



member to member connection

Breaking through barriers for workers who have children with special needs
N° 19 Winter 2009

This issue of *Member to Member Connection* is dedicated to our advisors. Your letters express it all! Advisors have supported many of you over the phone, often for years. Even though you have never met your advisors in person, they have touched your lives.

Advisors share their knowledge and wisdom – and their hearts. They care for our members and their families well beyond the two or three phone calls a year and what their job title suggests. One member refers to hers as “an angel on the other end of the line.”

The Special Needs and Moving On projects have always been about more than the financial assistance parents receive: they are about support, communication and caring. We hope you enjoy this issue.

On behalf of Lynn Bue (CUPW), Richard Des Lauriers (UPCE), Jamie Kass, CUPW & UPCE Child Care Coordinator, JoAnna LaTulippe-Rochon (Family Place) and all the project staff (Gail, Dorothy and Cary) we send all advisors our appreciation and thanks.



My advisor for the Moving on Project is Ellen. She has been with us for almost 2 years. She is always on time to call us. She tries to find any information that will be useful for our family. She's never in a rush to finish our conversation.

Roberta has been with us from the beginning of the Special Needs Project. She used to deal with my 3 boys but now she deals with Kareem only. She has been part of the family while they've grown, through the pain of sickness and joy of achievement. She worked with us from the beginning giving us useful advice to set up some programs.

Letter Carrier
Brampton, ON





"She was the only one who understood what I was going through."



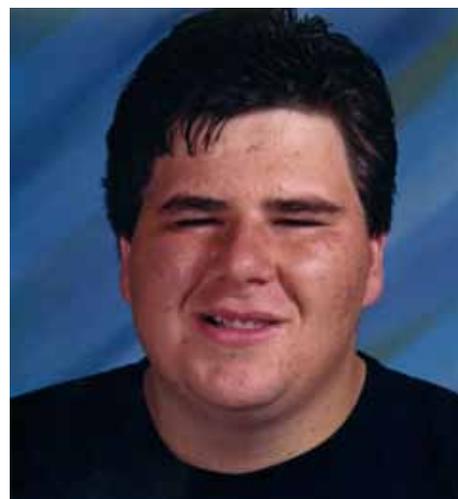
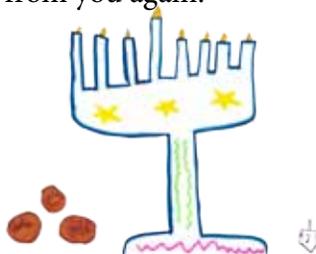
My advisor Roberta has been calling me for a long time. It has to be at least ten years ago that I first heard her voice. I try to picture the person behind the bubbly voice and positive attitude. She has shared my successes and felt my pain. Sometimes we would talk for hours. In those days I was so isolated I rarely spoke to any adult so I poured my heart out to her every time. She would call after the kids were in bed. I always looked forward to her calls. She was the only one who

understood what I was going through. She always made my burden feel a lot lighter due to her kind words and encouragement. She supported me no matter what had happened, never judged and always listened to the very end. She knows me better than most. I cannot express the appreciation that I have for Roberta. She has saved my sanity in the crazy, unpredictable world of Tourette Syndrome and ADHD, impulsivity and learning disabilities. Roberta has meant so much to me. She has always been there for me. Those phone calls turned into something far more than they were meant to be. An angel was at the other end of the line. For that I will be eternally grateful.

Letter Carrier
Winnipeg, MB

We moved from Calgary to Victoria January of 2006. A few weeks later I got a call from my advisor Donna. This was very reassuring as we were in a new place and did not know what supports were available. She was a good resource person. I feel like I know her after talking to her for almost 4 years, and, she knows my son Taso. I also had an older son who is now finished the project. Sometimes I feel stressed and a call from Donna eases the stress. She has good suggestions for the boys and it's quite comforting to know she is there. Donna got me going and planted the seed in my brain to have Taso assessed again. I would like to say thank you very much. I look forward to hearing from you again.

