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Imagine!

So, How's Your Flourishing Going?

**Contributed by Gord Tulloch, Director of Innovation
and Co-Author of "The Trampoline Effect"**

It's a crazy world. A hard world, sometimes.
Occasionally impossible.

Yet always beautiful. Breathtakingly so.

And yet despite the miracle of life, how often do we find ourselves with our heads down, plowing through our day-to-day until we are suddenly surprised to realize a month has passed, a year, a decade? So many things demanding our attention. So many to-dos. How did we come to forget ourselves?

And how do we remember, again?

The community living sector began with a dream that people would leave institutions and discover their full potential, living good lives in welcoming communities—just like everybody else. Turns out it's not so easy, especially where stigma and ableism prevail, and where one is caught up in systems that focus on deficits rather than potential.

When it comes to professional supports, our sector has spent a lot of resources on safety and security, and for good reason. The result is a lot of training,

policies and procedures, and routines around these things. It is past time to turn our attention to the original vision of our sector, and to the most fundamental of questions—*what does it mean to "live fully" or "to flourish"?* And, what must we do to become springboards for someone else's flourishing?

We usually answer the first question with responses like 'friends and family,' 'belonging,' 'self-determination,' 'employment,' and the like. Yes—and, there are many other critical elements such as beauty, purpose, hope, creativity, reflection, learning, laughter and love. Such things can't be "programmatized" – they occur in moments, often catching us unawares. They also don't take place between a "staff" and a "person served" or between a "manager" and a "front line staff" or between a "professional" and a "family member," they occur between two people who, for a moment, anyways, have transcended their roles and are encountering one another on equal terms: as beings in the world. As presences.

How do we create settings that can lead to more moments like those? What can we learn from Elders, psychologists, cognitive scientists, philosophers, artists, poets, and others? How do we glean wisdom from religious traditions and cultural worldviews that have been grappling with the meaning of human life and fulfillment for millennia? And just as importantly, how do we apply that learning to our workplace(s)?

We see this as more than a professional obligation; it's a human one. Just as we have a duty to ourselves to live fully, which we can neglect for oh-so-many reasons, we have a duty to support others to live fully, especially those for whom we have some

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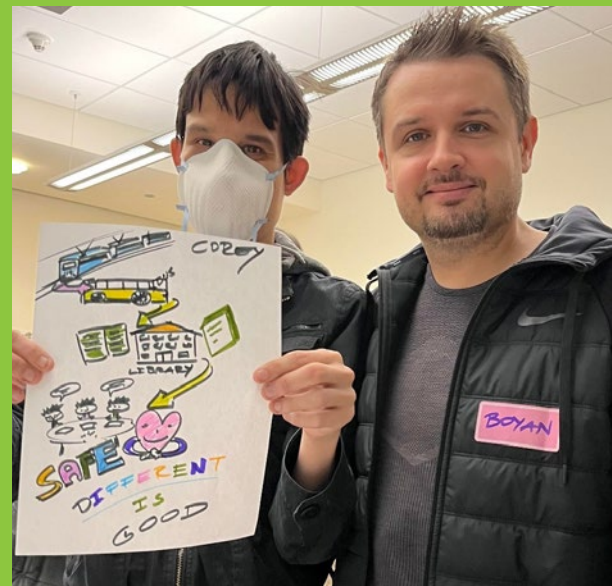


Do you have a story for our quarterly newsletter or website?

Email: communications@posAbilities.ca or call 778-945-3344.



posAbilities.ca



So, How's Your Flourishing Going?

Continued from Page 1

formal responsibility. And in a world filled with distraction, and which seems increasingly intent on tearing down anyone who doesn't look or think a certain way, this obligation is especially important to affirm.

Which means, we're entering a different kind of territory. We can't prescribe the production of moments—it's something we must all be open to participating in, whether by freely offering and receiving the gift of encounter, or by being willing to be caught by surprise and to fall into such moments.

How do we become an intentional assortment of people who, even with different backgrounds and beliefs, and though indwelling different roles within the organization, can still nourish one another? How do we "set the table" so that meaningful moments and encounters become more abundant, so that we become a place where there is more room for everyone's project of being—for joy, connection, beauty, meaning, and making sense of suffering?

In short, how does *posAbilities* become a house of human flourishing?

That's what we want to become over the next few years, and we'll really need your help to figure it out.

