

# DISCOVER

Spring 2023



DISABILITY  
FOUNDATION





THE DISABILITY FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

# DISCOVER

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## Letter from the Executive Director

Throughout 2022, the Disability Foundation and our Network of Societies reviewed our 2018-2022 Strategic Plan in preparation for a new plan that will guide us through 2027. After much consultation with staff, clients, board members, volunteers, and community partners, our new five-year strategic plan is being put in place.

In addition to delivering our current programming and services, we want our programs to reach more people in more communities around British Columbia and beyond. Stability is a central theme in the five key areas we will focus on over the next five years:

**1. Position each organization for long-term financial sustainability:** Achieving greater financial stability by diversifying our fundraising efforts will remove the “if we get funding” stress that affects planning new and ongoing programming.

**2. Develop long-term relationships with local and national organizations to maximize program impact and fundraising:** We will connect with people and organizations who share our vision for creating a more inclusive and accessible world for people with disabilities.

**3. Build an inclusive, healthy, effective, and sustainable staff and Board:** Building greater internal capacity will ensure our talented and diverse team remains stable, engaged, and compensated with competitive wages and benefits.

**4. Develop a robust and growing system of volunteer engagement and stewardship:** Volunteer recruitment and retention remain at the forefront of our strategic plan as we find new and creative ways to retain and celebrate our passionate volunteers.

**5. Impact and empower more people with disabilities, their families, friends, and community:** Our societies’ programs are the heart of why the Disability Foundation Network exists. Program delivery will be holistic and inclusive, responding to the needs of clients and their family, friends, caregivers, medical professionals, and support organizations.

This work has already begun with so many caring and generous individuals and organizations committed to supporting our societies: promoting, donating, volunteering, or otherwise helping the work we do.

The Disability Foundation and its Network of Societies are excited about what is coming in 2023 and beyond! Stay on top of everything that’s going on at the Disability Foundation and our Network of Societies. Follow us on social media and subscribe to our mailing list to stay informed.

**David Fong**

**Executive Director**



## Youth Leadership Initiative

Future Leaders Shaping the Future Workplace



Royal Roads  
UNIVERSITY



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## What's New in 2023

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 2023. The YLI team and the YLI Advisory Committee are hard at work creating the YLI Toolkit, an online resource hub that will support the employment goals of youth with disabilities. Learn more at [disabilityfoundation.org/yli](https://disabilityfoundation.org/yli).

Learn about  
the Youth  
Leadership  
Initiative



Become  
a Member

Did you know that you can become a member of the Disability Foundation and our network of societies? For \$20 per organization, register to join our network of societies and receive benefits like helping guide our direction by voting during our Annual General Meetings as well as society exclusive perks like: discounts on purchasing musical instruments from VAMS, priority placement on activity waitlists and so much more. To learn more, visit any society's website and click "Become a Member".



### Adaptive Sailing Association of BC (ASABC)



ASABC staff launches Martin 16 adaptive sailboat.

The 2023 season for ASABC is approaching quickly! 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 15th for the May 24th 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 (dates coming soon).

ASABC is putting together the finishing touches on the crew who will be helping you sail this summer and is very excited to have several familiar faces as well as some new ones join ASABC this year as staff and volunteers. See you out on the water!

### BC Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS)

Once again, BCMOS will be offering a variety of outdoor adaptive activities starting May 23rd. Online booking starts in early May.

[Adaptive Paddling](#) will once again be running 7 days a week from 10am to 6pm at the Creekside Paddling Centre. Get out on the water starting May 22nd.

[TrailRider Hiking](#) will be available Wednesday through Sunday 10am to 6pm at Pacific Spirit Park and around the Lower Mainland throughout the summer. Bring the family out for Kids Days throughout the summer. More information coming soon!

Stay in shape from home with BCMOS' virtual [Adaptive Personal Training program](#). Each 4-month cohort offers you the opportunity to have 1-on-1



BCMOS offers adaptive paddleboarding to get you moving on the water.

sessions with Megan Williamson of Ocean Rehab and Fitness. The next cohort begins May 15th.

Adaptive Cycling is back for its full season on the BCMOS roster of activities! This summer, participants can cycle throughout Pacific Spirit Park. To learn more about this exciting new program, contact BCMOS at [info@bcmos.org](mailto:info@bcmos.org).



### ConnecTra Society

ConnecTra continues to expand the programming offered on 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 [www.ConnecTra.org/events](http://www.ConnecTra.org/events).

