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Access

Key



Richmond Centre for Disability  
Richmond, B.C.

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*Promoting a New Perspective on Disability*



The RCD is an accredited member of IL Canada

## Invisible Illness Awareness Week September 10-16, 2012

This September, RCD is joining hands with people who have an invisible illness/disability to spread the awareness of invisible illness issues, ranging from why they hate hearing "you look so good!" to confrontations

arising from using the parking permits for people with disabilities. Who would guess the spectrum of invisible illnesses to be so huge, and with a long lasting impact on people?

When I see the quote "My illness is invisible. I am anything but", I know that we have to be a part of this. Too many times we are No SEE, NO HEAR, NO SPEAK because invisible illness is a hidden, chronic illness which is not apparent to the outside world. We do not know because we do not want to know, or we do not care to know. The invisibility means isolation, frustration and ultimately there is no winner, because the majority of people are unfamiliar with invisible illness & rarely comprehend the physical, emotional and social implications that come with the



condition. The goal of hosting a week-long awareness event from September 10 to 14, 2012 is "To Be Visible".

Absolutely right, we need to be visible and bring awareness

to people who have these conditions, their families, service providers and the community. There are self care and self help educational activities, fun things to do together for relaxation and distraction therapy, as well as sharing and networking opportunities. There will be exciting events like "We are Visible Parking Lot Party" and "We are Visible after Dark Entertainment". Every day in that week the RCD will feature wellness activities, enrichment presentations, learning at lunch, "take-a-breath & really enjoy it" stress reduction activities, also networking and mini open house.

We hope that you will join us for a fun-filled week, participate in activities, and support our initiative. Being here is important because **YOU CAN BE VISIBLE TOO!**

**"My illness is invisible. I am anything but."**

## From a Person with an Invisible Illness.....

Someone not visible



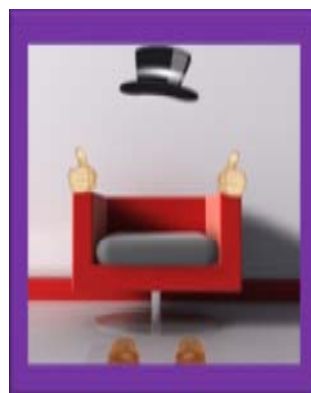
"I have seasonal affliction depression, so I get depressed every single year. The longer I go without sunlight, the harder it gets; so December/January is nearly unbearable. I haven't told my parents about it, and most people don't know except for my closest friends. I'm not open with it because I don't want people to worry about me, or show pity. If they worry, then it makes me feel even sadder. And as for pity, I can't really say why this is but I can't stand receiving it.

I'm thinking of becoming more open about it; I have some idea that it would make me stronger about dealing with what I have... It's lonesome, that's for sure. And I suppose others would be able to resonate with it; so that would be pretty neat to let people know that they aren't alone with any internal battle like depression, anxiety, etc. But on the other hand... would I come off as someone who is looking for pity? A little ironic, seeing as I can't stand people giving me pity in the first place..."

## What is an Invisible Illness?

Chronic pain and many other chronic health conditions are rarely visible to other. There were 4.8 million Canadians, i.e. 1 in 7 people, have identified in the 2007 Census having some form of disability. However most of these people (about 3/4) do not need assistive devices or give any signs of having a disability or an illness. In fact "INVISIBLE" is common in people with disabilities. Usually assistive devices, body appearance and behaviour tell others you are ill or have a disability. Devices include canes, wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, braces; most of these are used as mobility aids. Body appearance can be associated with skin colour, deformities and scarring. Behaviour includes limping or other changes in gait, posture, groaning sound, or facial expressions of pain or tension.

The list of invisible conditions is long – arthritis, asthma, brain injury, chronic fatigue syndrome, chronic pain of most types, Cushing's syndrome, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, endometriosis, heart disease, irritable bowel disorder, lupus, Lyme disease, Meniere's disease, migraine, multiple sclerosis in the early stages, neurological and seizure disorders, osteoporosis, organ transplant and Parkinson's disease.



In addition, not only the condition, but also the associated problems may be invisible to others. For instance, strangers may not realize that an activity might have a big impact on symptoms which are not fully seen until later; the consequence after over-doing an activity might be a crash that follows shortly.

Moreover, the effects on family life, sleep and the mental state of the individual are usually a private matter. In most cases the immediate symptoms are just the start, and many people easily under-estimate what they are really experiencing and coping with. All these contribute to the reason why assumptions are made; while misunderstanding blocks communication, and hinders awareness. This extra emotional turmoil may further aggravate the illness.