If you'd like to share a comment, curiosity or idea related to Gord's story, please send us an email to flourishing@posAbilities.ca or message us on social media at @posAbilitiesCA. Details about *posAbilities*' first "Festival of Flourishing" will follow soon...



posAbilities would like to thank our broad diversity of employees and stakeholders for their valuable contributions towards the development of our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. The board of directors, senior leadership, management, employees, persons served and their families all participated in strategic planning sessions, helping us chart a clear and strong path forward towards our vision of Good and Full Lives, for Everyone. How do we help people to flourish and to thrive? How do we help them to lead full lives—connected to others, participating in community life, and building resilience?



SIXPO Festival

What is SIXPO?

SIXPO ("Sexuality, Inclusion, and Exploration Expo") is the city's first ever sexuality conference about the experiences of people with disabilities.

They're excited to bring you events and activities to educate and discuss on topics related to sexual wellness and disability. There'll be panels, speakers, and plenty of opportunities to socialize. Whether these types of conversations are brand new for you, or you're confident in discussing sexuality, they'll have events for you!

Who is SIXPO for?

SIXPO is for folks who want to learn more about sexuality and especially for folks with lived experience of disability and their support. Whether you have never gone on a date, or you feel like you are a sexual expert, SIXPO is for you! Wherever you are in your relationship to sexuality, that is where you are supposed to be. We can all learn and explore a little more about sexuality, so come join!

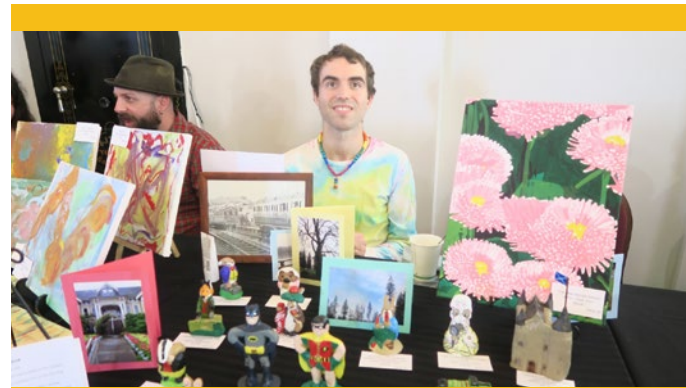
When is SIXPO?

Virtual: April 1-19 at www.sixpo.ca

In-person: April 20-22 at Heritage Hall (3102 Main Street, Vancouver)

Cost: By Donation

For more information, follow them on social - [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)



posAbilities and Open Door Group Proudly Present the 19th Annual INCLUSION Art Show

This year marks our 19th year of celebration and we're excited to host another hybrid show – both online and in-person. We'd love to see you in person on Thursday, October 12 at Heritage Hall in Vancouver or you can join us from the comfort of your home and check out our online show.

Artist registration opens in June

All artists with diverse abilities are welcome to register their paintings, pottery, glasswork, photography and more!

To join our registration list, email: artshow@posAbilities.ca



"Wacky Dress" by Karolina Wera

Stars Shimmering in the Dark

Stars Shimmering in the Dark is an art show inspired by hope. Over the past few months, the artists from Alternative Creations Studio created beautiful artworks inspired by hope, what it means to them, and what they are hopeful for. To explore the concept of hope, they looked to nature and its changing seasons, from dark winter to brighter spring days. The art on display celebrates their favourite things, representing their joy and dreams.

When: Exhibition runs until April 29th
Where: Britannia Community Centre (art gallery located in the library) at 1661 Napier Street, Vancouver
Gallery Hours: Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays (9am-6pm), Tuesdays & Wednesdays (9am-9pm), Sundays (1-5pm)

About the Studio

Alternative Creations Studio has been enriching the lives of artists, their families, and the broader community since 2013. It supports artists with developmental disabilities, showcasing their unique perspectives, interests, and creative strengths. The studio is located in East Vancouver and provides the opportunity for artists to express themselves creatively while refining their skills. Check out the studio's website at <https://alternativesart.ca> to





Buckingham Celebrates the Holidays

*Contributed by
Katherine Tionson, Team Leader*

Buckingham House celebrated the holidays in style. Check out these photos from their holiday themed party. Buckingham would also like to welcome Theresa Poitras to the team!

