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COMMUNIQUÉ

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**Premier's Council on the
Status of Disabled Persons**



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Executive Director's Message



The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has been very busy since our last newsletter in the fall. We're excited to continue working with consumers, community groups and key stakeholders on a number of important initiatives that will benefit people with disabilities in New Brunswick.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons would like to welcome Heather Hughes as a new staff person at the office. Heather has been hired to assist with coordinating activities regarding the Employment Action Plan Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, and is on contract till the end of April. Welcome Heather!!

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, in partnership with the City of Dieppe, and the Disability Awareness Week Executive Committee are thrilled to officially launch the 2012 Disability Awareness Week campaign here in N.B. The slogan for this year's event is ***"Disability Awareness Week – Ready and Able to Work!"***, and will run from May 27th to June 2nd, 2012. For more details on Disability Awareness Week 2012, please visit our website at www.gnb.ca/Council and follow the link to the Disability Awareness Week website.

The Premier's Council continues to compile the research that was collected from the Disability Action Plan Survey and consultation sessions. This data will help us prepare the New Disability Action Plan Report, which will be presented to government during Disability Awareness Week 2012.

I would like to thank everyone who has provided feedback to the Council on the issues faced by persons with disabilities and encourage those wishing to do so to contact the office. I look forward to continuing to engage government and moving the disability agenda forward.

Thank you to the Council members and staff for your tremendous support.
Christyne Allain, Executive Director



The Council wishes to thank Eleanor for her outstanding contribution and dedication to the work of the Council during her term as a Regional Representative from 2007-2011. Thank you for your continued support!

From left to right: Christyne Allain, Executive Director and Eleanor Kingston, Council Member

Premier says province becoming more inclusive

Premier David Alward says the province is making significant improvements in its efforts to make New Brunswick a more inclusive place for people with disabilities.



Stephen MacGillivray/The Daily Gleaner

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons held a media conference Friday regarding the United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons. Above, Premier David Alward, right, speaks to the crowd. To the left of the premier is Christyne Allain, executive director of the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, and in the background is Becky Schirato, sign language interpreter.

The premier highlighted some major points of the upcoming disability action plan during a media conference at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital on Friday. The report will be released during Disability Awareness Week 2012, which begins May 27.

The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons has been conducting consultations and receiving recommendations from every government department for over a year on how best to accommodate New Brunswickers with disabilities.

Christyne Allain, Executive Director of the Council, said the feedback illustrated the need to improve transportation services, social assistance plans, accessibility and employment opportunities in the province. "We need these issues to be improved for all New Brunswickers so they can lead meaningful and independent lives regardless of disabilities," she said.

The province is still working with the recommendations made in the plan's third status report conducted in 2010. Although having received encouraging advancements, the plan, which was conceived in 2007, needs more work, he said.

Per capita, 17.2 per cent of New Brunswick's population lives with a disability - second highest in the country. "That very fact alone underscores the importance of the council's work," Alward said. "It's making a real difference in the lives of New Brunswickers living with disabilities, and for that I'm grateful."

Although specifics have not been narrowed down as the council is still receiving recommendations, Alward said the province is developing and has already implemented new initiatives, including amendments to the New Brunswick Building Code Act. The reforms will be incorporated to ensure buildings are made more accessible.

The province's employment action plan will also get a facelift to increase the number of employment opportunities in the labour market. "One of the most important things we can do to move forward with reforms is to eliminate barriers to employment," said Alward. "We're very serious about our commitment to include different citizens with disabilities in the economic and social opportunities available to people in New Brunswick." He said the government needs to show leadership in this regard and develop enhanced awareness for the public.

After meeting with schools, officials have plans in place to build a strategy to promote education and inclusion in New Brunswick schools. The premier said there needs to be a consistent approach across the province. "Collectively, these initiatives will build on the progress that's been made in recent years, but there's still much work to do," he said.

Alward said he hoped the ongoing consultation with stakeholders will continue to create an optimal environment for people with disabilities.

