



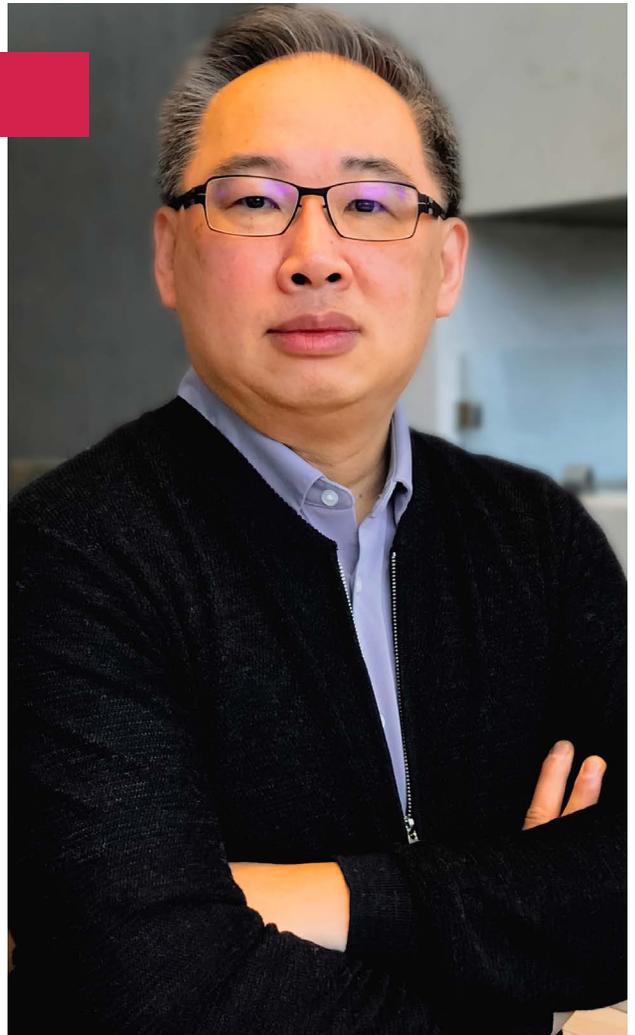
# DISCOVER

## It's About Change

“**T**o everything turn, turn, turn, there is a season turn, turn, turn”, goes the seminal 1960s song by the Byrds; it reminds me that change is inevitable. And so it was during the summer of 2021 with the departure of **Ruby Ng**, former Executive Director. I recall being hired by her and started my role as Director of Operations one month after Ruby started. For four and a half years it was a successful and solid relationship with many ups and a few downs. Ruby leaves behind an impressive legacy of positive change. We wish her great success as CEO at the Canadian Mental Health Association Vancouver-Fraser. As for the Disability Foundation and affiliated societies, I have taken on the interim role as Executive Director to ensure operations continue with few disruptions.

### More changes from the head office:

- The third person in the former leadership team is Executive Assistant **Grace Noguchi**. She will be leaving us before the end of 2021
- **Gail Bongalis** will replace Grace in a similar role as Organization Administrator
- **Eric Molendyk** is now Program Manager for TetraSociety, BCMOS, and ASABC
- **Graeme Wyman** is the new Program Manager for VAMS, ConnecTra Society, and DIGA
- **Taylor Wagner** is the Senior Communications Officer
- **Joy Hayden** is contracted as the Funds Development Lead
- **We are moving** head offices in 2022 as the existing lease will soon expire at the Carrall St location



Executive Director, David Fong.

Our organizations humbly thank the generosity of participants, all levels of government, private grantors and donors, foundations, and our network of amazing partners. We love that you care for our organizations and the work the employees, volunteers, and boards do. We come to work every day believing what we do matters to you. ***This will never change.***

David Fong,

Executive Director



## Online Programming Highlights

If 2020 was a year of change, then 2021 brought on the need to grow and adapt many of the virtual programs our six affiliated societies initiated last year. Adapting programs to an online space was an unexpected but welcome change for much of our societies' offerings. It enabled programs limited to the Lower Mainland to grow and expand their reach to new places in British Columbia. It also allowed for

