



# CAILC News Bulletin

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTRES

Information sharing, national initiatives, federal policies, and political decisions affecting the Independence of Canadians with Disabilities and their Independent Living Resource Centres

SPRING 2006 ISSUE

Volume 11 Number 1

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## WHAT DOES THE FEDERAL ELECTION MEAN FOR DISABILITY POLICY IN CANADA?

BY: JIHAN ABBAS

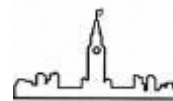
On Monday January 23 2006, Canadians went to the polls for their second Federal election in as many years. In an election campaign that seemed to focus primarily on the need for change and government accountability, Canadians elected a minority Conservative government making Stephen Harper Canada's 22<sup>nd</sup> Prime Minister. What this may mean for the disability community

remains to be seen, but the election has certainly given us a lot to consider.

### SOCIAL POLICY SHIFT

With the Conservative party forming its first government in Canada since 1993, many are wondering what changes are in store for social and disability policy in Canada. It is no secret that the disability community has been frustrated

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Traci Walters, National Director, CAILC, Paul Claude Bérubé, CAILC's National Chairperson and Pat Marshall, Vice President, Communications and Investor Relations, Cineplex Entertainment at CAILC's UN Day event December 2nd, 2005. Approximately 250 people attended the event.

WHAT DOES THE FEDERAL... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

by a lack of progress in recent years on many of the most pressing issues facing this community. Without a doubt, with a disproportionate number of persons with disabilities facing poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to transportation, supports, and housing – the situation remains unacceptable for a country that has been blessed with unprecedented federal surpluses.

If the Conservative party platform is any indication, disability policy is not likely to play a major role in the coming months. Issues like accountability, a GST tax reduction, and reduced wait times in Health Care took centre stage during election time. In terms of the disability portfolio, the Prime Minister has appointed Diane Finley, a businesswoman representing the riding of Haldimand-Norfolk in Ontario, as Minister of Human Resources and Social Development (the departments of Human Resources and Social Development have once again been merged). Finley served as the Conservative agriculture critic in the last Parliament, and there is nothing in her Parliamentary Biography to suggest past experience with social policy. This has many within the disability community concerned that the advancement of social policy may not be a priority for the Harper government.

Although any social policy agenda outside of the Conservative party platform remains unclear, now more than ever, it is important for those concerned with social policy and disability policy to express their concerns to their local Member of Parliament. In doing so, we can send a strong message that the Federal government not only has a role to play with respect to shaping and delivering social policy, but also that Canadians believe this to be a priority issue for this Parliament.

To learn more about your Member of Parliament, to find ways to contact them, or to learn

more about what your government is doing with respect to your concerns or community priorities, you can visit the Parliament of Canada web site at:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/>

## NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Although disability policy did not receive the attention during this Federal election that many within the disability community had hoped for, there was one message that came through loud and clear within the platforms of the Conservative, Liberal, NDP, and Green Party: National legislation to address the inequality faced by Canadians with disabilities.

While some platforms, like the NDP, Conservative, and Green Party state the introduction of some form of a national Disability Act, the Liberal Party committed to the safeguarding of an accessible Canada for all through the strengthening of existing legislation and exploration of an *Inclusion and Accessibility Act*.

This marks the first time Federal legislation to address access and inequality faced by Canadians with disabilities has appeared in *all* major platforms. With recent legislation passed in Ontario (*Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*), and rumblings across the country for stronger and more enforceable legislation, it looks as though this community may be one-step closer to Federal legislation on this issue.

Clearly how this will play out in the next Parliament remains unclear, but with this new focus on Federal legislation a reality, the time for real and engaging dialogue on this issue has come. Now is the time for the disability community to explore what this legislation can and cannot do, as well as the role of our community in shaping any proposed legislation.

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WHAT DOES THE FEDERAL... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Community has a role to play in shaping and informing this debate. With this in mind, the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) encourages citizens to en-

gage with their local Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC), community, and Member of Parliament to ensure their voices on these important issues are heard and considered.

