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Sometimes change is about staying the same

If there is one thing I have noticed in my role with PFC over these past years, it is that there will always be change.

But as much as things change, they often stay the same. In many ways, People First of Canada is going back to our grassroots. The issue that first brought together a small group of people is once again at the forefront.

That issue is deinstitutionalization and housing. This issue is Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We are going to be working on this issue in a number of ways.

We are going to be restructuring the Task Force on Deinstitutionalization. We are also going to give more support to the Task Force, and

update our social media and resources.

We are also going to be celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the *Freedom Tour*. This documentary has gone a long way and is used as an educational resource by many, many different groups around the world.

We are going to be taking part in the Global CRPD Roundtable at the World Congress in Birmingham, UK. This will give us more ideas on how we can use the CRPD in the issue of housing and closing institutions.

We will also be working with the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) on the My Home My Community project. This project will look at housing issues for people with intellectual disabilities in our country.

This is a lot of work on a very important issue and we will be looking to our chapters and members across the country to take part in these activities.

Another thing that is changing is the way we are being funded. This means that we have to change the way we fund our provincial and territorial chapters. It also means some restructuring of staff at the PFC national office. Catherine Rodgers is now our Director of Communications, and we will be hiring a new part-time coordinator.



Kory Earle, PFC President

We will keep you updated on these changes as we learn more. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue of *The Updater*.

The Power of Our Voice



Article by Natalie Spangnuolo and Kory Earle

During the spring of 2017, a friend of People First, university student Natalie Spangnuolo, approached PFC about doing an article about deinstitutionalization.

She wanted to work with Kory and the PFC team to write an article that was honest and in keeping with PFC's principles.

After months of research and working with the PFC team, a really good and very informative article was completed.

The article was called *Freeing our people: Updates from the long road to deinstitutionalization*.

The PFC team translated it into plain language. It was published online in the original format and in plain language in July 2017. In a short period of time, it got a lot of notice.

Through online publishing, social media and email, the article reached more than 10,000 people.

Thousands of people took the time to share the article – over 3,000 times! And there were hundreds of comments among the people who shared it.

That is a big reach for any article. That is a lot of people who are getting our information and message about the issue of institutions in this country.

But it hasn't stopped there! Read below to see where this article is going next.

From news article to course requirement

So – the article was published and reached a very wide audience.

But the news gets even better. We recently found out that it is now required reading in a university course!

In the fall of 2017, a professor at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, included the article as required reading in a course. The course is called *Social Welfare: General Introduction*.

The article is read while students are learning about disability and policy.

This is a very good example of the power of our voice and the power of media.

We are now reaching university students who may become social workers.

They are reading our messages and being tested on it. They are learning what we think about institutions. And we hope this will positively influence them in their careers.

You can read the original article or the plain language version through the link below.

www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/freeing-our-people-updates-long-road-deinstitutionalization



McMaster University is using the article in a social work course



Join the PFC Newsletter Committee?

We are looking to update the Updater, and we want you to be a part of it!

What do you think of the PFC Updater? Is it too long, or too short, does it have enough pictures? Does it have too many words? Is the information useful? Would you like to see something different in the newsletter? How can we make the newsletter better?

If these questions interest you, maybe you should join the Newsletter Committee. We are looking for some members from across the country

who would like to be on the committee.



We want you on the Newsletter Committee!

The Updater has two issues per year. The responsibilities of newsletter committee members would be to help provide information and pictures that would go in the newsletter. The committee members would also read and approve the articles in the newsletter. The

committee would meet once a month by teleconference. The committee members would also be responsible for reading and giving feedback on the newsletter as it is developed. All together, it would be about two to three hours a month to be on the committee.

There will also be staff support for the committee to organize calls and information.

If you are interested in being on the PFC Newsletter Committee, please let us know! You can contact the office or send an email to info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca

Federal updates – new Minister and accessibility legislation

In January, a new Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities was sworn in.

Science Minister Kirsty Duncan is taking on the additional minister position.



Minister Duncan with Kory Earle and Shelley Fletcher

The Minister has been in touch with the PFC President and Executive Director by phone after taking on the position. But, recently, they had the opportunity to meet in person.

This was at an Alliance for an Inclusive and Accessible Canada meeting. The Alliance has just finished their second report on consultations on the new federal accessibility legislation.

People First of Canada is a member of the Alliance and has been very active in the consultations across the country.

The federal accessibility legislation is still on track to be introduced in the house this spring. We will keep you updated on this important legislation!



Kory Earle joins Empower Us Action Team



Kory Earle joins Inclusion International's Empower Us Action Team

Inclusion International's self-advocacy initiative **Empower Us** is an opportunity for self-advocate leaders to join in the work of the organization.

The Empower Us Action Team is made up of self-advocates leaders from around the world.

