

what it's all about balance

BCITS  technology for living

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JULY 2017

47 Years & **STILL** Dancing



Live Dance Band
Souled Out

**Celebrating
independANCE!**

Technology for Independent
Living Fundraiser

**THURSDAY
SEP 21 • 2017
7 - 10PM**

**Italian Cultural Centre,
3075 Slocan Street,
Vancouver**

Hosted by

BCITS  technology for living

Presenting Sponsor



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Beate Breuers

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Get your tickets online >> bcits.org

Celebrating IndepenDANCE A Fun Event Open to All!

On Thursday, September 21, we will be having a fall fundraiser for our TIL (Technology for Independent Living) program.

The event will be at the Italian Cultural Centre, 3075 Slocan St., Vancouver from 7-10pm. Local cover band Souled Out will be playing lively songs we all love to dance to.

The emphasis is on having fun! There will be door prizes, canapés and the opportunity to mingle with friends, while supporting TIL. We've been providing environmental controls for 47 years: "Celebrating IndepenDance, 47 Years And Still Dancing!"

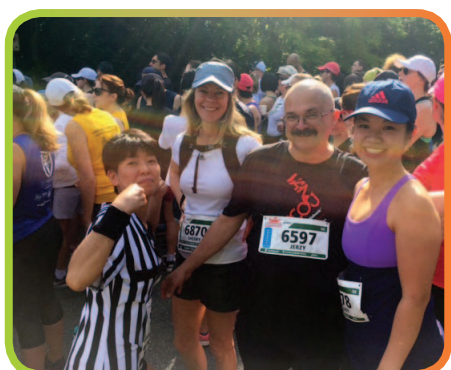
All funds raised at the event will go toward equipment to be adapted, customized and put in the homes of our membership. We hope you will join us in making the event a success!

BCITS would like to extend a big thank you to our generous "Presenting Sponsor" Medigas and all other community sponsors who are contributing towards the success of this fundraiser.

Go to our website (bcits.org) for tickets. Standard tickets are \$60. Tickets for PROP or TIL members who receive our services are \$20. If you require a carer, bring one for free. ●

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The Scotiabank Charity Challenge

BY RUTH MARZETTI

On June 25, the BCITS "TIL Team" (made up primarily of staff, but also volunteers, friends and family, and TIL supporters) took the Scotiabank Charity Challenge. We ran/walked/ wheeled around the 5km Stanley Park course to raise funds for the TIL Program, with our supporters cheering us on.

The people who use the services provided by TIL want to live independently in the community. With the aid of the tools, technology and expertise provided by trained Biomed working for our Technology for Independent Living program this can be made possible.

The funds we raised will help us provide members with bed controls; automatic door openers; switches to make phone calls, change TV or music channels; computer access, and much more. These are goals our Team felt worth participating for, whether running, walking, wheeling or cheering the TIL Team in the Scotia Charity Challenge.

Thank you to everyone who supported us and helped raise almost \$6,000. Every dollar raised will be used to purchase, adapt and customize equipment that will go directly into the homes of our members.

To learn more about TIL and PROP activities, check out our Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/BCITS ●

The Reality TV of My Life

BY CATHY GRANT | Years before the Kardashians made it popular, I felt like I had the world watching my every move. Only instead of getting paid for providing the entertainment, it was the audience that was being paid (namely staff).

It wasn't like most of my staff were doing anything wrong, it was the fact that they're *always* there!

They're there in the morning seeing my bed head, when I go to the bathroom, when they're drying my hair after a shower and when they're doing a full body check to make sure my skin isn't breaking out.

Now you may say, "Well that's their job, what's the problem?" And you're right, but the problem is I can never get away from them.

Even when they're not doing personal care, staff are still there in the room. By their very presence, they cause visiting people to change their behavior.

"Ps and Qs" are watched more and, while I can't prove it, I think people dress up before they come over.

Then of course there's the problem in North America we're not used to the idea of servants, like they are in England or other places that get to live the Downton Abby experience.

So, family and friends who come to visit me end up talking to my staff as much as they do me.

Even when they're not doing personal care, staff are still there in the room. By their very presence, they cause visiting people to change their behaviour.

