

Member-to-Member CONNECTION



SPECIAL EDITION • DECEMBER 2004

Sisters & Brothers, Seasons Greetings!
Welcome to this Member-to-Member Connection Special Edition newsletter. We would like to thank the members who have contributed. Your willingness to share your needs and concerns, as well your success stories, is sure to be appreciated by all who read these letters.

Since the last newsletter in December 2003, our work on the "Moving On" project for members with adult children (over 19 years) with disabilities has progressed.

During the months of September and October, 50 members and partners participated in focus groups in Calgary, Toronto, Montreal and St. John, as well as two teleconference sessions.

We want to thank those of you who have contributed to the development of this project. With the focus groups and the member survey conducted during the summer, we have learned much about how your child's transition to adulthood impacts your work and family life. We have heard about the lack of services and information about resources in your communities, your child's needs for employment, recreation, friends and further education, as well as your concerns about the future for your adult child.

Based on your input and your reflections on the strengths of the Special Needs Project, a proposed "Moving On" project design is being developed. We hope to launch the new project by late February. The project will be open to both CUPW and UPCE-PSAC members. We will continue to keep you informed as the "Moving On" project unfolds.

We wish you and your family much joy and peace as you enter into the holiday season. May this peace follow you into the new year and throughout 2005.

In solidarity,

Denis Lemelin
Luc Guèvremont
JoAnna Latulippe-Rochon

Collin belongs to the London Blizzard Sledge Hockey Club, with the help of the CUPW funding. Sledge hockey is for kids with physical disabilities allowing kids with mobility problems a chance to play hockey too. After all, shouldn't hockey be for all kids!

Postal Worker
London, ON



After paying for wheelchair repairs for over 13 years out of my own pocket and money received from the Special Needs Project, I was finally informed that Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services pays for repairs as long as the Ministry finances it. I discovered this information when I had no money to pay for the last repair. This meant that my son Abbey would have had to stay home and not be able to attend school.

Mail Delivery
Brampton, ON



I am a letter carrier in Campbell River, BC. My grandson, Skyler, who is 3 years old, came to live with us 1 year ago. His mother and father died at that time and we will be raising him.

Skyler is suffering from emotional trauma and has a supported day care worker at his daycare to help him cope. I am thankful for the help the Special Needs Project is giving me.

Letter Carrier

Campbell River, BC



I have a daughter, aged 8, and a son, aged 6. My son is autistic and developmentally challenged, possibly as a result of getting the MMR (measles, mumps & rubella) vaccine. At 21 months, my son was able to say words like daddy, mommy, boo-boo, wait, on the floor, give me 5, etc. After the vaccine, within a week, I'd lost him. He started withdrawing from us, like he was in a bubble, and began losing his balance.

We went to a clinic for PDDs (pervasive developmental disorders), and they made us waste a lot of valuable time seeing specialists who couldn't come up with a diagnosis. Nineteen months later, we managed to get a nightly news spot on autism with Paule Robitaille, just so my son could get an appointment with a child psychiatrist and have a label stuck on him. In addition, my son was badly treated at the daycare centre, and the Minister didn't do anything about it. The principal of the daycare centre involved expelled my son from the centre and the Minister closed the file. We did an enormous amount of legwork, with appalling results. We weren't taken seriously by the regional board, our MP, or the hospital. Then, my wife had a stroke. To this day, the only response we get is from the Montreal PPD Association and the Special Needs Project, which were kind enough to help us. I go could on and on about our family situation, but it would be too depressing. And so, thank you.

To labour activists and workers, I say, "Keep up the good work." We need you!

Montréal, QC

The school year was coming to a close back in May 2003. I was looking for a summer daycare camp for my daughter, Michelina, to go and have some fun and be cared for during the summer months. I had heard that CUPW had a summer day camp every year and I decided to check it out. I signed up Michelina and took her to camp. I tell you I was not disappointed with the results. Michelina had fun all through the summer and never wanted to leave to go home. When the CUPW camp came to a close, Michelina became very unhappy and wished she could keep going. She did not want to go back to school.

PO4

Halifax, NS

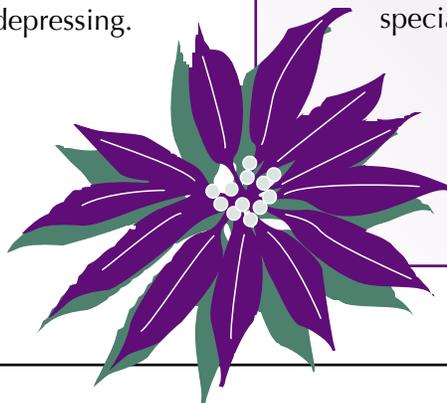
We would like to thank the CUPW Special Needs Project for all the help we have received from them. They made it possible for us to get tutoring for our two girls. It has made a very important difference.

