

ParaSCOPE

Saskatchewan's Newsletter for People with Spinal Cord Injuries and Other Physical Disabilities

Spring 2016

'Mi nah give up'

I thought my accident and resulting disability would be the end of my life as a musician. Boy, was I wrong. — by Jim Balfour

When I was 17 years old, I was in a motor vehicle accident. I lost one leg above the knee and suffered severe trauma to my other leg.

At the time, I played the drums but assumed that my days of playing were over. Many years later, I found that I could connect my artificial foot to the bass drum pedal. At that point, I continued developing my technique with blues, reggae, jazz and rock. My sense of rhythm and music further developed, although I had difficulties playing uptempo songs because I couldn't move my prosthesis fast enough.

When I began to perform publicly, I went to jam sessions in the city and



looked for other musicians with similar musical interests and abilities. Finding people who I could develop musical chemistry with was a journey of trial and error. I relied on my love of music to overcome any moments of discouragement or self-doubt.

In 1996, through my involvement with Ness Creek Music Festival and a fellow amputee, I became a self-taught (via videos) conga,

bongo, and djembe performer and soon became a freelance percussionist, performing with a number of Saskatoon artists including Tim Vaughn, Oral Fuentes, and BC Read.

AGM Notice

Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan's Annual General Meeting will be held on June 10, 2016. See page 3 for details.

The heroes in my life include Terry Fox and Bob Marley for their passion and commitment to a cause. A phrase in Jamaican patois is "mi nah give up" (I'll never give up). My love of music—in particular, the music and message of Bob Marley—led to the development of a nine-piece Bob Marley tribute band, Natural Mistik.

The band had difficulty finding a vocalist who could emulate Bob Marley's style, and almost by accident, I became the lead singer. For seven years, the band performed at the Saskatchewan Jazz Fest, Fringe Fest, local clubs and weddings.

I've also been the front man with two different blues bands, and performed with a folk band for over a year, but my

— continued on page 5

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United Way



Message from the Executive Director

Thank you United Way

"When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed."

— Maya Angelou

In recent months, it's been my pleasure and privilege to attend events which have highlighted the generosity and caring of our friends and neighbors in Saskatchewan.

These events were held to recognize the many donors and supporters of the United Way. The United Way Saskatoon and Area, the United Way Estevan, and the Weyburn and District United Way all continue to support Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan's programs and services with financial contributions. These contributions are helping us to continue to

provide our peer programs, group peer activities, information support services and service coordination.

As I sat amongst the volunteers, donors, and representatives from other supported agencies who also attended these events, I experienced an immense feeling of gratitude to those who cheerfully give financially to support programs and services which help their neighbors, friends and community members. We are blessed indeed.

Our commitment in response must be to ensure that we are reaching out to find those individuals

in need of our services, that we are available and accessible, that community agencies and professionals are aware of our services, and that we work harder to engage. This we can do!

In closing, it is with humble gratitude that I say, "Thank You" to the many contributors to the United Way campaigns who continue to support those with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities in our province.

— Lyn Brown
Executive Director

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc.

Formerly Canadian Paraplegic Association (Saskatchewan) Inc.

Friday, June 10, 2016, at the Canadian National Institute For The Blind (CNIB) Auditorium, 1705 McKercher Drive, Saskatoon

11:30 AM Social time
12:00 PM Appreciation Luncheon
12:50 PM Guest speaker: Kirstin Gowda, SCI SK Member
1:30 - 2:15 PM Annual General Meeting

Everyone is welcome to attend. If you are planning to attend, please call Joyce, Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Saskatoon Office, 306-652-9644 ext. 1 (voice mail available for messages) or email junger@canparaplegic.org by Monday, June 6, 2016.

Please advise of any dietary restrictions.

A copy of the audited financial statements of the organization is available after June 10, 2016 at no charge by contacting our Saskatoon office—Phone: (306) 652-9644 or Toll-free: 1-888-282-0186, or email saskatoon@canparaplegic.org

SLATE OF BOARD NOMINEES FOR THE 2016/17 FISCAL YEAR

Will Let Name Stand For an Additional Term of Two Years
Monique Beauregard, Leo Roth*

Remaining One-Year Term

Lynn Archdekin*, Lana George*, Jacqueline Kraushaar, Bill Lehne*

*Person with a disability

Notebook

SCI Able Artists Club

Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan, in partnership with Sherbrooke Community Centre, is excited to introduce a new peer group activity for individuals who have creative and artistic interests. If you're a painter, sculptor, illustrator, writer, poet, musician, photographer, film maker or dancer, or you just have an interest in the arts and would like to try something new, we'd like to hear from you! We have the use of the Sherbrooke Community Centre's amazing accessible art studio if it's needed.

