



member to member connection

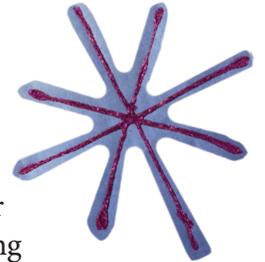
Breaking through barriers for workers who have children with special needs

N° 41 Winter 2020



Simon and Mom

My son will be turning 18 in the next few months, meaning our adventure in the Special Needs project is ending. Marie-Claude always provided wonderful support, both psychologically and emotionally, and I am grateful for her listening skills, her advice and her talent for finding practical and achievable solutions for us. Our last interview was an emotional one.



My advice is to take the time needed to make arrangements for your children with special needs.

Our experience with the project has been so positive and rewarding.

Thank you!

Relief Letter Carrier
Anjou, Quebec



Crafts and drawings included in this edition were created by the children of the Graphic Designer for CUPW National Office.

I am wishing all members the very best possible Holiday season. It might look different than usual but I hope you are able to have some family fun, maybe some time off and the very best Holiday food treats. Wishing you and your family all the best in the upcoming year.

Alberta Advisor





Season's Greetings,

Another year has passed – and an extremely difficult and challenging one it has been, to say the least.

The COVID pandemic has been front and centre in our work over the past months. We all have worked hard to keep each other safe in the workplace. Here in Ottawa, this included countless meetings with Canada Post to ensure all necessary measures and equipment are in place. We have heard from health and safety committees and steward and social steward networks about members concerns. We are doing our best to consider all of your feedback as we make decisions about how best to respond.

We have heard from many CUPW members about the increasing anxiety and stress as you deal with school closures, the loss of your child care arrangements, and stressful uncertainty about how long it will be before life returns to "normal". We know many CUPW members have been forced to make difficult choices about taking unpaid leave to care for children, or scrambling to piece together alternate child care arrangements in order to continue working.

Those with young children with special needs or caring for adult children with disabilities have endured additional challenges. We have heard about increasing exhaustion and fatigue as you struggle with longer working hours. The closure of many programs and services for children with disabilities has also left many children feeling anxious and isolated.

The pandemic has revealed many cracks in this nation's systems of health and social services. In times of increased police and military budgets, and with multi millionaires paying little, if any, taxes, growing inequality has come to the fore through the pandemic. Going back to "normal" when normal was not working in the first place, for far too many, is not an option.

As we move into 2021 CUPW will continue to work with our coalition partners for a more just society. We will continue our fight to care for our planet, safeguard workers and their families, and ensure the wellbeing of seniors, people with disabilities while celebrating and amplifying the rights and values of indigenous peoples as we defend and expand postal and public services for the benefit of all.

We will stand strong and be hopeful for our future.

Wishing All a Joyous Holiday Season!

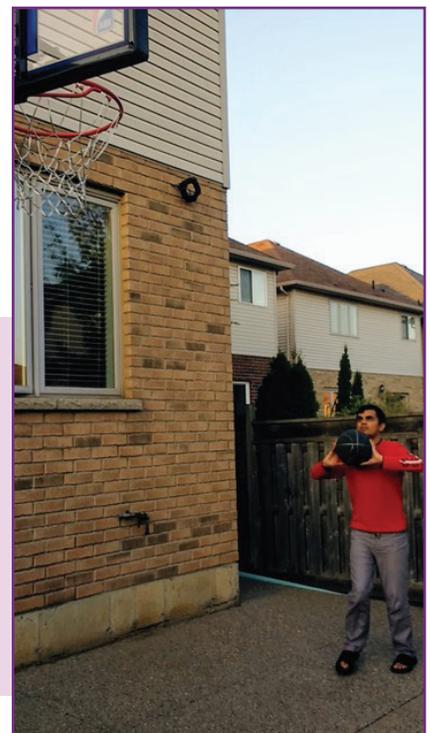
**CUPW National 2nd VP
Dave Bleakeny**



Here is my son Shawn Khangura's picture. He loves playing basketball in the backyard during covid-19. He has received support from the Moving On Project. Thank you.

