

THE STAR



Developmental
Disabilities Association

FALL
2019

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DDA OPEN HOUSE



Developmental
Disabilities Association

JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27 2019

LOCATION

Developmental Disabilities
Association, Head Office
100-3851 Shell Road,
Richmond, BC

TIME

Wednesday, November 27,
2019
1:00-6:00 PM

RSVP

Kindly RSVP before
November 20, 2019.
T: 604 273 9778
E: RSVP@develop.bc.ca

NOTE

Refreshments will be served.



CREEKSIDE WELCOMES PREMIER HORGAN AND MAYOR STEWART FOR CHILD-CARE ANNOUNCEMENT

BY: KEVIN CHAN

We were pleased to welcome Premier John Horgan, Vancouver Mayor Kennedy Stewart, Minister of State for Child Care Katrine Chen, Minister for Children and Family Development Katrine Conroy and other dignitaries from Victoria, Vancouver City Hall, the Vancouver Parks Board and the child care community on Thursday, July 4 at our Creekside Child Development Centre.

In front of a small wall of cameras and reporters, the Premier and Mayor announced an investment of \$33 million in Vancouver's

children and families to create 2,300 new child care spaces and work toward \$10 per day fees.

A parent of a child at our Creekside centre, Kate Isaac, spoke about her great experiences at Creekside (including praise of our hardworking staff!), and the importance of child care in creating a sense of community and belonging in areas such as Olympic Village.

"The greatest endowment a city can give its citizens is community," said Isaac.



REVIEWING THE REVIEWS

BY: ALANNA HENDREN

Two reports were issued over the past few months that impact children and adults with disabilities – *the Office of the Attorney General's Report on the audit of MCFD* and *Re-imagining Community Inclusion*, a review of CLBC. Both documents indicate that there is room for wholesale improvements to existing bureaucracies, processes and systems in both organizations.

The most startling revelation of the MCFD audit report was that, since the split of the old MCFD into Aboriginal Services, Non-Aboriginal Services and Community Living B.C. in the early 2000s, decisions about contracting for services to support children-in-care had nothing to do with the children. The report describes a system in chaos where most decisions were made by social workers untrained in contracting procedures based on crisis responses to children who had nowhere to go. There appears to have been no plan for anything or anyone in a Ministry supposedly based on 'person-centred' care in a field well known for its euphemisms, jargon and politically correct notions rather than its quality of care. As a parent, the province was neglectful and spent hundreds of millions of dollars every year on something other than what was best for children in care.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the OAG report is the Appendix that lists all of the previous reports that raised similar concerns so many times before. Since the Ministry was 'transformed' in

the early 2000s under a neo-liberal government, several reports with recommendations were written, some at great expense, and summarily ignored.

Services were de-funded from the start with a 23% cut to MCFD in 2002 just as the Ministry divested itself of Aboriginal Services and CLBC. Services were a 'joint responsibility' between government and the 'community' but legislatively, MCFD was and is still ultimately responsible for all kids in care. Any criticism of MCFD usually brought denials from politicians and senior bureaucrats, combined with contempt for anyone speaking out.

MCFD spends a lot of money but no one really knows on what or why.

“THE MOST STRIKING FEATURE OF THE OAG REPORT IS THE APPENDIX THAT LISTS ALL OF THE PREVIOUS REPORTS THAT RAISED SIMILAR CONCERNS...”

The CLBC report was equally as disturbing as the MCFD audit. Created in the early 2000's to “allow families to become more involved in the lives of their children”, CLBC's budget was cut by \$120 million upon its creation while advocates convinced the government (or was it the other way around?) that a Crown Corporation could move responsibility for community living away from the government. CLBC would further download responsibility for services back to families through individualized funding. This had never been done elsewhere but research indicated that individualized funding (IF) was more expensive than group services. The 'success' of IF was supported only by anecdotal stories. Raising these concerns

“[CLBC’S] BUDGET HAS DOUBLED BUT INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DO NOT HAVE THE CHOICES THEY WERE PROMISED.”

at the time was tantamount to heresy, however, and resulted in excommunication.

Re-imagining Community Inclusion finally states the real reasons for the transformation initiative:

“In 2001, the BC Government was concerned with increasing pressures on community living services such as rapid growth; reduced availability of funds; the Munroe [labour] settlement and corresponding labour accords; changing economic priorities

employers and have their homes become work sites. Families wanted agencies to provide good services and/or administer their individualized funding. CLBC also based much of their plan on ‘neighbours helping neighbours’, although there was no evidence that neighbours would step in where paid staff left off. CLBC envisioned a system that “views adults, children and their families, along with friends and personal networks, as having the capacity to solve their own problems”, meaning that they would not need government services or financial support. CLBC created



and the evolving expectations of families and communities with respect to the design of and access to services.”

These were not the reasons we were given at the time, when families were told that, under the new system they would be able to ‘dream their dreams’ and could expect CLBC to pay for everything they wanted. Independent planning centers would help them develop inclusive futures for their adult children, then ‘analysts’ would determine the family’s need for funding and they would receive it. At first, families received generous IF packages and capital grants to buy vehicles or renovate their houses, but that only lasted until the money ran out, leaving many families with only 10 days of respite per year. Some families believed they were promised individualized funding in addition to existing services and a new service delivery system that would view support “through a lens focussed on community involvement and governance, ownership and accountability, local decision-making, transparent processes, reduced bureaucracy and de-regulation”.

Told that ‘this is what families want’, service providers and professionals were demonized as consumers of government funds that were blocking community inclusion, even though there was no evidence or data that supported this claim or any viable alternatives. IF had already been available through the old system, but experience and research data demonstrated that only about 10% of families wanted IF because it was too onerous to become



\$120 million in savings on the backs of community living workers by paying staff far less than the lowest-paid workers in the public sector – just above minimum wage. Regrettably, this resulted in a complete disinterest in work in our sector - training colleges could not attract prospects to their community support programs - and triggered staff shortages that we live with to this day.

