

**Proceedings of the Conference on  
Disability Issues in  
Northern and Rural Manitoba  
April 13 and 14, 2011  
University College of the North  
The Pas, Manitoba**



With thanks for financial contributions from Manitoba Education and Manitoba Teachers' Society

## Opening Plenary: **Perspectives on Disability**

Welcome to this conference on disability issues. This is a wonderful way for Community Living Manitoba to kick off its diamond jubilee. This is our 60th year working towards truly inclusive communities for those with disabilities, in particular, those with intellectual disabilities.



Our first plenary is on disability issues and both Doreen Demas and I will be speaking on this topic. I can provide a more general overview of what the Community Living movement sees as current perspectives, while Doreen is well versed in providing both personal and professional perspectives on the challenges within the first nations of Canada and Manitoba.

Information quoted below comes from two sources: The 2010 Federal Disability Report - HRDSC and Annual report card for Canadian Association for Community Living

Results of report:

14.2% of adults with disabilities live in low income compared to 10.1 % of adults without disabilities

Average wage: \$29 393 with disability compared to \$37,944 without - there are also large gaps between what women with and without disabilities earn in management positions and between what women versus men earn when both report disabilities = the glass ceiling exists in the world of disability.

9.9% live in inadequate homes compare to 6.4% of those without disabilities

12.9 % of adults with disabilities have unmet medical needs and if they have severe disabilities, this percentage is 23.8%

If we look at the case of families of children with disabilities in Canada, a quarter of them reported

that they had financial difficulties in meeting household and disability-related expenses

66% reported that they lost or quit their job, declined work or a promotion or work fewer hours due to having the increased demands at home.

37% of parents reported that the services that they need are not available locally and 39% report not knowing where to go to find the help that they need.

In Canada, there are an estimated 60 220 girls (aged 5 to 14 y) with disabilities and 104 710 boys (aged 5 to 14 y) with disabilities.

32% of children with intellectual disabilities have been denied early learning and child care.

41% felt threatened at school or on the school bus and 36% were assaulted at school or on the school bus.

Of these, 64.7 % attend regular school, 24.9 % attend regular school with special education classes and 7.9% attend special education schools. 86.6% of parents reported that their children's schools accommodated their children's conditions.

43.4% of children with disabilities have good to very good report card performance but of those, most had mild disabilities and those with moderate and severe or very severe disabilities had poor or very poor report card performance.

64.6% of children with severe disabilities have limited classroom participation - 71.1% boys compared to 52.3% girls.

Boys are also more likely than girls to have unmet aid and device needs at school.

78.9% of parents report that unmet needs at due to funding cutbacks of lack of funding in school system

Of those with severe to very severe disabilities, 22.8% left their communities to undertake education, compared to 8.6% of those with mild to moderate disabilities. If we look at those with ID, 30% of children with intellectual disabilities had to leave their community in order to access school.

52% of adults with an intellectual disability (20-29 y) are neither working nor attending school.

Recently, Canada ratified of United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (March 2010). There is some cautious optimism

about what this convention might mean to all Canadians with a disability.

Another fairly recent boost for those with a disability is the Registered Disability Savings Plan - good for those who qualify for the Disability Tax Credit. Note that you also need to file your income tax return for the previous two years, even if you do not pay taxes.

The Disability Tax Credit will provide some financial help - only if you have taxable income

In Manitoba we have the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit - again this credit is only of use to those who have taxable income.

In Manitoba:

Total population 1.1 million people

An estimated 170 000 people have disabilities (15% of population)

6 540 of 155 100 are between the ages of 15 to 24 y

56% are older adults

57% of people receiving social assistance have a disability and this is their reason for claiming it - they also receive social assistance longer than people without disabilities.

8.9% of those unemployed have a disability compared to 4.6% without a disability

Approximately 180 000 children registered in Manitoba public schools

6273 students received level 2 and 3 funding from Manitoba Education in 2007/08 and this number has increased over time.

1 101 students are educated in ungraded special education classes (522 in Winnipeg; none reported in Kelsey and Mystery Lake SD)

**Some unanswered questions:** how many children in care have disabilities? Is the stress of having a child with a disability what causes the family breakdown? What happens to these children when they age out of the system?

In recent surveys related to inclusive education in Manitoba and on Transition to Adulthood planning, parents reported that, although their children with disabilities were attending their neighbourhood schools, they were still being excluded from the

social fabric of the school community. Parents also reported that they were frustrated in the transition planning process by the confusion around accessing adult services and whether their son or daughter was eligible for services that were similar to what they were getting within the children's system.