## UPDATE ON CAILC & NATIONAL PROJECTS

### INDEPENDENT LIVING IMPACT PROJECT UPDATE

### NATIONAL DATABASE AND INFORMATION COLLECTION SYSTEM

The creation of the National Database and Information Collection System, one of the major stated goals of the Independent Living Impact (IL) Project, is now underway. CAILC has met with the National Adult Literacy Database



(NALD) as they have begun to assist us in the development of our system. The indicators that will be used need to be finalized. A chart of proposed indicators for this system as well as a brief discussion paper on this issue was also sent to all

Independent Living Resource Centres (ILRCs) as a means to seek feedback so CAILC can finalize the information and proceed with testing.

### PROMISING PRACTICES

The collection of materials for the Promising Practices piece of the IL Impact is on going as the team from the Thunder Bay ILRC have put a link on their website to facilitate this process. So far we have received some excellent examples of Promising Practices for program delivery, Human Resource policy etc. and we encourage Centres to keep this valuable information flowing. In order to help facilitate the flow of information, the Thunder Bay ILRC recently set-up a message board to allow for greater

dialogue on this issue and the gathering and sharing of information. Some of the topics posted so far include: sponsors/ sponsorship, and evaluation of the executive director and successful events.

To participate in this message board or share your resources, please visit:

<http://www.ilrctbay.com/>



### IL IMPACT BOOK

Under the leadership of John Lord, the author who is writing the IL Impact book for CAILC, the literature review and the collection of consumer stories from across the country are well under-

way. We have received wonderful stories from across the country on the impact of Independent Living on consumers and individuals. We would like to remind consumers that there is still time to submit your story.

In addition to collecting the stories of individuals (we will continue to collect these until April 18, 2006), we are also striving to identify the ways in which Centres have impacted research, policy, and their communities at large. In order to do this, we have begun to collect the stories of centres and will be conducting some focus groups to assist with this. If you have historical information about your Centre,

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UPDATE ON CAILC ... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

or literature that illustrates key turning points for your Centre, innovative programs, interesting partners, or community impact, please feel free to share this with us as well.

We have also identified a number of key informants and will be conducting interviews in the coming months to get the perspectives of consumer leaders, researchers, and policy analysts, on the impact of Independent Living in Canada.

We thank all Centres and individuals for the information that has been provided to date, as it has been invaluable in shaping and informing the story of IL we will share!

## ACCESS TO RECOVERY - SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

We have a new name! In partnership with the Abilities Foundation, it has been decided that the Substance Abuse and Independent Living (SAIL) project be called *Access to Recovery* to better reflect the overall goals of this project. We chose to use the terms “access” and “recovery” as they are easily defined through an Independent Living lens.



### Access

The term “Access” refers to any policy or strategy that leads substance abuse information resources to become more accessible to persons with disabilities. Access can be achieved through the building of tools for centers and the community that can be used to provide knowledge and expertise to those seeking help. Access to treatment may include physical access (ramps, automatic doors ect.), information in alternative formats (Braille, plain lan-

guage), accessible treatment options (harm reduction, attendant services for residential programs) or any other alteration that is needed to make sure that people with disabilities have equal access to this essential health service.

### Recovery

The term “recovery” is defined using the personal wellness goals that the individual self-identifies and wishes to work towards. The focus is not that the person gives up use altogether, but rather on an empowering process with an end goal determined by the individual him/herself.

### National Needs Assessment

The project is currently completing the needs assessment stage by running focus groups with consumers at ILRC in St. John’s, Trois Pistoles, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Vernon. Although previous research has showed that persons with disabilities face substance abuse at least as often as the rest of the population (some estimates as high as 20% greater<sup>1</sup>), treatment participation rates by persons with disabilities are well below the national average. In fact, limited use of the addiction treatment system is related to a lack of accessibility and appropriate treatment options. Through a thorough national needs assessment, we hope to learn more about the scope of this issues as well as the barriers consumers face in this area.

For more information on Access to Recovery please visit the National Projects Section of CAILC’s web site.

<sup>1</sup>Special Populations Section, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), 2006. <http://sano.camh.net/resource/pdis.htm>

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## **LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR VIRTUAL INDEPENDENT LIVING RESOURCE CENTRES: A TIMELY INITIATIVE!**

Increasingly, technology impacts all the work we do. In January 2006, CAILC received funding from the federal Office for Learning Technologies (OLT) for a three-year pilot initiative called "Laying the Foundation for Virtual Independent Living Resource Centres (VILRC)".

