

FALL 2014

# WhyNot.

CDHF  
CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME



Welcome to The Hall of Fame

Mark Wafer • Honourable Vim Kochhar • Elisabeth Walker-Young  
Sudarshan Gautam • Chris Williamson



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**Cover:** Our 2014 Hall of Fame Winners

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**Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons**, a charitable organization founded in 1985, assists people with physical disabilities to live fuller lives. Its mission is to create awareness in the public, business communities and government of the abilities of persons with disabilities and their needs in the areas of housing, employment, education, accessibility, sports and recreation and research. In the past 30 years, the Foundation has raised substantial funds, which it has distributed to a wide variety of organizations and events. These include the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame, the Eternal Flame of Hope, the Rotary Cheshire Home, the annual Great Valentine Gala (in cooperation with the Rotary Club of Toronto-Don Valley), the King Clancy Awards, the Corporate Awards, the WhyNot Marathon, the first Canadian Marathon for the Paralympics and the Rolling Rampage.



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# MESSAGES

## Message from Hon. David Johnston

It is a pleasure to congratulate all those being inducted into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. This year's entries have proven that ingenuity, dedication and hard work are universal. The strength of this country's compassion is driven by men and women whose efforts enrich the lives of those around them. The inductees have ensured that Canadians with physical disabilities have greater opportunities to achieve their ambitions and have helped to lessen the stigma of living with a disability. They are all great additions to the Hall of Fame and are deserving of this honour. I wish everyone a wonderful celebration.

## Message from Hon. David Crombie

As chair of the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame it gives me great pleasure to announce our 2014 Hall of Fame inductees: visually impaired Paralympic skier Chris Williamson, Paralympic swimmer and sports administrator Elisabeth Walker-Young, inclusive workplace advocate Mark Wafer, and extraordinary achiever Sudarshan Gautam. Today we pay tribute to their memorable contributions and add their names to the Hall of Fame's distinguished record of achievement.

Like all members of the Hall of Fame, this year's inductees are remarkably accomplished individuals, but in recognizing their achievements, we also hope to promote a broader message. Everyday in Canada, people with disabilities are striving to succeed. They work, go to school, raise families and play an active role in their communities – and they do it with the same passion, talent and ability as their able-bodied peers. This is the underlying message of the Hall of Fame and it's a lesson we hope all Canadians will take to heart.

I want to thank the members of the Hall of Fame Selection Board whose deliberations play such an important part in this great undertaking. I also want to acknowledge the tremendous dedication and support of Vim Kochhar and his team at the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons. As always, it's been a pleasure working with all of you. Thank you.

## Message from Hon. Vim Kochhar

Greetings and welcome to our annual induction celebrations for the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. I'm sure everyone will agree that our 2014 inductees carry on the Hall of Fame's outstanding legacy of leadership, service and inspirational achievement. I hope you take this opportunity to learn about their remarkable accomplishments; they're an amazing group of individuals.

Here at the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons we've always thought of the disability community as a majority interest. Everyone who shares this cause is a member of the disability community. And that community extends far beyond the limits many Canadians seem to ascribe. All of us are vulnerable to the ravages of age or physical impairment and all of us have a stake in the disability community's continuing struggle for access and inclusion. Today, in celebrating our Hall of Fame inductees, you are showing your support and partnership in this great cause and we thank you. It's good to know we're all in this together.

I want to thank our loyal patrons, sponsors and everyone who supports the CFPDP's long running campaign to create a world of meaningful opportunity for Canadians who live with disability. All of us share in the disability community's ambitions for a better world. Together, I know that we can make it happen.



**Hon. David Johnston**  
*The Governor General*



**Hon. David Crombie**  
*Chairperson*  
The Canadian Disability Hall of Fame



**Hon. Vim Kochhar**  
*Chairperson,*  
Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons



## Proud to support the 2014 Canadian Disability Hall of Fame.

We are working together with the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons to make a difference in our communities.



**AFTER SOME FOUR DECADES OF** expanding protections in the area of employment equity and human rights, it may come as a surprise to Canadians that the marginal prospects for many people with disabilities in this country remain unduly grim. Unfortunately, there is no arguing with the statistical evidence: if you are a person with a disability in Canada today, you are far more likely than the average citizen to be: (a) unemployed; (b) poor; and (c) highly reliant on social assistance. Why this is still the case after so many years of progressive and forward thinking social action is a question a lot more Canadians need to start asking them-

selves, according to the Honourable Vim Kochhar, Chairman of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons and Founder of the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. "I think everyone in the disability movement would agree we've come a long way in the last thirty or forty years," says Kochhar. "If you think about the phenomenal growth of the Paralympics, the increasing opportunities in sports and recreation, transportation, housing and education, these are all areas where we've seen marked improvement. The one really big barrier for people with disabilities seems to be the workplace and that's something we can change, but we have

*The Canadian Disability Hall of Fame's 2014 inductees carry on a great tradition of inspired leadership and personal achievement*

Photography by Steve Blackburn



The 2013 Hall of Fame presentations: Chair the Hon. David Crombie with Ramesh Ferris - *Achiever*, Stephanie Dixon - *Athlete*, Founding Chair the Hon. Vim Kochhar, and Annie and Jerry Johnston - *Builders*. In front, the Hon. David C. Onley, former Lt. Governor of Ontario and Michelle Amerie, receiving the posthumous Builder Award on behalf of husband Raymond D. Cohen.



