

education watch:

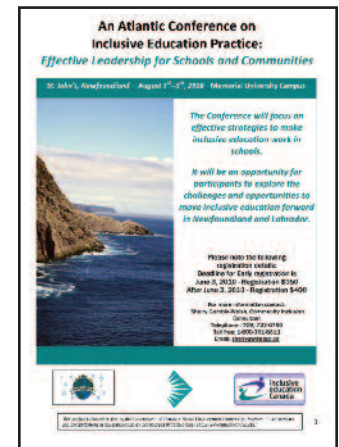
an update on inclusive education

Volume 2, Issue 2 – Summer 2010

Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living holds Inclusive Education Conference, August 1-3, 2010

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living (NLACL) will hold a major provincial conference on inclusive education, August 1-3. The conference is organized in partnership with Inclusive Education Canada and the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL). The Department of Education and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association are also supporting the event.

More than 200 educators from the province and a number of participants from other parts of Canada have registered for the conference. CACL is holding several national meetings focusing on inclusive education in conjunction with the conference. Look for updates on the conference on the www.inclusiveeducation.ca website.



Left to right – Kevin Costante, Ontario Deputy Minister of Education, Sal Amenta, Chair, CLO Education Committee and Michael Bach, Executive Vice-President, CACL.

Community Living Association Leaders meet with Ontario Deputy Minister of Education

Kevin Costante, the Ontario Deputy Minister of Education met with representatives of the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and Community Living Ontario (CLO) recently. The discussion was focused on ways the association and the Ministry of Education could work together on areas of common interest. Salvatore (Sal) Amenta, Chair, CLO Education Committee and Michael Bach, Executive Vice-President of CACL expressed an urgency to resolve the differences parents and families feel with local schools and school boards over access to regular classes in community schools for their sons/daughters with intellectual disabilities. The Ministry's policies are supportive but parents with children with disabilities disagree with the implementation of those policies. Too many children are excluded from regular classes and sent to special education, some full-time and others for part of the day.

Grant Clarke, the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Learning & Curriculum Division of the Ministry was part of the discussion. Also attending the meeting were Kimberley Gavan and Gordon Kyle from Community Living Ontario and Gordon Porter, Director of Inclusive Education Canada.



Canadian Association for Community Living
Association canadienne pour l'intégration communautaire

Diversity includes. On se ressemble.



Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.

Class size and composition... A slippery slope for children with disabilities



By **Anne Kresta**, Inclusive Education and Community Development Specialist, Community Living Manitoba

The Manitoba Teachers' Society recently released a report that summarizes its work assessing the increased feelings of stress teachers are experiencing province wide. This report indicates that majority of teachers feel overwhelmed with their workload and lists a series of recommendations to address this challenge.

While these recommendations seem designed to best support the classroom teacher, it is important to understand that some of the implications of these measures may have detrimental impacts upon students with disabilities and their families. This is especially true of recommendations regarding class composition, where children would be ranked according to how much of the teacher's time and energy would be required to educate them. The suggested ranking system, noted in an appendix to the report, does not take into consideration any support that the student may bring into the classroom with them such as an educational assistant or potential support from resource teaching staff. It also doesn't consider the potential benefits of having the student placed within the

classroom. Examples include:

- promoting teamwork among the students,
- providing opportunities to learn about diversity and inclusion, and
- alternate teaching styles that can benefit all of the other students within the classroom, particularly those with invisible disabilities or those who may have borderline struggles with learning.

It was particularly alarming to read suggestions that "alternative programs" be instituted to provide "the most enabling environment" rather than have all students placed within the regular classroom. The amendment to the Public Schools Act: Appropriate Educational Programming, places particular emphasis upon the need to have students placed within the regular classroom at their neighbourhood schools. This is a cornerstone to inclusive education. Historically, phrases like "most enabling environment" and "alternative programs" have been used to segregate students with disabilities, and their interpretation is more often subjective, usually in the hands of administrative staff and without thorough consultation with the families and students involved in those placement decisions.