The CLBC report notes: “Some of the original thinking proved not to work as expected.”

Although the CLBC of today does not look like the CLBC families and others envisioned in 2002, its budget has doubled but individuals with developmental disabilities do not have the choices they were promised. With few day programs available, many students graduate to a life of unemployment and inactivity. Although ‘employment first’ became CLBC policy along the way, there were no allowances made for individuals who are ageing, who have complex, chronic health care needs, or severe behaviour challenges. Parents can now also expect to house their adult children into their old age.

Re-imagining CLBC services is a great idea but it is time for the Crown Corporation to demonstrate some transparency, accountability, policy direction and equity in funding between individuals, agencies and regions. We, as a province, must be able to do better than this.

SUMMER EVENTS



DDA'S NIGHT AT THE NAT!

BY: KEVIN CHAN

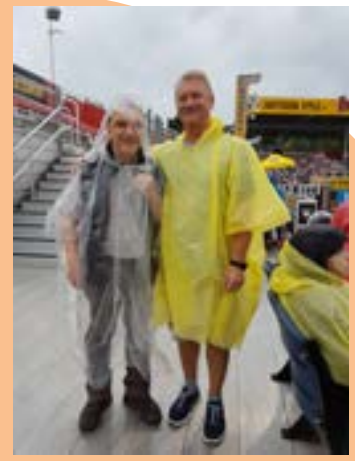
Our annual DDA Night at the Nat took place on July 9 and saw many of our clients, family, friends, supporters, and staff come together for a night at Nat Bailey stadium!

Even though there was some slight rain, everyone came out for a night of fun, laughter, and great baseball by the Vancouver Canadians. The Vancouver Canadians staff were gracious in

allowing many of us to find better seats that kept us dry and in good spirits.

The highlights of the night were sharing the evening together, stadium food, and of course watching Jayden throw out the first pitch!

See everyone next year!





CREATIVITY WITHOUT BARRIERS

ART CLASS WITH KIM

BY: MARIANNA SCHULTZ

DDA's art program is a blend of creativity, expression and inclusion, open to clients of all levels. This is the culmination of the efforts of Kim, who visits five programs, one day each week, to teach clients in her art classes. Clients participate based on interest, and work on projects in mediums from painting and ceramics, to printing on t-shirts, producing engaging and unique art in the process.

The program focused entirely on what the clients are drawn to create. It's not uncommon for Kim to form a class around an idea that a student was particularly enthusiastic about. In a similarly organic process, the progression from the initial introduction of a subject to the end product visibly evolves from project to project. What begins as a picture of a fish evolves into a painting, then a ceramic sculpture. The adaptability and collaboration with the clients' interests are what helps to shape the program.

DDA helps connect artists with as many opportunities as possible. Usually, the artists are featured in three to four art shows a year; allowing their art to reach a wider audience. From June to September, the artists have a booth at Granville Island Community Market, where they get a chance to sell the art made at DDA, and also have a fun outing while running the stand and getting out into the community.

In June, two DDA artists were part of a Wingspan Art Show in the Hatch Gallery at UBC. Joan and Cindy were selected to display their artwork including paintings and ceramic fish sculptures. Hundreds of people, including school groups from all over the Lower Mainland, came to appreciate and buy the art. Almost all of Joan's sculptures were sold, and various members of her family came out to support her.

Though the art classes present the opportunity to become paid artists, this isn't the program's main ambition. The goal is to simply provide the access to tools for the artists to project their creativity into the world. And while sharing their art appeals to some, it doesn't to others who would rather keep their pieces to themselves, or only share them with family and friends. As Kim says, "People aren't making things to sell, they're just making them, and then it's a nice surprise if they do sell." It's clear that the clients' pieces are made for their own gratification above all. This element of joy is what draws the viewers in, but most importantly, the artists.

DDA artists are featured in local art shows around Vancouver. Check out our Events webpage to see upcoming art shows.

RECOGNIZING STAFF MILESTONES

DDA STAFF APPRECIATION

Each year, we have a staff appreciation event to acknowledge the hardworking staff that make working at DDA so inspiring! This year, we had 70 staff celebrate milestones of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and even 30 years!

We are very thankful to each and every one of our staff members for their continuous effort in making DDA a place where everyone belongs and also for providing excellent service to our clients and their families.





DDA PARTNERS WITH TECH COMPANY ON NEW ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

BY: KEVIN CHAN

A version of this article was published in the Richmond News.

There are always concerns around the overuse of technology and its impact on social interaction. However, the Developmental Disabilities Association's (DDA) use of assistive technology has empowered individuals with developmental disabilities to improve their ability to communicate.

In January, Keegan Newberry, an Assistant Director at DDA, reviewed the Tap Wearable Keyboard produced by Tap Systems Inc., a wearable technology company in California.

After writing the review, she reached out to the company, thinking that there was an opportunity to expand on its current capabilities. Tap Systems Inc. was quick to respond and since then, she has been working with the company and providing feedback that can be used to increase the accessible component of the product.

"I stumbled across Tap while searching for assistive writing technology, particularly ones that suit individuals with various needs," explained Keegan. "Some individuals cannot type on a

standard keyboard and require low-impact alternatives that reduce physical strain on any one part of the body."

This partnership has also allowed Keegan to receive several additional devices that can be used to enhance communication between clients and staff at DDA's community-based group homes. Though the assistive technology is still a work in progress, results have been positive. Individuals who previously had challenges communicating whether speaking or writing have been able to use the wearable keyboard as an alternative input device to tap a series of patterns that can communicate anything from 'yes' or 'no' to food preferences and image recognition.

