

Signs of Sharing

Winners



BEST Group in Bathurst won the Pampered Chef Gift basket! Congratulations!

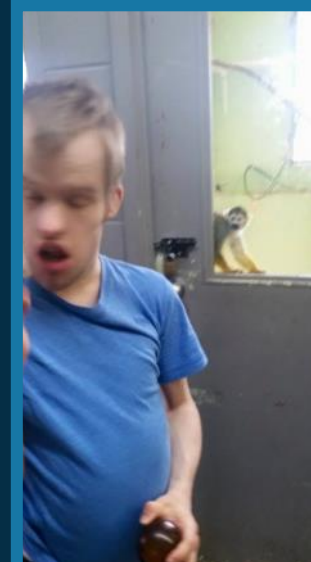
Thanks to Andrea Sealy for the donated items and to all those who sold tickets.



Congratulations to Andrea Mattinson on winning the \$100 Gas Gift Card!!

Thank you to all those who sold tickets.

A visit to the Zoo



New Brunswick/Nouveau Brunswick

This Issue

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AWARD WINNERS

Community/Staff Volunteer Award was presented the RICHIBUCTO CREW



Intervenor of the Year Award was presented to Cindy Delong.



Board Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to David Brown



Michael Stewart Sr. was the winner of the Cherry Bulmer Award (a National Award)

CDBA-NB Inc.

Board of Directors

Mike Stewart, President

Dwain McLean, Vice-President

David Brown, Treasurer

Ghita Gaudet, Director

Doug Page, Director

Alma Page, Director

Sheila Rogers, Director

Renee Landry, Director

Lyne Babineau, Director

Robert Johnson, Director



New Brunswick/Nouveau Brunswick

NEW ADDRESS AS OF MID-JULY

495 B Ground Floor
495 Prospect Street
Fredericton, NB
E3B 9M4

office@cdba-nb.ca

Office Staff

Kevin Symes

Executive Director

Shari Holmes

Office Manager

Jennifer Jewett

Senior Program Manager

Jody Brewer

Administrative Assistant



Message from the Executive Director, Kevin Symes

Here we are, once again, at that time when summer is upon us, with all the fun activities that summer brings. We have a wonderful summer day trip planned for this year and of course the staff are busy planning the CDBA-NB summer camp. I hope you are looking forward to this year as much as I am!! This year's theme is "Circus". We have a number of fundraising activities planned, for this summer and as always we need your support to make these events successful.

There has also been a few changes in the office staff as well. This year, Stacey Copeland has moved on to different career opportunities and we wish her all the success in the future. I would like to welcome Jennifer Jewett to our team. Jennifer will be working with the Intervenorers and our CDBA-NB families. If you have any questions or concerns or you would just like to welcome her, please feel free to contact her. I am sure she is looking forward to meeting everyone.

This year at the Annual General Meeting, the Board of Directors will be engaged in discussions that will have an impact on how the organization moves forward. I am looking forward to those discussions. Also, I would like to welcome our newest Board member Robert Johnson, to our Board. I look forward to working with Mr. Johnson, who has a background in Finance. The CDBA-NB Board of Directors are actively recruiting for Board members, if you are or know someone who you believe would enjoy getting involved at the Board level, please feel free to contact me.

As many of you know, we lost a member of our CDBA-NB family this year when Colleen passed away. Many of us will remember her smile and love of life. I will remember the day we were working at a liquor store fundraiser in Moncton and an older gentleman gave her a one hundred dollar bill. I think she thought she had won the lottery!! On behalf of the Board of Directors and myself I wish to pass on our best to the family, Becky, her Intervenor, and friend of many years, I am sorry for your loss, Colleen will be missed.

I cannot tell you the pleasure I get from working with such a dedicated and caring group of people...from the families, Intervenorers, Board of Directors, office staff and the consumers themselves, I feel truly blessed to have the privilege to working with you. So, having said this, we will be making some changes in the near future that will increase the job satisfaction of the Intervenorers and will, I believe, improve CDBA-NB's programming overall.

I am looking forward to a positive year working with all of you. This way, we can not only create a great environment for all the staff but the consumers and their families as well. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me anytime.



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR, SHARI HOLMES

(soon to be Ross)

Welcome to the 36th edition of 'Signs of Sharing'. I hope you enjoy it.

CDBA-NB Inc. continues to grow and change. I would like to welcome to Jenn our team. Our office will be moving mid-July to 495 B Ground Floor, 495 Prospect St., Fredericton, an open house will be held later this summer.

This summer has started off extremely busy..June (deafblind awareness month) started with a bowl-a-thon, several liquor store fundraisers, workshops and the Annual General Meeting....over the summer a consumer/Intervenor day trip is planned for Grand Falls....oh yeah..I get married :) and before we know it camp will be here.

Please continue to send in pictures, articles, etc. for next issue by

Communication Tips....For Life

Dick O'Brien ~ theresilientjourney.com

1. Never tell a person that they are wrong.
2. Always allow a person to save face.
3. Measure your words and think before you speak.
4. Pay attention and pause while you speak, listen and empathize.
5. Ask for clarification and take 110% responsibility for your clarity.
6. Know that you have been heard by checking in and asking questions.
7. Sometimes you need to hold your tongue.
8. Gossip is not secret and not secure.
9. Always criticize artfully.
10. Be generous with your praise and encouraging with your words.
11. Be genuine with your delivery.
12. Keep people informed, even if it is bad news.
13. Develop the skill of delivering unpopular or difficult messages.
14. Test the waters with a mini message before delving the final blow.
15. Always speak in a principled way and disengage hooks and games.
16. Surrender with calmness and stability.

