

HELPING PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

HORIZONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF BC REHAB

“WE BELIEVE IT’S ABILITY NOT DISABILITY THAT COUNTS.” JUNE 2004

In this issue, you will meet a remarkable man — Mr. Fred Christie — who left us a wonderful gift. And we tip our hat to those costumed Fiesta 2004 Dual Mountain Rally snowboarders and skiers who raised eyebrows at Whistler and \$29,000 for BC Rehab. Bright ideas? Check out the SOLUTIONS 2004 students competition we support. And the coolest bike you’ve ever seen.

MR. CHRISTIE’S GIFT

ORPHANED AT AGE 12, AND LATER TAKEN AS A POW IN BURMA WHILE FIGHTING IN SECOND WORLD WAR, FRED CHRISTIE NEVER FORGOT THE HELPING HAND HE GOT FROM OTHERS THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE. WHEN HE DIED AT AGE 76, A WIDOWER WITHOUT CHILDREN, HE LEFT A WONDERFUL GIFT. THE FREDERICK ARNISON CHRISTIE ENDOWMENT FUND, ESTABLISHED AT BC REHAB, WILL HELP BRITISH COLUMBIANS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES IN PERPETUITY.

"A lovely, kind man" is how good friend Albert Sanvido describes Fred Christie. "He was always helping someone else."

Frederick Arnison Christie was born on July 11 in 1925 in Mission City, B.C. William Mackenzie King was prime minister of Canada; King George V was on the throne. Young couples danced The Charleston; families laughed at Charlie Chaplin's silent film antics in The Gold Rush. It was also the year that F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote The Great Gatsby and Hitler published Mein Kampf.

Christie was only a teenager when he told his sister, with whom he lived after their parents died, that he had joined the Royal Canadian Navy. However, the Second World War was a very difficult experience. His friend Albert Sanvido says that Christie never talked about the years when he was a prisoner of war under the Japanese, but only 25 percent of POWs survived those grim camps. Sanvido wonders if Fred's serious mid-life back problems started then. "Fred eventually was so crippled up he had to go into rehab. But after his treatment, he was able to get back to a normal way of life. Fred was so grateful for the care he got — he never forgot how much rehab helped him."

"FRED WAS SO GRATEFUL FOR THE CARE HE GOT — HE NEVER FORGOT HOW MUCH REHAB HELPED HIM."

After peace was declared in 1945, Fred apprenticed as a machinist and worked until retirement with the American Can Company. Those were happy years in Vancouver. Fred's wife Dorothy shared his love of sport fishing, and the couple were soon involved with the community. A soccer enthusiast, Fred



Mr. Christie as a young man in Royal Canadian Naval Whites.

even traveled routinely to the Fraser Valley to coach the "Bradner Reds," an amateur soccer club with a lengthy history. When Fred passed away on April 3, 2001, the daffodils that Bradner is famous for were coming into bloom.

His friends and family miss him. But many more who never knew him, will come to know and respect Frederick Arnison Christie through his generous endowment fund designed to help those people who require specialty orthotics and prosthetics.

Thank you, Mr. Christie. We won't forget you.

HOW CAN I ENDOW A FUND AT BC REHAB?

Any gift — in cash or kind — over \$10,000 can be an endowed fund. As the donor, you can name the fund, and direct who or what you wish the fund to benefit. Or you can choose to leave it to BC Rehab to decide where the need is greatest. You can make the gift now, or after your death.



Mr. Christie (centre) with co-workers at American Can.



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FIESTA 2004! RAISES \$29,000 FOR ADAPTIVE SKI PROGRAM

SPRING SKIERS AND SNOWBOARDERS AT THE 8TH ANNUAL BC REHAB DUAL MOUNTAIN RALLY RAISED MONEY FOR THE WHISTLER ADAPTIVE SKI PROGRAM (WASP) AND BROUGHT A LITTLE TASTE OF MEXICO TO THE SUNNY SLOPES.

"We had a perfect spring skiing day this year!" said Karla Mebs BC Rehab executive director. Mebs credits the 25 enthusiastic teams — many of who return year after year — for raising \$29,000 to buy another sit ski and add to the Whistler Adaptive Ski Program bursary program.

Last year 400 skiers with disabilities enjoyed the mountains thanks to the Whistler Adaptive Ski Program. "We want even more people with disabilities to give sit skiing a try at the world's number one ski and snowboard resort," says Mebs

On April 3, more than 175 fun-seeking skiers, snowboarders and sit skiers took photos at 24 checkpoints on Whistler and Blackcomb mountains. Like a large-scale scavenger hunt, participants had to solve different riddles along the way. Each team was paired with an elite ski or snowboard athlete, who served as a strategy coach. The elite athletes included the likes of **Jen Ashton, Brian Savard and Gareth Dyer.**

"I was honoured to be asked to do this and to meet such great people," said **Tanya Reck-Peterson**, Quattro Amigos team coach. "A friend of mine became a paraplegic and this event is for a great cause."

Before the rally, each team member was required to raise \$250, but some teams went beyond the call of duty. Glacier Express members **Eric Prall, Dieter Prall, Keeiran Magee, Karen Magee, Boyd McTavish and Michel Gendrea** raised \$10,037.