A number of intergovernmental committees have been created to look into some specific disability issues, with FASD, with autism spectrum disorders, with providing support to people with complex medical needs on and off reserve, with clearer service navigation. We will be learning about these initiatives over the course of the next two days.

The picture on disability in Canada and Manitoba is not consistent and seems to be a patchwork with evidence of good practice in inclusion and support in more and more communities, while others still work with outdated medical or charity models of service delivery. More and more, the social justice movement is asserting the fundamental human rights of all people and the need to respect the diversity that they bring to our communities.

Now that we have heard a bit about what is happening for many Manitobans and Canadians, it is important that we keep in mind that many of these statistics don't include all of our population. And if we truly want an inclusive country and province, we need to hear the stories of our First Nations people.

Doreen Demas is a well respected aboriginal woman who has spoken provincially, nationally and internationally on disability issues within the First Nations community. She has worked with First Nations organizations, provincial and federal governments and persons with disabilities and a consultant, policy and analyst and writer on issues related to disability, in areas such as health and poverty. She participated in the Canada Aboriginal Peoples' Round Table sessions where she contributed in the areas of healthcare, education and housing. Of late, she is working with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the First Nations Education Resource Centre on their disability services model for on reserve First Nations children and adults with disabilities and their families.

Afternoon Plenary: **Family Centered Practice** (see attached information package)

Thursday Morning Plenary: **Service Navigation** (see attached powerpoint presentation)

Discussion during this presentation focused on the many gaps in service that are experienced by families in northern and rural Manitoba, on and off reserve. There were questions about whether these communities had been consulted in the planning stages for this project and whether their concerns will be heard in the future. There were also concerns regarding how each reserve may be governed differently from others and provisions of support would also be different. Again, it is difficult to provide for the needs of a few community members with disabilities when the whole community is in need of clean water and adequate housing. There were good examples of partnerships formed between reserve and off-reserve communities that allow for better service

provision, but in many cases, those services off reserve are also limited by the availability of support workers. Clearly, this would be an area worth exploring further as we move forward into the future



### Closing Plenary: Panel Discussion - **"Where do we go from here?"**

Facilitated by John VanWalleghem

Speakers: John Wyndels, Policy Analyst, Disability Issues Office;

Irene McKay, Awassis Agency - Children with Complex Lifelong Medical Needs;

Doreen Demas, First Nations Disability Association of Manitoba;

Tara Manych, Principal, Mary Duncan School;

Gordon Miller, Opaskwayak Education Authority;

Al Gardiner, Dean of Education, University College of the North



Overarching themes of the discussion included:

- Accessibility Legislation at the provincial level and the need for ongoing feedback as this rolls out in the coming months.
- The need to address fundamental attitudes and the fear factor that may be associated with having people with disabilities in our communities, both on and off reserve. Also the differences that exist between First

- Nations communities. Each has their own system of governance and their own priorities for disbursing federal funding. Those closer to provincial urban communities can and do partner with provincial services and this has worked well. Those that are more isolated have fewer opportunities for that kind of partnership.
- The need to think and plan with the long term needs of the communities and people with disabilities in mind.
- Partnerships among many different stakeholders are important. Gordon Miller reflected upon how partnerships with health and other jurisdictions have allowed for better service within their community school. Irene also reflected on how the services created for children with complex medical needs were modelled on the provincial CSS program and how that model worked well for a number of years. Finding mentors among community members, between on and off reserve communities, within the systems that we work (education, family services, crisis intervention, health, etc) and outside of those systems
- Advocacy is still needed. Especially when we are working towards gaining more and

better supports for those in traditionally underserved areas (on reserve) or in areas where there may not be the options available for life in the community that we may be seeking.

- Building capacity among ourselves so that we feel stronger with the work ahead of us. Also finding ways to extend that capacity to

other provincial, federal, band-regulated, etc areas.

With both the federal and provincial elections coming fast, it is important to get our message out so that we will see better futures for all of our children and people, especially those with disabilities who have historically been isolated and underserved.

## **Breakout sessions:**

**Jordan's Principle** -Wilma Sanderson, Northern Authority

**Inclusive Education** - Anne Kresta, Community Living Manitoba  
Powerpoint presentation attached

**The Vulnerable Person's Act** - Rose Flaig, Community Living Manitoba

**On and Off Reserve** - Don Shackel, MFNERC and Doreen Demas, First Nations Disability Association of Manitoba

**Leadership and Meeting Facilitation Skills** - Naomi Kruse and Judith Cameron, MAPC

**Transition to Adulthood** - Anne Kresta  
Powerpoint presentation attached

**Essential Skills** - Rose Flaig

**Enabling Conditions Supporting Northern Principals in Implementing Appropriate Educational Programming** - Joan Zaretsky

