

THE DISABILITY FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

DISCOVER

SPRING 2022



DISCOVER

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Executive Director David Fong (left) with Disability Board Chair Maureen DeLandreville (middle) and longtime program participant Jack Tait (right)

Letter from the Executive Director

Uncertainty has been all too common these past couple years. Although we met some challenges in delivering our societies' programs, I am proud of the resilience shown by our staff, volunteers, and most importantly, our community.

We were really happy to be able to run all of our programs! But what about this year?

If the current trend (at the time of writing) continues, the Disability Foundation and our affiliated Societies may decide on a strategy to relax our safety protocols. Of course, we will follow no less than the rules set by the provincial health authorities.

After consulting with the directors from our boards, the expectation is to continue the high safety standard we established. As some of our participants are in a greater health-compromised situation, all programs will require (with rare exceptions) full vaccinations to

work, participate and volunteer. We will continue the process of protective equipment, social distancing, and limiting people on premises.

With the confidence of a safe environment, we believe 2022 will be an amazing start to returning to pre-COVID times.

The Disability Foundation and its affiliated Societies are very excited about this year. Many of our summer staff are returning; they could have gone on to other jobs but have told us how much they love working for our programs and their participants.

More than anything, we all can't wait to see you again and to have a fun-filled, safe, and meaningful year.

David Fong

Executive Director



Youth Leadership Initiative

Future Leaders Shaping the Future Workplace

www.disabilityfoundation.org/yli



What's New in 2022

There are many exciting things happening for the Disability Foundation and affiliated Societies this year!

Disability Foundation

On top of supporting our six affiliated Societies, the Disability Foundation is excited to continue the Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI) in 2022. This three-year project employs interns with disabilities to research and find solutions to help break down barriers for young Canadians with disabilities entering the workforce.

Learn more at disabilityfoundation.org/yli.

Adaptive Sailing Association of BC (ASABC)

The 2022 season is fast approaching!

Here's hoping for great weather, good tides, and smooth sailings at the Jericho Sailing Centre. You will be able to book your summer sailings online starting May 9th for the May 25th season start.

This year, sailing will be available Wednesday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm. Bring the whole family for their 16th annual Kids Days in June and August (dates coming soon).

ASABC is very excited to have several familiar faces return this year as staff and volunteers.



Sailing Coordinator Avi enjoying a sail with an ASABC participant.

BC Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS)

Once again, BCMOS will be offering a variety of outdoor adaptive activities starting May 23rd. Online booking opens May 9th.

Adaptive Paddling will be running 7 days a week from 10am to 6pm at the Hiking will be available Wednesday through Sunday 10am to 6pm at Pacific Spirit Park and throughout the Lower Mainland. Bring the family out for three Kids Days throughout the summer. More information coming soon!

BCMOS is piloting a new program in 2022: Adaptive Cycling! Although the pilot will not be available to clients at this time, we are excited for the possibilities in 2023.



BCMOS staff member Arden taking a ride on an adapted hand cycle.

Not ready to get outside? Stay in shape from home with BCMOS' virtual [Adaptive Personal Training program](#). The 4-month training cohorts take up to 25 people, and offer you the opportunity to have 1-on-1 sessions with Megan Williamson of [Ocean Rehab and Fitness](#). The next scheduled cohort begins May 16th.

ConnecTra Society

ConnecTra will continue adding **NEW programming to ConnecTogether**, their online learning platform. From organization showcases, adaptive fitness, yoga and dance classes, to community support groups and Perspectives Series on disability-related topics – there's something for everyone! Learn more and register at [ConnecTra.org/events](https://connectra.org/events).

In addition, ConnecTra will continue to host [Accessible Community Forums](#) in 2022 to inspire conversations between organizations and the disability community. These forums are an inclusive way to explore solutions to accessibility barriers you may be facing. You are the expert of your experience. Be heard!



Megan Williamson teaching her weekly adaptive fitness class with ConnecTra's online ConnecTogether program.

Abilities Expo is back! ConnecTra is excited to mark the gradual return of in-person programming with the 11th Annual Abilities Expo. Join us on May 25th and reconnect with exhibitors, vendors, employers, guest speakers, and more! Learn more at connectra.org/AbilitiesExpo.

Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA)

This year, DIGA gardeners will nurture plots at seven community gardens.

Stay tuned for a grand opening at the new community garden located at [GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre](#) later in the summer.

DIGA's GrowABLE Online Workshop Series is in full swing! Workshops will ramp up to two per month in the growing season with topics from all areas of gardening.

Learn more at digabc.org/events.

If you have missed DIGA's Growing Together podcast last fall, all episodes have been released and can be heard at digabc.org/growing-together-podcast/.



Tetra Volunteer George (left) and DIGA Coordinator Shareen (right) setting up an irrigation system in one of DIGA's community gardens.

Tetra Society of North America



We live in TetraNation: Help celebrate Tetra's national volunteers by voting for your favorite assistive device at TetraNation.org

The Tetra Society has been working hard throughout the pandemic serving people with disabilities, and have completed more custom assistive devices throughout Canada in 2021 than ever before!

Check out TetraNation.org to vote for your favourite volunteer-made projects. There are new videos released every two weeks until April 24th, show your support to those who give their time

and skills to make these projects a reality.

In the fall, Tetra will be inviting you to their virtual TetraCon, featuring guest speakers and exciting topics from around the organization.

Visit TetraSociety.org to request a custom assistive device, read the Gizmo newsletter, join as a volunteer, and keep up to date with everything Tetra Society!

Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS)



VAMS Program Coordinator Bryden Veinot (left), Co-founder Dave Symington (middle) and Program Manager Graeme Wyman (right) performing in a StrongX Virtual Concert last year

After nearly two years of virtual programming, the VAMS studio is back up and running at [G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre](#). From there, VAMS offers a variety of lessons and recording sessions with an experienced musician both in person and online.

Over the past year, VAMS has also created its own internet podcast and radio station; Re-Imagine Radio. Tune in 24 hours a day, seven days a week to hear music from artists with disabilities

and topics covering different aspects of living with a disability. For live performances, check out our Strong X Virtual Concert series on the new [VAMS YouTube channel](#).

The VAMS team is also excited to bring back their flagship concert, the Strong Sessions this October! More information coming soon.

Email info@vams.org with any questions or to get involved!





Welcome to Our New Office!

One of the biggest changes this year for the Disability Foundation and affiliated Societies is our head office! After 10 years at our Carrall Street location, we are excited to begin a new chapter in our new Clark Drive space.

“We wanted to be away from downtown and the downtown east side but still remain in Vancouver with relatively close proximity to our program locations,” says David Fong, our Executive Director. “There was no point in paying for downtown premium costs. And with our hybrid office model, staff can work from home allowing us to find smaller spaces. We did not need the 2,700+ sq. ft.”

One of the features we are most excited for is its location on the ground floor. By no longer needing to rely on elevators, our office will be much more accessible to staff and visitors who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Plus, among other features, we have an accessible washroom on the same floor, a newly renovated accessible kitchen, automatic doors that can be opened by waving, and height adjustable hydraulic desks.

