

access ABILITY

Participation. Independence. Empowerment.

INSIDE access ABILITY

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smd

SUMMER 2009



Access 2 Entertainment

Launched in December 2004, the Access 2 Entertainment program seeks to help businesses provide quality customer service to individuals with disabilities. Through the program, people with disabilities who require personal support, carry an Access 2 Entertainment card with them. The card indicates to the ticket seller that the individual does indeed require the support of an attendant.

Cineplex Entertainment and the Motion Picture Theatres Association are the founding business partners. They honour the card at their venues and support the management and promotion of the card through financial and in-kind contributions. The card provides free admission (or a substantial discount) for the support person at all participating entertainment venues. The person with the disability pays the regular admission fee.

Many people with disabilities require the assistance of a support person to help them with daily activities. Over the years, different venues have had varying policies on admission fees for someone acting as a support person. Often it ended up being left to an employee at the ticket counter to determine the validity of someone's disability, their need for an attendant, and the discount – if any.

Recreation and leisure activities are an important component of good health and well-being. Through education, businesses have begun to recognize that there are special needs for their customers with disabilities and that it's necessary to accommodate them in order to provide the best possible customer service. This makes a big difference to the community.



The collaboration between disability service groups, the disability community and the corporate sector has produced such strong results that Easter Seals Canada is approaching other leisure and entertainment sectors with the hope that they will accept the card in their venues.

Over the next couple of years, Easter Seals will be expanding the program to include access to a wider variety of entertainment, recreational, sporting and cultural venues as well as the transportation industry.

In order to obtain a card, an application form must be submitted by a person with a disability who requires the assistance of a support person. The application must be authorized by a registered health care or disability service provider.

For more information, visit www.smd.mb.ca or contact 975-3111.

The SMD Foundation awarded over \$642,000 in grants to assist a variety of programs and services through the SMD family, such as:

- SMD Services
- SMD Clearinghouse
- SMD Information Services
- Assistive Technology Program
- Canadian Centre on Disability Studies

The card provides free admission or a substantial discount...at all participating entertainment venues.



Expanding the World of Communication

SM D Foundation/Easter Seals Manitoba has formed a new and exciting partnership with TD Commercial bank to improve the literacy of deaf and hard of hearing children.

TD Commercial banking has donated \$10,000 for the purchase of audio visual equipment for the classroom and production of American Sign Language DVDs to be used in the Communication Centre for Children (CCC).

The CCC was established in 1968 and continues to adapt to the present needs of families and their children. The staff at the CCC works with children during their early years. Any child in Manitoba who has a permanent hearing loss can gain access to services without charge. Referrals are accepted from parents, audiologists, as well as speech and language pathologists. The Centre provides high quality services that are comprehensive and individually designed. Services include intervention in a home or daycare setting, group programming, parent groups, sign language classes, counseling and education forums.

The CCC is an invaluable program. Currently there are 1,289,420 Canadians who are deaf or hard of hearing. Statistics Canada reported that in 2006 sadly 52% of these individuals had less than a Grade 8 Education. It is imperative the centre is able to provide preschool deaf and hard of hearing children with a solid language foundation to ensure they excel scholastically throughout their school years.

Jim Kilmister, TD Commercial Bank, Manager Commercial Sales stated "TD chose to support the CCC because our priority funding focus is promoting the education of children from pre-school to post secondary school. Literacy and education are the cornerstones of a flourishing society. The CCC project is a wonderful opportunity for TD to continue investing in our community by contributing to the education and literacy of deaf or hard of hearing children."

"For children who have a hearing loss, establishing communication is fundamental...TD's generosity will assist us in maintaining our high standard of education."

The CCC operates a classroom preschool program for children between the ages of 2 to 6 years. The goal of the program is to support the language development (literacy) of the children so that they can then enter an integrated community program having developed either oral language, American Sign Language or both.



With TD's partnership the CCC staff will now have the modern technological resources to work with the children as well as specialized DVDs to teach children common nursery rhymes in American Sign Language.

Marion Bremner commented, "For children who have a hearing loss, establishing communication is fundamental. The Society for Manitobans with Disabilities (SMD) provides children with the opportunity to learn to communicate and develop their full potential. TD's generosity enables us to purchase modern educational equipment and DVD's that will assist us in maintaining our high standard of education."

