SUMMER 2019 WWW.SCIONTARIO.ORG

Community

THE SPIRIT OF SPINAL CORD INJURY ONTARIO

SPINAL CORD INJURY ONTARIO
LÉSIONS MÉDULLAIRES ONTARIO

We serve, support and advocate for and with people with spinal cord injury and other disabilities.


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COVER STORY: *Anthony Lue is well back on track! Since his injury in 2009, he played Parasport and discovered other recreational activities. He pursued a career as a Paralympian and is now a member of Team Ontario, training full time for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics. If that's not enough, he is a motivational speaker promoting work safety, worked in TV at Accessible Media Inc., advocating accessibility and inclusiveness for all Canadians, and has a modelling contract with IZ Adaptive.*

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SPINAL CORD INJURY ONTARIO
LÉSIONS MÉDULLAIRES ONTARIO

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Subscription to ***Community*** is a benefit of joining the Spinal Cord Injury Ontario community. To join, please visit our weblink at www.sciontario.org/join or email communications@sciontario.org.

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For more information, visit us online: www.sciontario.org

2018-2019 – A STRONG YEAR

This past year has been an exciting one for SCIO. We celebrated our achievements and all the ways our community came together at our Annual General Meeting, held June 19 at Lyndhurst.

By Stuart Howe

We were very happy to welcome everyone who participated in our AGM, both in person at Lyndhurst and online across the province. Technology gave us a wider reach to our members, which is a priority for us to better communicate with our community. Online viewers were able to actively participate in our meeting, being able to pose questions, and vote in polls in favour or opposition to a motion. This truly gave everyone the opportunity to voice their opinions during our meeting.

As we prepared for our AGM, we looked back at the achievements we'd made over the past year and how we stickhandled the challenges we've faced. And, every year, it strikes me that, through it all, our strong community, no matter where they are in the province, are helping to identify a need or a problem, finding solutions and making the changes we need to achieve our mission and vision. Bob Nigol, the Chair of the Board and I were proud to report that we had a very strong year.

As we reported in the annual report available online at www.sciontario.org/perspectives there was a lot going on this past year.

Our first strategic priority is to **Expand our Impact across Ontario**. It's a big province and there are people with SCI living in every corner but there aren't always services and supports where they need it. So, it's important for us to have as wide an impact as possible.

- Many of you will have heard us talk about VIP4SCI. It's a web-based platform that allows users to connect with their health care network using a computer, tablet or mobile phone. This means bringing medical care and our own RSCs and peer support co-ordinators into a community where there may not be a SCI clinic or we may not have an office. It's currently being tested with a small group of clients and medical professionals, and we think it'll make a big difference.
- You will also likely have heard about – or attended – one of our Community Celebration events this past year. We hosted events in Barrie, Kingston, Peterborough, Toronto, York and Hamilton. You can read about our events in this issue of *Community* magazine. Bringing our community members together in one place to celebrate the collaboration and commitment they show all year is a lot of fun. It's also important because when people come together, they talk, plan, solve problems and expand their thinking.
- In March, we launched our #peeforfree campaign at Queen's Park with a terrific turn out of community and MPPs. This campaign is helping spread the word that the cost of catheters is simply too high. And it's getting noticed, which could very well translate into reduced costs for thousands of catheter users.

Our second strategic priority is to **Share Knowledge**. We really do believe that knowledge is power because we've seen what happens when the right information gets to those who need it. Fear and frustration lessen and confidence grows.

- This past year we developed an innovative new learning program called

Beyond in-person attendees at our event, technology enabled us to deliver our AGM message to people across the province.

Cortree and we're excited about launching it. Tory Bowman and our Knowledge Exchange team have produced a series of dynamic and interactive courses that our community has identified as important: Choosing a Wheelchair, Sex and Disability, Vehicle Modification, Nutrition & Kitchen Accessibility and a Pain Management series. We've just invited our core community members to log in and try them out so we'll hear soon how they've been received. Please read more about this initiative in this issue of *Community* magazine and go online to connect with the program at sciontario.org/cortree.

- As you may know, there aren't enough physicians in this province who are trained to work with patients with SCI. One of the ways we're helping change that is partnering with the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) Professional Learning Series. We've put our own expertise forward and invited our partners in health care to build a certified series for physicians and this year we hosted a well-attended web conference on chronic pain.
- From our Marketing & Communications department came new initiatives to inform and engage our community. In June 2018, we launched a new website, produced videos to support our advocacy campaigns, updated our magazine and developed an online version, and got very active on our social media channels. The more people who know about our objectives, the more they can help meet them.

Our last strategic priority is to **Amplify Our Community's Voice**, which is all about expanding our advocacy efforts, strengthening partnerships and promoting equitable services.

- As part of our *Your Move, Ontario* campaign leading up to the June 2018 election, we built the structure for our community to start conversations with MPPs across the province. They talked about four issues which are still urgent for people with SCI: accessible health care; access to affordable medical supplies; access to mobility devices; and a commitment to AODA goals.
- In January, we hosted a great day with rehab centres across the province. They are our service partners when it comes to being there as early as possible in the SCI journey and the stronger we can make our partnerships, the better for our community. The conference looked at inequities between rehab centres and ways to implement and measure best practices.
- In keeping with the theme of giving voice to issues that keep people with SCI from living the lives they choose, our Client Services department spearheaded a project to assess the need for mobility equipment. They worked with vendors and our community to gather information on developing a donated used equipment program. With complicated and expensive logistics, it will be a challenge but we're hoping our Resource Development department will help with sourcing funding and sponsorships, as they've done so well this past year.

The spirit of changing things for the better is alive and well at SCIO – we see it every day with personal contributions, new programs and services, and lots of new partnerships between government, business and health care. You can read the highlights of our last year in our 2018-19 Annual Report online at www.sciontario.org/perspectives. It's a great snapshot of what we did last year, as well as a forum for community perspectives.

I want to thank all of our donors and sponsors for their support and leadership. Thank you to our clients and other volunteers for your generous contribution of many hours of service and to our staff for your dedicated work this past year. And last, but certainly not least, thanks to our clients and other community members for continuing to guide us in our work and for helping us build our future!

Thanks to you all.

Stuart Howe

Dr. Stuart Howe
CEO, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario

AWARDS!

Connected to SCIO are people of integrity who embody the spirit of community as they bring our mission to life. We are proud and honoured to introduce our 2018-19 award recipients.

Patti Dawson Activist of the Year – John Shepherd

John Shepherd is a force for change. With a BA and MBA from Harvard University, John has never stopped learning or taking action. As a strategic management consultant, he created an innovative e-learning program for patient education in SCI; he served on the boards of SCIO and UHN's Toronto Rehab and on the Rick Hansen Institute's Care Committee; he's a founding member of the Ontario SCI Alliance; and is completing a PhD in rehabilitation science at U of T.

This year, John supported the development of our advocacy program, participating in major campaigns including access to medical supplies, access to mobility devices, and improving access to primary care in Ontario. You'll recognize John as a subject in our #peeforfree video, launched at recent Queen's Park event.

Through John's commitment to our work, we have much to celebrate in knowledge translation and dissemination, policy change and practice improvements for the betterment of people with spinal cord injuries in Ontario and Canada.

Employer of the Year – City of Toronto Election Services

What started as an inquiry in October 2014 from the SCIO Employment Services team to the City of Toronto Election Service team has resulted in a mutually beneficial relationship that has flourished over the years. Thirteen candidates placed in 2014 has grown to twenty candidates placed during the October 2018 election. Along with Information Officers and Tabulations Officers, some of the positions also include Disability Trainers and Attendance and Information Clerks for staff training.

As well as providing opportunities for job seekers, we have observed a growing desire by the City of Toronto Election Services to improve the accessibility for voters and candidates with disabilities and feel proud that we have had a small part in helping to support and encourage this. Our staff and our job seekers have been listened to when giving feedback and practical accessibility improvement suggestions over the years. We have seen these suggestions actioned which results in making voting more accessible for all Torontonians.

Working for the Election Services team has enabled many of our job seekers to gain valuable work experience and develop skills that are valued in today's workplace. For some people, it was their first work experience. After working for the Election Services team many of our job seekers have gained the confidence to take the next step in their employment goals.

We are proud and pleased to name City of Toronto Election Services as our Employer of the Year.

Vigmond Philanthropy Award – Homan Hogan Charity Bonspiel

From left to right: Rick McGrath, Jeff Murphy, Ann McGahey, Greg Purcell, Paul Vaillancourt, Dan Andress and Wanita Andress | Absent: Louise McInnis

Marshall Hogan, a former client of SCIO, was looking for a way to give back and help others following his recovery. Dan Andress, Marshall's brother-in-law, proposed a charity bonspiel and soon Dan had Mark Homan, former provincial junior men's and provincial mixed champion on board.

Next, was the crucial element of the organizing committee. Who would give their time, energy and heart to the event? For five years and counting, Wanita Andress, Dan Andress, Ann McGahey, Rick McGrath, Louise McInnis, Jeff Murphy, Greg Purcell and Paul Vaillancourt have done just that. Their commitment and efforts have raised over $42,000 and critical awareness about access. In fact, the good people

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Spinal Cord Injury Ontario Annual General Meeting Highlights

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Mark Abraham took participants through the Treasurer's Report and annual financial statements.

Total revenue for the year was $10.2 million dollars. This is up by about 0.4% from last year. By far the biggest portion of our revenue comes from Government grants which, at $8.4M, represents 81% of the total. The primary funders of these grants are the Toronto Central LHIN, Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. These are not general operating grants, but rather funds that are provided to us to deliver specific programs that have specific targets that we need to meet. Anything we want to do outside of those programs requires additional sources of revenue. Such as ... Public Support – which is the second most significant portion of our revenue, representing 18% of the total. This category – also known as Fundraising - includes funds generously provided through Individual Giving, Program Sponsorships, and Corporate & Foundation Donations. This year we received $1.4M, up by 6% over last year.

The final meaningful portion of our revenue last year came from grants provided by the Ontario Paraplegic Foundation (OPF) which is a related organization that is controlled by SCIO and is designed to hold our financial reserves and provide grants to SCIO. This year, grants from the OPF totalled $343,000. This amount represents investments made in SCIO's fundraising and marketing areas, which, over the next five years, are intended to yield dividends and grow the public support revenue category, and further build the funds in the OPF.

Complete details of the Treasurer's Report can be viewed online at www.sciontario.org in our Annual Report.

The accounting firm Grant Thornton conducted an audit of SCIO's financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2019, a condensed version of which can be found online. The firm of Grant Thornton was appointed the Auditor of SCIO for the ensuing year.

Craig Brown, Chair of SCIO's Governance and Nominations Committee presents an award to Tom Proszowski for his long-time service to SCIO. (Missing from photo: Marco Ferrara.

Board of Directors for 2019-20

Craig Brown, Chair of SCIO's Governance and Nominations Committee acknowledged the invaluable contribution of two hard-working and passionate volunteers who have stepped down from the Board: Marco Ferrara and Tom Proszowski.

Marco was previously a board member of Canadian Paraplegic Association from 2004 – 2006 and has sat as a board member of SCIO from 2013. He has also been a member of the Marketing and Fundraising Committee and Advocacy Committee.

Tom has been a board member of SCIO since 2011 and has served as Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee until very recently.

Spinal Cord Injury Ontario 2019-20 Board of Directors

MARK ABRAHAM, TREASURER

Mark has served on SCIO's board as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee since 2016 and has been contributing to the financial oversight of the organization as a committee member since 2011.

Mark is the Director of Operations and Administration at Blueprint-ADE. A senior organizational leader, he has successfully guided both for-profit and not-for-profit businesses through phases of growth, change, and maturity. He brings a deep level of business and financial acumen to SCIO, with more than 15 years of management, consulting, and board-level experience across a range of sectors including health care, education, policy research, and technology.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Mathematics from the University of Waterloo and a Master of Business Administration with a specialization in strategic management from York University's Schulich School of Business. Mark is a Certified Corporate Financial Planning and Analysis Professional and active member of the Association of Finance Professionals.

KENT BASSETT-SPIERS

Kent serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, a position he has held since 1999, and was appointed as the Executive Director of the Canadian Spinal Research Organization in 2014.

Kent has extensive experience in developing strategic linkages and partnerships, organizational restructuring and working with the Ministry of Health on policy and system reforms.

Kent is a Certified Health Care Executive with the Canadian College of Health Services Executives. He completed his undergraduate work at Schulich School of Business, York University and graduate work at the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine in the School of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation.

Through his work with the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation Kent has been involved in a number of partnership activities with the Rick Hansen Foundation and the Rick Hansen Institute including the SCI Solutions Network, Canadian Neurotrauma Research Partnership and more recently with the Best Practices Implementation Project.

CRAIG BROWN

Craig was called to the Bar in 1980. He has practiced with Thomson, Rogers for more than 30 years and is certified by the Law Society as a specialist in Civil Litigation. Craig is listed in "Best Lawyers in Canada" and is one of Lexpert's "Leading Civil Litigation Practitioners."

Since 1990, Craig has restricted his practice to acting for plaintiffs in serious personal injury claims, class actions and medical malpractice claims. He has more than 50 reported Court and Tribunal decisions and has tried numerous jury actions over the past three decades.

Craig is an enthusiastic skier and sailor. He volunteers with the Disabled Sailing Association of Ontario and the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing.

HEATHER FLETT

Heather is the Advanced Practice Leader for Spinal Cord Rehabilitation at University Health Network in Toronto. She has 20 years of experience in the field of spinal cord rehabilitation working as a Physical Therapist for eight years prior to her current role. In her Advanced Practice Leader role, Heather supports clinical research integration and leads projects to advance best practices in SCI rehabilitation. Heather has been an active member of the Ontario Solutions Alliance since 2010. She is a Lecturer in the Department of Physical Therapy at University of Toronto and completed an MSc in the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Science focusing on walking outcomes following incomplete spinal cord injury.

DANA FRANCOZ

Dana has had a long career in media, representing some of North America's most iconic brands to Canadian advertisers and marketers, across every media platform – print, digital, broadcast, radio and Out of Home. Throughout her career, Dana has also been an active volunteer and board member. Most recently, Dana was an active member of the board of the Clarendon Foundation, seeing its eventual integration into PACE, which serves people with disabilities, allowing them to live independently. Dana grew up with an amazing mother who, although she used a wheelchair, gave her a real-life example of just how much can be accomplished, no matter what your physical ability. Her mother, Marjorie Francoz, has been a peer support volunteer at SCIO for close to 40 years.

GARY FROUDE

Gary is a Muskoka transplant arriving a short 20 years ago coming surreptitiously from an environmental project in Costa Rica and a musical project in Africa. He became managing director of the Muskoka Lakes Music Festival which evolved into an international Chautauqua. He chaired the national Arts Network for Children and Youth for several years and continues as a director in assisting that organization with re-structuring its ArtsSmarts partners across the country. Gary was one of the first presidents of a newly formed Rotary Club in Muskoka Lakes, is a multiple Paul Harris Fellow, and has been Secretary of a leading-edge, affordable home ownership project since its inception. He chaired the Board of Muskoka Tourism for a number of years and led Muskoka in the development of a new provincial tourism structure and chaired the Board of the newly formed Explorers' Edge. In 2012 Gary was honoured to receive the Muskoka Citizen of the Year award.

In 2013, he was paralyzed by an unknown virus and was introduced to the field of health care as he gained insight into the challenges of complex continuing care in the province and in Muskoka. Gary has been bringing the patient voice to the table as a member of the Muskoka Area Health System Transformation Executive Committee, the Critical Care Council of Ontario and as co-chair of the MAHST Community Engagement Workstream. Gary and his partner Gayle are active members of their community, striving for positive change and valuing quality of life.

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OMAR HA- REDEYE

Omar is a lawyer who practices civil litigation, employment and human rights law, technology, and health law. He holds a JD from Western, and an LLM in Health Law from Osgoode Hall. Prior to becoming a lawyer, he worked in clinical health care, and maintains his American designation in nuclear medicine technology.

Omar joined the Board in 2018 and served on the SCIO Young Professionals Board prior to that since 2015. He is a member of the Advocacy Committee and is actively involved in SCIO's government relations and legislative strategies.