**Neurodevelopmental Disorders - Brain Injury, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder** - Lisa Moxam, Manitoba Foster Family Network

**The Development of Support Networks** -Suzanne Swanton, Continuity Care

**The Development of the School Community** - Tara Manych, Mary Duncan School, and Bonnie Rempel, Wapahnok School

**Working with Educational Assistants** - cancelled

**Innovative Approaches to Service Delivery - held off campus at Mary Duncan School**  
No speaking notes available

**Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre** - Don Shackel

**New Perspectives on Service Delivery** - Lynda Dobbin-Turner, In The Company of Friends - LIFE Inc.

**Supports for Foster and Adoptive Parents in the North** - Valerie Bighatty, MFFN

## Speaker Bio's and contact information

**Anne Kresta** is the inclusive education and community development specialist with Community Living Manitoba, Chair of the Children's Coalition and President of Asperger Manitoba Inc. She is the mother of three, the eldest two having multiple neurodevelopmental disorders including Asperger Syndrome, Tourette Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder etc. Anne has been a strong advocate for appropriate, inclusive education and has delivered many presentations to parents, teachers, students and others on Asperger Syndrome, Inclusive Education, Service Navigation, Transition Planning and much more. **akresta@mts.net**

**Al Gardiner** is Dean of Education at University College of the North. Al has responsibility for the teacher education, early childhood education, educational assistant, applied counselling, and recreation leadership programs at University College of the North. Al has over 30 years of experience in public education as a teacher, counsellor, school administrator, and school superintendent. **agardiner@ucn.ca**

**Naomi Kruse** is the Executive Director and Advocacy Project Coordinator for Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC). She also serves on the Board of Directors for Mediation Services, Winnipeg. She is the parent of two children enrolled in Manitoba's public education system and has extensive experience as an active member in both of her children's school communities. Naomi has a diploma in Public Relations and a Management Certificate from the University of Winnipeg's Division of Continuing Education. She is currently working towards a degree in Conflict Resolution Studies at the University of Winnipeg. **nkruse@mapc.mb.ca**

**Judith Cameron**, currently serves as the Chairperson for Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC). She has over 20 years experience as both a Human Resources Consultant and Corporate Trainer, delivering seminars and workshops on a number of topics including: Board Roles and Responsibilities, Governance Methods, Team Building, Volunteer Recruitment, and Effective Meeting Strategies. Her company, Cameron Consulting, is dedicated to providing assistance to clients to help build efficient, effective, and progressive organizations. Judith is the parent of three children enrolled in Manitoba's public education system. She, has been recognized for her many contributions as a volunteer within the Interlake Region as a community leader, having been awarded the Premier's Volunteer Service Award and the NEICOM Community Volunteer of the Year Award in 2006.

**Wilma Sanderson** is a registered nurse working for the Northern Authority of Child and Family Services. Wilma comes from Moose Lake Manitoba, she has two daughters aged 17 and 26. She studied nursing in Thompson Manitoba and graduated as a Registered Nurse in 1995. Wilma was hired to case manage special needs children as a Special Needs Worker with Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba in 1994 before graduation. After graduation she continued to work as a special needs worker. She began managing the pilot program Children with Life Long Complex Medical Needs in 1997 until leaving to work with Burntwood RHA in 2002 as a Case Coordinator for Home Care. Wilma then moved to Brandon to work with the RHA in 2007 as an Aboriginal Health Liaison Worker a term position. Her journey led her to Winnipeg in 2009 with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to take on yet another term position as the advisor to the H1N1 Coordinator. In July 2010 Wilma accepted the position as Jordan's Principle Specialist for Northern Authority and later that year as the FASD Specialist. **wilmas@northernauthority.ca**

**Rose Flaig** is the executive director of Community Living Manitoba. She brings to the position and field of work diverse experiences. Being a parent (of a 24-year old), a previous board member of numerous organizations, and solopreneur/business owner provides a broad perspective. You may also find Rose acting at her local community theatre. Equality, justice, and inclusion have been her passion for decades. **hplodge@mymts.net**

**Don Shackel** works for the First Nations Educational Resource Centre and travels extensively to Manitoba's many first nations communities to consult with schools about supporting students with special needs. [dons@mfnerc.com](mailto:dons@mfnerc.com)

**Doreen Demas** is an aboriginal woman who has spoken both nationally and internationally on the subject of disability from a First Nation's Perspective. She has worked with First Nations organizations, provincial and federal governments and persons with disabilities and a consultant, policy and analyst and writer on issues related to disability, in areas such as health and poverty. She participated in the Canada Aboriginal Peoples' Round Table sessions where she contributed in the areas of healthcare, education and housing. Of late, she is working with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the First Nations Education Resource Centre on their disability services model for on reserve First Nations children and adults with disabilities and their families. An award winner, she has published and spoken nationally and internationally on disability issues. [ddemas@mts.net](mailto:ddemas@mts.net)