Wishing everyone a healthy and safe year.

**PO4 Postal Clerk
Hamilton, ON**





WOW!! What a year we have had

and what a year coming ahead of us. This year has certainly seemed to drag on and flown by all at once. I am not sure if this statement makes sense to others or not. We have had to adapt to new ways of connecting with others. We have had to adapt to new ways of finding support for ourselves and our families. If you are reading this newsletter, then that tells me that there is something strong and resilient within you. If anything, I have learned the word "KINDNESS" and "BE KIND". I got this expression from one of my favorite fictional characters, DR Who and it has subconsciously resonated with me this whole time. This seems to be my theme for survival that sums up this year and how I am prepared to take on life to come. I hope that all of you are able to experience kindness and to offer kindness to others. It is very easy to be caught up in our own bubbles of life and stress. I have found that if I stop and reflect in the moment, I can find special little things that I am grateful for. One of them is that I was very much looking forward to connecting with the members involved in the Moving on Project. Often I find that I am humbled by the strength and the goodness within each member, and the love they have for their families. I come away from my conversations feeling so good about the human race and human potential. We are all human, we all deserve respect, and we all deserve a quality of life that gives us purpose. I also want to encourage those of you that might be finding some days harder than others, to become aware of how to be more self compassionate. Often we are very hard on ourselves, and are not kind to ourselves. One tool that I discovered during COVID 19 isolation is the

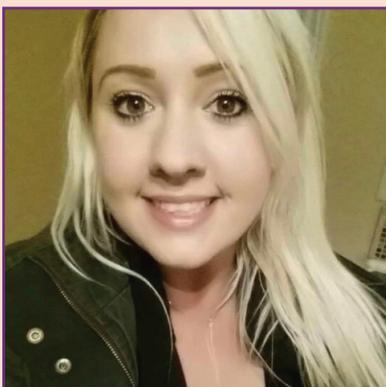


This picture is taken at the top of Mount Carleton in New Brunswick, the highest point in the Maritimes.

Mindful Self Compassion Workbook by Kristen Neff. I am telling most of the people I talk to about it because it truly is a mirror into how to feel good about who we are and accept the many challenges that come our way. I leave these words for you to ponder...

UBUNTU: *I can't be free to be fully me unless you are free to be fully you.* At Nelson Mandela's memorial, Barack Obama said that UBUNTU is a word that captured Nelson Mandela's greatest gift: his recognition that we are all bound together in ways that are invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness in humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others, and caring for those around us.

Nova Scotia Advisor



Wishing everyone health, happiness and peace this holiday season. This has been a year like no other but I continue to be reminded of how resilient and resourceful we all can be. My wish for you and your loved ones is that you take a little bit of time out of your busy days and spread joy. Be present, reach out to an old friend, help your neighbour, share a laugh, donate food to someone in need, find opportunities for new connections, be mindful and express gratitude. We are all in this together.

Happy Holidays from my family to yours,

Ontario Advisor



"She has found ways to use her disability for advantages."

I am one of your four children. I am the one who feels left out, the one who does not live with you anymore. I am the one who is unable to express my needs and my wants. I was so hurt and didn't understand why I couldn't be with you and my siblings. I am thankful that you never turned your back on me. You attended all my appointments no matter how far away I lived. I have lived in three homes yet you still visited faithfully. I came home every other weekend, special occasions and to celebrate my sibling's birthdays. During covid you came with masks on and spent a few hours with me to celebrate my birthday. I enjoyed coming home for a day during covid to spend the day swimming and having a picnic with my siblings and niece. (This was real nice. Thank you mom.) I witnessed many times you going off on staff and supervisors. I don't know why but whatever the reason...it made the



Mom and Shelden



by Shelden's niece Shabana

situation better and things changed. I marvel at your frustrations knowing mine are far greater because I cannot express myself as you can.

My mother, what I give you is so valuable. I give you Strength, Courage, Patience, Understanding, Knowledge and Wisdom but most of all I give you Love, Hope and Faith.