**Left:**

The Hon. David Crombie receives the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hon. David C. Onley and the Hon. Vim Kochhar.



**Middle:**

The Hon. David C. Onley presents Raymond D. Cohen's posthumous Canadian Disability Hall of Fame Award to Michelle Amerie, with the Hon. Vim Kochhar.



**Right:**

The Hon. David C. Onley with Stephanie Dixon and the Hon. Vim Kochhar.



Keynote Speaker the Hon. Michael Wilson chats with the Hon. Vim Kochhar.

to get more Canadians to recognize the tremendous potential of the disability community.”

The struggle to create a world of greater opportunity and awareness of their issues and abilities has always been spearheaded by the disability community itself. As evidenced in the Disability Hall of Fame, Canada's disability movement has a long and impressive legacy of visionary leadership and achievement. The history of the movement is full of larger-than-life figures who captured the attention of the world with the force of their vision and ability: Terry Fox, Rick Hansen, Chantal Petitclerc, Jeff Healey... Behind the scenes, members of the disability community have helped to shape or administer legislative protections enshrining equal rights and opportunity, like activist lawyers David Lepofsky and David Shannon. Others have sought and occupied public office, like former Vancouver Mayor Sam Sullivan and

Manitoba M.P. Steven Fletcher. They have also founded and run some of the nation's most respected healthcare and service organizations: John Gibbons Counsell, Lieutenant Colonel Edwin A. Baker and Clifford Chadderton. They have been persuasive and articulate advocates for a better world: Whipper Billy Watson, Beryl Potter, Mona Winberg, Raymond Cohen, Stephanie McClellan, Patrick Jarvis, Ramesh Ferris... And this is just a short list of the multitude of remarkable Canadians with disabilities who have played formative roles in the life of their country. Choose any pastime or avocation in life and you will discover people with disabilities have proven themselves time and time again, says Kochhar. “The history is very clear. People with disabilities have demonstrated they have a tremendous wealth of talent and ability. The only question remaining is when the rest of us finally wake up and recognize what they're able to accomplish,” says the eternally youthful retired Member of the Senate of Canada.

On Monday, November 3, 2014, the CFPDP will host its twenty-first annual Hall of Fame induction celebrations in the Concert Hall of Toronto's iconic Fairmont Royal York Hotel. Guest Speaker for the luncheon ceremonies will be Canadian Tire Corp. Chairman Maureen Sabia. The 2014 Canadian Disability Hall of Fame inductees are:

- Nepal born Calgarian **Sudarshan Gautam**, Achiever, the first armless person to



The Hon. David C. Onley joins Jerry and Annie Johnston, with the Hon. Vim Kochhar.

The Hon. David C. Onley with Ramesh Ferris and the Hon. Vim Kochhar.

Deborah Lewis of CityEvents presents the Hon. Con DiNino with his door prize.

Hall of Fame Chair the Hon. David Crombie enjoys the keynote address.

climb the summit of Mount Everest without the use of prosthetics.

- Tim Horton's franchisee **Mark Wafer**, Builder, an outspoken and exemplary advocate of inclusive workplaces as a winning business strategy.

- **Elisabeth Walker-Young**, Achiever, retired Paralympian and multi-medal winning swimmer named Canada's Chef de Mission for the 2015 Parapan American Games.

- And Athlete, **Chris Williamson**, the visually impaired para-alpine ski racer, four-time Paralympic medalist, and winner of eight International Paralympic Committee Crystal Globes.

As always, the 2014 induction celebrations will be hosted by the Hall of Fame's longstanding Chairman, former Toronto Mayor, M.P. and Federal Cabinet Minister David Crombie, who also heads up the Hall of Fame's Selection

Board. "I think our 2014 inductees are tremendous role models and certainly deserving candidates for Hall of Fame induction. It's a great pleasure to be able to honour their achievements in this way," says Crombie. As chair of the selection process since the inaugural inductions in 1994, Crombie has a long acquaintance with the remarkable achievements of the disability community. "That's what really strikes you about the Hall of Fame, how truly remarkable these people are," says Crombie. "I've been doing this for over 20 years and every year I'm amazed by what they've managed to accomplish. People often ask me if there is anyone who really stands out for their achievements and I don't know where to start. These are true Canadian heroes. Each has their own story and all of them have made important contributions to the life of our country. They are all people who truly made a difference."

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MEET THE CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME 2014 INDUCTEES

# THE TRADITION CONTINUES

*This year's Hall of Fame inductees continue a great tradition of athletic excellence, advocacy and leadership*

## **SUDARSHAN GAUTAM** *Achiever*

Nepal-born Calgarian Sudarshan Gautam has surmounted some of the profoundest extremities life has to offer, ascending literally to the top of the world in a long, determined journey that began in the deepest depths of despair. The first armless person without prosthetics to summit Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak, Gautam's conquest of the 8,848m mountain in May of 2013 is merely the latest achievement in an extraordinary life dedicated to showing the world there is no limit to what people with disabilities can accomplish. "Disability is not an inability. If you want to change your life you can do anything you really want to and that is my main purpose, to prove this and show people what is possible," says the 35 year-old business owner, husband and father.