In addition, ConnecTra's [Accessible Community Forums \(ACF\)](#) will continue to inspire conversations between organizations and the disability community. These forums offer an inclusive way to explore solutions to accessibility barriers. The first ACF for 2023 took place on March 10th and focused on the topic of Accessible Travel ([Watch now on the Disability Foundation YouTube Channel](#)). You are the expert of



2022 Abilities Expo.

your experience. Be heard! Stay tuned for the next ACF coming later this year.

Abilities Expo is back in 2023, with the theme of "Adventure Awaits"! Join us on May 18th to connect with exhibitors, vendors, employers, guest speakers, participate in interactive activities and so much more! Learn more at [connectra.org/AbilitiesExpo](http://connectra.org/AbilitiesExpo).

### Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA)



DIGA Coordinator, Shareen, gardening with late DIGA board member, Terry LeBlanc at new GF Strong Garden.

DIGA gardeners will nurture plots at seven community gardens this year. Last summer, DIGA officially opened its newest community garden, located at [GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre](#) and is excited for what the future holds at this new location!

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](http://digabc.org/growing-together-podcast).

New this year is a series of workshops presented by dietitian Renee Chan of [True Nosh](#). Renee will share healthy eating and cooking tips and much more. [See page 7 to learn more.](#)



Tetra Society of North America



[TetraNation](#) is back for another friendly competition between Tetra chapters. Between March 20th and April 20th, check out [tetrasociety.org/tetranation/](https://tetrasociety.org/tetranation/) to vote for your favourite volunteer-made projects. This year's TetraNation submissions will be split up by region (Atlantic, Central, Prairies, BC), with each region having a week in the spotlight.

Show your support to those who give their time and skills to make these projects a reality by casting a vote for your favourites. The TetraNation awards, [sponsored by Fable](#) will be announced on ConnectTogether April 21st as part of National Volunteer Week.

Coming up in the fall, Tetra will be inviting you to their virtual TetraCon, featuring guest speakers and exciting topics from around the organization. Stay tuned for more details coming soon!

Visit [TetraSociety.org](https://TetraSociety.org) to request a custom assistive device, read the latest Gizmo newsletter, join as a volunteer, and keep up to date with everything Tetra Society!

Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS)

Connect with VAMS to learn about the variety of [lessons and recording sessions](#) available at the VAMS Studio at GF Strong. VAMS holds drop-in hours every Thursday at either 1pm or 3pm, where those who are interested can learn more about programs and even work on some music with the VAMS team. Email [info@vams.org](mailto:info@vams.org) to confirm which time drop-in hours are scheduled for that week or upcoming weeks.

New this year is the [VAMS Mini School](#). See page 8 to [read more](#) about this 8-course program which covers different parts of the music-making process.

On October 6th, 2022, Vancouver Adapted Music Society presented its flagship concert event, The Strong Sessions. Throughout 2023, VAMS will be releasing all of the Strong Sessions

performances through their [YouTube Channel](#). Subscribe to the channel to stay in the loop for the latest releases from VAMS!

The VAMS podcast, Re-Imagine Radio, is now found on the VAMS [YouTube Channel](#). Check out the channel each week to hear people with disabilities discuss topics covering different aspects of living with a disability.



Rachael Ransom and Bend Sinister performing at VAMS 2022 Strong Sessions





## Adventure Awaits at this year's Abilities Expo

Since 1999, [ConnecTra](#) has built connections between people with disabilities and the programs and services that can support them in living full, engaged lives. These connections impact all aspects of a person's life, from providing social outlets to arranging access to disability services and connecting with employment supports. Ultimately, ConnecTra helps people with disabilities identify, pursue, and achieve the goals found along their personal journey.

The Abilities Expo is Connectra Society's flagship event, bringing together exhibitors, vendors, resources, guest speakers and more, to further enrich the disability community's well-being and connectedness. "We are thrilled to again host this year's Abilities Expo at the Roundhouse Community Center! After bringing back the event last year we really wanted to find a fresh and intriguing way to engage our community and participants. I think we have done that!" says Program Manager, Graeme Wyman.

Now in its 12th year, the Abilities Expo returns on Thursday May 18th from 11:00AM – 6:00PM. The theme this year is Adventure Awaits, and there will be lots of opportunities for youth and kids living with disabilities, as well as adults and parents alike! "The Abilities Expo is my favourite event that we put on. It's wonderful to see so many like-minded organizations share the same space and connect with one another," says Program Coordinator Emily Chambers." Presentations include "Sex Education with Real Talk", "Transitioning into the Working World with Rick Hansen Foundation", and more! "This year, I'm really looking forward to our presentations, including our Sexual Health discussion with Real-Talk," Emily says.