The suggested recommendations made within the Manitoba Teachers Society report should in no way, shape or form, lead to a debate on the merits of inclusive education versus

Western Canadian Conference on Leadership for Inclusive Education: *Raising the Bar and Getting Results*

University of Regina • Regina, Saskatchewan • November 4-6, 2010

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Alberta Association for Community Living
Canadian Down Syndrome Society
Community Rehabilitation & Disability Studies at University of Calgary
Education Department at University of Lethbridge

It is time to make access to inclusive classrooms a reality in communities throughout Western Canada. This conference will focus on the opportunities and strategies that can move beyond the challenges and obstacles. Designed to bring together educators, policy makers, and teacher educators as well as self advocates and parents.

- **Plenary Sessions**
- **Keynote Speakers**
- **Theme Sessions**
- **Discussion and Networking**

Details to follow — keep informed with updates on the Inclusive Education Canada Website: www.inclusiveeducation.ca

For information — email us at inclusiveeducation@caeci.ca

Please turn over to see a Preliminary Conference Program.

A great conference program is being developed for the Western Canadian Conference on Leadership for Inclusive Education. It will be held in Regina from November 4-6, 2010. Updates will be posted on the Inclusive Education Canada website at www.inclusiveeducation.ca on a regular basis.

Put it on your calendar and plan to attend.

segregated programming. That debate ended with the proclamation of the Amendment to the Public Schools Act. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities affirm the proclamation.

Our children belong in the classroom with their peers, and our teachers must receive the supports that they need to ensure that all of the children in their classroom can obtain an appropriate education. This support should include more professional development, consultation with specialists who can provide their insights into barriers to the provision of the curriculum, and the use of educational assistants to support classroom practices that encourage learning opportunities. The use of educational assistants can range from providing opportunities for the teacher to engage in smaller group or one-on-one work with specific students, to addressing the unique support needs of specific students who are in the classroom. Alternatively, using the categorical funding available for the appropriate educational programming for specific students can offset the costs of hiring additional teaching or resource staff. Those decisions need to be made by a collaborative team of stakeholders that include the parents (and student whenever appropriate). Too often, even with the amendment to the Public Schools Act, parents are left in the dark about the programming for their children with special needs. Not surprisingly, parents in this position can feel very defensive and want their child to have direct support (in the form of an educational assistant) to ensure that their learning, social and emotional needs are met during the school day. It is important that classroom teachers are able to take ownership of all of their students and that the school and school division ensure that classroom teachers are encouraged and supported to do so.

Public education is about preparing all of our children for a future world that is inclusive, socially just, and diverse. By working collaboratively to root out the barriers to attaining these goals and supporting each other in the process, we will be able to move towards these goals and our children and society will be richer for it.

Supporting families – on a mission

Janis Jaffe-White and Reva Schafer of the Toronto Family Network have advocated for more than 1,000 families fighting for school supports for their children. The two are a force to be reckoned with in education circles in Toronto. They help families in their struggle to get school boards to comply with their obligation to provide legally mandated supports. Janis has identified what she calls a “major relationship crisis” between parents on one side, and school boards and the ministry on the other.

The duo told a reporter for the *Toronto Star* that –

The parents just want what their child is legally entitled to, but, too often, boards refer them to the ministry and the ministry sends them back to the school system while the child falls farther behind. These parents have nowhere to go,” says Jaffe-White.

Reva & Janis have called for the creation of an independent education ombudsmen to review parents’ complaints. Other advocates have called on the education system to change their approach as well.

Contact: tortontofamilynetwork@gmail.com



Reva and Janis are shown here with Bruce Rivers, Executive Director of Community Living Toronto, a family and advocacy NGO working with Community Living Ontario and CACL on a tri-level effort to promote change in education in Toronto.



**Diversity includes.
On se ressemble.**



Some reflections on... Life, my family and inclusion

By **Anne Kresta**, Parent, Winnipeg

All of my life, I have had a passion to support the underdog...not out of a sense of cheering on the little guy, but of ensuring that we all enjoy the same rights, freedoms and opportunities for full citizenship in society. This may have come from being raised in a family of five children, each with their unique gifts and challenges, and one of whom was born with an intellectual disability (I call her my little, big sister as she is much smaller but older than I). And then, low and behold, of my three children, the older two were born with neuro-developmental disorders that included Asperger Syndrome, non-verbal learning disabilities, Tourette's Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder and assorted other challenges.