Letter Carrier
Victoria, BC



I would like to say thank you to my advisor Kathleen J. for all the good advice she has given me. She also made me feel really good when I was going thru bad stuff. She opened my eyes about taking time for myself and not feeling guilty about it. Thank you for that. I will never forget.

RSMC
Prescott, ON

I have been with my advisor Ellen for 2 years. She is very precise. If she says she will call at 6:00 pm she will call at the time specified. She has expressed concern about the horrible condition my son was in at the group home and elated when I told her he is in a new home and much closer to me. Thank you Ellen for your support and words of encouragement.

PO-4
Ajax, ON

“Thank you for who you are, and all that you have done for us.”



Janet has been my family’s advisor for approximately 4 years. She has a very warm and understanding disposition. I feel she is also a friend. Since my son David’s diagnosis of autism, I have been on a mission to do anything and everything possible to heal him. I have always felt that even if there were only a remote possibility that a child could recover, which there is, David would be the one. This determination has resulted in perusing various types of interventions. During our last conversation Janet mentioned another new treatment abroad that may help with David’s progress and recovery. She followed up our conversation with an e-mail link to this centre as well as a success story of another child. I have since investigated and booked this exact treatment for David and am very hopeful. I think in life people and events come together to set in motion a destiny we see for ourselves and our loved ones. I believe Janet is one of those people. I am very grateful.

PO-5
Maple, Ontario

We have had the pleasure of knowing and speaking with our advisor Ellen for 8 years. When Ellen says she is calling on a certain day, at a certain time, she is always on time, very polite and takes the time to listen and help us with any questions we may have. She always has suggestions for different services and resources that we would normally not be aware of.

There are times when we need to share with Ellen what worries we have regarding our special needs son’s heart surgery. She is always there to listen and is very compassionate and warm. Ellen always tries to reassure us and make us feel special. We never feel pushed in our conversations with her.

Thank you Ellen, for who you are, and all that you have done for us. You are a fabulous coach and a special friend.

Mail Service Courier
Mississauga, ON



"It has been a pleasure to have her ongoing care over the years."

I cannot say enough

about how helpful and encouraging our advisor Norma has been to my son Dustyn and I over the past 5 years. Dustyn is a handful and I would have fallen through the cracks had it not been for the help that I have received from both the Special Needs Project and Norma. I received so much information and connections that I would have never known was available. I am truly thankful to be part of this program and have the knowledge I need to deal with everyday situations.

RSMC

Wasaga Beach, ON

Sue M. is an excellent advisor who has always been supportive. If she wasn't sure about an answer to one of our questions she took the time to find out the right answer and got back to us. She's always informative and has a happy attitude. Sue has a warm pleasant personality that makes you feel relaxed. She truly understands how you feel and makes you feel at ease when talking about your child's special needs. This is something society as a whole could learn from her. Thanks Sue.

PO-4

Toronto, ON

For several years

Debbie D. was our advisor. I always wondered about the face that would match the cheerful voice on the other end of the phone. Not only was Debbie patient as she asked her many questions over the years but she was extremely helpful, compassionate and truly interested in the lives of our children. Our family now has a new advisor Betsy. I hope to build the same special link and connection with her as well. We wish Debbie all the best! Thanks for all your help and support and your very positive attitude in life.

PO-4

Windsor, ON

Arlie, our advisor, has been a great support to our family for many years. I look forward to her calls because she is always cheerful and helpful. Arlie has always taken an interest in our family. Even though I only speak to her on the phone I think of her as a friend.

Letter Carrier

Bowmanville, ON



My advisor is Anne.

She has been our advisor since we joined the Special Needs Project. Anne has played an important role in advising me about the use of the funding. She has always listened patiently to my concerns, even through times when I was upset and crying due to the frustration involved in raising a child with special needs. Being a single parent, there are many times when I have been challenged beyond what I have felt I am able to handle. Anne has always provided advice, suggestions and compassion. She knows how to ask the right questions and offer alternatives that I might not have thought of otherwise. Due to my current health and circumstances, I have not always been able to follow through with the creative ideas she has offered. But I would like her to know how invaluable her professional experience and concern for our well-being has been. It has been a pleasure to have her ongoing care over the years. I look forward to working with her again.