## RCD Embraces Invisible Illness Awareness Week

Dave Thomson

*Many people with **INVISIBLE ILLNESS** go through significant isolation. This isolation often happens over a very short period of time and can be very detrimental to the management of their illness.*

The RCD has been in support of self-empowerment and finding unique solutions for the disability community of Richmond and beyond for over 26 years. One of our key goals is to always strive to keep our services relevant to all those with disabilities in our community. There has been an increased request for support from those with conditions such

96% of illnesses are **INVISIBLE**  
People do understand... we just don't know who

as depression, fibromyalgia, bipolar disorder, lupus and chronic pain. We would like to respond to this need by proudly presenting a new initiative in support of the **Invisible Illness Awareness Week in September**. From **September 10-14, 2012**, the RCD will be hosting a week-long event comprising of a series of activities to heighten awareness to invisible illness/disability, and to highlight

the significance of empowerment, education and distraction therapy in a positive, relaxed and supportive environment. Invisible illnesses are not well known and receive minimum support. They are very real and debilitating conditions that usually last a lifetime. The term "Invisible Illness" is a fairly new term that describes those conditions that at first may not be evident to the general public. It encompasses most chronic pain disorders, diabetes, lupus and most mental health conditions.

If you would like more information about this event and about resources for invisible illness, contact Dave at 604-232-2404 or email [dave@rcdrichmond.org](mailto:dave@rcdrichmond.org).

## Coping with an Invisible Condition

Most people's understanding of illness is based mostly on acute conditions. We understand a cold or a broken leg. Moreover the sick and healthy roles are well understood, and most of us think that people are either sick or healthy. Sick people complain, look ill, and remain inactive while they recover, which is usually within a few days or weeks. However how much do we know of someone with a chronic condition that is not totally disabling? Someone who can go for walks and do some errands, but has limited capacity? Someone who appears to function normally, but not sustainably?

The hardest part to deal with invisible illness is not being sick; it is the suspicion and lack of understanding about the disability. Some people

would judge the situation as lazy, exaggerating, or accusation of faking to get attention; some might expect too much or over estimating one's ability. Dealing with people's misunderstanding, judgment and assumptions is painful; having to justify one's lack of productivity is an extra stress on top of having the actual condition.

If you have a chronic, invisible condition, you have an important job: to look after yourself as well as possible. Do not let your illness become the focus of your life and take away more and more of the quality of what you have left. It is sometimes a dilemma whether to make a point of "showing" your illness. You want to appear "normal"; you also want people to

recognize and understand your conditions. To a degree, it is a personal choice – consider the consequences of each option and the long term outcome.

Here are some useful hints:

- ▶ Get involved with a support group, include your family or friends if necessary
- ▶ Learn more about the condition and educate those around you
- ▶ Decide whose opinion of you is important to you
- ▶ Do not allow yourself to limit your activity by your fear of other's opinion
- ▶ Increase the awareness to invisible illness; do not be afraid to talk about it

# RCD



## RCD Annual Fundraising Gala

The RCD will be hosting our Annual Fundraising Gala on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the River Rock Casino Resort. We enjoyed a spectacular event last year, and to continue the high profile of this annual endeavour, our theme this time is "Viva Las Vegas – A Tribute to Elvis".

Viva Las Vegas was a 1964 American romantic musical movie starring music icon Elvis Presley; this film is regarded by fans and by film critics as one of Elvis' best movies. RCD is bringing the phenomenon to Richmond and "Elvis" is giving a hand with the fundraising event. Darren Lee, an Edmonton born Canadian, will appear at the Gala and give a highly acclaimed performance as a Tribute Artist of Elvis. Darren was the first Canadian rated as the No.1 Elvis Tribute Artist in the World in Memphis, on August 16, 1997 on the



very day of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Elvis' death. Find out more about Darren Lee on his website at [www.Darren-Lee.com](http://www.Darren-Lee.com).

Ticket for the 2012 RCD Fundraising Gala will be available for purchase in August; tickets are priced at \$88 each with a \$20 tax deductible portion.

We also welcome donations for the event, and ticket sponsors for our volunteers and members. Your support, either through direct participation in the Gala, or through a donation in support of our fundraising goal, will be greatly appreciated. The RCD needs to raise \$50,000 over the next few months to ensure that the Centre is able to handle anticipated funding challenges later this year. All donations will be eligible for a tax receipt.