Early on, my family was challenged by a school system that did not know what these disorders were and were at a loss when it came to how to appropriately support our sons.

MORE

Editors Note: To read the rest of Anne's story – check it out on www.inclusiveeducation.ca

Saskatchewan school shares inclusion strategies

School Principal Reg Leidl of the P.J. Gillen School in Esterhazy, SK shared their experiences with inclusive education with participants at a pre-conference seminar in Regina sponsored by the Canadian Down Syndrome Society and Inclusive Education Canada.



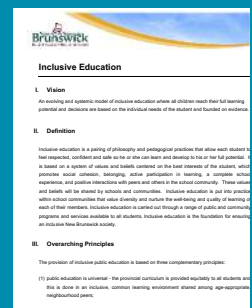
Ron Leidl and his staff at P.J. Gillen School are part of the growing network of educators in Canada working to make inclusion a reality.

The seminar was attended by more than 120 people including teachers, parents and delegates to the CDSS National Conference. The seminar organizer was Dr. Gordon L. Porter, Director of Inclusive Education Canada.

Dr. Wanda Lyons of the University of Regina facilitated the P.J. Gillen staff to attend the seminar and review what they have learned about making inclusion work. They called their presentation – “**Navigating the Path**” and discussed their 15-year journey in building an inclusive school. The presentation focused on the process of inclusion; the issues and challenges that have surfaced; and how the principal, teachers, parents, and students have worked together to respond to concerns and resolve issues. The teachers shared their successes and disappointments and how they have learned from their mistakes along the way. The session concluded with the team's collective thoughts on what it takes to make inclusion work.

Definition of Inclusive Education – Department of Education – New Brunswick

One of the recommendations of the MacKay Report on inclusion in schools in New Brunswick was that the stakeholders should define what they mean by “inclusive education”. A committee was established to do this and after several years work the definition was completed. It is a five page document and can be found at www.inclusiveeducation.ca or on the NB government site – <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/publications/Definition%20of%20Inclusion.pdf>



Mount Pearl teacher receives National Inclusive Education Award

By **Sherry Gambin-Walsh**, Provincial Inclusion Consultant for the Newfoundland and Labrador ACL

On May 2010, I had the pleasure of presenting the Newfoundland and Labrador Inclusive Education Award to Mr. Luke Neville, a very humble Phys Ed teacher from St. Peter's Junior High in Mount Pearl. As a mother of a 14 year old boy with autism, it was a remarkable moment for me personally.

Inclusive Education is about how we develop our learning environments— schools, classrooms, programs and activities — so that all students learn and participate together. It is based on the firm belief that all students have value and can best learn in regular classrooms alongside students their own age. Inclusion also means that our schools help develop positive relationships and mutual respect between all students. In February, Luke, a teacher from St. Peter's Junior High, was nominated for the Inclusive Education Award, a national award from the Canadian Association for Community Living.

To turn the concept of inclusion into reality takes a tremendous amount of effort and dedication. Mr. Neville helped showcase St. Peter's ability to embrace the spirit of inclusion at a Volley Fest in January of this year. He was described as a remarkable coach and an inspiration to the students. A teacher, who from his



Luke Neville receiving his award from Sherry Gambin-Walsh.

internship days always looked for ways to engage those who were reluctant to participate and who constantly, modified games and activities so that all students could experience success.

The National “Inclusive Education Awards” are sponsored by the Canadian Association for Community Living and Inclusive Education Canada.

Community Living Stormont County named Ontario recipient of 2010 CACL Inclusive Education Award

At its 57th Annual Conference and AGM this past May, Community Living Ontario was proud to join Michael Bach, Executive Vice-President of CACL, to present the 2010 CACL Inclusive Education Award to this year's recipient: **Community Living Stormont County**. The nomination was made by Bobbi Steffan, President, Brockville Association for Community Involvement. The award is presented to an individual or team in each of the 13 provinces or territories that has made a positive contribution towards the goal of meaningful inclusion in the education system of students who have a disability.

According to Ms. Steffan, Community Living Stormont County *“has an impressive history of advocacy on behalf of families and people with intellectual disabilities. It was a pioneer in inclusive preschools, and carried that spirit forward to promote inclusive education at the elementary and secondary levels.”* This is evident in the ongoing work and achievements of the Association which includes working toward the closure of the Kinsmen School in Cornwall, Ontario, one of the remaining seven segregated schools in the province.