Letter Carrier

Winnipeg, MB

"She has the power to ease my tension."



Through our many

phone conversations our advisor Norma has been a part of our son's growing and making positive gains. Norma has helped us with many situations requiring her valuable insight and knowledge. She has been a great source for information and resources to help us along the way. Thanks so much!

Letter Carrier

Pickering, ON

Kathleen J., my advisor, has been involved since my son became old enough for the Moving On Project. Kathleen's support has made a great difference for our family. I would like to say thank you Kathleen, you're amazing.

PO-4

Hamilton, ON

My advisor Nancy is a very sweet person. Although we have not met I can feel the humbleness and kindness in her voice. Nancy has been very helpful in many ways. She will update me with anything she has found or heard in the news about my daughter who suffers from autism. Nancy conveys central ideas clearly and succinctly. She will always check on all aspects of my daughter's welfare. She is even concerned about our personal lives, asking how we are coping. She has the power to ease my tension. She will not only talk about my daughter with special needs but shows an interest in my whole family. I am glad to have Nancy as my advisor for she has educated me in many ways. Thank you Nancy.

PO-4

Scarborough, ON



My family just wanted to say a "BIG" thank you to the Special Needs Project. Chris will be 19 in October and that means it is time for him to move on. Special Needs has been a tremendous help to Chris and us. When we had to make several trips to the IWK in Halifax for appointments, Special Needs was there to help us. They supported us not only with money but they care about "All Families". They made it much easier to concentrate on our sick child instead of "how are we going to be able to afford this?" Again thank you so very much. All of you will always be in our thoughts and will be remembered as "The Caring, Loving, Family". My family has gone through a lot in the last 5 years not only with Chris but other parts of our family, from death, cancer, etc. Special needs advisors always ask how the family is doing. They deserve a pat on the back and a big thank you. Chris' advisor was always so kind and offered comfort when we needed it. Normand always made me feel better by the end of the call. Chris is now in his 2nd year at NBCC – Moncton taking business and doing pretty good. Hopefully he will graduate in 2010 and get a job that he will be happy with. Thank you to our advisor Normand.

Letter Carrier

Moncton, NB

Check out our website at www.specialneedsproject.ca

Thursday, 12 November 2009 English ▾



Special Needs & Moving On

Projects of CUPW/UPCE-PSAC

Breaking through barriers for workers who have children with special needs ...

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"She has guided me when I didn't know where to go."

My advisor is Ellen. I cannot say enough about the wonderful things she has done for me. She is always positive and is very understanding. She has guided me when I didn't know where to go with my son Aaron. She has suggested books to read, web sites to check and has inspired me to be a voice not only for my son but for other people, like my grandson with Down Syndrome. Where do you start but by saying thank you to such a wonderful person. My time with the project is almost up and I am truly going to miss all the wonderful people I've encountered. Thank you to all. I will miss you.

Letter Carrier

Hamilton, ON



It has been 5 years that Susan B. has been calling me at least 2 times a year with her warmest regards. I feel guilty every time she calls because she would have to try so many times in order to catch me. However I am delighted to converse with her because I feel like I am meeting a long lost friend. Our conversation would usually last quite a while. Susan would repeatedly ask how my disabled son is doing and seemed to care as if she was his mother. None of my friends or relatives would express that kind of regard or concern. Susan also shared a long list of services or venues that support those with special needs. She would always ask if I needed any help. That feeling of being cared for would last days if not weeks after our call, mainly because she is the only one that seemed to care and understand our situation. I do not know how to express my appreciation for her support. I do not know how to say it verbally but it is there in my heart.

PO-4

Toronto, ON

We've been with the Special Needs Project for almost 12 years. Soon after we registered, we got our first call from our advisor Christine.