Effective Communication Strategies with An Angry Person

Dick O'Brien ~ theresilientjourney.com

The List

1. Adopt the perspective of compassion.
2. Don't take it personal.
3. Allow the person to vent.
4. Empathize, capture, validate and reflect the concerns in an encouraging tone.
5. Focus on issues and not incidents.
6. Indicate your concern, resolve and willingness to help.
7. Make an offer and give an invitation.
8. Smile and be concerned but confident
9. Thank the person for their help.

In Loving Memory of Colleen

November 3, 1992 to May 24, 2015

“What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes a part of us”
~~Helen Keller~

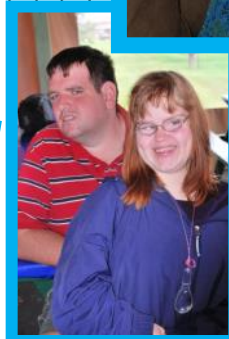
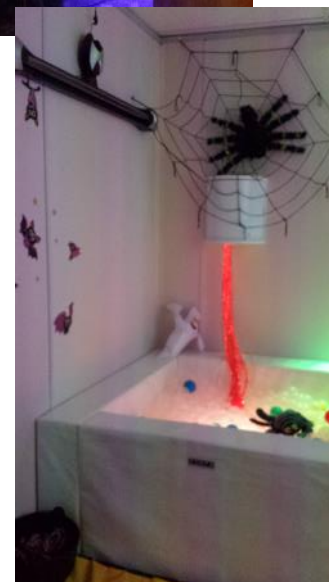
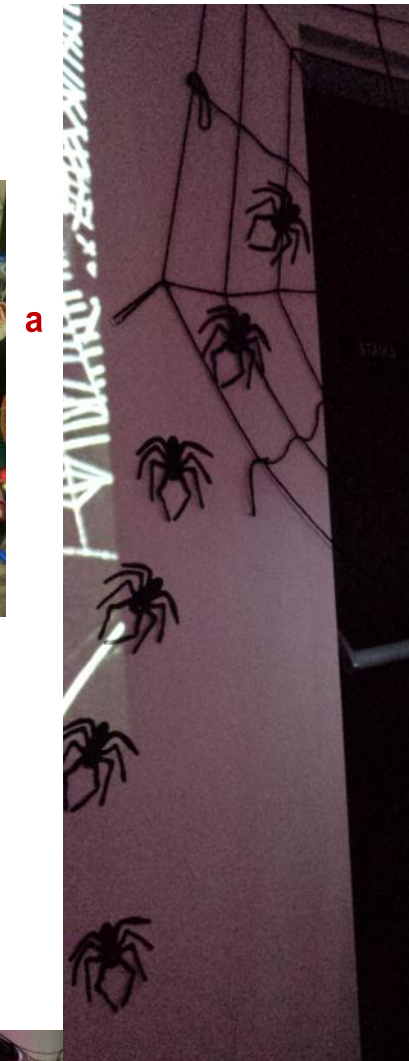


LORNA THOMPSON MEMORIAL SNOEZELN ROOM

The Snoezelen Room is open for CDBA-NB Inc. consumers and other agencies.

For more information or to book a session please contact Jody at the CDBA-NB Inc. office.

In February we transformed the Snoezelen Room for 2 weeks into Haunted House Theme.



In and Around New Brunswick



Corey and Lyndon go to the zoo.



Eddy celebrating St. Patrick's Day



Brendan and his Intervenor go skating.

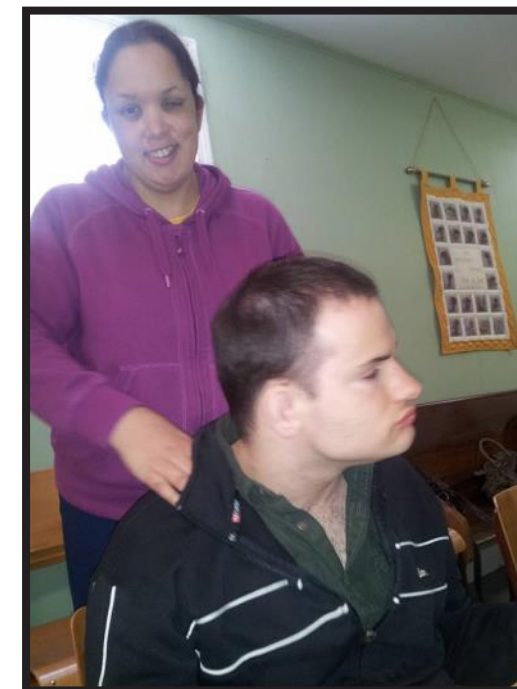


Doug and his Intervenor went to Winterfest.

In and Around New Brunswick

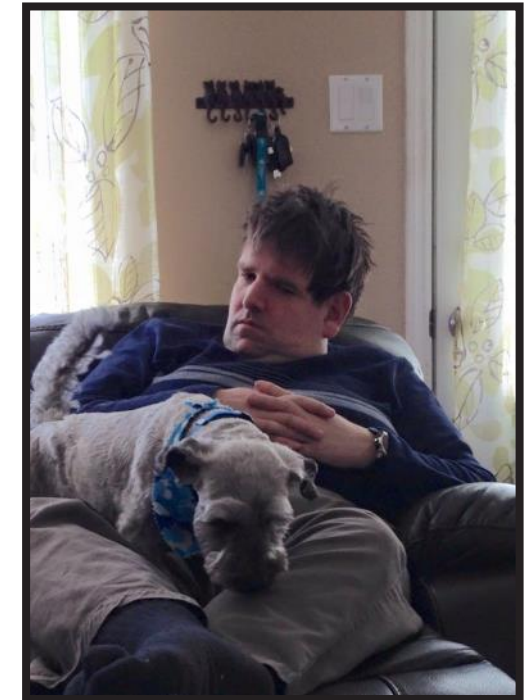


Denise won a bronze medal at the Special Olympics Provincial Bowling Tournament in Saint John in May.



Adam enjoying a massage from Sheena.

