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Inclusion NEWS

Centre for Integrated Education and Community

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All Means All: No Buts!

Building Networks Worldwide

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Inclusion and Diversity: The Global Challenge

Marsha Forest & Jack Pearpoint

For us, Inclusion is big, broad, global. It is not just about getting some child here or there into school, although that is part of it. It is not about doing a MAP, PATH, or any Person Centered Planning tool to help an adult into the community (although that is part of it). It is not about finding people homes, or jobs, or leisure time (although that is part of it). It is about changing the world so **no one** will have to worry about these issues. There will be basic rights for every person because they are human.

Some will scoff that this is impossible, or just wishful thinking. Some believe nothing ever changes. But if you look globally, you know that nothing in this world is remaining the same. Travel to the moon was a dream. Voting for women was a dream. Peace with human rights are also compelling and worthy dreams. Perhaps we can achieve them too, if we strive...

As we traveled through Laos and Cambodia, we witnessed the devastation of the U.S. bombing during the Vietnam War. Bombs - UXO (unexploded ordinance) still kill children every day - 25 years later. This grim reality reminded us that life itself is the highest form of inclusion. While wars rage and children are maimed, the work of inclusion is not done. Inclusion is big picture stuff. It is about racism, social class, inequality, poverty, war and peace. And it is about getting Sayeed to school - with Mary Jo and all the other kids - every day - safely, together - learning, loving, living. These daily struggles are a piece of the complex puzzle that brings us together on issues ranging from high schools without murders, to food, water and meaningful engagement for every person - everywhere.

We believe this can be done. We do have a dream. It will not be done quickly, not glibly, not for one group at the expense of another. The human future will not be built by special interest lobbying, or by simply legislating morality. All of us will have to learn to 'give a little', and then 'give a lot'. We will have to learn to actually listen to one another: to stop, breathe, think and then act. The human future will be built by long-haul leaders and ordinary citizens who are willing to stand up - together - for basic human decency - everywhere. It is not a matter of left or right, democrat or conservative, but a matter of human decency and integrity in all societies.

There is a huge world out there. Most of it is not white, nor based on western ideas of democracy and private property. It is varied, colorful, often confusing and messy. But it is full of billions of diverse people. We need to broaden our horizons, to see locally AND globally. For example: China has 1.3 billion people, yet we know almost nothing about China. And what we do know is often tainted and trivial. We know almost nothing of Asia or Africa. We actually know very little about our own backyards. Our own ignorance paraded in front of us at the opening of the Asia games in Bangkok in December. We watched delegations from country after country (which we had never heard of) march together in an amazing tapestry of color, sound and texture. The theme of the Asia Games was ***Friendship Beyond Frontiers***. The games were a celebration of friendship and harmony.

As we sat in the sweltering heat of Bangkok, surrounded by Thais, Chinese, Koreans, Indians, etc., we realized how little we know, how much there is to learn, how diverse the world is. In Asia, there is hope and excitement about the future. We are not romanticizing Asia. It is complex, demanding - and driving toward a future. In this pulsing chaos, we felt the heart of diversity and inclusion. Can we figure it out - how to live together? Can we live with political, cultural, economic diversity? Our shared challenge is to take up the mantle of inclusion every morning, and work to figure out how we can live together - in our households, on our streets, in our schools and communities - and in the world. It is a massive undertaking - but we have the energy because we must. Our lives are the prize.

Figuring out how to live together will not be easy. Putting together the Asian Games wasn't easy. Getting Jane or Jasmine into school isn't easy. Not beating up that fat kid who was once a young Dave Hingsburger is not easy. But we were never promised easy. No microwave solutions here. This is big stuff. Long haul stuff. But the good news is we can begin again with tiny steps every single day. That is the joy and the frustration. It is that simple - and that overwhelming.

The journey will be long and we will need to be resilient and relentless in our commitment. There are many sources of strength for the journey. One is learning. Ignorance is the enemy of our work. Learning blossoms with opportunity. Narrow vision is constraining; seeing the big picture of Inclusion and our daily steps as a part of this enormous undertaking gives hope. Personalizing each issue is draining and diminishing; seeing the daily struggles as part of any kind of exclusion makes us less easily and more effective. If we are consistent, we can't include Rashid in school and ban his teacher for being gay.

Real inclusion will not happen until human beings are guaranteed basic human rights everywhere: health care, education, decent housing, meaningful employment. Current political systems are not yet good enough. We have to create new ways to run our neighbourhoods, schools and social systems.

However, society is progressing. All the doom and gloom sayers should spend a day in Bangkok, spend a week in China, travel the Mekong with the people of Laos. The world is bigger than simply Canada and the USA.

When you see the big picture, you realize you are part of a vast network of people around the globe fighting for a better life for ALL. And as we've been saying for years, "All Really Does Mean ALL!" If you think globally, you will never feel alone.

About this issue

If you have to walk on thin ice, you may as well dance.

Inclusion News reflects the core of our work - our lives. Each issue shows us and our readers where we are, and how we think the movement for social justice, peace and inclusion is doing.

This year, we are producing **Inclusion News** under challenging circumstances. When we arrived home from our incredible nine week Asian Learning Immersion Sabbatical at the end of 1998, we found out that Marsha had a recurrence of her breast cancer and would once again need to undergo chemotherapy.

This put a dent in our armour and in our January to May schedule. We therefore determined that this would be the best **Inclusion News** yet: the one with the broadest perspective, the one with the most comprehensive **Inclusion Press Resource Catalogue**. Here it is.

In this issue we share some of the ways our understanding of inclusion has grown wider and deeper through our travels in Asia, through our continuing journey with cancer, through our reflections on the legacy of friends who have died, through news from people who are living the challenges and rewards of inclusion, and through a sampling of reports on what people are doing with the ideas and tools they have picked up in their work with us.

As a look at the enclosed resource catalogue will show, we have published a growing library of books and videos that communicate the ideas that matter to us in depth. And we have created a series of intensive learning experiences that offer growing numbers of people the tools and supports they need to promote inclusion. Throughout, we have provided pointers to books, tapes, and workshops that will allow you to gain a deeper understanding of what you read about.

Thinking is an important component of our work to make a more peaceful, more just world. We hope this issue of **Inclusion News** makes you think about many things. We don't expect everyone to agree, but we hope it makes you think about the bigger picture and the wider implications of what inclusion and diversity really mean in our world and in our lives.

Like all of our work, **Inclusion News** is a dance with LIFE! Join us!

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint & John O'Brien

The Rose Quartz Warrior

Marsha Forest

Sharing a sweet with a shepherd near Lijiang, Yunan, China in Nov. 1998

It is 1999. I have been living with cancer since June 1988 when I had my first lumpectomy for intraductal breast cancer. For years, misunderstanding my doctor, I thought I had had "introductory" breast cancer. In 1995, I was treated for Ovarian cancer with a radical hysterectomy and chemotherapy. In January 1997, my oncologist found a tiny breast lump during a routine check up. This time it was diagnosed as invasive breast cancer and the tumor plus 14 lymph nodes were removed. This was followed by radiation. In late 1998 we returned home from our incredible nine week sabbatical in Asia. I was diagnosed with pneumonia on New Year's Eve. Soon, a recurrence of cancer was diagnosed. I started chemotherapy again.

In April, I asked myself: What if I were to sit down for a short time and write without any outcome expectation. Just write what is in my heart and soul as part of the healing path I am currently on.

What if I simply told the truth about my life and my experiences. What if I wrote without judging myself, without fear, and let the words and feelings flow out of me for a period of time.... without judgment.

Here is what came in answer to these questions.

Who Wrote This Script?

For the longest time I felt I was living someone else's life, or at least I was living two lives. I was on one hand a healthy, hearty, creative, lively, enthusiastic liver and lover of life. Then there was this cancer stuff. That sort of belonged to another person. I would put the cancer part somewhere else. Even our book, *Dream Catchers and Dolphins*, an amazing collection of all the e-mail we and our circle of friends wrote during the ovarian cancer crisis, somehow stood apart from the rest of our books. There was this one Marsha in a life of work, joy, meaning, and then this other Marsha with a "cancer" story - which somehow stood apart.

It was like I was not permitted to have cancer, to be sick. Sickness happened to others, not to me. I was split and I really don't think I knew how deeply until I started writing this.

The suffering part, the pain, the fear was in a way to be denied. Get it over with and carry on. But the suffering, the pain, the nausea and the fear cannot be denied or forgotten. They are as much a part of me as the trip to China. They are as much a part of me as the sunrise and sunset at Ankgor Wat. To deny one is to deny myself and my experiences - not just the good ones but all of them.

These two parts must form a whole. For me to be whole, I need to feel there isn't the sick part and the healthy part, but just this person called "Marsha" which includes all of my experiences, and which has no path to take except the one she creates with Jack and their life together.

Silent Scream

"This isn't me or my script" I would silently scream with each visit to the hospital. "I hate hospitals. I hate sickness." This was crazy making behavior. This was not the script I wanted, but I wasn't in control of everything (how novel an idea!) How arrogant of me to think anyone else really liked cancer, sickness and hospitals. If this wasn't me, well then who the hell was it? It sure as hell was my body being cut up, parts taken out and now two rounds of chemo. It was my hair that I lost and my terror that I felt waking up each morning. It was me all right, and it was time to notice that.

Yes, this was me. This was Jack living with me through this cancer experience again. It could no longer be the happy, productive me vs. the sick cancer me. It simply had to be me - the whole me - going through life. I had to put humpty dumpty together again - the good, the bad and the ugly.

I could honestly say I wish I didn't have to go through all this. I don't particularly like this part of the script. But to deny that this is me is what I now realize drives both me and Jack crazy. Understanding this will be a big help in my journey of healing.

When I fully believe these words I just wrote, I will probably feel more settled, centered and comfortable. That's what I long for. Feeling comfortable with me, the whole me. Not fighting me and all the sides of me. Just learning to accept ME, at fifty six, a me that has been truly bashed and bruised by cancer. I have been hurt. I work so hard to forget the pain and the fear and not to dwell on it, that I make myself crazy. I need to admit it a bit each day and then get on with life (which I certainly do). The other side is that I have been blessed with an exciting life, a great partner, meaningful work. This is part of what my life is all about, and I do mean ALL.

I need to not deny the word and feelings of real "suffering" in my life. When Paul recently said he thought I had "endured a lot of suffering in the last several years," I began to weep. Indeed I had. Having someone I respect validate the suffering part really helped.

Not a Gift - It Is What It Is

I am not of the "cancer is a gift" school of thought. I didn't need cancer to bring meaning to my life. I didn't need cancer to remind me to slow down and enjoy life. I didn't need cancer to tell me how precious each day and how precious my relationship with Jack is.

I didn't need it, but I got it. So what do I do with it? My only answer: Live with it, and one day die, as all the rest of us will do. When - nobody knows. I am not a fortune teller. Living with this mortality thread hanging over me is something else I don't like. But once again, I can dislike it as much as I like, but I still have to deal with it. Denying that it has been a big part of my life is to basically deny myself, my experience and my life.

So I am re-inventing myself as the Rose Quartz Warrior. My mentor, friend and guide in New Zealand - Uncle Whitu - says I am a warrior. He wrote to me in Feb. 1999 and said, "You Marsha, must do what you must do. You are a warrior. Those who truly love you and those you have touched (including me) must be trusted and included to put down the little skirmishes (little outbursts of fire) around you. Those can dissipate your energies for the main battle. Jack and your team is the 'strike force'. Beware of the takers. They are the ones to deflect. Take care of Jack and his energy. You have my blessing to do what it takes to get well so you can carry on your work and your life."

Looking Closely at a Piece of Rose Quartz

All over our home are pieces of Rose Quartz. We have friends who used to own a Rose Quartz Quarry in Quadeville, Ontario. Fran and Don have given us large and small pieces of Rose Quartz over the years. I have learned that Rose Quartz is a healing stone and I simply love the color and feel of the stone.

The piece on my desk is a metaphor of how I feel at the moment. It is a beautiful piece of stone - full of cracks and crevices. It is not smooth or even, but has a lovely pink and white quality to it. There are lines and ridges. You can stand it in many positions which change the way it looks. From one angle I see the face of an animal, from another a beautiful mountain, yet another is a small hill. Each time I switch the angle, another facet of the Rose Quartz comes into view. One side has a spot that is shiny and pink. It is changeable - but at all times beautiful.

If only I could feel that way about myself these days. That I am changeable - but always beautiful. That I am acceptable - whatever I am and whatever I have. It is still hard for me to say "I am living with cancer." It is like saying "something is wrong with me." And that is true. I still think that I should be the perfect student, daughter, wife, friend. The "shoulds" are killing me. But, I am not, nor do I aspire to be perfect.

I feel that till I believe this, I shouldn't go near helping other people. As a teacher, workshop leader, writer, counselor - I am deeply accepting of other people being human, and at all times being beautiful. It is time I really believed it myself. I will be humble with this knowledge of myself. I will use it well. I will forgive myself at long last for just being human, and in doing so, I will liberate my health, my spirit and my soul.

I keep telling others, particularly those who work with people labeled disabled, that until the worker feels beautiful, he can't make the person, seen by society's eyes as imperfect and disabled, feel beautiful. One of my gifts is that I make others feel good and strong about themselves. I make them feel beautiful and accepted. I just need to feel that way about myself right now. I am getting there. Admitting the problem is the first step. Acting on it is beginning to happen.

In a sense I am experiencing what it is like to be a person with a disability.

Humbling to say the least.

Tis People, Tis People, Tis People

Te Ripowai Higgins, New Zealand

Hūtia te rito o te harakeke	Pluck out the centre shoot of the flax bush
kei hea te kōmako e kō?	where would the bellbird sing?
Rere ki uta?	Should it fly inland?
Rere ki tai?	Should it fly to sea?
Ki mai koe ki ahau	Ask me
He aha te mea nui o te ao?	What is most important in the world?
Māku e ki atu:	I would say;
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata!	'Tis people, 'tis people, 'tis people

This proverb I share from my culture, from my land, from my ancestors, the Maori (aboriginals) of Aotearoa/ New Zealand. The message is simple yet powerful. It saved a village from annihilation.

Inclusion News and I have the same powerful message for ALL who are vulnerable. It is a universal message, one that transverses the oceans. I wonder if there is in some small corner of this world just one community that has escaped the contamination of individualization.

Today Maori people are struggling to maintain their traditional society and natural community - the whanau (extended family). One hundred and sixty years of colonization and assimilation policies have driven our culture to the brink of destruction. It hangs by a thread. The more communities have become isolated from each other, the more the spirit of defiance and resistance is becoming the renaissance of Maori culture.

It is that unconquerable spirit of the human species that needs to be strengthened. We must always honestly expose the dangers of power, of isolation, of helplessness. We must challenge and give hope for communities and people to take back control from the 'professionals', to themselves. It is simply and truly about PEOPLE FIRST. This is surely not simple to do or even say, but it is just, it is right, and it is time to start doing it now!

What is most important in this world,
'tis people, 'tis people, 'tis people'

Sarah Jennings Question

David and Faye Wetherow

When young John Jennings, who happens to have Down syndrome, was celebrating his ninth birthday, his parents began talking with friends and family members about the fact that he would need to be welcomed into the world of work when he left school at age nineteen. His mother, Sarah, began asking: "Who will need to know him, and what kind of experience will they need to have with each other so that someone in our circle will offer him employment when he leaves school? What do we need to be doing together over the next ten years for this to happen?"

Our friend Judith Snow defines a 'great question' as a question that refuses to be answered, so it keeps leading us into deeper thinking and deeper connections with each other. Sarah was asking a great question, and she was asking it of the right people.

Sarah said, "Think about the old nursery rhyme, 'Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the door and see all the people". Well, all of the people in our church – in fact every one of the people in John's life – are connected to something during the daytime. They all go somewhere during the day. I figure if the people in our church start talking about John's future, and keep asking the question for the next ten years, we can probably figure out how people can welcome him into the places where they work, or volunteer, or do their art, or their music, or add to the community in other ways".

Somehow John's parents knew that it was important to do a good job with their personal community – not with 'the community' at large, but with the people who knew John, who loved him, and who knew that he would be part of their future, forever. They knew that if they did the right kind of work, he might have a chance at being independent of the system. A small amount of formal support – money, technology, or job adaptation – could support a much larger commitment from their friends, but John's future wouldn't be dependent on the operation of the system.

That same summer, fifty-four families marched on our Provincial Legislature, stridently complaining that the 'vocational rehabilitation system' had not made preparations for their children's graduation from high school. Some of their sons and daughters had been sitting at home for over a year. Their question to government sort of boiled down to "Where are the dollars?". Government's answer was simple: "Other people with even more critical needs are standing in line for the dollars". The underlying message? Get more skilled at the game of competitive misery. Sarah's question helped us understand that the march on the Legislature had three meanings:

First, it was true that the 'system' had not done a very good job of planning for these young men and women as they approached high school graduation – somehow they had not been 'planned for' or 'budgeted for' on their way into the adult system.

Second, it meant that for eight, ten, or even twenty years, fifty-four families had been systematically convinced that their children's futures would somehow emerge from the service system. They were told that the most important work that they could do as families was to pay attention to the interface with that system – educating, challenging, advocating, and hoping against hope that the system would do its job when their sons and daughters emerged from school.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, it meant that fifty-four sets of friends, extended family members, members of church congregations, colleagues at work, schoolmates and neighbors – literally hundreds of people – had never been asked to think about what they might do to welcome these young men and women who they already knew, into the world of work. A great opportunity had been missed.

Sarah Jenning's simple question is one that can reveal and engage an enormous amount of community capacity, hospitality, and creativity. Now, how do we get Sarah's question, and other great questions, on the agenda?

Warning Signs of Bad Practice in Education

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint, Fran Maiuri, Judith Snow, Rose and Dom Galati, Louise Bailey

We advise you to read this list and laugh and cry at the same time. All the statements are absolutely true and real situations from families all across Canada and the United States. If you are experiencing three or more of these warning signs we advise you to sit down, stop, breathe, think and then ACT!

You Know It's Not Inclusion...

- When there's an inclusion class.
- When there's an inclusion school.
- When there's an inclusion teacher.
- When there are the "inclusion kids."
- When you dread the phone is going to ring and the school is going to tell you for the millionth time to come pick up Renata because she is showing "behavior."
- When you have chronic diarrhea, butterflies in your stomach and a urinary tract infection from the stress.
- When you have a chronic feeling that something is not right.
- When you tell your son that he doesn't ever have to go back to "that place" again and your son replies, "Thank God, Thank God."
- When they say , "But, she has inclusion for a half hour a day."
- When she has "inclusion" in the morning and goes to another building in the afternoon.
- When you feel unwelcome.
- When you feel you don't belong.
- When the staff refuse to lift your daughter out of her wheelchair.
- When the wheelchair convoy goes down the hallway to the cafeteria together.
- When the staff wear rubber gloves to touch or feed your child.
- When everyone else goes on a field trip except your child.
- When your child is the only one not to go outside for recess.
- When your child is the only one who does go to recess alone with her assistant.
- When the school yard is sectioned off just for your child.
- When no support people are being paid.
- When all support people are being paid.
- When there is "John's assistant," not the 'class' assistant.
- When Jane is included in kindergarten even though she's ten years old.
- When everyone thinks they are "doing" inclusion.
- When you are invited to a meeting (without your support circle) and 28 professionals in suits greet you around a big board table.

Inclusion is NOT a Part time program. It is a right of life! We were ALL Born in!

- When those 28 people all tell you they know how you must feel but:...

  You are still "denying" your child's "condition."

  You are not being "realistic."

  You are listening to "those advocacy people."

  You are.....
- When it is Whites Only, middle class only and everyone looks and acts the same.
- When you spend all your time trying to defend inclusion and tell them why it's a good idea.
- When you pay for your child's assistant.
- When you pay for an in-service on inclusion.
- When "inclusion" starts promptly at 9 AM and ends at 3:30 PM
- When you can only see your child through a one way mirror.
- When inclusion is funded by a short term research grant.
- When there's a new "inclusion department".
- When "inclusion" is somebody else's job.
- When the hair at the back of your neck stands up when you walk into the school.
- When you start to feel really awful about yourself and start questioning your own sanity.
- When you definitely know it would be better not to be there.
- When Inclusion Class is an item on the student's schedule.
- When your child has "his teacher" and the rest of the class has "their teacher".
- When children partner for cooperative activities your child's partner is always the teaching assistant.
- When a teaching assistant is velcro-ed to your child at all times.
- When no one has heard of the idea of "friendship."

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.
Helen Keller

Inclusion means WITH - not just in!

Inclusion's Here to Stay

It's very clear,
Inclusion's Here to Stay.

Not for a year,
But ever and a day.

In time the rockies may tumble,
Gibralter may crumble,

They're only made of clay,
But,
Inclusion's Here to Stay.

Adapted from Gershwin's (george and ira) "Love is Here to Stay" with apologies from Inclusion's English bard... Gerv Leyden

Don't Defend Inclusion; Make Others Defend Segregation

Enjoying Life

Amber Svingen

Hello Marsha and Jack!

This is one of my first e-mail messages.

I am smiling. Excited. And I'm stretching out my arms in a huge hug for you. Thank you for being part of my life.

I have been home schooling with Marilyn and Anna-Marie Krahn, who are good friends and gentle teachers. We are studying biology, Macbeth, organic gardening, Canadian social studies and cooking.