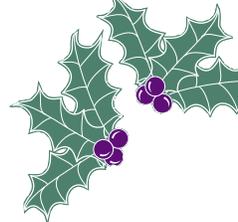
Letter Carrier

Windsor, ON

On March 11, 2004, a superior court judgment came down for my son, Jared, concerning individualized funding. The 3-judge court found that the government had been both unfair and unreasonable in their funding response to the needs of my son. They were ordered to go back to 2001 and review and reassess Jared's individualized funding agreements based on the court decision and develop and implement a procedure, with appeal process, for this type of funding. It is my hope that this decision will have far reaching positive effects for all families with special needs kids/adults.

Barrie, ON



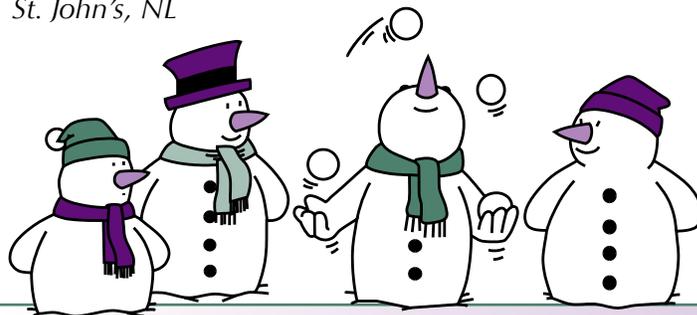


It was great to hear about the Special Needs Project. It has helped Jeremy function with his ADHD in such a positive way. He is able to focus better and his organizational skills are getting better. He says that now he's got friends, which never really existed before. He is very excited about Jr. High. Concerta has been a blessing in helping us deal with his condition. It feels as though he has found a new lease on life. Schoolwork, friends, behaviour and social skills have all improved. This new slow-release drug doesn't make him like a zombie. He takes it once in the morning and it lasts all day and it doesn't break into a powder which is a concern with teenagers. It actually turns into a gel. You don't see any change in him physically, but there's a big change in his self-esteem. Thanks. Renée Barron.

Thank you CUPW for the financial help you've given my family. I have enclosed a picture of Christian receiving a Turnaround Achievement Award from his school. We are very proud of him. He is finally being recognized for his efforts. Barrett Corporation made him feel very special. They really boosted his self-esteem. I truly believe that the success Christian is enjoying today is directly connected to the help received from the CUPW Special Needs Project. Thanks a million.

PO4
Grand Falls, NB

St. John's, NL



For Sale

Three wheeled bike 20" wheel high rise handle bars. Picture available.

Nipawin, SK

At the beginning of the school year I had purchased a "Walk Man" for my son. He has ADHD moderate to severe. It has become a valuable tool for his education. His accommodations at school allow the teachers to put his exams and some lessons on a CD format. Since Jacob must do his exams orally, this has become a valuable tool. Hope the "new use" of a Walk Man will help others to help their children. Do not let the school say no - it's your right to have your special child accommodated.

Letter Carrier PO1
Innisfil, ON

I hope to introduce an idea to the CUPW membership in the fall of 2004. I think that disabled children of single parents should be deemed as spouses for the purpose of tax deduction and benefactor of pensions and CPP.

The philosophy is quite simple. If I was in my seventies and married a partner fifty years my junior that spouse would be entitled to all my pensions without question. Since most, if not all, of our disabled children never marry, why can't we give our pensions to them?

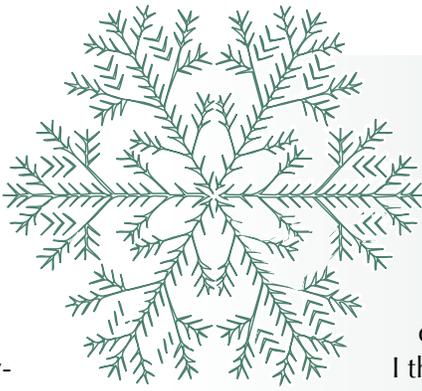
One may state that you can give insurance to them. If you have looked into this you will know that the government mandates all monies, assets, etc, must be used up before reinstating a disability cheque. Your child will lose that (the disability cheque) the day they inherit money or assets. I found this out the day I made my will.

Please write to me with your thoughts about this. Sorry I don't have e-mail.

Clerk PO4
Windsor, ON

Our son

is 14 and has ADHD with aggression—he is very loud, likes to yell whatever he says and thinks he knows everything. He is becoming very hard to deal with when it comes to taking his meds. He is on Ritalin SR in the mornings and Clonidine in the evenings to aid sleep. The nights are not as much of a problem as the mornings. Effects of not taking the morning med are verbal language to abusive levels. Other aggressions often appear - mostly on the way out the door to school or when returning from school. Some days I want to change my address and leave no forward for him. Very frustrated.



