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## Stacy Story

***As I Look out  
the window,  
the calm pres-  
ence is around,  
The branches  
on the trees are  
barely moving ,***

***It is so quiet and peaceful, God,  
It is so beautiful!***

***Slowly a northeast wind starts  
to breeze, the wind is getting  
stronger.***

***Snow is starting to fall,  
the calm serene presence  
leaves. As I watch  
...The change begins*** □

In the summer of 1996, I left Newfoundland to find a better life for my family. I came to Prince Edward Island in June, just after my son finished school. My husband was here and had a place for my two children and me. I found the temperature hot and for the first week I slept on the floor, where it was cooler!

Work was easy to find and in August I started working for Belle River Enterprises. Working at rock crab was not easy but I got good at it. I made a good living, even though back then the hourly rate was \$4.75 an hour. I loved working there but in 2000, I was suffering from chronic migraines. I decided to leave the factory because the light-

ing was hard on my headaches. In the fall of 2000, I started working for A&R Farms Ltd. That, by no means was an easy job, but I loved it.

Grading potatoes was fun! In 2002, I started having problems with both hands. My specialist told me I had *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* and it was fixable. My boss was good about my hands, so I decided to have both hands fixed. My first surgery was in 2002 and in total I ended up with five surgeries by 2004. The surgeries had worked and I continued to work for A&R Farms Ltd. until January 2008. Then I had developed a problem that affected my entire arm and shoulder. My family doctor turned me down for working. Therefore, I started looking at other avenues. I visited Career Development Services whom were very good to me but told me that the Council of People With Disabilities had better resources for me.

In March I visited Wendy Guindon in the Montague office and was met with compassion and understanding for my problem. I had developed *Rachael's Pain Syndrome*, otherwise known as *Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy*. They have been helping me with searching for new ways in seeking employment with my disabilities. Now, I can tell you they were good! I told them I was lost and only worked labour



## "A Few More Steps" With Bernie Wilson

### POWER CHAIR USE IN WINTER-FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Many wheelchair users have been there at one time or another. There has just been a snowstorm and you have an appointment. Should you put your chair on the street or not? The short answer is no. Some would advise the use of some other form of transportation. This may or may not be available or could be too expensive. There is another possibility. Though I do not presume to decide what other people should do, my experience of nearly thirty years as a wheelchair user may be informative.

#### 1. **Should I or shouldn't I go out in bad weather?**

*Be honest with yourself and others. Talk to a qualified occupational therapist and a seating specialist about your level of ability. Talk about how and where you plan to use your wheelchair. You may need a specifically designed seating system to ensure your safety and well-being.*

#### 2. **How do I know if my chair can be used in poor conditions?**

*Not all wheel chairs are created equal. Speak to a dealer or wheelchair mechanic about the best type of wheelchair to suit your needs. Also, other chair users are an invaluable source of information about chair performance and reliability.*

#### 3. **How do I get the best performance out of my chair?**

*Test drive your chair for at least one day before purchasing it. Make any necessary electronic or mechanical adjustments to maximize comfort and usability. A properly "set" chair will do much to enhance a users quality of life. Always keep your chair in good working condition. Have a qualified wheelchair mechanic service it regularly.*

#### 4. **Will it hurt my joystick if it gets wet?**

*Keep your controller, commonly know as a "joystick", dry. It is a very delicate part of your power chair. Even if a tiny amount of moisture gets into it your wheelchair it could stop functioning.*

#### 5. **Are there any times I should not use my chair out of doors?**

*If at all possible avoid using your chair after dark. Not withstanding the fact that most chairs are equipped with lights, however, the danger is rarely worth the risk. Remember..be extremely careful in traffic at all times. The person most responsible for your safety is you.*

***If you aren't sure it is safe to travel, then it isn't.***

### Tips to Remember when using your chair

- ☞ Dress according to the weather ☐ The cold may have a negative effect on your ability to operate the chair.
- ☞ Always use seatbelts and other safety devices as advised by manufacturers and medical professionals.
- ☞ Always carry a cellular phone. The cost of a cell phone should be included when purchasing a new chair.
- ☞ Always inform someone of your destination and when you plan to return.

Make sure that your destination is open and all access points are cleared. You may need to alter your route to insure your safety. These guidelines are not a universal guarantee of safety. As a fellow power chair user, I would like to remind others that the choice is our own, the risks are our own, and the freedom is our own.



## Grand Opening– Prince County PEI COD

The PEI COD celebrated the grand opening of its new Prince County location on March 11/09. Executive Director Marcia Carroll, Employment Manager Wendy Guindon, along with Prince County staff Nancymarie Arsenault and Devon Broome welcomed more than 40 people to their new barrier free space at 11 Water Street, Summerside. Those in attendance included PEICOD board members and clients, members of the general public, representatives from Canadian Mental Health, Service Canada, PEI Disability Support Program, several government departments as well as representation from municipal, provincial and federal government representatives. The Council was recognized for their many years of advocacy and support on behalf of Islanders with disabilities by local MLA Janice Sherry and Summerside City Councilor Vance Bridges. The Council was also pleased with the generous support of donations by local are merchants for door prizes and food trays.

