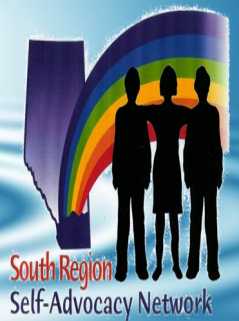


The Ripple

MARCH/APRIL 2017



BRANDON THIELEN - 2016 LETHBRIDGE INCLUSION AWARD

The Ripple Newsletter crew was able to interview Brandon, the recipient of the 2016 Inclusion Award

Why did you win the Inclusion Award?

I won the inclusion award because I own and operate *Photos Galore Digitizing Services*. I am showing that people with different abilities are just like everyone else. We can follow our dreams if we believe in ourselves.

How did you feel when you won the Inclusion Award?

I felt so honored to have won this award. I am still so surprised and in a good way! It made me feel like I have done so much and this made me feel happier than I ever thought I could be.

How long have you owned your own business?

I have owned my own business for 8 years.

How old were you when you started it?

I was 24 or 25 years old when I started *Photos Galore Digitizing Services*.

Why did you start your own business?

I started my own business because I have always loved computers, but I was having a hard time trying to find someone to hire me. That got me thinking of starting my own business. I have always loved typing and working on databases, and I love doing power points and scanning photos and slides for my family. I decided I could start my own business and give myself a job.

Now I enjoy helping others keep their memories safe and permanent by scanning their family photos and digitizing family videos. I also really enjoy being my own boss so I can be flexible with my work hours. I love working at my business! It makes me happy to look at pictures and happy smiling people.



Brandon speaking at IDPD Dec 3, 2016

BRANDON THIELEN CONTINUED

Do you participate in any sports? What is your favorite?

Yes I do. I am in Special Olympics in Lethbridge. I participate in 5 Pin Bowling at Holiday Bowl on Thursdays. I also play Bocce in the spring and I used to golf as well. I like swimming and snorkelling in the ocean.

We know you are a member of VATTA. What is VATTA?

VATTA stands for Voices at the Table for Advocacy and it is a group of adults who have Down syndrome. We meet 3 times a year and teleconference in between our meetings. We discuss ways to help people with Down syndrome to live inclusive lives. We have committee meetings and help write pamphlets to be distributed to parents and to people with Down syndrome. We also write many blogs about our lives.

Can you tell us how SRSAN and VATTA are the same? Or different?

SRSAN is the same as VATTA because they are both groups of adults with different abilities and both are trying to make the world see that it is important to be inclusive. SRSAN and VATTA are different because SRSAN is people in Southern Alberta and VATTA is people from all across Canada. They are also different because SRSAN has more members and they have all kinds of different abilities. VATTA has only up to 10 members and they all have Down syndrome.

On January 18, 2017, the SRSAN meeting was held in Taber at the Royal Canadian Legion. Recently the SRSAN board changed and this was their first meeting as a new executive and it ran great!

There were two main activities for the day. First, we learned about different communication styles and body language. Then we focused on our gifts and talents and how we can share them with others. It was a great meeting to learn of SRSAN's recent successes and to continue to build relationships with other self-advocates.

The next SRSAN meeting will be March 9, 2017 in Lethbridge at the Royal Canadian Legion at 10:30am.

We hope to see all SRSAN members there!

IDPD: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)



IDPD is a United Nations event that happens every year on December 3. The reason that IDPD exists is to make sure that the community knows about the importance of inclusion and rights of people with disabilities. Each year, the day is celebrated with a new theme to draw attention to different disability issues.

Locally, IDPD has been celebrated in lots of ways for more than 10 years. A committee made up of self-advocates and local organizations work hard each year to plan IDPD so that the community will hear about all the good things people with disabilities can do.

This year the committee wanted to plan a day that focused on inclusion and breaking barriers. The City of Lethbridge gave the committee a \$1,025 grant that would help us plan an amazing celebration that the whole community would enjoy!

IDPD happened on December 1, 2016 at CASA in two parts:

Part 1: A day time celebration that had local guest speakers.