I thought I was finished with homework when I finished school! But no, I am more concerned with homework now than I was with that horrible chore years ago. I was lucky to be able to carry a homework load without difficulty. I see now that what I thought was a heavy load, is only a mere sample of what my son, Brian, has to face. Children with special needs carry a double load. A 30lb back-pack, 8 subjects every night and no attention span, doom them from square one. He has a homework mentor, but still, it is a struggle each night, weekends, breaks or snow days. He goes in at 8:30 some mornings, goes to homework night at the local library and still, I know not all of it gets done. Any parent that feels the same way, write me. We have common concerns. My son will be in high school next fall, so I have been told. I would like to hear from other parents, as I need some input about special needs kids going into high school, regarding the homework load and how to approach this new phase in life.

Cochrane, ON

I have a 13-year-old son with an extra chromosome that is part of chromosome 22 and 11. Therefore, they term his condition as a translocated 22;11. The abbreviation we use is T:11;22. This extra chromosome resulted in severe physical and mental handicaps in my son. Because of his determination, and much occupational and physical therapy, he was able to walk by the time he reached age 9. We still use a wheel chair when ambulating over long distances. He doesn't speak but has a very expressive face plus the use of a few signs to help with communication.

Ottawa, ON

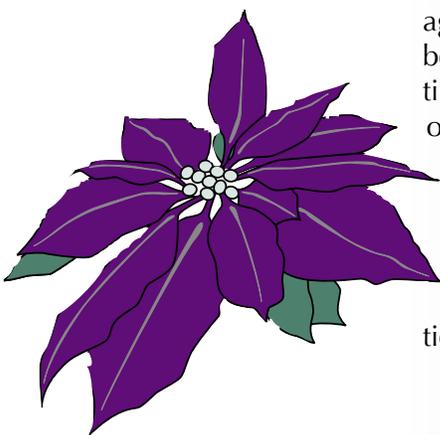
Postal Clerk

Garson, ON

This is for those people who every once in a while glance at the *Moving Mountains* book, think of all those families, and wonder if they should call—I did that, too. Many of us feel we can get by on what we have (we don't need help), but it's really about our children after all. I can't think of one thing that could possibly bring me as much unbelievable happiness as my six children. They range in age from 21-year-old twins, a 15-year-old boy, and 12-year-old girl, to 6 & 5 year old boys. The laughter in our house is sometimes over-whelming. All interact, but the times that are frustrating are when two of my children aren't accepted socially like others in today's world. However, since I joined the Special Needs Project, I have come to realize that there is a fit for my special needs children. The financial help I receive from this program makes a difference in their lives as well as the step-by-step help I receive from the support team - from Gail and Dorothy to my very own advisor, Lesley, who has given countless hours to help me. I wish I had taken the steps (to join the project) much sooner. So please take a look, ask questions, call today. You won't be disappointed. Thank you to the Special Needs Project.

PO4

Hamilton, ON



I was recently visited by Contact Hamilton, which is a program for children between the teen to young adult ages. This program is basically run by the government and is a resource for parents. As we know, the older our children get, the less there is out there for them. During the visit, the resource coordinator talked with my daughter and I to find out what kind of things my daughter likes to do. Then she gave me a couple of contacts for services my daughter might like during the summer and, of course, all year round. I would like to share this information with you.



Contact Hamilton
For Children and Developmental Services
 140 King St. E, Suite 4
 Hamilton, ON, L8N 1B2
 (905) 570-8888
Choices (905) 628-6147
Extend - A - Family (905) 383-2885
Hamilton Association for Community Living
 191 York Blvd., Hamilton, ON, L8R 1Y6

If you don't live in my area, I'm sure there is one in your area.

PO4 Clerk
 Hamilton, ON

Once again my family thanks you. I don't know if you truly understand what your help does for us. Here is a picture of my son Christopher just to let you see who you are helping. Thank you.

Letter Carrier
 Moncton, NB



Colin has been reassessed from being mildly mentally challenged to moderately mentally challenged. His greatest accomplishments since starting kindergarten are reading, working on smaller, beautiful handwriting, eager classmates, and being able to find friends and get invited to a birthday party. Two boys ran out of the school just so Colin wouldn't miss it. He's finally being noticed. His teacher has said that Colin puts all his effort into everything that he does. He wants to be included and accepted by his classmates. This is his last year for elementary school. Next year, Colin will enter middle school and we can only hope that he will continue to get peer support and perhaps more of it. As Colin and time progress I would like to see more promotion and support for integrating people with special needs into the work force and education system. Thank you Canada Post from Colin who knows all about your funding.

