

Vibrations

FALL 2022

Letter from Sherry: ASL

Dear readers,

I'm pleased to present another exciting issue of our client newsletter, Vibrations! This issue features lots of great articles and stories - including everything from this year's Kerry G. Wadman Award winner to the latest technology updates.

I'm excited to share that this is a special "stories" edition of Vibrations, readers. In this issue, you'll find stories from people who are Deafblind across the country - many of which were submitted directly from clients like you!

If you are interested in writing a story or article for the next edition of Vibrations, please talk to your intervenor, or send an email to [**social@deafblindservices.ca**](mailto:social@deafblindservices.ca). The next newsletter will be produced in the spring, and submissions are due by **February 1, 2023**.

Earlier this year, the Government of British Columbia announced that they will be providing dedicated funding for intervenor services to support British Columbians who are Deafblind.

The landmark decision makes British Columbia the third province outside of Ontario and Saskatchewan to provide funding for DBCS, representing a monumental step for Canada's Deafblind community. We are expecting to have services start this fall.

In other news, DBCS has been hard at work developing our new strategic plan. We are looking forward to receiving the feedback from clients that was collected through surveys and focus groups. I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who took time out of their days to participate - it's because of you that DBCS will be creating our most inclusive strategic plan yet - and we are truly looking forward to sharing the results in Spring of 2023.

Alongside the ongoing efforts to develop our strategic plan, we have also been working to expand and develop our brand. I would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who participated in the photography sessions - the photos turned out amazing and capture our services so well!



Many of the photos were featured in this year's annual report, "**Reach Higher - Dream Bigger.**" The report touches on some of the incredible milestones we celebrated this past year, including the recent expansion of our services to the province of British Columbia. If you would like a copy of this year's annual report, please connect with your intervenor.

Finally, I hope you'll take the time to check out DBCS' new and improved website - **deafblindservices.ca**. Alongside refreshing some of the language and imagery that appears across the website, we've also taken the time to restructure the way you navigate the site. With these changes, it will be much easier for staff, clients, and members of the public to quickly find what they're looking for.

As an organization, our goal is to always put accessibility and inclusion first. That's why, alongside some of the key accessibility features that have already been built into the website - including adjustable text size, contrast, and more - we're planning to integrate American Sign Language (ASL) videos throughout the website soon.



I hope you enjoy this edition of Vibrations as much as I did! Please read on to learn more about what's happening here at DBCS and how you can get involved.

Sincerely,

Sherry Grabowski

Vice President
CNIB Deafblind Community Services

June is Deafblind Awareness Month

June is Deafblind Awareness Month: ASL



In honour of National Deafblind Awareness Month this past June, clients, staff, volunteers, and friends and family came together to spread awareness by participating in yarn bombing initiatives in their communities.

Yarn bombing is a colourful display of knitted, crocheted, or loomed squares made of yarn.

This year's yarnbombing campaign was a great success - and helped reach and educate more people about Deafblindness than ever before!

Check out some of this year's best photos by visiting the **DBAM photo gallery** on our website!

The 2022 Adult Literacy Learner Award

Literacy Learner Award: ASL

By Lois Klassen

My name is Lois Klassen, and in April 2022 I was nominated for the Adult Literacy Learner Award, sponsored by the Hamilton Spectator.

I was introduced to the literacy program when Brittany Fletcher brought me to a luncheon with the literacy department. Jocelyn was encouraging me to try. I finally decided to give it a try at my husband's urging.

My literacy instructors were Jocelyn Evans, Kim Setzer, and Aislynn Curran. Kim told me I had been nominated, and I was very surprised.

I started my first lesson with the literacy program in April of 2021 with Jocelyn Evans. Kim started with me over the phone in November or December with an intervenor. Then Kim introduced Aislynn as my new instructor, and I'm still taking lessons on the iPhone with her and really enjoying the experience.

My intervenor Dana Blais came by in May and set up her computer so I could do an interview with the Adult Basic Education Association.

Then in June, Laura Mason came and set up her computer for the award ceremony. My friend Gloria came too; she wanted to watch with me and hear about all the people being honoured with the awards. All very exciting! A few days later I got a glass trophy in the mail.

If there are any people who are interested in learning but are hesitant: it is a lot of work, but you learn an awful lot. Thanks to CNIB Deafblind Community Services, who have offered this plan to me. As I said in my award interview, it has given me a new lease on life.