As a child growing up in a village in rural Nepal, Gautam says he was an "average" student who loved to play soccer and volleyball but he also had a curious bent and was excited by scientific experiments. "Like any child, I was full of dreams and ambitions, like being a pilot or maybe a political leader," he remembers fondly. Those dreams and ambitions would become a cruel memory when Gautam lost his arms in an electrical accident at the age of 14. On vacation with his family in Kathmandu, he was flying a kite when it became entangled in a nearby power line and tried to retrieve it with a



Drawings by  
Shannon Parks

metal pole. When he awoke in hospital, Gautam's hands and forearms were horribly burned and doctors told him they would have to amputate both arms at the shoulder. The weeks and months that followed were the darkest and bleakest of his life. Gautam could do



## MARK WAFER *Builder*

**B**usiness owner and inclusive workplace advocate Mark Wafer makes a very persuasive argument why employers need to hire more people with disabilities and the compelling hook is in his bottom line. Wafer, who owns six Tim Hortons franchises, has hired more than 100 people with disabilities since purchasing his first outlet back in 1995 and he's got the numbers to prove they are a real and measurable asset to his business. "There is no downside to being an inclusive employer. It's simply good for business," says Wafer. "Workplaces that employ people with disabilities are more innovative, have higher productivity, higher staff morale, lower absenteeism, lower employee turnover, and better safety records. And all of these benefits have a dollar value attached."

Wafer knows first-hand how difficult it can be for people with disabilities to find meaningful work. Born with only 20 percent hearing, he struggled to earn a living before launching his own business and the experience gave him a keen appreciation of what it feels like to be shut out of the workplace. "I knew the barriers they faced because I faced them myself," says Wafer, recalling the altruistic impulse that first motivated him to take on an employee with a disability. That person was Clint Sparling, a young man with Down's syndrome, and within two weeks Wafer realized Sparling was his best employee. "Clint really wanted the job. He came in early, he didn't need breaks or have to go home. He was so proud of his job he wore his uniform home on the bus," remembers Wafer. Twenty years later, Sparling still proudly wears the uniform, he is married and owns his own condo.

Mark Wafer's outspoken advocacy was an outgrowth of the realization that a strong business case for inclusive workplaces was the only argument that would carry the day with business owners. After some forty years of expanding human rights legislation and other systemic and emotional inducements, Wafer points out the unemployment rate in the disability community is little changed. "The unemployment rate among Canadians with disabilities is 70 percent. Right now there are 800,000 Canadians with disabilities who are job ready and unemployed and that's a huge burden on the economy and the country. It's not sustainable." On his own time, at his own expense, Wafer has made hundreds of presentations promoting the case for inclusion in Canada, the U.S. and abroad. He is a co-founder of Rotary at Work, a peer to peer

nothing for himself, needed someone to help him do even the most basic of human functions, like eating or going to the bathroom. He found his utter dependence on others humiliating and became so depressed he couldn't see the faintest glimmer of hope. "I felt like they had amputated not just my arms but my dreams, my whole future," recalls Gautam of his ordeal.

The first step in his recovery was making peace with the facts of his condition and recognizing that no matter what, he had to endure and learn to live without arms. He began to practice 14 hours a day training his feet to work like hands, learning all over how to brush his teeth, dress, eat, cook, write, use a telephone, turn the pages of a book. He returned to school, eventually earning a commerce degree. He also learned to drive a standard transmission car and climbed three of the most challenging mountains in the Himalayas. And he founded the Leg Is My Arm Foundation to share his message of courage and ability with the world.

program promoting inclusion, business owner to business owner. In 2012 he was appointed to the federal Panel on Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, credited with helping to reshape the government's national strategy on workplace inclusion. "It's clear we can't keep hammering the same old message," says Wafer. "We have to make people understand that this is good for business, it's good for the country and it's good for people with disabilities. It's a win/win."

#### **ELISABETH WALKER-YOUNG** *Achiever*

**W**hen four-time Paralympian Elisabeth Walker-Young was named Canada's Chef de Mission for the Toronto 2015 Parapan American Games it marked the former world-class athlete and sports administrator's arrival as one of the nation's most influential and accomplished advocates for Paralympic sport. Only the second Paralympian to ascend to the post – the first was athletics star Patrick Jarvis – Walker-Young's proven leadership skills and experience as a respected athlete and administrator were cited by CPC President Gaétan Tardif as being "uniquely suited" for the important job of leading Canada's largest-ever Parapan Am team to the 2015 Games. Announcing the appointment in May of this year, Tardif praised her "spectacular" contribution as Assistant Chef de Mission at the 2012 Paralympics in London, noting her natural rapport-building abilities and athlete's perspective would be vital assets in her new role. "There is a great value in Canada hosting international events and I know Elisabeth will help Team Canada's athletes and coaches make the most of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of competing at a home Games," declared Tardif.

