

Fall 2011

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Greetings

RADS Roads is written by students and alumni for students, alumni and the DST community. All DST students and alumni are encouraged to contribute pieces of writing and resources. Together we make this newsletter. Submissions for the newsletter are welcome at anytime. Please send content to Sandra Phillips at: s.phillips@sympatico.ca or s.phillips@nhcia.ca.

Jennifer Paterson and Sandy Phillips, Editors of RADS Roads.

Alumni Updates

Terry Poirier (Class of 2003)

Below is a picture of Terry.



It's almost been nine years since my graduation from the Disability Studies program and so many opportunities have been given to me since. I spent a couple of years as an assistive technology trainer and vendor with a national company known as Bridges Canada. Next, I worked as a School Support Program and Autism Services consultant with school boards through ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development, while pursuing a Masters degree at Athabasca University. Simultaneously I also coordinated teaching duties at the University of Toronto and the Educational Assistant program at Sheridan College in Oakville. I was always looking for a full time faculty position and have now landed a great position with the Niagara College Educational Assistant - Special Needs Services (EA-SNS) program as a full time Professor. This program is unique in that it prepares students for both the educational system and community practice in places such as community living or alternative education settings. Upon diploma completion students are marketable into two distinct career paths, and from what I've gathered from a few of my students, many continue their education through the Ryerson Disability Studies program.

I have to admit that while the journey to this program was longer than I had wanted, it was well worth the wait. In the short observation period that I have had as faculty I have seen that many students in our program are versed in the Social Model of Disability, they are keen and observant vis a vis disability rights, and are already poised to make impacts when hired in either the

community services or educational sectors. The faculty members at Niagara College are a talented and knowledgeable group of people, and I truly feel as though I am a part of a community of like minded individuals in terms of disability cultures and philosophies. This is the beginning of a new career at Niagara College I plan to seize and to inspire a graduate population that identifies with many of the values I inherited from the DST program at Ryerson.

Dawn Sheldrick (Class of 2005)

Dawn's work is helping to break down stereotypes and misconceptions about involving people with disabilities into fitness programs. Below is a scanned image of an article about Dawn and her "Fitness for all" work and includes a picture of herself with participants in her fitness program.



Heather Willis (Class of 2005)

Below is a photo of Heather



It's hard to believe that it has been a full year since I began my role as Accessibility Officer at Ryerson. As I reflect on the last 12 months, I think about lessons learned and the enormity of the task ahead – lesson #1 "How to eat an elephant? – One bite at a time of course!" After several bites, we now have a comprehensive strategy in place, and in light of the second regulation of the AODA becoming legislation on July 1st - which

incorporates the Employment, Information and Communication and Transportation standards - two working groups have been initiated focusing on Information and Communication as well as Employment.

From another perspective, I have become a student again! I am one of the first participants in Ryerson's new "Advancing the AODA" certificate being offered by the Chang School in partnership with the School of Disability Studies. The foundational course called "Making Ontario Accessible" recently began. It is a very diverse class with folks from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences including those who are new to disability studies as well as at least five alumni like me. The highlight of our first session was a visit from the father of the ODA/AODA himself, David Lepovfsky. David had my undivided attention, particularly when he began discussing strategies for implementing accessibility. While many of these ideas were not unfamiliar, for example, "find your natural allies", "go for the 'low hanging fruit'", "focus on barrier prevention", I was listening to them from a position of actually being able to do make a difference this time. It also helped me to realize I was on the right track as I had been frustrated by what had been feeling to me like very slow progress. More than one person has told me since my arrival that it takes at least a full year to get the "lay of the land" and feel comfortable here. I'm happy to say that I feel like the foundation has been laid, my appetite is whetted and that elephant is looking pretty tasty!

Ruth Ruth Stackhouse (class of 2000)



Below is a photo of RuthRuth.

Recently I learned that I am the winner of the 2011 Marilyn Booth Award offered by The Chang School. The award will be presented at Annual Leaders in Learning Award Celebration in October.

Currently I am a student at York University, in the Critical Disability Studies MA program, and pursuing Social Gerontology at The Chang School. I also continue to be a community theatre director with The Friendly Spike Theatre Band.

Shyla George Matthew (Class of 2011)



To the left is a photo of Shyla.

I immigrated to Canada with my husband and two boys in September 2003. I am an internationally trained educator working as a supply teacher with Toronto District School Board in the Secondary Panel.

