

# National Access Awareness Week: May 26-June 1

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THE BRUNSWICKIAN

After Rick Hansen's Man in Motion World Tour, he requested an awareness week to promote access for persons with disabilities. The National Access Awareness Week (NAAW) was established following this in 1988.

The focus of the NAAW has shifted since 1988 from awareness-raising to action designed to create access through concrete change. There are six key areas of focus for

stated as follows: "Bringing Canadians together to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities in community life". The provincial slogan for 1997 is: "For a future that includes persons with disabilities."

NAAW promotes access for all people with disabilities, including people with mobility, sensory, non-visible, and intellectual disabilities. The 1991 census states that of the 723,900 people in New Brunswick, 17.7% have a disability. This means that approximately 128,130 people

## NAAW considers the following disabilities:

- persons who have a mobility disability (may use a wheelchair, walk with a cane or walker, use braces, etc.)
- persons who are blind or who have a visual impairment
- persons who are deaf or hard of hearing
- persons who have a learning disability
- persons who have a mental disability
- persons who have a traumatic brain injury
- persons who have a rare disease that causes them to have one of the above disabilities
- persons who have a non-visible disability (i.e. such as epilepsy, diabetes)

the organization: Transportation, Housing, Employment, Recreation, Education and Communications. The Week is seeking to fulfill four objectives: assess the accessibility of services and facilities, set measurable goals, make practical improvement and celebrate achievements.

The organization is locally based and involves the work of volunteers. Since 1988 the group has grown significantly from 250 to over 1000 participating communities. Funding comes from a variety of sources from across Canada but is primarily local because it is a community-based initiative. NAAW is coordinated in New Brunswick by the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons.

Although NAAW is seeking to fulfill many goals, the main goal is

have some kind of a disability. There are many different kinds of disabilities. When we hear the word disability, we often think of a person who uses a wheelchair or someone who is blind. Many disabilities are less obvious such as mental health, hard of hearing, epilepsy, learning or developmental disabilities.

Getting an education and getting a job would be the best way to ensure "A Future that Includes Persons with Disabilities" with dignity and independence. Learning is the key to opening doors for every citizen. Give us a chance and we may surprise you. A message from National Access Awareness Week.

Information provided by The Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

The University of New Brunswick is committed to equitable treatment of students with disabilities.

While all students are expected to satisfy the requirements for courses and programs, the administration, faculty, staff, and students of UNB are expected to provide reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodation is the use of originality and flexibility in adjusting to particular needs; it is not to be interpreted as the lowering of standards.

Reasonable accommodations may include such things as special seating, wheelchair accessible tables, adjustments to lighting and ventilation, use of a computer, tape recorder or FM system, and expanded time for tests or exams.

This statement recognizes the responsibility of the student to identify his/her specific needs for which accommodation is requested; it also recognizes the role of the university to preserve, as much as possible, the confidentiality and privacy of students' affairs; and finally it recognizes the joint effort of student and university needed to create and support an environment where students with disabilities will have the opportunity to attain academic and personal success.

UNB has limited resources and must work within existing resources (faculty, staff and budgets) in attempting to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Regulations which pertain to students with disabilities are listed in the 1996-1997 undergraduate calendar on page B.11 and are reproduced here for your convenience.

10(b) Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations to enable them to complete academic requirements. The student may be required to provide the university with professional reports which contain specific recommended accommodation which are necessary for the student to achieve course, examination, and program completion. The University will respond to requests for reasonable

accommodations as its resources permit.

10(c) Students who wish to be considered under the provisions in 10(b) must make the request to the instructor no later than the official date to withdraw from the course without academic penalty.

Accommodations The following are some of the accommodations which are deemed reasonable:

Classrooms:

• book lists available prior to term

• preferred seating accommodation

• note taker or taped lectures permitted, equipment provided by student

• copies of overheads and outlines

• provision of individual copies by the instructor/professor

• use of special adaptive equipment provided by the student

Tests/Examinations:

• extra time to write exams/tests (time and a half maximum)

• writing exams/tests in a private room

• use of word processing

• alternate exam format

• alternate methods of testing and evaluation (i.e. large print, Braille, oral testing, etc.)

• use of readers during the exam setting.

If other accommodations are needed, please contact the Co-ordinator of Services to Students with Disabilities.

Counselling Services:

• There is a Counselling Centre on campus staffed with counsellors who are familiar with disabilities and who are available to all students.