Friday's media conference fell on the backdrop of the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities which took place Saturday. The day encourages the understanding of rights for people with disabilities and highlights major issues, while promoting awareness and inclusion worldwide.

Employment Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities

The Government of New Brunswick and the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Person's is currently working with persons with disabilities, families, support agencies, and employers to develop a new and effective Employment Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities. The goal of this project is to see more persons with disabilities participating in New Brunswick's labour force and post-secondary education opportunities.

MLA Danny Soucy and Employer Representative Jonathan Davenport (UPS Canada) are co-chairing the Employment Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities Steering Committee. The objective of this effort is to have an Employment Action Plan ready for government by April 2012. The Employment Action Plan Steering Committee will make recommendations to government based on the feedback and input that has been gathered during many regional consultation sessions. The Steering Committee also wants to understand and incorporate actions that will best support employers in hiring and retaining New Brunswickers with disabilities.

For more information please visit the Premier's Council website at www.gnb.ca/council.

"Caring is a powerful business advantage." – *Scott Johnson*

Disability Awareness Week – Ready and Able to Work

The Premier’s Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, in partnership with the City of Dieppe, are thrilled to officially launch the 2012 Disability Awareness Week campaign here in N.B. The slogan for this year’s event is **“Disability Awareness Week – Ready and Able to Work!”**, and will run from May 27th to June 2nd, 2012.



This year’s event will mark the **25th Anniversary** of Disability Awareness Week in New Brunswick! It continues the tradition of National Access Awareness Week first established in 1988 to promote better community access for people with disabilities. This campaign happened in response to a request from Rick Hansen following his Man in Motion World Tour. For ten years, a national committee coordinated planning for the week in communities all over Canada and we have continued this campaign here in New Brunswick.

Activities for Disability Awareness Week 2012 will take place in communities throughout the province of N.B. The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons would like to thank the City of Dieppe and the Accessibility Advisory Committee for their support in hosting the official kick-off event on Saturday, May 26th, at Place 1604 in Dieppe. More details to follow. Other provincial activities will include the Annual Legislative Breakfast and Workshop, a media awareness campaign, Walk & Roll events and a host of other activities as well. Local groups are encouraged to organize community projects across the province.

Disability Awareness Week covers all types of disabilities and all age groups. With the help of our community partners, stakeholders, sponsors and the Province of New Brunswick, we can continue moving closer towards a society that leaves no one behind.

For details on Disability Awareness Week 2012, which includes promotional items, Disability Awareness Week activities, sponsors and more, please visit our website at www.gnb.ca/Council and follow the link to the Disability Awareness Week website.

Quality Education for all Children

The NB Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has created a new Website for NB parents, teachers, support staff and organizations looking to support each student to succeed to their fullest potential in a positive learning environment.



Please find linked here resources developed in helping to provide a quality education for all children. Planning, collaboration, mutual respect, leadership, training and support is key.

<http://www.gnb.ca/0000/incl-e.asp>

Home Energy Assistance Program Forms to be Available



Application forms for the 2012 Home Energy Assistance Program will be available on Dec. 22. The provincial government has committed to extend the program over the next five years.

"We want to ensure that New Brunswickers are able to care for their families during the cold winter months," said Finance Minister Blaine Higgs. "We expect up to 55,000 individuals will be helped by this program."

The provincial government re-introduced the program in November of 2010.

"We are also committed to extending the program over the next five years so that low income families will have one less thing to worry about," said Social Development Minister Sue Stultz. "Even in these challenging financial times our government recognizes how important it is to provide this program which offers assistance to New Brunswick families who need help paying their heating bills."

The \$100 benefit will help low-income families cope with high-energy prices. The benefit will be provided to those who have incomes up to, and including, \$28,000 in 2010. Benefits to qualifying applicants will be issued within two to four weeks of a completed application being received.

Individuals may apply by going to the Department of Finance or Service New Brunswick websites or by calling 1-800-669-7070. Forms are also available at Service New Brunswick outlets.

LINK: Department of Finance: www.gnb.ca/finance

New Technology for those who are Blind or Visually Impaired

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing has developed a free downloadable application (app) to assist the blind and visually impaired denominate US currency. The app is called EyeNote®. EyeNote® is a mobile device app designed for Apple iPhone® (3G, 3Gs, 4), and the 4th Generation iPod® Touch and iPad®2 platforms, and is available through the Apple iTunes App StoreSM.

EyeNote® uses image recognition technology to determine a note's denomination. The mobile device's camera requires 51 percent of a note's scanned image, front or back, to process. In a matter of seconds, EyeNote® can provide an audible or vibrating response, and can denominate all Federal Reserve notes issued since 1996.



For more information about EyeNote® click on the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHGQNEcJlr4&feature=sharewww.eyenote.gov>, or visit www.moneyfactory.gov.

N.B. Parasport and Recreation Program

The N.B. Parasport and Recreation Management Committee and Working Group is pleased to announce the development of a new Parasport & Recreation Program in NB. This program will focus on working with persons with physical disabilities, Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs), disability organizations, recreation organizations and facilities to build capacity and lead the development and coordination of a system that engages New Brunswickers with physical disabilities in parasport and recreation.

Courtenay Brennan has recently been hired as the Parasport & Recreation Coordinator for New Brunswick. She brings with her a strong background in sport and recreation, and is a big asset to this program. The N.B. Parasport and Recreation Working Group and Management Committee wish to thank the Department of Wellness, Culture & Sport and the Canadian Paralympic Committee for their support of this position.

For more information about the Parasport and Recreation program, or future events in New Brunswick, feel free to contact Courtenay.Brennan@abilitynb.ca or 1.866.462.9555.

“The more a person can do, the more can motivate them.” – *Frederick Herzberg*

N.B. Adaptive Golf Club

The organizing committee for the NB Adaptive Golf Club will be hosting a series of instructional clinics throughout the winter for people with various disabilities. Participants will learn the basic skills and fundamentals related to golf, meet new people and have lots of fun! No previous golf experience is necessary. Participants will have the opportunity to join the NB Adaptive Golf Club Program, and participate in community golf at Carman Creek beginning this spring. For more information, please contact Stacey Copeland at:

Phone: 506-452-1544

Fax: 506-451-8309

E-mail: s.copeland@cdba-nb.ca or

Website: www.cdba-nb.ca



Interesting Links

Income tax tips for 2011 can be found on Canada Revenue Agency's website at: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/nwsrm/txtps/2011/menu-eng.html>

The Medical and Disability related information can be found at: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/rc4064/README.html>

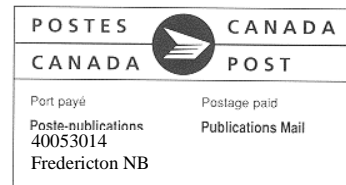
The Inclusion Club is a new and growing international community of like-minded people. People that want to see more people with disability getting active and participating in sport. There are thousands of people around the world doing some great and innovative things in this field. Problem is, there are very few, if any, opportunities to share good practice.

That's what The Inclusion Club has been set up to do. It is a place where you can learn from others, no matter where they are in the world. We know there are great things happening in different parts of the world – from Scandinavia to South America to Australia and we intend to share them with you. For more information, visit <http://theinclusionclub.com/>

The TravelinWheels website was created for people with disabilities to share experiences about great accessible places to visit around the world. New information is constantly posted to this site, and includes an accessibility guide, tips and suggestions regarding travel plans, and a chat room to talk one-on-one with other vacationers. For more information, visit <http://travelinwheels.com/index2.aspx>



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We welcome submissions for our newsletter on any topic relative to persons with disabilities. This newsletter can be available in alternate formats. Please circulate the Communiqué within your office and with friends.



NOTICE

The September 2011 edition of the *Directory of Services Offered to Persons with Disabilities in New Brunswick* is available. If you wish to receive a copy, please fill out the following and return to our office by fax or mail.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Language: English _____ French _____

Return to: Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons
440 King Street, Suite 648, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H8
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Updates are available upon request throughout the year