

balance

... what it's all about

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A true pioneer

By Christine Gordon

Technology for Living has been blessed with a legion of great leaders through its history. Each has brought unique qualities to our organization and to the disability movement. Each has left an enduring impact that has become a fundamental aspect of our organization.

Terry LeBlanc, who passed away unexpectedly in December 2022, left a legacy of kindness that he generously extended to everyone who was lucky enough to know him. Terry's work as an advocate, mentor, innovator, sailor and music lover was so deeply rooted in affection for other human beings with all of their foibles that it was transformative. Imagine its power to someone newly living with a spinal cord injury, or to a person grappling with how to live independently in a barrier full world.

Terry didn't have to convince people of their worth; it shone through his eyes, his voice, and his smile.

His special power was living and breathing empathy and kindness.

He was thrilled by the advances in assistive technology and was always keen to try anything new. He was a champion sailor who wanted everybody to learn how to sail. He was a loving mentor who walked every mile with a peer no matter how challenging the terrain. I was privileged to work with Terry on one complicated discharge from George Pearson Centre and I marveled at his determination. I never had a more reliable partner in struggle than Terry who knew the peril coming from giving up.

For everyone at TFL, losing Terry is heart breaking in the literal sense because he always gave his heart while he captured yours. Who will cheerlead the Simon Cox Student Design Competition? Who will orient our new staff? Who will mentor our young members? There are many great holes to fill. I think I know what Terry would say: Have faith that great leaders will emerge from our TFL membership if we practice kindness and build affirmative, inclusive spaces.



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📍 #103-366 East Kent Ave. South
Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6

☎ 604.326.0175 📠 604.326.0176

✉ info@technologyforliving.org

🌐 technologyforliving.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ruth Marzetti

DESIGN / EDITOR

Britt Permien

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Benson Au • Taylor Danielson •
Marnie Essery • Christine Gordon
Chloe Gratton • David Hill • Wayne Pogue
Krysten Polsky • Ean Price

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Technology for Living Round Up

Introducing Dr. Aditi Shah, PROP's new Medical Advisor



Dr. Aditi Shah is part of Faculty of Medicine, Division of Respiriology at University of British Columbia. She completed her training in Respiriology medicine at University of Saskatchewan and has received clinical and research training in Sleep Medicine and Neuromuscular respiratory disease at University of British Columbia. She is currently working as a Respirologist at Vancouver General Hospital and in Sleep Medicine department at University of British Columbia Hospital.



Youth Assistive Technology (YAT) Program

The Youth Assistive Technology Program, provides assistive technology to youth like Dacian across BC. The program's goal is to increase independence and empower youths living with disabilities by removing the barriers that prevent them from fully participating in their homes and communities. These barriers increase stigma, dependency, and isolation. YAT aims to enhance their ability to learn, play, and experience the world in a more meaningful way. Through providing voice-activated devices and environmental controls, YAT helps youths to live a more fulfilling life, one in which they are able to overcome the barriers they face and fully participate in their homes and communities.

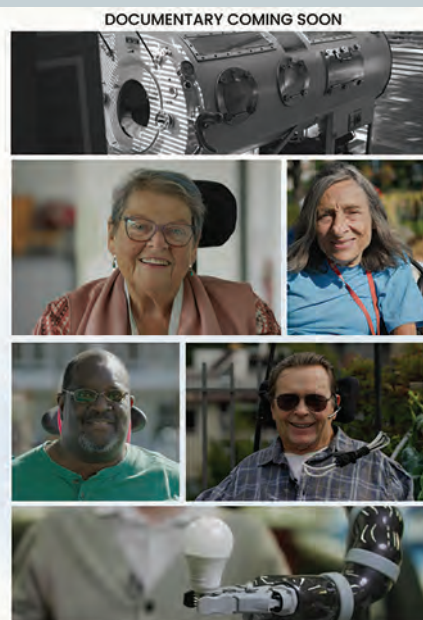
For more info: eprice@technologyforliving.org

The Evolution of Technology for Independent Living

Our 22-minute documentary explores the impact of technology on independent living for individuals with disabilities. Join Taylor Danielson as he showcases the technologies that have enabled him to live independently with Spinal Muscular Atrophy II.

