my 40 year career. My work has focused primarily on disability rights; women's health; and poverty elimination advocacy. I have engaged in individual and systemic advocacy to advance the issues above. This has meant that I have honed my skills on how to develop strategies and arguments that would favourably reflect and advance the issues and people I am advocating with and for.

Recently I accepted an investigator job with the Manitoba Ombudsman Office. While this is a great opportunity to learn about the definition of "fairness" and privacy laws, I thought that my "advocacy" days were over. In fact I found myself grieving about having to shift from being an advocate to playing a neutral role as an investigator. While I was struggling with this I had a conversation with the Ombudsman Mel Holley. I asked him how he shifted from being a ferocious poverty advocate to being the Ombudsman.

Mel said that once he realized that his role had to do with ensuring that the legislation and policies we have in place in our province are implemented correctly and fairly while safeguarding individual privacy rights, he could see that his advocacy role had just shifted from a community perspective to a legislation perspective. I started to understand that this new role of mine was just taking the concept of advocacy in a different direction.

The word "ombudsman" is a Swedish word that means "representative of the people". We investigate complaints filed by individuals who feel that they have not been treated fairly by any provincial or municipal program or policy and report on our findings. If the complaint is a systemic one where complainants feel that a whole program or policy is being unfair in how it administers what it offers then recommendations are made on how to improve things. These reports are made public and the recommendations are presented to the legislature, the elected officials. At first I thought that the power of the Ombudsman wasn't very significant because we only recommend changes, we can't order them, however now that I see how detailed and extensive the investigation

process is, along with research of best practices etc., I understand that government appreciates the quality of the work done and takes the recommendations seriously. Personally what I think also influences how quickly the government will take action on implementing the recommendations is how the public responds to the report.

What I have learned is that as a community advocate you are always under the microscope, but as an Ombudsman you are the microscope! So now I will continue to redefine my advocate role to reflect my new position where I advocate for the fair implementation of our provincial laws and policies and the protection of privacy rights.

Congratulations to Tim Mclsaac, New Inductee to Canadian Paralympic Hall of Fame by April D'Aubin

Tim Mclsaac, a former Chairperson of the MLPD and MLPD's appointee to the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), was honoured by the Canadian Paralympic Committee for his success as a swimmer and

inducted into the Paralympic Hall of Fame. Tim won medals at four Paralympic Games: Toronto in 1976 (one gold, two silver, two bronze), Arnhem, the Netherlands in 1980 (four gold, one silver, two bronze), New York in 1984 (four gold, three silver) and Seoul in 1988 (six gold, three bronze). Tim also competed at the World Games, an Olympic-style competition for blind and visually impaired athletes in 1979 and 1986, tabulating five gold, four silver and eight bronze. He was named Canada's junior male athlete of the year in 1976 and Manitoba's athlete of year in 1982. He was inducted into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame in 2000 and Swimming Canada's Circle of Excellence in 2012. The MLPD congratulates Tim for this well-deserved recognition of his impressive contribution to sport.

Manitoba Access Awareness Week 2013 Fast Approaching by Colleen Watters

The Province of Manitoba proclaimed June 2 to 8, 2013, Manitoba Access Awareness Week (MAAW). MAAW raises awareness of the barriers people with disabilities face that impact

their full participation in society and promotes the removal of these barriers.

The week begins on Monday, June 3 with a kick-off at the Forks. The Honourable Jennifer Howard, Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities, will bring greetings on behalf of the province and events planned for the week will be highlighted.

In addition to the kick-off, other events will include:

Ride for Fun Event presented by the Vision Impaired Resource Network (VIRN) which will take place following the kick-off Public Relations Event sponsored by the Resource Centre for Manitobans Who Are Deaf-Blind and the Manitoba Deaf-Blind Association, June 3 MAAW Disability Awareness Training for Businesses, sponsored by the Manitoba Access Awareness Week Steering Committee and Manitoba Hydro, June 5 MLPD Annual General Meeting and Workshop, June 6.

On Friday, June 7, 2013, an awards luncheon will be held to celebrate the leadership provided by individuals, organizations and businesses in making Manitoba an inclusive society. The Honourable

Jennifer Howard, Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities will present the awards to the recipients.

MAAW 2013 is being organized by a Steering Committee composed of the following members: Jess Turner (Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities); Janet Forbes, (Community Living Winnipeg); Shannon Martin (Reaching Equality Employment Services); Doris Koop (Vision Impaired Resource Network); Valerie Wolbert (People First of Manitoba and MLPD); Pat Shandroski (Canadian National Institute for the Blind); Natalie Mulaire and Heather Hiscock (Society for Manitobans with Disabilities), Shirley Kalyniuk and Ed Zimmerman (Rossburn Age-Friendly Community Committee) and Colleen Watters (Disabilities Issues Office).

