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technology for living
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balance
... what it's all about

IN THIS ISSUE

The value of partnerships

By Christine Gordon

Technology for Living was formed out of a partnership between TIL and PROP. When the PROP program was in development in the late 1990s, we asked ventilator users where we might be able to house a community based provincial program. The answer was unequivocal. "It must be with TIL" they said "because we trust them".

Trust forms the basis of any great partnership and we have been lucky at Technology for Living to have had the benefits of many partnerships. The Kinsmen Foundation has been our partner since TIL's inception 50 years ago. The role that the Foundation has played extends beyond fundraising to commitment to the very heart of our mission. The BC Rehab Foundation has been another stalwart partner, particularly in our Open Doors program. We have counted on their support to bring power door openers to people without the means to secure them.

Other partners like BCIT, CAYA and Tetra have helped us to expand and refine the range of assistive technology available to British Columbians.

> **If you need to open a door contact us so that we can assist you to get out of your home and into the world.**

At our Technology for Living AGM in September, we celebrated these partnerships and welcomed the election of our most valued partners, our Board of Directors, more than 50% of whom are TFL users.

Our keynote speaker, Elizabeth Rathbun, urged our members to become politically engaged advocates for equality. There is an opportunity for you to do so right now. The BC government is consulting about what should be in new Accessibility Legislation. Our upcoming Pathways to Independence peer meetings will be devoted to providing the government with our members' views on what would make this province more accessible. Join us on this initiative and become a partner for change.

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Technology for Living AGM and Social

The chair of the board, Christine Gordon, presented her report at the Technology for Living AGM on 24 September. The over arching message of the board is to firmly focus on the future, with an emphasis on engaging with emerging technologies by both the TIL program and PROP. Looking at some statistics from the previous year revealed that the TIL biomeds made more than 890 home visits while PROP made over 780 home visits. Those strong numbers make it abundantly clear that both programs are serving an essential need throughout the province for British Columbians who want to live independently at home. The membership voted for the existing board members to continue their good work.

L-R: Ruth Marzetti, Paul Gauthier and Christine Gordon

Ruth Marzetti (ED ,TFL), Paul Gauthier (ED, IFRC) and Christine Gordon (Chair, TFL) are posing in their finest at the photobooth during the *Pathways to Independence* peer group social which followed the Technology for Living AGM. TFL and IFRC have partnered to bring the *Pathways to Independence* project to locations around the province to provide an opportunity for people living with a disability to discuss issues around independent living. The social was an opportunity to come together and have fun outside of the meeting.

The *Pathways for Independence* social provided a chance to enjoy and admire the *Fuse Wheelchair Dance Society*; the dancers gave a powerful demonstration of their art as well as encouraging lots of participation through the evening. It was a wonderful evening which also included an inspirational talk by Elizabeth Rathbun. Attendees enjoyed food, drinks, a raffle and chatting with friends.
We are looking forward to next year's event already especially since we will be celebrating TIL's 50th anniversary!

BITS & BYTES FROM TIL

Coming up Aces!

Let's welcome Ace Ganotisi to the Technology for Independent Living team. He began with us in April 2019 as a BCIT Biomedical Engineering Technology practicum placement. At the end of his practicum, we were so impressed, we hired him on a 6 month contract, to see how well he fit into the program and the team.

Well, those 6 months are not even up yet, and we've hired Ace on as a permanent team member. Ace is a very down to earth technologist, with loads of empathy and knowledge. If you haven't met Ace yet, you will be lucky to do so when he stops by to help you with your TIL needs in the future.

Welcome to the team Ace!

CONTACT US!

We are always happy to discuss any member's needs. Simply phone us at
604.326.0175
or send an email to
TIL@technologyforliving.org

TIPS & TRICKS

Google Routines

Is it tiring having to say too many Google Home commands in the morning? Create one short command called a "Google Routine". Google Home will now deliver a number of things with one command. "Hey Google, Good Morning" could dim lights, announces the weather, your schedule, & changes your thermostat while playing your favorite radio station. Create Google Routines in Google Home app.

Hey Google... Head Up!