Spreading Love One Card at a Time

Contributed by Sofiya Lim, Communications Specialist

Can-Do is a program where people connect, volunteer, and become involved in the community. With big hearts and 15 members strong, the collective took on a mission of spreading love this February. Each year, the group makes cards for various occasions, and this time they decided to do something special for Valentine's Day, sharing their love with Fair Haven Homes Society and putting a smile on its residents' faces.



More Youth with Developmental Disabilities Get Help Finding Work

Contributed by Raman Manhas, Project Lead, posAbilities Employment Service

Do you want to find a job but don't know where to start? The B.C. government is providing a \$2-million provincial grant that will help more youth (ages 16-19) with developmental disabilities find work! As part of the IMPACT initiative, posAbilities Employment Service (PES) is grateful for this support, as it's been a fantastic program for youth with solid results. [Read the news release here.](#)

"We're excited to participate in this collaborative research project. As a specialized employment service, this initiative allows us to provide youth with the knowledge, tools and experiences to be better prepared for their future careers." – Kalena Kavanaugh, Manager, PES.

Over the past three years, we've run three cohorts with 253 participants. We're excited to share that youth have demonstrated statistically significant increases in nine of the 11 employment domains (MAS): Time Expectations, Organization, Authority, Teamwork, Perseverance, Responsibility, Mindfulness, Self-Awareness, and Personal Appearance. Results also indicate that this initiative improved participants' unique strengths, interests and confidence about their employment and work skills.

Some of the youth shared their experiences with us:

"Provides a huge impact on my life, teaches you a lot about how to live as an adult. Very useful information."

"I really enjoyed meeting new people, learning how to find a job and preparing for interviews."

"I liked the ice breakers, meeting new people and having games day!"

Parents also expressed their appreciation:

"This has been the best experience for my son. He feels good, he's more confident and happier. I'm glad this program exists for kids with disabilities!"

"This experience was invaluable for my son. He learned a lot and enjoyed communicating."

We're thrilled to see these results and the impacts they've made. We look forward to our next cohort in 2024! If you're interested in participating next year, get in touch with us: Employment@posabilities.ca or 236-471-0444. To learn more about PES, visit: www.pesworks.ca



"I can't believe I got my dream job! I wouldn't have this job without my job coach. I'm going to start getting supervisory position training in the next few weeks. I am shocked that I was able to develop so quickly, because my supervisor said that it takes people a couple of years to be comfortable enough to be a supervisor. My parents are very happy."

Cam, Starbucks employee and future supervisor!



Camp Sasamat Registration Opens Early Summer

Contributed by Amy Chang, Team Leader

The joys of camping can be seen if you ever go to Supported Living Network (SLN)'s Camp Sasamat each Fall.

Fun in the cabins, daily activities either by the lake or on the grounds with music, dance, and sports, or arts and crafts, make each camp moment memorable. It's a chance for campers to see old friends, meet new ones and form relationships that can last for years.

Camp Sasamat registration will be coming up again in the early Summer. More details will come via ShareVision announcements if anyone is interested in having a 'camp experience'.



Taking Flight

Contributed by Rebecca Leckie, Team Leader

Surinder loves airplanes and helicopters. She has had a goal since 2018 about riding in a helicopter with her day program staff, Dianne. There was research and planning happening by her staff and then COVID-19 postponed the adventure.

Since our world has opened up and Surinder was still excited about the opportunity to fly in a helicopter, Dianne made sure that would happen for her. To prepare, Surinder bought herself some new lipstick and hair clips to look and feel beautiful for her flight.

The experience Surinder chose to do was a 30-minute flight over the BC backcountry seeing waterfalls, lakes and mountains. She loved the experience and the pilot gave her a Sky Helicopter toque before she left. Staff have loved seeing Surinder smile for the weeks before and days after her helicopter flight.



Remembering Andrew Lucas

Contributed by the Supported Living Network team

We lost a member of the Supported Living Network recently, Andrew Lucas. Andrew is fondly remembered as a sociable and fun loving guy who was passionate about his independence. He exhibited a vivid imagination and creativity in all aspects of his life. Andrew is missed by those in his circle, including the folks he regularly chatted with at his usual hangouts. May he rest in peace.