# ACTIVITIES

## RCD September Activity Schedule

Many RCD members, after a long and warm summer, will be looking forward to the Fall commencement of different activities. This year as the RCD is preparing for the Invisible Illness Awareness Week from September 10-14; all the Centre activities will start the week of September 17. Registration for most activities starting in September will begin in August. Contact the staff in charge for more details.

Richmond Centre for Disability  
[www.rcdrichmond.org](http://www.rcdrichmond.org)  
 100-5671 No. 3 Road, Richmond  
 604-232-2404

- Computer Classes      September 17 to December 7, weekly class or 2-week Express Class
- English Classes        September 17 to November 28, Monday and Wednesday afternoons
- Life Skills Training     September 21 to November 23, Fridays 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Guitar Class             September 24 to November 19, Mondays 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Music in Motion         September 25 to November 27, Tuesdays 2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.
- Creative Arts Club      September 17 to November 19, Mondays 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### On-going Recreational Activities:

- Yarn Craft Club            Every Monday morning 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$2 material fee
- Games Club                Every Tuesday afternoon 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. FREE drop in
- Martial Arts & Self Defence Every Wednesday morning 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. \$80 for 10 sessions
- Singing Club                Every Thursday morning 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. FREE drop in
- Table Tennis                Every Thursday 12 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. FREE drop in
- Social Group                Every Thursday 1:45 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. FREE drop in
- Fun Exercise Club         Every Friday 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. \$5 monthly pass
- Friday Frenzy (Chinese)    Every Friday 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. \$2 material fee, register for wait list first



## 2012 RCD Canadian Open Wheelchair Bonspiel

From November 7 to 10, 2012 the RCD will be hosting its annual wheelchair curling tournament; it is doubly exciting this year because we have a new title to the event – Canadian Open Wheelchair Bonspiel. Wheelchair curling athletes are exemplary role models who demonstrate passion and commitment to live an independent and meaningful life. In 2010, Canada won the Paralympics Wheelchair Curling gold medal. In 2011 Canada won the World Wheelchair Curling Championship, as well as the 2011 RCD Annual Bonspiel.



2011 Champion – Canada Team



For 2012, the new title exhibits the determination of RCD to make this event nationally and internationally acclaimed. We hope to attract quality competitors worldwide and bring the global stage to Richmond in November. We shall keep you posted for more information.

## Summer Camp 2012 RCD Summer Camp for Children with Special Needs

2012 will be the 12<sup>th</sup> year RCD is hosting a specialized summer camp for children with special needs. We adopt a new format for this year's Summer Camp – AM Camp and PM Camp to suit the different schedule of campers, plus a weekly combined field trip where both camps will join together. In addition we are providing one-on-one support to campers to ensure their safety, being included to participate in different activities and to develop social and communication skills.

The themes this year are Sports and Arts. We have planned various sports activities such as Martial Arts, basketballs, soccer and more. Field trip destinations include Aquarium, Science World, Burnaby Village Museum and Carousel, Queen's Park, Bowling and Movie. Call Tom at RCD at 604-232-2404 for more details and registration!



**July 28, 2012, Saturday  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at RCD**

## RCD Annual Garage Sale

The annual garage sale is hosted by the RCD Chinese Support Group, raising funds for their activities and events.

We welcome donation for the garage sale. Please drop off your donated items to the RCD on July 27, Friday, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. No early bird please!

We want clothing, household items, kitchen utensils, small electrical appliances (working). We do not take furniture, computer, computer accessories, video tapes and damaged items. For more info, please contact Kathie at 604-232-2404.

# Invisible Illness Awareness Week Activity Schedule

## Who should come to RCD's Invisible Illness Awareness Week?

- ▶ *Individuals with chronic, hidden illness*
- ▶ *Family and friends of people living with an invisible illness*
- ▶ *Individuals following career paths associated with invisible illness: medicine, nursing, kinesiology, psychology, sociology, etc.*
- ▶ *Community members who want to learn more*

All activities are subjected to change or modification at RCD's discretion.