By Wayne Pogue

That's right, Technology for Living has created the "**TIL Voice Bed Control**"! We are in the process of testing it with some TIL members. Using the device, members are able to control their bed's head and foot functions by saying the following commands to a *Google Home* device: 'Head Up', 'Head Down', 'Foot Up', and 'Foot Down'.

For many years, one of the most frequent questions from members living at home was "do you have anything that will allow me to control my bed by myself?" Up until two years ago, we didn't. Then we developed the "TIL Bed Control", a device that allowed the TIL member to control four to six functions of their bed with one single ability switch. We had great success with the "TIL Bed Control".

But technology has moved on and TIL with it. Many of our members have progressed to using TIL's smart home technology (Google Home Mini, TP Link Lighting, Chromecast, TV Control, etc). We very quickly saw an opportunity to increase our members' independence at home by incorporating their bed control functions into their smart home setup.

The "**TIL Voice Bed Control**" is operated via *Google Home* by sending a command to the bed control relay where the "TIL Voice Bed Control" closes a relay for a set amount of time (relay time), operating the bed. This "relay time" is programmed by the TIL technician during the initial setup. It is based on the member's needs and the function of their bed. The "relay time" can be set anywhere from one to ten seconds.

The "**TIL Voice Bed Control**" will be great for a lot of our members' beds, but a word of caution: it won't work with everyone's bed. To see if this device will work with your bed, please contact us so we can examine it. If it does work with your bed, we'll set you up with either "**TIL Voice Bed Control**" or the "TIL Bed Control" device, depending on the needs you have at home. Your caregivers can sleep easy knowing that you'll be more independent throughout the night!

INHALE/ EXHALE WITH PROP

PROP CONNECTING WITH PARTNERS

PROP is always looking to connect with partners in health services. Recently, PROP had the privilege of visiting the Cystic Fibrosis clinic at St. Paul's Hospital. The Cystic Fibrosis team was celebrating their 40th anniversary with patients across BC.

Canadian patients with Cystic Fibrosis are living ten years longer than American patients, partly due to access to health care and lung transplants. The milestones that the Cystic Fibrosis patients have reached with Dr. Wilcox and the dedicated healthcare team are one to celebrate.

Happy 40th anniversary to the Cystic Fibrosis clinic at St. Paul's!

CONTACT US!

If you need respiratory advice or support please contact the PROP team at ☎ 1.800.326.1245

IDEA CORNER

Flu season is around the corner and a great idea to protect yourself, is through the flu vaccine. If you are susceptible to the flu or if you are around people who cannot be vaccinated due to medical reasons, talk to your physician or pharmacist. If you work for the BC public service, vaccinations are free from the end of October to early December!

Automated CPAP cleaners

By Patrick Cho

You may have seen advertisements on TV or in newspapers about a new product called SoClean CPAP cleaner. PROP had a few calls about this equipment. What was the question asked? Was it if SoClean can be used for both CPAP and BiPAP machines? Continuous Positive Air Pressure (CPAP) and Bilevel Positive Air Pressure (BiPAP) machines look very similar and only differ in the settings that are available for programming.

Most PROP members are familiar with BiPAP machines as they are the breathing equipment PROP sets up for them. The good news is the SoClean cleaner is compatible with both CPAP and BiPAP machines.

How does it work?

The SoClean cleaner hooks up to your equipment with a special adapter and runs an automated program for two hours in which it blows ozone through the humidifier pot, tubing, and mask. Technically, it only sanitizes the surface and does not physically clean it. The manufacturer still recommends washing the CPAP or BiPAP machine to remove dirt and oil that is left behind.

The SoClean unit is not cheap. It can cost upwards of $400 and is not covered by insurance. Unfortunately, PROP is not funded for it either, so potential users will have to pay for these units out of their own pockets.

However, manufacturers of CPAP and BiPap machines continue to recommend that gently handwashing the interfaces regularly is sufficient.