My better staff will leave the room when I have guests over or at least don't mind being asked to leave. But when we're out of the house, this isn't always possible.

Besides we're social animals. I don't always feel right (or sometimes it's not possible) to ask staff to sit at another table and certainly when I visit friends at their home they feel awkward not having staff in the room.

They're playing host and that includes playing host to my staff. It's fair, but it's still hard on me.

I still can't get away—it's me, my friends...and my staff. ●



Connect with us online!

Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook

Social media is a powerful tool in today's world for connecting people and organizations, and spreading news and ideas.

At BCITS, we believe in maximizing people's quality of life as much as possible through technology, so we are excited to announce that PROP and TIL are now on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

We want to connect with our current clients, future clients, professionals and organizations that support people with disabilities and independent living.

We will be posting PROP and TIL content on our website www.bcits.org and on the following social media accounts:

Twitter

Technologyforliving@PROP_TIL

LinkedIn

The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS)

Facebook

www.facebook.com/BCITS/

Please help welcome us into the online community by following us! We look forward to connecting with you!

Twitter Show and Tell

BY PATRICK CHO

In the past year, BCITS has started posting on several social media sites. It's fun to see the online interactions from the posted content. Twitter is a nice platform to showcase some of things we do at TIL, PROP and our peer support group.

For those that are curious, here are some recent postings. BCITS is looking forward to generating more engaging content. ●



help us fulfill our vision

BCITS, proud home of PROP and TIL, is a registered non-profit and charitable organization. The funds to operate these programs come from the Ministry of Health, through the Vancouver Coastal Health region. We are very grateful for this generous support.

However, this funding does not cover all the costs to provide equipment to TIL clients. For example, a special telephone for a person with a high level disability can cost as much as \$1000 and an automatic door opener can cost \$3000.

We provide many devices like these to adults—at no cost—to fulfill our vision of people living in the community as independently as possible.

You can help us continue this work through your donation. Any contribution large or small will be gratefully accepted. 100% of your donation will go toward equipment and assistive devices.

Charitable Registration Number 807477070RR0001

I would like to support TIL's equipment program.

- ☐ I enclose a cheque for \$ _____.
- ☐ I will make a donation by credit card through CanadaHelps.org.
[Donate in minutes by clicking on the CanadaHelps button on our home page at www.bcits.org.]
- ☐ I would like to donate directly by VISA. I will call 604-326-0175.

Please be sure to fill in all your contact details, so we can send your tax receipt (for donations of \$10 or more).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY & PROVINCE _____ POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Please return form to: BCITS, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6

thank you for your support

Keeping Your Chest Healthy | by Dr. Viet Vu

As a good friend reminds me, “breathing is not under-rated.” Most people don’t have to think about breathing, until they really have to think about breathing.

A spinal cord injury is one of those instances because the respiratory muscles can become weak depending on the level of spinal cord injury. In medical school, we used a phrase “C3,4,5 keeps the diaphragm alive” to remember the innervation of the phrenic nerve to the diaphragm.

So, people with injuries above C5 tend to have breathing problems due to weakness of the diaphragm. Of course, there are other muscles like the ones that lift the rib cage to expand the chest that are affected too. They all work together to fill the alveoli (lung tissue that is involved in the exchange of carbon dioxide for oxygen) and expand the lungs as much as possible. Oxygen is crucial for brain and muscle function. Conversely, carbon dioxide is bad for both the earth and your body!

I’m going to get a bit medical on you. People with injuries above T6 are also at risk for increased secretions. Not only that, but the nerves that narrow the airways can also go unchecked! This means more phlegm and tighter airways, which equates to difficulty getting the gunk out.

And to top it all off, the strength of a cough is much weaker after a spinal cord injury. This can present as a perfect storm to set up complications with mucus plugging and pneumonia.

It’s not all bad because there are several ways to prevent pneumonia and optimize chest health. First and foremost is proper hydration. Sorry folks, there is just no substitute for water. Water is power!