Visiting MLA's from left to right are Janice Sherry, Robert Henderson and Paula Bigger



## We've Moved

PEI COD  
Charlottetown Office  
Has Moved to:

**5 Lower Malpeque Rd.  
Unit 2,  
Landmark Plaza  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1E 1R4  
902-892-9149**



## Good News—Work Abilities Program

We congratulate five participants for a successful completion of a nine-week Work Abilities Program held in Charlottetown. Participants are from back left to right: Work Abilities Facilitator, Stanley Onwukwe, Paul Fralick, From front left to right, Darlene Cooper, Debbie Carragher, and Tracy Gillis. Missing from photo, Barry Johnston. Rumi, a Sufi poet, once said, "Let the beauty of what we love be what we do. There are a hundred ways to kneel and kiss the ground" There is no limit to opportunities; all we need is to discover it. The Work Abilities Program is designed to assist participants meet these opportunities. The program presents an inspiring collection of motivational activities, designed to enliven and direct the spirit of work seekers with disabilities! Through a variety of exercises and assessments, participants will instill a fresh vision of the role that work can play in their lives, and how and where to find work. At the very heart of the program we sow the seeds of respect, esteem,



even reverence. We appreciate and value the importance of every encounter and interaction we have with participants. We adopt various strategies or techniques, however, our strength lies in the quality that we bring to the delivery of the program. Can you easily identify your vocational skill, abilities and interests? Can you communicate your strengths and weaknesses comfortably and easily to others? Do you let your work history dictate your future; or are you able to use your hopes and dreams in considering employment options? Are you hopeful and enthusiastic about becoming employed or are you less motivated? For more information, contact us at [www.peicod.pe.ca](http://www.peicod.pe.ca) or by phone 902-892-9149 ext 225 or toll free at 1-888-473-4263.



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Jobs that I could no longer do. They got me into the Work Abilities Program. That program showed me many important things: how to look for jobs best suited for my skills, how to look up information, do resumes, interview training, but most important the feeling that you are not alone and to help each other no matter what the problem may be.

On the day of the interview testing, which I still to this day find funny when I think of it, the building they worked in had a surprise emergency fire alarm drill

I now see Theresa MacKinnon, the Community Access Worker in Montague. She helped me apply for CPP. She holds the monthly Disability Support Group meetings in which I attend. Those meetings are refreshing and enlighten me. Judy MacLeod, the

Employment Specialist is helping me look at new ideas for employment . Right now, I am looking into freelance writing. I am not sure how I will fair out, but I am going to try. If that does not work, with the Council's help, I will look for something else.

On December 2, 2008, I found out I qualified for CPP Disability on application! I was very relieved, out of all the ones, the Council really believed me, that something was wrong. They supported me. I was broke and when the cheque came in, it gave me Christmas and helped me get some bills in order. My kids were happy! It made my Christmas big time!

The one thing I have learned is, I am not alone and the Council is there to help when I need them. So, I guess change is inevitable in everyone's life, the difference is in how we choose to deal with it.



# ABILITY NEWS

## CONTACT US

### PEI COUNCIL OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

5 Lower Malpeque Rd., Unit #2 Landmark Plaza

Charlottetown, PE C1E 1R4

TEL | 902 892-9149 TOLL FREE | 1 888 473 4263

<b>Marcia Carroll</b>	Executive Director	Ext#222	peicod@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Mary Lou Cormier</b>	Administrative Assistant	Ext#221	admin@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Wendy Guindon</b>	Employment Manager	Ext#225	employment@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Canda MacNeill</b>	Information & Dev. Coord.	Ext#224	info@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Patt Allen</b>	Employment Specialist	Ext#226	employqueens@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Joyce Raymond</b>	Bookkeeper	Ext#223	finance@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Cathy Rose</b>	Work Abilities Coordinator	Ext#227	workcoord@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Stanley Onwukwe</b>	Work Abilities Facilitator	Ext#231	workfacil@peicod.pe.ca

#### PRINCE COUNTY OFFICE IN SUMMERSIDE:

<b>Nancymarie Arsenault</b>	Employment Specialist	436-9259	employprince@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Devon Broome</b>	Community Access Worker	436-1296	summerside@peicod.pe.ca

#### KINGS COUNTY OFFICE IN MONTAGUE:

<b>Judy MacLeod</b>	Employment Specialist	838-5878	employkings@peicod.pe.ca
<b>Teresa MacKinnon</b>	Community Access Worker	838-5879	montague@peicod.pe.ca

### Air Travel with an Escort

Air Canada and Westjet are now providing a free seat to an escort who is needed to assist a traveler with a disability. The form must be filled out by your doctor. Forms can be downloaded from the following web sites. For more information, customers should contact the Air Canada website at <http://www.aircanada.com/en/travelinfo/before/specialneeds.html> and for Westjet go to <http://www.westjet.com>



### 1<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting

### **Brain Injury Coalition of Prince Edward Island**



BICPEI

West Royalty Community Centre,  
1 Kirkdale Road, Charlottetown, PEI

**Wednesday, April 8th, 2009**

**7:00 p.m. - 9:00p.m. R.S.V.P.**

[info@bicpei.com](mailto:info@bicpei.com) ☐ 902-892-0367

## DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES MEETINGS

#### EASTERN KINGS

**Souris Hospital**  
Main/Level Boardroom  
Wed. April 15th, 1:30  
Wed. May 20th, 1:30  
Wed. June 17th, 1:30

#### SOUTHERN KINGS

**Montague**  
PEI COD Boardroom  
Wed. April 22, 12:00  
Wed. May 22, 12:00  
Wed. June 24, 12:00

#### QUEENS

**PEICOD**  
Boardroom  
Wed. April 29th, 2:00  
Wed. May 20th, 2:00  
Wed. June 17th, 2:00

#### EAST PRINCE

**S'Side/Brophy St.**  
Lions Seniors Complex  
Tues. Apr. 14th, 12:30  
Tues. May 12th, 12:30  
Tues. June 09th, 12:30

#### WEST PRINCE

**Alberton**  
Maplewood Manor  
Tues. Apr. 21st, 12:30  
Tues. May 19th, 12:30  
Tues. June 16th, 12:30