If you or your organization would like to partner with SMD Foundation/Easter Seals Manitoba by making a major gift please contact 975-3108.

Changing Lives Seventeen Storeys High

Easter Seals Drop Zone is an annual fundraising event for The Society for Manitobans with Disabilities (SMD). This year, 84 brave and dedicated "Superheroes" from Manitoba businesses, media and the community will rappel down the Royal Bank Building located at 220 Portage Ave in downtown Winnipeg, Manitoba. With a minimum of \$1,500 in pledges to participate, rappellers will experience the adventure of a lifetime. On August 20th, 2009 Gus Burneau will join his fellow Superheroes as members of an exclusive club of over 1,700 Canadians who have challenged their comfort zones to raise over \$2 million dollars for Easter Seals.

Gus was inspired by his mother and father-in law to take the plunge and overcome his fear of heights. "My mother has really bad tremors, and my father-in-law was a double amputee, who persevered for many years without utilizing the programs or services that SMD offers to their clients. The Drop Zone event is my way of honoring them and doing my part to help SMD ensure that the services they offer continue to be available to all who need them."

Gus has targeted his fundraising goals at \$3,500, but ultimately would love to raise over \$10,000 to help support and sustain SMD's programs and services. On July 25th, Gus and his wife are planning a charity garage sale in the parking lot of Extra Foods on the corner of Main and Inkster. All of the proceeds are going to SMD Foundation/Easter Seals Manitoba for Drop Zone. Over the past few months, Gus has been enthusiastically collecting donations from friends, family, neighbors to reach his goal. Although Gus concedes that he's pretty "freaked out" by the height, his focus is on all the people with disabilities he is helping.

"My mother has really bad tremors, and my father-in-law was a double amputee...The Drop Zone event is my way of honoring them..."

According to Tammy Hildebrand-Ardiles, Manager, Special Events – National, the 2009 Drop Zone is projected to raise \$115,000, which would be an increase of 32% from last years fundraising revenues. "With the help of each participant and the support of the media, we are on track to attain our goal."



Gus has the eye of the tiger when it comes to fundraising for SMD!

All proceeds raised stay here in Manitoba to support SMD's programs and services. Currently 1 in 6 Manitobans has a disability.

The 2009 Drop Zone kicks off on Thursday, August 20th, (rain date: August 21st). Drop Zone Participants are scheduled to rappel from 8:00am to 4:00pm.

This year's Drop Zone event is completely SOLD OUT. However, pledges are still graciously accepted by sponsoring any deserving Superhero at www.thedropzone.ca.

We encourage everyone to come out and support our local "Superheroes" at Portage Avenue and Fort Street. Witness this once in a lifetime experience for these brave participants as they challenge themselves and change lives! And who knows, you may find yourself signing up for next year to become a Superhero for Manitobans with disabilities!

For more information please call (204) 975-3089, or email: dropzone@smd.mb.ca

Going Above And Beyond

When it comes to mobility, it's not just about how you get somewhere. It's also about what happens after you arrive at your destination.

That's what they believe at Go Orderly, a new Winnipeg based service that offers safe, comfortable transportation with attendant care. The service was developed by long time orderly Jeff Middleton and quadriplegic Kevin Funk who, during their combined work and life experiences, saw a need for a different approach to transportation for those with limited mobility.

According to both Jeff and Kevin, "Go Orderly is about you, your independence and your freedom to decide what you want to do any given day."

People can go shopping, visit family, attend special events and plan personal appointments on their own time and at their own pace - all with the comfort and confidence of knowing there is a certified home care attendant on hands at all times to provide any assistance required.

Being a citizen means staying connected and participating in the community. It means being included with family, friends and neighbors in the activities or events that matter to you. It means building personal connections with the world around us that makes us feel like we're part of something bigger. That's not just about transportation. It's about being active, being involved and living life.

"Go Orderly is about you, your independence and your freedom to decide what you want to do any given day."

Go Orderly is proudly supported by SMD Ventures and Occupational Rehabilitation Group of Canada. For more information, please call 783-7881 or 471-5116 or email goorderly@mts.net.



**1 in 6 individuals
has a disability.
Share in the spirit of
Easter Seals Manitoba & SMD**

**Give generously
975-3108 or
1-866-282-8041**