If you're interested in participating as an artist or volunteer, contact Colin Farnan at SCI Saskatchewan—call (306) 652-9644 ext. 3 or email cfarnan@canparaplegic.org.

New Staff Member

Dwayne Main is SCI Saskatchewan's new Finance Manager (working out of the Saskatoon office). Dwayne's career in finance and administration has spanned more than two decades, and includes several years in the non-profit sector. Dwayne earned a BA (Economics) from the University of Saskatchewan, and his combination of education and experience will be a great asset to our organization.

"Since starting my position in February, I have met and talked with many of our wonderful members," says Dwayne. "I look forward to meeting many more."

Dwayne can be reached at (306) 652-9644 ext. 4 or by email at dwaynemain@sci-sk.ca.



Volunteers Wanted!

We're in need of community-minded people to help with our programs and activities. Volunteers are needed in a variety of areas, including assisting with peer events and group activities, sitting on committees, working in our offices, and helping out during events such as Chair Leader and Wheelchair Relay. Call us today to find out more.

Women's Circle

The Women's Circle is a monthly gathering for women with spinal cord injuries and other mobility disabilities. They are informal gatherings, held at different inclusive locations throughout Saskatoon. Some months we meet for coffee; some months for supper—majority decision rules. Topics are whatever pops up, and discussions vary from parenting to pressure sores, and recipes to recurrent urinary tract infections. No matter where the conversation goes, it's always an informative and supportive experience.

When asked about the most beneficial aspects of participating in this program, one of our participants summed it up nicely: "Talking and connecting with other women with disabilities—other females and moms don't have the same hurdles. Sharing ideas and problem solving. Friendship!"

To get involved, contact Delynn Bortis at (306) 652-9644 ext. 7, or email dbortis@canparaplegic.org.

Aboriginal Program/Me tso Win

Our Me tso win gatherings are held once a month. We either plan a meal in, or an outing in the community. The gatherings have a First Nations perspective and include the presence of an Elder. If you would like more information or want to attend, please contact Kelly Palmer at (306) 652-9644 ext.5 or email kpalmers@canparaplegic.org.

Soup, Bannock & Barbecue

A Soup and Bannock Gathering was held March 10th in Regina. Thank you to all who attended! Another gathering will take place on June 15, 2016 at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre in recognition of Saskatchewan First Nation's Disability Awareness Day. If you would like more details, please contact Lyndley at ldiacon@canparaplegic.org or (306) 584-0101 ext. 3. Hope to see you there!

Just a few days later, we'll be combining our Regina summer BBQ with a celebration in honour of National Aboriginal Day. It's scheduled for Saturday, June 18, from 2:30 PM to 5:00 PM, at the Core Ritchie Neighbourhood Centre located at 445 14th Avenue. Admission is free and the event is open to all. The afternoon will feature delicious food, performances and a craft table. Pre-registration is required to ensure we have enough food for everyone to enjoy. Register by June 13th by contacting Lyndley at ldiacon@canparaplegic.org or (306) 584-0101 ext. 3.

Saskatoon's 3rd Annual BBQ

Save the date! Our annual BBQ will be tentatively held on August 13, 2016 (weather permitting) from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM. More details will be posted on the Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan website (www.spinalcordinjurysask.ca).

Entrepreneurs Wanted

Are you an entrepreneur? Do you own a business? Do you have an idea for your own business? We'd like to hear from you! Please call Colin at (306) 652-9644 ext. 3. or email cfarnan@canparaplegic.org.

Thank you, Dakota Dunes!

Thank you to Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation for their funding support for the SCI Saskatchewan Aboriginal Services Program in the Saskatoon area.



“Mi nah give up” – continued from page 1

primary musical connection is with reggae.

In 2009, I visited Negril, Jamaica for a month. Since that first visit, I have returned annually to immerse myself in Jamaican culture and music. I perform at a number of venues, and have earned the nickname Whitebob, Jimbob or Bob Marley from local residents and tourists. For the last two years, I have been recording in Jamaica and laid the foundation for the recently released EP *Jim Balfour in Jamaica* (for details, see jimbalfour.com and Facebook, or search online for Jim Balfour musician/band).

This summer, several musicians from Jamaica are joining me for a six-week tour and recording sessions in Saskatchewan, beginning with the Saskatchewan Jazz Festival. Watch for Jim Balfour and the Hygh Wave Jamaicans.

I've also been able to assist Jamaican friends whose family members have lost limbs by taking used prosthesis parts to Jamaica with the help of my prosthetist.

Of course, music, is only part of my life. For more than 30 years, I've been a politically-minded social worker and activist. About a decade ago, over a period of three years and with contributions from many of Saskatoon's finest musicians, I developed and coordinated an annual event called Musicians for Peace, held on September 21, the International Day of Peace.