Rally organizers thanked the coaches for their participation and volunteers for working throughout the day and evening. "But it is really our sponsors and suppliers that are the glue holding this event together," said BC Rehab's Karla Mebs-Tabet, citing Nesters, who supplied rave-review lunches for all the athletes, as well as major sponsors TD Canada Trust, Corona Extra, Japan Airlines and St. Moritz Watches.

Adapted from an article originally published in the Whistler Question newspaper, **April 2004.**



Teams were challenged to fill their pockets and panhandle for money throughout the day. Led by coach Bart Ross, Las Banditas in Question solicited the most money through creative "Wanted" leaflets, raising \$1,007.



As a client and volunteer for Whistler Adaptive Ski Program, **Pete Crutchfield**, who broke his neck skiing at Whistler Blackcomb, has been involved in the annual BC Rehab Rally since the beginning. "The Dual Mountain Rally raises awareness that people with disabilities can ski as well. My long-term goal is to see sit skiing become totally integrated on the mountain."



AND THE WINNERS ARE . . .

- **Most funds raised by a team:** \$10,037 by Glacier Express
- **Most rally points:** Las Banditas in Question
- **Best costume:** Fun in the Sun
- **Best collage:** Pablo and the Tequila Shooter
- **Trip to Mexico on Norwegian Cruise Line:** Joanne Moore
- **Puerto Vallarta Sol Meliá Resort vacation:** Diane Michaels



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Exceptional weather resulted in many sun-kissed faces at the wrap-up Westin Resort and Spa banquet where awards and raffle prizes were doled out along with well-deserved food. Justin Tilson (seated) with his team.

"HOW DOES MY DONATION HELP?" WHISTLER MOUNTAIN'S ADAPTIVE SKI PROGRAM

Last year more than 400 people with disabilities enjoyed the mountains thanks to the 80 instructors and volunteers in the Whistler Adaptive Ski Program.

"WE AIM TO PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH THE THRILL OF AN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY AND GIVE THEM A FLOW OF ADRENALINE AND EXCITEMENT THEY MAY NOT HAVE THOUGHT POSSIBLE."

" Sean Blyth, Whistler Adaptive Ski Program

"Our Adaptive Ski Program makes skiing accessible to all, whatever their ability." says Sean Blyth. The program caters to both beginners and advanced skiers. Rates include the use of adaptive equipment, lessons and guiding during the winter months on both Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains. All instructors and volunteers have their CADS (Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing) Instructor Level 1 certification.

DISABLED GROUPS AND LESSON TYPES

- **Skis, mono-skis, sit skis:** People who use wheelchairs, including those with paraplegia and quadriplegia, bilateral lower extremity amputations, or developmental disabilities are able to ski using these adaptive devices.
- **Stand-up skiing:** Standing skiers with disabilities may use one-, two-, three- or four-track skiing techniques. These techniques often use "outriggers" for balance and are named for the number of tracks left in the snow. Snowboarding is also available.
- **Blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing:** These skiers/snowboarders use the same equipment as non-disabled skiers. A guide and/or instructor provides instruction and direction.
- **Children** can be integrated into regular Whistler Kids with Adaptive Ski Program volunteers to help.

SOLUTIONS 2004 STUDENT DESIGN EXPOSITION

EVER WONDER HOW YOU WOULD MAKE YOUR BED, ROLL A MEDICINAL MARIJUANA JOINT, CRACK AN EGG OR WRING OUT A WASHCLOTH WITH LIMITED HAND USE? INVENTIVE ENGINEERING AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN STUDENTS FROM UBC AND EMILY CARR INSTITUTE OF ART + DESIGN, AS WELL AS A GRADE 6 CLASS FROM EMILY CARR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, DID. THESE 72 STUDENTS CAME UP WITH AMAZING SOLUTIONS AT THE BC REHAB-SPONSORED 10TH ANNUAL ASSISTIVE DEVICES DESIGN COMPETITION.

"This was the first year we've included elementary school kids, and it was a huge success," says Dr. James Watzke, associate director of Human Factors for the BCIT Health Technology Research Group, when he's not organizing the annual SOLUTIONS design competition. "They are learning about disability, and thinking about problem solving."

To get students at Emily Carr Elementary School started, Stephanie Cadieux from the BC Paraplegic Association wheeled into teacher Sally Thompson's Grade 6 classroom. Cadieux talked to the students about her daily life as a quadriplegic, and her problems with accessibility. "For an hour she answered any and every question they had about physical disabilities," says Watzke, who was impressed by how "interesting, smart and sensitive" the kids were, once given permission to ask questions most of us simply don't ask. "They asked everything from 'how do you exercise' to 'how do we know how tall you are when you're in a wheelchair?'"

Undergraduate students also met with someone with a physical disability as the first step to identifying a problem and then a solution.

Can we expect to see any of this year's inventions on the market? (Earlier SOLUTIONS, such as an all-terrain wheelchair, and an intimate positioning pillow for romantic moments have received patents and are in limited

production.) Possibly, but that's not the point of SOLUTIONS, says Watzke. "What is important is to increase students' awareness of disability problem solving through technology."

"THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS LOVED HOW FREE-WHEELING THE GRADE 6 KIDS ARE IN THEIR THINKING — AND HOW PROUD THEY WERE OF THEIR EFFORTS. WHEN YOU'RE 11 OR 12 YEARS OLD, YOU'RE NOT WORRYING ABOUT A CAREER OR COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL."

"Dr. James Watzke"

That said, every year, BCIT does choose 10 to 12 promising SOLUTIONS projects. "We invite those students into another BCIT program—PROTÉGÉ — which is all about exploring commercial potential of assistive device prototypes," says Watzke.

Best outcome? Watzke points to those SOLUTIONS students now dedicating their energy in the field of health care and engineering. "They have either focused their graduate work there, or are already working with companies in the world of medical and assistive technology. That's why we are so grateful to BC Rehab for their on-going financial support of students. They obviously recognize an investment now will pay off in the future."

SNOWBOARDER? SURGEON? WE'VE GOT YOUR SOLUTION.

On April 22, G.F. Strong Rehab Centre's lobby was buzzing with visitors, clients and staff—often a source of ideas and problems to be solved by SOLUTIONS participants. Check out these ingenious gizmos:

- **Automated bed maker:** footswitch-activated compressor inflates air tubes to straighten sheet and duvet.
- **Leg armour:** "cool" protection permits crash-prone snowboarders to practice more often without damage to shins, knees and thighs, reducing risk of more serious injuries as skills increase.
- **Wheelchair tire cleaner:** no more dirty tires staining mobile users' sleeves, hospital floors, and apartment carpets, with this simple roll-on, free-wheeling brush system.
- **Surgical staple holder for resection lung surgery:** solves the dilemma of holding tool in position during time cancer patient is transiting through a CT scanner without later exposing surgeons to radiation.
- **Bye, bye, flies!** when hands can't brush the flies away from summer picnic food, this mechanical feather fan will do the trick.
- **"in-D-I"** inexpensive, one-size-fits-all solution to dilemma of how someone with severe arthritis or Parkinson's can easily use an eyedropper.
- **Twistlet:** easy credit card and coin access via a "fanning system" wallet for people with hand tremors.



Brad Overbye shows his accessory bag.



Mark Vidal demonstrates a wash sponge.

HOW YOUR DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

AT A POPULAR ONE-DAY WORKSHOP, REHAB NURSES BONED-UP ON THE LATEST IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INCLUDING "LEAKY SNEEZES," THE BEST BAND-AID, PAIN MANAGEMENT, DRIVER ASSESSMENT AND ADAPTIVE VIBRATORS.

Thanks in part to BC Rehab's sponsorship, over 100 rehab nurses and other healthcare professionals from the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and Peace Arch area attended What's New in Science & Technology, the April 2 workshop at Vancouver's Plaza 500 Hotel.

"The feedback has been very positive," said organizer Kate McBride, herself a registered nurse and sexual health clinician at GF Strong Rehab Centre. "Many people are asking us to hold similar technology workshops every year."

BEST BAND-AID? OVERALL, NEW LIQUID BANDAGES TESTED WELL FOR FLEXIBILITY, WATER RESISTANCE, AND KNOCK PROTECTION, REPORTED WORKSHOP PRESENTER IAN DENISON, PHYSIOTHERAPIST AND EQUIPMENT SPECIALIST AT G.F. STRONG REHAB CENTRE.

Rehab nurses attended workshops on a wide range of areas including spasticity management, the actual dangers of cell-phone use in hospitals, wheelchair fitting, incontinence triggered by a sneeze, female sexual desire, the pros and cons of carpet versus hard surfaces given their differing 'rolling resistance,' the failure rate of exam gloves, and bio feedback treatment for stress-and-urge incontinence ('leaky sneezes').

TIPS: RRSP/RRIF

Funds accumulated in a RRSP or RRIF can be used to make a gift by naming the charity as the beneficiary of the plan. At the end of the donor's lifetime, the organization will receive the plan proceeds and, where the beneficiary is a registered charity, such as BC Rehab, the donor's estate will receive a donation receipt. The resulting tax credit will offset the taxes incurred when the plan is redeemed.



BC REHAB SUPPORTS WORLD'S BEST: NATIONAL WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN COQUITLAM

ATHLETES VIE FOR TITLE—AND COVETED TEAM CANADA SPOT FOR ATHEN'S 2004 PARALYMPIC GAMES.

Teams from across Canada traveled to Coquitlam BC on the May 21-23 long weekend to battle it out on the court for the national title and the Robert W. Jackson Trophy. Many of the athletes are literally the best in the world, having won gold in Sydney, whose Paralympic Games in 2000 drew record crowds.

A week-long Selection Camp for Athens 2004 followed the Championships.



Womens semi final action, BC Breakers Marni Abbott defends a charging Danielle Peers of the Edmonton Inferno. BC Breakers would claim the Bronze Medal, while the Edmonton Inferno would take home the gold.



Richard Peter moving up court during the bronze medal game. The BC Men would go on to win in exciting fashion.

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"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." — Gandhi, 1869–1948

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