Yesterday, I made pumpkin bread with a brand new mixer. Marilyn set it up so I could start the mixer with my knee switch. Dave set up the same switch so I could grind coffee for all of us.

I'm happy. My life is good. I love my family and my dog, Lady. We're all working hard, and enjoying life together.

Big, BIG love from,
Amber

Dave Wetherow's note: Amber dictated this letter by indicating who she wanted to write to, by showing us some of the things she wanted to say with her eyes, smile and arms (the big hug), by looking meaningfully at different parts of the house (so we could ask the right questions), and by saying 'yes' when we asked if she wanted to say something about...

Amber is a sparkling 18 year old with her family - Dave and Faye Wetherow.

My Commitment To Create Inclusive Community

Kalli Fortune

My commitment to the future is that I will help create an inclusive community. I will lead the way to a world that welcomes ALL people, no matter what their differences.

Inclusion involves the whole community. Inclusion means that as a society, we must recognize that we are all ONE. Yes, we are all unique, but everyone has gifts to offer the entire community. We must learn to appreciate the need for our interdependence.

The opposite of inclusion is exclusion. Anyone who is different is shut-out from the world. Racial discrimination, caste systems, gender discrimination, labelling of "handicaps"—these are all types of exclusion. In our society, they can contribute to a person living ALONE in the world.

You may think that exclusion is something that only happens to someone else. Unfortunately, it is a very real problem that is thriving in our society. It could even happen to YOU!

At the core of my passion to build inclusive communities is my younger sister. She has had many labels placed upon her, most of which fall under the term "handicapped." She has seen exclusion rear it's ugly head numerous times, but proved that she DOES belong in the community.

When she was in first grade, the school wanted to place her in special education, but instead she went into a regular first grade classroom. To assist in feeding her, she had tubes coming out of her nose that dangled down to her stomach. The other kids connected this to an elephant's trunk, so they began calling my sister "Elephant." Within the first few days of school, my sister taught them about teasing. She directly asked the kids, "Do you intend to hurt my feelings, because you most certainly are!" The teasing immediately stopped, because no one was wanting to hurt her.

To the class that my sister "did not belong," she taught an important lesson. It proved that my sister did indeed have gifts to share.

If any of you have ever flown before, a friend of mine, Shafik Asante, would tell you that you have participated in exclusion. A plane has two major sections. There is First Class where passengers pay extra to sit. Then, there is Coach, where most passengers sit. First Class and Coach are separated by an ugly curtain. First Class gets comfortable chairs, wonderful service, and good food, while Coach gets peanuts. But what if there is trouble and the plane crashes? Do you think just because some people paid more they have better chances of surviving? Of course not! Either the whole plane arrives safely or it crashes with everyone in it. There is no need for that ugly curtain, because it does not REALLY matter. The same is true with the community. There is no need for segregation or discrimination, because either we all sink or we all swim.

So what am I going to do about this? I am going to start with my peers by organizing a youth initiative. I will meet with youth to discuss ways to promote inclusion in our community. We can send out flyers announcing a program. It will advertise free food, because as Shafik says, *"If you build it, they will come. If you Bake it, they will stay."* It will be sent to various places to attract people of all different backgrounds. We will offer fun things to do. We will also have rap sessions where people can share their stories with each other. This is how people bond. It is also how people learn about other cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles.

Eventually, the group will come up with shared ideas. This idea will spread to other areas! Then others and others.... creating a huge snowball effect. The snowball will continue until we have one community sharing stories together from all over the world.

Therefore, inclusion is something that demands everyone's participation. Each of us can make a change in our OWN actions. We can greet each person by asking ourselves, "What gift will this person bring to our community?" If we just take this one step, we can realize what Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has." I invite you to join me in creating an inclusive community.

Drooling: A Story of Change

Colleen F. Tomko

I recently got a letter from my son's classroom aide that previously would have really made me mad and upset. This time I looked at it and said aloud to my husband, "Is this really an issue? In the big picture of what we are trying to do is this really an issue at all?" We simply decided to throw out the letter and not give it another thought.

The next day I got a call from the school principal about my son's "drooling". Usually this kind of call really gets to me, but this time instead of getting defensive I told her what I "saw" happening and suggested they get the other kids to help Shaun. I said that the other children would meet people who drool (including their grandparents perhaps) and it was something they would hopefully see as part of the human condition. I also told her that Bob Williams, the Director of Developmental Disabilities in Washington, D.C. is a person with cerebral palsy who also drools at times.

There was a long silence.

I did agree to bring in changes of shirts for Shaun when he needed them. After that she started talking about the upcoming school year. Instead of getting defensive and feeling they were about to kick him out, I took control and started to tell her what I envisioned happening in the next school year. I said I saw Shaun sitting in the middle of a group of children who were his friends. He would get help from peer tutors as well as the teaching assistant for the class and he'd have his own computer on his desk so he could use it whenever he needed it. I actually felt good about this conversation.

At the next meeting I took bright colorful plates, cups, napkins and a tray of home made brownies. My husband attended as well as my friends Lynn, Kim and Tammy. I even took jugs of iced tea. Staff walked in and said, "Oooh, goodies." This was the first meeting I left where I didn't feel I was hit by a truck. I'm not sure how the rest of them felt but for us it was a piece of cake.

We planned before we went in what we really wanted and I told everyone that if the meeting turned into another discussion about "drooling" we would all just walk out. I guess we all felt more in control and confident too.

I know we won't magically have beautiful meetings for the rest of Shaun's life, but I feel I have the tools now to go into a meeting with confidence and with at least a chance to get what we want for Shaun.

At the next meeting when the "big guns" come I'll just have to get extra special food and maybe play some gentle Irish music in the background.

I have also thought a lot more about what my own dreams are. I even cancelled doing something that I really didn't want to do and which wasn't important so I could spend a whole day shopping with my friends who I haven't seen much of lately. I am more confident that Shaun will have a better life now that I am not such a nervous wreck all the time. Thanks for the tools.

Meeting Reminders

When you go to any meeting:

1. CMF - bring color, music and food.
2. Do not ask permission, ask forgiveness.
3. Prepare ahead. Know what you want. Know your boundaries.
4. Bring at least two other people.

This will ensure at least the possibility that you will get something. It is not a guarantee, but if you are alone and unprepared it is a guarantee for failure. Best of luck in all your meetings.

One can never content to creep when one feels an impulse to soar.
Helen Keller

Solution Circle: We're In The Driver's Seat

After a Solution Circle in Connecticut
Kathy Whitbread

We did an excellent solution circle around the problem we were having around a little girl named Allie who had been turned away from her local school. I was clearly stuck so I chose to do a solution circle. I called together a random group of people and we followed the format of the Solution Circle Tool.

What followed from this half hour "whack on the side of the head" was an intense and emotional journey. This is basically a synopsis without the gory details. After the solution circle our circle of support for Allie was re-energized and renewed with new folks as well as old members. We discovered as we looked closely and listened harder that Allie has deep friendships with the kids at the local school. This, in spite of the fact that the administration has only allowed her to "visit".

It blew me away to talk to those kids, and the para-professional who is so devoted to Allie. The special education administrator had done everything in her power to keep us from hearing the good stuff, and had blocked communication between the para-professional, Allie's mother and the kids by always insisting that all communication go through her.

Anyway, after we realized how connected Allie was with the kids at school, her mother decided to push for her to attend there full-time. She got tough - armed with advocates and a good knowledge of the law. At the planning meeting, the para-professional spoke up very powerfully on Allie's behalf. The regular education teacher expressed frustration at special education interference in including Allie. Everyone spoke right from the heart.

And the good news is that in Sept., Allie, for the first time in her life will enroll in a real school. Unbelievably, the administrator has stopped pouring all her energy into standing in the way of Allie. The people who really care about Allie are now in the driver's seat.

We truly were stuck. We were buried in all the negative stuff. Taking the time to step back and bring in some new people who weren't so tired and burned out really turned things around. We love solution circles!

The Solution Circle is a creative process that can help unstick a problem solver who is willing to ask five to eight other people to help for about a half an hour. The person responsible for taking action spends six uninterrupted minutes presenting the difficult situation, listens attentively for six minutes to other group members brainstorming approaches, spends six minutes in discussion identifying promising possibilities for understanding and acting on the problem, spends six minutes deciding on concrete steps to take toward shifting the situation within three days, and then shares reactions to the process

I hate the term 'Respite Care'

Micheline Mason

Micheline and Lucy Mason - advocates!

As a person with a disability it tells me I am a burden to even those who love me. As a parent of a child with a disability it tells me that it is my daughter's 'needs' which cause the problems we have, not our lack of resources or the general unhelpfulness of our so called community. In fact the idea of putting Lucy in the Ursala Jones Room (a little ward in St. George's Hospital) whilst I had a 'break' was so preposterous that it made me dissolve into hysterical giggles for rather a long time, much to the consternation of the nurse who told me about it.

However, as Lucy has grown older and heavier and more in need of 'space' and privacy, I did recognize that we needed some more help in our lives. After a great deal of thinking about it, I worked out that we needed to be able to pay someone to be available to Lucy at least two evenings a week to help her do things she couldn't do, like have a bath or go out swimming.

Having heard of the 'Community Care' Act and the Direct Payments Bill, I rang social services and asked to be assessed. It took several weeks before people stopped passing us up a line of social workers with clipboards, until we met the person who knew what she was doing. She understood the need, but a direct payment had never been asked for before.

We were finally assessed and we were awarded a package of 416 hours a year with extra hours in a 'bank' for emergencies and holidays.

We could recruit and manage the people ourselves but social services said that direct payment would not be possible till Lucy was at least 16.

We advertised through a local teacher training college for a student with a car, a sense of humour and who liked hanging around with young people. We found Catherine and I have now seen a version of 'respite care' that is really empowering to both me and Lucy. Lucy decides what they are going to do and has worked out ways of using these hours which had not even occurred to me. They pick up her friends and go bowling, swimming, pizza eating, sometimes to the cinema. Sometimes they juggle the hours so that Catherine can take Lucy to a friend's party, or to their (inaccessible) houses.

Suddenly the invitations are coming from friends who do not have the sort of parents who are even willing or able to lift Lucy around. Sometimes they even stay in and have the bath/homework session so high on my list of desirable activities. I have two evenings a week when I can go out and do what I want.

> The central question is not 'do we know what to do?' but rather, 'Will we do what we know?'
>
> Gary Bunch

Andreas in College

Heide Prinz

After seven years of high school and a summer working at Canada's Wonderland, my son, Andreas, started George Brown Theatre College in September 1997. It had been his dream to go to college - his brother had gone - and to study drama. Actually, the program he is taking is called, "Pre-Theatre", but to Andreas, it is all the same, it is drama. And to his parents, it has been an absolute blessing. Has Andreas changed? Has his life and my perception of him changed? YES to all three questions. He is much more independent, reliable, capable, and helpful: more sure of himself, and socially accepted.

But in day-to-day life, little things count - like waking him up at 6 a.m., and he does not complain. He does get a car ride to the subway, but then it is a 35 minute subway ride, change of subways, and a 5 or 10 minute walk, depending on how fast he walks. Actually, Andreas has been walking much faster for the last couple of months. I rarely get a call from him any more to pick him up at the subway when he comes home from college, or the library, or from a friend's house. He takes the bus and walks the 15 minutes.

Andreas rarely forgets to take to college what is important to him. Mind you, he will remember some of these items at the last minute. He never forgets to make sure he has enough money. Money is still very abstract to him but he knows, exactly how much he needs for lunch in the cafeteria, or to have a coffee and a bagel at the Country Style outside the college. Or rather, he knows how much money is NOT enough. He knows how much he needs to pay the teacher to be able to attend this rehearsal, or that play or musical. (He is getting to see some really good stuff. After all, this is drama.) Andreas has learned to take care of his personal items really fast. In the very beginning, like day 2 or 3, he lost a vest and then a jacket. Since then, nothing but a key has disappeared.

There have been occasions when we had to pick him up somewhere in Toronto from parties as late as 3:00 a.m.! Or from the Hardrock Cafe in downtown Toronto at midnight. From there we had gotten a call saying that Andreas had been drinking a beer and was drunk. When I picked him up he seemed quite sober, but had had a marvellous time pretending to enjoy beer and acting like some of this peers!!

Andreas' reading skills are improving also. He will read his essay, or other homework to me, and I may enter it into the computer. All through high school he resisted working with me, so this is a new experience. (All the stuff I am learning too!) My son was always really funny and witty. Now he can express himself better.

As a parent, I never believed my son would really be able to become an actor. There are so many would-be, poor actors and they do not have an extra chromosome. Andreas and his teachers have taught me different. The teachers believe in him. Their support really opened my eyes. Andreas won my admiration when he started memorizing some HAMLET and the PUCK from Midsummer Nights Dream. Three months later, he still remembered everything! I have learned to listen to Andreas' wishes and hopes more carefully. I know my son would benefit from continuing his experiences at college.

Andreas reading lines with Patrice Goodman

January 1999

A year has gone by.... Andreas is still in college, still in pre-theatre. Some of the courses have changed and some are being reinforced, one of the new ones is Computers. This one has been a particular joy to me as the teacher phoned me one day to tell me that Andreas had written the test and had scored 78%!! The teacher was really excited as the test had not been modified.

How have things changed from last year for me? I do not ever pack his school bag any more. Last year I did all the packing. I don't check whether he has all his stuff, like money, TTC card, books, special assignments, etc. I don't write his times and locations of the classes for the day on a piece of paper for him to carry around. Now Andreas uses his day timer. I tell Andreas, "I don't do homework." I do still drive him to the subway though.

The tutors this year are different. He has had the same ones since September. (They are students from his classes or the college.) They do get paid, but what they appreciate most is what they learn from Andreas.

You expect a person to mature in one year and Andreas has done such an excellent job of it. His conversation and social skills are something to be proud of. I have finally done what he wanted me to do for the last year - I have signed Andreas up with an agent! In the beginning that may just get Andreas working as an "extra", but, then who knows? Last year, one of his teachers said that Andreas should definitely be working in this field!!

What is left to say? Maybe that it has really paid off that Andreas attended regular classes in neighbourhood schools. He also attended regular classes in various community sports, recreation, and drama centres just for fun. Without all these experience Andreas would not be able to cope and his social skills might not be acceptable for college. But.... HE IS !! and THEY ARE!!

Becky at Work

Linda Till

As graduation from High School loomed ever closer, I was filled with a significant amount of distress. I was absolutely not ready to take on another huge battle! And you know trying to access the post secondary system would have been a huge battle. I finally realized Becky didn't have to go to college or university right away. She did need to do meaningful things during the day. Many of us who finish High School do not go right on to college and choose to find employment instead. We decided to explore the opportunities. We were committed to finding an inclusive work experience in a real work environment.

Equally important was ensuring that the work Becky would do was work she actually did herself and work that she enjoyed doing. Given that she experiences significant difficulties in moving her arms and hands, holding her head up, and speaking, this was a major challenge.

The first thing I realized was that we needed to recognize the need for diversity in her work tasks throughout the week, in order to minimize the possibility of boredom. We called this developing a "multi faceted week."

Today, Becky has several jobs, all unpaid (although we hope to change that); a fitness program at a local fitness center, a weekly visit to the local library where she does preparatory work for one of her jobs, as well as obtaining the books she likes to read.

Her favorite job, the one most suited for her needs and abilities is working as a reading tutor in a grade one class at a local elementary school. She assists the children in learning to read, although she leaves the actual instruction to the teacher. Becky's task is to have the children read to her, thereby strengthening their reading skills. Since all children this age need to practice reading aloud, this is a perfect match for Becky's skills.

Becky is an excellent listener, has great comprehension, loves children and is very social. She is so good at this job that the children often fight to see who will read to her. She is an excellent motivator as well. The more expressively a student reads, the more flamboyantly they add sound effects or actions to the story, the more Becky rewards them with her brilliant smiles and body language. Thus the children are becoming adept with being expressive and creative with stories while improving their actual reading competencies.

Becky brings in stories she has found at the library. She has her assistant put some of these stories on tape. She uses a foot switch to turn on her story to "read" to the students. She chooses one of the children to be the page turner. The children have spontaneously started to write about Becky in their journals, demonstrating their improvement in writing as well as reading.

My favorite story is of a child who was reluctant to read to anyone but who would literally fight for Becky to hear him read. He struggled one day for a whole hour and finally finished his book. It was the first time the teacher had ever seen him do that. Becky is helping that child with his self confidence as much as his reading.

Becky's other work placements are equally as valid. She works at the humane society where her job is to socialize puppies and kittens. She can do most of this task without assistance.

She also visits a local dance school where she makes popcorn for the children during their breaks. She uses her foot switch to turn on the electric popcorn maker, and enlists the children in the parts of the task she can't complete i.e. dishing out and serving the popcorn, and placing their money in the cash box.

When the grade one kids see her they shout, "There's Becky. We read together."

When she's at the fitness center, the people there say, "There's Becky. She's one of our members.

When the pets see her coming they immediately perk up and know she will bring them fun and attention.

When the children at the dance school see her they say, "There's Becky. She makes our popcorn."

This is what I want for her - a life in which her competencies are the focus, for which she is welcomed and valued. An interactive life with people she likes to be with, doing things of interest and meaning to her, contributing to her world in the best way she can and being recognized for that contribution.

We are working toward making that recognition include a salary. One step at a time. I think it's a good start and it sure is agreeing with Becky.

Life or Death

by Judith Snow

Jam packed into one week in October, yet once again Canadians are going to be treated to a media spectacle - the Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide Follies. The opening act will consist of a dramatic presentation on CBC starring the ghost of Sue Rodriguez. The main act will bring Robert Latimer back for an encore performance of "Killing Me Softly" performed with genuine Canadian empathy and compassion.

Meanwhile the majority of Canadians with disabilities will once again either see the event with rage or tremble even more with the anxiety that comes from knowing all too well that the bell does indeed toll for each and everyone of us - we who are made more vulnerable everyday to this death sentence.

As I approach my fiftieth year I chalk up a long list of infirmities that I live with in an uneasy harmony or have actually overcome through ingenuity and considerable help. On my list are quadriplegia, 25% breathing capacity, inoperable fibroids, chronic kidney stones, hepatitis C, post-traumatic shock, osteoporosis, diabetes and a variety of food and drug allergies. At various times, sometimes for years at a stretch, I have lived with relentless pain, itch and/or depression. I have stared my own death in the eyes not less than six times in 49 years.

I know many other people, personally, who like Tracy Latimer do not share in words their appreciation for life or their own perceptions of the beauty and complexity of our world. Not speaking, but certainly not silent either, these people, these fellow travelers of life have known the heights and depths of joy and suffering too.

If Sue Rodriguez had reviewed her life and her relationships in the light of failing physical ability and privately decided to end it all - privately, I say - I would have not agreed but never complained. Many people believe that they know what disability is all about already. They never look closely at me, at my life, at my work, at my home and so they never can understand either how I actually live and do stuff, or appreciate why my life is so important to me and those who love and work with me. Not knowing - many, like Sue Rodriguez, like Robert Latimer, think that life with disability is not worth living. Thinking she knew how it would go Sue Rodriguez chose to die. Too bad for her!

My problem is that these death mongers won't keep their private ignorance and irrationality to themselves. Rather they firmly, publicly parade their death sentences around, drawing the comfort of assumed solidarity from convincing others that I should be dead too. Now I have to deal with a public that wonders why I want to live or if I should be allowed to.

With Robert Latimer, the media goes out of its way to paint large, every negative shade of Tracy's life while turning its own blindness and deafness into deadly silence about all that was worthwhile in her life and her presence among us. Absent are the words and pictures about what could have been if true compassion and appreciation had been turned into an intentional search for ways to support, develop and contribute her gifts.

Just think, Tracy would have been celebrating her sixteenth birthday this month! What about some funky clothes - say some leggings, a mini-kilt, some makeup, a stylin' purple streak in her hair to bring out her laughing eyes. How about a henna tattoo, and an accessible taxi to the school dance accompanied by some school chums to make sure that all goes well. Afterwards, some pizza and loud music in the rec room to round out a perfect birthday. It happens for girls like Tracy everywhere. It will never happen for Tracy.

Instead of parties and planning for a future that will be full of participation - instead the media concentrates on the pain and the daily struggles. Even worse, the pain and struggles are magnified with no questions asked: "Were there really no alternatives? No one else willing to step in?". In the last years of this millennium, with access to every medical system ever known to human beings, with millions of dollars going into human services in Canada, with every sort of innovation getting a test run in North America - no alternatives than death - really - really?!? Give me a F...in' Break!!!

The very worst thing about being a Canadian with disabilities is the death sentence in our culture's eyes, the death sentence that stops every person without the courage from looking past the surface or thinking past the hype. People easily decide that I want to be, soon will be, should be, already am, dead. Robert Latimer and his wife were handed an excuse by a society that has already decided - helped in large measure by a media that feeds on the sensational and sentimental. The same media and society write the lines for Sven Robinson and Sue Rodriguez to faithfully parrot on the way to her grave - and beyond onto prime time TV.

Save me from one thing and one thing alone. Save me from all those who would have me dead for my own good!

Language of Us/Them

We like things.
They fixate on objects.

We try to make friends.
They display attention thinking behavior.

We take breaks.
They display off task behavior.

