

THE STAR

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2021



Developmental
Disabilities Association

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BY: ALANNA HENDREN
DDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RHETORIC MEETS REALITY.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCPRD) was adopted on December 13, 2006 in New York and was opened for signatures by member countries in March 2007. All countries have at least signed the Convention except the USA, Surinam, Libya, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan and North Korea. Canada was an early signatory and supporter of the UNCPRD.

The Preamble to the Convention (x) says: "Convinced that family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State, persons with disabilities and their family members should receive the necessary protection and assistance to enable families to contribute towards the full and equal enjoyment of the right of persons with disabilities".

The Convention continues in detail about values and supports that ensure people "have access" to a range of home, residential and community supports "necessary to support living and inclusion in the community" and prevent segregation. Another Article in the Convention makes provisions for maximum independence through comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services.


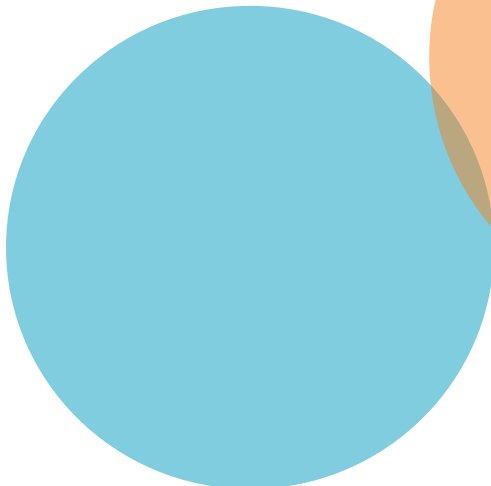

The realization of the Rights envisioned in the Convention continues to pose a challenge to all countries globally who are working to support inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. The biggest challenge is created by the vague language open to interpretation in the document and the conscious omission of who is responsible for paying for services and supports. Since the Convention has identified families as the "natural and fundamental group unit of society", it appears that payment falls to them, since "protection" and "assistance" are not defined. The assumption in the past was that the State was responsible but this changed over the last 20 years or so.

The Convention was adopted during a time of rapid, extreme privatization of public assets, deregulation and

an economic ethos of open global markets. Moving from the post-World War II western idea of the Welfare State while promoting the agency of the individual (over the collective or groups) led to the power of often amoral entrepreneurs (corporations) over government (collectives). The human "higher power" shifted from deities, elders, and philosophers to the "free market", represented by the often ruthless accumulation of wealth or capital.

Because of these philosophical shifts, families can privately pay for services and have maximum choice, depending on how much money they have, as opposed to receiving government-funded services that may limit individual choice. This may work for families who have economic resources but those adults with no families to turn to or those from economically insecure families are still dependent on public services. Particularly after the global recession of 2008, government austerity measures disenfranchised people with disabilities and anyone else who lived in poverty, thereby accelerating extreme wealth inequality.

In Canada we are very lucky to have a democratic history of collective action but families will need to stay vigilant and advocate for their loved ones with disabilities to ensure that the UNCPRD is more completely realized. Our disability policies must achieve greater clarity and recognize that over 60% of people with disabilities in Canada live in poverty and do not receive the social service supports required for their full inclusion and community participation. As people with disabilities age, their abilities decline just like the rest of us, necessitating greater physical and psychological supports that are regularly unavailable. Infants and children with special needs require specific interventions and supports at critical developmental stages, but services are often unavailable to those who cannot purchase them independently due to long public wait lists and a system so complex that families cannot get to the help they need. After a number of new 'frameworks', services for children with special needs have become more diluted and less attractive to professionals,



who can make much more money in private practice. Any complaints to a series of governments resulted in bureaucratic assurances that everything was really great and getting better all the time.

Having been around for a long time, I hear about problems families are having today that I thought were solved in the 1980's. The B.C. Liberals threw the disability system into such chaos we didn't realize how far backwards we were moving. The past battles we won did not win the war and unfortunately, all British Columbians with disabilities need to continue to fight to realize their rights, using Canada's commitment to the UNCRPD as a guide to barrier-free environments, personal supports, technological assistance and full inclusion in society regardless of their parents' financial status. We must recognize that human beings are much more than their net worth.

Families have been fragmented over the years and were 'taught' to reduce their expectations of government, but government is responsible for disability policy and funding in the end, and must accept responsibility for the sorry state of their systems and supports after over 20 years of misguided 'transformation'.



ANDREW SHERET: CHARITY DRIVE

Every year, 31 Andrew Sheret locations across the province take part in charity drives as the season of giving gets underway. Each location chose a local association to support and together raised thousands for those who need it most in B.C.

Andrew Sheret's Richmond location chose DDA as its recipient of the company's 2021 charity drive and raised an amazing \$5,100 to support people with developmental disabilities. DDA is extremely grateful to Jayson and his team who held BBQs, donut sales and promoted the cause to their customers. Thank you for your hard work, support, advocacy, and commitment to your community.