Four seniors with disabilities also share their stories of adapting and thriving with assistive technology. Linda McGowan, who has MS, shares her journey of traveling the globe. Roger B. Jones, who sustained a spinal cord injury, shares his journey of becoming a recognized authority on disability culture. Zosia Ettenberg, who had polio, shares her journey of becoming a physiotherapist and transitioning into disability awareness. Terry LeBlanc, who also sustained a spinal cord injury, shares his journey of becoming an advocate for accessibility and human rights.

This documentary is informative and inspiring for those living with disabilities to adapt and thrive with the help of technology. Don't miss this opportunity to discover the powerful impact of technology on independent living for individuals with disabilities over the years.



THE EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Thanks to a grant from the New Horizons for Seniors Program

BITS & BYTES FROM TIL

TIL has been receiving a high volume of calls from members who are worried that their smart home devices are not functioning properly after switching to a new WIFI provider. While we strive to assist our members, it may be difficult for us to visit within a short timeframe.

To ensure a seamless transition when changing WIFI providers, we recommend asking your new provider to separate the 2.4GHz and 5GHz WIFI and make the 2.4GHz have the same name and password as your old WIFI.

By following these steps, your smart home devices should continue to work without interruption on your new WIFI network.

CONTACT US!

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

TIPS & TRICKS

Are you looking for information on the most accessible video games or new technology that can enhance your gaming experience? Look no further than caniplaythat.com - a website dedicated to providing helpful resources for gamers with disabilities where you can find a wide range of accessibility reviews on popular video games, controller options, and get tips from other gamers.

SMART start to spring

By Wayne Pogue

As the temperature rises and the desire to let in the fresh spring air through open windows grows, it's crucial to keep in mind the significance of maintaining exceptional indoor air quality throughout the year. Poor air quality not only poses a threat to our health but also has an impact on our overall comfort and well-being in our homes.

To ensure that our indoor air is as clean as possible, it's essential to first understand the factors that can affect air quality.

These can include things like particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), humidity, temperature, pollen, and air pressure. Because air quality can vary in different locations, it's a good idea to measure air quality in various locations throughout the home. Monitors can measure various pollutants such as radon, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide.

Once you have a better understanding of the air quality in your home, you can start using technology to improve it. For example, air purifiers can filter out particles, dehumidifiers can decrease moisture levels, and fans can circulate the air in the home.

The best part is that all of this technology can be integrated into a SMART home ecosystem, making it easy to control and monitor with just your voice or phone.

For example, if your air quality monitor detects that the humidity is elevated and there are more particles in the air, your system can automatically adjust the dehumidifier and air purifier to adjust the elevated conditions.

In addition to using technology, there are also some simple, non-technical solutions that can help improve indoor air quality. These include running kitchen and bathroom fans when needed, regularly changing or cleaning filters in appliances like AC units, furnaces, and vacuum cleaners, and adding plants to your home. Not only do plants look beautiful, but they also act as natural air purifiers.

So as we gear up for the spring season, let's not forget to keep our indoor air quality in mind and take the necessary steps to ensure that our homes are as clean and healthy as possible all year round.



INHALE / EXHALE

Research Opportunity

If you or your family member was affected by the Philips Respironics recall that occurred in 2021, you are eligible to participate in a research study being conducted by The University of Calgary.

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of the ongoing recall of Philips Respironics positive airway pressure (CPAP and BiLevel) therapy devices. The interview would take about 30 minutes and can be done remotely.

As a token of appreciation for your time, participants will be offered a gift card. If you are interested in participating in this study, please do not hesitate to reach out to sleepresearch@ucalgary.ca or by telephone at 403-220-5838 for more information.

CONTACT US!

If you need respiratory advice or support please contact the PROP team at [1.866.326.1245](tel:18663261245)

IDEA CORNER

Your **mask** is made up of 3 separate pieces. These include the cushion, the headgear and the frame. If you find that your mask is leaking or the headgear velcro is no longer secure, these pieces can be ordered from PROP separately. Replacing the cushion alone may help to minimize leak while keeping costs in check! For more information: **1-866-326-1245**.