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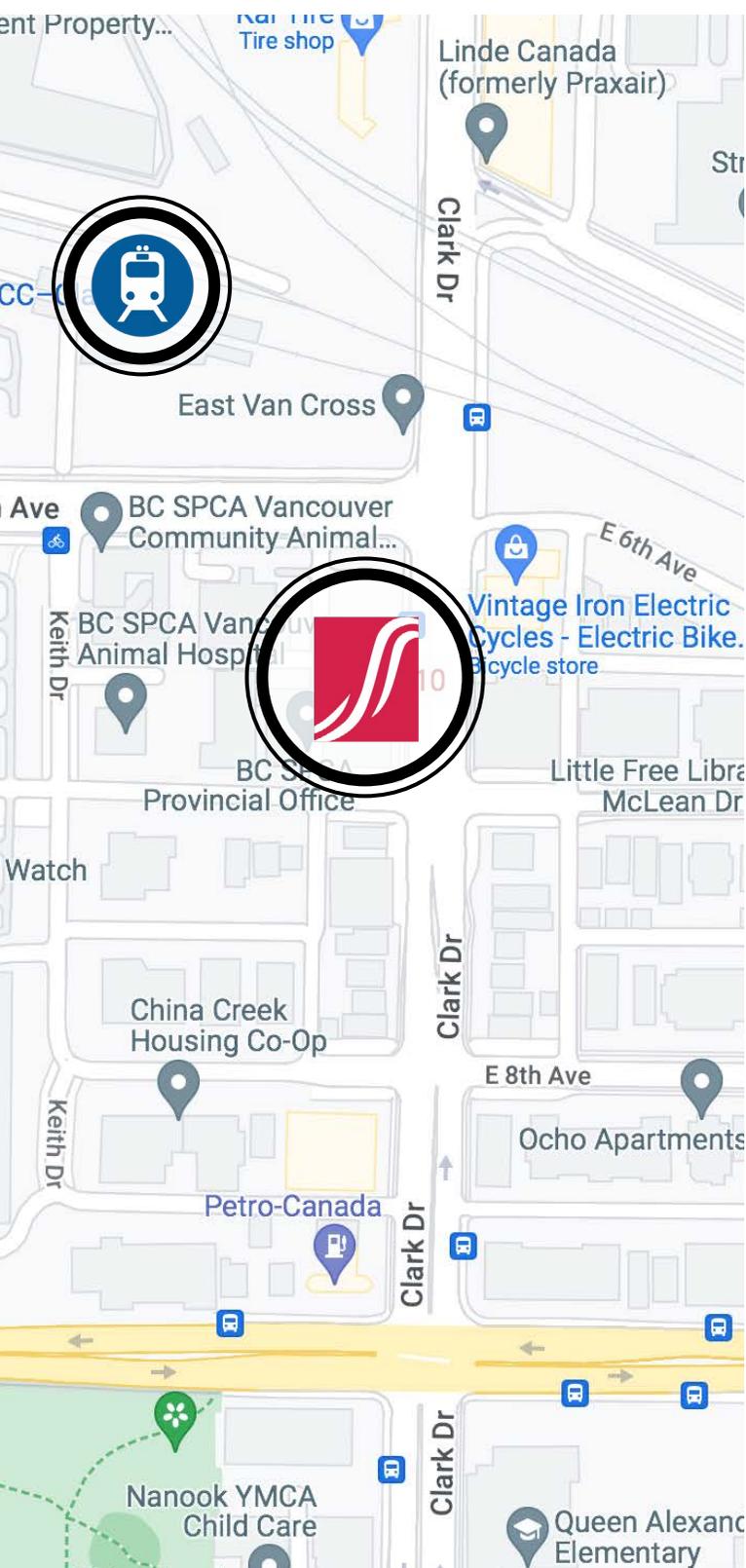


The Disability Foundation and affiliated Societies' new Clark Drive office.

Welcome to Our New Office continued



The Disability Foundation and affiliated Societies' new Clark Drive office.



Map overview of new head office location.

To fully embrace a hybrid work model, our furniture is reconfigurable. A series of shared break-apart desks will enable many uses of the main and conference room space. Not only will this help our teams collaborate, but it means we can host workshops, presentations and other events right on location. These events are not limited to in-person – in this new space we will be able to record them for our online community too.

For our visitors, there is free parking on the street including some all-day spaces. Transit is within minutes as well; the VCC-Clark Skytrain Station is across the street, Commercial-Broadway Station is a few blocks away, and the 22 Knight bus stops right in front of the building.

We are within easy access to Commercial Drive. Imagine the wonderful summer meetings at the local coffee houses and restaurants!

A huge thank you to Justin Omichinski from Avison Young Realty who helped us find our previous office as well as this one.

We are working now to complete the set-up of this new space and will invite you all soon to see it yourselves. Join the Disability Foundation email list or follow us on social media for more updates.



VAMS Program Coordinator Bryden Veinot poses with the new studio moving boxes.

VAMS Has a New Studio

After seven long years of design, fundraising and construction, phase one of the new [Vancouver Adapted Music Society \(VAMS\)](#) studio at GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre has been completed!