For many years, I was an active member of the City of Saskatoon's Race Relations and Cultural Diversity Committee. I believe in doing what I can to make Saskatoon a stronger city by working to empower the most marginalized people in the city.

Reg Banga/SCI Saskatchewan Scholarship

The Reg Banga/Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Scholarship provides financial assistance for the training and education of SCI Saskatchewan members with a spinal cord injury or similar mobility impairment, for the purpose of encouraging self-reliance and independence. Anyone pursuing a certificate, diploma or degree course in a recognized educational institute in Saskatchewan that assists an individual in achieving their employment goals is eligible.

Applications for the 2016/2017 year with all necessary attachments are to be submitted to Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan not later than June 30, 2016. Any applications postmarked after this date will not be eligible.

For more information or for an application form, contact Colin Farnan at (306) 652-9644 ext. 3, or email cfarnan@canparaplegic.org. The application form is also available on our web site (www.spinalcordinjurysask.ca).

Completed applications should be sent to: Colin Farnan, Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan, 311 – 38th Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7K 0T1.



I've participated in sports with many people with disabilities and find the main trait we all have in common is focusing on the things we can do, and not on the things we can't do. I find it to be the same in performing with other musicians. It's essential to listen to what the other musician is doing to create music together, and a positive energy is the driving force. I will always be grateful to anyone with whom I have shared a basketball court or stage, as I have learned so much from other people.

I think of myself as a musician who also has a disability. Thankfully, my congas provide some stability for me on stage—I have to dance with the music, but I haven't had any major falls.

I plan to retire this June from my position as a supervisor with the Ministry of Social Services to devote more time to family (spouse Angela, step-children Katrina and Christopher, daughter Regan (Yann), grandson Roman, and son Aaron) and more time to music. I'm planning an event with the Jamaican musicians for late July to celebrate both the end of the music tour and retirement.

My local band is called Jim Balfour and the Outer Rings, and I will kick start that band once the summer tour is completed.

I plan to record a song titled *Put it Out There*, which is all about finding your passion and pursuing it regardless of obstacles, and believing in yourself and your path ahead. I've found that, when one door closes in life, another one always opens. I just have to keep knocking—or drumming!

Ness Creek Music Festival July 14-17

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Chair-Leader 2016:

Sit down...and start leading!

Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan invites community leaders in Regina to take part in the Third Annual Chair-Leader “Enabling Access” event. Come out and spend a portion of the morning of June 1st in a wheelchair to champion the cause for greater inclusion in communities.

Chair-Leaders conduct day-to-day activities at work while swapping their desk chairs for wheelchairs. Picture yourself getting a coffee from the coffee pot on the counter, manoeuvring your way past people, or getting in and out of elevators.

Many Chair-Leaders have said it’s an incredible and rewarding learning experience.

“Spending time bound to a wheelchair makes you aware of how difficult things can be,” says 2015 Chair-Leader Jennifer Gelsinger, RE/MAX Crown Real Estate North. “Moving around, reaching for items, getting through doors, carrying items from one place to another—all are things that able-bodied people don’t think twice about, but when you’re in a wheelchair you have to plan and improvise.”

Not only was Gelsinger’s RE/MAX office up to the challenge of bringing accessibility in the workplace to the forefront, this organization supported our cause by raising the most funds in last year’s Chair-Leader event.

Change cannot be made without leaders. Do you have a Chair-Leader in your organization? To participate on June 1, contact Colleen Gnypp at the Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan office by phone at (306) 519-8464 or by e-mail at gnyppcomm@sasktel.net.

Update: Peer Program

SOUTH: Our spring Peer Program events were marked by popular topics and good conversation. In March, we held a spring social and games night, and in April we were treated to presentations from the Wind On My Wings adapted sailing club and the Tetra Society. In May, the topic was Individualized Funding from the perspective of a recipient of the service.

Just around the corner, on June 18, we’ll hold our Summer BBQ Celebration, in honour of National Aboriginal Day, at the Core Ritchie Neighbourhood Centre. See Barbecue information on page 4 for more details.

Please note that no events are planned for July or August.

For more information about upcoming peer events or to be added to the distribution list for peer event notifications, please contact Kristin Drummond at (306) 584-0101 ext. 2 or email kdrummond@canparaplegic.org.

NORTH: In Saskatoon, the peer information events are held from September to June, on the last Monday of the month, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM. We either have an informative speaker or organize a fun event.

In the last few months, we’ve made chocolates, learned about Access Transit, went bowling, held a scavenger hunt at the Western Development Museum, held a nutrition workshop, and much more.

If you would like more information, please contact Kelly at kpalmers@canparaplegic.org or call (306) 652-9644 ext. 5.

Wheelchair Relay 2016

Save the date! Our 17th Annual Wheelchair Relay will be held on September 24, 2016 at the Henk Ruys Soccer Center in Saskatoon. We’re looking forward to some exciting competition, and would love to see even more teams involved.

The relay is open to everybody age 12 and up, and includes persons with and without mobility disabilities. For those under 12, come out to the relay and take part in the always exciting Children’s Race. Lunch is provided, and there’s a children’s entertainment area.

Come out, help us raise some funds, and have a great time! We supply the chairs, you supply the fun!

For more information, or to register a team, contact Delynn Bortis at (306) 652-9644 ext. 7, or email dbortis@canparaplegic.org.



You can make a difference.

Your donations continue to help us provide services that matter to individuals and families facing the challenges of spinal cord injury or other physical disabilities.

The following testimonial is from one of our peer group participants: "Such a wonderful feeling to be around other moms who encounter similar hardships and triumph. Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan's Women's Circle is extremely valuable! Not only has it given me the opportunity to meet and connect with other moms who have disabilities, but it's also helped me to gain more confidence in myself as a woman, wife and mother. I look forward to our times together and it's a great chance to be able to just be myself without any barriers whatsoever and it's a safe environment where I feel completely comfortable."

Our Women's Circle is just one of the many valuable programs and services that we offer throughout our province. Please consider making a donation and help us to continue our mission to assist persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence, self-reliance and full community participation.

DONATION FORM

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Credit Card Information <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard Name on Card _____ Card Number _____ Expiry ____/____(YY/MM) Signature _____	Donor Information for Tax Receipt First Name _____ Last Name _____ Address _____ City _____ Prov _____ Postal Code _____ Phone _____ Email _____
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Signature of Account Holder

Date

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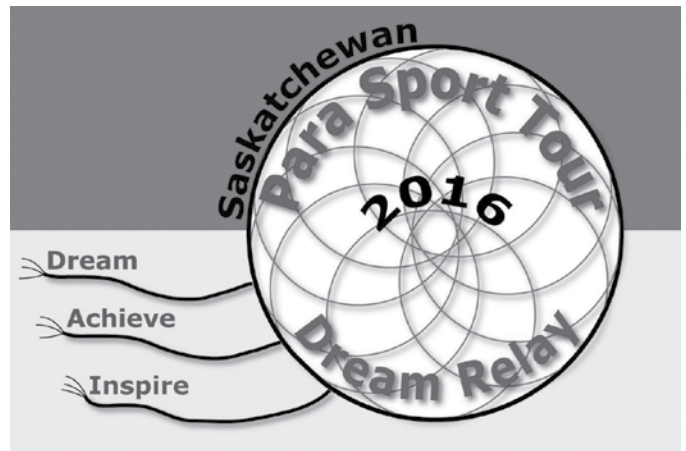
Showcasing Para-Sport

This June, please support the Saskatchewan Para-Sport Tour Dream Relay, which will travel some 360 kilometres from Prince Albert to Regina.

The Saskatchewan Para-Sport Tour Dream Relay, organized by SASKI Skiing for Disabled, is all about raising awareness of Para-sports and giving people with disabilities province-wide the opportunity to get involved. The goal is to encourage more persons with a disability to lead an active lifestyle and enjoy the benefits of sport and fitness.

The relay will run from June 8th to June 17th, from Prince Albert to Regina, with visits to eight other communities along the way. An RV loaded with Para-athletes and volunteers will be stopping in these communities to offer:

- information about Para-sports with the goal to create awareness & recruit youth
- information about how you can get involved in a Para-sport you may be interested in
- an opportunity to meet athletes and ordinary participants with physical/sensory challenges
- a chance to view a showcase of Paralympic medals from Barcelona, Atlanta, Nagano, Torino, Vancouver, etc.
- fundraising for your organization to promote Para-sport
- a celebration of past, present, and future Paralympians from Saskatchewan.



During the tour, Saskatchewan Wheelchair Sport Association will be holding "Just Try It" sessions in communities along the route to showcase various summer/winter para sports. See page 14 for more details.

Media are invited to participate—along the route, at the parades in the bigger cities, or the Just-Try-It sessions.

For more information and a full schedule:

- visit www.parasporttourdreamrelay.com
- contact SASKI-Skiing for Disabled (email prokr@sasktel.net or cbourgonje@hotmail.com)
- phone (306) 374-7745 or (306) 221-5798.



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A Collective Voice

The Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities Inc., or SVOPD, is a community-based provincial organization that assists with concerns affecting the lives of people with disabilities and actively promotes full participation in society across Saskatchewan. SVOPD strives for improvements in areas such as accessibility, education, employment, housing, transportation, income security and support services. SVOPD also supports Saskatchewan residents with disabilities with social policy research and consultation, public education programs and referral services.

