

The Link

CONNECTRA
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Spring/Summer 2011

Out and about this summer

Programs under way this summer offer a variety of adventurous experiences and leisure options for people with disabilities.

The **Disabled Sailing Association of BC (DSA-BC)** summer season opens **Wednesday, May 25**. DSA-BC operates a fleet of eight adaptive Martin 16 sloops which are suitable for all levels of disability.

A season-launching Celtic concert, *A Salty Shindig*, is held at Blusson Spinal Cord Centre, 818 West 10th Ave., Vancouver from 6:30pm on **Tuesday, May 31**. The Irish Wakers headline.

Meanwhile, **British Columbia Mobility Opportunities Society (BCMOS)** opens its hiking program **Wednesday, May 25**.

It offers "day hikes" using the TrailRider, a specially designed one-wheeled remote access wheelchair. Guided hikes will be held around Vancouver's 1,885-acre Pacific Spirit Regional Park Wednesdays to Friday each week, with theme hikes that venture a little further afield on Saturdays and Sundays. BCMOS also offers gliding and kayaking.

And the **Disabled Independent Gardeners Association** is a lecture at UBC Botanical Gardens at noon on **Monday, June 27**.

Info: www.disabledsailingbc.org,
www.bcmos.org and
www.disabilityfoundation.org/diga.



All aboard: Elaine Lee, centre, showing off her TAO creations, a circus train and an "eye" stool.

New skills lead to new chances

Opportunities to create art in a new medium are opening doors for Elaine Lee.

But then, as Elaine is proud to say, she's spent her whole life overcoming obstacles. "With hands as tiny as a newborn baby, nobody knew what I'd be capable of – not even I knew," she said.

"Born with a rare condition, osteogenesis imperfecta – known as brittle bone disease – I was never expected to live past the age of two. I spent my first five years living in the hospital where I baffled doctors, family and friends by overcoming every fathomable challenge."

An acclaimed artist, inspired and tutored by Canadian painter Ted Harrison, she has been drawing and painting in acrylics for most of her 32 years.

But earlier this year, Elaine got to try woodworking through the Tetra Ability Opportunities project, which gives people with disabilities hands-on workshop skills. It's operated by the Tetra Society of North America at its 620-square-foot, fully accessible workshop located at Blusson Spinal Cord Centre, Vancouver.

"Never in a million years did I ever imagine that I would be getting down and dusty on a scroll saw, electric drill, banging nails, creating everything from small wooden animals, designing unique benches and making pretty pictures with wood burning tools," she said.

She was such a success that Elaine is now helping out at the workshop as a volunteer consultant, which she believes will lead to future opportunities.

ConnecTra Society: Opportunities for inclusion.



Supports: Presenter Paul Gauthier, EATI



Rights: Paul Caune, Civil Rights Now.



Care: Virginie Francoeur, Live-in Caregivers.

All smiles at ConnecTra's Abilities Expo 2011

With more than 30 organizations contributing, a dozen presentations and more than 200 participants, Abilities Expo was a great success.

The event, held at Roundhouse Community Centre, in April brought people with disabilities face to face with Metro Vancouver's key service providers. The pictures speak for themselves:



The Open Door Group was presenting employment-related programs.



Heather McCain, Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods.



Dr. Edwin Lau talks health.



David Thomson, equipment supplier.



Terreane Derrick, Liz Zur.



Artist A. J. Brown.



Musician Glenn David Loft.



Karen Cheung of Flight Centre.



Roger Jones, Amberin Bonnett.



Tammy van der Kamp.