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# Imagine!

## At Its Best, Music is Medicine

Contributed by Asya Melville, Support Worker, Can-Do

Tom's love for music and his innate rhythm skills are well known to all who get the privilege to walk alongside him. Tom was a key player in The posAbilities House Band Friday Jams at Suna Studios (circa 2016-2019). Indie rock/pop punk song hooks written with the founding team members and his peers still get sung at Can-Do today – "Tom hates the library!" or "Tom loves the waterslides!"

I had the pleasure of working with Tom this past year at Can-Do as he played percussion instruments along to click tracks and musical favorites and participated in Curiko's online Music Therapy with Emily Brown. But it was clear that he was ready for a stretch of his musical talent. Drum lessons!

Tom got a set of his own noise cancelling headphones and was ready to meet his new drum teacher and start his lessons at Rufus Drum Shop. Tom received an anonymous donation to get started and has continued to receive support for part of his lessons. Tom as well has started to independently pay for one bi-weekly

lesson! This will make his music therapy and progression as a drummer more sustainable moving forward.

Tom's know-how with call and response drumming speaks volumes. He's learning how to play with limb independence, full body coordination, foot pedals and different drum sticks. He's working on rhythm studies, dynamics, call and response playing with his teacher... all while playing the music he loves. Some favorites so far: Led Zeppelin, Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, Johnny Cash, and Black Sabbath! Tom lights up while playing – fully engaged on every level.

When he's behind the drum kit after his lessons, he often has a huge smile on his face and exclaims, "MUSIC!" Tom's teacher at Rufus Drum Shop, Tristan (@tristandrums), shares: "Music is the greatest, most powerful gift that we have been given and my time with Thomas only proves that. Seeing him react to the sound coming through his headphones is the highlight of my week."

Our community partners at [The Rockin' Cowboy Clothing Company](#) and [International Motorsports](#) chose Tom to be the recipient of the proceeds from this year's Motolifestyle Spring Revival Market fundraiser on May 7, 2022. "Tom is resilient and ingenious. He uses the tools he has, including his keen sense of rhythm - to communicate through the universal language of music. Tom works hard in his lessons and catches on quick. To keep growing, Tom needs his own drum kit." Dan – [@rockin\\_cowboy\\_clothing\\_company](#)

Tom took in the day's festivities by getting a fresh barber cut from [@realbarbergraham](#), dancing and enjoying live music by [@theunbrandedband](#), [@emmettjeromemusic](#) and [@claytonbellamy](#). Tom socialized at the outdoor market with the best, and took in all the Spring Revival had to offer – including indulging in a post-birthday brownie from [@brownie.bakers](#).

Were funds raised to get Tom his own electric drum kit?! There was never any doubt. That's him in the cover photo behind his new kit hooked up by Rufus Drum Shop – [@rufusdrumshop](#). Dan shares, "If Tom's beats don't get your toes tapping - check your pulse. This project continues to put a big smile on my face every time it comes to mind - and I know there are legions of us who feel the same. Special shout out to Asya - catalyst behind the whole deal - 10 out of 10 - recommend, big time."

Continued on Page 2



Photo Credit: Dan – [@rockin\\_cowboy\\_clothing\\_company](#)

Do you have a story for our quarterly newsletter or website?

Email: [communications@posAbilities.ca](mailto:communications@posAbilities.ca) or call 778-945-3344.



posAbilities.ca



Photo credit: Milton Stille – @darkenergyindustries

## At Its Best, Music is Medicine

Continued from Page 1

A BIG thank you to our community partners: The Rockin' Cowboy Clothing Company and International Motorsports for backing Tom with his musical development and engagement. He will keep playing loud! This is truly an example of community supporting community.

Gratitude from the Can-Do crew, for the support of Tom's mother, his staff team at WJS-Cornerstone, Claire at PLAN Lifetime Advocacy Network and our posAbilities Communications team.



## Artist Registration Open for INCLUSION Art Show

We're back! Our 18th Annual INCLUSION Art Show & Sale is just around the corner and we're excited for you to join us. This year marks our first hybrid show – both in-person and online. We recognize that people have different comfort levels at this time, so we welcome you to join us in-person or from the comfort of your home.