PO4
 Kelowna, BC

Have you ever been at the grocery store and for once it is someone else's child having a temper tantrum? Although you may sympathize with the parent it still feels good to see that you are not the only person that this happens to, that you are normal.

Devin is a wonderful boy but dealing with him at times is a challenge. My 10 year old has ADHD, ODD and LD, which often puts me in the boat of feeling that people are staring and wondering why I can't control my child. The fact that he comes across as "a normal child" (I hate that term) makes people less apt to understand. I started with CPC just over a year ago. The union promptly put me in touch with the Special Needs Project. Not only has it helped out financially but I no longer feel so alone. Devin's tutoring and hard work have improved not only his school-work, but his self esteem. It has helped a bit in his ability to get along with his peers. Thanks a lot and keep up the good work.

Term
 Windsor, ON

My name is

Allan Leaf. I am a postal clerk at the Atrium P.O. in down town Toronto.

My son Marty is a special needs child who has gross motor skill delays and speech delays. We found that the X-ceptional Biking program (offered by Laura Hunter's STEPS Programs) has helped him gain the ability to ride a bike. I've been told by Laura Hunter, the director, that children come from great distances for her programs. If there are families close enough to Toronto to take advantage of these programs, I would recommend them highly.

Laura Hunter's STEPS Programs—Quality Physical Education for Children and Youth of all Abilities. PH: 905-642-8001 web site. www.stepsprograms.com.

PO4 Postal Clerk
Thornhill, ON



In November

I traveled to Central Brazil (thanks to air miles from my sister) to see one of the most powerful healers alive. He's known simply as John of God. I was thoroughly impressed and amazed at what he could do with otherwise hopeless conditions. A google search of "Miracle Man of Brazil" or www.JohnofGod.com will bring up a lot of information on the net.

Anyone wanting to talk to me, just call or e-mail me.

Ext. 01
Vancouver, BC

Simple words cannot explain how grateful and appreciative my family is for your continued, generous support. The boys have been progressing very well.

My older son now has an enlarged breast. We have been doing tests to determine if it is the medication or just hormones. It seems like when we get over one obstacle, another one pops up. His father and I continue to pray daily for him.

Postal Clerk
Ajax, ON

Keep up the

good work. After attending the Child Care Now educational, I have gained a new appreciation for the effort you all put in day to day. Hope to see you all in the near future. Your brother in solidarity.

MSC
Richmond, BC

Our family has had a very hard last year. I went off on stress leave for a few weeks. The problems we face are complicated. Our teenage daughter has been drinking over these times. She does not clean anything and she is loud and mean if she doesn't get what she wants. Thank God she still has a desire to read and will do school work with a tutor only. 16 years old is hard on parents.

Miscellaneous
London, ON

Dear Brothers/Sisters:

I want to thank the Special Needs Project for the assistance and support that benefits my autistic son, Gabriel. He has improved in his daily tasks at home and at school. We have noticed the progression of his social and motor skills, which means that he's more adaptable around other people. That's huge progress for him but we still have a long way to go yet. Hopefully, at some point, he'll be able to communicate with us a lot more. Thank you for everything!!

MSC
Toronto, ON

Myla-Kim is doing well with her skating. We continue pushing her to the maximum. She is starting to show more discipline and is having a lot fewer fits. Our perseverance is working. Now, she has a better understanding of what she has to do and she likes it. We are thinking about introducing her to a new sport, such as swimming. We are very proud of her and adore her despite everything she makes us go through.

Ville-de-la-baie. QC

I would like to thank

the Special Needs Project on behalf of myself and the rest of my family. The opportunity to be part of this unique project has been beneficial financially. As well, it has provided a wonderful listening "ear" regarding the obstacles and challenges families with special needs children face day to day. Two of our special needs children are now adults and it is very exciting to watch them grow on their own. Opportunities that they were given because of Special Needs Project funding has been a contributing factor to their advancement and growth. We still have a fourteen-year-old daughter with Juvenile Diabetes in the program. She is going to a two-week diabetic camp again this summer in Huntsville, ON, thanks to special needs assistance. These opportunities help to build confidence in our youth. From the bottom of our hearts, thanks again.

PO2
Elmira, ON

My son Myles is 11 years old now. I see a big difference in him. He has started to read. We are still working on his speech. He's going to speech therapy twice a week and he's improving. We're still working on other issues and I'm getting some help for that. I believe that his speech therapy has helped him a lot.

