

AA CL Connections

A publication of Alberta Association for Community Living



Defending Hannah

Friends Hannah Gunderson and Aliese Sumner were featured on posters protesting Hannah's forced school bus separation from her classmates. Inset: the Gunderson family. See story page 6.

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Alberta Association for
Community Living

Changing Lives
Changing Communities

On the cover

Ministik Elementary School students and friends Hannah Gunderson and Aliese Sumner enjoy a summer holiday afternoon. The friends were featured on posters promoting a rally that was held to protest the Elk Island Public School Division's move to transport Hannah to and from school apart from her classmates and friends. The Division unilaterally altered Hannah's previous inclusive busing by pulling the accessible bus from her route. Instead, they planned for her to

travel alone on a separate bus. This would place Hannah's friendships at risk and increase her vulnerability to abuse. Initially, the School District and its Trustees refused to reconsider this decision despite the concern expressed by the Gundersons until AAAL and the media became involved. Inset: the Gunderson family: Dave, Kathy, Cole, grade 11, Ashley, grade nine, and Hannah, grade six. See story page 6. (Gunderson family photos) 

a publication of the

Alberta Association for Community Living

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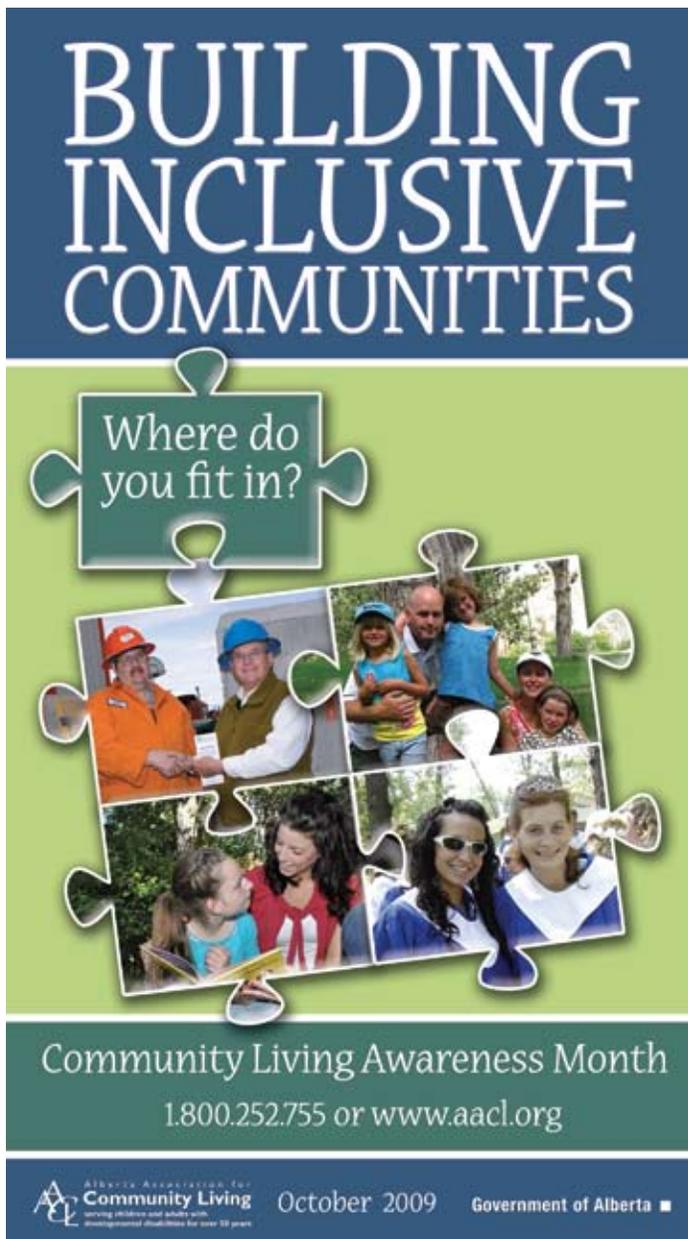
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Alberta Association for
Community Living
serving children and adults with
developmental disabilities for over 50 years

October 2009 Government of Alberta

IQ testing: A critique for parents of children with developmental disabilities

by Bruce Uditsky

Part 3: PDD eligibility requirements raise legal, ethical concerns

Since beginning this three-part series on IQ testing, the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Program has implemented a new regulation that limits access on the basis of an IQ score. This action has implications for the decisions parents must make when their child is young, given the potential impact on whether their son or daughter will be able to access PDD supports when he or she is an adult. PDD's new eligibility requirement comes at a time when it appears Alberta Education is moving away from labeling and categorizing children unnecessarily. So while one government department is moving in the right direction, the other moves backwards—always a frustrating experience for families.