VILRC, or the "OLT project" as we have come to call it, will build the virtual capacity of CAILC and the national network of ILRCs. This project will also support our ongoing efforts to get our virtual house in order and ensure CAILC's web site is truly responsive to Centres, the needs of persons with disabilities, and that it is W3C compliant. CAILC will also create a model of what a Centre site could look like which will benefit new Centres that join our national network. The OLT project will also provide free online employment and pre-employment supports, services, resources and tools to persons with disabilities. To find out more about the specific and employment related goals of the OLT project please visit the National Project section of CAILC's web site.

In addition to the goals of the project outlined on the CAILC web site, this project is also exciting as it comes at the same time as several other technology related developments at CAILC. In fact, all of our recent initiatives, including IL Impact project, the Fund Development initiative, and now the OLT project compliment one another. Together, these initiatives will enable CAILC to develop virtual promising practices, a flexible user-friendly data collection system for accountability and reporting, and to share and create an online employment resource and fund development opportunities. What we learn and the standards developed will also have a positive impact on the accreditation process.

Another related issue CAILC is also considering is how to best develop consistent branding across the network. Traci Walters (CAILC's National Director) and Linda McGreevy (CAILC's new Director of Fund Development) are very excited about the opportunities to make CAILC and member Centres known nationally through corporate partnerships. To make this a reality, one key factor will be consistent branding and a continued successful marketing strategy.

In future editions we will be providing updates as the project takes shape and resources become available.

## **ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CONFERENCE**

Traci Walters, CAILC's National Director, will be attending the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference. The conference will be hosted by California State University, and is held in Los Angeles from March 20-25, 2006.

With CAILC moving further into accessibility and technology, the information gathered at this event will help inform all CAILC's technology initiatives, and help increase our knowledge of adaptive technologies for persons with disabilities.

In past years the conference has explored topics such as accessible E-learning; art as tools for inclusion; customizing software; PowerPoint presentations for the persons who are blind; and hands free computer access. This year's topics will include supporting speech and language development with technology; low technology and literacy for older students;

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access to technology employment; and planning for accessible video and DVD formats.

The keynote speaker will be well known artist, Lisa Fittipaldi, a blind artist who began the *Mind's Eye Foundation* for children who are visually impaired. The foundation assists children achieve their full potential by providing educational technology. For more information on Lisa Fittipaldi, her writing, and the Mind's Eye Foundation please visit <http://www.lisafittipaldi.com/>.

The conference will host over 150 exhibitors including: Industry Canada; AbleLink Technologies; MOVE International, and SensAbility.

For more information on the 21st Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference please visit <http://www.csun.edu/cod/conf/index.htm>.

## SPOTLIGHT ON PARTNERS

# GRAND & TOY®

### GRAND AND TOY – A PROUD NEW CORPORATE PARTNER

CAILC and the Independent Living Resources Centres are grateful to Grand and Toy for their generous discounts on office supplies and furnishings. Grand and Toy will also provide a 2% rebate to CAILC National Office for all on-line orders.

CAILC is extremely grateful for all in-kind donations that result in more funds being directed towards essential programs and services that benefit Centres and consumers who access support.

With twenty-five sales offices from coast to coast and the largest account manager team in the industry, Grand and Toy understands how businesses operate. They pride themselves on being able to provide organizations with thousands of different solutions to help make offices work better.

CAILC is pleased to recognize businesses that demonstrate a spirit of giving back to the community in which they conduct business



Brian Basanda, Grand & Toy, General Sales Manager, David Willsie, Captain Canadian Wheelchair Rugby Team and Jason Johanson, Grand & Toy, Inside Account Manager

## GRASSROOTS NEWS & COMMUNITY IMPACT

### SSILC CHAIRPERSON HONOURED WITH SASKATCHEWAN CENTENNIAL MEDAL

South Saskatchewan Independent Living Resource Centre (SSILC) is pleased to announce that Chris Bailey, current Chairperson of SSILC, has been awarded the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal in recognition of his role in the community and the work of the organization.

“The medal is very much a medal honouring the work and impact of SSILC. It was a symbol, which said to me, that the SSILC staff does make a difference and that difference has been recognized. SSILC has an outstanding record of accomplishment and a high reputation within the community and with our stakeholders. As Chair of the Board, I have been privileged to participate in SSILC and to contribute, in some small measure, to its success. Thank you for the great work you do.”

