


PFC new meeting format with Zoom – Top row left to right: Shelley Fletcher, Executive Director; Monica Schroder, Project Coordinator; Gordon Fletcher, Treasurer. Bottom row left to right: Sylvain Bergeron, National Advisor; Dewlyn Lobo, 1st Vice President; and Kory Earle, President.

OUR NEW WAY OF MEETING!

The Updater
March 31, 2020

PEOPLE FIRST OF CANADA  PERSONNES D'ABORD DU CANADA

IN THIS ISSUE

A Message from the President on the COVID-19 crisis

Unfortunately, there is no other topic right now besides COVID-19 and the effect it is having on our country. We are all being affected by this. I hope you are keeping safe. I urge you all to follow the guidelines from the public health officers in your provinces and territories.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for all of us to stay home, to practice social distancing, and to wash our hands often and well.

At PFC, we have been responding to the COVID-19 crisis by trying to provide as much information as we can in plain language. We are posting information on our website and social media. We are reaching out to our members and connecting through phone calls and emails.

We want to share information about COVID-19, but we don't want to take away from all the great work PFC and our members have done over the past several months. So we have provided an Updater Insert on COVID-19 to go with our regular newsletter.

I also want to recognize all the people with intellectual disabilities who are more affected by this virus because of where they live. Our people who live in group homes and care homes and those who get personal support and care are very much affected by this virus. I want to thank the people who continue to work and provide much needed support to people with intellectual disabilities across our country.

I also want to thank all of our leaders of every party for stepping up to protect the lives of Canadians during this crisis. Now more than ever, we need to be united in our messages and our actions.

Finally, I want to remind you all to take the time to thank someone for all they are doing to keep us safe and healthy.

Most of all, I want you to take care and be safe.

Respectfully, Kory Earle



PFC Strategic Planning

It's great to have a plan! PFC members have been working on strategic planning as we look towards the next few years. Page 5 & 6



10th Annual Federal Policy Forum on Inclusion:
Why am I poor? Decreasing poverty & increasing opportunity for people with an intellectual disability

10th Annual Policy Forum

The 10th Annual Policy Forum was held in Ottawa in December 2019. Our members did a great job representing PFC and our movement! Page 3

Celebrating International Day

Celebrations may not be high on the list of things to do when the country is on lockdown. But it is important to note the things that we are working towards. This includes the rights of people with disabilities in our country.

On December 3, 2019, some of our PFC members were in Ottawa and took part in the celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Every year, our government and the national disability community come together to celebrate the advances we have made in inclusion and accessibility in our country.

This year, the theme of the celebration was to promote people with disabilities taking on leadership roles.

Dewlyn Lobo is one of those people who is taking on leadership roles wherever she can!



Dewlyn is the First Vice President of PFC and a tireless volunteer.

Before the changes from COVID-19, Dewlyn was preparing to give a presentation in Trinidad and Tobago about her experiences as a 'student of life.' Along with PFC Executive Director, Shelley Fletcher, Dewlyn was looking forward to presenting at the Down Syndrome Family Network conference.

Even without giving this presentation,

we know that Dewlyn Lobo is a leader to watch in the future. You can follow Dewlyn on social media by looking for @Dewlynlobo.

DEWLYN LOBO CELEBRATING

Pictured above is Dewlyn Lobo at the International Day for Persons with Disabilities celebration in Ottawa.

Spotlight on Donna Brown!



Donna Brown is the president of People First of New Brunswick and represents the province on the PFC National Board.

Donna Brown is the president of People First of New Brunswick (PFNB). She represents the province on the national PFC board. Donna has been very busy lately working to increase the capacity of PFNB!

PFNB has recently hired a coordinator to help with the work of the chapter. A warm welcome from the People First family to April Levesque! Donna and April have started a Facebook page for PFNL and have gotten some items made with the PFNB logo on them.

Donna has also been helping out PFC at the national level. Donna is bilingual and has translated some PFC documents into French in her spare time.

Donna has also been a plain language tester for PFC over the past several months.

Hats off to Donna for a great job and for her commitment to the People First movement!

POLICY FORUM PRESENTERS

**Transition to Employment**

Gordon Fletcher, PFC Treasures presents on the transition from sheltered workshops to real employment at the 10th Annual Policy Forum.

**Inclusive Employment**

PFC board member Herb Franklin (seated on the left) is introduced by Krista Carr for his presentation on real work for real pay.

