



**Independent Living  
Centre Kingston**  
Promoting a new perspective on disability

# Levelling The Landscape

Independent Living Centre Kingston Newsletter \* June, 2009

## Self Advocacy



Do you see the need for change? Do you feel that your point of view is not heard? Do you have an opinion or course of action on: bus strikes, non accessible businesses, laws that need change, agencies not serving your needs and more. One way to have a stronger voice is Self Advocacy.

**Advocacy** is defined as the pursuit of influencing outcomes, including public-policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions that directly effect people's current lives. Therefore, advocacy can be seen as a deliberate process of speaking out on issues of concern in order to exert some influence on behalf of ideas or persons.

**Self advocacy** is carried out by individuals and organizations who are completely separate from the organizations who provide services. Independent advocates do not answer to managers in social work, health, housing, education, or any of the other services that vulnerable people depend on.

On your own, with support of an advocate or group, you can make your voice heard.

*Check out the article Advocacy Tips on page 5.*

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## Rick Hanson Wheels In Motion 2009





## Notes from the Executive Director

### **Ontario's safety net inadequate for people with disabilities.**

The recent stoppage of Kingston Access Bus service to people with disabilities is unacceptable and should never have happened. The situation with Kingston Access Bus had significant negative impacts on the quality of life of people with disabilities. It is demonstrated once again that people with disabilities are treated as second class citizens. The recent labor dispute at Kingston Access Services is a symptom of all that is wrong with the Ontario Government's current approach to providing supports to people with disabilities. The power and control of this service, and most other services for people with disabilities, is held by those who govern, set policy and provide services at the provincial, municipal and community levels. People with disabilities clearly do not have any control over their transportation services or most other supports they require to participate as equal citizens. The provincial government needs to stop treating disability as a medical condition that needs to be treated and cared for based on a person's disability. They need to stop funding services and supports in Ontario through various Ministry silos that are focused on a disability type.

The Ontario government should develop a comprehensive disability supports strategy that first and foremost views people with disabilities as full and equal citizens. They need to partner with the disability community and municipal governments to reinforce this approach and develop integrated provincial-municipal mechanisms for disability related supports. The provincial government needs to develop a strategy that is in line with the Independent Living philosophy, the consumers (people with disabilities) have control in obtaining and using required disability related supports and services. The services need to be designed in a way that embraces the whole person as they move through the many phases of life. Until the service system in Ontario is restructured and people with disabilities are empowered to manage their own supports they will never truly be equal citizens.

Never has there been such a need for self advocacy skills building and support. The many services, supports and systems that people with disabilities require for a decent quality of life require constant communication and advocacy. As Ontarians with disabilities we need to communicate our needs for appropriate and adequate supports. We need to advocate every time we require an improved or different service in order to participate equally. This communication and advocacy needs to happen at the provincial, municipal and community level.

We need to exercise our rights as citizens to ensure that our members of provincial parliament and our city councilors understand that the service stoppage of Kingston Access Bus should never have happened. It is an essential service that significantly affects our quality of life. We also need to get to work, attend school, get to medical appointments, and participate in the community. I would encourage everyone with a disability to communicate your experiences of not having services or control over these services and how it negatively impacts your quality of life. Pick up the phone, fax or e-mail Members of Provincial Parliament and city councilors. (see bottom page 5)

## A Model for Disability Supports

### The Ontario Self-Managed Attendant Services Direct Funding Program

The Direct Funding Program enables adults with physical disabilities to become employers of their own attendant services. This innovative program is operated by people with disabilities using an entrepreneurial approach, that empowers individuals with physical disabilities in managing their attendant service needs.



Through this program personal attendants assist Self-Managers with routine activities of daily living. Currently this program supports over 700 Self-Managers across Ontario, with another 500 people waiting for funding to come available. In comparison to other service provider type programs, the Direct Funding Program provides the most choice, flexibility and control to people with disabilities. It is also the most cost effective attendant service program funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health.

Due to the importance of this program structure and the desperate need for expansion funding, we would encourage you to contact your local MPP, and request that more funding be provided for the Direct Funding Program in Ontario. If you would like more information about this program, please contact the Independent Living Centre Kingston.

Neil Allen  
Regional Administrative Coordinator  
Direct Funding Program

## Gasoline Tax Refund

People who have a permanent disability because of a mobility impairment and cannot safely use public transportation can apply for a refund of part of the federal excise tax on gasoline. See Information Sheet XE8, *Federal Excise Gasoline Tax Refund Program* at

[www.cra.arc.gc.ca/disability](http://www.cra.arc.gc.ca/disability)

or call 1-800-959-5525. In addition, some provinces have gasoline tax refunds for people with disabilities. Check with your own provincial government for information.

## Computer Tip

### Top 5 security tips:

#### 1. Get an antivirus tool.

No, really get one. Don't just say you will, and update it regularly, at least once a week.

#### 2. Keep your systems patched.

Believe it or not, Windows Update is your friend. By visiting Windows Update once a week and making sure you've got all the critical updates, you'll be far safer from attack. It's remarkably easy to do.