Program Manager Graeme Wyman remembers the first email he received on the project back in 2015, and the excitement the community felt to get renovations underway, “with the new studio, just the ability to be more accessible than we already are to so many other people... It is exciting beyond belief!”

The first step happened in 2018, when the VAMS studio relocated to the basement of GF Strong. The larger space (nearly four times the size of the previous studio) meant that more than one client could comfortably use it at once. Teaching a piano lesson and recording live music at the same time

became an option. Plus, the extra space meant that mobility device users could be better accommodated.

Another big benefit was that clients could come into the studio to work on their own projects without needing to book an appointment. Definitely a bonus for those admitted to the Rehabilitation Centre!

Already, plans were underway to adapt the studio even further.

This started thanks to generous grants and donations from organizations and individuals. VAMS was able to add more current equipment for lessons, recordings, rehearsals, and live performances.

Then, as the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in 2020 and programs began to move online, Graeme received word that the studio renovations were to finally begin.

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VAMS Has a New Studio *continued*

In early August 2021, the main focus of the renovation was to upgrade the current studio HVAC system. Because many VAMS clients are affected by temperature fluctuations, having control over the heating system was important in making the space more accessible. With this done, the move back has begun!

“Virtual programs at VAMS have been great, but having the studio opens up so many accessible opportunities to our clients that haven’t been available for the past two years.” Says Bryden Veinot, VAMS’ new Program Coordinator, “I feel very lucky to be able to provide this

service to such an amazing community!”

Although more renovations are still needed, moving equipment back into VAMS’ home carries that same feeling of excitement as when the project was first announced. The return is all the more meaningful as VAMS begins in-person programming again.

VAMS follows the COVID-19 protocols at GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre. Clients must be fully vaccinated to take part in any program run at the VAMS studio.

Sessions at the VAMS studio can now be booked through vams.org.



Attendees and exhibitors enjoying ConnecTra’s previous Abilities Expo back in 2019.

The Abilities Expo is Back in 2022!

After a couple years’ hiatus due to the pandemic, we are excited to say that ConnecTra Society’s annual flagship event is back for its 11th year at the Roundhouse Community Centre. The “Reconnect 2022” theme is a nice touch!

The Abilities Expo brings together disability focused exhibitors, vendors, resources, guest speakers, and more to build community and connect with opportunities in the Lower Mainland, and

across British Columbia.

ConnecTra’s first official Abilities Expo, called the Disability Expo, started in 2010 and was organized by the Disability Foundation’s founder himself, Sam Sullivan. Billed as a festival of services, arts and recreation for people with disabilities, this was the ConnecTra Society’s first event to bring in outside organizations.

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ConnecTra's Abilities Expo

Reconnect 2022

Join the Vancouver disability community for this 11th annual flagship event
Exhibitors, Vendors, Employers, Guest Speakers, and more!

Date: May 25th @ 10:00am - 4:00pm

Location: Roundhouse Community Centre



Get your FREE ticket today at www.connectra.org/AbilitiesExpo

The Expo hosted 27 service providers and had over 130 people with disabilities attend.

"I really liked the focus on abilities at the Expo," says Paul Gauthier, a longtime ConnecTra community member who attended this first event. "There were people from all over who were working, and involved in the arts, and really participating and doing amazing things in the community. It was all about abilities and full participation."

Since then, Abilities Expo has grown in size and scope, bringing together more than 220 attendees and 50 exhibitors in its peak years. Service providers have focused on a variety of community needs including employment, adaptive devices, accessible technology, martial arts, dancing, accessing the outdoors, finance, yoga, clothing, and transit. Guest speakers from in and around the disability community shared stories, experiences and resources to inspire and empower their peers.

Date: May 25, 10:00am - 4:00pm

Location: Roundhouse Community Centre, 181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver, BC

*Proof of vaccination required

This year, reconnect with the disability community in-person as an attendee, vendor, organization, or sponsor! Whether you're looking for adaptive activities to join this summer, resources to help with all aspects of living with a disability, or inclusive employment opportunities - there will be something for everyone.

There will also be an Art Alley showcasing Artists with disabilities, and boxed lunches provided.