In praising the Association's efforts in relation to inclusive education, another colleague, Rick Tutt, Executive Director, Community Living Association Lanark County said: “They have always maintained a low profile, worked hard at doing the right thing, and are not flamboyant. They are a hardworking, grassroots organization that has a commendable commitment to families and to inclusive education.”

Congratulations Community Living Stormont County!



Shown with Michael Bach, Executive Vice-President, CACL are Community Living Stormont County representatives Dick D'Alessio, Executive Director and Linda Lister, Vice-President.



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Dr. Gordon Porter named to Order of Canada

July 6, 2010

(Fredericton, NB) The New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL) is pleased to note that one of its long-time volunteers has been awarded Canada's highest civilian honour for lifetime achievement. On Wednesday, June 30th, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, announced the appointment of Dr. Gordon L. Porter, former Chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission and Director of Inclusive Education Initiatives with the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), as a member of the Order of Canada.

The Order of Canada is presented annually to those who have demonstrated excellence, courage or exceptional dedication to service in ways that bring special credit to Canada. Dr. Porter, a retired professor who was among 74 new appointees, will be receiving the honour for his leadership in promoting the rights of Canadians with disabilities, particularly children.

A native of Woodstock, NB, Dr. Porter has been a stalwart supporter of inclusive education in New Brunswick and is recognized internationally for his work in this area, which has influenced educational practices around the world. He has consulted and taught on inclusive education in over a dozen countries, including Peru, New Zealand, South Africa, Portugal, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Bolivia and a number of francophone African countries, as well as Canada and the U.S.

"This is such a well-deserved honour, recognizing Dr. Porter's local-to-global leadership for inclusive education - from its earliest beginnings to its recognition as a right in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," says Michael Bach, Executive Vice President of the Canadian Association for Community Living.

"It speaks to the remarkable man that he is, and to the highest regard in which his work, and indeed the cause of people with an intellectual disability, is held."

Dr. Porter has also been involved with the New Brunswick Association for Community Living's Inclusive Education Committee for several years and has played a key role in setting New Brunswick apart as a leader in inclusive education locally and globally.

"NBACL is very proud of the achievements of Dr. Porter, who has dedicated his life to ensuring that all children here in New Brunswick and internationally have the necessary supports to learn, participate and contribute fully in every aspect of school life," says Marlene Munn, president of NBACL.

"Gordon Porter has been a tremendous advocate for the idea that quality teaching can reach every child. His passionate belief that we should leave no child behind has allowed us not only to rethink the classroom, but to rethink the limits of what is possible. New Brunswick is a leader in inclusive education today because of our outstanding educators, and Gordon has inspired and assisted many of those teachers," says Kelly Lamrock, Minister of Social Development.

"This is a well-deserved honour for Gordon Porter. He has not only contributed to making New Brunswick a leader in inclusive education, but is recognized as a leader in inclusive education internationally. His dedication to inclusive education has opened school doors to children around the world," says Education Minister Roland Haché.

Dr. Porter will be invited to accept his insignia at a ceremony to be held at a later date.



NBACL is a provincial, non-profit organization, which works on behalf of children and adults with an intellectual disability and their families. NBACL was formed in 1957 and has 13 local branches throughout New Brunswick.

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All students benefit from inclusive education: School Board Chairperson

School board's inclusive philosophy a driving force for 41 years

By **Deron Hamel**, Writer, Community Living Leaders. Spring 2010



Patrick Daly

Since 1969, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board's (HWCDSB) philosophy — “Each belongs” — has been a driving force in the board's effort to ensure that all students are included in every aspect of academic life, no matter their abilities.

The result of this philosophy has been that all students benefit socially and academically, says Patrick Daly, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees for HWCDSB.

He points out that students attending schools represented by the Board can expect to find themselves in supportive environments where friendships are made. Academic testing by the province and school board indicates that students of all abilities attain “positive results” in this atmosphere, Daly adds.