As noted in the second part of this series, an IQ test is not required to access educational supports, Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD), health care or, for that matter, any other supports or assistance, including income supports for adults. And while Alberta Education is currently taking new steps to reduce the costs of its educational tests, PDD is requiring testing and developing new ones at a time when it has limited resources and has already reduced some of the more progressive, inclusive and cost-effective options available to families and individuals.

In the near future we may see a situation where one individual is able to access PDD with an IQ score of 70 while another is rejected with a score of 72. IQ tests were never designed to determine eligibility for needed services and to use them as such is highly problematic. These tests are not precise enough to be used to determine, on the basis of a few points, whether one individual should get the supports they need while another should be rejected. IQ scores do not necessarily reflect the level of support someone might need. For example, an individual with a score of 65 might need less support than someone with a score of 75, depending on personal circumstances, individual characteristics and the nature of their

disability. Some studies have shown scores vary significantly (e.g., by as much as five points) between types of IQ tests. In effect, a parent might unknowingly have their child assessed with one test that results in a higher score than another. As a consequence, when that child is an adult she may be denied the supports she needs for the rest of her life. As noted previously there are many other factors that contribute to variability in test scores (e.g., the tester, cultural and ethnic differences, number of times the test is repeated, mood on the day of test).

PDD has also developed its own test to determine eligibility. Universally the definition for a developmental disability requires significant limitations in intellectual ability and two areas of adaptive skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting). These limitations were ordinarily determined by established psychological tests. Now PDD has developed its own test and as it will be administered by PDD, this raises serious conflict of interest issues. No doubt a legal challenge will emerge when someone is denied access to PDD because of a score on a test developed and administered by PDD that has no standing in the research literature.

PDD has developed eligibility guidelines. These guidelines make distinctions between individuals on the basis of IQ scores that favour some individuals while penalizing others. PDD will accept a single IQ test if it is 55 or less but if it is more than 55 and less than 70, they may require a second test, both of which must result in a score of 70 or less. The only reason for adding a second test is to make eligibility more difficult. PDD should accept any single test with a score of 70 or less. IQ scores vary somewhat over time and there is a learning effect; the more times one is tested, the greater likelihood the individual will learn



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Find out about us during monthly sessions

Each month, AACL opens its doors to people interested in learning more about the organization. AACL hosts free, one-hour information sessions that describe how families created AACL, the challenges families face, the activities and services AACL provides across the province and offers an opportunity to hear directly from some of the individuals and families AACL has helped. Typically sessions are held over the noon hour and lunch is provided. These sessions are not fund raising events, but rather provide the public with a better understanding of AACL and its mission. AACL can host an information session in your community and is committed to ensuring as many people as possible learn about AACL and its mission. If you are interested in hosting an information session in your community, at your office, or for a group that you might belong to and would simply like more information about this opportunity, please contact us.

The balance of sessions for the fall and winter will be held on the following dates. In Edmonton, November 27, 2009, January 15, 2010, and February 19, 2010. In Calgary, November 19 and December 10. Sessions are held at AACL, 11724 Kingsway Avenue, Edmonton, and at the regional AACL office, 4112 – 4th St. N.W., Calgary. To attend one of these information sessions, or for more details, contact AACL at mail@aacl.org or 1.800.272.5774 Ext. 222. As lunch is provided, it is appreciated if attendance can be confirmed at least three days in advance.

Breakfast gatherings nourish understanding, connections

This year AACL held its annual Changing Lives, Changing Communities Fund raising Breakfasts on October 6 in Calgary and on the 20th in Edmonton. Last year, close to 400 attended the events with more than \$200,000 raised. This year almost 500 people attended and close to \$300,000 was pledged. AACL has now raised just under a million dollars since holding the first breakfast in 2006. The one-hour events feature stories from parents, individuals with developmental disabilities and community members on how AACL made a difference to their lives.

In Calgary Elaine and Gerry Wood from Woodridge Ford, to whom AACL is ever grateful for their generosity and support, sponsored the event. Gerry's

humour and passion as a parent and business leader ensure our success in Calgary. Jackie and Jeff Polovick of Driving Force sponsored past Breakfasts in Edmonton. It was Jeff's encouragement and support that helped AACL launch its most successful fund raising effort ever. This year we would like to add our special thanks to Patrick Duffy, Big Futures Inc, for his support in making the Edmonton Breakfast a success.

AACL's gratitude also goes to the table captains who are instrumental in ensuring each Breakfast is filled to capacity. "The events provide a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness about AACL and inform the public about the experiences and challenges families and their sons and daughters face," says McDonald.

Meet our Dream Makers

In each issue of Connections, you will meet one of our generous Dream Makers. This collection of outstanding community-minded people from all walks of life have chosen to support the hopes and aspirations of Albertans with developmental disabilities and their families. Our Dream Makers make financial commitments of \$1,000 to \$10,000 or more over five years in one of three pledge levels: The Dreams of a Child or an Adult, The Dreams of a Family, or The Dreams of a Community. With these supporters, AACL can make all the difference in the lives of individuals and families, and can change communities for the better. In this issue, meet Andy Clark, CEO of Clark Builders, a construction company that has grown in 35 years from a one-man operation in Yellowknife to a multi-million dollar general contracting firm with offices in Edmonton, Yellowknife and Calgary.

"I became interested in supporting AACL after hearing of the positive experience of a good friend, fellow businessman and now fellow Dream Maker who employs two people with disabilities. We all have a heart for different worthwhile ventures. I find inspiration in the Bible story about the good shepherd who leaves his flock in a safe place and goes out to look for others who need guidance and support. I believe AACL does good shepherd work." ■



Andy Clark, CEO, Clark Builders

(If you'd like to become an AACL Dream Maker or would like more information about AACL, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Shawn Ergang, at 780.451.3055, ext 236 or toll free at 1.800.252.7556 or send him an email at sergang@aacl.org. Shawn will be happy to provide you with additional information.)

Good inclusive education a dream come true

By Lina Lu

My family and I moved to Edmonton from Taiwan five years ago. We heard a lot of good things about the special education system in North America. So we wanted to find a good education system for my son Peter. Peter was in a regular school program in Taiwan but there were some times he was pulled out of classes to work on Math and other subjects.

We tried to find the best education program for Peter after we moved to Canada. We were told by the Principal that Peter needed to be in an ESL [English as Second Language] program for Grade 7 after we looked at different programs.

In Grade 8, they told us he needed to be in an “opportunity classroom” but they did not tell us what an opportunity classroom is about. An opportunity classroom is a segregated classroom. We agreed to have him in the opportunity program, as we trusted the school would give him the best education opportunity. Again in Grade 9, Peter was in the segregated special education program and when he finished junior high, the school told us he should go to a segregated special education high school.

Every year I kept thinking that he needed to be in the regular class but I didn't know how to do it. Peter was not happy. He wanted to make friends but he couldn't speak out. I knew that he felt unhappy and shy about being in the special education program. I knew he should be with peers, his age, doing what they are. When I came to Canada, I had a dream that I wanted to find a good education for my son but the doors kept closing on me. My dream was shattered.

Then I met with a health broker from the Multicultural Health Broker Cooperative who told me about AACL and that they could help me. I also joined a parents' group and I met other parents who had their children in the regular school program, and heard more about AACL. We then met Trina Steed from AACL and when I heard her ask Peter what he wanted to do after high school, and talk about university and what career he wanted, I knew that Peter



Lina Lu and son Peter get cozy on Mother's Day. Earlier this spring, the two shared their stories at the Family Conference about coming to Canada from Taiwan and building an inclusive life with AACL's support.

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School feels better now

By Peter Lee

I am in Grade 11 at Jasper Place High School Edmonton. This is the first year I am included in regular high school classes and I am now part of the school leadership group where I have helped out with events like open house and projects to help send school supplies to Africa.

When I first came to Canada I was in Grade 7 in a regular classroom and I learned and worked hard to learn English. In Grade 8, I was put in a special education class and it was a big change because every day I spent most of the day in one small room and I felt like getting out of there. The teacher did not give me homework and every year we did the same things like spelling, math and cooking. When I was in Grade 9, I had a substitute teacher for a while and she told me that I am better at math and that I should go to the regular math class. But when my real teacher came back to work, I never got to go to the regular math class.

Even in Grade 10, I was in the special education class again and it was the same thing doing the same spelling and math from Junior High. I wanted to be in the regular classes and finally in Grade 11, thanks to AACL's advocacy, I was in regular classes. I took Social Studies where I had a good teacher help me learn, and I am now taking Science, English and Culinary Arts. I am getting used to having different teachers and I think the students are really nice.

When I graduate from high school, I want to go to NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) or Grant MacEwan University. There are inclusive post-secondary opportunities at both places because of AACL. Right now I am taking a business class every Tuesday night with other high school kids, and we work in groups to market products. I am making friends and my group likes my ideas. One day I want to have my own business and open a café. I feel fresh and ready to work hard and make new friends. I feel that I am finally out of special education classes. ■

(Several families who immigrated to Alberta have been supported by AACL in their dreams for inclusion. Watch upcoming issues for more stories.)

Defending Hannah

by Kathy and Dave Gunderson

In June, AACL issued a media release denouncing the actions of the Elk Island Public School Division's plans to segregate and isolate Hannah Gunderson, a 10-year-old grade six student by transporting her alone and separately. Hannah has always been included in school and traveled to school on an inclusive and accessible bus. Without consultation with Hannah's parents, the Elk Island Public School Division unilaterally altered her busing arrangement by pulling the accessible bus from Hannah's route. Instead, they planned to have her travel alone and separately, although this would increase her risk of abuse and risk her friendships. Initially, the School Division and its Trustees refused to reconsider this decision despite the concern expressed by the Gundersons and AACL. The Division stated that they are not required to consult parents and that "inclusion starts at school, not on the way there." In late June, a rally was held in support of Hannah's right to travel to and from school in the company of friends and students she knows. Hannah had the support of her community and the school council but the Division simply refused to listen. CTV Television and Global Television covered the unfolding story. AACL President Wendy McDonald and CEO Bruce Uditsky accompanied the Gundersons to meetings with the Elk Island Public School Division and eventually a compromise was reached.

Our family—Dave, Kathy, Cole, who's in grade 11, Ashley, in grade nine, and Hannah, grade six—lives on an acreage outside of Sherwood Park. Our daughter Hannah has been included in her community school since kindergarten, and bused with her peers for six years. She is non-verbal and has challenges with fine and gross motor skills. Three years ago, a bus was retrofitted so she could ride in her wheelchair and we were told that this bus would follow her throughout her school years. Hannah's school had two 70-passenger buses running for several years and she rode one with about 30 kids; the school population is around 70 and the majority of students are bused.

Just after Easter this year, we found out that our school division had decided to segregate Hannah from her peers on her way to and from Ministik Elementary School. The long-term contract with the school bus company was up and instead of renewing it, the division planned to put Hannah on a bus by herself, with no consultation with us. We followed the Division's process and tried to meet with the Division officials and when that didn't work, we asked for and were denied a meeting with our School Board. The Minister of Education said it wasn't his responsibility.

Our School Council, which supported us, contacted the media and we were interviewed about our concerns. We also received advice and support from AACL and they hosted a rally, arranged to send flyers to homes in our community and placed a full-page advertisement in our local paper to organize more support. Friends, family, community members as



Buoyed by a sea of friends, Hannah Gunderson looks toward the future with confidence and no small amount of cheek. Defending her right to belong were legion; among the authors of pointed letters of protest to the Board of Trustees were Sheri Schmidt, 11, far left, and Hannah Hunter, 12, second from right. "Hannah G. already had a bus for her and this bus had Hannah G.," wrote Sheri.

well as media came to the rally and members of the community wrote letters and emails to the media, School Board representatives and government officials. The extensive media coverage, community support and AACL's strategic advice helped us to get further meetings with the Division's senior administration so we could talk about the issue. AACL attended with us. It was difficult, as our School Division went back on their word more than once, and wouldn't go back to the simplest solution – the original bus. AACL offered additional solutions but the Division wouldn't accept any. We kept at it and eventually agreed to a compromise, though it is not

what we really wanted. Essentially, the Division said they would carve out a small route for an accessible bus, out of the existing route so Hannah could at least travel with a few friends and classmates. The School Division also had to shift the school day by 10 minutes for the entire school to accommodate the new bus schedule. When we suggested it made more sense, both common and financial, to go back to the original way of doing things, they said it wasn't possible. We feel that we got the best we could, but we wanted her on the bus with her friends like she always had been. This final compromise wasn't spelled out in a letter until mid-August, so we had a worrisome summer. We did achieve agreement that for the rest of Hannah's schooling, all the way through high school, her bus would be accessible and inclusive. In addition, she would have access to inclusive transportation for all her field trips and school outings. So while we were not entirely successful or happy about the decision for this school year we did succeed in ensuring the future would be different. We have learned to get things in writing and not to be afraid to advocate publicly for what we believe is right for our daughter. We appreciated the support from AACL and from everyone who spoke up for Hannah, including her classmates who saw the injustice. We treasure their letters [see sidebar] and their friendship with our daughter. We hope that there are other parents who become inspired to act on what they believe their child needs. We also hope to influence the decision-makers in our Division and province to re-examine how the system is set up in order to better serve and support children and families.

➔ 'GOOD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION...' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

deserved to have a future. When he said he wanted to own a business I knew I needed to help build his dream of being included, gaining experience and one day he may even have the skills to open his own business.

AACL staff helped me to have Peter included in Grade 11 and I am so happy he is doing the best he can. When we attended parent/teacher conference last week Peter's science teacher said he is a good student and on Peter's report he got marks higher than the class average. Before I wanted to create the chance for Peter to be included but I couldn't get it for him. I have hope for Peter after meeting with AACL staff and hearing about all of the opportunities, post-secondary education and career in the future. Now I have the information and support. They understand me and what I need. AACL is like my second family.