The chemistry with her was good from the start. She was attentive to our needs and helped us find solutions. She noted our requests and would check back in on issues we'd previously discussed. She would ask about our child's progress and check the available resources in our neighbourhood. But most of all, she listened to us without regard to the amount of time spent on the phone. That was important for us.

Christine really loves and cares about her work and has the patience of an angel. When she called us last time she told us she was leaving the project to devote more time to her job. I am happy to have had her as an advisor. I'd like to thank her for everything she's done and wish her every happiness in the future. Thanks, again, Christine!

Letter Carrier

L'Epiphanie, QC

"A phone call can help break the isolation a little."



I'd like to thank Marie-Josée, who has been calling me for the past seven years since my son was diagnosed with hypopituitarism. She's a very kind person who takes the time to listen. I feel she is really there to help us with Alexander so he can more easily deal with his condition on a day-to-day basis. A phone call can help break the isolation a little. Thanks so much for all of the kind support.

Letter Carrier
Oka, QC

Susan B. has been my advisor for the past three years. We have not yet met in person but I have built an image of Susan in my mind:

An unselfish and giving individual whose purpose in life
Is to serve others without complaining at all.

A woman whose life story would fit that of saints like Mother
Theresa and humanitarians such as Diana Princess of Wales.

Someone who wakes up every morning and thinks of nothing
but what she could do to make life's burdens easier for others.

It may sound as if I am exaggerating but that is how I feel about her. There are no words to truly describe Susan. She has never sounded phony or condescending regardless of how stupid her client may have been. She has always talked to me like a friend/sister.

Rufaro is 32 years old now. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1996. I had struggled and despaired wondering how I would manage to carry on. Balancing work and the chaos that comes with living with a child who has mental disabilities had made me a very neurotic individual.

The dread of being judged left me wanting to hide my son from friends and co-workers. People will accept any other disability gladly but I know that they will always shun mental disabilities. It was not until I started listening to Susan's advice that I realized I was being too harsh on myself and that everyone else has to deal with one problem or another.

Susan, in her calm and consoling voice, helped me to build inner strength that I never expected. One might say this should not be about me but my more positive attitude helped reassure my son and calm his anxieties. Susan cares for my family and me in a professional and personal way.

Susan had never mentioned anything about herself or her family until the last time I spoke to her. I am ashamed to say that I never inquired either. I was flabbergasted to learn that she herself has a child with disabilities. Imagine that. All this time I went on and on about myself and how life had been unfair to me.

I have since learned to thank God for whatever I have to deal with in life. I have also realized that the hard and the easy tasks we have to manage are things that make life what it is. I thank God for the strength he has given to Susan. I sincerely wish her the best of everything.

Letter Carrier
Richmond Hill, ON





"I enjoy her calls as she always has new information or good suggestions for me."

My advisor Sharel

has been calling me for 3 years. It's nice to always have the same person calling. I'm impressed with how she recalls our previous conversations and details of what I was doing, or dealing with, that I've completely forgotten. Sharel is always very pleasant and positive. I enjoy her calls as she always has new information or good suggestions for me. I would like to say a huge "Thank you Sharel". You make a difference.

Letter Carrier

Bellville, ON

Diane my advisor, has been helping me find solutions to the needs of my three children by referring me to resources that could provide me with information and assistance. I really enjoy getting her calls, since she is always cheery and knows how to listen. Thanks for all the fantastic help.

Letter Carrier

Mirabel, QC



Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Ellen, my advisor of approximately three years. Her unwavering encouragement and support have greatly enhanced my understanding and ability to deal with a child suffering from ADHD. The most important aspect of my relationship with Ellen is the fact that she was able to empathize with me in a way that only a parent of a child with ADHD can. She graciously shared her family's personal triumphs and challenges as they unfolded. I look forward to Ellen's calls. I am able to fully express my feelings, disappointments and fears; emotions which had previously been difficult to access. Ellen's presence, however much on the periphery of our lives, has brought about a greater closeness with my son. She has inspired me to have greater patience, to share experiences and communicate better. She pointed me in directions to help my son that I did not know existed. I appreciate her efforts more than I can express and more than she will ever know. I wish her continued success in all of her efforts to bridge the vale of understanding.