We stand up for ourselves.
They are non-compliant.

We have hobbies.
They self-stim.

We choose our friends wisely.
They display poor peer socialization.

We persevere.
They perseverate.

We love people.
They have dependencies on people.

We go for a walk.
They run away.

We insist.
They tantrum.

We change our minds.
They are disoriented and have short attention spans.

Meyer Shevin

No one is free while others are oppressed.

Dear Teacher,
I am a survivor of a concentration camp.
My eyes saw what no man should witness.
Gas chambers built by learned engineers.
Children poisoned by educated physicians.
Infants killed by trained nurses.
Women & babies shot & burned by high school & college graduates.
So, I am suspicious of education.
My request is that teachers help students become human.
Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.
Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human..

from: Haim Ginott (1972)
Teacher & Child

Standing By

Dick Sobsey

Back in the year of '17,
Someone said, "its just plain mean
That we prolong a wretched life.
There is no need to bare the knife
Or bear the blame. We'll just stand by
And watch defective children die."
So, in that region of the gray
A hundred children passed away.

Then in the year of '22,
There rose another point of view,
"Death from neglect in pain is slow,
A most unpleasant way to go
Its kinder far to end the strife
And take the infant's useless life."
And with their hearts so mercy filled
A thousand children more were killed.

Back in the year of '31,
They realized that they'd just begun.
"The most defective children die,
Yet many others are passed by
To live such lives that we can see
Have no potential quality."
And so they used a stricter test
That laid 10,000 more to rest.

In early spring of '39,
Hitler and his grand design
Gave Karl Rudolf Brandt the power
To take the life from Baby Knauer.
Then others whose young lives would be
"Not worth living," certainly,
From our world were quickly passed,
Starved or drugged or simply gassed.
So by the year of '45,
The "healthy child" stayed alive
While "damaged goods" were quickly slain
By those who wished to spare them pain.
The bioethicists define
That most illusive borderline
Between the ones that we should save
And those sent to a cradle grave.

Minor defects, imperfection
Seemed to grow with close inspection,
And with the "worst" eliminated,
Stricter standards are created.

The sharp-edges scythe cuts fast and clean
And with each stroke it moves the mean.
The babe that once might be the norm
Now seemed "a most defective form,"
And when new standards were applied
A hundred thousand children died.

That's long ago and far away.
It couldn't happen here today.
We would never just stand by
And watch a helpless child die...

What's that you say? I didn't know.
Candace Taschuk? Baby Doe?
There days were numbered just a few:
But was there something we could do?
Could we save them? Did we try?
Or is it us who just stand by?

Don't Defend Inclusion; Make Others Defend Segregation

First they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the communists
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out -
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me -
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.

Pastor Niemoeller
(Victim of the Nazis)

Hearts and Flours

Dave Hingsburger

Butter tarts. She was making butter tarts. I leaned up against the counter and watched. Impossibly slow, incredibly precise, she fairly burned with purpose. I was expected elsewhere in the building to have another meeting about something important, I'm sure. But something bade me watch. Not a drop of batter spilled, or if it did I didn't notice. All I could see was a graceful ballet of movements.

Butter tarts. Really. Butter tarts. She was making butter tarts. Her hands, the ones that had mixed the batter, were women's hands. I could tell that hers had not been cared for, seldom scented, maybe never even held. Time slowed around us as she turned a mundane chore into a hymn to freedom.

Butter tarts. Do you realize the importance of butter tarts? And yes, that she was making them. Sweet batter, unnecessary calories, a smell of luxury, all in a frivolous food. Not on a diet or menu plan anywhere in the world. Butter tarts, two words that freeze the heart of every nutritionist and darken the soul of every dietician. A revolutionary food, a declaration of independence from those who know better.

Butter tarts. With raisins. She was making butter tarts with raisins. There were other people in the room with me but none seemed to notice her. Sound swirled around her but couldn't penetrate her concentration. Her eyes followed every raisin fall into the delicate pool of sweetness. I looked at the others in shock. Why couldn't they see the glint in her eyes as she slowly filled each cup. None ran over. They don't need to anymore. Because and only because she was making ...

Butter tarts. With raisins. On a pan full and waiting only for her. This was her job. It needed her hands. We were in a kitchen. It had a sink. A fridge. Stove. It was like a thousand kitchens in a thousand homes. Unremarkable really, except maybe to her. She would notice the unlocked doors that led only outside. The windows without mesh or bars. It had people who knew her name and used it kindly. Her hands showed no tension from rush, or fear, or force. They simply worked at their own speed in creation of the sweet hereafter.

Butter tarts. Call down the corridor of time. "Come one. Come all. Quick come see. The village idiot was making butter tarts. The institution's moron was scooping batter and the school's imbecile watched the raisins fall. The denied child — her tongue knows sweet. The refused communicant — her heart knows bitter." How long, I wondered, had her hands been held captive in one of those places with the long corridors. How long had she waited, and endured, and prayed for today. The day that she would make...

Butter tarts. With the poetry of motion she was eloquent. She moved in freedom as if its air had the buoyancy of water. In wisdom we had locked her away for the crime of learning slowly. She will again, I know, be called a Retard by those who know better. She will face those who are embarrassed by her presence. She will struggle, every day, against bigotry to live with dignity. But the battle is won. Because now, and all we really have is now, she is sitting on a comfortable chair and waiting.

For butter tarts.

Micah's Circle - A Mother's Thanks

Janice Fialka

Marsha Forest's note: Although this letter was written to me, I think it speaks to all of our readers in a more general way. I don't need traditional recognition. Awards and certificates don't mean much to me. But a letter or a phone call from a teacher, parent, person who has been influenced by our workshops, books or videos is all I need to keep going in those times I wonder if anything is really changing. The answer is "YES!" Things are really changing but change is slow and often you only hear the bleak news not the little gems like in this letter that make everything worthwhile. I urge all our readers to write letters or phone those who have done something meaningful or just plain nice. It means a great deal. The feedback we give each other is one thing that costs no money and means more than money can buy. Here's Janice's letter edited with her permission.

Dear Marsha,

I have a few quiet moments away from the demands of family and work. I decided I wanted to spend this quiet time with a cup of hot chamomile tea (with a hint of vanilla) and YOU. So I am visualizing you sitting somewhere comfortable.

The conversation went like this:

Marsha, I just have to tell you that Micah was invited to his first 8th grade party given by one of his classmates, Andrea. We are all thrilled, happy, delighted and quite pleased. (Sorry to belabor the feeling but it's all very sweet!)

I am convinced that this invitation was likely never to have happened if wasn't for you and all the work you and "your gang" have done around inclusion.

Because of you Micah has a Circle of Friends that has been meeting for five years. Different kids have floated in and out but the circle has been circling since his third grade experience.

Over the years Micah's classmates have had the chance to experience his many gifts. ("You can always count on Micah to give you a smile. Micah doesn't get frustrated when he can't play soccer perfectly. He does what he can and is satisfied. I wish I could be like that.") They have witnessed his growth and changes and they celebrate them with him.

These young people who have been in Micah's circle have an experience denied most adults of today. They've been able to interact on a day-to-day basis in common routines with someone who has a disability. I know that these ten or so kids will view the world a bit differently because of knowing Micah.

Marsha, you taught me to be OK about asking for what I need. Wow that's hard! But your words echoed over and over when I was concerned that Micah was being left out! So as a result of your encouragement and reassurance I've been able to (once in a while) ask for help from another mom whose son or daughter is in the Circle. As you would expect, the asking helped to create positive results.

I think that's how Micah got invited to the party. We all need a little nudging (not out of guilt but out of a sense of community and responsibility for others in our world).

I shudder to think where our family would be today without the work being done on inclusion. The good news is that I only have to shudder for a brief blink of an eye. Then I can move on to do the real work.

Although none of the children in the circle know your name, you have touched their lives forever just as you have mine, Micah's, my husband Rich and our daughter Emma. I just thought you and all your readers and others who do this work should know how grateful I and every other mother and father are!

I will end with this quote which is a beautiful reframing of asking for help.

"At the deepest level, there is no giver, no gift, and no recipient...only the universe rearranging itself." (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

So Marsha, here's your tea bag (real tea bag enclosed) so you can enjoy a hot cup of tea while you savor this love note. Thanks for being in the world.

Love, Janice Fialka (Michigan)

The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in times of great moral crisis maintain their neutrality.

Dante 1265-1321

Big Bellies, Short Legs and a Fine Six Year Old Scotch

Dave Hingsburger

"Hey, Tiny!!"

The scene is depressingly similar. I am walking down the sidewalk in Toronto and some passer-by feels it necessary to comment on my size. Each one of them, no matter if they call me "Slim" or "Fatso" thinks that they are outrageously clever. They walk away chuckling to themselves pleased at their clever riposte.

I now know better. Whenever I present my self to the world – I prepare. From the curious glances of children to the outright hostile glares of their parents, I wait. It's dangerous to just forget, even for a moment that I am different. Once, when finishing teaching a group of people with disabilities on how to defend themselves from abuse and violence, I left feeling wonderful. The session had been powerful, fun and outright exciting. I saw people grow under my careful planning and teaching – it felt good to be making a difference in the lives of others.

Alone in Vancouver, I decided to treat myself to dinner at a small restaurant across the street from my hotel. Odd. I had taught them how to be careful of dangerous situations and I forgot. Forgot that those in thin skins often have thick skulls. Forgot that the sight of fat people on the streets brings out the worst in some and the horrible in others. I was crossing the street. As I write this, I tense up. Sweat forms on my back. To you, this is a story. To me, this is my life. I was thinking, about me and them, the ones I was teaching – not me and THEM, the ones who hate me.

Fatso, Lardass, Here Piggy Piggy Pig, a group of teenaged girls in a fancy car sped by throwing hate out of their windows like stones. And because I forgot. And ONLY because I forgot. They hurt me.

Now don't go thinking this is another "Woe is me!!" piece of writing. I'm just stating the facts. I don't want to be thin – sorry Mr. Simmon's but to me Sweating to the Oldies, happens every time I try to get into my old jeans after they've had about an hour in the dryer. If they made a thin pill, I wouldn't take it – unless it was flavoured with chocolate. Since you aren't old until your age passes your waist size, I will be forever young. No, I don't mind being fat – but I get tired of the casual cruelty of others.

But. And it's a big but. (Shut up!!) Sometimes there are wonderful moments of kindness. One happened today. I was sitting in church and chatting with two little boys. Eric and Robert were visiting their grandmother – and for an old Scottish lady she has a big heart for her grand-kids. I've gotten to know them well as they visit quite often.

Well, today, Robert, a cute little six year old came over beside me. He started to crawl over me and I thought he wanted out of the pew. I asked if he wanted out and he said, "No, I want to sit on your lap."

Cute, huh.

I haven't had a lap since ... well, I haven't had a lap. I joked and told him that I didn't have a lap, I only had knees and he wouldn't be comfortable sitting on them. He said, "You don't have a lap because your legs are short, right?" I smiled. I am almost 6'3". If I had short legs, I'd have to have an awesome torso. Now I don't mind being fat, or even talking about it so I said, "No, it's not because I have short legs, it's because I have a big belly." Completely nonplussed he said - and this is a direct quote, "I know, but it's nicer to say you have short legs."

Ain't that about three miles beyond the town of cute. What tremendous social skills from someone who likes to dig in mud, slide down hills and fall out of trees. I have but two questions. "Where did he learn such kindness?" and "How old will he be before he understands how much his sensitivity meant to a bald, fat guy?"

Well, I'm writing this so that his old grandma (and boy she sure is old) can give it to him when he hits his teens. He'll need to be reminded that kindness is remembered – and appreciated – by guys with tiny little legs.

Martin Luther King Jr. 1929-1968

These quotes inspired us everyday during our workshop in Anchorage, Alaska. They were on the wall at the Martin Luther King Center. We stopped and read them each day. We hope they will inspire you as well... M & J

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed:

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character. I have a dream today.

The function of education therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason but with no morals. We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only the power of concentration but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate.

Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable.

Dreaming and Planning

Judith Snow

A Quiet Revolution

As I remember it there was no Person Centered Planning in 1978. I believe that the widespread adoption of planning that is focused on an individual with a disability label is a marker of a quiet revolution. Some perceptions have changed in some of our culture as this practice is taking hold.

First of all we have begun to believe that individuals who are called disabled are first of all people. Not many years ago this thought would be dismissed politely but quickly - still is in some places. Formerly the universal perception that disability invalidated all other characteristics of an individual gave rise to blanket, usually mass, treatment of labeled people. Instead "they" were viewed as dangerous, burdensome, non-human creatures. To have a disability was to be without the capacity for relationship, participation, responsibility or intimacy. Now some of us are willing to see and support these human capacities in everyone.

Secondly, we have begun to believe in and experience the value of planning with individuals. To plan is to believe that the future is not already given - that it can be guided into better directions. Even more importantly we are willing to try planning alternative futures that may be better not just for the individuals themselves but also for the various communities that they may come to participate in. We dare to carry out our planning in ways that encourage communities to encounter the capacities, contributions and differences of labeled people in ways that benefit as many people as possible.

Thirdly, we are not centering our efforts on the caregivers and providers, as important as they are. We are focusing on the individual made vulnerable by being physically or functionally "different". We have created vehicles for discovering and giving strength to the directions desired by the central individual. By doing so we have stood behind our ethic that normal is not always the best and usual is not always the way things have to be. In this we have added our voices to other voices of the latter part of this century. We are speaking against our cultural and political myopia. We are asserting that diversity in all of life is of great value and we plan to keep diversity as a regular part of our communities.

Dreaming and Planning with Scott

When Scott was born his father immediately announced to friends and family that he was "special". He was born without eyes. Later he had an allergic reaction to childhood vaccinations. He developed epilepsy, a hearing impairment and generalized muscular weakness. At 16 he doesn't speak, uses a wheelchair, eats with the greatest of difficulty and is supported in every area of personal care.

But only the uninitiated would think that these are the characteristics that make Scott special.

Picture a rambling two storey house with a two-car garage, built on a wooded ravine in small town Ontario. Over 30 people are crowded into a - usually - spacious family room. Large sheets of newsprint are taped to the extensive bank of windows. The assemblage ranges from a two-month-old baby to Grandmother in her eighties. Family members are well represented but ten of the gathering are teenagers. The young man taking graphic notes on the newsprint is one of them and Scott is another. The other eight teens have been Scott's classmates since Grade 4 or earlier.

The group has gathered to do more than celebrate Scott's 16th birthday. They are dreaming and planning with him. Over a space of three hours they tell stories of Scott, of his parents and of his many friends. They recount battles lost and won with school boards to maintain Scott's inclusion in regular classrooms. Most of all they talk about the love and inspiration they have received after being drawn into Scott's influence.

The young men and women tell discreet versions of their adventures. Stories range from afternoons experimenting with lurid hair dyes shared among the group to wild rides at Canada's Wonderland where Scott has served as their "Amex", ("Don't leave home without it!"). As a wheelchair user, Scott can go to the front of every line-up and go round more than once, too. All his buddies are sure to get on with him!

Scott's parents tell of the careful negotiations that have been required over the years to ensure that all the children will get to stay together, not just in class but on school trips and during important, "just hanging out" times. It becomes clear that the "children" are aware their allegiance to Scott, and his to them, is always threatened. The teens tell of a recent incident in the school cafeteria where Scott was almost hit by an empty pop can being thrown across the room in a food fight. The official response was to suggest restriction of Scott's presence in the lunch room. Scott's gang tell us that they made sure that restriction never got registered and that the word went out to would-be can launchers to be more careful.

Other, somewhat older members of the gathering tell of meeting Scott. Time spent with him has moved them to shape their work and marriage plans around him. It turns out that Scott is a good judge of a life partner because folks who know him won't marry anyone who doesn't want to spend time with him. People are making life decisions to ensure that they can keep Scott in their daily activities and move in with him if and when that should become necessary.

And what of the future! There is no shortage of volunteers when the idea of a new adventure is raised. Supposing Scott got himself a camper van and traveled around North America, and beyond, looking for new experiences and, of course, fun. No one says: "You must be kidding! Be realistic!" Scott, himself, is laughing and slapping his knee in excitement over that one.

Scott has brought many problems for many people to cope with. His challenges pale when measured against the laughter, the camaraderie and the mutual support he brings to his family, his family's friends and his school chums. Young people who get close to Scott get a rare opportunity to discover both how to support another person and how to accept support from others as well. They experience personal engagement in action. They are part of a team where commitment is needed and fostered. They see human values at work and are learning to solve both practical and social problems as they assist Scott and his family in overcoming barriers in the way of his full participation.

The intimacy that Scott brings to his world goes beyond personal emotion. By sharing his desire for a full life, the fragility of his body and the challenges society places in his path, Scott creates a way for his family and friends to know each other completely and to work together for common purposes. They discover a deeper love and a genuine community. This is the specialness of Scott.

"Visiting a family in their home teaches more than a thousand books"

Jack Pearpoint

Finding Mr. Yang in Yunnan, China

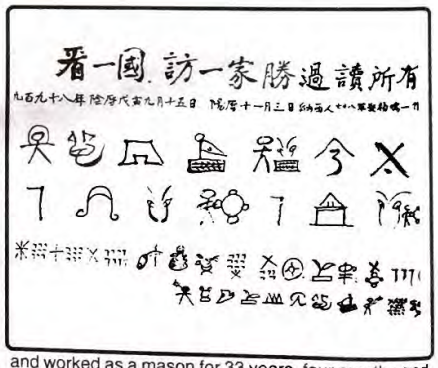
Marsha with Mr. Yang in Lijiang

Lijiang has apparently been here for 800 years and is the centre of Naxi culture. The old city has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is carefully preserved and maintained. It is charming, and we walked the marble cobbles to the old market which was a little - actually a lot - touristy, but still filled with delightful wrinkly faces and wonderful traditional costumes. We shot our photo fill, and then began to explore the back streets. We went the other way. It was a blessing because we got to meet Mr. Yang and his sisters.

We were wandering up a side street, and poked heads in a tiny darkened doorway to see two ancient ladies weaving and sewing. We asked and were encouraged to take pictures. We didn't argue. After a few shots, Duane and I began to move on. Marsha and Donna fortunately doddled. They were leaving when a reporter from the *Beijing Financial Times* came to interview Mr. Yang and his sisters. He wanted some 'foreigners' to colourise his pictures, and they were the right answer. They were invited in, and were privileged to discover that this family of 80 year olds were quite remarkable. Mr. Yang is a famous poet, and perhaps the leading expert on the oldest living pictorial language. Dong-Ba (the Naxi language) was invented 2,000 years ago and has been in constant use ever since.

The reporter left, but Mr. Yang was in fine form and we spent the next two hours drinking green tea and having poetry and language lessons from Mr. Yang. He 'punned' in Naxi (Dong-Ba), Chinese and English. (Naxi is pronounced 'Nashi'.) When he revealed that he was 80 on the solar calendar - and 89 on the lunar calendar, we were humbled by our ignorance and his wit. He insisted that he was just a 'foolish old man' - foolish like a snake. He read, translated and pixilated three poems, two on the environment, and a third that summarizes in one line why we travel: "Visiting a family in their home teaches more than a thousand books." As he shuffled through mounds of books and cards from admirers around the world, we saw Bruce Chatwin's book, *Songlines* (a book we love) sitting there. We opened it, and the inscription was a personal note from Bruce Chatwin - who visited Mr. Yang in 1985. As we chatted, tid bits emerged. He had been a teacher until 1951, when he was sent for compulsory re-education

Mr. Yang reads us his poetry in Naxi script



and worked as a mason for 33 years, four months and three days. Now he is a teacher again, presenting himself as "a foolish old man."

Duane made the fatal error of asking him the symbol for 'foolish old man'. He looked at Duane and laughed. It is a pictograph of a man who uses only one eye - and Duane wears an eye patch. Mr. Yang hugged Marsha and Donna, posed for photographs, and agreed to copy one or two of his poems for us.

A note from John O'Brien: This is not just a good travel story, it is a parable about essential skills for any journey. Staying on a linear plan and schedule that sticks to the routes in the guidebook, as too many travellers do, sometimes yields less than wandering. Being restless to see more and making things happen – as Jack and Duane were – sometimes yields less than moving slower and letting things develop by seeking hospitality and sharing – as Marsha and Donna did. The coincidence of Jack's interest in graphic recording with Mr. Yang's expertise might be more than accidental in arranging their meeting.

Captain Al: A Unique Teacher in a Unique School

Marsha Forest

There's a great Sufi story which says, "You only learn what you already know." This is about something I already know. I have been a teacher of students of all ages for over 30 years. Recently I was reminded of what great teachers do. I learned it in an unusual classroom.

My classroom was located under the cold and pristine waters of the Pacific Northwest Coast of British Columbia. My teacher - Captain Al Spilde. Captain Al is a master scuba diver and Captain of the Sea Venturer, a 53-foot livaboard scuba diving vessel harboured in Nanaimo on Vancouver Island.

What makes Al such a great teacher is that he doesn't see himself as a teacher. He sees that his job is to make sure all his "guests" on the boat are safe, secure and having a great adventure in scuba diving at the level at which they want to dive.

For me to have that great adventure under the enchanted emerald sea means diving very closely with someone who respects my level of diving and the reasons I want to dive.