Creating a Culture of Belonging

**Contributed by Monique Nelson,
Diversity and Inclusion Committee Member**

I'd like to take a moment to celebrate the work that we do in partnership with other community-based organizations to foster a culture of belonging in Burnaby (and beyond) for the folks we serve, their families and our team members. With the extra support from our Community Engagement Advisor, Josiane Spyker, we have been able to attract new talent to our organization, while also finding pathways to share information about our services with newcomers who face various barriers to inclusion.

Alongside our collaboration with settlement and other social care organizations, we are committed to Indigenous reconciliation and healing. We have been educating our leadership and outreach teams on cultural humility, safety and trauma informed care; and have the intention of continuing this work across the association's programs and employee groups. We also have a unique opportunity to open up learning about Indigenous and other worldviews, and where various groups find connection (e.g. to place or to their spirituality) through platforms like [Curiko](#).

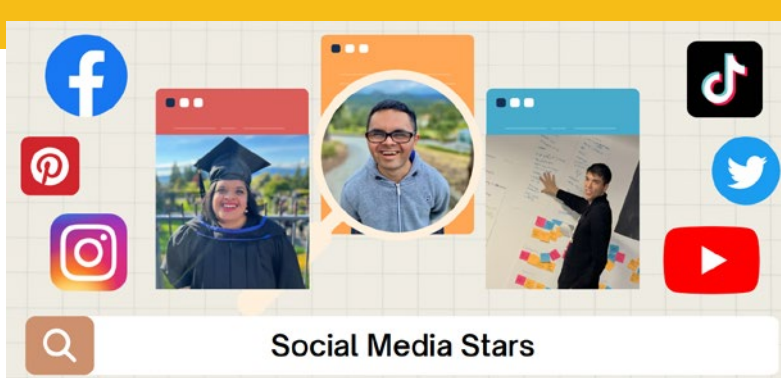
As a multi-regional organization based in Burnaby, we started this work of engaging harder to reach populations by tilling the soil in our own backyard. Here, we work on the unceded, ancestral lands of 12 Indigenous nations, we speak over 135 languages and are also home to refugees, newcomers and economic immigrants. We are so rich in human potential.

By taking on engagement initiatives with other organizations that are similar in size and scope, we may be able to break down some of the known barriers to acquiring or receiving helpful services and/or employment. We need to rethink any barriers we put in place – can we remove them? Examples of barriers include things like specific educational backgrounds, language proficiencies, literacy level, access to technology, stable housing, food security, poverty, or mental wellness supports.

When we are intentional in our welcoming of the beauty and diversity that is all around us, we become ready to learn, unlearn and grow. A part of this work, is to reflect and evaluate how our practices impact others, and to consider how we can improve them to build a more inclusive world.

posAbilities' representatives participate in planning and events hosted by the City of Burnaby's Intercultural Planning Table, Burnaby Together coalition against racism and hate, Social Planning Committee and the Burnaby Primary Care Network – Developmental Disability table. By focusing on developing relationships across cultures, and accessing sites where radical hospitality abounds (e.g., neighbourhood houses, libraries, community centres) we are building an equitable pathway to our doorstep, and then opening our doors to a welcoming space for others.

For more information about our organization's Diversity and Inclusion Committee or community engagement initiatives, please contact us by email diversitycommittee@posAbilities.ca or call 778-945-3367.



Introducing: The Social Media Fellowship Project

Contributed by Hannah Nolan, Social Media Lead

Where We Have Been: 1st Year of Fellowship

Following the success of last year's Social Media Fellowship, we are thrilled to announce the continuation of this exciting project. Last year, our first cohort of adults with disabilities and social media coaches worked together to develop a program that provided the necessary skills to form an identity online. Coaches and fellows worked together on remote and in-person projects to find what creators inspire them, how to develop unique content, and discover ways these concepts can be taught to future cohorts.

Through their hard work, they were able to...

- Identify eight foundational topics for a social media course
- Create a successful Instagram reel for posAbilities
- Use social media to build connections with each other and the online world

Where We Are Going: 2nd Year of Fellowship

Using the knowledge and experience of last year, the Social Media Fellowship will provide two unique courses this year. Both courses will involve a blend of virtual and in-person workshops, group field trips, and skill-share sessions. These courses will also be made available entirely virtual for participants located outside of the Greater Vancouver area.

The first course, Social Media Exploration, is four months and covers all the basic skills to get started with social media and post high-quality content. Fellows will learn about the different platforms, online safety, and original ways to express themselves and their interests.