Walker-Young's contagious passion for Paralympic sport is a product of her experience growing up as a young girl with a disability who loved sports, but never dreamed of participating in elite competition. Born with two foreshortened arms as a result of a congenital condition called *dysmelia*, Walker-Young enjoyed all the same activities as her friends and family, especially swimming. "I just loved the water. I was always the first one in and the last one out. I knew I was good at it, but I never thought about being an Olympian because people who went to the Olympics didn't look like me," recalls the striking 37 year-old, who recently became a new mother. It was happenstance that introduced Walker-Young to Paralympic sport. "It was just luck I heard



about it. I think that's why I got so involved in volunteering later – I didn't want to think anybody else would just find out by accident," says Walker-Young, explaining her eventual transition into advocacy and sports administration.

It was with Toronto's famed Variety Village Flames that Walker-Young found her calling for elite competition. She swam in her first Paralympic Games in 1992 in Barcelona at the age of 15. Four years later in Atlanta she won her first Paralympic medal, a bronze in the 100m backstroke. For the 2000 Games in Sydney, Walker-Young pulled out all the stops. She practiced visualization, kept a log of training and posted her goal times on the ceiling over her bed so they would be the first and last thing she thought of every day. She even assigned her bank-card pin number with Sydney front and centre: 2000. That intense focus paid off in three gold medals, all world records. In all, she would win six medals in four trips to the Paralympic Games, breaking numerous Canadian and world records and serving as national team captain for more than half of her career.



**CHRIS WILLIAMSON** *Athlete*

**P**ara-alpine skiing great Chris Williamson is one of the most decorated athletes in the history of his sport. Many Canadians will be familiar with the names Erik Guay and Steve Podborski, each of whom have won an individual discipline or “small” Crystal Globe, alpine skiing’s top honour for most points over a season in a single discipline. Williamson, however, is the only Canadian male to win the “big” Crystal Globe, the overall world title for most points in a season spanning all disci-

plines, downhill, super-G, giant slalom, super combined and slalom. What’s more, he accomplished this feat of total world dominance seven times. He also has 14 small Crystal Globes to his credit, at least one in every discipline. Over the course of a 16-year career on the international circuit, Williamson medalled in four Paralympics, including gold in Salt Lake City in 2002, won 13 International Paralympic Committee World Championship medals and racked up an unprecedented 105 IPC World Cup podium finishes, 56 of them victories.

That’s an astonishing record by any measure but now imagine collecting all that hardware hurtling down some of the world’s most treacherous slopes virtually blind. Williamson, who jokes he can go 120 km an hour but can’t get a driver’s license, was born with macular degeneration due to toxoplasmosis and has only 6 percent peripheral vision in one eye, and zero vision in the other. Skiing behind a sighted guide who relays information about the course and conditions over a radio headset, Williamson negotiates the gates by coordinating his guide’s cues with the map he methodically pieces together in his head before the race, memorizing the shape and pitch and placement of every turn. In a sport predicated on break-neck speed with a margin for error measured in hundredths of a second, there is no room for fear or self-doubts. Once he is in the starting gate, he has to be ready to point his skis downhill and go for broke. “I love to go fast” says the 42-year-old husband and father of two, but there’s a lot of hard work that goes into those fleeting moments of sheer exhilaration. “I work extremely hard. I know it’s just skiing and it’s fun but I always saw skiing as a career, I wasn’t there to party. It’s hard work and you have to do the work if you want to be successful.”

Throughout his career, Williamson contended with numerous injuries and, he says, his fair share of disappointments, chief among them the Vancouver Paralympics. Heading into Vancouver he was ranked number one in the world and finished out of the medals in every event. “There’s no crying in baseball,” says Williamson. “It’s ski racing, you’re going to lose more often than you win. It’s not how many times you fall that matters but how many times you get back up and keep fighting.”

# CDHF

CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME

*The Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons invites you to learn more about the inspirational leadership and achievements of Canada's disability community*

The Canadian Disability Hall of Fame is a national public awareness project of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons.

Launched in 1993, the Hall of Fame is the flagship of the CFPDP's long-running campaign to create a world of greater opportunity for Canadians who live with disability.

"The Hall of Fame is a great tribute to the wealth of talent and ability in Canada's disability community," says Hall of Fame Chairman David Crombie. "For a lot of people with disabilities, the only barrier they face is other people's misconceptions. The Hall of Fame tells the real story, the story of their courage, determination and accomplishment. People with disabilities have a long history of achievement in this country and that's a message people really need to think about."

Located in downtown Toronto on the ground floor of Metro Hall, 55 John Street, the Hall of Fame recognizes exemplary contributions in sports, health and rehabilitation, science and medical research, advocacy, public policy, volunteerism and community service.

Members of the Hall of Fame include:

**RAMESH FERRIS**, polio survivor and international leader in the global campaign for polio eradication and rehabilitation.

**RAYMOND COHEN**, founder, publisher and editor of Abilities magazine, "Canada's lifestyle magazine for people with disabilities".

**BENOÎT HUOT**, a triple world record holder and winner of 16 Paralympic medals

in swimming, including eight golds and four silvers.

**ARCHIE ALLISON**, influential accessibility advocate and coach, teacher, friend and mentor to generations of young people with disabilities.

**CELIA SOUTHWARD**, founder of the Windsor Classic Games and a lifelong advocate of adaptive sports and recreation for seniors and people with a disability.