SARAH HICKS

Sarah is a communications professional with more than 20 years' experience. For the last decade, she has been working with non-profit corporations to strengthen their communications and stakeholder engagement capacity – most recently with the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. Sarah started her career in public relations working with pharmaceutical clients in Toronto, the U.S. and U.K., and then joined GlaxoSmithKline Canada. Sarah speaks French and German and has a BA in Social and Political History from Victoria College, University of Toronto, and a Public Relations Post Graduate Certificate from Humber College.

ANITA KAISER

Anita completed a Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Science through the University of Toronto with a focus on parenting with a SCI. Anita works as a Research Assistant at Toronto Rehab's Lyndhurst Centre, University Health Network. She has been Director of Research for the Canadian Spinal Research Organization since 2005 and a board member of the Canada International Scientific Exchange Program since 2012. Anita also sits on several committees for various SCI organizations. Anita has been a peer support volunteer with SCIO since 2000 and an Injury Survivor Presenter with Parachute's No Regrets program since 1999. In her spare time, Anita enjoys modeling for IZ Adaptive Clothing, travelling, exercising, reading, and spending time with her family and young daughter.

JOANNE MACDONALD

Joanne started in the news business 38 years ago, first in radio, then transitioning to television as a story producer with Canada AM in 1983, then on to field producing for CTV National News in 1989. From there, Joanne headed to Ottawa, where she became the Bureau Manager then Deputy Ottawa Bureau Chief for CTV News. She continued to ascend the ranks, ultimately to the role of Senior Vice-President, CTV News where she oversaw day-to-day operations and strategic vision for CP24 and CTV News Toronto.

Joanne has helped shape some of Canada's best journalists. Her leadership, news sense, and commitment to the highest news standards have contributed greatly to cementing CTV News as the powerhouse it is today. She actively contributes to the professional development of young journalists and is on the Advisory Council for her alma mater at the Ryerson School of Journalism.

ALEX MCKINNON

Alex is a certified employee benefit specialist (CEBS) and is the Research Director for the United Steelworkers Union – Canadian National Office. He has been on staff with the Union for 32 years. In 1991, he became the first rank and file member to go into the Unions National Office Research Department and in 2013 became the first rank and file member to be promoted to the Research Director.

Alex serves as a pension trustee on the multi-employer Steelworkers Pension Plan, as well as Chair of the Canadian Energy and Related Industries Pension Plan(CERi). He is the Vice-Chair and past Chair and Vice-Chair of the University of Toronto Pension Plan; Secretary Treasurer of MEBCO and Chair of the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) Multi-Employer Pension Committee. He also serves as a Labour Co-Chair of the Ontario University Pension Project (UPP).

Alex is a graduate of Sir Wilfred Laurier University with a Bachelors' in Economics, as well as holding the CEBS designation and a variety of certifications in pension fund governance. He also volunteers as a SCIO peer support volunteer and in 2018 was awarded the Peer Support Volunteer of the Year

BOB NIGOL, CHAIR

Bob is the Managing Partner of EPS Settlements Group of Canada.

Bob holds a Master's degree in Policy Studies, specifically in the area of Insurance Law and Finance. He is an accomplished lecturer and published author. Among his philanthropic interests, in addition to SCIO and Spinal Cord Injury British Columbia, Bob has been an active contributor and consultant to and fundraiser for the Ontario Brain Injury Association and Hamilton Health Sciences. With regard to the latter, the "Making the Links" Charity Golf event that he founded two years ago has raised close to $150K for the hospital and related charities which includes SCIO.

CINDY SCOTT, VICE CHAIR

Cindy manages an event management company, First Avenue Consulting and brings more than 15 years of leadership experience in communications, marketing and event management to her clients. Cindy began her career at Corel Corporation, where she soon rose to the Director of Corporate

Communications position, managing a worldwide staff of 35 professionals. Later, Cindy took over corporate communications at Corel Computer Corporation. After Corel Computer Corporation merged with Hardware Canada, Cindy led the launch of its new corporate identity, Rebel.com. She then joined Reid Eddison as a partner, where she counselled emerging companies on how to build and promote their businesses.

SHAUN WESTLAKE, SECRETARY

Team Leader, TC Transcontinental Printing.

For the last five years Shaun has been a SCIO board member, after being a chapter member in Grey Bruce since the early 90s. Twenty-five years ago, he sustained a spinal cord injury from a diving accident at which time he became a client of SCIO, formerly known at that time as Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario. A resident of Owen Sound since 1983, allows him to be a passionate advocate for people living with spinal cord injuries living in rural Ontario. With an education in computer science, Shaun is employed as a Team Leader at TC Transcontinental Printing in Owen Sound. When not busy working full-time, he is an avid amateur photographer, a fan of OHL hockey and enjoys spending time with friends and family. ●

AWARDS!

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of the Smith's Falls Curling and Squash Club undertook to make their facility accessible for the event.

Our thanks and recognition to the organizing committee of the Homan Hogan Charity Bonspiel for turning their time, energy and affection for friends, family and community into meaningful change for people living with spinal cord injury.

Darrel Murphy Award – Theresa Power

Theresa has been a part of the Attendant Services Team for 26+ years and is the epitome of commitment and dedication. Darrel Murphy was a mentor to Theresa and someone she admired greatly.

Theresa is approachable and professional when supporting clients. She is a true supporter of the Independent Living Philosophy and the rights for persons with disabilities to choose their path and live the life they choose.

Theresa was recognized by a client with the following comment; "This attendant applies both the splint for my hand and the compression garment for my leg so that it's both comfortable and does its job. She is a great listener, respectful, follows direction, demonstrates strong work ethics, follows policy and practices and is not anxious to be on her way to the next client."

It is our continued pleasure to have such a committed and dedicated Attendant as a part of our team here at SCIO, and we are proud to name Theresa our 2018-19 Attendant of the Year.

Community Awards

BARRIE

Kevin McKenzie – Volunteer of the Year

Michael Thompson – Family Volunteer of the Year

Dennis Burke – Peer Support Volunteer of the Year

Sheena Gow – Health Care Professional of the Year

KINGSTON

Rachel Holthof – Volunteer of the Year

Tamara Van Grunsven – Family Volunteer of the Year

David Baldwin – Peer Support Volunteer of the Year

Dr. Sussan Askari – Health Care Professional of the Year

Bergeron Clifford LLP – Award of Appreciation

TORONTO

Julie Hayes – Peer Support Family Volunteer of the Year

John Anacleto – Peer Support Volunteer of the Year

Gloria Kwan – Health Care Professional of the Year

HAMILTON

Michelle Read – Health Care Professional of the Year

Alex McKinnon – Peer Support Volunteer of the Year

Christine Martz Family – Volunteer of the Year

LONG TERM STAFF RECOGNITION

20 years Delia Barroga, Janet Deonarayan, Yvonne Williamson

25 years Cora Vigilia

35 years Heather Hollingshead

By Joanne Smith

Dietary Detective

Dietary fads used to come and go every decade or so. The 60s were all about Weight Watchers and the Macrobiotic Diet, until the Grapefruit and Scarsdale Diets took over in the 70s. These were replaced by the Cabbage Soup and Liquid Diets in the 80s until the Low Fat and Zone trends ruled in the 90s.

Today, diet crazes turn over so frequently, it's hard to keep track of their fashionable names, never mind what you're actually supposed to be putting in your mouth. The plethora of popular diets that people swear by right now include Keto, Paleo, FODMAP, Intermittent Fasting, Anti-Inflammatory and Carb Cycling just to name a few. All make similar claims of weight loss, decreased inflammation, increased physical energy and mental clarity, so it's enticing to try one or a succession of a few of these to see which one your body best responds to. While I highly encourage everyone to eat well, try new recipes and thoroughly enjoy their food, I have a growing concern.

In my nutrition practice, I'm seeing more and more clients with disabilities and chronic health conditions jumping onto these trendy food bandwagons without doing any homework about how excess or limitation of specific nutrients may affect them and in some cases, potentially make their condition worse. Here are a couple of examples to demonstrate.

Detoxifying diets are currently very much in vogue. An individual with a spinal cord injury, who was dealing with a pressure sore, put himself on a long term "Detox" eating plan that he'd read about on the internet. This diet involved only eating fruits, vegetables and a small selection and quantity of nuts and seeds. It is recommended that individuals with spinal cord injuries who have pressure wounds increase their calorie (30-35 calories per kg/body weight/per day) – Kirk 1996) and protein (1.2-1.5 grams of protein per kg/body weight/per day – Kirk 1996) consumption in order to support the healing process. Thus, this particular "Detox" diet was severely limiting the amount of critical macronutrients he needed to help heal his pressure sore.

The ketogenic diet, which is also all the rage right now, was actually developed in the 1920s to help reduce seizures in children who had resistance to epileptic medications. The "Keto" diet, which involves a high intake of healthy fats, with moderate protein and limited carbohydrate consumption, causes the body to burn fat instead of glucose. This process, known as ketosis, is what inhibits seizure activity. Studies have shown that the ketogenic diet can decrease seizure activity by as much as 50% in some individuals (Henderson et. al. 2006), though this diet has gained popularity most recently for its ability to help people lose weight quickly. While this diet has proven to be safe and effective in treating a serious medical condition, that doesn't mean it doesn't come without risk. For example, an individual living with type 2 diabetes (who was using insulin to control her blood sugar levels) was eager to lose weight and put herself on "Keto". While this low carbohydrate diet may seem like an ideal plan to lose weight and also manage blood sugar levels, for this person, when followed alongside her insulin regime, lead to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), which contributed to severe headaches (other symptoms of hypoglycemia include mental confusion and blurred vision).

Another individual living with epilepsy, as well as a serious kidney condition, also tried the ketogenic diet in the hopes of minimizing her seizures. For this woman, the "Keto" diet, in combination with her kidney dysfunction, triggered a dangerous condition called ketoacidosis (acids produced as a by-product of burning fat cause blood to become too acidic), which in turn can cause damage to the liver, kidneys and brain.

I too tried "Keto" (as I like to try all diets before recommending them to my clients) and I experienced what is known as Keto Flu. This is a collection of flu-like symptoms that occur as the body adapts to burn fat as its fuel source. While I was aware of this potential side effect, I must admit I was surprised at the intensity of the muscle cramps and lethargy. Luckily, because I was aware of what was causing my symptoms, I was able to take steps to alleviate them.

So, I write this as a caution that not all diets are for everyone, particularly if you are living with a chronic health condition. I strongly urge you to be your own dietary detective and research your own condition(s), specific nutritional needs and always consult with your physician or health care provider before starting any hot new diet plan.

Some of the fun in doing this kind of detective work is finding delicious new recipes – this is a fantastic summer dish I recently found and wanted to share!

No Tuna Salad Sandwich

1 large can	chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1 tsp	Dijon mustard
1 tbsp	pure maple syrup
¼ cup	red onion, diced
¼ cup	pickle, diced
3 tbsp	fresh dill, chopped
2 tbsp	mayonnaise
1 tsp	capers, drained
pinch	sea salt and pepper

- Mash chick peas in bowl with fork. Mix in all other ingredients.
- Enjoy on a bed of greens or mashed up on whole grain bread. ●

Children & Youth Wheelchair Dancers Wanted!

TO TRAIN FOR AND PERFORM AT SHOWCASE EVENT IN NOVEMBER 2019

OPPORTUNITY

- Train with professional dance choreographer ***(no prior experience required)***
- Weekly dance class expenses covered
- Perform at showcase event on November 2nd

REQUIREMENTS

- Wheelchair user between the ages of 4-17
- Positive, motivated, and eager to learn & have fun!
- Commitment to attend class once a week between August to October
- Commitment to perform at showcase event on November 2nd, 2019

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT
WHEEL DANCE
wheeldance@outlook.com
647-297-3198

REBUILDING LIVES
29th Annual Golf Tournament

With summer in the air, let's team up and play a round of golf!

Join Bruce Power, the Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council of Ontario and SCIO on Wednesday, September 11 at the private Georgian Bay Club. This tournament is in support of SCIO. The par-71 layout includes five sets of tees ranging from 5,129 to 7,108 yards, 55 acres of fairways, 73 Alister MacKenzie-inspired bunkers and large undulating greens, providing new challenges for everyone.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

THE GEORGIAN BAY CLUB, 516689 7 LINE,
CLARKSBURG, ON N0H 1J0

SCHEDULE:
Noon – Registration and Lunch
1:00 pm – Shotgun tee-off
5:00 pm – Reception and Dinner

FEATURES:
- 18 holes of golf
- Lunch on the course
- Dinner in the Clubhouse
- Door prizes
- Golfers prizes
- Longest drive award
- Closest to the pin award
- Hole-in-one prize...and more!

To learn more, register, or sponsor this event, please visit our website at sciontario.org/rebuildinglives2019.

Proud to support the Peer Support Program, Hamilton Region

THE MORRIS
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Back Row: MC Jillian Purdham, CEO Stuart Howe, award recipient Erlinda Erfe, keynote speaker Shala Yaghoubian, Peer Support Co-ordinator Sherri Upper
Front Row: Award recipients Tyler Barker and Chris Rice

Celebrating Our Community in York Region

On the evening of May 9, SCIO members from York community came together to celebrate and share stories of overcoming the odds and practicing gratitude through adversity.

There was a lot of energy in the room as this was our first opportunity to raise a glass to our newest chapter members for their contributions.

Our MC for the event, Jillian Purdham, spoke of her own experience with SCIO before introducing our keynote speaker Shala Yaghoubian who spoke candidly about her family's confusion, anger and sense of loss following her husband Abbas' SCI. Feeling adrift in the health care system, Shala recalled it was SCIO staff and volunteers who took the time to listen and present the big picture for a plan to recovery.

After Shala's rousing speech, Regional Services Co-ordinator Sheri Upper presented awards to a few of our community members:

- **Erlinda Erfe**: York Region Health Care Professional Award
- **Chris Rice**: York Region Peer Support Volunteer Award
- **Tyler Barker**: York Region Accessibility Advocate Award

A huge thank you to our sponsors for the event Wright Rehab, Hollister Ltd, Coloplast and IBC as well as our host, The Edward Hotel, for providing the beautiful space for our event and a delicious meal. We also want to thank our entire York region community for their commitment to our ongoing service and support. ●

Celebrating Our Peterborough Community

We gathered with our friends in Peterborough on April 24 to celebrate the fantastic contribution they have made to SCIO in our community.

It was a cold spring night but the atmosphere at our venue, The StoneHouse Hall, was warm and bright. Community members from in and around Peterborough joined us to celebrate everything we've achieved over the past year. In particular, we honoured our award recipients:

- **Carl Bax**: Peterborough Peer Support Volunteer Award
- **Carrie Cleverdon**: Peterborough Health Care Professional Award
- **Les Latchford**: Peterborough Community Partner Award

Keynote speaker and professional volunteer, Julie Hayes, reflected on her experiences with SCIO. Julie paid a heartfelt and emotional tribute to Stephanie Bolton, SCIO's Regional Services Co-ordinator for the Peterborough area. MC for the evening was vlogger, speaker and marketing expert Michelle Ferreri, who welcomed people onto stage with flare and humour.

A huge thank you to our sponsors Wright Rehab, LLF Lawyers, ProResp, Hollister, Coloplast and IBC, and our event photographer Kennedy Headon.

Thanks Peterborough community for your passionate support of the SCIO mission and vision. ●

Regional Services Co-ordinator Stephanie Bolton, Julie Hayes, Les Latchford, Stephanie's daughter Grace, Michelle Ferreri, Carrie Cleverdon and Carl Bax.
Photo credit: Kennedy Headon

The Magic of Marjorie

Above: Peer Support Volunteer Marjorie Francoz.
Left: Marjorie pictured wearing her Medal, with SCIO's Director of Advocacy, Peter Athanasopoulos.
Below: Marjorie speaking during National Volunteer Week 2019.

Peer Support Volunteer Marjorie Francoz receives the Governor General of Canada's Sovereign's Medal for her service to Spinal Cord Injury Ontario.

Lifelong volunteers are a rare breed. While approximately 50% of Canadians donate their time, energy and skills at some point, few show the passion, dedication and commitment to community that Marjorie Francoz has over nearly 40 years of helping others. In fact, Marjorie is so much the exception that she was recently awarded the Governor General of Canada's Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers.