• Confidential and group counselling are available on request. Students are encouraged to contact Counselling Services as early as possible in their university career.

• A 24 hour emergency service is available.

Location: Alumni Memorial Building  
Phone: (506)453-4820

Psycho-Educational Assessment Due to limited resources, the University is unable to provide extensive psycho-educational assessment services on demand.

However, should you need or would like an assessment, please contact Counselling Services or the office of the Co-ordinator of Services to Students with Disabilities.  
Phone: (506) 453-4820  
(506) 453-3515

Health Services:

• There is a health clinic on campus available to all students by appointment or urgent walk-in. The medical clinic is staffed by three physicians and two nurses. All are aware of issues of students with disabilities.

• The clinic is located on the second floor of Tibbitts Hall. Students with mobility impairments who would have difficulty with stairs should phone the clinic before going to the Health Centre to receive directions for the elevator location.

Location: Tibbitts Hall

Phone: (506) 453-4837

Residences:

• The Dean of Residence seeks to be responsive to the needs of students with disabilities.

• Room Assignments When students are completing their application for residence, they are requested to identify any medical or other condition which should be considered when assigning the student a residence room or roommate. Appropriate supporting documentation should accompany the application.

Physical Accessibility of Residences:

Although it is an important part of ongoing planning, only a small number of UNB residence rooms are considered wheelchair accessible or are equipped with private bathrooms.

Location: Residence Administration Building

Phone: (506) 453-4800

Off Campus Housing:

• Plans of campus housing (apartments, rooms, roommates, etc.) are available through the off campus housing office.

Lists do not indicate accessibility. Phone: (506) 453-4667

International students

Information about services for international students is available from the International Student Advisor/CIDA Coordinator's Office.  
Location: Alumni Memorial Building  
Phone: 9506) 453-5005  
E-mail: isa@unb.ca

Food Service Students with specific food allergies

diabetic requirements or other specific dietary requirements can make arrangements through the University Food Service Operator's dietitian. Consultations are available at the Student Health Centre.

Financial Aid

In August 1995, the Canada Student Loan Program made available a new program especially for students with disabilities.

For more information please contact Sue Wiesner, Director of Financial Aid.  
Location: Alumni Memorial Building  
Phone: (506) 453-4796  
E-mail: wiesner@unb.ca

Physical Accessibility of Campus

The University contains facilities and parking areas which are designated as accessible. However, some buildings and parking areas are more accessible than others.

Should you wish more information about the physical accessibility of university buildings please contact the Security Office. Staff are available 24 hours a day and can explain the physical accessibility of each building.  
Location: VU Centre  
Phone: (506) 453-4830

For More Information, please contact: The Co-ordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities:  
Sandra Latchford  
Phone: (506) 453-3515 (office)  
(506) 453-4765 (fax)  
E-mail: sandral@unb.ca or  
The Dean of Students:  
Thomas Austin  
Phone: (506) 453-4527 (office)  
(506) 453-5005 (fax)  
E-mail: deanofst@unb.ca

## Graduating With The "Hidden Disability"

Graduating With The Hidden Disability  
Susan Alcorn MacKay  
from Abilities: Canada's lifestyle magazine for people with disabilities Issue 29, Winter, 1996

Stephanie is a bright, well-spoken young woman who reads at the grade-two level. Daryl uses a calculator even for simple multiplication. Michael dropped out of grade nine because he couldn't write. Kristen is an avid reader but becomes very confused with oral instruction.

All these people have something in common. They are all adults with learning disabilities. And they all went back to school, to graduate with post-secondary education.

Learning disabilities affect about five to ten per cent of the general population. They affect how the brain receives, stores or processes language in people of average to above-average intellectual capability. A learning disability may influence only how a person reads, or writes, or hears or speaks.

Most people have experienced reversing digits in a phone number, or having to search for that word "on the tip of the tongue," or having their thought process distracted simply by worry or fatigue. For the person with

a learning disability, most numbers or letters are reversed, they never find that word on the tip of their tongue, or distractions interfere with their paying attention in situations every day.

Learning disabilities (LD) do not go away. They affect the person as a child, adolescent and adult in daily activities. LD can be a barrier in school, employment, family life and social relationships.

The person with LD contends with more than the direct effect of the particular disability. If a child in grade two has difficulty reading, his or her feelings about school in general may be affected. By grade four, the student may have become frustrated, have poor self-esteem or have behavioral problems. The LD itself takes a back seat to the overall feelings of inadequacy, anger, depression and defeat.

