

# COALITION CONNECTOR



A PUBLICATION OF THE COALITION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

*Volume 2, Issue 2*  
November 2008

## The Magic Formula

There is no secret as to why the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities continues to make its mark in Peel, Halton and Dufferin. The magic formula is to create a vision that everyone can believe in and develop a winning team.

With the support of a dedicated staff, the Coalition has grown into a respected organization that attracts more than 2000 persons with disabilities.

Over the next several newsletters, the Coalition would like to recognize and celebrate members of its winning team.



For the past ten years, Christine Heath comes into work excited; she loves her job. In 1997, the Coalition hired her as an Employment Counsellor for its new program. She was the second person hired by Employment ACCESS, one of the programs offered by the Coalition to persons with disabilities.

Chris has supported the clients of the Coalition in her roles as program coordinator for Employment ACCESS and then as a facilitator for Discover Your Personal Power Workshop (DYPP).

The Coalition firmly believes in investing in its people, and Chris excels in her position as Staff Coordinator. In addition to her responsibilities in human resources, such as working with the Executive Director to hire and oversee training of staff, coordinating employee performance appraisal programs and arranging for in-house and external training activities, she is charged in motivating her fellow employees. Her effervescent and bubbly personality shines through. For the past two years, Chris has been involved in planning the Annual Staff Training Day. Staff

from the Mississauga and Brampton offices comes together to celebrate its successes, reconfirm its vision of advocacy for people with disabilities and have a good time together.

The Oakville mother of two said, "I have seen a lot of changes in the past 10 years and the future looks good for the Coalition. By remaining true to the foundations and beliefs of the Coalition, it will continue to grow."

Recently, Ryan Machete celebrated his first anniversary at Employment ACCESS. The past year has been exciting for Ryan as he settles into his job and gets to see some of the positive changes that the Coalition can make in people's lives.



Ryan works with clients from Ontario Disability Employment Support Program (ODSP) in all aspects of their job development. His strength lies in taking the time needed with clients to help them achieve their employment goals. Ryan works with individuals to identify the skills that they need to develop for use in the workplace, to gain competitive employment and to work with employers to assist in

*>>Continued on page 2*

### IN THIS ISSUE

<b>The Magic Formula</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
<b>The Visionaries</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
<b>Standards for Customer Service</b> . . . .	<b>3</b>
<b>Year in Review</b> . . . . .	<b>4</b>

integrating the new employee to the workplace. In addition, Ryan can assist employed clients and their employers to resolve situations before jobs are lost. Ryan also negotiates employment opportunities with employers and provides employment follow-up.

Around the office, he is well known for his patience and dedication to the clients he supports. Ryan approaches each project with his keen sense of humour and his witty banter. He is one of the reasons that the Coalition is a fun place to work. He is an integral part of the winning team.

## The Visionaries

The Coalition for Persons with Disabilities is governed by a board of directors that represents the diverse cultural and professional make up of the region. The board forms the vision of the Coalition and ensures that the integrity of the vision is met. Each board member has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to service within the disability community.

The Coalition would like to introduce the 2009 board members and recognize them for the outstanding work they do in the name of the Coalition and the positive contributions they make to our community.

**Naz Husain** is the new chair for the board of directors for the Coalition. She is an active community participant.

Her professional experience ranges from teaching, project developments and also working in the private sector. She is presently the vice chair of both the Mississauga and Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committees. She also volunteers for the Distress Centers of Canada and

Credit Valley Hospital. Living with vision loss, Naz is determined to remove barriers so all persons with disabilities can equally participate in their own communities.

**Glenn Barnes** has a longstanding commitment to accessibility issues within the disability community. He is employed as the Ontario Coordinator for the Tetra Society

of North America - an organization that recruits skilled technicians, designers and engineers to create assistive devices for persons with disabilities in order to provide greater independence and integration into the community. He is also the past chair of the board of directors for the Coalition and the Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee. Glenn currently chairs several boards, such as the Region of Peel TransHelp Advisory Committee and the Ontario Accessibility Directorate "Mainstreet on Ontario" Advisory Committee. Glenn also serves as a board member for several other committees.

His volunteer work also includes a position as the coordinator of Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion - Mississauga and he is a Rick Hansen Foundation Ambassador. In addition, he is a peer mentor with the Canadian Paraplegic Association of Ontario. Glenn is also in demand as a motivational speaker for SmartRisk Heroes Program. Glenn was injured in a diving accident in 1992.

**Clement Lowe**, Jamaican by birth, Canadian by choice, has been active in the region of Peel for the last 30 years. Starting out as a volunteer for Peel Association for Handicapped Adults (PAHA), which promotes the interests of the physically disabled and provides recreational activities. Clem has held a number of positions and currently serves as president of PAHA. Clem first came to the Coalition's board as a representative for PAHA. He has been on the board for the Coalition for a number of years, and currently holds the position of vice chair. Clem has also volunteered for the March of Dimes over the years. His crowning achievement is as one of the founding members of the Peel & Halton Acquired Brain Injury Services and continues to serve on its board of directors. Clem watches with great pride as the group, which advocates for the needs of survivors of brain injuries, grows in the community.

