

## Canadians With Disabilities Celebrate Supreme Court Decision

On March 23, 2007, the Supreme Court of Canada overturned a Federal Court of Appeal decision that allowed VIA Rail to run inaccessible passenger rail cars. Justice Abella made the ruling and stated, "Safety measures can be expensive, too, but one would hardly expect to hear that their cost justifies dangerous conditions. . . . In the long run, danger is more expensive than safety, and discrimination is more expensive than inclusion."

ACCD has long awaited the outcome of this court battle. Margot Brunner-Campbell, ACCD's president celebrated the ruling, stating, "After seven years of fighting for this issue, I am satisfied to hear that the courts in this country have done the right thing by recognizing the parity of people with disabilities as participants in this country. This happens at the same time that Canada has signed the UN Declaration recognizing that equality throughout the world. The VIA Rail decision speaks volumes about our country's willingness to uphold their commitment to the UN."

While the Supreme Court decision is a victory for people with disabilities, the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) hopes the results will be far reaching: "This case has been a long and arduous journey for the disability community. It has expended a great deal of time and resources. While the outcome is all that we have dreamed of, we are asking the Federal Government to take the necessary regulatory action to prevent a similar boondoggle in the future."

For more information on the ruling and the issue of VIA Rail's purchase of the inaccessible rail cars in 2000, visit the CCD website at: <http://www.ccdonline.ca/publications/media-releases/via0201.htm>

### New Budget Gives Boost to AISH

When the provincial government announced its 2007 budget in late April, ACCD was pleased to hear positive news regarding the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program. For the third year in a row, AISH recipients will see an increase in their benefits. This year's increase of \$50 will help off-set some of the cost of living increases that are making it difficult for low-income individuals and families in the province to make ends meet. As well, there's been an 18% overall increase in the AISH budget, with some of this increase directed at improving incentives for AISH recipients who can and want to be a part of the work force.

Bev Matthiessen, ACCD's executive director, commends the government for the commitment it's made to AISH. She says, "We can see progress is being made and that the government is listening to us. By increasing the benefit amount for three years running, they are showing a commitment to a fair process for AISH recipients. ACCD will be working with the government to encourage them to agree in principle to a yearly increase in the AISH benefit amount."

To learn more about the budget, visit <http://www.finance.gov.ab.ca/business/budget/index.html>

## Canada Signs UN Convention

On March 30, 2007, ACCD, along with the entire disability community, applauded the news that Canada had signed the UN Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). Margot Brunner-Campbell, ACCD's president, was delighted by the news. She said, "Canada has become a leader in human rights and was instrumental in the development of the CRPD, playing a key role in ensuring that the Convention was built on a strong foundation of equality and human rights."

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities thanked the Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of Foreign Affairs for his leadership in the process, saying, "By participating in the signing ceremony, Canada has become an important role model to other nations, demonstrating how to make rights meaningful for a group that has

experienced some of the most severe forms of human rights violations."

## Education for Life Bursary: Deadline Fast Approaching!

June 30, 2007 is the application deadline for the 2007-2008 Education for Life Bursary. Individuals with disabilities who are upgrading their education as first-time, post-secondary students are eligible for bursaries ranging from \$300 to \$800. In 2006, ACCD awarded bursaries to eight students attending post-secondary campuses across the province. Details and an application form can be found on our website at [www.accd.net](http://www.accd.net). Or you can contact us at the ACCD office by calling (780) 488-9088 in Edmonton or toll free at 1-800-387-2514. We look forward to hearing from you!

## ACCD Annual General Meeting

*You are invited to*  
**ACCD's Annual General Meeting**  
**May 25, 2007**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton**

If you have questions about the AGM, please contact Charleen at 488-9088 (in Edmonton) or toll free at 1-800-387-2514. Or you can email her at [charleen@accd.net](mailto:charleen@accd.net).



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