PO-4

Thornhill, ON



Our advisor is Pam.

She has given us helpful advice about new programs and how to fill out the forms. She also asks how our son Jonathan is doing. She has always been very patient and takes the time to listen and help us understand what needs to be done. She is very helpful and she encourages us as well. Pam is a good person and does her job well.

PO-5

Toronto, ON

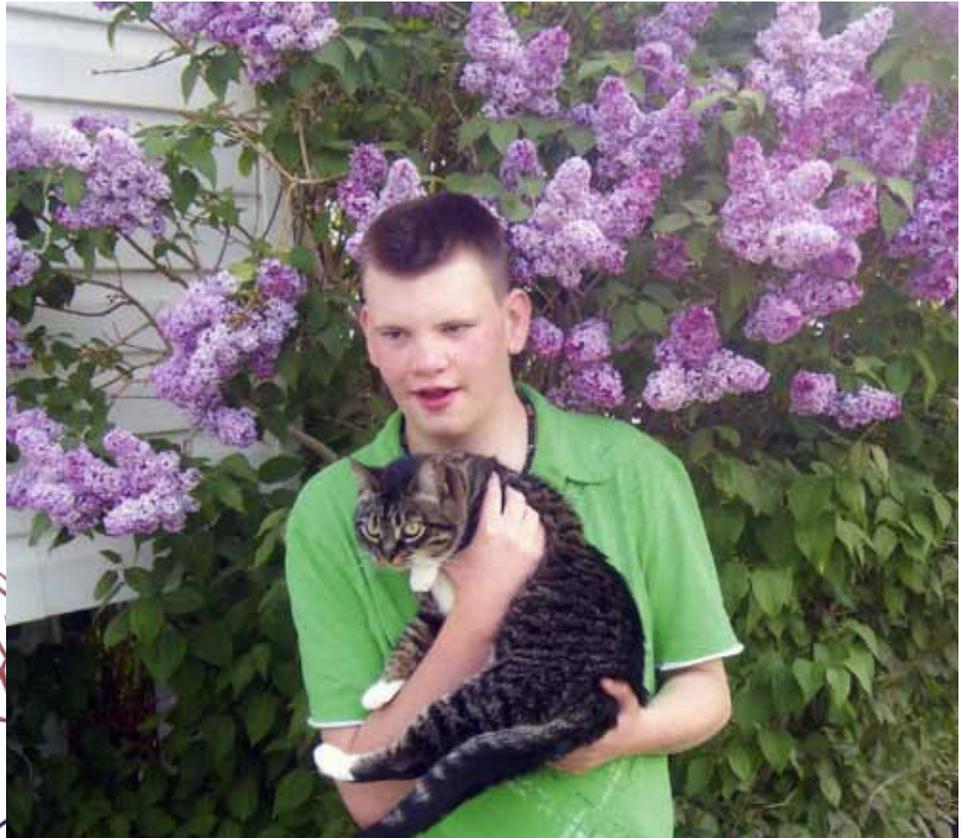
"She is a kind-hearted person and I am glad she is on your team."



Anne is my advisor and she is wonderful. She has taken the time to talk and listen to both my husband and I. She has called us at some pretty rough times. When we got off the phone we felt much better. Sometimes our friends do not understand what we are going through so it is nice to talk to someone who has probably heard it all and never judges. Anne is wonderful!

UPCE

Winnipeg, MB



Calvin

My advisor Debbie W. has been calling me for about 2 years. I really look forward to her calls. She too has children with special needs so she really makes me feel like she knows where I'm coming from. I feel she is very interested in listening to me. She has let me rattle on about my boy. It's like I have known her for years! I would love to meet her. Debbie has educated me about the Registered Disability Savings Plan and has gone out of her way to provide me with information. I would like to thank Debbie so much for all of her support. She is a kind-hearted person and I am glad she is on your team for the Moving On Project.