Some presentations will be shared live to the Disability Foundation YouTube channel for those located outside of the Lower Mainland or otherwise unable to attend.

Come spend the day with us at this incredible **FREE** event! Follow the ConnecTra Society on Facebook and Instagram for more information.



Prototype of DIGA's Self Irrigating Planter (SIP) in full bloom.

Accessible Gardening from Home

Leaving the comfort of home has carried some risk these past couple years. Although community gardens are an essential service, several members in our community felt unsafe on public transit and in public spaces. So, in 2021, the Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA) decided to pursue a new venture - accessible gardening at home!

With help from Tetra Society volunteers Larry Cook and George Shipley, the team worked with DIGA gardeners and volunteers to design an accessible planter box. Now called Self Irrigating Planters (SIPs), these mobile gardens would be small enough to fit on a deck or patio, easy to use from different kinds of mobility devices, and able to be left for several days without needing water.

After building and refining a prototype, five planters were given to DIGA gardeners for testing. One of these resides at the new GF Strong

Rehabilitation Centre community garden. Larry and George held monthly meetings over the summer with the test group to refine the design.

"This is a brilliant idea," said longtime DIGA client, Mark Stockbrocks, "and huge gratitude to the Disability Foundation, DIGA and our builders for facilitating this follow-up to ensure more people can enjoy the SIP design in future!" Mark will be helping the team design the next version of the planter.

Thankfully, a grant from the Craig H Neilsen Foundation was awarded in October to help cover the next round of production costs.

With this funding, and with help from George and Larry, DIGA contracted Victory Gardens, a Vancouver-based garden design worker cooperative and social enterprise, to manufacture six SIPs.

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Accessible Gardening from Home continued



DIGA gardener Mark (left) taking home a Self Irrigating Planter (SIP) prototype to test out

The organization started production this January and will have the first round of updated planters ready in March.

Since production began, one of DIGA's partners, Ingenium, Canada's Museum of Science and Innovation in Ottawa, has added four extra SIPs to their initial order. Thanks to this, DIGA Program Manager Graeme Wyman and Tetra volunteer Bob Potegal have already begun designing a new and more cost-effective planter for the next round of production.

Currently, DIGA is reaching out to the community to see which members want to receive a planter. Once distributed, DIGA and Tetra volunteers will follow up with in-house visits (upon request) to help with maintenance and modifications.

DIGA's home gardening program is shaping up to be a fantastic way to safely connect with nature, create one's own food security and learn a new skill. We are so excited to see what the future of this project holds!



Self Irrigating Planter (SIP) prototype set up and ready to be filled.

If you are interested in the Home Gardening Project, please reach out to Graeme Wyman at gwyman@disabilityfoundation.org



BCMOS volunteers taking a client on a group hike with a TrailRider.

Call to Volunteers

Sunshine is just around the corner! Our Societies' summer programs will open on May 23, 2022.

If you are eager to be in nature and enjoy outdoor activities, this is the right time to sign up to volunteer with these programs. Whether you're looking for in-person or virtual opportunities, there's a way for everyone to help!

The Adaptive Sailing Association (ASABC) invites volunteers with sailing experience or certification to be one of our Sailing Companions. Your role is to take participants with disabilities to experience recreational sailing. You can be a land volunteer to assist in the daily upkeep of sailboats and help get participants into the boats. Another opportunity is to be an office assistant volunteer. You will assist the office coordinator in daily office tasks.

BC Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS) offers hiking, adapted cycling, kayaking and paddle-boarding programs. Volunteers who have experience in

any of these activities are welcome to join. You can also be a Paddling Land Volunteer. Your role is to greet guests, prepare the equipment, help with client transfers or clean the dock.

If your passion is gardening, you can join Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA). DIGA is looking for community gardeners to maintain gardens. You will also provide one-on-one help with their gardening participants. DIGA has seven community gardens located in and around Vancouver and you can choose a garden that is closest to you!

If you're looking for one-off volunteering, you can join the Kids' Day Events with ASABC and BCMOS in June and August. There will also be an Abilities Expo with the ConnecTra Society on May 25th and a Strong X Concert with Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS) on October 7th. All these events will need several volunteers to make them a success.

