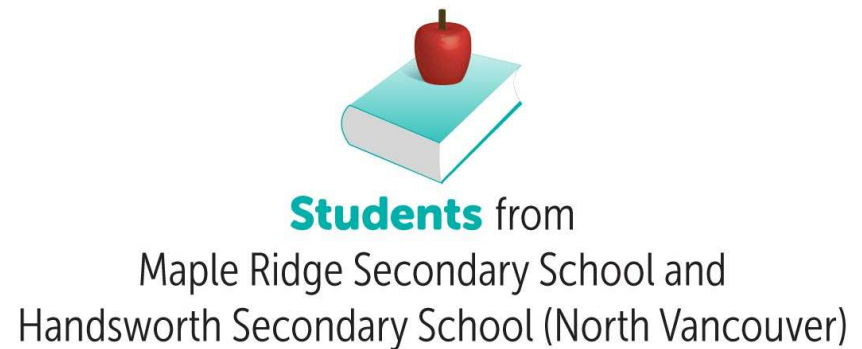


A Community Inclusion Initiative





Introduction

This project was developed by SPARC BC with funding through a BC Community Gaming Grant. The intention was to develop a series of images and stories that reflect what it means to be a truly accessible and inclusive community. We received an excellent response from across different regions and different parts of the province – with each adding their own unique perspective and insights. We are pleased to share the results of these collective efforts and believe that the pictures can help to start important conversations and dialogue in community about what accessibility means and how to be a truly accessible and inclusive society. The photos in this book come from a number of different sources—professional photographers, amateur photographers, students, people with disabilities, families and support networks. We want to thank each and every individual who took the time to reflect on our question and contribute to this book.



A Gifted Person

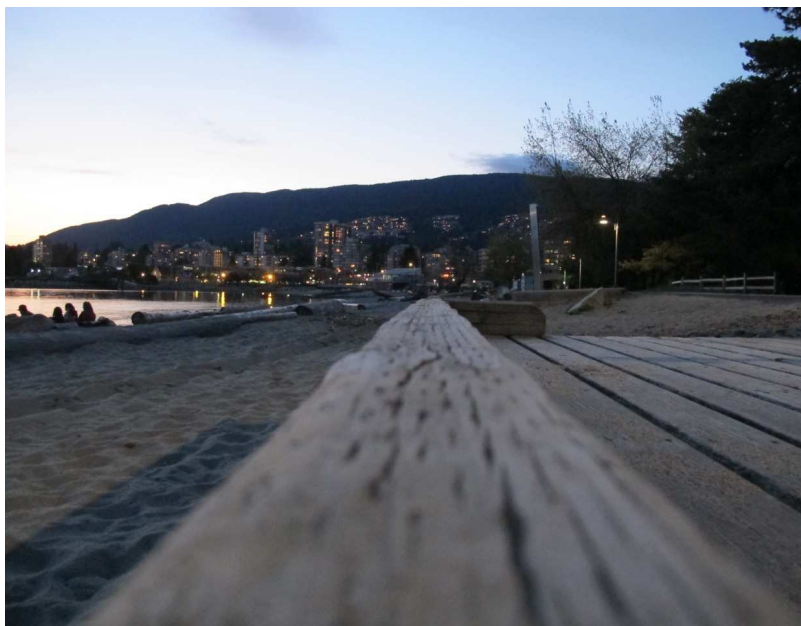
I love to paint. It's become more challenging now. My hand freezes and cramps with pain if I hold the brush too tightly and for too long. My shoulder stiffens and I hear it crack as I shift my position to get more comfortable. Each of us is gifted in some way. Having rheumatoid arthritis and living in a crippled body will never mean I am not a gifted and talented person. Often disability is viewed as a condition within a person. When I am connected and participating in the infinite array of life's experiences, I am not disabled. The question I ask is not, "How can I fit into our world?", but rather, "How does our world fit me in?"