Aside from DDA's implementation of new communication methods, Keegan and DDA are also able to share findings back to Tap Systems Inc. The hope is that providing these findings will open the eyes of wearable tech and app companies to a larger audience that includes individuals with developmental disabilities.

"Assistive technology is more than providing tools for communication," Keegan says. "It is giving back autonomy, independence, and a voice. It provides access and the ability to build relationships within a community."

ADVOCATING FOR A MORE ACCESSIBLE CITY WITH TASIA

BY: TASIA ALEXIS & MARIANNA SCHULTZ

Throughout our history, DDA has always prioritized advocacy. Over the past 15 years, Assistant Director Tasia Alexis, who has been supporting persons with developmental disabilities for 41 years, has represented DDA while advocating for change on the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee at Vancouver City Hall. These changes come in the form of accessible transit, social inclusion and accessible and affordable housing. Tasia often says, "If you improve services for people with disabilities, you improve services for everyone."

Living with a disability is a universal experience. Living with a disability is more than a health problem. It can affect children, teens, adults, men, women, gay, transgendered, every race, ethnicity and social class.

Though some aspects of accessibility in the city are improving, advocates can still sometimes find themselves fighting for the most basic human rights. Tasia is one of many who recommended a public restroom be included on the Broadway Millennium SkyTrain line as a part of the 2040 Transportation plan. The right to have access to a public restroom is important on the increasingly busy SkyTrain, which is often used to reach the Vancouver General

Hospital and a multitude of medical centres available along the line.

"One of the hardest parts of being an advocate is getting the right person's attention," Tasia explains, "because there are so many competing interests and problems." In order to capture the attention of the persons making the decisions, Tasia uses real-life examples to explain why this concern or cause is important and let people relate to it. Advocacy always requires patience, persistence and a plan.

CITY OF VANCOUVER INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

A number of years ago, the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee recognized the need for an overarching Inclusion and Accessibility Strategy that will set priorities and timelines for the City. There are currently over one hundred policies and strategies in place in the city, but not one for accessibility and inclusion.

On September 7, 2018, Vancouver City Council recommended the development of Phase 1 of an Accessibility Strategy. The staff convened a task force of appointed representatives from the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, Senior Advisory Committee and People with Lived Experienced Advisory on



TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

- Broadway Millennium SkyTrain Line
- HandyDART Consultation
- Universally accessible public washrooms on SkyTrain lines
- Transportation 2040 Plan Consultation
- Mobility Pricing



ACCESSIBLE CITY SUBCOMMITTEE

- Increased curb cuts and curb ramps at intersections
- Advocate for Accessibility & Inclusion Strategy Task Force
- Single-Use Reduction Strategy
- West 10th Avenue Hospital Precinct

HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE

- Vancouver Building By-Law for adaptable housing requirements
- Pearson Dogwood Redevelopment
- BC Housing Retrofit Criteria
- Poverty Reduction Strategy



SOCIAL INCLUSION SUBCOMMITTEE

- Elections BC accessible voting machines
- Inclusive Cities Strategy
- Creative Cities Strategy
- 2018 Resilient Cities Summit



Mental Health and Addiction. Tasia is a member of the Accessible Strategy Task Force.

PEARSON DOGWOOD REDEVELOPMENT

Another large project that Tasia has been part of is the redevelopment of the Pearson Dogwood lands. The George Pearson Centre (GPC) located on the site is closing and the building will be demolished. The residents living there will be re-housed by Vancouver Coastal Health on the same site. With 14 years of experience working at Woodlands institution, Tasia understands the importance of ensuring the new development is inclusive.

A Consensus Housing and Support Proposal for the Pearson Redevelopment was collaboratively prepared by the Pearson Residents Redevelopment Group, BC Coalition for People with Disabilities (Disability Alliance BC) and the City of Vancouver Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee. This proposal is important because individuals want a voice, autonomy and control over their lives, and input on where, how, and who they live with in their homes.

When things aren't progressing in the right way, or seem hopeless, Tasia emphasizes the importance of continuing to show up and participate in ongoing planning to advance access and inclusion.

Continuing to be a presence to keep people accountable, or acting as a resource, or understanding the power of policies and bylaws to forward access and inclusion initiatives is important. As a representative of DDA and a City of Vancouver Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee member, Tasia believes that showing up is key because you never know who may be listening.

Changing one person's mind can often make a world of difference and effect change.

"I have DDA as my focus," says Tasia. "When you have an opportunity to talk about what you deeply care about, you get to showcase who we are and what we do."

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Tasia and many other advocates, DDA has been a part of important work in the city. Developing with accessibility in mind is a crucial part of being an inclusive community.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that over 5% of Vancouver residents have some form of physical disability or mobility restriction? When you include their accompanying family, friends and staff, about 50% of Vancouver residents are affected by poor access to buildings, and that is just the beginning.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION STATS:

- In BC, the prevalence of persons living with a disability is 14%
- 1 in 7 Canadians age 15 and older lives with a disability
- In BC, 14.8% of persons live with a disability
- 3.8 million Canadians reported having a disability that limited their daily activities

SUMMER PROGRAMS



HOLIDAY OPTIONS RECAP

BY: KEVIN CHAN

Every summer, our Holiday Options program takes clients on day trips and weekend-long adventures. Here are a few recaps of the events this past summer!

FLYING U RANCH

Yeehaw! Our group of cowboys and cowgirls travelled a scenic route along Highway 1 up to 70 Mile House where The Flying U Ranch is located. We enjoyed home-cooked meals, a beautiful view of Green Lake, and a barn full of sweet horses. We had fun horseback riding through the trails and even saw some deer! In the afternoon, we had the chance to go on boat rides and get our fingers sticky with s'mores by the bonfire. Thank you Flying U Ranch for the amazing horse-pitality!

