

# balance

What it's all about.

BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities

ISSN 1916-7709

July 2012

## Supernatural BC for All

The Accessible Wilderness Society (AWS) was officially incorporated in May of 2009, founded on the principles that inclusion of people with physical challenges is a concept that should not be the exclusive domain of urban centers.

The AWS motto is to “create, develop and promote” the idea that all people, regardless of their physical challenges, should be able to enjoy one of Canada’s greatest natural resources, the Great Outdoors.

This goal, according to President Dan Bauer whose passion and dedication spawned the new organization, is to build a resort and campground facility that will be open for “every body” to enjoy.

In order to traverse the wilderness, Dan uses a specially modified “Rhino” ATV provided through the Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative (EATI).

This is not a place for people who use wheelchairs, but they can come because it will be built barrier-free. This is not a facility for seniors or anyone else with mobility challenges, but they will be able to come because it will be designed with their needs in mind.

The resort will be a place for everyone where families, friends and loved ones can come to enjoy the

**The Roberts Lake site is the perfect location to begin the development of Canada’s first universally designed resort and campground facility.**

facility and all the recreational opportunities they will provide. It can be a place for adventure or a place to relax and recharge your emotional batteries.

On October 1, 2011, AWS’s application for a crown land tenure on Roberts Lake was approved. Special thanks to Minister Ida Chong and the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development for their tenure sponsorship.

The Roberts Lake site is the perfect location to begin the development of Canada’s first universally designed resort and campground facility. Roberts Lake is located just 35 kms. north of Campbell River, and is conveniently located an hour from Comox Airport and a short two-hour drive from the Nanaimo ferry terminal.

Incredible recreation opportunities will be available from fishing, kayaking and hiking—and much more. If all goes according to plan, AWS will open the site in 2015. Let the adventure begin!

For more information, visit [www.awsociety.org](http://www.awsociety.org).



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## Engineering Design Awards

The annual Dr. Jim McEwen Excellence in Engineering Design awards ceremony was held on May 7, 2012 at the Robson Suite Hotel in Vancouver. The award recipients were:

**Principal Award** (\$5000), Alan Kwok, Alex Sayer and Benny Chik for their project: "Eyeselect" control devices.

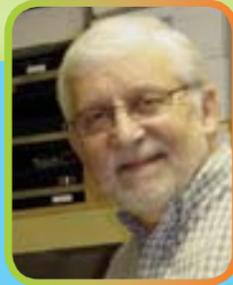
**Award of Distinction** (\$2500), David Tan, Feng Yue and Russell Flanagan for their project: "Click Smart, a PALS-operated bed controller."

**Innovation Award** (\$1000), Bryan Vanderhorst, Chris McNie, and Pete Last for their entry: "Simple Texter," a device to enable people with ALS to send and receive text messages."

The awards were established by the ALS Society of BC in 2007 to recognize innovation in technology to help improve the quality of life of people living with ALS.

For more information, please contact ALSBC at 604-278-2257 or [info@als.bc.ca](mailto:info@als.bc.ca).

David Tan, one of the award recipients, completed his student practicum with BCITS. Congratulations David!



## Help Us Fulfill Our Vision

BCITS, proud home of PROP and TIL, is a registered non-profit and charitable organization. The funds to operate these programs come from the Ministry of Health, through the Vancouver Coastal Health region. We are very grateful for this generous support.

However, this funding does not cover the costs to provide equipment to TIL clients. For example, a special telephone for a person with a high level disability can cost as much as \$1000 and an automatic door opener can cost \$3000.

**We provide many devices like these to adults—at no cost—to fulfill our vision of people living in the community as independently as possible.**

**You can help us continue this work through your donation.** Any contribution large or small will be gratefully accepted. You'll also receive a "thank you" in BALANCE and on our website. **And, 100% of your donation will go toward equipment and assistive devices.**

Thank you  
Simon Cox, BCITS Executive Director  
Charitable Registration Number 807477070RR0001

### Yes, I would like to support TIL's equipment program.

- I enclose a cheque for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
- I will make a donation by credit card through CanadaHelps.org. [Donate in minutes by clicking on the CanadaHelps button on our home page at [www.bcits.org](http://www.bcits.org).]

**Please be sure to fill in all your contact details, so we can send your tax receipt (for donations of \$10 or more).**

NAME

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**Please return this form to:** BCITS, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6

## George Pearson: Past, Present and Future

by Simon Cox

George Pearson Centre celebrated its 60th anniversary on May 17. I'm sure the many people who attended had indelible memories from many of those years, some of which were captured in the "technology display" which included photos of iron lungs, rocking beds and former residents that we remember so warmly.