- **In-person show**  
October 6, 10:30am - 7:30pm | Heritage Hall, Vancouver
- **Online show**  
October 6-13

If you are or know of an artist with diverse abilities, join us in spreading the word that registration is open! Artists of all ages are encouraged to register as independents or through the agencies that support them. You can register for the in-person show, online show or both! **Deadline: September 9.**

Register here: [www.inclusionartshow.com](http://www.inclusionartshow.com)



## Stage Door Returns with Medieval Production

This spring, the Stage Door crew returned to the stage to perform another skit-style comedy hit called "Stage Door Goes Medieval". Lords and ladies witnessed the live scenes of jousting, jesters, and medieval medicine mixed with video skits of wizards, knights and maidens. Audience member, Monique, shares: "Being close amongst old friends was a huge treat. As the actors did their thing, we laughed until we cried - just like usual!"

Director, Don House, was thrilled to be back in action: "After going through a pandemic, doing a live show has renewed our original creative purpose. Having the whole cast and crew working together again has a magic all its own. We also had some new cast members that were performing for the very first time. We're thrilled to be back and laughing again!"

# Shoreline Cleanup Challenge

Contributed by **Montgomery House**

This year, we decided to do the Shoreline Cleanup as a project for our Red Pod! April Carmody talked about it in one of our monthly Pod meetings, so I checked out the site and was impressed with how easy this could be set up.

I picked a spot on the map that I thought would be easy for our team to access with wheelchairs and walkers. Stephanie Hamilton, April Carmody, Nola Boivin, Kelly Ternes, Ron Walberg, Shirley Meeker and the folks from our programs all arrived. Everyone was in a good mood and ready to do a cleanup in our community!

We all took a different path and foraged the woods for garbage. It felt good to hear people laughing and talking together again after we had been closed off from one another for the last two years.

The cleanup took about an hour and I was surprised at how competitive we were with how much garbage we each collected! If there had been a prize, Stephanie Hamilton and Ron Walberg would have won for the most garbage picked up... good job! We collected 36.3 lbs of garbage and most of that was recyclable.

I want to challenge other Pods to try this and see if you can pick up more than 36.3 lbs of garbage! Visit: [www.shorelinecleanup.org](http://www.shorelinecleanup.org)



## Connecting Through Culture

Contributed by **Maverick Todd, Special Projects Worker**

I had the pleasure of sitting down with Christian, Nina, Justin, Justin, MJ, Paolo, and Nathan, who are a part of the Filipino Club. They met during the COVID-19 pandemic and are based out of [Building Caring Communities \(BCC\)](#). The group consists of 10 members and they are also joined by other community members for some of their in-person activities. The Filipino Club formed naturally through Facebook Messenger and has been around for over a year. Nathan, a BCC team member, explains, "we started posting food in the group, would have Zoom meetings, and eventually met up and started doing activities in-person. Our group blossomed like a flower, COVID separated a lot of people, and the in-person connection isn't there online. This connection, you can be online but you're always looking forward to meeting up in person".

Ever since the group met in person, they've done activities like playing basketball, eating together, and creating a t-shirt with the Canadian maple leaf and Filipino colors inside of it. The Filipino Club collaborated on a design for a t-shirt that incorporates Canada, the Canadian maple leaf, and the colours of the Philippines flag. The t-shirt was made for volunteer work and symbolizes the connection between Canada and the Philippines. The t-shirt represents unity for the club, "we can all wear it together and it represents our club. We also got a discount from Justin's work", says Nina, a BCC team member through BACI. Nina is also happy that the group started informally and grew organically, "it's nice that Nathan and I can step away from organizing stuff and the group members plan things themselves".

Some of their favourite restaurants are Jollibee, Pampanga's Cuisine, and Max's Restaurant. One of the most memorable activities for the group was going to one of their favourite restaurants, "we all took our first bite at the same time. I could see that we all felt like we were back in the Philippines and it showed through the food", says Nina. Feeling like you're back in the Philippines is what makes this group so special, "it's so natural, they understand each other's jokes, as they're from the same culture. It makes you feel at home with the group", says Nathan. When asked the best part about being in the Filipino Club, MJ said she "enjoys playing the most and hanging out with everyone". Justin (2) also added that he "enjoys meeting online and in-person". Additionally, Justin (1) shared the best part about being in the Club was "getting back into speaking the language. I spoke Filipino and then stopped because I had to learn English".

