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January 2010 Issue

Charlene Gallant *Road to Success*

Charlene Gallant was diagnosed with osteoarthritis, which affected her cervical spine. Three years ago, she realized that she would be unable to continue in the career she had chosen. Her 10 year employment was leading her towards the area of Quality Assurance with numerous training opportunities in auditing in an ever growing aerospace industry.

"I was a very motivated, self-disciplined individual who had a lot of drive and commitment and this brought about numerous hours of overtime along with pushing myself at times to extremes", says Charlene.

"My mind did not want to stop but my body was saying enough. I found myself falling into a state of depression. So then began the soul searching for my future", states Charlene.

In December 2007, Charlene began her journey on the road to success. She began training as a medical transcriptionist with the CanScribe Institute, located in B.C.

Prior to her enrollment, her experience in the medical field consisted of some short courses while working with the YMCA as a fitness instructor. This was all about to change as she entered the field of medical terminology.

Charlene says, "my daughter was the first person who suggested a career as a medical

CG Transcription Medical Transcriptionist Charlene Gallant



transcriptionist. She saw that I had fallen into a state of hopelessness and despair after having once been so active. Things come about at times when you need them the most, and at that time her roommate knew about an option to work from home. I knew this would be my only hope for employment due to the flexibility of being able to pick and choose my own hours of work around my disability.

I began working on the program in December 2007 and throughout 2008. After having surgery on my cervical spine, I was able to graduate in February 2009 with Honours.

I continue to live through the pain and discomforts of osteoarthritis, but have faced the fact that being an independent contractor will allow me the flexibility to be able to operate a home-based business in my community. Jobs in this field are global. Thereby, the options are endless. My only constraints are deciding what market I want to aim for whether it will be medical offices, hospitals, or private clinics.

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The Mission Statement of the PEI Council of People with Disabilities is:
"to promote the full participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in Island Society"

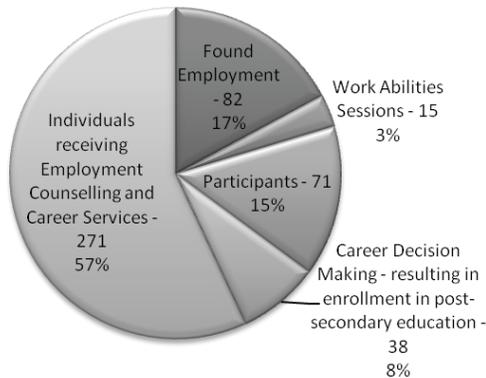
Road to Success

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I recently participated in an entrepreneurial program in order to become aware of the necessary avenues of registering the business, bookkeeping and understanding what is happening with the business at any given time.”

Today Charlene’s journey has taken her through various turns, curves and bumps on the *Road to her Success* and she has this final comment, “I know my life is not hopeless. I am confident that I am working towards a worthwhile cause, and this is of utmost importance to me in my life. I know I will make a difference, and that’s all that matters to me. I am happier and more content now than I have been in a long time. I make time to smell the roses and keep my priorities in check. I have a great network of people that help me along the way and I know that I need to look after me first before I can do anything for anyone else.”

PEI Council of People with Disabilities Employment Counselling and Services Statistics October 2008 - October 2009



Community Legal Information Association of PEI

CLIA is a charitable organization that provides Islanders with understandable and useful information about the law and the justice system in Prince Edward Island. They have up to date information on Family Violence and Sexual Assault. **Contact:** 902-892-0853 or 1-800-240-9798; email: clia@cliapei.ca. Website is www.cliapei.ca



2010 Paralympic Winter Games March 12 - March 21 Vancouver, BC

The PEI Council of People with Disabilities extends best wishes to our two hometown athletes who will be attending the Paralympic Winter Games in March. They are **Billy Bridges** of Summerside, PEI, Sport: Sledge Hockey and **Mark Arendz** of Springton, PEI, Sport: Para-Nordic Skiing.

The Paralympic Movement has its roots in a sporting competition organized in 1948 by Sir Ludwig Guttman. He was concerned about the many British soldiers returning home from the war in wheelchairs as a result of spinal cord and other injuries. Guttman believed that a sporting event could motivate the soldiers to get moving again. It was a great success, and four years later athletes from the Netherlands joined in. A movement was born. In 1976, the first Paralympic Winter Games were convened in Örnköldsvik, Sweden.

The Paralympic Games showcase the athletic

achievements of elite athletes from six different disability groups. During the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games, approximately 600 athletes will compete in five sports and more than 60 medal events. These sports include: Alpine Skiing, Biathlon, Cross-Country Skiing, Wheelchair Curling and Ice Sledge Hockey.



Paralympic Torch Relay Begins: March 3, 2010 Location: Ottawa, Ontario

A representative from PEI will be present at the Torch lighting ceremony and the name of the person will be revealed at a later date. We look forward to the event and hearing more about it in the spring.

The 2010 Paralympic Torch emblem, the Flame, symbolizes the fire within each and every one of us — the fire of friendship, inspiration and the spirit of the 2010 Paralympic Torch Relay.

Information was taken from the official Olympic/Paralympic 2010 Winter Games website. Go to the website for more information on the upcoming games at <http://www.vancouver2010.com>.



Olive Crane, Judy MacLeod

“TOWARDS THE DREAM”

PEI Council of People with Disabilities in partnership with PEI People First and the PEI Association for Community Living celebrated International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, 2009

“The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was a call for all Canadians and Islanders to demand increased rights and opportunities for those in our community who



Judy MacLeod, Leo Garland, Barb Fanning

are living with a disability”, said Marcia Carroll, Executive Director. The annual observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities aimed to promote an understanding of disability issues, the rights of persons with disabilities and gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of the political, social, economic and cultural life of their communities.