#### 3. BACK UP! BACK UP! BACK UP!

4. Install an anti-spyware tool to augment your antivirus protection.

5. Don't install a search-help bar in your browser unless it's from someone you trust. Google and Yahoo! search-help bars are fine. Many of the other search helpers are just plain evil.

<http://webanywhere.cs.washington.edu/>

WebAnywhere is a web-based screen reader for the web.

## From ILCK's Board of Directors

Independent Living Centre Kingston's Board of Directors are developing a strategic plan that will guide the organization over the next three years. We would like you, the membership, to review the strategic directions and their definitions, and ask that you provide us with feedback by the end of July so that we may finalize our focus at the September board meeting.

### The 6 Strategic Directions are:

**Research:** To conduct an environmental scan.

Expected Results:

- Identification of gaps in current Independent Living Centre Kingston's programs and services.
- Identification of new programs and services required.

**Programming:** To develop individual empowerment skills for people with disabilities.

Expected results:

- Meet or surpass consumers' needs within budget allocations.
- Existing and new programs Refined and developed.
- Annual participant satisfaction survey conducted.

**Funding:** to seek and obtain funding to operate the Independent Living Centre Kingston.

Expected Results:

- Secured funding for current programs and projects for the next 3 years.
- Secured funding for new programs and project for the next 3 years.

**Marketing/Communications:** raise the profile of the ILCK and promote the Independent Living principles.

Expected Results:

- Increased awareness of ILCK programs and services.
- Increased awareness of Independent living principles and issues.

**Human Resources:** to ensure that staff and volunteers have the necessary skills to achieve our mission.

Expected Results:

- Implemented Policies and Procedures
- Process to review and update policies and procedures.

**Governance:** to ensure the Board provides accountable leadership and management to achieve our mission.

Expected Results:

- Updated Governance Policy.
- An annual meeting to report on activities and achievements to the membership.



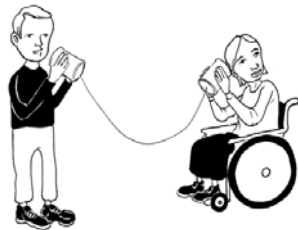
## Advocacy Tips

Remember: the simple, straightforward solution is often the best. Be careful not to blow a problem out of proportion. That can make people defensive rather than supportive.



Approaching the wrong person in an organization wastes time and causes frustration. Don't expect someone to change something if they have no influence in that area. Reach the people within the organization who actually have the authority to make the changes you are requesting.

After identifying the appropriate organization and / or individual (s), familiarize yourself with their philosophy and goals and find out how they view the issue. Be prepared and know the arguments that might be put forward in opposition to your issue. Develop a strategy for countering these arguments. Be able to clearly demonstrate how the issue is creating problems and how it is defeating the system's own goals.



From *Advocacy: The Process* by Active Living Alliance

### **Kingston Councillors**

<http://www.cityofkingston.ca/cityhall/council/councillors/>

### **Ontario Members (MPPs)**

<http://www.ontla.on.ca> click on Members (MPPs) on the left

### **Federal Members (MPs)**

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

## Featured Organization Able Sail Kingston



Able Sail programs have been offered in sailing centres across Canada since 1980. The Kingston Program began in 2002. Programs offering recreational and competitive sailing instruction for persons with a disability now exist in over 20 communities in Canada. The volunteer committee of Able Sail Kingston and the Kingston Yacht Club Board is pleased to offer accessible sailing programs at KYC.

Participants in the "Learn to Sail" and "Come Sail Away" programs sail in untippable, specially designed dinghies and sailboats such as the "Access 303" and the larger 16 ft. "Martin 16".

Kingston's first sailing program for persons with a disability is open to Adults 18 and up. No previous sailing experience is required. All that's required is a desire to experience the tremendous feeling of freedom sailing has to offer, and the desire to challenge oneself by trying something new. The program is currently offered to participants with physical disabilities only; including the visually and hearing impaired.

### **Contact Able Sail**

#### **By Phone:**

613. 217.9859

KYC Main Office:

613.548.3052

**Fax:** 613.548.8876

**By Email:** [ask@kingstonyachtclub.com](mailto:ask@kingstonyachtclub.com)

# Employment Tip

## Oh My! I have a Job Interview!

Many people feel excited and happy once they receive a phone call from a potential employer to schedule an in-person interview; then the nerves set in.

The first thing to remember while communicating with the potential employer on the phone is:

They are already interviewing you – critiquing your phone mannerisms; your ability to communicate thoroughly & professionally. Remember to speak clearly, confidently and above all - **LISTEN** to the information that is being given to you. Write down any information that is being given & do not hesitate to say “do you mind holding; while I get a pen & paper to write down this information?”



Once you have received the phone call & have scheduled your interview time; stop and congratulate yourself. You have been short-listed, meaning all the hard-work you have done on your Resume and Cover letter have worked. The Potential Employer has recognized that you have some of the skill sets that they are looking for in their vacant position and that they are interested in meeting you.