### ConnecTra's Abilities Expo

*Adventure Awaits*





Scan to get your  
FREE ticket today!

Come connect and create adventures with your community in-person! Whether you're looking for adaptive activities to join this summer, inclusive travel opportunities, or resources to help with all aspects of living life to the fullest with a disability – there's something for everyone.

Features:

- 30+ Exhibitors & Vendors from in and around the Lower Mainland
- Disability resources & adaptive activities
- Guest speakers
- Hands-on activities
- Catered lunch
- and more!

Find out more at [Connectra.org/abilitiesexpo/](https://Connectra.org/abilitiesexpo/)

We look forward to seeing you there!

## DIGA partners with True Nosh to Deliver Healthy Eating Workshop

It is no surprise DIGA is passionate about gardening. Did you know DIGA is also passionate about nutrition education? Their goal is to help you to be as healthy as you can be!

This year DIGA will be partnering up again with Renée Chan, registered dietitian and owner of True Nosh. "We are very lucky to be working with Renée again after partnering with her back in 2020," says Program Manager, Graeme Wyman, "We are looking forward to having our clients participate in virtual and in-person classes for the first time."

Renée first worked with DIGA during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering with her online nutrition



Nutritionalist Renee Chan.



workshops as part of [ConnecTogether](#). There is still so much to learn. With the hunger for knowledge and the vision of a better and healthier world, Renée hopes to fill your kitchen with food that banishes lifestyle diseases.

This series was made possible by The Million Gardens Movement. Through their generosity, DIGA received a grant that supports improved nutritional education and food knowledge revitalization. The Million Gardens Movement is a charitable food initiative in Canada and the US whose goal is to bring together people who believe the

simple act of planting a tomato is an act of hope and resilience.

Throughout 2023, Renée will be hosting six educational, engaging, and fun workshops both online and in person. The series begins on April 21st on ConnecTogether, where Renée will talk about the series of workshops and what's to come.

Food and nutrition are crucial for good health. By the end of the series, participants will gain a better understanding of how food and nutrition impact health. We want you to live a healthy, vital and long life.

# Vancouver Adapted Music Society Launches New Program



Bryden Veinot teaches Foundations of Music for VAMS Mini School.

Over the years, [VAMS](#) has supported musicians with disabilities from the start of their musical journey all the way to recording and performing professionally. We also understand that access to music education can be difficult for people in our community, which has led us to launch our newest program: [The VAMS Mini-School](#). Made possible through a grant received from Creative BC, the

Mini-School is an 8-course program which covers different facets of the music-making process, starting at the very basic fundamentals. Participants don't need any prior experience or knowledge, only a passion for learning and creating music! "It is really exciting to finally see this program up and running. When it was first announced back in 2018 at our Strong Sessions



VAMS didn't have the capacity to take on the project," says Program Manager, Graeme Wyman, "with the hard work Bryden and Noah have put in to flesh out these courses and the support we received from Creative BC, we were able to start our first cohort in February."

Each class builds upon previous courses, giving a natural flow and order to each participant's learning experience.

The courses are delivered weekly, in-person and are split into two terms that each last approximately 4 months. Specific requests for individually taught lessons can be made, though this would depend on the availability of the studio schedule and may result in being added to a waitlist.

If you are interested in joining the VAMS Mini-School, please reach out to the VAMS Program Coordinator, Bryden Veinot, at [bveinot@vams.org](mailto:bveinot@vams.org)

Here is the list of courses we offer:

- VAMS 100 Foundations of Music
- VAMS 200 Songwriting
- VAMS 300 Music Arrangement
- VAMS 400 Pre-Production of a Record
- VAMS 500 Dissecting Hit Songs
- VAMS 600 Tools of the Trade
- VAMS 700 Intro to the Music Business
- VAMS 800 Self Promotion and Marketing

Meet Our Volunteers!



With National Volunteer just around the corner, we wanted to take this opportunity to thank the 226 people who dedicated their time, energy, skills, and passion to our organizations over the past year. Whether helping out with sailing, paddling, hiking, creating assistive devices or supporting us at one of the in-person events we put on last year, we couldn't have done everything we did without your support.



Ron Sidon (Tetra Society of North America)

Ron Sidon was attracted to volunteering with Tetra because he feels it is important to share his experience and skills. In his own words, “when you give, it also gives back”. Ron has always been passionate about designing and conceptualizing solutions for unique mechanical and technical projects. As an engineer and a dedicated volunteer, he completes two to three projects with Tetra Society each year. In the last 10 to 12 years, he’s completed about 30 projects that have improved the lives of countless people.