Travelling with respiratory equipment

By Krysten Polsky with input by Ean Price



The chaotic travel season of 2022 served as a powerful reminder that preparation is key when it comes to traveling with medical equipment. The stress of navigating airport security, flight delays, and unexpected complications can be overwhelming, especially when you have to take into account the needs of your medical devices but with a bit of preparation, you can ensure that your trip goes smoothly.

It is important to check with the airline well in advance for any forms that are required before travelling with medical equipment. Many airlines require a form to be completed by a physician/specialist prior to the flight. Make sure to give yourself enough time to see your physician/specialist before the flight to have any required forms completed. Rules will vary from one airline to another, so ensure to check with your specific one.

Ensure that you have enough battery power to last for the duration of your trip plus any possible delays. It's unlikely that you'll be able to plug your ventilator or BiPAP in on the plane, so make sure to charge up as much as possible before the flight. Take every opportunity you get to charge up! Bring a few extension cords and power bars with you, as outlets may not always be conveniently located.

Consider bringing a surge protector with you and plugging in all your medical equipment into this while traveling to protect it from any damage.

For our trached and ventilated members, ensure you bring your emergency supplies and ambu bag with you in-cabin during your flight, in case of any emergencies. Always bring a backup unit if you're not comfortable going without therapy for a night.

Always carry-on your medical devices. Most airlines will allow you an exemption to the carry-on baggage limit for medical devices. Again, always check with your specific airline to confirm that you'll be able to bring all your necessary devices with you on board during the flight. Remember when packing that most airlines do not allow lithium ion batteries in checked luggage.

Ensure that you have the right power adapters or power inverters, and bring a backup for each one. If you're unsure about what you need, you can always reach out to a member of the biomed team here at TFL.

Contact TFL to get information on the type of batteries in your devices before travelling. Most airlines will request this information. Pack extra supplies just in case of any unforeseen delays. Plan to carry enough with you to allow for a few extra days of travel just in case.

With these tips in mind, you can travel with peace of mind, knowing that you have taken the necessary steps to ensure that your medical equipment will be safe and functional during your trip. Safe travels!

Northern Perspectives

Where to find friendship in a small town

By Chloe Gratton

Making connections in smaller communities can be challenging for people with disabilities. For children and youth there are more supports and opportunities for socializing, such as preschool and elementary school, and parents often set up playdates. However, these options dwindle the older you get.

In Prince George, youth with disabilities can take part in therapeutic horseback riding, challenger baseball, bocci ball and w/c basketball. AIMHI (aimhi.ca), a non-profit organization, in Prince George provides assistance for children to learn life skills and attend community events such as dances and fundraisers. But once you turn 19, unless you have an intellectual disability, you can no longer receive any of their services.

**So, the question looms:
where does a disabled young adult make friends?**



Common places for people to make friends are jobs, school, sports, and nightclubs. But not all disabled people have the opportunity or capacity of working or going to college. And as for nightlife in smaller communities: there isn't much in the first place and if there is, venues are not generally accessible.

By the time disabled people reach adulthood, your friend list has shrunk. It is also important to remember some of

my disabled friends have passed away due to their medical conditions.

I believe friendships are super important. As a human being I crave community. I want friends with similar interests and understanding. I find it very challenging making friends with people who are not disabled. Other disabled people I have talked to about this feel the same. The question lurking in the back of my mind: "Is the offered friendship authentic or is it extended out of pity?" Having friends who have similar challenges as I do helps me to share experiences and, together, we can find ways to solve those challenges. Finding someone with a similar disability to mine is very hard in a small town. Finding an adult group to join is even harder, as there is often little advertisement for them. I recently went to a group event for people with spinal cord injuries, and only then learned that the group is open to people with different disabilities.

The other place where people often make friends is work. But finding employment can be a challenge for individuals with disabilities, as many workplaces may not have the proper accommodations or resources to support them, particularly in small towns. It took me 2 years and over 200 applications before I found an employer who was willing to give me a job. Home Depot took a chance on me. But while I have met many people there, few socialize with me outside of work.

