

# The Link

CONNECTRA  
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

October 2008

## ConnecTra speaker will map out the simple route to achieving peace, joy and health

One of Metro Vancouver's most in-demand speakers will be giving a talk on "the nature of health" at the next ConnecTra meeting, Wednesday Oct. 22.

Dr. Udo Erasmus, who studied biochemistry and genetics at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, has appeared on national radio shows across North America, lectured across the world and written health advice for countless newspapers over the past 15 years. He is in demand as a speaker, so this is a coup for ConnecTra.

Dr. Erasmus will be making a presentation to ConnecTra members on "life wellness," and will consider ways of optimizing health by looking at the individuals "life, mind and body" – which roughly equates to spiritual, mental and physical health.



Dr. Udo Erasmus

While not overlooking physical health, and the importance of a balanced diet, he says anyone can

achieve peace and joy. Feeling good about life is certainly not the sole preserve of healthy people, but an aspect of life itself – even if it can sometimes be hard to achieve.

"We have to go deep inside to dig out peace," he said. "When I talk about peace I'm not talking about religion or politics but human nature and belonging."

He said people have to strive to find peace, even though it was there all along – an element of human nature that does not go away, however hard it might be to locate.

"What's cool about it is that, when you are talking to people with disabilities, you find that thing in them was never changed. If they find it, they can have a remarkably joyful life."

Dr. Erasmus's whole philosophy is "really about life" – about encouraging people to live in more "peaceful, beautiful ways" to become more fulfilled.

"I talk about human nature in general. The nature of health

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## Boccia players demonstrate their sport at meeting

Vancouver boccia players demonstrated their sport to ConnecTra members – and made an open invitation to join them.

Boccia is a Paralympic sport for people with cerebral palsy, but played provincially by people with a range of disabilities, as individuals, pairs, or teams of three. It is similar to bowls, in that the object is to propel a ball as close as possible to a target ball, called a jack.

Vancouver Wildcats coach Herb Torrance made the presentation, and team members demonstrated the sport. Anyone wanting to find out about boccia should contact Herb Torrance at 604-731-3248.



Pitching in: Boccia players demonstrating their sport.

More info: call Steve Street at 604-688-6464 ext. 115, or email [ssstreet@disabilityfoundation.org](mailto:ssstreet@disabilityfoundation.org)

# Peace is in every human heart - cont. from Page 1

and peace, and the personal aspects of that.”

Dr. Erasmus is psychological rather than religious, and more likely to talk about *life* than *spirit* – he puts his message in simple, scientific terms. For him, there are no hidden mysteries, although he does not make self realization sound like an easy or quick process.

“You can’t just *think* yourself there. The reason we are striving for it is that we have lost touch with it.”

The good news is that once we have awareness of peace and joy the rest flows automatically. Getting there is a deliberate process, however.

Anyone wanting to improve their physical health should start off by considering that “the genetic program was only made for living in the natural environment on planet Earth,” which essentially means we evolved eating natural whole foods and have trouble digesting convenience foods. Or, as Dr. Erasmus puts it, accept that tigers eat free-range antelopes that are raised on organic grass.

This means, as Erasmus sees it, avoiding poisons (pollution, plastics and overly processed foods) in favour of the “essential building blocks” (fresh, organic and raw).

“When you cook you lose enzymes, probiotics and some minerals, and some of the more sensitive vitamins – these can all be replaced. You make the proteins harder to digest.”

However, he doesn’t want people to get too hung-up on the



Healthy view: Dr. Udo Erasmus, life wellness guru.

food side of the equation, overlooking the need for personal realization.

Dr. Erasmus will be making the presentation at the ConnecTra Information Workshop, on Wednesday Oct. 22. It will be held from 1pm to 3pm in the Alma VanDusen and Peter Kaye meeting rooms of the Library Square Conference Centre, 350 West Georgia Street, Vancouver.

In addition, a representative from Access Works will talk about paid and volunteer opportunities with the 2010 Winter Olympics.

If you want to attend, please RSVP with Steve Street at 604-688-6464 ext. 115.

## *Did you know?* Activities, events and points of interest . . .

### **A round-up of facts and information relating in some way to the lives of our readers**

For visitors in wheelchairs, admission to North Vancouver’s **Capilano Suspension Bridge** is free! Although the suspension bridge itself is not accessible, visitors in wheelchairs can experience attractions such as the Totem Park, Spirit Stage, Story Centre, Kia’palano (the First Nations’ Cultural Center), and Trading Post gift shop. Info: [www.capbridge.com](http://www.capbridge.com) or 604-985-7474.

You can read **stories by people with disabilities** on the website [www.tell-us-your-story.com](http://www.tell-us-your-story.com). Writers retain full personal ownership of their stories while they share them with others. It’s a great place to read about personal experiences of others with disabilities. Another site to read disability and health stories: [www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/yourstories.shtml](http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/yourstories.shtml).

**Baseball hand gestures** used by umpires originate from William Hoy, a deaf baseball player who was a success in the Major League. He requested umpires to use sign language because he could not hear verbal calls.

**Thomas Edison**, most famous for his work on the light bulb and electricity, did not learn to talk until he was almost four years old and did not learn to read until the age of 12. He was also slightly deaf. Despite his learning disability and hearing impairment, he became one of the greatest inventors of all time, holding over 1,000 patents.

An estimated **500 million people are disabled** – roughly one in ten. According to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), 80 per cent of people with disabilities live in developing countries. In Canada, 15.5 per cent, or 4.4 million people, reported some level of disability.