> **Disassemble the mask components and thoroughly wash each piece with warm soapy water.**

This is the universally accepted way to clean your supplies and keep them in good shape. I am not aware of any studies or evidence that automated accessory cleaners do a better job cleaning or reducing risk of infection. Additionally, this is another piece of equipment you will have to set up on your own, to maintain, and to purchase supplies for. And there is this question: if ozone is strong enough to kill germs, it may also not be too healthy to be exposed to it.

In summary, the SoClean cleaner offers an additional supplement to your day to day maintenance routine, but the benefits are not as substantial as advertized. If you are already cleaning and washing your equipment and supplies regularly, you are on the right track with the tried-and-tested method.

Pathways to Independence

...in Victoria

On Friday, September 13, Ruth Marzetti, the executive director of *Technology for Living*, and Paul Gauthier and Chris Hofley of the *Individualized Funding Resource Centre (IFRC) Society*, were visiting Victoria to present their joint initiative, the **Pathways to Independence** peer project which aims to develop and maintain strong networks and resources for people with disabilities across British Columbia. Innovation and collaboration were key messages at the event.

IFRC, based in Vancouver, provides support to individuals with disabilities who receive or are interested in receiving individualized funding for their personal care needs. *Technology for Living* develops and provides member-centred technological solutions such as home automation and environmental controls to support and optimize independence through collaboration with members.

The meeting was held at the Yakomovich Wellness Centre. While participants arrived with their caregivers, people took the opportunity to chat informally and enjoy light snacks.

Paul and Chris from IFRC started the meeting by sharing their personal stories before inviting attendants to introduce themselves, asking to identify themselves as a current CSIL employee or if they were in the process to apply to become one.

CSIL (Choice in Supports for Independent Living) is the province's self-directed care option program for eligible home support clients. Under this program a case manager working for the Health Authority can approve funding to individuals to employ their own care giver. It is up to the applicant to be able to present their care needs in a way that the case manager understands why they may need for example 6 hours a day.

Approximately 20 people identified as CSIL employers, some people were in the process of applying to become one, yet others were interested in learning more.

Interesting debates arose about how to prepare a robust application, with questions ranging from preparing a plan for the assessment to the types of things applicants might be asked by the assessor. People shared ideas about how to creatively recruit caregivers, how to retain well-trained staff or how to tackle administrative issues arising from being an employer. Paul pointed out that IFRC provides materials to help prepare an application and can assist with recruitment of staff and book-keeping.

People at the meeting were interested in creating an ongoing peer group to continue sharing experiences and ideas in a space exclusively designed for people with disabilities. Being amongst peers made for a comfortable environment to share challenges and successes.

The meet up provided a tremendous opportunity for people in the Victoria disabled community to network, share knowledge and brainstorm ideas to be discussed in future meetings. Proposed topics include the new *Disabilities Act*; the *Employee Standards Act* (specifically regulation around night shifts); and more information about WorkSafe BC guidelines. People also want to discuss the shifting position of the health authorities and the role of representation agreements.

A community of friends can make a world of difference

By David Hill

Readers of my last column will remember that one highlight of my summer is attending the *Little People of America National Conference*. It is a weeklong conference usually held around July 4th.

Each year it takes place in a different American city. In 2019, the *62nd Little People of America (LPA) National Conference* was held in San Francisco. More than 2000 people attended. It is a wonderfully eclectic mix of diverse little people of all walks of life. Many bring their average size family members along for the fun.

While the conference is an American event, it really is a global affair. Attendees come from all around the world including Canada, Australia, the Bahamas, Brazil, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, the Philippines, Poland, Puerto Rico, the UK, the United Arab Emirates and more. I would guess that 75% of the little people who attended this year were American, 5% Canadian, 10% European and 10% from the rest of the world.

I traveled to San Francisco with Aaron, my care assistant and friend, and my mom. The last national conference she attended was with my dad in San Diego in July of 2014. She hasn't felt up to coming along since, as my dad passed away in 2015. But she feels a special connection with the city by the Bay, having spent some wonderful times there with my dad.

Attending the LPA conference each year is always filled with many exciting experiences. But the absolute highlight is reconnecting with old friends and building new friendships. For example, I met Michael Lee Gogin, a musician\singer and actor whom you may remember from his recurring role in the TV show "Charmed", for the first time in 2011 at the Anaheim national conference. I really enjoy having long conversations with him when we finally manage to find time. This is not always easy since the conferences are overflowing with people, activities and networking events.