## Now the work begins:

There is saying that is true “Poor Preparation equals Poor Performance”. At this stage you want to ensure that your interview is the best; Employers are looking to get to know you; try to relax and let your natural personality come shining through. Steps for preparing:

- Get to know the Company – the internet is a great tool; visit the Company’s website; get to understand their business; their mission statement and/or philosophies. Read press releases or any public information you find. This will help you understand the company and will boost your confidence in the interview.
- Get to know the Players – many companies will post their Hierarchy on their website; HR Managers regularly google candidates on the internet to get additional information about potential candidates. There is nothing wrong with getting to know who you maybe working for. You may even find a common interest between you and the individual.
- Review the Job Ad - take some time to review the job ad you applied for; especially the duties & requirements of the position and link each one with your past work experience. Write it down and review this information frequently. This will help you formulate answers to questions that the employer will pose to you during the interview stage.
- Organized – once you are comfortable with the job requirements and have reviewed your answers to potential questions; your focus should be on organizing the details. Pick out

the Interview Outfit – something that looks professional and is comfortable for you to wear. Lay it out and ensure it is clean. Make sure you know how to get to your interview location and arrange any transportation needed, make sure you leave enough time to get there, especially if you are taking Public transit. This should be completed at least the day before your interview. Rushing around at the last moment will only distract you from the Interview.

- Reviewing – once everything is organized, spend some time reviewing all the information that you have gathered; be confident and trust that you have absorbed this information. It is important not to overload yourself; so by 8pm the night before set everything aside, relax and have an early night. A good sleep is a good foundation for your performance at the interview. Rise early enough so that you can ease into getting ready for the interview. Take one more review of your information and get ready to go.

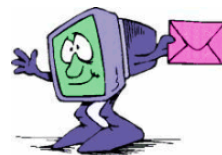
All that you can ask from yourself after the interview process is that you have put your best effort into it; debriefing is an important step in realizing two questions “What did I do really well in the interview” and “What can I improve on”. Make a list of both and use this information to your advantage.

**For more information contact David at the Centre.**

**ARCH Disability Law Centre** is a specialty legal aid clinic serving the province of Ontario and is dedicated to defending and advancing the equality rights of persons with disabilities. Go to <http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca/> to sign up for their newsletter.

## Stay connected to ILCK!

- Are you a member?
- Is your contact information up-to-date?
- Do we have your current email address?



**Contact the Centre today!**

## Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)



The Registered Disability Savings Plan is a new plan that will allow funds to be invested tax-free until withdrawal. It is intended to help parents and others to save for the long-term financial security of a child with a disability. The plan structure is similar to a Registered Education Savings Plan.

Contributions to an RDSP will be eligible for the new Canada Disability Savings Grant. There is also a new Canada Disability Savings Bond for individuals with lower family net incomes.

Who will be eligible for the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)? Any person who is: eligible for the Disability Tax Credit and is a Canadian resident; or a parent or legal representative of a person who is resident in Canada and is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit.

These are two programs designed to augment funds in the RDSP. The government will contribute, in the form of Canada Disability Savings Grants, funds equivalent to 100% to 300% of RDSP contributions, up to a maximum of \$3,500 depending on the net income of the beneficiary's family. The government will also contribute up to \$1,000 annually in Canada Disability Savings Bonds depending on the net income of the beneficiary's family.

## Cooking Tips for People with Disabilities

- Keep a stool in the kitchen to avoid standing for long periods.
- Food processors help with chopping, cutting and slicing. Inexpensive used processors can often be found in 2nd hand shops. 
- Pizza cutters (with wheel and large handle) work as an alternative cutting tool for many things like sandwiches, onions and more.
- Use a slow cooker/crock pot. Throw In your ingredients and let it cook throughout the day.
- If you use a wheelchair, set a flat board on your lap to help carry things around the kitchen.
- To stabilize a mixing bowl set it in a drawer and shut the drawer against the bowl's sides, lean against the drawer to keep pressure on the bowl's sides, which prevents it from rotating as you stir.
- Put a lazy Susan on refrigerator shelf or cabinet shelf. This will make it easier to reach items that tend to disappear in the back. 
- Put a towel or fabric mat under appliances on your counter, This makes it easier to pull the appliance to the front of the counter. Use a long-handled spoon to help lift pot lids. This helps balance the weight of the lid.

- Use Braille, tactile markings, large print or colors to mark stove or microwave controls, food seasonings, or anything.

- If you use wheel chair or need to sit while cooking, hang an unbreakable mirror at an angle above the stove so that you can see into the pots on the stovetop.



- Contrasting cutting boards ensure that food shows up easily. Use a dark cutting board for light food and a light one for dark foods.
- A liquid level indicator slips onto a cup or bowl and beeps when liquid reaches approximately one inch from the top. Battery operated.
- Communal and institutional living or difficulties communicating may limit opportunities to be involved in meal planning and having access to preferred food choices. You do have a right to decide what food you eat.

## Dates to Remember

The annual open house and BBQ will be on **Thursday August 20<sup>th</sup>**

### Dinner Club

Tuesday July 7

- Ramekins - 1540 Bath Road

Tuesday August 4<sup>th</sup>

- Smitty's - 2376 Princess Street

Accredited Member



For more information please visit/contact:

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