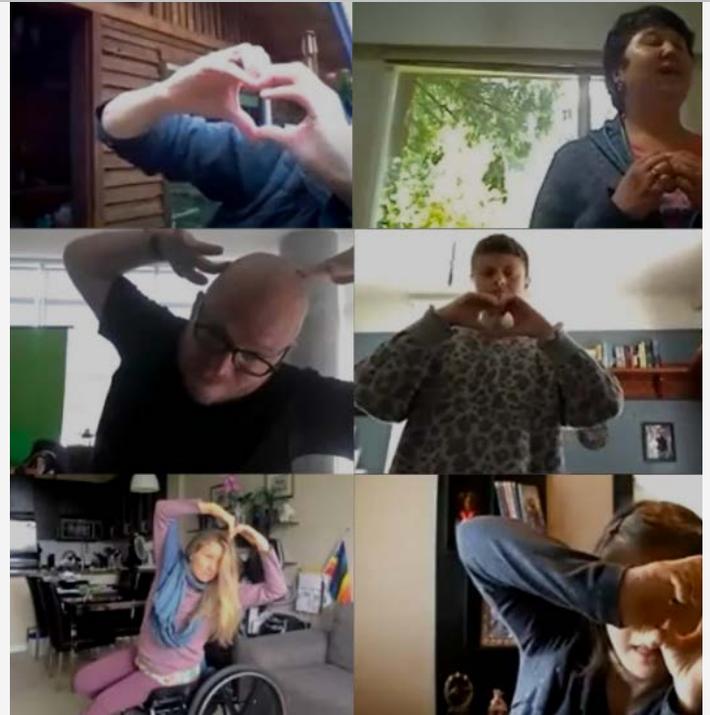
distanced learning and coordination, granting people with a variety of disabilities opportunities for services, fun, connection and community from the safety of their homes. Although we faced many a challenge ensuring our programs remained accessible and inclusive to all, virtual programming is a facet of our societies we intend to facilitate for years to come. Here are some highlights:

### ConnecTra: Connecting people in new ways

As all of 2020's challenges poured over into 2021, the ConnecTra Society realized how important it was to continue keeping members of the disability community connected. This year alone, ConnecTra hosted over 250 presentations in their online learning program, ConnecTogether. Programming ranged from Chair Yoga and Adaptive Fitness classes, to mental health courses, art classes, disability theory lectures, disability organization showcases and more.

Extending the programs' reach, resources and organizations working with people with disabilities from all across British Columbia were broadcasted through virtual Roadshows. In three week-long events, ConnecTra's programming was exposed to new audiences in and around Osoyoos, the Okanagan, and Vancouver Island.

Not only this, ConnecTra listened and amplified voices through online Accessible Community Forums covering the topics of Built Environment, Accessible Recreation, and soon



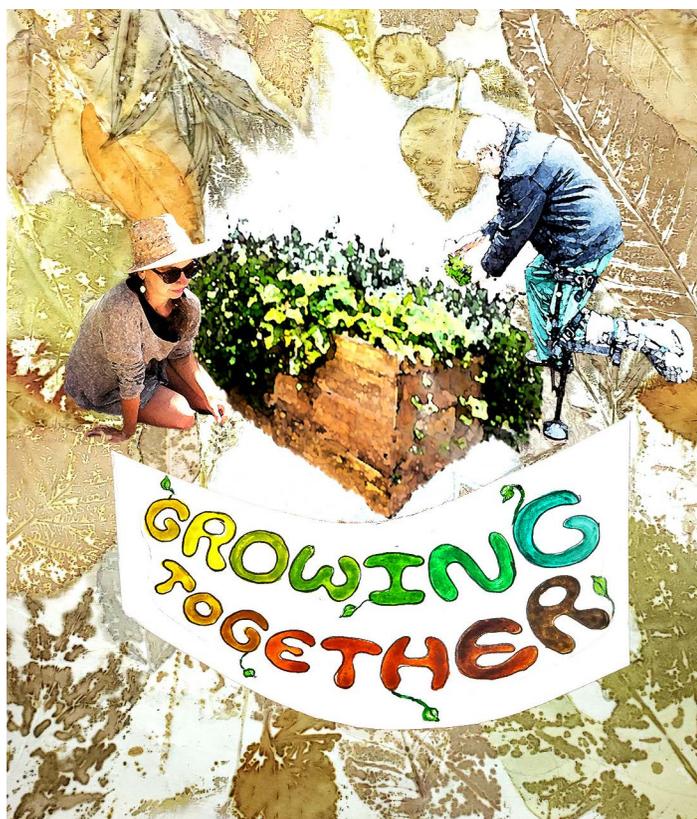
Some love from ConnecTogether's Weekly Abilities Dance Class participants. Photo credit: Joanne Cuffe.

