



Hub



Canadian Paraplegic Association (Nova Scotia) Association canadienne des paraplégiques

The Newsletter for Nova Scotians with Spinal Cord Injuries and Other Physical Disabilities

Spring 2008

The 56th Annual

CHAIR-ity dinner & Auction

On Thursday, May 15, you are invited to join us at the Westin Nova Scotia Hotel for the 2008 Annual CHAIR-ity Dinner and Silent Auction in support of the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Nova Scotia). The presenting sponsor of the event is Dominion of Canada General Insurance Company. Tickets are \$90 per person.

The CHAIR-ity Dinner is a celebration! The evening gets underway at 6:00 p.m. with a cash bar and the opportunity to view the silent auction items. Then dinner begins at 7:00 p.m. The evening includes the presentation of awards to an outstanding person with paraplegia and with quadriplegia, who have made notable progress in their work toward self reliance, independence and full community participation. In addition, we will be presenting the collaboration award to those persons or organizations who have excelled in their efforts to work with CPA (NS), as we assist persons with mobility disabilities and other disabilities to work toward their individual goals. Finally, the winner of the Victor Thibault Award for Barrier Free Design will be announced!

Our guest speaker this year is Ivar Mendez, MD, PhD, FRCSC, FACS. Dr. Mendez is professor and head, Division of Neurosurgery, Director of the Neural Transplantation Laboratory and chairman of the Brain Repair Centre at Dalhousie University. He is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Mendez is recognized

internationally as an expert in his field and has extensive scientific publications. As a clinician/ scientist, Dr. Mendez' research focus is in functional neurosurgery, brain repair, stem cells, robotic neurosurgery and computerized systems in neurosurgical applications. Dr. Mendez will be discussing the new technologies in neurosurgery developed in Halifax.

Persons with mobility disabilities face barriers every day. In that spirit, we have asked persons who do not live daily with a mobility disability to participate in our Chair-Leader Program. ChairLeaders will be given a wheelchair to use for the day (May 15th) and will be asked to share their experiences and their new appreciation of barriers faced by persons with mobility disabilities in our communities.



This year's ChairLeaders are: Ron Swan – Home Safe Living; Alexa McDonough – M.P., Halifax; David Cook – Lord Nelson Hotel; Matthew W. Napier – Boyne Clarke Barristers and Solicitors; Gord Pye – Investors Group; and Blaise Morrison – Halifax Shopping Center. Each of these ChairLeaders is currently collecting pledges in support of the many programs and services offered by the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Nova Scotia) for persons with disability and their families in your community.

Please call Marilyn Taylor at 423-1277, ext. 101 or mtaylor@canparaplegic.org to pledge a donation or reserve tickets to this event. We want to take this time to thank you for considering this opportunity to increase your own awareness and to help us eliminate barriers for persons with mobility disabilities.

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Creating accommodating workplaces means thinking beyond the workspace

Working with colleagues with a disability requires that we embrace dignity and equality in ways beyond the physical space. In the workplace, this can sometimes be a challenge.

by David W. Shannon, LL.M.

One in eight Canadians has a disability – that's 3.6 million people. Achieving dignity and equality for persons with a disability is essential, not just to enhance their lives, but to enhance our society in general.

We've come a long way toward improving the lives of persons with a disability in a relatively short time. But it's time for a fundamental shift in our approach. We need a holistic approach that will embrace the idea that equality involves the full realization of a person's potential, with its accomplishments, triumphs, losses and passions.

Because dignity is not just about one aspect of an individual's life, or about one aspect of society, broader thinking is needed to reverse social and attitudinal barriers. Personal care, social welfare and medical support can be key elements of meeting a disabled person's immediate needs. It's time also to put a human rights framework into place that will pursue the goals of full participation of persons with disabilities in our workplaces and in our economic, social and political life. That's what true equality will be based on.

Creating an accommodating workplace

We all know what it's like to be excluded from something. It's disrespectful and can be harmful on many levels. Simply providing equality or freedom from discrimination is indeed not enough, as many court cases have shown over the years. For example, an individual who uses a wheelchair may be able to apply for a job in the same way that an able-bodied person would; however, if there is no ramp or automatic doors where the interview is to take place, then they are clearly disadvantaged.

To answer this apparent gap, legislatures and courts have developed the duty to accommodate. The concept is straightforward: Every reasonable effort, short of undue hardship, must be made to accommodate a person with a disability.