One of the Band

This photo was taken at a performance of the Frances Kelsey Secondary School Sr. Jazz Band's outdoor performance in April 2014. Can you spot the individual with a diagnosis of autism and selective mutism? I'm betting you can't. I don't think you would be able to pick the person out of a video of the performance either. Why? It's simple; the person is just one of the band. He attends all practices (yes, even the early morning ones and the lunchtime ones) and is part of all the performances. Okay, I've given you a hint – I said "he". Unlike most of the other musicians in the band, when he is away there is no one else playing the same instrument so he leaves a big void. There, I've limited it down to two students. Which student is your guess? Did you guess the young man on the drum kit in the far left corner of the photo? Playing in the Sr. Jazz Band and Sr. Concert Band are two of his favorite classes. He also has a full course load and will be graduating with a regular Dogwood certificate next year.



Enjoying the Beach!

The photo was taken on the seawall in West Vancouver. The wood you see in the foreground of the photo is part of the wheelchair platform that the city has built so that people using wheelchairs or walkers can have access to the beach. Decisions made by local leaders can make a real difference in how accessible our communities are. It is a great feeling when everyone has the chance to enjoy the services, amenities and opportunities that their community has to offer.

Learning Braille

a b c d e f g h i

j k l m n o p q r

s t u v w x y z

I feel good!

Learning Braille—I Feel Good!

An accessible community provides children with access to opportunities to learn and grow. Having playgrounds that are accessible makes it easy to see that while we all have different abilities, we all have the same desire to be included and show who we are.



003 DOWNTOWN
003 DOWNTOWN

2min
5min

Sunset

Accessible transportation gives all people the freedom to travel and helps them to get where they want to go. The freedom and independence that accessible transportation can provide is an important part of a community social infrastructure.



Yes, We are Open

Sometimes “open” can mean more than business hours. Sometimes “open” can be a feeling of acceptance and belonging. Some places can feel more accepting and inclusive of people with disabilities than others. It is great when people can feel the sense of genuine inclusion and that, as a society, we are open to everyone.

BOOKSLOT IS ONLY OPEN AFTER HOURS

BOOK RETURN

Attention to Detail

Libraries provide a space where everyone has the opportunity to participate and learn. This book drop is open 24 hours. It means that people can drop books off any time they want. This is what inclusion should feel like— it should just be there and you don't even have to think about it because someone has already thought of it for you.

Audio Books



Opportunities to Learn

Audio books provide opportunities for people with visual disabilities to explore different kinds of books and knowledge. Books help people to connect with each other and to share their ideas. Sometimes it is the simple pleasures in life like a good book that can really make the difference.



An Invitation to Come In

A door can be a strong symbol of inclusion. If the door is closed or is too heavy it can be a barrier. The design of doors promotes and supports real inclusion by allowing people in wheelchairs and walkers to enter safely and comfortably. Automatic doors are part of many public spaces now. In fact, they have become so common you don't even have to think about it. This is what inclusion should be – an open invitation to come in and be part of something.