**COLETTE BOURGONJE**, nine-time Paralympian and multi-medalist in both the Summer and Winter Paralympic Games.

**DAVID SHANNON**, founding chair of the Accessibility Advisory Council of Ontario and the first quadriplegic to reach the geographic North Pole.

**LAUREN WOOLSTENCROFT**, known as the Paralympic Winter Games' "Golden Girl" for her eight gold medals in three Winter Games.

**JEFF HEALEY**, the legendary blues, rock and jazz musician who left an indelible mark on popular music despite losing his sight to cancer.

War amputee **H. CLIFFORD CHADDERTON**, the internationally respected advocate for veteran, civilian and child amputees.

**ANN CAINE**, whose leadership and dedication to the sport of therapeutic riding created new opportunities for social growth and active living for children and adults who live with disability.

**JOYCE THOMPSON**, the pioneering advocate and service provider for Canada's deaf-blind community.

Short biographies of all members of the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame can be found on the CFPDP's website: [www.cfpdp.com](http://www.cfpdp.com)

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*Former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario*

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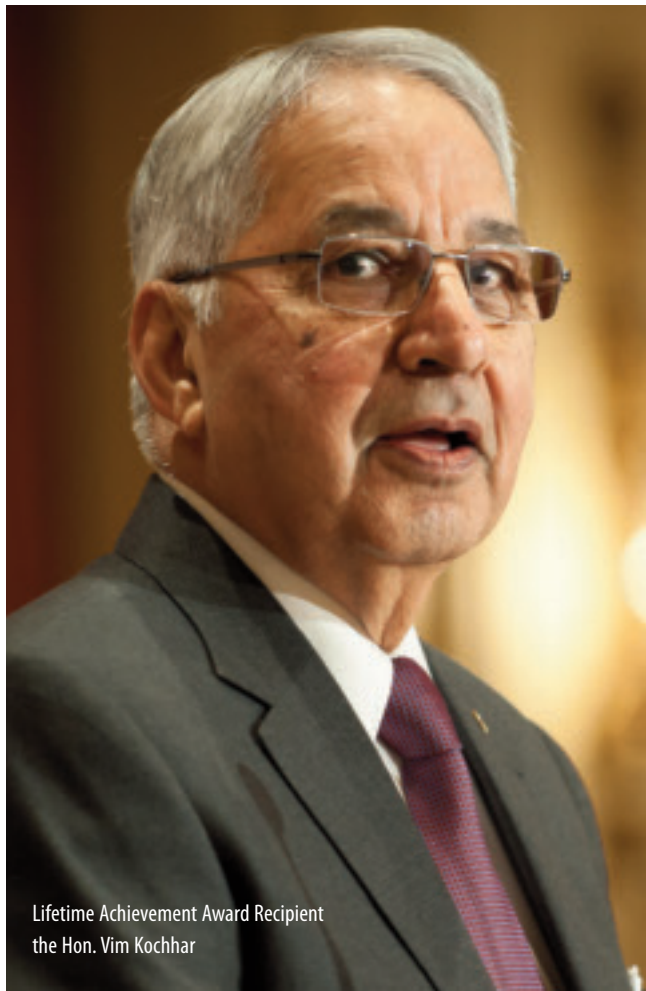
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*Former President,  
Canadian Paralympic Committee*

# A SALUTE TO OUR FOUNDER

**F**ounder and proud perennial custodian of the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame, the Honourable Vim Kochhar has always taken a passionate interest in the inspirational achievements of Canadians who live with disability. Kochhar's passion for the disability community's stories is grounded in the conviction his beloved Hall of Fame's historic record of achievement is a powerful touchstone for the cause of his life: an unequivocal statement that people with disabilities are ready, willing and more than able to assume their rightful role in Canadian society. A devoted and visionary champion of the disability community for more than 30 years, Kochhar has left his own indelible mark on the national movement to create a world of greater

promise and opportunity. In recognition of that extraordinary commitment, the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame Selection Board has chosen to honour Kochhar with a special Lifetime Achievement Award, permanently enshrining his exemplary contributions alongside those of all the other great Canadian heroes he has so long and passionately espoused.

The idea for the special recognition first came up at a rare meeting of the Selection Board when Kochhar wasn't present and was immediately and enthusiastically taken up by the entire membership, says Hall of Fame Chair David Crombie. Kochhar has not been told about the award and the Board's hope was to keep the honour under wraps until the presentation at the Hall of Fame induction celebrations November 3rd. "I don't remember who first



Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient  
the Hon. Vim Kochhar

proposed the idea but everyone was instantly onboard," says Crombie, the first and only other recipient of the Hall of Fame's Lifetime Achievement Award. "Vim should have been the first person to receive this award. He's been on the disability wicket for over three decades now. It's been an extraordinary commitment and he's showing no signs of slowing down. He's our Energizer Bunny. Vim has an amazing ability to stick with a job and still take on more projects every day. It's a very rare faculty he possesses and we've been lucky to have it. It's what has sustained us all these years."