Another wonderful friend I meet up with is Dana. We go back a very long time. We actually met at the one and only LPA conference that was held in Canada, way back in 2001 in Toronto.

A very fun, young couple I absolutely try to see every year are Blake and Juli Windsor. They are a few years younger than me. I first met Juli in the summer of 2004 and Blake in the summer of 2005. Ever since then we have such a good time when we are able to connect.


David travelling with his mother.

Of course, I try to talk to these friends during the rest of the year via online social networks. But the week of the conference is always special for me because nothing beats meeting in person. And while I love connecting with old acquaintances, the conference is also an opportunity to meet new, cool people who may end up becoming long term friends.

Little people who attend the conference share many experiences and struggles, issues we have to overcome in our daily lives which only fellow little people share. During that one week in the year, we do not feel marginalized. As a matter of fact: it's the tall people that stand out for a change!

Every year again and again I find it incredible to be among so many little people, see our many different physiques, our distinctive types of skeletal dysplasia, and listen to folks talk about the myriads of health conditions we live with. Learning about all our personal stories about daily life and our medical journeys often boggles my mind.

During the conference we hear so many descriptions about how the lives of little people differ from the average size world. All of us are unique, but together we are much more: a vibrant, colorful collage of uniqueness, a kaleidoscope of different appearances!

Saying goodbye to old and new friends is always emotional. It never seems to get easier and it feels always tough to leave. One thing that helps a bit is taking photos. Creating memories is very important to me. All of us attending cherish the community/family environment and the mutual support offered by all the little people at this wonderful get together.

FINDING COMMUNITY.

The Little People of British Columbia Society *for Short Stature Awareness is a non-profit organization for children and adults with a growth disorder or dwarfism.*

The purposes of the association are to provide social, emotional, and educational support to the membership and their families; to educate the general public about short stature; to provide a medical board knowledgeable about short stature; and to refer members to various community services and government agencies for additional support.

littlepeopleofbc.org

The Dwarf Athletic Association of Canada (DAAC) *is a not-for-profit organization that provides life-long fellowship, athletic support, and information to people with dwarfism, their families and friends across Canada.*

dwarfathletics.ca

In 2020 the Technology for Living (TIL) Program turns 50

The more you know about the past, the better you are prepared for the future

In 1970 the Kinsmen Rehabilitation Foundation of BC (KRF) set up both TIL and the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) as special divisions under its umbrella with TIL being a central contributor in developing the TOSC and POSSUM, equipment that allowed users to activate electronics in their home using a single button. Then and now, TIL was firmly based in designing and installing assistive devices to enable people with severe physical disabilities to live at home. TIL was at the cutting edge of Augmentative Communication Systems (ACS) and Environmental Control Systems (ECS).

Looking at the history of TIL's technological accomplishments is to bear witness to the astonishing technological paradigm shifts of the last half century. From mechanical to infra-red and now to digital and voice activated solutions, TIL has installed it all in people's home over the last 50 years.

The early years

During its first 10 years, TIL grew so rapidly that by the early 1980s it was operating nearly independently from KRF. When organizations grow as vigorously as TIL did in those years, structural and organizational changes need to be addressed. The manager of TIL since day one, Simon Cox, understood at this time that TIL had outgrown its current relationship with the KRF. TIL began to be funded independently through the Vancouver Richmond Health Board and then joined with the newly created Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) in 2000 under the auspices of the BC Paraplegic Association (BCPA). In 2006, PROP and TIL departed from BCPA and became BCITS (BC Association of Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities now Technology for Living). a non profit, charitable society.

To this day both the Kinsmen Foundation and the BC Rehab Foundation, another early ally, remain an integral part of TIL's dynamic support system. This ongoing commitment to TIL speaks highly of the people and organizations from which TIL has emerged. Their understanding of the importance of TIL's position as an independent body, enabling people with complex needs to live at home in BC, has never wavered.

Today TIL is as always at the forefront of harnessing emerging technologies and bringing them into the home of our members.