FAST FACTS

44%

of working age people with intellectual disabilities receive social assistance at some point in their lives.

85%

of employed people with disabilities are less likely to quit or leave their jobs after one year of employment, compared with people without disabilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Check out our website at www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca



Pictured from left to right Robin Acton, CACL President; Roy Soreyko, Task Force member; Krista Carr, CACL Executive Director; Kory Earle, PFC President; and Shelley Fletcher, PFC Executive Director.

10th Annual Policy Forum on Inclusion

The Policy Forum is an annual event co-hosted by People First of Canada and the Canadian Association for Community living (CACL). The Office for Disability Issues partners with both organizations to host the forum. It is held in early December in Ottawa. This year's theme was **'Why Am I Poor? Decreasing Poverty and Increasing Opportunity for People with an Intellectual Disability.'**

This year was a milestone! It was the tenth forum we have held. It was also the largest number of people we have ever had at a policy forum. Each year, the number of people attending increases. We think this means that people are listening to us. And that they are looking for ways to be more inclusive.

Once again, our members represented PFC very well. Thanks go out to Herb Franklin, Gordon Fletcher, and Kory Earle for their work at the policy forum. Gordon shared his story of working in a sheltered workshop and then finding a real job and fellowship. Herb Franklin shared his story of finding real employment after spending several years in jobs he did not like and was not suited for.

Kory Earle brought greetings on behalf of PFC to start the day. Kory also spoke on a panel about government programs for people with disabilities. Kory spoke about how difficult it is to access programs like the Disability Tax Credit and the Registered Disability Savings Plan.

Shelley Fletcher, along with Krista Carr from CACL, had the main hosting duties for the forum. They introduce the panels and give some background information on the topic. They kept the day flowing and facilitated the small group work.

Along with a representative from the Office for Disability Issues, they also give comments at the end of the day. Shelley presented some very insightful thoughts and comments on why people with intellectual disabilities continue to live in poverty in our country.

Given the changes that may come about due to the COVID-19 virus, the Policy Forum might look a little different next year.

But we know the strong commitment from all partners will remain the same.

Update on Elections Canada project

It was not our first time working with Elections Canada, but we were excited to get started and share information. All our chapters dove into this work!

We started with a 'Train-the-Trainer' event. Our Board got together and went through the materials. We talked about how to present this to our regional members. The information we presented focused on where to vote, what ID to use and the accessibility of polling stations.

We also talked about why it is important to vote. We wanted to start the conversation on the power of each person's vote and the importance of using that power. This became one of

our themes as we went out and shared with our national membership.



Pictured above: PFC member Herb Franklin in front of a display of 'Why I Vote'.

Two of our members also created a video talking about their experiences running for city council. PFC posted these on our website and YouTube channel. We had many social media posts and used the hash tag #WhyIVote.

Overall, we did a really good job of getting our messages out there **AND** in plain language.

We had 22 events that took place in eight provinces and one territory. Almost every event included a pop-up voting activity where people could practice filling out a ballot. We also did a national online survey to see what kind of experiences our members had when voting in the federal election.

We want to thank all the staff at Elections Canada for their support and the opportunity to work together. Most importantly, we want to thank our members for supporting this project and democracy in Canada!

Task Force on Deinstitutionalization

The Joint Task Force on Deinstitutionalization is made up of members from PFC and the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL).

The Task Force has recently restarted its work and has been very busy over the past few months. They have a new website, a new issue of Institution Watch newsletter, and a new twitter account.

You can find the Task Force and more information about their work at institutionwatch.ca/.

You can follow the Task Force on Facebook at facebook.com/InstitutionWatch/

You can follow the Task Force on twitter at [@InstitutionScan](https://twitter.com/InstitutionScan)

This year, the Task Force gave the Pat Worth Award for Inclusion to David Weremy. David has been a long-time supporter of the work to close institutions in Canada. David is also the lead plaintiff in the class action suit against the Manitoba Government on behalf of people who lived in the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC).



DAVID WEREMY RECEIVES THE PAT WORTH AWARD

Pictured above, Kory Earle (left) presents the Pat Worth Award for Inclusion to David Weremy (right). David was in hospital at the time but has since recovered and is at home and doing well.

David also received the PFC President's Award for 2019. Congratulations David on both well-deserved awards!