Accessible Parking. With 50-100 people in attendance, questions were asked to a variety of organizational panelists working on a provincial and national level, as well as city and government officials who can institute real change. Overall, through the power of accessible and inclusive virtual programming, ConnecTra Society continues to find new and innovative ways to grow, serve, and connect the disability community.



## **DIGA:** Growing independence through gardening education

In 2021, the Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA)'s GrowABLE online gardening workshop series, as well as the Growing Together podcast, were crucial elements of the move to accessible virtual programming.



Cover art for DIGA's Growing Together podcast.

Through these, DIGA members were able to access information on pertinent disability gardening topics from the comfort of their own homes. During a time when social isolation was hitting hardest, the GrowABLE workshop series provided a space for members to both enjoy content catered to adaptive gardening and socialize with others safely.

Additionally, through the Growing Together podcast, gardening topics were approached through an intersectional and accessibility-centered lens with content targeted towards reducing barriers within gardening for people with disabilities. Paired with the podcast's overarching theme of food security, members are provided with informative and relevant virtual content that also featured various community guests and initiatives. With the first episode having launched in October, DIGA is thrilled for the community to hear them all!

## **ASABC:** Sailing practice from your computer

The Adaptive Sailing Association of BC (ASABC) was most challenged by COVID-19 restrictions. With all programs being in-person, they tried to find a way for clients unable to visit the Jericho Sailing Centre to continue practicing their sailing skills. Fortunately, inspiration was quickly found in the form of a video game sailing simulator called eSail. Over the last couple years, ASABC has offered many sailors this program free of charge,

enabling their sailors a way to sail from their computers.

Adding to this, although ASABC is often featured in boat shows across the Lower Mainland, pandemic restrictions prevented their staff from networking and fundraising as previously done at these events. As an alternative, ASABC attended virtual boat shows through an online booth format, raising the program's visibility in this online space.

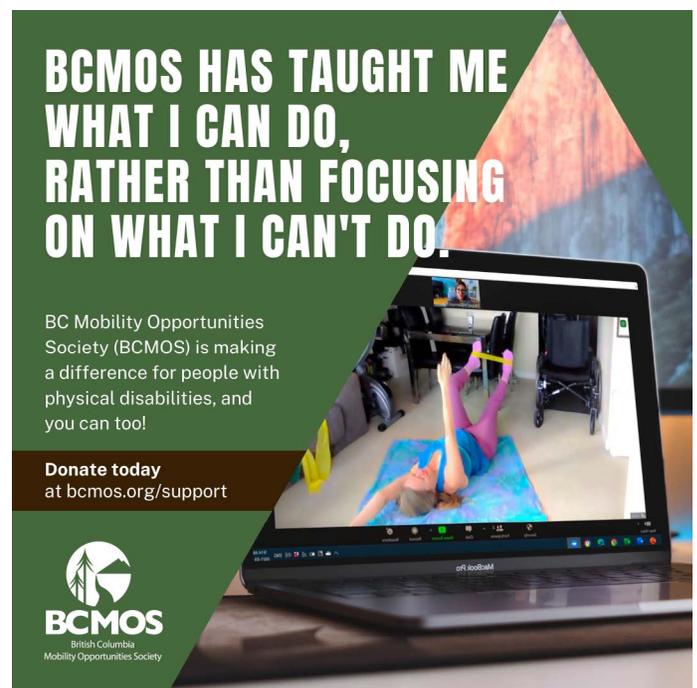


# DISCOVER

## BCMOS: Fitness without barriers

On top of a very successful summer season with 700 total paddling activities, 108 hikes, and well-attended Kids Days, the British Columbia Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS) dove head first into the virtual space this year with its Adaptive Personal Training program. Expanding its offerings beyond the summer months, this collaboration with Ocean Rehab and Fitness' Megan Williamson has proven to be a hit with all four seasonal cohorts filling to capacity within days. Not only is the Adaptive Personal Training program providing an accessible, customizable at-home exercise regimen for a large variety of disabilities, its building confidence, teaching new skills, and providing routine for many who have struggled during the pandemic. Provided with funding, BCMOS hopes to continue offering this program for the foreseeable future.