PO4 Postal Clerk
Surrey, BC

From the Simcoe Reformer newspaper, March 2004: "Lauren Poitras took home the *Against the Odds* award in the 13 to 18 age category. *Against the Odds* nominees have shown great strength, ambition and dedication in overcoming a mental, physical, personal, economic or environmental challenge to achieve a goal." From Dawn Poitras, who nominated her daughter Lauren for this award: "Lauren is one of the most courageous, strong-willed young women I know. Her honest and

innocent eyes reveal a familiar soul, her smile reflective of warm summer sun, her tolerance that of a world class athlete, and her ability to adapt is truly amazing and beyond medical comprehension. Discover my daughter, indulge yourself in her love and laughter, and you too will be amazed. Even a brief encounter with Lauren will touch your heart, but when you know the path she has traveled, you too will understand and applaud her accomplishments. While other little girls took ballet, mine learned to stand on her own two feet. While other parents spent time in arenas, studios, schools, we spent time in hospital. This is where we all grew up... Lauren has made it easy for me to dedicate my life to her. Special needs...no, our life together has been a special blessing."

Letter Carrier
Simcoe, ON

I want to say how important it has been for Dennis to go to a Diabetic Camp. He now is 15 and has learned so much about acceptance. He is more at ease with his illness, and is looking at the possibility of the pump. He came home from camp not scared but pleased with the idea. Next year he can be a leader and help other kids in his situation. I'm proud of him.

Mail Clerk
Toronto, ON



This is with regards to the dental care plan. We don't go to our dentist regularly simply because it is too expensive. Every time we go we end up paying quite a lot because of the difference in the rates. It seems that the dental care plan is behind, using rates that are old.

MSC Mail Service
Vancouver, BC

Looking for a used, good quality, large booster seat for a reasonable price. Needed for a 60 lb, 11 year old with Cerebral Palsy.

Letter Carrier
Bobcaygeon, ON

Today they cut down Jordan's tree. It was a huge elm standing at least 50 feet high beside the highway. For years I didn't even realize it was an elm as I had never seen one that tall. It was straight and stately like an ancient oak or maple. But even these I had never seen standing this tall. When you came around the bend in the highway you would see the massive silhouette where no trees usually stand. The usual easement for Hydro was waived in this instance. I suppose they never thought it would grow this big. We first noticed this tree when we moved up here. We didn't marvel at it or give it any extra attention until Jordan noticed it. Even before we could see the tree, Jordan would sense it and start giggling and kicking in the back seat. We would be coming home from a visit to the city or even just to town, and Jordan's little feet would kick and he would be suddenly laughing. We couldn't even see the tree yet! Maybe he has far-sightedness. We all thought it was co-incidence until we realized that as we passed the tree on the road, Jordan would turn his head and watch it. Then he would be quiet. This went on for a few years. Jordan was only 8 months old when we moved here. After a few years of giggling as we passed that stretch of road, Jordan now became emotional. Every time we came round the bend and saw Jordan's tree he would start to giggle for a moment then he would cry. We couldn't console him. He would cry until we passed the tree. Was he scared of it now? We have no way of knowing. After a year or so of that, Jordan showed no more indication that he noticed the tree any more. We would even prompt him and say, "There's your tree Jordan" but he didn't respond. Did he still see it? We don't know. But now it is gone. Dutch elm disease killed it within three years. If Jordan was still laughing when we passed by I would be upset. But he doesn't seem to know it is gone. However I will not forget the tree that made my disabled and non-speaking little boy laugh, then cry, for a few short years. Thank-you for the funny times, elm tree.

We love our son with disabilities. He can't talk but he loves us back. It's not so bad after all.

Letter Carrier
 Bobcaygeon, ON



I have enclosed an article from the *Burnaby Now* newspaper. (Headline "Turning dreams into gold. Multi-medals at Pan-AM Games focus deaf swimmer on future.") Excerpt: "With his growing ability to compete on a more even footing with hearing competition, and with the advent of the starting signal light becoming more common in more and more pools, Sawyer sees new opportunities awaiting him at the finish line.") The goal for us is to have Brian become more social and out going. Our hope is that sports will help improve his self-esteem and broaden his social group. Money from the Special Needs Project can be used for educational and self esteem purposes. But as you can see we spend a lot on other things that would never happen, if he was a regular hearing kid.

Whiterock, BC

Just wanted to let you all know how helpful its been receiving support from the UPCE Special Needs Project. My only change is that I don't think I'll need assistance any longer. Channelle has been taken off her crutches and we're not quite sure what will happen at her next appointment in March. Thank you once again for the help the last year.

Antigonish, NS

I enjoyed reading about the Disability Tax Credit and especially about someone who is trying to battle the Government. As a parent of a 14 year old daughter with Cerebral Palsy which has left her little function in one leg and hand, I was told her disability was temporary by Revenue Canada. Can you imagine—brain damage temporary? We wish. Those who read our request for help need to be enlightened - Cerebral Palsy is permanent. Shame on Revenue Canada and on those who feel they have the power to decide someone else's future.