I propose in order to make it easier for people with disabilities to find social groups and make connections, there needs to be more awareness and an increase of resources. For example, using social media: let's create sites that offer social activities and networking connections for both children and adults with disabilities. Currently it feels like people only learn about these programs through word of mouth, which means it is very difficult for newcomers to know how to access them. The community should work together to spread awareness through platforms like Facebook and Instagram, to create opportunities for those looking to make connections.

If you live in Prince George or the surrounding area, and are interested in creating a network of likeminded folks, contact Chloe at c.gratton96@gmail.com.

70 Years of Impact

The Kinsmen Foundation of BC reaches a major milestone

By Marnie Essery



Recently we chatted with the Kinsmen Foundation's current Volunteer ED, Philip Jewell, about the rich history of the organization.

Can you share some highlights?

Philip: The Kinsmen Foundation of BC, along with the Kinsmen and Kinette Clubs of BC, have made significant contributions to improving the lives of people with disabilities in British Columbia. We have provided funding for the construction of accessible residences and research facilities, such as the Neurological Tower at U.B.C. and G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre. We also started and supported programs such as 'The Kids on The Block' and Technology for Independent Living (TIL), which provide education and assistive devices for people with disabilities. Additionally, during the Polio epidemic of the 50s and 60s, we provided funding for community and regional health centres throughout the province.

On a more personal note, I cherish a memory from 10 years ago when the Kinsmen received an inheritance and bequest and established the Legacy Fund in partnership with the Vancouver Foundation. I am pleased to say that every subsequent board since has made the decision to invest all bequests received into this fund, to continue generating income for the foundation.

What inspired you to become a volunteer with the Kinsmen?

Philip: 30 years ago, my family moved from the US to BC. I wanted to make a difference and meet people. I joined the Kinsmen, a community organization

organizing events such as Mothers' Marches, fishing derbies and golf tournaments, where I met Jim Watson, Past National President of Kinsmen and Director of the Foundation, who introduced me to Simon Cox, former ED of BCITS (now TFL), who also became a mentor.

Once, during a tour with Simon, I had the chance to see an iron lung and was deeply affected by the experience. During the polio epidemic, service clubs like the Kinsmen raised funds for this type of medical equipment. The Kinsmen later expanded to provide other medical and rehabilitation equipment, including braces and wheelchairs.

At some point I asked Simon: 'How should the Kinsmen decide what to invest in?' He responded: 'Go ask the people directly because while you might think it's important for them to get out the front door and catch a bus, they might think it's more important to get out the back door and smell the roses. That's why BCITS is successful. We are talking directly to our clients about their needs.'

Eventually Jim convinced me to run for the Board of the Kinsmen Foundation of BC. I am currently serving as the Volunteer Executive Director. Previously I have held the roles of Treasurer and Chairperson. The Kinsmen Foundation of BC does not have any office space or staff.

Guidelines and procedures for allocating funds to individuals

Philip: Applicants have to be at least 19 years of age, demonstrate a severe need, and an inability to acquire

the necessary equipment through other means. We fund a wide array of equipment from power wheelchairs to assistive technologies like Dragon speaking software.

Sometimes government funding may not cover everything you need. We often work with other non-profit organizations like BC Rehab Foundation, Cystic Fibrosis, Cerebral Palsy Association, Neil Squire Society, G.F. Strong and Technology for Living (TFL) to help bridge the gap and 'get you over the line.' Unfortunately, there's never enough money.

How do the Kinsmen fundraise?

Philip: Fundraising efforts vary by club/zone and benefit both local communities and the provincial Foundation. Due to COVID-19, fundraising events were cancelled for two years, including our annual major fundraiser, the golf tournament. But our clubs have bounced back, and we are very grateful for their amazing support.

Volunteering with the Kinsmen

Philip: I have made some lifelong friends. When you are engaged with your community and involved in joint projects you learn more about your community. I enjoy the camaraderie among volunteers. People feel good when they are helping others.

Thank you, Philip, for your time and congratulations to the Kinsmen Foundation of BC on reaching their 70th anniversary.

Visit [kinsmenfoundationofbc.ca](https://www.kinsmenfoundationofbc.ca) for more information.