SEA TO SKY

No wind or rain can stop us from having a good time! Four travellers and three staff went to Squamish (which means "Mother of the Wind") for a hearty lunch at White Spot. We had lasagna, salads, burgers, fries, and milkshakes! After our tummies were more than satisfied, we rode the Sea to Sky Gondola to view the beautiful Coast Mountain scenery. We hiked the Panorama Trail, walked across the Sky Pilot Suspension Bridge, and took pictures along the viewing deck with a breath-taking backdrop.

INDIAN ARM LUNCHEON

Our first trip was the Indian Arm Luncheon. Six participants and two staff boarded the Harbour Princess and enjoyed a buffet lunch with potato salad, salmon, chicken, and apple peach pie! The West Coast view through Vancouver's harbour, the Burrard Inlet, and north into Indian Arm was spectacular! We even saw a family of seals and a couple of bald eagles.



FIRST-EVER FOSTERING EARLY DEVELOPMENT “FUN CAMP”!

BY: JOSCELYN WONG & AMY RIS

This year, the Fostering Early Development team put together their first-ever summer day camp for children aged four to six, currently in foster care, and it was a huge success!

“Fun Camp” was held the week of July 22, from Monday to Friday, with two 2-hour sessions: one in the morning, and one in the afternoon. Each group had a maximum of five children, which allowed for 1:1 support with a consultant/support worker. We had a different theme for each day of the week: Science Experiments, Circus Day, Yoga & Music, Water Day, and Bees & Such! The energy was great, everyone was excited, and the kids had a blast! It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn and experience new things while developing their skills in social interaction and group play.

“FUN CAMP” GOALS

We had some overarching goals for camp this year, which we feel were met with resounding success! These include the following:

1. At snack time, we facilitated opportunities for social communication with peers by having a daily helper (which rotated each day) that would take the snack plate and ask all other campers what they wanted off the snack tray and placing it on their plate. This required the daily helper to use a strong voice to get each camper's attention, ask others what they wanted, listen to what the other child was saying, and choose the correct items, including an appropriate quantity.
2. By using the book, “Big Feelings Come and Go” (which each child took home at the end of camp), we introduced what BIG FEELINGS might be and how/when we might have these feelings, along with identifying and practicing what children can do to get calm again (e.g., taking deep breaths, simple grounding exercises such as identifying 5 items of the same colour in the room, wiggling fingers and toes, etc).
3. Lastly, we recognize that children in foster care spend more time than the average child sitting in cars, driving to appointments and visits for themselves or the other children in the foster home. We wanted to provide two hours every day for each child to have access to time outside and preferred play activities, rather than needing to be in a car or appointment.

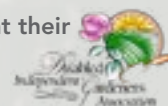
We brought the dream of summer camp to life, and it's safe to say that our hopes have been exceeded! We are definitely looking forward to another week of summer fun next year!

CALLING ALL GARDENERS!

The Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA) provides opportunities for people with disabilities to actively participate in gardening.

Operating in Metro Vancouver, they offer workshops, garden tours, customized adaptive tools, and their volunteers work one-on-one with DIGA members tending to fully-accessible plots in community gardens. Their community gardens have wheelchair-accessible pathways and raised beds. Many also offer roll-under table-top gardens.

For more information please look at their website: <http://digabc.org/>



DAY PROGRAMS

GO-KARTING WITH GRANDVIEW DAY PROGRAM

BY: SHANNON WAGNER

Grandview day program kicked off the summer season by racing around the tracks of Richmond Go-Karts. It was a warm and sunny day, but the real heat was coming from the clients encouraging the staff to drive faster!

We arrived at 10:00 am, enjoyed free coffee, put our helmets on, and were lucky enough to have the track to ourselves until noon. Clients were able to watch and cheer on their friends and staff from the sidelines while sitting in comfortable chairs and enjoying the sunshine. To celebrate an exciting morning, we finished up having lunch on the many colourful picnic tables that were available. This activity was enjoyed by everyone who participated and the excitement continued into the afternoon while clients shared their stories with everyone back at the program.

If you are interested in this activity, you better hurry up and contact them, as they will be closing down after the summer!



CREATING A RECIPE BOOK AT CORE DAY PROGRAM

BY: FRANCESCA HEMINGTON

CORE Day Program has been creating a recipe book full of delicious tried and tested treats.

They are easy to follow and can be made by anyone. Clients have been working hard to find the tastiest items and put together the book over the last six months. Included in the book are ingredient lists, methods and photos of the finished piece as well as reviews by the clients.

If you would like a copy, please contact Francesca at fhemington@develop.bc.ca. We will be delivering the recipe book electronically. We can also distribute a printed copy upon request.





EXCITEMENT BREWING AT THE DROP-IN!

BY: ELIZABETH BERTUZZI

Do you ever get excited about an upcoming event or time of the year? For example, the return of summer after a cold winter, or upcoming holidays, or maybe your birthday?

Well, the way some people talk about their evening/weekend activities at our Drop-In program is very similar. After registration, I have heard people talk with each other saying, "Are you going to such and such play?" or "I signed up for the corn maze on Saturday are you going?" or "Did you sign up for pizza and bingo tonight?"

There is a lot of excitement around the activities and people talk about it weekly and even daily. Despite the fact that someone's birthday is only one time each year the excitement for evening/weekend events happens many times throughout the year.

Some of the other popular activities for evening/weekend are pub night, Dairy Queen, sports events, community kitchen and baking nights. Evening/weekend activities can provide you with a social outlet and with some new experiences and most importantly fun, every night of the week including Saturdays.



SUMMER UPDATES FROM LEISURE CHALLENGE

BY: NAZLI KARAMI

The Leisure Challenge crew has been busy bees this year!