The group says they want to start doing volunteer work in the community, "we want to volunteer, we want more opportunities to volunteer", says Christian. The Burnaby Neighbourhood House Food Bank expressed interest in having the group help them out. In addition, they've connected with United Way to volunteer with their program at the airport by greeting Ukrainians as they enter Canada.

This summer will be full of adventures and creating new memories. The community is opening up and they're excited to be out there. MJ's birthday is coming up, so the group will celebrate that. In addition, Christian shared he would like to go go-karting, while Paolo looks forward to going paintballing. The Club aims to join a larger community and connect with other Filipinos in the Greater Vancouver area. If you're interested, join their [Facebook group here!](#)

## The 'Come Outside!' BBQ Celebration

Contributed by **Rebecca Leckie, Team Leader**

Thank you to New Britton for hosting such a lovely BBQ! We were happy to see that all the Goodlad residents joined us as well. It was fun to see Michael trying to shoot everyone with water and great to get everyone out of the house. We learned that the AHA soda water "tastes like coke" according to Surinder. Thank you all for your work with the BBQ!







## Celebrating Pride

June is here, which means it's Pride Month! It's a celebration of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities and a reminder that our communities are stronger when we come together and recognize the contributions of everyone. We also see this as a time to acknowledge the diverse range of experiences that people with disabilities bring to the LGBTQ+ community and vice versa. At the intersection of these identities, people still face unique challenges. However, more and more, these rarely-heard voices are finding new audiences. We featured a few people sharing their stories on our blog last year: [Queer and Disabled Artists and Activists to Know](#)

As we celebrate Pride in June and the months to come, it's important to make these spaces accessible and inclusive. Autism BC has a great article on [Creating Inclusive Queer Spaces](#) where autistic people can be authentically themselves. Taking steps to ensure neurodivergent folks and people with disabilities can fully participate is essential. We bring our whole selves to any space we're in, whether it's a large community event or small gathering.

### Queer Peer Support

Looking for a place to hang out with peers, make friends, or find support?

**Qmunity** is BC's queer, trans, and Two-Spirit resource centre—hosts a number of peer groups. Among these is Autistic Queer Peers. The group meets on Zoom on the 2nd Wednesday of every month. It's a safe space for friendly discussions in a low-social-pressure environment.

**Chronically Queer** is a bi-monthly Zoom event for LGBTQ+ people who are neurodivergent, chronically ill, and/or disabled. It's a peer-facilitated support group. People can share personal stories/feelings, listen as others share their experiences, and learn coping strategies in an encouraging and caring environment without fear of judgment.

**Real Talk** hosts conversations about dating, love, relationships and sex for adults with cognitive disabilities. Each month, they host Zoom hangouts facilitated by a certified sexual health educator. Sometimes they host special events aimed at people under the LGBTQ umbrella. They also have a series of videos all about [sexual orientation and gender identity](#).

Real Talk is hosting an [LGBTQ in-person hangout on Tuesday, July 26 from 1 -3pm](#). Join them in New Westminster, enjoy some casual snacks, watch some Real Talk videos, and participate in the conversation.

### Celebrate Pride in your Community!

Burnaby | [Burnaby Pride](#): July 23, 12-5pm, Civic Square

Coquitlam | [Pride in PoCo](#): July 23, 11-6pm, location TBD

Kamloops | [Kamloops Pride](#): June Pride events and ongoing monthly events

Maple Ridge | [PLEA'S Pride Picnic in the Park](#): July 16, 11-3pm, Memorial Peace Park

New West | [Street Festival](#): August 13, 3-8pm, Columbia Street

Vancouver | [Vancouver Pride Events](#) and [Vancouver Pride Parade](#): July 31, 12-3pm, downtown Vancouver

Victoria | [Victoria Pride Festival](#): June 23-July 2, various locations

White Rock | [White Rock Pride Family Day](#): July 23, 11-5pm, Mirimar Plaza

For more Pride events across BC, check out [What's On Queer BC](#).