And so developed the "hand in hand with Captain Al" method of diving. If anyone is familiar with the concept of "facilitated communication" they will understand the "hand in hand with Captain Al" method. In facilitated communication a facilitator/teacher gently holds the hand of the person who cannot usually communicate verbally and supports the person to choose letters of the alphabet which spell words. Slowly the facilitator phases out and although the facilitator stays close, they gradually fade the support.

My adventure in "facilitated diving" or HHWCA (Hand in Hand with Captain AL) evolved naturally as all good situations do. Al unobtrusively assesses each of his diver's abilities and quietly lets the more advanced divers go while checking out the novices (who were in both trips only myself and Jack.) Jack quickly moved from novice to "octopus explorer."

I explained to Al that I was excited about diving but quite anxious about the dry suit, the cold water, the tides, etc. "Could you stay close by," I sheepishly asked. As all expert masters of any craft or art do, Al listened. And he heard. I had experienced severe health problems in the past and had quite enough anxiety in my life. I was diving to relax, to experience a new world, and to have fun. I did not want to be an instructor, nor did I want to get more advanced certification in any way. I simply wanted to enjoy the experience and see the sights.

Al really heard me and I soon realized that this burley sea Captain 10 years my junior, this ex Calgary, Alberta policeman was a poet and a Zen master at sea.

Al's knowledge of the ocean, the tides, the life under the sea and his passionate appreciation of the art and craft of diving was immeasurable. To put it mildly, he loved his work and as he told me in a conversation, "if everyone could become a diver and see the pristine beauty of the waters of British Columbia, the world would be a better place."

Others on the boat often encouraged me to "try diving alone," or to be more independent of Al. Some were clearly skeptical of this "hand in hand with Captain Al" thing. But I won them all over with my enthusiasm.

Al never once had a judgmental attitude that I was any less a real diver than anyone else in the group. When I was ready at 76 feet down on Renata Reef to finally let go of Al's hand and go on my own, I got a smile that was worth an honorary doctorate. On that dive a play-

and we visited a huge Lingcod who never moved as we hovered near him. He stared us down and on we went.

I got so confident that one day on Effingham Bluff we both jumped off an underwater cliff. Standing on the edge of a beautiful underwater mountain I leaped into the colourful starfish filled sand below. Floating slowly down among the puffy snow white plumose anemones was a moment of pure joy, pure fun in pure beauty.

The next day I surprised Al and myself by going through a rather narrow crevasse and then through a smallish hole in a rock. In my own time frame, I had become a fairly comfortable diver. I also managed to learn to handle undersea ocean surges. "It's like life," Al explained after the dive. "If you fight it, you wear yourself out. You truly have to wait and then swim when the surge comes." Another lesson from the sea.

But one morning I literally bounced out of the water with a thought that had nothing to do with the wonders I had just seen. It was after the dive at Tyler Rock when we were looking for the elusive six-Gill shark. I really got it.

"The kids that are the hardest to teach need the very best teachers," I said as Dan was helping me out of my gear on the diving skiff. I know this. I have been saying it for years in my own teaching of teachers. But I suddenly knew it at an incredible depth. Like I finally really knew it. I knew because in this school, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, I was the kid that had the most needs.

I needed and got the best and most skilled diver on the boat. I got the teacher who is so secure that he doesn't have to push. I got the teacher who loves his subject so much that he encourages his students with his own passion. I got the teacher that kids need so they don't drop out of school or lose their love of learning. I got the inspired teacher and he in turn inspired me.

Al never pushed. He always however encouraged. I wanted to do three dives each day like the rest of "the kids". However after two dives I was pooped and so two safe good dives a day became my standard. I was never ever made to feel stupid, slow or inferior. Who says everyone has to follow the "same" standards?

All master teachers love their subject matter and are proud to share this with their students. Learning then is contagious. This scuba story is also a lesson in the famous learning dictum:

Tell me I'll forget.
Show me I may remember.
Involve me and I'll understand.

Fear is at the root of all forms of exclusion, just as trust is at the root of all forms of inclusion.
Jean Vanier

Dream Catchers and Dolphins

Peter Mosher

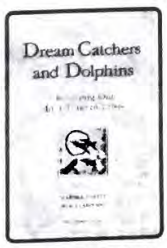
Who needs to read about illness and fear? Nobody. Who needs to read about illness and fear....*and* love and compassion and inspiration and creativity and — putting it simply — life? Probably all of us.

Because if cancer isn't (yet) part of your daily life or that of someone you love, you can read *Dream Catchers and Dolphins*, by Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint, as an affirmation of what it means to be human: not just accepting our need for others but making that terrifying and wondrous insight central to our lives.

If you *are* dealing with cancer or another serious disease, you'll recognize yourself in these pages. You'll be there on Marsha and Jack's good days, and on their bad days. They've had many of both in the 11 years since Marsha's first diagnosis of early breast cancer. And you'll feel part of their exceptional network of friends.

More than 150 people around the world, brought together over the years by Marsha's illness, counseled her, reassured her, shared with her, all by e-mail. Their tears and joy, the beauty of their thousands of messages, letters and poems led Jack and Marsha to select many of them for this book. Thoughts both large and small were prompted by Marsha and Jack reaching out, but what flooded in to their computer is now meant for all of us.

Many of the writers, like Jack and Marsha themselves, have a background in "inclusion" - working to enrich the lives of those we call disabled. Perhaps this has helped them write movingly but also, when needed, with such an iron grip on reality. There's emotion and spirituality here, for sure, but no glib recipes or religious dogma. (Although there are phrases to remember. For example, Marsha's reworking of the expression "Change is inevitable, growth is optional" to become "Death is inevitable, life is optional.")



There are many things to be learned in this book, and the authors and their friends are not people to oversimplify. Nevertheless, there is a central message. In Marsha's words, "It is our job in life to tend our garden of relationships for without them we will die. With them, we at least have the best chance to enjoy life as long as any of us are able. There are no guarantees for any of us. The only guarantee is in the circle around us."

As this is being written in April, 1999, Marsha is enduring another session of chemotherapy. When that's over, she and Jack will hit the road again, organizing, counseling, teaching others how to strengthen all our lives through community. As Marsha wrote "E-mail buddies" in 1997:

"The word that sums up how I feel is *human*. When people say how strong or brave we are, it doesn't ring true for me. All I feel is human, fragile, vulnerable. Sometimes strong, sometimes fragile, sometimes positive, sometimes scared. I feel it all - that's what human means to me. I can't live up to the popular expectation to 'feel positive' in the face of some simply terrifying stuff. I do know that love and true comradeship are high on my list of why people survive tests of endurance. Alone, we're sunk. Together, we at least have a fighting chance! We also have more fun - together."

Dream Catchers and Dolphins is a book of value. It is not, as Jack and Marsha put it, a "tell you what to do book. It is simply an invitation extended with the hope that it will help even one person to reach out." It has already done that.

Living to the Full

Bob Perske

Although it wasn't expected, ***Dream Catchers and Dolphins*** turned out to be an adventure book. Not being on the e-mail circuit, I never got the scoop on all that was going on. But this book became a journal of a complete odyssey. It provides a satisfying understanding of all Marsha and Jack went through, and how those who were close reinforced and cheered Marsha and Jack on. And if things had finally turned bad (God forbid) it would still be a touching adventure on living life to its fullest.

Jack & Marsha elephant riding in Laos

Each Belongs!

Congratulations Hamilton!

While some school systems are still debating whether or not to "do" inclusive education, the **Hamilton-Wentworth Separate School Board in** Hamilton, Ontario, is celebrating **THIRTY (yes 30) years** of welcoming **ALL children** in its schools.

Under the leadership of Jim Hansen, Phil DiFrancesco and Betty Browne, with the clear mission statment: 'Each Belongs', ALL children have been welcomed in this system for thirty years. No if's, ands or buts. Jim says he will take credit for coining the simple powerful two word mission statement, but nothing else.

To the 28,500 students and 1400 staff in the Hamilton system, this is common practice. They don't understand why it is such a 'big deal' elsewhere. They have no extra budgets, assistants, etc. What they do have is the uncompromising belief that 'Each Belongs'. Their new 15 minute video allows us to see this 'ordinary', yet remarkable school system in action. Contratulations to all involved: parents, teachers, students, administrators, support staff - for making the dream of inclusion a reality - for thirty years.

Thirty Years of Inclusion: Phil DiFrancesco, Betty Browne and Jim Hansen - Hamilton-Wentworth RC Separate School Board - remembering.

No one can say it can't be done. It's been done for thirty years in Hamilton. Congratulations!

Scuba Rules

An Exercise in Listening

"Scuba Rules" are our adaptation of the 'international laws' of scuba diving. Building on the learning of millions of safe scuba dives, we have used this as a metaphor for creating 'safe spaces' for living and learning.

NEVER DIVE ALONE: Always with a Buddy: In scuba diving internationally, there is a 'law'. Never Dive Alone: Always with a Buddy. This law is enforced by divers internationally. Diving without a buddy will strip you of your diving certification for life. The reason is simple. It saves lives. This isn't a choice. It is an

ethic. If you want to dive, you dive with a buddy. We think this ethic is as valuable above the surface as below. It could 'save lives' in organizations and families too.

Merely saying *don't dive alone* isn't enough. We must have 'practices' to encourage and reinforce the habit.

In teaching diving, one learns the 'habits' of an effective buddy system. Underwater, you must keep your buddy in sight. IF you are separated, you have SIXTY SECONDS to conduct a short, focused search around, under and above you. (A useful hint is follow the bubbles – modeled on 'follow the money'.)

If you do not locate your buddy, you begin to surface immediately. Usually, you find another diver surfacing – and it will be your buddy.

This is not a complex ethic. It negates individualism. It acknowledges our mutual interdependence.

It can be implemented immediately anywhere – and everywhere. We recommend it.

Procedure:

• Introduce the **Never Dive Alone** rule (use the overhead if you like). Explain the dangers of diving alone briefly.

• Generate a short dialogue on the kinds of dangers participants face in their lives and work situations – if they 'dive alone'.

• **Arrange an 'experience' of 'diving with a buddy'.** For example, in our workshops, we have people 'buddy up' for the day. We do not require them to be in 'sight' at all times, but we do create several 'check-in' times when we ask 'buddies' to do a safely check with each other. It only takes five minutes.

• **"Find a Buddy"** – make a time (only a couple of minutes for everyone to 'find a buddy' for the day. Make it clear that the only requirement will be occasional safety check-ins. They are NOT required to be friends for life. (**Be sure everyone has a buddy!** For odd numbers, having a trio is ok.)

* **Buddy Up Time**: At intervals throughout the day, make "buddy check' times. Take a couple of minutes to check with your buddy and see if you are OK, and if there is anything that can be done to make things better.

This does not guarantee anything – but it creates an opportunity for people to begin taking care of one another – at no cost. It 'personalizes' whatever you are doing, since every single person gets to have some input on how things are going. This means that simmering issues are less likely to explode because they are 'given voice' and hopefully an opportunity to make timely and reasonable accommodations where possible.

Emergency Rules (Scuba)

STOP
BREATHE
THINK
ACT!

All of us are racing frantically, trying to cope with the daily pressures of life. When we 'react' to a new 'threat/emergency/situation' from a headspace of frantic chaos and internal muddle, we are putting ourselves in grave danger. This is the time for emergency scuba rules. This discipline is quick, but saves lives.

Underwater, when an emergency occurs, it is too late to begin planning for an emergency. One must have learned the discipline almost instinctively – so you do not make the crisis worse – and thus increase your chances of survival. The over arching concern is that by 'reacting' quickly, we can make things worse. Thus, the first step is:

• **STOP** – whatever you are doing – STOP!

• **BREATHE** – Breathing is fundamental to life. When we forget to breathe, problems get more complex and dangerous almost instantaneously. As we know from many practices including yoga, breathing is NOT just hyperventilating, but rather a full, slow, even intake of breathe – and a full, slow and measured exhaling. In crisis, many of us gulp air and then hold our breath. Underwater, that can be fatal. Above water, it doesn't help much. Thus, we ask people to join us in inhaling and exhaling three deep breaths – so they FEEL what we are talking about. Then when a 'crisis' arises, and they remember Scuba emergency rules, they will remember and repeat the feeling of deep slow breaths – in **and** out.

• **THINK** - Having stopped, and cleared your mind with a deep breath or two, (it only takes a couple of seconds), you are in a position to THINK about what to do – rather than simply 'reacting'.

• **ACT** – This is an emergency. There is no time for lengthy deliberations. Stop, Breathe, Think – and then ACT. Do what you must do to be as safe and secure as you can.

Again, this does not guarantee success. Life isn't like that. However, it gives a better chance of responding constructively to the issues we encounter. Reacting often 'increases' harm; scuba rules diminish the risk of increasing harm – and increase the probability of a positive outcome. Above and below the water, these have become indispensable 'habits' we use to deal with the daily surprises of life.

Challenge Questions: **Are you working alone?** Why? Budget is not an acceptable excuse. If there are other humans in your vicinity, you can have a buddy.

What would it take to get you to ASK someone to be your buddy? When? If not, why not? What is so frightening about asking? Couldn't you survive if they said no?

Are you 'REACTING' without thinking? Why? Time is not an acceptable excuse. A three second pause to stop, breathe and think – BEFORE you act will save you time and aggravation. If you aren't stopping, ask yourself why not. Is your reason a reason or just a bad habit?

When are you going to start developing your new HABIT? Tomorrow is the wrong answer. NOW is the right time. Practice, practice, practice makes a habit.

Stop, Breathe, THINK _ and now go on...

Inclusion is Not Exclusion

Marsha Forest

Inclusion is
the future.

Inclusion is
belonging to one race,
the human race.
Inclusion is
a basic human right.
Inclusion is
struggling
to figure out
how to live with one another.

Inclusion is not
something you do
to someone or
for someone.
It is something we do
WITH
one another.
Inclusion is
not a person.
"the inclusion kid."
Not a program.
Not an adjective.
Not an add on.
Inclusion is
a noun.

Inclusion is
not something we do a little of.
It either is or isn't.
It is not a fad.
Not a bandwagon.
It is a trend,
similar to democracy.
"With liberty and justice for all."
All means all.
No but's about it!

Inclusion
is the opposite of exclusion.
Inclusion is not exclusion.

Inclusion is fair play,
common sense,
common decency,
hard work.
Inclusion is elegant in its simplicity
and like love
awesome in its complexity.

Inclusion is a battle cry,
a parent's cry,
a child's cry to be
welcomed, embraced,
cherished, prized,
loved as a gift,
as a wonder,
a treasure.

Inclusion is
not spending more money on
building more prisons,
mental hospitals,
nursing homes,
group homes,
but investing in
real homes,
real life,
real people
all people.

Inclusion is
pain
struggle
joy
tears
grief
mourning
celebration!

Inclusion is the ship that isn't even built yet.
It is a new ship.
One we will build together.

Inclusion is like a good jazz combo,
like an orchestra
disciplined to play melody
in harmony.
Inclusion is
a kaleidoscope of diversity,
bits of color, sounds, shapes, sizes.

Inclusion is
The future.

Understanding MAPS and PATH

Jack Pearpoint, Marsha Forest & John O'Brien

You make the path by walking

MAPS and PATH first and foremost are tools to help restore dreams and ignite hope by drawing people together to envision and plan and enact constructive futures. For us, MAPS and PATH are not just another way of doing a service plan, they represent a different way of thinking. They are definitely not more of the same thing.

MAPS and PATH are designed as healing tools for people and for organizations. They are in fact more spiritual than technical, which is one of the reasons they are difficult to bureaucratize. They must be used with skill and heart, a practice rooted in an ethic of 'do no harm'. This is not simply a matter of technique, it is more an art. There are technical competencies to master, but this is not the difficult part. As an art, person-centered planning requires facilitators to be able to truly listen to people's dreams and nightmares. Next, their hopes and visions must be shaped into sustainable images. Finally, there is a translation into practical daily routines that move them safely in the direction of the dream. Facilitation requires giving over control by taking and practicing the power to move from a position of power over others to power with them.

We have invested time and energy in developing MAPS and PATH because we think they make a difference in the lives of real human beings. We believe that these tools are for all of us. We are all human beings. We believe everyone wants and deserves, simply by virtue of being born human, a chance to live fulfilling lives where gifts and capacities are recognized and utilized.

All of us, at various times of our lives, are in situations where we cannot manage alone, our abilities are trapped, and only our 'deficiencies' are noticed. At such times, we need tools to reach out, to renew, to recommission our 'mission', to find the power in our dream, so we can be full, healthy, contributing citizens. That's where MAPS and PATH fit for us.

People who want to exert power over others will use any tool to enhance their control. The only controls we choose to exert are clear ethical guidelines. Thus, if people with power choose to plan for people without having them present, the label on the tool makes no difference, but simply becomes another deceptive shell game to take or sustain power and con-

Before you work with others, do these introductory activities.

Introductory MAPS learning checklist

I have...

_____ Watched the Shafik's MAP video.

Read...

_____ All my life's a circle, pp.1-28

_____ Action for inclusion

_____ What's really worth doing

_____ From behind the piano

_____ Answered the sequence of MAPS questions reflectively, for myself, with facilitation, and provided the faclitator/recorder with feedback.

_____ Facilitated another person in answering the MAPS questions, and received feedback on my facilitation.

_____ Made a graphic record of another person answering the MAPS questions and received feedback on my recording.

_____ Developed a set of notes for myself on "What I want to review before I facilitate a MAP."

_____ Made agreements with at least two other people who will support my practice with MAPS by encouraging me and debriefing with me.

_____ Identified a family I will approach to be my partners in taking the next step by allowing me to facilitate a MAP with them.

Introductory PATH learning checklist

I have...

_____ Watched the Introductory PATH training video.

_____ Watched the PATH in ACTION video.

Read...

_____ All my life's a circle, pp.29-43

_____ PATH Workbook

_____ Been a PATHfinder on an issue that matters to me, and provided the faclitator and recorder with feedback i.e. have had my own PATH done.

_____ Facilitated another person's PATH, and received feedback on my facilitation.

_____ Acted as a graphic recorder for another person's PATH and received feedback on my recording.

_____ Developed a set of notes for myself on "What I want to review before I facilitate or record a PATH."

_____ Made agreements with at least two other people who will support my practice with PATH by encouraging me and debriefing with me.

_____ Identified a person or group I will approach to be my partners in taking the next step by allowing me to facilitate/ record a PATH with them.

by O'Brien, Forest, Pearpoint

The Quest for Community Membership

John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien

...we must inescapably understand our lives in narrative form, as a 'quest'.
– Charles Taylor (1989)

How can person-centered planning contribute to building communities competent to include people with developmental disabilities as contributing members? Failure to actively and thoughtfully engage this tough question unnecessarily limits the effectiveness of the growing variety of approaches to person-centered planning as a set of tools for social change.

The image of a quest – a difficult search through unknown territory for something that seems good to the hero – provides a way to think about the relationship between person-centered planning and community building. Whether it concerns Rama's search for his kidnapped wife Sita, Odessus' voyage home, Perceval's pursuit of the Holy Grail, or Judith Snow's quest for the kind of personal assistance that frees her from imprisonment in a nursing home (Pearpoint, 1990), the story of a quest answers at least four questions:

1)What does the hero seek?
2)Who are the hero's companions?
3)What are the challenges and aids offered by the territory through which the hero journeys and what prices must the hero pay to continue the journey?
4) How does the quest change the hero?

Each of these questions opens a window on the effectiveness of person-centered planning.

...Any quest that overcomes this dismal history of segregation and control deserves honor, regardless of which social space people journey through. However, work to change shared space offers the greatest opportunity for learning about how person-centered planning can encourage people to overcome the invisible bubble. So we hope that each practitioner of person-centered planning supports at least one or two focus people whose quests draw them into shared space.

Excerpted from:

A Little Book About Person Centered Planning.

Excerpts from:
A Little Book About Person Centered Planning

John O'Brien.. Exalted Pooh Bah of Inclusion Press

Nunavut: A Beacon of Hope for Aboriginal People and All of Us

On April 1, 1999, Canada's youngest population took control of our largest territory. With the creation of Nunavut almost all the world's 150,000 Inuit people now enjoy a degree of self determination: some 50,000 in Alaska, 55,000 in Greenland, 25,000 in Nunavut and 8000 in Nunavik, as Northern Quebec's Inuit call their homeland. Nunavut is the latest beacon of hope for other aboriginal people's, not only in Canada, whose land claims or other negotiations are proceeding at a glacial pace..

Nunavut illustrates that small populations and daunting physical distances are not insurmountable barriers to maintaining a distinct cultural community within Canada. "We are very much a distinct society," leader John Amagoalik says. "And the Nunavut government will have the responsibility of protecting and preserving that distinct society. But we are not trying to break up Canada. We're trying to join it.

From Inclusion Press, we wish this new young land the best of luck in creating a new future for their people.

Vision Statement of Nunavut

In Preparation for Nunavut, the Nunavut Implementation Commission created a vision for their future government. It was adopted. Today, Nunavut has a government that:

- **Places people first;**
- **Represents and is accountable and fair to all its residents;**
- **Is a servant of the people of Nunavut;**
- **Seeks direction from the people;**
- **Offers programs and services in an integrated and holistic manner;**
- **Promotes harmony amongst people;**
- **Places ownership of well being into the hands of individuals, families, and communities;**
- **Conducts itself with integrity and openness;**
- **Encourages excellence and welcomes creativity and;**
- **Incorporates the best of Inuit and contemporary government systems.**

Office of the Interim Commissioner of Nunavut
P.O. Box 1750, Iqalult, NT X0A 0H0 (fax) 867-979-5833

We are privileged to be working in Iqaluit with the new school division who are using PATH in classrooms throughout Nunavut.