At our space, we have converted office space into a sensory room for our youth to relax in. We've celebrated five high school graduations since August of last year! We've also welcomed new youth and staff members to our program. We're currently loving the warm weather and enjoying fun outings throughout the Lower Mainland. Highlights of our summer include getting a tour of the cannery in Richmond, swimming in outdoor pools, listening to music at the Granville Island Jazz Festival, hours of blueberry picking, enjoying what nature has to offer in our beautiful city and so much more. The message our group wants to give our readers is: "Hello and hope you have a fun summer!"

LEGO LEGO LEGO AT BROCK JUNCTION

BY: ALEX ORASA

To kick off the start of summer break, the Brock Junction group took a trip out to the Surrey Museum to see the amazing LEGO exhibit that was on display.

This outing was definitely a much-anticipated trip for the Brock Junction group as LEGO building at the program has been a long time group favourite activity to participate in for the kids, and staff too. Upon arriving the kids were excited to be greeted by an actual life-size character outside the front and were quick to jump in and take many funny group photos together.

After entering the museum the kids were super excited to explore the many interactive and detailed exhibits on display. The museum offered exhibits for all ages and even included a fun play area for the kids to enjoy. After taking in all there was to see, and there was lots, the kids were inspired to create their own LEGO exhibits back at the program. As you can see, the kids have been working tirelessly during free time every day to recreate a fraction of what they saw at the museum.

Thank you to the Surrey Museum for putting on such a fun and free experience for all kids to enjoy. We will be sure to come back again! The Brock Junction group has been off to a fun-filled summer and look forward to seeing you in the community on one of our many fun outings around the city.

TECH REVIEWS

PRODUCT

Decide Now! Random Wheel

PRODUCER:

Catforce Studio

COST

\$2.79

COMPATABILITY

iOS

CATEGORY

App

SUB CATEGORY

Multi-Use

STAR RATINGS

Ease of Use:

Grab & go



Adaptability:

Wide Variety of Settings Available



Accessibility:

Suitable for Most Users



Cost vs. Value:

Worthwhile Expense



Overall Rating:



DECIDE NOW! RANDOM WHEEL

BY: KEEGAN NEWBERRY

Decide Now! is a choice-making app produced by Catforce Studios available for iOS only. The app functions as a single-screen spinning choice wheel that selects an item at random from a setlist when the user presses a central control button. Wheels can be edited and saved for future use, with unlimited wheels and fully customizable lists.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Intuitive design and easy set-up for users, with the ability to import choices as lists;
- Single screen display with pop-up menu allows for quick, on-the-go edits;
- Able to add a visual cue using emojis;
- Choices may be deactivated after selection to ensure a new choice is chosen on every spin.

LOWLIGHTS

- Selections are visual only, not possible to speak selection using app or iPad accessibility settings;
- Central control button activates on each touch input making it difficult to prevent unintended successive spins and stalling behaviour;
- Not suitable for users with visual impairments.

FINAL WORD

Decide Now! was intended for use by all and, as a result, does not have any built-in functions specifically geared towards supporting those with disabilities. This quality is a double-edged sword: on one hand, limiting the ability to completely personalize the settings for individuals with complex needs, and on the other, giving support workers an extremely simple interface that requires only a little creativity for use. Though this app has a wide variety of potential uses, as a support tool it is a unique option for individuals with impairments in choice-making skills and for task-completion of less-preferred activities.

By randomizing each choice, Decide Now! allows users who struggle with decision-making to move directly to the activity or option while bypassing the anxiety of actually making the decision. The key to using this app for choice-making is the deactivation feature. Decide Now! should not replace decision-making, but rather be used with the intent of removing barriers to choice while still giving users the option of declining the randomized suggestion. Using the deactivation button, support workers can eliminate a specific item and allow the user the re-spin for another option. This ensures users remain active participants in decision-making and reframes choice as a simple 'yes' or 'no' rather than requiring a selection from a multi-item field. Continuous use of a single wheel promotes user familiarity of options and may decrease choice-making anxiety overall.

A similar impact can be observed when used as a task-completion tool for less-preferred activities. For individuals who may struggle with maintaining motivation when completing a series of small tasks within a single activity, Decide Now! is a unique alternative to more traditional visual schedules or step-by-step task breakdowns. Not only is this app more appealing to users both visually and through the interactive experience it offers, for activities that do not require tasks to be completed in a specific order, fun or preferred choices can be interspersed within the tasks required for completion, presenting what may have originally been a chore list now as a series of options on a game show wheel. Using the deactivation feature, support workers can ensure that each task is only presented once and gives the user a visual reference for how many steps remain in an activity, as the app greys out each item once deactivated.

Regardless of the purposes for which this app is used, Decide Now! strongly relies on support worker creativity for meaningful use. The limitations of this app are outweighed by its ease of use, quick adaptability, and level of customization. When reviewed strictly for basic use, this is an inexpensive tool for support workers that can be applied to a variety of different situations; but when considered as an alternative strategy-on-hand when traditional methods are unsuccessful, it is the potential for positive impact that makes Decide Now! a highly suggested app for purchase.



EMPLOYMENT



MICHAEL AT OLD NAVY

BY: AARON BOWBYES

Michael is a part-time sales associate at Old Navy. He started at Old Navy in facilities maintenance, holding the responsibility to clean and maintain the retail space. After thriving as an employee, his manager decided to put him on the sales floor where he can improve the customers' shopping experience. Michael loves the thrill of a new challenge, and he is already holding down the whole floor by himself! He also values talking to customers, the friendly staff, and having a good rapport with management. All of these aspects are helping to master his communication and interpersonal skills.

"Michael has been doing great on the sales floor, super interactive with customers and great on tasking on projects in the store!" – Tyler, Manager.

Michael says his manager is very understanding of his many commitments like the Special Olympics, and also gives him many opportunities to try new things. Michael's face lights up just talking about the job because he feels valued in the company. Michael flourishes autonomously in every facet of the job.