## Community Garden Accessibility Toolkit



## CYDI Community Garden Accessibility Toolkit

Are you looking at finding ways to make community gardens more physically accessible? The Public Health Association of BC's Can You Dig It program launched a Community Garden Accessibility Toolkit as an easy-to-use guide for garden coordinators.

The purpose of the Community Garden Accessibility Toolkit is to explore how Universal Design principles can be applied to the physical, built environment in community gardens. It provides an easy-to-use guide for garden coordinators to develop more physically accessible gardens.

This toolkit was made in partnership with the City of Victoria and through a Whole Cities grant. Access the toolkit here: <https://bit.ly/3ygtxxp>

## Introducing Link! Safety, Relationships and Sexuality



We are pleased to announce our brand-new website for Link! Check out the site here: [www.linksrs.ca](http://www.linksrs.ca)

The Link! SRS curriculum developed by posAbilities, provides adapted and tailored sexual health education to individuals of all ages and their supporters. Our Certified Sexual Health Educators empower a person's exploration of sexuality in a safe and healthy manner. Link! SRS focuses on topics such as: puberty, public versus private settings, sexual health rights, online safety, relationships, sex and the law, and more.

We also provide training to parents, guardians, other members of their support networks, school teams, home share providers, staff and managers. Our topics are customized to meet the needs of the whole team.

Feel free to get in touch if you have any questions!

## Exploring Disability Justice at the Inclusion BC Conference Everybody Belongs!

Contributed by **Alicia Neptune, Communications Specialist**

In May, the 2022 Inclusion BC conference *Everybody Belongs!* brought people together for three days of learning, discussion, and celebration. The conference, co-hosted by UNITI and the Self Advocates of Semiahmoo, provided the opportunity to gather in person at long last. It was easy to see by the smiles, hugs, and high fives that everyone was grateful to be together again.

The themes of inclusion, diversity, belonging, and collaboration were present in this year's keynote presentations and breakout sessions. Discussions also tackled big questions, like "Why aren't people with disabilities leading their movement?" and "How can we create systemic change?"

Among this year's keynote speakers was Sarah Jama, a community organizer and co-founder of the Disability Justice Network of Ontario. In her keynote, Sarah talked about her experience as a disabled person and her journey toward getting involved in disability justice. She spoke about being at university and sitting on student council—literally having a seat at the table—and still not being heard.

Rather than needing a seat at a specific table, Sarah began to feel heard and empowered to create change when she started signing up for clubs and meeting new people from diverse backgrounds. She found that their issues were all connected. Coming together and creating new community based on their shared needs made them a stronger, unified voice. Sarah's current work is about taking a closer look at the existing oppressive structures of our society and how we can move toward real justice for all.

The last of the 12 "stretches" outlined in *The Trampoline Effect: Redesigning Our Social Safety Nets* is a shift from focusing on rights to culture. At one point in her keynote, Sarah described disability advocacy as "stuck in the 90s," focused on disability rights without interrogating systemic issues, like the impact of capitalism. Without understanding the underlying causes of disability issues, inclusion can only take us so far.

In Sarah's own words: "You don't need a seat at a specific table—you need to understand where people are coming from and how all our issues connect." At the core of disability justice is one truth: we're stronger together.



## My First University Experience

Contributed by **Roshni Kashyap**

I have taken a lot of interesting courses at different colleges, but it was always my dream to attend the University of British Columbia (UBC). Thanks to the STEPS Forward program who helped to make my dream come true! On getting to know that I got accepted at UBC, I was nervous and excited at the same time. But the second I was on campus, I fell in love with it like "wow, I am studying here!" The facilitators I had were helpful and informative when it came to my classwork - they were always there to help me.

The years passed by so quickly and a lot changed at UBC, but I always enjoyed myself on campus, it just felt so amazing. I worked in a coffee shop on campus called Loafe Cafe, where I prepped food in the kitchen. I made friends on campus and the Cafe became my favourite hangout spot. I also volunteered at the radio station called CiTR 101.9FM which was fun. I quickly knew my way around the campus like the back of my hand!