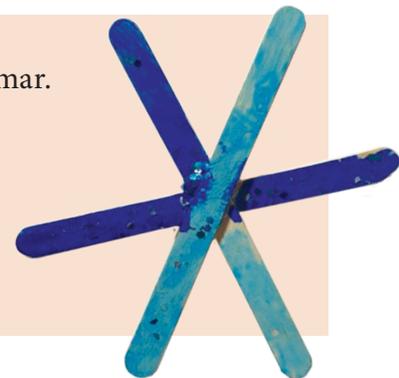
I am the child with a disability. I am your teacher, I am your strength. I give you unconditional Love. I am the child who will never talk back, I am the child who will listen to you. I am your special son... Shelden Jemahl Anthony Miller.

**PO4 Postal Clerk
Scarborough, ON**

The Special Needs Project has changed the quality of life for my son Omar.

With psychotherapy it is clearer for him how to solve his problems with friends and problems in school. A lot of effort has been put in by me and I thank you for this program which is an important element for my son's development. *Thank you.*

PO-4 Postal Clerk - Pierrefonds, QC



Here is the pic of Olivia - she is quite the goalie around here in the region as she has found ways to use her disability for advantages. We have to be creative, always vigilant of her energy levels, and have continuously taught her how to self-assess her pain and exhaustion levels, but she makes it work! It is a HUGE element for our sanity as parents because it gives us a piece of respite as she is with her hockey family for the time she is on the ice, plus she has made plenty of new friends. We are currently missing the rink very much in the current pandemic mode, so she has had to make-due playing a whole lot of Uno and Risk with her family! Lol! I am so proud of her and how she takes her "weakness" and figures out how to build on them to kick some butt.

**Letter Carrier
Dauphin, MB**





Unifying Advent calendar

During this very special Holiday season, family time can lift the spirits of children and parents alike. Sharing fun and positive moments with your family every day allows us to focus on what really matters: Love, Family, and our shared Values. Here are 24 family activities for a unifying Advent calendar for December. Try them all or print the page several times and repeat the activities as many times as you like. 😊

Each day, choose an activity and mark the box with a sticker, a bit of colour or a check mark.



Photo by: pixnio.com/fr/vacances/fr/noel/fr/marron-sapin-noel-decor-ornement-decoration

Listen to Holiday music	An extra ___ minutes before bedtime	Watch a Holiday movie	Choose today's dinner	Write a letter to Santa	Make a Holiday card
Make Holiday decorations	Read a Holiday story	Special snack	Play Holiday bingo	Camping near the Christmas tree	Take a goofy Holiday picture
Special breakfast	Play a board game	Walk to see decorations	An extra ___ minutes of playtime	Holiday crafts	Pajama day
Dance to Holiday music	Cook a Holiday dessert	Holiday colouring	Picnic meal	Play video games together	Hot chocolate

Have Fun! 😊 Jessica, Quebec Counselor



"Our vision is a Canada that values diversity."

About People First of Canada

People First of Canada is the national voice for people who have been labeled with an intellectual disability. We advocate for human rights and full inclusion. We advocate for the right to choose where and with whom we live. We do this by sharing our stories, supporting each other, and speaking for ourselves. We advocate for change within community and government so that all people will be included. We work together so that our voices will be heard as equal citizens. Our vision is a Canada that values diversity; and honors, respects, and includes all its citizens.

The People First movement was started in British Columbia in 1973 by a small group of people who lived in an institution and wanted to get out and live in the community. Since that time, thousands of people with intellectual disabilities have become part of the movement. In 1991, the organization was incorporated nationally and continues to move forward in its goal of community living, equality, and inclusion for Canadians with intellectual disabilities.

People First is unique in that the organization is controlled and run by the Board of Directors and the membership – who are all people who have been labeled with an intellectual or developmental disability. We come from all walks of life and have considerable life experience and unique perspectives on the issues that directly affect people with intellectual disabilities. We exist so that persons with intellectual disabilities have a voice, and that their voice is heard, especially on issues that directly affect them.