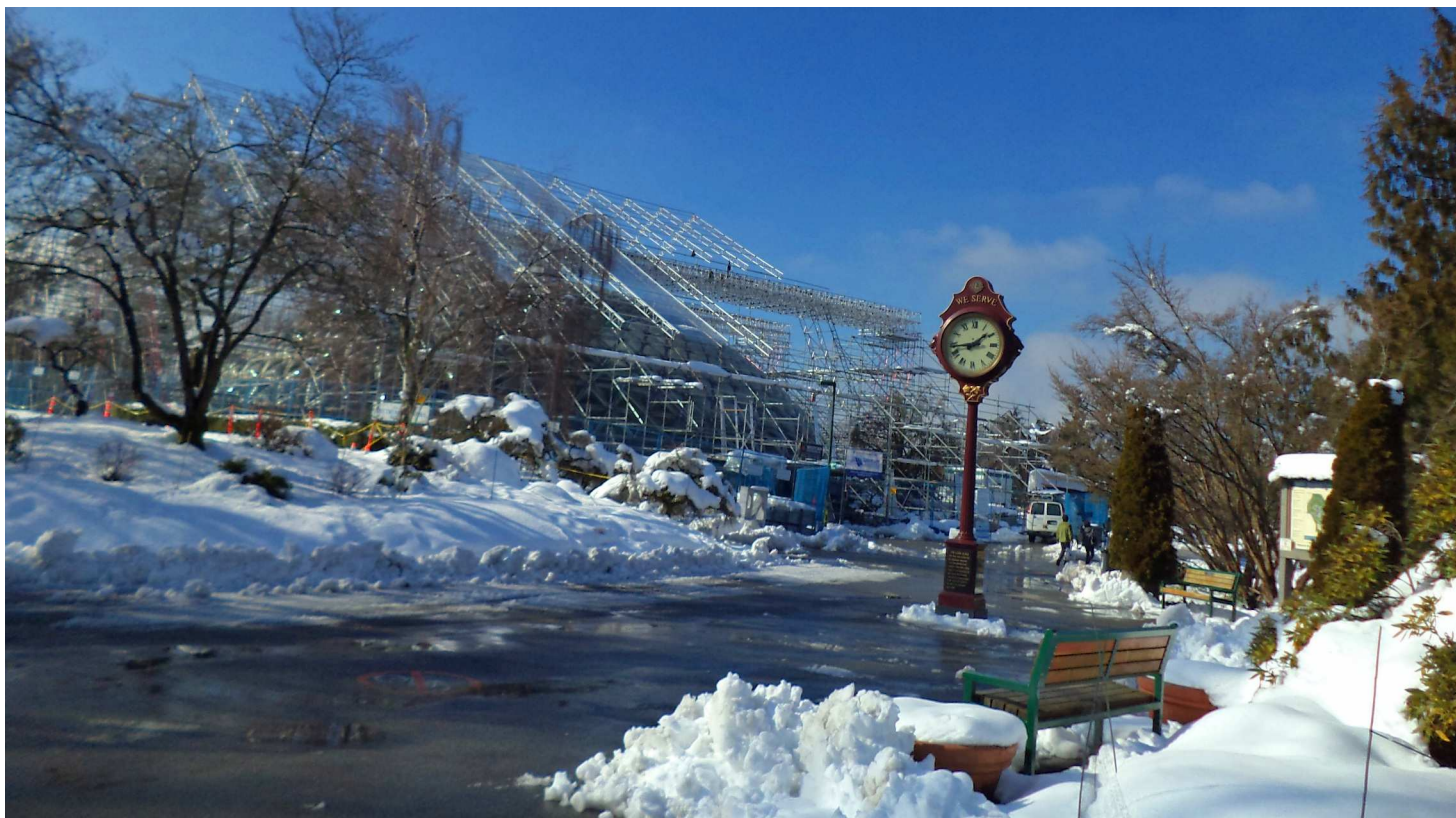
Celebrate Inclusion

Banners are a way of celebrating community. These banners hang in celebration and remind us that thinking and acting inclusively can add just a bit more colour and energy to our communities.



Join In

This picture shows a special lift that provides people with disabilities a way to join in and feel the sense of weightlessness and freedom that can come with swimming. Investments in infrastructure and technology, along with programs and planning, are making it possible for everyone to join in.



Snow in Queen Elizabeth Park

The snow in Queen Elizabeth Park is beautiful! At the same time, something as simple as snow on the sidewalks can mean that seniors and people with mobility challenges are not able to get out and be part of their community safely. A well cleaned pathway means that everyone can be part of their community – even when it snows.