We offer information and support for individuals, other agencies and governments; along with health and wellness programs for youth. We've also been quite successful in and lobbying for change for people with disabilities by:

- raising awareness for barrier-free areas such as accessibility, education, employment, housing, transportation, income security and support services
- supporting Saskatchewan residents with disabilities with social policy research and consultation, public education programs, information and referral services
- fostering the personal involvement of people with disabilities in the removal of personal and physical barriers to full and equal participation in the community
- connecting with First Nations people with disabilities to improve access to service and quality of life, both on and off the reserve
- collaborating with other groups to submit disability issues to federal government parliamentary committees and task forces
- designing and supporting income support programs, educational and training strategies along with the provincial government and other agencies
- ensuring inclusion of persons with disabilities under the Saskatchewan Human Rights Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- navigating "systems" for individuals and families (commonly known as advocacy).

Advocacy involves fielding hundreds of inquiries about Saskatchewan's disability-related issues, programs and services. We do our best to respond and refer individuals to the appropriate organization or government department.

Depending on specific situations, we can provide assistance with:

- filling out disability-related forms
- helping people prepare for government program appeals
- providing information about disability services and programs.

If you need more information, please call our provincial office at (306) 569-3111 or visit our website (www.saskvoice.com).

Community Garden Update

Hey gardeners! We're looking for a team to help in our accessible garden in Saskatoon, which is located at 3144 Arlington Drive behind the John Dolan School. We're looking for individuals to join together as a group of enthusiastic gardeners. Imagine the delicious healthy harvest! If you're interested, contact the Saskatoon SCI Saskatchewan office at (306) 652-9644 ext. 3.

By the way, we're currently working on developing an accessible garden in Regina. We'll keep you posted on progress in future issues.



Community Kitchen Program

Our Community Kitchen program, offered in partnership with REACH and Huston Heights Apartments, is a peer group activity opportunity for individuals to get together in an accessible environment and cook a healthy and affordable meal—and meet new friends in the process.

The program includes an educational component, allowing participants to learn about a variety of topics such as nutrition and budgeting.

The program is free of charge and open to individuals within the mandate of Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan. The program is offered in three-month modules on the first Thursday of each month (unless otherwise stated). We're now accepting registration for our fall sessions.

Please note that space is limited, so pre-registration is required. Registration deadline is August 18, 2016. If the program is full, your name will go onto a waiting list. Please note that, when participants sign up for the program, they're agreeing to participate in three consecutive sessions (the length of one module). We'll try to provide time at the end of each session for participants to eat what's been prepared, but this can't be guaranteed. If possible, please have a light snack before coming to each program.

For more information or to register, please contact Kristin Drummond at (306) 584-0101 ext. 2 or email kdrummond@canparaplegic.org.

Quick Change Artist

Since 2011, Luke Anderson and his StopGap Foundation have created instant access at hundreds of small Toronto storefronts—and generated a whole lot of awareness in the process.

Sometimes, all it takes to create wholesale change is one pissed off, determined person. Case in point: Luke Anderson, a 36-year-old engineer from Toronto who is creating access to small downtown businesses and facilities, one simple, brightly-coloured ramp at a time.

Anderson grew up in Stouffville, just outside of Toronto. After high school, he headed to nearby Waterloo University, where he enrolled in the civil engineering program. But when he graduated in 2002, the self-admitted adrenaline junkie put his engineering career on hold and moved to Rossland, BC—a Mecca for outdoor adventure enthusiasts—to pursue his passion for mountain biking.

Months later, his life changed forever when he attempted a huge eight meter jump and came up short on the landing. The result was a high level, complete SCI. After a stint in acute care, it made sense for Anderson to rehab at Toronto's Lyndhurst Centre, where he had family close by.

"I'm not going to downplay the fact that it was a long road to recovery—I'm still learning how to live in this world that's not well-suited for someone with a disability," he says. "The first four years after my injury, there were some dark times and some lessons learned. I'm glad they're behind me."

After he regained his health and made some sense of his life with SCI, he contemplated work. In 2005, he took his first career steps, and began working from home as an engineer-in-training for a small structural firm. Then, in 2006, he was hired at a larger firm, located in downtown Toronto.

A natural problem solver, Anderson enjoyed the work. But a constant source of aggravation greeted him every morning when he arrived at the downtown office building that housed the firm: three steps at the sidewalk entrance. Every morning and evening, Anderson relied on

friend and co-worker Michael Hopkins to deploy a portable—yet heavy and awkward—folding ramp so that he could enter and exit.

He also enjoyed living in quirky and colourful downtown Toronto, with its variety of ethnic neighbourhoods and vibrant street scene. But just as he was frustrated with lack of access to his workplace, he became increasingly disenchanted with many of the area's smaller shops and restaurants, rendered off limits to him and other wheelchair users by virtue of just one or two stairs at the entrance.