Our TIL program has a history of working with the residents of Pearson Hospital. In the early 80s, TIL visited Ward 7 to install communication aids and control systems for many residents who are still with our program today.

People like Walt Lawrence, Robb Dunfield, Cody Tresierra, Don Danbrook, Jeanette Anderson, Heather Morrison and many others were pioneers who forged a route toward living in the community that had not existed before. Robb, Jeanette, Heather, Walt and Cody proved that ventilator-dependent people could not only manage their ventilator care on their own, but they opened the door for others using ventilators to live in the community.

The Provincial Respiratory Outreach program, that now exists in the community (in conjunction with TIL), is a direct result of the efforts of Pearson residents to develop a community-based respiratory program that works for the consumers.

There was also a good news announcement at the ceremony by government representatives: that it is time to develop a new building for Pearson residents. More to come! ●



This photo shows the iron lung technology used before portable ventilation came on the scene.



This is a staged photo of a "lung porch" that was used to inspire donations. But, it realistically depicts how crowded the lung porches were and how busy the staff were.

## Brushing Away Misconceptions



Cody Tresierra used to get puzzled glances whenever he'd pull into a local painting class. After all, it's not every day you see a quadriplegic put a paintbrush in his mouth and get to work.

But the Cloverdale resident said it's getting harder to find people that are dumbfounded by his vivid landscapes and portraits.

"Now, it's pretty accepted," Tresierra said of his classmates. "They're still a little bit surprised that I'm there, but once I get started I can pretty much keep up."

It's a bit of an understatement from an artist fluent in the ways of a paintbrush.

Since being hurt in a car accident, Tresierra has gone on to be a successful professional artist and is actively involved in the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists association (MFPA).

He recently finished painting the first part of a cross-country MFPA project called *Canvassing the Country: A Moving, Canadian Art Story*.

Seven talented painters with disabilities across Canada are asked to paint something in their region that inspires them and pass it on to the next artist, like an art torch relay. Tresierra chose the totem poles at Stanley Park as his subject.

His top-right corner spot on the canvass, three by four feet, proved to be a challenge for someone in a wheelchair. But he managed expertly by turning the canvass sideways and upside down.

"I'm really satisfied with it," he said. "I did it fairly realistic. I just pushed the colours a bit and it turned out really well." The finished piece will be unveiled in September for Self-Help Awareness Week.

"It just shows what people can be capable of," he said. "The campaign is for self-help awareness week, that's kind of what the MFPA is about. It's about doing something for yourself and not staying home and feeling sorry for yourself. If you have an interest, pursue it."

Able-bodied people will surely be impressed, but Tresierra hopes that people with disabilities really take the campaign to heart. He initially struggled to paint using just his mouth but, with patience and perseverance, the payoff was worth it.

"When you're starting out you're shaking, your strokes are pretty rough and crude. I would paint everyday even if no one saw my

### Visit Our New and Improved Website

If you haven't visited our website lately, please come check it out.

We've made some big changes based on your feedback, incorporated lots of new videos and created key sections that we hope will serve you better.

#### Highlights

**Client Centre** Some key things to know about being a BCITS client: how to connect with a peer, order services and supplies, and rate our services.

**Learning Centre** Now, all our resources are in one place, including instructional and inspirational videos, self-help guides, information on training and workshops, and more.

**Health Professionals page** Home base for our colleagues in the health professions.

These improvements are a work in progress, so your feedback is most welcome. Visit [www.bcits.org](http://www.bcits.org), explore and send us a note. You can use the feedback form on the Contact Us page.

paintings and they ended up in the garage," he said. "A lot of it is for myself. But once you have people appreciate what you've done and respond to your work, there's a lot of gratification. It kind of pumps you up inside and makes you feel good."

From an article written by Matt Kielytky. Reprinted with permission from Metro Vancouver. ●

## Adaptive Sports Adventure

BY ELAINA ZEBROFF, RRT In March of this year, I was invited to volunteer for an Adaptive Surf Camp. It was a very easy decision: the location was the fabled North Shore of Oahu and the timing could not have been better as Vancouver's dreary winter seemed to be lingering on. I had very little information leading into this adventure, but hey...that's what adventures are all about.

This adaptive camp was sponsored by Whistler's own XSAadaptive Sports. The participants, selected from across Canada, all had spinal cord injuries resulting in varying degrees of quadriplegia and paraplegia. The main focus of this camp was Adaptive Surfing—adapting surfboards to meet individual's needs and to have fun!

The highlight of the trip was the XSAadaptive team's participation in a large adaptive surfing event called "They Will Surf Again", sponsored by an organization called Life Rolls On.