Interesting Neighbourhoods

Vancouver has many interesting neighbourhoods to explore. Being a part of your neighbourhood and knowing your neighbours gives a sense of belonging. Diversity within a neighbourhood also makes vibrant communities and builds a sense of community. Vancouver's Commercial Drive neighbourhood has found a way to celebrate its diversity and build a real sense of connection.



Part of the Social Fabric

Cultural capital is the knowledge, skills and resources and cultural history that are a part of the community. Cultural capital contributes to the resilience, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship of a community. In 2013, the City of Richmond celebrated their cultural heritage through “Culture Days”. Community celebrations help to build vibrant and inclusive communities by recognizing the contribution of everyone.



Exploring the Sites

Some days it is fun to head out and just explore. Exploring can add to one's understanding of the world around us and build a real sense of inclusion. Experiencing different places, people and cultures is a great way to figure out where we all fit in.



Jessica's Photo Exhibit

My name is Jessica and I have a disability. I think being included means having the opportunity to share my talents and abilities with others. This photo shows my personal photo exhibit where I displayed some of the pictures that I took. Many of these photos were taken in our local community garden where I garden with my friends.



Grown in the Same Garden

This photo illustrates community and diversity. Each of the tomatoes in the photo is a different shape, size and color, yet they all come from the same garden. We should celebrate and honour the diversity we see in our communities. Even though we are all different, in many ways we are all the same.



Come In and Enjoy

Community gardens provide a fun outdoor activity where you can get to know your neighbours and work toward a common purpose. This picture is from Jessica's community garden where she gardens with friends. They share produce from their garden with others in their neighbourhood. It is fun to share with others the abundance that comes from our hard work and efforts.



Living in the Moment

Sharing fun activities with others and taking the time to enjoy the moment is one of the simple pleasures in life. It can be something like an afternoon fishing trip with friends that can bring real happiness. Sometimes building an inclusive community takes the patience and focus needed to be successful at fishing - sometimes it all comes together right away and sometimes you have to wait patiently. The beauty is in Living in the Moment.



We Are All Part of the Mix

Everyone loves cookies. Christina is adding her own special magic to the mix and making cookies for her friends and teachers to enjoy. An accessible and inclusive community provides fun opportunities for each of us to share our skills and talents. We each bring our own special ingredients to the mix.



Growing Community

It is the richness of the soil that helps a garden to grow. Diversity within our communities brings richness. Being part of a project like a community garden can bring joy and help people to blossom. More and more communities have community gardens. Community gardens represent a space where everyone can come and enjoy working together on a small project – that's what community is all about.



Learn

a b

j k l

s t u

l f e

An Invitation to Play

There is no place like a playground if you are a child. Accessible playgrounds create a space where children can meet one another, play together and form friendships. By designing playgrounds that are accessible, we are building healthy, active and inclusive communities naturally.



Being Part of a Family

This public art invites you to be a part of this family. When you are part of a family you feel like you belong. Accessibility should feel like this - it should be like an open invitation to be part of our cities and communities.



Playing with Friends

Accessible playgrounds are a great way to let kids know from the start that everyone is valued and everyone is welcome. Come and join in.



Making Beautiful Music

Violins make beautiful music. We all bring our own voices and our own experiences to our communities. In the same way that the different instruments play together and contribute to the whole, we are also part of something where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



The Perfect Resting Place

Sometimes it is fun to just sit and watch the world go by. It is fun to find that perfect resting place where everything comes together.





The Bicycle

I was walking down the street one day when I came across a bicycle. What an unusual sight it was to see this bicycle standing defiantly with its own unique story and history. The bicycle acts as a symbol of strength as it stands tall and takes its place in the community. This is how we should view ourselves and insist on our inclusion—we all have our own place and own story to share in our community.



Celebrating Diversity

Vancouver's Chinatown is a vibrant and diverse community. It is a place where people from diverse pasts and backgrounds can come together. Many cultures, ethnicities and beliefs are included and celebrated in this vibrant urban community that is rich in both its diversity and history.