Born in India, the 78 year-old retired Senator immigrated to Canada in 1967 after taking his engineering degree at the University of Texas. He became a citizen in 1974. For 20 years he was

associated with the construction industry, working with Intercontinental Hotels and Howard Johnson Hotels as a project manager on new hotel sites around the world. He later worked for Canadian Bechtel and Scrivener on major projects like the University of Toronto's Medical Sciences Complex and Memorial University Medical School. He also supervised the move of Toronto's historic Campbell House to the corner of University Avenue and Queen Street. However, it was the Hall of Fame founder's success as an entrepreneur and President and CEO of the Vimal Group of Companies, manufacturers and retailers of pine furniture, that would finally afford him the freedom to actively pursue his lifelong passion for community service. Inspired by the example of his great hero Mahatma Gandhi – "be the change you wish to see in the world" –



Kochhar dedicated himself to the business of making lasting, positive change in his new homeland and the abiding focus of that passionate thirty-year commitment has been people with disabilities. Among his many significant contributions:

- Kochhar is the founder and chair of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons.

- Founder of the annual Great Valentine Gala, a 30-plus year Toronto tradition that has raised more than \$25 million for worthy projects in the disability community.

- Founder of Rotary Cheshire Home, a \$3.5 million barrier-free apartment complex for people who are deaf and blind.

- Founding Chair of the Canadian Helen Keller Centre, the nation's first facility offering training in independent living skills for deaf-blind Canadians.

- Founder of 1996's WhyNot Marathon, a national undertaking traversing over 11,000 kilometres and engaging hundreds of thousands of Canadians in the power and excitement of Paralympic sport.

- Founder of the Eternal Flame of Hope, a \$100,000 monument to the hopes and aspirations of Canadians with disabilities located on the plaza of Toronto's Metro Hall.

- Founder of the Rolling Rampage, an annual elite wheelchair road race showcasing some of the finest wheelchair racers in the world.

In recognition of his extraordinary sustained commitment to the life of the country, in 2010 Kochhar was appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to the Senate of Canada, the first Indo-Canadian named to Parliament's upper house. In Ottawa he served on the Senate Committees on Banking, Trade and Commerce and Human Rights before taking mandatory retirement at age 75. He was also a key player in the development of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, serving on the original advisory committee and as a Trustee and Member of the Board. Among the many distinctions he has earned during a life of dedicated service to the community, Kochhar was chosen by India Abroad as one of the 30 most influential Canadians of Indian origin. He was also selected by CARP as one of the top 25 Canadians over 45 who have made a difference in the lives of Canadians. He has also received the 2012 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award, the Order of Ontario, Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship, The Gardiner Award for Citizen of the Year Metropolitan Toronto, the Order of Honour, Association of Professional Engineers, the CNIB's E. A. Baker Memorial Award for his pioneering work on behalf of Deaf-Blind services in Canada and York University awarded him with an Honourary Doctorate of Laws in June 2014.

## Remembering Barrington "Barry" Coke

It is with great sadness that the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons notes the passing of long-standing CFPDP Board member Barrington "Barry" Coke.



"Barry was a charter member of the Toronto-Don Valley Rotary Club so I've known him for more than 30 years. He was a great personal friend and a great Canadian," says CFPDP Chair Vim Kochhar. "He had a tremendous giving spirit and was incredibly generous of his time and energy. He was always contributing, giving of himself. He was a real inspiration for all of us."

Although he was a paraplegic, the result of being shot in the neck by a violent attacker many years ago in Jamaica, Coke never let his afflictions get him down, notes Kochhar. "Nothing ever slowed him down. Barry threw himself completely into everything he did and he did it with such joy and unfailing kindness. He was a wonderful man."

Fellow Rotarian Ravi Vijh worked on many projects with Coke over the course of more than 15 years and remembers his friend as a man who was deeply committed to the Rotary ideal of service before self. The two men also served together on the Board of Rotary Cheshire Homes, Canada's first barrier-free apartment complex for the deaf-blind community, and Vijh says he was always impressed by Coke's genuine humility and sense of commitment. "Barry always gave of himself with enthusiasm and he was a great leader and team player," says Vijh. "He was so affable and humble. Everybody loved working with him. He will be greatly missed, but he left us with a lot of great memories."

For CFPDP Board member and Rotarian David Ford, those memories include the "resplendent" vision of Coke turned out in his tuxedo every year for the Great Valentine Gala. "He looked very handsome. He was always so upbeat and infectious cheerful in spite of his afflictions. We will miss him."

Barry Coke passed away at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto on September 7, 2014, surrounded by his family. He leaves behind his beloved children: Althea, Dianne (Mark), Stacey and Harvey (Charmaine). He was also the cherished grandpa of Aidon, Alyssa, Milan, Aaron, Olivia and Alannah; and dear brother of Lena, Winston and Anthony.

# FUN FOR ALL

**ParaSport Ontario** has introduced hundreds of thousands of people with a disability to the joys and rewards of active participation in sports

by ParaSport Ontario

**K**evin, from Cambridge, Ontario, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, spastic diplegia when he was one year old. Growing up, Kevin participated in many different sports, not letting the challenges in his legs stop him. However in 2009, when Kevin was fifteen, he was introduced to wheelchair basketball at a summer camp. At first hesitant to use a wheelchair, Kevin was convinced by Tina May, the Athlete Ambassador for ParaSport Ontario's Ready, Willing and Able program to give it a try. Kevin was hooked immediately. He joined a local club in Kitchener, then progressed to the senior program with the Twin City Spinners and competed for Ontario at the Canada Summer Games. Skip ahead four short years from that first introduction to wheelchair basketball and in 2013 Kevin Wakeling was named to the Canadian National Wheelchair Basketball Program.