A single mother of four, licensed pilot, painter and accomplished piano teacher who trained under Glenn Gould's mentor Alberto Guerrero, Marjorie's spinal cord was severed in 1979 during surgery. While rehabilitating in the Lyndhurst Centre and working hard to transition to her new life, Marjorie decided that feeling sorry for herself would yield absolutely nothing.

"Yelling about it doesn't do anything," she says. "What does help is time. It took me awhile to get my life back together. Then, seeing so many others at Lyndhurst – especially so many young people – I thought, if I can help someone, I will. So, I started encouraging people. The time right after an injury is so disheartening. I wanted to help people see a way forward."

Marjorie's primary message was empowering: you can create a new life. You design your future. Wherever you want to go, you can get there – and I will help you.

Marjorie's greatest strength as a person and Peer Support Volunteer may be her tenaciousness. Understanding that the greatest challenges after a spinal cord injury are mental and emotional, she believes that how we respond to life's road-

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Megan's Story:

LIVING LIFE AS A NEW MOM WITH DISABILITIES

By Megan Ladelpha

I grew up being that loud mouth, scrappy, outgoing, athletic, wild, and independent woman. Being busy and constantly on the go was my lifestyle and I loved it.

While I was a teen and young adult I worked numerous jobs and volunteered for many organizations at the same time. For more than seven years, I was a lifeguard for the City of Ottawa and worked as a waterfront director for a Girl Guide Camp in the summers.

I met Ben when I turned 18, and later when I was 25, we rekindled our love for each other and we married. We eloped with our son by our side in 2016, and it was one of the best days of my life. Ben's support and love throughout the last nine years has definitely helped me accomplish numerous goals and he gave me the best gift ever, my now five-year-old son Hudson. I am beyond grateful to him standing beside me all these years and showing me what true love is and what it can really endure.

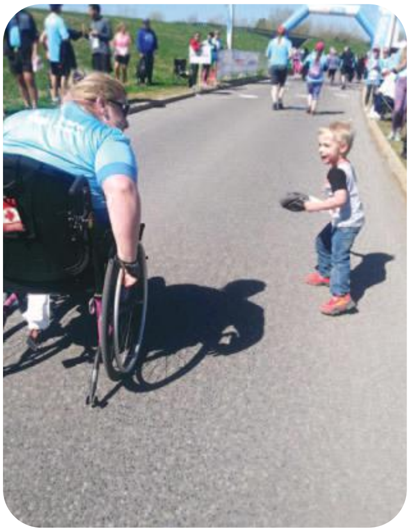
My love for athletics got me to start taking part in numerous running races including a winter half marathon and a 27k Spartan race in Quebec Mountains. I was always an active and motivated woman who never let anything or anyone get in my way. During the time I was pregnant, I worked on my second Master's Degree while continuing to work and volunteer. A month prior to giving birth to my beautiful son, I was finally offered a casual librarian position with the Ottawa Public Library. I kept working 11 days past my due date, and only two months after having my son I returned to work. Financially it was needed as I continued to pay my tuition while writing my Master's research paper, and we were also new home owners. After only two weeks of having my son, I returned to my weekly Sparks meetings with Hudson in tow, as I was the Guider in Charge and wanted to continue being me and taking part in my extracurricular activities. As a parent, you say you would do anything for your child's happiness and wellbeing. Providing for my family financially and showing what hard work can really do were two things I tried to show my son from a very young age.

In November 2016, I started to have pain in my right leg. By May 2017, I was in significant pain and experienced numbness now from my right hip all the way down to my ankle. I was going to the doctor's office and hospital emergency rooms every two weeks or so saying that something was really wrong. I've always had a high pain tolerance yet this was becoming unbearable. I was advised to take medical leave from work and do physiotherapy. I was off for more than a month and tried to return to work. After three days, I went back on medical leave as the pain became even more excruciating. I was always a heavy woman with a good health track record having experienced no injuries or accidents.

Unfortunately, something went undiagnosed and I knew it. I kept getting prescribed different pain medications and told to continue with physiotherapy and lose weight. I was beyond depressed and felt hopeless. I couldn't walk. I couldn't stand. I couldn't cook, clean, or even take care of my son. I was constantly in bed trying to sleep off the pain and time was passing me by.

On August 20, 2017, I woke up not being able to walk to the bathroom. I stumbled holding myself up by leaning on the walls and I finally got to the toilet. I sat down and knew I was in trouble. I wasn't able to actually go to the bathroom and the alarm bells began ringing in my head (my physiotherapist said that if you can't go to the bathroom call 911 right away). I tried standing up again to get back to my bedroom where my cellphone was to call for an ambulance, as my son and husband left about an hour earlier to go get haircuts at the mall down the road, but I lost balance and barely sat back down on the toilet. I then got my body completely down onto the floor and army crawled back to my bedroom. I got my phone and called my husband first saying that I'm calling 911 so you need to come home and unlock the door for me to let the paramedics in because I can't walk at all. I hung up and called 911. I told my husband to stay home with my son and I would call my mom to meet me at the hospital.

After receiving an MRI, I was told from the ER Doctor that I had a slipped disc (L3 or L4) that was pretty much puncturing my spinal cord and almost splitting my spinal cord in half. I would need emergency surgery to remove the disc and to try to fix the damage. I was instructed that this procedure might help but unfortunately the damage was so severe that I really only had 1% chance of walking again. The first thing that flashed before my eyes was my then three-year-old son and husband and how are they going to manage if I had a disability. I pushed those feelings aside and thought let's do the surgery and let's get walking again. I didn't care if I was going to need leg braces or have to walk with a walker or arm crutches, I was going to walk; someway… somehow!



After surgery, I was in the hospital for 11 days before going to the Rehab Centre in Ottawa for three long months. I slept there every night and woke up every morning knowing that I am doing what I had to do in order to get home to be with my son and husband. My son would come to visit me during each hospital stay yet it's nothing like being at home, in your own environment with your son.

So, I worked. I worked hard on getting my balance and leg strength to reappear. I had to learn how to do everything over again in my life but I

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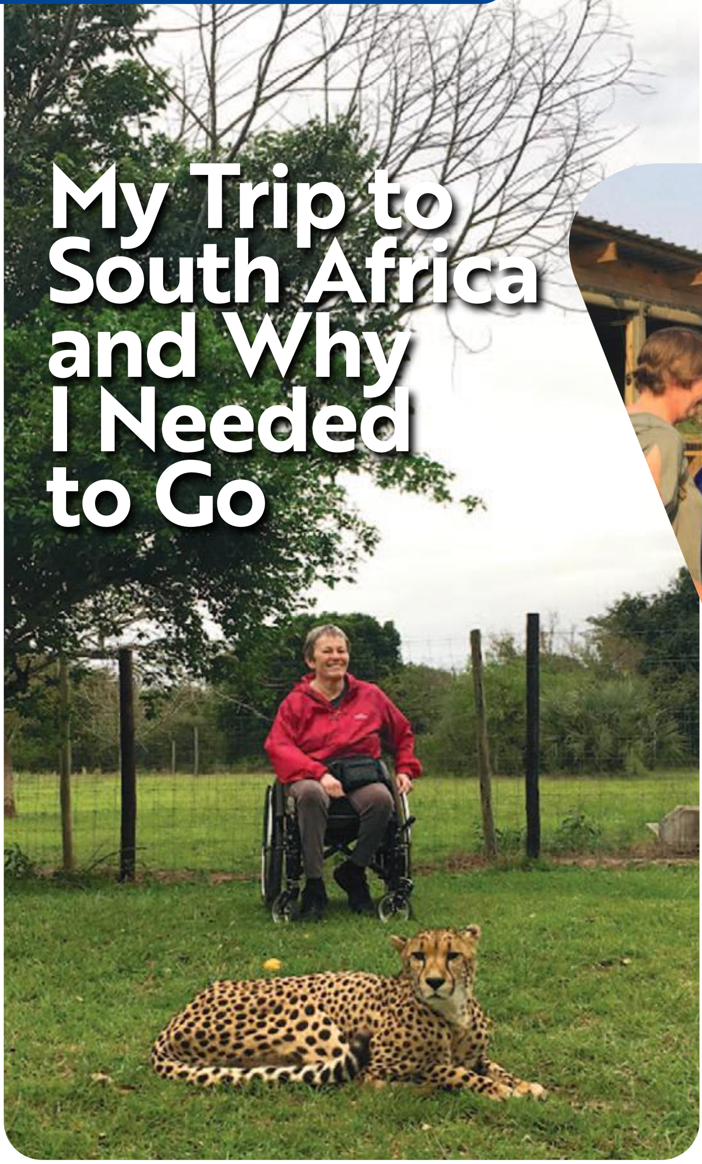
My Trip to South Africa and Why I Needed to Go



By Pat Israel

My sweet husband John passed away on December 31, 2016. We had been married 37 years and travelled together to many different cities in the United States, Canada, Australia, England, and Holland.

After he died, I missed him terribly and wondered if I could ever feel happiness again. Over a year had passed since his death and I still had not experienced happiness.

I wanted to travel again but had no one to go with. When I was wandering around the internet looking for accessible tours I connected with a travel agent named Deborah who also uses a wheelchair. She got back to me with a few suggestions and one of them was an accessible safari trip in South Africa. I loved the idea. I planned a year in advance for the trip, zealously preparing things like vaccinations, getting proper clothing and other essential equipment. On September 12, 2018, I boarded my flight and began my much-anticipated trip.

My first leg of the flight was to Dubai. I stayed there overnight and flew to Durban in South Africa the next day. I spent a total of 22 hours in the air keeping myself entertained by watching a lot of movies. Fortunately, the flight attendants, the airport staff and the shuttle bus driver were very accommodating. Staff at the hotel where I stayed overnight were always hovering around me, ready to help whether I needed it or not.

After landing in South Africa, I found someone with the sign Access2AfricaSafaris waiting for me. It was a representative from the local accessible tour company. There were 20 people on our safari. Some people brought their own attendants. The tour company did have a staff person who provided some assistance but not attendant care for different group members. Most of the group came from England. They were with an organization that works with people who have had brain injuries. There was an Australian woman who used a scooter, but I was the lone person from Canada. After everyone finally arrived, we got loaded onto two accessible vans and headed to the Makaranga Lodge. I admit that I was nervous before I met everyone but they were really friendly and welcoming, and I knew right away it was going to be a good trip.

Makaranga Lodge was beautiful, surrounded by a stunning garden with a collection of sculptures. The day after we arrived was a day to rest and recover. Many folks took advantage of the spa and wandered around the grounds. The following day, our itinerary consisted of a visit to Ushaka Marine. Later in the trip we visited the Kulani Special Needs School where we met many students and teachers.

The real adventure did not start until we were off to the Hluhluwe Game Reserve on Day 4. My accommodation was a hut that was modern, neat and cozy. I had my own private unit which was connected to another person's unit on our safari. In the morning, two monkeys were outside my window grooming

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Magazine without Borders

By Nancy Xia, Information and Resource Specialist

A few years ago, we published an article entitled "Wheelchair without Borders". It talks about a local organization in Toronto that sends out donated wheelchairs to third world countries and how these donations have drastically changed people's lives. A few weeks ago, the founder of the organization Jose Orozco shared stories about how the magazines have also gone across the border and reach people in ways that are miraculous.

The original article in *Outspoken!* magazine talked about how this initiative started: In March 1996, Jose was injured in a work-place accident and temporarily needed a mobility aid. It was the first time he became aware of the needs of people with disabilities. In 2007, his friend Christopher, a local Canadian with a Cuban son-in-law, was talking to him about his charity work of sending donated wheelchairs to Cuba. It inspired Jose to do the same for his people in Peru. Christopher helped him started the project by providing the first wheelchair and 12 years later, his organization Purinapaq has reached more than 10,000 people across South America.

Last year, Christopher asked Jose to go with him to Cuba to help a local Cuban named Nika. Nika received his first power wheelchair 15 years ago, but it had run its course. After finding a donated wheelchair in Toronto, Christopher planned the trip and paid for all of Jose's expenses. Upon meeting Nika, Jose learned that he was injured almost 20 years ago. The government has been good at providing physiotherapies to injured people, but when it comes to equipment and assistive devices, they only have manual wheelchairs with basic features. As someone with quadriplegia, Nika was bedridden for more than five years. Christopher's first gift 15 years ago was game changing for Nika. Now that he saw his second wheelchair, he was over the moon! The following day, when Jose went back to Nika's home to re-adjust and program the wheelchair, he saw dozens of empty rum bottles lying outside of the house. Apparently, the whole village was rejoicing over Nika's new wheelchair. They had a ceremony to baptize the wheelchair. The festivity lasted past midnight.

After helping Nika and fixing a few other wheelchairs in the local area, Jose returned to Canada. But he quickly found out that he had forgotten a memory card at Nika's home. It was the most vital piece that he needed to do all his work on power wheelchairs. There was no postal service in Nika's area and getting him on the phone was already a chore that took a lot of creativity. Jose would have to return to Cuba to retrieve it himself. But a few days later, he found a better reason to go there.

A Cuban lady sent Jose a message over Facebook. She said that she read about Jose's charity work in a magazine called *Outspoken!* The magazine was brought to Cuba by a Canadian tourist. It had an article about travelling to Cuba written by another member of SCIO. After the tourist returned home, he left the magazine in one of the places he had visited. By chance, the Cuban lady found the magazine and read about Jose's article. She had a neighbour who desperately needed a wheelchair and she wondered if Jose could help. She sent him a picture of the young man named Reinier.

Based on the picture, finding a suitable wheelchair for Reinier was a challenge because his legs had a severe deformity and his physical condition was hard to assess by just looking at pictures of him. Jose replied, "Can you send me a picture of the wheelchair that he is using right now?" Reinier was using an old Invacare manual wheelchair with adapted footrest, which gave Jose an idea. After receiving a power wheelchair donation from a friend named Zvonko, Jose started to adapt it by building an extended footrest similar to Reiner's manual wheelchair. A friend named Mila donated the batteries and another friend David offered to pay for part of Jose's trip. With all of his supporters help, Jose returned to Cuba.

When Reinier sat on his first power wheelchair, he had this unceasing grin on his face. For the first time ever, he could wheel around independently. He made the bold statement that he would be going to the carnival this June with his girlfriend… whom he will soon meet. Jose was hoping to get the magazine back because he only had a few copies left, but Reinier refused because it was, "MINE!"

Since the article was shared on Facebook and other social media channels, Jose has received requests from Mongolia, Panama, Paraguay and other parts of the world. It has also

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JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

Chris Rice, Peer Support Volunteer, and his sister Felicia.

"I like what you're doing."

This simple thought built our community these past 74 years. And it's the thought that continues to strengthen our work - and resolve – to expand our reach and impact. We invite you to join our inspired group of change-makers – all it takes is a word from you that you want to stay in touch on our initiatives to **support**, **serve** and **advocate** for and with people with spinal cord injury. It's the thought that counts for vital change.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

If you are aligned with our mission and vision, you are a welcome member of our community. There's no membership fee to pay or application to complete – just let us know you're interested and we'll connect with you about our work, while we honour your privacy and communication preferences.

If you want to expand your involvement with SCIO, there are lots of ways to do that – volunteer, donate, become an advocate – and if you want to lend your support simply by **becoming a member of our e-community** or engaging with us on **Twitter**, **Facebook** or **Instagram** – that's meaningful too. It's all about expanding the number of people who believe in what we do, which demonstrates and deepens the impact we have on those living with spinal cord injury.

We are proud to count among **our powerful community** all those who give flight to our work:

- people with spinal cord injury and other physical disabilities
- families and friends of people with SCI and other disabilities
- health care professionals (including MDs, RNs, NPs, PSWs, SWs, OTs, PTs and RTs)
- government staff whose work supports our advocacy efforts
- businesses that want to engage their staff in a dynamic charity or want to partner with us as sponsors or employers
- interested members of the public looking for awareness, education and a sense of community
- our vendors – people and businesses that help us deliver our programs
- our staff and volunteers
- our donors

For more on how you can join our community, please visit **www.sciontario.org/join**. ●

My Baby's Beautiful Eyes

By Christine Martz

When a new mother looks at her newborn baby for the very first time she fulfills a dream in her mind of who they will become, looking into their eyes seeking out a connection to this perfect bundle that's been placed in your arms. For me it came quickly and fiercely. Unconditional love finally had a definition.