For further information on Manitoba Access Awareness Week, 2013, please contact Colleen Watters, Disabilities Issues Office (204) 945-5304 or e-mail colleen.watters@gov.mb.ca

You can also visit the Disabilities Issues Office website:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/dio>

Manitoba Budget & Issues by Deanna Ng

MLPD is a member of the Make Poverty History Manitoba (MPHM) Coalition.

Since 1992, EIA rates have not increased by much. Market housing rents have gone up by approximately 60-70% since 1992.

Before the recent Manitoba Budget, Honourable Stan Struthers asked Manitobans for their input on poverty reduction. Members of the coalition provided feedback of what they would like the government to spend money on.

Marianne Cerelli from the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (SPCW) commented, "MPHM asked for the EIA rent allowance to go to 75% of MMR it went from 52% to 55%. They are putting the \$6.3 million into rent aid which doesn't really help

those who are the poorest; they only got \$20 per month."

The Province estimates this will cost approximately \$18.5 million per year. This new amount would cost the government less than 1% of the total provincial budget. The coalition would like to encourage the province to adjust rent rates to inflation to make sure no one gets left behind.

The provincial government has introduced a \$240 per year increase to EIA RentAid benefits and they will make it easier to apply for RentAid.

There is a new Rent Aid Transition for people with disabilities or with kids and transitioning to employment, it is \$60 per month.

The government agrees the real solution to a shortage of affordable housing is to build more housing. The Province's long term plan is to improve and make it so that people can get portable shelter benefits to help them transition to independent living. They are also introducing a new tax credit that will encourage even more rental housing construction.

They have already planned for 1,500 social housing and 1,500 affordable housing units that were already planned to be made for 2014. On top of this, they will develop hundreds more social housing units over the next three years.

The Province made note of the need for more resources and supports for Manitobans with low income to become employed or live decently. The government agrees that it is good for all to include people with disabilities in the workforce. They will develop a strategy to help them get employed. The government will support services to help people with disabilities become employed and employers to keep them. This year, the Province plans to increase the minimum wage to \$10.45 per hour to benefit Manitobans with low income.

Our PST will now be increased by one point making it 8% out of all you buy. Manitoba's PST is still the third lowest in the country.

On the good side, the government will have more items on the list exempt such as; essential baby items including diapers, car seats and strollers. Manitobans will have a \$250

personal income tax exemption to help cover some of these costs.

What can we do about this?

We congratulate the Province on their efforts to increase EIA RentAid. However, this \$240 a year does not cover the whole cost being 75% of the median market rent. Make Poverty History encourages your say.

To join the Coalition,

Email: Kirsten Bernas at:

manitoba@makepovertyhistory.ca

Or visit:

<http://makepovertyhistorymb.com/>

To learn more about the Provincial Budget visit:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/provincialbudgets.html>

To learn more about the Social Planning Council visit:

<http://www.spcw.mb.ca>

Public Forum on Disability Issues and Employment by Deanna Ng

How do we achieve employment and income security as Manitobans with Disabilities? On March 12 we had this discussion at the Viscount Gort

Hotel with Minister Jennifer Howard and 4 other panelists.

Minister Jennifer Howard was glad to receive comments and questions.

Barriers need to be eliminated – often by simple accommodations. A success is the Disabilities Access Legislation, which is a collaboration to eliminate barriers from the beginning. Often attitudes are the greatest barriers.

Minister Howard recognizes we are in tight times but does not want to see programs cut.

An example of an improvement in employment is BUILD - Building Urban Industries for Local Development. This is a non-profit contractor and a training program for people who face barriers to employment. They work in homes on insulation, high-efficiency toilets and other energy saving things. They train people with limited experience in the field. Their goods and services benefit low income housing and the environment. Here people with episodic disabilities work at their own pace.

The province recognizes mental health is affected by emotional work place injuries from

bullying or stress. Awareness is needed.

Chris Gaulin spoke at the event, and owns his own Internet business. He received funding for transportation and equipment to use for his work. He struggled through the bureaucracy just to survive – that is getting funding for tools, supports, and transportation. Gaulin enjoys the rewards of his work. He enjoys learning and encourages others with disabilities to continue to learn and grow and ask for accommodations in the workplace.

Jan Forster of the Provincial Government noted often employers are reluctant to hire people with disabilities because they just don't know that accommodations don't always cost them.

People with disabilities want to work. EIA needs to recognize that people need their basic needs met before they can pursue employment. A holistic approach is necessary.

Tracy Williams described the difficulties for youths between 18 years to 21 years. Not all school systems have the same programs. Supported employment agencies can help.

MSEN has a resource guide to help families and supporters. This can be found at www.msen.mb.ca.

Nancy Carroll, described the Manitoba Civil Service. Currently, they are the largest employer in Manitoba with over 15,000 employees. In March 2007 2.8% (421 workers) had a disability. Currently 4.7% (774 workers) have disabilities. Their goal is 7%.

One example of a recruitment plan was a partnership the Province had with 5 Winnipeg school divisions and Manitoba Hydro. They offered real jobs to help students build their skills and this was a success!