Since its inception over thirty years ago, ParaSport Ontario has been introducing persons with a disability to a variety of sports through Ready, Willing and Able (RWA). According to Alan Trivett, ParaSport Ontario's executive director "The First Contact and Awareness programs that are run by our organisation and others are critical in the recruitment of new para-athletes as so often they are totally unaware that there are options for them to participate in sport".

According to research provided by the Canadian Paralympic Committee, fewer than 4 percent of Canadians with a physical disability participate in sport. Compare this to around 30 percent for the able-bodied population and you can understand the importance of the parasport community's emphasis on introductory sport programming.

"We try to find the best fit for kids and a sport that they will enjoy and stick with" said Jennifer Bruce who runs the RWA outreach programs for ParaSport Ontario. "Whether it's boccia, wheelchair tennis, sitting volleyball or one of the other sports we promote and introduce, it's

about being active and fit for life that counts – no matter which sport the person connects with".

ParaSport Ontario is a non-profit organization committed to providing persons with a physical disability the opportunity to enjoy the many benefits inherent in sport. They work with their member associations (Ontario Blind Sports Association, Ontario Wheelchair Sports Association, Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association and Ontario Amputee and Les Autres Sports Association) along with eight member Provincial Sport Associations. In addition to Ready, Willing and Able, Para Sport Ontario partners with the Sport Alliance of Ontario to co-host the Ontario ParaSport Summer and Winter Games, loans and rents adaptive sports equipment to individuals, schools, recreation centres and clubs, provides resources to sport organizations to assist them in the development of their parasport programs and is a vocal advocate for athletes with a physical disability throughout the province of Ontario.

Trivett takes obvious pride in his team of staff, sponsors and incredible volunteers who make ParaSport Ontario programs possible. Most importantly Trivett says "at ParaSport Ontario we are all about creating opportunities. It's great when a superstar like Kevin graduates to the international sports stage but it's far more important that the tens of thousands of kids with issues that affect their mobility and vision get to experience the joy and rewards of active lifestyles and that is our main focus".

Over the next year, leading up to the Toronto 2015 Parapan American Games, parasport will be introduced to approximately 250,000 people in the province and everyone at ParaSport Ontario is eagerly embracing the challenge of providing opportunities for every one of them to practice, play and compete.

*For more information or to support ParaSport Ontario, please visit their website at [www.parasportontario.ca](http://www.parasportontario.ca) or follow them on Facebook or Twitter @parasport\_on.*



ParaSport Ontario offers adaptable sport and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities of all ages and ability.

I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.

*Christopher Reeve*



Canadian Association for Prosthetics and Orthotics congratulates the 2014 Canadian Disability Hall of Fame Inductees:

- Sudarshan Gautam
- Mark Wafer
- Elisabeth Walker-Young
- Chris Williamson

Effective January 1, 2015 the Canadian Association for Prosthetics and Orthotics (CAPO) and the Canadian Board for Certification of Prosthetists and Orthotists (CBCPO) will be merging to become Orthotics Prosthetics Canada / Orthèse Prothèse Canada (OPC).

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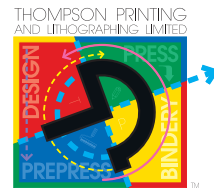
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# 2014

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# WORKING TOGETHER FOR GREATER INDEPENDENCE

*The Canadian Helen Keller Centre provides a supportive, collegial setting where members of the deaf-blind community can acquire the necessary skills to play an active, independent role at home in their communities*

by Christine Payne

As the only residential training centre in Canada for people who are deaf-blind, The Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC) provides a supportive environment for consumers to learn new skills that enrich their lives and foster independence. A variety of clubs, which meet regularly, range from cooking and gardening to technology and orientation and mobility. However, unlike a traditional classroom setting, instruction is designed to engage consumers in direct, real-world experiences and with each other. Attendees are encouraged to collaborate and the club leaders facilitate and participate, rather than directing consumers and their progress.

“CHKC’s clubs exist so that people can come together and learn in an environment that is at their own pace, where accommodations are made for various styles of communication, and where everyone feels comfortable learning with others who are facing similar challenges,” says Cindy Accardi, Executive Director of CHKC. “Be it



cooking or technology, consumers are discovering new things and figuring out problems together. They share what is working for them personally, how they are dealing with various situations and really benefit from each other’s experiences.”

## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

At the biweekly CHKC cooking club, consumers work their way around the kitchen, practicing a variety of skills that keep their environment safe and organized. They learn how to properly handle hot liquids, knives and other kitchen tools, plus share and prepare a variety of delicious recipes.

“Consumers in the cooking club work together on practical skills, such as baking, grilling, using a microwave, stovetop or crock pot, and labeling systems. It’s a fun environment that encourages cooperation, but it also includes an educational component,” says Mélanie Gauthier-Perley, Training Coordinator for CHKC. “For



example, when chopping or slicing, our instructor Max would suggest putting the knife blade under the chopping board when it is not being used. That way, consumers who are visually impaired won't cut themselves while feeling around and trying to locate the knife again. Consumers also share tips that can be adapted based on each individual's abilities, such as putting an elastic around all your cans of veggies, using Braille labels or removing the labels so they can be easily identified."