Dear Board of Trustees:

My name is Sheri Schmidt, I go to school with Hannah. I've known her since I was four and so seven years I've known her. It is really hard to see my friend sad. It is not right to put Hannah on a bus alone. How come no one else does?... If you grew up with Hannah you would know that when she smiles and laughs you smile and laugh, when she is sad you're sad. It's not right for the school board to choose what's best for Hannah because they don't know her; they don't know what it's like to be on the other end or to be in her shoes. And if you did, you would know that this is extremely unacceptable to break Hannah's heart. Let her ride with her friends just like any other kid would want to. Hannah already had a bus just for her and this bus had Hannah, her friends and her schoolmates... I know Hannah should have the right to stay with her friends and schoolmates. Sure, she can't talk or walk but she has a heart.

Sincerely,
Sheri Schmidt, age 11

Hello. My name is Hannah Hunter and I'm a Grade 6 student at Ministik School. In Social Studies, we learned about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We also learned about how Canada is a discrimination-free country. I was so proud of our country and our province, Alberta. But since hearing about a future segregation of a fellow classmate, I have become unsure... Even if you made a mistake, and overlooked something, now is the time to be accountable for your actions. How would you feel, if you were going to a meeting and someone said that you had to sit away from everyone else? Even though you were still part of the meeting, you were segregated from everyone else... Hannah G. belongs on the bus with her classmates, and it saddens me to think she would be anywhere else... Isn't everyone treated equally in Canada? If so, then why isn't Hannah one of them? She is every bit of a person that you are. All in all, I'm quite disappointed that things have to be this way. It's sad that you would let this go this far.

Sincerely,
Hannah Hunter, age 12

Unique training event with Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger

A reflective format workshop on *The Philosophy of Personalism With Special Reference to People in Service Engagements and Advocacy with Societally Devalued People*. Co-sponsored by Alberta Safeguards Foundation and ACCL, it will be held June 11-13, in Calgary. The workshop is designed and directed by Prof. Wolf Wolfensberger, Director, Syracuse University Training Institute For Human Service Planning, Leadership And Change Agency. Contact Carla Hamarsnes, phone (403) 249-1554; email chamarsnes@shaw.ca.

Supporting recreation leaders ensures all kids belong

By Karin Melberg Schwier

Because of a long tradition of segregated and separate programs that have kept people with disabilities apart, it takes a concerted effort to bring about social change. AACL has never shied away from its role as a change agent and the Supportive Communities: Strengthening Families (SCSF) project is an innovation that's changing how community recreation and cultural program providers think and act. The result is children and young people with developmental disabilities are welcomed and their families feel confident that their children will be accepted and can participate like any other. Supportive Communities: Strengthening Families is a partnership with Calgary Child and Area and East Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authorities.

Making that become the norm instead of the exception takes some deliberate work. AACL facilitators in the Calgary Area and Lloydminster are encouraging recreation leaders in these Alberta communities to utilize their existing capacity to include everyone and develop a deep understanding of what inclusion is all about. Helping providers understand how a child can be supported and involved also means promoting inclusion in program brochures, incorporating a commitment to inclusion in their literature and adapting the registration process so a program person can get to know the child and discuss any accommodations that might be needed.

"When I'm talking to people I like to explain inclu-



Macy, Tylan, Tristen and Brooke get some hands-on instruction from Explosion Gymnastics coach Terra Ostropolski in Lloydminster. Helping community recreation, leisure and cultural programs to be open to all is an AACL goal. (Photo by Stacey Andrews)

sion by saying, 'If I picked up your summer program brochure and saw a statement indicating that you welcome and include children with disabilities and you want to work with me as parent to have my kid involved, I would say your beginning to understand inclusion,'" says Stacey Andrews, a SCSF facilitator based in Lloydminster. "It's awesome that a child with a disability could be involved in a program without the parents having to ask if it's possible." Andrews understands this not only as someone working professionally to make inclusion a reality; she's also a parent. Her son Tylan has been an Explosion Gymnastics participant, along with his sister. If your child has an interest, or could develop an interest, in a particular activity, Andrews encourages parents to find out where other families have had success and go straight to the club or program leaders.