I felt a great need to share my successful transition as an immigrant to a proud Canadian. Reflection of my successful journey and the challenges faced as a new immigrant culturing into Canadian soil requires patience, perseverance, discipline and dedication. I joined the troupe of general laborer doing survival jobs with the employment agencies in warehouses and factories and later enrolled in the DSW program at Humber in 2005. I did not anticipate

that the program could lead me to where I am now. I was admitted to the Disability Studies Program in 2007.

While I was enrolled in the DST Program I pursued the post graduate certificate in Behaviour Modification. My time in the DST program was very enriching and rewarding. I was highly focused in selecting my courses and concentrated on Gerontology and Psychology courses. Now I am enrolled in Mental Health and Addiction certification using my Psychology Credits. Flexibility in choosing electives gave me the much required tool to be successful. I graduated in spring 2011.

My enriched qualification paved a way in being selected for my Graduate studies at two universities. Yorkville University, New Brunswick, Fredericton offered me admission in Master of Counseling Psychology an online blended program which I am currently doing. I was also accepted at Brock University in Master of Applied Disability Studies (ABA stream). I have deferred my start date to September 2012. I intend to complete both Masters and in two years from now I see myself successfully placed in a good position.

From a humble beginning as an immigrant to a Canadian citizen and from General labourer to a Masters degree I owe my appreciation and gratitude to the wonderful DST faculty members and for helping me succeed.

Student and Alumni Activities



Megan Stuart (Current student – shown in photo on left with Geoffrey Reaume to the right of the picture, a participant in the middle and Megan on the right.)

Undergraduate Research Opportunities (URO) Filmmaking with The Friendly Spike Theatre Band.

The Office of the Vice President Research and Innovation (OVPRI) offers a grant to undergraduate students who

are interested in doing faculty mentored research over the summer term. In the winter of 2011 I was in pre-production on a documentary film I was planning to shoot during summer with Ruth Ruth Stackhouse and her community theatre troupe, The Friendly Spike Theatre Band. With the support of Kathryn Church and David Reville I submitted a detailed proposal to the OVPRI URO program along with a sample of my film work. I was approved for funding to conduct a participatory case study that would result in a documentary film.

The experience was awesome and solidified my interest in documentary filmmaking as a form of research and activism. Over the course of the summer I participated in Ruth Ruth's play development as a member of the cast. The production was a theatrical walking tour of the Historic Patient Built Wall at CAMH based on Geoffrey Reaume's book *Remembrance of Patients Past*. Several members of the cast were interested in participating in the documentary and together we filmed interviews and footage of rehearsals and

performances. I am now in the post production stage and hope to submit to Toronto film festivals such as Rendezvous with Madness and Hot Docs.

Youth Activist Forum

Paul Oberoi (Class of 2009)

Below is a picture of Paul with two fellow friends and activists that he met at the youth activist forum.



I heard about the inaugural Youth Activist Forum from the RADS network held at Carlton University in Ottawa from June 3-5, 2011. The participants were individuals between the ages of 16-30 who have a strong passion for activism and dis/ability rights. There was about 35 youth there including myself.

Day one began with an ice breaker activity and continued with a focus on the CRPD and the UN. The evening capped off with stellar comedy, dance and storytelling performances. Day two continued on the theme of activism where we were taught about the National Youth Disability Network and shown a film about individuals with Intellectual Disabilities who identify as LGBTQI. We then broke up into small groups and learned about stand-up comedy/dance/web comics. The evening performances provided an entertaining camaraderie with singing, comedy, dance and storytelling and an open mic. Day three addressed non violent direct action movements and Jeff Preston spoke about a film that he made which highlighted the negative aspects of Wheel Trans/Para Trans.

I was sad to see the conference end because it is always great to be among individuals who are in the same age group and who are like minded. I made friends for life from attending this conference and learned so much about disability arts and activism and it was very worth it. I encourage everyone to take up the opportunity to attend conferences because they are a great learning and networking experience. For those interested in more information, I would be glad to discuss it further.

School News and Events



To the left is a photo of Melanie with alumni Sandy Phillips and Terry Poirier at Leadership to Remember.

Change is upon us!

