



NEWS RELEASE

CENTRAL & SOUTH OKANAGAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL WILL FOSTER INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Kelowna, April 26, 2007 – Community Living BC (CLBC) has now finalized the members of its Central and South Okanagan community council, which will give community and business leaders the opportunity to work with families to enrich the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

The Central and South Okanagan council has a combination of individuals with developmental disabilities (more commonly known as self-advocates), parents, service providers and community members. The members represent the communities of Kelowna, Penticton and Summerland.

The councils are being established across the province to ensure that communities have more meaningful involvement in how their services are delivered and outcomes are achieved for individuals with disabilities and their families.

The Central and South Okanagan community council is comprised of the following members:

Self-Advocates	Roni Keeley	Penticton	Looks forward to active participation as a voice for self-advocates in her area.
	James Murphy	Kelowna	An outspoken advocate for personalized service for persons with disabilities.
	Kelly Tompkins	Kelowna	In a leadership role with the Downs Syndrome support group in Kelowna.
Family Members	Donna Long	Kelowna	Parent of special needs children and the Director of the Association for the Benefit of Children with Disabilities.
	Sylvie Zebroff	Kelowna	Parent of a child with autism. Has a master's degree in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies.
	Janet Roloff	Kelowna	Parent of a child transitioning to adulthood. Is the co-chair of the parent liaison committee for Special Education for School District 23.
	Allison McNeil	Kelowna	Parent of a child with down syndrome. Allison is a Marketing Associate with financial planners Thom and Associates.
	Melanie AbedRabo	Summerland	Is a parent of a child with down syndrome. Has a background in health services management.
Service Providers	Rainer Persicke	Penticton	He has over 30 years experience in the disability field. Manages programs for Penticton and District Community Resources Society.
	George Arambasich	Kelowna	Director of TIER Services in Kelowna. Is a supporter of the Kelowna Downs Syndrome group.

	Miki Hanna	Kelowna	Works for Kelowna and District Society for Community Living where she acts as an advisor to self-advocates.
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Recruitment will continue for community members and residents of the Similkameen area.

The councils will review financial information about CLBC's budget and participate in determining how to best utilize limited resources. They will also work with CLBC managers to identify gaps, overlaps, issues and service delivery problems within the area. In addition, they will help set priorities for new or existing funding and participate in determining the impacts of financial decisions.

Each community council will act as an ambassador and a bridge to creating inclusive communities and participate in shared decision making. Together with CLBC staff and managers they will enhance the creation of safe environments, improve access to community resources and acknowledge the gifts and contributions of people with disabilities.

In addition, they will help develop and promote creative solutions which improve community access and inclusion. The councils will also identify research that will enhance our knowledge of how best to support people in community.

Community Living BC is the Crown agency responsible for providing support and services to people with developmental disabilities, children with special needs and their families in British Columbia. It has a board of self-advocates, family and community members, as well as staff located throughout the province. It believes that people with developmental disabilities and their families know best when it comes to their needs, goals and planning for the future.

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