Thumbs up for Cambie Gardens

By Benson Au

I am happy to share that the moves at Cambie Gardens are progressing smoothly. As a member of the joint team from TFL, VCH, and Connect, I am proud to be a part of this exciting project that is making a real difference in the lives of residents. We have been consistently moving one to two residents a week into their new homes and every week, the building becomes livelier and more vibrant.

I work as an assistive technologist with TFL. My role in this project is to install assistive technology for residents. We have been using Alexa and Google for window blind control and light control, and switchbots for bed control and other tasks such as turning on and off computers. Recently, I had the opportunity to set up a system that allows a family member of a resident to change the TV channels remotely, allowing them to watch TV together over video chat. It's things like this that make my work so fulfilling.

Each resident has a unique set of circumstances, which means we have the opportunity to work with individuals on finding creative solutions to overcome any issues that may arise. This makes every day a new adventure and is what gets me up in the morning, aside from Alexa triggering my alarm clock, of course!

A couple of weeks ago, I had the chance to sit down with one of the residents and hear about their new experience at Cambie Gardens. The resident was initially hesitant about the move but has since adjusted to life here. They are enjoying atmosphere, and many have expressed to me that they are optimistic about the future and the positive impact this change will have on their life.

Of course, I understand that making major changes in life can be worrisome, but I am honored to work with these pioneering residents who are embracing change and taking this step with so much courage. All residents are coming from the George Pearson Centre and were chosen by a lottery pick system last year. And while some may need more time than others to adjust, everyone has mentioned that the food is definitely better at Cambie Gardens.

Moving forward, I expect a continuous stream of moves throughout the next couple of months as we continue to pick up momentum. We have a fantastic group of people from TFL, VCH, and Connect who are working behind the scenes to ensure that the moves run as smoothly as possible. I am hopeful that we will have everyone moved into Cambie Gardens by Summer of 2023.

Currently, I am at Cambie Gardens as needed, which turns out to be usually once or twice a week. I have the pleasure of working with residents who I already know from my time with them at the George Pearson Centre. They have given me a list of items that they would like me to do for them in their new homes, which makes my job a lot easier. It's very efficient to work from a list so I know what to expect and what materials I may need before heading over to Cambie Gardens.

I will have more to share in the coming months. Stay tuned for updates on this project and the positive impact it is making on the lives of our residents at Cambie Gardens.

Creating a more inclusive world

A report from 'The Little People of America Conference'

By David Hill

In June 2022, I travelled to Spokane, Washington to attend the Little People of America (LPA) conference, a national event where people with short stature from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and parts of Europe come together to socialize and make connections.

There is typically a primary location, the host hotel resort, as well as opportunities for day trips and nighttime dancing.

Additionally, there is a lounge, known as the *Barty Room* or *Barty Lounge*, named in honour of the founder of the Little People of America event, Billy Barty. During the conference, attendees can also

explore and discover various products and vendors on display at an exposition. The event was originally created to ensure proper representation and a community for individuals of short stature, defined as those who are 4'10" or shorter, also known as dwarves or little people.

For individuals of short stature, having an accessible hotel or resort to stay at is essential for a comfortable and enjoyable experience. As someone with a disability or special needs, the availability of appropriate accommodations and equipment like stools, reach sticks, and special chairs, is of vital importance. The peace of mind that comes from knowing these things are taken care of, makes it possible for me to fully relax and enjoy my stay. This year, the Marriott Resort in Spokane, WA, ticked all those boxes and I had a great stay.

I arrived a day early and was accompanied by my care-assistant John and my best friend Kevin, who is from the North of British Columbia. The conference was a great opportunity for me to catch up with Kevin, who has a different type of dwarfism than I do.

I took the opportunity to visit the LPA merchant expo area during my stay and bumped into a friend of mine, Di-

anna Carda, who was representing a vitamin and nutrient company. I also had the opportunity to test out a chair that was specifically designed for individuals of short stature. It was very comfortable and had all the right adjustments. I was really impressed with the attention to detail that went into its design. It was wonderful to see so many products catering to the needs of individuals of short stature.

However, the highlight of the week for me was dancing and partying with my little people friends one night in the adult lounge and ballroom. While I don't remember the

exact songs that were played, I do recall that the majority of the music was from the 70s and 80s, perfect in my opinion to go crazy on the dance floor.