PEI People First members shared readings from their collection of stories, *“Writing For Change, The Fox and Other Stories”*, and Judy MacLeod, Council Employment Specialist, performed the song she wrote to commemorate the day titled, *“Towards the Dream”...So let’s roll along like Bernie. Roll towards the dream. The dream where doors are open and abilities are seen. A dream where all are welcome and there’s no gap between. Roll a little further on the journey of the dream.”*

Disability Tax Credit Certificate

Are you receiving or have you applied for the disability tax credit? If not, the first step is to establish your eligibility. You are eligible for the disability amount only if a qualified practitioner certifies, on form (T2201 E), you have a severe and prolonged impairment and its effects. The qualified practitioner can be a medical doctor or specialist to your impairment such as an optometrist, speech-language pathologist, audiologist, occupational therapist, or psychologist.

If you receive CPP disability benefits, worker’s compensation, or other types of disability or insurance benefits, it does not necessarily mean you are eligible for the disability amount. For enquiries visit the Web site at www.cra.gc.ca/disability or call 1-800-959-8281. If you need forms or publications visit www.cra.gc.ca/forms or call 1-800-959-2221.

Disability Benefits

To qualify: To receive a CPP disability benefit, a person must have made sufficient valid contributions to the Plan in four of the last six years and have a disability as defined in CPP legislation.



He or she must be under 65 and not receiving a retirement pension. All applications must be made in writing.

To be eligible: a contributor must have a physical or mental disability that is both severe and prolong.

There are also provisions that may help late applicants qualify for benefits. For more information, contact: PEI Council of People with Disabilities, 902-892-9149, or check the website, <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/audiences/disabilities/index.shtml>



EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION STUDENT AWARDS

The National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) is now accepting applications for the NEADS Equity Through Education Student Awards Programs. These awards are being offered to encourage full access to post-secondary education for persons with disabilities enrolled in undergraduate, graduate or professional degree programs at recognized Canadian Universities, or in Certified Diploma programs at Canadian colleges. Applicants, who meet the criteria of the program will be receiving an award in the amount of \$3,000 to support the costs of their tuition and student fees. For more information on the program please contact the NEADS Office: National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS), Rm. 426 Unicentre, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6, Tel: (613) 380-8065 or go directly to our Equity Through Education Student Awards website: <http://www.neads.ca/en/about/projects/ete2/scholarship/>



ABILITY NEWS

CONTACT US

PEI COUNCIL OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
5 Lower Malpeque Rd., Unit #2 Landmark Plaza
Charlottetown, PE C1E 1R4
TELEPHONE: 902-892-9149 // TOLL FREE: 1-888-473-4263

Marcia Carroll	Executive Director	Ext. 222	peicod@peicod.pe.ca
Shelley Harvey	Administrative Assistant	Ext. 221	admin@peicod.pe.ca
Wendy Guindon	Employment Manager	Ext. 225	employment@peicod.pe.ca
Canda MacNeill	Information & Dev Coord	Ext. 224	info@peicod.pe.ca
Patt Allen	Employment Specialist	Ext. 226	employqueens@peicod.pe.ca
Emma Fugate	Financial Administrator	Ext. 223	finance@peicod.pe.ca
Cathy Rose	Work Abilities Coordinator	Ext. 227	workcoord@peicod.pe.ca
Stanley Onwukwe	Work Abilities Facilitator	Ext. 231	workfacil@peicod.pe.ca

PRINCE COUNTY OFFICE - 11 WATER ST. SUMMERSIDE PE C1N 1A2 (ENTRANCE ON HECKBERT STREET)
Nancymarie Arsenault Employment Specialist 436-9259 employprince@peicod.pe.ca
Devon Broome Community Access Worker 436-1296 summerside@peicod.pe.ca

KINGS COUNTY OFFICE - 2 CRESCENT LANE (BRUDENELL MINI MALL) MONTAGUE PE C0A 1R0
Judy MacLeod Employment Specialist 838-5878 employkings@peicod.pe.ca
Teresa MacKinnon Community Access Worker 838-5879 montague@peicod.pe.ca

Building Entrepreneurial and Employability Skills Across Canada



The PEI Council of People with Disabilities is in partnership with the **Canadian Society for Social Development (CSSD)**. The CSSD provides employment and skills training to persons facing barriers to employment: persons with disabilities, aboriginals, youth, the unemployed and individuals living in rural areas; and they conduct research for the development of programs in the areas of entrepreneurship, leadership and distance learning. Contact the PEI Council of People with Disabilities at 902-892-9149 for more information and check out the website: www.cssd-web.org.

DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES MEETINGS

EASTERN KINGS

Souris Hospital

Main/Level Boardroom at 1:30 pm
Wednesdays Jan. 20, Feb. 17, Mar. 17

EAST PRINCE

Summerside

Lions Seniors Complex/Brophy St. at 1:30 pm
Tuesdays Jan. 12, Feb. 9, Mar. 9

SOUTHERN KINGS

Montague

PEI COD Boardroom at 12 noon
Wednesdays Jan. 27, Feb. 24, Mar. 24

QUEENS

Charlottetown

PEI COD Boardroom at 3 pm
Wednesdays Jan. 20, Feb. 17, Mar. 17

WEST PRINCE

Alberton

Maplewood Manor at 12:30 pm
Tuesdays Jan. 19, Feb. 16, Mar. 16