The Commemorative Medal for the Centen-

nial of Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Centennial Medal) is a one-time commemorative medal marking the province's 100th anniversary. The medal recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to society and honours outstanding achievements. Approximately 4,000 medals were presented throughout Saskatchewan's Centennial year.

Criteria for this medal are a broad range of contributions to the community and to the province through leadership, voluntarism, community involvement and outstanding personal achievements



## ONLINE EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

As employment remains a key issue for persons with disabilities, CAILC is committed to sharing employment resources. The following web based, employment and e-learning links may be useful in your employment related endeavours. For more employment links, please keep checking the Employment and Independent Living section on the National Projects section of CAILC's web site.

<http://www.atutor.ca/> is a free Open Source Web-based Learning Content Management System (LCMS) with capacity for educators to conduct courses online.

<http://www.builtnetwork.ca/online/> This online

program is designed for participants to gain skills necessary to return to work and is a project of the National Network for Mental Health.

<http://www.businessabilities.ca/> Designed for persons with disabilities across Canada to explore the world of self-employment, this site has online learning programs, “webinars”, and more.

[http://careerbookmarks.tpl.toronto.on.ca/guides/guides\\_frame.html](http://careerbookmarks.tpl.toronto.on.ca/guides/guides_frame.html) is a virtual career guide for persons with disabilities with information on varied topics such as job accommodation and disclosure.

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ONLINE EMPLOYMENT... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

<http://learnflex.com/presentation/index.html> provides a critical examination and evaluation of e-learning tools.

<http://www.utoronto.ca/atrc/research.html>  
The Adaptive Technology Resource Centre site with new projects including the Accessibility Checker, 10 Accessible HTML commands and much more.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK – APRIL 23-29 2006**

National Volunteer Week will honour the millions of Canadian volunteers who contribute their time and skills to better their communities. Since volunteerism plays an important role in the IL movement nationally, this is a great opportunity to reflect on and celebrate these important contributions. In support of this week, Volunteer Canada produces and distributes promotional material that may help you with related community activities. For more information please visit:

<http://www.volunteer.ca>

### **Canadian Disability Studies Association - 3rd Annual Conference**

On May 27 & 28 2006 York University (Toronto) will be hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Canadian Disability Studies Association Conference. This year's theme is *The City: A Festi-*

*val of Knowledge*. For more information on the conference please visit:

<http://www.atkinson.yorku.ca/cdis/cdsa/>

### **CANADA TO HOST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED PERSONS (TRANSED)**

Canada will play host to the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons (TRANSED) to be held June 2007 in Montreal. The theme of this conference will be *Benchmarking, Evaluation, and Vision for the Future* and will explore a range of issues including international breakthroughs in this area. For more information on this conference, please visit:

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/pol/en/transed2007/home.htm>

### **CAILC UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- Executive Directors Forum on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, in Ottawa, Ontario. (tentative dates)
- CAILC's National Substance Abuse Train-the-Trainer Institute in June 2006. (date to be confirmed shortly)
- CAILC Annual General Meeting (AGM), will be held in Richmond, BC on October 19 to 22, 2006
- UN Day, International Day of Disabled Persons, National Kick-Off Event will be held on November 30th, 2006.

## RESEARCH CORNER

### COUNT YOURSELF IN! MAY 16, 2006 IS CENSUS DAY!

The census provides the government with a statistical portrait of our country and its people. It is conducted every five years by Statistics Canada. Every household will receive a census questionnaire which is to be completed. It is important for people with disabilities to complete the census form because it helps to ensure that our voices are heard. This year, people have the option of completing the census online. The online version is compatible with adaptive software. The census questionnaire is available in Braille and in Large Print formats. If you require a Census form which is in Braille or Large Print, please call the Census Help Line at 1-877-594-2006.

[www.census2006.ca](http://www.census2006.ca)

### CCD SEEKS RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) has announced it is conducting research on the experiences of people with disabilities who have sought assistance in the last three years from the Canadian Human Rights Commission to resolve a discrimination complaint. The purpose of the research is to identify difficulties and improvements that people with disabilities have encountered in filing a complaint with the Commission and to assess whether recent changes made by the Canadian Human Rights Commission address these difficulties.