There is an equation for how much water one should drink and it is: $40\text{ml/kg} + 500\text{ml}$ (i.e. a 70kg person should drink 3.2L of water a day). Water will not only help your chest and thin out the secretions, but it will also help your bladder, bowels, blood pressure, skin, cognition, pretty much everything!

Second, it is important to cough up the phlegm, or secretions. Whether it is with a manual assisted cough (aka “quad cough”) or with a machine, like the Cough Assist, people need an external force to help strengthen the cough. Both are quite easy to perform and the combination of the two together will blow you away!

Make sure your caregivers are well trained as to how you personally like to be “coughed.” The only warning with the Cough Assist machine is to use lower pressures in patients with a smoking history.

Positioning is also helpful in getting the secretions out. We have five lobes of lung tissue and the secretions can be stuck in any of those. A lot of the times it is at the base or the bottom lobes because those don’t inflate very well. There’s a really bad “A” word and it’s atelectasis. This is when the lung tissue collapses, becomes stuck together,



and is no longer effective with gas exchange—less overall oxygen for the body. The best way to combat this is prevention. Keep those alveoli inflated.

However you do it, take the big breaths in through breath stacking (lung volume recruitment) or frog breathing (glossopharyngeal insufflation).

If you put this all together, it would be:

1. Stay hydrated, drink water! For most of us, it’s at least 2 litres of water a day. This keeps the secretions thin and easily coughed up.
2. Strengthen your cough by man or machine, or both!
3. Exercise those breathing muscles to open up the lungs! Your body and brain will thank you for it! ●

Join us at our AGM

BCITS Annual General Meeting Thursday October 5, 6pm – 7:30pm

The AGM is an opportunity for our membership to be involved with the governance of BCITS which includes the Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP); Technology for Independent Living (TIL) and the Peer Support Program.

We pride ourselves on being an organization that is run by our membership—the people who receive our services. BCITS was founded by a small group of members who lived at home and needed the technology and equipment to remain independent. Our services are directed by the members on an individual level—your ventilator and environmental controls are set up as individually as you are.

On a governance level, the AGM allows you, our membership, to elect the Board that will represent you and it is an opportunity to become involved in the direction of the organization.

We have not decided on a venue yet (details to follow), but we can promise snacks and lively discussion. We hope to see you at the AGM. BCITS is your organization!

For more information and to stay updated, click on the “follow” button on our website, www.bcits.org. ●

Peer Support News

Summer has officially arrived, so the calendar says! However, we have quite the variation in temperatures from day to day!

Well, despite the weather, BCITS Peer Support members have remained active. From Richmond, the first BC Disability Pride march, to Vancouver at the TIL Focus Group discussion and then to Burnaby for the TransLink Fare Gate “hands-free” testing event, Peers were out in full force.

Balance is a great forum to thank you for your continued participation and contribution with these events and others! You make BCITS Peer Support stronger each year.

We thanked the Peers who helped with the Peer History Video last winter, by having a Peer Luncheon at Milestones. The video will be shown at the upcoming TIL fundraiser and party, “Celebrating Independence,” on September 21. Everyone is welcome to purchase a ticket!

Next to come your way is a short “Peer Planning Event questionnaire” which will be circulated via email. This questionnaire will assist the Peer Support department with planning activities that you would like to be involved in. Please stay tuned for that and share your likes with us!

In signing off, it has been a pleasure communicating about, planning and attending events with you. Thank you again for your time. Please feel free to contact me.

Nancy Lear, Peer Support Facilitator
778-870-0122
nlear@bcits.org ●



balance

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BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities is the home of Technology for Independent Living (TIL) and the Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP).

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last word ■

Bricks & Bouquets

Have you seen these stickers around the Lower Mainland?

If you don't already know the story behind these stickers, they're the work of Mark Stockbrocks, SCI BC Peer and accessibility advocate extraordinaire.

Stockbrocks, who lives in Vancouver, was hoping to become a firefighter in 2011 when a cerebral haemorrhage changed his plans. Today, he uses a power wheelchair and is paralyzed in both legs and his left arm.

It wasn't long after he left rehab at GF Strong that he began to assess the accessibility of his new world on wheels. He encountered lots of truly accessible public spaces, but just as many bad—including many businesses and facilities that promoted themselves as accessible but were, in fact, far from it.