After six years, Kevin finally cuddles with Scruffy..A huge milestone!



Brendan got to have a test drive at Dave's Sports in this Polaris Sling Shot. Made his day!



Continued from page 11

The company that had made the Tele-Braille, which converted Tele-type Text (TTY) into Braille, had disbanded and stopped making the devices. Parts became hard to find, said Rozmaryn.

Rozmaryn started looking for something to replace the Tele-Braille but found nothing.

Twice, Rozmaryn said, she had to put out a bid for a company to develop and manufacture the device before HumanWare stepped forward.

At focus groups of the deaf-blind community, the joy was palpable among people who were asked for feedback on the devices, said Raff.

Steppler says the device has made a profound difference in his life.

"I used to feel like a dog," said Steppler. "People would say, 'Tell him this or tell him that.' If there were a conversation and I wanted to know what was going on, someone would say, 'I'll tell you later.'"

"But now I am able to use this to talk and get messages back. I can communicate with my nephews and send text messages, just like any other person," Steppler said.

"It's brought me out into the world and given me freedom."



The New Brunswick Disability Executives' Network (NBDEN) was the inaugural recipient of the Andy Scott Social Policy Award. NBDEN is a supportive, professional peer network of executive directors of the 12 major disability organizations in New Brunswick who have worked collaboratively for the past 25 years on advancing public policies that support full inclusion and citizenship for persons with a disability and their families (Kevin Symes, CDBA-NB Inc. Executive Director on left)



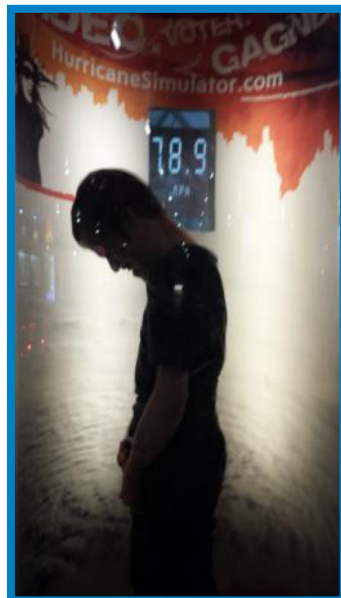
A MESSAGE FROM CDBA NATIONAL
Tom McFadden
National Executive Director

"Spring, with its promise of warmer weather, always signals a flurry of activity for the deafblind community across Canada. However, I want to especially draw your attention to a Diversity Hiring Program being developed by HSBC Bank of Canada. A large part of the program's focus will be on hiring those who self-identify as a person with a disability. CDBA National is working with HSBC Bank to explore the possibilities surrounding the potential placement of qualified job seekers from the deafblind community within their organization. If you would like more information about this program, send me an email tmcfadden@cdbanational.com You may prefer to contact HSBC Bank directly freya.h.d'cunha@hsbc.ca or go to their website www.hsbc.ca where you can click on 'Current Opportunities.'"

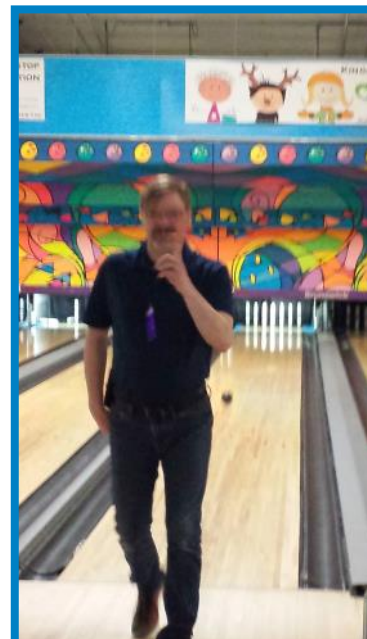
On behalf of CDBA National, I want to thank those of who have already renewed their membership for 2015-16 thereby continuing to receive new and improved member benefits. For those who have not, I encourage you to do so at your first opportunity. As well, if you have moved or have a new email address, please let us know."

2nd Annual Bowl-a-thon

Again this June, we held a bowl-a-thon in recognition of Deafblind Awareness Month. Consumers and Intervenorers throughout the province participated. A fun time was had by all.



Corey, Fredericton consumer, loved the hurricane simulator.. 78.9 km winds



This issue has two craft corners, as we have many talented consumers and instead of us giving you inspiration...they are inspiring us.

Brendan and his Intervenor, Cindy, worked at least 2 months on this project. Brendan worked really hard using his fine motor skills. He used his hands to run the peddle while Cindy was his eyes. Brendan was very attentive when it came to stopping and starting the machine. Sometimes he would stop before Cindy had the word completely out.



Brendan is a very crafty guy...he made this burlap wreath for his Mom for Mother's Day!