In practical terms, what does accommodation look like? This is a particularly pertinent question when examining equality in the workplace. Learning how to approach equality issues begins with understanding that it goes on and to be aware of it. This is the first step.

In order to develop a policy that promotes independence for the employee so that she or he avoids barriers,

How to create a workplace with dignity

- ✓ Involve *everyone* in discussions to make changes in the workplace.
- ✓ Equality begins with understanding that discrimination exists and to be aware of it.
- ✓ Make dignity part of your workplace values and measure people against it.
- ✓ Encourage a respectful workplace. No one wants to be excluded.
- ✓ Speak up if you see behaviour or hear language that does not support dignity.

and more fully integrates in the workplace, several groups suggest adopting an "independent living lens." While it's not the complete response, it may be a helpful guide in developing a welcoming environment for the disabled employee, and meeting "duty to accommodate" standards.

Resources

- ✓ *Six Degrees of Dignity: Disability in an Age of Freedom*, a personal, as well as a legal and academic perspective on the issues of equality and dignity for all human beings, www.creativebound.com
- ✓ "Accessible Procurement Toolkit," low and high tech accommodations for any type of disability, www.apr.gc.ca
- ✓ "Just Ask Me," materials for a full-day workshop, with facilitator's workbook and guide on building an accommodating workplace, www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/odi/documents/justAskMe/00_toc.shtml
- ✓ Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) commitment to lead the Web to its full potential includes promoting a high degree of usability for people with disabilities (U.S.-based), www.w3.org/WAI/
- ✓ "A Way with Words and Images," suggestions for the portrayal of persons with disabilities, www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/odi/documents/wayWithWords/00_toc.shtml

Six Degrees of Dignity

Six elements are required to reverse society's attitude of exclusion.

Dignity in public perception: The negative impact of stereotypical images of disability currently portrayed in mass media and in popular art forms harms both public perception and the individual's sense of dignity. We need broad communication strategies targeted at reversing these discriminatory portrayals, and a better understanding of disabilities in order to reduce the over-representation of persons with disabilities.

Dignity in the community: Practical alternatives in the area of personal care and housing are critical to maximize autonomy for persons with disabilities in an environment where their own needs are self-directed and barrier-free. Employment issues need to be addressed to enhance opportunities for persons with disabilities to contribute their skills and benefit from economic participation.

Dignity in law: The judiciary in Canada, through Section 15, the equality provision of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, has provided a cornerstone for the protection of disability rights. Key advances include the legal duty to accommodate people with disabilities, which should be seen as a first step, rather than an end in itself.

Dignity in public policy: Policy initiatives that have been introduced in recent years, including the *Accessibility for Ontarians with a Disability Act*, illustrate both opportunities and barriers in developing effective policy to address the needs of the disabled. Improvements are needed, along with a reversal of the negative impact brought by government funding cuts.

Dignity of self: Through the removal of social and economic barriers, leading to empowerment and overcoming alienation and exclusion, the dignity of the disabled self can be reclaimed.

Dignity in future: The recently ratified UN Convention on the Rights and Dignity of Persons with a Disability combines the protection of individual and group rights, while creating a framework for positive policy and public perception changes. It provides employers and their managers with an ideal opportunity to create workplace environments that are in tune with the changes, policy initiatives and attitudinal transitions required – a forward-looking goal that will create a broad, common consensus, and hope for persons with disabilities.

In addition to considering a legal duty for the employer to accommodate, it is also critical to understand the context in which such a policy must be constructed.

First, disabled employees are on the vanguard of reversing a legacy of discrimination and socio-economic barriers.

Second, a disability is a personal characteristic, and as such should not be a barrier to equal treatment.

Third, any rule or policy must be premised upon promoting the dignity of the disabled employee.

Fourth, a disabled employee has already signed an employment contract from which accommodation costs arise.

Finally, it is important to appreciate that disabled employees want the same as their able-bodied coworkers: respect and recognition for their efforts, collegiality in the workplace, and an absence of barriers that highlight differences rather than commonalities.

A policy of accommodation should appreciate the above factors. However, employers all too often do not include the disabled employee in the development of such policies. This limits choice, creates low morale, and is short-sighted. Not only do disabled employees have the right to earn a living like their able-bodied colleagues; they have much to contribute to their employers.

Accommodation in workplaces, social programs, housing, and the community in general, benefit us all in the long-run.