As COVID restrictions are lifting, BCMOS has also piloted an adaptive hand-cycling program that saw 22 clients (with volunteers and program coordinators) travel through Vancouver's Pacific Spirit Park. BCMOS hopes to continue this program in 2022.



Janice Laurence and Megan Williamson in a zoom 1-on-1 training session.

## Tetra Society: Adapting the built environment from a distance

Although the Tetra Society of North America has often used virtual methods to reach its many chapters across Canada, this year they went even further. Fueled by the need to reach clients without entering their homes, Tetra volunteers quickly brainstormed how to design, build, and even install custom adapted devices from a distance. Now, with a little creativity, some success stories include;

- A Tetraplegic client is able to access his home independently through the use of an Alexa remotely configured by a Tetra volunteer.
- A beach wheelchair was constructed in Hamilton out of PVC pipe and then sent to the client, allowing him to remain safely in his "COVID-19 bubble" but still get out to the beach.
- In Newfoundland, Dr. Leonard Lye, along with students at Memorial University were able to reconfigure a hockey glove for a young boy with Cerebral Palsy. Featured on CBC, the glove helps Carter to be able to play hockey independently.

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## **Tetra Society:** Adapting the built environment from a distance

Further to this, TetraNation, a beloved video submission contest celebrating the myriad devices volunteers have designed for clients with disabilities, ran successfully in April for National Volunteer Week. With over 50 videos of devices submitted from chapters across the country, the Tetra community was able to vote for their favourites online, all while raising the public profile of this unique society.

Not only this, on September 18th, the Tetra Society held its third ever TetraCon, a national conference dedicated to

sharing ideas and awareness of custom accessibility devices, virtually. Over 70 people attended and guest speakers included Sam Sullivan, founder of the Tetra Society and Disability Foundation, Bryce Clarke, BCMOS board member and the only full-time police officer with a spinal cord injury, and Newfoundland chapter coordinator for over 25 years, Dr. Leonard Lye. The conference created great discussion about how Tetra can break down barriers one faces in their daily life. Tetra looks forward to making next year's TetraCon even more successful!

## **VAMS:** Musical expression, no matter one's ability

The Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS) has had to look for ways to engage clients using new platforms. Pivoting to online video-conferencing platforms, clients were still provided the opportunity to try out new musical passions ranging from children's piano lessons to more advanced guitar techniques free of judgment and supported by trained music industry professionals or volunteers. For clients who face problems when holding an instrument, the VAMS team worked closely with the Tetra Society of North America to virtually design adaptive instruments and assistive devices to allow clients to try what was once thought impossible.

Furthermore, clients collaborated with VAMS staff and volunteers to write and record musical pieces in a way that is unique to the virtual environment, by changing the general structure of songwriting to a more collaborative effort

over an extended period of time. To keep their musicians engaged in performance, the VAMS team facilitated the booking, filming, recording, editing and other production needs, and continued creating and distributing a virtual concert series called "The Strong X Sessions".

Finally, a new program sparked by the pandemic is the podcast network "Re-Imagine Radio". This program aims to go beyond music and disability by giving a voice to all in the community to share their experience with disability. Stay tuned for new episodes every week on [Soundcloud](#).



VAMS Program Coordinator Bryden giving a young client a piano lesson.



# DISCOVER

Online Programming Highlights concluded...

With organizational values including teamwork, accountability, and learning, our affiliated societies are always working hard to ensure that Canadians with disabilities are kept front of mind in everything we do. Regardless of the challenges we have all encountered this past year, their creative thinking has enabled virtual participation, connection, and inclusion for people often disproportionately facing insecurity and isolation. No matter the amount, every charitable contribution to our network of societies helps empower people with disabilities through accessible virtual programming to re-imagine what is possible.

## Thank you Wolrige Foundation

The Adaptive Sailing Association of BC has been able to grow thanks to the support we receive from people and organizations around British Columbia and across Canada.

One of our longest serving supporters is the Wolrige Foundation. Community-minded Alan and Barbara Wolrige started the foundation as a way to support a variety of causes important to them. The foundation has supported ASABC since 2003, in memory of Barbara's nephew, Michael Harvey, says Wolrige Foundation Executive Director Pamela Mitchell: "Alan & Barbara Wolrige learned of DSA many years ago & believed in the program & the Wolrige Foundation in their memory has continued to support DSA, now ASABC."

Drawn to ASABC's inclusiveness as well as the opportunities the organization provides for people with disabilities to learn to sail, compete in races and regattas, and experience fun and build long-lasting friendships at Kids Days, the Wolrige Foundation has long embraced the spirit of ASABC's programs and we are so grateful for their continued support!



Barbara Wolrige.

# DISCOVER

## Boats, Guitars, and PPE: Different ways to Support the Disability Foundation

**T**he Disability Foundation and our affiliated Societies have been supporting people with disabilities for over 30 years thanks to the generous support of many people and organizations across Canada and beyond. We often receive donations of goods, called in-kind donations, from individuals and organizations across the country. From musical instruments to boats, stocks and securities, and, over the past year and a half, COVID-19 supplies, in-kind donations have long been a key part of our fundraising puzzle.

As we worked to adapt our programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many individuals and organizations banded together to provide grocery gift cards for people with disabilities struggling to obtain food during the pandemic. We also received donations of personal protective equipment, like masks, shields, and hand sanitizer, that helped ensure the safe delivery of our programs.

In-kind donations have long been a part of our programs. The Adaptive Sailing Association of BC (ASABC) came to be in part through the donation of the Iron Lady, a boat that Rick Hansen received from Margaret Thatcher and in turn passed on to Sam Sullivan. Since then, boat donations have played a key role in ensuring the sustainability of ASABC. “We have enjoyed fortunate circumstances, and we knew that we wanted to share our good fortune by



ASABC crewmembers Loïc and Emilie help sailor Elizabeth get on the water at the Jericho Sailing Centre.



The Iron Lady sailboat on display at the Mobility Cup Opening Ceremonies in 2010.

donating our boat to benefit people with disabilities,” say recent boat donors Janet and Martin McKeown, noting that, “the whole process was very seamless.”

With over 100 people participating in the Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS) programs each year, the wear-and-tear on instruments and equipment is significant. Instrument donations allow VAMS’ programs to grow, in turn supporting more musicians with

.....Continued on page 9.



# DISCOVER

...Continued from page 8

disabilities. Recalling a recent donation, VAMS' new Program Coordinator, Bryden Veinot, says, "A client of ours had a guitar that was too small for him. Because of generous donations from the public, VAMS was able to replace his guitar with a larger one at no cost. Now he can practice properly!"

These are only a few of the ways that in-kind donations have supported our efforts to help people with disabilities Re-Imagine What is Possible. If you are unable to make a financial contribution but would like to support the Disability Foundation, making an in-kind donation is easy! Donors will receive a tax receipt for the market value of the goods being donated.



Acoustic guitar donated to the VAMS instrument donation program.

To find out how you can donate that old ukulele sitting in your closet, check out the VAMS website: [VAMS.org/support](https://VAMS.org/support)

To make a cash or in-kind donation to the Disability Foundation, see: [DisabilityFoundation.org/support](https://DisabilityFoundation.org/support)

To learn more about ASABC's Breeze Boat donation program, please visit: [ASABC.org/breeze](https://ASABC.org/breeze)

## Learning and Growing Together Through Diversity and Inclusion

Over the years, we have learned from our community of people with disabilities that accessibility in all online spaces is crucial to an inclusive society. In an effort to learn and grow alongside our organizational and government partners, we set out to improve multiple facets of our communications to better accommodate

all forms of disabilities. Including regular Diversity and Inclusion staff discussions, a series of comprehensive website audits, and the creation and implementation of an Accessible Design Guidelines toolkit, we have worked (and are still working) diligently in 2021 to improve the accessibility of all our offerings.