The second course, Social Media Mastery, is six months and introduces new concepts such as networking, branding, marketing, and business. In this course, fellows will be encouraged to be leaders, help others, and build community. Both courses will give fellows all the tools they need to succeed, and of course, make amazing friends along the way.

How to Get Involved

We want to embrace social media as an inclusive resource that is open to everyone. Our goal is to not only teach fellows how to grow within social media, but also within themselves. In fact, we believe social media can give everyone an important voice and a chance to share their unique perspectives on any topic imaginable.

Whether you love to cook, travel, film, or run a small business, there is an online community for you! We would love to help you explore these communities with our social media courses. If you, or a person you know is interested in the program, the application period will begin this month. We would love to hear from you and what interests you about the program. Please contact Hannah Nolan, our Social Media Lead, for more information. We are so excited to meet you!

Email: hannah.nolan@posabilities.ca

Call or Text: (604) 368-1473

FAMILIES MATTER

Contributed by Monique Nelson,
Director of Community Engagement, Mom of Two

Do you need disability-related information? Is there an issue affecting your relative with a developmental or intellectual disability that you need a hand with? Check out our list of [free and low cost community resources online on our website](#) or contact me by email mnelson@posAbilities.ca or phone 778-945-3367 for support.



Summer Camps and Vacation Planning for the Whole Family

Although Spring came in like a lion, we're ready for those warmer days and have some excellent resources to help you plan fun in the sun no matter where you live. Did you know that Easter Seals BC Yukon offers camps for all ages? You can try out their new camper weekend, overnight camps, family camp weekends, or virtual camps! There are leadership development opportunities too. To learn more, [click here](#)...

I also recommend you sign up for the [Kids Out and About "Vancouver and Area"](#) e-news, and visit their amazing website. You'll find summer camp options organized by interest, age and date – as well as other family friendly activities to try. Their listings include recreation in lots of adjacent communities - Squamish, Richmond and White Rock – just to name a few. Look into their virtual experiences for inspiration!

Funding Support – For information about subsidies, check out [Recreation Funding - BC Disability](#) or ask the camp organizer directly if they have any bursaries available.

Story Share – Do you have a favourite camp or experience that you'd like to share with others? Contact us at info@posAbilities.ca - and we'll put your photo and story into an upcoming issue of our newsletter!

Core individual and family support funding increases in Budget 2023

Posted on March 3, 2023 (Source: CLBC website)

Community Living BC (CLBC) is pleased with the commitment made to people with developmental disabilities and their families in the B.C. government's 2023 budget. Budget 2023 will allow CLBC to maintain existing services, provide new services for transitioning youth, and increase core individual and family supports.

CLBC will have a budget of \$1.45 billion in 2023/24 to serve 28,000 eligible individuals.

Budget 2023 includes \$3.1 million for CLBC to increase core individual and family support funding. This is standard minimum funding available to individuals and families that can be used flexibly for wellness supports (formerly called respite) or contracted services. This funding is increasing from \$300 per month to \$350 per month (or \$3,600 per year to \$4,200 per year). This increase will begin April 1, 2023.

"People get more funding through Budget 2023 for supports, like skills training, wellness programs or towards community inclusion," said Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

The provincial budget also includes an increase in funding to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to increase the maximum shelter rate of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) income assistance from \$375 per month to \$500 per month effective July 19, 2023.

"I am grateful for this measure," said CLBC CEO Ross Chilton. "It is an important response to the increased housing costs faced by individuals living independently, in a home sharing arrangement, or in a staffed home."

The increase in the shelter rate will also help home sharing providers and agencies who operate staffed homes to meet increased housing costs. CLBC supported individuals who live in home sharing or staffed homes contribute their PWD shelter funding to these service providers. CLBC will adjust individual financial contributions with service providers and home sharing providers to include the increased shelter rate funding when it takes effect in July.

Every year, along with the Provincial Budget, CLBC posts its service plan outlining its goals and strategies for the year ahead. [You can read CLBC's new Service Plan here.](#)

Plan
Institute



Money Matters

When you have a relative with a disability, there are some specific things that you need to know to help secure their financial future. Whether you need a hand with doing your taxes, will, estate and trust planning, or opening up a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) – there are family/professional led workshops, websites and info lines to call for help.