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Volunteer training at the Creekside Paddling Centre docks.

Under the Disability Foundation, we are looking for a Volunteer Engagement Assistant. You will assist in overseeing volunteer activities. You will maintain volunteer records, cultivate partnerships, attend on-site volunteer activities and others. This position is a combination of remote and occasional in-person work.

What's new this year is our Volunteer Media Team! We need volunteers who have a passion for photography, videography and social media. The goal is to cover our summer activities and capture the moments with pictures and videos. We will post these events on our

social media platforms for awareness and promotion.

Virtual Volunteer opportunities are also available in all societies. If you're good at social media or profile writing, you can donate your time to our communications team. If fundraising and grant writing appeal to you, our development team would love your help. There's data entry, event support, research, workshops - a wide range of opportunities!

We invite you to join us and make a difference in enriching and changing lives.

Be part of our Volunteer Family. Email Sheryl Newman,
Volunteer Management Coordinator, at

volunteer@disabilityfoundation.org

Crossword Puzzle

Fill out the following crossword puzzle and email your answers to info@disabilityfoundation.org to be entered in a raffle to win a gift card!

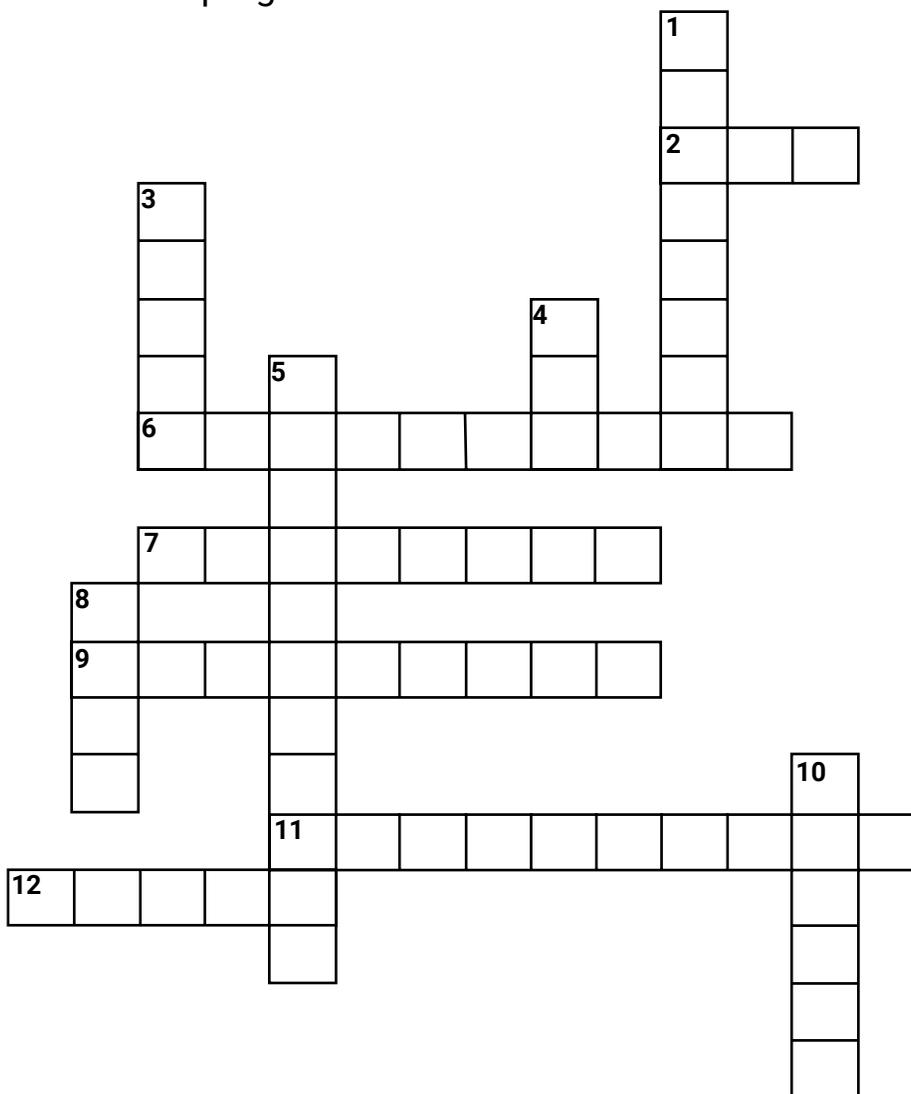
Hint: Read through this issue of Discover and/or visit our website to find the answers!