David W. Shannon is the author of Six Degrees of Dignity: Disability in an Age of Freedom (Creative Bound International, 2007). For the past 25 years, David has committed himself to policy development and legal advocacy for the protection of human rights and community integration for persons with a disability, working with governments, social agencies and the United Nations. As a person with quadriplegia, he offers a personal, as well as a legal and academic perspective on the issues of equality and dignity for all human beings. For more information please contact him at the CPA (NS) (902) 423-1277.



Golf tournament

Presenting sponsor, Investors Group, and CPA (Nova Scotia) invited you to participate in the 17th Annual Golf Tournament on June 12th, 2008 at Granite Spring Golf and Country Club near Peggy's Cove. The format is a Texas Scramble with a shotgun start at 9:00 am, preceded by a casual breakfast. Player fees of \$200 include the shared use of a power cart, breakfast and dinner following the event. Hole sponsorships are available starting at \$300.

Registration and sponsorship forms can be obtained by calling Marilyn at 1-800-889-1889, ext 101 or by emailing mtaylor@canparaplegic.org.

Wheelchair curling season comes to an end

The third year of the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Nova Scotia) wheelchair curling season came to an end in late March. Each year, this peer program has seen a slow but steady increase in the number of participants. The wheelchair curling program is the first of its kind in Nova Scotia and is considered to be a recreational league. This year, the CPA (NS) curling has been held weekly at the Lakeshore Curling Club in Lower Sackville. The United Way of Halifax Region has funded this activity through its support of the CPA (NS) Peer Program. Location of wheelchair curling for next fall is to be announced.

As a result of their participation in the CPA (NS) and the wheelchair curling program over the past few years, participants felt ready this year to be part of two teams from Atlantic Canada to attend the Canadian Wheelchair Curling Championship held in Winnipeg. Both teams had the skills and experience to be very competitive and eight of the ten players from the two Atlantic Canada teams came from the CPA (NS) wheelchair curling program.

British Columbia, again this year, were national champions beating Ontario in the finals. British Columbia, however, had suffered a loss in the round robin matches losing to Nova Scotia on the opening day. Nova Scotia eventually came fifth in the championship.

Plans are already underway for the 2008/2009 CPA (NS) wheelchair curling program. New participants are always welcome and are being strongly encouraged to contact CPA (NS) if they want to come and see how it is done. It has proven to be both an entertaining and social experience for participants. In addition, it is an environment where peer support and sharing happen in a natural way, resulting in a high level of comradeship.

Wheelchair curling is played without sweeping and participants deliver the rocks using a tool called an extender stick. It requires hand grip to hold the stick and upper body strength to push the stone the length of the house. Strength is important but wheelchair curling is just as much about style as it is strength. It is a mixed sport with both females and males competing on the same team. Age is not a significant barrier and the sport is ideal for those persons wishing to participate in a non-contact recreational activity. There is an excellent website www.wheelchaircurling.com for those who have computer access and who want to learn more about the sport. There are links to actual video so a game can be seen online. If you do not have computer access, CPA (NS) can send you a wheelchair curling demo DVD.

The CPA (NS) peer program is waiting to hear from you. No experience is necessary.

Please contact CPA (NS) by phone at 1-800-889-1889 and speak with Earl Burton at ext. 108 or Gord Publicover at ext. 104 or contact Laughie Rutt at (902) 864-2737. They can also be reached by email at eburton@canparaplegic.org; gpublicover@canparaplegic.org and ljrutt@eastlink.ca.

Bulletin Board

Wheelchairs

18" MANUAL, FOLDING WHEELCHAIR. Excellent condition. Used very little. Call (902) 662-4088. Asking \$500.

Vans and Lifts

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1994 FORD ECONOLINE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VAN. White, full-size accessible van equipped with a power ramp and hand controls. It is a one owner van and well cared for. 19,888 kms. Call Mark Millington at Steele Hyundai (902) 441-0019. Asking \$14,990.

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Bedroom Equipment/Patient Lifts

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Miscellaneous

HAND CONTROLS. Used less than 30 days. Call (902) 634-4456. Asking \$600.

RAISED TOILET SEAT WITH ARMS, sturdy, good condition.

ELECTRIC LIFT CHAIR, good shape, 1-2 years old, tan.

QUAD CANE. Please call (902) 826-2758 (leave a message).

EXTRA WIDE COMMODE. With padded seat and includes covers. Call (902) 876-7459. Asking \$50.

Additional equipment listings can be found on the Web at: freedom.nsnnet.org and www.thespine.ca

Interested in placing an ad free of charge?

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