

The New Perspectives logo, with the words New and Perspectives intersecting at the first E, above multi-coloured boxes. There are graphics of fall leaves surrounding the logo.

Fall 2023 Edition Newsletter

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** VDRC Annual General Meeting 2023 ()

An image of Donna Jodhan, standing next to a window and holding her cane. She is smiling.

The VDRC held its 33rd Annual General Meeting on the evening of Thursday, September 21st and, by all accounts, it proved to be a very informative and positive affair. The meeting took place online via Zoom and was well-attended by many members of the public, as well as VDRC staff, volunteers and board of directors. Board member Kim Donaldson took on the role of the evening's host. Everything began with a thorough run-thru of all the accessibility features that were in place to enable everyone to engage with the meeting, including having closed captions turned on, a live transcript and an ASL interpreter who remained onscreen at all times. Attendees could also submit questions to the speakers via Zoom's chat function.

Kim then introduced the main highlight of the evening, our guest speaker, Donna Jodhan, award-winning sight-loss coach, advocate and author. Joining us all the way from Ontario, Donna spoke about an initiative she led to make Canadian government websites more accessible for people who are blind or have low-sight, something that took her all the way to the Canadian Supreme Court!

After losing most of her sight due to a retinal detachment, Donna sought out possible employment in the government, but found the process of applying online or even navigating the relevant websites extremely difficult. After a particular government department refused to accommodate her, mainly due to cost, Donna knew she had to help bring about some changes. She built up a team of supporters, fronted by disability rights lawyer David Baker, and then brought her case to court. What followed was a legal back and forth that lasted several years and, while the process tested Donna's resolve on more than one occasion, she never wavered from her goal.

"You're doing it for your fellow Canadians. You're not doing it for yourself. You're doing it for your fellow Canadians," says Donna. "And you're doing it for the kids of the future. Because you want our kids of the future to have a better future."

Finally, after seemingly countless legal hurdles, the supreme court ruled in Donna's favour and declared all Canadian government websites need to be made accessible, marking a huge landmark win for disability rights! "There's still a lot of work to be done. They have done quite a bit of work, but it's never enough," says Donna.

After thanking Donna for her incredible account of her journey, Kim called upon Pat Danforth, Board Chair, to start off the VDRC's Year in Review report. Pat, who is marking her third year as Chair, believes that we, as a "cross disability, grassroots, not-for-profit organization run by and for people with disabilities," have made significant progress in the past year. This can be seen through our newly developed Lived Experiences Around Disability (LEAD) Program and Disability Inclusion Awareness Training (DIAT) Program, as well as our ongoing core services, such as our Information and Referral and Parking Placard programs. Pat gave special thanks to all the staff, volunteers, and board members for all their dedicated work.

Next up was the Executive Director, Wendy Cox, who gave a report on all staff changes and program updates that have occurred over the past year. She thanked all the donors, funders and supporters who have helped out the VDRC, and gave a special mention to her coworkers. "There's a lot of support and understanding in the office and I feel very blessed to be supported by this team."

After a brief financial report from our Treasurer, Melanie Gold, Kim launched into the election of our new Board of Directors. There were two members that were up for re-election, Kim herself and Vice-Chair Jeremy Scott, as well as two new members, Gordon Rowell and Caroline Sheldrake. With all unanimous votes, the new VDRC Board of Directors was officially elected:

- * Pat Danforth (Chair)
- * Jeremy Scott (Vice-Chair)
- * Doug Copley (Secretary)
- * Melanie Gold (Treasurer)
- * Kim Donaldson (Director)
- * Lynn Mullally (Director)
- * Caroline Sheldrake (Director)
- * Gordon Rowell (Director)

Special recognition was also given to outgoing board member David Hosking, who has been part of the VDRC family for many years in many different roles. On behalf of everyone at the VDRC, David, we wish you our utmost thanks and highest hopes for the future.

The VDRC's 33rd Annual General Meeting did a fantastic job at highlighting how vital our role in the persons with disabilities community has become and how it continues to grow. The upcoming year holds many exciting possibilities for our organization!

On behalf of all the staff and volunteers of the VDRC, thank you so much to our board of directors and to our wonderful guest speaker, Donna Jodhan! If you are interested in learning more about Donna's incredible work, check out her website ** here (<https://www.donnajodhan.com/index.html>)

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VDRC to Provide Audio Visual Description at Santa Claus Parade

A truck in the Santa Claus Parade, covered in tiny multi-coloured lights.