Sadly, on Tuesday, July 5, I started to show symptoms of Covid-19 and went to a testing centre the next day, where I tested positive. I was caught off guard and disappointed because it meant that I had to leave earlier than expected. I was also concerned about the other 60 people in my friend group who tested positive. While my experience with the virus was not pleasant, it wasn't as bad as I had feared (at least the particular Omicron variant). I experienced it like a bad seasonal influenza. It certainly wasn't a fun experience.

My illness lasted for about 2 weeks. I took two antigen tests at the end of the second week to make sure I was no longer positive for the virus. Thankfully, on July 21, I was not and could finally return to my normal activities. Overall, I had a great time at the conference, even though my experience was unfortunately cut short due to my Covid diagnosis. I am looking forward to the next conference this coming July when the LPA conference will be in Austin, Texas. I am definitely planning on going!



David Hill (r) & his friend Kevin (l) at the Little People of America Conference

Power Wheelchairs 2.0

The next generation of mobility is here

By Taylor Danielson

As I embark on my silver anniversary in the world of power wheelchairs, I would like to think of myself as an expert user. But let's be real here: while my driving experience might be in excess of tens of thousands of hours, I have only ever used five different power chairs. So, this article is a journey to discover some of the amazing new technology and designs the world of power wheelchairs has to offer.

Power wheelchairs come in three main formats: front-wheel-drive (the wheels are in front of the user), mid-wheel-drive (where the wheels are directly under the user), and rear-wheel-drive (the wheels are behind the user). Each style has its own advantages and disadvantages, making them suitable for different users and environments. Front-wheel-drive and rear-wheel-drive power wheelchairs typically offer superior stability, making them ideal for uneven terrain. Mid-wheel-drive power wheelchairs, on the other hand, have a smaller turning radius, making them ideal for indoor use and tight spaces where every centimeter counts.

The best way to figure out which drive style is right for you is to take a test drive. You wouldn't buy a car without test driving it first, the same should go for your power chair. If you're in the market for a new one, it's important to explore your options and try different styles. Don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone and try something new. For example, my first four wheelchairs were rear wheel drive chairs, perfect for me as a youth and all the adventures I had with my friends, offroading, pulling sleds or pushing go karts. However, as I've grown older and settled into a more sedentary lifestyle, I've found that a front wheel drive chair is more appropriate for me now where I am living a *boring* 9-to-5 adult lifestyle.

A bit of history

The first electric wheelchair was invented in the 1950s to help veterans returning from World War II. Inventor George Klein at the National Research Council of Canada realized that while manual chairs were suitable for those with paraplegia, those with quadriplegia would need a more advanced solution to restore their mobility. The first electric wheelchair was invented! It can be found today in the Canadian Science and Technology Museum in Ottawa. In the decades since its invention, power chair technology

has advanced significantly, giving users who rely on them for mobility a range of features that allow them to achieve greater independence, comfort, and mobility.

One of the most impactful innovations in power wheelchairs, in my opinion, is powered seating. It allows users to adjust their positioning independently. This can include tilting the seat backwards, which is particularly useful for relieving pressure. More advanced chairs have mechanized seating options, which can include reclining, elevating the feet and elevating the entire seating system, raising the user an additional 30 cm (12 inches). Another feature that could be worth looking into is "power standing" which allows the user to stand upright. While these features may seem like the fancy upgrades your dad looks for in his new recliner for his man cave, they can be medically necessary and greatly improve the quality of life for many users.



Taylor demonstrating the "power standing" mode.

Many power wheelchair users, myself included, can spend hours in their chair every day, without being able to readjust their positioning themselves which can put them at risk of developing pressure sores, a nightmare situation for wheelchair users everywhere. Through reclining, tilting, adjusting foot position, and for those who can, standing, users can independently achieve greater comfort by reconfiguring their seated position as needed throughout the day. These seating options not only provide functional

benefits but also social ones, particularly the standing and elevated seating options: users are able to interact with people and the world around them at eye level, rather than looking up. My current power chair has elevated seating which allows me to raise up to the eye level of someone who is 5'8" and I will never forget the profound feeling of satisfaction I felt the first time I used it in public while navigating IKEA. Instead of being lost in the crowd, I was part of it.