Toronto, ON



My nine-year old son Jonathan will be ten soon. He is hyperactive, autistic (Asperger) and has emotionally pervasive developmental disabilities. I can tell you that it isn't always easy. At age seven, he tried to kill himself because he was going to a regular school and was always left out. Then, he spent more than three months in Ste-Justine Hospital in the child psychology wing. I can tell you we've been asking ourselves a lot of questions, i.e. What am I doing wrong? Is it my fault? etc. But thanks to the Special Needs Project, I was able to find counselling, and it was worth it. I can tell you, don't get discouraged, everything will work out, even if our bosses at Canada Post aren't always very understanding. Today, my son is going to a special school for pathopsychological problems in Laval, and he's doing much better and is happier more often than before, which has improved our family moral. The important thing is that he's learning to live with his "handicap" and has rediscovered his zest for living and now appreciates school. Thank you for becoming interested in our situation. Keep hoping and smiling!

CST 01
Laval, QC



My son was diagnosed with diabetes three years ago. He experienced a very difficult time having to take shots. His blood sugar levels were most often above the acceptable level. He was in and out of hospital receiving intravenous in order to have the levels lowered. Finally, a new doctor placed him on the pump. Now his levels are much more controlled, his behaviour, due to the frustration of taking needles, has changed. He is a much happier individual now and certainly looks healthier. Thanks to the funds this program offers, it covers half the monthly cost for his installment payments for the pump. This has helped to ease some of the financial strain that confronts us. Thank you CUPW Special Needs Project.

Mississauga, ON



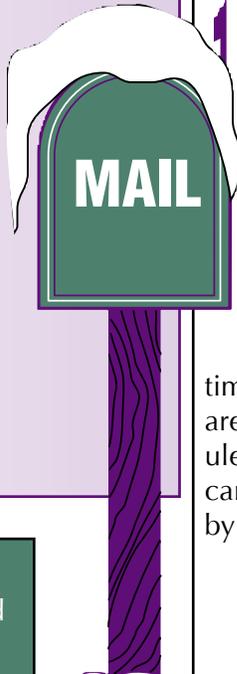
Letter carrier, Peter Amponsah's daughter, Brittany, was diagnosed with a hearing loss: moderate to moderately severe bilateral sensor neural hearing loss at the age of four by the Simon Fraser Health Unit in Vancouver, BC. Brittney is now nine years old and has her own unique situation and needs in her educational settings. As parents, we've had lost, chewed, squealing, carbureted and wet hearing aides, and oh yes, the dreaded swallowed batteries. There have been, and will continue to be, tough times and warm and wonderful times. Thank you. The project has been a ray of hope and help.

Letter Carrier
Coquitlam, BC

I'm thankful for a strong union. Because of the strength of its members my son Shawn can get the extra help he needs to keep up with his classmates.

Hamilton, ON

On Friday May 28, 04, our daughter Julie-Anne was presented with the "Sunshine Award" at her high school. This in itself was great. But what was even better was that all the students from grade 9 to 12, and faculty, gave her a standing ovation. This is an award that is presented every year to a student who brings a smile or is always happy around others. Gilles and I have always called her our "ray of sunshine". To have received this award, plus the standing ovation, is, and was, a great honor. Julie-Anne has been with us since we adopted her at 4 years old. They told us she wouldn't do this or that. We just said, "Is that so." She was in a ballet troop for 3 years, took jazz, and was in a recital at our cities theatre. This is a little girl who will be 17. She may be small and she may have a disability, but there is no challenge she won't attempt. To people that say "Oh you have a special needs child.", I say, "No we have a child who is special and she is our special gift." Never say no and never give up. We have the best and sweetest children. And the very, very best is that we are the lucky ones "God" chose to put these children, "our angels", with. Yes, there are frustrations and sometimes we are tired to the bone and say, "Why me?" Let me tell you when I stood in that gym and saw Julie-Anne receive the "Sunshine Award" and saw her get a standing ovation from everyone there, it made me want to say to her and to all our special kids - "Go girls and boys, you rule. Show them what you can do." To all parents I say, don't accept someone saying that your child will never be able to do something. Check the sparkle in your child's eye and say, "Oh yea, stand back and watch!"



Letter Carrier
Riverview, NB

The Child Care Fund is administered by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and financed by the Canada Post Corporation.

My daughter missed 76 days this school year due to hospitalization at HSC, but still came home with C's. Due to the funding help we were able to get her some good tutoring and she managed to stay afloat. For the first time she's feeling like one of the other kids in her class academically. That has had a wonderful impact on her self-esteem. Thanks to the Special Needs Project.