[Watch the full award interview.](#)

Learning through Zoom: Nutrition

Learning through Zoom: ASL

By Penny Bennet (LeClair)

Using Zoom, I participated in several classes with Christine to learn about foods and my recent need to know about my condition of slightly high cholesterol levels. I needed to know more about foods I could eat that would help to control my cholesterol levels.



We covered the subjects related to healthy eating and the new Canada rules that provide better ways to judge the amount of the food groups.

- I learned how to better understand the layout of food labels and what exactly is available to ask others to find for me when shopping.
- I learned what mindful eating is and how to apply it each day and how that helps to control what I eat and to chew more so that my system can process what I eat.
- I learned about emergency kits and what they contain to keep safe in the case of unexpected emergencies.
- I learned that the different ways we cook food can make a difference to the value of lowering calories or for retaining the good nutrients within the food.
- I learned more about different fats and what they mean. I know now about alternative oils to use.

I have a better understanding of how much liquid drinks like water I should drink, and this includes coffee juice and milk, so to keep this in mind

throughout the day. I know about different ways of eating enough fiber and the best foods to eat for this important component of nutrition.

The lessons I attended will help me for the rest of my life as I have the goal of being as healthy as I can be.

My thanks to the DBCS Literacy program. The benefit of having one-on-one classes is due to my hearing loss and having material emailed to me is great because I can file the information so I can read it again.

About Penny



Penny Bennett (LeClair) lives in Kingston. She grew up in Vancouver, BC but moved to Ontario during the spring of 1997. Penny is Deafblind. She speaks for herself, and the hearing she has is from cochlear implants. Penny currently serves on the CNIB Deafblind Community Services Board of Directors.

The 2022 Kerry G. Wadman Service Excellence Award

Kerry Wadman Award: ASL

By Sally Teng

The Kerry G. Wadman Service Excellence Award is presented to a staff member who consistently demonstrates the core values of respect, empowerment, empathy, teamwork, and professionalism. The recipient is someone who consistently demonstrates exceptional client service, and continually goes above and beyond in their role.

This year, this prestigious award was presented to Kim Setzer, Deafblind Literacy Specialist for DBCS.



Kim has been described by her peers as a shining example of what it means to be both a mentor and teacher. She continuously demonstrates her capacity for empathy and compassion, and often goes out of her way to support everyone around her.

Kim can often be found spending extra time with clients, teaching and empowering them to use technologies that they may have previously believed were beyond their abilities.

Everyone who works with Kim leaves class feeling accomplished and empowered to live the life they choose.

From all of us at CNIB Deafblind Community Services, we'd like to express congratulations to Kim on this outstanding achievement

Technology Spotlight: New Accessibility Features Coming to iPhones

Technology Spotlight: ASL

By Carolina Cohoon

This fall, Apple iOS 16 will no longer support older devices such as the iPhone SE, iPhone 6s and iPhone 6s Plus, iPhone 7 and iPhone 7 Plus, and the iPod touch. We have created a concise list of some new accessibility features Apple will be offering for iPhones' models released since 2017. If you have any questions, please contact your nearest Apple store for information, or a DBCS Literacy Specialist for support learning how to use the new accessibility features.

Notifications

Apple users are familiar with **Notifications** alerts appearing on the top of the screen. With iOS 16, Notifications will be rolling up from the **bottom of the screen**. This is to ensure the main widgets and features are in clear view. The **lock screen** will be customizable. According to **Apple.com**, “users can change the look of the date and time on the lock screen with expressive styles and color choices. Widgets will also offer information at a glance.”

New Feature: Detection Mode

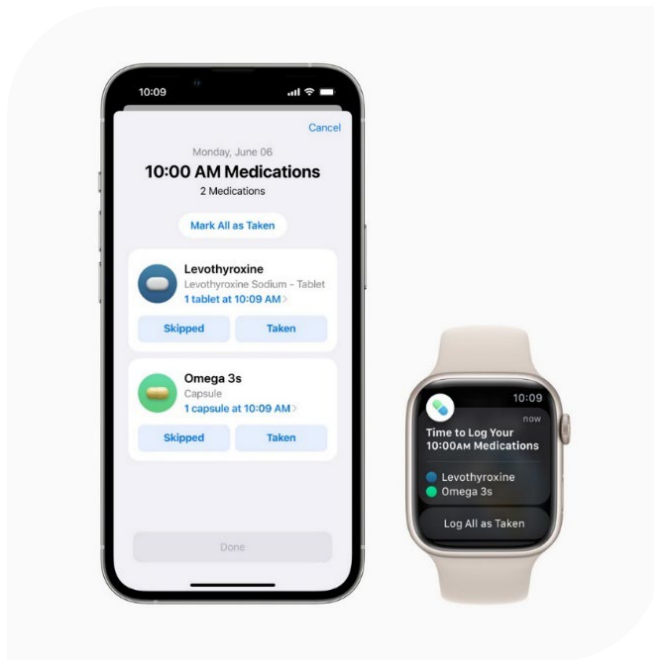
Detection Mode in the **Magnifier app** includes **Door Detection**, **People Detection**, and **Image Descriptions**. These features help users who are blind or partially sighted use their iPhone to travel safely by locating a door upon arrival to a destination and describing the distance to the door. These new accessibility features can tell the user if a door is open or closed, or whether it can be opened by pushing, or turning a knob. It also reads signs and symbols on the door with the capability to provide descriptions of the user surroundings.

