

Spring 2013

newsbreak

your community living newsletter

In This Issue:

- ◆ Feet on the ground: NBACL works to develop social policy for real change
- ◆ President's Message
- ◆ German students study inclusion
- ◆ New "Focus on Inclusion" Initiative
- ◆ NBACL ChangeMaker Rob Ricketts
- ◆ Upcoming Events
- ◆ Barbara Coloroso Returns to New Brunswick
- ◆ Staff Matters
- ◆ NBACL ChangeMaker Society

Feet on the ground

NBACL works to develop social policy for real change

By Christy McLean and Ken Pike

In addition to the work we do on behalf of children and adults with an intellectual disability through our many programs, NBACL is busy building relationships with government policy makers to develop and enhance social policies and programs that benefit children and adults with an intellectual disability and their families. Here is a glimpse behind the scenes at just some of the work we do to create real and lasting change in New Brunswick.

Dispute Resolution within the Public Education Sector

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's 2012-2013 action plan included the creation of a dispute resolution process within the public education sector. This process will support parents to better handle disputes with the New Brunswick public school system (kindergarten to grade 12). Ken Pike participated on a Department committee that helped to develop a draft dispute resolution policy and process. A new dispute resolution policy is expected to be in place by the fall of 2013.

Disability Income Program

In 2012, NBACL's Executive Director, Krista Carr, along with other members of the New Brunswick Disability Executives' Network (NBDEN) developed and submitted a detailed proposal for a disability income program to the Department of Social Development and the Social Assistance Reform Advisory Committee. Included in the proposal were recommendations for new eligibility criteria for disability income benefits, higher benefit rates, and improvements to the wage exemption that will allow a person with a disability who is on social assistance to keep more of the income they earn through employment.

Continued on Page 3...

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President's Message

“If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door”
— Milton Berle

Through the years, NBACL has worked to create positive change for children and adults with an intellectual disability. While many of these changes may have appeared to have happened over night, it took a great deal of work behind the scenes to take a vision and turn it into a reality for individuals and families. It takes persistence and months, sometimes years to develop or change social policies that affect the lives of children and adults with an intellectual disability. NBACL works to “build doors” for people with an intellectual disability and in this issue, we wanted to share with our readers some of the work we are doing today for a brighter tomorrow.

In June we hosted our annual Changing Lives, Changing Communities fundraising luncheon in Fredericton. It was an opportunity for people who attended to deepen their understanding of the work of the Association and to share what they have learned with others in the community. In this issue of Newsbreak, we thank some of the many people who believe in and contribute to our mission. We would not be able to continue our work without their support.

Coming this fall, NBACL will be holding three very exciting workshops. Due to popular demand, childcare expert and author, Barbara Coloroso will be returning in October to present “Kids are Worth It – Teaching Wit and Wisdom.” In November, Beth Keeton will be in Moncton to present a workshop on customized employment. In July, NBACL will be holding a workshop on supporting people with an intellectual disability to achieve healthy relationships.

NBACL has grown its staff again. I would like to wish a warm welcome to the new members of our staff and students who will be interning with us over the summer months. Know that the contributions you will make through your work at NBACL will help to change lives and change communities!

Joy Bacon,

President, NBACL

Joy Bacon,
NBACL President



Feet on the ground continued...

In April, the government announced changes that will see a 7% increase in benefit rates by April 2014. In October 2013, the wage exemption will change so that people with a disability can keep \$250 per month of income from employment **plus** 30% of any income they earn above \$250 per month. Also, people eligible for disability income benefits living with their parents will only have their benefits reduced by \$100 per month once parental income is above \$50,000 per year. Other aspects of the proposal are being addressed by the Social Assistance Reform Advisory Committee and further improvements are expected over the coming months.

Employment Action Plan

The Employment Action Plan for Persons with a Disability was released in May of 2012 (NBACL participated on a committee to set up to develop the plan). This Action Plan set out 37 recommendations for assisting working age people with a disability to become employed. Recommendations cover areas such as transition from high school to work, access to post secondary education and training, transportation, improving pre-employment and employment services, and incentives for employers to hire job seekers with a disability. The N.B. Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities is responsible for coordinating the response to the plan and recommendations.

Early Learning and Childcare Policy

In 2012, NBACL in collaboration with Early Childhood Care and Education New Brunswick (ECCENB) produced a report entitled "Walking in Our Shoes". This report includes recommendations for policy and program changes so that families who have a child with a disability can have better access to quality inclusive early learning and childcare.

Portable Rent Subsidies

NBACL has been promoting the concept of "portable rent subsidies" for people with a disability. These are subsidies to help people afford to rent apartments in their communities so that they can have a home of their own (with support if needed). A portable subsidy is not attached to a particular apartment building (as is currently the case with rent supplements); rather it is paid directly to the person so that he or she has more choice about where to live. NBACL will be meeting with government in the near future to discuss this idea further.

Improvements to the Disability Support Program

NBACL has worked with other disability organizations to identify issues related to the Disability Support Program (DSP). This Department of Social Development program (for adults ages 19 to 64) provides funding for personalized, flexible disability supports and encourages people with disabilities to be directly involved in developing their personal disability support plans. Policy issues such as access to transportation and providing more flexibility on how support funding is used are being discussed. NBACL continues to encourage the Department of Social Development to address policy issues and will hold further meetings with the Department to move forward with this work.

Children with Special Needs Program

The government of New Brunswick has committed to "modernizing" the Community Based Services for Children with Special Needs Program. The Department of Social Development has recently conducted a survey of current users of the Children with Special Needs Program and held regional focus groups with families. In early 2013, NBACL conducted an independent survey of parents of children with an intellectual disability to hear about their experiences with the program. In April 2013, Ken Pike and Tara Brinston also participated in a provincial consultation held by the Department. NBACL, along with other provincial disability organizations recently submitted a brief with recommendations for reform based on the information from the surveys and the consultation. Issues such as better access to funding, more flexibility on the use of funding, and more assistance with finding support workers were addressed in the brief to government.

Continued on next page...

Feet on the ground continued...

Supported Decision Making Legislation

The pursuit of Supported Decision Making legislation comes on the heels of Canada's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Article 12 of the Convention provides that countries must take steps to support people with a disability to exercise their right to "legal capacity". This means that people who need support to make decisions should have access to this support.

A Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) working group has developed a framework for supported decision making legislation. This framework is outlined in a recent document entitled "Securing Citizenship and Legal Capacity for All". This month, NBACL will be holding a meeting with community members and the Minister of Justice to discuss supported decision making in New Brunswick.

To learn more about NBACL's work in the area of Social Policy, contact NBACL or call 1-866-622-2548.

German students study inclusion during NBACL internship

By Aleisha Bosch

Nadine Kirchhoff and Johanna Kellner think the best way to learn about inclusion is to experience it.

Both Kirchhoff and Kellner are students from the Inclusive Education Program at Protestant University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt Germany who spent three months at NBACL's Fredericton office, learning how New Brunswick and Canada implement inclusive policies and practices. Their Professor, Anne-Dore Stein had spent time in New Brunswick studying the same topic in 2008 and recommended New Brunswick to the pair. During that time, they worked on their shared thesis for their undergraduate degree, which examines how NBACL facilitates inclusion and participation in communities, using the Disability Support and Social Inclusion programs as examples. They focused particularly on the strategies, backgrounds, and professional attitudes of NBACL staff in their thesis.



Nadine Kirchhoff (left) and Johanna Kellner (right) were in New Brunswick to learn more about inclusion.

"I learned about it before but didn't really see inclusion before I came to Canada... we don't really have it in Germany," said Kellner.

Kellner first became interested in inclusion after spending time in Israel after finishing high school. While there, she worked in a residence or apartment complex for people with a disability. She enjoyed the experience and wanted to learn more.

Kirchhoff spent a year volunteering after completing high school. During that time, she worked in a school for people with an intellectual disability. In Germany, she said, people with an intellectual disability attend separate schools and live in institutions. It was her first experience with people with a disability and she wanted to learn more.

People with a disability are not often seen on the street in Germany, said Kellner. Because many people don't have contact with people with a disability, she added, they don't know how to include them. Assisting anyone with a disability is viewed solely as an act of charity.

Continued on next page...

German students study inclusion *continued...*

“They don’t view them as people, they view them as people with a disability,” said Kirchhoff. “They are afraid of people with a disability because they never have contact with them.”

In the past decade, said Kirchhoff, more people have been moved out of institutions and put into smaller group homes. However, this movement is organized by the institutions, so Kirchhoff said they are still not really a part of the community.

Kellner added that people who live in institutions or group homes take part in activities organized by their facility, which do not involve people without a disability.

“That’s why other people don’t have contact with them and they don’t really know that they exist,” said Kirchhoff.

Not everyone in Germany shares this attitude, said Kellner. There are some organizations similar to NBACL, but they are much smaller, underfunded, and lack the power to make social policy changes. In Canada, said Kellner, disability organizations work together and are stronger for it. In contrast, their German counterparts do not.

“What I like is that NBACL has grown to a strong organization and has power to change something and go to the government,” said Kellner.

From her experience at NBACL, Kirchhoff says she has learned that the actions of people in the community are the most important step towards creating change. While both Germany and Canada have signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, attitudes towards people with disabilities vary widely between the two countries.

“In Germany people are afraid to do something wrong so they do nothing, but people here in Canada are more willing to try new things to make changes,” said Kirchhoff.

“Focus on Inclusion”

Initiative looks to support early learning and child care centre staff with inclusive strategies, resources, professional learning and on-site consultation support

By Aleisha Bosch

Through supporting staff and sharing resources with early learning and child care centres, NBACL’s new “Focus on Inclusion” initiative aims to enhance the capacities of centre staff (teachers, directors and others) to include children of varying needs and abilities.

Dixie Mitchell, NBACL’s Early Learning and Childcare Coordinator and the initiative’s manager, said much of the project’s emphasis is placed on educating and supporting early learning and child care staff. She and her team of four Early Learning Inclusion Facilitators offer resources, mentoring, and strategy modelling. They also offer professional learning to staff, and help them engage more with their children’s families.

Continued on next page...

“Focus on Inclusion” *Continued...*

“Engagement is the first step to building a relationship-based model,” said Mitchell. “This engagement is really important for educators to get to know their children.”

Mitchell and her team also work with the children’s families, ensuring strategies they give are consistently used both in centres and at home.

Strategies are tailored to the needs of children and situations at each centre. Some children may require support demonstrating more positive behaviours, interacting in new ways with other children, using equipment and materials, and becoming used to routines, said Mitchell. In many cases, facilitators work with staff to help the children develop friendships, starting with smaller groups and increasing over time.

Emphasis is placed on the children’s social and emotional development. Mitchell and her team work towards a goal of all children being ready for kindergarten, and being able to participate fully in programming.

Being prepared for kindergarten is not only about intellectual growth, said Mitchell, but rather having good social and emotional health.

Centres are divided among facilitators depending on the needs of staff. Mitchell and her team spend more time each month in centres where staff require more support, but every centre in the initiative is visited for at least three hours every month.

This month, Mitchell and her team will evaluate if their support is still needed in each of the participating centres. These centres will remain on the support list for the following year, along with centres who have yet to participate.

As part of the project, a two-day forum titled “Walking in Our Shoes,” was held in February at the Fredericton Inn. Early learning and child care experts from Canada and the United States gave presentations and workshops to those attending. Dr. Sharon Hope Irwin, researcher and author, gave a keynote speech about the important elements of inclusive education environments and systems, and the need for measuring inclusive principles and practices.

All children benefit from growing up in inclusive environments, said Irwin, adding that children in inclusive environments don’t have to unlearn negative behaviours as an adult. Instead of learning rejection, they learn empathy.

“Little kids get a jump start at that if they’re together,” said Irwin.

Mitchell said the initiative so far has been a success. Early learning and child care staff report a change in their inclusive practices and attitude towards inclusion, and children and their families are benefiting. Early Childhood educators and aides also demonstrate a greater confidence and comfort level in supporting children with varying needs.

For more information about the “Focus on Inclusion,” initiative, contact Dixie Mitchell at (506) 453-4424 or email dmitchell@nbacl.nb.ca.



Emphasis is placed on the children’s social and emotional development. Mitchell and her team work towards a goal of all children being ready for kindergarten, and being able to participate fully in programming.

NBACL ChangeMaker profile: Rob Ricketts of Fredericton Volkswagon

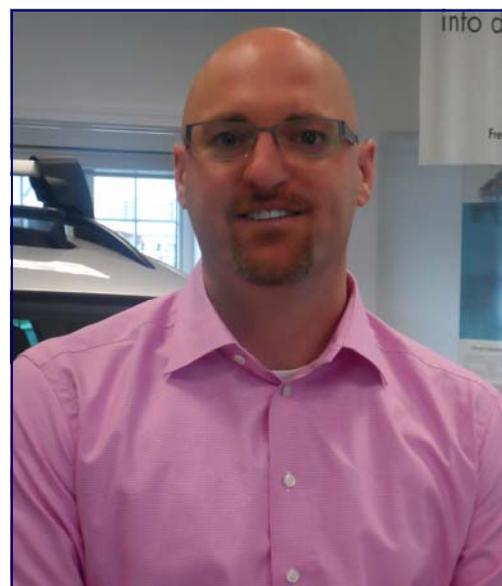
By Sheri Shannon

Four years ago, NBACL launched our first ever multiple-year giving society, *The ChangeMaker Society*, where people and/or organizations could donate \$1000 per year for five years or more. In this edition of Newsbreak, we are profiling ChangeMaker Rob Ricketts, who is helping us make a difference in the lives of children and adults with an intellectual disability and their families.

Rob was interviewed by Sheri Shannon, NBACL's Community Giving Coordinator, about his involvement as an NBACL ChangeMaker.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I was born in Scarborough Ontario and grew up in Burlington just West of Toronto with my younger brother and mom. I graduated from Georgian College, and then North Wood University with studies in Business and Automotive Marketing. I have held various roles in the Auto business since 1999. In 2005, I left Volkswagen Canada and moved to Fredericton with my business Partner Thor Olesen to run Fredericton Volkswagen. I have been living in Fredericton for the last 8 years. Not long after moving to the area, I met my wife Helene Bouchard. We now have a wonderful 3 year old daughter named Sophie.



NBACL Changemaker, Rob Ricketts

Why did you choose to support NBACL and why is this important to you?

Shortly after becoming the dealer I was approached by a customer who was involved with the Rotary Club and Jobs Unlimited. At that time, I had no idea about NBACL or what types of programs they supported. In the beginning, we were just an employer who was able to offer some part time work to a staff member who has an intellectual disability. Terry has worked for the store since. He comes in one day a week and does a lot of the jobs that we just don't have time to do. He's always happy to see everyone and he always lets us know what the weather is going to be like for the week.

Through his employment, I slowly learned more about NBACL and other programs they support. I've attended CLCC luncheons and NBACL fundraising dinners, in addition to holding a clothing drive at Fredericton VW. Over the years, I've had several interactions with various team members at NBACL and enjoy helping out where I can.

Why do you feel it is important for others to get to know NBACL and to support the work we do?

I believe that people are inherently good. However, we are all very busy and often struggle just to keep up with the day to day activities in our own lives. Organizations like NBACL lend a much needed hand to people who need support doing things that most of us take for granted. It's this type of support that makes the difference in the lives of people in our community and the feeling of community is one of the things I like most about living in Fredericton. Like any not for profit organization funding is a key element in allowing NBACL to support the people who need it. Support can mean many things, donating time, donating clothes, or donating financial support. It all helps which at the end of the day allows NBACL to continue the work they do.

Upcoming Events

SEXCESS - SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN ACHIEVING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY

- Do you deal with issues and provide information about sexuality and healthy relationships to people with an intellectual disability?
- Do you want to learn innovative ways to approach the topic of sexuality?
- Do you support someone who needs assistance with a particular challenge related to sexuality and healthy relationships?

We are all sexual beings; however, there is often an uneasiness discussing sexuality, particularly as it relates to people with an intellectual disability. We all need relationships and support, however, people with an intellectual disability often experience significant social isolation. SEXCESS! is a 2 day training event designed to give you real-life tools to support an individual in achieving healthy sexuality and in developing positive relationships.

Participants will explore the following three key themes: Relating to Myself; Relating to Others: Building Healthy Relationships and; Exploring Boundaries, Trust and Ways to Keep Safe. We will also take an in-depth look at: sexuality; puberty; public and private spaces; establishing boundaries, and abuse prevention. This training will cover a variety of strategies and activities you can use with individuals to support them through their personal growth. Join us for an interactive and highly informative two days!

Presented by Tara Brinston | NBACL **Date:** July 16 & 17, 2013 | **Time:** 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (both days)

Location: Killarney Lake Lodge | Rotary Room | 1600 St. Mary's Street, Fredericton **COST:** \$300

Registration Deadline: July 9, 2013

To Register, contact: Rebecca Pilson, rpilson@nbacl.nb.ca or call, toll free: 1-866-622-2548

Save the Date!

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT - A WORKSHOP PRESENTED BY BETH KEETON

Join us for two workshops presented by Beth Keeton, Senior Consultant with Griffin-Hammis Associates, an organization that specializes in community rehabilitation improvement, job creation and job site training, employer development, work incentives and more. On Day One of the workshop, we will cover a range of topics from knowing your rights to work customization. On Day Two, we will go deeper into the topic of customized employment for people with an intellectual disability. Participants can choose to attend one or both workshops.

Dates: Workshop #1: November 14th | Workshop #2: November 15th

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (both days)

Location: Moncton, NB **Venue:** To be announced

Please visit the NBACL website for more details at www.nbacl.nb.ca



NBACL receives donation through curling fundraiser

Left to right: Executive Director Krista Carr accepted a \$1,400 cheque April 24 on behalf of NBACL from Doug Mockler, who raised the money through the 10th Annual Hogan Paving Senior Curling Club Fundraiser. Held April 3 at the Capital Winter Curling Club, more than 60 senior men and women curlers from both the Capital Winter Club and the Fredericton Curling Club participated. Thank you, curlers!

A Workshop with Barbara Coloroso

KIDS ARE WORTH IT - TEACHING WITH WIT & WISDOM

This workshop offers solid practical advice for educators on how to create a school climate in which students can become self-disciplined, compassionate, responsible, resourceful, resilient human beings who can act in their own best interest, “stand up for themselves,” and, exercise their own rights, while respecting the rights and legitimate needs of others.

Barbara will discuss the keys to good teaching; treating kids with respect; giving them a sense of positive power in their own lives; giving them opportunities to make decisions, take responsibility for their own actions, and learn from their successes and mistakes.

Barbara Coloroso is an international bestselling author and for the past 38 years an internationally recognized speaker and consultant on parenting, teaching, school discipline, positive school climate, bullying, grieving, nonviolent conflict resolution and restorative justice.



Krista Carr, NBACL Executive Director (left) with presenter Barbara Coloroso (right)

Date: October 9th, 2013 **Time:** 9 am—4 pm **Registration Deadline:** October 1, 2013

Cost: \$175 (Workshop includes lunch, nutrition breaks and refreshments)

Location: Irving Theatre, Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre Fredericton, NB

To register, contact: Rebecca Pilson, rpilson@nbacl.nb.ca or call, toll free: 1-866-622-2548

KIDS ARE WORTH IT - PARENTING WITH WIT & WISDOM

A Special Evening Session for Parents and Families

Barbara Coloroso will be also be presenting a 2 hour evening session packed with solid practical advice for parents of children from toddlers to teenagers. Barbara will discuss the keys to good parenting: treating kids with respect; giving them a sense of positive power in their own lives; giving them opportunities to make decisions, take responsibility for their actions and learn from their successes and mistakes.

Date: October 9th, 2013 **Time:** 7pm - 9 pm **Registration Deadline:** October 1, 2013 **Cost:** \$10 per person

Location: Irving Theatre, Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre Fredericton, NB

To register, contact: Rebecca Pilson, rpilson@nbacl.nb.ca or call, toll free: 1-866-622-2548

PLEASE NOTE: A limited number of grants are available to support individuals to attend the Barbara Coloroso Full Day workshop. To apply for a grant application, please contact: Rebecca Pilson: rpilson@nbacl.nb.ca

Staff Matters

With over 50 staff working around the province doing “whatever it takes for as long as it takes”, NBACL is an ever-growing and ever-changing organization! We’d like to introduce and re-introduce you to some friendly faces on the NBACL team.



Anne Daley joined the NBACL team in March 2013 as a Social Inclusion Facilitator in Saint John. Anne holds an Educational Assistant Diploma from NBCC Saint John and has previously worked as a Family Support Worker.

Heather MacLellan is completing the last part of her social work degree from Dalhousie University with a practicum at NBACL’s Fredericton office. Heather works with the Independent Facilitators and the Disability Support program.



Christy McLean has returned from maternity leave to her position as Manager of Communications. She is based in the Fredericton provincial office and has been with NBACL for nine years.

Kelly Naish returned to NBACL in May 2013 as an Early Learning Inclusion Facilitator in Saint John, where she will be part of the “Focus on Inclusion” initiative. Kelly previously worked with NBACL on the “Opening the Door to Quality Childcare and Development” project, starting in 2009.



Liz Rickard joined the NBACL team in May 2013 as Finance Officer, working out of the Fredericton office. Liz holds a diploma in Accounting, Payroll, and Business Administration from Eastern College.

Helene St. Cyr-Levesque has returned to her position as Independent Facilitator in Edmundston after time off for maternity leave. Helene originally joined the NBACL team in May 2006.



Aleisha Bosch, NBACL’s digital and communications intern has completed her internship with NBACL and is now Communications Manager of the New Brunswick Medical Society. Congratulations, Aleisha!

Johanna Kellner and Nadine Kirchhoff worked as interns in the Fredericton office from February to May 2013. Johanna and Nadine are from Germany and spent their time learning about inclusion in New Brunswick and Canada for their university thesis topic.



Johanna Kellner



Nadine Kirchhoff



Amy Murray, NBACL’s Manager of Employment and Training Initiatives is currently on maternity leave. NBACL wishes Amy and family all the best!

NBACL Changemaker Society

NBACL would like to extend a special

Thank You to our ChangeMaker Society members. For the past few years the following people have made significant contributions in support of the work we do for children and adults with an intellectual disability and their families:

Rhonda & Premier David Alward
Andal Corp
Joy Bacon
Base Engineering Inc.
Cannon's Cross
Krista & Jody Carr
Ed Carten Realty (1998) Ltd.
& Francine Comeau
Elaine Colter
David Emmerson, Riverview Ford Lincoln
Claude Francouer
Fredericton Inn
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Joanne Kraftcheck
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Ron McDonald, LiteCo

NB Nurses Union
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New Brunswick Union of
Public and Private Employees
Debbie Northrop
Northumberland Dairies
Jack & Ann Passmore
Gordon Porter
Rob Ricketts, Fredericton Volkswagon
Scotiabank
Andy & Denise Scott
Maynard Shore
Lorraine Silliphant
Snooty Fox
Danny Soucy
Gary Waite & Kate Hayward
Colette & Brad Wasson, Business Bridge Inc.
Jeff White
Doug Willms & Ann Manuel



Thank-you to our lead donors for 2013!





Tell Us What You Think!

The *Newsbreak* newsletter is *your* newsletter and we want to know what you think! We are always looking for ways to improve, so tell us what stories or information you would like to see or ways we can enhance your reading experience. Of course, we are always looking for great stories and photos; feel free to send us your own news!

Contact:

Christy McLean, Manager of Communications

Email: cmclean@nbacl.nb.ca

Tel: 1-506-453-4404

Enter to WIN!

Help spread the word about our work by *liking* and *sharing* our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/nbacl>). Once we reach our goal of 1000 likes, you will be entered to win a **\$50 gift card to the Atlantic Superstore**. The Atlantic Superstore also donated \$15,000 to NBACL in support of the programs and projects we offer children and adults with an intellectual disability and their families.

We're also on Twitter: twitter.com/NBACL



We invite you to hear how we change lives and change communities:

NBACL regularly hosts one hour tours to increase awareness of our work. Through the use of story-telling and myth-busting, we love to share our passion with any interested community member. To book a tour with your group, please contact Sheri Shannon: sshannon@nbacl.nb.ca or 1-506-453-4400

Help us save our resources, and the environment!



New Brunswick
Association for
Community Living

Association du
Nouveau-Brunswick pour
l'intégration communautaire

NBACL/ANBIC is a provincial non-profit organization that has been supporting people with intellectual disabilities and their families since 1957. NBACL works to ensure that people with intellectual disabilities have the supports they need to live meaningful lives and participate in their communities as valued and contributing members.