Andrew Sheret is Western Canada's leading distributor of plumbing and heating supplies.



ANDREW SHERET LIMITED



CARDS OF GRATITUDE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

For all of us it's been a long two years as we grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic. For our healthcare professionals, without a doubt, it's felt even longer. When the pandemic began and we all realized the incredible sacrifices healthcare workers were making we proudly gathered at 7pm every night and banged pots and pans together in a voice of solidarity and appreciation.

Today, under a cloud of political division, our healthcare heroes have seemingly been forgotten, or at worse, been the target of angry protests from those who would fear our government's measures to limit the spread of the illness.

Over Thanksgiving, DDA residents at our Curzon home created 30 greeting cards beautifully conveying words of gratitude and encouragement for St. Paul's healthcare professionals. They were deeply touched and appreciated this heartfelt gesture from our Curzon residents and staff.

Thanks to Alyssa, Henrik and Michael for taking the time to go to St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver.





BOLLYWOOD: IN THE PARK

We are so happy when the sun shines, even in October! DDA residents took advantage of some seasonal sun to have a fun Bollywood dance and Thanksgiving picnic at the King George/Cambie Community park.

Everyone dressed up in Indian scarves and headdress and danced the afternoon away. DDA staff set up a wonderful buffet of turkey dinner!

Thank you to everyone involved!



CHAMPLAIN FILMING DAY: ECE RECRUITMENT VIDEO

One of DDA's big motivations this year has been recruitment and retention of staff. Earlier in the year we created a new recruitment video showing what employees are saying about working at DDA.

This fall we created another recruitment video targeted at Early Childhood Educators who are now more recognized by the government of British Columbia. This year, the NDP government created new Early Childhood Educators and Early Learning and Child Care Acts which have now been made into law.

The new laws will support quality early learning and child care by creating a public registry of ECEs and approved post-secondary programs, and improving oversight of ECEs. It will reduce barriers to certification by allowing internationally trained ECEs to work while getting certified, making it easier for child care providers to hire skilled educators.

It was a great opportunity for the DDA to really highlight the benefits of working as an ECE for DDA.

Colleen Thomas, DDA's Manager at our Champlain Child Development Centre said the children had a great time being part of the video and talked about it for days! A big thanks to DDA's videographer, David Ozier for making these look so good!

The videos can be seen on our YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/dda604



JOBS WEST: TIMOTHY AT TENDON KOHAKU

In 2019, Timothy started in a joint program with the Vancouver School Board and DDA where he had a combination of classroom training combined with community exposure to learn all the skills necessary for success after high school. This led to a volunteer experience at Belkin House where he learned the basics of how a commercial kitchen operates. In February 2021, he started a work experience at the Rise Eatery where he honed his skills as a Barista, learned more about baking and confirmed his passion for all things gastronomic!

In July, he landed himself a paid job as a Kitchen Aid in a stylish new Japanese restaurant in Burnaby; Tendon Kohaku. Timothy started working before the restaurant opened its doors to the public and so was involved with both the preparation and the grand opening itself. Tim's new role includes food preparation, dish washing and putting the finishing touches on customers' orders. He is really enthusiastic about his job and says that he likes it because it is "so much fun." The restaurant manager, Kevin, is equally as passionate about Tim's new role and reports that he is a hard worker who is "part of the team, just like everybody else. We're happy to have him here!"

Congratulations to Timothy on his new job from everyone at JobsWest!



HALLOWEEN: 2021



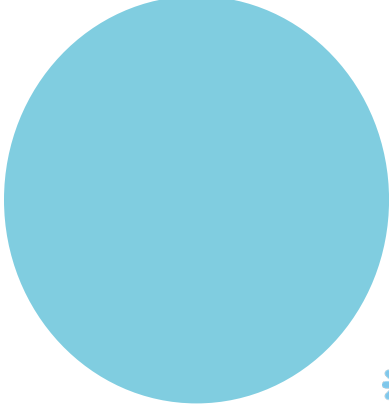
It's Been a Spooktacular October!!

One of the favourite times of the year for DDA staff and clients is Halloween! From carving pumpkins to decorating our homes to a dance party at the King George/Cambie community park a lot of fun was had this year.

For the dance party, everyone was dressed up in costume. Alyssa was super scary in her evil clown mask, the two Doug's joined forces as a pair of hockey mask wearing killers! It was Danny who stole the show, however, showing up in a fantastic gold Elvis suit complete with sunglasses, hair and sequins.

Scare you next year!





POSABILITIES ART SHOW: 2021

posAbilities held its annual Inclusive Art Show in October to great success! Due to COVID, once again the art show was held online and the organization managed to sell over \$10,000 in art!