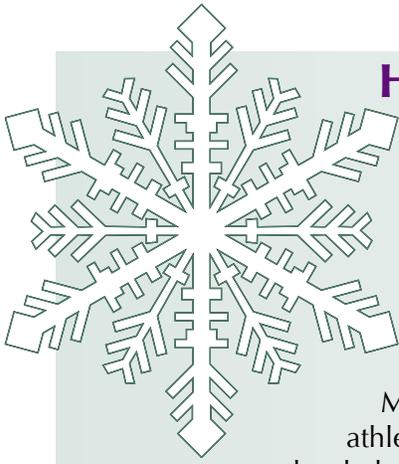
West Hill, ON

I would like to thank the Special Needs Project for the 6 years of helping us provide Alysha with the equipment and services that she needed when our funds were such that we could not provide them. This being, I believe, her last year of funding, I would like to thank my advisor, Debra Poirier, for all the help over the years.

Letter Carrier
Airdrie, AB

Our son Nic started (April 2004) doing school work at CASA (Child and Adolescent Services). He had not been to school since October 2003 because of anxiety and asperger syndrome. Academically he is quite capable but socially it is very difficult for him to be in large groups or crowds. At CASA half the day is spent on core subjects (language arts and math) and the other half of the day is spent on group or individual therapy. We have signed on as a family to attend the "multi - family" therapy sessions every Monday and once a month for our family alone. We have seen improvements in Nic's moods and behaviour. I felt forced by the school board to register Nic in high school for next year but do not see how he can function in a large high school environment. We have decided to enroll him at the Argyll Center (learn net) where he can do everything on the Internet. We will upgrade our computer and purchase programs for instruction. When he will need help he can take the bus to the Argyll center and interact with the teachers there. Nic still has a hard time taking the bus but is willing to try (as long as there are no unexpected changes to the routes and schedules). Nic really enjoys the swimming experience. He can be with people he knows and still be surrounded by strangers and have a good time.

A-5 Administration
Edmonton, AB



Hello, my name is Andrea Dziejwior.

I'm seventeen and on the honor roll in grade 12 at NDSS. I'm an above knee, left leg amputee and lost my leg shortly after being born. This was due to amniotic band syndrome, which had cut off the blood circulation to my leg. My father works as a wicket clerk in Nanaimo and I have been involved in the Special Needs Project since I was five years old.

My parents have always encouraged me to get involved in athletic and leadership activities and the Special Needs Project has helped offset the cost of my participation in these activities.

Recently, I was selected for the Canadian Disabled Alpine Ski Team and will start my first season with them as a developing racer. That means I'll be competing against world-class athletes in places like Colorado and Utah in the United States. Being selected for the National Team has been a dream of mine since I was twelve years old. It's such a great feeling knowing that I have accomplished one of my goals with the help of the Special Needs Project. As for the future, I hope to compete for Canada internationally and at the 2010 Olympics. Last year I took up swimming as a form of therapy and cross training for skiing and started to excel at this sport as well.

I should let you know that I have trained with able-bodied swimmers and skiers for a long time. I believe that I have gained their respect and shown people the importance of integration and inclusion in any activity by a person with a disability. By educating people that a disability does not define a person, we'll create a healthier and more vibrant society. My involvement in sports helped me more than just physically; it helped me gain more self esteem and self confidence that allowed me to get involved in social and leadership activities.

I am currently a Junior Counselor with the War Amps where I help new or young amputees under 18 adapt to life without a limb. Recently, I was elected as the athlete representative for Vancouver Island on the management board for the Pacific Sport organization. I represent athletes, disabled and not, on the Island and help Pacific Sport understand what the athletes' needs and desires are from all sports. I will also be participating in starting sports programs in elementary school to promote a healthy life style.

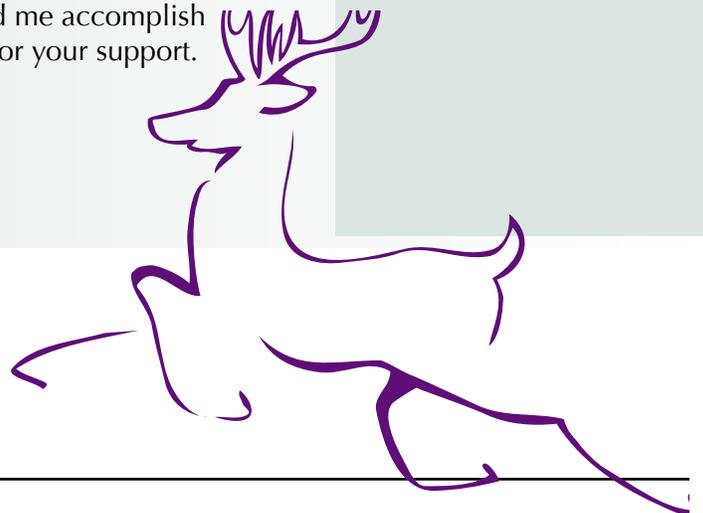
The support of the CUPW Special Needs Project has helped me accomplish these things and I just wanted to say a heart felt thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Andrea Dziejwior