So he vowed to take matters into his own hands and somehow develop a system to publicly acknowledge and identify accessible spaces—and, just as publicly, identify and condemn spaces that presented barriers to wheelchair users.

His solution is Accessstickers—two stickers he had professionally produced. One gives a big thumbs up for facilities and businesses that have excellent accessible features; the other, as you can see, isn't quite so complimentary. He carries these stickers with him wherever he goes, and doesn't hesitate to slap them up wherever he feels necessary.

"This idea was borne by the complete void of anyone involved with the disability community to actually be an assertive and proactive higher-profile voice representing the actual real-life people in our world who have unique accessibility needs," he explains. "I put these stickers in the most high profile, high traffic areas I encounter in the community. For example, push-to-open buttons in any type of public entrance imaginable get a thumbs up. Steep ramps, no ramps,



narrow doors, inaccessible bathrooms—these get a big thumbs down. I don't care whose toes I step on. This is the real deal, and it needs to be done."

Stockbrocks self-funds Accessstickers, paying out of pocket for the high-quality, long-lasting vinyl stickers. In the time that he's been slapping them up around town, he's been contacted by angry business owners (he always refuses to apologize). But he's had a lot of gratifying successes.

"The Accessstickers project has scored some major victories," he says. "For example, it's prompted BCIT, Lon-

don Drugs, the Rick Hansen Foundation, Langley Rugby club, some Boston Pizza locations, and theatres around the city, to name a few, to make excellent renovations to improve accessibility."

An important goal, he explains is to clearly identify to other wheelchair users those places that have great accessibility, and those that don't. And he says many other people benefit in the process.

"Although it's primarily intended for people with mobility challenges, it actually helps everyone who enters the premises—notably mothers with strollers, elderly people, and people making deliveries," he says.

The approach may seem confrontational at first, but Stockbrocks says that's necessary to get people's attention. And the end game is to actually trigger a dialogue with people who could potentially improve the accessibility of a space.

"I like to communicate directly with private business owners, educational institutions, theatres, hospitals, restaurants, live performance venues, apartment buildings, arenas," he says. "Places that people tend to go with friends and family, to push real world inclusion and accessibility."

Once a conversation has been started, Stockbrocks is happy to offer his perspective and provide some initial accessibility advice.

He's also glad when someone in the disability community offers to help him spread the word. That's why he created

<http://accessstickers.blogspot.ca>,

where he offers Accessstickers on a free, open source basis—anyone interested in being an accessibility advocate can visit and download high resolution, print-ready graphics files. ■



Mark Stockbrocks

Yes, I Accept Your Invitation to Join BCITS

The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS) Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

**Please mail this form along with any applicable membership fees to BCITS:
#103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6. Thank you.**

Please Check One

- ☐ **Membership for Registered BCITS Clients** Please mail completed form to BCITS (the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)
- ☐ **Non-client Membership** Please mail completed form along with \$20 annual membership fee payable to BCITS.

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Endowment 150

Endowment 150 (E150) was first launched by Vancouver Foundation in 2009, with a \$4.5 million fund and a goal of expanding the number of Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) account holders in BC.

E150 offers eligible people with disabilities a one-time grant of \$150 to help their RDSP grow.

Who Can Apply?

Endowment 150 is available to the following BC residents:

- Adults with a disability, who are under 60 years of age, have an RDSP, and have received income assistance sometime after January 1, 2008 or have net income below \$25,000.
- Children with a disability, who are under 18 years of age, and have an RDSP.

Find all eligibility requirements at www.rdsp.com/endowment-150.

How do I Apply?

To download an application or to get details about how to apply, see www.rdsp.com/how-to-apply-for-an-adult or www.rdsp.com/how-to-apply-for-a-child.

When Can I Apply?

You can apply anytime. There are no deadlines for E150 applications at this time.

Need more information?

Registered Disability Saving Plan www.rdsp.com

Federal Disability Tax Credit www.cra-arc.gc.ca/disability

Provincial Income Assistance (T5007) www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance

From www.rdsp.com/endowment-150 ●