MAPs and PATHs - A Family Perspective

Bryn and Clark Fortune

Kali, Lindsay and Bryn Fortune

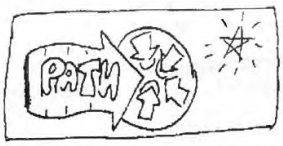
As often happens, unexpected blessings occur when we step out and try new things. As a result of a professionally motivated educational experience, our family wound up with a fresh look at ourselves in an affirming, revealing process called a MAP.

Bryn is the director of the Michigan based Parent Leadership Program-Early On. In an attempt to understand the MAPS and PATHS processes, she attended a facilitator's workshop put on by Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest. A MAP is a process that a creative facilitator can use to bring out the dreams and fears of individuals (or groups), create an affirming focus on the strengths, gifts and uniqueness of that individual to reach out for their dreams, and take steps to avert their fears. In our experience, two points seem critical to the accomplishment of a meaningful MAP. First, a MAP can only change your life if the individual makes a personal commitment to the action steps created in the MAPS process. Second, the facilitators must be incredibly respectful of the power of this process. Without this deep regard the possibility of 'MAP abuse' exists. The only way to avoid this potential is for the facilitators to experience the risk and discomfort of their own individual MAP. *We believe* this is the only way one can create the understanding needed to allow the discomfort to run its course, the fear to be replaced by courage, and the nightmares to be replaced by dreams.

After attending the facilitator's workshop, Bryn was so impressed with the process that she signed up our entire family to attend another MAP opportunity, the Toronto Summer Institute. During that time, we completed a family and individual MAPS.

The experience was powerful, risky, and at times very uncomfortable. In the generation of our family's MAP, our two daughters each gave their heartfelt dreams and nightmares. Both of our children have significant challenges to their physical health and the youngest daughter has "differing abilities". Relative to other children their age, both have unique perceptions of the world, life, and spirituality. As parents, it was very sobering to hear the girls discuss their health fears, and exciting to hear their dreams of college, boys, and future children.

Lindsay's (our youngest, at the time twelve) nightmare was about losing her gift to communicate. Her dream was of a huge white mansion with servants, a chef to cook her special diets and make them palatable, an indoor pool, a lake and ski boat in the rear, and a multiplicity of automobiles in the garage. Kalli (our older daughter at fifteen) dreamt of her own space, a loft in a high location. Later, as our daughter's own MAPS were generated, we found that Lindsay's principle desire for a white mansion was to house the homeless, and Kalli's desire for a loft was to have a safe haven where she could rest, be supported and worry-free.



Bryn's principle nightmare was the hell of surviving the loss of her children to physical illness. Her dream was to be connected to a vast circle of friends. Clark's nightmare was one of isolation, without the support and love of his family. His dream was to develop our family's shared sense of faith and spirituality.

All of these feelings were powerful, very uncomfortable, and risky to announce to a group of people, even if those attending the MAPS session were family and friends. The courage to articulate those things that you fear, the permission to kick back and dream of what might be, and the acceptance of support from those in your MAP circle, are all liberating and stretching activities. As a personal development tool, the MAP process had shown its strengths. As a family it allowed us to think about and communicate some important feelings and information we often neglect in everyday living. Each of us felt blessed to have had this opportunity and experience.

As a family, we often pull our MAPS out on the living room floor and speak to which action steps we have accomplished and which ones we are still working towards. We have moved closer to our dreams! The clarity and hopefulness that the MAPS process brings forth is an incredible gift. We would encourage any family given the opportunity to participate in a MAP to seize the experience. It can truly change your life.

Who says MAPS and PATH Facilitators Have to be "Adults"

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint, Marijo McBride, Joel Hollands

Many people who want to be MAPS and PATH facilitators get stuck when we insist that the process be co-facilitated i.e. uses two people, a graphic recorder and a process facilitator. They are concerned about costs, or finding a teammate. This is where we need to be creative. Budget is hardly ever an excuse, especially when there are so many people who want to help, to learn and to be involved. Who said everyone needs to be paid all the time? Who says we can't involve both our elders and our youngsters in the process? Joel Hollands, our friend and budding graphic facilitator is currently 15 years old. He began learning MAPS and PATH when he was 13 and has been a helper at our courses.

We believe the hidden resource out there in the world is people. We limit ourselves by thinking a "facilitator" needs to be of a certain age, have a degree, etc. Who made those rules? The main ingredient is the desire to try this out and "do no harm."

Marijo McBride, a professional social service worker from Minnesota, met Joel at one of the Toronto courses. Joel volunteered to be the process facilitator for Marijo's PATH. He had already done the graphics part and wanted to try a new role. Marijo remembers, "At first I was a bit concerned as I know that any Person Centered Plan should not be taken lightly. I learned, as Joel facilitated my PATH, that facilitation is an art that can transcend age as long as the person demonstrates mature judgment, is grounded in the values of inclusion, honors the uniqueness of the focus person, is a good listener, elicits the person's dreams and ideas rather than their own, is flexible and creative and creates a welcoming environment. Joel did all that as he had basically taken the same course as I did. In fact, he did it far better than some of the so called 'trained educators' present."

Joel remembers Marijo's PATH. "I was really nervous. I didn't want to mess up. I wanted it to be perfect. I was very cautious. I learned that was good, as I got down Marijo's images and thoughts - not mine. I had to make Marijo focus and get out everything she wanted to say."

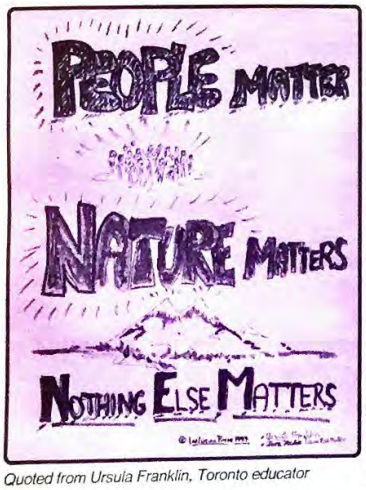
Marijo: "Joel was great. His youthfulness entered my soul, yet he is wise beyond his years. His creative thinking and action pushed me beyond narrow thinking limits. He asked the right questions to unlock my PATH. My PATH was called "My Journey to a Legacy" and Joel was realistic about the steps I needed to take to reach my North Star. He and the graphic recorder, Tammy, created images for my words.

As a result of having my own PATH done I am convinced I am now a much better listener to other's dreams and I'm better at helping people figure out how to reach their own North Star."

Joel now wants to facilitate a MAP but he knows before he does this he has to have a MAP done for himself. "I know the first rule of thumb is that you can't do these things to other people till you've been through it yourself, because you can't understand what another person is going through." Since this was written Joel has had a MAP done and is now learning to be a MAPS facilitator.

The next time you wonder where you are going to find a potential co-facilitator - just open your eyes and look around. They are all around! A friend of mine asked us if we didn't think Joel was "extraordinary." We answered a resounding yes and no. There are many Joels out there waiting for the opportunity to be asked to be involved in real and creative work. Not all teenagers would be interested, but many are simply waiting for us to ask.

The DREAM (North Star) segment of a PATH. Never kill anyone's dreams.



Quoted from Ursula Franklin, Toronto educator

The Education Assistant's Prayer

I wish for a teacher who will see me as
A colleague with contributions to make.
I wish for a teacher who will see me as an assistant
To all children,
Though with particular focus on a few.
I wish for a teacher who will ask for my ideas.
I wish for a teacher who will see me as a person,
But feel free to guide me as a tool
To benefit children.
I wish for a teacher who will challenge me
To do my best.
I wish for a teacher who likes children.
I wish for a teacher in whom I can see a model.

Gary Bunch Inclusion: How To p. 85

True peace is not merely the absence of tension. It is the presence of justice.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Inclusion: How To

by Gary Bunch

The inclusive teacher is a student oriented professional who:

Knows the student is more important than the curriculum.

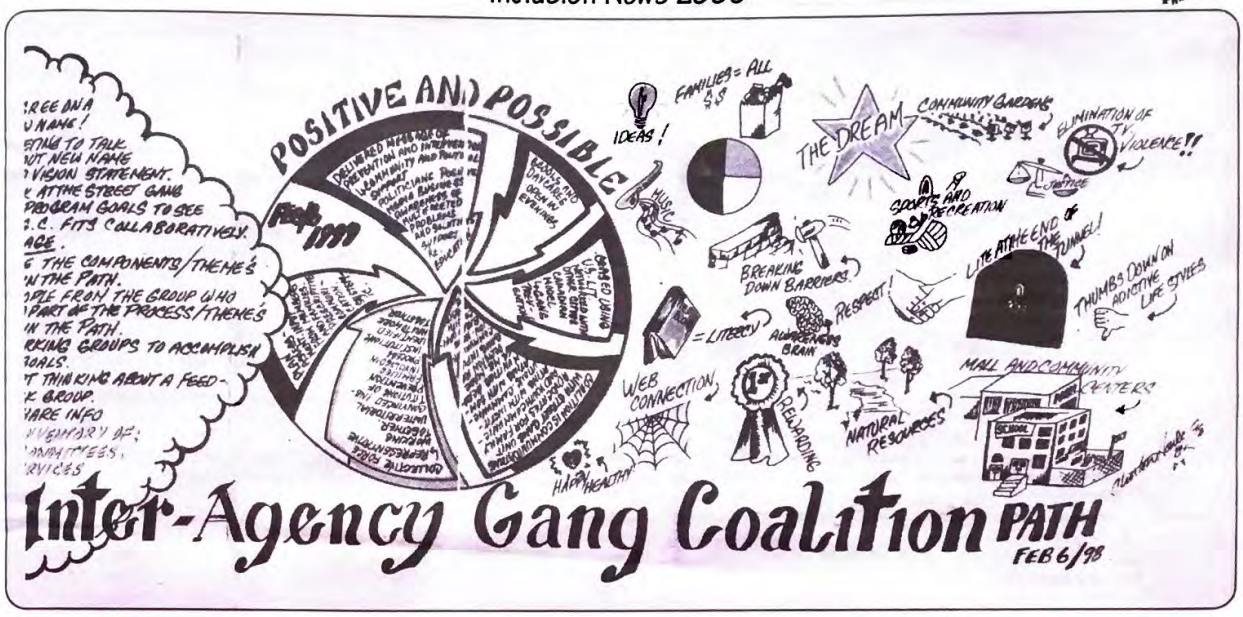
Knows that differences amount to students are to be valued.

Knows every student learns better together than apart.

Knows the teacher can control the curriculum to the benefit of the student.

Knows the effort is worth the prize of a child's learning.

Inclusion: How To. p 26



Hope Restored with PATH

Glenn Cochran
Gang Prevention Coordinator
Winnipeg, Manitoba

I decided I wanted to do something that truly might be in the area of prevention, not wait until kids were in trouble but get to them early. I phoned the principal of a downtown Winnipeg core area school (Dufferin School) where I knew the principal, an aboriginal woman named Donna Green. I asked her if I could work with the Grade 6 students on doing some creative planning. She said, "Sure."

I was also tired of seeing too many expensive consultants with over-complicated materials that didn't really involve the community. Hardly anyone ever involved the youth that were getting in trouble. These consultants, as too many teachers and social workers, often meant well but were so busy "telling" everyone what to do that they didn't have any time to involve the youth in solving their own problems.

When I say involved I really mean involved. Involved in a meaningful way. I wanted these grade six students to be able to see a future with hope.

A few years ago I met my now friends and colleagues Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint while they were doing a workshop for aboriginal health care workers in Winnipeg. I liked the tool they had developed called PATH. They basically said to me - Glen, you've seen PATH in action - go do it. That's exactly what I did.

To me PATH was exactly what I was looking for. It started with a blank sheet of paper, used teamwork to facilitate, and used a colorful visual graphic as a key. It was built on a model of community capacity and believed that all people have gifts and talents and can solve their own problems "with a little help from their friends."

To me PATH is a simple and amazing little tool. What it basically does is

* Gets people who are stuck in a rut or problem unstuck.
* Gives people a way to actually see a future.
* Gives people hope.
* Gives people a beginning, a starting point for action.

The first thing that amazed me when I worked with the grade six students was that their hopes and dreams for themselves were the same as the adult professionals that work with them.

The students above all wanted:
* their families back together
* their families to participate at school more
* their parent, parents, or guardians to get really involved in their lives, especially at school

In drawing their vision or North Star (step one in the PATH process) practically all the students wanted me to draw a mansion - this mansion for them was a place where they and their families could be safe.

For them the mansion was their school and the school would provide meals, and teachers who genuinely cared for the students and their families. The most important people for the students to enroll were their families and then their teachers. They all wanted to get through school and life and move on to find a better way of life than they were experiencing now.

The NOW part of the PATH was quite powerful. The students described their now as dirty, lots of fighting, gangs, getting beat up, drugs, needles, inability to get up in the morning because they'd been up all night, lack of things to do in the evening, violence, unhappy, scared, hungry, homeless.

They wanted the schools open day and evening and they wanted team and other sports.

I kept thinking. This is exactly what most of the teachers and social service people also wanted for the kids. This is exactly how we all described the now. We all agree so let's make it happen. What's stopping us. Let's do it.

One thing was sure. Few thought or believed that these "inner city core kids" would sit still long enough to do anything meaningful. How wrong they were! I started working not only with the Grade six kids but with Grade 5, 4, 3 and even Grade 2. And they all sat for two and a half hours with only a short break for recess. Because it was their PATH they were truly involved. They even got involved in doing their own graphic recording. After all it was their PATH.

They were proud of their plan. They knew I was there for one reason - for them. There are now five fabulous PATHS at Dufferin School. The seeds are planted. We don't need sophisticated complicated expensive plans. We can do it simply and inexpensively with PATH.

PATH is a catalyst for change and therefore the follow up is built right into the process. The plan is right there for everyone to see. If it has involved the people it is meant to serve it will be followed. If it hasn't really involved the students it will not be followed. Simple. You won't need follow up or coercion as it is right there in living color before everyone's eyes. It is right in your face.

My goal and dream is to do this for all the aboriginal youth groups in Winnipeg and then to do individual PATHS for all the kids who want one so they can take their PATH home and put it up for their families to see or better yet do it in their homes with their families present.

Glenn doing PATH's with Grades 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The Bigger Picture

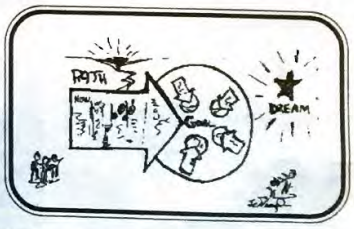
My job is basically to figure out how to "stop" crime and violence before it even starts. We do this in many ways in Winnipeg such as family group conferencing,

sentencing circles, using PATH, sharing circles, mentor programs. Our model is based on using the strength of the community and those in it.

Instead of marching criminals in one door of a prison and out the same door when their time is done, we need to see what we can do to help women and men in trouble turn their lives around. To do this we must have an integrated community action approach.

My vision for crime prevention and a good life for the youngsters I work with is a simple one, shared by many. We want to feel safe again. I cannot imagine that happening without communities having hope and without caring. The model and processes we are using in Winnipeg and elsewhere take us back to community cohesiveness...and that hope.

Come to Winnipeg and visit. Come see the hope for the future at the Dufferin School.



PATH: *Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope*

> The Great Spirit, in placing people on the earth, desired them to take care of the ground and to do each other no harm.
>
> *Young Chief of the Cayuses*

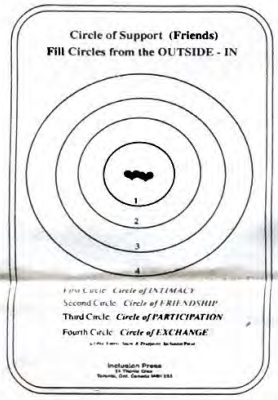
Circle of Friends: Not a Program

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint and John O'Brien

We get phone calls that have a disturbing consistency. *"Can you send me information on the Circle of Friends Program. I want my school to set up a Circle of Friends Program for my child."* This is not a thoughtless request. However, it is frightening in its implications. It is a cry for salvation from the prison of loneliness - attached to the assumption that there is a 'program' one can buy that will solve this problem. In times of school massacres, these are calls that we ignore at our peril. They are cries for help.

The callers are usually parents of children who have somehow been excluded by the system. They are looking for the "school" to create a friendship circle for their lonely child. Our response is find out where the family lives, and hopefully to connect them to some other families in the vicinity with whom they can begin to talk.

The other frightening call tended to be from 'systems'. They said, *"We did a circle and it didn't work."* The basis of both these calls is the same. The circle has been commodified - turned into a



'thing' you can purchase, buy, make work. Circles of friendship are not for sale. Friendship cannot be purchased. By it's nature, it must be freely given. A circle is not a thing. A circle is the very soul of life.

A Circle of Friends concept was not invented nor written about for any one discipline or field of thought. It is an ancient concept. It is about art, literature, theatre. It is about hope, dreams, philosophy. It is about love, hate, rejection, loneliness. It is about life.

In modern times, when everything is marketed as instant, when answers come in pills, and dating services provide partners, of course one wants a circle for a lonely child. A noble wish, but it doesn't work. It is a set up for frustration and failure. Friends don't pop out of the micro-wave. Instant cookies don't quite taste like the real thing. Real cookies are messy to make, and take time to bake. But the results are delicious. And you don't need a commercial to tell you how good it is. You know.

We think people often confuse the simple but powerful tool - the Circle of Friends Exercise - with the actual building of a circle of friends. The exercise, developed and used over the years by Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint, Judith Snow and John O'Brien, asks people to look deeply and closely at those in their lives, and as a visual aid, to make a chart of who is in your life - in the first, second, third and forth level of your circles. We did this originally to demonstrate that for too many people with disabilities, there was only a fourth circle of paid personnel in their lives. The 'fourth circle' people were not bad people. It is simply a fact that they are involved with a person's life because of their jobs.

This profound exercise, which can take an hour or a day, opens insights to people about what they want their life to look like. It gives insights into what and who is missing in your life - what you really want your life to look like. It is a tool that is a major catalyst for change. But this tool, which increases clarity, does not build a friendship. It is not a program, it is a tool.

A circle may begin with ideas triggered by using the Circle of Friends tool - and result in simple practical steps - a visit to a neighbour, or a call to a friend. It really begins by being vulnerable to yourself and others. It never begins with your child or student, but always with you the adult. Families whose children have the chance of friendship are families where the adults have relationships in their lives. Numbers don't count. The importance is quality and loyalty and love.

Yes, it would be wonderful for school systems to build in the notion of fostering friendships for all children. But this is much too important to wait for schools to conclude the debate about what school is for. In fact, the "friendship stuff" is still not high on the agenda - even as we read the lengthening list of the tragic massacres by isolated, excluded, lonely students. Expecting the school to solve this crisis is a recipe for failure. Don't let them off the hook, but don't wait. It is too important. "But what do I do?" That is a good place to start.

Sit and wonder what to do. But do not sit alone! First and foremost, do not expect someone else to do it for you. It is time to gather your closest allies and ask, "What do **WE** do?"

We are not saying there are NO places where facilitators are hired to assist young and older students to make friends. There are a few. We think it should be a top priority everywhere - now. But even in the best circumstances, school ends and summer comes. Holidays. Graduation. Kids come and go. Facilitators come and go. It is too risky to put the fabric of relationships for you and your children into the 'care' of such a fragile structure. Circles and friendships exist in the very fabric of life - not in the fourth period on Thursday. Families must be the owner/operators of their circles of support. If schools and other support systems can help - great. But prudent families do not give over control of their children's lives lightly.

We urge you to agonize over this. Read books, watch movies. Think and ponder on who and what you want in your life. We are still overdosed in a culture of massive individualism where doing things alone is the norm. Asking others for help - especially outside the family unit - is still enormously difficult for most of us. We can and should do it alone - without bothering anyone - is the norm. But the more your family differs from the ever decreasing norm, the more we need each other. Doing it alone is almost guaranteed failure. Consider that carefully.

We have all been taught a delicate and dangerous 'habit' - thinking that there is an "expert", a professional with the answer. There are (and always have been) some people gifted with wisdom, skills, techniques that may help us. We want to welcome those talents and gifts. But some issues are not "technical stuff", but about people helping people - people helping each other. We have been doing this for centuries. We KNOW how to do this - in our hearts. If we take the time and create the courage to dig deep into our souls, we will find we have untold capacities and unexplored answers to respond to our unique situations.

Our own case in point illustrates the story. We could tell Judith Snow's story or Rose's story, etc. It is always easier and less vulnerable to tell other people's stories, but we have our story. For the past eleven years we have been struggling with cancer, the last five years - intensely. The first round of intense chemo therapy was in 1995 followed by radiation in 1997 and another current round of chemo now (April 1999). A very difficult period indeed. Not pleasant nor easy.

The hospitals in Toronto are among the best in the world. The doctors are brilliant technicians and experts in their field. They can do the treatment. But what they cannot do no matter how many times we ask, no matter how nice or not nice we are, is to give the caring we need to survive the fear and trauma of cancer and the often cruel side effects of the drugs.