Before Old Navy, Michael participated in numerous work experiences and volunteered at local non-profit organizations. In the fall, Michael will be balancing his work schedule by starting a new college program.

Michael's original goal to find paid employment has been achieved due to his commitment to embracing new challenges. Congratulations Michael for all your achievements, and thank you for inspiring us all to work harder.

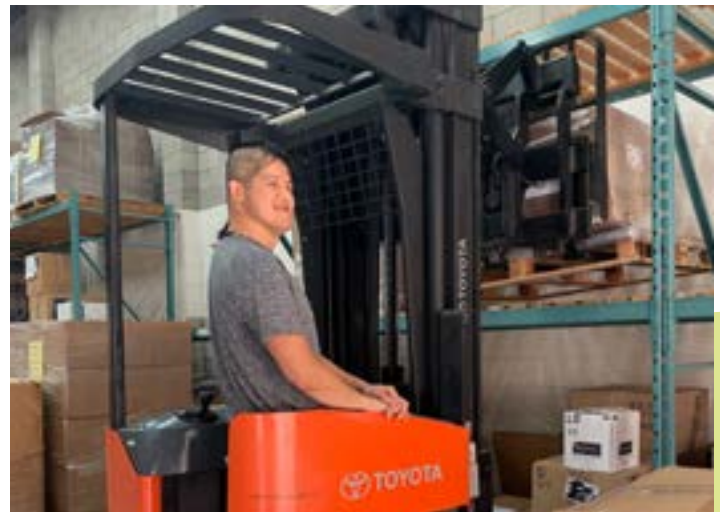


JOHANN AT STARBUCKS

BY: AARON BOWBYES

Congratulations to Johann on his 10-year work anniversary with Starbucks! Julian, manager at Starbucks, had this to say about Johann:

"Johann always comes to work with a 'can-do' attitude. He never really says no to a job either, and yeah, he's a really hard worker. He always shows up to work in a great, positive mood and a big smile on his face. He's always ready to work!"



SIMON AT STARWORKS

BY: ROCHELLE REZANSOFF

Congratulations to Simon Kan, who reached ten years of employment at Starworks! Simon's dedication and hard work have made him a valuable part of the Starworks team. Simon works diligently on BC Hydro Tie Wires and recently completed his Forklift certification exam.

Great work Simon!

SUMMER STUDENT EXPERIENCES



REFLECTING ON SUMMER AT GRANDVIEW DAY PROGRAM

BY: EUNICE WONG

I had the most amazing and eye-opening time as a summer student at Grandview Day Program.

Every day was full of learning, laughter and growth with the clients and staff. At Grandview, we often went on outings to explore Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. This summer was especially busy with even more outings and events to attend than in previous years. Some activities we did include: paddle boarding, sailing, hiking, exploring Science World and Maple Wood Farms, attending CBC Nooners, and even performing a short skit at our barbecue! We also maintained a healthy garden, so we often had fresh vegetables to enjoy. Needless to say, this summer was full of excitement!

One of the most memorable experiences I've had was when we went paddleboarding with a client who was very nervous beforehand. All the staff tried to encourage him and cheer him up. He was still nervous even when he got onto the paddleboard.

After paddleboarding, however, he had the biggest smile on his face and was excitedly telling us about his experience. It amazed me by how brave he was in overcoming his fears.

Despite all these amazing activities, what touched me the most was the welcoming and supportive environment I experienced, even on the first day. I felt warm from all the smiles from the clients and was surprised by how friendly everyone was. Seeing clients give random hugs everyday brightened me up every time. From this experience, I learned to slow down and to enjoy the little things in life. I was touched by how much the clients enjoyed seemingly simple activities, such as riding the SkyTrain, laughing at old jokes, or having a cup of coffee. I was inspired when I saw clients stepping out of their comfort zones and being more expressive in drama class. I was amazed by their persistence in learning how to write tricky numbers and build complicated structures. Being a summer student has taught me so many more life lessons than I would have imagined.

LOOKING BACK AT AN AMAZING SUMMER WITH OUR SUMMER STUDENTS AND YOUTH!

BY: MARIANNA SCHULTZ

Every year, we offer a variety of summer positions that appeal to the interests of students and youth looking for work experience. Our summer staff have highlighted that they've enjoyed working with amazing people, making meaningful connections, and having exciting and dynamic workdays.

Here is what some of our summer students and staff have to say about their experiences:

SOPHIE, RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

"This has by far been my favourite summer job yet... My most memorable experience working with DDA has been the people."

AARON, JOBS WEST

"The employees here are all unique which really complements each other's skills, and creates a vibrant workplace culture that's welcoming and non-judgemental."

This experience has pushed me in many ways to be a more effective leader, an organized person, and a creative inventor.... It has revealed my potential to lead others in a meaningful way, and I see myself continuing to improve these skills."

KRISTEN, RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

"This is one of the best jobs you can get as a student if you are studying something related to healthcare. Staff are treated well and there was lots of opportunity for personal growth."

JOSHUA, ASSISTANT ART INSTRUCTOR, MAIN STREET DROP-IN

"Coming to work every day to do my passion and help others has been an amazing experience for me. [It's] been a different but very fun and rewarding experience."

EUNICE, GRANDVIEW DAY PROGRAM

"I learned that I really enjoy and find meaning in working with people with developmental disabilities."

MARIANNA, COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

"This position has allowed me to take initiative on projects and focus on the areas I'm interested in. I've been able to gain experience and expand on practical skillsets that I know will be useful in future jobs, all in a supportive environment where my voice feels valued and respected."

AYAN, MAIN STREET DROP-IN

"It's easily the best job I've ever had. I wish the summer was longer so I could stay longer."