Letter Carrier

Fort St. John, BC



Cora is wonderful and understanding about everything. She's patient and so helpful. Thank you very much for everything you do because it shows lots of love for others.

Letter Carrier

Coquitlam, BC

Thank you to the children at First Avenue School-Aged Program at the Glebe Parents Daycare Centre in Ottawa for the drawings.





"She makes my life easier by helping me help myself."



Donna has been my advisor since I moved to Victoria BC. She has always been a great listener as well as someone who has had wonderful suggestions that came from both her personal as well as professional experience. She had wonderful advice when I was dealing with my son's high school and their lack of support in assisting with his Individualized Education Plan needs. Her best advice - Keep going after them. Check up and follow through. Results!! Thanks Donna.

Letter Carrier

Victoria, BC

Our advisor for at least ten years was Valerie. Val was always very compassionate when I talked about our daughter, Devin, who has arthritis and crohn's disease. She always made me feel like she knew Devin personally. She never rushed me through an interview and was ready to give helpful advice when we needed it. Our family was just informed that Valerie would no longer be our advisor. Our new advisor, also very nice, told me Val has retired. We would like to thank her very much for always being sympathetic to our family situation. We will truly miss her and want to wish her and her family the best in the future. Goodbye and good luck! Debbie, Dave, Devin and Darcy.

Letter Carrier

Niagara Falls, ON

Our advisor is

Enna. She's been calling us for many years. She is very punctual with her calls and is very pleasant and easy to talk to. Enna is very thorough and takes the time to cover and explain everything. She has made sure we are accessing all services available and always lets us know about any new information/services. It's nice to know Enna has decided to devote some of her time to help families like ours.

Letter Carrier

Mississauga, ON

I would like to thank

everyone I have spoken with regarding the Special Needs Project. Recently my advisor has been Laura. She is really understanding and easy to talk to. She has encouraged me to expand my limited information by checking a few websites etc. I would like to thank her for being so informative and supportive. She makes my life easier by helping me help myself. Thanks Laura.

Letter Carrier

Airdrie, AB

“She stressed the importance of making my daughter feel she is included, not excluded.”



Bernadette has been my advisor for approximately 8 years. She always shows compassion during her interviews, even if it is “busy-crazy” here when she calls. She tries to book a time that is convenient but kids and life always have other plans. She is always thoughtful and explains her questions. She is always willing to offer extra help or resources. Thank you Bernadette for everything you do for us.

MSC
Middle Sackville, NS

For the last year my advisor has been Betsy. In this short period of time we have had great conversations about the crisis of the day. Betsy does a great job finding information for me and makes every phone call a real pleasure. Thank you Betsy. I’m looking forward to our next talk.

Letter Carrier
Forest, ON

Our advisor Janet has been wonderful. She’s been calling us for about 4 years. She’s always looking for helpful suggestions and tips to help us. We look forward to hearing from her because she’s always thoughtful, sensitive and has good advice for all the different situations that have happened to us. She’s very sympathetic and understanding. We wish her the best.

PO-4
Milton, ON

Ellen is my advisor. She has helped me understand how the program works. She is a very knowledgeable woman who has helped me a lot.

PO5
Kitchener, ON

My advisor’s name is Cora. She has encouraged me not to give up and to pay attention to the every day activities of my daughter who has a hearing impairment. Activities like her school projects, sports and self-esteem, socialization building, and doctor’s appointments. Above all Cora stressed the importance of making my daughter feel that she is included, not excluded. Cora has become an extended family member with her encouragement to my family not to give up. Her education and broader experiences from the bigger world help my daughter to study hard to become somebody in the future. I would like to say a big thank you for all her help.