My biggest highlights at UBC were just being on campus and getting involved. I made new friends, participated in UBC improv, worked on campus and even took night classes! I used to take public transit to my classes and wouldn't get home sometimes until close to midnight.

Five years goes by so fast! I celebrated my graduation by going on two road trips with my family - I felt on the top of the world having so much fun. My upcoming plans for now are getting a part-time job and going from there. I'm interested in working in the hospitality, film and/or theatre industry. I am excited to join the workforce and be part of the real world. Make friends, make money, and do good.





# Global Conversations About Shared Living

Over the past few months, *posAbilities* has been working with colleagues at the New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation and other non-profit organizations to create an international gathering to celebrate shared living. The two-day event via Zoom will dig deeply into the richness of life sharing through storytelling.

Discussions will centre on themes like values, relationships and systems. Listen to lived experiences across the globe and reflections by thought leaders including former Shared Lives Plus CEO - Alex Fox (UK), and BC's own Aaron Johannes-Rosenberg and Shelley Nessman.

Requests for Presentations (RFP) are currently being accepted. To learn more about conference themes and to express your interest, please visit [the RFP page](#) or [contact us](#).



disability  
without  
poverty

le handicap  
sans  
pauvreté

## Turning Bill C-22 Into The Canada Disability Benefit Act

By Amanda Lockitch

### How does a bill become law in Canada?

On June 2, 2022, the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) had its first reading in the House of Commons (HOC). On June 13th, with roughly 10 sitting days left before parliament adjourns for summer break, the leaders of over 75 stakeholder organizations put forth a letter to government requesting that Bill C-22 (CDB) be called for its second reading before this adjournment. The second reading will enable C-22 to move to its assigned Standing Committee and then onto the rest of the legislative process. The hope is that the CDB can progress in a timely manner because people are in desperate need of help now.

While Bill C-22 has reached the first important step of being tabled, many working age people with disabilities living in Canada are asking why their dinner plates are still empty at the end of each month. We are seeing increasing accounts of people taking the drastic step of applying for Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD) simply because they can't make ends meet. How long will it take the CDB to reach the pocketbooks of people in need?

Saskatchewan Senator Brent Cotter and Greg McMeekin, Alberta's Advocate for Persons with Disabilities, held a webinar moderated by the Co-Chair of Disability Without Poverty, Michelle Hewitt, to explain the process of how a bill becomes law in Canada and answer questions that have arisen about this process. Below is an overview of that process.

### The House of Commons

In this case, the CDB was introduced into the HOC. Once past its first reading and tabled, it must go through a second reading, where it undergoes debate and a vote on its principles. Then it moves to its Standing Committee.

### Consideration in Committee

Witnesses and experts are invited to the committee to examine the implications of the proposal. They look at how to improve it, what might need to be added or taken away. They review it, clause by clause, and eventually report back to the HOC. In this case the committees will

examine over 20 regulations to make sure they fit the letter of the bill as introduced. For example, Bill C-22, as introduced, speaks to a benefit for people of working age. That means if anywhere it includes minors or seniors as entitled to the benefit, they are 'out of bounds' and cannot remain in this particular bill. Once every regulation and every aspect of the bill has been approved by its committee, it is reported back, to the HOC and receives its third reading.

### The Senate

Then it goes through a similar process from first to third read in the Senate.

Once the exact same version passes through both the HOC and the Senate it obtains Royal Assent from the Governor General. It passes into law by Coming into Force at the discretion of the Governor in Council. It changes from Bill C-22 to the Canada Disability Benefit Act.

### Where We Stand Today

At this time, the HOC has risen for the summer break. While Bill-C22 did not receive a second reading, we are hopeful it will be picked up quickly again in the fall. We encourage you shake hands with your local MPs when you see them out and about this summer and keep the pressure on regarding the Canada Disability Benefit. As too many people living in Canada are aware: poverty doesn't take a break for summer.

### What Can You Do?

#### Meet/Call/Email your MP

Write to your local MP today using [Disability Without Poverty and March of Dimes Canada's tool](#), which sends an email to your MP in just a few clicks!

Over 1,650 of you have written to your MP's to let them know how important it is to move people with disabilities out of poverty. We must continue to make sure the Canadian Disability Benefit remains a national priority.