That's how I felt after I delivered my first child, a son. Braden was born Oct 27, 1993 and everything about life in that moment was perfect. My husband Paul, was starting out in his field as a Mechanical Engineer. I was working toward my diploma as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE). We didn't have a lot starting out as a young family, but we had each other and we shared common goals.

This was an exciting and rewarding time in my life. I was flourishing in my role as a Mom and I loved being in school. A requirement of my ECE program was a work placement where I was placed at a centre with children who had special needs. I was very nervous going into this as I had very little exposure and experience with children who had developmental disabilities. I am embarrassed to admit that I did not finish this placement. In fact, I didn't last more than a day in that special needs classroom.

I failed them, I did not know how to relate to those beautiful children. That day was a defining moment in my life.

I celebrated my twenty fourth birthday on February 27, 1995 and we had a lovely family dinner complete with cake and presents. Our lives continued and I started a part time evening job, giving me something to do until I could find a placement that suited my personality and comfort level.

Two weeks later, on March 9, our whole world came to an abrupt halt, the world shifted and everything I had ever known in that split second was never going to be the same.

This day started out as an ordinary day, Braden and I were at home. At around 2:00 pm I started to get ready for work. I loaded Braden into his car seat and headed out to drop him off at his child care provider and then continue on to work.

At the end of our street I pulled up to the stop sign. I looked left, checked right and then proceeded to pull out to make my turn. As I was just crossing the yellow line I heard the loudest crash and I felt the impact. I felt my chest hitting the steering wheel with a force so strong it knocked the breath out of me.

It didn't register at first where that loud obnoxious wreckage came from, and I couldn't see where it was because everything went black. My mind returned to inside my car and instinctively I thought of Braden. My eyes were not focusing, and I couldn't hear him. Eventually Braden came into focus. There was no noise. It was so quiet. He wasn't crying or screaming, but when I got close to him I could see the damage that had been done.

Things were becoming clear to me; Braden wasn't moving. He wasn't moving his arms or his legs. The only thing I could see moving was his eyes. He was terrified and tears began to roll down his cheek. I realized then that any noise from him would be reassuring. I just wanted to hear him scream.

His colour was changing. He no longer looked like that perfect cherub pink chubby baby that only ten minutes ago had filled my world with love. He was a losing his light and at this time I realized how close to death he was. He was so still. His tears stopped and so did his will to cry. Looking into my baby's beautiful blue eyes and seeing a grey cloud overtaking his life was the most excruciating moment of my life. Each breath he took was further and further apart. He was like a fish out of water, gasping for a breath, struggling with every muscle he had still working for him. The battle to live was there and I could see that my baby was not going to give up.

I vividly remember feeling a sense of safety standing in the hospital watching so many doctors attend to our son. As terrifying as it was with all the machines, noises and doctors coming at us from every angle we still felt protected. Our first night was very touch and go. We stayed at Braden's bedside throughout the night. I was where we felt most comfortable. Doctors pulled us aside and told us Braden was a very sick young boy, and they gave him 72 hours to come through this tragedy. They informed us that they had paralyzed him with medications to rest his body and his brain. They had suspected a possible brain injury, from the whip lash and movement of the car.

Braden was diagnosed with a C2 SCI. He was fifteen months old, lying in the ICU with breathing tubes, feeding tubes, saturation and heart monitors. They told us Braden had a severed spinal cord. Our baby, our precious son who just a few hours ago put on his little winter boots and walked up a set of stairs is now lying lifeless in a hospital that has completely engulfed him. He couldn't move. He wasn't even able to breathe on his own. Those eyes, those precious blue eyes remained faithful. He would look at me, I at him and we both knew we were too strong to give up. From the very beginning I knew that little boy was a fighter. There was an unspoken connection we shared. Not one word was said, but his eyes spoke out with intense determination.

As scared as I was, standing at the foot of his bed I had the most profound feeling that things were going to be ok. I felt an energy surround me in his room, a feeling of warmth, love and peace. With Paul by my side, feeling his strength as he embraced me I knew we would find our way with vengeance, stumbling forward each day.

His recovery was remarkable. Paul had taken a year off to stay home and provide Braden with daily physiotherapy. Each morning they headed to the basement for Braden to practice walking and building strength. I will forever be grateful to Paul for unselfishly dedicating a full year to Braden's therapeutic recovery.

A team of Paediatric therapists at McMaster University Hospital joined forces and started their quest to help Braden regain as much movement as possible. Paul, my parents and I joined the team and jumped on board willing to learn and assist in any way we could. Glimpses of our new life entered and slowly I was becoming someone new. I had changed from being that person who had previously walked out on special needs children. Not believing I could handle those beautiful children. Now I am the mother of a child who is medically fragile and quickly showing signs of becoming a child with physical disabilities. Would he now be a child in that special needs classroom? Looking back at this I wonder if somehow, I was being taught a lesson.

From the moment we were given the grim news of Braden's fate, we always considered his rehabilitation as a "means to recovery". It has always been so very important that we treat this as an injury, because that means he can continue to get better. Accepting his diagnosis was not yet something we entertained.

Up until April 6, that Easter Sunday we had not seen any movement from Braden. As I sat at his bedside that Easter morning after a full night of praying to God for a sign that things were going to be okay. I asked Braden to reach up and grab my nose, and that fateful morning, he did!

A mere six weeks prior to this, we were told he'd never move again. How was this possible? The room lit up, doctors, nurses and family filled the room to watch with gleaming eyes as Braden started moving his right arm. From then on, we had hope. They did a repeat MRI and found that the previous test which showed a complete transection of the spinal cord was in fact wrong. He had a sheared, bruised and damaged cord at the C2 level. This news changed everything. We had more to fight for. Soon after that we started to see him wiggling in his toes.

After a very long five months in hospital we finally had a plan to get home. Braden came home with a tracheostomy, Nasal Gastric tube, heart monitor and saturation monitor to keep track of his blood oxygen. We needed nursing care at home to help with the new demands of caring for Braden. But that didn't matter, we were going home again. Things were so different. Nothing I previously had known in my former life before March 9 existed.

Initially we were fortunate to have the physiotherapist and occupational therapist from the hospital make home visits. This helped with our transition and Paul and I were taught how to provide those services as well. We became experts in range of motion and core strengthening.

His recovery was remarkable. Paul had taken a year off to stay home and provide Braden with daily physiotherapy. Each morning they headed to the basement for Braden to practice walking and building strength. I will forever be grateful to Paul for unselfishly dedicating a full year to Braden's therapeutic recovery.

One year after my accident, Paul and I were wanting to have another baby. On December 16, 1996, we were blessed with a beautiful baby girl, Kailey Mackensey. In all the most diffi-

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SCIO Calendar of Events

Havelock Country Jamboree Raffle for SCIO

Julie Hayes started her raffle to raise funds for and bring awareness to SCIO to hundreds of people at the Havelock Country Jamboree. Julie is an active supporter of SCIO and wants to bring more visibility to our community and the range of possibilities available for all people. For years, the Havelock Country Jamboree has been very supportive of Julie's raffle initiative, allowing her to have booth space at the event and stage time to make the draw. They are also donating prizes for the raffle this year.

The raffle will take place August 18.

We want to support Julie with her ticket sales! For further details on how you can purchase your tickets – $2 for one ticket or $5 for three tickets, please email events@sciontario.org.

Scotiabank Waterfront Marathon

Join us at the Scotiabank Waterfront Marathon for a fun day out and help raise funds for SCIO. You can participate in the 5k, 21k or 42k and join us at the After Party.

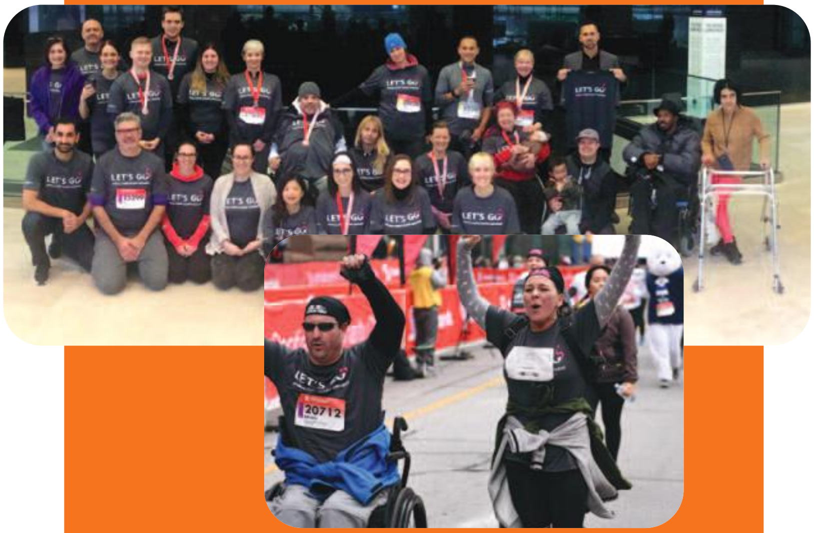
EVENT DETAILS:

Date: Sunday, October 20: 8:00 am – 5k, 8:45 am: 21k and 42k, SCIO After Party to follow

Location 1: 5k Participants: Pre-race location: Ontario Place, Lot 1 and start location: Lakeshore Blvd., west of Ontario Dr.

Location 2: 21k & 42k Participants: Start Location – University Ave. & Queen St.

To register, visit sciontario.org/scotiabank or please contact our Development Co-ordinator, Leandre Casselman at leandre.casselman@sciontario.org.



28th Annual Spinal Tap

Please join us for an all-day curling event followed by dinner, dancing, prizes and awards. This event is in partnership with the Canadian American Spinal Research Organization, presented by Permobil.

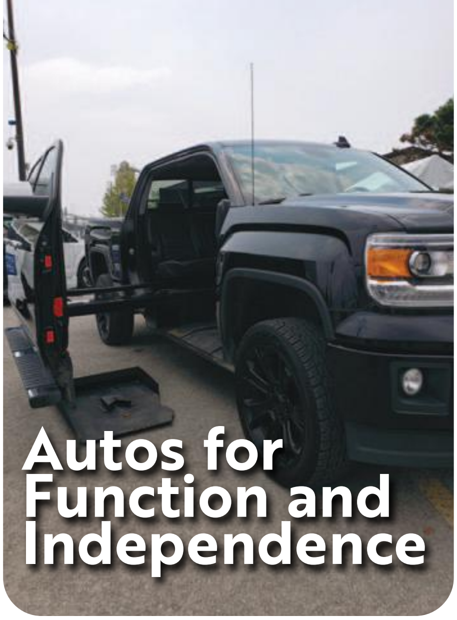
EVENT DETAILS:

Date: Saturday, October 26

Location: Thornhill Curling Club, 7994 Yonge St., Thornhill, ON, L4J 1W3

For more details on how to register for or sponsor this event, please contact our Partnerships and Special Events Manager, Nicole Jacobs at events@sciontario.org

Autos for Function and Independence

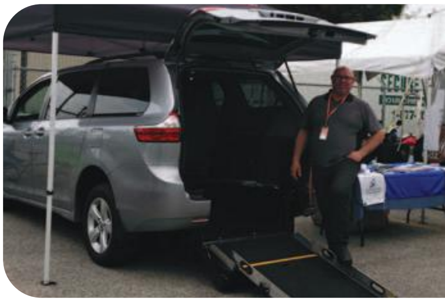


SCIO once again took part in the Georgian College Auto Show Barrie Campus on June 1. This was a terrific opportunity to showcase accessible vehicles. We had great day with a lot of interest and sharing of knowledge about the many options for vehicle adaptions to deliver function and independence for people with varying levels of ability. Participants included vehicle modifiers, SCIO members who displayed their personal vehicles and there was a driving assessment clinic.

Thanks to the events major sponsor Patrick Saunders of Humberview Mobility. Also thanks to Luc Barrett of Silver Cross Automotive and Wendy Nieuwland from Skill Builders Barrie who provides driving assessments and recommendations in our region.

Thanks also to our SCIO members Peter White who showcased his Corvette with hand controls and his Lexus with a robotic arm, and Aaron Lillie who displayed his Chevrolet pickup with ACT modification on the passenger side.

Thank you to Georgian College Barrie Campus for once again including SCIO in their annual Auto Show. ●



Hamilton Wheelchair Relay

The Hamilton Health Sciences Regional Rehabilitation Centre hosted a Wheelchair Relay at Pier 4 Park on Saturday, June 1. Teams arrived in bright costumes and ready to roll!

Our event was jam-packed with fun activities for families including a kids colouring and face painting station, a 50/50 raffle and lots of great prizes to be won. Everyone participating in the relay had the chance to try out a wheelchair, some for the first time. The aim of the game was simple – beat the competition!

With support from our participants, donors and valued sponsors, our event raised more than $7,300 for SCIO and the Hamilton region.

We want to extend a big thank you to the entire volunteer committee who ensured that this event ran smoothly and was a great success. Thank you to Amanda Snively, Diana Herrington, Jennifer New, Michelle Hannah, Michelle Read, Norma Spero, Rob Murphy, Ron Rattie, Rosemary Bellefeuille, and Tina Cowper.

Thank you to all of our generous sponsors! ●

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Fun Times

AT THE OTTAWA TAMARACK WEEKEND!

Although rainy weather tried hard to thwart our efforts, Team SCIO aka "Cole's Crew" took another kick at the Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend.

With runners and rollers in the 10k and half marathon events and the generous support of our team sponsors, we raised $9,170. Hats off to our three top fundraisers: Cheryl Grusnick, Marla Ferguson and Sandy Wood. Not only were these women fantastic fundraisers but they were also amazing athletes with Cheryl and Marla running the 10k race in the pouring rain, and Sandy tackling the hot, humid and windy half marathon. Our team captain, Cole Ferguson rocked the 10k course again this year, rolling it out in 57:43.

We would like to thank our generous sponsors who supported the event:

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We would also like to thank Randy and Maura Romain for their behind-the-scenes fundraising efforts. And finally, the SCIO team would love to give a big shout out to our cheering squad who came out to show their support, in particular, Viola Lalonde and Michael McAuley.

We are looking forward to outsmarting the weather man next year and making this event even bigger and better! We hope you will consider joining us for the fun. ●

Kitchener Roll & Bowl:

On Tuesday March 26, SCIO hosted the 4th Annual Kitchener Roll and Bowl at Bingeman's, Kingpin Bowlounge.

With help from our amazing Apple volunteers, teams were greeted with smiling faces and able to check in smoothly. The night was filled with friendly competition, team building, great food and some great prizes.

This year we had two incredible event sponsors, Deutschmann Law and Wright Rehab. We also had some wonderful Lane Sponsors, including: Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada Inc. and Thompson Rogers. Thank you to our transportation sponsor, Voyago, for ensuring our SCIO clients were able to attend the event.

Thank you to everyone in the Kitchener and Waterloo Region for your ongoing support. We are looking forward to the 5th anniversary of our event in 2020! ●

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2019 Ski Day Masters Winner, Grant Desjardine

To say it was the trip of a lifetime may be the understatement of the year," said Grant about his trip to the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, Georgia, won through SCIO's Ski Day contest..

"From the moment I got the call I had won this incredible trip, it was hard to imagine myself there. And it was in that same moment the incredible team behind the entire experience started working to make sure we didn't have to worry about a thing. From the flight scheduling, to dinner reservations and everything in between we were so well taken care of. We felt truly lucky every step of the way.

Having watched the Masters, like so many others, for years I've always thought about how incredible it would be to walk alongside the greats of golf and thanks to this prize we got to do that.

Not only was I able to be there, I was able to share it with my family and for that I am so grateful.

As a proud Canadian it was a special moment to see our flag represented on top of the iconic scoreboard at Augusta National. To see Corey Connors play was equally special.

Then there is Tiger, the one everyone was watching. It's hard to put into words what it was like to see him climb back to the top of the golf world. The mood in the crowd was electric all day and in that moment with that final putt it was a feeling I won't soon forget.