Real-Time Captions

Real-time captions will allow anyone to follow any audio-based content when you use an app. Whether you are video conferencing with FaceTime or in a phone call, or watching a video on your device, Live Captions will automatically appear at the top of your screen in a separate pop-up window. Live Captions will also automatically attribute its transcribed captions to the right caller, making it clear who is speaking.

New Feature: Medications

Apple is also adding a new tool to the **health** app on the iPhone through the new **Medications** category, which will allow users to add any medicine, vitamins, and supplements. Users can also create a custom schedule and reminders for each medication and give each one a unique visual with customizable background. Users can search for their medications and manually add them or scan them using the iPhone's camera.



Caption: The new Medications experience on Apple Watch and iPhone helps users manage and track their medications, vitamins, and supplements. Picture courtesy of [Apple.com](https://www.apple.com)

Keyboard Haptics will allow users to feel confirmation when typing, and VoiceOver users will get both sound and haptic feedback in **Maps** by identifying the starting point when following walking directions. Users will be also able to set up multi-stop routing and plan a route that has multiple

stops.

Mail & iMessage

Mail app users will be able to schedule emails ahead of time and have up to ten seconds to cancel the delivery of a message before it reaches a receiver's inbox.

When **iMessaging** with another Apple user, they will have 15 minutes after sending a message to either edit it or unsend it. The other user will not get a notification but will see that the message has been edited or recalled. Users will also be able to mark texts as unread. Users will be also able to schedule sending e-mails for a time in the future such as the next day!

Helpful tips and tricks

- [**Activating haptics on iOS 16**](#)
- [**Learn about helpful integrations for transit Voiceover**](#)

Which new feature are you looking forward to use and try? Tell us by writing a review or your experience in our next newsletter. Speak to a Literacy Specialist for more details, we would love to hear from you!

Preparing for Emergencies with Jen McEachen

Preparing for Emergencies: ASL

By Jen McEachen



This past May and July, I had the wonderful opportunity to share my knowledge and experience on preparing for emergencies in two Zoom sessions to the CNIB Deafblind Community Services Literacy group.

In the first session, we discussed the different types of natural disasters, the difference between “Evacuation Notice” and an “Evacuation Order”.

How to build a “Go Kit”

This list can be changed depending on what you and your family needs to take when evacuating.

Remember to check for expiry dates on all the items every six months.

- Medication and medical supplies
- Water containers - 2L of drinking water per person and 2L cleaning/cooking water for a maximum of 2 - 4 days. (Make sure to refresh this supply every 18 months).
- Photocopy of your insurance papers
- Emergency rescue blanket
- Garbage bags for your food wrappers
- Manual can opener
- First aid kit
- Small games
- Personal hygiene items
- Perishable food items
- Pets: picture of your pet/guide dog, extra leashes, dog/cat food, photocopy of medical records.

In the second session, we learned how to practice finding emergency exits, where to meet up with your family after you leave your apartment or house, what to do if there is an earthquake or a tornado, and a few tips if you go on vacation and stay in a hotel.

Jen suggests adding one item for each shopping trip to avoid feeling overwhelmed by how much you need to add to your kit.

Deafblind individuals, intervenors and their families, if you are interested in learning more about emergency preparedness, I would love to connect with you via email at: [**jenandnixon@gmail.com**](mailto:jenandnixon@gmail.com)

About Jen



Jen McEachen is a Deafblind individual living in Northern British Columbia.