[The clients] are all pretty amazing individuals and your experience will be all the more amazing once you build strong bonds with the people here. Fair warning though, you'll miss them once you're gone!"

AMY, TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM WORKER

"Summer workers do not have to be students as I am not, I highly recommend this program to new immigrants- you will experience openness and kindness."

Thank you to all of the students and staff that made this a memorable summer!



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RECAP

BY: KEVIN CHAN

We held our 67th Annual General Meeting on June 19, 2019, and were joined by members of the Association, Board of Directors, staff, family and other interested parties.

To kick-off the meeting, we welcomed back Aether, a collaborative service robot developed by JDQ. Through an ongoing partnership with JDQ, Aether has taken steps forward in its learning ability and can now recognize faces, identify people, give appointment reminders, provide bus schedules, and more.

We also shared the highlights from this year's annual report including:

- Infant Development Program provided over 1,800 home visits;
- Child Development Centres supported 425 families including 89 spaces to serve children with special needs;
- Day Programs served over 225 participants across six Day Services centres; Jobs West supported 238 job seekers this year, with 70 of our candidates receiving jobs and 16 participating in work experiences this year; Family Support Services supported 213 families with 1,500 service hours;
- Residential Services has tapped into assistive technology as a means to increase learning and independence. Currently, there are 79 individuals using assistive technology.

The annual report also had a focus on community involvement which includes:

- 13,198 community volunteer hours by Day Programs;
- 1,236 staff hours attending meetings with various hospitals and universities, municipal committees and government ministries;
- Over 30 community partnerships and 19 community agencies served.

You can read the [2019 Annual Report](#) or view highlights of the report on our website.



FEATURING
DDA
ARTISTS

INCLUSION ART SHOW & SALE

October 10, 2019 | 10:30am–8:30pm
Heritage Hall, Vancouver



DDA AWARDS ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO RICHMOND & VANCOUVER STUDENTS

BY: KEVIN CHAN

It is important to invest in the future of our youth! This is why we award the Developmental Disabilities Association Scholarship to students with disabilities in every Richmond and Vancouver secondary school. Successful recipients are those who most embody our mission of overcoming obstacles in pursuit of maximizing their potential. This year, we awarded a total of 32 scholarships.

We were delighted to receive a number of 'thank you' notes from these students for scholarships that told us what they are looking forward to in the future.

"I look forward to a future where the language around disabilities is more focused on abilities rather than disabilities, as I feel I have significant abilities in my chosen vocation (Carpentry). I appreciate this recognition and am committed to doing well with the help of this award" – Tai

"Receiving this scholarship will motivate me to study hard and go after my dreams. I want everyone to know that a disability is not an obstacle to what you want to do in life." – Katelin

"To have someone that believes I will excel and support my journey is unbelievable." – Amanda

"Thank you for giving me this scholarship. I will be putting this towards my future. It will help me after high school." – Kaysha

"Words can't explain how extremely grateful I am and shocked to be getting a scholarship ... This year has been one of my best years yet, it helped me discover what I want to do in life and with this scholarship I can achieve that goal ... I have never won an award in my life and when I got this scholarship it changed my thought process in life." – David



TEACHING FOR TECHNOLOGY

BY: KEEGAN NEWBERRY

Technology has become part of every aspect of our daily lives, from electric toothbrushes to smart TVs. For individuals with developmental disabilities, skill attainment in this area can support increased independence, community participation, and enhanced communication.

This summer, we had the opportunity to offer iPad and assistive technology classes for residents taught by our technology program worker, Amy.

Each class is individualized to its participants, presented in 1:1 or a small group format as appropriate, and may cover a wide variety of skills ranging from simple, fine motor and touch interaction activities to complex communication and task-completion practice using assistive technology supports. Residents at our Arlington residence have even incorporated iPad technology into their cooking program as recipe support.

One of the more unique programs being offered is a weekly social, interactive iPad games class. This class is offered in a large group format and brings learners together from our various sites to practice skills through organized iPad games, modelled social interactions using assistive technology, and some healthy competition for motivation. Feedback on these classes has been extremely positive and the impact Amy has had with these classes is evident in the enjoyment and engagement seen in its participants.

With the rapid pace at which technology advances, it is important that learning remains a continuous process to ensure growth in our own skill development and for those that we support. Through the continuation of these classes, our hope is to maintain this educational momentum, encouraging personal skill development and enjoyment of learning for both staff and residents.

TEXTILES

ARE ONE OF THE
FASTEST GROWING
WASTE
AREAS
IN



METRO VANCOUVER



UNLEARNING FAST FASHION

BY MARIANNA SCHULTZ

It's no news that the fashion industry has a negative impact on the environment- especially fast fashion. The topics of poor labour conditions, negative environmental effects and questionable ethics have all frequented headlines in recent years. As the result of production, transportation and waste, fashion produces 10% of the world's carbon emissions, and if consumer habits and manufacturing processes don't change soon, the industry will use up a quarter of the global carbon budget by 2050. In a world panicking about the climate crisis, but never seeming to take action, it's not hard to feel daunted in the face of such a huge problem. Now we're looking at how we can break the cycle, starting in our own closets.

Lately, things have been improving a little. As people become aware of the impact their purchases make, they are seeking better and more environmentally-friendly alternatives. According to 2019 research by the *Boston Consulting Group*, a third of consumers have already switched from their preferred brand to a more sustainable one, and half of consumers plan to switch brands if another becomes more sustainable than their current one. With a consistently growing demand, maybe it is possible to manufacture a greener future.

WHAT DOES A SUSTAINABLE FASHION FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

While it isn't difficult to choose organic over-farmed, or paper over plastic, it's harder to change a practiced mentality towards excessive shopping. A [2017 publication](#) by the *Ellen McArthur Foundation* stated that the average number of times a garment is worn before it is abandoned has decreased by 36% over the past 15 years. Persistent sales and a never-ending cycle of new styles enable shoppers to treat fashion as disposable and make it easier to justify wearing a sweater fewer times before throwing it away. However, the trending Marie Kondo mantra to get rid of items unless they "spark joy" seems to prove that a minimal mindset can go mainstream.