There are also ways to build up your own personal support network, so that you can cultivate relationships with family members or friends to help you fulfill vital support roles, like that of a legal representative or trustee. The staff and families with PLAN and PLAN Institute are trusted leaders, advisors and supporters of families.

For example, did you know that there are free tax services offered by their partner the Disability Alliance BC (DABC)? In addition, Plan Institute's Helpline advisors are an ongoing resource through tax season. You can reach an advisor by calling 1-844-311-7526 or emailing info@rdsp.com.

PLAN has other exciting news! The Canada Disability Benefit (Bill C-22) continues to move forward. Disability Without Poverty is pleased to see Bill C-22 moving through the Senate and anticipates the bill will move to committee shortly, probably the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science & Technology (SOCI). We need to keep the pressure on the Senate to not delay in getting the Canada Disability Benefit made into law, and we are encouraged by the recent federal budget. However, we know that every delay prolongs the suffering of people with disabilities living in poverty and encourage you to keep an eye on [this website](#) for info about the next campaign and to learn how you can get involved.



FAMILY SUPPORT
Institute of **BC**
families supporting families

Find Support Through the Family Support Institute (FSI)

Are you looking to hire support staff? Learn about [Support Worker Central \(SWC\)](#), a free, provincial wide employment website that allows families and their loved ones with disabilities to find support staff. FSI also created other mini-sites to help families in their journeys – visit them all through the SWC's landing page.

FSI also provides useful resources and many opportunities to connect with other families. A calendar of FREE events and webinars can be found [here](#).



Introducing the Home Sharing Support Society BC

Contributed by the Home Sharing Support Society BC

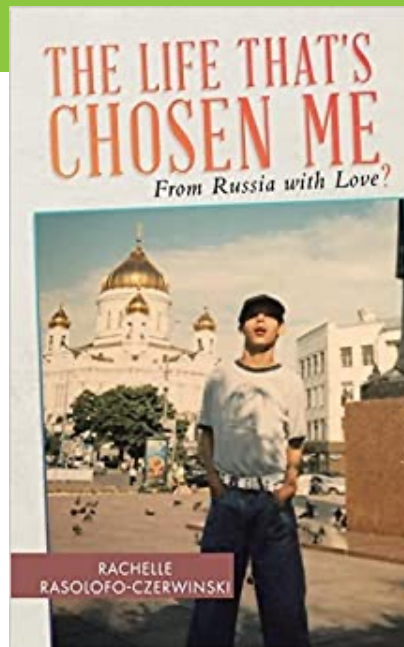
Discover for yourself home sharing options and opportunities for people with disabilities! Home sharing is the most accessible housing option offered by Community Living BC (CLBC).

Their mission is to enhance and support the sustainability and quality of home sharing and other housing options for adults with developmental disabilities throughout British Columbia.

More than 4,200 adults with developmental disabilities are accessing home sharing arrangements where an adult with a developmental disability shares a home with a person or family that is contracted to provide housing support. Home sharing is delivered through more than 3,800 dedicated home sharing providers and about 100 coordinating agencies.

One of the actions CLBC undertook was to establish an independent provincial society to better support Home Sharing, Home Sharing providers and the people living in home sharing. To meet the need, the Home Sharing Support Society BC (HSSSBC) was established in 2022. CLBC is committed to the society's success and will continue to foster collaboration and partnerships and support the society's vision, mission and values. CLBC will not dictate or direct the society on its membership or its strategic goals.

The Home Sharing Support Society BC does not operate home-sharing services funded by Community Living BC (CLBC). If you would like to provide home sharing services or are looking to receive services, we recommend contacting your local [Community Living BC](#) office for more information.



This astonishing book describes the journey of an extraordinary family in Russia from 2003 to 2005. It is a vivid account, at times poignant, at times hilarious, of life in post-Perestroika Russia, narrated by a mother, originally from Madagascar, with an international civil-servant Canadian husband and their two sons, one of them with severe disabilities.

"It takes courage to reveal one's innermost struggles to the reading public, but you have done so in a way that brings realism and a sense of humour to your story and which offers encouragement to those facing what seem like insurmountable odds." – Review by M. Joan Chard, PhD in English Literature and author of "A Victorian Pilgrimage"

You can purchase this book here: [The Life That's Chosen Me: From Russia with Love? by Rachelle Rasolofo-Czerwinski | Goodreads](#)