This is no one's fault. It is indeed a system's fault but while we are attempting to stay alive, we have to do something aside from long term revolutionary change of a medical system gone amok.

And so we call. We call our friends. We cry. We call out and we see over time who comes. Some come and some don't. There are disappointments and there are surprises. But the more we call, the more they come. Alone we would die. Together we have a chance of survival. There is no certainty. There is chaos and fear. And yes there are times of joy and laughter.

There is no program in this. There is just life itself. There is passion and there is tenderness. There is tremendous vulnerability. There is extreme pain. There is no drug to solve this problem, there is only doing the best we can everyday.

But what if there is no one in your life you may ask? We believe there are lonely people everywhere. There are churches and neighborhood groups. There are self help groups. There are neighbors and school people. There are good people all around you. Find them. Go to places and people you know. Go to places and people you don't know. Act.

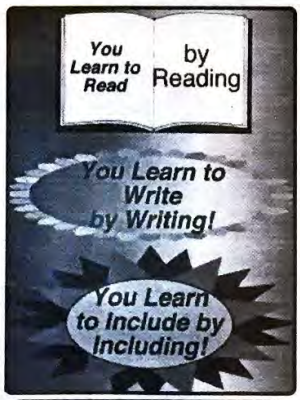
What we have found is that if you open your eyes there are people around. Ask them in for coffee or tea. Feed them and cry with them. That is the start. Many family members and neighbors have been waiting for years to be asked to help. They just didn't want to intrude.

There are books and videos to give you ideas. But the action starts around your kitchen table or in your living room. There is no one answer. And for sure the answer will not come from the outside. It will come from inside. There is no 'program'.

Our suggestion is to stop. Sit quietly with the issue. Think about it with another person. Then ask a third. Then a fourth. Now you are on your way. Laugh and cry together.

We wish you the best on this quest which indeed is the most important thing you can do for your own life and the life of your children.

We did not weave the web of life. We are but a strand in it.
Chief Seattle



Martin Luther King Jr. said:
"I have a Dream!"
He did not say:
"I have quarterly goals and objectives!"

My Circle of Friends

Miriam Miller

I have circle meetings. We talk about problems I have. We talk about my work. We plan my birthday party.

I live in a co-op. We are a community. Everyone helps each other. My circle helps me figure out what to do in the co-op.

Do you know what a circle of friends is? A circle helps you with your problems. People meet every few months in my apartment. We usually have pot luck. Sometimes I cook before the meeting and Audrey or Judith helps me.

There are seven people and me on my circle. My Mom and my sister are part of my circle. Sometimes other people come too. I always ask lots of people to come. Some of my friends don't want to come.

Before the meeting I make an agenda. I put down all the things I want to talk about. At my last circle meeting

we talked about my hours at work and cleaning my apartment and getting more people to come to People First meetings.

My circle of friends listens to me. Then they give me their opinions.

My next circle meeting is after Easter. We are going to talk about my ex-boyfriend. He is bothering me. My circle of friends will help me.

Reclaiming Our Words

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint and John O'Brien

We were driving home from a wonderful conference in London, Ontario, having a lively conversation about whether the word "inclusion" was being so mutilated and perverted that it was no longer useful. We all decided that rather than discard perfectly good and useful words like "inclusion" and "integration" we need to reclaim these words and own them proudly.

For example, just because the Conservative government of Ontario's current Premier Mike Harris, is using the term "Common Sense Revolution", to cut everything decent, good and kind out of the Ontario social service system, that doesn't mean the words "common sense" or "revolution" are bad or wrong words to use.

We are sick and tired of the "bad guys" co-opting our language. It is time to take back, to reclaim our words. In 1989 we wrote *Action for Inclusion*, and we believe it is still relevant to say...

Integration is our goal. The word comes from the Latin for making complete - in the sense of renewing or restoring wholeness. We aim to develop complete classrooms - classrooms that continually renew and restore wholeness among children and teachers who represent the diversity of the real communities in which we live.

Inclusion of those who have been left outside is the first step in integration. The word derives from the Latin for shutting the door after someone has come into the house. Some people think that you can speak of integration without inclusion. This seems like nonsense to us. Integration begins only when each child belongs.

Only after we are all in the room or at the table can true integration happen. This is NOT assimilation. It is dealing positively with diversity. It is integration in the sense of the word meaning - wholeness and healing.

The words "Inclusion" and "Integration" get misused to mask the power and endurance of segregation and professional hegemony. We must take the power to turn these words into ideas and deeds that make the world a better place for ALL. The words and the power to use them do not belong to the segregationists. The words and power belong to people with the courage and creativity to work together for social justice. Let's reclaim our language.

"Love" is another word that has been mutilated and cheapened. It has been co-opted by the advertisers of Madison Ave. and the pop psychologists of the talk shows. It remains vital. It does not belong to those who would sell jeans, or cigarettes or instant answers to life's dilemmas. It belongs to the heart. It belongs to people with the courage and commitment to stick together through the long haul for what is right.

The exciting work of building and rebuilding a classroom, a business, a neighborhood, a family can only begin after everyone has begun the work of belonging. Belonging begins with welcoming - thoughtfully, carefully, joyfully, lovingly. The opening movements in the dance of life must carry mutual acknowledgement, recognition, and appreciation. This is not a fast or finished work. It is a life long adventure.

We are often astounded by our own naiveté. We don't feel naive in believing that together people can take important steps toward a more inclusive society. But we continue to have to learn how long it takes, how hard the work is, and how deeply it is linked to issues of war and peace, poverty and wealth, profit and greed, justice and injustice.

Inclusion will only happen in places that want to unleash the poet in every child, in neighborhoods that seek social justice for all, and in work places where the truth is faced head on, and where the hard stuff is not hidden in back closets. Inclusion is about facing fear, racism, hatred, prejudice and injustice, and then changing these conditions so that people can build a new kind of world.

Life is suffering and pain as well as joy and love. This is no secret. Inclusion isn't about "the inclusion room", "the inclusion children", "the inclusion curriculum". Inclusion is about integration, and integration is about creating wholeness in a fragmented and frazzled society.

We are optimistic! The trend internationally is toward more people living with more and more diversity. The trend is democracy. The trend is human rights. The trend is inclusive. Let's take the word inclusion and use it well. Inclusion means bringing more people in the door. That is a critical step in creating a just society with a just education system, a just system of laws, a just health care system.

The words are there. Let's use them proudly and wisely. Let's live them.

People First Define REAL Education

Richard Ruston, Tamara Meyer, Karen Pastirik, Barb Fowke, Michael Callahan, Dean McKennitt, Mary Bourns, David Gilmour, Pauline Lynch, Bill Ballantyne, Pat Worth with David Hasbury

Think about it!

We have some thoughts about growing up, about education, about being people, about what is truly important. We offer these to you to think about as you "restructure" our education system.

But who are we?

- We are People First of Ontario.
- We are people first!
- We are people who have been labelled.
- We are people who have been through the system – we know its flaws.
- We are people who make our own decisions. We fight for the right of all people who have been labelled to make their own decisions.
- We are people who have feelings.
- We are people who have been segregated, pushed around and called names.
- We are people who have been locked up in institutions — like prisoners.
- We educate the public about the harm caused by segregation through telling our stories.
- We are people who need a good education to get a REAL JOB in the community.

We believe you need to know what it was like to be labelled as a child:

- It hurt to be called "mentally retarded" and "mentally handicapped".
- It made me real angry.
- It made me feel different from everybody else.
- I was called "stupid" and it really hurt.
- It made me upset then and it still does now.
- I didn't understand but when I found out I was really angry. I rebelled. I hit people. I punched people out. I acted out.
- I felt mixed up. I didn't understand why they were labelling me.

We believe you need to know what it was like to be segregated from all of the "regular" kids:

- I felt like an outcast.
- I felt really alone. I needed a friend.
- I felt different. I only had a couple of friends. Most of the other kids were "higher" up than I was.
- I was upset. Why couldn't I go to the regular school? Why couldn't I go to high school? It hurt.
- I felt like I was VERY different.
- It did a lot of damage. Why couldn't I go on the regular bus? I was confused. Why was I different? What was "special" about it?
- Why did I have to go to a different school?
- I felt VERY LONELY! I felt very isolated. I felt ashamed because I wasn't good enough for all of the other schools.

We want you to know what we think makes a good education:

- Having all my friends, all my cousins, cooperating, helping me. Not being called "handicapped". Being with all of the other kids in the neighbourhood.
- Learning to read, to write, to do arithmetic.
- RESPECT from your classmates and peers. Having respect for them. A two way street.
- Being with everyone — TOGETHER.
- Having the other kids learn from you. Teaching each other, learning from each other.
- Participating. Getting the help you need. Being committed to learning. Persevering.
- Overcoming obstacles.
- Making friends. Doing things with friends after school.
- Teaching the teacher that nothing is impossible.

- A good education takes parents and teachers believing that we are intelligent. It takes parents and teachers believing that we have a right to be included. It takes people helping us to believe in ourselves.

And here's why we believe it is important to get a "good" education:

- A good education makes us happy! We have more knowledge. We feel great going through high school and then getting a job.
- A good education means we can learn to teach others. It means we can become a teacher. That is what education is all about.
- We can get a cool job after school, maybe become a CEO, run a company.
- It allows us to go on to night school – even become a teacher.
- It means we can get a job.
- Because we need to know how to read and write. We need to learn different things. We need to get a job.
- Maybe we can work with computers.
- We need to learn how to read and write – so we won't feel devalued as adult citizens.
- It is important to get a good education so I won't be known as the kid who doesn't know anything.

But most of all learning together as people is important because:

- Every child has a right to dream about what they want to do with their life.
- Every child has the right to share how they feel.
- Every child has the right to dream of a future — a world of possibilities.
- Every child has the right to speak — every child has the right to be heard.
- Every child has the right to learn as much as possible – in the regular class with all of the other kids.
- Every child has the right to a REAL EDUCATION!

Dave Hasbury reviews his graphics

Where there is great love there are always miracles.
Helen Keller

Unexploded Ordinance

Jack Pearpoint

In Phonsavan, Laos, we visited the UXO - unexploded ordinance project sponsored by MAG: The Mines Advisory Group. There I was chilled to the bone by the obscene and terrifying reality of travelling in rural Laos. It is not safe. There are literally millions of unexploded bombs - everywhere - waiting to be stepped on or triggered accidentally. For nine years, the US dropped more bombs on Laos than were dropped in all of Europe during WWII – the equivalent of one B-52 load of bombs every eight minutes, 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.

We met with the director of MAG, a British Non-Governmental Organization that has been operating for five years in the most intensely bombed region in Laos. Their motto: Returning Mined Land to the Community Worldwide. Their budget is $1.5 million per year - from various sources. It desperately needs to be increased and secured for the long term. The program has four components: 1. Data gathering - going to villages and collecting information on bomb locations from local people. These are prioritized, then, 2. 'Technical Teams' move in to destroy surface level bombs. They do not dig for them. There are so many digging cannot be a priority. 3. Community awareness programs - taking information to children and adults in villages and schools. Teachers are also included in training programs so they can pass information to children and families. Lastly, there is a training program for Laotian bomb disposal technicians. The group of 32 that graduated in December, 1998 increased the team of technicians to 120. (For more information: www.oneworld.org/mag/intro/html)

How serious is this issue? Accidental ordinance explosions kill 50% of the time - and the majority of deaths and dismemberments are children under 15. MAG has already destroyed 80,000 bombs in this one province (50 BIG bombs, and the balance in all kinds of smaller bombs). At the present rate, with sustained funding (which does not yet exist), the majority of the UXO could be cleared in 30-50 years. The clearing so far is perhaps 1/10 of 1% of the live bombs lying around.

This deadly drama became real when one of the Technical Crews left to go up the road a mile to the new University buildings that are already open. NINE bombs have already been found on the tiny campus and will be exploded today. The search hasn't been completed. It is not safe to walk around. Similarly, yesterday, they exploded bombs in a local school yard. The chilling fact is that they haven't even been able to 'clear' school yards, and almost every yard they visit turns up multiple bombs. Another anecdote from village awareness sessions. It is common for a villager to walk into the session with a bomb in hand. The technical staff have to be taught the procedure. back away, ask the person to set the bomb down gently, and when everyone has been cleared out, arrange for priority destruction of the bomb. One does not accept bombs from another person - ever. It is too dangerous.

The real issue is that the world is ignoring the problem in Laos. It is 'passe'. Laos isn't sexy. Bomblets aren't sexy. Mines make better press. And of course, there 'never was a war in Laos'. It was simply bombed into oblivion. Therefore, there is no money for Laos - and the cost is dead and maimed children - every year. The Project Director's message was simple: "There is a problem in Laos".

My spine tingled and my blood ran cold as we stood staring at the UXO training site - with perhaps 100 different types of 'ordinance' that the technicians had to be able to identify - and destroy. These were not samples. They were the real thing. It is about death and death - supposedly to give life. My blood ran cold. How could we have done this? How could any humans do this to other humans?

Making bombs must stop. Weapons that maim and kill may be good for the economy, but they are bad for people. If we put a fraction of our effort into creating alternative jobs to armament jobs, it would make a difference. Wiping out the livelihoods of workers is not the solution. Changing the products they make into things that create and sustain life would make a difference. The money is there. We are already spending it every day. The question is one for the policy makers. Does anyone have the political guts to stop the killing that keeps going on in Laos. It is that simple.

Thinking About Freedom, Individualism and Democracy

As we complete our three week immersion in Laos, I am confused by how to communicate what we have seen. There are the slides which will convey images. But even good photographs are but one dimension - and there is more. And the more is largely intangible. It is more than the smell of frangipani, or the slow unstoppable whoosh of the silt filled Mekong. It is more than crickets at night and roosters in the morning.

One perspective could be that it is views of poverty. That does not sit well with me. It is true that in terms of per capita income, Laos is poor. But for me, poverty (if you have food, shelter and water) becomes a relative term. We have travelled the full length of Laos, and seen a thousand views of people in their daily lives. Since the 'tourism' industry is not yet sophisticated enough to create plywood painted barriers to hide what they do not want us to see, we have seen Laos in the raw. And we have loved it.

So what is the confusion in my head? It is to do with the underlying spirit of the people. This is not something we were able to 'discern' from conversations. We do not speak Laotian. And yet, with all the lack of 'modern' facilities for so many people, we saw little sign of anguish or despair. In fact, it was very clear that people worked hard, rested in between the agricultural cycles, and within reasonable bounds, enjoyed life. Perhaps one of the strangest and most profound visible symbols were the Buddhist temples and monks and novices in saffron robes. Keeping in mind that the country had a revolution led by a party that identifies itself as "Marxist-Leninist", this is a serious contradiction. Religion is supposed to be banned according to dogma. But they apparently tried that dogma in 1975, and the people didn't like it. So they changed. The 'official' position is that no religion will be supported, but none will be opposed. Thus, the people wanted to be Buddhists - fine. And there is animism and Catholicism (a little). But Buddhism is evident everywhere - and no one raises objections. In fact, there is something wonderful about a culture where it is not only 'normative', but honoured, to take a 'Sabbatical' and think about the needs of the spirit. This can be for a week or a lifetime - or on the instalment plan. And the cost is 'show up'. People feed monks. Their work is spiritual, so manual workers contribute enough to allow them to do that work. One of the incidental implications is that the kind of 'begging' we see on the streets of Toronto, and most any other Western city, is virtually non-existent. My count was four in Laos. Three were very old and crippled, and one was a war amputee.

Graphic Lao Posters - intended to reduce death and maiming of children from UXO - unexploded bombs.

Others don saffron robes and instead of imaging themselves as beggars, they become spiritual scholars. Nice twist. Everyone wins.

And then there is our Western obsession with individualism. This is a communal society. It has been for several thousand years. And although our way may seem better, one should not dismiss the enormous advantages of this kind of mutual support so quickly. In the West, we have an enormous search for the meaning of community - and we flail about wondering how to build it. Here, the question has no meaning. People live in communities - and families. To live any other way would be inconceivable. And before we chuck the whole package as a rejection of individual rights, think about the baby sitting facilities - at no direct cost. Think about the home cooked meals instead of microwave specials. Think about "what we do with granny?" In our society, 'gerontology' is the new crisis that threatens our personal old age and the stability of our economies. Old age is not a separate category in Laos. Older people are part of the family and have jobs to do - just like everyone else. And 'senior citizens' do not require cards and discounts. They are honoured as wise people who have learned a great deal through living.

And then there is individualism and democracy. These emotive buzz words in the West have become so ritualized that they have no meaning. Our individualism has become reduced to the 'right' to have a different hair colour or style (much like everyone else who is having a different hair colour /style). We think we are free because we can see the movie of our choice (pre-selected by Hollywood); or the channel of our choice from the 50 repeater channels that have virtually no news - except consumerism commercials. We equate freedom with 'shop till you drop'. That is a very 'thin' understanding of freedom and individualism.

And democracy is "one man (and more recently - or woman) one vote". And yet, voter registration is a relative term, and still does not include everyone. And voter participation, among those who register, is abysmally low. Thus, in many of our 'democracies,' a tiny percentage of us dominate everyone else. A related but seldom admitted fact is that we are influenced and shaped by what we see and hear to an enormous

Bombs (hopefully exploded) serve as toys, pillars, ornaments and canoes.

degree. Thus, the media barons and money moguls get to shape us all to make the "choices" they have already chosen for us. In the bigger scheme of things, the choices we are 'presented' are largely trivial. The big decisions we don't even know about are made behind closed doors - beyond the reaches of government in many cases. Money rules our lives. And money makes decisions on the basis of unthinkable greed. Most of us

as citizens - if we really knew how greed runs our lives - we would be ashamed. But we have been conned. We over-consume, and over-eat and are lulled into the falsely engineered 'freedom' of furby fever*, or the freedom to choose between the latest (soon to be obsolescent) cars and fashions (if they can be separated) - as long as we borrow money and spend lots. A strange freedom this is. * furby = a fuzzy talking toy

We have 'lost' the freedom to smell the roses, (not the two dozen bought and delivered), but the roses you grew in your garden. We have forgotten how. We don't have time. We are so busy trying to make enough money to keep up with the 'needs' we have been sold on TV, that we don't have time to enjoy life. We are 'entertained' to death - literally. We have forgotten what is important. We run from anything that deals with the inner soul and spirit, partly because it too has been commodified. And we purchase more products - whether crystals or retreats to fill our spiritual vacuum - as long as it fits into the schedule. We have forgotten how to stop and smell the roses.

In Laos, people grow flowers. They enjoy them. They grow rice - and although it is hard work, they have a really good party at harvest time. We watched them. And on national day, they had great soccer games, and big all night dances - and everyone went - all ages. And they didn't need a lot of security

police to manage the rioters. There were no soccer hooligans. People celebrated and had a good time. Then they went back to their farms, fed the cattle and started planting rice seedlings for the next crop. Because if one does not do that back breaking work now, starvation will follow. It is a simple life. But is it full of simple rewards that I think we desperately need to remember. That may be one way to stop the youth suicide, to cut down the alcoholism and drug addiction - to put meaning back in our society and in our daily lives. There is no one way. But perhaps, planting a rose in your own personal style, waiting for it to grow, and enjoying the fleeting fragrance of it's delicate bloom might be a start.

Graphic Lao Posters - intended to reduce death and maiming of children from UXO - unexploded bombs.

Phnom Penh, Cambodia: The Killing Fields

Today was Killing Fields day.

We walked through the sunken mounds – where tens of thousands had been slaughtered and dumped. We saw human skulls – all ages – piled – sun dried. We saw torture chambers.

The best estimates available suggest that 2,000,000+ people were assassinated during this bitter civil war. With toothless skulls abounding, and leg and arm bones protruding from the pits, the thrill of being human chilled. Could humans do this to one another? How? How many centuries ago was this insanity? But this is not ancient history. It is now. And as much as there were leaders like Pol Pot, one man could not do this. One tiny country, that has about 10,000,000 citizens remaining could not have done this without manipulative external finance and prodding. I don't understand, but I know better than to pretend that this insanity is from 'somewhere else'. Who are we to label the Cambodians as crazy for killing each other, when the CIA, Chinese, Thai and others were providing and making money from arms and sales. And in Kosovo, the bombs now rain down on people that until recently lived as next-door-neighbors. Today they are slaughtering each other - again. The Irish 'troubles' are not done. The Israeli's and the Palestinians appear ready to gouge each other's eyes out – in the cause of peace. Indonesia is boiling, and East Timor ready to explode. The list could go on. We don't have to go far to see intolerance that is the short fuse of genocide. Listen to Canadians talk about Quebec. Listen or watch the not so latent racism toward the Chinese, the East Indians, the North American Indians. We have no room to gloat at our superiority. I stare at smashed and tortured skulls. I realize I cannot and must not allow the thought that this was another time - a different place. It is now!

