

what it's all about balance

BCITS  technology for living  ISSN 1916-7709 MARCH 2016



The Joy of Knitting and Crocheting

by Lily Cheung | Among the apple orchards, out in the meandering roads of Kelowna, you'll find Edeltraut Hattenbach—a humble matriarch, settled quietly at home, earnestly knitting the next gem to be gifted to a lucky recipient.

Since her mother taught her to knit at the age of 12, Edeltraut has developed a voracious knitting and crocheting habit. She has created thousands of crafted goods for family, friends, neighbours and even strangers.

Since arriving from Germany in 1961, Edeltraut and her husband earned a living farming the land. They raised a family that grew to three children, six grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.



She estimates that, with family, friends and neighbours, she makes well over 100 handmade pieces yearly.

Early on, Edeltraut was diagnosed with kyphoscoliosis: a musculo-skeletal disorder which involves a marked curvature of the spine that causes chronic under-ventilation of the lungs. Edeltraut uses a bi-level breathing machine to support her breathing at night.

With her farming duties far behind her, Edeltraut spends most days and nights crafting projects with her imagination and her nimble hands—slippers, pot holders, dresses, coasters, jackets, shawls, pillows, hats, gloves, and even curtains and bedspreads.

On a recent visit to her home, Edeltraut's bounty of knit and crochet goods was spilling out of its storage spaces.

When asked about the time she devotes to her craft, Edeltraut admits to dedicating most of her recreational time to knitting. She estimates that, with family, friends and neighbours, she makes well over 100 handmade pieces yearly.

At the accomplished age of 85, Edeltraut shows no sign of slow-

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Welcome Ruth Marzetti

BCITS' New
Executive Director



Ruth Marzetti joined BCITS as Executive Director in November 2015. Ruth's passion for the non-profit sector is motivated by working for organizations that are deeply committed to making a meaningful difference in people's lives. Her career, both in the UK and Canada, has spanned more than two decades and includes working in services for refugees, cancer care, HIV and AIDS, and alcohol and drug counselling.

Ruth has a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Information Technology. She lives in Vancouver with her partner and nine-year-old twin boys.

Since joining BCITS, Ruth has "enjoyed meeting the staff and Board who are a committed, hardworking team" and is "looking forward to working with them in developing the 2016-2018 TIL Strategic Plan."

Her vision is to work with internal and external stakeholders to continue shaping the organization and building on BCITS' strengths in delivering vital supports to clients. In moving forward in her commitment to collaborative communication, she "welcomes learning more about the needs of clients and incorporating their feedback to enhance service delivery."

Ruth feels extremely fortunate to have joined BCITS and to be entrusted with the responsibility to lead an organization dedicated to helping people with disabilities live independently in the community.

Joy, continued from previous page

ing down. She relishes her roles as mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. No birthday or Christmas is without Edeltraut's personal yarn touch. She also gives her time to the church congregation, knitting for families in need.

With such a prolific talent, Edeltraut is no stranger to local accolades. She participates regularly in the annual Interior Provincial Exhibition Association in Armstrong, BC, where her work receives much-deserved awards.

Edeltraut seems genuinely tickled by the mounting recognition she receives at these exhibitions and strikes me as a woman we can all aspire to be. She says, "it all gives me satisfaction and a very special purpose to my life."

For someone who continues to be enthralled by the daily opportunity to create, Edeltraut clearly makes the most of her golden years with an uncomplicated ball or two of yarn. ●

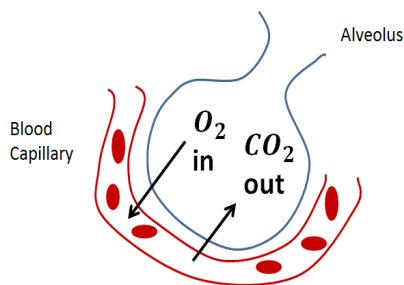


Carbon Dioxide, Plants and You | BY SHERRY SHEA

While it is very important to monitor and have good oxygen (O_2) levels in your blood, this is only part of the crucial work your Respiratory System is meant to do. The amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in your blood is also a key marker of whether or not you are breathing effectively.

What is carbon dioxide?