I have raised Andrea, as well as her little sister Alicia, in the firm belief that you should reach for the limits of your ability and try your best at anything you do or desire. You should not restrict yourself to any preconceived prejudices or the traditional limits and restrictions set on a person with any type of disability.

These are easy words to write and speak about, but unless you've walked a mile in our shoes, a lot of people do not understand the tears and celebrations that you have experienced. I commend the children and parents for their courage. I would also like to thank the CUPW Special Needs Project for their assistance through all our years together. Feel free to connect with Andrea or myself if you wish.

PO4 Clerk
Nanaimo, BC



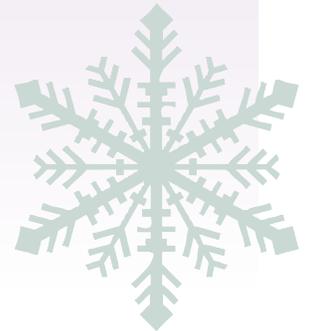
My son Gene, although suffering from Cerebral Palsy which hinders a lot of his activities, has a strong mind of his own. He is willing to accept all kinds of challenges. Not only is he a regular swimmer, he also participates in the rock wall-climbing program at Variety Village. Typical kids can get to the top of the wall in less than a minute. Gene will have to struggle 10 times harder to do the same task. However, he is always proud of himself every time he accomplishes a climb. He keeps saying, "If there is a will, there is a way".

Scarborough, ON



First I'd like to thank the CUPW Special Needs Project for helping us provide our daughter, recently diagnosed with Autism, with music therapy. Music therapy provides June with an outlet for creative expression and a way to connect and have fun, while learning. She sparkles throughout the whole session. I believe this has been instrumental in her development. We would like to connect with another family, if possible, who has a young son/daughter, 4 years old, with a developmental delay or neurological defect, especially Autism. We would like to share experiences and ideas.

Permanent
Winnipeg, MB



Special Needs Advisors:

Lisa B.
Donna M.
Michele T.
Beth B.
Sheila S.
Melissa B.
Kathy L.
Sue M.
Dianna S.
Shirley M.
Anne G.
Agnieszka G.
Nancy B.
Suzanne C.

Lesley Ann C.
Laura C.
Debbie D.
Sylvie G.
Pam M.
Roberta M.
Ellen M.
Sheila O.
Arlie R.
Janet M.
Norma C.
Enna M.
Betsy S.
Sharel S.
Christine D.

Marie-Josée L.
Julie S.
Pierre B.
Mario R.
Marie-France H.
Brenda G.
Tracey H.
Valerie D.
Kelly H.
Bernadette M.
Pat M.
Debra Jo P.
Nancy S.
Maureen B.
Thérèse Labonté

Family Place:

JoAnna LaTulippe-Rochon
Gail Holdner
Dorothy Keigan

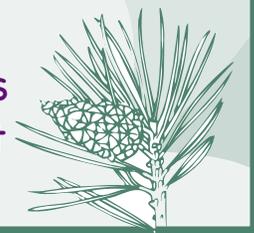
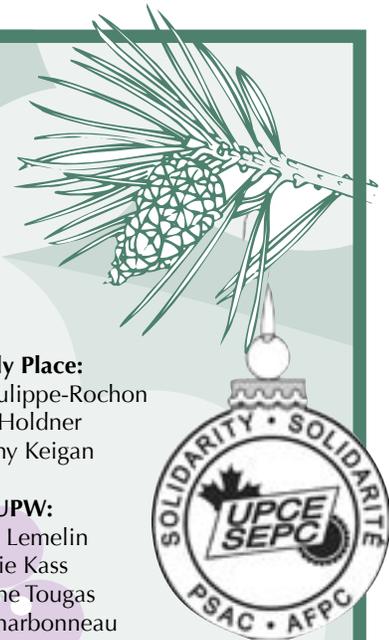
CUPW:

Denis Lemelin
Jamie Kass
Jocelyne Tougas
Sylvie Charbonneau

UPCE-PSAC:

Luc Guèvremont
Marilyn Adlam

May there be peace in your hearts and homes now and in the new year from your friends at
CUPW/UPCE-PSAC Special Needs Project



All photos are from members, unless otherwise indicated.