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In this edition, you'll read about an upcoming makeover for PROPNews. Roger Desmarais reminds us to make sure we have Emergency Plans in place. And, in keeping with the Holiday Season, read about generosity in the form of grants and donations. All the best of the Season to you all and have a great New Year!

### PROP STAFF

## All about Roger Desmarais

Roger Desmarais has worked as a Biomedical Engineering Technologist with PROP for almost a year and a half. He tests, cleans and repairs Bi-PAPS, suction machines and humidifiers. Roger was a student at BCIT and first heard about PROP through Cristina Aldulea, his teacher at the college.

Cristina thought that PROP would be a good fit for Roger. She contacted PROP about him, and then Roger contacted PROP himself and asked about working there. The rest, as they say, is history. Roger says that he is "forever grateful" to Cristina and to PROP for all their assistance.

Roger enjoys working at PROP immensely and loves the work environment. "It's a small non-profit organization that does really meaningful work that I am proud to be part of."

Roger is profoundly deaf and communicates mainly by sign language and written English. "My co-workers have been great and very accommodating in order to ensure good communication. Several co-workers actually took sign language courses."

Away from his work at PROP, Roger enjoys family life with his wife and son. Roger also likes playing



*"My co-workers have been great and very accommodating in order to ensure good communication. Several co-workers actually took sign language courses."*

games of all sorts and reading. His favourite books are fantasy novels. The latest addition to Roger's family is a Labradoodle, a cross between a Labrador Retriever and a Poodle, who has been named Frankie by Roger's son. Apparently Labradoodles are an increasingly popular breed because they are great with families and do not shed.

Roger wanted to conclude his interview with a reminder to all of our clients. "Make sure your Emergency Plans are outlined and verified. Winter's coming and power outages are likely to happen!" Thank you Roger, that's very good advice. Remember to call us at the office if you need any information or help with your Emergency Plan. ■



Photo on left:  
From left to right,  
Simon Cox, Minister  
Carole Taylor, Minister  
Claude Richmond and  
Jeff Riley, CAYA  
manager.

Photo on right:  
Melinda Rundel (left)  
and Ashleigh Dukoff



## A BIG THANK YOU!

# BC Ministers announce CAYA funding

The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports (BCITS) and the Communication Assistance for Young Adults program (CAYA) would like to thank Minister Claude Richmond and Minister Carole Taylor for a \$4.2-million grant that they announced on October 4<sup>th</sup>. This funding will help ensure that young adults leaving the school system to pursue interests in the community will continue to be provided with the communication devices and supports they need.

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Approximately 50 people came to listen to speeches by Minister Richmond; Minister Taylor; Jeff Riley, manager of CAYA, Simon Cox, executive director of BCITS; Melinda Rundel, ISAAC Canada; and Ashleigh Dukoff, a CAYA client.

Minister Taylor proclaimed October 4, 2007, as International Awareness Day for Alternative and Augmentative Communication, and Minister Richmond announced the grant to BCITS and CAYA. Melinda and Ashleigh used their speech generating devices to deliver their speeches. This was a great demonstration of the difference the communications devices can make to the independence of people with disabilities.

The event concluded with some very delicious cake and coffee and time for everyone present to chat and get to know each other. What a wonderful afternoon! ■

## Coordinators bring something unique to training sessions

by Evelyn Klees

As you know, PROP offers trach/vent classes on a monthly basis to clients, their health care professionals, families and caregivers. About a year ago, our two Peer Support Coordinators, Heather and Jeanette, joined the second day of one of our classes to give their unique perspective on what it's like to be a ventilator-user. The participation of these two active and vibrant women had a tremendous impact on the class's participants and Heather and Jeanette have continued to attend the classes to provide their specialized viewpoint.

Meeting Heather and Jeanette is, for some class participants, the first time they have interacted with ventilator-users. Their presence provides everybody with the opportunity to ask direct questions about life with a vent.

As Jeanette says, "we can show that it's possible to 'go on' after being trached and vented, to live a relatively 'normal' life in the sense that it is still possible to obtain or finish your

education, hold down a job, participate in community life, go to the theatre, go out for dinner, volunteer, enjoy time with family and friends, and wheel the wheelchair accessible Yew Lake trail at Cypress Bowl."

There is no doubt that new clients, their families, caregivers and health care professionals are able to put into perspective all they have just learned when they listen to over 40-years of combined ventilator experience as Heather and Jeanette so honestly share their experiences. Their contribution has helped to make our classes more client-focused and complete. ■



*"We can show that it's possible to 'go on' after being trached and vented, to live a relatively 'normal' life..." says Jeanette.*

*Heather Morrison (left) and Jeanette Andersen*

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### Disclaimer

The information contained in this newsletter cannot replace your doctor or other health care provider. While we try to ensure that material is accurate and appropriate, we do not take responsibility for or endorse content produced by other individuals or organizations.

# all about us

PROP is funded by the Ministry of Health through Vancouver Coastal Health.



## New Wheels!

Technology for Independent Living (TIL) has a new *PT Cruiser* thanks to the BC Rehab Foundation! The Foundation invited organizations to apply

for the *Cruiser* earlier in the year and TIL was very fortunate to have been chosen.

TIL's biomedical engineering team delivers, installs and maintains assistive technology in clients' homes throughout BC. The team's technicians accumulate over 30,000 kilometres per year on service trips.

Until now, TIL has had to lease a vehicle which works out to be quite expensive. It has always been very important to TIL to use its resources directly for clients, and the cost savings that will result from owning rather than leasing a vehicle will enable us to purchase more equipment.

The car will be an immense help as we build our program. A very big thank to the BC Rehab Foundation for helping us to do our work. ■



## Under One Roof

by Jeanette Andersen and Heather Morrison

As you know, in April 2006 the BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports (BCITS) was formed. BCITS houses under one roof the Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program and Technology for Independent Living, PROP and TIL. Many PROP clients are also TIL clients and vice versa and we think it's high time that we were all under the same newsletter roof rather than having separate publications as we do now.

So, sometime over the next few months, you will be receiving a joint PROP/TIL newsletter.

This change is in its very early planning stages and we'd love to have your input. If you have any ideas for the new improved publication—including what you think it should be called—please write or call us and let us know. ■

**Thank you** to everyone who recently joined BCITS. Membership is important because it helps increase support and sustain funding for our programs.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please give us a call at 604-326-0175 or email us at [membership@bcits.org](mailto:membership@bcits.org).



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