"It's important for parents to initiate the conversation about enrolling their child in a specific program with the leader, manager, supervisor, head coach of an organization as they potentially know the organization the best." While it's good to get to know the staff and help them understand that your child's interest is no different than any other child, going 'up the ladder' right from the start can be important. You need to help the organization understand, at all levels, that they have the capacity to include your child and do it well," Andrews adds. AACL can provide assistance on how a recreation program can include a child with disabilities and, in those instances, where some additional support might be needed, their avenues for acquiring this support. However, many organizations do not realize that they often have the internal capacity to include children with disabilities, particularly with just a little assistance from AACL. "Everyone involved," she says, "needs to understand this fundamental tenet of inclusion. Having a leader or coach who appreciates it makes the process so much easier." Tylan's coach, Terra Ostropolski, when pursuing her gymnastics dream, "discovered very quickly that children with disabilities could benefit a lot from participating in a regular gymnastics program." Over the past three years, Explosion has involved about 10 children with disabilities and there has been "nothing but positive feedback from all parents."

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What's new?

Watch this column for details on new developments, projects and partnerships that AACL has underway of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

AACL fosters family leadership and advocacy in the pursuit of fully inclusive community lives for children and adults with developmental disabilities. As part of that work, a Family Managed Supports (FMS) Resource Centre has been established in Calgary in collaboration with Family Voices – Calgary and the Calgary Community Board for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. Trevor Liskowich is the coordinator of this first ever Centre who looks forward to “opening up new avenues of support that families want, need and create.” Liskowich, with 20 years of experience in the rehabilitation sector in varying support positions and organizations, says he’s looking forward to working with families on what is really an essential premise.

The beauty of family-managed supports lies in its capacity to enable families to craft highly personalized supports,” says Trevor. “It provides the opportunity for families to be dynamic and creative in enabling an inclusive life. It’s what the rest of us do every day. We take inclusion for granted and the same ought to be true for adults with developmental disabilities. We need to constantly be learning new ways to enable people with disabilities and their families to pursue an inclusive pathway, and family managed supports can assist in achieving that end.”

Family Managed Supports (FMS) is funding provided by PDD directly to families to enable them to hire their own staff and this funding may also be used by families to contract with an agency for supports. The Centre’s mission is to facilitate and support families who are considering or currently using family-managed funding. Trevor is there to provide resources and guidance and including connecting families new to FMS with more experienced families. Often other families are the best source of information and knowledge. ■

PHOTO (RIGHT): Orvella and Fraser Small use Family Managed Supports to support their daughter Sheena in her own business as the owner of a candy store and also to provide some support to her in her own home. Orvella is Chair of the Family Managed Supports Resource Centre Steering Committee.

➔ ‘SUPPORT RECREATION LEADERS’, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

“We’re based on Gymnastics Canada’s philosophy of fun, fitness, and fundamentals,” says Ostropolski. “Without a big emphasis on having fun, and this goes for all participants, they don’t want to continue. Children with disabilities seem to be comfortable here because of the positive energy around them. I typically put them in classes with coaches who exude fun and energy because all children respond to that.”

In her role with the Supporting Communities: Strengthening Families initiative, Andrews says establishing and maintaining ongoing communication between the parent and the program coach/recreation provider is very important. “The more a parent does this, the easier it becomes. It builds confidence for the recreation provider and the parents,” Andrews says. “The child’s family is generally the recreation leader’s greatest resource in creating an inclusive program.”

As for Tylan, his coach calls him “an amazing little man who has shown a lot of growth right from the very beginning.” His involvement has helped with the more practical aspect of his disability, too. Physiotherapy goals like improved coordination and strength are more fun to work on in the Explosion environment. “He’s really grown in his responsiveness to me and the other kids. Honestly, we have never had any questions about participants with disabilities. But if we did, I would explain that doing things differently is absolutely okay.”

“Tylan has taught many of us that gymnastics really is for everyone,” Ostropolski says. “There is such a huge spectrum of what that involvement looks like from doing a forward roll to walking on a beam or simply learning to hang onto the bars. I think he makes the other kids try and they’re willing to help each other.”



To celebrate inclusion, award nominations sought

AACL's Executive Committee invites the nominations for the Community Inclusion, Community Living, the Cormack Memorial, and the National Inclusive Education Awards. These awards will be presented at the annual Family Conference March 19–20, 2010 in Edmonton at the Fantasyland Hotel. Nominations must be received at the AACL office by January 30, 2010, except for the National Inclusive Education Award (see details below) and must be accompanied by a recent biography and photo for each nominee. See forms for downloading or online submission details at www.aacl.org, or send by mail to AACL. For more information, contact Deb McLean at 780.451.3055 Ext. 228, or at 1.800.252.7556, Ext. 228 or email dmclean@aacl.org.

The **Community Inclusion Award** is presented to individuals or groups whose efforts in enabling the complete and meaningful inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities into community life have been inspiring and outstanding.

The **Community Living Award** is given to individuals or organizations in Alberta who, on a day-to-day basis, promote the concept and spirit of inclusive community living.