The holiday season is fast approaching and, for some families in Victoria, that means waiting for an appearance from the jolly man in the red suit himself during the Peninsula Co-op Santa Claus Parade! The VDRC, in partnership with the Greater Victoria Festival Society, is beyond thrilled to be helping make that a reality for those families with members who have a disability!

During this year's 41st Annual Peninsula Co-op Santa Claus Parade, taking place on Saturday, November 25th, we will be managing a specially designated viewing area for persons with disabilities and their families! While certain details are still being worked out, one service that will definitely be available at the viewing area is audio visual description! A member of our staff, Rowan Yates, has received training on Live Audio Description through ** the American Council of the Blind (<https://www.acb.org/audio-description-project>) and will be on hand to provide vivid descriptions of the parade as it occurs to anyone who is blind or has low vision!

There are other services that are being looked into for the event, including a professional deaf interpreter for the parade's live broadcast, and further details will be made available at a later date. For any inquiries about the accessible viewing area or if you would like to receive audio visual assistance, please contact Wendy at ** director@drcvictoria.com (<mailto:director@drcvictoria.com>) or 250-595-0044, extension 107. We are greatly looking forward to help bring you a little holiday cheer!

** Program Spotlight - LEAD Program ()

** A photo of an assortment of teaching tools for the LEAD Program, including a sign language chart and a braille guide.

(https://mcusercontent.com/bd0f47ac051e04759b6449ec0/_compressed/e0520ae2-0e15-96d1-5232-ac5b642706a3.jpg)

One of the many ways that the VDRC strives to help improve the lives of persons with disabilities is through education. By highlighting what it is like to live with a disability and the various types of barriers faced by those living with disabilities, we have the potential to help foster a society that is more mindful of accessibility and inclusion. This is the core principle behind our Lived Experiences Around Disability (LEAD) Program.

LEAD brings the experiences of living with a disability to the classrooms of students (K-12) through innovative and engaging group presentations. These presentations are developed and delivered by persons with disabilities who have first-hand knowledge of navigating their daily lives within their abilities. Each presentation covers a wide variety of disabilities, including: sensory, physical, mental, mobility, learning, pain-related, and more.

Activities that students can participate in include:

- * demonstrations on how daily tasks are accomplished
- * an overview on the assistive technology and devices that enable independence
- * simulation activities for students to experience how activities are done differently
- * educating about barrier free environments and promoting inclusion
- * sharing helpful tips and suggestions on talking/interacting with/assisting someone with a disability
- * dedicated time for students to ask questions

In addition, the speakers will work in partnership with students with disabilities in the class, giving them an opportunity to anonymously (via the speaker) or personally share what would help eliminate barriers for them in the classroom and at school.

By offering LEAD to students, we are broadening their understanding of disabilities at a time when they are beginning to shape their own futures. As they work towards making their own marks on society, they can use this greater understanding to help shape a more barrier-free and inclusive environment for persons of all abilities.

LEAD also has the potential to offer a positive pathway for youths with disabilities as they navigate within the school system. Youth with disabilities face multiple barriers as a result of environmental factors and social stigma. Connected with this is the fact that there is a distinct lack of understanding and an abundance of misconceptions surrounding disabilities. The knowledge gained through LEAD can benefit youths with disabilities not only by dispelling the misconceptions and strengthening the understanding of their peers, but also by giving them the opportunity to acknowledge what works in their educational environment and what could be improved.

According to Sunny, Vice-Principal of McKenzie Elementary School, "As an educator of 15 years, I have seen many presentations and this one has been the most interesting and inspiring program for myself and for my students. This program plays a crucial role in helping children and adults harness empathy, which in turn, helps to manage complex, cooperative situations. These are crucial skills children need because it motivates them to act positively on behalf of others."

Are you interested in bringing LEAD to your students? Get in touch with our LEAD Coordinator, Erin Davis. at** (mailto:LEAD@drcvictoria.com)

** LEAD@drcvictoria.com (mailto:LEAD@drcvictoria.com)

or 250-595-0044, ext. 103.

** Volunteer Profile ()

** ()

A photo of Jen. They are sitting at the reception desk and they are smiling at the camera.

Jen Deakin (they/them)

What area of the VDRC office do you volunteer in?

I volunteer at the reception desk and as front end team lead.

How long have you been volunteering with the VDRC?

I have been at the VDRC since October of 2019.

What are some of your responsibilities in a typical volunteer shift?

Some of my responsibilities in a typical shift are answering the phone, transferring emails and voicemails, greeting service users who walk in, stats, and making notes of papers that need to be filled.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the VDRC?

One thing I most enjoy about volunteering with the VDRC is being able to help service users and the welcoming atmosphere.