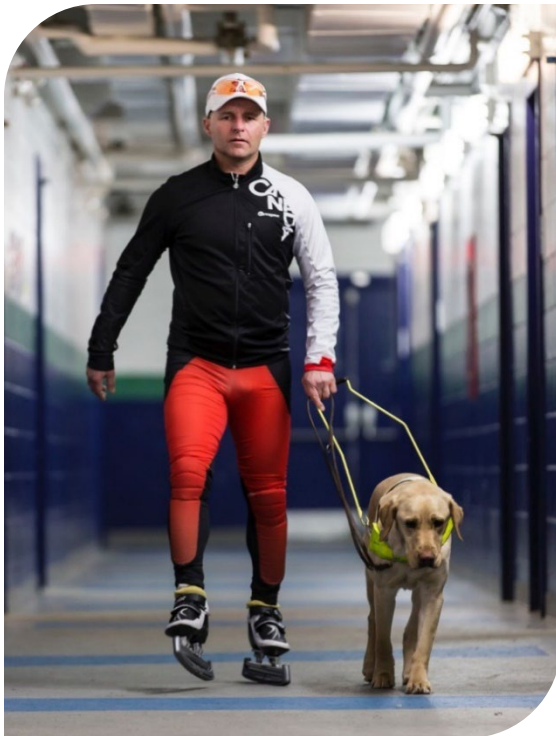
Jen has a female yellow Lab, named Parmesan, from Guide Dogs for the Blind. She is a part-time staff person at the Canadian Red Cross Society in the Shared Services department and is passionate about educating Deafblind people the importance of being prepared for any emergency.

Jen is currently working towards achieving her bachelor's degree in Emergency and Security Management through the Justice Institute of British Columbia.

Boundless Dreams: Kevin's Story

Kevin's Story: ASL

By Caitlyn Crews



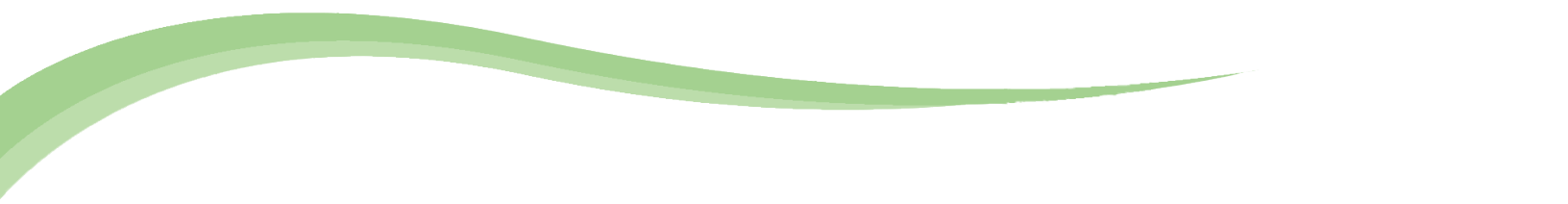
Kevin Frost has always had a passion for sport. Growing up, Kevin discovered his love of hockey and began refereeing at the age of 10. By sixth grade, Kevin was diagnosed with hearing loss - but that didn't stop him from pursuing his passion.

Kevin spent many years working as a referee before the early 2000s when he was diagnosed with Type 2 Usher Syndrome.

Usher Syndrome is a rare genetic disorder that first causes a person to lose their hearing in childhood and then their vision later in life.

“I could still referee hockey, but my driver's license was immediately taken away, and for liability reasons, my employer could no longer have me working there. I thought I had hit a cement wall in my life.”

While Kevin knew that his dreams might have to change a little, he was determined to not let his disability prevent him from pursuing his passions. Knowing that he would need some support, Kevin reached out to CNIB Deafblind Community Services (DBCS) for help.



“DBCS has been my guiding light and helped me get back on my feet after being diagnosed with Usher Syndrome,” he says. “Having an intervenor under my wings has given me more freedom to live independently.”

Having an intervenor offers Kevin consistent, ongoing support for activities like grocery shopping, banking, and medical appointments so he can feel empowered to live his life with confidence and independence.

Before long, Kevin was back on the ice - but not in the way he originally expected.

Kevin’s friend and now coach, Mike Rivet, asked if he would be interested in speed skating - and with some coaching and practice, Kevin reignited his passion for sport. Today, Kevin is a three-time World Champion Canadian speed skater with dreams of winning an Olympic medal for Canada.

“My dream of being a winning Olympic speed skater is not just for me. It doesn’t stop at coming home with a gold medal. It goes on to supporting others in accomplishing their dreams,” says Kevin. “I want to be a mentor and a role model to future goal achievers.

“To be successful as a person with a disability, we all have to learn to educate, listen, and be positive. The barriers will always be challenging as a Deafblind person, but I believe that positive energy will always win in the end.”