| ACTIVITIES  | MONDAY<br>Sept 10                   | TUESDAY<br>Sept 11              | WEDNESDAY<br>Sept 12                | THURSDAY<br>Sept 13                        | FRIDAY<br>Sept 14                           |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| 10 a.m. WAKE UP FOR HEALTH EXERCISES                                    | Stretching Exercises                | Stretching Exercises            | Stretching Exercises                | Stretching Exercises                       | Stretching Exercises                        |
| 11 a.m. WELLNESS ACITIVITY  | Laughter Yoga                       | Qi-Gong Introduction            | Medical Qi-Gong Basics              | Chair Tai Chi                              | Laughter Yoga                               |
| 12:30 p.m. LEARNING @ LUNCH   | Rieki Energy Healing Technique      | Richmond Muscle & Tendon Clinic | Arthritis 101                       | Living Well with Chronic Health Conditions | On the Horizon: New Research on Pain Relief |
| 1:30 p.m. ENRICHMENT PRESENTATION                                       | Daily Eating & Diet                 | 9 Lives Adventures              | Gadget Hour                         | Emotional Freedom Technique                | Resources for Career Development            |
| 2:30 p.m. "TAKE A BREATH & REALLY ENJOY IT" STRESS REDUCTION ACTIVITIES | Guided Imagery & Breathing Practice | Breathing Relaxation            | Guided Imagery & Breathing Practice | Affirmations & Positive Thoughts           | Guided Imagery & Breathing Practice         |
| 3:30 p.m.   | Networking & RCD Mini Open House    |                                 |                                     |  |   |

## "We Are Visible" Parking Lot Party

September 11, Tuesday  
12 – 2 p.m. at RCD

- BBQ
- Music Performance
- Launch of RCD Promo Video

## "We Are Visible" at Ceili's Irish Pub

September 12, Wednesday  
5 – 7 p.m. at RCD

- "Before the Show" Pub Night
- Fundraising Hamburger Meal
- Special Combo offer with show

## "We Are Visible Even After Dark" Show

September 12, Wednesday  
7 – 9 p.m. at Richmond General Hospital Auditorium

- An evening of distraction through positive messages & inspiring performing arts

**Stay tuned for event updates and ticket sales!**

# Community

Are you interested in sharing your experiences and expertise with UBC health professional students? The Division of Health Care Communication at UBC is currently looking for individuals living with a chronic condition or disability, or caregivers who provide care for a loved one with a chronic condition or disability, to become health mentors. Health mentors are volunteers who meet with a group of 4 health professional students over 16 months (Sept. 2012 - Dec. 2013), and share their experiences with the healthcare system and what it means to live with a chronic condition or disability.

**For more information and to apply to the program, please contact:**  
Cathy Kline, Program Coordinator

## UBC HEALTH MENTORS PROGRAM

**Do you have a chronic condition or disability or care for someone who does?**

**Share your experiences with students.....**

**Helping students in the health & human services to learn from your health experiences.**

Participating student programs include: dentistry, dietetics, medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy, and social work. By becoming a health mentor, you will: contribute to the education of the health professionals of tomorrow, be a pioneer in this exciting new program, meet students and other health mentors, and help others to understand what it is like to live with your condition.

Tel: (604) 822-8002 | Email: [cckline@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:cckline@mail.ubc.ca) | Website: [www.chd.ubc.ca/dhcc/healthmentors](http://www.chd.ubc.ca/dhcc/healthmentors)

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Disability**

We love feedback!  
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**Fax** 604-232-2415  
**E-mail**  
[rcd@rcdrichmond.org](mailto:rcd@rcdrichmond.org)

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## Richmond Centre for Disability

### City of Richmond Liaisons

Council Liaison Councillor: Bill McNulty  
Staff Liaison: Alan Hill

### RCD Board of Directors

Chairperson ..... Vince Miele  
Vice-chair ..... Tom Parker  
Treasurer..... Wai Lung  
Corr. Secretary ... Frances Clark  
Rec. Secretary.... Angela Gauld  
Director ..... Alvin Ip  
Director ..... David Hung  
Director ..... Elaine Gee  
Director ..... Jenny Wong  
Director ..... Shirley Liang

### RCD Staff Team

**Management:**

Ella Huang      Eileen Kalshoven  
Kathy Butler   Tom Tang   Viet Vu

**Staff:**

Cecile Mulkens (Maternity Leave)  
Dave Thomson   Dina McInnes  
Ian Yeung      Kathie Shih  
Kaye Han      Louise Gaudry  
Rich Green      Shabbi Khan

**CAP & Office Interns:**

Argon Dai      Edmark Lim  
Shelton Tsang   Vanessa Mendoza

**On Call Staff Members:**

Bob Ayers      Ravinder Dhillon

**Regular Volunteer:** Jacqueline Roy