About the Artists



Bob Smith (photographer)

My interest in amateur photography began in the 1970's while living in Massachusetts, where I was struck by the beautiful and ever changing landscapes of New England. After immigrating to Canada, I worked in agriculture and geology, before training and having a fulfilling career in electronics at Okanagan College and UBC Okanagan. I was fortunate to have been a member of the Canadian Ski Patrol Society providing first aid support at Big White Ski Resort for many years. Since moving to Lake Country, my love of first aid and community service led me to volunteer with the (then) Carr's Landing Fire Department and I have served as a volunteer firefighter and Chief Medical Officer with the Lake Country Fire Department for almost 25 years. Both organizations have provided me with unique experiences, tremendous satisfaction and amazing friends. Since retiring almost 6 years ago from UBCO, I now have the time for hiking, skiing and camping in the Okanagan and I have renewed my passion for photography, in particular the wonder of nature in beautiful vistas and the multitudes of local wildlife and birds.

Marie Molloy, BA, MA,

Chair, District of Lake Country Age-friendly and Access Committee

Diagnosed with severe chronic rheumatoid arthritis at twenty-one, my youthful notions of one day becoming a nurse and having four children quietly died within me. I knew then that my life's course would be painful and challenging. I also believed I would most likely travel it alone. After completing two degrees in Ontario and, in search of a drier, more comfortable climate, I drove myself out to British Columbia's Okanagan Valley in 1993. I was unemployed, broke, knew nobody and had nowhere to live. Thirty-five years later I retired from a successful career at UBC Okanagan, own a spectacular Lakeview acreage and am absolutely not alone. I married a wonderful man, have amazing friends and never imagined such a fairy tale ending would happen to me. Inclusivity means different things in various contexts to different people. For me, it's all about feeling and being connected. Being able to comfortably participate in life's diverse experiences and having easy access to activities, places, people and opportunities. Inclusivity exists where there's: a levered handle that I can easily push to enter or exit a space; a water tap in a public washroom that's easy to use; doors, locks, lids and packaging which I can easily open myself; a glass that I can comfortably hold while making a toast to my loving husband. Often times disability is viewed as a condition within a person. When I'm connected and participating in the infinite array of life's experiences, I am not disabled. The question I ask is not, "How can I fit into our world?", but rather, "How does our world fit me in?"



Claire Spencer

Trevor is my 16-year-old son. My name is Claire Spencer, and I am a mother of two, living in beautiful Cowichan Bay, British Columbia. I love to take photos, primarily of the beautiful area I am lucky enough to call home.



Chris Dietrich

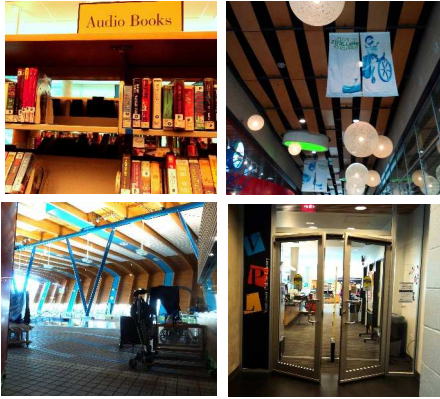
I am a grade 10 student at Handsworth Secondary School in North Vancouver. I like photography, film making, soccer and skiing.



Indra Aulak

My name is Indra. I like photography and working at my job in the kitchen at the Drop-In Centre. I like to earn my own money. I spend my time shopping, cooking and watching soccer games. I'm looking forward to my summer camp in June. I LOVE drinking coffee and I love using my bus pass in Vancouver.