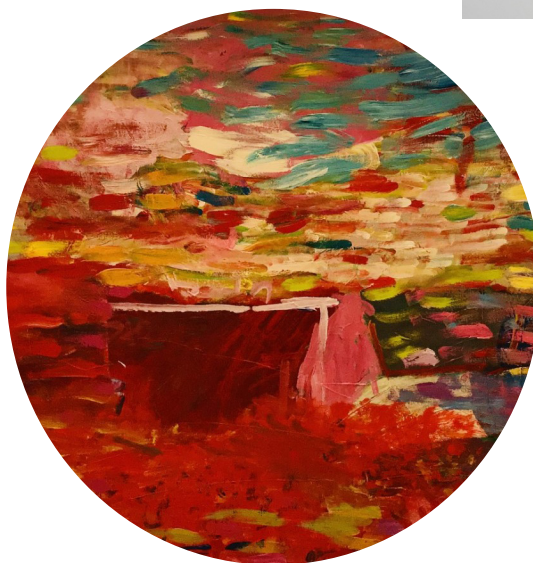
DDA was very involved again and over 25 of our artists took part in the event. Six of our artists were among those who sold work to the general public. We couldn't be more proud of their accomplishments and incredible talent.

For more information on DDA art for sale, go here: <https://www.develop.bc.ca/news-and-publications/dda-artists/>

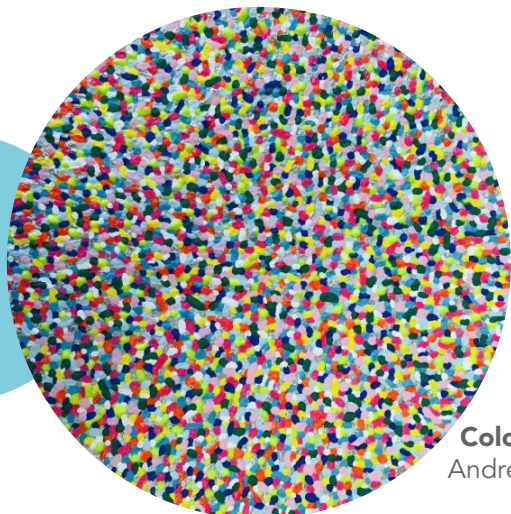
Congratulations to the following DDA artists:



Bird
George (JR) Soika



Abstract
Sam Lai



Colour Fields
Andrew Cathers



Blue Lace
Lucy Lam



Blue Fish
Scott Foster



12 Cats
Andrew Jackson

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: TOM EASON

Happy 92nd Birthday to DDA's Tom Eason!

Tom is young at heart, easy going, flexible, humble, and polite. He celebrated his 92nd year with his friends and caregivers at DDA's home on East 55th in Vancouver.

What are his secrets to long life? Daily fresh juice, exercise, doing chores yourself and above all never complaining.

He wanted a small, quiet party at the home complete with Chinese food and his favourite cake, red velvet with cream cheese.

Happy Birthday Tom!



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY: RESEARCH

PARTICIPATE IN AUTISM RESEARCH!

This study is looking at how autistic youth differ by gender when estimating their own academic ability. Participants will complete several questionnaires and a math & verbal task! Participants will also be compensated for their time.



If you are interested in participating please contact us for more information!

11eb31@queensu.ca

613 533 2894

Looking for females aged 9-18 diagnosed with ASD!

DINOLAND: GAME-BASED COGNITIVE INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Participate in a study focusing on a new game-based intervention for attention and executive functions.

The UVic Child Development Lab is conducting a study comparing game-based intervention programs for children with ASD. Support your child's development of attention and executive functions through a parent-delivered intervention over 6 weeks.

Your child will play one of two game-based interventions 3-4x per week with you supporting them.

Open to children ages 4-8yrs diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their caregivers.

For more information, please contact:

MacounLab@uvic.ca or 250-472-4195



TECH REVIEWS

BY: KEEGAN NEWBERRY



REMARKABLE 2 VS BAMBOO SLATE

Learning to write is an important literacy milestone, but in an increasingly digital world learning to write means learning to type. Writing and typing share a number of the same base skills: letter identification, spelling, grammar and syntax; but for individuals with developmental disabilities the method is just as important as the message. ReMarkable 2 and Bamboo Slate are both tablet alternatives that aim to give the user a pen to paper experience while supporting automatic digitization. Digitization of written text or images can give individuals with developing computer literacy, access to word processing tools, digital art programs, and even sending emails without needing to touch a keyboard.