"I became increasingly frustrated with not being able to access the spaces that I really wanted to," says Anderson. "I realized it wasn't just me that was being affected; it was also all of my friends that I wanted to go out with or check out a clothing store with, or other retail locations. All of a sudden, we are all unable to participate in that experience. I coupled that with the stupid situation that I dealt with for almost five years at work—this ramp that had to be put in place every time I wanted to come and go. All of those issues boiled over."

As he contemplated some kind of action, he noticed that when the portable ramp to his own workplace was deployed on the sidewalk, many other people wanted to use it—for



example, parents with strollers and delivery people.

“Everything sort of confirmed that something needed to be done,” he says. “And I also realized that nothing was being done about the awareness of the problem. This is a problem that’s worldwide. And this isn’t an issue that happens just here in Toronto—it happens all around the world and prevents so many people from engaging and taking part in everything that’s going on in their community and reaching their potential. Four years ago, all of that pent up frustration came to a boil, and I just wanted to get people thinking about the problem.”

In the fall of 2011, Anderson created the StopGap Foundation—a non-profit organization that he believed would allow him to take a stab at removing some barriers in downtown Toronto.

The foundation’s first order of business was establishing the Community Ramp Project—an initiative to address what Anderson believed was the most pressing and most easily-addressed accessibility problem in downtown

Toronto: small businesses and facilities that were excluding him and his fellow wheelchair users because they had one or two small steps at their entrances.

First, he asked himself, “Why?” The obvious answer was that, unlike other countries including the United States with its Americans with Disabilities Act, Canada has a glaring lack of legislation to mandate accessibility—businesses and facilities are only obligated to create equal access if they build new, or renovate. Anderson came to the conclusion that, in the absence of this type of legislation, lack of finances for code-compliant and permanent ramp solutions, along with a general lack of awareness, was holding small businesses and restaurants back from opening their doors to wheelchair users.

With a handful of committed volunteers including Hopkins, his friend from work, Anderson canvassed his neighbourhood businesses and found several were willing to start using a portable ramp. Then, with donations of building supplies from community

hardware stores, the Community Ramp Project constructed 13 simple, colourful, and relatively inexpensive portable wood ramps, which were donated to the willing local businesses.

He admits that, at the time, his expectations were modest. “I thought it might be just a little one-off project that we would do to raise some awareness,” he recalls. “I had no idea. It was so successful that we had to keep the project rolling.”

The ramps were an instant sensation. Other businesses started calling, wanting to get onboard. The media started to take an interest, and soon Anderson had to raise his expectations. A major reason for the widespread interest, he believes, was the ramps’ high visibility.

“When people think of barrier free access, they sometimes think, ‘Institutional, sterile, stainless,’” says Anderson. “So the bright colours are strategic—they draw people’s attention; it gets people talking about the issue. But it also creates this kind of playful vibrancy that is key to removing the stigma attached to the concept of barrier free. There’s a real need to incorporate some fun when you’re tackling a really serious issue like accessibility. It’s a topic that comes with a lot of ignorance and fear, so crafting a positive tone has proven to give us better traction.”

As Anderson predicted, business owners soon found out the benefits of having a StopGap ramp extend well beyond providing access to customers with disabilities—they are also friendly for delivery people, the elderly, and people with strollers.

He is quick to concede that the ramps were intended to be a quick fix, and certainly not a perfect solution. They’re lightweight and temporary, and therefore not designed to the same standards as permanent ramps. They’re also often slightly steeper. But Anderson points out that, because they’re deployed when needed, they allow a business to avoid a lot of bureaucratic red tape. More importantly, they get owners

StopGap Debuts in Saskatchewan

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Saskatchewan and other community partners are bringing the StopGap Foundation Ramp Project to Saskatoon this spring and summer.

SCI Saskatchewan is excited to work with Luke and the StopGap Foundation to break down barriers to accessibility in Saskatoon. If you’re a business owner or know of a business that could benefit, or you would like to volunteer for this amazing project, contact Colin Farnan at (306) 652-9644 ext. 3 or email cfarnan@canparaplegic.org.

Good Access is Good Business!

Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan presents Good Access is Good Business—a new initiative that will assist us in establishing new and valuable business relationships.

As a business owner, knowing that your business is accessible just makes good business sense and may give you a competitive edge in growing your customer base. Accessible businesses can be listed in our *Accessible Business Directory*, which we will highlight as part of our new website coming in July of 2016.

If you’re a business owner or manager, please get in touch and ask us about accessibility consultations and the accessible business directory; lunch and learn presentations; and education on adaptive workplaces, employment subsidy and scholarships.