We drove back in silence. Our next stop - the high school that became one of the major torture chambers and prisons. From the exterior, other than the barbed wire, it was a simple high school. But as we walked around the cells and torture chambers, the blood, the anguished shrieks of babies, children, men and women could be felt in one's bones. Paintings of the torture methods left nothing to the imagination. Manacles that I deluded myself had disappeared with slavery were piled, rusting from endless soaking in human blood. A map of Cambodia made from human skulls was one effective summary of recent Khmer history. Again, I must stop myself from allowing the pretence that 'they were different', 'we are different.' We are all human. And as numbing as the truth is, we too could do this. The only difference is that with all our technological sophistication, we can have the pretence of civility as we butcher people – with cruise missiles and smart bombs. We must be very careful. The blood soaked slide from mere racism to genocide is an uncontrollable skid. No one thinks the atrocities are possible - in the beginning. No one means them to happen. Once the propaganda erodes respect for human life and convinces us that "they aren't human", "this is a necessary evil", or "it's us or them", the precipice is near.

Peace is an alternative. After a few millennia of war, we have inconvertible proof that war doesn't work very well. Perhaps 'waging peace' with the same finances and energy would give a different result. We have nothing to lose by trying, and only our humanity and our lives to gain.

I have seen enough of genocide. I was in Biafra. I was in Sudan, I have seen kwashiorkor among Canadian aboriginal people. I have seen unconscionable greed - and unthinkable poverty. I have seen human skulls piled high. Enough. It is time to give peace a chance.

We can begin by stopping the bombing today. Feed children; do not bomb them.

Tribute to Teachers

There are many wonderful teachers out there. They can inspire students to want to come to school or to avoid it like the plague. Dom Galati is one such great teacher. This note was written to him and we convinced him and the author to let us publish it as a tribute to the many unsung heroes who make kids who would otherwise not get up in the morning want to attend school and learn.

I know a teacher. He has a good heart, sense of humor and always would go that extra mile for anybody. But, most of all, he has a lot of respect and love. He is the best teacher I've ever had. I always enjoy his company. He pretty much always points me in the right direction. Next to my grandparents, he is the kindest, most generous person, that I know. I would do anything to be in his class again.

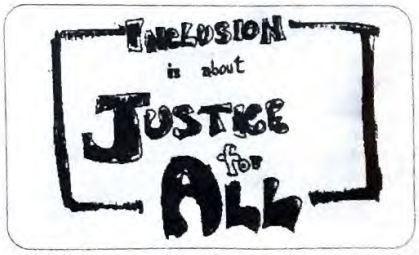
Mr. Galati, you go the extra mile for all your students. You did for me and for my friends. You were the one who gave me a reason to come to school every morning. But most of all you had a heart. Most of my teachers aren't like that. There wasn't a day I remember that you weren't happy except that one day when we all read an article and we all had no questions or comments about it because the story was so sad. But you expected us to have questions.

You made learning fun for me. I have a lot of respect for you as well as love. I wish you and your family the very best. *Jennifer*

A Lao flower for the teachers...

Learn to Listen

The Chinese characters which make up the verb "to listen" tell us something significant about this skill.



Remembering Lives Well Lived...

Since the last issue of **Inclusion News**, a number of close friends and colleagues of all ages have passed from this life. Each taught us a great deal. We thank them, and honour their memory by carrying on our shared commitments to working to creating a world where all are welcome.

We honour the contribution of all those who have passed on, and hope that you will make time to remember the unique contributions made by each of our loved ones. These are but a few...

The first small article is by Joel Hollands and tells of a growing friendship with Bryce Thomas. Maria Galati was at that Summer Institute when Joel and Byrce's Texas trip was a dream. Donnie was a powerful teacher in New Mexico, and like Maria has made the path smooth for many who will follow.

We selected from quotes from Herb Lovett's book, *Learning to Listen*, because none of us can speak for Herb - and we miss him. Similarly with Shafik Asante. When we were thinking, we looked at his book, *When Spider Webs Unite*, and discovered once again that his essays have much to teach today - on violence in schools.

The Adventures of Joel and Bryce in Texas

Joel Hollands

Joel and Bryce just being boys last summer

While I was doing my MAP at the Toronto Summer Institute in 1998, one of the things I told the group I wanted to do was to travel. Darryl, Janet and Bryce were part of my MAP team and Darryl asked me if I really wanted to visit them in Texas. I said "Yes," but I really didn't think I'd be on a plane to Texas that August and actually spend two weeks in Cleburne where it was 110 degrees. My dad's mileage points got me a ticket and off I went.

At first Bryce and I just hung out. We watched our favorite TV shows, went swimming, played our favorite game "fighting the bad guys, rented movies, and played with Bubba the dog. Later the first week, we went to Fossil Rim where you drive around and see and feed real animals. Bryce loved it when an ostrich stuck its head in the window. It freaked me out!

We also got to go to the observatory at the university where we looked at the moon through big telescopes. That was pretty neat.

But the highlight of the trip was Six Flags, a gigantic amusement park. Bryce had gone there before and done most of the rides. I was totally scared to be on the rides with Bryce as I was sure he was going to fall out. But he had a harness on and his dad would hold him from the side and his mom or I would hold on to him (for dear life) from the back.

We did practically every single ride in the park and then we did the ultimate - Dive Bomber Alley. If my mother was there she would have advised against it - very strongly. Basically there's two huge 200 foot towers and one rainbow shaped 200 foot arch. There's two bungy cables that come down from the arch and hook up to you. Three of us went. It took a little more time to hook up Bryce, but the workers were really very nice, helpful and enthusiastic.

A cable hooks to the three harnesses and it pulls you up to the top of one of the towers quite slowly. You are then 250 feet above the earth and all that's holding you is your harnesses. The speaker announces "Flyers 3,2,1 FLY". I pulled the rip cord which let us go and then you free fall and swing back and forth a few times. We screamed all the way down and Bryce said at the end "I feel like Pegasus." (The ancient mythological winged horse.)

Later that week we went to Hurricane Harbour, a huge water park where we did all the water slides possible. The people there were really nice. They even let us stay after the park closed to go on Bryces' favorite water slide one more time.

Bryce and I had lots of fun and I hope we can do it again. We are going to show the video of the Dive Bomber Alley to start the Summer Institute of 1999.

I'm learning more and more that Bryce can do anything that any other kid wants to do. We just need to be creative in figuring it out. The main reason Bryce and I get along so well is because we're both "insane roller coaster junkies."

Bryce Thomas

Aug. 11, 1987 - Jan. 20, 1999

Joel Hollands wrote and read this at Bryce's funeral service.

Bryce was a great friend. Bryce was fun to be with. I enjoyed being with him fighting the bad guys and answering his many questions as best I could. Reading him stories and racing him around like I did whenever we were together. Braving dive bomber alley at Six Flags. I loved doing things with him. Bryce was a curious intelligent person who could have been anything he wanted to be. I am so happy I had the opportunity to meet him, get to know him, and be his friend. Bryce was like a brother. I treated him as I would family. If Bryce needed something, I or anyone else in my family wouldn't even have to think twice about it. But I will miss Bryce. No, I do miss Bryce. I'm going to miss the way he said, "yes", the way he would always say "What are you talking about?" I miss fighting bad guys with him and I most definitely miss his smile. I will miss him but never forget him.

Spirit Brother

Janet Thomas

Closer than a brother.
Closer than a mother.
You are my friend.
My mother did not choose me, as dearly as she loves me.
Others do not want me, even though blood ties are strong.
We met and our kindred spirits burst into flame.
I felt a completeness, right here, next to my heart.
You my spirit brother are ever a safe harbor
from the storms of my soul.
My mother did not choose me.
But God formed you and I of the same clay.
We are two pieces of one whole.
And I simply call you friend.

> Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. Security does not exist in nature nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than exposure.
>
> *Helen Keller*

Maria Galati

March 24, 1979 - July 14, 1998

Rose and Maria Galati with Jim Hansen

While we regretfully announce the passing of Maria, her gifts to us all far outnumber any regrets we may have. Her life has been a profound influence on so many.

The people who have been and are affected by her will forever be her legacy. Because of this, she can never be forgotten. She celebrated her life as a beacon for all who believe in the value of the individual. For us, who knew her on a daily basis, we grew to understand her goodness, her power to affect others, and her beauty. She brought out the good in even the most hard hearted. She brought together people whose diverse ideas and beliefs are crystallizing into visions of what the world should be.

Pioneer and Teacher

It is always complex when young people die, but few at the tender age of 19 have a list of powerful accomplishments as a pioneer, teacher, and friend. Maria lived her life as a warrior for peace. She and her family were relentless in their struggles to ensure that she was fully welcomed, accepted and participating fully in school, church, community and beyond. Some had the illusion that this was just Rose and Dom. They were involved - but they were Maria's partners in a struggle for justice for all - for full inclusion - for a full life for all children. Maria was the inspiration and the drive. She will continue to provide that energy and leadership. Her capacity to crush brick walls with the warmth of her smile is legendary. Her pioneering efforts to open schools to all have paved the way for thousands in Canada. She was one of the first and one of the bravest souls. Now she can rest while we continue the struggle she fueled with love. She taught so much to so many of us. We will use her wisdom and her strength for years to come. We will remember her as we continue her mission to welcome all children.

For Maria

Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint

Maria,
You left us too soon
but your tune
is being heard around the world.
You were our teacher,
the preacher at age five
of full inclusion
of "all means all!".
You clearly heard the call.
You showed us a new way and
as we watched you play
we saw a scene unfold
and we grew bold.

Donnie Phillips

April 24, 1982 - May 31, 1998

Leau Phillips

Many adoptive parents know the saying, "You didn't grow under my heart, but in it." And that is true, but the real truth here is, I didn't give birth to Donnie, but he gave birth to me. He is the only person in my life that loves me unconditionally. He holds nothing back! He allows us to experience his joy, fear, excitement and anxiety, love, laughter and sadness to the full depth that he does. He is the bravest person I know. To live the life he does and to do it with such great spirit takes a great deal of courage. Donnie is a teacher first and foremost. He taught me you don't have to have sight to see clearly or ears to hear. That patience takes many forms. That walking is a gift and not walking is a gift. That smart takes many paths and has nothing to do with anything that can be measured, or tested. That love is not hearts and flowers, but blood, sweat and tears, and hard work and lots of laughter and that it is worth every moment. His love reaches the deepest part of my soul and brings out the best and the worst in me. He makes me want to run faster, jump higher, fight harder, persevere longer, laugh quicker and cry more often. "And a little child shall lead them..." and he does, kicking and screaming sometimes and with a gentleness unexpected at others. He never lost patience with me-unless he couldn't go in the car or I didn't change the battery in the tickler fast enough. Changed by a child? Absolutely, in ways I could never have imagined. Donnie brought new life to my life, broadened my circle of friends, made me learn to navigate systems I had never even heard of before and loved me fiercely even when I failed. I am and will be eternally grateful he choose me.

Herb Lovett

1951 - March 21, 1998

Robert Cutler

Of all the speeches and tributes to Herb, Rob's is the one that touched us the most.

I am sad. The world lost a good man. Herb is still part of my circle in spirit form. He went to heaven and is safe.

I will type about Herb and how his work will continue. I am writing this for everyone to hear. What was Herb to me? The answer lies in my heart and soul. Last December at TASH, I typed that Herb would take Gunnar's place. What I did not realize was Herb would be in heaven helping the people who died needlessly in institutions.

I want everyone to know Herb loved everyone. He is now an angel in God's army. His job is to help in deciding which behaviorist gets into heaven or ends up in hell. Herb is going to many operas in heaven. His days are spent reading poetry and his nights are filled with music.

Herb wants Michael to build a memorial for the thousands of people who are in institutions.

I will help in freeing everyone from places that use aversive treatments. I will stand and fight against all odds. We need to rally everyone. It is time to fight like the battle of the bulge. It is time to start a revolution and I am ready.

I want to tell people life is hard, but we must never stop trying. Fortunately, I have family and friends who support me in my goals for a safer life for all.

Michael, I hope will meet with me so I can type and tell him something. Michael can be on my panel, too. He will replace Herb in a way the world cannot understand, but I do. I hope Michael realizes one of the reasons for Herb's success was Michael.

When I typed, God said it was okay that Herb loved Michael. God wants love in His world, not hatred. I understand this from observing.

Herb's life needs to live in our hearts and souls. Here, today, we should all take a stand that no longer will suffering be allowed. No more, no more.

Shafik Asante

Aug. 11, 1949 - Sept. 5, 1997

Shafik was born and raised in the heart of Philadelphia. As the founder of New African Voices Alliance, Shafik brought together African American Community Organizers to fight against the many injustices prevalent in the African American community.

As director of Community Awareness Network, Shafik worked with diverse cultures in uniting them in struggles for better community services. Shafik was known and honoured as an outstanding international human rights activist. His wisdom and inspiration will carry on.

As this **Inclusion News** was being finished, we heard the tragic news of shootings of students and teachers in High Schools in Colorado and Alberta. We used to phone Shafik to discuss the events shaking the world. We couldn't phone him this time. However in his writings, his thinking lives on. He wrote this in his book ***When Spider Webs Unite***.

Learning to Listen

Herb Lovett

Herb thought deeply about what it means to see and treat one another as humans first, as these quotations from his most recent book show.

We have established services for what people are not, rather than for who they are.

"If Maureen died tonight," I asked them, "who would care?" Someone said her mother probably would. "Anyone else?" I asked. The group thought about it and decided, "Not really." So this woman who has no home, whose one emotional relationship with someone other than her mother has been abusive, who makes about $5 a week, and who has no friends is difficult to be around. In the face of all this - by the way of comfort and assistance – she is told that if she is "appropriate" she can earn two cans of diet cola a day. And then we get confused when she is still noisy, demanding, and "impossible." It took me a while to notice the perilous gap between what we know and what we do. Knowing her plight as a homeless, poor, and battered woman would ordinarily move people to think in terms of getting her some emergency money, a reliable income, and a safe home. Instead, because of her labels as "mentally retarded" and "emotionally disturbed," she was seen as needing "treatment."

Over time, I have gradually come to see that people whose behavior is difficult are not clients to be "fixed" so much as freedom fighters – the most vigorous critics of our attempts at service. Time and again, I have worked for people who have either told me directly or whose behavior has said: "These people who work for and around me are nice enough, but what they are doing is either irrelevant or detrimental to my wishes, my happiness, and even, at times, my survival."

When we professionals assume that people with behavioral differences have to change (and cannot really belong in society until they have changed), we run the risk of becoming the most dangerous kind of protector oppressors: people who not only keep others oppressed but also insist they are helping while they do it.

Institutions ultimately make everyone stupid. They impair the people who live in them. They stunt those who work in them, and they stupefy those who fund them. Institutional thinking, wherever it is done, often focuses on what people cannot do or what they need to learn. The communities I want to be a part of celebrate the gifts people already have and delight in mutual learning.

Being needed is a genuinely important status. When we are needed, we belong and we have a reason to speak up; and when people are needed, that is when we most often find the ways to listen to them.

Fundamentally, the most helpful thing I have found is to listen to what people have to say. By now, I suppose it's obvious that by listening, I mean the act of attending carefully to what is said as well as to what is meant, to regard actions as communication, and, most profoundly, to possess the spirit of taking other people seriously.

from *Learning to Listen. Positive Approaches and People with Difficult Behaviour.*
Paul Brookes Publishing. 1996.
With permission.

The Roots of School Violence

Shafik Asante

Very few people, if any, would refute the fact that we live in a violent society. In fact, our society seems to honour violence. How many times have we seen Sylvester Stallone (Rambo) or other male superstars calmly negotiating a truce with their opponents, applying conflict resolution skills or saying "I'm sorry, I may be wrong, let's try to work this out," or do they end up killing them? We all know they always end up killing the people they view as their enemies, the people they are in conflict with. Aren't too many of our youth doing pretty much the same?

A recent 'Childwatch' report from Washington, D.C. stated that the number one cause of death among High School aged youth today is gunshots. This is the reality our youth must face every day. In fact, this is the reality we all face.

What Can We Do?

Varying groups have done a number of things to both publicize and eliminate this issue of school violence. Calls for more police protection in the schools, metal detectors and better police weaponry are consistently heard throughout our communities. There have been countless rallies, demonstrations, and conferences. Why then does violence remain so present and so seemingly unstoppable.

Some say it is the "crack" epidemic that's causing the problem, others think the media is the culprit. Others insist we need more police. I take the position that if we are to change what violent offenders do, we have to change what violent offenders think. A common theme that youth offer me is they see a generation of people who have "abandoned" them and then label them "lost". They go on to say that if they are lost, then we are the generation that lost them, making us "losers".

The cutting of major school programs like music and sports that are important to the youth feed their belief that we don't care about them. The lack of decent jobs and education leave them missing the skills to compete in the economic market, so many of them have decided to get paid "by any means necessary" selling drugs and other illegal activities.

Our Challenge

Our youth feel estranged from the larger society. Our challenge is to get them re-connected to those things that are positive and would benefit the entire society i.e. community building. It is the youth and students of the world who have led many movements that brought about major change in the conditions that isolated them from their society (such as the students of Soweto, South Africa did in 1976). In the U.S. and Canada youth played a major role in the Civil Rights and Anti-War Movement.

We must reclaim our youth and not buy into the myth that the youth are a major cause of what is wrong in society. I believe in the saying that "It takes a Whole Village to Raise A Child." Therefore our number one challenge is to re-create the village for them. We need to answer the question, "What does it take to raise the village"? Re-organizing our schools so they recognize and reflect the fact they are social as well as academic institutions is another major challenge. Taking this approach means schools will deal with social relations as a primary responsibility along with anything else we teach.

"Community Building" is a major solution to much that grieves our youth today. School problems are caused by many things. Our youth are not the problem, though they are definitely a challenge. Re-creating a safe and caring community for them will play a major role in our meeting this challenge head on.

When the best leader's work is done, the people say, We did this ourselves.
Lao-Tzu

Our Work Will Go On and On
Marsha Forest

Our work will go on and on
Till no child's excluded, unwanted, unloved.
Till no child is hungry, or homeless, unsung.
Till no child's rejected, abused or despised.
Till all are included, are welcome, belong.
Till all are rejoiced for, each with their own song.
Till then,
Our work will go on and on.

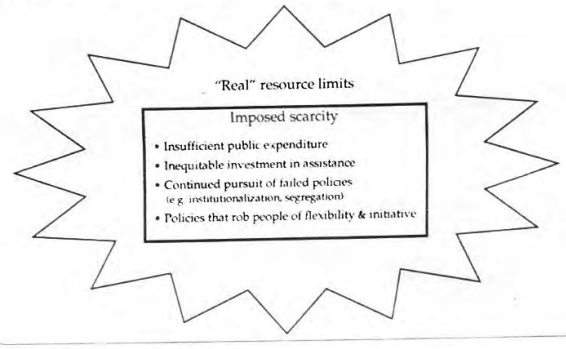
Thinking about "Not Enough Money"

John O'Brien

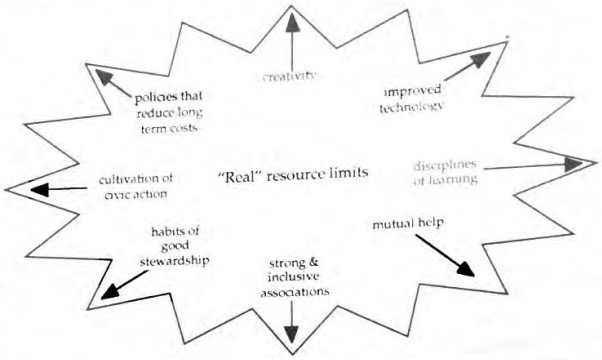
Those of us who work for inclusion hear a lot about "reality" from those looking for good reasons to discourage us. Many such discouragements involve the scarcity of money to pay for necessary assistance or accommodations. Belief in scarcity of money also justifies dominating people's lives in the name of "cost control" and denying the supports people need to participate in community life in the name of "prioritizing scarce funds to assure health and safety."

Few of us actually imagine limitless public resources, though control-seeking policy makers and their allies often accuse us of such fantasies. We know that the costs of honouring people's right to inclusion are both reasonable and offset by many social benefits. But we do need to think clearly about scarcity and act to overcome it's negative effects. In doing so, it helps to distinguish between "real" resource limits and scarcities imposed by policy. Both limits matter, but each calls for a different kind of action.

This diagram suggests the difference. The edge of the star represents such limits as the carrying capacity of the earth and the productivity of the local economy given multiple legitimate demands on natural resources, and public funds, and human energy. The edge of the box represents the scarcity created by the decisions of governments and officials in professional bureaucracies like schools and human service agencies. The area between the edges of the box and the edges of the star represents the resources people can claim to grow in by working "outside the box".



Because the policies that impose scarcities serve important social and political interests –such as minimizing taxation, or distributing wealth to the wealthy, or returning profit to nursing home investors or protecting the working conditions of union members or reducing contact with socially devalued people – the box will



fight strongly and skillfully to protect itself. Change will come through organized political action in conflict with the powers the box serves.

Bracketing the *real* in "real" limits with quotation marks acknowledges the ambiguity suggested by this diagram: limits are *both* real *and* subject to purposeful efforts to push them back, such as the eight forms of action listed next to the arrows.

Most of these limit-expanding forms of action lie outside the power of policy makers to command. They lie within the power of groups of people with disabilities and their families and friends and co-workers and schoolmates and neighbors. Policies can create barriers or provide help to these kinds of actions. Imaginative people must engage one another in making the most of what is actually available by working to create strong mutual support and access to necessary knowledge, skills, materials, and funds.

Reflections on Our Asian Odyssey: Deepening the Dialogue on Inclusion

Jack Pearpoint

Kunmin, Yunnan, China - PEOPLE...