The **Colonel Eric W. and Dr. Barbara V. Cormack Memorial Award** is given to an Alberta resident who has made an outstanding, long-term voluntary contribution to serving the interests of people with developmental disabilities and their families. This award is sponsored by AACL in collaboration with the Robin Hood Association for the Handicapped and is presented annually.

The **National Inclusive Education Award** is an initiative organized by the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and its provincial and territorial member associations. The award for Alberta is jointly presented by CACL and AACL. It will honour a school or school district whose commitment to inclusive education is exemplary and deserving of recognition. The award is announced following National Inclusive Education Week February 15-19, and presented at the Family Conference. Nominations can be made online at www.aacl.org or by requesting a nomination form from AACL. The submission deadline for this particular award is December 15, 2009. Forward the nomination form and letter to: AACL, Attention: National Inclusive →

Family Voices

Alberta is divided into six regions—Northwest, Northeast, Edmonton, Central, Calgary and South. AACL has developed a network of families, known as Family Voices (FV), to advocate regionally on behalf of children and adults with developmental disabilities. These networks work with school districts to improve inclusive education, with Child and Family Services Authorities to improve supports to families and with Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Boards to improve supports to adults with developmental disabilities. A Community Development Advocate supports each network:

Northwest: Aimee Steinke, asteinke@aacl.org, ph: 780.832.7326

South: Heather Wiebe, hwiebe@aacl.org, ph: 403.892.5817

Tracey Semko, tsemko@aacl.org, ph: 403.548.4016

Central: position vacant.

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Edmonton: Dolores Patterson, dpatterson@aacl.org, ph: 780.717.2049

In this issue, we feature Calgary.

Family Voices Calgary held The Fifth Annual Family Summit – From ME to WE: Building Communities, October 16, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. and October 17, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at Rocky Mountain College. Friday evening's From ME to WE: Building Communities Reception provided an introduction and preview for allies, families and professionals on topics and issues to be presented at the Family Summit including an inspirational speaker, family stories and cutting edge music, as well as a resource fair of new and innovative projects. On Saturday, The Family Summit was an opportunity for families with children or other family members with developmental disabilities to meet, share their successes and learn from each other's experiences in a thought provoking and interactive environment.

For more information, contact Alicia Fisher, Family Voices Calgary at 403.717.0361 or afisher@aacl.org. ■

New Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act Workshop

featuring speakers from the John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre, the Office of the Public Guardian and the Health Law Institute. Free registration. Call 780.492.6676 or email: dossetor.centre@ualberta.ca.

The November workshop will be repeated in early 2010.

Contact the Centre for details.

Education Award, 11724 Kingsway, Edmonton, AB, T5G 0X5. For more information, contact Deb McLean at 780.451.3055 Ext. 228, or at 1.800.252.7556, Ext. 228 or email dmclean@aacl.org. ■

In the Reg Peters Library

Educating Children With Multiple Disabilities: A Collaborative Approach (4th ed.), by Fred P. Orelve, Dick Sobsey, and Roseanne K. Silbberman. Baltimore: Brookes, 2004.

Review by Douglas Fisher, San Diego State University

As the editors of this volume note, “What a difference 17 years makes!” (p. xv). When the first edition of this book was published, students with disabilities were rarely included in regular classrooms. Yet the first edition of this book ignited some fairly profound thinking in the field. The authors and editors of the first edition dared to suggest that students with significant and multiple disabilities receive a quality education from a teaching force that was well-prepared. I remember reading the first edition and thinking through the various supports that needed to be in place—communication systems, behavioral supports, and self-care instruction, for example. At that time, I worked in a residential institution for people with disabilities and had not really considered alternatives to this “living and learning” environment.

Of course, the world has changed in dramatic ways since the first edition was published. Students with significant disabilities have paved the way for all students who challenge the system in order to be educated in respectful, inclusive ways. I am pleased to report that this book has kept pace and will, once again, push our thinking about the service delivery system for children and youth with multiple disabilities.

The authors and editors of this volume set out to describe the “broad sense of the characteristics and needs of learners with severe and multiple disabilities and their families” (p. xvii) and begin the book with a discussion of the ways in which we can design collaborative educational services. This focus, from the very first chapter, is evident throughout the book. Entire chapters are devoted to addressing the characteristics and need, including attention to sensorimotor development, physical management, health care needs, communication, mealtimes, and self-care.