The first guest speaker was Diana Sim, Executive Director of Volunteer Lethbridge, she talked about the Voicebank project. This is an idea that puts together people with voices with people without voices so that everyone can have a voice.



The second guest speaker was Rebecca Neels, a local self-advocate and sit-skier who talked about how she began to ski even though she uses a wheelchair and how this has changed her life. The last part of the day was films from the annual Picture this...Film Festival. Picture this... shows films that are about disabilities or are made by people with disabilities.

IDPD CONTINUED

Part 2: An evening celebration that gave away the Inclusion Awards.

These awards showed the individuals, businesses, groups and self-advocates that help inclusion happen in the community.

The Ripple Crew thinks that IDPD is an important day for self-advocates. We think that people should care about inclusion and understanding the gifts and talents of people with disabilities. We want the community to see us as valuable and respected people. IDPD this year showed 175 people that attended the event that people with disabilities are important members of the community.

We look forward to many more years of celebrating IDPD and hope that more people will join in for 2017!

What a Song Can Say

By: Shannon Kehler

**I know that your powers of retention
Are as wet as a warthog's backside
But thick as you are, pay attention
My words are a matter of pride
Yes, our teeth and ambitions are
bared, Be prepared!**



I think this song means you can stick up for yourselves and others to make a change. As self-advocates, we need to take control of situations and be strong leaders. We need to be willing to fight and sacrifice for what we want.

RICK HANSEN - MAN IN MOTION



In 1985, Rick Hansen started his Man in Motion World Tour. In his wheelchair he travelled through 34 countries, over 26 months. He raised 26 million dollars for spinal cord research and quality of life programs. Rick Hansen was born and raised in British Columbia, Canada.

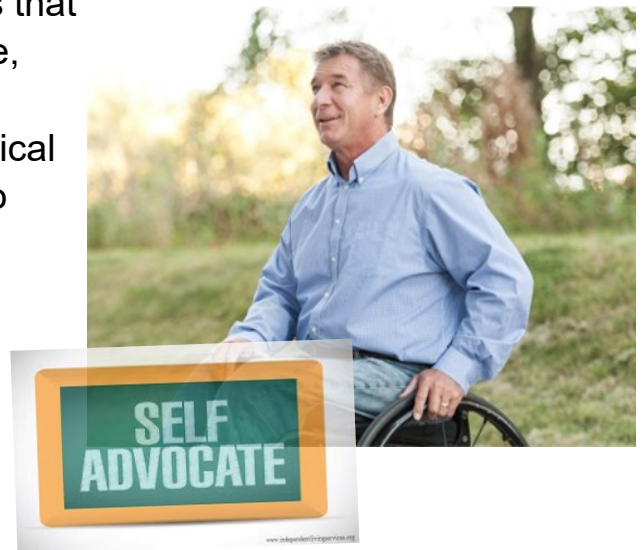
Before his tour he was a champion wheelchair marathoner and Paralympic athlete. He competed in wheelchair racing at both the 1980 and 1984 Summer Paralympics. He also shared the 1983 Lou Marsh Award with

Wayne Gretzky, as Canada's Outstanding Athlete of the Year. Rick is part of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, the BC Sports Hall of Fame and the University of British Columbia Athletic Hall of Fame.

In 1988, he created and became CEO of the Rick Hansen Foundation. The foundation works to create an inclusive world where people with disabilities can reach their goals. This foundation is still up and running today, working to create a world without barriers.

Rick Hansen is still a strong voice in the media. He is currently trying to get rewards for businesses who have worked to make accessible buildings. Also, his foundation has created a website, Planat, where you can type in which city you will be visiting and get a listing of businesses that are accessible. In every city, even Lethbridge, there are buildings that are not accessible to those of us in wheelchairs or with other physical disabilities. This is something we can work to change as self-advocates.

Rick Hansen is very motivational to our newsletter crew because he shows us that we are all capable of making changes and are all able to set goals and achieve them. If he can do all of these things, why can't we?