Most every day (on our nine week odyssey; Oct. - Dec., 1998), I spent time with my battery powered Apple e-mate recording events and impressions. From time to time, impressions collected into reflections on what we were learning. We have a deep commitment to building a world where all are welcome and all are appreciated. We know that we all grow through meeting 'differences'. Our understanding was deepened, stretched and sometimes troubled and puzzled by our unprogrammed travels. These extracts from my journal provide a sense of what we learned. The first confronts the dynamism of Asian people, the second calls for action on the horror of people living and dying among unexploded bombs in Laos, the third reflects on the questions about individualism raised by spending time among Laotian people, the forth describes my renewed commitment arising from meditations in the killing fields of Cambodia. These are not easy pieces to read. They were not easy to write. I share them in the hope of deepening our discussions of the boundaries of inclusion.

Thoughts Leaving China

Being in China brings many things to mind. Perhaps the most powerful is that there are 1.3 billion Chinese - give or take a hundred million. That is a lot of people. And if our wander through Yunnan is any indication, they are eating well, have good access to an extensive health care system, and the children are going to school. English is being taught, so that a decade from now, getting around China will again be a different experience. But my hunch is that the English is not being taught to create a nation of tour guides for European tourists. Rather, English is the global language of commerce and computers. Here comes China. In my head, there is no question. The twenty-first century will be the century of China. We have had our day. Fifty years from now, we will wonder how we squandered so much on so few with such a minimal result. China will show us.

Another impact of being in China is renewing consciousness of the power of literacy. We have been totally illiterate - again. It is not a matter of 'privilege', it is a matter of survival. We were virtually unable to carry out the most fundamental daily rituals without assistance. We couldn't eat properly. We couldn't find a place to sleep. We couldn't find bathrooms. We often didn't know where we were, and how to get to the next place, by bus, train, plane - or even walking - even though all the information was often right in front of us. It is important to be humbled - knowing that the world isn't all white - and in fact - only a tiny minority of us are. It is important to remember that basic literacy is a right - and without it, people live imprisoned lives of constrained and contained potential. It need not be - anywhere. The resources to provide clean water and basic literacy to the world are a mere fraction of the annual arms budgets - and yet we pretend that there is no money. Visiting China puts the lie to all that. The largest country in the world was at the beginning of this century, perhaps the sickest in the world. Today, its population is fed and literate. Untold millions still till fields, but other millions are trained in the very latest technologies. All this in spite of multiple attempts by all the world's super powers to contain, constrain, and put and keep China down. We may not understand China at the end of this millennium, but it is clear that it has 6000 years of cultural survival, and it will take much more than opium and gun boats to keep China down. Today, China is not down. I certainly do not pretend to understand, but I do believe, that China is on the move, and we had all better pay attention. Teach your children Mandarin. It is the other language of the future.

Yunnan under construction - high tech and labour intensive together.

Action for Inclusion

The TORONTO Summer Institute on Inclusion, Community & Diversity

5th Annual

July 1-7, 2000

Hosts for the Learning Community:

- John McKnight
- John O'Brien
- Marsha Forest
- Jack Pearpoint
- Judith Snow
- Wayne Helgason
- Nkosi Asante
- Bahiya Cabral Asante
- Dave Hingsburger

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Tel: 416-658-5363 Fax: 416-658-5067
Jack Pearpoint 74640.1124@compuserve.com

Visit Our WEB Page: http://www.inclusion.com

Dear Marsha and Jack,

Just a note to tell you how valuable I found this year's Summer Institute. Pedagogically, I think you've mastered the rare capacity to engage participants in their own learning. And, of course, that's the only way people really learn!

Also it seems to me that you have multiplied the learning possibilities by 120 people. While we have a great faculty, we are only seven so the Institute provides 20-fold opportunities. This is rare and wonderful to see in education.

In addition to the valuable information learning, there was also an invaluable sharing of and by the participants about survival, grief, joy and victory. I never witness as much renewal and power generation as at the Institute.

It is by far the best adult learning experience in North America. I travel extensively and see far too little of the real kind of learning environment that exists at the Summer Institute.

It is a privilege to join you.

I look forward to the years to come.

John McKnight

Most training programs treat participants as clients. And as we all know, people learn the least when they have no active role and are merely consumers. The Summer Institute is the great and grand exception to typical training programs. The Institute is intentionally designed to create a learning, sharing forum where everyone contributes and everyone learns. It is for this reason that I find its participants the liveliest learners and the most influential activists in the course of inclusion.

John L. McKnight

I Got Help at the Toronto Summer Institute

by Miriam Miller

Last summer, in the first week of July, I went to the Toronto Summer Institute for Inclusion, Community & Diversity. I had fun. We went to a party on Monday night at Rose's house and another party on Wednesday night at Sheldon and Judith's house. I liked the last party at Jack & Marsha's. It was on Friday night.

I liked doing my PATH. I talked about what I want to do in my life. There were two women who helped draw and asked me questions. Other people sat with me and helped me do my PATH. My PATH helped me think about things I can do with my friends. Almost everyone did a PATH. On Tuesday night I went to the Marche restaurant. I had pasta for dinner. It was good. One day I went out for lunch with some of the people. One afternoon I had fun with some kids.

My job was to welcome people everyday. I told people: "My name is Miriam. Welcome to the Summer Institute."

I went to different sessions. John McKnight talked about community. David Hingsburger talked about his work and his books about handicapped people. Some of the sessions were about MAPS, PATH and Circles.

I am going to the Summer Institute again next summer. A woman from Colorado is going to stay at my apartment and go to the Summer Institute with me on the subway every morning. Are you going to the Summer Institute too?

Dear Summer Institute Team,

Our group from Winnipeg had a unique learning experience this summer at your amazing Institute. Our team, including two aboriginal youth, found the experience challenging, stimulating and inspiring. We are all used to too many stilted and stale workshops which don't even employ good adult learning techniques. The Summer Institute is on the cutting edge of just plain good learning and effective teaching. And we thoroughly enjoyed it.

I particularly enjoyed participating in the PATH Planning Process with our two youth members. We are well on that PATH and are using the tool in our own meetings. I want to make sure more of our people from across Canada attend the 1999 program in Toronto. This is too good to miss. You managed to make everyone feel welcome and safe to try out new ideas and new learning. John McKnight's daily sessions were terrific.

The diversity of the group was excellent and I particularly enjoyed meeting and learning with colleagues from England, Scotland and the United States. The African American group from Philadelphia was particularly stimulating in their ideas and practice. We plan to keep in touch with many of the people we met at the Institute and feel it has widened our perspective into what true diversity looks like.

We all talk about empowerment, about learning styles, about a new way of doing business - this week's learning experience put the theories into practice. I look forward to brainstorming with you about how to get more native people to the Institute next summer.

Thanks for including me. See you both soon.

Sincerely and warm greetings from,

Wayne Helgason
Director, Winnipeg Social Planning Council

Cathy Hollands: Managing Director

Cathy Hollands is the Managing Director of Inclusion Press in her spare time. Her real job is mother of five. Need we say more? Cathy comes in evenings - AFTER her main job - and is an indispensible part of our Inclusion team and our family.

Cathy Hollands:
Chief of Collections;
Convenor:
Back Porch Collective

Reflections on the Design for Change Course

Heather Anderson, Edinburgh, Scotland

For four days in Feb. 1999, thirty of us had the opportunity to think and reflect on the work we were doing and how we might do it differently. Choreographed and orchestrated by John O'Brien, Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest, the course was a thought provoking and inspiring four days.

In the real world, back here in Scotland, I spend all my working life designing and delivering training courses to help people think about inclusion and ways of making it more likely in our society. As a participant who therefore knows a bit about how hard it is to help people to see what's in front of their nose, I want to thank John, Jack and Marsha - the course was brilliantly conceived and wonderfully structured.

The opening sequence circled around a video of Douglas Cardinal, an internationally renowned Canadian aboriginal architect, who spoke wisely and profoundly about creativity and the power we all have to be magical and creative beings. He reminded us we all had creativity within us. By the last day of the course, my own power of creativity was something I had been forced to accept.

With Douglas Cardinal's words ringing in our ears, we then traveled on a roller coaster of ideas and challenges.

It was all fabulous stuff and we were skillfully guided through the rapids by our coaches. By the third day if someone had asked me to present a play on the ramifications of quantum physics for change in mental health services, I would have tried. Thank you all for letting me have so much fun while learning so much.

More importantly, Design for Change really helped me to see from a different vantage point where I was and what I was struggling with. The exercises and readings helped shift things in my head that were blocking out the sun, and I really needed that. Several weeks after the course, I am still remembering in minute detail, the things we thought about, the stories and energy people shared, the things we made and the plays we presented together. It was a wonderful and creative learning experience.

Design for Change

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Jan. 26-29, 2000

Jack Pearpoint
Marsha Forest
John O'Brien

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To Apply: Send a cheque or purchase order for $600 to Inclusion Press

Design for Change Course

Owen Cooper (Manchester, England)

For me, this course was a mental keep fit workshop where I was sufficiently stretched so as to come away feeling supple and alert to new possibilities.

If you believe anything is possible, given sufficient commitment and determination, then you'll be in good company. This is a workshop for 'can-do' people and those prepared and keen to step into the unknown.

A workshop for those who like to experience new ways of thinking and new ways of making things happen. This is leadership and training at the cutting edge. I went home to Manchester and made a major change in my work life.

The Creative Facilitator - A Course

We get many calls asking about our Creative Facilitator Course. We have been running this course in Toronto for the past seven years and it is always fresh and exciting with each new group. The foundation of the course is based on a clear and powerful VISION of an inclusive society for all. This course is not about disability - but about the wider issue of "how are we all going to figure out how to live with one another."

We do not argue or debate this vision, but move right into understanding a set of tools designed to help any family or organization move in this direction.

The course is built on sound adult education principles as summarized by the quotation:

Tell me I'll forget.
Show me I may remember.
Involve me and I'll understand.

The heart of the Creative Facilitator course is observing and then practicing a set of tools including MAPS (Making Action Plans), PATH (Planning Alternate Futures) and other tools depending on the group such as Solution Circles, Talking Stick Reflection, Making Meetings Matter, Six Thinking Hats, Building Circles of Friends.

Will this course certify the participants to be MAPS or PATH facilitators. Absolutely not. We don't believe in a certification process, but we do believe that with practice each participant will have the potential to be an effective facilitator.

The course is for beginners who have never heard of these tools and also people who have been using them in their work. Everyone works at his/her pace and using a "Learning Marketplace" philosophy everyone builds their own agenda for the four days. Evenings for example are optional but many form working groups to practice the tools they learned during the day.

We guarantee nothing except that if you show up, be present, tell the truth and let go of preconceived ideas. You will go home inspired and renewed.

We ask participants to come with a creative and open spirit and a full heart. What happens is to a large extent dependent on the group who arrive. We create the agenda with the group based on the theme of the course.

We always like to say that this course comes with a warning: It may just change your life.

This is not about doing something to someone else. It is about looking deeply into yourself, reflecting and being thoughtful about your own practice and practicing rather than simply talking about issues.

We love teaching and facilitating this four day workshop where the emphasis is on listening to one another respectfully and creating an atmosphere where without judgment we can all practice process and graphic facilitation and go home just a little bit wiser and with a few more skills than we had when we walked in.

We do not give traditional course outlines. This is not a course for those that need to know what is going to happen every minute. This is four days for those who want to live Helen Keller's credo, "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all!"

We look forward to meeting you at the Creative Facilitator Course.

There will be approximately 35 people at the course. Everyone is welcome!

Enrollment Limited Teams Welcome

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Practical Tools

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Hosted by:
• Marsha Forest
• Jack Pearpoint

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Visit Our Web Page: http://www.inclusion.com

To organize PATH Workshops or
Creative Facilitator Events, call or fax us.

Kinharvie House Workshop

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint, Heather Anderson

We did an exciting three day workshop sponsored by SHS (Scottish Human Services Trust) organized by our friends and colleagues in Edinburgh. The course was held in June 1998 in the beautiful Kinharvie House near Dumfries on the Borders. Enrolment limit 25. Reflection, disciplined work and practice, practice, practice in creative facilitation. The purpose: building inclusive communities, schools and organizations in Scotland. There were also several women from Northern Ireland who were activists in the child care movement. We worked all day and almost all night and then sang during the time left over. The singing was led by the beautiful voices of "The Two Heathers" - Heather Simmonds and Heather Anderson.

Some of the comments to the organizing team from several of the participants gives the flavour of a learning environment in which people are not "clients" or "consumers" but active participants in their own unique learning.

The comments to the team:

This is the best training I've ever had. I particularly enjoyed the visual material, the graphics and the music. I have gained more confidence in myself and I know this will make a difference in my work. I don't think I will ever feel isolated again. I am going to be talking about this forever BUT NOT DEFENDING INCLUSION. I'll make others defend segregation. *Laura*

Over the last 3 days I have laughed and cried more than I can remember for some time. I am most struck by how you created and sustained a real safe environment. It was inspiring. The opportunity to learn and participate in doing MAPS and PATH has been wonderful. I learned an incredible amount about myself and about the sense of being a focus person which will stay with me for life. I now have the dream and the PATH. What more could you ask. *Patricia*

A disparate group of people became a supportive community for three days. You made us feel safe to do new and scary things. You picked a beautiful setting and made it even more welcoming. You made learning fun. It was a wonderful experience.

Arrived with knowledge, left with wisdom.

The thing I learned best is about sharing out the power and control. Love the room set up!

I have loved the past three days - every minute of them. I've been re-energized; renewed, and refreshed by them. I was especially touched by the welcome and the continued kindness in the wee gifts. I loved the vision thing. I loved the coaching. I'm going back to put this stuff into practice. I'm going to embark on my action plan. Thanks. This is the best thing I've ever done. *Heather*

I have learned so much, the three days have changed me. I will do things differently. I have learned practical tools that pull emotional punches. I hope through practicing these tools I will "do no harm." Yes, I will get a scuba buddy. *Linda*

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Things do not Change: We change.
Henry Thoreau

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Inclusion Press Demystified

Who we are and what we do.

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint and Cathy Hollands

When you call Inclusion Press, you will hear a team message from Marsha, Jack and Cathy welcoming you. We do our best to call back in 48 hours - attempting to respond to whatever you want.

The magic answering machine, our computers, fax machine, desks, books, etc. are on the second floor of our home. We call our office the "aerie - eagle's nest". It is light and airy with two large skylights to brighten our way. It is cozy, colourful and warmly cluttered for intense and exciting work. Jack and his larger computers take up half the space; Cathy and Marsha share the other half - so that they can pass notes back and forth like school kids. The space was designed by Dave Hollands, husband of Cathy and architect par excellence. As you can tell, this is a family business.

Cathy's five kids are in and out - or at least they are always on the phone. That is our core. The office works day and night as Cathy often comes in after 8 PM when the five children are settled for the evening.

Other key actors in Inclusion Press include all our friends at **New Concept Printing** who do our printing, design work and arrange our storage. Barbara Seed and David Gershuny deserve special thanks, as do Indira Nunner and Mannye Gitterman.

David Hasbury, who lives down the street, is part of the team helping in production and facilitation work. John O'Brien, although he lives in Georgia, is a key friend and partner - developing materials and always available with sage advice. Judith Snow, our resident philosopher, rolls in for tea and wise words that keep us on the round and narrow.

We'd never survive without Harry Mathews our poet accountant. He and his assistant Christine Ho are always on call when we need them.

In association with the Press, we also run the **Centre for Integrated Education and Community**, which is a Canadian Charity. The major activities of the Centre are to run the Toronto Summer Institute, and the writing, production and distribution of **Inclusion News**. The Center also does pro bono work with families.

We are guided by aboriginal elders in New Zealand (Uncle Whitu) and Toronto (Lillian Anne McGregor) plus one Maori elder to be, our dear friend Te Ripowai Higgins.

Our mandate and vision is to make **Inclusion for All** a reality. We see this as a lifetime work. We travel internationally to do workshops - teaching organizations, educators, families, etc. a set of creative tools to help them work differently and more productively without the negativity we see too often. We work with whoever wants to really change.

Thanks for your support!

Where there is no vision, people perish
Proverbs 29:18

The Four Seasons Major Workshops in Toronto

All courses are for individuals, teams, organizations or families
All welcome!
Location: Primrose Hotel, downtown Toronto

The Fall Season:

The Creative Facilitator

Presents the popular four day Creative Facilitator Course with Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint and Dave Hasbury as your guides. This course delivers four full days and optional evenings to learn and practice many creative tools developed by Inclusion Press: Circles, MAPS and PATH. This is a hands on practical workshop based on an uncompromising vision of full citizenship and inclusion for all. We can promise that if you show up, be present and participate you will leave Toronto with a tool kit full of new ways of thinking and working. We suggest you come with at least one other person from your organization. Limited to 35 participants.

"This course changed my life. I thought I was coming to learn how to do PATH for others. I found out the first person who needed to change and plan was ME. The best training course I have ever done. And it was fun!!"
Administrator

The Winter Season:

Design for Change

Presents the challenging four day and evening Design for Change Course with John O'Brien, Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest as your guides. This course is for people who have participated in the Creative Facilitator course, the Summer Institute, or other events with John, Jack or Marsha. It is a rigorous and exciting workshop that will give participants time to scan, focus and then design a change plan for their organization, family or self. There is an entirely new set of reading materials and tools used in these four days. No one will go home untouched and unchanged.

"I came to this course to take the time to stop and reflect on what I was really doing. I went home with a design that I can implement over time. The best new thinking I've done in years. I strongly recommend you bring a small team so you can go back home and keep on working. This is a unique experience and one that lasts."
Human Service Worker

The Spring Season: *phone to book*

The Challenge of Change: Training for Guides

NEW COURSE based on **NEW CD ROM "The Challenge of Change"**

Motto: *"Have Course; Will Travel."* ***Locations:*** *to be announced.*

The guides for this course are Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest. We offer tools for Creating an Energetic, Can-Do Culture for Surviving Change in Your Organization - slowly and surely. A four day intensive event for leaders, teams, organizations. Based on our new CD ROM, you can take the course home when you are done - including a collection of overheads, slide shows and text.

The focus is on tools, grouped in categories, that you can implement when you take them home. Examples:

Listening Tools: Talking Stick Reflection, Neighborhood Rounds, Scuba Rules.

Team Building Tools: The All Star Company, Making Meetings Matter.

Problem Solving Tools: Solution Circles, The Four Questions.

All the tools are based on a strong vision of revisiting a vision and belief that ALL BELONG, ALL Can Be CREATIVE and PRODUCTIVE and EVERYONE Can Be a CONTRIBUTING MEMBER of SOCIETY.

The Summer Season:

The Toronto Summer Institute on Inclusion, Diversity & Change

Hosts for the Learning Community include: John McKnight, Chicago; Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint, Judith Snow, Dave Hasbury, Toronto; Bahiya Cabral Asante, Nkosi Ali Asante, Philadelphia; John O'Brien, Atlanta; Wayne Helgason, Winnipeg; and special guest for one day Dave Hingsburger, Quebec.

We welcome 100 cutting edge learners to be co-thinkers in creating a unique one week Learning Marketplace event that builds a new kind of team learning community. Taste what education for the Year 2000 can look like and feel like. This is for current leaders in social services, education, health care, ecology, advocacy who are struggling with how to find practical and creative solutions to the complex problems of the day. **Warning:** This is not for people wondering whether and why to do it but how to get the work done to make everyone's lives more full and just.

"Where else could I have breakfast with an aboriginal group from Winnipeg, lunch with an amazing team from Scotland and dinner with my own team and all in one day. I did this for seven days and nights. What struck me was not any one talk or individual but the whole event. It is a taste of the future and a new way of being and working together. Bring a team - and take the learning home. A truly amazing experience." Educator, London, Ontario

Phone Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint and Cathy Hollands for more information and costs re these courses. All courses can and do travel to other locations internationally but are held once a year in Toronto.

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Inclusion Press is a small independent press striving to produce readable, accessible, user-friendly books and resources about full inclusion in school, work, and community.

Our books are excellent resources for courses and conferences. Write/call for information on **bulk** rates for schools and voluntary/advocacy organizations. Inclusion Press can recommend packets of materials for your conferences, workshops, staff-development and events.

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Inclusion News The Inside Story

Inclusion News is the newsy and user friendly Newspaper of Inclusion Press that is published every two years. The purpose of the newspaper is to let our readers and friends know what we and *the international network of people interested in* inclusion and diversity is doing and thinking about. It is a tool for information and networking. We believe people from all over the world are enjoying this.

We do not sell **Inclusion News** in bulk but ask only that you either **pay** for shipment of boxes (150 copies per box approximately $50 in most of Canada and continental United States.) Write us and we'll mail you a free sample copy. **Inclusion News** is a connector, a bridge-builder among like-minded kindred spirits all over the world. If you like it, let us know. Send us your articles and ideas.

Inclusion News is popular at large and small conferences. We can arrange to ship to your conference. Call us. We've done this with conferences of 400 to 4000. It is a great gift to find on your conference seat. People seem to enjoy the material, the spirit and the values in **Inclusion News**.

RESOURCES in Britain

Inclusion Distribution UK

Kevin Reeves, a good friend in England, is now doing a great job distributing Inclusion Press books and videos in UK. Contact him - he is diligent about getting orders out.

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