This book, however, is so much more than a summary of the supports that students with multiple disabili-

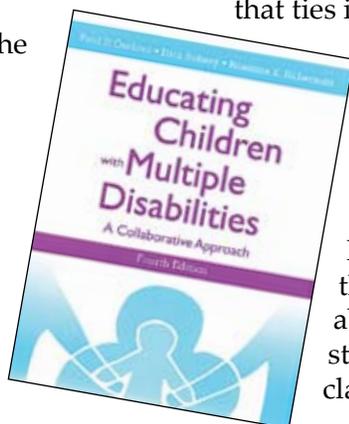
ties need to be successful. These chapters come alive with case examples and practical solutions....A common criticism of edited books is the changing voice between the chapters and the potential for redundancy among chapters. This is not the case for this book. The editors have skillfully organized the chapters such that topics are introduced and reinforced but are not redundant. In addition, the editors successfully ensured that there is a common voice across the book, which also is a golden thread that ties it together. This golden thread is introduced

in the very first sentence in the book, “Putting the student with severe and/or multiple disabilities at the core of all planning is key to truly making a difference in that student’s life” (Cloninger, p. 1) and is a major feature of every chapter in the book. I was pleased to see that the fourth edition of this classic was published and thrilled to learn about the contribution it makes to educating students with significant disabilities in regular classrooms and schools.

(Douglas Fisher, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the College of Education, Department of Teacher Education at San Diego State University. This review originally appeared in *Mental Retardation*: Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 66–67. It is reprinted by permission and has been edited for space. This journal is now called *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*.)

Sobsey says fifth edition possible

Dr. Dick Sobsey, a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta, is the Director of the JP Das Developmental Disabilities Centre and of the John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre. Well known to AACL, Sobsey credits the progressive work of families and advocates who work toward more inclusive lives for people with developmental disabilities. His book *Educating Children* is pushing the envelope of inclusive education, he says, but “while we are happy to take the credit for being leaders, we have mostly followed the lead of what we saw families and advocates already doing. What we, as authors, really deserve credit for is keeping our eyes open enough that when others promoted inclusion, we just recognized it was a good idea.” Sobsey says a fifth edition is tentatively being planned with an even greater focus on inclusion. ■



some of the test and score higher. Again, if someone is required to take a second test and is rejected on the basis of one test score, this too will likely end up in a legal challenge.

Families are now faced with a dilemma. An IQ test is not required for any child related services or supports. Many studies have also shown that low IQ scores result in diminished expectations by teachers as well as inviting continuing societal stigmatization. However, to acquire adult supports from PDD, an IQ test will be required (individuals with severe disabilities are not likely to need one). The longer a parent waits the more likely their son or daughter will score higher and a few points difference can have serious implications. One option for parents, assuming cost is not a major barrier, is to have an IQ test done privately or through a university or other clinic, not through a school, and hold onto that confidential information for future consideration as to when and where it might be shared.

There is no easy answer at this time as to what parents should do. However, as AACL believes the use of an IQ test, as criteria for eligibility, is inappropriate we are prepared to assist individuals and families to challenge its use. The ideal solution is for PDD to remove the requirement for an IQ score and for the government to ensure every individual with disabilities receives supports according to need. ■

(The complete IQ testing series is available at www.aacl.org.)

On-line forum open to families: Dick Sobsey, Associate Director of the JP Das Developmental Disabilities Centre at the University of Alberta, is inviting families to enter into an open discussion called Sustainable Family Care Forum about balancing the demands of parenting, employment, dealing with government and private support agencies, and a variety of other life challenges. "We just want to know what families are thinking about balancing life's other demands." Visit: www.supportedparenting.ualberta.ca/.

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 **Alberta Association for
Community Living**
serving children and adults with
developmental disabilities for over 50 years

Foundation supports AACL work

Blue donation bins are located in Calgary, Edmonton and surrounding communities. The Alberta Community Living Foundation (ACLF) will also pick up donated items free of charge in those same areas. Donors can arrange for a pick up by simply calling the Donation Line at 403.531.3080 in Calgary and area, and 780.452.2121 in Edmonton and area. Sometimes ACLF will canvas a neighbourhood, either by phone or a pamphlet, letting homeowners know when a truck will be in the area to pick up items.

(For a list of bin locations or to find out the bin nearest you, call the Donation Lines or visit www.aacl.org.)

AACL Advanced Leadership Series

In January 2010, AACL launches a new three-weekend advanced leadership series on challenging topics and actions families can take collectively to sustain and promote inclusion. This invitation-only series for past leadership participants, will be offered every few years with the regular leadership series continuing as well in other years. For more information, contact: Deb McLean at 780.451.3055 Ext. 228, or at 1.800.252.7556, Ext. 228 or email dmclean@aacl.org.

Be there!

Alberta Association for Community Living's
Annual Family Conference March 19 & 20, 2010
AACL AGM March 21, 2010
Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton

Details will be available soon. Watch your spring *Connections* issue for more conference information.

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