



Limitless News - March 2018

Creating Confidence Workshop (by Jillian Sloane)

The Creating Confidence Workshop held throughout the month of November was designed to help give the youth of Blind Beginnings more confidence and an understanding of different social aspects in their daily lives. In the workshop, a group composed of two Blind Beginnings staff members, six youth participants, and four wonderful volunteers met once per week. We were led in engaging discussions on topics of our choosing, such as dating and flirting, makeup and fashion, and proper social cues. The interesting component to all of these conversations was that we first looked at them through our own experiences – with each of us having different levels of blindness – and then we learned what those same experiences were like for our sighted peers. This gave us a whole new perspective into a sighted person's world, and it also taught us specific skills to better interact with them.

During the third week of the workshop, we got to go to Metrotown mall where we put what we had learned in the fashion discussion to the test with the hopes of finding a new outfit for ourselves. We were paired up with one of the volunteers who gave us advice on what kinds of clothing worked best for our body type. This was a great opportunity because we got to have hands-on experience, and we got to make decisions for ourselves and receive very helpful pointers along the way. In the fourth and final week of the workshop, we met up for a nice dinner. We talked about proper dinner etiquette, such as how to keep a conversation going, body language, and when to disclose your visual impairment. We even ventured into interviews and job advice.

This was a great workshop to take part in. We learned a lot about many different topics, came to better understand how to interact with sighted people, and gained a new set of skills to use in any social situation. This workshop gave us more confidence in ourselves and a better understanding of social situations. It helped with daily social experiences and overall life skills, which are of great value for visually impaired people.

Community Discovery (by Harjinder Saran)

Blind Beginnings launched “community discovery outings” this January to compensate for the Junior Explorers club which used to take place every month. Each month, children, youth and their families are invited on an outing in order to explore the community, learn something new, and be active. There have been two outings so far: cross-country skiing in Whistler and snowshoeing on Mount Seymour.

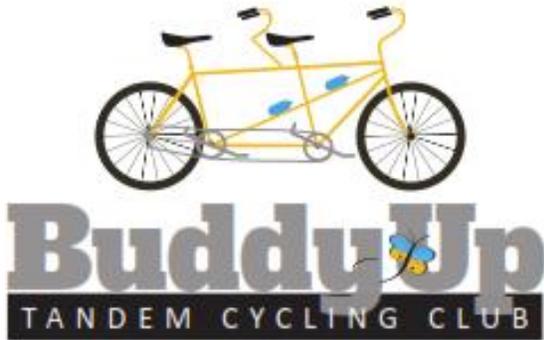


Although both of these activities were very different, their uniqueness is what made each activity a new experience and memorable. Not only were we having fun while experiencing new things, we were also proving to ourselves and the people around us that we are able to take part in physical activity.

If you want to know about the upcoming discovery outings, please check the Blind Beginnings calendar of events which is posted on our website (www.blindbeginnings.ca).

Tandem Cycling Club

This spring, Blind Beginnings will be starting up the “Buddy-Up Tandem Cycling Club”. Participants in the club will partner up with volunteers and go for a biking adventure in the Lower Mainland. This club exists thanks to Youth Leaders who presented at a Mountain Equipment Company conference with a goal to get people out and active. They were able to acquire a \$5,000 donation to help start up this program in conjunction with BC Blind Sports.



Start Date: Sunday, May 6th, 2018

When: Every Sunday morning for around 1 to 2 hours until the fall

Who: All youth at any skill level. If you have never biked before, then come and learn. If you are experienced, come bike with your friends. If your family owns a bike, then come join us.

What to Wear: Depending on weather, light but warm clothes and runners. The intention is to go rain or shine but it will depend on the week. Bring a water bottle and snack.

Registration: Space is limited, so it will be first come first served each week. People may register and then will need to tell us whether they are attending each week so that we can determine who will be there. We want to make sure that if there is an open bike, others will get the opportunity to participate.

More information will be coming out about how to register for the club and how weekly rides will be organized, so get EXCITED!

TEDX Talk Experience (by Harjinder Saran)

Recently, one of our Blind Beginnings youth, 18-year-old Harjinder Saran, had the opportunity to speak at a TEDX Youth Conference. Harjinder's talk was about education regarding disabilities with a focus on ending common misconceptions surrounding blindness. "I remember having to choose a topic and I was thinking about how things such as gender equality and LGBT issues are taught about in schools and how the kids are protected from bullying, and then it dawned on me that ever since I have been in school, not once was disability mentioned." This motivated Harjinder to explain why disability should be included in education as well. Harjinder wanted to emphasize that the education is not just for people with disabilities to be included, but also to benefit non-disabled people as well.

Harjinder describes her experience during the designing of the talk as a challenging one. "I wanted to say a lot and it was difficult to choose one thing and stick to it, because I had to remember I can't educate everyone on every part of blindness and disability education at once." For Harjinder, it took a good number of rewrites to prepare her talk. "I was still unsure about some things the night before. I guess what I mean to say is that a speech will never be completely perfect." Harjinder's presenting experience was a "blast but also a little nerve-racking" as there were many people in the audience. "I definitely was very nervous at the beginning and it is clearly noticeable, but when I got into my topic I was able to focus and relax a bit."

To watch Harjinder's TED Talk experience click [here](#).

Note: Blind Beginnings does not claim any rights to the video and the content displayed with in or any affiliations with the independently organized TEDX conference.

Blind Tennis (by Clement Chou)

Some of our youth have been participating in a new sport which has been breaking into the scene here in the Lower Mainland and attracting a fair crowd with its relaxed atmosphere and novel concept. Say hello to Blind Tennis!

Developed in Japan by Mr. Miyoshi Takei around 1984, Blind Tennis uses a shorter court, shorter rackets, and a foam tennis ball containing rattles to enable totally blind and low vision players to track the trajectory of the slower moving ball as it bounces across the court. Players who are totally blind or have little usable vision are allowed three bounces before the ball must be returned, and players with more vision are allowed two.