What is one thing you would want to tell anyone who is interested in volunteering with the VDRC?

One thing I would tell anyone who is interested in volunteering with the VDRC is that, honestly I actually can't say enough about the VDRC, a great organization with fantastic people who really support each other and the community so it's you're interested absolutely take the chance.

What do you like to do when you're not volunteering?

When I'm not volunteering, I like to listen to music watch tv, play video games, [I] love Dungeons and dragons and I have a passion for the theater.

What is your favourite food?

My favorite food is a toss-up between tacos and mashed potatoes.

What is your favourite TV show, movie or book?

My favorite tv show is Big Brother (US, Canada, and Celebrity).

If you could meet any celebrity or historical figure, who would it be and why?

if I could met any celebrity or historical figure it would be Princess Diana I think it would be a very informative and inspiring and uplifting experience to be able to exchange wisdom and shared experiences with each other. Although a close second would be Marilyn Monroe for pretty much the same reason.

** Upcoming Events ()

A graphic of the t6talk logo.

VDRC and t6talk present "Peer Hang Out Sessions"

Date: October 11th, 2023, @ 12:30pm PST/3:30pm EST

Topic: The Healing Nature of Self-Forgiveness

Have you ever forgiven yourself for something? What was your process? Was it easy? Hard? Impossible? Have you ever forgiven someone else? If not, why not? And if so, what was your process? Can we be accountable for our actions and forgive ourselves? What are your feelings, ideas, experiences?

Date: October 25th, 2023 @ 12:30pm PST/3:30pm EST

Topic: Life Hacks

The disability community is filled with creative problem solvers. Plato wrote "Our need will be the real creator" ... which over time has become "Necessity is the mother of invention" (The Open University). What tools have you created? What workarounds have you discovered? Are you currently working on anything that you'd like to share? What are your feelings, ideas, experiences?

Date: November 8th, 2023 @ 12:30pm PST/3:30pm EST

Topic: Understanding You

What do you wish people better understood about you and your disability? Who "gets" you? Some people seem to get it right away. Others seem like they never will. Then there are those who are in between. What are your feelings, ideas, experiences?

Date: November 22nd, 2023 @ 12:30pm PST/3:30pm EST

Topic: What Feels Good?

What brings you comfort? What do you do that makes you feel good? Getting your hair washed? Eating a still warm cookie? Reading a good (or bad) book? Singing loudly? Wearing clothes that clash? How do you celebrate your life? What are your feelings, ideas, experiences?

Date: December 6th, 2023 @ 12:30pm PST/3:30pm EST

Topic: Adventure

We are all adventurers. Our idea of what adventure means may differ from one another, but our personal adventures always challenge us and push against our comfort zones. It's not about comparing who is more adventurous, it's about defining what it means to you. Tapping into the curiosity we had as children, how do we push ourselves to grow and learn? What are your feelings, ideas, experiences?

Find the links to the sessions at ** <https://t6talk.com/events>

(<https://t6talk.com/events>)

or contact us via ** <https://t6talk.com/contactus> (<https://t6talk.com/contactus>)
for more information

Note: These sessions are flexible - including the scheduled topic. As always, participation is welcomed, but not required. Join with or without your camera on.

Stat Holiday Closures

A graphic of a SORRY WE'RE CLOSED! sign.

The VDRC will be observing the following statutory holidays:

- * Thanksgiving - Office Closed on Monday, October 9th
- * Remembrance Day - Office Closed on Monday, November 13th

Winter Break Office Closure

A cartoon of three snowmen holding a sign that says HAPPY WINTER.

The VDRC office will be closed for Winter Break from Monday, December 18th, 2023 to Monday, January 1st, 2024.

We will be open again on

Tuesday, January 2nd at 9:00am.

** Strategic Plan Survey ()

A graphic of a checklist and a pencil.

As valued supporters of the VDRC's vision, mission and goals, we kindly request your participation in a brief (2-3 minute) survey (** click here to access (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc1S_Ius7k9EzEcFSQsuL8eIJHf0bMYobpji0xKHgKinRjcw/viewform?pli=1)).

Responses will help us draft the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, which outlines the VDRC's commitments to you over the next 3 years and how it will get there.

The VDRC is proud to be a grassroots organization, and in order to ensure our services continue to meet the needs and expectations of those we serve, we require community feedback and involvement.