The goal is to help build self-advocacy and inclusion around the world. The action team is a global resource that can give advice and support to self-

advocates, supporters, families, and organizations on self-advocacy and its development around the world.

People First of Canada is proud to announce that Kory Earle has been chosen to be a part of this dynamic international team.

The Empower Us Action Team will be a part of helping to produce international self-advocacy resources and tools.

This will include creating public statements on some of the big issues for people with intellectual disabilities.

They will also have the opportunity to lead training, and take part in self-advocate exchanges.

The Empower Us Action Team will be launched at the Inclusion International World Congress 2018. Read below to find out more!

World Congress 2018 – Birmingham, United Kingdom



Inclusion International's World Congress 2018

Inclusion International will be holding its next World Congress in June 2018, in Birmingham, United Kingdom (UK). The theme of the congress is Learn, Inspire, Lead.

PFC will be sending two members and two staff. There may be members from other provincial and territorial chapters who will also be going. Those members have been raising funds to attend.

During the conference, Inclusion International will launch its global self-advocacy network with the formal introduction of the Empower Us Action Team.

Kory Earle is going to be a part of the Empower Us Action Team. He is also going to be one of the speakers at the World Congress 2018. And he won't be alone.

Dewlyn Lobo and Gordon Fletcher are also

attending the World Congress. They will be helping to lead a session called 'Self-advocates working for inclusion.'

People First members are also looking forward to taking part in the Global CRPD Roundtable. This session will look at how we can use the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in our efforts to advance inclusion in Canada.

PFC School Language Project update

The PFC School Language Project brings information and messages about rights, acceptance, language sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion to students in the middle grades. The project began in 2014 and wrapped up this year.

Over the course of the project, over 100 People First members across the country have been trained to deliver the presentation. And, although we have officially finished the project, the numbers keep coming in!

At last count, there were 10,799 students across this country who have seen this presentation.

This is a fantastic accomplishment for our national and provincial and territorial chapters, all our members who took part in the project.

We often talk about the numbers when it comes to projects. But numbers aren't always the most important thing. Here are a few student quotes to show the impact the presentation had on the students.

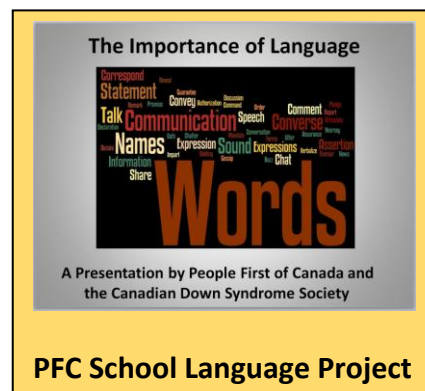
"The R word is a lot more hurtful than I thought"

"It can really affect the way somebody feels about themselves when people use hurtful language to people with disabilities"

"People with disabilities can do more than what you would expect"

"I learned that people with disabilities are being treated a lot more poorly than I thought so it was a big eye opener"

"I learned that we're not treating people with disabilities like people"



Upcoming Events

**People First of Canada
Freedom Tour 10th
Anniversary and AGM**
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Date : To be announced

**Canadian Down Syndrome
Society AGM and Conference**
Hamilton, Ontario
May 18-20, 2018

**Inclusion International –
World Congress 2018**
Birmingham, United Kingdom
May 30 – June 1, 2018

**Council of Canadians with
Disabilities (CCD) AGM and
Council Meetings**
Winnipeg, Manitoba
June 15-16, 2018

**Canadian Association for
Supported Employment AGM
and Conference**
Halifax, Nova Scotia
June 19-21, 2018

**9th Annual Policy Forum
PFC / CACL / and the Office for
Disability Issues (ODI)**
Ottawa, Ontario
December, 2018

**Canadian Association for
Community Living AGM and
Board Meetings**
December, 2018



If you have an event or activity for this section of The Updater, please send the information to info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca

**institution
watch.ca**

**The Institution Watch
website**

The Task Force on Deinstitutionalization: Where do we go from here?

Even though People First of Canada is going to be involved in a lot of work around the issue of deinstitutionalization in the next several months, we are not quite sure where the Task Force on Deinstitutionalization is going to be in all this.

But we do know this – we would like to have People First members from all regions around the country on the Task Force. We want members who have experienced institutional life to be

part of the Task Force as we move forward. We need to make sure the voice and lived experiences of our members are at the Task Force table. We also want to keep the information on the website and continue to produce the newsletter *Institution Watch*.

Over the next few months, we will be reaching out to members in different regions of the country to not only represent

on the Task Force, but to also help with the workload. The Task Force has working committees where members can contribute and help.

In the meantime, the work and issues around institutions in our country continue to go on even if the Task Force is stalled right now.