Many people are unaware that they have a learning disability. They may never have succeeded in school and may have been told that they were lazy or unmotivated. Some were class clowns. Others quit school in frustration. Some turned to sports, or specific types of employment where their learning disability would be largely undetected.

Learning disabilities are hidden. They

can't be obviously seen. Every person with a learning disability is different, and no two people will experience the same characteristics. This, too, makes precise identification difficult.

But a brief list of characteristics has been reported by many people with LD, including: difficulty reading; always spelling poorly; difficulty writing thoughts down on paper; confusion with directions or long speeches; lack of past success in school; and difficulty with multiplication and division. Some people have one or more of these features. The individual is considered to have a learning disability if these characteristics interfere with his or her achievement.

There are several reasons why a person might have a learning disability. One explanation is genetics. There is a trend in some families for more than one individual to have a learning disability. Another reason is environmental factors. Exposure to certain chemicals such as lead can produce learning disabilities. Head trauma when young has also been linked to LD, as have some illnesses such as those associated with high fevers.

When a person has a learning disability, he or she does not "outgrow" it. There is no training or treatment

proven to cure a learning disability. However, some adults find adults returning to school for retraining, and who may have missed special education services in elementary and secondary school.

If you wish to attend a college, contract the school of your choice and ask for an interview with the special needs office. The staff will determine appropriate strategies with you. Strategies differ depending on the individual college, the type of program requested and the nature of the learning disability.

In Stephanie's situation, her poor reading skills had always prevented her from accessing the kinds of books that would have given her a well-rounded education. But in college, staff read her books onto audio cassette so that she could listen to them. As she listened, she followed along in her books for the diagram.

Stephanie also found that a reading scanner was helpful for class notes and library research. A scanner is an electronic device that scans printed pages and reads them aloud in a synthesized voice.

It was a lot of work, but Stephanie earned a college diploma in Public Relations. Her superior verbal skills allowed her to excel, while the

accommodation of moralized print helped her to learn.

Daryl had a real problem with math. A calculator helped him to perform multiplication and division accurately, so he could do everyday math. However, he couldn't understand the basic mathematical concepts.

The special needs counselor helped Daryl to visualize a career without math. He entered the Journalism program and excelled in most of the courses. Basic Accounting was difficult but Daryl eventually made that course with accommodations, including patient tutors and extended time to write his exams.

Michael had dropped out of school in grade nine, which he repeated twice. He spent all his spare time helping out at his uncle's auto repair shop. Michael had a gift for fixing motors. However, without further education, he couldn't be a Class "A" Mechanic.

Michael couldn't write—at all. He could barely write his name. At college, the special needs office arranged a scribe for his exams. He would dictate the answer, and the scribe wrote down exactly what he said. A classmate copied notes for Michael so he could review for tests. Eventually, Michael opened his own shop and formed a partnership with another person—with

neat handwriting! Kristen had considerable difficulty with oral language. Long lectures confused her. Oral directions sent her off in a daze. Her accommodations included tape recordings of class lectures, a reduced course load, a counselor to help her select a college program that fit her interests and abilities, and a tutor who helped her organize her studies.

These students all succeeded. It took patience, planning, hard work and motivation. They were all 35 years of age or older when they graduated! And they all thought they could never succeed, but had the drive to try.

For more information about LD, contact your local branch of the Learning Disabilities Association, or call the Learning Disabilities Association National Office in Ottawa at (613) 238-5721.

To find out what accommodations may work for you, get in touch with the special needs coordinator at the college in your area.

Susan Alcorn MacKay is Director of the Special Needs Regional Resource Centre at Cambrian College in Sudbury, ON.

# Spring Computer Specials!

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 60 Watt Amplified Speakers  
 Corel Office/Compton's CD Bundle  
 2 Serial Ports, 1 Parallel Port  
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 Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia '97  
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 More than 40,000 Articles, Photos, Sounds

### Best Buy Power

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 32MB RAM (256KB Cache)  
 2.1GB EIDE Hard Drive  
 4MB 3D SVIRGE Graphics Card  
 15" 28" N Color SVGA Monitor  
 1.44MB Floppy Drive  
 33.6Kbaud Voice Fax/Modem  
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 Corel Office/Compton's CD Bundle  
 2 Serial Ports, 1 Parallel Port  
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### Best Buy Notebook

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