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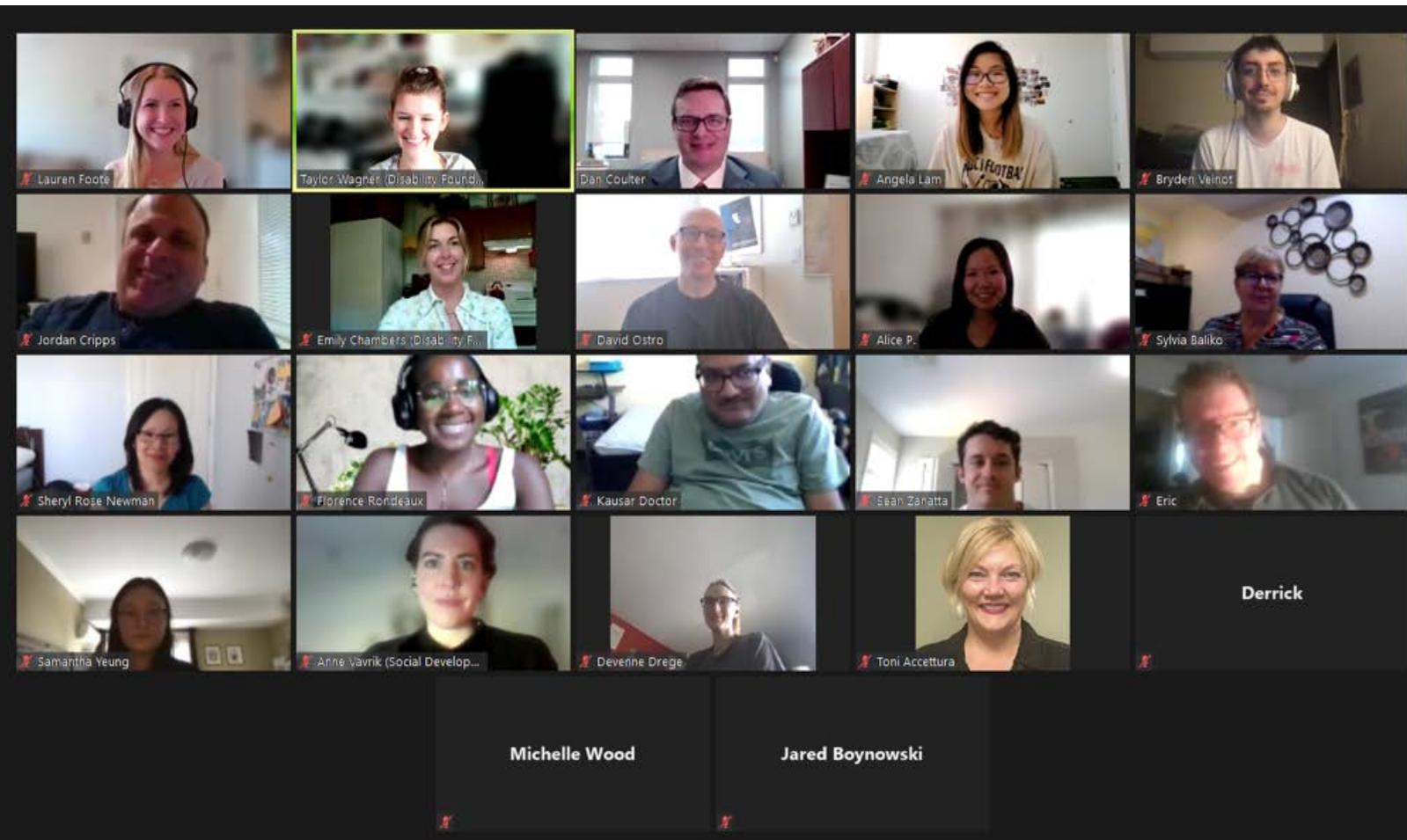
# DISCOVER

## Collaboration from the core

Identifying the need for diversity and inclusion education for our staff was only the first step. Fortunately, our team is diverse. Half of our employees identify as having a disability, lending to distinct lived experiences and perspectives. To leverage this, we established a bi-monthly virtual group space where staff are empowered to lead meetings on topics surrounding race, disability, intersectionality, and more. Over time, these meetings gained an internal following, with a dedicated group sharing opinions, stories, and resources to

encourage our staff to think critically about all the things we do with an inclusivity lens.