The researchers, Yvonne Peters, a disability rights lawyer, and April D'Aubin, a Research Analyst, are looking for people with disabilities who would be willing to be interviewed about their experiences.

Anyone interested in participating in this research should contact the researchers (Tel: 204-947-0303 or email: [april@ccdonline.ca](mailto:april@ccdonline.ca)).

### CANADIAN E-LEARNING STUDY SEEKS PARTICIPANTS

The Adaptech Research Network is examining the accessibility of eLearning to college and university students with disabilities, including students with learning disabilities. eLearning refers to information and communication technologies that professors use when teaching their courses and may include: PowerPoint in the classroom, online tests, CD-ROMs, and WebCT.

The online survey is confidential and lasts approximately 20 minutes. To participate go to <http://www.adaptech.org/elearning>.

Send questions to:  
[elearning@Adaptech.org](mailto:elearning@Adaptech.org)

This study is part of the Disability and Information Technologies Research Alliance and is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

In recent months here at CAILC we have been working to make our newsletter more responsive to the needs of ILRCs, consumers, the disability community, and stakeholders. For us, this has meant striving to perfect our format and include content that you want to see. We encourage you to provide

any feedback you have on the design, layout, content, and tips for information you would like included. Please send any comments, question, or feedback you have to:

[policy@cailc.ca](mailto:policy@cailc.ca)

## SOCIAL POLICY & DISABILITY SUPPORTS

### SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES guide

The new *Services for People with Disabilities* guide includes information on more than 60 Government of Canada programs and services for people with disabilities. For a free copy, call **1-800-622-6232**, for TTY users, call **1-800-926-9105**, or visit [service-canada.gc.ca](http://service-canada.gc.ca) or your local Service Canada Centre. The guides are also available in alternative formats (large print, Braille, audio cassette or computer diskette) by calling **1 800 O-Canada**.

### CANADA BENEFITS WEB SITE

Run by the Government of Canada, this site provides online information about federal, provincial, and territorial benefit programs and services for Canadians. Users can search by region to access contact information for all available government benefits. This is a great research resource to start any search for government benefits and services.

English: <http://www.canadabenefits.gc.ca/faechome.jsp?&lang=en>

## USEFUL ONLINE LINKS

### GUIDE TO PLANNING INCLUSIVE MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

An online resource providing those who are planning meetings or conferences with practical tips to ensure their events are accessible to all persons with disabilities. Provided by the Treasury Board of Canada, this web-based guide includes several good tips and resources including an accessibility checklist for planners and a sample event registration form.

[http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs\\_pol/hrpubs/tb\\_852/gpimc-gprci\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/tb_852/gpimc-gprci_e.asp)

### MATCHING HOUSES

This website is a database of accessible holiday home exchanges. People with disabilities can swap houses with other people with disabilities who have the same accessibility needs when they are on holiday. Membership is free while the database is being developed, but it will eventually be £25 for one year. The site is available in English at this time, but translators may be available to help with arranging house swaps in chat room meetings, via email or teleconference calls.

<http://www.matchinghouses.com/>

"To be a good leader, you need courage. But what kind of courage? Not the courage to face physical danger, but a quieter kind. You need to keep going when it's hard to do. You need to tell people things they don't necessarily want to hear. You need to take risks. You have to open yourself to criticism. These all take courage."

~ Advocating Change Today  
[www.selfadvocacy.org](http://www.selfadvocacy.org)

## THE LIGHTER SIDE OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

### BLOODY MONDAY

BY: CHRISTINE MALONE

So it looked like any other Monday, cursing the alarm clock as it goes off at the ungodly hour of 6am, and I was on my way to do my humanitarian part and go to blood services before heading off to work.

I check in with the overly perky assistant at the front desk, and decide that I need to visit the facilities before the deed. It was at that moment that a rogue piece of carpet came along and sent me into a large wooden coat stand- which is not as soft as you think it would be.