Craft Corner

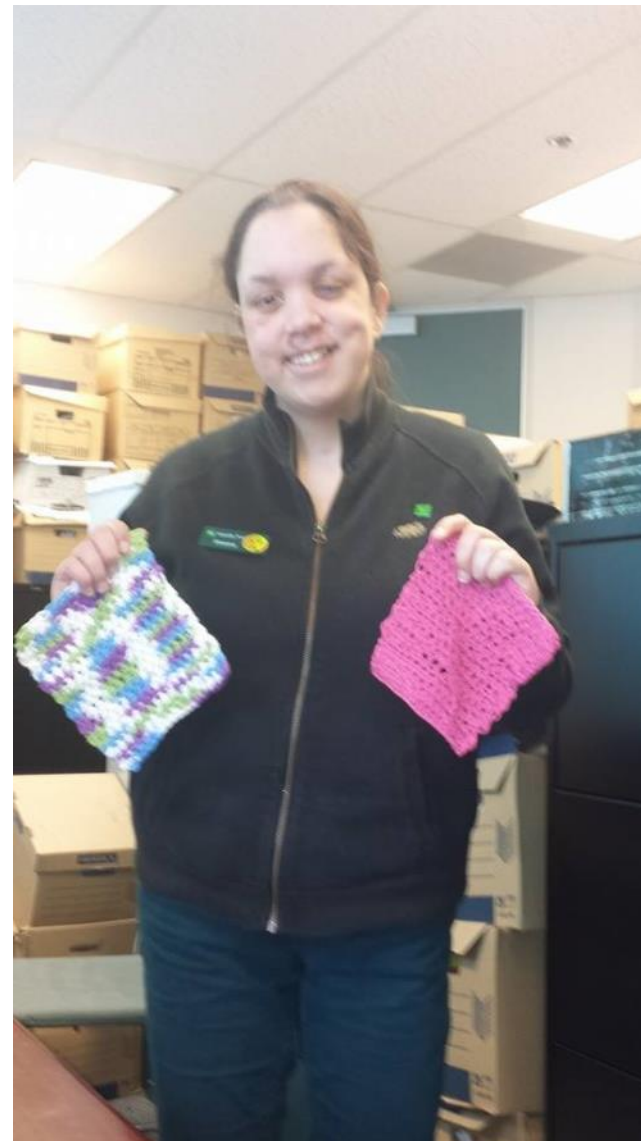
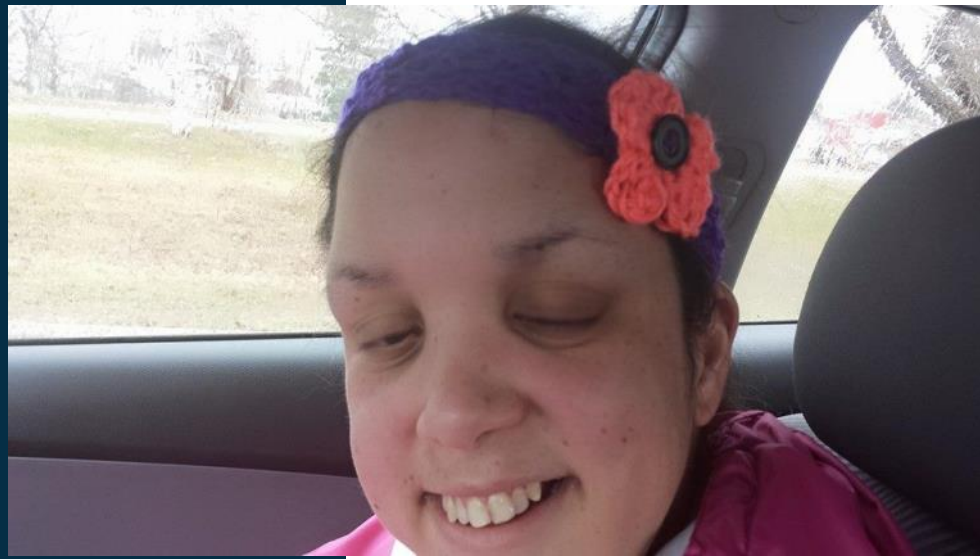


CRAFT CORNER ---

Sheena, an artistic consumer, has been crocheting up a storm... headbands, dish clothes and now working on a bag...great job Sheena!



This issue has two craft corners, as we have many talented consumers and instead of us giving you inspiration...they are inspiring us.



RECIPE CORNER

CINNAMON BUNS

Ingredients

2 cups flour

2 tsp salt

1 cup (less a bit) milk

4 tsp baking powder

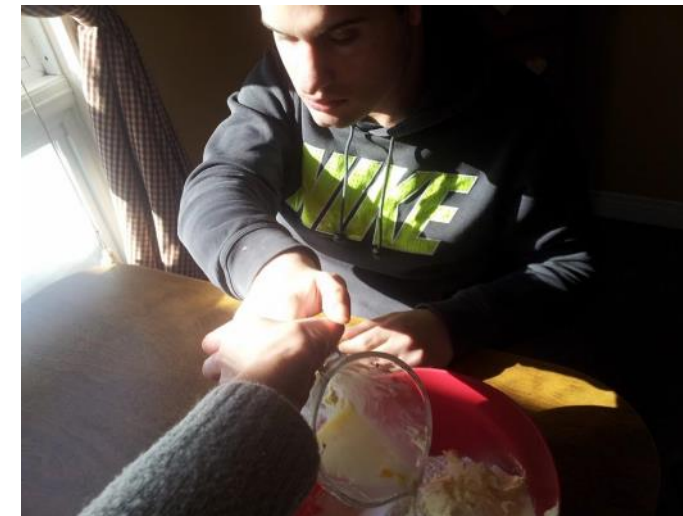
1/2 cup shortening

1/4 cup sugar

1 Tbsp cinnamon

Combine, flour, baking powder and salt. Cut in shortening with pastry blender. Add milk, stir with a fork to make dough soft. Turn dough out on lightly floured board. Knead 8-10 times. Roll dough into a rectangle. Spread with softened butter, sprinkle with a cinnamon mixture. Roll into cylinder and slice. Bake for 12-15 minutes at 375 degrees.

Shari received this recipe when she took HomeEc in grade 8 and still uses it today.



Adam, consumer, and his Intervenor, Lisa making similar cinnamon buns.



STRAWBERRY WHIPPED SENSATION

INGREDIENTS

4 cups fresh strawberries, divided
1 can (300 ml) sweetened condensed milk

1/4 cup lemon juice

2 1/4 cups thawed Cool Whip Topping, divided

8 OREO cookies

1 Tbsp margarine, melted

Shape foil onto outside of loaf pan. Line inside of pan with shaped foil, with ends extending over the sides of the pan.

Mash 2 cups of the strawberries in a large bowl. Stir in condensed milk and juice.

Stir 1 cup of whipped topping into strawberry mixture. Pour into prepared pan.

Finely chop cookies. Combine cookies and margarine. Spoon over whipped topping mixture in pan.