**Paula Olthuis** is very active in the local community. She has volunteered for a number of organizations, which has resulted in a Volunteer Centre of Peel Award of Merit. She currently serves as secretary for Toronto Hydro's Charity Trust/United Way. In addition, Paula has served on the volunteer board of directors and is the former chair on the Volunteer Centre of Peel. She is also acting president and treasurer for the Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel. As well, Paula is the president of Peel Community Connections. Paula currently serves as secretary for the board of directors for the Coalition.

Paula is also a prolific writer. She began writing poetry when she was 16 years old. Many of her poems are recorded on CD and published in anthologies. She has also published a book of poetry, *Poisoned Tea*, and a

>>Continued on page 3



**Paula Olthuis (l) looks on as Glenn Barnes addresses the audience and introduces the new chair, Naz Husain (r) at the 2008 Annual General Meeting.**

children's book, *Twenty-one Wishes & Emma's Dilemma*. She has also authored, *Sultry Smith*, a book for young adults. She is currently writing a novel, *Just a Man*. Paula also enjoys oil painting.

**Shauna Petrie** has been actively involved in the disability community since a spinal cord injury rendered her paraplegic in 1981. She is currently serving as treasurer for the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities, and is on the board of directors for the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation chairing their Consumer Outreach Committee. She is the founder and past president of the Canadian Paraplegic Association - Eastern Ontario Chapter. In 1997, she received the Ontario Community Action Award from the Government of Ontario for her outstanding leadership and contribution towards improving lives of individuals with disabilities.

One of Shauna's greatest passions is travel and she has been globetrotting the world in search of accessible travel opportunities since she was injured over 25 years ago. She shares her enthusiasm for travel with her husband Dave and they founded Sea Wheels Inc., an organization dedicated to facilitating travel opportunities for persons with disabilities.

## The Coalition & New Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

The AODA will see the development of five accessibility standards in the areas of customer service, information & communication, transportation, built environment and employment. The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service were the first to come into force beginning in January 2008. Organizations in Ontario that provide goods or services, and have one or more employees in Ontario, will be required to comply with the standards. Public sector organizations must comply by 2010 and private businesses, non-profit organizations or any other service provider with at least one employee must comply by 2012.

The standards are intended to ensure that organizations are providing accessible customer service to people with various kinds of disabilities. Below, we provide a generalized summary of the types of requirements for which organizations will need to be prepared.

Organizations will need to establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities. A policy is also required for allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access goods and services. A process is also required for

people to provide feedback on how goods or services are provided and how feedback or complaints will be responded to.

Communication with a person with a disability must take into account his or her disability. Training must be provided to staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or who are involved in developing policies, practices and procedures.



The standard also addresses the requirement to allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas that are open to the public. If a service animal is excluded by law, there must be other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.

The standard requires that people with disabilities who use a support person be allowed to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services. If admission fees are charged, then notice should be provided ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person. Notice must also be provided if there is going to be a temporary disruption to any facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access goods or services.



Public sector organizations with 20 or more employees must document in writing all their policies, practices and procedures for providing accessible customer service and notify customers that documents required under the customer service standard are available upon request. These documents must be available in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides comprehensive information on this standard and the status of the other standards under the AODA from their website at [www.mcscs.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca). The Coalition is preparing itself to assist organizations in meeting their training and other needs to meet these requirements. In the next issue of the Connector, we will highlight the Accessible Information & Communication Standards.



## A Year in Review

Once again the provincial government will change the way it does business in providing employment services in this province. As will all of the services, we are waiting to hear which of us will continue on under this new system. There has been no decision as yet as to how those services will be provided for persons with disabilities and whether there will be another attempt to mainstream those individuals who have relied on our service. Mainstream service providers have a long way to go in order to be able to provide full accessibility in their provision of customer service. We are hoping that the lessons learned by the federal government and the extensive studies that showed the need for specific services for persons with disabilities will be taken into account by the Ministry. We are not expecting a decision to be made until next year.



On a much brighter note, our employment services, Employment ACCESS, has exceeded all our targets for the current contract and we have received a record amount of referrals this past month. The Second Career program has been amended to allow for separate funding for disability supports, making it a great opportunity for our clients to access skills upgrading. Applications can be made with the assistance of our staff and we encourage anyone interested to call our office for more information.

We wish to extend our appreciation to all our community partners for their support and assistance over the past year and wish them continuing success in the New Year. In a time of intense competition, we have worked within this community in a spirit of cooperation that speaks volumes to the values of the many services.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very Happy Holiday and thank everyone for helping to make us successful. We look forward to continuing to serve you in 2009 and facing all the challenges of change together. Thank you to all our wonderful and dedicated staff for another outstanding year.



**Season's Greetings**  
*from the staff at the Coalition*

## Coalition Connector

### Published by:

Marketing & Public Relations

Coalition for Persons with Disabilities

### Editor-in-chief

Linda Soulliere

### Editor

Debra Luthe

### Layout and Contributions

Matthew Fleet

Debra Luthe

Linda Soulliere

### Photography

Debra Luthe

### QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS?

10 Kingsbridge Garden Circle, Suite 403  
Mississauga, ON L5R 3K6

Tel: 905.755.9734 ext. 251

Fax: 905.755.9953

TTY: 905.755.9958

Toll: 1.866.969.9734

E-mail: [coalition.pwd@sympatico.ca](mailto:coalition.pwd@sympatico.ca)

[www.disabilityaccess.org](http://www.disabilityaccess.org)