Sharing TIL's expertise

TIL remains at the forefront of positive advances for people with severe physical disabilities. With the BC government looking for input into accessible legislation, TIL can and will offer advice and insight. TIL's history uniquely qualifies it to be an integral part of developing accessible housing & building legislation. TIL advice has already been successfully implemented by architects and building designers during construction and retrofitting of accessible housing units, not least of all in the successful collaboration around the development of the Pearson land.

The Simon Cox Student Design Competition

TIL is not content with the status quo of today, nor with resting on the laurels of yesterday. The possibilities for independent living are evolving more rapidly than ever. TIL is not only celebrating its 50th anniversary next year but in the spirit of shaping the future, TIL is also hosting also the 6th Simon Cox Student Design Competition. The idea behind the competition is simple: connect engineering students with TIL members and form a creative team to explore emerging ideas which enable people with severe disabilities to live at home, and ultimately showcase resulting prototypes at an exhibition where they will be judged and the winning team receives a prize. (*This year the exhibition will be on May 3, 2020 at the Wosk Centre in Vancouver*).

TIL has come a long way and we are proud of what we together with our members have been able to achieve. We are continuing to refine, customize and invent emerging technologies because we understand the difference it makes for people to be able to live at home. TIL's ongoing mission is to make this happen!

Changing Oceans

A proud Newfie taking stock

By Nancy Lear

I was born in the early 1960s into a big, wonderful family. I am the youngest of 9 siblings from a small town called Kelligrews on the rugged shores of Conception Bay South, part of the Avalon Peninsula, in Newfoundland.

To this day the locals simply call it "CBS". I had the most beautiful childhood I could ever have asked for.

We were root vegetable crop farmers. My father sold the crops to all types of stores 'around the bay'. His trusted van had to negotiate the gravel roads around our land trying to avoid the many potholes. It took 45 minutes to drive into St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland.

Growing up was a wonderfully exciting time as I was surrounded by a huge, devoted family: I grew up with 8 other siblings! Contemplating each of our births is like looking at stepping stones in a garden. Lillian is the oldest followed by Harvey, Gerald, Vic, Neil, Marilyn, Dean, Carol and then me. I am the baby.

Four of us were born with muscular dystrophy.

The disease was part of the family. By the time I was diagnosed at age 9, my brother Harvey was already in a manual wheelchair. Neil and Carol showed symptoms in their gait walk and arched inward spine. 4 years after my diagnosis, I began using a manual wheelchair, for school mostly, and I parked it when at home. But soon, I started using the wheelchair full time.

My sister Carol

Carol was ***exactly*** one year older than me. My arrival happened on her first birthday. She was my idol. She had so much spunk and strength of character. I so much wanted to be like her. I always thought of us as kindred spirits because we shared the same birthday. I know it's odd but none of my siblings ever drove me crazy like siblings are known to do. However, Carol and I had many heated exchanges about our different approaches to life and about future plans. We both were stubborn and we each wanted things our own way. Carol explained her side of our arguments in a way that sooner or later made sense to me, so I mostly came around to agreeing with her.

St. John's fog at Quidi Vidi Lake

Carol refused to rely on mom to take care of her. She was incredibly regimented about exercising, to keep her muscles at a level that allowed her to continue walking and able to perform household chores. The same iron discipline that allowed her to help out around the house also fired her rebellious streak. She argued passionately with mom about not having the same access privileges to the car as our brother Neil who got to use it whenever he wanted. She was so angry that one time when mom and dad were out and Neil came home after returning with the car, Carol locked the front door so Neil couldn't get in. Neil warned her he was going to smash the front door window if she didn't unlock the door, but Carol refused. Dad was not a happy camper when he got back and saw the broken front door window.

We had different plans for our futures. Carol quit high school and moved to St John's. Carol got her GED and worked for the provincial government in an administrative capacity. Later she became an advocate for a non-profit organization, in that role helping many people to improve their lives and independence.