Cover cookie mixture with the ends of the foil and gently press cookie mixture into whipped topping mixture. Freeze 6 hours or until firm.

Invert dessert onto serving plate when ready to serve; remove pan and foil. Spread remaining 1 1/4 cups whipped topping onto top and sides of dessert.

Slice remaining 2 cups strawberries; arrange over dessert.

Enjoy!

Intervenor Workshops and Annual General Meeting

On Friday, June 12 and Saturday, June 13, Intervenorers gathered to meet with one another and attend a variety of Workshops and the Annual General Meeting.

2015 Personnel Awards were to: **Jody Brewer** (2 years as Administrative Assistant), **Alicia Sharp**, **Clayton Gill** and **Janice Martin** (2 years as an Intervenor); **Donna Lagacy**, **Tammy Rowe** and **Amanda Walsh** (5 years as an Intervenor); **Katie Chapman** and **Andrea Mattinson** (10 years as an Intervenor) and **Shari Holmes** (20 years as Office Manager). Congratulations!!

The 2015 Intervenor of the Year Award was presented to **Cindy DeLong** for all her creative and inventive ways to get Brendan involved with life skills and into the community.

Community/Staff Volunteer of the year award was presented to the **Richibucto Crew** for 10 years of fund-raising in Richibucto. The Board Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to David Brown. Congratulations!!! The Cherry Bulmer Award (a CDBA National award) was presented to Michael Stewart Sr. Congratulations!!!!



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However, it was virtually impossible for a person both deaf and blind to converse with a hearing, sighted individual without an interpreter. That ruled out almost all spontaneous, private or face-to-face conversation with a person who did not know how to sign, said Eric Raff, director of the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The DeafBlind Communicator changes all that.

It features a laptop-sized device that has either a regular or Braille keyboard. Beneath that keyboard is a second, smaller keyboard with Braille keys.

There is also a second, smaller device that resembles a personal digital assistant, or PDA, in size and appearance.

When a deaf-blind person wishes to communicate with a non-signing person, he or she simply hands over the smaller device and sends the following message, which is both displayed on the text screen and electronically spoken through speakers:

"Hi, I am deaf-blind (I can't hear or see). To communicate with me, type a message and press" the return arrow.

The return message is converted into Braille, which the deaf-blind person is able to read by touch on the smaller set of keys on the keyboard device.

Raff said the state has bought 35 of the devices at USD\$6,000 (about \$7,600 Canadian) apiece and has two people training recipients on how to use them. Training can take a few hours or a few weeks, depending on a person's computer savvy.

Raff estimates there are 300 deaf-blind individuals in the state, many of whom would qualify to receive the devices and the training at no cost.

The devices were conceived about 10 years ago by Colleen Rozmaryn, program manager at the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, when she began looking for a device to replace the older Tele-Braille communication devices.

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It Only Takes One to Make A Difference

Dick O'Brien ~ thesilientjourney.com

Leadership from Within

1. Lead Thyself First
2. Reflect, Renew and Refocus
3. Take Ownership, Authorship and Stewardship of your day and your life
4. Live Life with Compassion and a Compass
5. Turn Intentions into Actions
6. Debrief Failures
7. See yourself as a Life-long Learner
8. Develop the art of Self-Counsel
9. Understand the absolute power of Attitude
10. Greet, Meet and Complete each day.

Everyone is a Leader

Personal Leadership

Compassion and a Compass

(It is easy to lead when things are going well.)

1. Select what you take personal.
2. Stand guard at the portals of our mind.
3. Never forget, it is about people.
4. Remember that when you are taking good care of you, you are taking good care of others.
5. Realize that everything changes. Know that everything passes, and accept that it is all part of your growth.
6. Consider that you only grow outside of your comfort zone.
7. Remember that most of your bad days are never as bad as you tell yourself.
8. Be a person of compassion with a reputation for optimism.
9. Learn to light a candle rather than curse the darkness.
10. Observe yourself, contribute to other and LEAD THYSELF FIRST!



Leadership From Within

Commitment

CHOICE

1. I will deal with whatever surprises life send me today.
2. I will rise above any negativity in my life.
3. I will catch myself before I react and seek the means to respond wisely.
4. I will smile often.
5. I will constantly remember all I have to be grateful for.
6. I will always remember that we are all doing the best we can, with what we got at the time we are doing it.
7. I will accept people for what they are and endeavor to refrain from judging, criticizing, attacking or discouraging.
8. I will try to leave this world better off than when I woke up this morning.
9. Though it will be a struggle "I will constantly attempt to improve the depth of my sleep, the quality of my food, the care of my body, and the state of my mind."
10. I will forgive myself and seek greater wisdom when I struggle, slip or fail at these!

Life is less about chance and more about choice. You and you alone make the daily choices of your life. When things are not working well, look to your recent choices and you will discover the cause.

Eight Fundamental Choices in Life.

You can always choose.

1. What you Focus on
2. What you Think
3. What you Say
4. What you Do
5. What Attitude you will employ
6. How you will Respond to life
7. Your Self Talk
8. Your Explanations

Become a silent and conscious witness

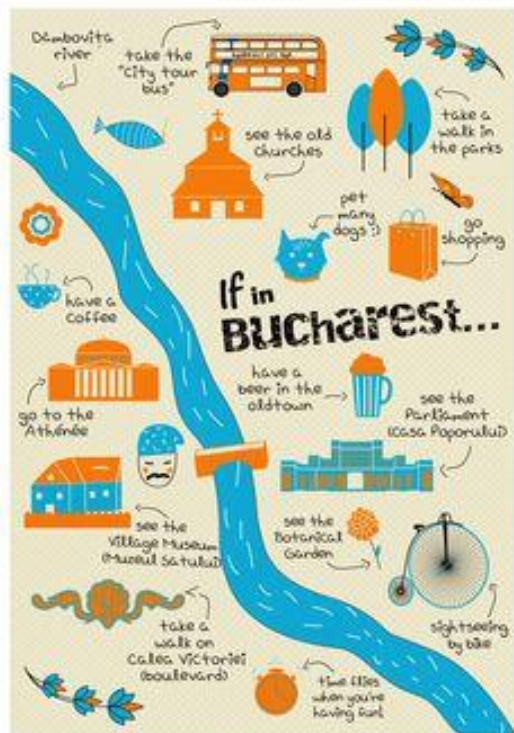
* You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you *
* cannot do. Together we can do great things. *
* ~ ~ Mother Theresa *