The day was filled with adventure. The adaptive surfers were helped onto the surfboards, lying on their stomachs and using their forearms to prop themselves up. Next, the team of volunteers would hoist the surfer and surfboard up and into the water. Once stable in the water, the team would swim the adaptive surfer out into the waves, turn the surfboard around and wait for the perfect wave to come. When that perfect wave did come, the

**It was truly amazing to see participants be free on a wave with nothing holding them back.**

adaptive surfer was set and ready to go...and go they did. Waiting for the adaptive surfer in shallower waters was another team of volunteers, ready to "catch" the surfer before they surfed right into the shoreline.

It was truly amazing to see participants be free on a wave with nothing holding them back.

Volunteering for the XSAadaptive Surf Camp opened my eyes to a world I knew very little about: adaptive sports. It left me thinking about the many clients BCITS serves and the stories of adventure that must be out there just waiting to be shared.

Please share your stories with us and help get the word out about adaptive sports, camps, travelling and adventures.

For more information about Life Rolls On, please visit their website at [www.liferollson.org](http://www.liferollson.org).



## balance

BALANCE is published three times a year by the BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS).

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We are pleased to have content from BALANCE reprinted in other publications. Contact us with your request and please cite BCITS, BALANCE and the edition date when reprinting.

BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities is the home of Technology for Independent Living (TIL) and the Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP).

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TIL is funded by the Province of British Columbia Ministry of Health and Direct Access to Gaming. PROP is funded by the Province of British Columbia Ministry of Health through Vancouver Coastal Health.

**Publications Mail Agreement No.**  
41682526

## PROP's Spirit: Looking for People-Centred Solutions

My name is Esther and I'm a newer member of the PROP family. I'm participating in BCITS by writing this article. I hope you enjoy it.

Remember when your parents told you how hard life was when they were younger? How far they had to walk to school or the paper routes they had in the summer? Why do they do that?

Maybe they wanted to impart a lesson. They didn't want us to forget the difficulties they experienced so life could be a little easier for us.

As our PROP family grows, it's good to remember the difficulties it faced when it was younger.

On February 24, 1998, people who were on ventilation support received a letter stating that the Pearson respiratory program would close within 30 days. The next course of action when assistance was needed would be to call 911. No support, no supplies, no respiratory program.

If you're a ventilator user, what do you do when you hear this news? The answer is, "You don't give up and you get involved." Users of the Pearson program met with representatives of the Ministry of Health and supporting community organizations. After much debate, the Ministry reinstated the Pearson program temporarily and committed to a new provincial program that would meet consumer's needs.

So, consumers developed a concept for a new community-based respiratory program. Eventually, this resulted in the program we lovingly call PROP and we "moved in" with the Technology for Independent Living (TIL). The respiratory program was now housed in the community—not in a hospital.

It's this spirit of getting involved and looking for people-centred solutions that is the lifeline of PROP. PROP survives because consumers become peer support members,

board members, advocates, writers of wonderful BALANCE articles, policy developers, equipment testers, and the list goes on!

Participate in your direction of care, and share knowledge with your care workers, respiratory therapists and doctors.

PROP was built upon a small but dedicated group of people that decided to lift the limitations that were often placed upon them.

They decided to live life their way and this gave the opportunity for many others to live independently too.

**An Easy Way for You to Participate**  
By ordering supplies every 3-4 months in correct quantities, you can decrease PROP's shipping costs.

This may seem like a small thing, but it's not. Every penny saved will go back into the program and essentially back to you. ●



### Yes, I Accept Your Invitation To Join BCITS

The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS)  
Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Please Check One

- Membership for registered BCITS clients**  
Please mail completed form to BCITS (the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)
- Non-client membership fee**  
Please mail completed form along with \$20.00 annual membership fee payable to BCITS.

Please mail this form along with any applicable membership fees to BCITS - The Home Of PROP and TIL, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6



## Tablets and Smart Phones Now Accessible with Switches

We are very excited to announce it is now possible for our clients to use switches to navigate Tablets and Smart Phones! This includes Androids (e.g., a Samsung tablet or Galaxy phone) or Apple's iPad and iPhone.

#### What will BCITS provide?

If you are a client on our TIL program, we are able to set up your Tablet or Smart Phone with an interface that allows you to access it wirelessly with switches. We can also mount your Tablet or Smart Phone on your wheelchair for easy viewing.

#### Which devices will work?

You need a Tablet or Smart Phone with the following:

- Android OS 2 or 4
- Bluetooth connection
- WiFi and/or 3G (depending on your needs)
- Screen size that suits your needs

A Tablet that only has WiFi will have an internet connection only when WiFi is available, either at home or in a public place that has a WiFi connection, such as Starbucks, Waves Coffee Shop or other establishments. If you want more ability to connect to the internet—in places that don't have WiFi—you need a Tablet with 3G or better. This option costs more than a WiFi device and includes the WiFi connection option as well.