From the collaboration that emerged from this ongoing sharing, we began using the D&I group to review outgoing communications content. From analyzing the language in our surveys to discussing feedback received over social media, this teamwork has proven essential to our mission to empower and inspire people with disabilities to re-imagine what is possible.



A Disability Foundation Staff Diversity and Inclusion meeting with the Honourable Dan Coulter M.L.A., Minister for Chilliwack and Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility, in attendance.

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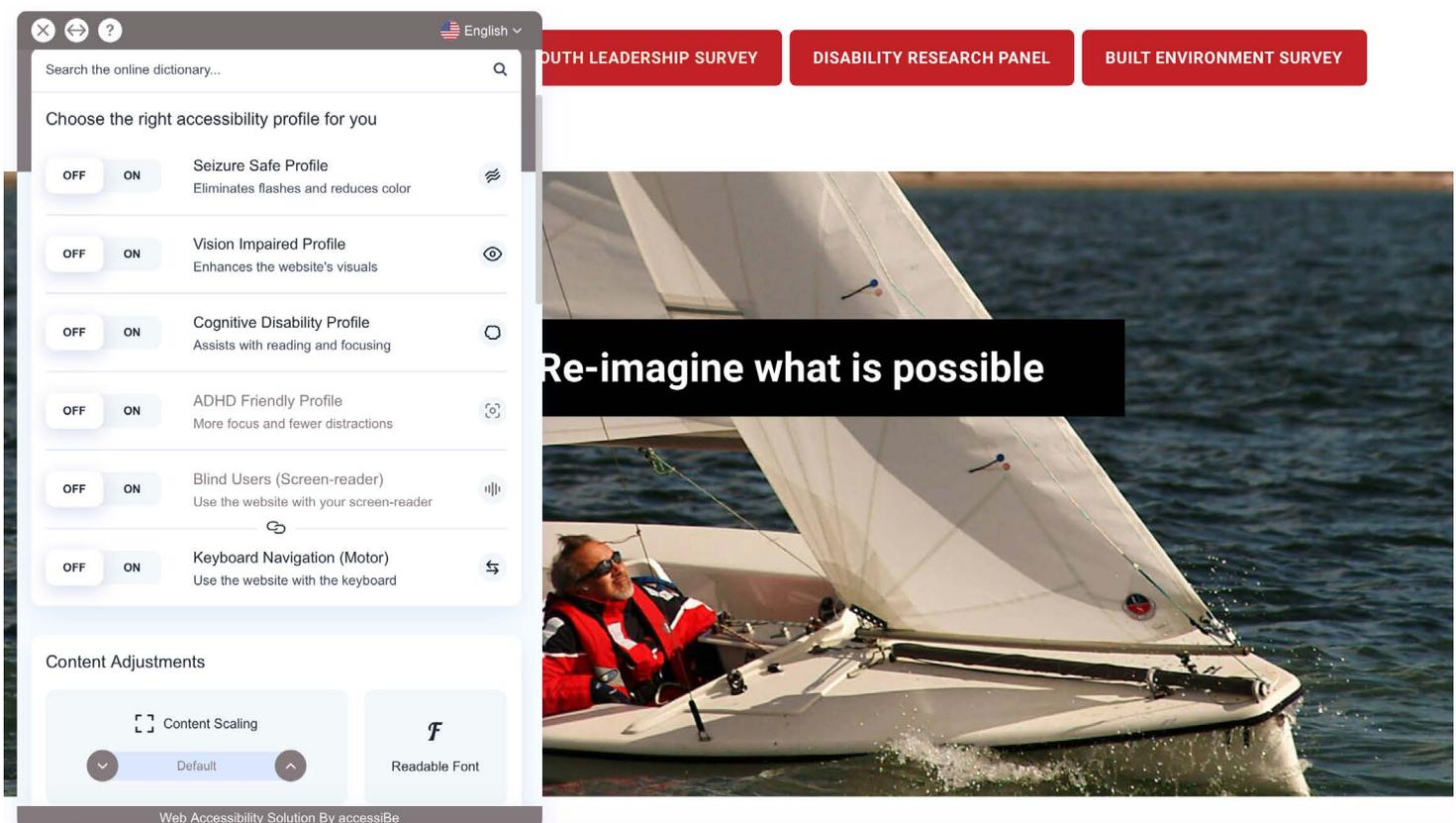
## Online Accessibility

A large part of our inclusion process is making sure that all our websites are as accessible as possible. Since the beginning stages of the novel Coronavirus, and quickly pivoting our programs to online spaces, the need to create an easier-to-use interface became exceedingly apparent.