Community News Commons (the Winnipeg Foundation) by Deanna Ng

Where does all the good news go? The Winnipeg Foundation and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation recently sponsored a new news site called the Community News Commons (CNC). Others involved are; Red River College, the Winnipeg Free Press and Cafe, and the Winnipeg Public Library.

Everyone in the community is invited to write anything such as science, the environment, education, economics, politics, sports, food, positive stories about the community, and commentaries. You can submit an article and people will view it and make comments in a friendly atmosphere where inappropriate feedback is not tolerated.

Noah Erenberg is the editor of this new site. Together with Dan Flett, they are putting on a series of workshops Throughout May, Monday nights and Tuesday afternoons are at the Millennium Library. Monday's focus is on writing and Tuesday's focus is on multimedia. Wednesday evenings are at the Winnipeg Free Press Café and this is the practicum where you get to meet famous people who you will later interview.

This site helps with basic story building blocks.
<http://www.marymcguire.ca/sites//webwritingresources.html>

This site helps with basic multimedia skills.
http://www.jou.ufl.edu/faculty/mmcadams/video/five_shot.html

The CNC is fun, free and easy!
<http://wwwwww.communitynewscommons.org/>

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 for 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.



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204.792.0028

Introductory natural skin care kit available for \$25 (Retail value \$46). \$5 from each sale goes to MLPD.
Package includes: 1.5 oz avocado and green tea face lotion, 2 oz lotion, 8 oz makeup remover/cleansing oil (can also be used on hair and nails), lip gloss, soap, bath salt, and free delivery.



CLOSING THE GAP, DISABILITY RIGHTS PENDANT

Hilary Druxman, a Winnipeg designer, has created the “Closing the Gap” disability rights pendant for the MLPD and the DisAbled Women’s Network (DAWN) Manitoba as a fundraising tool.

“This simple, but meaningful pendant represents closing the gap of understanding between people with disabilities and the non-disabled world,” said Diane Driedger, MLPD’s Provincial Coordinator. The pendants are \$35.00 and available at the MLPD office or online at hilarydruxman.com.



Save the Dates

MLPD Annual General Meeting

When: Thursday, June 6, 2013
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Where: Union Centre, 275
Broadway

Canadian Multicultural Disability Centre, Inc. MULTICULTURAL FUNDRAISER DINNER

What: The Canadian Multicultural Disability Centre cordially invites you to attend their annual fundraiser dinner.

Why: Please join us in the understanding and sharing of knowledge and capabilities of the people with disabilities from diverse backgrounds.

Who: Keynote speaker: Joyce Bateman.

When: Saturday, June 1st
from 6:00 pm-10:00pm

Where: Lord Roberts Community
Centre 725 Kylemore Ave
Winnipeg, MB

How: Tickets: \$20 (includes food,
Drinks & entertainment)
Phone: 204-453-0391

You're Invited! To an Information/Discussion Forum on Manitoba Housing and Community Development's Non-Smoking Pilot Project

What: Manitoba Housing is looking to provide options for people who want to live in a smoke-free environment. Manitoba Housing is currently testing a non-smoking policy in a few of its housing buildings.

Why: As valued members of the public and the disability community, The Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities (MLPD) wants to know what you think about Manitoba Housing's providing smoke-free housing options.

Manitoba Housing and Community Development staff will be there to provide information about the Non-Smoking Pilot.

Come find out more about Manitoba Housing's Non-Smoking Pilot Project and tell us your opinion.

What: Information Session on Manitoba Housing's Non-Smoking Pilot
When: Friday, May 31, 2013, from 12:00 p.m.- 1:30 p.m.

Where: Winnipeg Independent

Living Resource Centre, 311A-393 Portage Avenue

Sponsored by: Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities

Hosted by: Winnipeg Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC)

Any questions? Please call: Mel Graham, MLPD Housing Committee Chair, at (204) 832-8414 or Doug Lockhart, ILRC Program Director, at (204) 947-0194

YOUR FINANCIAL REALITY

What: Would you like a Planning Handbook?

Who: Join Money Management Educator Zanna Joyce to explore Your Financial Reality

Why: Discuss your priorities, budgetting and future planning

**When: Four Thursdays: May 23, May 30, May 30, June 6 and June 13
4:30 – 6 p.m.**

Where: Location to be announced based on attendance.

Cost: Free.

**Registration required:
204-997-3841
or email zjoyce@mts.net**

Let us know what accommodations you might need.

A project of The Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities (204-943-6099) and Community Financial Counselling Services (204-989-

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), Laura Schnellert (Thumbs Up Project - Coordinator), Deanna Ng (Program Assistant)

The 2012/2013 MLPD Provincial Council:

Jesse Turner (Co-chair), Carlos Sosa (Co-chair), April D'Aubin (Secretary), Laura Gordon (Treasurer), Zephania Matanga, Colleen Watters, Shayani Fernando, Valerie Wolbert

This newsletter is available in alternate media upon request.

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