Please read below for an update on the human rights hearings in Nova Scotia.



**Members of the People First of Canada and
Canadian Association for Community Living Joint
Task Force on Deinstitutionalization**

After four years of delays, a human rights commission hearing finally began on February 5, 2018, in Nova Scotia. The human rights complaint was put forward by Nova Scotia Legal Aid on behalf of two women and one man with intellectual disabilities. They have been living in locked

wards of institutions for decades because no other options have been provided for them.

Many people testified on behalf of the complainants. There were also reports going back over a decade that showed that the standards of care for patients was being violated, and patients

human rights were at risk as well.

The hearings continued until March 15, and future dates will be announced when they are set. We will keep you updated on the hearings as we learn more.

You can learn more about the Task Force and read past issues of the newsletter at www.institutionwatch.ca

What's happening in Nova Scotia?

Over the past several months, there has been a lot happening in Nova Scotia when it comes to people with intellectual disabilities and their human rights.

In the fall of 2017, the Nova Scotia government passed the new legislation called the *Adult Capacity and Decision-making Act* (Bill 16). This act deals with the issue of legal capacity and the ability to make your own decisions.

Many disability and community groups opposed the new law because it was

not much different than the old law. It does not allow people with intellectual disabilities to have supported-decision making teams. Instead, this new legislation uses much of the same old guardianship model and language.



People First Nova Scotia

People First Nova Scotia worked hard to raise awareness of this issue and presented at the Law Amendments Committee. PFNS

and PFC worked together and published an open letter to the Minister of Justice in Nova Scotia. And although we didn't get the law changed the way we wanted it, we did raise a lot of awareness in Canada and around the world.

Our letter was noticed by People First Scotland as they go through their own legal capacity legislation. Our members who are going to the World Congress in Birmingham, UK, will be part of a session with People First Scotland while we are there.

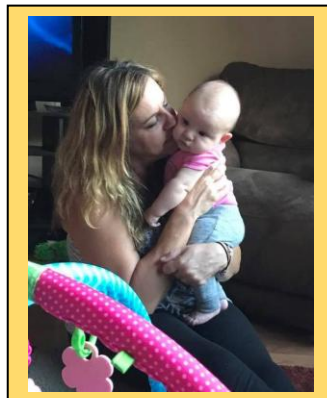
On a Personal Note...

#NansGirl

Did you know that #NansGirl is trending? That's right, new Nan Shelley Fletcher can't get enough of her first grandchild.

Harlowe Rae Maltman made her entrance on June 27, 2017 and has been stealing Shelley's heart since then! New parents, Sheyanne Fletcher and Elias Maltman are also quite taken with their new addition (when they can get her away from Nan!).

Miss Harlowe is a very healthy and happy girl and certainly enjoys all the attention she gets. She especially enjoys the mornings that she gets to spend with Nan.



Nan and Harlowe

Thank you to PFC board, members, advisors and staff

Our staff member, Catherine Rodgers, would like to thank everybody at PFC for their compassion and concern over the past few months.

Catherine and her family have recently lost their father after a period of intense illness. She is grateful to her 'PFC family' for their kind words, thoughts and gestures during this time. She is also very

appreciative of the time she got to spend with her father and family in the last few months of his life.



Thank you

If you have items for the personal notes section, please send them to:

info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca



20-226 Osborne Street
North
Winnipeg, MB,
R3C 1V4

PHONE:
204-784-7362
FAX:
204-784-7364

EMAIL:
info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca

Visit us at:

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People First of Canada's Freedom Tour 10th anniversary celebration

Have you ever wondered where the *Freedom Tour* has been in the past ten years? Come to our 10th anniversary celebration of the documentary film and find out!



People First of Canada is pleased to be celebrating the accomplishments of the *Freedom Tour* with an event that will show the impact a small group of people can have on a big issue in our world.

Save the date! People First of Canada will be holding this celebration in the fall of 2018 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We hope to see you there!

16 people
4 vehicles
3 provinces
2 cameras
1 goal...
FREE OUR PEOPLE!



Celebrate the Freedom Tour 10th Anniversary!

About People First of Canada

People First of Canada is the national voice for people who have been labelled with an intellectual disability. The vision for People First is of a movement of people who want all citizens to live equally in the community.

Our activities include raising public awareness around full inclusion for people with disabilities and to empower self-

advocates to know that they have the same rights as everyone else.

We promote rights – human rights, citizenship rights, accommodations rights and language rights. We fight for the rights to freedom, choice and equality for all citizens. People First protects the voice of self advocates and acts on what they say. We identify issues about which people can

speak, and bring people together so they can help each other.

People First of Canada also develops information around issues and creates opportunities and events for people to come together, speak up and be heard.

If you have any questions about People First of Canada, please contact us at
info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca