

## Spring 2023 Edition Newsletter

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### \*\* High School Students Win Competition for the VDRC ()

Ferris, a high school student, standing outside and holding a giant cheque for \$5000 to the VDRC

The Victoria Disability Resource Centre (VDRC) recently had the amazing honour of being the subject of two different presentations delivered by some wonderful high school students for the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative competition. These presentations, delivered by Oak Bay High student Ferris Smart and by Reynolds Secondary School students Gabriele Farruggio, Andrea Parraud and Sebastian Soballa, were not only researched and delivered with incredible dedication and compassion, but also won their respective competitions! Both wins have each resulted in a grand prize of \$5000.00 to be donated to the VDRC!

The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) is a social service program that aims to, according to their website, “strengthen support for local social issues by empowering young people to determine where grant dollars would be best put to use in their own communities.” Groups deliver their presentations at two stages, the initial stage and then the finals, where a panel of youths vote on which group will win the grant for their charity. YPI has grown from its beginnings in Canada to an internationally adopted program that is responsible for donating millions of dollars to charities all

over the world. Both presentations on the VDRC were delivered as part of the students' Career Life Education classes.

For Ferris Smart, they were initially drawn to the VDRC because they found our organization to be friendly and accessible. "Walking out of the VDRC after meeting Wendy Cox left me with an unmatched feeling; everyone at the charity was so friendly, calm, and generous," says Ferris. "It makes me smile to think I could walk in there and I would not be a stranger - it is so warm and welcoming."

Their presentation began with a discussion of resources for persons with disabilities as a social issue before launching into an overview of the VDRC. They spoke about the services we provide, our outreach, what our current financial situation is like and how we would use the grant money should they win the competition. Ferris talked about their experiences visiting our organization and meeting the staff, showed off photos taken during their visit and, for the finals, they even wore an outfit with the VDRC's colours!

The responses Ferris received for their presentation were glowing, with many feeling how much of a passionate connection they had formed with the VDRC. "It truly made me feel heard that the effort and energy behind my passion for advocating for the VDRC did not go unnoticed."

Ferris sees their presentation winning the competition as a dream come true, one that they worked hard at achieving. "I am going to be honest - I cried, I felt so honoured to have been given the opportunity to represent such a great cause and such kind people."

Gabriele Farruggio, Andrea Parraud and Sebastian Soballa chose to do their presentation on the VDRC after being impressed with the abundance of info on our website and appreciating the kindness and availability of the staff. "I was very impacted by how much time and passion everyone put into their work at the VDRC," says Andrea.

The group opened their presentation with a talk about why they chose to focus on persons with disabilities and why it is such a relevant topic in our society. After a general overview of the VDRC and its programs, they talked about their visit to the

centre, highlighting some of the more interesting and impactful details and displaying several photos. They also included a video clip of their interview with the Executive Director, Wendy Cox. "In the end, our final part was a written reflection about what we learned during this adventure and why we thought that VDRC was deserving of winning the YPI prize," says Gabriele.

Their presentation earned high praise from their peers, many of whom expressed their appreciation for the work put into it, which resulted in a deeper understanding of persons with disabilities. Says Gabriele, "In particular, the lived experience that we included through the interview showed our determination in the project which I consider a crucial factor for our win."

The group was thrilled to find out that their presentation had won the competition. "Immediately I wanted to call Wendy to let her know the good news," says Andrea. According to Gabriele, he could not believe it at first and was very overwhelmed when they took a group photo with the giant \$5000 cheque. "I felt very grateful to my groupmates as it would have never been possible without them."

For all these wonderful students, their wins come with some strong hopes for the knowledge people could take away from their presentations and the positive impact it could have on the persons with disabilities community. "I hope people take away that you can make a difference - it may sound like a cliché but I want people to see me as an example if nothing else," says Ferris. "I wanted to help and all it took was this passion and competitive spirit that built up inside me that drove my presentation to the finals."

Says Gabriele, "My hope is that people finally understand that it is not acceptable that people with disabilities cannot fit in the society as they should just because they are not treated properly and they are not provided with the proper facilities." Andrea adds that she wants there to be more awareness of both persons with disabilities and the VDRC.

All of these students have expressed interests in getting more involved with charity work in the future. In particular, Ferris is excited to deliver their presentation to an international audience through the company their father works for. "In just a couple weeks I get the chance to speak to the DE&I (diversity, equity and inclusion)

committee at Vectorworks. I can only imagine the great things this will do and I will take every opportunity that has branched from this experience and make the biggest difference I can.”

On behalf of everyone at the VDRC, we want to say thank you so very much to Ferris, Gabriele, Andrea and Sebastian for the remarkable compassion and dedication put into your presentations and for helping spread the importance of supporting the persons with disabilities community. This funding will be put towards our Lived Experiences Around Disability (LEAD) Program, which aims to educate students in schools about living with a disability and how vital accessibility and inclusion for everyone is. Through LEAD, we will strive to inspire others much in the same way you have.

\*\* VDRC Attending Victoria Pride Festival in the Park ( )

Nicole, a VDRC staff member, is standing in front of a Pride flag in the VDRC office. She is smiling.

Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>

12:00pm - 8:00pm (Parade starts at 11:00am)

MacDonald Park

The VDRC is thrilled to announce that we will be again attending the Victoria Pride Festival in the Park! The festivities will begin following the Pride Parade and feature loads of entertainment, great food and an endless supply of positive vibes! We will have a table set up in the Venders section with brochures and flyers for our various programs and services, plus volunteers will be on hand to help with your questions. We might just also have some special treats for anyone who stops by to say hi! Check out the map on \*\* the official festival page

(<https://victoriapridesociety.org/victoria-pride-festival-in-the-park-2023/>)

for details on the area where our table will be located!

In addition, we will have an accessible viewing area for the Pride Parade, located on Government Street just off of Belleville Street! There will be two tents set up for shade and a ramp for wheelchair and mobility device access. Water, earplugs and chairs will be provided.

No registration needed, just drop on by! If you have any questions about the accessible viewing area, please feel free to contact Wendy Cox at \*\* [director@drcvictoria.com](mailto:director@drcvictoria.com) (mailto:director@drcvictoria.com)

or 250-595-0044, extension 107. For more info on the parade, check out \*\* the official page (<https://victoriapridesociety.org/parade/>)

!

This is an event that holds special meaning to the VDRC staff and volunteers and one that we are happy to come back to year after year. Our organization will always be proud to support persons with disabilities who are part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community!

\*\* Coordinator Needed for Artists with Disabilities Showcase ()

A stock photo of a painter's palette.

The Victoria Disability Resource Centre is looking for an individual to take on the role of Showcase Coordinator for the production of our Tenth Annual Artists with Disabilities Showcase. The show, held in early December over two or three days (to be determined), provides a platform for local artists who identify as having a disability to share their amazing creative talents, as well as observe the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3rd.)

As the Showcase Coordinator, you will be responsible for organizing and coordinating the various stages of production for the show, along with the aid and support of other contributors. Tasks include, but are not limited to:

- \* Locating and securing a local venue that will allow us to host the event, preferably donated or low cost
- \* Developing a means of inviting individuals to submit their art pieces to the show and how we would like submissions to be made (including what information we would require from each entrant)
- \* Ensuring the show is properly advertised to the general public, including coordinating the development of social media advertisements
- \* Assisting with the selection of a jury of individuals who will determine which art pieces will be featured in the art show
- \* Informing selected artists that their art pieces will be featured in the show
- \* Providing all featured artists with photo release forms and any other required legal documents, which will be provided by the VDRC
- \* Coordinating with featured artists in order to receive final art pieces to be displayed, along with a write-up containing an artist bio and any other insight they would like to share
- \* Working with the venue to determine the best way to display the art pieces

- \* Contacting local art supplies shops and galleries to enquire about potentially donating easels for displaying the art pieces
- \* Coordinating volunteers throughout the course of the event (volunteers will be recruited and assigned tasks by the VDRC)
- \* Coordinating with the venue, volunteers and featured artists on the teardown of the event and returning of art pieces to their owners

An honorarium will be given to the chosen candidate, which will be issued after the event. Starting date for the position would be effective immediately.

If you are interested in applying for the position or have any questions, please contact Christopher Wooding at \*\* [writer@drcvictoria.com](mailto:writer@drcvictoria.com)

(<mailto:writer@drcvictoria.com>)

or 250-595-0044, extension 109. You can also contact Wendy Cox at \*\*

[director@drcvictoria.com](mailto:director@drcvictoria.com) (<mailto:director@drcvictoria.com>)

or 250-595-0044, extension 107.

\*\* Program Spotlight - Disability Inclusion and Awareness Training (DIAT) ()

A graphic of several multi-coloured stick figures. One is standing in front of a big screen with a few disability related symbols on it, while the other three sit in the foreground with their hands raised.

Disability Inclusion and Awareness Training (DIAT) is one of the VDRC's newest programs and one we are very excited to bring you.

Also commonly referred to as Anti-Ableism Training, DIAT is customized training for people in the customer service industry that educates, trains, and provides resources for developing and maintaining a fully inclusive business/organization.

While our programs are typically intended for individuals with disabilities, DIAT is unique in that it is designed to create awareness for those who do not identify as have disabilities. Specifically, it is for people who work in the customer service industry, either as a business owner, an employee, a government official or volunteer. In taking this training, they are looking to expand their awareness of what it means to be a person with a disability and the various barriers they face. With this knowledge, employers and employees will have a greater understanding of how they can make their businesses more welcoming and inclusive to everyone.

The training is developed and delivered by people with disabilities who have lived experience dealing with accessibility and inclusive barriers. They work with the attending business, employers and employees to customize the training to best suit their environment, ensuring the best possible learning experience. Topics that are covered in the training include:

- \* The difference between unconscious biases and microaggressions.
- \* About Disability Intersectionality and the barriers it can cause.
- \* About the various types of disabilities.
- \* The difference between visible and invisible disabilities.
- \* What assumptions and stereotypes exist.
- \* What inclusive language is, how to use it and what language to avoid.
- \* How to best offer assistance to customers with disabilities.
- \* How to remove or decrease barriers to increase access to your services.
- \* What low-tech and low-cost options exist that can increase access to your services.

Says one DIAT participant “This session brought many issues up in an engaging and approachable way- staff felt safe asking questions and were able to understand disabilities in a deeper way.”

If you are interested in signing up your team for the Disability Inclusion and Awareness Training and would like more information, including cost, contact Wendy at \*\* [director@drcvictoria.com](mailto:director@drcvictoria.com) (mailto:director@drcvictoria.com) or 250-595-0044, extension 107.

\*\* Volunteer Profile - Sean Stewart ()

Sean, a volunteer, sits in his wheelchair in the VDRC office hallway.

What area of the VDRC office do you volunteer in?

Parking Permit Desk

How long have you been volunteering with the VDRC?

Since August 2008

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

Mailing out Parking Permits to service users, and dealing with service users who come in with parking permits

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with the VDRC?

Dealing with service users who come in and staff

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

The staff are knowledgeable and friendly

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

Either watching TV or playing on computer

What is your favourite food?

Pizza or Subway

What is your favourite TV show, movie or book?

Crime shows

If you could go on vacation to anywhere in the world, where would you go?

California

\*\* Upcoming Events ( )

VDRC 33rd Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Thursday, September 21st, 6:00pm till 7:30pm PST

Join us via Zoom to have your say by voting on financials and who gets a seat on the board of directors. Hear from the Chair and the Executive Director about the programs and services provided over the last fiscal year.

ASL Interpreting and Live Transcription will be available. Zoom access will be available closer to the event. For more information, contact Wendy at \*\*  
director@drcvictoria.com (mailto:director@drcvictoria.com)  
or 250-595-0044, extension 107.

VDRC and t6talk present

“Peer Hang Out Sessions - An Open Forum”

Based on peer feedback, these bi-weekly sessions are an Open Forum style so we can exchange ideas and discuss issues. This approach gives us the opportunity to share what we are currently celebrating or struggling with. When you share, it is important to let the group know if you want people to just listen, or if you want feedback. We look forward to hanging out and chatting.



August 2nd, 2023, at 2:30 PST/5:30 EST

August 16th, 2023, 2:30 PST/5:30 EST

August 30th, 2023, at 2:30 PST/5:30 EST

September 13th, 2023, 2:30 PST/5:30 EST

September 27th, 2023, at 2:30 PST/5:30 EST

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: As always, participation is welcomed, but not required. Join with or without your camera on.

\*\* VDRComics! ()

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 this 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)  
(<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) (<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

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) (<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>)

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

\*\* Twitter (<https://twitter.com/DRCVictoria>)

\*\* Twitter (<https://twitter.com/DRCVictoria>)

\*\* Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/drcvictoria/>)

\*\* Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/drcvictoria/>)

\*\* Website (<http://www.drcvictoria.com/>)

\*\* Website (<http://www.drcvictoria.com/>)

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

\*\* 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) (<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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