To reduce clothing waste, the most apparent solution is to simply buy less and make smarter purchases. The idea of changing so many people's habits seems nearly impossible, but some of that pressure could be lifted if clothing stores we buy from assume some of the responsibility too. Brands have been evolving and improving, but not nearly as fast as necessary. In fact, the improvement rate measured by the [Pulse Fashion Report](#) decreased by a third over the past year. To continue the remaining momentum, it's important that the groups and forces which have power within the fashion industry like investors, NGO's, policies, and the media use their influence to drive transformation.



BUYING SUSTAINABLY

There is an increasing range of options which make shopping sustainably and secondhand convenient for everyone. Mainstream brands like Patagonia and Reformation are leaders in their fields who make significant efforts to decrease their environmental footprint and reject fast fashion by using greener materials or providing repair services to increase the life of their items. More accessibly, there is the local thrift store, and more recently, buy-and-sell apps and websites like Depop, Poshmark and TheRealReal which allow people to purchase used clothes from home. There are even subscription services like Rent the Runway which allow people to rent clothes for special events or everyday life. These shopping options remove the consumer from the buying loop and reduce their carbon footprints by reusing clothing items that might have otherwise been thrown away.

Another aspect of buying sustainably is choosing clothing made of sustainable fabrics. Cotton is a huge consumer of water, and polyester releases microplastics into water systems during a washing machine cycle. Textile dyeing is the second-largest polluter of water globally; contaminating rivers in production countries like India and Bangladesh, and causing health problems in the surrounding communities. Some responsible alternatives include recycled fabrics or organic fabrics like linen and hemp.

Learn more about DDA's donation program here:
<https://www.develop.bc.ca/donate-clothes/>

WHERE DO YOUR CLOTHES END UP?

After some clothing is deemed unwearable, the owner is faced with a few options to determine its fate – not all of them equal. Large clothing companies like H&M use in-store donation bins as part of a green campaign using the company I:Collect, who partners with many companies like Levi's and The North Face in similar programs. In exchange for a donation, customers receive a coupon to redeem on their next purchase. Though the message of the program is positive, it is often criticized for being a marketing initiative and continuing to promote excessive buying. In a statement in 2019, H&M's sustainability manager revealed that only 0.1% of donations they receive are actually recycled into a new piece of clothing.

The McKinsey Report says that current clothing recycling methods are not advanced enough to deal with the amount of textile waste being produced and that there isn't a market large enough to absorb all of the waste. But most clothing waste is never even donated or recycled, and instead is thrown away and goes directly to landfills.

To ensure that the life of your clothing is prolonged, you can take part in a clothing swap, or mend or resell the item yourself. Donating your clothes also gives them a second chance to be used again and diverts them from the landfill. DDA's services make donation easy and convenient and create a second positive community impact that wouldn't be possible if donations were made directly to thrift stores.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

VANCOUVER CHINESE SUPPORT GROUP

General support for children's and adult's issues in Cantonese and Mandarin.

Date: 3rd Saturday of the month.

Time: 6:30PM – 8:30PM

Location: 4948 Fraser Street, Vancouver

Childcare: Available on site when requested at least 1 week in advance of meeting.

Contact: Katherine Lee, katsalon@hotmail.com or
Fannie Huang, fanniehuang525@hotmail.com

YOUTH IN TRANSITION

Support information for transition to adulthood.

Dates: Wednesday, October 2, December 4, 2019
March 4, May 6, 2020

Time: 6:30PM

Location: 3455 Kaslo Street, Vancouver

Date: Saturday, November 9, 2019

Time: 10:30AM

Location: 2006 West 10th Ave, Vancouver

Contact: Liz Cochrane (604) 733-6252 or
transitionparents@gmail.com

VIETNAMESE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Support to families in Vietnamese.

Date: Second Thursday of the Month

Time: 6:30PM – 8:00PM

Location: 3455 Kaslo Street, Vancouver

Childcare: Available on site when requested at least 1 week in advance of meeting.

Contact: Nikki Tran (778) 895-2535 from 6:00PM – 9:00PM

TWINKLE STARS LOWER MAINLAND JAPANESE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Support to families in Japanese.

Date: Saturday, September 28, 2019

Topic: Self Care Workshop for Families

Time: 10:00AM – 2:00PM

Location: 3455 Kaslo Street, Vancouver

Contact: Chigusa Barnes, twinklestars2017@hotmail.com

FIRST STEP JAPANESE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

General support to families in Japanese.

Date: TBD

Location: 3455 Kaslo Street, Vancouver

Contact: firststepcanada@outlook.com

UPSIDE DOWN FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Support to families with Children with Down Syndrome.

Vancouver Location

Dates: Saturday, October 26, 2019

Time: 10:00AM – 12:00PM

Location: 3455 Kaslo Street, Vancouver

Contact: Aileen Mellors, amluyt@gmail.com or Shixin Gao,
sgao@develop.bc.ca

North Vancouver Location

Dates: Saturday, September 28, November 23, 2019

Time: 1:15PM – 3:15PM

Location: Maplewood House, 399 Seymour River Place, North Vancouver

Contact: Aileen Mellors, amluyt@gmail.com or Shixin Gao,
sgao@develop.bc.ca

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Canadian Publications Agreement Number 40011236

**SUITE 100 – 3851 SHELL ROAD,
RICHMOND, BC CANADA V6X 2W2**

The Star is a quarterly external publication of the Developmental Disabilities Association.
We welcome your comments and feedback. Kindly direct all comments and submissions
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