**Lynda Dobbin-Turner** is a Resource Coordinator for LIFE Inc., an organization created specifically to provide support to people with intellectual disabilities who choose "In the Company of Friends" as their model of support. Lynda has worked with LIFE since 2003, and although she attributes many of her skills to the training and opportunities she's received within that role, she maintains the bulk of her education came from what she refers to as the 'University of Shane' as the mother of a child who lived with significant effects of Cerebral Palsy. Although Shane passed away in 2009, it is the lessons that Shane taught her about the importance of friendship, community involvement and appreciating our unique, individual gifts that she finds most valuable in the work she continues to do. These two distinct views give Lynda a well rounded understanding of the world of supported living. [lynda@icof-life.ca](mailto:lynda@icof-life.ca)

**Dr. Joan Zaretsky** is passionate about the right of every student to an appropriate education, especially those students most vulnerable to the systemic barriers frequently imposed by school systems. She has delivered workshops on inclusive special education at conferences sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation in Ottawa, the Council for Exceptional Children in Louisville, Kentucky, the Canadian Association of Community Living in Regina and a wide variety of workshops for members of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. For the past 12 years, Joan has served as a Professional Issues Staff Officer with the Manitoba Teachers' Society. She completed her doctorate in Inclusive Special Education in February 2011. [jzaretsky@mbteach.org](mailto:jzaretsky@mbteach.org)

**Debbie Zimmerman** is a registered Social Worker, and currently works as the Coordinator of the Community Support Program at St. Amant. She received her Bachelor of Social Work Degree from the University of Manitoba in 1998. Debbie has over 15 years of experience working with individuals who have been diagnosed with developmental disabilities and their families. Debbie developed an interest in Family Centered Practice through her work in the Family Care Program as well as through her studies in the MSW program at the U of M. Debbie also co-presented at the Family Centred Care in Context 2007 Conference in Alberta. [dzimmerman@stamant.ca](mailto:dzimmerman@stamant.ca)

**Andrea Vystrcil** joined St. Amant's Community Support Program in August of 2009 as a Social Worker with Family Care Program. She grew up in Northern Manitoba, and received her BSW from Thompson's Northern Faculty of Social Work in 2002. Andrea has experience in several social services systems including developmental and physical disabilities, Child and Family Services, Community Mental Health and School Clinical Social Work. [avystrcil@stamant.ca](mailto:avystrcil@stamant.ca)

**Lisa Moxam** is a foster parent and works with the Manitoba Foster Family Network to support the many other foster parents within the province. [cdinterlake,mffn@mymts.net](mailto:cdinterlake,mffn@mymts.net)

**Valerie Bihatty** of the Manitoba Foster Family Network is a foster parent.

**Suzanne Swanton** is the Executive Director for Continuity Care. She is a Social Worker and has been working in the Disability field in various capacities for the past 22 years. She has worked with both with

children and adults who have disabilities and their families in Manitoba and also in Saskatchewan. Continuity Care is a non profit organization that assists families in Manitoba with planning for the future of their family member with an intellectual disability. [suzanne@continuitycare.ca](mailto:suzanne@continuitycare.ca)

**Tara Manych** is the principal of Mary Duncan School in The Pas. [tmanych@ksd.mb.ca](mailto:tmanych@ksd.mb.ca)

**John VanWalleggem** consults in educational administration and student services and is executive director of the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education. Previously, he worked at the government, school division and university levels. John's doctorate in Education followed studies at the Universities of Idaho, Wisconsin and Manitoba. He is married, father of two, an aging athlete and keen traveller. [johnvan@mymts.net](mailto:johnvan@mymts.net)

**John Wyndels** is a policy analyst from the Disability Issues Office and a long time advocate for accessible communities. [John.wyndels@gov.mb.ca](mailto:John.wyndels@gov.mb.ca)

**Bonnie Rempel**, principal of Wapanohk School in Thompson graduated from Brandon University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Education and started her teaching career in Thompson, Manitoba. She has been working for the School District of Mystery Lake for the 21 years. Bonnie has worked as a classroom teacher teaching grade K – 8, resource, Emotional Behaviour Disorder programming, Life Skills, Vice-principal and currently working as a Principal at Wapanohk Community School. Bonnie believes in Community School Concept, which supports integrated services within the school setting. Bonnie implements a transformational approach to leadership, ensuring all staff members participate in shared leadership roles.  
[bonnierempel@mysterynet.mb.ca](mailto:bonnierempel@mysterynet.mb.ca)