“It's clear to all of us who have seen this system work over the last number of years that there have been two very important results. The first would be the fact that children (who have a disability) are able to attend their neighbourhood schools with their brothers and sisters, their friends and their neighbours, which is their right,” says Daly.

“The other is that other students have benefited — and I've seen this on numerous occasions. They benefit from having these young people as their classmates in their schools. They clearly have a much better understanding of the challenges of some of their peers, but also of the gifts that these young people bring to our school.”

Characterized by some as “the most inclusive school board on Earth,” HWCDSB's philosophy stems from the “Catholic vision of the child,” says Daly.

He adds that the “Each belongs” philosophy has been ingrained in every teacher, principal and administrator in the 57 schools represented by the Board. The philosophy, Daly notes, “has become part of who they are.” “They all ensure that all of our students are included. We have no segregated programs,” says Daly.

“Since we have no segregated programs, all of our students are integrated into the full life of the school, academically, spiritually, and (with) the arts (and) athletics, depending on the abilities of the child and the wishes of the parents.” What has sustained the philosophy, says Daly, is the support of parents and their love for their children, coupled with vigorous staff commitment.

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Researching Change Strategies

By **Jason Newberry, PhD**, Taylor Newberry Consulting, Guelph, Ontario



For the past six years I have had the pleasure of partnering with the Community Inclusion Initiative (CI), a national community development initiative promoting the inclusion, full participation and citizenship of Canadians with intellectual disabilities and their families. The initiative needed an evaluation framework and ongoing support to fully understand the most promising strategies to change and improve organizations, policies, and systems in ways that are supportive of inclusion. I started this work as a researcher at the Centre for Community Based Research, and have continued my relationship with CI more recently with Taylor Newberry Consulting.

There are several priority areas for CI, and a big one has been inclusive education. In my work with the partners, I have heard about amazing innovations and partnerships in the education systems all across the nation.

A common thread has been the development of effective partnerships between Associations for Community Living and teachers, principals, and school boards. This has led to a variety of collaborative approaches to teacher in-service and training in which teachers learn effective strategies to promote and support classroom inclusion. In our work, we have already learned a lot about systems change in education, including the importance of translating values of inclusion into educational practice. Other important factors are understanding school culture, “place-based” training, and gaining buy-in to training at all levels of the system.

We are now embarking on national research initiative that will directly examine and compare different models of teacher training on knowledge, skills, attitudes, and classroom practices among participating teachers and schools. This new research initiative will help to further illuminate the best and promising practices in supporting fully inclusive education.

For more information, please contact Jason at jay11@rogers.com



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Toronto educator studies key issue: Roles and responsibilities of educational assistants in Ontario

Joyce Mounstevan has recently completed research on an important topic. During the school years 2006 – 2009 a research study entitled: Roles and Responsibilities of Educational Assistants in Ontario Schools: implications for practice, was conducted. Permission was received from numerous school boards, French, English, Public and Catholic to access the educational assistants (EAs) within their board. This is a summary of the results.

Impetus for the study: There are approximately 22,000 EAs working in Ontario schools. The number is an estimate based on the fact that there is no direct method of reporting exact numbers to the Ministry of Education. The position of EAs is known by a variety of names e.g. Teacher Assistant, Education Resource Worker, Paraprofessional etc., which adds to the difficulty of identifying exact numbers. The number of EAs has increased by 68.4% between 1999 and 2006 as compared to the growth of students receiving special education support of 10.79%. (Zegarac, 2008).

The full executive summary (11 pages) of Dr. Mounstevan's work can be found on the website — www.inclusiveeducation.ca

From: Executive Summary of Doctoral Dissertation — Joyce Mounstevan PhD — joyce@jmconsulting.ca



A few things about Joyce: *Joyce has recently completed her Doctoral programme at York University in Ontario. Prior to 'retirement' Joyce was the Supervising Principal for Special Education in Toronto. Her interest in moving the inclusion agenda forward in the public schools has greatly influenced her career. She continues to advocate on behalf of students with exceptionalities and their families. Her most recent work has involved the large scale training of educational assistants across the province of Ontario in the area of autism. She is currently on the Faculty of Geneva Centre for Autism and hopes to use her research findings to guide future practice in the implementation of teacher /EA or teacher/ECE teams.*



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