Jee Lam (BCMOS | DIGA | ConnecTra)



When asked what she would say to anyone considering volunteering for the summer programs, Jee Lam emphatically said, “Do it!” As a perfectionist, she always wants to do her best, but volunteering doesn’t need to be perfect. She recommends leading with enthusiasm and bringing a willingness to learn and explore. There is so much enjoyment in going for a walk or a paddle: “You can sign up for whatever shift you want. It’s very flexible even if you work a full-time job. You choose when you want to go.”

Bailey Gutsche (VAMS)

When Bailey meets for a session with someone from VAMS, it’s not just about the music, it’s also about forming a meaningful connection. She believes in taking a respectful and unassuming approach to learning about music and each other. By taking the time to learn about each student’s specific interests and experiences, Bailey hopes that they “feel understood, listened to, and maybe [even] empowered.”





Dorian and Theo Bayer (BCMOS)

What motivates Dorian and Theo to volunteer is their desire to help people enjoy the same sports that they love. They also love the experience of socializing with different people outside their circle. When asked how they would summarize their volunteer experience, Theo shared that “being paddling land volunteers was one of our first volunteer experiences and it was very good. This experience was the most consistent one we’ve been through.” He says, “I don’t think we would have chosen any other place as it was a very good place to start getting volunteer experience.”



Adriaan Windt (ASABC)



When asked about what stands out to Adriaan about volunteering with ASABC, he shared, “What makes volunteering really special is I am passionate about sailing. So being on English Bay sailing on a very safe boat, on a personal level, is special, but when you see how appreciative the people you take out sailing and seeing the expression on their faces, that adds up to a great experience.” The memory stands out seeing people come off the water with appreciation on their faces and just how much they enjoy sailing.”







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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](https://disabilityfoundation.org/support)

In Loving Memory of  
**Terry Leblanc**

Dec 27, 1952 — Dec 19, 2022



## 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.

### Disability Foundation

Sam Sullivan, Founder & Honourary Director  
Mary-Jo Fetterly, Chair  
Geoff Dodds, Secretary-Treasurer  
Keiko Honda, Director  
Maureen DeLandreville, Chair Emeritus

### Adaptive Sailing Association of British Columbia (ASABC)

Gerry Burns, Chair  
Derek Lau, Director  
Matthew Burke, Director  
Carrie Torrans, Director  
Thomas Branson, Director

### British Columbia Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS)

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

### ConnecTra Society

Art Jonker - Chair  
Samantha Riesco, Director  
Jerry Gosling, Director  
Catherine Pope - Director

### Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA)

Simon Paradis, Vice Chair  
Joseph Morrisette, Director  
Caspar Ryan, Chair

### Tetra Society of North America

Keith McDonald, Director  
Dr. Leonard Lye, Director  
Ho Ting Ip, Chair  
Michelle Amerie, Treasurer  
Ean Price, Director  
Joy Hayden, Director

### Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS)

Art Jonker, Chair  
Kristina Shelden, Director  
E.J. Tremblay, Director

## Contact Us

### **Disability Foundation:**

Charitable Registration Number:  
89446 8396 RR0001  
[disabilityfoundation.org](https://disabilityfoundation.org)  
[info@disabilityfoundation.org](mailto:info@disabilityfoundation.org)

### **Adaptive Sailing Association of British Columbia (ASABC):**

Charitable Registration Number:  
13046 3649 RR0001  
[www.asabc.org](https://www.asabc.org)  
[info@asabc.org](mailto:info@asabc.org)

### **British Columbia Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS):**

Charitable Registration Number:  
11881 8723 RR0001  
[www.bcmos.org](https://www.bcmos.org)  
[info@bcmos.org](mailto:info@bcmos.org)

### **ConnecTra Society:**

Charitable Registration Number:  
86997 1184 RR0001  
[www.connectra.org](https://www.connectra.org)  
[info@connectra.org](mailto:info@connectra.org)

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.

### **Disabled Independent Gardeners Association (DIGA):**

Charitable Registration Number:  
86127 4157 RR0001  
[www.digabc.org](https://www.digabc.org)  
[info@digabc.org](mailto:info@digabc.org)

### **Tetra Society of North America:**

Charitable Registration Number:  
14043 5108 RR0001  
[www.tetrasociety.org](https://www.tetrasociety.org)  
[info@tetrasociety.org](mailto:info@tetrasociety.org)

### **Vancouver Adapted Music Society:**

Charitable Registration Number:  
13046 3607 RR0001  
[www.vams.org](https://www.vams.org)  
[info@vams.org](mailto:info@vams.org)