Suddenly four employees come running like they had just found gold. You get the feeling that these highly trained professionals rarely get to use their skills in such a way. They pull me out of the coat stand. One goes to grab medical supplies to deal with the gash that is now proudly displayed on my forehead, another takes my crutches and gets a wheelchair as it is decided that I am no longer "able" to walk. Another runs to grab the incident report which must be filled out- You know it is all very serious business. One little joke about donating blood goes through my head...It was then determined that I must be off my rocker (If they only knew how true it is).

After some assessment and a good crowd of on-lookers have formed, it is decided that I can get off the floor.

Any dignity that I had managed to retain was quickly lost as I was observed for the next hour, even being followed into the washroom. Of course, I can't really show pain, and choose to go to my happy place- I call denial. "What you mean everyone doesn't bleed from the forehead and ear when they come in here?" Again bad timing...no one laughed. They then decided that they would not let me donate today.

I go to work and about an hour later I get an urgent call from the porcelain god. Being experienced in the world of minor head injury, I decide that now would be a good time to pay a little visit to the emergency room. I am taken into a room where I promptly wait an hour and a half to see a doctor. Someone comes in and asked if I have a headache (duh!), where I am, and how many fingers I see. He then determines that I have a minor concussion, gives me a Gravol and sends me on my way. I am so glad to see seven years of med school pays off!

The best part of this experience is you know that next week the Canadian Blood Services will be calling me to donate.....

## SPOTLIGHT ON ACCESS

### NEW MULTIPLE FORMAT SERVICE FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS OFFERED BY THE CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

In February the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) announced that effective immediately the CRA will be offer a new multiple format service for individuals with a

visual impairment. Once individuals have self-identified as such, they may make requests to have material specific to the individual, as well as non client-specific information sent to them.

For additional information on this service, please visit the CRA web site at: [www.cra.gc.ca](http://www.cra.gc.ca)

## REVIEWS

### HELLO YELLOW

PREPARED BY SUSAN FORSTER

Hello Yellow (310-YELO or 310-9356) is a new free voice activated service to search the yellow pages in the Greater Toronto (GTA) and Hamilton areas, and is currently only available in Ontario. It can be called from most area codes in Southwestern Ontario (416, 905, 647, 705, 519, 289, and 613) and outside these locations, users can dial 1-877-310-YELO (9356). An automated attendant "Genie" gives instructions and specific information based on your choices; for example listings of all Italian restaurants close to a landmark such as the CN Tower.

I found the service easy to use, although you do need to speak clearly. One way round this is to give the number of your choice instead of the name. To find out more and to access the demo please visit:

<http://www.helloyellow.ca/index.html>.

The Yellow Pages Group have a toll free number 1 800 848-8353 and other contact information listed inside each Yellow Pages directory: if you want to have this service in your community why not consider calling or writing to make a request.

### MY LIFE IN MY HANDS - BY ALISON LAPPER WITH GUY FELDMAN

PREPARED BY MARY JANE CLINKARD

*My Life in My Hands* is the inspirational and compelling autobiography of Alison Lapper, a

woman born in 1965 without arms and shortened legs resulting from a medical condition known as phocomelia. Lapper was rejected by her mother shortly after her birth and spent the first 19 years of her life living in institutions for children with disabilities. She gives vivid details about what it was like growing up in an institution and mentions that the staff was very strict and in some cases abusive towards her and the other children. As well, she explains that she often struggled with the prosthetics which were made for her as a child.

In spite of all these barriers, Lapper grew up to be an independent young woman who moved into her own apartment in London England. Although she is a member of the Mouth and Foot Painters Association, she specializes in photographic art. In 2003, she was awarded the MBE (Member of the British Empire) at Buckingham Palace for her services to art.

In 1999, she was approached by a sculptor named Marc Quinn who wanted to create a statue of a person with a disability and he thought that Lapper would be a good subject. She also happened to be eight months pregnant with her son Parys at the time of the casting. After the sculpture was made, Mr. Quinn entered the statue into a competition and the winning statue would be displayed in Trafalgar Square. Sure enough, it won and on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2005, it was unveiled on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square.

This book is only available in English.

Thanks to Human Resources and Social Development (HRSDC). We would like to thank HRSDC for making this newsletter possible through their ongoing financial support to CAILC and our member Centres. Without them, this type of citizenship engagement would not be possible

**OPINIONS EXPRESSED ARE THOSE OF THE CONTRIBUTORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTRES (CAILC)**

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