My brothers

My brothers Vic and Neil were the jokesters of the family. Remembering their practical jokes makes me laugh to this day. They put sneakers in the freezer during family gatherings, filled up the sugar dish with salt to watch your reactions and so forth. The thing was: we all knew the culprit had to be one of them!

Three of my brothers — Gerald, Vic and Dean — helped with the planting and harvesting all through school and after, whenever they could. It was mandatory for them, but truth be told, none of them enjoyed farming and they dreaded planting season as much as harvesting times. As they got older, however, they appreciated the knowledge learned and grew some veggies for their own personal use.

My mother

Mom worked hard in the house and in the fields. She baked bread by hand every Saturday: 6 loaves that lasted the week. They weren't your average artisan loaf you see at a bakery; these loaves were super large with 3 buns to a loaf pan baked together!

Meals were traditional fare and we all sat together around the table. We had fish on Fridays and pots of moose, stewing beef or split pea soup on Saturdays. But what I remember most fondly was the 'Jiggs' dinner on Sundays, a famous *outport* staple (a term for rural Newfoundland cuisine). 'Jiggs' is a character from the comic strip *Bringing Up Father*. He was an Irish immigrant living in North America who regularly ate corned beef and cabbage, a precursor to the Newfoundland dish. In our house the 'Jiggs' was sometimes a beef or pork roast and other times a roasted stuffed chicken with 'dressing' — crumbled up bread, butter and our local savoury that was harvested, hung to dry in our kitchen over the woodstove and sieved through a colander before being bottled in mason jars.

Mom also cared for Harvey, Neil, and I. Muscular dystrophy progressed at different rates for each of us. Harvey and I were in manual wheelchairs and needed the most care, but Neil continued to walk and even had a driver's license, only needing help in the morning. Then he was gone for most of the day. Harvey was very artistic. He would spend the day painting, making designer lamps, or dabbling in some new project or other. Dad would usually drive me to school and pick me up again.

Making memories

The entire Lear family loved getting together and having fun: 120, blackjack, hearts, or scat were card games we would play endlessly. But we also were very inventive when it came to physical activities. Our kitchen table was big enough for an ad hoc table tennis game: my brothers put a chair on either of the longer side in the middle, placed a string across the table, and attached it to those chairs, with draped dish towels over the string.

Us girls used to shake baby powder on the floor and pretend we were skating or sliding on ice across all the way into the boys' bedroom. We played musical chairs or 'Button-Button, Who's Got the Button.' All that happened while mom and dad were out to church or visiting friends for tea, of course!

We had parties all year round. Our annual summer party was in May because 3 of my siblings' birthdays were in May. 'Shed parties' started after we had gotten too old for Halloween 'trick or treating' and we missed the fun of dressing up. So, we decided to plan a costume party in our huge shed. We set up a bob-for-apples station and a bar section. Music blasted from a radio and my brothers got a fire going: after all it was October on the east coast, brrrrr! Those times have left me with an abundance of wonderful memories.

But living in a family where 4 members have MD means heartbreak will be part of life as well. I am the last sibling living with MD which sometimes makes me feel very alone. I first experienced profound loss when my eldest brother Harvey passed away at the age of 40. I was turning 26 at the time and I was devastated. By the time I was 50 we had lost Neil and Carol to MD.

I am the last sibling living with MD which sometimes makes me feel very alone.

My dad had passed away in 1997 and my mom in 2006. And while my remaining siblings always were and continue to be an unwavering support to me, our family dynamic had changed. I didn't want to be a burden. While working through my grief of Carol's death, I came to the conclusion that I didn't want to move because of having lost loved ones but that I felt a genuine need to change the path I was on. Two years after Carol passed it was time to seek out new things, make new friends and, for the first time in my life, find gainful employment.

Looking for a new place from afar

Even though I had hardly any work experience I had plenty of volunteer experience. I had spent 25 years with various organizations like COD (Consumer Organization for Disabled People now renamed to the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities) and Muscular Dystrophy Canada (I am a founding member of the St. John's MD Chapter). I sat on the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PACSW) and many subsidiary boards.