While I realize the prize is an amazing opportunity, I also realize it is about supporting something much bigger, and that is Spinal Cord Injury Ontario.

The work that is facilitated through fundraisers like this is what really matters here. Thank you to everyone involved in not only this prize, but in the SCIO organization, for the important work you do.

We will never forget our time at Augusta and when we do think about it we can't help but smile."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SCIO'S SKI AND SNOWBOARD DAY ON FEBRUARY 13, 2020 AT CRAIGLEITH SKI CLUB. WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU THERE!

Please reach out to our Partnerships and Special Events Manager, Nicole Jacobs at events@sciontario.org with any questions you have prior to registration opening in the winter. Details will also be posted on our website at www.sciontario.org. ●

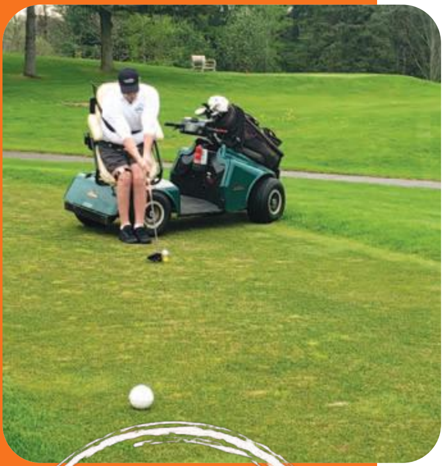
Rolling Thunder Golf Tournament:

The inaugural Rolling Thunder Charity Golf Tournament (RTGT) took place at Flamborough Hills Golf and Country Club on Thursday May 23, and the sun certainly shone for our guests.

Brian and Claire Campbell and the entire RTGT Team not only came out to test their skills on the greens, they also volunteered their time to give back to the SCIO community.

With around 50 golfers and more than 65 guests joining us for dinner and the awards presentations, the day was filled with friendly competition, raffles, auctions and putting contests.

During dinner, the Campbell's shared their reason for giving back to the SCIO community and where their passion stems from. The support they received from SCIO while in hospital, at rehab and now back at home has been the driver for their desire to support and give back to SCIO. Brian and Claire even noted that they are in the process of becoming peer support volunteers for families going through what they have experienced. Claire recounted, "One of the first things Brian said after he woke up from his traumatic surgery was that he was worried he would never play golf again. Now, 18 months later, not only is he playing the sport again; he is encouraging others with disabilities to continue doing what they love." ●



ROLLING THUNDER
CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Know how. Right now.

SCIO is proud to introduce our new online learning series for people with disabilities and their families. We developed Cortree with the help of our vibrant community members, people who get it, who know life with a disability inside out and are excited to share what they know with you.

We worked with industry experts, health care professionals, researchers, counsellors, and disability specialists – professionals whose experience and expertise are built into every course you take. And we reached out to our community to find out exactly what topics they are most interested in. The answers? Choosing a Wheelchair. Pain Management. Sexual Health. Nutrition & Kitchen Accessibility. Vehicle Modification. These topics represent some of the many dynamic, interactive courses you'll find on Cortree.

This is an exciting new learning product from SCIO and we're sure you'll find something to help improve or enhance your health and well-being. Look for more topics in the coming months to help you make your home accessible, stay healthy, get back to work, and live the life you choose.

HOW TO ACCESS CORTREE

Cortree is free to access if you are:

- an SCIO client
- a person with a spinal cord injury who is registered as an SCIO community member
- a family member of a person with an SCI and is registered as an SCIO community member

If you are a client or are already registered as an SCIO community member, look for a Welcome to Cortree email.

If you aren't (or aren't sure if you are) registered as an SCIO community member, register online at sciontario.org/join. There is no fee to register to be a member.

If you do not meet the above criteria for free access, you can still explore Cortree by visiting cortree.com. A small fee gets you big online learning!

ABOUT CORTREE

Cortree is your direct line to reliable information to help boost your confidence, competence and community. It is a social venture owned by SCIO – all proceeds from sales and partnerships are reinvested in SCIO to support new programs and services, education and advocacy campaigns by and for people with disabilities. Cortree is grounded in the spirit of Peer Support and Independent Living – we're committed to making life more inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities.

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Advances in Accessibility

SCIO's Director of Advocacy Peter Athanasopoulos and Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility

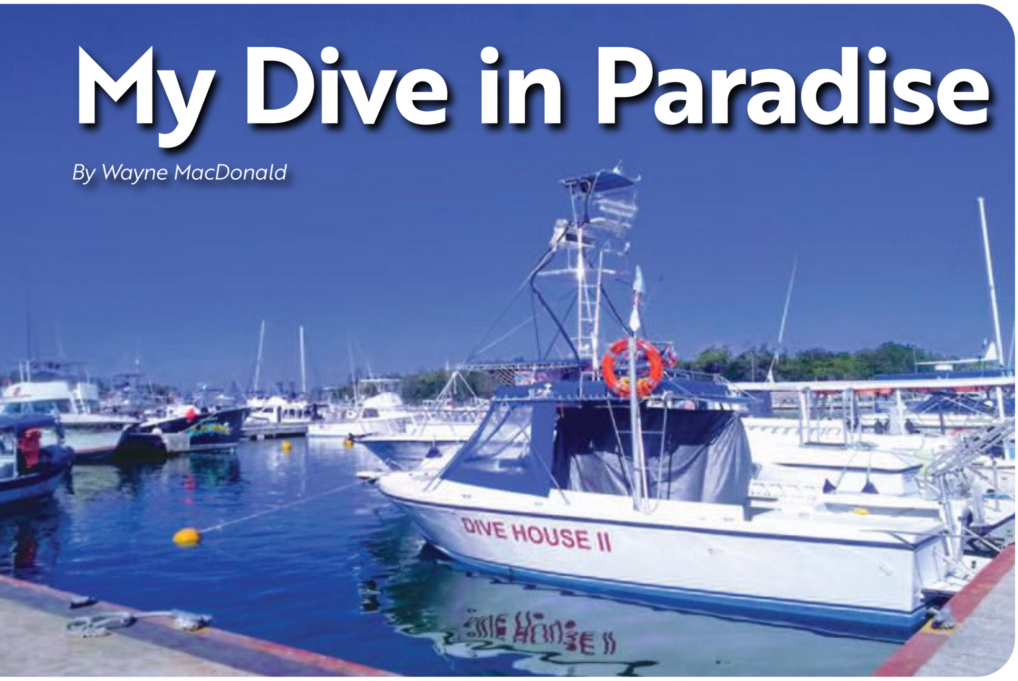
Bill C-81 the Accessible Canada Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, passed in the House of Commons with unanimous support on May 29! The SCIO community and many other champions had a hand in making this important legislation a reality and this gave us lots to celebrate during National Accessibility Week 2019 (May 26 – June 1).

The next and final step is the bill proceeding to Royal Assent. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, (pictured with SCIO's Director of Advocacy Peter Athanasopoulos) announced May 23 that she was "Pleased to share that our government intends to accept all Senate amendments to Bill C-81, the **#AccessibleCanada** Act. This historic Bill reflects the work, commitment and contributions of the disability community and has been improved on through each phase of the process."

Bill Adair, Executive Director of SCI Canada and spokesperson for the Federal Accessibility Legislation Alliance, a group of 96 organizations including SCIO, said in a recent Globe and Mail article that more than a thousand people and non-profit groups have sent letters to MPs in a blitz aimed at getting Bill C-81 passed by Parliament and written into law before the summer break begins. Clearly, this work from our community has paid off! ●

My Dive in Paradise

By Wayne MacDonald



My last dives had been on the Keystorm in the St. Lawrence, September 2018. I was now trading in liquid water for the solid kind as the 2018/19 curling season was beginning.

Our team had slated tournaments throughout the winter with my first time playing in Richmond BC. I immediately zoned in on my drills and obtaining practice ice as much as possible. I had also taken on the role as lead on the team, so my first two rocks were extremely important in setting up successful ends. We also learned that 2019 Provincials would be held at City View Curling Club in Ottawa. The issue was that it would be the weekend following the ringing in of the New Year, which meant limited ice time between Christmas and New Year's. My core temperature was not feeling the love after a while and the Provincials were soon upon us. We would end up in the semifinals after the round robin. We would come back from a 7-0 deficit in the fourth end winning by two for a berth in the finals. Unfortunately we would lose by two points in the finals.

Once I was back home my mind turned to a possible diving trip, but it was short lived as my skip Chris informed me we were invited to Nationals as a wild card team to represent Ontario. It would take place in Boucherville Quebec at the end of April. That would mean my mind was back to the task at hand and not swimming through the clear blue ocean. As January and February marched on, I stuck to my regimen but I could feel the resentment creeping in. I had come across a business card for Sarah Tengler of Impact Vacations and the ocean was calling. At the end of February I informed my team I was going to take a break for a week and Sarah and I decided a trip back to Cozumel was what I needed. I would jet off into the wild blue yonder on March 20. Until then I practiced, competed, practiced and competed.

I touched down at the Cozumel airport on the afternoon of the 20th. I would be returning to Hotel Cozumel as they had ten available accessible rooms. I also decided to use a different dive operator for a change of pace. Roberta, owner of Roberta's Scuba Shack met me at the airport. She had experience with divers with disabilities and upon meeting her I was already happy with my decision. I would be meeting her at a marina not far from the hotel first thing the next morning. With the glorious

warmth and sunshine I could feel the tension leaving my body. Settling into the hotel was like meeting an old friend. It is just the right size with amazing staff and my room would work out great.

I met Roberta the next morning and she introduced me to the captain, crew, Cesar the boat owner. I mingled with the fellow divers first as we made our way out to the first dive site. As our boat rolled over the waves I was mesmerized by the bands of bright neon blue amongst the many other shades of incredible blue water. Breathing in the saltwater air along with anticipation of the dive was filling my soul as we got ready for dive number one. We would dive on Columbia wall.

After the briefing I was transferred onto the swim platform. What I had noticed was that with all the curling I had done, my core stability seemed to be a lot stronger. Once in the ocean we descended into my happy place. Roberta and I needed a few minutes to work together as we got to know each other as dive partners below the surface. A synergy and mutual trust has to develop with your partner to have enjoyable experiences and as we went through our dive it was clear this would happen.

Cozumel is known for its currents and unpredictability. Walls present an issue as down currents can occur, so being aware of this is of utmost importance. People get lost in the kaleidoscope of colours and activity surrounding them so vigilance is required at all times.

The wall was beautiful as we leveled off at 80 ft. and I took in its entire splendor. It is truly hard to describe just how small and vulnerable you feel as your back is facing the wide open ocean. With more than 100 ft. of visibility the sun shines through onto the reef at a depth of 80 ft. We surfaced with high fives and Roberta was happy to be my partner.

I was struck by the number species of fish and corals I saw throughout the reef system. The ocean is a living, breathing world unto itself and I am always humbled by its enormity. Roberta gave me a lift back to the hotel and we got to know each other better. I enjoyed dinner and wheeled myself into Cozumel to listen to the ocean and watch the sun sink into the horizon. That would become my ritual each evening along with my ride back after our dives. A couple of days prior to my departure home I was lost in the sound of the waves in town when a woman approached me. Maria did not speak much English but we struck up a friendship that we continue to this day.

Over the week I would have 12 dives with every one of them as special as the last. My laundry list of highlights included Palancar Caves which is a mind boggling set of massive coral heads, tunnels and drop offs along with San Francesco wall and Santa Rosa wall to name a few. Some had pretty strong currents to contend with but you truly know the feeling of being in space as you fly over the marine world below and let the ocean be your guide.

Some of the special moments I experienced were seeing at least 25 conchs in the white sand between a set of coral heads. A baby trunkfish the size of a peanut, black with bright orange spots, dragon seahorse, a male jawfish holding its unhatched eggs in its mouth, peacock flounder, spotted scorpion fish, a family of arrow crabs occupying a tube sponge, 25-30 spiny lobsters under a coral overhang, a large nurse shark resting in a small cave, and an up close and personal encounter with a hawksbill turtle feeding on coral. I would also be swimming through schools of bar jacks coming to say hi. I saw a couple of southern stingrays along with queen and spotlight parrotfish. I saw a few puffer fish along with green and spotted moray eels. Queen angelfish were very abundant throughout the reefs along with their cousin's gray and French angels. I was also struck by the number of nurseries hidden among the corals. It was clear that this whole coast was thriving. I had a couple of sightings of a favourite of mine, a small black damselfish with neon blue spots so bright that it seemed it had swallowed a light bulb, and large schools of tomtate moving with the surge in a sheltered alcove of coral. Trunkfish, species of butterfly fish, barracuda, brightly colored honeycomb cowfish, scrawled filefish. The list is never-ending and each dive was a wonder to behold.

On the last evening I took Roberta out to dinner at Sal De Mar to thank her for her diving hospitality. It was the house of the owner's grandparent's with amazing décor and ambiance. We sat in an open area were the back wall had been partially removed. The food was incredible and I had black pasta which was delicious. We had a great evening reminiscing about the incredible world very few get to see and the sense of community with our fellow divers on board. I would highly recommend Cozumel for those yet to visit. For you divers it is one of the best reef systems in the world.

I arrived home the following Wednesday and was back on the practice ice the next day. My mind and soul had been cleansed by my week in paradise above and below the waterline. I was now ready to get back to business and prepare to represent Ontario in my second consecutive year at the National Wheelchair Curling Championships.

If you are interested in arranging your own great dive in paradise, please contact Sarah or Roberta. I promise you will not be disappointed! ●

Sarah Tengler • Impact Vacations
(T) 905-551-1545 or 1-855-823-4567
(E) info@impactvacations.com
(W) www.impactvacations.com

Roberta • Roberta's Scuba Shack
(T) +52-987-872-4240
(E) roberta@scubashackcoz.com
(W) https://scubashackcoz.com

CLARA STEL:

Resilient; Positive and Embracing Life

By Mary Dufton

Getting older while staying in our own home poses its challenges for those of us with disabilities. Clara Stel is living proof that it is entirely possible with the right supports and mindset.

Clara on her lift, going out to the garage.

Young Clara after surgery on her legs.

Clara, who is 61, lives with her 89-year-old father Herbert in an Ottawa bungalow. They plan to live independently for as long as possible with the support of their family, friends and community.

Clara and Herbert both use walkers for mobility and stability, but for different causes. Herbert's is from aging and Clara's is from the secondary conditions related to spina bifida – weakened muscles and joints, which led to a series of falls in her 30s and 40s. Together, Clara and Herbert have learned to accommodate and adjust to the changes in their mobility and find ways to help each other.

Clara grew up in Winchester, Ontario. Three days after her birth, she was taken by night train with a nurse to Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto for surgery to close her back; one of about seven surgeries. While in hospital, her parents received regular progress updates by telegram until Clara returned home several weeks later. She learned to walk when she was six and got around without braces or canes until well into her adulthood.

Clara attended mainstream school and was treated the

Clara on her tricycle.

same as her peers, except that she avoided field trips because she could not walk distances. She had friends and a typical childhood, for the most part. She rode an adult tricycle around her neighbourhood.

Clara credits her parents with her success and believes she would not be where she is today without their support and encouragement. They taught her to drive and made sure she had an education. Clara graduated from Algonquin College with a diploma in Administrative Secretarial work. Her 30-year career in the federal public service included various departments such as National Defence and Transport Canada.

Whenever she had medical appointments, her father, who worked as a hospital administrator at the Brockville General Hospital, would take time off work. Today, her brother Doug attends medical appointments as her advocate. Clara often goes to medical appointments with her Dad to advocate for him. Doug and his wife Lyne live nearby and help when they can.

Now that Clara is experiencing further changes to her health and mobility, she is considering getting a motorized wheelchair. She swims to stay fit. She may soon have further surgery to correct her tethered spinal cord as she is experiencing numbness in her leg and has more fatigue.

She is grateful to Angela Clair, regional services co-ordinator at SCIO in Ottawa, who she met through a friend. Angela visited Clara at home and suggested that a lift would be more practical than stairs for getting into her SUV. Angela provided the contact information for several local companies that install vertical platform lifts. The Good Access Company came to Clara's home to determine the best type of lift. Clara and her Dad both find the lift has made daily living a lot easier.