By maximizing our relationships within the business community, increasing awareness of SCI Saskatchewan programs and services, and building new partnerships, we continue to work collaboratively for inclusive communities.

To learn more, contact Rosanne Verhulst, Program Oversight Manager & Community Business Liaison, at (306) 584-0101 ext. 4 or email rverhulst@canparaplegic.org.

to recognize the business benefits of inclusiveness, and generate a buzz about accessibility in general within the community. And because they don't cost small businesses a small fortune or require applications, permits and the like, they continued to pop up throughout the downtown core at more and more businesses.

Over the course of the next four years, StopGap's profile and output continued to surge. Anderson quit his job as an engineer in February of 2015, becoming the foundation's fulltime director. He and his foundation became media darlings, which in turn fuelled more growth. By the end of 2015, more than 800 StopGap ramps had been built and put into service. The majority of these were in Toronto, but increasingly, individuals and groups from across Canada began approaching the foundation and, using a partnership approach, began initiatives in other cities and provinces.

Last year, in Ontario alone, projects took place in Guelph, Hamilton, Huron East, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Ottawa, Peterborough, Port Credit, Sarnia-Lambton, Streetsville, and Toronto. Meanwhile, in other provinces, Anderson and his foundation formed partnerships in Calgary, Charlottetown, Halifax, and Montréal.

"I encourage any group out there who would like to spearhead the project, with my support, to get in touch. I'm not going to lie; it doesn't happen overnight, and there's many moving parts—someone needs to engage business owners to participate, there needs to be a retail hardware store that's willing to help out with building materials, and there needs to be a community group or a team of volunteers to lead the project. But I can tell you that any person or group that's been part of the project has loved every minute of it. And a precedent has been set—there are many successes to emulate. Future projects will not be reinventing the wheel."

If you're inspired by StopGap, you can find a number of helpful tools to get started at www.stopgap.ca.

Muscular Dystrophy Canada

Muscular Dystrophy Canada is a national organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of those affected with neuromuscular disorders by providing ongoing support while relentlessly searching for a cure through well-funded research. We provide services to clients in Saskatchewan under five pillars:

- Information: research updates and individualized assistance.
- Support: connecting clients with their local chapter, community-based supports, family fun events and retreats.
- Education: workshops on nutrition, respiratory care and caregiver burnout; Muscle Facts, a school program about MD.
- Western Equipment Program offers registered clients a \$3,000 grant towards the purchase of mobility equipment.
- Advocacy: We engage in systemic and individual advocacy.

We would love to hear from you—please contact Danya Dziedzic, Services Coordinator Saskatchewan & Manitoba, at 1-800-366-8166 ext. 5401, or danya.dziedzic@muscle.ca.

Not surprisingly, Anderson and the StopGap Foundation have gradually built a reputation as experts in the ramp business—so much so that they began getting requests to commercially build more permanent custom installations for retail, residential, and institutional locations. That, in turn, has created a new revenue stream, which helps offset the cost of the ramps that they continue to donate or provide for a modest price to streetfront businesses.

What's next? Not surprisingly, Anderson's expectations are no longer so modest.

"We'd like to see the number of ramps we have out there double in the next year or so. It would be great to see about 1,500 to 2,000 ramps by this time next year. I think it's totally doable, but it will take a lot of work. The big vision, however, is to take this thing around the world—and take what we've learned here to the USA, and into Central America and other places where it's really needed. It's totally possible."

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Kick It Up with Power Soccer

Hey Saskatoon! Come out and try Powerchair Soccer in a non-competitive atmosphere. Each month we gather and kick the ball around. We'll be taking the game outside for the summer months, and you're invited to attend. Our schedule:

- Saskatoon Fieldhouse, Tuesday May 17, 2 - 4 PM
- Sherbrooke Community Centre (north side of garage), 401 Acadia Drive, Wednesdays, June 22, July 20, August 24, 2 - 4 PM

For more information, please contact Kelly Palmer at kpalm@canparaplegic.org or call (306) 652-9644 ext. 5.

In Regina, the schedule of dates and locations is currently being revised. For details, call Blake Lamontagne at (306) 584-0101 ext. 1 or email blamontagne@canparaplegic.org.



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SWSA Update

Para Sport Dream Relay Tour

From June 8 – 17, para-athletes from around the province will be wheeling along Highway 11 through 10 different communities for the 2016 Para Sport Dream Relay Tour. The goal is to create awareness of para-sport opportunities available throughout our province and to celebrate past, present, and future Paralympians.

Come out and meet local para sport athletes and see a showcase of past Paralympic medals from Barcelona, Atlanta, Nagano, Torino, and Vancouver!

For more details, see the full story on page 9. To find out how to participate and get involved, visit the relay website at www.parasportdreamrelay.com.