Melanie's term as the Director of the school ended in June 2011. To mark this occasion, students, alumni, staff and faculty of Disability Studies gathered during summer institute for "Leadership to Remember." This event was held to celebrate and thank Melanie for her outstanding leadership and service during her eleven years as Director. Melanie was instrumental in establishing RADS and supported alumna Sandra Phillips (class of 2004) and Tracy Beck (class of 2004) who founded RADS.

Cathy Berry (class of 2006) and DST Instructor David Reville co-emceed and welcomed students and alumni who shared heartfelt speeches about Melanie. Each speaker attended to the ways Melanie's leadership and work embodied Vision, Passion and Action and social justice which the school is built upon. Melanie is now on a well deserved sabbatical and working on research until June of 2012.

Many thanks to Paul Oberoi (class of 2010) for helping guests with arrival and directions, Shane Horvath (current student) from JFC Photography for photographing the event, Terry Poirier (class of 2003) for technical support and to Deidre Panitch (class of 2010) for compiling a slide show.

Congratulations, Kathryn!

Congratulations to Kathryn Church who became the new Director of the School as of July, 2011. So far, during her tenure as Director, Kathryn facilitated a town hall for DST students and alumni about the status of the school, is addressing many accessibility issues and continues to teach DST 88 and DST 99 along with her research work. Visit the DST website to read updates from Kathryn during the fall 2011 and winter 2012 terms.

Congratulations, Esther!

Congratulations are also in order for Esther Ignangi, now Dr. Ignangi after successfully defending her doctoral dissertation entitled "Disabled young people, support and the dialogical work of accomplishing citizenship." Esther continues to teach DST 501, DST 725, DST 99 along with an exciting emerging research agenda.

Resources

Critical Disability Studies Online Theses

Online college of MA and PhD theses available with open access

<http://cdsot.posterous.com/>

Fuck Yeah Autism Spectrum Blog

<http://fyehautismspectrum.tumblr.com/>

Journal of Developmental Disability

This is an open access journal that is published by Canadian scholars and people working in the field. Esther Ignagni is one of the editors and writers for the column on disability and the media.

<http://www.oadd.org/index.php?page=712>

New Program in Masters of Design in Inclusive Design

http://www.ocad.ca/programs/graduate_studies/inclusive_design.htm

Events

Arts and Culture

Allan MacNeil: Psychotherapist, Artistic Director Theatre Instructor is directing five plays and a musical for the 2011 **LOFT Drama Festival**. Allan is a graduate of the Gestalt Institute of Toronto, Ryerson University and George Brown College. This year's production includes Drawer Boy by Michael Healy, Ecstasy of Rita Joe by George Ryga, Interview from America Hurrah by Jean-Claude Van Itallie, Come and Go and Act Without Words by Samuel Beckett and a musical, Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris. This year's festival also includes Mime/Clown and Stand-Up Comedy.

The festival grew out of drama workshops Allan has been teaching over the last several years with LOFT/Wilkinson. Cast will include clients and staff from LOFT Wilkinson Community Support Service. Tickets are free for the LOFT Drama Festival which takes place at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday October 25th at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander.

Creative Spirit Art Festival, Conference and Exhibition

October 27, 28, 29 2011

Please e mail or phone to register for the event. It is free of charge. Please contact Ellen Anderson to register: Ellen Anderson Executive Director Creative Spirit Art Centre

999 Dovercourt Road Toronto, ON

t. 416.588.8801

www.creativespirit.on.ca

Conferences

The interdisciplinary conference, "Cripples, Idiots, Lepers, and Freaks: Extraordinary Bodies / Extraordinary Minds," will be held at the CUNY Graduate Center in midtown Manhattan on March 22 to March 23, 2012. More information about the conference is available at:

<http://esaconference2012.wordpress.com/>

Canadian Disability Studies Association 9th Annual Conference
May 30 to June 1, 2012 at the University of Waterloo. For more information, visit: <http://www.cdsa-acei.ca/conference.html>

Keeping in touch

RADS maintains a network list of alumni and students for students and alumni to find each other for networking and mentoring opportunities. The list is available in the DST café in the general discussion forum, the "ask-a-grad" forum or you may receive a copy by email.

If you would like to sign on to the network or receive a copy, please email Jennifer [**jpaterso@ryerson.ca**](mailto:jpaterso@ryerson.ca). If you have already signed on the network before, you do not need to sign up again.

Please help us keep our email list up to date by providing us with your recent email address. Students are encouraged to sign up before they graduate. If you are a student and aren't on the RADS distribution list, please email Jennifer.