Currently, People First of Canada has 11 provincial and territorial chapters, over 70 local chapters throughout Canada and more than 3000 individual members. People First of Canada also has many, many wonderful volunteer advisors across the country who help chapters and members to reach their potential.

The priorities of the organization are around raising awareness, community living, education, employment, and recreation and social opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The work of People First of Canada closely follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. People First was also very involved in the Accessible Canada Act. Our members across the country contributed to consultations around the Act. In addition to that, our President and Executive Director presented our concerns about the Act to the Standing Committee in Parliament.



People First of Canada also produces resources and materials around these priorities. One of our most successful resources is the documentary film *The Freedom Tour*.

This powerful documentary film is one of a kind as it was designed, developed and produced by people with intellectual disabilities. It is used in universities, colleges and training courses in Canada and around the world. The film is also used by many advocacy and community organizations.

If you are interested in learning more about People First of Canada, please visit our website <https://www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca/>

If you are interested in watching *The Freedom Tour*, you can view the film here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tKw7vGo3ro&t=493s> or through the People First of Canada website.

PEOPLE
FIRST
OF CANADA



PERSONNES
D'ABORD
DU CANADA



Stop! Look! Listen!

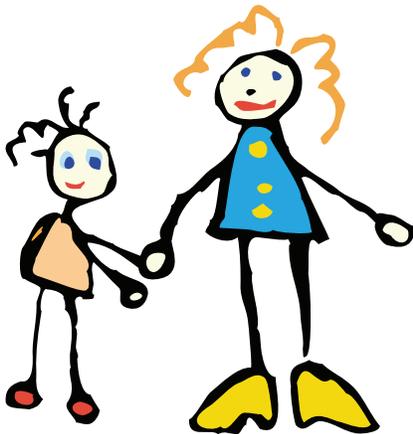
Creative ways to communicate with your children

It's important to know what bothers and upsets your children. Don't wait until you think your child is stressed. Ask them, when things are calm, what they worry about. Then listen very carefully. Try not to finish their sentences or interrupt. Stop, look, and listen!



STOP!

- Some parents find that the best time to talk to their children is when they are doing some everyday activity together, maybe riding on a bus, washing dishes or folding laundry. What times do you find your children open up and want to talk to you? Any quiet time during the day or at bedtime might work.
 - It is important to choose the moment. Find a time when you are relaxed and not feeling rushed and can be together without interruption.
 - Set the climate. You might say, "I know there are things that upset you sometimes. Can you tell me about them." Give your children time to finish what they're saying. Don't interrupt. Encourage them to continue by nodding, and listen to their words and the feeling in the words.

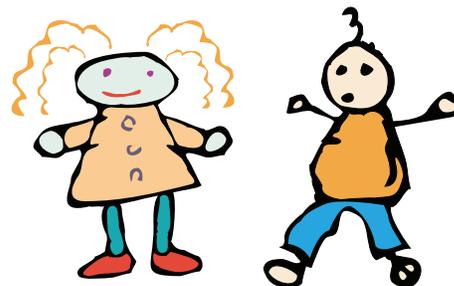


LOOK!

- Once a day, casually check your child's face from the child's level or holding him or her on your lap. When you look into her eyes, does she look back at you or do her eyes dart around? Does her jaw seem tense and tight? Is she smiling and happy? Does she seem relaxed?

LISTEN!

- To show you are really interested in your child and what he is saying, sit facing him and look at his face. Listen without speaking. Nod your head and give other nonverbal encouragement. Remember, the tongue works slower than the mind and it sometimes seems to take forever for a young child to say something. It can take even longer if a child is trying to express something difficult, confusing or upsetting. It is important to give a child time. Don't finish his sentence. Even if you think you know what he is trying to say, give him time to put it into his own words.



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Season's Greetings from your friends at the Special Needs and Moving On projects. Happy Holidays! Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a new year filled with peace and happiness.

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- | | | | | |
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Member-to-Member Connection

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