In addition to side dishes like potato salad and roasted beets, the cooking club prepares meals from all around the world. "This makes it possible for consumers to have sensory experiences, explains Gauthier-Perley. "If they are cooking food from India, different spices will be passed around so consumers can see what curry smells like and how tamarind sauce tastes."

### **PLANTING NEW IDEAS**

CHKC's garden club meets each week from spring through fall. It is run in partnership with volunteers from the Garden Club of Toronto, which has been involved since CHKC's earliest days. These experts work one-on-one with deaf-blind consumers, teaching them a variety of gardening techniques, such as planting, weeding, pruning and lawn maintenance. This provides a wonderful peer-to-peer learning environment and helps keep the gardens at CHKC beautiful.

"Consumers also practice orientation and mobility skills at the garden club. When cutting the grass with a manual lawnmower, they can feel where the grass ends and gravel begins in the same way as they would feel a change in surface with their white cane," says Gauthier-Perley.

### **TECHNOLOGY SKILLS**

CHKC's iOS club meets once a month. Consumers explore and learn about devices from Apple – iPhones, iPads and iPods – in an informative, interactive, fun and inclusive environment. A wide range of apps, features and functions are covered, all based on the needs and interests of the group. Examples include configuring and fine tuning accessibility features to meet individual needs, word processing, email and text messaging, file sharing, GPS, photo and video editing, apps for information on transit, weather, news, products and services, apps for Braille and sign language, games and more.

"The iOS club discusses different apps that are deaf-blind friendly. Some of them have auditory output for people who can still use their hearing. For others, there is a visual component, such as hooking up a Braille display to an iPhone. The group downloads the apps ahead of time and works through them together. Some are recommended by our club facilitator and others are suggested by consumers based on what they've found to

be useful in their own lives," explains Gauthier-Perley.

"iOS club members enjoy exploring apps at their own pace and help each other figure things out. Everyone is included, with more experienced users helping those who are newer users," says Megan McHugh, who facilitates the club and is deaf-blind herself. "I have found that as iOS club members become more confident, they actively interact with other members, to problem solve and help each other out, with me stepping back a bit. This creates a wonderful atmosphere of inclusion, friendship and teamwork as opposed to people just sitting there and following the facilitator."

### **ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY**

People who are blind or visually impaired learn orientation and mobility (O&M) skills to support independence and freedom of movement in their homes, places of work and the community. Body, sensory, community and environmental awareness coupled with formal mobility skills, such as using a cane or guide dog, help consumers know where they are and how to get where they want to go, be it to their mailbox or across town on the subway.

At CHKC's O&M club, consumers are instructed by a certified orientation and mobility specialist, with programs designed to meet the needs of each individual. Skills are reinforced by people who spend time with the consumer, which can include interveners, family and friends. Consumers also work with each other and learn in a group setting, much like the cooking club where everyone talks about techniques, what works and what doesn't work.

"There is a theme and practicum aspect for each monthly meeting. We may cover O&M in the home, community and workplace or on transit," says Training Coordinator Gauthier-Perley. "If a topic like travelling safely through revolving doors was on the agenda, our consumers would share tips, learn from our facilitator, then go to a mall where there is a revolving door to practice together. If a subway station was being renovated, they would discuss the updates and their experiences, then share tips about continuing to travel independently throughout the station during construction."

CHKC also offers a guide dog club, which covers everything from how dogs learn and communicate to travel and issues of first aid, plus the popular drop-in program Rendezvous at Helen's, which provides a friendly, social environment for seniors.

"Regardless of the situation, many of us naturally draw on the knowledge of our friends, family and colleagues," says Cindy Accardi. "Our clubs make it possible for deaf-blind consumers to learn from each other and socialize at the same time. We are proud to be providing powerful opportunities for people to benefit from each other's life experiences."

Thank you to Conval-Aid for their participation in the Rolling Rampage.



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CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME

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Jeff Adams  
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CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME

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FOR PHYSICALLY DISABLED PERSONS

# 2015

THE CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME recognizes distinguished Canadians who have made significant contributions assisting or enhancing the lives of physically disabled persons. Both physically disabled and non-disabled persons may be inducted into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. Individuals are inducted into one of three categories: Builder, Achiever or Athlete. Nominations are considered on the basis of information provided. Please submit as detailed an account of the individual's background as possible, including a résumé or biography and any additional material, such as newspaper clippings, testimonial letters, etc., to:

Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons, 6 Garamond Court, Suite 265, Toronto, Ontario, M3C 1Z5  
Telephone: (416) 760-7351 Fax: (416) 760-9405 E-Mail: [whynot@sympatico.ca](mailto:whynot@sympatico.ca) Website: [www.cfpdp.com](http://www.cfpdp.com)  
Please include your name, address and phone number. Nominations to be submitted no later than May 9, 2015.

## FUTURE EVENTS

**CANADIAN HELEN KELLER CENTRE  
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*The Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons presents*

*The 31st Great Valentine Gala*

**Starring Matt Dusk**

**Saturday, February 7, 2015, The Westin Harbour Castle**



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