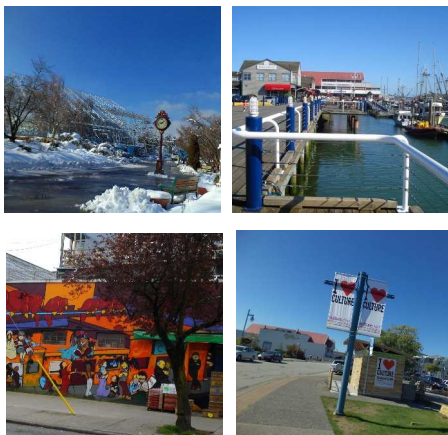
Jamie Dri

Hi, my name is Jamie. I am 26 years old and live in Vancouver. I have a cat named Abbey who I love to cuddle with. She is like my child. I love her so much. I am a huge fan of scary movies. My favorite is "Paranormal Activity". I also like funny TV shows like "Everybody Loves Raymond". I go to the Main Street Drop-In Centre where I get to do evening activities. I love to do art and photography. I have a job working with kids. I work twice a week- one day I work with the kids, the next day I wash toys.



Robin Flaten

My name is Robin and I am an amateur photographer. I would like to be entered into your photo contest. I am a Home Share provider. One of the ways that we include Jessica is by taking her into nature with our family. I love this picture of Jessica and the look of happiness and joy on her face.



Hugh Campbell

I like to take photographs. I take photos at different angles of scenery and nature, and I like to include interesting shapes and colours. I also enjoy ceramics and working with my hands. I paint pictures and I've made several raku masks in my art class. I used to work as a carrier, but I've retired from that now. I like to travel and I plan to go to Seattle soon. I enjoy watching Special O athletes play baseball; I play as well. I will be seventy-six in a couple of weeks.



Jessica DeBruin

Hi, I'm Jessica Rose DeBruin!!! I love life!!! I am 31 years old and have Down's Syndrome. I love photography and people. I love to capture beauty with my pictures.



Bailey Hunniford

I am a student at Maple Ridge Secondary School in my final year of high school. I enjoy documenting events and making stories through video. Creating video content allows you to work with other people and find multiple ways to execute the same idea. I have never been particularly good at expressing my ideas through writing, but I have always liked the idea of exposing my ideas through different mediums; with video and photos you can share your views through a body separate from your own, and this never ceases to fascinate and inspire me.



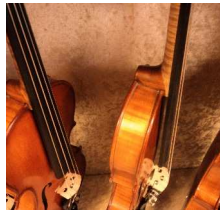
Lindsay Hong

Hi, my name is Lindsay. I love taking pictures. I volunteer at the YWCA three days a week. I take part in Special O sports; track and field; soccer; bowling and weight training. I also enjoy shopping, going to movies and I love the weather in Vancouver. Photography is my favorite hobby. I meet so many friends and learn a lot. I've participated in many art shows too; I love showing my photos. I hope you enjoy looking at my pictures. Thank you.



Adam Songer

I enjoy sports and I like watching hockey and football. I am a Vancouver Canucks fan too. I keep active and I help people with volunteering whenever I can. I have been involved with photography for about a year. I like learning, and I have shown some of my photos in art shows.



Jerome Cousineau

My name is Jerome Cousineau and I like photography. I take pictures of trees; gold and silver things; park pathways and rivers. I like bird watching; bowling; listening to orchestral music as well as going to baseball games in the summer time.



Quin Martins

Quin Martins is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice incorporates film-making, painting, installation, and photography. He moves freely through disciplines to create work that subverts and disrupts accepted social expectations of the artist and issues relating to mental health. Quin's work investigates the interface between the insider artist, and the outsider artist; between notions of superiority and inferiority; the real and the copy. Quin served for five years as a Collective Member of Gallery Gachet and continues to be involved with the gallery as an Associate Member. For several years Quin helped facilitate the LifeSkills Experimental Film and Video Group through the Portland Hotel Society. Quin is also one of the founding members of the DTES Artists Coalition.



Charle Von Ham

I have been a mental health consumer since 2007. I have been working as a peer support worker at the Vancouver Mental Health & Addiction Service since 2012. I have been doing theatre since 2009...to be continued...