Meet Genny



The power chairs we've discussed so far are what I would consider "typical," but with innovation has come many styles of power chairs in a variety of different and unique form factors. One of the most interesting of these is Genny (gennymobility.com/en), a two-wheeled self-balancing power wheelchair. Imagine a power wheelchair combined with a Segway that looks like it just rolled off the Ferrari factory line, that's Genny, the brainchild of inventor entrepreneur Paulo Badano. His goal from the beginning was to overcome the mobility limitations of four-wheeled chairs and improve their "aesthetically questionable" design.

This novel design is about more than just looks. For people whom Genny is appropriate for, it boasts physical benefits as the abdominal muscles are subtly, constantly engaged as the body naturally adjusts its center of gravity with the chair's movement. This also forces the user to maintain proper posture. Genny can be compacted into a cube, making it easy to transport in most vehicles. The two-wheeled design also excels where traditional wheelchairs, both powered and manual, usually get stuck: sand, snow, and gravel.

And there were none



We've talked about wheelchairs with four wheels and two wheels, but what about no wheels? Introducing TrackMaster (trackmastermobility.com), a powered wheelchair that utilizes tracks to enable unparalleled all-terrain mobility. Snow, sand, gravel, mud? Not a problem for TrackMaster! This chair means business. The most impressive specification of this chair, in my mind, is its ability to submerge itself into up to 30 cm (12 inches) of water. I highly advise not to try that with your current power wheelchair, trust me, and please don't ask how I know this.

I can see the TrackMaster being an invaluable mobility tool for people who live in cold climates with regular, deep snow. While I do love my front-wheel drive chair, I must admit its flaws include poor performance in snow, leaving me trapped indoors whenever we get a light dusting.

A SMART chair



I would be remiss if I didn't mention a wheelchair that integrates SMART technology. There are a few options, with the most notable being the WHILL Model C2 (whill.inc/us/whill-model-c2/). As far as I know, it is one of two power wheelchairs with its own app. Through the app,

you can view total mileage, distance traveled, battery level, change settings, and, most intriguingly, control and drive the wheelchair remotely. Imagine being able to open your phone and instruct your wheelchair to come to wherever you are. That's possible with the Model C2. While it's not an all-terrain vehicle like the TrackMaster, it does integrate unique "omni-wheels" which allow the user to climb obstacles up to 5 cm (2 inches) in height.

Hello Scewo BRO



You might be wondering where can we possibly go from self-balancing chairs and chairs with tracks? What about a combination of all these technologies? The Scewo BRO (scewo.com/en) is an advanced power wheelchair that combines various technologies to offer unparalleled mobility. It is perhaps the most advanced power wheelchair available on the market thanks to its ability to overcome the bane of wheelchair users everywhere: stairs. With its deployable tracks, the chair can climb stairs at a rate of 30 stairs per minute and surmount obstacles up to 20 cm in height. This feature is particularly beneficial for wheelchair users as stairs, curbs, raised surfaces, and uneven terrain can be significant barriers to mobility. The ability to navigate these obstacles without the need for ramps, elevators, or a team of strong people to lift and carry the chair makes the Scewo BRO a game-changer for individuals. This feature can lead to a significant improvement in quality of life, particularly for those living in places where accessibility is a low priority or in older cities and countries where accessibility was not a concern during construction.

And the winner is...

Out of all the advanced power wheelchairs discussed, for me personally the Scewo BRO is a winner. Its ability to climb stairs, the number 1 obstacle I come across in my daily life is a game-changer for me as a wheelchair user. It means I can navigate the environment more freely without the barriers of stairs and uneven terrain. But it's worth noting that this decision is based on my personal lifestyle and the environment I live in. In an urban area with moderate climate, the BRO is the perfect fit for me. However, if I lived in a place with heavy snow-fall like northern British Columbia, the TrackMaster with its all-terrain capabilities would be a better fit.

It's important to keep in mind that the availability of these power wheelchairs may vary depending on the region. BRO is currently only available in select European countries. But all other power wheelchairs mentioned are available here in BC.