#### How does it all work?

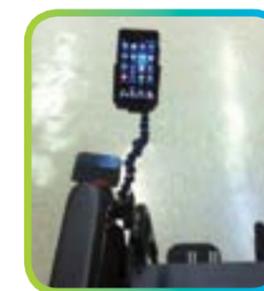
The Tablet and the interface are connected via Bluetooth. After downloading the required software and adjusting some settings on the Tablet, a different keyboard will appear on the screen display.

You have the option of a single switch for auto scanning or a four-way joystick to do your own scanning. We can adjust the scanning speed, if it's too fast or too slow.



#### How are devices mounted on a wheelchair?

Your Tablet or Smart Phone is mounted on your wheelchair, so the device is visible from your sitting position. The interface we provide is hidden from view because it communicates wirelessly with your tablet. We will set up either a single switch or a joystick for you.



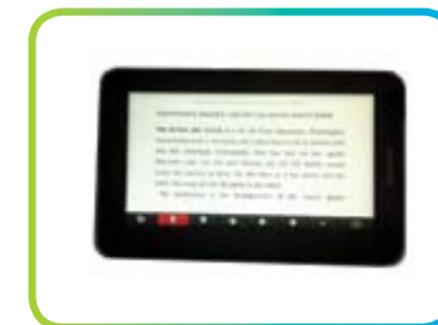
#### What can I do with it?

There are lots of things you can do with your Tablet or Smart Phone, once the interface and switches are set up.

Avid readers can enjoy e-books. Not only can you purchase e-books, you can also borrow e-books from the library!

Social butterflies can also access Facebook on their Tablet or Smart Phone, and use its features such as writing on people's walls, sharing pictures or annoying friends with pokes!

You can surf the internet, read and write email, find directions using online maps, watch videos and much more!



If you have questions about the Tablet or Smart Phone, contact us at 604-326-0175. ●

## Be Prepared

Emergency Preparedness Week was May 6-12, so we'd like to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance of being properly prepared in the event of an emergency.

Valerie Shaver, RRT wrote a detailed article on readiness for people who need ventilation. If you missed it, the full article can be found online in the March/12 BALANCE.

Please see *A Primer for Our Ventilated Clients* at [www.bcits.org/newsletters.htm](http://www.bcits.org/newsletters.htm). Other helpful resources for planning can be found at [www.pep.bc.ca](http://www.pep.bc.ca) and [www.getprepared.gc.ca](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca). Taking the proper precautions and planning now will give you a sense of security and ensure you are ready for anything. ●

## NEWS BITS

### Filter Changes

Changing the filter on the back of a bilevel or ventilator is often a step that clients overlook during routine cleaning.

Air enters the back of the machine, goes through the filter to remove dust and particulates, before being delivered to the lungs. Filters keep the air we breathe clean, so the filter should be checked weekly and changed when it becomes visibly soiled.

The life of the filter depends on many factors such as pets in the home, number of hours of use per day, dust in the home and surrounding construction to name a few.

- If you use a Legendair, a PB560 or a SmartAir bilevel, the filter should be placed with the white side facing out.
- If you use a VPAP, the filter should be placed with the blue side facing out.
- The Synchrony and Harmony units have two filters: a black re-usable filter and a white disposable filter. The black filter is put in first and the white filter is put in last with the white side facing out. The black reusable filters can be cleaned with warm soapy water, rinsed and air dried before reuse.
- The Bipap ST filter is placed in the front of the machine.

If your machine was not mentioned and you have concerns, please call an RT at PROP and we would be happy to assist you.



### CSRT Conference

BY MIRANDA WHITELEY, RRT

On June 1st and 2nd, the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists Educational Confer-



ence was held here in beautiful BC. This was a great opportunity to let Canada know how PROP serves our clients through our unique community-based respiratory outreach program.

I was pleasantly surprised to realize that PROP is very comprehensive compared to programs offered in other provinces across Canada. I think we are unique because our clients themselves created this program over 10 years ago. Who better to decide which services and supports are needed than consumers? I was very proud to have the opportunity to let my peers know about our program.

Jeanette Andersen, who is not only a PROP client but also a member of our PROP Peer Support Group, was asked to tell the audience how her life has changed since PROP began. Jeanette has been involved since its inception and she said that TIL and PROP are instrumental to her continuing independence in the community.

It is because of clients like Jeanette that we are able to assist our other clients across the province to meet their individual needs and goals. ●