Down

1. We re-imagine what is _____.
(8 letters)
3. One of the Disability Foundation's top values. (5 letters)
4. Project helping young adults with disabilities to break down employment barriers. (3 letters)
5. Disability Foundation founder.
(11 letters)
8. Charity that operates the only fully-accessible recording studio in Western Canada. (4 letters)
10. ASABC's boat donation program.
(6 letters)

Across

2. The number of charities the Disability Foundation supports. (3 letters)
6. BCMOS' iconic adaptive hiking device.
(10 letters)
7. Location of DIGA's newest accessible garden. (8 letters)
9. ConnecTra is bringing back the _____ Expo in 2022. (9 letters)
11. We rely on the help of _____ to keep our programs running. (10 letters)
12. The only affiliated Society with chapters across Canada. (5 letters)





**DISABILITY
FOUNDATION**

Through the six societies we support, the Disability Foundation creates opportunities for participation in recreation and leisure activities, fosters inclusion by connecting people with disabilities to skilled volunteers who build customized assistive devices, and, ultimately, helps to create a world where people with physical disabilities feel empowered and inspired to **re-imagine what is possible.**

at disabilityfoundation.org/support



Boards of Directors for The Disability Foundation and six Affiliated Societies

The support of our passionate and committed Boards of Directors guides everything that the Disability Foundation and our affiliated Societies do. The diverse professional, volunteer, and lived experiences each board member brings to their roles ensures that we remain focused on our mandate to empower and inspire people with disabilities to re-imagine what is possible.

Adaptive Sailing Association of British Columbia (ASABC)

Mike Stiles, Chair
Matthew Burke, Director
Renuka Senaratne, Secretary
Derek Lau, Director
Gerry Burns, Director

British Columbia Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS)

Mike Stiles, Chair
Linda McGowan, Treasurer
E.J. Tremblay, Director
Carrie Torrans, Director

ConnecTra Society

Gaile Lacy, Chair
Art Jonker, Secretary-Treasurer
Nicolas Haddad, Director

Disability Foundation

Maureen DeLandreville, Chair
Ryan Miller, Director
Geoff Dodds, Treasurer
Mary Jo Fetterly, Vice-Chair

Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA)

Caspar Ryan, Chair
Terry LeBlanc, Secretary-Treasurer
Simon Paradis, Director
Joseph Morrissette, Director

Tetra Society of North America

Ryan Clarkson, Director
Bryce Clarke, Director
Michelle Amerie, Director
Ho Ting Ip, Director
Jacques Courteau, Director

Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS)

Terry LeBlanc, Vice Chair
Cody Tresierra, Secretary-Treasurer
Art Jonker, Chair
Kristina Shelden, Director
E.J. Tremblay, Director

Contact Us

We'd love to hear from you! Visit us online or send us an email to find out more about our programs, how to volunteer, or how you can otherwise support our programs.

Adaptive Sailing Association of British Columbia (ASABC):

Charitable Registration
Number: 13046 3649 RR0001
www.asabc.org
info@asabc.org

British Columbia Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS):

Charitable Registration
Number: 11881 8723 RR0001
www.bcmos.org
info@bcmos.org

ConnecTra Society:

Charitable Registration
Number: 86997 1184 RR0001
www.connectra.org
info@connectra.org

Disability Foundation:

Charitable Registration
Number: 89446 8396 RR0001
disabilityfoundation.org
info@disabilityfoundation.org

Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA):

Charitable Registration
Number: 86127 4157 RR0001
www.digabc.org
info@digabc.org

Tetra Society of North America:

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Number: 14043 5108 RR0001
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Vancouver Adapted Music Society:

Charitable Registration
Number: 13046 3607 RR0001
www.vams.org
info@vams.org