PO-4
Coquitlam, BC



Season's Greetings from your friends at the Special Needs and Moving On Projects

Special Needs and Moving On Advisors:

Bernadette M.
Lisa B.
Shirley M.
Donna M.
Marie-Josée L.
Christine D.
Roberta M.
Suzanne C.
Pam M.
Arlie R.
Anne G.
Sylvie G.
Pat M.
Sheila O.
Ellen M.
Sheila S.
Lesley-Anne C.
Nancy B.
Agnieszka G.
Sue M.
Brenda G.
Sharel S.
Enna M.
Norma C.
Janet M.
Betsy S.
Catherine D.

Kathleen J.
Donald G.
Susan B.
Normand R.
Diane M.
Cora B.
Genevieve P.
Theresa A.
Debbie W.
Trina S.
Kathleen B.
Chantal T.
Jean C.
Laura M.

Family Place:

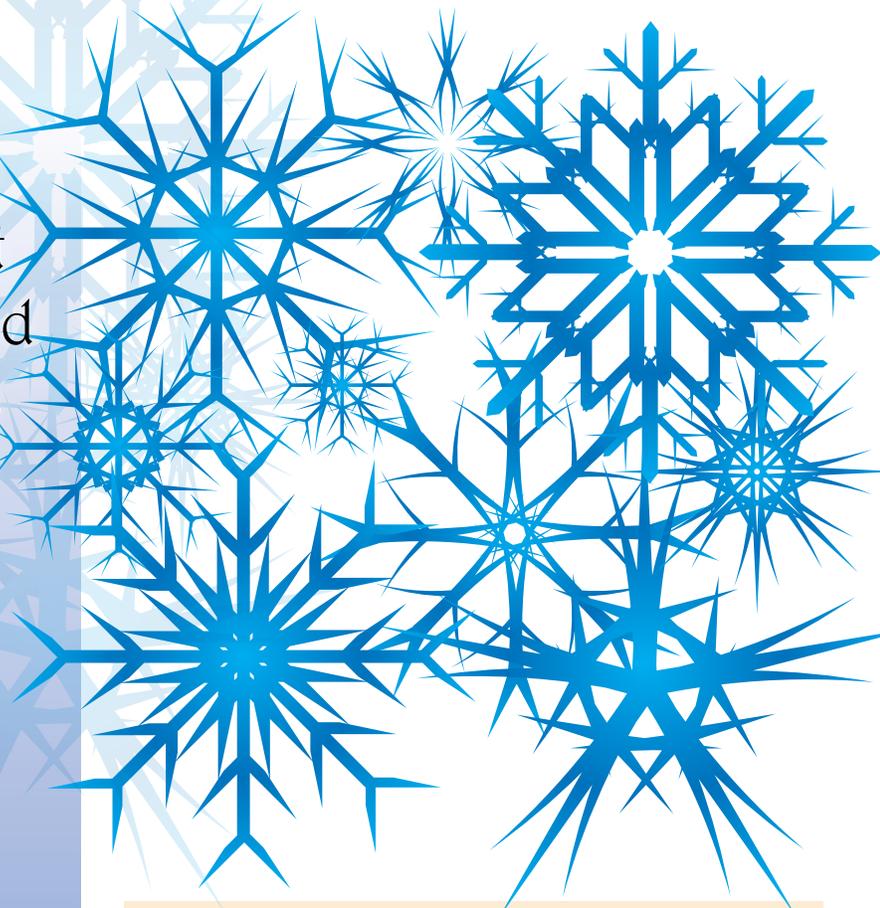
JoAnna LaTulippe-
Rochon
Gail Holdner
Dorothy Keigan
Cary MacDonald
Doris Tremblay

CUPW:

Lynn Bue
Jamie Kass

UPCE-PSAC:

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Member-to-Member Connection is the newsletter of the Special Needs and Moving On projects. It is produced by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Union of Postal Communications Employees—Public Service Alliance of Canada.

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The CUPW/UPCE-PSAC Child Care Fund is administered by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and financed by Canada Post Corporation



The letters you are reading have been edited in an effort to include as many of them as possible. Visit our website at www.specialneedsproject.ca to see all the letters we received in their complete form.