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is a by-product of your body's metabolism and needs to be expelled from your body, just like any other metabolic waste (which we won't talk about here!). The most effective way for your body to get rid of CO_2 is from your lungs.



When you breathe in (inhalation), you take in life-giving oxygen from the atmosphere. The oxygen passes down to the small air-sacs in your lungs (alveoli) and diffuses into your bloodstream to travel to your tissues.

Conversely, CO_2 that has come from your tissues as a result of metabolism, travels through your bloodstream and diffuses into your air sacs and is exhaled into the atmosphere.

Where else does CO_2 come from?

There are both natural and human-made sources of carbon dioxide emissions.

Natural sources include decomposition, ocean release and respiration. Human-made sources come from activities like cement production and deforestation, as well as the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas.

What does this have to do with plants and you?

Plant respiration works differently than ours. Plants use CO_2 in their metabolic cycle which has a by-product of oxygen for us to use. That is their superpower.

If you want to improve the air quality in your home, plants are one way you can do this.

All plants contribute to cleaning your indoor air of CO_2 , but some are also particularly effective in clearing other pollutants such as benzenes, formaldehyde and more (another plant superpower).



Good house plants

NASA has compiled a list of the best plants to clean indoor air. Here are a few on that list:

- English Ivy (*Hedera Helix*)
- Variegated snake plant, mother-in-law's tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata* "Laurentii")
- Red-edged dracaena (*Dracaena marginata*)
- Florist's chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*)
- Peace lily (*Spathiphyllum* "Mauna Loa")

Resources

For more information, please visit these great and informative websites:

<http://whatsyourimpact.org/greenhouse-gases/carbon-dioxide-sources>

<http://www.co2meter.com/blogs/news/782922-nasa-compiles-list-of-best-plants-to-clean-indoor-air>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASA_Clean_Air_Study

balance

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A New Career with BCITS

by sodany taing | I was born and raised in beautiful London, Ontario—the “forest city”—and called it home for most of my life. I never imagined I would leave my comfort zone to move to a new city where the environment felt so different.

When I moved to Vancouver, I felt overwhelmed by the high mountains covering most of the sky, in awe over the ideal transportation system called SkyTrain and surprised at having more rain fall than snowflakes in the wintery months.

The best advice I received when trying to adapt to Vancouver was “get yourself a good umbrella and a great pair of rain boots.” I scoffed when I first heard this—how much rain could there possibly be? Yes, I learned my lesson.

Arriving in Vancouver in 2012, I was a young Respiratory Therapist, ready to save the world. I started my career at Vancouver General Hospital and I will always remember the first patient I treated—a severely burned patient from a factory explosion. I was terrified to hurt the patient with my touch. The experience made me question if I was cut out for this career path, but I did it!

As I treated more patients with different diagnoses, my experience and confidence grew. Each day was a surprise and a challenge, but I realized I would always be a Respiratory Therapist.

After a few years, I started to wonder if there was a world outside of acute care. I was ready for a change in my career and to be part of making life more accessible to people who needed support.

Enter Lily Cheung, a fellow BCITS Respiratory Therapist. She opened my eyes to much more—a place where patients are clients who direct their own care. I knew that being part of a team that improved a person’s quality of life was work that would be valuable and meaningful to me.

On my first day, I was welcomed by a group of amazing people who helped make the new job an easy transition. I met a PROP/TIL client who could not wait to show off his gadgets. He demonstrated his TIL-engineered sip-and-puff which was used not only for breathing, but for picking up phone calls and manoeuvring his wheelchair. I was amazed and excited.

As I see more and more clients who share their happy lives and stories with me, I can see the appreciation they have for BCITS’ support. And I can see the care and devotion the BCITS staff have for their clients.

I can honestly say I have made one of the best decisions in my career. I cannot be more thankful for this opportunity and I look forward to meeting each of you! ●



The Client Participation Model at Work

| BY NANCY LEAR

If you are a client, family member or staff member of BCITS, you may be familiar with one of our principles which states: "BCITS programs are accountable to the people that they serve."

This is a very powerful statement that clients, in particular, should be aware of because it describes the BCITS client-centred approach to services and programs.