Updates and Information

My Home My Community Project

Last year, My Home, My Community spent time gathering feedback from self-advocates and families on housing and home ownership for people with an intellectual disability. Gathering feedback continues this spring and hopefully shouldn't be delayed too long due to the current health crisis.

Help Wanted – Sheltered Workshop Project

PFC has finished the first year of our Sheltered Workshop project. This year was about research and gathering information about sheltered workshops and the laws that allow them to continue. We hired IRIS, Pooran Law and Chronicle Analytics to work on this. We also did two focus groups with our board last year. Our board shared stories and information that helped the project grow.

We are excited to move into the second year of the project and develop a tool kit to share with everyone. The tool kit will include a public presentation that talks about what people can do to help close sheltered workshops and increase employment for people with an intellectual disability. We will be doing a pilot project with the toolkit in Manitoba and then share it across the regions in the coming year.

Plain Language Testers

Are you available on short notice for plain language translation testing? If you would like to be on the list of testers, please let us know. Send an email to info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca with 'Plain Language Tester' in the subject line and we will add you to the list. People First members only need to have access to email and a phone to be a plain language tester. Send us an email and let's have a chat!

#iThankYou

PFC wants to take the time to thank all the people who support people with intellectual disabilities. We have put a video on our social media and have encouraged others to take the time to give thanks to those who are helping you during the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is important to thank all of those who take the risk to do their jobs during this time. They support all of us. And we support them. PFC Thanks YOU!

PFC Strategic Planning

Over the past few board meetings, PFC has been working on our strategic plan. We have contracted Taylor Newberry Consulting to help us develop this plan for the next few years – from 2020 to 2023. Strategic planning is great way to get everybody working towards common goals. It also helps us identify how we are going to reach those goals.

We have finished some of the hard parts of doing the strategic plan. We have gathered all the information we need to make the plan. We have spoken to our members across the country. We have spoken to leaders in the disability community. We have also spoken to people who know our movement well and are familiar with our work.

And we have had three face to face meetings with our members around strategic planning. During the last meeting, PFC members made the decisions on our priorities over the next few years. Taylor Newberry has put all the information together and we now have our strategic plan.

(continued on next page)

PFC AT WORK



#iThankYou

People First of Canada wants to thank all the people who support those with intellectual disabilities during the COVID-19 outbreak.

PFC STRATEGIC PLANNING



Choosing our priorities

Pictured above is PFC National Coordinator, Monica Schroder (standing) with members and advisors. Seated from left to right: member Herb Franklin, advisors Bernadette Farrell and Carys Osborne, members Kevin Johnson, Steph Paul, and Dewlyn Lobo.



Working in groups

Pictured above left to right are members Chris Rowley, Andrea Harrison, and Donna Brown, advisor Brigitte Leclerc, and member Jonathan Bouchard as they work together on strategic plans for PFC.

PFC Strategic Planning

In March, the PFC Executive Committee was given a presentation on the strategic plan. It will be on our agenda at the next board meeting.

Once our board members have had time to go through the plan, we will be at the final stage of strategic planning.

This is where PFC board members decide which priority we work on and how we do it. This is where we make our action plans.

For many boards, this is the tough part. It will be very important to be very honest and realistic about who will be doing what activities. It will be important to know what resources are required to do the job. The board will need to be very committed to the process and will need to work hard to stay on track.

The role of staff and advisors will be critical during this time as well.

Research shows that a lot of organizations don't follow through on their strategic plans. Only a small amount of board members and staff are even aware of an organization's strategic plan. .

We want to make sure our strategic plan gets used!

Every PFC board member has helped to make this plan and choose our priorities.

We will be keeping the plan high on our agendas when we are meeting in the future.



PFC board member Louise Bourgeois speaks with translator Ann Dubouloz-Lodge on choosing priorities for the PFC strategic plan.

The Updater Newsletter

People First of Canada
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Winnipeg, MB R3C 1V4

People First of Canada is the national voice for people who have been labelled with an intellectual disability.

We are a national non-profit organization for men and women with an intellectual disability supporting each other to reclaim our right to be recognized as full citizens. We do this through peer support, sharing our personal stories, developing leadership skills, advocating for our right to choose where and with whom we live, and by ensuring that our voices are heard and respected. We work together to educate and influence communities and government to ensure that all persons with intellectual disabilities are fully included and supported to live as equal citizens in Canada.

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. The vision for People First is of a movement of people who want all citizens to live equally in the community.

Find out more at www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca

Contact us at info@peoplefirstofcanada.ca