Since Clara's father no longer drives, Clara drives them around. In addition to help from her brother Doug and his wife Lyne, a home care worker visits three times a week.

When she is driving, she looks for full-service gas stations, which are easier to maneuver, but harder to find. Although accessibility is improving for people with disabilities, she finds that older buildings are not as accessible. For example, she has arranged for church meetings at her home during the winter months as the church isn't accessible.

Clara is active in her church craft group and enjoys plastic canvas needlepoint, which she learned while vacationing in Florida. Her creations range from coasters, placemats and wall hangings to an entire Christmas village.

Clara also attends social groups like the Ottawa Tasters Club for adults with spina bifida/ hydrocephalus. She has made many friends who also share her interests and experiences. She also enjoys attending Peer Connections events at the Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre.

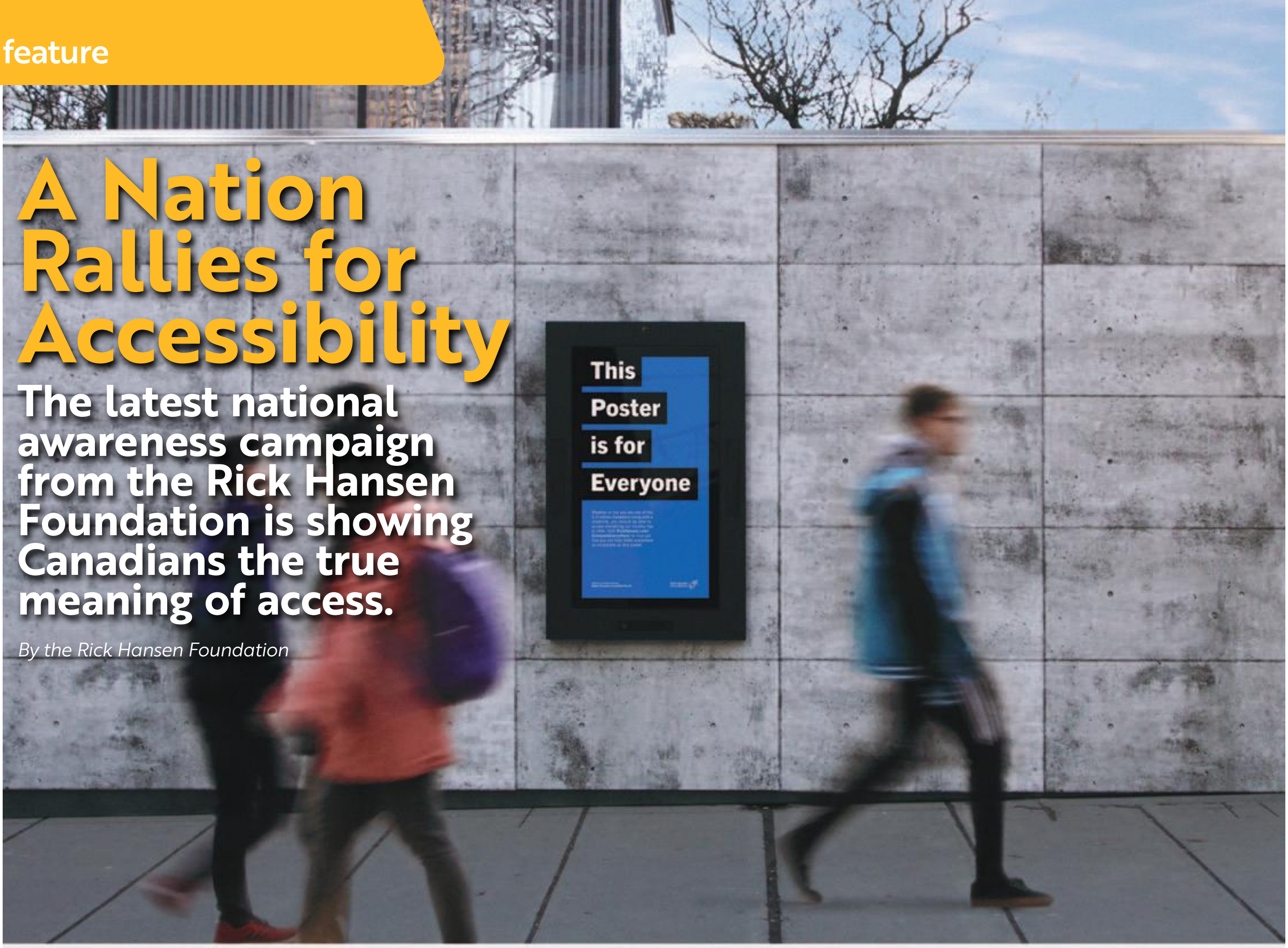
Although Clara is concerned about changes to her disability, she knows she has the support to face whatever happens. She is grateful to her parents for giving her a sound foundation and resilience to prepare for life ahead. ●

Clara showing her handiwork.

A Nation Rallies for Accessibility

The latest national awareness campaign from the Rick Hansen Foundation is showing Canadians the true meaning of access.

By the Rick Hansen Foundation



What is #EveryoneEverywhere?

It started with a simple notion: all people, regardless of their ability, should be able to access the places where we live, work, learn, and play. This is the guiding philosophy behind the access and inclusion initiatives at the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF), and at the core of our latest national awareness campaign.

Partnering with creative agency TAXI, we summed it up in two words: ***Everyone. Everywhere***.

When you're constantly faced with accessibility challenges, it's hard to believe everyone isn't thinking about the significance of something like how to get into a building without an accessible ramp or push button doors. On the other hand, people with disabilities see it every day, with the lack of meaningful access at the bank, grocery store, coffee shop —you name it. The goal of #EveryoneEverywhere is to bring accessibility to the forefront of every Canadian's mind so the current lack of access can no longer be ignored.

A feature of #EveryoneEverywhere is the 'Poster for Everyone', an interactive poster using technology

that adapts to the needs of its viewers. It was displayed in Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto, and a video was developed to show how it interacts with people of various abilities. Messaging on the poster adjusted to the viewer's eye-line based on their height, including those using wheelchairs; font size adjusted for those with low vision alongside a braille pad and audio speakers; and text changed language when it detected speakers of French, Mandarin, and Arabic.

However, it is more than just a cool poster: it's a way to capture the public's attention, and illustrate the varying needs of different individuals. The poster demonstrates how diversity in abilities is a wonderful opportunity to encourage innovation in design and technology. And it's these innovations—whether they're in a poster, building design, or something else—that allow us to come together and enjoy the same things in life.

Accessibility was taken into all accounts of the campaign. The design elements include blue, black, and white, colours that offer high-contrast for individuals with low vision, as well as Trade Gothic Next, an accessible sans serif font. The launch included a hand-painted wall mural using these colours and hashtag, and the creation of a 'Poster for Everyone'. Radio spots will be released this summer and TV is in development to launch this fall.

Making Canada Accessible

The launch of #EveryoneEverywhere accompanied the national expansion of the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) program. RHFAC is the only program in Canada to rate the accessibility of the built environment based on meaningful access for people with disabilities affecting their mobility, vision, and hearing. It offers practical solutions to the growing need for access.

An accessibility rating is an important step for organizations who aren't sure how accessible their buildings are. As many of us already know, building code standards may fall short in providing real access—access that allows you to enter through the same door as everyone else, or ensures your safety in emergency situations.

Buildings that receive high scores on their accessibility ratings can achieve 'RHF Accessibility Certified' or 'RHF Accessibility Certified Gold' and all rated sites receive a scorecard outlining areas of strength and where improvements can be made. Not only does this celebrate organizations who prioritize accessibility; it also encourages them to continue removing barriers, and demonstrates to the public that their building is an inclusive space.

Let's Get Everyone Everywhere

This is just the beginning. Both RHFAC and #EveryoneEverywhere continue to grow, and we are encouraged by the newly passed *Accessible Canada Act.* A movement has been set in motion to create a future that is accessible for everyone.

We encourage everyone to add their voice to the campaign. Visit rickhansen.com/everyoneeverywhere to learn more, and share the message using #everyoneeverywhere. ●

Rick Hansen Foundation

About the Rick Hansen Foundation

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following the completion of Rick Hansen's Man In Motion World Tour. For over 30 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Over 1,100 buildings have been rated through the RHF Accessibility Certification™ program to-date. Visit www.rickhansen.com to learn more.

Changing the **Relationship** between **Disability** and **Technology**

There are some exciting new studies taking place on a global scale and we want to let you know what they are. We will continue to follow these research initiatives and bring news about them to you as they develop.

A major new research project is harnessing a diverse range of disciplines to examine how technologists can learn from people with disabilities and support them in the future.

Led by the University of Leeds, Imagining Technologies for Disability Futures will for the first time bring together expertise in arts and humanities, design, engineering and robotics to increase understanding of how disability is currently represented, and ways in which technology can enhance lives in the future.

Funded with a flagship Wellcome Trust Collaborative Award in Humanities and Social Sciences, the £1.5m five-year project will begin in January 2020. A variety of disability groups across the UK will be closely involved in shaping the project, which includes researchers from the universities of Sheffield, Dundee and Exeter and international partners in the USA, Japan and Sweden.

Principal Investigator Professor Stuart Murray said, “From care and companionship robots to sophisticated assistive speech technology systems, well-designed technology that fully takes account of users’ needs can be a great force for positive change. This is a unique project, bringing together researchers across the world from very different backgrounds. Our aim is to better understand how disability and technology interact and how that interaction could develop in the future, with an ever-increasing rate of technological change.”

Professor Murray, who is Director of Leeds’ Centre for Medical Humanities, added, “Our research will not only produce new ideas about how disability is seen in a world where artificial intelligence and robotics will affect how we all live, it will also create new technologies that can be used by people with disabilities today.”

Project partners will also make films, design exhibitions, participate in arts festivals and showcase their work at technology fairs in the UK and abroad.

Academic expertise will include literary and cultural studies, medical humanities and philosophy, disability design, production engineering and robotics.

At Leeds, colleagues of Professor Murray in the schools of English (Dr. Amelia DeFalco) and Mechanical Engineering (Dr. Raymond Holt) are co-investigators.

The project, the first funded by Wellcome at Leeds through the Collaborative Award scheme, draws together several of the University’s research and innovation strengths, including medical humanities, health care technologies and robotics.

An English Studies critical approach will investigate how society tells stories about disability and technology and the ways in which they are represented in literature and film. It will explore how bodies are imagined in the future, for example in science fiction, and how this resonates with people with disabilities today.

Research at the University of Sheffield will be led by Professor Tony Prescott and colleagues in Sheffield Robotics and the University’s Department of Computer Science.

The team will conduct participatory design activities with children and older adults with disabilities with the aim of co-designing and prototyping next generation assistive technologies.

An important focus will be on animal-like companion robots that could operate to reduce anxiety in children in a hospital setting, and on telepresence robots that could allow older users to act or interact at a distance by remotely controlling a robot.

In addition to the project partners, the Sheffield group will lead on work with Sheffield Children’s NHS Foundation Trust, with researchers at Carnegie Mellon University in the USA and Kyushu Institute of Technology in Japan, and with the University of Sheffield spin-out company Consequential Robotics.

Professor Prescott said, “We are excited to work with researchers from the medical humanities to understand how culture influences the ways in which people relate to, and use, different kinds of robot technology in real-world contexts such as classrooms, hospital wards and people’s homes. Our aim in this project is to work closely with people with disabilities in order to understand how assistive robots could help them and to design new kinds of assistive robot technologies that they find appealing and useable.”

continued on page 41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PULL UP

THE REALTOR® AND THE OT

By Jeffrey Kerr

In addition to working with a REALTOR®, there are many professionals you can consult with when buying a home. These include a Mortgage Broker, Home Inspector, Real Estate Lawyer, Insurance Broker and Contractor.

I would also add Occupational Therapist (OT) to this list.

According to the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, "Occupational therapy is a type of health care that helps solve problems that interfere with a person's ability to do the things that are important to them. Everyday things like:

- Self-care – getting dressed, eating, moving around the house;
- Being productive – going to work or school, participating in the community; and
- Leisure activities – sports, gardening, social activities."

One of the questions I always ask my clients is, "Are you working with an Occupational Therapist?" I recommend my clients speak with an OT to ask for recommendations regarding activities of daily living. What are your needs now? How about in five years? In ten years? Your future mobility needs need to be considered to ensure you make the right move.

Throughout my 20-year career in Real Estate I have received a number of phone calls from people who had to make a move because their long-term needs were not considered.

It's far better to buy a home now that can be modified to accommodate your future needs. Will you need an accessible entrance? How about an accessible bathroom? Will you need access to a second floor or basement?

An OT can help you with all of these answers. And with the right home, these can always be added at a later date.

In my last article in *Community* magazine – Building A More Accessible Toronto (Spring 2019), I referenced the growing trend of aging in place. This trend is occurring, in part because the cost of retirement home living is high. It might make more economic sense for you to modify your current home rather than move homes. You can then continue to live there safely and comfortably in the neighbourhood that you love.

OTs can be a valuable resource to help you age in place. An OT can make recommendations for present-day needs and potential future needs. If your current home can be modified to meet your future needs then great. However, if it can't be modified cost effectively or you'd simply prefer to move, now is the time to start planning. When it comes to housing, I always encourage my clients to plan ahead and be

pro-active rather than re-active.

OTs are also a very important part of the rehab team after an injury or accident. I regularly get asked to consult on housing after a motor vehicle accident or other personal injury. The request often comes from the OT who is already working with their client. If it's determined that the pre-accident home can't be modified, and the client decides to move, I rely on the OT to provide me with a list of essentials that the new home needs to have.

I recommend my clients speak with an OT to ask for recommendations regarding activities of daily living. What are your needs now? How about in five years? In ten years? Your future mobility needs need to be considered to ensure you make the right move.

The United Kingdom has already embraced the importance of OTs when it comes to home modification. In my winter 2019 *Community* article The UK Leads The Way, I discussed the UK's home modification initiative called Foundations which oversees a network of home improvement agencies. When a client first contacts their local agency, they are assigned an OT for consultation and they can then help them from start to finish.

Efforts are now being made in Canada to include OTs in the home modification process. In the winter 2018 Outspoken! edition I introduced readers to The Canadian Home Builders Association's (CHBA) Home Modification Council. The CHBA is working towards a national database of qualified contractors who have experience in accessible home modification. I attended the CHBA annual conference earlier this year and I saw firsthand how home modification contractors are relying on the advice and guidance of OTs. I expect the OTs role in home modification will continue to grow.

Whether you're making a move or modifying your home to age in place, an Occupational Therapist can help you plan ahead. ●

Jeffrey Kerr, Broker, Barrier Free Real Estate Specialist
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Changing the Relationship between Disability and Technology

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Meanwhile in Dundee, Dr. Graham Pullin, a researcher in disability-led design at Dundee's Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, will lead a team exploring alternative futures for assistive communication technologies, again drawing on cultural imaginings as well as lived experiences.

The team will build, exhibit and share early prototypes, the role of which will be to provoke reflection and debate about assistive technology and disability design.

Dr. Pullin said, "We will be challenging the assumption that future augmented communication will inevitably 'disappear' into people's bodies. The futures we will prototype will be neither utopian nor dystopian, but as 'everyday' as we can make them.

"There are also issues around disability identity that we would like to explore with our mentors with disabilities and their conversational partners."

And at Exeter, Dr. Luna Dolezal, a philosopher from the University of Exeter's Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health, will work alongside literary scholars and with the designers and engineers prototyping and testing technologies. She said, "This is an exciting opportunity for philosophers to engage directly with engineers, designers and participants, through workshops and meetings, in order to develop innovative solutions for finished designs. I hope our philosophical work will help provide a better understanding of the impact of these technologies on users." ●

Back on Track

By Nancy Xia, Information and Resource Specialist

Anthony Lue always has this big and hearty smile on his face. His beaming energy would brighten up the gloomiest day. Prior to his injury, he was a popular high school student attending Pickering High, a school famous for its strong athletic program. Anthony was on the track and baseball teams. He had a gift for running and was offered a scholarship in a U.S. university. Meanwhile, his passion for speed prompted him to work at an auto repair shop as an apprentice mechanic. Working with high-performance sports cars like Lamborghini made his job feel more like a hobby. His life was exciting, free and full of potential.

On September 30, 2009, Anthony went to work on what he thought would be an ordinary day. During lunch hour, he was asked to bring a few wrecked cars to the scrap yard. His job was to steer the motorless cars as they were being pushed around by a construction vehicle. As his car was being nudged off the weighing scale, the crane operator attempted to pick it up by dropping a giant magnet on top of it. The operator had no idea that Anthony was still in the car. As soon as the magnet came down, the roof of the car caved in. On impact of the initial blow, Anthony blacked out. The operator proceeded to pick the car up, and when it was about 15 feet in the air, a co-worker screamed from the sideline, "someone is in the car!" The crane operator panicked and hit the "drop" button. Anthony's car fell helplessly back onto the ground. Anthony woke up from the impact. He heard people yelling and saw them frantically running towards him. His buddy Kyle was first to arrive and he tried to pull the door open. The door was stuck. The owner of the shop shoved Kyle aside. Being a much beefier man, he yanked the door off. Kyle asked Anthony, "Dude, can you feel everything?!" He could feel pain in his torso and arms, but everything below the waist was numb. He slapped his right leg and it fell sloppily to the left. Anthony thought that he had broken his legs without knowing anything about SCI. He started to feel weak and light-headed. He told himself to remain calm and stay awake, and everything would be alright.

When firefighters arrived at the scene, they cut the roof off of the car and slowly got Anthony out of the wreckage. The paramedics stabilized his back, put a neck brace on him and strapped him onto the back board. After their initial assessment, they called Orange Air. Hearing that the chopper just got called, Anthony knew he was in trouble. Somewhere above Scarborough, Anthony suddenly realized that it was the very first time he had ever flown in a helicopter. He forgot about his circumstances for a moment and curiously attempted to peek out the window. The paramedic yelled, "DON'T MOVE!" Little did he know, he had a tiny fracture on his C7 vertebrate.

After Anthony arrived at Sunnybrook Hospital, he was diagnosed with a T9 complete spinal cord injury. When his family arrived, his doctor put the prognosis in plain language, "Your son will never walk again." Anthony was right there, and when he heard that verdict, he went into shock and started to profusely throw up. Because he could not move, he was choking on his own vomit. The nurse had to insert a tube down his throat to prevent him from suffocating. He blacked out again.

The news of his injury spread quickly to everyone he knew. Within days, his room was filled with his friends and family visitors from far and wide. A girl named Danielle was introduced by a mutual friend. She had gone through a similar situation in her life, and wanted to visit Anthony to offer much needed encouragement. At the time, Anthony was coping with the side effects of his medications. He constantly felt hot and sweaty to a point where he couldn't fall asleep at night. A few days after Danielle's initial visit, she came back again with a small fan that fit perfectly on his bedside table. He was sure that she was an angel.

Three weeks later, Anthony was in a much better emotional state. One day, a co-ordinator from Sunnybrook's injury prevention program named Sandi visited Anthony and asked him if he would be willing to share his story with a small group of high school students, in the hope of raising awareness about job safety. Anthony accepted the request right away. According to Sandi's account, she had never met a newly injured patient that had so much positive energy and his signature smiles made him one of the most memorable people in Sandi's nine-year career as a program co-ordinator. On the day of the visit, when 15 youngsters crowded his hospital room, Anthony was surprised that he could talk about the incident and reflect on it as if it had happened a long, long time ago. The only challenge during the presentation was his insecurity about that half-filled urinary bag hanging indiscreetly at the bedrail and the fact that he was in his birthday suit underneath a thin cover.

One month later, Anthony got transferred to Lyndhurst Rehab Hospital. Upon receiving more education about SCI, the tiny little false hope that he might be back to his old walking self was totally diminished. Anthony's smile was temporarily replaced by a frown. He had never felt this sad and disappointed before. Thanks to the strong support from his family and friends, within a short period of time, he recovered. He put it this way, "I am grateful that I am still alive. My injury could have been worse. I know it sucks, but I will make the most of it." On the day when his rehab team brought in his custom-made wheelchair, he felt like he was being gifted with a new bike. It gave him back his freedom and his need for speed was once again satisfied.

Meeting Jeff Adam, a former Paralympian, inspired Anthony to play Parasport. He participated in wheelchair basketball for a couple of seasons. It opened the door for him to discover other recreational activities. Meeting Rich VanderWal was even more game changing. When he loaned Anthony a handcycle and introduced him to the sport, a brand-new track was paved for him. In 2015, after riding with his buddies in the handcycle club, participating in several local and regional races and winning a few "little ones," Anthony decided to follow the lead of his colleagues by pursuing a career as a Paralympian. His handcycle was not just a bike, it was a ride to a new life filled with fun, excitement and opportunities. He is now a member of Team Ontario and training full-time for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.

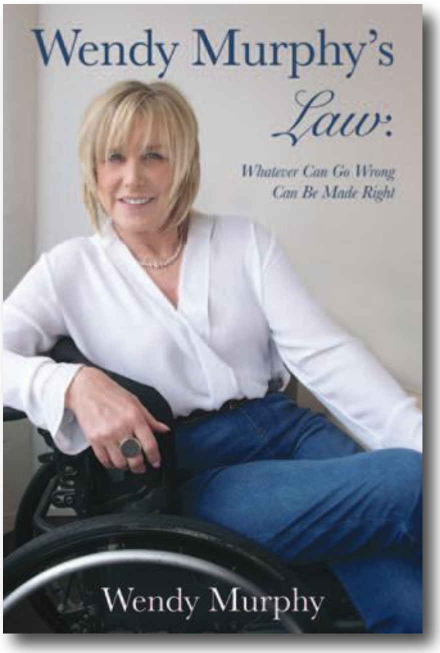
Apart from training, Anthony kept himself busy by being a motivational speaker. He continued to speak to young people about job place safety, inspire them to be resilient and teach them to value and respect their family. He also worked in TV at Accessible Media Inc., promoting accessibility and inclusiveness for all Canadians. His signature smiles also landed him a modelling contract with IZ Adaptive. In his personal life, his injury has brought his family even closer, not just to himself, but to one another. He met so many amazing people since (or because of) his injury, and they share a lot in common. As for the fan that Danielle got him, it stopped working after a few years, but she got him a second one.

When asked what messages he would like to pass on to his peers, especially people who are newly injured, Anthony said, "I just want to let them know that no matter where they are or what point they are at in their life, they can change and turn things around so they are right-side up. Negative things can sometimes have positive consequences, if they just endure long enough to find out what they are. Keep smiling."

Visit Anthony's website at: www.anthonylue.com. ●

Marking a Milestone

By Wendy Murphy



For those of you who do not recognize me I am a former City TV newsroom reporter who, at one time, was given the opportunity to challenge the public's perception on what we as wheelchair users are capable of when given the opportunity. In less than a two-minute spot I brought stories to life through television, using a camera and microphone. I did this in the sincere hope of dispelling the public's limited perception of what the physically challenged community was actually capable of achieving.

August 6, 2019, will mark my 35th year using a wheelchair with a lot to celebrate since that unforgettable day. There have been government programs implemented such as the Accessible Parking Permit and the Ontario Disability Support Program, to name just two, both designed to better assist people with disabilities. Today, job opportunities are often made available through organizations like SCIO, and simply seeing more people who use wheelchairs actively participating in life post spinal cord injury has become the welcomed norm today.

There is little doubt that living with a spinal cord injury certainly has its challenges. It is through our ability to move past any difficult circumstance that we move forward in life, with much to be garnered when we refuse to lose hope in all that is still around us, and yet to be achieved. It comes down to our individual attitude that will ultimately determine the life that unfolds before us. This is an important factor when making choices and considering the relevance of positive thinking in how things will ultimately turn out. Seeing the glass half-full theory applies here.

Always one to see the glass half full, I decided there would be no better way to commemorate this 35-year milestone than by writing my memoir. A diary of stories that I hope will offer insight and inspiration to its reader. Determined to expose the issue of disability at a time it seemed society was finally ready to accept, and willing to assist, I was able to break down existing barriers. It was through an unconventional approach that I took on new challenges, all in the pursuit of social change. Modelling, acting and finally newsroom reporting all became part of my mission while hoping to make a difference in the larger world, exemplifying all that one, regardless of their physical limitations, is capable of achieving when given the opportunity. ●

Wendy's book is published by Iguana Books. The book will be launched in September, and will be available to pre order on Amazon, with worldwide availability as of September 4.

Beyond Pain – Livin' La Vita

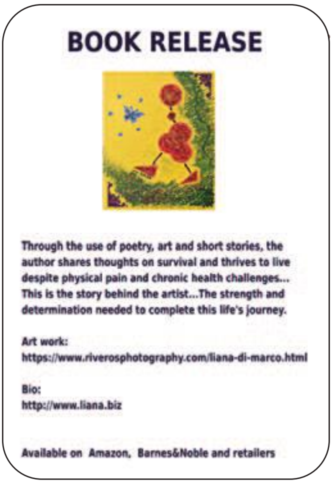
Italian-Canadian Liana Di Marco, (Liana Guitarbabe) is a super talented singer/songwriter/poet/short fiction writer and artist. All of these talents are evident in her new book Beyond Pain – Livin' La Vita. Through the use of poetry, art and short stories, she shares thoughts on survival and thrives to live despite physical pain and chronic health challenges.

This is a powerful, no-holds-barred swipe at pomposity, inefficiency and blatant cruelty in the health care system, church hierarchy, child abuse in patriarchal societies, disability advocacy, and other stark injustices tolerated in 'civilized' society. Her humour and irrepressible joy for life takes us on her journey beyond pain to livin' la vita. This is the story behind the artist, with the strength and determination needed to complete her life's journey.

Her book is available on Amazon and at Barnes & Noble and other retailers.

For more about Liana visit http://wwwliana.biz.

You can see her artwork at:
https://wwww.riverosphotography.com/liana-di-marco.html. ●



BOOK RELEASE

Through the use of poetry, art and short stories, the author shares thoughts on survival and thrives to live despite physical pain and chronic health challenges... This is the story behind the artist...The strength and determination needed to complete this life's journey.

Art work:
https://www.riverosphotography.com/liana-di-marco.html

Bio:
http://www.liana.biz

Available on Amazon, Barnes&Noble and retailers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Ottawa On Course

Fore – that's the sound of the awesome 4th Annual OT Consult Ergo Golf Invitational held on June 26, 2019 at the Pine View Golf Course in Ottawa. This year, our host Mario Le Bouthillier pulled together players from across the spinal cord injury service and support community in Ottawa for a sunny day of golf and fundraising. The event raised nearly $6,500 for SCIO.

Although Mother Nature made a great deal of grumbling and rumbling, the storms held off and a fabulous time was had by all. Eighteen holes were followed by a fantastic dinner, silent auction and awards. This year will once again see ProMotion Orthotics on the much-coveted OT Consult Ergo Golf Invitational trophy – they have been the reigning champions for three years. A hearty congrats to Marty McCaffrey, Valerie McCaffrey, Elliott McCaffrey and Courtney Thompson!

SCIO would like to gratefully acknowledge the hours of work and preparation for this event by Mario Le Bouthillier; a labour of love is still labour and we appreciate it immensely. Many thanks to everyone who participated in the tournament and a huge shout out to our sponsors. In particular, we would like to thank Power Plus Mobility for feeding the crowd again this year as our meal sponsor. Thanks also to the SCIO staff and volunteers who helped to make the day a success. Working together we are working toward the SCIO vision of seeing people with spinal cord injury living the life they choose in a fully inclusive Ontario. ●

Top: Winning team. Middle: Host's team. Bottom: Volunteer at putting challenge.

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Celebrating our Hamilton Community

Top: Rob Murphy, Kristy Luker, Anne-Marie Covello-Baxter, Matt Sagan, Ann Hammer, Diana Herrington, Ron Rattie. Middle: Kristy Luker and Rob Murphy. Bottom: Diana Herrington and Ari Wahl.

It was a fantastic night because of the people who came together. We celebrated the strong Hamilton community at the beautiful Waterfront Banquet and Conference Centre, looking onto Lake Ontario on a warm and rainy June 20. This was the 13th year we hosted an event to honour our community at this venue – a relationship that reflects the longevity, respect and connection among all our partners. You could feel the positive energy in the room as SCIO volunteers, staff, clients, health care professionals, corporate partners, family and friends talked, laughed and shared. We are grateful for the good turnout from our friends at Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) and all those who took time to celebrate the work we do together, spearheaded by SCIO's Peer Support Co-ordinator Ron Rattie and Regional Services Co-ordinator Rob Murphy.

Great thanks to our warm and personable MC for the evening, HHS physiotherapist **Diana Herrington**, who kept the show moving and the laughs coming. Our keynote speaker, educator **Kristy Luker**, spoke from the heart about the journey she and her husband Gary have been on since he sustained an SCI six days before their wedding. There were nodding heads, as so many people with SCI and family and friends in the audience could relate to every word. As Kristy said, "no two experiences are the same," for people with SCI or their families, but it was clear there are common bonds and shared emotions.

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Consider a Corporate Partnership with Spinal Cord Injury Ontario

In very good company…

Businesses that choose to align themselves with SCIO are forward-thinking organizations that see the good they can do in this province. There are endless opportunities to match your business goals with our mission and activities. The result? A strong, creative partnership that changes things, for the better.

CHOOSE YOUR PARTNER

The great benefits for your company in partnering with SCIO include exposure to a dynamic community of over 30,000 clients, families and friends from across the province and Canada.

In addition, your company earns a reputation as a caring and generous corporate citizen who makes a difference in your community. Your employees are buoyed by your commitment to an exceptional cause and are energized to help improve accessibility and support services in our province.

We will work with you to create a customized corporate engagement plan, which can include sponsorships, cause-related marketing programs, participation in fundraising events, corporate and employee volunteering, and workplace giving.

As a small grass roots non-profit, we guarantee that your corporate participation will have great impact for people living with a spinal cord injury in your community and across the province, and satisfy your business partnership needs.

PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS

The following partnerships offer many benefits including enhanced brand awareness, community reputation and employee spirit.

Philanthropy

As a registered Canadian charity with over 74 years of history in Ontario, we will provide you with tax benefits, a tax receipt and recognition for your financial support. You also receive peace of mind from knowing your investment in SCIO directly impacts the services, support and advocacy we provide to strengthen our community.

Sponsorship

Here are a few dynamic and engaging sponsorship opportunities to consider:

- Promote a strong presence of your company at popular community events in Toronto and across the province.
- Outline your business offerings on a relevant topic within the Living with an SCI section of our website (give us your logo, ad and a link to your content and we're good to go!)
- Become a go-to company for our community by getting listed. Your brand on our popular online business directory is a smart match.
- Get your workforce up to speed on expert disability awareness training for your HR department and staff. Online or in person, our training is developed and often delivered by those with lived experience.

Cause-related marketing

Harness the brand equity of SCIO by creating a special promotion that is mutually beneficial, advertises your company's brand and supports a cause close to the hearts of your customers and employees.

Corporate teams

Form a corporate team to participate in fun activities-based events such as golf, curling, snowboarding or lawn bowling. There's always something exciting going on at SCIO.

Gifts in kind

We accept gifts of goods, products, services and used vehicles – items our community is always in need of, and highly appreciative of receiving. Your gift will be evaluated in accordance with our gift acceptance policy.

Employee engagement and volunteering

Getting involved with SCIO is a fantastic team-building and volunteer opportunity that will motivate and unite your employees. On your company employee volunteer day, consider coming to work for us. We can customize an opportunity that helps you to meet your business and social responsibility goals while raising your company's profile in the community.

Event hosting

Raise awareness for your company by organizing a fundraising event or golf tournament on our behalf. Our team will guide you through the process of creating a successful event.

Matching gifts

Maximize and encourage employee giving by matching your staff's charitable contributions or create a corporate matching challenge.

Workplace giving

Start an employee fund drive offering workers the opportunity to make a one-time gift or spread out payroll deductions over the course of a year.

Advertising in Community Magazine

Our quarterly magazine reaches about 20,000 consumers. You can broadcast your corporate logo and unique messaging, and receive recognition from SCIO for your generous support.

Board and committee roles

Do you have a specialized skill set? Or a depth of knowledge about living with an SCI or disability? There are committee and board roles across the province with your name on them.

CAN WE TALK?

We'd love to chat with you on any of these opportunities. Please connect with Ari Wahl, 416-422-5644, ext. 264 or philanthropy@sciontario.org ●

Canadian Paralympic Committee allocates $200,000 in funding for Para sport organizations across Canada

The Canadian Paralympic Committee announced on June 10 it has granted $200,000 in funding through the 2019-20 Paralympic Sport Development Fund to support Para sport programming across the country.

The Paralympic Sport Development Fund is a grant program that annually supports initiatives that contribute to the development of athletes and coaches on a Paralympic pathway, with a goal of growing Para sport in Canada and ultimately helping to produce more top athletes.

A total of 25 programs or organizations throughout Canada have received grants for the 2019-20 year, in amounts of up to $15,000. Funding supports developing athletes and programming and can cover areas such as recruitment, coaching, equipment, competition and club development, and training camps.

"Congratulations to all of the Paralympic Sport Development Fund recipients who are doing incredible work to grow Para sport in their communities," said Karen O'Neill, CEO, Canadian Paralympic Committee. "It is so critical for the future of Paralympic sport in our country that we continue to nurture the development of athletes from the entry level up, and that requires resources and strong programming. The organizations supported by these grants are important parts of our sport system and the additional funding will help them enhance their programs."

For the complete list of Paralympic Sport Development Fund recipients visit https://paralympic.ca.

The Paralympic Sport Development Fund is made possible through financial contributions from Sport Canada, the Canadian Paralympic Committee, and Paralympic Foundation of Canada.●

Celebrating our Hamilton Community

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Congratulations to the deserving award recipients of the evening, whose contributions have been outstanding and who have helped make the Hamilton community as powerful and effective as it is:

- **Matt Sagan**, Hamilton Peer Support Volunteer of the Year
- **Ann Hammer**, Hamilton Health Care Professional of the Year
- **Anne-Marie Covello-Baxter**, Hamilton Community Partner of the Year

We could not have hosted the evening without our generous sponsors. Thanks and appreciation to:

- **Wright Rehab**, Reception Sponsor
- **CathetersPlus**, Dessert Sponsor
- **Alert / Best**, Community Sponsor
- **Coloplast** and **Hollister**, Preferred Medical Suppliers Sponsor
- **IBC**, Premier Provincial Partner

Special thanks to our kind volunteer photographer, **Caitlyn Spero**. ●

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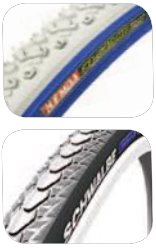

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The Magic of Marjorie

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Left: Marjorie receiving her Medal
Below: Marjorie displaying her paintings at SCIO's Shades of Ability

blocks defines us, not the roadblocks themselves. Marjorie's philosophy is that everyone can lead a fulfilling and satisfying life, which partly explains why she brought so much optimism to so many people.

When asked about her impact on others, Marjorie is genuinely modest in her estimation.

"There is nothing magic about what I do," she says. "I know what it's like to be in someone's shoes. I know how many challenges they face and how frustrating it can be. I can offer people understanding and creative problem solving for life's realities. Those are good things, and I know I have done some good. But I also believe that we can only really help ourselves. If someone's life turns out well, it's because they did the work."

While it may be true that every individual is the architect of their own life, there is more to Marjorie's magic than she acknowledges. There is the comfort of knowing that someone can help. There is the warmth of human connection and shared experience. There is the recognition that a person is more than their injury. There is the assurance that dreams – education, career, family, artistry – can be realized.

Perhaps most of all, there is Marjorie herself who, post-injury, continued to raise her children, paint and teach piano. Who sat on boards and committees and drove her van back and forth between Orillia and Toronto so many times. Who gave others as much hope as her time and insight. She may not have a magic wand, but Marjorie brought spirit and energy to everyone she helped.

"I would describe my mother as a force of nature," says Dana Francoz. "She detests the phrase, 'you can't do it.' No-one gets in her way. And she radiated a 'you can do it' message to everyone she helped. I remember one man who approached her at a Canadian Paraplegic Association event and said, 'you were my peer supporter and you saved my life.' He wasn't exaggerating. They had never met, only talked on the phone. But he wanted her to know the impact she had on him, the care he felt."

Sheila Casemore, Director of Client Services at SCIO, understands that impact. She describes the value of volunteers as immeasurable, and Marjorie in particular as highly influential and respected. "She is known for her honesty, her sense of community and her willingness to help. It is just part of her character to give, which has made her a gift to so many people."

The Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers is a tribute to Marjorie's significant and sustained contribution to the SCIO community. It is well deserved and acknowledges the magic that Marjorie has brought to so many lives. ●

The Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers recognizes the remarkable volunteer achievements of Canadians from across the country in a wide range of fields. As an official Canadian honour, the Medal pays tribute to the dedication and exemplary commitment of volunteers.

Marjorie Francoz was awarded the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers on September 24, 2018, and presented with the Medal this past April during National Volunteer Week 2019.

For more information or to nominate a deserving volunteer, visit www.caring.gg.ca.

Megan's Story:

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was beyond determined. When I left I was still using a wheelchair but it didn't stop me from getting stronger. Five months later I was readmitted to the Rehab Centre in Ottawa to work on bowel and bladder control and to continue working on the improvements I made in walking with a walker at home. Another two months of hard physiotherapy and occupational therapy enabled me to walk out of the rehab building on my own using only leg braces and a walker. SUCCESS!

The hardest part for me throughout this whole SCI journey, was not the fact that I was unable to walk for more than a year, or go to the washroom on my own, or go back to work fulltime, or participate in the activities that I used to do, but it is rather the fact that I was away from my son for so long and missed vital bonding time. I didn't get to kiss him before bed for so many nights. I didn't get to pick his clothes out for the morning or make him dinner every night for those five long months. Needless to say, I am trying to make the best of every moment and participate with my son in activities, going out and about as well as having stay at home fun together.

Despite now being a young mother with a disability, I make sure to continue to take my son out to do activities together in public such as visiting museums, libraries, play structure parks, water parks, movies, theatre performances, swimming pools, and shopping centres. I try to promote the positive side of things to my son, to be resourceful and to work hard. I want my son Hudson to understand that yes, I now have a disability, but we can still continue to do activities together. Now we just have do them in different ways. For example, we have to take Para Transpo to places since I haven't yet gotten back my driver's licence since my surgery. I really have tried to promote this to my son and to show other people who we encounter in our day-to-day life that yes, we are now an inter-abled family dynamic and we can make it work. If you were to ask me what's the hardest part now since becoming a mom with disabilities, I would probably have to say getting my son to the school bus stop to go to school due to his lack of motivation in the mornings and poor weather conditions.

Thankfully, a social worker from the Rehab Centre connected me with Chris Bourne, the Regional Services Co-ordinator from SCIO in order to help provide me with information and resources after my surgery. Needless to say, I felt lost with my new-found disability, but I quickly realized comfort in knowing that there was a community of people offering support and guidance. The care alone that I have received from SCIO has been beyond wonderful and more than helpful in my recovery both mentally and physically. I have been connected to my peer mentor Sally, and I was gifted a unicycle in order to go biking with my son. I have also had the opportunity to try adaptive sailing and para skiing. These are just a few of the enormous generosities that SCIO has offered me during my road to recovery.

Often, throughout my healing time, I felt lost and unsure of where go to next. Therefore, finding my base support system was inevitably one of my most viable options for recovery. I was so lucky I didn't have to worry about the wellbeing of my son because of my husband's tremendous care, but I knew I had to do something for my own mental well-being. I have gone back to work part-time as an adult fiction selector librarian in order to help me feel productive and provide value to both society and my family.

To women who are experiencing a similar circumstance, please make sure to reach outside of your caregiving family for support. Try to find a support network that works best for you whether it's online or in person. I found it helpful to speak to individuals who have also gone through similar experiences as myself. I came across a Mom's Despite Disabilities Support Group on Facebook and joined the online community. I am now a co-chair of this group with my close friend Shawnie. We attempt to create fun and accessible events in which moms with disabilities and their children can participate, as well as provide online support forums for our community members.

Being a mother has been the most rewarding experience of my life and my son Hudson has been the best gift of all time. With this being said, I will continue to push myself to get stronger, both emotionally and physically, in order to take the best care of my son. Yes, I am now a mom with disabilities. No, I will not give up. Instead I will continue to the make the best of myself and I will push forward. As Confucius once said, "It does not matter how slowly you go, as long as you do not stop." I not only intend to remember and live this way, but I also hope to teach my son this valuable life lesson through my own strength and experiences. ●

My Trip to South Africa

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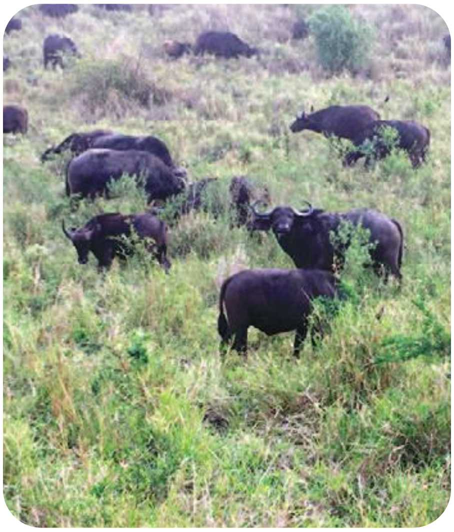

each other. We were warned not to let the monkeys into our room no matter how temptingly cute they were.

Each day, we would get up early in the morning and go out on a three-hour drive on the reserve. The vehicle was accessible and open to the elements. Our guide was very knowledgeable about wild animals. When we spotted them, he would educate us on their behaviour and tell us all sorts of fun facts about them. We were all in awe when we saw our first elephants. Then came the rhinos, zebras, warthogs, and many other animals whose names I cannot remember. A lot of time was given to taking photos.

We went to visit three orphaned elephants at Bayeta. These elephants had been raised by people. We were able to hand feed and touch them. Their trainers were always beside them and helping us. It was an amazing experience I will never forget. Another highlight was visiting a Cat and Cheetah Rehabilitation Centre. We met small wild cats and were allowed to pet and interact with them. We got close to a cheetah and the handler let us pose for pictures behind this big, beautiful cat.

Our stay at St. Lucia was equally amazing. It is home to the largest number of hippos in Africa. We went on a boat ride and got to view the hippos in the water. They looked like large rocks until they moved. Staff on the boat opened a door at the front of the boat and let me go out on the front of the boat to get a closer view. A young teenager from South Africa quietly sat beside me and we had a great conversation about his country, the animals and what life is like in Canada. After the boat docked, he came up to me and shook my hand and thanked me for the conversation. His mom was in the background smiling at us. What a great ambassador he was for his country.

One night, Dave who worked for Access2africasafari was cooking a meal for all of us. He suddenly came and announced there were two hippos across the street slowly walking around. We all quietly went out and there they were – two large hippos a few feet from us calmly eating the grass. Wow – I can't even describe how amazing that was. Apparently, it was very common for hippos to walk around St. Lucia at night. As long as you don't get too close to them and bother them, they are pretty calm. But they can flip very quickly and chase you with a speed up to 40 miles per hour.

We had time to shop at markets and stores in St. Lucia before driving to our next destination on the itinerary. It was a spot along the coastline. The path down was long and inaccessible. But my friends from England stepped up and assisted me down the steep rocky path. Safari staff helped me get up back up. Our guide also helped another woman dip her feet in the water. It was a beautiful conclusion to this unforgettable trip.

This trip was one of the best experiences in my life. I travelled in a country I had never been to before. I got to meet South Africans who love their country and the animals that live there. I got to feed and touch elephants. I got to see many other wild animals close up. I made new friends who shared this wonderful experience with me. We talked, we laughed, and we sang *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* loudly on our vehicle as we were driven around. We exchanged emails and connected on Facebook. I now even play Pokémon with someone from England. This year, I went on a two-week vacation to England visiting my newfound friends. Finally, I want to tell you that I experienced happiness again. ●

For more information about Pat's trip, questions about accessibility features, cost of the trip and other tips and tricks, please send an email to info@sciontario.org.

Magazine without Borders

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attracted people who want to help him in his mission.

A woman named Karin reached out to Jose. She is a teacher in a small village in Peru. She has a 14-year-old student with Cerebral Palsy. When a Torontonian named Joseph was planning to go to the Amazon region Jose asked him if he could help transport the wheelchair to this boy in Peru.

When Joseph delivered the wheelchair to Karin's student, he was overwhelmed with emotion. Shortly after his birth, the boy's mom had abandoned him and he was brought up by his grandma. All his life, he had been crawling on the floor to get around; occasionally someone would lend him a manual wheelchair. And each weekday, his classmates had to put him in a wheelbarrow to get him to school. This experience opened Joseph's eyes and his heart to people with disabilities especially the ones living in less privileged parts of the world.

In recent years, Jose has been helping people in Ontario as well. He works with the Veterans in Canadian Legions, newcomers to Canada and people in our SCI community. He connects SCIO with people who want to donate hospital beds, porch lifts, stair lifts or other equipment that they have no need for. He helps people with wheelchair repairs, especially the ones who need emergency service and the ones who have no benefit or insurance coverage. He also helps us transport donated equipment to people who have no means themselves, and as a final resort, he donates wheelchairs to people who have exhausted all other sources.

At this time, his organization is looking for a spacious facility to store his equipment and also be used as a repairing shop. In the past, Storage Mart has generously provided him three small units free of cost, but as of 2020, two of the units will no longer be available for free. If you would like to contribute to his cause, please contact him at 416-938-9311. Visit his website to read the original article and find out more about his good work at www.purinapaq.org. ●

My Baby's Beautiful Eyes

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cult moments we endured this past year having Kailey was by far the best thing to come out of it.

Although life was incredibly busy with a new baby, Braden continued to work hard. He had regained movement in his legs and his right arm. Unfortunately, his left arm had permanent damage. The reality is that most children would not have survived the injury that Braden sustained. Subsequently this translated into our awareness of the lack of services in our community for children who have SCI. (Braden was an anomaly.)

The remarkable group of therapists at Kidsability soon became close friends. Our support group did not have any experience with SCIs but they found a way to become creative with their treatments. They stayed with him for fifteen years, providing him with constant support and encouragement as he managed through his childhood and teenage years. We had some pretty significant battles during those formative childhood years. Some of which included segregation, bullying and human rights violations.

It was enforced by the school board for Braden to attend a school for children with Orthopaedic disabilities. This was devastating to him as he was being segregated from his neighbourhood friends and classmates, all because he couldn't walk!

We did see him attend that middle school. With the help from our local newspaper an article was printed regarding classroom integration. The school board was frowned upon and they retracted their initial statement. Braden eventually resumed going to his original school with his friends, where he belonged.

Once Braden became a young man we found another rehabilitation centre called MacWheelers. It was specifically for people who have SCI. I remember walking into this gym and feeling like we had finally found our people. Braden loved being a part of this gym. He gained strength and determination from this group of individuals who shared so much in common with him.

Not only did Braden find his support, but so did I. Through SCIO I became a peer support volunteer. This gave me the chance to share my knowledge and life experience with others who were new to the world of SCI. We are now 23 years post injury. So much of our lives has changed. Our family has a wealth of knowledge regarding life after SCI and we enjoy sharing our journey with others. It has not always been an easy quest, but with the love and support of everyone who has stood with us, we have managed to find our happy once again. ●

CANADIAN SPINAL CORD INJURY REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION
CSCIRA

2019 National Spinal Cord Injury Conference

We are currently building a Community Engagement Bursary Program to recruit leaders and community activists from the SCI community who would be interested in attending the 8th National SCI Conference in October 2019.

Watch our website and your email inbox for more updates as we launch our online Bursary Program in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, if you are interested in attending the conference (all expenses paid), please email advocacy@sciontario.org to get yourself on the early bird list. One major criterion for the bursary program is that you must be an Ontarian with a SCI. For more information on the 2019 National SCI Conference, please see http://cscira.ca/biennial-conference/2019 ●

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