The Client Participation model is a prime example. This model means that, when a client receives services through PROP or TIL or both, the client's feedback is crucial. BCITS invites your suggestions about what works well, what needs improving or what you would like changed.

The Client Participation Model also promotes your involvement on committees or, if you are interested, on the Board of Directors. You can also become involved with Peer events or write articles for Balance.

Hiring clients as staff is another way BCITS embraces the Client Participation Model.

I have been employed with BCITS since November 2015 as the Peer Network Facilitator (PNF). I have over twenty years experience volunteering in the non-profit sector providing services, motivation and leadership to disability groups and individuals. I have a BA in English from Memorial University, Newfoundland and, in pursuit of my continued passion to help others, I am

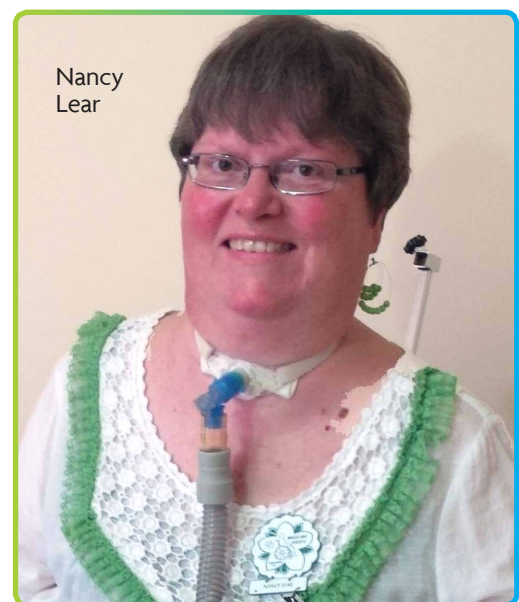
BCITS invites your suggestions about what works well, what needs improving or what you would like changed.

completing a diploma program as a Career Development Practitioner at Simon Fraser University.

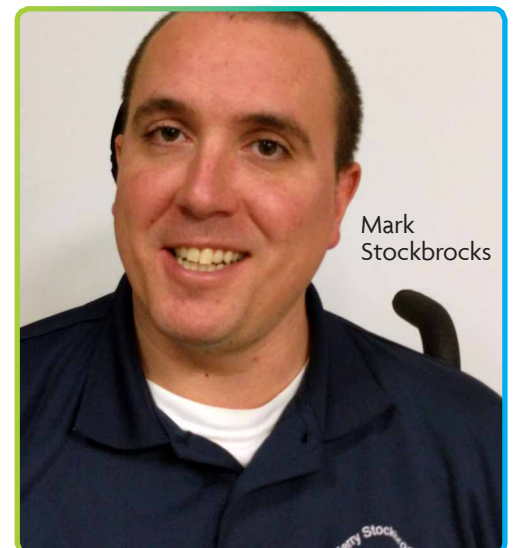
In my role as the PNF, I call on my experience to help clients. I know which questions to ask and will listen closely to each client's needs and concerns as they move forward towards independence. I have been respirator-dependent since 1993 and am an employer in the Choice in Supports for Independent Living (CSIL) program.

In my spare time, I am an avid square dancer with the Wheelin' 8s, and a volunteer at the Neil Squire Society and the Canadian Assisted Travel Society. I also enjoy exploring my neighbourhood, shopping and enjoying social activities.

Mark Stockbrocks joined BCITS in January as our Peer TIL Support Worker. He is a TIL client who brings his knowledge of social media, expertise in fundraising events and a new wave of energy to BCITS. Mark is a go-getter, a nature-lover and someone who enjoys new challenges. ●



Nancy Lear



Mark Stockbrocks

TIL Awarded 2016 CAOT Citation Award

Technology for Independent Living (TIL) has received the 2016 Citation Award from the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT), British Columbia. This annual award is given to acknowledge the contributions of agencies, programs or individuals to the health and well-being of Canadians.

The award is an incredible honour for TIL and BCITS, for a number of reasons. First, it is awarded by the professionals we work so closely with to deliver TIL services. Without the help of Occupational Therapists throughout British Columbia, our services couldn't be what they are today.