ReMarkable 2 is marketed as “a tablet that feels like paper”, using a textured surface that gives the user sensory feedback and a backlight-free, eye-friendly display similar to that of other e-reading devices. Documents can be saved, sorted into folders and transferred via a wifi connection to both Apple and Windows devices. ReMarkable 2 additionally supports reading and annotation of PDF and ePUB documents. Bamboo Slate is primarily a digitization tool using a paper notebook and ballpoint pen on top of a pressure sensitive slate that automatically converts handwritten notes or drawings into digital documents. Pages can be synced via USB connection or Bluetooth to both Apple and Windows devices. Bamboo Slate is advertised as a “smartpad” which allows for quick and accurate digitization while maintaining the ease and familiarity of pen to paper note taking.

PRODUCT reMarkable 2 **PRODUCER:** reMarkable **COST** \$599 + \$149 for Marker Plus **COMPATABILITY** iOS/Android

Ease of Use: Easy with Practice ★★★★★

- Set-up requires the user to download the reMarkable app to their computer or device and create an account; once created the tablet can be paired via wifi to transfer documents;
- Tablet uses a familiar format with the ability to sort files into folders and create new documents using a number of templates;
- Tablet can be navigated by touch or using the device-specific stylus (Marker Plus), but written inputs can only be performed using the stylus

Adaptability: Some Personalization Available ★★★★★

- Limited accessibility features offering small or large font and the ability to optimize screen layout for either right or left-handed users;
- Screen brightness is limited to prevent eye-strain which can be a useful feature for users who may be hypersensitive to light, but not ideal for individuals with visual impairments or those needing high contrast text/images;
- Menu uses text and symbol icons, though sub-menu layout can be a bit confusing to navigate and most users would benefit from additional time spent to prepare several blank documents in advance using the most useful templates for that individual.

Accessibility: Suitable For Almost All Users ★★★★★

- Use of the device requires an intermediate to high level of reading fluency, and sufficient digital navigation skills to move through the various menus; this device would not be appropriate for individuals relying on spatial memorization of icons for use;
- As the icons are quite small this device may not be appropriate for those with fine motor impairments, though accuracy is improved when using the stylus to navigate which could easily be fitted with adaptive grip supports;
- Screen is textured giving the user a high level of sensory feedback which may aid users who have difficulty maintaining consistent pressure or those with hyposensitive tactile processing impairments.
- Text recognition has a much lower accuracy rate than other automated digitization tools, though each document can be stored and shared as a PDF if text transcription is not required.

Cost vs. Value: Expense Greater Than Return ★★★★★

- For the right demographic this device performs as advertised, but for use as an assistive device there are significant user limitations. The textured screen is a unique feature that may work well as a transitional tool for individuals moving from paper to tablet, but unless being used exclusively for that purpose (such as within a clinical setting), the expense exceeds the benefits which could be accessed through alternative supports.

PRODUCT Bamboo Slate

PRODUCER: Wacom

COST \$179

COMPATABILITY iOS/Android

Ease of Use: Simple Instructions Helpful ★★★★★

- Set-up requires the user to create an Inkspace account and either: download the Inkspace app to their mobile device, or install the desktop program on their computer/laptop;
- Once set-up, the user can choose to write in live-mode - giving real time updates to the paired device - or push data manually using the one-tap button after each page of writing;
- Though instructions for set-up and use are clear, using both text and images to guide the user through the process, where to find this information initially was not readily apparent.

Adaptability: Some Personalization Available ★★★★★

- Available in large and small sizes;
- Compatible with any paper up to 80 pages thick with pre-made notepads also available for purchase;
- Requires user to use device-specific pen, though could easily be modified by adding adaptive writing supports such as pen/pencil grips.

Accessibility: Suitable For Almost All Users ★★★★★

- Seamless transition for users with developing written literacy;
- High level of text recognition from written words, able to detect both printing and cursive, autocorrect for spelling errors, and draw text information from pages that contain both text and images; this high level of capture accuracy supports a wide-range of literacy levels;
- Simple write-share-send process that can be easily performed without needing to navigate lengthy menus or move between apps.

Cost vs. Value: Worthwhile Expense ★★★★★

- High accuracy, ease of use, and the tactile writing experience make this a worthwhile expense for those seeking an automatic digitization tool.

FINAL WORD

Adaptive technology is highly personalized by nature - what works for one may work for some, but a universally adaptable tool does not exist. When the limited market of assistive technology fails to meet the needs of the consumer, often those supporting individuals with developmental disabilities need to creatively repurpose technology designed for use by the neurotypical population. Both reMarkable 2 and Bamboo Slate perform as advertised and would be useful tools for the primary demographic they were designed for; but as an adaptive device that reaches beyond the boundaries of the neurotypical world, Bamboo Slate is the clear winner. Wacom has designed a device that gives the user the familiarity of pen-to-paper, reduces barriers faced by individuals navigating the leap from the analog world to the digital one, and maintains a level of simplicity that supports a broad range of users being able to access information, engage in communication, and connect with others in an increasingly virtual world.





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