Dbl Conference

THE 16TH DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL WORLD CONFERENCE WAS HELD ON MAY 25-30, 2015 IN BUCHAREST, ROMANIA. ATTENDED BY 400 REPRESENTATIVES FROM 40 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES INCLUDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CDBA-NB, KEVIN SYMES, AND CDBA-NB BOARD MEMBER, SHEILA ROGERS, THE EVENT WAS SPONSORED BY PERKINS INTERNATIONAL, INDEX BRAILLE, IMMOCHAN AND ARGUS OPTIK.

THE CENTRAL THEME REGARDED THE GROUP'S FUTURE AND FEATURED MANY PLENARY SESSIONS (E.G. 'LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO COMMON NEEDS'; 'EDUCATION AND LEARNING'; 'IDENTITY AND BELONGING') IN ADDITION TO PRESENTATIONS ON 'HOW TO TRAIN TEACHERS OF CHILDREN WITH DEAFBLINDNESS'; 'COMMUNITY- BASED EDUCATION IN TANZANIA', 'ENDING THE ISOLATION - DEAFBLINDNESS IN THE AUSTRALIAN AGED CARE SECTOR) ... TO NAME BUT A FEW. KEVIN AND SHEILA ATTENDED PARALLEL WORKSHOPS.

THERE WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL ART EXHIBITION MADE BY CHILDREN FROM 7 ROMANIAN SCHOOLS THAT EDUCATE STUDENTS WITH DEAFBLINDNESS IN ADDITION TO BOOTHS SET UP WITH EQUIPMENT DISPLAYS.



SEVERAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENT INCLUDED

'GOT 2 ACT', FEATURING SOME YOUNG DEAF-BLIND PERFORMERS FROM CORNWALL, ENGLAND, WHO PUT ON A PLAY ABOUT THE EARLY LIFE OF HELEN KELLER; A GALA DINNER WITH ENTERTAINMENT BY LOCAL DEAF STUDENTS DOING A TRADITIONAL DANCE IN FULL COSTUME; AND SEVERAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS.

KEVIN AND SHEILA ALSO PARTICIPATED IN SEVERAL TOURS IN THE CITY OF BUCHAREST AND AROUND THE COUNTRYSIDE, ORGANIZED FOR CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS.



New device lets deaf-blind people converse with anyone

Editor's Note: This story was written by Christine Clarridge and published in the Seattle Times.

Not long ago, Robert J. Steppler walked from his home in Wedgwood (close to Seattle, Washington) to a little coffee shop nearby, ordered a green tea and chatted with the baristas.

While that may sound hardly worthy of note, for Steppler and others like him, it most certainly is.

Steppler, a deaf-blind individual, is one of the first people in the world to use a new device called the DeafBlind Communicator, which allows him to communicate freely despite his disabilities.

The two-piece portable device was conceived by the state's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, built by the Canadian company HumanWare and perfected with feedback from the members of Seattle's deaf-blind community.

"It's so cool to see people smile spontaneously, joyously when they use it for the first time and realize the possibilities," said Deborah Schow, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Social and Health Services, which oversees the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

"Technology for the deaf-blind has always been behind," said Steppler, 54, who was born deaf and began to lose his sight when he was about 10. "We had literally been left out in the dark, and it was bleak."

With the new device and his service dog, Steppler said he is able to go about anywhere he wants and communicate.

Deaf-blind people most often speak to others in person through the use of American Sign Language, in which one person spells out or signs words into the palm of the other person's hand. Those who have computers with Braille capabilities can get information through the Internet.

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Even so, I mean, I respected Senator Gauthier and I liked him, but I can't say I communicated much with him. I was sitting beside a man who was incapable of hearing a word I said. Then I had a colleague who used to send me written jokes and I started passing them on to Senator Gauthier. He could read — oh boy, could he read — and his world lit up. He would giggle and that brought home to me, as much as anything ever has, how alone he was when he was deprived of the written word, even though he could see everything.

Thanks to help from people like the members of Speech-Language & Audiology Canada, some people can achieve miraculous progress. I once met a man who had been born totally deaf and who spoke fluent English, French and Spanish. I think he was working on his fourth language when I met him.

All things are possible if you have the determination, the resources and the talent. But how many of us have all of those things and, in particular, how many have the resources they need?

So let us move forward into June, thinking about deaf-blindness. I thank Senator Martin and Senator Munson again for bringing this terrible condition to our attention. But let us also think about the month of May. Remember that the campaign this year was about communication and aging, which is something we all need to pay attention to, colleagues.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Government): I thank the Honourable Senator Fraser for her statement, as well as her support, and to all honourable senators for supporting the motion. I also wish to acknowledge once again Senator Jim Munson for being the co-sponsor of this motion.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

DEAFBLIND SIMUULATION HELD DURING THE WORKSHOPS ON JUNE 13th



The Senate

May 26, 2015

Motion to Take Notice of the Month of June as the Birth Month of Helen Keller and to Recognize it as "Deaf-Blind Awareness Month"—Debate Adjourned

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of May 6, 2015, moved:

That the Senate take notice of the month of June as the birth month of Helen Keller, who is renowned around the world for her perseverance and achievements and who, as a person who was deaf-blind, is an inspiration to us all and, in particular, to members of the deaf-blind community; and

That the Senate recognize the month of June as "Deaf-Blind Awareness Month", to promote public awareness of deaf-blind issues and to recognize the contributions of Canadians who are deaf-blind.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to ask for your support to recognize the month of June as Deaf-Blind Awareness Month in Canada. I had the honour to introduce this motion back in 2013, but the session ended prior to its adoption. Therefore, today, Senator Jim Munson and I are pleased to bring forward this motion once again.