For your interest, the last strategic plan can be found ** here (<https://drcvictoria.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/VDRC-Strategic-Plan-2020-2023.pdf>)

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For alternate versions of this survey, please contact Wendy at 250-595-0044 ext. 107 or at ** director@drcvictoria.com (<mailto:director@drcvictoria.com>)

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On behalf of all of us at the VDRC, we thank you for your time!

** VDRComics! ()

** A two panel comic strip. The first panel has the caption "If you ask to pet someone's service animal..." In the panel, an excitable elderly asks to pet another woman's dog. The other woman is blind and asks her not to, as the dog is guiding her. The second panel has the caption "You are asking to pet their mobility aid!" The same elderly lady is asking to pet the same other woman's cane. The other woman looks uncomfortable and asks her to go away.

(<https://mcusercontent.com/bd0f47ac051e04759b6449ec0/images/ed36f7e9-50b4-38b3-ac2e-f44fe646d56b.jpg>)

Written and drawn by Christopher Wooding

** Donate to the VDRC ()

The Victoria Disability Resource Centre (VDRC) is a non-profit, grassroots organization that provides information, support, and skills-building programs for people with disabilities. We could not do this without your generous support!

There are multiple ways to donate:

* Directly through CanadaHelps by clicking the following link:

+ ** <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/victoria-disability-resource-centre>
(<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/victoria-disability-resource-centre>)

* The donation form on our website ** here (<https://drcvictoria.com/get-involved/donate/>)

* Over the phone via credit card at 250-595-0044

* Through the mail via cheque to:

+ 817 A Fort Street, Victoria BC V8W 1H6

* Via an email e-transfer to ** giving@drcvictoria.com
(<mailto:giving@drcvictoria.com>)

(if you would like a tax receipt then please add your address in the notes section of the e-transfer or email ** giving@drcvictoria.com (<mailto:giving@drcvictoria.com>)

)

Your donation will help the VDRC continue to provide services, programs and education to the local disability community, their family and friends.

The VDRC is now accepting Cryptocurrency donations!!!

** Click here to donate Bitcoin (BTC) and Ether (ETH)!

(<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/cryptocurrency/72934/donate>)

Registered charity #: 89274 6165 RR0001

** Supporters ()

We would like to extend our utmost gratitude to every individual, group and organization that has supported our efforts over the years!

** The Province of British Columbia logo (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home>)

** The Independent Living Canada logo (<https://www.ilc-vac.ca/>)

** The Neil Squire logo (<https://www.neilsquire.ca/>)

** The United Way Southern Vancouver Island logo (<https://uwsvi.ca/>)

** The Victoria Foundation logo (<https://victoriafoundation.bc.ca/>)

** The Disability Alliance BC logo (<https://disabilityalliancebc.org/>)

** The City of Victoria logo (<https://www.victoria.ca/#>)

** The Vancity logo (<https://www.vancity.com/>)

** The Capital Regional District logo (<https://www.crd.bc.ca/>)

** The Telus Victoria Community Board logo
(<https://www.friendlyfuture.com/en/foundation/community-boards/vancouver-island>)

** The Hamber Foundation logo (<https://hamberfoundation.ca/>)

** The GVSCU Legacy Foundation logo
(<https://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/give/donor-advised-funds/greater-victoria-saving-credit-union-legacy-fund>)

** The Fort Properties LTD. logo (<https://www.fortproperties.ca/>)

** The First West Foundation Island Savings Community Endowment logo
(<https://www.firstwestfoundation.ca/content/island-savings-community-endowment>)

** (<https://drcvictoria.com/about/supporters/#:~:text=Picture%20of%20Ken%20and%20Tom>)
The Tom Dekker Fund

Questions or feedback on anything in this newsletter?
Please feel free to reach out to our Writer, Christopher Wooding, at **
writer@drcvictoria.com (<mailto:writer@drcvictoria.com>)
or 250-595-0044, extension 109!
Check out our social media for more information
on our programs and services!

** Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/drcvictoriabc>)

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** YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1vk3DDZQDMr5nm5b5kke1A/featured>)

The VDRC logo.

817A Fort Street

Victoria, BC V8W 1H6

250-595-0044

** reception@drcvictoria.com (<mailto:reception@drcvictoria.com>)

Open Mondays to Thursdays 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and

Fridays 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

The VDRC resides on the ancestral, unsurrendered, and unceded lands of the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ Nations. The VDRC recognizes the injustices upon local lands and peoples and the benefits we reap from them. We encourage our membership to give back what they can to the land and its people when possible.

If you are a settler who is interested in allyship with W̱SÁNEĆ people, please visit the Resources for Settlers page on the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council Society website ** here (<https://wsanec.com/learn-settlers/>) for great information.

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