"Just Try It!" Days

To complement the Para Sport Dream Relay Tour, Saskatchewan Wheelchair Sports Association will be hosting para sport "Just Try It!" days in the following communities to allow individuals a fantastic opportunity to try a new activity or sport.

- Thursday, May 26: Yorkton, St Paul's School Gymnasium *pre-tour event*
- Tuesday, June 7: Prince Albert, Alfred Jenkins Field House *kickoff event*
- Thursday, June 9: Duck Lake, Stobart Community School
- Saturday, June 11: Saskatoon, Walter Murray Collegiate Gymnasium
- Tuesday, June 14: Swift Current, Swift Current Comprehensive High School Gymnasium
- Friday, June 17: Regina, venue TBD

All Para Sport "Just Try It!" sessions will take place from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM. Come out and try wheelchair athletics (track & field), wheelchair basketball, wheelchair tennis, sledge hockey, skiing, and much more!

For details, contact Chantal Gosselin, SWSA Provincial Bridging the Gap Coordinator, at chantal@swsa.ca or (306) 975-0824.

Para Sport Have-A-Go Day

Come and try adaptive sailing with us at Blackstrap Lake (Highway 11 to Highway 211 at Dundurn) on Saturday, June 25 and Sunday, June 26 at 10:00 AM.

Sailors will use a 2.4 metre sail boat. This boat is ideal for people with a physical disability as the sailor does not move in the boat. Both hand-steering and foot-steering are possible.

Please register by Thursday, June 23 by contacting Chantal Gosselin at chantal@swsa.ca or (306) 975-0824.

Hometown Heroes!



Congratulations to the Saskatchewan wheelchair curling team! Skip Darwin Bender and teammates Marie Wright, Larry Schrader, Moose Gibson and Gil Dash won the gold medal at the Canadian Wheelchair Curling Championships held in Regina, April 4 – 10, 2016. This was the first time the Championships were held in Saskatchewan. To have our own team win the event when it was held in our province for the first time was doubly sweet!

Swap & Shop

For Sale: Wheelchair accessible 2005 Dodge Grand Caravan, manual fold-out ramp and rear door, body in excellent shape, always kept in garage, history available, 116,500 kms, excellent condition, power locks and windows, air conditioning, automatic. \$10,900. Contact: (306) 569-0740.

If you are in need of a scooter (used 3-wheel ShopRider), contact the Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Regina Office at (306) 584-0101 ext. 5.

For Sale: Merit (Model P3261) power chair. Two new batteries/basket on the back, five years old (only used one year), new price \$3,700, asking \$1,800. Call Doug (306) 537-0905.

For Sale: Permobil power chair (Model M300), \$9,000 OBO. E-motion power assist wheels, \$2,000 OBO. Call or text (306) 281-7290.

For Sale: Pantera X manual wheelchair, \$8,000 OBO. Invacare Top End Excelsior-XLT handcycle, great for all cyclist levels, mountain drive hub, water bottle cage, \$2,000 OBO. Call or text (306) 281-7290

For Sale: Deluxe Bruno Scooter. Ideal for a larger person. Pneumatic tires, signal lights, hazard and headlights, adjustable steering column with rear view mirror, forward/reverse with high/low range and disengage lever, rotating seat with adjustable height, well-padded seat and back cushion with swing away armrests, horn, keyed ignition and a front storage basket, custom storage cover, new batteries, excellent shape, rarely used. Asking \$1,800 or best offer. Call Fern in Saskatoon at (306) 384-4290.

For Sale: 1999 Ford Econoline van, hand controls, tie downs, swing-out wheelchair lift with remote control, fully loaded, 132,000 kms. *Not available until last week in June. \$7,500 firm. Call (306) 382-9301.

Be advised that SCI Saskatchewan is not responsible for the transactions that occur through Swap and Shop. Consumers are advised to be aware of potential fraudulent activity and scams. Please take precautionary measures to ensure all transactions are legitimate. Use caution when conducting business through ads. Ensure sellers (or buyers) are legitimate by getting phone numbers and addresses. Never view products alone or in situations that may put you at risk.

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DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED IN PARA-ATHLETICS?

Athletics Canada offers opportunities for athletes across all disability groups to train and compete in track and field events.

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Athletes who compete using a wheelchair, including athletes with spinal cord injuries and some amputees amongst other neuromuscular disabilities.



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Athletes may have Cerebral Palsy or similar disabilities as a result of stroke, brain injury or other neurological disorders. Athletes can compete from a standing position or a wheelchair.



ATHLETES WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Athletes with varying degrees of visual impairment



Contact **Billy Reed** for more information: **604.787.5281** or **wreed@athletics.ca**

* Athletes with an intellectual impairment may compete in select track and field events within the framework of the sport.