In May, we recognize National Vision Health Month as a result of the leadership of our former colleague Senator Asha Seth. This motion to recognize June as Deaf-Blind Awareness Month will build even greater awareness about those who live with deaf-blindness and will celebrate the life of their greatest inspiration, Helen Keller.

June 27 is Helen Keller Day, which was enacted by President Jimmy Carter in 1980, on the day of her birthday. As many of you know, Helen Keller's journey is an inspiration to many, as she triumphed over adversity and went from a world of silence and darkness to vision and advocacy.

Honourable senators, I rise once again in the hope that we recognize deaf-blind awareness and the challenges deaf-blind citizens experience in Canada from coast to coast to coast. I will quote former Ontario MPP David Young, whose private member's bill created Deaf-Blind Awareness Month in Ontario, to describe why a month like this is so essential:

. . . I believe this legislation is a step in the right direction to further improve the lives of deaf-blind Ontarians. With June declared Deaf-Blind Awareness Month, it will appear on every politician's calendar and many will make that extra effort to promote this cause in their communities. Why? Because it is the right thing to do.

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Not everybody is born with the mighty brain that she was able to put to such good use. Not everybody has the good fortune to have parents who can afford to have a full-time carer, as Helen Keller did, to bring her out of her prison. That's why we need to take a collective sense of responsibility for helping people who suffer from this unimaginably lonely condition. They may not all be Helen Kellers, but every one of them can contribute to the betterment of our society, and it begins with awareness.

I think it would be really terrific if today, on our last sitting in May, we recognize June as deaf-blind awareness month. But before we leave the month of May, I would like to remind all colleagues that the month of May has been designated by Speech-Language and Audiology Canada as speech and hearing month. Speech-Language and Audiology Canada is an organization representing about 6,000 professionals in the field of speech and hearing loss across Canada. Every year, in the month of May, they have a specific campaign to raise awareness and get help for some element of speech and hearing difficulties.

This year, I think we in the Senate may have a particular interest. This year, their focus was on communication, health and aging. I don't know how many of us know that people who have hearing loss are two to five times more likely than others to develop dementia. We know that hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic condition, behind arthritis and hypertension, and yet only one in five people who could benefit from a hearing aid actually uses one.

To have lost your hearing or never to have had your hearing is not as bad as to have lost both your hearing and your sight or never to have had your hearing and your sight, but to have lost your hearing is also a terrible factor of isolation. I sometimes think that if I had to choose between the two, I would almost rather be blind.

We see it. We sometimes feel it ourselves. As we age, we're more and more likely to feel it. When you're deaf, it's very difficult to be part of the communications network of the people around you. It starts out with not quite catching what they say, not quite understanding the joke because you didn't quite get the punch line, and then it progresses until there you are, surrounded by people who think you look normal but cut off from them by an invisible wall.

I'm sure most of us here today remember our former colleague Senator Jean-Robert Gauthier, who was my seatmate for several years. He was deaf, and he was very much alone in the Senate Chamber despite his years of extraordinary parliamentary service. He was functionally alone here until the Senate figured out a computer system that would allow him to receive the stenographer's debates on a computer screen. The whole world opened up to him.

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The Senate

May 28, 2015

Motion to Take Notice of the Month of June as the Birth Month of Helen Keller and to Recognize it as "Deaf-Blind Awareness Month" Adopted

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Martin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Munson:

That the Senate take notice of the month of June as the birth month of Helen Keller, who is renowned around the world for her perseverance and achievements and who, as a person who was deaf-blind, is an inspiration to us all and, in particular, to members of the deaf-blind community; and

That the Senate recognize the month of June as "Deaf-Blind Awareness Month", to promote public awareness of deaf-blind issues and to recognize the contributions of Canadians who are deaf-blind.

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I am very pleased to speak in favour of Senator Martin's motion that we recognize the month of June as speech and hearing awareness month — I'm sorry, as deaf-blind awareness month. Speech and hearing is a separate matter that I'm going to get to in a moment. It is deaf-blind awareness month.

I was deeply moved, as I'm sure we all were, to listen to Senator Martin and Senator Munson as they spoke about something most of us probably did not know, which is the great numbers of people in Canada who suffer from deaf-blindness — nearly 70,000 Canadians, of whom apparently only maybe 3,000 are enrolled in programs getting the help they need.

The month of June was chosen because it's Helen Keller's birth month. I am sure we all remember, most of us, seeing years ago now the incredible film, *The Miracle Worker*, showing how Helen Keller, a child who was blind and deaf and lost, living basically like an animal, was saved by the work of what we now call an intervenor, Anne Sullivan. Thanks to that intervention, that long patient work, Helen Keller was able to overcome the terrible isolation in which she lived and become a beacon of hope and an inspiration for people all over the world, not just because she learned to speak and talk but because she had, once she was able to show it, such a wonderful mind that she could apply to the great issues of the day. She was truly an inspiring figure.

Honourable senators, we now have the opportunity to recognize the month of June as we take important steps in raising awareness among Canadians. In doing so, we recognize the strength, courage and perseverance that deaf-blind people show every day in living their lives and facing their daily challenges. A month dedicated to honouring them will mean so much to them, their families and those who work closely with them.

The number of people who live with deaf-blind challenges in Canada is significant. Statistics Canada reports that there are approximately 69,700 Canadians over the age of 12 living with the dual disability of deafness and blindness or a combination of both vision and hearing losses that limit their everyday activities. Only 3,000 of these have been acknowledged by the organizations providing intervenor services.

I would once again like to describe three important terms to better understand the deaf-blind community. The first is a person with deaf-blindness, which is unique and separate from deafness or blindness on their own. A person living with this disability is an individual with a considerable degree of loss in sight and hearing, the combination of which results in significant difficulties in assessing information and in pursuing educational, vocational, recreational and social goals. An individual with the combined losses of hearing and vision requires specialized services, including adapted communication methods.

The second term is "intervenor." Intervenors are specially trained to act as the eyes and ears of an individual who is deaf-blind. The intervenor's job can include providing access to information — auditory, visual or tactile — by means of a variety of communication methods, acting as a sighted guide. Some methods of communication include tactile signing systems, Braille, large print and communication boards. In fact, I met an intervenor at the May event on the Hill and was amazed at how the hand becomes a typewriter, so to speak. The role they play is essential to a deaf-blind person being able to access the world — to be able to see and experience life through these intervenors.

The third item is "intervenor service," the provision of a professional service, paid or voluntary, that facilitates interactions of persons who are deaf-blind with other people, places and environment. Our former colleague Senator Vim Kochhar cofounded the Canadian Helen Keller Centre and Rotary Cheshire Homes, which are two examples of excellent facilities. In fact, Rotary Cheshire Homes is said to be the only facility in the world where those who are deaf-blind can live independently.

I wish to recognize Senator Jim Munson who is also a champion of this cause and the co-sponsor of this motion once again.

Honourable senators, there are many deaf-blind persons around the world who have overcome adversity and achieved leaps and bounds like Helen Keller. The determination of people living with deaf-blindness and all those who dedicate their time to working with them leave me inspired. It is my hope that we can unanimously pass this motion to endorse June as Deaf-Blind Awareness Month. I urge all honourable senators to support this motion. Thank you.

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Hon. Jim Munson: Honourable senators, it is my pleasure today to express support for Senator Martin's motion to recognize June as Deaf-Blind Awareness Month. The purpose of this motion, as Senator Martin put it, is to raise public awareness of the issues impacting people with deaf-blindness and to recognize the contribution of these people to our society.

Helen Keller was born in June, so it is appropriate to select the month to direct our attention and energies to learning about this particular disability and inciting Canadians to do the same. For many of us, the inspiring story of Helen Keller is a reason we know anything at all not only about the challenges of being deaf-blind, but also about the human capacity to overcome them. This woman, after all, broke through the walls of limited vision and near silence to establish connections with people, her community, the world and future generations like us. A writer, an activist and a humanitarian, Helen Keller is today, almost 50 years after her death, an example of hope, heroism and the reason a motion like Senator Martin's should be supported.

Overcoming adversity is, by nature, difficult. Overcoming adversity alone — well, I doubt that is even possible.

We are fortunate as parliamentarians to have a public profile. We are well-positioned to nudge social issues like those related to deaf-blindness into the light. Earlier today, we saw former Senator Asha Seth with us. Look what she has done, as well, with her inspiration and passion in this regard. She is still passionate about the issue, as we look at her good work at the Canadian Helen Keller Centre.

We talk about our good friends. There was Vim and now there's Jim. Vim Kochhar has already cleared the path for us. You certainly couldn't say no to Senator Kochhar. For more than 30 years, he has been helping those with deaf-blindness through activities that bring real, meaningful improvements to their lives. In the 1980s, he was instrumental in raising the necessary funds and bringing plans to provide housing for deaf-blind people to fruition. As Senator Martin said, I'm referring to the Rotary Cheshire Homes. It is the only facility in the world that specifically enables deaf-blind people to live independently.

The Great Valentine Gala also bears Vim's distinct stamp. Since 1984, he has been doing the front-line work, putting on this annual fundraising event to benefit people with disabilities.

Currently, there are almost 70,000 deaf-blind people over the age of 12 in Canada. The prevalence of this dual disability is surprising to me. In part, that is because I know little about deaf-blindness; I need to know more. I work so much in so many other areas dealing with disabilities that this is the one that caught my imagination. It is the influence of senators like Senators Martin, Kochhar and Seth that has spurred me on to talk about this particular area of life.

I hate to look at the word "dis-." I look at the "ability." I don't like that "dis-" word, but it seems to be in our vocabulary.

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I understand that disabilities limit people in their everyday activities. Here, I can apply what I know of some other disabilities to appreciate the emotional, financial and other hardships these limitations create. I can also apply my insights into the experiences of people with disabilities to appreciate that limitations like these betray what our society is failing to do in the interests of deaf-blind people.

(1540)

As Senator Martin has said, only 3,000 deaf-blind people have been identified as clients of organizations that help them interact with other people, places and environments. That is 3,000 out of 70,000 deaf-blind people. Think about it. In terms of the fundamental rights we all have to live as fully as possible and to realize our potential, this is a travesty.

In terms of what Senator Martin is proposing in her motion to recognize June as deaf-blind awareness month, these numbers are a starting point for us all. We can begin to change the odds by learning about deaf-blindness and the real life experiences of people with this distinct disability.

Unwilling to simply tuck the few facts I know away, I'm inspired by what I glean from them. It is clear to see there is so much work ahead for us if we are to set this imbalance right.

Senator Martin, I thank you personally for your motion and your determination to get it passed. It is simple. I hope we can do it faster than my autism bill, which took three years, but was still worth it. Every minute, every day, it is worth it to do these things, because people do pay attention.

If I can get in a plug on autism, there is more money than ever before in the last decade and people are doing better things. The same thing should be happening here. Your motion is a simple and straightforward request.

I am sure all honourable senators can see clearly the moral and social purpose of this measure. I urge you to join us in supporting it.

Thank you very much.

(On motion of Senator Fraser, debate adjourned.)

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