Consulting BCMOS Board members E.J. Tremblay and Mike Stiles, we began an auditing process of our websites. Through them, we were provided with resources and tools from associates and organizations like [CNIB Moncton](#), a non-profit foundation dedicated to improving accessibility for people impacted by vision loss. We wanted to ensure that someone with visual impairments,

mobility limitations, or cognitive disabilities could intuitively adapt our websites to their specific needs. After immense research, planning of the accessibility of our sites have been put in place.

We are now in the process of piloting a web accessibility tool called [accessiBe](#). This tool allows people to change their own preferences on how to view and navigate our sites, ranging from visual impairments to cognitive disabilities. As we continue to gather information, and work with peers on creating an all-inclusive web presence, we are excited to announce that we plan to have integrated our findings to all of our sites in 2022.



Example of accessiBe on the Disability Foundation Test site.



## Design for Everyone

**Accessible Design**  
TYPOGRAPHY

Readability refers to the accuracy and speed with which content can be consumed over an expanse of text. Readability is affected by numerous factors including the following:

- Typeface selection
- Font size
- Spacing
- Line length
- Alignment
- Formatting

For body copy, a minimum 10:1 contrast ratio is recommended for optimal readability.

**TYPESETTING**

**DIGITAL**  
When deciding font size, consider the users ability to change the font to the size they desire. Use the standard font sizes for the platform or system you are working on, and test to make sure the use can increase the size of every text element without compromise.

**PRINT**  
Most printed material has body text that is set between 8 to 12 pt, yet organizations advocating for the visually impaired often recommend anywhere from 12 to 24 pt body copy.

**FOR PRINT AND DIGITAL USE, FONTS SHOULD BE NO SMALLER THAN 12PT (14PT IS PREFERRED)**

Accessible Design Guide | 4

Slide from the ongoing Accessible Design guide.

However, our web presence is only a small part of the content we regularly deliver. Wanting to improve the accessibility of all the writing and design projects our communications team creates, we decided to create a standardized Accessible Design Guidelines toolkit. Although the document is still evolving, we are now using it as a tool to train and guide our staff on best

practices for graphic design, ALT text, copywriting, and more. Eventually, we hope to share this guide with other organizations who could apply these practices to their own communications.

Change comes from within, and we have been hard at work making our online world a more accessible one. If you would like to help us improve our communications, we encourage you to send us your feedback at [info@disabilityfoundation.org](mailto:info@disabilityfoundation.org).

## Peer to Peer Fundraising

The holidays are a great time for giving, so why stop at one donation when you have the tools and platforms to help spread awareness and raise funds for a cause you believe in. This year we have been working hard on creating an easy and understandable way that you can help support the Disability Foundation and Affiliated Societies. It can be as easy as posting on your social media, inviting friends and family over for a cozy dinner fundraiser (restrictions following) or having a festive holiday bake sale. Your efforts will help the Disability Foundation provide the continuation of

programs and tools cherished by so many members across British Columbia and Canada. Your efforts can help a child feel included with adaptive sports equipment, allow a parent to provide food security for their family through gardening, empower a tetraplegic musician to make holiday music, enable an elderly person to enjoy climbing a mountain, and help make a holiday wish come true.

Resources and more information can be found at [disabilityfoundation.org/third-party-fundraising](http://disabilityfoundation.org/third-party-fundraising) or reach out to us at [info@disabilityfoundation.org](mailto:info@disabilityfoundation.org) we are happy to connect and learn more about other fundraising ideas you have.

THE DISABILITY FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

# DISCOVER



For more information or to make a gift, contact

Disability Foundation

318 – 425 Carrall St.

Vancouver, BC V6B 6E3

Phone: 604-688-6464

Email: [info@disabilityfoundation.org](mailto:info@disabilityfoundation.org)

Charitable Tax number: 89446 8396 RR0001



DISABILITY  
FOUNDATION