LET'S TALK ABOUT... CARBON TAX

The Ripple crew got together and researched some questions we have about carbon tax. We thought we would share what we learned with you.

Why is there a carbon tax?

Over the next 5 years this tax is going to make almost \$10 billion dollars for services we want as Albertans. This money will go towards things like:

- ⇒ Rebates (for some Albertans)
- ⇒ Renewable energy projects
- ⇒ Upgrading public transit
- ⇒ Cutting small business tax
- ⇒ Funding for “Energy Efficiency Alberta”, a new agency that will work to help us become better with our energy use.



From what we have researched the tax is here to make us think how we can be better to our environment and change our living to make our planet last longer.

How much more money do I have to spend each month?

The carbon tax isn't going to affect each person or household the same. If you use a car a lot, and always have your heat turned up, you may end up paying more than people who use public transit and turn down their heat when they are not home. Now may be a good time to think about going Green. Going green means being more careful about the things we do, and how they change our environment. It also means trying to do things like use less power and recycle more.

What about public transit cost?

Some of the money will be used to improve public transit to make it more environmentally friendly. Public transit costs haven't gone up yet in Lethbridge, so hopefully they don't. As self-advocates, we don't think they should because those of us who are using public transit are being more environmentally friendly.

Will the cost of groceries go up?

It is estimated that the cost of food will go up in 2017. Everything will go up in price a bit but some items will increase more than others. Things like meat, vegetables, fruit and nuts will have the biggest jump in price. Bakery food, cereal, dairy and eggs will go up less. Restaurants are expected to charge more as well.

LET'S TALK ABOUT... CARBON TAX

Who is going to get a rebate cheque?

A rebate is the amount of money the government will give you back. They look at your income tax return to decide how much you get back. Most self-advocates who did their taxes will get money back. This money is mailed or put into your bank account by the government. Some Albertans got a rebate in January 2017 and the next one will come in July. These payments will happen in January and July from now on.

Some other questions we had that we weren't able to find an answer to are:

Will the carbon tax change my AISH?

Will carbon tax change my rent?

We are hoping to answer these questions, as they are very important to us. We will do an update in The Ripple when we do. If your AISH or rent changes because of the carbon tax we want to hear about that. You can contact The Ripple newsletter crew by phone or email (at the bottom of this page).



At The Ripple, we think that the carbon tax is not such a bad thing. We think that people should be more environmentally friendly in all that they do. We think that it is good that the government is recognizing lower income individuals and giving rebates to help with some of the extra cost because of the carbon tax.

This newsletter raises awareness about self-advocacy, inclusion and community. It also provides information on how to be a better self-advocate, how to speak up and how to help other advocacy groups and their friends. If you have information, events or ideas you would like to see in the newsletter, please contact The Ripple newsletter editor (Jenn) at 403-320-1515 or jenn.hyggen@saipa.info

The Ripple is also online! www.saipa.info

SRSAN GETS A “MAKEOVER”

Recently SRSAN (South Region Self Advocacy Network) has had some changes. The Ripple crew met with members of SRSAN to learn about these changes.

MISSION STATEMENT

SRSAN is a united voice for people with different abilities that brings inspiration and opportunity to achieve.

SRSAN began in 2001, it came to be because of Leadership Today training and people who wanted to learn and do more in the area of self-advocacy. At The Ripple we have all helped with, and learned from SRSAN, so we are very interested to see what they are changing. This is their new mission statement; everything that SRSAN does matches this. They are also working on developing a new vision statement right now.

South Region
Self-Advocacy Network

SRSAN has also come up with some value statements:

Relationship

We work with all individuals, groups and government to work toward change.

Learning

We seek opportunities for learning, self improvement and growth as a group.

Commitment

We are committed to doing our best and sharing the responsibility as we work toward our vision.

Education

We share our talents and ideas to teach all communities about what we can do.

Team/Group Connections

We respect each other and work together as a team.

Voice

We speak together about issues affecting the disability community.

COMING NEXT...INTERVIEWS WITH THE NEW SRSAN EXECUTIVE!