Early on I had wanted to get a university degree and change the world through architecture. I got a basic drafting diploma and ended up working in highway design for the provincial government for two years. But then I decided to pursue my university dreams. In 2003 I gained my BA from Memorial University of Newfoundland & Labrador. But ultimately, I had only ever spent 2 ½ years in the workforce. The urge to contribute more was another reason for relocating.

Being an east coaster, I first investigated Halifax and then Ottawa. There was a freeze on care funding at the time and accessible housing was simply not available. When I began researching Vancouver, I also received discouraging answers about the possibility of accessible housing. But I felt there was an undercurrent of positive energy which had been absent in any of the other places I researched. I decided to focus on the positive and started my journey to the west coast.

Relocation is tough for anybody but for people with a disability it is even more challenging. I went over and over the steps that needed to happen upon my arrival in Vancouver:

- find a place to live
- register with social services
- acquire care funding
- get in touch with the key people in order to make this all happen.

Building connections

While still living in Newfoundland I connected with Paul Gauthier (ED of the Independent Funding Resource Centre), knowledgeable officials of the CSIL Funding scheme, and Ken Fraser (manager, Vancouver Resource Society). I spoke with Paul and Ken on several occasions to inform them of my decisions to move and asked for their help once I arrived.

Paul is part of my support system up to this very day. Ken accommodated me in emergency housing for the first 5-months after my arrival in a vacant care facility.

To re-iterate: care funding and accessible housing are the two vital areas to sort out, ideally even before arrival.

I never regretted my decision to move. But I was not prepared for what was to come. The first 3 months were grueling. Acquiring wheelchair accessible housing; registering for monthly social benefits; meetings with the Health Authority for my care needs; figuring out the transportation system… It was overwhelming. Carol would have been so proud of me! Realistically, I couldn't have completed the relocation without Paul and Ken, my two aces in my pocket as I like to think of them.

There are always new things to learn in life. And that is how I like it.

Prior to having been approved for the CSIL, the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority covered the cost of 24-hour care in an emergency capacity because my caregivers from Newfoundland were returning home. Before they returned East, they taught the agency care staff about my daily routines, such as using the manual Hoya floor lift for transfers.

Working with Paul and the Health Authority to get on the CSIL Program was a daunting project. But I firmly set my mind to it and took time to document every aspect of my daily care needs. Finally, I was accepted on the CSIL Program.

Trusting my instincts, having confidence in my abilities, staying focused on my end goal were all important. It was the right move for me. Now, I experience a better quality of life. I have new friends and a job as the Peer Support Co-ordinator with Technology for Living. My respiratory health is taken care of by the amazing support provided through PROP and Dr. Jeremy Road. And thanks to the TIL program I am enjoying greater independence living at home than I ever thought possible using their innovative assistive devices.

I miss my family and friends back East. It's such a great treat for me when we get to visit each other. They are my biggest fans after all. But, today, 6 years later, I am at home in Vancouver.

My two nieces and my sister visiting with me in Vancouver.

Living Independently at Home – thanks to the Kinsmen Foundation and BC Rehab Foundation

The Kinsmen Foundation have partnered with the BC Rehab Foundation in funding our Open Door Program. Following their successful Golf Tournament in the summer the Kinsmen have generously given a substantial donation to Technology for Independent Living. With these funds, and those donated by the BC Rehab Foundation, we are able to provide you with an automatic door to your home, if you are having trouble getting in or out of your home. For more information on how to apply contact Wayne Pogue at TIL@technologyforliving.org

The SIMON COX

6th STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION

We want you!

Living as a person with a disability do you have an idea for a device to help improve your independence?
Do you want to work with a student team on a unique project which may increase your autonomy at home?
Contact
Technology for Living!

Contest runs OCT 2019 - APR 30, 2020
Showcase/judging of winning entries at the WOSK CENTRE -Vancouver, May 3rd, 2020

For more information
email **info@technologyforliving.org**

technology for living

Interested students!

This is a tremendous opportunity for students to make substantial contributions to the independence of people living with disabilities while at the same time showcasing and gaining recognition for their work, and of course if placed, winning prize money!

Contact us at

info@technologyforliving.org or go to technologyforliving.org/2020-simon-cox-student-design-competition