You know best

Choosing a new wheelchair is a fundamentally personal decision that will have a significant impact on your life for the next few years. It's essential to take the time to explore all of your options and carefully evaluate which one is the best fit for your unique lifestyle. Reflecting on my own experiences, I've come to realize that my first four power chairs, all of which were rear wheel drive models, may not have been the best choices for me. In retrospect, I believe that only the first three were suitable for my needs. In the past, I've made the mistake of settling for less-than-ideal power chairs, as I didn't fully understand how to navigate the sales process and protect my own interests. Now, I know that it's essential to arm myself with knowledge and ask the right questions to ensure I am getting the perfect chair for me. Remember, you know yourself best and you are your own strongest advocate. Don't be afraid to ask questions, do your research, and understand your needs to make an informed decision and ensure that your next power wheelchair is exactly what you need to live your life to the fullest.

Bring your idea to life

Do you have a practical problem related to a physical disability that you wish someone would solve?

Spend some time brainstorming possible solutions with students as part of our annual Simon Cox Student Design Competition (SCSDC).

The competition is all about creating solutions to overcome obstacles. Participation and inclusion of all people is essential to a healthy and vibrant society.

For more info go to simoncoxcompetition.com/peers/ or contact tdanielson@technologyforliving.org with your idea!

The SIMON COX

8th STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION

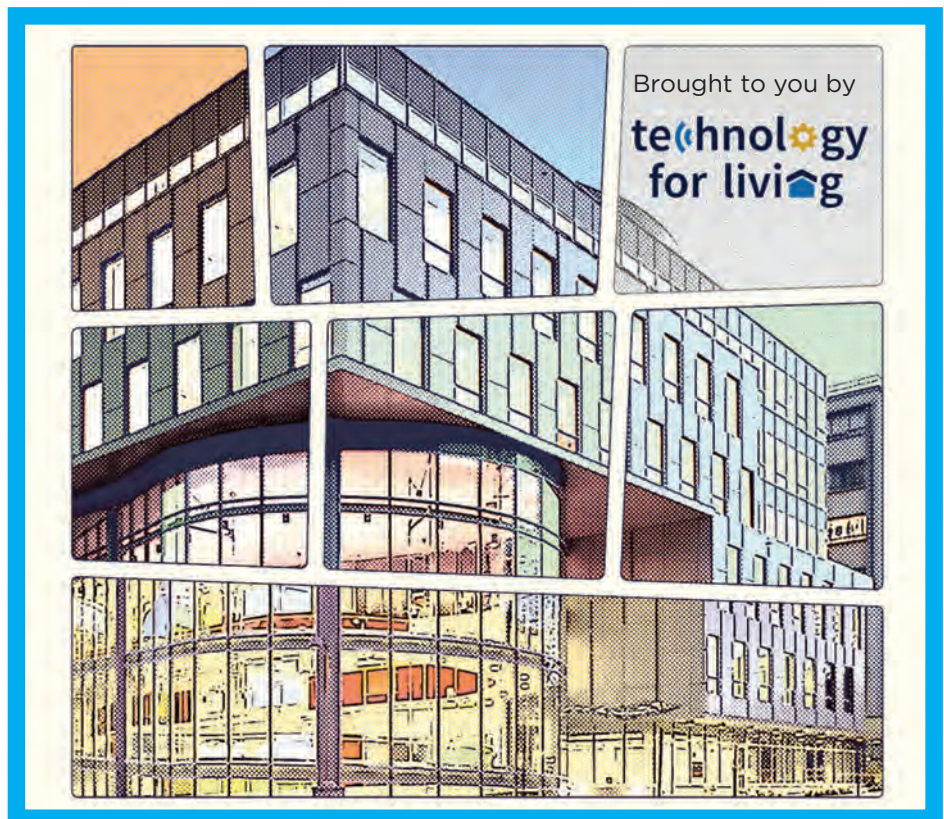
April 29, 2023

Join us between 11AM – 3PM

Awards announcements at 1PM
for this year's winning entries

Blusson Spinal Cord Centre

818 W 10th Ave, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9



Technology for Living, the proud host of this prestigious and innovative annual competition, is inviting you to join us for our signature event, showcasing assistive technologies developed by students and people with disabilities.

To RSVP & other info: info@simoncoxcompetition.com

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