
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2009HSD0051-000443
October 3, 2009

Ministry of Housing and Social Development

B.C. CELEBRATES OCTOBER AS COMMUNITY LIVING MONTH

VANCOUVER – This year marks the 10th anniversary of B.C. proclaiming October as Community Living Month, joining the nation to recognize the hard work of individuals and families who create inclusive communities and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

“This year’s theme for Community Living Month is inclusive education,” said Housing and Social Development Minister Rich Coleman. “We want children with developmental disabilities to have access to the supports they need at a young age so they can have the brightest future possible.”

With close to 58,000 students with special needs in B.C., the total funding to B.C. school districts for special needs students is estimated at nearly \$750 million for 2009-10. Over the last few years, the Province has enhanced its special needs supports in the public school system through a number of initiatives, including:

- Increasing the number of teacher and educational assistants.
- Broadening the criteria for the autism category and thereby providing supplemental funding for all students on the autism spectrum.
- Issuing School Completion Certificates to students with developmental disabilities.

“Inclusive education for people with disabilities fosters a culture of respect and belonging in our schools and communities for all students,” said Education Minister Margaret MacDiarmid. “We’re seeing results; in 2008, the Province issued 975 School Completion Certificates – recognizing young people with special needs who have made considerable achievements in their schooling.”

Community Living BC is supporting Community Living Month with “Start with Hi” events. The initiative encourages all British Columbians to make people with developmental disabilities feel safe and included in their communities through very small acts, like saying hello.

“It’s important for people to know that I am a person first, not a person with a disability,” said Tracy Jo, an individual with developmental disabilities involved with Start with Hi. “I want people to know they shouldn’t be afraid to say hello to someone. You never know, they might become a long-term friend, and you can be there for each other if you need help or are in trouble.”

“Start with Hi” events are taking place across the province throughout October in:

- Vancouver, Oakridge Centre, on Saturday, Oct. 3
- Victoria, Tillicum Mall, on Saturday, Oct. 17
- Kelowna, Orchard Park Centre, on Saturday, Oct. 24
- Prince George, Pine Centre, on Saturday, Oct. 24

For 2009-10, the Province is investing more than \$5 billion this year in disability supports and services for British Columbians with disabilities. CLBC is the Crown agency responsible for providing support and services to adults with developmental disabilities and their families in British Columbia.

For more information, visit: www.communitylivingbc.ca or www.startwithhi.ca

For photos of the Community Living Month Start with Hi events, please contact Community Living BC for more information.

-30-

Contact:	Seumas Gordon	Kate Chandler
	Media Relations Officer	External Relations Advisor
	Ministry of Housing and Social	Community Living BC
	Development	604-664-0101
	250 387-6490	

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province’s news feeds using RSS, visit the Province’s website at www.gov.bc.ca.