Second, there are so many wonderful organizations, programs and individuals in BC. Along with our BC community partners, we've hosted a number of organizations from around the world who want to understand how BC can provide so many valuable community services. To be selected from this impressive group of BC programs and organizations is very humbling.

Finally, it is an incredible honour to provide TIL services, knowing the rich 45-year history of the program which was originally started by Kinsmen Canada. When TIL left Kinsmen, it was spearheaded for decades by Simon Cox who has grown the program to what it is today. In recognizing the dedication of Kinsmen and Simon Cox, we realize it's our duty to continue to grow the program and make positive changes in our community.

Our thanks to the CAOT for this honour! ●

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 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

Not all Remotes are Created Equal

by wayne pogue | The home entertainment world has been growing exponentially over the past few years. From Smart TVs to streaming content to cable systems with PVR, the home entertainment industry has ensured we can find what we want, when we want it. It can be as simple as pressing a few remote buttons, using your smartphone, or swiping a remote and talking to it... but not for everyone!

If you have the use of your hands, the hardest part of accessing your home entertainment is deciding which show to watch first. However, if you don't, it can be a struggle to watch anything.

TIL has been providing switch-controlled home entertainment systems for decades, allowing clients to access their home environment using scanning remotes at the press of a switch or the puff of a straw.

It's not the most efficient system, but until home entertainment is consistently and completely voice-controlled, we are going to have to continue using these scanning remotes (i.e., Gewa).

That being said, TIL has worked hard to match our current assistive technology with all the new technology built into Smart TVs, new cable systems and streaming content systems such as Apple TV and Roku. The technology that currently works for TIL clients is based on infrared wireless technology and can only work with infrared remote controls.

The wireless technology used in emerging entertainment solutions includes Wi-Fi, radio frequency (RF) and Bluetooth. These systems

don't work with our Gewa remotes or other scanning remotes on the market.

Some of our clients have started using tablets and smartphones to access their entertainment which is a great option. We can provide switch access to your smartphone or tablet, allowing you to operate your home entertainment from your smartphone/tablet using a scanning method.

However, to do this, you must be using entertainment systems that can be operated from a smartphone or tablet.

Also, we have recently seen a change in the way local cable providers program their infrared technology, including one provider whose infrared technology works very inconsistently with our Gewa remotes, especially after a recent upgrade. In this case, we have recommended switching providers, so our clients don't con-



tinue to be frustrated by the inconsistency of software upgrades.

If you are thinking of changing cable providers or adding new entertainment technology to your home environment, and want to be sure it's compatible with your current TIL equipment, please contact our BioMed department.

We would be more than happy to advise you on home entertainment solutions that will work for you. ●

Have You Checked Your Suction Pressure Lately?

Excess pressure can lead to loss of lung volume and trauma to the tracheal wall.

Watch for signs of bleeding from the trachea.



The suction pressure for Tracheal suctioning should not exceed 120mmHg/16kpa

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.

BCITS  technology for living 

Gadgets

BY WAYNE POGUE



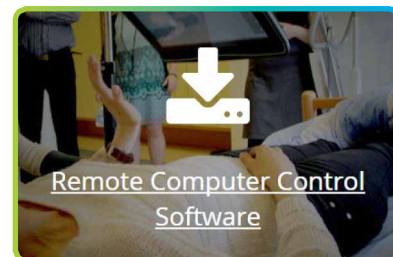
Technology for Independent Living (TIL) is not currently providing access to computer controls, but we did come across a computer access solution that may benefit many of our clients.

The solution is Inovatell's Remote Computer Control Software which is available as a free download!

The hardware requirements are minimal: a Windows 8 Mobile or desktop computer and a webcam (either USB or built-in webcam). Once the software is downloaded, you can start using it right away.

We downloaded the software on a Windows 7 computer and it worked immediately. It was tested for a short period with great success. The camera followed our tester's head movements and moved the mouse in the same pattern. When our tester held her head still, the mouse

Inovatell Remote Computer Control Software



"clicked." You can tell the software if you'd like it to click, right click or double click.

One thing did create a few problems: the system is quite sensitive. However, I'm sure with a few other adjustments, like mouse speed, this is a solution that could work for many of our clients. ●